

was in Carson's when I saw Blue, and it was love at first sight! The saleslady said, "I don't know, dear. A girl with your coloring? You're really a Fall, and Blue is definitely a Winter." I ignored her. I was sure that Blue and I were made for each other. Together, we can change the world! Okay, maybe Blue is a little different. So what? So what? Together, we can change the world. My brother yelled, "Hey, the circus is in town! Can we get tickets?" And my dad said, "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." That did it. I mean, I like being different. I like taking chances once in a while. But

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?

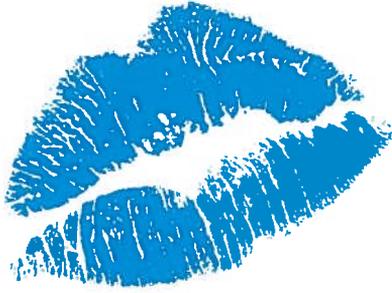
Jessie's definitely a girl with strong opinions, and she isn't shy about sharing them. Of course, that sometimes leads to friction—with her parents, her younger brother, her classmates, and certain English teachers who assign totally lame homework. But she's also not afraid to change her mind . . . about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

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by John Grandits*



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



**BLUE
LIPSTICK**



BLUE LIPSTICK



Concrete Poems by John Grandits

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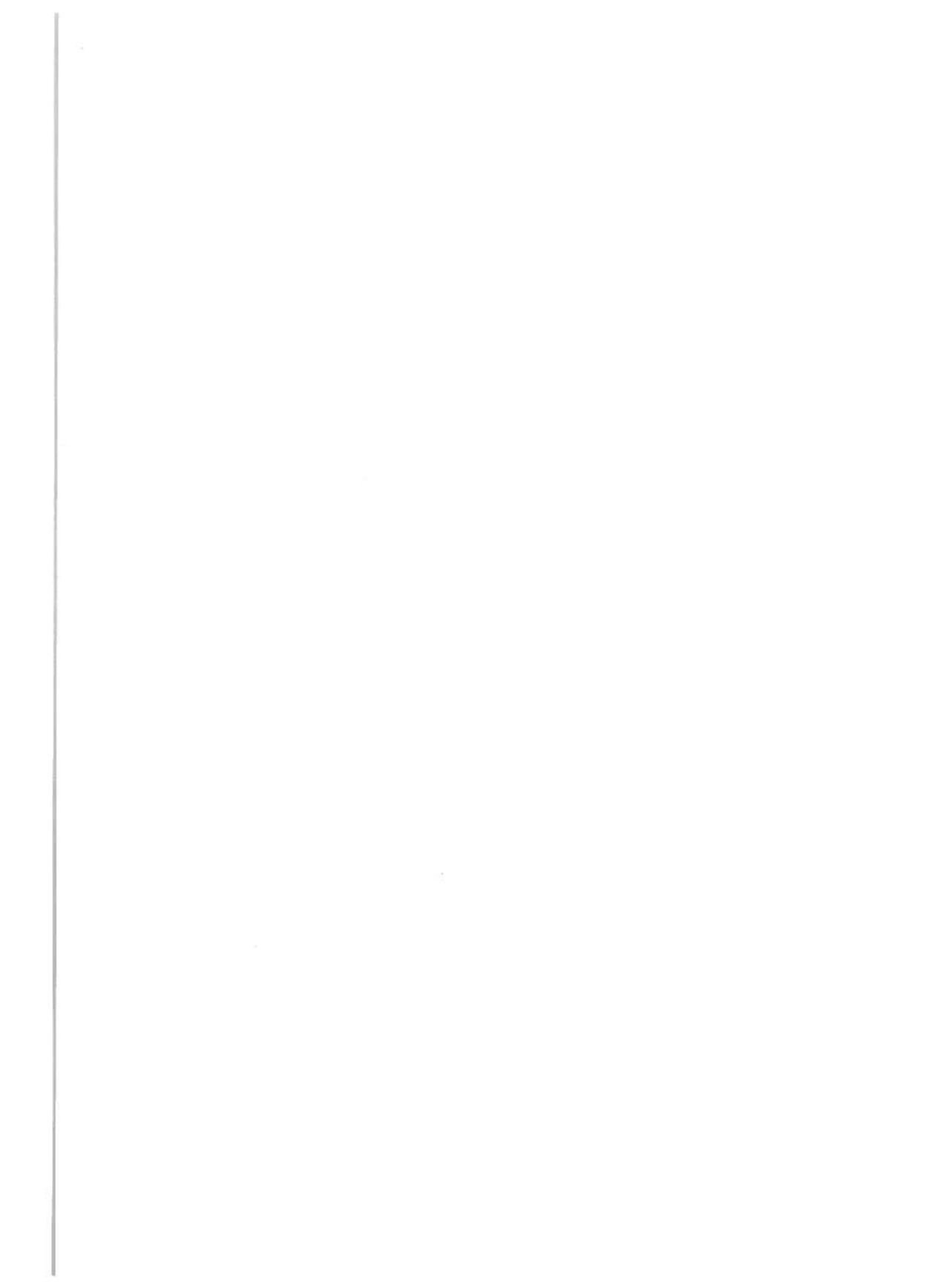
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Thanks to Joanne, Amanda and her cousin Kelsey, Signature Tracy, Mayfair Gary,
For
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Jordan & Tara, Mom & James, and my personal cheerleader, Andrea.



Stupor Farms

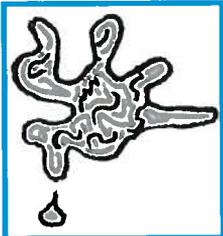
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AWAKE

MISSING

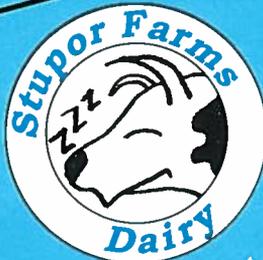
Have you seen Jessie's brain?



Recent photo



Computer simulation of what her brain looks like now



MILK

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?

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

Talented 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 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

Robert (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

Zombie Jocks

tro
phy trophy

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

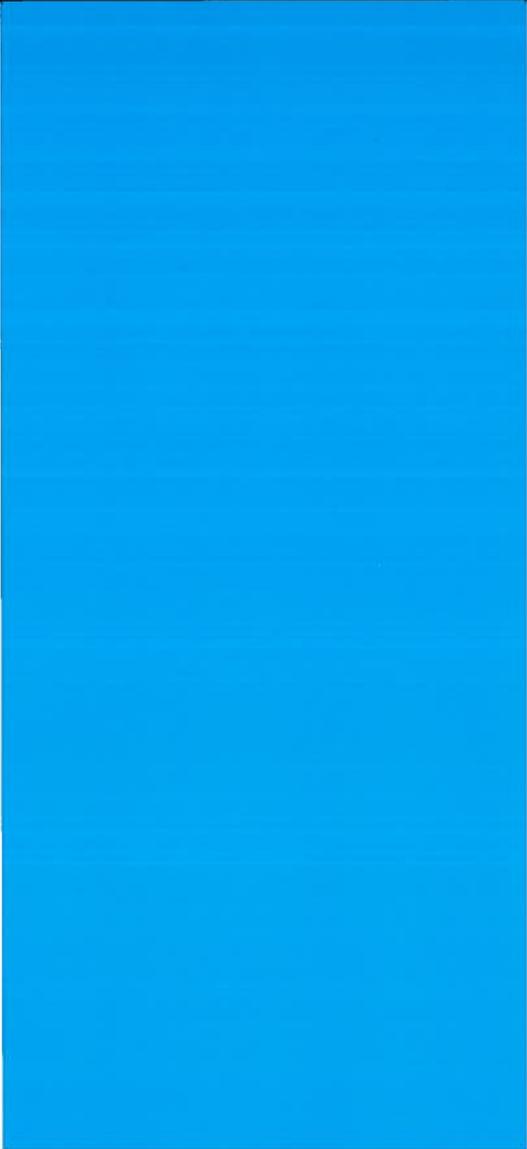
Football, baseball, we will win 'em.
When we wrestle, we must pin 'em.
Soccer, hockey, we will skin 'em.
On our bikes, you bet we'll Schwinn 'em.

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.

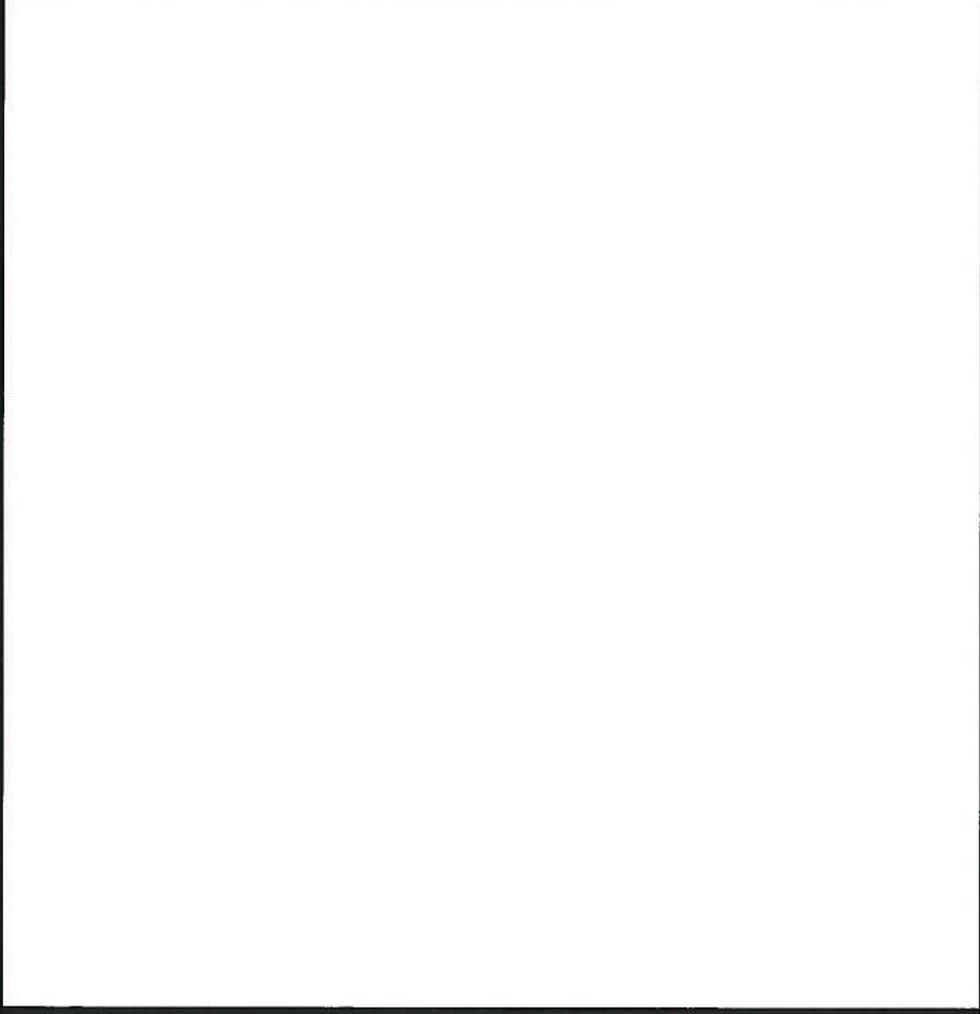
MONDRIAN

Dad and I went to the Art Instit



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

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



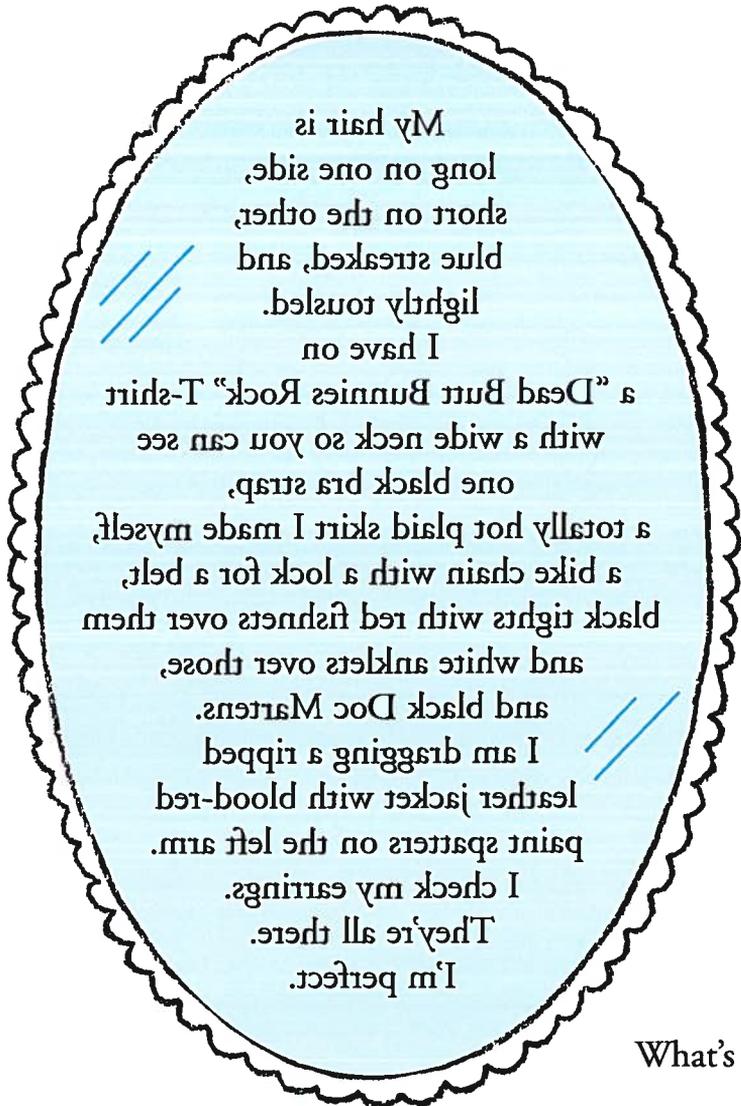
He did these paintings with just boxes and lines, and he only used

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

A CHART OF MY EMOTIONAL DAY

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

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. Lo

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!"

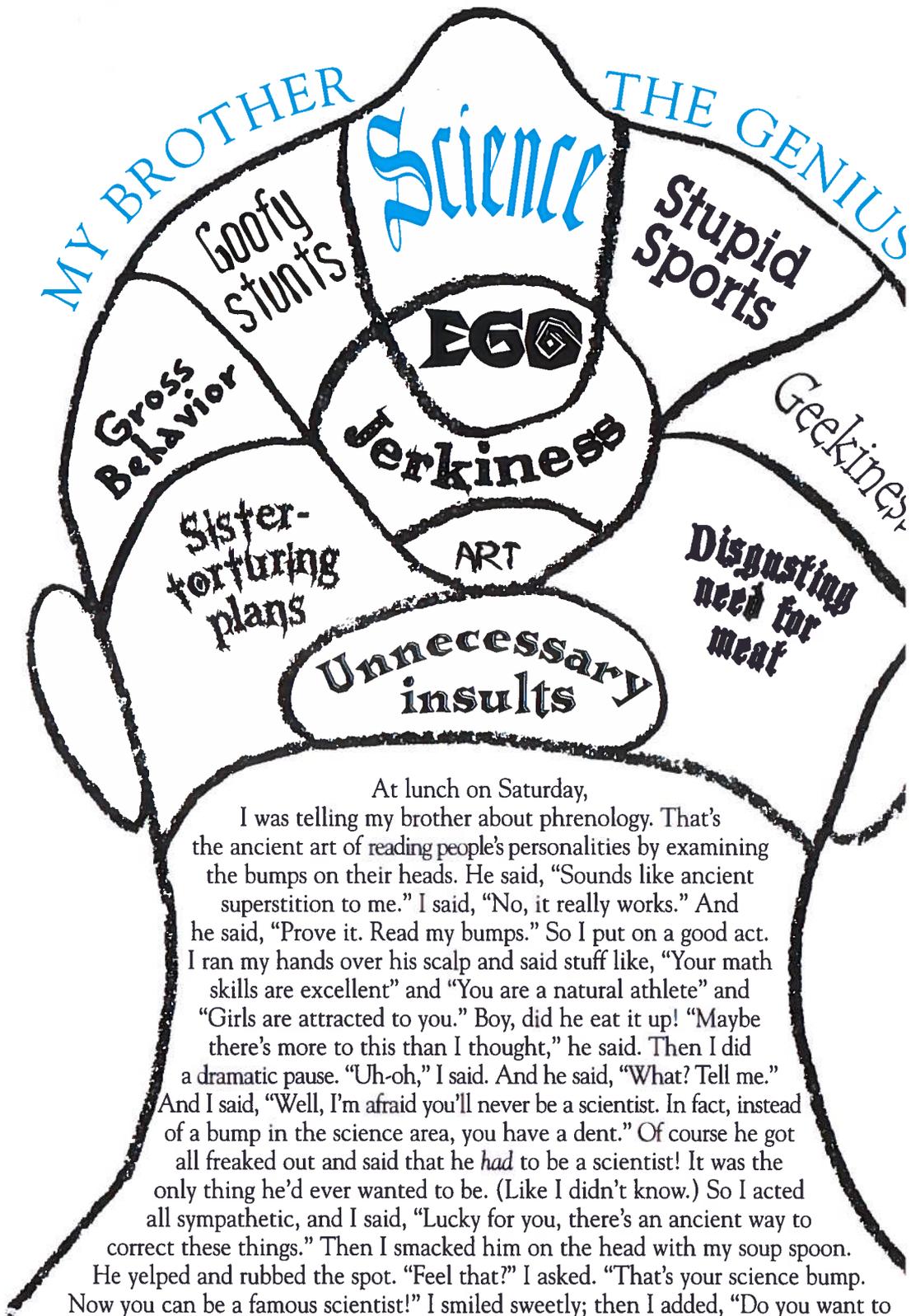
Mom changed menu. Ordered broccoli pizza instead.

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.

me: What I liked and what kinds of things I liked to do. Caught my stupid younger brother trying to superglue



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.

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?"

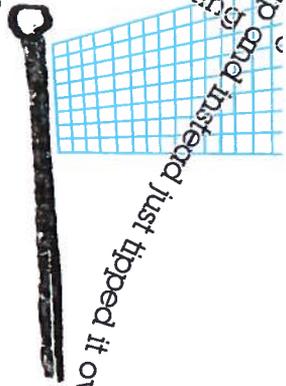
Me: "You know, the funeral in *Tom Sawyer*."
Elton: Blank expression.

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

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.

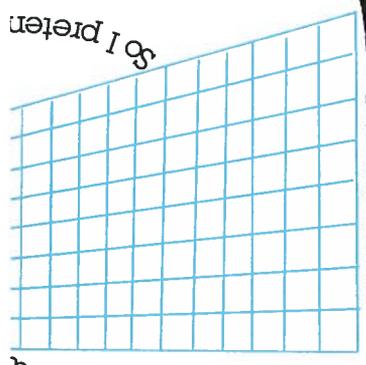


K.C. was waiting and instead just tipped it over the net.

Yesssssssssssssssssssss

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.

So I pretended it. It was a bullet. But LaShondra redeemed herself and put up a beautiful set. It was high and ready for me to slam. They were waiting.



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

LaShondra redeemed herself and put up a beautiful set. It was high and ready for me to slam. They were waiting.



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 covets? 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.

The musical notation consists of five staves of music in 4/4 time, each starting with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are simple quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some letters in all caps and some in title case. The lyrics are: H U P F J S V X Q I A L-M-N-O B T Y C K D E W - - Z R G Now I know my H-U-Ps Proud me of aren't you ver - Y?

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. Do they still have Home Ec in high school?

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:



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
Favorable reviews Surprising consideration
Unexpected tendernes
Compassionate conc
Astonishing
Sympathetic tho

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

The volleyball team went bowling. 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 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.

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

Mr. Kruntz is, without a doubt, the creepiest bus driver we've ever had.

Deranged.

How can you serve this stuff and call it oatmeal? How can you serve this stuff and call it oatmeal? How can you serve this stuff and call it oatmeal? How can you serve this stuff and call it oatmeal?

I think Michael Workman is seriously deranged. I wonder if you can become an astronaut without knowing algebra.

MY If I have to listen to one more lecture about mitosis, I'll scream.

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

BAD We have to read Old Yeller. I hate the hall. Get out of my way.

CRANKY Lunch stinks! Jumping jacks? All I did was contain a little.

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

Dumb assignment. Every single poster is rotten. Mi vaca se llama Grisilda. This is useful.

...at to me.

Ol snack. I want s'mores.

Possibly be any grosser?

Qu could you in it.

Rats! Rats! Rats! Rats! Rats! Rats! Rats! Rats! Rats! Rats! Rats!

Excuse me, stupid younger brother. Could you scratch my back?

SI eat only vegetable. I don't eat dead baby cow.

Time.

Unbelievable! Three classes with homework.

Very funny, Robert.

Why me? Why can't Robert. Now get those oranges out of my bra.

XIt's NOT an excuse. It's a perfectly good reason. I don't wanna.

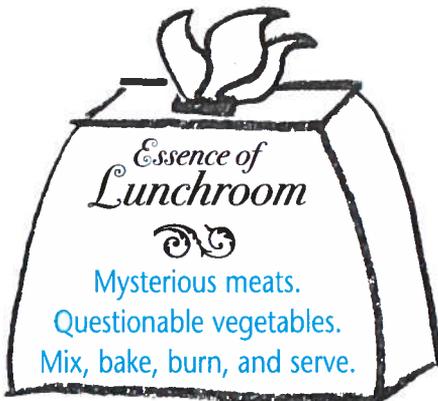
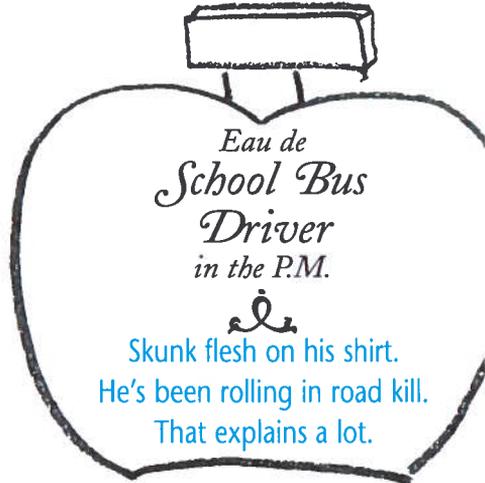
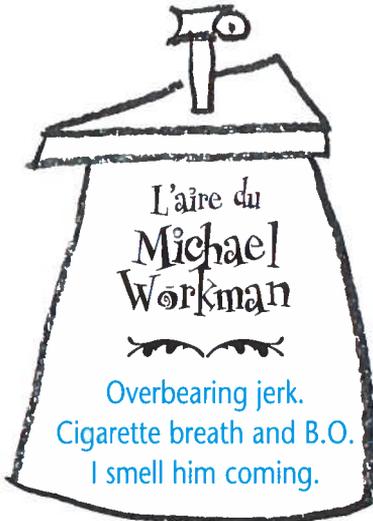
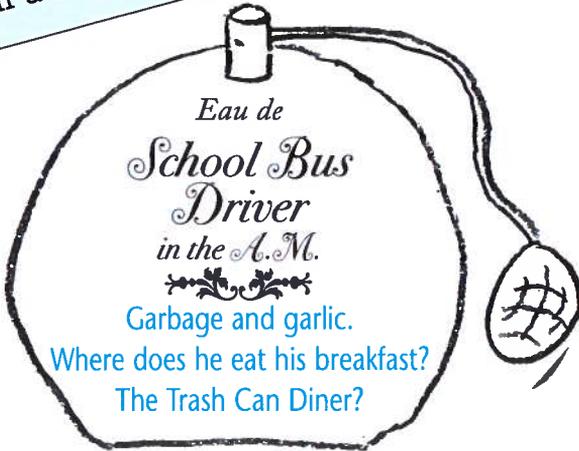
Y of my life.

Sorry, Mom. I'll be a nicer person tomorrow after I get some zzzs.

Zzzz.

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

Poems Inspired by the Free Perfume Samples at Carson



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!"

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

- 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're doing calculus already.")
 - 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.

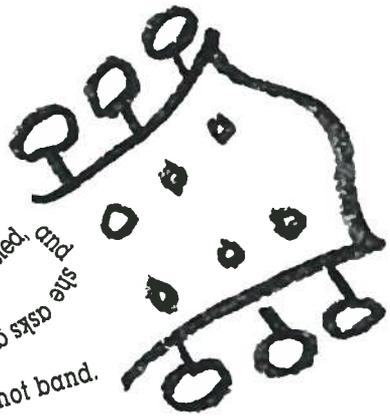
It's beautiful—with little zirconium bits to mark the hours. But yesterday I felt this strange itch, and when I went to the girls' room, I saw that I had a rash right under the pendant. I took it off (duh!) and washed the spot. So I totally missed the school bus and got a big lecture from the parents 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. She'll 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
I can play about a billion rock-and-roll songs. Well, only the rhythm-guitar parts, I
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." And she says, "I know. I saw
and I put 'spicy' on my three chords. The teacher says we're supposed to play about a billion rock-and-roll songs. Well, only the rhythm-guitar parts, I
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." And she says, "I know. I saw



I know much about classical, but she's interested, and she asks questions. Then she shows me her sudden 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 most killed each other trying to pick a name."



And I explain about the Long Skirt Problem: A girl cellist has to wear a long skirt, or else the audience can see her underwear, and the skirt looks dorky. Andrea says, "This is bad for a cheerleading unicorn."

You could be the first classical musician to look hot."

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'th?" 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-lease. 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.

HOW TO LOVE POETRY

I cut the poem into strips and taped them to a hanger.

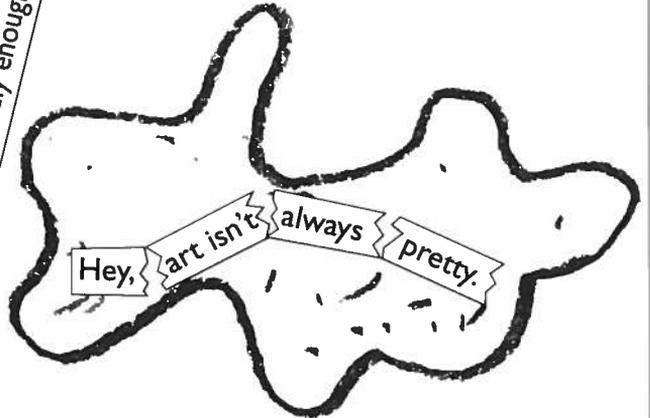
She loved it. She batted at it for an hour.

She ripped off little pieces and ate them.

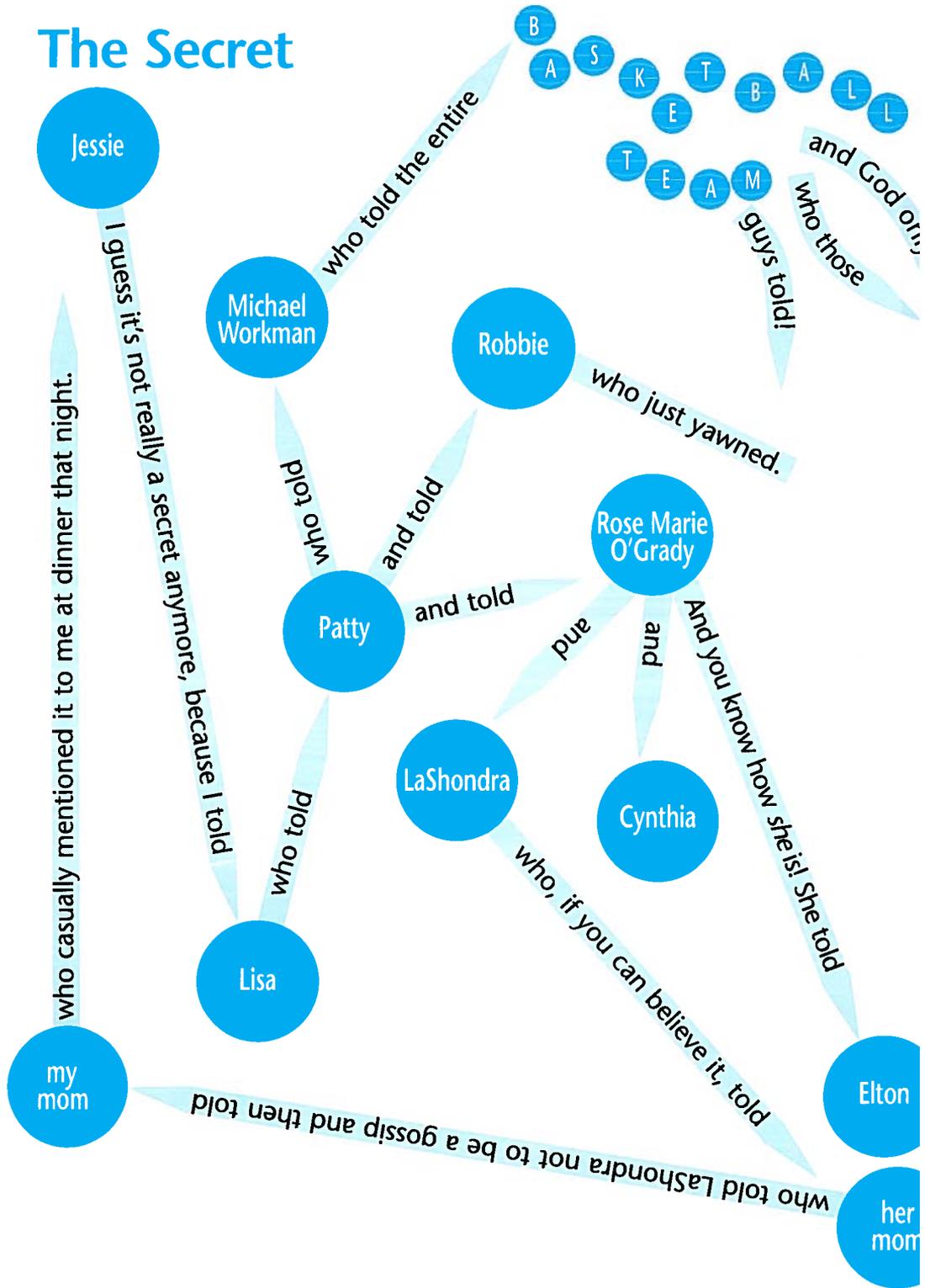
That was totally cool. You have to really love a poem to want to eat it.

Fifteen minutes later, it was a Friskies-and-poetry pile of cat puke.

Oddly enough, Mr. Holt didn't seem to appreciate the finished work.



The Secret



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

Happy B*day, Mom

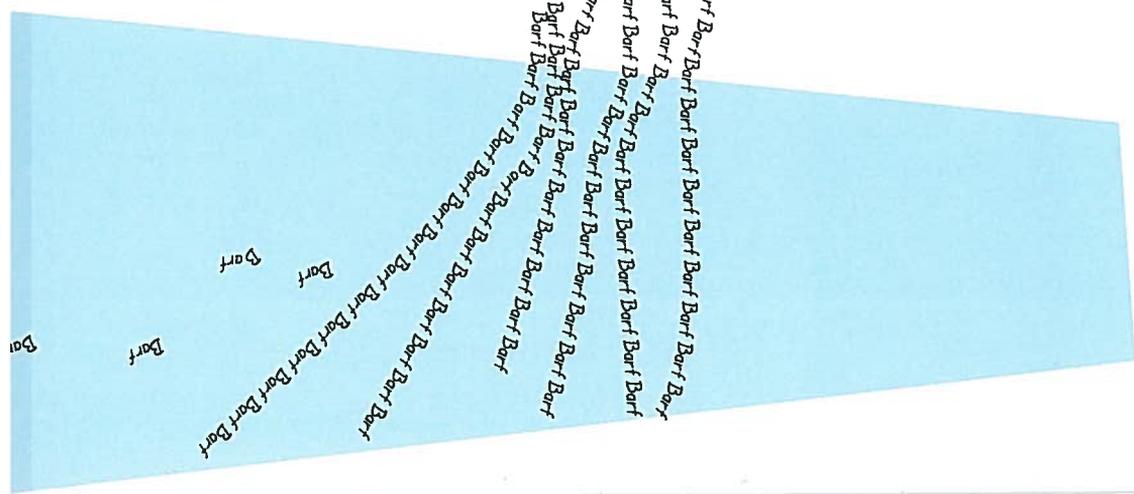
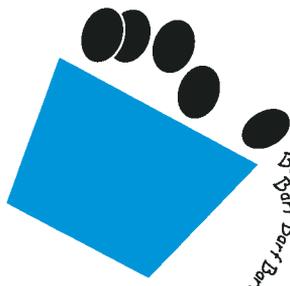
I gave Mom the coolest gift:
an air balloon ride—
we all got to go! I couldn't wait.
My boys wanted to float through the air
in a beautiful balloon.

On the way there, I teased Robert unmercifully,
telling him that he was too little to ride with us,
saying they wouldn't let a kid his age go
because he'd get sick or be scared or fall out.

They let Robert on, and there we were,
rising and floating
swinging and floating and
we were swinging over some
of my boys' absolutely beautiful swimming pool...
I lost it.

Don't ever hear the end of this.

HOT-AIR BALLOON



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.

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

BooBoo Kitty

Meat eaters

Robert (when I'm not around)

90% of the kids on the school bus

Mr. H my English teacher

Smokers

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

Guy Jocks

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

Ebola

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

Slappy Joe

sf h l (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

An ALA Notable Book
A Book Sense 2005 "Top Ten Poetry List"
A VOYA Poetry Pick for 2004

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 - The Name-Your-Rock-Band Chart • Tattoo & Tongue Stud •
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