A GREETING FROM NATURE
By Nancy Waddell

Across the silver ice-pond flew,
Scarlet-winged and fleet,
A cardinal whose liquid song
 Held notes all clear and sweet.
He flew beside the silent woods,
Green with spruce and pine;
His flight was swift; the earth beneath
Gleamed in the cold sunshine.
His plumage made a splash of red
Against the trees he passed,
And on he flew until he reached
The tallest tree at last.
Then to the world at large he sang
A carol, soft and clear;
His song was happiness, good will,
And the best of Christmas cheer.

As a result of many experiments, of which some ended happily and some did not, I find that the acrostic, although it may at first seem unnecessarily difficult, is an excellent method of approach for young folks who have never tried to write verse. It becomes a suggestive outline, both for structure and for content. It adds also to the play instinct that same teasing challenge which once gave to the late lamented crossword puzzle its really powerful appeal. The material available for acrostics is as varied as are the personalities of the teachers who would use them. I have had interesting results with “Hallowe’en,” “Autumn,” “Christmas,” “Winter,” “Spring,” “April is Coming,” or like variation on the first five subjects. “April calls to May” once proved especially good. After one or two attempts of this kind, pupils need only the right sort of opportunity and encouragement.

I believe that there are many practical advantages to be derived from such a class exercise, besides the actual fun that both teacher and pupils get out of it. Of course, though, the great thing is the adventure. For what teacher, facing a classroom full of young America, may dare to say “I have no mute, inglorious Miltons resting here!”

WILLIAM S. LONG

OUR MODEL PLAYGROUND
A THIRD GRADE UNIT IN CIVICS—ENGLISH—ART

DURING the summer session of 1925 our third grade became interested in why so many people like to live in Harrisonburg. They listed on the blackboard the particular advantages possessed by their city. This led naturally to a discussion of advantages not possessed by Harrisonburg that they had noted in the other cities where they had lived or visited. When the list of these “missing” advantages was put on the blackboard, the class decided that one chief need for Harrisonburg was a model playground in the south end of town. They went from this into a discussion of what kind of a playground was needed; the next step was their decision to work out such a playground in miniature.

I. What the Children Did
A. They decided to find out what kind of a playground would be best for their city.

1. They made a chart showing the equipment which they wished their playground to have.
   a. They discussed playground equipment seen in other playgrounds.
   b. They found out the companies which sold playground equipment by asking the school superintendent and by writing prominent directors of playgrounds in Virginia.
   c. They wrote to the companies for catalogs and pictures.
   d. They cut out pictures from the catalogs and mounted them.
   e. They decided on a legend for the chart, cut out the letters and pasted them on to make the legend.

B. They made a miniature set of playground equipment.
1. They decided what equipment to make.
2. They decided upon tools and materials needed: hammer, saw, nails, rules, square, staples, rope, and lumber.
3. They got the material from home, from the incubator factory, and from the tannery scrap pile.
4. In order that all pupils work and not disturb, they made their own rules for working.

C. They set up the miniature equipment in the back of the room for an exhibit.
1. They brought their dolls to school and played with the equipment.
2. They invited other rooms to the exhibit.
3. They demonstrated and explained the equipment to the visitors.
4. They took a kodak picture of the completed playground.

II. Information the Children Used
A. They learned that some of the advantages of their city are: Pure water, a teachers college within its limits, a desirable climate, and a surrounding farming section of much fertility.
B. They learned that some of the outstanding needs of their city are: A new school building, a library, a park, and a playground.
C. They learned that the minimum equipment for a model playground consists of slides, a sandpan, swings, see-saws, a walking ladder, and a giant stride.
D. They learned that a playground can be equipped very inexpensively.
1. Swings may be made by attaching ropes to a strong limb, or to a long bar supported by two upright poles.
2. Horizontal bars may be made by putting pipes through holes in two upright poles.
3. A sand bin may be made by enclosing a pile of sand with four boards.
4. Seesaws may be made by placing boards over saw horses or over one long pole supported by two short poles or legs.
5. Merry-go-rounds may be made by setting up a post about three or four feet high and fastening to this a long board bolted so as to rotate.
6. Horse shoes can be secured from a blacksmith.

III. Skills the Children Strengthened
A. They learned how to make a sentence outline.
When the pupils made the rules for working, they decided that the first word in each sentence should tell something they would do. This naturally resulted in parallel structure.
B. They learned to spell many needed words, such as: playground, equipment, swing, seesaw, city.
C. They learned how to cut well-shaped letters.
D. They developed taste in the mounting of pictures.
E. They became more accurate in the use of a ruler in measuring inches and half-inches.
F. They learned how to write invitations and business letters.
G. They learned how to make clear explanations to visitors.

IV. Attitudes and Ideals the Children Strengthened
A. They realized the importance of a critical attitude toward their own work.
When one group was responsible for a piece of work, it was brought before the class for constructive criticism before completion. Changes were then made, or the entire work was done over if the children doing the work felt it necessary.
B. They acquired more consideration for others.
It was necessary to share tools and materials; the small space available for the work shop forced them to think of the rights of fellow workers.

V. Chart Showing the Manufacturing Companies and Cost of Minimum Playground Equipment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apparatus</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giant Stride</td>
<td>$95.00</td>
<td>Sutcliffe &amp; Co., Louisville, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse Shoes and Stakes</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>Any hardware store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand Bin</td>
<td>2.00 up</td>
<td>Sutcliffe &amp; Co., Louisville, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seesaw (four board)</td>
<td>115.00</td>
<td>Sutcliffe &amp; Co., Louisville, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slide, Small</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>Marshall, Field &amp; Co., Chicago, Ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slide, Large</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>Marshall, Field &amp; Co., Chicago, Ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swing—Lawn</td>
<td>15.00 up</td>
<td>Sutcliffe &amp; Co., Louisville, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swing—Set of 6</td>
<td>175.00</td>
<td>Sutcliffe &amp; Co., Louisville, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swing—Set of 3</td>
<td>115.00</td>
<td>Sutcliffe &amp; Co., Louisville, Ky.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GLADYS GOODMAN

EDUCATION AS A NATIONAL ASSET

I HAVE been reluctant to accept the honor of your invitation to address your body, because I feel that no layman can instruct a great profession such as yours, whose traditions and skill have been built upon a century of experience. Nevertheless, it is the duty of the layman to express the indebtedness which lies upon us to so great a body as yours.

About one-fourth of the whole population of our country is always simultaneously engaged in the same occupation—the job of going to school. It is the largest group in any one employment. To use a term of the Census, it is truly a "gainful occupation." Moreover, as nearly the whole people have worked at it at one time or another, no matter how diverse their later life may become, they all have a common memory of the school yard and the classroom, and they all have a lasting affection for some teacher.

Not three other industries in our country can boast of so large a physical plant as yours. Hundreds of millions are invested in new construction every decade, and still, in commercial slang, you are behind your

orders, as witness the unsatisfied demand for seats in the schools of every city in the country. Yours is a big business. And it is big in its responsibilities and bigger in its possibilities than any other business ever undertaken by our countrymen.

No nation in the world’s history has so devoutly believed in, and so deeply pledged itself to, free universal education. In this great experiment America has marched in advance of all other nations. To maintain the moral and spiritual fibre of our people, to sustain the skill required to use the tools which great discoveries in science have given us, to hold our national ideals, we must not fail in the support and constant improvement of our school system.

Both as the cause and the effect the maintenance of our complex civilization now depends upon it. From generation to generation we hand on our vast material equipment, our knowledge of how to run it, and our stock of intellectual and spiritual ideas. If we were to suppress our educational system for a single generation the equipment would decay, the most of our people would die of starvation, and intellectually and spiritually we should slip back four thousand years in human progress. We could recover the loss of any other big business in a few years—but not this one. And unless our educational system keeps pace with the growth of our material equipment we will slip also.

An address delivered before the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association, Washington, D. C., February 25, 1926.