



## Personal Writing Sample 2006

### The Talking Goldfish

Thursday morning: 7.30 a.m. Why was I so dog tired? I had gone to bed at 10.30 and that's early for me. Now here I was up again feeling utterly miserable after a sleepless night. That voice last night? Was I hearing things? It seemed a continuous drone, a mix between a bad minded chipmunk and mewing kitten. I had opened the window to see if the voice was outside. It wasn't. I hoped I wasn't imagining it – that voice going on and on. I heard it three nights before too, on the night of my birthday.

I told dad the next morning. "Must be old age!" he said. Ha, Ha, nice one dad (not). I told my big sister but she said sarcastically, "Maria dear, you know you really must get out more!" Now I couldn't tell anyone at school as they would think I was insane. Well they already did but this time they'd think I actually lost it completely. I thought, "If only someone else could hear it." That is when it hit me. I would have a sleepover; someone else is bound to hear the little voice then.

Saturday night came. Sara and Sorcha arrived laden with goodies and all the stuff makes you skin terrible and a scary DVD. Ten o'clock and the massive pizza arrived. Twelve o'clock came and the movie over then the talking started. Two o'clock, "Sara, Sorcha, time for sleep." I couldn't wait for the silence to come and for someone else to hear that horrible little voice.

But my dream of organising the girls had not allowed for Sorcha. She decided to stay awake all night – just to see if she could! And to keep her occupied she wanted to decorate my new fish tank with cut outs of shells and ships and fish of every shape her not insignificant imagination could create.

Sunday went by in an uneventful daze and before I knew it, it was Monday. I was in History class. The last thing I remember was a picture of bombed out buildings in my history book and then my head colliding gently with the said picture and me drifting as in a deep pool of peace and tranquillity. The superior voice of Miss Mullen my history teacher boomed out above my head, "Maria Maguire, get to the principal's office at once! Maybe then you'll learn to stay awake in my class!" I left the room to a chorus of class laughter. Dazed I wandered down the corridor to The Office and as I waited, I promptly fell asleep again.

A more sympathetic voice woke me this time, invited me in, and listened to my sorry tale. I could see he was beginning to smile as I came to the bit about the voice sounding like a chipmunk and then finally he broke and started to howl with laughter at what he took to be a sorry excuse for late-night carousing. That was it! I exploded with wounded rage and gave him a piece of my mind – too much of my mind, I'm afraid! He sent me home and demanded I come in tomorrow with my parents.

When I got home I didn't know what to do. I was a victim of the world and that crazy voice that wouldn't let me have a wink of sleep. I crept upstairs without saying anything to Mam and lay quietly on my bed. Sleep was beginning to descend on me like a warm downy duvet.... And then that bloody little voice started again!



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I looked up but all that was in front of me was my new fish in his tank and he was talking to me! I couldn't believe it – a talking goldfish. I lay in a daze trying to make out what he was saying. It sounded like gibberish but with the odd word that made sense. "Under.... bubble babble bubble... bubble... babble....bed..... bubble babble...watch it!.....bubble babble.."

In absolute frustration and boiling anger I decided to eradicate this intruder from my life and my sleep. I picked up the tank and poured everything down the toilet and flushed the lot. Relief! I'm free! But then I looked at my bed and the fish's words came back ..." Under ...bed...watch it.." Now every time I try getting to sleep I can't for fear of what's under my bed. Heeellllpppp!