

# Stone Soup

the magazine by young writers and artists



"Bicycle Race," by Sofia Voikovitch, age 10, Russia

## SONG OF A WANDERER

Traveling from town to town in a VW van is not Annie's idea of fun

## LAKOTA

A writer spends a year living with wolves in the Alaskan wilderness

*Also:* Illustrations by Erica Pratt and Hanna Kozlowski

Ann meets a challenge in her Tae Kwon Do class

A poem about the moon

JULY/AUGUST 2000  
\$5.50 U.S. \$7.50 CANADA





# Stone Soup

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Volume 28, Number 6

July/August 2000

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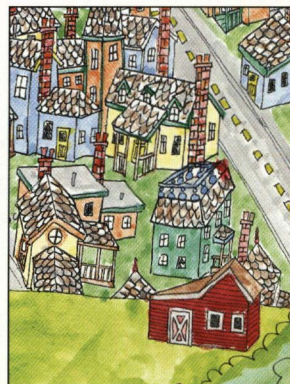
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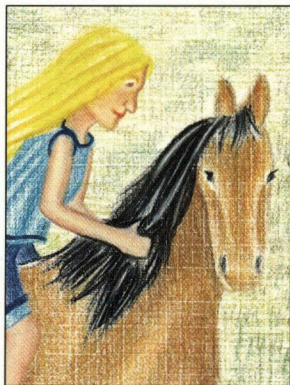
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# Stone Soup

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:** "Bicycle Race" was loaned to the Children's Art Foundation by the Albany-Tula Alliance in New York and the Children's Art Exchange in Vermont. Both organizations promote exchanges of children's art between the former Soviet Union and the United States. Special thanks to Laura Chodos and Renee Wells.

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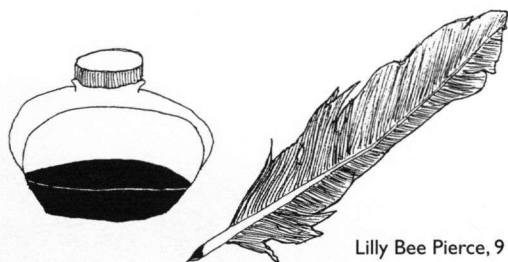


Barbara Harker

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*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 6. 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 love reading stories written by children my age. I am ten and I want to write a book that would be interesting if you have any suggestions. In your September/October issue, I saw a story that caught my eye. The story is "Emily Ames: A Fictional Biography." I really love horses and I like to read about slavery. I think slavery is wrong. Recently I read a book about Harriet Tubman. It was really interesting. Thank you for a neat magazine to read!

Charlotte Stanton, 10  
Northeast Harbor, Maine

I just wanted to drop a note to tell you I think your magazine is wonderful. I just found it on the Internet while doing research for a paper I am writing. In my paper I argue that poetry is a way to teach children empathy and compassion for others—especially those different from them. This helps to deter violence. Your magazine is the epitome of this! I think it is beautiful and I will recommend it to every parent I know. Thank you so much for publishing your magazine.

Melissa A. Crouch, college student  
Memphis, Tennessee

I think your magazine is a great idea! Most writing magazines seem to look down on kids and also give half the magazine to adults. *Stone Soup* is written ALL by kids and there's not really a length limit for a story. Most magazines only let kids write stories under 700 words. Thank you for making your magazine!!

Julia Echternach, 11  
Englewood, Colorado

I really enjoy getting *Stone Soup*. Whenever it comes I stop reading the book I'm reading and read *Stone Soup* from cover to cover. I really enjoy the book reviews and "A Strike for the Wind" [March/April 2000].

Monika Robbins, 8  
Sacramento, California

What you are doing is absolutely outstanding, and a great inspiration to children like mine. It is frustrating for my daughter to read and write with such fervor, and to feel that things are "dummied down" in her class. Gifted enrichment is not offered in our school system until the grade five level, so the long years before can be grinding and boring. All the very best in the inspiration you offer to kids like this.

Kathy Dolgy, parent  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

I am writing to commend Lucy Strother on her story "Teddy's Eyes" [March/April 2000]. I thought it was written by a thirteen-year-old before I looked at her age (nine). I think that her story is one of the best stories that has been in this magazine. Please print this because I really want Lucy to know what a good job she did. Oh, and I also want to say that Jade D'Addario did a great job on the illustration.

Alex Fixler, 10  
St. Petersburg, Florida

**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 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.





I still remember driving into the tiny, midwestern town in Iowa

# Song of a Wanderer

by Annie Strother

illustrated by Martin Taylor

**T**HEY SAY GUILT is a staggering burden, but I think change is the heaviest load of all. All my life I had faced it head on, and I'm surprised that I was older when I finally decided that all of the wandering wasn't fair.

I still remember driving into the tiny, midwestern town in Iowa. The sky looked troubled and angry, and I recall that it looked formidable and opposing. It was November, and I was sure that the bleak landscape would soon be covered with a blanket of sparkling, white snow.

I sat with my brother Rob in the back of the old VW van. We were both sullen and cross, angry with our parents for dragging us to yet another town. We glared at them from the back seat as they bubbled over at every little thing like ecstatic children at a birthday party.

"Look at that adorable little house!"

"It's so darling!"

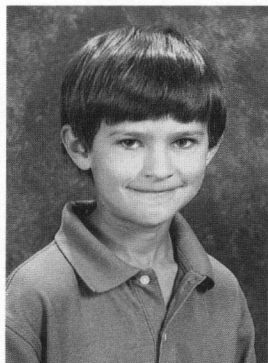
"And all the little shops! Oh, how exciting!"

I had heard it many times before as we entered a new place when roaming about the country on my parents' vagabond trip. *Our* vagabond trip. They called themselves wanderers, but I referred to them as middle-aged hippies.

This was the thirty-second town I had lived in throughout my life. I was thirteen, adaptable and, most importantly, accepting. Too accepting. Inside I was sick of the traveling and the wandering. I wanted a place of my own.



Annie Strother, 13  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Martin Taylor, 10  
Portola Valley, California



My parents loved the traveling. They had been real hippies back in the sixties. They had attended rowdy rallies, smoked one or two joints in the hope of reaching an astounding level of intellect and insight, and had tramped around Woodstock in baggy bell-bottoms. They had married at twenty, gone to college, earned degrees in philosophy, and hopped in the old van. Thus began their life on the road.

I was born at their sixteenth stop, in a tiny little town in Vermont in a red barn filled with fragrant hay. It was October, and my mother says that the trees were all boasting their brilliant fall colors of red, orange, yellow and brown, creating a dazzling sight visible through the open door. She says that I was born with my eyes wide open, as if the vibrant colors shocked me into silence. That's why I'm so observant, she says, because I was born gaping at the world in awe and wonder.

My mother was born in a New England state too, New York. She was born in the Catskill Mountains where the air is crisp and fresh. I went there once to visit my grandparents, and spent most of the time running through the little town of Cooperstown, marveling at the clear air and the abundant wildlife of squirrels, deer and countless others.

I've never lived in a house; the van was always home to us. We slept and ate in the back of the van where my father took out the seats and nailed in a soft couch, an old wooden table, two cots, a refrigerator and a stove. I never knew

what I was missing out on until I went over to a friend's house when we were camped out in Alabama. It wasn't a Georgian mansion or a Victorian painted lady, just a normal, suburban house. But it made my heart ache to see each person's room, the tiled bathroom, the orderly kitchen. The privacy of a house made me want one desperately.

I saw plenty of other houses. I saw cheap duplexes in Newark, enormous mansions in Beverly Hills, unoriginal ranches in Nebraska and Wyoming, beach houses in North Carolina and Maryland, even long houses in Washington State. I wanted all of them.

As we drove past charming bungalows and farmhouses I grew miserable. I knew that I would forever envy the people who lived in them, and would always be jealous of those that lived here simply because they had a home.

I hadn't wanted to leave our last home in Wisconsin. It was in the northern part of the state, a place called Boulder Junction. There were thick forests of tall, straight pines that stood like a regiment of dignified soldiers. There was a main street of prim shops and little houses. The school was small, the people were friendly, and finally I was accepted as an individual. I had friends, I had good grades, and, for once, was content with who I was.

And then my parents announced that we would move again. "We haven't been to Iowa yet," they explained. "We ought to experience the sights and sounds of the Hawkeye State!"

But Rob was on many of the athletic teams, and I was on the honor roll and the student council. We cried and sulked for three days until Mom and Dad pulled us into the van and started up the engine.

"Look at those little buildings!"

"Aren't they precious!"

"This is such a darling town, don't you think?" Mom turned and smiled her bubbly smile at us. We just stared back. Mom's smile faded and she turned back to the window to gawk at something else.

We stopped at a dumpy little place for Chinese take-out for dinner. I squinted at the menu. Though we had always taken out Chinese, McDonald's or Pizza Hut for meals, I had never become familiar with the exotic names on the Chinese menus.

I pointed at a dish and held it out for the waiter to see.

"I don't know how to pronounce this name," I told him apologetically. He mumbled something, scribbled onto his pad, and shuffled into the kitchen to get the food.

We walked back to the van with our little white cartons of chow mein, dumplings, beef and broccoli, or whatever we had decided upon.

"This is good!" Dad exclaimed after tasting his chop suey. "We'll have to come here more often."

I sighed. I had heard the same thing about the Thai restaurant in Santa Fe, the Wong's Wok in Annapolis and the Taco Bell in Detroit. I had had my share

of greasy food from run-down restaurant joints.

Rob smiled feebly at me over his bowl of won ton noodle soup. "Sure, Dad," he muttered, "this food's great."

Dad looked up, not knowing whether to smile or frown.

On the first day of school, I wandered throughout the halls to my various classes in a misty haze. Everything was vague and fuzzy through the walls of my little bubble. I was ahead of this school in math, but behind them in history. I already knew about cell biology, but was still struggling with the types of adjectives. It was different at every school, and I never fit in, like a piece from a forgotten jigsaw puzzle. I could never blend into the puzzle anywhere.

The kids at this school were no different from most others. There were about three cliques, the popular kids, the nerds, and the freaks. Then there were the misfits, who fit into none of these categories. I had seen them all before, not them actually, but their personalities, their treatment from others. The nerds were friendly, they always are, ready to reach out to another. The freaks were clammed up and silent in their gothic clothing, dark and gloomy. And the popular people were all scared like they are at almost every school, scared of being creative, frightened of originality. And petrified of anything different. They snickered at me when I walked by, they giggled at me when I turned my head. They mocked me and teased me throughout the day until I

finally closed my ears to everything but the teacher.

"Don't you think that as much as Mom and Dad wander, they're really the most scared of change?"

Rob looked up at me. We were seated on the floor of the junky van, struggling with a crossword puzzle. He thought for a minute, his mouth pursed in a pout of concentration. "Yeah," he said finally, "I guess they always were."

We were silent for a bit. Silence can be marvelous in the middle of chaos. And even when nothing is hectic or frenzied, silence can be delicious. It's certainly better than talk when you're angry, and sometimes it's silence that helps you to your feet when you're stumbling with sadness. Silence was truly needed that night.

Mom strolled in carrying ice-cream

cones from a nearby ice-cream parlor. Rob looked doubtful.

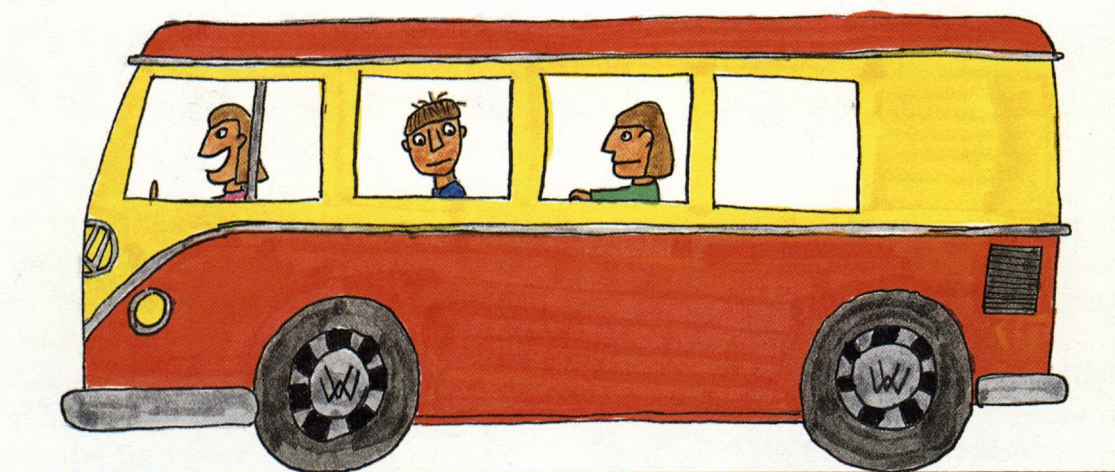
"Ice cream? In November?" he asked skeptically.

"Why not?" Mom shrugged and handed me a cone.

The ice cream fell from the cone and landed on the floor of the van where it splattered a little and began to melt, the melted ice cream flowing in little streams along the floor.

And oddly enough, I began to laugh. Soon we were all giggling, though afterwards I felt as if I had cried off the sorrows of thirty-two towns. I still don't know which is better, laughing or crying.

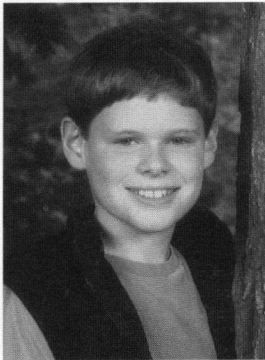
I guess I'll just have to have a good laugh now and then until my parents have had enough of Iowa and we'll all pile into the old van and move on. ❖





# The Moon

by Stewart Hoelscher



Stewart Hoelscher, 13  
Greensboro, North Carolina

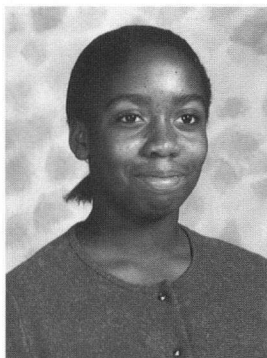
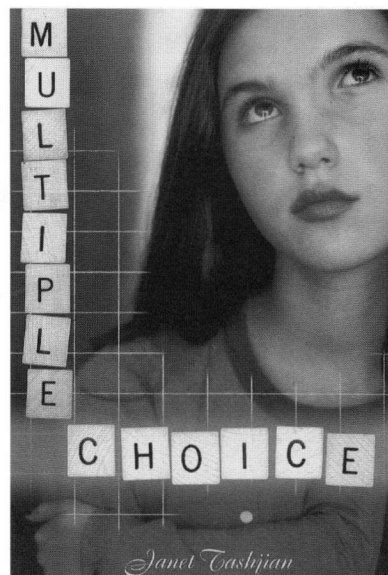
The moon  
A candle in the darkness  
The sun of the night.

For the passing traveler it is a guide  
For the sleeper a comforting watcher  
The guardian of the night.

With its blanket of stars  
Wrapped securely around the darkness  
The mother of the night.


# Book Review

by Lauren Porter



Lauren Porter, 12  
Berlin, Connecticut

*Multiple Choice* by Janet Tashjian; Henry Holt and Company: New York, 1999; \$16.95

“ WISH MY BRAIN were a toaster.” That’s how Monica Devon feels about the way she obsesses over everything—from the amount of beans in a beanbag to the word she spelled incorrectly in a spelling bee three years ago. *Multiple Choice*, by Janet Tashjian, is the story of Monica Devon, a fourteen-year-old girl whose one wish is to stop obsessing. Although she has always been a perfectionist, her condition seems to be getting worse. Since Monica has had a passion for word games and anagrams for most of her life, she creates a game, *Multiple Choice*, with Scrabble tiles. It’s supposed to help her become more spontaneous by making decisions for her, and for a while, it does. Monica feels as if she can do anything without having to worry because she can’t go against *Multiple Choice*’s solutions. However, when one of the game’s decisions results in a young boy getting hurt, Monica knows she has gone too far.

One aspect I particularly liked about *Multiple Choice* was the creative way in which the author explained Monica’s feelings. At the beginning of many chapters were word

games or anagrams which set the tone for the events to come, such as

I'M

THE WORLD

(I'm on top of the world!). These titles, as well as Monica's general sense of humor, "... and the whole point of this stupid game is to liberate me. Liberate me straight into a padded room is more like it," result in a lighthearted tone even as Monica's problems develop.

Reading this book made me realize that obsession can be as much of a disorder as anorexia. Although everyone worries about problems they face throughout the day, some people spend so much time analyzing that they become depressed, constantly thinking about mistakes that were made years ago. Small problems that might be viewed as meaningless become monstrous ones that must be tackled, no matter how insignificant they may appear. Monica, for instance, tries to scoop beans from one beanbag to another to try to equal out their sizes.

Although Monica Devon is a fictitious character, there is a little of her in all of us. There have been times in the past year when I became obsessed over my schoolwork and other things. For example, once our social studies class was assigned a report on a country in South America. I wanted to do a perfect job on the report, so I collected pages of research. By working nearly constantly on the report and staying up late on the last night, I felt that my paper would be pretty good. When I printed the report

out, however, I wasn't satisfied. I then printed out as many pictures of the country as I could find to try and make the report longer. When everyone else handed in five- and six-page reports, I might as well have made a whole book—I had twenty-one pages of text and nine of pictures! While my experiences have never been as dramatic as Monica's, I can understand why she felt compelled to try and break out of her usual perfectionism—even if that meant hurting her family and friends.

Overall, I think *Multiple Choice* should be a top pick for kids, particularly ones who like realistic fiction. Janet Tashjian is a talented author who makes the characters in this story seem lifelike and the many anagrams Monica includes with her humor, such as

Maybe the letters in Lynn's name saved her—that since Lynn can't be rearranged into something else, she's destined to live a simple, easy life without complications. I, on the other hand, have IN COMA to deal with, among other things.

are both amusing and give readers a sense of her desperation. The undertones of Monica's disorder are balanced by this story's lighthearted feel, which come together nicely at the end of the book, along with Monica's realization about who she is inside. Readers will find themselves, as I did, both sympathizing with Monica and feeling angry with her as she unknowingly loses control of her life. All of these elements mixed together make this story an excellent read for kids and adults alike. ❖



# Flaming Sunset

by Isabel Gottlieb

illustrated by Rita Lanham

## ONE



Isabel Gottlieb, 11  
Lakeville, Connecticut

**T**HE CHILLY WIND blew up spirals of dry leaves, but the sun still shone merrily. The faded blue paint was peeling off the porch on the old farmhouse. A short, red-haired girl lay on the porch with her chin propped in her hands. Stretched out on the steps was another girl, with brown hair. They were both five, but there the resemblance ended. Sarah was over a head taller than Elizabeth. Her short, light brown hair blew around her head in the breeze. Her eyes were also brown, the color of chocolate. Elizabeth, the redhead, had energetic, dancing, bright green eyes that mirrored her personality. Both had their attention fixed on the toy horse Sarah was holding. It was bright orange, with a blue mane and tail.

"His name's Flaming Sunset," Sarah explained. "I just got him."

Elizabeth nodded. The two girls were extremely close friends, tied together by their love of horses. Sarah had recently moved into the house next to Elizabeth's. They were already inseparable, spending their afternoons wandering about the farm down the road from their houses. Their favorite place was, of course, the horse barn. As soon as they had finished admiring Sarah's new toy, they set off to feed carrots to the horses, with Elizabeth's large black dog trailing at their heels.



Rita Lanham, 11  
Madison, Wisconsin



Holding the opened door in one hand with a carrot outstretched in the other was a smiling, red-haired girl

## TWO

THE STARS intently watched the scene below from their perch in the velvet-blue night sky. At Fairweather Horse Farm a small crowd had gathered around one stall. Inside stood a small bay horse. The dim light from the dusty bulb overhead was enough to show that his coat was flaming red. His silky black mane streamed from his arched neck, and his black tail billowed out behind him like a cloak. The star on his face seemed to shine brighter than the elec-

tric lights. His feet rustled in the thick straw as he inched forward to inspect his visitors. Holding the opened door in one hand with a carrot outstretched in the other was a smiling, red-haired ten-year-old girl.

"Wow, Elizabeth, he's really pretty."

"What's his name?"

"How old is he?"

"Where'd you get him?"

"Can I pet him?"

"Yeah, me too?"

Questions poured down on Elizabeth.

Suddenly the horse reached forward and took the carrot from her hand. He was starting to relax.

"OK, you can come in," she agreed. As half of her Pony Club rushed into the stall, Elizabeth noticed that Sarah was hanging back. Elizabeth felt a sharp stab of guilt. She hadn't talked about a thing in school except Surprise, that horse that lived up to his name on her tenth birthday. She hadn't had any time for her friend.

"Hey, Sarah!" she called. "I have another carrot in my pocket. Want to give it to him?"

Sarah opened her mouth to reply, but no sound came out. Finally she nodded her head weakly, gave a shaky smile, and headed into the stall.

### THREE

"**A**ND NOW on course is number 17, Elizabeth Green." As she entered the ring Elizabeth could feel the crowd's eyes on her. However, there was one pair whose expression she was unaware of. The owner of those eyes looked upon Elizabeth as a rival who would threaten her quest for the '96 Regional Pony Club Jumper Cup. The owner of those eyes realized that Elizabeth would likely win. The owner of those eyes used to be Elizabeth's best friend. They belonged to Sarah. Sarah sat on top of her chunky gray gelding looking outwardly calm, while her boyfriend Pete dusted one of her boots and her friend Margaret the other. Margaret was wearing a belly-short tank top, bell-bottom

jeans, two-inch platform sandals, and an unhappy expression.

"It's too dusty here, Sarah," she whined. Sarah ignored her and turned to Pete, who had begun talking.

"I don't know, Sarah, she looks pretty good," he warned.

"In this class looks don't count, it's speed."

"I understand that, but look how fast she's going."

Elizabeth was dashing through the ring on the jumper she had trained herself: the little bay Surprise. Though he was barely larger than a pony, he soared over the jump as though he was winged. This horse and rider would probably win.

"Why don't you go check your course?" Pete suggested.

"I know my course," Sarah replied through clenched teeth.

"Well, now it's your turn to go in," he said.

When she exited the ring again Sarah's scowl was larger than before. She knew that she had lost the Cup. Since she had finished her course Elizabeth's Pony Club friends had been helping her cool out her horse, and a friend from school brought her a soda.

The ringmaster's voice suddenly sounded out: "Would the following contestants please enter the ring in the order your number is called. 17, 163, 84, 22."

Sarah tried not to hear the excited cries coming from Elizabeth and her friends. She tried not to see the tricolor



ribbon pinned on Surprise's bridle, or the gleaming silver trophy Elizabeth held. As she exited the ring she stuffed the yellow third-place ribbon in her pocket, embarrassed to be seen with it. Right then and there she vowed to never be friends with Elizabeth again.

"Nice job," Pete congratulated. Sarah ignored him and whiny Margaret too. She wanted to be alone.

#### FOUR

ELIZABETH SAT on her tack box looking at her collection of trophies. Finally her gaze rested on her first Pony Club Jumper Cup. She remembered how excited she had felt when her number was called. She then turned her eyes toward Surprise. He was three years older than he had been when they won that Cup, but you wouldn't know it to look at him. His coat still glistened, his neck still arched, and his ears still pricked just as much as they had that afternoon. Surprise was all tacked up and ready.

It was an Indian summer October afternoon. The sun smiled down, warming the earth. A perfect day for a trail ride. Elizabeth was sorry she had no one to share it with. Suddenly a car door slammed. Surprise, who had been dozing, jerked his head up and spun around. Elizabeth, also startled, turned quickly. A tall, brown-haired figure was striding up the barn aisle. Elizabeth blinked: *it was Sarah*. Elizabeth hadn't seen her at the barn for more than two years. Yet here she was, in riding

clothes, looking back at her and smiling. Elizabeth noticed that she clutched something tightly in her hand.

"Hi, Elizabeth," the taller girl said. Elizabeth stared. Sarah had barely said a word to her since sixth grade.

"Elizabeth, we're moving and I was packing my boxes and I found this at the back of my closet and I thought you'd like to see." This was all said very quickly, in one breath, then Sarah extended her arm and opened her hand, very slowly. When Elizabeth saw what was there she gasped. Lying in Sarah's palm was a small plastic horse. Though faded and scratched its coat was still clearly orange, and the dirty, knotted mane and tail a bright blue.

"It's . . ." began Elizabeth.

". . . Flaming Sunset," finished Sarah.

"I was about to take a trail ride. Why don't you tack up Bear and come out with me?" Elizabeth suggested, gesturing to the stall of the gray gelding that Sarah used to ride. "And, I'm sorry."

"Don't be," Sarah answered. "You didn't do anything wrong. It was me."

"Sarah," Elizabeth said, "if we get to the top of Friendship Mountain soon enough we'll be able to watch the sunset."

The chilly wind blew up spirals of dry leaves, but Elizabeth felt warm inside.

Two friends on horseback climbed a steep mountainside. Though no words were spoken, there were radiant smiles on both girls' faces. Surrounded by the dying day, they rode up into a sunset the color of a very special old toy horse. ♦





The howl of the wolf can evoke a sense of wildness in me

# Lakota

by Sarah Shissler

illustrated by the author

## INTRODUCTION



MAJESTIC TIMBER WOLF stands on a high ridge overlooking the vast Alaskan wilderness. She throws back her head and lets out a mournful cry. The howl of the wolf can evoke a sense of wildness in me and bring to me images of an ancient heritage long forgotten by today's world.

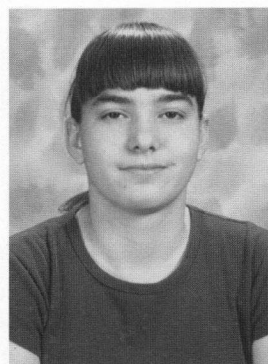
I have studied wolves for years. They are among the most beautiful and intelligent of all animals, a symbol of the wilderness in perfect balance. Alaska is one of the few places left in the world where they still thrive in their natural habitat.

The sky is growing lighter now with the coming of dawn. The wolf looks up and sees me watching her. She pauses for a few seconds and then quietly vanishes into the forest.

Reluctantly, I decide to start back to camp. Walking back to the ridge I begin to recall my first trip to Alaska, ten years ago. It's funny how you don't really miss things until you've been away from them for such a long time. I sigh. I have missed it a lot. Ahead the sun is rising over the horizon.

I sit down on a tree stump across from my tent and pour myself a cup of coffee. I begin to sip it slowly as I bore deeper into my mind, searching for memories from the past.

I had gone to Alaska to gather information for a book I was writing at the time. I lacked in experience but I had determination. Little did I know what challenges lay ahead or the amazing friendship I would make.



Sarah Shissler, 12  
Keithsburg, Illinois

Sarah wrote this story two years ago. Now she is 14.



CHAPTER ONE  
THE BLACK WOLF

I ARRIVED IN Alaska by plane to Anchorage. With my last few dollars I bought some supplies and a bus ticket that would take me to the mountains of the Alaska range.

The next day I left on the bus. It took us almost three days to reach our destination. I spent most of my time looking out the window. The wilderness of Alaska was a lot different from the prairies of Illinois where I grew up.

Finally we arrived in the mountains at the end of the line. It was the first time I'd set foot off the bus for three long days. I didn't even bother to pick up my gear, I just wanted to be off the bus.

I breathed in the fresh air and gazed at the towering mountains. I never thought I would see something that beautiful.

Suddenly the moment was interrupted by the sound of the bus door sliding closed. I whirled around and saw the bus driving away.

"Hey!" I yelled. "My stuff's in there!" I chased after the bus, cussing and yelling. Finally the bus stopped.

The bus driver tossed my backpack out of the door and drove off. I ran up to my gear and picked it up. My camera was gone. "Figures," I mumbled.

I backpacked a few miles west to a ridge overlooking a small stream. At least I had a place to camp. Then it dawned on me. I had never assembled a tent before.

It was a struggle but finally I got it to stand. I backed up and looked at it. "There!" I said. At that moment the tent collapsed. I moaned. "I wanted to sleep under the stars anyway."

The next morning my back ached from sleeping on the rocks. "Oh," I moaned, "I need some coffee." That was one thing I did have.

After the coffee woke me up I decided to go looking for wolves, my cause for being out in the middle of nowhere. I hiked up the mountains and down into the valley but I found nothing that day, or the next, or the next.

I began to wonder if I would ever find any wolves to study. I wanted to go home.

I finally got my break one week after I arrived in the mountains. I was hiking as usual when I stopped at the lake for a rest. That was when I first saw the black wolf.

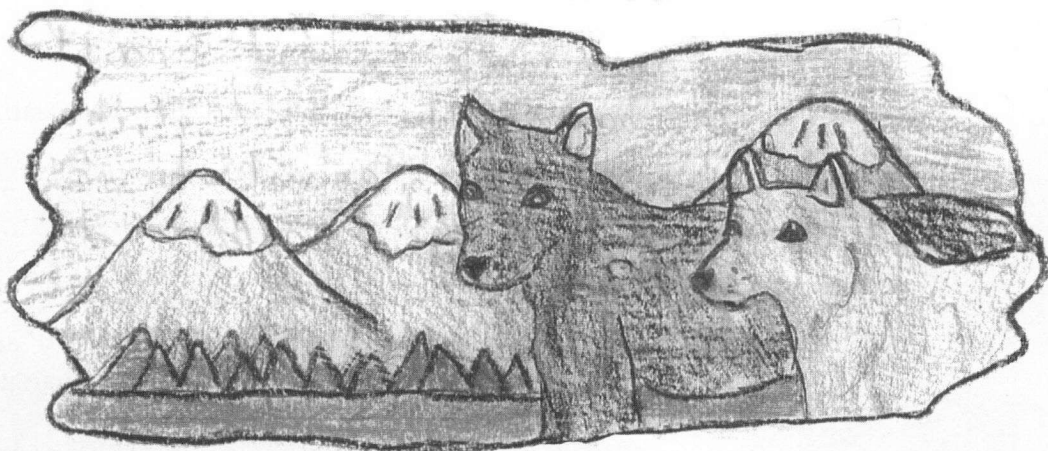
I was sitting on a rock splashing some water in my face when I looked up and saw him standing near the trees on the other side of the lake.

He was solid black except for a small white spot in the center of his chest. For a few seconds he just stared at me with his curious, golden eyes. He was a young wolf, about one year old.

Suddenly I saw another wolf appear by his side. He was a smoky gray color and he was about the same age.

The gray wolf turned and walked into the forest but the black wolf stayed a few seconds more. Then he turned and darted after him.





Their very survival was dependent on each other's trust

I just sat on my rock. My heart was racing. I couldn't believe what I had just seen. A wolf had just appeared and vanished in front of my eyes.

I saw the wolves again and again during the next few weeks. They were lone wolves, most likely brothers, who had been driven from their pack. They roamed around the valley for most of the time.

I decided to give them names. I named the black wolf Lakota. It is an Indian word that means "the great wolf."

Lakota was the bolder and more outgoing of the two wolves. He was the leader.

I named the gray one Pike. Pike was a shyer and more timid wolf, but he had brains.

Together they were a team. Their very survival was dependent on each other's trust. I knew that there was much I could learn from them. The next lesson would come in blood.

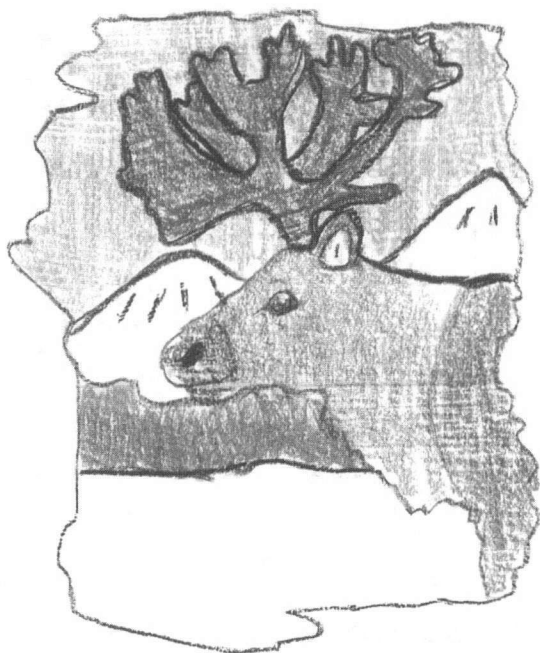
## CHAPTER TWO LESSONS OF SURVIVAL

**W**OLVES ARE PREDATORS, which means that they eat other animals in order to stay alive. Packs of wolves can bring down animals as large as elk and caribou. Lone wolves, when hungry, eat rabbits, beavers, birds, and even fish!

I knew that wolves had to kill to survive. I knew that only the strongest individuals would live to adulthood. At least, I thought I knew.

I never thought I would see the wolves kill a large animal and I've only seen it happen a few times since. But one day I did see it.

I was tracking the wolves down the ravine, into the valley. They were hunting caribou without much luck. I was standing on the top of the ridge, watching them circle the herd. I could see a caribou on the outside of the group. It was a young animal who was limping



The caribou whirled around

on three legs. I could see his leg was broken.

Lakota spotted him first. Pike went downwind of the deer. I knew they were going to jump him.

Lakota burst out from the brush, jaws wide open. The caribou whirled around but Pike was ready for him. He closed his jaws around the deer's neck.

The caribou panicked and fell on top of Pike. Lakota tore away at the caribou's tender side. The prey rose up, shaking his head violently. Pike released his deadly hold, and Lakota jumped back.

The wounded caribou tried to run away on three feet. Wolves can run at speeds of forty miles per hour for hours without tiring. The chase was short.

The wolves dragged him to the

ground and began tearing him apart. They tore his sides open and began ripping parts of him out. They were eating him alive.

Finally, I couldn't look. The sight was too gruesome. I closed my eyes and tried to force the images out of my mind. I'm not sure how long I sat there. When I looked up the caribou was dead and the wolves had half eaten the mangled carcass.

I learned much that day. I thought I understood how the wolves worked, but you can't really understand them until you've seen something like that. It was wrong for me to think that they would be the way I wanted them to be. Now I understand.



### CHAPTER THREE

#### KEPA

I STAND UP and drink some more coffee. I pick up my backpack and pull out an old book. It was my journal. I opened it slowly and turned the pages.

There was a photo of three wolves on the first page.

There was Lakota, Pike, and a white wolf standing by a creek. "Kepa," I said to myself.

It was in October and the winter snows were falling. I had noticed that another lone wolf was in the area. She was a white female I called Kepa.

She joined Lakota and Pike. Sometimes wolves join each other to form packs, particularly during the winter when hunting gets difficult.

Kepa was a very smart wolf. She knew how to get the bait from steel traps. One day I saw her do this. She turned her back to the trap and kicked snow on it until it snapped closed. She then ripped the slab of meat from the trap.

Afterwards the three wolves continued down the trapline robbing traps. Soon Lakota and Pike perfected the skill.

During the next few months the pack became close, particularly Lakota and Kepa. When these bonds form within a group of wolves the dominant wolves become the alpha pair. The alphas are usually the only wolves to mate.

The mountains were beautiful in the winter. A three-foot-deep blanket of snow was draped elegantly over the forest. At night the northern lights sparkled brilliantly in the bitter cold sky. For now, at least, the world was at peace.

#### CHAPTER FOUR THE BEAR

AS THE LONG WINTER dragged on it grew harder for the wolves to sur-

vive. The temperature plunged to forty below and freezing Arctic winds carved the windswept landscape. The prey was scarcer than ever. Somehow the pack got by.

I spent most of the winter huddled in my tent. If it weren't for my extremely warm expedition gear and my heaping supply of firewood I might not have survived.

One day I was out in the field watching the wolves scavenge for food when I had a close encounter with a grizzly bear. Grizzlies hibernate most of the winter but may awake from time to time to eat. Often they can't hold through the whole winter on their fat reserves alone.

I was standing at the edge of the forest and I could see Lakota, Pike, and Kepa eating a freshly killed snowshoe hare a few yards away. Then I heard it, a low growling noise. Then a roar.

I turned around and the bear came out of nowhere. With one swipe of his paw he sent me flying to the ground.

The next thing I knew Pike and Lakota were slashing away at the bear's chest. The bear shook his head to the side and sent Lakota into a tree six feet away. Pike fell on his side on the ground. Blood stained the snow all around the trees.

Kepa flew from the ground into the grizzly's face. She sunk her teeth into the bear's muzzle. The bear's eyes widened and he roared in pain.

Lakota, who had been stunned by the bear's blow, was up again. He bit down



on the back of the bear's neck.

The grizzly was overcome by pain and fell on his side in the snow, but only for a few seconds. He rose back up and shook the wolves from his back.

Lakota wouldn't let go. The bear knocked him to the ground and ripped his shoulder open. Lakota wailed in agony but somehow managed to kick free.

Then the wolves banded together and chased away the injured bear. Once he was gone I could see how bad Lakota was injured. Dark, red blood was streaming from his wound.

I never forgot that day. I guess you could say that the wolves saved my life. If they hadn't chased the bear away I might have been killed.

I will never really know if the wolves knew that my life was in danger or if they just chased off the bear to defend their territory. But I think that maybe it was a little of both. Who knows, maybe they thought of me as a friend.

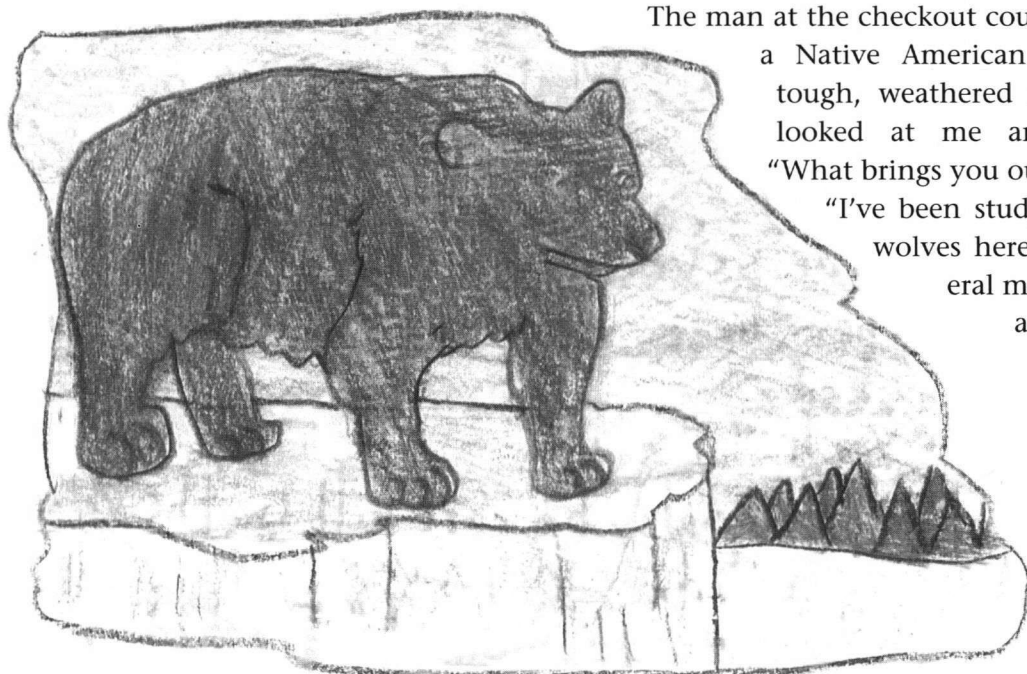
## CHAPTER FIVE WILD JOE

IT WAS JANUARY, one of the coldest, most brutal months of the year. I needed supplies. I hiked a few miles southwest to a small town called Kaltag.

When I got there I was tired and my legs ached terribly. I walked into a small shop on Main Street and just sat in a chair for a few minutes.

I got up and took a few packages of food and a box of matches to the counter.

The man at the checkout counter was a Native American with a tough, weathered face. He looked at me and said, "What brings you out here?" "I've been studying the wolves here for several months," I answered.



I turned around and the bear came out of nowhere

"The three wolves out in the valley?" he asked.

"Yeah," I said.

"You should be careful in the valley," he warned.

"What do you mean?" I asked in a confused tone.

"There are a lot of bush hunters in the area this time of year. They hunt wolves from planes."

"Isn't that illegal?"

"Yes, but Wild Joe doesn't care."

"Who's Wild Joe?"

"He is a man named John Perrault. He's nicknamed Wild Joe because of his explosive temper. He hunts wolves."

The words scared me. "Not my wolves," I snapped. Then I grabbed my supplies and left.

#### CHAPTER SIX DEATH FROM THE SKY

IT WAS a quiet February day when it happened. I was hiking in the mountains, on my way back down the summit. I could see the wolves in the distance. They were standing in the middle of a one-hundred-yard clearing in the forest.

Suddenly I heard the roar of a plane's engine. I looked up and saw a bush plane swooping down toward the clearing. My heart raced as I ran down the side of the mountain. I needed to protect them but I was too late.

I heard four shots. They all missed. I was standing at the edge of the forest now. Then another shot. Pike dropped to the ground. My heart stopped.

Just when I thought he was gone he got back up and staggered to the safety of the forest. The plane had passed over.

I ran out over the clearing. I found the place where Pike had fallen. Blood was splattered on the snow.

I saw that his bloody tracks lead into the woods. Part of me didn't want to see him but the other part made me.

I found him lying on his side by a log. He had been shot in the neck. He was spitting up blood. I couldn't look at him. I almost cried.

I turned my head and saw Lakota and Kepa standing silent. I looked back at Pike, then down, at my rifle.

I didn't want Pike to suffer anymore. I drew my gun and pointed at Pike's head. "Good-bye, friend," I said, and I pulled the trigger.

#### CHAPTER SEVEN DARK SHADOWS

IN THE MONTHS after Pike's death I began to realize how much I missed him. He had been the shy little wolf who helped save my life. And now he was gone.

I never found out who killed Pike, whether it was Wild Joe or who it was, but I vowed that if I ever found out I'd make them wish they had never been born.

Some people say that animals have no emotions, but I know that they do. I could see it in Lakota and Kepa. Back at an old cave they used to live in there was a place where Pike used to lie.

Sometimes, at night, Lakota would get up and go sniff Pike's spot. Each time his scent grew fainter and fainter.

Sometimes, when they were hunting, Lakota would look over his shoulder for no reason, almost as if he expected to see Pike running behind them. On the night of Pike's death he and Kepa wouldn't leave his body. It was their way of saying good-bye.

#### CHAPTER EIGHT THE END OF WINTER

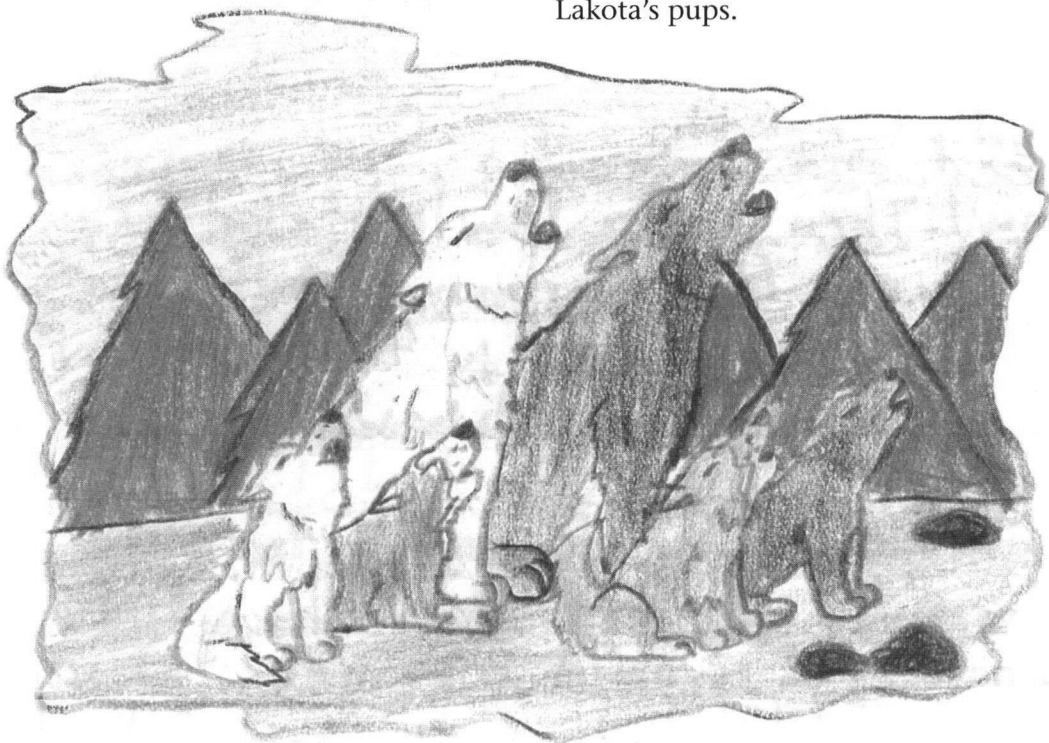
**L**IKE ALL THINGS winter can't last forever. The snows melted away to reveal the new March grass. Spring had returned to the valley.

Kepa was soon to have pups. She was fat and she ate constantly. The hardships of winter seemed so distant now.

I hadn't seen Lakota or Kepa for ten days when I found the den. I was hiking and from the ridge I could see Lakota disappear into the old cave where he, Kepa, and Pike had spent the winter. Kepa appeared at the entrance of the den and greeted him with a friendly lick.

Two weeks later I saw the pups. There were four of them. They were small and awkward at first but they grew with time.

The wolf pack was whole again. I haven't forgotten Pike, but it seemed almost as if a little part of him lived on in Lakota's pups.



The harmony of the wolves' wild song echoed in the mountains



As the months passed the pups grew stronger and I could pick out their distinct personalities.

The tan pup was the runt of the litter. The gray pup acted like Pike, shy and timid. The white pup had inherited Kepa's ice-blue eyes. And the black pup was bold and strong like his father.

As much as I wanted to stay there with the wolves I knew that my time there was short. Soon the time would come to leave.

#### CHAPTER NINE LEAVING ALASKA

I REMEMBER well the day I left my campground in the mountains. It had to be the single saddest day of my life.

I took down my battered old tent and gathered up all my gear. Once I was packed I hiked down the ridge to say good-bye to Lakota.

The wolves were standing near the cave. When Lakota saw me his ears stood erect. I stared at him and his family. They stared back.

Suddenly, Lakota threw back his head and howled a long, mournful howl. Then Kepa howled, and then the pups. The harmony of the wolves' wild song echoed in the mountains. They must have known I was going.

When they stopped I turned around and left. Back then I didn't know if I would ever see the wolves again. All I knew was that I had to get a bus to Anchorage and fly home. When I got to the bus stop there was a bus waiting.

I took one last look at the mountains

and stepped on the bus. When I got home I didn't tell anyone about Lakota or Pike. I never even published my book, until now.

#### CHAPTER TEN A NEW BEGINNING

THAT IS my story but it isn't really over. I have returned to Alaska to once again study the wolves. I camp on the same ridge in the same mountains and watch Lakota's children hunt in the same valley.

But sadly the wolves are still hunted here and in other places where they are protected. I have made it my mission to make people understand them. Because with their understanding comes hope for their survival.

Wolves cannot exist without our help. The wilderness cannot exist without the wolves. It is this delicate balance that we must protect.

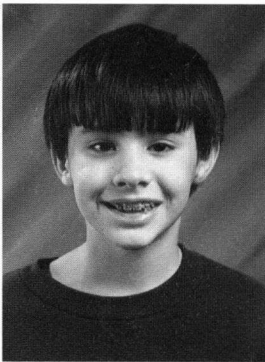
My memories are growing dimmer and dimmer now but I will never forget Lakota and his pack. They made me understand what wolves were about when it was almost too late. It was people like me, people who say that they love the wilderness, then turn around and try to change parts of it, that could be the hope for the wolves, if they only understood.

The sky is growing dark now and the stars are beginning to shine overhead. In the far distance I can hear the mournful howl of a wolf. It is up to us to make sure that this howl still echoes in the mountains years from now. ❖

# A Long Way Down

by Jason Lee

illustrated by Bonny Reynolds



Jason Lee, 13  
Prospect, Kentucky



Bonny Reynolds, 13  
Wannaska, Minnesota

**M**Y LEGS WERE SHAKING, my heart pounding. As we neared the edge of the cliff, I double-checked all my rappelling equipment to make sure it was secure. Quickly, I went through all the safety precautions in my mind. I felt anxious, but not eager for my turn as I waited in line with the members of my group. Fear rose from the pit of my stomach as I realized there was no one else to let in front of me. Slowly, I lowered myself to the edge of the nearly 200-foot cliff. My skin shook like a dozen earthquakes when I reached the belay man, the person who hooks me to the belaying ropes, which keep me from falling. He was tied to a tree probably tighter than his true love would have held on to him. He hooked me up, and I slowly lowered myself over the edge of the cliff, inhaled deeply, and went into a sitting position with both feet in front of me. I closed my eyes, gulped, and began to rappel.

I had traveled no more than five feet when a man I didn't recognize appeared over the edge. With camera in hand he smiled and said, "Cheese," then snapped a picture of me.

"Funny," I replied. In my head I heard the words, Listen, wise guy, I've more important things to do . . . like, say . . . surviving.

My anger was soon forgotten as I reached a point where my feet could no longer touch the rocky wall. Panic took over. The wall was right there, mocking me. I can't stand to be mocked.



With camera in hand he smiled and said, "Cheese"

Thump, my foot made contact with the wall, causing me to rotate. As I slowly began to spin around an interesting thing happened; my panic vanished. The panoramic view of the surrounding area overwhelmed me. All the different-sized trees were evergreens, which seemed to blanket the hillside. The forest was teeming with life as different types of animals raced across my field of vision. As I looked upward the sky seemed to open up into a blue vastness. A sense of excitement overtook me. I'd been waiting for this moment, night and day, for one long month, and finally my dream had become reality. I began to feel more calm and more relaxed. Impulsively, I blurted

out, "My name is Bond, James Bond." Someone climbing back up the cliff overheard me and started laughing. His laughter made me realize that my sense of humor had returned.

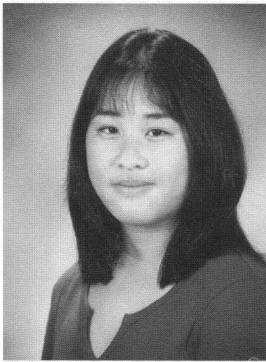
As I finally neared the bottom of the cliff, there seemed to be less animal activity. Looking up, the cliff did not seem as intimidating as it did going down. My feet were shaky when they finally touched the soft and muddy ground. Mixed emotions were in the back of my mind. I was happy that the rappel was done, yet longed to do it again. Pride swelled up within me. Traveling the muddy road, I began the long climb upward. ♦



# Carrying Heart's Roses

by Kirsten Moon

illustrated by Erica D. Pratt



Kirsten Moon, 13  
Honolulu, Hawaii

**N**ICOLE OPENED HER EYES with the reluctance of one uneager to face the day. She hadn't slept well that night, nor on any other night for the past few days. Her mind screamed the reason for her lack of sleep, and she remembered all too clearly the importance of that day. Stumbling out of bed, Nicole staggered toward her desk, hoping against hope it would be any other month than June, any number than the seventeenth. But when her gaze focused on the large calendar angled artistically over her desk, her eyes riveted to a square circled in unforgiving red; it was Saturday, June seventeenth, and it was the day she had been dreading for a long time.



Erica D. Pratt, 13  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

**S**AN FRANCISCO was teeming with people walking up and down its sidewalks, some holding bags of vegetables bought cheap from Chinatown, some walking their dogs or children. Nicole sat near the window with her chin propped up in her hand, staring vacantly at the light beige house across the street. As the morning grew into afternoon, so did the hollowness in her stomach. She didn't stray from the chair all day, until the front door opened and her father was home.

"Nicole, have you been there all day?" he asked concernedly, glancing down at his only daughter. He knew today was a solemn day for her. But he also knew that today was



"Nicole, have you been there all day?" he asked concernedly

necessary, for in order for Nicole to move on, she had to see her one last time.

"Dad, why do we have to move?" Nicole asked quietly. He sighed wearily and sat down on the couch beside her.

"Nicole, we've been over this a thousand and one times. I've been offered a very good job out in Boston. It pays well, and I've checked out the schools and the environment there. They've gotten incredible reviews. All in all, the move will be good for us." Empty resignation tinted his voice when he added,

"We have nothing here."

"I know," Nicole said wearily. The pair was silent for a moment.

"Ready to see her?" Nicole's father finally asked. Nicole nodded. But I'm not ready, she thought silently. I'll never be able to say good-bye.

Soon they were cruising down Clement Street. Passing various flower shops, her father suddenly asked, "Do you want to bring her flowers?"

"Good idea," Nicole agreed. They parked illegally by the curb and entered the small, dim flower shop. There was

an old lady sitting behind a desk, jotting down what appeared to be numbers on a small pad of paper. She glanced up at them with no particular interest, then resumed her task. Nicole looked at all the clear plastic boxes stored inside refrigerators. A flower, she wondered, or a bouquet. Instinctively, she reached out and grabbed a beautiful arrangement of red roses, then selected a single white rose to slide in the center of the bouquet. She handed it to her father, who paid for them without a word, though she was sure he noted the extremely expensive price. Then they were on their way again. Nicole switched on the radio to her favorite station. A loud rap song filled the car, sounding brutal and sharp, and she quickly switched to a soft rock station. Somehow, that too, sounded too loud. Sometimes you don't know what you want, Nicole remembered her saying.

"It's been a long time since you've seen her," her father remarked in a half-hearted attempt at conversation. Nicole nodded briefly, and silence once again filled the car. The rest of the drive was tense and endless.

After what seemed like an eternity, they drove through the stylish black iron gate, finally stopping in the gravelly road. Nicole hesitantly opened her door, then closed it. The sound rever-

berated through the empty fields, on and on. To the end of the world, Nicole thought absently. Her father stayed in the car. He knew she needed to talk to her alone. Carrying the roses, Nicole stumbled across the dewy grass, toward the spot she'd memorized by heart. Three down, eight across.

Kneeling down to face her, Nicole lay the bouquet at the head of her mother's bed of lush green grass. Her fingers caressed the cold, wet marble, running over the engraved letters that marked her mother's final resting place.

"Hey, Mom," she said softly, a single tear sliding out of the corner of her eyes. She watched the salty drop splash onto her mother's headstone, then drip down the side into the grass. "Dad and I are moving to Massachusetts, so I won't see you for a while. We'll . . . miss you," she struggled to get out the words, her throat tightening on the last word.

Suddenly, a cool breeze rushed down from the heavens, despite the warm summer afternoon. It seemed to swirl around Nicole, chilling her body but warming her soul. Her hair blew around her, yet the leaves of nearby trees didn't waver. The sorrow and emotion she had locked inside herself finally bubbled out in the form of tears, but Nicole kissed the tombstone and smiled.

"I love you too."





# Little Pal

by Nikki Morse

illustrated by Garrett Landon

**I** SAW IT IN AN old country store. All around it were dull tools of an earlier generation. What caught my attention at first was the flash that I saw when I opened the door. I walked over eagerly. In my pocket was a five-dollar bill that I had gotten for my birthday. My dad had taken me to the only store in town and told me to get anything with my money. Surely the flashing thing was under five dollars.

It was a golden model dog with a silver tail. I gasped. I had never seen the color gold in our little town. I lifted it gently and looked on the bottom, then I rolled it around. Still, I couldn't find a price tag. Holding it gently I went up to the counter. The only thing distinguishing the counter from the shelves piled with broken stuff was an old lady standing behind it.

"Could you tell me the price of this model, ma'am?" I asked as politely as I could.

"You can't buy *that* dog, young lady," she replied, "it's thirty-five dollars."

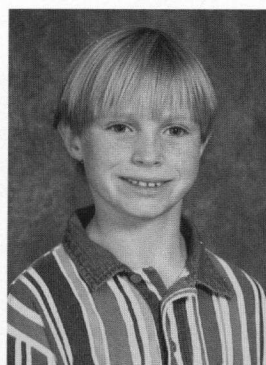
"You've got to be kidding," I laughed. "There isn't any model dog worth thirty-five dollars."

"Then you can kid yourself out of here. That model is worth *more* than thirty-five dollars." She stomped out of the shop and into her house across the muddy yard.

The dog was glittering in my hand. It flashed temptingly. I



Nikki Morse, 12  
Boulder, Colorado



Garrett Landon, 11  
Santa Cruz, California

wanted something gold and silver. Something that would look like what the rich people have in their fancy houses. I looked around and saw that my dad was bending over the old pick-up trying to get a squirmy puppy out of the back. I started trying to shove the model in my pocket when the lady came back.

"What are you doing with that dog, young lady?" she demanded.

"Oh," I said, while my brain started racing frantically.

"Is that your father out there?" she asked, going to the door.

"Uh, yeah," I mumbled, and tried to sneak the dog back onto the shelf.

"I see what you're doing, young lady," she snapped. "You can leave it in your pocket while I get your dad." There wasn't any way out. The bell jingled as they came in.

"I'm sorry, ma'am, for the trouble my daughter has caused," my dad said. "I assure you that you won't have her coming into your shop in the future. Come along, Sara." He jerked his head to the door and we marched out. I was feeling terrible, but not because I had been caught stealing. No, I was just mad about not getting that model.

On the ride home my dad was silent and so was I. The only sound was a lonely yip now and then from the pup in the back. My dad was going to sell it to the lady in the shop because we didn't have any need for another puppy. He couldn't sell it after what I had done. I wasn't sorry. All I wanted was to

get that model, and I would sneak out tonight and go to the village and get it.

I stayed awake long into the night while I waited to make sure everyone was asleep. When it had been at least an hour after the last light had gone out, I breathed a sigh of relief. It was really uncomfortable to lie in bed in overalls. As I crept to the front door I felt something grab my pant leg. I whirled around and saw the pup digging his claws into the floor with his teeth through my cuff. I was furious! I grabbed him and set him on the floor none too gently. He whimpered and I turned away. He was back, trying to rip my sock off. Over and over I'd try to get away and he'd stop me. I finally stuck him in the broom closet and ran outside into a pounding rain.

I started running toward town with my bare feet slapping on the mud of the road. It was crisscrossed by torrents of water cutting little canyons into the dirt. There was water everywhere. The trees were dripping with it and the stream was flooding out of its banks. Little pinpoints of light beside the road told me that the raccoons were watching me. It gives you an eerie feeling seeing unblinking eyes watching you from the forest.

I felt something hit my back and I froze. A wet tongue licked my face and I knew the puppy had gotten out of the closet. How, I didn't know, but I was sure that *it* had damaged the woodwork a little. *It* whimpered and tugged at my pant leg. Then I realized what he was doing. He was trying to keep me from





He licked my fingers and I felt that the model dog didn't matter to me anymore

going to the store and stealing the model! I reached down and patted his head. He licked my fingers and I felt that the model dog didn't matter to me anymore. The little dog leapt into my arms and I started running home.

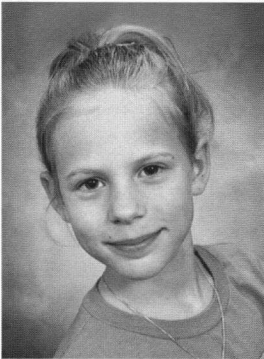
"You know," I said into his fur, "I've got the perfect name for you. You're my

Little Pal." Little Pal, as he was now called, fell asleep on my bed right after we got home. After I told my dad I was sorry, I used my five dollars to buy myself the best birthday present ever, Little Pal. My very own genuine dog. He was adorable, the most perfect puppy ever, in my opinion. ❖



# The Answer of the Night

by Elizabeth Sughrue



Elizabeth Sughrue, 7  
Grasonville, Maryland

Your mother is calling you.  
It is time to go to bed.  
The night is calling out its cry of dark.  
"Come, come," she calls to you.  
Again you do not answer.  
The clock strikes nine.  
The cat is rubbing at your ankles.  
You are silent.  
Your mother calls you again and again,  
But you still do not go.  
The peepers are singing,  
And the birds are calling the sound of night.  
The moon is already out and shining on the houses.  
You run into the yard.  
Owls start to hoot.  
A frog jumps out of the stream  
Breaking the stillness of the night.  
The dog barks in his kennel.  
The night is answering.  
You still do not go inside.  
Your mother calls one last time,  
And you finally go in to bed.

# Edward's Treasure

by Emily Taylor

illustrated by Zoe Paschkis

**I**T WAS ONLY a quick walk to Murphy's Woods from Anjeli's backyard where Heather and Anjeli had been enjoying the hot July day, so they soon reached the edge of the woods. Instinctively, Heather grabbed her friend's hand as they stepped onto the dirt path that led through the woods.

It was considerably cooler under the shade of the tall oaks. The two girls kicked through the clumps of dark, damp leaves while chattering to each other. Soon, Heather forgot her first fears and joined Anjeli in skipping in between the trees and turning over the many rocks that lined their path.

"Anj, I bet I can do fifteen cartwheels in a row!"

"Let me see you try, girl!"

Heather proceeded to try, but on the seventh, she slammed hard into the trunk of two oaks that had grown together.

"Ow!"

"You OK, Heather?" asked her friend, hurrying to her side.

Heather pulled herself up on a branch of the tree mass. But before she could even dust the leaves off her shorts, Anjeli pushed her aside.

"Hey!" said Heather indignantly, from the ground.

"Oh my God . . ."

"What, Anj?"

"Heather, come here, *quick!* I found something!"

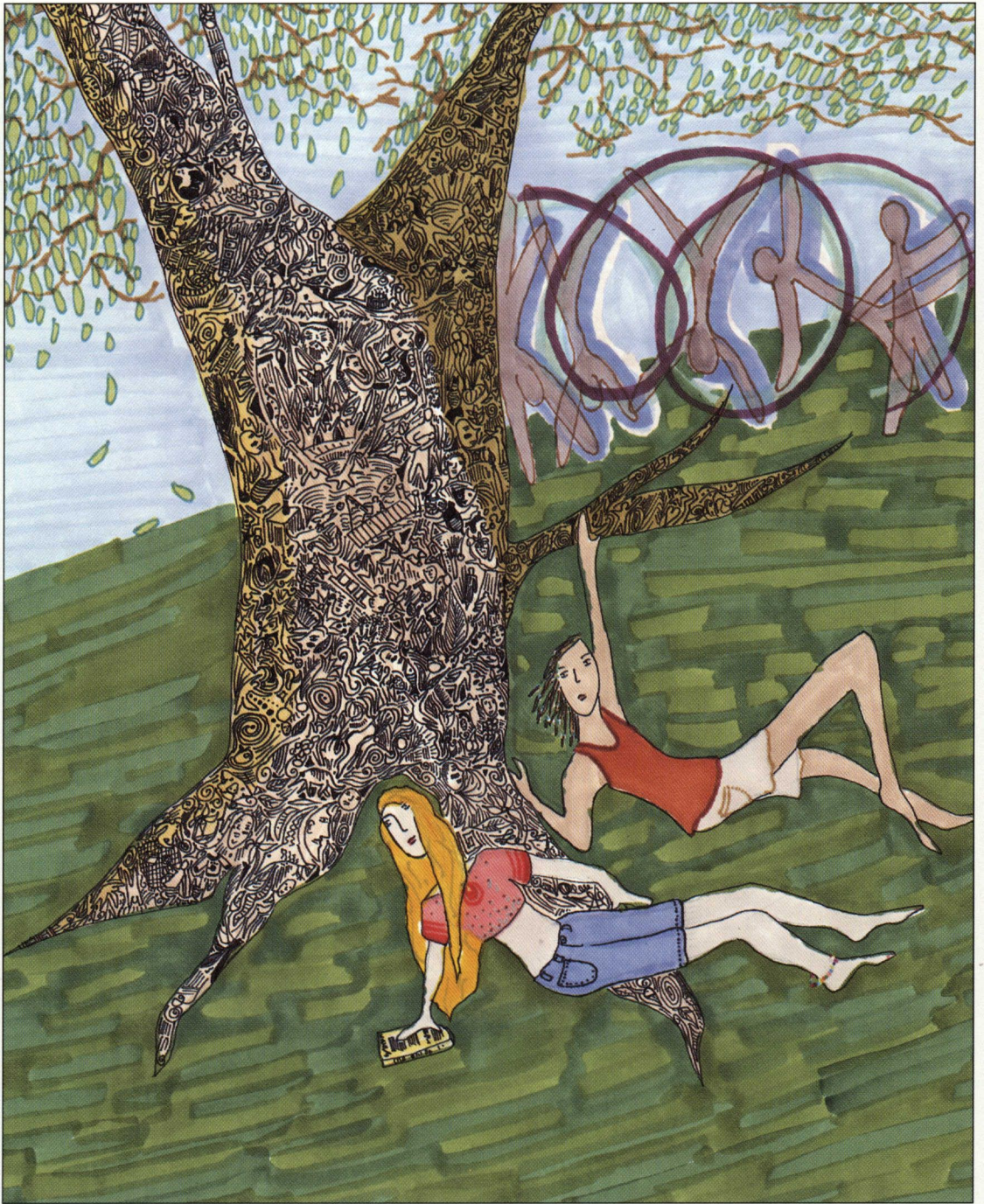


Emily Taylor, 11  
Menlo Park, California



Zoe Paschkis, 12  
Newton, Massachusetts





"Heather, come here, *quick!* I found something!"



Heather scrambled to her feet. Slowly, Anjeli reached down into a tiny crevice under the tree and pulled out a package about the same size and shape as a book. It was wrapped in what looked like an old, yellowed newspaper.

"Oh my God, Anj, what should we do?" asked Heather with a note of panic in her already-trembling voice.

"I'm gonna open it."

"Be *careful*, Anjeli, it might be a bomb or something!"

Anjeli scoffed, reached into her pocket for her Swiss Army knife and started to slit the ends of the package where they seemed to be waxed together. Heather couldn't stand the suspense. She closed her eyes and counted to ten. But before she had even reached four, Anjeli's deft fingers had the package open, and the treasure lay in her hands.

From the cease of paper crackling, Heather knew that the secret was unveiled. She slowly opened her eyes and read the cover of the blue book with gold trim:

A STAMP COLLECTION  
FOR YOUNG BOYS

There was a long silence, a very long silence.

Finally Anjeli spoke. "Stamp collecting?"

Heather tried a bright smile. "It's not so bad. My cousin used to collect stamps, and they were really . . ." she swallowed hard, and finished, ". . . valuable."

Anjeli almost dropped the book in

excitement and hurry to look inside. And lo and behold, there was page after page of yellowed paper, covered in neatly placed stamps. Anjeli read some of them aloud.

"U.S., eight cents. England, five pence. Mexico, ooh, Heather, look at this beautiful flower!"

The girls paged through the book. Each stamp had its own special square that was exactly the size of the stamp. Underneath each stamp were two lines where the country and cost were neatly penned.

"I wonder who owned this," mused Heather. She flipped to the inside front cover, where, in the same painstakingly tidy cursive, was written:

*Edward Williamson, 1943*

"We've got to try and find him, no matter how valuable these are."

"It doesn't say where he lived or anything."

"Well, he must have lived close to these woods, if he hid it under this tree. I wonder why he had to leave it here," said Anjeli, almost to herself.

They sat down under the cooling shade of the oak, each quietly running down the list of possibilities.

Maybe he was running from the police and had time to bring only one thing with him, thought Heather, and he had to leave it behind when he knew they were about to catch him.

At the same time, Anjeli thought, Maybe he knew a thief was after it because it was so valuable. Maybe he

was planning to come back for it one day, but something happened so he couldn't . . .

"Heather!"

"What?"

"Remember last year, during that elective 'How to Use the Library,' when we had to search that guy who used to live in Brevitown in 1976 on the computer that keeps all the records at the library? I'll bet that will work with Eddie here if we can get the librarian to let us use that computer!"

Heather gasped. "We've got to get to the library!"

Heather and Anjeli stopped their bikes in front of Brevitown Library. The two girls dashed inside, with Anjeli carrying the book in one hand. Left, then right to the children's department.

"Excuse me, ma'am," Heather panted, "we need your help."

"Of course," said the librarian, looking worried.

"Um, it's not an emergency or anything, but we found this book"—Anjeli held it up—"in a tree in Murphy Woods. We were wondering if you had any information on Edward Williamson's family. They lived in Brevitown around 1943."

The librarian looked much less worried. "Of course, dear. Let me check our records for 1943." She got up (her name tag read Judy) and moved toward the room behind her desk. The girls eagerly followed her.

Sitting down at a computer, Judy said, "This is where we keep all our

records for past years. They date back ever since the library was built in 1889."

She typed in 1943, then Williamson. What appeared looked like this:

WILLIAMSON, Lloyd

His wife Muriel

His daughter Mary

His son Michael

His son Edward

Moved in 1941. Moved out 1943. Edward and his wife Alicia moved back 1995 and reside at 1284 Copper Street.

"Thanks so much gotta go have a nice day!" said Heather and Anjeli in one breath, grabbing the book and dashing back out the way they had come.

They jumped back on their bikes and raced through town till they came to the turnoff for Copper Street. "1134 . . . 1168 . . . 1192 . . . 1258 . . . 1284!" the two chanted together, stopping in front of a white shuttered house with blue trim. Abandoning their bikes and taking a big breath, Anjeli and Heather walked up the cobblestone path.

"Ding-dong, dong dongitty ditty dong dong!" They tried to suppress their laughter at the doorbell's tune. Then a pretty woman who looked sixty-ish, with white hair cut in a bob, answered the door, smiling.

"Yes, girls? Can I help you?"

"Um, we're looking for an Edward Williamson? Does he live here?"

The woman's smile grew. "Eddie, dear! You have a visitor!"

A minute later, a man with a white

beard who looked about the same age as the woman shuffled to the door. "Yes?" he inquired kindly.

"Mr. Williamson, sir," stuttered Anjeli, "we found your, um, your book. Here," she finished, thrusting the book in his face. His face lit up like a Christmas tree.

"Why, however on earth—well, do come in, my dears, please! He led them into a cheery room with lots of sunlight. "Please, do sit down," he said, motioning toward a white couch with bright-colored throw pillows. He settled himself in an armchair across from them. "When I was a boy," he began, "eight years old or so, I collected stamps. They were the light of my life, so to speak. My father traveled frequently on business, and wrote my family and me letters from wherever he happened to be. I was allowed to keep the stamps. They were a bit like"—he paused to think—"my window to my father during those times that he was so far away."

"Why did you decide to hide them, if they were so important to you?" interrupted Anjeli.

The weathered man sighed. "Now, that was a sad story. As you girls have probably learned in school, World War II was going on in 1943."

The girls nodded.

"Well, when I was a boy, many people were very afraid that our enemy, the Germans, were going to attack along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean in submarines. One day, during one of the rare times my father was home, our family went to Martins Beach for a picnic and a swim. I'm sure you girls have been there."

They nodded again.

"Well, my father was standing on that big cliff near the back of the beach, when he thought he saw the tip of a submarine poking out of the water near the shore. He panicked, and he made us all hurry back to the house where we picked up the luggage we had packed in case of such an 'emergency.' I only had time to grab my book of stamps and hide it in the woods that were next to our house."

He paused to take a breath. The girls were enthralled by his story.

"But when Alicia and I moved back here in 1995, I couldn't seem to find the tree I had hid it in, my horrible memory being what it is. I can't thank you enough for bringing it back to me. But now it's your turn to tell a story. How on earth did you find me?"

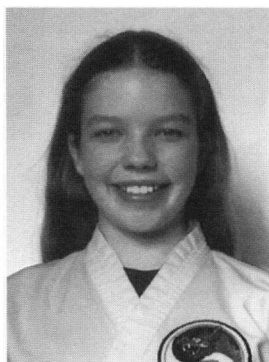
"Well," said Anjeli and Heather in unison, "it started like this . . ." ❖



# The Board

by Ann Pedtke

illustrated by Sarah Dennis



Ann Pedtke, 12  
East Lansing, Michigan



Sarah Dennis, 12  
Nashville, Tennessee

**M**Y TAE KWON DO instructor stood in front of me, the board held tightly in his hands.

"Just tell me when you're ready," he said.

I *had* to break it. That thought was ringing around inside my head, inside my stomach. Break it. BREAK IT! You have to break it.

I stepped back for a practice kick. I got in a good stance, clenched my fists, and then I spun around backwards, doing a complete turn, and brought my heel up lightly on the edge of the board. Just to make sure that I was lined up, I practiced again.

The old, thin brown carpet was rough on my bare feet as I pivoted. The fluorescent lights in the ceiling filled the room with light. Everything was silent, waiting for me. My martial arts classmates sat Indian-style in a row on the floor to my left. In the back of the room, my mom and dad sat in chairs. I could feel everyone's gaze boring through me like so many tiny lasers. I had never broken a board before, although I had tried several times. Even a boy in my Tae Kwon Do class who was two years younger than me (and a lower rank) had broken one, and he always made sure that I knew it.

My loose white uniform made snapping sounds as I lined myself up once more, but the baggy pants and jacket didn't keep me from sweating. I felt as hot as if I were wearing sweatpants and a turtleneck. I paused to pull the knot in my

deep-blue belt tight.

"OK," I whispered, and with one last deep breath, I swirled around, the room blurring before my eyes. Then I kicked my heel against the hard wood. I stepped back. The board was still in one piece.

"You stopped," my instructor said, smiling. "You have to go *through* the board. Try it again."

I was getting sick of people telling me to "go *through* the board." As if I wasn't trying!

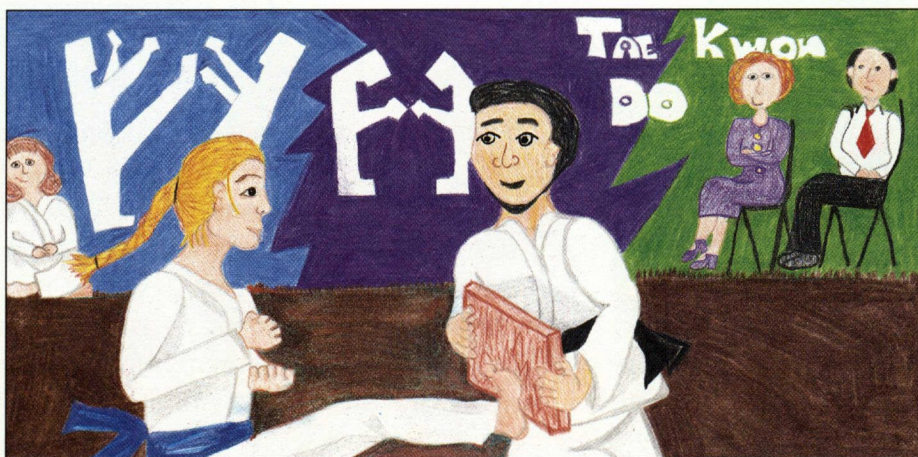
"Almost," my instructor told me. "You still stopped. Try it just one more time."

One more chance. That was all I got. Suddenly, I remembered my instructor sticking his tongue out once and waving his hands by his ears.

"That's what the board's doing," he had said to me.

I closed my eyes and pictured myself cracking the board in half.

"I'll show you, Mr. Board. I'll do it," I whispered, and the words "I'll do it"



"Through the board, through the board," I chanted to myself

"Through the board, through the board," I chanted to myself. I took another practice try and then flew around again, my long, blond braid swishing around behind me. But again, I couldn't break the board. I hadn't even cracked it! I felt tears of frustration welling up in my eyes and tipped my head back to get rid of them. I wouldn't disappoint everyone by being a quitter. I wouldn't disappoint myself.

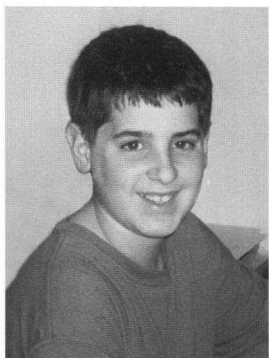
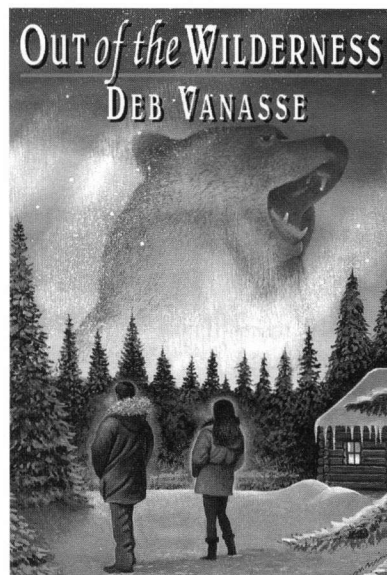
echoed inside me. "I'll do it. I'll do it. I'll do it."

"OK," I said quietly. I spun around. My foot snapped out and collided with the board in just the right spot. I heard a distant CRACK! and then my foot fell through the board and my instructor was holding up the two jagged pieces and grinning.

"Knowing that you can," he said. "That's all there is to it." ❖

# Book Review

by Steven Yenzer



Steven Yenzer, 11  
Columbia, Maryland

*Out of the Wilderness*, by Deb Vanasse; Clarion Books: New York, 1999; \$15

**W**HEN I DIMMED the lights and sat down, I expected a good book. That is not what I got. I got a great book. In *Out of the Wilderness*, Deb Vanasse's extremely descriptive writing complements the vast complexities of the Alaskan wilderness. The symbolic artwork on the jacket depicts a howling wolf set in front of a beautiful aurora borealis. I believe it shows the sheer beauty and harshness of the wild.

The characters are each unique in their own way. Nathan, brother to Josh, is to wildlife as Picasso was to art. He sought cover in bears' dens, and claimed to have a mystical connection with them. He's willing to sacrifice himself to live by his high standards. Josh, the main character, is disgusted with his brother's feelings about wildlife. However, they aren't considered when his brother is hurt by his own obsession.

Shannon and Pete, who are brother and sister, are opposites when it comes to wildlife. Shannon has feelings for wildlife as Nathan does, but she is not obsessed with the subject. Pete makes Josh his idol, even though he is not exactly



comfortable around dead animals. Another character in this book is the father of Nathan and Josh. He always worries about Nathan, his son. Frank, father to Shannon and Pete, is caring and generous. He gave up the cabin that his friend let him use to Nathan.

Now that I'm done with the long list of confusing characters, I am going to tell about how I felt as I turned the pages of this book. I can relate to Nathan's obsession because of, surprisingly, my obsession with the Internet. What I mean is that I make the Internet my top priority, instead of focusing on my schoolwork or anything else. That is similar to Nathan's thoughts, as he

makes his own safety, and even that of others, less important than his desire to bond with animals. This shows when Nathan camps out in a bear den and is attacked by a female bear protecting her cubs. I can relate to Josh in that sometimes I ignore a friend I am angry at, but if they need help with something, I forgive them and try to help. That's like Josh, because he is annoyed with Nathan because of his thoughts about animals, but when Nathan is injured by the bear, Josh risks his life to save Nathan's.

All in all, Deb Vanasse's *Out of the Wilderness* is a great book that arouses thoughts about the wilderness. ❖



Theresa Moss, 7, Morgantown, West Virginia





How I loved to watch her ride, from my seat halfway up a peach tree



# Memories

by Chappell Sargent

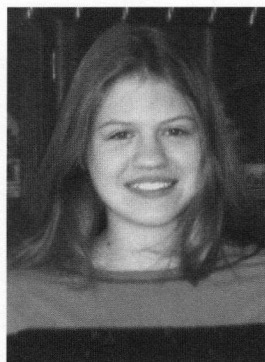
illustrated by Hanna Kozlowski

**K**AREN WALKED OUT into the blazing August sun. She smiled to see the horses grazing contentedly in the fields, swishing their tails at the bugs and stomping the ground occasionally, as if to remind strangers or newcomers that it was their grass to eat. She brushed a fly off her top and walked over to the water spigot. Her hand grasped the handle, turning it, and she dunked her face into the stream of water spilling down to get a drink. After quenching her own thirst, she wiped her mouth with her wrist and filled a nearby bucket to the brim with cold water. She turned the handle again, until the water came only in drops, and picked up the bucket. She carried it through the field, stopping at each horse and letting them have a drink. When she reached the bay near the peach tree, she took an extra minute to stay with the horse. It was her favorite horse, Calla, the most spirited filly of them all at Piping Greens. She cooed softly to the horse, then swung her long leg over Calla's back. Karen tapped Calla with her bare feet and grabbed the horse's coarse black mane. The filly began to trot, and the two went smoothly across the perimeter of the paddock. Karen's hair flew back as the horse picked up speed. Her hair was a golden blond, contrasting beautifully with her brown eyes and tanned skin.

How I loved to watch her ride, from my seat halfway up a peach tree. I grinned and grabbed a peach. As I bit into it, all



Chappell Sargent, 10  
Charlestown, Massachusetts



Hanna Kozlowski, 13  
Batesburg, South Carolina



of the luscious juice streamed into my mouth and filled my head with memories of my own horse, Bosa, who I had owned two—or was it three—years ago. She was an old mare, nineteen or so. She was an Appaloosa, a big brown Appaloosa with grayish-white spots on her rear and a long blaze on her nose. She looked rather like me, dark and freckled, with big brown eyes. We had more in common than looks, too. We both were very eager about getting our own way, and it made it quite a challenge to ride her. Yet it was those times when she threw me off or refused a jump that made me remember her so fondly.

There was the time when we came to a bridge, and I urged her forward, but she stayed put. I urged again, and still she did not move. Finally, she took one quick step, then bucked me into the water. I could remember so clearly the look on Karen's face when she pulled me out of the stream. It was a look of sheer bliss, laughter, joy, and any other words that would appear on a list of when a girl sees her sister in a stream

with a riderless horse nearby.

Then there was the time I rode her to a restaurant. I tied her up outside and went in. Nearly twenty minutes later the door opened and in marched Bosa, feeling competent and proud. I could almost swear she was grinning.

The strongest memory, however, was the day we parted. It was early February, the first snow of the year. One of our best studs, Parker, had been put down, so the year had been financially bad. My father decided that we would have to sell our two leisure horses, Troy and Bosa. I had been heartbroken. Some stout man came in a big gray horse van. He took Troy. Then a woman came in a green horse van. It was a small stall, but the hay smelled fresh and the water was cold. I led Bosa in, kissed her neck and let the woman close the back and drive away, while tears rolled down my cheeks . . .

I was suddenly awoken by Karen tapping my shoulder. I opened my eyes. A long stream of peach juice was streaming down my chin. I licked my lips and we laughed. ❖

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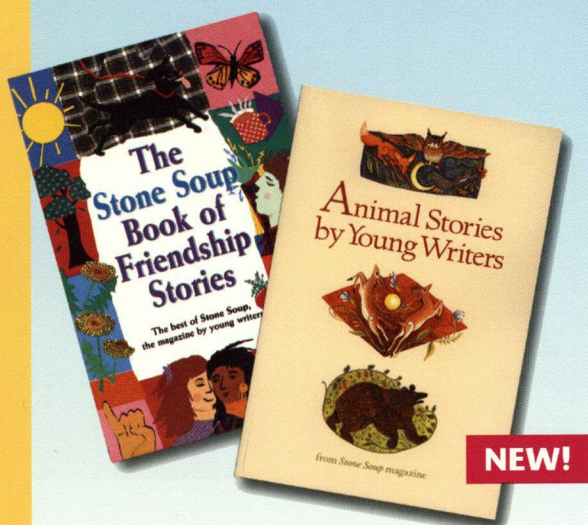




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