

Okay, maybe Blue is a little different. So what? Together, we can change the world!  
 as in Carson's when I saw Blue, and it was love at first sight! The  
 heap." My brother yelled, "Hey, the circus is in town! Can we get tickets?"  
 Anyway, there was a long line of kids waiting to get into the movie, and the girls all looked at me like, "Huh?" And Michael Workman  
 a Fall, and Blue is definitely a Winter." That did it. I mean, I like being different. I like taking chances once in a while. But  
 saleslady said, "I don't know, dear. A girl with your coloring? You're really a Fall, and Blue is definitely  
 "Your lips look blue. Are you cold? Are you sure you should go to the movies tonight?" I figured, what do they know  
 offered me a cigarette. Yuck! And then my best friend, Lisa, said, "I don't know, Jessie. With your coloring, you're really a Fall, and Blue is definitely a Winter."  
 and in the end, I guess you'd have to say I gave Blue the kiss-off.

# Blue Lipstick

CONCRETE POEMS

BY JOHN GRANDITS

Okay, maybe blue lipstick's not quite right for Jessie. And maybe her new hairstyle isn't, either. But at least she's never boring or predictable. Who else do you know who plays volleyball and cello, designs her own clothes, and writes poetry to her cat?

Jessie's definitely a girl with strong opinions, and she isn't shy about sharing them. Of course, that sometimes leads to friction—with her parents, her younger brother, her classmates, and certain English teachers who assign totally lame homework. But she's also not afraid to change her mind . . . about some things.

Jessie's funny, sarcastic take on high school life is revealed through concrete poetry: words, ideas, type, and design that combine to make pictures and patterns. The poems are inventive, irreverent, irresistible, and full of surprises—just like Jessie.

*Jacket illustration copyright © 2007  
by John Grandits*



*Title lettering by Julianna Carlson  
Back cover photo by Gary S. Groves*



**BLUE  
LIPSTICK**



# BLUE LIPSTICK



**Concrete Poems by John Grandits**

**Clarion Books • New York**

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Thanks to Joanne, Amanda and her cousin Kelsey, Signature Tracy, Mayfair Gary,  
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Jordan & Tara, Mom & James, and my personal cheerleader, Andrea.





Stupor Farms

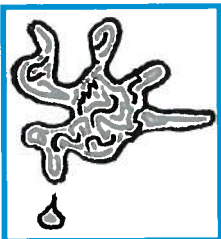
20%  
AWAKE

# MISSING

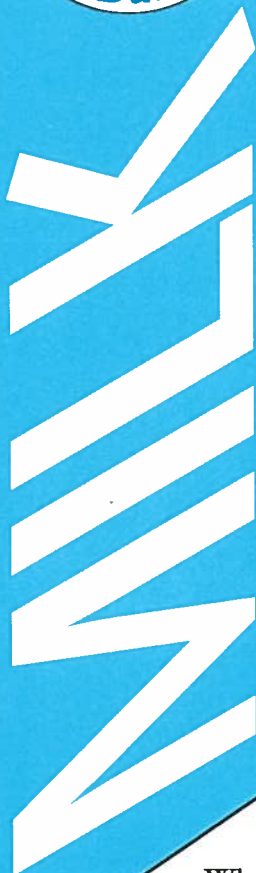
Have you seen Jessie's brain?



Recent photo



Computer  
simulation of  
what her brain  
looks like now



## LAST SEEN:

2:45 this morning.

## LAST KNOWN ACTIVITY:

Staying up all night  
instant-messaging Lisa.

If you find this missing brain,  
contact Jessie immediately!

Jessie,  
wake up!  
Eat your cereal.  
What's wrong with you?  
You look totally out of it.  
Didn't you sleep well last night?

# BAD HAIR DAY

Lisa had this cool idea to do my hair a totally extreme go for it."

So after school we and bought some that was even on sale with the bleach, which grandmother. Then something It was a disaster! have that glistening School? I couldn't I'm cured!" once and some "This is a hug, my room to cry some more.

Went to the drugstore hair bleach and some blue dye First, we stripped out my natural color like I'd turned into my and pale, and the other side was blue.

"I'm sooooo sorry," she said. "Do you want to borrow some scissors to cut it?"

I sent her home.

and telling my head about shaving seriously thinking what's wrong?" and I started crying and I couldn't stop. But finally makes the big, BIG said, "Jessica, every woman once in her life, said, "Tomorrow when you go to school, just hold your hair back. When Mom came home, she said, "Honey, ruined! I was humiliated. My life was going anymore. Lisa started crying, "Wait till it dries." But that didn't help at all. My hair just felt crispy instead of soft, and it didn't even

"It's a miracle everyone I had cancer and saying

Only I didn't I actually felt a little better Mom called me a wor

# The Wall

## MY SIDE

Life is simpler if  
you have a wall.  
It keeps away  
people who drag  
you down, like  
this girl I knew  
in seventh grade.  
Agnes. We were  
sort of friendly.  
I told her I liked  
her tank top.  
She insisted,  
she *insisted* that I  
borrow it. It sort of  
got ruined.  
An accident.  
She insisted,  
she *insisted* that I  
pay her for it.  
I paid her for it.  
Then she forgot  
I'd paid her for it.  
She conveniently  
forgot I'd paid!  
My mother said,  
"It's not worth  
the grief" and went  
over to Agnes's  
house and paid  
her mother—even  
though I'd already  
paid Agnes.  
And that was that.  
You've got to be  
careful who you  
make friends with.  
So now I've got  
this wall . . .

## THE OTHER SIDE

Fast-food chains  
that cook their  
french fries in  
animal fat

Smokers  
(of anything)!

Rich girls who  
spend more on  
one pair of shoes  
than I spend on  
clothes in a year

Talentless  
12-year-olds  
pop stars

Meat  
eaters

Kids who cut  
the cafeteria  
line

Mr. Holt,  
my English  
teacher

People  
with  
totally  
boring  
karma

Cheerleaders

Robert  
(the other half  
of the time)

The school  
bus driver  
(yuck!)

Old  
Years  
three  
If you're  
as  
who talk  
Grown-ups

Guy  
jocks  
Everybody  
on the  
school bus,  
near the  
school bus,  
or even  
wearing  
that shade  
of yellow

Lisa—only  
my best  
friend in the  
universe

Mom  
and  
Dad

My little  
cousin  
Natalie

Goert  
(half of the  
time)

My cat,  
Boo-Boo  
Kitty

\* \* \*  
\* B U R P \*  
\* \* \*

Robert! Say "Excuse me."

What?

Say "Excuse me." When  
you burp, you're supposed  
to say "Excuse me."

Why?

*Because that's what you do.*

*Right. Like you always do everything  
you're supposed to do.*

*You always pick up your room.*

*You always come home  
on time for dinner.*

*You always tell Mom and Dad*

*exactly where you're going*

*and who you're going to be with.*

*Yeah, yeah, yeah. Whatever.*

*But I always say "Excuse me"*

*because it's good manners.*

Talking  
to My  
Stupid  
Younger  
Brother

Ahhh  
—ch—o—o—o—o—o—  
—ch—o—o—o—o—o—

Excuse me.

You don't have to say "Excuse me".  
after you sneeze.

Really? Why not?  
Because when you sneeze,  
I'm supposed to say  
"God bless you."

So you ask God to bless me?  
That's a real laugh!  
God must put that in the  
funny pages of the  
Daily Heaven News.

Shut up.

You shut up.

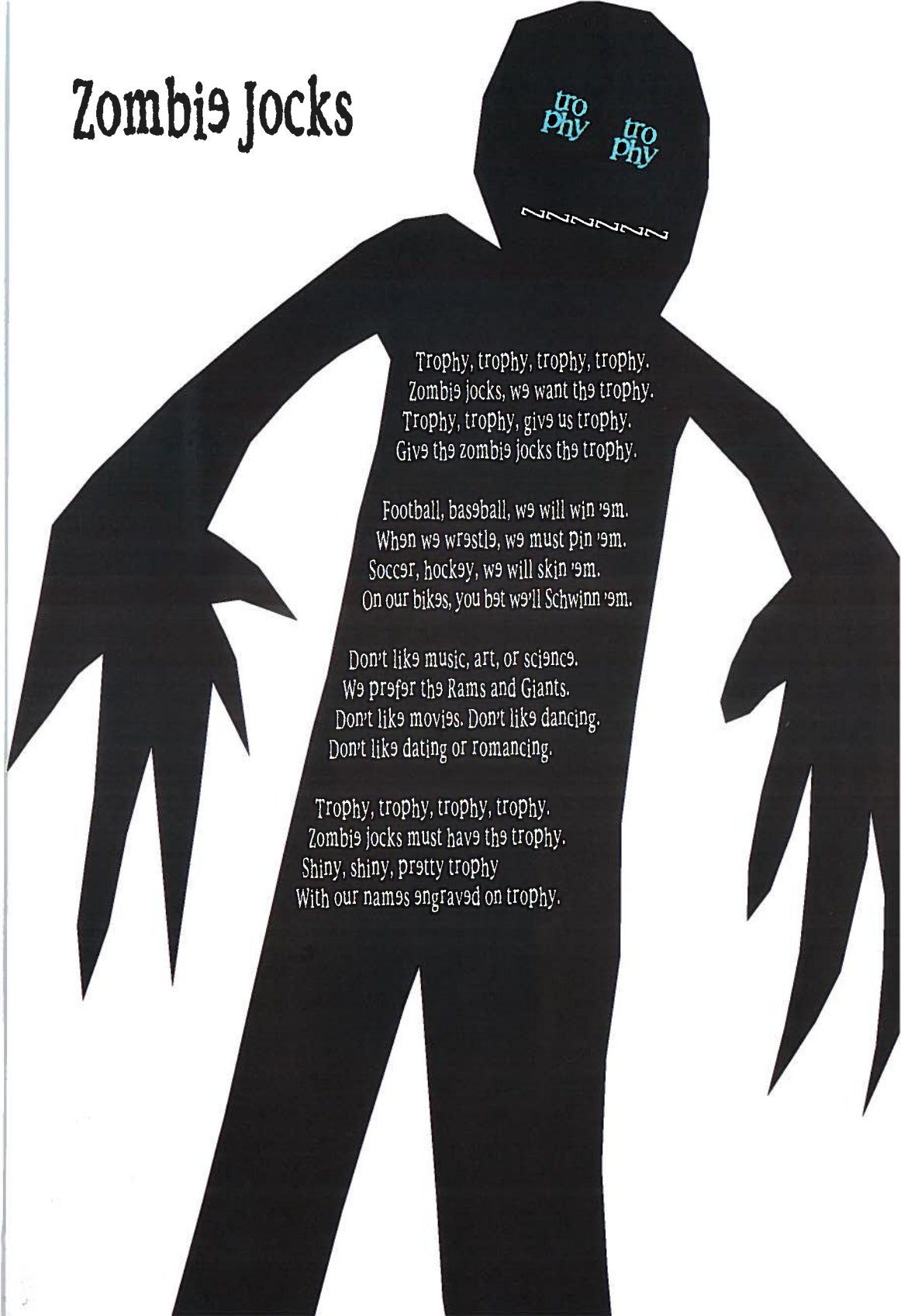
No, you shut up.

No, you shut up.

You shut up.

Like  
vimming  
stream in  
River to  
owhere

# Zombie Jocks



Trophy, trophy, trophy, trophy.  
Zombie jocks, we want the trophy.  
Trophy, trophy, give us trophy.  
Give the zombie jocks the trophy.

Football, baseball, we will win 'em.  
When we wrestle, we must pin 'em.  
Soccer, hockey, we will skin 'em.  
On our bikes, you bet we'll Schwinn 'em.

Don't like music, art, or science.  
We prefer the Rams and Giants.  
Don't like movies. Don't like dancing.  
Don't like dating or romancing.

Trophy, trophy, trophy, trophy.  
Zombie jocks must have the trophy.  
Shiny, shiny, pretty trophy  
With our names engraved on trophy.



## PEP RALLY

Why do they force us to come to these stupid pep rallies?

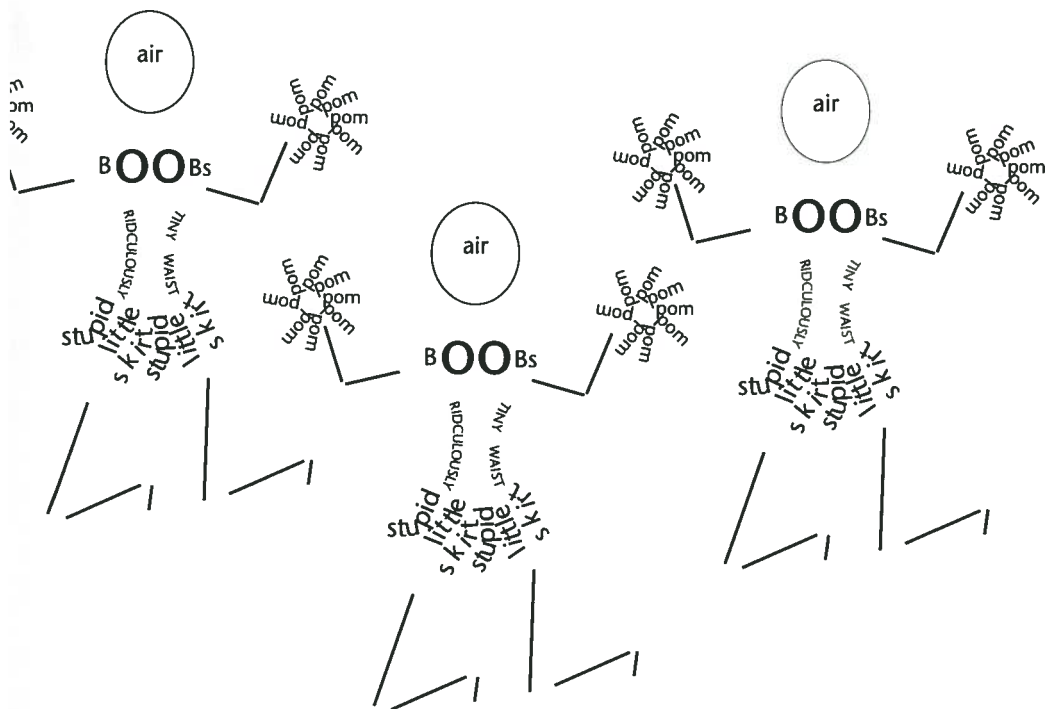
I don't want to be here.

I'm not feeling peppy, and the pep rally isn't helping.

These things are only set up so that the cheerleaders can show off, and all the boys can drool over them—especially Andrea Herkimer.

I don't actually hate Andrea, since we've never spoken.

But if we ever *did* speak, I would hate her.



# MONDRIAN

Dad and I went to the Art Instit





black and yellow and blue and red. I mean, he didn't mix his

He did these paintings with just boxes and lines, and he only used

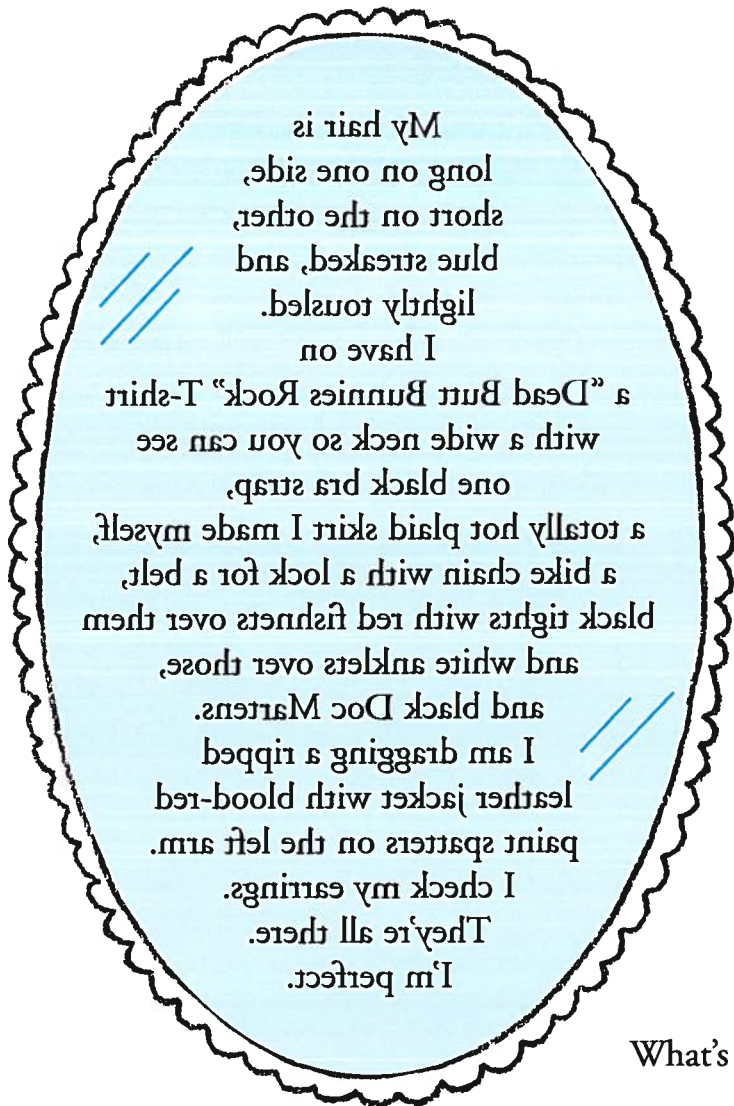
re was a show of work by Mondrian, and the guy totally rocks!

make ultra-cool radical art.” Dad said, “It’s not easy to be creative.” And I thought to myself, “You wouldn’t believe how creative I have to be just to get through the day.” He said, “It’s tough being an artist. You’ve got to struggle for years. People often misunderstand your work. You’ve got to be thick-skinned because critics can be cruel. You don’t have any money. And in many ways you’re really alone.” And I said, “It sounds like high school.”

# Go look in the mirror!

Dad says, "You may not leave the house like that!"  
and "Don't you care about your appearance at all?"  
and "Just look at yourself, young lady."  
He throws his hands in the air like he's seeking divine intervention.

I roll my eyes,  
but I go over to the mirror.



What's *his* problem

ent to Sylvia's Psychic Shack yesterday to get this new kind of tarot deck that has  
tures of dead rock stars instead of the regular pictures. But Sylvia said she didn't  
y those cards, because they might give off bad vibrations. What ever. So I was looking  
nd, and Sylvia was talking to another customer, and the woman said, "No, I wasn't  
t Atlantis itself, I was from one of the small islands off Atlantis." And even though I  
n't part of the conversation, I said, "You mean, like, in a past life you lived in Atlantis?"  
said, "Yeah." And I said, "And you didn't even live in town, you lived in some wanky  
urb?" And she said, "Well, the schools were better." And I said, "What kind of SUVs  
they drive in this suburb of Atlantis?" She acted all put out, and Sylvia gave me an  
l look, but I didn't care. It just proved to me that no matter how many times they're  
carnated, some people drag their totally boring karma around with them forever.

**SUBURB** OF

**ATLANTIS**

Ridiculously  
Happy

Very Cheerful

Quietly  
Content

Sort of Smiling

Could Be Better

Just Okay

Could Be Worse

Worse

Ticked Off

I Hate Everyone

Shaving My  
Head and  
Running Away

## A CHART OF MY EMOTIONAL DAY

Woke up feeling pretty good.  
Realized it was Saturday, I

had a cello lesson, and I hadn't practiced.

Lugged cello to the car and saw my neighbor

Katrin. Swapped gossip.

Cello  
Lesson even worse than I expected.

Bummed.

Went over to Elton Simpson's house to see

if he was outside shooting hoops. He was,  
but Lisa was there, too.

They were talking and joking and laughing together. To



med.

Walked home with Lisa. She said Elton kept asking about my bedroom door shut. Stomped off to tell Dad.

Robert managed to superglue his hand to my bedroom

door. He was totally defenseless. Hah!

Found note from Mom: "No snacks this afternoon. Making tuna surprise tonight!"

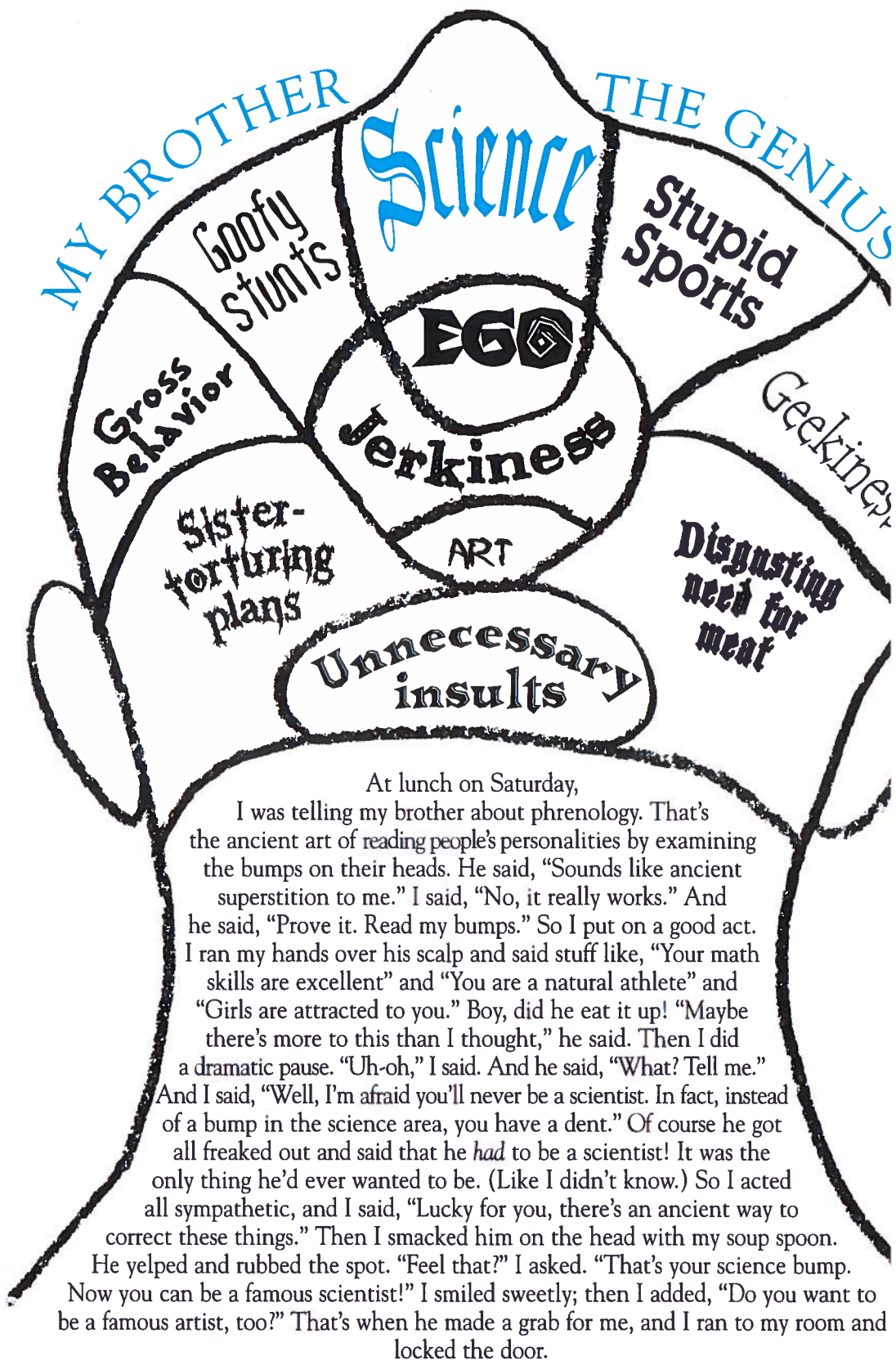
Mom changed menu. Ordered broccoli pizza instead.

Robert forced to eat his slice standing and glued to my door.

Homework. Had to come up with a stupid chart for math

class.  
Called

Lisa. Bed.



At lunch on Saturday, I was telling my brother about phrenology. That's the ancient art of reading people's personalities by examining the bumps on their heads. He said, "Sounds like ancient superstition to me." I said, "No, it really works." And he said, "Prove it. Read my bumps." So I put on a good act. I ran my hands over his scalp and said stuff like, "Your math skills are excellent" and "You are a natural athlete" and "Girls are attracted to you." Boy, did he eat it up! "Maybe there's more to this than I thought," he said. Then I did a dramatic pause. "Uh-oh," I said. And he said, "What? Tell me." And I said, "Well, I'm afraid you'll never be a scientist. In fact, instead of a bump in the science area, you have a dent." Of course he got all freaked out and said that he *had* to be a scientist! It was the only thing he'd ever wanted to be. (Like I didn't know.) So I acted all sympathetic, and I said, "Lucky for you, there's an ancient way to correct these things." Then I smacked him on the head with my soup spoon. He yelped and rubbed the spot. "Feel that?" I asked. "That's your science bump. Now you can be a famous scientist!" I smiled sweetly; then I added, "Do you want to be a famous artist, too?" That's when he made a grab for me, and I ran to my room and locked the door.

# All My Important Thinking Gets Done in the Shower



The next time Mom and Dad go out, I could trick Robert into going down to the basement, figure out some way to block the door, and leave him there. If I took down all the posters on my wall, I could paint a huge mural of the Seven Earth Goddesses. That would be awesome. College! College! College! . . . Enough about college. I wonder if there's an art school that teaches you how to do tattooing and piercing. I hate zoos. I wouldn't want to be stuck in a cage. But petting zoos are a lot of fun. I should start a petting zoo for vegetables. Maybe I could get a job this summer. Then if I saved enough money and got my learner's permit, I could buy a motor scooter. Football is so stupid. I bet it would be a lot less violent if the players wore tutus and ballet shoes. Mom's tossing the laundry-room curtains because Robert got bleach on them. They would make a totally cool skirt.

# Purr Verse

Boo Boo Kitty is layin' down a meadow track.  
Cat poetry! It's fine.  
Even the sweetest rapper can't come close  
to the smoothest sound  
or the Boo Boo Kitty sound.  
It's more laid back than any human could ever be.  
She just sits on my lap, the Buddha of poetry, and  
purrp, purrrp, purrrp.  
Don't need speakers. Don't need earphones.  
All I gotta do is make my lap  
available for the concert.



I don't think I'm in love with Elton Simpson,  
but . . . well . . . you know. I definitely like him.  
The thing is, I don't have much to say to him.  
I mean, what do guys talk about, anyway?  
What am I going to say—"How about that Bears game last night?"  
Not likely.

But here's the deal: Elton got into Advanced English.  
I didn't.

His teacher, Mr. Fox, posted the class's required reading list.  
So I'm thinking, I'll read all the books, too!  
That way, when I see Elton, we can talk about them,  
and we'll have this soul-revealing intellectual connection.

It took me, like, a million years to read all the books,  
'cause I also had a list to get through for my English class.  
But I made little notes so I could remember stuff.  
Then I sort of casually bumped into Elton at school.

Me: "I've been thinking. Wasn't it funny in *Tom Sawyer*  
when Tom and Huck and Joe went to their own funeral?  
And everybody who hated them before was so sad?  
I'd love to go to my own funeral  
and see what people said about me! Wouldn't you?"

Elton: "Huh?"  
Me: "You know, the funeral in *Tom Sawyer*."  
Elton: Blank expression.

Me: "One of the books you have to read for Advanced English."  
Elton: "Oh, I didn't bother reading those.  
I just sort of checked them out on the Internet."  
I don't have a boyfriend.

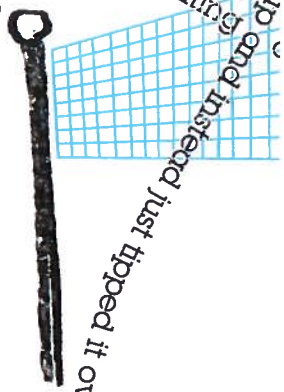
I've read more books than all the kids in the Advanced English class  
I couldn't get into.

# VOLLEYBALL PRACTICE

# WHEELER

## PRACTICE

It was tied 20-20, and they had the serve. Mary overhanded a high, looping ball way, way over them a spike. But they were waiting for it. Rose Marie O'Grady look it underhand with two fists. It was a beautiful pass. It floated gently into the air to Cassandra, who set it up right in front of the net. K.C. was waiting up and instead just tipped it over the net.

A simple line drawing of a netball net, showing the rectangular frame and the mesh. A netball is shown in mid-air, just above the net, as if it has just been tipped over it. The net is positioned on the right side of the page, and the ball is to its left.

in front of the net.

K.C. was waiting up and instead just tipped it over the net.

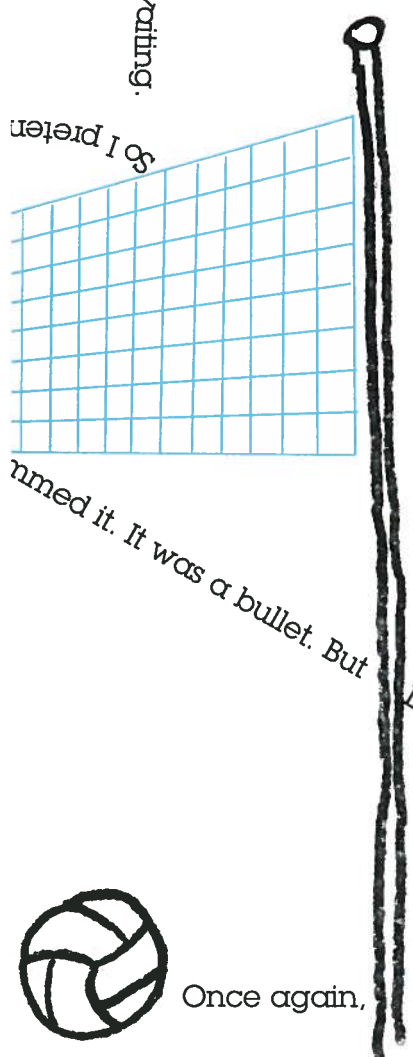
*Yesssssssssssssssssss*

ie net and deep into our backcourt. A defensive serve. Not a tough serve to return. It just depended on what we did with it.

Patty got it and put it up a nice little set to LaShondra.

LaShondra sort of freckled and sent a long ball back over the net. They were waiting.

So I pretended it was a bullet. But LaShondra redeemed herself and put up a beautiful set.



Once again, brains win out over brawn.

*Style?  
Yeah, I'd  
love to have my  
own signature  
style. Not  
something preppy  
or conventional.  
Something  
interesting that  
says M.E.*

*But do you know what style costs? It's unbelievable. I was in this trendy boutique yesterday called Funk: Poofy rainbow skirt, \$150. Tank top, \$85. Color-washed jeans, \$139. Cropped jean jacket, \$268! Embroidered "Rock Star" T-shirt, \$130. Studded dog-collar necklace, \$60.*

*Who can afford this kind of stuff? I'm a kid. I'm not a hip-hop star. So I make some of my own clothes and shop for what's cheap and unusual and hope that it makes me look interesting. But I have the feeling that when guys see me, they're not thinking "style," they're thinking "weird."*

*The kind  
of style that  
would make a guy  
look at me and  
think, "Hey,  
that's a girl I'd  
like to hang out  
with." Sort of post-  
punk urban too-  
cool-to-go-to-the-  
mall style.*

# The H-U-P Song

I babysit for my little cousin Natalie all the time.  
She's great! But her mom, my Aunt Sophie, is kind of a pain.

Natalie has to be in the best preschool.

Natalie has to have the latest toys and the fanciest clothes.

Natalie can't watch TV because she might hear the word "stupid."

But that's not Natalie's fault. She's great.

So last week I was babysitting Natalie, and we were singing songs.

I said, "Let's sing the ABC song. Do you know your letters?"

And she said, "Well, I know them, but I only know them mixed up."

So we made up a song of our own.



You can imagine how proud Aunt Sophie was.

# Grownups Talking:

A+

What grade are you in now? I remember when you were only this high. Now you're so tall. Do you have a boyfriend? That skirt is just darling. Do you make your own clothes? You're going to be a beauty in a couple of years. Do you still have Home Ec in high school? You should learn to cook. A model? Looks don't matter.

Uh-huh. It runs in the family. I'm a freshman. I make some of them. No, not exactly. No, not really. I cook a little. What's Home Ec?

remaking—that's what made Martha Stewart rich. Are you a cheerleader? A cheerleader?

I hope not! You should be on a team. Do you play any sports?

Swimming is a good sport for girls. Yes,

I definitely think swimming is the sport for you. You can train with me

uh. No. I'm on the volleyball team. I said, I play volleyball. I like swimming, but I play on the volleyball team. Whatever.

# Grownups Listening:

D-



# Angels



Bountiful blessings Devoted attention Remarkable results  
 Unconditional love Good news  
 Glorious visions Celestial dreams Rare opportunities  
 Unexplained kindness  
 Caring gestures  
 Spiritual guidance Rapturous experiences  
 Divine intervention  
 Magical moments Mystical messages  
 Sublime happiness  
 Triumphant truth

Metaphysical mysteries Unconditional forgiveness  
 Charitable actions Friendly attitudes Good w  
 Gentle reminders Helpful advice Unusual tol  
 Surprising consideration  
 Compassionate conc  
 Tender mercy Astonishing  
 Sympathetic tho  
 Favorable reviews Amazing gr  
 Unexpected tendernes

I know  
 guardian  
 angels exist.  
 I've seen some  
 unbelievable  
 things, and that's  
 the only explanation.  
 Robert says no way. He  
 says it's either coincidence  
 or the work of aliens that  
 secretly live among us. But I  
 know I'm right, and I've got proof.  
 Like this time in phys. ed., Lisa is  
 climbing the knotted rope, and she's  
 nearly at the top, and then she loses it. So  
 she's falling, like, a mile straight down, and  
 Ms. Kaufman just happens to be standing there  
 and—get this—catches her! That's the work of a  
 smart angel. Another time, Michael Workman, the  
 dork, is showing off in the school parking lot and almost  
 gets creamed by a toilet-paper delivery truck. I swear, it  
 looks like someone pushes him out of the way at the last  
 second. But there's no one there! Now that's a stupid angel. The  
 world would be a better place with Michael Workman in a full body  
 cast for a year or two. But still, it's evidence: Guardian angels really exist.  
 There's no way that aliens live among us.  
 Unless Robert is one of them.



# The Bowling Party

I'd never bowled before, but how tough could it be? Well . . . I had 15 gutter balls. Hard to believe, yet true.

The volleyball team went bowling. I did that three times.

My most successful shot turned out to be one that started off going straight but then faded left and knocked over only the 7 pin. I did that three times.

One frame I just pushed the ball down the alley. It was looking good, but it was moving so-o-o-o slowly, it knocked over only the 1 pin and then rolled into the gutter.

Another time I stumbled, the ball bounced over the gutter, and I got a strike in the **WRONG** lane! The automatic scoreboard gave the other team the points.

My total score was 4.  
The next lowest score was 40!  
I was mortified.  
But then LaShondra said,  
"You'll do better next game,"  
and the other team bought me a Coke,  
and I just had to laugh.  
Maybe if I work at it,  
I can bring my average up to 7.

7:00  
Bed

7:40

8:20  
School bus

9:00  
Homeroom

9:40  
Math

10:20  
Biology

11:00  
English

11:40

12:20  
Lunch

1:00  
Phys. ed.

1:40  
Study  
hall

2:20  
Spanish

Absolutely not! I will not get up. You can't make me.

Breakfast?

Mr. Kruntz is, without a doubt,

the

Creepiest bus driver we've ever had.

Deranged.

to

Expect an astronaut without knowing algebra.

to

Expect about mitosis, I'll scream.

to

Give me a break! That's a sixth-grade book.

to

Hall. Get out of my way.

to

Lunch stinks!

to

Jumping jacks? All I did was complain a little.

to

All the kids I know are boring, boring, boring.

to

Mi vaca se llama Grisilda. This is useful.

MY

If I have to listen to one more

ABSOLUTELY

BAD

We have to read Old Yeller?

CRANKY

DAY

Dumb assignment. Every single poster is rotten.

every sucks are a lousy after-school

every sucks are a lousy after-school

... brother. Could you

Excuse me, stupid younger brother. Could you not stop your scratching post.

BooBoo, get down. I am  
eat only vegetab

\* least get an hour

**Why me?** I've had a horrible day. I should be dead.

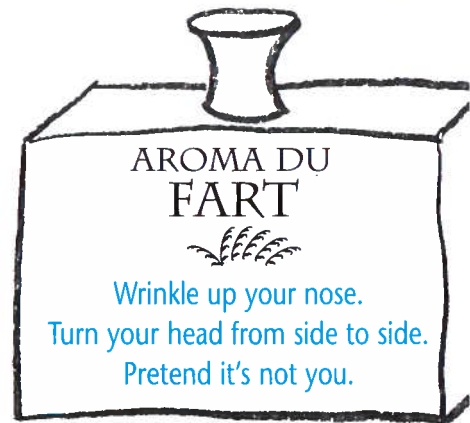
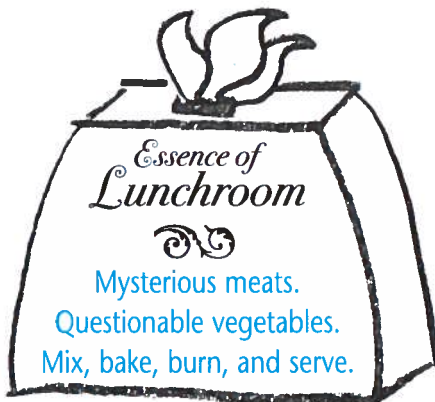
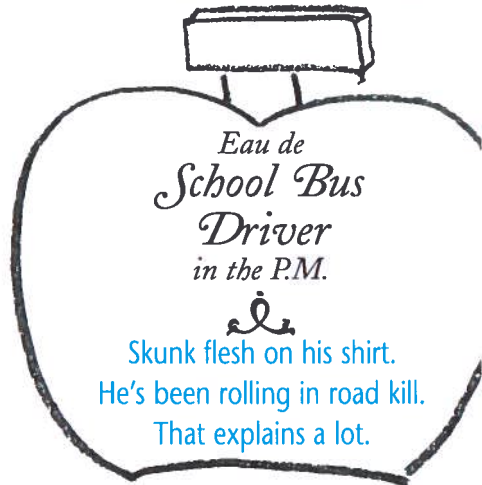
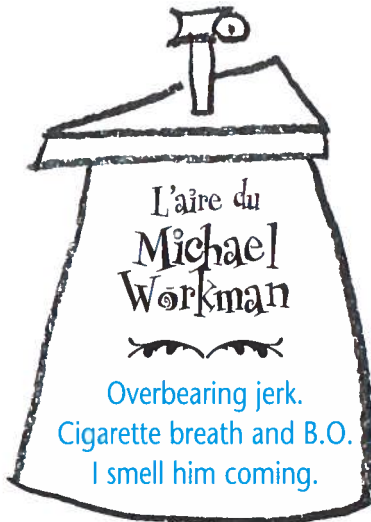
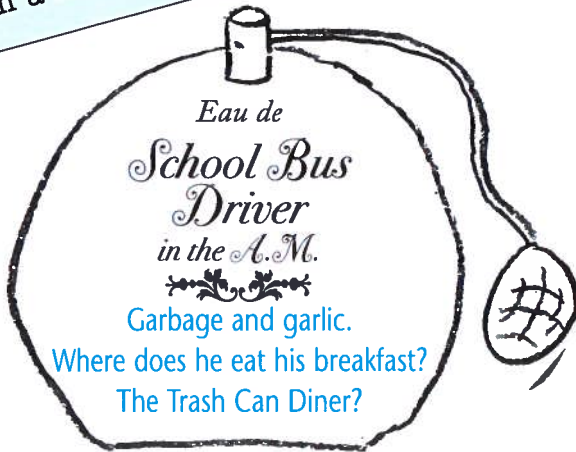
It's NOT an

... "be a nicer person tomorrow after!"

er / get some

*Totally Lame*  
 English Assignment #19:  
 Create a series of four  
 to six haiku centered  
 on a single theme.

# Poems Inspired by the Fr Perfume Samples at Carso



# Girls

## We have the solution!

Feeling low?

Unattractive?

Unsure of yourself?

Unable to compete?

For as little as \$5 a week, we'll make you feel good about yourself, and other people will think you're terrific, too!

Here's how it works:

Twice a day, one of us will come up to you and compliment you. Picture yourself in the hall with your friends, and Jessie walks up and says, "Wow, your hair looks great. Did you do something new with it?"

Or imagine yourself on the bus, and Lisa hands you some papers and says, "Thanks for loaning me your history homework. You are soooo smart!"

**Prices:** \$5 for any one category, \$2 for each additional category. Just choose from the following:

- ☐ Clothing ("Great skirt. I wish I could find stuff that cool.")
- ☐ Hair ("Your new haircut is soooo cute. Where did you get it done?")
- ☐ General beauty ("Do you have to look good every day? Give the rest of us a break!")
- ☐ Sports ("Awesome serve. You should really be team captain.")
- ☐ Intelligence (check two)
  - ☐ Science ("You're going to be the next Einstein, except without the big hair.")
  - ☐ Math ("I can't believe you wrote was soooo sad, I cried.")
- ☐ Creative writing ("That poem you wrote was soooo sad, I cried.")
- ☐ Art ("You draw really well. Would you do my portrait?")

### OUR GUARANTEE\*

- No ironic tone of voice
- No sarcastic looks
- No behind-your-back denials
- ess you don't pay.

### SPECIAL

Sign up before Friday, and we'll say nice things about you in front of the boy of your choice!

contact: Jessie or Lisa at locker #154 or #177





# Allergic to Time

I got a watch for my birthday. It was silver, and it had cool numbers. I wore it for a week; then it suddenly died. The guy at the repair shop said, "Some people just give off a chemical that stops watches." After that, my alarm clock started acting weird. It refused to buzz, so Dad had to get me up for school. Then three days ago, Mom got me a pendant

w  
a  
t  
c  
h.

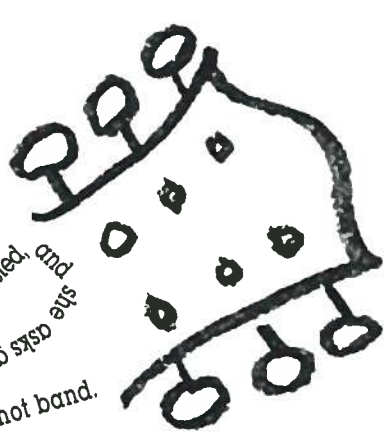
It's beautiful—with little zirconium bits to mark the hours. But yesterday I felt this strange itch, and when I went to the girls' room, I saw that I had a rash right under the pendant. I took it off (duh!) and washed the spot. So I totally missed the school bus and got a big lecture from the parents about responsibility and taking charge of my life. But then Robert said, "Jeez, give her a break. It's not like she can help it." And Dad said, "What do you mean, Robert?" in that official parent sort of voice. And Robert said, "Don't you get it? Time hates Jessie. She'll never be on time. She'll always be late. It's just the way she is. It's like she has an allergy." There was a long silence while everybody thought about this. Finally, Dad said, "Well, that's a good point, Robert. But Jessie, at least make an effort in the future." And I will. I will also try to do something nice, but not obviously nice, for my not-always-stupid younger brother.

# SILVER SPANDEX

Andrea invited me over to see her new electric guitar. She plays in an all-girl band  
your recital, and you were really good! I'm thinking, this is going to be weird, but I go anyway. We sit around and talk ab  
And she says, "I know. I saw you play about a billion rock-and-roll songs. Well, only the rhythm-guitar parts, y  
called Rainbow Unicorn—which is the stupidest name in the universe, but whatever. We're not exactly friends, so I say, "Why me? I play the cello."



I know much about classical, but she's interested, and she asks good questions. Then she shows me her t-shirt. I'm thinking about being in a hot band.



I say, "What's it like to be in a rock group?" and she says, "It's fun, except for all the arguments."

We almost killed each other trying to pick a name."



Long Skirt Problem: A girl cellist has to—wear a long skirt, or else the audience can see her underwear, and the skirt is always—looks dorky. Andrea says, "That's when it hits me: This girl is not so bad—for a cheerleading unicorn."

And I explain about the practice some more. And then you have to practice a lot, and none of your friends care about your music, and then you have to practice some more.

I tell her it's great, but you have to practice a lot, and none of your friends care about your music, and then you have to practice some more.

Then she says, "What's it like to be a classical musician?" "I tell her it's great, but you have to practice a lot, and none of your friends care about your music, and then you have to practice some more."


# The Name-Your-Rock-Band Chart

Your band will have 3,551 arguments before you break up in an explosion of jealousy and anger. Avoid the first big fight—choosing the band's name.

Pick one from each column.

Bulky	Worms	of Justice
Putrid	Onions	About Town
Funny	Coathangers	by the Dozen
Foreign	Power Tools	of Death
Quiet	Earthquakes	from Winnetka
Ridiculous	Super Models	Around the Clock
Sleek	Iguanas	in Love
Magic	Eyeballs	Between Classes
Horrible	Biplanes	Without Reason
Muscular	Seeds	Against Fur

# Tattoo and Tongue Stud

I walk into the kitchen. Robert is at the table, eating ice cream. I sit down beside him and casually push up my sleeve so he'll see it: My new tattoo. It says, "Sex, Drugs, & Rock 'n' Roll" in spiky goth letters. "What the heck is that?" he screams. I smile. This is working out just fine. "It's a tattoo," I say, all innocent-like. "What's wrong with you?" he demands. "Why are you lisping?" I stick out my tongue, and there it is: a perfect little silver stud, right in the center. Robert starts pumping his arm like he just won a million bucks. "Yessss! You are in soooo much trouble," he says. "Wait till Mom and Dad see this. Dad will kill you, and then Mom will ground you for life." I give him a big  yawn. "Who care'st?" I say. "You will, when I tell them," he says. "They're at the neighbors', and I'm going to go get them." He takes off, and I can hear him yelling, "Mom! Dad!" all the way down the street. How perfect is this? I slide off the magnetic tongue stud. I wash off the temporary tattoo. And while I wait for my parents to come rushing home, I practice saying, "I don't know what Robert is talking about. Maybe he needs counseling." This is going to be great.

# HOW I TAUGHT MY

## *Totally Lame*

English Assignment #27:  
Create a poem for  
someone you love;  
then read it out loud  
to him or her.

Give me a break! Who was I going to write an I-love-you poem to?

Mom or Dad? Boring. Robert? Puh-leese. Lisa or Elton? No way.

So I wrote a poem for BooBoo Kitty.

I put a lot into it, and I was very pleased with the way it turned out.

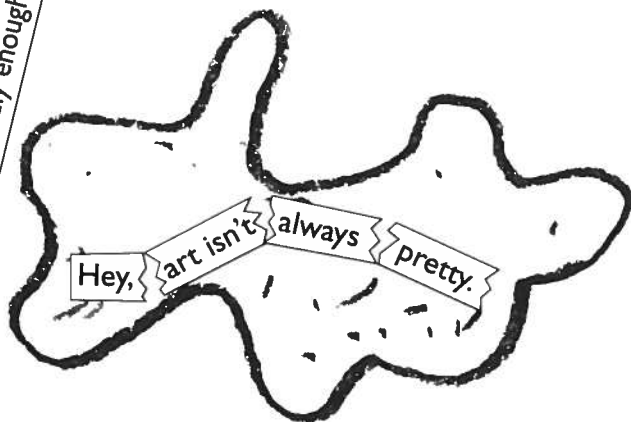
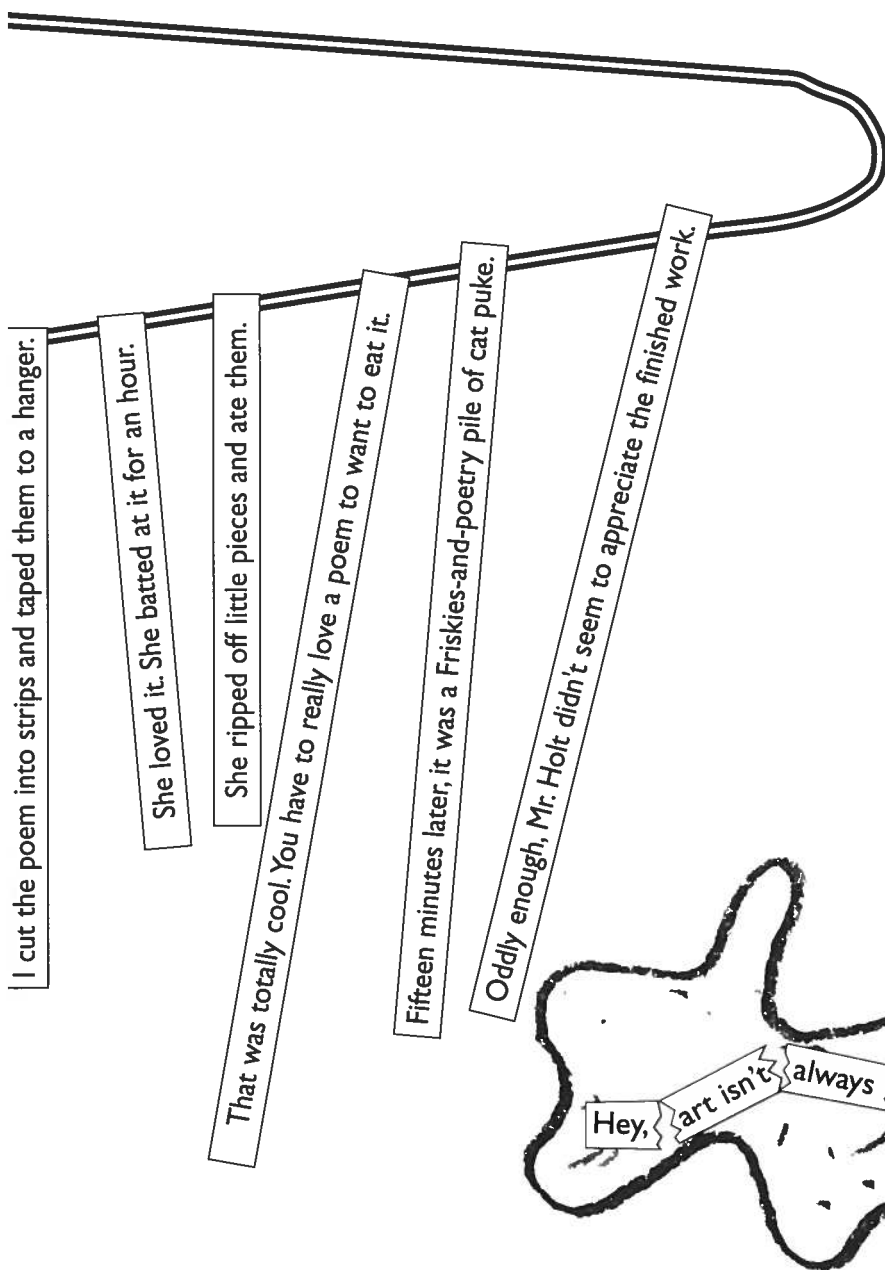
But when I read it to her, she just yawned.

That was disappointing. Nobody wants to be dissed, even by a cat.

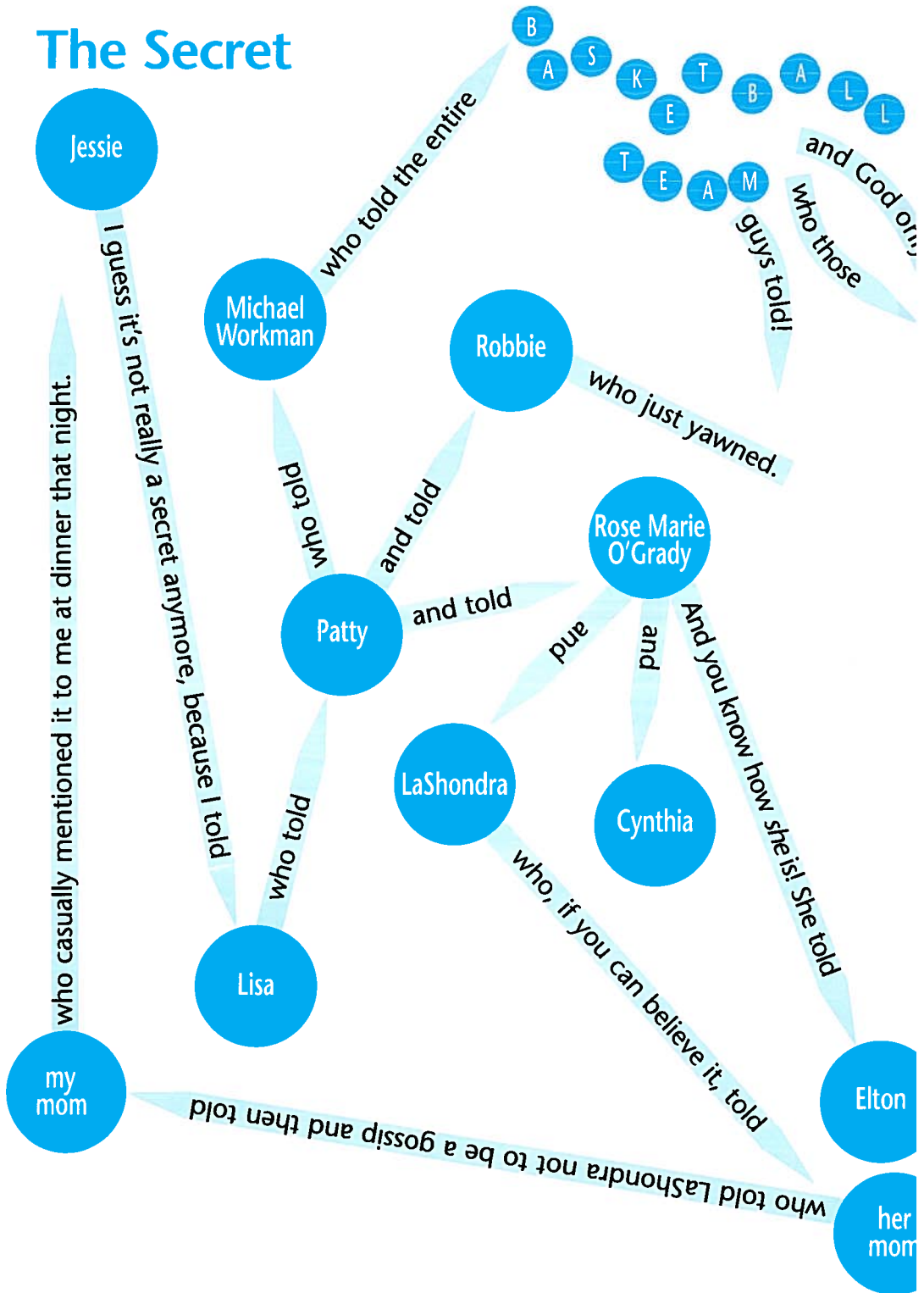
I tried again. She turned her back on me. I kept trying. She fell asleep.

I had a brilliant idea.

# AT TO LOVE POETRY



# The Secret



Now everybody knows. I just wish I could remember who told me.





# The Wall (Revisited)

MY SIDE

STILL ON  
THE OTHER SIDE

I started taking down  
my wall this year.  
Mom said, "Maybe  
you're maturing."  
Yeah? Then why can't  
I get a motorbike?  
Dad said, "Maybe  
you're learning  
to get along  
with people." That  
made me mad. "Are  
you saying I didn't get  
along with people  
before?" I yelled. "I've  
always gotten along  
with everybody! They  
just haven't gotten  
along with me." Dad  
said, "Okay, okay. You  
win. I was wrong."  
And he went back to  
reading his book.  
Robert said, "You are  
a noble adversary,  
O Evil One. Yet soon  
my powers will defeat  
you." What an idiot.  
Anyway, I still have a  
wall. But now I've got  
more company.

BooBoo  
Kitty

Elton  
Simpson,  
even though  
the boyfriend  
thing seems  
unlikely

The girls  
on the  
volleyball  
team

Robert  
(when  
he's not  
around)

Mom  
and  
Dad

My  
little  
cousin  
Natalie

Andrea,  
a cheerleader who  
turned  
out to be a  
regular person—  
annoyingly pretty,  
but a  
regular person

Lisa  
forever

Meat  
eaters

Robert  
(when  
isn't)

90% of the  
kids on the  
school bus

Mr. H  
my Eng  
teacher

Smokers

Guy  
Jocks

The school  
bus driver  
(It's more  
than the B.C.  
He's a  
jerk)

I mean, a girl's  
got to have  
some standards

NOTE  
FROM THE AUTHOR

## Pocket Poem

It's a good idea to carry a poem in your pocket  
in case of an emotional emergency.

Sometimes I carry around "The Cremation of Sam McGee."  
It's guaranteed to cheer me up. I don't know why.  
At the end, Sam freezes to death and makes a ghostly appearance.  
It sends a chill through me. But I always feel better.

Some days I need a sonnet.  
When Shakespeare writes to a faraway girlfriend,  
he writes what I wish I could write:  
"For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings  
That then I scorn to change my state with kings."

And some days only a silly little kid's poem will do.  
"A tree toad loved a she-toad, who lived up in a tree.  
He was a two-toed tree toad, but a three-toed toad was she."  
You've got to smile when you read that.

Yes, it's a good idea to carry a poem in your pocket.  
It's a little snack for your soul.



These poems were written on a Macintosh G4 using QuarkXPress Software.  
The drawings were done with a Bristol China Marker and touched up  
in Adobe Photoshop.

The poems are set in the following typefaces:

**Airstream ITC**  
American Typewriter  
**Angryhog ITC**  
**Arial Black**  
*Belch*  
Bembo  
**Blackmoor**  
Bodoni ITC  
 (Bodoni Ornaments)  
**Bookman Old Style**  
**Brainhead**  
*Caflisch Script*  
Caslon  
Centaur  
CHARLEMAGNE  
*Clover ITC*  
**Comic Sans**  
Courier New  
*Django ITC*  
**Ibola**  
Fenice ITC  
Galliard ITC  
Adobe Garamond  
*Giddyup*  
Gill Sans Condensed  
Goudy Old Style  
**Goudy Text**

**Grapefruit ITC**  
**Harlequin**  
**Jiggery Pokery ITC**  
*Jott*  
*Kaufmann*  
**Kristen Normal ITC**  
*Kumquat ITC*  
*Lingo ITC*  
Lubalin Graph  
*Lucida Handwriting*  
*Lucifer's Pension*  
*Ludwig ITC*  
**Marker Felt**  
*Medici Script*  
**Pesto**  
**Regular Joe**  
**Sand**  
*Sloppy Joe*  
*st h l m (Sonata)*  
Stone Informal  
Stone Sans  
Tapioca ITC  
Tempus  
TRAJAN  
Uncle Stinky  
**Werkstatt Engraved**  
 (Zapf Dingbats)

**JOHN GRANDITS** is an award-winning book and magazine designer who lives in Red Bank, New Jersey, with his wife, Joanne, a children's librarian. His first book of concrete poetry, *Technically, It's Not My Fault*, followed the adventures of a boy named Robert, who was often in conflict with his older sister, Jessie. *Blue Lipstick* gives Jessie a chance to tell her side of the story.

### **TECHNICALLY, IT'S NOT MY FAULT**

#### **Concrete Poems by John Grandits**

★ "Grandits combines technical brilliance and goofy good humor to provide an accessible, fun-filled collection of poems, dramatically brought to life through a brilliant book design."

—*School Library Journal*, starred review

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- Grownups: Talking A+, Listening D- • Angels •
- The Bowling Party • My Absolutely Bad Cranky Day •
- Poems Inspired by the Free Perfume Samples at Carson's • Girls! •
- Point A to Point B • Allergic to Time • Silver Spandex •
- The Name-Your-Rock-Band Chart • Tattoo & Tongue Stud •
- How I Taught My Cat to Love Poetry • The Secret •
- Happy B\*day, Mom • The Wall (Revisited) • Pocket Poem •



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