

Tenth Picture

Hollis Woods

I know what people mean when they say they feel as if they're floating. That's the way I felt, as if my feet weren't attached to the ground, as if they were bouncing off the floor, touching lightly, and bouncing again. And inside me, it was as if bubbles were drifting, bumping gently into each other.

I was happy. No, that doesn't even describe it. I was ... jubilant, ecstatic.

I drew it using all the pencils—yellows and oranges, pinks and blues. I drew purple shoes on my feet and wings on my shoulders. My eyes were closed, the way you see pictures of angels sometimes with their eyelashes down on their cheeks.

So does it make sense that I wasn't thinking? That all that floating and all those bubbles made me think I could do anything?

And so that last week, all I thought about was going to the top of the Old Man's mountain and shouting down to the whole world. I even knew what I was going to say: Here I am, Hollis Woods, who didn't deserve to be in a family ... tough Hollis Woods, running-away Hollis Woods. Look at me. I climbed the mountain. Now I belong.