

# Massachusetts Letters About Literature Honors, | 2011 Level I

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Dear William Steig,

It is important to use inner strength to deal with hard situations. In your book *Abel's Island*, Abel was separated from his beloved mouse wife, and he felt lost and alone on the island. I have felt lost since my mother died when I was only four years old. She died of brain cancer, and since then my life has never been the same.

It is hard not having a mother to talk to or to love. I talk to my family to remember the way she was. They say that I look just like her. I have her eyes and her smile, I even hold my pencil like she did. My family says I have her personality, too. She was passionate and creative and strong.

To overcome his difficulties, Abel used art. Art sustained Abel and kept him from missing his family. He practiced sculpting, and he enjoyed making art. Abel made sculptures of his family to keep him going. Art is important to me and helps me know myself. I love art like my mother and Abel loved art. I have a painting that I love that belonged to my mother, and this painting connects me to her.

Abel showed me how to find my way through a difficult situation. Abel developed strength and self-reliance as a result of having to survive until he returned home. I found my inner strength, and I have become more self-reliant. My mother would want what is best for me. I have become stronger from the memories of my mother and more self-reliant because I know how to take care of myself.

The tragic loss that I experienced forever changed me, for I will always be heartbroken from the loss of my mother. Reading your book showed me that I have inner strength. My family is very supportive of me, and that makes me feel lucky. Like my mother, I am passionate and creative and strong. My mother is no longer here with me, but she is in my heart.

Sincerely,

Georgia

**Georgia Hannock, Grade 5  
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