

# **Student Essay on "The Story of Nil"**

## **"The Story of Nil"**

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## Essay

"The story of Nil" by Gabrielle Roy is about the way that smallest things can in some ways help to inspire a person. Nil, the main character, did not transform the people themselves instead he changed their outlook on life. Using his incredible singing voice he managed to get people to forget all the suffering in their lives, to find hope in life. I believe that choosing the name 'Nil', known for meaning nothing, for the main character was done on purpose. In some ways it refers to his age, him being about six or seven, and the epitome of innocence, but it shows the way that "small things can make a big difference" and that "big things come in small packages." He brought so much inspiration and hope to people in distress. Flickers of hope characterized by gestures and facial expressions, were all reactions to his singing. The teacher's mother even got up the courage and determination to get up and start walking, when she had seemed to have given up after weeks of no change. The individuals in the mental hospital "wanted to take possession of the wonder child" because they had finally got hope from Nil, and they didn't want to go back to life without leaving it. They knew that they couldn't keep a hold of the hope, and the only way they could was by "keeping" Nil, or else they would go back to their previous suffering. Nil himself was also experiencing suffering in his own home as he was in the midst of poverty. His mother knew that she couldn't get out of this lifestyle and the teacher was in some ways an outlet for her to let Nil experience things she couldn't herself give him. Growing up beside a slaughterhouse he was always present in the midst of death and a sickening odour, but his mother tried to cover up with a powerful smell of hyacinth. In a way Nil is like the flower, ever present in unflattering conditions, but blooming and developing despite the surroundings. In life during times of despair and anguish we need that glimmer of hope to somehow inspire us to get through our days because otherwise we will stay in a rut and keep on being on miserable.