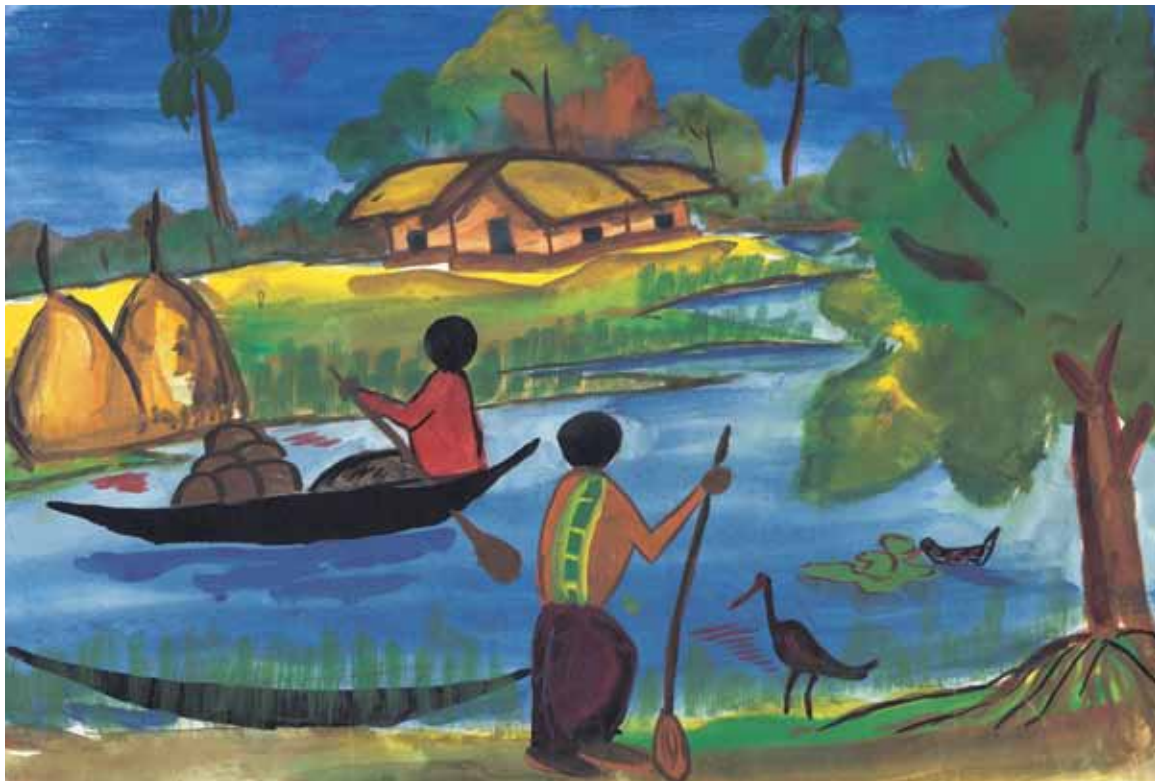


# Stone Soup

*The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists*



*"Fisherman," by Pavel Rahman, age 10, Bangladesh*

## BUFFALO HUNT

A Sioux boy participates in a rite of passage

## ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE

Will Addie be able to crack the code and open Grandma's locket?

*Also:* An epic poem based on the Greek myth of Icarus



# Stone Soup

*The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists*

VOLUME 40, NUMBER 1  
SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2011

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

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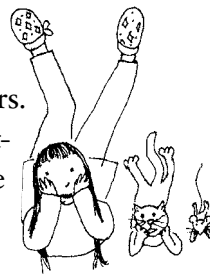
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# Stone Soup

The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists

**W**ELCOME TO ALL OUR READERS, old and new! We've had the pleasure of publishing *Stone Soup* for more than 38 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:** "Fisherman" was loaned to *Stone Soup* by Paintbrush Diplomacy of Menlo Park, California. For more than 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, Louise Valeur and Lisa Fahey.

# The Mailbox



LBP, 9

Just a few minutes ago I went to the mailbox to see if the July/August issue of *Stone Soup* had arrived. This was the issue with my first submission, "As the Breeze Blows," in it. I'd been waiting with anticipation for months to see it and I had a feeling that it had arrived. When I saw the envelope with *Stone Soup* on it I ran all the way home. Then I jumped up and down squealing!! There's nothing like seeing your name, story, and photo printed in a magazine! Also, I had been reading the previous issue and saw a girl named Emily Jackson who was my age had illustrated something. I thought she looked really nice, and I was so happy to see that she'd illustrated my story! Plus, I got a \$40 check! That's like getting paid for Christmas! Thank you for inspiring me!!

**SCHUYLER MITCHELL, 12**

*Raleigh, North Carolina*

Thank you for editing the wonderful *Stone Soup* magazine. I love enjoying the writings and illustrations of other authors and illustrators my own age! It's neat to read a magazine just *for* kids and *by* kids! The stories are so exciting and interesting that I read them over and over again. The pictures show a lot of action as if I'm right there in the story—I get to travel to all sorts of places over and over and over again!

**CHRISTINE ANNA TROLL, 9**

*Somerset, Pennsylvania*

I have been reading *Stone Soup* for almost two years now, and I love it! What I love most are the book reviews. Almost always when I finish a book review, I beg my mom to buy the book for me, but sometimes she makes me go to the library.

**EMILY HAHN, 11**

*Millwood, New York*

I really think that an opportunity for children to be creative is a glimmer of hope in our world of video games, texting and television.

**ALEXANDER AZEKA, 12**

*San Diego, California*

I recently read your September/October 2009 issue for a school assignment. I immediately fell in love with your well-written magazine. I think it's great that you give young authors and illustrators like myself an opportunity to have their work published. I really enjoy reading and writing so *Stone Soup* is the perfect magazine for me! It helps me in my writing to read other kids' writing. For example, say I read a funny story with a lot of dialog; I may include that in my next story. The book reviews are wonderful for children who have a hard time finding good books to read. They may also read something they normally would not. As much as I like your magazine I think it could be better. I think it would be very cool if you added a puzzle page. In my opinion there are three types of people: people who like to write, people who like to draw, and what I call puzzle people. If you simply add this one page of puzzles and fun you could attract a lot more readers. As an added bonus you could say, "We've got something for everyone!"

**SOFIA SACERDOTE, 10**

*Hanover, New Hampshire*

I love your magazines. Once I start reading them I can't stop. There are some stories that make me laugh and some that make me cry. My favorite issue is May/June 2011 and the story I most like is "Infinite Field," by Amanda Kneppel and illustrated by Leigh McNeil-Taboika.

**CAITLIN HORNER, 10**

*Clinton, Montana*

**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.





*"Look, son. See the way the land is in shadow, even though there is nothing to cast it?"*

# Buffalo Hunt

By **Olivia Michelle Smit**

*Illustrated by* **Olivia Zhou**

**T**HE BOY STOOD, facing the early morning. He let the gentle breeze caress his dark skin and play with his hair as he stared thoughtfully off into the distance. Today was the day of his first buffalo hunt. Today he had a chance to become a man. Ten years old, he had been waiting many months for the time to be right. He had been practicing his aim with his bow and arrows and had been working with his pony as well. He was determined that all would go well and he would be given a name by the end of the day. For the young Sioux warrior did not have a name. He would not be given one until he had proven himself in some way worthy of one. All he had was his nickname, Arrow. His friends had named him such because of his keen eyes and sharp hand. He rarely missed his targets. A nickname such as his was better than none, however. His friend, Wet Grasses, was named for the first time he was sent to gather grasses for the fire. He was not supervised, and gathered and dumped armful after armful of wet grass on the fire, causing the entire camp to be encased in smoke for the better part of the night.

At the soft step of his father he turned. His father smiled reassuringly at him and moved to stand beside him. His voice was husky in the early morning.

“Look, son. See the way the land is in shadow, even though there is nothing to cast it? That is the buffalo, waiting for us.” He looked down at his son and the boy smiled, letting his excitement show.



Olivia Michelle Smit, 13  
London, Ontario, Canada



Olivia Zhou, 11  
Roselle Park, New Jersey

“I am ready.”

The sun seemed to burst up from the horizon at the same time as the camp awakened, men and boys appearing out of tipis with the women and girls not far behind. The happy chatter filled the air as the women sharpened their knives for the skinning of the buffalo. The men painted their ponies with their family’s design and made sure that their quivers were full of arrows and their bows were flexible. Arrow smiled up at his father and ran off to bring his pony to the paint. His father watched him go, a proud smile playing about his lips, for he had taught the boy and was confident in his abilities.

Arrow reappeared, leading his pony to the paint. Carefully, he selected the same black and yellow paint as his father. Dipping his hand into the wet, chalky substance, he bit his lip in concentration as he smeared the animal’s haunches in the spots and lines of his family. He glanced to the side of him to see Wet Grasses doing the same thing. Arrow could tell from the sparkle in Wet Grasses’ eyes that he, too, was filled with anticipation for the hunt. Breathing deeply, Arrow dabbed his own face with paint as well, before swinging himself up on top of his pony.

He looked over the camp and laughed aloud at the cheerful busyness. He could see his mother and sisters preparing for the buffalo, and he waved to them. Most of the men were not yet finished with painting their horses, and Arrow watched them eagerly. He had been watching

them for years now, waiting impatiently for when he would be old enough to join them. It was different, watching from the middle of the action instead of the outskirts. He shielded his eyes against the sun and looked for the younger boys that were watching. He waited until he found them and had to suppress a feeling of pride that this time he was the one they were looking up to.

At a cry from the leader the rest of the men mounted their horses, yelling and cheering as the horses gradually moved out of the camp to the open plains. Arrow felt a clamor of joy well up in him as his pony’s muscles bunched beneath him, moving into a comfortable canter. Arrow sat tall on the warm back of his pony and whooped. Wet Grasses was riding beside him, and he too yelled out. They were riding in the middle of the pack, real men helping to feed the women and children. They nearly pulled their horses up short, though, when they saw the buffalo. Arrow drew in his breath at the sight of them. Never in his life had he seen a live buffalo before. He had only ever seen the dead ones that the women skinned after the hunt. A surge of energy filled him and he grinned as he urged his pony on. They were downwind, so the buffalo had not seen them yet. He wanted to be right at the front, where he would be one of the ones to actually startle the buffalo into fleeing. He felt for the bow slung across his back. It was still there, in a position where it would be easy for him to reach when he needed it. His arrows, too, were



hanging in a tube from his waist. He fingered the feathered tips, longing to pull one out and shoot—but the time was not right.

The buffalo were beginning to sense them now. They lifted their heads in uneasiness, then, as they caught sight of the horses, they broke into a run. Like a stream of water they cascaded down the gentle slope. Arrow leaned down over his pony's neck, forcing him into a gallop. He could sense the other men doing the same. With Wet Grasses beside him, his father somewhere behind him, he surged into the center of the herd. The thundering of hooves was in his ears, and he looked around himself. The completeness of the buffalo was all around him. He was alone. Not truly alone, for there were men all around him, and buffalo in front and to the sides of him. He was alone only inside of him. It was a peaceful feeling, but it did not last long. He could sense his pony beginning to tire. In one fluid motion, he let go of his pony's mane and brought his bow in front of him. Riding using only his legs to guide his horse, he notched an arrow to the string and looked around him for a buffalo. *The buffalo.*

He examined them in his mind. *Too fast, too skinny, too young, too old.* He looked to his side. Keeping pace with him perfectly was a huge buffalo. Arrow caught his breath. He was young, but not a baby. He looked like all of his fat would make him slow and easy to catch. Arrow pulled back his bow and aimed. In the instant before he let go of the arrow, the buffalo looked

him in the eyes. A connection jolted through Arrow's inner being, and he knew that the buffalo had been placed there for him; for his family. With a soft thank-you to the spirit of the great animal, he let go. His aim was true, and as it pierced the buffalo's hide the mass of brown fur toppled and fell. Arrow looked back, and upon making sure that it really was dead, let out a great yell of joy. He had done it! He had killed a buffalo, and a big one at that. One that would feed his family and tribe for months. He threw his hands up in the air, his bow still clenched tightly in his fist, crying to the spirit of the buffalo.

He opened his eyes to see the last of the buffalo leaving. He could hear the happy cries of the women and children approaching, and he turned his pony around, looking for the great beast that he had slain. He did not need to look for the signature colored feathers on his arrows. He instinctively knew which buffalo was his.

"Father!" he could not help calling out to his father as he approached. "Look, Father! I have killed it!" His father slowed his pony to a walk and leaped down, coming over to examine the animal. When he reached Arrow, he looked down and whistled through his teeth. Arrow could see respect and pride in his eyes. Wet Grasses too looked at Arrow with respect.

"I only managed to kill a little one. You, my friend, have killed the heart of the herd itself!"

Suddenly afraid, Arrow looked at his father. "The buffalo will be all right without



*In the instant before he let go of the arrow, the buffalo looked him in the eyes*

him, won't they?" His question was soft but serious.

His father put an arm around his shoulders. "Everything will be fine. You have done well, my son."

Suddenly Arrow's mother's voice came from behind him. "Arrow, did you do this?"

In his mother's eyes were glad tears; even his sister looked impressed.

"*Ai yi!*" My son has slain the biggest buffalo ever in existence! The father of all buffalo! I will make you a new bedroll with the hide of this animal. I will make

you two bedrolls!" His mother and sister began to skin the buffalo and Arrow moved with his father and the rest of the men back to camp. He found himself traveling next to the chief of their tribe, and he looked up at him in awe. He had never been this close to the man before, and felt a little scared.

The big man looked solemnly down at him. "Are you the one who killed the great beast?" Arrow could only nod, afraid of doing or saying something wrong in front of such a powerful man. To his surprise, the man smiled at him!

"We will have to do something about getting you a name now, won't we?"

In surprise Arrow pulled his pony to a halt, and the man laughed and continued on.

THAT NIGHT as dusk covered the plains, there was great celebration in the Sioux camp. Huge blazing fires were lit, and all of the boys slathered paint over themselves in preparation for the ceremony of the buffalo spirit. Wet Grasses looked at Arrow with a touch of envy, for he was not to earn a name that night. There was also a hint of pride in his voice, for he and Arrow were very close friends. The men were all dressed in masks and headdresses, and Arrow watched with new interest as they offered thanks to the buffalo spirits for the plentiful hunt. He had seen the ceremony many times before, but tonight it held new meaning for him. He watched the dancers for hours and was beginning to feel sleepy when the men beckoned to him. He watched for a moment, hesitant as to whether they meant him or someone else. Then he stepped up to the fire.

The chief's eyes were kind under his headdress as he asked Arrow to tell his story. He started slowly but grew more confident as he took in his attentive audience. By the time he got to the part about the connection he had felt with the

buffalo, they were hanging on his every word. When he was finished the chief clapped him on the back.


"It seems that you are talented in the weaving of a tale as well as the killing of buffalo." The people sitting laughed appreciatively.

"But now," the chief raised his hands and it was quiet, "now it is time for this brave young boy to receive his duly earned name."

There was great cheering, and Arrow caught his father's eye. He was grinning proudly, and his smile lent strength to the boy's nervous body. The chief and the shaman spoke together quietly for a few moments. Then they stood on either side of the boy and held his hands up where everyone could see them. The chief started.

"Because of this boy's bravery and quick thinking in the buffalo hunt today, he shall no longer be known by his previous name, Arrow."

The shaman stepped forward to finish. "Because of his spiritual connection with the buffalo, he shall be named as such. Buffalo Spirit, we welcome you!"

Great cheers and cries of gladness echoed through the camp as the boy, Arrow, stood tall. He felt a change come over him, something spreading through his body. He grinned. Buffalo Spirit was now a man. 

# Field Trip

*By* John Rager

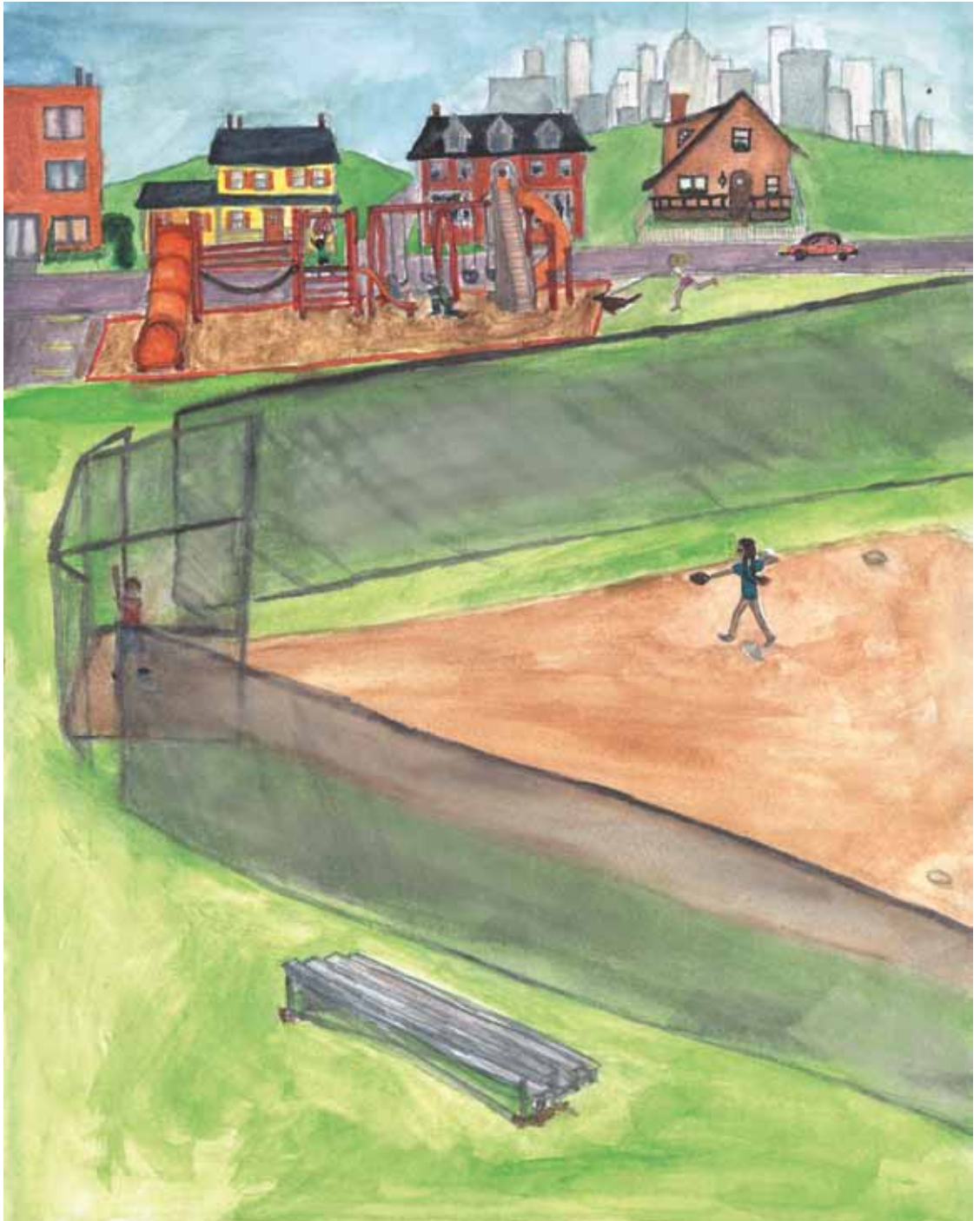


John Rager, 12  
Russellville, Kentucky

Look up.  
Can you see the moon?  
white as snow?  
The sun, as  
yellow as a new crayon?  
A baby blue sky  
like an ocean?

Look down!  
Cold in one spot,  
warm in others,  
the creek is full  
of amazing creatures  
Our nets,  
shaped like D's  
scoop up  
mud puppies and  
crawdads

The still water  
is a mirror,  
and tripping on  
sharp rocks,  
I scrape my knee,  
But I am sad only  
because my teacher calls,  
“Time to go!”



*"Let's do this, Dani," Sam shouted, eyes twinkling with delight*



# How to Survive a Line Drive

By **Dani Bergman Chudnow**

*Illustrated by* **Hannah Phillips**

**E**VER WISH YOU were smaller than a grain of sand? Ever wish you could become invisible? Ever wish you could rewind your day? Well, that's what I wished on my eleventh birthday.

"Happy birthday to Dani, happy birthday to you," they sang as I blew out my candles and made a wish. Then I heard my mother and brother singing, "Skip around the room, we won't stop 'til you skip around the room."

How embarrassing, I thought to myself. But instead of skipping around and making a complete fool of myself, I simply asked, "Mom, can I get the biggest slice of cake?"

The cake looked so good. It was from Buttercup Bakery and was called a Hummingbird Cake. I think it is a cross between carrot and banana cake with some nuts and amazing frosting. I was very excited to have this cake because I hadn't had it in so long. I had been away at sleep-away camp for four weeks, and let's just say the food there is not really memorable in a good kind of way.

"Dani, will you play baseball with me?" Sam (a pesky seven-year-old boy) pleaded with me, tugging at my sleeve. I was thinking about my favorite cake and then I heard this little kid. Sam loved to play baseball and really looked up to me. To Sam I was a cool, sporty big kid. I, well, I did not look at him the same way at all. I was turning eleven and he was just seven. That can be a pretty big four-year difference. Not to mention that I have been hesitant playing with him since he hit my face with



Dani Bergman Chudnow, 11  
New York, New York



Hannah Phillips, 13  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

a basketball. Sure, he didn't intend to hit me. It was an accident, but I'm the type of person who can forgive but not forget. Sam really seemed to like me though. Every time I wanted to do something, Sam wanted to do it, too. I worried that he would never play a game unless I said it was important to me, and that if I said no to baseball, Sam would stop playing baseball. Maybe I was making too much of it, but I felt like if I said no, I would crush a little part of him and I didn't want to do that. It's my birthday though! I thought to myself. I should make myself happy today, not him, said the voice inside my head. The choice was clear, me or Sam? I was thinking. I mean, it was classic villain against hero, The Joker against Batman. Which one did I want to be?

Flash forward. Could I deal with crushing Sam? Nope. Rewind. Batman it was.

"Dani... Dani." Sam's loud but tiny voice snapped me out of my conscience games. "Dani, will you play baseball with me," Sam asked in the sweetest, most innocent voice. "Please..."

He gave me the puppy-dog eyes, too. I mean, that's not fair! I always fall for that. It's my kryptonite. Don't do it, I thought. Say no. No, no, NO, I thought.

"Yeah, sure, Sam, let's go play."

**"B**ATTER UP," I cried, mounting the high pile of sand also known as the pitcher's mound.

"Let's do this, Dani," Sam shouted, eyes twinkling with delight, "we all know who's going to win here." He was relaxed around

me, but he was always trying to impress me.

"Right," I said, winding my arm up like a windmill. Sam was clearly happy, but he certainly wasn't smiling. Instead, there was a thin red line, pursed tightly together with a tiny curve upward at the end. I sighed. I was really doing this. Besides, Sam had his game face on. There was no going back now.

Whoosh! My pitch flew right past his head. I was being a little harsh. Well, I thought, if I'm doing this, I'm not just going to let him win. No. I never just "phone it in." I always give it my best.

"Ugghh." Sam kicked home plate in disgust. "Go again, Dani," he growled.

Whoosh! He missed and kicked poor home plate again. Whoosh! Oh, boy. I'm glad I'm not home plate. I would be in shambles. Gone was the little boy who loved me. Here, instead, was the competitive boy who kicks—no, destroys—things. "Um, let's switch it up, Sam," I suggested nervously. Without a word, we switched places.

I'd like to say it was a cloudy, rainy day, but it wasn't. It was a beautiful, sunny day. It was my birthday. "Batter up," Sam shouted. "I didn't get a run so you won't either!"

"Let's do this," I replied. Whoosh! I heard the ball whistling towards me. Crack! I heard the connection of my bat and the ball. I felt my arm surging in the air. I heard Sam cry out, but it wasn't like before. When I looked over, as I was running towards first base, I saw him lying on

the ground, in agony. Just like that, I became the villain.

“SAM, ARE YOU OK?” I shouted as I turned and immediately started sprinting toward the pitcher’s mound. I, of course, feared the worst. What did I do? How would I get through this?

“Owww,” Sam groaned as he lay on the ground, with one hand pressed against his eye.

“Sam, are you OK, kiddo?” I kept repeating.

“It hurts, Dani,” he wailed.

“I’m really sorry, Sam. I didn’t mean to,” I said, feeling so bad. I felt my face go a deep shade of pink.

“It’ll be OK,” Sam said, removing his hand to reveal a bright red welt that would surely bruise terribly. “Can we keep playing?” he asked. It was so funny and confusing I almost laughed. He was OK... and he forgave me! Sam wanted to play again. Sam, with his flat, dark brown hair and warm affable eyes, wanted to play again. I was about to jump up and down like a lit-

tle kid. My face lit up like I had just won the lottery. This little kid was showing me something. This little kid had guts!

His eye stayed that same red color the rest of the day. I was joyful, though, just because Sam forgave me, and I was happy. Just because Sam forgave me, my birthday was great. That’s how I remember my eleventh birthday, how Sam had saved it from being a total disaster. That day, I learned that just because someone hurts you, doesn’t mean he or she is a bad person. I didn’t mean to hurt Sam, but he ended up getting hurt anyway. Now, since he forgave me, we’re still baseball buddies to this very day. Just because a seven-year-old boy gave me, an eleven-year-old girl, a second chance, I have a great friend.

Ever since my birthday, I’ve stopped thinking (and acting like) little kids can only be annoying. I thought I had it all figured out. Boy, was I wrong. Sometimes, they can be more mature than much older kids, and more fun, too. Maybe I’ll give my six-year-old sister a second chance. Nah!



# Akira and the Wolf

By **Megan Petty**

*Illustrated by* **Erik Zou**



Megan Petty, 11  
Lapeer, Michigan



Erik Zou, 11  
Lexington, Massachusetts

**A**KIRA WAS A DOG. Nitia was a wolf. Akira never cared to think about dogs and wolves living together. Not until Nitia.

Akira always thought about wolves, and why they were hated so much.

She watched them run through the woods and heard their howls. Her owner, who was a hunter, often said wolves were a disgrace and should never be alive. Akira decided to meet a wolf. After all, what could be so bad about her wild cousins?

The dog was racing happily through the woods when she saw another dog. This other dog was a tawny-colored female with pointed ears and a long bushy tail.

No, thought Akira. That is a wolf!

The wolf turned and saw Akira. They watched each other for some time before the wolf walked forward. They sniffed each other, smelling where they had been and what their names were.

Akira smelled that this wolf was named Nitia. Nitia had been the mate of a leader. Then, the leader wolf had then taken another mate, kicking Nitia out of the pack. She was pregnant with his pups. They were due any day.

Akira and Nitia spent every spare moment together. When the sun began to set, Nitia would lead Akira up the mountain and they would howl. Nitia often heard her mate and would howl to him.

One day, Akira was headed to see Nitia when she heard a loud whine. She looked around and saw Nitia lying in a patch of



*Akira and Nitia spent every spare moment together*

grass. Her pups were coming!

Akira whimpered. She did not know what to do. What if something bad happened?

“Akira?” called the voice of her owner. “Akira, where are you?”

Akira’s heart leaped. She smelled his gun. He would find Nitia and kill her! She had to lead him away.

The dog headed towards his voice, but it was too late. He emerged from the bushes and said, “There you are! And just as I thought. A wolf.”

Nitia closed her eyes. The man drew back his gun, but Akira lunged in front of the wolf. He could not hurt her.

“Akira, what is this?” he yelled. “Get out!”

Akira did not move. Wolves and dogs were the same. If he could easily kill a wolf, then he could easily kill a dog. She growled.

Her owner looked at her, then lowered his gun. “The wolf lives.” He dropped his gun to the ground and backed away. He moved away into the woods and called Akira to come to him. Akira did not. He got her message and hopefully would tell others.

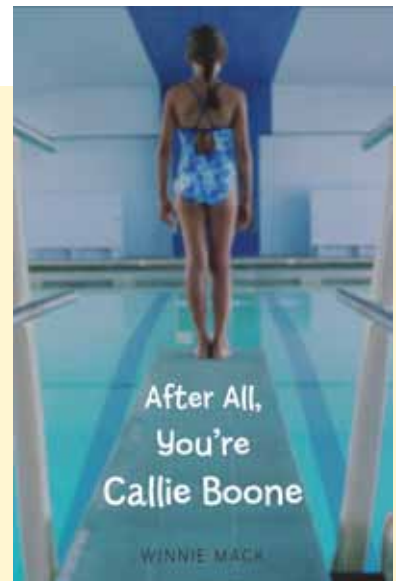
Now, Akira would be a wolf. She and Nitia would live together. Wolves and dogs could come together again. ❁



# Book Review

By Jamila Kern

*After All, You're Callie Boone*, by Winnie Mack;  
Feiwei and Friends: New York, 2010; \$16.99



Jamila Kern, 10  
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts

“OH FISH STICKS, tartar, and a side of fries!” Being called a loser by your former best friend, having to live together with stinking ferrets, and doing one *extremely* public belly flop is definitely not Callie Boone’s idea of a fun summer. Then enters Hoot, the new kid from next door, who turns Callie’s world upside down and right side up and teaches her the true meaning of friendship.

Callie loves the water. It’s the only place where she feels like she can get away from everything and everyone at once. But that all changes when Callie gets banned permanently from the pool for doing a dive from the high diving board (which is strictly forbidden to children). Actually... it wasn’t a dive—it was a belly flop. But it wasn’t her fault... or at least that’s what Callie thinks. The other girls she was swimming with made her do it! But deep down, Callie knows that she did the dive because she wanted to wow the older girls. She wanted to come out of the water to the sound of thundering applause. Instead, she came up to hear the sound of roaring laughter.


In addition to being humiliated in front of a gigantic crowd of people, Callie is friendless. Ever since first grade, Callie Boone and Amy Higgins were the best of friends, but just before the end of the school year, Amy started acting weird. It began when



Amy no longer wanted to trade stickers with the other kids. Next, Callie couldn't find Amy to sit with her in the cafeteria. She realized that Amy had gone home with Samantha McAllister to work on an assignment. Although Callie had the same assignment, she hadn't been invited along. Why? Then on the last day of school, Callie overheard Amy and Samantha talking... about her! Callie feels upset and doesn't understand why Amy traded her in for snotty old Samantha McAllister. Is it because Callie likes riding her bike better than painting her fingernails?

During this whole scenario of events, a new family moves into the house next door. Callie has been crossing her fingers hoping a girl her age will move in who, for some unknown reason, will want to be best friends with her. But Callie's hopes are dashed when a boy with a large amount of freckles turns up on the other side of the hedge. When Hoot asks her to show him around the neighborhood, Callie is flabbergasted. She can't be seen showing a *boy* around town. People might talk and then *no one* would want to be her friend. Still, Callie and Hoot end up becoming good buddies.

In this sense I'm a little like Callie. I also have a good friend who is a boy. We've known each other since we were born and are still close. When I was in third grade, my mom decided to pull me out of school and home-school me. When I first started, I didn't know anyone else and—like Callie—was sometimes very lonely. But all the kids were friendly and nice to me and integrated me into their group. Now I know them well and we have lots of fun together. Through home-schooling I have met many different kinds of people and I'm happy about that. I think friendship is special and it's important to have friends of different ages, races, genders, and personalities.

When things have finally started to look up for Callie, real disaster strikes and she feels like she's on a high diving board with no way down. But with lots of effort and teamwork, she might pull through. After all, she's Callie Boone! 



*Addie didn't—couldn't—believe what she was hearing*

# All You Need Is Love

By Rachel Keirstead

*Illustrated by* Mariah Rae Olson

**A**DDIE WAS PERCHED precariously on the edge of her ruffled bed. Her mother was seated next to her, chewing on her lower lip as she so often did when something was troubling her.

"Addie," her mother started, then stopped to wipe her eyes on the sleeve of her red T-shirt.

"Mom, w-what is it?" Addie's stomach was in knots. She wondered if her cat, Pumpkin, had run away again.

"It's Grandma, Addie. She... she..." Cinnamon Taylor drew a shaky breath before continuing. "She passed away, darling."

Addie didn't—couldn't—believe what she was hearing. "What?"

"Grandma had cancer, Addie. She didn't want you to know, so she hid it from you. She lost her hair and had been terribly sick. Grandma knew this was coming, but she didn't want to upset you. You understand, don't you? I hope you're not mad at me for not telling you."

Addie stared numbly at her mother, who was valiantly trying not to cry in front of her. For the first few seconds, Addie felt nothing. She wasn't sad, or happy, or much of anything really.

But, as Addie gazed into her mother's puffy eyes, the weight of the situation pressed down upon her. "No! Why did Grandma have to die? She... she..." Addie couldn't speak anymore. Tears were flooding from her eyes. Addie grabbed the handheld mirror from atop her dresser and flung it against the wall. It shattered into a million tiny fragments.



Rachel Keirstead, 13  
Blandon, Pennsylvania



Mariah Rae Olson, 13,  
Mint Hill, North Carolina

Addie continued to storm about the room. Her mother just watched, stunned. Addie had always been a calm child, no matter what situation she was faced with. When Cinnamon and her husband had told her of their decision to divorce a few years ago, Addie had just numbly nodded. Cinnamon had never seen Addie rage the way she was now.

"Why did she have to die?" Addie kicked the bed angrily, as if it was the bed's fault her grandmother had passed away. Suddenly, Cinnamon came to her senses and grabbed her daughter's arm. Addie allowed herself to be enveloped in a hug.

"I know, I know," Cinnamon whispered. "She meant a lot to me too." With that, the fight went out of Addie and she collapsed, sobbing, on her bed.

**A**DDIE CONTINUED to mope for the next week or so. One dull summer afternoon, Addie was lying on her stomach in her bed. She tried to concentrate on the novel she was reading, but to no avail. Like a boomerang, all thoughts strayed back to Grandma.

Grandma had been more than just a grandmother to Addie. When Dad had left to go live in the middle of nowhere, Grandma stepped in. She helped Cinnamon adjust to being a single parent and was always around to babysit Addie or do whatever was needed around the house. Addie and Grandma, who was Dad's mom, became close friends immediately. It was terrible that Grandma

would never be around to talk or laugh with Addie anymore.

Cinnamon quietly knocked on the door, then let herself in. "Come on, Addie," she said softly. "We need to go to the lawyer's office. Mr. Mitchell's reading the will today, you know."

Sighing in resignation, Addie dragged herself out of bed and stared in the mirror. She saw Grandma's dark, thoughtful eyes staring back. Addie wrenched a comb through her black hair. Realizing it was futile to try to tame her hair now, Addie threw the comb back on the dresser and waited at the apartment door.

The ride to Mr. Mitchell's office was long and quiet. Addie stared glumly out the taxi window at all the people rushing to and fro. She chewed the watermelon gum in her mouth without even tasting it.

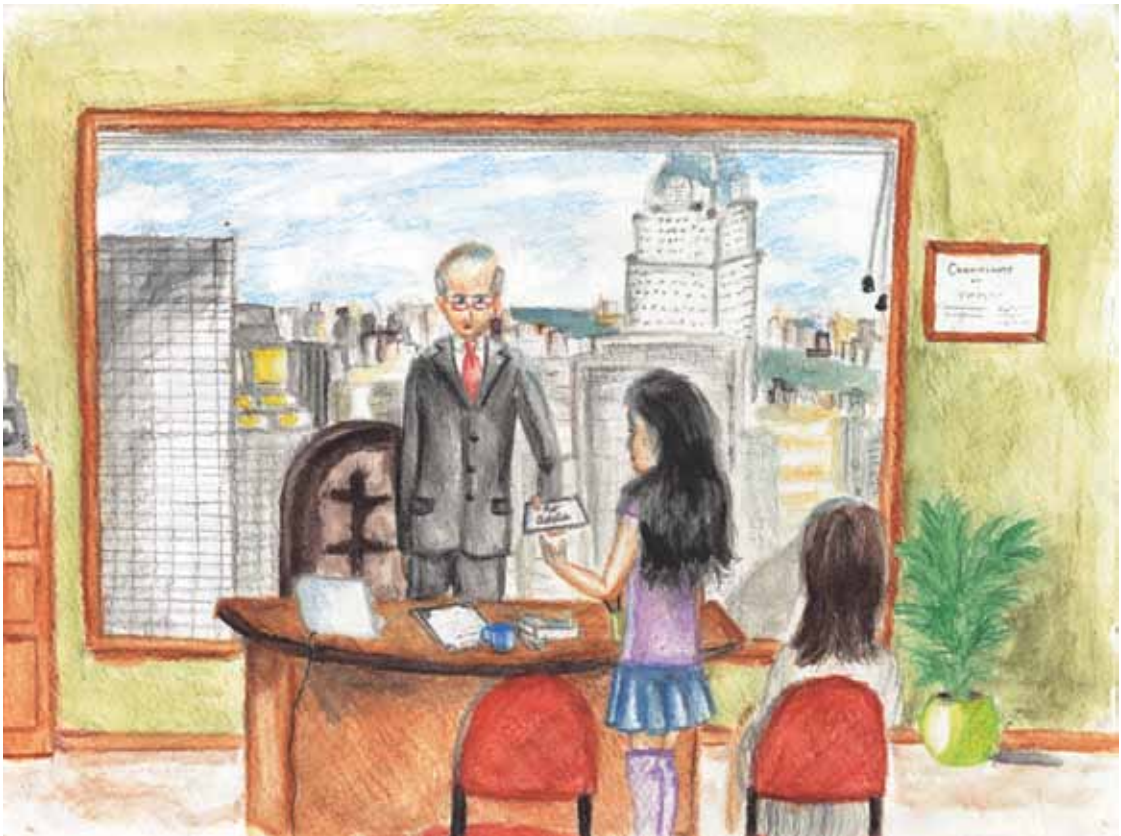
"Here we are," the driver proclaimed, coming to a stop in front of a tall, glass building. Addie got out of the cab, then looked up and down the building in amazement. This place was *nice*.

Cinnamon purposefully strode into the cool, air-conditioned lobby with Addie at her heels. The lobby was absolutely gorgeous. Addie craned her neck in an attempt to see everything at once as her mother led her up to the reception desk. "We're here to see Mr. Mitchell," Cinnamon told the receptionist.

"Fifteenth floor," the woman said, without looking up. "It's suite 1503."

After the elevator ride, the pair found the office and quietly let themselves in. There was an empty waiting room com-





*"For you, Miss Addie," he said cheerfully*

plete with a dormant television and large leather seats. Addie wished she could've stayed home.

Just then an adjoining door opened and a well-dressed businessman stood before them. He extended his hand to Cinnamon. "Hello, Ms. Taylor. I'm glad you could make it." He smiled down at Addie, as one would do if amused by a small child. Addie glared back. She didn't like this man. He was *glad* Grandma had died, just so he could get business. When his back was turned, Addie stuck her tongue out at him.

Mr. Mitchell led the pair into his office.

There was a huge window behind his desk that allowed a fantastic view of New York City. Addie caught a glimpse of water in the distance. She couldn't tear her eyes away.

"Nice view, huh?" Mr. Mitchell was talking to her again. He was seated behind his desk in a large leather chair. She just shrugged at Mr. Mitchell though, to show she wasn't impressed with his office.

"Both of you have been mentioned in the late Andrea Evelyn Taylor's will. Shall I begin?" Cinnamon nodded, and Addie stared at her sneakers.

The man droned on forever about legal

stuff, and Addie automatically tuned him out. She quickly took an interest again, however, when she heard her name. “And to Addison Matilda...” At this, Addie winced. Nobody called her by her full name, plus Addie despised her middle name. She had been named after a character in one of Roald Dahl’s books. By the time Addie started listening again, Mr. Mitchell was saying, “...an envelope, which includes a letter and a locket.”

Addie’s mouth dropped open. Could it be *the* locket, the one Grandma had treasured like it was a crown jewel? It had been on Grandma’s dresser for as long as Addie could remember. A month or two ago, it had disappeared. Addie found it kind of mysterious, in fact. She wished she knew where the locket came from.

After an eternity, the meeting came to an end. Mr. Mitchell handed Addie an envelope. “For you, Miss Addie,” he said cheerfully. Addie found it hard to be mad at him now. All she cared about was the envelope in her hand.

She studied it on the cab ride home. The envelope was made of heavy paper, and “To Addie” was scrawled in black ink on the front in her grandmother’s beautiful cursive. Addie ran her fingers over the rough envelope. She imagined her grandmother with her expensive black pen, slowly carving the words into the paper.

As soon as the cab pulled to a stop in front of Addie’s apartment building, she hopped out of the car and streaked into the lobby. Carlos, who worked in the building, exclaimed, “Hello, Addie! You’re

in quite a hurry this fine day!” Addie smiled and waved in response, without slowing down. She punched the up button beside the elevator. In seconds, she was being lifted to her floor.

As Addie exited the elevator, she mumbled a quick “Hi” to Mrs. Oswald, who was wobbling—as she had an awkward gait because of her considerable size—toward the elevator. Addie squeezed past her neighbor and sprinted down the hall. She grabbed the handle of Apartment 314 and turned. The door was locked.

Groaning impatiently, Addie leaned against the door, waiting for her mother. Addie resumed the task of studying the envelope. She could feel the locket’s chain under her fingers.

Finally, Cinnamon got to the apartment. She gave Addie a quizzical look but didn’t say anything. Cinnamon unlocked the door, and Addie barreled into the apartment like a football player chasing down someone to tackle. Addie skidded into her room, then dropped to her hands and knees on the worn carpet floor.

After rooting around in her bottom dresser drawer, Addie found a letter opener. She had insisted on buying it a few years ago when she had gotten a paper cut while trying to open an envelope. Addie hadn’t bothered to use it a lot; it was too much of a hassle. This, however, was a special occasion.

Addie deftly opened the envelope. She pulled out a letter and the locket. Addie opened the letter, which was crisply folded into thirds. Grandma had handwritten



it in her neat cursive. Addie began to read.

Dear Addie,

I hope this letter finds you well. As you have probably noticed, I've included my locket—my prized possession—in this envelope.

I remember when you were seven years old, and you asked me where I got this locket. I told you that you would find out in good time. Now, I believe, is the proper time to tell you the story of my locket.

My family was very poor when I was a girl. They wanted me to marry young, so there would be one less mouth to feed. They had set up a marriage with the Taylor family. I was to marry their eldest son, Eric.

It was only good luck we fell in love because we were to be wed whether we liked it or not. It was my sixteenth birthday when I met him. He was seventeen, handsome, and smart. I discovered he lived down the road, and we soon spent all our time together.

We were wed two years later. My parents couldn't afford expensive wedding gifts, so my mother gave me this locket. It had been given to her by her mother when she passed away. Of course, the locket was even more beautiful back then, and I treasured it.

I wore the locket every day of my married life with Eric. We were the best of friends. Oh, Addie, I wish you could've met him. You would've loved him. He was adventurous and curious like you.

If only cancer hadn't stepped in! It broke my heart to see Eric dying. The chemo was terrible on him. He passed away before you were born. If only we'd had more time.

If only we'd had more time. Addie sighed, thinking about that sentence. She wished she had had more time with Grandma, too. Why hadn't she asked Grandma about her past before? It was so interesting, and Addie had many unasked questions for her grandmother. She continued to read.

I stopped wearing the locket when Eric died. I looked at it every day, though, and it served as a constant reminder of him.

Now, Addie, I'm passing it on to you. Tradition dictates I pass it on to my daughter, but I don't have one. So it's yours now, darling. If you open it, you'll see the locket holds the meaning of happiness. Take good care of it for me.

Lots of love,  
Grandma

P.S. The answer's in the code.

ADDIE LOOKED UP from the letter. What did that last part mean? Had she missed something important? Grandma had always been into codes, so she passed on her knowledge to Addie at a young age. Why was this relevant now, though?

Tears were streaming down her face. She wiped them with her sleeve before turning to the locket. She stuck her fingernails under one edge and tried to pry it open. Nothing happened. Addie tried the left side, but once again, the locket didn't open. What was going on?

What if she couldn't open the locket? She'd have failed Grandma. She tried to pry it open one more time. Nothing.

"Open!" Addie screamed, throwing the locket down. Cinnamon rushed into the room and put her arms around Addie.

"Shhh," Cinnamon whispered, like Addie was a baby needing comfort. "What's the matter, Addie?"

"Locket... won't... open..." Addie hiccupped. Cinnamon gently scooped up the locket and slid her nails between the top and bottom portion of the locket.

"I'm sorry," Cinnamon whispered, "it just won't open, Addie." The letter from Grandma glared up at Addie. *Take good care of it for me.* Addie certainly wasn't doing well at that. She angrily flipped the paper over.

To her surprise, there was a single word on the back of the letter—*dolls*. "Mom, look..." Addie pointed at the mysterious word. "What do dolls have to do with anything?"

Suddenly, it hit her. The word dolls was the code Grandma had mentioned in her cryptic postscript. Addie quickly explained this to her mother. Addie, however, still had no idea why this code was important.

"I'll leave you to your code cracking," Cinnamon said with a grin. With that, she stood and left the room.

Addie sat on the floor, her chin in her hands. She found it likely that Grandma had used a code wheel. A code wheel consisted of two wheels, one inside of the other. Each wheel had the alphabet around it. The user could substitute

one letter for another by lining up two different letters. For example, if the user lined the letter A up with B, the code would be A–B.


Addie dug around in the miscellaneous drawer of her dresser and pulled out an old one she had made a few years ago. Giving the wheel an experimental spin, she immediately got to work. First, she tried the code A–B. Addie quickly substituted the letters, but the code was just gibberish.

Addie made short work of the next few codes she tried. Finally, she tried the code A–T. By then, Addie was beginning to lose hope. However, she lined the A up with the T and was soon consumed by excitement. The word she had gotten was "wheel."

Wheel was the solution to how to open the locket. Addie didn't have to pry it open; she just had to rotate the top half. Snatching up the locket from the floor, Addie did just that. The locket opened easily.

A small, white slip of paper tumbled out, alighting on the floor. Addie picked it up, smoothing out the edges. As she read it, she began to smile.

*The meaning of happiness is love.*

Addie carefully replaced the paper, shut the locket, and fastened it around her neck. Even though Grandma wasn't alive anymore, Addie would always have a small part of her in the locket. But an even bigger part of Grandma resided in Addie's heart. 

# Fog

By Robin Sandell

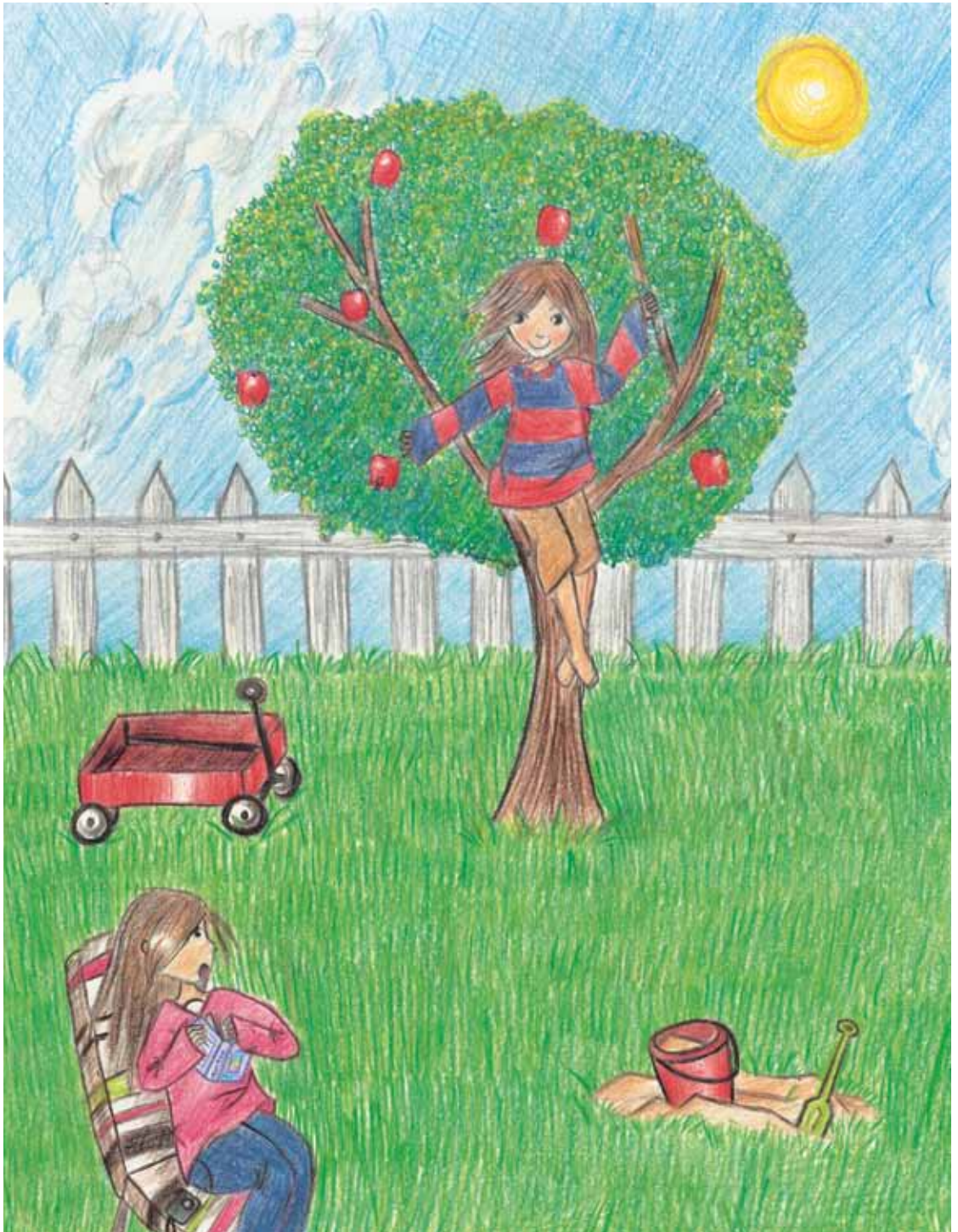
Every evening a tumbling, frothy white waterfall cascades  
over the mountains.  
Its thick, swirly, blanket settles among the trees, and oozes  
into the valley.  
It keeps coming; soft, white and misty.  
It reaches its tendrils around each tree.  
You can see it creeping, crawling like it is sneaking up  
on someone.

As the sun sets, yellow rays shine through its top layer  
of mist.  
So bright are the sun's last rays it drowns the mountain's green  
Till all you can see is the very outline.  
The sky darkens.  
Slowly, the froth pools in the valley and rests its head.  
One by one the stars come out, shining crisp  
in the cold clear night.

The fingers of mist wake early and start retreating back  
over the mountains to the sea.  
Slowly the world wakes up.  
The sun shines its first blossoming rays towards the sky.  
The soft blanket slips back over the hills, hoping not to be seen.



Robin Sandell, 11  
Portola Valley, California



*"Cora! Cora, lookit! Lookit me!"*



# Rose's Tree

By **Freya Trefonides**

*Illustrated by* **Michelle Du**

“**H**EY! HEY CORA! Look at me!”

I looked up from my paperback. Somehow, Rose had hoisted herself up and into a little red wagon that stood by the fence. The little girl stood there, precarious but triumphant, her small arms stuck out to the sides for balance. I laughed inwardly at the look of mixed surprise and pride on my younger cousin's sweet face.

“Rose, honey, get down from there. Remember what happened last time?” I said, lifting her gently down from the wagon.

“Uh huh,” said Rose rather sadly, fingering the small bruise on her forehead, obtained in a similar incident two days earlier. “I just like to be up high.”

“I know you do, Rose, but it's still dangerous. How do you think your mommy would feel if you fell down again?”

Rose looked up at me seriously, considering. “Well, first she would be angry at me cause I'm not supposed to climb things. Then she'd yell at you for not taking care of me better. But after a while,” she proclaimed, brightening, “she would say that she was just glad I was safe and give me a Popsicle.” She looked up and grinned. “Can I have a Popsicle right now?”

Not for the first time, I marveled at the four-year-old girl's intellect. She was so observant for her age, sometimes it was frightening. “Not right now. Later, OK?”

She nodded, then noticed something. “Cora, you brought your camera. Why,” she wondered aloud, “why did you bring your camera? Were you gonna take pictures?”



Freya Trefonides, 12  
Oak Park, Illinois



Michelle Du, 12  
San Jose, California

"I thought I might, yes. Do you want me to take a picture of you, Rose?" The truth was that I had hoped to snap a few photos of my little cousin for my photography class.

"Yeah! Yeah!" Scrambling excitedly, Rose ran to the fence. Turning around, she posed, one hand sassily placed on a little hip, the other thrown high, palm up, with the fingers trailing slightly, a movie-star smile on her little face. Rose would have been a miniature model, if it weren't for the knitted red-and-navy-blue sweater hanging around her torso in woolly folds. I resisted the urge to laugh, picked up my digital camera, and clicked. Rose dropped the model stance and dashed over to see the screen. We both laughed at the ridiculously adult pose.

"I look funny, don't I? Like the ladies in Mommy's mazzageens. Is it later? Can I have a Popsicle now?"

Reminding her for the hundredth time that it was *mag-a-zines*, not *mazzageens*, I ruffled my little cousin's hair fondly. "No, it's not quite *later* enough yet. Wait a little longer," I said mildly, and returned to my book. Rose was truly a remarkable kid.

For a few minutes, the small novel I held captured my attention. I leaned back in my cushioned lawn chair. Rose had settled comfortably down with a shovel and pail in the patch of dirt designated for her digging. I was sure she wouldn't move for a while.

Then suddenly, the cry came again. "Cora! Cora, lookit! Lookit me!"

My head snapped up. Not the wagon

again! But it wasn't the wagon. It was Rose's tree.

Who knows how she did it? But in one way or another, Rose had climbed to a perilous perch again—when I looked up, her little body was wedged in a crook of the apple sapling her parents had planted when Rose was born. This was Rose's tree, a monument to her life. She loved it fiercely and was never so happy as when she was, as now, nestled in its branches.

My first instinct was to jump up and rescue my little cousin, but she looked perfectly safe and happy there in the tree, and I couldn't resist the obviously perfect photo op. Snatching up my camera, I snapped a quick shot of the scene, then dropped my camera onto a cushion and lightly disentangled Rose from the tree.

"Rose, I told you, no more climbing stuff!" I chided, a little more harshly than I intended. I could see my tone have an effect on her, her little shoulders sagging and her normally sparkling eyes downcast. I immediately felt guilty, gathering her up and whispering reassuring words in her little ear.

"I'm sorry, Cora," she said sadly. "I just wanted to see if I could get up by myself." She brightened slightly. "You took a picture, didn't you?"

"I guess I did," I said, remembering. Snapping the photo, jumping up and lifting Rose out of the tree were blended in my memory in one streamlined movement. I found it difficult to recall the moment of actually pressing the shutter button. I pulled up the photo on the small



screen and looked for a long moment.

In the photo, Rose's knees were hooked over the spot where two of the branches met, her short little legs hooked over each other in a surprisingly ladylike manner. Her chubby left hand was coiled tightly around the nearest bough, and her right stuck out slightly in front, the elbow cupped between knee and branch. Rose's face was turned straight toward the lens, and her crinkled eyes and half-grin made it seem as though she and I were sharing a secret or private joke—not funny enough to cause real laughter, but full of wit nonetheless.

Looking at the surprisingly good picture, I struggled to make sense of my emotions. The picture made me want to laugh, but it strangely seemed to make me slightly sad as well. I knew that it was silly, but I had a sense that the tree, the one object Rose loved most, would one day be cut down. I wondered why this seemed so evident.

At that moment, I knew I would save this photo. If future generations asked about it, the most truthful reply would be

to say that this was Rose, that the picture summed up her as well as anything could. Because it did.

Would Rose even remember this? After she had gone to school, grown up, had a million other things happen in her life, would she still recall one afternoon when she was four? I decided she would, because I would remind her of it. I would show her the picture and describe the circumstances in great detail because I had gotten a special feeling from this afternoon in the yard. It was, I felt, worth remembering.

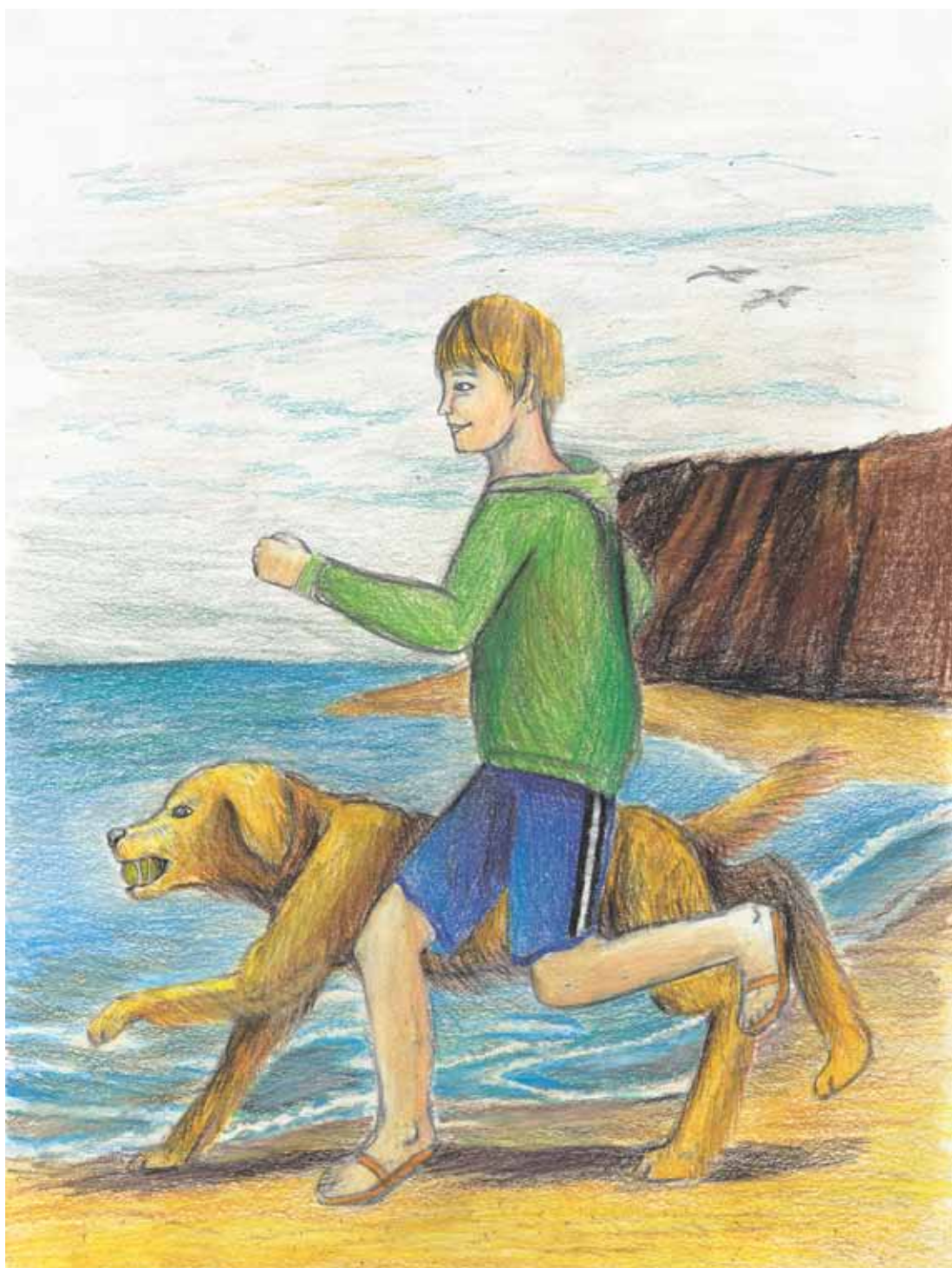
Lost in thought, I felt a small tug on my sleeve. "Can I see?" queried Rose softly.

I lowered the camera down to her level. Rose leaned in and looked at the screen for a long moment, then turned back to me and gave her funny little grin.

"I like it. Am I allowed to climb my tree again?"

"Rose!" I laughed. "No, you can't climb the tree. Sorry, honey, it's just not safe!" Rose's face fell again. Then she brightened and chirped, "OK. Can I have a Popsicle now?"





*For the rest of time itself, the spirit of Maddy will always live on here at Fort Funston Beach*

# Maddy's Last Beach Visit

By **Ryan Kearns**

*Illustrated by* **Jordan Lei**

**O**UR SLEEK BLACK HIGHLANDER pulls up into the parking lot atop the steep cliff. I open the door and jump out, my feet landing on hard gravel with a soft crunch. The salty ocean air fills my lungs, and the roaring of the sea is faint in my ears. My sisters file out of the open car door after me, while my parents are helping our dog Maddy out of the car while our other dog Lila waits eagerly behind. Had this been a normal weekend, this would just be our average trip to the beach this cloudy afternoon. But it will never be the same. Maddy has cancer. This will be her last trip to the beach.

Maddy is too weak to walk, so my dad carries her on her dog bed. After everyone is out of the car, we start the walk down to the beach.

The trail to the beach is a sandy one that winds through a small forest at a shallow angle. It is a very quiet walk; even the girls are silent for once. The only talking we hear is when we meet people who are coming up from the beach on the other side of the trail. Some notice the hospital band around Maddy's leg and feel sorry for us. Some stop to pet her, and others walk by without any notice. It's all right though; I don't blame them. It's hard to understand a type of pain until you've felt it yourself.

We walk through one more grove of trees and then we are at sea level. We can hear seagulls cawing overhead as my dad finds an empty spot on the beach and lays Maddy down. I can see in her eyes that she knows, somehow, she knows that this is her last visit here. The final ending to her story.



Ryan Kearns, 12  
Hillsborough, California



Jordan Lei, 12  
Portland, Oregon

The cancer has been attacking her body for weeks now, but Maddy puts that out of her mind for this one time. Slowly, she brings herself to her feet. This is the first time she has stood in three days. Then, when she is steady, she begins to walk.

Soon Maddy is trotting around in the surf and burying her favorite tennis ball, which we brought to the beach for her. Like the same old Maddy I've known my entire life. Carefree and happy, without a thought of cancer in her mind. It is this sight that makes me feel happiness and hope along with a cold, bitter sadness at the same time. A dying dog's last visit to the place she loves.

Eventually, we have to leave. I can tell that Maddy doesn't want to, but she accepts it. She knows she can't stay here for-

ever, and she seems content. But for the rest of time itself, the spirit of Maddy will always live on here at Fort Funston Beach.

Maddy is put to sleep the next day. Madison Avenue Dreams Kearns, 1997–2010. My mom's dog baby, my golden retriever sister, and our family's protector and companion. I think that losing a loved one is one of the most powerful emotions a human can feel. It leaves you with an icy black void in the pit of your stomach, and you selfishly think only of having that loved one here on earth with you. But it was Maddy's time to go to heaven. She feels no more pain now; her suffering has ended. And while it feels wrong without her on earth, I know that she is still with us. Still watching over us, guarding us, now as I'm writing this, and for every day for the rest of my life. 🍀



# Memories

By **Genna Carroll**

*Illustrated by* **Rebecca Bihn-Wallace**

**T**HE SUNLIGHT SLANTED through her window, dancing merrily around the room: the crayon drawings still taped on the walls, the beanbag chair sitting invitingly on the floor, the magenta streak on her desk from when she had drawn a particularly messy oil pastel scene. Kathy smiled, lost in the deluge of memories. This room was special to her, and yet she would be leaving it forever in two weeks. She would be moving clear across the country, from California to Massachusetts.

After a few moments she sighed and sat down on the floor. She pulled a stack of books toward her and started sorting through them. Old picture books? Into the bin without a second glance. Roald Dahl? Kathy stared at them for a minute and then tossed them onto the pile of books to ask her brother if he wanted them.

Her cleaning went well. In half an hour she was on her bottom shelf, with the taller books: comic compilations, encyclopedias of science and mammals, an old photo album, and assorted art books. Kathy flipped through the photo album for a few minutes, enjoying pictures from the first five years of her life, and then she saw the binder.

Frowning, she pulled it out. She had no idea what the half-inch plastic binder contained. But as soon as she saw the cover, a grin spread across her face and she settled more comfortably against her wall. “Kathy’s Stories, age 9,” it read in a childish hand. When she was nine, Kathy had gone through a writing phase where she churned out five stories per week. She hadn’t



Genna Carroll, 13  
San Jose, California



Rebecca Bihn-Wallace, 12  
Baltimore, Maryland





*At last she reached the final story*


looked at them in years, probably since they were first written. Kathy opened the binder and began to read.

A clock ticked regularly in the background and the dust motes swirled around her, becoming golden when the ray of sunlight coming through the window leveled as the afternoon wore on. A deep silence spread around the house. Her brother suspiciously became quiet. The clattering from the kitchen became more muted. Even the very birds outside Kathy's window seemed to stop singing. Kathy delved through time and space, completely alone, held captive by the words of her nine-year-old self. Nothing existed except the words on the paper, speaking with a volition of their own about fantastic faraway lands and heroes who triumphed over evil (interestingly enough, they were all named Kathy) and amazing, exotic beasts illustrated in compelling colors and seeming to breathe with life and spirit. The words wove a complex spell around Kathy, and she sat late into the afternoon, drinking in tale after tale of increasing interest and skill.

At last she reached the final story. This one was written at least six months after the others. Kathy remembered that she had wanted to write a story set in the future. A realistic one, unlike her other stories of heroism and adventure. It was titled simply "Memories." Kathy scanned the page and frowned in disappointment.

Only one small paragraph had been written under the title. Apparently she hadn't had time to finish it. The paragraph read:

The sunlight slanted through her window, dancing merrily around the room: the crayon drawings still taped on the walls, the beanbag chair sitting invitingly on the floor, the magenta streak on her desk from when she had drawn a particularly messy oil pastel scene. Kathy smiled, lost in the deluge of memories. This room was special to her, and yet she would be leaving it forever in two weeks.

But there it stopped. The real Kathy gasped. As a nine-year-old, she had written about the very event that was happening to her now! But as Kathy raised her eyes from the page, the world came awake again. The spell was broken. The house was awakening as from a deep sleep. The birds again began to chatter, the scent of lasagna drifted from the kitchen, and Kathy's brother began once more to whistle to himself. Kathy still sat immobile, but after a few minutes she came to a decision. She turned the page onto a blank sheet and began to write, continuing the story about moving but melding it to the one in the binder. Her neat, slanted handwriting contrasted strongly with how she had written as a nine-year-old, but her style was much the same. Kathy wrote late into the evening, until she was pleased. She read it through once more, checking for mistakes. She didn't edit the first paragraph at all. 

# Icarus Falling

By Leila Yaghmaei



Leila Yaghmaei, 12  
Aliso Viejo, California

I awake early  
in our small, candlelit prison  
a stone tower  
high above the sands of Crete.

Father melts hot wax  
from his thick candle  
dripping it on my shoulders  
his gentle hands  
press something into place.

Wings!  
Giant, feathery white wings  
unfolding from my bronze shoulders  
I stand in awe.

Suddenly  
guards pound on our bolted wooden door  
breaking the rich silence  
I hear loud shouts of rage  
and sharp panic  
cuts me like a knife.

A whispered warning  
a soft shove  
I stumble out of the tall window  
nothing to hold onto  
and I'm plummeting toward  
the ground and armed guards  
my heart pounds wildly  
I squeeze my eyes shut  
waiting  
I'm a heavy stone  
dropping into the deep  
death abyss.

Then  
my wings snap up  
trapping the cold wind  
I glide softly  
through the blue sky  
I'm alive!

The wind rushes past me  
tangling in my black locks  
and slapping my flushed face  
exhilaration locks away  
my thoughts of dark, suffocating towers  
and nightmare labyrinths.

I look down  
the sea is blue  
a deep, glittering mass

of rolling waves  
spread forever before me  
I skim the cool surface  
feeling the tingling spray  
breathing in the scent of  
salt and freedom.

Behind me  
Father whoops loudly  
“Icarus, my boy! We’re free!”  
I break into happy laughter, and he smiles.  
We fly together  
father and son  
beating our wings  
to a lulling rhythm  
we claim the vast sky.

I see the sun  
a blinding golden sphere  
hanging high above  
I can reach it!  
Up  
I soar  
higher and higher  
leaving Father below  
passing astonished seagulls  
the sun burns hotly  
and my face glistens with sweat  
I reach out to the bright light.

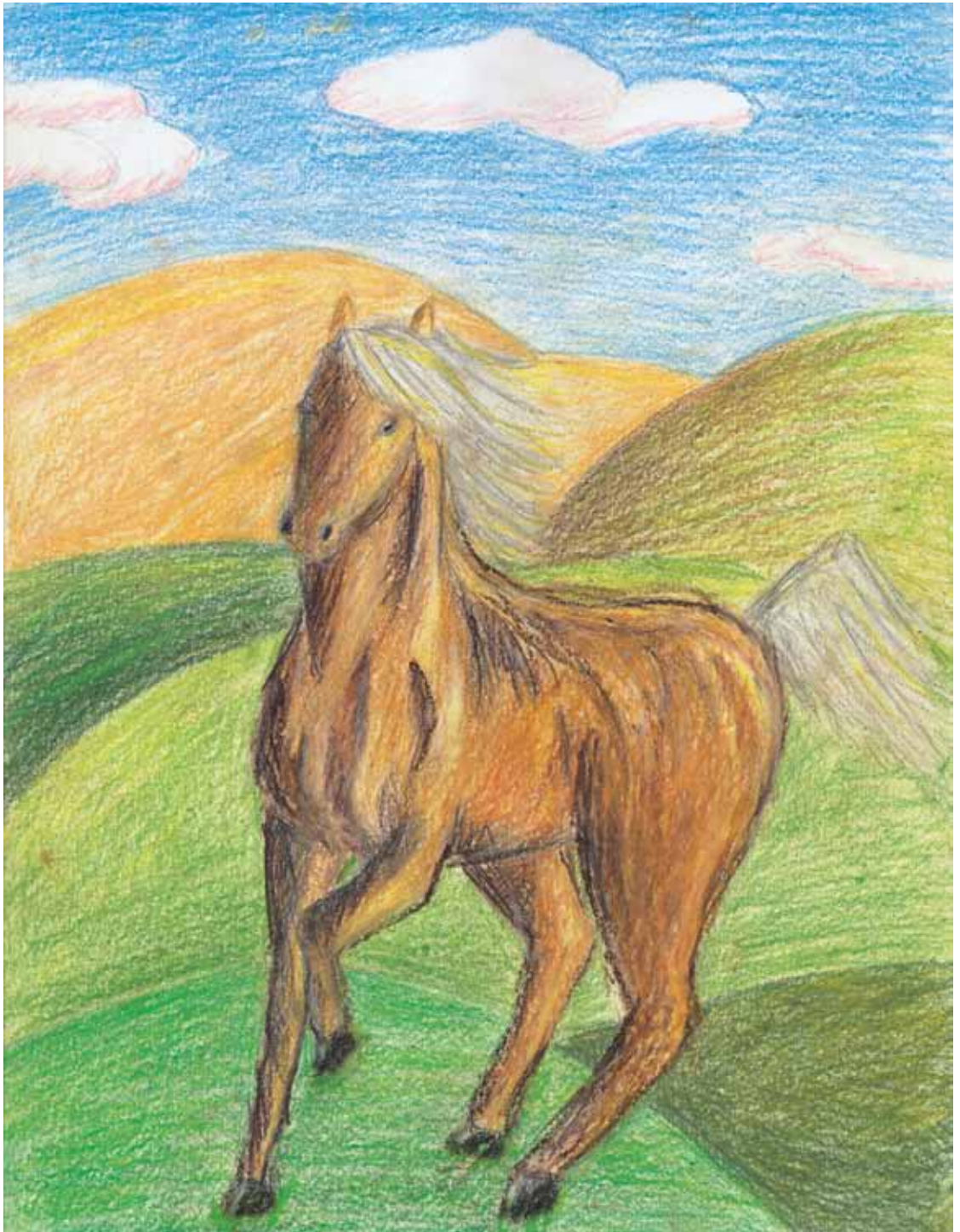
Then I feel it  
the hard wax softens



in the raging heat  
and trickles  
slowly but steadily  
scalding my bare skin  
I'm terrified.

Now I remember  
Father's urgent warning  
Don't fly too close to the sun!  
It's too late.

Feathers  
fall around me  
drifting away  
suspended in midair  
I flap my arms desperately  
and I scream to my father  
the harsh sound of  
sharp  
chilling  
fear  
but all he can do is watch  
helplessly  
the seagulls don't catch me  
in their beaks  
and I sink into the  
black, icy depths of the sea  
all that is left  
is haunting silence  
and floating  
white  
feathers.



*The sun enhanced his golden coat, making it shine like a diamond*

# Diablo's Apology

By **Emily Grant**

*Illustrated by Annie Liu*

**T**HE SMELL OF baking bread filled my nostrils as I walked into the house, carrying my basket of eggs.

"Carrie! Did you bring in the eggs?" Mama called from the kitchen.

"Yes, Mama." I set the basket on the table, where Mama was kneading bread dough. It was strange seeing her alone in the kitchen; usually Colleen was helping her. But since Papa died, Colleen had been spending more time with her friends to avoid the emptiness of the house. Jack took care of the cattle and the horses, and it was my job to look after the sheep and chickens.

"Give me that salt, please, dear," Mama said, nodding toward the can on the table. I scooted the can her way.

"Can I help?" I asked.

"Please. You can chop those onions and potatoes for the soup."

I quietly went about my work, then asked, "Where's Colleen?"

Mama sighed, folding the dough over once again. "She's off with Katie and Nancy again."

"Why don't you make her stay here?" I asked.

"She's seventeen years old, Carrie. I can't just make her stay in the house."

"But you're her mother! She should do whatever you tell her to."

"It doesn't work that way." I could see the sadness in her eyes as she rinsed flour from her hands. Her body was here, but her



Emily Grant, 12  
Potosi, Missouri



Annie Liu, 13  
Somerset, New Jersey

mind was far away. With Papa.

"Thank you for helping, dear, now why don't you go outside?" Mama said. I could tell she needed some time alone.

I went to the room I shared with my brother, Jack, and grabbed my sketching pen and paper. Once I was outside, I did not waste any time climbing my special tree and beginning to draw.

First I sketched the brook running alongside the barn; it was unusually pretty today. Then I began slowly shaping the outline of a pony's head. Pointed ears, alert eyes, flaring nostrils, streaming mane—when I was finished adding details and wisps of stray hair, I was surprised at how good it had turned out.

Some say I should be angry with horses. After all, it was because of one that my papa had been killed. But my love for horses was as strong as ever.

Three months ago, my papa had gone with a group of cowboys to round up mustangs. It was the cowboys' job to round up horses when the herds got a little crowded; the mustangs were then sold.

On that particular day, the lead stallion had not been happy with his mares being taken. So he charged around, neighing and bucking, and finally Papa's horse was spooked. The horse reared, and Papa fell under the flailing hooves of the lead stallion.

I sat in my tree, thinking about Papa and how much I missed him. My mind was so occupied that I almost did not notice the beautiful horse on the horizon. But when I did notice it, I was amazed

and hypnotized. He was gorgeous. The sun enhanced his golden coat, making it shine like a diamond. His mane and tail were white, pure white. Other than that, he was completely golden, all over his body. I could not resist climbing down the tree to get a better look.

He was not any less beautiful on the ground. He stampeded across the earth as if he owned it. I ran inside.

"Mama! Mama, you have to come see him, he's beautiful, it's..."

"Calm down, Carrie. What do you want?" Mama asked.

"Just... come outside!" I grabbed her hand and pulled her out the door. "Look!"

Suddenly, Mama froze. She became pale, and her eyes glazed over with bitterness.

"Carrie." She spoke sharply. "I don't want you near that horse."

I stared at her in confusion. "What? Why?"

"It's... it's that devil horse. Just stay away from it." She gulped and went back inside.

As I watched the beautiful horse galloping around, I tried to understand what Mama meant.

Suddenly, I realized. That horse was the lead stallion who had killed Papa.

WHEN I WALKED into the barn the next day, I did not expect to see the palomino stallion munching hay that had fallen from the loft. I had figured by the open door that Jack was inside caring for the horses, but I was

met instead with the surprised eyes of the palomino stallion. When he saw me, he flicked his ears back and took a tiny step backward. Not thinking about the fact that he could easily bolt and mow me over, I slowly held my hand out. With a fair amount of hesitation, he sniffed it.

Overjoyed as I was to be petting the mustang, I knew Jack would be coming out soon, and Mama would surely order the horse shot.

"You need to go," I said. I backed against the wall and raised my voice.

"Go! Go, or you'll be killed!"

His muscles tensed and, laying his ears back, the stallion galloped past me and out of the barn.

As I watched him become smaller, approaching the sun, the perfect name struck me. Diablo. It meant devil in Spanish, and devil horse was how Mama had described him.

**D**IABLO DID NOT come so near the house after that; I just watched him on the place where earth and sky met to make a beautiful picture. Each day that I watched him, I developed a stronger bond with him, and I felt I had an obligation to him. It was strange. But I felt we were great friends.

Over time, I began to wonder if Diablo had come back to apologize. It sounded crazy, but I thought it was possible. No; I knew it was possible.

Something else, too; it seemed that every day, Diablo galloped closer and closer to the house. It was like he was gradu-

ally trying to get closer to me.

One day, Mama noticed me watching the stallion. Her voice was icy when she spoke to me.

"Carrie, why are you watching that demon?" she demanded.

"Devil," I corrected her under my breath.

"What was that?" Mama said sharply.

"Nothing." I stood up. "Mama, just look at him! He's beautiful! How could you..."

"No, Carrie, how could *you*?" Mama said. Her voice sounded incredibly sad and lonely. "That animal destroyed our family."

"But, Mama," I argued, "he's come every day! Don't you think he may have come to apologize?"

"Apologize? That's ridiculous!" Mama went inside, nearly slamming the door behind her.

I sighed and turned back to Diablo. Without our noticing it, he had wandered over closer, and now he was just yards away from me. He stood there calmly, looking at me. As he stood, I was struck yet again by his intense beauty.

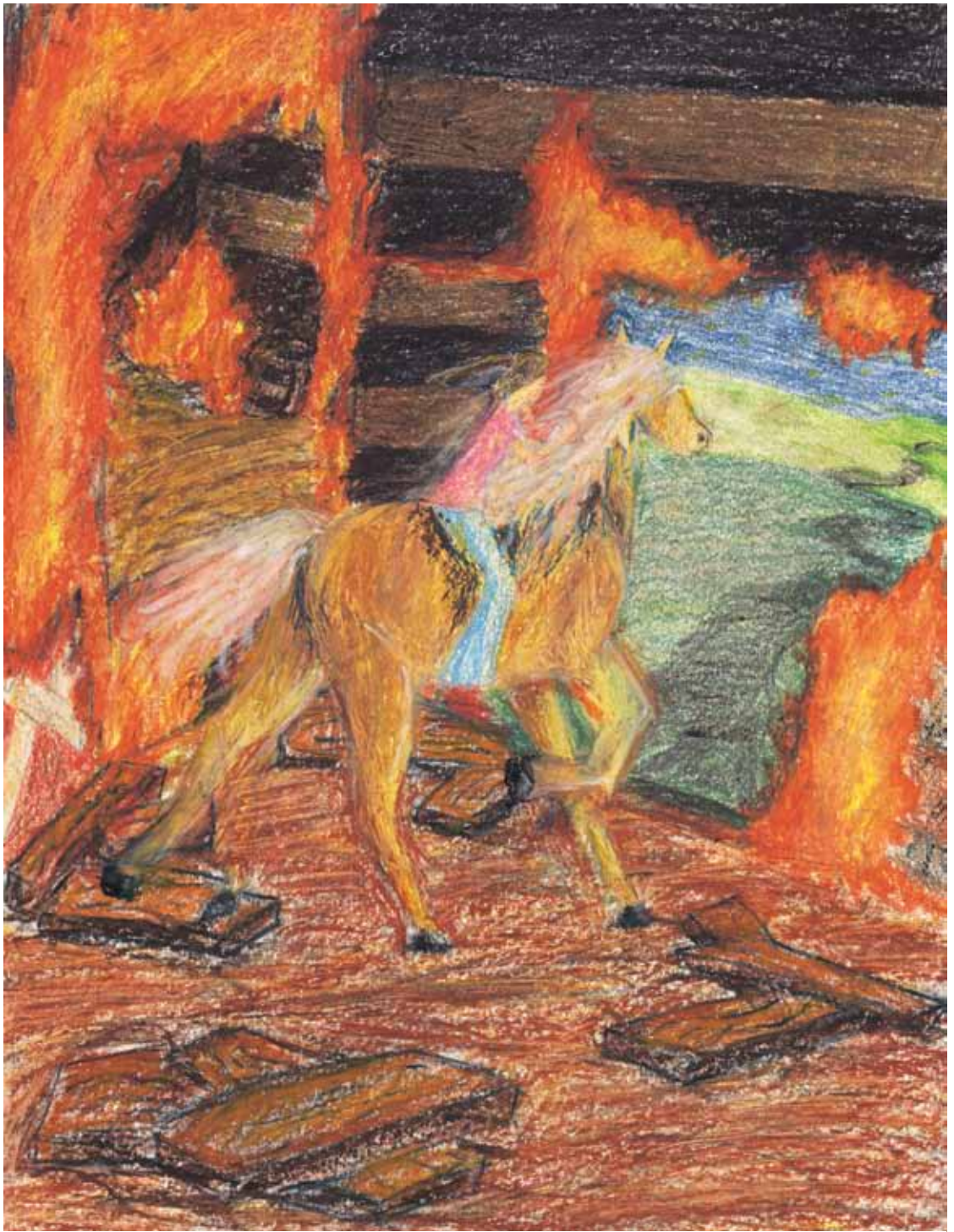
Slowly, I stood up and walked toward him. I stroked his golden nose gently.

"Oh, Diablo," I whispered, "I forgive you, at least."

Then he galloped away.

**T**HE NEXT DAY was dark, dreary, and cold. I stepped outside to do my chores with my shawl wrapped tightly around my head and shoulders. Icy fingers called raindrops reached at my face cruel-





*He wanted me to get on, and I did so immediately*

ly. I was very glad to step into the barn—the wonderful barn, warm with the heat of the cows and horses.

I began reaching under the hens' soft bodies to gather the eggs. The barn was quiet, tranquil. It was a pleasant feeling.

Suddenly, the peace was disturbed when a loud crack made all the animals stir. In seconds, the faint smell of smoke wafted through the air.

Lightning had struck the barn.

It did not take long for the fire to spread. Dry bales of hay made the blazes even stronger, and soon I was in danger.

As flames licked at my heels, I set to work freeing the animals. Frantically unlocking stalls and whipping horses and cows out the door, I did not realize just how much danger I was in until I was surrounded completely by fire. By then I could hear Mama, Colleen, and Jack calling for me from outside the barn.

"Mama!" I yelled in return. I did not hear her reply, for a loud, shrill whinny pierced the air like the bolt of lightning that had placed me in this very situation.

Then I heard a beating sound from outside. The wall in front of me, brittle and charred, crumbled. Diablo had kicked it down.

I gasped as the majestic stallion stepped without hesitation into the flames and knelt. He wanted me to get on, and I did so immediately. The golden horse carried me out of the flames selflessly.

Outside the barn, there was a sort of assembly. Cows and horses stood randomly about, and a few chickens flapped

around frantically. Lastly, my family stood there with open arms.

"Carrie!" Mama cried, embracing me as soon as I slid off Diablo's back. "You're OK!" Jack and Colleen hugged me too. Mama framed my hot cheeks with her hands, and I gulped.

"He saved me, Mama," I said timidly, pointing at Diablo.

Mama released me from her grasp and looked at the horse. Diablo's tail was singed, and his legs were burned. Slowly, Mama walked toward him.

"Thank you," she whispered. There seemed to be more words waiting to break through, but Mama seemed incapable of saying them at the moment.


I stepped forward and nudged Mama's shoulder. She seemed to understand.

"I forgive you," Mama whispered.

Thankfully, the barn did not burn completely. The rain quenched the flames not long after my rescue. Our only other loss was almost all our hay and a few hens.

Diablo became a part of our family. We treated his legs, and he stayed with us just until he was completely healed. Now he roams free once again, and he comes back quite frequently. On those times, I get on his back, and he gallops around the plains joyfully.

Colleen stays at home more now, too. I guess the incident with the barn softened her and made her thankful for the family she does have.

And it is all thanks to Diablo, the golden devil horse who changed just one family, twice—and forever. 

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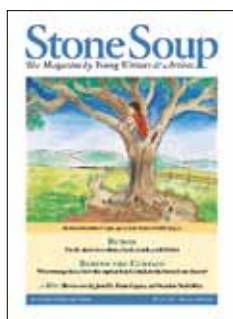
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