

Last week I heard my friend, Theresa Demarest, being interviewed on the radio. During the hour, Theresa and her band, “Good Company”, played a song she had recently written, at my request, to compliment my talk entitled “My Child is Different and Sometimes it Hurts”. I wanted something that would musically express the process I had gone through, in coming to terms with my son’s autism.

They played “Momma Birdie and Jordan A”. After marveling over the touching lyrics, the host commented about “how some people seem to have more than their share of burdens in life.” As she, albeit with good intention, began to glorify the ways in which such people “rise to meet the challenge..,” Theresa interrupted her. She was in the middle of what I term, ‘media hype’ about the virtues of people who face unusual difficulties. Theresa’s point was simply that nobody escapes from burdens! At some time in their life, everyone has burdens to bear. I was relieved to hear her share that perspective.

The challenges I face in my life (e.g., having a son with autism, and a husband with m.s.) do feel burdensome at times. At the same time, they have presented me with incredible gifts. When I have occasion to informally share my circumstances with people, they so often respond with, “Oh, you do have your plate full, don’t you!” I used to relish their admiration for my ‘courage’.

The time came when it began to feel very uncomfortable to have that kind of attention. I realized that they were only seeing the challenges and overlooking the gifts. My son feeds my soul endlessly with his fresh perspective and pure innocence. I’m also grateful to have learned some important life lessons much earlier, than if I had lived a more mainstream lifestyle. But I don’t think I’m anymore courageous than the next person. We all do what we have to do, and most of us do the best we know how to do.

Putting people on a pedestal for the challenges they face is isolating. It makes it harder to let it show during those times when we need other people’s support. Sometimes I feel courageous, sometimes overwhelmed, and sometimes just plain blessed. It’s all part of the picture.

Theresa captured the experience in a song, based on reading my speeches, but more importantly, shaped by how she experiences, “Momma Birdie, and Jordan A”.
I thought it would be fitting to share the lyrics with Rain Kids readers.

MOMMA BIRDIE AND JORDAN A.

Words and Music by Theresa Demarest/Concept by Lisa Lieberman

Momma Birdie and Jordan A. got caught in a tune that they couldn't play

She was trying to find the rhythm without a song,

He was trying to find the beat without a drum and,

Chorus: Noone was dancing, noone could hear, noone was even looking at the wonder in
the air, playing all around them, playing all around them, playing all around

Jordan A was knocked to the ground

They thought he lost his mind but his soul was found

And Momma Birdie didn't know what to do

She went running around got caught in a stew and

Chorus: Noone was dancing, noone could hear, noone was even looking at the wonder in
the air, playing all around them, playing all around them, playing all around

Everybody wonders how did she do it

Everyone wants to know

They see Jordan A in a fountain dancing with a song he made of his own

Playing all around him, playing all around him, playing all around

Momma Birdie and Jordan A finally found a song they both could play

But it's not the one you thought it would be

So turn yourself around come dance with me cause

Chorus: Everyone's dancing, everyone is here, everyone is looking at the wonder in the
air, playing all around them, playing all around them, playing all around...

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