



ANNAGRAMMATICA'S
Children's Dictionary of
INVISIBLE THINGS

by Mary Campbell



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With pictures by artists whose illustrations appeared in books and magazines during the Golden Age of Illustration (c. 1880-1940)

Anne Anderson 1874-1952

Harry Anderson 1906-1996

Mabel Lucie Attwell 1879-1964

Ethel Franklin Betts 1877-1959

Charlot Byj d. 1983

Pauli Ebner 1873-1949

Kate Greenaway 1846-1901

Bessie Pease Gutmann 1876-1960

Ruth Hallock 1876-1945

Mabel Rollins Harris 1896?-19—?

Hannie Holt

A. E. Kennedy

G. M. Luckraft

Kay Rasmus Nielsen 1886-1957

Susan Beatrice Pearse 1878-1980

Beatrix Potter 1866-1943

Margaret Evans Price 1888-1973

Arthur Rackham 1867-1939

Jessie Willcox Smith 1863-1935

Millicent Sowerby 1878-1967

Inez Topham 1885-1959

Eloise Wilkin 1904-1987

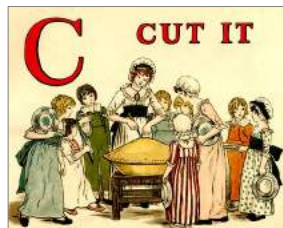
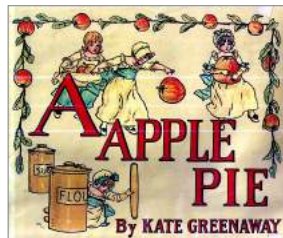
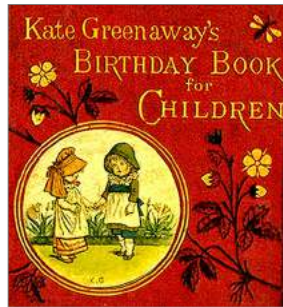
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Jessie Willcox Smith

THE GOLDEN AGE OF ILLUSTRATION 1880s-1940s



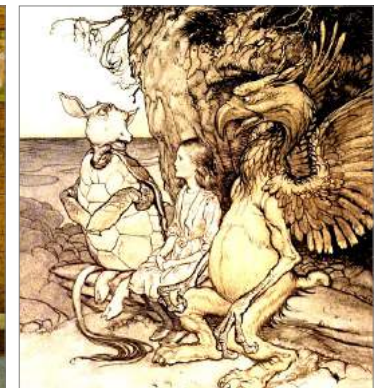
About 140 years ago, an amazing transformation took place on the pages of magazines and children's books. Where there had been few if any pictures, and these in black and white, suddenly glorious color illustrations appeared. Some of the finest artists in the world began illustrating familiar tales—such as the Grimm brothers' fairy tales—and new books as well. For over 50 years, the outpouring of color art flooded so many pages that the time is called the Golden Age of Illustration. One of the first children's picture books to appear was *Kate Greenaway's Birthday Book for Children* (1880).

Kate Greenaway's style influenced dozens of artists, including Millicent Sowerby, an English illustrator whose pictures for the book *Childhood* (1907) fill every page with rich, warm color—very different from Arthur Rackham's dark, broody illustrations. If I had owned an Arthur Rackham picture book when I was a child, I would never have read it at bedtime for fear of nightmares!

Turn back a page to see my very favorite illustration. The artist—Jessie Willcox Smith—depicts a boy with his arm around his sister, or perhaps his cousin or his best friend. The way his hand covers hers, you know that he would do anything to make her happy. Another artist whose pictures are full of love is Bessie Pease Gutmann. Clearly she adored children... and dogs as well. I've used many of her illustrations in the pages of this book.

Before the Golden Age, few women could earn money as artists. Suddenly, women's art decorated millions of book and magazine covers and inside pages. Almost all the pictures in this book were created by women.

Can you imagine a universe without color picture books? Yet through many thousands of years of human history, we've had color picture books for only a little over a century. The Golden Age changed the way we see the world. Isn't this a wonderful time to be alive?



Above left are covers and pages from Kate Greenaway's books. The pictures of three little girls at the bottom of this page are by Millicent Sowerby. At the far right is an illustration by Arthur Rackham from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.



Millicent Sowerby, from *Childhood*, 1907



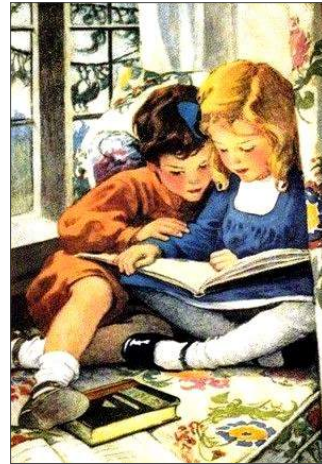
Arthur Rackham, from "The Three Bears"



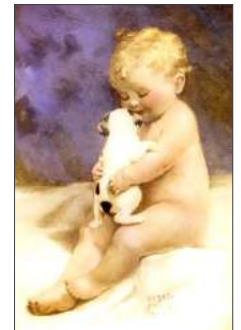
Arthur Rackham, "The Dance in Cupid's Alley," 1904



Arthur Rackham, from *Peter Pan*



Jessie Willcox Smith



Bessie Pease Gutmann



Beatrix Potter



Anne Anderson



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Ethel Franklin Betts

PARENTS

(n.) LOVE. The people who loved you even before you were born, who smiled and laughed and sang silly songs while they changed your poopy diaper 900 skillion times a

day, and who will always always *al-ways* love you, no matter what, until the end of time

Well, yes, you say. Parents are excellent things, you say. But parents are not invisible.

This is what /say: If you cannot see your mother right now, she is invisible to you. My mother died in 1974, so I have not seen her for many, many years, but she is just as *real* to me now as she was in 1974.

HERE IS WHAT SHE LOOKED LIKE: *Freckles*. She had freckles on her nose and freckles on her arms and freckles on her knees and freckles on her freckles—dots and spots and splitches of brown on pale pink skin. The brown spots and the pink skin felt the same—soft and smooth, like her voice, which was almost never scratchy or screamly but sweet like a song. Now and then she used words that if you said them in school you would get sent to the principal's office, but when she said them in a sweet, soft voice, nobody minded.

HERE IS HOW I FELT WHEN I WAS WITH MY PARENTS: *Safe and loved*. If I was afraid in the middle of the night, Mom or Dad held me and my fears fell



Freckle Face, Charlot Byj

away. Even today, when I am afraid, I think of my mother and my father, and I feel safe and loved.

But I would be lying if I said that my parents were perfect. I'll bet your parents aren't perfect either. Sometimes my parents had noisy arguments. When that happened I felt afraid. Then I got angry with them for making me afraid.

Here is a secret: Sometimes I even felt like I hated my mom and dad.

Fear, anger, and hate—three invisible things that can make us miserable. And do you know what? It's all okay. Your feelings are important. In some ways they're the most important things in the world. You can try not to feel them, but that doesn't usually work very well. If you push your feelings away, very often they sneak back up on you when you're not looking.

It's good if there's someone you can talk to about your feelings.

One day, when I was 8 or 9 years old, I was so mad at my mom I told her I hated her. Right away I was sorry I had said it, but it was too late. I didn't mean to make her feel bad. But do you know what she said?

That's okay, she said. I'm not too happy with you right now either. But we'll get over it.



Harry Anderson

And we did... because love is bigger than anger and fear. Love is bigger than hate. In fact, love is the biggest thing in the world.

SLEEP

(n.) Silent times in the songs of your life

Sleep is floating in the arms of angels. —David John Unger

When you are tired and weary, sleep takes over. You might not want to sleep. Maybe it's your



Susan Beatrice Pearce

birthday party. Maybe it's an amazing meal—oh, gosh, peanut-butter-sardine-and-watermelon pizza—but your eyes will not stay open and the next thing you know, you are face-down in a plate of pizza. Your body says, *Sleep!* Fight it all you want; your body loves you and wants to take care of you, and your body is going to win.

A series of songs

I started playing the piano when I was 6. At least once a year, my piano teacher gave a recital where all his students played the music they had learned. Piano teachers do this so that parents know that when their children go to piano lessons they don't sit around eating marshmallows and watching *Scooby Doo* on TV. So I have been in seven or eight million gazillion piano recitals, I'll bet, and at every recital, when it was my turn to play, I got out of my chair, walked to the piano, sat down on the bench, played my songs—beginning, middle, and end—stood up, and walked back to my chair, while everybody clapped, especially my parents, who clapped all the way through the next kid's songs, too, and as far as I know, my parents are *still* clapping.

Life is like a piano recital—a series of songs, each having a beginning, a middle, and an end. Some of the songs are short—the Song of Breakfast—and some are longer—the Song of Seventh Grade—and there are always several songs playing at the same time—songs of Childhood, of Friendship, of Summer, of Soccer Games....

Sleep is like a song, but it is also the silence between songs, a time of getting ready for the next song. When you've been working or playing hard for a while, your body shuts down to give

you the rest you need... so that you can wake up and work and play and eat peanut-butter-sardine-and-watermelon pizza all over again. Sleep is your body's way of telling you that a song is over, for a little while, at least.

You and I sleep about one-third of the time, unless you are a newborn baby, in which case you sleep almost TWO-thirds of the time AND you are very intelligent for your age. While we sleep, our bodies repair themselves.

Toys are not for eating

When I was 4 years old, my aunt Maxine gave me a stuffed lamb. I called him Lambie. He was soft and snowy white, and in his tummy there was a marvelous music box that played a song. I can't remember the name of the song... "Charlie Had a Little Lamb"? "Bam Bam Had a Little Lamb"? "Queen Elizabeth the First Had a Little Lamb"? Rats and mice! I can't remember. Can you help me remember the name of the song? Anyway, to play the song you turned the key that was stuck into Lambie's side.

Lambie's eyes looked like raisins, so I pulled one of them out of his head and tried to eat it. I spat it right out, though, because it wasn't sweet and squishy like a raisin.

Do not eat your dollies' or stuffed animals' eyes. Or noses. Or toes. Or fur. Do not eat your toys at all. Do not eat your clothes, either, or your shoes, or anyone else's shoes. Just eat food. Trust me on this.

One afternoon I gave Lambie a bath. I filled the bathroom sink with warm water and poured a whole bottle of dish soap into the water. Then I plunged Lambie into the water. His stuffing



Bessie Pease Gutmann



Bessie Pease Gutmann

soaked up all the water, and he got very heavy. It took a month for him to dry out. His fur lost all its fluff—it turned hard and scratchy—and the music box never worked again.

The magic of sleep

It would have been wonderful if when Lambie went to sleep at night all the damage I had done got fixed so that the next morning he was as good as new. But Lambie was not a living thing, so if he was broken at bedtime he was just as broken the next morning. Unlike Lambie, we humans are alive, and we have bodies that love us and want us to be happy. We run our bodies

ragged all day, zipping around, bumping into things, falling down, scraping our knees, and wearing ourselves out. We might get some cuts and bruises, but most of the wear and tear on our bodies can't be seen because it's underneath our skin. Almost like magic, during sleep our bodies repair the damage. If we didn't sleep, that damage would eventually make us sick.

Our bodies do the best they can to make us sleep. Some people actually take little catnaps with their eyes open. They don't even know they're sleeping. They don't want to sleep. They think they're too busy.

Your body doesn't lie

There are many things I'd rather do than sleep: write stories, watch movies, eat ice cream, fly to South Carolina on the back of a goose, visit friends, dance, sing, eat ice cream.... Sometimes I stay up late and then grumble and groan when I have to get up early in the morning—still tired, because I haven't slept enough.

Other animals sleep when they're tired. They don't ever try to stay awake. Human beings are the only animals who actually fight the urge to sleep. But sooner or later that urge will win, because our bodies always take care of us.

When you are tired, your body says, *Sleep!*—not with words but with feelings. Pay attention to your feelings, the ones you like and the ones you don't. There is something they want you to know.

When you are cold, your body says, *Get warm!* If you stick your finger into a pan of boiling water, your body says, *Don't!* and quick as lightning you pull your finger out. You can't help it. Your body insists. Your body always tries to do its job—keeping you safe and comfortable: not too hot, not too cold, not too hungry, not too full, and not too sleepy. Your body talks to you with feelings all the time.



Bessie Pease Gutmann

PAIN

(n.) A frightful feeling

One morning in 1955, when I was in third grade, my teacher (Mrs. Edwards) said the strangest thing.



I have wonderful news, she said. Next Tuesday, a nurse is going to come to our school and give each child a polio shot.

No one spoke. We were waiting for the *wonderful* part. Surely she was going to say something like ...*each child* EXCEPT FOR YOU. *There are not enough polio shots to go around, so you will NOT be getting a polio shot. Instead, each of you will get a roller coaster for your back yard.* But no, Mrs. Edwards had finished the announcement, and the wonderful news was that we were going to be stabbed in the arm with a long, sharp needle. What we would later learn is that there would actually be not just *one* wonderful polio shot... not even *two* shots... but *three, yes, three polio shots* a few weeks apart.

Now, by the time you are 8 you understand that children and grownups do not always think alike. What teachers and parents call *wonderful* might not seem at all wonderful to you, not even a little bit nice. Your mother says, *I have a wonderful surprise for you*, and you immediately think *PUPPY!* when, in fact, it is your Step-Grandmother Martha visiting from Des Moines. Your teacher says *wonderful news*, and if it's not a backyard roller coaster or swimming pool, couldn't it at least be ice cream?



1930s British poster, artist unknown

But we were also old enough to understand why our parents and teachers were jumping for joy about polio shots. Polio was a very serious disease. Children died from polio. The new polio shot—the Salk Vaccine—meant that parents would never again have to worry that their children might get polio. We understood that.

We all knew kids who had gotten polio, and some of them had badly damaged muscles, usually in their legs. My brother, John, came down with polio when he was 4 years old. He got well, but so that he would be able to walk normally my dad did special exercises with Johnny's legs, and those exercises hurt. Johnny howled with

pain. One of my earliest memories is watching Dad push and pull on Johnny's legs and wondering why Dad had to hurt Johnny to make him get well.

Now there was a vaccine that meant kids wouldn't get polio. Yay! But I was terrified of shots. I told my parents about Mrs. Edwards's *wonderful news* and begged them to let me stay home on the "shot day." Of course they said no. Then I told them I had decided to become a Christian Scientist like my friend Susan. Christian Scientists do not go to doctors or use medicine, and Susan would be excused from having polio shots. I thought being a Christian Scientist was a fine idea, but in 1955 it was not going to get me out of my polio shot.

My parents tried to reason with me. Wouldn't a few seconds of pain be better than getting a horrible disease? I told them no, I'd rather take my chances with the disease.

Here's the thing about shots: They really don't hurt very much, and the sting lasts for just a few seconds. It's not the shot that's scary; it's the needle. If the thing they stuck you with was soft and pretty, like a pink cotton ball, everyone would calm down.



Eloise Wilkin

Next time you're getting a shot, take a deep breath and then pretend you're blowing on a pinwheel. This simple breathing trick relaxes your body, and the shot won't hurt as much. In fact, it might not hurt at all.

Mary split her splunk

If I had minded my mother, the thing that I'm about to tell you would never have happened,

but I didn't, so it did, and let that be a lesson to you and every other child who has a smart mom.

We lived right across the street from my school—Dundee Elementary School—which had a very large playground with swings, a slide, a teeter-totter, hopscotches, and lots of room to run. The school went all the way from our street—Chicago Street—to Davenport Street, a block south.



By 1963 polio shots were *out* and the new oral vaccine was *in*. I don't remember how it tasted, but we had to drink only a tiny cupful—so much better than a shot.

But the best thing was the fence, or wall, that went all the way around the school. It was actually made out of cement, and it had a nice flat top, about a foot wide, perfect for walking on and pretending you were a tightrope walker. The playground wasn't level, so in some places the top of the wall was just a few feet higher than the ground—not scary at all—but in other places it was eight or nine feet high—too high for walking on.

On a sunny Saturday afternoon in late September 1956, when I was in fourth grade, I called my best friend Judy Goldberg and said *Meet me at the school and we'll walk on the wall*. Judy was my best friend because we both loved to play Monopoly and canasta, we both played the piano, we both could spell *antidisestablishmentarianism*, and we both were good wall-walkers.

I sailed out the door, yelling to my mother, *Mom, I'm meeting Judy at the school*. My mom called back, *Okay, but don't walk on the wall*. But it was such a beautiful day—warm but not hot, with a bit of breeze and the leaves turning red and gold on the trees—the perfect sort of day for walking on the wall. So Judy and I went across the playground to the Davenport Street side, where the wall could not be seen from our house, and we scampered up onto the wall.

We had been walking for only a few minutes when Judy, who was walking behind me, said something I couldn't hear... so I called, *What?* and turned my head. At that moment a big old nasty wasp buzzed smack into my face. I shrieked, lost my balance, and did a belly flop onto the ground...*splat*, right on my stomach. At that part of the wall, the top was about four feet off the ground, which meant that my stomach was about *six* feet off the ground. It was a pretty good fall with a pretty bad result.

It didn't hurt right away, but I couldn't get my breath—Have you ever fallen and “gotten the wind knocked out of you”? That's what it felt like—as if my lungs had emptied and I couldn't fill them up again. There was a pile of dirt about 20

feet from where I had fallen, and something—I'm not sure what—made me stand up, run over to that pile of dirt, and lie down so that my head was higher than my feet.

After that I couldn't move, but I heard someone call to my brother, who was playing baseball at the other end of the playground. Whoever it was yelled, *Johnny, your sister got hurt. Go get your mom.* There were probably 15 or 20 kids on the playground, and I knew all of them.

I knew every family on Chicago Street but none of the people on Davenport Street. Luckily, some nice people named Mr. and Mrs. McCourt, who lived on Davenport Street, had seen me fall. They rushed over to see if they could help at about the same time my mom got there. My dad



Dundee School was built in 1904. Every year, school started the day after Labor Day and ended early in June. The wall still surrounds most of the playground, but they have removed the flat top and replaced it with a round bar—impossible for walking on. Now about half the playground is covered with a new gym. The swings, slide, teeter-totter, and hopscotch- es are gone. So are the four round openings next to the hopscotch- es. The openings were covered except when big trucks came to dump coal for the furnace into the base- ment.

This photo shows the front door; the playground, where the wall is, is on the other side.

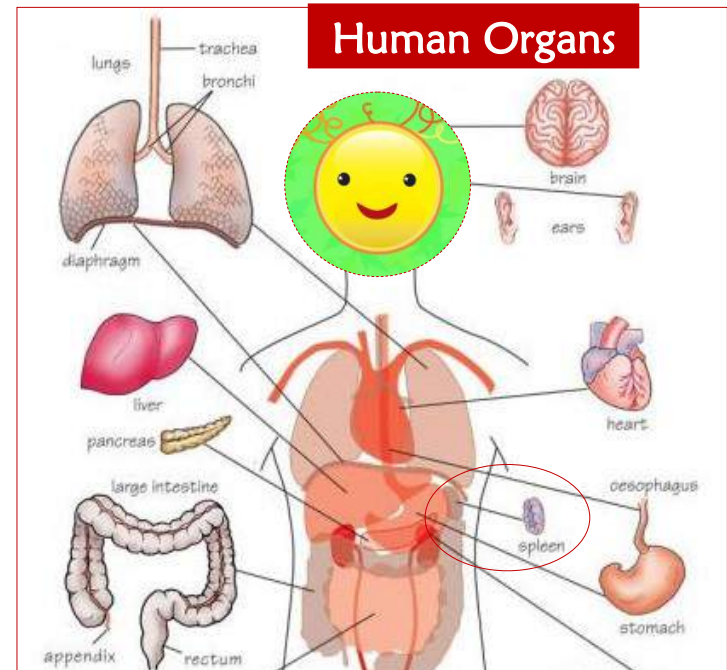
had our car and he was out of town, so the McCourts drove Johnny, Mom, and me in their station wagon to Children's Hospital.

By the time we got to the hospital I could breathe normally and the only pain I felt was an ache in my left shoulder. The emergency-room doctor wanted to send me home, but my smart Mom insisted on waiting until my pediatrician, Dr. Morrow, got there. Dr. Morrow took X-ray pictures that showed that my abdomen was full of blood. Yuck. So Dr. Morrow called his surgeon friend, Dr. Coe, who would do "exploratory surgery" the next morning. He would open up my abdomen and "explore" the abdominal cavity to see where the bleeding was coming from.

I wasn't afraid of anything except the drug they would use to put me to sleep. It was called *ether*, and I had had it before, when I had my tonsils out. Ether smelled horrible and made me sick and dizzy. Surgeons don't use ether any more, and it's a darn good thing.

While I was sleeping, Dr. Coe made a long cut from my chest to my lower abdomen and peeled the skin, muscle, and other tissue layers back. He used a machine like a vacuum cleaner to suck all the blood out, and then he saw what the prob-

lem was: I had ruptured my spleen. (When my next-door neighbor, Richie, found out about my accident, he told his mom excitedly: *Guess what! Mary split her splunk!*)



I didn't know what *ruptured* meant or what a *spleen* was. As you can see in the picture labeled *Human Organs*, the spleen is in the upper left part of the abdomen. My fall had torn the spleen open, and that's where the blood was coming from. Dr. Coe removed the spleen and closed the bleeding blood vessels, closed the flaps of skin and other tissues, and sewed me back up.

Swaddled in Saturday

Friday afternoon in early spring was everything but Saturday, and finer in its way—a long, warm wallowing in fresh anticipation with activity suspended, all except the effortless, habitual mobility of youth. I lived in energetic fantasies adapted from tradition, witches, faeries, elves, and television—much like those of every other girl who has the slightest inclination toward adventure in her DNA. How pliable the world and I were then, how agile my imagination, deftly crafting Saturday scenarios and shaping ghastly situations on the least substantial Friday whim.

In my fringed suede jacket—my long, brown hair in braids that swished across my back—I could be Jo March from *Little Women*, Annie Oakley, even Nancy Drew, by simply wishing to. A lengthening of stride on pleasant residential sidewalks, in an instant turned to hard-packed trails across Nebraska Territory, had me guiding covered wagons westward, though unhappily my little pony, Daisy, had been left behind in Council Bluffs, recuperating from... hmm... well... the hiccups; such a mystifying case, so strange.

The wind changed. Balmy just a tick ago, the day turned oddly dark, and cold, quick puffs of what remained of winter merged into a gale. I loosed my braided hair and let the wind do what it must. I knew (the wind did not), no matter how it tugged and turned, no ordinary gust could separate my hair and skin—a small but gratifying evidence of strength, to tease the elements that way and win. And with such cosmic victories did Fridays end and Saturdays begin.

There was a windswept wooded place, if only ten feet wide or so, that circumscribed the park. Good climbing trees were there, and shrubs to hide in while you waited for Doc Holliday and Wyatt Earp to ride in from their day of keeping lawlessness at bay. I must be pert and canny and adjust my brim so it just barely skims my eyes. Oh, hush, girl, here they come. I bet I'm blushing like a ripe tomato. Dang, but it ain't even them. Behold, It's Robin and his Men, and I, Maid Marian, again defy the wind and pin my tousled hair into a prim, aristocratic bun, with tendrils tumbling 'round my face. Too soon, the wind abated and the sun peeked out.

I leaned against the Gallaghers' red maple tree and watched the play of shade and shimmer in the variegated canopy and felt the muffled thrum that was the rhythm of a Saturday in spring, the quieting of afternoon in placid neighborhoods. I heard my mother mixing commerce with a bit of gossip as the Alamito Dairy man delivered butter, half-and-half, and cottage cheese. He muttered something he had gleaned from Mrs. Hahn about the Beasleys' sheltie's puppies being weaned, as I recall. I listened to the uninflected tune of bees around a clump of lilacs, heard a small

child's bleating and her mama crooning consolation, and a screen door with a wicked spring obedient to physics snapping like a shot, too raucous for the soporific interlude.

It seemed the perfect time to slip away... lie back and be attended to, and temporarily surrender to the earth. It's ample for the job... and then I'll let myself be swaddled by the sun, just floating in the homely sounds and earthy smells within my little glade—the scent of sod just laid and lilies of the valley emanating fragrance too audacious for their dainty faces and discreet, half-hidden habitat.

Well contented was I then to call an end to my adventures for a time in favor of fresh lemonade and oyster crackers, slightly stale, and one book, maybe three, to carry to the back yard and my secret nook between the privet and the elm, whose trunk, because of rain and time and children's choreography, had worn away until it formed a shallow cave, one made expressly for my shoulder blades... which demonstrates how very many ways there are to make a century of memories in two hours (you must borrow, though, from eighteen-sixty-eight and nineteen-ten). And then politely tell God *Thank you* for the loan, for all the minutes you have left to use (alone and with a friend) and for the many ways to savor them... and positively, absolutely don't forget how soon it will be Saturday once more, so *Thanks again. Amen.*



WHEN I WASN'T WALKING ON THE WALL I MIGHT BE ADVENTURING IN THE NOOKS AND CRANNIES, WELL-WORN PATHS AND HIDING PLACES OUR NEIGHBORHOOD OF LARGE OLD HOUSES AND EVEN OLDER OAK TREES OFFERED. PEOPLE RARELY MOVED IN OR OUT, CHOOSING TO STAY IN THEIR HOMES FOR 20 OR 30 YEARS. IT WAS THE SORT OF NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE SOMEONE'S MOM WAS ALWAYS HOME AND OLDER KIDS LOOKED OUT FOR YOUNGER ONES, SO WE COULD VENTURE OUTDOORS ON A SUNNY SATURDAY MORNING AND SHOW UP IN THE KITCHEN AT LUNCHTIME WITH NO ONE WORRYING ABOUT US. MY MOM HAD A LARGE BRASS WHISTLE, SO IF SHE NEEDED TO FIND US SHE STOOD ON THE FRONT PORCH AND BLEW THE WHISTLE—THREE TIMES FOR ME, TWICE FOR JOHNNY, AND ONCE FOR PIP. OTHERWISE, LIKE KIDS OF OUR GENERATION EVERYWHERE, WE KNEW THAT WHEN THE STREET LIGHTS SWITCHED ON IT WAS TIME TO GO HOME.

Dr. Morrow told my mom that when I complained of pain in my shoulder he suspected a ruptured spleen. Because I listened to my body, and Dr. Morrow listened to me, I am alive today. My body was also taking care of me when I ran over to lie down on that old pile of dirt on the playground. For some reason, lying at a slant slowed the bleeding.

When I woke up after the operation, the first thing I had to do was swallow a long tube through my nose. If you can swallow a long tube through your nose, you can do anything. I stayed in the hospital for over a week. The first several days I couldn't eat or drink anything, not even water. Instead, they gave me liquid "food" through another tube that was attached to a vein in my left ankle.

A famous TV star was visiting the hospital the day of my operation. Her name was Gail Davis and she was on a television show called *Annie Oakley*. Any other day I would have been really excited to see her, but that afternoon I was still feeling pretty sick.

Even when I went home after ten days, I couldn't go back to school for a few weeks. My body had to rest and heal. That's what bodies do when they are repairing themselves.

Do you know what I learned from this experience? (1) I learned not to walk on the wall any more (hardly ever). (2) I learned to pay attention to my body—to the messages it sends me. (3) I learned that my mom—even though she wasn't perfect—was a lot smarter than I was.

Your body's messages

Pain is an unpleasant message that your body sends when something is wrong. Pay attention to it. Your body is sending you another kind of message when you eat too much sweet stuff and get sick. Your body is saying, *Hey! Too many brownies. All that sugar isn't healthy. More vegetables, less brownies, okay?* That's what your body is saying when you throw up. I don't know about you, but I really, really hate throwing up. I don't even like the WORDS *throw up...* or *upchuck, vomit, ralph, puke, retch, hurl*, or any other synonym for *throw up*. Yuck. I try to do what my body tells me to, because I trust my body. It never lies.

WANTING

(n.) A feeling like love for something you don't have

Wanting is what keeps us moving. If there were no wanting, why get out of bed?

Sometimes the best part of wanting something is THINKING ABOUT HAVING IT. This is true about stuff like toys and clothes. This is NOT true about puppies. The best part of wanting a puppy is getting a puppy, holding the puppy, playing with the puppy, smelling the puppy, and watching TV while the soft, warm, sleepy puppy curls up in your lap and nudges your hand with her head so you will pet her. IMAGINING getting a puppy is wonderful. ACTUALLY HAVING a puppy is a little bit of heaven.

We even love our puppies when they stop being cute and cuddly and grow up to be lean,

muscular dogs or fat, lazy dogs. For eight years I lived in a house full of dogs. First we had Monica and Itsy. (Monica is the doggie of my heart. When I get to Heaven, Monica is the first living thing I'll see, even before Mom and Dad. Monica is one of the angels.)

Then we got Amos, a yellow Labrador puppy who ate furniture but oh, my, he was sweet.



Bessie Pease Gutmann



Then we got a girlfriend for Amos, another yellow Lab called Dani. She was a sweet, roly-poly puppy too, but she got big, like Amos. Then she got even bigger than Amos because she was pregnant with a great many puppies. The veterinarian told us there were six puppies in Dani's belly, but it looked more like there were 60 of them, that's how fat Dani got. We fixed up a nice, soft, clean bed next to the washing machine and said, *Dani, when it's time for the puppies to come out, lie down right here. This is where you can have your babies.* Dani said, *Yeah, sure, okay,* and had her babies on a pile of clothes in my closet. One, two, three, four, five, six pup-

pies—all done. Wait a minute. Hold the phone. Seven, eight, nine. *Nine?* Oh, wow.

Good doggie mamma

Dani did what good doggie mommas do; she lay down next to her puppies so that they could eat. The puppies were so excited about lunch they just flopped around, climbing on each other, writhing and wiggling, pushing each other out of the way, trying to find a nipple to latch on to. They couldn't see yet, you know. Finally, when they sorted themselves out and every puppy was hooked up, just when they had gotten settled and were blissfully swallowing great gulps



Bessie Pease Gutmann



Mabel Rollins Harris



of milk, Dani stood up and the puppies went *splat*. They couldn't hold on. They toppled onto each other and wriggled around and started the puppy shuffle again, trying to find Dani's nipples and chewing on each other's noses when they couldn't find Mom. Dani walked out into the middle of the room and just stood there for a minute. *Dani, what's wrong?* Uh-oh. *Plop*. Out dropped another slippery puppy. *Omigosh*.

Think about it. Ten creamy white roly-poly Labrador puppies.

Dani was such a sweet, patient mama. When she went outdoors to pee and the puppies had gotten big enough to follow her, they wouldn't leave her alone. She would squat to pee the way girl doggies do, and the puppies—who were always, always hungry—latched onto her. She tried

to run away from them—*Just give me a minute, please, babies*—but they wouldn't let go.

Poor Dani. Her nipples got so sore from feeding puppies all the time that she would go outside and lie down in the mud—which felt cool and soothing, and which helped her nipples heal. Her body was taking care of her.

We found homes for all the puppies except the one we wanted to keep, who was called Truman. Then we had 5 dogs instead of 14, and we loved them all.

Puppies are the best presents

Most presents are not as wonderful as puppies. Most presents are special for only a little while.

Think about Christmas. As early as Thanksgiving, you make a list of all the stuff you want, and every day before Christmas you *imagine* what it would be like to open your presents and, omi-



gosh, there it is—the Xbox or book or dollhouse or drone or Monopoly game or dress or whatever it was that you asked for! How thrilling! You feel wonderful! And the next day and the day after that, you

DO NOT LET YOUR DOG HAVE...

Alcohol
Avocado
Bones
Caffeine: coffee, tea, soda
Chocolate
Fat trimmings
Grapes, raisins
Macadamia nuts
Milk, cheese, ice cream,
other dairy products

Onions, garlic
Pantry items such as
spices, baking powder,
baking soda
Persimmons, peaches,
plums
Raw eggs
Raw meat and fish
Raw potatoes
Salt and salty foods
Sugary food and drinks
Yeast dough
Your medicine

play with it or wear it or read it or put it on a shelf where you can look at it, and you feel wonderful. But after a week, when you've gotten used to having it or wearing it or looking at it... well, it's still nice, it's still fun, but it isn't exciting any more. And the days are ordinary again, not full of golden-bright elation like the day before Christmas and Christmas Day. Not every day is like your birthday any more.

There is a secret to making an ordinary day golden-bright like Christmas and your birthday, though. It is GRATITUDE. (See more about *gratitude* on page 43.)

NEED

(n.) A thing that keeps you alive and safe—air, water, stuff like that

When I was 12 years old, I was invited to a glorious birthday party by my friend Joanne. About 50 people were going, and there was going to be a band and dancing and amazing food. I liked a

boy called Steve. He was sort of my boyfriend, but he liked another girl called Holly, too. Steve and Holly would be there, so I wanted to look amazing at the party. I wanted to look prettier than Holly. I wanted to look like Cinderella when she went to the ball, so beautiful that the handsome prince looked at no one else. I wanted that so much that I couldn't think about anything except looking beautiful at the party so that Steve would like me better than he liked Holly.

So I said to my mother, *I need a new dress for Joanne's party.*



My mom said, *Darling, you have a whole closetful of dresses.* It was true, and they were lovely dresses, but they were hand-me-downs. They had been my sister Pipi's dresses first, and she had outgrown

them or gotten tired of them.

I started to cry. I was 12 years old, and there I was, crying because I knew that my mother would not buy me a new dress.

My mom poured me a glass of chocolate milk—a special treat at our house—and poured herself a cup of coffee and sat down beside me. And here is what she said:

You are a beautiful girl, and you do not NEED a new dress. You



NEED air to breathe and food to eat and clothes to keep you warm. You WANT to be the prettiest girl at the party, and I can't promise that you will. But if you do what I tell you, I promise that you will be beautiful.

I smiled, because I knew what she was going to say, but I listened anyway because it felt good to hear her say it.

We will wash your hair and make it shiny, and brush it and curl it, and we will iron and starch your dress and petticoats, and we will make you smell good. You will look lovely and smell like sunshine. And when you get to the party, you will forget about how you look and how you smell. You will smile and be kind. You will look for someone who is alone and doesn't seem to be having a good time, and you will go and talk to that person until he or she is smiling too. I don't know if you will be the most beautiful girl at the party, but I do know that no one will be having a more wonderful time than you are.

My mother was wise

She knew that I didn't need a new dress, and she knew what I *really* wanted—to feel good about myself. She always said that if you want other people to like you, you first have to like yourself. And she always let me know that what I wanted was important.



**SIMPLY MUST HAVE A NEW
FROCK FOR THE HOLS!**

Mabel Lucie Attwell

We are always wanting things. We wake up in the morning wanting to get out of bed or wanting to stay in bed, wanting to eat breakfast, wanting to go places and do things, wanting to move from one chair to a more comfortable chair on the other side of the room, wanting to

have company, wanting to be alone, wanting, wanting, wanting. Some of our wants might seem silly. Many of the things we want are not good for us, like too many brownies.

But behind every want is a need. We might WANT brownies, but the NEED is to eat so our bodies can grow. We might WANT a new dress, but the NEED is to feel good about ourselves, to know that we are worth loving. We can't always have what we want, but our wants are important anyway because they tell us what we need.

I know a family who adopted a little girl called Amy who had been living in a children's home in Korea. The children's home did not feed the children very well. They did the best they could, but they didn't have enough money to buy healthy food, so the kids never got meat or fresh vegetables. Amy's new mom told me that when Amy first came to them her hair was completely white because of poor nutrition. Her body wasn't getting the kind of food it needed.

When dinner was served, Amy walked around the table, took the meat off everyone's plate, and ate it as she moved from plate to plate. It's a good thing Amy's new family was wise. They understood that Amy wasn't being naughty or

selfish. She couldn't help herself. Her body was starved for protein, and her body directed her to the protein-rich food that was being served, especially meat. This wasn't something that Amy had learned in school. Her body knew what it needed in order to be healthy, and her body was taking care of her.

PETTICOATS—Do you see how full the little girl's and her mother's skirts are? They are wearing starched petticoats. A petticoat is a skirt you wear under your skirt. It might have several layers of material, including netting... and starching makes the material even stiffer, so it makes your dress fuller, standing out farther from your body. My sister and I wore starched petticoats to school every day. Our mother wore them only for going out dancing with Daddy.



Jessie Willcox Smith

Some people never learn the difference between *wanting* and *needing*. Believe it or not, there are people who spend their whole lives believing that they *need* to be the prettiest girl at the party, or the handsomest man... thinking that they *need* to have the biggest house or the newest car or the smartest children. It's okay to want those things. I wouldn't mind having a bigger house myself. But I don't *need* a bigger house in order to be happy.

The only thing I *need*, besides air to breathe and food to eat and a safe place to live, is love—to love myself, to love other people, and to know that I am lovable. Everything else is icing.

Although I sure would like to have a little pickup truck—a red one, please, with a radio that works.

CHOOSE

(v.) Well, which do you want more, Thing A or Thing B? Pick one.

Choosing is powerful. You can't have everything you want, but most of the time you can choose *at any time* to be happier, better, smarter, kinder, stronger....

You are always making choices, and much of the time you don't think about them. If you are thirsty, you *choose* to get up out of your chair

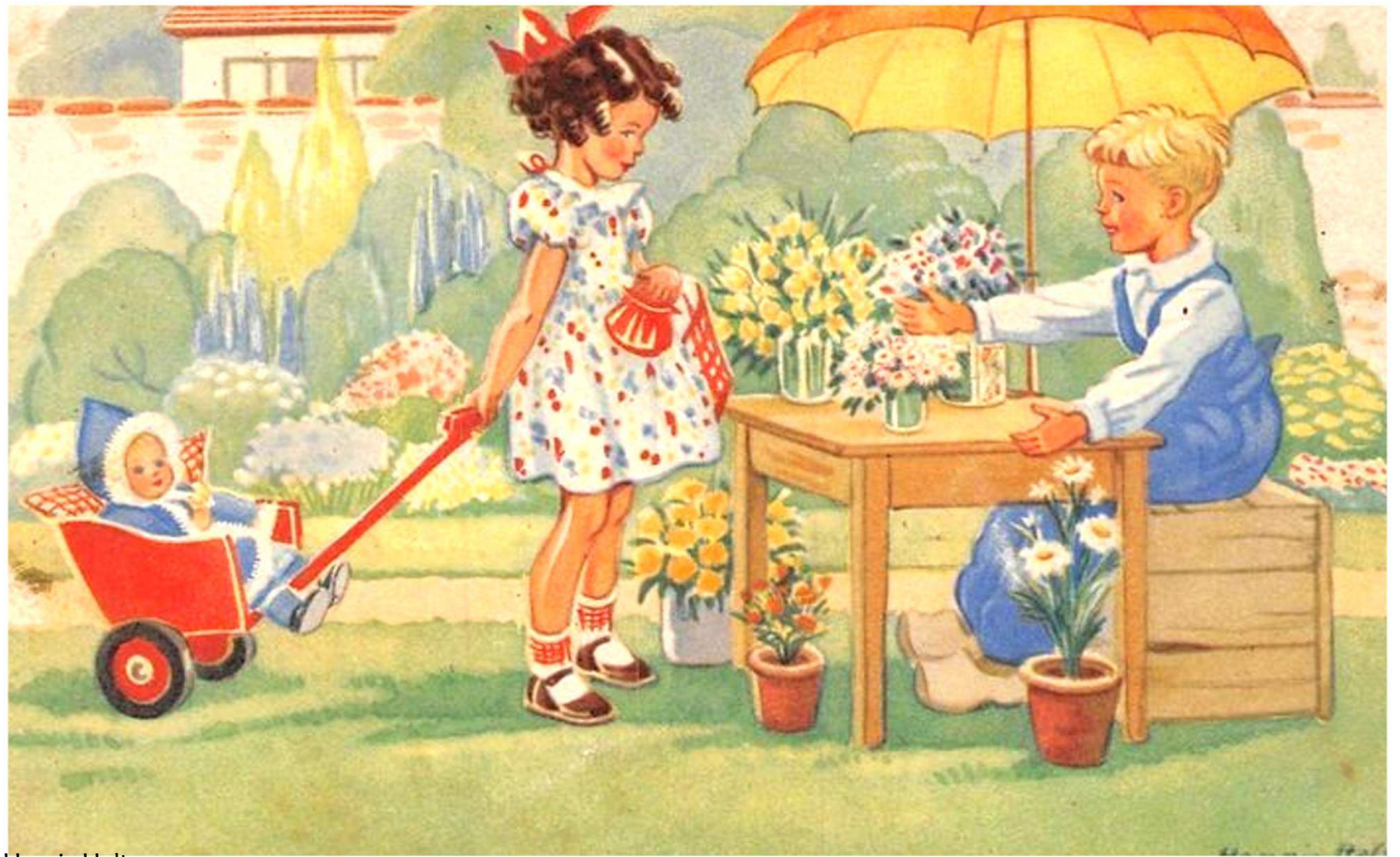
and walk into the kitchen and turn on the faucet or get a bottle out of the refrigerator and pour yourself a glass of water. You might choose lemonade instead, or orange juice, or milk. Not soda, I hope.

When I was a little girl, my mom and dad hardly ever bought soda—we called it *pop*, not *soda*, and it came in glass bottles. Once in a while Mom brought home a few bottles of orange or grape pop, Coca Cola, 7Up, or ginger ale. It was a huge treat.

We drank it out of the bottle, then we washed out the bottle and put it under the kitchen sink. These bottles didn't have the sorts of lids that you could twist back on. After you pried the lid off with a bottle opener, the lid was bent, so you threw it away. If you didn't wash out the bottles, and sometimes even if you did, bugs crawled in to them.

I could never figure out how bugs knew there was sugary sticky stuff in bottles that were tucked away under the sink, but they did, and I hated bugs as much as I hated throwing up, so I learned early: washing out the bottle—good choice; not washing out the bottle—bugs. Yuck.

If there was anyone in our house that hated bugs as much as I did, it was Johnny, even though he was bigger and older than I was.



Hannie Holt

When he was still small enough to ride in a stroller, Pipi, who was the eldest, would promise to push him in the stroller down in the basement, where there was plenty of room. Johnny loved to ride in the stroller, but sometimes Pipi played an unkind trick on him. She would strap him into the stroller—for “safety”—then she would push the stroller over to the big drain in the middle of the floor. Johnny had seen bugs crawl into and out of that drain, and he was terrified of the

bugs. When Pipi pushed the stroller to the drain, she’d leave it there, with my brother strapped in, and walk upstairs. Johnny would scream and cry and struggle to get out of the stroller, but he couldn’t unfasten the strap. Pretty soon Mom would hear the screaming and crying, walk down the stairs into the basement, undo the strap, and pick my brother up, holding and patting him till he stopped crying. At least this is what they tell me. I wasn’t born yet.

But the story I hear is that the very next day, Pipi would say, *Johnny, do you want me to push you in the stroller in the basement?* Johnny would say yes, he'd like that very much, but she had to promise not to push the stroller over to the drain and leave it there with him strapped in. And she would make that promise. And then she played the same trick all over again. I suppose she got in trouble with Mom and Dad, but it didn't keep her from tormenting my brother.

Johnny is pretty smart now, but it took him a long time to learn to say, *No, thank you*, when Pipi offered to push him in the stroller. That's called *learning from experience*, and it's one of the reasons we don't put babies in charge of an-

anything important, such as flying airplanes or running large corporations. They haven't had enough experience to make good choices. If you offer them brownies or green beans, they're going to pick the brownies every time.

What you learn in school helps you make choices. It might not seem that way when you're studying prime numbers or punctuation, but the more you know about how the world works the better you are at making choices. Good choices are the ones that lead to health and happiness for you, your family, and even your community. Bad choices are the ones that get you sent to your room.



Bessie Pease Gutmann

Naughty or nice?

Very often we want two things and we can't have them both. When I was a teenager, I rode the city bus to school. To make sure I got up on time, I set an alarm clock. Every school-day morning, when that alarm clock jangled, I wanted it to be Saturday. I wanted to sleep for another hour. I did not want to get out of bed, get dressed, eat breakfast, and walk three blocks to the bus stop, especially if it was a cold or rainy day.

But I was late to school only one time, and I found out that if you were late to school, you had to go to the principal's office, explain why you were late, listen to the principal scold you, wait for the principal to write you a note, and take the note to your teacher. Since you were late to class, you had to listen to the teacher scold you and tell you what you already knew—that if you were late very many times you'd get a bad grade. I didn't like bad grades. I wanted good grades, and I wanted them more than I wanted to stay in bed on rainy mornings. So I *chose* to get up and go to school.

When I was little, after I played outside I was always hungry. If I asked for something to eat at 5 or 5:30, my parents usually said, *Wait till dinner*. So I had a problem:

- (1) I was STA-A-A-ARVING and wanted to eat *right now*.
- (2) My *parents* wanted me to wait a half-hour till 6 o'clock.
- (3) I wanted to mind my parents and eat dinner with my family *more than* I wanted to eat *right now*.

The selfish (and not-smart) thing would have been to grab a banana when Mom wasn't looking, or maybe to whine or yell or throw a fit, but that never worked, the whining-tantrum



Pauli Ebner

thing. By waiting, I got what I wanted most: a delicious meal with my happy family in our cozy yellow kitchen.

This whole growing-up thing is about learning, and not just the stuff they teach you at school, but also (and especially) learning

(1) what we want;



Jessie Willcox Smith 1863-1935

- (2) what we want MORE;
- (3) what OTHER people want and what that has to do with US;
- (4) how to choose.

Do not ever be ashamed of wanting something.

Do not ever beat yourself up for being "selfish."

DO know that you can't have everything you want, and try to figure out which thing you want is the most important.

There will be a time when the thing you want is also wanted by someone you care about. Maybe you are running for class president, and a friend of yours is also running for class president, and one of you is going to lose and you hope it's not you. Of course you want to win! If you didn't want to win, you wouldn't be running. Be kind if you win. Be kind if you don't win. Your day will come.

Learning to love your life

To tell you the truth, growing up is kind of messy, which is why you get at least eighteen years to practice making choices before you're on your own. Babies, as we know, are not wise about making choices.

If I am a baby, what I want seems like the most important thing in the world. Letting the world

know what they want is what babies do best. When they are hungry, it's no good telling them to wait half an hour. Don't try explaining to them that THEY'LL be happier if their MOMS and DADS are happy... or that it really would be better for everyone else if they, the babies, didn't demand to be fed three times between midnight and 5 a.m.

Kids have two jobs:

- (1) playing, and
- (2) learning.

Most of the learning happens on its own, without your having to work at it. When you make a choice—say, eating a whole can of frosting in 15 minutes—there is a consequence—say, throwing up. I know this for a fact. Some of your choices, such as doing your homework BEFORE you play video games, work out pretty well, others—frosting, throwing up—not so well. You learn from your mistakes and your successes.

Let's say you love to play the piccolo and you decide you want to be a piccolo-player when you grow up. A grownup might tell you that piccolo-players don't make very much money and you should be a dentist instead. Another grownup might say, *Follow your dreams. Do what you love.*

But, gosh, you don't like looking at other people's tooth decay or gum disease. And honestly, you're not that great a piccolo-player. Then you get a summer job at an animal shelter, and you discover that you absolutely LOVE taking care of sick and injured animals, so you go to college to be a veterinarian. Or maybe you find out you're better at playing the violin than the piccolo and, even though that same grumpy grownup tells you that only the VERY BEST violinists make enough money to buy a house and feed the seven or eight children you might or might not have, it occurs to you that maybe you're THAT GOOD a violinist, and two or three children would really be enough. And then somebody gives you a lottery ticket as sort of a joke, and it's a WINNING lottery ticket, and you are so VERY, VERY glad you didn't waste



Bessie Pease Gutmann



Bessie Pease Gutmann

all those years going to dental school and looking at gum disease.

How you feel is still the most important thing... but if you pay attention, you learn that *other* people's happiness is a big part of your own.



BABY

(n.) a tiny, sweet, and selfish human being

Once again I hear you saying, *Wait a minute! Hold on here! Babies are not invisible. And even when they are—maybe because they're in the next room having their diapers changed—you can smell them.*

One thing I believe we can agree upon is that babies are small and portable, easy to carry from crib to tub to stroller to car. Most of them are also cute, especially when sleeping... not so much when they scream and their faces scrunch up and turn red and blotchy, which happens quite a bit during the first few months. Their parents usually stop what they are doing to fix the problem, and the problem is usually that the baby is hungry.

Some people think that babies cry because their diapers are wet or poopy. I, however, have known many babies, and not one of these babies minded at all when they had poopy pants. Some babies are fascinated by the squishy stuff in their diapers. They grab handfuls of it, look at it, rub it in their hair, paint the wall with it.... They might even put it in their mouths, but it tastes terrible so they spit it out again right away.

When Mom or Dad walks into the nursery and sees the poop-covered baby smiling a huge, poopy smile, Mom or Dad gets very excited and the baby gets a lot of attention. Babies like attention, and they learn pretty fast that making a big poopy mess is a sure-fire attention-getter. If Mom or Dad wants the baby to stop playing with poop, the best thing to do is... well, nothing... or almost nothing. Do not get excited. Babies love excitement. Take the baby into the bathroom, wash him, dry him, dress him in clean clothes, put a clean sheet on his bed, clean the poop off the crib and the walls, set the baby back in his bed—quickly and calmly, without saying a single word—and leave the room. If the attention and excitement stop, pretty soon the poopy mess-making will stop too.

Babies cry when they are uncomfortable—hungry, cold, or having a belly-ache. A bellyache usually means that they are about to do something gross. After she burps or toots or poops, the baby feels better and smiles so sweetly that we think she's adorable and we don't mind the awful smell, which, if it came out of a grownup, would be disgusting.

Tiny babies are completely selfish. As I said a few pages back, when they have a problem, they want it fixed right this minute and they don't mind if someone else has a bigger problem. And we love them for it, because we all wish that we could be a little more like them, not worrying a bit when their demands are inconvenient for someone else... plus we know that they can't take care of themselves. Yes, they are little tyrants, but they have to be, because they can't solve their own problems. No, they need us to take care of them—and we love to be needed.

Newborn babies don't care who feeds them or changes their diapers or soaps them off in the tubby, as long as they are not uncomfortable. Only after several days of being cared for by the same person or people—mother, father,



Bessie Pease Gutmann

sibling, or babysitter—does a baby start to notice who it is that has the good stuff. That's when they begin to cry when Mom or Dad leaves the room—and the baby has no way of knowing whether Mom or Dad will ever come back—and smile, laugh, coo, and totally rejoice when Mom or Dad DOES come back.



Mabel Lucie Attwell

Oh, the stuff babies get away with! For a while, the entire household—which is the baby's entire world—revolves around the baby. This works only because babies are cute and cuddly, and also because we know that the situation is only temporary. As babies learn the rules, they discover that they can't have their way all the time, that the entire world will not always drop everything to fix their problems because the entire world has problems of its own.

As kids get older, they learn to do more and more on their own, and they find that they can help other people, too. It feels amazing to be independent and to help others... which is a very, very good thing, because as children grow they are not quite as adorable or portable and their problems are more complicated and harder to solve. You can't fix everything by giving them more food—although some people try, and that is why there are so many tubby children in the world.

I know this to be true because I have a lot of experience with babies. There does not have to be an actual baby in the room for me to describe what babies are like. Particular babies are not invisible; babyhood is.



The invisible baby

When people get married, most of them want to start having babies—maybe not right away, but soon. Sometimes I wonder why, because babies are a lot of trouble and they cost mountains of money. Women who work out at the gym and eat watercress to stay thin suddenly don't mind that their bellies are going to grow and grow until they're bigger than an SUV. Their bodies start changing, getting ready for the day that they have to push a baby-size object through an opening smaller than a bathtub drain. They don't care. They want babies anyway. And the babies they want are, at this point, invisible.

When a couple wants a baby, and the woman finds out she's pregnant, she goes bananas. Right away, she starts loving a baby she can't see, hear, smell, taste, or feel. Before the baby is the size of her little finger, she starts singing to it. She buys a bed for it, and that's just the start—rocking chair, car seat, booties, diapers, caps, blankets, toys—all for an invisible boy or girl that she's been told is growing inside her.

She is over the moon about an invisible baby that she's going to be taking care of for at least 18 years. This is not like getting a new bike, where you can go to the store and look at doz-



Jessie Willcox Smith

ens of bikes and even sit on a few and ride them around before you pick the one you like best, and if you buy it and then decide you don't like it after all, you can take it back and get a refund. And believe me when I say there are going to be times during the first 18 years of that baby's life when its parents are going to want a refund. That baby is going to be more trouble than its parents could possibly have imagined. But they

won't take it back to the store, because (a) it's not a bicycle, and (b) they love that child beyond all reason.

The love that parents feel for their children is a mysterious and beautiful thing. It's kind of like the love you might feel for a puppy or a kitten, but more... so very much more. You know how wonderful it feels to cuddle a small, warm living thing, especially when that thing needs you more than it needs anything else in the entire world? You feel special. You feel important. And that, too, is a very, very good thing, because if babies didn't make grownups feel special and important, then they (the grownups) would stop having babies.

Many mothers will tell you that nothing makes them happier than being mothers. And everybody wants to be happy. If they could get the same kind of happiness by playing with Legos, then there would be a whole lot of Legos in the world but fewer and fewer babies. Pretty soon everybody would play with Legos, no one would have babies, and things would be fine until everyone got old. As soon as all the Legos got lost or broken, all the old people would be sad and there would be nobody young enough to work in the Lego factories.

But Legos do not light up in a huge, adorable, sweet-baby smile when you walk into the room. Legos do not become mobile, so of course they do not scamper as fast as their little arms and legs (if they have arms and legs) will propel them across the room and latch onto your knees, or whimper and reach upward in the way that means, *Pick me up and hold me tight and love me, right this minute, please.*

You could have ten babies, and each of them would be a beautiful package of surprises. But all of them are born hungry. Some mamas nurse their babies with milk out of their own boobies—imagine that! Other mamas give their babies “formula,” which is as much like breast milk as scientists can make it. Either way, the mamas snuggle their babies when they feed them, so for the babies mealtime is a double treat—food and the delightful sensation of cuddling with someone who loves you more than life.

As always, our bodies love us and want us to be happy. Most of the time, the feeding-and-cuddling experience is heavenly. Babies tend to be soft, sweet, warm, and beautiful, so everybody wants to hug them.



Kids need hugs

Alice and Liz were next-door neighbors in a big apartment building. Their babies, Marcella and Evelyn, were born on the same day. Both babies weighed exactly eight pounds. Both mothers bottle-fed their babies, using the same formula.

One morning, when the babies were about two months old, Alice and Marcella popped over to visit Liz and Evelyn. Marcella had just awakened from her nap, and she was hungry. She fussed and fretted the way hungry babies do. Alice sat down on the sofa, settled the squirmy baby on her lap, then reached into her baby-stuff bag and pulled out a bottle of formula. When she held it up so that Marcella could see it, Marcella smiled a huge, radiant, happy-baby smile and then opened her mouth as wide as it would go, just as a



Lunch-Time.

G. M. Luckraft

baby bird does when its mama dangles a wonderfully juicy worm before its eyes.

Alice pulled Marcella closer, so that the little head, with its cap of black curls, was resting on her bosom. Then she lowered the bottle so that it brushed Marcella's lips. Marcella closed her eyes and clamped her mouth around—nothing! Alice had pulled the bottle away. Marcella's eyes flew open and her lips puckered in confusion. Alice laughed, slowly lowered the bottle, tapped Marcella's lips... again Marcella closed her eyes and clamped her mouth around... nothing! She started to squirm and fuss. Her mom was teasing her, and it might have been funny the first time, but the joke had gotten old and Baby Marcella wanted to eat.

At last, Alice eased the nipple into Marcella's mouth and Marcella sucked on it for all she was worth. Once the flow of milk was steady, the baby re-

laxed and stopped sucking just long enough to give a deep, contented sigh. Mother and baby were in a state of complete happiness.

While Alice and Marcella were getting settled on the sofa, Liz was feeding Evelyn, too, but instead of holding her, she propped the baby's bottle on a rolled-up blanket so that Evelyn could just reach the nipple with her little mouth. But while Marcella was humming with delight, Evelyn was fretful. She squirmed in her baby carrier, and the nipple fell out of her mouth. Liz walked over, replaced the nipple in Evelyn's hungry little mouth, and turned to her friend Alice with a frown.

I don't know what's wrong with this baby, she said. She spits up all the time, she's not gaining enough weight, and she never naps for more than an hour before she wants to eat again.

It was easy to see that Marcella was happier and healthier than Evelyn. Alice knew more about babies than Liz did, and she asked Liz in a kind way why she didn't hold and snuggle Evelyn while she fed her.

I'm so crazy about this sweet baby I want to hold her all the time, Liz admitted, but I don't, because I'm afraid she'll be one of those spoiled, clingy babies who's never happy except when she's being held.

But little babies need to be held and cuddled a LOT, Alice told her friend. They need it as much as they need food and warmth. If they don't get enough gentle, loving contact with their moms and other caregivers, they don't thrive as well as babies who get lots of cuddles. Try holding her close when you feed her and see if she doesn't do better.

Liz took Alice's advice, and within just a few days Evelyn was a happier, healthier baby. She was getting the closeness her little body needed.

Wall of fire

When I was pregnant with my first baby, Marian, I could hardly wait to see her and hold her. But one day, about a week before she was born, I became very fearful. I got in the car and went to visit my mom. By the time I got to her house, I was crying big, sloppy tears.

What's the matter, sweetheart? Mom asked.

Mom! I blubbed. *What if I have the baby and I find out I don't love it? I'm afraid I'm not going to love my baby!*

Mom gave me a big hug and said something I have never forgotten: *I promise you, she told me, when you have that baby, you will love it more than life. If you had to, you would go through a wall of fire to save your baby.*

Well, I've never had to run through fire but I have had some scary moments with all my babies, and there was never a minute when I didn't love them with my whole heart, even when they were the naughtiest children on the face of the earth, even when I was angry with them. And even though they're all grown up now, they still need hugs. And so do I.

There was a time, before I ruptured my spleen, when I thought I was too old for hugs and I didn't want to cuddle with my mom and dad any more. But when I was in the hospital after my operation, my pediatrician, Dr. Morrow, wrote out a prescription, just like doctors do for medicine. On his prescription pad he wrote, *A dozen hugs a day*. He knew that loving touch—by people whom you know and trust—is as important for healing as medicine, no matter how old you are. And that is the truth.

GOD

(n.) Life loving you

People sometimes argue about who or what God is or is not. There is a lot of mystery around God, but I will tell you what I know for sure: God is love. God is the loving force that created all the universes and you and me and trees and tadpoles.



Jessie Willcox Smith

Artists have tried to make pictures of God. In some of them God is an old man with a long, white beard who lives in the sky. But you can't make pictures of what love IS. You can only make pictures of what love DOES.

Some people say, *I don't believe in God*. I think that is like a fish saying, *I don't believe in the sea*. There is a verse in the Bible—a big book about

God—that says, *In God, we live and move and have our being.*

Some people say, *If God is real, why do bad things happen?* I don't know why bad things happen. If I did, I'd be as big and wise as God. But I've been in some deep water, and God has always saved me from drowning.

There was a time in my life when I was very, very unhappy, and nobody—not even my mom and dad—could make my misery go away. I tried so hard to be happy, but nothing I did made me feel better. I was always sad, and I was always afraid, and I thought I'd always feel that way.

I wasn't even sure I knew how to love any more. People tried to love me, but I wouldn't let them. I didn't think I deserved their love. I just wanted to be left alone, because my sadness made other people sad. So I gave up. And after I had pushed everybody away and shut the door behind them, I realized that I wasn't alone. Something or someone was with me, helping me heal.

Little by little, my mind healed, just as my body healed after my surgery... just as all our hurts heal if we let them. And I believe that another name for healing is God. I believe that if we ask God for help, God will help us—maybe not that minute, maybe not that day, but soon. When we are



God created frogs (artist unknown)

ready. When the time is right. Because as long as we are alive, life is loving us, and that's what God is, as near as I can tell—life loving us.

At the beginning of this book, I said that PARENTS are LOVE. Our parents' love is as close to God's love as anything in our experience. They might not always act loving, but the truth is that they love us no matter what... the way life loves us... the way God loves us.



Mabel Lucie Attwell

PRAYER

(n.) Listening and talking to God

Prayer can be anything you want it to be. There are no special words you need to say, and there's no particular place you need to say them. Sometimes the best prayer is, *Help!* God understands that prayer.

There are people called mystics who seem to know how to talk with God with more clarity

than most of us. But anybody can talk with God, any time, any place.

The Bible says that God answers our prayers. Some people think that means that God will give them whatever they ask for. But they find out sooner or later that's just not true. If I ask God for a million dollars tonight, I'm pretty sure that when I wake up tomorrow morning there's not going to be any million dollars on my bed or in my purse or my bank account.

You know how we talked about **WANTS** and **NEEDS** earlier in this book? Well, I believe that if I pray for what I *want*, God will send what I *need*.

God is the Great Giver of Love, and love is the source of all happiness. It can be lots of fun to have **STUFF**. I love my home and my comfortable furniture and interesting books and pretty clothes—but they can't love me back. When I pray to God for love in my heart, and people to share it with, God always answers that prayer.

But sometimes everything goes wrong. Sometimes the people I love the most are far away, or are too busy to spend time with me, or are angry with me. Sometimes I'm afraid. Sometimes I turn into a lump of misery for no good reason. That's when I pray the *Help!* prayer. I ask God to lift me up and hold me tight and make the monsters and gremlins go away. God always answers

that prayer too, though not always as quickly as I would like.

Here's a gift I can always trust God to supply:

GRATITUDE

(n.) Feeling glad about what *is*

do you ever think, *I would be happy if only I had that THING*—whatever that *thing* might be for you: a certain game or toy or book or maybe just lots of money so you could buy the THINGS you wanted? Or do you ever think, *I would be happy if only other people would act the way I want them to act?*

Here's a secret: My mother was a wonderful woman, but sometimes she drank too much wine. I didn't like the way she acted when she was drinking. In fact, I hated to be around her. I would go to my room and read my favorite books and try to forget that my mother was downstairs drinking too much wine.

When she drank, I was miserable, and I thought, *If Mom would stop drinking, then I would be happy and I would never ask God for anything else.* Of course I prayed about it—*God, please make my mom stop drinking.* Then I'd wait five or ten minutes, and, when she kept on drinking, I



Millicent Sowerby

thought that God hadn't heard me; or that God had heard me but didn't care about me; or, worst of all, that there was no God.

When I became a parent myself, I understood. My mother drank because she was sick and unhappy. But she healed, and when she got well—even though she didn't quit drinking—she drank much less, and I didn't mind it so much. Looking back, I can see that I had a very happy childhood, and that God held my hand through the dark, scary times.

I learned to pay much more attention to the good things in my life and not weep and wail so much about the uncomfortable things.

Homeless

Here is another secret: There was a time in my life when I was homeless. I found a place to stay with some other homeless women, and when I heard their stories, I became very grateful indeed. I had always had a roof over my head, but some of those women had lived outdoors, summer and winter, rain or shine. Some had had to steal for food. Some had been drug addicts with no one to help them get well. Some had been in prison.

There were twelve of us in a large, old, roomy house with beautiful, shiny hardwood floors and great big windows that the sun streamed through in the mornings. We shared an enormous kitchen. The women who liked to cook would fix meals for those of us who weren't crazy about cooking. Some of us became close friends.

I have probably never felt so completely grateful as I felt when I was homeless, living with other homeless women, in that big, old house with its big sunny windows and shiny floors. I had my own comfortable room, I never had to be lonely, there was always something good to eat, and every woman had an interesting story. Of course, I wanted to live in a home of my own with my own furniture and maybe a cat or two. But sometimes it was enough just to watch the

sunlight filtering through the trees outside my window and know that God loved me and that life would always change in interesting ways, calling me to change, too.

Do-it-yourself gratitude

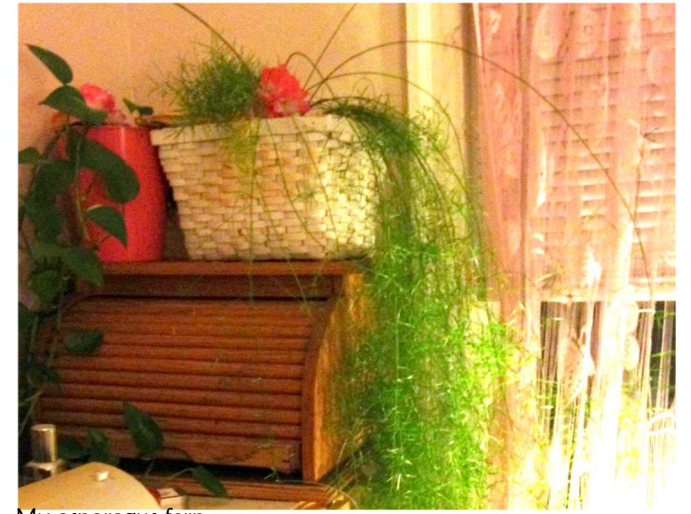
One day not long ago, I saw a picture in a magazine of a pink quilted pillow. I wanted that pillow in the worst way, but it cost 50 dollars, and there was no way I could afford to spend 50 dollars on a pillow I didn't even need.



For about five minutes I felt sorry for myself. Then I had an idea: I would make something just as pretty for almost no cost. I found some lovely rose patterns on the internet, and I printed them onto some paper. I took an empty box out of the closet, covered it with the rose-patterned paper, glued some little plastic buckets in the box, and hung it on my wall. Voila! I had a pretty bit



My bed and rug



My asparagus fern

of wall art that I could keep things in—rolls of tape, pads of paper, and other odds and ends.

Radiant gratitude

If I'm ever having trouble feeling grateful, sunlight almost always does the trick. Life on earth would not be possible without sunlight. It is the energy that all other forms of energy come from. And even if we could survive without light, it might be a pretty dreary existence.

People who live near the North Pole know what it's like to live in the dark—and they also know how to enjoy it. In Tromsø, Norway—200 miles north of the Arctic Circle—the sun never rises between November and January, though there are a few hours of dusky light every day. But the attitudes of those who live there are up-

beat. There are festivals and celebrations and cozy candlelit gatherings. And on the darkest nights the residents are treated to the Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights—a panorama of spectacular swirls and bands of color that dance across the sky.

Even so, some people have trouble getting used to so many hours of bitter cold and dark skies. Those who love living there are the ones who make up their minds to be happy. Often, when you decide to be grateful, things to be grateful for show up in great clumps.

Human gratitude

If you have a gratitude list—and if you don't, I suggest you make one—I'll bet the first things on your list are other people. When I ask little kids what they're most grateful for, most of them say *Mom* or *Dad*.

I'm grateful for the parents who brought me into the world, took care of me when I couldn't even tie my shoes, showed me how to be kind and loving, answered the gazillions of questions I asked—from *Why is the sky blue?* to *How does electricity work?*—and went to all my piano recitals and Christmas programs. They made sure I knew that I was loved and lovable and helped me learn to deal with anger and sadness, too. I'm



grateful for my sister and brother, nieces and nephews, children and grandchildren... and for the friends who are as close to me as family. I could start making a gratitude list first thing in the morning and write all day long, and by bedtime I wouldn't even be half finished.

DEATH

(n.) The beginning of the next adventure

When my mother died, in 1974, I was very sad and angry. One day she was lively and happy; the next day she was gone and I couldn't find her. I was old enough to understand that she wasn't going to come back, but some little part of me thought it was just a bad dream.

We humans have five senses with which we get information about the world: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. But many very smart people believe that we have more senses that we simply don't know how to use. I believe it too... and even though I can't see my parents, or hear, smell, touch, or taste them, they are somehow with me—in the same way that love and other invisible things are always with me too.

Several years ago, I woke up one morning and had a strong sense of my parents' presence in the next room. I couldn't see, hear, smell, touch, or taste them. I could, of course, remember them... but my sense told me they were with me now, in the present, that very moment.

Every morning for about three weeks, I woke up with the same sense. I knew that if I went into the next room, I wouldn't see my parents. It didn't matter. I had the same feeling of joy that I would have had if I *could* have seen them.



Millicent Sowerby

One of the reasons I know that my parents are very much alive—even though I can't see them—is that I still love them. It's not just the *memories* of them that I love. It is an active, very-much-in-the-moment sort of love.

THE MOMENT

(n.) Where you always are

do you remember what I said earlier, about the time in my life when I was always sad and afraid? I was either living in the past—feeling bad about something that happened yesterday or a month ago or last year—or

living in the future—worrying about what might happen tomorrow or next week or next year. And because of all that fretting about the past or the future, I wasn't enjoying the moment.

Let me tell you, I was one miserable human being. I had a wonderful family and amazing friends and a cozy and comfortable place to live and plenty to eat, but I was too busy making myself unhappy to enjoy them.

Babies are always living in the moment. They might be screaming their little heads off, but it's always about something that's happening RIGHT NOW. As soon as they've been fed and cuddled, those big baby smiles are back on their faces. We could all be happier if we were a little more like babies that way.

Any time you find yourself stuck in the past or the future, remember to be grateful for NOW.

MOST OF ALL...

this book is about the importance of invisible things. I would even say that all real and important things are invisible. Remember when we talked about *stuff* and I said that *stuff* doesn't make us happy, it's our feelings *about* stuff that bring us joy and pleasure?

If everybody understood that, it would put an end to so much of the fear and the fighting that darken our world. As long as people think that *stuff* makes them happy, they're going to keep wanting more stuff. Their own stuff won't be enough to give them joy and contentment. They'll want other people's stuff too, and that's when the fighting starts.

LOVE is not a separate definition in this *Dictionary of Invisible Things* because the whole book is about love. It is the invisible thing that all the others pour into.

I've enjoyed talking to you, telling you a little bit about what I've learned in 70 years of living. I hope that you've enjoyed it too. And so I wish you a wonderful life filled with amazing experiences and beautiful people and special moments. But most of all...

I wish you love.





Jessie Willcox Smith

The End



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