

# ❁❁ The Boy from Bolinas ❁❁

a story by

Sharon Wheeler

In the summer of 1972 I was living with Hector Presteria and his two kids in a house four miles up a dirt road on the mountain above Esalen. We became close friends with a family from Bolinas, California. They lived in a small house near the ocean that somehow fit them and all six children and the astonishing ensuing chaos.

They were fine friends, brilliant and singular. We shared many of our interests with them in those years. We had more fun playing with George Simon and his partner Christine O'Reilly and their Community for Conscious Evolution. We met about every two weeks -sometimes in Pacifica at George's and sometimes in Half Moon Bay near Chris.

They were our house guests in Big Sur. We were on staff at Esalen and could extend it's hospitality to them of endless baths, great food, and always something new and interesting happening. We especially introduced them to Structural Integration. After I had finished working on the mom of the family, she said to me that she had just the one for me to start on out of her six kids; her youngest- the four year old- who had a "gimpy" left leg she wanted some help with.

The boy's leg trouble had started with an accident he had when he was two and a half years old. A big pack of his older siblings and their neighborhood friends were running and riding bicycles through the hummocky grass that grows on the California coast near the ocean. He was too little to ride a bicycle, so he was running along with them. One of the children on a bike hit a grassy hummock with the front bike tire, and the bike swerved sideways and then the rider of the bike hauled the handlebars back up to save his balance. As he did so, the bike's tire climbed up this little one's left leg. When the tire got about half way up his lower leg, both of the lower leg bones, the fibula and the tibia, broke inwards, towards the mid-line.

At the doctor's office, the little boy was screaming, crying, and scared. Mom told me she thought the doctor was in a big hurry to get them out the door because she did not control her son and make him stop crying. The doctor put a cast on without straightening the bones out and sent the boy and his mom home. When the cast came off 6 weeks later, the leg had healed about 35 degrees off true. Noticing this very crooked leg, she asked the doctor what to do about it... and he offered to re-break it for her so it could heal again straighter. Her reply his offer was "Over my dead body."

Two years after the original break, this four and a half year boy had a crooked left leg about 35 degrees off true. When he ran, it looped around looking a little bit like a flipper. When I saw it I said to his mom that I would be a tissue worker and that was a bone problem and that I did not think I would be able to help.

She said to me "You'll think of something." I answered her with a sarcastic "Yeah. Right. Sure I'll think of something. I don't think so! However, it won't hurt to give him ten sessions."

In order to work with him, I had mother and son form a communication relay team. If I was bothering him too much, he could tell his mom and she would tell me, and I could adjust my pressure. I had mom lay down on the table with him to stay close and be available for him for comfort and companionship, as well as the occasional shameless bribe of a cookie, water or juice or maybe even a story.

We worked along pretty well in this fashion, doing all right with the first three sessions of the ten series... and then it arrived: the fourth session in which I was to create a mid-line on the inside line of his legs. I was going to have to go right through the area of the break. I worried about getting him through his fourth session from the moment I first saw his crooked leg. I had visions of him screaming, and his mom protecting him - by tackling me to the ground swooping him up and leaving, never to talk to me again. One good thing about that fourth session: it arrives reasonably quickly.

One general strategy of Dr. Rolf's was to start the session's work as far away as possible from the worst trouble to be addressed in that session. She thought that taking strain out of the better side would create some length or slack and help the work on the second side. It may also help the discomfort level of the recipient for the second side and the very least, the recipient will know what to expect - which eliminates some of the apprehension of

