THE ANGRY TREE

Ma and Michael walked leisurely up the road that would take them to the big street opposite the "park". Along the way Michael picked up objects that were of special interest to him to show to Ma for approval or opinion. First a pile of used up firecrackers, then the acorns that seemed to be everywhere. Ma showed him how the "hats" on top of the acorns came off very easily if the acorn was dry enough. The fresher, greener ones were the possible new trees so Ma put one of those in her pocket just in case a suitable place was found for planting. They reached the top of the road and turned to walk on the pavement that took them to the main street. Near a drain, Michael found a deep hole and Ma said that would be a good spot for the acorn in her pocket. She handed it to him and he dropped it into the hole. Neither of them could be sure the acorn would sprout, but if it did, it would be their special secret. The people in the neighborhood would always wonder how a tree grew out of a drain. They laughed and continued on their way to the traffic light.

PART TWO

Michael had noticed the large cemetery the first time he went to visit Aunt Lisa and Uncle Kent at their new house. He thought how neat it would be to walk around the stones and markers and read the names and dates on them. But asking grownups to walk with him in the cemetery seemed to make them uncomfortable. He supposed he would never get his chance. But wonder of wonders, Ma had come to Atlanta to surprise him on his birthday. He thought about Ma often. He missed her and all the special things they shared. She always had time to listen to him and take his side. Mom said Ma was spoiling him but he liked that part of Ma best. Sometimes she made him do things he didn't believe he could do, like climbing to the top of the giant rope spider and almost touching the sky. Ma was the perfect one to take on a walk to the"park". Towards the end of her visit, they went to spend the afternoon with Aunt Lisa. On the way, Michael mentioned his wish. Ma promised him they would go that very afternoon, as soon as Aunt Lisa left for an appointment.

And now there they were, Ma and Michael, running across the busy street toward the large iron gates that opened to that special "park".

PART THREE

The cemetery spread before them. It was very pretty, full of vases filled with flowers. "Which way shall we go," said Ma. Michael didn't answer right away but ran down a small hill calling to Ma to follow him. Together they walked from marker to marker. Michael found some with his birthdate and some with names that were the same as many of the Georgia counties. There was one part where all the men who had fought in wars were buried. The flowers in the vases weren't real but they were still very pretty. Michael asked Ma if they could walk further where the big tombstones were. "Michael, I am getting tired and they look so far away," she said. Please,please Ma. She paused caught her breath and said,"Michael, we will go as far as the hill with the big tree on the top." That was fine with him because he too was beginning to tire. As they walked to the hill, a young man drove past them, stopped and got out of his car. In his arms were two fresh flower arrangements in pots. He placed each one on separate graves. Ma and Michael walked quietly so they would not disturb the man.

As they ~~walked~~ walked up the hill, it became very quiet, not even a breeze was blowing. Michael started reading the stones and Ma helped with the harder names. As they walked closer to the tree at the top, they heard popping sounds like firecrackers. They looked around, seeing nothing, they continued to the tree. The popping got louder and suddenly they were being hit by large seed pods that were coming from the tree. They were hit on

on the head and back as the tree rattled and shook harder and harder. "Michael, the tree doesn't want us here. Lets go," shouted Ma. She grabbed his hand and they raced down the hill. The could hear the popping continue as the seed pods hit the ground. They didn't stop running until they saw a stone bench at the bottom of the hill. They flopped on the bench, trying to catch their breath. The looked up the hill to the top. The tree stood quietly, not a branch was moving. Ma and Michael looked at each other, then back at the tree. "I really think that tree ws angry at us,"she said as Michael nodded his head in agreement. "I never saw a tree so angry," he sighed. They rested on the bench and started walking slowly back to the cemetery entrance. They stopped to read more stones recognizing other well-known Georgia families. They picked up fallen leaves and twigs and showed them to each other to compares shapes and colors. The air was still and there were birds everywhere singing cheerfully. The late afternoon sun felt warm and friendly. Michael took Ma's hand as they headed out the entrance past the big iron gates.

"Well, Michael, this was really an adventure." "Yes, Ma it sure was" he thought, another special shared day.