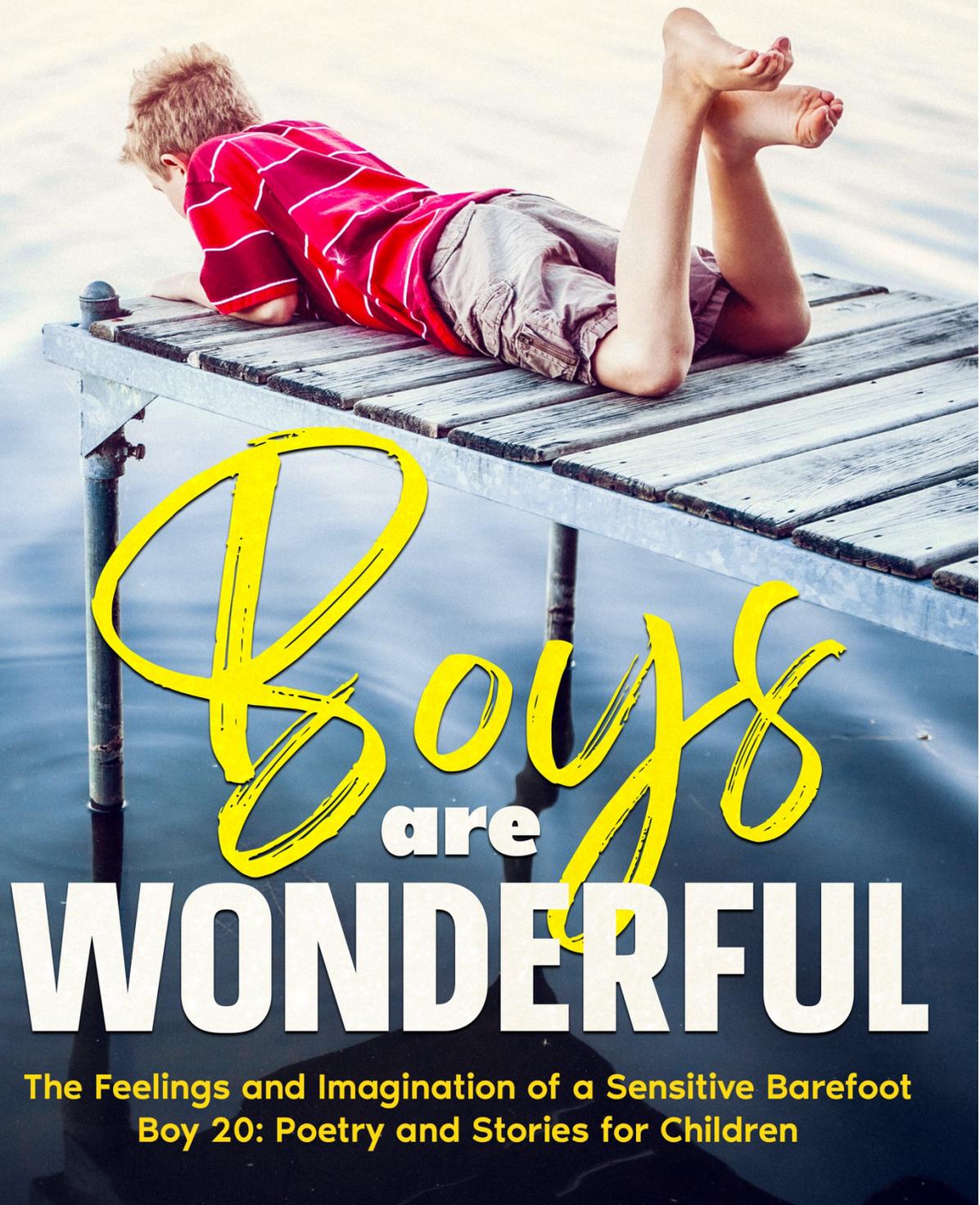


**RICHARD CARLSON**



**Boys**  
**are**  
**WONDERFUL**

**The Feelings and Imagination of a Sensitive Barefoot  
Boy 20: Poetry and Stories for Children**

# **Boys are Wonderful:**

**The Feelings and Imagination of a Sensitive**

**Barefoot Boy 20:**

**Poetry and Stories for Children**

Richard Carlson

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## **My Younger Brother Peed in the Bathtub**

I walked in on

My younger brother

Standing in

—and peeing in—

the tub.

“Why are you peeing

In the tub?”

I asked.

“I’m curious,”

He replied with a smile.

“Okay,” I said frowning

As he peed.

## **Handsome Tween Boy**

Brady's dad told Uncle

That several girls at school

*Like* Brady.

“Oh, that's good,” Uncle said.

“No, it isn't,”

Brady replied.

“I don't want to be embarrassed.”

Shrugging twice.

## **Stolen**

At school,

I stole several computer discs

But was never caught.

I learned my lesson

Because I had felt so worried

And worried

And worried

About being caught

I never stole again.

## Stormville

I really wanted our family  
To move back to Stormville,  
A small town where I grew up.

“But it isn’t the same  
As when we lived there,”  
Dad said.

“There’s high crime,  
And now the land is developed.”

*(Frown)*

## **Used Dirty Tissues Bugged Grandma**

My brothers and I had the flu

And left used dirty tissues in the house.

“Please throw your tissues away,”

Grandma asked.

We apologized

And threw them away.

## **Grapevine**

There is a grapevine  
In our grandparents' backyard  
Growing on a trellis.  
But the grapes  
Have seeds.  
I like them anyway.

## Uncle Tommy

As a boy, Uncle Tommy  
Took turtles out of the neighbor's yard  
And put them in his yard  
By turning the turtles  
Sideways  
And pulling them through  
The gaps between the fence pickets.  
Because he wanted them  
For his own.

## Deer

Dad drove us to school

One morning.

We were late.

Dad drove too fast

A deer leaped in front of us

From nowhere

And Dad swerved off the road.

“I almost hit a deer,”

He said.

We were happy that he didn't.

## Skunk

At night, at a certain time,

An odor fills our house.

It's a

skunk

passing through the neighborhood

Every night.

## **Misty**

Our cat, Misty,  
Carries dead birds home  
Every so often.  
I pet and praise her  
Because she thinks she's  
Bringing her family food.  
Scolding would confuse her  
And might make her feel bad.

## Calculator

I put my calculator

In my school backpack,

And the screen got cracked.

The corner of my math book

Smashed the screen!

Math is dangerous.

## Can

Mom and I bought  
A six-pack of soda  
And brought it home  
With the other groceries  
From the store.

But

One can was  
Empty!

We didn't know that  
When we bought it.  
It was still factory sealed.

I put the can  
In Dad's model kit collection  
Display cabinet,  
On the top shelf,  
To show friends.

## Wall

There is a short wall in our backyard

That our dog doesn't jump over.

But he could—

If he knew he could.

Is there something

I don't do because

I don't know I can?

What is my wall?

## **Lips and Tongue**

I ate candy,

And my lips

And tongue

Turned blue,

Like the sky.

## **Five-Dollar Bill**

My younger brother

Lost five dollars

For playing videogames

At the arcade.

He lost it

On the bike ride there.

Even though he was distraught,

I harped on him

About it.

That made him feel worse.

I apologized.

He cheered up.

Be nice to your brother.

## **I Should Have Been Nice to My Brother**

**About the story:** Steve, a young boy, loses five dollars for playing videogames on the bicycle ride to an arcade in his neighborhood. His twelve-year-old older brother, Rich, doesn't use his noggin and lectures his distraught brother for being careless. Based on a true story that took place in Tucson, Arizona, USA, circa 1983.

Rich, an imaginative, sensitive, and shy twelve-year-old boy, rode his bicycle with his younger brothers, Mike and Steve, and their friends, Dave and Greg, to a mall in the neighborhood to play video games in the arcade.

They rode in the hot Arizona summer sun and finally arrived at the mall. The boys hurried straight to the arcade.

Their moms had given each of them five dollars to get quarters in the coin machine at the arcade to play the games.

Rich took his five-dollar bill out of his pocket.

"Oh, no! I don't know where my five dollars went," Steve said, distraught about losing the money.

"Did you check your pockets?" Rich asked him. At Steve's nod, he added, "You lost it? How?"

"I checked and checked. I must have dropped it on the way over here," Steve said, shrugging. "Now, I can't

play," he added, worried. He knew he had made a mistake.

"Well, you shouldn't have been so careless," Rich snapped, making his brother feel more upset.

"Chill out," Dave told Rich. "He made an honest mistake. Don't make him feel worse about it."

Rich suddenly realized that he wasn't being nice to his brother.

"I'm sorry, Steve. I shouldn't have gotten angry with you. It's okay. You can use some of my money to play," Rich said, making Steve cheer up a little.

"Let's all chip in some money for Steve," Mike suggested. "That way, he can play, too."

The boys all agreed to share some of their money with Steve, so he could have fun, too.

Rich and the boys watched Steve play Ms. Pacman. Steve got the highest score!

## **Peer Pressure at Summer Camp**

**About the story:** Does Rich, an imaginative, sensitive, and shy twelve-year-old, succumb to peer pressure at summer camp? Idea based on a true story that took place in Tucson, Arizona, USA, 1983.

Rich, a twelve-year-old in sixth grade, was at summer camp for a week. He had already been there for four days, and he was feeling homesick. He decided to take a photograph of the cabin door.

Rich got out his camera and went outside the cabin. He held up his camera and aimed at the door, planning to get several good pictures.

"You're taking a picture of the door? How dumb," Eric said from inside the adjacent cabin.

Before he could even snap one shot, Rich stopped what he was doing and rushed back inside his cabin. Grrr, peer pressure! He didn't take any photographs of the door, even though he really wanted to, all because of what someone else had said about it.

Instead, Rich took several shots of his buddies, Steve and Ron, sitting on their bunks. But he kept thinking about the cabin door.

Rich realized that he still wanted to take pictures of the door. He knew he shouldn't let himself be swayed by what someone else said.

Rich took his camera back outside and took several photographs of the door. None of the other boys said anything about it. Now, he was happy. Then, he and his buddies went to archery, their next activity.

Rich had a lot of fun at camp that summer. After he returned home, his mom had the film developed at a photo store and had prints made.

Rich looked at the pictures and was very pleased. Days later, he asked his parents if he could get a large picture made of the cabin door at the photo store, and they said yes.

Rich and his dad framed the picture, and they hung it on his bedroom wall. Rich was so glad that he hadn't caved in to peer pressure!

## **A Sixth-Grade Boy's Crush on a Fourth-Grade Girl: A Tween Love Story**

**About the story:** Richard, a shy, sensitive, and imaginative twelve-year-old sixth-grader who was in elementary school had a crush on a fourth-grade girl, Sarah, whom he usually sat next to on the bus ride to school. Based on a true story that took place at Donaldson Elementary School in Tucson, Arizona, USA, circa May 1983.

I was in sixth grade at Donaldson Elementary School, and today was the last day of school. For the past month, I had been sitting next to Sarah, a pretty fourth-grader, on the bus ride to school. Just about every day, I flirted with her by teasing José, a boy who always sat in the seat in front of us.

Today, I sat next to Sarah, right behind José, like usual.

“It’s something or someone we can’t explain. My sensors can’t determine what he is,” I said, touching José’s neck with two orange felt piping strips left over from art class; I was using them like an imaginary electronic sensor.

José turned and looked back at us, laughing.

Sarah giggled.

“You are a goof,” he said, smiling.

“He’s not something from our world. What planet is he from?” I asked Sarah, adjusting my imaginary sensor on José.

After I put my fake sensors away in my backpack, I had a surprise for Sarah and José: I pulled out two cherry lollipops and handed one to each of them.

“Thank you, Richard,” she said. “You really care about me.”

I was so in love with her!

“Thanks,” José said. Then he asked, “Did you stick these in a used toilet?”

“No, but I peed all over them,” I said.

They grinned, knowing I was only joking.

“In that case, thank you,” he said, and Sarah giggled. They unwrapped and licked their lollipops.

“You’re welcome,” I replied.

“What's your favorite color?” Sarah asked me.

“Umm. What is yours?”

“Bluish green, like your eyes. You have very handsome eyes,” she said, making my chest tingle with joy.

“Mine is green,” I said.

I smiled at her.

*Her feet must be pretty, because she’s so beautiful. I’d like to see them.*

“Let me guess your middle name. What letter does it start with?” she asked.

“W,” I said.

“Waldo?” she asked.

“No.”

“William?”

“No.”

“Wilson?”

“No.”

“Winston?”

“No.”

“Watson?”

“No.”

She pressed her finger to her chin and looked up at the bus ceiling for a second or two. “Walter?” she said, and I grinned.

“Richard Walter Carlson,” she said, smiling at me.

I very much wanted to kiss her, but how could I with all the kids and the driver right there on the bus? Besides, I was too shy.

I tried to think of something to say or ask.

“Do you like hamburgers or pizza better?” I asked.

“I like pizza.”

“Me, too,” she said.

*Think fast, Rich!* I had to say something so I could see her over the summer.

I’d love to play footsies with her, both of us barefoot. I’d really like that. She’s petite and dainty. I bet her feet were smaller than mine.

“It’s going to be a real scorching summer. Does your house have a pool?” I asked. “Ours doesn't. We have nowhere to swim and keep cool.” I was hoping she’d invite me over during the summer to swim at her house.

“No,” she said, dashing my hopes just as the school bus arrived at school. I couldn't think of anything else to do or say.

The bus stopped, and the driver opened the door. Then, Sarah stood in the aisle, with me right behind her. Everyone got off the bus. Her sneakers were smaller than mine, I noticed, which made me smile. My heart was fluttering, but I was worried because this was the last bus ride to school for the school year. Next year, I'd ride the bus to Cross Junior High, and she’d still be in elementary school.

As we separated on the walk to our classrooms, I already wanted so badly to see her again. But in truth, I felt so shy.

*Shucks!* I folded my arms over my chest and wished I had the courage to ask her if she'd like to come to my house over the summer.

*Shucks!* It would be fun to date her and walk around holding hands with her. How romantic that would be!

*Shucks!* Maybe next time...



**About the book:** *Boys are Wonderful: The Feelings and Imagination of a Sensitive Barefoot Boy 20: Poetry and Stories for Children* includes fun poems for boys and girls who are inspired by the imaginative barefoot boy or girl who lives inside us all. Also included are several short stories.

### **I Should Have Been Nice to My Brother**

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**About the author:** Richard Carlson is an author of children's and coming-of-age books. He is a highly sensitive person, or HSP. You can learn more about him at [www.richardcarlson.com](http://www.richardcarlson.com).