

## HEART STOPPING SILENCE

*By Natalie Lawson*

Our family was very young when we went to a Company Picnic in the mountains. Everyone was having a great time. There were many children including my four. My youngest was one-and-one-half-year-old Julie. I had her in my arms while I was watching and keeping tabs on the other three.

The ladies were all visiting and laughing and I became distracted.

When I looked up for my children, I realized I didn't see Mark. I shouted at my husband but all the men were involved playing ball at a distance and no one paid any attention to me.

I left the baby with the ladies and ran around calling for Mark. Asking the older kids if they had seen Mark, a blond little boy with a red sweater and blue pants. Sammy and Linda couldn't remember when they last saw him. So everyone went searching.

There was a field next to our picnic area so I ran and called "Mark! Mark!" Silence. I kept running further as though I was running a 100-yard dash. I didn't think he would have gotten this far but the silence was driving me crazy!

Some people were coming toward me and I asked them had seen a little boy wearing a red sweater. "No," they said, "there is only a river that way," pointing up ahead.

I continued to run as fast as I could calling for him. All of a sudden I heard crying. My heart in my throat I started crying. I believe my heart stopped for a couple of beats.

I couldn't see him through the shrubbery but followed the sound. Finally, "Mommy, Mommy!" and I found him at the edge of the river.

To this day I believe he was taken. What he remembers now, is something dark covering his face.