

Stone Soup

The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists

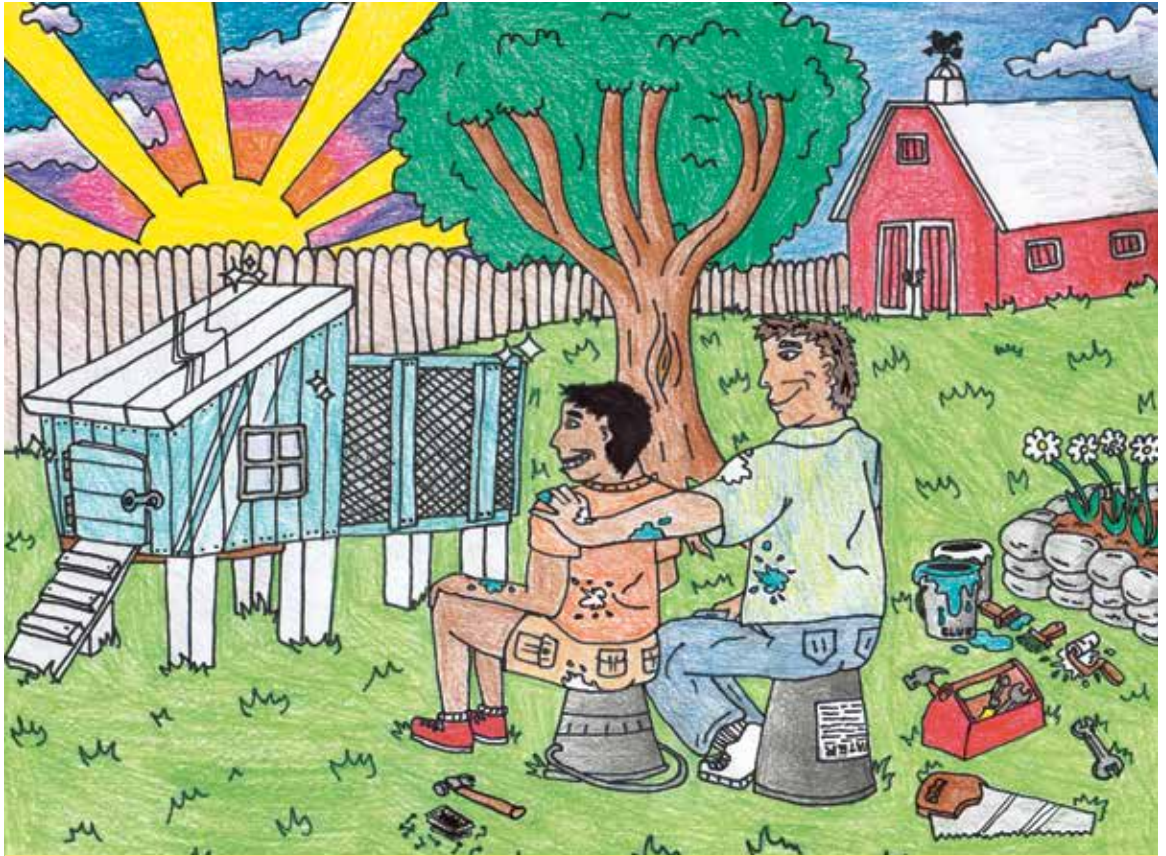


Illustration by Thomas Buchanan, age 11, for "Grandpa and the Chicken Coop," page 38

THE FIVE-DOLLAR BILL

With the help of Mr. C., Amy realizes that not everyone is bad

GRANDPA AND THE CHICKEN COOP

At last, Jack and Grandpa are together, building something

Also: A poem about fireworks

JULY/AUGUST 2015

\$6.99 US \$6.99 CANADA

Stone Soup

The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists

VOLUME 43, NUMBER 6
JULY / AUGUST 2015

STORIES

The Bean Plant *by Isabel Stronski* 5

Mia finds the comfort she needs in an unlikely place

Racing Coconuts *by Rachel Barglow* 11

What could be better than a night at the beach with friends?

Girl's Best Friend *by Catherine Chung* 13

Jeana blames herself for what happened to Spotz

The Five-Dollar Bill *by Katherine Tung* 19

Amy is excited at the prospect of making a friend

Memories *by Sophia Harne* 25

How can Annalise keep her memories of Cape Cod alive?

The Path to Acceptance *by Logan Gusmano* 33

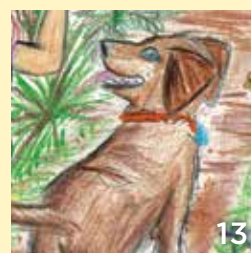
Logan realizes he was wrong and decides to change

Grandpa and the Chicken Coop *by Jack Zimmerman* 38

All Jack needs is just one project with Grandpa

Different City, Same Stars *by Abby K. Svetlik* 43

It's hard for Samantha to accept the changes in her life



POEMS

Canoe *by Hannah Mark* 8

Fireworks *by Jack R. Lefkowitz* 23

My Grandfather's Words *by Kira Householder* 31

The Chickens *by Celie Kreilkamp* 41



BOOK REVIEWS

Half a World Away *reviewed by Kobe Simon* 16

The Running Dream *reviewed by Lauren Vanden Bosch* 36





Editors & Founders

Gerry Mandel & William Rubel

Special Projects

Michael King

Design & Production

Slub Design
Prism Photographics

Administrative Assistant

Barbara Harker



Stone Soup (ISSN 0094 579X) is published six times a year, in January, March, May, July, September, and November, by the Children's Art Foundation, 765 Cedar Street, Suite 201, Santa Cruz, CA 95060. Copyright © 2015 by the Children's Art Foundation. All rights reserved. Subscribe at stonesoup.com.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Stone Soup, PO Box 3103, Langhorne, PA 19047. Periodicals postage paid at Santa Cruz, CA, and additional offices.

Printed in the United States by Consolidated Press on recycled paper.

Stone Soup is available from the Library of Congress in braille for visually handicapped readers. To request the braille edition, call 800-424-8567.

Stone Soup is indexed in the *Children's Magazine Guide*.

Find *Stone Soup Magazine* on Facebook.

Editor's Note

Adults to the rescue. I grew up the oldest of three sisters. I felt mature and independent from a young age. Maybe you're like me. But sometimes a kid faces a tough problem and needs the help of a parent, teacher, or adult friend. This issue has several stories that illustrate this point. In "The Bean Plant" and "Different City, Same Stars," the main character has lost her mother and moved far away with her dad. Both girls are sad and lost, until an adult helps them see that, despite the sadness, life must go on. In "The Five-Dollar Bill," a seven-year-old girl, newly arrived in this country, gets tricked by a bad boy. A teacher comes to the rescue and encourages her to think about all the good people in her life. The moms in "Girl's Best Friend" and "The Path to Acceptance" both provide helpful advice to their children too. Was there a time when you couldn't solve a problem by yourself? Tell us about it.

— Gerry Mandel

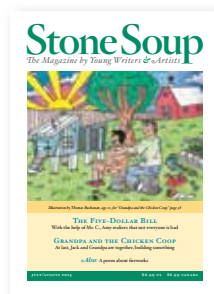
Subscriptions

Subscribe to the print and digital editions of *Stone Soup* at stonesoup.com. If you have subscription questions, write to stonesoup@icnfull.com.

Submissions

Read our guidelines at stonesoup.com. If you have submission questions, write to editor@stonesoup.com. No email submissions, please.

ON THE COVER Thomas Buchanan has been drawing since he was two years old. He won the first of many awards for his artwork at age four. Thomas enjoys reading, collecting vintage items, and he loves *Star Wars*. He wants to be an archeologist, paleontologist, museum curator, or designer/engineer when he grows up.



The Mailbox



A friend introduced me to *Stone Soup* and I was immediately transfixed as soon as I picked it up! I really want to tell all of the authors and illustrators to keep on working, for your pieces are really inspiring and so well done! I hope, someday, to have some of my work published so all the kids around the world who read this magazine can hear what I have to express. Some of my favorite entries are “Owl Song,” by Eleanor Polak, and also “Just Don’t Quit,” by Juliette Shang [both from the May/June 2015 issue]. I thank both of you (and many more!) for creating such touching and memorable stories. Thank you, *Stone Soup*, for creating such a wonderful opportunity for young authors and illustrators!

Mia Sloan, 11
New Haven, Connecticut

I have recently received my second magazine, so I am one of your newest subscribers, and I adore your magazine already! It’s great to have an actual printing press of some sort, have kids send them their work, and print it! I’ve been writing for as long as I can remember, and I really do appreciate having a place to send it to. I want to be an author when I grow up, and your miraculous magazine looks like a great place to start! Can’t wait for the next edition!

Lily E. Labella, 11
Port Washington, New York

Lily’s work is recognized in the Honor Roll on page 48.



Even though I just recently subscribed to *Stone Soup*, I’ve been reading through your writing archives at stonesoup.com since I was eight. I actually run a magazine of my own, *Circle of Friends*—circleoffriendsmagazine.weebly.com—and *Stone Soup* has inspired me so much! Thank you so much for creating such a wonderful magazine!

Sophia Harne, 13
Warner, New Hampshire

Sophia’s story, “Memories,” appears on page 25 of this issue.



Stone Soup is an extraordinary magazine! The artwork is breathtaking, the stories are amazingly well written, and the poems speak for themselves! A story that I enjoyed from this most recent issue, May/June 2015, is “A Mysterious Package,” by Lukas Bacho. The characters are very realistic and the plot line is very well planned out. A poem I especially loved is “Reflections,” by Genevieve Jacobs [November/December 2014].

Abigail Rose Cargo, 12
Lexington, South Carolina

Abigail’s work is recognized in the Honor Roll on page 48.

Just recently I started reading your magazine and am already a big fan. The idea of giving kids a place to read other children’s work, to write some of their own, and to express their love and creativity for language arts greatly intrigues me.

Eve Donnelly, 12
Palo Alto, California

Stone Soup welcomes your comments. Send them to editor@stonesoup.com.



My dad said to leave her be, that she was probably without a home

The Bean Plant

By **Isabel Stronski**

Illustrated by **Sophia Kotschoubey**

WHEN MY DAD said we needed a fresh start after my mom died I didn't realize he meant literally. Fresh tomatoes dotted the field with clouds of basil and parsley. Stalks of corn towered over the pumpkin patch and the smell of fertilizer burned my nose. The sun crept over the rolling hills as dawn slunk over the morning sky. My dad called me down for breakfast. I groaned, threw off my covers, and pulled on my slippers before dragging myself downstairs.

"Why, good morning, sleepyhead! I made pancakes!" my dad chimed.

I pulled a comb through my ratty hair. "Dad, it's five-thirty in the morning, why do we have to get up so early?"

"Because there is a lot of work to be done around here and we don't have enough money to hire help for the time being," he responded, flipping the pancakes.

"I miss Mom," I moaned.

He froze, the pancake sizzled in the pan, he lowered his head. "I know, but life moves on and we must too, no matter how much we miss her," he replied quietly. "By the way, Mia, I need you to water the crops, put down fresh fertilizer, do the laundry, and start dinner. I need to head to town to gather some supplies, but I'll be back by three." He tucked a loose strand of hair behind my ear. "Think you can handle that?"

I nodded without looking up.

"That's my girl!" He dumped a stack of pancakes onto my plate. "Dig in!"



Isabel Stronski, 12
Bronxville New York



Sophia Kotschoubey, 12
Bethesda, Maryland

Once we were done with breakfast, my dad pulled out of the driveway in the rusty old pickup truck, leaving me all alone. I sighed and pulled my knees to my chest as I sat on the front stoop. When my mom was here I was never alone. When I was scared she'd pull me close and tell me that she was there, right there for me. She said she would protect me, she said I would never be alone. I took three deep breaths and composed myself. I forced myself to stand and go over the list of my chores.

WATERING ALL the plants took a couple hours; I pushed the big cart of fertilizer down the long path towards the fields. I soon approached the bean patch. An old lady was there, just sitting and staring. She hung out there a lot. I didn't know who she was though. My dad said to leave her be, that she was probably without a home and needed someplace to stay. It was still uncomfortable having her around though. I sped up my pace. I didn't want to be near her any longer than necessary. It was hard to maneuver the cart on the bumpy ground. I struggled to keep it in line, but it hit a rock and went swerving to the side. Fertilizer was everywhere, and all over the old woman. Dirt colored her bleached hair and stained her weathered yellow dress. She didn't say a word; she just stared, her eyes drilling holes into mine. I stood there like a deer in the headlights, then ran, leaving the cart as I sprinted back to the house.

MY DAD AND I were enjoying our meal of mashed potatoes, biscuits, peas, and lamb chops when the bell rang. My dad set his napkin on the table and went to answer the door. Standing stiffly in the doorway was the old lady; she was still filthy from the fertilizer.

"My clothes are dirty," she stated blandly.

"I can see that," my dad answered, a little thrown.

"My clothes are dirty," she repeated, more insistently this time.

"How may I help you?" he asked.

"She knows," she pointed at me. "She knows why my clothes are dirty."

"Mia?" He waited for an explanation.

I shifted awkwardly in my seat as my dad looked at me expectantly. "It was an accident!" I blurted. "I couldn't steer the cart and the fertilizer spilled!"

"Mia!" My dad shook his head. "You didn't help her clean up?"

"Look at her, Dad, she's scary!"

"Mia!" he scolded. He shook his head. "I'm so sorry about this," he apologized to the lady. "Mia, go upstairs and get my overalls and your big fleece. She needs new clothes."

"But Dad, I like that fleece!"

"Mia!" He stared at me.

"Fine!" I stomped up the stairs, pulled the clothing out of the closet roughly, trudged downstairs, and threw the clothing in the lady's face.

"Mia!" my dad exclaimed. "Go to your room!"

I gave the woman a look of pure hatred

and did as my dad told me to.

I lay awake for most of the night, thinking about what happened downstairs. I wasn't sure why I got so upset. The jacket didn't mean that much to me. I guess it was the fact that that lady just barged in and ruined the peaceful evening I was having with my dad. My mom would have stuck up for me. She wouldn't have let me get pushed around by some stranger.

THE NEXT DAY I went on with my chores as usual after apologizing to my dad about making a scene the night before. I walked down the long path to get the hose and sponges I needed to clean the truck. Unfortunately, it was the same path I took when I spilled the fertilizer the day before. I prayed that the lady wouldn't be there, but to my dismay there she was. I tried to avoid her gaze as I sped up my pace.

"You like my here bean plant, child?" the lady croaked.

I stopped and stared.

"I said, you like my here bean plant?"

I waited a few seconds and stiffly nodded, not knowing what else to do.

"My husband left it to me, just this here bean plant, that's it. We were behind on our payments on this here barn, you see." She nodded to herself. "Yup, I don't get nothin' but a bean plant. My husband

said, 'You take care of this here plant now. As long as you have it you have me.'" She nodded to herself some more. "He gone now. He gone and I don't got nothin' but a bean plant."

"I lost my mother," I murmur, not being able to hold it in any longer.

She shook her head. "It ain't fair, life takes away the things you love most and keeps goin' on, leavin' you to try and figure out how to go on with it."

I nodded, biting my lip. Tears rose.

"Now don't you cry, girl," the lady scolded me.

"You start cryin' and you ain't never gonna stop."

I nodded, blinking furiously, pushing down the tears and trying to hide my quivering lip.

"Good girl," she patted my shoulder.


We stayed there in silence for a while.

"Do you have a place to stay for the night?" I ask.

"I'm sittin' in this here pile of dirt, what do you think?" she smirks.

"Well then... would you like to join us for dinner?" I offer. "I'm cooking and I could use some help."

"Well, only since you need help." She tried to hide a grin but couldn't quite manage to do it.

I smiled, took her hand, and started towards the house. Leaving the little bean plant behind us. 

**"Life moves on
and we must too,
no matter how much
we miss her."**

Canoe

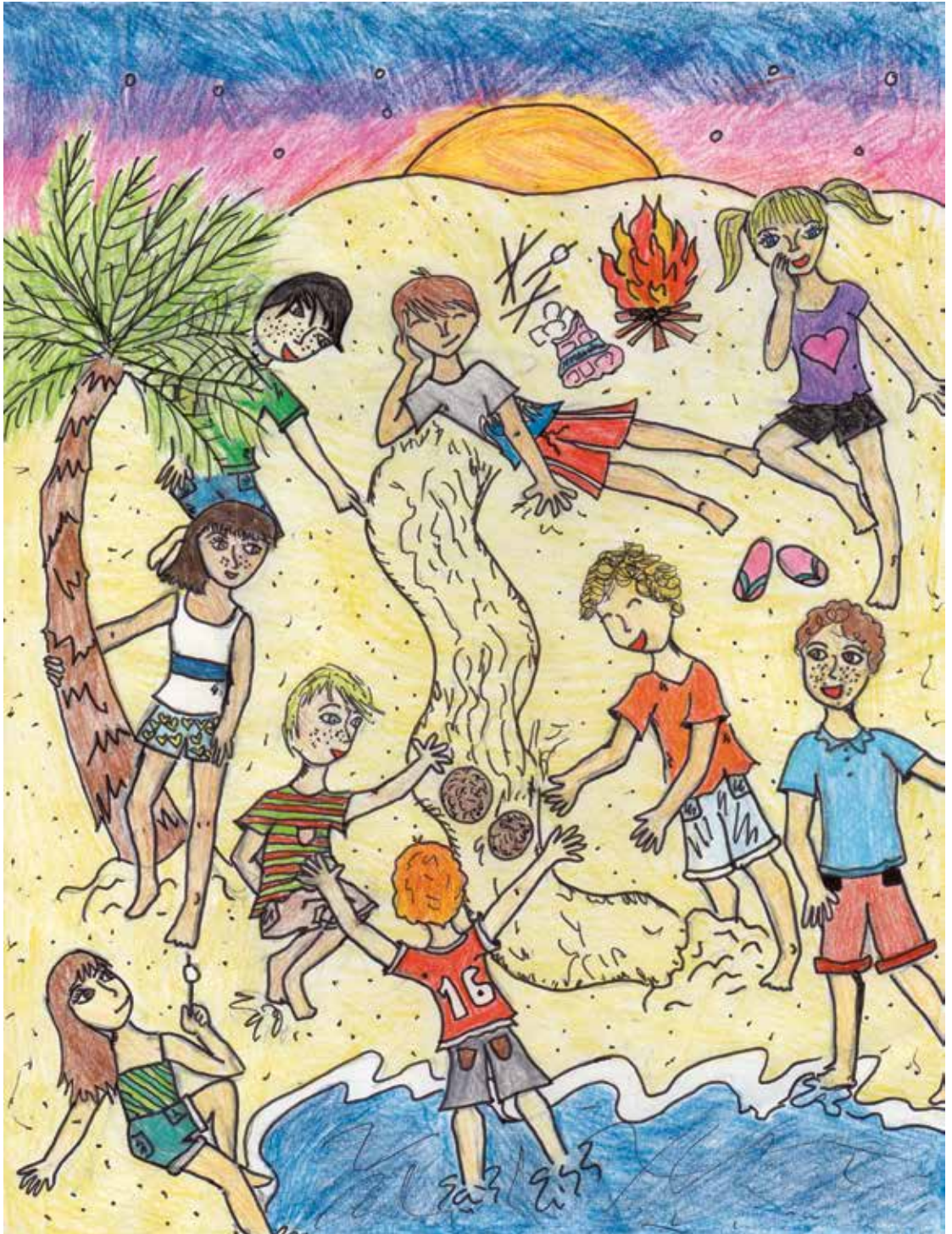
By **Hannah Mark**



Hannah Mark, 12
Hardin, Montana

Gliding through the water
As swift and silent as an arrow
With the swish swish splash of the paddle.
Water burbling over smooth stones, singing over sticks,
Jumbling in a happy mass to wherever rivers go.
The blue blue sky overhead, clear as crystal,
Dotted here and there with wisps of milk-white clouds.
A gentle breeze, ruffling the water, making ripples.
Tousling my hair with invisible fingers.
The calls of birds to one another overhead,
A tapestry of sound, laced with splashes
And the murmur of summer crickets.
Trees in full glory,
Ancient reminders of what used to be,
Stand as silent sentinels—
Ever watchful as the river flows on.
Magnificent cliffs rise out of the current,
With tall black buttresses like a castle,
Cloaked in emerald green,
Polka-dotted by clumps of sunshine flowers.
The crunch of the boat on rocks.
Eager feet clamber out to explore this new place.

The smell of wild mint drifts lazily on the air
Like the circling hawk,
Wafting under my nose, inviting a taste...
An eagle, full of splendor and pride,
Perches in the tallest tree
And watches everyone below.
Like a father, stern, gazing on playing children.
His eyes are black as the rock and cruel if need be.
The boat drifts on again,
Past a brigade of pelicans dressed in shiny white.
They glance momentarily at our canoe and,
As if deeming it not important enough to trouble
themselves with,
They continue their toilet.
All this beauty and magnificence,
Captured in a single moment, like a snapshot,
Tucked away in the folds of memory,
To be taken out later and cherished as a jewel,
A memory of what once was,
The canoe, the river,
the long ago
afternoon...



I feel the thrill of the moment as my coconut wobbles, surprisingly fast, past me

Racing Coconuts

By Rachel Barglow

Illustrated by Ester Luna

“**T**RUTH OR DARE?” my best friend Jackson challenges me. I glance around at my circle of friends like they might have an answer.

“Dare,” I say confidently. My friends and I always get together Saturday evenings. We’re gathered around a campfire eating marshmallows on a beach in Florida. Just then, Jackson grins wickedly at a tall palm tree with four coconuts cradled under its huge green leaves, and then back at me.

“Simon—I dare you to a coconut race with me. Take it or leave it.”

“I’ll take it,” I say, feeling my face turn red like it always does when I’m excited. Jackson and I know the drill. We each jog over to separate palm trees and shake them vigorously. When the tree gives up a coconut, I catch it as it falls. Jackson also gets a coconut. Then we drag our feet in the sand, creating one wide racetrack going for maybe twenty-five feet down a hill. The hill is steep enough to give the coconuts momentum. Jackson and I go to the starting line and bend down, the coconuts barely touching the ground. I feel the tense feeling of excitement in the air, my heart beating quickly. Everyone has their eye on our coconuts. A surfer shouts loudly to a friend in the distance. No one budges, no one hears. I will win this race. I will.

“On your mark, get set...” Jackson starts, my heart beating even quicker.

“On your mark, get set...” everyone cries, “Go!” Our coconuts tumble out of our hands and down the track, picking up sand.



Rachel Barglow, 10
Arlington, Massachusetts



Ester Luna, 12
Washington, D.C.

Jackson and I race alongside the coconuts, making sure neither of them stray off our uneven track.

Our friends start choosing sides. They break away from our circle and form two clumps, one cheering, “Go... Jackson! Go... Jackson! Let’s hear it for Jackson!” and another group yells, “*Simon! Simon! Simon!*” I feel the thrill of the moment as my coconut wobbles, surprisingly fast, past me. I sprint to keep up with it. Our audience crane their necks and squint to see the coconuts through the rapidly falling night.

Now the coconuts are nearing the end of the track, where Jackson and I made a heap of sand to stop the coconuts from rolling on and into the water. Mine’s in front—or is it Jackson’s? Oh, darn it, we

forgot to mark the coconuts so we could tell whose is whose! But it’s too late—one of the coconuts has hit the barrier of sand.

“*I won!*” Jackson shrieks, sticking his index fingers in the air.

“No way. I won!” I argue, jabbing my thumb into my chest.

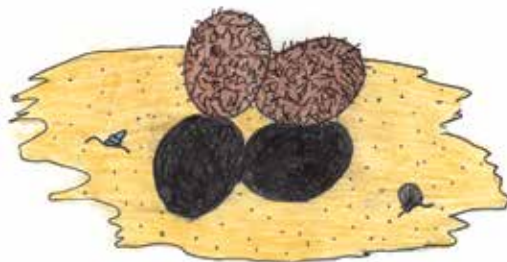
“You wish!”

“You’re just jealous of the winner!!”

“I definitely won!”

“You did not.” The two of us go on like this for a while more, the onlookers’ heads swiveling from one person to the other. Eventually we get tired of our argument and collapse on the ground, laughing. Once we quiet down, all the kids lie on their backs and look at the stars. I gaze at one that looks particularly like a coconut. ❁

Oh, darn it,
we forgot to mark
the coconuts!



Girl's Best Friend

By Catherine Chung

Illustrated by the author

MY CURLY RED HAIR flew out behind me as I ran. What I desperately needed was a place where I could be alone, a place where all there was for company were the chirping of crickets, the flapping of birds, and the occasional breeze.

Luckily, I knew exactly where that was.

Lost in my determination of my journey, and so absorbed in my thoughts that a stray twig slashed a cut on my ankle as I ran—it didn't matter. Nothing matters when the most faithful dog you've ever known leaves Earth, because then it seems like the world is over, and what is a little gash compared to the loss of the greatest dog in the world?

Finally, after much huffing and puffing, I stopped at the creek. My creek. My place. My hideout. Looking in the water, I pouted, and in the water a freckle-faced girl pouted back at me. But she was soon swept away with the rush of playful little waves frolicking on the rocks. The laughing waves left behind mounds of tiny bubbles, and I could see the reflections of hundreds of geese circling overhead, all squawking noisily. It was nice to let myself sink into another world, to escape from one in pieces... A single teardrop fell through the creek.

I thought, and mourned over what had happened just hours earlier as I sat down, dipping my feet into the creek.

This morning, my dog, the best dog in the world, who, after eight healthy, fun, and *very* spoiled years, had got run over. Now that I think about it, Spotz had not been *just* my dog. Spotz had



Catherine Chung, 10
Theodore, Alabama



Spotz had not been just my dog. Spotz had been my life's companion.

been my life's companion. She never criticized me. Instead, she comforted me. And when I was upset, when I had a bad day, or when we got some bad news from the bank, Spotz would always trot along with me—no matter *how* much she'd rather

explore our food pantry, or roll in the mud—to this creek, to our place. To our own secret hideout that only we knew. To where I could calm down my anger—and today I had a *lot* of anger bottled up inside me.

I was mad at myself for never realizing until now how important Spotz had been in my life. And now Spotz had... It was much too late now.

If I had stayed at home instead of going to Cecilia's sleepover, none of this would have happened. Spotz would accompany me to my rough years, and maybe she'd even see me graduate!

I had a dozen questions for myself. Didn't I know that Spotz was scared of thunder and hated it? Didn't I know that there would be a storm that night, yet I still went to the sleepover, leaving dear Spotz all alone? Didn't I know that when Spotz heard thunder, she'd dig a tunnel beneath the fence to escape? That she would be terrified? That she would be out of her mind? That... that she'd accidentally get run over by a car?

No, a tiny voice in my head whispered. *You couldn't have known that Spotz would get run over.* True. But... for not thinking about my beloved Spotz, for focusing on the sleepover, did that make me a bad person?

Replaying the events in my head was too painful for words. How Spotz had playfully licked my hand and looked me in the eye for what I didn't know then was the last time. And seeing Spotz's limp body on the side of the road, helping Mom and Dad bury her... it was all too much... I couldn't stand it. And I cried. First, tears welled up in my eyes, then, gradually, a flow of tears began dripping down in the creek. Lying down on the cool black earth, I cried myself to dreams,

while the serene scene before me faded away slowly.


“JEANA, JEANA, wake *up!*” Annoyed at this, I sat up. Blinking a million times faster than usual, I gaped at the tall, brown-haired woman beside me by the creek, sitting patiently.

It was *Mom!!!!*

Suddenly, I felt flustered, shocked, and a mixture of all the emotions that make you go red in the face, and I'm positive that my face had turned into an awkward-looking tomato.

“Er, how, ho-how, di-did you fi-fi-*find*...” I sputtered, knowing that my words made no sense.

Mom surveyed my face. Gently, she said, “Jeana, when I heard, I *knew* what you would do. The number of times I saw Spotz and you come here...” She grasped my hand tightly, and I saw her eyes glistening with tears. A shadow of guilt flickered across them. “Your dad and I should've watched her more carefully. I know how much Spotz meant to you. I... I really, really am sorry.” Mom sniffed. So did I. Mom continued, “It's hard, I *know*, but try thinking the other way. Spotz had a great eight years with us. It's OK to mourn now, but remember, you've still got a life to lead. Spotz may be gone, but she won't ever go away in our hearts.”

Mom didn't get up, and her presence itself was comforting. As we watched the orange sky dissolve into an indigo night, it was then I realized just how much Spotz had been a part of my life. 

Book Review

By Kobe Simon

Half a World Away, by Cynthia Kadohata;
Atheneum Books for Young Readers: New York,
2014; \$16.99



Kobe Simon, 11
Scottsdale, Arizona

ELECTRICITY: IT CREATES lightning, turns on the TV, generates power. A microscopic current. Something that we cannot see, that connects us all. The concept fascinates twelve-year-old Jaden. But what he can't understand is this: he doesn't feel connected to anyone. So he lights fires. Hoards food. Steals. Runs until his anger beats him to the ground. His biological mother didn't want him. And while his adoptive parents say they love him, Jaden feels... nothing. Or, something, actually. Like an epic fail. And now Jaden's parents want to adopt a new kid, so they pack up and fly with Jaden halfway around the world to get one. In Kazakhstan, Jaden's smoldering anger flares. He knows what will happen next. Or does he?


Have you ever known someone, close, who loves you but you did not love them back? That's how Jaden feels about his adoptive parents. Jaden was abandoned by his mother when he was four, and he has told himself he will never love another. And he doesn't, or at least not until the extraordinary chain of events that occurs when Jaden and his adoptive parents visit Kazakhstan to adopt another child. *Half a World Away* taught me that love is an amazing thing and can completely transform someone.

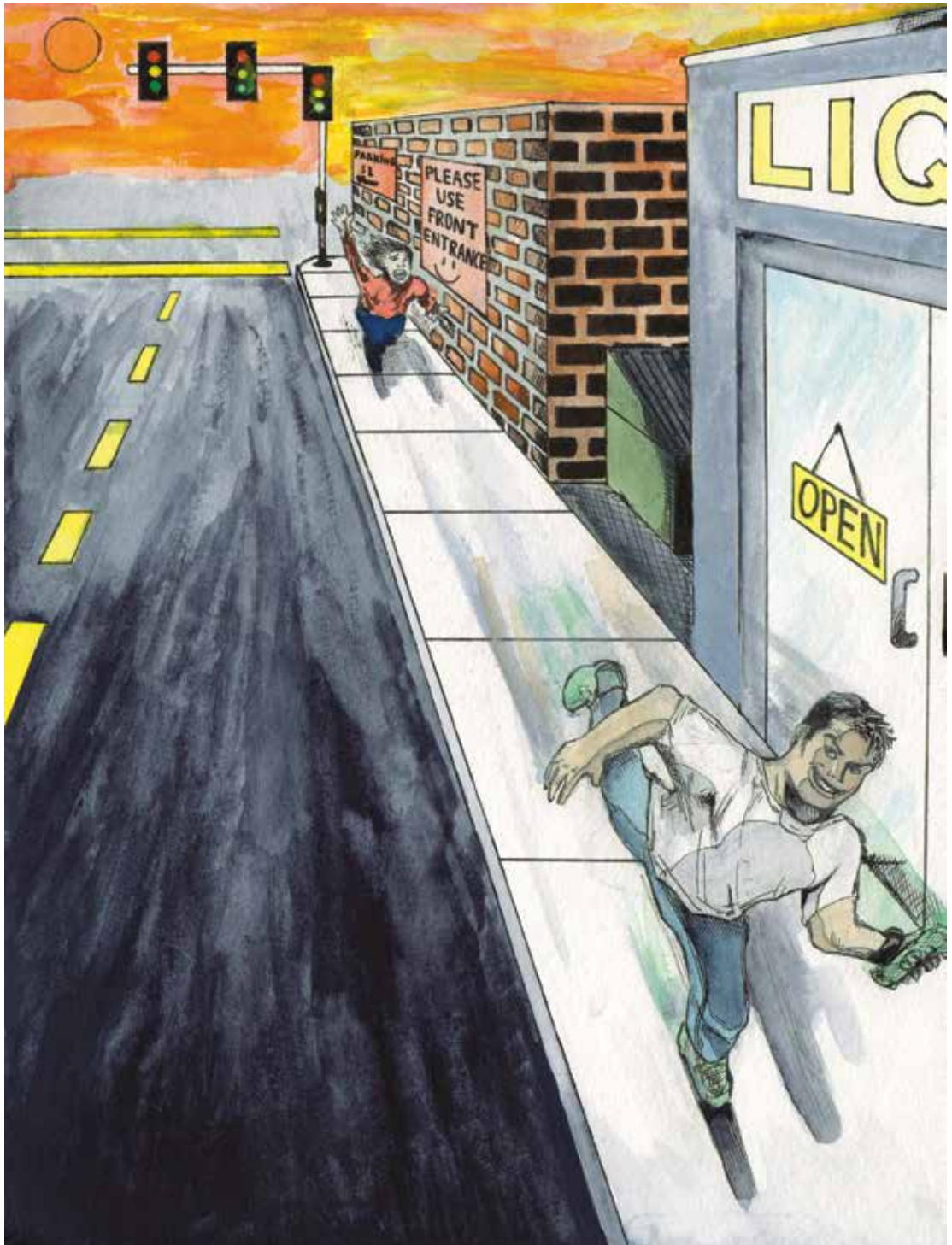
When I started reading this novel, I thought Jaden was kind of an obnoxious brat. He has a cell phone and a computer of his own but is sarcastic to his parents, steals money, and hides food. And I'm speaking about stealing more than loose change every now and then. Try thirty dollars! Then I began to feel sympathy for him, because of his situation. And because of the feelings of love for his adoptive parents that Jaden has unintentionally locked up deep inside his soul where he can never find them.

Jaden's adoptive parents, Steve and Penni, are actually pretty nice. It's just Jaden who is the problem. Or that's how he feels, anyway. Jaden believes that he's just a big screwup, and everything's his fault. Sometimes I feel like a failure too.

I can relate to Jaden, entirely, because he has trouble controlling his anger and I feel the same way at times. Also, Jaden's biological mother abandoned him at a very young age. I have not had contact with my biological mother—who lives in a foreign country—in over six years. I share Jaden's pain. I have a step-mother, and sometimes I wish that I lived with my real mother instead. This book taught me to just be grateful for the family I already have instead of wishing for one that does not seem possible.

Jaden feels that Steve and Penni are looking for a new child to replace him. But when they get to Kazakhstan, they find out the baby they wanted was already adopted. While Steve and Penni look for a new baby to adopt, Jaden struggles with his feelings. Sometimes, I feel I, too, am alone in wrestling with my emotions. This book served to remind me I am not alone.

Half a World Away made me want to cry at some of the sadder parts and jump up and down at the happy parts. This book moved me. I usually don't read stories like this. Instead, I read adventure stories about dragons or wizards. But I'm glad I read this book, because it made me grateful for who I am, what I have, and most importantly, the family I do have, rather than the family I do not have. 



With the agility of a panther, he rounded the corner of the supermarket

The Five-Dollar Bill

By Katherine Tung

Illustrated by Aris Demopoulos

“**S**TOP TIGER FROM chasing Fluffy!” Mike Brady yelled as he charged headlong at his sons’ dog at his wedding reception. Tiger dashed under the wedding cake table and tipped it. The three-tiered cake slid along the table and into Mike’s arms. When Carol Brady hugged him for saving the cake, it toppled onto Mike’s face.

This scene on TV sent my brother and me rolling on the carpet in fits of laughter. Ben and I relied on *The Brady Bunch* reruns to release frustration. We watched them every afternoon, since we spent our taxing schooldays proving to the mostly white student body that we were not mentally retarded, we just couldn’t speak English. After all, we came to the U.S. three months ago, knowing only how to say “hi.” I wanted to return to Taiwan, where I lived a Brady-Bunch life—wholesome and care-free, where each day ended with everyone happy.

Mom yelled from the kitchen, “哥哥，去市場 買一袋紅蘿蔔。現在就去!”¹ She ordered Ben to buy a bag of carrots from the market, this instant.

“我不要! 叫妹妹去,”² Ben shouted back, refusing to budge and offering me a chance to go.

Mom marched into the family room and stood in front of the TV screen, hands on hips, and commanded, “現在就去,”³ repeating her order.

1. “Ben, go to the market and buy a bag of carrots. Now!”

2. “No! Make Amy go.”

3. “Go now.”



Katherine Tung, 11
Los Altos, California



Aris Demopoulos, 12
Los Angeles, California

Ben rolled onto his stomach, crossed his arms overhead, plopped his forehead onto his forearms, and groaned. She turned around and switched off the TV. Mom was always pressed for time. She no longer had help from her family and friends to make dinner and run errands. I wanted to help her, so I volunteered.

She hesitated. She had always relied on Ben to run errands. Would she trust me to go alone for the first time? Like Cindy Brady begging to have her way, I clasped my hands, looked earnestly into Mom's eyes, and in my sweet seven-year-old voice, pleaded with her to let me go. "媽媽, 讓我去. 就在街頭。"¹

Mom glanced at the wall clock, which read five o'clock. "Go quickly. I need it to finish the dish before Dad comes home."

She folded a five-dollar bill widthwise twice and handed it to me as I left the house. I clutched the bill in my right hand and skipped, half running, down to the store, humming the opening tune of *The Brady Bunch*.

When I reached the market, my pace slowed. A brilliant sunset was in clear view from the near-vacant parking lot. It looked as if someone had spread rainbow sherbet across the sky with white cotton candy as clouds. I thought of the countless sunsets I had savored with my grandma from the balcony of our house. I reached over to hold her hand, but she wasn't there. Where was she? Where were my friends, and my extended family?

A kind voice jarred me from my thoughts. "Hi." It came from a slim, tall, athletic boy in tennis shoes and blue jeans, about Ben's age. I had never seen him before, but that was true of most Americans I had met. We exchanged warm, friendly smiles.

The boy enunciated each word slowly, asking, "You go to Condit Elementary? You know, Condit Elementary School."

I stared in astonishment. Yes, yes, that was where I went to school! My mind raced with excitement at the prospect of making a friend. I thought hard, trying to express myself in proper English. "I go schoo Condid."

The boy stifled a giggle. My ears burned, my toes curled, and my fists tightened. My palms began sweating, and the five-dollar bill felt like a damp paper towel. I switched the bill to my left hand, letting the breeze cool my right one. I expected him to leave, since I couldn't carry on a conversation with him. He stayed.

Again, slowly and patiently, he said, "I've seen you at school."

He has seen me at school? Maybe he has seen me with Ben. "You know my broder, Be-en? He in fif grade."

His eyes lit up and he grinned like a Cheshire cat. "Yeah, yeah, we're in the same class. I know him real good. We're like this." He raised his right hand, pressing together his index and middle fingers. "You're his little sister."

I was comforted in knowing he was my



1. "Mom, can I please go? It's just at the end of the street."

brother's friend. My ears stopped burning, my toes straightened, and my fists relaxed. My left hand loosely held the five-dollar bill. I couldn't wait to tell Ben about this. Maybe we could invite the boy over to our house. Maybe we'd bike around the neighborhood or watch TV or play in the backyard or do anything he wants to. Should I ask now? Before I could decide, the boy lunged at me, snatched the bill, and sprang into flight.

For a second, I hesitated. What happened? Was this a prank? I stared at the air in front of me in shock and opened my mouth to yell for help, but nothing came out. My body felt numb and cold, as if all blood was channeled to my thrashing heart. From the corner of my eyes, I saw him getting further away from me. I thought only of catching him.

I flung myself into the chase. My eyes tracked his every move. With the agility of a panther, he rounded the corner of the supermarket. I followed. We were now in an empty stretch of the parking lot, with only a few parking lot islands with waist height hedges. My soles ripped the asphalt. I was gaining on him. After all my years of chasing Ben, I knew I could catch this boy. He glanced back and then picked up speed. He smashed through a gap in the hedges. I followed. The thorns scratched my bare shins, breaking my stride. My right foot caught on the edge of the curb, and I stumbled and fell to the ground.

His eyes lit up
and he grinned like
a Cheshire cat.

I didn't check for injuries. I couldn't. I pushed myself upright and raced after him with all the power I had, but with my right ankle throbbing, I could only watch his figure shrink in the distance. I lost my chance to catch him, and with it, my chance to prove that I was as able as my brother.

From behind me, a man in a track suit and sneakers burst past me, running towards the boy. The boy looked over his shoulders, thrust the crumpled bill on the ground, turned the corner, and dashed past

the dumpsters in the back of the supermarket. He just ran, ran, ran, and I never saw him again.

I stopped. I staggered, coughing, and choking for breath as I watched the man pick up the bill and walk to me. As he approached, I recognized him as Mr. C., my PE teacher from school. I was safe. We walked to the nearest concrete wheel stop and sat down.

"Are you all right?" Mr. C. asked.

The pounding in my ears drowned out the rest of his words. "... here by yourself... don't worry... your money..."

I leaned into my legs, lowered my head, and felt small streams of tears escape my eyes. I didn't want to cry because I didn't want the boy to have the satisfaction of getting to me. I was angry. Angry at the boy for violating my trust. Angry at my mother for sending a seven-year-old to the market alone. Angry at myself for

wearing this silly skirt and not being a faster runner. I felt like a hot tea kettle on a stove and my anger was steam. When all the water evaporated, I felt empty. Empty because the boy had stolen my faith in the honesty of people.

MY FIST tightened on the money, sliding it back and forth to hide it from sight. I had better be more alert in case someone else tries to take my money. No more looking at sunsets or any other distractions. My head jerked up and my eyes darted from left to right. I waited for my legs to stop shaking, waited for the moment when I could run, run for home where I'd be safe.

A hand touched my right shoulder and I lurched away from it. It was Mr. C. "It's OK, I'm here. He was a bad boy, but not everyone is bad." I furrowed my brow and groped for memories of people who were good to me. Yesterday? Last week? Last month? The ESL teacher? She baked me a

cake on my birthday. The lunch lady? She slipped me a carton of chocolate milk. My grandma? She was kind to everyone, though she had a broken hip from bound feet and had to support her family during a war. She made my life in Taiwan wholesome and carefree.

Grandma didn't have to. Neither did the lunch lady or the ESL teacher or Mr. C. They had a choice between being good or bad, and they chose to be good, to selflessly improve others' lives. Some people chose to be bad, like the boy and my classmates. They chose to cause problems for those around them. I wanted to be good. Today, that meant finishing what I came for.

I turned to Mr. C., grinned, and declared, "I go buy carrots. Go home fast." I jerked up, folded the bill so it fit undetected in my fist, and walked resolutely towards the market. I walked faster and faster, putting the incident behind me and rushing towards the happy days of my own creation. 🍁



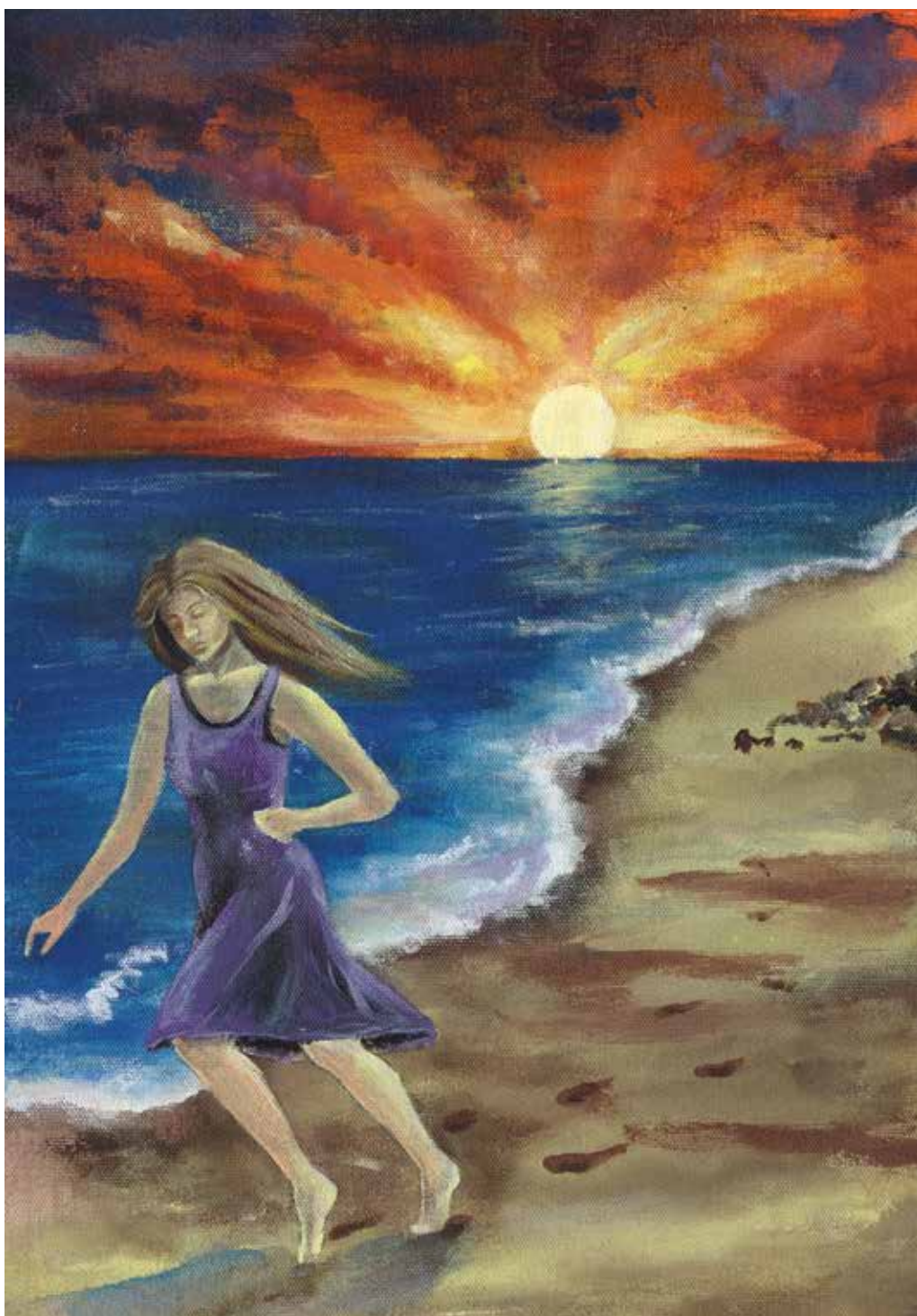
Fireworks

By Jack R. Lefkowitz

The first time I saw
Fireworks
Big and
BOLD
With sparkles
Splattering on the ground
Like little
Fireballs
Coming to Earth
Aliens in their star-spangled spaceships
Invading the earth
BOOM
It pierced through my ears
Flaming needles
So high
Scraping heaven
Reflecting in everybody's eyes



Jack R. Lefkowitz, 10
Brooklyn, New York



I had grown up here, but soon I would be here no longer

Memories

By **Sophia Harne**

Illustrated by **Claire Litsey**

I RAN DOWN THE BEACH, the wind blowing through my hair. My T-shirt flapped about me, the wind toying with the white cloth, as my feet hit the sand, spraying about in my wake. It was sunset, and the sky was painted with brilliant hues of violet and indigo, all leading to a great glowing sphere seemingly suspended in the sky. The sea rushed towards me, trying to capture my feet, but I leaped over a wave that had daringly come closer than the rest. I slowed to a stop and gazed off into the distance. I loved the sea. The salty air, the frigid ocean, the beautiful shells, and the cry of seagulls. I had grown up here, but soon I would be here no longer. I had learned to accept that fact in the past months, learned to stop denying my future, as there was not a possible course of action that would change it. I would go to high school like any other teenage girl, paint my nails, go to the prom, and do mounds of homework.

But even though my mind told me that there was no way I could possibly stay, my heart disagreed. It pulled me toward the sea, reasoning with me, begging me to come and swim within its waters forever. No, I told myself. With Mom working and Aunt Sharon moving away, I had to leave. Had to go. Idaho couldn't be that bad. Other than it being landlocked. Even though I knew that I would be happy there, or as happy as I could be, I still had the deepest desire to stay.

Finally, my heart won. I pulled off my sundress, revealing an ocean-green swimsuit underneath, ran through the shallows, and dove into the ocean. I came up gasping. It was cold. It was



Sophia Harne, 13
Warner, New Hampshire



Claire Litsey, 13
Northlake, Texas

springtime, April, but the coolness of the water still surprised me. I looked down at my feet, through the rippling, swirling water. I couldn't feel my toes. The soft, seemingly silk sand was a comfort though, and I didn't mind. I ducked under again, letting my eyes adjust to the semi-murkiness. I knew I'd have to swim out farther before the water would get completely clear. A small, silvery fish darted in front of me and then disappeared. I swam out farther, toward the setting sun, alternating between backstroke and breaststroke.

Years ago I had started swimming lessons on the beach and had taken to it immediately. I soon passed the other four-year-olds in my class and was swimming with children three years my senior within six months. After telling her of my accomplishments, my Aunt Sharon, who had taken my mother and me in when my father died, called me her little dolphin girl, and for good reason. I could swim for hours, taking only short breaks, and I knew the names of almost every fish in this part of the ocean.

Half of my day was spent on the beach, half doing the schoolwork my mom gave me. She had homeschooled me from day one, but that would soon be changing. Once, I even went so far as to carry my books down our long boardwalk that led from our Cape house, the creaking boards littered with sand that my calloused feet

**Adam seemed to be
the only one
who understood me.**

no longer even felt. I would carry that stack of schoolbooks through the dunes, past the beach grass, and out onto the white sand. My scheme, however, did not work for long. A few weeks after I had begun doing this, my mother, coming home from work, discovered sand and

shells between my algebra homework and asked me how it had gotten there. I, of course, explained, which led to me being grounded from the beach for the rest of the day.

From then on I did school on our deck, overlooking the ocean. I was not allowed on the beach until I finished my schoolwork.

However, what my mother didn't know is that, often, I would wake early, around five o'clock, two hours before she awoke, and take a walk on the beach to watch the sunrise. Sometimes, if I was lucky, Adam would be there. Adam seemed to be the only one who understood me. We weren't dating, it was way too soon for that, we were only twelve after all, but we had grown up together. Oh sure, we had our share of fights and misunderstandings, but we always regained our friendship in the end.

He too lived on the Cape, and wanted to be a marine biologist. I had dreams of that, but with the money situation we were in now, there weren't many chances of that happening any time soon. Public high school was the only option for me at the moment, and I was dreading it. I

wanted to go on living on the Cape, the sun in my face, the wind in my hair, not caring whether I was part of the popular group, or which teacher I had for science.

I floated on my back for a while, letting my hair spread out underwater in a flowing golden web. After a moment, I sat up and, treading water, found that I had swum quite a ways from shore. I turned around and leisurely backstroked toward the beach. Upon arrival, I ran, shivering, toward the boardwalk, where my towel hung from the railing.

"Annalise, wait!" I heard a voice. I turned. There was Adam, the sun casting a long shadow across the beach, lengthening his already towering height. His dark, semi-curly hair was mussed by the wind, and he wore a striped polo.

"Adam!" I cried, running toward him. "You're back! How was California?"

"Beautiful," he replied, grinning. "But not as beautiful as our Cape."

Our Cape, I thought. Our Cape. Soon it would no longer be home, the thing we referred to as ours, but his Cape. My "old" home. I sighed.

He looked at me and noticed my slight change of expression. That was the way with Adam. He could read my face as if it was a storybook, and we always knew what the other was thinking.

"You're upset about the move, aren't you?"

"You guessed it."

"Listen, Annalise," he said, in one of the most serious voices I'd ever heard him use. "Tell me why you don't want to leave."

I blinked, confused. "But you know!"

"Tell me anyway." He sat down on the sand. "Here. Sit."

So I told him. I told him about the sea, the sand, and the rocky cliffs. I told him about the birds, the fish, and the dolphins. I told him how I would miss my house and miss spending afternoons collecting sand dollars with him. And then I told him my greatest fear. That I would forget this wondrous place. When I was finished, he sat in silence for a while, gazing out toward the ocean.

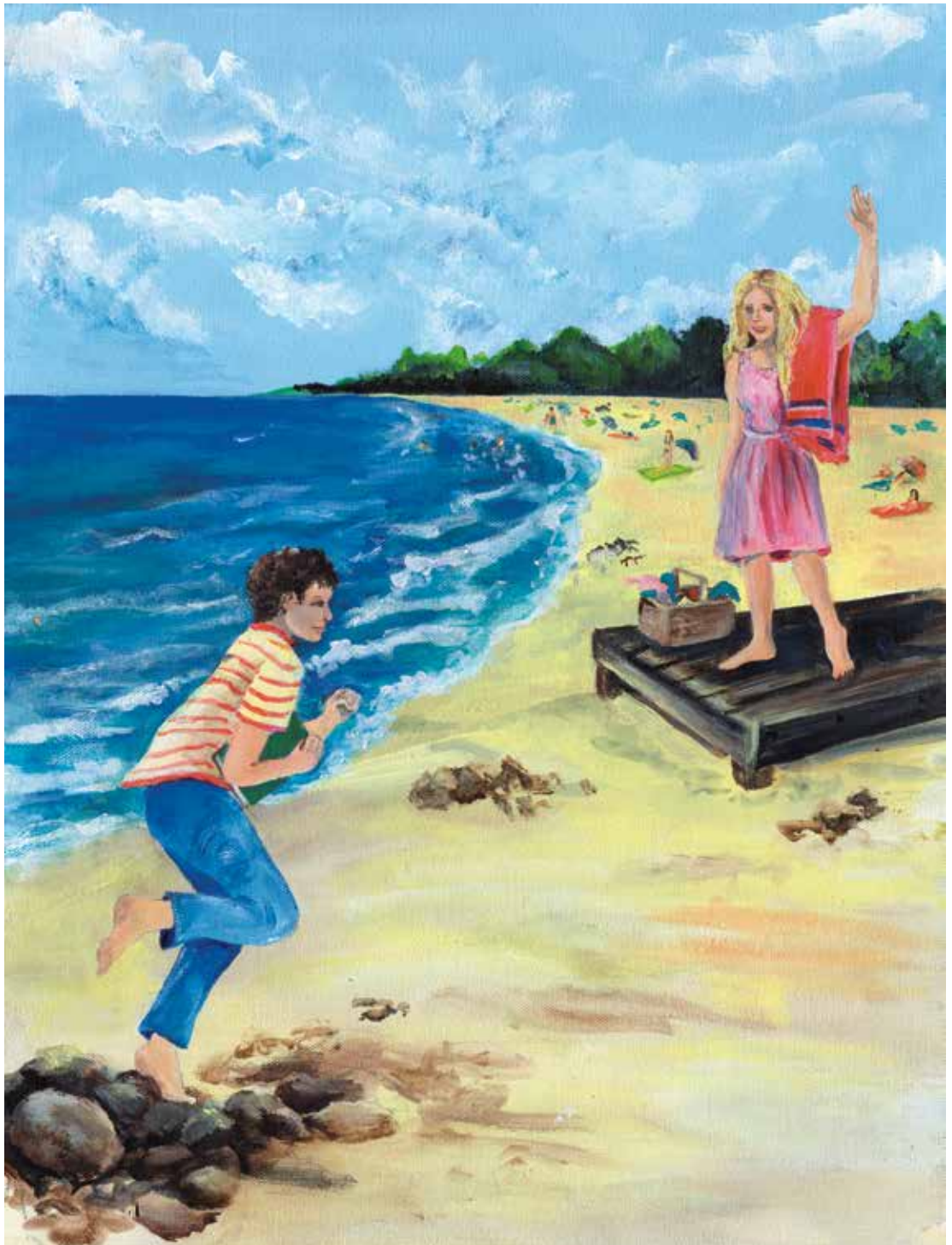
"You know, Annalise," he said, breaking the silence, "if there's one thing in life I've learned, it's this. If you try hard at something, no matter what it is, you can accomplish it. If you're afraid of forgetting, we'll figure out a way for you to remember, I promise."

I smiled. "Thanks, Adam. But how are you going to help me remember?" I put on my best quizzical face, and he laughed.

"You'll see," he said, and stood up, brushing the sand off his jeans. "Meet me back here in a week, the day before you move, and I'll have a surprise for you."

THAT WEEK was torture. I couldn't stand not knowing what Adam had for me. Every time I saw him on the beach he just winked and said, "You'll see."

When the day finally came, I was out on the beach, bright and early. It was Saturday, so I didn't have to worry about school, and I was on the beach at eight. I would have been out earlier, except for the fact that Mom kept insisting that I



He carried something in his hand, a book, I thought

shower and pack a lunch first. I grudgingly did so, throwing on a swimsuit and coverup, and carrying a picnic basket packed with enough for two, in case Adam wanted to have lunch with me. I soon found out that he did, for when he finally appeared, it was around eleven. He carried something in his hand, a book, I thought.

"Adam!" I called, waving my hand so that he'd see me among the umbrellas scattered about the beach.

"Lise!" he responded, his face lighting up in a smile. "Hi!" He ran up to me.

"What have you got?" I asked.

"Well you certainly are in a hurry, aren't you?"

I grinned, wondering what the book was. "I have lunch for you if you want any."

"Lunch sounds great." He sat down on the towel I had spread out. "Just as long as it isn't one of your bologna mustard sandwiches!" he added.

I laughed. "No, just PB&J for you."

"Oh good. Well then, shall we get started?" He unwrapped his sandwich and began to eat. After a couple bites, he paused and said, "Now. Assuming that you're still dying of curiosity, I'll show you what I have."

"Do you really think that I don't want to know what you brought? Show me!" I tried to grasp the book, but he snatched it away.

"Not so fast. I want to tell you something. Before you open this, I want you to know that I was not the only one who

worked to put together this book. Many other people in town who know you and are going to miss you helped me as well. We all hope you'll come visit over the summer. And you'd better, or I will personally fly over to Idaho, kidnap you, and bring you back here."

I smiled. "Definitely. I've already begun saving up for plane tickets."

"So, to show you how much we're going to miss you, we made you this. I made the book, but the townspeople took most

of the photos, and my little cousin, Rose, collected the shells. Everyone contributed a little something. We hope you like it!" He handed me the book.

Upon opening the book, I instantly felt my eyes filling with tears. It was a book with a worn canvas cover, wrapped with fishing net for decoration, and on the front was a photo of Main Street. The silver words on the cover read, "Annalise's Memory Book of Cape Cod."

I flipped through the pages, seeing photos that were snapshots of memories I was so afraid I would forget. Adam and me at Scoops, the ice cream parlor; everyone at the Fourth of July picnic; and a picture of me at the library, my head in a book. (I wondered who had taken that one.) I was so focused on the photos I didn't even notice until the fourth page that there was a different type of shell glued in place on each page, which gave the book a somewhat lumpy feel, with all the shells stick-

**I told him my greatest
fear. That I would forget
this wondrous place.**

ing through the worn pages. There were mussels, sand dollars, all kinds of shells. As I neared the end I couldn't bear it any longer. I threw my arms around Adam, giving him a great big hug. At first he was surprised, and then he hugged me back.

"You're welcome," he said, reading my thoughts. "You like it?"

"I love it!" I said, pulling back.

He picked up the book, placing it back in my hands. "Look at the last page."

I found that the last page was blank, so I flipped back towards the middle to find the last page that held photos and a shell. On it was a photo of the sunrise, and Adam's handwriting.

Annalise,

We're all going to miss you very much, and we want you to use this book to keep your memories of us and Cape Cod close, no matter where you are. Use the following blank pages to keep future memories safe too. Have fun in Idaho, and write often!

Signed,

Your friends from Cape Cod

Below that were the scribbled signatures of various people around town: Mrs. Moore, the post office lady, Roy, the town policeman, and of course, Adam. All my friends, from the four-year-olds I befriended on the beach to sixteen-year-old Catherine who tutored me in English, had signed too. How Adam had managed to find all their signatures in a week, I didn't know.

"Adam... this is just... wow... thank you so much!"

He smiled. "I don't know about you, but, in my opinion, the best way to spend the last six hours of daylight on your last day would be in the water."

"You got that right!" I responded. "Race you!"

He scrambled up and we ran towards the ocean, shedding articles of clothing until we were in nothing but our bathing suits. We reached the water and waded in to our waists. Then, I turned one last time to grin at Adam, before diving under a wave. ❁



My Grandfather's Words

By Kira Householder

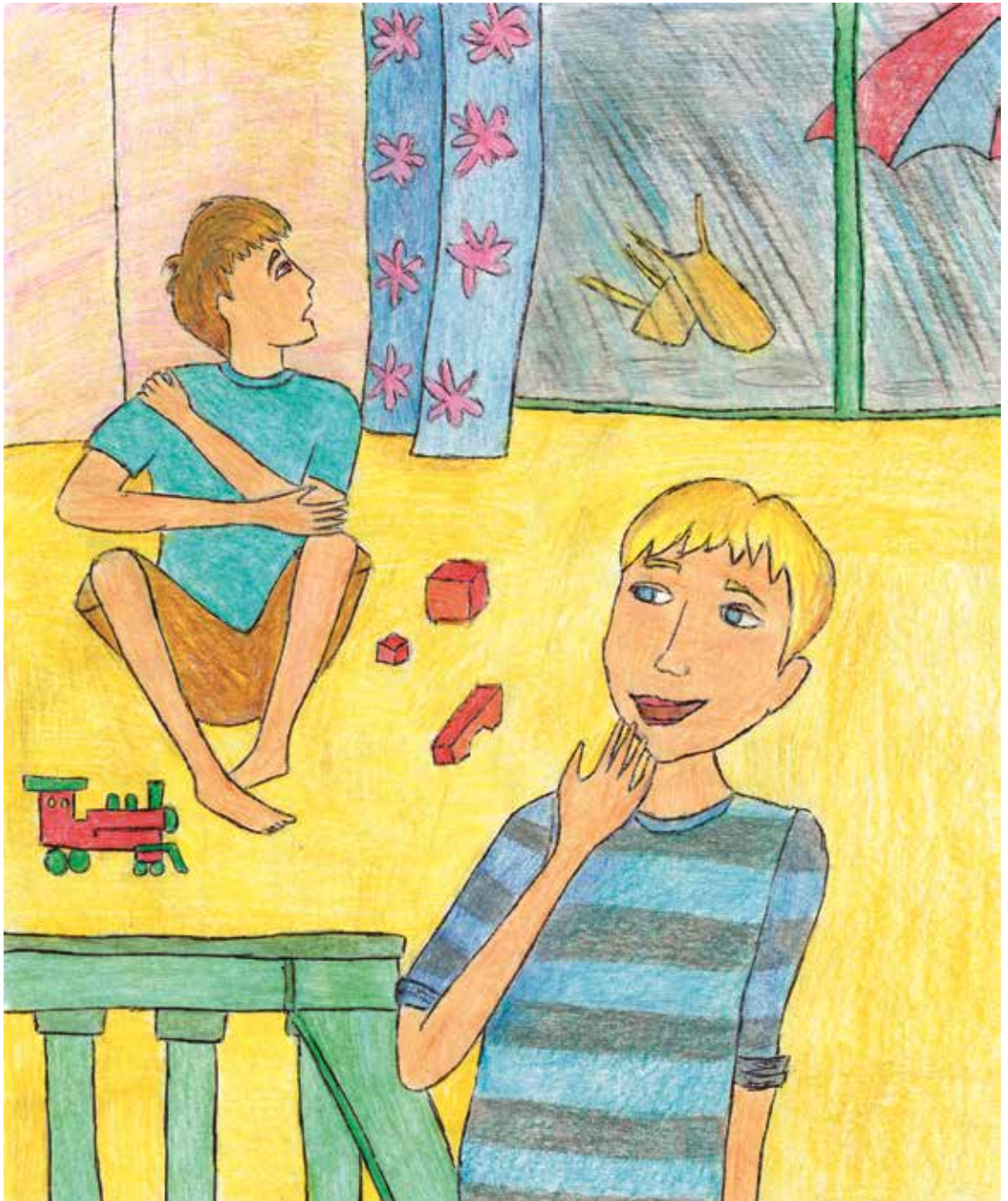
One day we were riding in the car
Talking about his work
He speaks so deeply about everything
Has a philosophical point of view.

Talks to me like an adult
As if I understand
The amount of wood needed to construct a frame
And how business works.

Nonetheless, I listen
And do so very intently
For I love to hear the sound of his words that are not only
Soft and gentle and beautiful
But have lessons hidden beneath them.



Kira Householder, 12
Scottsdale, Arizona



I couldn't help myself from laughing. I guess I like to annoy my little brother.

The Path to Acceptance

By **Logan Gusmano**

Illustrated by **Tina Splann**

I COULD SEE the silvery clouds roll in. I was headed out of our summer rental in the town of Saignon, France, to buy a baguette. As I walked down the narrow lane I saw the leaves blowing briskly and those marvelous clouds were moving faster all of a sudden. I knew that a storm was on its way. As I ran across the cracked brick stones I could hear the wind start to howl.

It just started raining ample raindrops when I returned to our townhouse with the crusty baguette. I walked in the door and up the helicoid staircase and reached Mom's bedroom. I could now hear the thunder bellowing in the distance. Mom was sitting on her bed, writing in her journal about our trip.

"Where is Quin?" I said curiously.

"He's up in the loft, playing with the train he got at the antique market yesterday," Mom said.

I turned and continued to walk the spiral staircase until I made it to the loft. As I reached the top I could now see hail raining down out the balcony glass doors. Quin gets frightened easily, so I had an idea to turn the storm into something bigger that would really scare him.

"Quin," I said.

"Yes?" Quin said.

Can you believe that it's raining hail?"

"Yeah," Quin replied.

"But be careful," I said.

"Why?" Quin said nervously.



Logan Gusmano, 11
New York, New York



Tina Splann, 11
Providence Village, Texas

"It is very dangerous, and it's big and..."

"Just tell me," Quin interrupted.

"It is the beginning of a tornado," I yelled, trying to make myself not laugh.

Suddenly there was a big crack of thunder. Hail was raining down. The hail was now the size of a golf ball! The storm was much more severe than I thought. The wind was howling, the ample raindrops were mixed with the hail so you couldn't tell what was hail and what was rain.

"I don't want to die!" Quin kept repeating and repeating.

I couldn't help myself from laughing. I guess I like to annoy my little brother. Quin gets very dramatic very quickly and I find it funny to see that, but this time it quickly became bothersome.

I walked down the creaky old wooden steps into the kitchen and left Quin alone, scared.

As I looked through the kitchen window, I could see rushing water careening through the streets. It wasn't a flood or anything like that, it was not even deep, but the darkness of the clouds made it look like it was deep. I could hear Mom speaking over the wind howling. In the distance I could also hear Quin screaming in terror. I had lost my patience because I realized Quin still can't take a joke. He can never seem to let things go. What surprised me was I could still hear Quin screaming two floors below. I felt the cold handle of the refrigerator as I looked for a drink.

Mom said in her sweetest voice, "Quin gets scared, you know. Quin is a really

sensitive little boy. Do you remember when we adopted him he was considerably more scared than any other child in his orphanage? He didn't want to be alone in the kitchen, the bathroom, or even his own room. Every time you make a simple joke, like the time when you said there was a monster in the closet, he feels scared and unsafe. Quin feels things in a more sensitive way than maybe you do."

"Yeah, but I can't deal with it," I snapped back.

"We all have something that scares us. Like you, Logan, you have a fear of bees, hornets, and wasps. How would you feel if no one understood you? Why don't you try and help Quin?" Mom said in a positive voice.

"But he is scared of everything, Mom," I said.

Mom's right eye went up. Mom just looked at me with this look that I call the *really* look.

I walked to the couch and flung myself on the soft cushions. I started to think about what Mom said and I remembered that a year ago when we went to France I had been stung by a wasp. We were walking up to Château de Saumur. I could smell the strong aroma of grapes in the air. I went to sniff the voluminous grapes and was instantly attacked by a wasp. Ever since that day I find it hard to trust any type of buzzing bug. The buzzing noise haunts me. Every time I hear that noise I am terrified. Sometimes Quin says I am overreacting, but he still seems to understand me. I can see that I am overreact-

ing. I keep my hood on when I am near a flower patch and I jump when I see a bee go near me. I wish I could stop this fear, but I can't seem to get over it. When I was screaming "BEES!" Quin did not complain or walk away. He helped me and understood my fear. He is my little brother. I am his big brother. I should be helping him, I thought, and I was a jerk for making him more scared than he might have been.

As I heard Quin continue to scream I felt bad, I felt really bad. I should have helped Quin when he really needed me. It was wrong of me to manipulate his fear to frighten him more. I felt myself running up the wooden stairs to Quin.

As I headed up the staircase I could see Quin crying. I needed to fix what I had done. I suddenly came up with a good idea that would take his mind off this crazy storm.

"Quin," I said, trying to be cheerful.

"What?" Quin said through his tears.

"It's just a storm, let's play survivor. We have to use things in the house to protect ourselves against the storm and survive," I said.

Quin's eyes widened with excitement.

"You're right!" Quin said, delighted with my idea.

We played while it continued to rain. The storm was our main entertainment. We ran around the house, turning off all the lights, and pretended we were hiding

from the storm. In the basement of our French house was an 800-year-old stone wine cellar. It had old wooden barrels that we pretended was our food supply. In that cellar was a stone shaft in the ceiling that was connected to Mom's bedroom. Quin would throw down important notes and items that we pretended would help us survive.

Quin and I repeatedly said, "Do not worry, we are going to survive this storm."

I was happy to see Quin happy. After thirty minutes had passed I knew my plan to distract Quin was working. We continued closing the curtains and hiding. He thought it was hilarious. Quin forgot all about being scared, and I liked that. I thought to myself that Quin is a very sweet and kind boy and it was wrong of me to make up something about a tornado that would scare him. I was wrong to do that to him.

When the storm finally began to die down we were curious if the umbrella on the balcony was still standing or if anything broke. We peeked out the glass door and saw a huge puddle and the umbrella was still standing. We played until the storm stopped. As a farewell to the storm we went out into the night. We could see the dark black clouds turning into a marvelous orange sunset. I put my arm around Quin's shoulder and whispered in his ear, "I love you, brother." 🍷

He is my little brother.

I am his big brother.

I should be helping him.

Book Review

By Lauren Vanden Bosch

The Running Dream, by Wendelin Van Draanen;
Knopf Books for Young Readers: New York,
2011; \$16.99



Lauren Vanden Bosch, 13
Grand Rapids, Michigan


HAVE YOU EVER seen a book on the shelf and known it was the perfect book for you even before you turned the first page? *The Running Dream* was like that for me. The moment I saw it on the shelf I knew instantly that I had to read it.

Jessica, age sixteen, loves to run more than anything else in the world. She can run a 55-second, 400-meter dash. But then everything changes. She loses her leg in a terrible accident. Faced with the impossibility of running, Jessica sinks into depression. Only the love and encouragement of her track team and a girl with cerebral palsy named Rosa can make her dream of running again come true.

This book touched the deepest feelings inside me. There was sadness and joy, pain and loss, hope and love, and sometimes a mixture of all of them. Jessica's voice was so honest and true that I felt as if she was a real person, even a friend, sitting beside me and telling me her story. She was easy to relate to; I found myself comparing my experiences to hers. She found her love of running by sprinting around the soccer field, so did I. She ran track, so did I. She cheers on her teammates, so did I. Wendelin

Van Draanen described the feelings of running so accurately too. I felt as if I was inside the story; it felt so real.

Jessica's determination also made me really admire her as a character. She showed determination when working with crutches and with a prosthetic leg. Even though she was often disappointed and frustrated with herself, she never lost her vision that she would run again. My favorite part of the story, however, was when Jessica had a crazy plan to run a 10-mile race pushing her friend Rosa in a wheelchair. She believed that people should see past Rosa's disability and appreciate her for who she really was, a kind, funny, cheerful, and incredibly smart girl. Jessica's strong will and strength were really inspiring. Even though running was painful, uncomfortable, and always really, really hard, she pushed through and found that she could do the impossible.

Overall, this story is unlike any other that I've read. During the course of the story I learned about prosthetics and about what you can do if you believe in yourself and in others. The chapters were short and swift and full of meaning, conveyed in simple, crisp, concise sentences. I liked how the book was also divided in sections as if it were a race, starting with "Finish Line" and ending with "Starting Line." If you are a runner, you must read this book because it will deeply impact you. 

Grandpa and the Chicken Coop

By Jack Zimmerman

Illustrated by Thomas Buchanan



Jack Zimmerman, 11
New York, New York



Thomas Buchanan, 11
Newalla, Oklahoma

MY GRANDPA HAS always loved to build and is a very handy man. He retired from his job as an electrician a few years ago. He has really big muscles and really big hands, so he can always lift something heavy. However, he still loves to build and continues to do it, but now only with those he loves. He has built a garage, a barn, and a trellis, and when I'm around I work with him.

I always thought to myself that one day I would build a project with him and I would show him how much fun I have doing them. The problem is he lives in California and I'm in New York, so I'm not around that much. My grandpa is always calling, saying how he is in the middle of a project that he is doing with my cousin Logan, who lives very close to him. I'm always jealous when I hear that and want to go over there and help. I didn't think he knew how much I loved to build and I didn't think he cared.

One time I was in the middle of doing my homework in third grade and my grandpa called.

"Hi son," he said in his deep voice.

"Hi Grandpa," I said in reply.

"Guess what!" he said in excitement.

"What?" I said, excited to know.

"Logan and I are building a barn. It's so exciting," he said.

Everything went silent. I slowly turned to look out the window. I was so upset and disappointed, but all I said was, "Cool. It must be a lot of fun." Then I said goodbye and hung up.



We just sat there looking at our final piece of art and didn't say much

I tried not to think about it and tried to finish my homework as the light in my room slowly started to dim as the sun went down. I did finish my homework, but the whole time I was thinking about our conversation. I just wanted to be alone. I didn't know what to do. The thing is, there was nothing I could do about it. My grandpa is so great and does everything I like to do, and for that reason I love him so much.

All I needed was just one project. Building is just very fun for me.

The summer after third grade I went back out to California. Grandpa and I were on our way to the store to get some

supplies. We were going to build a chicken coop. We went through the store getting one thing after another. I didn't do much because he was better when it came to getting supplies and he was also paying, so I let him do what he had to do. When we got back we started planning and putting the first steps together.

"Do you want to put the first few boards together or do you want to read the blueprint we just made?" I said.

"How about this? I will start to put the coop together as you read me the blueprint. You watch what I'm doing and when you think you can do it you tell me and we will switch," Grandpa said.

"Sounds good," I said.

We started to work on the coop and not long after I understood what he was doing and we switched. I started doing it myself until I made a mistake.

"Wait a sec, son. That's not how you do it. You have to hold the hammer like this and hit it on the nail like this."

"Oh, I get it now, Grandpa. Sorry."

"There is no need for a sorry, son. Mistakes are the only way to learn and the world would be so boring if there was no such thing as mistakes."

Each time I would make a mistake he would correct me and teach me how to do it right. That was what I loved most about him during that project. At the end of the day I couldn't believe how much I had learned in just a few hours.

I soon started to think that this project was more of a learning experience than just to build a coop with Grandpa. I felt like his goal was not by the end of the day to have a chicken coop, but to teach me the skill of building and to make sure I was having a fun day.

A few hours later we were done building the chicken coop. I went and got a bucket to sit on next to Grandpa.

The coop looked so shiny, like a brand new car. I could still smell the fresh paint emanating from the coop. The windows were so clean and the roof was on the most perfect slant I have ever seen. The bedding of hay for the chickens smelled like it was just cut a second ago.

Grandpa and I had built the coop together. We just sat there looking at our

final piece of art and didn't say much. One thing was for sure though, I was thinking how great this project was to me and it reminded me how much I love my grandpa and how much I need him, even though I don't get to see him often. He doesn't realize it and I didn't until now how much I have actually learned from him from just one simple project. I love him.

We sat there looking at the coop, just him and me. I couldn't believe what I saw. I had just built a chicken coop with my grandpa. One of my goals was done. Now, there I was looking at something I had finally got to do with my grandpa. I was so happy.

"Thank you, son," he said to me.

"Thank me for what? You're the one who has been teaching me. So thank you so much for everything."

"Thank you as well. You have also taught me something and..."

"What in the world could I have taught you?" I said, cutting him off. "You were the one teaching me this whole time. I never taught you anything."

"Well, son, what I was trying to say was that you have taught me that it is a lot more fun to do something with someone than by yourself. And it's especially fun when it's with your grandson."

"Oh, Grandpa. I love you so much," I said as I hugged him.

And for the rest of the time until my grandma screamed, "*Dinner!*" we looked at the chicken coop together as the sun set behind us.



The Chickens

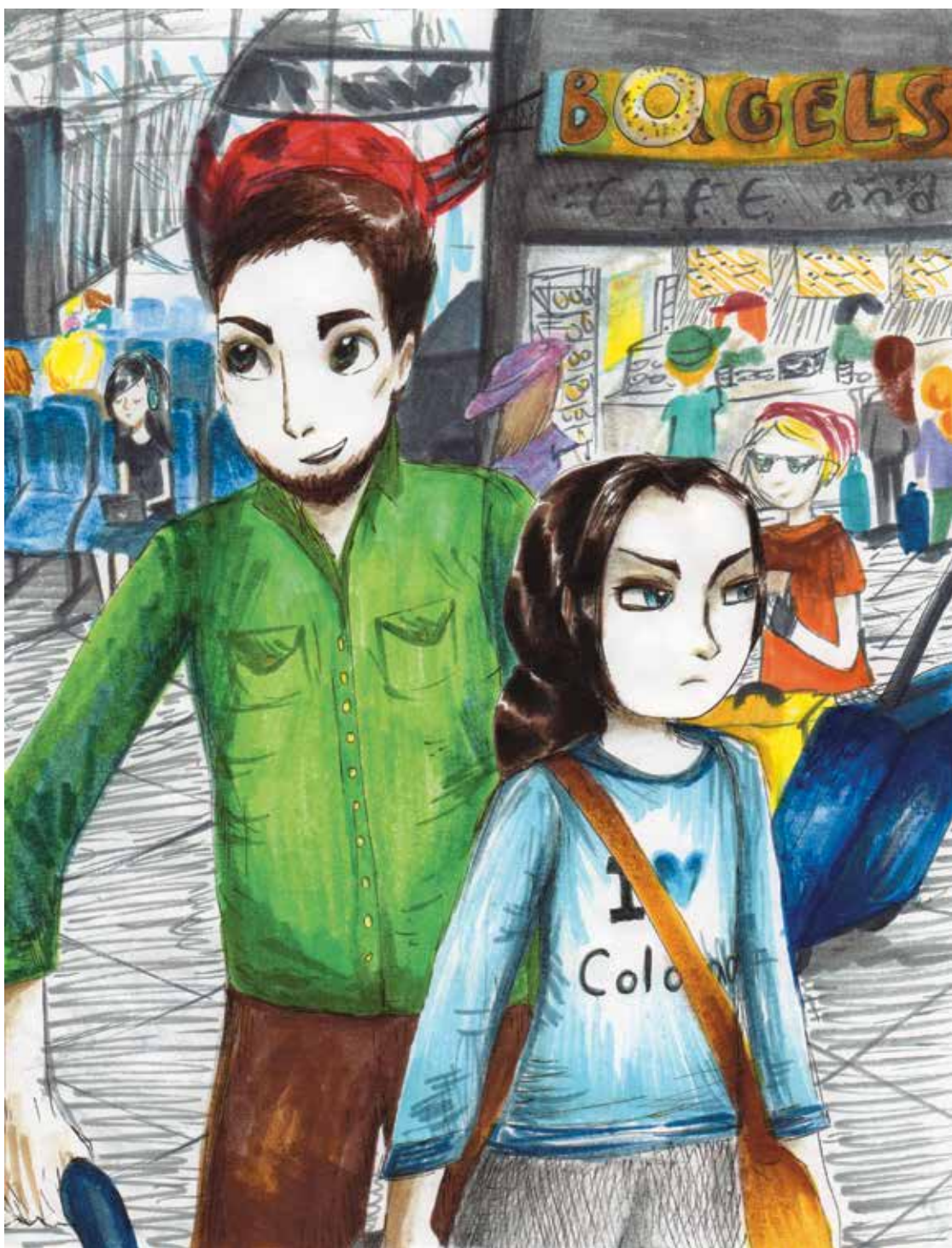
By Celie Kreilkamp

In a comic explosion of feathers,
the hens race to the safety of a compost pile.
I wave a dirty dish rag after them, a warning not to get
too close
to our first outside dinner of the year.
They start to creep forward,
combs waving,
lured by the plates of food we are bringing out.
I go to drastic measures, throwing the towel in their midst.
The hens raise their wings high,
and do a little flying sprint
out of the area,
shrieking indignantly.

After dinner I go out to the coop
and stroke them,
listening to their soft clucks
as they settle down for the night.
They slowly rock and shuffle around on the roost,
like they are putting themselves to sleep.
I give each hen a pat on the head,
then go back to the lit-up house,
In sharp contrast with the dark night,
leaving them to coo to each other until they fall asleep.



Celie Kreilkamp, 11
Bloomington, Indiana



As we make our way through the airport, Dad proceeds to tell me of his childhood here

Different City, Same Stars

By Abby K. Svetlik

Illustrated by Audrey Zhang

I JOLT AWAKE WHEN I hear the stewardess's too perky voice come over the plane's intercom system.

"We will be landing in New York in just about fifteen minutes. I hope you all have enjoyed your flight thus far..."

I zone out when she starts to ramble on about the weather conditions and time in New York. My dad realizes I'm awake and turns to me.

"Welcome home," he says. I give him a lame smile in return and hope he accounts its lack of cheeriness for sleepiness.

But on the inside, all of me is frowning. New York is not my home. It never really was and it never will be.

Colorado is home. Colorado was where I could lie on the roof in a sleeping bag and stare at the stars for hours. Colorado was where I kept a collection of newspaper articles and random doodles in a loose floorboard in my room. Colorado was where I grew up, despite the fact that I was born here, and where anything that ever mattered happened to me.

THE AIRPORT we touch down in is like any other. Filled with people, smelling like dry bagels and tasteless coffee, and crowded with suitcases rolling along always clean hallways. As we make our way through the airport, Dad proceeds to tell me of his childhood here, the things he did, and the neighborhood he grew up in.

I keep a few steps ahead of him so that he can't see the grimace that contorts my face. Dad is just beginning a speech that



Abby K. Svetlik, 12
Washington, D.C.



Audrey Zhang, 12
Levittown, New York

I'm sure will go on for at least ten more minutes about where we're moving in, and I can't stand it anymore.

"Stop," I say sternly, and it's obvious my dad is taken aback by my tone. "I'm sorry..." I say, trying to soften my voice, "I'm just... tired."

He nods and stops talking, but I'm sure he's continuing the conversation in his head. For the past six months, since the unimaginable happened, he's taken to filling up empty space with words; endless chatter and meaningless conversation. I think it's his attempt to keep his thoughts away from what happened, but there's no way he's not thinking about it.

The sudden death of your wife—and the mother of yours truly—is hard to ignore.

So it's not a huge surprise when he starts chatting again when we climb into the taxi.

"Oh, Sam! You and I, we're going to have the chance to start over here." There's an emotion in his voice that I can't pinpoint, but it makes me think of bitter, day-old coffee. "New York is where we belong. It's where I grew up, and where you were born. This is good for us, I promise." He reaches over to give my hand a reassuring squeeze, but I yank it away at his touch.

Dad sighs and keeps talking, but the thoughts that crowd my brain are louder than his words. I have the same lean

frame as my dad, but my features match my mother's. Creamy skin, dark hair, a small nose, and the same clear blue eyes that are the color of a cloudless summer day. But my mother and I have more in common than that. She and I both believe in living in the moment. Traveling, creating art, leaving a mark on the world—that

was her kind of thing. And New York is the place she would love to be, but instead of being here *with* her, I'm here *because* of her. Or more precisely, because of her death.

**New York is not my
home. It never really was
and it never will be.**

When my head clears, and I'm confident the tears will stay put, I tune back into real life. Dad's now pointing out specific locations and landmarks. The taxi driver keeps flicking his eyes up to the rearview mirror, eyeing Dad. He looks just as irritated with the never-ending chatter as I feel. Luckily for him, he doesn't have to deal with it as often.

Soon we are pulling up to the squat brick apartment building and I am relieved to escape the small taxi. The man who drove us stops the car with a slight lurch and walks around to the trunk. He hands us our suitcases and accepts the payment nicely enough, but says nothing and pulls away quickly.

The landlady who meets us at the door is a short old woman with hair that looks silver and brushes over her shoulders when she moves her head. Her eyes are wide and bright blue, like she's still

searching for something in her old age.

When we enter the small lobby area and set our stuff down, she introduces herself.

“Hello! I’m Ms. Fink, but please, please call me Rose.”

“Thank you, Ms. Fink. I’m...” my dad starts.

“Mr. Michelson and his daughter, Samantha,” she smiles warmly at us, and I feel welcomed, not just into the apartment building, but into this new life. My heart readily welcomes the feelings but I shove them away, telling (reminding) myself I do not belong here. “Welcome to Willow Falls Apartments,” she continues. “You found your way here well enough, I hope?”

“Yes. I was wondering...”

“Great!” Rose interrupts Dad again and I can’t help but smirk. Looks like she might give him a taste of his own medicine. “I’ll get your key,” she says, disappearing into an office on the left of a long hallway.

When she reappears, Rose is holding two dull-looking silver keys and hands them to my dad, telling him, “You’ll be in apartment 3B,” and pointing us towards the stairwell.

Calling the apartment building Willow Falls makes it sound luxurious, but it’s no more than a four-story row house stuck in the middle of a street full of average-looking homes. The kind of homes families would live in, I can’t help but think. I do my best to ignore the thought and focus on lugging my suitcase through the dimly lit stairwell. The suitcase jumps a little

each time I pull it over one of the black metal steps, and dad is grunting with the effort.

When we finally reach the third floor, we find ourselves standing on a square of pale green carpet that looks like it’s been here for ages. Facing forward, I look straight at our apartment. On my right is 3C, and to my left, 3A. My curiosity can’t help but nag at my thoughts, and I wonder if it’d be polite to ask Rose who lives in those apartments.

“Well, here we are,” Dad says, after we’ve been standing there for what feels like a little too long.

THE KEY CLICKS in the lock and the door swings open easily. The brightness comes as a shock to me. There is a large curtain-less window covering one wall and an infinite supply of sunlight streams in. It’s odd to see so much light in the room, because I somehow imagined the apartment to be as makeshift as the rest of the building feels, with thick curtains and a half-inch of dust covering everything. Instead, the counters and other surfaces are clean and the blank walls are just that—perfectly blank.

I leave my suitcase in the first room and dash into the first door I see. Like the room I just stepped out of, a window covers most of one wall, and light pours in. The room itself is not very large, but the view out the window makes me do a double take. Because we’re on the third floor, I can see across the rooftops, and each line of houses looks like it’s trying to



"There would be no stars without the darkness of the night to let them shine"

stand taller than the other.

"Hey, you like this room?" a voice asks, and I whip around to find my dad standing in the doorway.

"Yeah," I reply, unsure of what to say.

"Then it's all yours."

"Really!" I exclaim, truly looking forward to something for the first time in a while.

"Absolutely," he says, and gives me a sad smile. For the first time since Mom died, I realize how hard this has been on my dad, and how selfish it was of me to ignore this.

"I know this is hard," he continues, "and it's hard for me too, but it'll get better."

I just nod along and choke down tears, and when I can't keep them down anymore, I let the salty drops escape, one by one, until it's a river that won't stop flowing. I suddenly feel my dad's strong arms around me, but I don't force him off; I welcome his embrace.

"I'm sorry," I whisper, and I am.

AFTER A WEEK of being in New York and a week of moving in, the apartment is feeling cozier and more like home, but I still have trouble considering it to be home. Since we arrived, I've


only spent time with my dad or Rose or taking walks through our little neighborhood alone. My time with Rose has been when I'm happiest, and she's become a confidant of sorts. I feel comfortable telling her about my mother and where we moved from, and about my insecurities

about being in a new place. She's told me about how happy her grandchildren make her, and where she grew up, and her desire for adventure.

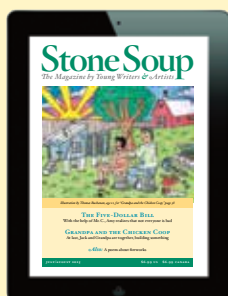
Just yesterday, I told her everything I missed about Colorado; seeing

the stars at night at the top of my list. She took me up to the roof that night. We lay there for an hour, but the lights of the city drowned out any stars, and the sky remained an inky blue. I appreciated what Rose was trying to do for me, but the sky was nowhere near as beautiful as it was back home, and it only made me miss it more.

"Rose, thank you, but... the stars... I don't see..."

"Sam, what you don't see is what I'm trying to tell you," Rose replied. "There would be no stars without the darkness of the night to let them shine, just as there would be no love in your heart without pain to make the feeling special." 

**For the first time
since Mom died,
I realize how hard this
has been on my dad.**



Bonus Materials

On Our Website

- Editor Gerry Mandel blogs about the featured story from each issue.
stonesoup.com/blog
- A feature about child composer Jahan Raymond, including video and sheet music.
stonesoup.com/jahan
- Hundreds of stories, poems, and book reviews from past issues—FREE in the *Stone Soup* Archive!
stonesoup.com/archive

On Our YouTube Channel

- *Stone Soup* authors and illustrators talk about their work.

Find *Stone Soup Magazine* at youtube.com

In Our iPad Edition

- Bonus stories and poems.
- Creative writing activities.

Find *Stone Soup Magazine* for iPad in the App Store, or subscribe to the digital edition of *Stone Soup* at stonesoup.com/subscribe

Honor Roll

Welcome to the *Stone Soup* Honor Roll! We receive hundreds of submissions every month by 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.

— *The Editors*

Stories

Jem Burch, 12
Miranda Burgos, 9
Darcy Coleman, 13
Livia E. Daggett, 11
Anna Joy Dreher, 12
Caitlin FitzMaurice, 11
Sylvie R. Fitzgerald, 11
Eugénie Foss, 11
Elizabeth Galett, 11
Noah Benjamin Getz, 11
Charles R. Hanhurst, 11
Sabrina Katzman, 10
Madeleine G. Koetke, 13
Lily E. Labella, 11
Sylvia Lund, 11
Trevor Marquez-McCook, 11
Mikaela Millan, 12
Jackie Prata, 13
Nora E. Roscoe, 11
Eleanor Scott, 13
Naomi Rio Solwren, 11
Kyla Speizer, 13
James Francisco Tilson, 12

Poems

Charles Abemayor, 7
Stella Aldrich, 11
Annabelle Baird, 10

Abigail Rose Cargo, 12
Noah Connolly, 9
Katie Elizabeth Cunneen, 13
Peter Frates, 13
Kristen Garcia, 11
Ellie Gottlieb, 11
Maggie Gray, 11
Lizzie Johns, 12
Dianne Kim, 13
Milène Klein, 12
Victoria Krylova, 13
Josephine O'Grady, 13
Ashlyn Kate Poppe, 11
Claire Shang, 12
Raina Waldvogel, 11

Book Reviews

Ryan Beam, 13
Hana Doliente, 13
Caroline Loscalzo, 13
Ester Luna, 12
Victoria Mendez, 13

Artwork

London Keigley, 11
Clare McElhaney, 13
Shreya Sinha, 13
Louisa Surtz, 13
Madeline Thompson, 13

The Stone Soup Store

Anthologies

For kids who love to read and collect books, we offer anthologies of writing by young authors from past issues of *Stone Soup*. Choose from *Friendship*, *Animal*, *Fantasy*, *Historical*, *Family*, *Sports*, and *Poetry*. Or collect the whole set and save!

Stone Soup Anthologies, \$7.50 each



Journals & Sketchbooks

For young writers and artists, we offer a line of journals and sketchbooks featuring favorite *Stone Soup* illustrations on the covers. Great for jotting down story ideas, snippets of dialogue, reflections on daily life; and everything from quick sketches to detailed drawings.

Journals & Sketchbooks, \$7-\$8 each

Order online at StoneSoupStore.com