

# Ascension

*by* Dean H. Wild

The day gleamed and whirlygigged around her as if the linen on Maybelle's washline had expanded to fill the world. She laughed as she ran, barely aware of her voice rising into the changeless blue and blending with bird songs trickling through the meadow fence. BabyJon laughed, too, a few feet ahead of her, each toddling step putting a hitch she found quirky and adorable in his throat. He reveled in the chase, giddy when just out of arm's reach. When to catch him, that was the question.

He led her twice around the house (once skipping his small hands along the fender of the new Studebaker) and once around the outhouse (which Maybelle said had gone into disuse a year before there was "childrens to be tended"), and once down the sailing corridor of white between Maybelle's wash lines only to escape back into the sun. Maybelle scolded with a smiling mouth as they eddied by.

Brambles waited in a far corner, a shunned relative offering its lap, promising an embrace. BabyJon bolted in with a squeal. Riddled gray wood chuckled through its disguise at his small shoes. It deliberated. Coughed. Yawned. She reached out, her arms always ready and capable now too slow, too short. The day drained into blindness, numbness.

"The well," she finally found her voice, the stale fabric of the sofa against her cheek. Her words floated in shade-pulled air.

Maybelle touched her forehead with a folded cloth. It was small, cold. Wet. Soaked in adults' tears, perhaps.

The Andrews Sisters sang from the radio in the dust shafted kitchen. Their voices were melded wails.

