

## **Robot Max**

In English class we read a story about a robot so lifelike he felt hope and grew sad. I asked my students if they thought this technology might ever be possible, pointing at Max and saying, "Take Max, for instance, what if Max was a robot but we couldn't tell. Do you think a time will

come when a boy could be a robot and you couldn't tell?" From that day forward, Max, not the most popular kid, but no outcast, was known as Robot Max; whenever he gave an answer, fixed a computer, opened his lunchbox, jokes about his mechanical innards flew across the room: "Ask

the robot!" "Of course Max knows, he's a robot." "Is that what robots eat?" He took it well, but I cursed myself for singling him out. As for Max, he'd learned a lesson, too, if not the one I'd wanted to impart, that not being a robot and being called one was worse than being one and not.