

Stone Soup

the magazine by young writers and artists



"Protect Birds," by Ran Rui, age 8, China

HAWAIIAN HURRICANE

Sunny soars across the water on the back of a dolphin

BEETHOVEN'S BARGAIN

A famous composer wants to live again through a young boy

Also: Illustrations by William Drewes and Jane Westrick

A poem about forgiveness

MAY/JUNE 2000

\$5.50 U.S. \$7.50 CANADA

Stone Soup

the magazine by young writers and artists

Volume 28, Number 5
May/June 2000

STORIES

Irina Cleans Her Room *Susan Decker* 4

Sometimes computer games just have to wait

The Riding Lesson *Torey Bocast* 7

Clara takes a first step toward regaining her independence

Beethoven's Bargain *Simon Reis* 11

Simon loves Beethoven's music, but how much?

Hawaiian Hurricane *Nina Painter* 23

Sunny is alone in her little boat when a hurricane strikes

A Girl with Red Hair Is Nice to Know! *Annika Thomas* 32

An act of kindness leads to a new friendship

Robbie *Emma A. Lunbeck* 37

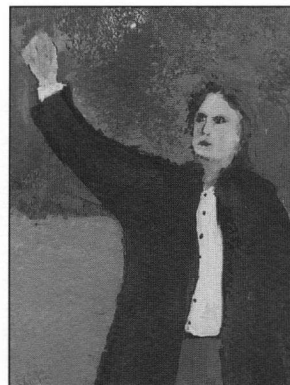
Patch and Robbie pass their summer days in a tree house

Wings of Water *Emily Heninger* 42

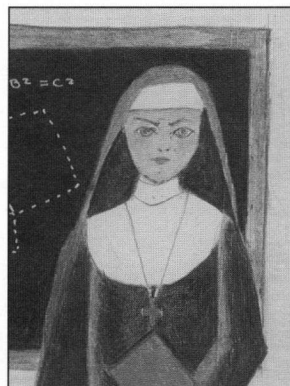
It's scary to try new things, but the rewards can be great

The Wild Mare *Emily Villano* 45

Day after day, the wild horse tries to avoid being captured



page 11



page 32

POEM

Forgive Me *Zoe Paschkis* 6

BOOK REVIEWS

Summer Hawk *Victoria Gillette* 20

Leaving Emma *Amanda Claire Gutterman* 34



page 37

♻️ *Stone Soup* is printed on recycled paper

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

Stone Soup

the magazine by young writers and artists

Welcome to all our readers, old and new! We've had the pleasure of publishing *Stone Soup* for over 27 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.



Contributors' Guidelines

Stone Soup welcomes submissions from young people through age 13.

If you want us to respond to your submission, you must enclose a business-size self-addressed stamped envelope. If you want your work returned, your envelope must be large enough and have sufficient postage for the return of your work. (Foreign contributors need not include return postage.) Contributors whose work is accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope will hear from us within four weeks. Mail your submission to *Stone Soup*, P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. Include your name, age, home address, and phone number. If you are interested in reviewing books for *Stone Soup*, write Gerry Mandel for more information. Tell her a little about yourself and the kinds of books you like to read. If you would like to illustrate for *Stone Soup*, send Ms. Mandel some samples of your art work, along with a letter saying what kinds of stories you would like to illustrate. Here's a tip for all our 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.



Jessie Moore, 12

Cover: "Protect Birds" was loaned to *Stone Soup* by the International Children's Art Museum (ICAM) in San Francisco. Through exhibits, educational programs, and art exchanges ICAM aims to foster creativity and cultural understanding among young artists from around the world. Special thanks to Germaine Juneau.

Gerry Mandel

William Rubel

Editors



Laurie Gabriel

Fulfillment Director



Stephen Pollard

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 bi-monthly in January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, and November/December. Volume 28, Number 5. Copyright © 2000 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 \$32, two years \$54, three years \$74. Rates to Canada and Mexico are an additional \$6 per year. Rates to all other countries are an additional \$12 per year. Please remit in U.S. funds or the equivalent amount in your own currency. Send SUBMISSIONS, SUBSCRIPTIONS, and ADDRESS CHANGES to: *Stone Soup*, P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to *Stone Soup*, P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. Preferred periodical postage paid at Santa Cruz, California. Printed in the United States of America.



Lilly Bee Pierce, 9

The Mailbox

I really liked your January/February issue for 2000. One of my favorite stories was "The Shopping Incident," which was about peer pressure. The thing is the peer pressure was coming from a friend. I always say, if a friend is putting you under peer pressure, then that's not a friend. The second story that I liked was "The Bullet." It showed me what other people in other countries go through every day.

Ashley Harris, 11
Los Angeles, California

I love the story "Dolphin Promises" by Shasanna Browne in the November/December *Stone Soup*. It makes me cry when Sam's best friend Amanda dies. She is diagnosed with leukemia. Before she gets ill she gives Sam a dolphin necklace (Amanda has one too). At the hospital Amanda gives her necklace to Sam and tells her to give it to her daughter someday. Sam has a daughter and names her Amanda. They go to a pond and Sam gives her daughter the dolphin necklace. I love this story. It reminds me of my best friend Joslyn O'Conner. Except for my best friend doesn't die. You've got to try and read this story.

Grace Kirby, 10
Jackson, Georgia

You published my story "Samantha's Flute" in the July/August issue of 1998. I haven't sent you anything in a while, but I am still an avid *Stone Soup* reader. In the January/February 2000 issue I discovered a story that I think is the most impressive piece I have ever read in your magazine. That story was "Laura" by Francie Neukom. Not only was the writing just incredible, but also there were so many aspects of the story that I could relate to: a beloved friend turned snobby and "popular," the obnoxiously evil "cool" clique, even the elaborate and thrilling pretend game involving pioneers, except that the game my friends and I played was about a covered wagon on the Oregon Trail instead of the Ingalls family. Francie, your story was just fabulous. I applaud you with hands and heart. Please, please keep writing!

Ruth Passanante Shannon, 13
Maplewood, New Jersey

Just looked at your Web site. How wonderful! If this had only been around when I was a kid—how different things might have been for me. I was a writer as a child, but labored in obscurity. Now I am an adult—published—but what a difference your magazine, or one like it could have made for me. I am going to encourage my niece to submit to you. Keep up the good work, please.

Pam Free
Columbus, Ohio

I think your magazine rocks! I love reading it and pick up an issue any chance I get. I think it really inspires kids to spread their wings and share with the world how wonderful they are. It's amazing how much something like that could influence your life! I hope you guys keep it up, and remember that you are doing something really great for a lot of kids.

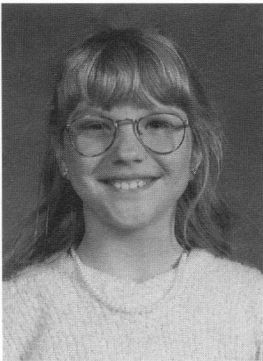
Amanda Lindgren, 11
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada

Note to our readers: Send us your letters! We are especially interested in your comments about specific stories, poems, book reviews, and illustrations. We also want to know what you like and don't like about *Stone Soup*. Send letters to "The Mailbox," *Stone Soup*, P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. Include your name, age, address, and daytime phone number.

Irina Cleans Her Room

by Susan Decker

illustrated by Hannah Richman



Susan Decker, 9
Eau Claire, Wisconsin



Hannah Richman, 12
Kittanning, Pennsylvania

IRINA SAT GINGERLY on the fluffy gray computer chair. She loved to e-mail her best friend, Maxine, and play trivia games.

"Meow!"

Irina looked down. Her white kitty jumped aboard the computer table. Irina laughed. "Wanna play too, Annie?" Annie nuzzled the computer.

"Irina! Check the chore chart, young lady!"

Irina rose from the chair. She walked to the chore chart. Her name was listed, for cleaning her closet, at seven AM. It was nine AM. "Mom, I was on the compu- . . ."

Mom cut her off. "Chores come before fun and games, Irina. Now, shut off the Oscar and clean your closet."

Irina glanced at the Oscar. The game list was on. Just then, Annie slipped, and pressed the mouse. A trivia game of the show "Perfect Angel" appeared on the screen. "Mom, it's just a few lousy shirts, skirts, and pants! Besides, a trivia game is on for "Perfect Angel!"

Mom looked frustrated. "Irina Jess Lashoka! Turn off that darn Oscar, or I will do it myself!"

Irina didn't budge, so Mom, filled with rage, went to the Oscar and shut it off. Irina stormed upstairs. She could smell turkey roasting, and biscuits. She went to her closet and sighed heavily. "Stupid closet," she muttered. She took a shirt and flung it on the bed. "Hey!" Irina cried. My old paddle-



She arranged her headbands by brand names: satiny to cloth, vinyl to plastic

ball! I lost it about a year ago!" She dug around and found her old sweater, toy boxcar, stapler, and colored paper clip box. She straightened her clothes and picked up her paddleball.

"Irina! The Oscar's free!"

Irina glanced at her messy dress drawer, then thought about the computer. Drawer. Oscar. Drawer. Oscar. She went to her dress drawer and straightened them. She looked in her scrunchy drawer. "That looks messy," Irina said aloud. "So does that headband rack. And my beanie babies!" She arranged all her

scrunchies by color: dark to bright. She arranged her headbands by brand names: satiny to cloth, vinyl to plastic. She arranged her beanie babies by animal, by alphabetical order. She looked at her room, which was sparkling clean. She went downstairs, and Mom checked her room.

"See, honey? When your room is so clean like this, it's enjoyable."

Irina smiled as she sat by the computer. She smiled again. The trivia game for "Perfect Angel" was still on. ❖

Forgive Me

by Zoe Paschkis

illustrated by the author



Zoe Paschkis, 12
Newton, Massachusetts

Something so strong,
Not the sharpest knife could spear,
Not the heaviest club could knock out,
Not the strongest python could strangle,
But with one word I detached our friendship.
Now I must ask forgiveness.

Deep as the ocean,
Meaningful as a smile,
I must ask forgiveness.
I must stitch together the wide rip,
With words so powerful,
Lions will bow down.



The Riding Lesson

by Torey Bocast

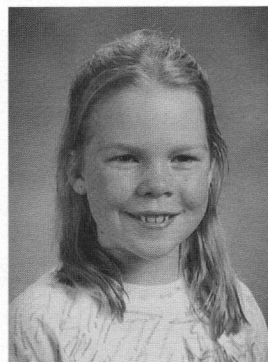
illustrated by Carrie Bell-Hoerth

THE GRAVEL CRUNCHED under the weight of my wheels, and for a moment I held my breath fearing my chair would tip over as one side was lifted as it went over a rock. But my chair righted itself and I continued down the path to the barn. I was certain I could see my heart pounding against my sweater. I hate to admit that I was scared, but I was. I had told my mother to wait in the office. Since the accident, I had needed her help so many times to do so many things, this I wanted to do by myself.

I had met Lucy, the riding instructor, when I came here two weeks ago to visit, and I recognized her at once as the only familiar face. I wheeled over to where she was standing inside the barn with a saddle cradled in her arms. She told me to wait while Chelsea, the horse I'd be riding today, was being tacked up. I was too embarrassed to ask what that meant. Then Lucy walked out of the barn into the stable. A flash of color caught my eyes as I sat there. Someone was flying a kite in a nearby field. I watched as the kite dipped and then shot straight up. The kite moved across the sky like a ballet dancer, but thinking about it, it occurred to me that the kite couldn't move on its own. It needs the wind to lift and carry it, and it was connected to a person who controlled it. My thoughts were interrupted by another girl walking into the barn, leaning heavily on a crutch. I sat and she stood for about five minutes in silence before I saw Lucy re-



Torey Bocast, 13
McLean, Virginia



Carrie Bell-Hoerth, 10
Bath, Maine



I reached up to stroke her nose

turn to the stable area, now leading a horse.

"Am I riding Garfield again today?" asked the girl with the crutch as soon as she saw Lucy, and Lucy nodded. The girl smiled broadly. "I just *love* my Garfield!" she said, turning toward me.

Lucy brought the horse over to me. "This is Chelsea," she said, and then addressing the horse, "Chelsea, this is Clara, she'll be riding you today." She turned to me again, "Do you want to pet her? She won't bite you. Just be really gentle." I reached up to stroke her

nose. She snorted and I quickly pulled back.

"Chelsea, have some manners! You'll have to wait a few more minutes, Clara. There was a mix-up in the tack room," said Lucy.

I nodded, "OK." Lucy walked Chelsea over to a post and tied her to it, then she walked back past me and into the stable area. I drummed my fingers on my helmet, which sat in my lap. I watched the girl with the crutch still leaning against the wall. She was looking into the arena watching the lesson that was going on now. Suddenly, she turned to look at me. This startled me, and I hit my helmet, sending it rolling off my lap. I peered over my knees and looked down at it. I tried to reach it, but I knew that was pointless. The girl with the crutch saw me and started hobbling over to help. "Oh, no, you don't have to . . ." I started to say, but she just shook her head and stiffly bent down to pick it up. Then I realized that she *did* have to, not her in particular, but anyone. I couldn't even pick something up by myself, I felt so useless. The girl slowly stood back up.

"Here," she said, handing it to me.

"Thanks," I replied.

"I'm Helen," she said, and then pointed to her knee. "Just had surgery done last month. I used to ride a few years ago, so now I'm riding again to help it get stronger."

I nodded and replied, "I'm Clara," but refused to tell her why I had come.

She didn't seem to mind. Garfield

was brought out and Helen gave a little shriek of delight, and rushed over to him the best she could, wrapping her free arm that wasn't holding her crutch around the pony's neck. "Isn't he just *adorable*?" she asked me.

I nodded.

Then Chelsea was untied and brought over. Seeing her this second time, with her saddle on and ready to go, made me realize how nervous I really was. Although she was a small horse—maybe a pony—she seemed big to me, looking up at her.

"Over here," said Lucy, as she began to lead Chelsea over to the mounting ramp.

I followed behind and wheeled up the ramp. Helen followed behind me. I moved my chair as close to the end of the ramp as I possibly could without falling off, and two of Lucy's helpers helped me stand and swing my leg over onto Chelsea's back. I'm so high up! I thought, and as I looked down at the ground oh-so-far below, it was like being at the top of a Ferris wheel. Then Chelsea began to move. It was only one step, but it felt huge and I lurched forward in the saddle. I nearly screamed. Chelsea took another tentative step. There was a big thing moving me and I had no way to control it! "I'm gonna fall off!" I said, as Chelsea was taking her third step.

"Relax," said Lucy. "You're not going to fall. See," she motioned to the two side-walkers who stood on either side of the horse holding onto the saddle,

"they won't let you fall."

"Yeah, we won't let you fall," repeated one of the side-walkers. Lucy handed the lead rope over to a girl who had just arrived, and then Lucy walked into the center of the arena.

"Helen! Take the outside. Work on what we were practicing last week with trotting. Kari, bring Chelsea into the center." My leader nodded and led me into the middle as Helen began to circle the outside ring, her leader barely holding the rope; she didn't need side-walkers.

"This is your first time on a horse, right?" Lucy asked me.

"Yes," I said timidly.

"Well, then first you need to know what you're doing. Do you know what these are?" She pointed to the reins in my hands.

"Of course," I said, "reins."

"Good, that's all you need to know right now. All we're going to be doing today is just walking. We're going to have to go real slow, but hopefully if what your doctor told us is right, you could be walking again in maybe only a few years."

I smiled. I couldn't help it. *Walking*. I'd been living in my wheelchair for over a year now, and I didn't know how I could endure it for a lifetime. What I wanted

more than anything was to walk again; and this horse Chelsea was going to help me to. I felt my fear melt away just thinking about that.

Kari led Chelsea to the inside ring and began to slowly walk her around. This is actually kind of fun, not too scary, I thought. As Chelsea walked, although I couldn't actually feel her, I could feel the motion. It traveled up the reins into my hands and continued through my arms. It went up my back and neck. 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4 . . . went the rhythm of her steps. Hey, this isn't hard!

"You're really good," said one of the side-walkers. "It probably won't be long before you're doing this by yourself."

By myself. I couldn't wait; there pretty much was nothing that I could do without even a little help. I always had to be helped in some way . . . but riding? By myself? Like a regular kid? With no help at all? I could imagine I already was. More than being able to walk, I wanted to be able to do things by myself again. The first step Chelsea took was my first step in regaining the independence I once had, to "get better," and although the journey would be of a thousand miles, I was more than willing to do it. I glanced up and saw the kite still dancing in the sky. ❖

Beethoven's Bargain

by Simon Reis

illustrated by William Drewes

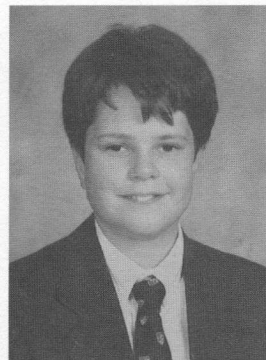
HE WAS A STRANGE BOY. Some people would say that he was a loner. He usually went his own way and stayed away from others. Nobody knew why. A quiet, sad boy, he hardly ever said much and so he had trouble making friends. But he was smart, very smart. He knew more than he ever revealed. It seemed like he had some kind of deep, dark secret that he kept to himself. Nobody could really understand him, but they were interested in the mystery of him.

People came over to his house and rang the bell, but nobody ever answered it. The only time you could see the boy would be at midnight when he was sitting on the lawn looking up at the stars. He never spoke. He just stared at people in the oddest way. Some people believe that he took drugs and drank alcohol.

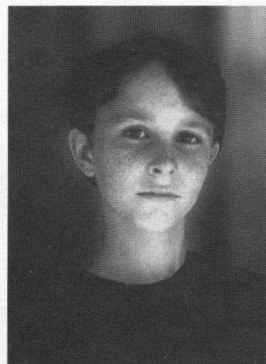
On some nights you could hear him scream. It wasn't a scream of pain or terror, but more like a long wail, one note, deep and dark like that of a foghorn calling out across a vast sea. If anything, it was a chant echoing distant and lonely.

He lived a few houses down from mine and that night, that one night, I heard him. Was he calling out to someone? To me? I decided to find out and so I walked toward it. When I approached the house, I saw a single light on through a small window. As I got closer, I could see him clearly.

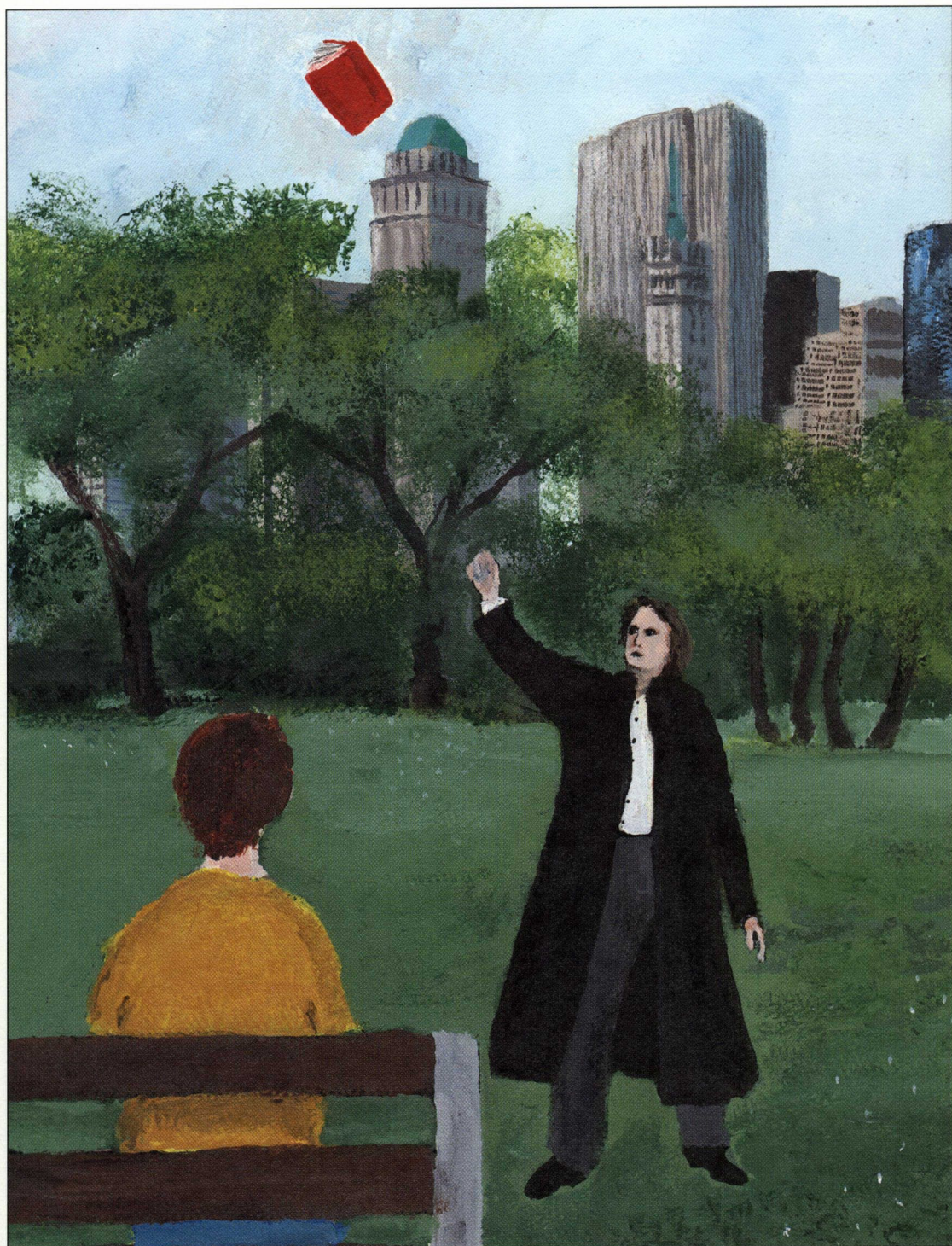
He was playing the piano. He was lively and quick on the



Simon Reis, 11
Port Hope, Ontario, Canada



William Drewes, 13
Reno, Nevada



...in one smooth gesture he threw the book in the air

keys, wild, his hair flying everywhere. The music shook the house.

Suddenly, I sneezed. The boy flipped around on the bench and yelled, "Hey you!"

I dashed away from the window and ran home. I didn't see him again for some time but he haunted my mind like a ghost. I knew that I had to find out more about this mysterious neighbor, but I was afraid. He reminded me of a young, mad Beethoven alone in his room. I even expected to see his piano lying flat on the floor with its legs cut off and him with his ear close to the ground listening to the vibrations of the music. Who was this young boy? And why was he so strange? I had to know.

For a while I forgot about it, but one day when I least expected it, I saw him again. It was in the park close to my home. I was sitting on a bench reading and enjoying the warm weather. As I looked up, I saw him in the distance. My first instinct was to leave, but something kept me there. The boy got closer and closer and then he stopped and stared at me for a long time. I wanted to run but I could not turn away. He started to walk slowly toward me and stopped a few feet away. He was carrying a book and I was close enough to see the title. I couldn't believe my eyes. The title of the book was "Simon." I stared at him and back at the book. The boy slowly walked away, stopped, looked back at me, smiling, and in one smooth gesture threw the book in the air.

It flew! Up, up, up beyond the clouds. I watched it. It was amazing as it came down, slowly, inch by inch, and settled right into my lap. I looked at the boy. He had disappeared!

I didn't know what to think or what I was feeling and so I sat there for what seemed an eternity. The book lay on my lap. There was no mistake about it. On the cover was written "Simon" in the handwriting of a young child. My hand trembled as I carefully opened it.

"My name is Simon. I am eleven years old and this is my story. I am a child of the late twentieth century, born in a time when the century and the world were about to change.

"I missed most of the last hundred years, a period in history of many wars, disasters, but also of triumphs. I have heard my parents talking about all the good and evil of this time, of peace and war. Millions of innocent people were killed all over the world. The planet became polluted. Natural disasters destroyed cities and countries. There were revolutions, assassinations, inventions that saved lives and others that threatened to destroy the earth. Man walked on the moon and we looked for strangers from other worlds but never found any. These and other countless victories and defeats were part of the century I missed. I am the child of parents who were a part of these events and I learned about them through their eyes.

"Together we now face the future and no one knows what the twenty-first

century will bring. I will be twelve years old when it begins. I will grow up and die in the twenty-first century. During that time, I hope that the world will be a better place . . ."

I stopped reading. I felt as if I was in a time warp. I certainly never wrote that story, but it was about me. It gave me the shivers. My mind raced. I started to sweat and shake. Was I in a nightmare? I was about to throw the book away but thought better of it. I put it in my bag and walked away trying to pretend that nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

That night, I couldn't sleep. I decided to write a note:

Who are you? Where did you come from?
Why did you write to me. What do you want?

Simon

I took the note, snuck out of the house in the cover of darkness to his house. There was a light in the window coloring the room in a pale, yellow glow. There he was, hunched over his piano, his fingers racing over the keys. He was playing Beethoven's "Für Elise." I knew it well. I loved this piece of music. Quickly, I dropped the letter in the mailbox and hurried back home to the safety of my bed.

In the morning as I was leaving the house for school there was a note under the door.

Meet me tonight. Midnight. By the bench
in the park. Come alone!

L.v.B.

L.v.B.? I had no idea what it was. Was it a name?

The rest of the day went slowly. I couldn't concentrate. I knew I had to meet him. It was my destiny. When I walked home from school, I was so deep in thought I could have fallen down a sewer pipe and I would not have noticed it. When I got home, the phone was ringing.

"OK, OK, I am coming," I said. I picked up the phone. "Hello."

"Be there, tonight," said a voice. It was a low voice, almost a whisper. That's all it said, "Be there tonight."

I slammed the phone down. I was scared. My mind was full of questions. How? Why? Should I go? Of course go, don't be stupid, I thought.

My parents didn't get home until five-thirty. So I had some time to prepare for the meeting. I found some dark clothes and a flashlight. I didn't know if I was in danger or not but decided I was not going to panic.

When my parents got home I pretended there was nothing wrong. I went to bed early and lay there with my eyes wide open staring at the clock. By eleven PM my parents went to sleep and soon it was time to get ready. I got dressed, took the flashlight and quietly let myself out of the house. It was eleven-forty-five.

It was a full moon that night. As I walked toward the park all kinds of shadows seemed to follow me. I held my breath. Ahead of me was the bench. I shone the flashlight toward it. It was

empty. There was nobody there. I walked to it and sat down. It was almost midnight. No one. Nothing. Time passed. A single cloud drifted past the moon.

"Hello," said the voice, in a murmur. I shone the flashlight in the direction of the voice.

There he was, the boy, standing by a nearby tree. I stood up and he approached until we were only a few feet apart. We stared at each other. Finally, he spoke. "Don't be afraid."

I stared at him. He moved closer. As he did, the moon cast light on the boy's clothes. He was wearing a long black coat that just brushed the ground. He had a black hat, the brim almost covering his eyes, an ancient white shirt, and he looked like he was going to a costume party.

"Come, sit over here," he said.

I hesitated, looked around, and when I sat down, I was shaking. I almost fell off the bench.

"Now, Simon," he started, "you must swear that you will never tell anyone what you are about to hear."

"I swear," I said.

"Good. Now I must tell you who I am. My name is Ludwig van Beethoven."

I sat there just staring at him. First, I felt like laughing but I didn't. One of us is crazy, I thought. This is a joke, I thought, an absurd joke. Beethoven died two hundred years ago. This is a boy. I was confused, scared. I wanted to leave but I stayed. I wanted to say something but I didn't. I wanted some answers but

I didn't ask. It was all so unreal.

Here I was, in the middle of the night, on a park bench, with a strange boy telling me that he was Ludwig van Beethoven. The whole world seemed upside down.

"I know what you are thinking," he finally said. "I am not a ghost. I am not here to scare you or confuse you. This is real, I am real. You are not in a dream."

I was finally able to speak, "What do you want? Why . . . why are you here?"

"I am your muse," he said, "I am your inspiration and I have come back as a child so I can live again through you. I know that there are many mysteries in life that cannot be explained. There are some things we just have to accept on faith, and no matter how confusing and strange these things are, there are times when you just have to believe. This is one of those times."

"I believe you," I said, not knowing if I did, "but what do you want?"

"I want you to play me, I mean, I want you to play my music."

"I do. But why?" I asked.

"I want to live again. No, I want to begin again, to start at the beginning through the soul of a young boy. I know you like my music. I have heard you play it, but more to the point I chose you because you are, like I was at your age, curious about what is inside your soul. There is music in your soul, music that wants to come out and speak to the world. I'm right, am I not?"

"I don't know," was the only answer I had.



I stopped playing, turned around in fright and clearly heard my mother's voice

"That's the best answer you could give me," he said. "Will you? Will you play and let me inspire you?"

Without thinking, knowing or understanding, I simply said, "Yes."

He smiled oddly, turned and slipped away into the shadows of the night.

I sat on that bench for a long time. It was getting late. I had to think. I had to think of what to do. If this was real, if Ludwig van Beethoven had come back to life! As a boy?

I stood up and walked back to my house. I lay on my bed and slept. Sometime in the middle of the night, I awoke. I didn't know the reason but I knew that something was wrong. I went downstairs to get a glass of milk. Suddenly, I stopped dead in my tracks. There, on the piano, was a sheet of music.

I picked it up. At first I couldn't see the title, but as my eyes became accustomed to the dark, I could just make it out. "Fü . . . Für . . . El . . . Eli . . . Elise . . . Für Elise!" I stared at the sheet of music. How is it possible? When I went to sleep it wasn't there. How could it just magically appear? I looked at it again. It looked extremely complicated, much too hard for me. But then I sat down on the bench and began to play. After a few tries, I finally got the first bar. Then my hands started to play the rest. I tried to stop but I couldn't. My fingers seemed to be stuck like glue to the piano. They danced up and down the keys and the music spilled out, rising and falling like a

wave, loud, soft, subsiding on a sandy beach.

I had played this music before, but this time it was more than notes on a staff of sheet music. It was poetry, a rush of colors. I was no longer thinking. I closed my eyes and let the music carry me away.

That night, I played until dawn, until I could not stay up any longer. I went to bed and slept like an angel.

As the days and nights passed, sheets of music appeared on my piano and I became possessed. "Beethoven, what have you done to me?"

Slowly, my hair grew longer, my hands stronger. Music filled my waking hours. Soon, something even stranger began to happen. As I played, my head began to lean closer and closer to the piano keys. The music began to get dimmer and dimmer until the only sound I could hear was silence. I knew what was happening but I could not stop it.

Now I got scared. My fingers were trembling on the keys but they still kept playing. I was going deaf!

Deaf . . . The word stopped me. The truth . . . sliding into my being like a snake. I was becoming deaf. Not being able to hear . . . the laughter of a child . . . the song of a bird . . . the whistling wind . . . a piece of your heart ripped out of you . . . the genius of music in return for silence . . . I . . .

Suddenly, I felt a tapping on my shoulder. I stopped playing, turned around in fright and clearly heard my mother's voice.

"It's just me, silly."

"Oh, hi, Mom," I said. Should I tell her? No, he told me not to.

"What's wrong dear? You look terrified."

"Nothing is wrong."

"What are you doing playing the piano at this time of night?"

"I couldn't sleep," I answered quickly.

"Come on, get back to bed," she said.

I hurried up the stairs and crawled into bed. As I lay there, I thought about what had just happened. I did not know what to do.

I had heard that people have been possessed by the souls of others. I know that there are strange phenomena about the connection between people both dead and alive. I have heard about these things and believe they are possible, but why me and why him? He was a tortured genius. I am just an average kid. By the end of his life he was in a world of silence. If I inherit his music, must I also suffer his pain and isolation? If that was the bargain, then I would never touch the piano again. And I didn't for a long time.

The music kept appearing on my piano. I longed to play it but I didn't. Music is a part of me. It fills my heart with joy. But why play it if I can't hear it? He was also insane, or so it was said. Must I be insane to play his music? Questions raged through my mind.

I was afraid. I wanted no part of this bargain and I had to tell him. That would mean meeting again. I sat down

at my desk and started writing a short note.

Meet me on the bench at the same time tonight.

Simon

I went outside and slid the note into his mailbox. Then I scurried off back to my house. I started thinking of what to say. I couldn't just say, "I don't want to live your life, get out of my life."

All I could see in my mind was a shadow coming out of the darkness walking toward me saying, "Simon, Simon, Simon. I need your life, I need your soul. I need to live through you."

I was startled by my alarm clock ringing. I suddenly realized what time it was. Midnight. I grabbed my coat and flew out the door. As I crept down the street, shadows haunted me and from behind every tree there seemed to be a man staring at me. I got to the bench but I could not see him.

"What do you want?"

I was startled and it took me a few minutes to catch my breath. "I, I . . . I would like to . . . I can't do it . . ."

There was a slight moment of silence.

"What do you mean?"

I hesitated, he sounded so threatening. I trembled and finally had the courage to answer, but in a timid and halting voice, "I . . . I cannot be you. I am me. You . . . you are a genius, I am not. I love your music. I love to listen to it, I love to play it, but I cannot suffer your pain. There is too much for me to hear in the world. I can't do this.

I can't do what you ask. Please . . . understand."

He looked at me long and hard. His eyes glinted in the dark. His face was like a stone mask.

I didn't know what to expect. I knew that he had a bad temper and was probably a little insane. I was ready for anything.

The wind drifted through the trees. The clouds darkened the moon. And all was quiet.

Finally . . . he spoke. "Our lives are short. You don't know that yet. You think you'll live forever. But most of us are old before we know it and we die regretting what we did not accomplish. And then we are forgotten. My life was shorter than most. I became sick. I was deaf, but two hundred years later, the world listens to my music. I had no choice, I had to write music. I'm asking you to continue it. I'm asking for a life, to finish what I never had a chance to do. I chose you because you chose me. You took me into your heart. You are young, but I was never young. I was cursed by the gift of music and I gave my life to it. I want to be young again, just one more time. You see, there is

more music . . . and I need more time . . . I need . . ."

He looked at me, waiting.

Time stood still as I stared at him, his tortured face white in the harsh, cold light of the moon.

I had no answer, no words that could say what I felt.

"I am a part of you," he said, "you will never leave me."

"I have to be me," I answered. "You are immortal. I will always listen to your music. I will play it but I cannot live your life. It's not mine."

Silence now filled the air.

"So be it," he said in a sad but kind voice and he got up slowly, walked away, head bent down like the many pictures I had seen of him.

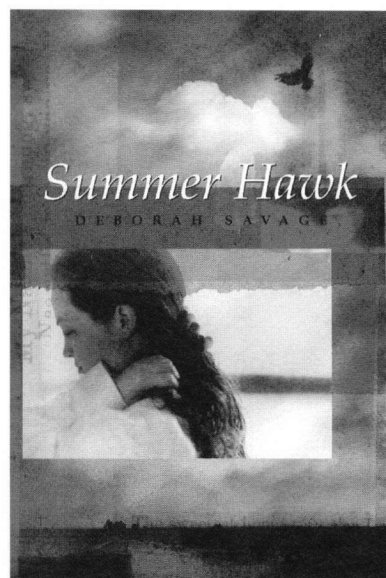
I sat there for a while. I heard the wind. I heard the lonely barking of a dog. I heard my heart. I listened and I heard. The faint strains of the *Ode to Joy* drifted and hung in the air.

I was not afraid. I was at peace. I walked home. But somehow, I knew that this was not the end of the story.

There on the piano was a sheet of music, the first four notes of the *Fifth Symphony*. ♦

Book Review

by Victoria Gillette



Victoria Gillette, 12
Virginia Beach, Virginia

Summer Hawk by Deborah Savage; Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston, 1999; \$16

HAVE YOU EVER been in a situation you hate? This is exactly what happens to the main character, Melissa.

Melissa is unhappy, living in the small rural community of Hunter's Gap, Pennsylvania. She dislikes the people of Hunter's Gap because she considers them small-minded and bigoted, and she longs for the happy, privileged life that she left behind in Philadelphia. Right away, I was able to identify with Melissa's situation because I once lived in New York City, and after moving to suburban Virginia with my parents, I missed living in the city also.

I found it hard to believe, though, that Melissa's classmates could be so backwards in their thinking. For example one day Melissa brought up the subject of Bosnia in history class and one of the students thought that Bosnia was a city in Massachusetts! The other kids in her school didn't seem to care much about education, and they constantly made fun of Melissa's mother, who was a psychoanalyst. They joked that she was a psychopath. It was easy for me to understand why

Melissa must have felt like she was surrounded by Martians.

One character in the book that I found inspiring was Rail Bogart. It seemed that Melissa secretly admired Rail but would not admit it to herself because she considered him to be just a backwards country boy. I thought this was kind of snobbish of her to treat him so coldly. He was definitely different from the other kids in Hunter's Gap. Also, I think that he really wanted to be friends with her. If I knew a boy like Rail, I wouldn't push him away like Melissa did at first. But as I read on in the story, I was happy to see that she finally developed a close friendship with him.

The character that I found the oddest

of all was the wildlife biologist the townspeople call the "Hawk Lady." At one point Melissa finds an injured baby hawk that she takes to the Hawk Lady. This eventually leads them to have a close friendship. Quite frankly, though, I questioned the sincerity of the Hawk Lady, because she had an affair with Melissa's father, who happened to still be married to Melissa's mother. This really made me angry!

In the end, however, Melissa reconciles her friendship with the Hawk Lady, and even though I wouldn't have, I found *Summer Hawk* to be a contemporary and memorable story; a story that showed me the power of love and friendship and the necessity for forgiveness. ♦



Jessica Libor, 12, Worcester, Pennsylvania



This has got to be a dream, I thought, this is too wonderful to be happening to me

Hawaiian Hurricane

by Nina Painter

illustrated by the author

INTRODUCTION



LOVE THE BEACH. It's my home, and I'm proud of it. I love to run on the beach and then dive into the sand and feel the warmth soothe my body. I love to feel the waves ripple on my toes.

This is my home, Maui, Hawaii. Sure, it's a big tourist place, but I don't care.

I also love the animals. There's so many dolphins, whales, birds and fish, nobody could be happier.

That's why I never wanted to leave.

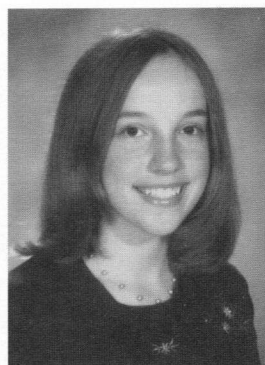
CHAPTER ONE

THE MIRACLE

WHOOSH! The waves splashed against my boat. I laughed as my hair flew all around my face. It was one of those nice, hot summer days. There was a strong breeze, so it was perfect weather for sailing. The air smelled like plumeria flowers.

I was out in my boat, sailing in the ocean. I glided for a while in the peaceful waves.

Suddenly, a grayish, triangle-shaped figure popped up from the waves, right next to my boat. Then another one popped up! And another! Before I knew it, there were seven of them. I slowed down my speed. I knew what those figures were. My favorite animal on earth gracefully leaped into the air. It was a dolphin.



Nina Painter, 12
Issaquah, Washington

The dolphin thrashed its tail in the air as it flew over my boat. SPLASH! It dove back into the water. Then, all of the dolphins raised their heads above the water.

They chirped, and at that moment, I could feel all of their joy. Trust and happiness rushed through my body, and I could feel it pouring into my heart.

Two ropes that were connected to my boat fell into the water. Instantly, two dolphins grabbed onto the ropes. They swam as fast as they could, pulling my boat along with them.

We soared through the water. The wind tore at my face. It blew my hair behind my shoulders. I never wanted this moment to end. It was a miracle! I'd never been this close to dolphins before!

An hour went by of sailing with the dolphins. I knew that it was time for them to leave when they clapped their flippers.

I leaned over the edge of my boat to touch the dolphin's back. I leaned out too far, so SPLASH! I fell into the ocean.

Luckily I was in my bathing suit. Water poured into my eyes. I struggled around, gasping for air and trying to find something to grab onto. I felt something rubbery. Well, it was something, so I grabbed onto it.

I wiped off my eyes, and saw that I had grabbed onto one of the dolphin's dorsal fins. Then another dolphin swam under my open legs. It lifted me up into the air.

Now I was actually *on* a dolphin. I let

go of the other dolphin's fin and grabbed onto the dolphin's fin that I was sitting on.

Then the dolphin suddenly raced forward. I almost fell off of him! The other dolphins swam on either side of me, as if for extra protection.

I zoomed through the water. This has got to be a dream, I thought, this is too wonderful to be happening to me. The dolphins that were swimming next to me jumped in the air.

After a long time of riding the dolphins (it seemed like just minutes of riding), the dolphins brought me back to my boat. Then they grabbed onto the ropes again and brought me back to shore.

It had been the best moment of my life.

CHAPTER TWO BAD NEWS

"MOM! DAD!" I yelled. I slammed the door behind me. I couldn't wait to tell my parents about the miracle.

My mom walked into the room I was in. "Oh, Mom!" I told her. "You won't believe what just happened! There were dolphins in the water, and they . . ."

"Start packing, Sunny," she interrupted. "You can tell me your little story later. Right now I want you to start packing."

I was puzzled. "Where are we going?"

My mom *tried* to look sympathetic. "Oh honey. Your father and I thought that you were spending too much time

in the ocean. We are going to move to Montana for a year and see how it works. Also, your father got offered a very good job there."

"You're kidding, right?" I asked.

She smiled. "No, I am sorry."

Suddenly I got a very sick feeling in my stomach. I raced to our bathroom and threw up. I sank down and sat on the toilet. How could they do this to me? Tear me apart from my life? I was just about to go into sixth grade. My best friend Lydia would need me!

They weren't my real parents anyway. They adopted me. If only my real parents were alive, they wouldn't wreck my life.

Mom walked into the bathroom. She smiled like everything was normal.

I glared at her. I got up to leave and stormed out of the room.

UP IN MY ROOM I turned on the radio. They talked about some hurricane coming this way. Oh, well. It was probably just another fake call. Last week they had my "parents" scared because of a false alarm.

I pulled out a suitcase and my backpack. I started packing. I wasn't packing to go to Montana though. I was running away.

CHAPTER THREE LEAVING

TODAY WAS THE DAY. I was running away. I woke up and acted normal. I ate an extremely big breakfast. Then when my parents were packing in their

room, I raced out of the house. My suitcase was luckily lightweight and easy to carry, while my backpack was heavier.

I walked down to our dock and got into my boat. I put on a life vest. I checked my pocket to make sure that I had my \$709. The day before I had gone to the bank, plus I took the money from our family emergency fund. After all, this was an emergency.

I pushed off the dock. There was an island that I could easily sail to. On that day, there was a strong current. Perfect for if you were trying to run away.

About an hour after sailing, I looked up into the sky. Black clouds swirled in my direction. It was then that I wished I had paid more attention to the radio.

CHAPTER FOUR HURRICANE!

I COULD TELL that it was a hurricane. There was no doubt about it.

I turned around. I saw that I couldn't make it back to Maui. I also knew that I wouldn't survive if I stayed in the water. Hurricanes were dangerous, powerful and deadly. Two years ago a big hurricane came. It tore off Lydia's roof and threw their car into their house, paralyzing her dad.

Without warning, strong winds pushed me toward the hurricane! The hurricane was coming from the south side of the island, coming quickly. I turned on my motor and started as fast as I could toward the north side of the island. There was about a ninety-nine percent chance that I'd make it out of

this hurricane unharmed.

The hurricane was pulling toward my boat quickly. I veered off to the right, hoping to come out of its path. Big mistake. I ran right into some heavy winds. My boat was swirling around, and I just couldn't get out of the big tangle of wind. Now I knew what a fly trapped in a spider's web felt like. I also knew that if I didn't get out of there quick, I would become dinner!

The hurricane was pulling in quickly. The noise was heart stopping. Swirling wind, water being churned up into the hurricane. The wind was tremendous! I was grabbing as tight as I could onto my boat. It did no good though. First my motor flew off, and then the back of the boat. The wind tugged at the sail. It flew off. A blast of wind flipped my boat in a somersault. Then I too was thrown up into the wind. I was spinning around, desperately grabbing for something, although there was nothing there but air, crushed-up leaves, pieces of wood . . . you name it. I finally grabbed something and saw it was a steering wheel. I remembered Lydia's dad and just the thought made my stomach turn.

The hurricane tossed me into the water. I kicked with all my strength to get to the surface, but it was useless. The hurricane was pushing me down. Even my life vest didn't help.

I needed to get to the surface! I never should have run away in the first place! Air! All I wanted was air. My lungs ached and hurt terribly.

Everything seemed to be in a daze. I

breathed in. I breathed in water. This was it. This was the end of me, Sunny. If only I hadn't run away . . .

CHAPTER FIVE

LUFT

I LAY THERE, breathing. Good. It had all been a dream, a realistic dream for that matter. The dolphins, everything had been a dream. It was too bad. It really had felt like I was riding them. At least the hurricane was just a dream. Or so I thought.

Ka-BOOM! My eyes flew open. I was floating in the middle between Maui and the other near island. I saw in the distance the hurricane.

I groaned. So it wasn't a dream after all. I started choking; it must have been the water I'd swallowed.

It was impossible to see. The lightning blinded my eyes, and the big ka-BOOM of the thunder was just too much. The rain was pouring.

It was then I noticed that I was lying on something. I felt it with my hands. It was . . . a dolphin!

So they had come to rescue me! I grabbed onto a dorsal fin that was near my back, and with a chirp we were off! I wasn't sure if we were going back to Maui or not. I really hoped that we didn't. I knew that it was right in the hurricane's path.

I had the feeling that the dolphin didn't either. My yellow windbreaker and blue jeans were soaked to the skin. The orange life jacket still was on me though.

The dolphin was going at a fast pace. The whole pack was with him. I knew that they too wanted to get away from the hurricane alive.

It was good that I had finally gotten air though. At that point, I suddenly remembered from my German class how *luft* meant air in German. It sure is strange to remember strange things at deadly times.

WE WERE FINALLY THERE. The dolphins let me off. I stroked one's head to show my appreciation. Then they dove down. I could see their tails as they swam deeper and deeper.

I looked in the sky. My heart skipped a beat. I was in Maui. The hurricane was aiming toward Maui.

Good. At least the dolphins had dropped me off by the dock at my house. I started walking toward a little hill that lead up to home. The wind was going against me on the hill. I fell down and skinned a hole through my jeans. I had forgotten how weak I was and how strong the wind was. I somehow managed to climb the hill, which at this point seemed to be a cliff.

I walked as hard as I could to my house. I felt a flashlight in my pocket. I tried to flip it on. To my luck, it worked.

I opened the door to my house. It looked empty.

"Mom!" I cried out. "Dad!"

I searched every room in the house. They must have left, I thought. I raced out of our house, slamming the door.

There was a big hill leading down to

Lydia's house. As I turned toward the hill, I gasped. About three feet were flooded!

I tried to walk down the hill, but slipped on a big palm tree leaf. I slid down the hill and landed in the chilly water.

Did I say three feet were flooded? About five-and-a-half were! I spotted a door floating by and grabbed onto it. Then I saw a table, but on it was something . . . something alive.

"Lydia?" I yelled out.

"Sunny? Sunny, it's me! Help!"

I paddled over to the table and grabbed on. "Where is everybody?" I asked.

"Both my parents and yours left. I stayed here. I wanted to wait for you."

Between strikes of lightning I could see her worried eyebrows. Her usually happy face and brown hair were soaked.

"Lydia, we have to get out of here!" I said. "The hurricane is coming fast. I already got caught in it, and trust me, it isn't much fun."

Lydia quickly got off the table. "Where should we go?" she asked.

"Well, I think lots of people go to the hospi- . . ."

Before I could finish, Lydia reached out her palm and forced my head into the water.

CHAPTER SIX

A BRILLIANT IDEA

LYDIA KEPT PUSHING me down. I could tell that she was underwater too. Why was she doing this?



"Run!" Lydia suddenly cried out

Then I saw a great big telephone pole smack on the water's surface right where my head would have been.

Lydia loosened her grip on my hand and I swam around it. Back above water, I thanked Lydia.

"No," she said, "I should be thanking you. After all, you came to rescue me."

So we started off on our way to the hospital. As I had been saying, the hospital was where most people went when a hurricane was coming. We had to climb up a tree to get up a steep hill. I boosted up Lydia into the tree, and then she pulled me up. The tree was nestled next to an extremely steep hill. For many years Lydia and I had always tried to ride our bikes up it but were never successful. From the top branch of the tree, we finally made it up on top of the hill; we looked back and saw jumbo waves.

Both of us were terrified, seeing the wind tear apart palm trees that we had read stories under, that we had built sandcastles under.

"Run!" Lydia suddenly cried out.

I didn't blame her. As we were racing past abandoned gas stations and houses I could feel my heart pounding against my ribs. The hospital was over six miles away. Would we make it?

I was burning hot. My shoes were untied. I didn't know it, so I tripped.

Lydia knelt next to me. "Sunny, I just can't make it to the hospital."

I gulped. "Neither can I." I think we both knew that the end was going to come. Then I saw it. Not the hurricane,

but a car. A nice little car. Maybe . . . "Come on!" I said to Lydia. "I've got an idea." I grabbed her hand and we raced toward the car.

"Sunny, are you going to drive the car?" Lydia asked as she got in. "Because if you are, I'm getting out."

I got in by the driver's side. Next to the steering wheel there were keys. All right! I thought.

"Sunny, you can't drive," Lydia said.

I buckled my seat belt and turned toward her.

"Look, Lydia," I said, "I'm cold and I'm hungry and I've almost died a few times tonight. Now this is the only way that we may get out of this alive."

Lydia sighed and buckled her seat belt too.

I turned the key. The engine started up. I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, opened my eyes and pressed the gas pedal.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SAFE AT LAST

SCREECH! The car lurched forward. I took my foot off the gas pedal. Then I put my foot on, but not quite as hard. Lydia was shivering all over. She closed her eyes.

"Lydia!" I screamed over the wind, "Don't close your eyes! You need to look out for things on the road."

Lydia barely opened up her eyes. "WATCH OUT!" she screamed as I dodged a telephone pole that was lying in the middle of the road.

Finally we reached the hospital. I was

wet, sweaty, and terrified.

Lydia and I grabbed hands after we were out of the car. The wind was too loud to see anything. We tried to open the door, but it wouldn't budge.

"It must be jammed!" I yelled.

"What?" Lydia asked, "I can't hear you!"

Right as I was about to answer though, I felt a big clunk on the back of my head. My eyes went out of focus and then everything turned black as I fell down to the ground.

WHEN I CAME TO, I was in a hospital room. There was something wrapped around the top of my head. It was just above the top of my eyes, so I could still see.

A nurse came in and gave me an exhausted smile. I could tell that there were a lot of other hurt people here too.

"So your friend Lydia told me that your name is Sunshine Williams," the nurse said. She had shoulder-length blond curly hair.

"Yeah, but what happened?" I replied.

"Lydia said that you got hit on the head with a life preserver. You've just got a minor concussion. Your parents are outside the hospital room."

"And what about the hurricane?" I asked.

"The hurricane is almost over. Now try to get some sleep." She left then, turned the light off, and left the door open a crack.

CHAPTER EIGHT

TWO WEEKS LATER

TWO WEEKS LATER I was back at home. My parents and I both apologized, them because of almost moving, and me because I'd run away.

My boat was gone, somewhere off at the bottom of the ocean, but Dad had promised to build me another one. Our house was pretty fine, except for the fact that the wall facing the northernmost side had been completely torn off. There were workers at our house, and they were already halfway done. Meanwhile, we'd been staying at a hotel about eight miles away. And that \$709? When I pushed off the dock it fell out of my pocket. My parents had been taking a beach walk and found it.

Lydia was over at our house that day. We were both in our aqua socks, bathing suits and shorts. We were sitting with my dad on the hill overlooking the ocean.

"Well," my dad mused, "I sure am glad that you girls made it out of the hurricane alive and well." (I got over my concussion about a week ago.)

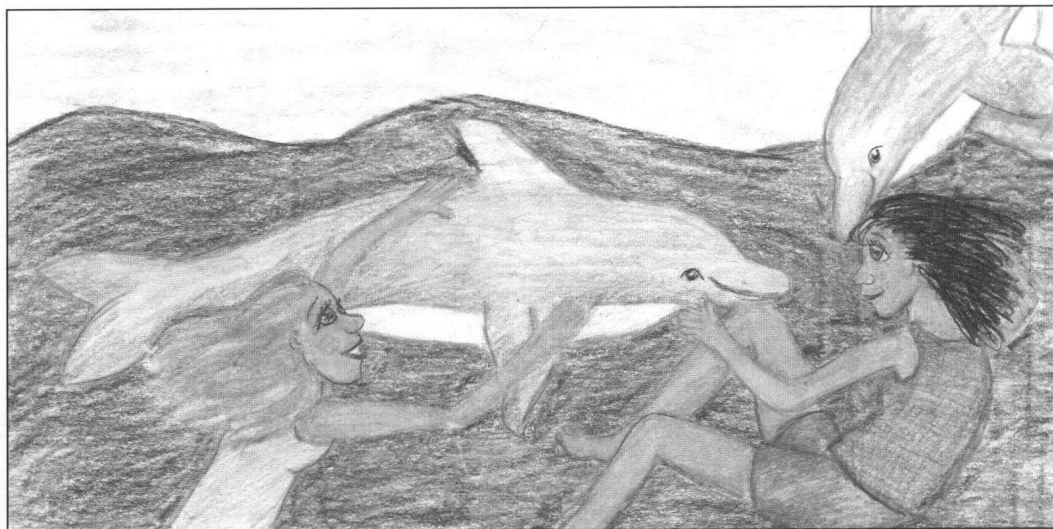
"Me too," Lydia said.

I just stood there nodding. Then I saw something in the water and got an idea.

"Dad, can Lydia and I go down to the beach? Just to see what it looks like?" I asked.

My dad smiled. "Sure. Just be careful!"

All right! I said silently. We raced down the path to the beach. I dodged through the branches and bushes that



"This is what you brought us down here for?" Lydia's smile was a mile wide

lined the path. When we got to the bottom, I made Lydia promise never to tell anybody about what was going to happen.

I splashed into the water, shorts and all. Lydia followed close behind. We waded in even further, until the water was over our heads.

Then the dolphins came up to us. Lydia looked surprised, but not scared. "This is what you brought us down here for?" Lydia's smile was a mile wide.

I touched one of the dolphins. She did the same, still amazed.

"Hold on tight though," I reminded her as I sat on the dolphin and grasped onto the dorsal fin. I don't know how, but she managed to get her smile even bigger.

"Do you mean that we can ride them?" she asked.

I nodded and helped her position herself on another dolphin. Then I noticed that this time there were more dolphins than before, at least ten! The dolphins started swimming slowly. Both Lydia and I hugged onto the dorsal fin as they picked up speed.

We both were laughing. We couldn't see anything though because there was so much water rushing up at us.

"Hold your breath!" I screamed as the dolphins plunged into the water. They came up in a jump. Then they went under the water again and jumped again.

As we were riding the waves on the dolphins, I felt like nothing bad had ever happened. I felt as carefree and happy as the dolphins did. Then I knew that everything was back to normal, and in a way, even better than before! ♦

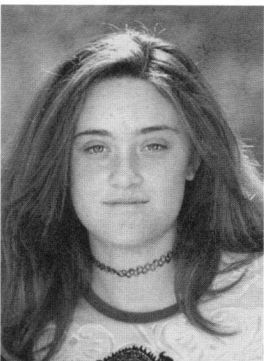
A Girl with Red Hair Is Nice to Know!

by Annika Thomas

illustrated by Kate Engel



Annika Thomas, 11
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



Kate Engel, 13
Ojai, California

ONE DAY AT SCHOOL Sister Rachel, our teacher, asked for a volunteer to read out loud. A girl named Cindy raised her hand. Cindy was a shy, quiet girl who always sat on her hands. She had short reddish hair and a twitch in her eye when she was nervous, which was most of the time. I knew Cindy was proud of herself for raising her hand. Sister Rachel looked at Cindy with her eyes wide and bulgy.

Cindy started to read the paragraph. When she came to the last sentence on the page she read, "A girl with red hair is nice." Cindy was unaware that the words "to know" were on the next page, finishing the sentence.

Sister Rachel said, "Yes . . . a girl with red hair is nice . . . what!"

Cindy repeated, "A girl with red hair is nice."

Sister Rachel let out a big disgusted sigh. Cindy knew she was in big trouble! Now she was sweating like a sprinkler.

She looked at me from across the aisle. I whispered, "To know." She stared at me with a puzzled face.

She looked at the girl on the other side of the aisle. That girl said softly, "To know."

Cindy looked back over at me, now in a panic. Her eye was twitching like a rabbit's nose.

Sister Rachel was walking slowly down the aisle. She was breathing fire, and smoke was coming out of her ears!!! She



I took a deep breath and lunged across the aisle

was ready to blow!

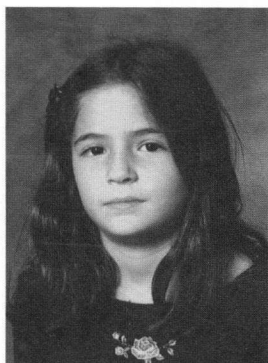
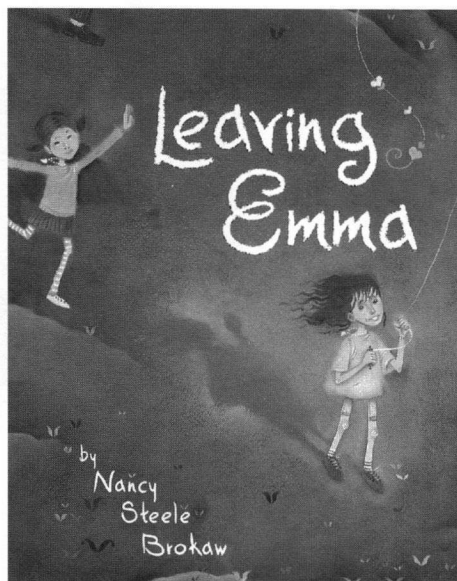
Cindy's salvation was only a page away. I took a deep breath and lunged across the aisle. In an instant I turned the page under Cindy's nervous nose.

The light bulb finally went on in her head! Cindy yelled, "To know. A girl with red hair is nice to know!!!"

The bell rang and we all filed out of class. Cindy and I looked at each other and broke into laughter. For a moment we were the world's best friends. She and I were very different people, but from then on we looked at each other with new eyes. A girl with "reddish" hair was nice to know. ❖

Book Review

by Amanda Claire Gutterman



Amanda Claire Gutterman, 8
Washington, D.C.

Leaving Emma by Nancy Steele Brokaw; Clarion Books:
New York, 1999; \$15

HAVING A BEST FRIEND can make a kid feel like she's on top of the world. I know, because I have had the same best friend since I was less than two years old. But if something should happen with that best friend, and especially if she were your only friend, it could be terrifying. In Nancy Steele Brokaw's book, *Leaving Emma*, terrified is just how Emma feels when her best friend Tem announces that she has to move at the end of the school year. To make matters worse, Emma's father tells her that he has to go far away for five months and Emma's mom is so absorbed in her own problems that she can't even help. Emma feels as though her life is wrecked.

Tumbling even further down from her perfect perch, Emma has to deal with dreaded Great-Aunt Grace who played music that "sounded exactly like those old monster movies when the lights in the castle go out, and the thunder crashes all around, and someone is about to be killed." Emma can't even tolerate when Aunt Grace comes to dinner!

In order to deal with the fear and anger of everyone

leaving her, Emma manages to patch together a few talents she barely knew she had. By making some new friends who share her love of art and by confronting other problems, Emma makes it through some difficult times and comes out more than OK. Emma even figures out a way to replace one after-school activity which she had been doing merely to please her father with another activity which she loved, was good at and received much praise for.

The characters in *Leaving Emma* could be typical people in your own neighborhood. Emma describes one nasty girl, Megan VanHook, as "the most beauti-

ful, talented, intelligent girl in North-point Middle School, and if you weren't sure about that, you could just ask her." Throughout the story, Brokaw's vivid descriptions of feelings and situations seem very realistic. Writing "whatever color concrete was, that was the color of my thoughts" made me really understand Emma's melancholy.

Leaving Emma is studded with laughs and thoughts which come together to make this a good book. I would never have chosen this book myself, yet I am glad that I read it and hope you will enjoy it, too. This book is for anyone who enjoys reading about kid problems and has a good sense of humor. ❖



Nicole Meyo, 11, Akron, Ohio



Pausing for a minute, I grasped the cool metal doorknob as I glanced hurriedly around

Robbie

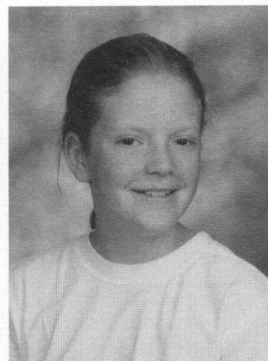
by Emma A. Lunbeck

illustrated by Jane Westrick

“**H**ERE WE ARE THEN,” said Mother happily, at the same time tipping the cab, hoisting our luggage out of the trunk, and brushing her hair aside impatiently. “Go on in and set yourself up, darling . . . I’ll be a minute.”

I nodded, then skipped up to the door; it looked about to fall off its rusting hinges. Pausing for a minute, I grasped the cool metal doorknob as I glanced hurriedly around. The grass was a pleasant shade of green, patched in some places with a prairie yellow. To the far left, I spotted a small creek, chuckling as though sharing a private joke with itself. There were bushes lining our new home, if you could call it new. The white paint was peeling, and most windows had only one green shutter (I wondered idly where the others were). And then there were the trees. Scattered haphazardly among flower beds and grasses, they seemed so energetic and alive I expected them to pull up their roots and run joyously down the twisting, dusty dirt path.

Shaking myself, I turned the doorknob and stepped into the damp, refreshing air of the house. The wooden boards underfoot creaked as I moved slowly to my new bedroom. The bed had been made up in lavender sheets; in the far corner stood a sturdy desk and, next to it, an empty bookshelf. A slight breeze ruffled the drapes by the window, and I turned my attention to it. Walking over, I leaned over the windowsill and found myself . . . staring into the eyes of a



Emma A. Lunbeck, 12
Salt Lake City, Utah



Jane Westrick, 12
Mechanicsville, Virginia

boy. For some reason, I was not in the least surprised, and could not tear my gaze away from his eyes. They were wild, and mischievous, glowing greener than a thousand emeralds. His black hair was askew, flying in all directions, but somehow managing to leave his ears sticking straight out from his head, in plain sight. Quite unexpectedly, he grinned at me, wrinkling his already hilarious features into an absurd expression. I found myself grinning back—for some reason I liked him.

"What's your name?" he asked abruptly.

"Patricia," I replied.

"OK, Patch," he said, grinning again.

"Well, what's your name?" I asked him, a little put out at my new nickname.

"Robbie."

For no reason at all, we both broke into giggles, laughing so hard that Robbie almost fell off the windowsill. I laughed harder.

When at last we had quieted down, I asked him why he had been at my window.

"I heard tell someone was movin' in; I'm the curious type" . . . here he blushed . . . "so I thought I'd, y'know, check it out." I nodded slowly, accepting his explanation. We were quiet for a moment, until he said mischievously, "Y'know, if you push the window up more, you could jump out real easy. Not far to the ground." I caught his hint, smiled slowly, went up to the window and vaulted straight out, landing with a

thud in some grass. Robbie laughed as I got up and brushed myself off; I scowled at him, and he tried to turn the laugh into a cough.

"Well, what now, Patch?" he asked.

"I dunno. I'm new here. Why don't you show me around?"

"Follow me," he replied, and dashed off toward the woods. I sighed, picked up my skirts, and hurried after.

BY THE END of the day, I was a complete mess. I had sap on my hands from climbing numerous trees, grass-stained knees, twigs and leaves in my hair from crawling through a secret passage of bushes Robbie had made, smudges on my skirt and bruises everywhere. It was painful to walk, even.

Mother took one look at me and started filling the bathtub with water. As I was attempting (unsuccessfully) to rub the grass stains off, I told her about my day. When I was finished, she nodded, then disappeared into the hallway. Presently she returned, holding a beaten-up pair of pants.

"I think it would be best, Patricia . . ."

"Patch," I corrected automatically.

"All right then, Patch. I believe it would be best for you to wear these" . . . holding up the pants . . . "from now on." She ruefully gazed at my ripped dress.

"OK, Mother," I said happily, wrapping a towel around myself and skipping off to my room. Quickly, I put on my favorite pajamas with clouds on them, then ran into the kitchen for a

hurried dinner. Soon after I was in bed, with Mother kissing me goodnight.

"See you in the morning . . . Patch," she whispered.

I giggled as she left the room. Today had been the best day of my entire life. I had done so many things I never even knew I could do—but, more than that, I had made a true friend. In the city, I can't count on anyone for anything. But I knew I could trust Robbie.

I AWOKE THE next morning to a world wreathed in rosy shadows. I slipped out of bed, shivered in the cold air once or twice, and then practically jumped into my new pants. Not wanting to wake Mother, I lowered myself cautiously out of the window and then tiptoed away to meet Robbie at the creek.

When I arrived, he was making boats out of weeds and grass, then sending them on their way along the twisting water.

"'ello," he greeted me, jumping to his feet, and before I could say anything, he ran off, yelling over his shoulder, "C'mere. I wanna show you something." Smiling to myself, I dashed after him.

It wasn't far. Just beyond the first few lines of trees, past an abandoned flower bed, and around three berry bushes was a very tall tree. Lichen covered it (along with ivy) from head to toe, and many branches were broken, or, if they were not, launching themselves in completely different directions.

Robbie turned to make sure I was still behind him, then began scrambling up the tree. I followed, grasping ivy and finding footholds on tufts of lichen. Soon I reached the top, and as I rubbed the sweat out of my eyes, my breath caught in my throat.

I was standing in a tree house! I could see no wooden boards, for ivy carpeted the entire floor.

Robbie turned and asked hopefully, "Do you like it?"

I giggled. "Robbie—I love it!" I exclaimed. Robbie grinned, blushing deep crimson. "I love it," I repeated.

FROM THAT DAY ON, Robbie and I spent nearly all of our time in the tree house. We devised outrageous plans that never would have worked, we played games like Dragons and Goblins, or we pretended we were monkeys; during the night, I would sometimes sneak out of the house to help Robbie catch fireflies, and most days I came home soaked from water fights. But wherever we were, we felt drawn to the tree house. There was something about its leafy silence that always made us feel secure.

One day, when I came home (wet as usual—we had been trying to catch frogs in the creek), I noticed Mother packing her suitcase. Curious, I walked over and asked, "What are you doing?"

"I'm packing," she replied. "We leave tomorrow."

"What?" I gasped.

"This has been a nice vacation, but



From that day on, Robbie and I spent nearly all of our time in the tree house

honey, we can't stay here forever. It's time we returned to the city."

"But . . ." I choked on a sob. Whirling, I ran to my room and threw myself on my bed, crying helplessly. Memories flashed behind my closed eyelids. Sunshine . . . tree house . . . Robbie . . . firefly . . . creek . . . forest . . . trees . . . Robbie. I finally cried myself to sleep.

I awoke the next morning to the sound of rain slipping down the windowpane. Unhappily, I dragged myself out of bed. Walking dejectedly over to the window, I leaned against it, my hands on the sill. Suddenly, I felt something under my thumb. Lifting up a small package, I carefully took the letter out from under the string. Opening it, I felt tears prick my eyes as I read these words:

Dear Patch,
Good-bye. I hope to see you soon. In the package is a ring I made for you. I hope you like it.

Robbie

I ripped the tissue paper away from a small box, then carefully lifted the ring out. The band was made of ivy stems

(probably from the tree house), and set in the top, glued on with sap, was a small purple pebble from the creek.

I let my tears fall again as I clutched the ring in my hand. How did Robbie know I would be leaving?

THE TRAIN RIDE had been long and depressing. All I could think about was how much I was going to miss Robbie. He was the best friend I'd ever had—funny, thoughtful, generous, kind, trustworthy. I didn't know anyone like him, and I knew I never would.

The train whirled to a stop. Mother picked up her suitcase and started down the corridor toward the door. I followed, but as I stepped off the train I paused.

"Mother," I said.

"Yes, dear?" she replied.

"Can we go . . . back . . . sometime?"

"Of course, darling," she said, grinning. And I felt like the sun was shining and the birds were flying and the clouds were drifting—my heart seemed to laugh, and I felt happy for the first time that day. Smiling back at Mother, I slipped Robbie's ring onto my finger.

I'll be back, Robbie.

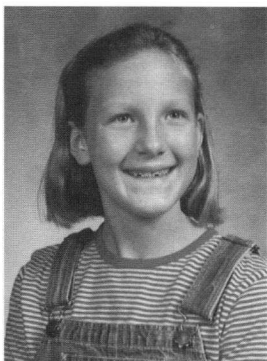
I'll be back.



Wings of Water

by Emily Heninger

illustrated by Susie Speicher



Emily Heninger, 11
Bettendorf, Iowa



Susie Speicher, 13
Lakewood, Washington

I WAS OUT ON my boat, the Eaglet, for what seemed the millionth time that summer. Once more, my dad and brother had persuaded me to come out and try to water-ski again.

I was standing in the middle of my boat, staring at the slightly rippling water, and wishing I had stayed home with my mom instead of coming out on the river. The murky, brown waters of the mighty Mississippi stared back at me, as if challenging me to jump in.

I involuntarily shivered. I turned toward my dad and said, "Dad, can't I try this some other time?"

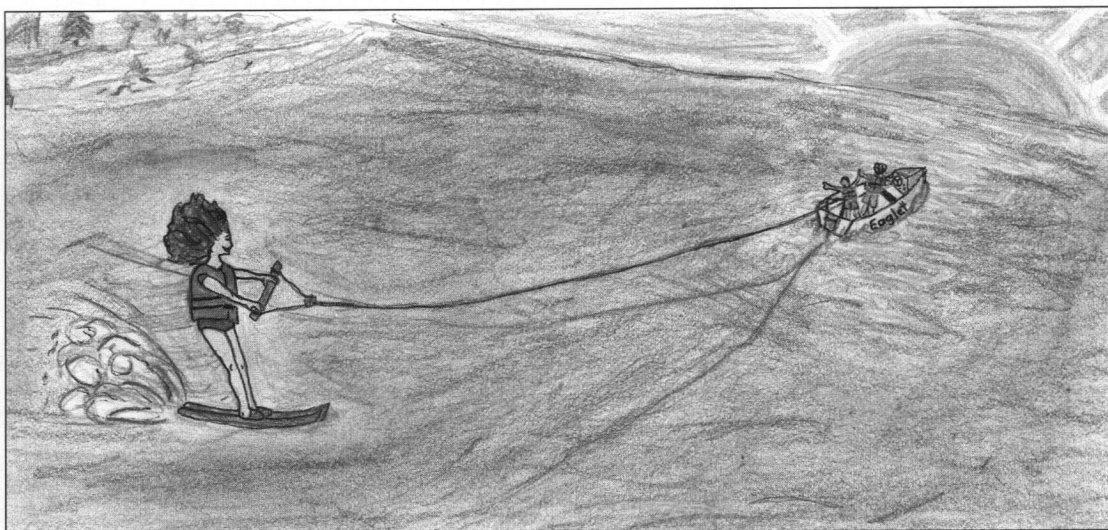
He sighed, "Emily, won't you please try again? Tonight might be the night you get up! Even Jacob wants you to try," he pleaded with me.

My brother Jacob gave me his most pitiful, puppy-dog look.

I realized I had lost the argument. Even so, I thought, I'm only seven years old! How am I supposed to do this?!

I heaved a big sigh and started to get my two wooden water skis out. When I had them out, I gingerly lowered myself into the murky waters of the river.

I sucked in my breath as the cold water swirled around my body. My dad carefully gave me one ski. I twisted and turned as I fought with the current to get it on. Finally, my foot slid into place. My dad threw the other ski to me, and I went



I couldn't believe what I had been missing all these years

through the same ordeal to get it on. Then, it slid into place too.

My dad tossed me the rope. "Remember, bend your knees, and keep your skis in front of you. Just stand up and let the boat do all the work. You can do it, Em!"

The motor hummed as my dad turned the key. The boat slowly started to pick up the slack on the rope. As it tightened, I tried to remember all the things that my dad had told me, but they seemed to have flown from my head.

Finally, the rope was tight. I felt like I was dreaming. Distantly, I heard my dad shouting, "Just yell when you're ready to go!"

I took a deep breath, and wondering if I would ever do this, filled my lungs with air and hollered, "Hit it!"

There was a roar as the engine sped

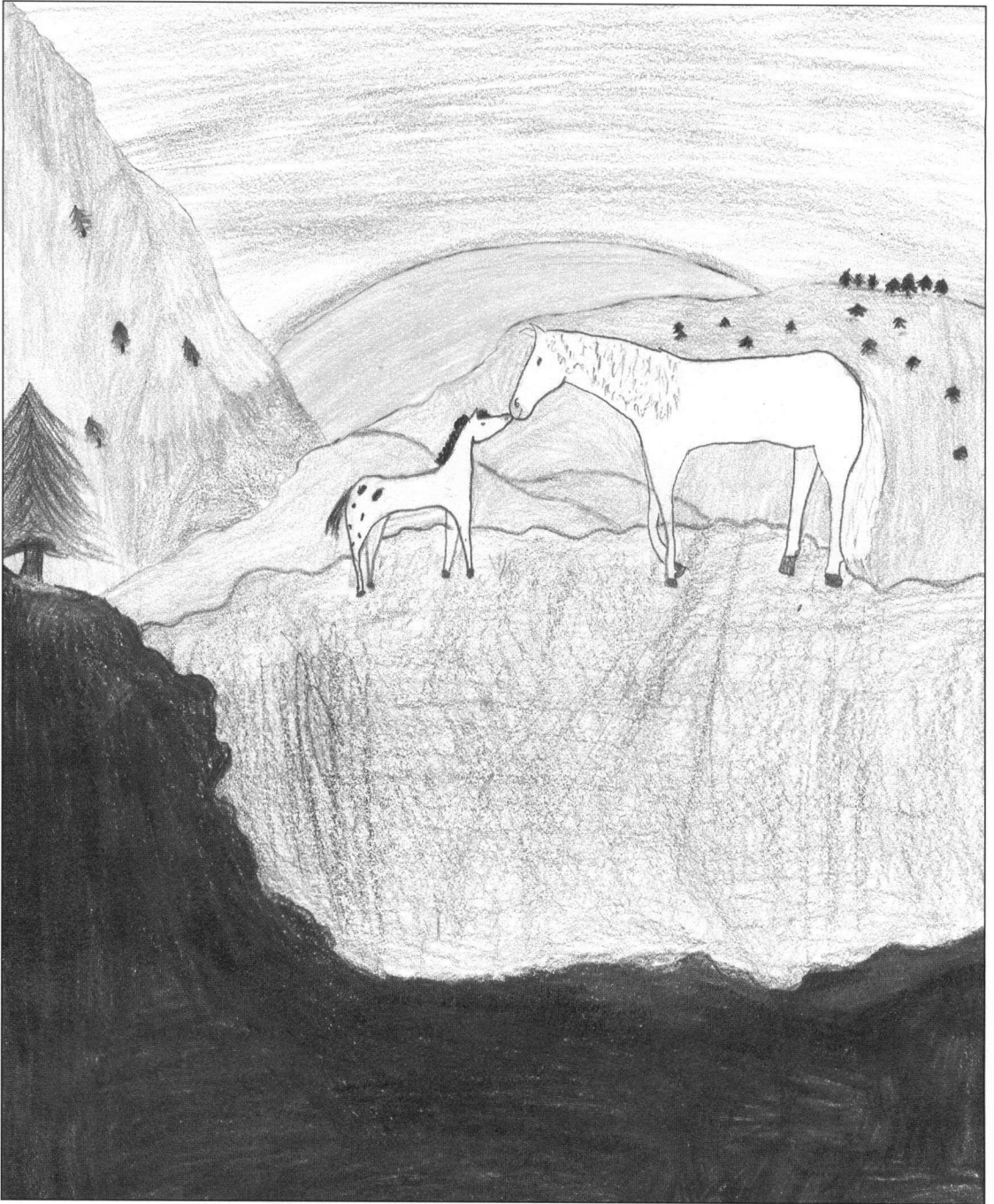
up, and water was flying into my face. I gritted my teeth, and grimly hung on for dear life as I started to rise out of the water.

Suddenly, it was over, and I was skimming across the water!

I couldn't believe it! I shouted from pure triumph and joy, while in the Eaglet my brother and dad were jumping up and down, waving their arms and yelling. On my face was a huge grin. I felt as if I was on top of the world!

I couldn't believe what I had been missing all these years. The spray, the roar of the motor, and wind whipping across my face were all part of my total happiness.

I felt as if I were flying. On my face was a happy smile as I soared off into the sunset on the wings of water. ❖



The mare and foal didn't need to worry about men anymore

The Wild Mare

by Emily Villano

illustrated by Lina Kavaliunas

FOR THE MEN the day had started a few hours before. The men worked for hours. Instead of a few hours to the men it felt like years. When the men came home the women's day started. They cooked and cleaned for hours. To the women the hours felt like years. When the people lay down on their fluffy beds to sleep the animals' day began. They hunted, nursed, and dodged their enemy. They did this for hours. To the animals it felt like years. The hours were years to the people and animals.

Everyone wanted a horse to ride. They were slick and much faster than walking. Out in the open, a white-silver mare roamed around in circles, charging every movement. Her mother had been captured and forced to leave her foal. The mare was so beautiful the people all wanted to capture her and tame her too. The snow was Mother Earth's protection for the mare. The mare was hard to find because of her white coat. Some people called the mare Silver Ghost. Some called her The Snow Goddess. Others call her Snowflake. But no matter what you call her she will capture your eyes and hide them in her flaky mane.

The mare was not just beautiful and fluffy and soft, but she was as fast as the wind, as slick as a fox, and as quiet as the dead. Many men had tried to capture her with tricks and food. But the mare had learned about the tricks and was too smart for the foolish men. But she had to deal with one



Emily Villano, 7
Rochester, New York



Lina Kavaliunas, 9
Hoffman Estates, Illinois

problem. Winter. Though the crystal trees and blankets of fluffy white snow were beautiful, the mare had to find food. She had two hard choices: she could either go down low near her enemy, men, or go up high where men were not likely to come but there was less food.

One winter the mare had made the choice of going near men. The first day the mare stayed up in the mountains. The second day she went to graze in the furthest place from men where there was grass. The grass freshened up the mare's mouth.

In the summer the men came often to the grassy place. The mare was white and couldn't use camouflage then. Every day the mare hoped for mist. She would run into the mist and disappear like a ghost. But not every day was a storm of mist bound to come.

The men would come and go. The mare became tired out. The mare was expecting a foal. The men knew now that they could capture her. When the foal was born she got started with its lessons of survival. The mare showed

the foal the good foods and the bad food. She also taught the foal how to escape traps and how to avoid traps. The men were amazed. The mare was impossible to capture. The men couldn't stay by the mare forever. Their food was running out. They had no choice but to leave. They had to leave the land. They did the mare a great favor.

The mare and foal didn't need to worry about men anymore. But the mare kept teaching her foal to avoid men and their traps and harm. The foal won't be captured, thought the mare. It was quite unlikely for the mare's baby to be captured because his mom was the great top horse of the land.

But one day the mare had to let the foal go. Now full-grown, he had to leave. Neither the mare nor the mare's son wanted to leave one another, but the mare knew her son's life would not be complete if they stayed together forever. The mare was weak. It was her turn to leave the crystal mountains and never-ending valleys. She had lived a life of freedom. She could be free forever, but she could not live forever. ❖

The Stone Soup Store

(See all our products in color on the back cover)

Stories from Stone Soup

If you like *Stone Soup*, you'll love *The Stone Soup Book of Friendship Stories* and *Animal Stories by Young Writers*! These two 6- by 9-inch quality paperbacks present some of the best stories to appear in the pages of *Stone Soup* over the years. Published by Tricycle Press, the anthologies provide hours of great reading and make wonderful gifts.

#108 *Friendship Stories* \$8.95

#109 *Animal Stories* \$9.95



Cat T-Shirt

Are you a cat-lover, or do you know one? Everyone who comes into our offices falls in love with the painting "Cats Warming Themselves" by 8-year-old Dalius Arulis from Lithuania. This charming painting is reproduced in brilliant color on our 100% cotton T-shirts for young people and adults.

#101 Youth M, L \$12

#102 Adult M, L, XL \$15

Jessie Mug

Three of Jessie Moore's whimsical line drawings are a regular feature on page 2 of *Stone Soup*. Now you can brighten your breakfast table with our colorful mugs, each ringed with six of Jessie's drawings of girls in different outfits and poses. Sets of three can include any combination of colors. Colors: plum, rose, teal.

#103 Jessie Mug \$8

#104 Set of 3 Mugs \$20



The order form is on the next page →

Stone Soup

the magazine by young writers and artists

P.O. Box 83, Santa Cruz, CA 95063, USA

800 447-4569

Orders taken Monday-Friday 9:00-5:30 Pacific time*

Messages taken 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

24-hour fax: 831 426-1161

(To order subscriptions to *Stone Soup*, use the cards in the center of the magazine or call 800 447-4569)

ORDERED BY

SHIP TO (if different from ordered by)

Name	Name
Address (no P.O. boxes)	Address (no P.O. boxes)
City, State, Zip	City, State, Zip
Daytime phone ()	(List additional names and addresses on a separate sheet)

Quantity	Item number	Description	Size	Color	Price each	Total price

HOW TO ORDER: Mail in this form or a copy of it with your check, money order, or credit card information; fax us your order with your credit card information; or call us toll free. During non-business hours messages (but not orders) are taken by our voice mail system. Your satisfaction is guaranteed.

* **HOLIDAY ORDERS:** From November 22 to December 23, our staff works Monday-Friday 8:00-5:30 Pacific time. We recommend special shipping for orders received after December 13.

Subtotal	
Sales tax	
For delivery in CA add 8%	
Regular shipping (see below)	
Separate charge for each address	
Special shipping (see below)	
TOTAL	

REGULAR SHIPPING

SPECIAL SHIPPING

UPS Ground Service		UPS 2nd Day Air	
To the continental US only		Add \$14 per address	
Please allow 2 weeks for delivery		UPS Next Day Air	
up to \$25		Add \$29 per address	
\$25.01-\$50	\$4.50	Alaska, Hawaii and Canada	
\$50.01-\$75	\$6.00	Add \$7.50 per address	
\$75.01-\$100	\$7.50	Other Countries	
\$75.01-\$100	\$9.00	Call for rates to your country	
over \$100	\$10.50		

METHOD OF PAYMENT

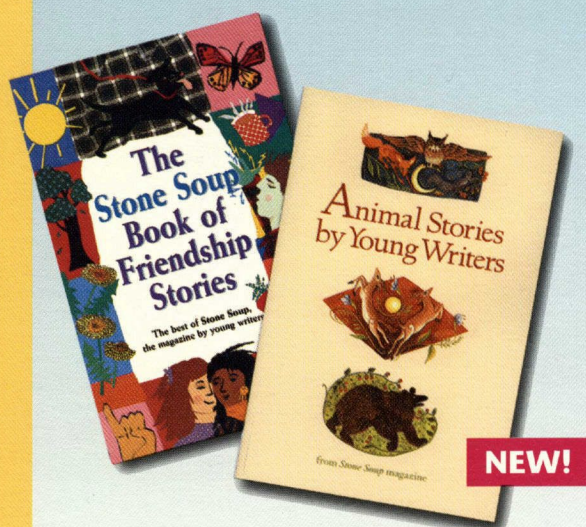
<input type="checkbox"/> Check or money order enclosed (Payable to Stone Soup. US funds only)
<input type="checkbox"/> VISA <input type="checkbox"/> MC <input type="checkbox"/> AmEx <input type="checkbox"/> Discover
Card number _____
Expiration date _____
Cardholder's name (please print) _____
Sorry, no C.O.D. orders

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

THE STONE SOUP STORE



CAT T-SHIRT



ANTHOLOGIES



JESSIE MUGS

See pages 47 and 48 for more information and to place your order

Visit our Web site at www.stonesoup.com