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## The World of Men

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## The World of Men

He was just a little boy,  
 And his right eye was crossed,  
 So he squinted it and looked  
 At the world through the other one.  
 His hair was like dandelion seed,  
 And his father's friends would tease,  
 "Where did you get that white hair?"  
 And he would reply with intended precision  
 (for even then he was passionate about truth),  
 But in a voice that squeaked,  
 "My hair is dark white."

His father's friends always knew what to do  
 When a horse needed shoeing or a car broke.  
 There was wiry Willard McLaws who could  
 Put a strap around a refrigerator  
 And carry it up a flight of stairs.  
 And Ed Gillespie, who at rodeos  
 Could pluck a bronc rider from the  
 Back of a bucking horse when the whistle blew.  
 And Shag Tate, that his father taught him  
 To say was the ugliest man in town;  
 And Minky, who'd been All-American  
 Halfback and called the boy Sour Puss.

He followed his father into their world,  
 Watched their arm wrestling,  
 And listened to their talk  
 About quarterbacks and deer hunts  
 And cutting horses and Chevrolets,  
 And the eternal argument over whether  
 Shag Tate was really uglier than Rufus Bevan.

The boy walked a little spraddle-legged  
 Like his father—though he was  
 Knock-kneed rather than bowlegged,  
 And he tried to wave at people on the street  
 Using two fingers the way his father did.  
 And at night in his prayers  
 He said God bless Minky,  
 And Ed Gillespie, and Willard McLaws.

—John Sterling Harris