



Monthly Musings

Just Another Miracle

by Jane Bailey

Years ago, I started a daily 'Miracle Journal' to capture the small miracles in life that many days I overlook. My journal is filled with simple things, like the miracle of running water, or the miracle of my teenage daughter having a conversation with me without a hint of surliness.

One day, after my husband left for work and the children's school bus pulled away, I took out my miracle journal to enjoy a writing respite in the morning quiet. There didn't seem to be a miracle in sight, so I sat with pen in hand deep in thought. *God, there must be a miracle around here somewhere.*

With that, a whooshing sound came from the chimney only steps from the sofa where I was sitting. I looked up and found myself face-to-face with a squirrel who had landed with a thud right onto the fireplace grate that was filled with ash. He got his bearings quicker than I did and flew out of the fireplace headed to parts unknown in the house, leaving a wake of black soot on the carpet.

In that nanosecond, a childhood memory flashed through me of my uncle's home being destroyed by a squirrel during a week he and his family were on vacation. The picture of my uncle's beautiful home in shambles morphed into a vision of my own house being gnawed to death as it was turned topsy-turvy by this invader. My heart raced as I considered what to do, while remembering cautions about animal bites and rabies that might ravage my body as the squirrel marched along his path of destruction.

A plan popped into place, a wonderful and simple plan: contain the squirrel in one room and call the town animal control department. I could hear the squirrel upstairs and I cautiously followed the soot trail, hoping to shut him into a bedroom. I got to the top of the stairs, where he stood looking at me. Blood pounded in my ears as this small squirrel took on features of a mountain lion ready to tear me limb-from-limb. He must have thought I was ready to do the same to him, because he took off with a shot into my husband's office.

I caught my breath and glanced into the office to insure he hadn't escaped from under me. There the squirrel was, hidden beyond my vacuum cleaner which was spread out in the middle of the room, with its hose disconnected from the carpet attachment in a messy sprawl.

In a moment of magical insight, I ran into the room and slammed the door behind me putting the squirrel and me in the same room. Throwing caution to the wind, I ran to the open window and threw up the screen as I grabbed the vacuum hose and dropped the end of it out the window. The squirrel was cowering in the corner, as I cowered deep inside myself—two animals in fight or flight mode. Not a good thing!

I turned to run back out of the room when suddenly the squirrel scampered up the hose heading for freedom, as my sub-conscious knew he would. When he got to the end of the hose just outside the window,....*Aaagh...* I hadn't thought of this part...*he's going to splat onto the concrete sidewalk below. There will be blood, and guts. I don't want to kill him. Why did I ever do this? This was a terrible idea!*

Just as that thought crossed my mind, my squirrel took a leap and to my amazement spread what I can only describe as wings, angel wings, and glided toward the tree that is 10 yards from the house. *Is this possible?* There he was, safely scampering down the trunk of the tree, none the worse for his adventure.

My prayers of "Oh God! Oh God! Oh God!" turned into "Thank you, God! Thank you, God! Thank you, for sending me a flying squirrel to show me that miracles do happen!"

I shut the window, put the vacuum away, walked downstairs, and closed the glass door to the fireplace. Then I sat down, picked up my journal, and entered my miracle of the day. As my journal attests, there is no end to the miracles around us. We just need to look--even into the fireplace and soot of our lives.

Jane Bailey is a freelance writer who lives in Litchfield. She is a retired educator who enjoys writing creative nonfiction that explores matters of the heart.

Photo credit: <https://www.pestworld.org/pest-guide/nuisance-wildlife/flying-squirrels/>

