

The ant who wanted to be an artist

I am not a big person.

Okay, I'm what you could call little.

Okay, I'm *really* tiny.

I was born like that. At the hospital, the nurses thought that I was a premature baby. And you know what? I wasn't. I was a healthy baby. I was a healthy baby *late*. Yeah, you read "late". Because as my mom always says: "You didn't want to come. I was eleven-month-pregnant when you finally decided to get out!"

Anyway, as you could have guessed it didn't get better with time. God, I'm the smallest fifteen-year-old person in the world! I can hear you say: "Being tiny is cute." But that's a legend. I mean, I agree: when you are a baby, being little is cute. When you are a kid, being little is cute. But God, when you are a teenager and you are as little as an ant, you aren't cute. You are *pathetic*. At least, I'm not bullied like the other odd-ones-out in my school. Nobody sees me. I don't even know if the other students know I exist.

Anyway, I see you, now saying "Okay, so maybe you are not cute, but there is certainly something really beautiful about you ... like your eyes perhaps?"

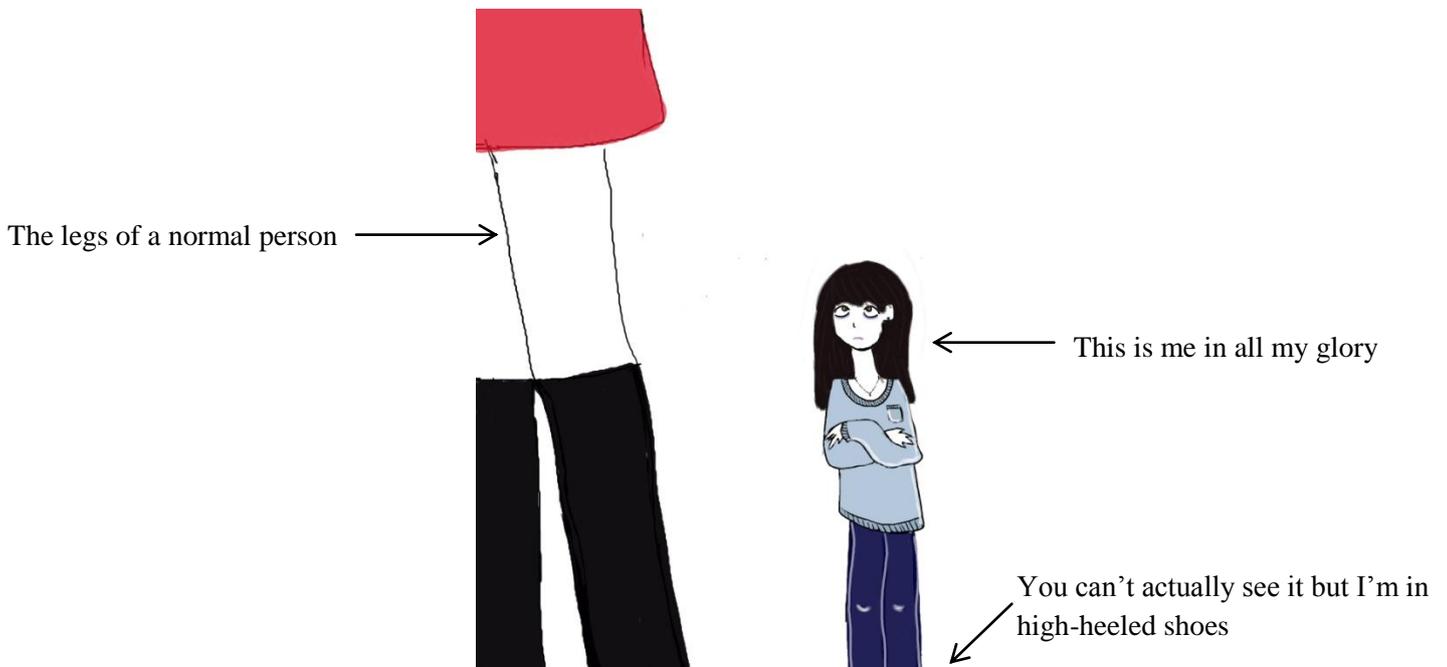
I'm sorry to disappoint you, but my eyes are ugly. First of all, I have little almond-shaped eyes with enormous rings around them. Brown eyes and purple rings round them. Not a beautiful brown shade almost black or with green sparkles in it. No, I have *mud-brown eyes*. And you know what? God, I hate rain! And mud comes with rain. And you can easily imagine how depressing it is to have mud-brown eyes when you hate rain.

Okay, my mouth ... is it really a mouth? We can barely see it! Chapped, dry, tiny mouth. However cold or hot it is outside, my mouth will always be chapped. What a shame huh?

I could have beautiful hair, you know to compensate for the utter mess that my body is. But God, it is just like my eyes. The *same* color! They are perfectly matched! Besides, it is thick. Bushy. Like a lion's mane. But if a lion looks classy, I look more like a freak. And do you imagine a little little head

with a big big mane on it? That's me. I'm hidden by my hair, God! Like a bush, with legs.

I always wear high-heeled shoes. It may rain, it may snow, you'll always see me in my high-heeled shoes. Mmmh ... okay you won't really see me because I will be trampled by the crowd, but you get the meaning, don't you?



The thing that could save me is that I love arts. Yeah, actually I love singing, photographing and drawing. You will always see me with my camera around my neck, twitting a song and a pencil in my pocket. And you know what? I could even say I'm pretty good at some of them. Just forget singing that more seems like a *croak*. But my drawings and photos are great. How many feelings, how many things can you say with a picture?

I want to be an artist. Yeah, a famous, and rich, and loved artist. A wonderful photographer. A wonderful drawer. A wonderful singer.

But for the moment, that is just a dream. God, for the moment I just have to do my homework and not to be late at school. And you know what? That *sucks*. You have guessed that I don't really like school, not to say I hate it. I have no friends, there. If you aren't at school anymore, you surely remember the poor kid that you discover on the class picture, the one who always stays alone, the one that even the teachers didn't notice. That's just *me*.

So at school I just draw. God, I'm drawing all day long, in math class, in English class, in Spanish class, in history class, I'm always drawing.

When I get back home, I take photos. What great days huh? But you know what? I actually love my days. I love drawing. I love taking photos.

And here is the point when you are wondering: “Okay, you have no friends, you love arts, you do that all day long, okay, I get that! But you have a family don’t you?”

Yes, I do.

Indeed, I do have a family.

Unfortunately I do.

Oh get this straight, I love them. But they are kind of weird. My brother for example, it’s just simple: he never gets out of his room. *Never*. He eats in his room. He works in his room. He relaxes in his room. And of course he sleeps in his room. And you know what he is doing all day in his room? He works. Yeah, he works hard, because he wants to be a doctor and he already failed the competitive examination twice. Twice. And he knows that he can’t fail again this year, because if he does that, my dad would kill him. Strangle him. Hit him with a baseball bat. You know why? Because, God, my dad just wanted him to be an engineer, like him. And he wants me to be an engineer, but I am an artist. And God, I just don’t understand *anything* in math.

Yes, my dad is an engineer, and proud of it. I never see him. He leaves home when I’m asleep. He gets home when I’m asleep. On week-ends he’s in his room, working for Monday.

And that brings us to mom. My mom. You know, I think mom is just disappointed. She’s disappointed because she wanted to be a vet. Yeah, that’s a curious dream, I know. But since she was a kid, she wanted to be a vet. Then she met dad, and she got pregnant, and she stopped her studies, then she had a family that she had to take care of, and she just understood that she would never be a vet. And you know what she is now? She’s a steward. Yes, a steward. She is always on a plane. And I don’t know if you know that, but stewards come back home only week-ends.

So, yes, I’m just *alone*, at school, at home, I’m always alone. Well, at home I’m not completely alone, because there are my cats, my only friends. My precious friends that make me feel better when I’m sick of being alone. And

God, isn't that *pathetic* to have cats as best friends? But I must confess that they are wonderful models for my pictures and drawings.

And anyway, you know what? The better artists are always the most tortured, the *loneliest* and weirdest people.

I think I could be a wonderful artist, don't you think so?

Why problems

Mean so

Much to me

I was born with water on my skull.

My mother *already* knew that I wasn't like the other babies. Yes, I know now that every new born-child is bald!

As soon as I was born, I was *different*.

When I was born my parents lived in the countryside.

When I was three years old, we left my grandma's farm, and we went to a nice suburb near Paris. My family and I have enough money to live a nice and decent life. So I presume we are *well-off* and we belong to the upper middle class

For the first two years, I hated this place because *it* was enormous, and people were not as nice as they were in my grandma's village. I missed my grandmother a lot and I was very sad she lived alone.

When I was six my grandmother died, and we sold the farm.

It was the worst day of my life!

Yes, the *worst*.

It is why, when I tell my story, everybody says "Oh my condolences" or "My deepest sympathy".

And when they say that, I cry. I don't know why, but I cry.

And when I'm crying they say that I'm in trouble, sad, unfortunate.

And when they say that, I stop crying.

You can say I'm *special* because it's true, but don't say I'm unfortunate because I'm not!

Okay, let's talk about my teeth, or I should say my tooth.

As you know I'm different, and my teeth are too.

I'm a fifteen-year-old girl, and I have only one normal tooth. Yes only one!

The typical human has thirty-two, right?

Doctors and dentists have never understood what my problem is.

And what is more?

The surgery which was supposed to add me thirty-one normal teeth didn't succeed. So I have now only one normal tooth, and *twenty fake teeth!!*

I think I should talk about my hair.

Must I really?

Probably not, but it doesn't matter.

I have straight, long honey-blond hair. I love my hair colour because it recalls the sun and daisies. My hair is rarely neatly-combed, and often tied in a ponytail.

Oh yes, I think you would like to know about my eyes.

I went to the doctor's three years ago, and he told me that I needed *glasses*.

So, like everybody, I went to the optician.

When I arrived, he mocked at me. He told me that he hadn't got glasses for my eyes.

Oh jeez, I forgot to say that my eyes are not normal.

One of my eyes is large, slanted and as blue as a lizard's, whereas the other is small and green.

So we can say that I'm a one-wide-eyed child, but also a one-small-eyed child.

What a bit of luck!

I will tell you now about my huge problem. I'm sure it's one of the slightest problems of the Universe, but to my mind, it's the most important.

My main problem is *my* cheeks.

They look like cow cheeks.

Indeed, my cheeks are so enormous that people often think I'm overweight!

But I'm not!!

I have another big problem: *my* face complexion.

My face is so ruddy that it looks like a big tomato. And it's not sunburns, it's just my skin!

My skin is dry, like my grandmother's skin and I can assure you that it is not pretty.

Oops, I forget to say something. This often happens.

Yes, my name.

So my name is Laura, but everybody calls me Reddy, and I think you understand why.

In my grandma's farm, it was cold, so I was used to wearing woolen clothes. So I love wool.

I don't really like leather because I love cows, even if I have the *same* cheeks as those animals.

I often wear jeans, overalls or crop pants.

I love tee-shirts, hoodies, and hats.

Yes I always put a hat on my skull firstly because I like to have something on my hair, and secondly because hats hide my hair!

I'm very angry about it, but like my grandfather, I have a *strange* growth problem.

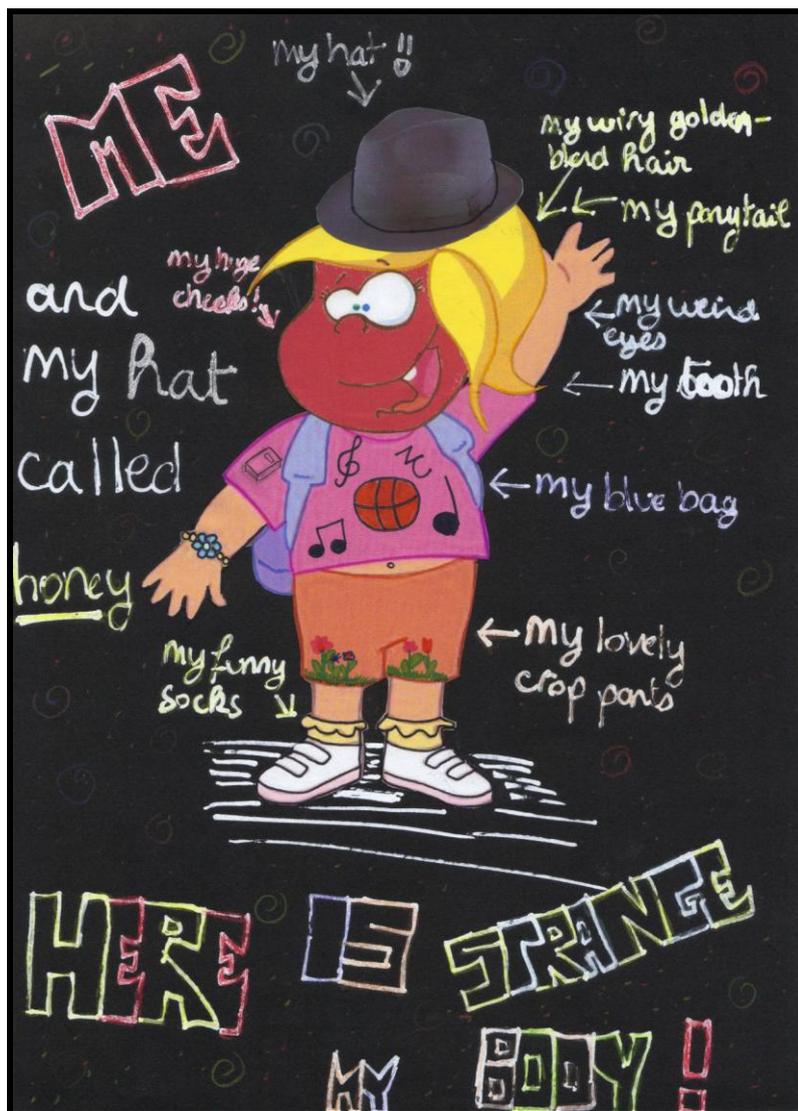
For ten years, I was a head shorter than all my friends.

And for five years, I have been a head taller than all my friends.

It's very weird, but as you know, I am special.

I know now that the worse thing between those two things is to be taller than everybody. Indeed, I'm a *giant* and it's really painful!

Here is a picture of *me* when I was a head shorter than all my friends:



I live with my family in a big house. I have my own and huge bedroom. I love my family even though I have two little brothers who sometimes look like two *monkeys*.

I have a little family and my cousins are all boys!!

When I arrived in this town, I hated all my neighbors because they weren't nice to me and I was afraid of them.

As I was a new student in school my classmates weren't nice with me and I was laughed at and shunned.

Everybody made me feel like a *fool*.

I was pointed at as the odd-one-out and I didn't belong.

At the end of the year I began to get integrated. I had few friends, and my neighbors were nicer.

I'm interested in lots of things and I think it's a big *skill*.

I read all the time. I read comics, novels, newspaper...

I read because words are not limited.

I read because I love travelling. I'm in another world when I read, and I love that.

Thanks to the books I read, I travelled to China, to Africa, but also back in the Middle Ages or at the time of Louis XIV.

Thanks to reading I dream about lots of things.

Thanks to reading I can be a king, a baby or a professional basketball referee.

Thanks to reading you can understand the World's problem, Earth history and human development.

Reading is WONDERFUL!

I love playing basketball, and I'm quite good at this sport.

When I was younger, I wanted to be a basketball referee. Now, I would like to be a *writer*. For me writing is more than just a *hobby*.

I also love music. Indeed, I love listening to music when I am in my room.

I had like every girl, when I was younger, a lot of dreams. For example, I wanted to be a princess. However, I know now that we can't become princesses, and it's not because you are not poor that you can become what you want.

As you know, I live in a wealthy area and I can promise you that not all the students in this town will achieve their dreams.

Indeed, I'm sure that I won't be able to become a writer, and I'm very *sad* about it.

A strange beginning

For a strange life

I was born with two broken collarbones.

And that's true, I think I was the biggest baby you've ever seen. And so the doctor had to take pliers to help me to get out of the "situation".

One problem ; pliers = *deformed* skull.

I was a deformed baby. A mistake of mother nature. Maybe my family thought : "9 months ... for that ?!". I was a *marshmallow* baby : without collarbones, your body is like devoid of structure. That was funny because I was as elastic and flexible as rubber, like a super-hero !

Fortunately, I didn't stay like that for the rest of my life. I became "*Hard as Rock*", like the AC/DC's song ! My body had changed, but the consequences of the pliers stayed visible ; my forehead was huge :

As gigantic as the Grand Canyon ;

As gigantic as a limousine ;

Like you wouldn't believe.

Jeez , I looked like *Frankenstein* ... without the scars.

Then, I began very tall and thin, like an asparagus. The only problem when you are tall, it's that little men always annoy you : they are jealous and scared !

What's more, I'm a "*pig-headed*" man ... Never talk to me when I'm waking up ; I'm in a bad mood !

When I was 6, at school, children hated me !

I was the least *out-going* of my class, people didn't like me. I was a weird kid. And I was stupid too. I wasn't nice with other people, that's why they were not nice with me.

Conclusion : I scared people.

They were afraid of me because my father was a biker,

They were frightened because I was tall,

They hated me, because I was different. One boy liked me. *Bob*.

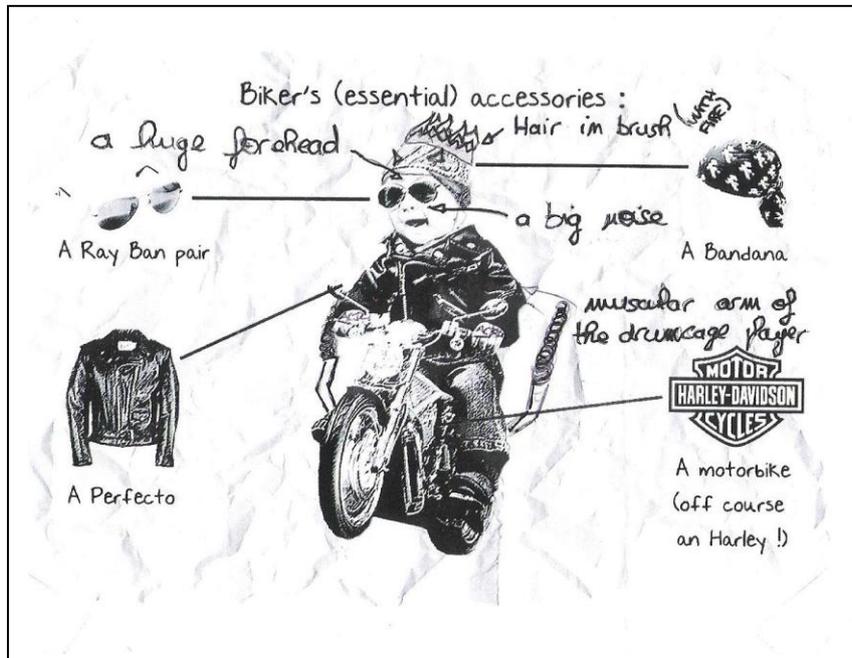
We were best friends, like our fathers. I have knew him since ... I don't remember. But he's the greatest guys you've ever seen ! Of course he likes motorbikes too.

We dreamed of riding *Harley-Davidson* all life long.

Like him, I was an energetic boy.

That's why, when I was ten, we began Ju Jitsu (it's like kick-boxing ...) in a club managed by a bikers group. My father was one of them, they were called "*The born to be Wild*".

After school, I spent my evening at the Moto Club with Bob, playing with old Harley frames. During my childhood, I thought that it was the coolest place for a child : A giant wasteland, a garage with thirty Harleys, a bar (with beer !), ...



This place was like a *church* for my family, because my house is a slum, like the city.

That's why My father was always there,

My mother was always there,

My sister was always there...

I was always there.

My mother worked in a supermarket and my father extorted money from the local shop owners.

My imagination and playing with Bob were the only ways I had to escape from this *slum*.

But my future was not like I had imagined.

I wanted to earn money to buy a beautiful motorbike.

Two choices : work at my mother's supermarket,

Or, steal like my father.

The second choice was the easier. Big mistake.

That was just the beginning of a job life.

TO BE CONTINUED