

# Stone Soup

*The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists*



*"View of My Library," by Samik Goswami, age 12, Calcutta, India*

## YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE

A parrot, captured from the rainforest, finds a new home

## PHOTOS IN THE HAYLOFT

Jenny travels back in time and meets her grandfather as a young man

*Also:* A poem about a tree house

MARCH/APRIL 2011

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# Stone Soup

*The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists*

VOLUME 39, NUMBER 4

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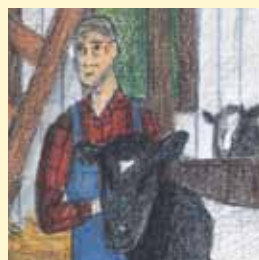
The girl and the wolf understand each other perfectly



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# Stone Soup

The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists

WELCOME TO ALL OUR READERS, old and new! We've had the pleasure of publishing *Stone Soup* for over 37 years. It is our belief that, by presenting rich, heart-felt work by young people the world over, we can stir the imaginations of our readers and inspire young writers and artists to create.



Jessie Moore, 12

## Contributors' Guidelines

*Stone Soup* welcomes submissions from young people through age 13. For our complete guidelines, please visit our website: [stonesoup.com](http://stonesoup.com).

**Story and poem authors:** Please do not enclose a self-addressed envelope with your submission. Send copies of your work, not originals. If we decide to consider your work for a future issue, you will hear from us within four weeks. If you do not hear from us, it means we were not able to use your work. Don't be discouraged! Try again!

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

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

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

**Cover:** "View of My Library" was loaned to *Stone Soup* by Paintbrush Diplomacy of Menlo Park, California. For over 30 years, Paintbrush Diplomacy has worked to promote children's artistic expression around the world and to raise awareness of children's causes. Special thanks to Char Pribuss and Lisa Fahey.

# The Mailbox



LBP, 9

I am a passionate writer and I am truly inspired by your magazine. It is very motivational to know that there are other children out there who are enthusiastic writers and hope to pursue a career in literature. I am currently working on my first novel and when I heard about *Stone Soup* I was ecstatic. After doing my research on the website I decided to submit a few short stories. I must admit this is not my usual form of work. I am mostly a science fiction writer, but I was determined to try something new and meet the high standards of your magazine.

**GABRIELA S. RODRIGUEZ, 12**  
*Haverford, Pennsylvania*

I recently read the January/February 2007 issue of *Stone Soup*. The story "Summer of the Sea Turtles" really made me think. The main character of the story, a boy named Tyler who tries to protect a nest of baby sea turtles, has an interesting personality. In the beginning of the story, he has thoughts about the beach, but when he sees a mother sea turtle, his thoughts quickly change. I thought the article was great. It made me think of my vacations on the beach and the things I see there. As I read it, I noticed a hidden message. Tyler has the entire city learn how to appreciate the beach and the nest of sea turtles. To me, this meant that beaches are more than just vacation spots. They're home to amazing animals and are very beautiful.

**HAYDEN SMITH, 9**  
*Hanover, New Hampshire*

Thanks a lot for the inspiration, and for the great stuff you publish. You have very much motivated me.

**SASHA BARISH, 12**  
*Berkeley, California*

I have been really inspired by *Stone Soup*. *Stone Soup* is a great way to learn from other people's writing.

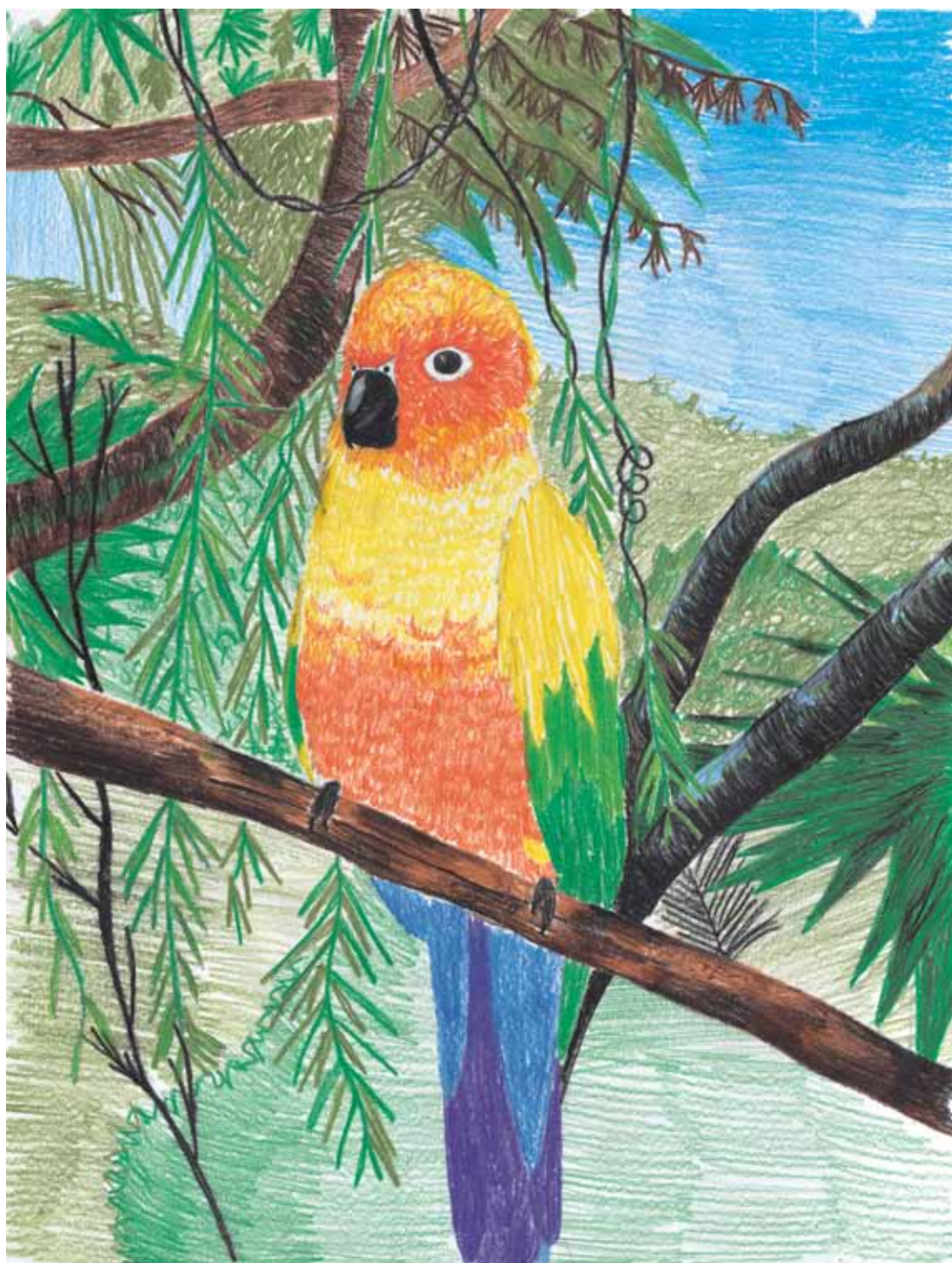
**ALBERT LENG, 10**  
*Palo Alto, California*

This is actually the first *Stone Soup* I have ever read but after reading the stories and book reviews I instantly fell in love with this incredible magazine. In the recent July/August issue I might have found my favorite short story ever, "Tear Drop's Legacy." The words Olivia Smit used to describe this amazing story were so deeply touching. I almost cried when David had to give this wonderful horse that he loved so much to a hateful man who would do such a thing as slap David for "messing with his horse." David was just saying goodbye to that poor horse that was stuck with that horribly mean man! But then again I almost cried at the lovely ending when you could feel the friendship and bond between the human and horse. It seemed so true and through the words I felt how much he loved Tear Drop. The only thing I would have liked is for the author to tell us when this story took place. I think that maybe the story took place in the past? I would love it if Olivia Smit extended and continued this story into a book and for her to keep publishing these amazing stories that seem to come to life as you're reading them. I predict Olivia Smit will become the next Lewis Carroll, William Shakespeare, J.K. Rowling, Jane Austen, L.M. Montgomery or even the next Robert Louis Stevenson. This magazine was truly wonderful and I think everyone involved should be admired for being part of it and building an incredible magazine.

**SAYDIE BUBNIW, 10**  
*Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada*

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





*I found a high branch to sit on, near the canopy*

# You Are My Sunshine

By **Lebo Molefe**

*Illustrated by the author*

## CHAPTER ONE

I START TO SHIVER and my feathers begin to puff instinctively. It's getting colder, and I can tell through the slats in my crate that it must be night. The humming of the truck mingles with the soft song of disheartened birds. Occasionally, I join in.

The events of the day flash through my mind. There was only a light misting today, unlike the heavy rainfall we usually get in the rainforest. The sky seemed bluer than usual, the wind more refreshing, the sun brighter. Everything smelled fresher, looked greener, sounded happier. In the morning, I rolled around in a giant wet leaf to bathe. I found a high branch to sit on, near the canopy. The vast expanse of sky above me made me feel like soaring. So I did. Above the rainforest, troubles, and worries. The afternoon was spent preening and drying my plumage in the sun. I managed to find a large clump of berries today. The forest floor was a treasure trove of ripe goodies. I even found a whole peach. It's a good thing too because I haven't had any food since a small nut was tossed in this box.

Thinking of home makes me nostalgic. I try to shift my wings, but they are covered with cardboard pieces, which are attached to me with a rubber band that wraps around my body. I close my eyes. No use leaving them open in this darkness.

Today I was captured. Thought it could never happen to me. I was wrong. I've heard stories, of course. I was always careful. Scanning the rainforest. Alert. Listening. So careful. Today, my



Lebo Molefe, 13  
Naperville, Illinois

guard slipped. It was over quickly. The humans are experienced at this. All at once there was a net, over my head. It was mostly a blur. The one thing I remember clearly was the toothy smile the man gave me. I gave a struggle, tried to chew through, but no use. I looked forlornly at what I was leaving behind as we got farther and farther away. They put cardboard over my wings. Put me in a box.

My feathers. I've always been proud of them, every color of the rainbow. My wings—green. My body feathers start amber and blend into crimson. My beak is ebony. My tail is royal purple, and deep blue. Now they are ruffled. Out of place. Ruined.

I don't know where they're taking me. I just know I'm never going home again.

## CHAPTER TWO

ANNE PULLED her bright yellow scarf tighter around her neck. Even though she was wearing the detective coat, as her dad called it, the cold was still seeping into her skin. Even the cobblestone streets lost their charm in this chill.

She tried to pedal faster, avoiding puddles. Her warm breath made tiny white puffs in the air. It was cloudy out, and bitterly cold, but soon she would arrive at the townhouse and the warmth would melt her frozen bones. She rode her bike over a stone bridge, looking at her reflection in the swift, gray water that ran underneath. She let go of the handlebars and sailed along, arms out for balance. It was a skill she had learned from her mother.

Yet another dreary day, thought Anne, and not just the weather.

Anne allowed herself to think about the day. Emily and her flock of giggling friends had been even more spiteful than usual, as if the awful weather made them meaner. They had destroyed one of her notebooks by spilling apple cider all over it, sent her books sprawling in the hallway, and her oatmeal cookies were nowhere to be found when lunch came around.

The talking behind her back she could endure. But now all this? Anne always sat alone at lunch, just reading and thinking. But the cookies were the sparkle, the gleam of happiness she looked forward to every day. She had nothing to hold on to, no friends.

What more could they possibly take away from her?

Too much thinking. Again she was about to cry. She refused to let herself because then they would win. Her home was in sight now. The old townhouse was tired and dilapidated with moldy brownstone bricks and climbing ivy latching onto the walls. Even so, it had grandeur about it. It stood with pride. Anne hopped off her bike and walked down the stone path to the front door. She put the bike against the house and tried to look happy for her dad before she walked inside.

## CHAPTER THREE

IT'S BEEN three days. The pale yellow sunlight coming through the slats in the crate tells me it must be morning. Something is happening outside the





*She let go of the handlebars and sailed along, arms out for balance*

box. Commotion. Human voices arguing. I wonder what's going on. I can't understand the rusty language they speak. They talk with quick, sudden words and a growling in the throat. It reminds me of the sound of the panther.

Suddenly, I'm moving, but it's not the vehicle. I'm being picked up. Transported to where? Another vehicle? It turns out I'm right. After a long wait, I hear an engine start. We drive for a long time. The other birds that were captured are still here. We each sing our own unique song. All birds are born with one. I sing mine

until I get tired. I also chatter with the others. Mostly, I can't understand. It is night when we arrive.

A human has taken me out of the crate. The woman is wearing a white coat and she has nice brown hair. Deep brown, I notice, like tree bark. She's starting to free me from my rubber band. I survey the surroundings. I'm inside a room with shiny white tiles and fluorescent lights. There are no windows, just a countertop. I miss the sunshine. I look around and see a potted tree. A little slice of the rainforest. She releases me and, instinctively, I

try to fly away. Bad idea. Everything is a blur, and then, everything goes white. The solid wall jars my head.

She leans down and offers me her hands. I consider escaping, but I can't muster any strength. I have no choice. I hop into her open palms. My body goes limp in her warm, soft hands. She stretches my wings and studies me for a moment. They haven't opened in days. They feel stiff and awkward in her hands.

She pokes me with a needle. I see red liquid slowly fill the syringe. It doesn't hurt until afterwards, but she applies some kind of sticky substance to the puncture, all the time writing on her clipboard.

She also touches me with a cold metal circle. I squirm, but she restrains my wings. The circle connects to her ears. She is listening. I don't know what happens next because I get covered with a towel. I start to struggle and squirm. Was I wrong? Is she going to hurt me? I try to bite, something, anything. But she isn't hurting me. She's touching my feet. Doing something.

After the towel, she puts me on her arm. Normally, flight would be my first choice, but there's nowhere to go in here. I begin to preen right away. I don't have time to get through the full routine though. When I start preening my back feathers, I stop in the sleeping position and allow myself to close my eyes. Her arm is warm. I relax. And then I poop.

For the night, I'm deposited in a spacious cage with three perches. These aren't tree branches, but they're wooden.

I have food and water, but I'm not hungry. This place isn't my home, but at least it's better than a crate.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

"HOW WAS SCHOOL, Anne?"  
"It was fine, Dad."

Anne hung her "detective coat" on the coatrack next to her dad's big black one. She slid her feet out of her yellow rain boots and dropped her knapsack on the floor.

"Really? You seem... I don't know."

"No, it was great. Except... I lost my oatmeal cookies."

"You lost them, huh?" He sighed. "There's a new batch on the counter. Take some extra."

Anne took a cookie and sat on the counter. She chewed it thoughtfully. Gave a hint of a smile.

"I thought you were going to a friend's after school today," her dad said.

"Oh she... uh... cancelled at the last minute."

More like she purposefully invited me just so she could cancel, Anne thought but didn't say anything out loud.

"Oh," said her dad. He looked at his daughter for a moment. She smiled at him, reassuringly. He went back to work, whistling, "You Are My Sunshine." Anne's dad illustrated children's books for a living, but it didn't pull in a lot of money. They had just enough to be comfortable.

His office was the living room. It was cozy and the walls were dandelion yellow, his wife's favorite color. The furnish-

ings were old-fashioned, but Anne didn't mind. She rather liked it.

Anne went upstairs and crossed another day off her calendar in red marker. Only eighty-nine days to go until school ended.

## CHAPTER FIVE

IT'S BEEN another two days. I've been transported across the sea in a flying machine. As if I couldn't fly myself. I'm now living with a nice woman. She has gray hair that flies everywhere around her face and she likes to talk to us. I like the sound of her voice. She doesn't put us in boxes or cages. We're allowed to roam free in the house. I like to chew on her pillows, but only the thread. The stuffing has a strange texture. Today a man came in and talked to her for a long time. Eventually, she nodded, in... approval?

"This one was a rescue from illegal traders. I think he'll be a nice fit," she said. I don't know what that means. She asks me to step up on her arm and looks at me as if to say, Go on, he's a nice man. So I climb onto his shoulder. He seems very happy about this. But I bite his ear, just to see how he will respond. The bad ones get angry. He simply laughs.

The woman looks at me sternly. She

puts me in a cage, but the way she looks at me, I know it will be all right. It is sad to leave her. My cage is covered with a blanket, which has rainforest patterns on it. If I imagine hard, I think I can smell the rainforest. Hear it. Feel it. The man is putting me in his car. We drive. I'm used to this by now. He whistles a strange tune, and I begin to pick up on it.

Eventually we stop. I hear the man struggle to carry the cage. He puts it down somewhere. A table, probably. I stay covered all afternoon.

## CHAPTER SIX

"DAD, I'M HOME," Anne called. "Oh hi, honey, I've got a surprise for you." Her dad was beaming from ear to ear.


"What is it?"

"It's a surprise. It's a friend."

"Oh, Dad, you didn't bring me a... person, did you?"

"No, no, just come see."

## CHAPTER SEVEN

I HEAR VOICES outside my cage. It's the man and... someone. Who's there? Where am I? The voices stop. The man gently pulls the blanket off the cage. 

# Roller Skating

*By* Nicky Cannon

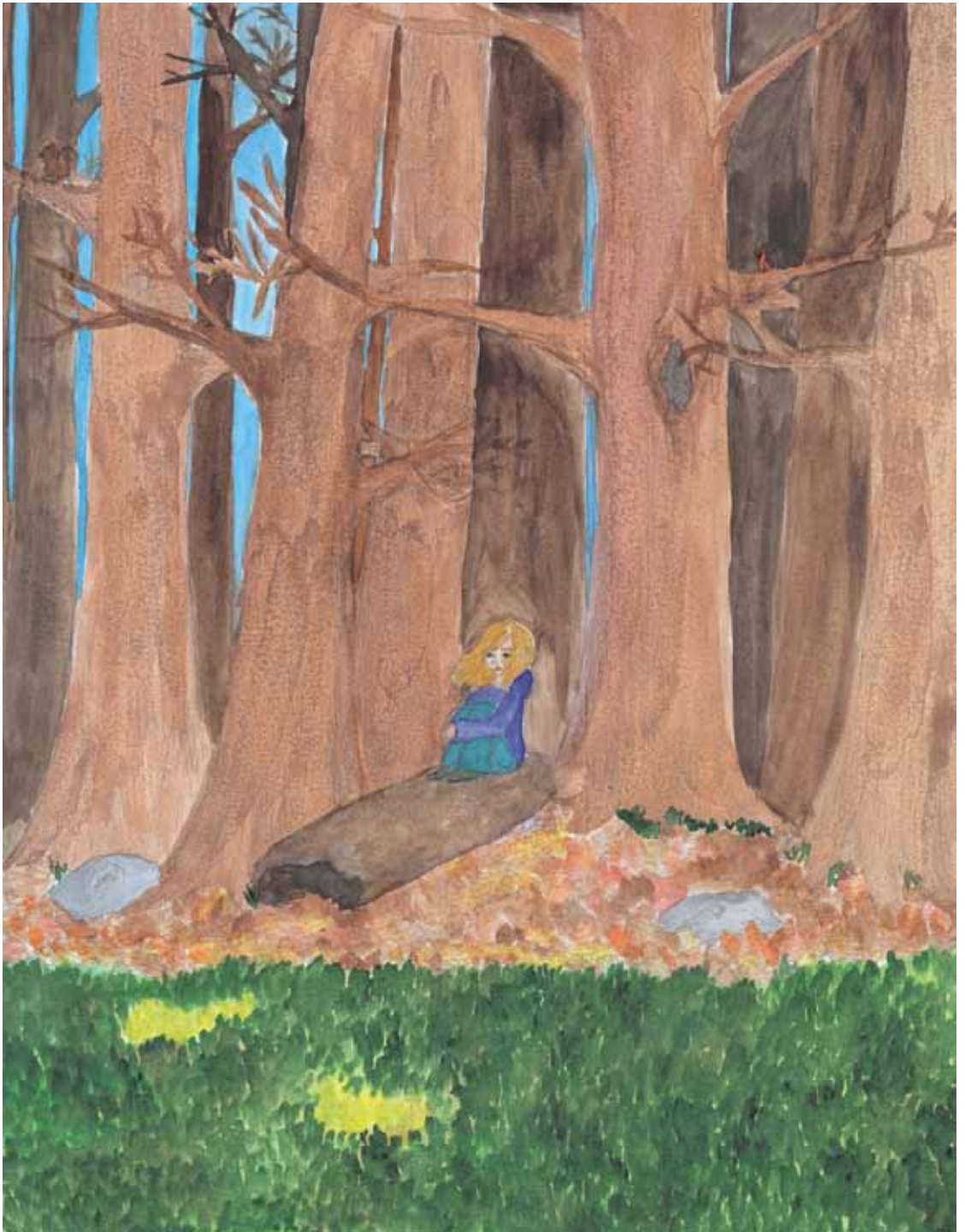


Nicky Cannon, 12  
Dallas, Texas

The wheels  
Crunch over the pea gravel  
As sweat  
Crowds my tomato-red face.  
My legs are constantly moving  
Pumping with pure  
Adrenaline.  
A puddle  
Crammed with mud  
Stretches over the cement sidewalk.  
Consumed with laughter  
And joy  
I am too delirious  
To see the hazard.  
My body  
Is shot into the air  
And my arms  
Flail  
Like a baby pigeon  
Flying for the first time.



My legs are  
Spattered  
With grime.  
My aerial adventure  
Concludes  
With a tragic  
Crash.  
Water  
Spurts out  
From under my  
Bruised body.  
Drops pitter-patter as they  
Connect with land.  
I sit there  
Soaked  
Absorbed with how I look  
What pity watchers must feel.  
But I am chortling  
Elated  
Even if briefly  
And even if disastrously ended.  
I had  
Done it.  
I had roller skated.



*Nothing mattered. Leah was leaving*

# Home Is Where You're Happy

By **Rachel Keirstead**

*Illustrated by* **Hannah Phillips**

**I**T WASN'T TRUE. It couldn't be. Leah shook her head in disbelief, not accepting that she could be moving away from her beloved home in Chardon, Ohio. Sure, she'd known the possibility had been there, but she didn't believe something this awful could happen to *her*. The news had been broken in such a gruff and unfeeling manner. Didn't her parents care? Didn't they understand how hard this was? *Nobody* moved in the middle of November. She felt like she had been punched in the gut, and her heart rose in her throat. But tears didn't fall. Not yet.

It turned out the dental clinic her father had worked at for so many years was being shut down, but he had found work at a clinic in New Jersey. New Jersey. That felt like it was an entire continent away. Leah's parents told her they had found a new family to live in the house Leah had grown up in. They had made an unsuccessful attempt to console her by telling her how wonderful the new house was. They said meaningless things like, "Oh, you'll have such a great time" and "You'll make plenty of friends. Don't you worry."

They had done this all behind Leah's back. She felt betrayed. In a month, Leah would be in New Jersey.

Leah stood, still shaking her head. "No," she said. "No." With that, she ran out of the living room and out the back door. The old screen door banged shut behind her.

The crisp, late autumn air rushed to greet her. Leah pulled her sweatshirt tighter, trying to keep in as much warmth as pos-



Rachel Keirstead, 12  
Blandon, Pennsylvania



Hannah Phillips, 13  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

sible. She jammed her bony fingers into her pockets.

The leaf-covered ground crunched as Leah trudged across the yard. She expected her parents to come after her, to apologize. Maybe they would tell her they had been joking after all.

Leah kept walking, the woods behind her yard greeting her with sympathetic words. She often spent time in the woods when she needed solace. The *whoosh* of wind through branches of the old oak trees and the *chirp* of a lone bird washed over her in a soothing manner. Leah continued to walk through the woods, dodging between trees stripped of their leaves.

After a few minutes of walking, Leah came to an abrupt halt. She was where she wanted to be. She was in a small clearing where she sometimes came to think and escape her problems, at least for the time being. This was where she was happy. Leah sat on an old log, taking in her familiar surroundings.

Tree branches extended upward, forming a protective canopy, which nearly blocked out the sun entirely. Only a small sliver of sunlight made it through to illuminate a small patch of grass in front of her. The crisp fall wind whipped Leah's dirty-blond hair mercilessly against her face. Her warm blue eyes stung from the biting wind. But it didn't matter. Nothing mattered. Leah was leaving.

#### ONE MONTH LATER

THE SCHOOL BUS was noisier than the packed stadium at a Cleveland

Indians game. Kids hurled balled-up paper at each other and blasted loud music from their cell phones. They shouted out windows and tossed litter into the street. Leah glanced around nervously, afraid that one of these kids would pull her hair or hit her with any of a number of projectiles. The bus driver seemed unaffected by all of this chaos, which impressed Leah immensely.

The bus finally pulled up to the curb next to the school. The brakes squealed as the driver slammed down on them. The doors were thrown open, and the kids practically ran each other over to be the first off the bus. Welcome to New Jersey.

Leah didn't know where to go or who to talk to. She didn't know any of her teachers, and she had no friends. She rubbed her gloved hands together to keep herself warm.

She wished she could finish seventh grade in Chardon, where she had friends. She especially missed the woods. Leah's new home was in a large housing development with hardly any trees. Everything was different in New Jersey.

"Hey, move it!" A boy shook Leah from her thoughts as he rudely shoved her aside. She had been blocking the sidewalk, which was lightly dusted with snow. Leah wandered toward a set of doors with a huge crowd of rowdy students around them. She joined the crowd, hoping she would be permitted to enter the warm building soon.

The rest of the day passed in a blur of loud, jarring sounds and unfamiliar faces.





*“Now, does anyone know why trees lose their leaves?”*

Leah got lost more than once, and she sat alone at lunch. The day had been a failure, except for science class.

The class had been studying dendrology, the study of trees and woody plants. Mr. Wilson, the bespectacled teacher, had asked, “Now, does anyone know why trees lose their leaves?” The class shifted uncomfortably, no one daring to answer the question. Leah tentatively raised her hand. She felt the curious eyes of the class turn to her. She took a deep breath to steady herself. “Yes?” Mr. Wilson nodded toward Leah.

“There are a number of reasons for trees to lose their leaves,” Leah explained,

the words coming out in a huge rush. She knew that if she didn’t speak now, she would chicken out. “One of them is that trees can conserve moisture by losing their leaves. Trees can also save energy, which the tree needs to stay alive through the winter.”

“Very good!” Mr. Wilson had looked impressed. “Are you interested in the outdoors, Leah?”

“Yes,” Leah had said. *I just wish there were woods here...*

Now, the day was over. Leah twisted the lock on her locker one way, then the other. The locker clicked open. Out tumbled a small slip of paper. In a rush, Leah

pocketed it, then packed up. She couldn't wait to get out of this place.

The bus was even noisier than it had been that morning. Kids were unruly and wild, shouting and screaming. Leah sighed. She would have to get used to this. Leah leaned her head against the frosted window as the bus pulled away from the school. She was startled when someone tapped her shoulder.

A perky-looking brunette plopped down next to Leah. She was grinning in a friendly way, which she probably did a lot. "Hi! I'm Lizzy. Did you get my note?"

Leah shook her head, bewildered. "What are you talking about?" she asked.

"You mean... you didn't get it?" Lizzy looked disappointed. Her green eyes turned down to her hands in her lap, then back up to Leah. "I thought I put it where you would see it."

Leah pulled out the slip of paper in her pocket. "This?" she asked.

"Yeah! Read it!"

Leah read the messy script out loud. "If you are interested in the outdoors, please join the outdoor club. The advisor is Mr. Wilson, seventh-grade science teacher. The due date for spring sign-ups is tomorrow, December 13th."

"Well? Will you join?" Lizzy looked hopeful. "You see, we don't have many people who are interested in the outdoors anymore. They'd rather sit inside and play video games." She frowned, as if there was nothing she hated more than a couch potato. "I could tell that you care about the outdoors when you answered that ques-

tion in science class today. I sit right behind you.


"It's too bad we don't start until the spring, though. I would love to have the outdoor club in the fall, too, but Mr. Wilson only wants to have it one season per year. That way, it never gets old. I was in the outdoor club last year. It was great! We went on a camping trip and explored Chatsworth Woods." The words bubbled excitedly out of Lizzy's mouth.

Leah felt an excited trill of hope deep in her chest. Not only had she discovered a chance to experience the outdoors near her new home, she had also met a girl who cared about them. "What do I have to do to get signed up?" she asked cautiously.

"Easy." Lizzy waved a permission slip under Leah's nose. She took it. "Just get your parents to fill this out, and give it to Mr. Wilson tomorrow." Leah nodded, smiling. She couldn't wait to get home.

#### FOUR MONTHS LATER

LEAH CLOSED her eyes and breathed in the cherished scent of fresh pine needles underfoot. Her new friends were already pitching tents and building a fire, but Leah was savoring the precious moment. She couldn't wait to spend the night in the woodlands that she loved.

Her musings were interrupted by Lizzy's excited voice across the campsite. "Come on, Leah! Help me pitch this tent!" Leah opened her eyes, gazed up at the distant treetops, and thought, *Home is where you're happy.* 

# Tree House

*By* Caroline Lunt

I climb up the light brown ladder  
I smell fresh air  
A soft wind touches my face  
Gently brushing new green leaves  
I rest my back on a thick old tree  
and watch an ant crawl  
carrying a small piece of green  
A bird chirps  
I look up  
I watch it fly away  
softly on the wind  
I take a deep breath  
and settle to my book.



Caroline Lunt, 12  
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts





*He seemed to be singing to somebody. And he was*



# The Radiant Melody

By **Angela Chang**

*Illustrated by* **Erik Zou**

A FEW FALLEN LEAVES and twigs rustled around me as I shuffled my feet. I crouched in the darkest corner of my backyard. As I brushed my black hair behind my ear, through the plumage of green leaves I could see a beautiful male blue jay.

He was a quite large blue jay with gleaming blue feathers and his crest was raised in a dignified way. He let out a call. Then suddenly he began to sing. It was a beautiful song, full of melody.

I was in awe, since it was such a wonderful song. The soft melody floated through the trees, and up. There was silence. Then he began his song again. He seemed to be singing to somebody. And he was. As he sang I saw a bird far away, gliding closer.

It was another blue jay. It seemed feminine because of its smaller size and much more dull colors. As it landed on the branch next to the male blue jay it started grooming the other blue jay.

Then so suddenly both of the blue jays spread open their wings so quickly one would expect to hear an umbrella opening. As they soared into the air, I watched. Then I shaded my eyes from the glare of the sun. This is a wonderful sight! I thought. Then I raised my head again and gazed at the sky. I could still see two compact hints of birds flying into the sky. 🌀



Angela Chang, 9  
Sugar Land, Texas

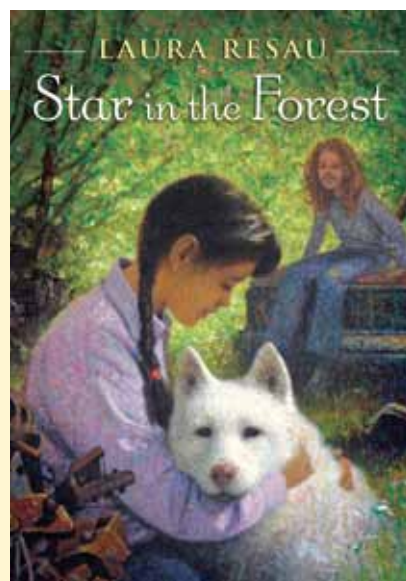


Erik Zou, 10  
Lexington, Massachusetts

# Book Review

By Jamila dePeiza-Kern

*Star in the Forest*, by Laura Resau;  
Delacourte Books for Young Readers:  
New York, 2010; \$14.99



Jamila dePeiza-Kern, 10  
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts

**D**EPORTED. On her eleventh birthday Zitlally Mora's father was arrested for speeding. Now he is going to be sent back to Mexico. And it is going to be *very* hard for him to come back. Zitlally's name means *Estrella*, or Star, in Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs. Just like Zitlally, I am multi-cultural. My mother is German and my father Caribbean. My name, Jamila, means beautiful in Arabic.


There is a special relationship between Zitlally and her papá. After he is deported, life seems to go straight downhill for Zitlally. She has three *so-called* best friends, but friendship with Morgan, Emma, and Olivia is hard work! Zitlally always has to look at what they're wearing so that she can do the same. She has to see how they style their hair, how they walk and how they talk so she can be just like them. But on the inside, Zitlally is a completely different person. Her friends don't know the true Zitlally, the one that crossed the desert from Mexico and came to the U.S. illegally. After her father is deported, Zitlally starts keeping to herself. Sometimes she doesn't brush her hair or wears the same clothes twice. She forgets to laugh at jokes. When Zitlally stops trying to be like her friends, they dump her because she has "turned boring."

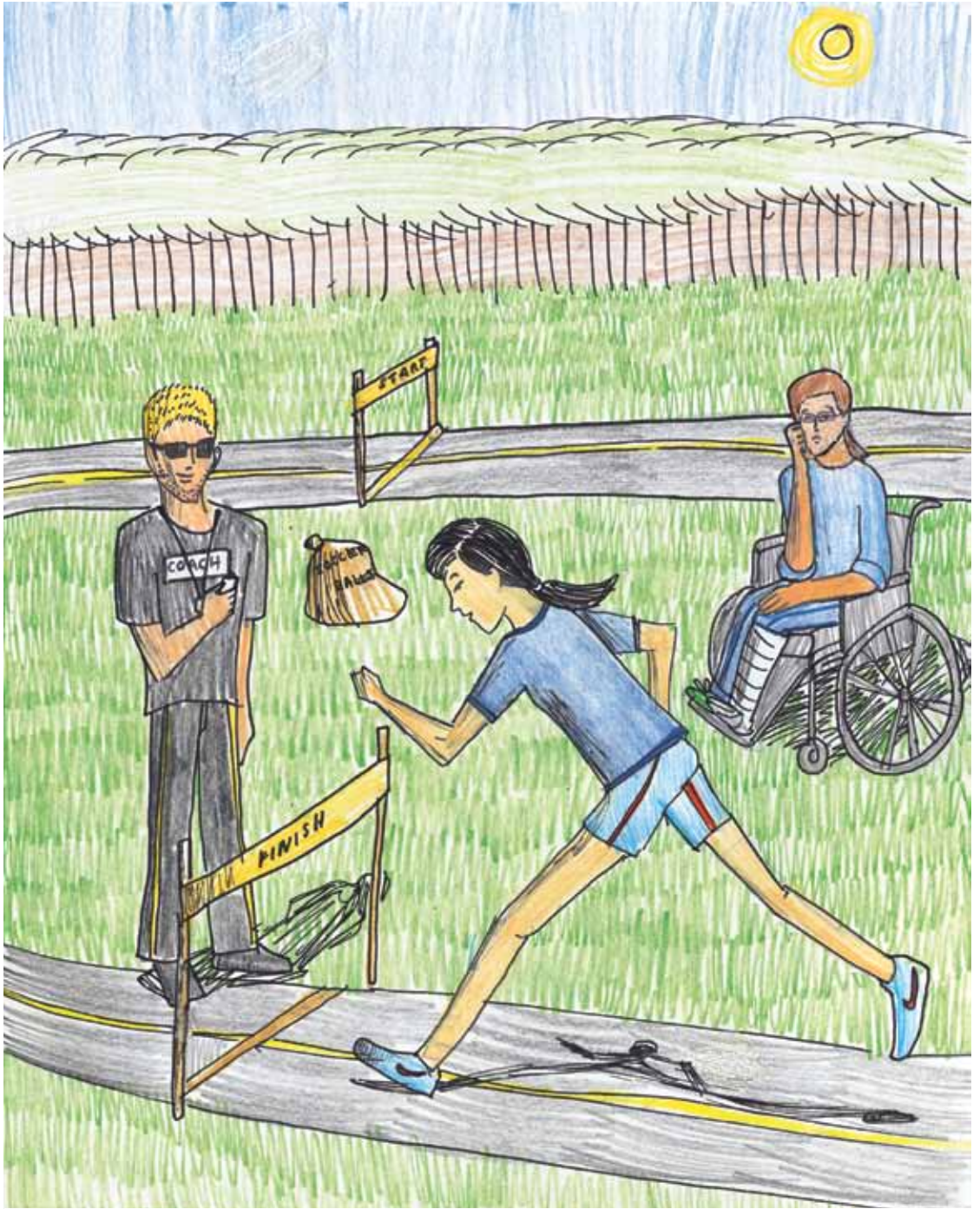
That's when she meets Star. He is a skinny, scruffy dog

Zitlally finds in the forest of old car parts behind the trailer park where she lives. Zitlally feeds Star, grooms him, and gives him lots of love. She also befriends her next-door neighbor, Crystal. There is a bond that connects the two girls: they are both outsiders. Together they not only teach Star ordinary dog tricks but also how to beep a car horn. Then news reaches the Mora family that Zitlally's father is returning home. Everyone is in a festive mood. But shortly after this wonderful news, Star vanishes! Did he run away? Did his owner come to take him back? Not only that, but on the very same day, Zitlally's papá is kidnapped!

Zitlally knows that Star is a special animal. When she was a young child, her father had told her a story from the time of his great-great-grandparents about when people used to have special animals. If the animal was sick, the person would become sick too. Human and animal could feel each other's pain. If the person needed extra strength, he could think of his animal and use its powers. It doesn't take long for Zitlally to figure out that Star is her father's special animal. She and Crystal desperately try to find their beloved dog because Zitlally knows if something happens to Star it will happen to Papá too.

This wasn't the first time I had heard about illegal immigrants, but I had never thought much about it consciously. Zitlally's friends who dumped her thought she came from Mexico by plane. They assumed Zitlally's father could come and go as he pleased. Zitlally couldn't admit to them that it was dangerous for her father to cross the desert from Mexico. I can relate to Zitlally in the sense that people who don't know me well sometimes misunderstand, thinking I am adopted because I have darker skin color than my mother. On many occasions I am also mistaken for being Hispanic.

This is a very fun book that wraps up humor, animals, friendship, illegal immigration, love, family and hope all in one. Zitlally's character is one of a courageous young girl who doesn't lose heart no matter what gets in her way. 



*Now she sat helpless, her days of freedom just a memory*



# Wind Before

By Catherine Pugh

*Illustrated by* Hannah Feldman

“JUST TAKE IT EASY, Jenna. We don’t want you to fall.” Jenna gritted her teeth and took a step. She gripped the walker in front of her so hard her knuckles were white. The pain she expected didn’t occur, and she looked up with a smile.

“Mom, do you think I...” Her leg collapsed underneath her and she thudded to the ground with a cry of agony. Tears were wrenched from her eyes against her will, but it wasn’t the pain. She was used to pain. Pain was her constant companion. It had been with her ever since she had fallen off the stone wall by the creek while chasing her cousin and shattered her leg. The surgery to implant the stabilizing rods had gone wrong, and Jenna was left with a useless leg. No, she was crying because of the hopelessness of it all. Every day she tried to exercise, to strengthen her leg, but she still couldn’t take a single step. Her mother was at her side, but she wasn’t aware of it. At that moment, her world consisted of the walker on its side with its wheels still spinning, her throbbing leg, and the tears that streamed down her face and soaked her shirt.

JENNA HAD PE first period, but it wasn’t physical. Usually, PE was just sitting in her wheelchair reading or doing homework. Today she watched the other kids. They lined up at the edge of the jumbo track, the mile-long course they ran each day. Mr. Heket blew his whistle, and they were off. Alexa was far ahead, her long legs pumping gracefully. But then, re-



Catherine Pugh, 13  
Saratoga, California



Hannah Feldman, 13  
Warren, New Jersey

flected Jenna, she always was. It hadn't always been that way. Jenna could still remember the days when another slim girl had been out in front, by far the fastest, the strongest. I ran like the wind, thought Jenna bitterly. I was the wind before. Then a twinge in her leg reminded her that things were different now. Now she sat helpless, her days of freedom just a memory. The doctors pretended she could make a miraculous recovery, but Jenna could see the truth behind their fake smiles: you will never heal. You will be crippled for life.

Alexa was nearly finished with the run, and Jenna listened intently for her time.

"Well done, Alexa. 5:33." Jenna sat upright in shock. The record she had set before her fall still stood, but not for long now. It had been 5:32. Alexa smiled breathlessly. Now along came Daniel, always second. Jenna tuned out again. Soon, the slower runners were arriving. As fashionable Sasha finished, she ignored Mr. Heket and continued chatting with her friends.

"Hey, you know? I *hate* running. Sometimes I wish I had, like, a broken leg or something." Jenna spun the wheels of her wheelchair, intensely angry all of a sudden. Skillfully maneuvering over to the group of kids, she planted herself firmly in their way. Sasha looked at her, surprised.

"Excuse me," she said in an overly enunciated tone, as if Jenna was stupid as well as wheelchair-confined. Jenna remained still.

"Believe me, Sasha. You don't want a

broken leg." Sasha shot a glance at Jenna's leg.

"Oh, yeah. Oops." She shoved past Jenna, who made no move to stop her. Jenna felt tears stinging in her eyes, remembering days past. Sasha had been her friend, before the accident. Now Sasha found her own friends, and Jenna was alone. Wind before, thought Jenna, watching Sasha's retreating back. I was wind before.

"GUESS WHAT, Jenna?" gushed her mother as Jenna was lifted into her car. Her face was glowing. "Doctor Johnson says there's some different technology he can try, and he thinks it can help you!" Yeah, right, thought Jenna. Like anything can help me now.

"It'll mean more surgery. Do you think you can handle that?" Jenna wasn't sure. She had been suspicious of surgery since hers had gone wrong. Her uneasiness came from the voice in her subconscious that asked, "What if it happens again? What if you're paralyzed, or even *killed*?"

"I don't know... What's the different technology?"

"Well, they tried inserting rods before, but Dr. Johnson says they could try metal plates. He also said they might have to re-break the bone... Do you want to do this?"

Do I? Jenna asked herself. If there's even a small chance I can run again? "I... Can I think about it?"

"Of course." Jenna retreated into the recesses of her mind for contemplation.

The surgery could fix her, she knew that. But, persisted that tiny little voice, what if...

"No!" Jenna declared, defiantly.

"But, Jenna..." Her mother's voice was sad.

"I... No, I didn't mean it that way, Mom. I meant, like, no to *not* doing it. I mean, yes. I'll do it." Jenna was babbling. She was determined not to live in fear and let that voice win. Her fears and doubts intensified, but she mentally shoved them away. I could be wind again, Jenna reminded herself.

IT WAS deathly cold in the waiting room. Jenna was only half-awake. Why did I have to get up at three in the morning? she thought. She vaguely glanced around the room, taking in the cold plastic chairs and the walls that were so white it hurt to look at them. A side door opened and a nurse stepped out.

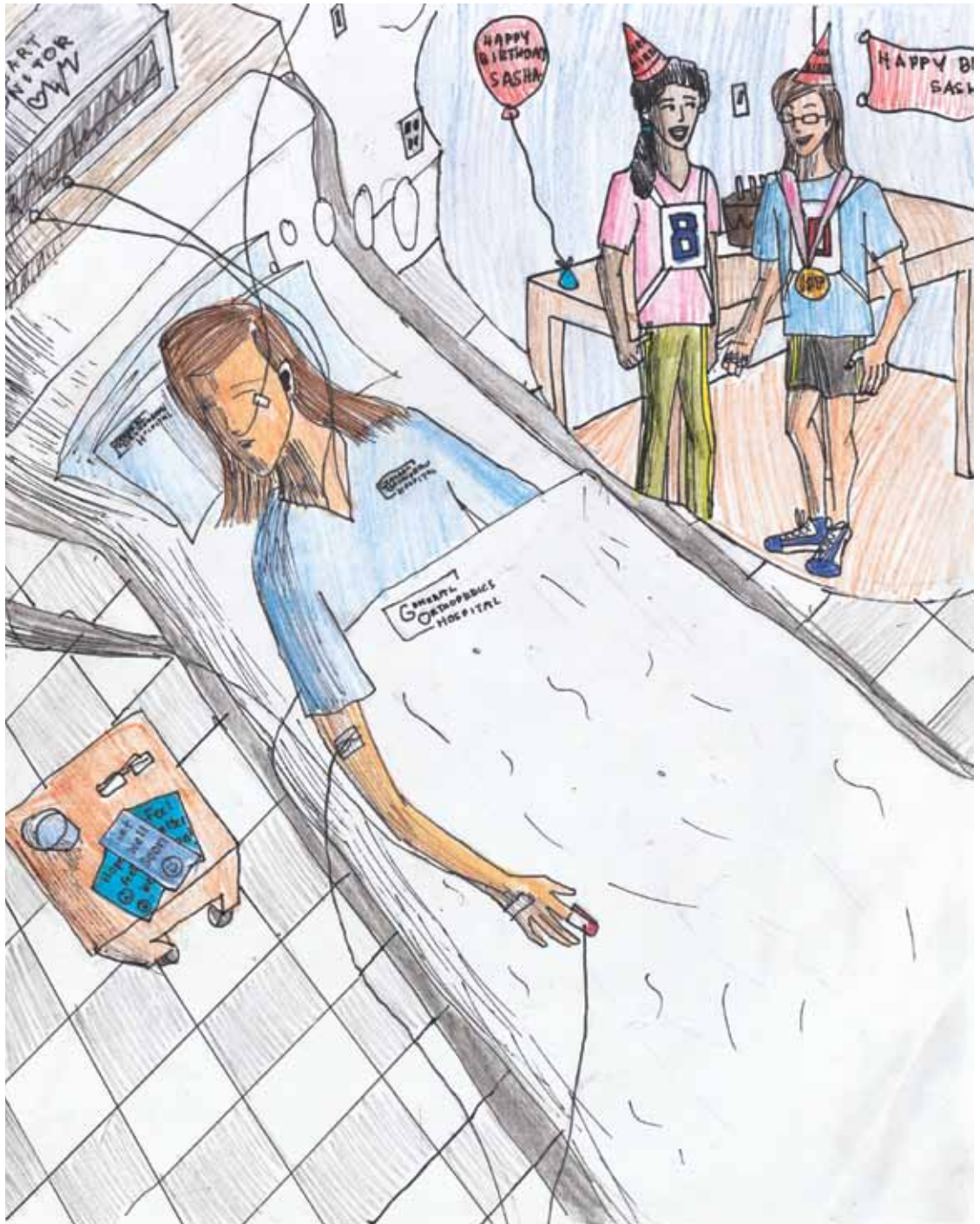
"Jenna Rakashashov?" Jenna became slightly more awake as adrenaline coursed through her. She slid her wheelchair into the next room, where a nurse helped her onto the gurney. Lying back, she gazed up at the white ceiling tiles that looked like they were made of cardboard. The gurney began to move slowly, and Jenna could feel her leg throb with the same rhythm as the clicking wheels. Ha, she said silently to the voice of doubt inside of her. I win. I'll be fixed. Then she tried to relax, watching the squares of fluorescent light whiz by overhead.

JENNA CRANED her neck upward as she was wheeled into the operating room, trying to see what it looked like. She gasped. The stainless room was painfully familiar. It couldn't be the same room—this was reconstructive surgery, not the emergency room—but the room was laid out in exactly the same way. Jenna remembered the scared little girl who had been wheeled in. That girl had come out with a ruined life. The nurse stopped for a moment a few feet past the doorway. That little voice flared up again, screaming, "It's not too late! Tell the nurse you've changed your mind!"

No, Jenna thought. I have to do this. Suddenly a great weariness came over her. She just wanted it over with.

She was wheeled over to the operating table. A second nurse came through an adjoining doorway and they unstrapped her from the gurney and re-strapped her to the table. Jenna shakily lay back, tiredness dragging at her limbs, her bones like lead inside her. When the surgeon entered, she didn't register his face except as a blur. She was asleep before they injected the anesthetic.

JENNA DRIFTED in and out of sleep for days. She was briefly aware of being moved a few times, sort of remembered a soft white bed. She had blurry memories of her family around her, holding her hand and murmuring comforting words. She remembered lots of wires and tubes and nurses. Mostly she slept. And she dreamed.



*She remembered lots of wires and tubes and nurses. Mostly she slept. And she dreamed*



She was at Sasha's birthday party, but Alexa and Jenna were the only ones that came. Sasha decided they should have a race. Jenna was healthy... healed. Running was the easiest thing. She won the race by entire minutes. Sasha was congratulating her, wanting to be her friend again...

Jenna's rough hospital pillow was wet with her tears.

EVERYTHING was fuzzy. Jenna was hot, and a slight stickiness on her cheek suggested she had been drooling in her sleep. She squinted unsurely at the pale blue figure approaching—another nurse. She helped Jenna sit up. Jenna felt very groggy, but an idle observation made its way through her stupor to her brain. Hmm... no pain. Jenna knew this swinging-legs-over-lifting-upper-body routine should make her at least wince. A small hope began to flicker inside her. It was quickly dampened as the nurse rolled over a wheelchair. So, nothing had changed. Jenna sighed. She was wheeled out to her mother's car. Dozing as she was driven home, she was barely aware of her mother's chatter. Briefly aware of being carried from the car, she was deposited in her bed and left to sleep. Jenna tried to sit up to examine her leg, but before she could, all was black.

JENNA WOKE again with perfect clarity of mind. Apparently, her subconscious had been thinking while she slept, for several things were immediately clear: the reason she had felt no pain

had been the anesthetic, and the nurse had asked for a wheelchair because she was still unable to walk, so the surgery had probably failed. Jenna gripped the handles set in the wall by her bed and heaved herself into a sitting position. Her leg flopped weakly, but there was still no pain. Jenna realized it probably was because the anesthetic was still strong in her leg. But...

"Curious," muttered Jenna aloud. She could have been certain the anesthetic was gone because she felt so alert and awake. So where was the pain? She glanced at the LCD display on her alarm clock: 3:45 AM. Jenna closed her eyes, bracing herself, and then looked down at her leg. It was limp and weak as always, with a bloody sewn-up cut along her shin. Ewww, Jenna thought. But it wasn't as nasty as when she'd first fractured her leg. She lifted a cautious hand and poked the stitches, then bit back a gasp at the stab of pain. Her leg was definitely not numb. Now that she had prodded it, her leg began to throb again, but it was a sharp, clean pain, the pain of a healing body, not a crippled one. Jenna smiled a little, then lifted herself into the waiting wheelchair and rolled down the hall to her parents' room.

"Mom?" Her timid voice sounded unnaturally loud in the still room. There was no reply except the steady breathing of her mother and father.

"Mom!" But it was her father who sat up, rubbing his eyes.

"What's the matter, Jen?"

Jenna contemplated this. "Nothing, I

guess. And that's the matter."

Her dad laughed. "I'm sure that would make perfect sense if I was awake."

"Mm? Jordan, who are you talking to?"

"Mom!"

"Jenna?" Her mother was more awake now; her tone was worried.

"Um... should I be feeling pain?"

"No! Oh, Jenna, I should have known! Dr. Johnson said that when the body rejects surgery, maybe it will reject it again. Oh, no, what kind of a mother am I? I shouldn't have let you..." her voice trailed off into sobbing.

"I'm *fine*, Mom. It just feels... strange."

"Ohhh. Why don't you go back to bed? We're seeing the doctor in the morning."


DR. JOHNSON folded his fingers together and stared over them at Jenna, sitting across from him at his desk.

"You'll definitely have to go through extensive physical therapy, but I think there's a positive chance you'll make a one-hundred-percent recovery." Jenna felt a surge of excitement. Just a few weeks more of the walker and she could be wind again!

"JUST TAKE it easy, Jenna. We don't want you to fall." The same words, Jenna realized. But it's different now. She didn't wince as she took a step. So she took another. And another. And that flicker of hope burst into flame and soared. There was a buzzing in her ears and a burning in her heart as she touched

the opposite wall. She had made it across the room! Mason, her physical therapist, grinned.

"That's great, Jenna! Do you want to try it without the walker?" Jenna shoved the walker away and touched a hand to the wall for support. It was so strange, to stand upright without any aid but the yellow plaster at her fingertips. Unsteadily, she began to move. The act of walking, once natural, was now a science. Swing leg forward, transfer weight. Lift other leg. Repeat. Jenna made up a little song in her head as she walked. *One foot in front of the other, one step after another.* She began to move more confidently. Her old grace returned, and she was fluid, she was flying. She was running, without being aware of the transition. Then, she was brought back to earth—literally. She felt her leg crumple and she hit the ground hard. But she wasn't crying this time. There was nothing to cry about.

JENNA THOUGHT she would never forget the looks on her classmates' faces when she *walked* out to the jumbo track. Jenna didn't push herself in the run, knowing she had no hope of beating Alexa. Besides, if she collapsed, she would have no help—or so she thought. When she inevitably did fall, someone did stop, gazing down with an unreadable look—Sasha. As they finished the run together, Jenna didn't listen to her time. All that mattered was that she was flying. She was wind again. 

# Horses

*By* Sophia Lipkin

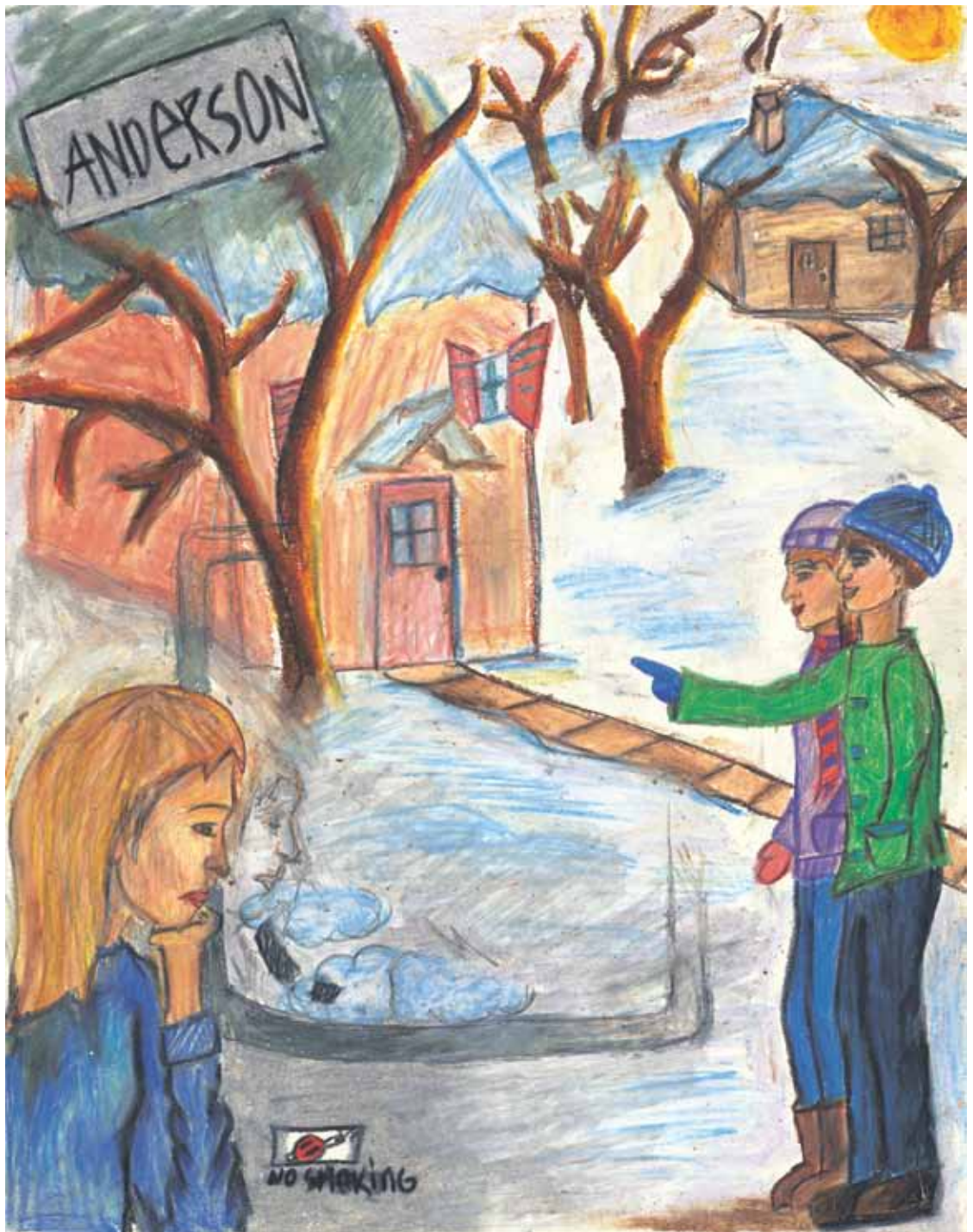
George,  
with his silver-gray fur  
cantering across bright green grass  
whinnying softly  
his white mane blown out by the wind  
the sun a horizon of bright colors  
behind him

Reaching out to pet  
the soft  
brown and white dotted face  
of Polka  
Peering out from behind the stall  
ready to ride

**A**LL MY LIFE I've been watching those jumpers in that field wishing it was me. Finally I was ready. The swishing of Violet's tail and the clop of her canter encouraged me onward. Leaning forward I felt my heart soar into the bright blue sky as Violet leapt into the air almost as if she were flying. Then dropping gently to the ground and coming slowly to a stop. I had done it. I had jumped.



Sophia Lipkin, 9  
Brooklyn, New York



*It's just, my family has been moving all over for as long as I can remember*



# Lilly of the South

By **Benet Dawn Stoen**

*Illustrated by* **Mary Zhong**

## CHAPTER ONE: THE SOUTH POLE

**T**HE PLANE SEEMED to be going ridiculously slow. I had a seat by the window and was looking out at the South Pole, also my new home. Both of my parents were considered brilliant scientists. I didn't disagree. We were moving to the bottom of the world so they could study the earth's changing climates. At fourteen, I shouldn't complain, and believe me, I really tried not to. It's just, my family has been moving all over for as long as I can remember. Before the South Pole, we lived in Australia. (They were studying heat and sun rays.) I loved Australia. What I would miss the most would be my friends Ophelia Jones and Percy Smith. They were both only children like me. Ophelia's mom is a nurse, and her dad was a pilot, but he got kicked out for something, but Ophelia never told me what. Percy's mom died when he was just a few hours old. His dad is really cool though. He's a math whiz and a great photographer. I would miss them, a lot.

The plane stuttered to a stop, made a strange blasting noise, but didn't shatter into a million pieces like I had expected. The flight attendant ushered us out to the walkway and we entered the small (very small) airport. We looked around for a person holding a sign that read "Anderson."

My mom spotted it first. We approached the young woman holding the sign. She had on a black coat that went to her knees. Her blond hair was pulled back in a braid. And her face and eyes were kind and gentle.



Benet Dawn Stoen, 11  
Austin, Minnesota



Mary Zhong, 13  
Plano, Texas

"Are you the Andersons?" she asked.

"Yes," my dad answered. "I'm Patrick; this is my wife, Karen, and my daughter, Lilly."

The woman smiled and said, "A pleasure to meet you. My name is Jasmine Lewis, my son Jeremy is around here somewhere." My parents shook hands with her, and she led us to the door. A boy around my age with perfect brown hair and ocean-blue eyes caught up with us. "Mr. and Mrs. Anderson, this is my son, Jeremy," Jasmine said.

"Nice to meet you." He shook hands with my parents and then with me. "Let me carry that for you." He took my suitcase, and we walked through the ice and snow to find Mrs. Lewis's snowmobiles. Once we found them, she threw Jeremy a pair of keys. Mrs. Lewis's mobile had three seats, but Jeremy's had only two seats.

"Lilly, you can ride with Jeremy," my mom instructed. Jeremy handed me a helmet, he put the keys in the ignition, and we took off through the snow. Mrs. Lewis was a few feet behind us with my mom nervously clutching her waist. I wasn't scared, I was actually having fun.

"You all right back there?" Jeremy called back to me.

"Yeah, I'm fine," I called back over the roaring of the snowmobiles. "We're about to turn, hold on to me." I didn't hesitate to cling to his back as we turned a sharp corner, nearly missing a general store.

"Show off!" Mrs. Lewis called to Jeremy. He laughed, and I did too. We soon came to a charming little cottage and parked

the snowmobiles.

"This one's yours, ours is that one." Jeremy pointed to a smaller cottage a little ways behind ours. We got off the bikes, and Jeremy grabbed my suitcase for me. Both of our jean legs were soaked, and I was freezing. "You OK?" Jeremy asked.

"J-just c-cold," I muttered. Jeremy left and returned with a green wool blanket, and he put it around my shoulders.

"Thanks."

"No problem, my sister made it for a welcoming present for you."

"Lilly." My mom appeared. "We're going to go tour around town; do you and Jeremy want to stay here?"

"Sure." Jeremy read my mind.

"OK, see you later then." She left.

"Would you like a tour?" Jeremy asked.

"Sure."

And he showed me around. There were three bedrooms, one bathroom, a small kitchen, and a living room. In the kitchen were four chairs that surrounded a small table. There was a woodstove, an icebox, a counter, and four cupboards. He pulled out a small pan and set it on the stove. He took milk, cocoa powder, and powdered sugar. I sat down at the table and watched him make hot chocolate.

"How long have you lived here?" I asked as he poured the milk in over the cocoa.

"I think since I was three. We lived in Russia before here."

"Why did you live in Russia?"

"I'm not really sure." He raised an eyebrow. He took a ladle out of a drawer and

poured the cocoa in mugs.

I wrapped the blanket more tightly around me. He set a mug in front of me. I took a drink, and I could feel my legs warming up. It was delicious. "Where did you learn to cook?" I asked.

He looked down at the floor. "My sister taught me."

"Was it the same sister who made this blanket?"

"Yes."

"I would like to meet her."

He slammed his cup on the table, stood up, and walked toward the door. His action made me jump. "Where are you going?" I followed him.

"I've got to go home," he muttered as he pulled his coat on.

"Why?" I asked.

He walked over to me. "I just really think I should go." His teeth were gritted together. I looked into his angry eyes.

"OK, I guess I'll see you tomorrow then."

He stormed out of the house, slamming the door behind him. I walked back to the kitchen, put a lid on the leftover hot chocolate, and dumped Jeremy's in the sink.

My parents came home later that night. My mom was carrying grocery bags and my dad was carrying a library bag full of books. I was on the small sofa reading my copy of *A Wrinkle in Time*. My mom put the groceries on the counter, and I went up to unpack. I was hardly paying attention to what I was doing. I was more concerned with the fact that Jeremy was mad at me. Why? What did I do? I won-

dered. I tried to remember what exactly had gone on in the kitchen: Jeremy made hot chocolate, then we were talking about where he used to live, and then about his sister. I didn't see any harm done...

"Ouch!" I slammed my hand in the dresser while I was putting a pair of socks away. I looked at my throbbing hand and sighed sadly. Once I finally finished unpacking (paying closer attention this time), I went downstairs to help my mom with dinner. As soon as I got downstairs, I heard my mom's cell phone ringing.

"Lilly, could you get that for me? I can't now, I'm making dinner."

I found my mom's phone in her purse and answered it. "Hello?"

"Hello? Who is this?" A woman's voice came from the other end.

"Um, this is Lilly. Who is this?" I asked.

"Oh! Hello, Lilly. It's Mrs. Lewis."

"Oh hi, Mrs. Lewis, how are you?" I wanted to ask how Jeremy was, but I decided to make better conversation first.

"I'm fine. Jeremy wanted to talk to you."

My stomach did a somersault.

"He did?" I tried not to sound anxious.

"Yeah, here he is." Before I could say anything, Jeremy's voice came into my ear.

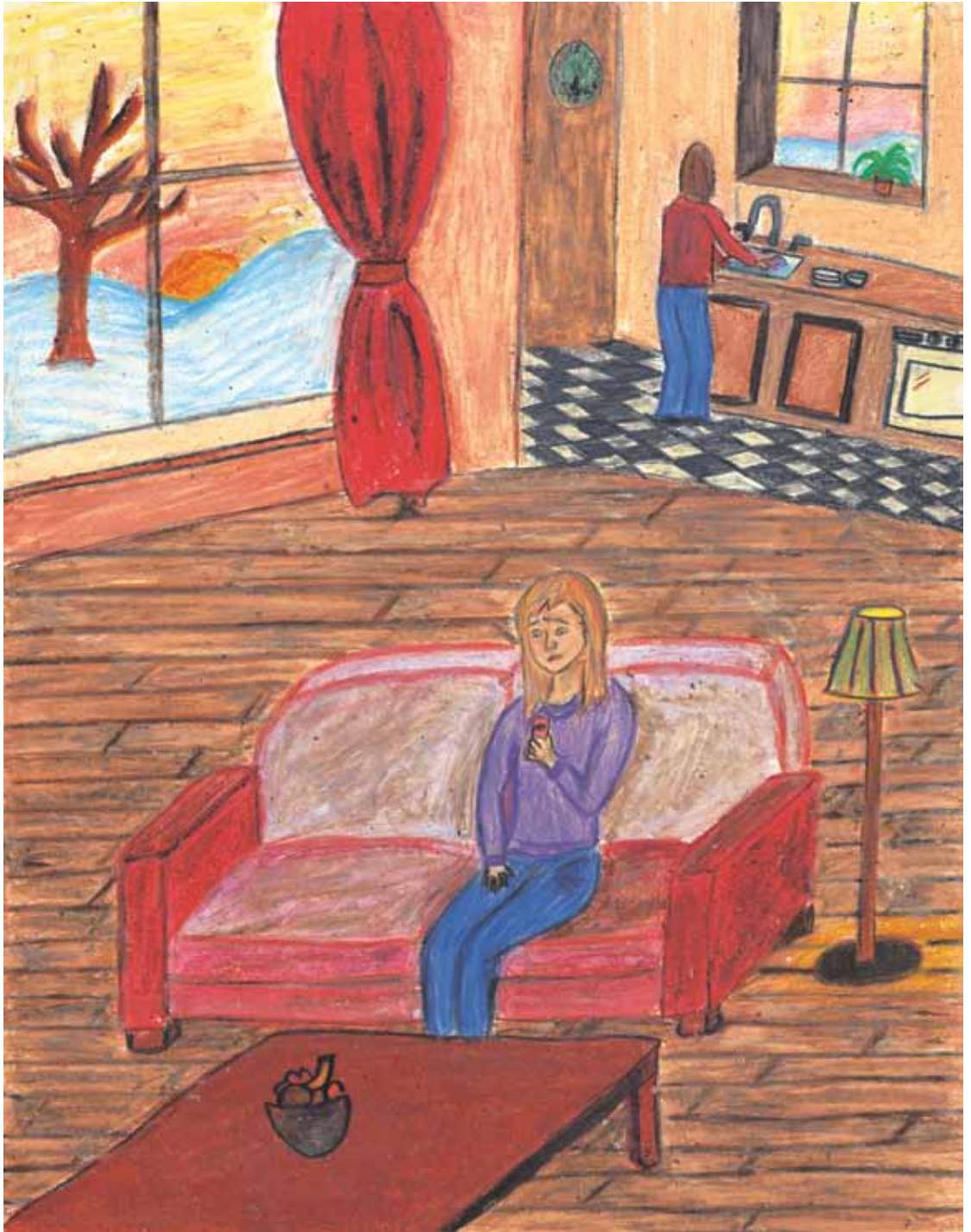
"Hi," he started.

"Hi," I echoed.

"Um, I just wanted to say sorry," he mumbled.

"I forgive you. Besides, there isn't a law that says you can't be mad at others," I told him.

"Well, the thing is, I wasn't mad at *you*."



*I sat there, holding my mom's pink cell phone, wondering what emergency the Lewises were in*



## CHAPTER TWO: LOST

**“Y**OU WEREN’T?” I was surprised.  
“No, I was just mad because...”

“What? You can tell me.”

“I was mad because...” His voice was cracked and choked up, like he was about to cry.

“Jeremy? Are you all right?”

“I was mad at my sister.” He must have been crying now.

“Why?” I didn’t know why I was asking, it was just hurting him more.

“Because... I’ve got to go, I’ll see you tomorrow.” He hung up.

“Bye,” I murmured to the abandoned phone line.

After dinner, I went straight to the couch and called Mrs. Lewis. It rang twice before Mrs. Lewis answered.

“Hello?” Her voice was fast and anxious, like she had been expecting an important call. “Mrs. Lewis? It’s Lilly.”

“Oh hi, Lilly, listen, I’m not trying to be rude, but I can’t talk right now, I’m in a little emergency.”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“Lilly, sweetheart, I can’t talk now, I promise I’ll tell you another time.” And then she hung up. I sat there, holding my mom’s pink cell phone, wondering what *emergency* the Lewises were in.

**T**HE NEXT MORNING, I had my mom’s phone in my pocket all day. My parents had gone to the lab, so it was just me home.

I ate briefly, then just sat on the couch, waiting for the phone to ring.

After about six PM, I decided to call my parents to see if I should eat dinner without them. As soon as I took the phone out of my pocket, it rang.

“Hello?” I answered.

“Lilly? Hi, it’s me.” Mrs. Lewis sounded tired.

“What’s up?” I tried to sound casual.

“Well, last night I told you I was in an emergency? Well, Jeremy ran away from home.”

“*WHAT? He ran away?!*” I screeched.

“Yup, the police and I have been looking for him all night.”

“When did you first realize he was gone?” I asked.

“I think around six-thirty last night.”

My stomach did a flip. Six-thirty was around when he called!

“Mrs. Lewis, do you remember when Jeremy called me at about six-thirty last night?!”

“Lilly, you’re right! What did he say?”

I told her what Jeremy said, and that he was crying. And when she spoke again, she was crying, too.

“Um, will you just tell me if you see him?” she asked.

“Yes ma’am.”

I closed the cell and tried not to imagine Jeremy freezing to death.

## CHAPTER THREE: JEREMY’S HIDING PLACE

**I**T HAD BEEN several days since Jeremy’s mysterious disappearance. Try to remember something in the past that worried you so much you thought

you were going to pass out. Then, multiply it by ten and you will know how I felt for Jeremy. I had gone looking for him several times but no luck.

Today was Saturday; I decided to go look for him again. I hopped on my snowmobile and headed out. I went up to his house and looked in the four directions he could have gone. I decided to go right. So I put the keys back into the ignition and zoomed away. I had tried to estimate how far he could have gone in forty-eight hours. I guessed he wasn't going nonstop, so I narrowed down the miles I had estimated to about five-and-a-half miles.

I headed five miles south, but there was no sign of him. I decided to go left and straight from his house, but there was no sign of him there either. I was about ready to go home, so I thought I would try again tomorrow.

That night, as I lay asleep in my bed, I heard a noise. Like someone was throwing rocks at my window. They woke me with a jerk, and I walked over to my window and looked out. Jeremy, dressed in warm clothes, was throwing twigs at my window. I threw on my jeans and a sweater and ran outside with no coat. "Jeremy!" I screeched. And we hugged.

"I want to show you something," he said.

"What?"

"Get in some warm clothes and meet me out here."

I went inside, put on my warmest coat, wool mittens, and a hat.

Outside, Jeremy was leaning against my snowmobile.

I sat on my parents' snowmobile, put my elbows on my knees, and said, "You were gone, for two weeks."

"I know, I'm sorry."

"What do you mean *sorry*?" I asked.

"Lilly, I just needed to get out for a while. I was angry, and I wanted to be alone."

"Where were you?"

"I found this weird cave up north, that's what I wanted to show you."

"A cave?" I couldn't keep the hesitation out of my voice.

"Yeah, I promise we'll only be gone an hour."

"You promise?"

"I promise."

We got on my snowmobile and rode away, into the night.

After a while, it started getting really cold, and I was shivering like crazy. But, after a little while, we arrived at his little cave. It was charming: there was a sleeping bag in one corner and a box of food in the other. I sat down, now feeling not as cold anymore, but warm. Jeremy held a piece of food out to me, I tried to grab it, but my coordination was off, so I grabbed thin air. "Lilly, stop messing around, take it," Jeremy told me.

Before he shoved the food in my hand, I felt really tired, so tired I wasn't staying awake. I dozed, and my eyes slowly began to shut...

"Hypothermia!" Jeremy's voice was a screech.

He tried waking me up, but I was just too tired.

He did the only thing he could do: drag me out to the snowmobile and get me to a doctor.

Jeremy somehow managed to keep me barely awake on the ride. He talked to me, though I could hardly pay attention. "You have to live, Lilly, I can't lose another person to hypothermia." Jeremy had taken off his coat and wrapped me in it. I dozed again, and Jeremy woke me up again and again.

We skidded to a stop in front of the small hospital. Jeremy took me inside on his shoulder, and the nurse opened the door. "What happened?" The nurse got a rolling bed, and Jeremy placed me on it. He spoke as they ran to the ER. "I think she has the early stages of hypothermia." The nurse listened and pushed the bed.

The doctor treated me. But I was half asleep through most of it, so I didn't really know what was happening, or that I was freezing to death.

A FEW HOURS later, I woke up healthy and warm. Jeremy, Mrs. Lewis, and my parents were all asleep in chairs lined up against the wall. I looked around silently at the room. It was small, blue, and had one window. My dad snored, and I giggled.

My parents awoke, and my mom rushed over to hug me. Jeremy and his mom woke up, and the room was filled with talking and laughing.

Jeremy told me about his sister, and what happened to her: she died from hypothermia.

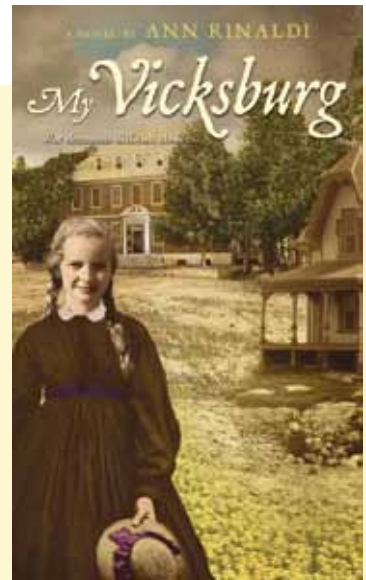
After more talking, I thought to myself, I guess I have a new favorite home. ❁



# Book Review

By **Grace Russell**

*My Vicksburg*, by Ann Rinaldi; Harcourt  
Children's Books: New York, 2009; \$16



Grace Russell, 12  
Belmont, North Carolina

**F**OURTEEN-YEAR-OLD Claire Louise Corbet has always lived a life of medicine because her brother and papa are both doctors. Now more than ever there are hospitals, sickness and injuries around her. Claire Louise is living in the Civil War battle of Vicksburg. During the battle, most families of Vicksburg are living in dugout cave homes. Claire Louise's cave serves as a home for Mama, herself, and her little brother James, while her older brother and papa are serving in the army. The fighting is so heavy that people can only leave their caves or houses during the Yankees' breakfast, lunch and dinner breaks. To occupy these days, everyone, including Claire Louise, must find something to do.

My favorite part of the story, even though it is not the main theme, is Claire Louise's work at the hospital. This might be because I want to be a doctor, or it might be because my uncle and grandfather are doctors. Either way, I think the hospital part of *My Vicksburg* is very impressive.

After visiting the hospital with her brother, Claire Louise decides that she would like to contribute her time to helping the wounded soldiers. Claire Louise decides to visit the hospital twice a week and write letters for the injured Brave Boys, as her mama calls them.




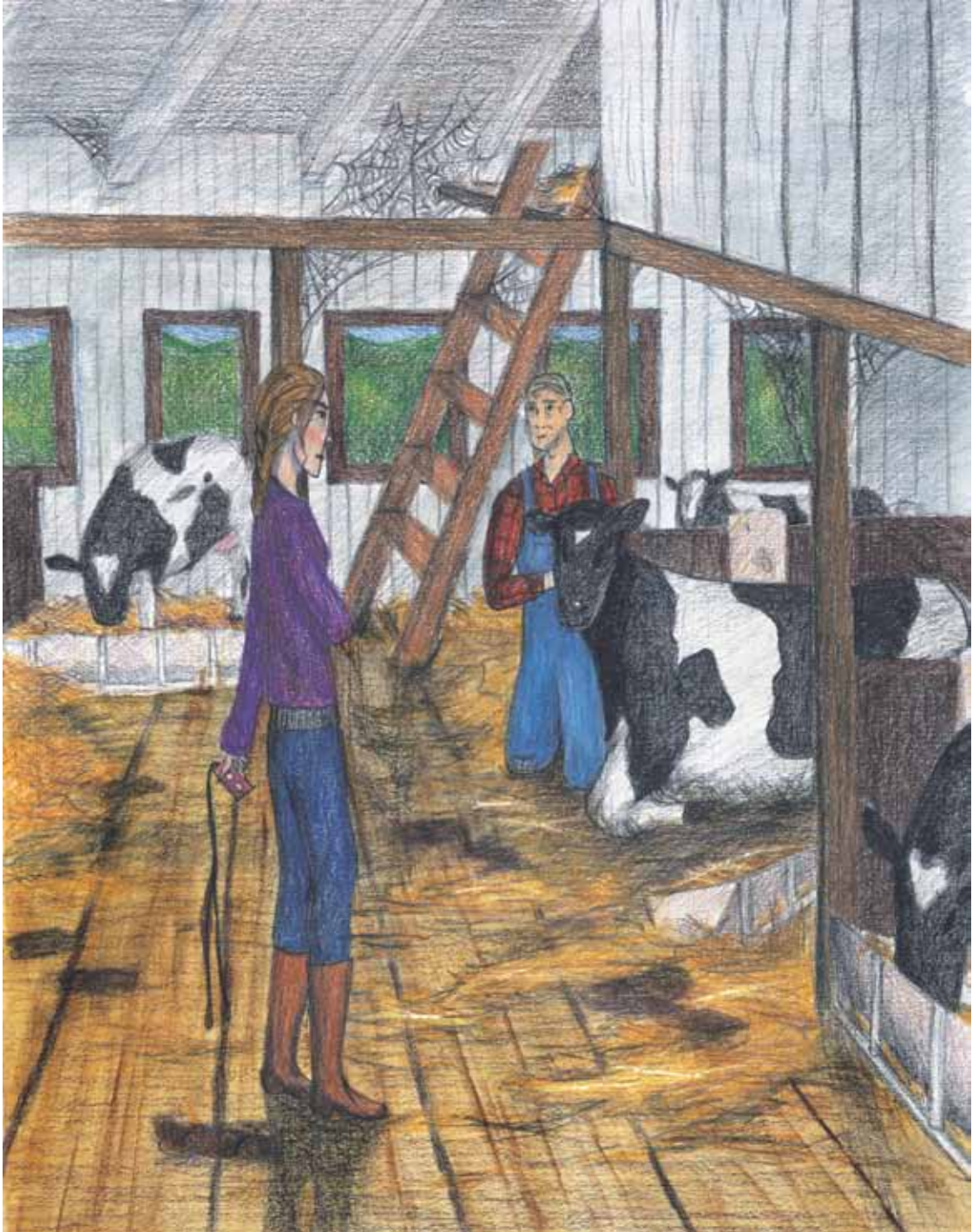
When Claire Louise goes to the hospital she walks across town to the makeshift tent. The environment at the hospital is very different from her regular life. Many men are wounded, amputated, bleeding, and sad. Some are even dead. The nurses sometimes move these dead soldiers to keep the wounded men's spirits high. The first time she goes to the hospital, Claire Louise is scared by all the injuries.

Claire Louise decides to keep coming despite her fright because she is dedicated to the help she is providing. At the hospital people are glad to see her. The sight of a young girl rouses hope in many soldiers. Sometimes Claire Louise does favors along with her task of letter writing. At one point in the story, she brings sweet potatoes to a soldier because he is hungry.

Claire Louise's main duty is to write down the words of the wounded. Many letters are written to wives, mothers, and children, saying that all will be well and that they loved their family very, very much. One soldier, dying of typhoid, asked Claire Louise to record his words to his wife. He then loudly recited an epic love letter, saddening both nurses and other soldiers.

Although this story took place long ago, I think it has many similarities with 2010. People still want to help out just like Claire Louise did. In our time with the Iraq War we could use some of the lessons Claire Louise learned. Because our war is so far away, many people feel there is nothing we can do to help. Yes, it is true young girls can't visit army hospitals, but we can write to those serving, say thank you, or connect ourselves other ways. The soldiers will appreciate anything anyone does.

By the age of fourteen Claire Louise had undergone conflict in her country, her city, even in her family. This is a story about facing conflicts, growing up, and learning lessons. Claire Louise lived 150 years ago but there are things we can relate to today. Whether you are interested in historical fiction, working out conflicts, medicine, or the Civil War, you can find something worthwhile in *My Vicksburg*. 



*Retrieving her iPod, Jenny scowled and stared back at her grandpa*

# Photos in the Hayloft

By **Erin Riesen**

*Illustrated by* **Zoe Yeoh**

JENNY YAWNED, getting ready. She had only slept three hours because of all the gaming she had done. She popped her iPod on and headed down the stairs. She had promised to help, so that her grandpa would keep quiet about how good it was for young people to do chores. He was so old-fashioned. She never did chores at home, so why here? She pulled on her angora sweater, slipped on her suede boots and headed for the barn.

Inside the barn, Jenny saw cobwebs loosely hung around the whitewashed cement ceiling that now looked more brown than white. It was dirty and musty; the ground was full of hay that had been flattened by dirt and manure. Old milk pumps were mounted on every stall. Some of the black-and-white jersey cows were staring at Jenny with their deep, hazel eyes, while others munched on the hay in the troughs in front of them. She only came here because her parents were busy traveling all around the world with their jobs, and they had bribed her with the latest laptop in the stores if she spent the summer with her grandpa. Jenny already knew which laptop she wanted. It was hot pink and had all the latest features. She couldn't wait to get it. Bessie stared at Jenny and made a loud and low moo. Taken aback, Jenny stepped backwards into manure, sending her iPod whirling through the air and landing on its face.

"Great to see you," Grandpa smiled. "Come over here and help hold Bessie, while I work with getting this calf out. You hold her tail out and don't let her swish it."



Erin Riesen, 12  
Mission, British Columbia,  
Canada



Zoe Yeoh, 13  
Salem, Connecticut

Retrieving her iPod, Jenny scowled and stared back at her grandpa. The smell of the barn and now her new suede boots drifted up to her nose. She turned and raced out the door, scraped her boots off on the grass, and ran into an old barn.

She pushed open the red, wooden door, climbed up the rickety old knotted-wood ladder that led to a hayloft and stationed herself behind some fresh hay. Pitchforks leaned against the walls and clumps of hay were scattered all over the floor. She swept away the loose hay with her feet to make room to sit among the hay bales. The hay stung her back but she was so relieved to be away from her grandpa and that old cow. She had heard her grandpa holler for her, but whatever he had yelled, she was too far away to hear what he had said. Why did her grandpa always make *her* do things that she didn't want to do? Making *her* get up early in the morning just to feed those cows, or making *her* listen to his growing-up stories. Didn't he know that she didn't care? So what if he grew up during the wartime? It didn't have anything to do with her, so it was just a waste of her time. She never really listened anyway.

She tried to turn on her iPod, only to find that it needed to be charged. She looked around, searching for something to do, and spotted an old, leather walnut-brown suitcase tucked behind some rusty rakes, hoes and shovels. She pulled the dust-covered suitcase out of the heap, dusted it off and carelessly undid the buckles. She ripped open the lid, only to

find piles of black-and-white pictures, about 300 in all. She flipped through them, scattering some on the floor. There were many pictures of people she didn't know and landscapes she had never seen. There were a few pictures of her grandpa growing up. Some pictures had her grandpa, about ten, playing the mandolin.

That mandolin was now in her parents' glass cabinet. Nobody played it anymore. She wondered why they even kept it.

One particular picture caught her eye; it was the figure of a tall young man. He had dark thin hair and his eyes gleamed with adventure, as if ready for anything that was yet to come. He was wearing an old brown shirt and had ripped and tattered brown pants held up by suspenders. It looked like he was standing on a cobble street, lined with many buildings.

Jenny yawned. She made herself a pillow of golden-brown straw and fell asleep.

**“B**OOM!” JENNY bolted up, suddenly wide awake as some concrete debris dropped inches away from her head. Scanning, she saw no windows but only a door slightly ajar. The air was getting thicker and she dropped to her knees and started to crawl towards the door. With all her might, she pried it open. A woman came rushing out, shouting, “Come, child, we must get to shelter!” She firmly grabbed Jenny’s arm and dragged her out of the building and onto a cobbled street below. Jenny knew the woman wasn’t speaking English, but somehow she could understand her. It was the language her



grandpa sometimes spoke; it was German.

"Let go of me! I don't even know you!" Jenny snapped. She coughed. She could barely catch her breath. Suddenly, the building she was just in collapsed into rubble and dust.

"We'll find your family later, but now you and I must get out of here before another bomb hits," the woman insisted.

Jenny looked around; she could see burning and leaning buildings, roofs caved in, and walls gone. It looked like a river of fire all around her. Some people were screaming and running, while others lay motionless on the streets. Jenny even saw a woman with her hair and clothes on fire! Where was she?

The woman dragged Jenny down the road. They finally stopped and went inside a concrete shelter. Inside, people were huddled together. Kids were crying and parents quietly wept. It seemed like everyone was in shock. The air-raid sirens pounded in her ears. Jenny wanted out of there. She couldn't think. Tears trickled down her dust-crusted face, leaving stream-like lines down her cheek. Closing her eyes, she hoped it was all a dream, that when she'd open her eyes again, she would be back in the hayloft, safe and sound. But no, wherever she was, she couldn't get out of it, she was stuck. Jenny mustered a whisper, "Where are we?"

The woman shook her head in amazement and disbelief. "The British have destroyed Dresden. It wasn't supposed to happen. We were to be safe here. Now where do we go?"

**D**RESDEN! Hadn't her grandpa just told her a story about Dresden yesterday at supper? He had said he was there in World War II during the British bombing of Dresden. What had he said? When he had told her the story, she was only half-listening.

Out of the corner of her eye, she spotted a young man huddled up in a crocheted afghan. He was holding a leather walnut-brown suitcase stuffed with clothes and pictures. Beside him was a mandolin. It couldn't be. Jenny squeezed her way in and out of kids, infants and adults, until she was stationed right beside him. Suddenly, the air-raid sirens ended. Everything was still and quiet; people stopped, and it was a moment of silence.

Breaking the silence, Jenny started to say something but then stopped. This was her grandpa. It was too weird. Overcoming her fear, she blurted out the first thing that popped into her head, "Where did you get the mandolin?"

Her grandpa replied, "It was my mother's. She got it from her grandma. She always told me stories about how they played music growing up and how God provided for their poor family. When I had to flee my home to go to Dresden, I grabbed it. I know the mandolin is old and doesn't have much value, but I wanted to take it, to remember how faithful God had been to my grandmother and mother and how faithful He will be to me."

"Where are you going now?" asked

Jenny, shivering from the cold.

Noticing Jenny was cold, her grandpa wrapped the crocheted afghan around her and replied, "I feel that God wants me to go to Canada. I have relatives there who will sponsor me to come. I will find a way."

"JENNY, JENNY, wake up," her grandpa whispered, "you've been sleeping here all morning." Jenny jumped up, relieved to be back in the hayloft. She was back! Everything was back to the way it was. The pictures were still in a mess around her, they shouldn't be on the floor. She started to pick them up, when she looked down at her suede boots. They were still ruined with manure but she

just smiled. It didn't matter anymore. She couldn't stop smiling. She was alive and safe. Jenny squeezed her grandpa tightly.

"Come on, it's time for lunch," replied Grandpa, hugging her back. He started to head down the ladder.

"Wait, Grandpa, what about this old photo of you playing the mandolin?"

"Bring it inside and I'll tell you all about it." Grandpa held out his hand as an invitation, which Jenny accepted with a great big smile.

Before Jenny climbed down the ladder, she asked, "Do you think we can call up Mom and Dad and ask them to send the mandolin here? I would love to learn how to play it." ❁



# Through Each Other's Eyes

By **Alex Carmona**

*Illustrated by* **Jordan Lei**

**T**HE TINY WOLF scrambled to keep up with her brothers and mother as she trudged through snow that reached up to her chest. She felt her legs go numb as she tried to walk in mother's paw prints. She gave a wail of protest as the blinding snow swallowed the dull shadow of her mother in a whirl of gray and white. The wolf pup felt the snow clumping in her paws, stinging them. The pup cried out as the ground gave way under her small gray paws, sending her tumbling into darkness...

Sakura woke with a shudder that passed through her fur and rippled the pale gray peltage. Sakura still felt the loss of her family afresh. She remembered whimpering pitifully in a paw print of her mother when she had lost her brothers and mother in a blizzard. Then warm shapes, pulling her gently around them, soft as living furs. She remembered waking in a warm nest, the clumped snow washed off her. In this new family, she felt cared for and loved, but even so, her family was still gone. Her brother had been found not far away, howling and almost unconscious.

Sakura couldn't stand sitting here alone with her thoughts. She could never outrun the memory of looking at her beloved brother, hearing his wailing of fear, his gaze staring at her, though she knew he could no longer, and never again, see her.

**T**HE GIRL RAN her hands through caramel hair, her pale cheeks stained with tears. She kept repeating in her head how he couldn't have been dead, how he was faking. But she



Alex Carmona, 12  
Montebello, California



Jordan Lei, 12  
Portland, Oregon



*Can you really see your own soulful self in an animal's eyes?*

knew her beloved Champ was dead, his age failing him and crippling him. She knew him as her little black lab puppy, still gnawing and jumping with mischievous innocence. She remembered him chewing furniture and eating both human and dog food, his impatient yips when she tried to teach him to roll over. But she knew that it was all memories now. So she had kept running from the house, until she had reached the dull gray sea, almost reflecting the hazy, blue-less sky that shone no sun. She had taken refuge on a rough, bark-like rock on the edge of

the cliffs. She had cried there all morning, feeling as if there was to be no happiness again.

Suddenly there was the crackle of twigs. The girl whipped around to see a large pale gray wolf slide out of the pines bordering the cliffs. The girl quickly grabbed a nearby rock, ready to throw if the wolf lunged. But the creature's eyes were not aggressive or hostile; the golden depths seemed to be filled with grief and sadness. For a moment the girl saw her own liquid brown eyes reflected there, and for a moment she saw a pulsing light of rainbow



colors there. Can you really see your own soulful self in an animal's eyes? She remembered a similar feeling stirring when she met the brown eyes of Champ, but she never saw anything like this.

Then the wolf dipped its head as if respectfully. The girl was in awe. She felt no need to fear this creature. She dipped her head in a response. She felt mesmerized by the golden depths of the eyes.

**S**AKURA SAW the girl staring her in the eyes, drawn by something. Sakura felt something else though, a pulsing emotion of sadness. She closed her eyes and saw darkness, but still the girl, with a blue and purple bubble of sadness around her. The wolf saw a strange dog in the girl's eyes, and the sadness intensified, like a growing fire. Then she heard the girl gasp, as if whatever she had been staring at in her eyes, the connection had broken. Sakura knew that the dog had been important to the girl. In fact, it reminded her of someone...

**T**HE GIRL WATCHED the wolf leave. She sighed, knowing the moment couldn't last forever. She slumped back on the rock, wondering what to do.

Then there was more rustling. The wolf returned, gently guiding along a handsome black wolf. The girl was painfully reminded of Champ, with his smooth black coat, his warm brown eyes, and his slightly flopped ears...

The wolf nodded and nuzzled the black wolf's ear. The girl guessed they were talking. The black wolf walked toward her, his brown gaze unwavering. He's blind, she thought. But when he stumbled and she caught him, she knew she would take care of him and love him as much as Champ.

The two creatures, girl and wolf, looked at each other, brown meeting gold. They knew they had solved a problem together, and Sakura knew her brother would be cared for. The two spirits departed, one holding the young wolf, the other holding pride, and they disappeared in the mist, knowing they could heal in peace. ❁



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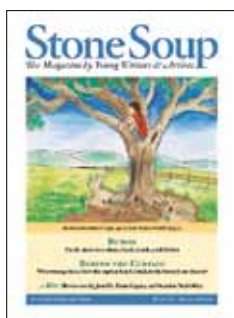
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