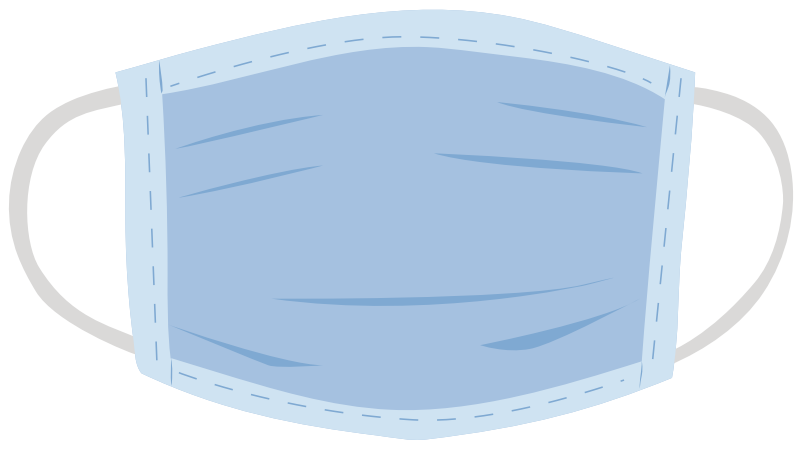




SCREENS, BEANS & QUARANTINES

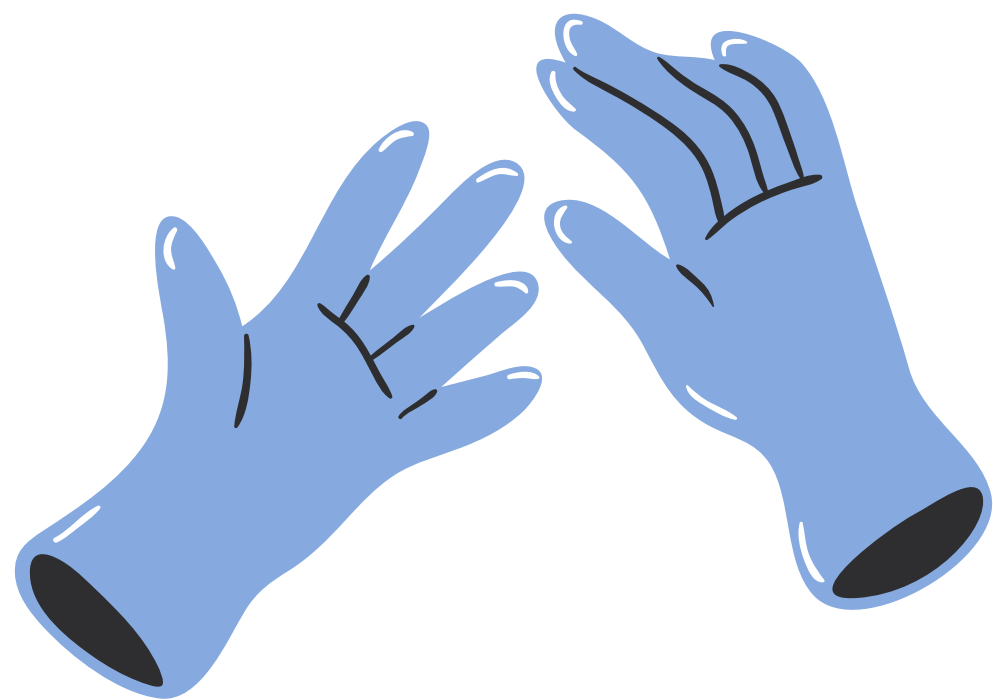
by Mel Kaspin Blume



**What is this thing,
this COVID-19?**

And what in the world is a “quarantine”?

What do all of these
words even mean?



And why do we have so many canned beans?

It's a virus people have
worldwide, I hear,

In faraway cities and
also close to here.



It's brought lots of changes
and sometimes some fear,

So, school is closed
for the rest of the year.

Friends stand apart,
wear masks and more,

We barely even step out of
the front door.

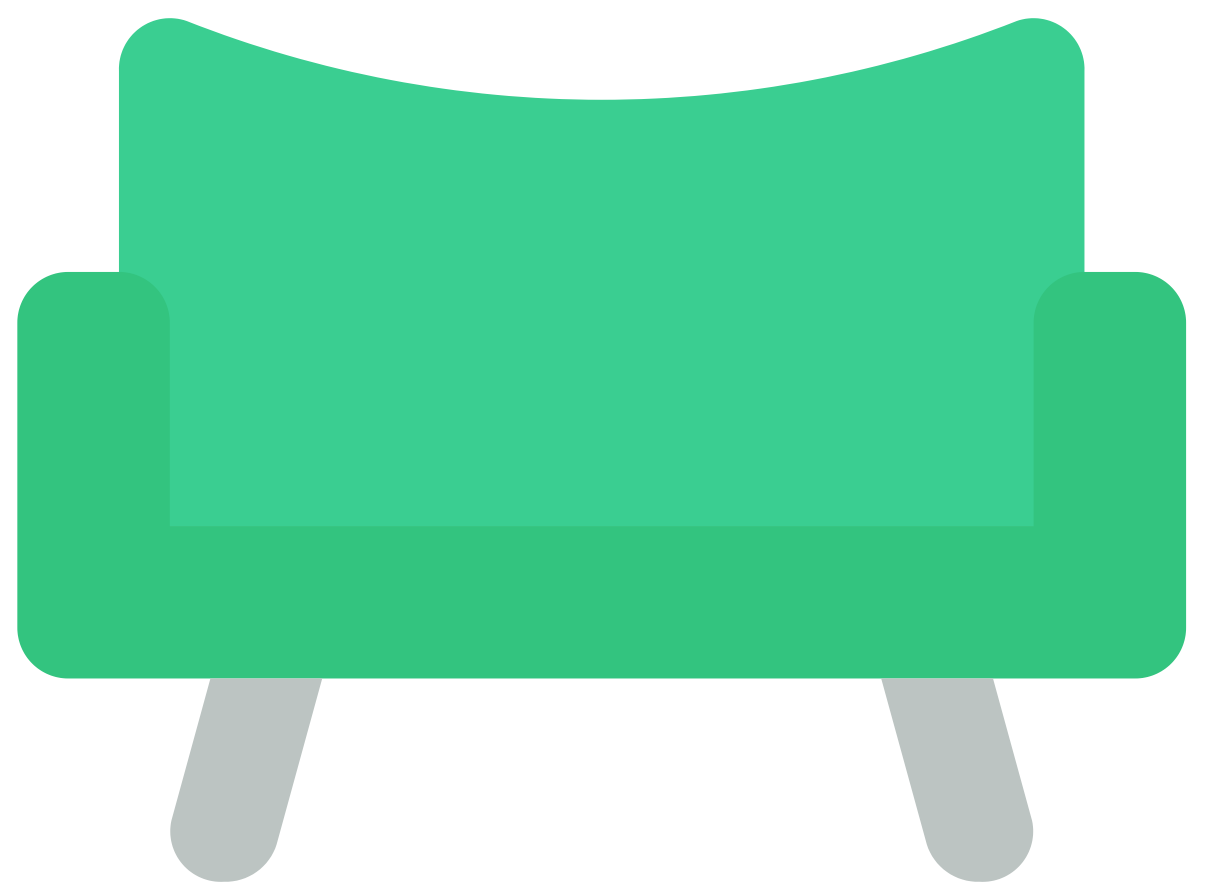


So many questions,
I just want to roar.

I'm sure that I have at least 44.

My questions are like,
“How big is it?”

Will it travel sideways from somebody’s spit?



Does this weird virus live
where I sit?”

I’m not sure, not even a bit.

Today is so weird,
because I turn 9.

When I woke up,
I thought I'd feel fine.



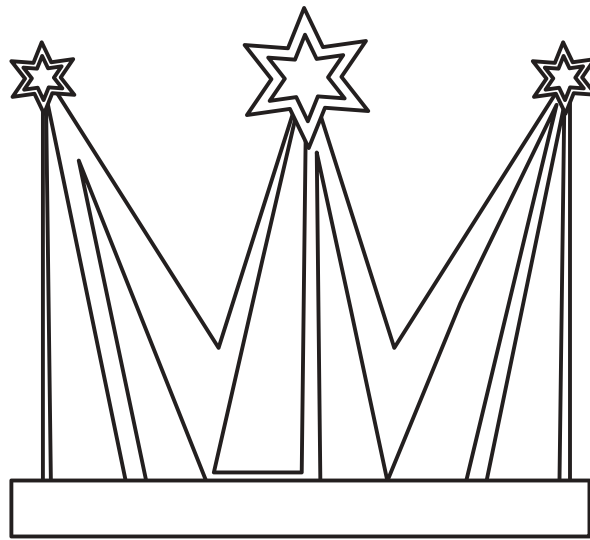
But, the day seems like others,
so it's not mine.

No colorful balloons.
Not even one sign!



We threw a “party”
that took place on screen,

But, um, I was a little mean.



I did not feel like a birthday queen.

Not even a cake!
So, instead I ate beans.



Today, I don't want to celebrate,

I might as well just stay 8.



Or, maybe I'll just forget this
not-so-fun date.

Yes, turning 9 will
have to wait!

I miss my neighbors
and school crew.

Today I'm just feeling cloudy and blue.



Then my Mom calls,
“They’re here for you!”

Who, what, huh?
I don’t have a clue.

Beeping, honking,
even cheers,

I can't believe my ears!



My friends in cars!
I'm almost in tears.

The big cloud overhead just disappears!

Happy birthday chants
fill the street,

Handmade signs and
giggles so sweet,



I think I feel my heart skip a beat.

My new kind of birthday's
the best-ever treat!

There's Olivia, Margo, and Dave,

Avery, Asa, and, oh my,
there's Maeve!



Seeing them all pass by,
smile and wave,

Reminds me that I can be
so strong and brave.

I love my strange birthday,
I can truly say,

My mom, Dad and Jake have saved the day!

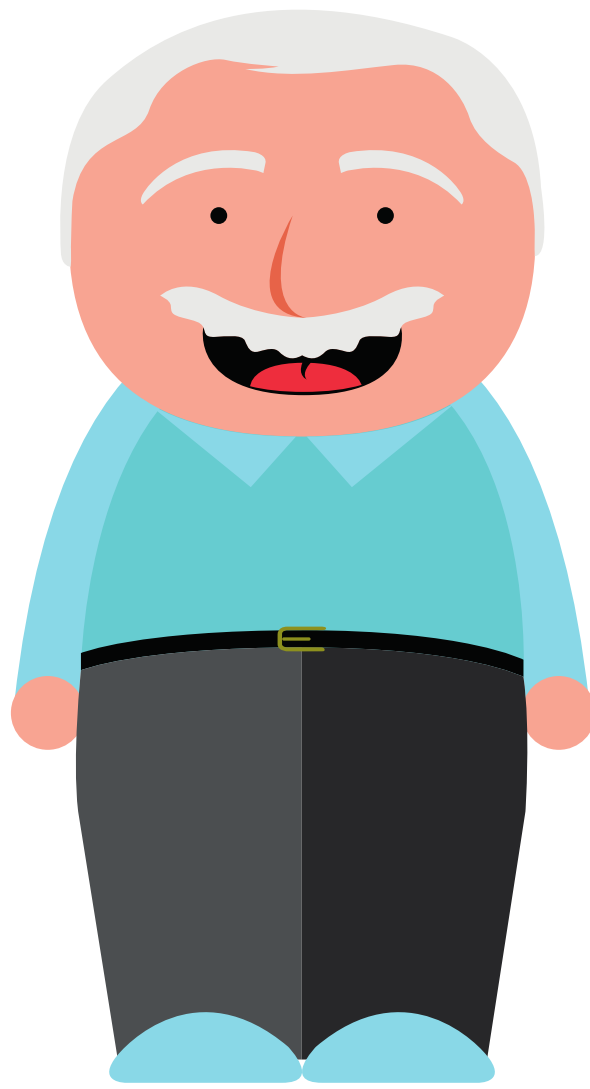


Maybe odd parties might be okay.

I'm feeling really,
really happy today.

I'm lucky I get to ride my new bike,

And chat all the time with
kind Grandpa Ike.

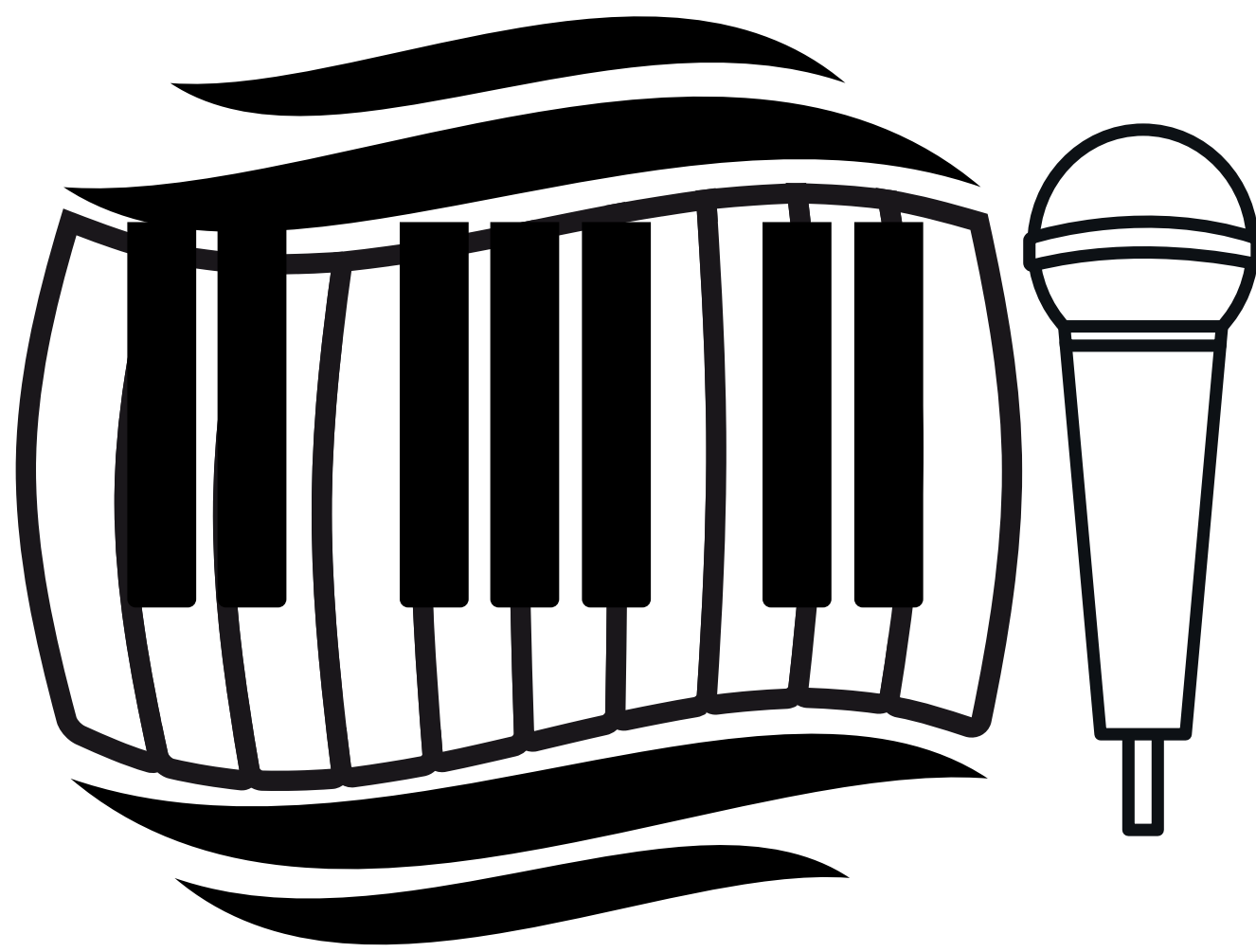


I love using the walkie talkie
with neighbor Mike,

And it's so much fun to
go on a backyard hike.

I see Mom and Dad
all day and night long,

Jake and I even sort of get along.

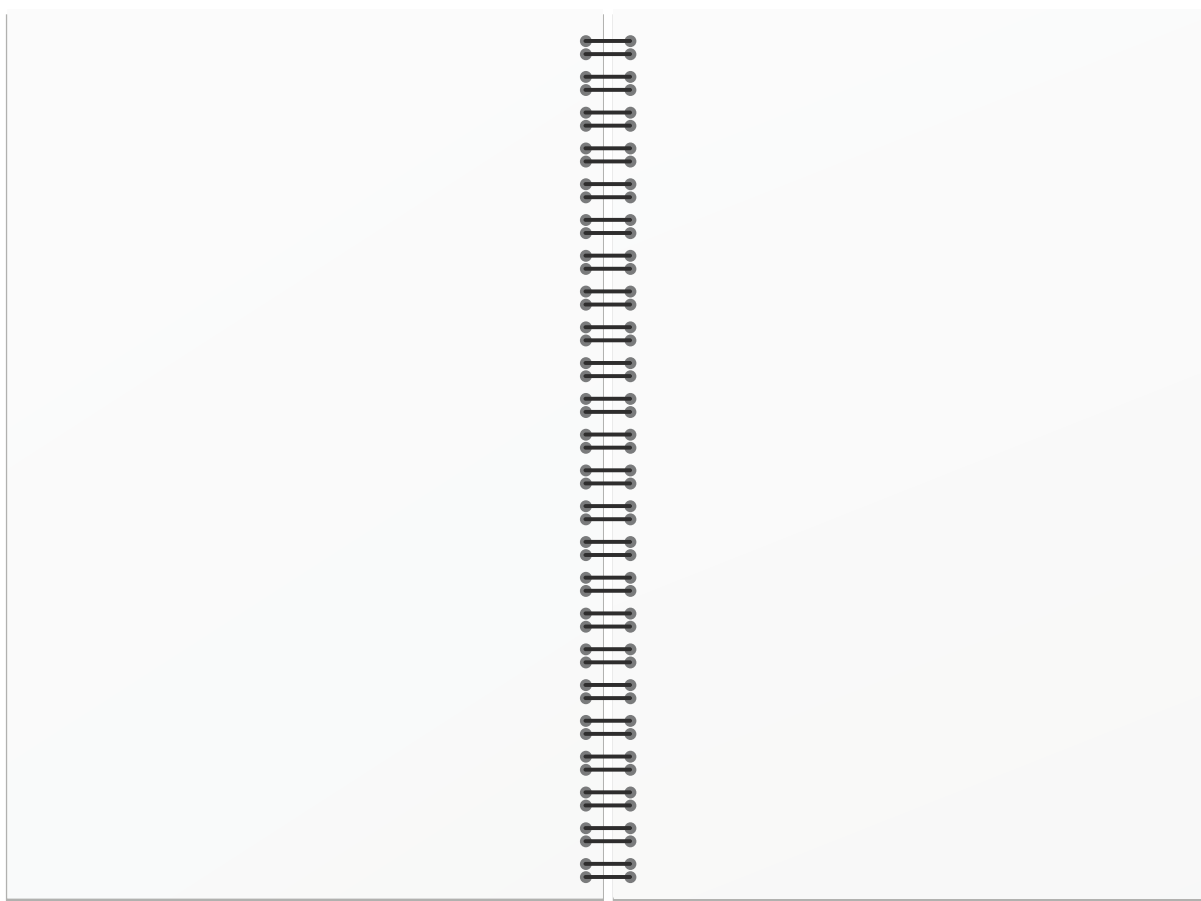


He plays piano while
I sing a song,

And we laugh even when
it comes out wrong!

Life is so different,
but not really bad,

I will remember this
when I feel sad.



I should scribble my
thoughts on a pad.

I hear that can get
rid of feelings of mad!

I'll start to ask my questions
about COVID-19,

And find out more about
this "quarantine."



Whatever that really means.

Oh, and why we are eating
a ton of canned beans.

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