

Sketch

Volume 25, Number 2

1959

Article 1

Jamie and Me

Bob Boston*

*Iowa State College

Copyright ©1959 by the authors. *Sketch* is produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress).
<http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/sketch>

Jamie and Me

Bob Boston

Abstract

Jamie and me walked pretty slow through old man Carter's field; slower than most of the other guys would have walked, anyway...

Jamie and Me

JAMIE and me walked pretty slow through old man Carter's field; slower than most of the other guys would have walked, anyway. Most everybody ran through that field, if they went through it at all, because everybody knew that old man Carter had one of the meanest bulls for miles around. Jamie and me always walked through it pretty slow, though. We didn't do it to show off for the other guys, because we'd go slow even when just Jamie and me were there, and we didn't have to show off for each other because we were real friends, you know, and we didn't have to pretend for each other.

All of us guys had been swimming at the beaver pond that Sunday afternoon, but Jamie and me had stayed a little longer than the rest of them because we didn't live so far away, and we could make it home for supper faster than they could. It had been a pretty good afternoon. The sun was real hot, and there wasn't any wind to make you cold when you came out of the water with the little droplets beaded up all over your skin and shining like jewels in the sunlight. Terry had brought his big beach ball along, and we had played tag with it until Terry got mad because he couldn't catch anybody. Then George Newton called him a frilly-britches, and Terry started crying when everybody laughed. I started to laugh, too, but then I saw that Jamie wasn't laughing, and I remembered that it was mean to laugh like that, so I looked at Terry and tried to smile a comforting smile like Mother always smiles at me when something has gone wrong and makes me feel bad. I always feel silly when I smile that smile, though, because I don't think I'm old enough to be doing it.

Anyway, I don't believe it comforted Terry very much, because he just kept on crying and then ran off down the

lane. All the other guys went back to the beaver pool, but Jamie stood there for a long time and watched Terry run down the road and then stop to look back at us. Jamie waved to him, and Terry waved back, because he knew the trouble wasn't Jamie's fault. We stood and watched Terry keep going then, and when he had gone over the rise we went back to the water.

After Terry left, the rest of us stayed for a while and just swam, but without a ball, we didn't feel like playing tag, and pretty soon the guys started drifting off until only Jamie and me were left. Jamie and me didn't mind that at all since we like to be alone together. That's the only time we can really talk, you know, and tell each other what we're going to do when we grow up. We usually talk about the boat we're going to build to sail around the world in. Jamie says that he especially wants to go to Africa or India or China, because there are a lot of people there that need help, and he wants to help them. He says maybe we could teach them how to farm better because they hardly ever have enough food to eat, and there are some people over there who are hungry all the time. He says there are some people over there who are so hungry that they starve to death.

I try to think about all those poor people, but I dream about the boat most of the time, and how beautiful it is slicing through the blue waves with its big white sail all bellied out in the wind that blows the spray up in my face and makes it feel cool and fresh in the hot sun, just as it does when I climb out of the beaver pond.

Sometimes I dream about pirates, too, and how they try to capture us, but we fight them off of our boat. I told Jamie about the dream once, but he wouldn't dream it with me, for he doesn't like fighting at all, or anything that has hurting in it, so now I usually just dream that dream to myself and don't tell Jamie about it.

We sat there by the beaver pond and talked for a long time about what we were going to do when we grow up, and then Jamie asked me, all of a sudden, what would happen if we didn't grow up. I just laughed at that, but he said no,

what did I think it would be like if we didn't grow up, but if we had an accident or something and died while we were still kids. I never even thought about it before, but the way Jamie talked, I guess he had been thinking about it for a long time. He went on and talked about all the things we'd never be able to do, like getting married (which neither of us planned to do anyway, because everybody knows it's bad luck to have women on a ship), and driving a car, and playing football like Terry's big brother, and even building the boat and sailing around the world. I didn't laugh this time, but I wasn't scared or anything, because I knew that nothing like that could ever happen. I said that people don't die until they get real old, but Jamie said what about all those kids in India. Some of them die when they aren't even as old as we are. Holy cow, I said, we couldn't die while we were still kids, because we wouldn't have everything done yet, and Jamie said you can only do as much as you're supposed to do. You never know when God wants you to die.

Jamie is a Catholic and he goes to Sister's school twice a week, so he knows pretty much about God. I don't know much about God because I don't even know what I am, and I never even get to go to Sunday school to learn anything about God. I think I'd like to be a Catholic when I get older, though, because Jamie always seems to know what God would think about everything. That's why he never laughs at anybody, because he says that God doesn't like people to do that. Jamie never tells the other guys about God, even the other Catholic guys, because they don't like to think about God, and they laugh at Jamie sometimes. He knows I never laugh at him, though, because Jamie and me are friends.

I couldn't think of anything else to say then, so we just sat there and thought to ourselves. Then I thought that Jamie was right, that I might die today, and I wondered what Jamie would do if he came past my house on the way to school tomorrow morning, and my mother told him I was dead. I know Mother and Dad would probably cry, because that's what they always do in the movies, and I wondered

if Jamie would cry too. But then I knew he wouldn't cry because he would know that I would be in Heaven, and going to Heaven isn't something to cry about. He would probably tell Mother and Dad that, and then they would see it, too, and they would stop crying and be glad for me. Maybe they would even have a party for me, I thought, because dying is sure a better thing than having a birthday or anything like that.

I don't know what Jamie was thinking about, but pretty soon we noticed it was starting to get late and near supper-time. We put on our clothes and walked up the bank and then followed the creek until we came to the rocky field that belongs to old man Carter. He never uses that field for anything, because it's too rocky for even a pasture, and we used to play cowboys and indians and hide and seek there. There is one big rock there that we always climb, because you can see the whole field from that rock, and you can almost always find where everybody is hiding. When we were walking home from the beaver pond Jamie and me always raced to the big rock from the fence, and the one who got to the top first was the winner. It was a pretty close race, for Jamie and me ran just about as fast as each other, so one time he would win, and the next time I would. This time I was winning by a mile, but when I got to the rock I tried to climb it too fast, and I fell off and twisted my ankle under my leg. Jamie didn't even climb the big rock then, but he helped me get up and said that I won the race this time, anyway, for I was so far ahead of him that he couldn't have beaten me.

I really wasn't hurt very bad, except that I cut my knee and tore my pants, so I brushed the dirt off and then we started for the other fence. When I tried to walk my ankle hurt like mad, but I could still limp along, and I didn't need any help from Jamie even though he asked me if I did. He helped me through the barbed wire fence around the pasture, but we always helped each other through that, ever since the time I snagged my good pants on it and got spanked when I went home.

We walked slow through the pasture. We always walked through it pretty slow even though that old bull was always right there. Jamie said that if we didn't bother him he wouldn't bother us, so we just walked through real slow and didn't even pay any attention to him. We were almost all the way through when I looked back to see where that old bull was, and he was coming at Jamie and me like a jet. I yelled at Jamie to run, and started to run myself, but when I stepped on that hurt ankle I just fell down. Jamie saw me fall, and he came back to help me along. We were almost to the fence, and Jamie saw that he couldn't get me there in time, so he just let go of me and told me to crawl the rest of the way. When I got on the other side of the fence I looked back and saw Jamie dodging away from that bull just like Terry's big brother dodges tacklers when he's carrying the ball. The bull went on past Jamie, and while it was turning around Jamie started for the fence. I held the wires apart for him so he could get through faster, and he was almost there, but the bull was running faster than he was, and I yelled duck Jamie at him and he tried to duck out of the way but the bull reached him before he had a chance and it lifted him clear off the ground on its horns and then I got sick and turned away.

When I couldn't hear the bull snuffling around anymore I turned around again and saw him way over on the other end of the pasture, so I went in and got Jamie. I don't remember feeling like crying. I don't remember feeling anything at all, except that I should wash Jamie's face for him because it was all bloody and dirty, but there wasn't any water there, so I carried him all the way to his house, and I didn't even get tired.

When his mother saw Jamie she started to cry, and I told her that she shouldn't cry because Jamie was in Heaven and that's something to be happy about, but she must not have heard me because she just took Jamie in her arms and squeezed him and kept on crying, and then all of a sudden I started crying too.

— *Bob Boston, E. Soph.*