

**SAMANTHA
ON A ROLL**

by

Linda Ashman

“No, Samantha.
Not today.
Please—go put those skates away.
You’re still too small;
You don’t know how!
I can’t help you—not right now.”

But Samantha cannot wait.
Straps herself into a skate.
Straps herself into the other.
Tries them on despite her mother.

Sammy stands and rolls a bit.
Says, “I *knew* these skates would fit!
I’ll just try them in the hall.
Mama wouldn’t care at all.”

(Mama, talking to Aunt Joan,
WOULD have cared, if she had known.)

(on the telephone)

Sammy skates from here to there—
The bookcase to the rocking chair,
Through the kitchen, through the den,
Down the hall and back again.

Sammy likes the way they glide;
Longs to try those skates outside.
“Why not?” she says. “I’m doing fine.
I’m sure that Mama wouldn’t mind.”

(Mama, busy bathing Spot,
WOULD have minded quite a lot.)

(the dog)

One more loop across the floor,
Then Samantha’s out the door.
Down the sidewalk,
To the street,
Roller skates strapped on her feet.
Rising upward—
What a thrill!—
To the top of Hawthorn Hill!

(gradual upward slope)

Oh, the view! The park, the pond,
The houses, streets, and farms beyond,
The baseball fields and swimming pools,
The trees and gardens, shops and schools.
A scene of such tremendous scope . . .

She doesn't note the long,

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slope.

Slow at first, she glides downhill.

Quickly then,

And quicker still,

Till the scenery's blurring past—

Sammy's going VERY fast!

Will is chasing butterflies.

Sammy takes him by surprise.

Flying by him like a jet,

Carries off his insect net.

(accidentally)

Matt and Molly, playing ball,

Miss the frantic warning call.

Sammy stumbles, bumping Matt—

Winds up with his baseball bat.

Toward the park now, swerving right,

Snags the string of Katie's kite.

(gets tangled in string, takes kite with her)

Katie hollers, "Come back NOW!"

Sammy cries, "I don't know how!"

(Meanwhile Mama, changing John,
doesn't realize Sammy's gone.)

(baby)

Now there's music: someone's singing.
Outdoor wedding. Bells are ringing.
Whiz! Whoosh! Zip! Zoom!
Straight ahead—

The bride and groom!

(on sidewalk outside City Hall/church/temple)

Sammy tries to move aside.
It's too late—they all collide.
The bride is down. The groom is pale.
Sammy wears the bridal veil.

Now she's heading into town.
Tries to brake, but can't slow down.
Oh, what's this? The town parade!
Veers around the fire brigade,
Slaloms through the marching band,
Overturns the ice cream stand.

Just beyond: a skateboard camp.
Sammy's racing toward the ramp.
"Hey, look out!" a camper cries.
Sammy, frightened, shuts her eyes.

Can't stop herself.
Can't turn around.
She hits the ramp.
She's off the ground.

Sammy's soaring out of sight—
Lifted up by Katie's kite!

(Mama, making Sammy's snack,
Calls her name . . . hears nothing back.)

Sammy drifts above the town.

Lets the net and bat fall down.

(to owners below)

Hears the bride's pathetic wail.

Drops the lacy bridal veil.

(to the bride)

Higher then,

And higher still,

To the top of Hawthorn Hill—

Carried by the summer breeze,

Sails into a clump of trees.

Sammy looks between her feet.

“Hey!” she hollers. “It's my street!”

Scrambles down and wipes her face.

Dashes home at lightning pace.

Up the sidewalk,

In the door,

Collapses on the playroom floor.

Removes a skate.

Removes the other.

Just in time—

Here comes her mother!

Sammy, flustered, grabs a book.

Dives into the reading nook.

Mama says, “Well, there you are!

I knew you wouldn’t go too far.

What a perfect child you’ve been—

Want to give those skates a spin?”

Sammy sighs. “Oh, that’s okay.

I’ll try them on another day.”