

# Stone Soup

*The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists*



*Scrapes of Light, Photo by Delaney Slote*

## **FACING THE HURRICANE**

A father dares his son to face his greatest fear

## **ONLY AN OCEAN AWAY**

Everything changes when Evelyn's best friend Abigail tells her she's moving to Korea

*Plus:* Two poems that remind us of the incredible healing power of nature



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*The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists*

OCTOBER 2017  
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# Editor's Note

**Fear, anger, anxiety,** the elements—in the stories and poems in this issue, the characters and speakers are all confronting something big and frightening. Time seems to slow down, and nearly stop altogether, in both “Game Time” and “Perfection,” as nerves take over. In “Facing the Hurricane,” the speaker faces not only a dangerous storm, but his own (mis)understanding of his father. Meanwhile, Evelyn faces her loneliness at the thought of her best friend Abigail moving to Korea in “Only an Ocean Away.” In the poem, “I Remember the Water and the Wind,” the speaker discovers her own strength while encountering a storm head-on, and in “Candlenut Tree,” the speaker faces down—and overcomes—her anger “like lava ready to explode into the air.” Can you remember a time when you faced a person, an emotion, or a situation that made you want to turn around—but you didn’t, you stayed? If so, consider writing about the experience—or maybe even drawing a picture of it!—and submitting it to *Stone Soup*! We’d love to consider it for publication.

— Emma Wood

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**ON THE COVER** Delaney Slote is ten-years-old from Missoula, MT.



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## Subscriptions

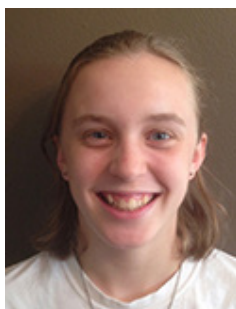
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## Submissions

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# Game Time

By Audrey Nelson



Audrey Nelson, 13  
Bainbridge Island, WA

**Y**OU'RE IMPATIENT. There's no counting how many games you've played in your lifetime. No counting the screens you've set and the shots you've taken and the passes you've given and received. No counting the number of times you've waited in that small, dark, smelly little locker room, quick-stepping from one foot to the next.

And yet, you're the same third-grade girl, hair scraped into a reluctant ponytail, brand-new Nikes over blue cotton socks. Bouncing up and down. *When? When? When do we start?* Butterflies in your stomach, smile on your face.

Since third grade, sure, you've gone to camps. You've guarded girls who broke your arms. You've gotten taller. You've gotten heavier. You've gotten older. Teammates dropped out, rejoined. You can no longer get away with wearing nothing under your jersey.

Now, they whisper your name up and down the opposing bench. Girls play dirty under the basket because if they don't foul you, you'll go right through. The paper flashes your picture and cameras burn your eyes.

But what's different, really?

You still have butterflies: spades of them. You still bounce. You're bouncing now, in your laced-up kicks five or six sizes bigger than they were. There's Ladell, your tiny point guard—she was tall for her age, in third grade, and they stuck her down at the block. There's Desiree, your center. She's been six feet since seventh grade. There's Ellie, your wing. First

player on your fifth-grade team to sink a three.

They're still here. You're still here.

So you got a little older. So you got a little stronger. So you got a little faster.

But it's the same locker room, the same girls. Your jersey's half-untucked, the way it always is. Blue cotton socks rise from your Nikes. You're made of bouncing and butterflies and anticipation.

In ten minutes, you'll be on that court, with Desiree stuck proudly in the middle of the jump circle. You'll be behind her, to the right, ready to grab the ball when she tips it towards you. The bleachers will come alive. You'll have fast breaks and steals, you'll have turnovers and crazy threes.

It'll be just another game.

The same extension of arms and legs, the same roar of the crowd. The same fumbling and breathlessness and calling out. Jumping jacks in the key, three-pointers from the right wing; pick-and-pop and pick-and-roll. L-cuts on the line. *Baseline, baseline!* Plant your feet and take the charge.

The game's the same, and so are you.

Now, in that small, dark, smelly little locker room, you tap your feet. Across the room, Desiree's earbuds are bleeding pump-up rap. Ellie mouths numbers as she watches the clock.

Your girls.

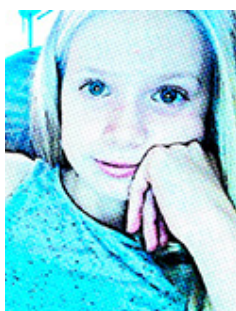
Your game.

It's almost time, and you're impatient.



# Perfection

By Katie Dillon



Katie Dillon, 12  
Winnipeg, Canada

**F**IVE MINUTES LEFT." My teacher's calm voice chimes.

My brain freezes. I glance at the clock. The seconds are ticking by rapidly. I HAVE to finish this test. Now I am just trying to do it as fast as I can. *Should I think it through or just slap down an answer?* Kids start standing up and handing in their papers. The metal legs of chairs clang against desks. I scribble across the paper, not able to feel my hands. Thoughts are running uncontrollably through my brain. *Will I fail sixth grade math?* My head feels like it's on fire. *Stop it!* A voice in my head barks. *You are being an idiot!* Three more students stand up and push in their chairs. I frantically look at the clock. 10:28. Two minutes left. *Should I think it through or just slap down an answer?* Tears spring into my eyes, but I won't let them escape. *Should I go to the washroom and buy myself some more time?* Suddenly, it's a race against the clock. I just want to be perfect.

I know I've always put a lot of pressure on myself. I really want to do well on this. It feels like my whole entire life will rely on this math quiz in sixth grade. It's not like my parents force me to do well in school or will be upset if I don't get 100%. It's me that will be upset. I want to be that perfect student you see in movies and read about in books. I pound my fist against my thigh. I squeeze my eyes shut so the tears won't leak out. My knuckles turn white from gripping my pencil with all my might. *Okay.* I take a deep breath. *Focus.*

Finally, I give up. It feels like I'm going to throw up any



second now. I rummage through my desk to find my pencil case. I zip it open and see a picture I will treasure forever.

It's my little cousin Emily, at her first birthday party. It's like it was yesterday. Her mouth was in a perfect 'O' shape, ready to blow out her candles. Her reddish-brownish hair was pulled into two ponytails with white ribbons. She was wearing a lavender frilly dress that she kept tugging around, uncomfortable with its itchy material. My parents, my brother and I arrived an hour early to help set up for the party.

My cousin was in her dress and dancing around singing "Emmy birthday! Emmy birthday!"

I smiled.

We tried to teach her how to say her name, but apparently now it's just "Emmy." I scooped her up in my arms, and we headed towards the basement as she squealed at the top of her lungs. We climbed down the stairs one at a time, the rough carpet scratching against our feet. She caught her eyes on her bright red toy car and sprinted over to it.

"Wait!" I shouted. But she ignored me. I sighed and ran after her.

She climbed on and looked at me with a huge grin. I bent down on my knees, grabbed hold of the handles and pushed

forward. We circled around the white couch and accidentally crashed into a pile of stuffed animals. Emily fell over and so did I.


"Whoops! Sorry Em," I said. She didn't have to say anything. Her smile said it all. She gave me a big hug and I knew that she loved me, no matter what I did. The little red car was beat up and old, but it was still filled with many memories.

She was honking the car horn and screeching "Beep! Beep! Go car gooooo!" And then she would laugh hysterically. This made me laugh too, so we kept on laughing and laughing until our bellies ached. Suddenly, all my aunts and uncles came thundering down the stairs and raced over to Emily as fast as the 100-meter dash at the Olympics. They all start to gush over her, taking pictures and talking in those high, squeaky voices that adults use when they talk to babies. No one even notices I'm there.

It's so easy for her—she doesn't have to worry about doing well on a test, or care about what people think.

"Kate!" a voice says, snapping me out of my daydream. "Are you coming out for recess?"

"Yeah." I say, zipping up my pencil case

I hand in my unfinished test. Nobody's perfect, not even me. 



*"Girl Asleep"*



Sophia Bartolini, 11  
Holland, NY

# I Remember the Water and the Wind

*By* **Callen Bailey**

I remember the water and the wind —

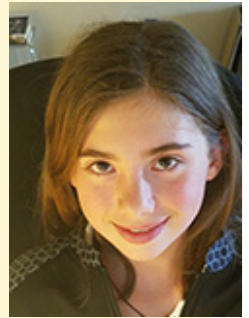
in the Adirondacks,  
in our small blue canoe.

I remember the child's paddle in my hands,  
  
with the muscles on my back and shoulders,  
tense and pulsing,  
with each stroke.  
I was maintaining our position in the water  
because I wasn't strong enough yet  
to move us forward  
like Dad or Mom

could.

I remember how the rain hit my small back  
  
and stung each time,  
like bee stings.

And I remember fighting  
the two-foot waves that splashed  
over and into our blue canoe.



Callen Bailey, 12  
Lewisburg, WV

I remember feeling so powerful,  
and invincible,  
even though a good wave could flip us,  
and even though I was five,

I felt strong.

I felt strong among the storm,  
among the bee-sting rain,  
among the sharp wind,  
among the two-foot waves that soaked me,  
among my little sister, three years old and scared.

And I remember being within all that chaos,  
and thunder and lighting,  
and tense muscles,  
and strong paddle strokes,  
and pumping blood,  
and chaos.

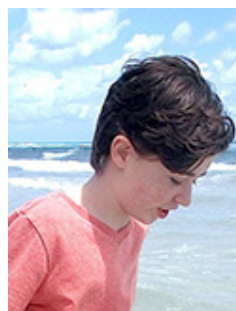
I was immersed in the water and the wind.

And I was

laughing.



*"Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada"*



Maximilien St-Jacques, 13  
Brooklyn, NY

# Facing the Hurricane

By Justin Le Veness



Justin Le Veness, 11  
New York, NY

IT WAS A STORMY DAY in October 2016. One of the worst hurricanes since Katrina was raging New York City, and for me, the Upper East Side. Flood barriers were being broken, homes destroyed, people getting stuck. The thought of being outside was scary in itself.

Yet, my dad, notorious for daring me, dared me to go outside!

My dad is at an average height of 5'9", which I am close to surpassing. His hair is cropped black hair and always glimmering in the day. He is known for being upbeat and always daring me to do all sorts of things.

He dared me to bike ride on the GW bridge when I was eight, and he dared me to jump off a cliff into the ocean (it was legal and not that high), but even this seemed a bit too much for him.

Putting on my shoes, I felt a sudden wave of fear overcome me. I was scared as I touched the elevator's soft button. As each floor rolled away, I became increasingly excited, but at the same time, a bit anxious. I was worried about what might happen, but also what it would look like. The soft carpet seemed to be all around me. It was on the floor and walls, surrounding me. The elevator dinged, and I stepped out into the lobby.

When I turned to the right, I saw something amazing, so incredible. Our windows are huge—they're about nine feet tall, and I can easily see through them.

The winds were whipping about, my legs trembled at the sight. I heard the wind as it went through the trees and went around the cars. I walked down the first step, ever so slightly. I was feet away to my eight-year-old self's doom. I walked hesitantly the last few steps and turned the cold handle with my sweaty hand, stepping into the small cubicle that separated the outdoors from the actual building.

I heard the wind howling outside. I finally, reluctantly, turned the handle into the night.

I was scared for the winds and the sound of rain, pitter pat, pitter pat, pitter pat. Our attendant, Julio, was outside. Surprisingly some people were on their terraces also watching.

Suddenly I started to understand what was happening when I saw what was about me. There was no garbage, no cars were on the street, and every store was closed. Usually New York is a bit dirty, and always bustling. It was a strange sight. I was trembling, and my face was pale.

"Can we go inside so I can read, dad?" I asked my dad.

He responded, "Of course, man." He opened the door and, with his hand around my small eight-year-old shoulders, led me through.

I was shocked, usually he would have said something like "Oh, it's not

that bad dude," but this time I really think he didn't want me to feel scared or frightened. I thought back to my other times with my dad. I realize now that he would never have brought me out if the storm was that bad. Maybe he was different than I thought at the time. I was so shocked actually that I didn't look where I

was going and banged into the door.

As I went up the elevator again, I was relieved it was over. I had been frightened when I went outside. Images still passed through me, like when I saw that

car driving and skidding to a halt at a red light. Finally it dinged 5, and I stepped out into the hotness of my floor. I felt safe again, feeling as though I was back home, with my family.

The lights illuminated the area in a mysterious way, a way that always spooked me out. I stepped in, and I grabbed *The Perfect Storm* by Sebastian Junger and read in my bed. I flipped the page and listened to the crinkle of the book, and the winds.


As I was reading, I began to think. Did I actually believe my dad would, on purpose, let me get hurt? I didn't think so. After all, he was my dad, and dads don't let their children get hurt, especially my dad. I was actually regretting that I hadn't stayed outside with my dad and experienced

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When I turned to the right, I saw something amazing, so incredible.

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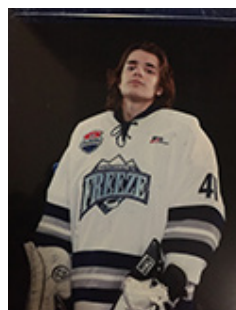
the hurricane more. Then, I thought maybe this realization wouldn't have happened. I think that seeing my dad do that, my thought of me knowing

everything about him, changed. I learned he does know my limit and respects it also. 





*"The Look"*



Gavin Einfeldt, 14  
Randolph, NJ

# Only an Ocean Away

By Evelyn Fitzpatrick



Evelyn Fitzpatrick, 11  
New York, NY

I HAD ALWAYS lived on the floor above my best friend. I lived on the 29th floor of our building, and she lived on the 28th. All I had to do was ride the elevator down one floor. But now it's different. Now I have to cross an ocean to see my best friend.

Abigail and I had been friends for as long as either of us could remember. You would never see me without her, or her without me. We would stick together, as if glue kept us that way. We were inseparable. We were sisters. We were best friends.

It all started on a crisp spring afternoon. The leaves were green; the flowers were blooming; and the sky was blue. I could feel myself smiling as I skipped to the swing set in the yard of my building. I knew that Abigail would be waiting for me there, like she always would back then, three years ago, when we were eight and in the second grade. I started to sprint over, imagining the fun we would have in my mind.

Suddenly, I stopped in my tracks. My stomach twisted into a knot. I saw Abigail's tear-streaked face, and I ran towards her. I ran as fast as my legs would carry me. That moment I knew, just like you know that it's going to snow long before the first snowflake lands on your nose, that everything was about to change. I gazed up at the leafy trees and the ice blue sky. It was as if the sky didn't care that everything was changing.

Slowly, I walked over to Abigail. I crouched down

next to her, careful not to step on her trembling hands. "What's wrong?" I asked, rubbing her back, which was heaving from her sobs. I looked into her large, brown, almond-shaped eyes.

"Please don't be mad," she pleaded.

"Why would I be?"

"Because," she started to sob, "this is going to change *everything*."

"Wha—," I started, suddenly concerned.

"I'm moving," she blurted out, hiding her face in her jet black hair. "To Korea."

At that moment, I felt like crying. My head started to pound, and a faint dizziness came over me. I buried my face into my hands, vigorously shaking my head. No, this can't be happening, I thought. I couldn't move. I couldn't breathe. I just sat there, frozen in place. I blinked rapidly to stop the warm tears from escaping my eyelids. Moving? To Korea? I asked myself over and over again.

"You can't move! No, please don't leave," I pleaded between heavy sobs.

"I *need* to go. My dad got a new job. Everything's all planned out. I don't have a say in this. And, uh, we're leaving in two days!" She explained, with a hopeless look in her eyes, while she pulled her shiny hair into a ponytail.

"Two days? You can't just leave

me! It's not fair! Wait a second, why didn't you tell me?!" I could feel my face growing hot and red.

"I tried to! You've got to understand! Please understand. I don't have any control over this!" she said, her voice breaking.

"Well, I don't understand," I told her, my voice growing louder by the second, "Friends don't leave each other."

"Sometimes they have to. Sometimes things need to change," she spoke, placing her hand on my shoulder. I pushed it off and turned away, my face flushed with anger.

"No, they don't need to change," I argued. Things are fine as they are. Why do we need to change it? How could she do this to me? Friends don't abandon each other, I thought.

"Why can't you be happy for me?" she asked, standing up and crossing her arms over her chest.

"Why should I be happy for you?" I snapped back. "How could I be happy for you when you've betrayed me like this? You're *abandoning* me."

"Betrayed you? You've got to be kidding!" she shot back. But I didn't hear her. I was too busy storming away from her.

I hate her. I'm going to hate her forever. How does she think I feel? I thought.

That evening passed in a blur. I

don't remember anything from that night. Just being too angry and shaken to speak, eat, or sleep. Thoughts swam around in my brain as I laid under my covers. How does she think I feel? I asked myself again.

All of a sudden, I could hear someone creeping into the room. I buried myself underneath my blankets and laid still, as if I were asleep.

"I know you're awake," I heard a voice whisper next to my bed. "There's no use faking it." I knew that it was my mother. I could recognize her gentle footsteps, sneaking closer. "Abigail's mom told me about their move," she spoke, frowning sadly, "You're going to miss her so much! But change happens."

"Why does everyone keep saying that?" I burst out.

"Because it's true, Evelyn. I know how hard this is, and it's only going to get harder. Whether you like it or not, things change. People change."

I groaned, and rolled my eyes, "It's all her fault. She ruined a perfectly good friendship."

"What happened?" My mom asked, slowly.

"None of your business," I replied, yawning.

"Listen, sweetie," my mother said, attempting to give me a kiss, "you need to go to sleep. But tomorrow, you are telling me all about what happened between you and Abigail."

"No, I'm not," I argued.

"Just come to me if you need me,"

she told me sweetly, blowing me a kiss. "I love you."

"Love you too," I muttered, half asleep.

The next morning, I stared at my shoes as I walked to school. When I arrived at the classroom, I greeted my teacher, Myra, with a plastic smile and clenched teeth. Usually I would be genuinely happy to see her, but I was still upset from the previous day's events. I glanced around at the colorful posters that plastered the walls and sighed.

I sat down at my table seat, dreading the six hours and twenty minutes ahead. I took a bright yellow pencil from the table caddy and placed my head on my desk, closing my eyes. I hadn't slept at all. It's going to be a long day, I thought.

One by one, my classmates piled into the room. They chattered excitedly, with broad smiles on their faces.

"Hey, Evelyn! How are you? Is everything okay?" my friend Maddy asked.

"I'm fine," I mumbled, staring at the floor. Then I felt something brush against my hip. It was Abigail. I gazed in her direction, but I avoided any eye contact. I could see that her face was the same shade of red as the eraser on the end of my pencil. She carefully opened her backpack, which was identical to mine. We had begged our mothers into buying matching school supplies, and we were ecstatic when we both arrived

at school with the same bags, pencil cases, and pens. I couldn't imagine why I would ever want to have the same things as her. This isn't how friends are supposed to act with each other, I thought angrily.

Once every student had arrived and we were all seated at the rug, class began. I sat directly behind Abigail, and while sitting there, I surprised myself by needing to fight the urge to whisper a joke in her ear. Do I miss Abigail? I asked myself. Suddenly, I realized that I had made a mistake. A terrible, terrible mistake.

I couldn't rid the thought from my head. How does Abigail feel? I wondered anxiously. I knew that she was probably feeling scared to be moving to a new country where she knew absolutely no one. She was probably sad to be leaving the only place she had ever known. Oh, no. I thought. What have I done? But most importantly, Abigail was *definitely* mad at me for abandoning her in the time she needed me the most. I don't blame her, I thought. How am I going to fix this?

After several minutes of thinking, I had decided to simply talk to her. This is going to work. I just know it, I thought, preparing for what I was going to say.

Finally, it was time for recess. A stampede of hyper children pushed and shoved to enter the yard. Screams of laughter and cheers filled the air,

as we all ran into the schoolyard. My ears were ringing from all the noise, so I sat down on the bench. This particular bench was one of my favorite places, partly because it was where Abigail and I met, and because it sat right under a beautiful tree. The tree was a weeping willow, and its branches reached out, as if calling me closer. I loved that tree. My mind wandered back to reality.


I sat, hugging my knees and rocking back and forth, hopeless. All of a sudden, I realized that someone had sat down next to me. It was Abigail. I smiled to myself and lifted my head to face her. Our eyes locked, and right then I knew that we would be okay.

The next thing I knew, we were hugging. "Abigail, I'm so sorry. I was a jerk."

She smiled and responded, "Yeah, you were. But I forgive you."

"I'm going to miss you," I whispered into her ear.

It was right then when I knew that we would stay friends no matter what. Nothing could ever keep us apart, not even the fact that Abigail was moving. She would only be an ocean away.

"I'm going to miss you more," she whispered back, a huge smile spreading across her face. 

# Candlenut Tree

By Christiana Joiner



Christiana Joiner, 11  
Kihei, HI

Angry labored breath  
All I can hear  
Angry labored breath  
I don't remember what I'm angry about  
Something  
Doesn't matter...  
I turn back to my math book  
One problem left  
I can't think,  
My mind  
Crowded by a radiating heat,  
Like lava ready to explode into the air  
I need clarity  
I stand from my recumbent position  
Dad asks me something about where  
I am going  
I barely hear him  
And don't answer  
I rush through the front door  
Rough concrete hits my feet,  
Shocking me back to reality  
I hit the ground running, running  
It feels like a few miles

It is only a few feet  
The spiky grass of the front lawn  
Grabs at my feet  
Tripping over the exposed roots, closer, closer to my beloved tree,  
My clarity  
I grab the bark and lift up,  
My limbs flying over practiced handholds and footholds  
Climbing higher  
Higher  
Not registering the rough, sandpapery bark  
Scratching  
I finally reach the branch where I sit  
Dream  
I let out my breath  
Not realizing I had held it  
Scalding hot tears hesitate  
At the edge of my eyes...  
Unsure of what to do  
A stinging sensation  
I stare down at my hands,  
Red and scratched  
I close my eyes  
Lean against another branch

The anger leaves me  
Tears trickle down my face  
Cooling down the red sweaty mess  
My face has become  
My crowded head clears  
Leaving a glowing radiance of clarity  
For a moment there is nothing, but the brilliance of silence  
Shared by the tree and the wind





*"Mountain Quail"*

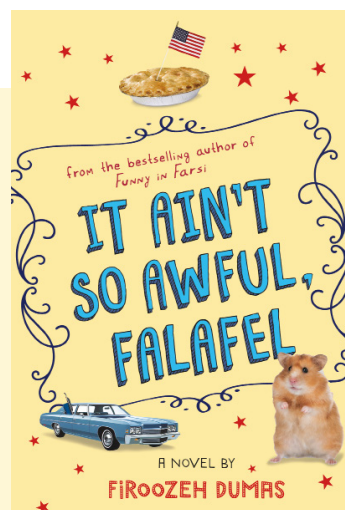


Sierra Glassman, 10  
Watsonville, CA

# Book Review

By Sahana Nellian

*It Ain't So Awful, Falafel*, by Firoozeh Dumas;  
Clarion Books: New York, 2016; \$16.99



Sahana Nellian, 11  
Dublin, CA


HAVE YOU EVER desired to be like someone else or to lose everything that makes you different and just blend in? Desperate to belong in a foreign country, Zomorod Yousefzadeh is tired of who she is and that is exactly how she felt when she changed her name to Cindy. She then makes a friend who lives next door and her name is coincidentally Cindy too. Soon, Zomorod realizes that Cindy isn't such a true friend when she rudely tells Zomorod that she doesn't like her.

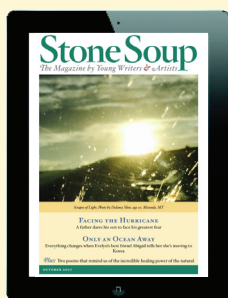
Before she realizes it, Zomorod suddenly has more problems. Middle school has made its appearance. On the first day of school, Cindy whispers something to her friends when Zomorod passes and they abruptly burst into laughter. The late 1970s bring more troubles than you could expect for young Zomorod. Stuck in a web of questions about camels, and teachers asking her to talk about her homeland, Iran—that she is ashamed of—Zomorod feels lonelier than ever. Just when she makes one faithful friend and joins Girl Scouts, her happiness is diminished, like a fire blown away leaving the people shivering with the coldness of the air. The first heart-breaking event is when her father loses his job. He was only in the US because of his job, but all of this turmoil changes things.

To worsen the circumstances, Zomorod's mom can never seem to be happy. She is always crying or yelling and Zomorod can't handle the pressure. With mixed feelings of love and hate towards America, Zomorod feels very uncertain about this new school and home. Puka shell necklaces, beanbag chairs, and frilly bed sets aren't enough for her to take her mind off the strife between America and Iran. When the 64 hostages are taken by Iran, life gets even worse and the bullying increases.

Being in middle school myself, I have seen occurrences of bullying before and I can understand how she feels. As the author describes Zomorod's experiences, you can find yourself being drawn into the book while feeling sympathy, empathy, and tenderness. I can personally feel how hard it is for Zomorod to move to different schools so many times. I have moved to four various schools, but she has it worse because she moves in and out of the country.

One of my favorite parts of this book is that the emotion is so raw. Feelings keep this book alive and entertaining. Zomorod's life is so different from other people's, which means her feelings are too. Sorrowful wisdom is shown through her. This book is a touching story with sentiment dotting it. I think that the author paints a picture of words for us to breathe in.

If you wish to read a book filled with humor and drama, you should read *It Ain't So Awful, Falafel* by Firoozeh Dumas. I would say that this book would interest 10 to 13 year olds. Overall, for me, this would be a 5 star book for its words that made me let out wisps of laughter, sighs of sadness, and breaths of understanding. This book nicely conveys a message about being unique with a middle school twist on it. Emotion, pleasure, and pain talk to you, leading you into a relatable story. Filled with comedy and whimsical words of wisdom, we learn about how hard it is to be different, but at the same time how important it is, too. 



# Honor Roll

**Welcome to the Stone Soup Honor Roll!** We receive hundreds of submissions every month by kids from around the world. Unfortunately, we don't have space to publish all the great work we receive. We want to commend some of these talented writers and artists and encourage them to keep creating.

— *The Editors*

## Bonus Materials

### At StoneSoup.com

- Twenty years of back issues in the *Stone Soup* Archives. (Every story, every poem, every book review!)
- Blog posts by the editors and by guest bloggers, filled with great ideas for teachers and young writers.
- Video interviews with *Stone Soup* authors and illustrators. Meet some of your favorite contributors!
- Video interviews with beloved children's book authors, including Madeleine L'Engle and Rick Riordan.
- Video performances by talented young musicians, dancers, and poets.

### On Our YouTube Channel

- *Stone Soup* authors and illustrators talk about their work.

### In Our Apps (Apple & Android)

- All of the above in mobile form!

### Stories

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