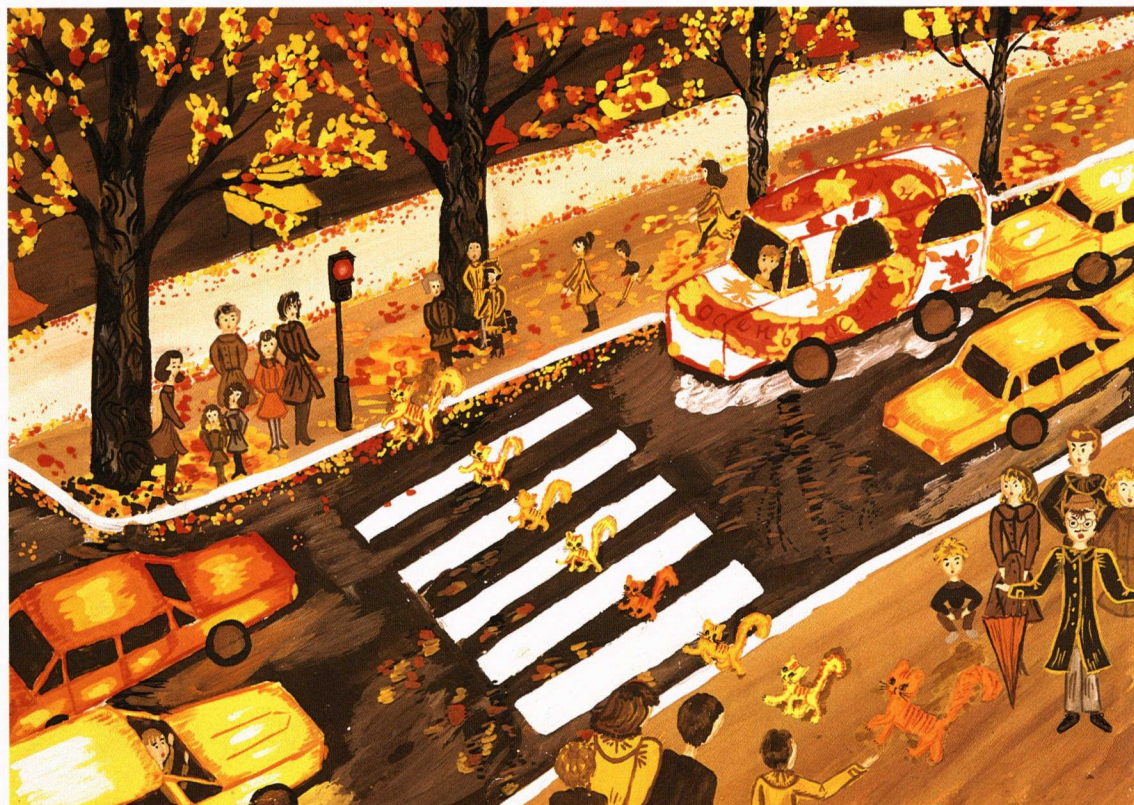


Stone Soup

The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists



"Stop! A Family Is Crossing the Road," by Anja Chernomonetz, age 11, Moldova

FRIENDS FOREVER?

Could Michael's best friend and his sister be flirting with each other?

A GOLDEN DOG AFTER ALL

Ruthie discovers that breed isn't everything in a dog

Also: Illustrations by Sofia deGraff-Ford and Ashley Burke

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2006

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Stone Soup

The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists

VOLUME 35, NUMBER I
SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2006

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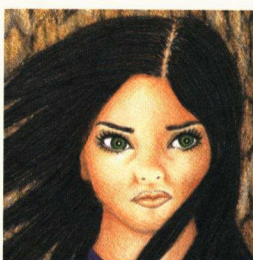
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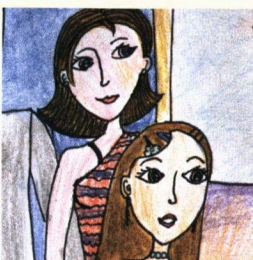
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Stone Soup

The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists

WELCOME TO ALL OUR READERS, old and new! We've had the pleasure of publishing *Stone Soup* for over 30 years. It is our belief that, by presenting rich, heart-felt work by young people the world over, we can stir the imaginations of our readers and inspire young writers and artists to create.



Jessie Moore, 12

Contributors' Guidelines

Stone Soup welcomes submissions from young people through age 13. For our complete guidelines, please visit our Web site at www.stonesoup.com.

Story and poem authors: Please do not enclose a self-addressed envelope with

your submission. Send copies of your work, not originals. If we decide to consider your work for a future issue, you will hear from us in four to six weeks. If you do not hear from us, it means we were not able to use your work. Don't be discouraged! Try again!

Book reviewers: If you are interested in reviewing books for *Stone Soup*, write editor Gerry Mandel. Tell her a little about yourself and the kinds of books you like to read. Enclose an SASE for her reply.

Artists: If you would like to illustrate for *Stone Soup*, send Ms. Mandel three samples of your artwork, along with a letter saying what you like to draw most. Enclose an SASE for her reply. We need artists who can draw or paint complete scenes in color. Please send color copies of your work, not originals.

All contributors: Send us writing and art about the things you feel most strongly about! Whether your work is about imaginary situations or real ones, use your own experiences and observations to give your work depth and a sense of reality. Send your work to *Stone Soup*, Submissions Dept., P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. Include your name, age, birthdate, home address and phone number.

Cover: "Stop! A Family Is Crossing the Road" was loaned to *Stone Soup* by the International Museum of Children's Art in Oslo, Norway. Established in 1986 by Rafael and Alla Goldin, the museum is a wonderland of floor-to-ceiling art by children from over 150 countries. Special thanks to Angela and Alla Goldin.

The Mailbox



LBP, 9

I think your magazine is most wonderful. I love all of the stories and illustrations in it, but I have a few favorites out of everything I've seen. The story "Mrs. Will Baker," by Kyle Eichner [May/June 2004] was so touching. It almost made me cry, though not quite, as I don't cry easily. I was touched by the careful telling of the story, and I thought it was very neat that it's based on a true story. It's so tragic. I also thoroughly enjoyed "Tripod," by Caitlin Peterson [May/June 2004]. It was a wonderful telling, and it made me sad that they didn't see Tripod again. The illustrations, by Melissa Moucka, were amazing and beautiful. And the illustrations by Jana Bernard to "The Tale of Tawret," written by Emily deLisle [July/August 2005], were wonderful. It's hard to believe a ten-year-old drew that, it's so beautiful, especially the hippo one. My mum thought a sixteen-year-old drew it.

CLEMY OBERST, 11
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

See Jana's new illustrations for the story on page 23 of this issue.

I would like to inform *Stone Soup* readers of my opinion on Katherine Long's book review, on *The Waterless Sea*, and her beliefs concerning sappy fantasy. I agreed with her completely on many accounts, but I felt quite annoyed when she mentioned her consideration of *Eragon* and *Eldest* being on the brink of being sappy fantasy tales. I do not speak without proof. Katherine listed her requirements for sappy fantasy, and I believe that these books fit none of them. For one thing, one of the main characters is beautiful, but this is simply an important part of the story, and a way Mr. Paolini describes the vanity within her elfin race. The one typical fairy-tale creature

that Katherine lists does happen to be the elves; but the author only uses the name "elves" and changes everything else stereotypical of them. They are very different from most other elves in storybooks. Also, *Eldest* begins with Eragon stepping over the body of a dead urgul in the first paragraph. I know both of us are entitled to our opinion, Katherine (and *Stone Soup* readers), but please take mine into consideration.

ISABEL BARTHOLOMEW, 10
Salt Lake City, Utah

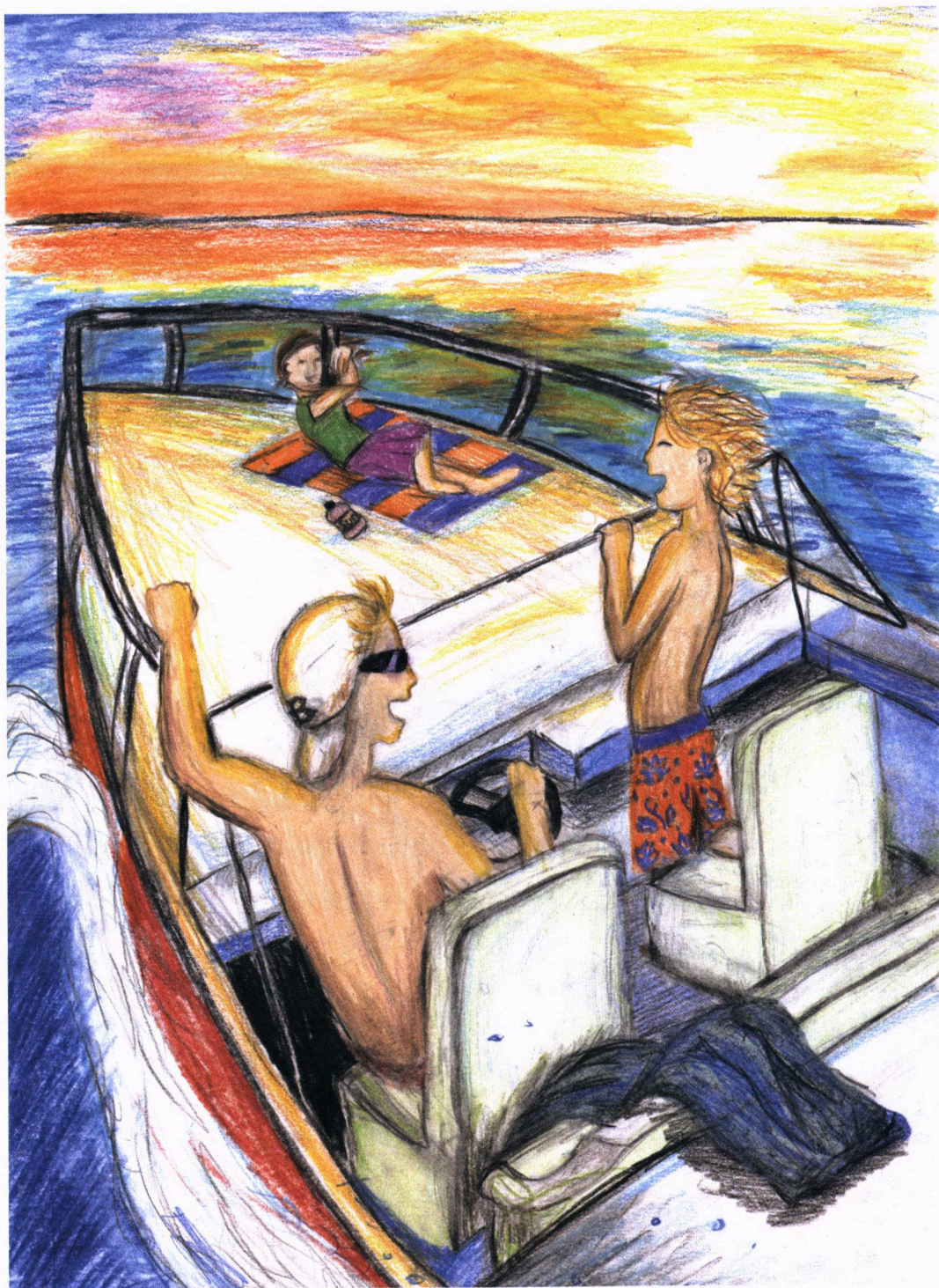
When I got the March/April 2006 issue of *Stone Soup*, I was pretty shocked. On the cover there is a picture of somebody killing a tiger. I have been to India three times and my mom has been five times. Our main purpose is for wildlife conservation. I have been to two national parks there, Corbett and Ranthambhore. Every time I see a nice picture of a tiger I smile. I love those big cats. And I love *Stone Soup*. My book review was even published in the May/June 2006 issue. But to see a boy's drawing of somebody killing a tiger was way too much. There are people in India and other places trying to save the last tigers. Why would an international children's writing magazine have a picture of a dying tiger on the cover?

JULIA WORCESTER, 11
Bronx, New York

We understand how you feel and we agree with you. There is no excuse for hunting tigers. The painting on our cover illustrates a classic Chinese story. While walking home late at night, after drinking at an inn, Wu Song was attacked by a tiger. He killed the tiger in self-defense; he was not purposefully hunting tigers.

All the work mentioned in The Mailbox can be found on our Web site: www.stonesoup.com.

Note to our readers: Send us your letters! We are especially interested in detailed comments about specific stories, poems, book reviews, and illustrations. We'd also like to receive anecdotes (150 words or less) about interesting experiences you'd like to share with our readers. Send letters to The Mailbox, *Stone Soup*, P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. Include your name, age, address, and phone number.



We must have been going fifty, maybe sixty miles per hour, and I loved every minute of it

Friends Forever?

By Michael Scognamiglio

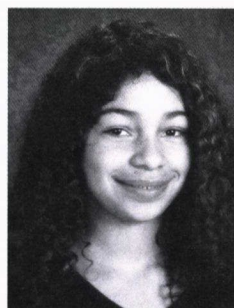
Illustrated by Sofia deGraff-Ford

“**W**HEEEE!” We must have been going fifty, maybe sixty miles per hour in his new Whaler speedboat, and I loved every minute of it. Janet, lying down in the bow to perfect her supermodel tan, gripped onto the handrails at this sudden shift of speed. I laughed next to Jesse, my six-foot-one, fifteen-year-old friend from two houses down. His sandy-blond hair was erupting from his worn Boston Red Sox cap that looked like it went through just as much abuse as the team itself. His emerald eyes were shielded by a brand new, gleaming pair of black Oakleys so as to impress the ladies. I on the other hand was uncomfortably placed on the driver’s seat next to him, attempting to look half as cool. I strained my eyes behind the dashboard and I could barely make out our destination in the distance.

I stepped off the *Kiss My Bass* and lingered on the dock as Jesse fastened the bow rope to the dock post. My fifteen-year-old sister, Janet, a brown-haired, fashion-loving, shoe-collecting diva, was right behind me, sporting a J-Crew skirt and an Anthropology T-shirt. Then I noticed her earrings, sparkling like tiny suns dangling from her earlobes. *Why has she suddenly started wearing earrings?* I thought to myself. *Who is she trying to impress? It’s not like we’re in the city... we’re on a boat heading into a fisherman’s diner!* However, the thought of melt-in-your-mouth, luscious, buttermilk pancakes quickly took over my mind and I had to cup my hand up to my mouth to stop the cascading drops of drool. Jesse jogged up the walkway, slowly putting his wife



Michael Scognamiglio, 13
Saddle River, New Jersey



Sofia deGraff-Ford, 13
Duncan, British Columbia,
Canada

beater over his bare chest, and I thought I saw Janet's stare linger for a couple of seconds before she looked down at her feet.

You see, the story of our friendship is a complicated one and may not be for the weak of heart. Back in the day, when I was a mere six years old, I met Jesse on the sandy shoreline of Wingaersheek beach. He looked a lot like me, only two years older with some buck teeth, but I didn't care and we soon became two peas in a pod. One day I brought him to my humble abode, and we ran into my sister. Coincidentally, the two knew each other from sailing. However, they were not buddies. Jesse would tease her incessantly and Janet hated him. The awkwardness that followed was so tangible it was hard to breathe. In the following summers, Janet and Jesse warmed up to each other, but it was obvious that Jesse and I were closer buddies than him and Janet. I selfishly enjoyed this knowledge, but that would all end soon.

Jesse taught me everything about sports, girls, video games, baseball cards, and everything in between! Soon, Janet became accepted into our Rat Pack, and we'd all hang out together. But recently, I started to feel that maybe I was becoming the outcast...

We walked through the rickety, weather-beaten door of Charlie's Restaurant. The jingle-jangle of the two bells taped to the front door caught the attention of the waitress and she pointed us to a corner booth. I slid down the bouncy seat, and Jesse followed behind me as Janet sat

opposite from him, directly opposite. A rumbling feeling erupted from my stomach, my calling card for hunger. Or was it something else? I ordered my buttermilk pancakes and Janet and Jesse decided to split a short stack of chocolate chip pancakes. "You like chocolate chip pancakes?" my sister giddily exclaimed. "Me too!"

Suddenly, they started to talk non-stop and every time I tried to get a word in edgewise, I was cut off by banter of shoes or high school. *What has happened to our friendship? Our gang?* And then I was struck with the most hideous, repulsive, barf-inducing thought. *Do—do my friends LIKE each other? Oh—oh no, it can't be!* But even as I denied this horrible idea, the two were having a staring contest and my sister laughed the most girlish giggle I had ever heard from her. My heart sank as our waitress named Pam set out my steaming, juicy set of carb-filled happiness. The two clanged their forks together as I tried to bury my heart-broken face into my cup of milk.

I walked alone down Wingaersheek Beach, the same beach where Jesse and I used to practice football plays in the sand and where we would point out all of the beach babes soaking up the rays. The clouds had swallowed the sun, leaving only a dull shine on one end of the beach. Every step I took, I could not believe my luck (or lack thereof). All of the signs, how did I miss them? Their lone walks together when I was at tennis, her always dressing up nice even when we were eating pizza, Jesse always calling and asking for Janet instead of me, I felt so alone. He



With each round of the pedals I felt more confident that this was the right thing to do

was my best friend, the only one I had, and I was losing him and there was nothing I could do to stop it.

But, maybe it was time I met someone else, someone my own age. There were the Silverman kids on the next street over; one of them looks around thirteen. Maybe it's time that I took control, to stop feeling alone and left out. I ran up my beach path, snapped on my sandals, slammed on my helmet, and biked to the next street over. With each round of the pedals I felt more confident that this was the right thing to do. I was sick of wasting away my summer

with two kids who thought of me as an annoying little brother rather than a friend. Quickly I skidded to a stop, kicking up flecks of dust, sand, and rubble in front of my new destination. Then, I started to second-guess myself. *Maybe this isn't a good idea. I mean, maybe I'm all wrong about this. This is foolish; I'm being a baby.* I looked up at the blue beach house with its quaint patio furniture and the brightly glowing doorbell. I looked down the gray, rocky street leading to the main road.

I had never heard a more beautiful doorbell. ❁

Firefly Sky

By Jennifer Hu



Jennifer Hu, 13
Hummelstown, Pennsylvania

The fields are a wonder in summertime:
Midnight black like the sky,
With twinkling lights like stars.

What are those lights?
Hundreds of fireflies fluttering about,
Tiny and so nimble.
Their lights shine on and off,
Making the field like shiny sequins,
Like moonshine dancing off the sea.

I run out into the field,
The half-grown wheat scratching my legs,
The ground soft and damp,
The air humid and fresh.

The fireflies dart away from me,
Intimidated by my presence,
But I don't mind.
I watch them from a distance.

They float above the wheat,
Like bright candles in the field.
Glancing up at the heavens,
I see the stars,
Bright candles in the sky.

This is the moment
When Heaven and Earth meet:
The stars in the sky are the stars on the ground.

How strange it seems
That something as small as fireflies
Can bring these two vast kingdoms
Together as one.



As I grew older on the farm in Greenland, I rode more and more

Cherish Road

By **Molly Morabito**

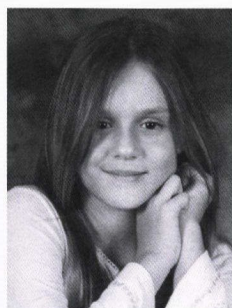
Illustrated by **Caley Liptak**

I WAS SEVEN when I first worked up the courage to get on the back of a horse. Not that it needed too much courage to climb aboard a twenty-year-old pony who was not even five feet tall. It was at one of those pony rides at the county fair, nothing special. Me and the little pony, named Cash, walked once around a little paddock, me holding the mane with white knuckles, and the old man who ran it leading the little horse. After the first trip around, I decided I had had enough, and I climbed down. My mom was putting the digital camera back in her purse; she had just snapped a picture of me on top of Cash, and my dad beaming brightly through his beard. My parents then took me to get some cotton candy and ride the merry-go-round. When I climbed onto the deck of the ride, I chose the white horse with a harness of flowers and chipped paint. I had ridden that one since the first summer of coming to the county fair; it had always made me feel magical. But as the horse went up and down, I found that it couldn't replace the sensation of a living creature below me, my body moving with it, even if I had been terrified.

That was probably the most important day of my life. That was the day I decided to ride. The very next summer, I was already cantering. And the summer after that, I got my first horse. I named her Cherish, though while I was riding, I called her Cher. She was sixteen hands tall, and was two when we got her. She had a buckskin coat and was my perfect companion. I told her more than I told my friends. She stayed in our little barn



Molly Morabito, 11
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



Caley Liptak, 11
Harleyville, South Carolina

behind our house, and was with us when we moved to Kentucky. I still remember my anxiety about leaving her alone in a cramped trailer behind us. But the seven-hour drive was completely worth it. We moved from our little house in the country of Sewickley, Pennsylvania, to the rolling pastures of Greenland, Kentucky. Dad was gameskeeper for a property owned by Mr. Wester, the owner of the legendary racing stud, Black Thunder. Black Thunder had sired nearly seven other racing legends. Now, in his old age, the ten-million-dollar horse shared a pasture with Cherish. I always pretended they were boyfriend and girlfriend.

As I grew older on the farm in Greenland, I rode more and more. I became a very good rider, and was always winning trophies and such at little shows scattered around the area. The shows were my mom's idea, I never really cared for dressage or jumping on Cherish. I wasn't like the girls at school, they claimed that dressage was for proper ladies, or that jumping made them feel like they were flying. I could jump and do dressage just fine. But what really got my heart racing was not dressage or jumping, but racing.

I needed to run. I needed to race. At the stable where I rode and was instructed, we had a little thing called Game Sundays. Now, I didn't have time to ride every day, no matter how much I wanted to. But I did ride on the weekend, so I was there for Game Sunday. On that day, the kids riding could choose a game to play on horseback, like polo, or racing. Of course

my vote was always for racing, and sometimes it won. And during those times, I truly knew what was so wonderful about riding. While Cherish ran her hardest, time seemed to slow. I could feel her every movement, every little increase in muscle tension, I could hear her breathing and my breath came in and out to match hers. We won almost always. My thrill of the race only increased as time wore on. Soon, I was pressing my parents to enroll me in county-fair races, instead of wasting time on dressage and jumping. After about a month of nagging (not mentioning the hours of chores I did to make Mom pleased), they finally agreed to enter me in one cross-country race. It wasn't much of one, only a quarter mile through the pasture owned by Edgar Greenwell, but at least it was something. I remember the day of the race was clear and sunny, perfect for racing. I could see the finish line, an orange sign stretched across the small space between Mr. Greenwell's house and barn. It read, "Finish." I apologize for talking about the finish line so obviously. I'm not questioning your intelligence of the word. But while Cherish and I were lining up on the starting line, I could only see that one thing. When the pop gun bang rang out, I gave Cherish a nudge. I believe still to this day that Cherish loved to run. She did that day. All it took was a nudge, and she was off, running as fast as possible. There was a gelding who was leading, but Cher and I were right behind him. Cher kept her pace the whole half. I figured that was all she had, she couldn't

run any faster, but I was wrong. Around halfway there, she began to run faster. I could feel her body aching to move faster and faster, and she did. We slowly began to pace the gelding, whose rider probably couldn't tell whether we were going faster or if they were going slower. Then Cherish broke free. It was as if she was breaking free of a thin layer of film; now she could really run. We ended up winning the race. My parents, always supportive, were thrilled. I took the little medal that was the prize home. I set it apart from my other winnings. I put it in the barn next to Cherish's stall. That way, every time I saddled up, I could see it, and remember our first run.

IT WAS THE biggest cross-country race in the state. I had won the local and the county cross-country races. I won the local first place and the cross-country third, and now I was going to the regional semifinals. If I could win this, it would be straight on to the states and then to country. Truth be told, I couldn't decide if I wanted to be a racer for a career, or to pursue becoming a dancer, which had been my dream for a while. However, I was only dumbfounded by this for a while because, after winning the local, I easily chose riding over ballet. So now, I was waiting for the weeks of summer to pass, waiting for that day of June 14, 2005, when the Junior Regional Semifinal Cross-Country Race would take place. And almost every day of the week (except Sunday, swim meet) I was practicing on Cher, out in the pasture,

running over green hills and jumping over creeks. Every day she seemed to get faster and faster. I couldn't wait for the race.

On the day of the race, I woke up at six o'clock, even though the starting line was only a five-minute drive south. I got up and went to see Cherish. My beautiful horse had her back facing me when I came in; she was looking out the window. I waited patiently as I watched her ears turn so that even though her head wasn't facing me, her ears were. "You excited, Cher?" And Cherish turned so I could see her eyes, normally brown, filled with fire. "Really?" I smiled. "Me too."

I lined up on the starting line. There were seven other horses and riders in the race, they had worked as hard as I to get here, I gave them credit. But in my heart, I knew the medal was mine. My breath came synchronized with Cherish. We both stared ahead, and the world quieted. It was me, and my horse. The pistol shot rang. I didn't even knee Cher. She was off, running her fastest, I couldn't even believe it myself. But there she was, tearing away. The race was four miles long, and there was a check-up every half mile. Cher and I were already first, and soon, as we entered the forest path, the world closed around us. I loosened. I wasn't going to push Cher. She knew her limit, and she also knew if she could beat it. Instead, I concentrated on steering. I had a map, as well as necessary emergency gear in my saddle pack. The map was useless, I had memorized the direct route. I knew every landmark to look for. I knew the track well enough



The pistol shot rang. I didn't even knee Cher. She was off, running her fastest

to know a shortcut. It wasn't cheating, but few racers knew about it. I decided to take it, as we passed a well-disguised deer path. I slowed Cherish to a canter, deer paths can be tricky, but we had to keep our lead. Suddenly, Cher stumbled. I heard a loud crack, but I was soon sailing through the air and couldn't see anything but the ground. I hit with a dull thud. My head was swimming and I could barely hear Cher hit too. I lay like that for a few minutes. Maybe it was a half hour. I was half-expecting my mom to come and pick me up, or give me a Band-Aid or something. But as I watched the sky begin to get brighter with the coming of noon, no one came. I sat up. Stars danced in front of my eyes, but what I could make out made me stand and walk. Cher was on the ground, breathing heavily. I could see sweat gleam through her skin. It took me a moment to realize her front leg was broken. I immediately took action. I undid the girth and pulled the saddle off Cher's back. Then I rolled my horse onto her side so as to make her more comfortable. I took off my sweatshirt and put it under her head. Then I spoke to her gently and stroked her, and braided her mane until she had calmed down a little. Then I unpacked our emergency tote. There were bandages, and Neosporin, but no other first-aid things. Instead, I found crackers, little rations of meat, and a large bottle of water. Plus, there was my map. I took it out and looked at it. My finger moved to the shortcut. It had been hard for me to find, what if no one else could even do that? I was be-

ginning to feel panic. Usually, the woods was a nice place to me, but right now, every bird call made me jump, and the wind in the trees frightened me. I tried to shake away my fear and returned to aiding Cher. I gently, cautiously, began to set her leg. If there hadn't been a course on veterinary emergency skill, I wouldn't have done this, it's too dangerous for the horse to have an inexperienced person setting their leg. First I felt it. There was an odd bump below her knee, and I judged that the bone had snapped in her shin. Carefully, I got behind Cher's back to make sure she wouldn't kick me and set it. Cher whinnied in pain and tried to stand up, but I held her down, desperately. I began to cry. Fighting back more panic, I wrapped her leg with a bandage. Cher was breathing heavily again, but the worst part was over. She would be OK if I could get her a vet, soon. I returned to stroking my horse and relaxing her, but it seemed to take forever for her to calm down again. I stood up and walked over to where my things were unpacked. I picked up the bottle of water and brought it over. I poured some into Cher's mouth, but I doubt that helped at all. I looked back at the pack. There was one thing I had left in there. It was a flare. It had instructions on it, but I was still nervous as I walked away to set it off. Aiming carefully, I shot. There was a deafening bang as I ran away and dove into a crouch, like those spies in the movies do when there's a big explosion. Finally, convinced that it was all right, I looked. The flare had gone straight up in the air and

burst into flame. Kneeling, I prayed that someone would find us soon.


The rest of the afternoon I tended to Cher. I had been waiting for a while for the rescue team, and was beginning to think of a new plan when there was a sound behind me. I twirled around.

"Yep, we got her, over..." a voice came from the trees. A man with a helmet and ranger uniform stepped out of the trees. "You all right, missy?" he asked, walking over.

I nearly fainted with delight. "Are you the rescue team?" I asked faintly.

The man laughed. "Part of it. Let me give our locations to the other officers. You're going to be fine." A few minutes later, a team of rangers arrived with a vet and my parents. I flung myself into my mom's arms, and she and I hugged and hugged. Then I walked over to see how Cher was doing.

Cher had to go to an Equine Center for a few weeks. The vets said it was a minor fracture, and she would be able to walk, trot, and canter a little, but racing was out of the question. My parents asked me if I minded and I said no. I was just glad Cherish could still walk. She came back to live with us a month later, though it was a month after that before I could ride her again. A few weeks after that, I received a letter from the board of judges who ran the regional semifinals. They said I could enter whenever I could race again for free admission. I was delighted. And so was Cher.

AFTERNOTE: Cherish, named Cherish Road after the incident, never-raced again. Her owner, Jesse, didn't race until after Cherish died several years later. Until then, though, Cherish was honored as much as the horse she shared her pasture with. 



Meadow

By Julia Lipkis

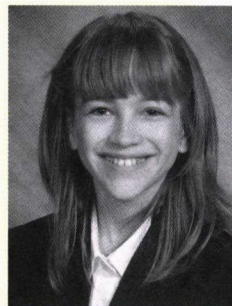
There are scattered
wildflowers
wilting among the coarse grass.

Solitary
deer
graze on prickly
stems.

Birds gossip
in the branches
of
dead
oak trees.

Sunlight casts a
dappled
shadow
onto the
hard
dirt.

And the wind
whispers
secrets to me
over the
bent
corn.



Julia Lipkis, 12
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Moonlight

By **Bella Shraiman**

Illustrated by **Jena Ritchey**



Bella Shraiman, 11
Goleta, California



Jena Ritchey, 13
Albuquerque, New Mexico

THE CLOCK STRUCK twelve. Everybody was asleep. Everybody, except for me. As the chimes resonated throughout the house, I soundlessly threw back the covers and crept out of bed, not bothering to put on my shoes or throw on a jacket. I tiptoed out into the hallway, the rug muffling my footsteps. Down into the kitchen, the spotless white tiles glowing eerily in the darkness, and out the back door, shutting it carefully behind me.

The cool grass tickled my bare feet, dampening them with the midnight dew that glistened in the moonlight. I surveyed my surroundings. Beyond the little yellow home where slept my family, rose the mountains, majestic as they stood, green and black, like pillars supporting the vault of blue velvet that was the sky.

To the right was the cliff, falling steeply down to the beach and ocean below. The distant lapping of the waves and the soft whispering of the wind as it swept the waters filled my mind and soul, a sweet lullaby, lulling the world to sleep. The moon lit a silver path across the ocean, a roadway to the heavens.

And up above it all was the night. Moon, in all her splendor, sailed through the sky, drifting serenely with her retinue of stars, amongst the fleecy clouds, now a hazy purplish-gray in the darkness, circling in the endless orbit, which forms the core of life itself.

I must have been a strange sight as I stood there, head tilted up, arms reaching to the unreachable, hair floating behind me



Moon, in all her splendor, sailed through the sky, drifting serenely with her retinue of stars

in the cool night breeze, glowing in an unearthly light, in my blue plaid pajama pants and white tank top, feeling a part

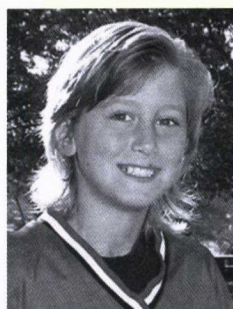
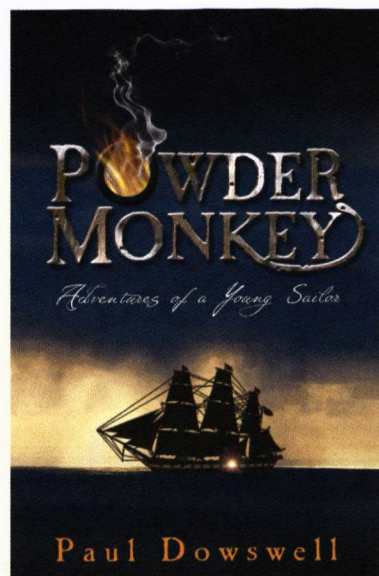
of it all. I crept back to bed, drunken with life and dreamt a dream of dreaming dreams.



Book Review

By Jackson Jaro

Powder Monkey, by Paul Dowswell; Bloomsbury USA Children's Books: New York, 2005; \$16.95



Jackson Jaro, 9
Santa Rosa, California

IMAGINE THE FEAR of being blown to pieces at any minute! Thirteen-year-old Samuel Witchall constantly faced this horror in the action-packed historical adventure, *Powder Monkey*. Being blown up was just one danger Sam had to endure aboard a Navy fighting ship in 1800. While reading this book, I kept wondering why any boy who wasn't crazy would want to be a sailor in this time period. But it was the book's vivid descriptions that helped me understand the thrill of a reckless adventure and how it could tempt men and boys out of their comfortable homes to the sea.

The book opens with Sam wishing to be a sailor so he can discover the world beyond his tiny town. He ends up on a merchant ship which is quickly taken over by a British Royal Navy frigate called the *HMS Miranda*. This sleek, 32-gun boat is so precisely described I felt I was bobbing in the sea looking up at its dazzling beauty.


Sam is forced to work on the vessel as a powder monkey, running back and forth to the *Miranda's* gun deck delivering powder to the cannon crews. Sam is told he needs to be like a monkey because monkeys are nimble creatures. He's also told if one stray spark floats onto his gunpowder delivery he will be blown to a pink mist! I've never heard of a more stressful job for a kid

than powder monkey.

Sam had to confront so much brutal stuff, including: fierce fighting, raging storms, punishment, mutiny, and death. Yet, the day-to-day annoyances of Sam's life hit me the hardest. I'm not a morning person, and on a Navy ship in 1800 I would have been extremely miserable. If a sailor isn't awake and out of his hammock in double speed, the hammock is cut down or the sailor's head is assaulted by a knotted rope! I wouldn't get used to this. Sam never did. Sam says he "dreamed of a fresh, warm bed, and the freedom to stay in it until the weariness left his bones." Up until reading this book, I thought it was really hard to get out of bed for school. Now I realize things could be much worse. I can't imagine giving up my safe, warm home for Sam's life! This doesn't mean, however, I wasn't captivated by every word describing Sam's adventures.

By far, my favorite part of this book was when Sam's courage is tested after a Spanish ship captures the *Miranda* in a miserable battle. Sam's crewmates plan to take their ship over again, with Sam playing a key role. He sneaks through dark passages, swims through freezing, rat-filled water and outsmarts his captors on his way to the weapons room where he steals cutlasses, axes, and swords. Sam's adventure made my heart race as I tried to imagine how stealthy and brave I could be in this situation.

Until *Powder Monkey*, the author, Paul Dowswell, had never written a fiction book. He wrote mostly history and science books. For a rookie fiction writer, Mr. Dowswell sure tells an absorbing tale. Knowing the author's background, I'm not surprised this book is brimming with actual history and technical maritime details.

This is a really great book that I'd recommend to many people, including: historical fiction readers, Blackbeard and other pirate fans, maritime history buffs and lovers of the movie *Master and Commander*! In my case, I'm always looking for an unforgettable adventure. I found a WILD one in *Powder Monkey*! 



He may be lucky, Ruthie thought, but I'm not

A Golden Dog After All

By **Bailey Bergmann**

Illustrated by **Jana Bernard**

RUTHIE SPOKES WAS a lover of golden retrievers. She was captivated by their silky, golden coats, and their sweet, lovable nature. She often begged her parents to get her a golden retriever, and by the time Ruthie was eleven, her parents knew Ruthie would settle for no other dog. She would have never guessed that one dark, rainy night, before her birthday, her dream was almost about to come true...

Ruthie threw the covers away from her. What was that noise? It sounded like it was coming from... the garage.

Trying not to awaken her sleeping seven-year-old sister, Julie, she crept down the bunkbed ladder and opened the door. Peering around quickly, she tiptoed down the stairs and to the door that led to the garage. Voices drifted to her ears.

"Perhaps we shouldn't have bought the Irish setter," she heard her father say. "You know Ruthie will be upset he's not a golden."

"But all the golden retrievers we looked at were filthy and sick," her mother reasoned.

Ruthie gasped.

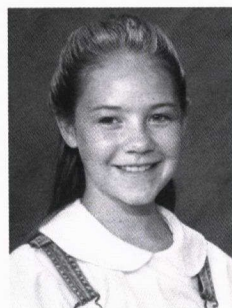
"What was that?" Mom said.

Before Ruthie could run away, the door swung open.

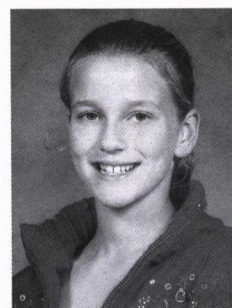
"Ruthie!" her father said in a surprised voice. Ruthie looked at her feet. "Well, come in," he sighed. "Happy birthday."

Ruthie walked in to see the puppy her parents were talking about. He ran to Ruthie, barking ecstatically.

"He's not a golden," Ruthie said to herself. To her parents she said, "Th-thanks, Mom, thanks, Dad."



Bailey Bergmann, 11
Shawano, Wisconsin



Jana Bernard, 11
Far Hills, New Jersey

"You're welcome," they replied.

Ruthie's fifteen-year-old brother, Sam, opened the door, holding Julie on his hip. "What's all the commotion?" he yawned. "Julie was scared out of her wits."

"A puppy!" Julie cried, forgetting all sleepiness. "What are you gonna call him, Ruthie?"

"Shamrock," Ruthie said sadly, though no one noticed. "Ireland's Lucky Shamrock."

"Nice name," Sam approved.

He may be lucky, Ruthie thought, but I'm not.

AS RUTHIE climbed the stairs to her room Shamrock followed behind her, pouncing and growling at her heels. When they reached the bedroom Ruthie shared with her sister, Shamrock crawled into his blue-polka-dot doggy bed, and promptly began chewing on a stuffed toy. Her parents had helped her set up Shamrock's things in Ruthie's room. Ruthie climbed up the bunkbed ladder and lay down. Ruthie glanced over at Shamrock. The doggy bed was three sizes too big for him, and the carrier that contained newspaper for bathroom breaks was gargantuan to the little puppy. But Shamrock didn't seem to mind. He contentedly chewed the stuffed animal's leg slowly.

Ruthie reached under the covers of her bed and pulled out a book hidden there. It was entitled, *Owner's Guide to Golden Retrievers*. The spine was broken and a few pages torn from constant use. Each picture of a dog was marked with a different

name. Ruthie smiled as she remembered how she used to play "dogs." She would carefully set out food and water, patiently groom the "dogs," and take each individual for a long walk down the sidewalk.

Now Ruthie turned to the page that had a picture showing a smiling girl and a happy golden retriever puppy. Under the picture it said: Best Friends.

"What are you reading?" a voice asked. Ruthie jumped, and seeing that it was her mother, hastily shut the book and sat on it.

"Oh, n-nothing, Mom," Ruthie stammered. "I was just reading about what to do when you first get a puppy."

Mom stared at Ruthie's pale face for a moment. Then she said, "I know you're disappointed. You were hoping for a golden retriever, weren't you?" Ruthie nodded. "I know you always wanted a golden, but all the golden retriever puppies we looked at were overpriced and unhealthy. We didn't want to spend money on veterinary bills, so we picked a healthy, active Irish setter puppy. He's not a golden retriever, but who knows?" She smiled. "This setter pup may turn out to be a golden dog, too." She bent over and kissed Ruthie. "Now you get some sleep. Don't keep Julie awake."

Ruthie smiled a crooked smile.

"Thanks, Mom," Ruthie grinned.

RUTHIE AWOKE with a start for the second time that night. She heard a weird whining sound. Then she remembered: Shamrock. She peered over the edge of her bed. She saw Shamrock pacing

the ground, crying. Ruthie dropped lightly from the ladder.

"What is it, boy?" Ruthie whispered. Shamrock stared at her with a sad, hollow stare. Ruthie thought for a moment, and then walked to the bathroom, Shamrock right behind her. Ruthie found a hot water bottle and filled it with hot water. She then wrapped it in a towel, and placed it in Shamrock's bed. She carefully placed Shamrock in the bed. Shamrock snuggled close to the water bottle. He stopped crying. Ruthie turned to leave, but as she stepped away Shamrock cried out and leaped toward her. Sighing, Ruthie dragged her pillow and blanket by Shamrock's bed, and lay down. Shamrock jumped into his bed, satisfied. Shamrock licked Ruthie's face, then fell asleep.

THE NEXT MORNING Ruthie was licked awake enthusiastically by Shamrock.

"OK, OK, I'm awake," groaned Ruthie, sitting up. "I'm going to get your breakfast."

Ruthie poured the dog kibble into Shamrock's blue bowl. She then filled the other bowl with fresh water from the bathroom. She placed both bowls far away from the carrier, which was going to be used as Shamrock's bathroom. As soon as Ruthie set the bowls down, Shamrock shot forward and started devouring the kibble. Ruthie grabbed his collar and pulled him back.

"No," she said firmly. She knew if she let Shamrock eat quickly, he could get a tum-

myache. After Shamrock finished chewing the first mouthful, Ruthie let go of his collar and Shamrock darted forward again. Ruthie pulled him back and said very firmly, "Shamrock, that's *no*." Shamrock ate slowly after that.

As Ruthie joined the table with her mom and siblings, Shamrock started sniffing around the table for crumbs. As Ruthie ate her cereal, she watched Shamrock carefully. As soon as he gobbled the first crumb, Ruthie darted forward, and yanked Shamrock back. She looked him squarely in the eye and said, "No."

Ruthie's family was pretty impressed at Ruthie's training and standards. She made sure Shamrock didn't eat the crumbs off the floor, and she wouldn't let him beg for food. Instead, she distracted him with a chew bone, which he contentedly chewed.

After breakfast, the kids started school. Mom home-schooled them, and Ruthie was glad, since she wanted to keep an eye on Shamrock.

Mom helped Julie with math, Sam started studying science, and Ruthie began English. She was concentrating hard on a challenging subject, when Shamrock jumped up next to her on the chair, pushing her off. Ruthie hit the floor hard, but instead of yelling at Shamrock, she shooed him off the chair and sat down.

Ruthie started English again. After a few minutes, Shamrock began whining at Ruthie. Ruthie tossed down her book and grabbed Shamrock's leash, which was lying on the counter. She snapped it on Shamrock's collar, and opened the door.



"So what are you doing, Ruthie, playing in the mud?"

Shamrock bolted out, dragging a surprised Ruthie behind him. It was muddy from the rain last night, but Shamrock didn't care. That is, until Ruthie sharply scolded him. He slowed down to a walk, staring meekly at his mistress. But after a minute or two he started running again, and this time he tripped, and fell in the mud. Ruthie slipped on some grass and dove into the mud puddle. Gasping, she pulled herself up from the sticky mess.

"Shamrock!" she scolded, shaking a muddy finger at him. "No! That's naughty! Don't ever do that again!"

She tried to wipe the mud off but it just smeared. Sighing, Ruthie started to lead a muddy Shamrock away when a high, mocking voice pierced the air.

"So what are *you* doing, Ruthie," the voice said, "playing in the mud?"

Ruthie whirled around to see Sandra Davis and her cocker spaniel, Duffy, standing on the sidewalk. Sandra Davis went to Ruthie's church, and she was one girl whom Ruthie did not like.

"Leave me alone, Sandra," Ruthie huffed. "You're not welcome."

"Oh, well that's too bad," Sandra said, "because I might have started playing in the mud with you and your—whatever it is." She laughed a high, light laugh before continuing. "That mutt there doesn't even compare to my Duffy. Duffy's parents were champions at tons of dog shows. I'm sure your mud friend there didn't even have purebred parents." She eyed Shamrock critically.

"That's not true!" Ruthie exclaimed.

"Shamrock's a full-blood Irish setter. His parents are worldwide champions!"

"An Irish setter?" Sandra said with disgust. "I thought you wanted a golden retriever. What happened—you lost your color vision?"

Ruthie was about to explain that she didn't exactly pick the puppy when Shamrock, curious of the new dog in front of him, pulled the leash from Ruthie's hands. The next thing she remembered was that Shamrock started chasing Duffy and then the two slipped and fell, causing the girls that were following behind to fall too. Shamrock ran in the mud barking and splashing more mud on the screeching trio. Sandra picked herself up and yanked a bedraggled Duffy up with her.

"Goodbye!" Sandra yelled, stomping off.

Ruthie was annoyed, and after cleaning off both herself and Shamrock, she locked the puppy in her room so that he could take a nap. Ruthie finished her school, and plopped down on the living room couch, exhausted.

RUTHIE ENROLLED Shamrock in an obedience training group. The first day Shamrock was more interested in making friends than learning how to sit. He continued to do this throughout the whole course. He finally did graduate, though, after everyone made Ruthie promise to bring Shamrock back sometime. Shamrock had won the hearts of man and beast alike, and no one liked the thought of Shamrock leaving.

The next day after graduating, Ruthie

was practicing "heel" with Shamrock in the front yard. Sandra and Duffy walked up to them.

"Oh, hello," Sandra said superiorly. "You may think you are good at that heeling stuff, but wait until you hear what me and Duffy are doing."

Ruthie noticed that Sandra held Duffy's leash a lot tighter. "What?" Ruthie asked.

"Well, Duffy has done so good in her training that I've decided to enter her into an agility competition. Here." She handed Ruthie a folded flyer. "I picked one up at the groomer's." She smiled slyly. "Even if you do decide to enter, there's no chance that you will win. Duffy and I will steal the show."

As Sandra bragged on, Ruthie read the flyer. It read: Agility Contest, Saturday, May 2, 10:00 AM.

"So," Sandra concluded, "are you going to enter and be defeated by me and Duffy?"

"I'm entering," Ruthie grinned.

ON THE DAY of the show Mom snapped Shamrock's and Ruthie's picture before leaving.

"I'm certain you're going to win," Mom assured Ruthie, smiling.

Despite Mom's assurance, Ruthie was still nervous when she arrived at the show. Shamrock and Ruthie walked the field, eyeing the course before warming up. After Shamrock had exercised for a few minutes, they both took a break.

Ruthie trotted to the place reserved for entrants. When she had checked in, she

had received a number: 32. That meant she could view plenty of dogs and owners perform before her and Shamrock's turn. She sat on the ground and Shamrock laid his head in her lap.

When the first dog was up, Ruthie gasped. A gorgeous golden retriever took his place at the starting line. Ruthie felt a twinge of jealousy. But then Shamrock licked Ruthie lovingly on the hand. All thoughts of jealousy vanished.

Watching thirty-one entrants do the same course repeatedly tired Ruthie. When it was time to start, she was rather bored. When the announcer yelled, "GO!" Shamrock shot forward like a bullet, and Ruthie ran beside him. He leaped through hanging hoops and tires, crawled through long tunnels, and maneuvered around and through and over obstacles. Everything went fine until the last obstacle. It was a large jump, about three feet high. Shamrock took a powerful leap but clipped the top of the jump with his hind legs. Everybody gasped as he fell heavily on his left foreleg and lay there. Ruthie screamed and medical help ran towards the field. But Shamrock jumped up and somehow ran to the finish line. His time beat the others by a split second. Ruthie ran over to Shamrock, who was covered with mud and grass. Ruthie hugged him close.

After five more contestants, Shamrock was declared the winner by a second. Sandra and Duffy had failed the course completely, due to the fact Duffy worked terribly in the mud.

Shamrock barked loudly as he heard his



Ruthie felt a twinge of jealousy. But then Shamrock licked Ruthie lovingly on the hand

name on the loudspeaker. The veterinarian had a hard time bandaging his sprained leg after that. As soon as the vet finished, Shamrock ran to a large puddle of mud. Ruthie, afraid he might hurt himself, ran to take him away but she slipped and fell into the mud. Reporters and family ran to the champions.

"Miss Ruthie, how do you feel about winning the agility contest?" all the reporters asked.

"So," Mom smiled, "are you still disappointed Shamrock's not a golden retriever?"

Ruthie looked at Shamrock, with his muddy coat and shining eyes.

"I think I learned two things," Ruthie answered. "One, it's not the breed or color that makes the perfect dog, but it's the inside that counts." She hugged Shamrock.

"And what's the second?" the reporters prompted, eager to get a good story.

"And second," Ruthie continued, "I learned that Shamrock likes mud."

As everyone laughed, Ruthie hugged Shamrock again. She whispered in his ear, "Mom was right, Shamrock; you are a golden dog." ❁

Joys of the Night

By Katie Ferman



Katie Ferman, 13
Three Lakes, Wisconsin

At first glance, only shadows
Only wisps of black knitted into
The patchwork quilt of springy turf
Where magic warms the notes of moon's music,
Light playing upon scruffy T-shirt and shorts,
Hair swirling, legs
Twirling,
Hoping to gather treasure in her net

Then out of dark and fresh-lain night:
A tiny little bead of light

Up, up swoops the net with arms raised high
And the balls of bare feet jump to meet
The moon
And lo, the little flickerin' thing
Is caught up in the net
And she reaches balled fist in eagerly,
Band-Aids patching up hurts of yesterday,
And tiny, warty fingers fix themselves round their catch,

But, try as she will to cut off its light,
Clasping both hands round the firefly,
She cannot kill the hope of the creature
That has been caught before,
And the giggles, the attempts to close in the beams of yellow
Only amuse the moon

For what would parents know of such important matters?
And as she releases the firefly's light
It sails back off into the night.



I scramble up the last few feet, and grab the shiny apple in my hands

A Morning in the Orchard

By William Gwaltney

Illustrated by the author

I'M LYING ON my back in my grandfather's orchard, staring up at the branches above me. It is one of the last days of summer. Already the days are shorter and the nights are cooler. Some kinds of apples are already ripe. Others will be ready to pick soon. I think of my grandmother's apple pie, and how I used to make it with her. She died last year, before the apple harvest, and I have not had her pie since. I really miss her.

I hear bees busily humming about, visiting the late summer flowers. Fall is quickly approaching, and the bees move from flower to flower, collecting pollen to make the sweet honey that they will dream about all winter. They are landing so softly on flowers that it barely makes the flowers dance. The gentle hum of their wings nearly lulls me to sleep.

The sky is as blue as my grandfather's eyes. Above me, big white clouds race across the sky like pieces of cotton blowing in the wind. I look for pictures in the clouds. One looks like a dog chasing after a ball. Another looks like a frog jumping off of a lily pad. School starts in another week, and time seems to have slowed down.

I hear the branches moving in the closest tree. I look up and see a squirrel, flicking his bushy tail, his eyes happily laughing at me. I don't know what he finds so funny. And then I see it, the perfect apple! Big, ripe, and juicy, it hangs far above my head.

I scrape my hands on the rough bark of the trunk as I struggle to reach the lowest branch on the tree. I let go of the trunk and leap for the branch, an adrenaline rush temporarily con-



William Gwaltney, 10
Englewood, Colorado

quering my fear of heights. I catch it in my hands and hang from it, slowly swinging, surprised that I have made it this far without falling. Slowly, painstakingly, I pull myself up onto the branch. Standing on the thickest part of it, closest to the tree, I look up.

The apple is still far above me. I continue climbing higher, using the same tactic for every large branch that I meet. The smaller branches get in my way, scratching my face and tangling my long, black hair. I pass many beautiful apples, dripping with dew and warmed by the sun, but none are the perfect apple I am after. I scramble up the last few feet, and grab the shiny apple in my hands. My mouth begins to water. I can almost taste the apple, sweet and yet tart at the same time. Crisp... juicy... with a nice big... hole? A hole?! Now I know what the squirrel was laughing at. Over in the next tree, he chatters again. I throw the apple at him. Of course I miss. His eyes still smiling, he runs away, jumping from tree to tree across the orchard until I lose sight of him.

"Sophie!" calls my grandfather. "Is that you?" I scamper down the tree, take his hand, and tell him all about my day as we walk through the orchard. We talk about apples, and squirrels, and Grandma. He tells me that he misses her too.

He puts his rough, brown farmer's hand around my shoulder and pulls me close. "You know, Sophie," he says, "I spent the morning in the attic, and you'll never guess what I found. It's the recipe for Grandma's apple pie. I used to help her make it sometimes. I can't do it all alone, but you used to help her too. Maybe between the two of us, we can figure it out. Wanna try?"

"But it won't be the same without Grandma," I tell him.

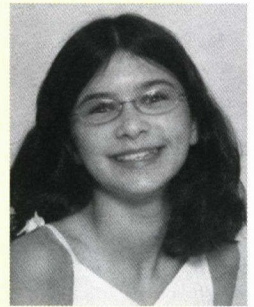
"That's true," he says, "but nothing is the same without Grandma. Still, I don't think that she would want us to never have another apple pie. What do you say?" I nod yes, and we walk towards home... towards an afternoon in the farmhouse kitchen, making Grandma's famous apple pie. ❀



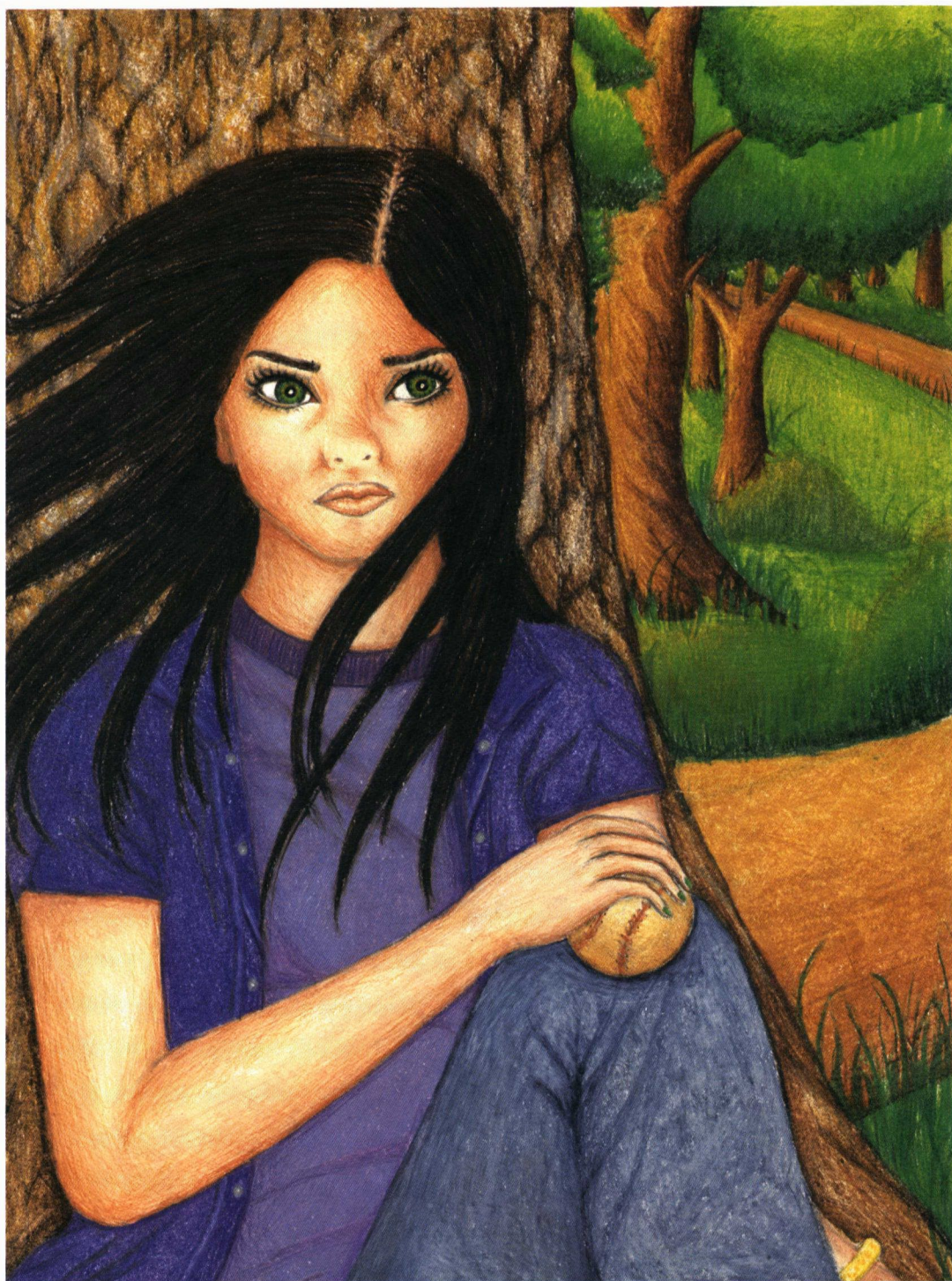
The Leaf and the Web

By Taylor Nelsen

Lines... Veins... Silky Strands...
One red leaf on a green tree,
Swaying all alone in the wind
One red leaf falling through the chilled fall air
Swirling in the twilight.
A busy spider in the early hours of dawn,
Silk webbing falling behind,
Swirling strand, into lines, into web of silk.
Twilight
One red leaf is swirling,
Falling it twirls one more time,
A beauty...
A web with one red leaf
Intertwined in the silky strands.



Taylor Nelsen, 11
Greenville, North Carolina



Jenna would love it here, Adrian found herself thinking

The Baseball

By **Katie Russell**

Illustrated by **Ashley Burke**

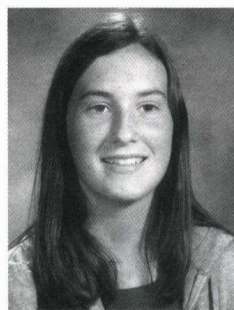
ADRIAN STARED at the ball in her hand. It was old, obviously well-used and well-loved. Dirt and grass had been ground into it, its once shining whiteness now a muddy, undetermined brown. The laces had been worn down, rough and rusty red. When Adrian held the ball, her hand could feel familiar bumps and dents that had come from years of use.

Adrian could remember when her sister, Jenna, had first handed her the ball and taught her how to play baseball. The ball had been new then, just-bought-from-the-store new. Its creamy outside had promised exciting adventures that the two would face. Adrian loved the ball.

It had been years since Adrian last played baseball. Two years and four months to be exact. Ever since her move from Boston, Adrian had stayed away from baseball. It wasn't that there weren't any baseball teams in New York City. There were. And it wasn't because she wasn't a very good player. She was. It was that playing baseball brought back painful memories of Jenna, and when they'd played together and had fun.

Jenna was one of those older sisters that everyone wishes they'd had. Beautiful, carefree, and good at everything, it was Jenna who'd introduced Adrian to everything she loved now.

When Adrian was nine, Jenna found drugs and alcohol. Adrian watched as Jenna drew away from her, slowly at first, then faster and faster until all Adrian had of her confident older sister was a shadow of a memory and a forlorn baseball. Adrian's parents, unsure how to deal with this new daughter they now had, divorced,



Katie Russell, 13
Charlotte, Vermont



Ashley Burke, 13
Cedar Park, Texas

and Adrian was sent to live with her father in New York, while Jenna lived with their mother in Maryland.

Adrian hadn't seen Jenna since the divorce, but she dreamed of someday going to Maryland and asking to play baseball or to talk with her older sister.

Adrian, thinking of this, gripped the ball hard and bit her lip, trying to keep the tears from spilling out. Once she got herself firmly under control, Adrian glanced around. She was sitting against the base of a tall tree in the park, surrounded by laughing, talking, happy children. In the distance, there was even a small group of girls playing softball.

The air smelled sweetly of cut grass and the cool breeze swept over Adrian's face, blowing her dark brown hair into her face. The massive roots of the towering oak she was leaning against dug into her back and she could feel the rough bark on her bare arms. A woman with her auburn hair pulled back into a ponytail ran by on the dirt path inches to Adrian's left, humming quietly to herself. Adrian smiled as she watched one of the softball players hit the

ball deep into center field.

Jenna would love it here, Adrian found herself thinking, unconsciously scratching at her light green nail polish. She would immediately ask to go play with the girls playing softball, no matter that she was at least five years older than them and that she actually played baseball. The girls would be so impressed by Jenna that they wouldn't mind if her tagalong sister joined them. They might even notice Adrian once in a while.

Suddenly Adrian realized that the Jenna of today, the Jenna she would meet if she ever went to Maryland to visit, wouldn't care about things like this. She didn't care about baseball, about parks, about impressing softball players, and she didn't care about Adrian.

Adrian leapt to her feet and threw the ball far off into the deep, green woods. Then she walked down the dirt path towards the softball players. ❁

Note: This story is a sequel to "Adrian," which appeared in the September/October 2004 issue of Stone Soup.



Going Home

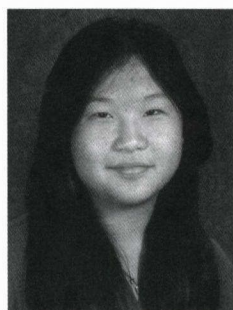
By **Caroline Lu**

Illustrated by **Olga-Teodora Stanislavova Todorova**

IN THE BLINK of an eye, one chapter of your life changes into another. Someone that you knew since you were a toddler becomes a stranger. A place that you've memorized by heart becomes unfamiliar. And you, you've changed so much that your childhood best friend wouldn't recognize you if you appeared right before them. It's been three years since I've felt the North Carolina air around me, three years since I last said goodbye to my closest friends, three years since I left my native home. I expected everything to be the same as I left it. I expected everyone to be who they were back then. Only after my brief visit back home did I finally come to realize that I expected too much.

As we drove past the tall, looming trees and the wide, dusty lanes, my parents pointed out all the different things that they remembered. I didn't remember anything. Only as we entered our old neighborhood did I finally have memories pushing themselves to the front of my mind. Home, I thought, I'm finally back home. Familiar houses passed us by, well-known paths and gardens seemed to welcome us back warmly. Yet, something had changed. I just didn't know what.

All the adults gushed about the changes in my appearance, notably my height. All my friends, who were all grown up themselves, welcomed me back with friendly smiles and familiar words. They filled me in on all the things that I've missed out on and on all the changes of our community. They all seemed like strangers to me, it seemed like I was meeting them for the



Caroline Lu, 13
Friendswood, Texas



Olga-Teodora Todorova, 12
Plovdiv, Bulgaria



All my friends welcomed me back with friendly smiles and familiar words

first time. But as the days passed, their facades disappeared, and they became, once again, the people that I knew so well. The people who I could tell my innermost secrets to, and the people who I shared all my childhood memories with. My love and care towards them returned and our friendships were revived.

One night, we were all crowded around the television screen, watching the intensity of the basketball game on television. Our home team, which we all loved deeply, against some unknown college. We cheered as victories were made and groaned as the other team gained points. We were all on the edges of our seat as the final minutes of the game came upon us. When we won only by a narrow margin, we exploded, cheering like mad. Only then did memories of our past come swimming back at me.

They all told me that Texas had changed me, that I was an entirely different person. My love for pop music slowly gave way to the fun country songs. Healthy East Coast

dishes gave way to fried foods and steak. My hair grew out, I adored shopping malls and makeup, my clothing style became unknown to them. But at the end of the week, they too realized, that deep down inside, I was still that little girl who cherished her stuffed animals and saved every blemished photograph in her memory box.

On my last day in North Carolina, I sat down on the little bed and thought. I thought about how much everyone had changed, about how much I, myself had changed. I had made plenty of new friends, and I wouldn't give up my new Texas home for anything. I had eventually moved on and became a different person. But then, as I waved goodbye to all the people that I loved, a little voice inside my head reminded me that, only here is where my heart truly belongs. Only here is home. ❁

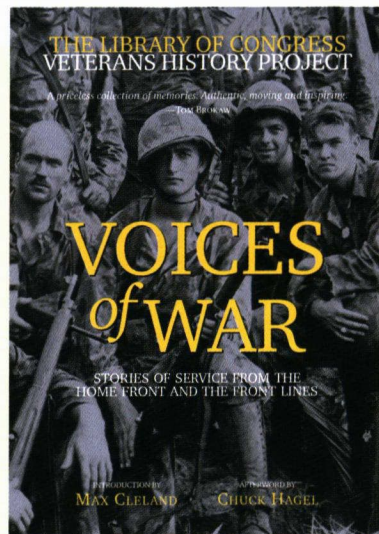
Note: This story is a sequel to "Moving On," which appeared in the January/February 2005 issue of Stone Soup.



Book Review

By Celia Arguilez Smith

Voices of War, edited by Tom Wiener; National Geographic: Washington D.C., 2004; \$30



Celia Arguilez Smith, 12
San Diego, California


DON'T GET SCARED away by the title or how many pages in this book. It is really the Voices of Heroes. Veterans who served in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf talk about what happened to them in the wars. It's like sitting down with someone's grandfather or uncle or brother and hearing them tell stories that you will never learn about anywhere else.

On page 127, Ben Snyder remembers on December 7, 1944 that it had been three years since he heard the horrible news of the Pearl Harbor attack by Japan. He was in the South Pacific still fighting the Japanese and he didn't know when he would ever go home. When I read that, I remembered the attacks on September 11, 2001, and we are still trying to stop the terrorists.

An army nurse, Isabelle Cedar Cook, wrote, "I keep thinking about the children that will soon only know World War II as a chapter in the history books. I wanted very much to share my experiences with them, so I decided to write a book. I called it *In Times of War*, because in times of war things are very different." One man told about how his brother had been killed. His mother thought the army would fly him home immediately.

"Unfortunately, she believed the nonsense the government put in the newspapers during the war for civilian consumption, such as flying soldiers home when tragedy struck a family," wrote the soldier, William Whiting. He was in the Army's 802nd Field Artillery Battalion. When he saw dead German soldiers he wrote that "even though they were the enemy, once they were dead you could no longer hate them. You could not help but remember they were or had been someone's son, husband, father, brother."

That's what this book is about. How the war is for regular people like nurses, soldiers and sailors. That's why you should read this book. So you can see how Americans coped with war.

I feel like a walking version of *Voices of War*. I am involved in the Stories of Service Veterans History Project. I am a youth producer. I videotape interviews of veterans for the Library of Congress. Then the veterans' interviews will be preserved for future generations. These interviews will give information for speech writers, college students and book writers. Each veteran that I interview becomes part of me. I am hearing firsthand accounts of what happened to these men and women. Every one of them has a great story and lesson to pass on. One thing I hear the veterans say is that they want peace. These people know what war is and they want peace in the world. At DePortola Middle School, where I am a seventh-grader, war is not something students think about, but this book would be a very good book to have. It can be used to write history essays and learn about how soldiers and sailors lived and felt then and how they think about the wars now, which is thirty or forty or sixty years later. In history, we learn about the generals and presidents and the famous battles. This book tells the real story of the people who fought the wars that became history. 



School had just ended, and Makoto went out every day to see something new

Makoto, the Turtle Boy

By Annakai Hayakawa Geshlider

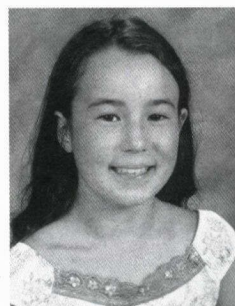
Illustrated by the author

THERE WAS ONCE a boy who lived in a village in a valley of Japan. His village had wooden houses with sliding doors and rushing water and creeks. One hot summer day, it rained heavily from dawn to dusk. The creeks got deeper and wilder, and the boy, Makoto, thought it was the perfect time to venture down to the creek and hop from rock to rock. Makoto loved to watch the water, to feel it gushing over his hands. He put on a finely-woven straw hat and his blue shoes.

Makoto's mother was fixing lunch, and she told him to be back in half an hour so he could eat with his father when he came home from his job at the post office. Makoto told his mother that he would be back by then.

Stretching his socks up to his knees so he would not get mosquito bites, Makoto started down the road. Not many others were on the road at the time, but Makoto did not mind. He liked to be by himself, to breathe in the fresh, thick air, to wade in the creek, to trek amongst the large green trees of the valley. School had just ended, and Makoto went out every day to see something new, or to visit old special places.

Makoto headed down the road, and stopped at the post office to say hello to his dad. Makoto reached into his pocket and took out a few pumpkin seeds. He handed them to his dad over the counter where he worked, selling people stamps or arranging for their letters and packages to be mailed. Makoto pressed the seeds into his father's hand and his father smiled and thanked him.



Annakai Hayakawa Geshlider, 11
San Francisco, California

"Where are you off to today?" he asked Makoto.

"The creek," Makoto told him. Then, in a hurry to get there, Makoto waved to his father and ran down the rest of the road.

Makoto walked past the giant bamboo stalks and he stepped carefully down to the creek. He hopped from rock to rock, and then stopped to listen to the loud, rushing water. He looked to his right, where two waterfalls stood. They had been there for hundreds of years. He hopped onto three more rocks, slipping on the last one, which was wet and slippery. He fell on it and scraped his knee, and as he scrambled up on the opposite bank, his shoe was pulled from his foot and swept down the river. Makoto ran down the riverbank as fast as he could. He caught up with his shoe, but then it floated away from him and under the bridge. There was no bank for him to run on and no rocks to hop on. He waded into the creek, then swam through the creek and under the bridge. His shoe had caught in between two rocks. He swam closer to it, but was soon swept off to the side. Makoto was tired from swimming and his limbs were sore. He pulled himself up onto the bank, and lay down on his side. He was wearing only one shoe. He turned to lie down on his back on the muddy bank. He sat for a long while, just thinking and sitting still. Then he remembered that he had been asked to be home to eat lunch with his father.

His shoe was no longer in sight and Makoto was so tired that he couldn't

bring himself to swim through the rushing water and the sharp rocks. He decided that he would sit on the bank until a villager noticed him. But if he didn't arrive home soon, his parents would be worried.

Makoto was just falling asleep when he heard an ancient voice whisper into his ear. "I will take you back, and look! I found your shoe." Makoto opened one eye and then two. A turtle was standing in the mud next to him. On the turtle's back was his shoe! Makoto thanked him gratefully and put his shoe back onto his foot.

The turtle waded into the water. "Climb onto my back," he said. Makoto sat down on the turtle's back and he leaned forward and held on tight to the turtle's beautiful shell. Then the turtle swam swiftly into the water.

Makoto held his breath, but the turtle assured him that he didn't need to. Makoto breathed in, and water came out his nose. "I wasn't ever able to breathe water before!" he told the turtle.

The turtle smiled wisely and said to Makoto, "Did you ever try?"

Makoto had not.


The turtle said to him, "Makoto, you have always been one of us. You are really a human body and mind, but your spirit and soul are turtle. Once every seven years we give one newborn child the ability. The child can breathe and swim like us. When you fell into the creek when you were young, all the turtles of the creek circled around you to cast the spell. Your mother came and took you out of the water just after you had become part turtle."



The turtle said to him, "Makoto, you have always been one of us"

Makoto was amazed with the turtle's tale, and he believed it. He even found himself about to check if there was a shell on his back, but he remembered that his appearance was human. He began to get used to breathing water, and soon they had swum under the bridge. The turtle paddled in between rocks, and then up the bank. Makoto turned to say goodbye and thank you to the turtle.

But the turtle had swum back into the creek.

Makoto crossed the creek on the rocks once again, and he held on with his hands so that he didn't slip. He hurried up to the road and ran toward his house. He slipped into his house slippers and crossed the room to the table where his parents were sitting on the tatami mats. 

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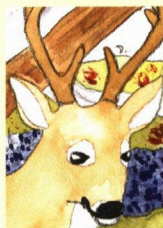
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