



Ruchy and the Very Different Guests

by Yael Mermelstein

“But Mommy,” cried Ruchie, “I can’t make more room!
I scooped out more dirt and I swept with a broom.
So please tell those sparrows to stay in their nests.
We just don’t have room here for those sorts of guests.”

But Mommy just smiled and smoothed Ruchie’s ears.
“I want you to know that I hear all your fears.
We’ve all been so busy with so many things,
Preparing our burrow for creatures with wings.

“But their nest was destroyed in last week’s nasty storm.
I’m sure they’ll be out once the weather gets warm.
This mitzvah’s a big one, so don’t be so sad.
Remember that different is not always bad.”

The next day the sparrows arrived in a flutter,
Bumping and flapping around in the clutter,
Settling their things in the burrow so dark,
And Ruchie ran out to go play in the park.

For she didn’t feel happy to have them around,
With their wings and beaks and their pecking the ground,
And she angrily hopped from the swings to the slide
Where one of the sparrows was ready to ride.

“Oh, hi!” said the sparrow. “My name’s Sparaloo.
I’m glad we’ll be roommates! I hope you are too!”
“I guess,” Ruchie said, running back to the swing.
“Come back!” Sparaloo called and held out her wing.



Soon Ruchie was flying above the brick ramp,
The earth square and small like a brown postage stamp.
“Whoo-hoo!” Ruchie cried. “This is really such fun!”
“When we land,” Sparaloo said, “you’ll teach me to run.”

Ruchie and the sparrow laughed down the whole street
As Sparaloo ran on her tiny, thin feet.
A bird and a bunny just having some fun,
One learning to fly and the other to run.

That night Ruchie heard Sparaloo cry in bed.
“What’s wrong?” Ruchie asked. “Was it something I said?”
“No,” her friend sniffled back. “I just miss my old nest.”
“Don’t be sad,” Ruchie answered. “Right now, this is best.”

The two of them talked till the wee hours of night
About running and hopping and taking to flight.
They had so much to say that they spoke until dawn.
Then they rolled out of bed with a smile and a yawn.

A few short days later, they woke to blue skies.
It was time for the birds to say their goodbyes.
“I’m glad that you came,” Ruchie said to her friend.
“So am I,” she replied. “It worked out in the end.”

“Were you worried?” asked Ruchie. “Oh, yes,” she replied.
They smiled and laughed and then both of them sighed.
“I wish you could stay,” Ruchie said. “But I’m glad,
'Cause I learned being different is not always bad.”