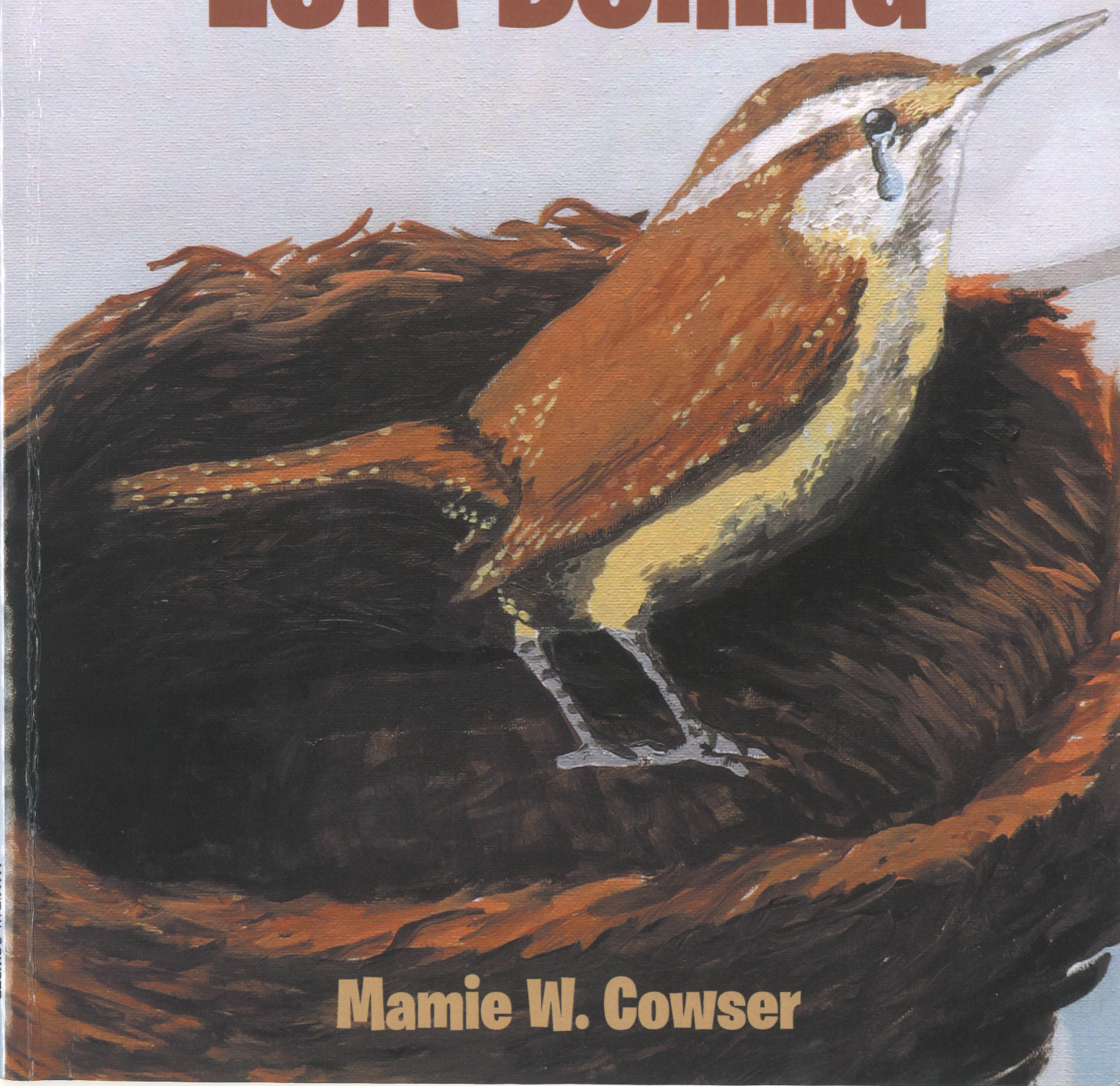
The Bird Left Behind



Mamie W. Cowser

Introduction

This story is about a little newborn bird. His name is Jake. Jake is a Carolina wren. He was born on my porch in Columbia, South Carolina, the state capital.

Jake has two brothers. Their names are Jay and Ray.

Since Jake was the youngest, I was shocked when I saw his mother and brothers fly away one day, leaving Jake all alone.

His brothers had not been very kind to him while they were in the nest. His mother hadn't seemed to notice.

If she did, she had not done anything about it. It broke my heart when they flew away and left poor Jake all alone.

Jake was very sad too. He spent a great deal of his time looking around, looking at me through my window, crying, looking up at the sky, looking down at the ground, and sleeping. Sometimes he stood on the side of his nest and flapped his wings as if he were going to fly.

I was afraid a cat or a snake might kill or eat him. I wanted to help, but I didn't know what to do.

I fell in love with this little bird but decided not to interfere, hoping his mother would come back to get him.

I kept a watchful eye as much as I could and did all I knew to do. I prayed. The days I spent watching this family gave me the idea to write this story. I sincerely hope you will enjoy reading about Jake and his struggles overcoming his fear of flying so that he can hopefully reunite with his family.

Jake seemed to know me. He flew back to see me after he learned how to fly.



Immediately, I start jumping up and down and flapping my wings. This is the happiest day of my life. Mommy did not forget about me after all. She is standing right here on the side of our nest with a mouth full of worms. She feeds them all to me. I have more than enough to eat. This is just terrific. I have Mommy all to myself. I miss Jay and Ray, but I am glad they are not here to eat some of my worms. As soon as I eat, I start jumping up and down again.

"Mommy, I am so glad to see you. I missed you. Thank you for the food. Last night, I thought that I might starve to death."

"Good morning, baby. I do not know why you would think those negative thoughts. Daddy and I have been busy getting your brothers settled. We had to watch out for them last night. Yesterday afternoon, after we left you here, we taught them how to find food and watch out for predators. I knew you were still in the nest, but I did not have time to come back to see you.

"I am here to help you fly. You have eaten the worms I brought. Now I want you to rest for a little while. Daddy is gathering some more worms for you to eat. We want you to be strong. I am going to fly back into the trees and get them. Do not worry. I will be back soon."

"I know that Jay and Ray ate most of the worms before they flew away with me. I did not want to make them wait for you, so I let them get away with eating most of the worms. I also knew you were smaller and weaker and that you needed a little more time to become stronger. Don't rest too long. I want you to walk around the nest and practice flapping your wings. You must continue to practice so that you will be strong enough to fly away with me. Your daddy, Jay, and Ray are out there in those trees. They are waiting for you. You must do your part to get ready so that our family can be together."

After giving me instructions, Mommy flaps her wings, lifts her feet, and flies back into the trees. I watch her until I can see her no longer.



I am alone again, but this time, I am happy. I am not worried about being left behind anymore. I cannot tell you how happy I am. Mommy is coming back to get me. I will not be alone anymore. I need to get to work. I start flapping my wings and walking around our nest. I flap for a long time. When I am tired, I rest for a little while, then I start flapping my wings again. I flap and walk and walk and flap until I am too tired to walk and flap anymore.

While I am resting, I look in the window of the lady's house again. The lady is still watching me. She does not look sad anymore. She looks happy. I believe she is happy because Mommy came back. I know that she can see that I am happy too. We are both happy that Mommy has not forgotten about me after all.

I sleep for a short time. I get up and continue to practice as Mommy told me to do. I flap my wings and walk around the side of our nest. I am not afraid to walk around the side of our nest and flap my wings.

The lady continues to watch me. I do not know why she spends so much time watching me. I think she likes me. It seems to make her happy to see me flapping my wings like my brothers had done before they flew away.

I look down at the ground. Some of my happiness starts to fade away. The fear returns. I do not know what I am going to do. I realize that I am still terribly afraid. I do not want to tell Mommy that I am too afraid to lift my feet and fly into the air. I still do not believe that I can do that, but I never stop flapping my wings. I go on flapping until I am too tired to flap any longer. I lie back down in our nest and fall asleep.