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Humorous Interpretation
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Learning to Fall
by Millay McCain

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Canada, Eh!

by Frank and Jack Walston

NARR. We begin our story with a...story. (very spectacularish) A long time ago in a barren land filled with great wonder and delight, there lived a wee little man who loved everything around him. The trees, the earth, the cold, cold winters and everything about his home land. That's why you should come to Canada...because a wee little man told you to.

EXEC. Nice...I love that feeling of patriotism...yes...proud to be a Canadian. Ahem...so how did the commercial run with the test audiences?

ASST. Umm...sir...the only positive results we had were with chimpanzees and algae...

EXEC. WHY IS THAT?

ASST. Well sir it's just not appealing to any 'human' audience...

EXEC. What does this mean, eh?

ASST. Basically, primates and algae don't spend the dough so I guess the commercial is being pulled.

EXEC. We really have to do something here...I could lose my job...my car...my house...my flannel hat!!

ASST. Sir, I think I have an idea.

EXEC. Yes? Out with it.

ASST. Well while I am frequently watching American television I notice that their advertising campaigns are...well...entertaining...not boring...funny...intelligent...creative...

EXEC. I get the point. What are you saying?

ASST. (Whispers) Let's hire Americans to make our PR campaigns...that way we don't look so bad...

EXEC. OUI!!! I mean YES!! I love it. Lets get on the phone.

JOEL. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of In Your Face Advertising, it is my pleasure to be here.

COREY. Thank you Joel. My name is Corey and you good people at the Canadian Ministry of Tourism have asked our firm to give your nation a public relations makeover.

JOEL. That's right. Here are the profit numbers from tourism last year. Zero (hold up a zero)

COREY. Fixable...definitely fixable

JOEL. Wait a minute. That's not right. (holds up negative one billion)

COREY. Negative one billion...right.

JOEL. Okay folks that's just bad-(bewildered look)

JOEL. Moving along, we have several ideas that will give your country a nice kick in the pants. So if you're ready, let's begin. We feel it's best to appeal to a new generation. It worked for Pepsi. It worked for Star Trek: The Next Generation. "N-E-X-T" Generation...see what I'm saying?

COREY. Hmm...you know what I'm talking about.

COREY. You have to give kids what they want. They don't want their grandma's Canada. They want C-N-D wit duh triple A's mixed in...word.

JOEL. (aside) That means Canada.

COREY. Here's a little rap about a land called Canada. It's got lots of moose, but we ain't got pan-uh-das...

JOEL. (cuts off) That doesn't even make sense. What I think you were going for is, pandas?

COREY. Look I'm the one bustin' the lyrical rhymes YO! You stick to the beat ah-

ig-it?

Hip Hop rap to the dog dawg diggity/
It might be cold but we ain't shivery.
Cruisin' all around quite like a thief/
When we hail our flag we hail the maple leaf.
Hip hop rap to the Mix Master Sinister/
We cooler than the States cause we gots a Prime Minister...
We ain't finished here, just up to Prime Minister. (scratch) Wikky wikky, Prime Minister.

JOEL. Go dizzown t'da grocery, stuff's labelled in French. You laugh at our metrics; but wad up with 'dat inch?

COREY. Ha Ha you use the inch...

JOEL. So raise up that Maple Leaf, give props to the red and whizzite. Say, waddup Canada! This country's out of sight. (finish with robot dance)

JOEL. All right, that could be a little too much, so let's put that one in the maybe pile.

COREY. How about, or should I say 'about', (laughs) I always kill myself.

JOEL. If you don't get on with it, I'll do it for you.

COREY. How about we move along to the most troubled spots in your country? The whole thing. For years Canada has been the Vancouver Grizzlies of the tourism world.

JOEL. Corey, I hate to break this to you, but the NBA moved the Grizzlies to Memphis.

COREY. My point exactly. We feel the best way to deal with this problem is to simply bite the bullet and be honest with the public. After all, honesty is the best policy. Isn't that what we learned from Abraham Lincoln?

JOEL. Was that before or after John Wilkes Booth shot him in the head?

COREY. We're oozing-lay edibility-cray.

JOEL. Sorry. Here are the new billboards for the Canada, Eh! campaign.

COREY. Okay then...what have we got here then? Hmm, I call this a big 'ole bag of slogans!

JOEL. Canada: It's a Dry Cold.

COREY. Canada: What Else is Above America?

JOEL. Canada: Come See Our Beavers!

COREY. Got Canada? No? Well You Should!

JOEL. We think this last one is really going to set off the whole campaign. You've arrived in Canada Sorry About That!

JOEL. Alrighty...so maybe honesty isn't the best policy. Well, this next idea is going to knock you all flat on your ice hockey-loving frozen butts.

COREY. Way to put that so eloquently. What my esteemed colleague meant to say is we want to show that Canada isn't a nation of big ole pansies, with police who ride horses...I mean which is cool and all but we just want to point out the greatest moment in Canadian history: the time when Canada kicked America's butt.

JOEL. I think we should go with some sort of historical motif. Like a re-enactment. Something hip fresh and cool. Saving Private Ryanish... hmm?

GENERAL SOLDIER. Alright there, eh. Umm...so let's see. Guns, eh?

GENERAL SOLDIER. Check, eh!

GENERAL SOLDIER. Bullets, eh?

GENERAL SOLDIER. No check there, eh.

GENERAL SOLDIER. No bullets, eh?

GENERAL SOLDIER. Nope, eh.

GENERAL SOLDIER. What kind of military sends out troops without bullets, eh?

GENERAL SOLDIER. A Canadian one.

Being That Guy

Poetry Program Builder by Tony Damico

KISS

by Tony Damico

I am trying to write a poem, but all I can think of are the curves of your lips.
Don't get me wrong, because I don't want to fall into sappy sentimental metaphors,
but you capture me like a prisoner of war in your arms and I'm torn,
reborn, like I've been sworn in to a cult of forlorn losers
With nothing better to do than write this poem.

See, every time I look into your eyes,
I see the man I want to be,
I see eternity,
You and me breathing one breath of unity.

You are the essence of what I hoped for and the evidence of things unseen,
And nothing is real except how I feel when you smile,
With drops of moonshine drippin from your lips,
And all I am is wanting to sip your love from the tip of it's cup in a kiss.

They say that Jesus may be coming soon, but you're already here,
And you're filling a hole I never knew was there.
You're like a blue-jean-savior,
With a belt of truth wrapped around your closely curved hips,
And I confess
That all I am is wanting
To find poetry
Is to find
Poetry
Is to kiss your lips
To watch our hearts eclipse
But this dorky boy is nervous.
Feelin like Milli Vanilli when the CD skips.
And I confess that

I wanna love you like making out in 8th grade!
I wanna love you like racing over speed bumps at 80 miles-per-hour in a beat up
Impala.
I wanna love you like doggy-style
I wanna love you like froggy-style

But I'm stuck here in fear with pen in hand,
Too scared to tell you how you put my sex drive in 3rd gear,
And girl, I wanna make you happy,
Like a Puerto-Rican girl yellin pappi,
I wanna be the
Strong,
Able,
Convincing man who makes cameo appearances in your dreams,
But love is a game,
And I don't even know how to operate the controller.
I'm just sitting here
Getting sappy,
Hoping
For
A
Kiss.

Just for a Kiss.

Because this is where true poetry lies.

THAT NICE GUY

by Tony Damico

After being forced into watching an episode of "The Bachelor,"
I realized that the TV industry has no clue what women want.

But I do.
Oh, yeah, I know exactly what you want.
Me!
That's right, baby,
I am what every woman is afraid to admit that they want.

See, ladies, society tells you that you need a
strong willed , bullheaded man
to tell you what's right and wrong
and then have you get them a beer
that you need a man who will
work long nights, be in charge,
make all the plans, and, in the end,
leave you for his secretary with fake blonde hair.

Ooh, but baby, I know what a girl wants!
I know what a girl needs!

Because I am—
That nice guy who stays up late on the phone after you get dumped,
That poor sap who you know always had a crush on you,
But never had the balls to ask you out.
I am that guy standing on the table at your party, spraying Cheez Whiz all over his body
Just to get your attention!

I am that nice guy manifest in the flesh
who always finishes last

I am that nice guy
who you go to when you need to feel good about yourself
after being treated like a piece of meat—I'll be your filet mignon, baby,
and prove that it's not the size of your steak that matters, it's how tender it is.

Because you know you need
a guy who isn't good with words,
who says things like "that's swell,"
who shoots metaphors to the sky like....
Like...
Well, you get the point.

Because you need a guy
Who recovers from embarrassing situations with the grace
of a figure skater after a failed triple axle.

Who holds you like a body pillow on a thin twin bed,
Who finishes dinner after you,
Who climaxes with you,
Who can touch you with the thoughtful reflection only found in the
pages of Danielle Steel novels.

Because you need a sensitive man
Who will read you poetry
And light you candles
And cook you dinner
And rub your feet
And meet your parents

You need someone who is
'boyfriend material'

You say you want a superhero to
rescue you from evil...
but I am every superhero's secret identity

You say you want a captain danger...

The Amazing Presto

by Faith Codge

BETH. Ladies and Gentleman, prepare yourself for a feast of magical talent renowned the world over. Be ready to question what is real. To witness a power that some say comes from the other side. And above all, remember, don't trust your eyes... Tonight for all those assembled (looks at card) at the Glen Oaks Assisted Living Center. Please welcome, the one, the only...Amazing Presto!!!

MIKE. (appears drunk) Good evening fellow citizens. Would anyone in the audience care to lend me a twenty dollar bill. Not for a trick, but for my bus ride home. (no response) Okay...Uh... Hmm...I know you all have oxygen masks on, but take them off for a second and give a guy a break. (to Beth) Alright, let's move on to the big finale.

BETH. This next trick is for Mary Sawicky who is 97 years young today. Evoking shades of the late, great Harry Houdini, the Amazing Presto will now attempt to escape from not 2, but ONE straight jacket...While completely blindfolded and an apple in his mouth. (Beth prepares the apple, feeds him, puts him into straight jacket, inserts apple) (He begins struggling)

BETH. Come on folks, bang those canes together and give him some encouragement. Not even Houdini could do this trick in 10 seconds....15 seconds...20...

MIKE. (with apple in mouth) Curtain. Curtain. (Spits out apple) Curtain!

(sitting in bar that night)

MIKE. Yeah. Give me a shot of Wise Men... and a double scotch neat....and...

BETH. ...a diet coke please. (awkward pause) Look, I think things are getting better. We're learning. I mean, the apple didn't work, so now we know. Next time we'll try a pear or an orange...or even a banana.

MIKE. Come on, Beth. I sucked. I saw those old folks pulling at the cords on their respirators halfway through the act. I couldn't even guess the card that old lady in the audience was holding.

BETH. Well...there's 52 cards in a deck. That could happen to anyone.

MIKE. Beth, every card in the deck is an ace of spades! (deep breath) I don't know. You'd think after 11 years of doing this, a man would get better.

BETH. (searching) Mike, you are the Amazing Presto. You've played all over the country. Sioux Falls. Rapid City. Chattanooga. And I don't think I have to remind you of the time you shared the stage with a certain David Copperfield in Las Vegas. Actually I was in touch with him the other day. He swears that the straight jacket bit works better with a pear, not an apple.

MIKE. A pear? (a beat) When were you talking to Copperfield?

BETH. We've kept in touch a bit. Anyway, you played before thousands at that show and they loved you. Everyone loves you.

MIKE. That was a long time ago. Seven years. (a beat) I guess I was pretty good. (cheering up) You remember how much they clapped when I levitated you. Nobody was doing that then. I started that trend and it's my patented trick. I had you floating five feet in the air completely horizontal, busted out those hoops from virtually nowhere, passed you through them and...

BOTH.

MIKE.

BETH.

PRESTO!

Okay. What's next? Here's the map. Where are we heading to now? On Thursday we have Lacy's Bingo Parlor in Des Moines. Then we've got to truck it to the 8-Ball in Springfield. From there we are off to that high school reunion in Charlottesville. Big hall. Big venue. Alright, cool. Let's plan our route. If we hop onto I-80 and take it across to...(fades out)

MIKE.

BETH.

He didn't have to map it out. I already had it planned. I'm not just his assistant. I'm also his tour manager. I book the shows, I plan the routes, I even budget for food...when there's any money to budget. Sometimes after a long show, I even provide him...(thinking of the right word)...comfort. (grins) It's a kind of lark, it's something to do. But it didn't take long for it to bite me...That dream of seeing OUR names in lights. THE AMAZING PRESTO with Beth. Kinda has a ring to it.

MIKE.

BETH.

MIKE.

(appears) Are you ready?

(snaps back) Yes. I figure we have about 300 miles before...

Quit your yammering. Let's just go.

BETH.

Bingo Players young and old. Mostly old. Put your hands together for the Amazing Presto Give him a warm welcome and he may just put that 8-3 on your card when you need it the most. (starts applauding)

MIKE.

BETH.

For my first trick, folks, I will use the legendary hat of mystery,

Who knows what wonders this hat holds? Only the power of Presto can unleash its secrets.

MIKE.

From the beginning of time, man has been spellbound by the majesty of flight. Men have given their lives to unravel the workings of this miracle and few have mastered this...(searching for the word to describe)

BETH.

MIKE.

Cosmic riddle!

From this hat, I summon the powers beyond to assemble and spring forth WITH FLIGHT!

BOTH.

MIKE.

BETH.

Presto! (nothing happens)

Ha ha! Presto!

(a beat behind him) Presto! (pause) (looks into hat) Uh, Presto. It's dead.

MIKE.

BETH.

MIKE.

Well, you know ladies and gentlemen the powers of the unknown...

And the abyss can produce havoc...even with...the conjure of those...

Oh, geeze. Come on, Beth! That pigeon cost 30 dollars. Sales guy said they are supposed to live 6 years...Minimum! (a beat) You know what? I got a magic trick for you, pigeon. (flicks off the dead bird).

(Leaves stage)

BETH.

Take five, folks.

MIKE.

Yeah. Give me a shot of Wise Men... and a double scotch neat....and...

BETH.

MIKE.

BETH.

Mike. We're at a truck stop.

I'll take a coffee.

...and a water. So, do you think we should replace the hat of mystery tonight?

MIKE.

I don't give a shit. Whatever you want to call it. The sweatshirt of marvel...the earrings of majesty...Whatever.

BETH.

Presentation is everything. Dave says the same thing. Some of his tricks aren't even that hard, he just...

MIKE.

His tricks aren't that hard??!! Dude made the Statue of Liberty disappear! And he's married to a model! Hello???! You hand me a can of

The Apology of Socrates

by Odell Workman

- TRIPP. Socrates was a philosopher, a visionary of his time.
SOCRATES. I do nothing but go around trying to persuade people to listen. All I care about is the improvement of the soul.
TRIPP. Socrates didn't care what others had to say about himself or his teachings.
SOCRATES. Hey, don't be offended at my speaking the truth. You want the truth? You want the truth? You can handle the truth! The truth is...
TRIPP. Socrates would teach from the streets. He would teach in public areas. He would teach wherever there was a single person willing to listen.
SOCRATES. A man who is good for anything should only consider when doing something if it is right or wrong. It's that simple folks.
TRIPP. Socrates didn't claim to know everything. He simply wanted people to listen.
SOCRATES. I don't know everything. Hell, no one knows everything. All I know is that I know enough to know that I don't know everything. You get that?
TRIPP. Socrates was awesome.
- WARD. Mr. Lamplin, once again I am less than pleased with your work. Might I remind you that you are no longer at your old high school? You are a student at the prestigious Woodsburg Academy.
TRIPP. It was a dumb assignment. Personally, I don't care about history. It's dead people with dead thoughts. I want something real...alive.
WARD. Real? You want something real? Mr. Lamplin those who fail to learn from the past...
TRIPP. Yeah, are doomed to repeat it. I get you loud and clear.
WARD. I'm afraid that you do not. However, I see our discussion is having little effect on your opinions so I propose a second chance, of sorts.
TRIPP. I don't wanna write another research paper.
WARD. Quite the opposite. I want you to find someone in the community and see what you can learn from this person. Find out who he is. What has shaped her life?
TRIPP. Anyone that I want?
WARD. Yes, Mr. Lamplin, the choice is yours.
TRIPP. Ok, what's the catch?
WARD. There is no catch, but may I remind you that it is this or failure. Your GPA and hope of remaining with us at Woodsburg rests on this grade. And I'm sure your father would not be pleased with that, now would he? You have two weeks. Dismissed.
- TRIPP. Stupid Mr. Reynolds. 'Those who fail to learn from their mistakes are doomed to repeat them.' Now where am I gonna find someone interesting in two weeks?
SOCRATES. Some spare change ma'am. Penny for my thoughts, sir? Is every damn person here deaf or is it just me?
TRIPP. Well, so much for a challenge.
SOCRATES. Why does everyone ignore me? Does anyone have ears to hear, think, or speak? Knowledge is the only real power any of us have.
TRIPP. Knowledge for sale! It's gain' cheap!
SOCRATES. Here goes everything. Excuse me?
TRIPP. At last, a student with an eager mind. It's about time. Half price

- TRIPP. discount for students today.
SOCRATES. Uh...on second thought, never mind.
TRIPP. Sorry, I didn't mean to startle you. It's not every day that someone actually stops to listen. Name's Eddie, Eddie Thompkins.
SOCRATES. Hal Lamplin the third. Friends call me Tripp.
TRIPP. Nickname, eh? I like it. Well, if we're going by nicknames, friends call me Socrates.
TRIPP. Socrates? Like the philosopher?
SOCRATES. You know any other Socrates? If you do, then I'm in trouble.
TRIPP. (changing subject) Do you do this every day? I mean, stand on a street corner yelling at people?
SOCRATES. You call that yelling? Oh, it's far from yelling. It's teaching, though most people only listen long enough to hear the sound and not the message. And what kind of message is that?
TRIPP. Nouns and verbs juxtaposed to the melodic rhythms of the mind. (coughs because Tripp doesn't get it) Everything you really need to know to make it in life.
SOCRATES. And how long would it take you to teach me that?
TRIPP. How long you got?
SOCRATES. Two weeks.
TRIPP. That'll do...That'll do. Meet me here tomorrow for your first lesson.
- TRIPP. Mr. Reynolds, I wanted to let you know I found the subject for my project.
WARD. Why Tripp, are you actually showing some initiative?
TRIPP. I guess I was in the right place at the right time. He calls himself Socrates. He's a philosopher, I guess you could say. You may have seen him around town down on...
WARD. I have more than seen him. He was once my colleague...
TRIPP. You mean he was a professor here?
WARD. Emphasis on the word was, Mr. Lamplin. And I would recommend you stay away from him.
TRIPP. Why?
WARD. Because he has several problems. Problems that he was unwilling to deal with that caused Professor Thompkins to mentally break down one day during a class. Needless to say he was no longer welcome here. But he seems harmless.
TRIPP. Most dangerous individuals do. I know I said anyone, but this is now a matter of liability. I am warning you, for your own safety stay away from Mr. Thompkins or Socrates or whatever he calls himself.
WARD. But you said I could choose anyone. You want me to learn and yet it goes right back to what you choose for me to learn.
TRIPP. Fine. And while you are learning about him, ask Socrates what happened that day.
- SOCRATES. The student returns for his first lesson.
TRIPP. Look, you wanna tell me how you ended up on the street?
SOCRATES. An eager mind, but most pupils allow the teacher to ask the first question.
TRIPP. Cut the crap. I know what happened at Woodsburg.
SOCRATES. I see. That certainly isn't a moment that I'm proud of. Let's just say I had reached rock bottom and found a way to go deeper. My wife had filed for divorce, I had been told my contract wouldn't be renewed for the following year, and when I stared into twenty blank faces that would rather be watching a shaking Britney Spears than Shakespeare, I lost control.
TRIPP. But how did you wind up on the street?
SOCRATES. Do you really think there's a lot of work out there for a person with a

Learning to Fall

by Millay McCain

I spent the better part of my childhood convincing my sister that I could turn into a unicorn at will—just not in her presence. We were both the type who wanted so badly to believe in Things Magic, I think we really did believe I spent half my time prancing about in the clouds or the heavens or wherever it is unicorns...prance. At the time, I thought there would be no end to those long, yellow Louisiana afternoons we spent being fairies, elves, dragons and every other magical creature implanted in our brains by Tolkien and Weiss. The end came in a rush of magnolia trees and hard earth. All of it ended when we tried to fly.

I didn't voluntarily wear clothes when I didn't have to until I was about twelve years old. Before that, every morning there was an all-out battle between my parents and me to don clothes in order to emerge into the less understanding world outside our home. The fight got particularly nasty when we were going to Grandma's house for, as I said, "I'll just take them off when I get there!"

On this day, I was eleven and my sister was nine. My parents had, as usual, won the clothing war; so, we were going to grandma's, forcibly stuffed into shorts and a T-shirt. Grandma's house was great because she made topnotch macaroni and Grandpa had a garden you could pick vegetables out of and the neighbor had a flock of enemy chickens.

I now feel really sorry for those poor little stupid chickens. I certainly didn't then. Immediately after getting out of the car and offering the obligatory hugs, Mattie and I retrieved our handmade bows and arrows from the garage and shot up the evil beasts with them. According to me, they were minions of the Dark Lord come to spy on we Magic-folk. Mattie (her trust in me absolutely visible in her disturbingly large, disturbingly dark blue eyes) rained a torrent of arrows on the miserable fowl.

"Girls! Dinner! Gurehhhhhs!" I looked longingly at the towering magnolia tree near the garden on the way back inside—it would be our next adventure.

"Mattie, did you know that magnolia leaves have the same dynamics as wings?"

"What's dynamics?"

"You know—it goes through the air really well. Like wings have good dynamics but bowling balls don't."

"Oh, okay."

"Well, leaves have good ones. So, if we could make wings out of them...we could actually fly."

"Nuh-uh."

"Yeah, we could—if we get high enough in the tree and then we call on the Spirits of Flight—but the wings hafta be good."

"I have an idea—hold on." She came back with a conspiratorial grin and a roll of scotch tape.

"That's perfect."

What you've got to understand is that we had been inundated with this alternative world of whimsy stuff from before we were born when our parents read us fairy tales in the womb. Even and nine might seem too old to believe you could fly, but we were raised on books, movies, and grandma-made costumes of the fairy bent exclusively. We went to every Renaissance Festival within a three-hundred mile radius; we watched Labyrinth every day after school for a two-month period. To us, this stuff was no joke.

So our parents and grandparents were neither surprised nor suspicious when we asked them for help attaching the magnolia leaves we'd gathered to our arms. With their bright smiles and sweet encouragement, it was clear they assumed they were helping us to merely pretend to fly.

"Be careful—don't mess up your wings." We climbed with meticulous precision—it took longer than our usual monkeyesque pace, but it was worth it when we both arrived at the top with a full set of undamaged feathers.

"It's pretty high" She was right. It was twenty-five feet—which was definitely pretty high...especially if you were planning on free-falling from that height with leaves taped to your arms.

"You have to believe if you want to make it."

"We can't do this—this is stupid. We are going to fall."

"—we can—we can fly—we're different from everybody else—we know what's really going on."

"Do you really think that's true?"

"Yes...yes."

"Okay." We held hands and I know we both wished, prayed, begged, dreamed, believed harder than I even have the strength to imagine anymore. And then, we jumped.

We spent the rest of the waning afternoon in the ER. One of the smaller bones in my left foot didn't quite survive the impact of the fall. Somehow it was the only physical injury either of us sustained. I spent the car ride back to grandma's trying to figure out how to explain this profound failure to Mattie. The best reason I could come up with was that we had been thwarted by our enemies: the chickens. Prospects were not good.

From everyone else, I'd gotten "Oh you poor thing" and "Let me sign your cast" — great doses of attention I usually had to work so hard for—but not from Mattie. Mattie was angry.

"YOU said we could fly but you knew we couldn't. I can't believe I believed you. And you can't turn into a unicorn either, can you? Do you think it's funny to lie to me? I trusted you so much and we fell, we fell! You made me think I could fly, okay? You did it, you tricked me; I hope it was worth it."

"I'm so sorry." And I was sorry—but not for tricking Mattie—because I hadn't meant to trick her—I was sorry we hadn't flown when we jumped out of that magnolia tree.

"I thought it was going to work." She marched out of my sight, determined not to talk to me for days. There were still pieces of tape attached to her arms.

When we fell, desperately grabbing branches on the way down, I was thinking: "I didn't really believe it, that's why this is happening."

But Mattie was thinking: "I knew it, I knew we couldn't fly. I can't believe I fell for this." So the disillusionment that happened to both of us when we hit the ground was grade-A painful: contrary to what we wished, we were not special. We were not magical, not of the Chosen Few. We would have normal lives, like everyone else. Like our parents, our friends, our cousins. We would go to school and to work. We would be happy sometimes and bored and confused most of the time. What a dramatic way to find that out. That realization, then and now, hurts something more than my feet.

As much as it pains me to say it, I think the flying incident was the end of Mattie's childhood. While she graduated to boyfriends and sleep-overs, I—even though I was older—held on to my spell-books and dragon figurines and stuffed unicorns well into middle school. Our relationship was distant during adolescence; but, in college, we grew close again. We went to parties, made fun of each other's boyfriends, tried to figure out Life and The Universe and all our Big Ideas together. Evil chickens and fairy lands and flying were old memories. We never really talked about that era of our lives.

Until last year, when our grandmother died. Mattie and I drove down together to Louisiana from Boston where we both went to college. On the way to the funeral, I found myself asking her if she remembered the day we tried to fly in grandma's backyard.

"Um...no?"

"Yeah you do—we taped magnolia leaves all up and down our arms and we jumped out of that tree by grandpa's garden, remember? I broke my foot?!"

"Oh yeah, I remember the foot getting broken, but somehow I thought that was