

know, I know. You're really mad. But I can explain. See, I was reading about Galileo, a guy who made all these great discoveries and did cool experiments. And the book said that he dropped a heavy object and a light object out of a window to show they'd land at the same time because gravity is constant. But I thought, No way! Heavy things fall fast and light things fall slow. We know this from Saturday morning cartoons, right? So I decided to do the experiment myself. I found a concrete block in the garage and I got a tomato from the fridge, and I took them up to the attic and opened the window and rested them on the sill. And it really, really looked like there was going to be plenty of room for them to fall between the house and the car. I mean, like, who knew? So then I pushed them out of the window together, but I must have pushed just the tiniest bit too hard, because the block went out a little farther than I expected, and it kind of landed on the car. But you know what? The tomato got there at exactly the same time, which proves that Galileo was right! Boy, did I ever learn a lesson—and that's the important thing, isn't it? I mean, even if you know something for a fact, like heavy stuff falls faster than light stuff, it's best to check it with a carefully planned scientific experiment. Oh, yeah, and I also learned not to drop concrete blocks out of the attic window. But in my opinion, the experiment was totally worth doing. There was just a slight mix-up, one tiny detail that went wrong, so even though the car has a concrete block sticking out of the roof,

BY JOHN GRANDITS

**technically,  
IT'S NOT MY FAULT**

CONCRETE  
POEMS

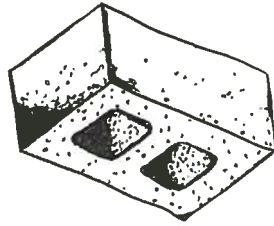
**T**echnically, it's not Robert's fault that a concrete block fell on the car or that his sister's homework got blown to smithereens. Really, he doesn't try to cause trouble. He's just an ordinary kid who likes pizza and sports and computer games. . . . Okay, maybe he thinks about some weird stuff, like designing the perfect roller coaster (complete with poisonous spiders) and writing the autobiography of a fart. But doesn't everyone? How can his social studies teacher even hint that he acts backward on purpose?

Robert's hilarious view of the world is expressed through a series of concrete poems, in which words, ideas, type, and art combine to make pictures and patterns. You may have to turn the book—or your mind—sideways and upside down to read them, but laughter is 100% guaranteed.

*Jacket illustration and photograph copyright © 2004  
by John Grandits*



# Technically, It's Not My Fault





# Technically, It's Not My Fault



**Concrete Poems by John Grandits**

**Clarion Books New York**

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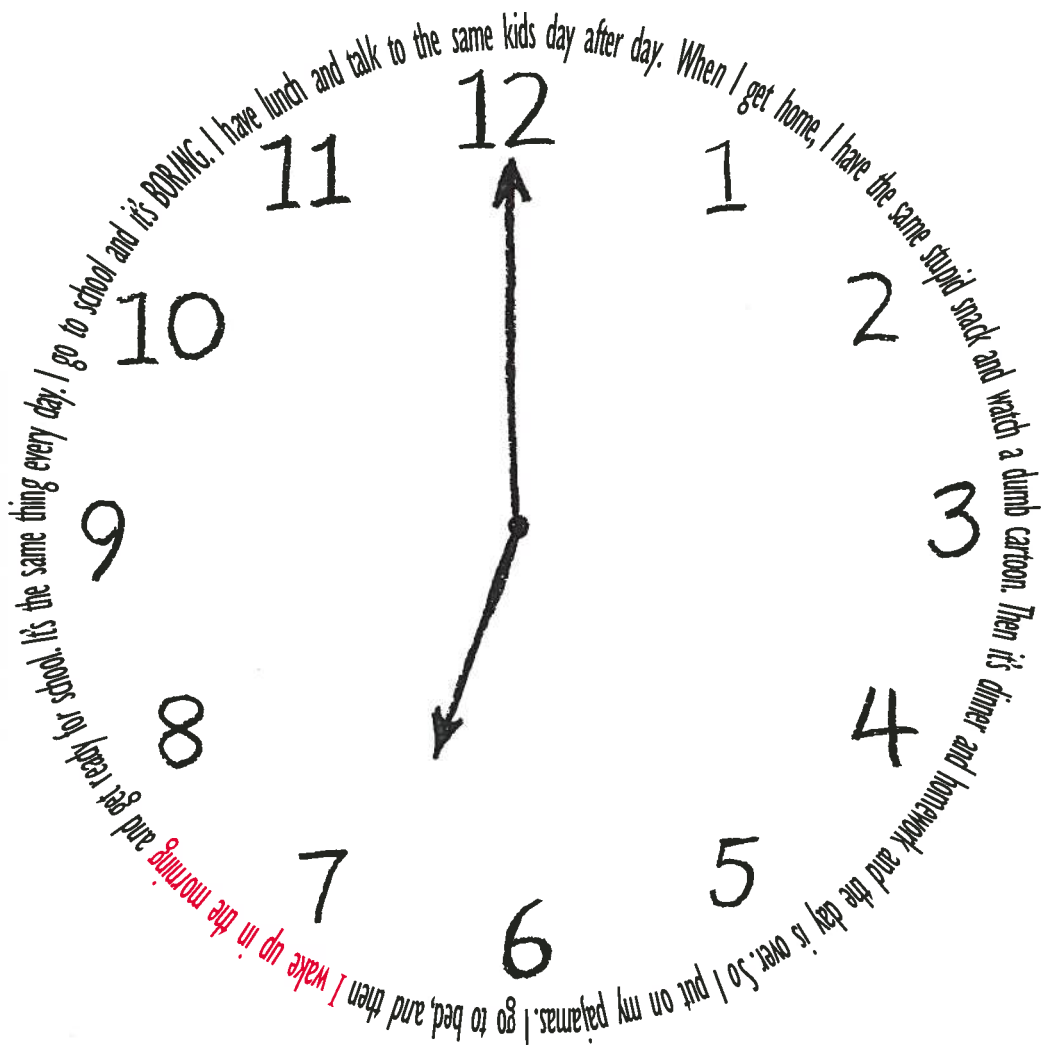
*Stellar Linda and Skateboard Communist. Thanks to Mom and James and Andrea and Marcia and Dinah and Romney Matt and Bagel Joe and Elm Place Lilian and*

*For  
Joanne & Jordan*





# MY STUPID DAY



## MY SISTER IS CRAZY

My sister wears a pyramid on her head.  
That's right. She has a little pyramid-shaped hat.  
"What is wrong with you?"  
I ask her. "You look like a jerk!"  
My sister sighs and rolls her eyes, as if I'm the one who's a total loon.

"The pyramid is a source of ancient power," she says. "The Egyptians had pyramids, and their empire lasted 3,000 years. The Aztecs ruled Mexico with an iron fist. Or was it the Incas? No, Aztecs, I think. Anyway, they had pyramids. And how about the pyramid on the one-dollar bill? Coincidence? I don't think so."

My sister is crazy. That's because she's getting bombarded by alien anti-brain waves from outer space. Super-intelligent beings from the Nebula Galaxy are shooting at us with pluton rays that can make you go crazy. They're not aiming at everyone, of course. Just my family.

That's why I wear aluminum foil on my head. I have a very good looking ray-deflecting foil hat that I made myself. Not in the shape of a pyramid! You'd have to be nuts to think that a pyramid would protect your brain from evil alien rays coming from outer space. Which proves my point: My sister is crazy.



# The Thank-You Letter<sup>1</sup>

Dear Aunt Hildegard,

Thank you<sup>2</sup> for the amazing gifts.<sup>3</sup> It was terrific<sup>4</sup> getting your package!<sup>5</sup> I grabbed it immediately.<sup>6</sup> But when my parents saw it,<sup>7</sup> they said<sup>8</sup> I shouldn't open it until my birthday. You can imagine how I felt when I found two gifts!<sup>9</sup> The sweater was totally awesome.<sup>10</sup> It's amazing how well you know me.<sup>11</sup>

Then there was the poster you got for my room.<sup>12</sup> You're in luck; I don't already have a Polka Hall of Fame poster.<sup>13</sup> I'm putting it right under my World Wrestling Federation poster.<sup>14</sup>

Thanks,<sup>15</sup> thanks,<sup>16</sup> and thanks again.<sup>17</sup> I'm already planning when to wear my new sweater.<sup>18</sup>

Your 11-year-old<sup>19</sup> nephew,

Robert

## 1. with Footnotes

2. For nothing!

3. Do you have the slightest clue what an 11-year-old boy likes?

4. I almost croaked when I saw the package. I still remember last year's gift. "Oh, no! Not again!" I screamed.

5. I was in luck. Mom didn't see the mailman.

6. I hid the package in the garage under the hose.

7. What were the chances that Dad would decide to wash the car *that* day?

8. "What's this?" they said. "When did this come?"

9. You monster.

10. In the history of sweaters, there has never been an uglier waste of yarn.

11. Where did you *ever* find a sweater that not only has Barney on it but also is two sizes too big for me?

12. I'm old enough to decorate my own room.

13. Just what I need—a picture of an old guy with an accordion.

14. And I do mean UNDER.

15. For trying to embarrass me in front of my friends.

16. For the lectures from my parents.

17. For making me waste an hour of my life writing this stupid thank-you letter.

18. I know they'll make me wear it the next time you come to visit. I just hope nobody sees me.

19. I'm 11!!! Get it!?!?

# TyrannosaurBus Rex

I am the vicious TyrannosaurBus Rex.  
I roam the suburbs, hunting.  
Those who see me gaze in terror.  
Those who are spared are grateful.

Early in the morning, I spy  
a group of small human children  
standing on the corner of Elm and Spring.  
I slam on my brakes.  
I open my mouth.  
"Come in, little children," I say.  
They don't want to, but they must.  
Their parents have delivered them to  
Human sacrifices.



Harding and Broad.  
Yum.



Broad and White.  
Yum.



Soon I am full.



I eat the humans.  
They are young and tender.  
Yum.

Then I go to Elm and Hudson.  
More children. More sacrifices.  
Yum.



I follow my usual route.  
Hudson and Harding.  
Yum.

My breakfast is noisy.  
My breakfast is jumping around my stomach.  
My breakfast is giggling and laughing and queasy.  
My stomach is queasy.  
I don't feel so good.

I go to the school parking lot.  
I open my mouth  
and barf out my noisy,  
jumping,  
giggling,  
laughing,  
arguing  
breakfast.



I'm so tired from hunting.  
I settle into my nap  
and dream dreams about 3:30,  
when I will go to the parking lot  
next to the school and hunt again.

# The Australian Cane Toad

The cane toad does not belong in Australia.  
He doesn't like it much.

"How did I get here?" he asks himself.

"These Australian bugs taste awful."

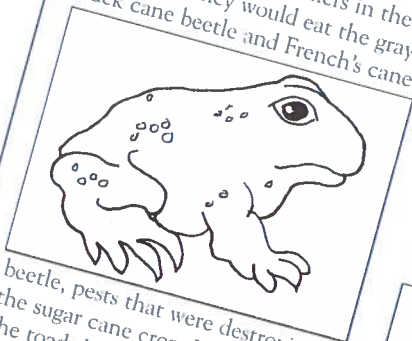
Unfortunately for the toad, a dingo sneaks up from behind.  
Snap! Crunch! Gulp! . . . Ahhh.

Unfortunately for the dingo, the cane toad is poisonous.  
Very poisonous.

*The Animals of Australia*

## Cane Toad *Bufo marinus*

Cane toads are not native to Australia. They were introduced in 1935 by sugar cane farmers in the hopes that they would eat the gray-back cane beetle and French's cane



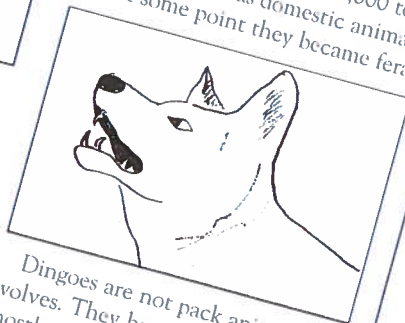
beetle, pests that were destroying the sugar cane crop. Unfortunately, the toads have proved to be even bigger pests than the beetles. They eat large numbers of honeybees, prey on native fauna, and carry diseases that are transmitted to native frogs and fishes. They are also highly toxic.

If eaten or handled, cane toads can poison household pets and injure humans. They can also kill native species, including the goanna, tiger snake, northern spotted quoll, red-

bellied black snake, death adder, freshwater crocodile, and dingo.

## Dingo *Canis lupus dingo*

Dingoes are light gray or reddish tan doglike mammals that live throughout Australia in habitats ranging from harsh deserts to lush rainforests. They may have been brought to the continent 3,000 to 4,000 years ago as domestic animals, but at some point they became feral.



Dingoes are not pack animals like wolves. They hunt alone or in pairs, mostly at night. They prefer to eat small mammals such as rodents and rabbits, but they will also hunt large creatures such as kangaroo and sheep. When food is scarce, they will eat reptiles, amphibians, and insects.

I'm supposed to be doing my science homework.  
But really I'm reading about the cane toad.  
The homework sheet is about magnets.  
It's stupid. Not only stupid, but easy.  
We had all this stuff last year.  
The teacher must think we're morons.  
Well, some of us are morons,  
so she's partially right.  
It's just that I'm not a moron.  
Multiple choice:

- ☐ One answer is right.
- ☐ Two are close if you're not paying attention.
- ☐ One is wrong.
- ☐ And one is you-must-not-have-the-brains-God-gave-a-chicken wrong.

I answer each question with the chicken-brain option.

Worksheet # 4 -- Magnets

Name Robert Room 101

Now that you've read about magnet experiments, answer the following

- Magnets will attract:
  - ☐ Anything metal
  - ☐ Anything really hard
  - ☐ Aluminum
  - ☒ Wood
- Attention
- A magnet has two poles called:
  - ☐ Big and little
  - ☒ North and South
  - ☐ Homer and Marge
  - ☐ Pushy and pully
- A magnetic field is:
  - ☒ the area affected by the pull of a place to grow magnet bushes
  - ☐ copper wire wrapped around a magnet
  - ☐ the speed of electricity
  - ☐ the area of a triangle



On the school bus the next day,  
I run into Ronald Workman.  
Ronald is big.  
Really big.  
And dumb, with a brain the size of a—oh,  
I don't know, maybe a chicken's.  
He's the seventh-grade equivalent of a Triceratops.  
Except carnivorous.  
"Hey, dweeb. Give me your science homework," he says.  
"I don't think that would be a good idea," I croak.  
But it's difficult to explain why because of the headlock.  
"I think it's a good idea," Ronald cleverly answers.  
"What are you going to do about it, anyway?"  
Unfortunately for the Triceratops, the homework is poisonous.  
Very poisonous.

# S K A T E B O A R D

I'm on my totally cool new board and I'm

bombing the hill.

into  
curb

I do a little cut jump up a

---

lift onto the be

Out of the lot,

curb,

across the street,

curb,

into the park. I do a sweet little

---

Busted. Walking home. I'm a sad old dog who's been swatted with a rolled-up newspa



even parking lot and try a tight little figure eight over a milk crate when all of a sudden I hear **HEY, KID!**  
**No skateboards**  
**in the**  
**parking lot.**  
**Get outta here!**

over a milk crate when all of a sudden I hear **HEY, KID!**  
**No skateboards**  
**in the**  
**parking lot.**  
**Get outta here!**

I clean, p- u- u- m- p up the hill, around the flagpole, d- o- o- o- w- n the ramp, and **HEY, YOU!**  
**Can't you read the sign?**  
**No skateboarding!**

ve up. I'm just gonna

veg in front of the TV  
and not think about it.

I mean, why bother, and then **HEY,**  
**What are you doing inside?**  
**You begged for that**  
**skateboard, Robert.**  
**Now go out and use it!**

# DRAWKCAB

Mrs. Kosacowski started it.

Last week in social studies class she said to me,  
"Robert, sometimes I think you're brilliant,  
and other times I think you're absolutely backward,  
and that you act backward on purpose."

So I'm teaching myself  
to be backward on purpose.

Today Mrs. K. asked,

"Robert, are you paying attention?"

"On, ton yllaer," I answered.

"What did you say?" she said.

"I ma gniklat drawkcab yadot," I explained.

"Oh, my goodness. Are you having a seizure?"

Mrs. K. looked a little worried.

"On, I ma enif." I tried to reassure her. "Tub ouy  
thgim eb gninrael-deriapmi."

She sent me to the nurse's office.

"I ma yllaer yako," I told the nurse.

She called my mom anyway.

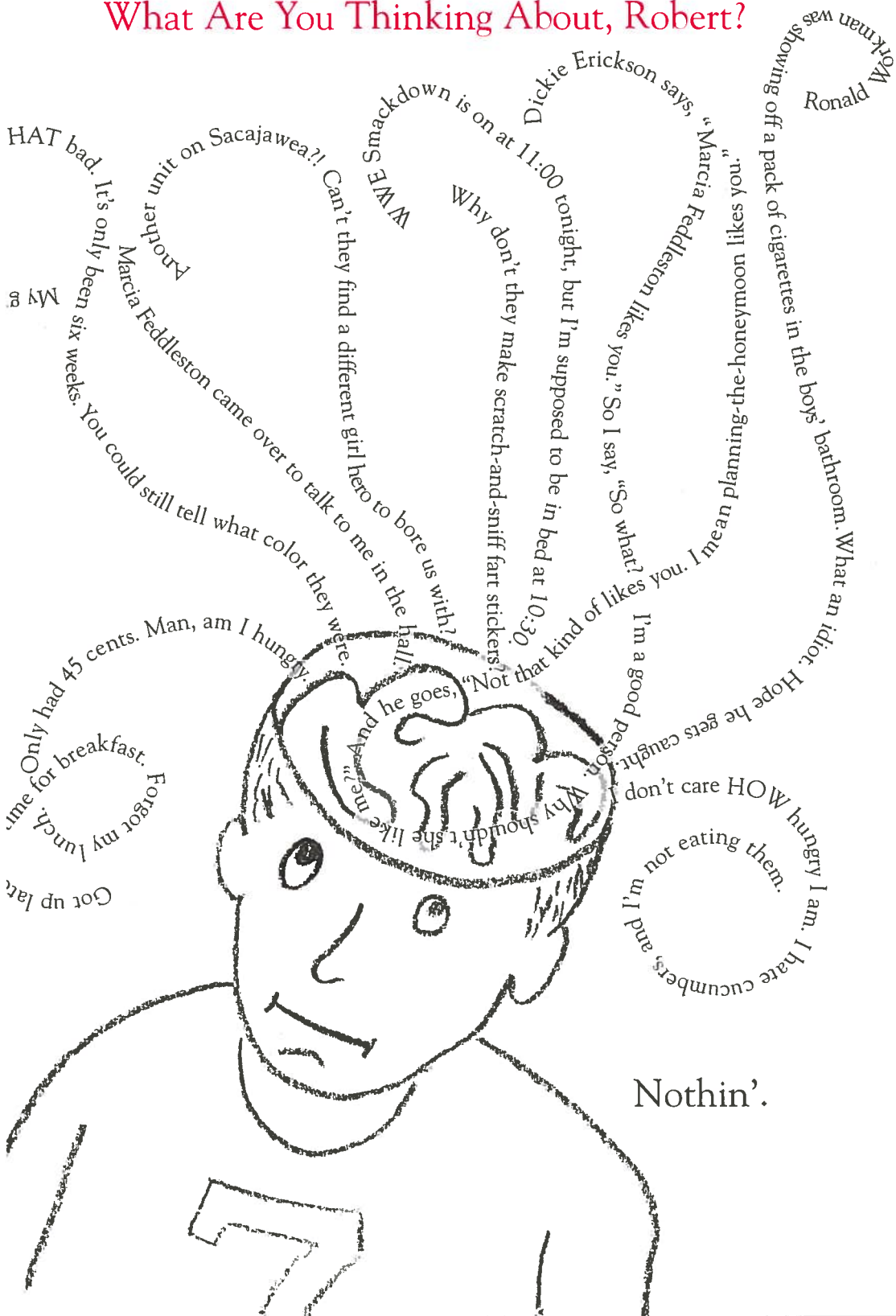
Mom will have to take off from work  
to come pick me up.

But I'm not worried.

I can explain everything.

I just hope Mom understands drawkcab klat.

# What Are You Thinking About, Robert?



Nothin'.

**"Robert, it's your turn to let Chips out!"**

**"Okay, okay. I'm going."**

**"Where is that dog?"**

**Hey!**

**TRIP**

**Ooops**

**BANG**

**Ayeee!**

**ON THE STAIRS  
IN THE MIDDLE  
OF THE NIGHT**



ID

SMASH

iq2no

00000

SPLAT

FLIP

F L O P

"Stupid dog."

# Where New Words Come From

## SNARPY

*Don't get **snarpy** with me, young man. I don't think your attitude is anything to be proud of. Your father and I work our tails off so that you will be able to have all the advantages that we never had. When I was your age, I had to...*

**Snarpy?** What the heck is **snarpy**? I should look it up.

**snark** /snärk/ noun. 1. a vicious animal (coined by Lewis Carroll in *Hunting of the Snark*)—verb. 2. to snore. **snarky** /snärk'el/ adjective. 1. testy, irritable. 2. short-tempered [1910-15] British dialect: **nag**—verb. 2. to snort. 3. a wood knot. **snarl** /snär/ verb. 1. to growl in a threatening or vicious manner, often while showing teeth. 2. to talk in a threatening way. **snarl** /snär/ noun. 1. tangled-up bits: a *snarl of hair* or a *snarl of wire*. 2. confused or up. 3. a wood knot. **snarly** /snär'le/ adjective. 1. easily agitated. 2. full of tangles: *Your hair is snarly*. **snash** /snash/ snäsh/ verb. 1. to be in a nasty way. 2. to try to grab suddenly. **snatch** /snach/ verb. to grab suddenly.

snarl ...  
snarly ...  
snash ...  
There's no such word as **snarpy**. Maybe it's too cool to be in the dictionary. I'll try it out on a few kids and see if they get it.

Oh, Lisa, don't be so **snarpy**.

I'll be **snarpy** if I want to be.

I'll be **snarpy** even if I don't know what it is.

You know how Mr. Sullivan is. ... He's just so, I don't know ... **snarpy**.

I'll say.

He sure is!

He's, like, totally **snarpy**.

And so, Mr. Sullivan, I just don't think Edgar Allan Poe has anything to say to kids today. He's just too **snarpy**.

Well, Robert, you are entitled to your opinion. At least you've read the material.

Personally, I think Edgar Allan Poe is one of the geniuses of the horror genre. Moreover, he seems to have created singlehandedly a spot in literature that would eventually be taken up by Dean Koontz and Stephen King.

**Snarpy?** Is that some sort of new slang? Well, it's what the kids are saying.

So when I was talking to my class today, I told them that they really had to have more respect for their teachers. Respect for the authority figure is what western civilization is built on. But I tried to put it to them in their own language. "Don't get *snarpy* with The Man," I said.

Oh, Bill, you are so hip! The kids must LOVE you.

What the heck is he talking about now?

My boyfriend, Bill, teaches seventh grade and he can't seem to leave his work at school. He's so-o-o-o juvenile. I think I've got to dump him. He's too *snarpy*.

So he's a little *snarpy*! So what! Don't be so picky.

Today on the Style Network: What's in? What's out? How do we know what the beautiful people are saying? Who decides what's hip? We go to our trend correspondent, Marsala Piquet. Marsala?

Thanks, Morton. In the past, when an older man—like yourself—said or did something new, it became fashion. Nowadays younger and younger kids are deciding what's hip and what's not, what's in and what's out. Fashion is made in middle school or even grammar school. Clothes, language, hair color: even what we eat and drink are determined by kids. But don't worry, Morton, we still think you're very *snarpy*! Back to you.

The president announced today that the country of Bizaristan faces strict censure and loss of trading privileges with the U.S. if it doesn't alter its foreign policy. CNN has this exclusive interview. . . . Mr. President, could you tell the American people--what is the problem in Bizaristan?

In a nutshell, Wolf, it's their attitude. In the White House, we think they're a 10 on the *Snarpy*-Attitude Scale. If we don't address these issues now, the American people will suffer in the long run. That's why I am sending the secretary of state . . .

Wow! I guess *snarpy* really is a word.

Watch out for my hair, she said, I don't want it off I just

...out for my hair, she said, I want split ends. Take your boots off, I just washed them for my

barrette, it's my favorite! she said. Why are you so strong?

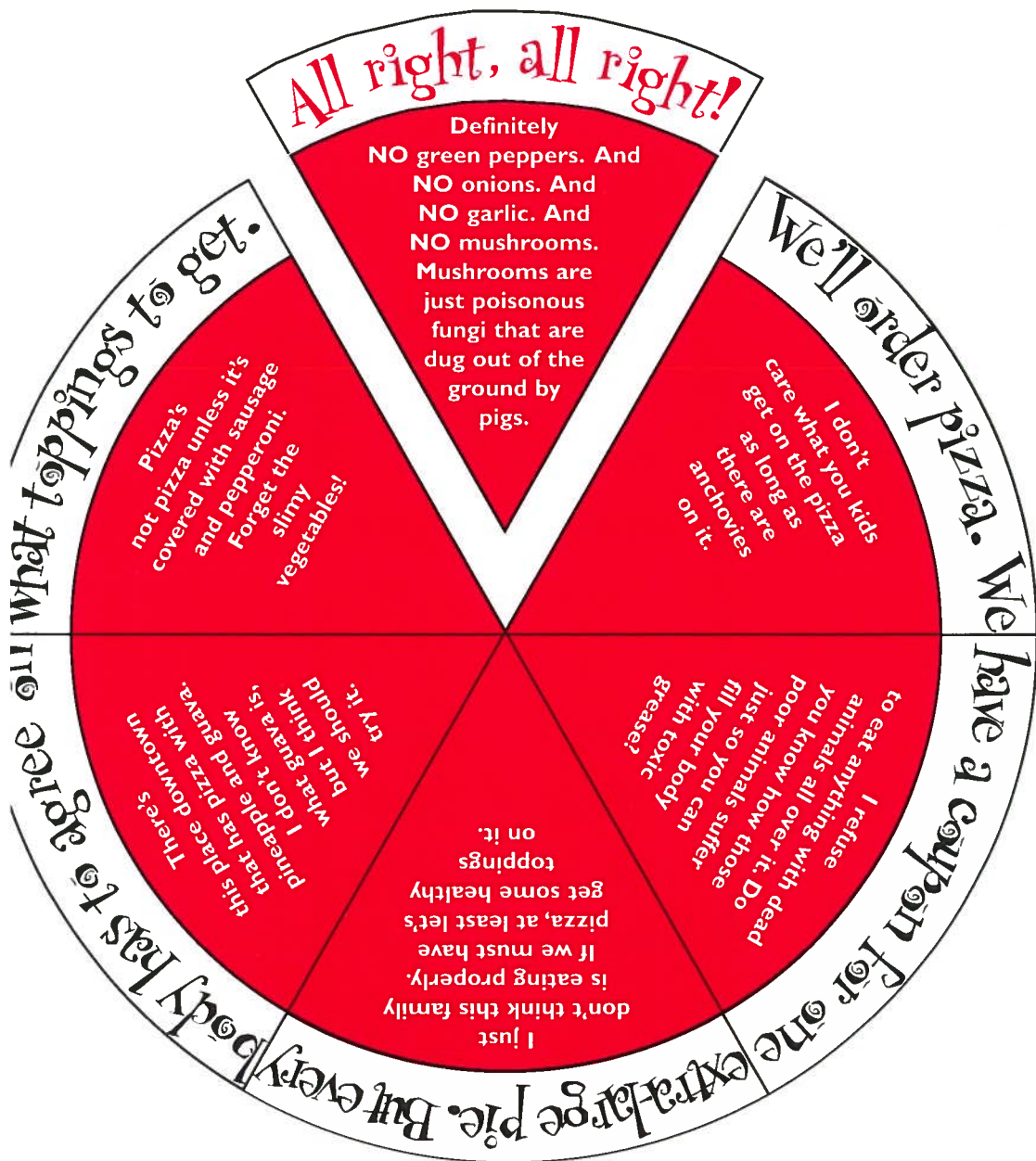
You slowing down? Aren't you supposed to be  
enough to rescue me? Why did you stop?  
What? ... anyway?

I climbed back down. I've heard about this other kind of prince are you, any?

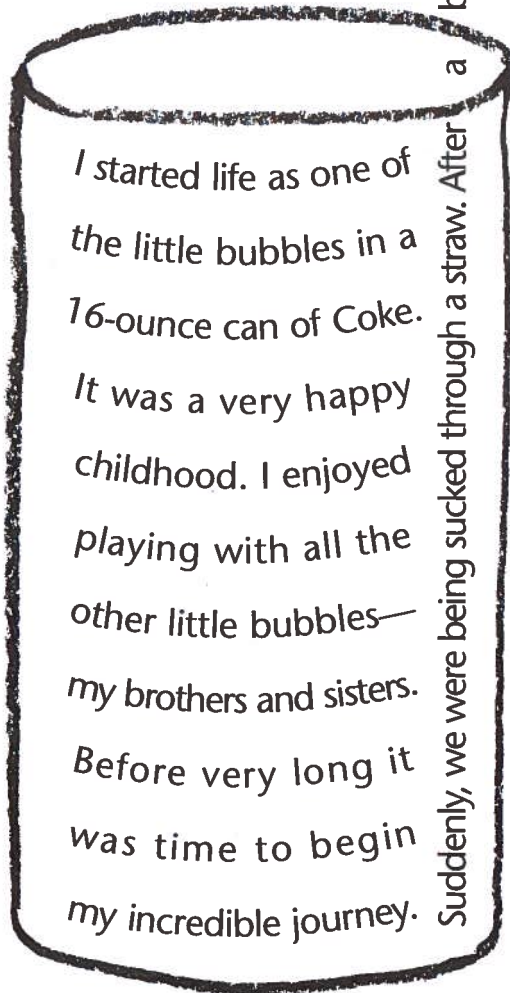
...ther princess who's asleep—a real beau-



# How We Ended Up with a Plain Pizza



# The Autobiography of Murray the Fart



myself in the mouth of ;  
a breathtaking ride I found

I started life as one of  
the little bubbles in a  
16-ounce can of Coke.  
It was a very happy  
childhood. I enjoyed  
playing with all the  
other little bubbles—  
my brothers and sisters.  
Before very long it  
was time to begin  
my incredible journey.

ned Robert.

Then we made our way down his throat. I never saw them again.

Some of my brothers and sisters decided to go back. They formed a group they called the Burp Club. We said our goodbyes, and they

I continued down, down, down. I visited so many exciting places: the stomach, the small intestine, the large intestine. I even made a side trip to the appendix. Finally, I was near the end.

In a great rush, I was shot out into the air. It was thrilling! The ultimate extreme sport. Now I mingle with other kinds of air, floating here, blowing there. My next great adventure will be . . . the nose.

Professional Wrestling for Animals

When an

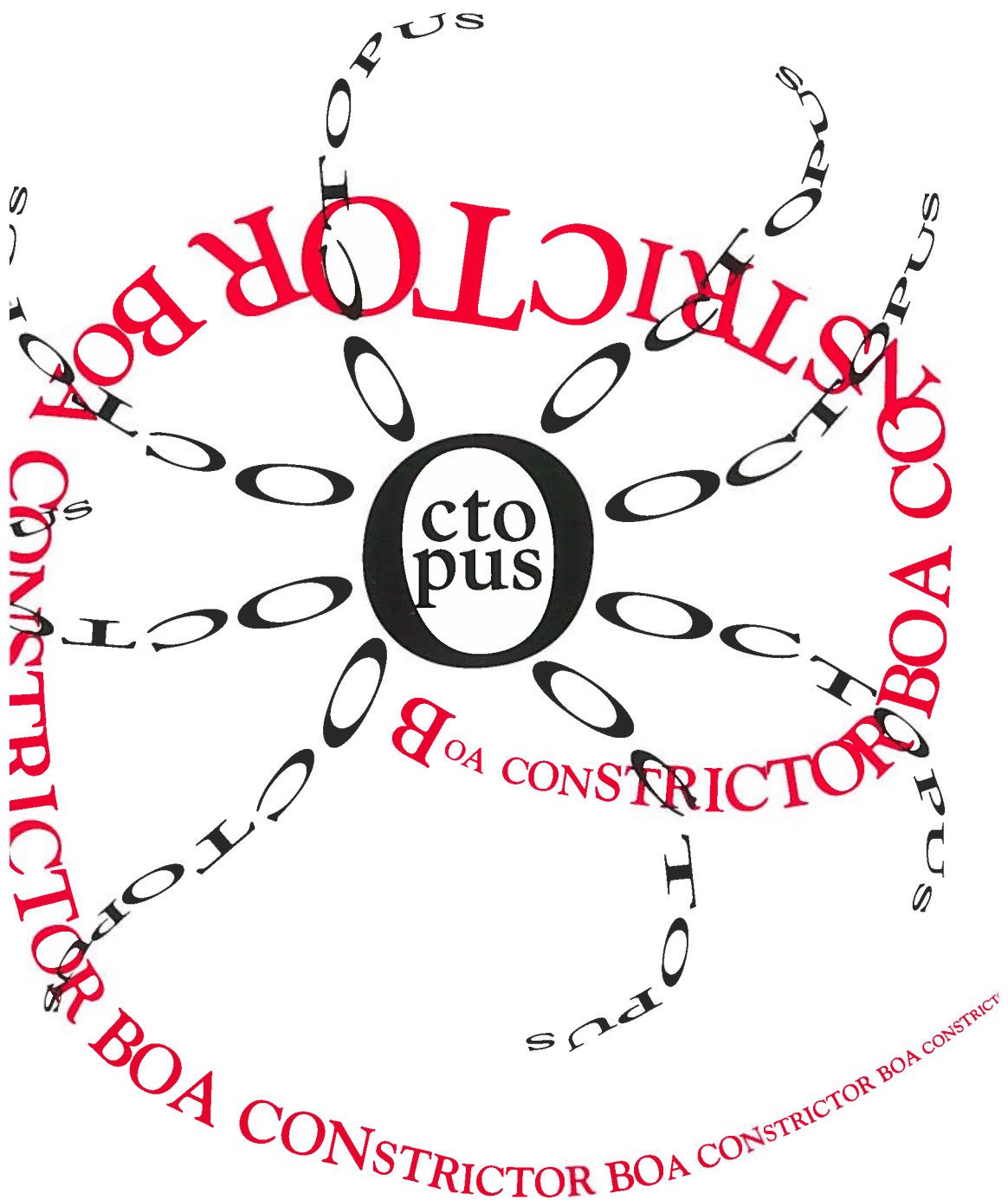
octopus

wrestles a

TRIO

cto  
pus

it's **hard** to **figure** out **who's** winning.



# THE LAY-UP

There's a pass across court. Right to me. I'm in the clear. I take off downcourt. Dribbling, running.

A defender blocks me, but I make a little move and get around him. All clear in front of me! Just keep dribbling and don't scre



# Mom Says, "No New Pets!"

RIP  
1998  
SSSSAMMY  
SSSNEAKY SSSNAKE

You  
never  
should  
have  
crawled  
into the  
La-Z-Boy

HERE LIES  
PIRATE  
THE CAT  
SHE STOLE  
HER LAST  
CHICKEN LEG  
IN 1997

2000  
DIGGY II  
YOUR INSIDES  
FELL OUT  
YOUR BUTT  
GROSS!

1999  
DIGGY  
OVERACTIVE  
HAMSTER  
HE BROKE HIS  
NECK IN THE  
EXERCISE WHEEL

RIZZO  
2002  
EXCELLENT RAT  
CHEWED TO LIVE,  
LIVED TO CHEW  
—BUT NOT THE  
TOASTER CORD

KNUCKLEHEAD  
2004  
A PARAKEET WE ALL  
LOOKED UP TO  
WATCH OUT FOR  
CEILING FANS  
IN HEAVEN

Why not?

The backyard is full!



# BLOODCURDLING SCREAMS

My sister makes this cool noise  
when she's in the shower  
and I flush the toilet.



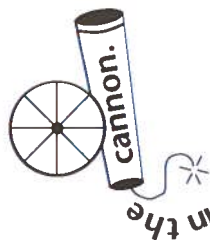
Wait till I get  
my hands  
on you, Robert!  
You did that  
on purpose.

# Spew Machine

I'd have the usual stuff like loop-de-loops. But I'd make them go much faster. Of course, I'd I

If I designed a roller coaster, you'd really have reason to spew. Then I'd I

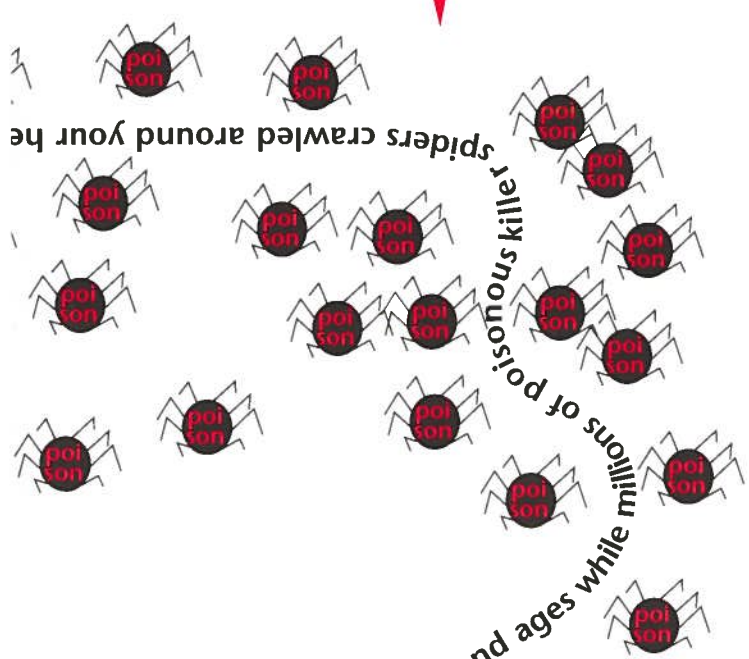
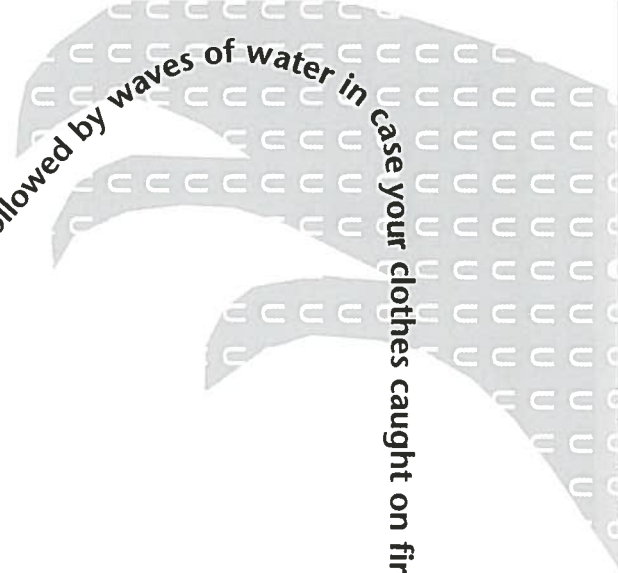
just  
drop,  
free-  
falling  
littun  
the  
parachute  
opened.



**BANG! ZOOM!**

Into the air, where you'd peak and then  
s when you'd hit the rim of an ice-cave vortex. It's like the inside  
of a frozen tornado that takes you swirling down this slippery drai  
un' around and around until you're so dizzy that you  
can't even focus. Finally,  
you'd be in the

Which it always would.  
Well, 90% of the time, anyway.



es shoot out at you when you went by, followed by waves of water in case your clothes caught on fire. The big drop would be really, really steep and really, really long. You'd have to stay upside down and sideways for ages and ages while millions of poisonous killer spiders crawled around you he

# Robert's Four At-Bats

**FIRST INNING:** Robert hits a long fly ball to deep, deep, deep center field. It l  
A wild pitch! Robert breaks for home. It'll be close. He sll-!!-!!-!!-!!-!!-!!-!!-!!-!!  
**SECOND INNING:** Robert smashes a line drive, but the short

**FIRST INNING:** Robert smashes a line drive, but the shortstop is in the way. He still will be close. He still will be close.

**THIRD INNING:** Robert smashes a line drive, but the shortstop is in the way. He still will be close. He still will be close.

**FIFTH INNING:** A bouncing ground ball to the second baseman.

**FIFTH INNING:** A bouncing ground ball to the second base

**BOTTOM OF THE SEVENTH:** It's all tied up. Robert comes to bat

**BOTTOM OF THE SEVENTH:** It's all tied up. Robert comes to bat. Robert takes off for first. He sees the right fielder boot the ball, so he makes the turn and heads for second base. Shoot!

Cougars win!  
Cougars win!  
Cougars win!

t might be out of here! The center fielder goes back, back, back to the fence . . . and makes the catch. Rats!

s and makes a fantastic grab. Darn it.

The next batter flies deep to right  
SAFE!  
a wicked hop, but he snags it and  
fires it  
a solid hit  
to right. The outfielder misjudges the bounce and bobbles the ball.  
over to first. It's close, but Ror  
se the ball so he slides

A hand-drawn illustration of a toilet bowl. The bowl is represented by a large circle with a thick, dark, irregular border. At the top of the bowl, there is a rectangular shape representing the toilet seat and tank area. Inside the bowl, there are three concentric circles, also drawn with thick, dark, irregular lines. The text is written in a serif font, following the curves of these concentric circles. The outermost circle contains the text 'When you flush a toilet in the Northern Hemisphere, the water drains in a clockwise direction. They say it goes counterclockwise in the Southern Hemisphere. I try to think about how interesting that is while I'm kneeling here, but all I can think about is the disgusting taste in my mouth.' The middle circle contains the text 'SICK DAY' in red. The innermost circle contains the text 'When you flush a toilet in the Northern Hemisphere, the water drains in a clockwise direction. They say it goes counterclockwise in the Southern Hemisphere. I try to think about how interesting that is while I'm kneeling here, but all I can think about is the disgusting taste in my mouth.'

## SICK DAY

When you flush a toilet in the Northern Hemisphere, the water drains in a clockwise direction. They say it goes counterclockwise in the Southern Hemisphere. I try to think about how interesting that is while I'm kneeling here, but all I can think about is the disgusting taste in my mouth.

# New Game, Old Computer

Neutrino is totally tough,  
totally chill,  
totally indestructible.  
She enters the Black Cave of Subatomica.

She makes a perfect cliff dive  
into the toxic  
Muon Marsh.

She jumps from  
to  
rock  
to  
rock  
across the  
Lepton Lava Lake.

She leaps to grab a Pion Vine  
in the  
Electro-  
Rain  
Forest.

She swings  
in jerky slo-mo  
over the abyss  
and just freezes.

The little hourglass  
and flips and flips and  
flips and flips and  
flips.

The computer crashes.  
Neutrino is gone—vaporized  
into a billion little atoms  
scattered someplace  
in the hard drive.

Defeated by a  
senile computer and  
my totally cheap father.

# SLEEPOVER

## Robert's Bed

I like sleeping over. Your room is so cool.

I will. You've got totally superior stuff.

Let's talk for a while.

How come you always win at chess?

I think it's because you're four years older.

I'm going to practice a lot, and  
next time we come to visit, I'll beat you.

I like *Huggin' the Rail*. I can win that game.

Don't be a sore loser.

Great! What?

Okay, I'll start. . . .

. . .

. . .

Hey! No fair.



# CONVERSATION

## Cousin Paul's Bed

Knock yourself out.

No. I mean it. Knock yourself out—shut up,  
be quiet, go to sleep.

You talked all day. You never shut up.  
Now go to sleep.

I'm smarter than you.

No, it's because I'm smarter.

I'll still be four years older. And I'll still be smarter.

It's a stupid board game. It's just luck. Whoever  
rolls the highest number wins. No skill. All luck.

I have a game we can play.

Who can stay quiet the longest. Ready, set, GO!

...

...

...

# It's Not Fair

Nobody  
ever actually  
forbid me  
to shoot off  
fireworks.

Maybe  
I should have  
known better,  
but *technically*  
I wasn't disobeying.

It was cool, though.

The rocket went up very nicely, flying in a graceful arc up over the garage, heading to

I lit the  
fuse and watched it burn down.

I'd wrapped my sister's math  
homework around the tube.

front yard. Then it exploded,  
little hunks of algebra  
blasting apart,  
sparks shooting out  
in every direction,  
a tiny star  
going nova,  
and then  
the pieces

fluttering  
down  
like  
a

beautiful

confetti  
parade for  
Einstein.

I am so grounded.  
And my parents made me  
apologize to my sister.  
But it's not *all* bad.  
Now she's not talking to me.

And that's the lamest excuse you've come up with yet.

[illegible]



# Stop Playing with Your Food!



I ONLY like spaghetti.

It's exactly the same, Robert. Pasta is pasta. By the way, you spelled linguine wrong.

I don't care. It's flat and it's stupid.

Put some tomato sauce on it, you'll never know the difference.

I already know the difference! I'm just going to leave it plain so I can hate it more.

So I've been sitting here for an hour because I have to eat everything on my plate.

# THE CAST

I was on my porch  
when you came down  
the hill. I never  
knew a bike could  
go that fast.  
Tommy Z.



I'll bring you  
homework over every  
day after school.  
XOXO,  
Marcia  
Feddleston



I wish I could see  
inside of an ambulance  
I bet it was great.  
Molly S.



Nice work, bro!  
You'd do anything to get  
out of chores.

Sis

Yo! My advice-  
when the back  
brakes go, take it  
easy with the  
front brakes.  
Dickie

Wow!  
Flipped out, dude.  
Alex

Wait till you  
see your bike.  
It's totally  
totaled!

Ethan

Hey, Superman.  
I never knew you could fly.  
Too bad about the landing.  
Matt S.

Checkmate.  
Paul

No school for two  
weeks?!  
You lucky dog.  
Zack B.



What a DORK!!!  
Ronald W.



A Note from the Author

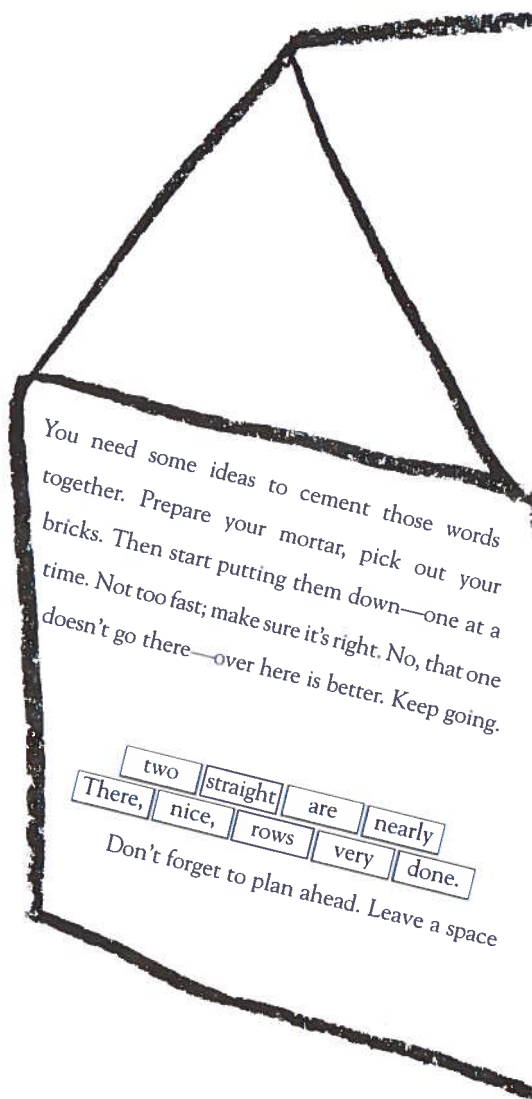
# THE LITTLE HOUSE

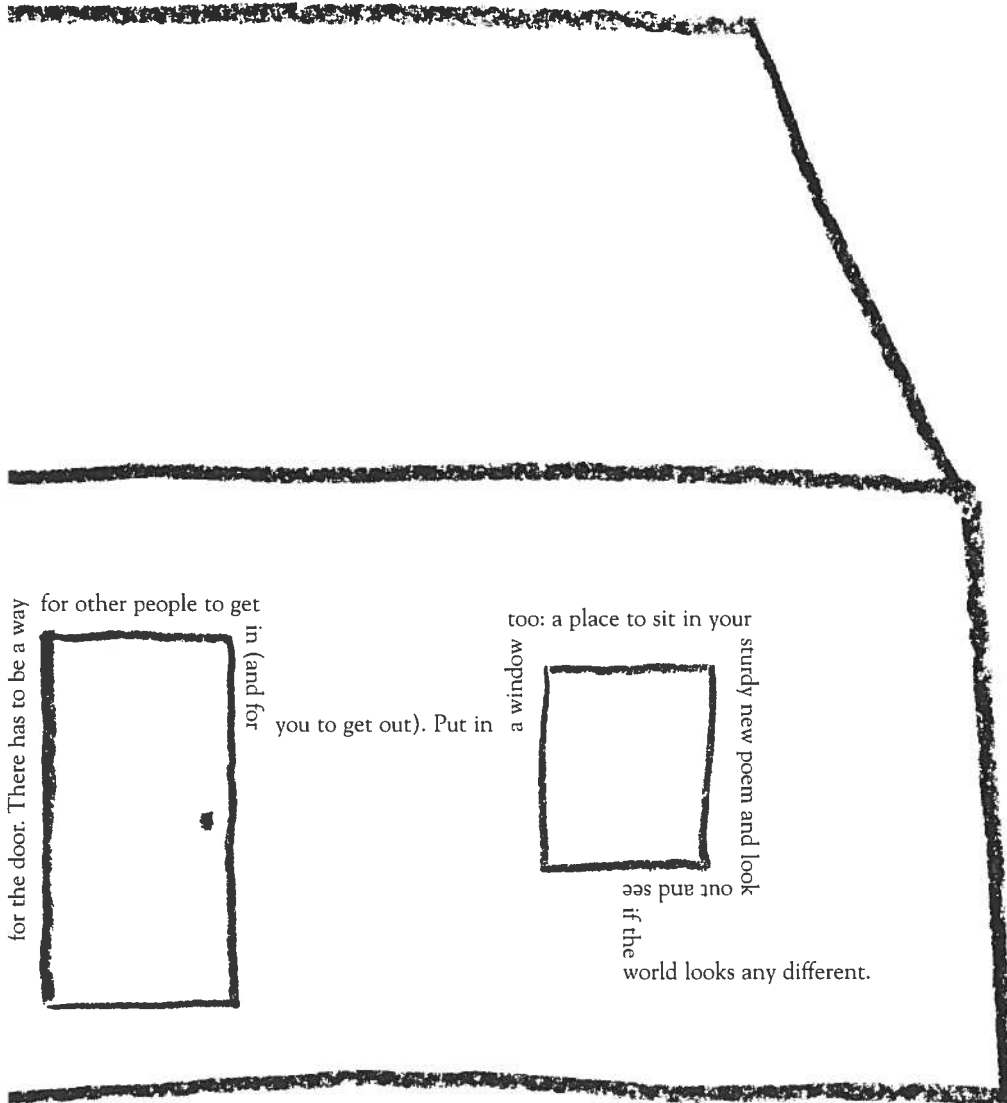
Building  
a poem is like  
building a little house.

You start  
with some bricks—  
a pile of words.

They're  
all mixed up. There is  
no order.

They keep  
tumbling all  
over each other.





for the door. There has to be a way  
for other people to get  
in (and for

you to get out). Put in

too: a place to sit in your  
a window

sturdy new poem and look  
out and see  
if the  
world looks any different.



**JOHN GRANDITS**, an award-winning book and magazine designer, is the author of *Pictures Tell Stories*, a book about fine art for young children, and of “Beatrice Black Bear,” a cartoon for *Click* magazine. He has been fascinated by type and printing all his life. In fact, the first job he undertook—at age nine—was to hand-set type and print himself a business card. He lives in Red Bank, N.J., with his wife, Joanne, a children’s librarian, and Gilbert, an evil cat. *Technically, It’s Not My Fault* is his first book of poetry.

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- On the Stairs in the Middle of the Night •
- Where New Words Come From • The Tower •
- How We Ended Up with a Plain Pizza •
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- The Lay-up • Mom Says, "No New Pets!" • Bloodcurdling Screams •
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- New Game, Old Computer • Sleepover Conversation • It's Not Fair •
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- The Little House •



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