

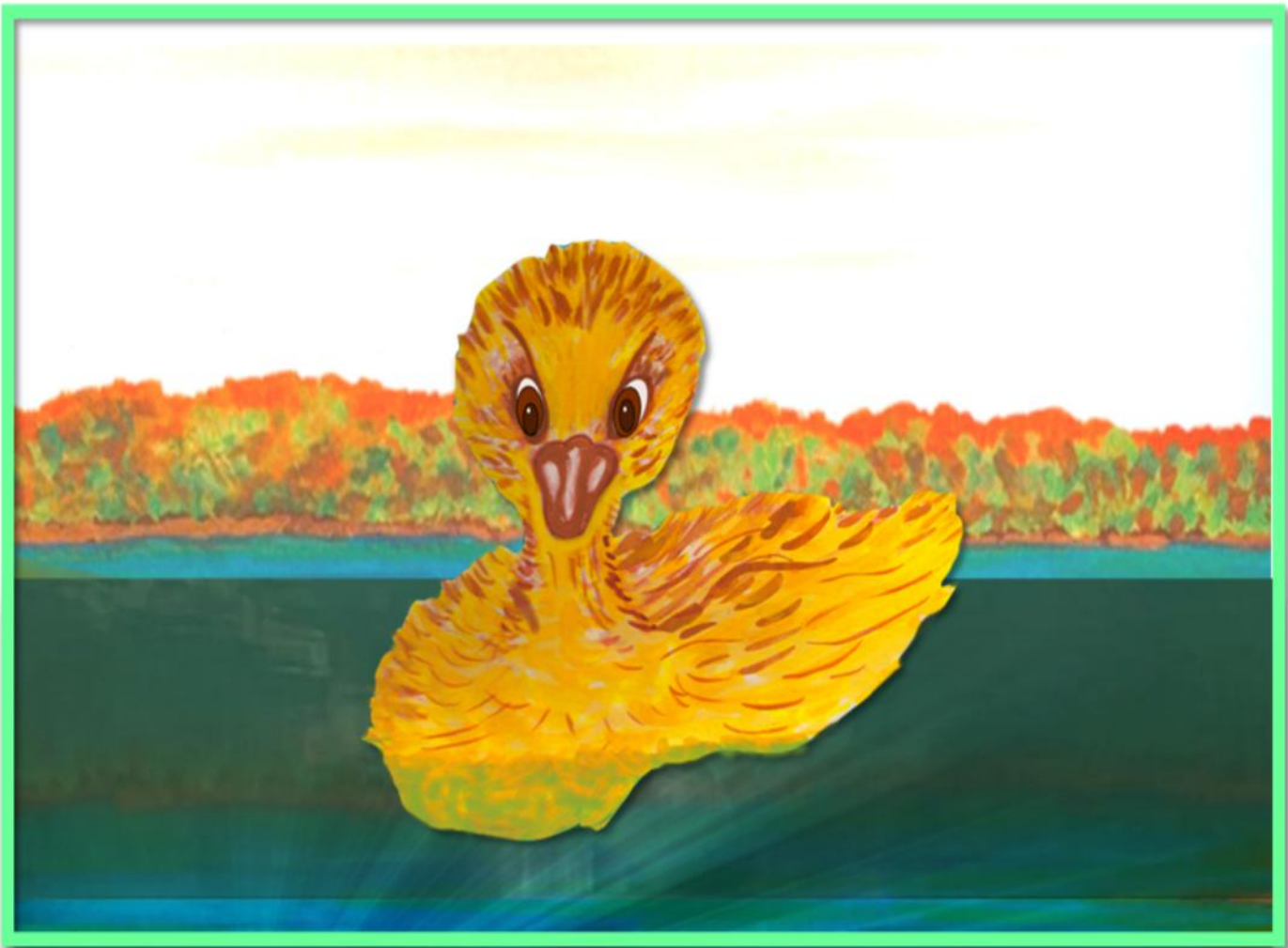
# Flying Is For The Birds



Written by Belinda Briggs  
Illustrated by Joan Lynn Padian



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**In a simple place called Somewhere, lived Mr. and Mrs. Coo. One day, the Coos hatched a new baby boy duckling and named him Zeek.**



**The Coos had two teenaged sons named Chip and Skip.**





**Zeek was too small to fly. He liked to swim in  
Somewhere's beautiful lake and splash water with his  
wings. "Look at me, everyone!" "I can swim." His  
mother watched him swim in the lake. "Don't go far,  
dear."**

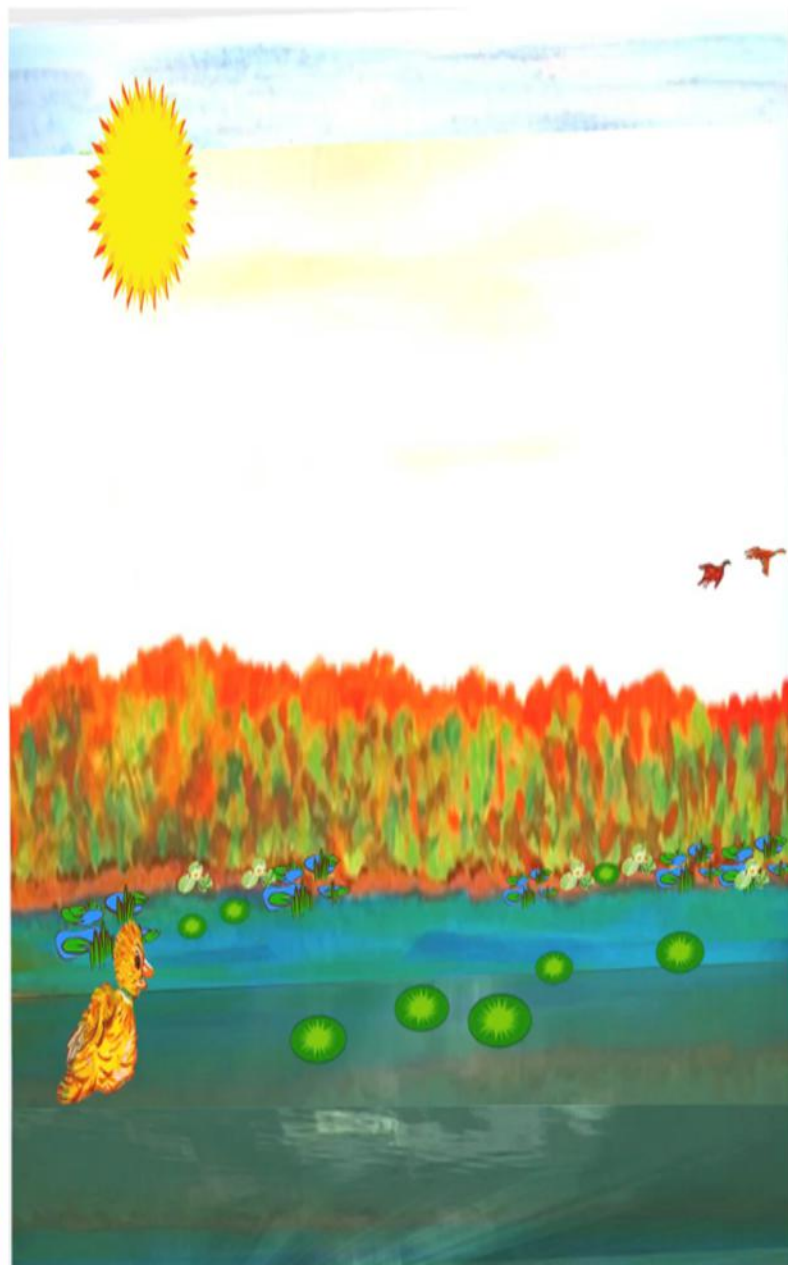




**One day, Zeek wanted to play a game of “Follow the Leader” with his older brothers and their friends. He watched as they played. “I can swim and jump over seven water lilies,” said Chip. Skip and the others said, “We can, too.”**



**Zeek jumped over three water lilies and fell into the water with a big splash. He was little and clumsy.**  
**‘This game is silly,’ he thought. Little Zeek swam alone.**





**While swimming, Zeek saw tiny bubbles in the water. Zeek watched as the bubbles circled him. The faster the bubbles circled him, the faster Zeek spun around. Zeek stopped and ducked his head into the water.**



**A young, playful fish named Yike popped his head out of the water. "You can't catch me," laughed Yike. "I can swim faster than you."**

**Zeek and Yike swam quickly around the lake, back and forth, splashing and laughing.**







**The sun set. A pink-purplish sky covered the lake. The dark sky didn't bother Zeek and Yike. They were having fun and continued to play.**

**"Ze-eek, Ze-eek, it's time to come home," Ellaweez Coo called out.**

**"Let's play again tomorrow," said Zeek. Zeek no longer felt alone.**

**Weeks passed quickly as Zeek and Yike frolicked around the lake, playing many games together.**

The seasons changed in Somewhere. Spring flowers bloomed, then lickety-split into summer. Summer hurried to become a colorful fall. Zeek grew older and big enough to fly.



Flying was the furthest thought from Zeek's mind. Zeek and Yike were having so much fun playing with their new friends on the lake.



**A chilly wind blew over the lake. Leaves fell to the ground as fall lost its colors: red, orange, and yellow. Winter's frost would arrive soon.**





**Mr. and Mrs. Coo called their sons, “A letter came from your grandparents today, and they want us to visit this winter. We will fly south and they will meet Zeek.”**

**“We’ll have fun,” said Skip.**







**Excited, Zeek hurried to the lake. He could not wait to tell Yike his news.**

**“Yike, Yike, I am flying south to meet my grandparents.”**

**“That’s great, Zeek. When are you leaving?”**

**Zeek stopped, thought, then rubbed his head.**

**“What is flying? Do I fly?”**

**“Sure you do, silly. That’s what birds do, and you’re a bird.”** said Yike.

**“Do you fly, Yike?”**

**“No! Fish swim, and I am a fish. I wish I could fly. We would have so much fun flying together.”**

**“I’d rather swim south with you,”** cried Zeek.







**"Have you tried to fly, Zeek?"**

**"No, Yike."**

**"It is natural for you." "Zeek, flap your wings up and down quickly," said Yike.**

**Zeek flapped his wings fast. The flutter of his wings against the air lifted his body out of the water.**

**“That’s it, Zeek!” “Keep moving your wings!”**

**Zeek hovered in the air and saw Yike looking up from the water.**







**"Ooh!" Yelled Zeek. "It is scary up here. I am feeling dizzy. I see polka dots, orange, and yellow. Now, I see plaids in blue and green. I wish I knew what those colors mean!" Zeek cried as he fell, crashing into the water.**

**"Flying is for the birds," he said.**



**“But Zeek, you’re a bird!” piped Yike. “Try it again, and I know this time it will be easier.”**

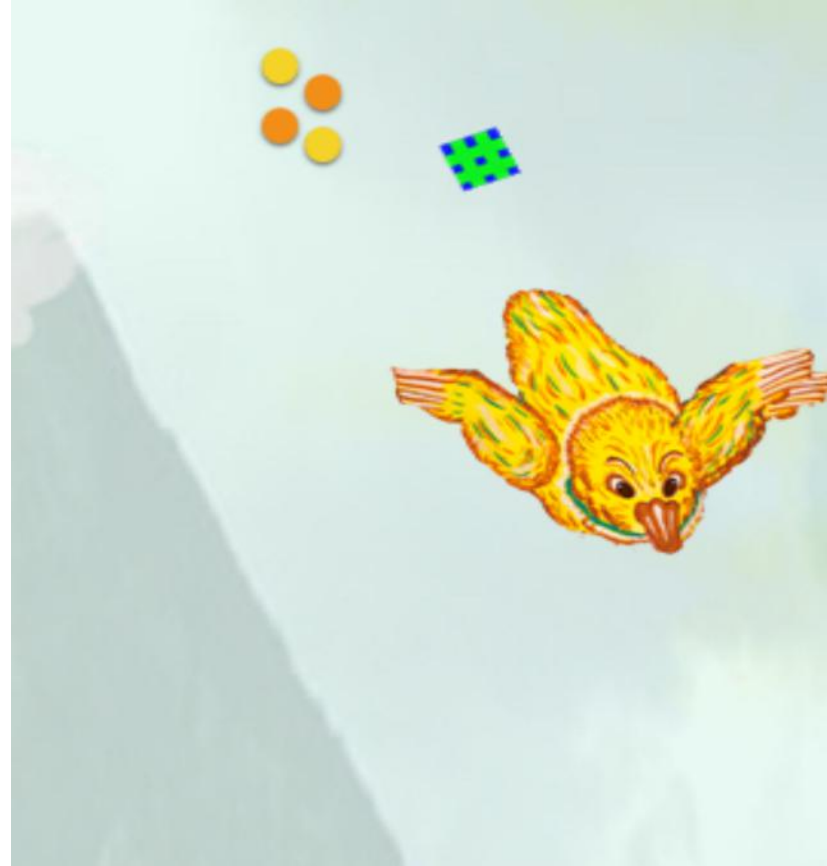
**Zeeks’ flapping wings sped up. His body lifted into the air, and he flew high above the lake and trees. The wind blew. Once again, Zeek saw the colors and fell into the lake.**



**Zeek tried again. As he fell, his mother caught him in her mouth and flew him to the ground.**

**"Thanks Mom. Mom, can we swim to visit Grandpa and Grandma?"**

**"It's too far and dangerous, son. Dear, flying is fun."**



**"I'd rather swim with my friend Yike. I am an excellent swimmer, like him. Flying is for the birds," said Zeek.**

**"Flying is for the birds! Zeek, you are a bird that dislikes flying! How positively absurd. I think you must see a doctor!" Squawked Ella Coo.**



**Doctor Jay is a wise, old buzzard living deep within the woods of Somewhere. They arrived at the doctor's office. "Doctor, my son doesn't like to fly. He thinks he is a fish. All he wants to do is swim."**





**"What's wrong with flying?" Doctor Jay asked. Zeek sighed and explained the colors he saw. "Um, the colors are orange, yellow, blue, and green, right?" She said.**



**Dr. Jay thought and said, "Zeek has 'height fright!' Only two other cases existed. After we help him get over his fear of flying high up in the sky, he would like to fly."**







**The doctor piled books on top of each other. Zeek did well as the stack grew higher. When the books reached the tallest tree branch, Dr. Jay said, “Flying off this branch will be your first test, Zeek.”**

**“It’s too high.”**

**“You must keep trying, son!”**

**Zeek flapped his wings and rose above the branch.**



**Next, Doctor Jay grabbed his wings and pulled him onto the branch. "That's wonderful, Zeek. Look down and tell me how you feel," she said.**

**"I feel like the ground is moving..."**

**Before he ended his statement, she nudged him off the branch. As Zeek fell to the ground,**

**"Spread your wings and let yourself soar." "You can do this, Zeek, I am sure." Dr. Jay said.**







**Zeek hurried up, flapping his wings. He stopped falling. Next, he felt his feet touch the ground. Flying started to feel natural to him. Zeek was proud of himself.**



**Dr. Jay pointed to the tallest mountain in Somewhere.  
“Zeek, take one last big test. Fly up to that mountain’s  
highest peak.”**

**Clouds covered the mountain top, and Zeek could not  
see it.**







**He took a big breath, looked up, and with a giant leap, Zeek flew up, up, and up!**

**Doctor Jay called, "Spread your wings and let yourself soar. You can do this, Zeek. I am sure!"**

**Zeek spread his wings and flew above the puffy white clouds in the sky. He looked down and saw the colorful trees and the beautiful, calm lake.**

**His excitement grew as he watched other birds fly high, too. The colors did not appear before his eyes. He had landed at the top of Somewhere's highest mountain.**

**“I love being a bird and flying,” cheered Zeek.**





**Happy, Zeek was ready to visit his grandparents in the south. He followed his parents and older brothers as they flew up and away.**

**Zeek called out to Yike, “See you in the spring.”**







**Zeek and his friend Yike lived and played forever on the lake in a simple place called Somewhere.**





**The End**

This book is  
dedicated to friends  
everywhere.