

I WISH I WAS UPSIDE DOWN

by Aaron Jones

I'm supposed to be with Grandpa, but I'm tired of smelling moth balls and licorice and smoke and his peg leg is scary and I needed a walk. Since I super pretended to be asleep in the rocking chair, I think he really did sleep, because I heard his pipe fall on the floor and saw his mouth droop and drip like a slug upside down.

And I needed a walk. Mom says that's what Dad did when he needed a "breather," whatever that is, so I guess I'll look for one. I just figure I'm tired of all those things in my nose and don't want them anymore, so I'm not having them by going on a walk because I didn't know what else to do. And because I'm not supposed to.

Mom says my clothes look nice even though she smells like old postcards and I say she puts the same ones on me everyday before I go to Grandpa's and I'm tired of it because now I smell like him. But she dresses me with clothes for working even though I hate working and even though all Grandpa does is sleep, because I wouldn't want to mess up my good trousers. Even the squirrels smell me coming and run away to go jump around in the trees or try to fly like those other ones do in Australia, that I read about at the library but only on Tuesdays. I wanted to fly off the front porch once, but I just sort of fell down and ripped my trousers before church, which was a bad idea to do anytime but especially before church. I think you have to be in Australia so you can be upside down and flying is normal anyways.

So I guess I'm going to try to find a "breather" now even though I don't know where it is, or couldn't fly away with it if I found it, probably because Dad used up all the ones in the world,

and is still using the last one right now, which Mom calls being shellfish, I guess like a clam keeps a pearl in his mouth or something, which makes me tired, and doesn't make sense to me because she likes pearls on her neck but doesn't like Dad on her neck, or anywhere.

So I decided to look in the river, or really pretended to decide to look in the river because I just followed the squirrels to see if they would fly, and the sidewalk felt like sharp teeth, and they kept running to get away from my smell because like me they hate it too and we almost fell off a grass lump into the river. I think now I have to thank Mom for that because she always makes me thank people for nice things and also always makes me wear my glasses, and machines in my ears, and eat medicines so I don't get hurt when I touch coins or keys or anything not my bunny and I always hate it, but I just found out that they make me see and hear the future a little and I didn't fall off the grass lump. Mom would say that was a nice thing.

Thank you, Mom.

But I still stunk like Grandpa and that made me a little sad, since I sort of realized that maybe a "breather" would help me not stink, since Dad was always tired of old postcards that smelled like everywhere but home. The squirrels looked a little sad too, like when they find out I moved their acorns from under the Ancient Rock, which is my rock because I named it, to all over the yard or at crows. I recognized this because I could still see the future a little and remembered that Mom said it's a nice thing to understand how people feel, so I thanked my glasses because I was supposed to.

Thank you, glasses.

I said: thank you.

THANK. YOU.

THANK! YOU!

I was getting tired and I think Mom calls it fustervated because my glasses were dumb and didn't know to say you're welcome, but I remembered that Mom said if someone is mean to you, pretend they are nice, so I took my glasses off and pretended they were nice and made them say you're welcome, which was a nice thing so I thanked them.

But I think I got a little excited, Mom calls it, and my glasses went flying like Australia, you're welcoming me all along the way. And you know and I know now that because I couldn't see the future a little anymore I didn't know where they went. But I could still hear it pretty good because my machines were working and didn't have water in them, which makes them break I found out.

I decided to thank God for hearing the future before it came, because when I heard a big lion or truck or gun behind me like in movies I knew that it wasn't there yet, which was a nice thing.

Thank you, G--

Then the thing really happened I think, or something, I don't know what it was but all I did know was that I was glad I did not eat my medicine, because I pretended to fall asleep before Grandpa gave it to me, and I felt the drool from his mouth on my face. This made me think I was home again, but I don't know. I was a little fustervated because it messed up my machines, but he was probably sleeping big and you shouldn't wake people like that, Mom says. He must have been sleeping big because I really felt a lot of it, and even all the squirrels ran away, I think into the river because they didn't have glasses. When Dad heard about a car eating a dog or a window punching a bird he would say So It Goes, but I don't know what that means, but I decided to say it about the squirrels because it was sorta funny because they were animals and they really were going away from me, washing down the river like spiders after my bath.

So it goes. So they go.

I was about to think that I maybe ate my medicine but found out that I really didn't because I super felt something really hard and big hit my head and then my back and then my bottom and then my legs and they all broke like the twig fence I made for bunny when Dad dropped a heavy thing on it, not on purpose he said, so I figured Grandpa fell on me. Either way, it hurt a lot, like when I put my finger on the mousetrap, except all over, so much that I think it stopped hurting.

But I still stunk like Grandpa and that made me sad, and I was getting more and more fustervated because now I was broken like I was before the first time Dad took a "breather," when I didn't have to wear glasses or machines or eat medicine, and it made me remember what that was like but I couldn't have it, like the squirrels after I throw their acorns at the yard or at birds. I was also mad because now I smelled something else, probably Grandpa making a fire with old trees and I always hate that. Yes, that was definitely it because I could even smell the hot and light from the big fire that he always builds, stirring it like soup with his scary peg leg.

There's only one more thing I remember, which was maybe smelling Grandpa's stink really big and at first I was even more fustervated and was smelling it bigger and bigger until I almost died of suffocations in my nose but I didn't because at the last possible millisecond (they use them in Australia, I learned on Tuesday) I started liking the smell. I almost got more mad because I didn't want to like it, but Mom says change is good so I decided it was a nice thing, and it kept getting nicer.

Thank you.

That's when I stop remembering. I'm still broken everywhere and my machines and glasses are gone and I only have the past now, and all I smell is the big machine that makes me

breathe so I don't have to, which is nice, and medicines and bloods, which I will never forget because I learned those smells forever the first time Dad took a "breather," which I decided I don't want one anymore. Every now and then I think I smell lots of places, which means postcards, and I think Mom is probably smiling at me, but I don't know. She said smiling is a nice thing, so when I think I smell her probably doing it, because I really can if I think about, I pretend that I smile too, because it's a nice thing.

Thank you.