

A Wish For Wings That Work

By Holly Lisle

Forty-seven years old, and THIS week I discovered something about myself that I never knew. I yearn for wings that work.

I'd used the metaphor of wings as ideas in a lesson I was writing. And then noticed that I'd made references to flying in another lesson outline. And then discovered that an anecdote I'd written about being five on my first day of kindergarten, which referenced having my wings clipped, also listed the REASON I got my wings clipped by Mrs. Quimby, kindergarten killjoy.

1966, when girls still had to wear dresses to school. I wore shorts under mine.

My first day of kindergarten, I:

Ran from one end of the teeter-totter to the other fast enough that the other end of it was still in the air when I got there, giving me the most wonderful sensation of weightlessness in the few instants before it crashed to the ground... and I elicited a scream from Mrs. Quimby... ("Never do that again!")

And...

Launched myself from the swingset into midair at my swing's apogee (and

these were old swingsets with very long chains and impressive height from earth at their highest point)... and I drew a shriek from Mrs. Quimby...

("Are you trying to kill yourself?" "...No... ")

And...

Slid down the very tall galvanized sliding board standing, wearing my smooth-soled Mary-Janes , shooting weightless through the air at the bottom to land on my feet at a dead run. Beating snowboarders to the punch of that particular thrill by a good thirty years...

... and Mrs. Quimby and two other teachers on playground duty rushed up to me and told me I must never, ever, ever do that again, because I could be hurt and what if the other children did what they saw me do?

First day of kindergarten, three separate times when I got chewed out for doing something I did all the time—I lived within walking distance of the school and had played there off-hours since we moved there.

And all three times, I'd been flying in my own way.

When I wrote about my brief and pathetic career in track, I wrote about flying.

When I was nineteen, I looked into getting a pilot's license, and only the fact that I made \$99/week at my job kept me from doing it.

When my family traveled by plane, I begged the window seat.

And when I write and the writing is flowing, it feels like flying.

Wings that work.

But I never put it all together. Never realized until I tripped over a series of metaphors hidden in different places how much I have yearned all my life for this thing I cannot have.

I don't want a plane. Don't want a hang glider. Don't want to parasail, or parachute. I want wings that work. Somewhere down deep, it is part of the core of who I am, and who I have always been.

Look through your own writing, and study the metaphors you've used. See if you can discover the part of you hiding behind everyday life, duty, obligation, routine...

I'm willing to bet there's something magical in you, something you don't even realize is there.

And if you find something, drop me a line and let me know.

Here's to your wings, in whatever form they take, and to your magic.

(I took this from the most recent issue of my Writing Updates newsletter. I don't often crosspost, but this particular discovery hit home for me, and I'm wondering what you'll discover about yourself, too.)

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