

# Passages Press



## They Make Me Smile

by Gayle Wood - Machias

In becoming a mother I've realized I catch myself constantly on what seems to be a skipping record. I battle with the need to be stretched in a thousand directions to conquer the day. I need to make sure that Coraline is adequately cared for and loved, to make sure the house isn't always the aftermath of a hurricane, and with juggling errands, appointments, or simply trying to find the time to shower, sleep, and eat.

Maintaining relationships (partner, daughter, mother, self), and shelter are incredibly time consuming and most days I feel as if it swallows me.

I try to always do a few things in a day's time for myself, but my go-to activity of choice isn't the greatest habit for my health. I'm a couch potato. I prefer to spend the times that Coraline is sleeping or preoccupied, to either sleep when she does, eat, or clean. Then, after everything is accomplished, I take

what moments are left to sit on the couch with Netflix and the Internet. These times are what ground me.

I thrive from the entertainment of the smaller aspects of life. They're what make me happy. The thick aroma of coffee brewing brightens my senses as my partner, Tevin wakes up to leave at quarter past six am - our morning routine with all three of us. I find the familiarity of it soothing with the combined comfort of home. There are times where Tevin's sister, Camy, comes to visit all of us. She

watches Cora while I get to shower, so I can have more time than usual. It's rare, but I find inspiration sometimes to put on makeup. I have my dad who is always managing his time to see us every day to give us rides to where we need to go. These things are what make the "me" time happen. I love these people for who they have been to me. My family is what keeps me anchored. They make me smile.





## Reading to Caroline

by Alyssa Pease - Richmond

### *The Itsy-Bitsy Spider*

**By Rosemary Wells**

Caroline loved the tone of my voice while I read this book to her. She wanted me to keep reading it to her, so I read it twice.

### *Old Mac Donald*

**By Rosemary Wells**

I knew this nursery rhyme, so I decided to sing the book to her and she loved it! She even tried to turn the pages for me so I would keep reading to her.

### *The Bear Went Over The Moon*

**By Rosemary Wells**

With the tone of my voice for this book she ended up loving it. I was singing it to her and she started to smile and dance to it. The tone of my voice really impacts how she likes the story. She likes it when I'm all cheerful and singing. Her attitude was different with every book because I would have a different tone of voice with each book. It turns out I love reading to her now. Before it made me uncomfortable, but now I'm okay with it.

## Reading to Hartley

by Amber Gabriel - Perry

I've been reading to Hartley every night for a month because that's the only way he will go to sleep. He doesn't like baby books; he only likes chapter books, which is really good because I like reading and it's a lot better to read those to him instead of just reading them to myself. I mean, I know he doesn't really understand what I'm reading to him, but one of these days he will understand and then hopefully he will start reading chapter books by himself.

In my opinion, I think chapter books will be the books he starts reading right off. He's a smart little boy and it's different to me having a kid that likes being read to because my daughter, Ever, never liked it.

I really enjoy reading to Hartley every night. When I read to him he lays there and looks at me and when he falls asleep I still keep on reading to him. I even read to him when he wakes up at 4 in the morning! I enjoy reading to him and he enjoys being read to.

I think when he gets older that he's going to be right into the Goosebumps books or other horror books. That's what I'm really hoping for because those are the only kind of books I have in my room, but if he didn't that would be fine with me. I just want him to be into reading like I was when I was younger.

Reading is a good way to escape whatever you're dealing with. That's why I used to read all the time before I had kids - when I actually had the chance to!

# Reading to Riley

by Danyelle Wright - Richmond

## ***Green Eggs and Ham***

by Dr. Seuss

I've been reading Riley the book *Green Eggs and Ham* and he absolutely loves it. He likes the way that it rhymes and how the book is kind of playful. Of course, I have to read it in a playful way or Riley gets a bit upset. Sometimes while I'm reading he will take the book from me and try to read the page just like I did. He can't, but he is trying. Which is a good thing because that means he is really trying his hardest to read.

I like that the book repeats itself because that will help Riley in the future to read. It's kind of like how people learn how to talk. You hear it enough times and you keep practicing and before you know it you're talking.

## ***Bubbles Bubbles***

### **A Sesame Street Beginning Book**

*Bubbles Bubbles* is not a very long book, however Riley seems very interested by it. He likes when at the end of the book when my voice gets louder like I'm excited. I think it's important for him when I seem excited about the book or interested in it because when I do those things he gets excited about them, too. He has actually started to "read" the book. I think he has memorized it!

I like that the sentences rhyme and are short because it helps Riley when he tries to read the book himself. I also like that the book is very colorful on each page because I think that helps him stay interested. He has started to be able to read one or two of the pages himself and actually knows what it says. But it might just be because he has heard me read it so many times. Either way I absolutely love that he loves to read.



# Reading to Madison

by Amber Burns - Wiscasset

## ***Good Night Maine***

by Adam Gamble

*Good Night Maine* is a book that is written for children. It's about different places in Maine, and shows different occupations and animals that you can see in Maine. Madison loves this book because it's stuff she knows. She can point out the animals and things and talk about them with me. Her favorite part of the book is a picture of a bear and a picture of blueberries. She knows the page they are on and loves to show them to me. Sometimes she will even pretend to read it to me. I found out that there is a whole series of books about different places that I would love to get for Madison.



# Our Little Adventure!

by Kayla Wing - Bath

Bryson and I finished our dinner and then it was time to go Halloween light hunting. Bryson loves to go find lights! He likes the decorations and the beautiful lights shining! It doesn't even matter what the lights and decorations are.

Bryson and I go almost every night to different housing projects, to Main Street, or any other type of streets. We walk out to the Jeep all happy and looking at the moon and the stars and talking about how beautiful and sparkly they are.

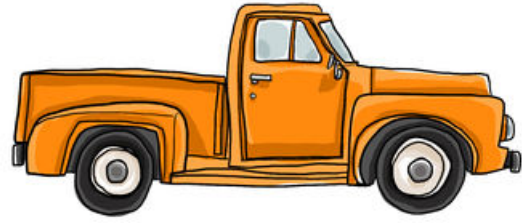
I say to Bryson, "When Mommy looks at the stars, I think of your beautiful sparkly eyes and it reminds me of you!"

I get Bryson in his seat and hand him his hot cocoa for the ride.

I get in the Jeep and start her on up then look back at Bryson and ask, "You ready to rock and roll? Let's go find these lights!"

He screams, "YES!"

Being all excited, I put on the Wiggles song, "Do the Propeller", and crank it up! I put the jeep in reverse and not looking behind me, backed her up! I looked in my mirrors instead. Bad idea! I never had anyone park behind me in



the two years that I have parked in my housing project, but this night my boyfriend parked my father's truck right behind me. Now you would have thought walking to my jeep and getting Bryson in the jeep and then walking to the driver's side to get in, I would have seen my father's truck; it is bright orange, lifted, and sticks out like a sore thumb! But nope, I was blind to it! So as I'm backing up, I crash into his truck. Oops! First thing I do is ask Bryson, "Are you okay, baby?"

He looks at me and says, "You crashed into Peppe's truck! Ohhh Mama I'm gonna put you straight to TIME OUT! Call Peppe NOW!"

I am in shock because I have just been told off by my son, told that I get to sit in the time out chair and that I have to call my father!

As a mommy I am relieved that Bryson and I are okay and decide crashing into my father's truck was a little love tap and that Bryson and I don't need to see a doctor! My Jeep and my father's truck are okay, too. (There was no damage because well, it was a love tap.)

So, Bryson and I proceed on our trip and have a wonderful time finding lights and listening to the Wiggles, but when I get home I sit in time out for over 10 minutes and call my father on speaker phone. My son tells on me and my father agrees that I needed to sit in time out. He told Bryson I need to be in time out for the rest of the night! Haha!



# Volunteering at the Ark

by Rochelle Millay - Machiasport

My teacher and I volunteered at the Ark Animal Shelter in Cherryfield, Maine. I love animals, so I knew it would be the perfect choice. I made homemade peanut butter dog treats [see recipe below]. It's a very simple recipe, but the dogs there seemed to like them.

We walked dogs and played with the cats.



There were a few kittens and a lot of adult cats. The cats have a certain room in the main building, and they also have a whole house to themselves. It all depends on the cat's temperament. The shelter workers

obviously don't want the cats to fight.

I took Meeka on a walk (it was more like Meeka took me on a walk), and Fern took Thumper. I believe there were 4 dogs that were adoptable. There was Chico a sweet little, old-man Chihuahua, Thumper a beagle, and Cami who was very territorial. She barked if you went near her cage. She needs a very strong, loving forever home. There was also Toots who I have no idea what breed she is. Employees and volunteers also brought their dogs into work with them.

When I get my own place and am financially stable, I would like to adopt older dogs and cats and make the last years of their lives the best.

## Peanut Butter Dog Biscuits

<http://www.sugarlaws.com/dog-treats>

### INGREDIENTS:

2 cups whole-wheat flour  
1 tbsp baking powder  
1 cup peanut butter  
1 cup skim milk

### DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a bowl, combine flour and baking powder. In another bowl, mix peanut butter and milk. Add wet mixture to dry and mix well.

Turn out dough on a lightly floured surface and knead. Roll out to 1/4-inch thickness and cut out shapes. Place on a greased baking sheet and bake 20 minutes or until lightly brown. Cool on a rack and store in an airtight container.



# A Place Near the River

by Shanika Simkowitz - Old Orchard Beach

Dear Blake,

When Mommy was about 10 or 11 yrs old, she lived in a red house down near a river in Saco that had boat docks which we would swim from. One day I saw a little trail near the boat docks, so I decided to walk down a check it out.

I got about halfway down the trail and saw a little, cabin-like thing with a little bench inside of it. There's a little trail that goes along the side of the cabin that leads you to sandy spot where you can put your feet in the river, sit back and relax.

I told Aunt Ali about it and she and I would walk down there after to school. We made a little fire spot, and Grammie, Grampie, Lydia, Olivia, Ali and Mommy would go down there, too. Grampie made a fire and we would roast marshmallows and make s'mores.

I liked this spot because it was nice and quiet. Daddy and Mommy went down there a long time before you were born and we loved it. It felt like a private island. I would love to take you down there sometime.



# How about Restorative Justice?

by Chloe Edwards - Rockland

*[Editor's note: To protect their privacy, Chloe has chosen the initial E.]*

Restorative Justice is a philosophy or a way of thinking about what the offender can do to make things right with the community and the victim. This is an option that might be offered to the offender instead of getting in a lot of trouble and going to court and then having probation or jail time. Restorative Justice is supposed to make the offender realize what they did to the victim and make them realize what they did wrong and how it has not only affected the victim, but everyone around the victim.

Here is my experience with Restorative Justice:

I thought that it was going to be a good idea until my first meeting. I thought that it was pretty ignorant that I was the one getting punished when E sat there in front of everyone and said that yes, she hit me first, but I am the one that has to go through all this and have meetings every week with Restorative Justice.

If I hadn't chosen to do this program, I would have ended up going to court and one of these three things could have happened: 1) I end up with Restorative Justice, 2) I end up on probation, or 3) I end up going to jail. So, being a teen mom, I picked Restorative Justice because that way that sounded better to me.

I think that Restorative Justice is childish. E and I are okay with not being friends and both of us can move on with our lives without being friends. The Restorative Justice mediators want to make us become friends and be able to talk to each other, but I didn't want to. I'm 100% okay with not being friends and not having to talk to E about anything. They keep trying to push for it though. So to me it seems like something a middle school counselor does and that is childish to me because I am not a child.

# Aubrey's Birth Story

by Brianna Sukeforth - Limington

Aubrey is an amazing little girl. She's by far the best thing that's ever happened to me. She's the best baby girl anyone could ask for. She's wonderful, but how she came into this world on Sunday, August 2, 2015 at 10:30pm, is a whole 'nother story.

I had lay down to go to sleep. I was almost asleep when suddenly I got a really sharp pain in the pit of my stomach. I thought maybe it was a just a little cramp, so I tried falling back asleep. Two minutes later it happened again. After about three hours of laying in bed, ignoring the cramps, I went into my mom's room and told her about them. She played along as if they were cramps because she didn't want to scare me by telling me that I possibly could be in labor. Still concerned as to what was happening, I decided I'd take a nice warm bath to see if it would help the pain. Throughout my pregnancy, when something hurt I would take a hot bath and it would help me, so I thought I'd do it to help the cramps. Well, as soon as I got into the water, they got worse and a lot closer to each other.

I thought to myself "I shouldn't be in labor this early. I'm not supposed to have her for another month. If I have her now, something might be wrong."

After my bath, I went back to my mom's room and I told her that they were getting worse and I didn't know what to do. She brought me downstairs, made some tea, and gave me some pain medicine. She was still playing along as if they were really cramps instead of contractions. I told her I was surprised about how the bath made them worse. I decided to go back to bed because they were getting so intense I just wanted to lay

down. My mom told me she would call my doctor first thing in the morning and tell them what was going on.

The next morning came (mind you, I lay in bed crying all night because the contractions just got worse) around 6:30 am I went into my mom's room and lay with her as she got ready for work. My contractions were so nerve pinching I couldn't breathe when I got one, so I would hold my breath until it went away.

She called my doctor and they said I could go in at 2 pm later that day. It was only 7 am at that time, and I was beyond miserable. A couple hours later, my mom left to go to work and my dad called, telling me he was on his way to get me so we could go to the beach—that had been the plan for a couple days. I tried telling him that I had really bad cramps all night long, didn't sleep and felt sick because I didn't eat anything from being in so much pain. But he still insisted that I go to the beach with him.

I had my fiancé, David, get stuff ready for the beach while I lay in bed. During the night I tried not to bother him because I wanted him to be able to get some sleep, but I was a little upset when I asked him to get up with me a couple times and he said he wanted to just stay in bed. When he woke up the next morning, he was helpful from then on, continuing to this day.

David packed everything and tried making me breakfast. I told him I 100% refused to eat, I had excruciating pain and food was the last thing on my mind. My dad pulled into the driveway and I broke down started crying extremely hard telling David that I didn't want to go. He told me I'd be fine, and let's go. The whole ride to the beach felt like three hours when really it was only ten minutes. The bumps, the radio, my thoughts of that I was going to have her in a couple hours

frightened me and made the pain ten times worse.

When we got to the beach, David and I tried going swimming. It didn't help at all. I didn't have enough strength to hold myself up in the water. We went back up to the picnic table and I knew for sure this time something was going on. These weren't just regular pulled muscle cramps or period cramps, these were extremely painful contractions that were only seconds apart from each other.

I finally broke down and called my mom and told her I needed to go to the hospital, right then. She told me to have my dad bring me home and she'd pick me up and bring me. The ride to the hospital was about 45 minutes and it was miserable. I cried the whole ride and my contractions just got worse and worse - which, surprisingly I didn't know they could get any worse because they already hurt so bad, I would have never thought that a human being could go through this much pain.

We got to the doctor's and they monitored my contractions. My doctor, Erika, came in and checked to see how I was doing. She checked to see how dilated I was. She said I was 9 cm and you're supposed to start pushing at 10 cm, so she



sent me to the hospital right next door and notified the doctors so I could get right in.

I got in, they changed me into a johnny and had me lay in bed. My water didn't break overnight so they asked me if I wanted to see if it would break on its own or if I wanted them to break it so I could start pushing. I told them to wait because I was not ready to give birth. Then, the contractions were so close together, they didn't even go away. It was one after another after another! I finally told the doctor to break it so I could start pushing.

The doctor broke my water and told me that in a couple minutes, I'd need to start pushing. So I relaxed myself—sort of—and braced myself for birth. They asked me to start pushing and to hold my breath. I held my breath for the longest push. She was out in 4 pushes, but my pushes were so long, so it lasted 15 minutes.

My birth was definitely shorter than I thought it was going to be. August 3, 2015 at 5:50pm, my precious baby Aubrey came into this world. It was such an amazing, incredible experience. I still can't believe that I made her. She's so precious.

My first words to her were, "Welcome to the world precious, mommy loves you tons." That's how my beautiful little angel was brought into this world.



# I Love NY

by Heather Geisinger - Portland

My favorite place is Manhattan, New York. I've visited many times, but my favorite time was my most recent trip on August 24, 2016. I went with my parents, my baby Izabela, and Jorge. We drove down and we spent three days there. We visited the Empire State Building, Central Park, the World Trade Center 9/11 Memorial, Rockefeller Center and walked around the heart of Manhattan - Times Square.

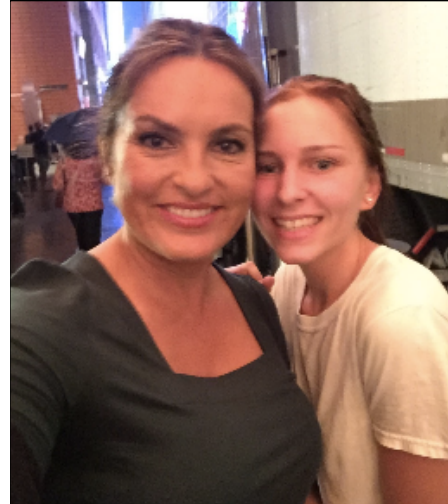
I've always loved road trips. Something about them has always made me happy. It was last minute that we decided we were gonna drive there. We stayed in North Bergen, New Jersey, because staying in New York City was too expensive. When we first got to the hotel, Jorge and I went swimming at the hotel pool, then we walked around the city and visited the Empire State Building. It was our first time to that building, so it was breathtaking for us all. We were there at 1:30am and the entire city was lit up.

The second day we visited the World Trade Center and walked around the city again. On our last day we walked around Central Park.

I've visited New York City many times before, but I never went sightseeing so it was a good experience.

The Empire State Building was my favorite part of the trip. We went up to the 86th floor in an elevator that only took 46 seconds to reach the top. Overlooking the city, all the lights, and all the views were indescribable. I wish I could see that view everyday. It was very cold and windy though.

Driving around looking for a place to park, we saw the cast from Law and Order SVU. We parked and walked back to find them filming a scene for a new episode. After they were done, all the cast members just walked away and I ran up to the actress that plays Olivia Benson (Mariska



Hargitay) and asked her for a picture. She grabbed my phone out of my hand and took a selfie of us. Since I was young I've watched SVU so it was really cool to see her. That's one thing

I love about NY - that there are always famous people walking around. You just have to be in the right place at the right time.





That's Lacey in the purple dress.

## King Neptune's Brides

by Lacey Phinney - Lubec

In 2014 I volunteered to help raise money for the Lost Fishermen Fund. I dressed up in a fancy dress with the other woman and jumped into the Cobscook Bay. The event was called King Neptune's Brides. I raised \$150. My Uncle Wade's name is going to be on a plaque on the Lost Fishermen Memorial in Lubec with all the names of our community's lost fishermen.

It felt good to raise money. The bay was a little cold, but not really that bad. It was definitely worth \$150 and it was nice to do something to help someone.

*[Editor's note: A dedication and unveiling ceremony for the Memorial was held in Lubec on August 21, 2016]*

## Finding Your Way at Sea

by Justis Anthony - Phippsburg

Land maps aren't very useful when you are on the sea. If you are trying to locate where you are on the ocean, you would use nautical charts.

With nautical charts you can see depth of the ocean, just like you can see elevation on a land map. You can also see shorelines and landmarks (such as dangerous areas like shipwrecks or big rocks.) Nautical charts also show navigational aids, which are things to show that you are in the right place or near something. Like when you're traveling on the road and someone says, "When you come to a big red church, turn right." Nautical charts also show shipping lanes, which are kind of like roads on land maps. They are there so sailors can stay in the safe zones and not get too close to any shallow areas.

Last of all, nautical maps show which way the currents are going in all locations.



## Remembering My Dad's Words

Destini Edwards - Waldoboro

Life.

Reader, that is what we will be talking about today. Such a simple word, but can you tell me where life begins and where life ends? Obviously you thought when we're born and when we die. Well, my dear Reader, I regret to inform you, you are wrong.

There are few times in our lives when we truly live, when we feel life coursing through our bodies, a moment where life truly began, much like a book. Life can begin and stop like a sentence. It has a period at the end that represents when life ends, and the capital letter at the beginning. Those are the moments when we truly live.

One of the moments when I felt truly alive was when I was little. As a child my father would say, "Rain is the angels crying for the living because we mourn the dead and they celebrate it, because it is so wonderful 'there' that we can't begin to imagine it."

I was in Florida years after my Dad passed away, and I was riding a bike in Brandon when it started to downpour. I found peace in the rain, and in remembering my dad's words.

A more recent time I felt truly alive was when my son was born. The few seconds before he

was here, I glanced outside to find it was raining. I thought of my dad's words again and right on cue my midwife was saying, "Grab your baby!" Then with a cry so sweet, Izek entered the world. These are my most precious moments of my life thus far.

I will leave you with this darling Reader. I have found that when you're feeling the weight of the world, remember these pinnacle moments for yourself, they will keep you going and often the memories will brighten a dim spirit.

## Motorized Stroller? Yes!

by Kileigh Rickett - Berwick

A while ago my friend, Vickie, and I were going for a walk with my daughter, Skyler, and her son Riley and we were talking about how they should invent a motorized stroller.

We were saying how we would put a motor on it and a steering wheel in the handle bars and have a platform in the bottom for you to stand on and a pedal on the platform to make it move. The stroller could go up to 20 mph. Another feature would be that it could fold and unfold itself.

I feel this would be a great idea because there are some handicapped people that would love to bring their grandkids for a walk and can't because they are handicapped. If there was a motorized stroller the handicapped person can enjoy a walk with the child without having to actually walk.

Also, a motorized stroller would be helpful if you have an appointment that you need to walk to and are running late; the motorized stroller could get you there faster without you having to run.

# I Am Brayden's Father

by Shane Callahan - Rockland

Brayden is unique because he's a lot like me, and also a lot like Kelley. Sometimes he's really hyper, and when we're not playing he's calm. He makes me smile when he says, "I love you!" When he gives you hugs, he always has to hug you twice, putting his head on each side of yours. Brayden likes to try to read books. I read to him so he can learn more words. I would like to get some flash cards for him too, so he can get better at math. He likes to count things and we can do that together. As Brayden grows older I am looking forward to showing him lots of science stuff. I love science and I can't wait to share this with him. I hope that Brayden will graduate high school and go to college someday. I hope to help him do this.

Brayden and I like to play around and goof off. If he's playing and someone says, "STOP!" I get him to listen to that; that is teaching him to be respectful. I see him as being an athletic and mechanically inclined child. I am excited to teach him football. We have a football in the house that we toss back and forth. I do it lightly so he can catch it and bring it in. As he gets older he'll actually learn to pass and catch and we can go to the field and play there. I am really looking forward to showing him how to work on cars, too.

I am trying to teach Brayden right from wrong. I am looking forward to helping him learn to show respect and how to be a good person. To do this I will try to be a good role model. I show respect and try to be an all-around, good person especially when he's around, as I know he's watching all I do

# Babies are Curious

by Kat Guernsey - Warren

There are many developmental stages in a child's early life; most occur during the first year. In just the first year, a child is just a little bundle of 'potato,' where he or she can't move themselves and their movements aren't complex. Soon they start moving, wiggling, and even crawling around. They babble and start feeding themselves. Then, walking and saying a few words starts toward the end of the first year. Babies grow rapidly at this time and have an IQ higher than it will ever be. This helps with learning new things easily!

There are many ways to help your baby with these stages, such as tummy time, reading and play. Babies love other babies, so putting a mirror in front of your baby during tummy time will motivate them to move forward to get the 'other baby.' Using a favorite toy can help, too!

Talking and singing songs or pointing things out to the child like, "that's a squirrel and that's a tree" will encourage your baby and will help as they learn to move!

## How to Make A Pat Mat

Babies are curious and love new things. You can make a 'pat mat' for your baby to explore textures by filling a gallon sized freezer bag with a little over a third of the way with water and adding small toys, pieces of string or fabric, then just close it up tight with little air and add duct tape to the top to prevent leaking. It works best on a flat surface.



# Critic's Corner



## *Beautiful*

by Amy Reeds

Reviewed by Danyelle Wright - Richmond

When good girl Cassie moves from Seattle she is determined to no longer be a boring old, good girl. She takes this opportunity to change the way people look at her and to not be invisible anymore.

Going into her new identity turned out to be pretty easy. One moment and one choice changed absolutely everything. Cassie's new life both scared her and gave her a thrill. Going into a life of partying, losing her virginity, and embracing the numbness she feels from the drugs. She just floats through it all, knowing that finally she is now known as beautiful.

She doesn't care about the dangers of her new life, but she can't sidestep the secrets and cruelty. Cassie is caught in a downward spiral filled with violence and abuse, and no one, not even the people she thought she could trust, can help her now.

This book reminded me of the books that Ellen Hopkins has written. Both authors wrote about the struggles that someone has gone through.

I can relate to these books because I have gone through some of these struggles - self-harm, doing drugs (marijuana), running away from home, and the abuse. Like Cassie I wanted to escape my life, wanted to be numb, but the effects of these things didn't last long and all the pain was right there waiting for me to come right back to the reality of my crappy life.

Things have gotten better for me and I've learned how to cope with these things. I just have to remind myself that things could be worse, and that life will get better. There is always a rainbow at the end of every rainstorm.

## *Llama Llama Mad At Mama*

by Anna Dewdney

Reviewed by Kayla Wing - Bath

This book is about shopping with a child and no child likes to go shopping - at least my son doesn't!

Mama Llama can't leave little Llama Llama at home so he has to go with Mama. There are lots of aisles and lots of lines. Mama Llama is so busy shopping that she doesn't notice that Llama Llama is upset and wants to leave. Little Llama throws a tantrum, and it's not a pretty one! He is mad at his mama.

My favorite part is when Mama calms him down by saying, "I think shopping is boring too, but at least I'm here with you."

Mama Llama needs to make it more fun so Llama Llama gets to push the cart. At the end he gets a treat and loves his Mama.

**Responding to Literature:**

**A Letter to the character Gabby Holland  
from the novel**

***The Choice***

**by Nicholas Sparks**

**Reviewed by Jacki Riethmuller - Milford**

Dear Gabby,

The biggest thing is that I'm still shocked that you aren't here. You're not a phone call away or even just sitting home with your two girls. I just can't believe that as I write this letter there is a chance that you may never read it. Everyone in your life misses you like crazy and no one is giving up on you - especially not Travis. He sits at your bedside every day and just waits for you to wake up. And every night he goes and gets the girls off the bus, gets them a snack, and is there for them. He doesn't like to bring them to visit with you because they are so young and they don't understand that you are sleeping and not dead. They always ask if you are ever going to wake up and poor Travis doesn't know how to answer them because he doesn't even know the answer. He feels bad for not bringing them by, but at the same time he wants them continue with their everyday routine and not get too upset so they don't want to go to school.

All I can really say is that he is trying his hardest to keep everything as normal as possible for everyone all the way around. At this point though, I know he is starting to lose hope because he has to make the decision: whether to put you in a nursing home or decide differently. I know that he is going to end up putting you in a nursing home because he will always have hope that one day you will wake up. And sure enough the next day he makes that decision and you go into a nursing home. When that choice was made he

also made the choice to try harder at home and that he needed to continue with his life as much as possible while still coming to see you. He went back to work and started really trying his hardest.

Until that day when he was work and he got that phone call that scared the crap out of him. He didn't know what to think so he came right over and there you were sitting up and wanting to know where he was and where you were. He had to explain to you about the accident and how he felt like it was all his fault.

I think that worst part of you being gone for so long was that your girls didn't know how to react because they had just assumed that you were dead. That's what they did so they could move forward with their lives. Travis struggled the most because he wanted so badly just for everything to go back to the way they were, but it couldn't because the girls needed to adjust to you being back. But everyone was so happy to see you alive and well.

I'm just happy that you are okay and doing really good. I wrote you this letter so that you could see over a period of time what happened while you were not with us. I wanted you to know just about everything that went on and not feel so weird for missing out on things. I'm glad that you are doing so well. And that your girls and other half are doing good. I just can't wait to be able to some see you and spend a weekend with you. Please stay healthy and well.

Yours Truly,  
Jacki Riethmuller

