

# One Day We Grow Wings

*by* Cheryl Anne Gardner

Cicadas shed their skin as they grow, leaving crisp hollowed out remains on tree trunks, fence posts, and the undersides of upturned leaves. Tommy and I would collect them in the early morning and stick them to our clothes like brooches.

I used to like Tommy, but I hate him now. He teases me, taunts me now, points to my boobs and yells, "Itty bitty titty committee!" until all the kids in the schoolyard laugh at me. We used to be best friends . . . until I started to get boobs.

Tommy hasn't grown an inch in four years. There's something wrong with his bones. He told me that's what the nurse had said to his mother, which is why he had to wear those braces on his legs and why he couldn't ride a normal bike that was fast like mine. He told me that before I moved into the neighborhood, he'd had to go to the hospital once. He said he didn't remember much about it, but that when he was brought home, he'd had to lie flat like a mummy for a whole year and that it was very boring and itchy. I didn't think he was fibbing about the story because he is so mean now. I guess lying flat for a year will do that to a person.

On the way home from school today, a cicada flew into my hair. I shook it out and it landed on the sidewalk. It was all shiny new, red eyes and emerald green, buzzing and buzzing, its wings glistening in the sun.

I crushed it; then I ran all the way home.

