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Dangerous Facts

When I try to explain to you exactly what I feel I remember the time I ran home from school crying because I thought everyone there could read minds. I'd been trying to show them the difference between the sailbacked reptile edaphosaurus and the similar, but fiercer dimetredon, when I realized something was wrong. They were listening, not to me, but to a part of my voice that I couldn't hear. I tried to distract them with dangerous facts: how many apple seeds it takes to kill a man and how to make a sleeping potion from urine. Imagine yourself, I said, lying in bed on the surface of a white dwarf star. Try lifting your finger. It weighs one thousand two hundred pounds. Now open your eyelids—if you can find them. Your brain, I said, is nothing but soup with chunks of bone in it. That's when the teacher sent me home with a note saying "Jay has a problem with peer interaction." I wanted to ask my mother what kind of interaction this was, but I was afraid of making her lie. That night I couldn't get to sleep. I had to know the truth about everything.

—Jay Klokker