

JANE ROSEN

*Egyptian Bird with
Man and Coopers*, 2015
Ink and Gouache on Paper, 18 x 24 in



DEBORAH LEFALLE

A Keepsake from Nature

Birds imitate my life

One quiet Saturday morning I was blessed with a precious moment in nature that many people can appreciate but comparatively few actually get the opportunity to experience. The moment was uniquely symbolic because it occurred around the same time my daughter, my firstborn child, was preparing to leave home for college.

As I stood at the kitchen sink washing dishes, I kept hearing faint intermittent chirps through the partially open window above. Curious to find out from where the chirps were coming, I stopped washing dishes, stood on my toes, and drew my face as close to the window without touching it as I could. Peering through the weathered pane in hopes of catching a glimpse of the recurring chirping source, I soon noticed two young brown birds perched on twigs of the dense boxwood hedge along my driveway. The birds looked as if they wanted to take flight, but were hesitant, unsure about taking the risk. Seconds later, I spotted two more young birds of the same color on a low-hanging branch of my neighbor's manicured navel orange tree that protruded over the boxwood. Negotiating their balance, they also looked as if they wanted to take flight but were cautiously reluctant. On a higher branch of the tree perched yet a fifth young bird. It was not chirping, just turning its head in short, quick and jerky movements as if to say, "Where am I and what's going on here?" I only

realized when I saw the larger more mature bird even higher up, obviously the mother, what was occurring. Under mother bird's watchful eye, her offspring were preparing to leave the nest!

Responding to their pleas, the mother bird flitted with authority from branch to branch, chirping back with encouragement and reassurance as she intently observed the nestlings become fledglings in their quest to fly. With some coaxing and confidence boosting, all five young birds—eventually, though a tad clumsily—flew away.

I witnessed a gift from Nature. This is not a tangible memento in my hands to mindfully admire. Rather, it is a lived experience that dwells in a tranquil, sacred place in my mind. I shared this story with my daughter right before she left home for college. While I do not know the degree to which she was personally touched by my experience, I like to think she will always remember its likeness to when she innocently ventured out to start a new chapter of life on her own.

Deborah LeFalle is an active retiree who enjoys writing, supporting the arts, and spending time outdoors communing with nature. Poetry and creative nonfiction are the genres of writing she is drawn to most, with inspiration for her poems and stories usually stemming from personal experiences and/or writing prompts. She lives a simple, gratitude-filled life in Northern California.