

Scene 8

BLUEBIRD

(The BLUEBIRD STUDENT stands in a spotlight.)

BLUEBIRD STUDENT. There's a birdbath in my yard. In the back. We get robins, sparrows, pigeons. A lot of pigeons. Sometimes there's a cardinal. And squirrels. Yeah, I know they're not birds, but maybe the squirrels think they are. I mean there's flying squirrels—right? I've never seen one, but flying squirrels exist. Right?

(Beat.)

I like watching the birds. The real birds. The way they all kinda twitch their heads forward,

It's like they're talking to each other. Saying how's your day and how's the weather and would you like worms with that order?

Thank You for Flushing My Head in the Toilet

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Sometimes when I'm bored, I make up what they'd say. Like this one pigeon, he's complaining about his taxes to a sparrow, and the sparrow's like, "dude, maybe if you spent more time working and

less time looking for handouts in the park...”

(Beat.)

I’m supposed to put water in the birdbath once a week. Today’s my day. And the birds are there talking about the weather and their kids and there’s a duck talking about how his cousin bought the farm and got served up in orange sauce last week. And the other birds are saying how sad that is and how sorry they are, only this one bird’s not talking. He’s not even in the bath. He’s wet, like he was there, but he’s not in there. He’s on the ground under the bath, and he’s trying to hop up, only he can’t. There’s something wrong with his left wing. He can’t flap it like the right one. And he’s spinning around in a circle, like he’s break dancing—only he’s not.

(Beat. ACHILLES enters silently and watches.)

I go over to the bath, and they all scatter when I get close. Except for the break dancing bird. It’s a bluebird—I don’t remember when I’ve ever seen a bluebird in our backyard, and now there’s one spinning like a merry-go-round under the birdbath. He’s beautiful. He’s flapping his right wing like crazy, but the poor little guy can’t go anywhere. And he’s going nuts when I pick him up in my hands. I hold him real tight so he doesn’t scratch me, and I’ve got my thumb and finger around his neck to keep him from biting. “Don’t worry, little bird. I’ve got you.” And I hold him.

(Beat.)

The phone rings in the house. I’m the only one home, but I don’t move. I’ve got this beautiful, living thing in my hands, and that’s more important than—

(Beat.)

The longer I hold him, the less he fights. He knows he’s safe. I’m like the Dr. Doolittle of my backyard.

(Beat.)

And then I start to squeeze my finger and thumb together. Around his neck. Around *its* neck. Tighter and tighter. The bluebird starts going crazy. I know it can't breathe, and I don't stop. I keep going—because I can.

(HELEN continues the monologue seamlessly. She might take over completely from the BLUEBIRD STUDENT, or they might do some of the following lines together.)

HELEN. I keep going until it's— It feels good. It feels good, because for once in my life, I'm not the bird.

(For a long moment, ACHILLES and HELEN stare at each other. Enter GLINDA, staring at them both across the stage. HELEN