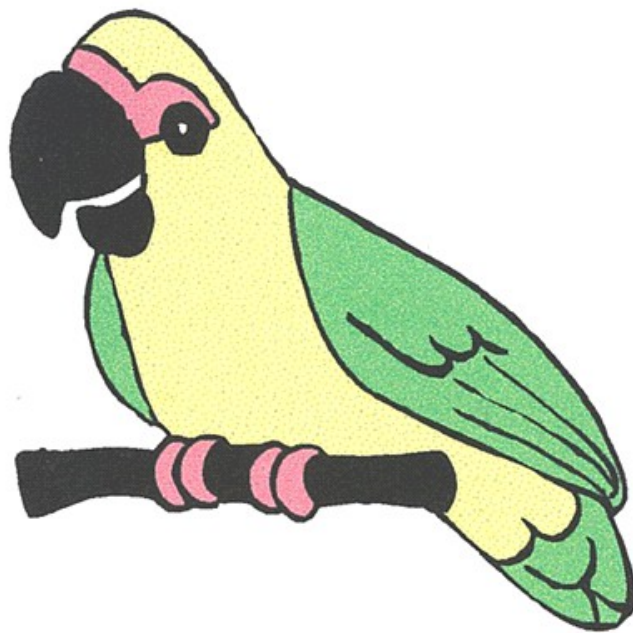


Animal Stories



By June Stepansky

*Five animal story-poems
to entertain and delight*



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To Alex—The child in my life

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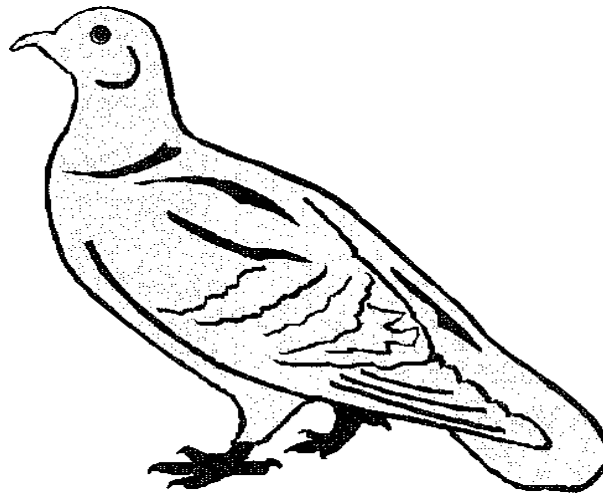
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HERCULES THE POOPED-OUT PIGEON



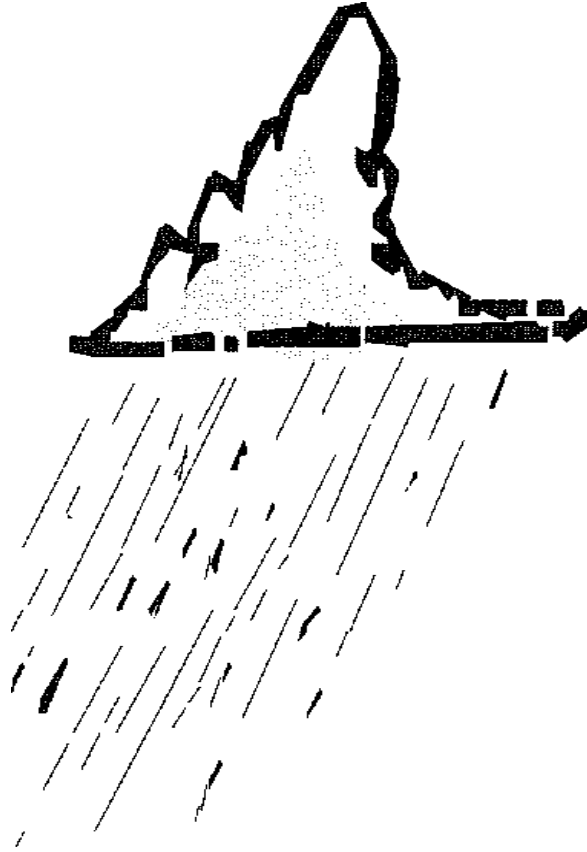
Hercules was a pigeon.

A very special kind.

He could fly a long, long way
and never seemed to mind.

He flew from Mr. Roger's house
to Mr. Murphy's place,
and then he flew right back again,
all in one day's space.

A homing pigeon he was called.
He liked best being home, and only went to
Murphy's place when he felt he should roam.



Now one sad day,
when he flew out, it started in to rain.
although he flew with all his might,
he couldn't get home again.
He beat his wings against the rain,
But then they slowly drooped.

He tried his best to make them go.

He knew that he was “pooped.”



A little girl was watching him.

Her name was Sara Jane.

She saw him fall into her yard

Her duty was quite plain.

She took that tiny frail bird.

She kept him warm and dry.

She gave him water he could drink,
and told him not to cry.

She cared for him for seven days.

'Till he became quite strong.

She watched him fearfully:

she knew he wouldn't be there long.

“Please, Mother, may I keep this bird?”, her voice was sad and low,

“ He loves me now, and I love him I just can’t let him go.”



Her mom spoke softly, gently too

She knew just what to say,

His home is somewhere else from here.

He must soon fly away

Our yard has been a resting place,

just like a small hotel,

but he will soon be leaving here

as soon as he is well.”

Yes, what she said was very true.

It happened that next day.

The pigeon circled overhead,

and then he flew away

Now Hercules is home again,

and all in one day's space

He flies from Mr. Roger's house

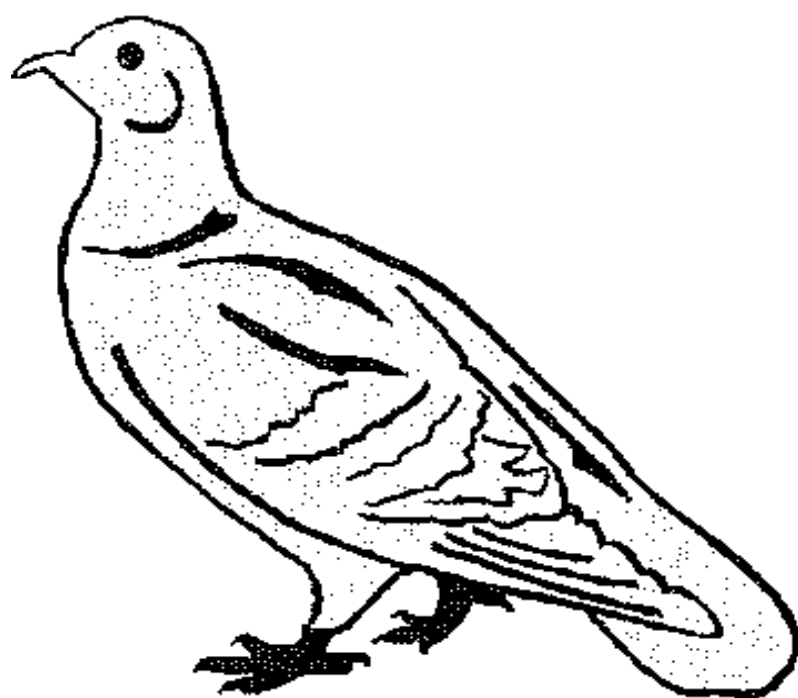
to Mr. Murphy's place.

It takes a little longer now,

though not because he's slow.

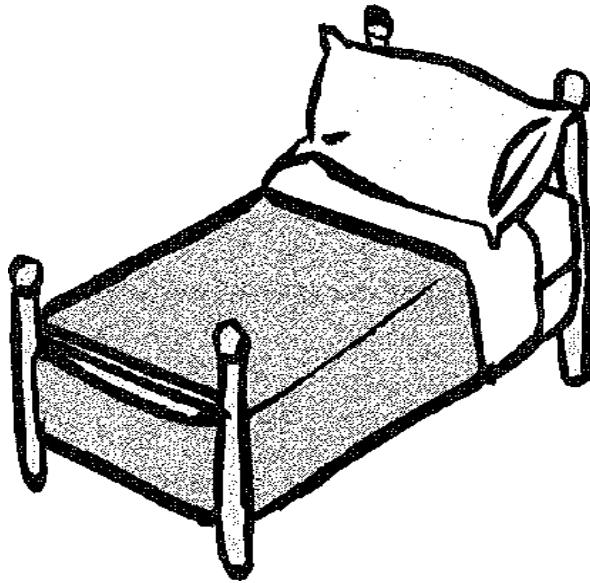
He always stops at Sara Jane's

to tell his friend hello.



A GHOST STORY

Lee and Norm were two small boys,
as brave as brave could be.
They fought all bullies on the block.
They climbed the tallest tree.



One evening in the dark of night,
'bout two or half- past three,
they were awakened from their sleep
by sounds like hee, hee, hee.
It was a wild-like kind of laugh
that seemed to mean them harm.

Lee tiptoed softly from his bed

showing no alarm.

“Norm, take a stick I’ll take this broom,

and if a ghost it be, we’ll find it out,

and then we’ll stop that awful hee, hee, hee!

And even if it’s not a ghost, but just a burglar man

we’ll wake up dad, call the police, and stop him, if we can.”

So armed with courage, weapons too,

they tiptoed through each room

In every closet, behind each door,

they poked that searching broom.

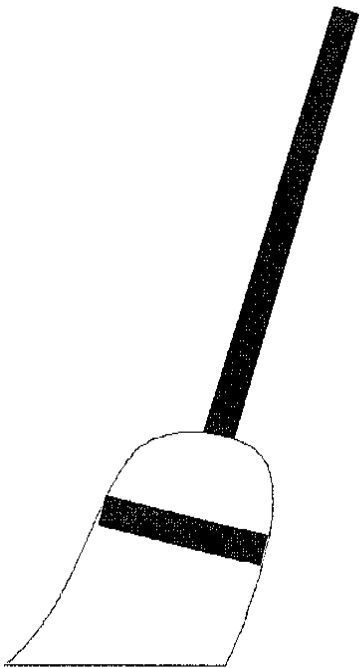
Lee whispered to his brother,

“Norm, let us search no more.

There’s nothing in these rooms to find.”

Then from the backyard door

there came a sound



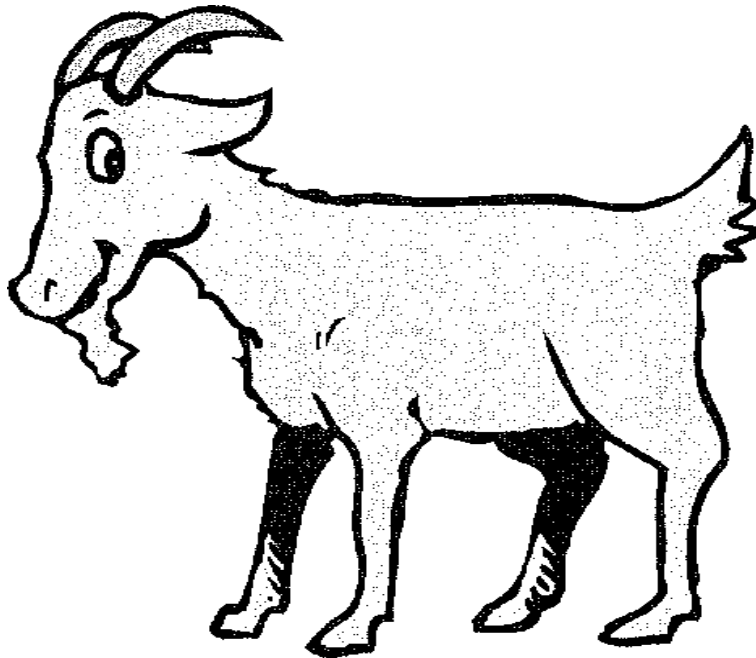
A terrible sound. They ran right up to see.

It was that same old awful sound.

The sound was hee, hee, hee!

With all the courage that they had,
they opened wide the door, and there it stood.
That noisy thing would scare them nevermore.

The thing stood there and looked at them.



Goat

It stood next to a tree.

It looked right in their eyes, and then,

it bleated hee, hee, hee.

The cutest, cuddliest little goat

you'd ever want to see.

The boys just rolled right on the ground.

They laughed until they cried.

They wiped the laughter from their eyes,

and then they went inside.

Those two tired boys climbed into bed.

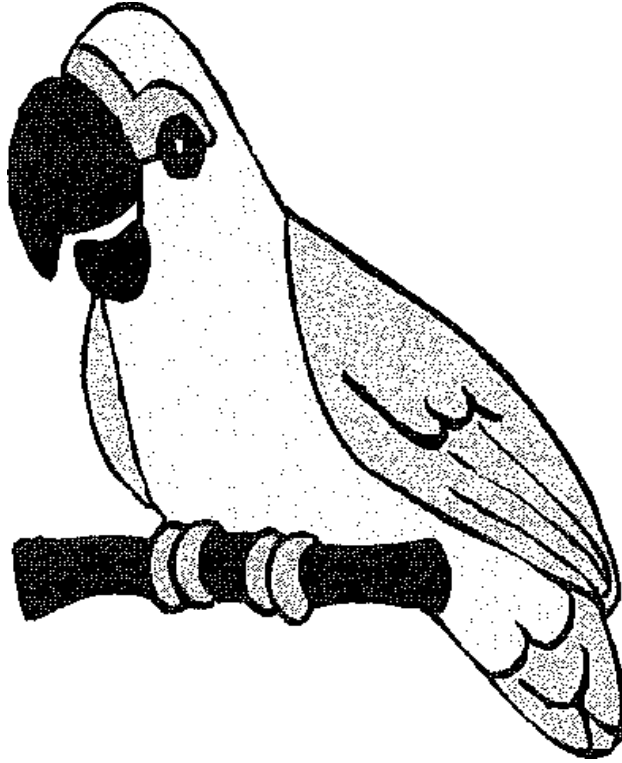
A clock chimed loud and clear.

The ghost was really just a goat.

There was no more to fear.



DOLLY, MOLLY AND FRED



Dolly was a parrot,

as pretty as could be,

all orange, green and yellow

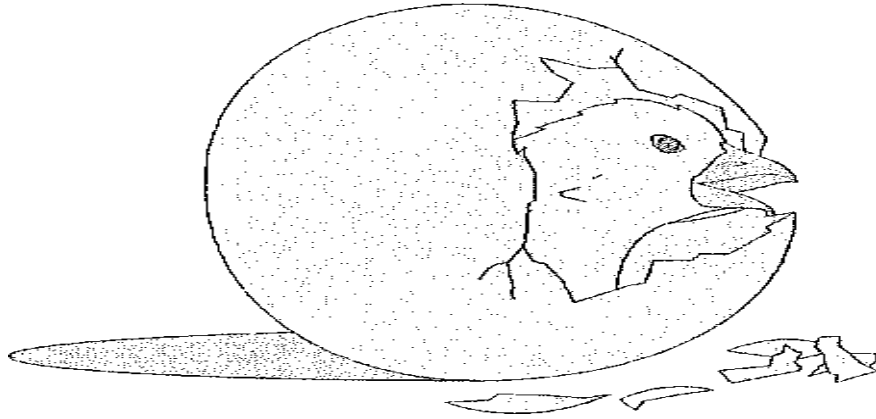
a lovely sight to see.

One day, when she was in her cage

she stood upon one leg,

and then before she realized

she laid a little egg.



She sat upon that little egg

as if they were attached,

and in a while to her surprise

it opened up and hatched.

A tiny, scrawny, baby bird

poked out his wobbly head.

Then Molly, who was Dolly's friend

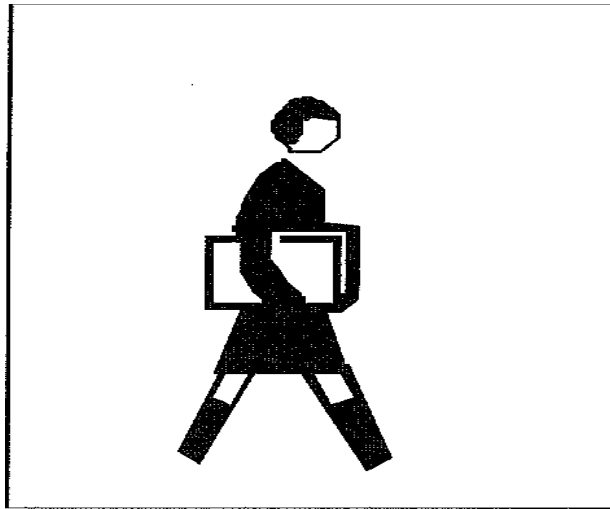
named the baby Fred.

But Dolly could not feed her son.

She lay ill in her bed.

“I’ll care for him”, young Molly said,

“ I’ll keep him warm and fed.”



She took the frail baby bird.

She kept him warm and dry.

She fed him every hour or two,

just so he wouldn’t cry.

She took him everywhere she went,

to school, to work, to play.

She loved to have him with her.

He was never in her way.

They grew so close.

Soon it was clear

how much they loved each other.

He went with her wherever she went.

He thought she was his mother.



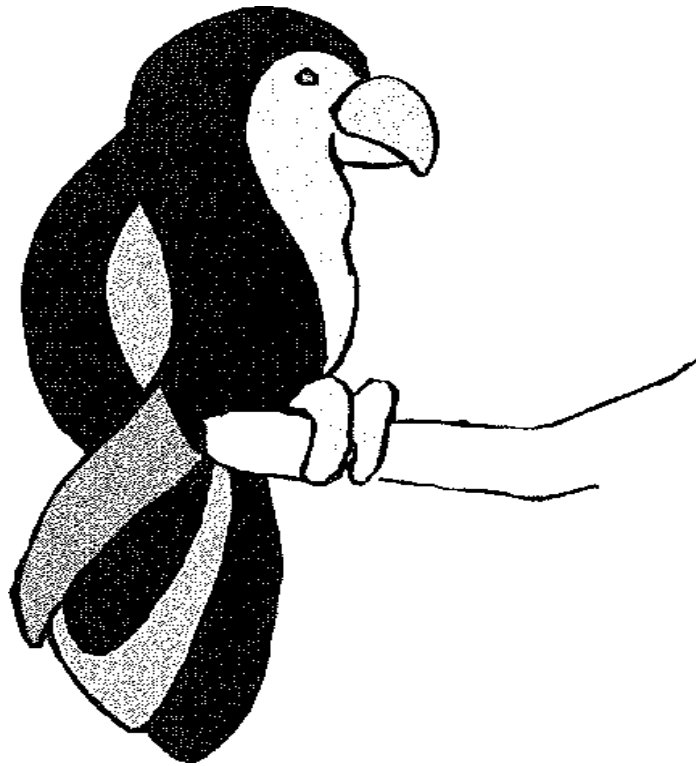
And in a very little while, nine weeks

from that first day, he grew to be a

handsome bird grown up in every way.

He's still a parrot. That's quite plain,

but this is also true,
because of Molly's loving care
he is half-human too.
Just yesterday, to Molly's joy,
although he seemed quite calm,
he opened wide his little beak, and said to her,
"THANKS MOM."



THE FROGS UNDER THE LOGS

Ron and Jeff were two small boys

who loved to ride and play.



“I’ve thought and thought,”

said Jeff to Ron,

“What shall we do today?”

Then Ron said to his brother,

“Let’s go out and explore.

We’ll ride to Calabasas Creek,

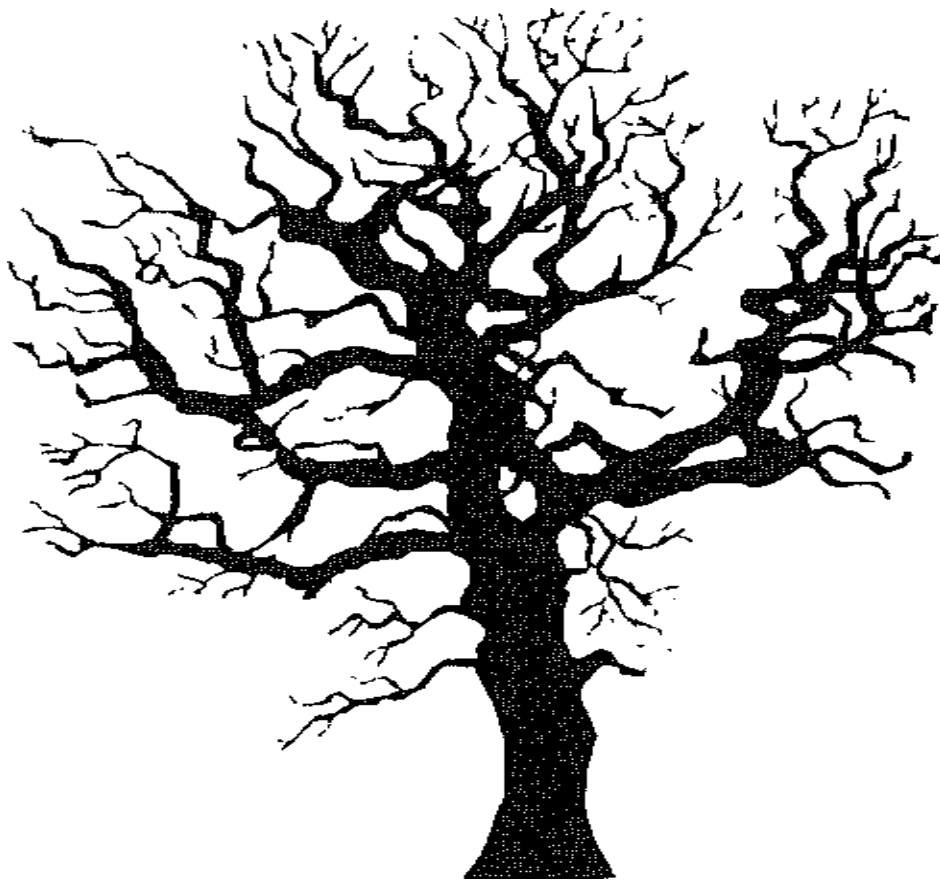
and then we’ll ride some more.

We’ll go into the general store,

and maybe go and see

the place they used to hang the crooks,

the scary hanging tree.



They took their bikes
and rode into old Calabasas town.
They saw the store, the hanging tree
and then they sat right down
upon some logs, because you see,

they felt quite tuckered out.

They ate the tasty lunch they brought,

then Jeff began to shout,

Oh, look ,Ron, look, see what I've found.”

and from beneath the logs

some greenish creatures jumped right out,

“I think I’ve found some frogs.”

The frogs hopped by.

They followed them to Calabasas creek,

The frogs jumped in the water

They were playing hide and seek.



Then Ron smiled at his brother,

“I know just what we’ll do.

We’ll take some tadpoles home with us,

and then before we’re through,

we’ll have some frogs all of our own

much more than just a few.”

They filled the cup they had from lunch

with water to the brim.

They scooped up tadpoles from the creek,

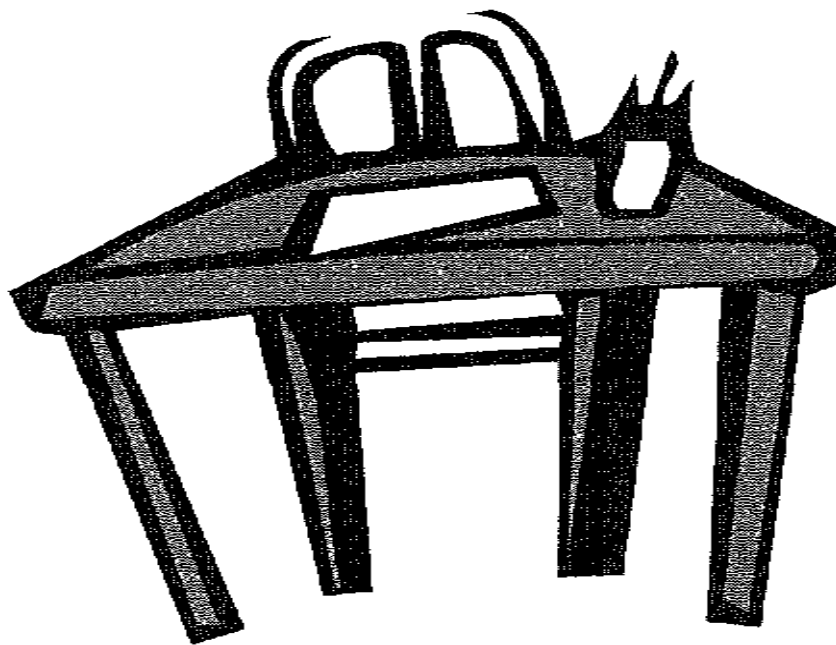
and then they dropped them in.

They took them home,

and placed them in their yard upon a table.

They watched them grow,

and cared for them as much as they were able.



But one day something happened.

The tadpoles all were gone.

The cup had dropped, and everything
spilled out upon the lawn.

The boys felt sad, but feeling bad
would not bring back their friends.

The real surprise in all of this
is how this story ends.

It happened that next summer,
about the month of June.

The boys were sitting in their yard

just looking at the moon

They heard a sound just like “burump”

and then a hundred more,



and all at once a frog hopped by

across the patio floor,

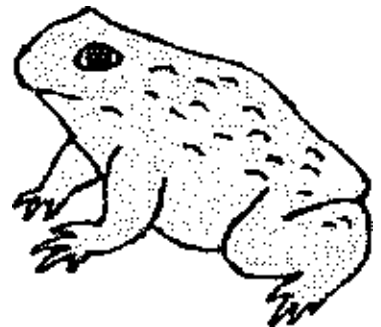
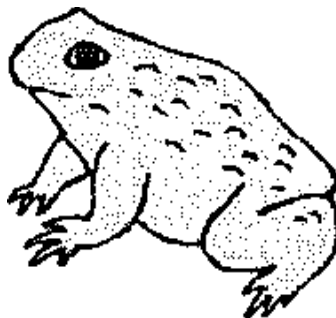
and then another and another,

too many frogs to count.



You'd have to count into the night

to get the right amount.

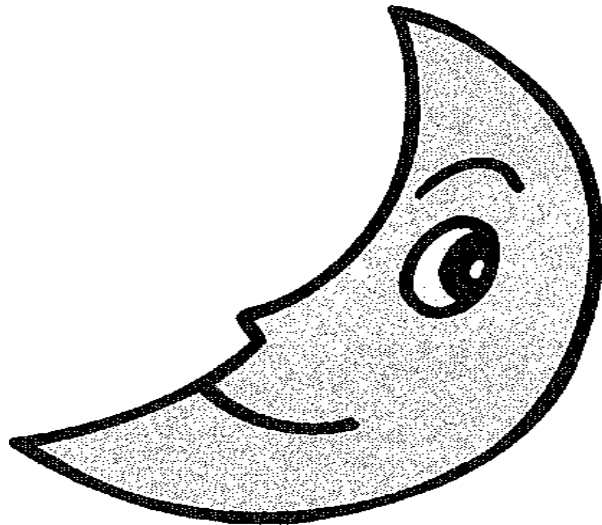


It seems the tadpoles grew up

and were hiding under logs

It took about three months or so

to turn them into frogs.



Now in their yard on moonlit nights

the boys sit waiting there

to watch and listen to the sounds

that drift upon the air.

They hear the crick, burump, crick, crick

of crickets and of frogs,

and think of their adventures

with the frogs under the logs.



THE MAGIC GARDEN

There is a magic garden,
where I just love to be
and if you have a little time,
I'll take you there with me.

In spring it's very special

when robins visit there,



Finch

and lemon trees, and orange trees

put perfume in the air.

And soon there are the vireos,

The finches and the jays and

hummingbirds and orioles



Hummingbird

fly through long summer days.

The mourning doves sing their duets

and on a summer night

the mockingbirds sing to the moon,

the birch tree shines all white.

Gardenias and jasmine

smell fragrant and sweet,

they make the magic garden

a most enchanting treat.



The cedar wax-wings stop awhile

to rest upon a wire,

then it is autumn,

and the leaves

look like they are on fire.

Then winter comes.

The trees are bare.

Some owls hoot at night,

and in the day, a real surprise,

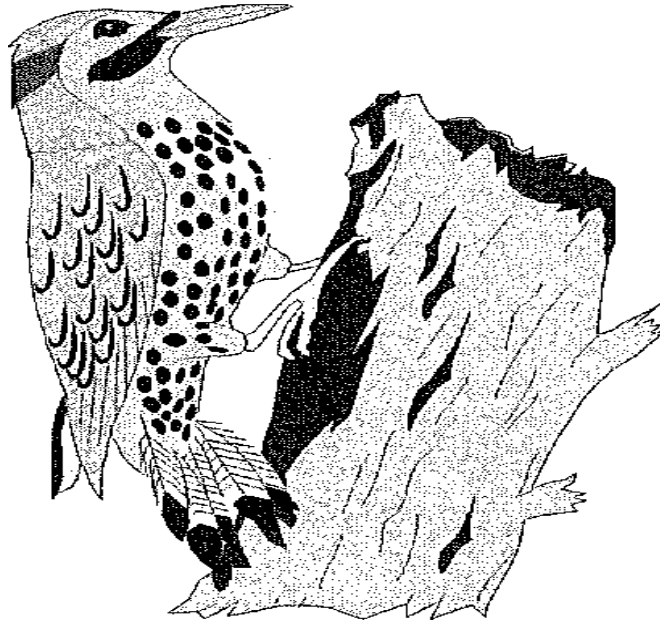
a fascinating sight.

A most exciting kind of bird,

so beautiful to see

A woodpecker—a flicker

flies down from a pine tree.



Then after winter's season

the spring will reappear,

and all the magic wonders

will begin again next year.

So if you watch with special care

this surely will come true.

You'll see some magic wonders

in gardens close to you



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