

Planets hung from the ceiling of the sickeningly yellow-lit third grade science room, moving in a constant circular motion. The plants growing in the window almost visibly ate up the sunlight. Beige desks, the messy tables, and the not-so-friendly teacher rounded out the room.

But what I remember most of all from that room was not being able to see anything.

In the back, I would squint my eyes because all I saw were blotches of red, green, and blue splattered across the white board. We were learning how to take notes for the first time but I couldn't make out what the teacher was writing down. I had no idea that something was wrong with my eyes at the time, because eyes seemed invincible and absolute to me.

Not telling anybody my problem, I spent the rest of third grade squirming into the front seat at my table to take notes. When asked why I was out of my assigned seat, I used my height as an excuse for my physical impairment.

"Everyone else is too tall. I'm short, so I can't see when everyone's heads are in the way."

It wasn't until a trip to the doctor that I got slapped with my dilemma. This was a new doctor, who I would come to find out only dealt in the eye business. After a few strange tests Dr. Haller gave me my prognosis: Nearsighted.

I got scared. *What would they do to me? Would they have to take my eyeballs out and replace them with new ones? What if I couldn't see anything forever? Most importantly, why did it have to be me?*

I saw Dr. Haller scribbling away on a piece of paper.

"What's that for?" My mind was trying to deny it, but my heart was telling me that this was my ticket to the eyeball removal convention. My stomach was doing somersaults, my face was trickling with sweat, and my teeth were clenched furiously. No one was taking my eyes even if they were awful at being eyes. Before I could interject, Dr. Haller smiled up at me.

"There's an easy way to fix this problem, Noureen. You just need glasses. I'm writing you a prescription. That will tell the people making your glasses how strong they need to make them for each eye."

"Okay," I said weakly. So my eyeballs would stay in? That was one positive. I wasn't so sure about the glasses thing, though.

Two days later, I was in Schrier Optics surrounded by a plethora of glasses. They were red, square, round, green, blue, small, large, black. It took me awhile, but I left the store with a pair of black and purple rectangular rimmed glasses.

I walked out of the store a new Noureen. Everything was bigger, brighter, and more exciting. I could relish in the flowers, the leaves, the cracks in the sidewalk, store signs, train signs, bus signs, any type of signs. I could actually see what teachers wrote, could finally see the way my mom really looked (or the way anyone looked for that matter). I was even

introduced to particularly hideous faces, such as that of my younger brother's. I wasn't afraid to tell him so. The world was a wonderful place, and without my glasses I could have never seen it.

The first thing I do every morning is plant my glasses on the bridge of my nose, and take in the sunlight peeking behind the trees. After all, I am nothing without my glasses. My glasses made me realize that it's okay to need help. With this new realization I began to understand that help only enhances whatever task I'm doing at the time. I will never have to work alone in this world, because four eyes will always be better than two.