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## Ripple

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# Ripple

*By Reed Gifford*

We were the fourth house  
to be built-  
out on Vista View.

To tappings of nail-guns  
and echoed classic-rock on  
one-o-four point-one, *The Eagle*,  
my brother and I spent those  
first summer months combing  
our surrounding new acre.

Commissioned by Mom  
to track down and transplant  
jagged desert rocks, found hiding  
in the shadow of parched sage,  
woven in the shoots of bunchgrass,  
and littered along the tumbleweed's trail.  
We went to work, out on that acre.

Hauling our five-gallon Ace-bucket,  
we'd set it central in each square area  
and, one-by-one, uproot any rocks  
big enough to dent or stall  
the swish blades on our push-mower,  
while Mom edged out her garden  
with our findings.

By the end of that summer  
the acre surrounding  
our house on Vista View  
sat flat and rockless.  
The weeds had been mowed  
tight as mere dust

and settled atop  
the windswept desert floor.

So when the long-fall  
rains came  
water gathered in stagnant  
muddy pools-  
out on our acre-  
where mallard ducks  
would light before the dawn light      and settle  
never to ripple the puddle again  
until cast-off into flight.

Then one morning,  
early before school,  
Mom woke us up  
and had us put on  
our winter bibs  
and jackets,  
and rushed us out the door  
to greet the chilly morning air,  
to get to know it's gray sky-drizzles,  
and to have us splash about  
our endless acre of puddles-  
scattering      ducks  
like the worries we need not have  
as children  
nor as brothers.

For, we do not live  
out on Vista View anymore,  
and I never play-  
in puddles.