

CHAPTER 10

THE HOUSE BETWEEN

A CRYSTAL SET. To get to my grandparents' house you had to walk past the Raymond house. The Raymonds were interesting people. I do not remember what his main occupation was at the time, but he had been a barber and still cut hair in his barber room in the Raymond house. That is where I got my hair cut. But hair cutting was not the most interesting thing about Mr. Raymond. He was also a crystal set radio buff. He built crystal sets, and not just any old crystal set. He built crystal sets that you could hear not just through ear phones, but through a small speaker.

It Just So Happened that I had a collection of coins and Mr. Raymond was also a coin collector. We did a little dickering. I don't know who got the best deal, but I got a crystal set with a speaker, which I promptly put next to my downstairs bed and let it put me to sleep every night.¹

DANDELIONS. But Mr. Raymond was not the only Raymond. There was also Mrs. Raymond and she was a charmer, and around her I always tried to be a serious minded, little charmer also. One day she was out in the yard digging dandelions. I said something like, "Digging dandelions is a job, isn't it." She looked up at me and smiled; looked down at the dandelions; then looked at me again and said, "Yes, Junior, thankless, hopeless. I have about decided that what we ought to do with dandelions is learn to love them." She was right! I knew it in that very moment. Love them!

And I did. And I do. Don't dig them. Don't spray them. Love them.

¹For all of you too young to know, once there were little radios that rather magically gathered, without electronic assistance, radio waves into audible sounds--in the good old days when magic was magic, not just microchips.