

# StoneSoup



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# StoneSoup

*The magazine supporting  
creative kids around the world*

Editor  
Emma Wood

Director  
William Rubel

Operations  
Jane Levi

Education & Production  
Sarah Ainsworth

Design  
Joe Ewart, Society

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## Editor's Note

I remember the first time I sat down in a room different from the room where I'd grown up, in my parents' house, and said, "This is home." I was in college, and it was a strange feeling—to feel at home away from home. What is home anyway? Is it a planet, a city, a feeling, a person, a piece of furniture? Each of the pieces in this issue wrangles with the idea of "home" in an interesting, exciting way. I hope they will inspire you to write about your own home as well!

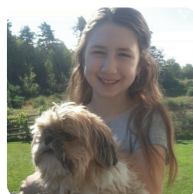
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emma Wood'.

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On the cover:  
'Window to Another  
World',  
**Nikon Coolpix L830**

by Hannah Parker, 13  
Burlington, VT

# Stone Soup

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# A Great Community

*Zach's family is immigrating from Poland to the U.S.— and he's scared: what if America smells bad or is too hot or too expensive?*

We were at the airport. We were there for a good reason. To go to America.

My dad had stayed in America for two years. The reason for this was to get a job and be able to take me and Grandma Nicole there to live. But while he was there, the stock markets crashed and Dad lost a lot of money. But he did find a job eventually, so we are moving there now.

The reason we were moving is because my dad had little money, and, before staying in America for two years, he got fired from his job. Grandma, Grandpa, and I had to work at great-uncle Bill's sausage factory to get the money for our family while Dad was away. In the sausage factory, it was hot and the pay was not quite enough to sustain four people. While I worked there, I always felt the sweat cling to my face after only one hour of work. We had to carefully place the sausages into the boxes, then tape the boxes shut. It doesn't sound like much work, but doing it nonstop for long amounts of time is tiring. We were so grateful when Dad returned from America! But, as soon as he got home, we had to get ready for our trip.

We were at the airport security desk, getting our passports checked.

"Hello!" my dad said in Polish.

"This is the Berkes family. I'm Jim, and this is Nicole and Zach. We are here for

our flight to America."

My legs were bouncy, and I was biting at the sides of my fingernails, which I do when I'm nervous. And I was. I didn't know if America would be a good place to live or not. And even if it was, there might be other dangers waiting. Actually, I was probably getting too nervous.

We were apparently moving to a place called Miami. The temperature there is always hot or hotter. Here in Poland, it's usually cold, so I wasn't sure if we were going to be able to stand the heat—especially because we were moving in spring, the second hottest season.

We were taking clothes, money, and a plastic sword I got when my dad started his two-year staying period in America. When Dad went to America for his job finding period, I was worried that he would stay forever, not get a job, and not be able to come back. My friend Tim got the plastic sword for me to keep me from thinking about Dad. I have always admired the sword from then on. I wished Tim could go to America with me. I wished everyone could come.

The security person checked our passports, wished us good luck in America, and we were on our way to the other security, like the scanners and the bag checks. At the bag checks,



by Charlie Kubica, 11  
Chapel Hill, NC

the worker reluctantly informed us that we would have to wait so that they could make sure the plastic sword was safe. It took half an hour, and we almost missed our plane, but we made it. I hoped everything won't be that challenging in America.

We had never been on a plane before. We had to look around and figure out where the bathroom was. Another downside of this plane was the disgusting smell of rotten peanuts. I found a pretzel wedged into the crack of the seat that looked like it was two-years-old. These things would have made me gag, but working in a sausage factory that can't afford fresh meat most of the time drastically raises the strength of your gag reflex.

After a little while, the plane started moving. The unsettling sound of the wheels on the runway tortured me. Luckily, a safety video started playing, so I could listen to that instead. The video talked about what would happen if a plane crashed in the water. The video ended when we were in the air. I was afraid that the plane would fall out of the sky. How does a giant metal tube support itself in the air and not fall?

When the plane was flying straight forward, the flight attendant came down the aisle and handed out peanuts. I heard him mumbling about

how he hates his job.

"Do you even want peanuts?" asked the attendant very rudely.

"Yes please," I responded. "Do you have them salted?"

"If you want them salted, put salt on them."

"I've heard that planes offer a choice between salted and unsalted peanuts."

"Uuugh. *Fine*. We have them in the back," he finally admitted.

He was *extremely* rude. I felt my fists clenching, and I even bared my teeth a little bit. I hoped people wouldn't be this rude in America.

It had been two hours on the plane. I really needed to use the bathroom. I tried to walk over to it, but I couldn't remember where it was. I eventually found it, but somebody was in it. My legs were crossed, and there was sweat beneath my eyes. But it finally opened! Huzzah! I walked in and...

All my senses except for my sense of smell momentarily stopped working. I can't describe the stench that invaded my nose. It was foul. What I smelled was a mix of basically everything that smells disgusting in the entirety of Poland. I gagged, and I kneeled to the ground. I also almost threw up directly onto the floor, which would have made the stench even worse. Yes, even with my enhanced

gag reflex. I hoped it wouldn't smell that bad in all of America.

After I was done, I went back to my seat and ate more of my peanuts. The bag said the peanuts were "salted to the finest degree," but what it actually tasted like was a bag of salt with peanuts dropped into it. If all food in America was like this, I wouldn't be able to survive.

Sometime in the middle of the ride, Grandpa Skyped us on Dad's phone.

"Hello, Jim!" Grandpa exclaimed excitedly. "How's the ride on the flying tube of death?"

Out of all my family members, Grandpa was, no doubt, my favorite. He's funny and always kind. I wished he could come, but he wasn't allowed to because he had head lice.

"It's going alright," Dad replied, obviously lying.

Grandpa gave us a face like he does when he knows we're not being truthful.

"Hey, Zach, how's that sword of yours?" asked Grandpa.

I was glad somebody finally asked about the sword. It showed how much Grandpa cared about me.

"Good," I replied. We talked a little more, and then he hung up. I was feeling more positive about America now.

The ride had gone overnight, but it was finally finished! We landed at a very well-air-conditioned airport in Miami. I say it's well air conditioned because it had to work very hard to battle against the Miami heat. I was not looking forward to checking the weather. It might be too hot outside for me to stand. Well, now was the time to test.

But first we had to go through tons

of airport immigration security. We waited in line for 90 minutes. My feet were aching, and my mind was racing with bad possibilities for what things could happen in America. When the security was at last done, we ventured outside.

I almost fell where I stood. It felt like it was a thousand degrees outside! I was dizzy, and I was sweating like a person from Antarctica wearing a fur coat in a garment factory in summer with no air-conditioning. I was definitely right to be worried about the weather.

"Oh my goodness!" Grandma Nicole exclaimed weakly. "It's hotter out here than it was in the sausage factory when the machine broke the third time!"

But weather was only one of our problems. We were low on money after the plane ride here. I wondered how small our house would be.

We carried our bags to the place where our house apparently was. I saw a huge building with tons of windows and doors. "Is that our house?" I asked happily, my confidence starting to rise a little bit.

"No, Zach. Well, some of it is," Dad replied.

I was confused. I had no idea what he meant. We started walking up the stairs of the giant building. Part of the building? That did not clear anything up for me. Dad revealed a key that was in his work bag and put it into the keyhole in one of the doors. When we opened the door, it was a tiny room with two beds, a nightstand, a bathroom, and a little closet.

"This is our new house! What do you think of it?" asked Dad.



*But weather was only one of our problems. We were low on money after the plane ride here.*

"It's good," I replied. But what I was really thinking was: *What!?! How is this even considered a house!?! We're all going to live in this thing!?!*

"Thank you for being optimistic, Zach," said Grandma Nicole. "It's the best we could do with how little money we have."

Well, I guess it was time to put on my brave face and get some rest, because the next day I was going to school.

On the walk to school, I took in the scenery around me. The trees were beautiful, and the ocean glimmered like freshly-cut diamonds. This was one thing about Miami that I didn't hate. What I do hate is:

The weather

The apartments

Wait. What am I doing? I'll hate Miami more if I think about the things I do hate. The things I like are:

The scenery

And I haven't come up with anything else. But at least I'm staying positive.

When I finally reached the school, I appreciated basically all the scenery in Miami. Even the school itself. The large bell tower in the middle made the whole rest of the school look good as well. But I had no idea what was coming my way.

I made my way to the classroom I was apparently assigned to. Room 344. I found a desk in the back of

the room because I didn't want to get called on in class too much. Then class started.

"Hello, class!" exclaimed the teacher excitedly. "We have a new student with us today! Please welcome Zach Berkes!"

I didn't want anyone to welcome me. I just wanted to stay as quiet as possible. I couldn't say anything. I didn't know the words to. I couldn't speak their language. After a long wait, my teacher finally saved me from having to speak in Polish.

"Maybe he's too nervous right now. Let's try again later," the teacher replied to her own comment.

After awhile, we had a break. In America, they call it "recess," which is probably an English word for "przerwa." I went outside and saw all the swings, slides, and jungle gyms we had in our old school. It was the first thing at the school that made me feel at home. But, just then, some kid who looked like he was very overweight walked up to me. I started biting at the sides of my nails, and I felt my sweat start to stick my clothes onto me. He was also saying a bunch of English words I didn't understand. The kids around me let out gasps and "ooooOOOohs," so I'm assuming they weren't good words.

"Nie lubimy imigrantów," said the kid, his posse surrounding him.

That meant "we don't like im-

migrants” in Polish. I’m guessing he learned to say that in almost every language.

“We don’t want you here,” added the kid, in English.

Then he pushed me. My eyes were wide, and I was sweating basically everywhere. This kid was not nice. I landed on the concrete and one of my baby teeth broke out. The sting felt like three bees had just stabbed the bottom of my gums at once. The hole was bleeding. Badly. No adult saw me. And that’s the last thing I remember before I blacked out.

I woke on a very uncomfortable cot in the nurse’s office.

“Don’t worry,” said a lady I thought was the nurse. “He won’t hurt you again. We suspended him.”

I wanted to ask how she knew who hurt me, but I didn’t know the words.

When I got back outside, the kid was gone. But, just then, I heard a “Witaj! Czy wszystko w porządku?” That means “Hello! Are you alright?” in Polish.

Then I turned, and a boy was standing right behind me.

“Słyszałem, że Joshua cię popycha,” he said, which means “I heard about Joshua pushing you.”

**THIS KID SPEAKS POLISH!** I thought excitedly to myself. Maybe there are other immigrants in the school, immigrants that speak all dif-

ferent languages.

“Tak, wszystko w porządku,” I replied, or “Yeah, I’m okay.”

“Hey. My name’s Greg. Greg McAlister,” he told me, as we spoke Polish.

“Nice to meet you! I’m Zach. Zach Berkes,” I informed him back. “Do you know a place where I could learn English?”

“If you want to learn English, there’s a class called ESL that you can take, where a bunch of immigrants learn English,” Greg replied.

My mind was made up. I was going to take that class.

The next day, I went through a bunch of classes in English like math and reading. But, close to the end of the day, I walked into a room that had a big sign on the door that read “ESL.” Of course, Greg was there, but there were so many other people that spoke so many different languages, too! A boy named Jav spoke Spanish, someone named Brenda spoke French, and a girl named Yutong spoke Chinese! Those are just a few examples. There were so many of them!

At the end of the class, I went out into the hall and bumped into Jav by the lockers.

“Hey, Zach,” Jav greeted me, in English.

“Hello,” I replied, saying my first ever out-of-ESL English word.

I was actually very calm for the first time in a while.

*Maybe there are other immigrants in the school, immigrants that speak all different languages.*

Maybe all my worry was for nothing. What was I thinking? America is pretty cool. I would give a lot of things to not go back to Poland. The jobs there were horrible, and our family probably wouldn't do so well. It's hard to enjoy a place like that. Eventually, I thought, my worry would most likely die down a little, and I would have a great time. I can definitely settle in a place that has all these immigrants. If Greg can do it, I can do, too!



A Field at Sunset, *Nikon Coolpix L830*



by Hannah Parker, 13  
Burlington, VT

# Home

by Pauline McAndrew, 9  
Larchmont, NY



"Cousins!" I hear a little voice call. Two small, sticky hands wrap themselves around my legs. I see two shining blue eyes beaming up at me.

"Pauline!" I turn around to see Uncle Brendan and Aunt Kathy striding toward me, warm smiles spread across their faces. I hug my uncle, and immediately I inhale the sweet, piercing fragrance of pine trees, a whole forest of them. He makes me want to go deep into the forest brush and take a sip from a cool, fresh stream. I bury my face into Aunt Kathy, and the warm, homey aroma of fresh hot cookies draws me in. But I am pulled away from them all too soon and led out by another pair of sticky hands to where the grass is up to my thigh. I then see the old, ragged tire swing I've known for more than half of my life. I run toward it and slide on, for even though it appears as if the slightest tap will cause it to collapse to the ground, it can be trusted.

The tree begins to sway and creak slightly as I glide serenely from side to side. I slip off, and jog over to the wooden fence out where the cows graze. I lean over to stroke their bristly coat and fish around in my pocket for my leftover apple slices to feed them.

"Come on, Pauline!" more laughing cousins shout. "We're collecting wood for the fire!"

My cousins are all sorts of ages, sizes, shapes, and hues, but to us that matters no more than the types of clothes we wear. The soles of our

shoes have walked the same ground, so we always play together as one.

I hurry to catch up with my cousins and we set off, a little wagon rumbling behind us. We find all sorts of wood around old barns so frail no one had the heart to knock them down. Driftwood, bark, pine cones, wood chips, even a long, slender black leg from a piano with missing keys. We bring it all back to Uncle Brendan, and we watch him whittle away on the sticks as we savor the captivating sunset. Any northern sunset can be beautiful, but a North Carolina sunset is really something special. The fading sunlight leaks through the trees like water through a strainer.

Uncle Brendan adds the shavings to the mountain of wood, which erupts into flames. We gather in a circle around the fire, shoulder to shoulder, sitting on logs, chuckling with each other in the firelight. There are grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters, cousins and more cousins. Everybody. Sparks dance in the air, like little lanterns held by invisible hands as we begin toasting the marshmallows and popcorn. The smoke rising up through the curls of flame gives off a wondrous scent. It smells of Uncle Brendan's pine trees and Aunt Kathy's cookies. It smells of sticky hands and old rundown barns. It smells of almost-burnt marshmallows and popcorn. It smells of home. Home sweet home.

# A Child's Memoir

by Alejandro Lugo Saavedra, 13  
Lithia, FL



The sky's vibrant gray was an embodiment of metallic hues colliding. Smothering the arid landscape like a hazy hand. The shrill, choppy thrilling of the desert songbirds forewarned of night's arrival. It would soon engulf the soothing ash-stricken contour in its obsidian abyss. A boy treaded through the sandy asphalt of the neighborhood, shoes clomping steadily in a monotonous rhythm. He wore an apparent trait, weariness. His cheeks were pinched in a nostalgist manner. His wiry silhouette was accompanied by a downcast shadow. Willow-worn and sallow, his facial complexion was pleasant and provided an atmosphere of easy-goingness not displayed in his current state. Even his rounded, melodious, Tuscan-brown eyes, were glassy and non-talkative. Taut palo verde trees shimmied their decumbent leaves in the brisk breeze, waving at the youth, clearly unaware of the flora. The boy's fervent forehead glistened with beads of sweat, which threatened to cascade in a trickle of perspiration. The malicious heat was exhausting him. He trembled back home; the impulse of a phantom burden suddenly seized him.

"Gabriel!"

A gasp of distress from afar jarred him. His puffy, crusty eyes unfurled a minuscule sliver. The comfort that pulsed from his body relieved him like a tight fist blooming into a hand.

He sighed.

"Yes Mom?" Gabriel skimmed his bronze-skin hands across bedhead eyes. Wiping the discomfort away.

"It's time to go to school, son."

Gabriel groaned in displeasure. In a relieved-but-sleepy-and-grumpy manner. He was a forthwith Pennsylvania native, after living six years in a cramped, but comfortable apartment. He hailed from Phoenix, Arizona however, and his childhood was a bustle. He had lived in Caborca and Chiapas, Mexico. His lucid flashback as a flourishing five-year-old living in the Sonoran Desert seemed all too genuine. *Real? Not real? Somewhere in between?* Answers to questions lost in the dusty catacombs of time.

---

Hawkins Middle School of Lebanon, Pennsylvania. Gustly, frost-heaved riptides of a draft wavered across strikingly lofty oak trees. Crisp, autumn leaves crunched into multicolored ash under Gabriel's feet. Steam-like figurines spatially billowed from his mouth. The suggestively glacial weather exposed the middle schoolers to a seductive quantity of indoor time. No recess. Gabriel felt enclosed and captive; his school's vicinity was restricting to him. He was accustomed to swaying freely with the frisky under-

growth caressing his liberated feet in a tender embrace.

Gabriel was heartfelt about nature and its conundrum. He was captivated preeminently by insects and akin. Abounding ubiquitously, he was obsessed with every nook and cranny of their existence and strived to unearth their every secluded perplexity. Winter was agonizing to him. A full six-month period without a trace of an insect. Eradicated. Vanished. Like a potent existence switch, winter blanked them. Mrs. Roseté, his superb science teacher, comprehended. She was a captivating reliance to him. Their prominent similarities encompassed them. His vision faded and sputtered. Daydream. Gabriel gasped: A hollow sound that momentarily resonated against the dingy cut-rate aluminum lockers. He remarked grainy rubber gaits on the azure and cyan filamented tiles of hallway 300. He bolted to homeroom. He roughly gripped the doorknob in his right hand, gingerly turned, and winced as the bulky, birch-wood door chirred.

"Take a seat, Gabriel. Glad you're on time."

Gabriel's mind churned as Mrs. Young, the mathematics teacher, coursed through algebra "...And so, the domain of a parabola..." Boredom beckoned with succulence. Its enticement held affiance. Gabriel endured, aggravation vexing to reign. Despite struggling to stay on task, he felt satisfied in school for the most part. But all this would corrode to an abrupt halt.

---

A pace from bus 40's stationing was their corrivated home. A rusky apartment with crude clay-mound bricks as the structure. He clutched the hand-polished bronze handle on their door and jerked. His dad's concern radiated as he talked to his mom from the meager living room, a formal silence of speech that barricaded any suggestive normality element. This altered him, although he blundered mentally to comprehend. He noisily trampled inside, hoping for his parents to perceive him. To no avail.

"Hello Mom!"

He was answered with a concerned smile. A phony, concealed grin. Dinner was eaten in the quietness of secludedness. Gabriel merely an eyewitness account of an unprovoked speech. He felt his parents' selectivity of words. As though they strained their words. The exchange of words, or the lack of it, left him on edge. Stress overwhelmed him in a void of isolation.

---

A discussion took place that night. A finalizing, executive meet. They took in consideration their social position, their experiences, and especially Hawkins Middle. The stale bitterness of Lebanon's wind rimmed the fleur-white stalks of their windows with coincidental gloominess. A crest-fallen Gabriel contemplated the memories he constructed. Snow, friends, school. Fuzzy brightness flooded him. Ghosts, reaching their tinge of liveliness in limbs of animation. Things. Gained, earned, made. Fairytales of whimsical

aspects. Summarized as his memories.

---

“Son, it’s final. We’re moving to Florida.”

Gabriel managed a faint nod. In time, the rhythm of tempo paved weeks beyond seeming. May brought a floral boutique of daisies, cherry blossoms, and cul-de-sac poppies. Gabriel felt equilibrated and integrated with the time he had left. He chased and tumbled around the foliated hills he had come to know. The earthy soil a hearty perfume. Walnut trees loomed atop. Their ridged trunks a nutty brown. June fletched into view, the vastness of May dominated by its upheld viewpoint of expectations.

An act of kindness was shared by Mrs. Roseté and her alumnus. A beautiful necklace of enlaced golden hoops and a hug were exchanged between the two. The last day of school curtailed. Gabriel and his parents snugly lodged their possessions into the truck and drove into the amber dusk.

Farewell Lebanon.





Wheat in Heaven, *Nikon D3400*



by Delaney Slote, 12  
Missoula, MT

# Raking the River

by Charlotte Tigchelaar, 11  
Huntington, WV



*Jeff Kovatch Memorial Ohio River Cleanup,  
Harris Riverside Park, Huntington, WV*

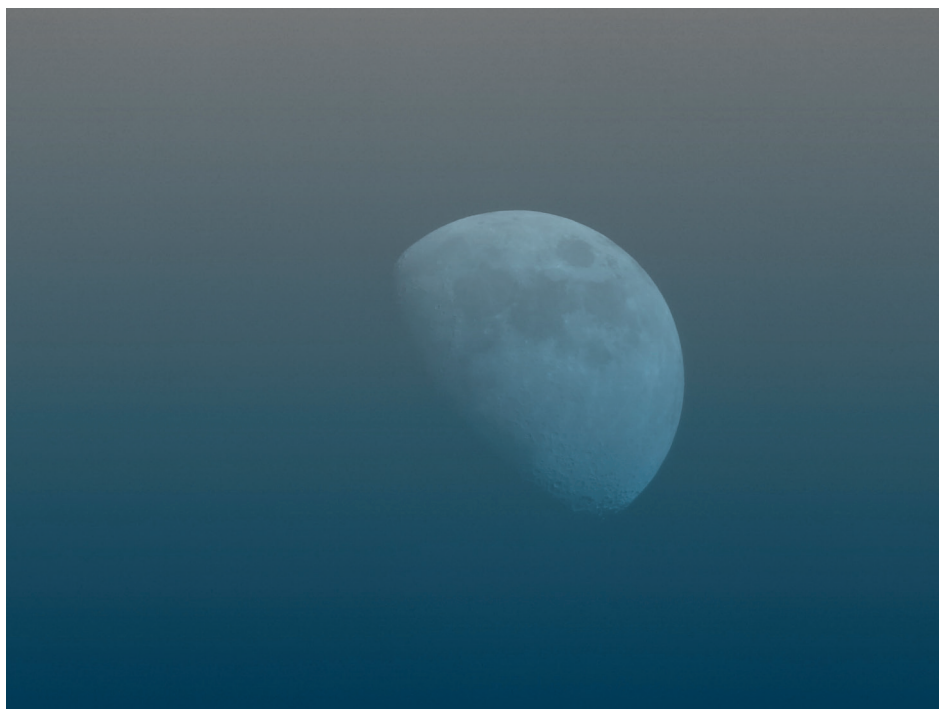
My father  
reaches out with the rake  
and pulls the bottle toward us.  
I pick it up with my litter-getter and  
drop it into our big green plastic bag.  
“I’m raking the river,” he says.  
We both laugh.  
I think that would be a good idea for a poem.

# No one knew

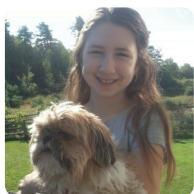
by Jada Kovatch, 11  
Huntington, NY



The rain pounded the windows. No one knew what to do... What would happen to everyone? The baby started to cry. He had been born in a happy, sunny place.



**Mysterious Moon, Nikon Coolpix L830**



**by Hannah Parker, 13  
Burlington, VT**

# The Blue Planet

by Arabella McClendon, 13  
Racine, WI



## *Captain Vistyz Stausk is on a mission to find and destroy malicious planets in the universe*

Captain Vistyz Stausk paced the command center of her ship. It had been her father's ship, but he had passed onto the next multiverse a Sastorian year ago. Captain Stausk missed Sastorus, but she missed her father more, and thus stayed with his ship.

She had been given a commission to either find and destroy or rehabilitate particularly malignant species. Sastorus and its brother planet, Castea, had been attacked by an unknown entity that left as quickly as it destroyed. This was one of the more far-reaching and broader missions to stop both their attackers and the general malice in the universe. So far, they hadn't disintegrated anyone, but they also hadn't found any civilization that didn't need serious help. The crew's morale was low and what they needed just then was to come across a kind and loving race that they could ally with. They seemed to be in luck, as Captain Stausk's co-captain, Naeq, came in with a report: "Smallish blue planet off the starboard side. Looks to be inhabited. Should I organize a scouting party?"

Captain Stausk thought for a minute before replying.

"No, just set up gear and a landing pod for us two."

~20 minutes later~

Vistyz and Naeq unboxed the high-tech, to-be-reserved-for-special-missions, highly-adaptable camouflage suits for the seventh time that voyage. They lamented their one-size-fits-all label as they squeezed their six limbs inside and climbed into a two-person landing pod. As they sat in the dark interior of the white, bubble-shaped contraption, hurtling towards the little blue planet, they both thought about how wonderful it would be if the inhabitants were nice. How perfectly lovely it would be if they could negotiate an alliance. How highly likely it was, based on the laws of statistics. Sadly, they were wrong.

The first thing the two noticed was that the planet was divided up into nations, each with a different language and different customs. Of course, though they would be much stronger united as a whole planet, they had to be forgiven for this fault because of the language barrier. Yet another thing they noticed within their first "week" (a term used to describe seven days on that planet) was that most of the world's leaders were power-hungry and corrupt. They didn't work together peacefully, as would have been best

for all on the planet; instead, they squabbled among themselves childishly. Many of the humanoid inhabitants were without basic necessities, while others had an almost disgusting surplus of material wealth and currency. The planet itself was polluted and littered, which took its toll upon the flora and fauna, which had done nothing wrong. Even worse, some beings were considered less than or more than other beings simply because of trivial surface traits! And when Vistyz and Naeq began to perform experiments of moral character and look into the minds and psychologies of many, they found irresponsibility, avarice, malice, and many more things. Captain and co-captain were saddened by the fact that so many vibrant cultural traditions and kind, loving people were overshadowed by the much larger amount of bad.

Back aboard the ship, Vistyz called a meeting with all of her advisors, counselors, friends, and trusted allies. They argued about the fate of the planet for many earth days, talking in turns, sitting in reflection, screaming at each other, and then laughing about it afterwards. Finally, they came to the conclusion that they could neither destroy, nor heal, this planet. There was too much wrong and sadness to be fixed by an outside force, but the goodness and kindness was enough that it could not be destroyed. So, they isolated it: they placed a special barrier around it, preventing interaction with any other planets or societies until the good in this planet became enough to destroy the barrier. They had a chance to change.

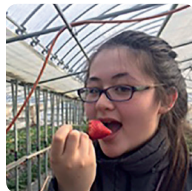
And so Captain Vistyz and her

ship went on its way, but this violent little planet, violently good and bad, had left its impression on many. Some were significantly saddened by the wrong and the dirty, but others were uplifted by the good and clean and pure they had seen there. Many were confused, others convinced that they had done the right thing.

All would remember it.

# Found

by Maya Wolfford, 13  
Cincinnati, OH



The fire-colored butterflies  
Flying drunkenly  
Silently sipping on the budding milkweeds.  
Snowflakes delicately falling  
Landing on open mouths of youth.  
The lake, calm and tranquil  
Silently discovering the ocean.  
The smallest trail of smoke  
Making its way to the sky.  
Fate isn't sealed  
Like an envelope,  
Instead it guides  
Like the rails on a cliff  
To prevent falling  
Into a never ending  
Darkness.  
Or the stars  
Dotting the sky like freckles  
To prevent the sailors  
From stumbling into a whistling whirlpool.  
Not all maps  
Must be followed.

# To Contradict

The waterfall, thought as brave,  
Viewed as unwearable, unstopable, ablaze,  
Secretly cowers and hopes to end its days  
But continues to roar and never strays.  
The brambles, viewed as fierce and tough,  
Ignorant, guarded, as if they've had enough  
And stay like that until they wither,  
Pretending to be cool and tastelessly blither.  
The garden, swaying with the wind  
Seen as vulnerable, flimsy, weak, and thin  
But only leans with this harsh blow  
Because it has learned to go with the flow.  
The ocean, scrubbing away at the sand,  
Knows it could do something much more grand  
But still tries to reach for the land  
With a watery, frothy, desperate hand.  
The dirt, seen as filthy and rotted,  
With jewels and gems its depths are dotted  
But still it chooses to follow the dark way  
For it's afraid to be seen with a happy day.  
The pebble, smoothed down by the stream,  
Seen as solitary, so hadn't tried to join a team  
And as it tried to let out a scream  
Beneath the waters, it was held, serene.  
But the rose, viewed as superficial behind thorns  
Was expected to laugh with pity and scorn  
At the ugly weeds as they were promptly picked  
But instead it didn't, thoughtful to contradict.  
And until this very significant moment  
It had been waiting for the bestowment  
Of the gift it had long ago earned:  
The petals it has, since young age, yearned.  
And this is how the rose gained its beauty,  
For performing a kind act, a necessity, a duty,  
And now you look at the rose and think pretty  
Instead of low, arrogant, and gritty.



# The Standing Mountains

by Cora Gelman, 8  
Washington, D.C.



They are frozen

but not yet gone

They feel so sad but cold

I can't

Oh I can't feel my body

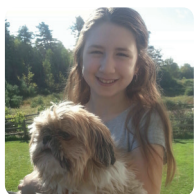
when I stare at them

for they're so great

and I'm so small



**Fog on the Mountains, Nikon Coolpix L830**



**by Hannah Parker, 13  
Burlington, VT**

# The Hut on the Hill

by Linden Grace Koshland, 11  
Berkeley, CA



The ferocious waves slapped against the shoreline, spitting mist and bits of white foam into the crisp air. The gray clouds conquering the sky like a vast cotton blanket of darkness responded with the occasional crack of thunder. Rain beat down hard onto the backs of seagulls desperately searching for cover. The gloom was a plague that reached the toes of everything in the vicinity. Everything, that is, except a small wooden hut daintily perched atop a towering hill rising from the ocean. It observed the storm with a sort of wisdom and knowledge that pleased it, because it had lived a long life and knew many secrets. Its small form looked ready to be swept away by the wind like a minuscule piece of dust, but it sat firmly on the hill, proud of its resistance. A large oak tree curved over it, partially shading it from the merciless rain pelting from the heavens.

Inside the hut, a crackling fire burned merrily in the hearth, and a large, cushioned armchair stood invitingly before it. There was a cozy-looking four-poster bed in the corner of the single room, its colorful quilt pulled back and the mattress still warm. A kettle dangled before the fire, the hot water inside bubbling and boiling like children frolicking on a warm summer's day, the pot whistling along, too. Over on the corner opposite the bed, a little table was placed with two

sides against the wall, with windows bearing cheerful, yellow-flowered curtains directly above them. A single three-legged stool was beside the table, and the remains of a berry pie was on a china plate beside it. Near the table was a wooden cupboard, the door ajar. The door on the other side of the room swung open as if a ghost had entered, and, from outside, the pleasantly fresh smell of petrichor wafted in, signaling that the rain had lessened. Emerging from the clouds, the sun shone, a bright light illuminating all the earth. Out the window of the hut, a gorgeous rainbow arched across the sky, basking in the glory of both sun and rain. The little hut sighed and creaked slightly at the wonderful sight. *What a great view, thought the hut. I hope another storm comes one day.* And, with that, the hut gave a huge yawn and fell fast asleep. The floral curtains slid closed, the fire lessened to glowing embers, the kettle was still, and the covers of the bed slowly were pulled over the mattress.

And although the hut was empty, it would always be full to the brim with memories of Home.

# Wild Wyoming Horses

by Gwen Deutsch, 12  
Dubuque, IA



As the horses ran down the mountain like a raging  
sand storm, I knew I was in Wyoming.  
The swift, creek water was mint in my mouth.  
I felt sandpaper as I touched the horse's hair.

I turned around to see the trees of the forest swaying as if  
they were rocking their leaves to sleep.  
Everywhere I walked I could smell the scent of the  
flowers like the perfume of a beautiful women.

I found myself crying as I watched the beautiful  
horses run across the plains beating  
their hooves to a strong, clear beat.

# Honor Roll

Welcome to the *Stone Soup* Honor Roll. Every month we receive submissions from hundreds of kids from around the world. Unfortunately, we don't have space to publish all the great work we receive. We want to commend some of these talented writers and artists and encourage them to keep creating.

## Fiction

Maggie Tan, 11  
Beatrice Cappuccio, 8  
Vivian G. Hoffman, 11  
Isabel Angle, 10  
Avery McPherson, 12  
Wyatt Goeckner, 9  
Caleb Meyaard, 11

## Poetry

Emily Maremont, 11  
Maya Kalbach, 11

## Art

Coco Wu, 12  
Natalie Dougan, 13

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...and more!



