

Artist's Statement

Thomas Lister, Lexington, KY

Age: 11 (6th Grade)

YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/hkc1hgBjD6Y>

Hi. My name is Thomas Lister. I am in 6th grade at Beaumont Middle School in Lexington, KY.

I learned about the "The Write Stuff" contest at school. My mother had Acute Myeloid Leukemia (blood cancer) and a Bone Marrow Transplant in 2016. It was a long, rough road for my family. The one thing that really helped cheer us up was humor.

When I read about this contest, I thought of my Aunt Kerstin. Kerstin is a teacher and improv comedian in Connecticut and she is a big fan of Gilda Radner. Aunt Kerstin helped our family a lot during my mom's treatments. My mom was in the hospital for 127 days and my little brother Charlie and I were too young to visit her. Kerstin came to visit us and when she couldn't be here, she found other ways to cheer us up.

I created this video to share how awesome my Aunt Kerstin is. I hope it will inspire other people to keep their sense of humor, too.

I started this project by looking through hundreds of photos my mom had saved on her phone in a folder marked "AML Journey." I knew also she had some great photos of her and Kerstin when they were little. The picture of them wearing matching outfits made me laugh out loud. (The look on their faces is kind of how I feel when my mom does this to me and Charlie.)

Next, I organized the photos I wanted to use into an album called “Gilda’s Club” on our iPad. (We don’t own a computer.) Next, I wrote a script to tell the story.

I used the iMovie App on my mom’s iPad. The app is super easy to use and I even figured out how to add music in the background. I chose the song “You’ve got a Friend” by James Taylor performed by Fred Benedetti and Peter Popping. I looked up on YouTube how to make titles in case someone watches the video without sound. I had to edit my script after I put in the photos because what I originally wrote was way too long.

I found a picture of me and my brother wearing matching sweaters at Christmas and knew that would be a great way to end the video.

The iMovie App automatically puts in transitions between photos. I made a few of them a little longer or changed to “wipe” instead. Some of the photos got cut-off in iMovie, so I had to look up online how to fix that.

The hardest part was recording my voice-over. I decided to record it in small bits at a time because I couldn’t get through the whole thing without messing up.

This was a fun project to do even though it was hard to think about that year all over again.