

William J. Moore

The Chronicles of Wire Willy: Chapter 2 Flying

Reading for Billy was a gift. He often read aloud from the bible and other books but particularly loved reading the stories his teacher had at school. When the other children would want to play some game or take a nap, Billy always asked if he could read instead. His teacher tried to accommodate him as much as possible for she was a kindly woman who had genuine affection for Billy.

On this particular day, It was blustery, rain falling sporadically and Billy had walked all the way home from school all by himself. Six grueling blocks of mud puddles and water running down the gutter. Bursting in the door Billy looked around for Mom and found that no one was home. There was a note:

"Billy, I have gone out for awhile and will be back soon. DO NOT LEAVE THE YARD. Mom"

He had hoped she would have made some lunch, he was hungry. Instead, he went out on the front porch, still wearing his jacket and rubber rain boots and sat at the top of the stairs. The roof of the covered porch kept the porch mostly dry on rainy days since the wind usually came from the back of the house. But it was not raining at the moment. Billy looked out past the picket fence at the world outside of his yard. The neighbors to the left were Mr. and Mrs. Goats, they were the last house on the street, then there was the vacant lot that you could play on sometimes. The vacant lot was bordered by the alley that went behind the house. Further left at the dead end of the street was the Snow Plow Shed.

The Plow Shed was a big barn like structure that had big snowplows in it. Outside were big piles of sand and pea gravel. Pea gravel was small fairly uniformly

sized rocks that were about the size of a dime or a little smaller. Very good for sling shot ammunition. Billy's dad often used it for things like the patio floor and walkways in the backyard. It was nice, because it was free as long as no one saw you take it.

Instead of the street just ending at the Plow Shed it became another street for a block and that street dead ended into another street that followed the railroad tracks. If you went left, you went into where the poor white trash people lived on a gravel road. They did not have a fire break. If you went right, you went into the Mexican neighborhood, which was three blocks long.

The street Billy lived on was twice as wide as other streets were. This allowed the snow plows extra room as it was common for snow to get five or six feet deep at times.

Billy looked out at the edge of the street past where the wooden sidewalk lay. There was a large flock of small black birds swirling and landing. Billy started to get excited. He loved the way the birds could just jump into the air and fly away and how they always seemed to stick together. He imagined that they must be very good friends. He wished he could be a bird too.

The flock lifted up and moved down the street toward the Plow Shed. Billy stood and ran down the steps to the fence to watch them land. Then they flew up again in a swarm and landed in front of the Plow Shed. He felt sad. They were leaving him behind. He was not a bird. He was not their friend.

"Billy-eee, you can be a bird if you want to...." Wire Willy, Billy's friend was back!

"Uh, hi Wire Willy" as Billy strained to see where the birds were going to go next. "I can be a bird too?"

"Yesss, Billy-eee, you can. Just open the latch on the gate and I will show you how."

"I am not supposed to leave the yard, Wire Willy."

"Well, Billy-eee, who is going to know if they don't catch you? There is nobody here, is there, Billy-eee."

Billy pondered this for a very brief moment and unlatched the gate. In an instant he slammed the gate behind him and ran off to catch up with his flock. By the time Billy and Wire Willy caught up to the flock they were more than two blocks from home, near the railroad tracks. This was forbidden territory, trains were dangerous. Billy loved being free, running along as he pretended to fly with his flock. He was a bird, flapping his wings and jumping along through the tall grass and weeds.

"Billy-eee, get down quick, lay down, she is coming around the corner..." Billy knew that Wire Willy saw his mother, she was in her car with some women. Billy dove into the tall grass and hoped she did not see him. His mom was not very observant, more interested in what she was blabbing on about than anything else. Stupid gum chewing cow. Her car went on by and around the corner toward the Plow Shed.

"Billy-eee, run around the corner, past the Plow Shed and down the alley. You can tell her you were putting wood in the wood shed or something if she notices you come in through the alley gate."

Billy smiled and began to run like the wind. He neared the Plow Shed.

"Uh oh, Billy-eee, she found you..."

Looking up he saw her running toward him with a coat hanger in her hand and he knew it was going to hurt.

"How did she know so fast?", Billy wondered.

"Because, Billy-eee, Mrs. Goats told her." Sure enough, Mrs. Goats was standing in front of her yard to watch as punishment was measured out.

Billy's mom was on a collision course with him. Billy turned and jumped the small ditch and headed across the fire break toward the woods, hoping for safety from the beating that was coming.

"If you make me run to catch you I will have your father spank you when he gets home. Now you come here right now."

Billy put his head down and pumped his little legs even faster, suddenly the stakes had been raised and he was even more determined. If he could make it the flood control ditch it would slow her down because she was wearing a dress. "Yesss, Billy-eee, jump into the ditch...." Only a few yards from the deep flood control ditch, the hand snagged the collar of his jacket and the other hand grabbed the bottom of his ear and twisted, partially lifting him off the ground.

"NO MOMMA NO..."

Her left hand twisted his ear and began to drag him home, while her right hand applied the coat hanger with great effect to his now repentant butt. Wire Willy had slipped away. Billy was happy that Wire Willy did not get caught. The cow began to yell at him. He did not feel the savage blows of the coat hanger or his ear being twisted. He looked at Mrs. Goats as they passed by. Mrs. Goats stood there smiling at Billy's mother, approving. Billy reminded himself to cry because it made the spanking much

shorter. At least it would be lunchtime soon, he hoped they would have tuna sandwiches and tomato soup. The spanking was almost over now. Billy loved being a bird.