

DING THE MAGICAL DOG

BY JAMES J. COLLINS

I saw a dog sitting in a tree
It smiled and barked and it seemed to me
To be very strange to be up there
Till I noticed it had feathers and hair
Now dogs aren't known to have feathers
Though some wear collars made out of leather
The dog was a girl, I want you to know,
I could tell at once, for her hair held a bow.
But she one was relaxed, relaxed as can be
And seemed to be happy to sit in the tree
Then she yawned and sneezed and said, "what's your name?"
I stopped in my tracks: I forgot about the game.
For the dog she was different, as different can be
From any other dog ever seen by me.
She spoke to me clearly, but her lips never moved
And her rear legs were different, they ended in hooves
"My name is Ding," she said to me
"I know yours is Suzie, and I agree

That today is boring,

There's nothing to do."

I just had that thought

Could she read minds too?

Ding smiled and nodded and seemed to say

"We'll get on together, we both like to play."

How did you get there? I wanted to know

"I was just resting," Ding said, "I had no place to go.

I've been everywhere, I've flown for a year

But I haven't a friend." Then she shed a tear.

This sounded so strange, I pulled at my ear

For the dog high in the tree could have had no fear

And yet how it spoke I couldn't make out,

For though I heard words, it ne'er moved its mouth.

Then the dog licked its paw, smiled, moved and scratched.

A wing then appeared as she rose sneezed and stretched.

Dogs can't have wings, I know this is true

But there it was. I checked - She truly had two.

She fluffed up her feathers like a parakeet would,

and looked under her wing, I just knew she could

And she winked down at me. She had read my mind!

For some reason I knew she really was kind.

So I had no fear and we both then relaxed.

"Can I come down now?" Ding gently asked.

"Please join me," I said as I sat on the walk.

She spread out her wings and sailed down like a hawk.

"Can you stay with me today?

I know so many games to play."

I asked this dog who looked around,

And said, "It's nice to be on the ground.

I spend much time up in the air

For I fly to places everywhere.

Though games are nice and pass the time,

There are other things that are also fine.

Would you like to see the world? it's really very nice

We can view it all this afternoon and be back before the night."

"We have to be back, early for supper

For my mother would worry as well as my brother."

"Not to worry, we'll go very fast

Before anyone knows the time has passed

You'll be back in your yard with some wonderful stories

Don't bother to fret - you don't have any worries."

"Where do you come from Ding? Please tell me - speak."

Before my eyes Ding grew a beak.

"What are you Ding a dog or bird?"

"I'm anything you ever heard."

Then she changed before me just like that,

From dog to pony, pig to cat,

And then, she smiled, raised up a paw,

And showed me almost thirty more.
First she paused, then she sighed,
Then she turned over on a side,
And rose up in the air.
Nothing moved, not a single hair.
And then she shrank to very small.
I almost couldn't see her at all.
She was an insect - a honey bee
She buzzed; shrank smaller - became a flea
Then she said, " have you seen enough?
Doing all these changes is not tough,
But it wears me out to think of them,
For you are one of the race of men.
I can't show you a shape that would scare,
For I like you - I really care.
That is why I appear as a dog,
I'm lonely and you wouldn't like a hog.
So here I am again," she said,
Her body appeared followed by her head.
All parts intact, still floating in the air,
She settled down, never moved a hair.

Then Ding explained how we could travel
She is really quite different- truly a marvel
When Ding is at rest, she is quite small
But then she can grow to be ten feet tall

Her wings spread out bigger than any bird,
And she takes you to places about which you heard.

(But never expected to see.)

"If you climb on my back, I will make you some room.
We can go here today, next week to the moon.
But today I will take you all over the seas,
To have great adventure, if you ask me but 'Please'."

"Could I dress up before we go?
It will keep my spirits from getting low.
When mommy travels she gets dressed
In her best clothes. They don't get messed.
When she goes to fly,
In a plane in the sky."

"Well I have magic ," said miss Ding
"And you can wear most anything,
you dream of, while you fly with me.
But when the trip is over, You will go back to be
The lovely little creature that first I came to see.
So I though of the purple colors of royal robes
I did a curtsey, and when I arose,
I was transformed instantly
To a gorgeous princess, for all to see
But in this bare dress, it was cold
Ding knew; she smiled; her nose rolled

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and I was dressed in a warm crimson jacket
I reached inside. There were fur gloves in the pocket.
So off we went we headed east instead of west
Ding said "today, this would be best."

All day we played up in the sky
Diving, turning - it's great to fly.
Later we dipped to skim over the waves.
The feeling I had I wanted to save.
I can't explain the thrill you get,
When you skim a wave and your hair gets wet
From the spray and surf coming over your boat,
Salt gets in your eyes. It gets in your throat.
It's fun to know, your ship's really a dog
That's racing you through the waves and the fog.
Boats are seen, in the distance as specks
That grow larger than houses, as you fly o'er their decks,
And then they fade in the distance. You pick up speed.
You feel you are racing the sun - What a steed.
And when we rested in the water, Ding hoisted a sail
By raising her wing, and we chased a whale
Who lifted a fluke and slapped the water.
The splash hit us as we shook with laughter
How could we scare so big a whale?
Ding thought it was the sight of her tail

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For feathered dogs are not often at sea
Especially one wearing a child like a flea.

The wonders of the sea appeared to me,
All types of fish were there to see.
Fishermen in boats waved, then covered their eyes
For none of them had seen such a sight in the skies
As Ding and I flew over their craft.
Some looked surprised, they thought they'd gone daft.
For no one before saw a dog that flew
With such breakneck speed over the ocean blue.
And then to hear a little girl sing
On the back of the dog was a wondrous thing.

We flew right over,
The white cliffs of Dover.
And things looked so nice,
We went back there twice.
Then Ding extended a feather ,
To protect me from the weather,
For we ran into rain
Off the coast of Spain.
We also stopped for water
At the Rock of Gibraltar.
I wish I studied geography
For now I'm flying and Ding tells me

That we're flying o'er the Dead sea,
But I don't know where it can be.
Where all we went, I do not know,
For we were never travelling slow.
We flew so fast.
That things went past,
Quickly. - Till Ding slowed.
And then she showed
Me wondrous things,
All spread before me from up on wing,
While she hovered. We stood so still,
To watch a city high on a hill.
I know not its name,
For they all look the same,
But Ding knew them all.
One had a great wall.
Some I remember. Like New York and Saint Paul.
Others I can not remember at all.
The names were so long. They twisted my tongue.
The ones in the jungle, I could never overcome.
As soon as I'm finished, I have lots to do.
I have to find out where is this Timbuctu?

All day long we crisscrossed the sky.
We flew down low. We sailed up high.

From end to end we travelled the world,
While the land sped by; it all was a whirl
Till we landed once more in my back yard.
I looked for my friends. I looked real hard,
But they had all gone. There was none in sight,
And I had to go in. It was almost night.

"Mother, mother, I'm home from play,
It's been the most exciting day.
For everything has been fun, fun, fun
But it's too early, the day can't be done.
For I made a new friend, her name it is Ding
No she's not a girl; she's not a thing,
She's a magical dog I met while at play.
What a wonderful time, what a wonderful day."
I took my mother by the hand.
"Come meet my friend Ding. She's simply grand.
She showed me things, took me places,
I saw a thousand people with different faces
For I flew through the air on the back of a dog,
I've been in clouds; I've been in fog.
I can hardly begin, Let me tell you my story,
It started so strange, but you needn't worry."
So I told her the story, left out nothing at all,
She smiled, wiped her hands and looked out in the hall
"Where is Ding now?" "I really don't know

She dropped me outside, and then turned to go."
I ran through the hall to the window, the door,
No trace of Ding could I see anymore.
She vanished from sight, in the blink of an eye,
I lost my friend-- I started to cry,
But then I remembered the promises made,
To me while outside, under the tree in the shade.
She said, "We can go here today, next week the moon."
So I smiled to myself, I went up to my room,
And I slept. I really had to get my rest.
For Ding will come back. The next trip will be best.

THE END