

For us humans, the story is often the place where the head and the heart come together and so it has been for me. You see, in the story you just read, I was that boy, and when I was young, I had terrible asthma. Because it was often so hard for me to breathe normally, I couldn't run as much as some of the other boys and girls and I spent very little time outside the domes. My favorite pastime was drawing or painting. The first time I held a paintbrush in my hand it was like going back in time to a place where color and light and softness reveled in a slowly unfolding friendship. I wanted to paint everything I saw.

There's a knowing that comes from being an artist, but I hadn't understood what was happening to me back then. It just felt like I had once been somewhat asleep but now I was becoming more and more awake. Art changed me. One day, when Mom and my little sister, Kendall, were walking me home from school I said something that had been on my mind all day. I said, "Art's not important, is it Mom?"

Surprised, she looked at me and asked, "What do you mean, Evan?"

"Well, you know. It's not important like reading and math and stuff like that."

"Honey, art is very important!" "It is?" I asked. I hadn't expected that answer. "Sure, honey," she continued. "Art is

something you can enjoy your whole life. You'll feel the need to express yourself in ways that can only come to this world through your eyes, through your hands, through your spirit. When you create with an artist's eye, the creator voice within you breaths new life into all of us."

Of course, I was lost after "Sure, Honey." I began running toward our pod. That's when Kendall, who had been holding Mom's hand, did something weird. Oh, I know. All sisters can be weird sometimes, but I mean super-impossibly weird. I know this sounds dorky, but Kendall, who has never been able to use her vocal cords, let go of Mom's hand and ran toward me. She put her little hand on my arm and looked directly into my eyes so that I wasn't sure what to do. I stopped and stood motionless, staring back at her.

Kendall had learned to use sign language by then and so had our parents but I couldn't be bothered much. I had always wanted a dog, not a

sister who couldn't talk. I began to feel this wonderful aliveness when she touched me like that. I mean it was better than chocolate pudding! I wanted it to last! In a few seconds she let go and with a big smile on her face she ran inside.

Mom didn't even seem to notice what had happened, but I kept feeling this thought. Yes. That's what I said. I felt a thought! It whispered inside my head like a song with a

beat.

*“Enjoy your art, if art you seek!*

*Go deep within where stillness speaks!”*

I let the words sink in a bit and then dashed inside and jotted them into my notebook in case I forgot. I wasn't sure what she meant but it made me feel good. After that day I began bouncing my basketball to the rhythm.

*“Enjoy your art, if art you seek!*

*Go deep within where stillness speaks!”*

It became my mantra. I found myself inhaling more and more deeply. The words did something else too. For the first time I began paying more and more attention to Kendall. I spent all my spare time studying sign language, and soon I was able to communicate with other kids in my class who also were unable to speak. It opened up a whole new world for me and I got to know lots of kids I hadn't really paid much attention to before.