

## ANNE DUKE JUDD

### Morning Workout

"If I just knew how to throw a lasso,  
we could be in the kitchen now  
drinking coffee,"  
I moan,  
fantasizing from the porch  
neatly capturing  
the little runaway  
with one practiced toss  
while it dozed in the ankledeep dandelions.

In town, women in neon bright  
Spandex  
a pink-laced Reeboks  
are arriving at the health club.  
Betty and I – she in jeans,  
I in sweats –  
both with knee-high rubber boots,  
pant in the laneway  
after cornering the calf.  
"Stupid bugger!" Betty says.  
We watch it cross the yard  
(Please God keep it out of the pond)  
and squiggle  
under the fence  
back into the pasture of mommas.  
But it does not stop,  
panics headlong on a diagonal  
which brings  
it to

"The road! The stupid thing's  
on the road!"  
On Betty's shout we dash for the pickup  
squeal out the lane  
and slowly approach the butterscotch  
mischief  
now squeezing under

the neighbour's bottom strand  
"Oh, no!"  
His whole hundred is one big field except  
"If we can get it in the barnyard  
we've got a hope."  
I'm trying to be helpful  
even if unskilled.

The pickup blocks the lane  
While we – Betty with a rope halter,  
I with a hastily grabbed  
hockey stick –  
outwit the calf,  
now tired, corner it behind the house.

Caught between the satellite dish  
and the fence angle,  
subdued into the halter,  
it hardly struggles against my hold.  
Betty brings the truck closer,  
still sparing the intervening garden.  
we tug-of-war the calf across  
Betty takes the hindquarters, I the front,  
thinking of pot roast.  
"Weight training," I say.  
We boost it onto the tailgate;  
Betty scrambles up beside it.  
I drive  
fumbling the unfamiliar gears.

Five minutes later,  
it sucks thirstily beside its mother,  
bovine,  
pastoral  
in the ankledeep dandelions.  
Betty grins at me across the tailgate.

*A freelance writer since 1974, Anne Duke Judd works now as an editor, bookseller, publisher, and gardener in Bruce County. Active in Writers' BLOC and the poetry co-operative Words Aloud, she won the 2004 Wingham Literary Day contest.*