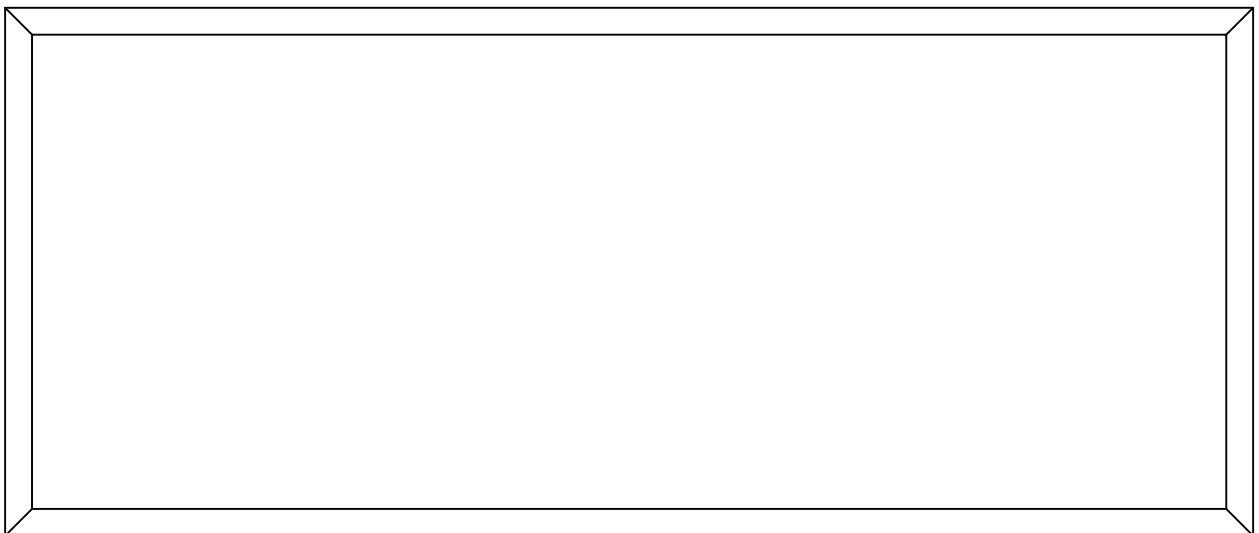


It was hard to think of Caleb as beautiful.

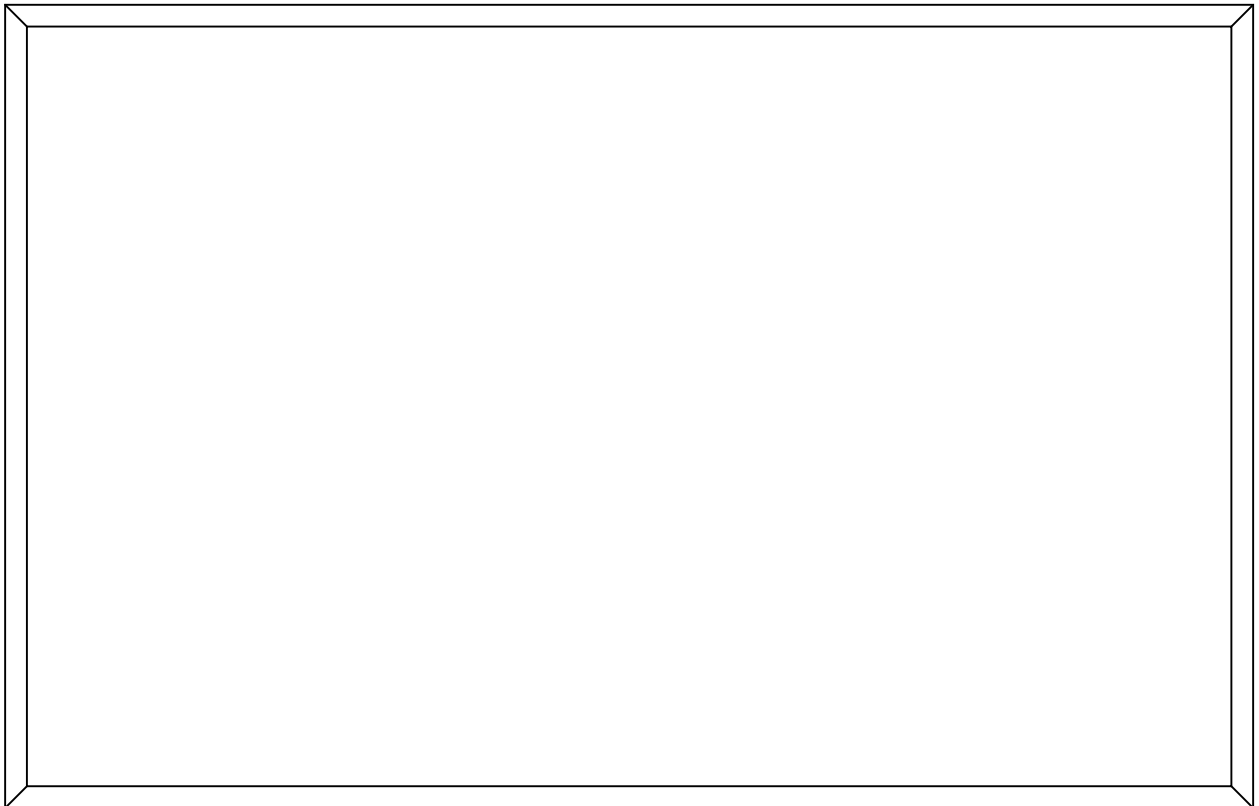
It took three whole days for me to love him,
sitting in the chair by the fire, Papa washing
up the supper dishes, Caleb's tiny hand
brushing my cheek. And a smile. It was the
smile, I know.

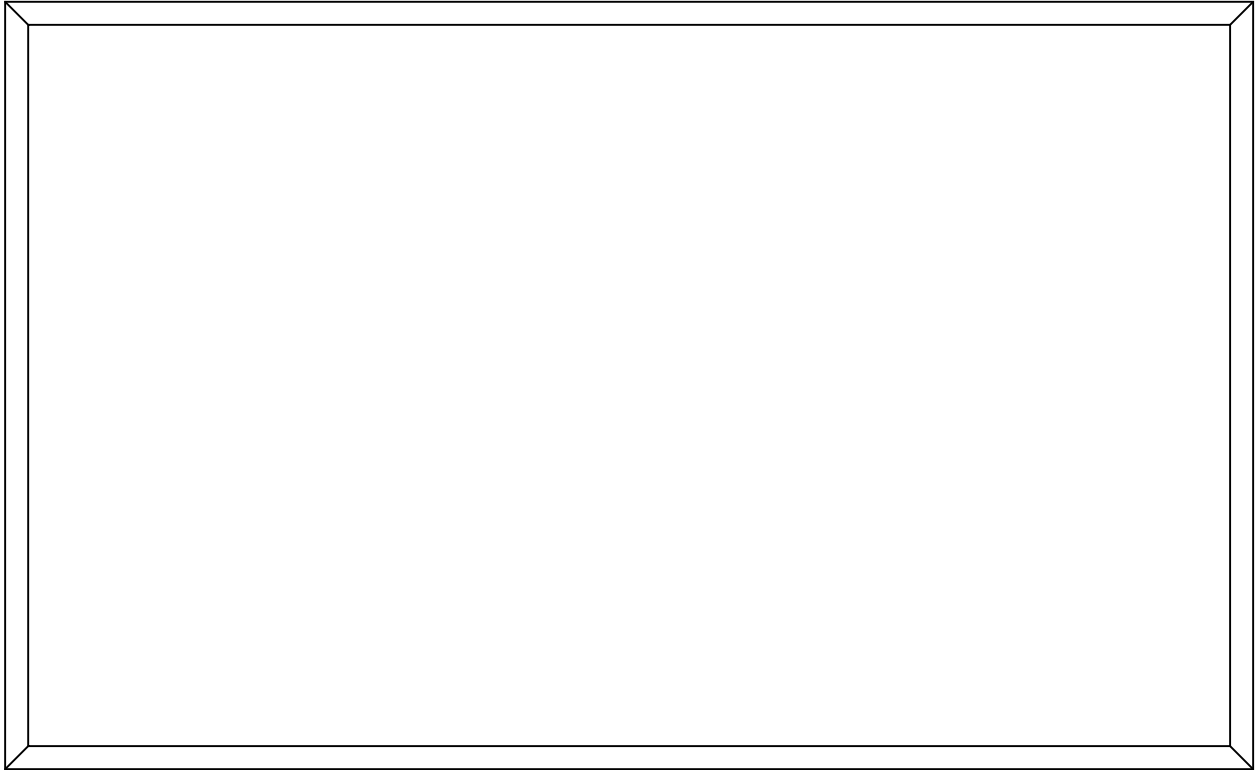
Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle, bottom) with a dotted midline for letter height guidance.

The next day Papa went to town to mail his letter to Sarah. It was rainy for days, and the clouds followed. The house was cool and damp and quiet. Once I set four places at the table, then caught myself and put the extra plate away.



Sarah stepped down from the wagon, a cloth bag in her hand. She reached up and took off her yellow bonnet, smoothing back her brown hair into a bun. She was plain and tall.

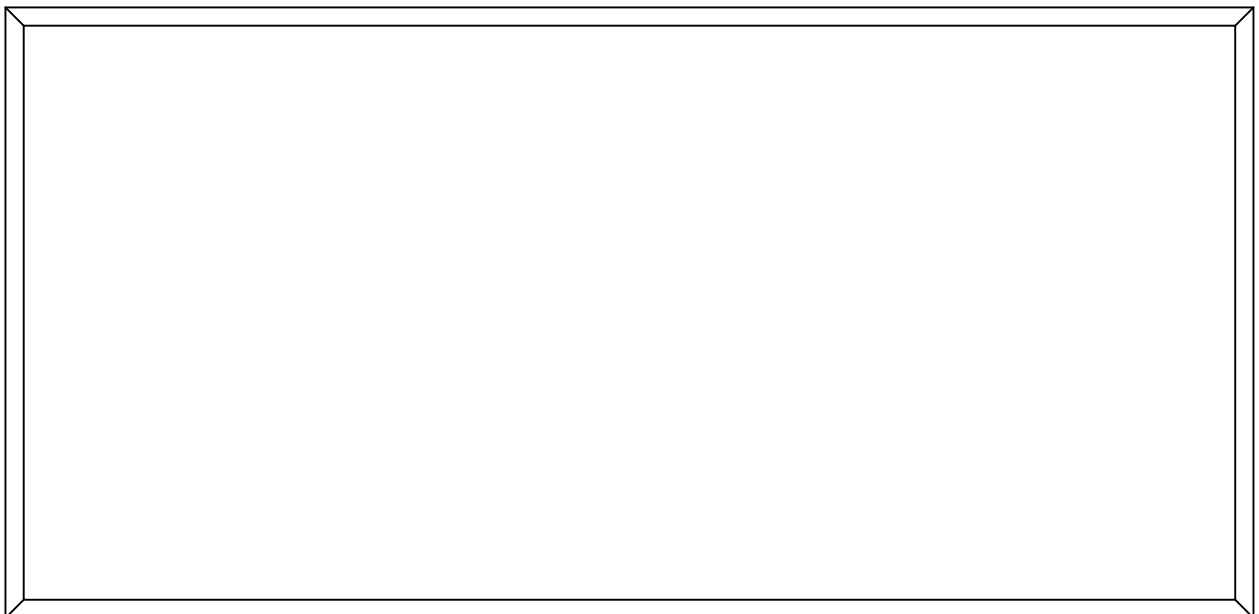




At dusk Sarah cut Caleb's hair on the front steps, gathering his curls and scattering them on the fence and ground. Seal batted some around the porch as the dogs watched.

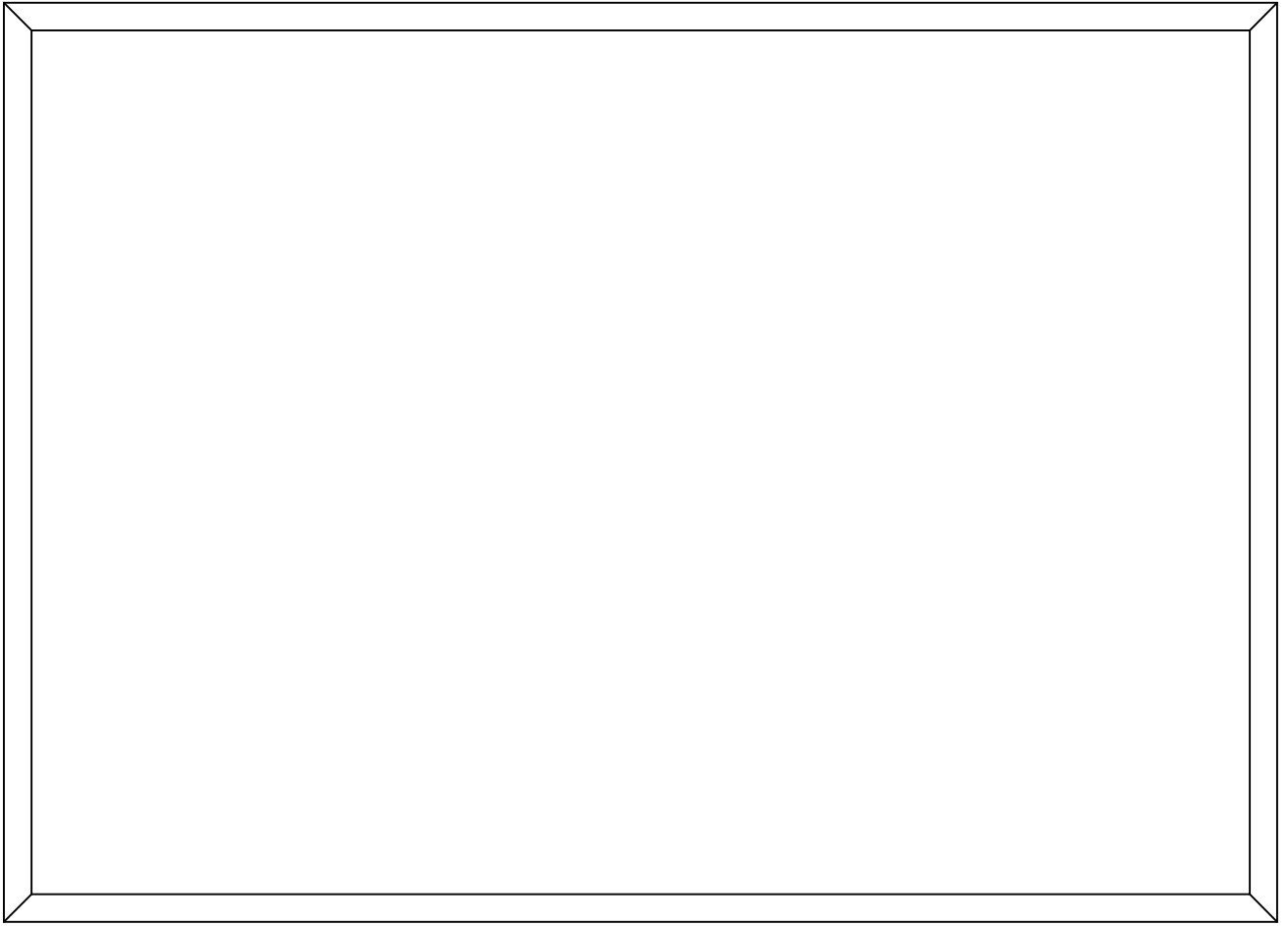
Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid) for writing practice.

The sheep made Sarah smile. She sank her fingers into their thick, coarse wool. She talked to them, running with the lambs, letting them suck on her fingers. She named them after her favorite aunts, Harriet and Mattie and Lou.



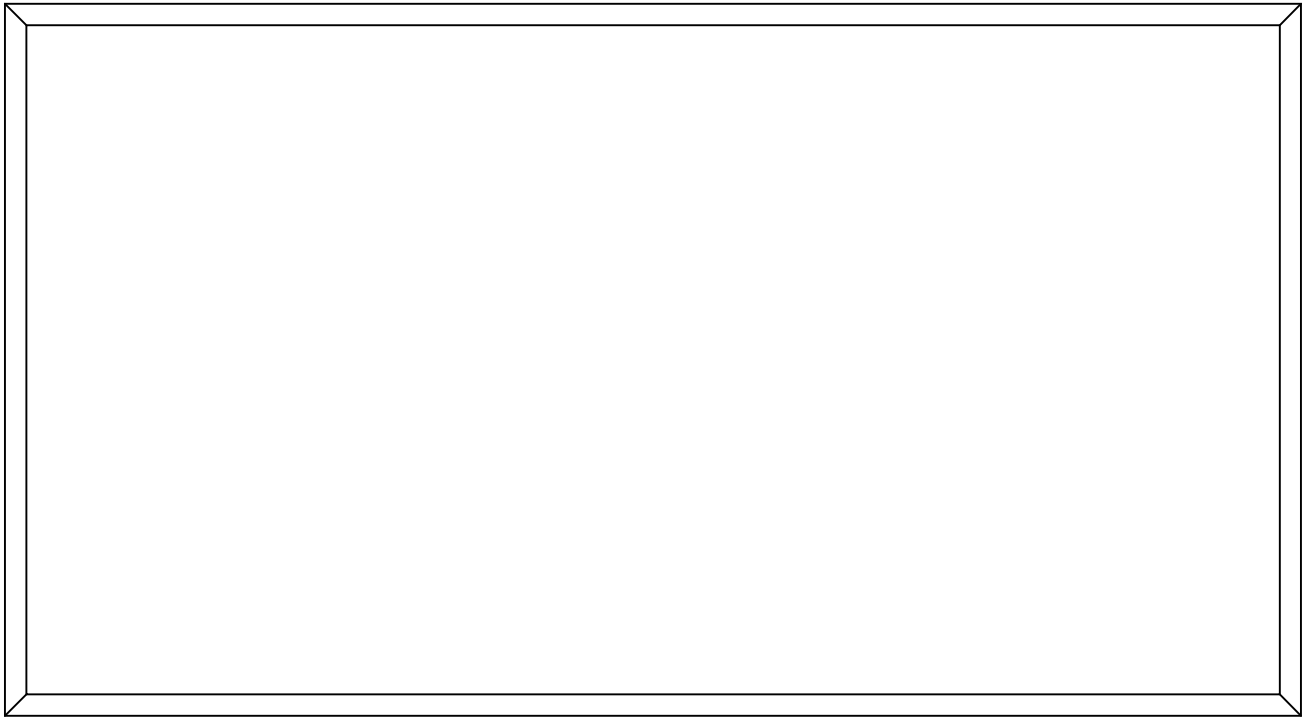
"The sea is salt," said Sarah. "It stretches out
as far as you can see. It gleams like the sun
on glass. There are waves."





Sarah loved the chickens. She clucked back to them and fed them grain. They followed her shuffling and scratching primly in the dirt. I knew they would not be for eating.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle, bottom) with a dotted line in the middle, providing space for writing practice.



We slept in the hay all night, waking when the wind was wild, sleeping again when it was quiet. And at dawn there was the sudden sound of hail, like stones tossed against the barn.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle, bottom) with a dotted midline, providing a guide for letter height and placement.

"We thought you might be leaving us," I told her. "Because you miss the sea." Sarah smiled. "No," she said. "I will always miss my old home, but the truth of it is I would miss you more."

