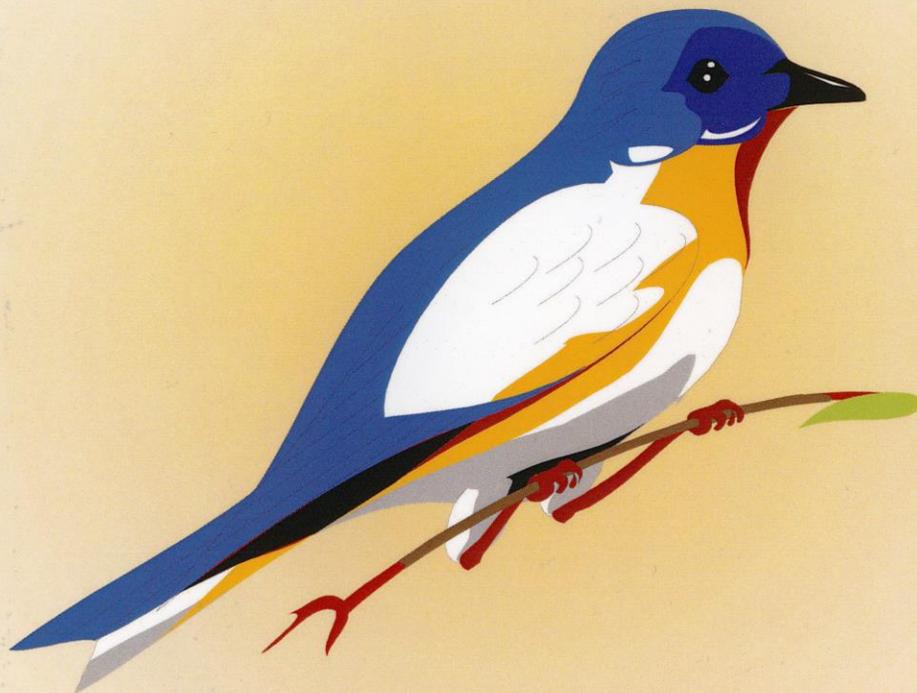


Blue Boy



A True Bluebird Story

L. T. Loner

August 4, 1930 – April 5, 2017

Blue Boy A True Bluebird Story

by L.T. Loner

L.T. Loner

DORRANCE PUBLISHING CO., INC.
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15222

Dedication

Dedicated with love to my children: Dianne, Ginny, and Edd; to my grandchildren: Amber, Ashley, Russell, and Josh; and to my great-grandchildren: Blair, Jamie, Walker, and Elise.

WThis is a true story about a bluebird named “Blue Boy.” I know because I am that bird! As of this date, I am flying around enjoying this beautiful earth, all because of kind humans who love us bluebirds. I was hatched in their backyard, where they have bird houses made especially for us with round doorways just one and three-eighths inches wide and no perches out front. This discourages other birds from using our nests because they have to light first. We fly directly into the house. There is plenty of pine straw for us to build our nests, fresh water to drink and bathe in, lots of trees and grass where crickets and other good bugs can live so we can have all the food we need, and a fence to sit on and watch for our food moving around in the grass. It is a wonderful yard to be in.

I had two beautiful blue-feathered parents who lovingly made their nest of pine straw. They laid four blue eggs, but I was the only one that hatched. My kind humans discovered that something had happened to my parents late one afternoon, and kind Mrs. Human came right away to see about me because she knew I was all alone. She found me with my mouth wide open, just begging for food. I was sooo hungry.

She figured things out very quickly, so she and left me in my nest and ran inside her house, grabbed a shoe box, made some holes in the lid, put some fresh white paper napkins in it, and came back to get me. She reached in and carefully took me out of the nest and placed me in the shoe box. I was only two days or so old and really just helpless! I had no feathers, just a little bit of soft fuzz on a few places on my little body. I was sooo fragile because I was mostly just skin! My legs were quite long and refused to hold me up! In fact, they just flopped straight out sideways with my little body down on the floor of my new home! I sure must have been a sight to see, but my



Blue Boy's house where he was hatched. (The birdhouse on the post under the limb of the birch tree.)



Blue Boy back in his shoebox home only for a picture

kind Mrs. Human thought I was just beautiful!
She patted me lovingly on my little head and
gave me my name, "Blue Boy."

Well, as I said before, I was sooo hungry, holding my head back with my mouth wide open, waiting for some food! My kind Mrs. Human remembered that we bluebirds eat bugs. Our parents go out and catch nice, fresh, live bugs, which she says are mostly protein. It was getting dark quickly, so she told kind Mr. Human to please get a flashlight and start looking for some bugs! He did so, looking under things, over things, in corners, everywhere—without any luck whatsoever! My kind Mrs. Human began to pray—yes pray! All three of us were getting pretty desperate by this time!

She prayed, “Lord, we need a bug. Please send me a bug. Any kind of bug will do! This little bird is hungry.”

Just seconds later, she turned, and on the concrete floor under the carport, what did she see coming toward her but a fine-sized spider!

She said, “Thank you, Lord.” She tapped him lightly with her shoe, just enough to stun him and stop him! Then she picked him up by one leg and dropped him in my mouth. Oh, he tasted sooo good! But he was just a small bite

for me. I needed a lot more food than that! And kind Mr. Human had come up with absolutely nothing! So kind Mrs. Human was thinking, *What do we do now? We have to have something to feed this hungry little baby.*

So . . . she prayed again, “Lord, please show me what to do.” Suddenly she remembered that she had a leftover New York strip steak in her freezer! She ran in the house, taking me with her in my new shoe box nest, took the steak from the freezer, put it in her microwave for a few seconds, then took a sharp knife and shaved some small bits and pieces off the side. Using tweezers that she cleaned with an anti-septic, she fed me all I wanted to eat. It was sooo good. Again she said, “Thank you, Lord.”

I settled down and slept really well that night. This continued for a couple of days when a family member heard about the time my kind humans were having and offered to go on the Internet to see what was suggested.

A website said to get some puppy chow, use a blender and make meal out of it, add lots of water and a little oil, use a syringe or a dropper, and feed this to me. Kind Mrs. Human did

this, using water she had boiled. She had also cleaned a dropper along with all the things she used to feed me. She continued to clean after every feeding from then on. She wanted to keep me as safe as she could so I would not get sick. The puppy chow was sooo good, and I gobbled it down! She would feed me until I would not open my mouth for her any more.

After several days, I began to move about, and my feathers began growing. But before I became too active, my kind Mrs. Human put me back in my original nest in the bird house with good old pine straw. The three blue eggs that did not hatch were still in it. I felt very comfortable staying there. She did this many times until I was moving around enough that she was afraid I would get out. She always took me inside their house with them at night, and I always slept really well. My legs were really getting strong by now, and my little body was covered with feathers.

My kind Mrs. Human knew I was about to “outgrow” my shoe box home, so she told kind Mr. Human that I was going to have to have a cage. She remembered that they had some left-

over “hardware cloth” and thought this would be perfect material for a cage. Now “hardware cloth” is another name for really heavy screen wire. Kind Mr. Human made me a really sweet little cage with a door on the front so my kind Mrs. Human could get her hand inside and take me out or do whatever she needed to do. She put some sticks inside from side to side at different levels for perches, and it was not long before I was jumping from one to the other without any problem. And she made my new home sooo comfortable! She kept nice clean pine straw on the bottom with several snow-white paper napkins over it in places. She could reach in and change any or all of these things as often as needed.

She continued to feed me regularly because I just stayed sooo hungry. But she realized that one day I would have to be free and would have to be able to take care of myself. She also knew that the parents of little birds teach them



Blue Boy in his hardware cloth home, where he lived until he was taken to Carolina Wildlife.



Blue Boy's "Kind Mrs. Human" watching him closely in his nest.

to find and catch their food. Oh my, what to do? You guessed it—more prayer! “Lord, show me what to do!”

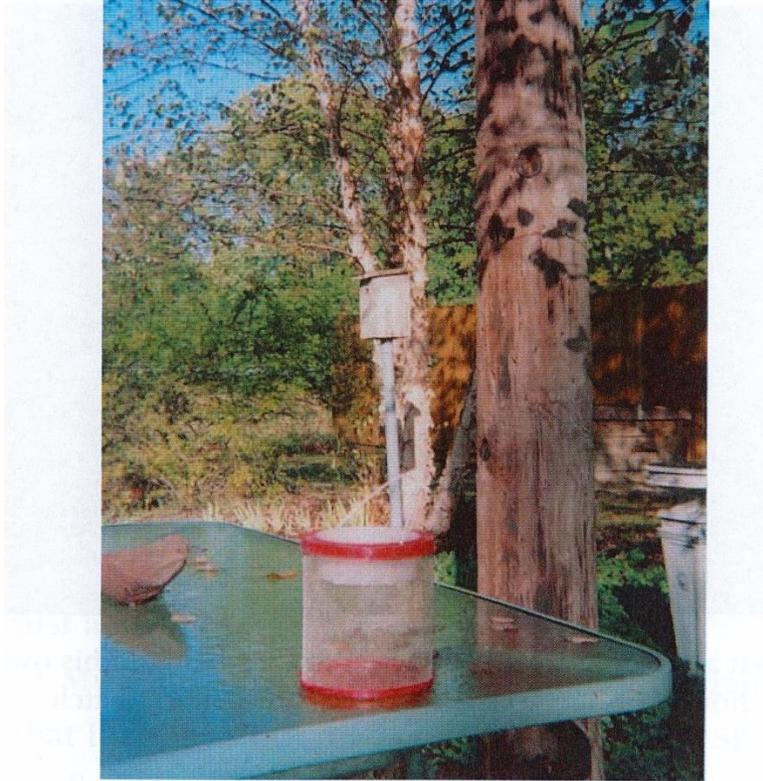
Now, I sure did like that puppy chow, and one day she told kind Mr. Human that this little bluebird might grow up wagging his tail feathers and barking instead of chirping! They both laughed. But seriously, she knew I could not stay on puppy chow much longer so, you guessed it again: more prayer. Just by chance, they ran into the nice neighbors from across the street, and she told them that she needed some crickets. She remembered at that moment that he loved to fish.

He quickly responded, “I have some crickets. I will bring you my cricket box with some crickets in it. Just feed them some fresh lettuce and maybe something like frozen French fries, and spray their box with a little water from time to time. Use them to feed your little bird.” She felt like she had another answer to prayer.

“Thank you, Lord.”

So I had some nice fresh bugs along with my puppy chow. They were sooo good! But my kind humans knew that I would have to learn how to get my own food so I could live out in my world. They decided to try something. They took a big piece of the “hardware cloth” and made a cage, leaving the bottom open. They placed it on the grass, and kind Mrs. Human put me in it and turned some crickets loose inside. I did not like that thing at all! And I let them know it! She took me out, and put me back in my little cage.

She continued to feed me my puppy chow and cricket diet, and I was beginning to look like a fine, healthy, bluebird. She was sooo proud! I was really moving around in my cage, fluttering my wings, just practicing, you know, for the time I would be able to fly away. Everyone was assuring and reassuring kind Mrs. Human that I would be okay outside, that I would just “go back to the wild.” She had many doubts about that. Finally she gave in, and they decided to just see what I would do. They put me in my original nest and walked away.



Our neighbor's cricket box, which is mentioned in the story. Also, there is another bluebird house in the background.



What a precious bird! He seemed to love being in his own house, even with the three eggs that didn't hatch.

In a little while I jumped up into my one and three-eighths inch doorway and just sat there. After a minute or so, I decided to try my wings! Off I went into the air and flew about forty feet across the yard, right into a big window screen. I dug my claws in and stayed there for a little while, then let go and dropped softly to the flower bed below—but my wings worked. I could fly! I was sooo proud! I just stayed there, and kind Mrs. Human came over and scooped me up and put me back in my little cage. I was kinda glad to be back in there too, because my heart was just a-pounding.

My kind Mrs. Human was thinking again that I just was not ready to be on my own. She took care of me for a few more days. By this time I was really responding to my caregivers as they called me by my name, “Blue Boy, Blue Boy.” I was always sooo happy to see them.

My kind Mrs. Human gave in again when it was suggested that they let me go. So kind Mr. Human placed me on another birdhouse there in the yard. Suddenly two big birds with beautiful blue feathers came and sat on the bird

house with me and checked me out real good before flying away. I guess they were just curious, but I was not afraid of them.

I then flew to the top of the carport and from there to the tree limb over my original home. I just sat there for a while, my heart just a-pounding, not knowing quite what to do. My kind Mrs. Human must have realized how insecure I felt. She told kind Mr. Human to get a ladder, go up and bring me down! I did not try to get away from him as he did this. She put me back in my little cage once again and took care of me, feeding me my puppy chow and cricket diet.

And all the while she was praying, “Lord, please show me what to do.”

As everyone continued telling her I would revert back to the wild, she gave in for a third time. Kind Mr. Human placed me on the same little birdhouse and moved away. In just a minute, away I went! I flew way up into another tree in the backyard, then to the top of their house, then over to another tree for a few seconds. I was sooo confident and so proud! I took flight again, flying across the backyard,

over the fence, and across the pasture to the trees about the length of a football field away!

Kind Mrs. Human was sooo sad thinking, *Maybe I was wrong. Maybe he can make it on his own. Looks like he is gone for good this time!* She was crying sooo hard.

This all happened on a Sunday morning before they went off to church. When they came back home, she looked for me all around the backyard, but saw no sign of me anywhere. All this time my kind Mrs. Human was praying prayers for me. She was still worried that I just could not take care of myself out in the wild.

She prayed, “Lord, please take care of ‘Blue Boy.’ You care about him too. You made him and all the other beautiful birds and wildlife that are on this earth, and the Bible tells us how you even know when a sparrow falls. So please, take care of him. And Lord, if he still needs us, please send him back.”

Well, that Sunday afternoon my kind Mrs. Human heard me chirp down in the trees across the pasture. That lady really knew my

voice! The next day they were doing some yard work in the backyard when kind Mrs. Human heard me again down in the trees back across the pasture! She stopped what she was doing and rushed through her fence gate and over through the horse gate leading to the pasture. But by then, my chirp was coming from the big oak tree just up the way. As quickly as she could, she came back through the horse gate and got to the big oak tree. But the chirp had changed locations again! So she came as fast as she could, following the fence, and there on the other side of the fence in her backyard, in a little crepe myrtle tree, sat a little bluebird—ME!

She could not believe her eyes! She could not reach me over the fence or through the fence! She called to kind Mr. Human, who was sitting under a shade tree about ten feet away, to come quickly! He did so and just reached down and picked me up off the limb! I did not try to get away from him. He placed me on his arm, and I just sat there. It was obvious that I was tired, hungry, and thirsty.



The trees back across the pasture where I heard Blue Boy chirping on his way back home. He came over the fence onto a low limb, where “Mr. Human” just stooped down and picked him up. “Mr. Human” was sitting in the white chair.



The pasture beyond the fence where Blue Boy crossed the third time we turned him loose. Look closely on the right side of the birdhouse. There is a bluebird on top.

He offered me a few drops of water from the garden hose, and I swallowed them quickly. Kind Mrs. Human was rushing to get to me. She came back in the front gate, ran to the cricket box, grabbed a cricket, and fed it to me. I ate it so quickly! Then she went in and made up some fresh puppy chow. It tasted sooo good! I ate and ate. She was thinking just how good the Lord is, answering another prayer about a little bluebird! She stopped and thanked Him again for that. She put me back in my little cage—I got on my perch, settled down, and just rested. I was sooo tired! I had been out overnight this time, and my feathers had begun to change to a beautiful, rich blue, but my chest feathers remained the same.

In the meantime, my kind Mrs. Human realized that the neighbors who had brought her the crickets had just returned from a ten-day trip. They knew of a place where they would take any kind of wildlife that needed help, and the people there would take good care of the wildlife and teach them to find and catch their food, and then return them to the wild. Realizing that I had to have some help to

be able to do this, and that they did not know how to teach me, they started making plans to take me there.

Kind Mrs. Human knew this was going to be very hard because they were sooo attached to me, and I to them! I was responding to them in so many ways! I knew their voices, and kind Mrs. Human sure did know mine! But they knew I needed to be free.

Kind Mr. Human had even bought a little box of red worms you humans use to catch fish. My Mrs. Human offered me one, one day. It was dangling from the tweezers, wiggling, and that thing nearly scared the daylights out of me! I was on the perch in my cage, and I quickly started moving sideways, as fast as I could, all the way across to the other side, getting away from that thing! Kind Mrs. Human had a good laugh at that! Now the crickets and the puppy chow were delicious, but wiggling red fishing worms? No thank you!

My kind humans continued to make plans to take me to the wildlife refuge, which they did two days later. Before we left their home,

my kind Mrs. Human opened my cage door and gently ruffled the soft feathers under my neck. I looked her right in the eyes and did not move, acting like I understood everything that she said. She told me how much she loved me and how much she disliked having to give me up, but knew this was the best for me. She was crying. Saying good-bye is always hard, even for little birds. They put me and my little cage into their truck, and we drove down to Carolina Wildlife Refuge. They handed me over to the nice attendant, who took me out of my cage and told them she would put me in with another bluebird who would show me how to get food. Then she started asking them questions about me, like what they had fed me (she could see that I was a very healthy bird!). Kind Mrs. Human started to tell her “puppy chow,” but that was all she could say because she just burst into tears. Mr. Human stepped in and answered the attendant’s questions.

So they left me there, even though it was very hard to do so. They knew I was in the good hands of other kind people who cared for little orphaned, sick, or hurt animals and birds

like me, who could prepare us to take care of ourselves back out in “our” world, where we were supposed to be.

Now this is not the end of the story. My kind Mrs. Human thinks that after I was trained and released, I might have returned to their backyard, more than once! They saw a lone bluebird with beautiful deep blue feathers, acting very familiar with places in the yard, like the tree where kind Mr. Human had gone up a ladder and brought me down.

Also, my kind Mrs. Human continued to offer up prayers for me like, “Lord, please help me to know that ‘Blue Boy’ is now able to find food and take care of himself.”

Several weeks after I had been taken to the wildlife shelter, she was in the backyard and thought she heard a familiar chip! (As I have said before, that lady always knew my voice!)

It was coming from the same tree on the side of the pasture behind their house where I had flown to after having been out overnight. She watched and waited a few minutes calling “Blue Boy, Blue Boy.” In a moment she saw a

bird fly by, way up high into her tall eucalyptus tree. My kind Mrs. Human walked over under the tree, still softly calling “Blue Boy, Blue Boy.” Only seconds passed, and a lone beautiful bluebird flew down from the tree on to a round flat top fence post about ten to fifteen feet from the tree, holding a large bug in its mouth! My kind Mrs. Human was utterly amazed, surprised, and happy! It was obvious that the bluebird had brought that bug with him from down in the pasture! It sat on top of the post about a minute, dropping and picking the bug up, three or four times, with kind Mrs. Human watching! The bud did not try to get away! The last time he picked him up, he gulped him down like a pro! Then it flew across the pasture to the same trees where I had flown the third time they let me go!

Coincidence? Maybe. Would I tell you that I was that bird? I cannot. Remember, I am a little bluebird, and I cannot talk! But my kind Mrs. Human would like to believe that it was me! She says the Good Lord had answered so many prayers, so quickly, that she cannot help

but believe it was me showing her that I could now get my own food! What do you think?

Maybe next summer I can return to their backyard, and with my beautiful, blue-feathered mate, lovingly make a pine straw nest like my parents made in the same little house where I was hatched, a house made especially for bluebirds with a one and three-eighths-inch door and no perch (because we fly right in!). That little house will be waiting along with plenty of pine straw, grass, trees, fresh water, and food, for my return. Won't that be exciting? Especially for my kind humans! We really are a joy to be around!

“Blue Boy”

The events of this story are true, told just like they happened. It was wonderfully amazing and my privilege to have this beautiful little bird in my care for almost a month. I would do it again in a minute!

The Author



Blue Boy flew from the eucalyptus tree to the the third fence post with a bug in his mouth. The top of the post is about 4" wide. (That post has a small dot on it to mark it in the picture.)



The eucalyptus tree mentioned in the story.



"Mrs. Human" holding the sweet little bird who was never afraid of them.



Our sweet baby bluebird, Blue Boy.

QUESTIONS FROM “BLUE BOY”

(Answers on pages which follow)

1. What kind of bird is in this story?
2. What was his name?
3. What was the shape of the doorway on my house?
4. What do bluebirds use to make their nest?
5. What do bluebirds eat?
6. How many eggs did my parents lay?
7. What color were the eggs?
8. How many eggs hatched?
9. What did I call the people who took care of me?
10. What kind of box did kind Mrs. Human put me in after she took me out of the bluebird house?
11. How did I look when my kind Mrs. Human first took me out of my nest?
12. Did my kind Mrs. Human think I was ugly?
13. What was the first food she fed me?
14. What was the next food she fed me?
15. She then used her blender to make my next food. What did she do?
16. What did she use to feed me?
17. When I outgrew my shoe box home, what did she do?
18. What did they use to make me a cage?
19. What is hardware cloth?

20. How did she make the cage comfortable for me?
21. Did she think she could just keep me for a pet?
22. What did she tell her neighbors she needed to feed me?
23. Why did she worry about letting me go?
24. Who teaches little birds how to get their food?
25. How many times did they turn me loose?
26. How many times did I come back to them?
27. Where did they take me so I could learn how to get my own food and take care of myself?
28. Do you think I was the bird who brought a bug and sat on the fence post, playing with it before I ate it, and then flew out across the pasture just like "Blue Boy" did to the trees about a football field away?

ANSWERS

1. (Answer: A bluebird)
2. (Answer: "Blue Boy")
3. (Answer: Round)
4. (Answer: Pine straw)
5. (Answer: Live bugs)
6. (Answer: Four)
7. (Answer: Blue)
8. (Answer: One)
9. (Answer: "My kind humans")
10. (Answer: A show box)
11. (Answer: I had no feathers and long legs
that would not hold me up.)
12. (Answer: No! She thought I was beautiful.)
13. (Answer: A spider)
14. (Answer: Tiny pieces of New York strip steak.)
15. (Answer: She made meal out of puppy chow
and added lots of water and some oil.)
16. (Answer: A dropper)
17. (Answer: Told kind Mr. Human I had to
have a cage.)
18. (Answer: Hardware cloth)
19. (Answer: Very heavy screen wire)

20. (Answer: She put fresh pine straw in the bottom, white paper napkins over that, and two perches at different levels.)
21. (Answer: No!)
22. (Answer: Crickets)
23. (Answer: Because she knew I did not know how to get food for myself.)
24. (Answer: Their parents)
25. (Answer: Three)
26. (Answer: Three)
27. (Answer: To the Carolina Wildlife Refuge)
28. (Answer: ? My kind Mrs. Human does!)

Blue Boy

A True Bluebird Story

L.T. Loner

What would you do if you were a baby bluebird, left all alone in a nest? How would you feed yourself and stay warm? Who would take care of you? If you're lucky, you'd be like Blue Boy. After Blue Boy's parents disappear, kind Mrs. Human feeds and cares for him until he is big enough to go out on his own. In this heartwarming story told from the bird's point of view, the reader can learn how to take care of a baby bird. Mrs. Human's actions may even inspire the reader to learn more about wild birds and bird care.

About the Author

L. T. Loner experienced her story firsthand when she had to nurse a bluebird in her own yard, a task she called "amazing" and "sweet." Though she released Blue Boy to the wild, Mrs. Loner still raises mealworms to feed the bluebirds that visit her yard in Blythewood, South Carolina, where she has lived all her life. Mrs. Loner is married and has three children, four grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Cover Design by Nicole Ray

ISBN: 978-1-4349-0072-2 • \$10.00



DORRANCE PUBLISHING CO., INC.
701 SMITHFIELD STREET • PITTSBURGH, PA 15222