

Spring Uprising

by Aaron Sabatine

Every afternoon Shiram Nofason mowed his backyard. It wasn't a large yard, even though Shiram owned acres of fields that could have been mowed. Unfortunately he was old and no longer had the strength or the will to mow those green fields. But Shiram did not despair. Instead his yard consisted of less than an acre of soft green grass, with a large pine tree in the middle. It sat secluded with trees on all sides, the shadows deep and soft.

Shiram used an old John Deere push mower to cut his grass every day. He had done this every day for twenty years. Some people might find it strange and a bit obsessive to mow their lawn every day, but to Shiram it was an irreplaceable part of his daily existence.

This particular afternoon was in late May, a beautiful and bright spring day. The light wind was rustling all the leaves and making the branches of Shiram's enormous pine sway as if in a trance; a lazy spring trance. Shiram looked out over his small yard. What he saw surprised him. It seemed that overnight the grass had been overrun by large, bright yellow dandelions. He frowned and then smiled. Today's cutting would be even better. He pushed the green and yellow mower from his small garage to the edge of the grass and pulled out the choke reverently. He took the worn pull string in his fist and pulled the cord calmly yet strongly in one continuous motion. As always, the little mower began its rough hum immediately.

Shiram pushed out onto the grass. He walked slowly, allowing the old blades to do their work. In a few meters he came to a dense patch of dandelions and smiled as he began to push even more slowly over them. Shiram thought he could hear them screaming as the chute on the side of the mower began to spit out their yellow heads. Humming along to the rhythm of the mower, he continued in a straight line down the edge of the yard, walking through the shade of the pine tree and rounding the first corner. He would continue in

this manner, the square of uncut grass in the center becoming smaller and smaller as he went.

On his third time around the square, Shiram noticed something about the dandelions. They were changing. The yellow heads closed and then opened to reveal fluffy white heads of seeds. The wind picked off pieces of this soft fluff and blew it around the yard and elsewhere.

"Spreading their seed!" Shiram muttered to himself and began to pick up his pace. The small yard was only half-mowed as the white stuff began to slowly blow about. As Shiram began to walk faster, the wind picked up. What had been a gentle zephyr earlier turned into a blustery breeze. Growling under his breath, Shiram moved forward as bits of fluff blew by him. Pieces of the stuff hit his clothes and stuck. He got to the tree and began mowing in a circle around it, then turned and went straight into the middle of the yard where the largest crowds of the yellow flowers remained. Now the wind was a full gale. A cloud of white seed flew at him. Shiram put his hands up to block it, but pieces got by and flew in his mouth and eyes. He let go off the mower and rubbed his hands over his face to get the stuff off, but to no avail. It was too silky and difficult to grasp.

Shiram started to cough. The wind blew all around him as he tried to bat the downy white scourge away. More and more of the dandelions closed their yellow heads and then exploded in small white bursts. Shiram fell to his knees as the white swarmed towards him, on him, over him. He began to choke, his throat clogged with silk. The seeds were covering him; they were alive! He felt pain in his right arm, which he had been using to shield his face. He reached and pulled out a seed, red with his blood. Shiram opened his mouth to scream, but all that came out was a choked cough that sounded like rotten fleece being forced through his windpipe.

Shiram fell prostrate to the ground, still waving his arms like a windmill gone mad. The wind howled around him and the pine tree shook its great arms in anguish. The seeds fully covered the old man now, his outline white and stark against the green grass, and

they began to burrow into him, germinating themselves in his warmth. Shiram writhed one last time and then lay still. Dark green dandelion leaves sprouted out of him, unfurling themselves in the wind. Light green stems rose quickly into the air and finally, in perfect unison, a thousand yellow heads popped open in the light. The wind immediately stilled back to a mild breeze. The pine tree relaxed and began its spring trance again. Dandelion heads looked at one another and smiled.

