

My Life

by Sarah Cartan



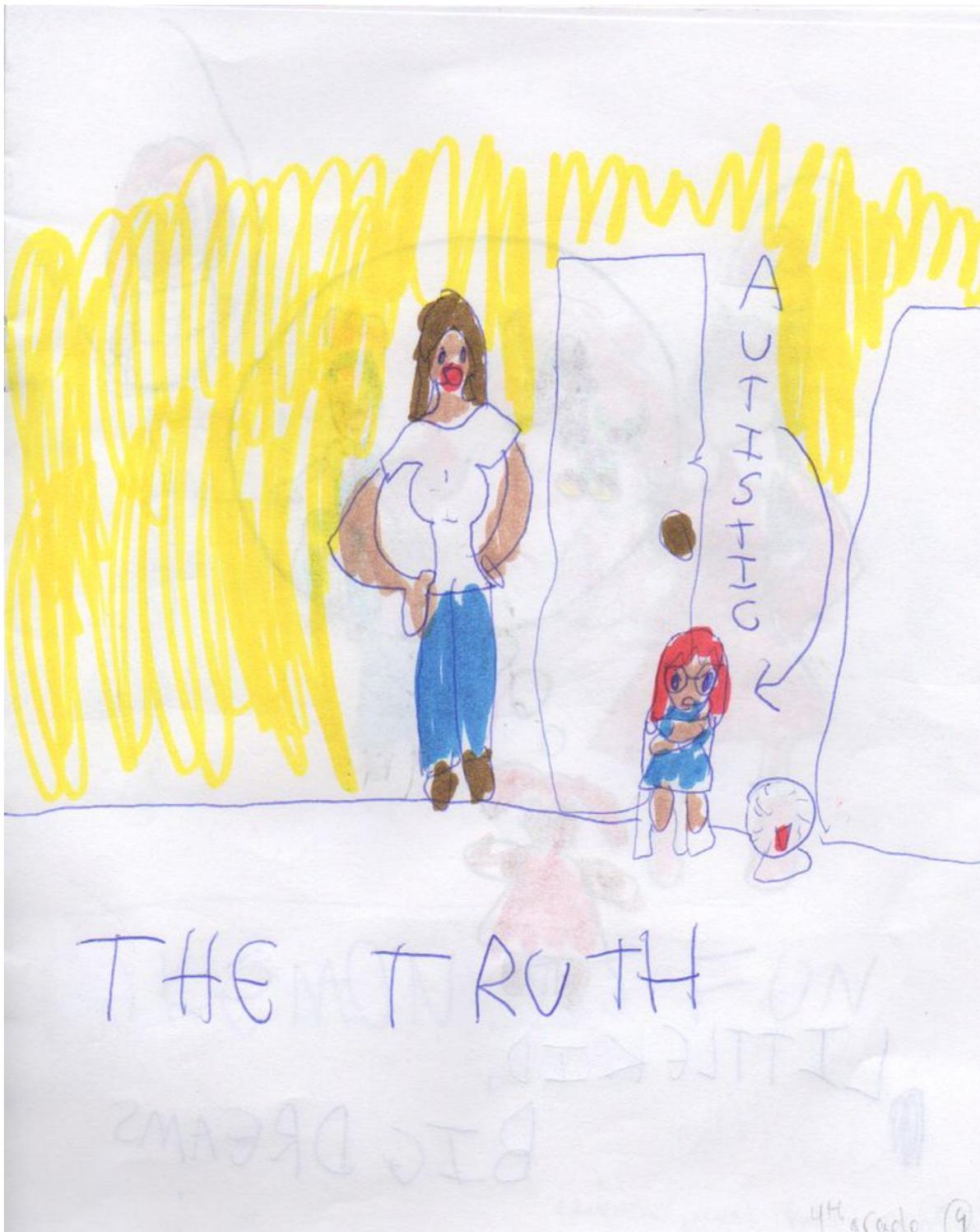
On the night of May 22, 1999, I was yanked out of my mother. Apparently, Mom was trying to push me out for almost 2 days. It turned out that I had come two weeks earlier than expected. This was the first of all the surprises that came along with my being.



When I was around 18 months, I gradually started to lose my words, from "bo" to "mamama". At first, my parents thought that I was deaf, and attempted to teach me sign language. But they eventually realized that this was not the case. After making me do some testing, my parents were devastated to find out that I had autism.



I had always sensed that I was different somehow. Maybe it was the skin tag in my right ear, or the fact that I was the only kid in preschool who had glasses. I had gone to three different preschools.



It was not until the fourth grade that I learned about my autism. Up until the end of the second grade year, I had to have helpers following me around. They constantly gave me time-outs and popped up every single day. When I asked why I had to put up with them, I was told that I had autism: a big, fat, DISABILITY.

It took a while for me to open up about it. My parents eventually forced me to tell the whole class about it. I just felt that I did not want to talk about having a "disability".



I have had many interests. When I was a toddler, I was obsessed with Barney, but my dad can't stand the show. I wonder what I ever saw in Barney. I also dreamed of being a princess, and was Cinderella's biggest fan. I did not give that up until the third grade.

Ever since I got my first computer, which was a hand-me-down from Dad, my favorite thing to do was play computer games. I was a Brownie for a while, but I quit because it was getting to be boring.



Ever since I first saw a Muk Pokemon card in my friend's backseat, I was eager to become a Pokemon Master. However, it was impossible to do so without a gaming system. When I was 10, I got my Nintendo DS and my first video game. I was instantly hooked. Pokemon Platinum was so thrilling, from the struggle of beating Gym Leaders to seeing the legendary Pokemon, Giratina.



My interest in video games started when Dad and I got Mom a Wii Fit game for Christmas. Of course, we had to get a Wii first. When my birthday came, we got more games, including Super Mario Galaxy, which was ranked as the best Mario game. Now I am the one who uses it the most.



CUTE KITTIES

I love animals a lot. I have two adorable cats at home named Darwin and Finch. They may be brothers, but they are very different. Darwin is a fat orange and white tabby with extra toes, a little notch in his ear, two dots on his nose, a sweet, gentle nature, and a craving for people food. Finch is less of a people cat. He is a tuxedo cat who is very clean and polite and likes to go outside.



When I was eleven, I encountered a stray cat, who I named Leaf. Leaf is gray with a black nose, a white chest, little white paws, a high-pitched mew, and long, tangled fur. When we first met her, Leaf was very thin and skittish. She only had one tooth left, which the vet had to pull out because it was infected.

Nowadays, Leaf lets us pet her, and she kneads her paws and purrs. She will even come inside and take treats from my hand! Once, I got her to walk all the way to our kitchen. She is still not entirely comfortable with humans. One day, Dad attempted to carry Leaf to the porch. She panicked and scratched him really bad. It serves him right for scaring her like that!



I do not really know what I want to do when I grow up. I'd love to work with animals, and I'm great with dogs. I'm also thinking of being an actress or a pop star. I put a lot of passion into the work that I choose to do. But I am forced to do things I hate in school, like putting up with the mean teachers that yell at us all the time.

I hope that one day, I'll be more than just stardust. I want to leave a mark before I die for good. I want to make the world better than it was when my life began. Those are my dreams for the future .