

## Lemon Meringue Pie

By Debra Strick

I was in my seat in my second-grade classroom at P.S. 193 in Brooklyn and I could barely contain myself. I had only one thing on my mind—pie! Dessert was a rarity in my household, but there had been a celebration and there was a leftover lemon meringue pie in the refrigerator. I couldn't wait until lunchtime when I would be able to have a nice, delicious piece. Pie, pie, pie—it permeated my morning in the classroom.

In those days it was safe for a seven-year-old to walk in the neighborhood alone, and I walked home for lunch every day, down the two blocks of paved sidewalk. I walked home with pie with me the whole time.

I sat in the kitchen and was served lunch that I rushed through, although I have only a vague recollection of that. However, I remember picturing the pie in its white bakery box, the red and white striped string tied loosely around, the sound of the cardboard opening, and the beautiful white peaks on top. I imagined it going into my mouth and all its softness and sweetness.

Finally, it was time for dessert. I got up and went to the refrigerator and opened the door. There it was! I reached for the box and, all of a sudden, I heard a strong voice, even stronger than the morning's "pie, pie, pie."

"WHAT IF YOU DIDN'T EAT THE PIE? "

It felt that voice like a jolt going through my whole body. I closed the refrigerator immediately, turned on my heel, and woke up. Everything was vivid. I felt energy all through me. Somewhere in me I still wanted pie but at the same time this energy was bigger, much bigger—and so different.

I walked back to school but this time I actually took in the neighborhood, and myself walking in it. I passed a shrub covered by luxuriant purple blooms giving off an intoxicating smell. (a wisteria, I later learned) It was surrounded by bees but I didn't feel my usual fear of bees. Instead, everything was shimmering and I felt free, cool, happy, and really alive.