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Children in the Backyard

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OLD MAN

If I could pop an antique blunderbuss,
Clash sabers loudly for a while, and then
Go home; if it were possible to fuss
My honor out, as old offended men
Do elsewhere, forgetting the facts
At issue, shaking hands when out of breath—

But surly Age affronts me, and exacts
A deeper satisfaction; i.e., death.

KEN EISLER

CHILDREN IN THE BACKYARD

The children clamber in the fenced-in grasses,
Scattering about their vivid energies:
Over a painted sandbox hover three cooks
Examining their rows of midget cakes
And pebble pies baking on the rim;
Two tots in swings attempting sunward flight
Prove bones to be born victims of ambition;
While the littlest butts his ego willy-nilly,
Gay pariah, desperate for a word or look!

And now the air stiffens, becomes a backdrop
On which the edge of sound suddenly sharpens,
Gesture disembodies and greenness heightens;
Lightning rips. Thunder roars,
Shaking this children's sphere as a bubble-cage
Through which are seen their frightened figures
Scurrying chickenwise; except again the littlest
Who stands quite still, palms extended for the deluge
Waiting to defy an adult outrage.

ELISE ASHER