

Must children's books always be written by adults? An organization called Books By Kids decided, not necessarily. The result is a book called *Wordsandwich*. Below are excerpts from it — some fiction, "cylinder steve," by Susie Donahue and a memoir, "Thirteen," by Paula Pepper.*

Cylinder Steve

Steve was an ordinary every-day kid. He liked playing hockey and he adored, for some unknown reason, rolling on the floor, ground or even on his bed.

One day, during his usual rolling exercises, Steve started rolling down a very big hill. He could not stop. His younger brother Andy rode his bicycle along beside Steve, waiting patiently for him to stop rolling. Well, he rolled and rolled. He rolled right through a traffic light, in and around many cars. . . .

You see, he lived in Montreal, a very hilly place. His mother had warned him about his rolling, but he didn't listen.

He rolled for hours. Finally, he stopped in a small town called Bala, population 35.

"Steve!!!" shouted Andy in terror, "You're, you're, um, like a telephone pole. You're a cylinder!!!"

"Not to worry," Steve said, looking at himself, "I'll fix it." . . .

So they rode home on Andy's bicycle. Andy peddled and Steve, after great difficulty, was lying in the basket up front.

They arrived home three hours later. His mother was appalled.

"Steve and Andy, where have you been? STEVEN!" she screamed, "You're, you're, you're!"

"Cylinder shaped," Steve put in.

"You're cylinder shaped!!! What happened?"

They explained. His mother listened intently.

"What am I going to do?" she cried, "Our bridge club will be here tonight, and they always want to see how the children have grown."

Well, evening came and despite their efforts, Steve was still a cylinder.

"Well," his mother said, "just act normally."

When the time came Steve and Andy were ready. . . .

"Well, hello Lois!" exclaimed one fat lady, "you're looking good." She sniffed. "Do you have a cat?"

When she entered she hung her coat on the hall tree. The only problem was, the Jacksons did not have one . . . it was Steve!!! His mother rushed over, zapped the coat off Steve and said,

"Excuse me!!! This is my son, Steven, and this is my other son, Andrew!"

The lady was very embarrassed. She said her apologies, and as soon as the other ladies arrived they started to play. It was a long, boring game.

When M*A*S*H was over, Steve decided to have a bath. It was rather awkward, but he managed. . . .

"Mom! Mom!" came a scream from the bathroom, "I'm UNCYLINDERING!"

"Oh! Uh, um, excuse me, ladies!" his mother stuttered as she ran towards the bathroom.

"Mommy," said five-year-old Andy, "Steve ain't like a . . ."

"Steve isn't," corrected the ex-English teacher.

"Mom!" came a voice from the bathroom, "I'm normal!!!"

"Now my dear boy is not a hall tree!" she cried.

Steve stepped out of the bathroom into the living room, to model himself. His only problem was that in the excitement he forgot to pick up his towel.

"Oh Steve, you're, you're, you're naked!"

Steve rushed into the bathroom. He was blushing. He grabbed a towel and stepped back out with a smile going from one ear to the other. The ladies stood up and cheered. Andy was so happy he tore his Spiderman comic in two. Mrs. Jackson and Steve danced around the room. . . .

Thirteen

Thirteen is a really bad age to be. You are too old to be a baby about most things, including dolls, and making loud noises, and behaving rudely in company, or at the table, but you are

* *Wordsandwich* (Toronto: Books by Kids, 1975), pp. 70-74, 15-16.