

Jeffery Little's Daisy
Rev. March 2020

“What would you like for your birthday this year, Jeffery?” Mom asked her nine-year-old son, the older of two children.

“A Daisy BB gun, mom, all the guys have got one.” Jeffery Little replied.

“I don't know about that, Jeffery. Those things can be dangerous.”

“Oh shoot, mom. They won't even break skin if you get shot by one.” Jeffery says with assuring air.

“Oh my, how do you know that?” Mom's eyes furrowed as she stared at her son.

“Mikey got shot by his big brother and it only left a red mark.”

“Well, we'll see about that, Jeffery. I'm going to talk to Mikey's mom.”

“You'll see, mom. You couldn't hurt a flea with a Daisy. No kidding, mom.”

After consulting with Mikey's, and several other mothers in the neighborhood, Jeffery's mother decided it would be cruel to deprive him of something all the other neighborhood boys had.

“Oh, geez. Thank you sooooo much, mom and dad. You're the greatest.” Jeffery beamed as he held the new Daisy BB gun and poured BBs into the hole at the end of the barrel.

“No shooting in the house, no shooting at the house, no shooting at other people, no shooting at any of God's creatures. These are the rules. We catch you shooting at any of these and we will take that gun away from you.” Jeffery's fathers sternly laid down the law. “Fair enough?”

“Fair enough, dad.” Jeffery says as he sighted down the barrel.

“Put that down, Jeffery. It might go off and break something.” His mother waved her hand in the air and put the other over her mouth.

“Geez, mom. It's not even cocked, see.” Holding the gun up, Jeffery pull on the trigger and nothing happened.

Throughout the summer Jeffery practice shooting his BB gun, picking off leaves on trees and hitting old tin cans sitting on top of fence posts. He became quite accurate. A sharp shooter, he thought.

On a mid-summer afternoon, Jeffery sat alone on the front porch watching a brilliant red Cardinal clean its beak against a limb. The hunter in him emerged, and he cocked the Daisy rifle and raised it to his shoulder. He aimed carefully, then squeezed the trigger.

He didn't see the bird when he opened his eyes, but did see a not so brilliant red bird land on the limb, heard it chirp and look toward the ground below. Then he saw it flopping around on the ground. In a frozen stare Jeffery watched the red bird wrestling for its life until it made one last desperate shudder, then it lay still, bright red nestled among the blades of green grass.

A tear welled and slowly rolled down Jeffery's cheek. He set the gun down and walked to the bird, its head lying on the side and its eye staring blankly up at him. Jeffery kneeled down and with both hands gently lifted the bird up to his lap. Looking at the bird through tear-filled eyes, he tenderly stroked its brilliant red feathers.

He carried the bird to the back yard and got a shovel from the garage. He thought a proper burial it deserved. After he tamped the last shovel full of dirt over the grave, he said a silent prayer, asking God to forgive him for hurting one of his creatures and to *please take him to heaven.*

As he walked back to the porch, he saw the not so brilliant red bird still on the branch, nervously hopping about. Jeffery said aloud, "I'm sorry."

The bird gave him a nod he thought, then chirped and flew away.

The weight of his actions hung heavily about his head and shoulders as he climbed back up the steps onto the porch and picked up the Daisy BB gun. Jeffery went into the house and walked to the kitchen where his mother was washing dishes. He held out the BB gun to his mom and said. "Here mom, I don't want this anymore."