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To Catch The Sun
by
Virginia M. Orzel

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Imaging Arts/Computer Animation
School of Film and Animation
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, New York

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Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and dedicate my thesis to a very special person, Adrianna White. She is my daily motivation and my main source of inspiration for writing and creating my thesis. Her love and dedication for me stimulates my creativity everyday.

Introduction

As many other graduate students, I wanted my thesis to be my best work ever. I truly believe it was. I am very proud of my film and very pleased how it turned out. Before coming back to school, my career has led me down a path where I was working on children programming. I tried to avoid it when I started graduate school. I just thought that children's programming or anything related to children filmmaking wasn't held to as high of a caliber as other filmmaking styles or genres. But after having a conversation with Professor Naomi Orwin, I realized that if I have a niche in children's filmmaking I should follow it. So I did and here I am with a thesis that I geared towards children and families.

Story Concept

I used to try and make films and write stories based on how others would make the film or write the story. I did this because I believed that for me to be successful I had to follow other established writers and filmmakers. The problem with that concept was there was something missing in my writing and my films. I have since learned that every film must come from within the artist, from their heart, and then the film will be successful.

A couple of years ago I spent the summer visiting friends on the West Coast. I began my journey in Montana. It was the first time I saw my aunt in three years. I was shocked by what I saw. She was a very frail woman who had lost over 70 pounds. Only a few months prior she was a strong boisterous woman who would put anyone in their place. It was a very painful and frightening sight. AT that moment I knew I would never see her again. She didn't want to die but a horrible disease had her by its claws and wouldn't let go. She would end up dying three months later.

I tell this story because the deep love I have for her and the great pain I suffered watching her die is how my thesis was born.

I am one of the youngest members of my family. My dad is the youngest of seven brothers and sisters.

Over the last ten years I have watched several aunts and uncles die. There is a moment in everybody's life when you realize you are beaten by the circumstances in life. Some are ok with dying some are not.

There is a look on the face in the eyes of a person near death that say it's over. My aunt in Montana wasn't ready to die. I never saw her cry until she told me the disease raging in her body was taking over and she was going to die.

The little girl in my film, Julianna, is every aunt and uncle in my life that were beaten by their circumstances. Julianna represents the moment that they knew they had no control over death. The rain symbolizes the diseases and other circumstances that we can't control.

Timmy is me, an observer who wants to make the other person feel better. He wants to comfort them, and to make them happy again.

The other characters in the film, the flowers symbolize the selfish people in this world who can't get beyond themselves and their own selfish needs to help others. Ms. Oak tree, who is consumed by self indulgence, can't see beyond herself to even realize that there is someone who needs her help. Mr. Yew, the dead tree, is willing to help, but is not strong enough physically or emotionally to endure the bulldozers of the world. The clouds are all the evil elements in life that add more challenges and road blocks that prevent us from moving forward.

My story is about a little girl, Julianna who is distraught because it won't stop raining. Timmy, her older brother wants to help his sister find peace and happiness again. At first he isn't sure what to do, but realizes that the Sun can help. Mr. Sun symbolizes God in the film.

Timmy asks the flowers and Ms. Oak tree for help but they don't help him. Mr. Yew volunteers to help Timmy but can't help him either. It's only when Timmy looks within himself that the answers come to him and he has the ability to seek Mr. Sun.

Of course when Timmy finally finds the sun and starts his journey towards the sun, the evil clouds step in and try to stop him.

It's when Timmy is at his lowest point clinging to the side of the mountain, that Mr. Sun comes and rescues him from the clouds.

My thesis, *To Catch The Sun*, is really about my journey in life and how I act and react to others in my life. God is always at the core of who I am and all the decisions I make in my life. I don't know why my life has taken me in the direction of making children's films, but it has. As I wrote this film I visualized myself speaking to my friend's daughter, Adrianna White. Adrianna was 5 when I first started writing the story.

The story began as a children's book which I later adapted into my thesis film. As I wrote the film, I wanted to keep it simple and fun. I tried to think like a child by adding randomness to the story. For instance, there is a line, "I knew I need help, I need Mr. Sun. He stop the rain and bring back the fun. I first made a sandwich fluffer nutter on rye, packed it all up and said my goodbyes."

In an adult story the journey would begin right away, but in a child's mind they must get everything in order that is logical to their own minds. I tried to convey the child's random mind throughout the script. I believe I was successful in accomplishing the child's thought process.

Again I exaggerated the end such as how a child exaggerates an idea or thought because they don't understand time.

When you hear a nine year old say, "When I was a child or when I was much younger at the age of six."

It cracks us up as adults because three years is not a long period of time within our own perception. But to a young child a month is an eternity. So I end the film, "Years have come and gone since that day...", and yet the children don't get any older. I did this on purpose to emphasize that the story being told through the child has a different perception of me then we as adults do.

In addition, as the camera pulls out from the house, the house is glowing from the inside even though it's still raining outside. The reason I did this was to show that true happiness comes from within ourselves, no matter what is going on around us.

It's not life or other people or uncontrollable circumstances that make us who we are, or dictate how we feel, but it is ourselves that have the choice to be happy. If we make the choice to be happy nothing else matters and no one can make us miserable but ourselves.

The greatest challenge for writing the script to my film was getting everything to rhyme. This is where Professor Naomi Orwin became a big asset to my film. I bought a rhyming dictionary and soon discovered that there are many words in the English language that don't rhyme. I now have a new found respect for Dr. Suess who created several rhyming stories. I now understand why he had so many made up words in his story.

Character Design

Designing the characters was rather easy for me. My main goal for designing my characters was to create them so they would appeal to children. I even wanted the evil clouds to be likeable. Plus, I didn't want anyone to be frightened or have any morbid thoughts by the dead tree. I want each character to have their own personality but also be enjoyable. I believe I was successful in this area.

I really enjoyed the process. I started with the children first. Julianna was a bit challenging because she always ended up looking older than Timmy. Of course this was a problem because she needed to be the younger sister.

At first I didn't have a set age for either Timmy or Julianna. So the first thing I did was determine that Timmy would be 8 years old and Julianna would be five years old.

I observed many of my friend's kids to get ideas on character design. One of the elements I loved most was when my friends tried to put hair scrunchies in their daughter's hair when they didn't have enough hair. What would happen is the hair would stick up straight. I thought it was the most adorable thing I ever saw. I actually designed Julianna with her hair pointing up. After I textured her, she looked like a little devil. Not quite the look I was going for. So I ended up turning her pigtails down. I believe if I was working with more realistic hair qualities, I could have gotten away with having the hair turn up because it would not have looked like horns. The hair would have had a more organic look to it and would have flopped around as the girl moved.

All the other characters just came to me and I sketched them out. I wanted the sun to have 11 rays, which later would become a hassle during rigging.

For the clouds I studied several pictures of clouds that I took, as well as, pictures on line of clouds that I found. I actually took a combination of a couple of different cloud types to create the clouds in my film.

I wanted the clouds to be evil, but not evil in a scary way. I wanted the clouds to be fun and enjoyable to children.

The biggest challenge was taking my drawings and trying to recreate my characters into the 3D space that they needed to exist in. I started with the sun.

I thought this would be the easiest character to create. It was one of the hardest along with the clouds. The body of the sun was easy; the hard part was connecting the rays.

Making the rays was easy. It was trying to get the rays and the body to connect without it looking like they were connected. I wanted them to look like one whole or complete piece.

It was very challenging to even rig the sun character. I tried a broken rig but ran into problems because of the number of rays and the length of the rays. I tried using soft bodies. This worked for the first few rays but 11 rays was just too much for the system to handle. I tried lattices but again it failed.

My last ditch effort was using non-deformers. I tried all but one and they all failed. Logically the sine non-deformer just didn't make sense to use. But out of desperation I gave it a go, and it worked.

The next challenge was texturing the sun. I love the look of color pencil and crayons. I wanted to do all my textures using those tools. At first, I used the crayons on regular animation paper but I didn't like the look. Professor Stephanie Maxwell suggested I use a variety of textured drawing or water color paper. So I did. I purchased several textured papers and started coloring swatches in them.

I quickly learned that you paint with crayons and colored pencils differently than you would with paint. First you start with the lightest color, and then move to the darkest color. It took me about two months to perfect the coloring with crayons and colored pencils.

I really love how the textures and colors came out. I wanted very saturated colors like a child's coloring book.

The clouds posed the next greatest challenge for modeling in Maya. In fact, I ended up not modeling them in Maya. I modeled them in Cinema 4D. I used meatballs which are an awesome feature.

It allows you to combine spheres and you can adjust the viscosity and density of the balls. By using meatballs, I was able to create the lumpiness of the clouds. The challenge came to importing the file into Maya.

During importing, the geometry for the clouds became very ugly. I spent months cleaning them up. I did create all the faces in Maya so I could use Maya blend shapes.

The clouds were very challenging to rig; I ended up using a broken rig for them.

All the other characters, Ms. Oak, Mr. Yew, the flowers, and the children were relatively easy to model in the 3D world. The flowers were challenging to rig. I ended up using a simple spine for them and creating set driven keys to animate them.

I had some crazy hair for Timmy in my original drawings but I had to eliminate the hair in the 3D world. I did model the hair and ended up with over 200 cone polygons for his hair. It looked great. It was exactly how I wanted it, but the character was so heavy and large I knew I was going to have problems when I got to texturing and rigging. I figured when I started animating him, I would crash the software. Hence, the change in hair style for Timmy.

Backgrounds

Theodor Geisel's Dr. Seuss books inspired me for my entire film, from the script to the character designs and even the sets. I wanted a different look to my 3D film. I didn't want it to look like 3D. I wanted my film to have a unique look. I love the look of colored pencils and crayons. I tried to capture that in the 3D world. I didn't get exactly what I was originally going for, but I enjoyed what I did come up with so I continued with it.

The house and porch were the first elements I modeled and designed in 3D. I next modeled Mr. Yew and Ms. Oak Tree. I wanted my trees and environment to be more like Dr. Suess, but the mistake I made, was making Ms. Oak Tree too much like a tree. Because when I first designed my environment it didn't work with her. She looked like an outcast.

I was really torn as to which direction to go in, change Ms. Oak to fit in the Dr. Suess world or change my filler trees to fit in Ms. Oak's world. I really loved Ms. Oak and worked so hard on her I just didn't have the heart to throw her on the cutting room floor. So I decided to keep her and scrap my trees.

My original filler trees looked like candy and lollypops. My next filler tree designs appeared more like palm trees you would see in Florida or Southern California. The last round of trees were too boring. I wanted to have more fun with them. I ended up taking a lattice to them and creating crazy bends in the trunk of the trees and the main branches. I really liked them. They were a cross between reality and Dr. Suess. So I kept them. Keep in mind that my original trees were 3D. I'll get to how they became 2D in a moment.

I wanted my environments to be simple. I wanted them to only have enough information for the audience to get an idea of where they were, but not so much information that it became a real world.

I created the ground to only have mountains on one side with a river at its base. The land going up to the mountains is very flat. This is a very typical look out West. I lived in Montana for three years and I was amazed at how flat the land could be with these enormous mountains as the backdrop. There was always a river at the base of the mountains. This was the look I wanted for my film.

The crazy thing about my outdoor environment is that it's a world I have always wanted. I love Montana and the mountains; there is no place like it in the world.

I also love the green hills and trees of New York State. For years I've been saying I wish the trees of New York could meet the mountains of Montana. They finally have in my film.

I went on to model the indoor environments, the living room and the kitchen. Again I was torn between how exaggerated to make my indoor environments while keeping them simple. I wanted the environments to be as simple as a five year old child. My goal was to only have what I needed and to keep everything simple.

I used textures to add details to the floor and walls. I kept all furniture to a minimum. I was very happy with the outcome.

Texturing and lighting enhanced the look of my environments.

It was rather interesting on the lighting because the first round of lighting I used harsher light with strong shadows. The film looked like stop motion especially with my textures. The sky and sun looked like it was carved out of foam.

I wasn't going for a stop motion look so I softened my lighting. During the time I was designing my lighting it was raining for several days if not weeks here. I observed that the light was so diffused even when it wasn't raining that the trees and other objects outside did not cast a shadow at all.

I decided to use very soft diffused light with a bluish hue to them. The majority of the lights I used were point lights. One of the greatest challenges I had with lighting was that I had to light each piece of geometry separately which was very time consuming. But I was very happy with the outcome. The most challenging lighting was the final indoor scene, the 180 degree camera wrap around the characters. It literally took me 24 hours straight to get the lighting to work. I'm still not 100 percent satisfied with it, but I don't think anyone notices the problems I have with it.

I spent a good portion of my time painting textures, revising textures and positioning planes to force perspectives. The amount of textures I had to create for my film grew to a few hundred. Many times I would have to create different shades, lighter or darker or blurred versions of a texture I already created, to give the environment more depth.

When I was satisfied with all my environments, it was time to add the last element before animating, the opening clouds. My plan was to use either paint effects or fluids for my clouds. I was all excited. This was the moment I had been waiting for; however, as soon as I added the clouds to my outdoor scene, my scene took on a new flavor.

My film no longer had a child like feeling to it. I didn't like. It was too reality based. I don't know where the idea came from, but I decided to draw 2D clouds and project the texture onto a plane in Maya. I loved my clouds. I loved how they looked in my 3D world. But my clouds clashed with my 3D filler trees. I spent months getting those trees just right and now they no longer fit.

Again I was at a turning point; I really couldn't go back to the paint effects clouds. So I did the only thing I could, I threw away my 3D clouds and drew my filler trees. I projected the new textures on planes and absolutely fell in love with the look. This is exactly what I wanted.

In the end my texturing methods, lighting and color scheme unified all my sets together and gave my film the look I imagined.

Animation

Before animating, the most important element to get right is the rigging. If you have a good rig the animation process will go smoother. I actually love to rig. Many people hate it because there are so many things that can go wrong. Due to this, there is a good share of trouble shooting. I always like to better myself therefore; I tried new methods to rigging and tried broken rigs that I learned from a seminar from Disney at Siggraph.

It took me eight months to rig my fourteen characters. I was concerned about spending so much time rigging. I thought it might be a waste of time, but it was worth the time because animating went much faster based on my rigs.

Most thesis films have 40-50 shots for a six to seven minute film. I was a bit over ambitious and had 100 shots in six minutes of animation. One plus to all these shots is that animation went faster because the shots were shorter. However, having 100 shots took a very long time to complete.

I studied my friends' kids and acted out my shots and blocked out the timing of each shot. Most people usually animate a rough pass then go through a few more passes to get a final look. I like to spend all my time on one shot and perfect that shot before moving on to the next. I several shots I went through three or four passes before I was satisfied with my animation. I would always add the secondary motion on the final two passes.

My goal was to have better animation than in my last film. I think for the most part I was able to achieve this goal. I was actually very terrified to animate my film. I didn't want to ruin it. But I really can't wait to animate again. I have plans for another film.

Editing

Editing was more challenging than I thought it would be. I spent all this time creating a dope sheet, figuring out how long each shot should be. I even factored in reaction shots and holds in the action so the audience would understand what was going on in the film. Yet, when I placed each of the shots in the timeline they didn't line up like I thought or planned them to. I therefore needed to revise my shots.

The first half of the film, I animated one shot at a time, placed it in the timeline, made necessary revisions to the clip, then revised the next clip before putting it into the timeline.

It was a very long process but I was very satisfied with the timing and the pace for each shot.

In the second half of the film, I had multiple shots per scene, so I animated all the shots for that scene then moved onto the next. I didn't place them in the timeline until all shots were animated. I didn't like working this way because the timing was off more and the pacing was off as well.

If time permits I would definitely recommend animating the first way. Coming from a live action background the editing process was much easier for me than for many others. One thing I do is work in transition time for all my shots. I allow one to one and a half second of slop for the front and tail of every clip. This way I can add dissolves or any other effect that I want.

This also comes in handy if you need to slow a shot down so the audience can see or comprehend the action that is going on in the film. I was amazed and surprised that other students don't do this. I strongly recommend that everyone plans for extra footage on the tail and head of every clip.

Sound

I had no idea what I wanted for sound. I didn't know what I wanted for the music or the sound effects. My first composer, I spent months with getting the music right. However in February this year, he ended up getting a rare lung bacteria and wasn't able to continue working on my music score. I wasn't too worried about my film because I was still consumed by all the animation I had to finish. Luckily I was able to find another composer, Mark Hijleh, who completed the score in less then a week.

I really enjoyed what Mark created for me. I feel he really captured the essence of my film. There were a couple moments in the second half of the film where the music becomes a bit over dramatic, but I wasn't sure how to direct the composer in a different direction.

But after listening to it a zillion times, the music grew on me and I actually really liked it.

The sound effects were the least favorite part of my film because normally I really enjoy this part. I don't know if exhaustion and fear of finishing just got the better of me. SOFA graduate students Moonsik Chung and Kum-Taek Kung stepped up to the plate about a week and a half before my film was due. They spent two nights helping me create the necessary sounds I needed.

I recorded a total of an hour and half of sound effects. In addition, a friend of mine works at a local radio station; Joe Lomonico, did all the voice effects in my film. He was fantastic. I wish I had more time to spend with him. I would have liked to work on the laughs for the clouds a little more. Other than that, I think Joe did a great job.

My film had 10 tracks of video and 14 tracks of audio. I don't think Premiere can handle an audio mix down of this magnitude. I had a difficult time trying to get my DVD output to equal what was in my timeline. This is where I really wished I had edited with Final Cut Pro where I could have used the Final Cut Pro audio mixdown tool.

My greatest concern was trying to find the right voice for my narrator. I wanted someone who would tell the story as if he was telling a child or a group of children. I wanted the narrator to be the voice of all the characters, so this person needed to be able to change his voice accordingly.

For a long while I spoke to people and had them do reads for me but no one had the right sound. I was beginning to think I was being too picky when I finally heard the voice. It was Pastor Dave Parker.

I was sitting in church one Sunday morning when Dave Parker got up to make announcements. As soon as I heard the voice I knew he was the one.

The greatest challenge I had for my sound effects would have to be the girl crying and the mud sound.

For the girl crying, I used a woman crying off a sound track CD. It was very difficult to make it sound like a girl but I believe I finally achieved the correct sound. One of the biggest problems was having it not sound like a doll.

The mud squishy sound was also equally challenging. I wish I had a yard where I could have dug up some dirt. Someone suggested using flour and water. It made sense to me.

But then again I was very sleep deprived at the time. The problem with flour and water is that it becomes very sticky and the flour absorbs the water very quickly. It took 50 takes but we eventually got a sound that worked. We soaked our hands in water, took a chunk of flour mixture, dunked it in the water than slid the flour mixture in our hands.

Screening

I do not enjoy getting up in front of a group of people after I screen my film but I strongly believe this is an important process. It allows the filmmaker to see and hear the first impressions of the audience. It also allows the filmmaker to let the audience know some of the background to their film or explain some of the choices made. In addition you have an opportunity to let the audience know any hardships that you have over come.

Thesis defending is a very important process. I would just like to suggest that the screenings be changed so that the only filmmakers that respond to their films are the undergraduate thesis students and the graduate thesis films.

Conclusion

It has been a long journey to finish this film, but it has been a great journey. I have learned so much and enjoyed the entire process. I am very proud of this film and can't wait to begin the next one.

I am one of those people who could spend a life time trying to perfect one tiny element in my film that most people wouldn't notice. I have learned through making several films that you need to let things go and move on.

I believe the best way to learn anything is to get your hands on it and actually do it.

It is a wonderful experience to be able to create a world from my imagination. It is so thrilling to see a character come to life. I really could feel the emotions of my characters as each one breathed life by me.

I would like to finish this paper by thanking all the people who helped me physically get this film done, Moonsik Chung, Kum-Taek Kung, Aharon Charnov, Ander Bergstrum, Bob Fleck, Mark Hijleh, Stephanie Maxwell, Cat Ashworth and Malcolm Spaul. A quick thanks to my family and friends who emotionally supported me as I gave up so much in my personal life to make this film possible. Without them I would have called this quits long ago, way back in December 2004, when my whole project decided to crash on me. But they helped me stay focused and not to lose hope. After two months my projects started working again.

Appendix A:

Original Proposal

Treatment of "To Catch the Sun"

Working Title:	"To Catch the Sun"	Start Date:	June 23, 2003
Producer:	Virginia M. Orzel	End Date:	May 12, 2004
Budget:	\$2,864,416	Running Time:	5 minutes
Actual Budget:	\$2,650	Release Print:	DV, DVD, VHS, BETA SP

Story:

"To Catch the Sun" is a story about a boy's love for a friend. He is willing to do anything to make her happy.

Synopsis:

We open with the rain drops hitting a puddle on the ground. The camera tilts up to a wide shot of a house. There are trees, bushes, and flowers around the house. We see two shadows in the window. The colors are very monotone, dull, browns and blues.

As we get closer, we see that there are two children, a boy and a girl looking out the window. They are very unhappy that it is raining outside. It is very nasty outside, the rain is blowing and the wind is howling. The children have been waiting a very long time for the rain to clear. As they turn towards the inside of the house, we go inside with them. They slouch on the couch and it is very obvious that they are bored.

Once inside the house, we cut to the children POV. They look up to the ceiling and we see it shrink. Then they look to the walls and the walls are moving in on them. The room becomes smaller, smaller, and smaller, until the room is the exact size of the children. The children are very uncomfortable, claustrophobic. Marilyn begins to cry. We see a close up of her tears hitting the floor. We cut to Timmy's POV of the room filling with water like the ocean. Marilyn has no knowledge that this is happening. She is very consumed in herself. All the objects and furniture begin to float. The children remain on the couch as it floats to the ceiling. Timmy draws in the sky a paddle and uses it to maneuver the couch in the water. We see the water is full of floating objects like lamps, toys, fish, a shark, etc.

The house starts to bow as the water is seeping out of its seams. Before we know it, the house explodes from the pressure. The screen goes white. We see a flow of water rushing by filled with furniture and household items. The children enter the screen from the left as Timmy is paddling the couch down the river, but he is exhausted. He decides that he needs a sail and asks Marilyn to help him draw one. She refuses. He draws one anyway with a duck on it. The duck is a happy duck. She does not like the duck he drew. She erases it and draws a new duck. This duck is a sad duck.

The water is rough at first from the initial burst but than calms down a bit. It is still raining and the colors of the world are muted. The river carries them til they run into a land mass protruding from the river bank. There we see a tree and a group of flowers enjoying the the days rain. Timmy sees them and becomes elated. Their boat/couch bumps into the side of the land. They get out and walk over to the flowers. Timmy bends down to the flowers, smells them and says, "If it weren't for the rain we would have no flowers to smell and to enjoy." Without hesitation, sad Marilyn replies, "It always rains too hard and knocks off all the petals and the flowers aren't beautiful any more." As she speaks the rain becomes harder and we see the petals falling off the flowers as they huddle together for shelter.

The water begins to rise on the land that they are standing on. We here a rumble in the distance. Timmy looks up and sees a large mass of water rushing to them. Timmy grabs Marilyn and he jumps onto the couch. Just as they land on the couch, a title wave hits them and launches them into the sky. They land in a very tall tree.

Timmy is relived to be alive but still shaken by the experience, look over to Marilyn and sees that she is crying harder now. He begins to take the pillows and the cushions off the couch and put them in the tree. Timmy, "If it didn't rain, the trees wouldn't grow big and strong so we could climb them and build forts in them. Come on its fun, bring that pillow over here." Marilyn stops crying but is whimpering a bit. She is thinking about this idea, and maybe this isn't so bad. Timmy draws a window for the house and opens the window. Marilyn quickly shuts it and says, "You'll let all the rain inside." This is when she realizes that the clouds during a rain storm ruin everything by blowing too much wind. "You'll let the bad wind in and it will blow all my toys away."

She is thinking, at first she likes the idea but than she frowns. As she frowns we see the clouds turn mean and angry. Marilyn says, "The wind always comes and blows everything away. All my toys and all the leaves off the tree." We see the wind pick up and toys are flying in the air. Timmy tries to hold but can't. The cushions, the pillows and the children go flying into the sky, along with other crazy objects like a bbq grill, and the leaves of the tree. They are tumbling in the sky and eventually land back into the river. The couch lands first, then the cushions, the pillows and the children. The river is much higher and rough than it was before. It looks more like rapids this time. Their sail has a rip it in. The children looked weathered.

As they float down the river and Timmy is trying to steer the couch with his paddle, the couch is uncontrollable. HE looks up and sees a farm to his right. Timmy, "See rain is good because the farmer needs it for his crops. If the corn didn't get rain than it wouldn't grow and we would have nothing to eat. See the corn." Marilyn looks up to the right and sees the corn stalkers growing and blooming and the corn popping out of its husks. She looks back down at the rapids, and says, "if the river over flows than it will destroy all the corn and we won't have anything to eat anyway." The river becomes more violent and destroys the crops. The river is begins to move faster and faster.

We hear a rumbling noise getting closer and closer. The children are going over a water fall. Timmy realizes this and tries to paddle in the other direction but cant compete with the river. Marilyn is terrified. The more she cries the faster the river flows which brings them closer to the water falls.

There is nothing Timmy can do to get them out of this, they go over the edge of the waterfall. As they fall Timmy draws a parachute to the couch and they float safely to the bottom of the falls.

Timmy exhausted and losing patients with Marilyn surprises himself when he comes up with a creature he invented on his own. He looks over the edge of the boat and looks back up to Marilyn, with a smile he says, "But if it wasn't for the rain, the blue plataroo would die." Marilyn finally becomes interested in what Timmy has to say, "a what?" Timmy, "A blue plataroo." Marilyn, "What does it look like?" Timmy begins to draw it in the sky as if he is drawing on an invisible easel. Marilyn begins to help draw him. Marilyn, "Does he have eyes?" Timmy, "Yes, he has two eyes." Marilyn, "Does he have ears?" Timmy, "No ears for the blue plataroo, but he has a bill and it goes right here." Marilyn, "I bet he doesn't even have any hands or feet. Lets put web feet in place of his hands." Timmy, "And lets give him a tail and kangaroo feet."

Marilyn begins to giggle. Over the creation of their creature, the rain lightens and stops and the colors of their world become brighter and brighter. The skies become blue and the clouds turn white.

Marilyn, "Where does the blue plataroo live?" Timmy, "In a shoe." We see the blue plataroo climb out of a shoe and onto her leg. Marilyn giggles, "I bet there are more than 2?" Timmy, "Way more than two. There are oodles and oodles of blue plataroos." The screen fills with lots of blue plataroos.

Marilyn begins to laugh as one climbs into her hand, the more she laughs the more colorful her world becomes. Marilyn, "I bet the blue plataroo likes the sun." Marilyn draws the sun in the air for the blue plataroo and when she does it becomes real and illuminates their world. The blue plataroo smiles at her and she smiles back. The cam is tight on the 2 of them as it dollies back, we see Timmy and Marilyn sitting on the living room floor coloring the blue plataroo. They continue to talk about the blue plataroo as the cam dollies back we see them laughing. The room is bright and colorful. It shines as if the sun is shining in the house. The cam continues to pull back as we go outside, we see that it is still raining, but the house is glowing on the inside. We see sun beams seeping through the seams of the house.

We hear Marilyn giggle, than she asks Timmy, "Does the blue plataroo like the rain too?"

Fade to black, roll credits.

Approach:

This film will be done in 3D. I want to experiment with different plug-ins and tune shaders to create a 2D look. I may even use the tomcat tune shader. The backgrounds will be very simple. I want them to have a watercolor look to them. In order to achieve this I may have to paint them in painter. The backgrounds will be on a separate layer and composited in after effects during post. The rain will be created in Maya's paint effects than looped and composited later in after effects. There will be limited lip syncing for Timmy and Marilyn and the flowers. For my sound, I plan to use mainly sound effects and atmosphere noises.

Virginia Orzel
 Thesis Timeline
 April 2004

July 7, 2003 – May 17, 2004

STORY DEVELOPMENT		
Script	1 week	July 14
Storyboard	1 week	July 21
Character Design	1 week	July 28
Total	3 weeks	
MODELING		
2 Character Clay Models	2 weeks	August 11
2 Character Models, texturing, rigging	7 weeks	Sept. 29
Environmental Modeling, texturing, lighting	9 weeks	Dec 01
Total	18 weeks	
ANIMATION		
3-D Animation	10.5 weeks	Feb. 11
Render Set Up	3 weeks	March 3
Rendering	simultaneous	
Compositing/Graphics	4 weeks	March 31
Editing	simultaneous	
Total	17.5 weeks	
Sound/Transfer		
Sound Effects	2 weeks	April 14
Final Soundtrack Editing	4 weeks	May 12
Transfer to Beta SP, DV, DVD, VHS	.5 weeks	May 14
Total	6.5 weeks	

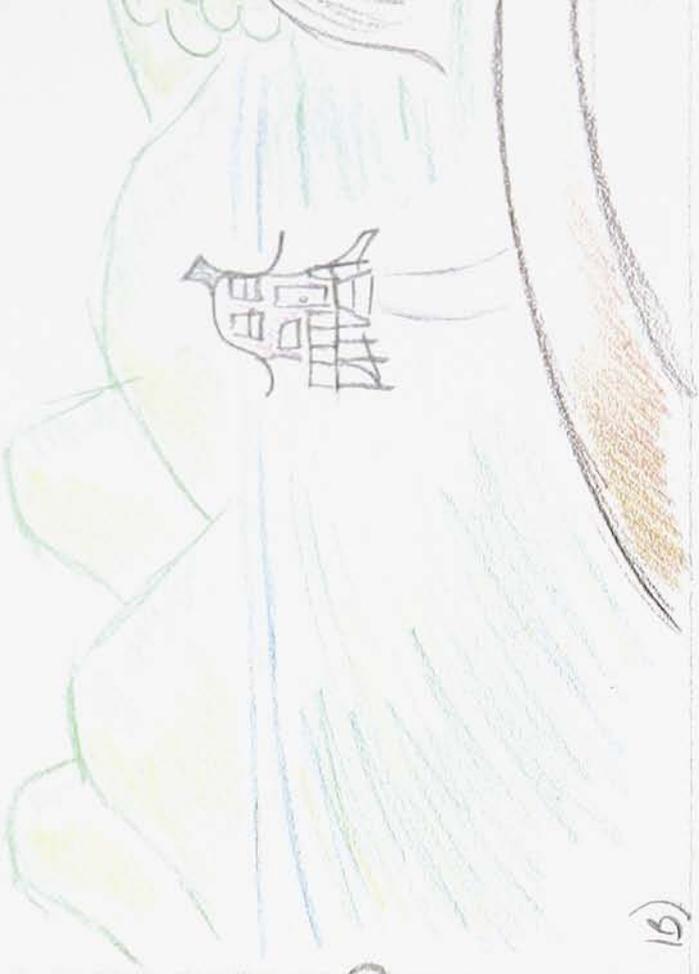
Appendix B:

Storyboard

Juliana + I was having a very bad day...



(1A)

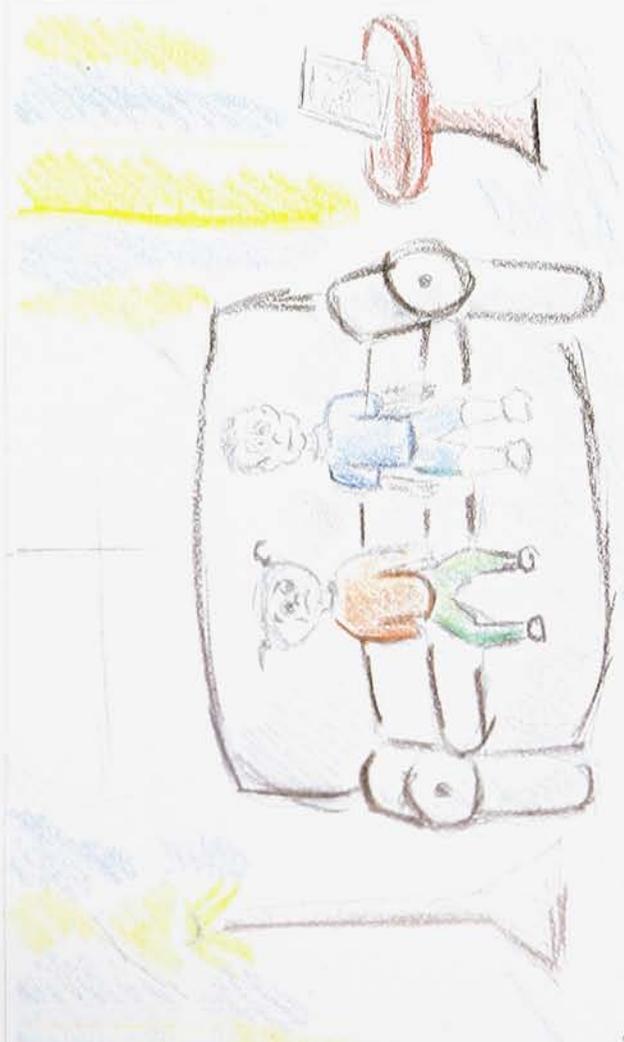


(1B)



(1D)

Have Julianna turn sit
down first & Timmy at
window, & turn + sit
down



2) Turn + sit down



Slow zoom
to 3B

3A)



4B)

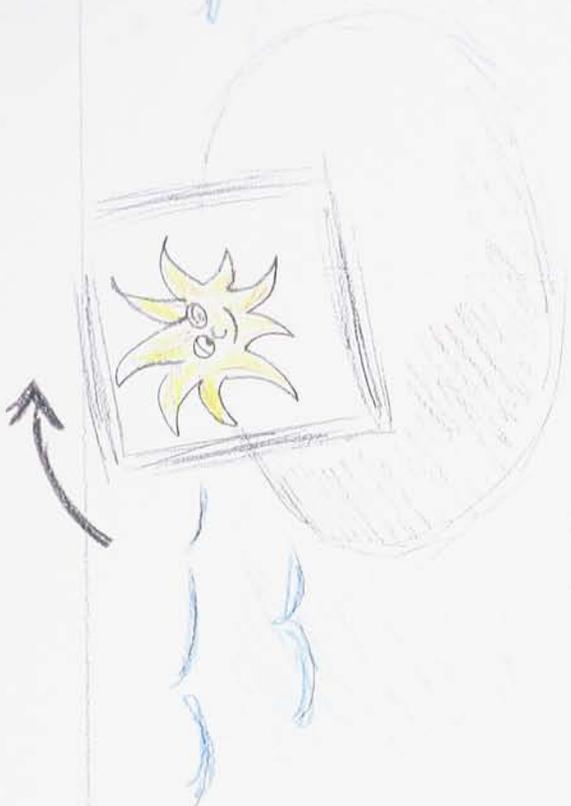
Pix of Sun Floats
TV Front of Timmy
Cut to CU of Pix



See the
Rising

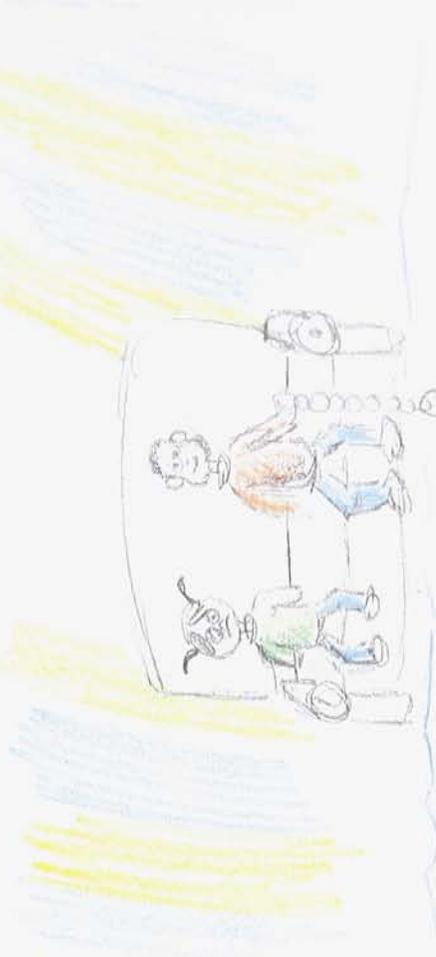
3) E.W.S. / ELS

Shark Fin



Cut to this AS

6) IF spins Towards Timmy " I know I need help
+ Giving back the Pix



7) Timmy bends over + uncorks the Floor
Water goes down

7B) AS water goes down see plug being, needed
+ couch lands

13) Quick like a cat



12) Pull hat out of shot (GRABS HAT)



door opens
door closes

CU of Door

13) Blur of Timmy going thru door + door sucks in
warps as it closes from Quick movement



13b) door sucks in

14) Mod shot Timmy Standing on Park
Pit



14B) Timmy puts hat on + bends down into the can

cut 2 1/2 inches
wide
cut out
hat on
can
15



Make
can
hat
up
to
fit
flowers

14C) Cut on Action to close up of Timmy
Looking down at flowers



15

15) Cut + Timmy looking down on flowers

"Flowers do you know what way
I should row"



wide shot of all flowers
16) Timmy Row

"we are too wet & soggy
to think..."

17



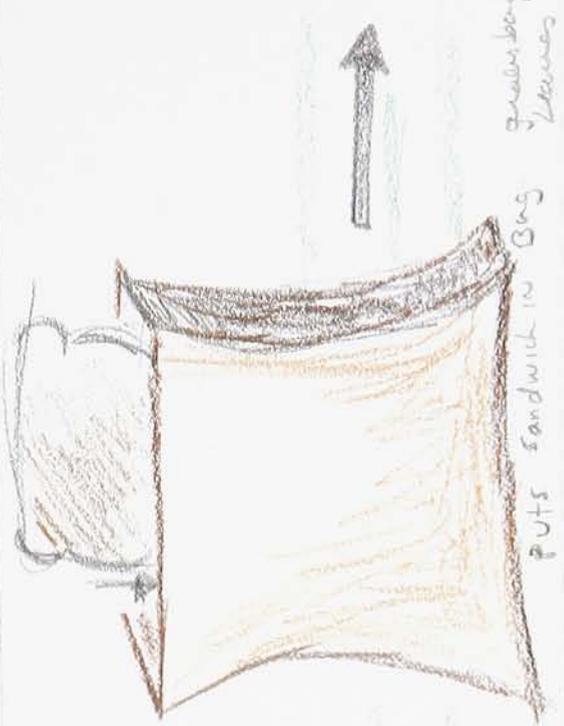
8) Cu of Timmy's Reaction H_2O going down (May not need this slot)



9A) Cut to slice of Bread covering earrr x moves Away from earrr as it goes on top of other slice w/ Flour on it



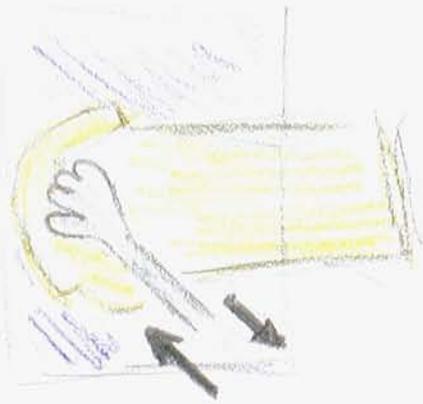
98)



Final body
Leaves



Hand
Grab Coats

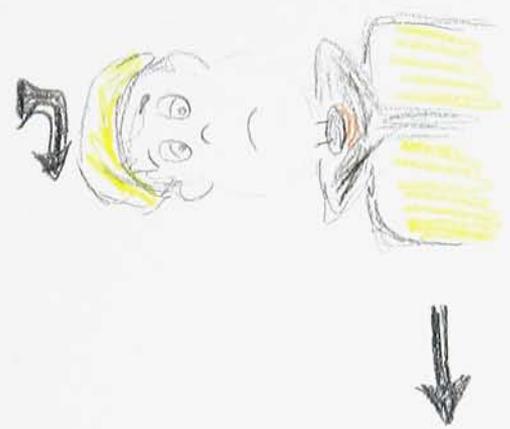


Hand and coat
11) GRAB Coats



"we've had too much to drink"

18) cut to CU of 1 flower

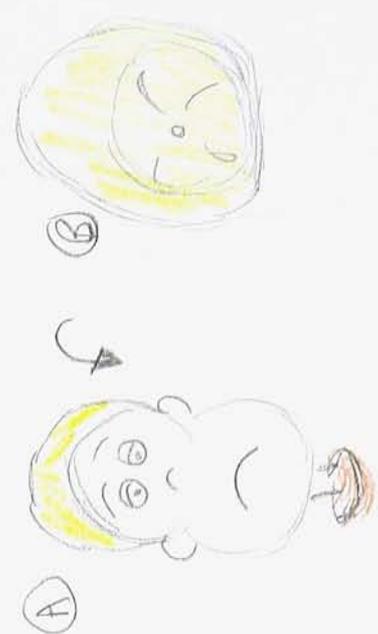


19) Reaction + Flowers Med shot

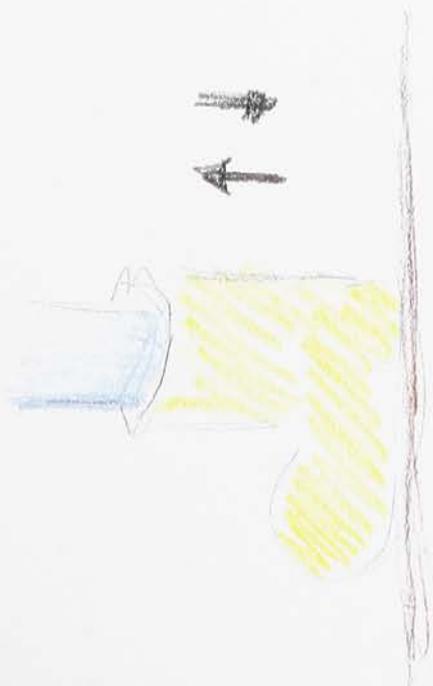


19) laws shot walking

Foot got stuck



20) cut to CU of FACE when foot gets stuck
He looks down then cut to CU of foot



24) Cu & Fact stack "AS & strygo & be fue"

go back to her face & quick come



(B)



(A)

Ready to see
looking at equity
see price out
see P&V

I looked up to see

Bats
P&V

THE TALLEST creature
Before ME

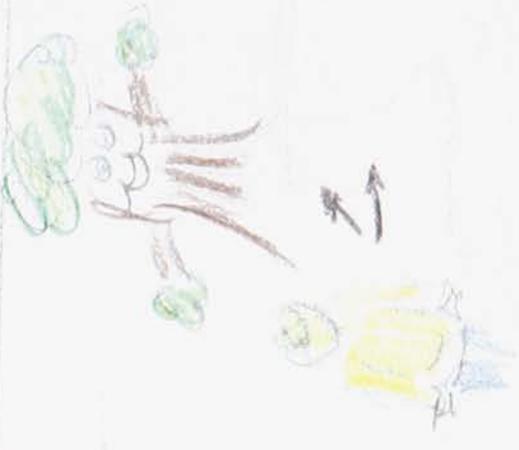
CAM PAN UP



IT'S MS OAK TREE

the oak tree

How you
dressing



Frame of his back to CAM
w/ oak tree XLS

I begged her to tell me where the sun would be

(18)



Mrs Galt is
long

But she didn't know
of just didn't care
where the sun was
or that I was even there

26A)



27) when the sun was



Out of
Timmy

CU

28.) or that I was even there



CU of Timmy
was down
disappointed
then he
you +
of his

Timmy shot
looking at Ms. Oak
thinks Mr. Yew +
Tucks to him
Mr. Yew



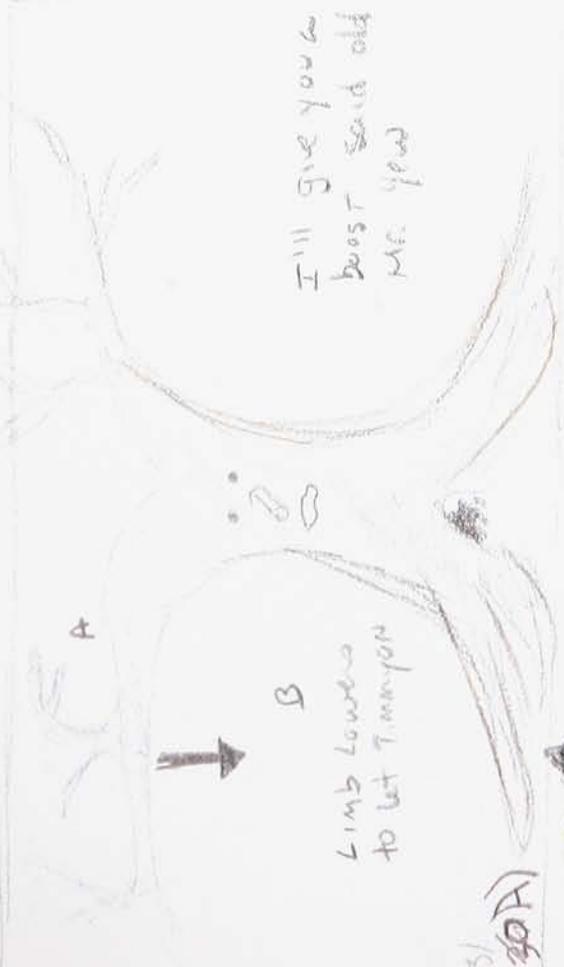
CU of
Timmy
was down
disappointed
then he
you +
of his

29) Pssst over here boy, I have a good view

30) ELS

Pssst

CU - of coming on
Branch down speaking



I'll give you a
boost said old
MC you

Limb lowers
to let Timmy on

3/30A



He lifted me
up, high into
the clouds

3/30C



Timmy walks in from off cam
& sits on Branch you lift
him up



Customs
Lifting
Timmy
up
into
the
clouds

3/30B

28)?

See...

Pot dead on far Rite #28
 #30 starts in propo + cloud
 turns to timmy

where timmy bolts
 Flash + the
 thunder was loud



or
 #32 Full

Clouds throwing down
 Liting + rain

Cloud Des from
 happy to
 Confused +
 turns to Timmy
 + MOVES to Timmy

where timmy bolts
 Flash + the
 thunder was loud



#34 Cloud Reaction

CU



#33 Shaking Finger at clouds

I yelled to the
 clouds, what have
 you done! when you
 keep me bright Mr. Sun



#35 Timmy Reaction - Squirms a bit, shifts

look at
shot
1/2



32) Cloud sizes Timmy up 3/4 shot



30 Full
35A) Timmy took a deep breath



Clouds move to CAM

36B (red)

36A) Till they were puffed up, you'll never find him
You'll have to give up



EXT. L.S.

36) 45 3/4 shot

Flies Timmy
out of frame



40 Timmy Flies into shot + bounces on ground



41 Clouds laughing

Generic Clouds



43 3/4 shot Timmy's head hang down



44 Timmy Pov of clouds
Wells shot - eyes on

"I must have the sun... I just need to know how"

2:24

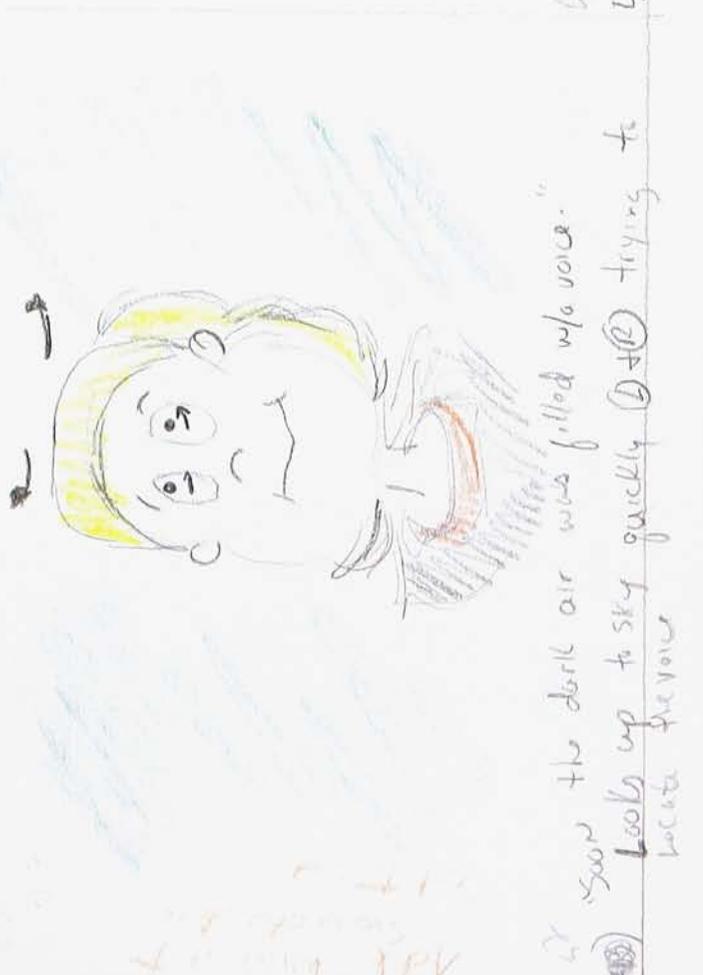
From 15 sec
 with 2 sec
 hold 15 sec hold 2 sec



60
 41) Timmy looking to his left
 42) Timmy cut to POV



51) Timmy POV going home
 "surely the sun will come out some day."



62) "Saw the dark air was filled w/ a voice."
 63) Looks up to sky quickly
 "You can give up now if that is your choice"
 "wide"



64) "You can give up now if that is your choice"
 "wide"

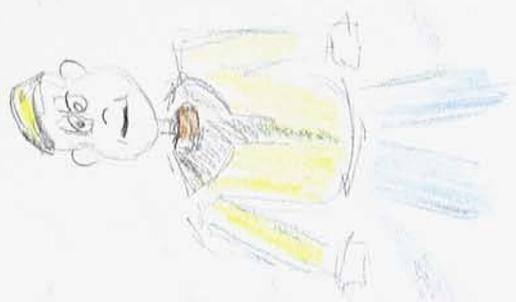
Lifts him
up + moves
him forward
(wider)



5(B) "But gather your strength + you'll succeed."
wind Pushes Tommy to his feet + moves him into c4d1

54C)

his legs
unzipped
But still
in the air



54d) Moved Tommy into CAM to CAM good detail



55) "By climbing that Mountain, you'll MASTER the dead."
Tommy's back leaves the CAM to reveal
the shot



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100



3/4 shot
Clouds leeching
shooting many & rain
Full shot to page 3 clouds



Read to it
Span 15

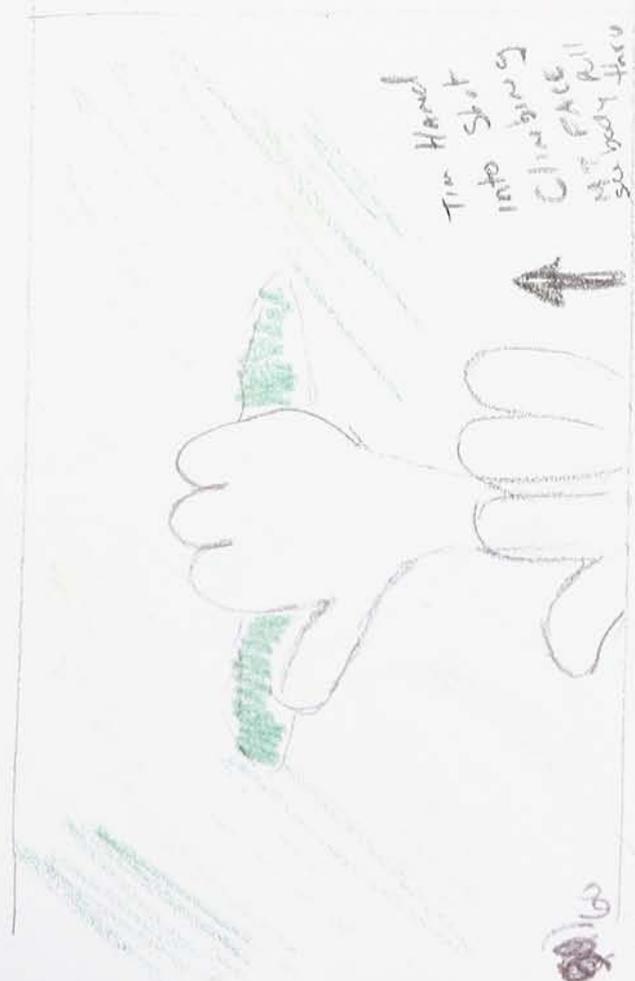
Squinting & a smile
I have hope

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100



WALKS to
BAT

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99
100



Tip Hand
into shot
climbers
M^o FACE
see body thru

53



Climbs out of scene
com

begin 48
49 v 50
50 not
spread
I AM

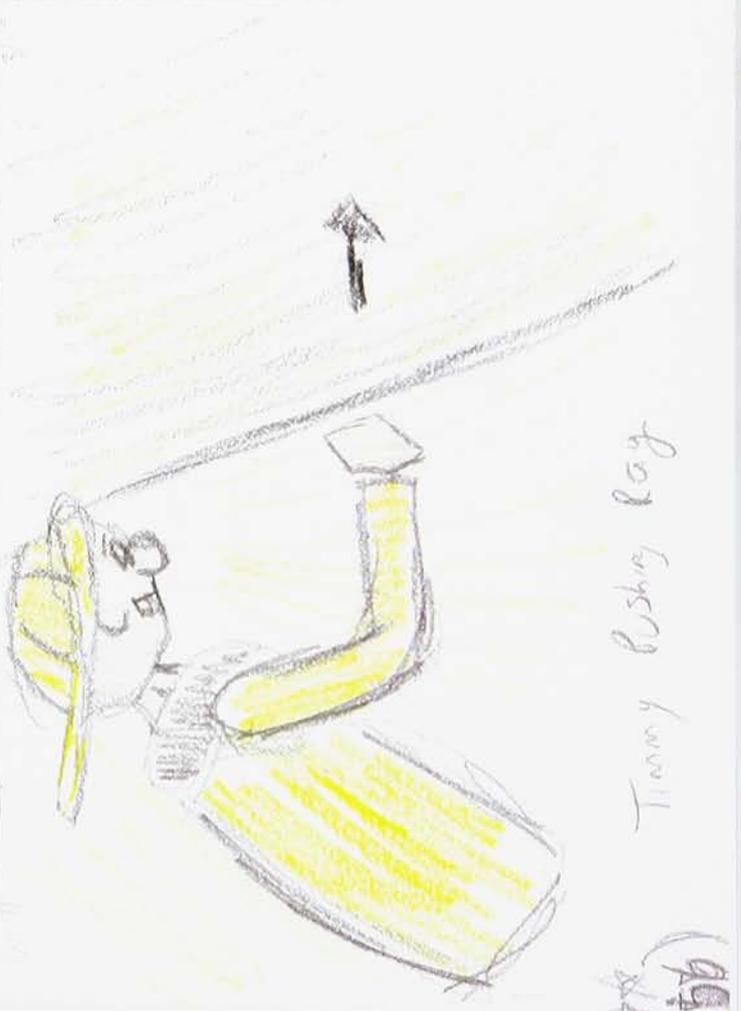


Tranny Pushing
Labs open

54



55) CD Climbs laughing



Bull cloud

Clouds move into shot w/ MT, don't see MT @ first



55) CW → 3/4 shot clouds moving to MT



Timmy's Bk
Blow
up



End of Damp
Breath + Blow

68) Cut to ahead cloud tenting deep breath + blowing



Some
LH

W/ all my m...
I hang on B... the Peak



71) w/ all my m...
I hang on B... the Peak



Red

72) clouds laughing red...
cloud



Loose

Deep cloud

73) cut back... clouds laughing closer shot

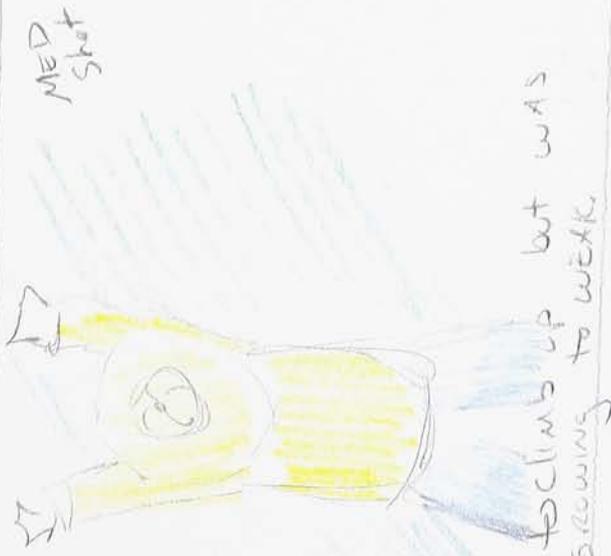


300002

74) clouds laughing...
right shot... on

74) clouds laughing...
cloud

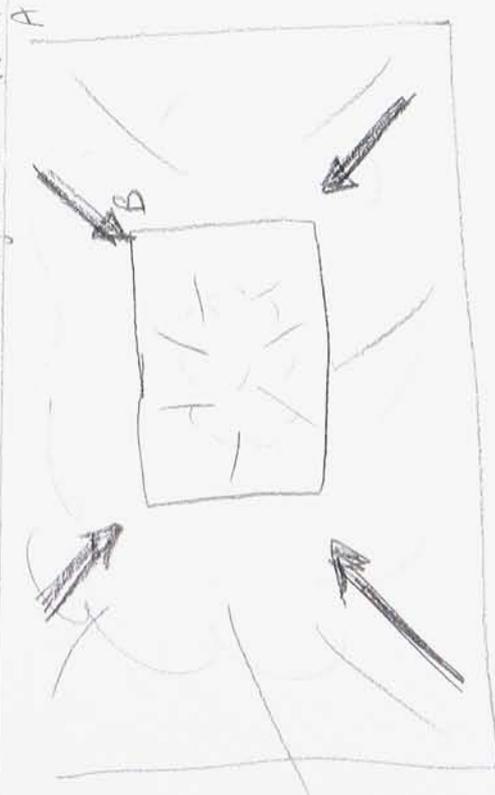
cut



75a) I tried to climb up but was growing to weak.



76) Cut to SUN Made 4 Flaming
"Mr. Sun Flared Bright + Joined in the
FRAY"



77b) Rays of light streaming thru clouds, clouds shrink
in size "Blinding the clouds w/ his fierce
sun-rays"



77A) Clouds React to SUN Flaring
Ahh ... Main cloud (died) doesn't stream - which
going on what? What? Flaming



78) SAND ON #60
ready struggling

Timmy turns sun down into spot
to Timmy sun turns down into spot
to see into



79F) Sun Reaction To clouds disappearing
Coincident, Pleased w/ self - Pulled up



Sun like
Starts
Moving into
Shot turns
Timmy
to his
cut to
wider
shot



80) Timmy on cliff

79B) Dec to concern
Sees Timmy on cliff

Sun Moves into
CAM



1 x
Cliff

Sun like
becomes brighter
Timmy
pulls himself up the
MT from
Struggle of SUN

Turns to M.T
Climbs up

81) MT from Struggle of SUN

" I WAS ELATED TO SEE HIM SHINING SO BRIGHT "

113 3/22



3/4

over sun
Shoulder

3/4

3/4



83) cut to Full shot Timmy climbing MT - climbing shot
"oh how I missed is warm glowing lit"

over
Timmy
Shoulder
Timmy open
his @ Pocket



Oh 11:30 A
11:30 A
11:30 A

84) "I wanted him here As my special guest"
I have honey here into shot to head sun

ON TOP of MT
89) " Now that I've come to the end of my guests"



95) cut to CO of Pocket opening
Sun dumps into his Pocket +

Timmy Turns
away from
camera
Can't see his
to why he
is there

Timmy faces into turns
Carpenter's back

into CAM

Low angle shot of Sun
 Sun smiling & waving
 Sun on the screen
 Sun on the screen



99) cut on
 ACTION



91) "YEARS HAVE COME + GONE SINCE
 THAT DAY" Kids smiling & laughing
 "Short ball out +
 "Still... it would be...
 "I would be...
 "and..."

Very slow pan to
 Sun's face
 Sun's face
 Sun's face



80) which had named my head for silent melody



88) CUT SUN
 CUT

2/16

2/16

85) Same as BT, hits

1/5-2



86) Song on BT 78

1/5-2



87) When Julianus I could not go out + play

Start over more + pull out cut to an of laughing cut to us of laughing cut to other camera + D.O out

88) ~~Time to time to our display~~

Cam pulls out Julianus inside to cut + Best some few fall

Cut + back

Staying
 inside
 our
 house
 by
 drawing



96
 (85C) "The clouds come in & cover the sun away."



96
 (85E) "Our Love For one Another is brighter than the sun is bold."



95
 (85d) "But we just laugh for the secret we hold."

F A C E B L A C K
 T O

96
 (86) "Our Love For one Another is brighter than the sun is bold."

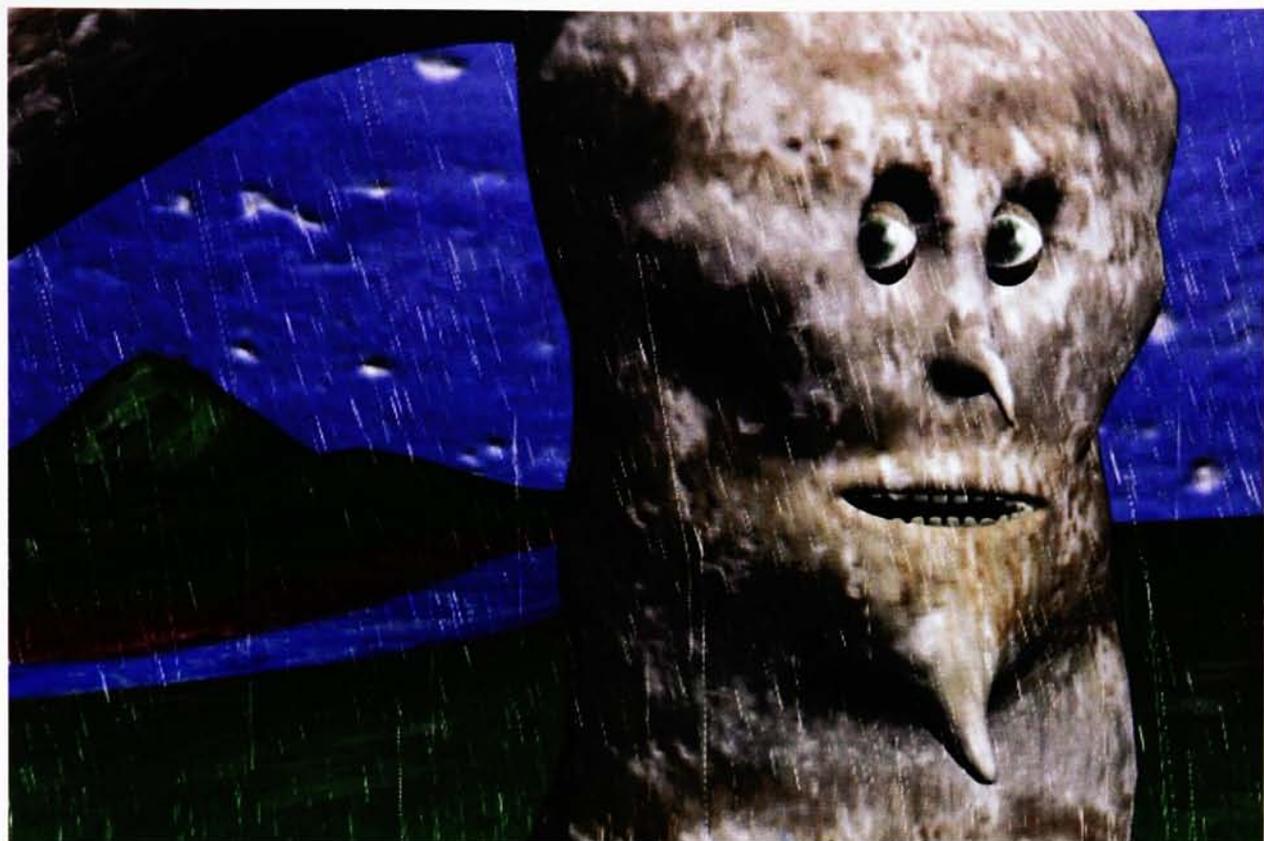
Appendix C:

Production Stills

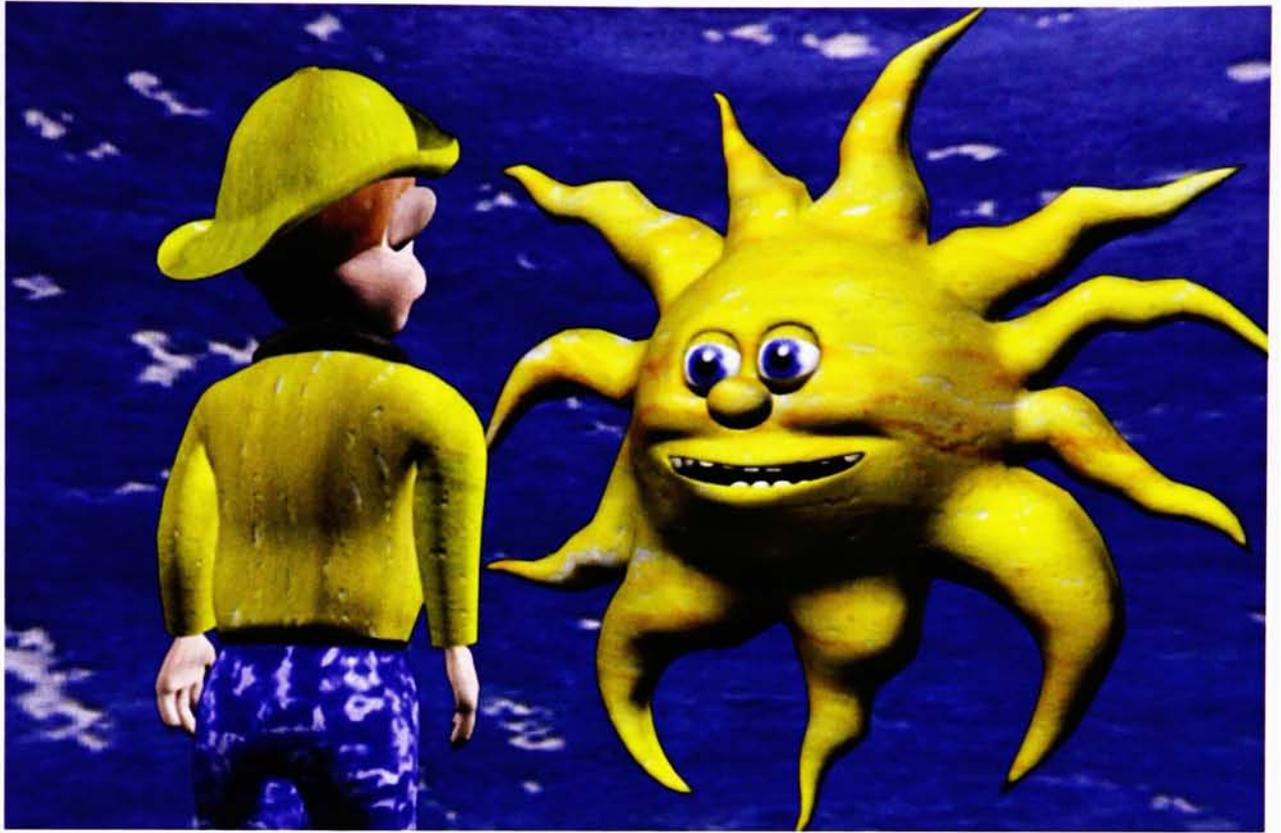














Appendix D:

Script

"To Catch the Sun"
By Virginia Orzel

AUDIO:

Julianna and I were having a very bad day,
It was way to wet to go out and play,

It rained and rained and rained some more,
It rained way more than ever before.
For 50 days and 50 nights...
There seemed to be no end insight.

It became too much for us to bear,
and my lil sis sent for a tear...
A second and a third would quickly fall,
before I could blink it was just like a waterfall.

Bounding from her cheeks as each tear pounded the floor.
It was like a loud fist hitting the front door.

Her Tears filled the house from bottom to top.
I had to find a way to make it all stop!

I knew I'd need help; I'd need Mr. Sun.
He'd stop the rain and bring back the fun.

I first made a sandwich – fluffer nutter on rye,
Packed it all up and said my goodbyes.

I grabbed my boots, my raincoat, and hat,
And went on my way, quick like a cat.

But where, o where, would I find Mr. Sun?

Flowers, do you know which way I should run?

"We are too wet and soggy to think,
our petals are rotting, we've had too much to drink!"

Onward I struggled...trudging on through the muck..
Getting wetter than wet...soon my foot got stuck...

I looked up to see the tallest creature standing before me...
It's Ms. Oak Tree

I begged her to tell me where the sun could be.
But she didn't know, or just didn't care
where the sun was, or that I was even there.

"Pissst, over here boy, I have a good view.
I'll give you a boost," said old Mr. Yew.
He lifted me up, high into the clouds
Where lightning bolts flashed and the thunder was loud.

I yelled to the clouds "What have you done!"
Where are you keeping bright Mr. Sun?
They took a deep breath, till they were inflated,
"Get out of our space or you'll be decollated!"

VIDEO:

(The clouds take a deep breath, then flick Timmy out of old Mr. Yew. The clouds laugh as we see Timmy fly out of the shot. Timmy lands on the ground and bounces a couple of times before he stops. He is now sitting up right with his head hung. We watch him grieve.)

AUDIO:

What can I do? I cant go home now.
I must rescue the sun.... I just need to know how.
Oh, who am I kidding, I should just walk away.
Surely the sun will come out some day.

(Mysterious Voice, One of Wisdom, It's the WInd)
Soon the dark air was filled with a voice,
"You can give up now if that is your choice.
But gather your strength and you can succeed.
By climbing that mountain you'll master the deed.

VIDEO:

(Timmy looks around and in the distance he sees one ray of light gently hitting a distance mountain. He gets up with glee and runs to it. He climbs the mountain. We cut to the clouds having fun throwing lighting bolts down to the earth, as well as balls of rain. When Timmy gets to the top of the mountain, he pulls the small ray of light apart so the ray becomes wider. He steps into the ray and forces the ray to get wider, first to his left, then to his right. He uses his entire body to widen the beam of sunlight. When the light gets wide enough, we see the sun's face, he is sleeping. Timmy wakes him up just as the clouds notice what Timmy is doing. The clouds blow Timmy off the mountain top. Timmy falls to the ground. He reaches out and hangs on to the edge of the cliff. The clouds begin to laugh. Mr. Sun becomes enraged by the clouds picking on his friend. When the sun gets mad, we see several rays of light shoot out from Mr. Sun several different directions. The clouds whince at the bright light and become smaller. The stronger the sun becomes, the weaker the clouds become.)

AUDIO:

With all of my might I hung on to the peak
I tried to climb up, but was growing too weak.
Mr. Sun flared bright and joined in the fray.
Blinding the clouds with his fierce sunrays.

VIDEO:

(Mr. Sun flies down to the mountain and rescues Timmy from the ledge and carries him safely to the ground)

AUDIO:

I was elated to see him shining so bright,
Oh, how I'd missed his warm glowing light.
Now that I'd come to the end of my quest,
I invited him home as my special guest.

VIDEO:

Timmy opens his pocket to so the sun can jump in and be safe from the clouds. See the clouds in the diistance starting to reform and move towards Mr. Sun. After Mr. Sun jumps into Timmy's pocket, Timmy walks straight into the camera, til the screen goes black, and as he walks away from the camera, we see he is in the living room.)

AUDIO:

Julianna was still crying when I had returned
till I gave her the present for which she yearned
She turned to me with a great big smile
which warmed my soul for miles and miles.
Years have come and gone since that day
when Julianna and I could not go out to play,
and from time to time to our dismay
the clouds come in to chase the sun away.

But we just laugh, for the secret we hold,
our love for one another is brighter than the sun is bold.

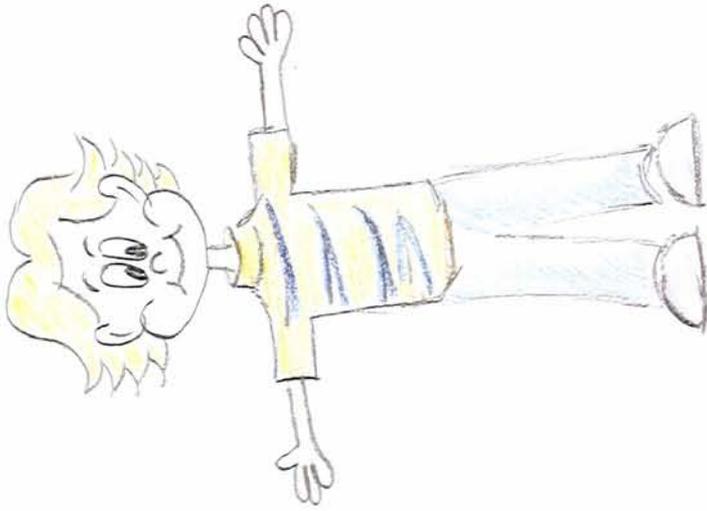
VIDEO:

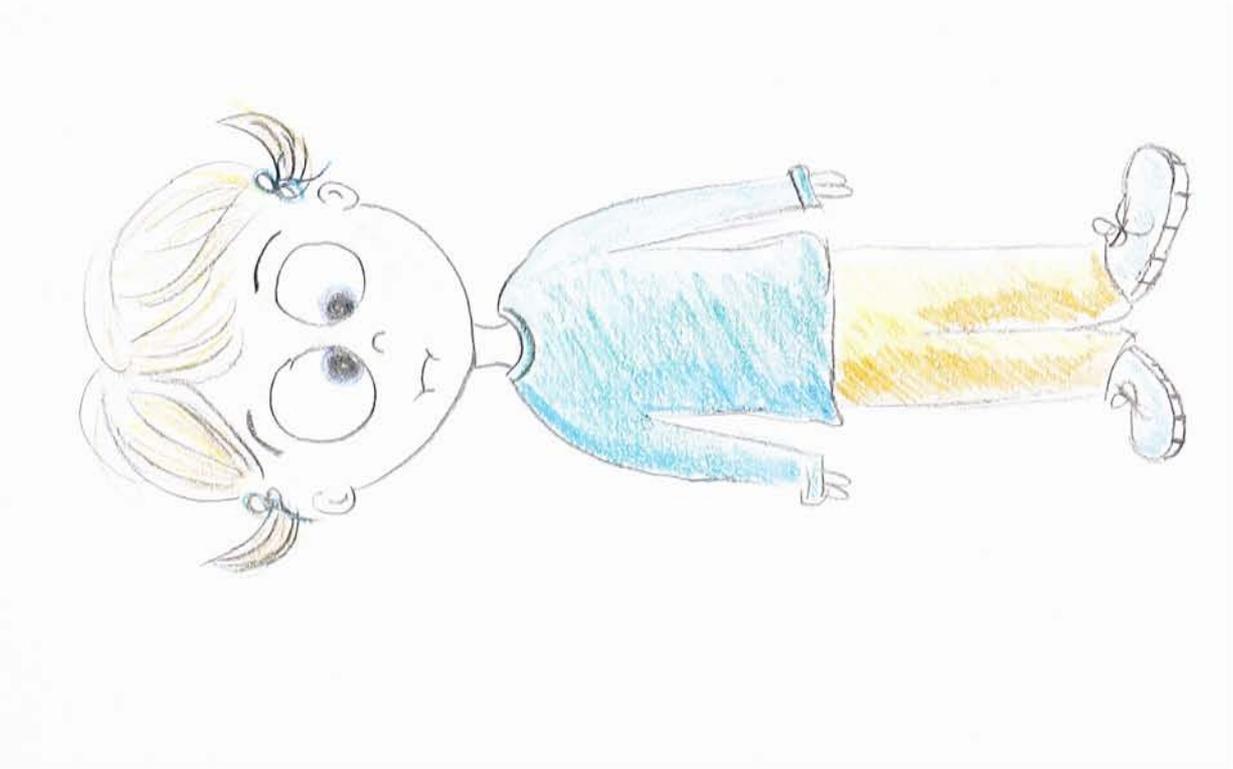
Kids and sun sit down to play as the camera pulls out, we see the entire room is glowing with warm light. The camera continues to pull out through the house, we see the windows are glowing from the warmth, and the camera continues to keep moving backwards. As it does, we see that it is still raining outside but the inside of the house is glowing.

FADE to BLACK

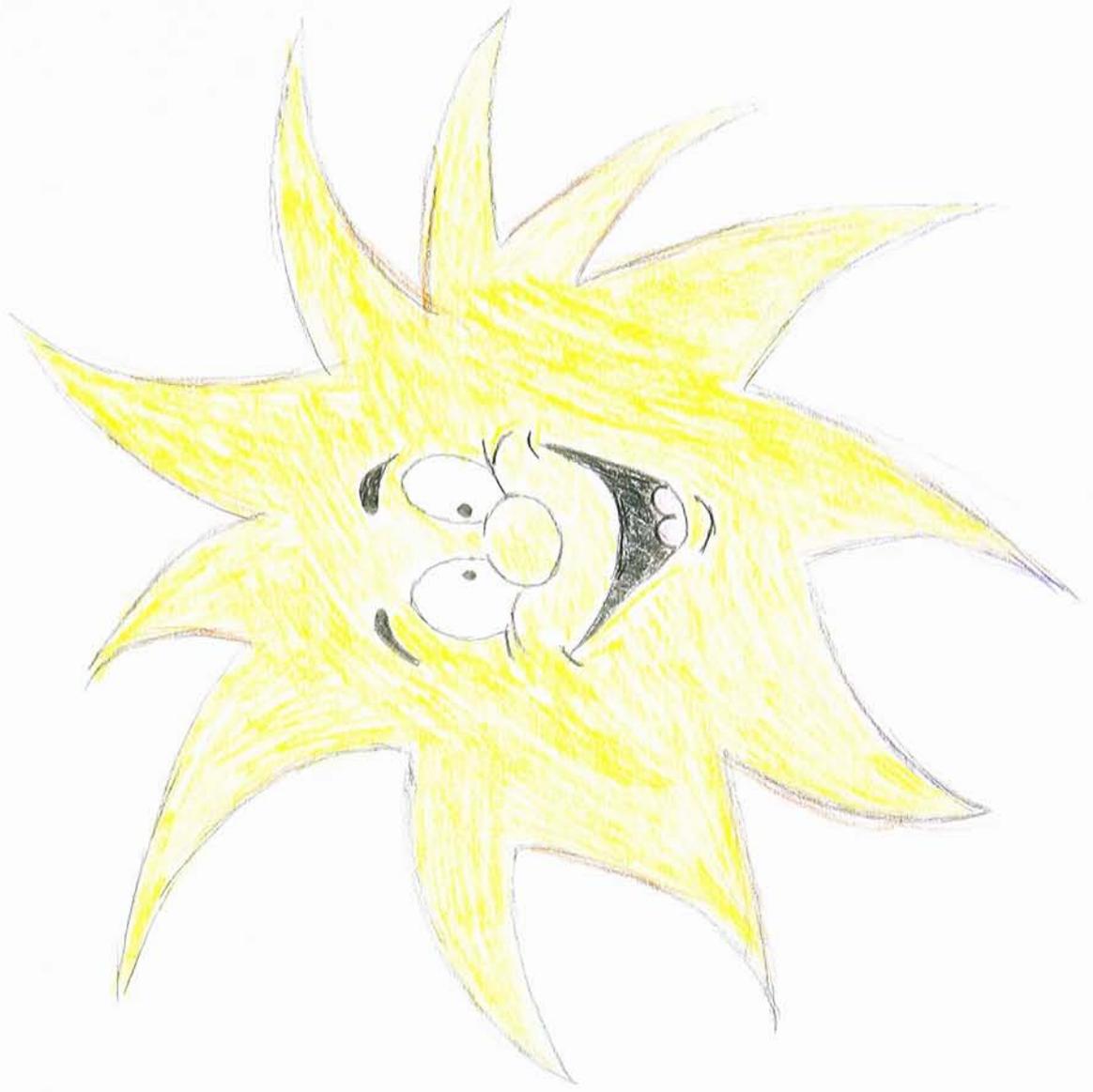
Appendix E:

Character Design Drawings













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