



Once when we walked to the bus stop, a bird flew overhead, and Jesse locked his thin knees and wouldn't budge. He stared up at the tree, his head flung back, eyes blinking. I knew it would be nearly impossible to get him moving again.

I guess I should be used to things like that.

Mom says God made Jesse special. Dad says that's true—Jesse's "wired differently." Our pastor says everything happens for a reason.

But I say—only to myself—"Why didn't I get a regular brother?" One like my friend Ashley's brother, Michael, who's eleven just like Jesse is. Except Michael doesn't act like a baby.

Jesse is who he is, I guess, whether I like it or not.

"C'mon now, you'll miss your bus." I tugged on his sleeve, but Jesse was in his own world, still gawking at the bird perched on a high branch.

"Sisser...not *listening*," he whispered back.

I shook my head. "You can talk to your silly ol' bird after school. Hurry—you'll be late!"

He frowned and shook his head. "No-o...no."



"Do what Jesse does." He parted himself on the chest. Then he got down and put his ear against the grass, listening to the teeming insects. "God make everything buzzy," he said.

I watched black ants scramble out of their tiny hills and smelled a caterpillar's mildewy coat. Imitating Jesse, I petted the grass like it was a green, hairy dog, enjoying its smooth yet prickly texture.

I remembered what Dad had always said: "*Jesse's wired differently.*" I was beginning to see—and hear and smell and feel—just what he meant.