

GILSON ROY ROLFE

IN THE MORNING GLOW:
SHORT STORIES

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Roy Rolfe Gilson

In the Morning Glow: Short Stories

Grandfather

When you gave Grandfather both your hands and put one foot against his knee and the other against his vest, you could walk right up to his white beard like a fly – but you had to hold tight. Sometimes your foot slipped on the knee, but the vest was wider and not so hard, so that when you were that far you were safe. And when you had both feet in the soft middle of the vest, and your body was stiff, and your face was looking right up at the ceiling, Grandfather groaned down deep inside, and that was the sign that your walk was ended. Then Grandfather crumpled you up in his arms. But on Sunday, when Grandfather wore his white vest, you walked like other folks.

In the morning Grandfather sat in the sun by the wall – the stone wall at the back of the garden, where the golden-rod grew. Grandfather read the paper and smoked. When it was afternoon and Mother was taking her nap, Grandfather was around the corner of the house, on the porch, in the sun – always in the sun, for the sun followed Grandfather wherever he went, till he passed into the house at supper-time. Then the sun went down and it was night.

Grandfather walked with a cane; but even then, with all the three legs he boasted of, you could run the meadow to the big rock before Grandfather had gone half-way. Grandfather's pipe was corn-cob, and every week he had a new one, for the little brown juice that cuddled down in the bottom of the bowl, and wouldn't come out without a straw, wasn't good for folks, Grandfather said. Old Man Stubbs, who came across the road to see Grandfather, chewed his tobacco, yet the little brown juice did not hurt him at all, he said. Still it was not pleasant to kiss Old Man Stubbs, and Mother said that chewing tobacco was a filthy habit, and that only very old men ever did it nowadays, because lots of people used to do it when Grandfather and Old Man Stubbs were little boys. Probably, you thought, people did not kiss other folks so often then.

One morning Grandfather was reading by the wall, in the sun. You were on the ground, flat, peeping under the grass, and you were so still that a cricket came and teetered on a grass-stalk near at hand. Two red ants climbed your hat as it lay beside you, and a white worm swung itself from one grass-blade to another, like a monkey. The ground under the apple-trees was broken out with sun-spots. Bees were humming in the red clover. Butterflies lazily flapped their wings and sailed like little boats in a sea of goldenrod and Queen Anne's lace.

"Dee, dee-dee, dee-dee," you sang, and Mr. Cricket sneaked under a plantain leaf. You tracked him to his lair with your finger, and he scuttled away.

"Grandfather."

No reply.

"Grandfather."

Not a word. Then you looked. Grandfather's paper had slipped to the ground, and his glasses to his lap. He was fast asleep in the sunshine with his head upon his breast. You stole softly to his side. With a long grass you tickled his ear. With a jump he awoke, and you tumbled, laughing, on the grass.

"Ain't you 'shamed?" cried Lizzie-in-the-kitchen, who was hanging out the clothes.

"Huh! Grandfather don't care."

Grandfather never cared. That is one of the things which made him Grandfather. If he had scolded he might have been Father, or even Uncle Ned – but he would not have been Grandfather. So when you spoiled his nap he only said, "H'm," deep in his beard, put on his glasses, and read his paper again.

When it was afternoon, and the sun followed Grandfather to the porch, and you were tired of playing House, or Hop-Toad, or Indian, or the Three Bears, it was only a step from Grandfather's foot to Grandfather's lap. When you sat back and curled your legs, your head lay in the hollow of Grandfather's shoulder, in the shadow of his white beard. Then Grandfather would say,

"Once upon a time there was a bear..."

Or, better still,

"Once, when I was a little boy..."

Or, best of all,

"When Grandfather went to the war..."

That was the story where Grandfather lay all day in the tall grass watching for Johnny Reb, and Johnny Reb was watching for Grandfather. When it came to the exciting part, you sat straight up to see Grandfather squint one eye and look along his outstretched arm, as though it were his gun, and say, "Bang!"

But Johnny Reb saw the tip of Grandfather's blue cap just peeping over the tops of the tall grass, and so he, too, went "Bang!"

And ever afterwards Grandfather walked with a cane.

"Did Johnny Reb have to walk with a cane, too, Grandfather?"

"Johnny Reb, he just lay in the tall grass, all doubled up, and says he, 'Gimme a chaw o' terbaccer afore I die.'"

"Did you give it to him, Grandfather?"

"He died 'fore I could get the plug out o' my pocket."

Then Mother would say:

"I wouldn't, Father – such stories to a child!"

Then Grandfather would smoke grimly, and would not tell you any more, and you would play Grandfather and Johnny Reb in the tall grass. Lizzie-in-the-kitchen would give you a piece of brown-bread for the chaw of tobacco, and when Johnny Reb died too soon you ate it yourself, to save it. You wondered what would have happened if Johnny Reb had not died too soon. Standing over Johnny Reb's prostrate but still animate form in the tall grass, with the brown-bread tobacco in your hand, you even contemplated playing that your adversary lived to tell the tale, but the awful thought that in that case you would have to give up the chaw (the brown-bread was fresh that day) kept you to the letter of Grandfather's story. Once only did you play that Johnny Reb lived – but the brown-bread was hard that day, and you were not hungry.

Grandfather wore the blue, and on his breast were the star and flag of the Grand Army. Every May he straightened his bent shoulders and marched to the music of fife and drum to the cemetery on the hill. So once a year there were tears in Grandfather's eyes. All the rest of that solemn May day he marched in the garden with his hands behind him, and a far-away look in his eyes, and once in a while his steps quickened as he hummed to himself,

"Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching."

And if it so happened that he told you the story of Johnny Reb that day, he would always have a new ending:

"Then we went into battle. The Rebs were on a tarnal big hill, and as we charged up the side, 'Boys,' says the Colonel – 'boys, give 'em hell!' says he. And, sir, we just did, I tell you."

"Oh Father, Father —*don't!*— such language before the child!" Mother would cry, and that would be the end of the new end of Grandfather's story.

On a soap-box in Abe Jones's corner grocery, Grandfather argued politics with Old Man Stubbs and the rest of the boys.

"I've voted the straight Republican ticket all my life," he would say, proudly, when the fray was at its height, "and, by George! I'll not make a darned old fool o' myself by turning coat now. Pesky few Democrats ever I see who – "

Here Old Man Stubbs would rise from the cracker-barrel.

"If I understand you correctly, sir, you have called me a darned old fool."

"Not at all, Stubbs," Grandfather would reply, soothingly. "Not by a jugful. Now you're a Democrat – "

"And proud of it, sir," Old Man Stubbs would break in.

"You're a Democrat, Stubbs, and as such you are not responsible; but if I was to turn Democrat, Stubbs, I'd be a darned old fool."

And in the roar that followed, Old Man Stubbs would subside to the cracker-barrel and smoke furiously. Then Grandfather would say:

"Stubbs, do you remember old Mose Gray?" That was to clear the battle-field of the political carnage, so to speak – so that Old Man Stubbs would forget his grievance and walk home with Grandfather peaceably when the grocery closed for the night.

If it was winter-time, and the snowdrifts were too deep for grandfathers and little boys, you sat before the fireplace, Grandfather in his arm-chair, you flat on the rug, your face between your hands, gazing into the flames.

"Who was the greatest man that ever lived, Grandfather?"

"Jesus of Nazareth, boy."

"And who was the greatest soldier?"

"Ulysses S. Grant."

"And the next greatest?"

"George Washington."

"But Old Man Stubbs says Napoleon was the greatest soldier."

"Old Man Stubbs? Old Man Stubbs? What does he know about it, I'd like to know? He wasn't in the war. He's afraid of his own shadder. U. S. Grant was the greatest general that ever lived. I guess I know. I was there, wasn't I? Napoleon! Old Man Stubbs! Fiddlesticks!"

And Grandfather would sink back into his chair, smoking wrath and weed in his trembling corn-cob, and scowling at the blazing fagots and the curling hickory smoke. By-and-by —

"Who was the greatest woman that ever lived, Grandfather?"

"Your mother, boy."

"Oh, Father" – it was Mother's voice – "you forget."

"Forget nothing," cried Grandfather, fiercely. "Boy, your mother is the best woman that ever lived, and mind you remember it, too. Every boy's mother is the best woman that ever lived."

And when Grandfather leaned forward in his chair and waved his pipe, there was no denying Grandfather.

At night, after supper, when your clothes were in a little heap on the chair, and you had your nightgown on, and you had said your prayers, Mother tucked you in bed and kissed you and called Grandfather. Then Grandfather came stumping up the stairs with his cane. Sitting on the edge of your bed, he sang to you,

"The wild gazelle with the silvery feet
I'll give thee for a playmate sweet."

And after Grandfather went away the wild gazelle came and stood beside you, and put his cold little nose against your cheek, and licked your face with his tongue. It was rough at first, but by-and-by it got softer and softer, till you woke up and wanted a drink, and found beside you, in place of the wild gazelle, a white mother with a brimming cup in her hand. She covered you up when you were

through, and kissed you, and then you went looking for the wild gazelle, and sometimes you found him; but sometimes, when you had just caught up to him and his silvery feet were shining like stars, he turned into Grandfather with his cane.

"Hi, sleepy-head! The dicky-birds are waitin' for you."

And then Grandfather would tickle you in the ribs, and help you on with your stockings, till it was time for him to sit by the wall in the sun.

When you were naughty, and Mother used the little brown switch that hung over the woodshed door, Grandfather tramped up and down in the garden, and the harder you hollered, the harder Grandfather tramped. Once when you played the empty flower-pots were not flower-pots at all, but just cannon-balls, and you killed a million Indians with them, Mother showed you the pieces, and the switch descended, and the tears fell, and Grandfather tramped and tramped, and lost the garden-path completely, and stepped on the pansies. Then they shut you up in your own room up-stairs, and you cried till the hiccups came. You heard the dishes rattling on the dining-room table below. They would be eating supper soon, and at one end of the table in a silver dish there would be a chocolate cake, for Lizzie-in-the-kitchen had baked one that afternoon. You had seen it in the pantry window with your own eyes, while you fired the flower-pots. Now chocolate cake was your favorite, so you hated your bread-and-milk, and tasted and wailed defiantly. Now and then you listened to hear if they pitied and came to you, but they came not, and you moaned and sobbed in the twilight, and hoped you would die, to make them sorry. By-and-by, between the hiccups, you heard the door open softly. Then Grandfather's hand came through the crack with a piece of chocolate cake in it. You knew it was Grandfather's hand, because it was all knuckly. So you cried no more, and while the chocolate cake was stopping the hiccups, you heard Grandfather steal down the stairs, softly – but it did not sound like Grandfather at all, for you did not hear the stumping of his cane. Next morning, when you asked him about it, his vest shook, and just the tip of his tongue showed between his teeth, for that was the way it did when anything pleased him. And Grandfather said:

"You won't ever tell?"

"No, Grandfather."

"Sure as shootin'?"

"Yes."

"Well, then – " but Grandfather kept shaking so he could not tell.

"Oh, Grandfather! *Why* didn't the cane sound on the stairs?"

"Whisht, boy! I just wrapped my old bandanna handkerchief around the end."

But worse than that time was the awful morning when you broke the blue pitcher that came over in the *Mayflower*. An old family law said you should never even touch it, where it sat on the shelf by the clock, but the Old Nick said it wouldn't hurt if you looked inside – just once. You had been munching bread-and-butter, and your fingers were slippery, and that is how the pitcher came to fall. Grandfather found you sobbing over the pieces, and his face was white.

"Sonny, Sonny, what have you done?"

"I – I d-didn't mean to, Grandfather."

In trembling fingers Grandfather gathered up the blue fragments – all that was left of the family heirloom, emblem of Mother's ancestral pride.

"Sh! Don't cry, Sonny. We'll make it all right again."

"M-Moth – Mother 'll whip me."

"Sh, boy. No, she won't. We'll take it to the tinker. He'll make it all right again. Come."

And you and Grandfather slunk guiltily to the tinker and watched him make the blue fragments into the blue pitcher again, and then you carried it home, and as Grandfather set it back on the shelf you whispered:

"Grandfather!"

Grandfather bent his ear to you. Very softly you said it:

"Grandfather, the cracks don't show at all from here."

Grandfather nodded his head. Then he tramped up and down in the garden. He forgot to smoke. Crime weighed upon his soul.

"Boy," said he, sternly, stopping in his walk. "You must never be naughty again. Do you hear me?"

"I won't, Grandfather."

Grandfather resumed his tramping; then paused and turned to where you sat on the wheelbarrow.

"But if you ever *are* naughty again, you must go at once and tell Mother. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Grandfather."

Up and down Grandfather tramped moodily, his head bent, his hands clasped behind him – up and down between the verbenas and hollyhocks. He paused irresolutely – turned – turned again – and came back to you.

"Boy, Grandfather's just as bad and wicked as you are. He ought to have made you tell Mother about the pitcher first, and take it to the tinker afterwards. You must never keep anything from your mother again – never. Do you hear?"

"Yes, Grandfather," you whimpered, hanging your head.

"Come, boy."

You gave him your hand. Mother listened, wondering, while Grandfather spoke out bravely to the very end. You had been bad, but he had been worse, he confessed; and he asked to be punished for himself and you.

Mother did not even look at the cracked blue pitcher on the clock-shelf, but her eyes filled, and at the sight of her tears you flung yourself, sobbing, into her arms.

"Oh, Mother, don't whip Grandfather. Just whip me."

"It isn't the blue pitcher I care about," she said. "It's only to think that Grandfather and my little boy were afraid to tell me."

And at this she broke out crying with your wet cheek against her wet cheek, and her warm arms crushing you to her breast. And you cried, and Grandfather blew his nose, and Carlo barked and leaped to lick your face, until by-and-by, when Mother's white handkerchief and Grandfather's red one were quite damp, you and Mother smiled through your tears, and she said it did not matter, and Grandfather patted one of her hands while you kissed the other. And you and Grandfather said you would never be bad again. When you were good, or sick – dear Grandfather! It was not what he said, for only Mother could say the love-words. It was the things he did without saying much at all – the circus he took you to see, the lessons in A B C while he held the book for you in his hand, the sail-boats he whittled for you on rainy days – for Grandfather was a ship-carpenter before he was a grandfather – and the willow whistles he made for you, and the soldier swords. It was Grandfather who fished you from the brook. Grandfather saved you from Farmer Tompkins's cow – the black one which gave no milk. Grandfather snatched you from prowling dogs, and stinging bees, and bad boys and their wiles. That is what grandfathers are for, and so we love them and climb into their laps and beg for sail-boats and tales – and *that* is their reward.

One day – your birthday had just gone by and it was time to think of Thanksgiving – you walked with Grandfather in the fields. Between the stacked corn the yellow pumpkins lay, and they made you think of Thanksgiving pies. The leaves, red and gold, dropped of old age in the autumn stillness, and you gathered an armful for Mother.

"Why don't all the people die every year, Grandfather, like the leaves?"

"Everybody dies when his work's done, little boy. The leaf's work is done in the fall when the frost comes. It takes longer for a man to do his work, 'cause a man has more to do."

"When will your work be done, Grandfather?"

"It's almost done now, little boy."

"Oh no, Grandfather. There's lots for you to do. You said you'd make me a bob-sled, and a truly engine what goes, when I'm bigger; and when I get to be a grown-up man like Father, you are to come and make willow whistles for my little boys."

And you were right, for while the frost came again and again for the little leaves, Grandfather stayed on in the sun, and when he had made you the bob-sled he still lingered, for did he not have the truly engine to make for you, and the willow whistles for your own little boys?

Waking from a nap, you could not remember when you fell asleep. You wondered what hour it was. Was it morning? Was it afternoon? Dreamily you came down-stairs. Golden sunlight crossed the ivied porch and smiled at you through the open door. The dining-room table was set with blue china, and at every place was a dish of red, red strawberries. Then you knew it was almost supper-time. You were rested with sleep, gentle with dreams of play, happy at the thought of red berries in blue dishes with sugar and cream. You found Grandfather in the garden sitting in the sun. He was not reading or smoking; he was just waiting.

"Are you tired waiting for me, Grandfather?"

"No, little boy."

"I came as soon as I could, Grandfather."

The leaves did not move. The flowers were motionless. Grandfather sat quite still, his soft, white beard against your cheek, flushed with sleep. You nestled in his lap. And so you sat together, with the sun going down about you, till Mother came and called you to supper. Even now when you are grown, you remember, as though it were yesterday, the long nap and the golden light in the doorway, and the red berries on the table, and Grandfather waiting in the sun.

One day – it was not long afterwards – they took you to see Aunt Mary, on the train. When you came home again, Grandfather was not waiting for you.

"Where is Grandfather?"

"Grandfather isn't here any more, dearie. He has gone 'way up in the sky to see God and the angels."

"And won't he ever come back to our house?"

"No, dear; but if you are a good boy, you will go to see him some day."

"But, oh, Mother, what will Grandfather do when he goes to walk with the little boy angels? See – he's gone and forgot his cane!"

Grandmother

In the days when you went into the country to visit her, Grandmother was a gay, spry little lady with velvety cheeks and gold-rimmed spectacles, knitting reins for your hobby-horse, and spreading bread-and-butter and brown sugar for you in the hungry middle of the afternoon. For a bumped head there was nothing in the bottles to compare with the magic of her lips.

"And what did the floor do to my poor little lamb? See! Grandmother will make the place well again." And when she had kissed it three times, lo! you knew that you were hungry, and on the door-sill of Grandmother's pantry you shed a final tear.

When you arrived for a visit, and Grandmother had taken off your cap and coat as you sat in her lap, you would say, softly, "Grandmother." Then she would know that you wanted to whisper, and she would lower her ear till it was even with your lips. Through the hollow of your two hands you said it:

"I think I would like some sugar pie now, Grandmother."

And then she would laugh till the tears came, and wipe her spectacles, for that was just what she had been waiting for you to say all the time, and if you had not said it – but, of course, that was impossible. Always, on the day before you came, she made two little sugar pies in two little round tins with crinkled edges. One was for you, and the other was for Lizbeth.

After you had eaten your pies you chased the rooster till he dropped you a white tail-feather in token of surrender, and just tucking the feather into your cap made you an Indian. Grandmother stood at the window and watched you while you scalped the sunflowers. The Indians and tigers at Grandmother's were wilder than those in Our Yard at home.

Being an Indian made you think of tents, and then you remembered Grandmother's old plaid shawl. She never wore it now, for she had a new one, but she kept it for you in the closet beneath the stairs. While you were gone, it hung in the dark alone, dejected, waiting for you to come back and play. When you came, at last, and dragged it forth, it clung to you warmly, and did everything you said: stretched its frayed length from chair to chair and became a tent for you; swelled proudly in the summer gale till your boat scudded through the surf of waving grass, and you anchored safely, to fish with string and pin, by the Isles of the Red Geraniums.

"The pirates are coming," you cried to Lizbeth, scanning the horizon of picket fence.

"The pirates are coming," she repeated, dutifully.

"And now we must haul up the anchor," you commanded, dragging in the stone. Lizbeth was in terror. "Oh, my poor dolly!" she cried, hushing it in her arms. Gallantly the old plaid shawl caught the breeze; and as it filled, your boat leaped forward through —

"Harry! Lizbeth! Come and be washed for dinner!"

Grandmother's voice came out to you across the waters. You hesitated. The pirate ship was close behind. You could see the cutlasses flashing in the sun.

"More sugar pies," sang the Grandmother siren on the rocks of the front porch, and at those melting words the pirate ship was a mere speck on the horizon. Seizing Lizbeth by the hand, you ran boldly across the sea.

By the white bowl Grandmother took your chin in one hand and lifted your face.

"My, what a dirty boy!"

With the rough wet rag she mopped the dirt away – grime of your long sea-voyage – while you squinted your eyes and pursed up your lips to keep out the soap. You clung to her apron for support in your mute agony.

"Grand – " you managed to sputter ere the wet rag smothered you. Warily you waited till the cloth went higher, to your puckered eyes. Then, "Grand-m-m – " But that was all, for with a trail of suds the rag swept down again, and as the half-word slipped out, the soap slipped in. So Grandmother dug and dug till she came to the pink stratum of your cheeks, and then it was wipe, wipe, wipe, till

the stratum shone. Then it was your hands' turn, while Grandmother listened to your belated tale, and last of all she kissed you above and gave you a little spank below, and you were done.

All through dinner your mind was on the table – not on the middle of it, where the meat was, but on the end of it.

"Harry, why don't you eat your bread?"

"Why, I don't feel for bread, Grandmother," you explained, looking at the end of the table. "I just feel for pie."

It was hard when you were back home again, for there it was mostly bread, and no sugar pies at all, and very little cake.

"Grandmother lets me have *two* pieces," you would urge to Mother, but the argument was of no avail. Two pieces, she said, were not good for little boys.

"Then why does Grandmother let me have them?" you would demand, sullenly, kicking the table leg; but Mother could not hear you unless you kicked hard, and then it was naughty boys, not Grandmothers, that she talked about. And if that happened which sometimes does to naughty little boys —

"Grandmother don't hurt at all when *she* spans," you said.

So there were wrathful moments when you wished you might live always with Grandmother. It was so easy to be good at her house – so easy, that is, to get two pieces of cake. And when God made little boys, you thought, He must have made Grandmothers to bake sugar pies for them.

"Suppose you were a little boy like me, Grandmother?" you once said to her.

"That would be fine," she admitted; "but suppose you were a little grandmother like me?"

"Well," you replied, with candor, "I think I would rather be like Grandfather, 'cause he was a soldier, and fought Johnny Reb."

"And if you were a grandfather," Grandmother asked, "what would you do?"

"Why, if I were a grandfather," you said – "why – "

"Well, what would you do?"

"Why, if I were a grandfather," you said, "I should want you to come and be a grandmother with me." And Grandmother kissed you for that.

"But I like you best as a little boy," she said. "Once Grandmother had a little boy just like you, and he used to climb into her lap and put his arms around her. Oh, he was a beautiful little boy, and sometimes Grandmother gets very lonesome without him – till you come, and then it's like having him back again. For you've got his blue eyes and his brown hair and his sweet little ways, and Grandmother loves you – once for yourself and once for him."

"But where is the little boy now, Grandmother?"

"He's a man now, darling. He's your own father."

Every Sunday, Grandmother went to church. After breakfast there was a flurry of dressing, with an opening and shutting of doors up-stairs, and Grandfather would be down-stairs in the kitchen, blacking his Sunday boots. On Sunday his beard looked whiter than on other days, but that was because he seemed so much blacker everywhere else. He creaked out to the stable and hitched Peggy to the buggy and led them around to the front gate. Then he would snap his big gold watch and go to the bottom of the stairs and say:

"Maria! Come! It's ten o'clock."

Grandmother's door would open a slender crack – "Yes, John" – and Grandfather would creak up and down in his Sunday boots, up and down, waiting, till there was a rustling on the stairs and Grandmother came down to him in a glory of black silk. There was a little frill of white about her neck, fastened with her gold brooch, and above that her gentle Sabbath face. Her face took on a new light when Sunday came, and she never seemed so near, somehow, as on other days. There was a look in her eyes that did not speak of sugar pies or play. There was a little pressure of the thin lips and a silence, as though she had no time for fairy-tales or lullabies. When she set her little black bonnet

on her gray hair and lifted up her chin to tie the ribbon strings beneath, you stopped your game to watch, wondering at her awesomeness; and when in her black-gloved fingers she clasped her worn Bible and stooped and kissed you good-bye, you never thought of putting your arms around her. She was too wonderful – this little Sabbath Grandmother – for that.

Through the window you watched them as they went down the walk together to the front gate, Grandmother and Grandfather, the tips of her gloved fingers laid in the hollow of his arm. Solemn was the steady stumping of his cane. Solemn was the day. Even the roosters knew it was Sunday, somehow, and crowed dismally; and the bells – the church-bells tolling through the quiet air – made you lonesome and cross with Lizbeth. Your collar was very stiff, and your Sunday trousers were very tight, and there was nothing to do, and you were dreary.

After dinner Grandfather went to sleep on the sofa, with a newspaper over his face. Then Grandmother took you up into her black silk lap and read you Bible stories and taught you the Twenty-third Psalm and the golden text. And every one of the golden texts meant the same thing – that little boys should be very good and do as they are told.

Grandmother's Sunday lap was not so fine as her other ones to lie in. Her Monday lap, for instance, was soft and gray, and there were no texts to disturb your reverie. Then Grandmother would stop her knitting to pinch your cheek and say, "You don't love Grandmother."

"Yes, I do."

"How much?"

"More'n tonguecantell. What is a tonguecantell, Grandmother?"

And while she was telling you she would be poking the tip of her finger into the soft of your jacket, so that you doubled up suddenly with your knees to your chin; and while you guarded your ribs a funny spider would crawl down the back of your neck; and when you chased the spider out of your collar it would suddenly creep under your chin, or there would be a panic in the ribs again. By that time you were nothing but wriggles and giggles and little cries.

"Don't, Grandmother; you tickle." And Grandmother would pause, breathless as yourself, and say, "*Oh*, my!"

"Now you must do it some more, Grandmother," you would urge, but she would shake her head at you and go back to her knitting again.

"Grandmother's tired," she would say.

You were tired, too, so you lay with your head on her shoulder, sucking your thumb. To and fro Grandmother rocked you, to and fro, while the kitten played with the ball of yarn on the floor. The afternoon sunshine fell warmly through the open window. Bees and butterflies hovered in the honeysuckles. Birds were singing. Your mind went a-wandering – out through the yard and the front gate and across the road. On it went past the Taylors' big dog and up by Auntie Green's, where the crullers lived, all brown and crusty, in the high stone crock. It scrambled down by the brook where the little green frogs were hopping into the water, leaving behind them trembling rings that grew wider and wider and wider, till pretty soon they were the ocean. That was a big thought, and you roused yourself.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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