

Bird on Gravel

by Erika Byrne-Ludwig

On the gravel it lay, unable to lift its body, fluttering lightly, heart beating still. Broken leg, speckled feathers, looked to the sky, to freedom, saw a tree, raised a wing.

The will to live ... so strong ... but the joy of flying, now denied.

"Just let it be," Marcel said. "It'll die on its own."

"Shush."

I found a rock. "Sorry, Bird, my heart says I have to."

"You're callous."

My fingers dug a hole, picked up Bird's inanimate life, put it gently in the grave, entrails, plumage and pain.

Laurel leaves. Peace.

