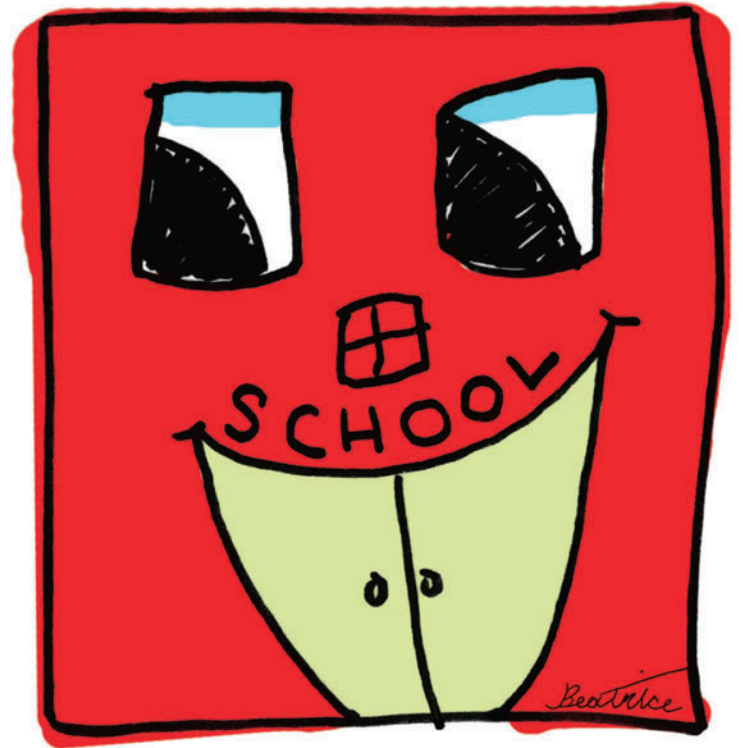
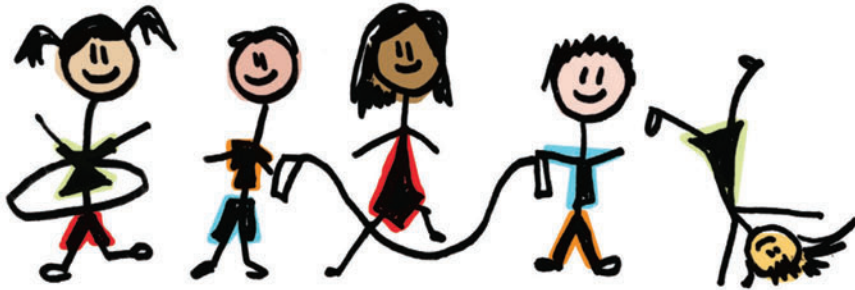


If I Ran The Schools

Written by Gene Weisfeld



Illustrated by Asher Weisfeld, Beatrice Weisfeld, Ilana Pereyra-Weisfeld, Kosmo Pereyra-Weisfeld

If I Ran The Schools

by Gene Weisfeld



Beatrice

dedication

I dedicate this book to my wife, Billie Blair, for her help, support and patience, my sons and daughters-in-law for their help, and most especially Asher, Trixie, Ilana and Kosmo for the illustrations that, I hope, help make this book enjoyable and interesting.

But most of all, I dedicate this book to all the teachers who get up each morning and go to school, to try, in a system that is beyond broken, to teach all too many students who don't care, have completely given up, hate school, are scarred by their home lives, are disruptive, defiant, insolent and antagonistic, agonizingly behind where they should be, and suffer from the "Teflon® effect" (immediately forgetting the simplest information).

prologue

After practicing law for 30 years and running a school based mentoring program for 12, I “retired” and became a substitute teacher and have subbed for over 9 years in all the elementary schools in the Santa Fe Public School District.

During this time, it became obvious to me that the system is badly broken. Despite shockingly low test scores going back decades (not to mention the latest test scores that showed, for example, that less than 1% of 8th grade students in the Santa Fe public schools were proficient in Algebra), nothing has changed significantly in the way kids are taught since public schools were created.

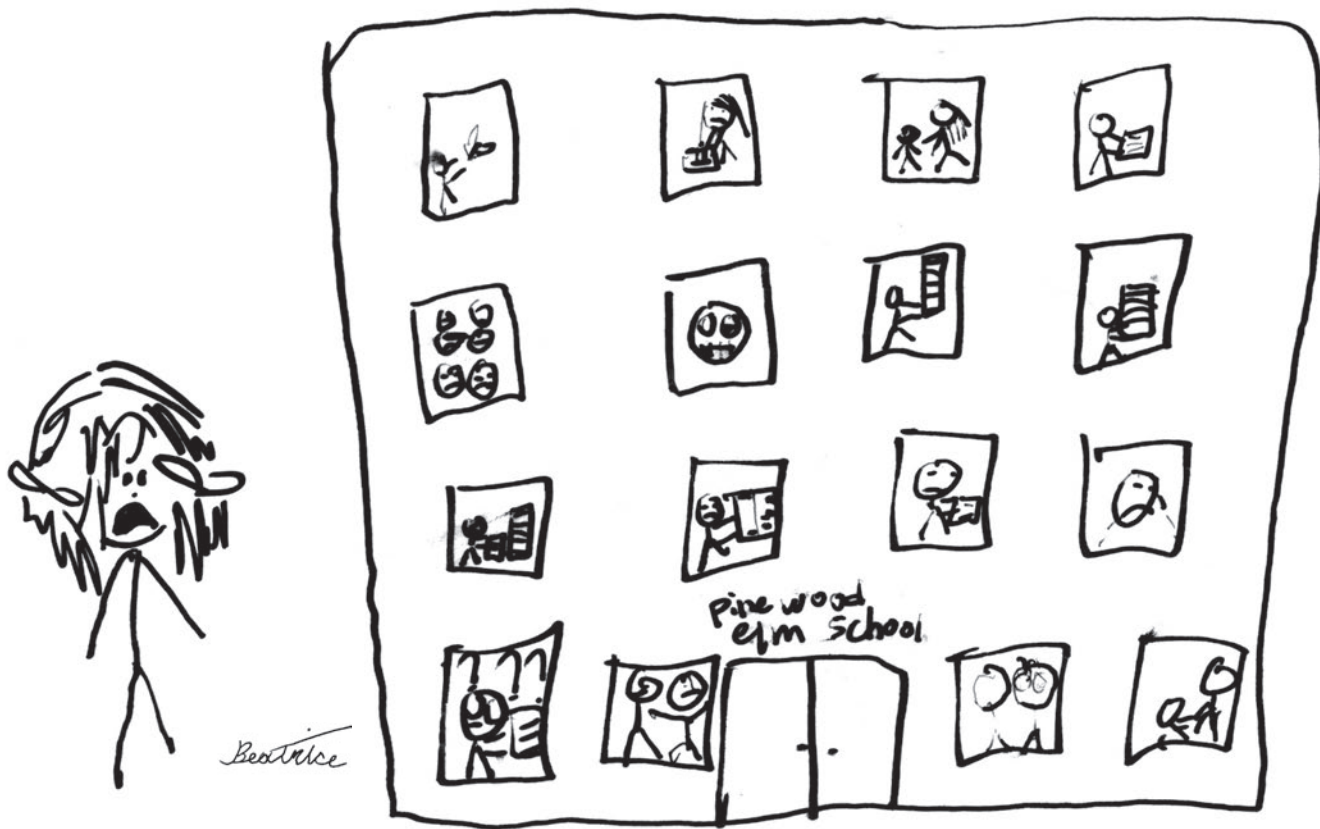
I also saw how badly the system treats its teachers.

This lack of change, the number of kids leaving, or graduating from, school unable to read, write, spell, think critically and do basic math, and the misery of so many kids and teachers moved me to write this book.

I hope teachers, parents, students and anyone interested in education find it edifying and enjoyable.

Gene Weisfeld

Santa Fe, New Mexico



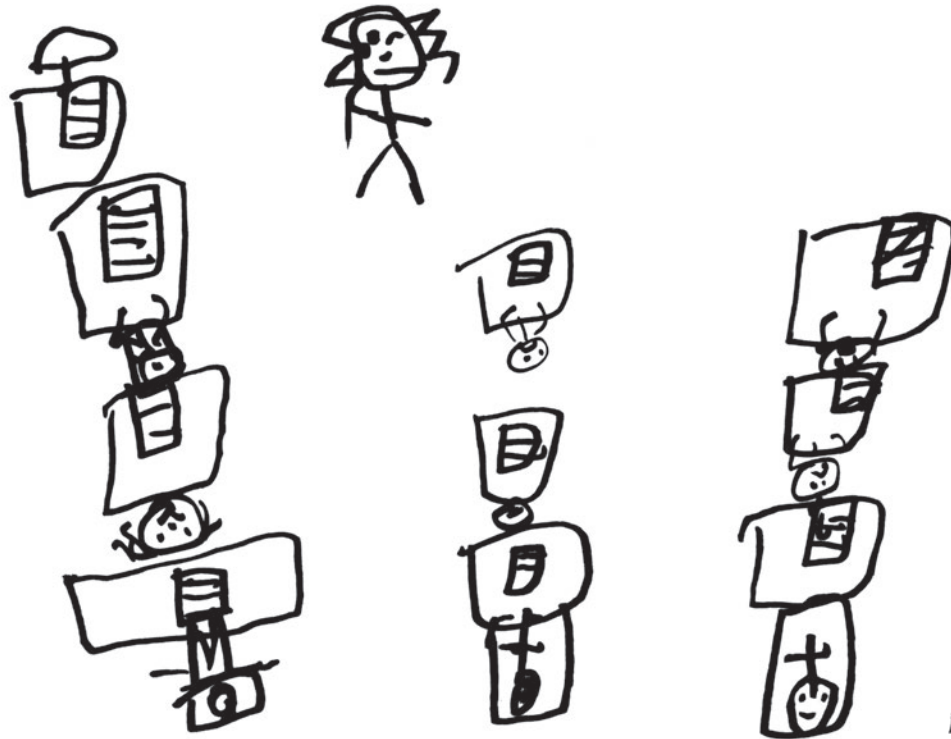
The schools are in trouble, it's sad but it's true,
Though the people who run them are trying, they do.

But if I ran the schools said
young Carol McFoo,
I'd make a few changes,
that's just what I'd do.

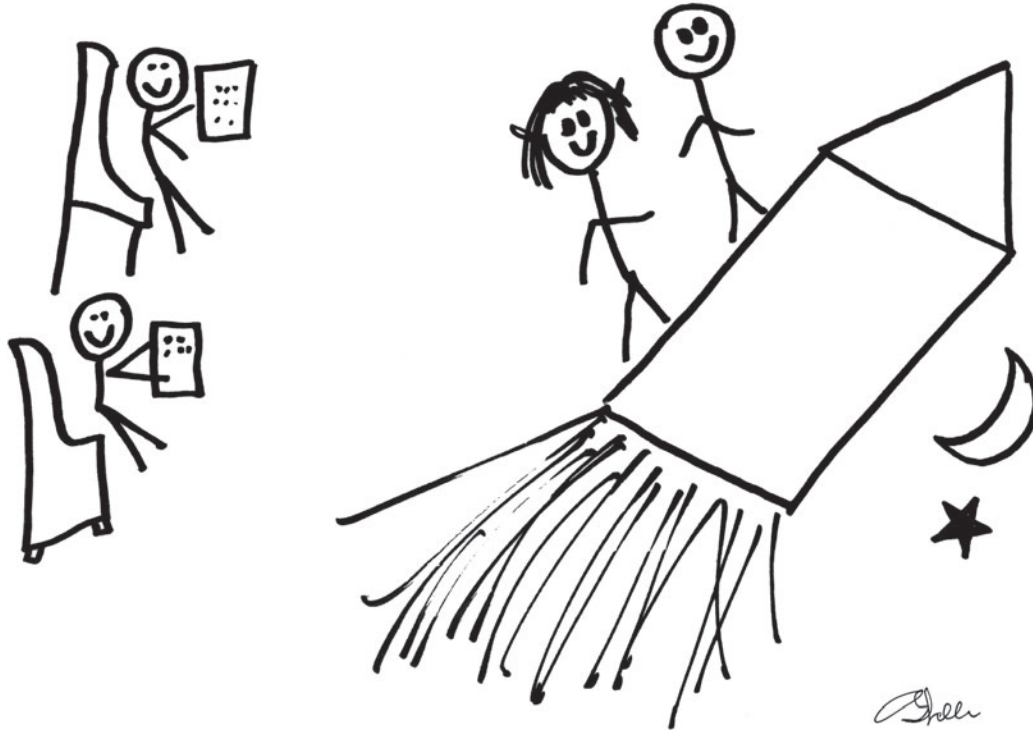
And somehow or other,
I know I could find,
Better ways kids could learn
so it wouldn't be a grind.



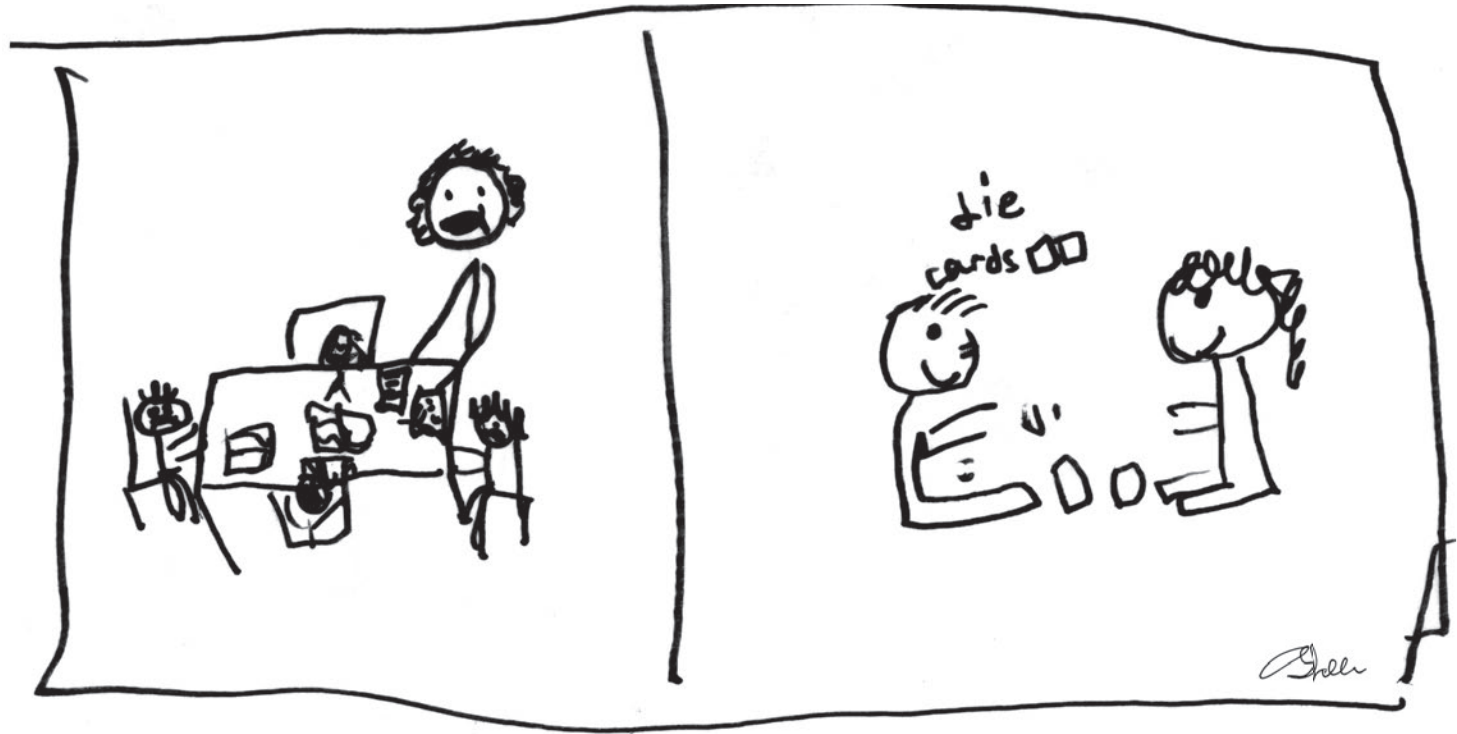
Kids sitting for hours, just stuck in their seat,
You see all the time, it all just repeats,
You see things like that in just any old school,
It's really old fashioned, I want something cool.



I'd make the seats comfy, so to sit not's a chore,
But why bother with chairs, let 'em sit on the floor,
Or under their tables, stretched out on the carpet,
They'll get so much work done, they'll take off like a rocket.



Handing out work sheets,
what a waste, what a shame,
Let's learn reading and math
by playing a game.



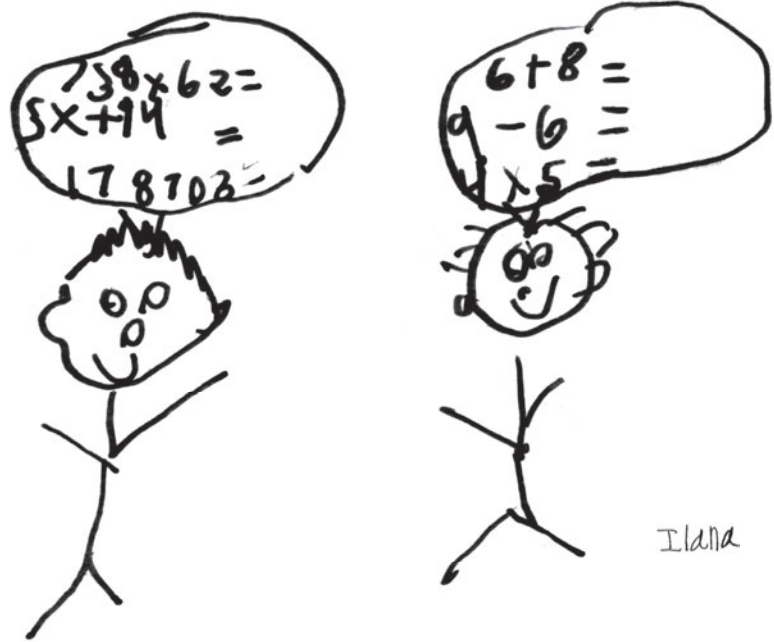


Shel

verb	noun	verb	noun	verb
adjective	adverb	verb	noun	free space
noun	verb	free space	noun	free space
adverb	noun	verb	noun	adjective
adjective	verb	noun	verb	adverb

To learn how to spell
 can be boring and dull,
 But playing words games,
 now that would be swell.

My new school, McFoo school,
won't make the kids balk,
My new school, McFoo school,
will make the kids talk.



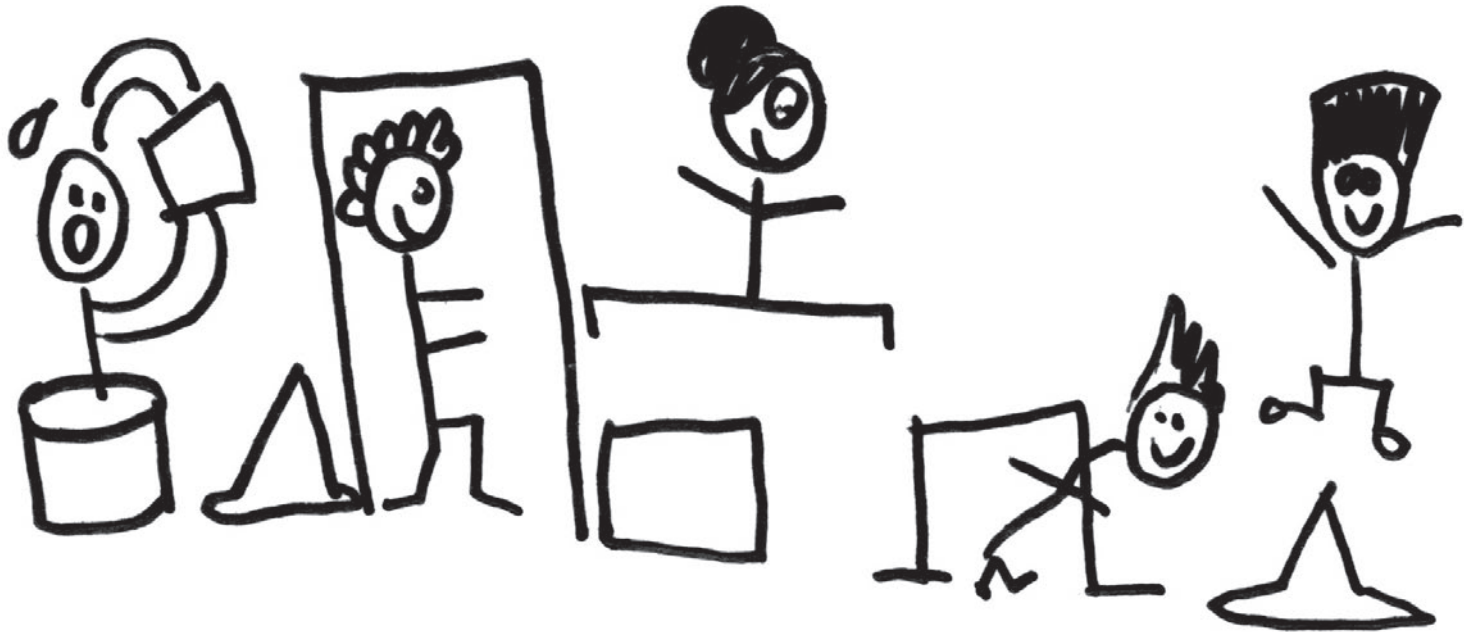
They'll talk about reading, they'll talk about math,
They'll talk about science while taking a bath.
They'll talk about adding and minusing too,
They'll talk about timesing and dividing by two.



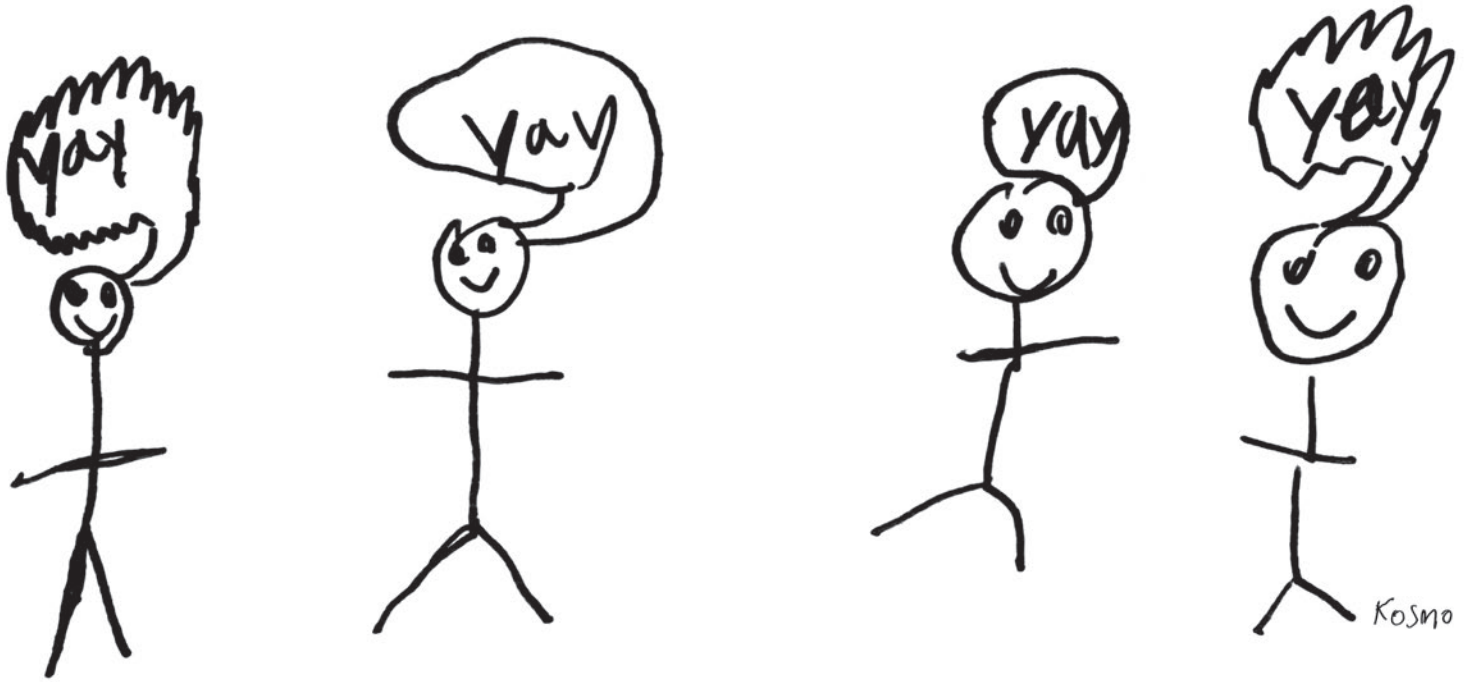
cornstarch and water
Make
lebleck

Ilana

And that's just the start, I'll do better than that,
I'll make obstacle courses for kids who are fat,
And skinny and short, and are slow and are fast,
Are big and are little, often first, often last.



Beatrix



Both for boys and for girls, it'll be lots of fun,
They'll be proud of themselves when they see what they've done.

Kids who learn facts
but do not remember,
Don't do well on tests
and forget by September.
Oh, they may pass a test
but won't get the idea,
That thinking and dreaming
are nothing to fear.
It's what makes us all special
and better and proud,
So we don't become robots or
get lost in the crowd.

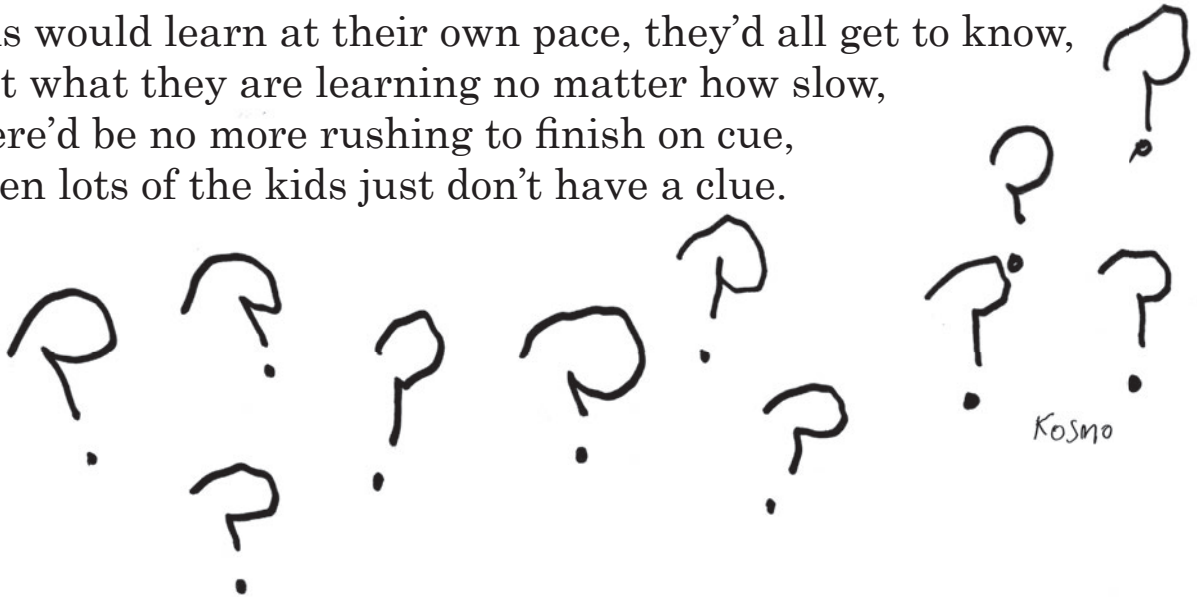




Then kids will sit up and they'll say "this is cool,"
This young Carol McFoo is nobody's fool.
She sees what we need, and she knows we can do it.
If we all work together we'll be done in a minute.



Kids would learn at their own pace, they'd all get to know,
Just what they are learning no matter how slow,
There'd be no more rushing to finish on cue,
When lots of the kids just don't have a clue.



Kosno



Allen

Kids who are noisy, and loud and a trouble,
Need someplace to go, their very own bubble,
A small space, so comfy, so safe and so near,
That these out of bound kids will find freedom from fear.



Ilana



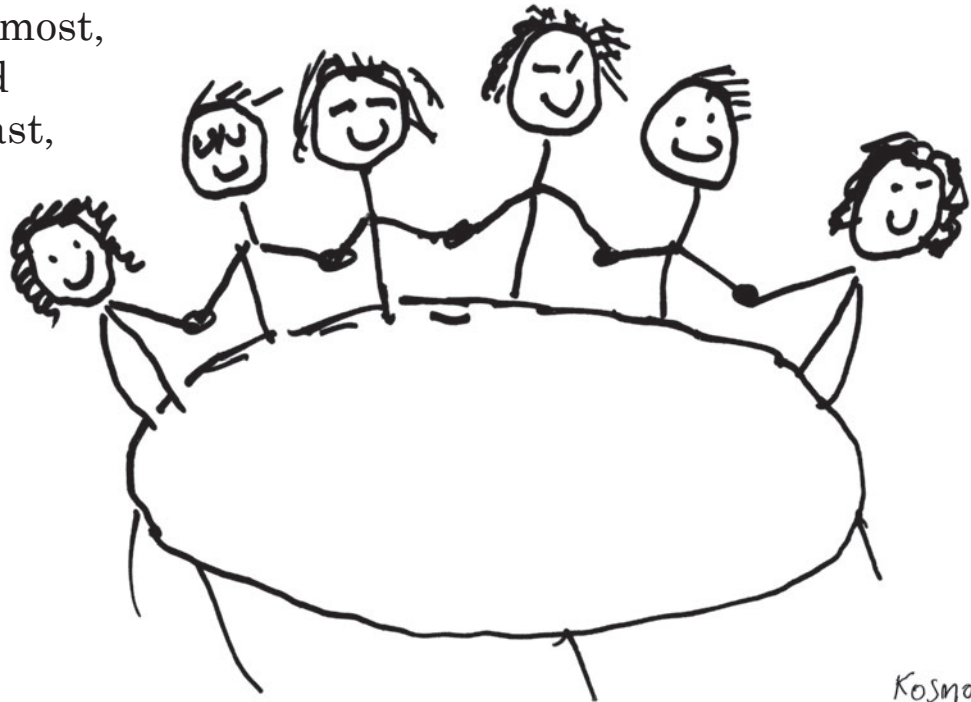
They won't keep on fighting, they won't be disruptive,
They'll all settle down and become quite constructive.



There'll be much more outside time, to everyone's pleasure,
The research is clear, all the kids do much better,
The more they can run, the more play with zest,
The better they'll do when they take their next test.



Teachers and principals
will all get along,
'Cause working together
is what makes a school strong.
Supporting each other
is what matters the most,
It turns schools around
and lets the kids boast,

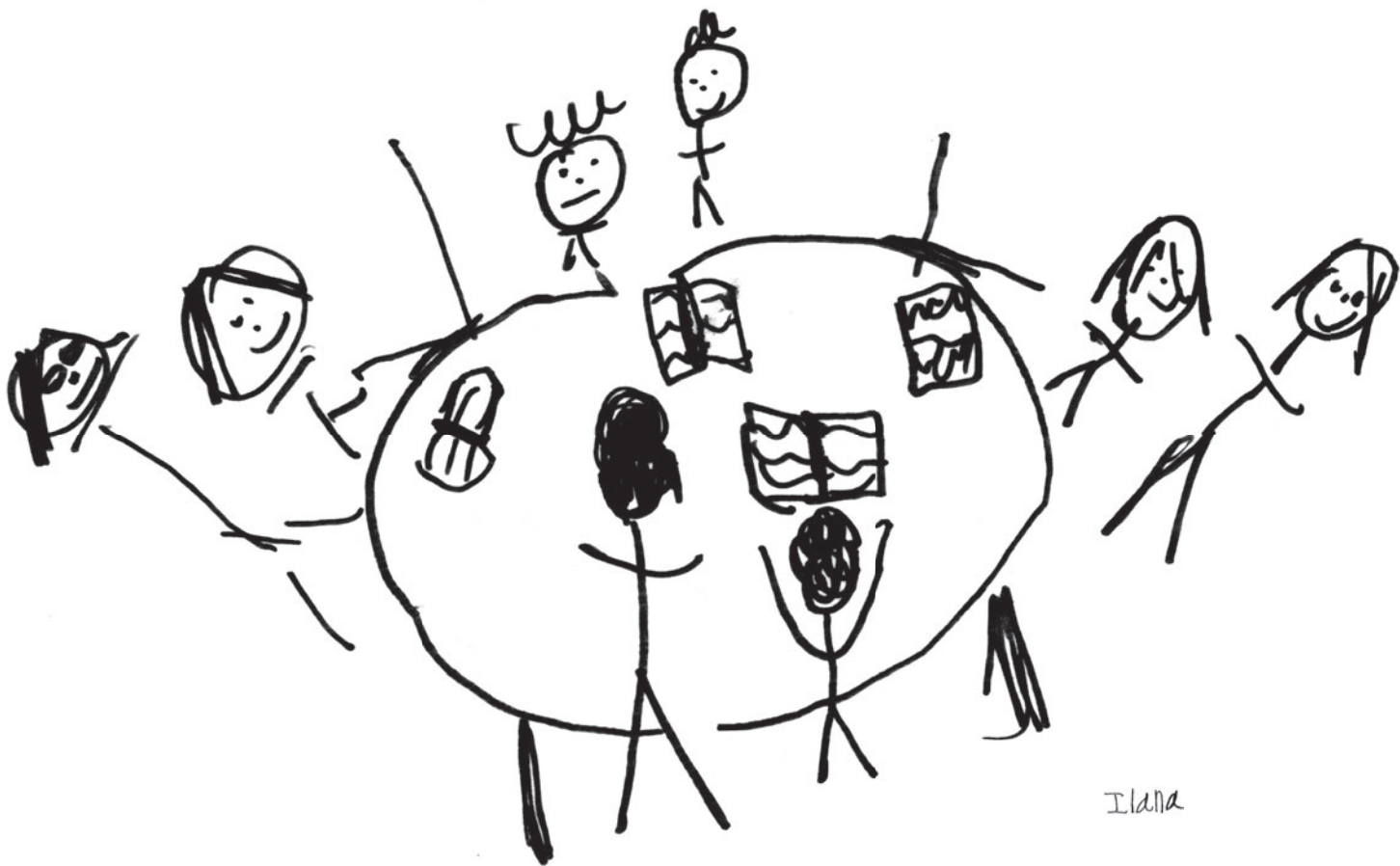




Beatrice

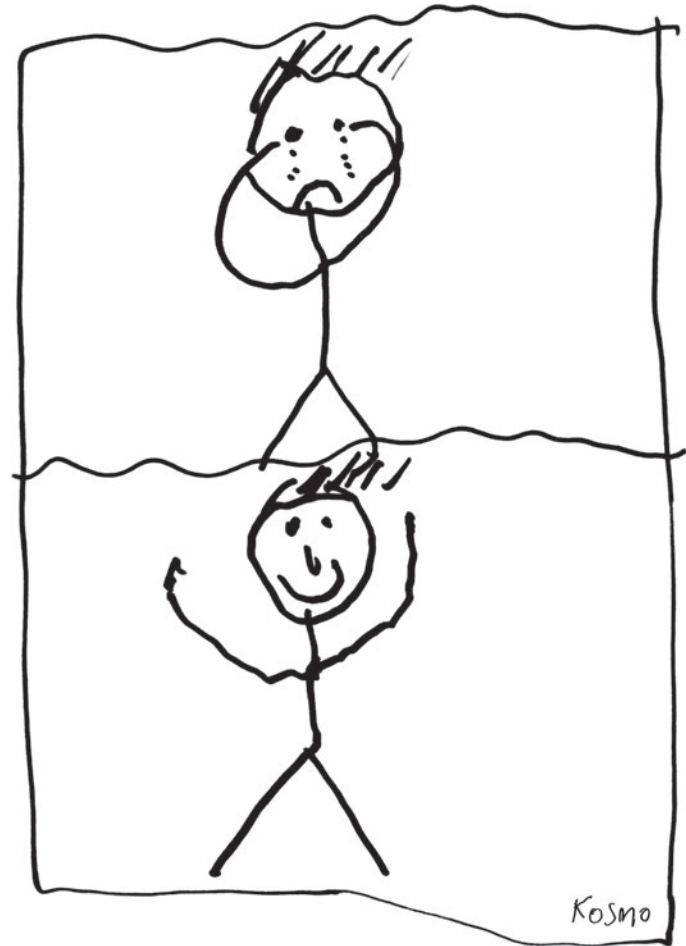
How they're learning and growing
and using their brains,
To make themselves smarter
while avoiding the pains,
Of boredom and rote,
thinking learning's a chore,
When they all could be
joyfully learning to soar.

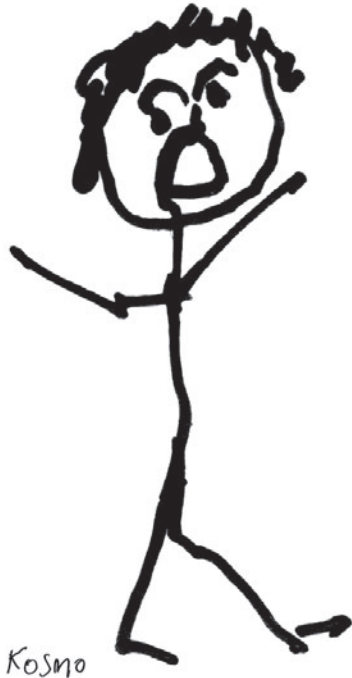
Big kids would help littles on a regular basis,
Being role models puts smiles on faces.
As the bigs help the littles their friendships will grow,
And all through the school everybody will know,
To be nicer and kinder and friendlier too,
To say “please” and “thank you” and “how do you do”?



Ilana

There'll be much less crying
and whining and booing,
But many more smiles
and lots of yoo hooing.

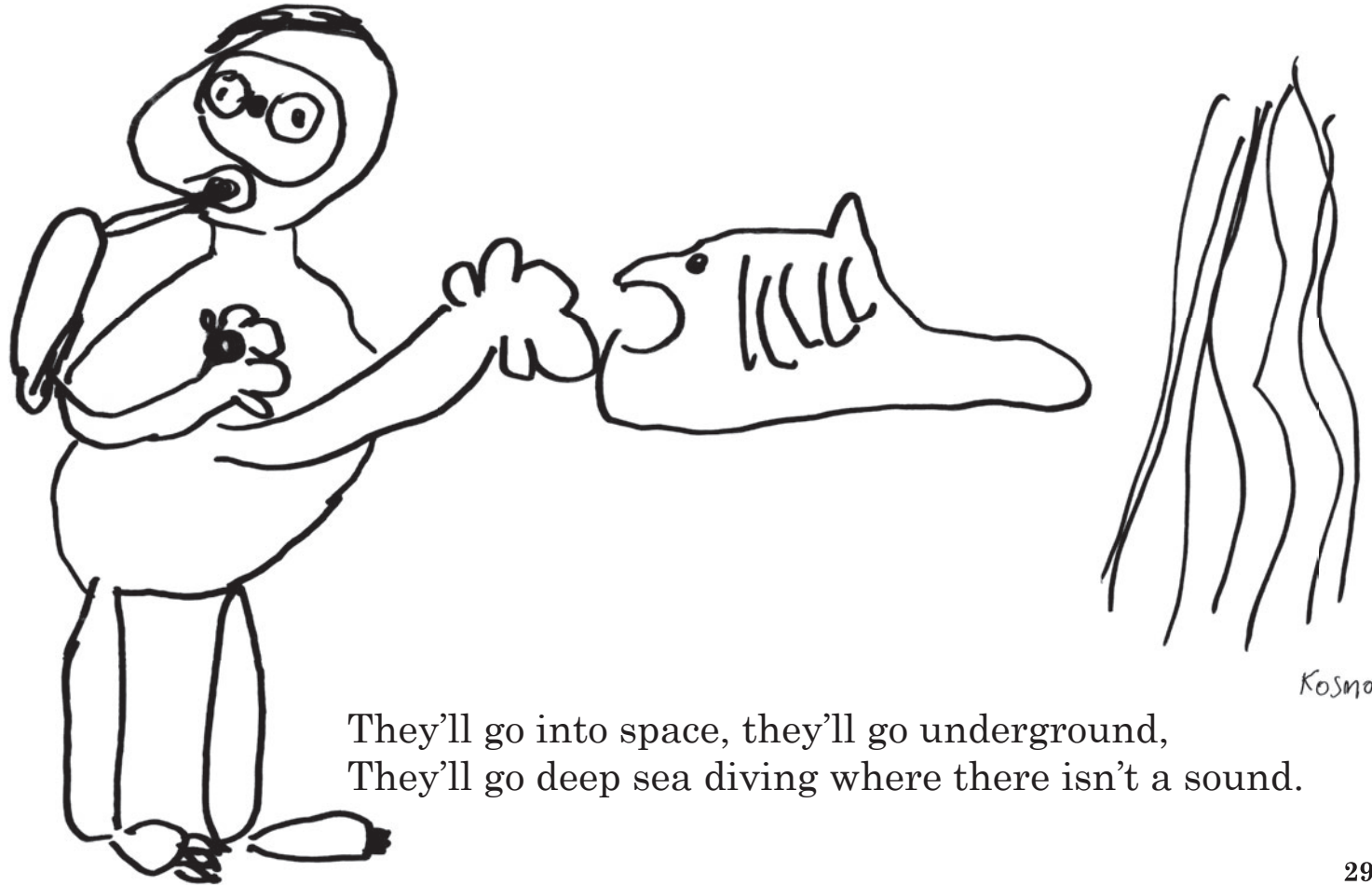




There'll be no more bullying,
there'll be no more strife,
And things will be better
in everyone's life.



If I ran the schools said young Carol McFoo,
What a wonderful place it would be, yes it's true.
They'll use the new smart boards to do wondrous things,
Like make friends in Paris, La Paz and Beijing.



They'll go into space, they'll go underground,
They'll go deep sea diving where there isn't a sound.

Kosmo

They'll hear African drumming, Mariachi, and soul,



Andean flutes and good rock and roll.

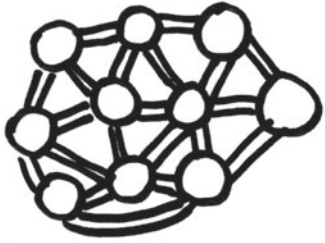




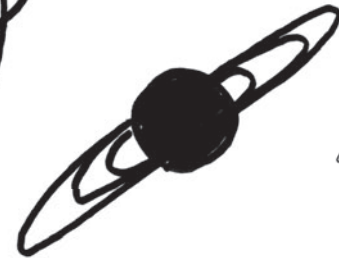
They'll meet lots of people from all round the globe,
Light skinned and dark skinned and brown skinned and gold.



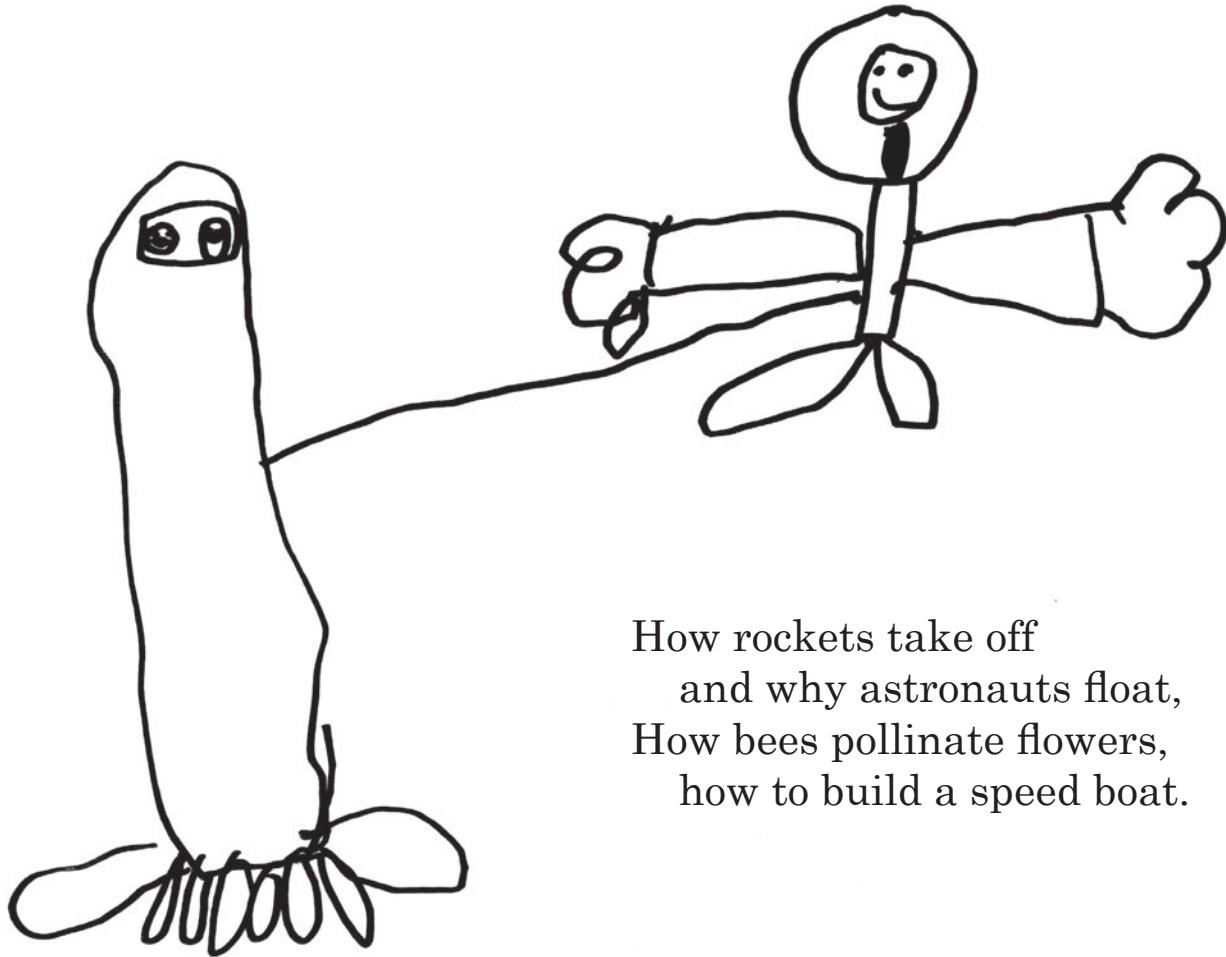
They'll see turbans and cheongs and burkas and shorts,
Parkas and trousers and dresses and skorts.
Long flowing robes, and clothing so pretty,
That they'll all ooh and aah and even be giddy.



They'll learn about black holes,
how particles fare,
Why the sun shines
and why there is air.



Green



Kosmo

How rockets take off
and why astronauts float,
How bees pollinate flowers,
how to build a speed boat.

They'll learn about writers and poets, and artists,
How we all have a spark of our own that shows brightest,
When given a chance to spring forth and bloom,
They'll give off such a glow, they'll light up the room.



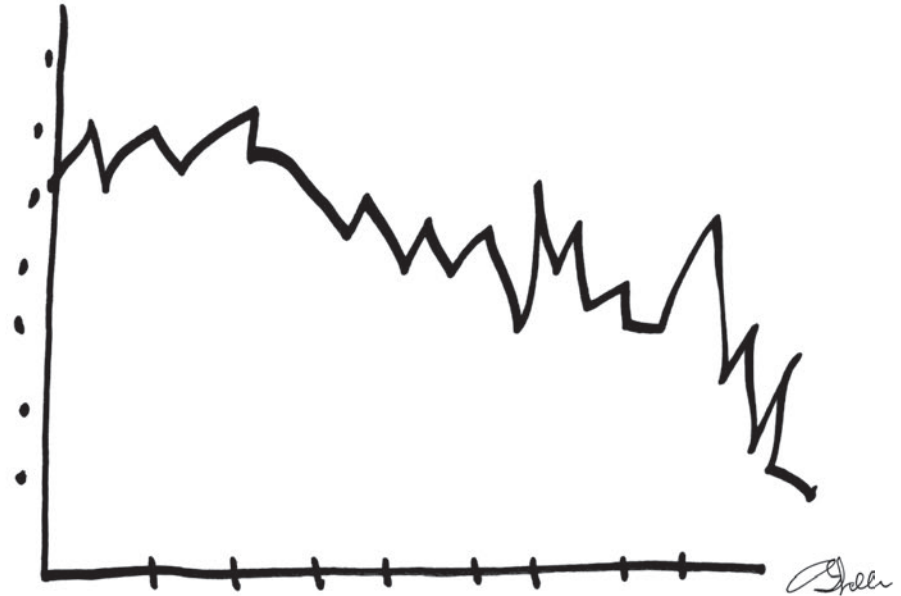
They'll learn about puppies and kittens and babies,
And songs full of gladness and stories of maybes.
They'll all learn to sing, to give out a great sound,
While laughter and gladness and joy will abound.



Beatrix

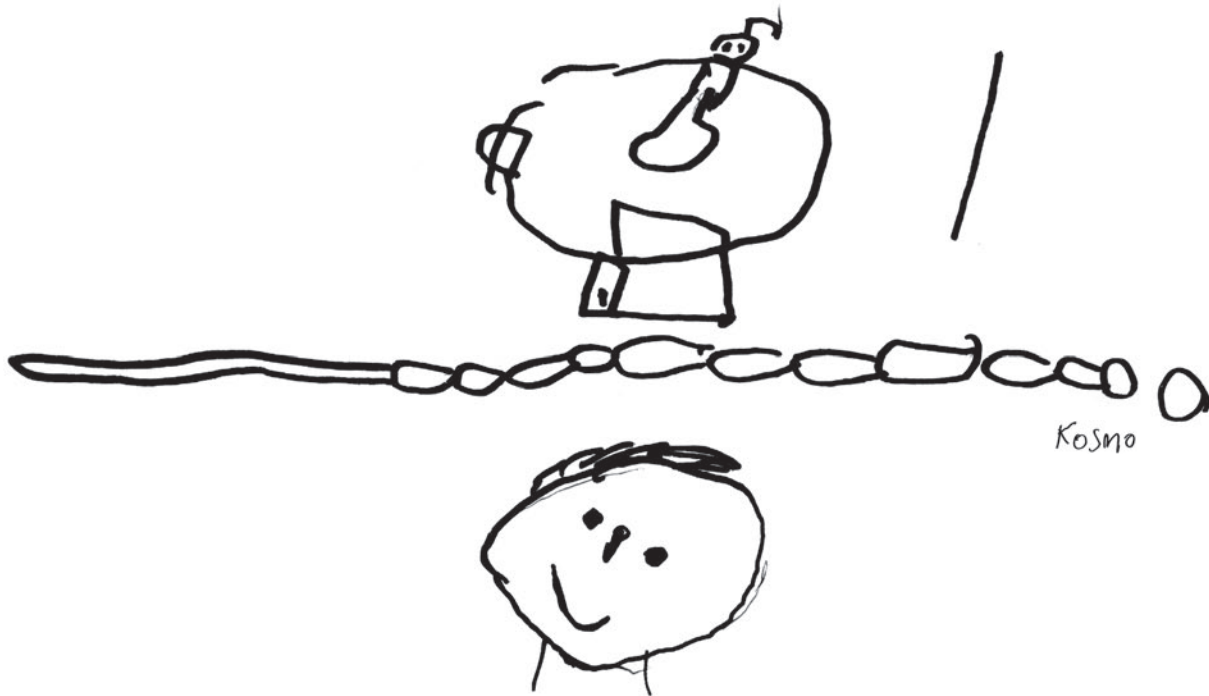


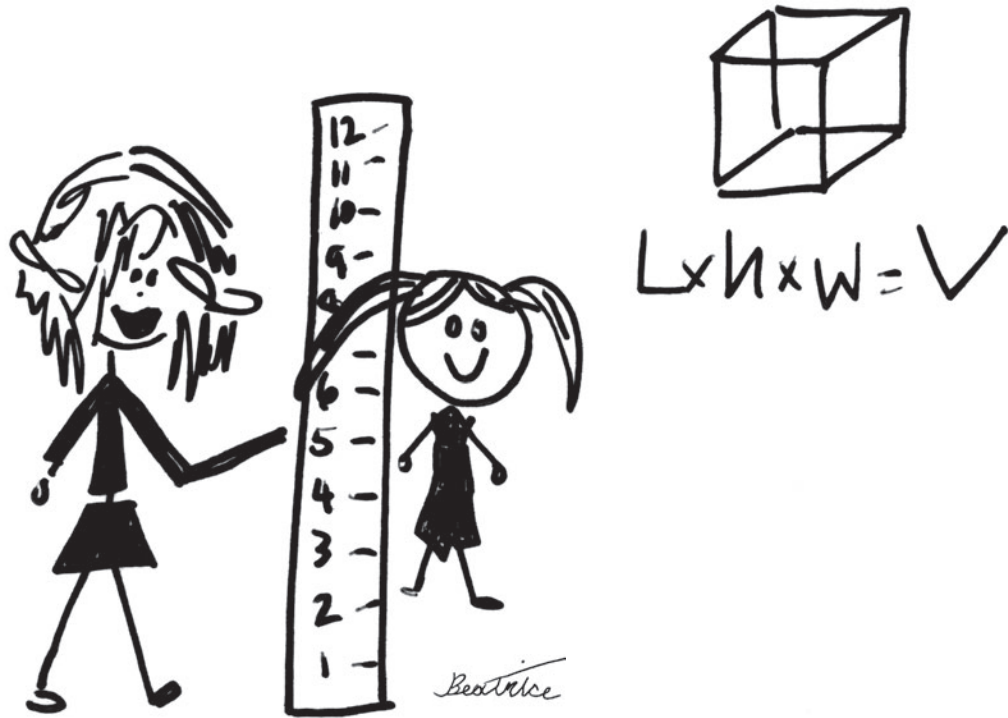
They'll make up experiments with things from their houses,
They'll run rats through mazes or maybe use mice.
They'll blow up balloons, have balloony races,
To learn about speed, about distance and paces.



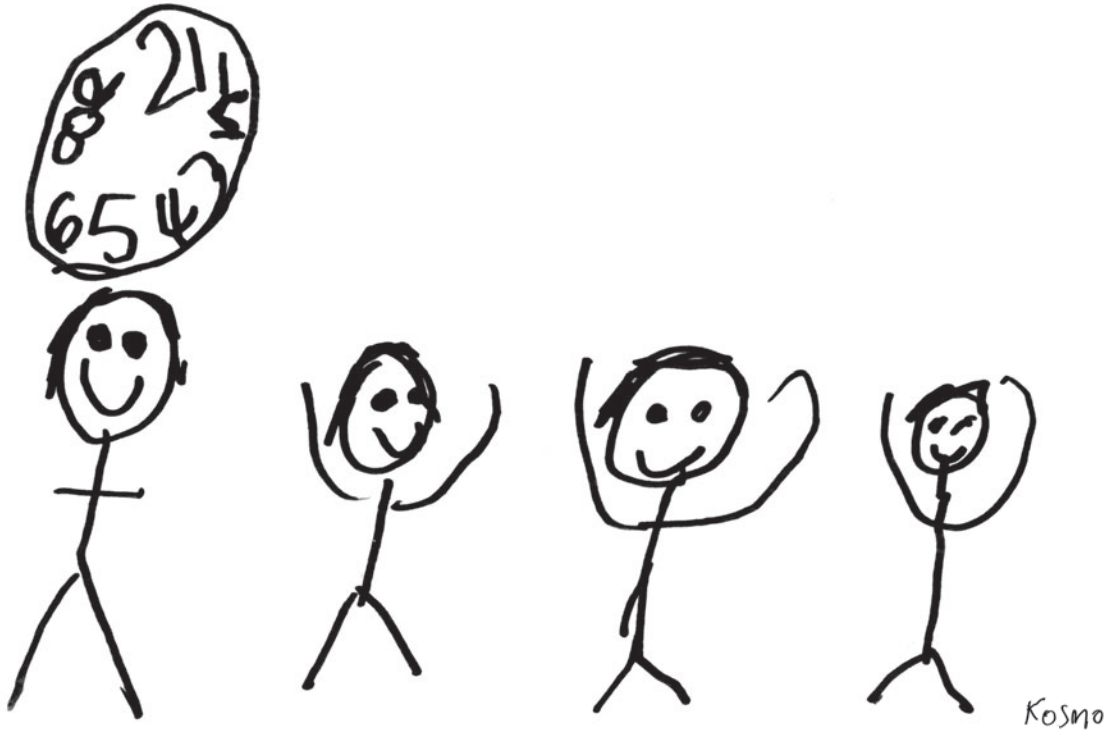
They'll look and they'll measure, they'll find out a lot,
They'll use lots of numbers, on graphs they will plot,
The results of their speriments, the good and the bad,
But they'll all learn a lot and of that they'll be glad.

They'll build things in class out of match sticks and straws,
And glue and pipe cleaners and a bunch of gee-gaws.
After drawing up plans to make sure that's they're right,
They'll figure out length, they'll figure out height,

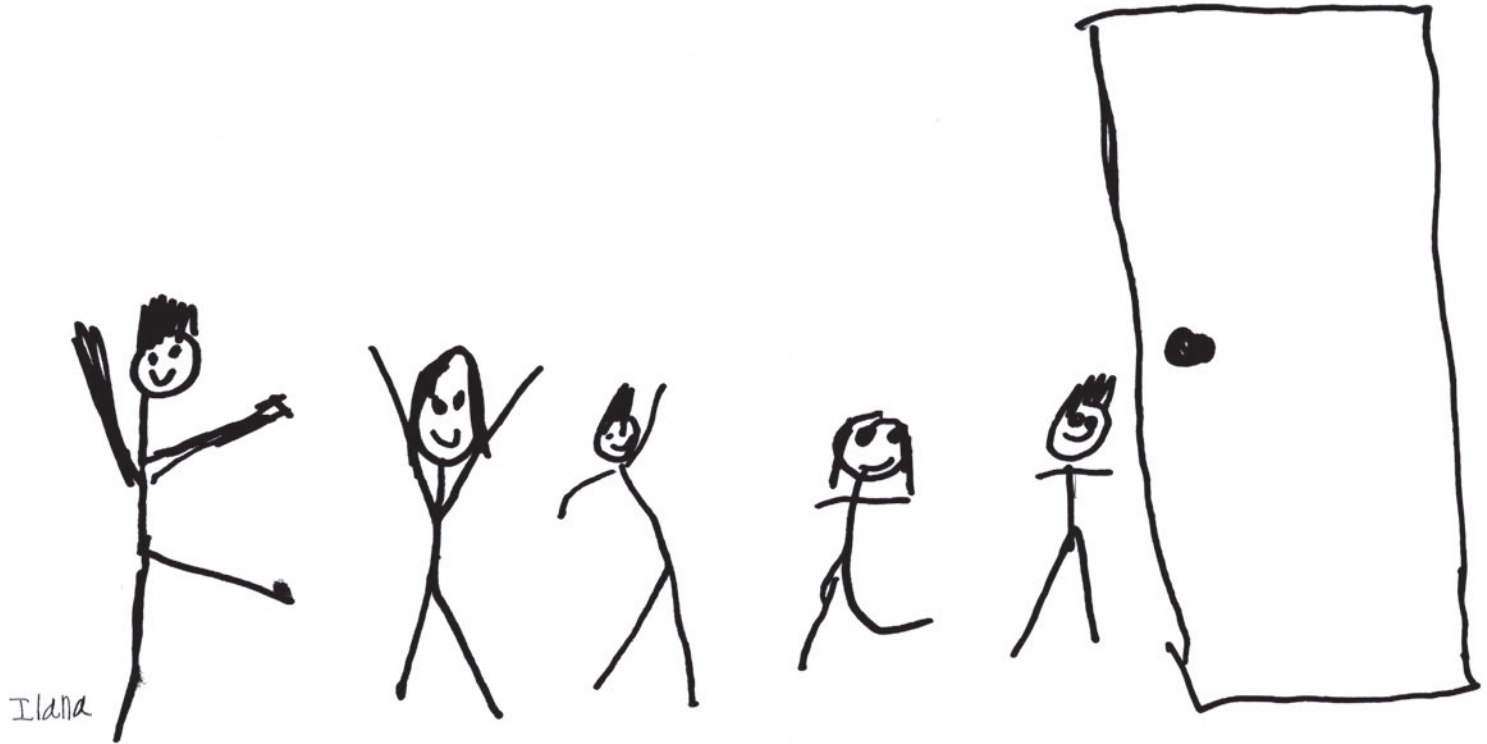




They'll measure the volume, the width, and the sum,
They'll test them for strength and for weakness, by gum,
Sometime together, sometimes alone,
They'll all be so proud when they see how they've grown.



They'll start out each day with some moving around,
While they learn about things that live in the ground,
Or science, or 'rithmetic or what makes things burn,
So they'll be healthy and focused and ready to learn.



They'll get exercise as they go place to place,
Hopping or skipping or running in place,
But they'll be very careful so no harm will befall,
Other kids, or their teachers or folks in the hall.

To write down ideas
is quite hard I must say
It's very frustrating,
makes a long boring day,
It keeps kids from learning,
and dreaming and thinking,
They'll all do much better
without ever blinking.

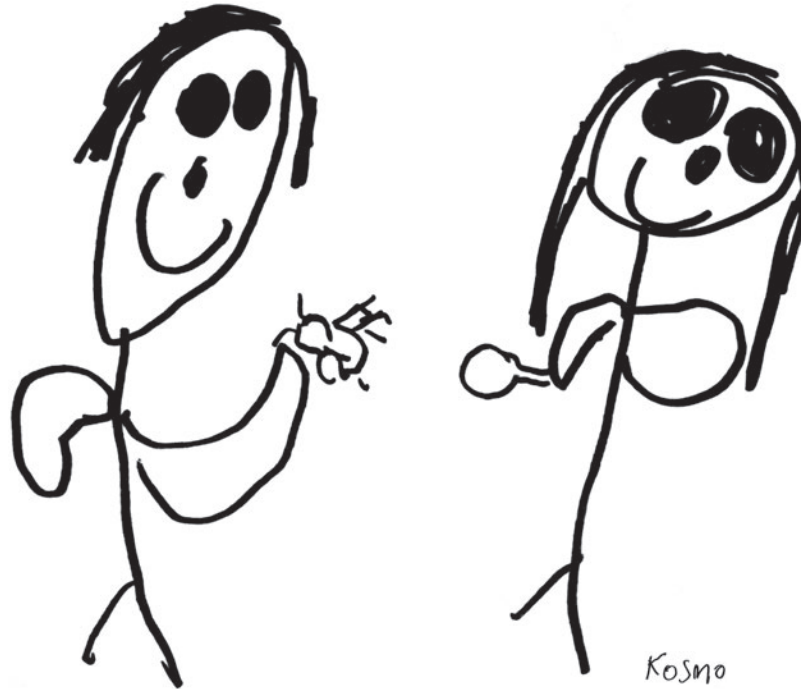


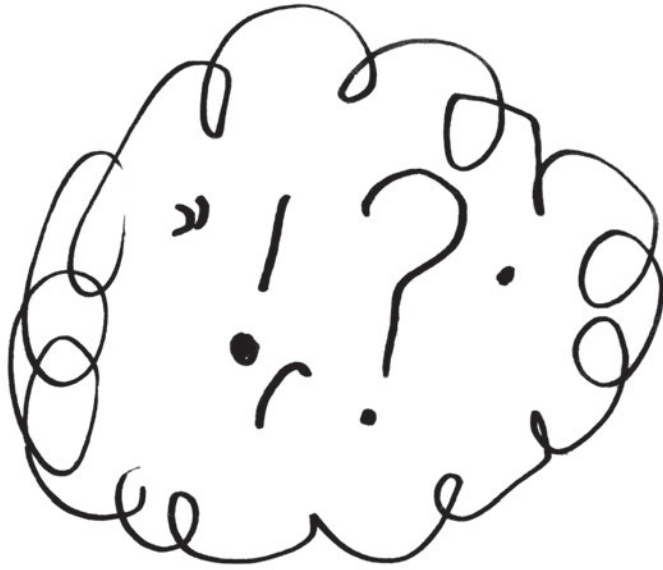
Ildana



The teachers will write
what kids think on the board,
For all of the kids to both
read and applaud.
They'll use a new program
that writes what they think,
It's 2016, and we're still using ink?

They'll all be so full of their thoughts and ideas,
Not having to write will quench all their fears.
Writing won't stop them, they'll be able to say,
What they know, what they think, what they hope every day.

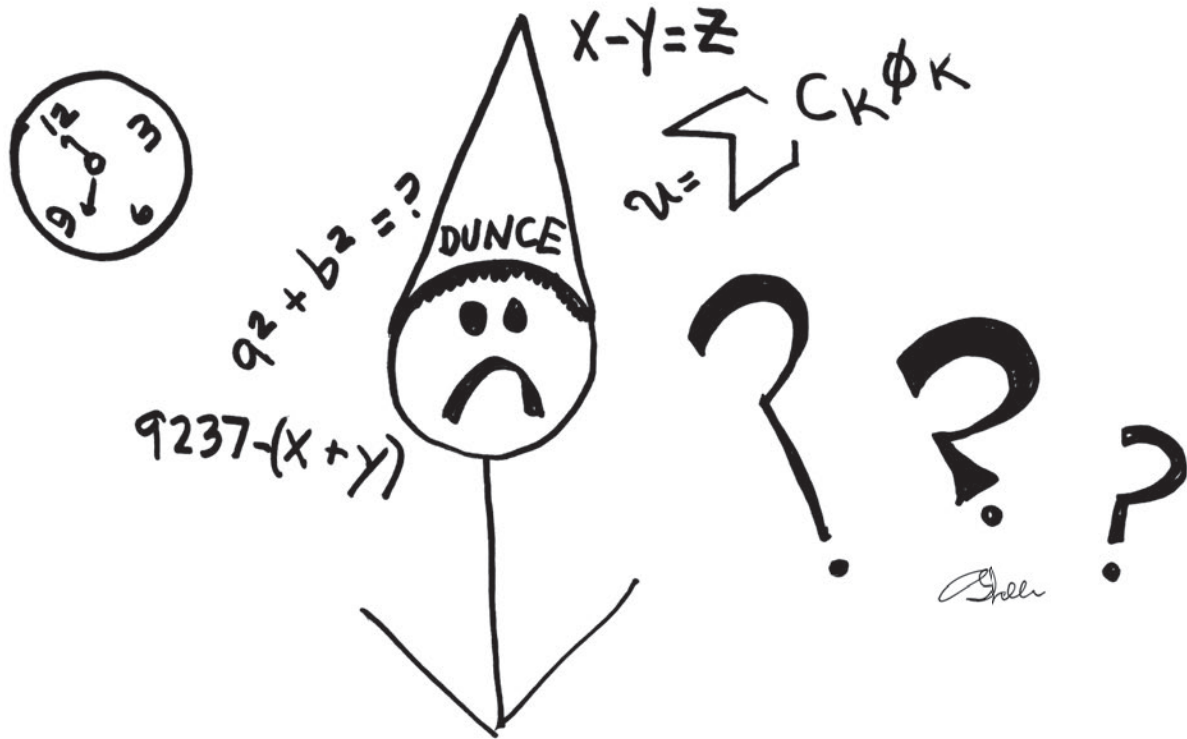




They'll still learn to write, punctuate and to spell,
But it won't break their spirits, they'll do very well.



And lots of the homework will just have to go,
For the kids who hate school they already will know,
If they can't get it in class, they won't get it at home,
They won't do it, won't get it, or will leave it alone.



So much of it's tedious, worthless and dull,
For kids who hate school, there just isn't a lull,
From feelings of failure, frustration and pain,
No wonder they give up, drop out and complain.



I'd make all the teachers much nicer and kinder,
By cutting their paperwork down to one binder,
It's all just some foolishness pushed by some clerks,
Who don't care about kids just 'bout their perks.

Kosmo



And the best thing of all is it won't cost a dime,
Just imagination and courage and time.

Yes if I ran the schools said young Carol McFoo,
Kids would love coming and learning, it's true,
They'd all gain the skills to be smart and be wise,
To be happy and healthy and live good long lives.



about the illustrators



Asher Weisfeld is in the seventh grade at Bearden Middle School in Knoxville, Tenn., loves playing soccer and football, and his favorite subject is science.



Beatrice Weisfeld is in the fourth grade at Sequoyah Elementary School in Knoxville, Tenn. and enjoys playing soccer and basketball. Her favorite “subject” is recess.



Ilana Pereyra-Weisfeld, who was formerly a bilingual class student at Enos Garcia Elementary School in Taos, N.M., is now in the fourth grade in La Paz, Boliva. She played guitar in a mariachi band and likes to read.



Kosmo Pereyra-Weisfeld, who graduated from University of New Mexico/Taos kindergarten, is a first grader in Boliva, where he plays soccer. He has always liked to say he majors in play.

about the author



Gene Weisfeld is a recovering attorney, who came to New Mexico in 1965 as a VISTA volunteer, working on building community and improving local schools in Mora County, one of the poorest counties in the nation. He moved permanently to New Mexico in 1970. He was certified to teach in the State of California and taught briefly at an alternative school in Taos, NM. He is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley and Hastings School of Law. Upon relocating to Santa Fe in 1993, he became Executive Director of Mentoring New Mexico, a nonprofit placing adult mentors one-on-one with students in schools in Santa Fe, Española, Pojoaque and Pecos, NM. He now tutors or substitutes daily in elementary schools in the Santa Fe Public School District. His favorite subject is math. This is his first book.

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