

## *Alan - Self-Portrait*

Crayon on Newsprint, 1958

My name is Alan Neal Levy. I am five years old.

I live in Blue Hills with my Mommy and Daddy. We live at 6 Jackson Road in a brand new house in Pershing Park. The neighborhood is filled with kids my age. I love it here. Our backyard is Keney Park with no fence around it. My neighbor at 8 Jackson Rd. is Mario and he is a kid but as big as a grown-up and he loves to play baseball just like me. He showed me a real baseball uniform he wears in American Legion. Mario and his family came here to live after escaping from Cuba, which is an island. His father grows huge vegetables in their back yard surrounded by a small fence. I can escape any fence in the world by climbing over it. Mario's Daddy tells me to stay clear of the plants. I don't really like vegetables, but I'm curious to learn how he will put them in cans. I wish Mario's fence was as big as ours and it would be the perfect height for a home run catch.

I have an older brother named Arthur and a dog named Fluffy. Fluffy is the best dog in the world. Sometimes I think she understands me. Arthur Henry is the best brother. He is in second grade and his best friends are Mickey and David who live three houses away on Allen St. They are brothers like us but only one year apart. Our backyard is better than theirs because they have a cemetery and we have Keney Park! Mickey and David have a bigger front yard and we have a bigger back yard and the woods of Keney Park which is in Hartford. The Woods are endless. Today I found a Lost Beach! Instead of heading towards the Go Kart track I kept going straight back from our house deeper than I have ever explored. It looks like the cover of *The Clue In The Embers* which is the second Hardy Boys Book I read all on my own. It is a Big Kids book, not like the Baby books I used to read and today I found this Beach with no water - just sand for ever and ever. I am excited to show Arthur what I found. He will know what the wood hut is and where the beach sand comes from. It sure looks like someone was living there, but I did not see any embers. We make tents, play Army, climb trees and break into the Go Kart track in Keney park. Arthur found the race track and took me there and we got caught by a man who shot Arthur in the butt with a BB gun!

I drew this picture in Blue Hills School. I am in Kindergarten. My teacher is nice. Her name is Miss Degman. I have a Belly Button! Mommy says it came from when I was born and Daddy said so too, so it must be true. All of the kids in Kindergarten have belly buttons too, but mine is really deep. Mommy says I was cut from the woman who gave birth to me which sounds kind of gross, but it was worth it because Mommy wanted another boy so badly. Another Miracle child for my Mommy and Daddy. The woman who gave birth could not keep her baby. Me. I was adopted by

my Mommy and Daddy who can't make babies on their own and now they have two boys of their own as they hoped and prayed. My brother was also adopted and in an incubator for a long time before he came home. Mommy says the woman who gave birth to me might be very young, or sick, or poor, and she and Daddy were just so lucky to find out there was another Miracle for them to adopt. Mommy is smart and pretty and all of the kids in the neighborhood love her.

Daddy says that since only mommies give birth, there isn't anything connecting boys and their dads. Daddy didn't know the woman who gave birth to me. At night, I pretend she is a princess who died in a tragedy. Or a famous movie star like Marilyn Monroe. I wonder if she misses me? And how did she have a baby with no Daddy? I ask Daddy if I have two fathers as well as two mothers and he said yes but he didn't know my other daddy either. Are they married? Did they give you Arthur too? Do they live in Bloomfield? Hartford? Do they live on Trinity Lane, East Hartford? Do they live in our old house? Are they making babies for other parents? Do they know I'm alive? Do they know that I am happy here with you? Oh so happy... here. Will I be adopted again? I really don't want more parents. I think four is enough to create a Miracle child. Like Arthur. I fear I will never be good enough to be Mommy's second Miracle child.

Pershing Park has one long road and three small roads forming a large rectangle. I can almost walk around the whole rectangle by going in either direction. Jackson Road is the long road and number six is close to Allen Street which leads to a small park with nothing in it. When we moved in last year there was this mountain of rocks in the middle, where we played King of the Hill, Hide and Seek and Capture the Flag. I love to play. Mommy doesn't know I go to Pershing Park by myself. Boys from my school meet everyday after school and play in the Park until it's time for dinner. Once I walked into one of the unfinished houses and talked with the three men who build it and they were drinking coffee in a can, like my Daddy brings to work at Fafnir Bearing company, where he is a draftsman and draws pictures of ball bearings. The builders have big drawings of the new house to help them build it. The Park is just three houses past the new house, but there was no one in the park so I turned before I reached Johnny's house. I walked past both Paula 1 and Paula 2's house and past Elizabeth Street which connects with older houses and Blue Hills Avenue.

The Pershing Park neighborhood has many kids with the same name, so I pretend to walk around sometimes before I fall asleep Besides the two Paulas, I have three Billys in Kindergarten that we call Bill T, Billy V and Bill Lee. I also know two Roberts, so I use street names to keep track of them: Bob C. on the other end of Jackson Road and Bob Clemons, who is my best friend on Merriam Road, which is also where the prettiest girl in Kindergarten lives right across the street from him, Mary Calderon. I keep waiting to meet the other Alan. Oh, get this: there is even another family named Levy that lives right next to Mario and they have an older girl named Marcia.

The other Levy family are not relatives of ours. Nor are they my other Mom and Dad. Maybe people don't have to have the same names as their adopted children. Some kids still believe the Stork delivers babies down chimneys, and I don't correct them because sometimes it's easier if I just don't tell someone I'm adopted. A lot of people don't know about adoption. Maybe we will learn about it in Grade 1.

I want to know everything. I want to explore the entire Keney Park and keep going around the whole planet. I want to meet everyone in the world. We are Jewish which means we get to celebrate both Hannukah and Christmas. I am the luckiest kid in the word!