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Abby's Pursuit

As I pass my mother in the hallway, she pauses and gazes reflectively into space. "Abby, this house is too quiet. Go find out what your brother is doing and tell him to stop it right now. And by the way, don't leave the house until you've practiced your piano."

What is it about mothers? Their mystical sixth sense of knowing most every situation before it happens?

I can hardly get away with anything, but today is the first warm day of spring. The fragrant flowers and warm breezes beckon to me. My mind says obey, but my fingers simply refuse to play scales on a day such as this.

Quietly, I slip through my window onto a branch of the large oak tree; my feet mechanically descend along each familiar groove and foothold. I race across the wide expanse of lawn and crawl under the loose board in the fence to the safety of my magical forest.

The cherry blossoms are ready to burst into color, and the last of the snow is swallowed up in the laughter of the brook. I follow its course to the little spring in the clearing, which I made friends with long ago, and skip across the bridge into a soft meadow—my own secret place.

I sink slowly to the ground and onto a bed of leaves, where I dream of an enchanted frog turning into a handsome prince who carries me off to his castle in the clouds. He saves me from a fate worse than death—a wicked witch who casts a spell over the land. She makes children eat liver and onions, wash her cauldron and polish her pointed shoes. Birds can't remember how to fly, and all the animals must walk stiffly on their hind legs. The sun is a bloody red, and gets darker every day. There is mourning all through the land.

My prince comes just in time to lock away this evil wretch forever.

Free at last! Free to never again practice the piano, wash dishes, make beds, or slave for her again.

Merlyn's Pen

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A poet's autobiography is his poetry.

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Anything else can be only a footnote.

—Yevgeny Yevtushenko

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But free to do what? . . . What will I do all day? Is life worthwhile with nothing constructive to do? Can my character or talent ever be developed without thought, practice, and determination—without putting in what I expect to get out? If nothing comes from nothing, can I become any more than what I make of myself?

I awaken to my dog, Ralph, licking my face. Reality calls. I streak back through the woods and across the lawn to my home.

As I walk through the door, my mother looks at me and smiles softly, “Were the woods as lovely as always?”

I grin back and say, “I’ll practice the piano first thing in the morning.”

—Tara Osmond,
Ninth grade, Union High School,
Roosevelt, Utah

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