

The Smile of a Child

by Rae Neal



A twinkle of delight worth living for
That rescues from life's morass
Is a child's smile that lights up their face
And lights up your heart, as well.
Even better is when a giggle breaks forth
And their eyes shine and their bodies ripple
When it turns into unrestrained laughter.
Then simple joys become amplified
As memories from the past resurface
And pictures roll through your mind
Of long ago years and forgotten moments.

A recall from younger days is
When nothing else but the sunshine
And a tarnished blue bicycle
Make promises of a carefree afternoon.
Pedaling as fast as you can,
You're off to your best friend's home.
The wind blows in your face
And billows fill out your blouse.
The fake motor of the queen of spades
Attached to the rim with a clothespin,
Flaps on the spokes and alerts the neighbors
Of your passing by or pending arrival.

With a child's smile in front of you,
Another memory slides into view;
A summer evening with friends on the block
Chasing around the corner street-lamp.
The worthy mission for the entire gang;
Capturing fireflies as they twinkle by,
Coaxing them into pint-size canning jars
With lids poked through by an ice pick
To prevent their quick demise.
What odd creatures they are, we thought,
To carry flashlights upon their backs.

A child's smile is a cherished reminder
Of long ago days that lay behind
And the shortened days looming ahead.
A child's smile elicits your own,
Maybe even a giggle or two.
The smile becomes the curved loop
That links us all to eternity;
Parent-child, parent-child,
Until we come full circle
To God the Father and to His Son.
With their welcoming smiles
They lead us to our ancestors;
To parent-child, parent-child
And we become forever linked
Through the smile of a child.

Luke 18:16, "But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.'"