

Springtime on the menu

It was a March day in Manhattan, and Sarah was crying over her menu.

Perhaps you think that she was sad because she was eating carefully and didn't want to see **ice cream** on the menu. Well, you're wrong.

Sarah was sitting at her desk with a **typewriter** in front of her. She worked at home – **typing** things for people.

Her best job was working for Schulenberg's Restaurant. This stood next to the house where she had a room. When she ate there one winter evening, she noticed that the writing on the menu **card** was really difficult to understand.

That night she typed out the menu, and the next day she showed it to Mr Schulenberg. He at once gave her the job of typing out menus for his restaurant every day. For this work Mr Schulenberg agreed to pay Sarah in food.

After that, a **waiter** took three meals every day to Sarah's room together with the new menu of the day in pencil for Sarah to type.

Now it was an afternoon in March – springtime! But the weather was still as cold as winter, and Sarah felt sad. She looked out of her window at the factory opposite, but she didn't really see it. She was remembering her holiday in the country last summer.

Sarah stayed two weeks at Sunnybrook **Farm**. There she fell in love with old Farmer Franklin's son, Walter. He took her for long walks in the country, and one day they sat together under a tree and he made a **crown** of **dandelion** flowers and put it on her head.

'Those yellow flowers look really beautiful in your brown hair,' said Walter.

ice cream sweet food that is made from very cold, thick milk

typewriter something that people wrote things quickly with before computers

type to write on a computer or typewriter

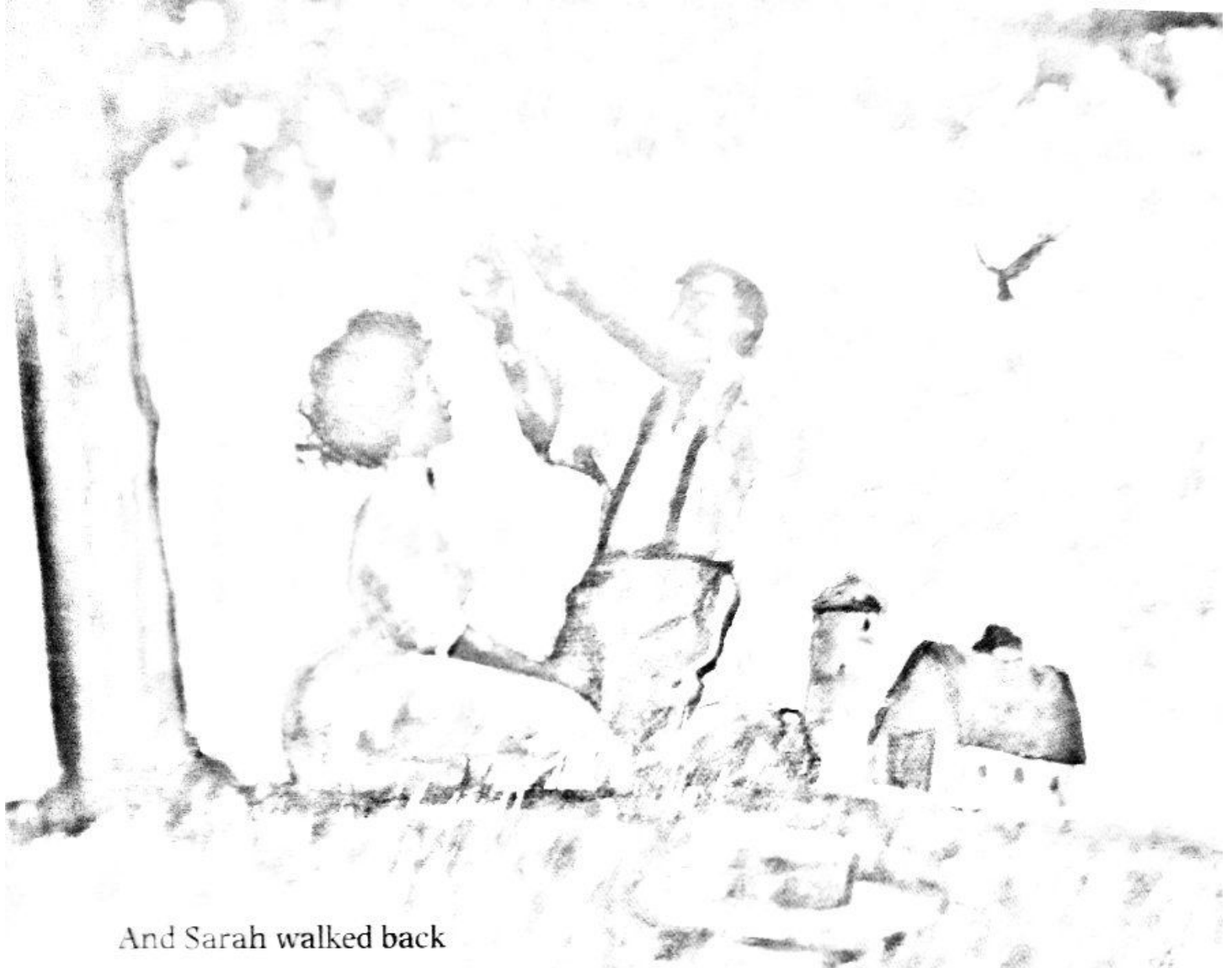
card a piece of thick paper

waiter someone working in a restaurant who takes food to people

farm a house with land in the country

crown a king or a queen wears this on their head

dandelion a wild plant with yellow flowers and leaves that you can cook and eat



And Sarah walked back
to the farm house with the
dandelion crown on her head,
and her hat in her hand.

'I'm going to marry you first thing
next spring,' said Walter and his eyes
shone.

And then Sarah came back to the big
city and her work as a typist.

Suddenly a knock on her room door made
her forget those happy days. It was the waiter
from Schulenberg's with the new menu.

She put a white card in the typewriter and began.

Her fingers danced across the typewriter keys. The **soups**
were first. The meats came next. After that, it was the
vegetables – potatoes, carrots, tomatoes, and then –
Sarah was crying over the menu.

soup a food
that you make by
cooking vegetables
or meat in water

She was waiting for a letter from Walter, and during the past two weeks no letter came. And now, on the menu that she was typing, she read 'dandelions' and something about an egg. She remembered Walter making that dandelion crown for her, and saying that he wanted to marry her in the spring, and now – seeing those beautiful flowers as just something to eat on the menu in front of her – she felt terrible.

At last she stopped crying. For a while she touched the keys of the typewriter sadly, still thinking of her young farmer friend. But soon she was busy typing card after card.

At six o'clock, the waiter from Schulenberg's brought her dinner, and took away the finished menus.

After dinner, Sarah took a book from the table, sat down in a comfortable chair, and began to read.

Just then, there was a ring at the front door. The **landlady** opened it. Sarah put down her book, and listened.

Hearing a man's voice downstairs, she suddenly jumped up from her chair, opened her room door, and ran out to the top of the stairs.

There, running up the stairs towards her, was Walter – and soon she was in his arms.

'Why didn't you write?' she asked.

'I wanted to surprise you. So I went to your old address, but they told me that you weren't living there. I didn't know where to find you.'

'But I wrote to you with my new address.'

'I never got it.'

'So how did you find me?'

The young farmer smiled.

'Well, I went to the restaurant next door for dinner, and looked at the menu. When I got to just below tomatoes, I jumped out of my chair, and called for Mr Schulenberg. He told me where you lived.'

landlady a woman who gets money for renting out rooms

'I remember,' said Sarah softly, 'Dandelions came just below tomatoes.'

'I knew that it was your typing, because of the strange way that your typewriter types the Ws higher than the other letters.'

'But there isn't a letter W in "dandelion"!' cried Sarah in surprise.

The young man took a menu from his pocket and gave it to her.

At the top there was a round grey **mark** from one of her tears. Sarah knew that it was the card she was typing when she began crying about the summer. And, there – just below tomatoes – in place of dandelions, she read:

DEAREST WALTER, WITH AN EGG ON TOP

mark something
dirty of a different
colour that you see
on something

