

Pigs Fly

by Gary Moshimer

You are rounded just the way the mountain is, out the window. The sun sets on both of you now. Three of you, I should say: the mountain, and you, and little Frank, who is currently batting my ear because he doesn't want to be named Frank but it's for your dead father, who you adored, so what can we do?

I talk to Frank, telling him I'm sorry about that. Sorry he's trapped in there and has to create a lot of fuss and movement of his own because his mom isn't, for her part. We have to keep rolling you back and forth, putting you in different positions because of Frank. The doctor says because of the miracle of air bags, you should wake up soon, when that tree out there blooms. He says it's a dogwood. But this year there are cold fists of air, like the ice you encountered, pressing the buds closed. Soon they should burst. Soon.

Your niece Susie says we need to make a pig fly, to be absolutely certain. She's heard this, a practical girl not sold on miracles from her little Catholic school, which she hates. She tells them to save their prayers; she's going with the sure fire —fire and brimstone maybe. She's a cute hellion with red hair, and I hope Frank has her hair, because it would run that way, cousins. I can see them running with it, together.

Of course the doctor says it's totally safe to take the baby even if you don't wake up, but I'm like, "Shit on that," and Susie's like, "Double poop on that." My mother says we should be more respectful, more afraid; more *God-fearing*. Susie says God is only to be feared when you don't use the God given brains and strength He's given you, so if we don't get our asses in gear with this pig thing, it's our own damn fault. We want you there to deliver this baby, awake and watching us cry and giggle because there will be a lot, a lot, at the very instant the dogwoods explode their pink. It's going to be quite the explosion, according to Susie, one for the evening news.

We confer in secret. The next morning we head out to Susie's uncle's farm for a suitable size pig, probably a piglet, one he can rig with a harness and a pair of Susie's old angel wings from a school pageant, and he's a man good with ropes and pulleys, a man with big useful hands unlike mine or the doctor's. We have a nice soft quilt for the piggy, we hold him like a dog, very peaceful. We have graham cracker crust on our fingers to keep him calm. He's all pink and we name him Frankie. He has no idea he will be flying, nor do the hospital staff, but Susie's Uncle Jed has been in a war and has a special rapport with security guards. He knows secret handshakes that can bring a man to his knees, if need be.

Jed's truck puffs blue smoke in the hospital parking lot. Susie blows pink bubbles. She wears her pink leotard, and her own wings.

Jed is a rock-star-farmer-spy. Jed Bond. Gummy boots and big gloves. He sticks to the balcony like Spiderman, rigging his equipment while the men in uniform keep watch and also look the other way.

I'm back at your side again, rubbing your belly with lotion, feeling Frank's knees and elbows. In a week he's due, so you have to wake up.

So what we have here is a spacious window with balcony and wide marble sill — this is a very nice hospital for high risk pregnancies. And the sill is like a stage for Susie, who pulls back the curtain with a flourish, and there is Frankie, flying with droopy wings and ears against the violet backdrop of the mountain and the swirling sky of pink and blue and white, most surreal.

And when you wake up, the doctor says it is coincidence, or a brain response equating Frankie's squeals to the squeal of brakes, which is maybe why you are clutching the air in front of you with clenched fists, the steering wheel.

Susie throws herself across the bed and says to this doctor: "Incorrect-a-mundo!" Where does she get this stuff?

And your first words are, "Is that a flying pig?"

Then you feel the kicks and it takes you a while to remember little Frank in there, and how he'll be coming soon. When it dawns on

you, that is when your fists open, and when the cold fists holding the dogwood buds release, white flames, not pink, and a nurse says it's a miracle, and of course Susie says miracles don't exist, just special real live people and creatures with real missions.

Frank is born with red hair, and in no time they are rolling down the hill at our new house, Frank's spiked like the new grass, Susie's flying like tumbleweed.

We've adopted Frankie, and in a year he has reached three-hundred pounds, and rolls when he feels like it, but is very slow coming back up, and we're thinking some new ropes and pulleys may be in order.

