

Massachusetts Letters About Literature 2016
Massachusetts Center for the Book
www.massbook.org

Level I Honors Award

Dear Hergé,

Before I read *The Hunger Games*, before Percy Jackson, even before Harry Potter, your books were sitting in my bookshelf. My dad would come to my room, take the latest one from the shelf and start to read to me. I would laugh at the jokes, and my dad would pinch my nose whenever someone saw stars. Before anything else, your books came first. They will always be with me, no matter how buried deep beneath the pile of young adult novels. They were here first.

At first, *Tintin in the Land of the Soviets* was just another book on my shelf. I hadn't read it. I had thought nothing of it. Then one day, my dad started reading it to me. This changed everything. I was only five or six years old, but I absolutely fell in love with reading. Your books taught me that everyone can be a hero like Tintin. They taught me it's okay to be a little weird like Professor Calculus. They taught me it's okay to be your own person.

If somebody asks if I've been out of the country, I would probably say just to Canada. But that's a lie. I've been to Egypt to investigate strange cigars and learned to speak elephant. I've been to China to meet an important businessman and someone tried to cut my head off to "show me the way". I've been to the moon! The moon I tell you! And I almost died from lack of oxygen.

You are the reason I devour books. You are the reason I dance in the hallways. You are the reason I can be strange and different. So thank you, for allowing me to be me. I will always be me. I cannot be controlled. I will not be a stereotype. I am me. That is the best I can do.

Sincerely,

Anna

Anna
Arlington
Grade 6