

Diamond

*Blue sky around me, earth below
Wind flutters my paper body
My tail dances beneath.
One string is fixed shoulder to shoulder
Another connects my top and tip
Two strings cross to form a harness.*

A boy and a girl are my dear keepers.
I'm rolled tightly around two sticks, one longer than the other, with red rubber bands at each end to keep me from unraveling. When we get to the field, the girl takes off the rubber bands and unrolls my paper body — red, green, blue, and yellow, nine stripes. The boy crosses my two sticks and unfurls my diamond shape. The breeze and my boy and girl give me life.

The girl slips a rubber band around her wrist like a red bracelet and puts the other one on the boy's wrist. He opens a cloth bag, takes out a roll of white string, and ties it to my harness. Then he carries me across the field away from the girl while the roll of string in her hands unwinds.

At the edge of the field, by a wall of pines, my boy stops and holds me high above his head facing the girl.

“Ready?” he yells at the top of his lungs.

“Go!” the girl yells back.



The boy jumps up and pushes me into the sky. The wind presses hard on my chest and I zoom up above the treetops. The girl runs backwards pulling the string and I fly higher above the meadow. The boy and girl laugh and I'm thrilled to be outside, free and flying, and making my keepers happy.

As I rise higher into the sky, the boy ties on a second roll of string and lets it out. I begin to slip backwards and fall. The treetops grow closer, but then my string pulls tight again and I rise up even higher than before where the wind is stronger and cooler, and my paper body rustles all over. I look down and can't see my tail, then over my shoulder I see it flowing along behind me, swaying side to side. My boy and girl look small and far away.



The wind cuts ripples through the field of yellow straw grass and passes on. In the middle of the meadow my boy and girl, both twelve years old, stand side by side, both wearing shorts and tee shirts. His hair is brown; hers is black and longer. The boy pulls on the string and a second later the string harness flexes my shoulders against the wind, pushing me upwards even more. It is magnificent to be free.

A lengthy string, now three rolls long, connects me in a great arc to my tiny-looking keepers in the field of waving grass. Their mouths move, but the sound of wind covers their words. The boy hands my string to the girl and she holds her arm up high and moves it back and forth. My shoulders flex again and the strong, steady wind pushes me back and up.

In the distance I see a brown speck floating alone, untethered. The spec comes closer. It's a red-tailed hawk and when it passes by, its eyes gaze only at the field below.

In the blue sky to my right is a round water tower with a name written in big, black capital letters. I make out the first two, R and U, but the others are around the far side.

In the sky to my left stands a tall, silver tower, adorned with antennas and cables. Beyond the tower, a bank of storm clouds builds. The afternoon sun warms my shoulders, while thunder rumbles in the distance.

I look back down at the field and see a tiny shadow dancing back and forth, my own shadow. My keepers lie side by side on their backs now, taking turns holding my string keeping me tethered to the earth.

The girl tugs my string once again and I barely feel the pull. Suddenly something pops and I am free of the pulling harness. I fly backward, spin and tumble downward. The world whirls around; first golden, then blue, then golden again. I spot my boy and girl running through the field, then lose sight of them. Forest green comes up fast, there's a stab in my back and I come to a stop.



A limb pokes through one of my red stripes and green pine needles tickle me. I'm dangling in the top of a pine above the forest. A few feet of my broken string drifts back and forth in the breeze passing through the treetops. I hang there wondering what will become of me. I don't want to be alone. I can't be who I'm meant to be without my keepers.

Then I hear voices.

“I think Diamond went this way,” the boy says as he points through the treetops.

“Sure hope we find her,” the girl replies.

The two pass under my tree and their voices dim as they move deeper into the forest. The sky darkens and I don't hear my keepers anymore. *Cheeeeeer*, comes from above and the hawk flies over, then all is quiet again, except for the whir of the wind flowing through pine needles.

Soon raindrops patter my papers and I am wet from top to tip. Drops of water roll down my red, green, yellow, and blue stripes and fall through the limbs toward the ground. The world grows gloomy and sounds of rain fill my ears. I hope my keepers find me tomorrow.

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