

Jacqueline Cordes

### Suvi

In early elementary school my best friend was a girl named Suvi. She had pale brown hair that was usually unbrushed, and always only wore cool-colored clothing: a headband, t-shirt, and shorts covered with a simple ruffled skirt on the outside. Her shoes were too big, so she swapped the feet so that they would fit better. She had very crooked teeth, and would always come skipping in the morning, sometimes saying in a high voice, “Helloooooo!” She often held her ears whenever there was a loud noise, and I figured that she was protecting her hearing, so I often did it too. During lunch, she’d sit on the grass and search for four-leafed clovers. For months, I never understood how she was able to find a four-leafed clover practically every day, and also didn’t understand why she would never let me hold it once she found one. Finally, after I figured out that she could be just holding a three-leafed clover next to one with a single leaf, she was surprised that I began to “find” four-leafed clovers too.

Suvi was never predictable. One time, at a McDonald’s, she held her food up to her nose to breathe in the scent for an incredibly long time. She wouldn’t become self-conscious if anyone laughed, she would just happily enjoy the moment. Another time when we were at a fair together, I found that there was dirt on my forehead, and she said, “You’re like me!”

Suvi loved nature, and after school she’d show me how to make fairy pools (filling up oak leaves with water and leaving them in moss-covered areas that looked as if they could be tiny meadows). She’d tell me how she believed that fairies were actually real, and that they would appreciate the pools and any small bits of food we left for them. She also liked insects like I did, and I ended up letting her keep some of my stickbugs. She had a family of five (people not

stickbugs), and several pets, including a cat, a dog, three chickens, a snake, and countless spiders that she claimed lived in the corners of her house. She shared my love for conlanging (creating fake languages) and learned some basic words in Enilekaj, a language that I'd made. I tried to also learn some of the language that she'd created, but it was pretty difficult, since her language relied on communicating silently by subtle microexpressions. Her mom once told me how she was getting sick of all of Suvi's made up languages; when they were in a drive-through, Suvi's mom asked her if she wanted a burger or a taco. Suvi responded with a solid thirty seconds of quiet high pitched sounds "Mnm nm nm nm nm nm." Suvi and I would also often diagnose diseases in acorns by opening them up and examining whether they had black stuff in between the shell and the core. We also enjoyed playing squirrels and pretending to run away from humans. Later, however, she came to school less and less, and soon not at all. Her mother explained to my family that she had a rare condition that made her brain receive sound as pain, and that she really needed to be in quiet areas. At some point, her mom moved with her to Oregon so that she wouldn't have the noise of the town, while the rest of her family remains here. In my mind, she's like a silent mythical creature who's gone to the forest to live with the fairies.