

## BEN'S GARDEN

*Ben's garden consisted of a patch of dirt near the barn that Papa had dug for him the previous year. How Ben had begged and cajoled for his very own garden to tend. Papa promised him seeds of his own to sow. Beans and cucumbers and melons. Potatoes, lettuce and corn. Ben wanted sunflowers so Kate stole some of MeMere's sunflower seeds she liked to nibble when she tatted and mended.*

*Kate had helped Papa turn the soil and throw stinky manure for fertilizer on Ben's garden last fall. This spring Kate alone had helped Ben hoe the soil, sow the seeds and water the rows.*

*Danced with him in it at dawn.*

*A bedraggled broom served as the body of Ben's scarecrow. Metal scraps from a rusty abandoned tractor in the orchard served as arms that whirled and clanked in the wind. MeMere gave him a shawl to drape about it. Using a shiny pie tin for the head, Ben painted the face with black tar. Circles for eyes, no nose. A wide grin that spanned most of the tin.*

*Tommy had warned Ben the scarecrow was supposed to be scary. To keep the crows, rabbits and deer from eating his garden.*

*Ben had laughed. Thought that silly. If the birds, bunnies and deer wanted to eat from his garden, that was fine with him. That's why he had planted it.*

*He'd built the scarecrow for them to play with.*