

Excerpt from "Balloons to Heaven"

First printed – March 2003

EXCERPT FROM BORN KNOWING

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by John Holland

Angels don't just sing. They also dance.

In my head, I could hear someone gliding across a polished wooden floor. But I was confused – this wasn't the familiar rhythm of a waltz. It sounded more like *clackity clack, clackity clack, clackity clack*. Heaven was tap dancing.

"Did Jennifer have a pair of tap shoes?" I asked her mother, Melinda, whose eyes instantly filled with tears. I could tell that once again, I'd succeeded in becoming a conduit for someone from the Other Side.

This time, the person reaching out was Jennifer, Melinda's five-year old daughter, who had crossed to the Other Side after a kidney operation went tragically wrong. Jennifer had died on Father's Day, during the one hour the hospital staff had begged her family to "go home, relax and get something to eat because nothing would happen." Yet something tremendous *did* happen, and the first one to know was Lisa, Jennifer's seven-year-old sister, who was running through the overgrown grass in the front yard the exact moment Jennifer passed on. Her parents found Lisa pointing upwards and crying, "See! My sister! My sister!" to a small white butterfly that swooped down, and slowly circled over Lisa's head.

Three years had since passed, and Melinda needed to know if her baby was safe in heaven. So she decided to call a medium. I wanted so terribly to give her any answers, but at first, I felt frustrated as I couldn't see or feel Jennifer. Instead, I just kept hearing the same noise, over and over..... *clackity clack, clackity clack, clackity clack*.

I realized that I couldn't ignore the sound any longer, so that's when I asked Melinda if Jennifer took tap dancing lessons.

Melinda started weeping. "No, but I understand the sound," she whispered. "The Christmas before Jennifer died, she received a pair of clogs that had a metal heel on them that tapped when she walked."

It seemed that the shoes were too big for Jennifer's little feet, but she insisted on wearing them anyway – even though they almost fell off with a clacking thud every time she walked. In fact, Jennifer loved those shoes so much that she'd beg to visit her aunt (who worked in a hospital with hard wooden floors), so she could skip down the long corridors for maximum effect. She adored the sound of the *clackity-clack* noise, which echoed down the hallways. She would giggle and ask Melinda: "Do you hear me making the noise, Mommy?"

Melinda told me that Jennifer had been buried in those shoes... and I heard her dancing in heaven.

Before she faded away, Jennifer had a message for her mother: "Please tell Mommy that it doesn't hurt anymore, and I love the balloons."

I expressed this to Melinda, who was by now speechless. Finally, she pulled herself together and said, "On the anniversary of Jennifer's death, and on her birthday each year, we always stuff balloons with a message for her and release them into the sky. We put her name with her photo on each and every balloon."

She paused and asked, "John, how could you know all that?"

I've always known that I came into this world with a special gift. It was as though I was somehowborn knowing.

For further information about John Holland,
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