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## The Duncan Yo-Yo Guy

About the time trick bike riding had lost its appeal because of flat tires and bent rims, and summer vacation had become a routine of stickball games, like the medicine shows of the Old West, the Duncan Yo-Yo guy would appear at the local Woolworth's and set out his stuff on a folding table. He had the solid wood models enameled in primary colors and later the plastic "see through" ones that cracked from smacking the sidewalk.

His forte was working two at a time, firing them out in quick narrow parabolas snapping his wrists as if he were sharpshooting clay pigeons. There were sharp white lines around his fingers like the marks my mother showed me once when she took off her wedding rings.

He taught the little kids how to double the finger loop and how to loosen the string when it knotted, holding it up high and waiting while the yo-yo, like a hypnotist's medallion, turned and slowed until it settled, slack enough to let the center pin spin rapidly or dreamily.

The thing about yo-yos is if you got a good one and practiced (and if you'd bought the glassine package of three extra strings for a nickel) you could become as good as you remembered the guy was. Once you've got it sleeping, walking, rocking the cradle, landing in your pocket, you think you could be him, dazzling kids in polo shirts, your name fancily lettered on a big display card in the window of every five and ten from Queens to Boston.

Then your father would get his vacation. You can't yo-yo in a car, so you leave it, maybe in the Garcia Vega box under your bed. Sometimes, in February, you'd find a spare string under an old baseball card in your top dresser drawer.