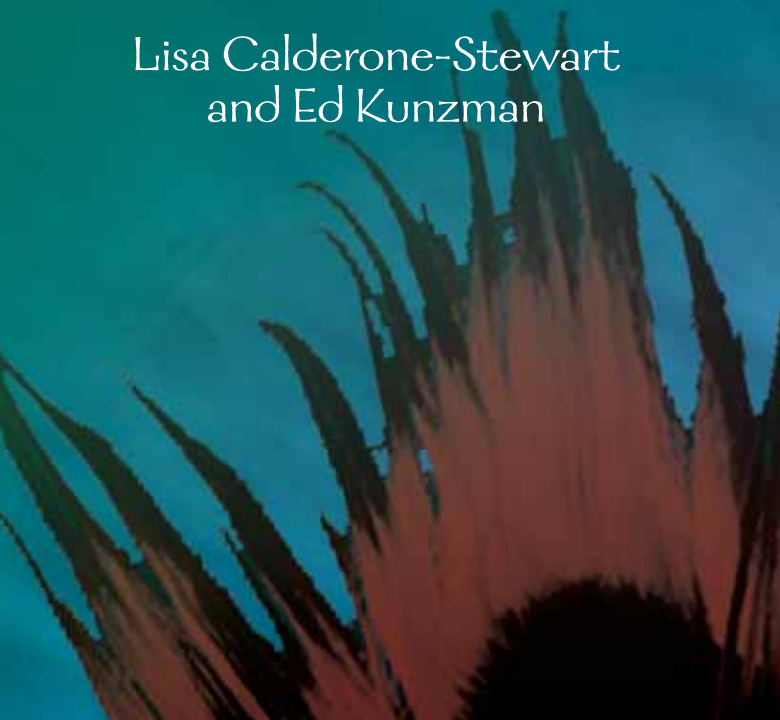


saint mary's press

Meeting Franken- stein

and Other Stories

Lisa Calderone-Stewart
and Ed Kunzman



*Meeting
Frankenstein
and Other Stories*

That First Kiss and Other Stories
My Wish List and Other Stories
Better than Natural and Other Stories
Straight from the Heart and Other Stories
Meeting Frankenstein and Other Stories

*Meeting
Frankenstein
and Other Stories*

**Lisa Calderone-Stewart
Ed Kunzman**



saint mary's press

We dedicate this book to the next generation:

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Rebecca Ann Banset	Rahne Lane Kunzman
Thomas Joseph Banset	Ri Albert Kunzman
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Robert Joseph Hladik	Aaron Thomas Willey
Adam Franklin Jacobs	Gretchen Michelle Willey
Billie Lee Kunzman	Richard Paul Willey

The precious gift of faith that we were given we now happily hand on to you—in fulfillment of Jesus’ desire: “The gift you have received, give as a gift” (Matthew 10:8).

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Preface

Life is filled with opportunities for sharing stories. We share stories with classmates at school, with friends at parties, and with relatives at family gatherings. We read stories in books, watch stories on television and in movies, and write stories for English class. We even read stories in chat rooms on the Internet and swap stories by e-mail.

Whenever we listen to good stories, we find ourselves responding in a variety of ways: we laugh and we cry, we tremble in fear and we sigh in relief, we shake our head in disbelief and we nod in agreement. We respond in these ways because good stories are like mirrors: they give us a reflection of ourselves. The joys and sorrows of the stories' characters reflect our own joys and sorrows: we laugh and we cry from the heart because we recognize ourselves in the tales being told.

Some of the most meaningful stories that people share focus on growing up. These are stories of going to school and playing sports, of losing friends and finding new ones, of falling in love and breaking up. These are also stories that try to deal with the big questions

of life: What kind of person do I want to be? Where is my life going? How do I relate to my family? What kinds of people do I want for friends? How do I make difficult decisions? What do I really believe in? Who is God?

This book is a collection of stories about young people. The characters in these stories experience wonder and struggle, hurt and forgiveness, failure and success, tears and laughter, learning and relearning. In other words, these stories are very much like your own. You are invited to use them as mirrors for looking at your own life.

After every story in this book, you will find a set of questions to help you take a deeper look at yourself. The title of this set of questions is “Seeing Your Own Story.” When you think about the issues and events in your own life that the stories reflect back to you, you can begin to see yourself in a new light and learn more about the unique person you are.

After the reflection questions is a section called “Seeing the Faith Story.” This section is designed to help you make connections between what you are discovering about yourself and what it means to be a believer in God, a Christian, and a Catholic. The questions at the end of this section can help you view your own life through the eyes of faith.

This book is one in a series of five. The other books in the series are entitled *That First Kiss and Other Stories*, *My Wish List and Other Stories*, *Better than Natural and Other*

Stories, and Straight from the Heart and Other Stories. Each book in the series presents several opportunities for you to discover more about your own story, to examine your own issues, and to search for your own answers about life, God, and faith.

It is our hope that once you see your deeper self through the mirrors of these stories, you will continue to reflect on the important matters of life. We believe that life becomes happier and more meaningful when we take the time to be reflective. A word of caution: Looking into the mirror of a story may become an exciting, lifelong habit!

Meeting Frankenstein

From: quentinp@riversidehs.edu
Sent: Monday, 16 March, 1:35 p.m.
To: schwartzkopfj@easternhs.edu
Subject: Driving with the Monster

Dear Jonah,

Last Friday, I went to the courthouse to take my driver's test. I was so nervous that my shirt was dripping with sweat when Mom and I parked out front. It seemed like the middle of August!

Why did I get so worked up over a simple driver's test? Well, there's a history of bad luck in my family, that's why. My brother Michael flunked the written test three times before he finally passed it, and my sister Billie ran into a parked car while driving with the examiner. Even though I'd studied the manual for weeks and driven with my parents countless times, I felt doomed by my family history. Besides, it was Friday the Thirteenth—a bad sign for sure!

When I was walking up the courthouse steps, I found myself uttering a prayer of desperation: "O God, I've done everything I can do to prepare myself for this test.

Please help me. *Please.*” Then I thought about all the really important things that people were praying for, and suddenly, I felt very selfish.

At that very moment, all around the world, people were praying for food and shelter, for loved ones who were dying, for an end to war and suffering. Do you think God really had time to listen to the petty prayer of a nervous teenager? For a few minutes, I forgot about the driver’s test and thought about those really in need. But then, across the hallway, I saw the Monster—the driving examiner everyone calls Frankenstein—and I started praying again!

Well, guess what? I passed everything with flying colors! I even received a half-serious compliment from Frankenstein after taking him for a ride: “You’re the first teenager I’ve ever seen who’s managed to stop for a yellow light! Congratulations, Quentin!” So, despite my fears about bad heredity, bad luck, and bad prayers, I came out a winner. My sister Billie even made a cake to celebrate the reversal of our family fortune!

What do you think, Jonah? I guess the biggest monster I have to face lives inside me, huh?

Later,
Quentin

» » » « « «

From: schwartzkopfj@easternhs.edu
Sent: Monday, 16 March, 2:15 p.m.
To: quentinp@riversidehs.edu
Subject: Congratulations!

Dear Quentin,

Let me join Frankenstein in congratulating you on passing your driver's test. Now you can begin worrying about something else—like getting a date for prom! (Only kidding!) When I read your story, I thought of a story that my grandpapa once told me about self-confidence.

After coming to this country as a boy in 1942, Grandpapa didn't know a word of English and was teased by his new classmates whenever he tried to speak the new language. One day, he complained about his bad luck to his sister Miriam. Instead of earning her sympathy, he earned a good scolding. "Bad luck?" she cried. "You escaped the concentration camp, Ezekiel! I think you're a very lucky boy!" Bad luck is a matter of perspective, Grandpapa learned that day. Soon, he was speaking English without an accent and thanking God every day for his good fortune.

As for bad prayers, Quentin, I don't believe in them. Surely, God's ready to hear whatever we want to talk about—even when we're confused or selfish or angry. Why would God be upset by an honest prayer? When you prayed to pass your dri-