

**SAMANTHA
ON A ROLL**

by

Linda Ashman

“No, Samantha.
Not today.
Put your sister’s skates away.
Don’t try them on.
You’re much too small.
If you do, you’ll surely fall.”

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 think I’ll try them in the hall.
Mama wouldn’t mind at all.”

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

(on the telephone)

Samantha 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.”

(Truly, Mom would mind a lot—
but now she’s busy bathing Spot.)

(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, fields, and farms beyond,
Baseball diamonds, swimming pools,
Streets and gardens, shops and schools.
A view of such tremendous scope . . .

She doesn’t note the long,

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slope.

(Surely she'd have turned around
before she started rolling down.)

Slow at first, she glides downhill.
Quickly then,
And quicker still.
Every second gaining speed—
Sammy's going fast, indeed!

Will is chasing butterflies.
Samantha takes him by surprise.
Flying by him like a jet,
Carries off his insect net.

(accidentally)

Toward the park now, swerving right,
Snags the string of Daniel's kite.
Danny hollers, "Come back NOW!"
Sammy cries, "I don't know how!"

(gets tangled in string, takes kite with her)

Sees Miss Bailey straight ahead.
Tries to turn, but trips instead.
Arms are flailing, cannot look—
Hooks Miss Bailey's pocketbook.

(stumbles; doesn't fall)

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

(baby)

Sammy listens: 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.

Too late—

She and the bride collide.

The bride is down.

The groom is pale.

Samantha wears the bridal veil.

(Veil, net, kite, purse—

Things have gone from bad to worse!)

Now she's heading into town.

Poor Samantha can't slow down.

Oh, no—

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.

Samantha, frightened, shuts her eyes.

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

Samantha's sailing out of sight.
(Good thing she's got Daniel's kite!)

Sammy drifts above the town.
Lets the purse and net 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.

Samantha looks between her feet.
“Hey!” she hollers. “It's my street!”

Scrambles down and wipes her face.
Races home at lightning pace.
Up the sidewalk,
In the door,
Collapses on the playroom floor.

Removes one 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 some other day.”