

**7. Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves...”**

IT WAS FINISHED. Neta jammed her thumb into the last glob of blue tack, securing one final ‘NETA’S ROOM’ sign to the outside of the door. There it was, proclaimed in twelve shades of Crayola-majesty... the room was hers. She scrambled back inside, eager to begin her reign.

The girl stretched her hand out to the walls, as she strode around the space in circles to survey her work. She had gathered all of her childish indifferences into this- her inhabitable laser beam of independence and promised glory. Neta held her favourite curly straw aloft, commanding stuffed toys to sit *still* in her presence, and for doonas to lie *flat*.

*Ahah!* Neta threw both arms up into the air, for no reason in particular, only to put them down again. Her eyes darted once more across the room... It was good, and she would shut out anything that was not.

**6. The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”**

Neta wasn’t going to miss Grace at all. No, finally Neta had *defeated* the adults and been given a place of her own. Finally, she was free from that pesky Grace, with her heavy breathing and funny smells, always stealing Neta’s soft pillow...

Neta knew Grace was just down the hall, but Grace probably wouldn’t be invited to see Neta’s new room... Because it was Neta’s room, and Neta was able to make up her mind with things like that.

**5. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.**

Unfortunately night fell, as it does. And sometimes, even in this (her *own* place), Neta took her sleeping slow. First she hurdled across the floor, launching herself onto the mattress to avoid that dark space under the bed. *Who knew what was under there*. She made it safe though, no problem. *So now she would go to sleep.... Just now... right now.*

But now: Cardiac monitors, dialysis tubes, lines, pumps and drains... they stood at attention, watching Neta from the wall. *How dare they*. Unused- but ready, and waiting. This room was hers, but it was still sick.

...Outside, the eucalypts cracked like limbs- hissed and popped. Neta's plastic flowers stood against it- all- in their little vase, so brave. Someone had brought Neta a balloon. The helium was leaving it, and it bobbed hesitantly, dipping in the air, but not quite gone yet.

So, perhaps it was a little different with Grace no longer there. But Neta was still very happy in her new room- *so happy!* Neta reminded herself that every dark corner she now saw, was not truly emptiness, but a *pillar*, celebrating her *sovereignty*... She needed to remember this.

Neta's mind raced trying to capture every *perfect* slice of colourful disorder that was *hers* here- sucking it all up, and describing it to herself as so. If she could just tie it down, cling to it tightly enough... rest, or whatever she wanted, would spring from it. *Soon, surely*. Neta stretched her mind across the room... further still...

And it was all almost successful.

#### **4. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.**

Neta sat up. *You know, Grace would probably really appreciate seeing Neta's new room. Actually, perhaps that would be a very nice thing for Neta to do.*

In one breath Neta launched from the bed, skittered over the tiles, and poked her head from the door. No adults. She pounced down the hall: *301, 303... ahh, 305*. Neta opened the door, ignoring the new girl that now slept in bed number two... *there she was!* Grace and her heavy breathing filled bed number one. Neta crept over, her little eyeballs peering at Grace, hard... It wasn't enough, she'd have to ask.

*"Grace! Wake up! ... Hey Grace I bet you want to see my new room, huh? It's pretty great you know... Well come on then, quick before I change my mind!"*

#### **3. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.**

The two reached 301- *well, 'Neta's room'*. Neta hesitated, turning back to Grace.

*“Now remember, it’s still kind of a big deal that I’m letting you in here. Since I’m doing this you really can’t touch anything, and... you have to do what I say... Actually, Grace you wait here one sec.”*

Neta went through the door first, and then in a muffled yell called, *“Grace, knock three times! ... Okay, now you can come in”*.

Neta opened the door. The two hopped straight up onto the hospital mattress. Neta paused, then pushed the less-scratchy pillow at Grace.

*“Hey, here you go”*.

Neta looked down, they both knew that was the good pillow. Neta watched Grace’s hands fold together neatly as she returned to her sleep. Her fingers were like keys, to a door, or something... The night settled, and in Neta’s room that same, heavy breathing brought sleep.

## ***2. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.***

Sleep saw Neta’s delight in this, her clinical kingdom, fall quiet- but Grace stayed in the room as alms for the delusion. And with this- such good sleep- time was no longer some transcendent savings account diminishing, but time counted up, and the child was born over and over again, and every empty corner in that hospital room was attended to by kneeling musicians who sang such good songs into that land of lost content, that life curled around and stayed.

## ***1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.***