

# Toad

by Miguel Lasala

“I come from a long line of Toad Kings,” Huckleberry said, “and we never back down from a bet.”

Phyllis, a great white heron, lowered her long white neck so she could get a better look into her friend's golden eyes.

“I just think you should reconsider, Huckleberry. Only trying to save an old friend from total humiliation.”

Several other water birds were gathering around just as a black heron flapped his wings in the hot night air. “Are we here to put down a wager or what? I'm ready to shut this toad up for good!”

Huckleberry, nodded.

“The wager stands. Whoever can fly highest on this night will from this day forth claim ownership to this contested waterway, and all the life within it. The loser will forever be banished.”

“But how can a toad fly?” the youngest of the cranes blurted out.

“Like this,” Huckleberry said as he began to strain and shake his chubby body. He was not trying to sprout wings. Instead, he let out an explosive cloud of mist from a sack behind his eyes, and it quickly engulfed all in attendance. And if that wasn't odd enough, in only two seconds the entire party, including a few near by crickets who were minding their own business, were all suddenly projected out into an apparent alternate universe a million miles from earth.

And as they all found themselves in this new and impossible reality of morphing geometrical configurations, Huckleberry carefully leaped up into an inter-dimensional thrown above them, to not only secure his victory for the remainder of the flight to the furthest reaches of the universe, but to declare himself "The Toad King" ruler of everything that ever was and everything that will ever be.

