

MARVIN'S ROOM
By Scott McPherson

HANK: Bugs don't bother me. They crawl out of the drain in the boys shower. They hide in the lumber in the wood shop. They float in the soap basins on the sinks. You get used to them. One dude in my room—there's twelve of us in this room, and this one dude catches bugs and puts them on a leash. A hair leash. He pulls out a strand of his hair and ties it around the bug and the other end he tacks down under his bunk. He had this whole zoo of bugs walking in little circles under his bed. Till this other dude smashed them all with the back of his cafeteria tray. I was an old tray. We used it to slide down the mud hill behind the seizure ward. You get going real fast. This one dude's father used to clock pitches for the national league east. He clocked me with his radar gun going fifty. And my tray shot out from underneath me and broke this dude's windpipe. We had to perform an emergency tracheotomy with a sharp piece of bark and a bic pen. Man, it was something. You want a candy?

ELIZABETH. When I watched my mother's ship take off, I saw it go straight into the sky and disappear. When my grandmother told me that my mother went to heaven, I thought that heaven was a part of outer space. I was excited because I thought she'd come back with all kinds of neat presents like a plastic harp or a pair of angel wings. I went to the mail box every day looking for a post card from her that would have clouds on it or a three-D picture of God. I waited for her to call long distance. When I didn't hear from her, I got very angry. I told my father that I hated her for being away so long. He told me that she had perished in the rocket. I told him that wasn't true, that she was alive, that she had left us and found a family that she liked better. He asked me why I thought she was still alive. And I said, because I never saw her dead. These are the reasons I gave myself for why my mother didn't come back. One: I hit my brother on the arm. Two: I wouldn't talk to the reporters. Three: I didn't say thank you to my Grandma for giving me the coloring book. Four: I wouldn't let my father hold me. And five: I didn't get all the lint off the Lifesaver.

(ELIZABETH sits on the floor with her crayons and the scribbled drawing we saw earlier.)

(MONET enters and looks down at the drawing.)

MONET. Ah. Spaghetti?

Scene Nineteen

(MONET and ELIZABETH.)