

*Effie and Her Friends*  
A Story of Friendship

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The time: the forties and fifties

The place: South Alabama

“Effie, my older brothers say that God made boy cardinals more special than girl cardinals. Is that true?”

Effie’s reply: “God *did* make boy cardinals more colorful. Color does not make you better; it makes you different.”

Dedicated to Coy J. Money, a brother whose heart, head, hands, and feet worked with such precision. To walk with Coy was to keep company with Jesus.

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# Preface

Some say you can't go home again. I believe not only that you *can* but that it is essential that you *do*. In *Effie and Her Friends* I journey home again and unpack some treasures that were stored away in the attic of my childhood memories.

Effie was a childhood friend who was poor, black, and crippled. Our emerging friendship, much like our faith, pushed against and crossed over barriers of race, sex, and social status. My journey home through the memories I share captures the gentle, growing friendship between a girl and a boy, a black and a white, a child of a tenant farmer and a child of an owner.

Each of the twenty episodes, like an open window, provides more and more light and allows a soft, steady breeze to blow in across our friendship. It is a friendship that quietly, yet openly, teaches personal Christian qualities such as respecting differences, sharing, empathizing, remembering, caring, fostering self-worth and self-confidence.

In *Effie and Her Friends* my childhood experiences are recounted and retold by my seeking, nurturing, thinking adult. The writings are childhood experiences viewed through an adult's perspective. Some parts of the story are told as they actually occurred. Other parts are told as a small boy wished them to be.

In remembering, I first found Effie hidden away in the distant memories of my past. As I began to write, she slowly walked out of the shadows of the woods into the open sunlight of the verdant, green meadow that lay beside her house and in front of mine. In sharing her with you, both she and I are alive in a new and different way.

It is a real joy for me to introduce you to my good friend, Effie. You will enjoy her as much as I.