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Gabe Hudson

EVERYTHING I SAID WAS A PUNCH LINE

I can't lie, it wasn't easy growing up when everything you said was a punch line. I could say something like, "That's not funny!" and people would just die laughing. I tried every cure I could think of, I even tried wearing a fake beard for a while, this was in the fourth grade, but nothing worked. One time I got so upset I threw myself in the dirty clothes hamper. My dad used to make me come with him to Yankee Stadium and watch the little round bird play connect the dots. I always knew that if I was in a plane crash, I'd just climb out on a wing and jump straight up in the air right before the plane hit the ground. That way I'd be able to land on my feet.

I used to get lost a lot. I was what you called "easily distracted." I'd see a squirrel running around, and in my mind I would become the squirrel. I'd see a cat turd in the dirt and I would become the cat turd. I can't tell you how many times my parents sent me out to check the mail and I didn't come back. Of course they always knew where to pick me up: they'd pile in the car and head straight to the pound. Though one time they wanted to teach me a lesson so they left me in there overnight.

This business of getting lost really started to disrupt our household, so my parents finally gave me a collar. The collar fit around my wrist and it had a clock on it. The day they gave it to me they made a big fuss about it, they even put a fancy tree up in the living room for me to pee on. My dad gets this big grin on his face and pulls a package out of his pocket and hands it to me. While I'm opening it he says, "This used to be my dad's. Take good care of it and it will last you a lifetime." So I had to pretend that I was excited when I saw it, even though I wasn't. I mean, I knew what was going on, nothing had changed, not really.

Now whenever my parents wanted to know the time, they'd just hold up a milkbone.