

Stone Soup

The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists



Illustration by Carly Thaw, age 13, from "The Boarder's Battle," page 16

BATS AND PEARLS

A fruit bat and a muskrat form an unlikely friendship

WHERE MY FAMILY IS

On a boat to America, Maggie relives the devastating Irish famine

Also: New stories from Andrew Lee and Jonathan Morris

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2009

\$6.50 US \$6.50 CANADA

Stone Soup

The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists

VOLUME 37, NUMBER 3
JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2009

STORIES

Bats and Pearls by *Cara Kornhaus* 5
Has Seed's selfishness led to the loss of his only friend?

Mirror, Mirror by *Sabrina Wong* 11
Memories of her grandmother help Ellie rethink her behavior

The Boarder's Battle by *Connor Nackley* 16
It's thrilling to fly through the air on a snowboard

Where My Family Is by *Jessye Holmgren-Sidell* 21
Maggie promised her sister that everything would be all right

The Forgotten Fort by *Andrew Lee* 27
Ken misses his brother terribly when he goes off to college

The Delivery Boy by *Richard Wang* 33
How important is it to keep your word?

Breaching the Wall by *Jonathan Morris* 39
Grandpa seems distant, until he and Peter build the *Seadog*

An Indian Monsoon by *Sanjana Saxena* 45
Jana and her family experience life in two countries



page 5



page 11



page 27

POEMS

The Storm by *Lincoln Hartnett* 15

Hanging the Laundry by *Isabel Sutter* 31

I Taste the Sky by *Isaac Kamgar* 43

BOOK REVIEWS

The Joys of Love reviewed by *Zoe Sims* 18

Hiroshima Dreams reviewed by *Alexandra Skinner* 36



page 45



Available from the Library of Congress in braille for visually handicapped readers. Call 800-424-8567 to request the braille edition

Stone Soup is printed on recycled paper

GERRY MANDEL
WILLIAM RUBEL

Editors



NIKKI HOWE

Subscriptions



STACI SAMBOL

Design and Production



BARBARA HARKER

Administrative Assistant

Stone Soup (ISSN 0094 579X) is published six times a year by the Children's Art Foundation, 765 Cedar Street, Suite 201, Santa Cruz, CA 95060. Phone: 800-447-4569. It is published bimonthly in January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, and November/December. Volume 37, Number 3. Copyright © 2009 by the Children's Art Foundation. All rights reserved. Reproduction of the whole or any part of the contents without written permission is prohibited. *Stone Soup* is mailed to members of the Children's Art Foundation. Eighty percent of the membership fee is designated for subscription to *Stone Soup*. In the United States, a one-year membership costs \$37, two years \$60, three years \$82. Canada add \$6 per year for postage; other countries add \$12 per year for postage. Please remit in U.S. funds only. Send SUBMISSIONS, SUBSCRIPTIONS, and ADDRESS CHANGES to: *Stone Soup*, P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Stone Soup*, P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. Periodical postage paid at Santa Cruz, CA and additional offices. Printed in Canada.

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 35 years. It is our belief that, by presenting rich, heartfelt 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: 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 within four 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, phone number and e-mail.

Cover: Carly Thaw is new to *Stone Soup*, but she has been drawing and painting for as long as she can remember. Inspired by her art teacher, Barrie Kaufman, Carly submitted her work to the *Charleston Gazette*, where she now contributes to FlipSide, a special section written and illustrated by teens. Carly also enjoys acting and sports.

The Mailbox



LBP, 9

The May/June 2008 of *Stone Soup* issue was simply astounding. I really liked the book review of *Hurt Go Happy* by Leah Wolfe. In fact, it inspired me so much that I went out and got the book! It was all she said and much more! But now for my absolute favorite: “The Nickname Game,” with its catchy title and wonderfully realistic pictures, was fabulous! The author, Hannah Gottlieb-Graham, did a great and rather touching job of portraying it through words, and Nancy Yan did equally fantastic work with the illustrations. It was the most fresh, fun, and animated story I’ve read in a long time! Keep up the great work, Hannah and Nancy! In fact, I even got my mom to read it and she said that it was good too!

ANNA FISHER, 13
West Chazy, New York

Stone Soup magazine is very interesting to read. I have read many of your magazines at the library. It touches my heart when kids my age write articles.

MARK ROBERTSON, 11
Opelouses, Louisiana

Thank you for letting me illustrate “Mirror, Mirror” [page 11 of this issue]. It is one of the best stories I’ve read in *Stone Soup*. I can really relate to the story because my school is full of cliques just like that. In third grade I was so unhappy with the mean girls, my mother said I should write down all my feelings. I entered it in my Mandarin speech contest. The teacher didn’t think it was appropriate and asked me to speak on another subject. But the Department of Education liked it, so they made it into a PSA (public service announcement) that they show on TV.

TIGER TAM, 10
Honolulu, Hawaii

Stone Soup’s great! The thing I like best about it is I never get bored of it. It’s very entertaining!! All the authors and illustrators do a great job! But, I must say, “The Gift” [July/August 2008] is my favorite story, along with “A Light Shining Out of the Darkness” [March/April 2008]. Emmy J. X. Wong and Jonathan Morris are great authors, but what really captivated me were the illustrations by Anna Welch. She is fantastic!! I love the way she puts so much effort and detail in her work and in consequence makes it look like a photo. I love how the ripples from the swan boat look so realistic. I’m your number one fan, Anna! I live in faraway Australia and cannot wait for my *Stone Soup* mag to arrive.

HANNAH ROLLS-KORIN, 11
Melbourne, Australia

Stone Soup really inspired me to write. Reading has always been a passion but I always thought stories were untouchable. That no one else but adult authors could write. Seeing stories and beautiful illustrations by others my own age, knowing that there were some of my peers to whom a story was not just a plot twist, to whom poems did not need to be restrained to immature rhymes... this feeling of community was something I will never forget. Without *Stone Soup*, books would still be just a plot neatly organized onto paper, not a metaphoric adventure, streaming poetry and beauty. I write this letter as a farewell to the wonderful editors who have made this possible and to the rest of us devoted readers. I will carry writing with me always.

HANNAH FREEDMAN, 13
Baltimore, Maryland

You can find all the work mentioned in The Mailbox at 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 also like to receive anecdotes (150 words or less) about interesting experiences you want 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.



The muskrat smiled as she lifted the pearl and watched it sparkle

Bats and Pearls

By **Cara Kornhaus**

Illustrated by **Stanislav Nedzelskyi**

RAINDROPS FELL FROM the dark velvety sky, dropping delicately onto the world below. A few clouds drifted through in the gloom, covering the moon and few stars that had escaped the light of the city that flourished down the river.

Five fruit bats glided through the air, each trying to find enough food for themselves before the rain started to pour down. The only reason they were staying together was that, if one bat found any sign of food, he wouldn't be able to get it all for himself.

Four of the five bats flapped a considerably long distance from the last one. They were bigger, with longer wings to allow them to fly farther and faster. They flew out every night to look for food, and they were veterans at it.

The fifth bat was a young creature called Seed. This was his first time venturing out of the cave where he was born. He had been smart enough to go with the most skilled fliers to search for food, but he was quickly tiring. His wings felt like lead. He bit his tongue, struggling to keep up with the others, but he was much smaller than any of them.

"Hey, wait up!" he gasped. The other bats didn't pay any attention. The rain came down harder. A bolt of lightening shot through the air, and a crack of thunder followed quickly after. The older bats dived, but Seed couldn't tell where they had gone. "I can't fly!" he cried, his wet wings flapping uselessly. He tumbled from the sky, down toward the ground. The world



Cara Kornhaus, 13
San Antonio, Texas



Stanislav Nedzelskyi, 13
Keller, Texas

snapped out of view, and numbness spread through him. He was unconscious before he could cry out.

A MUSKRAT SAT on her haunches at the edge of the river, carefully scrubbing the spherical pearl in her paws of any dirt. She didn't mind the rain pelting down onto her fur. She kind of liked it, actually. Not like that silly duck that sat hunched up in her nest as if the rain would burn her. The muskrat smiled as she lifted the pearl and watched it sparkle, evidently as clean as it would get. She was just about to turn and go back to her lodge when something caught her eye.

A dark shape floated toward her. She stood on her hind legs to get a better look at it. It was definitely a creature of some sort, but she couldn't tell what kind it was. She waded into the river, the current rushing past her faster than it usually went because of all the rain. The strange creature wasn't moving—it was either dead or unconscious. The muskrat seized the animal around the middle with her paws and hauled him to shore. She was enthralled about how this creature looked. It had long, thin membranes stretched across its forelegs, which she guessed served as wings. The bat stirred and coughed. He opened his eyes and stared around at the river. The muskrat gently lifted him into her lodge, which was made of grass, sticks, and dried mud.

"Who are you?" the bat asked suspiciously. He wiped his eyes with his thumbs.

"Me? Oh, I'm Azure," the muskrat said cheerfully. She looked curiously at the bat. "You're a bat, aren't you? How'd you get in the river?" The bat ignored her. She shook her head and stashed the pearl, which she realized she was still holding, behind a pile of sticks.

"What was that?" the bat demanded.

"Nothing," Azure replied. "I'm going to catch some fish!" She left rather quickly. The bat stood on his feet and looked around. The inside of the lodge was completely empty of anything of interest, except perhaps the thing that Azure had stashed away. He decided he would investigate that later.

"Hey, Bat, have you ever tried fish?" Azure asked, crawling back into the lodge with two pink fish wriggling in her paws.

"My name is Seed!" the bat protested. "And I only eat fruit!" He lifted his right wing and licked it, attempting to get it dry.

"You're not even going to thank me for saving your life?" the muskrat asked, appalled. Seed ignored her once more. He stretched and yawned widely, then climbed to the ceiling of the lodge and hung upside down, immediately drifting into dreams filled with apples and pears. Azure curled into a ball and fell asleep as well, planning to teach the little bat some manners in the morning.

SEED'S FEET SLIPPED. He landed on the ground with a bump, waking instantly. Fuming, he rubbed his furry head and crept to the entrance of the muskrat lodge. It had stopped raining, and the sun

was high in the sky. The bat shielded his sensitive eyes. Azure was paddling skillfully through the water, clutching a fish in her mouth. Seed glared at her. More fish! Why didn't she go get him some fruit? He turned and went back inside, his stomach growling. The sunlight was hurting his eyes, and he liked the darkness of the lodge much better. He was about to climb back onto the ceiling when he remembered. What had the muskrat hidden? He reached behind the sticks where she had put it, and to his amazement he drew out a snow-white pearl. Seed grasped it in his wing tip and marveled at it. If he brought this back with him to his cave, maybe the others would be so impressed that they wouldn't leave him alone in the rain the next time they left to find food!

He couldn't dwell on this thought very long, though, because at that moment a gunshot rang out, startling him so much that he dropped the pearl. There was a scuffling from outside, and Azure crawled into her lodge, out of breath and with wide eyes.

"A hunter!" she gasped. She hurried to the far corner of her lodge and crouched there. "Stay in here." Seed bit his lip. He wanted to stay out of the hunter's way, but what better chance did he have of making it out of Azure's home with the pearl? Cradling the beautiful thing in his wing tip, he stepped to the entrance and sneered at the muskrat.

"Do you think the other bats will like this?" he asked, displaying the pearl. Azure opened her mouth, closed it, then turned

her stunned look into a ferocious scowl.

"Give it to me," she said menacingly. Seed's heart quivered with fear, but the sneer sat frozen on his face.

"I don't think I should give it to you. I mean, you have no real use for it. And the bats back home will love me for this!" Seed snickered. "You could try to follow me, I guess. But... oh, yeah! Isn't muskrat fur valuable to hunters?" Azure lunged at the bat, but he was flying away from the lodge before she could blink.

"I saved your life, you vile creature!" she screamed. "I trusted you!" Seed felt a pang of guilt. How strange—he had never felt it before. With the pearl stashed safely in his mouth, he alighted upside-down on a tree branch and watched the lodge to see how Azure was taking this defeat.

She wasn't in the lodge.

"THAT PEARL WAS given to one of my ancestors by a sea rat he rescued!" the muskrat snarled as she made her way across the river, heading straight for Seed's tree. "It was passed down generation to generation!" Seed was so surprised by her actions that he let go of the branch, only barely managing to catch hold of the next one down. He began to get frantic. Was she crazy? She was going to get herself killed! But wait, no. There were no hunters near this area. Satisfied, Seed dropped from the tree and took wing in the other direction.

Blam! Blam! The gunshots rang through the forest. The bat let out a startled cry and lost height, checking every part of him



She lay motionless, carried away by the current of the river

to make sure he wasn't hit. It took him a second to register the blood in the water.

"Azure!" The cry was horrible. She lay motionless, carried away by the current of the river. The hunter's dogs were already going after her, barking excitedly. The bat lost all altitude and tumbled to the ground, breathing heavily. "No... no..." he moaned. She was dead. His only friend in the world. Dead! The word spun through his head, making him dizzy with horror and fear.

The dogs sloshed through the water, bending down and grasping Azure's limp body in their mouths. The hunter whis-

tled to them, loading his gun for his next kill. Anger suddenly surged through the bat's body. That human was just standing there! He had just killed an innocent creature and *he was just standing there!*

"You leave her alone!" Seed found himself shrieking, once again in the air. The pearl still sat lodged in his mouth, interfering with his speech. So it was really just a bunch of jumbled syllables that not even he could understand. Seed flew straight for the hunter's face.

If you've ever had an angry bat streaking straight toward you, you know it's a bit

unnerving. The hunter stepped back, raising his gun toward the bat. He was about to pull the trigger when he saw that the creature held a pearl in its mouth.

"What the...?" the man said in confusion. He was surprised enough to let down his guard for a split second. That was all that Seed needed. The little bat flapped right up to the man, buffeting him with his wings.

"Eek! Eeaaaccchh! Rahacch!" Seed cried, not sure what he was saying. The pearl dropped from his mouth, and the man lost no time in snatching it from the ground. In two seconds he was off and running, not caring about his newest muskrat prize. He just wanted to be sure he didn't get rabies from the crazy bat.

SEED COLLAPSED to the ground, moaning. He buried his head in his wings and sobbed. If he hadn't stolen the pearl, then the muskrat wouldn't have chased him, and she wouldn't be *dead*... She had been so nice, catching food for him and letting him stay in her home! Why on earth had he been so ungrateful?!

"Don't cry so hard. If you do, you'll get dehydrated. And the dumbest place to get dehydrated is by the river." Seed whipped around, his eyes wide in astonishment. Azure crawled onto the bank, her face twisted in pain.


"A- Azure! How! How did you..." he trailed off, just stood in amazement.

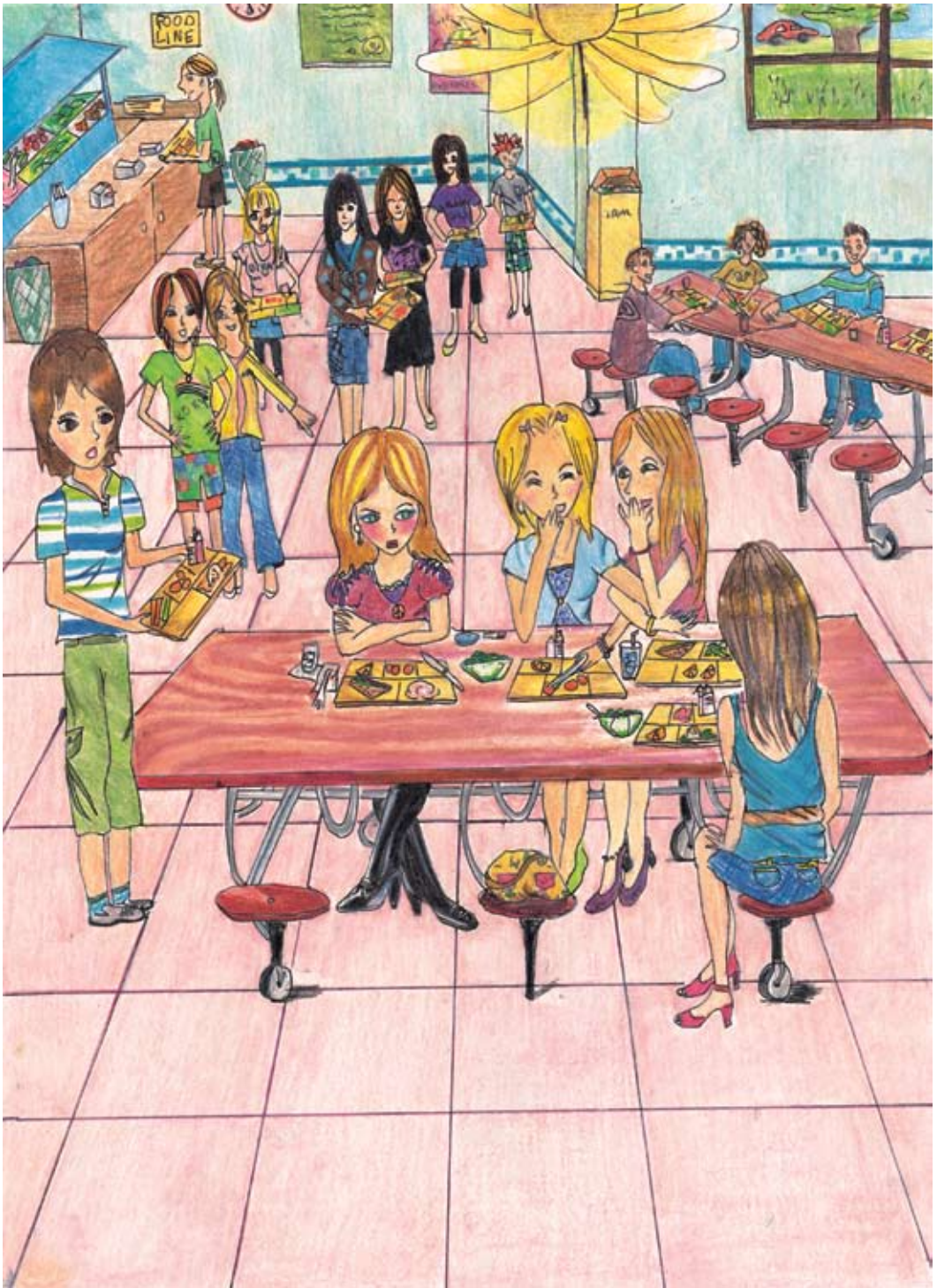
"His aim was off," she replied, trying to hide her pain. "He got me in the leg. But those dogs... those horrible dogs didn't care whether I was dead or alive, they just grabbed me..." she shuddered. Seed looked down at the ground, guilt replacing his sadness.

"Azure... I'm *so* sorry. I- I was just selfish. And I lost your pearl." He began to cry again. The muskrat nodded solemnly.

"I guess I was unfair to you, too. If I hadn't hid the pearl like it was some big deal, you wouldn't have stolen it, right?"

"Probably not," Seed muttered. He sighed. "Azure, I can't go back home. At the cave we don't really believe in helping each other and... we're just so selfish." He shifted uncomfortably as he said this. "So... I was hoping I could stay at the river. I could find my own home and everything!" Azure stared into his eyes, but the cold, hardened look that had previously been there was gone. In its place now stood sincere hope. The muskrat nodded.

"Of course you can stay, Seed," she said quietly. "I know of some fruit trees down the river." She smiled, and the bat smiled back. Right then, there was no place he would rather be. No place other than with his best friend. 



"Ellie, would you like to come over to my house Friday night for pizza and a movie?"

Mirror, Mirror

By **Sabrina Wong**

Illustrated by **Tiger Tam**

ELLIE LEAPED FROM the incubator warmth of her covers to get ready for the day that lay ahead. The sun was rising and the day was still in its infancy, offering a new beginning, and new challenges. After spending some time in her closet looking for just the right combination of shirt, pants and boots, she stole one last glance at herself in her dresser mirror.

“Yep, that’ll do,” she said, putting down the wand of her Sugar & Spice brand mascara. In the mirror, she saw a stylish girl staring back at her, with streaks of sunlight in her hair and promise in her smile. She smudged her eyeliner just the right amount. It was important to fit in at school. It took some doing, but all those trips to the mall with Hailey, Drew and Shoshanna had paid off. It wasn’t easy to run with the popular crowd; everything had to be perfect. There was a price to pay for being popular, but wearing that badge came with automatic lunch buddies at a reserved table, a crowd to hang out with every Friday night and a standing invitation to all the parties from anyone who was anybody. Ellie grabbed her books and ran to catch the school bus. Once aboard, she was careful to choose whom she sat with. Of course she wouldn’t want to be seen with the wrong person.

Wow, she thought, being popular does take a lot of energy. But she smiled to herself. It was worth it.

The morning moved as slow as a watched pot, but she knew things would pick up again by lunchtime. That’s when any gossip worth hearing would bounce around the cafeteria like a ball



Sabrina Wong, 10
Weston, Massachusetts



Tiger Tam, 10,
Honolulu, Hawaii

in Brownian motion.

"Hey, did you hear, Megan and Cole are going out?" asked Shoshanna.

"No, I hadn't heard that," she exclaimed, being careful to hide too much surprise in her voice for fear she'd be taken as an outsider.

"Did you hear that Avery and Jake broke up?" asked some junior wannabe sitting at the next table leaning over, clearly overstepping. Well, no she hadn't heard that either.

"Hey, did I tell you that they're having a sale on these new boots at Glitz & Glamour? I got mine for half price last night," announced Ellie, trying to change the subject. Her whole table cheered. That was something worth knowing. A low buzz continued between bites. It sounded more to Ellie like noise made by busybodies, rather than any useful communication, but surely this was what middle school was all about. It was all about seeing and being seen with the right crowd. From the corner of her eye, suddenly Ellie spied Melanie transfixed on her from across the crowded cafeteria.

Oh no, she's coming this way to talk to me, screamed Ellie anxiously in her mind. Melanie had been a friend ever since the first day of kindergarten when they both discovered their shared love for strawberry licorice and found out they had a common birthday. They had become instant friends and had celebrated almost every birthday in elementary school together. They had a lot in common. Both liked pink lemonade, jazz band and gymnastics.

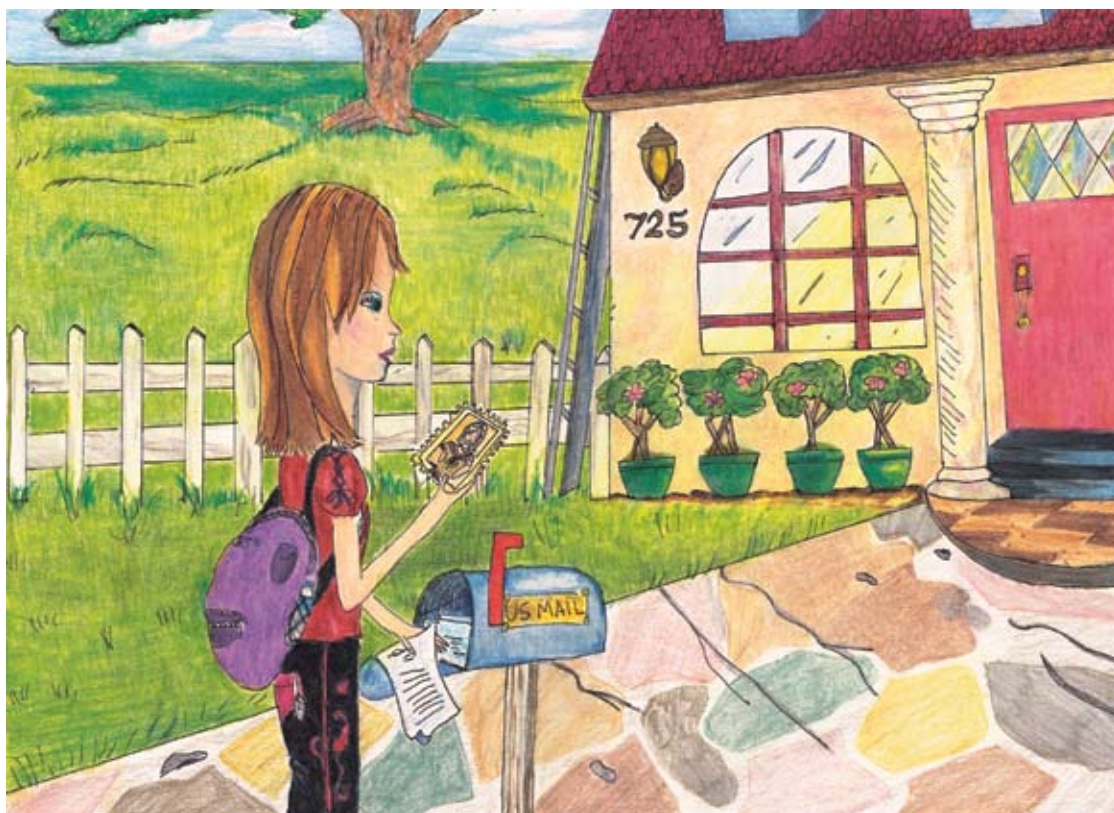
Ellie wondered exactly when their friendship had ended. Oh yeah, it was when Melanie had the nerve to wear that dorky lime-green sweater her grandmother had knit for her and sent her two birthdays ago, she reminded herself. She had been the laughingstock of the school. She wasn't foolish enough to wear that sweater twice. But there was more to it than that. She just wasn't popular and being popular meant everything, didn't it?

Melanie was walking faster now and heading directly for Ellie. There was no avoiding her. Suddenly, Melanie was standing right in front of her. Ellie tried to look away casually, like someone else had just called her name, diverting her gaze.

"Ellie, would you like to come over to my house Friday night for pizza and a movie?" Ellie's face turned a deep shade of fuchsia. She tried to pretend she didn't hear, but Melanie was persistent and facing her now, demanding a reply. "Ellie, would you...?"

"No, I heard you the first time, Melanie. Sorry, but I already have plans," she heard herself grumble, noticing that everyone at the lunch table was listening and watching, enjoying her misery. Some were pointing. Ellie was squirming and uncomfortable, as if an army of itchy hives had suddenly infiltrated to pronounce their conquest. Some girls were even snickering out loud. They didn't care whose feelings they hurt. Ellie turned away from Melanie sharply. Stony-faced, Melanie walked away.

Ellie thought she had seen tears in



Ellie's mind began to swirl with a thousand questions

those lovely root-beer-colored eyes, those eyes that effervesced with excitement whenever they shared secrets, like at those sleepless sleepovers in the distant past. Ellie was glad, however, that the unpleasant encounter was finally over and she could move on, but secretly she thought that a movie with Melanie actually sounded fun. She was getting bored of going to the mall every Friday night with the same tiresome friends who only talked about fashion, hair and makeup. She had given up so much to be popular. She let her honest feelings now float to the surface, including the stabbing pangs of guilt

for treating her friend so harshly.

The feeling of betrayal still stung when Ellie got home, but she tried to shrug it off. When she opened the mailbox at the edge of her driveway, part of every afternoon ritual, a letter addressed to her from her grandfather lay right on top. Ellie ripped open the envelope excitedly without taking another step.

"My Dear Eleanor," it read, "Your grandmother would have been so proud of you and the nice lady that you are becoming." Ellie's heart sank with her grandfather's description. Being an immigrant, English was not his first language, and


some of his phrases were stilted. She could picture his broad smile. It always seemed to make her feel better, but now somehow it made her feel worse inside. "Enclosed is a picture of your grandmother, Nora. You are just like her. You are her namesake. It was taken before I knew her, but I think she would have been about your age at the time of the photograph. She would want you to have it."

Ellie looked down at the sepia image before her. She was surprised to see herself staring back at her. The girl with the same promise in her eyes and brown hair that she wore shoulder length looked cheerful in her sailor dress. Her kindness shone through, thought Ellie. Ellie's mind began to swirl with a thousand questions. Why the sailor dress? Did Grandma face the same peer pressure in her day? Did all the girls dress like this? Did you have to, to fit in? Ellie re-read her grandfather's tightly scrolled handwriting over again. "Your grandmother would have been so proud." A teardrop fell, splat, onto the cold, hard pavement. She certainly hadn't felt proud of herself lately.

Ellie ran up to her room and threw herself onto her bed, allowing the softness of her petal-pink chenille bedspread to comfort her. It took a few moments before she could regain control of her sobbing. With a tear-stained face, she confronted herself again in her dresser mirror. Staring back at her was her grandmother's image. Ellie thought about Grandma Nora and all the

times she had taken care of her when she was younger, while her mom worked. She remembered the never-ending hugs, the velvety soft kisses, how she had scooped her up and held her close when she scraped her knee or bumped her head, or when Cupcake, her toy poodle, had nipped at her finger. Remembering, she wished she had made more of an effort to write to Grandma Nora in the last couple years. But she was too busy trying to fit in and time had quietly slipped away.

She looked into the dresser mirror again. This time she thought she saw another girl; her own granddaughter's image stared back at her questioningly. She saw honesty in those tranquil green-blue eyes and a genuine heart. With conviction, she made a solemn oath. When it was her turn, she would make sure she shared with her granddaughter what was truly important in life, just like Grandma Nora had done. Suddenly, she knew what she must do. Fresh starts can occur at any time of day, not just at their beginnings. Racing to the phone, she dialed her friend's number she had memorized by heart.

"Melanie, it's Ellie." Ellie felt her heart tripping over itself. "Can we still do pizza and a movie together this Friday? Would you like to come here, or would you still like me to come to your house? I know I'm babbling like an idiot, but I want to tell you that I'm really sorry I hurt your feelings today. If you can forgive me, can we still get together on Friday?" 

The Storm

By Lincoln Hartnett

Brilliant splashes of yellow light
Spewing all corners of the earth
With a radiant glow of scarlet

Then darkness
A shield of gray

Then the rains
Pounding relentlessly
On the cold
Damp
Ground

The wind
Slowly growing
With every passing second

A clap of thunder
Vibrating the water-drenched ground

Then peace
The storm retreats.



Lincoln Hartnett, 10
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

The Boarder's Battle

By **Connor Nackley**

Illustrated by **Carly Thaw**



Connor Nackley, 12
Darien, Connecticut



Carly Thaw, 13
Charleston, West Virginia

AS THE BOY DROPPED down from the icy ski lift and slid down the slope, you could already see the adrenaline pulsing through him like an aura of energy. This would be his last run of the year, and he knew it would be spectacular. As he glided over the snow on his board, he already knew which run he was going to do. With all of the possible choices, his mind was set on one run. The one run he could never do. This run was his enemy, a rival, a foe; he had to overcome the fear. His heart skipped a beat as he whooshed down the slope into the entrance to the run. As he looked down the slope he saw the obstacles, such as trees, rocks, and moguls, that he must overcome. He stopped. There was no going back now, he had to move on. His pulse increased tremendously. His eyes were bigger than his heart. This run was impossible! He had to move on or else he would be stuck on the mountain. He slid down the icy slope. It was getting colder by the second. His toes inside his boots were freezing, his jacket barely protecting him from the chilly winds. Snow started to fall from the sky, the white flakes brushing like a small, soft cloud against the boy's face. Crystals of frost clouded his goggles, trapping him inside a different world of vision. He gradually picked up speed. The moguls were like jagged mountains shooting out of the ground. The boy slowed down and sliced around them. He was tired, and only halfway done. Fortunately for him, the rest of the slope was decently flat with only a few of the mountain-like moguls along the way. The boy carved and glided through it with extravagant ease. Then on



This would be his last run of the year, and he knew it would be spectacular

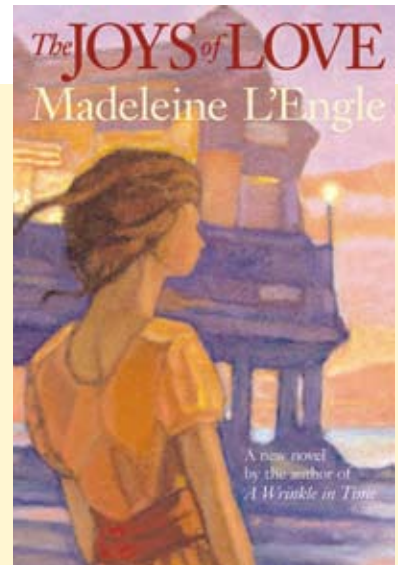
the final stretch the boy wanted a thrill, he was going to try and battle one of the enormous moguls. He had enough speed, he was ready. He crouched down into a jumping position. As he hit the mound he lurched forward and flew three feet off the ground! The boy's adrenaline surged as he was in the air. He felt free and alone like he had never felt before. It was as if the world had stopped and he kept racing forward. The boy had finished his enemy.

He had beaten it. He was satisfied and sad. He started to burst into tears, each drop like a drop of rain falling from his face. He would have to wait another year to feel free and energized. A whole year to challenge the impossible slope again. A whole year, yet he felt satisfied and accomplished that he had met his goal. He stopped crying. The boy said goodbye to the slope and went back into the lodge, ready to head home. ❄️

Book Review

By Zoe Sims

The Joys of Love, by Madeleine L'Engle;
Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York, 2008;
\$16.95



Zoe Sims, 12
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii

WHEN TWENTY-YEAR-OLD Elizabeth is offered a chance to work as an apprentice at a summer theatre, she is overjoyed and feels as if she is experiencing a whole new world. There's more going on at the theatre than just acting—Elizabeth finds herself in love with the handsome, grown-up, experienced Kurt Cantiz, a director. Suddenly small-town little Liz is whirled up into a turmoil of emotions. I found this book intriguing from the very beginning!

Interestingly, *The Joys of Love* takes place over a period of merely four days. Each day is described in detail and accentuated by flashbacks that slowly reveal the story of Elizabeth's chaotic childhood.

Part of what made the story so interesting to me is Elizabeth is an extremely compelling heroine. She is always seeking to do the right thing, but is constantly questioning what *is* right. She is a character anyone can empathize with, and she gives the book intrigue.

Elizabeth is very naïve about love. Now at the theatre, she is exposed to many different types of relationships. Liz has a friendly connection with easygoing Ben, but while she looks up to and desires Kurt, she feels unsure of his feelings for her.

Elizabeth's inexperienced position is very similar to mine.

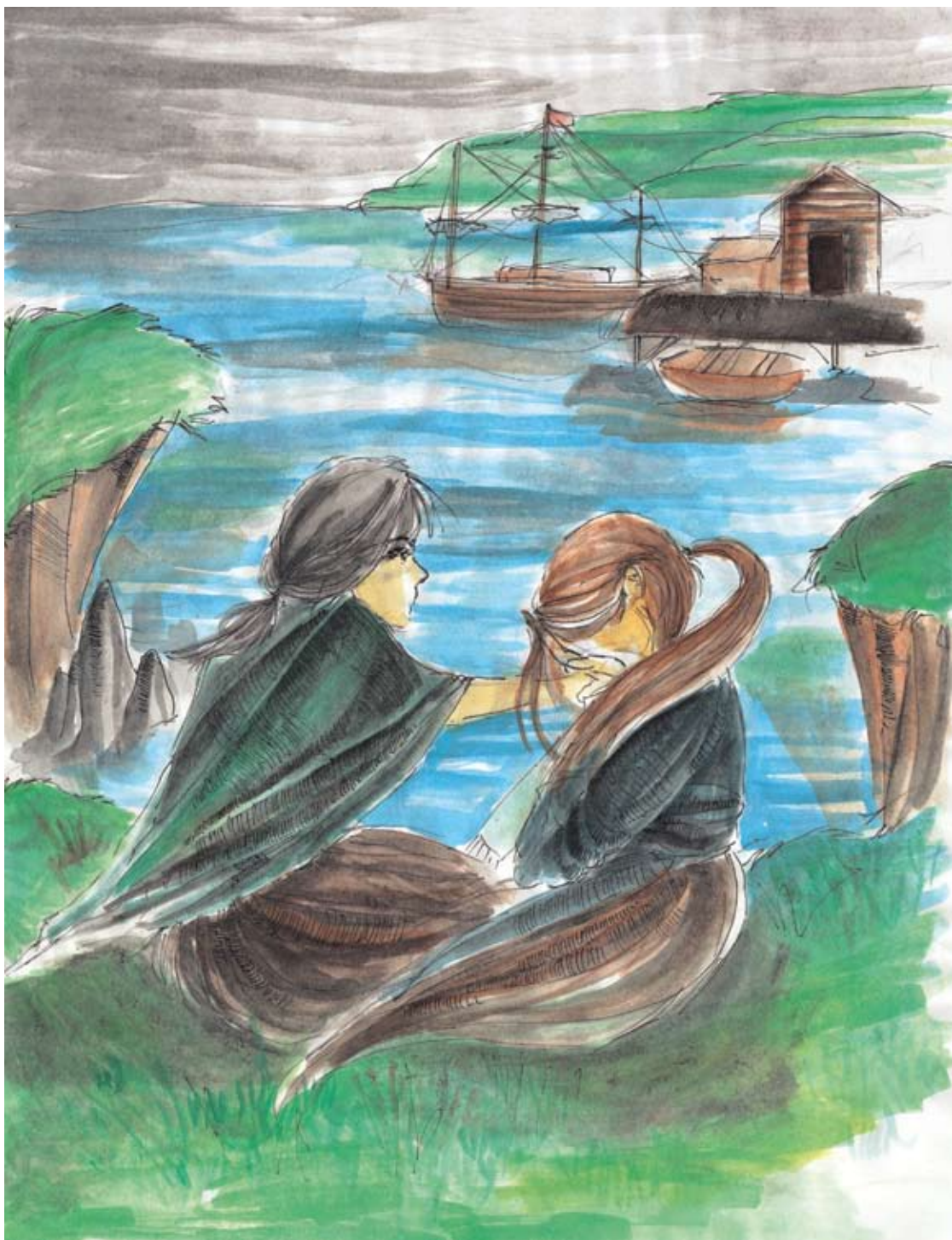
I've spent all my life on the island of Hawaii, in the small town of Kailua-Kona. Our tiny airport consists of Auntie's Leis, and the only place to eat is an ice-cream stand. The first large airport I ever saw was in San Francisco. I went on every escalator, elevator, and moving walkway I could find! Like Elizabeth in the big world of theatre, I was amazed.

As the book progresses, I learned that Elizabeth's father died when she was thirteen, and she never knew her mother. This made me feel sad for Liz, because my parents are very important to me, and I can't imagine living without them, especially, like Liz, if it was in a home where I'm barely even tolerated. Elizabeth has never had modeling about what love really is, so she's confused and overwhelmed by the myriad types of relationships she finds in the theatre.

This difficult childhood also contributes to Elizabeth's lovable character. She has had a hard life, but won't let anything stop her in pursuing her goals. Elizabeth is passionate about theatre, similar to how I feel about writing. I write because it's something I love, and, as in Elizabeth's case, persistence will make me better. This is also true for the author of the book, Madeleine L'Engle. For years L'Engle poured out many novels that weren't published, *The Joys of Love* among them. Finally, in the 1960s, several successes transformed her into a world-famous writer. Now, a year after her death, *The Joys of Love* is out, a testament to L'Engle's diligence, and a lesson for Elizabeth, me, and everyone.

In the end of the book, Kurt betrays Elizabeth's trust, and she also realizes that there's more to love than simply looking up to someone. She comprehends that Kurt always needs to have relationships with girls because he is actually insecure and needs to feel appreciated. Elizabeth finds true friendship with Ben, and they decide to stay in touch.

The Joys of Love is a story about love, self-image, and coming of age. It is a delicately woven drama that I enjoyed immensely and would suggest to any reader! ❀



"Hush," I said, "hush, everything will be all right"

Where My Family Is

By **Jessye Holmgren-Sidell**

Illustrated by the author

I SAT ALONE in the dark, feeling the boat rock from side to side. The hollow sounds the boat made as the waves hit it told me how deep the water was beneath us.

"Creaak, Creaak."

What was that noise?

"It's nothing," I told myself. "It's nothing."

But it is something: the sound of a woman, starving in the hills, begging by the road for a coffin for her dead child. The sound of a man pulling blackened potatoes from the ground.

No, that was in Ireland. We weren't in Ireland anymore. We were thousands of miles away, in the middle of the ocean. Ireland was where Ma, Da, and Nealy were. They were definitely not here.

"Creaak, Creaak."

Ireland was where there was no food, where people were starving. I shifted slightly. Where my family is, I thought.

I got up on my knees. "Good God, help me, I'm so hungry." I grabbed my empty dinner plate and threw up into it. The boat swayed violently back and forth and I leaned back against the hull, feeling my stomach twist like a blade of grass in the wind. "Oh," I moaned.

I threw up again, this time on the floor. I wiped my mouth with the back of my hand.

I remembered when I ate grass once. It was on the way to the boat when I had been so hungry. I had taken a handful of grass and shoved it into my mouth, trying to push it down my throat.



Jessye Holmgren-Sidell, 13
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

As I chewed, I was crying. If I had been home I would have eaten potatoes around the fire with my family. We would never have eaten grass.

But that was gone now. The potatoes had died and Ma, Da, and Nealy were buried in the empty harvest field outside the house. My brothers were gone, too. They had left for America before me and I didn't know exactly where they were.

"I miss them," I whispered. "I wish they were here."

I left Ma, Da, and Nealy behind when I closed the door to the house. I walked along the path, past fields of dead potatoes, past families taking refuge in the shadow of stones and dirt dugouts.

I began to cry. I remembered how this had all started the night the potatoes had died, how the wind moaned softly through the fields as we all got down on our knees to start an early harvest.

"**M**AGGIE, WAKE UP," Da said. "What's going on?" I wrapped my blanket around my shoulders.

"Nothing; nothing at all. We are just going to have an early harvest this year."

Ma waited outside quietly. "Come children, get down here with me."

"What's going on?" Nealy asked.

"Hush, Nealy. Please help me."

Nealy and I had pulled up potatoes while Da, Barrin, and Cahan collected them in their baskets. We worked hard until slowly the sun began to rise over the hills.

"Smell your hands," Nealy told me.

"They smell horrible."

"Keep quiet," I whispered. "We were told not to talk."

Inside the house Da dumped his potatoes on the ground.

"Get me a knife," he said.

One by one he opened each potato. "No," he would say, "no, this one is not good either."

Cahan picked up one of them. "Look," he whispered as he ran his hands through the slit, "it's black."

Da looked up. "Yes," he said. He put down his knife. "They are black. They are rotten."

I REMEMBERED IT was then that Da first went out to ask for food. He walked everywhere, to every house in Killala Bay, asking if they had any potatoes left. Some did have a few and some were like us and had lost their whole harvest this year. Those who did were unwilling to part with the potatoes they had, so Da came home empty-handed each day.

I dried my eyes. Now, I thought, even those who had potatoes before have lost them. They are all starving now.

Somebody coughed. I could hear a few more creaks as people stretched along the floorboards of the ship.

It smelled horrible in steerage, like waste and death. Yes, death has a smell. I had smelled it before when I had taken care of Nealy that night she had been sick and when Da and I had buried Ma. Every night I would fall asleep in the ship, lying in someone else's filth, and every morning



I no longer strived to keep myself alive; now I just wanted to get off the ship

I would wake up to darkness.

There were long days that I spent sitting alone, listening to the sounds of people getting sick. I could feel myself get weaker and weaker, slowly fading into the other hundred people who were crammed below deck. I no longer strived to keep myself alive; now I just wanted to get off the ship.

I wish it would sink, I thought, then I would hold onto a piece of driftwood and float to America.

Or back to Ireland.

I could feel my stomach start to churn again. My mind went back to the third week Da could not find any food.

“WE CAN LIVE off the remaining potatoes from last harvest,” he said. “It will pull us through the winter.”

“But what about after that?” Ma asked. “What will we eat then?”

Da looked at the ground.

“We’ve lost everything,” said Ma. “What will we do?”

“I have asked everyone; nobody is will-

ing to spare any potatoes.” Da put his hands up to the fire. “People have suffered losses, too. There is no harvest this year.”

We sat around the hearth, all six of us. The hollow silence seemed to echo through the room. There was no harvest; there was no food.

“What will we sell?” asked Nealy. “How will we earn money?”

“Hush.” Mama ripped a piece of bread off the loaf. “We will find other things to sell.”

“I will walk up to town tomorrow.” Barrin rose to his feet. “Perhaps there is a ship there that will bring provisions.”

Ma poked at the fire. “We will do what we must.”

I got up quietly. “Nealy and I are going outside.”

Outside the air smelled bad, very bad, like hunger. Nealy took my hand. “Maggie, are you hungry, too?”

I nodded. “Yes.”

“Sometimes I feel like I’m going to faint I’m so hungry.”

I sighed. “It has only been three weeks; things will get better soon.”

She looked at me. “But what if they don’t? What if things don’t get better? What if there isn’t food for many more months? What if there isn’t food for years?”

I didn’t have an answer for her. “We will find some way to survive this. Be strong, Nealy.”

She shook her head. “I can’t. Did you hear that Mary Smith’s family was evicted from their house? They were thrown out

into the cold because they couldn’t pay the rent, all eleven of them.”

I grabbed her shoulders. “We will survive. I promise you.”

She began to sob. “Maggie, I’m scared.”

“Hush,” I said, “hush, everything will be all right.”

I HAD PROMISED Nealy that everything would be all right, but it hadn’t been. We made it through that year by living off of the last year’s harvest of turnips and wild onions. Da assured us that this year’s harvest would be better. But once again our potatoes were black.

“WE WILL DIE if we stay here,” I heard Barrin say to Da one evening. “We must go somewhere else.”

“And where do you suggest?” Da answered quietly.

“America.” Barrin looked down. “There would be money and jobs. We could get food.”

Da laughed. “There is no money to go to America.”

“Yes, there could be if you sold the house. If we sold everything, we could pay for all of us to go.”

Da shook his head. “I will stay here; I will not sell this house.”

Barrin rose. “Cahan and I are going. We have saved up the money from the field work we’ve done and now we have enough to go.”

“You can’t go, how will we survive without you?” Da’s voice was firm. “You must stay.”

"If we stay, we will die. We must go to America. In a few months we will save up enough money to bring you all over. The Smiths have done it and now we will, too."

Da frowned. "Who will help us get food?"

"Maggie and Nealy will help; they are strong girls."

Da sighed. "You promise that we will all be together?"

Barrin nodded. "I promise."

Barrin and Cahan left two weeks later. Da drove them down to Killala Bay in the cart while Ma, Nealy and I stayed home to gather food.

"You will see, girls," said Ma, "we will all be together again."

BUT WE NEVER were. Two months after Barrin and Cahan left we received a letter from them saying that they were alive and well.

Dear Ma, Da, Maggie and Nealy,

We have made it to America, hard though it was. Cahan was almost sent back because he had a slight cough and they thought he might have consumption. They do not like the Irish here. I do my best to talk like an American. We live with four other boys in a place on 101 Clark Street. You won't know where that is, but don't worry. We'll find you when you get off the boat. We know some girls who work in a laundry where Maggie and Nealy can work and we'll all take care of Ma and Da.

Your loving sons,
Barrin and Cahan

By that time Ma had died and Nealy was sick. Enclosed in the envelope was enough money for one ticket to America, but Da did not use it. He put the letter and the money in the jar where we had once kept our money.

I never asked Da about it; I didn't want to leave. It occurred to me that Da might go to America and leave me and Nealy behind, but as Nealy grew weaker there was no way he would go by himself. The night Nealy died he brought out the letter.

"Maggie, take this," he said softly, "take this and leave."

I shook my head. "I will not go without you."

"I'll never make it, Maggie. You must go. You must go for both of us. Join your brothers and make a life in America."

I took the letter. "Will you come later?"

He looked over at Nealy. "I will try." He gave me a hug.

"I promised Nealy that everything would be all right," I whispered.

"We can't always keep our promises." He looked down. "Now go, Maggie."

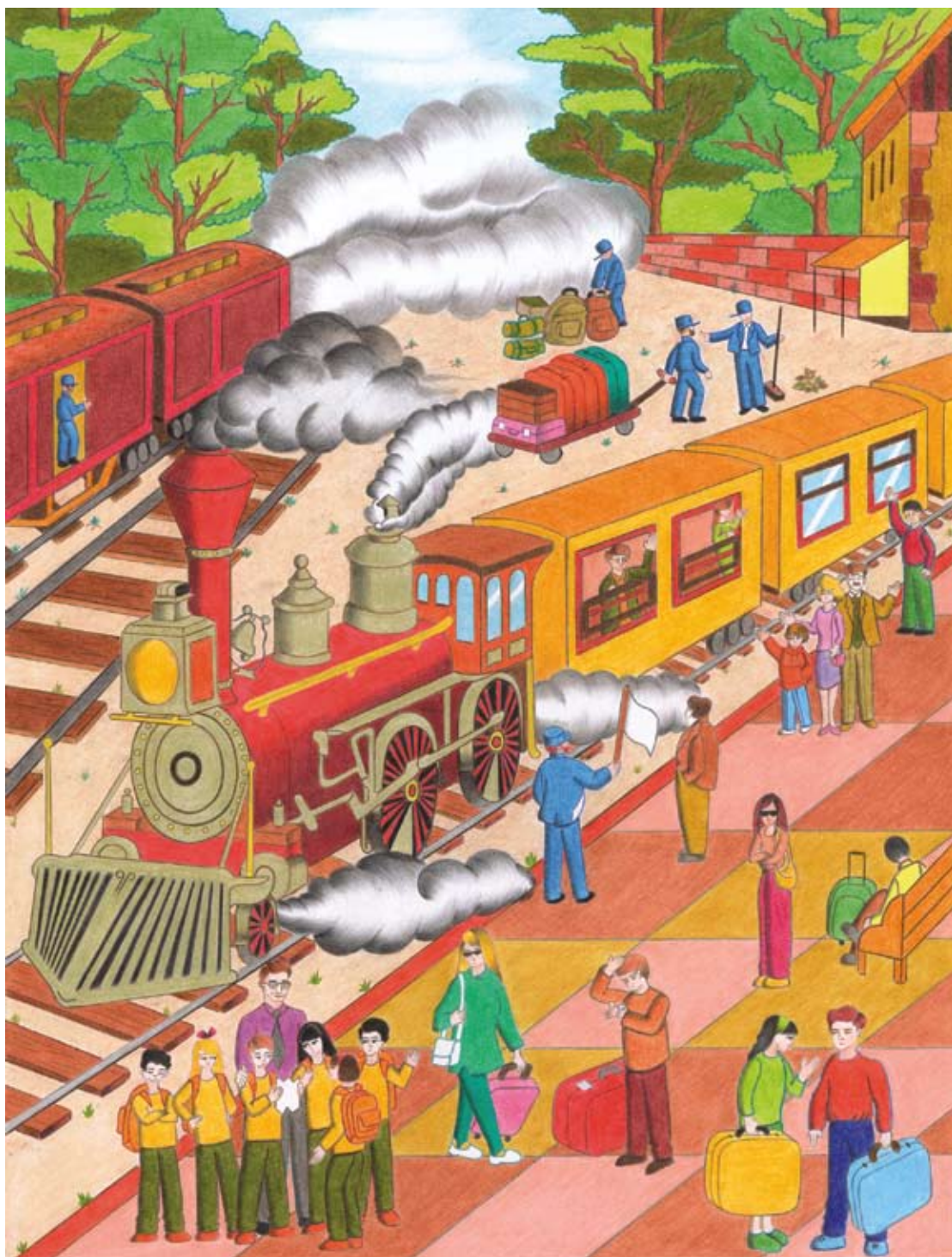
"Let me stay here tonight. I will leave in the morning."

AND NOW, I think, I am alone. I lie back against my cot, thinking of Ma, Da, and Nealy so far away.

"I wish they could come, too," I say out loud. "I wish we could all be together."

There is nothing I can do. They are gone.

But I am here. Maybe here to stay. 



The train gathered speed as it left the station

The Forgotten Fort

By **Andrew Lee**

Illustrated by **Keysun Mokhtarzadeh**

“**B**UT YOU’LL BE HOME to visit?” Ken looked hopefully at his brother, Tim.

Tim hugged Ken thoughtfully. “Course I will,” he said. “College won’t be so much fun that I won’t want to come back from time to time.”

“I’m proud of you, son,” said their father. “It’s time for you to see the real world. Gain some independence, too.”

Tim hugged his dad. “Thanks, Dad. I’ll miss you.”

Unlike their dad, who was broad-shouldered, lean, and stood with the best posture out of anyone they knew, Tim and Ken’s mother was slightly shorter. However, she made up for it with her steely composure and deadly glare. Tim, who was once on the receiving end of many disapproving glances, was now wrapped in a kind, tearful hug.

“Now don’t you get into any trouble,” chastised their mom. “I don’t want to hear any horror stories of late-night beer parties.”

Tim made a face behind her back and Ken laughed.

“He’ll be fine,” boomed their dad. “Let the boy be. He can take care of himself.”

Tim had his luggage close by. A backpack, one large compartment bag and a smaller suitcase with wheels. Tim had decided to “travel light,” as their father had said, leaving many of his possessions to a grateful Ken.

The scene went silent for a moment, each person lost in their own thoughts of the coming departure. Suddenly, as the faint whistle of the train pierced through the air, Ken felt an over-



Andrew Lee, 13
DeWitt, New York



Keysun Mokhtarzadeh, 12
Ankara, Turkey

whelming emotion overcome him. He and his brother had been through so much together. So many happy memories still lingered in his mind. Now his heart was giving way at the prospect of losing one of the closest people in his life.

The train creaked to a stop, and passengers stood up to board the train. Tim gave one last family hug and walked bravely away, not daring to look back at the tear-stained group behind him. The door slammed shut with an angry hiss, and the well-greased wheels of the train slowly began to turn. Tim's smiling features were plastered to the window, as his face was slowly carried away.

Their mother began calling frantically to the half-open window.

"Be good, you hear!"

"Make sure to go to bed early!"

"Don't forget your homework!"

The train gathered speed as it left the station. Tim had time for one last wave before he disappeared from view.

And that was it. Ken was left with a strange sense of loneliness, as if he had just lost his best friend. What would life be like now without Tim? He trudged wearily back to the van and climbed in. A light shower of rain was beginning to start up outside. The pitter-patter of the rain banged playfully against the car window, the streaming water distorting the image of Ken's face. It was a long ride home.

THE MORNING AIR was fresh and cool, carrying with it a faint trace of pine. Ken awoke sleepily, murmuring con-

tentedly in bed as the chilly breezes blew in from his open window.

The night before, Ken had cried himself to sleep. It had felt as if he had been swallowed in a pit of sadness and regret. The morning came as a shock for Ken, and he felt as if he was losing his brother all over again. No one was there to fight for the bathrooms, no one was there for their mom to yell at, no one to have their sleep-deprived face blink tiredly at the breakfast table.

Ken had always been an early riser, and he climbed out of bed long before his parents had stirred in the bedroom down the hall.

He walked outside into the brilliant morning. The dewy grass brushed against his naked ankles, but Ken didn't care. The morning air was exquisite, and Ken breathed deeply, thankful to be alive on such a perfect day.

With no particular motive, Ken shuffled across his backyard with his Nike flip-flops. He gradually walked into the woods that he had spent so many years exploring with his brother. Familiar trees and half-built forts revealed themselves to Ken, dew hanging from the leaves like the tears on his own face. Ken cried openly in the woods, a place of solitude where he had his own privacy.

Finally, he rubbed his eyes and ducked beneath some vines hanging at the entrance to one of the long-forgotten forts. Three large rocks sat resolutely in the center, while the area was fenced off by fallen branches and dead sticks. Branches of pine needles were woven between



Ken carefully picked up the fledgling in his palms, taking care not to cause it any more pain

neighboring trees to obscure the view and make it impenetrable to unwanted invaders. The dirt floor was ground neatly and removed of any tough roots, pebbles, or pinecones.

Ken ran his hands over the smooth rocks, remembering the laughter that

used to emanate from the clearing, the countless hours that he and his brother had spent carefully plotting the fort. Their sweat was as much part of the fort as the trees themselves. But somehow, the air was stiller than usual, quiet without his brother's voice to accompany his thoughts

and feelings.

Ken was filled with grief, knowing that his brother would never come back to play with him in the fort that they had made together. He suddenly missed his brother so much that his heart ached with a longing for just one more day to spend with his brother. He realized that there was still so much he didn't know about his brother, and questions that he wished he had asked.

Ken took his walking stick that was still propped up against the rock and looked around for the knife. Carefully, he started to shave the stick of its bark, trying to complete his walking stick so that it would gleam white with the pale flesh underneath. Fond memories of lazy afternoons fluttered through his mind, reminding him of the long conversations that he and Tim had shared while carving their own walking sticks.

A sudden flutter of the branch above his head caused him to pause and look up. A bird with red feathers had plummeted to the ground, now waving its wings in a frenzied attempt to get up. Ken studied it carefully. It was barely grown, with a small beak, beady eyes, and a tuft of bright feathers for a tail. Ken could see that it had broken its leg.

"Poor thing," murmured Ken. "How did it get here?"

He looked up to see the nest, barely visible in the foliage above him. There

were still a few broken shell fragments in the dirty nest. Its mother was nowhere in sight. Ken carefully picked up the fledgling in his palms, taking care not to cause it any more pain.

The bird obviously was not suited for flight yet. Ken wondered if it had been deserted by its family. With a sickening wrench, he thought of himself as a bird in the same predicament. With Tim gone it seemed like no one was there to guide him, to look after him. All his life, Ken could never have imagined what it would have been like without his older brother. The one friend that was always there for him, who even defended him against the bullies on the school bus. Ken wondered if the bird in his hand had a brother of its own. Where did its family go? He vowed that he would not let the bird die. Ken gently stroked the bird's head until its fluttering had slowed.

On impulse, Ken thought back to all the times his brother had taught him something or showed him something really cool. Tim's memory would always be here in the fort for Ken to cherish.

Poor little bird, thought Ken. He'll have to grow up without ever spending any real time with his brother. He cupped the baby fledgling in his hands and walked slowly back to his house. Don't worry, Ken thought as he blinked in the morning sunrise, making his way back up to the house. I can be your big brother from now on. ❁

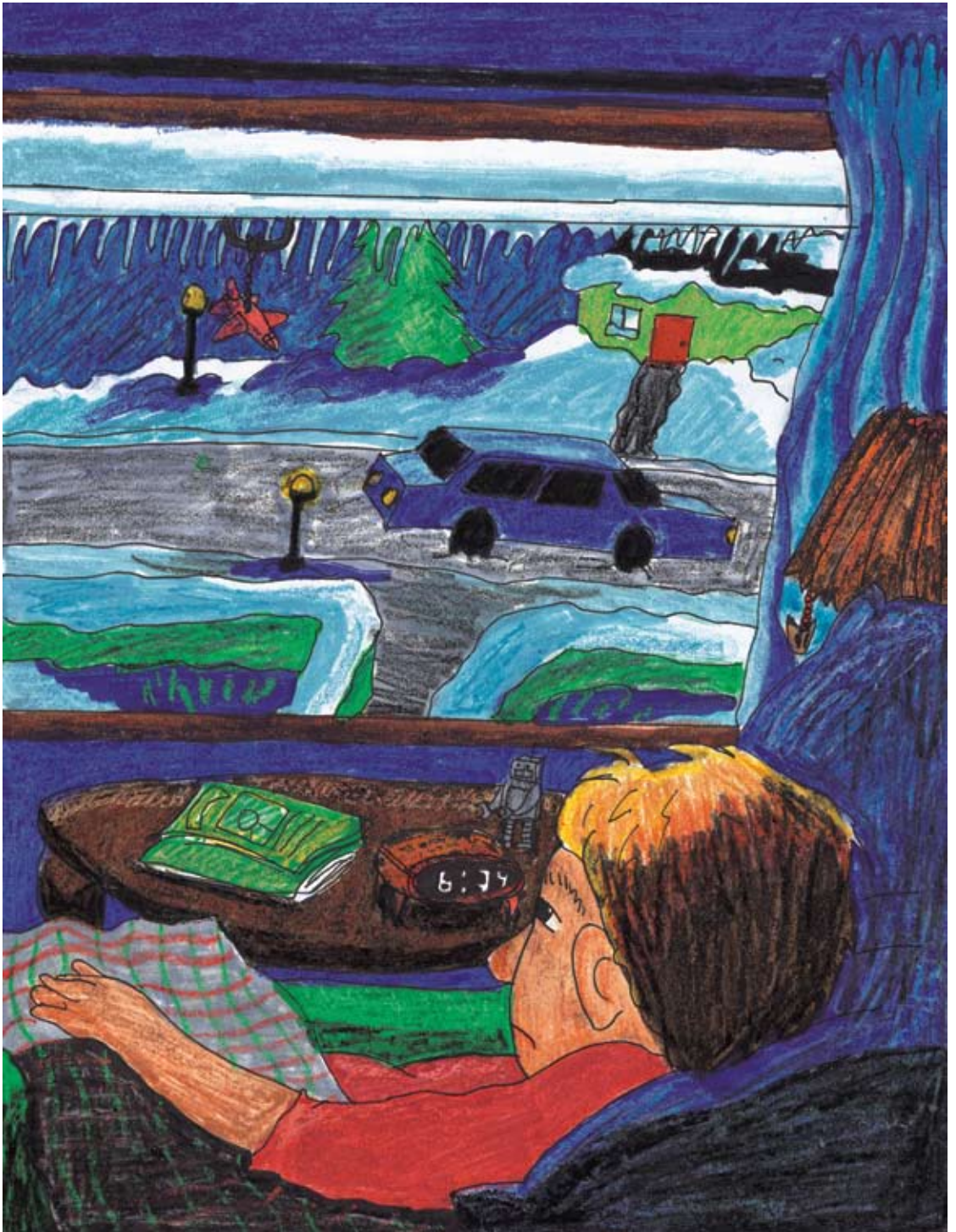
Hanging the Laundry

By Isabel Sutter

Sunlight
Dapples the long white laundry line.
Holding the plastic basket
On my sore hip
I lift a battered, hand-knitted
Cream-colored dishcloth
And hang it on the line.
A monarch butterfly flits about the yard
And a daring mourning dove
Tries to settle herself
On the laundry line.
I watch the line
Swaying in the cool breeze.
The sun dances across
The towels
And splatters them with color
Like an artist's palette
Dotted with creamy-yellow paint.
Hanging the last towel
I step back to survey my work.



Isabel Sutter, 12
Houston, Texas



There was no way he'd be going outside to deliver newspapers today

The Delivery Boy

By **Richard Wang**

Illustrated by **Zoe Hall**

A FURIOUS GUST of wind howled down the moonlit lane, sending a cascade of freshly fallen snowflakes tumbling from the treetops, up and over the rooftops, whirling around the lampposts, before finally slamming into the row of houses that lined either side of the street. The houses strained against the frigid blast, creaking and groaning, all the while steadfastly shielding the inhabitants lying dormant inside. The wind struggled for a moment, moaning with the sheer force of which it pushed against the walls of the houses, and then whistled away to continue on towards wherever its path lay. As the continuous drone of the wind slowly died away, the houses gave one final creak and shudder before relaxing back to their normal positions. In the muffled cover of heavy snow, all was silent once more.

It was this creak that awoke Tom on that cold, dark, winter's morning. With a start, he turned his head towards the alarm clock that sat upon his bedside table. Three numbers winked in the darkness on the face of the digital clock: 6:34.

For a second, Tom just stared. Then, with a sigh, he sank back into his pillow and turned the other way towards the bedroom window. The shades had been pulled back the night before, and the soft clear moonlight filtering in through the glass stood in stark contrast to the harsh, cold world that lay outside. The soft blanket of snow that had fallen outside earlier that night had been frozen into a single untouched sheet of ice that sparkled and glittered in the starlight. The long, glistening



Richard Wang, 13
Chalfont, Pennsylvania



Zoe Hall, 10
Rockville, Maryland

icicles that dangled from the top of the window lay testimony to the frigid temperatures outside.

Even more telling of the conditions outside was the fact that there wasn't a single newspaper boy outside delivering papers. Tom shut his eyes firmly and burrowed down under the warm covers of his bed. There was no way he'd be going outside to deliver newspapers today. For one thing, it was just completely frozen out there and Tom didn't fancy becoming a human popsicle. Besides, he was already late anyway. Mr. Beason, the newspaper delivery manager, wanted them "on the spot, six o'clock, at the dot." It was a bit too late for that. Tom imagined walking into the office more than a half hour later and announcing to him, "Here I am!" He scoffed. Chances were that the office would be completely abandoned and Mr. Beason himself was probably snug under the covers of his bed himself anyway.

However, Tom couldn't quite help thinking about walking into the newspaper office on that first day and asking for the job. Pocket money was always a bit tight around the house, and when he had seen the ad in the newspaper, he had jumped at the chance. His interview with Mr. Beason had been short, but he could never quite forget it.

After a few niceties and introductions, Mr. Beason had fixed Tom with an unblinking stare and said, "I want to tell you straight off the bat. We're looking for hard workers only here. The mornings delivering these papers won't always be easy, and

they won't always be fun. But if you want to be a part of our team, you have to do your job no matter what."

He had mumbled something like, "I won't quit on you. I'm a hard worker."

It was then that Mr. Beason smiled and clapped his shoulder. "I know that, son. I can see that you're a hard worker. Have a good sleep tonight. You start tomorrow at six."

Tom saw Mr. Beason's face smile through his closed eyes. He could hear his voice saying, "I won't quit on you." And then Mr. Beason clapping his shoulder and telling him, "I can see that you're a hard worker." The words seem to echo in his ears.

Tom opened his eyes and looked up at the dark ceiling of his bedroom. *Remember what Mr. Beason said about you*, a voice told him. But Mr. Beason was wrong. He wasn't a hard worker. Besides, Mr. Beason probably said the same thing to every kid who applied for the job. *You said you wouldn't quit on him*. So perhaps he had been lying to Mr. Beason when he had said he was a hard worker. On the other hand, who cared what Mr. Beason thought? So what if he had lied? It was ultimately Mr. Beason who made the decision to give him the job. But in his heart, Tom already knew. *You weren't just lying to Mr. Beason, you were lying to yourself*.

Groaning, Tom turned away from the ceiling and tried to bury his face in the pillow. "Go to sleep," he told himself. "Go to sleep. Mr. Beason doesn't care. I don't care."

However, sleep wouldn't come and the voice in his head was inescapable. *But you do care. And so do the others.*


It hit him then. The people he delivered the newspapers to! Would they be so disappointed not to get them that day? In his head, he saw Fido, the Kentleys' dog, leap onto him in joy at the sight of the rolled up bundle of newspaper. He saw the two Swanson twins running to meet him at the door when they saw him walking up towards their house. He saw old Mrs. Johnson, who always had a treat or two for him when he delivered her newspaper. Would they be so disappointed to not get their newspapers that day?

Tom shook his head, wearily trying to shake off this crazy, this insane idea. He couldn't deliver the newspapers today. Just by glancing out the window, it must have been at least minus-forty degrees outside. For heaven's sake, he thought, Icicles are hanging on my bedroom window. The streets are frozen and slippery. Delivering newspapers now is just completely stupid. That's why none of the other newspaper boys went outside today. Nobody would even go outside to even get their newspapers.

The time was now 6:50 according to the clock, and Tom had by now given up

all hope for sleep. Instead, he decided to distract himself by reading. He flicked on the lamp and winced in the sudden flash of light. Once Tom's eyes had adjusted to the new lighting, he took a magazine from his bedside table, flipped open to a random page, and started reading.

The article was about a man named Andrew Carnegie. It told the story of the man's journey from rags to riches. As a young boy, the article said, Andrew Carnegie immigrated with his family from Scotland to America. Though his family was poor and didn't have the greatest living conditions, eventually, Andrew Carnegie would grow to become a multi-millionaire and founder of one of the most powerful corporations in the world. When asked about his success, he would always attribute it to hard work. The article concluded with a quote from Andrew Carnegie that simply read: "Do your duty and a little more and the future will take care of itself."

When he had finished reading, Tom sat silently for a few moments. Outside, light began to break out from the rising sun, bathing everything in a warm, golden glow. Then, Tom put on a warm winter coat, turned out the light, and left to go out on his newspaper route. 

Book Review

By Alexandra Skinner

Hiroshima Dreams, by Kelly Easton; Dutton
Children's Books: New York, 2007; \$16.99



Alexandra Skinner, 10
St. Paul, Minnesota

"I have the gift of vision. It was given to me by my grandma, handed to me in a lotus seed, a pod that felt as big as my five-year-old hand."


LIN'S UNIQUE GIFT of vision, which she describes in the opening sentences of *Hiroshima Dreams*, helps her over the years, rescuing others, making her aware of danger, and seeing what no one else can. When Lin's Japanese grandmother, whom she calls Obaachan, comes to the United States to live with Lin and her family, secrets unravel about the family's history, and Lin gains a new strength and insight.

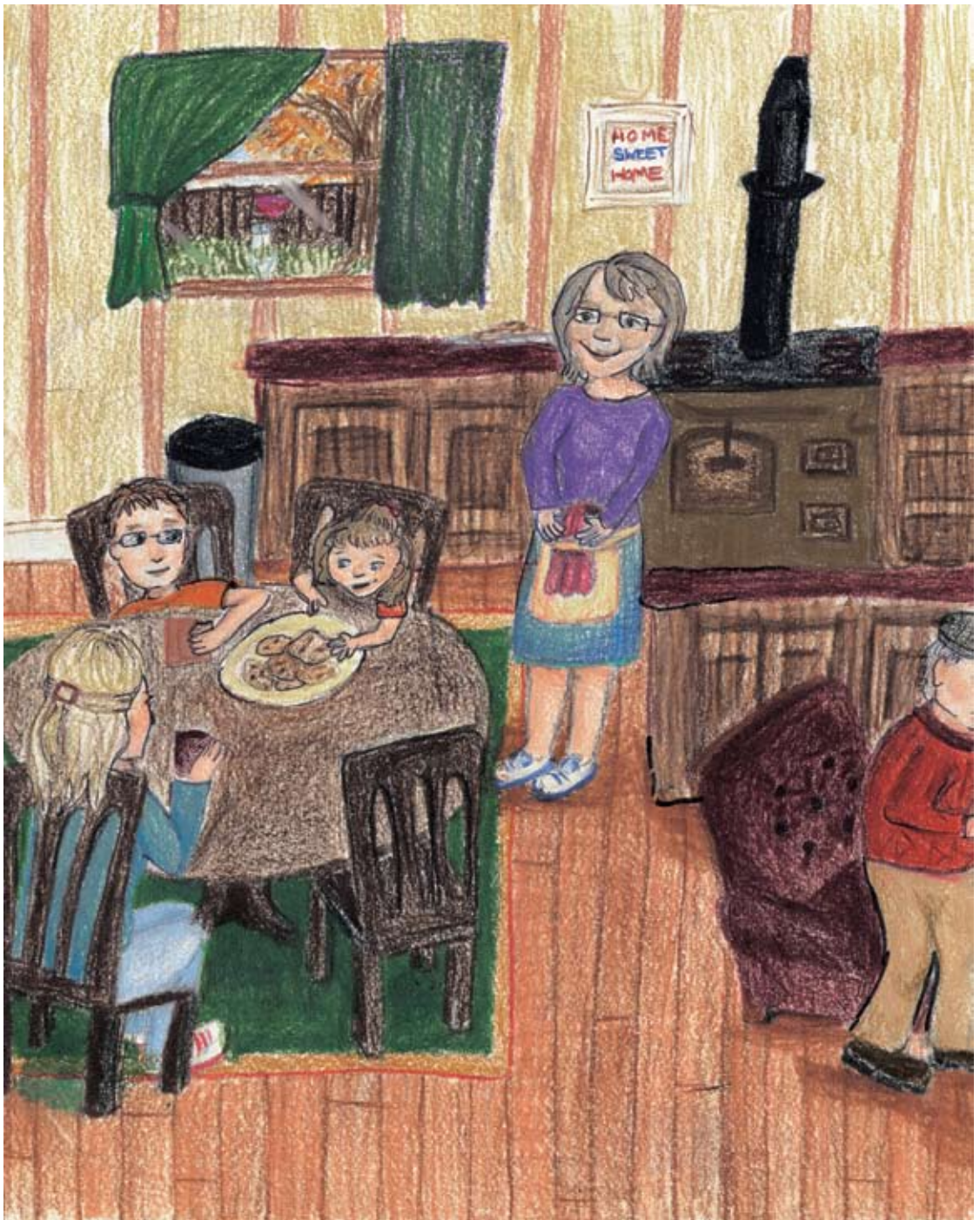
Obaachan was fifteen years old when Hiroshima was bombed during World War II. She tells the story to Lin: young Obaachan and some boys were tossing her mother's dress around and it was flying through the wind. The next moment, Obaachan heard a loud clap of thunder, and all that was left was her and a barren landscape. I can relate to a story like this about the horrors of war and how they can instantly shape an ancestor because, when my great-grandmother, Zoia, was one year old, she

lived in Russia at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution. When her parents refused to give up their land to the Communists, their house was set on fire. Five out of Zoia's six siblings died, as well as her father. She, her mother, and one remaining sister, Nina, had to flee to China. Lin and I have stories that changed our family histories in an instant, but unlike me, Lin didn't learn her story until her grandmother arrived to share it with her.

When Obaachan arrives, she brings herself, and also stories that have not only changed history but have made her and Lin who they are. Obaachan shares these stories with Lin alone, and together they learn about their past and how to face the challenges that lie ahead. *Hiroshima Dreams* takes readers through Lin's childhood, from ages five to sixteen.

Lin's strange gift of vision develops further from listening to Obaachan's stories and thinking more deeply about them by meditating. Obaachan teaches Lin how to meditate and they both do so when they have something on their minds. It acts as a way to help them think and consider other thoughts and ideas. This practice helps Lin understand the terrible times of the Hiroshima bombing, and also allows her to see things in a brand new way, making her more perceptive. For example, Lin visits her friend's house where her friend's brothers have built a mobile. Lin predicts that it is not sturdy enough and will soon collapse, but everyone else disagrees with her. Sure enough, she is correct!

Stories of all kinds bring mystery and memories, and I think that *Hiroshima Dreams* is a great one, because it encourages us to remember our own stories. Whether or not Lin's story connects to your story, it still can help you think differently about yourself or your family. 



A few moments later, we were in the kitchen, stuffing ourselves with cookies

Breaching the Wall

By Jonathan Morris

Illustrated by Emma Hoppough

THERE STOOD GRANDPA WILSON, his old yet strong form slightly hunched over, while his gaze followed our car as we pulled up to the house. The light drizzle dripped off the old tweed cap he liked to wear. As I clambered out of the car, a grin appeared on his face and he opened his arms to hug me. As I wrapped my arms around him, I could feel his red woolen sweater scratching my skin. A few moments later, Mom appeared with little Betsy. My little sister charged Grandpa and allowed herself to be picked up in his strong arms and smothered with affection. “Come in, come in,” said Grandpa. “Grandma’s been hard at work all morning baking cookies for you.”

“Yum, yum, yum!” shouted Betsy, who had immediately lost interest in Grandpa and desperately tried to get out of Grandpa’s arms and inside to the cookies.

Inside the scent of homemade chocolate-chip cookies filled the air. “Hello,” shouted Grandma from the kitchen. “Who wants cookies?”

“Meeeee!” yelled Betsy at the top of her lungs. A few moments later, we were in the kitchen, stuffing ourselves with cookies. Betsy elaborated on and on about how tedious the car ride to Connecticut was. When I looked up from the vast plate of cookies, I noticed that Grandpa had disappeared.

I knew that Grandpa was the kind of man who realized that arguing with his wife is pointless and for the most part avoided her by pursuing his interests—reading World War II stories and



Jonathan Morris, 13
Grantham, New Hampshire



Emma Hoppough, 13
Chico, California

biographies of infamous criminals in the hut by the brook and repairing furniture and building bookshelves for his ever-expanding library in his workshop. I also knew that he didn't like spending time with other people. Still, stunned that he would leave us the moment we arrived, I inquired about his whereabouts.

"He's probably in his workshop; he's got a bookshelf that he's got to finish," answered Grandpa.

"Why don't you go and build something with him? He always wanted to make a model boat," suggested Mom.

I walked down the hallway, turned at the open door and peered down the stairs to Grandpa's workshop. I could hear a paintbrush swishing over wood. I walked silently down the stairs and watched Grandpa staining the individual boards of the bookshelf. The evilly toxic smell of the wood stain flooded my nostrils and almost made me gag.

Finally, he finished and set the pieces to dry. As Grandpa turned, he noticed me, sitting on the unfinished wooden stairs. "Well, hello Peter," he mumbled, "what brings you down here?"

"Mom said we should make a model boat together," I stated awkwardly. "If you want to," I added. Grandpa said nothing. He went over to the corner of the shop, mumbled to himself a bit and then appeared with several two-foot-long boards. I just stood there, not knowing what to do.

"Come on, let's get to work," he ordered. We took the boards and cut them into thinner strips. Then, we started mak-

ing the ribs of the boat.

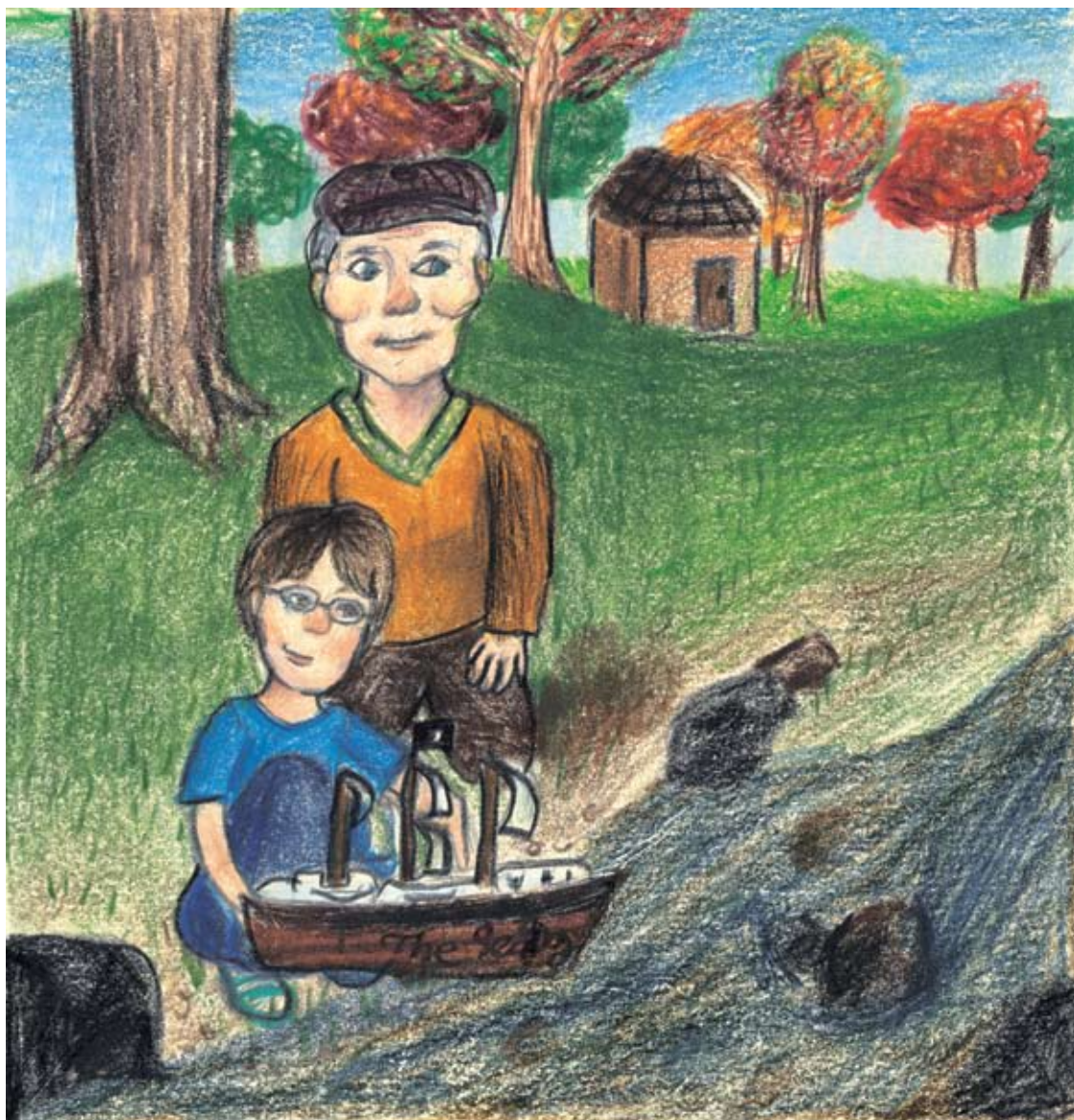
We worked until dinner in almost complete wordlessness. The Grandpa who had welcomed us was long gone; this new silent Grandpa seemed here to stay. As I went to bed, I made a wish that the old Grandpa would come back.

The next morning, we were working on the boat bright and early. Around eleven o'clock, Grandpa was using the lathe to make the mast, and the wood molded perfectly under his chisel. When the mast was complete, he turned the lathe off and took the wood off of the spikes that held it in place. He started talking, loudly enough for me to hear but not looking directly at me. "What shall we call her?" He looked up after a moment and I grasped that he was asking me. I thought for a moment and then stated, "The *Seadog*, the dreaded ship of Pirate Captain Wilson."

"And don't forget his loyal first mate, the swashbuckling Peg Leg Peter," he added, showing a seemingly uncharacteristic smile. "They sail the high seas, robbing rich merchant ships and giving to the poor."

Grandpa seemed to have let a bit of himself out and I realized that Grandpa wasn't the boring old man he seemed to be. Just then, Grandma called down that lunch was ready and we headed upstairs for our midday repast. After a delicious meal of grilled cheese with juicy tomatoes and smoked ham, we were back at work.

Now Grandpa seemed to be more open, although he didn't say a word. While fitting a miniature royal yard to the main mast, he spoke excitedly. "The *Seadog*



"Wish her luck," smiled Grandpa, setting our beloved model into the water

is the fastest, most maneuverable, best crewed ship on the high seas."

"And its crew is wanted by all the merchants in the known world," I continued.

"Why she once fought the *Endeavor*, flagship of the East India Tea Company,

and came out victorious," Grandpa explained authoritatively. "The freedom-fighting duo of Captain Wilson and Peg Leg Peter boarded and captured Blackbeard's ship single-handedly." As he spoke, he fit rigging to the already be-sailed

masts. "Recently, though," continued Grandpa, "the *Seadog* was forced to fight an entire column of British ship-of-the-line led by the *HMS Victory* herself. The *Seadog* suffered grievous losses but she will sail again someday." At first it seemed as if his story was done, but as he attached a miniature pirate flag to the flagstaff, he made as if to say one more thing. "I believe, that day is today!"

He picked up the finished boat and impishly motioned for me to follow him as he bore our precious cargo to the brook. I peered into the gurgling waters and worried for the *Seadog* on her maiden voyage. "Wish her luck," smiled Grandpa, setting our beloved model into the water. As she floated and bobbed along, we followed her trek.

Suddenly, she sped up. "Oh no! The falls!" Grandpa exclaimed. The thought of having our work destroyed quickened our pace, but it soon became apparent that we would not reach her in time. As he watched her sail over the edge, our pace slowed and we slid down the small ledge to see what could be salvaged.

As I looked up from the treacherous rocky scree, I saw the *Seadog*, completely unharmed, run aground on the large, flat river stones. Relieved that the boat was intact, we brought it back to the house, laughing about our good fortune. That evening, Mom and Grandma were surprised by how Grandpa talked

and laughed with me. I had breached the wall of Grandpa's self-induced solitude, a seemingly impossible task, the same way the *Seadog* had braved the waterfall.

After that fateful day, Grandpa remained really open around me; he even associated with others a bit, which caught everyone off guard. When it came time to leave, I felt truly sad to go, but I knew it wouldn't be long before I returned.

LATER

I WALKED THROUGH the door that seemed infinitely more familiar since that time my eight-year-old self had really gotten to know Grandpa.

"Hey, Grandpa," I shouted as I shrugged my rain-soaked sweatshirt off.

"Peter! So good to see you," he said, with the ecstatic emotion of a child on Christmas morning. "Boy, have I got the book for you, a biography of Al Capone. It's one of my new favorites." He hobbled off toward the library, motioning for me to follow.

As we entered the cluttered room, I noticed a model boat sitting atop a shelf.

"The *Seadog*," I remembered.

A knavish grin appeared on Grandpa's face as his shaking hands, showing signs of his developing Parkinson's disease, picked up the boat. "What do you say? I think Captain Wilson and Peg Leg Peter will sail the *Seadog* again."

"One last time," I finished.



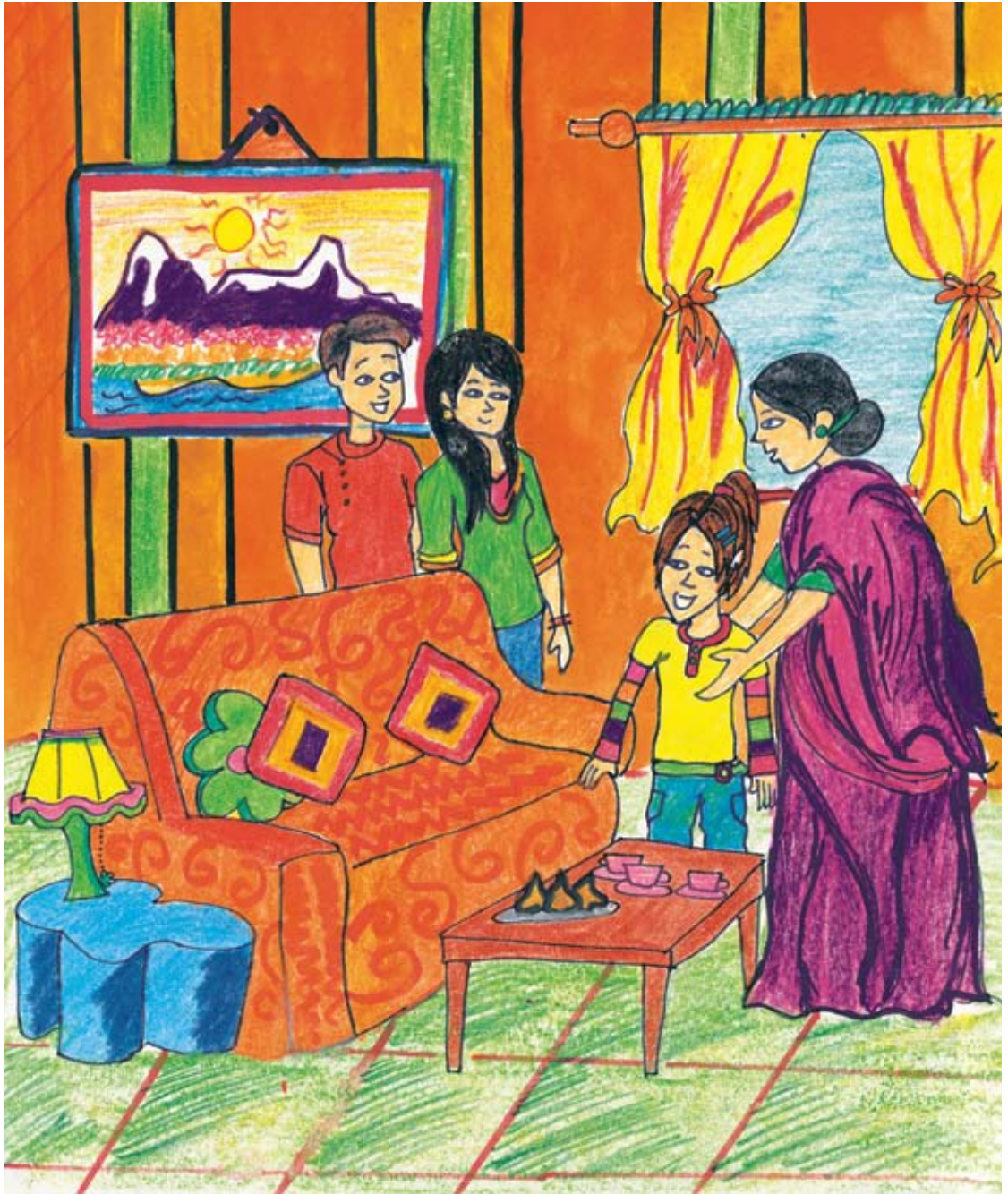
I Taste the Sky

By Isaac Kamgar

We fly like falcons over sheets of soft snow
Listening to the distant kinks and grinds of steel
 against rails
The scent of snow cools my mind
And I taste the blueness of the sky



Isaac Kamgar, 11
Laguna Beach, California



In Pune, my aunt came over to meet us and brought tea and samosas

An Indian Monsoon

By **Sanjana Saxena**

Illustrated by **Aditi Laddha**

“**I**N A FEW MINUTES, we will be landing at Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport in Mumbai. Please fasten your seat belts. Thank you for flying Air India and hope you have a wonderful stay in Mumbai,” the pilot’s voice echoed. As the plane descended under the clouds, I looked out of the window and got my first glimpse of Mumbai.

My family had decided to return to India after living in the U.S. for twelve years. As I thought of white and fuzzy snow falling into my hands, a few scattered lights twinkled in an island of darkness. This was so different from Chicago. There the city had glowed like a Christmas tree!

Coming out of the airplane, the first thing I noticed was the large number of people. Hundreds of baggage handlers, policemen, officials and many hangers-on were running back and forth like a swarm of bees. The air was also very hot and humid. My father had told me this happened because of the monsoon. He explained to me about these rising winds from the Arabian Sea that brought much relief from intense heat and were essential for Indian farmers. But this year, the monsoon was different.

The city was facing its worst flooding in a century and as we drove to Pune (100 miles from Mumbai), our destination, I saw the havoc that the rains had caused. There was water everywhere, dogs and cows lying on the streets, destroyed shantytowns and millions of people living in squalor. It seemed, on that day, the most wanted thing in Mumbai was a dry place to sleep!

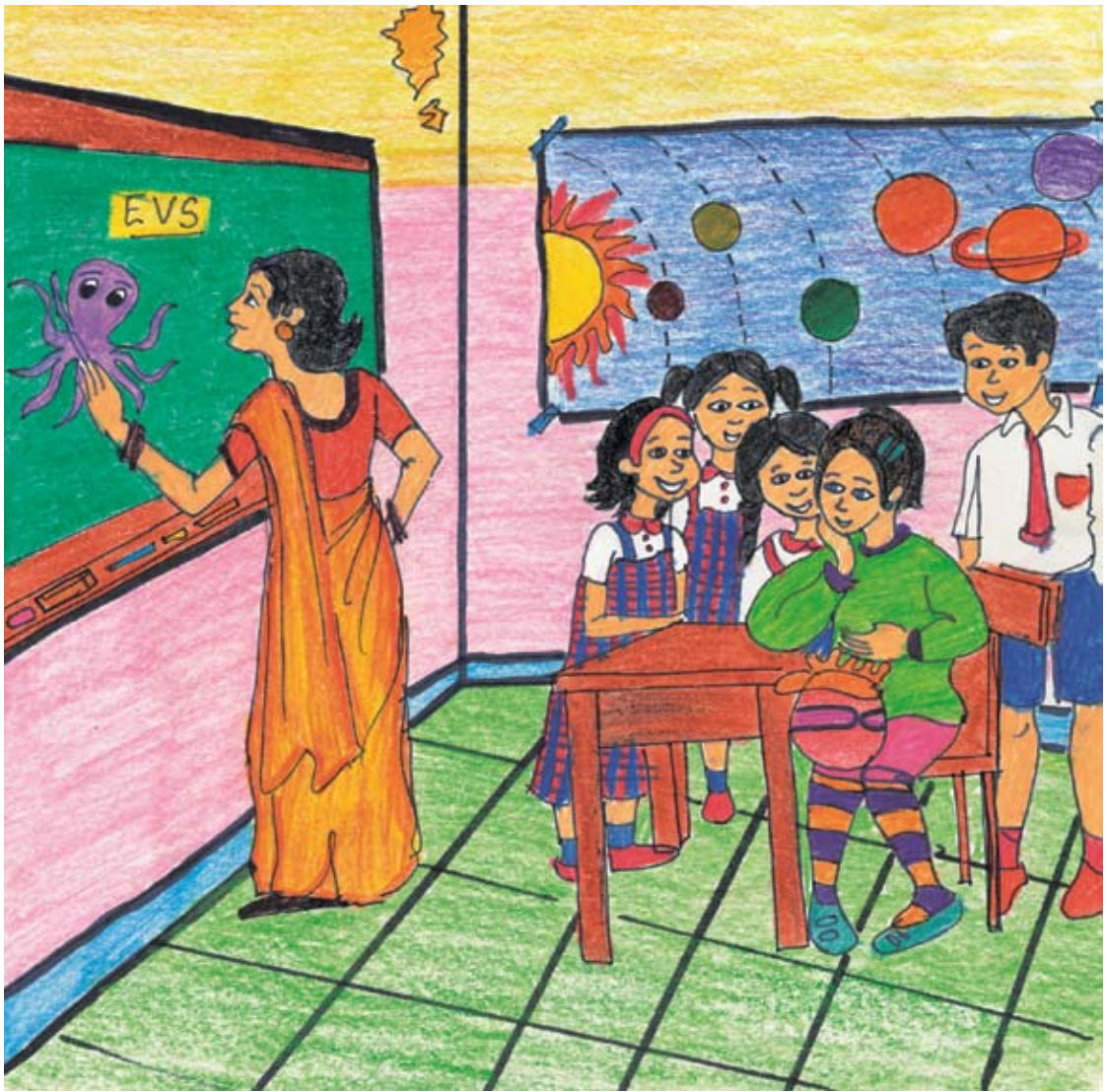
After that horrible view of Mumbai, we were now on an ex-



Sanjana Saxena, 11
Menlo Park, California



Aditi Laddha, 12
Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India



The best part was that, within a week, I had made new friends

pressway to Pune that seemed to pop out of a U.S. travel book. My father was beaming. "Wow! We never had roads like these when I was growing up in India. This is better than Chicago!" he exclaimed. The driver was talking on his cell phone—I had not expected that in India. As the early morning sun came (we had landed

at two AM), I saw the most beautiful scenery that I could imagine. It was green everywhere, rolling hills of the Sahyadri range surrounded us on both sides and there were hundreds of seasonal rivulets that were flowing down. I felt that I was in Hawaii! In Pune, my aunt came over to meet us and brought tea and samosas.

Although I had never met her before, she seemed to know everything about me.

In a week, I started at an International School in Pune. Its name was (believe me, this is going to be funny) the Mercedes-Benz International School. There were children and teachers from over twenty countries, and during our breaks we played baseball, cricket, soccer and “dog and the bone.” I was happy that my class teacher was an American—Mr. Winch, from Cambridge, Massachusetts. At least I wasn’t the only new one. He was a superb teacher and I learned well in his class. I also taught him a few words of Hindi!

After fourth grade, my parents moved me to an Indian school. It was a world apart from my school in Chicago or the International School. There were many kids in my class and the classrooms were not air-conditioned. The teachers were very strict and we had tests very frequently. The class had a broken ceiling—the facilities in the school were a little run-down.

But the best part was that, within a week, I had made new friends—Sheerja, Disha, Laxmi, Akansha, Meghna, Simran and Parinaz. They would break out in loud laughter when I would read “z” as “zee” instead of saying “zed” or spell “color” instead of using the Indian English spelling of “colour.” But that was just a little fun part. They also had many questions about America. “Is everybody rich there?” “Is it

very cold in Chicago?” “How is baseball different from cricket?” or “Do you miss your friends from Chicago?” I answered that America was a big country—pretty, rich and a lot of fun.

Time was flying by and I started to adjust to all the things that make India special—family, friends, festivals, food and my friend Sheerja. But my father was having second thoughts. He would often say, “India is still very poor,” “America has the best universities,” and “Can I make an honest living here?” I did not fully understand all the discussions that he had with my mother, but soon I found out that he had found a job in California and that we were moving to Menlo Park.

The only thing I knew about California was that it was called the Golden State and it was not as cold as Chicago. I was sad that I would be leaving my new friends in India—we exchanged e-mail addresses and promised to keep in touch. A long flight and a stopover in Chicago and soon I was at a school in Menlo Park.

It was a beautiful day when I started at my new school in Menlo Park. The teacher asked me to introduce myself to the class. After I said a few lines, the teacher thanked me and said, “Oh, what a beautiful day, Jana has brought an Indian summer to California.” I touched my lips; I did not want to tell her about the Indian monsoon!



Subscribe to Stone Soup!

ONLINE: **stonesoup.com**

By phone: **800-447-4569**

By mail: **P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063, USA**

By fax: **831-426-1161**

RECIPIENT 1

☐ 1 year ☐ 2 years ☐ 3 years

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip (Province, Postal code) _____

Country _____

Send a card for: ☐ Christmas ☐ Hanukkah ☐ Birthday

Sign card from _____

Begin with: ☐ Jan/Feb ☐ Mar/Apr ☐ May/Jun
 ☐ Jul/Aug ☐ Sep/Oct ☐ Nov/Dec

RECIPIENT 2

☐ 1 year ☐ 2 years ☐ 3 years

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip (Province, Postal code) _____

Country _____

Send a card for: ☐ Christmas ☐ Hanukkah ☐ Birthday

Sign card from _____

Begin with: ☐ Jan/Feb ☐ Mar/Apr ☐ May/Jun
 ☐ Jul/Aug ☐ Sep/Oct ☐ Nov/Dec

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Rates

	1 year	2 years	3 years
United States	\$37	\$60	\$82
Canada	US \$43	\$72	\$100
Other countries	\$49	\$84	\$118

Total purchase amount: \$ _____

International postage rates account for the entire difference in price between U.S. subscriptions and foreign subscriptions.

Payment by Check

☐ Check enclosed (payable to Stone Soup;
U.S. funds only)

Payment by Credit Card

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ AmEx ☐ Discover

Card number _____

Exp. date _____

Daytime phone number _____

Cardholder/Gift Giver

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip (Province, Postal code) _____

Country _____

Thank you for your order! Visit our Web site at stonesoup.com

Visit the Stone Soup Web Site!



stonesoup.com

for young writers and artists

HOME SUBSCRIBE LISTEN SEND WORK SITE MAP CONTACT US

About Stone Soup

Sample Issue

Stone Soup Store

Writing

Art

Links

We invite all our readers to pay us a visit at our fantastic Web site, stonesoup.com. Here are some of the things you'll find there:



- ▶ Detailed guidelines for contributing your work
- ▶ Over 300 stories, poems, and book reviews from past issues
- ▶ Recordings of our authors reading their own work
- ▶ Hundreds of examples of children's art from our international collection



- ▶ The collected work of our best illustrators
- ▶ A best-selling novel written by an 8-year-old in 1890
- ▶ Photos of the people who work at Stone Soup
- ▶ Links to other magazines by children
- ▶ The Stone Soup folktale

▲ Top

Home | Subscribe | Send work | Site map | Contact us | Privacy policy | Guarantee