

StoneSoup

An abstract painting of trees with thick, expressive brushstrokes. The foliage is in various shades of green, while the trunks and branches are rendered in red, brown, and grey. The background is a mix of blue, white, and grey, suggesting a sky or water.

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StoneSoup

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Editor's Note

"April is the cruelest month," the poet T.S. Eliot famously wrote in *The Wasteland*. Maybe it's cruel, but it is also National Poetry Month—a month when poems appear in even the most unlikely places. To honor the celebration of poetry, I've included a portfolio of poems in this issue by five young Chinese writers, whose work I love for its weirdness and darkness, for its insight and daring. This issue also includes another rarity for us: a long story. "The Fence" is a moving portrayal of a friendship formed in spite of segregation and social taboos, while the two shorter stories, "Ride to the Fence" and "Stone Angel" both explore the edges and limits of consciousness. This is a beautiful, strange issue, and one I am very proud of.

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.

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On the cover:
'Trees and Clouds',

by Alexa Zhang, 9
Los Altos, CA

StoneSoup

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The Fence

by Lia Clark, 13
Portland, OR



In a segregated town in 1953, a secret friendship grows between Ruth, a black girl, and Donna, a white girl

Ever since I could remember, Momma and I lived alone. Just us two. She never mentioned my Poppa or any aunts or uncles or cousins, so neither did I. We were happy enough how we were.

It was 1953, and we lived on the very edge of the Black District of the town. Some thought we were much too close to the White District, because only a tall, wooden fence separated us from their houses. The Fence stretched as far as I had ever ventured, and no one could come or go through it. But that didn't make any difference; we went our own way, they went theirs.

Momma ran a business doing laundry for the neighbors. I would help her wash the clothes in big metal tubs, then hang them all to dry on the long clothesline stretched across the yard. Some days, she would send me to buy more lye soap for her washing. Other days, I would deliver the clean laundry to her customers' houses.

One day, I sat on the steps of our house braiding the long, stringy grass and wishing there was shade somewhere nearby. The hot August sun was merciless. And since Momma had a group of talkative friends over, she had strictly instructed me not to go

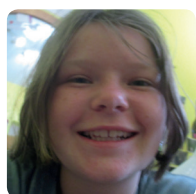
into the house unless of an emergency. So I was stuck outside.

After a few more minutes of this, I made up my mind. I would go exploring. Past the huge hedges behind the house was the Fence between us and the White people. I wasn't to go near the Fence under any circumstances, Momma's orders, but I was much too bored to heed that rule. She said that she didn't want me to get scratched by the prickly hedges, but I knew perfectly well that that was just an excuse. She didn't want me to see the White people on the other side.

After checking that Momma was still safely preoccupied inside with her friends, I climbed into the bushes. So much for getting scratched up, I thought. *They're not even prickly!* Just a few feet in, my hands found the rough wood of the Fence. I wriggled my entire body through until I was right up against it. Then I pressed my eye against a conveniently located knothole and peered through. All I could see were the leafy branches of identical hedges on the other side. Leaning forward a little too hard, the board gave way and I tumbled through, right onto the other side. Gasping with surprise, I began to



Lord of the Binder Rings



by Ula Pomian, 12
Ontario, Canada

“Do you know, exactly, why Whites and Blacks’ve got to live apart?”

sit up, rubbing dirt from my eyes. Until I heard a voice.

“Who’s there?” it demanded.

I held my breath, trembling with fright. I didn’t dare go back through. Surely whoever was speaking would notice me shaking the bushes. But if Momma found out I’d been over...

I took a quick look, not daring to even breathe. A little White girl was kneeling in front of me. She was so close that I could have reached out and touched her shining golden hair. She peered right into the branches.

I made myself as small as I could, but too late.

“I can see you in there. What are you spying on me for?”

I couldn’t do anything now but answer her nice and polite, just how Momma taught me.

“I wasn’t exactly spying on you,” I replied. “I didn’t even notice you was there at first.”

“What’s your name?” she asked me. She had lost her commanding voice now.

“Ruth,” I replied shyly.

“I’m Donna Schultz. Nice to meet you.”

“Yes,” I agreed.

“Would you like to come out? We can play together, and I will show you my dolls.”

I glanced back over my shoulder through the bare hole where the board had collapsed. What on earth would Momma say to see me on the other side of the Fence playing with a White girl? *Never mind*, I told myself, *She’ll*

never find out if you don’t tell her.

“Here I come,” I told the girl, tripping my way out.

Donna laughed. It was a nice sort of laugh, not mocking, but sweet and twinkly, just like her. I gave her a smile and brushed the dirt off my knees.

“So, how old are you?” she asked conversationally as she led me across the yard.

“Eight-years-old,” I told her proudly.

“I’m eight and three-quarters,” she responded. I had no idea what three-quarters was supposed to mean, so I kept quiet.

“This is my house. Mother and Father aren’t at home, only Jonathan. But he won’t play with me unless it’s baseball, and Mother says baseball is unladylike, so I can’t. I don’t like it much anyway.”

I was relieved to hear that this girl’s parents weren’t home because they probably wouldn’t have been very happy with a Black girl like me on their side, the White side, either. Even then I didn’t realize how big of a risk I was taking.

But at the time my thoughts were completely focused on Donna’s beautiful dolls and playthings. I was happy just to listen to her talk, lying comfortably in the dappled shade of her yard.

Once the sun began to set, however, I told her I’d better get home. She told me that she hoped she could talk to me again soon.

“Bye!” I called to her as I scrambled

back through the poky branches a little more gracefully than before.

"Goodbye, Ruth!" she responded, waving at me.

And that was the beginning of our secret friendship.

A few weeks later, as Momma and I were completing the noontime deliveries, I asked her an innocent question.

"Momma, why do we have to live apart from the White people?"

She looked at me funny and said, "Why you asking, girl?"

"It's just that there's other girls out there just like me 'cept they have white skin. Why ain't we allowed to be friends just because of our skin?"

Momma sighed. "Many years ago, all the way back to your great-granddaddy and before him, us Blacks was slaves. The white people owned us, like property. But the government changed that so we can't be owned or bought or sold anymore, only we're not equal to them neither. It's just how it goes," she explained.

I pondered this till we reached home. It still didn't make sense. I decided to ask Donna. She was a White person. Maybe she could explain it to me.

Momma sent me off to play right away. "You've been helping me all day, go do something else. I'm going over to your Auntie Eveline's."

That was just fine with me. As soon as she left, I scrambled through the bushes. I tapped one, two, three times on the Fence for May I come over now?

I barely had to wait for her reply. Tap. Yes. I crawled through the hole.

"Ruth!" she exclaimed. "I've missed you so much!"

"It's only been one day!" I teased. But she didn't know how much those words meant to me.

We talked a while, her telling me all about her day at school and me just listening, as usual. The question I had meant to ask her completely slipped my mind until I had to go. But I remembered it just as I began to leave.

"Donna," I said, "I meant to ask you something."

"Yes?"

"Do you know, exactly, why Whites and Blacks've got to live apart?"

She looked at me funny just like Momma had, the smile leaving her face. She answered, "Why should it matter?" She turned away.

"It doesn't really," I said. "Because I got you and I can't ask for nothing better than that."

She smiled. "You mean, we have each other." A pause.

"Bye, Donna," I said, breaking the silence.

She turned and this time and looked me in the eye. It looked like she was crying a little.

"We wouldn't have to hide our friendship if it weren't for that horrid rule. And I don't care, because you are the best friend I've ever had."

"You are mine, too." With that, I left.

Tap, tap, tap. *Can I come over?* waited for her to respond.

Then I heard voices, two of them, coming close.

Faintly I heard Donna saying, "You wait there, I just need to check on something."

Her head appeared in the whole

through the Fence. I hoped he hedge's canopy muffled our voices.

"Ruth! Mother made a girl from school come to play today and I really don't want to, but I have to, so can we play later?" she whispered all in one breath.

"Oh," I said. "Maybe tomorrow, then?"

"Listen for my—" But she was cut off mid-sentence. Another head was emerging from the hole in the Fence.

The girl froze in her tracks when she spotted me. She gazed open-mouthed, from Donna to me to Donna again.

"Donna!" the girl exclaimed, a little too loudly. "What do you think you're—" but Donna had slapped a hand over her mouth. Her eyes were huge with terror.

"Ruth, if anyone finds out..."

This could be the end of our friendship forever.

"They won't. They can't," I whispered. "Get her away, and quick!" I slipped away as Donna yanked her friend back through the hole.

And all I could do was wait.

The next day, since I hadn't heard from Donna all night and all morning, I peeked through the hole, not daring to give myself away by tapping. The yard was deserted. Nestling myself into the branches, I was invisible to the outside, but could see everything around me. I waited.

Soon, a tall, angry-looking man marched Donna by the arm outside. He must have been her father. And they were heading in my direction. I swiftly darted back through the hole and safe to the other side.

As I stood, listening intently, the sound of hammer blows rang through the air. Bang, bang, bang. Then came faint shouts which I couldn't quite make out. They subsided eventually and I crept over. The worst had finally come.

The hole, which was completely surrounded on all sides by the hedges, was now covered by two fresh planks of wood, strong and firm. I pounded my fist against it, hoping that it would fall off just as easily as before. But it was no use. It wouldn't budge.

"Donna!" I shouted, ignoring all common sense. "Donna, Donna!"

I heard the bushes rustle on the other side. "Ruth, is that you?"

"Yes!" I cried. I could say no more before I broke into tears.

I could hear her sobs, too. We cried for a long time, leaning against the Fence that separated us from each other.

"That girl ran and told Mother about you and the hole in the Fence and us talking to each other. Once Father found out about it, he forced me to show him where the hole was. And they told me to tell you that... that I'm never allowed to speak to you again."

I was devastated. And I knew I couldn't let her disobey them.

As if reading my thoughts, she said, "Ruth, promise you'll always come back. Please. I don't care what they say!"

Knowing that I would be endangering myself and Donna, I still replied, "No matter how many barriers they put between us, I will always come back."

The months passed. I didn't hear

anything from Donna, which meant that her parents were making sure that contact with me didn't continue. I had no idea what was going on on her side. Even if I did, I couldn't do anything about it.

Momma sent me to buy her some soap early one morning. The little market was packed full of people.

I grabbed the soap and handed my money to the kind old man who ran the shop.

"How are you this fine spring day?" he asked with a smile.

"Good," I replied.

"Have you heard the news? Just yesterday it was, May seventeenth. Everyone's talking 'bout it!"

"I haven't." It was best to be polite even though I wasn't really interested.

"Segregation's been overruled! Whites and Blacks are equals now!"

My mouth fell open.

The man laughed. "None of us've been expecting it, neither!"

I certainly was stunned. Wordlessly I collected my change and bar of soap.

He sensed my amazement. "Here, take a paper."

I pulled out more coins. "No, no. Free of charge, I insist," he said. I took it and walked from the shop.

I hightailed it home, where Momma was doing laundry as usual.

"Momma, you won't believe what's happened!" I cried, thrusting the newspaper at her.

Her eyes almost popped out of her head when she read the headline:

"Equality Redefined: The Supreme Court's history-making decision against racial segregation proves more than anything else that the Constitution is still a live and growing document..."

Her eyes scanned the paper hungrily. But I was too impatient.

"Momma, I need a hammer."

"Why on earth—"

"I just do!" I exclaimed.

She clearly sensed my urgency. A few minutes later, she returned, hammer in hand.

I snatched it and ran into the hedge. In only three swings I had blasted the boards right off. I dashed through the hole and was out in the middle of Donna's yard.

"Donna!" I cried loudly.

She was out the door in a moment, flinging her arms around me.

"Ruth, Ruth!" was all she could say.

We hugged for a good long time, both so overflowing with happiness we could barely speak.

"Come inside, Ruth!" she insisted, pulling me by the hand toward the door.

I froze suddenly. I had noticed what she hadn't. Donna's father was standing just inside the doorway, glaring at me.

She caught sight of him and, keeping cool as a cucumber, marched me up to the door.

"This is my friend Ruth from over the Fence, Father," she said.

He looked at Donna, scandalized. "Just what do you—"

"Segregation's been overruled! Whites and Blacks are equals now!"

But he was interrupted by Donna's mother behind him. "Michael, please." She pushed past him.

"We are pleased to meet you, Ruth. Donna speaks very highly of you," her mother said. She looked just like Donna, the same bright golden hair, the same faded gray-colored eyes, the same soft smile.

"Thank you, ma'am," I replied.

"May Ruth stay for breakfast, Mother and Father?" Donna asked hopefully.

"Of course," Mrs. Schultz said. "Just follow me."

As I passed Donna's father, he put an arm on my shoulder. "I'd like to apologize for everything," he said, bowing his head.

I didn't know how to respond; I was too surprised to even speak.

He paused, then added, "Welcome into our home."



Cedar Waxwing



by Sierra Glassman, 11
Watsonville, CA

Poetry Portfolio

The following poems were written by students in a creative writing class that took place in Shanghai, China, hosted by the Stanford University EPGY Honors Academy summer program. My students in this class wrote and read stories and poems in English, but most spoke Mandarin as well as other languages. Many of my students were totally fluent in English, while others were still practicing their English spelling and grammar.

I have noticed that students write the most original poems when they are a little bit wild and lost in their own imaginations. To do this, we read experimental poems that break the rules of English or the rules of poetry. We also read fantasy, like *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* or *The Phantom Tollbooth*. I think fantasy and ancient literature and experimental poetry do the same things for students: they challenge them to think of new structures, whether new worlds or new ways of using language.

For the same reason, I tried to make all their writing assignments weird:

1. Write a poem while sitting somewhere you have never sat before
2. Write a description of humans as if you were an alien who had never actually seen a human
3. First draw your friend without looking at the paper. Then draw your own face by putting a piece of paper on it and drawing (don't poke your eyeball). Then look at yourself in a

mirror and write a poem about your eyes, nose, teeth, hair, or other part of your head

4. Write a long poem as if you were a whole bunch of fairies all speaking at once
5. Write down one of your main character's deep secrets, then fold the paper up into origami and never show anyone what you wrote

When I challenge my students with funny, scary, and strange poems and assignments, they challenge me right back, writing work that is original, spooky, heartbreaking, or just hilarious. Somebody surprises me in every class. For instance, when I told my students to write somewhere they'd never written before, one student squeezed onto a shelf of the bookshelf!

So here are some weird, wild poems that came from these assignments, or assignments like these. These poems surprise me every time I read them.

--Sophia Dahlin



Sophia Dahlin is a poet and teacher who lives in Oakland, CA. She is a teaching artist for Bay Area schools with California Poets in the Schools, and has taught creative writing in Bangkok and Shanghai for Stanford Honors Academy. She has an MFA in Poetry from the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

About the Author

by Gabriel Levy, 9



When I try my best but no words come I feel worried,
like when I drown in lava.

How does it feel like to be an author?

Great, because everyone will know

the work you wrote. It also feels like you are the most important person in the world.

When I do not have to think more and I know what I have to write,
I feel like sleeping on a giant smooth waterfall full of bubbles.

It also feels like getting untangled from a spider web.

About the Author Poem

by Emilei Lu, 11

Before I write, I put on boots, jackets, scarfs and mittens.

“I am prepared.” I tell myself.

I close my eyes and write.

For I know that if I don't prepare myself fully, I may never get out of my fantasy world.

Untitled

by Emilei Lu, 11



I hold onto the
kite of my life
I set it all free
In the winds of my childhood
It soars
high
Next to many other kites
Higher and
higher
We ascend to the
skies of reality
Listening to the
whistling sounds of
of the air
Smelling the
wafting aroma of
the viridescent garden below
The skies suddenly darken.
BAM
One lightning of frustration
A crack in my stern
You will fall
Says that melancholy voice
But be there to mend
your stern
and get back up
for at the end
your only regret will be
not taking the chance in
the first place
The purpose of my life
Is to live
A life.

tiny big valley

by Angelina Lu, 11



tiny valley big so big
grass of blue lakes of green
tiny big down-upside trees
night and day spring to spring

nothing&noone comes to tiny big valley
nothing walks the roses
&noone paints the sky with love
night and day spring to spring

nothing&noone and someone and
everyone comes to tiny big valley
nothing loves noone n roses more
night and day spring to spring

tiny valley big so big
when nothing&noone stopped to breathe
a place of beauty sky of love
night and day spring to spring

THE MOON

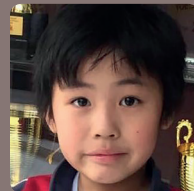
by Andy Wu, 10



The moon
The little moon
The lonely uncolorful moon
The only friend of earth
The moon of its only kind
There the moon stand by her only little self
The moon
The Earth's only friend
The grey boring moon
The old rusty moon

lonely boy

by Gilbert Huang, 9



Who am I, am I just a lonely boy?
When I am lonely I feel wild.
Does nobody want me?
Or do I have to stay here forever?
Well, I will be crashed by a car?
What shall I do.
I need a real life!
I am very far to become a normal boy.

A human

by Gilbert Huang, 9

A human's life is as an alien's life. This human has two feet and hairs.
It lives in a house and eats with its hair. But actually we guess that
humans eat like that. A piece of paper told us how humans are.
A human goes to work every day even Saturday and Sunday
and never gets a holiday. It grabs things with its feet.

Untitled

by Gilbert Huang, 9

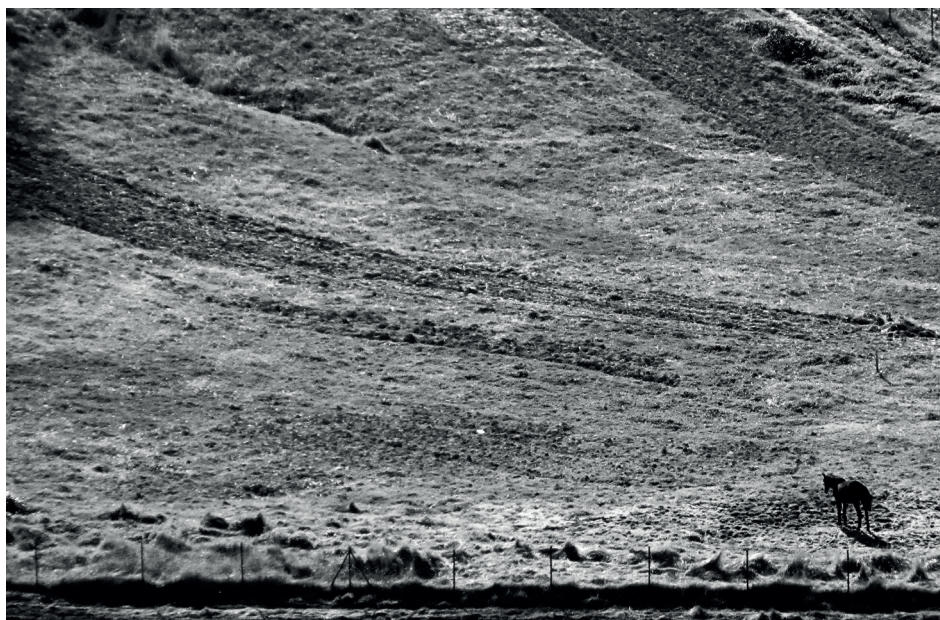
The sound you can hear is the fairy's voice.
And remember the fairies are behind you.
Fairies are not same as you because they have wings and they are absolutely tiny.
And Whatever money you get it is actually your tooth.

If you have a very clean and white tooth put it under your pillow and next day
you will see money under your pillow.
because the tooth fairy will grab your tooth and exchange it with money.

Myself

by Gilbert Huang, 9

When I write I feel very soft and smooth.
I always feel nervous when the pen touches the paper.
My feelings always control myself.
When I don't know what to write I transform into a monster.



One Horse



by Lara Katz, 14
Weston, CT

The Ride of Infinity

by Raina Sawyer, 11
Santa Cruz, CA



I wrapped my jacket around me to keep out the frigid air. It was cold and drizzly and my clothes were soaked. "The tapestry of life will outlast all of us," my dad had always told me. "Everyone who has ever lived and ever will is a part of the tapestry. Sometimes a thread will come loose when the person it's connected to has given up on life. Never become one of those loose threads, Allison." But now I had become a loose thread. And I didn't think I would ever be able to weave myself back in again.

My life began to unravel when my father was diagnosed with cancer last year. He could still continue homeschooling me until he died three weeks ago. Then I was put in public school, and that was when I realized that there was no going back. That my life was changed permanently. My mom had always had a full time job, and with my dad gone, we needed the money more than ever. There was no way I could be homeschooled.

I was in the very back of the group, atop my brown and black, chomp-happy horse. The man at the front hadn't told me its name. As I watched the tour guide go on and

on about some historical landmark with only the teachers engrossed, as I watched the boys have a spit fight, and as I watched the girls gossip about who liked who, I wondered if anyone would really notice if I left. If anyone would wonder why I disappeared. The more I thought about it, the more I realized they wouldn't. I was convinced no one would notice if I left.

I made up my mind. I swiftly turned my horse around and galloped in the opposite direction. And just like that, I had begun my ride of infinity.

I rode and rode until nightfall, and from sheer exhaustion, I eventually fell asleep on the horse. When I awoke, it was morning. My horse had halted. I quickly kicked it in the sides to get it moving, and then I noticed a tree line in the distance, lush and green and leafy.

Suddenly, all I wanted to do was reach the tree line. I was hypnotized by grief, and all I wanted was one small bit of hope to cling on to. I began to convince myself that if I reached the tree line, all my problems would be gone. Both my parents would be awaiting me, I could be homeschooled again, everything I valued would be within reach. My life would be back

When Allison's father dies, she begins to lose her hold on reality

to normal again. I could behold it. I could see it so clearly etched in my mind that I knew I could not turn back. I sent that horse galloping and galloping towards the tree line, without even pausing to think about what I was getting myself into.

Had I been thinking straight, this never would have happened. I never would have left the “historical tour on horseback” field trip. But I did. And I didn’t have an ounce of regret. I was still so sure that I would reach the tree line, so sure that if I did, everything would be impeccable. I rode day and night, with no food or water, for so long I lost track of time. Yet the tree line never got any nearer. Never.

My absurd impulsiveness finally stopped when the horse collapsed from exhaustion, and sent me sprawling on the dew-covered grass. Determined as I was to reach the tree line, I staggered to my feet and tried to run, but I could only make it a few steps before collapsing myself. I hit my head on something hard, and in the moment between consciousness and unconsciousness, I remembered.

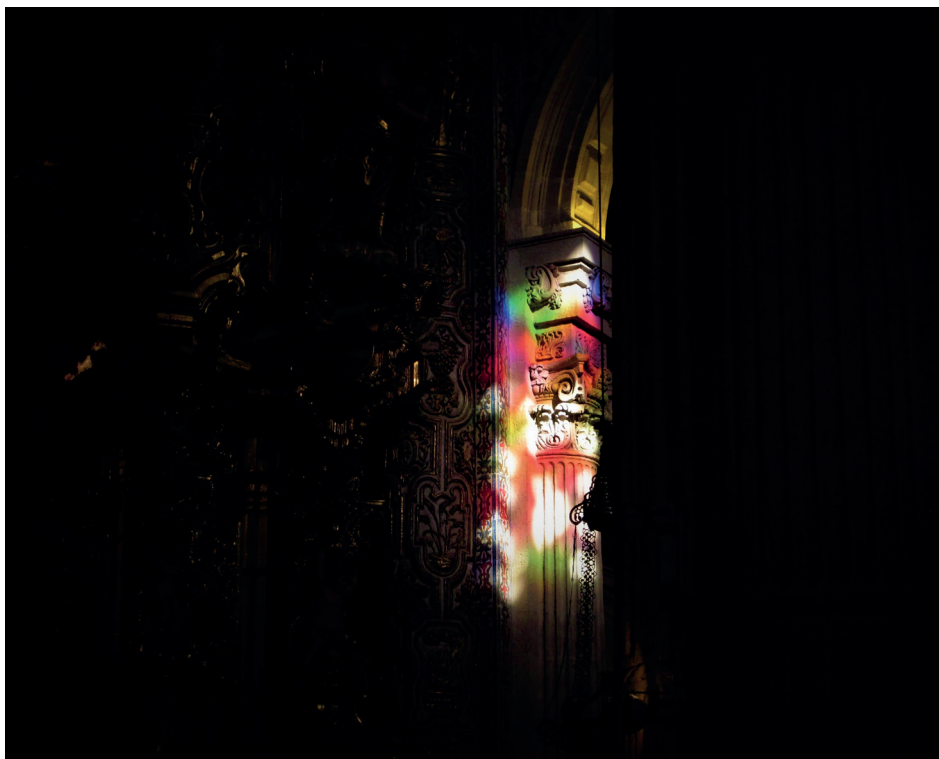
In that split second, I recalled so many of the times that my dad and I had had fun. Walking through the forest, the shining green canopy of trees overhead, learning the scientific names of all the mushrooms and plants. Going down the tallest slide at the water park. Jumping into the swimming hole in the river, the water sparkling like diamonds. Legions of memories swam in my mind. Then everything went dark.

I woke up to the sound of people shouting. Somebody was pulling on my leg. My eyes flew open, and I saw a crowd of people surrounding me. My class was there. Lots of unfamiliar people were there. Even an ambulance was present. My mom was there as well. *So they had noticed.*

I was told that I had hit my head on a rock and that I had passed out.

My throat was so dry I couldn’t speak. But I looked into my mother’s eyes, and she got the message: *get me out of here.* She had to carry me to the car because I was so weak I couldn’t stand up.

Sitting in her navy blue Toyota, I realized I had not achieved anything. All I had done was made my mom think she would lose me, too. I had done it all for nothing. To this day, I am still a loose thread.



Illuminated



by Lara Katz, 14
Weston, CT

The Stone Angel

by Julia Lockwood, 12
Bellingham, WA



The pewter sky hung like a tapestry over the graveyard, dark clouds spilling across it. The clouds boomed and thundered like an angry beast, releasing torrents of water that drenched the gray headstones below. Lightning sliced through the air like a sword, illuminating the world for a second with its violet light.

Libby liked the rain. The way it left her honey hair wet and clingy, the way the droplets slid down her cheeks like cool tears. She knelt down next to her favorite grave in the furthest corner of the cemetery.

Most of her neighbors grew up in fear of the cemetery across the street, but Libby loved it. Each weekend she would place flowers on her favorite graves, and she loved calculating the ages of the people on the headstones.

Libby peered at the grave in front of her. The cool stone of the memorial was cracked and crumbling, with moss climbing up it, filling in the crevasses. A smiling angel stood atop the base of the grave, holding a harp in its chubby hands. The angel's face had been worn away by decades in the rain, giving the grave an eerie look. Engraved on the podium was the name of the girl who rested there.

Here lies Ada Lee Clemmons
1896-1907
Beloved daughter, sister.
May her soul rest in peace.

"Pretty, isn't it?" a sweet voice said from behind Libby. Startled, Libby turned quickly to see a girl standing behind her. The girl looked about Libby's age, with tawny skin and soft coils of chestnut hair. Her cheeks held a slight rosy blush, probably a result of the cold of the rain. But what struck Libby as particularly striking were the girl's eyes. They blazed blue against her darker skin, as if holding a cold fire inside them.

The girl took a step closer to Libby.

"It's sad isn't it?" She asked. "She was so young. Only eleven, only as old as I am now." The girl turned to look at Libby, as if noticing her for the first time.

"You come here a lot," she said. It was not phrased as a question, but simply as a statement.

"Y-yes." Libby stammered. Something about the girl made her uncomfortable. It seemed as if the air grew cooler simply having her around. "How did you know?"

The girl shrugged.

Libby meets a mysterious girl at the cemetery

"I don't see why that matters."

She knelt down next to the grave, and patted the ground beside her as if inviting Libby to join her. Libby reluctantly obliged.

"Someone should clean the headstone," she said sadly. "But there is no one around to do it. It happened so long ago, there is no one left who remembers the name Ada Lee Clemmons."

"How do you know so much about her?" Libby asked, feeling her fear of the girl begin to be replaced by sympathy of sorts. The words that the girl spoke seemed so heavy, and as if they affected her directly.

The girl cocked her head at Libby

"I just simply know what the grave tells. Anyone could figure it out."

The girl reached out and traced the lettering on the grave with her finger.

"It's lonely I bet," she said suddenly. "Can you imagine being forgotten? Alone?"

Libby shook her head. She couldn't envision it.

The girl sighed and drew back from the grave. She stood. Libby rose with her.

"I have to go," she said. "But before I do, what is your name?"

Libby thought about lying, but the girl's eyes seemed safe and friendly as she looked her.

"Libby," she said. "Yours?"

"Ada," the girl smiled. Libby felt her eyes widen. She turned to face the headstone and its engraved letters. Ada.

"Are you...?" Libby stammered, the words catching on her tongue. Ada smiled.

"Thank you," she said. "For visiting me. It's not quite so lonely when you're around."

With that, Ada faded away.

Book Review

Uprising by Margaret Peterson Haddix;
Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers: New York, 2011; \$11.99



Uprising. One word, but somehow this meager collection of letters presents readers with strong, vivid emotions. Some when confronted with this word would mentally tremble in fright. Some might feel a sense of rebellion brewing inside them. Others would, I dare say, laugh, regarding almost humorously the rough cards life has dealt them and their failed attempts to regain control and ultimately *uprise*. Such a simple word, such a simple title, such a complex concept.

In this book, Haddix creates a world so similar to our own it's hard to believe that her story is based upon historical content dating back to over one hundred years ago. It is a world we see everyday on the news, a world

of division, anger, and violence. But it is also a world of hope and love. Through brilliant storytelling, the author is able to bring readers into early twentieth-century New York at the beginning of an uprising!

As 1911 progresses, the world is faced with new ideas each day. Women's rights are finally making their way into the United States, and many are hopeful that Britain's movement will sweep into America as well. While many suffragists are struggling to gain support for their cause, shirtwaist workers with very little public influence are also making their way into the headlines. Workers from around the country unite to protest peacefully for better conditions in the workplace.

Towards the beginning of the novel, we are swept into the lives of three girls, each speaking in different tongues and from different countries. However, somehow each one shares something in common, a yearning for a purpose. Timid Bella has just arrived in the land of opportunity, America, only to discover that this new land is not always paved with gold. On the other hand, headstrong Yetta is determined to change the world in some form. At the same time, elegant Jane lives in luxury, but passionately seeks more than her father's wealth can offer. As the book begins, the author focuses primarily on their

Reviewed by
Eliza Smith, 12
Church Hill, TN



separate lives, but later weaves each of these together to set a premise for a monumental conclusion.

The three girls join together about midway through the book to unite in their cause, worker's rights. Fighting peacefully each day for better working conditions in New York's crowded factories, the characters experience fear and pain in their quest for justice. However, a terrible tragedy holds the power to tear them apart forever.

Haddix keeps readers hanging on to each word throughout. I found that the many setbacks of the characters only added to the overall product and believe our modern world could learn a lot from the perseverance and hope conveyed in the book. The Shirtwaist Factory Strike is a main focus, but the author never strays away from human emotions and experiences despite the book's historical background.

Readers who enjoy the *Dear America* series will delight in this powerful portrayal of life in the twentieth-century U.S. Although intended for a young adult audience, it is my belief that anyone searching for a good historical read, regardless of age, will thoroughly enjoy this book. However, one must consider the intended age before choosing *Uprising* as their latest reading endeavor.

The story offers many historically accurate details, which pairing with the plot, create a stunning presentation. Overall I found this book entrancing, and struggled to put it down each day. It is a great representation of the power of perseverance and hope.

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

Alyssa Ao, 10
Jake Henschel, 11
Tuilaepa Katoanga, 11
Gavin Lehman, 11
Tracy Li, 13
Sayana Mayeski, 11
Stella Prince, 13
Leo Zhang, 11
Sarah Zhang, 11

Poetry

Ana Carpenter, 13
Uma Coutelle, 10
Colin Davison, 9
Lily Jessen, 9
Cecilia Yang, 11

Art

Sophia Zhang, 8

Reviews

Ananda Bhaduri, 12
Nicole Qian, 13

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 - Journals and Sketchbooks for writing and drawing
- ...and more!

