

Toads in the Pool

In Puerto Rico, in Guayama, I visited with my grandmother, Nona, but I was a little bit afraid of her pool. She had a pool, a special raised pool about as high as my fifth-grade desk. My grandfather had built it from wood for Nona a long time ago before he died. He built it so that he could get water easily for the plants in the garden. The rain filled the pool so it was usually full of clear water that reflected green grass.

All the days and nights the toads got into the pool, croaked and ate mosquitoes.

DAUGHTER. SAXOPHONIST. READER. AUTOBIOGRAPHER.*

My Nona fed them snails from her garden, too. The toads liked to hide in the grass of the pool and to swim in the funny-smelling water.

One day we saw that the pool was filled with toad eggs. My grandmother was really happy because she had so many toads in her pool. She loved all kinds of animals, especially crocodiles, iguanas and toads, and I learned to love animals, too.

All her toads grew and grew for two long years. There were hundreds of big and little toads growing and hopping in that piscinita, that little old pool. The old little pool structure couldn't bear all those toads and I saw it break. My Nona was in front of me and she said, "Oh, my beautiful piscinita!" The toads hopped crazily everywhere in the muddy grass. I screamed, "Yay!" I tried to catch them, but I couldn't get any of them. I was only five.

My grandmother was so sad about the toads hopping away, but she was happy that they had been born and that they had the chance to grow up in her pool.

– Nidy Rivera

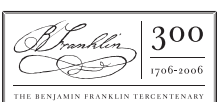


* THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
PROJECT

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The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin is the most widely published autobiography of all time. In honor of Franklin's 300th birthday, the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary and *One Book, One Philadelphia* invited today's Philadelphians to submit memoirs of their own, using no more than 300 words. At the end of the project – May 17, 2006 – a panel of judges selected twenty autobiographies to appear on bus shelters throughout the city. Visit www.theautobiographyproject.com for more information about the project, and to read more Philadelphia stories.

The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary is a non-profit organization established to mark the 300-year anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's birth. *One Book, One Philadelphia* is a project of the Mayor's Office and the Free Library of Philadelphia.



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