

*Two green soda bottles
tape 'em at the mouths
one with liquid, one without
flipped over, shaken like soup
form a tornado in your sticky
preschool hands
and never be the same again.*

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Home one day, restless and eager to make something, I grabbed a stack of multicolor construction paper and a pair of scissors. I do not remember where exactly I seized these objects from - maybe a cabinet, a drawer, a corner of the living room. I do remember the colors to be the same scheme as the crocheted blanket someone made for the family, often found thrown over the rust colored armchair. It was made of yarn in lime greens, baby pinks, soft yellows, something else too - scratchy, yet comforting. Sitting on hands and knees, I sliced the paper into strips, keeping the length that of the paper itself and roughly one inch in width. I was going to make a paper chain - all I needed was a way to put the parts together.

I went into my dad's office and grabbed a black stapler off of his desk, shiny and heavy in my hand. I proceeded to make a paper chain that crawled across the matching rust red carpet, nearly spilling over onto the hardwood floor of the kitchen. It reached roughly fifteen feet before my dad came in from the garage. Even though I was very little, I remember keenly sensing both admiration and exasperation. There was no yelling or time out, just a simple request next time to try and construct it like you do a gum wrapper chain - use the paper itself.

Staples puncturing paper would eventually puncture into flesh, as my dad began a battle with metastatic brain cancer in late 1995. I do not remember if this was before or after I made the paper chain that one random afternoon in our living room. I do remember the deep greens, bright reds, and twinkling blues of the Christmas tree lights to the left of us as I laid down with him in that same rust colored armchair; a scan scheduled for the next morning. Later, he would explain to me that the surgery he needed would require a steady, precise incision that would then crack his skull forward and wide open. He drew it out for me one day at the kitchen table, alluding to the character Rocko from the cartoon "Rocko's Modern Life" to illustrate. I remember the drawings in fragments - cheap, No. 2 pencil (*or was it ink, Bic blue?*) on both sides of copier paper. I do not remember if I still possess these drawings, but I think I have been trying to figure out how to put the parts together since.