



## Betsy, Linda and the First Robin



It was a lovely warm Saturday, more like May than March, and I was so happy when my little cousin Linda phoned to ask if I'd like to go to their beach house with her and her father. *Would I!* Mommy filled a bag with sandwiches, soda pop, bananas and raisins for the three of us to take along. The cottage was simply freezing, so we opened the doors and let the warm air in. The windows were covered with salt, and Uncle Rick washed them and cut the grass and painted the porch chairs. Linda and I helped a little, but not a lot, because there was so much to see. We sat on the porch in the sun and ate our sandwiches. "Look, there's a robin red-breast," Linda cried, pointing. Uncle Rick threw him a raisin, and the robin hopped over to it and picked it up.

I threw one, and he went after that. Then Linda ran over to him with a raisin in her

hand, and he flew away. "When I was a kid," her father said, "I actually trained a robin to eat raisins right off my shoulder. The way I did it was to leave a raisin nearer and nearer to where I was, and at last he came close to me." Uncle Rick went back to his painting, and I watched the robin.

Linda made a careful line of raisins from the lawn to the porch. Then she sat down on the bottom step, put a raisin on her shoulder and waited. Mr. Robin hoppity-hopped over, took a raisin from the grass and flew away. Linda waited and waited, but he didn't return. There were tears in her eyes. "Hey, what's up?" her father called. "He isn't coming back," she said sadly. "We-l-l-l, Rome wasn't built in a day, and my robin wasn't trained in an afternoon. It took *all summer*. If you coax him a little every day, I promise that he'll be on your shoulder, or at least at your feet, before you go back to school."



Betsy wears her new red cotton parka over her bell-bottom pants. Linda's goes over her shorts or bloomer-leg jump suit. She is crazy about her blue-and-white-dot sleeveless ruffled shift