



BROWSE



Riding on the Moon

Sidney Saylor Farr

Appalachian Heritage

The University of North Carolina Press

Volume 29, Number 1, Winter 2001

pp. 41-48

10.1353/aph.2001.0064

ARTICLE

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

FICTION Riding on the Moon Sidney Saylor Farr ANNIE, WHERE'S ANDREW? I told him we'd hoe that new-ground corn soon's I got in from work. Where'd he go?" Papa walked through the door, having worked a shift in the mine, then thumped down his lunch pail. "The cows broke out, Papa. He went to put 'em back in the pasture." "And now he's laying around in the shade somewhere reading a book! Go find him. We've got work to do." Annie ran up the road towards the pasture. Fine dry dust puffed up between her toes, coating her feet and legs. It was hot for early May. This side of the pasture, she saw Andrew sitting beside Gum Spring, a handkerchief up to his face. "Oh, Andrew, not again! Did you run too hard after the cows? Granny Brock says iff'n a body gets too hot, sometimes it'll cause a nose bleed." "What're you doing here?" Andrew interrupted. "Papa's ready to hoe the new-ground. He said to come help him." "Soon's this stops." "Come on home. Mama will help you." Annie looked as her brother got shakily to his feet. At fourteen he was big, like Papa. Except Andrew had sandy hair and freckles, and Papa had black curly hair and blue eyes. She took after her Papa in looks, having blue eyes and black hair. Andrew, who had their Mama's coloring, had been puny for

weeks. His nose had bled the first time in March and several times since. Mama came to the front porch carrying a washpan of water. "Sit down, Andrew. Let's see if I can stop this blood." "I'll go help Papa," Annie said, thinking that if she worked fast Papa wouldn't yell at Andrew for not coming to help. By the time she and Papa had finished hoeing, the sun was headed for a gap in the trees. Papa put their hoes in the shed, and they walked home. Andrew was stretched out on the porch, holding a wet towel to his face. Mama sat nearby, her lips forming the words of Ezekiel 16:6, handed down to her from far-back generations as a remedy to any unnatural bleeding. "When I passed by thee and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, live. Yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, 41 live." Then "Lloyd, it's not working this time; it's never failed me before." She looked anxiously at her husband, who turned away, walked to the end of the porch and looked out across the valley. "I've heard Pap talk about a remedy—said it would work if done in the spring or early summer, when the sap's up in the trees. Your Bible verses ain't working this time." He explained the procedure, then sent the two children to find a poplar tree. "I can't see why Papa won't take you to the mission doctor at Red Bird. The doctor'd help you quicker than any old poplar tree is going to." "Papa's just set in his ways, Annie. Nobody on Stoney Fork believes those mission people are anything but a bunch of furriners." Then, "Annie do you reckon I might die?" Andrew's voice was weak. "Your nose has bled before, and you ain't dead yet. We'd better hurry, it's getting dark." Andrew stumbled, almost fell. Annie took hold of his arm. He looked white and sick, and she was frightened. "Annie, if I was to die you can have my books. Beg Papa to let you go to school. You have to go to school if you're ever going to amount to anything." "Why, I can't take your books, Andrew. You'll need them when you get to be a teacher." "Annie, just in case this don't work and I die before I get through school, you'll have to be a teacher in my place." The Red Bird Mission School had existed in the mountains, near the Red Bird River, for more than...

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