

You find him dancing on your front lawn early one morning, a tall red fez on his head. He twirls around in circles, his long robe orbiting gyroscopically like a spinning plate. You ask your wife if it's a friend of hers. It's not.

When the school bus comes you rush the kids out, taking a wide berth around the man. Eyes rolled back, gaunt face pointing to heaven, he's spinning faster than you've ever seen a man go.

After dinner you flip on the porch light to see if he's still there. He is. The kids are watching him from the living room window. You tell everyone not to worry, and you call the police. When they arrive, they crowd around the man, asking him questions, but he doesn't respond so they take him away.

The next morning, he's back spinning in your front yard.

You approach him and ask him if he's hungry but he ignores you. Then you tell him to leave or you'll get your gun. You don't have a gun but he doesn't have to know that.

A week later he's still there, whirling in a hole where his feet have worn a crater in the lawn. The telephone rings all day long now—news stations calling to ask if the spinning man is still at it. Spectators crowd the streets. Your wife buys a silkscreen and sells tee-shirts that say, *Dervishes Do It Whirling.*

One evening, during supper, your youngest son asks you how the man spins but doesn't get dizzy.

You say you don't know.

He asks where the man came from.

You say you don't know.

He asks why the man whirls.

You tell your son that that's his way of remembering God.

Sipping your coffee, you peek through a curtain and there are now two men whirling in the front yard.

The next day there are fourteen men whirling in the front yard.

Your wife screams, darting half-dressed from the bathroom. In the tub, a dervish is whirling.

When the police show up, they have to call for backup to remove all the whirling dervishes. As soon as they've been hauled away, you find another one spinning like mad in your closet.

Your wife says something really must be done.

She is mortified when she comes home one day to find you and the kids in the living room, twirling like furious cogs among dozens of dervishes. *Have you seen what's on our lawn?* she says, pulling back the curtain. Outside the window, hundreds of dervishes form a humming sea of spiraling red-fez.

Now the kids are tiny cyclones dancing around your wife, urging her to join in. You take her hand and twirl her like a ballerina. She doesn't want to twirl, she says. It makes her dizzy. But reluctantly she turns around in clumsy circles, stiff and slow at first, then gradually her body opens up, gaining momentum like a top, until all of you, father, mother, child, dervish, become a single whirling machine without a single thought among you.