

It was a cold winter day. Everything outside was white. I was inside. I had just finished my homework and was drinking a mug of hot chocolate. I was bored—like always. I was done with my homework, and I really didn't have anything to do. But then, I heard a voice say,

"Psssst. I know you're bored. Come into the living room."

I froze. This was the creepiest thing I'd ever encountered. A talking voice with no source? That was the sort of thing that happened in, I don't know, *folk tales* or something. But then the voice said, "*Come on!* I know you're nervous. But it's better than being bored. Besides, you're done with that hot chocolate of yours." I looked in my mug, and nearly jumped out of my seat. The mug was indeed empty, and I hadn't even noticed.

The voice continued, "If I were evil, like those guys who try to kidnap children for ransom, then you should be creeped out if I know your phone number, (which, by the way, is 724-132-7465). But I know your *thoughts*. And *that* must mean that there is some *more-than-human* source going on here. So come in here."

I thought about what the voice had said. My dad was at work. My mom was downstairs, working on the computer. I guess it wouldn't hurt for me to go to the living room. So I did. And what did I see? A little stick figure perched on top of our piano! (He wasn't even that good of a drawing.)

"I HEARD THAT!" said the stick figure. "Don't you DARE call me a bad drawing. I'm the God of the ARTS!"

"Sorry," I said hastily. "But if you're the god of art, why are you just a stick figure?"

I seemed to have finally stumped the stick figure. His jaw dropped. Then, slowly, it closed up, and I saw, to my dismay, that a tear ran down his cheek. "I didn't mean it as an offense!" I said. The stick figure paused, then gave a weak smile.

"Of course you didn't," he said. "It's just that you're right. I *am* just a stick figure. And I'm just a drawing. But you see, that's because when I first discovered the arts—not art, the *arts*—I was like this. I was the youngest of all the gods up—up there." He pointed towards the sky.

"But surely, now that you've—er—*discovered* the arts, you can re-draw yourself?"

"I wish I could. But you see, the arts aren't popular enough. Most people these days are more interested in technology, politics, and stuff like that. If more people believed in and liked the arts, I might be the most beautiful god to roam—well, anywhere! But alas, it hasn't happened yet. In a list of subjects taught in school and jobs in the world, if something needs to be cut, the arts are the first to go."

I thought about this, and again realized the god had a very strong point.

"So, it's like Tinker Bell?" I asked. "You'll die out if not enough people believe in you—or what you teach?"

"It's not the best connection," sighed the god, "but yes. It's like that." He stared for a while, apparently lost in thought. But then he smiled. "However, I didn't bring you in here just to talk about my woes. I wanted to tell you a story."

“A story?” I asked. “I love stories.”

“And so do most kids your age, whether they know it or not. The problem is, at your age, most kids don’t have time for stories. But you’ve got some free time right now.”

“What are you going to tell me about?” I asked.

“I’m going to tell you about how I, the God of the Arts, (who was alive before humans had evolved, and was with Johann Sebastian Bach, William Shakespeare, Leonardo da Vinci, Ludwig van Beethoven, Vincent Van Gogh, Charles Dickens, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Mark Twain, and Michelangelo Buonarroti throughout their entire lives,) I, I repeat, founded the arts. You see...

I come from a place called heaven. You might have heard of it before. But this heaven is not like what you think. There are many gods up there. And up there is wonderful. It’s the best place I’ve ever been, and probably the best place you’d ever be in too—if you could get there. No, it’s not the place where you go when you die. And no, it’s not a place where everything is perfect. It’s simply a luxurious, larger-than-life home for the gods, who watch over the universe and try to make everything go right. And there’s a god for everything: food, drink, law, love, religion, technology, animals, nature, the stars, and even a god of the dead. And there’s a god of the arts. (That’s me.) But I think I told you that I’m the youngest of the gods. I was only a teenager when I created the arts. You see, each god not only represents something; he/she created that something. (Well, all except for death. The God of the Dead just watches over the deceased; he didn’t create death.) But aside from that, each god is a craftsman in his/her own way. Each god created something. But the arts were one of the last things to be developed.

My father was... well, we gods don’t really have a name. He was just the God of Wisdom. He knew almost everything godly possible, and he was the most learned of all the gods (save the King of the Gods.) My mother was the Goddess of Law. She made sure all the laws of the universe did what they were supposed to do, and wrote some of the actual laws in heaven. Needless to say, both of my parents were very important. But when I was born, I was different. I liked to think. Of course, both my parents were thinkers, but I thought in a different way. They cared more about what *must* be and rules and stuff like that. I always thought that there was something missing. Something that you didn’t really need to live, but made life more enjoyable.

I was born during the time when *homo sapiens sapiens* hadn’t quite evolved yet, (that’s Latin for modern humans, in case you didn’t know,) but there were *homo sapiens neanderthalensis* (Neanderthals). All the gods sensed a big change was coming in the series of this special type of monkey, who had been evolving for several million years, and was about to make a significant change again. Everyone gave credit to the God of the Animals, of course, for helping the monkeys evolve into, we knew, what would be the smartest of all animals and would be the most similar to us gods.

At about this time, my curiosity got the better of me, and I told my parents about my desire. They just laughed.

"It's a wonderful fantasy, I'm sure," said my father, "but this is the *real world*. Or heaven, that is."

"Now, don't get crazy ideas into your head," said my mother. "I don't want something bad happening to you because of this *something else*."

For that was what I called it. I had no idea that it would be called *the arts*. But I knew that there was something else, and I was determined to figure out what it was.

Also, (I don't think I told you this already,) before each god creates his/her element, they're invisible. Somehow, the other gods can see where they are and what they're doing. But they don't really have an image. Once they've created or discovered something, they appear according to what their talent is. Not only was I curious to find out what the *something else* would be, I was eager to find out what that *something else* would make me look like.

But although I looked in heaven for many years, (that is, you humans would consider it years,) I found nothing. Then I finally realized what I had to do to find the unknown element.

I had to go down to earth—alone. And I swore to never return until I found the mysterious element.

When I told my parents about this, they were very concerned—especially my mother.

"You can't do that!" she exclaimed. "You'll be in very grave danger! You have to wait until you're older to even set foot on the earth, and you certainly should never go down simply to look for a crazy element that doesn't exist!"

But although my father, at first, was upset too, he eventually calmed down and started to think. Then he said (as the wisest of all the gods, remember):

"Our son has a point. He is not so young anymore. If he is confident, and has thought this through, he has every right to go down to the earth. And how did all the other gods create their elements? If he is ever to create an element, he must take some sort of risk. The only person that can righteously stop him is either the King—or himself."

But the King said nothing of discouragement when my parents told him of the plan. He agreed to let me go. So I put on a backpack and set out to the golden gates, from which I would leave heaven's boundaries and fall to earth. But right as I was about to walk through the gates, I found my mother right by me. She whispered angrily (but with a note of pleading in her voice too),

"You can't do this! You'll be killed! Listen to your mother!" But I had no choice. I said, with a sad smile on my face:

"Sorry mom." And I pushed the gates open, and jumped from heaven's heavenly boundaries.

I fell for quite a long time. But eventually, I fell into an open, grassy field, with a soft bump. I wasn't hurt at all. I was amazed at how beautiful the earth was, for a planet, though it was nothing compared to heaven. And so I started my search.

But nothing seemed to show itself to me. I searched and searched, but although I encountered many strange things (even Neanderthals themselves!) I didn't find the *something else*.

You humans would probably consider it about six months that I roamed the earth. Finally, I sat down, exhausted. I hadn't found anything hopeful. Yet I had sworn to never return until I found the unknown substance. My mother's departing words echoed in my head, and I started to feel despair. She was right. I was on a wild goose chase (I like that expression you humans made up.), looking for something that didn't exist.

I started to cry.

And then something amazing happened. As my tears fell to the ground, they mixed with the grass, and the tears became green, like the grass. They also became more thick and sticky. In wonder, I smudged some on my finger. It was exactly like the grass, but different.

I had created the first paint. My godly tears had captured the color from the grass, and had made that sticky substance. I was in awe. Then it hit me. If I could capture green, I could capture the other colors too!

I ran around, and my tears that had been left on my face fell to the ground, and captured red, blue, yellow, brown, and more green. I scooped the colors and put them in separate glass cases in my backpack.

I suddenly got an inspiration. I picked up a stick, and dipped it in some black paint. Then, feeling for my body, I put some paint on me.

The paint stayed. I was elated. Finally, I would be visible to the gods! I painted my entire body a thick, dark black. (But, as you remember, I was not very learned in the arts at the time, and that is why I am a stick figure to this day.)

It was wonderful to see myself. And I knew that I had found the *something else*. It was art: being able to capture colors and use them at will. I could return to heaven triumphant.

But then I heard the sounds of nature, and another idea struck me. I took a stick, and painted the sounds. At once they became visible, written in a language nobody I had ever seen. It was music.

I put some in another glass case I had in my backpack. This was more wonderful than I had ever dreamed. These were truly things that weren't necessary to life, but made life much more enjoyable. I was so happy, that I started rising up, and I found myself floating to heaven.

Soon I was in front of the golden gates. Had I not discovered the something else that I had vowed to find, the gates would have remained sealed to me. But I kept my promise, and therefore the gates opened. I ran through them, ready to see my family, with my new body and materials.

Soon everyone discovered that I had come back, and they were as joyful as I was. Six human months had gone by, and they were almost sure that I was dead.

But here I was—and I was visible. They immediately brought me before the King of the Gods.

I kneeled before him and said, as respectfully as I could,

“Sir, I have returned.”

“Have you found what you sought?” he said.

“Sir,” I replied, “I have kept my promise. Let me show you.” I pulled out my stick and my paints. I stuck my stick in the paints and flung the stick across the sky in an arch-form. Instantly, a dazzling array of colors formed. And in that instant, some of the colors mixed. Red and yellow combined and made orange. Red and blue made purple. The new purple and blue made an even darker indigo. Blue and yellow combined and added to the green: the first color ever to be made into paint.

A series of “Ooohs” and “Aaahs” filled the room. They were as amazed as I had been myself when these colors came out all at once for the very first time. The king exclaimed, in a kingly voice, with very grand and fancy language,

“This is one of the most beautiful sights mine eyes have ever seen. From now on, these bows of light shall be seen in the sky right after it rains, so gods and nature alike shall feel joy, even though the sky has been crying.” Thus was the first rainbow created. I said,

“Sir, this is how I have come to have a visible body. I used this material to draw myself. And that’s not the only thing I have in my backpack.”

I opened the glass case that contained the music, and the sweetest sound filled the room. It was beautiful, but powerful too. There were more “Ooohs” and “Aaahs”. Eventually the sound disappeared, and the music went back inside my glass case. I quickly sealed it, and put it back in my backpack. The King said in amazement,

“It is a very good thing you went to earth. You are a genius, young god, and you shall now be declared the God of all these things.”

“Sir,” I said, bowing low, “with your permission, I will name these the arts, since the visual art I showed you was the first of these to be discovered.”

“Let it be so,” said the King of the Gods. He stood up, and declared,

*“You are the God of the Arts.”*

A loud cheer went up, and I smiled in spite of myself. But there were only two people in the crowd that I wished to see, and so I walked towards my parents. My father was beaming; in contrast, however, my mother was very pale.

“I’m sorry...” she began. But, with a big smile, quite different from the one I’d given her at the golden gates, I said,

“Don’t worry about it, mom.”

My parents were very proud, and from that day on, they never doubted me again.

But there was one more thing to do. When it was late at night, I went to my room, took my stick out of my backpack, and dipped it in some paint. My memories of the cheering crowds came out, and I painted them. They became words, and settled on a piece of paper. I smiled, and went to bed.

That was artistic writing. Writing had long since been used by the gods, but never as an art. This new writing was *poetry*. The third art had been discovered.

Now my job is to create more of the arts, and make sure they are used in a good way. When modern humans finally evolved, I personally went down to earth and spread the arts all over the earth, so that man would use them, for the years to come.

“And they do,” said the God of the Arts. “It’s just that these days they’re not as popular as they used to be.”

“You’re right,” I said. “I’m sorry to hear that. All that hard work—for nothing.”

“Aaah, but you’re wrong there!” said the god. “People do still use the arts—just not as much.”

“But I don’t understand,” I said. “I learned at school (I think it was Social Studies class) that writing isn’t an art; it’s its own category.”

“Did you?” the god asked interestedly. “Why would you be talking about that in Social Studies?”

“Well, we were talking about what makes a civilization ‘civilized.’ As I remember, a civilization has a stable food supply, social structure, government, religion, technology, the arts... *and* writing.”

“Well, as I told you,” said the god, “writing was used by the gods before the arts. They mean writing to keep track of laws and records and things like that.”

“Oh,” I said. “I get it. Well, thanks a lot for the story.”

“Thanks for the story?! No, I thank *you* for *listening* to the story. I told you that not many kids your age listen to stories. Anyway, I need to go now. But first, I have to tell you one last thing.”

He stood up, and looked more serious and somber than ever before. “Promise me,” he said, “that you’ll pay attention to the arts. The arts are used, but they’re dying out fast. They are *the things* that make humans human, and not animals. Use the arts, and if possible, combine them with other things, too. And tell others to do the same. That’s all.”

“I will,” I said.

“Good,” said the God of the Arts. And he turned to leave.

“Wait!” I said. “Don’t leave so soon!” The god turned back one last time.

“Honestly,” he laughed, “you don’t think I *live* on earth? I have other things to do. Although you humans are made in our image, you still are not gods. We have much bigger things to take care of than you humans do, I’m afraid. Good-bye.”

And he disappeared, just like that.

But the arts are still on earth. And so now *I* ask *you* to use the arts, and appreciate them. Don’t hold back any art-inspired ideas that come into your head. Have you ever felt an inspiration to draw a picture, or write a story (like this one), and you did it, and your efforts paid off?

The God of the Arts, 6-8, p. 7

I swear the God of the Arts was with you that day.