

up there lugging Mister Turtle with them in a bag. The guys picked a huge tree so it wouldn't matter that the turtle had its claws and head withdrawn; the kid just balanced the shell across the width of a branch. He then climbed down, careful not to shake the trunk. We've all been that cautious.

They expected a lot of excitement. After a minute or two the turtle tried to right itself. It fell a long way through leaves onto the grass. They weren't sure if it was dead. It kept itself retracted, and one kid said it must still be alive. That night they left it on the ground, to see if it would move. The next morning it had only moved two feet. Maybe somebody'd picked it up and set it back down again. They left it. It was still on the spot the next day. One kid wanted to smash the turtle with a hammer. "At least we can see if it's alive."

NOWHERE

He was a snot-nosed kid with glasses and a heinie haircut. His parents were poor and fat and ugly, and they were bored with being poor and fat and ugly, but ragging on the snot-nosed kid sometimes gave them a few seconds' relief so they kept at it, kept trying the experiment one more time making sure it worked and it did, it always did. The snot-nosed kid, if they ragged on him enough, had a way of heading for the back door and jumping on his bike. His mother had a way of shuffling to the screen door behind him. "Where you going?" "Nowhere." "Well don't be gone too long." Down the alley on the next block was a garage door with a scene of mountains painted on it. The mountains were chocolate and purple colored. A seagull flew across the foreground. Dots that might be mountain goats peppered the slopes. The snot-nosed kid with the heinie haircut liked to rock back and forth on his bike seat as he stared at the world that contained the mountains. He liked to think that a man with some cans of paint had changed that door into what he was staring at.