

Robin's Winter Adventure



It was snowing in the tiny village of Little Fressingfield. Thousands of snowflakes floated through the air and came to rest on the frozen ground. The garden looked like a winter world of white.

Robin sat in his bedroom staring gloomily at the three large boxes that his mum had told him to pack. He didn't want to move house. He didn't want to leave Little Fressingfield. He didn't want to say goodbye to his friends or his school.



He opened the window and looked outside, spotting a little robin redbreast on the bird table in the garden. He wondered what would happen to the birds when his family had moved. Who would feed them? Who would break the ice on the birdbath so they could drink the water?

The robin redbreast flew onto the window sill; he was quite tame. He had one feather on his tail that stuck out from the rest. He was their own special robin, living in their garden in Little Fressingfield.



Robin leaned out of the window until the snowflakes landed on his face making it icy cold. He thought about all things wintry; frost, snow, frozen ponds, sledging, snowmen.



Then he thought about his school, Little Fressingfield Primary. The headteacher Mr Thomas was organizing a poetry competition. Everyone had to try to write a poem about a winter adventure. Robin liked writing poems. He was good with words.

“Are you packing?” called Mum, frightening the robin away. “Get on with sorting out what you’re going to put in those removal boxes, one box for the charity shop with things you don’t want, and two boxes to take with us to London,” she reminded him. “Put summer and winter things in different boxes so it’s easy to sort out when we get there.”

“I’m writing a poem,” said Robin. “Mr Thomas says it should be about a winter adventure.”

Mum listened to Robin’s poem and then she wanted him to pack his boxes ready to move.

Robin didn’t want to move, but everything had been arranged.

Mum was to start her new job in London, Dad would be looking for work and Robin would be going to his new school.

“It will be an adventure!” Mum said.

Robin wasn’t sure that he liked adventures. He looked around his bedroom for all his summer things and picked up a fishing net, goggles, shorts, sun hat and jelly shoes which he dropped into the box marked ‘summer’.

“Now for the things I don’t like!” said Robin. “They can go in the charity box.”

One flannel as scratchy as a cat

One washbag as smelly as old shoes

One toothbrush!

One dressing gown that I don’t like!

One jumper, Gran knitted, as itchy as fleas.

One pair of school shoes!

One lunch box as old as dinosaur bones

One sensible coat.

Dad was out in the garden hitting the frozen soil with a fork. Robin put on his wellington boots and went out to join him.



“Solid!” complained Dad. “Frozen solid! Rock hard! Harder than diamonds! I just want a little soft soil for my pots to take with me to London.” He plucked a worm out of the soil. “Wriggle away before the birds get you,” he warned, popping the worm safely under a frozen leaf.

“We won’t have a garden for worms or birds in the city,” Robin complained.

“I know,” said Dad. “But we’ll have a balcony, hopefully big enough for these pots.”

“I don’t want to move,” said Robin. “I wish you hadn’t lost your job at the garden centre.”

“So do I,” said Dad; “I’ll miss my job.”

“I’ll miss my school,” said Robin.

Dad explained that Mum had an exciting new teaching job to go to in London and that he might find a job working in a city garden.

“What’s a city garden?” asked Robin.

“It’s a space for the community,” said Dad.

“Everyone that lives in the area and doesn’t have a garden can go there and grow things.”

Robin liked his house and his garden. He liked everything about Little Fressingfield. London seemed very big and scary with lots of traffic and buildings, and too many people.

The little robin redbreast flew down onto Dad’s fork.

“I’m going to miss him,” said Dad.

“So am I,” said Robin.

“You were named after him,” said Dad. “You were born the week before Christmas, so Robin seemed just the right name for you.”

“I don’t want to leave here; I don’t want to move!” cried Robin.

“There’ll be lots of other robins in London,” said Dad. “But not the same,” said Robin. “I want to stay here in the country in Little Fressingfield with this robin! I’m not going to pack. I’m going to write my poem!” Robin stormed back inside. Dad looked at the bird perched on his fork, and sighed.

Robin worked hard to write the best poem he could. He wrote about an icy pond. Then he wrote about Jack Frost, but he still thought he could do better. “This poetry competition is the last thing I’ll do at school before I leave,” he thought. “I’d love to win it.” He wondered what the prize might be and then felt sad that he might have left, before the prize was given. He then wrote a poem describing how he felt about moving to a big city.

“You’re not still moping are you?” asked Mum. She had some postcards to show him.



They had pictures of London on them. Buckingham Palace where the Queen lived, the London Eye, the Houses of Parliament, the Shard and the Tower of London. Robin thought the pictures looked exciting, but he still felt scared. Mum checked the removal boxes and then got rather cross.

“You can’t give those things to charity!” she said. “Your winter coat and jumper!”

“It itches,” said Robin.

“Your wash things!” cried Mum. “Are you not going to wash at our new flat or brush your teeth? And what are these?”

“School shoes,” said Robin.

“You’ll need your school shoes,” replied Mum.

“But I’m leaving school!” said Robin.

“And going to another one,” said Mum. “It will be exciting, I promise.”

“It will be much bigger than Little Fressingfield Primary,” said Robin. “I’m scared. It makes me shiver and shake like I’ve written in this poem.”

Mum read Robin’s poem and then went outside to show it to Dad. Robin had written all his feelings into the poem.

“He’s scared of change,” said Dad. “Scared of leaving behind everything he’s always known about to go to a strange place that’s very different. This poem is about being scared. It’s about shivering and shaking and getting away from a smoky city and traffic that roars!”

Mum felt sad that Robin was scared. She and Dad went inside to check if he was asleep. They hoped he would be dreaming of something nice.

That night Robin stirred as he heard a noise at the window. There was a fluttering of wings and in flew the robin from the garden. It seemed much bigger as it perched on the bed. Robin carefully climbed onto its back, and together they flew off into the night sky. Robin was a bit scared but he wrapped himself inside the bird’s feathers and felt quite warm and snug. “Maybe we’ll fly high up into the sky to visit the stars,” thought Robin.

The stars twinkled in the night sky as they flew onwards and upwards. Then the stars seemed to be getting closer. Robin realized that they weren’t stars after all.

“They’re not stars!” he cried. “They’re buildings, that’s the city! It looks beautiful.” The bird swooped and dived and Robin had to hold on very tight.

He then saw that the lights in the buildings below did indeed look like stars and the river was silver in the moonlight. Everything sparkled in the white of the snow. “Wow! It’s amazing,” he thought, “I can see the whole of London!” They flew over Buckingham Palace and then towards the London Eye that was turning very slowly. Robin could see people inside, but they were very tiny. They then passed the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben. “I’ve never been up this late!” thought Robin.



They flew around the Shard three times so Robin could look inside the glass sides, and then they were over the Tower of London. Robin was feeling very sleepy by now; so much had happened. He was fast asleep when the bird shook him back into bed and flew once more out of the window and back to the night sky.

When Robin woke up the next morning, he knew exactly what he would write for his poem. He grabbed a pen and started the verses. Ideas were flowing as fast as the river Thames, bobbing along until the last verse was finished. Robin couldn’t wait to take his poem into school. He hadn’t noticed the falling snow.

“I’m sorry Robin,” said Dad, “This will have to be your last day at school.”

“I thought we were leaving at the weekend,” said Robin.

“The snow is getting very bad,” said Dad. “If we don’t leave for London today, we might get snowed in for days.”

Robin was worried that he'd miss the poetry competition. He read his poem to Mum and Dad and they agreed that he could go into school for the morning to give in his poem, but they must leave after lunch.

In assembly at Little Fressingfield Primary, Robin read out his poem.



A Winter Adventure Twittering Along

Twittering over the snowy tops
of trees my father has grown.
Twittering through the icy parks,
over all I've ever known.

My heart is leaving the country
wrapped small in feathers and beak
it flutters its winged rhythm
towards the London streets.

Twittering over the houses,
over snow hugged factories.
Twittering over the river,
a frozen ribbon to the sea.

My heart thrums to the city,
snow flakes float above.
It thrums its winged rhythm
leaving the village it loved.

Twittering over the traffic,
over a frosty London Eye,
Twittering over The Icicle Shard,
how high my heart must fly.

Twittering with my Robin,
my cheeky bird of red.
Twittering together
over the City's snowy head.

There was a silence when Robin finished his poem about his journey to London on the back of his feathered friend. Then everyone clapped and clapped. Robin took a bow and said a tearful good bye to all his friends and teachers that he'd known since he'd started in Reception.

Back at home snow was still falling and Mum and Dad had nearly finished packing the van. Dad was in the garden having a final look at his plants; there was only room for one plant pot in the van. Robin Redbreast flew down as they said their goodbyes.



The journey to London took five hours, roads were blocked and the heavy snow slowed everything down. At last the trees and fields disappeared and were replaced by buildings.

“Look at all the shops and cafes,” said Mum. “Do we really need three Starbucks on one road!” They eventually reached London passing Buckingham Palace, the London Eye, the Houses of Parliament, Big Ben, The Shard and the Tower of London.

“I’ve been here before!” said Robin, but Mum and Dad didn’t believe him.

The new flat was near Tower Bridge on the twentieth floor. “I hope the lift works ok,” worried Mum. They unpacked everything from the van and squeezed their things into the tiny flat. From their balcony, they could see all over London.

A few days later two letters arrived in the post. One was for Robin and one for Dad.

“Mine will be the result of the poetry competition,” said Robin. Dad didn’t want to open his incase it was bad news. He was hoping that it might be a job offer. And it was!

“I’ve got a job!” said Dad.

“What is it?” asked Robin.

“I’m setting up a new city garden,” said Dad.

“One which will encourage wild life and pond life and an area where children can play safely.”

“That’s amazing!” said Mum. ‘It’s exactly what you were hoping for.”

Then it was Robin’s turn to open his letter.

“The Little Fressingfield Poetry Competition,” he read.

“This year’s winner is Robin Orchard! That’s me! You’ll never guess what the prize is!” Mum and Dad couldn’t guess. “Tickets for the London Eye!” said Robin, “Wow!”

Robin read out his winning poem standing on the balcony looking out over London, his new home. As he reached the part “Twittering with my Robin, my cheeky bird of red,” a robin appeared and landed on the plant pot that Dad had placed on the balcony.

“Robin redbreast,” said Dad.

“Not the same one,” said Robin. “This one’s tail feathers are different.”

“But he’s still a robin,” said Mum.

“Everything in London seems different,” said Robin.

He thought about the home that he’d left and the new one that he lived in now. He thought of his old school and his new one, and Dad’s old garden centre and the city garden where he’d soon be working. He thought about the robin in the garden in Little Fressingfield and the robin, just as tame, perching on the plant pot on the balcony. Difference could be scary, he thought, but it could also be exciting. An adventure.

