



# Hole in My Life

By Jack Gantos

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## Hole in My Life By Jack Gantos

### Becoming a writer the hard way

In the summer of 1971, Jack Gantos was an aspiring writer looking for adventure, cash for college tuition, and a way out of a dead-end job. For ten thousand dollars, he recklessly agreed to help sail a sixty-foot yacht loaded with a ton of hashish from the Virgin Islands to New York City, where he and his partners sold the drug until federal agents caught up with them. For his part in the conspiracy, Gantos was sentenced to serve up to six years in prison.

In *Hole in My Life*, this prizewinning author of over thirty books for young people confronts the period of struggle and confinement that marked the end of his own youth. On the surface, the narrative tumbles from one crazed moment to the next as Gantos pieces together the story of his restless final year of high school, his short-lived career as a criminal, and his time in prison. But running just beneath the action is the story of how Gantos – once he was locked up in a small, yellow-walled cell – moved from wanting to be a writer to writing, and how dedicating himself more fully to the thing he most wanted to do helped him endure and ultimately overcome the worst experience of his life. This title has Common Core connections.

*Hole in My Life* is a 2003 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

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## Hole in My Life By Jack Gantos Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

"I find myself moving like a knife, carving my way around people, cutting myself out of their picture and leaving nothing of myself behind but a hole." A gaping hole of misery is what popular young adult author Jack Gantos remembers when he thinks back to 1972, "the bleakest year of my life." Just 20 years old, Gantos was in a medium security prison for his participation in a get-rich-quick drug scam. Scared silly by the violence he saw around him daily, Gantos's only lifeline was a battered copy of *The Brothers Karamazov*, which he painstakingly turned into an impromptu journal by scratching his own thoughts into the tiny spaces between the lines. There, he recorded both his fears and his dream of someday writing a book of his own. Before prison, Gantos had penned a scattered myriad of journals, but had never been able to pull them together into a cohesive narrative. It was during his time behind bars that he found himself growing into a focused, diligent writer who eschewed drugs for the bigger high of watching his words fill the hole once and for all.

Gantos, best known for his award-winning Joey Pigza titles, mines darker material here that is as deeply compelling as his lighter fare. Using short, meaty sentences, Gantos manages to write in a way that dismisses the dubious "romance" of prison, drugs, and "life on the edge" without ever sounding didactic or heavy-handed. Older teens will appreciate his candor and sheer willingness to give them the straight story. Vigorously recommended. (Ages 13 and older) --*Jennifer Hubert*

### From Publishers Weekly

After penning a number of novels for preteens, including the Joey Pigza books and the Jack series, Gantos makes a smooth transition as he addresses an older audience. He uses the same bold honesty found in his fiction to offer a riveting autobiographical account of his teen years and the events may well penetrate the comfort zone of even the most complacent young adults. The memoir begins with the dramatic image of the author as a young convict ("When I look at my face in the photo I see nothing but the pocked mask I was hiding behind"). The book then goes on to provide an in-depth examination of the sensitive and intelligent boy residing behind a tough facade. Inspired by the words and lives of some of his favorite American authors, Gantos sought adventure after leaving high school. He eagerly agreed to help smuggle a shipment of hashish from Florida to New York without giving thought of the possible consequences. Knowing that the narrator is destined to land in jail keeps suspense at a high pitch, but this book's remarkable achievement is the multiple points of view that emerge, as experiences force a fledgling writer to continually revise his perspective of himself and the world around him. The book requires a commitment, as it rambles a bit at times, but it provides much food for thought and fuel for debate. It will leave readers emotionally exhausted and a little wiser. Ages 12-up.

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### From School Library Journal

Gr 8 Up-Gantos centers this memoir on his time as a drug smuggler, focusing on his arrest, conviction, and subsequent incarceration for 15 months in a federal prison. His straightforward account and honest reflection on his journey to become a writer makes for compelling reading. Audio version available from Listening Library. (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Staci Eager:**

Information is provisions for people to get better life, information these days can get by anyone in everywhere. The information can be a expertise or any news even restricted. What people must be consider whenever those information which is in the former life are challenging be find than now's taking seriously which one works to believe or which one often the resource are convinced. If you receive the unstable resource then you buy it as your main information we will see huge disadvantage for you. All those possibilities will not happen in you if you take Hole in My Life as your daily resource information.

#### **Phyllis Greenfield:**

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#### **Robert Carroll:**

Reading a guide tends to be new life style on this era globalization. With studying you can get a lot of information that may give you benefit in your life. With book everyone in this world may share their idea. Ebooks can also inspire a lot of people. A lot of author can inspire their very own reader with their story or even their experience. Not only the storyline that share in the guides. But also they write about the knowledge about something that you need case in point. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach children, there are many kinds of book which exist now. The authors these days always try to improve their ability in writing, they also doing some exploration before they write with their book. One of them is this Hole in My Life.

#### **Dorothy Cropper:**

As a university student exactly feel bored to help reading. If their teacher questioned them to go to the library or even make summary for some reserve, they are complained. Just small students that has reading's heart and soul or real their passion. They just do what the teacher want, like asked to the library. They go to right now there but nothing reading very seriously. Any students feel that reading through is not important, boring in addition to can't see colorful photos on there. Yeah, it is to become complicated. Book is very important for you personally. As we know that on this age, many ways to get whatever you want. Likewise word says, many ways to reach Chinese's country. Therefore , this Hole in My Life can make you feel more interested to read.

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