

# StoneSoup



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# StoneSoup

*The magazine supporting  
creative kids around the world*

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## Editor's Note

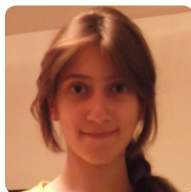
Our March issue revolves around themes of friendship, kindness, and belonging. Kate Choi's story "Zachary, Sophie" asks, among many questions: Why do we often refuse to give others the benefit of the doubt—judging them without knowing them or their circumstances? Meanwhile, Tristan Hui's perfectly simply poem "Belonging" evokes the comfort and happiness of knowing one is where one's meant to be. I'm also particularly excited to share *Stone Soup*'s first issue with a portfolio of work by an artist, Li Lingfei; I hope her whimsical, magical watercolors, paired with her imaginative, detailed descriptions, will charm and delight you as they did me!

Enjoy—

**Letters:** Do you have something to say about something you've read or seen in *Stone Soup*? If you do, we'd love to hear from you, and we might print your letter on our Letters to the Editor page! Post a comment on our website, or write to us at [editor@stonesoup.com](mailto:editor@stonesoup.com).

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On the cover:  
'Forest Creature',

by Eva Stoitchkova, 11  
Ontario, Canada

# StoneSoup

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# Zachary, Sophie

*The class resents Sophie, the mysterious girl who never shows up for class—and gets away with it*

The first day of seventh grade our teacher, Mrs. Mahoney, took attendance. Each name was called and answered. None of them were new. We had all known each other since at least fourth grade. My name, always the last to be called, finally came.

“Whitby, Sam.”

I responded, “Here!”

But unusually, she didn’t stop there. One more name was called. “Zachary, Sophie.”

There was silence, punctuated only by the occasional whisper or giggle. Mrs. Mahoney called, a faint frown creasing her forehead: “Sophie? Are you here?”

Still there was no response. Now we were all paying attention, and we all saw the empty desk at the very back of the room. The shadowed chair sat vacantly under our stares.

Just then there was a *ding!* from the front of the room, and everyone whirled back around to look at Mrs. Mahoney’s computer on her desk. Our teacher read her message quickly, and her frown deepened.

“It seems that Sophie will not be joining us today,” she told us finally. “She has... other matters to attend to. However, she wishes you all a wonderful day at school.” Mrs. Mahoney made a mark on her clipboard, and then smiled around at us. “First on the schedule is math. Pencils out, please.”

During recess we all gathered by the wall of the school to discuss the mysterious “Zachary, Sophie.” John, one of my friends, spoke the loudest.

“She’s *new*,” he announced.

“Did you hear her? She wishes us a ‘wonderful day at school.’”

“She’s *taunting* us, this hoity-toity Sophie,” scowled Winnie Adams.

“Acting all high and mighty. Being snobbish.”

“And what other matters do you think she has to attend to?” John added. “Sleeping in?”

This idea was instantly seized upon by the rest of us.

“Watching television!”

“Going shopping!”

“Playing computer games!”

We hated “Zachary, Sophie” for not coming to school. We hated her for being new. We hated her for having other matters to attend to. In other words, we hated her for no reason at all.



For the next six days, “Zachary, Sophie” had no response at attendance. Every day, just after roll call, there would be another *ding!* She had other matters to attend to, she told us, and she would be unable to come to school. However, she wished us, her “fellow classmates, a wonderful day at school.” Every day we hated her more; we



by Kate Choi, 11  
Seoul, South Korea

would gather in the courtyard at recess and sneer at “Zachary, Sophie” and her “other matters.” I was among them, but John was the unofficial leader of our group.

“Fellow classmates! As if she has the right to say that at all,” he said one day. We all agreed.

“She hasn’t even talked to us! Or seen us, or known us at all,” I added.

“She hasn’t even learned anything with us! She’s not a fellow *anything*,” John said indignantly, and off we were again.

“I hope *she* never comes to *this* school,” Winnie said darkly. But on the seventh day, “Zachary, Sophie” showed up in the front row—in a manner of speaking.



As soon as we walked in, we could tell something was different. Mrs. Mahoney met us at the door.

“Frances, I would like you to move to the back row, to the empty seat,” she said as soon as she saw Frances, who was one of Winnie’s closest friends.

“I didn’t do anything wrong!” cried Frances, indignant.

“I’m not punishing you,” Mrs. Mahoney told her. “I just need your seat in the front.”

We all looked towards Frances’s desk in the front row and saw, to our surprise, Mrs. Mahoney’s open

computer. As we filed in and took our seats, we all glanced at the screen curiously. Finally we were all settled. We waited for Mrs. Mahoney to take up her clipboard and take attendance, but she didn’t. She took up her computer instead.

The class studied the face on-screen. It was a girl’s face, with brown hair. That was as much as we could tell, because the image was of extremely bad quality.

“All right.” Mrs. Mahoney tilted the screen towards us. “Now, this is my class. I’m taking attendance now.”

Who was she talking to? The picture on-screen?

She put the computer on her desk (screen facing us), and ran through our names.

“Whitby, Sam.”

“Here,” I said. There was a pause.

“Zachary, Sophie,” Mrs. Mahoney said, with an air of finality. The rest of us were already whispering, taking the extra time we knew would follow to put in a few last words of conversation with our friends before math.

But then a clear voice cut through the whispers. “*Here*,” it said.

All of our heads jerked up, and we all stared with shock at the face on the screen, the face of “Zachary, Sophie” at last.



Because I was the last name before “Zachary, Sophie,” I was the one in charge of the computer. I was to direct the camera to whoever was speaking in class, to the board up front if Mrs. Mahoney was writing on it, to the page of my book if we were reading together as a class. I was warned severely not to break the computer, or there would be “dire consequences.”

“I would also like you to bring Sophie out to recess to be part of the socialization there,” Mrs. Mahoney added. “She’s never been to school before, so she doesn’t quite know how this works. Please include her in your conversations.”

At this, everyone exchanged glances.



At recess I dutifully took Sophie out to the wall, where we all looked at each other with helpless stares. Finally John turned the computer towards him.

“My name is John,” he said. “The class is going to need some privacy right now. Would you mind if I closed the lid of this computer? Just until recess is over.”

“Of course!” Sophie agreed. “Absolutely. If that’s how you do it.”

She had barely finished before John slammed the lid closed.

That recess, we had a very heated conversation about “Zachary, Sophie.” This continued every recess for the next few months.

We would complain that she was so lazy that she couldn’t even drag herself to school every day. That she got to start thirty minutes after us (which she did, halfway through

math), and much more. Sophie believed everything we told her about school, and would eagerly submit to the closing of the computer for recess “privacy.”

Several times during class she told us that she had “other matters to attend to for the rest of the day” and would turn off her camera to leave; it angered us that she was allowed to do this. Our hatred grew; we began taunting her at recess instead of closing the computer, and she would go along with all of it because she believed that this was what people did at school.

We would pour out all the things we had said about her to her very face (on-screen, of course) and watch her expression contort a little as she tried to pretend this was normal (because that was the only way she would fit in at school) and laugh later when the computer was closed.

We became cruel, but we didn’t care; we buffeted her with insult after insult and she endured it all with a wavering, cracking smile. “Zachary, Sophie” was being revenged; we were hungry for vengeance and we did not stop.



The whole time Mrs. Mahoney believed all was well and normal. She would ask us, and Sophie, how she was doing, and we would all say she was fitting in well. Sophie said so too with total conviction, because she believed she was. Mrs. Mahoney had no reason not to believe us.

One day, at attendance, there was a ding! from the computer. Sophie, who was due to start the call a half-hour



## The Gift of Music



by Delaney Slote, 10  
Missoula, MT

after attendance, was not there yet. We all turned our heads curiously.

"Sophie has some other matters to attend to," Mrs. Mahoney informed us. "She wishes her fellow classmates —"

"A wonderful day at school," we finished.

"Zachary, Sophie" was gone again.



The next day came another *ding!* We all watched as Mrs. Mahoney read her message. She looked, to our surprise, surprised.

"Well, how wonderful!" she said at last, turning to us. "Sophie will be joining us tomorrow!"

"She finished with her 'other matters' and can call again?" Winnie asked innocently. Mrs. Mahoney beamed.

"More than that. She's coming in person!"

At recess we assembled with a degree of uncertainty. We did not know how to feel: should we be triumphant? Afraid? John decided for us.

"This is great. Now we can tell her everything and see the reaction in person," he announced.

"Tell her that it isn't how school really is? Tell her that it was us, acting on purpose?" asked Frances. John nodded.

"We could write a note, and put it in her desk," I suggested. John nodded again, and Winnie spoke.

"Mrs. Mahoney has ordered me to vacate my desk and move to another one," she told us. "She's going to take my desk for the day. Because it's 'closest to the door'."

"She needs her own preferred spot, does she?" But Winnie shook her head.

"That's not all. She's not going to be coming on the bus with us—and she's going to be an hour late. Can you believe it?"

John looked thoughtful. "Write the note now. I'll tell you what to write."

He did, with the rest of us chiming in. We held nothing back; we told her the truth about school and recess "privacy." We expressed our disgust at her "lazy habits": not bothering to come to school, waking up late and being late for class, going to "attend to other matters," which, let's face it (we wrote), were nothing but matters for your own pleasure. "It's not a matter of life or death. It's not even medical issues. You're just lazy. We know everything," we wrote.

And when we had finished, we each signed the note. There was no apology.



The next day we all tumbled into the room with palpable tension and excitement. At attendance, when she got to "Zachary, Sophie", Mrs. Mahoney paused and smiled.

"Let's wait for her for this one," she said.

During math we all got distracted. Mrs. Mahoney made three mistakes when teaching us a new concept, and the rest of us passed tense, excited notes behind her back as she vigorously erased the errors and rewrote them.

Halfway through, she simply gave up. "Well, since we're all so distracted anyway, why don't we make a welcome



banner for Sophie?"

She took out a long sheet of paper and spread it out on the floor. We wrote, at her suggestion, 'WELCOME TO SCHOOL SOPHIE' in big letters. We drew our self-portraits (also at Mrs. Mahoney's suggestion) and labeled them with our names. We were just finished when there was a *ding!*

Mrs. Mahoney rushed to the desk. "I hope she didn't cancel," she said worriedly, but then she lit up. "She's here! Coming through the halls. Everyone, stand in front of her desk and hold up the sign. When she comes in, let's all cheer. Up now!" Excitedly she ushered us into a huddle around Sophie's desk, holding up the sign. The class exchanged eager whispers and several hushed giggles.

We waited.

Soon we heard voices, faint but clear. "It's fine! It's fine, I'll do it with these. I can do it, it's not far."

"That's her," Frances whispered. "I recognize the voice." We all did. Mrs. Mahoney grew extremely twitchy. I vaguely wondered what Sophie meant by what she had said.

There was another voice, her father's, and then silence. Well, there were footsteps. And rhythmic thuds.

"She's stomping her foot!" Winnie whispered incredulously, and we all exchanged discreet, disapproving shakes of the head.

Then the footsteps stopped, and we could all tell that she was right outside the open doorway. There was the sound of breathing.

"Okay, here I go," the voice said finally.

With that, "Zachary, Sophie" swung into the room.

Our mouths had been preparing to yell aloud in what Mrs. Mahoney would decipher as cheers, but suddenly they all collectively fell open. The banner was nearly dropped, and we all froze.

"Zachary, Sophie" was before us. Her brown hair swung around from the momentum of moving, and she was smiling at us earnestly.

Her left leg was completely nonexistent.



In a flash I—we all—understood. The reason why "Zachary, Sophie" only 'came' to school by video call was that she couldn't go to school; the reason why she 'came' thirty minutes after the rest of us (an hour today) was that she needed more time than the rest of us to prepare for the day; the reason why she had "other matters to attend to" was because she had to go to the doctor all the time.

Horror and remorse struck me like a bullet, and surged greater when I remembered the note, the cruel words we had written. "It's not a matter of life or death. It's not even medical issues. You're just lazy."

We had been so *wrong*.

"Cheer!" Mrs. Mahoney whispered behind us.

Somehow we managed to cheer weakly in our surprise. John was speechless. Winnie looked like she might cry. Frances did her best to woo-hoo and wave the banner in her hands, and the rest of us did the same.

Behind the feebly waving, cheering group, I slowly turned around. Carefully I put my hand in Sophie

Zachary's desk and removed the note.

I put my hands behind my back,  
tore it into shreds, and then I cheered  
as loud as I could.

"Zachary, Sophie!"

*"Here!"*

# Artist Portfolio:

Li Lingfei, 8  
Shanghai, China





“Mid-Autumn Festival,” watercolor.

When the 15th day of the 8th lunar month comes, the moon becomes completely round. We would reunite with our families.

This is our ship shaped like a bird that can take us to where the moon is. Because I think the fairy Chang'e is lonely on the moon with her rabbit everyday. So I want to go to the moon by boat with my family. And watch the moon with the fairy Chang'e during the Mid-Autumn Festival.

Fairy Chang'e is very happy! She also invites us to her home.

*Editor's Note: Chang'e is part of a Chinese legend, similar to our “Man on the Moon”*





“My Chinese Dream,” watercolor.

This painting is me boarding the ship to outer space, to see the beauty of the Milky Way. The children from that nation [of the Milky Way] are holding hands. Even the king and queen alien came out to meet us. I want to put the Chinese red flag on the top of their planet. The children of our Chinese nation on earth are singing and dancing and waiting for my good news!





“Sky City,” watercolor.

If I had a time machine, I would want to fly to the future. There is a great city in space. The city is like a huge jellyfish. There is light and fresh air in it. People can walk in the transparent tubes between buildings. Every family has a flying car, and there are many shops floating in the sky. There are so many beautiful gardens where people can walk. These buildings have strange shapes. People can stop their flying cars on the rooves. The yellow building is like a cup. It has a very big trumpet that can make fresh air. The spaceship shaped like a squid is taking us to this city. I like this super city! How do you imagine a super city in your mind?

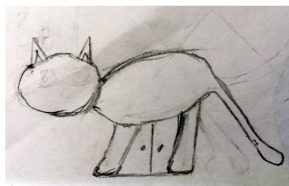


# “Cat House”

## —My creative journey



Who would have thought that my design was inspired by a cat sketch ? That's right! Just a cat!



**step1** Make the first chimney (The main body and chimney)

CASA BATLLO was designed by Gaudi in Spain. That's an amazing building in my mind. It looks like a beautiful dragon. So, I want to design one too! My cat house!



(Cat's ears)

Do you see the little flowers in there? In fact, the two ears are unique chimneys for the house!



(The Mosaic of the roof)

they are completely made in my hand! It took me a long time!



Do you see the sea?



Cat's tail is a fun slide designed for children. Each face has a different presentation. It's very interesting.

Two ears, roof and tail are all made of Mosaic collage art, I did it for a long time. There are also patterns hidden inside, only look carefully, you can see.







the model and draw  
the first draft  
the most challenging  
imaginative!)



**step2** Coloring and collage  
(The most delicate and  
busy work!)



**step3** Make all the faces together!  
(This is the happiest  
moment!)



you have find some interesting shapes of  
life on the doors and Windows?

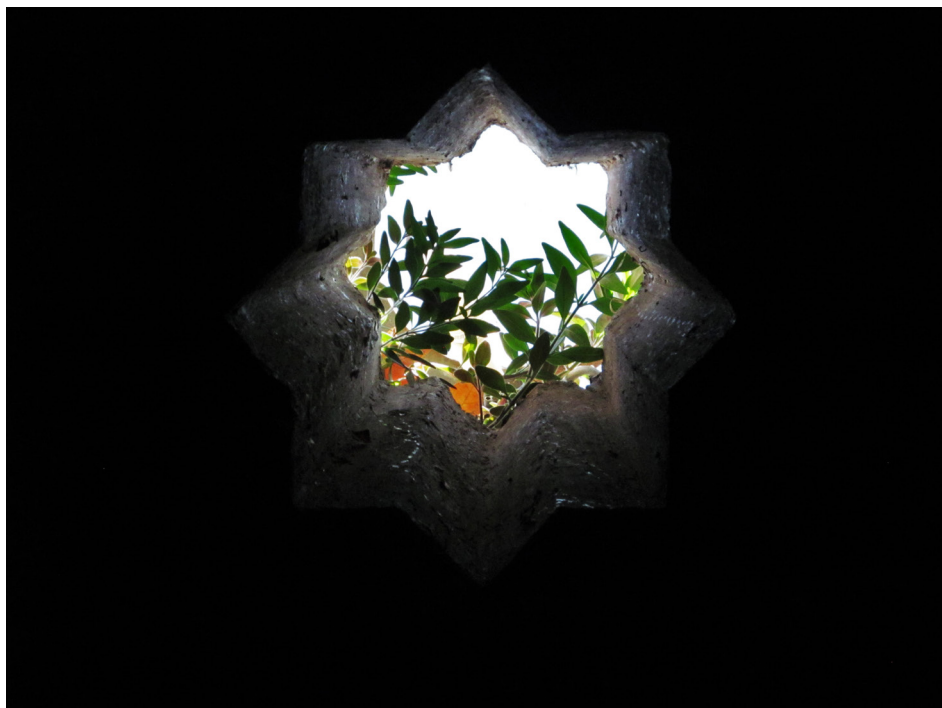


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*Li Lingfei*

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Peeking Through

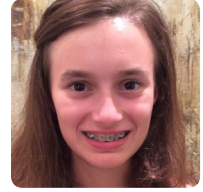


by Lara, Katz, 14  
Weston, CT



# The Giving Stone

by Peyton Jacobe, 12  
Dallas, TX



I stared at my shoes as I walked to the 6th grade door. I sighed, and pushed some of my long, dark brown hair out of my face. It was a Monday, and on Saturday, the worst thing had happened. My parakeet Willow died. Willow was my best friend; she was always there to cheer me up when I was sad, play when I was bored, or simply make me smile. She also had the prettiest feathers that were in beautiful shades of blue. My eyes watered at the thought. I took a deep breath and tried to focus on something else, but almost everything reminded me of Willow. The black birds in the gray sky were birds, like Willow. Hearing the chirping birds in the trees didn't help either, and a thought came to mind: How could everything be as normal as last Monday for everyone else, when everything was so different for me?

I was shifting the weight of my backpack when I heard tennis shoes pounding the pavement behind me. Soon, I realized it was Ivy, who was always quiet and thoughtful. She always wore her leaf-green Nikes, and her shiny brown hair was always neatly pulled back into a braid. She caught up to me, and walked beside

me, on my right. She turned and looked at me, her head cocked, and her chocolate eyes studying me. I pressed my lips together and turned away.

"You're sad, Rachel. Why?" she asked, startling me.

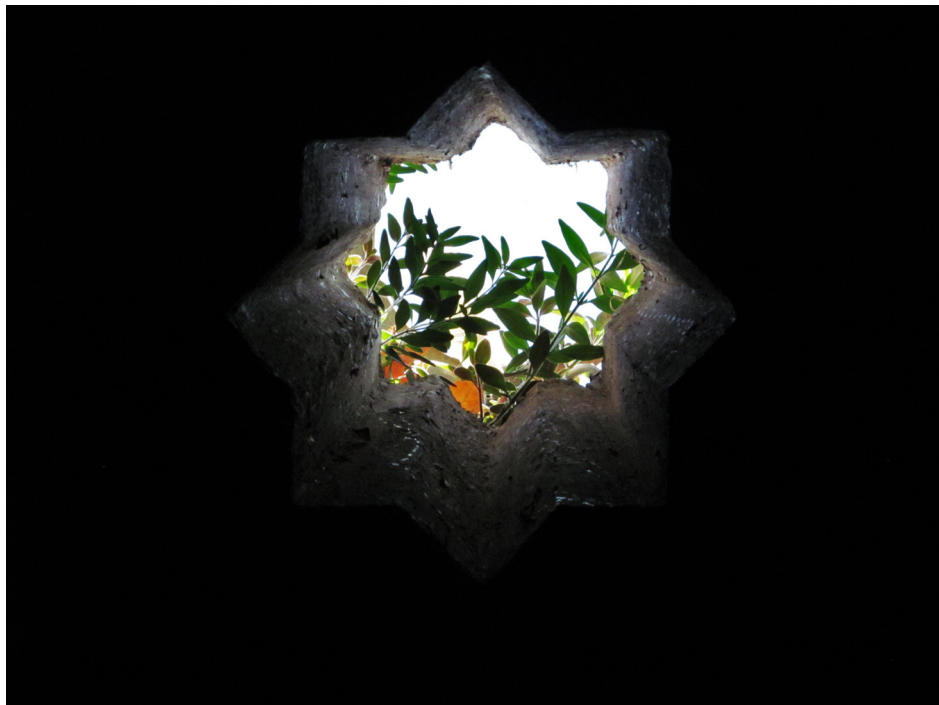
"My bird died," I said, voice shaking.

I had surprised myself by answering. Ivy looked like she was thinking about something. I pushed away my thoughts and looked at my shoes. Soon, she came to an abrupt stop, and reached into her pocket. She cocked her head again to look at me, her right hand forming a fist around the object from her pocket. Then, she took my left hand in her right, and pressed a small, smooth stone into my palm. She looked into my eyes and gave a small, kind smile before walking on.

Surprisingly, Ivy's stone helped me feel better about Willow. Just feeling the hard stone in my hand calmed me. After a few days, I realized that I have lots of good memories of Willow, even though she's not around anymore.

About two weeks after Ivy gave me the stone, on a Saturday, I was taking my golden retriever, Lucy, for a walk, when I came across Mrs.

*A kind gesture helps Rachel recover from the loss of her beloved pet parakeet*



## Peeking Through



by Lara, Katz, 14  
Weston, CT

Hernandez. Her children are all grown up, so now she lives with her husband and cat. She was sitting on her porch chair, her orange cat in her lap. Then I noticed that she had a sorrowful look on her face. I wondered what was wrong, and I thought of Ivy, and her stone in my pocket. So, I walked up to Mrs. Hernandez and asked her what was wrong.

“Kind girl, so thoughtful of you

to ask. My husband passed away two weeks ago,” she replied, her eyes filling with tears.

I sighed. “I’m so sorry,” I said, thinking about Willow.

She shook her head.

As I shifted my weight, I felt the stone shift in my pocket. I thought about how Ivy had noticed I was sad, and she wanted to make me feel better. Much of what had helped me feel

better was simply Ivy's kind gesture. I made my decision to act. I switched Lucy's leash to my left hand, then reached into my pocket with my right. I pressed my fist around the stone, and looked into Mrs. Hernandez's eyes. I pressed the stone into her palm, holding on for just a moment, and gave a small, kind smile. Then I walked back to the sidewalk. Once there, I looked back to see Mrs. Hernandez smiling, and I wondered if someone had given the stone to Ivy when she had been sad.



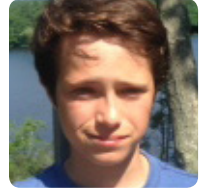
## Hidden Moon



by Hannah Parker, 11  
South Burlington, VT

# Moonlight Under Water

by Dusty Gibbon, 12  
New Haven, CT



The last look  
Of the scraggly trees  
Scraping their black fingernails  
Across the wistful shingles  
Of the buildings

The last breath of moonlight,  
Whispering on the curtains  
Shall forever slumber  
In my iris  
The last smell of sheer power,  
Radiating off the skyscrapers  
And the smell of the cigarette from the man with the  
Rusty barbed wire hair  
Who sleeps on the doorsteps of Broadway

The last blink of the artificial light of the streetlamps flickering  
On and off  
Like a dying firefly  
Moonlight under water  
Like the old man who has many ideas  
But is not brave enough to present them

Oh New York, you will forever be caught  
In the tangled thicket  
Of past importance



# The Runaway

by Frances Brogan, 11  
Lancaster, PA



“Go to your room!” my mom shouted. “It’s not all because of Rose—it just didn’t work out this year!”

“Didn’t work out because of her!” I said and stomped upstairs into my room. I knew I was acting like a baby. As my strict English teacher, Mrs. Hood, would say, “Grade six or age six?”

The first thing I noticed when I got to my room was the picture of my mom, Daniel, Rose, and me in the bed at the birth center. We looked so much younger, so much more carefree. I passed my hand over the glass, looking at my brother’s face, forever frozen in laughter as he held the tiny bundle of newborn life that was Rose.

I flung myself onto my bed and cried for a long time. Eventually, I heard the soft, slow pitter-patter of footsteps as Rose toddled into my room. She came over to me and slobbered on my face.

“Mwuh!” she said triumphantly.

For a moment, my heart melted. Rose looked so proud of herself. Even though she was only a baby, I could see how desperate she was for closeness to me. But this tenderness was quickly overpowered by anger and resentment. “Get out of my room!” I

shouted at her. She saw that I was mad at her, and she ran out of the room—awkward, precarious, baby running.

Every year since I was four-years-old, we had visited Lancaster, my grandma’s hometown and like a second home to us, on the first weekend of May for the annual carnival. I remember when I was four, the carnival was overwhelming, exhilarating. There was so much to hear and see! Now that I was almost twelve, the carnival didn’t give me the same kind of excitement, didn’t have its old charm. The rides were really for kids my brother Daniel’s age. But the previous year, my parents had taken a year off work and we had rented a house in Lancaster. Even though we only spent one year away from Annapolis, where we had lived since I was three, I had made lasting friendships there. I felt Lancaster would always be my true hometown.

Transitioning back to life in Annapolis was harder than it had been in my nightmares. For months I had been looking forward to the carnival, a chance to reunite with my friends and forget my worries, albeit only for a weekend. But because of Rose, Rose’s sleep schedule, Rose’s needs, we’d had

## *Desperate to see her old friends, Eva makes a reckless decision*

to break tradition and skip the carnival this year. I was devastated. My mom had tried to console me, saying things like, “Aren’t you getting too old for the carnival anyway?” But nothing she said made a difference. Even though I knew that the real reason for skipping the carnival was Daniel’s soccer tournament that Saturday, I desperately wanted a reason to blame Rose.

Annapolis was lonely. A year away had been enough for my old friendships to fade. I was growing farther apart from my family, too. As a child, I had always been so close to my parents and even Daniel. What was the rift between us?

Eleven. It had been the best year yet, but still not enough. I had so much. Why did I always want more?

My emotions were like an M&M—anger the hard, colorful coating, covering up the sweet, rich sadness that lay beneath. I’ve always been a private person, masking my true feelings with another feeling, usually anger. My sadness and fear stays bottled up inside. I’ve always just convinced myself that one day, they’ll explode.

When you’re feeling so upset,

you often act impulsive and reckless, even stupid. I so badly wanted to go to the carnival, so badly wanted to see my old friends and leave behind my lonely, friendless life for the weekend. My mom didn’t understand how much it meant to me. So I decided I would run away for the weekend, go to the carnival myself. My parents would be worried sick, but they deserved it, I thought savagely.

Silently I packed a few t-shirts, a sweater, and two pairs of jeans. I stuffed them in my backpack, and left the room. Rose was waiting for me at the door, her face tear-stained. She reached her chubby arms toward me, so pathetic. I hugged her. “I’m sorry,” I said, and I really was.

Daniel was in his room, my dad was at the store, my mom was on the phone. This was my chance to escape. I slipped out the door.

By the time I was at the end of the block, I realized I shouldn’t have just run off. I should have come up with a ruse, a story about where I was going. My overprotective mom was probably already panicking. Without looking behind me, my heart beating at an impossibly fast rate with terror, I ran.

The wind seemed to be whispering

my name. “Eva,” it echoed in my ears, “Come home, Eva, come home.” I shrugged it off, running faster. I glanced at my phone. The next bus was leaving for Philadelphia in less than an hour. I silently thanked heaven for my phone. With its help, I found the bus stop, surprising myself that I had made it this far.

The bus driver, a burly, intimidating man, asked me where I was going. I hesitated, barely able to breathe.

“Oh, hurry up or we’re leaving without you,” he burst out.

“Philadelphia,” I gulped. I handed him the transaction. I only had enough money left for the ride to Lancaster from Philadelphia; there was no turning back now.

I pushed away my guilt and felt a swoop of thrill in my stomach. I was finally on the way to Lancaster! After almost a year of waiting, I was making my dream come true!

From Philadelphia, I caught a bus to Lancaster. I felt much more comfortable on the road to Lancaster. This was my true home! I knew my way around Lancaster much better than Annapolis. With deft navigational ability, I found my way to my best friend, Annabelle’s house. I didn’t even bother to knock on her door, squirming with excitement.

“Annie!” I called. “I’m back!”

Annabelle’s mom was home, too. She made me tell her the whole story, from the very beginning. She stood

stiff and perfectly still the whole time, her lips pursed and her hands on her hips. But she didn’t doubt that what I said was true.

“All right,” she announced. “Get in the car. We’re driving to Annapolis, now.”

I was surprised she was so angry, and her decision was so sudden. I had thought she would be proud. But on the long, miserable drive back to Annapolis, I pictured the rage my mom would feel if the situation had been in reverse, and Annie had run away to our house. I realized that it’s part of a mom’s nature to be so protective.

Soon my reckless adventure was over, and I stood wrapped in my mother’s embrace. I whispered, “I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” over and over again, almost rhythmically. My mom whispered back, “I know, I know, I love you.” She forgave me so readily it made me feel even more ashamed. I said goodbye to Annie, but somehow it was less painful than I anticipated.

After a long talk with my mom, I went to straight to bed, exhausted by my endeavor. My last sleepy thought before I fell asleep was: how could I have done so many things in one day?

Even though I had longed for a friend for that whole year, I wasn’t ready to face my fears of judgment yet. That month I spent my lunch hour in the library, confiding in the librarian. I told myself this was practice for when I was ready to make a real friend. I started reading memoirs and

diaries. I imagined a future where I wrote a memoir of my own life, and hundreds of years later it was found in the ruins of our house. This was kind of far-fetched, but it got me thinking: I could write a memoir of my life, too. I could become a writer. Maybe this was a talent that was buried within me. A few weeks after I had my adventure, I sat down at my desk, picked up a pen, and began to tell my story . . .



Rusty



by Sarah Liu, 12  
Weston, FL



# Belonging

by Tristan Hui, 11  
Menlo Park, CA



We dig holes,

In the grainy sand

I dig mine, like a dog, the dog I wish I'd had then,

When we ran across the sand,

laughter surrounds us.

A small sand crab scuttles

over my foot

Daddy holds me

Just over the waves

The water tickles my feet and I squeal

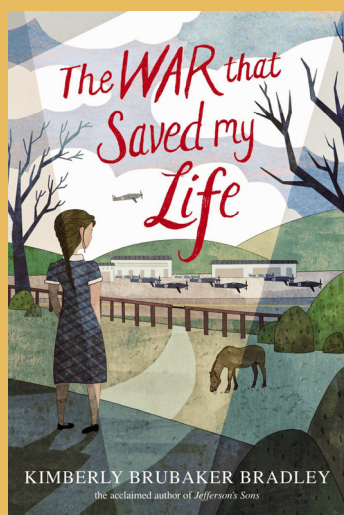
As he picks me up and the wave crashes down on where I was before

he bear hugs me tight

this is where I belong.

# Book Review

*The War That Saved My Life* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley;  
Dial Books for Young Readers: New York, 2015; \$11.89



When I sat down to read the book *The War That Saved My Life* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley, I thought it was a crummy book. But the more I got into the book, the more I couldn't put it down. Now, this book is one of my favorites!

The main character, Ada, is a girl with a clubfoot. Due to this, most people around her, such as her neighbors, hate Ada, and try to stay as far away from her as possible. This makes her feel very lonely, and she doesn't know where she belonged. As Ada thought to herself, right after a teacher wouldn't let Ada go to class because of her foot: "Why would I cry? I wanted to hit something, or throw something or scream. I wanted to gallop on butter and never stop.

I wanted to run, but not with my twisted, ugly, horrible foot." When this happened, I felt really sorry for Ada. I mean, it was just a clubfoot. Why did everybody treat her like she needed to be put in an asylum? Even her mom was not on the same side as Ada because she thought her clubfoot was an embarrassing sight. She not only hadn't taken Ada to school, but she hadn't even let Ada even step foot outside the apartment, leaving Ada not knowing about basic things.

However, Ada is a very brave and caring person. She has a lot of stress on her back, but she continued to fight forward for what was right. This is a reason I like her. Ada may look scrawny and weak, but inside, she's a good-hearted, strong person. Why, in fact, she even saves the village from a spy!

In contrast to Ada's biological mother, Susan Smith, Ada's foster mother, cares about her. Susan tries to help Ada with almost anything. She clearly showed a lot of effort into taking care of her. And when times seemed dark, she glowed, leading Ada into the right direction. Susan reminds me of my mom. My mom is also caring and supportive, and when times are dark, she helps me overcome the dark time with the light, just like Susan does for Ada.

This book takes place during World War Two. Ada sneaks out her

Reviewed by  
**Brian Qi, 11**  
Lexington, MA



apartment onto a train with many children, bound for a safe zone. Once there, she and her younger brother, Jamie, become Ms. Smith's children. After the war ends, Ada has to try to become normal and get used to the life outside of her apartment. It is hard, but she persists until she finally finds where she belongs.

In this book, Ada had to find her real home. Three years before I read this book, I had to leave my New York home and school I had lived and loved for five years, and move to a new, unfamiliar school in Massachusetts. The lonely feeling in my stomach was relatable to Ada's. But, just like her, I persisted. Three years after I moved to Massachusetts, I graduated one of the top students in the school. I had persisted, and finally fit in, just like Ada.

Another reason I like this book is that the plot is brilliant and very well thought up. I couldn't stop reading the book even when it was time for bed because I wanted to know what happened next. I would definitely recommend this book to you. After you finish it, I guarantee it will be your favorite book, too!

# Honor Roll

Welcome to the *Stone Soup* Honor Roll. Every month we receive submissions from hundreds of 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.

## Fiction

Sarah Bryden, 13  
Alexander Chodkowski, 11  
Latai Dunn-Georgiou, 13  
Lea Efran, 11  
Isabel Janjigian, 11  
Asfia Jawed, 12  
Kazuki Kobashi, 11  
Lucy Margiotta, 11  
Leonardo Mokriski, 13  
Sonia Modha, 10  
Alexis Reinhardt, 11

## Poetry

Ava Bonner, 11  
Phoebe Fogel, 11  
Sydney Kaplan, 12  
Raina Sawyer, 11  
Adelaide Tranel, 12  
Anna Yang, 12  
Cecilia Yang, 11

## Art

Sasen Amarasekara, 7  
John Anson, 7  
Alexis Forman, 10  
Madeline Nelson, 11  
Lauren Yu, 12

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- Journals and Sketchbooks for writing and drawing  
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