

# Mom #2

*by* Jerry Ratch

We'd sometimes find my mother asleep in her chair outside her trailer at the nudist camp when we drove up. She loved her garden there, even with the rabbits eating her young tomato plants. She used to coax the bluebirds down to the railing of her trailer with a line of peanuts. She loved those bluebirds too. They reminded her of her life-long love, her Otto.

But her last year, stuck in a wheelchair in a rest home in Flagstaff, she wouldn't even look outside, since she could no longer go out there and be in her garden. She just tuned away from the window.

"They're all old here," she told me, looking around her.

Finally she said she was going crazy. Then she said, "I am dying." Then she died.

It was October, a brilliant day, I remember, blue sky with puffed-up white clouds and the sun streaming down through the trees.

