

Relations

by Gary Percesepe

We were survivors of a dead mother and no account father. A stink was on us. We accepted the fact. We had one true friend, Old Bill. He had known our mother, but only when she was hiding out from our father, if you follow. Old Bill always told us the same story about Mom fainting when we was born. He'd cross his knobby knees and spit in the spittoon, and say, Now boys, it wasn't just when you was born that your Mama fainted. She fainted from the slightest thing that stirred her. We didn't really want to hear about that, again, so we always turned up the Farm Report on the radio. Pork bellies swung from the rafters. But Old Bill would be rolling like a hog truck on a gravel road going straight downhill. He was not a man to dip his donut, is what he said. Said he was a stallion of misbehavior. We wanted to shoot out his stoplight, but he was family, you see. This man to be reckoned with, our manly mentor. Old Bill had lived on nothing but crayfish for seven years, it was rumored. Boys, Old Bill said, Your mother would say to me, what say we unzip Old Trigger there, and let him out of the barn. And he went on in this general vein.

