I had to walk with a cane. Inexplicably I lost my balance and the doctors had yet to diagnose me with my affliction, but this didn’t stop me from taking my strolls along the park. I came across two young men practicing the tightrope and it nearly brought tears to my eyes, the unfairness of it all: how some people could steady themselves on a string while others must fear falling while walking on three legs over level ground.

The next Saturday, I came across the tightrope walkers again. There were three of them this time. And I limped up close enough to marvel at the miracle of balance. They noticed me and halted their act. I noticed the pity in their eyes, a glassiness bordering on shame. So I moved along.

One week later, we met again. The group had grown and by now we all knew that our schedules coincided: me on my cane, they on their rope. But out of some sense of politeness they ceased their fun long enough to watch me pass them by.

I was determined, the next time I saw them, to let them know there was no disrespect in their hobby. That when I cried in front of them it was an appreciation of beauty, not an expression of grief for my loss. But I never had the chance. The next week I came across a note on the trees that used to hold the rope up: The funambulism club has moved! Call Darren for new location.