

Stone Soup

The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists



Illustration by Zoe Hall, age 12, from "Time for Letting Go," page 27

THE EIGHT SNOW GLOBES

Each snow globe on Ms. Pushkin's mantle tells a story from her life

TO FOLLOW A FOX

It was so tempting, but now Cassie is stuck in another world

Also: A new story and illustrations from Emma T. Capps

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2010

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Stone Soup

The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists

VOLUME 39, NUMBER 2

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2010

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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, heartfelt work by young people the world over, we can stir the imaginations of our readers and inspire young writers and artists to create.



Jessie Moore, 12

Contributors' Guidelines

Stone Soup welcomes submissions from young people through age 13. For our complete guidelines, please visit our Web site: stonesoup.com.

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

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

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

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

Cover: Collage is artist Zoe Hall's current favorite medium because "not only do the bright, solid colors tell the story, but the textures do too." Zoe enjoys saving bits of wrapping paper and grocery bags for her collages. See more of her artwork at her family's blog: zekslite.typepad.com.

The Mailbox



LBP, 9

Even though you declined my story I would like to thank you for writing me to tell me. I know there are many other young writers out there, and you can't publish them all. I would hate to have some other kid be upset because I took their would-be spot. I think it was a great idea for someone to allow kids to publish stories and let them know that even if you're not an adult you can express yourself and let other people read what they wrote. If I do grow up to be a great writer I will always remember that *Stone Soup* gave me that push I needed.

AYLIE RUDGE, 11
Mahopac, New York

I'd like to thank Adair Brooks for her great book review on my grandmother's novel, *Road to Tater Hill* [May/June 2010]. I like how Adair was able to compare her life and family to the story, which was partially based on my grandmother's own life as a girl. When I first got my magazine, I started looking through it, like I normally do. I turned the page, saw the review, and called my grandmother right away. At first she thought I was joking, but then I read it to her over the phone. She was very excited that someone in the North Carolina mountains, where the book is set, liked it enough to write the review. Thanks again, Adair Brooks, for your very well written review!

CONNOR BUCKLEY, 11
Littlestown, Pennsylvania

We're glad you care about kids our age! Thank you for devoting your publication to this age group.

MIDDLE SCHOOL POETRY CLUB
The Spence School
New York, New York

While I was reading the March/April 2010 edition of *Stone Soup*, one of the stories caught my eye. It was "Simple Treasures" on page 41, written by Emma Watson and illustrated by Mary Campbell. I really like the drawings and the way the story was written. I can connect to Mara, the main character, because I too have a really annoying younger brother. Overall, I really liked the story. I think you should publish more stories like it.

SOPHIA WHEELAN, 10
Hanover, New Hampshire

I love *Stone Soup* magazine! The font, the feel of the paper, and the stories, poems, and book reviews by other young writers, as well as the illustrations, never fail to inspire me to submit something. I've read my collection of *Stone Soup* magazines over and over again and I never tire of the work in them. Thanks for publishing such a great outlet for creativity and imagination!

EMMA PLACE, 13
Waynesburg, Pennsylvania

Emma's story, "Swimming with the Dolphins," appeared in the May/June 2009 issue of Stone Soup.

Both Maya and Leela have been drawing every day since we've been here in Paris. I think the inspiration provided by *Stone Soup* is responsible in large part for that drive to create that they've been experiencing. Yesterday we visited Giverny and I "lost" them for over an hour while they were drawing by Monet's Japanese bridge! Their drawings seem to improve as the weeks go by. Thank you so much.

NICOLE KESHAV, PARENT
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

Maya and Leela Keshav are Stone Soup illustrators.

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.



"Ms. Pushkin, it's me, Jessie, from next door"

The Eight Snow Globes

By **Nina Lampert**

Illustrated by **Daria Lugina**

JESSIE WALKED UP the stairs of the old Victorian house, carrying the sticky chocolate cake her mother had made. Jessie had met Ms. Pushkin quite a few times, but always accompanied by her mother. Now that she was twelve, her mother had decided that it would be better if she went alone. She was only there, Jessie reminded herself, to deliver a Christmas cake for their elderly neighbor. Still, what if she wasn't home or something went wrong? Reaching the door at last, Jessie gripped the brass doorknocker that was shaped in a lion's head and knocked three times. She waited, no answer. She knocked again, still no answer. Jessie was about to consider leaving the cake on the steps when the door creaked open. There in the doorway stood a frail old lady in a silken nightgown and a pair of yellow slippers.

"Hello, Ms. Pushkin," Jessie said tentatively.

"Who's there?" she asked, rather confused.

"Ms. Pushkin, it's me, Jessie, from next door."

The old woman was silent for a minute, and then, as though she had just remembered who Jessie was, she said, "Oh, Jessie, come in, come in." Jessie entered the house, remembering her mother telling her it was the polite thing to do. Ms. Pushkin led her into a cozy sitting room with a roaring fire.

"Come, sit down," Ms. Pushkin pointed at the empty armchair.

Jessie sat down and then, remembering why she was there, she said, "Merry Christmas, Ms. Pushkin, I have a cake for you."



Nina Lampert, 12
San Francisco, California



Daria Lugina, 13
Northborough, Massachusetts

Jessie held out the cake, which was in a pink cardboard box.

"Oh thank you, dear, do me a favor, just put it in the kitchen," she waved a hand toward a small doorway. Jessie got up and, doing as the old woman had said, she entered the small kitchen and set the cake down on the green tiled counter. Returning to the sitting room, Jessie sat back down in the armchair. It was then that she noticed them. Sitting on the large mantle over the fireplace were seven or eight intricately designed snow globes. They were all different sizes and looked as though they would have been rather expensive. Ms. Pushkin sipped a cup of tea that had been sitting on a large glass coffee table. The two were silent, just taking in each other's presence.

"You like my snow globe collection?" Ms. Pushkin asked Jessie, who was still gazing at them.

"Yes ma'am, they're very beautiful," Jessie answered as she finally tore her gaze from them.

"That first one on the right, yes that one, that was given to me on my seventh birthday," Ms. Pushkin said. "And to think that I still have it." The old woman gave a snicker. "Now that second one I was given as a present for joining the circus."

"You were in the circus?" Jessie blurted out before she could stop herself.

"Oh yes, I lived in Russia my entire childhood, you see," Ms. Pushkin went on. "Moscow to be more exact. I had it all, the big tents and the face make-up that takes forever to get off. I was a juggler for

my group. On stage I would juggle anything from potatoes to flaming torches of fire. It was the time of my life!" As Jessie listened to the woman's story, she could see a gleam in her eye. "But," she said solemnly, "all good times must come to an end. It was the fifth show of the night for the Fire Catchers, that's what we called ourselves. I was doing my act, juggling the fire and all, when I spotted a small girl wandering onto the stage. She kept coming towards me and, when she was only inches away from my whirling balls of fire, I had to stop. But you see, I couldn't. It was Charlie's job to come out and extinguish the fire torches one at a time, while I was still juggling, but since it wasn't the end of the act, he didn't come out. Charlie was one of the people in my performing group. I stopped the fire just as it was about to hit the little girl, but in the process I was burned quite badly." Jessie looked in amazement from Ms. Pushkin to the snow globe. "Well, that ended my circus days and, to tell you the truth, I still miss them." Ms. Pushkin sipped her tea again and leaned back in her chair.

"Well now, dear, I have kept you much too long." She suddenly looked rather sad and apologetic. Jessie stood up. It was hard to draw herself away from the warm fire and the wonderful stories. "Thank you for the visit, my dear, and a merry Christmas to you," Ms. Pushkin said. "Feel free to come back anytime you wish, although I expect that you have much more important and enjoyable things to do than sit and listen to me rattle on and on."

"Ms. Pushkin," Jessie said slowly, "would it be all right with you if I came back tomorrow to hear another story? I do enjoy them a lot," she asked hopefully.

"Oh, it would be my pleasure," Ms. Pushkin said delightedly. "I tell you what, you come over at around four and we'll have tea." And that's what Jessie did.

Over the next few days, Jessie learned about Ms. Pushkin's adventures meeting the Indian prince and her exciting trip to Spain. She heard about the woman's trip to the Galapagos Islands and her expedition on an African safari. Jessie's mother was delighted that she was spending so much time with Ms. Pushkin, and Jessie was always eager to come again and again and to hear the wonderful stories of the old woman.

"Now that one I got when I went to the ballet with my friend in Australia." Jessie and Ms. Pushkin were seated in the two armchairs in the sitting room, a roaring fire in the hearth. They were sipping tea and Ms. Pushkin was in the middle of telling Jessie yet another story. "It was the best performance I'd ever seen," she exclaimed. "You see, halfway through the ballet, the main dancer was injured so badly that she had to be carried out of the auditorium. Now remember, my friend was with me, and when they called out frantically into the audience for anyone who knew how to dance this part of the ballet, before I knew what had happened, my friend was up there on the stage. It had turned out that their backup dancer had been diagnosed with pneumonia and

it just so happened that my friend had done this ballet in a class over the summer."

"Wow," Jessie breathed, entranced by the story. "This friend of yours must have had a lot of courage to do that. Just think, if she messed up, then what would happen?"

Ms. Pushkin sat quietly for a minute, reliving the moment in her head. "Yes, it was fantastic." Jessie stood up and went over to the mantle to get a closer look at the snow globes that had made the last few days of her Christmas break so wonderful. The very first snow globe on the right was a small one, and inside was a large present and a piece of cake. This was the one that Ms. Pushkin had received for her birthday. And the more Jessie looked at each of the snow globes the more it all made sense. In the second one was a big circus tent with many balloons tied to it. In the third was an Indian palace, the fourth an old-looking church from Spain. That was the church that Ms. Pushkin had told Jessie about. In the fifth were a small marine iguana and a breaching whale. Those were the exact animals she had described in the story about her exciting trip to the Galapagos Islands. The next one had a tall giraffe eating from a tree. Her trip to Africa, Jessie thought to herself. The one after that had a dancing ballerina in a pink leotard. The eighth and last snow globe Jessie did not remember being told about. In it was a small sitting room with a burning fire. There was a large coffee table in the middle of the



"You made all of these, didn't you?"

room and two comfortable-looking arm-chairs. Squinting her eyes, Jessie could just make out seven snow globes, sitting on the mantle. That's when it hit her. Ms. Pushkin, she couldn't have bought this anywhere because it was a complete replica of her real sitting room. And what about all the other globes? They fit her stories' descriptions so well that... Jessie spun around and saw that the whole time Ms. Pushkin had been watching her. "You made all of these, didn't you?"

"Indeed I did," Ms. Pushkin answered, a smile creeping across her face.

"So you were making it up the whole time, all of it! All those stories, you made them up just so I would stay and listen." Jessie was furious. Just when she had begun to really like the old woman it turned out she had been lying the whole time.

"Please, Jessie," Ms. Pushkin said, "that's not true." Jessie tried to think of something to say in return. "Then how come, how come you said you got all of

these snow globes in India and at the circus when really you made them here?"

"I did get them in all of those places, dear, don't you see, those are the places that I received all of those lovely memories. These snow globes, they're just here as a way to display my memories of my memories, if you will." Ms. Pushkin said this in a way that suddenly made so much sense to Jessie that she suddenly felt awful for getting angry with the woman and accusing her of lying. She wondered if Ms. Pushkin would forgive her.

"What about that last one?" Jessie asked finally.

"That one is my latest wonderful memory. It is of the few days in which I got to share parts of my life with you and, more importantly, I got to know you. And it is a gift," Ms. Pushkin added.

Jessie was confused. "I thought that you made all of those, so who gave it to you?"

Ms. Pushkin smiled. "No one gave it to me, child, I'm giving it to you." ❁



Red Fox at Dawn

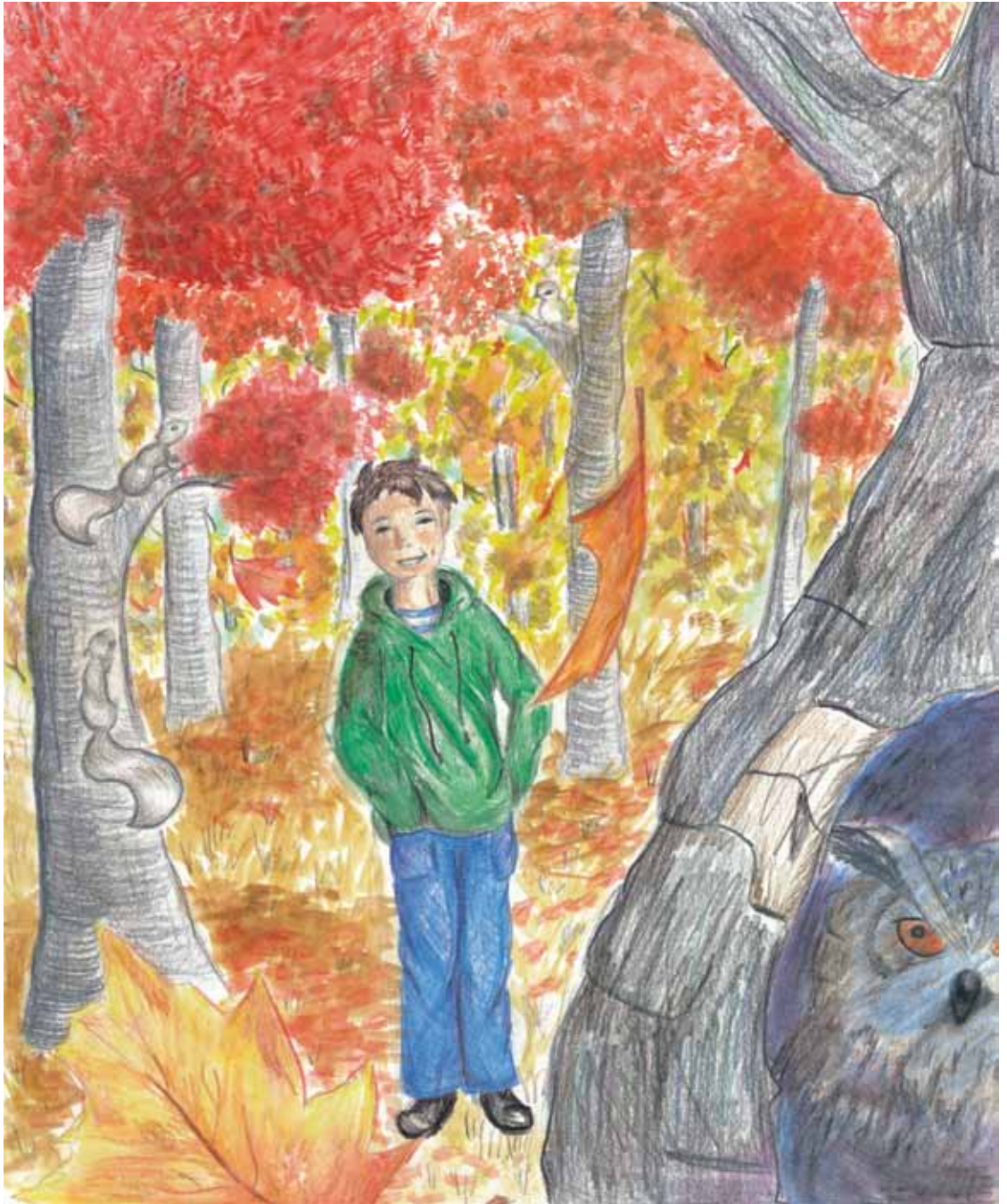
By Olivia Smit



Olivia Smit, 12
London, Ontario, Canada

Red fox at dawn
Picks its way across dewy ground
Leaving footprints
His fur gleams
Like fire
In the rising sun
As if he groomed it
Just for this.
Ears pricked high
His tail a banner for
All to see
Proud of himself
But not vain
How could he be vain?
A red fox all alone
Then joined
By another.
She turns
A signal passes.
Then.
Wait.

Cautiously
At first
Then faster
Come little
Fox kits
Throwing themselves
On the
Wet grass
Delighted.
Then the sun comes
Kisses them good morning
And sets their coats on fire
For all to see.
They hold their heads high
Then disappear the way they came
It would all have been a dream
But for the footprints left on the lawn



Cold wind made me shiver as I stopped to observe the beauty of my backyard

Backyard Battlefield

By **Jack Taitel**

Illustrated by **Alondra Paredes**

AS I SLID OPEN the door a valley of fun stood before me. The bright sun sliced through the cold air, leaving patches of bright grass on the backyard's surface. With no one around this was the perfect time to have fun at my favorite place. I looked back through the glass door, making sure not a single soul was there. As I set out to the swings, the creaking of the porch sounded like the roar of a lion in the peaceful evening air. The earth slid under my feet and, in a fraction of a second, I was taking a step that would lead me to the core of fun.

On the ground, dead grass was covered by colorful fall leaves that fell from trees. As I walked, squishy mud sank beneath me as the soothing sound of rustling leaves overcame me. Cold wind made me shiver as I stopped to observe the beauty of my backyard. Suddenly, the sun heated up like an oven and ceased my shivering. A frantic hunt of squirrels was happening around me like a search for your most prized possession.

I made my way through the tall grass, slicing like a knife towards the swings. The smell of rotting logs wafted towards my nose. My smelling machine scrunched up from the horrid smell. I dodged through dark shadows and then through wonderful light patches. The forest looked so lively but the whistling wind distracted me and invited me to dash across the beautiful yard. It said, "Come on, Jack, you know you want to." Resisting the temptations, I swerved away, knowing that I would have to use all of my strength to resist. The wind continued and eventually I gave way and turned around to the starting



Jack Taitel, 10
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts



Alondra Paredes, 11
Bentonville, Arkansas

line. I needed to improve my racing skills to beat my friend the Dashing Devil. Off the track we were friends, but, when it came time to race, our years of friendship vanished. Some knew him as John Meyer. Those kids thought that he was the fastest kid in Shrewsbury, but they thought wrong. The fastest kid in Shrewsbury was me. The air got chilly, but that didn't bother me. The sun took shelter behind a fluffy cloud, knowing that this clash wasn't going to be pretty.

As I lined up at the starting line, John appeared next to me. "Have you tasted defeat?" I asked.

"No, and I probably never will. Well, at least not from you," he said, chuckling.

"Prepare to taste defeat," I spat back to him in disgust.

We got into our starting positions, ready to go head-to-head, man-on-man. Go! We took off. Me in first, him in second. The colorful trees turned into blurs as he gained inch-by-inch on me. My heart began to pound, I lost energy and he gained as we flew across the grass. We

were neck-and-neck as we closed in on the finish line. I knew that if I could dig deep down inside of me I could beat him. The sun peeped out from behind its body-guard but then went right back, not bearing to see the ending of our battle. Using my last bits of energy, I took the final steps to... "*Victory! Yes!* I finally beat John Meyer," I screamed in my head as my whole body filled with happiness. With no energy left, I collapsed to the ground, still breathing hard. The trees looked down on me, approving my victory. "Yes!" I screamed at the top of my lungs. "I won!" I was exhausted.

Hauling myself up, I noticed the tired sun sinking behind the trees. Hobbling towards the start, I felt an urge to do it again, but the torch had gone out for these games. Later, I lay on the couch, exhausted from my battle. I could still see the grass flying beneath my feet as I glided over the finish line. I drifted off into a deep sleep, satisfied with knowing that I'd finally knocked the Dashing Devil off his throne. ❀



Seventeen Across

By **Emma T. Capps**

Illustrated by the author

“**S**EVENTEEN ACROSS: ‘Meaning of happiness,’” my dad said, reading out a clue on this morning’s crossword puzzle. “How does that work? Doesn’t everyone have their own unique meaning of happiness?”

“I agree with you,” I said. “Leave it blank for now and move on.”

We were seated at the kitchen table before breakfast, the golden smell of baking dough wafting throughout the room.

My dad was wearing a blue sweatshirt over his red plaid pajama bottoms. His salt-and-pepper hair was sticking out in all directions as he filled out his crossword puzzle. He was also trying to keep one eye on the oven, where this morning’s loaf of pumpkin bread was baking.

“Do you want some eggs to go with your bread, Katie?” my dad asked.

“Yes please,” I said.

He put his pen down and walked over to the fridge. He pulled out two brown eggs, deftly cracked them into a pan, and tossed in some cheese and chopped ham. I love it when my dad cooks because *he* loves it, and that joy shows on his face.

My parents, John and Ada, work together. My dad bakes breads and pastries and my mom travels around selling his creations in farmers’ markets near where we live, in McMinnville, Oregon.

As my dad brought our finished omelets to the kitchen table, I inhaled deeply and watched the bread rise through the glass



Emma T. Capps, 13
San Carlos, California

door of the oven. I was pleased that this loaf would stay in our kitchen and not go out to a stall in a market. Sometimes my dad's too busy baking for the market to make baked goods for our family.

"Mom isn't up yet?" I asked.

He shook his head and smiled. "No."

I laughed. "She's a night owl, for sure."

I swallowed a bite of omelet and watched as my dad worked away silently at his crossword puzzle. I gazed out the window at our backyard. I watched the weeping willows sway ever so slightly in the crisp breeze and listened to the deep coo of the mourning doves on the telephone wire.

The rich smell of espresso seeped into the kitchen, mingling with the cheerful smell of bread. The coffee pot began to bubble. My dad hopped up from his chair and poured himself a cup of coffee, then sat back down at the table, sipping it and filling out his crossword puzzle.

I was hungry for one of my dad's stories.

"Tell me again how you and Mom met," I said.

"OK," he said.

And here is the story my dad told me.

MY MOM and my dad met at the Portland Farmers' Market, halfway through March, 1997, on a brisk spring day. The market was outdoors, filled with soft smells and candy wrappers in the gutter, the sun glinting off the myriad canvas stalls. My dad was running a stall there, selling his flaky pastries and

succulent chocolate cakes. No one was taking any notice of him because my dad is terrible at selling anything. He's far too modest to be a good salesman. He eats too much humble pie.

My mom was at the farmers' market solely for the free samples. My dad and I like to joke that every single one of Mom's teeth is a sweet tooth.

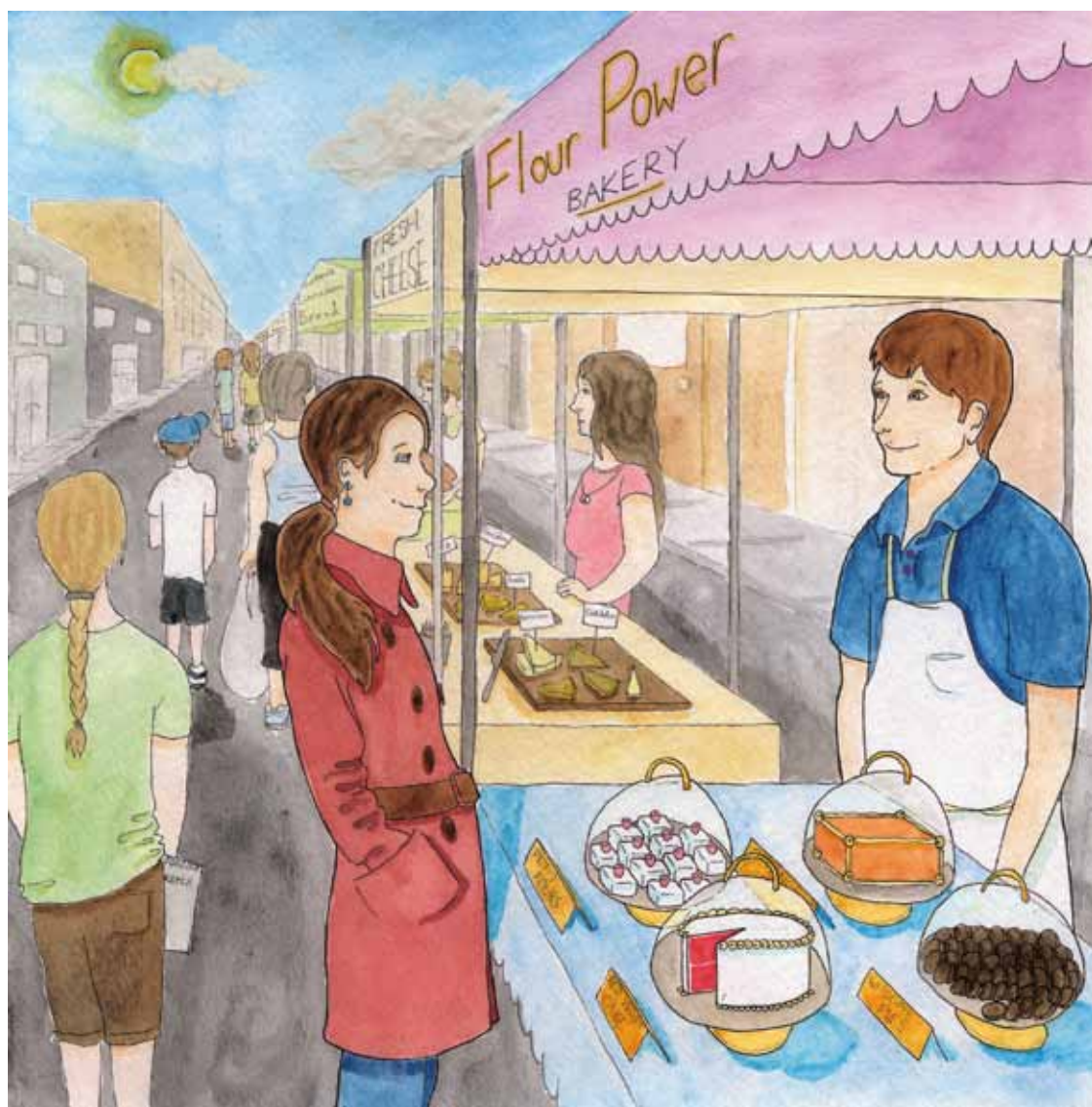
It was about noon that my dad noticed her, standing outside his stall, checking something on her cell phone. The market didn't close until two, but he wasn't selling anything. He was frustrated, and he wanted to give up and go home. After a minute or two, my mom put the phone back in her purse and glanced up at my dad. They locked eyes and watched each other for a while. My dad said she looked smart and mysterious, in a red trench coat, with her brown hair in a long ponytail.

"Listen," she said, striding up to him, "you see that booth over there, the one selling cinnamon bread?"

He looked over at the booth. It was run by a small Russian woman with a wispy blond bun. There was a group of people clustered around it, eating free samples and buying armfuls of cinnamon bread. The woman was grinning. Her pockets were filling up with cash with every loaf of bread she sold.

"Now, you know why there's a demand for her cinnamon bread?" asked my mother, leaning on the table in my dad's stall. "It's because she's not afraid to tell people her bread's good."

"OK..." said my dad.



For the first time since he started a stall at the market, my dad smiled

“I’ve got a proposal for you,” said my mom. “Anything you can bake, I can sell. I know what people who go to farmers’ markets like, and I know how to sell to them. I’m not afraid to tell people that your cakes are rich and moist, and that your pastries are golden and flaky.”

For the first time since he started a stall at the market, my dad smiled. A shy little smile, but it was there.

He stuck out a hand. “John Cooper.”

She shook it vigorously, grinning. “Ada Smith. Glad to be in business with you.”

They hit it off and dated for several



"I heard you two talking," she said softly

months. They became best friends, trading secrets and slices of shoo-fly pie. On my mom's thirty-first birthday, my dad got down on one knee in the middle of the farmers' market, right on the spot where they first met. He held out a small blue cake box to my mom, and inside was a tiny ring made of sugar-coated pastry.

"Will you marry me, Ada Smith," he said, "and be my wife through sickness and through failed crumpet recipes?"

"Yes, John Cooper, I will marry you!"

My dad slipped the little pastry on her ring finger. He never bought her a real ring. They both believed bonds of bread, and not bonds of gold, were what brought them together and would keep them together.

"**W**AS IT LOVE at first sight?" I asked my dad once he finished the story. My dad took a sip of his coffee and pondered the question.

"It was. For me," he said carefully. My dad always takes great care in answering questions. "There she came, all swaggering up to my stall. She smelled like cookie dough, and I thought it was the sweetest smell in the world."

I thought about this for a moment and finished up my omelet. This was very deep conversation for breakfast.

"Why did you say it was love at first sight, *for you*? Wasn't it love at first sight for Mom, too?"

He sighed. "I don't know. I used to

think so."

I smelled smoke and glanced over at the oven. The pumpkin bread was starting to burn. My dad *never* lets his bread burn.

"We had an argument last night," he said, "about work, and our marriage, and everything in between. We've been having more and more disagreements lately. We used to work so well together, but... I don't know."

"You can fix it," I said. "I know you can. You two can solve anything."

I wanted to believe this was true.


"You know," he said, "I didn't tell you the ending to that story. As your mother and I left that farmers' market, I glanced back at that lady with the cinnamon bread. Even though all her bread was gone and her pockets were filled with money, I knew I'd left the market with something much better."

There were two soft footsteps. My mom was standing in the doorway, twisting the fuzzy belt of her bathrobe around and around in her hands.

"I heard you two talking," she said softly. "I never knew that ending to the story."

She was addressing both of us, but it was my dad she stared at, with such love and affection that she positively glowed.

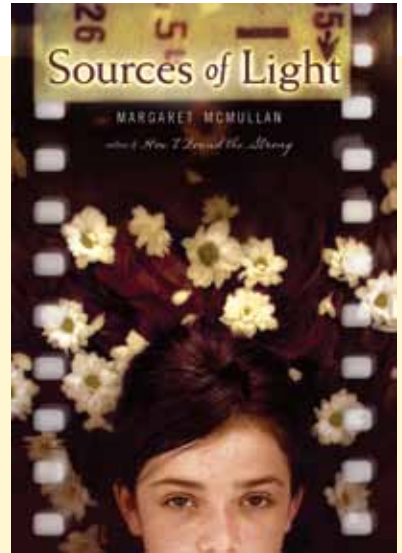
And she smiled down at my father, and he smiled up at her, and that is the meaning of happiness.

I wondered if I should mention the burning bread. 

Book Review

By Mara Cobb

Sources of Light, by Margaret McMullan;
Houghton Mifflin Books for Children;
New York, 2010; \$16



Mara Cobb, 12
Dunmor, Kentucky

HAVE YOU EVER felt a little out of place in the world? Maybe you have felt like you didn't belong, just like fourteen-year-old Sam (Samantha) feels in *Sources of Light*, by Margaret McMullan. Head back in time to the 1960s as you venture on a captivating journey through Sam's world.

After Sam's father dies, she and her mother move to Jackson, Mississippi. It was a bad place to be in 1962. Sam doesn't like that her African-American housekeeper and her Indian friend, Ears, are treated so differently from her. Black people and white people aren't allowed to sit at the same table at any restaurants! Black people have to shop at separate stores from white people. They even have to drink from a different water fountain!

Besides dealing with segregation, Sam has other problems to overcome. For one thing, Sam is extremely shy. Throughout the story, Sam has to learn to be more outgoing.

Another challenge that Sam deals with is that her mother is dating a man named Perry. He's a photographer, and he gives Sam a camera of her own. With this camera, Sam catches some very important evidence. A fight breaks out in a fast-food restaurant because some black college students are sitting with some white college students. Sam snaps pictures of lots of people talking to the students. She takes photos of a mob bursting

into the restaurant and beating all of the black students.

Just when Sam becomes more outgoing and starts to forget the whole mob scene, Perry is beaten. He starts to recover, but just a few days later, he dies.

A few days after Perry's cruel death, Sam begins to learn to accept things in her life. She becomes much more outgoing and starts to make her own friends. Sam finally becomes comfortable in the changing world around her.

I am like Sam in a couple of ways. For a long time, I was as shy as Sam. Like Sam, I only let those who I knew best see that I was not really as shy as I seemed.

I, too, have a great love for taking pictures. I never took pictures of a mob scene like Sam did, though. I think that Sam believed that people can say what they want to, but a picture does not lie. It only captures the truth. I believe that as well. A photo is always the best evidence of something.

Although this is fiction, many of these events actually happened. This story helped me understand what happened around 1962. Every year in history class, I read about segregation and black people being treated differently from white people. I was always aware that things like this used to happen, but I had no idea that things like this happened in the 1960s! I was shocked to know these things went on just ten years before my parents were born! I don't like that people were treated differently just because of their color. I am so glad that we don't have to deal with much of that now! The author describes this in a way that shocks you as you turn each page.

I thought this was a great novel and fun to read. In fact, I could not stop reading this book! The day that I got it, I didn't even go outside because then I couldn't read! After school I ran to grab *Sources of Light*. Every chance I got, I would sneak off to read just one more page. I couldn't wait to find out how the story would end!



Ghost Horse

By Emily Grant

Illustrated by Libby Marrs



Emily Grant, 11
Potosi, Missouri



Libby Marrs, 12
Albuquerque, New Mexico

THUNDER ROARED. Lightning split the sky. Leeto's mane flapped in the harsh wind. The man's silver arrow glimmered every time lightning struck. He shot at Leeto. The arrow struck Leeto's leg. At the same time, lightning struck Leeto's hide. Leeto's eyes widened.

Leeto was a special horse. All horses with his blood were called ghost horses. Ghost horses were magical. They were the only animals—or living creatures—to become ghosts after death.

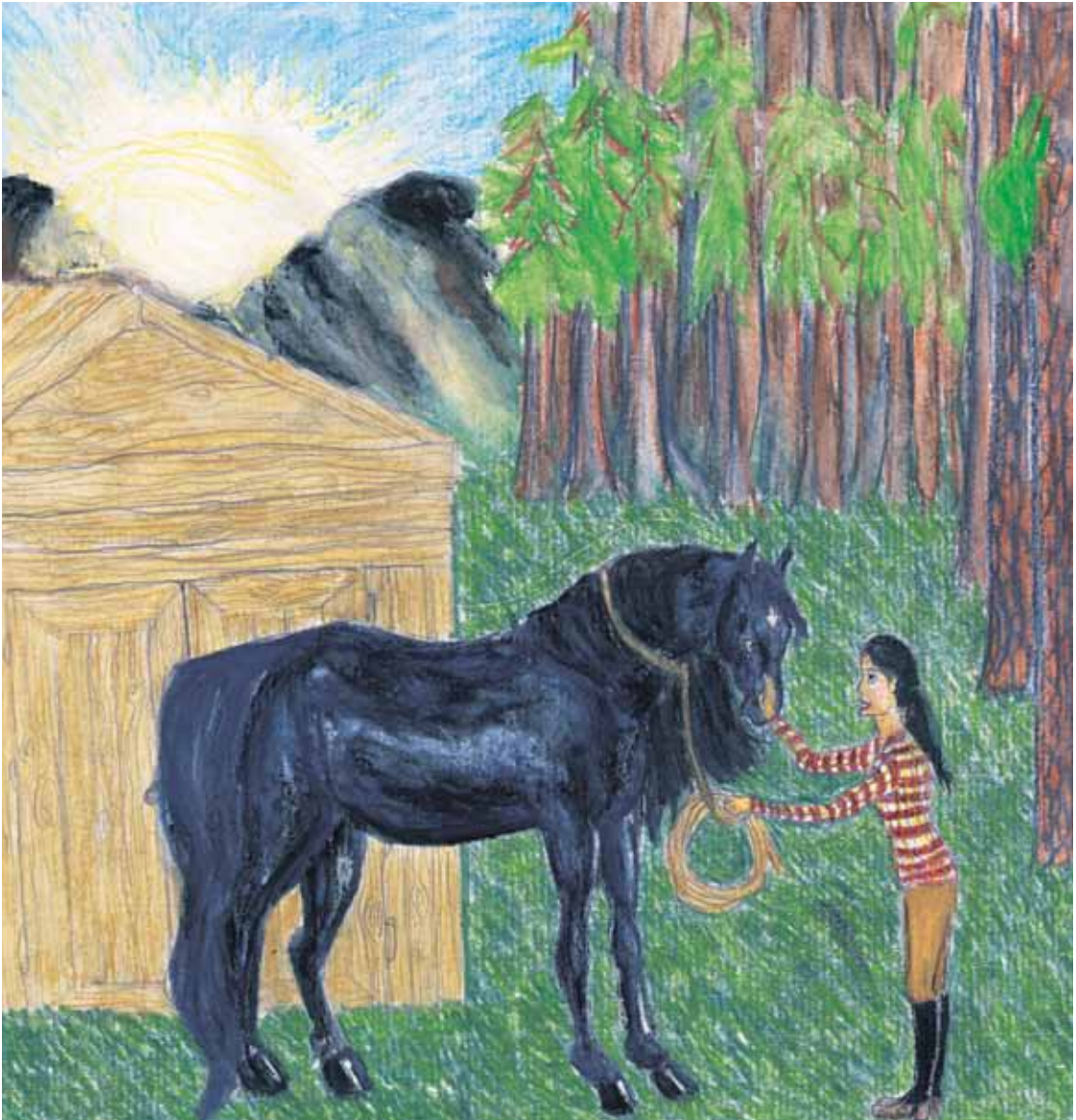
But there were only two ways for a ghost horse to die. One was for two ghost horses to fight, which was rare. But even rarer was the other way—for a ghost horse to be struck by an arrow and lightning at the same time.

Right now, Leeto's life was fading away.

LEAH YAWNED and made her way downstairs. A bowl of oatmeal and juice were waiting for her. Leah sat down and took a big sip of juice. Suddenly, she heard a sound—something like hooves against metal.

Leah ran outside. A pure-black horse was standing next to the shed. Gasping, Leah drank in the sight. The horse's coat was silkier than any she had ever seen. His mane and tail were longer than she knew possible. The horse was a gorgeous sight.

Slowly, Leah walked toward the horse. She grabbed a rope from the shed and looped it around his neck. "You beautiful thing," Leah whispered, stroking his velvet nose. "Where'd you



"You beautiful thing," Leah whispered, stroking his velvet nose. "Where'd you come from?"

come from?"

At that moment, Leah was very glad that no one else was home.

"COME ON, BOY," Leah urged. "Get in." She held the door to the shed

in the woods open and finally got the horse to step inside.

Then she noticed it. Right on the stallion's forehead was a white marking, shaped like an arrow. "I guess that settles it, then," Leah said in a low voice. "Your

name is Arrow.”

“**H**OW WAS school today, Leah?” Mrs. Koble asked at dinner.

“Um, fine,” Leah said. “We learned four-digit division.”

Mr. Koble laughed. “I remember the good old fours. Did you have any problems?”

Leah stared at her beans. “No... Mr. Jacobs said I was best in the class.”

“We-ell!” Mr. Koble rang out. “Good for you, Leah!”

Leah smiled. “Pass the potatoes, please.”

Mrs. Koble slid the bowl her way. “Tell me, sweetie, what did you learn in history class?”

Leah groaned silently. She wanted to keep quiet so that she could have room to think about Arrow.

“Uh, about the defeat of the Spanish Armada... I think,” Leah replied.

“Quite interesting that was,” Mr. Koble approved, cutting off a piece of pork chop. “I loved reading about that so much when I was a kid, I went searching the libraries just so I could learn more about it.”

“That’s interesting, Dad,” Leah said. Personally, she didn’t know how anything about the Spanish Armada could be interesting. “Um, may I be excused?”

Mrs. Koble nodded. “Yes, dear.”

Leah jumped up and grabbed an apple from the fridge.

“Heavens!” Mrs. Koble exclaimed. “You’ve just eaten a hearty meal.

Whatever do you need an apple for?”

“Uh, a science project,” Leah lied, bursting out the door before anyone could object.

Once outside, Leah breathed a sigh of relief and headed to the woods.

“**H**ELLO, my beautiful one!” Leah greeted Arrow. She held out the apple, and the horse gobbled it up greedily. Leah sighed. “I’m going to have to find you some real food if you’re going to stay here,” she announced.

Suddenly, Leah heard a distant voice calling her name.

Leah groaned. “That’s my mom. I have to work on a death trap called homework.” She gave him a kiss on the nose.

LEAH WOKE to a strange sound. She heard a shotgun going off outside. A sick feeling washed over her. What if somebody was shooting at Arrow? Had he escaped?

Alarmed, she jumped out of bed and pulled on a pair of sneakers. Then she ran outside into the dark night. “Dad!” she called to the dark figure standing by the shed. “Dad, what’s going on?”

“There’s a horse,” Mr. Koble replied grimly. “Black as night. Shot at it.”

Leah held her breath. “Why?”

“It was trying to kick the shed down.” His voice was tight.

Leah’s heart skipped a beat. “What happened?”

“Bullet seemed to run right through him.” Mr. Koble sounded confused.

"Leah, that horse was a ghost."

Leah had to grasp onto her father's arm to keep from falling. "But, Dad," she said, "a ghost?"

Mr. Koble pushed her back. "Get down!" he yelled, focusing his gun.

Then Leah saw it. A pitch-black, yet transparent horse stood before them. Mr. Koble held up his gun.

"Dad, no!" Leah screamed.

But Mr. Koble shot.

Just like he said before, the bullet went straight through the ghostly figure. The horse was unfazed.

"SEVERAL PEOPLE have reported a 'ghost horse' to have shown up in their yard," the news lady announced. "It seems unbelievable, but it's true. In fact, we even have some pictures."

Leah recognized the horse on the TV screen. No doubt, it was Arrow. The white marking on his forehead was unmistakable. But Leah wondered how this could be. Yesterday, Arrow was normal.

Leah jumped up.

"Where are you going, honey?" Mrs. Koble asked.

"Outside!" Leah answered. She grabbed a bag of stale bread and a carrot and ran outside. Leah ran as fast as she could into the woods. She ran until she could see the shed looming ahead of her. Panting, she burst through the door.

"Arrow!" she gasped. "You're here!"

Arrow looked at her in surprise.

"How did you do that, boy?" Leah sighed. She opened the bread and held out a piece. Arrow ate heartily. "It's not much," Leah said, sitting on the floor, "but it's food." She dumped the bag out on the floor. As Leah sat there, watching Arrow eat, several thoughts swept through her mind. Why? How? When? They were all unexplained.

Finally, Arrow finished and lay down. Leah offered him the carrot. "I'd better go," she said, shivering. She stood up. "See you, Arrow."

For three nights, no sightings of a ghost horse were reported. Leah's mind eased a bit.


But one Saturday night, Leah ran to the shed in the woods to say good night to Arrow. "Night, kiddo," she said, hugging the black shape. "See ya tomorrow." As she left the shed, a warm feeling came over her. She had a horse. Even if it was secret, she had a horse.

Suddenly, a hot light burned her back. Leah spun around. The shed was glowing. Arrow, transparent as ever, was galloping straight through the walls!

"Arrow!" Leah gasped. "You *are* a ghost horse!"

Arrow turned to look at her. A word on his leg shone like a scar. "Leeto," Leah whispered. "So that's your real name."

Tears stung her eyes. She knew that Arrow would never come back.

But suddenly, she was happy. Leeto was meant to be free. 



She ran her hand over the table's honey-colored surface and thought about her parents

Time for Letting Go

By **Silva Baiton**

Illustrated by **Zoe Hall**

GINA BOSTON SAT with her brother and grandmother at the old, well-used kitchen table in Grandma's farmhouse. They were eating breakfast, which was mixed cereal, composed of six different kinds. Gina and her older brother, Caleb, were used to this because they had always had mixed cereals when they had lived with their parents.

Maybe that's why Grandma mixes different kinds of cereals—to make us feel better, Gina thought as she pushed her spoon around.

She ran her hand over the table's honey-colored surface (scarred and faded from years of baking and sunlight) and thought about her parents. They had both died in a car accident when Gina was ten years old. Gina and Caleb had not been in the car when the accident happened; in fact, they had been seven miles away, visiting their grandmother who lived in the country in a beautiful old farmhouse, where outside there was a cow, eight chickens, and four pigs. Before the accident happened, in 1967, Gina and her brother had lived in Maple Brook, Alberta, with their parents and the family's fluffy white cat, Queenie. Gina did not know exactly how or when her grandmother had gotten the news, but it had been late one February night three years ago, and she and Caleb had been asleep. The next morning, Grandma had sat with them on the blue flowered couch and gently broken it to them that their parents were dead. Caleb and Gina had been numb for a minute and then had sobbed and sobbed. Now Gina could not remember what else



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had happened that day.

In a few days they had all gone to Gina and Caleb's house on Carlson Avenue, had taken everything out and chosen which things to give away and which things to move to Grandma's farmhouse. This was not an easy task because items which had a week ago seemed unimportant now held special value and memories. A glass elephant that had always stood on the shelf, a bottle of Mom's perfume, Dad's favorite tie—now all these things had suddenly become priceless heirlooms.

Grandma had sold the house in Maple Brook. Because she was their legal guardian, Gina and Caleb were to live permanently at her farmhouse.

And now it was 1970, three years later, and they had finished breakfast. They put their bowls away, and Grandma asked what they were going to do that day. Caleb answered gloomily that he might as well stick around because there was nothing else to do until swimming in the late afternoon.

"And plus," he added hurriedly, glancing at Grandma, "my bike needs fixing anyway. The, um, gearshift is, uh, stuck."

"Is it, now?" Grandma chuckled softly. "Well, I guess you'll have to fix it while you're 'sticking around.' It's funny, though; last week I thought you said the chain was stuck. And before that the chain needed oiling. Hmm. Your bike sure needs a lot of fixing."

Gina was laughing so hard she was doubled over and her glasses were falling off. She and her grandmother both knew that

Caleb's bike did not need to be fixed. For some reason her brother didn't like riding his bike, and it was hilarious watching him try to make up excuses not to.

Too bad for him, Gina thought, straightening her glasses. Grandma doesn't want to use all that gas taking us to town, so that's why she got us bikes.

Gina said she was going to ride to town, to read at the library.

"I actually *like* riding *my* bike. I don't have to just sit at home pretending to fix it!"

Her brother scowled at her.

Grandma smiled and winked at her. "That sounds great, Gina. Have a nice time!" she called as Gina went out the door.

"I will, Grandma! 'bye!"

Gina ran to the back to get her bike. It was a glorious August day, and she said hello to the pigs and chickens before getting her bike from the barn. The barn was divided into two parts. One part was the garage, and the other part was Blossom, the cow's, stall. She stroked Blossom and wheeled her bike through the yard. In seconds she was pedaling along the road. She loved riding her bike. Caleb did not. He grumbled about living in the country and not getting to ride his skateboard, which apparently was *much* cooler.

But Gina was happy with where they lived, just far enough away from town, and close enough to bike to the library and other places. She still missed her parents, her home, and her old life terribly, but she loved riding her bike alone on the country

road with her red hair blowing behind her and the wind in her face. She loved being alone with the grass and the sky—and the occasionally passing cars, and the birds, flying with her, were the only others on the windswept prairie.

She got to Maple Brook and biked to the library. She stayed there for about two hours, and then she got on her bike and rambled up and down the old familiar streets. She came to her old house and stopped. A new family was living in it now, and with plastic riding toys and balls cluttering the untrimmed front lawn, the white paint peeling and shabby, and the hinges on the once-gleaming door rusty, her home looked nothing like the beautiful place it had once been when the Bostons had lived in it. Yet Gina could still (she always did this when she came by) see past the grimy walls with a dog-eared Sesame Street poster on one of them and handprints on another, and the broken coffee table tipped sideways where Mom's piano had once stood, see past the dirty laundry strewn around, and someone else's little kids running around wildly with jam on their shirts, and imagine her own family—Mom, with her short, wavy red hair, bent over a journal; Dad, always so serious about movies; Caleb, with his favorite gray sweater and rumpled dark brown hair, like Dad's; herself, drawing, and Queenie, winding around everyone's legs.

My whole family is in this house, Gina thought. We were so happy, playing games, reading, eating dinner and laughing... Gina thought back to a Thursday

night three years ago... She saw a table in *this* house with Mom saying, "How would you and Caleb like to go to Grandma's house tomorrow? You could spend the night. Then your Dad and I could go to see that movie he's so enthusiastic about!"

Her mom had winked at them, and Dad smiled.

Gina and Caleb had agreed enthusiastically, and no one had known that they would only have one more dinner as a family.

Gina wiped away a tear and whirled back to her bike. In two seconds, she was riding away, away from the memories, fast.

SHE CAME to her grandmother's house and leaped off her bike. She took it to the back and ran into the house. Grandma was making lunch.

"Hi, Gina. Did you have a nice time?" Grandma asked.

Gina gulped. "Yes."

Grandma peered at Gina's face. "Is anything wrong?"

"N- no." Gina blinked hard.

"Well, if you're sure. *Caleb!*" Grandma called.

Caleb came down and they sat at the table. Grandma set down lunch—bagels and soup.

Gina thought she'd better look happy, so she pasted a smile onto her face.

"I guess your bike is all fixed now!" she teased Caleb.

Caleb looked mournful. "Yep, all fixed," he sighed.

Gina sighed too, but not for Caleb's bike.

After lunch, Gina ran to her room and closed the door. Queenie was sitting in Gina's room, washing her ears. Gina remembered her mother saying that if a cat washed its ears, then it would rain. Gina buried her face in the cat's fluffy white fur. Queenie squirmed and wriggled, and then jumped out of Gina's arms and scrambled under the bed. Then Gina remembered her mother's journals. She reached under her bed, past a hiding Queenie, and pulled out the large cardboard box filled with notebooks. Gina had read her mother's diaries so many times. She opened one.

This is the sooper
privit diary
of Flora Stanton
age 8 (but mostly 9).
Absolutly NO peeking

Gina smiled at the familiar words scrawled on the pages, but something seemed to have gone out of the journal. Her smile turned to a frown, and she put the notebook back and tried again.

Presented to
Flora Stanton
For her 16th birthday
Love from Mom and Dad
July 3rd, 1948

Gina liked this one. She felt her mother's words wrap around her in a warm embrace. Suddenly she realized that, although she liked some of the diaries, she didn't need all of them. Maybe she could save the few she liked and save only parts of the others. She had been literally *sleep-*

ing on top of these memories for three years. Even happy memories could be painful. Gina got caught up in the whirl of her idea. She took out her scrapbook (which she'd never used), scissors, and glue, and cut out the message from eight-year-old Flora's diary and glued it on a page of the scrapbook. Then she cut out a passage to represent the whole journal, glued it underneath, and put the notebook aside. She cut up the other notebooks in the same way, but saving the ones she loved. She came to a journal from 1967 and shuddered, throwing the book onto the letting-go pile without even looking at it. Gina got through all the diaries and sighed contentedly as the rain started to fall outside. She felt like a weight had been lifted from her life.

She packed up the unwanted notebooks into the box, with the scrapbook on top, and carefully stepped down the stairs to show Grandma. Halfway down, she stopped, realizing she hadn't even asked her grandmother if she could cut up Flora's journals. Gina trudged down the rest of the stairs. She found Grandma in the living room, reading. (Despite the fact that she was 74, Margery Stanton had excellent eyesight.) Gina told her grandmother the whole story and was relieved to see that her face did not show anger, but understanding.

"That's fine, Gina. We didn't need all those old notebooks lying around, and it was smart of you to choose passages from each. I know just how you felt when you realized it was time for letting go."



She felt her mother's words wrap around her in a warm embrace

Gina smiled. "Thanks, Grandma."

Grandma smiled back, then glanced at the clock and saw that it was time for Caleb's swimming lesson, just as he came thumping downstairs, ready to go.

AND WHEN THEY got to town and drove down Carlson Avenue on the way to the pool, Gina didn't try to imag-

ine her family there, like she had for so long. The time for remembering, that had been then. The time for letting go, that was now. Gina knew she'd always carry the happy memories with her, but she wouldn't dwell on them, letting them upset her again. She looked out the window and smiled into the rain. It was time for letting go. 🍁

Book Review

By John Delbert Floyd II

Ragtag, by Karl Wolf-Morgenländer;
Clarion Books: New York, 2009; \$16




John Delbert Floyd II, 11
Loris, South Carolina

THERE HAS BEEN and still are wars between animals of different species. Have you ever heard of a war fought between city birds and birds of prey? Do you always think you're too small or too weak to make a difference? Well, you and Ragtag could get along just fine.

Ragtag is a young swallow that is a member of the Feathered Alliance. He doesn't want to attend the council meetings so he flies off on his own. On a dark and stormy night a storm blows him into an old abandoned factory. At first he hears a sharp noise like nails on a chalkboard, and then he sees strong, powerful wings. He sees sharp, crooked talons and beak, and the floor stained with crimson blood. Huddled into a corner is an injured eagle named Baldur. Once Ragtag cuts through the rope restraining Baldur, the two make an agreement that Baldur will help fight the Talon Empire. This strong bond between these two characters reminds me of the promises I make to my teachers. Before we take a math test my teacher would take up our notes and check to see if they had a parent's signature. My teacher trusted me so much, I didn't have to show them to her. The method the Talon Empire used to attack Boston reminds

me of the way my coaches taught strategies on how to take the ball away from my opponent.

The fight between Hoogol and Bergelmir was one of the most exciting events in the story. A great horned owl and osprey are locked in a fight to the death. This is the climax because secrets spill out while they are fighting. This reminded me of when I hid a test and didn't tell anyone until two days later. When Hoogol passed up his leadership because he was dying, he passed it to Ragtag. This reminded me of when my grandmother passed her special box to me before she died. Bobtail, Ragtag's older brother, is jealous of him for inheriting the leadership. He was the one who attended all the meetings and helped form battle plans. This part reminded me of when my friends get jealous when people get new cell phones, but eventually, like Bobtail, they put it behind them. When Loki the crow flew off to join Ragtag and Tattler in the battle, it reminded me of when another person and I put aside our differences and decided to help each other. At the end of the story, when the city birds won victory over the birds of prey, it signaled that no more blood would have to be shed, no more lives would have to be lost, and they could unite all the birds of the city together and make the Feathered Alliance stronger. The birds broke out into a symphony greater than any ever heard. The way the author described it they sounded like a professional orchestra.

Ragtag shows that a war can't be won by a soldier's strength or brain power. The war can only be won by the size of the soldier's heart. *Ragtag* keeps you reading after every single page. At the end of each chapter, I couldn't wait to find out what happened next. As a reader and a book reviewer I hope to read another Karl Wolf-Morgenländer book very soon. 



She arrived at school just in time to see a reddish-orange fox disappearing into the forest

To Follow a Fox

By **Madeleine S. Gregory**

Illustrated by **Lydia Taverne**

CASSANDRA SAT at her desk in the midst of piles of papers and books. She had cleared a small space where a piece of paper and a few colored pencils were cramped together. A picture of a waterfall flooded into her mind. She hurriedly picked out the blue pencil and drew it.

As always, the picture didn't come out just how she imagined it. The light didn't hit the water the right way, making it sparkle, and where the waterfall hit the pond, it didn't bubble and foam quite the way she would've liked. "Ah well," she said, thrusting the picture into her pocket and grabbing her backpack. She hurried out of her room and stuffed a piece of toast down her throat without tasting it. She ran out of the door and into the ugly yellow school bus.

She arrived at school just in time to see a reddish-orange fox disappearing into the forest. She glanced quickly at her watch: five minutes till the bell rang. I'll chance it, she thought, and chased the fox.

She reached a large, grassy clearing where it was sitting on a rock, its legs crossed and its elbows on its knees. Its face lit up when it saw Cassandra and it turned around, its tail bristling, and disappeared once again into the endless forest. Still astonished at what she had just seen, she followed the fox once more.

Cassandra arrived at a little spring of water she never knew existed. She didn't think twice that she was supposed to be in math class but was instead following a fox through the woods. The fox turned to make sure it was still being followed and



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“Eat it, it’s good,” said Emily, biting into one herself

strode purposefully into the spring. To Cassandra’s surprise, it disappeared once more, but this time it left no trace.

Deciding quickly, Cassandra walked into the spring, her light blond hair darkening as the water washed over her. She closed her eyes to shield them from the cool water raining down on her face. After about thirty seconds of being thoroughly soaked through, she stepped out from the spring and wiped her wet eyes before opening them.

She was no longer surrounded by just green and brown but a marvelous array of colorful fruits. The fox was nowhere to be seen, but a girl with reddish-orange hair

was sitting cross-legged on a rock with her elbows on her knees. Her face lit up when she saw Cassandra had stepped out of the spring.

“I’m Emily,” said the girl shortly. She picked up a blue fruit resembling a tear-drop and threw it to Cassandra. “Eat it, it’s good,” said Emily, biting into one herself. Cassandra was hesitant to eat it but finally decided to try it. She bit off a small chunk of the fruit. It was the most unexplainable and delicious fruit she had ever tasted, and she quickly finished it. In a matter of seconds she was reaching for another.

“I’m Cassandra,” she said through a full

mouth that had been craving food since her tiny breakfast. When she had had her fill of all the wonderful new fruits, the ground was littered with cores and pits and stems. Emily stood waiting for her.

"Where did that fox go?" asked Cassandra.

Emily smirked. "I am the fox," she said. "When someone from this world goes into your world, they turn into an animal. I turn into a fox."

Slightly confused, Cassandra followed Emily as she began making her way through the forest with fox-like agility. Cassandra struggled to keep up and, more than once, Emily had to stop and wait for her.

"What do you mean, my world? Isn't this my world?" Cassandra asked.

"No," said Emily, her reddish-orange hair trailing behind her as she cut a quick corner. Cassandra's blond hair instead got caught by a bramble and caused a sharp pain in the back of her head when she tugged it out.

"Where are we going anyway?" asked Cassandra, clutching her head.

"You'll see," replied Emily.

Cassandra hated when people said things like that. Anyone who knew her knew that she hated waiting for surprises to be revealed, but when they finally came, she was glad no one had spoiled them by telling her.

"Water," began Emily, snapping Cassandra out of her thoughts, "has a strange effect on the two worlds we were talking about. Certain bodies of water, ones that

rain from above like springs and waterfalls, act as passageways between them. When you want to get back, just find another spring or waterfall and it'll bring you to the closest spring or waterfall to your home. That's the spring we used to get here, the one by your school."

Cassandra soaked in the knowledge like a dry sponge thirsting for water. Something rang a bell in the back of her mind. She pulled out the picture of a waterfall she had made earlier that morning. The colors had run a little and the page was still wet but you could still see the picture. She shook her head and dismissed it as mere coincidence that she had drawn the passage between two worlds on the day she actually used it. She slipped it back into her pocket.

After what seemed like hours of walking in the cool, dark shade of the tall, leafy trees, they arrived at a tall stone building. Emily placed her hand on the door and indicated for Cassandra to do the same. Emily removed her hand and Cassandra followed her example. Two hands glowed, indented, on the door.

"Emily and visitor!" exclaimed a harsh, sinister voice. "Come in!"

They obeyed.

Inside was a large, spiral staircase leading to the second floor. They climbed it and entered a room. Emily nudged Cassandra towards the large throne-like chair occupied by a portly man wearing robes of deep purple. Gold buttons strained at his rather large stomach.

"Who is this that you have brought me,

Emily?" asked the same harsh voice they had heard outside, now issuing from the fat lips on the man.

"Cassandra, sir," replied Emily, not looking at Cassandra.

"You can call me Cassie," she whispered to Emily.

"Where did you find her?" asked the man.

"Earth," replied Emily. "She followed me to a spring of water."

"Very good," he said, sitting up straighter. "Take her to the fields!"

Still avoiding Cassie's eyes, Emily led her out, down the stairs and onto the fields.

"Who was that man?" asked Cassie.

"Master," said Emily.

"Oh," said Cassie hesitantly. "Why did he tell you to take me to the fields?"

A pained expression darted across Emily's face but was hastily replaced by an apathetic one. "You're going to work for him," said Emily indifferently.

"Why?" Cassie asked, alarmed.

"Because I brought you as a slave for him," Emily answered, barely concealing the guilt in her voice. Cassie was speechless. It all fit though. Emily turned into a *fox*. Foxes were known to be sly and trick people. She refused to tell Cassie where she was going so she wouldn't try to run. The puzzle was almost complete but one piece was missing, and it was nowhere to be found. Why had Emily told her how to escape if she was working for Master? Why had she told her about the water? Utterly baffled, she tried to search for the

lost puzzle piece. She racked her brain, searching in every corner, but was presented with nothing.


Cassie gave up her search and looked around at the field of corn. "OK," said Emily, speaking rather shakily. "So, just harvest this corn. Here, I'll show you how."

The next three days consisted of eating, sleeping, and harvesting corn for Cassie. Emily visited Cassie on her third day and was greeted by silence. "Come on," she whispered to Cassie. Cassie didn't move. "I'm going to get you out of here! *Come on!*"

Cassie smiled and once more followed her through the woods. "How did you get away from him?" asked Cassie, speaking, of course, of Master.

"I'm a fox, Cassie, I tricked him," replied Emily, glancing over her shoulder. No one was following them. "I think I hear a waterfall this way, come on!" Emily exclaimed.

They pushed through the last few trees and reached a clearing with a waterfall flooding into a pond, bubbling and foaming where they connected. The light hit it in just the right way to make it sparkle. Cassie took out her picture, which was almost identical to the scene in front of her. She replaced it into her pocket and dove in, followed by Emily.

Cassie stepped out of the spring and glanced around at the fox next to her. "Well, whatever those fairy tales say," said Cassie, not sure why but whispering, "not all foxes are evil." 

Flows to Bay

By Catherine Pugh

Illustrated by Rebecca Bihn-Wallace

MADISON SHIVERED in the biting wind. She swayed precariously as the cable car lurched along the cables. It probably wasn't safe to be hanging on with only one arm, but the other was cradling *The Wish Horse* to her chest. A quick glance confirmed that her parents were nowhere nearby. Flexing her wind-chilled fingers with anticipation, Madison pulled the pencil out from behind her ear. The peeling paint rough against her back, she slid to a sitting position, looping one arm through the rail so she wouldn't fall. She opened *The Wish Horse* to the chapter that she was working on. Pencil point flying over the pages in her notebook, she began to write.

Jenna gazed in astonishment at the stallion. "But... that isn't possible!"

Mr. Harling nodded wisely. "We have the legal records to show it." Jenna glanced down at her feet, struggling with the...

A drop of water blurred the next letter she was writing. Madison looked up at the flat gray sky. Another drop landed on her nose. Raindrops fell slowly at first, then faster and faster. Madison stood up slowly, awkwardly, leaning on the cold metal of the railing. A sudden gust of wind caught her by surprise and she cried out as she lurched forward. Instinctively, her other hand swung forward to grab the railing and the manuscript flew out of her hand.

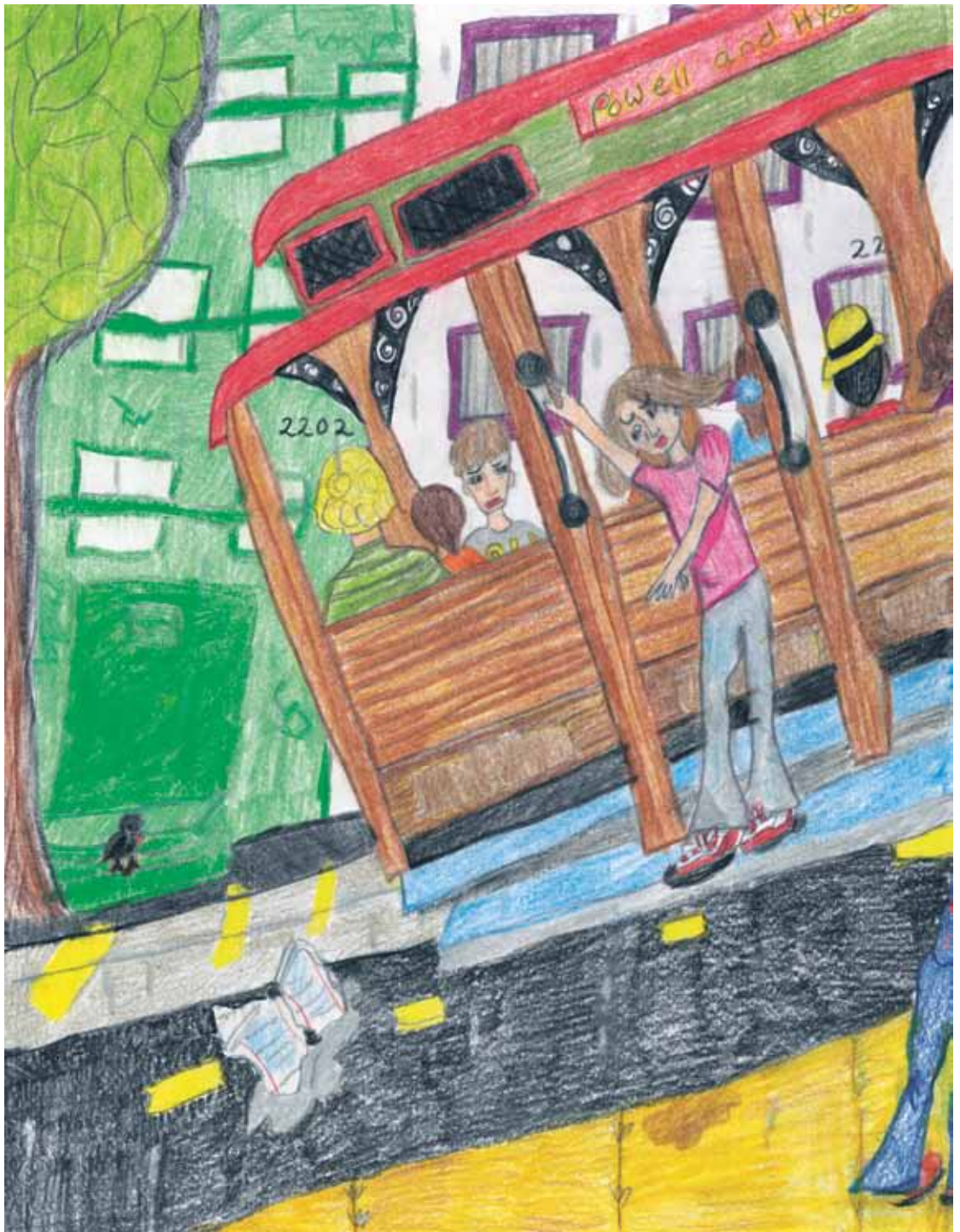
"No!" she screamed in horror as the battered notebook



Catherine Pugh, 12
Saratoga, California



Rebecca Bihn-Wallace, 11
Baltimore, Maryland



"No!" she screamed in horror as the battered notebook tumbled onto the slick black pavement

tumbled onto the slick black pavement. Madison released her grip on the car and lunged for the novel. Her arm was wrenched brutally as someone caught her and dragged her backward. Heart pounding with terror, she dimly heard her father yelling above the wind.

"What do you think you're doing, Madison? That is unsafe and..."

"Dad!" she called desperately. "My book! It's blowing away!"

"What book?" her dad asked as he pulled her into the hot and cramped interior of the cable car.

"*The Wish Horse!*" Madison didn't have time to explain. She jerked out of her father's grip and leaped off of the cable car. Luckily, there were no cars on that side of the road that moment. Scanning the asphalt desperately, she caught sight of the book. Pages flipping in the wind, it was being blown across the road and into the gutter. Her sneakers thudding on the street, she sprinted forward just in time to see her precious novel, the result of

years of work, tumble down the storm drain.

Madison dropped to her knees in the river of dirty water that was rushing down the gutter, pouring in a miniature waterfall into the gaping hole that was the storm drain. Her hand shot forward, feeling wildly around the cold and wet interior of the drain. Surely something that large could be stuck inside the opening? No, all she felt was empty air, and when she leaned forward all she saw was the four-foot drop into murky blackness.

"*Madison!*"

That's possibly the angriest I have ever heard him, reflected Madison dumbly. The sounds of people, buses, and shops faded away. Madison was left alone in a world of silence, staring at the blue painted sign on the curb that declared in white letters:

NO DUMPING!

FLOWSTO BAY

San Francisco remained mute as Madison's mother pulled her away. ❀



Winter Night

By Zoe Phillips



Zoe Phillips, 11
Moss Beach, California

The world is black
No moon
No stars
As black as ink from a squid

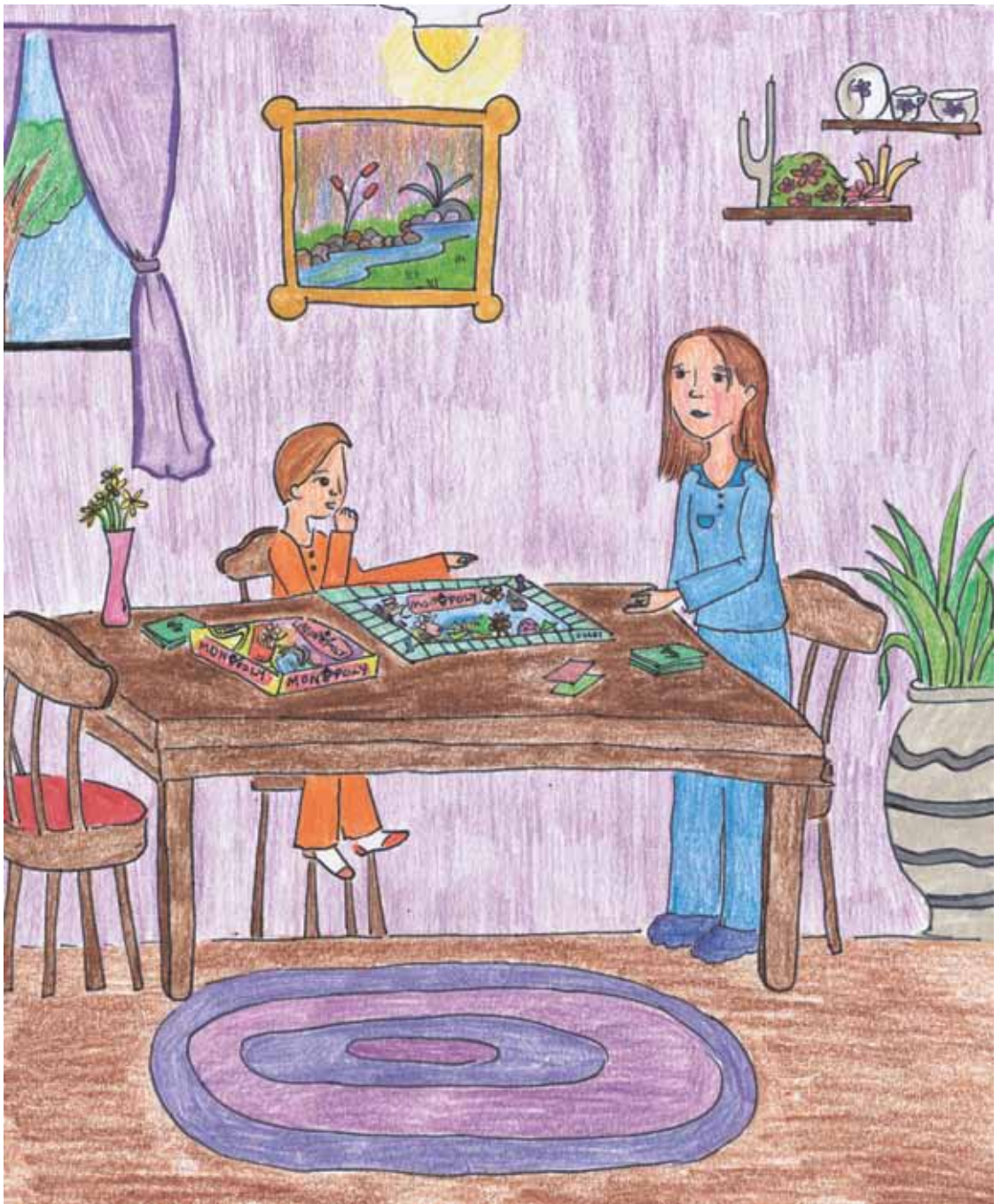
The air is damp
And moist
My clothing is wet and cold
Up against my skin

I can hear only
My breath
And the crunching of snow
Coming from my feet

My boots sink into the crystals
Of white
I walk for hours
Until I see a light
From a cottage

I smile
And run
My feet pounding into the snow
My breath blowing in my face

All of a sudden
It's not dark
It's not silent
I'm home now



I think about how my life is like those two dice

Stay with Me

(I Don't Want You to Leave)

By **Ethan Joel Biller**

Illustrated by **Noor Pirani**

I SIT AT OUR dining room table playing Monopoly with my brother. It is my turn to go so I pick up the dice and cup them in my hands. As I shake them around in the bowl that I made with my hands, I think about how my life is like those two dice. Bouncing around, never slowing down, never stopping. My life is exactly like those dice, it is different in only one way. When I let go of those dice, they'll topple onto the board and roll to a stop. I wish it was the same way in my case. I take my hands apart and let the dice fall to the board. I wish it was like that in my life.

For months we had been moving from one place to another. Sometimes down the street, sometimes out of state. "When is it going to stop? Or at least slow down?" I ask myself over and over again. I want desperately to just stay somewhere. I can't even talk to my pen pal anymore since my address has been changed so many times this year.

I was brought back to earth by my brother's voice. "Jamie! It's your turn! I've been calling you for like five minutes!"

"Sorry," I answer, "I've just been thinking a lot."

"I'll say you have! We aren't going to be able to finish this game before the grandparents come over this afternoon. Now go, it's your turn."

As I pick up the dice the same thoughts tumble through my head about my life. The grandparents were coming over this afternoon as an informal going-away party. We were moving again. This time to North Dakota. That was one of the things I liked



Ethan Joel Biller, 12
Seminole, Oklahoma



Noor Pirani, 13
Centerville, Virginia



“Do you have a mint and a fact for me today, Grandpa?”

about living here in Missouri, being close to relatives. It was going to be hard to say good-bye to them, especially Grandpa. Every time they came over I would sit next to him and chew one of his home-made mints while he would tell me an interesting fact off the top of his head. He never looked anything up online. Sometimes it seems like his knowledge is never-ending. He says that he owes it all to the reading that he had done when he was a boy.

I had a special present that I had made for the both of them. It was a little silk lap

pillow with my full name inscribed on it in fancy writing. I had also put “Love you for always.” It was sort of something for them to remember me by. We wouldn’t be seeing each other for a long time and I didn’t want them to forget me. Maybe I was silly for thinking that they would forget me, I don’t know.

Anyways, the afternoon finally rolled around and soon it was time for us to get dressed. Even though it was informal we wanted to look nice. I put on jeans and a dark blue T-shirt. I also put a blue ribbon in my hair. In case you haven’t noticed,

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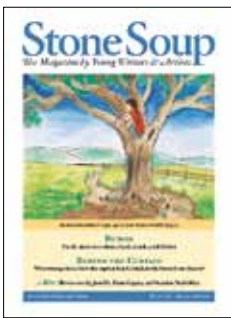
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blue is my favorite color. I heard the doorbell ring so I went to answer it. It was the grandparents, of course. I welcomed them inside and we all sat down at the table to eat. We had made lasagna for supper because that was everyone's favorite meal. Somehow we avoided talking about the move over supper and the conversation stayed on light topics. After dinner, however, the conversation turned to the move. I didn't really want to talk about it so I went over and sat down by Grandpa on the couch.

"Hello, Jamie," he says with a smile.

"Do you have a mint and a fact for me today, Grandpa?"

"I always do," he answers, chuckling. He hands me a mint while he thinks of something to tell me. He finally speaks. "Did you know that bananas grow upside down?" he asks.

I shift the mint over to one side of my mouth. "They do, Grandpa?"

"Yes, little one," he answers. Then he notices that Grandma is motioning that it is time to leave. He puts his arm around me, giving me a sideways hug. "It is time for us to say our good-byes," he says, standing up. We all gather by the doorway to say our good-byes.

Grandma crosses over to me. "I made something for you," she says, pulling a shawl out of the bag that hangs on her arm. "To keep you warm up in North Dakota," she explains.

"Thank you so much, Grandma," I say. "I will wear it for always." We hug close,

tears in our eyes. "I made something for you also," I say, pulling the pillow from behind my back. She thanks me and we hug again. When we part, I go to look for Grandpa.

"Ah, Jamie, I have been looking for you. These are for you." He handed me three packages. "But do not open them until tomorrow when you are driving."

"Yes, Grandpa," I say, trying not to cry. I set the packages on the table so I can hug him with both hands.

The next day I am sitting in the car slowly opening the three packages. The first is his old pocket watch. The second is a letter. It reads as follows:

Dear Jamie,

First, I must explain to you about the packages. Every time you cross a border to a new state, do these three things: wind the watch, eat a mint, and read a note. They are all new facts that I haven't told you yet. And now, good luck at your new home. I know that you will fit in wherever you go.

Love, Gramps

So I fold up the letter and put on the shawl to wait until we cross the Iowa border. About two hours later Mom calls out, "We're crossing the Iowa borderline!" So I wind the watch, pop a mint into my mouth, and unroll the first note. It reads as follows:

"Jamie, did you know that long-distance relationships make people's love grow stronger?"



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