

Something Special For Me



Vera B. Williams

SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR ME

by Vera B. Williams



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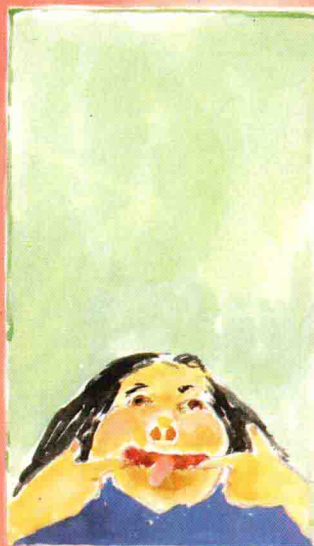
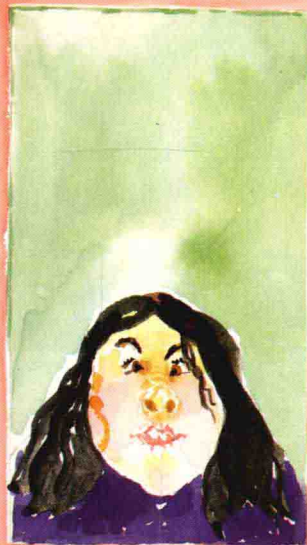
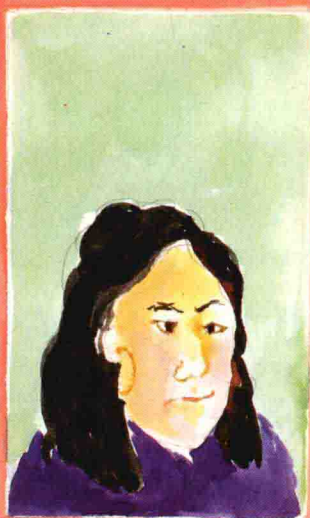
Our new chair has cocoa on one arm now. It isn't brand-new anymore, but Grandma and Mama and I still like to squeeze into it together just like the day we first brought it home. That was when Aunt Ida, who lives upstairs, took this picture of us. We keep it on the shelf next to the big money jar and the picture of me when I was one month old.



One Saturday Mama and I were sitting in the chair in our bathrobes. I kept trying to talk to Mama about my birthday which was going to be in just three days, but Mama wouldn't listen. On her day off from her job at the Blue Tile Diner, Mama loves to sit and read her newspaper. Then she never even hears the things I tell her. I had to tickle her foot until she threw down the paper and jumped out of the chair:

Then she chased me all over the house.





When she caught me, she held me up to the mirror. "Who's that kid who won't let her own mother enjoy her well-earned rest even on Saturday?" she said, making her mad face. I made my monster face. We made faces in the mirror till we laughed so much we had to stop. Then Mama hugged me tight. "You're much more fun than any newspaper," she said.





Then we studied the money in the big jar. The jar is only partly full now. But one time Grandma and Mama and I saved up so much money that jar was full to the top. That was when we went shopping and bought a chair for my mother. There was some money left even after we paid for the chair. Now we still put money in the jar every Friday when Mama brings her tips home from work. If I help out at the diner, I put money in the jar too, and Grandma puts in whatever she can spare.

“What are we going to spend the money on this time?” I asked Mama.



She lifted down the jar and dumped it and me right into the chair. She called my grandma over too. "Mother," she said, "it's going to be Rosa's birthday in three days. The chair was really for you and me. Don't you think it's Rosa's turn to get something special?"

Grandma thought it was a wonderful idea. "Why don't you take



Rosa shopping? Whatever you buy will be from me too."

"And it will be from Aunt Ida and Uncle Sandy too. Whenever they get their pay they drop money in our jar," I said.

Mama and I got dressed fast and Grandma changed the money into notes. As we went out the door, she hollered after us, "Rosa, you buy something real nice."





I knew just what would be nice, so we went right to the skate store. I tried on skates. I skated up and down in the store. My friends Leora and Jenny and Mae all have new skates, and I really wanted them too.

I could see myself dancing around on my new skates in the schoolyard to Leora's little radio. Then, just as the man was about to wrap up the box and Mama and I were about to pay for the skates, I wasn't so sure I wanted them.

I wanted them, but I could tell that skates weren't really what I wanted to empty that big jar of money for. Not even white skates with orange wheels that could race and dance all over the street.

So we went out of the store without buying anything.







Across the street was the department store, and I pulled Mama through the revolving door and up the escalator to the children's floor. There I tried on dresses and I tried on coats. I tried on shoes and even hats. I looked at myself all around in the big mirrors.

I imagined standing just like that with Leora and Jenny and Mae outside the store on my birthday. "I want these," I said to Mama, "the polka dot dress with its own jacket and the blue shoes with crisscross straps and little heels."

Then just as they were about to wrap them up and Mama and I were about to pay for them, I wasn't sure I really wanted them so much. I wanted them, but I could tell that new shoes and a new dress, even with its own jacket, were not the special presents I wanted to empty the big jar for. So we went out of the department store without buying anything.



