



Starfish at age 7.

# YOU CAN DRAW too

by Coleen Barnhart

For as long as I can remember, I longed to be an artist like my grandmother Margaret. My mother says I started to talk about becoming an artist when I was only two years old.

I was introduced to *Nature Friend* through the school I attended, and also through my cousin, Naomi. At her house, we used to sprawl on our tummies with pencils, fresh white papers, and stacks of *Nature Friend* magazines, and draw for hours!

In school, my fingertips itched to draw. I was often reprimanded for doodling in my books instead of working. I didn't mean to do it, but sometimes my imagination just wandered away from my studies, and my fingers

just followed along!

I never begged for art lessons as a girl because I had heard that they were expensive, and I didn't think we could afford them. When one of my little cousins was given art lessons and access to all the paint and paper she wanted, I was so jealous I cried! But *Nature Friend's* "You Can Draw" lessons

Grandparent portrait by Coleen Barnhart at age 14.



gave me the foundation I needed.

I was 14 when Grandfather Heatwole bought me my first set of oil paints in exchange for a small painting of him and Grandmother. Those tubes were so large that I



▲ Cotton at sunset, painted in our backyard in Waynesboro, Georgia.

◀ This is a mural I painted for the primary classroom at my church.



am still using most of them! I started painting portraits for close neighbors and family members and making a little money for my work.

When I was 17, I had a babysitting job and enough money to finally get those long-dreamed-of art les-

## OUR OLDEST SON,

Caleb, was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor in April 2001, when he was nine years old. Caleb had a great interest and talent in drawing. I was looking for something special to encourage him, when a friend suggested *Nature Friend*.



We began a subscription, and over the next several years Caleb submitted 16 drawings. His favorite drawing was published in October 2004, of a white-tailed deer.

When we had tornado warnings, Caleb would grab his artwork folders, *Nature Friend* issues, and some other treasured books. I wish I could express the joy Caleb has received from *Nature Friend*. The “You Can Draw” articles were exactly what we were looking for. Judy Kauffman “drew” Caleb into drawing objects that he didn’t know he could draw. She helped to stretch his abilities and gain a greater knowledge of art.

On December 22, 2005, Caleb was diagnosed with another brain tumor. Caleb continued to homeschool and draw during his treatments. In April 2006 he sent his last submission to *Nature Friend* of a squirrel sitting on a tree stump. On July 18, 2006, Caleb went home to be with his Creator and Saviour. Caleb’s nature artwork continues to tell of his love for his Creator through a tract that we’ve put together. On its cover is Caleb’s drawing of an eagle, and it’s accompanied by his testimony of trust with the title “The Shelter of His Wings.” Thank you again for the blessings for our family and others through the feature, “You Can Draw.”

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sons. I went to a tutor about twice a month for two years. She opened my eyes to the world of color and how to see it even in the shadows. She also taught me wonderful things about mixing colors and arranging my paintings in pleasing compositions. When she saw how much I enjoyed painting portraits, she began referring clients to me.

I believe that God has given almost everyone the ability to learn to draw. When I told that to my art students, they were skeptical. But over the following weeks we talked about techniques, lights and shadows, and different edges and shapes. The students produced wonderful drawings.

If you want to learn how to draw, don’t give up just because there is no one to teach you and the first drawings you made didn’t turn out the way you hoped. Keep trying, and take advantage of the opportunities you have to learn. ◀