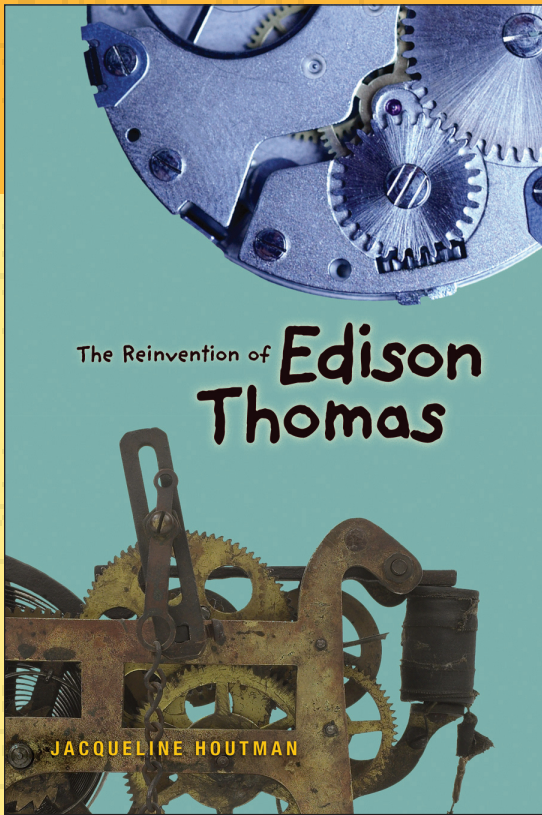


# For Eddy Thomas, science is easy. Figuring out friendship is much harder.



**The Reinvention of Edison Thomas**  
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*"Maybe his invention would even make him popular, like Mitch. Eddy hoped not, because he wouldn't like to have so many people around him all the time. He preferred to be by himself, or maybe with one or two other people, like Justin and Kip, or Terry. Otherwise, with too many people talking, Eddy had too many of those stupid, unwritten social rules to decipher at the same time."*

## MEET EDDY

Eddy Thomas copes with the noise and crowds of Drayton Middle School by reciting the periodic table of elements, memorizing Morse code, and jumping on the trampoline in the gym teacher's office. His mind stores thousands of facts and the scientific names of animals and plants, but cannot decode the meaning of the expressions on faces or the definition of a friend. When the local school crossing guard is laid off, Eddy can't stop thinking about the dangerous intersection and the possibility that someone could get hurt there. Marshalling his talents as a scientist and inventor, he builds a traffic-calming device out of his collection of old machines. Could Eddy's invention help with more than just the safety situation?

## Eddy's favorite band

Eddy listens to music by **They Might Be Giants** because a lot of their songs are full of science. These are a few of his favorites:

**Meet the Elements**

**Mammal**

**Why Does the Sun Really Shine?**

**Fact Number 299,792,458**  
from the **Random Access**  
**Memory of Edison Thomas:**

Reflective signs and paint contain tiny glass beads. Light that hits the surface is reflected directly back where it came from, a process called **retroreflection**.

## MEET EDDY'S FRIENDS

Eddy has known Mitch since preschool and Mitch talks to Eddy more than anyone else at school. That makes them friends, doesn't it? Then a new kid invites Eddy to sit with him at lunch, and Eddy begins to take a closer look at how friendship really works. Eddy discovers that even the mechanics of friendship — trust, humor, and a willingness to help — can be learned.

## THE WORLD THROUGH EDDY'S EYES

**JACQUELINE HOUTMAN** is uniquely positioned to create Eddy's voice and share his perspective with young readers in her first novel. A science writer, she covers biomedical topics including asthma, cancer, multiple sclerosis and AIDS for a wide range of publications, and holds a Ph.D. in Medical Microbiology and Immunology. Dr. Houtman says she is "equally comfortable writing for students in Medical School and Middle School, because the writing isn't really that different. Med students just use bigger words." The writing she enjoys most is "sciency fiction for kids, where science is integral to the theme and plot but, unlike science fiction, it's all real."

One in 91 children, and 1 in 58 boys, are affected by autism spectrum disorders. **In telling Eddy's story through his eyes and ears, without ever speaking of autism, Jacqueline Houtman powerfully reveals that Eddy's view is just another way of seeing the world, as unique and reasonable as anyone else's — and extraordinarily common.**

Jacqueline Houtman lives in Madison, Wisconsin with her engineer husband and two sciency kids.



**ONLINE RESOURCES FOR READERS AND TEACHERS:** [www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org) • [www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger](http://www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger)

[www.jhoutman.com](http://www.jhoutman.com)