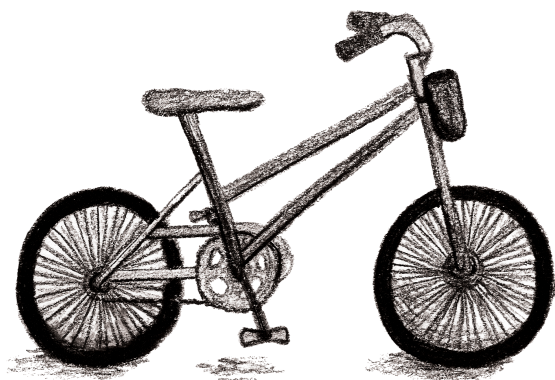


Katy

by Mary Evelyn Notgrass

Illustrated by the author



Notgrass Company

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*Dedicated with love to my dear friend
Irene Anderson.
I pray that God will make me like you some day.*

Katy

I

The Light Bulb

Katy Porter woke up and stretched as hard as she could, pressing her hands against the headboard. She threw off the lightweight pink and blue quilt her mom had made and sat up. As she did, her head hit the top bunk, waking up Anna.

“Ouch!” Katy exclaimed, rubbing the top of her head.

“Are you all right, Katy?” Anna asked. Katy looked up at her sister peering over the railing of the top bunk. Anna’s long brown hair tickled Katy’s face. Katy laughed, despite the bump that was forming on her head.

“Anna, that tickles!” Katy said as she scratched her tingling nose.

“You think that tickles?” said Anna as she climbed down the ladder. “How about this?” Anna leaped onto Katy’s bed and began to tickle her sister. Katy screamed and then started laughing. She was laughing so hard she could barely breathe and had little strength to resist her sister. Katy finally managed to utter the word, “Stop!” Anna pulled her arms away. The two sisters lay side by side on Katy’s bed, panting and laughing.

“I guess we should get up,” Anna said, still panting. “It’s your turn to feed the fish.”

“Oh, good!” said Katy. “I like the way those little flakes of fish food feel in between my fingers when I sprinkle them over the water. Don’t you? It’s like stiff tissue paper or something.”

Anna laughed. “I guess I never really thought about it; but you know, it does feel pretty neat!” Anna climbed back up the ladder to make her bed. Her quilt was pink and blue, too, just like Katy’s.

Katy sat up, careful not to bump her head again, and made her bed. She carefully laid her favorite doll on her pillow. Sugar Plum still wore the blue dress and white apron she had worn when Katy received her as

a gift on her first birthday. The Velcro was worn out on her dress, so it never stayed fastened very long. Sugar Plum had a patch on her neck where her head had started to fall off. She had a patch on each arm and one on each of her cloth shoes. The elastic on her sleeves was worn out, too. No matter how many times Katy pulled down on them, they always crept back up to make the doll's long-sleeved dress a short-sleeved one. Sugar Plum's face and hair were dirty, but Katy liked her better that way.

Katy walked over to the fish tank on the dresser. "Good morning, Wiggly Worm!" she said to her goldfish. Katy picked up the container of fish food and unscrewed the lid. She wrinkled her nose. She liked the way the flakes felt, but despised the way they smelled. She got a pinch of fish food and sprinkled it in the tank. She watched as Wiggly Worm swam to the top for his breakfast. Incognito, Anna's goldfish, soon followed.

"Anna?" Katy said to her sister in as sweet a voice as she could manage. "Will you go to the Acorn Lady's house with me? We could get dressed and go on before breakfast if it's okay with Mom."

The Acorn Lady was an elderly woman who lived down the street from the Porters. A massive oak tree grew in her front yard. One year, Mrs. Porter had asked her if she would give the Porters permission to gather the acorns that fell to the ground. Mrs. Porter liked to use them for craft projects. The Acorn Lady had gladly given them permission and told them they could come any time they pleased.

“No, I don’t really want to,” Anna answered. “Besides, it’s not fall. The acorns aren’t ripe yet. Let’s go in our playhouse instead.” Katy thought that sounded like a good alternative. Still in their nightgowns, the two girls opened the door into their playhouse. The playhouse was a small closet in the girls’ room. It had two platforms. From the second platform a ceiling entrance opened into the attic. Anna and Katy had claimed this closet as their playhouse soon after they moved to this part of Urbana, the Illinois town that had been Katy’s home for as long as she could remember.

Katy climbed to the second platform and pulled the string that turned on the light bulb hanging from the ceiling. Anna suggested they draw more pictures

to tape up on the walls. Anna was twelve, two years younger than their brother Seth, and she usually had an idea of what they should do. Katy got down the paper, markers, and tape from the wire baskets that hung on the wall. Anna drew a puppy. She made it white with black spots. At the top, she wrote "Sparky."

"That's what I'll name my dog if I ever get one," she said. Anna had talked about wanting to get a dog for years. Katy drew a tree with a swing hanging from it. It looked like the swing which hung from the crabapple tree in their front yard. Katy loved that swing. It was simply a piece of wood with a notch cut in each end. A pink rope was wrapped around the seat and was tied to a branch overhead. A friend at church had given them the swing the summer before. Katy liked to swing as hard as she could and then jump out onto the grass.

When the drawings were finished, the girls taped them to the wall beside ones they had drawn the day before.

"Whew!" said Katy, as she wiped her sweaty forehead. It didn't take long for the playhouse to get stuffy during the summer. "It's hot! Let's go do some-

thing else.” Anna was hot, too, so she agreed. As Katy and Anna were putting the art supplies away, Katy stood up suddenly without thinking about her surroundings. As soon as she stood up, the playhouse went black and glass shattered around them.

“My head!” Katy cried. Anna quickly opened the door, letting in the light from their bedroom so they could see. Mrs. Porter rushed into the room.

“Katy!” she exclaimed. “What happened?”

“I stood up under the light bulb,” Katy said, “and it broke.” Katy was surprised that she wasn’t crying, but it hadn’t really hurt very much. It mostly scared her.

“Come on out here,” said Mrs. Porter. Katy came down out of the playhouse. Her mother looked in Katy’s hair. “Come on into the bathroom, Honey. You have some glass in your hair. I don’t think your head is bleeding, though.” Katy followed her mother into the bathroom. Mrs. Porter opened a drawer and found a pair of tweezers. She began to pick out each tiny piece of glass in Katy’s hair. Katy winced when her mom touched the bump on her head. She told Mrs. Porter about hitting Anna’s bunk.

“Your poor head,” said Mrs. Porter sympathetically. She continued to pull out bits of glass. After a few more minutes, Katy’s mom announced, “Okay, Katy. Looks like you’re all clean. Now you two run on, and I’ll clean up the glass in your playhouse.”

“Thanks, Mom,” said Katy as she left the bathroom. She wandered into Seth’s room and found him playing marbles on the floor. The summer before, Mrs. Porter had stitched a large circle with yarn in an old scrap of carpet. The children used it as a marble ring.

“Is your head okay?” Seth asked his little sister.

“Oh, it’s fine,” answered Katy. “Can I play?”

“Sure, when I finish this game.” Seth was pretending to be two people competing against each other. “It’s Fred’s turn now,” he told Katy. “He’s losing. The score is 3 to 5.”

“What’s the other guy’s name?” Katy asked.

“I forgot. Look on the paper over there, and it’ll say. I’m doing a whole tournament. Just look at who won the last game.” Katy picked up the paper and scanned over the names. It was hard to read her brother’s handwriting.

“Is it Yerry?” she asked.

“Yes,” said Seth, “only it says Jerry, not Yerry.”

“Well, your writing is so messy I couldn’t tell,” Katy said to herself. She decided not to say it out loud, though. Katy sat on the edge of her brother’s bed as Seth played the last few innings of the game.

“Fred won after all,” he announced.

Katy smiled. “I was for him all along.”

As Seth began to set up a new game, Katy slid off the bed and joined him on the floor. They set up the thirteen marbles in an X in the center of the ring. Seth and Katy took turns trying to knock the marbles out of the ring with their shooters. Seth won, but Katy was used to that. It came with being nine years old and the youngest.

