

## A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

It is 1969, Springtime in Groton, our first Memorial Day Parade, our first taste of small town Yankee pride and patriotism. We had heard so much about it from our friends. The small New Jersey town we moved from the previous fall could boast of nothing to compare with this time-honored Groton tradition which reached across so many decades.

Our family is full of excitement today; our twelve year old, Geoffrey will be marching with the Groton-Dunstable Band along with several dozen other high school and middle school youngsters, his first parade and he has butterflies. It is a first for us all.

The marchers are assembling in the parking lot of Prescott School a half hour before parade time. So, in spite of the hectic challenge of stuffing three kids, a three-month old infant, car bed, diaper bag, extra bottle, aluminum folding chair, a trombone case and ourselves into the family station wagon, Bert and I manage to get Geoff there on time. He hops out of the car, grabs his horn and hurries to join his band mates. With luck we find a parking spot at the Old Groton Inn across the street (*since burned down and rebuilt*) and unload. Bert cradles baby Beverly, while I pick up the chair and baby essentials. Brian and Cindy skip ahead. We make our way past the Post Office, (*Now the Natural Shop*) and join a cluster of happy flag-waving spectators sporting red, white and blue leis around their necks.

This is our first opportunity to see our newly adopted town in full bloom and take in the clean, fresh smell in the air. Pink and white flowering trees, blazing azaleas, pots of geraniums, clumps of iris all grace the front lawns of stately white antique Colonials which stretch the full length of Main Street. Old Glory hangs by each front doorway.

As newcomers in town, we don't know anyone in the group but that problem is quickly solved when one of the men asks if we are the new folks who moved into the old Harriman Inn on Old Ayer Road last fall. Friendly handshakes and introductions immediately ensue along with much cooing over wide-eyed Beverly, snuggled in Daddy's arms. One man ruffles Brian's mop of red hair and asks him if he likes baseball. Another stoops to slip a lei over Cindy's head. The children are ushered to a perfect curbside viewing spot and I settle next to them in my chair. I reach for restless Beverly, arrange her on my lap and pull her bottle from the bag. As far as one can see, there are onlookers three deep on each side of Main Street.

Suddenly the sounds of drums and brass roll toward us and everyone turns to catch the first glimpse of the parade. Brian and Cindy jump for joy and I am caught by an unexpected thrill. As the sounds come closer, marchers come into view, led by a uniformed color guard: a sailor, a soldier, a marine. Each holds a flag: the Stars and Stripes flanked on either side by the official flags of the State of Massachusetts and the Town of Groton. Three others march behind them carrying ceremonial rifles.

To our delight, the lead band is the Groton-Dunstable school band and Geoff is on the front row with the trombone section. In front of them, three cute teens in short

swirling gray skirts, maroon jackets, black boots and plumed hats, twirl batons. The band also is dressed in maroon and gray uniforms with gold braid and brass buttons, somewhat ill-fitting, rather warm for the occasion and undoubtedly pre-WWII issue. The kids are doing a fair to middlin' job punching out Sousa's "El Capitan" and I feel a tear roll down my cheek. It's not that I am overcome with emotion seeing my son marching in his first parade: it's not because I am moved by the music of John Philip Sousa. I'm not even sure I like martial music very much. But ever since I can remember a marching band in full sound brings tears to my eyes. There is simply no explanation.

Hurrying alongside the band is their short squat uniformed director trying his best to keep them in step and in straight lines. The crowd doesn't care; it applauds them with enthusiasm. Geoffrey glances our way and smiles.

I watch Bert and I know what he is thinking. A drummer since boyhood, a musician first class in the Navy, who played in the 1953 inaugural parade for President Eisenhower, he's just itching to step in, grab a snare and pick up the cadence a notch or so. "Let's get this parade movin'!" he's saying to himself.

Following the band comes a group of men and women I can't identify because they are not wearing uniforms. All are in street dress. "Who are they?" I ask and a man behind me says they are our State representative and the town selectmen. "We don't have a mayor" he explains, "only the Board of Selectmen." and that I'll learn more about them when I go to Town Meeting. "Town Meeting?" I ask but he turns his eyes toward the shiny new fire truck and crew of Groton's Volunteer Fire Department, all volunteers except for the Chief who, along with two others, is mounted on horseback.

Behind them march a herd of Scouts: Boy Scouts, led by Eagle Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, Brownies, all in uniform and looking proud. Their uniformed den leaders, marching along side them, wave at friends along the way and spur on the dawdlers. One Cub spots Brian and calls out to him. "He is in my class." he says, so pleased to have been recognized. Some of the younger Cubs and Brownies lag behind, some dawdle; their dedicated leaders spur them on.

A new sound catches my ears. Actually, it's an echo from Revolutionary days. It's the Groton Fife and Drum Corps in authentic Colonial costume. I can't remember ever hearing fifes before. They're leading a company of Minute men. some shouldering muskets. Trailing them walk the ladies auxiliary in long flowing dresses and white bonnets. There are no Tories in this scene. The parade halts for a brief moment and shutter buffs race to capture them on film. A musket shot rings out. Beverly lets out a wail. I rock her, cuddle her, try to soothe her with a soft song and nuzzle into her sweet baby fragrance.

I hear a different sound wafting over the horizon, the clear tones of men's voices joined in song. A flat bed truck comes into view carrying a band of Union soldiers in navy blue who share a musical moment of comradery with the crowd. I recognize the song: "We're camping to night by the old camp ground." a relic from Civil War days. Along each side of the street several men are handing out small flags to the children. I

read somewhere that it was just a few years after the Civil War that Memorial Day was first celebrated by widows from both sides of the conflict. They joined together to honor the countless thousands who had fallen in that disastrous conflict by marking their graves with wreaths of flowers..

I am quickly returned to the present as a convoy of shiny top down convertibles creeps by. In the lead car, the commander of Laurence W. Gay American Legion Post 55 and several Legionnaires ride. My new acquaintance explains that each of the other cars carries an honored passenger, a World War I veteran. Now no longer able to walk the parade route, they wave and salute the cheering crowd. "Who was Laurence Gay?" I ask and she tells me that he was the last Groton soldier who died in that horrendous cataclysmic European conflict. Behind the motorcade a platoon rows of younger vets, men and women, heroes of War II, and the Korean conflict march along. I am impressed by how many, still fit and trim, proudly wear the uniform of the unit they once served. Along the sidelines several vets are distributing artificial poppies, the official flower of the American Legion family, which I knew was the symbol of mourning after World War I to commemorate the thousands buried in Flanders Field where acres of poppies cover the landscape. I think of all the wars, all those who sacrificed and all the veterans Memorial Day now embraces.

Next comes a contingent of Lawrence Academy boys and their masters in traditional prep school attire: blue blazers, gray slacks and matching striped neckties. The lady standing next to me is happy to see them in the parade. "Lawrence Academy has been a part of our town for over three hundred years" she informs me. "They should take part in our parade. And here comes Groton School" she adds, "That's the prep school FDR attended, you know." "No, I didn't know" I reply and for a brief moment my thoughts turn back to my childhood, the 1930's when FDR was the only President I ever knew until I got to jr. high school. After the preppies come troops of Girl Scouts and Brownies with their leaders happily waving and calling to friends on the sidelines.

The stirring sounds of "Stars and Stripes Forever" begin to fill the air. In perfect step to the accompaniment of the official Fort Devens military band, a brigade of Green Berets passes by. The crowds cheer; the soldiers look straight ahead, stoic, unmoved.

Finally, bringing up the rear, comes a swarm of kids on bikes, beribboned with red, white and blue crepe paper, They're doing wheelies, going in circles, criss-crossing Main Street, all the crazy things kids like to do on bikes. No one seems to mind.

A slow moving police cruiser marks the end of the parade. I see the crowds begin to fill the street behind the paraders obviously headed for some destination.

"What's next?" I asked my new acquaintance.

"The ceremony in the Groton cemetery." she replies.

"Is that very far?" I ask.

"About two miles from here but you'll have to walk. All the streets are blocked."

Bert and I look at each other. Beverly is getting very restless. Cindy and Brian

are hunkered down on the curb.“ Not this year” I say.

“You're right, Edie. Come on, kids. Let's head for the car,” he says and folds up the chair. “I'll come back later for your brother.”

## PART TWO

It is May 1972. Springtime has returned to Groton and we are once again captured by blossoming beauty and birdsong everywhere. With relief, I watch the iciest most snow-bound winter I've ever experienced slip into the recorded annals of the National Weather Bureau. To the delight of the children, they've had six snow days. I think they'll be sorry come June. Nevertheless in February the snow drifts by our barn were so deep, they all had the time of their lives climbing up on the barn roof and leaping into them, disappearing out of sight. I held my breath waiting for each one to emerge. I wonder how many years I must live in New England to get used to these winters? Today I'm humming “Welcome Sweet Springtime.”

The three and a half years we've lived in Groton have passed quickly but adjusting to this small centuries-old town has been slow for me. Going to the Unitarian Church has helped some but I find even there most old timers I meet are courteous, but very reserved. It would be wrong to say “cold” or “aloof” but there's just this feeling I have that they're waiting for me to do something to prove I'm an authentic “townie” but I have no idea what that something might be. Those families who have become our closest friends are, like ourselves, transplants from somewhere else. We've formed a kind of kinship and enjoy our “happy hours” together although I'm beginning to think these are becoming too frequent and too “happy”.

Bert is teaching full time at Fitchburg State and loves it. After two years bumping along a rocky road side by side with the unpredictable, untrustworthy and sometimes devious founder of the start-up management consulting firm whose promises enticed us to make the wrenching move to New England, he has decided on the less turbulent environment of academia. He is a born teacher; no doubt about it.

Geoffrey is enrolled in the all-boys Fenn School in Concord and thriving after a disastrous sixth grade year in the Groton-Dunstable Middle School. He has taken great interest in acrylic painting and plays trombone in the excellent Fenn band. Geoff amazed us all when he made the varsity hockey team, quite a feat since he had never owned pair of skates before we moved to Groton.

Brian and Cindy are still in the Groton-Dunstable public school system which cannot hold a candle to what we had in New Jersey. When we moved here in '69 we were shocked to discover there was no kindergarten for Cindy. We had to send her to the little community pre-school at the Federated Church in Ayer. But, unlike Geoff, they seem more able to go with the flow. Cindy tells me she can't stand her third grade teacher but loves all the new friends she's made. Brian plays trumpet and has a horse, a retired race horse named Sculley who needed a good home. Every once in a while, Sculley jumps the corral fence and takes off down Old Ayer Road or across the

neighbor's pasture with the Tompkins family in pursuit. Thank goodness there is very little traffic on the road. Cindy is begging for a pony. We'll see.

Bert is following his bliss.....playing drums. Last summer he joined every town band in the area. I think these summertime town bands are a wonderful New England tradition. We had nothing like in in New Jersey. From mid June to Labor Day, there is no end of outdoor evening concerts on town commons for me to attend: Leominster, Tuesday night; Ashby, Wednesday night; Townsend, Thursday night Fitchburg, Sunday afternoon. And on top of these, most Saturday nights I live the life of a band widow while he's off playing clubs with the Frank Sherry combo. I don't mind. He loves it and that's what counts.

Everyone takes delight in three year old Beverly, still the baby in our eyes and I wonder for how long. She's six years younger than her nearest sibling so we're all to blame for spoiling her. Except for a weekly play date, story hour at the library and Sunday school, it's only Bev and me together for much of the day while the others are at school.. But she's never lonely, never bored. She's in her own happy world, with her two imaginary playmates, Meeker and Nursey, constantly by her side.

I am back to teaching again, part-time as choral director at Groton-Dunstable High School and Middle School. I've never taught adolescents before; it's both interesting and challenging. It's fun to get to know what kids are listening to, Beatles, Baez, Mitchell, Dillon, Simon and Garfunkle, folk songs, protest songs, and I share their taste. I must be doing something right because both choruses have been growing in number since September. Our first Spring concert is coming up in three weeks. Fingers crossed.

My coworker, Will, the band director, has just given me some shocking news. In protest over the Vietnam War the high-school band has refused to march in the Memorial Day parade. I learn that Lawrence Academy and Groton School will not be participating either for the same reason. The Fort Devan military band is marching in another town which leaves a handful of fifers and drummers to lead Groton's most important and only annual parade. Groton doesn't parade on the Fourth of July. Naturally the whole town is upset about it. The commander of the Lawrence Gay American Legion Post, however, is adamant. There will be a parade, band or no band! Our veterans will parade! Our veterans will be honored!

The high school kids are on my mind. This war has made them angry and confused and I confess I share many of their feelings. But the difference between me and them is knowing the real meaning and history of Memorial Day which reaches back to the earliest days following the Civil War. It's not their fault: they haven't been taught. alightbout this. They don't know this day was first set aside to honor the many thousands who, regardless of whether they fought for the Union or the Confederacy, had made the extreme sacrifice. All their lives Memorial Day has meant a long week-end, a time to open the pool and light up the first barbecue of the summer. Showing honor and respect for our fallen heroes has been farthest from their young minds. The Vietnam War is terribly wrong I agree but to believe our town's Memorial Day parade is the veue

anti-war protest is a sadly misdirected conclusion. I wish I could make them understand.

I'm thinking to myself "How can you have a parade without a band? How do you keep in step? Stay together? A parade without a band has no soul. Then I get an idea. Why not form a town band? There must be plenty of folks in town who play instruments. I put the idea to Bert. He's all for it. We get on the phone and call everyone we can think of. "Meet us in our driveway Friday afternoon at four o'clock, bring your own instrument and pass the word along." I put a sign up in Bruce's Pharmacy and pray for the best. Where will I find easy music everyone can play? I tell my plan to the band director. He thinks I'm crazy but, yes, help yourself to the easy band books he says. "You're welcome to our bass drum if you need one," he adds.

It is four o'clock the Friday afternoon before Memorial Day and I'm looking at a motley crew of musicians, all ages, all sizes, standing in our driveway. Kids, moms, and dads are tuning up and ready to go. I count three trumpets, two trombones, one baritone horn, two flutes, three clarinets, a tenor sax, snare drum and a bass drum. Fifteen in all. I quiet them down, give them a little pep talk and pass out the music. Our first attempt is the Marines Hymn. It actually sounds better than I thought it would. We play it through a few times and move on to Anchors Aweigh and the Caissons song. Flipping through my book I find The Battle Hymn of the Republic and My country 'Tis of Thee. Five pieces, that should do it. We'll keep recycling them. Standing on the side lines I spy Charlotte Bell, a reporter for the Public Spirit, but also one of those unofficial town officials every small town has; you know, the one you find in the midst of everything that's going on.

After an hour or so, our legs are tired from standing; their embouchures ache from sudden abuse. As they begin to pack up an awful thought hits my mind. These folks can play the pieces well enough but there's no way on earth they will be able to play and march at the same time. I share my thoughts with the group; they agree and faces fall. But up pipes Charlotte who announces in her gruff almost mannish deep voice that she will guarantee to have a flat bed truck from the G.V. Moore Lumberyard, appropriately decorated for Memorial Day waiting for us in the parking lot of Prescott School. "Be there at 8:15 sharp!" she orders and heads out the drive way toward Ayer. With relief the group disbands with promises to practice all weekend.

Memorial Day arrives with perfect parade weather and Bert and the boys have loaded the station wagon with a snare drum, bass drum, trumpet and trombone. Our neighbor is taking the girls to the parade so we hop in our car and drive to town each one of us both excited and uncertain about what is about to happen. The flat bed truck that awaits us in the parking lot of Prescott School is festooned with red, white and blue flags and swags. Charlotte is true to her word. We are greeted by an enthusiastic crowd of Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, firemen, policemen, Selectmen, color guard, veterans, our State Rep and Minute Men assembling into parade formation. Most band members are already on the truck, waiting for me to tell them where to sit. It makes sense to put the trombones on the tailgate and the drums at the back. The rest I group by sections,

woodwinds or brass. I take my place, baton in hand, and lead them through a couple of warm up numbers. Not too bad I think. The American Legion commander approaches, greets us warmly and thanks us profusely. "We are saving his parade" he says with a catch in his voice.

At nine o'clock sharp the parade comes to life and with a lively cadence set by Bert, we roll out of the parking lot onto Main Street led by Chief Darling in his police cruiser, the color guard, followed by the one and only Groton Community Truck Band with a lively rendition of Anchors Aweigh. But before the first phrase is barely over, I am crying in full view of the clusters of townsfolk filling the sidewalks. All along the way, the crowd breaks into cheers and applause; some snap pictures. A few, I notice, stand quietly with their hands over their hearts also unable to hold back tears. This is a proud moment for us all. I pray I won't cry all the way to the cemetery.

The truck slowly creeps down Main Street but the pace of the music never lags. Bert keeps things moving at the military march tempo of 120 beats per minute. In between each selection he holds the the marchers in step with a flurry of cadences. Now and then, he shows off, twirls his sticks to the delight of the crowd. For a moment there is a minor conflict with the contingent of Minutemen halfway down the line, who are marching to a different drummer, a slower one, accompanied by fifes.

The truck band is blasting out the Marine's Hymn as we pass Moisin's Hardware, (*now the Salt and Light Cafe*) Town Hall draped in our national colors and Desmond's Five and Dime. (*now Bruno's Pizza*) When we reach Hollis street, blocked off from traffic, there is a crowd at every corner. The group in front of Dickson's Drug Store (*now Murphy's Insurance*) on the corner of Court Street The crowd cheers and claps in time to the beat. At Union Congregational Church, where parishioners are selling coffee and muffins, Bert quiets his drum and the marchers come to a halt for a brief but welcome rest.

I can't see what's going on, but Tom Crow, one of our tailgate trombonists, tells me the color guard and Legion members are laying a wreath by the flagpole in the small common across from the church. On the other side of the common, at Pleasant Street, more onlookers are watching from Johnny's Texaco (*now Fihlo's*) and the Groton Market. We wait in a brief interlude of silence, suddenly broken when by a three volley gun salute splits the air. Everyone falls into parade formation and Bert's cadence resumes. We take up the Battle Hymn of the Republic and we're on the move again past the P&C Super Market, Sacred Heart Church, and the old Baptist Church (*now Paul Matisse's studio*) with its original official town clock striking the hour.

We make a right turn onto School Street past Legion Common and the old Burial Ground, where clusters of thin weathered granite slabs lean against time. inscribed with names of Groton's earliest settlers. We get to Legion Hall where The Legion Auxiliary is also selling refreshments. There we meet up with Hollis Street and the final leg of our parade, I notice a few Cub Scouts and Brownies have dropped by the wayside. rescued by their parents, but most of the marchers seem to be holding up well and in good spirits

waving and calling out to friends along the way.

Along Hollis Street just beyond Martin's Pond Road, we make one more stop at the bronze monument on the Sawyer Common. Another wreath laying, another moment of silence, another gun salute, another drum cadence and we're headed for the Groton cemetery. The band fills the air with a stirring rendition of "The Caisson's Song." It's strange, I think, such a rousing song is all about artillery weapons.

As we enter the town cemetery, silence rules. A mood like reverence seems to take over. The truck low gears it up the graveled incline; players put down their instruments, marchers break stride and slowly make their way up the hill, followed by townsfolk, even a few children, some of whom have followed the parade from the sound off at Prescott School. As we pass hillside graves marked with flags and flowers, a few step off the path to spend a quiet moment with their separate memories at the grave side of a loved one, a neighbor, a friend, an ancestor before rejoining the procession. Our destination is the clearing at the crest of the hill where the Legion Commander waits for all to assemble.

Our driver parks the truck to one side behind the crowd so there will be plenty of room for all. The band remains on the truck and waits patiently for folks to find their places. After a brief welcome, the Commander asks Father Navien from Sacred heart Church to give the invocation. I bow my head and reflect on how many years, decades, a century or more, Groton folks like me, like the truck band, like my neighbors, like my church friends, have been quietly congregating here to commemorate the sacrifices of so many. A Groton's Selectman, steps to the podium and in a few solemn measured words brings our attention to the meaning of this ceremony.

At the conclusion of his remarks, I signal the band to take up their instruments and lead them through a chorus of "America". The Commander returns to the podium and, over Bert's sustained muffled drum roll, recites the long list of names that thread Groton's way through the history of America's wars. Beginning with the Revolution, I hear the same names echoing down through the years: Sawyer, Farnsworth, Tolles, Tarbell, Lawrence, Babcock, Gilson, Blood, Shattuck, Moore, Parker and more. All have an Anglo-Saxon ring to them. As I listen, I find myself opening up to the rich history of my adopted town. In the lingering silence which follows the recitation, Reverend Rosenberger from First Parish Church steps to the podium and delivers a reverent benediction. Then, from a distance behind us, a Fort Devens bugler lifts his instrument to his lips and begins to play "Taps". We are held in unbroken stillness. It comes to my mind how extraordinary it is that twenty-four notes, a call for "lights out" during Civil War days, has become America's music of mourning, ingrained in our national conscience. Just four separate tones, a simple broken tonic chord patterned in slow repetitious rhythm and soaring on the long breath of the bugler, can leave a crowd motionless, awed and humbled. The final sustained note trails off and slowly, quietly the crowd begins to make its way down the hill to Hollis Street. Some head for home, some straggle along; the hardiest follow the band back to



Prescott School. The crowds by the side of the road have diminished now. Our driver takes a short cut back to home base where a reporter from the Public Spirit awaits. He shoots me with a barrage of questions and wants the names of all the band members. I happily comply and hope I haven't left anyone out. I'm feeling enormous pride. Bert joins us. His snare drum dangles from one arm; with the other he gives me a little hug.

"We did it, Princess," he whispers. "We saved the parade." I come to the sudden realization that I must have stopped crying by the time we got to Dickson's Drug Store.

### POST SCRIPT

It is early May, 1973. we are all seated at the dinner table. The kids are happy that tonight is Prince spaghetti night and are asking "What's for dessert?" The telephone rings. Of course! Doesn't it always ring at dinner time? Being the closest, I reach for the phone. On the other end is Dave Eliot from the American Legion. I move away from the noisy family table talk. We exchange pleasant words and he explains the reason for his call.

"Edie, the Legion is making plans for the Memorial Day Parade and I've got some good news I'm sure you'll want to hear. The Groton-Dunstable school band is rejoining us this year as well as Fort Devens. And both Lawrence Academy and Groton School will be back on the scene."

"That is good news, Dave. I'm sure you are greatly relieved after last year's experience."

"Well, the reason I'm calling is to ask you and your truck band to participate again this year. You are all very special, you know. In fact, it's out of gratitude for what you folks did for our town last year that we would like you lead the parade again."

I am quiet for a moment.

"Edie? Are you there?"

"Oh, yes. Sorry, Dave. You've taken me by surprise."

"Well, what do you say?"

"I must say that I am extremely honored and both humbled and a bit flattered, Dave. Yes, the Groton Community Truck band was very special, wasn't it? But I have to say "was". I'm afraid our little band was born with a very short life span; only one day. It's lived it's life expectancy, you see; filled it's purpose, took you over a rough road. Now it appears all the pieces are in place for a very smooth, successful parade and I'm very happy for you all. Thank you so very much for inviting us, Dave. We'll be cheering from the sidelines."

"I'm really sorry you've declined, Edie. The others will be sorry, too. But none of us will ever forget our Groton Community Truck Band. Have a nice evening."

"Good night, Dave. And thanks for calling."

"Who was that?" Bert asks.

"The American Legion. I'll tell you about it later. Now, who would like some apple pie?"

THE END

Edith S Tompkins May, 2021

GROTON FIFTY YEARS AGO  
*(reminiscing by the pond on a summer afternoon)*

My ears strain to hear them  
but they are mute as mist;  
a few silent pictures  
flicker through my mind.  
It's their voices I miss.

Like the groan of gears,  
a hiss of brakes,  
as a truck, apple laden,  
pulled up our steep hill  
on its way to winter storage.

Or those boyish whoops  
from a backyard tussle  
of two-hand touch  
while old Baron whined  
to be let outside to join the game.

Or, from the birch behind the barn,  
the cry of a lonesome towhee  
who waits with hope for her answer  
to come singing back to him  
across the broad meadow.

Or, on an early snowy morn,  
three blaring blasts  
of the fire house horn  
jolting us from slumber.  
"NO SCHOOL TODAY!"

Or the thwack of a hockey puck  
sent skittering across the pond  
and the mad clatter of sticks,  
wood slapping wood, slapping ice  
in frenzied hot pursuit.

When, from the nearby orchard,  
rich Jamaican voices  
made the hillside ring with song  
while deft brown fingers  
stripped the trees of fruit.

Or, from his stall in the barn,  
impatient snorts and neighs  
from Scully demanding his oats,  
some slurps of cool water  
and a gallop across the field.

Clamoring hooves and bellows  
when Charlie's herd of Angus  
burst through the paddock fence  
on their annual Spring break  
to claim our fresh green lawn.

Such ordinary sounds  
could draw me to a window,  
nudge me out of doors  
and put me off schedule  
for one precious moment.

In the soft light of memory  
each brings back a smile.  
If only I could hear them  
shout, sing, stomp, scream,  
do something to ruffle up the air.