

# ESOPUS CD #4: IMAGINARY FRIENDS

## 1 THE PRAYERS AND TEARS OF ARTHUR DIGBY SELLERS

"Lisa"

Words and Music by Perry Wright

Produced by Alex Lazara

Vocals, guitars: Perry Wright

Harmony vocals: John K. Samson, Heather McEntire

Mellotron, Rhodes, piano: Alex Lazara

Drums, percussion: Dale Baker

Bass: David Daniels

Violins: Daniel Hart

Cellos: Lara Kent

Tambourine: Joshua Snyder

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## 2 TIM'M T. WEST

"Brown Buick, Brown House"

Written by Tim'm T. West and Steve Hoskins

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## 3 VETIVER

"Quiri Quirano"

Written by Andy Cabic

Recorded at Pan American by Jason Quever

Vocals, guitars, bass: Andy Cabic

Piano: Garth Steel Klippert

Clarinet, bass clarinet: Aaron Novik

Violin: Dina Maccabee

Drums: Jason Quever

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## 4 KIMYA DAWSON

"The Competition"

Written and performed by Kimya Dawson

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## 5 SOLEX

"Little Doo Dootz"

Written and performed by Solex

Copyright control

## 6 KATE PIERSON & PAT IRWIN

"Bunnies"

Music and instruments: Pat Irwin

Lyrics and vocals: Kate Pierson

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Urgentissimo (ASCAP)

## 7 JON LANGFORD

"W"

Written and performed by Jon Langford

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## 8 RUTH GERSON

"Kibby, Zocky Merino, and the Man with the Mustache"

Written and performed by Ruth Gerson

Recorded by Carter Matshullat

(Dedicated to Marjorie)

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## 9 GRANT HART

"Barbara"

Written and performed by Grant Hart

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## 10 AVEY TARE

"Judy Biworker"

Written and recorded by Avey Tare in February 2005

Mixed/mastered with Rusty

Copyright ©2005 Avey Bear Tongs (ASCAP)

## 11 J.F.K.

"Henny-Penny"

Written and produced by Kim Rancourt, Don Fleming and Andrew W.K.

Vocals: Kim Rancourt

Vocals, guitar, bass: Don Fleming

Vocals, drums: Andrew W.K.:

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## 12 TARA JANE ONEIL

"Delores"

Written, recorded, performed by Tara Jane O'Neil

Steel drum, electric calimba, melodica, percussion, voice

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## 13 THE CAULFIELD SISTERS

"Judy"

Written by the Caulfield Sisters

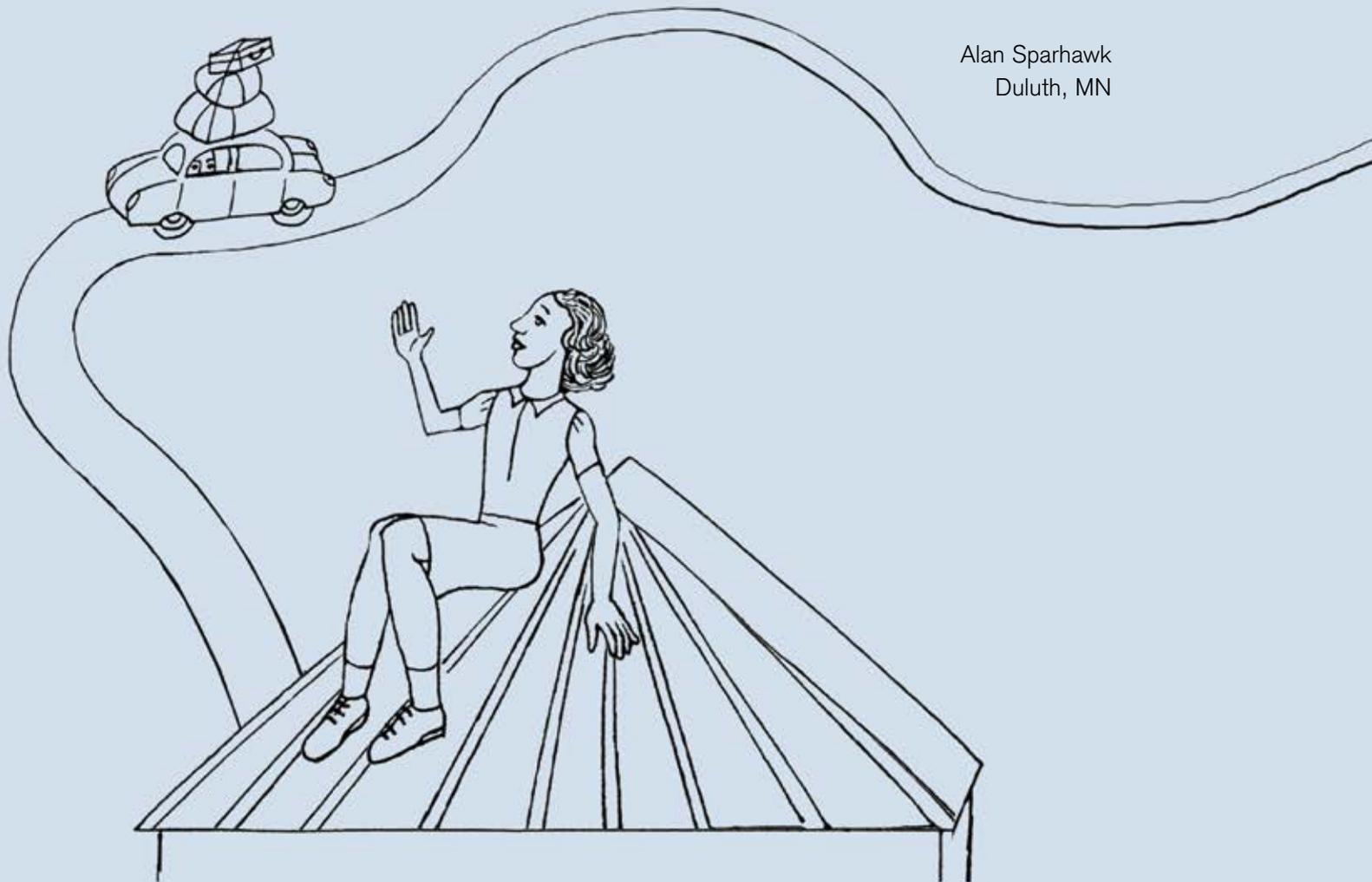
Recorded by Cindy Wheeler

Mixed by Casey Sweten and Cindy Wheeler

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# LISA

As a boy, from perhaps age 4 to 7, my dear imaginary friend was a small girl named Lisa. She lived in a small hole in the wall next to my bed. I always imagined her as a year or two older than me. She always seemed to have heavier, older-person things on her mind, so her demeanor was quite sober and even troubled, but never enough to keep her from finding time for me. She took care of me, gave me advice, and was great to have around when I couldn't sleep. I suppose she stayed with the house when we moved when I was 8. She probably has a family now.

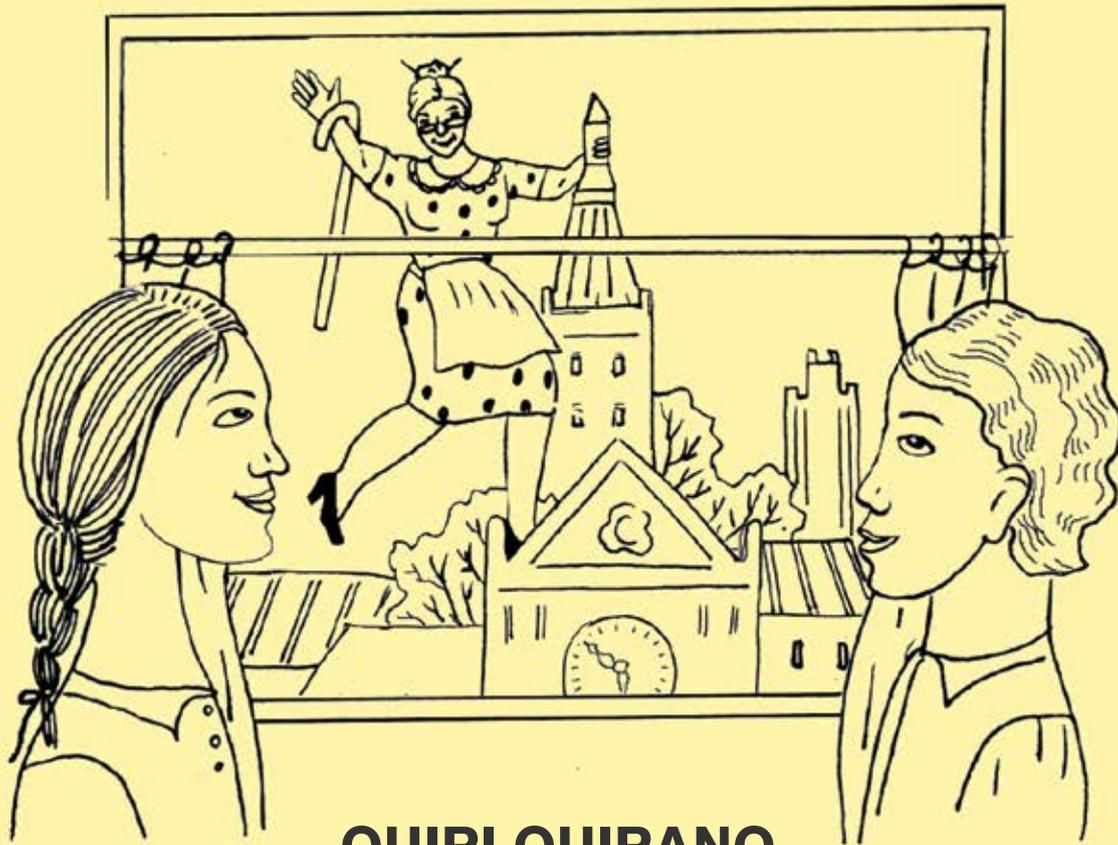


Alan Sparhawk  
Duluth, MN

# BROWN BUICK, BROWN HOUSE

Funny, I don't remember having an imaginary friend. Instead, I had an imaginary car and house. I was always talking about my "Brown Buick" and my "Brown House." The mental image I had of my Brown Buick was like a late-'60s, early-'70s, full-size Buick Electra 225, though I didn't label it as such at the time. My Brown House was a modest dwelling with a sloping front lawn and steep driveway. I maintain a car fixation to this day, though not necessarily for brown Buicks. And my current house is not brown.

Chandler Smith  
Fort Worth, TX



## QUIRI QUIRANO

For years I had no memory of my imaginary friend. Until one day, many years ago, my mother and I, and somebody else, maybe my new boyfriend at the time, were chatting amiably. Amiably? Hard thing to imagine since I did not really get along that well with either one of my parents until I moved this side of the Atlantic. But that's another story.

So, my mother discloses to me the fact that yes, when I was 5 or 6 years old, she worried a lot about me. She, a first-time mother, even thought of taking me to a psychiatrist, but that was not popular back then. She confessed her worries to my uncle—a general surgeon—who told her not to be alarmed if I talked to myself a lot and kept repeating the name “Quiri Quirano” (pronounced “Kweeree Kweerano”) while gesturing to the empty room. It was not going to affect my chances to go to the university one day.

As soon as my mother said the name Quiri Quirano, during that amiable conversation, a whole part of my memory came back to me. Of course, how could I forget? Quiri, my friend. We had so much fun together. How could anybody doubt the goodness of my friend Quiri? Such a good listener, and always ready to comply with any of my requests.

The best thing about Quiri was that his grandmother lived in Firenze, and so in order to visit her—she lived all alone—we would have to get on a train and travel over there. And maybe spend the night with Quiri's grandma. And the train rides...those were relaxing after all the confusion and noise of the train station. Quiri and I would look out the window and see the cows and the peasants, and we would feel so grown up, all alone in the train car.

Quiri was a delicate boy, always neatly dressed, not pushy or dirty-nosed like the boys down the street. His knees were never scratched or peeled, and I think he was quite fond of me.

I still miss him to this day.

Maura Pieretti  
Belleair, FL

# THE COMPETITION

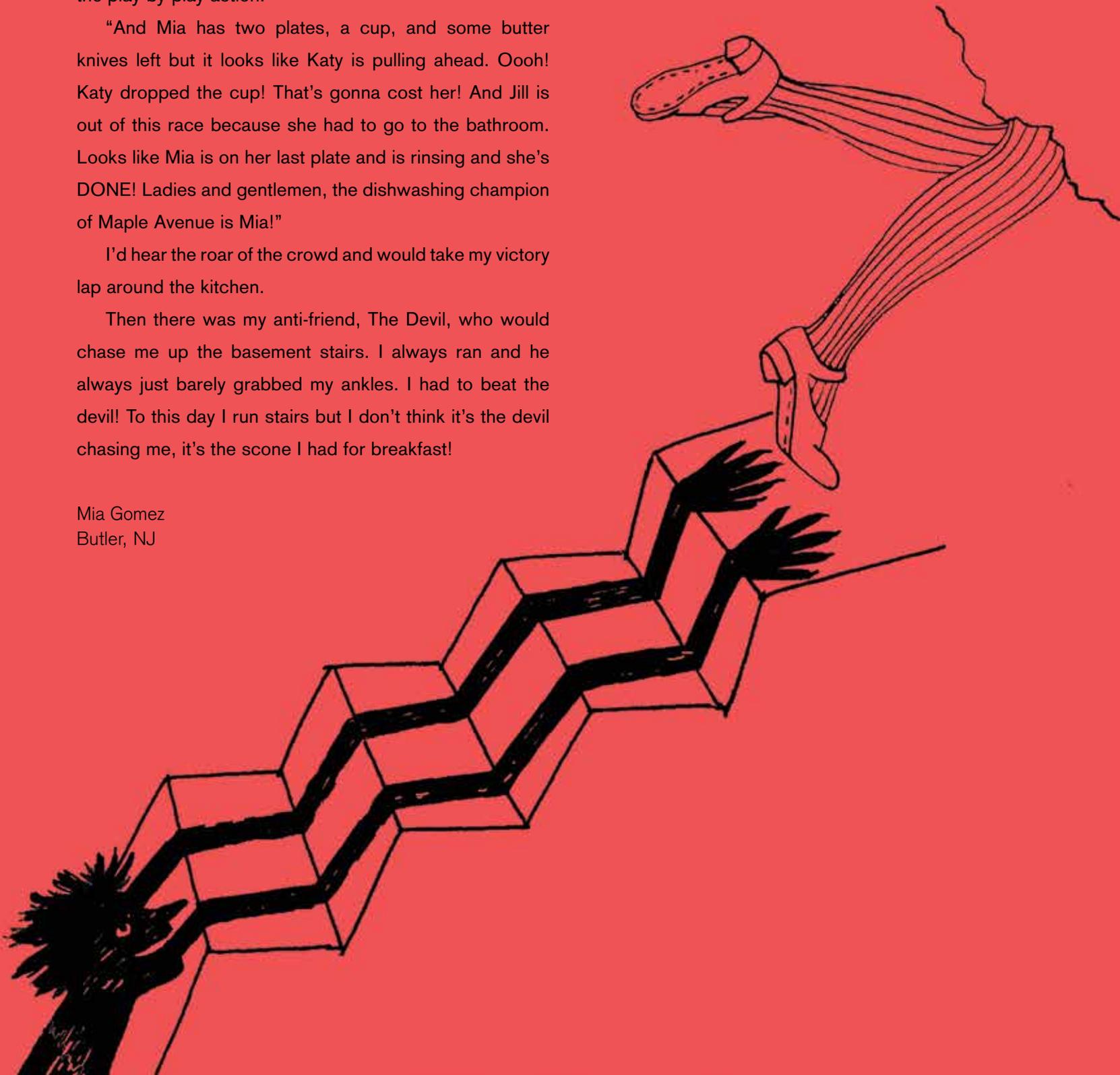
I didn't have an imaginary friend in the traditional sense. I had an army of kids I competed with. Type A at the age of 5! I remember standing on My Little Step Stool in front of the kitchen sink "helping" Mommy washing dishes while in my head, a Howard Cosell-like commentator was running the play-by-play action:

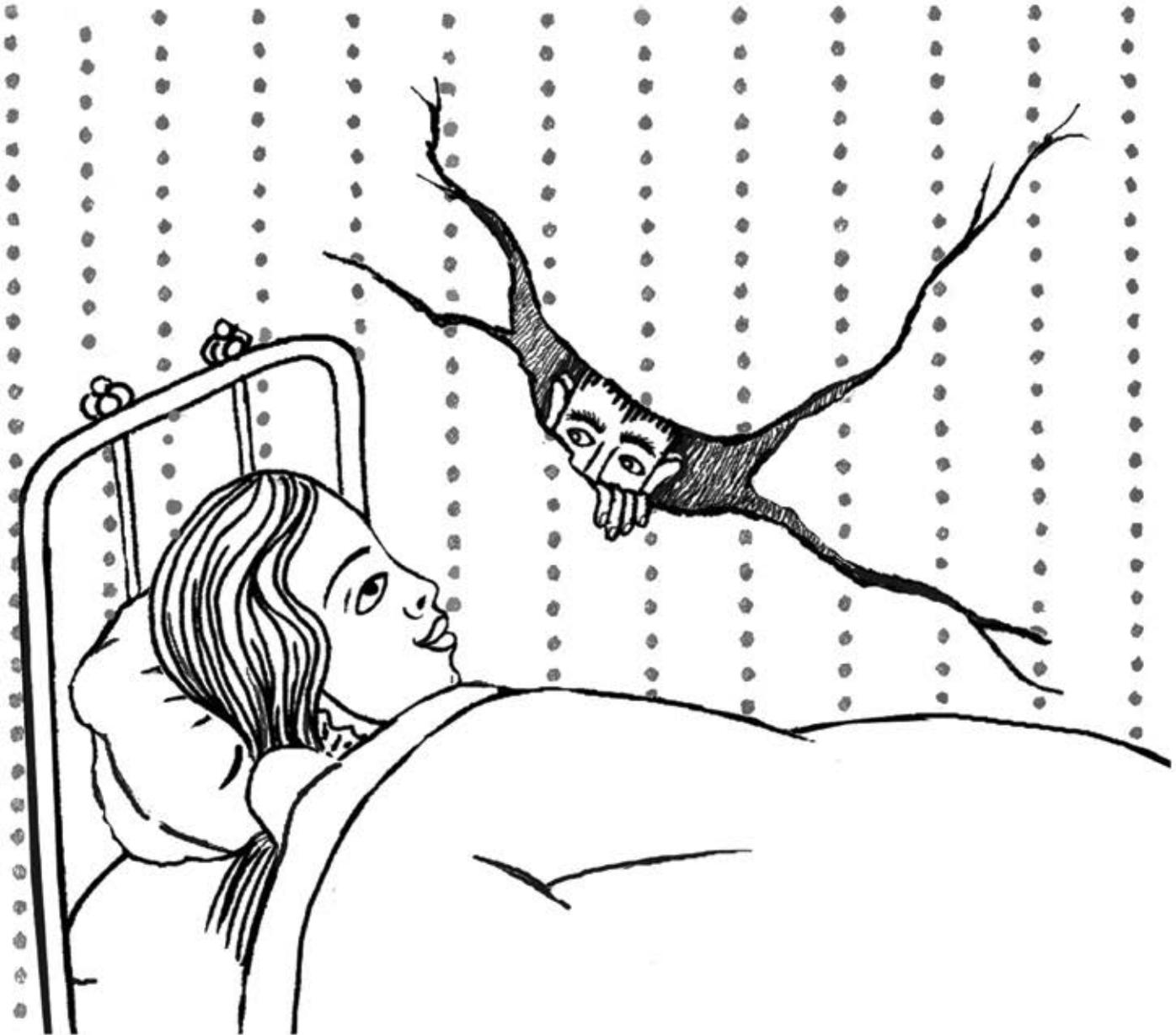
"And Mia has two plates, a cup, and some butter knives left but it looks like Katy is pulling ahead. Oooh! Katy dropped the cup! That's gonna cost her! And Jill is out of this race because she had to go to the bathroom. Looks like Mia is on her last plate and is rinsing and she's DONE! Ladies and gentlemen, the dishwashing champion of Maple Avenue is Mia!"

I'd hear the roar of the crowd and would take my victory lap around the kitchen.

Then there was my anti-friend, The Devil, who would chase me up the basement stairs. I always ran and he always just barely grabbed my ankles. I had to beat the devil! To this day I run stairs but I don't think it's the devil chasing me, it's the scone I had for breakfast!

Mia Gomez  
Butler, NJ





## LITTLE DOO DOOTZ

For about a year from ages 3 to 4, my secret imaginary friend was “Little Doo Dootz.” He was not exactly a mouse, but about that size, and he lived in a crack in the wall near my bed. Particularly when I had to take naps, which I never liked, I would call upon Little Doo Dootz to come out of the wall and play. We had conversations, games, laughs at the expense of the adults. Of course, the adults laughed at me and Doo Dootz, too. It was oh-so-funny that Kathleen would talk to a crack in the wall.

I hadn’t thought about Little Doo Dootz for many years until the subject of imaginary friends came up over dinner one night a couple of years ago (I’m 47 now). I told my friends about Little Doo Dootz who lived in a crack in the wall, and they went into absolute hysterics, finally pointing out to the bewildered me that the character’s name and living situation had decidedly scatological implications, particularly for a 3-year-old, which of course I had never, ever thought of before.

Kathleen Conkey  
New York, NY

# BUNNIES

I have had a family of bunnies in my hair for years now, after the braid I wore was set on fire. I was 8. The bunnies just appeared there, that day, after my melted strawberry-shaped ponytail holder fell off. Nothing was the same after that, because once the bunnies showed up, my hair started to expand. At least that's how I remembered it starting.

Anyway, there are four of them. Nobody knows about them, because they don't come out, and no one else can seem to hear them. Their arguments are mostly about "giving me my space" and "she should not have used that conditioner, I think I'm going to be sick." When they start going on like that, then I just guess that they think I'm not listening, because I'm not that tuned in sometimes. So they argue a lot, but they also sometimes talk to me. They get indignant when I do, like when we see someone do something stupid or mean. We all loathe bad manners. Then sometimes we'll say, often all at the same time, "What was that guy thinking?"

What do they sound like? It's just a bunny accent, pinched and nasal, not quite Detroit, but close. I don't know what they look like—I've never actually seen them, even though I've looked pretty hard. When I've point-blank asked, they answer in a singsong riddle, like:

"We have long floppy ears, and soft puffy tails.

Our teeth are very yellow, and so are our nails."

When I used to look for them, I'd get out the magnifying mirror and hold it against my head at an angle, trying to catch them with a big pink hair pick that someone gave me. Obviously, it's never been successful, and when I did this, they only got mad, and stopped talking to me for a few days. I tried a serving fork, once, too, which I thought might be both scary and more effective, but all I've ever seen is brown fur.

I'm not sure what they do all day, except make more room for themselves, which makes my hair very big. I think they do this by getting down on all fours, and fluffing with their paws. When you do it at the roots, it's bound to create volume. Some day soon, my hair will be too wide to get through doors. I've tried to manage this with shampoos and "calming" conditioners, which just end up making a giant shiny hair crust that keeps out the weather. Salon cuts have not helped at all. I've had the pixie bob, and even an art buzz, both of which looked horrible, and the shorter length just meant that the bunnies fluffed extra hard to get comfortable. They got very angry, too, and it was lonely up there for about a week. I missed them. So I guess the bunnies are sort of my friends, and maybe they are imaginary because you can't see them.



# W

I don't think I can say it was a friend. More like an anti-friend. It was the letter W. I would see it, about the size of a dinner plate, white with a grayish glow about it, hovering in the air and wobbling. It never emitted any kind of noise, but inside my head I would scream and run.

I never saw it at school (but I would sense it sometimes, waiting for me) and I never saw it when my parents or brother were around. It would appear only when I was by myself.

It seemed to appear when the possibility of danger or trouble arose.

The first time I saw it I was walking down the pothole-ridden road that led away from our house. I had stopped walking to tie my shoe and looked into the woods. There it was, situated amongst the Spanish moss that hung from the huge oak trees. Although it made no sound, I could almost hear it wobbling; a kind of reverberation that I felt inside my chest, under my heart. At the same time I realized I was probably late for dinner, and I ran home to find that my mother was wondering where I was.

Several months later I was hiking in the woods behind our house. I was with my older brother, but we decided to explore different areas of the woods so we split up. As I was walking up a tiny glen that led to what appeared to be a house foundation, I came across a mineshaft, a common occurrence in gold rush areas. The rim of the shaft was overgrown with manzanita and poison oak but I could still see the darkness that suggested a great depth. I picked up a rock and threw it down. I heard the rock hit the sides of the shaft as it fell, and after about 15 seconds I heard nothing. Just as I was getting ready to turn around I saw the W hovering over the hole, warbling there as if I disturbed it from a nap in that horrible pit. I turned and ran. I looked back once and saw a dim shape still there.

As I got older and became more firmly entrenched in the realm of language (or the symbolic, as Jacques Lacan would term it), my W sightings became scarce. I no longer needed the prompt of an imaginary "friend" to hone my common sense. The W melded into the rest of the alphabet, no longer standing out as a signifier in an imaginary way.

Susan Harlan  
Portland, OR



## KIBBY, ZOCKY MERINO, & THE MAN WITH THE MUSTACHE

Odd that your e-mail exactly coincided with what we were talking about last night—namely, the fact that our son, Christopher, who died just before his 28th birthday, had three invisible friends who apparently never left him: Kibby, Zocky Merino, and the Man with the Mustache. Christopher wasn't nuts, but he did write poetry, and he had an extraordinary voice. I'm not sending you this because you should publish anything about it, but just because the timing is strange. I do, however, think you might be interested in the following, written by my grandson when he was 9 (he was angry and was told to get his act together "or else"). He went into his bedroom and gave his mom this:

Coward under skin of me  
greed of giant, heart of flea  
at first sign of terror flees,  
Why am I?

Darkness of the soul combined  
with impurity of mind  
never searching to truly find  
Why are you?

Importance of a drop of rain  
a speck of dust on a muddy lane  
a single hair on a lion's mane  
Why are we?

Other than that, Jackson is an ordinary kid, living in the East Village, with a stud in his ear. He does write poems from time to time.

Marjorie Lee Wilde  
Briarcliff Manor, NY



## BARBARA

"This is the tale of Corally Cruthers.  
She had no sisters and had no brothers."

And so began my favorite little book when I was very, very young.

I think Corally was the genesis for the imaginary friend who lived with me when I was about 3. Her name was Barbara.

Corally, Barbara, and I looked very much alike, with seriously curly hair, blue eyes, and bony knees. When I try to picture Barbara, all these years later, that is how I see her. I wonder how she looked to my mother, who had to sit on the very edge of the streetcar seat because she was "mashing" the ever-present Barbara. Being an only child, I made the most of this dear friend, blaming her for the crayon pictures on the wall and the spilled juice. (I was given many messages for her from my mother.)

Barbara gave my life a lovely spark for the year or so that she lived with me, and I love remembering her....Maybe I'll try to bring her back someday....

Marjorie  
Hampstead, MD



## JUDY BIWORKER

I had an imaginary friend—two, actually, but one was my best friend. Judy Biworker. We only spoke on the phone; it was a red plastic dial-up phone.

She lived in Buffalo, New York, and that was due to all of the candy manufacturers being located there.

Mary Ellen Carroll  
New York, NY

## HENNY-PENNY

My imaginary friend was Henny-Penny, the “sky is falling” Henny-Penny—that one. Henny and I would sit in my closet with the door shut. Closets were small then and dark, and the walls had cracks in them. We would protect ourselves with my mother’s nylon stockings. There weren’t panty hose then, only those nylons she wore with a garter belt. I’d tie the stockings together on our heads. That way we would be safe and feel like we had long hair, too. Henny and I would go through the cracks to other places.

Our favorite place to go was this cave behind the waterfall. There were ledges inside with moss, and we could lie down and listen to the sound of water. We liked to swim in the pool. We’d go way deep under, and our long hair would stream behind us.

Sometimes there’d be a storm, but we could stay inside the cave. Even before the rain started, the thunder would come—and lightning. It would be so loud, it was almost quiet.

In this cave, Henny and I never worried about the sky.

Catherine Hammond  
Tempe, AZ





## DELORES

I met Delores at my best friend Mattie Hesch's house the summer I was 7 years old. Delores followed me on the perilous block-long walk back to my house, up the front steps, through the front door, up the stairs, and into my room without saying a word. When she had reached the safety of my room she plunked herself down underneath my bureau (so as not to be seen by anyone over the age of 7) and demanded that I play with her night and day, bring her crackers and cereal and water, tell her stories, loan her my stuffed animals—every sharing activity in which the average 7-year-old child is loath to participate. To this day I cannot explain why I obeyed so readily, why I agreed to hide her existence from my mother for several days, why I allowed her to turn me into a recluse when all of the neighborhood kids were playing a game of kick-the-can in the back alley, or why, when it took all of my might to not succumb to the comfort of footy-pajamas and an enormous twin-sized bed, I willed myself to stay awake and keep her company. And to this day I cannot explain why, after supplying her with all the comforts an imaginary friend could desire, my imagination allowed the fishing pole that she had been carrying when I met her to be turned into a rifle. The closest thing to a rifle I had ever experienced had been in animated form on television, and I had certainly never had one trained on me with the aggression and gravity that Delores expressed.

This was the point at which I finally decided to go to my mother and tell her about my friend Delores. My mother, of course, could not see Delores, but she did as only the best of mothers would do: She sat down with Delores and me in my room over water-flavored tea, and the three of us chatted. I, who had never actually had a conversation with Delores (as all of our communication up to this point had taken place on that telepathic level that exists only between children and their closest imaginary friends) was naturally the translator. It was during this interview with Delores and my mother that I found out that Delores had run away from her home in 1907 (yes, Delores was indeed a time traveler) because she was upset at her mother (for a reason that I either cannot recall or never understood in the first place). The three of us finished our tea, my mother explained to me (out of Delores's earshot) that Delores's mother missed her, and I explained to Delores (in my mother's earshot) that 1907 was actually much more fun than 1989 and that she should go back. After many long and tearful conversations with her delineating the pros of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the cons of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Delores finally left my house, taking her rifle with her, and returned to 1907.

Anne Rutherford  
Washington, D.C.

# JUDY

This is a potentially melancholy but true story of a girl and her imaginary companion. I haven't the slightest idea if it would be interesting to you, but it piqued my own interest to write it.

Deep in the country, amidst the large white house and barns surrounded by fields, forest, and lake—not a house or a human within shouting distance—a lonely daughter, at the distant bottom of a triad, longed for company. Animals and pets abounded on the pretended farm, but regular society eluded her outside of school, a half hour's bus ride from home; hence the arrival of "Judy." She slipped in one day and took on a life so animated the girl immediately spoke aloud to her. First a clandestine companion, Judy accompanied the girl on her solitary walks in the woods and through the vast stone quarry nearby. Together they wandered for hours in the surrounding countryside, constructing dams and sailing eggshell boats along the stream, or building diminutive structures of sticks, stones, pine needles, and leaves along the massive rocky ledge of the quarry for the mice family they imagined they were housing. Elaborate stick furniture and mouse clothing were constructed in the secret clubhouse in one of the barns and carried back, along with dyed paste food for acorn cups and bark plates.

Eventually Judy was brought into the house and sat at table with the little girl—the patient mother setting a place for an unseen friend without comment, the girl quietly whispering to her during meals. Perhaps it was just as well that the older sisters were off at boarding school by the time her companion arrived.

No one aside from the mother was ever made aware of Judy's presence; she lived with the girl until the family abandoned the solitary country life, packing up or dispersing horses, a bull calf, chickens, geese, ducks, cats, dogs, guinea fowl, and an evil-tempered parrot as they left. Judy sat on the broad front step of the big, old, double-doored entrance, one skinny arm draped across knobby knees, the other waving good-bye as the ancient, wood-sided Ford station wagon, packed to the rooftop, hove out of sight. There was no question of taking her along.

Elizabeth Hope Cushing  
Cambridge, MA

