

RANDALL COLLEY

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Minnows in a Coffee Can

By Randall Colley

It was the summer before I started the fourth grade. The summer of 1960, I was 9 years old.

My father's business was good and we moved to a home with a swimming pool, it was down the street from a golf course and a baseball field.

I could walk to the ball field and watch the older boys play little league baseball.

The pitcher was a tall 12 year old who had lost his left arm at the elbow, in some kind of accident.

I was amazed at how he could hold his glove under his left arm, it was like a wing.

He wound up and pitched a fastball, the batter hit the ball right back at him.



In one second he put his right hand in his glove caught the ball, put his glove back under his wing arm grabbed the ball out of the glove and threw it to first base.

He caught the runner, who had stepped off the bag when the ball was hit and made the double play.

He must have really loved baseball. He was way better than me and I had both hands.

On the way to the school bus stop, I had to walk by an old dilapidated cracker house that was back in the orange grove where the Coopers lived.

The Coopers were a family of mean kids, there were 3 boys and 4 girls.

My best description of the Cooper kids would be filthy, I don't think they had running water or in door plumbing.

I met John he was the oldest boy, he was 11 years old. I don't know what grade he was in because I don't think they went to school very often.

He told me to go home get my marbles and we could play marbles.

I came back with great confidence and a bag with my 12 best marbles.

I was used to playing marbles with my sister and I always won. I went home that day crying with an empty marble bag.

The Cooper boys and girls would go onto the golf course and take the flag poles off the greens and throw them like spears.

Sometimes they would hide and run out and steal the golf balls right off the green.

The golfers would chase them in the orange grove on their golf carts yelling at them.

Those kids were out of control.





One Saturday morning
John and I took an old
coffee can to a small pond
on the golf course and
caught some minnows.

We brought minnows back
to show the other kids.

I sat the can down under a
tree.

We were taking turns
swinging on a rope that
we had tied to an orange
tree limb.

My sister swung out on the limb and dropped to the ground.

Her barefoot landed on the sharp rim of the rusty coffee that was full of dirty pond water and about 10 little minnows.

The can cut a deep gash on the inside of her foot.

Blood was pouring out of her foot.



The minnows where
flipping around on the dirt
with no water.

All of the kids were
screaming. They ran to get
their mother.

I ran home to get my
mother.

My mother and father
drove our car as fast as
they could.

One of the parents had
wrapped my sisters foot in
a white towel, that was now
soaked in bright red blood.

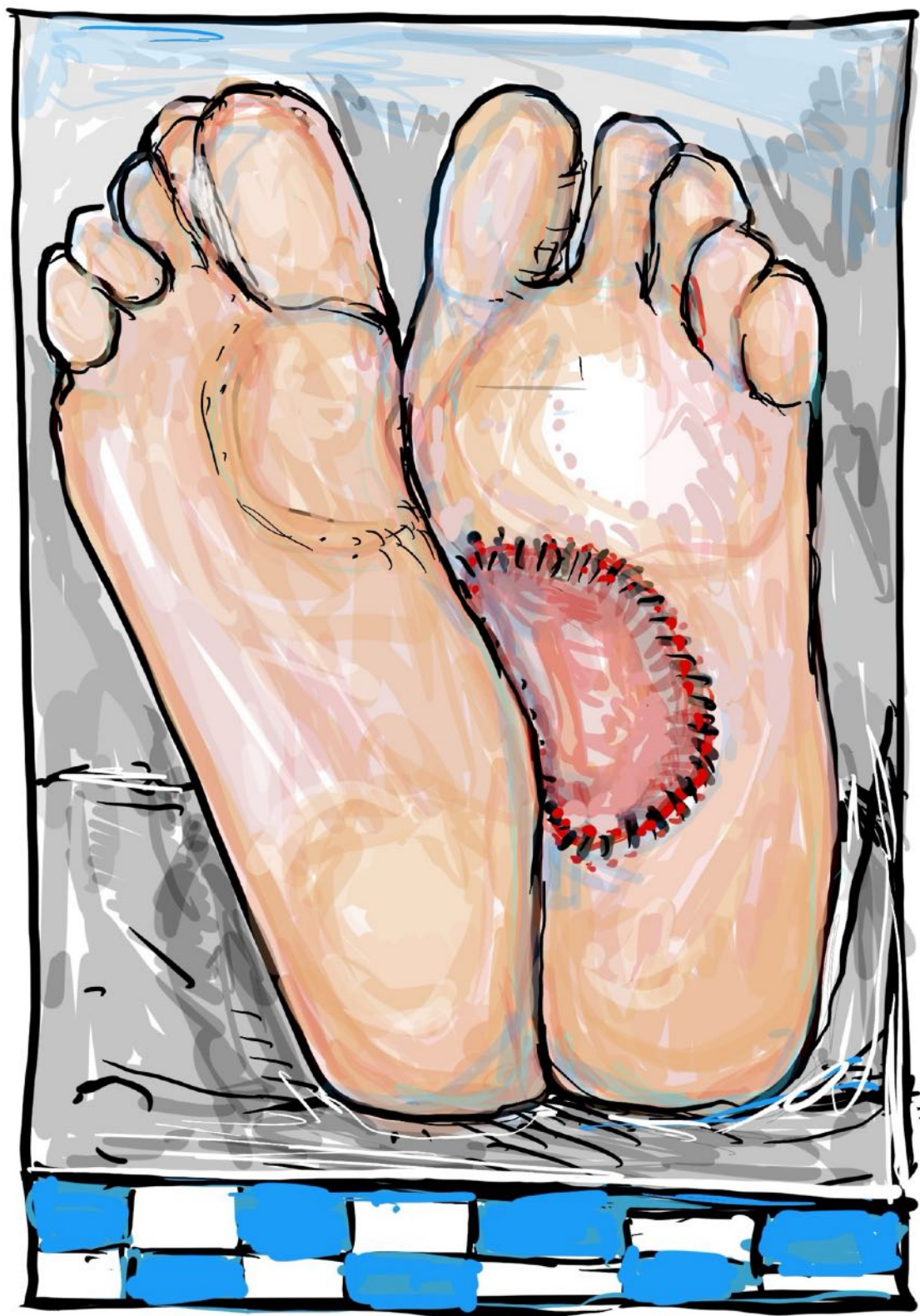
There was so much blood.

My mother and father
drove my sister to the
doctor.

I stayed with the Coopers
until they came back
from the doctor's office.

My sister got stitches in
her foot and could not
walk on her foot for the
entire summer.

She could not put her foot
in the pool and she was
not happy.



All of our cousins
came to swim in our
pool all summer.

While my sister sat at
the edge with her foot
on a pillow and splash
water at us.

We moved at the end
of summer and my
sister never got to
swim in the pool.

The End

MAKE A POEM
WRITE A STORY
MAKE A DRAWING
MAKE A ZINE
EVERYDAY

