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Now, Bix Rivers has disappeared, and who do you think is going to tell his story but me? Maybe his stepfather? Man, that dude does not know Bix deep and now he never will, will he? Only thing he could say is he's probably secretly happy Bix ran away and got out of his life, but he won't tell you even that on account of he's busy getting sympathy dumped on him all over town as the poor deserted guardian.

How about Bix's momma? Can she tell you? I reckon not—she is crazy in the hospital. And you can believe, they don't let crazies have anything sharp like a pencil, else she poke out her eye or worse. So she won't be writing any stories for a long time. But me—I have plenty of pencils, number threes all sharp and dark green enamel on the outside, and I have four black and white marble composition books. Plus I can tell you some things, like Bix was thirteen last birthday (same as me), Bix was a shortstop (supreme), Bix gets red spots the size of a quarter on his cheekbones when angry and a splotch looks like a cardinal smack in the middle of his forehead when he is ashamed. I can tell a lot more besides, including why Bix ran away. You just listen