



Stone Soup

HOPE

BEST

FREEDOM

Opportunity

desire

spirit

Encounter

momentous

joy

TRAVEL

important

jolly

happy

HIDDEN

OF

SEPTEMBER 2021

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StoneSoup

Writing and art by kids, for kids

Editor's Note

After featuring long-form fiction in our summer issue, in this issue, I decided to focus on poetry and super short personal narratives. Although I love the way a good story can pull me in and away from the world, reading a novel can also be an exhausting experience—especially if you get caught up in marathon reading sessions as I do!

One thing I love about shorter forms of writing is the way I can read them and return to the world feeling refreshed, as if I've just taken a brisk walk or had a drink of cool water on a hot day. I love to read a poem or a shorter narrative once through at a regular pace, and then reread it slower, and continue rereading and revisiting it at intervals. I have memorized some of my favorite poems and always find that their meaning seems to change (and expand!) over the years as my own experience grows and my perspective changes.

Finally, I just want to note that many of the poems in this issue were submitted to our 2020 book contest as part of longer poetry manuscripts. Although we ultimately were not able to publish every manuscript we loved, we are thrilled to share some of this really excellent work with you!

Enjoy the start of fall.



On the cover:
*The Hidden World
of Exploration*
(Mixed-media collage)
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Ashburn, VA

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StoneSoup

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ART

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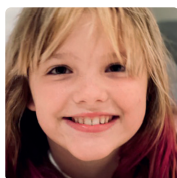
Ruth, Kakuma Refugee Camp

41 Astro Doll Queen

Created by group of children
from the Kakuma Refugee Camp

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Blue Jay (Watercolor)
Zoe Campbell, 11
San Francisco, CA

A Beautiful Day in August



By William Chui, 13
Mill Valley, CA

Friends. Gone.

Blank.

Pixels.

Without.

Presence.

School. Out.

What. Now?

Days. Filled.

Summer.

Routine.

Wake. Up.

Eat. Breakfast.

Violin.

Walk. Dog.

Lunch.

Piano.

Spanish.

Shower.

Dinner.

Sleep.

Repeat.

False.

So. Many.

Things.

To. Do.

Bedroom. Ceiling.

Light.

Flickering.

Huh. Weird.

Never.

Noticed.

That. Before.

Steps.

Face. Peering.

Down.

Bright. Bark.

Of.

Recognition.

White. Belly.

Warm. Soft.

Fog,

Sweeping.

The.

Mountain.

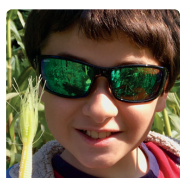
Blue. Sky.
Outside.
 What. A.
Pretty. Picture.

Violin. New.
 Scratches.
Still. Plays.
 Pretty. Well.
Be. More.
 Careful.
Next. Time.
Wow.
 “Izquierda.”
Is. Left.
First. Time.
 I.
Learned. That.
Piano.
The. “E.”
 Is.
Out. Of.
Tune.
Fuzz.
It’s. Fine.

Food. Is.
 Good.
Even. Better.
With.
Magazine.

Walking.
 The.
Backyard.
 Revealing.
New. Plants.
Watering.
 Them.
Is. Always.
A. Joy.

August.
 A.
Month. That.
Matters.
Summer. Break.
 Yay!
Birthdays.
 Me. Mom. Bear.
It’s.
 Anything.
But. Routine.
It.
 Truly.
Is. A.
Beautiful.
Day.
In.
August.



Ant on Mullein (Samsung Galaxy S9+)
Joey Vasaturo, 10
Colebrook, CT

Thirteen poems from *EARTH MATTERS*



By Benjamin Ding, 9
Jericho, NY

THE OPPOSITE OF EVERYTHING

Logs sink
while metals float.
Dogs meow
while cats bark.
Private signs say “Trespassers
welcome”
while doormats say “Do not enter.”
Worms fly
while birds burrow.
Trees grow underground
while potatoes grow upside down.
And all this is nonsense,
but the opposite is too!

META

I am writing a poem
about a poem
in which the poem
is about a poem!

TONGUE-TIED

I am jumping rope
as if I were the Pope,
flying cartwheels full of hope,
except there's no way to slope
down the tangled rope,
even when you're the Pope.

WRITING

Try devouring
a runaway pie
you find irresistible
but don't know why.

BONE FLUTES

Flutes made of bones
Have very strange tones.

EXISTENTIAL CRISIS

I am going to tell you
a really long story ...
TTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT
HHHHHHHHHHHHH
EEEEEEEEEEEEEE

EEEEEEEEEEEEEE
NNNNNNNNNNN
DDDDDDDDDD.

MONEY

Money money money
Money money money
Money money money

Why don't we forget
about buying money
with our own money
and living life instead?

STARS

Stars
upon stars
upon stars
upon stars,

as if the sky had scars.

LONG AND SHORT

A football field is long,
but a bug is short.
A bug is long,
but a cell is short.
A cell is long,
but an atom is short.
An atom is long,
but . . .

HOT CHOCOLATE

Right after a snowstorm,
the valleys are no longer torn,
and a blanket of white is born,
though the blanket is never warm.

FLIES

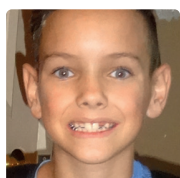
Zippering here and there with dirty feet,
landing on a birthday cake,
electric swatters and regular swatters,
hands clapping long after the candles
have
gone out.

PARADOX

What if the world was upside down
but while it was upside down
it was also right-side up!

MATERIALISM

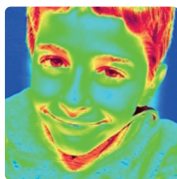
Nobody cares about the great
outdoors,
only their own puny properties . . .
a leak in the ceiling,
someone to mow the lawn,
a broken air conditioner . . .
People will pay for these things,
but no one stops to wonder about
species
on the verge of extinction:
Galapagos tortoises,
Leatherback sea turtles,
Giant pandas,
Blue whales,
Asian elephants . . .



Tiger (Acrylic)
Aiden Adams, 10
Bryant, AR

Loved

Will Gregory be able to write a memoir that will make his teacher cry?



By Gregory Scott, 10
Rome, Italy

It was a normal day in these past few months of quarantine: attending online classes and doing work. I casually got my half-full writer's workshop notebook, a pencil, and signed into class.

"You will be your own teachers today, guys, as our last few days for the memoir are approaching. Remember, some of my previous students made me cry. Ya think you can push yourselves to do the same?" our teacher concluded after the mini-lesson, raising one eyebrow with a squinted look.

The class didn't really know how to answer. That was a pretty high bar the teacher had just set. And I wasn't in the best of moods. I was stuck and didn't know what to write. I liked memoir because you can choose any structure you want, and you get to write! But my writing still felt too forced, which rarely happens, as writing is one of my most important subjects. I always think of writing classes as being like art, but expressing your feelings with words instead of pictures.

My brain felt as confused as a shark staring at a zig-zagging school of fish. I knew this couldn't continue. I

needed to have a good memoir! That was all that mattered to me. Unable to think, I raced to the bathroom and slammed the door shut.

You can do it, Greg. It's easy. All you have to do is think of a good story, make it interesting, and zoom in at the right moments. I almost felt positive for a moment!

But then a new memory flowed in: "*Remember, some of my previous students made me cry...*"

That was when I couldn't take it anymore. I didn't care if I made my teacher cry or not, but now I was worried she was just going to cry tears of sadness because I didn't have a story! Since apparently I was my own teacher now, it was the wrong time for him to go on a coffee break.

It was time for PE. Normally I like PE and feel exhausted and proud when I'm finished 'cause I know my body is getting healthier (even though I am pretty skinny; I'm not exactly muscular). Within thirty minutes (or what felt like hours), the lesson was finished. I wasn't sweating at all, compared to other times. I wasn't surprised. The entire lesson, I had barely tried to exercise as my head

was worriedly thinking about what I could do to stop this problem. I wasn't wet at all—except for under my eyes.

I dashed outside to reflect on what I could write about. It was useless. I couldn't think well; the only thing I could do was lie there in the warm sun.

It was getting close to lunchtime. Today was my babysitter's birthday. I didn't want to spoil it just because of an attitude crisis. My little brother came, and I tried to move away from him as politely as I could. I moved to the swings. So did he. He looked at me, asked what happened. When I ignored him, he just started swinging. But he knew something was wrong. He called my dad, who came, and at that point I blasted off into the house. My dad followed me, and for the longest time he stood there, asking me what happened. I refused to answer, hoping he would leave, but he stood there, not willing to move a muscle away from the door for as long as I wouldn't answer.

"C'mon, Greg. If you tell me what happened, it could make you feel better."

"No, it won't," I said. I walked to the heated balcony, and my dad followed me there. I looked down. "We only have a week for writing, and I don't have a good story that fits with my theme!"

"I know lots of stories about you, Greg," my dad said, now on his knees, getting me to look at him.

"It doesn't work like that!" I said. "I can't just pick a random story. It has to fit with my subject, and it needs to be a powerful and deep piece."

My father wasn't prepared for that. "Listen, Greg, it's Grace's birthday today. Don't ruin it. We can have a talk

after dinner tonight."

I stood up and hugged him. *You can run from your loved ones, but you can't hide*, I thought to myself during that nice big hug.

While my parents were preparing the birthday lunch, I hugged my little brother. Even though he was only five, he seemed to know what I had been through and stayed silent, returning the favor.

Finally, I decided that my memoir could be about the thing you are reading right now. The jokes my mother made to cheer me up, my father's assistance, and my brother's understanding helped me understand that love and family are the strongest forces on Earth. Like a strip of copper, you can bend it, fold it, twist it, but not break it, 'cause love can't be broken. And that is how it will always be.



Autobiography (iPhone 6s)
Amity Doyle, 11
Katonah, NY

Three Poems



By Sim Ling Thee, 13
Singapore

A Strand of Hair

i had my first strand of white hair at thirteen
it was an ordinary day
turned into an un-ordinary day
mom was combing my hair
i was daydreaming, blissfully unaware
when mom told me her finding
my heart screamed and screamed
how could this be possible?
it simply could not be!
i shook my head frantically
denial, denial
the light must have played tricks on her
i could not believe it for the world
my kind sister showed me proof
a photo on a mobile phone, a sympathetic “oof”
and that was when i thought:
i will grow old someday

an hour later, in school,
i was feeling blue
i cast glances of envy
at the classmates around me
gossiping and nodding

smiling and laughing
they were perfectly ordinary
they were perfectly happy
they did not have their first strand of white hair at thirteen
my teachers walked into the classroom
heads of hair like flowers in full bloom
radiating from head to toe
the very definition of “glow”
they were, compared to me, years and years older
not a strand of white hair on their shoulders
one thing’s for sure
they did not have their first strand of white hair at thirteen

looking in the mirror
i thought i’d see that strand of white hair clearer
i wanted to launch a vicious attack
but it was lost in a sea of black
a sea of black . . . like everyone else
into the crowd, it melts
but i was never normal
i was born different inside
reassured
i stepped away from the mirror
it’s okay to be different and have your first strand of white hair at thirteen

that consoling reassurance vanished with a puff
i thought i could be strong, but it proved tough
when an article appeared on the news
talking about that writer’s old-age blues
fading memory . . .
fading body . . .
old soul full of spite . . .
bare head full of white . . .
was this a sign of the end?
did i need to say goodbye to my friends?
was i going to grow old?

was i going to grow as old as mold?
i checked my skin for wrinkles
i checked my skin for a single crinkle
just in case
just in case
it's not okay to have your first strand of white hair at thirteen

i came across an article about not wasting time
how we can be more productive and earn another dime
the writer said we should always remember
we won't be living forever
we should focus on the life we are leading
instead of wallow in self-pity
that got me thinking
maybe getting white hair isn't such a big thing
why should i wallow in self-pity and be a bore
when i could be doing so much more?
they say that the day you know you will die
is the day you start living
for me the day i knew i had white hair
was the day i started living
it doesn't matter if you have your first strand of white hair at thirteen

Art

A drop

A splotch

A paintbrush gone astray

A crash

A puddle

A mug of milk collapsed on the table

A shriek

A fault line

A gaping tear on the paper

A kid

A toilet break

A sister folding artwork into a paper plane

A bin

A careless hand

A father throwing the masterpiece into the trash

After much gasping and searching and berating,

After much crying and panicking and apologizing,

You lose hope, you feel resigned:

You think the artwork is terrible, the biggest disgrace of all time.

But when you finally find that piece of art,

You take a looooong look.

You step back and think to yourself:

Perhaps this is art.

Perhaps this is art.

Words of Snow

a poet once wrote a poem
a friend read it
and exclaimed in outrage
this is just a blank page
exactly
the poet beamed
a blank page with words of snow:



Mary Poppins (Panasonic Lumix DC-ZS200)
Sage Millen, 13
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Three Poems



By Soheon Rhee, 12
Taguig City, the Philippines

Dear Husband at the Sink

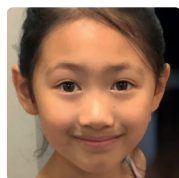
1. While the chattering water ripples through the kitchen, and a thin layer of liquid coats the plates on the table, shining in the sunlight, scrub the metal plate as it reflects in your bare hands.
2. Grab the cup and continue washing until it's filled with turbid water, mirroring the birds that carry the sky.
3. Looking through the swirls of white that sit at the surface of the cup, you may pour it back into the sink and wait for the rain to comb the clouds, which seems to mute the dogs barking at the back door.
4. Listen to the sudden rustle emerge from the *sonamu* peeking through your window, a pause interrupted by the sound of your neighbors.
5. You will remember Ms. Park apologizing for her children when they stained your wall with paint.
6. Take the sponge that you left yesterday on the sink and bathe it in soap once more, a citronella déjà vu.
7. Your hands like dried plums, lukewarm water tracing the lucid map of wrinkles.
8. Let the china drown in the basin.
9. Wash the muck you created while watching the morning news—the *namdaemun* shop that sells helmets has shut down.
10. A distant susurrrus of an old man's garbled voice.
11. Wrap your hands in the brittle cloth you use every day.

Uninvited Guest

- a. Sit on the Formica chairs you arranged yesterday, flowers embedded in the seat fabric.
- b. The candles should be lit, expanding light on the mahogany table, with white napkins laid out, displaying their whiteness.
- c. You will see the person in front of you, holding the silver cutlery with a single glove on the left hand, just like you, except yours is worn on the right.
- d. While the floorboards creak, make your steps across the kitchen for a glass of wine—the guest also leaves the chair, disappearing from the table.
- e. When you return, the person should be seated. Place the wine bottle to the side.
- f. After the plates have been emptied, bow your head slightly as a farewell and gather the leftover food into a pile.
- g. The person will bow back at you, and when you both look at each other, you will realize it was not a guest, but a mirror.

How to Clean the Hallway

1. Scrub the wall to form froth, then coat it with water like the coastline after a wave.
2. Soapy water will slide down to the floorboards. Sit down at the edge of the water, hold your shawl with one hand, and dry the floor.
3. Be careful not to get water in between the tiles.
4. Pull out the brush from the cleaning cart, its drawers tiered like bleachers.
5. By the window, you can see the gardeners trimming the trees below, one of them leaving for a break.
6. The lake to the side reflects the birds flying around in chains, as if trying to clasp the sides of the sky.
7. After cleaning the walls, make sure to put new soap in the tray below. Go inside the corner room to finish today's breakfast.



I Feel Music (Construction paper)
Serena Li, 9
Scarsdale, NY

The Piano

Violet can't wait to start playing the piano



by Violet Lou, 10
Beijing, China

"Do you play the piano?" my friend asked me.

"No," I replied.

Starting from when I was four, a lot of my kindergarten classmates started to play the piano. Of the thirteen students in my class, six played the piano, or at least an instrument. The seven people who didn't play instruments included me.

I should play the piano too, I thought to myself every time they asked me. But every time, I would only nod and smile and listen to what they had to say. I'd seen lots of people play the piano on TV or at concerts. I knew how it worked. You pressed down on one of the black or white keys and it would make a sound. However, I had never tried it myself. But one day, everything changed.

That day, I was talking with one of my classmates, and Mom was standing nearby.

"Do you play the piano?" my classmate asked.

"No. I don't," I answered truthfully.

"Do you want to?" Mom asked me.

"Of course! May I?" I shouted in excitement. I imagined myself sitting in front of a piano lifting my hands,

ready to play a song.

"Maybe. I'll talk with Dad," Mom replied, smiling.

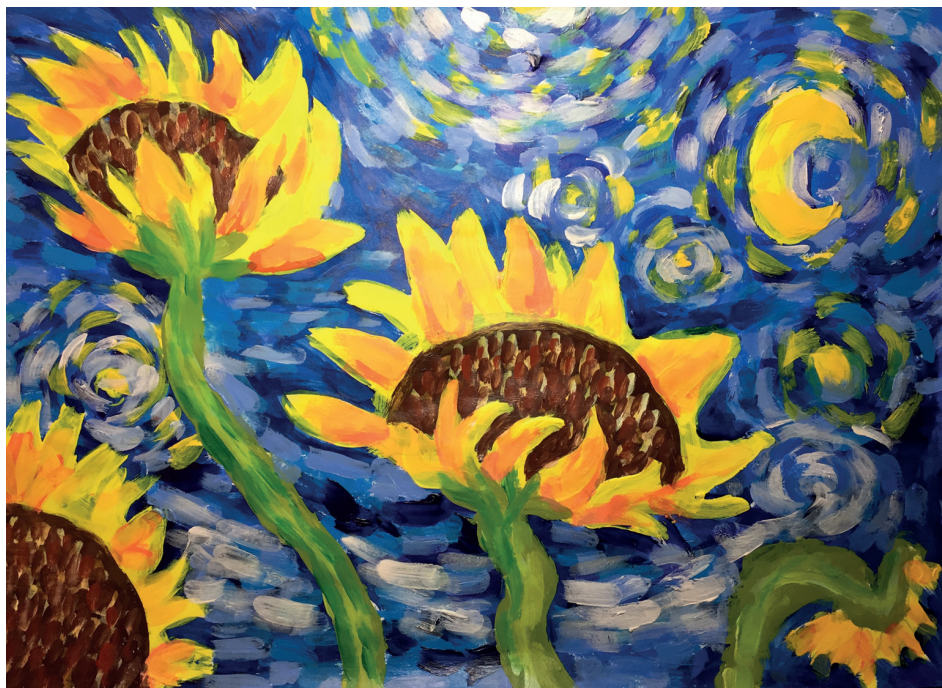
And Dad agreed! I was so happy! The only thing I could think of was that I was going to play the piano.

The piano arrived after three weeks. Four men arrived, pulling the piano behind them.

"Sir, where do you want to put this?" they asked.

"There, next to the desk. Yes, there." Dad pointed.

The piano was even bigger than I expected! It was twice the size of me, and who knew how much heavier! I touched the glossy lid and opened it. Beneath the lid, the black and white keys. According to Mom, there are 88 keys. I lightly touched one, and it made a tinkling sound. And I knew from that moment it would be staying with me for a long time. It would be my companion, my friend, and sometimes my torturer.



Sunflowers (Acrylic)
Ethan Hu, 8
San Diego, CA

Six Poems from *Falling Through a Cloud*



By Summer Loh, 8
New York, NY

A Moment

In this moment,
I see
my baby brother
toddling
through the house.
My dad is playing
his guitar,
the same song
he's been playing
since I was
my brother's age.
I sit here and type
on my new laptop.
I smell the
cheesy casserole
my mom is cooking,
and I glance
out the window
to see the trees
in their full bloom
of summer.

A Natural Evening

The high-rising sea
next to the tree
with the leaves scattering
on the ground and the sea,

with the rocks standing still

while the birds make their kill

and the blue lights,
as calm as can be.
The daisy tree, the stars, and the bee
and the little leaves next to me.

The cars on the street
with the little red lights,
and the mountains I see
where the people hike
when the stars go out to play
on a nice little day.

The moon is waking up
for the night,

and in the farm,
on a simple brown nest,
a hen walks up
to take a rest.

The Window

I look out the window and wipe the fog off the glass into a heart shape.

| | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| In the | clear glass | I can see |
| a girl in a | baseball cap, happily | strolling |
| with her dog | down | the road. |

I see a young man in a polka-dotted shirt performing a sad song,

| | | |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| an | old | couple |
| walking | to a | café |
| I see a | brave flower | blooming |

through the cracks of a city block, all alone, except for his friend, the shy moss.

The Chess Game

I make a move.

His bishop

falls down.

Well, there goes

his queen

and her shiny crown.

My knight

soars

through the air,

stealing the square of his pawn

without any

care.

My pawns are in a line.

Minutes pass by.

My position is fine.

I'm playing my best,

my position is great,

and then . . .

checkmate!

The Tree on the Lawn

Beneath the protection
of its strong branches,
I hear birds chirping
and singing their songs.
The leaves rustle
as squirrels race
to their nests.
The tree is high,
thick,
and rough.
There is a bud of a flower
on top of the leaves
that I hope will bloom one day.
And I see some birds
that months from now
will be miles away.
Bits of bark float off into the air
as leaves bow down gracefully
to the high and mighty winds.

The Woodpecker

The woodpecker pecks
at the tree
peck, peck, peck
with a calming sound
as I walk by.

I wonder what it's looking for
(bugs? ants?),
so diligently pecking at.

The bird is yellow,
a bit smaller than a hawk. He seems to look
at me, for a second.

Then he flexes his wings
and leaps off a branch,
gliding through the air
like a paper airplane,

as if to say,

Farewell.



Woodpecker (Watercolor)
Aspen Clayton, 11
Lisle, IL

What Clouds Are Made Of

Lara learns the truth about clouds



by Lara Fraenkel, 11
Mansonville, Quebec, Canada

When I was small, I was fascinated by clouds. *What were they made of? Cotton candy? Wool? Could you touch the clouds, break off a fluffy piece with your hands? How did they feel, how did they taste?* Those were some questions I asked myself. I could just lie down and watch the clouds drift across the sky, pushed by the wind, tickled by skyscrapers, in all shapes, sizes, and textures. I'd say, "Look, a cloud ship!" or, "Up there, a cloud elephant!" I wondered if fairies sat on them and looked down on us. For all I knew, God could be using them as his pillows!

My father had often read me a book called *Wolkenbrot* (which means "cloud bread" in German). It was a picture book about a small boy who would gather clouds that were caught on trees and ask his mom to turn them into bread: one cup of flour, some water, two eggs, and one cloud. Eating the bread allowed him to fly! In the book, clouds were something that you could touch, carry, and eat. It used to be one of my favorite stories, and on a misty day my dad would say, "Let's go outside and see if we can find a cloud stuck on a tree! Then we can ask Mom to bake cloud bread!"

As I got a little older, I started to doubt the magic of clouds. *Can one really eat them? I've never seen a real person fly.* But that didn't stop me from daydreaming and wondering what gave them their shape, what made them float . . .

One day, I was sitting in my school classroom. I think it was in Grade Two. We would now learn about clouds! Expectations ran high. All my classmates were just as excited as I was, waiting enthusiastically for this lesson. Some were drumming their fingers across their desks, others tapping their feet on the floor. One or two giggles seemed amplified by the silence we fell into when the teacher arrived. She smiled at our excitement. We held our breath as the lesson began. There was nothing on the cold, smooth surfaces of our desks to distract us.

When our teacher finally broke the silence and asked us how we thought clouds were made, I promptly raised my hand so high I almost fell off my chair, begging to be noticed. A bunch of other kids were in the same position. One after another, we excitedly explained our theories. She

had opened the floodgates, and we just couldn't get out the words fast enough. Our teacher didn't scold us for our theories, but we did gather some amused glances from our classmates. Then she drew in large strokes on the whiteboard what we had been trying so hard to understand. Something that seemed mysterious finally became clear. Though it was not really magical, it was still something fascinating that made us feel important: we'd learned about a pivotal and complicated process of nature. My guess is that a lot of parents got a lecture on clouds by some very proud young scholars that evening.

I'll admit, I was pretty disappointed when I found out that clouds weren't made of a solid, fluffy, soft, or sweet substance. However, I am also really fascinated by what it takes for clouds to form. The sun's heat turns water into steam. It rises. The air cools it down, far above the ground. The mist thickens, gets more compact, becomes the substance we call clouds. But wait—it doesn't end there. Wisps of clouds gather together, each becoming part of a larger whole. Everything keeps getting heavier and heavier. Big and grey. As the world comes closer, clouds get warmer. Droplets part, mist turns to water, and rain falls back to earth. Sometimes, when it's cold, there is snow. When it's freezing, hail. If it's warm, it will drizzle. The water is back where it started, in rivers, oceans, or lakes. The air warms it up again, the water rises . . . Endless cycles. Do you see how it never ends? The permanence of this mesmerized me. I mean, it was there long before my great-great-great-grandparents were

born and will be there, if all goes well, long after I die. This was one of the most interesting realizations I made.

Clouds—water in a cycle, with no end. Not sweet. Not home to small winged beings. Old. New. So much to see. So much seen long ago. That's what I think of when I look up to the clouds now. No one knows what exactly happens up there. We can just guess. Write what we think might be. That is what my dad and I did when we tried to imagine what the world might look like from the perspective of a raindrop called "Anton." Are our heads in the clouds? "Yes," my mom would say. Could well be.



Astro Doll (Mixed media)
Ruth, 8
Ethiopia, Kenya



Astro Doll Queen (Mixed media)

By a group of children, ages 5–12

Originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, South Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi; currently residing in Kenya

Created with the support of My Start Project at the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya

Two Poems



By Parwana Amiri, 16
Herat Province, Afghanistan;
Ritsona Refugee Camp, Greece

Fly with me!

~Sylvia

If the sky is blue, then fly with me!
If the sun is bright, then fly with me!
If the sea is rough, then fly with!
If you have wings, then fly with me!
If the wind blows through your wings, then fly with me!

Come here and fly with me!

~Parwana

The sky is dark, please help me!
The sun is sad, please help me!
The sea is stormy, please help me!
My wings are small, please help me!
The butterflies are afraid, please help me!
My world is ignored, please help me!
I am a refugee, please help me!
Please help me! Help me!

~Sylvia & Parwana

Never be scared!

We are together, with no fear!

We are together, full of courage!

We are together, with strong fists!

We are together, with powerful steps!

We are together, to fly and spy in the air!

We are together, to make a storm of happiness!

We are together, to stand up against all odds!

We are together, no one can stop us!

Because

We are together, we are together!

It needs courage!

It needs courage to build a school !

It needs courage to touch children's hearts !

It needs courage to welcome homelessness !

It needs courage to stand with us in one line !

It needs courage to open an educational house !

It needs courage to trade hope for hopelessness !

It needs courage to give pens to those who have never touched a pen before !

It needs courage to paint the black-and-white world of the wounded !

It needs courage to advocate from silence !

It needs courage to give shelter to others !

It needs courage to stay a human !

It needs courage !

It needs courage

BECAUSE . . .

It's easy to destroy !

It's easy to break hearts !

It's easy to shout at the silenced !

It's easy to close your eyes on truths !

It's easy to hurt those who have been hurt many times !

It's easy to sit aside !
It's easy to show your power against weakness !
It's easy !

But we will never give up !
We will build again, stronger than before !
We will help again, more committed than before !
We will bring happiness and stay happy, happier than before !
We will make islands free



About the Project

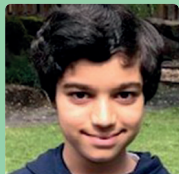
There are millions of children affected by war, social collapse, and climate change now living in refugee camps, or dispersed in host countries far from their original homes. The work that appears here is a part of Stone Soup's growing collection of creative expression by young people whose lives have been upended by such conflict throughout the world. To explore the entire collection, please visit the Stone Soup Refugee Project online: <https://stonesoup.com/refugee-project/>

Highlights from Stonesoup.com

From the Stone Soup Flash Contests

Weekly Creativity #147 | Flash Contest #30:

Visit the same place—precisely the same location—multiple times a day, or at the same time every day for a week. Document what you see through photography, other art forms, or writing.



An excerpt from **Observing My Backyard**

Rishan Chakraborty, 11
Portland, OR

4:00 p.m. 4/5/2021

On the second floor of the southeastern part of my house, my work room provides a spectacular view of our backyard. Right outside my window, which faces east, a noble fir with peculiar blue-green needles is located. When I was little, I thought that a Christmas tree with needles the same color would look amazing. However, I realize now that cutting the tree down would be a shame. All of the trees rock in the wind, but the noble fir is steadfast. When it does move, it moves gently, and sometimes it almost seems like it is breathing.

4:00 p.m. 4/6/2021

On the opposite side of the noble fir, a large, shaggy curly willow resides. When I was younger, my brother and I would grab one of the many dangling branches and run, pretending we were swinging from vines like Tarzan. Earlier, the branches were bare and speckled with tiny curly leaves. Now, there are hundreds of leaves on the tree, and the shape of its branches gives it the appearance of possessing bright green hair.

4:00 p.m. 4/7/2021

In our backyard, we have an old, tattered play structure. As a young child, it was one of my favorite places to hang out. Imagination would turn it into a spaceship, a boat, an airplane, and even a temple. In the summer, we would invite neighborhood kids to play with water guns, and the play structure could be used as a fort offering a vantage point, or somewhere to escape if you were under attack. Now, the slides are dirty, the swings rickety, the tarp missing one half, but I still cherish the fond memories associated with it.

4:00 p.m. 4/8/2021

A bird comes along, its purpose undefined. Very likely it came looking for food. The question remains unanswered. I did some research and discovered that it was probably an American robin, which is known to search for insects on the ground, hopping around in the process. I have keenly observed birds in my backyard too, such as a hummingbird, which flits around looking for its food. Spring is here, and as the days grow longer, more and more birds will start showing up, almost as if they are making the backyard come alive.

About the Stone Soup Flash Contests

Stone Soup holds a flash contest during the first week of every month. The month's first Weekly Creativity prompt provides the contest challenge. Submissions are due by midnight on Sunday of the same week. Up to five winners are chosen for publication on our blog. The winners, along with up to five honorable mentions, are announced in the following Saturday newsletter. Find all the details at [Stonesoup.com/post/stone-soup-monthly-flash-contest-winners-roll/](https://stonesoup.com/post/stone-soup-monthly-flash-contest-winners-roll/).

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.

STORIES

Julia Bizhko, 9
Max Chen, 13
Carolina Henderson, 10
Grace Jiang, 12
Madi Moore, 11
Sally Sandro, 7
Thomas Zhong, 9
Bianca Zou, 13

PERSONAL NARRATIVES

Oksana Andronyk, 11
A'Honesti Cowan, 11
Urjit Galera, 11
Daria Garkun, 11
Siroos Pashar, 12

POETRY

Amara M. Agarwal, 9
Nishka Budalakoti, 10
Celia Chen, 10
Caroline Gao, 9
Shula Mannes Geffen, 7
Lyla Hershkovitz, 11
Luba Howkins, 10
Nova Macknik-Conde, 9
Dana Yehia, 9

ART

William Dong, 4
Julia Hakanson, 8
Mihika Sarkar Omachi, 12
Shrika Shailesh, 8
Sunanda Vivekanandan, 8
Celine Xie, 6
Jiacheng Yu, 6

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At our store, you will find . . .

- Current and back issues of *Stone Soup* Magazine
- Our growing collection of books by young authors, as well as themed anthologies and the *Stone Soup Annual*
- High-quality prints from our collection of children's art
- Journals and sketchbooks

. . . and more!

Finally, don't forget to visit Stonesoup.com to browse our bonus materials. There you will find:

- More information about our writing workshops and book club
- Monthly flash contests and weekly creativity prompts
- Blog posts from our young bloggers on everything from sports to sewing
- Video interviews with *Stone Soup* authors

. . . and more content by young creators!

