In this Issue of Skipping Stones
Vol. 15, no. 3 May—August 2003 ISSN: 0899-529X

Long Summer Days, Time to Explore!
7 Rebuilding Cambodia
8 Inspiration in Cambodia
10 Visiting Ghana, W. Africa
11 My Life in Africa
12 Senegal’s Pink Lake
13 InsideOut: Poetry
14 There’s Nothing Wrong with a Little Moon Light
17 Coqui’s Song

Architecture of the Middle East
18 Cinco de Mayo • In My Childhood
20 Snapshtos of Mom • Mother’s Day
22 A Different View
23 You Know There Is Something You Could Do!
24 A Summer to Remember
26 China Mornings, China Nights

For Your Reading Adventure:
The 2003 Honor Awards

Regular Departments
3 From the Editor
4 Editor’s Mailbag
5 What’s On Your Mind?
15 Dear Hanna
16 Poetry Page
25 Skipping Stones Stew
27 Pen Pals Wanted
34 For Parents and Teachers
35 Folktale! A Lesson for Listeners
36 Images of Cambodia

Skipping Stones is a nonprofit children’s magazine that encourages cooperation, creativity and celebration of cultural and linguistic diversity. We explore stewardship of the ecological and social webs that nurture us. We offer a unique forum for communication among children from different lands and backgrounds. Skipping Stones expands horizons in a playful, creative way. We seek suggestions, submissions, subscriptions and support.

Editor and Publisher: Arun Narayan Toké
Editorial Staff: Michelle Lieberman
Webmaster: David Caruso
Interns: George Ayres, Anne Geuss, Pamela Sastra, Mitsuko Obase, Nina Forsberg.
Student Reviewers: Danielle Selcer, Abby Forbes, Aaron Wells, Your Name Here?

Acknowledgements
Cover: Cambodia photos by Valentina DuBasky, from the book Soul Survivors by Carol Wagner.
Board of Directors: Paulette Ansari, Bahati Ansari, Mary Drew, Bill Hessling, Steve Mallery, Ron Marson, Joachim Shultz, Hanna Still, and Arun N. Toké.
Special Thanks to all the contributors, supporters, interns, and to the teachers whose students’ work is in this issue.

Skipping Stones is an educational and charitable organization with a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Donations to Skipping Stones are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please support our 50% discount and free subscriptions to low-income subscribers by making a donation. Thanks to Virginia Wellington-Cabot Foundation, Tops Learning Systems, Black United Fund, Oregon Country Fair and Advanced Relay Corp. for financial support.


© 2003 by Skipping Stones. Opinions expressed in these pages reflect views of the contributors, and not necessarily those of Skipping Stones, Inc. In the spirit of ecological sensitivity, we choose to print with soy ink on recycled & recyclable paper.

To submit, subscribe or reprint, contact: Skipping Stones Magazine P.O. Box 3939 Eugene, OR 97403 USA (541) 342-4956; editor@SkippingStones.org wwwSkippingStones.org

Skipping Stones (Pub. No. 015-089) is published bimonthly, except July/August, by Skipping Stones, Inc., 1309 Lincoln St., Eugene, OR 97401. Postage paid at periodicals rate at Eugene, OR. Postmaster: Please send address changes to Skipping Stones, P. O. Box 3939 Eugene, OR 97403-0939.

In the Mayan “Story of the Questions,” the gods of light and darkness, Ik’al and Votán, are joined together as one.* At first they live in misery, unable to move, one side perpetually stuck in day and the other in night. Eventually, they figure out that by asking questions they are able to move. It gives them much happiness to be moving, so they continue to ask questions, make compromises, stretch and grow. Ik’al and Votán choose to travel a long road, always continuing to ask questions, never resting. Each answer leads to a new question, so as they arrive, they are already departing. We, too, must also learn to say “farewell” when we arrive and “hello” when we leave.

Since this is my farewell as an editor of Skipping Stones, I would like to say hello to all of you who have taught me the importance of asking questions. Each day at Skipping Stones I have been amazed by young people all over the world who are speaking their truth and raising important questions. As I read your writings I started asking my own questions: Why does the world too often ignore young people’s opinions? How can we make decisions that impact youth without consulting them?

These questions in turn led to deeper questions: Why are some people able to express themselves freely while others seem to be confined? Why is it sometimes difficult to remember our connections with other people and the natural world? How are compassion, communication and sense of connection related?

As I search for answers, I am moving forward. I am finding new ways to help youth and to facilitate better worldwide communication as an editor, a mentor, a yoga instructor, and simply as someone who will listen. I hope to never forget the lessons I have learned from the Skipping Stones family about the value of listening to as many viewpoints as possible and remaining open to where our questions and answers take us.

Like Ik’al and Votán, I am preparing to leave my comfort zone for greater challenges and greater opportunities. It won’t be easy to go. I came to Eugene with one suitcase and a desire for fresh ideas and new friendships. Since then I have made many friends, gotten married, planted a garden, explored the Oregon wilderness, and come to love and appreciate Skipping Stones. Still, the urge to grow pushes me on, and welcoming a new phase of life will require letting go of some old ways.

At this turning point, I am greeting new opportunities in the worlds of activism, career, community and spirituality. As I learn how these worlds are linked, I say farewell to my fears and lack of self-confidence. Each day I peel back more layers to reveal my inner-self and step closer to being the person I dream I can be. I am inspired to see so many of you also searching for your best selves, overcoming fears, and questioning through writing and artwork. We are all in the same process, connected by our questions, our answers and our choices.

What a privilege it has been to witness your moments of creativity, your thoughts and your opinions. At least once a day at Skipping Stones I have seen a student’s amazing work and realized all over again how much potential we have on Earth right now for healing, insight and understanding. I urge all young people to take your power seriously, to continue voicing your opinions, and to realize that you are not alone. A worldwide network of creative minds is out there to share with. Dare to listen deeply to one another, to take action, to speak your minds and follow your inner-voices. Keep those questions coming, and keep moving forward!

*See Questions & Swords (Cinco Puntos, 2001).
**Editor's Mailbag**

**Fur Fashion**

Many people do not think about it when they purchase a new fur coat. The exotic fashion and genuine beauty and elegance of this luxurious item hypnotizes shoppers. What they do not realize is that this piece of clothing traces back to the life of an animal, which was killed in order to produce it.

Many buyers do not realize that the lovely coat they just bought was once a living, breathing animal and was killed for the sake of their fashion needs. Millions of animals are slaughtered every year as they are trapped, clubbed and strangled. There are many different types of traps including snares, box traps, cage traps, and the most commonly used, leg hold trap. In the United States, raccoons, red and gray foxes, beavers, otters, coyotes, wolves, lynxes, bobcats, opossums, badgers, and muskrats are killed for fur. Thirty to 60 of these animals are needed to make just one fur coat. Animals are killed so numerously that they are at risk of endangerment. Furthermore, not allowing animals the rights they are entitled to demonstrates a lack of respect for nature, as animals die a suffering and painful death in traps. For every trap set to kill one particular targeted animal, up to 10 times as many animals that are not the target of the trap are also caught in it and killed. These animals are called “trash kills” because of their uselessness to the economy and are just disposed of. Fortunately, trapping is decreasing by the year, but fur coats still symbolize the suffering and painful death of an animal.

What do you value more: clothing and accessories, or the survival of the many animals that are victims of trapping? The environment and nature are worth much more than any amount of material wealth. Fur coats should not be purchased or worn. Fur coats represent the death and suffering of many animals, caught in a trap and killed because of the selfishness of human beings.

—Taylor Daugherty, 7th grade, Arcadia, CA.

*Students of Kimberly Baker, PCV, Balaclava Sec. School #30 in Sevastopol, Ukraine, found Skipping Stones’ donation educational and fascinating.*

---

**Ideas for Youth**

My mom, dad and I created peace symbols as a family project. We are each sending the peace symbols to different places. My dad is sending the colored symbol to senators, congressmen and other organizations. I am sending the uncolored symbol to my friends, pen pals and family to color for themselves.

The decisions our leaders make today affect our futures. Let our leaders hear what we have to say. Tell them how we feel.

I have written to President Bush. I invite youth everywhere to do the same. Write to:

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500  

—Abbey Forbes, 11, Port Deposit, Maryland.
What Peace Means to Me

Excerpts from the Peace Education Awards, printed with permission of The Radiant Peace Division, TRTIA.

I feel peace in my heart when I know that I have helped someone do something they think they can’t do. It is like making something impossible possible. I know that others are being helped. And that is what makes me have peace in my heart.

—Andy Davis, 8, St. Petersburg, Florida.

How can a little boy in Richmond help world peace? I can be a role model for younger children. Kids are the future of our world. If children see me being nice to others, they’ll see that violence isn’t right. Love and peace are spread from heart to heart, like candles lighting each other. If those candles are blown out, there is not peace but hate.

To spread that flame, I can congratulate the other team after a baseball game. I can share with my friends and family. I can do so much for peace by just being kind and caring.

I want to spread that burning candle in my heart to other people. By being a role model, I can show others how to be kind. And if everybody were kind and caring, there would be peace in this world.

—Danny Melson, 10, Richmond, Virginia.

Peace by Matt Schroeder, Gibsonia, PA.

To understand the true meaning of peace, what you do is much more important than what you say. We can tell each other that peace is very important, but not until we actually practice peaceful living will it really begin to make a difference.

We are not born mean and violent people. This way of living is something that we are taught. If one child throws a stone, then peace is lost. Violence feeds violence. In other words, if one kid throws a stone, a stone will be thrown back, possibly harming a person. This is much like our world today. The only way to stop violence is not to keep score.

Making our world a peaceful place will not be easy. Everyone will have to work together to change the way things already are.

—Sarah Eriksson, 13, Tampa, Florida.
Thoughts on War

War

Dead is life
and truth
and love
twisted grey
and broken brown
charred and murdered
blackened our
life is gone and with it love.

Greed and lust doth rub
drive to death
all beauty
cold steel glints
and gleams
mockingly reflects
a warped version
of light and warmth.

Truth
a myth derided
in scorn.

War destroys and kills
our world
browns and grays
all earthly forms.

Khaki color
rules
dead is life.

—Justine King, 8th grade,
Elka Park, New York.

I Saw Your Face

I saw your face.
Like carbon monoxide you seep through the vents,
Through broken doors and hidden crevices.
You hid yourself among the faces
Disguised as many races.

Like the Germans to the Jews
You tore through our flesh,
Contaminated our souls.

Like feuding sisters
You ripped through our veins,
Used our blood against us.

Like White men to Indians
You thrashed at our hearts,
Tried to make them cold.

I saw your face.
You exposed yourself,
Unveiled your face.
And now we know
You have no race.
You are neither pale nor brown,
Red nor yellow.

You hide yourself
Among each race
And now you know
I saw your face.

—Grace Sinclair, 17, Battle Creek,
Michigan. She writes, “After 9/11, I noticed
blame being thrown at different cultures, and I am inspired to stop prejudice.”

Land of the Free?

He trudges amongst
Rancid bodies of his friends
Not his choice to be here
But forced to fight
As he battles through
The rough green foliage
A plane becomes a target
In the dark night sky
And slams with the
Force of a supernova into
A village of innocence
As the bright flames
Greedily devour the homes
His leaders sit safely across the ocean
Behind their protective marble walls.

—Matt Allen, Bartow, Florida.

“Naturally the common people don’t want war, but after all it is
the leaders of a country who determine the policy, and it is always a
simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or
a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship.
Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of
the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is to tell them they are
being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and
exposing the country to danger. It works the same in every country.”

—Hermann Goering (Hitler’s Reichs-Marshall, 1939), Germany.
Rebuilding Cambodia

Cambodia suffered from a brutal genocide from 1975-1979 when a quarter of the population died from execution, starvation or disease. After the genocide there was 20 years of civil war. Today Cambodia is peaceful, but its people are still working to recover from the violence that destroyed their culture and communities.

Chath was five years old when the Khmer Rouge took over his country in 1975, and the genocide began. His father died from a disease because there was no medical care. Chath was separated from his mother and put in a cruel work camp for four years. After the genocide he immigrated to the United States with his brother. In the U.S. he experienced racial discrimination and poverty. Chath found it difficult to adjust to a new culture that was very different from his own. His life improved when his high school teacher recommended him for a special international studies program. There he met friends and discussed ideas about how to solve some of the problems of the world.

After graduating from college, Chath went back to Cambodia to work for a human rights organization. Chath helps train police to treat prisoners fairly and not beat them. In his spare time, Chath gives landmine education programs in rural villages to warn children about the dangers of landmines.

Cambodia is one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. There are 4 to 6 million landmines still in the ground. The process of removing mines is very slow and expensive because they are difficult to find. The landmines are made of plastic, so they can’t be located with a metal detector. The de-miner has to lie on his or her stomach and probe the earth inch by inch with a knife to try to find landmines. Cambodia and 145 other countries have signed an international treaty banning landmines, but the United States government has refused to sign.

In evenings Chath likes to visit the Buddhist temple in his neighborhood to hear the monks chant. He lights three sticks of incense and prays for world peace. The monks and nuns that live at the temples in Cambodia offer Peaceful Heart Trainings where they teach meditation, conflict resolution and communication skills. Buddhist leaders say that if true peace is to be achieved, each person has inner spiritual work to do.

“Peace will come not just by throwing away weapons. Peace comes from within the soul first and happens when our heart is calm.”

Many villages in Cambodia are rebuilding salabons—open air pavilions used by the community for welcoming visitors, for Buddhist ceremonies and for community meetings. When community members come together to raise the money and rebuild the salabon, they are also rebuilding their trust in each other and their sense of connection that was broken during the genocide.

Inspiration in Cambodia

“Money, money please!”
“Welcome to Cambodia, money please?”

From the moment we stepped off the bus at the border we were bombarded with Cambodians begging for money. Little kids with torn shirts and muddy pants ran toward us, barefoot. Older men hobbled down the street with hands outstretched. Young mothers breastfed their babies and looked up at us with pleading eyes. They all smiled as our gazes met. They had faith that we would help them.

It was early April and the middle of a powerful heat wave. Our clothes stuck to our bodies, and sweat dripped down our faces. I was exhausted. My body ached from the six-hour bus ride from Bangkok to the border town. I glanced at the tiny minibus waiting to take 20 of us for an eight-hour ride to Siem Reap. I boarded grudgingly and found a seat in the middle. I looked out the window at the group of children waving at us through the windows.

“Hello! Money, please?”

I hadn’t changed money into the local currency yet. Reaching into my bag, I wondered what I could give them. I pulled out the bunch of bananas that I had brought for the ride. I stretched my hand out through the window and gave three bananas to the kids calling up to me.

“Share these,” I advised them.

The tallest child took the bananas from me. He peeled them, broke off pieces and distributed them amongst the other kids.

“Thank you! Thank you!”

As my bus pulled away, I watched the kids waving to me with one hand and eating banana pieces with the other.

Siem Reap is the small city located next to the famous historical site of Angkor Wat. My friends and I planned to tour the area for a day and a half. The main temple is Angkor Wat itself, but the area has hundreds of stupas and temples to visit and explore. It is one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and thus a major tourist attraction for the country. Cambodians see this as a goldmine of opportunity for selling souvenirs and memorabilia.

I was extremely impressed by the Angkor Wat complex. It was everything I’d hoped it would be. Unlike the other temples I’d seen on my trip, this Wat was immense, decorative, creatively designed, and fascinating to explore. We also discovered the Bayon Temples, immense stone structures surrounded by massive carved faces. Lastly we visited the Jungle Wats. In these temples, tree roots had invaded the structures, pouring through their doors and windows.

All of these temples were truly amazing and left a lasting impression on me. It was not the temples that inspired me that day, though. After five hours of sightseeing, my friends and I stopped for lunch. We had already bought a few t-shirts and wooden flutes by then, so we did not want to be bom-
barded with any more pleas to buy souvenirs. We were hot and tired and hungry. That’s when we met her, the young Cambodian girl, probably about seven or eight years old, selling magnets.

“Please buy magnets. Small money.”

Her price was already low by North American standards, but she was willing to bargain with us. We politely declined her offer and started walking toward the restaurant.

“Please, please buy from me. Small money. Not expensive.”

Again, we told her that we did not have any use for magnets. She looked at us with determined eyes.

“No! Buy one for good price. I ask last time. If you cannot buy because you need money for yourself, that is okay. I understand. I go.”

Avoiding her gaze, I studied her magnets and tried to come up with a reason to buy one. I thought of my family back home and wondered if any of them would stick one of these magnets on their fridge. The girl smiled at me hopefully. I convinced myself that my little cousins would like the magnets so I agreed to buy some. I turned my back to the girl and counted my money. Her face grew with excitement. I had given her the equivalent of 15 cents. She gave me two magnets.

“Thank you! You make me so happy!”

She bowed her head and walked a few steps away from us. She plunked herself down on the grass behind a large tree and counted her money again.

My friends and I sat down at a table in the restaurant nearby and ordered lunch. We had bought more souvenirs than we had planned to, so we ordered the cheapest meals on the menu. As we sipped our drinks, I watched the girl on the grass. She still had her magnets.

“Please? The old man begged. My friends ignored him. I stared at the girl.

The girl stood up and walked over to us. She tugged on the old man’s shirt and said something in Khmer. She counted her money and gave him half.

“It’s okay. Do not worry,” she told us.

My friends and I stared at her in disbelief. Never had we seen such a pure display of compassion. This child was an angel. She didn’t have much herself, but she was willing to share what little she had earned.

Our food arrived at the table. The girl spoke to the old man again, and they turned to walk away in separate directions.

“Wait!”

I invited the girl and old man to sit with us. We asked our waitress for extra plates, and my friends and I each put some of our food on plates for them. They were very grateful and excited to eat with us. The conversation was limited by language barriers, but I found it thrilling nonetheless. This little girl filled me with new hope for humanity. I smiled at her sweet, innocent face and fell in love with Cambodia.

—Naomi Iscove, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
My Trip

This was my first trip to Africa. My dad brought me here because he wanted me to have experience in the world and because he wanted to return home and see our relatives. He brought me to all kinds of places: The Gardens, Kankum National Park, Cape Coast Castle, and the King’s Palace. We saw statues of the Ashanti king and the Queen Mother.

Jennifer is my cousin. She lives in Ghana. She is nine. She has a big house in Accra with a nice back yard. A lot of animals come there, like chickens, vultures and lizards. Jennifer wears a uniform to school. The boys wear shorts, and the girls wear skirts or dresses. They have a badge saying the name of their school. She wears her uniform every weekday. We like to play on the computer, and we play a card game called Spider.

In Ghana there are a lot of palm trees. People carry babies on their backs and things on their heads. They have different foods like fufu and plantains. There are a lot of farms for palm trees, goats and sheep. There is a lot of dry dirt and high mountains in Ghana. The money is called “cedis” and 8,000 cedis are one US dollar.

The people look different. Everyone has black hair. Some girls cut their hair very short. No one has blond hair. A lot of people have brown or black skin. In America I don’t really feel like I am me because people make fun of my color. Here I feel like myself. No one makes fun of me because they are all my color.

In Ghana, they don’t complain. They respect one another. They are nice to everybody. They have certain names for people who are born on different days. For example, I was born on Tuesday, and that’s why my name is Abena. My brother, Kofi, was born on Friday. When I talk to anyone who is older than me, I have to say “auntie” or “uncle.”

—Abena Agbo, 7, Forest Grove, Oregon.

Hello from Kofi

I was born in Canada, and right now I live in the USA. My dad was born in West Africa. When my dad left Africa he was 27 years old. That was 21 years ago. Right now we are in Ghana visiting along with three other people. This is their first time here. My dad brought me here last year. This year he brought me here with my sister, Abena.

We are having so much fun. We went to the canopy and had to go across a bridge to get back. The canopy is the top layer of the rain forest. We were above the trees on a wood and metal bridge. It swings, and it’s only wide enough for one person. It is really scary when you look down. Our friend was shaking it so much I thought I was going to fall. I saw lizards. In the daytime monkeys don’t come out, but you can hear them if you’re quiet. We also went to the beach with everyone.

—Kofi Agbo, 9, Forest Grove, Oregon.

Hello from Jennifer

I was born in Ghana. I go to school at Services Basic. In Ghana we have fun. My mother’s name is Gloria, and my father’s name is John. My family is very big. When Kofi and Abena were going to my mother’s village, I wanted to go, but my mother said I had to cut my hair and do my homework. I learn so much in school like environmental studies, music and dance, integrated science, religious/moral education, mathematics, English, comprehension, composition, Ga, Tewi and French. I have two friends. Their names are Esime and Sheila. They are good friends. They eat together. They do everything together.

—Jennifer Brobbey, 9, Ghana.
My Life in Africa

My name is Andrew Pike, but people call me Andy for short. I live in Uganda. That is in East Africa. My mum is from Australia and my dad is from England. My mum likes me to read a lot because she says it’s better than watching television and playing computer games.

My dad’s name is William Pike. My dad works at a government newspaper called The New Vision, and he owns a third of the best radio station ever to be built. The radio station is called Capital Radio.

At the newspaper my dad has two jobs: editor-in-chief and managing director. He has to work a lot. His hobbies are chess and art.

My mum used to work at an organization called Straight Talk which helps children and adolescents stay safe from problems like HIV. My mum was the co-boss.

I really like African food like matoke (pronounced, ma-to kay) and beans. Matoke is a non-sweet banana, and we eat it boiled. I also like gonja a lot. Gonja is a sweet type of cooked banana.

I have some African friends called Alex and Alvin. I really like them because they are really jokey. They are very tall because they have good food, and their tribes drink a lot of milk. They are cattle keepers.

In my garden we have monkeys. Sometimes we see their babies holding on under their mother’s chest. That is the way they travel until they are a bit older.

We play tennis every Saturday with our teacher, Erik. He is a really good Ugandan tennis player. He has trained a group of poor boys from the slums. They are really poor. One of them is Ronald, a boy nearly as good at tennis as Erik.

Ronald is very clever as well as sporty. In his class he is 18th out of 120. All of those 120 boys squeeze into one classroom and only have one teacher. We help boys like that by paying for their school fees. We are supporting three orphans at the moment. One of them lives with us.

Some construction companies were dumping soil in the swamp and building on it, but my mum fought them, and they had to take the dirt they had dumped in the swamp out. The swamp filters the rain water and keeps Lake Victoria clean. Our drinking water comes from the lake.

In the rainy season there is lots of flooding in the town. So they built a man-made river that has gutters where all the rain water goes in. It is called Nakivubo channel. Some cars get stuck in the flood water and float away, but with our big car it is exciting to drive through it.

I really like Uganda because it is hardly ever cold, and people are really friendly. I want to live in Uganda when I grow up because it is exciting, and, maybe someday, I can run my father’s radio station.

—Andrew Pike, 10, Kampala, Uganda.

David, My Brother

Destructive but delightful
Awful but adorable
Very rotten but very sweet
Ignorant but intelligent
David my brother.

—Alexandra Winder, 8, Bremerton, WA.
Written for her two-year-old brother.

Brother

Annoying at times
But he is always there when
I need him the most.

—Alex Whiting, 14, Gibsonia, Penn.
Senegal's Pink Lake

Can you imagine yourself having a swim in water so unusual you feel as though you’re wearing an invisible life jacket? Well, it’s possible to experience this sensation if you swim in one of the least known, yet most spectacular bodies of water on our planet, Lac Rose.

While visiting Senegal, a country nestled in Africa’s westernmost point, I heard about Lac Rose, also known as the pink lake. Estimated to be 10 times saltier than the oceans, it is often compared to the Dead Sea in Israel because of its salty and heavy water.

Curious, I set out with some Senegalese friends one afternoon to see for myself. Lac Rose is about an hour’s drive from Dakar, the capital city, in an area where savannah woodlands meet the desert. Endless fields of tall grass fanned out on either side of the flat, winding road. We occasionally passed large clearings of thatched huts with roving herds of grazing livestock. Intense sunlight shimmered over the semi-dry landscape, a reminder that Senegal lies within Africa’s Sahel region at the southern edge of the Sahara.

As we approached Lac Rose, I noticed restaurants and campsites. A small tourist market sat at the water’s edge. Flocks of seabirds congregated at the lake, which actually did sparkle a deep pink in the sunlight.

“This is a photographer’s dream,” I thought, as I aimed my camera.

A large, shallow lagoon surrounded by straw-colored dunes, Lac Rose is thought to be the remnants of a fossil sea which once covered all of Senegal. And, what about the lake’s unusual color, which is even more dramatic when the water level is low? A couple of explanations exist. One view holds that the lake contains a high concentration of mineral deposits that reflect sunlight through the salty water. The other theory attributes the color to halophytic algae or bacteria, containing a red pigment, which thrive in the salty soil of the lake.

“Let’s go for a dip!” someone yelled.

“A dip?” Suddenly I remembered I couldn’t swim. But I was soon hypnotized by the water’s alluring shade. We jumped in, and to my surprise, I found that very little effort is required to stay afloat. It is impossible to lie on your back because the heavy water somehow turns you on your stomach, curling you up in fetal position. I felt very light, as though suspended in time and space. We floated like buoys in the peaceful water, with only the birds for company.

As we dried off, my friends mentioned the similarity between the shape of the lake and the continent of Africa. Eager to judge for myself, I climbed the dunes for a panoramic view. I have to agree that with very little stretch of the imagination, it is easy to recognize the outline of the world’s second largest continent.

Someone else recounted a myth he had heard about the lake, almost as captivating as its color. It says that long ago the lake turned pink at the death of an important religious leader called a “marabout,” and it was haunted after dark. Luckily, we left before the sun set.

In the distance, we could make out the silhouettes of people from Niaga-Peul village collecting salt from the lake. The villagers wade into the very shallow water, where the women scrape salt from the lakebed and load it into special flat-bottomed boats. Each boat is then rowed back to shore, where the salt is unloaded onto the bank in mounds. The better quality salt is sold to distributors from Dakar, while the rest is sent elsewhere for processing before being sold locally.

Lac Rose is truly a rare phenomenon. So the next time you consider nature’s unique and unusual wonders; whether it be for a research paper, art project or pure inspiration; don’t forget Senegal’s pink lake.

—Cleopatra Blyden, Sierra Leone born African American, ESL teacher, New York, NY.
These students from Pelham Magnet Middle School, Detroit, Michigan, participated in *InsideOut*, a program that brings established writers to do workshops in inner-city schools.

### Broken

Cold
Broken
Sun
Water
Auntie
Mother
James

I once knew someone who was broken. They have never even spoken.

They dreamed of water in the air but there was one thing they did not share because they were broken.

Even when the sun came out this person could never shout because they were broken.

They dreamed of red hair on their chin but they had no money to spend.

My auntie helped someone who was broke. She helped people who never spoke.

My auntie had to hunt for people who care, hunt for people who share.

She had to fix shattered dreams in the air because people were broken.

—Lanardriah Kelly, 8th grade.

### Chains that Lock

I spit lyrics and whisper wisdom.
Those who speak words destroyed by chains that lock. My lyrics are so sweet, they vibrate and knock off your socks.
I speak in tongue twisters and leave lung blisters. I leave wounds that only a mother's song can heal.
I don't speak words, I speak lyrics that can kill. My wisdom is like thunder in the night, the only long lasting light. Stronger than the sun, stronger than moon, and my wisdom is like heaven locked in a room.

—Gerald E. Mosley, 8th grade.

### My Shadow

I hear a homeless person praying to God for some food.
I hear trees rattling. A shadow is jumping from where I am standing. It jumped from my back.
I looked behind me, and it was gone.
My mother said, "I found a boyfriend."
I noticed my mother was lying down.
I saw her with my shadow!
I said, "That's not a boy; it's a girl, and it's my shadow!"
My shadow ran. Actually it glided. My sister saw it.
I knew she'd do something. She stepped on it.
My shadow went inside her.
Her shadow left and flew inside me.
I told my mother she stole my shadow, but all she heard was bibble babble.

—Tateona Hughes, 4th grade.

### Fireflies with Homeless Woman

Fireflies glow in her mouth.
Fireflies set a fire in her hair.
Broken glass falls out of her mouth and forms into a golden glass boy. He gives her a feather as a present or toy. When she was a little girl she lived in the South, fireflies started glowing inside her mouth.

—Givant'e Knight, 8th grade.
It was a cold day. The fifth graders were huddled together, talking excitedly during recess.

“So Friday night, girls. Pizza and ghost stories. Are you in?” Lisa asked.

“I am,” Jennifer said right away. Ellen, Tisha and Mimi chimed in, “Me too. Me too.”

Vanessa realized all eyes were on her. “Yeah, me too,” she said, with shaky confidence.

It would be her first slumber party. Vanessa should have been excited, but she wasn’t.

Later that night, Vanessa got ready for bed. She did her nightly routine. She checked her closet, behind the curtains and under her bed. She peeked behind her dresser and into the clothes hamper before switching on her nightlight and getting into bed.

The next morning, all the way to school, Tisha talked about the party and how she couldn’t wait to be scared out of her mind, but Vanessa could wait. She hated to be scared, and she was terrified of the dark. Ever since she was a little girl, she’d had her little moon nightlight. She couldn’t bring her nightlight to her very first slumber party. All of the girls would think she was a baby. What was she going to do?

She came up with a plan. For the next couple of days Vanessa pretended she was sick. She convinced all of the girls that she was too sick to go to the party. She thought she’d feel relieved, but instead she felt sad and left out. All her friends talked about was the party. Vanessa wished she wasn’t such a scaredy cat.

On the bus ride to school Friday morning, Tisha started talking about the party again.

“Don’t you have anything else to talk about?” Vanessa snapped at her. Vanessa knew she hurt Tisha’s feelings. Even though she was embarrassed, she decided to tell Tisha what was bothering her. Tisha understood completely. It made Vanessa feel better to talk to her friend. That day, Vanessa dropped the sick act and joined in her friends’ excitement.

The party started off great. They made pizzas and listened to music. Everything was going just fine until they got into their pajamas.

“Okay, everyone, who wants to begin?” With a flip of the light switch Lisa plunged them into darkness. She turned on her flashlight, and it illuminated her face with an eerie glow.

One by one, each girl told a story. It seemed like each one was scarier than the next. Vanessa’s heart beat a million times a minute. When it was her turn, she realized she didn’t have one prepared. She’d been so busy pretending to be sick that she had forgotten

“I’m sorry; I don’t have one.”

“That’s okay,” Mimi said. “I’m getting sleepy anyway.”

“Me too,” the rest of the girls mumbled, turning off their flashlights.

All of the girls snuggled down into their sleeping bags. Tisha’s was right next to Vanessa’s.

“You okay?” she asked, in a quiet voice so that no one would hear.

“Yeah,” Vanessa said, “I guess so.”

But she wasn’t okay. She was terrified. Every time she closed her eyes, all she could see were ghosts and goblins and scary men with hooks for hands. When she opened her eyes all she saw was darkness. She shivered in her sleeping bag. Tisha sensed her fear.

“Hey guys,” Tisha said into the pitch-black room, “I’m feeling kinda creeped out. Can we put on a light or something?”

“What?” said Mimi,

“Are you scared or something?”

“Yes,” Tisha replied, in a strong voice, “I am.”

“Only babies are scared of ghost stories,” said Mimi.

“Well then I guess that makes me a baby,” Ellen said in the darkness, “because I’m scared too.”

“Me too,” said Maria and Jennifer simultaneously.

“Oh...well...those were pretty creepy stories,” Mimi admitted.

“I’ve got a nightlight,” Lisa said.

She walked over to her dresser and plugged it in. It was the same moon light Vanessa had in her room.

Soon the girls settled in, and Vanessa started to hear the slow, steady breathing of sleep. She looked over at Tisha to see if she was still awake.

“Tisha?” she whispered, quietly.

Tisha turned around giving her a smile and a wink. Vanessa smiled back and finally drifted off. It was the best night’s sleep she’d ever had.

—Emily Wilson, Chicago, Illinois.
Sometimes it feels like miracles happen to me; my friends have said that I make them happen. Do you believe in miracles?  —Anne

Dear Anne: I could not even define "miracle," much less declare whether I believe they happen. However, in my experience, life offers us sparks of enrichment, which I call magic moments. They are not miracles, but they are unexpected turns of events which enrich life immeasurably.

Just a few days ago I had such an experience. I noticed on my calendar that the following day was my neighbor's birthday. I really wanted to give her a meaningful gift. In a flash I knew that I wanted to give her my favorite book, an inspiring autobiography. Unfortunately, the previous day I had sent my copy of that very book to a former boss. I had special ordered the book because none of the local bookstores carried it.

Holding my breath, I dialed my favorite bookstore, saying to the salesperson, "I know you don't carry this book, but I so want it right now!"

"Well," responded clerk, "you were so excited about the book when you first ordered it, I thought you might want another copy. So I had ordered two. I have it right here in my hand."

Be it miracles or magic moments, I am reminded of an old Japanese legend.

Mochimitsu, a well-known musician, was sailing home after giving a concert when he was overtaken by pirates. Since he had no skills with which to defend himself, he assumed he would be killed, and the pirates would take his ship. He climbed on top of the ship's cabin and reached for his beloved hichiriki, a flute-like musical instrument. Loudly enough that the pirates could hear him, he said, "You can see that I have no weapons; I am totally defenseless. Take whatever you want! But I would like to play this piece on the hichiriki for you. I have been working on this piece for years."

The pirates sat down on the ship's deck. Mochimitsu began. Assuming it was the last time he would ever create music again, he poured his whole soul into the music. The pirates listened in ever deeper silence. When the music finally did cease, the leader arose saying, "I came to take your ship, but your playing has brought tears to my eyes. I cannot harm you now!"

Quietly, the pirates filed into their little boats and rowed away.

We are putting together a feature on magic moments. Write us yours to add to our collection.

Send your questions or comments to:
Dear Hanna  c/o Skipping Stones
P. O. Box 3939, Eugene, OR 97403

In Peace,
Fly Away to a Better Place

When I look at the sky
I want to fly away
To a place where no one lives or stays
Or hears or says,
“Get off my island.”
I want a place where
No wars or battles are ever going on
Where wolf and bear run freely.
I want a place where I can stay
Out of the rain or snow.

I want to fly away from wars and battles
Away from white walls that are always around
Doors clinking all night long
Cement beds and metal toilets
Mounted to the ground.
Where staff are all around
To watch you in your rooms.

We call this place hell to males and females.
So I want to fly away
To a beautiful place in the sky
Far away to live the rest of my life
Freely every day.

—Jesse Gaston, 17, Bend, Oregon. Jesse writes, “I am currently detained in a juvenile facility. I’ve made many life-changing decisions to turn my life around in a positive way.” Art by Jon Bush, Belmont, MA.

Every Second You Live

Every second you live is closer to your death
Every second you live you take another breath
Every second you live should be filled with happiness
Every second you live shouldn’t bring any stress

Every second you live definitely matters
Every second you live your heart pit-patters
Every second you live you think and work your imagination

You are a new creation.

—Jenine Sabot, 10, Airmont, New York.

Unlimited Paradise

The electrified lamp falls over in the full wind,
high above the house painted with wilting sunflowers.
How limited we are, how many more things we can do.
How rich we feel, while we are poor.
Balls rolling toward the electric cars,
toward statues white and full, toward chairs as rich blue,
toward the world’s arty time, toward the science crystal—
there are messages that we can’t see,
most we can see are not true.

There is an infinite range of things that we can do.

—Mel Goss, 7, Boca Raton, Florida. Mel was inspired by Architectural Digest magazine.
Soon he met Miguel, an iguana, chewing an orchid. Juan Pepe said, “The storm has stranded a great turtle. Will you help me return him to the sea?”

Miguel barely heard him. The iguana merely shook his head “no” and reached for another orchid.

Juan Pepe made his way deeper into the forest. Soon he met the mongoose, Manuel, lying on a rock swinging his tail. “Manuel,” Juan Pepe quietly pleaded, “the storm has stranded a great turtle. Will you help me return him to the sea?”

Manuel yawned, “No, Juan Pepe. There are rats to chase. You should be catching flies.”

Who would help him? Everyone was so busy eating or sleeping that no one had time. The rest of the Coqui had gathered in a clearing waiting for news of their brave Juan Pepe. When he returned, defeated and sad for the great turtle, the smallest Coqui of all, Jorgecito, spoke in a voice that only the other Coqui could hear. “Juan Pepe, we will help you return the great turtle to the sea. Let’s go to the beach and surely you will know what to do when we arrive.”

At the beach, the small and quiet Coqui surrounded the turtle who could not hear their words of “We’ll help you,” and “Soon you’ll be home.”

Juan Pepe looked to the sea. The tide was beginning to rise up the beach. “Now!” said Juan Pepe. “Lift with all your strength.” The many Coqui got beneath the turtle lifting him just high enough for the water to slide beneath his belly. Excitedly, the Coqui slid him into the water. He swam until they could no longer see his green shell above the waves.

Exhausted, the Coqui happily rested on the sand. They thought that feeling this brave and strong must be the prize. A slight breeze cooled them, and Juan Pepe looked up to see King Eduardo circling.

He landed beside them saying, “Juan Pepe, you and your family remembered what it means to be brave and strong. You have passed the test and earned this prize.” And with that, King Eduardo lifted his wings and gave the Coqui a song to sing that was strong, sweet and clear.

Even now, on warm Puerto Rican evenings, just as the sun sets, the Coqui sing from the trees to remind us that even the small and quiet ones can be brave and strong.

—Ann Russek and Luisa P. Detwiller, Spring City, PA.
A journey through the Middle East reveals a rich history that predates Islam and shows how the region has been at the crossroads of many empires. Building distinctive structures has not just been a way of life, but a necessity too. Even today, not content with this rich historical legacy, Middle Eastern architects are producing some of the most forward-thinking, stunning designs imaginable.

Top: Palmyra Arch and Colonnade, Syria

A 2,000-year-old city in the Syrian desert, Palmyra has been famous ever since Queen Zenobia challenged the Roman emperor Aurelian’s might by minting coins with her image. Six years later, the Romans removed her from power. The ruins of Palmyra show the importance of this city in defending the eastern border of the Roman empire. The well-preserved and easily accessible funeral towers on the city’s edge give an idea of the role that ancestor worship played in the Palmyran’s way of life.

The Zoroastrian Fire Temple in Yazd, Iran, holds a traditional fire, which has been kept alight by Zoroastrian priests continuously for over 1100 years. Islamic architecture, such as the Friday Mosque and wind towers called *badgirs*, which act as cooling systems for buildings, also adorns the city.

Old Mari’b tower houses, Yemen
Yemen's capital, Sana’a, is one of the oldest cities in the world. Within its walls are many unique building types, including the tower houses, which are five to nine stories high. Tower houses originated in villages where farmland was scarce. Building upward was a means of accommodating the settlers. Tower houses are made from stone and baked brick, and their exterior ornamentation often resembles elaborate latticework or textile patterns.

Bahrain, with its 33 islands on the northern coast of the Arabian peninsula, offers a blend of ancient and modern architecture. Skyscrapers share the landscape with majestic mosques. Ornately carved doorways are found on plain white houses, and giant statues of coffee-pots adorn traffic circles.

Baalbeck is Lebanon’s greatest Roman treasure. Baalbeck’s temples are the largest and most noble of all Roman sites and are also some of the best preserved. They were built on an ancient mound or *tel* that goes back at least to the end of the third millennium B.C. Little is known about the origins of the *tel*, but there is evidence that during the first millennium B.C. an enclosed court was built on this site. Under Greek occupation (333–64 B.C.) this enclosed court was enlarged. The Romans later built the Great Court of the Temple of Jupiter on top of the old court. One of the most inspiring sights of Baalbeck are the six Corinthian columns of this temple, which thrust 22 meters into the sky.
Cinco de Mayo

Fiesta! Fiesta! Today is Cinco de Mayo.
The old abuela rolls flour tortillas, causing the flour dust to rise in the air.
My prima wails her multi-colored vestido around, practicing Flamenco.
The papá bobs his head as the Spanish music begins to play.

The old abuela rolls flour tortillas, causing the flour dust to rise in the air.
Mamá blends the teary-eyed onion into the pico de gallo.
The papá bobs his head as the Spanish music carries on.
My hermanos swing for the star piñata filled with sweet candy.

The mamá blends the teary-eyed onion into the pico de gallo.
Tía Jimena rounds the children to tell them the story of the Compañero.
My hermanos swing for the star piñata filled with sweet candy.
The aging bisabuelo, slumped in the green recliner, focuses on the television.

Tía Jimena rounds the children to tell them the story of the Compañero.
I push the squeaky screen door and step outside.
My bisabuelo, slumped in the green recliner, focuses on the television.
Freshly bloomed tulips and velvet red roses surround me.

As I proceed forward, I dunk my head for the birdseed in the feeder.
My prima wails her multi-colored vestido around, practicing Flamenco.
I look back and see a small, old casa celebrating a family.
Fiesta! Fiesta! For today is Cinco de Mayo!

—Sierra Barraza, 14, Fort Collins, Colorado. Sierra writes, “This poem shows how a Hispanic family celebrates... It is common for them to have chickens, goats, cows and other farm animals roaming in the backyard. Therefore, in the end of the poem I am speaking from a chicken's point of view.”

Cinco de Mayo commemorates the Mexicans victory over the French Army at Puebla, Mexico, on 5 May, 1862. The Mexican Independence Day is 16 September.

In My Childhood by Allison Wist, 14, Gibsonia, Pennsylvania

In my childhood
I was superwoman, and nothing could stop me.
My mom was an even bigger super hero, though,
And she could always make things right.

In my childhood
My world was my backyard.
In it I could be anything, do anything,
It was mine to explore.

In my childhood
I had no enemies, brats or mean friends.
The only bad guys in my life,
Were the villains in my imagination.

In my childhood
I was just a kid with no worries in the world.
And some days my only wish,
Is to be that carefree child once more.
Snapshots of Mom

My mother is in her bedroom watching TV, a silhouette in the small amount of light slipping through the window. Mom adores the autumn sun. It’s not brutal, yet still gives you that sane feeling of serenity that goes throughout your body when you first get in front of the fire after sledding all day.

I run in with a virus; I have a nasty headache. I lay down near my mother. She gets a hot compress and delicately places it on my pounding forehead. She then tells me to think of happier thoughts and begins to stroke my hair so gently that I am just able to feel her fingertips leaving the ends of the strands. She has the softest touch; no other person in the world has the warmth of my mother.

Mom is in the kitchen making her specialties, creating new recipes. I sit in my room completing my homework. Something smells delicious, and I know what it is. I don’t even have to walk down the hall. It’s better than s’mores with their gooey, oozing marshmallow. So much better because my mom puts more effort into the food she is making. Every inch of her cheese and spinach quiche is filled with one more bit of her warm heart. When I go to other homes I eat their food, but it’s no match for my mom’s.

Much of her soul is reflected by what she cooks, making her meals great on the outside and in.

Mom walks in from work. She’s an administrative assistant. Traffic on the highway makes her stressed, but she still continues to commute. Arms at her sides, annoyance in her voice, she’s breathing heavily. Mom is aggravated, dragging her feet throughout the house as if five pounds of bricks were in her shoes. At dinner we all talk about how our day was. As usual Mom has undergone the most stress. How she handles it, I will never know. Dinner is done. Mom walks to her room to lie down. I hear a sigh of relief. Mom is off to sleep and not a moment too soon. Mom’s day is done and not in a minute less than her 24-hour life.

—Aimee Laitman, 15, New City, NY.

Vol. 15 no. 3

Skipping Stones
Icy shivers raced down Cerise’s back as she peered up at the dark, red brick building looming above her. This was where her beloved Josie had to live?

Josephine Davis was a famous artist who for years had been Cerise’s neighbor. Visiting Josie’s home was always an adventure. Mesmerized by her stories of traveling to exotic places, Cerise loved discovering the treasures Josie had collected from all over the world.

One night Josie fell. While she recuperated in the hospital, her niece and nephew claimed Josie couldn’t live by herself any longer. They sold her place and moved all her things to Wedgwood Lodge. It sounded like a nice old English estate.

Cerise knew it was a retirement home.

Cerise missed her friend and had been anxious to call on her, but now she had to force her feet to move down the poorly-lit hallway and knock on Josie’s door.

“Come in!” Josie welcomed Cerise with open arms.

Josie smelled fresh, like soap, but she looked different. Without makeup, her skin appeared luminous and pale and showed pink through her white hair. The sparkle was gone from her chocolate brown eyes. The gown dress hung on her.

Her rooms were dull, with heavy, old colorless furniture. Gone was the bedroom set with hand-carved pineapple bed posts draped with a filmy white mosquito netting; the black ebony chest and its hundred drawers filled with surprises; glass-topped display tables exhibiting Josie’s collections of ivory pieces, seashells, polished rocks and beautiful jewelry. Not a single picture decorated the walls.

“Where’s Images of Africa?” Cerise asked.

Josie shrugged. “In the University Gallery.”

Cerise recalled the huge paintings decorating the walls in Josie’s old home. Under vivid blue skies, hairy gray elephants, mired to their knees in a mud hole, raised their trunks to spray streams of water at long-necked giraffes, nibbling on tree leaves. Through high golden grass, sleek-bodied cheetahs chased frightened gazelles; their hooves never appearing to touch the ground.

“The animals symbolize natural beauty and freedom,” Josie always said.

“I could drive you to see your paintings,” Cerise offered.

“I don’t get out much anymore,” Josie said.

Aching inside, Cerise fought to control her emotions. How could Josephine Davis, adventurer and traveler all her life, accept confinement in this dull, dreary place?

“I know she isn’t happy,” Cerise told Mama.

“She’s getting old, honey,” Mama said.

On Cerise’s next visit, Josie appeared smaller and more frail. Worse, she was losing interest in the world outside. The drapes were shut tightly.

“Should I open them for you?” Cerise asked.

“Nothing to look at,” Josie shrugged.

Cerise couldn’t stop fretting about Josie or erase the vision of her sad friend.

She tried. On each visit, she brought a gift. But Josie picked at the food and didn’t eat or listen to music.

Today had been the worst. Josie shuffled to greet Cerise in floppy, white slippers and a threadbare bathrobe.

“Can I help you with your clothes?” Cerise offered.

“I don’t feel like getting dressed.”

Tears wet Cerise’s cheeks. It hurt her to think about Josie existing in such stark surroundings. No wonder Josie was letting go of her life. What was she going to do? She had to help Josie.

One night Cerise dreamed that she and Josie were strolling across an emerald green lawn, laughing together.

It was not just a dream! Cerise remembered her birthday a few years ago. Josie had joined
the family at Cerise’s party and gave Cerise a wonderful camera.

“So you can see the world through different eyes,” Josie had said.

“I’ve got an idea,” Cerise told Mama.

At the University Gallery, excitement tingled inside Cerise as she clicked photographs of *Images of Africa*.

After they were developed, she fit her favorites into frames. Cerise couldn’t wait to place the wrapped gift in Josie’s lap.

When Josie opened the box, tears splashed from the crinkled eyes.

Cerise smiled.

“Since you couldn’t go to *Images of Africa*, I brought it to you.”

Josie whispered, “Thank you so much!”

Arranging the photographs around the room, she told Cerise stories about her adventures while sketching and painting the panels.

“The bull elephant didn’t want his portrait painted, so he charged the truck. We had to skedaddle!”

They laughed together. Cerise eased the drapes back. Fingers of sun streamed in.

“Look, a cardinal.” Cerise pointed to the tree outside the window.

“I’d like to paint a picture of him,” Josie said.

“I’ll bring you art supplies,” Cerise offered.

Josie plucked at her robe. “Next time you come to see me, I’ll be dressed.”

That night Cerise was bursting with plans.

“I’m taking her brushes, paper, paints and a seashell. She can hold it up and hear the crashing waves—listen to the world through another ear.”

—Judy Camplin, Grand Island, Nebraska.

---

**You Know There Is Something You Could Do!**

Why is it so much easier to hate
Than to love?
.Is it because we are afraid?
What are we afraid of?
Afraid of everything that’s different?
The figure nor color nor religion,
Does matter to what is in the soul.

Why do we fight for riches,
When it only causes hatred and jealousy?
Why do we spend so much money
On weapons and on war
When there are people around us starving?
Put yourself in the position of the poor,
And think of when you threw them away
When they were begging at your door.

How can you look at yourself in the mirror
the next morning
And know that you went stuffed to bed
And they were starving in a rotten shelter?
How can you feel comfortable
In your warm and cozy bed
When you know there are people around
Freezing to death?

How can you throw away
The food left on your plate
When other people have nothing to eat?
What happens to us
When we start loving money and power
More than people?
We lose control of the kindness inside us
And get hatred in return.
What we need to learn in this great big world
Is to think of each other more than ourselves!!!

—Vegard Bohlerengen, 14, Czech Republic.
A Summer to Remember...

Grow a garden... windowsill garden... back yard garden... herb patch... salad garden...
plants in big pots... a garden on the rooftop...

No space for a garden?
sprout in large glass jars... mung beans, alfalfa, lentils, sunflowers...
soak overnight and rinse twice a day...
drain well with a cheese cloth...
put the jar at an angle or on its side in a dish drainer...

Eat fresh vegetables and fruits in season...
visit farmer's market... stop at roadside stands...
go to U-Pick farms...
spy blackberry patches in your neighborhood... visit them in season...

Read books... check out multicultural or nature books
visit the local library
keep a journal... record your thoughts, things to do...
write poems, stories, letters to relatives far away, and penpals
write to editors, leaders, business executives...
stretch your imagination... paint... draw cartoons

Cook simple vegetarian meals
try new, ethnic foods...
make banana smoothies... cucumber raita... spinach cheese pita sandwiches
prepare whole grain meals... brown rice,
whole wheat breads... chapatis, homemade pizza

Cool morning walks, evening walks, jogging, swimming, biking...
explore nearby nature, look under rocks, sit under a tree...

Learn something new... family history... that you always wanted to learn...
a game, hobby... skill, musical instrument
soak up the warmth... make new friends... meditate... seek solitude
enjoy your summer... explore life...

Page 24 Skipping Stones Vol. 15 no. 3
The blade of green grass
Shimmers in the bright sunlight
Twinkles in the wind.

The bright green grass
Tickles my feet as I walk
Softly toward the house.

The divine thunder
Strikes the unsuspecting earth
Is gone in a flash.
—Jon Faix, 14

Nature Heals
Don’t fear the mountain, mighty and tall.
Great wonders await, if you’d just risk the fall.
Don’t fear the waves that rumble and roar.
The waters will calm if you sail beyond shore.
Don’t fear the storm upon the wind’s wings.
Healing and clean is the rain that it brings.
Don’t fear the shadows that lurk everywhere.
Shadows just mean a light shines somewhere.
—Alice Yu, 13

Sun
Bright, warm
Burning, shining, glowing
This star gives life
Energy.
—Donna Kaltenbaugh, 13

Shade
Cooling breezes blow
Animals seek refuge here
From sweltering heat.
—David Ritchey, 14

Sunset
In a far off place
Wild colors drift together
And become one.
—Julia Hubbard, 13

Blade of Grass
The blade of green grass
Shimmers in the bright sunlight
Twinkles in the wind.
—Jaimie Rice, 14

One early morning
Crickets are chirping everywhere
Loudly but lovely.
—Erika Haberman, 13

Nature poems by students at Pine-Richland Middle School, Gibsonia, Pennsylvania. Art by Anne Geuss.
China Mornings, China Nights

China Mornings

At six o'clock in the morning, I wake up to the calm sounds of the streets outside. By the time I am dressed and ready to face the busy, crowded city of Taiyuan, China, the street activity has reached its full intensity. The cars and taxis honk clamorously while the drivers stare at the scene resignedly. Weaving in and out of the slow moving traffic and perilously darting in front of oncoming cars, a courageous multitude of bicyclists barely bat an eyelash at the interesting spectacle around them. On the congested sidewalks, merchants holler the praises of their wares. "Come and see the lovely tomatoes everyone! Specially imported from America!...Watermelons, guaranteed sweet!... Fresh baked pastries! Lady, look at this scrumptious cake! Sir, would you like a kilo or two of these sweets?" The buyers and sellers are all around, haggling over a dime or two. Some merchants actually feel despondent if they don't get to haggle. Why, look at that cookware seller. His voice is loud and coarse, alternating between yelling out disbelieving phrases about the prices offered and raving the praises of "the perfect little pan. I couldn't possibly sell it for less than 20 yuans!" But his eyes flash with enjoyment and an almost childish delight.

As I step out onto the street, the delicious aromas lead me to a busy, little breakfast shop where the most delicious Chinese bread, youxia, is served. After my breakfast, I start walking to the bus stop. Stepping into the street incautiously, a loud honk breaks through my thoughts and I see a car trying hard to avoid crashing into me. Full of self-reproach, I apologize to the driver profusely, but he only laughs and waves it off. Perhaps being on the perilous Chinese streets has made him used to close calls, but my heartbeat doesn't return to normal until I get on the bus safely.

China Nights

Around nine o'clock at night is when China really comes alive. Several large streets are closed to automobiles, and merchants set up shop in the little temporary stalls lining either side of the street. People mill around like so many little ants, talking, laughing, buying and eating. This is what is known as yieshi, the Night City, the place that tingles all your senses. The bright streetlights are beacons enticing everyone, as if saying, "Come on! Look at the fun we're having!" The Night City's presence is further announced by the noise. The loud drone of hundreds of voices coupled with the piercing tones of someone singing with the karaoke at top volume on the street makes the Night City seem like a gigantic, boisterous party. The heavenly smells of all kinds of foods are constantly in the air. No one hesitates to have another meal or snack in the Night City. Who can refuse the smells of roasting corn all
golden yellow, delicious soups with superbly tantalizing spices, fried noodles just out of the pan or freshly baked bread with oodles of cream on top? Certainly not me! I grab a large soft bread and leave quickly, trying to contain my suddenly acquired appetite.

Walking through the smaller streets tired but well satisfied at almost 11 p.m., I see that for many, the night is still young. In front of my quarters, there is an outdoor restaurant with over a hundred little tables, all of which are filled with rambunctious people happily conversing and dining. Beside them, rows of pool tables are laid out with three or four people per table and large crowds watching interestingly. The mood alters from person to person. That one with the black shirt is just having fun. Laughs and jokes come out of his mouth lavishly as if making sure everyone gets some. His opponent obviously takes this game more seriously, analyzing every shot with an intense concentration sitting on his brow. With every shot, the captive audience shouts out comments or suggestions, making the atmosphere into what the Chinese call renao, which literally means hot and noisy. Although I understand very little about the game, I still stand on the outskirts of the crowd, enjoying the fun and camaraderie. Finally, when my eyes cannot stay open any longer, I go home and retire to bed. As my eyes shut, the warm sounds of the streets lull me to sleep.

—Yan Zhao, 16, Chinese American, Okemos, Michigan. Zhao writes, “Learning and love are important to me. Without either, I would not be me. I hope in the future, everyone will be more aware of their culture and the world around them. I hope that everyone will take time to explore outside of their shells and discover how amazing and diverse the world really is. I wrote my essay on China after visiting three years ago. It was a wonderful experience and so completely different from America that I wanted to share it with everyone.”

Please note that we will no longer publish individual pen pal addresses (except for e-mail addresses). We do encourage pen pal requests from classrooms, library programs, pen pal clubs and youth groups. We hope that by writing to them you can continue finding friends from all over the world.

—editors
The 2003 Skipping Stones Honor Awards

Educational, Entertaining & Exceptional!

Are you searching for authentic multicultural information? Do you enjoy exploring the natural world through a good book? We all need to cultivate an awareness of the multicultural world we live in rather than perpetuating stereotypes and biases. Our youngsters, the future decision-makers, need positive role models from communities of color. The 2003 Skipping Stones Honor Award winners also promote cooperation, nonviolence, and appreciation of nature. They offer a great variety of learning experiences for students, teachers, parents and children.

Over 20 reviewers, including librarians, parents, teachers, students, interns and editors, helped in the award selection process.

Ecology and Nature Books:

Promoting an understanding of natural systems, specific species or habitats, human, plant and animal relationships, resource conservation, environmental protection and restoration efforts, community projects and sustainable living.


After four days of camping in the Pacific rain forest a fully formed song came to Dana Lyons as he was packing to leave. When he sang the song he told his audiences it was the song of the tree. A Lummi tribal chief on Orcas Island heard the song and assured Dana that it was indeed the song of the tree, for each tree has its own song.

The Tree is a collaboration which began after friends suggested the song should become a book. Feelings of awe and a sense of entering a sanctuary compel the reader to enter the tree's world. Lovely words spoken by the tree unite with exquisite full-page illustrations, drawing the reader into a new understanding of the need to protect not only each and every old-growth tree, but nature itself. The Tree will inspire readers to work to preserve our precious resources.

—Yvonne Young, storyteller, Eugene, Oregon.


As I read Encantado, I recalled my school days in India, when I learned about the rich diversity of our planet: Arctic Alaska, magnificent Madagascar and the amazing Amazon. How I longed to be there! While reading the book, I could almost smell the warmth of the tropical forests. The description of the rainy season reminded me of our walks to school in flooded streets.

Encantado is about much more than the pink dolphins that live in parts of the Amazon. We learn about the flora and fauna, and the indigenous people who live in this "enchanting" ecosystem called Amazonia. Through its many rich images and reader-friendly narrative, it takes us on a journey of a lifetime. We see why it is absolutely essential that we help preserve our global heritage. A rare, true-to-life, multicultural and nature book!

—Arun N. Toké, editor.

Sumi awakens to the smells of her home creek and the sound of her mother singing about a long journey, rivers and salty air. Sumi is a salmon egg, and soon she is all alone with only a memory of the song and smells and sounds to guide her. Many dangers and adventures await as she moves through various life stages and habitats, all the way to the sea and back.

A salmon’s life is one of changes leading in a perfect circle. It is an outstanding example of the cycles present in the entire natural world. An afterword about the man-made problems facing salmon is also included.

—Michelle Lieberman, associate editor.

Multicultural and International Books:
Focusing on ethnic diversity and intercultural or global relationships, these books build bridges of communication, understanding, social justice and peace.


Moses receives an assignment to write about a friend. He thinks about his human friends, then notes that animals are friends too. Moses especially likes Zaki, the iguana who lives next door. Like Moses, Zaki has special needs.

Moses writes that Zaki couldn’t move around at first because she had lost the use of her toes. But she kept trying, and her front legs got very strong. Now she pulls herself to places she couldn’t get to before. Since Moses has spina bifida and uses a wheelchair, he also figures out how to get where he wants to go in different ways than those around him.

This fun, educational book reminds me of one of my own students. During the first day’s introductions, he offered to the class that he has one ear. He said he was telling everyone up front so they wouldn’t feel uncomfortable with him when they noticed it. Later, this student told me that he has a cat who he instantly fell in love with because she too has only one ear.

—Charlotte Behm, educator, Springfield, Oregon.

For past winners, visit: www.SkippingStones.org


Reading Visiting Day with its sensitive illustrations was a profoundly moving experience for me. This powerful book speaks to the heart about the hidden life of many children and families.

The illustration on the cover, a man and child smiling and hugging joyfully, simultaneously disguises and reveals the essence of the book. The young girl and her grandmother visit their father/son in prison. They prepare for the visit with quiet happiness and travel on the bus with a community of people on the same errand. They drive up in front of high walls and barbed wire and then are drawn into a visiting room full of smiling people who are happy just to be together for a little while. We can see the humanity, the love and caring that is shared by everyone on a special day, even in a scary place.

Each page in this exquisite book requires careful contemplation. Words and pictures blend to create a story of almost unbearable love and endurance in the face of adversity. It is a sad, even potentially angry story told with grace, warmth and extraordinary art. Notes by both author and artist add personal insight and help the reader perceive how very real fiction can be.

—Mary Drew, ESL teacher, Woodburn, Oregon.

Juneteenth is a powerful presentation of what slavery was really like for millions of Africans and African Americans. The information comes from slave narratives, many of which were written before President Lincoln issued proclamations which freed the slaves in certain areas. During the Civil War 37,000 Blacks lost their lives fighting for a freedom they would never see. They fought willingly with the hope that their children and grandchildren would one day experience freedom.

Texas was the last stronghold for slavery. In the 1860 census Texas reported slaves as being one-third of its total population. When Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865, he issued the General Orders Number Three, announcing the emancipation of the slaves in Texas. This book is a thorough explanation of why Juneteenth is still celebrated in African American communities today.

—Paulette Ansari, librarian, Springfield, Oregon.


Parvana’s Journey sheds light on the broken lives of present-day Afghani people through the story of four children. The children have been abandoned by the adults in their lives and are forced to survive with their simple but surprisingly mature abilities.

Readers of this short novel are awakened to the realities of a war-torn country with vivid descriptions of hunger, bombing and mine fields. These images of destruction are contrasted with moments in which the children find some happiness. It is in these moments that the reader can find some hope in the desperate situation.

This novel is an important look at a country that very few people are truly aware of. The author’s honest description of recent events in Afghanistan makes it an incredible tool for gaining an understanding of the situation from a humanistic standpoint.

—George Ayres, Univ. of Oregon intern, Eugene.


Peter’s father was an alcoholic, and his mother abandoned him. Wanda’s mother abused her, and kids at school made her life miserable. Maria’s father died of AIDS, and she realized she was homosexual. In My Crazy Life, these three teenagers and seven others tell the remarkable stories of how they regained control of their lives while growing up in less-than-perfect families.

All of these teens went through life trials that seemed endless, with no hope in sight. However, with time, faith and help from the right people, they made it through. Now they share their experiences and give advice to other teenagers who are going through tough times. Their message is a simple one: there is always hope; there is always help available; there is always a way to get out of a bad situation.

This book is not only useful for teenagers, but also for their relatives, teachers, guidance counselors and principals. My Crazy Life is unique in that it allows teenagers to explain their thought processes about why they acted in the ways they did and how their family situations emotionally affected them. In essence, this book tells how it feels to be a young person trying to make sense of the world in un-supportive circumstances.

These 10 teenagers, writing simply and in their own clear voices, are everyday kids who will inspire readers and cultivate hope. A list of resources where young readers can seek help is included. My Crazy Life is a compelling read for those who need to understand the trials of growing up in difficult family situations.

—Nina Forsberg, Swedish American, U. of Oregon

Growing up in San Francisco’s Mission District, my sisters and I waited excitedly for our mother and aunts to come back from their shopping expeditions in Chinatown. They always brought intriguing treasures: satin slippers, painted fans, beautiful dolls. We begged to go along but were seldom allowed. Chinatown took on the allure of the forbidden, and so in high school, with more freedom, my friends and I spent hours exploring Chinatown, eating in the tiny restaurants, strolling the streets, buying teas to take home and soaking up culture. For Chinese New Year everyone I knew roamed around Chinatown, enjoying the festive atmosphere.

Not all children have experienced cosmopolitan life. Exploring Chinatown offers educators the opportunity to share some of the rich and fascinating Chinese American culture. Despite severe racism and exclusion laws, Chinese settlements in San Francisco and other cities flourished by adopting a self-sufficient economy and culture. Soon people everywhere were drawn to Chinatown by its unique and beautiful customs and art, its delicious and healthful food, and the dignity and friendliness of its people.

There is little information available at a child’s level about the history and traditions of Chinese immigrants in the US. Exploring Chinatown tells some of this history and describes traditions that many of us have only viewed from the outside. Food, medicine, writing, mathematics, family traditions, religion, art and performing arts are depicted, with engaging essays, drawings and photographs that made me long to go back and visit Chinatown!

—Mary Drew, Skipping Stones board member.


Grandma and me at the Flea / Los Meros Meros Remateros es una fiesta de color. Todas y cada una de las páginas vibran con color, un color cálido que se ve y se siente. Hay detalles divertidos dibujados en cada escena. El lenguaje del cuento esta también lleno de color, pintando cada aspecto del mercado de remates con buen humor, buena voluntad y muchos signos de admiración.

El vocabulario es amplio así como el mensaje. Los padres de Juanito lo han dejado con su abuela para irse a trabajar a los campos durante las cosechas. No ha sido fácil, pero él lo entiende. Con la ayuda de su abuela se da cuenta que vive en una comunidad donde hay problemas, pero también hay mucho apoyo de unos a otros. El se siente feliz de pertenecer y contribuir al grupo. Juanito y su abuela nos dan un buen ejemplo a seguir. An outstanding bilingual picture book!

—Esther Celis, from Mexico, is our Spanish editor.


Meet Sufiya and her friends in Bangladesh. Small loans of taka (Bangladeshi money) from a people’s bank help the women move from poverty to self-support. By working together and weaving their own visions with the bank’s principles of discipline, unity, courage and hard work, they establish their small businesses. In selling saris, milk, bangles and snacks to school children, the women’s lives are changed, and others in their village are also touched by their success.

Clear language and delicate pictures involve the reader in Sufiya’s business building process. We learn the importance of integrity and helping each other, as we watch Sufiya and her friends buy and sell their goods and repay their loans.

This is not a purely fictional story. A bank such as this does exist in Bangladesh. Grameen Bank lends money to groups of people who would otherwise have nothing. They then work together to pay it back. Isn’t that how banks are meant to be?

—Kathy Danz, Eugene, Oregon.

I love Confucius. I read every page—word for word—three times! I read it slowly because I treasure the thoughts which it contains and which I do not want to forget.

Confucius contains about 50 pages; half of them display full-page pictures. The words and pictures flow together like the waters of two rivers that sometimes flow together, mix and become one.

Remarkably, Confucius, the human being, who lived thousands of years ago, and I, the person who lives here and now, are the same species, the same human beings. We experience similar thoughts, feelings, struggles and quandaries about ethical positions.

I honor and respect the way Confucius lived his life. I deeply respect the values he presented and shared about how to live.

Hear some of Confucius’ advice: A ruler must have the consent of the people over whom he governs. An exemplary person helps bring out what is beautiful in other people and discourages what is ugly in them. A petty person does just the opposite.

Confucius spoke and lived humbly and wisely. We are fortunate that his companions recorded many of his sayings. He is honored because his sayings ring true to us. I know I shall be inspired by his wisdom and goodness from now on.

—Hanna Still, contributing editor.


¡Sí, Se Puede! / Yes, We Can! is a wonderful bilingual book that tells the story of the 1980s workers’ strikes in the words of Carlitos, a young Latino boy whose mother is a janitor in Los Angeles. Carlitos is proud of his mamá, who works hard through the night while he sleeps. One day she sits him down to ask for his help and explains that she wants to be able to take care of their family. It is unjust to work so hard and not earn enough to live on. Carlitos understands and agrees to support her decision to join the strike. But what can he do to help her?

In his search for the answer, he talks with his classmates and teacher and learns that their lives are also touched by the strike. His teacher shares with him the message that “When many people come together, they can make a strong force.” An office worker who joined the strikers told them that he had never thought about the janitors who cleaned his office before, but after seeing them in the daylight, he could never ignore them again. The story inspires readers to find their own contribution to a social cause, as Carlitos does, while emphasizing the power that comes with unity.

The janitors’ strike is successful, and so is the message of the book. A group of committed people working together can change the world! At the end of the story, Carlitos helps his mamá once again as she fulfills a promise to help other workers on strike achieve justice, too. ¡Sí, Se Puede! introduces powerful concepts in descriptive, easy-to-understand language. The colorful and expressive illustrations complement the story well. My children and I loved it.

—Heather Young, Eugene, Oregon.

For a thousand years, Yiddish was the language spoken by most European Jews. As Jewish people fled one violent regime after another, they left behind loved ones, customs, and in many cases their own language in an effort to put the past behind them and assimilate into their new cultures. Most young people today know Yiddish only by the few terms that have been adopted by comedians and television. With the loss of Yiddish, an entire culture is also being lost.

In this story, which reads from back to front, we get a peek into a rather typical relationship between a boy named Aaron and his zayde (grandfather). Zayde has drawers full of Yiddish books. He teaches Aaron to respect the books, but he is reluctant to teach Aaron about his painful history and a language that seems to have so little relevance to modern life. As Aaron grows older, he realizes that this crucial link to his ancestors is dying before his eyes, and he takes up studying Yiddish and family history from Zayde.

In true Jewish style, this story emphasizes the importance of books and studying. It also intermingles Yiddish with English in a way that will surely be familiar to anyone who grew up with a zayde of her/his own. Too Young for Yiddish highlights interaction with elders, language as culture, and the quest for knowledge and wisdom.

—Michelle Lieberman, associate editor.


Many people think that all Native Americans live on reservations or in the western or southwestern United States. But this is not true! What is it really like to be a Native American youth today?

This is a story about a Native American boy named Naiche. His mother is San Carlos Apache, and his father is Piscataway from Maryland. He shows us his everyday life, which is much like that of any student. He rides the bus to a public school. His favorite classes are gym and computer lab, and his favorite sport is soccer. But Naiche’s everyday life also includes many Native American traditions. In the springtime, he goes to the Piscataway ceremony, which is attended by many different Native nations. It is a celebration of spring and new life. There is singing, dancing and drumming as a way to thank Mother Earth and the ancestors. Through ceremonies such as this one, Naiche is following in the footsteps of his ancestors and becoming an honorable Native American man. Naiche is full of pride at embracing his own culture and ethnicity.

—Mitsuko Obase is a Japanese exchange student at Univ. of Oregon.


We don’t usually have an adult book category for our book awards. But this year, we decided that These Hands I Know is so outstanding that we wanted to honor it. The stories of African American families are engaging, well-written and real (i.e., They describe some of the interactions we’ve seen in our own families!)

Seventeen stories highlight the works of poets and writers as they reveal the inner workings of African American families. Henry Louis Gates Jr. writes about Big Mom, his mother’s mother who was at the head of his clan. Jarvis Q. DeBerry writes about his grandfather who was a tree, solid enough for generations to lean on him. Alice Walker tells stories of growing up in a family of five boys and three girls, about maintaining humanity under the weight of oppression, and the effects of the white patriarchy on black patriarchy. Honoré Fanonne Jeffers describes the dark skin of her mother, and the response to her from her father’s lighter-skinned family whose story was “just a simple cliche: miscegenation.”

These Hands I Know is hard to put down. You’ll find yourself saying, “Oh, I’ll just read one more story now.”

—Charlotte Behm, Springfield, Oregon.
Teaching Resources:

*Educators will find these books extremely helpful in their work with students and children to develop multicultural and nature awareness.*


**The Seventh Generation** is dedicated to the development of culturally reflective curricula. Many educators are searching for insight into the challenges Native and other non-Western students face in Western schools. When the students cannot see themselves, their histories and their contemporary experiences represented in the school curricula, they often lose sight of their academic goals. This book offers an extensive look into the experiences of young Native American students, the wisdom of elders, and indigenous teaching methodologies to break through the barriers that present challenges for Native American students.

The first person narratives by Native students make **The Seventh Generation** very accessible to teachers, students and parents. They speak candidly to the struggles and the successes they have in school. Some students discuss the difficulties that many young people face in school such as peer pressure, or the hardships of learning culturally appropriate behavior that is taught at home only to be misinterpreted and devalued in the classroom. Some discuss the importance of having instructors who know something about their Native cultures and having images on classroom walls that represent Native Americans respectfully. The beauty of these narratives is that teachers can share them with students who can then explore their own experiences, finding similarities and differences with other students who live in the same society but with different cultural realities. Non-Native teachers, students and parents can read this book and gain an understanding of and appreciation for the deeper cultural currents that run through the lives of Native students and families as well as through their own history.

This resource explores many of the critical aspects of life as a Native American student, such as the importance of being balanced by indigenous cultural lifeways in an ever-encroaching Western world. This teaching resource is written in a communication style that is common among many Native peoples. It relies at times on Native languages for terminology and indigenous ways of teaching to lay the groundwork for developing curricula that is inclusive of Native American ways of knowing and living.

—Leece M. Lee, instructor of ethnic studies and Native American studies at LCC, Eugene, Oregon.


The information used to develop school curricula about North American Native peoples and their tribes is often drawn from stereotypes that came from early missionary, military and U.S. government-sponsored ethnographies. Many authors, Native and non-Native, have worked to correct the data and inform the public about the true history and the contemporary lives of Native peoples. **Lessons from Turtle Island** is one such book. It offers suggestions for teaching the history and ways of life of the Native peoples of North America in culturally appropriate ways.

**Lessons from Turtle Island** brings a critical eye to how to teach Native studies respectfully to young students and how to avoid misinforming them. It emphasizes learning through authentic stories, histories and symbols that come from inside the culture. The authors include a list of things to avoid, such as having students make culturally irrelevant costumes, pretend to be “Indians” or invent their own “Indian myths” based on what students are supposed to know about Native peoples. The book also offers multiple book reviews divided into sections that are based on theme, cultural accuracy and age appropriateness.

The creation of myths and stereotypes of Native peoples does a great disservice to Native peoples and to the general public by erasing a prominent part of U.S. history and the history of Native peoples. With teaching tools such as this, we can better prepare our students and our children to understand the history and the world that surrounds them as a diverse and multifaceted experience.

—Leece M. Lee is also a mentor at Jefferson M. S.
A Lesson for Listeners

"Once upon a time..."

The oldest child interrupted by whispering loud enough for the grandmother to hear, "This story will be boring just like all the rest. All fairy tales are babyish."

"I changed my mind about telling you a fairy tale tonight," the grandmother said. "Instead I’m going to tell you a true story. Can I begin?"

The children said nothing, so she began. "Not so very long ago, in a beautiful white and gold palace in a little town in India, there lived a king, a queen and their two sons."

"What were their names?" asked the children.

"Don’t interrupt, and I’ll tell you," she replied. "The queen was the most beautiful woman in all of India and perhaps all the world."

"What did she look like?"

"Well, she had thick, smooth, glossy black hair that fell almost to her ankles, and eyes so dark brown they were almost black, and flawless golden skin. Her name was Gurdave. The king was a brave warrior."

"How brave?"

"He fought hundreds of battles, and at the mention of his name some still cower in fear. He was Jagdeep Singh. And the two little princes, they were Harveer Singh and Barinder Singh."

"What were they like?" asked the little girl.

"Harveer was a very good boy. He was known for always listening to his parents. Barinder, on the other hand, hardly ever listened to his parents and was always interrupting people, just like you children do. Now one day a nearby village was holding a bazaar."

"What’s a bazaar?" they all chimed in.

"A bazaar is a giant fair with all kinds of pretty things and food and dancers. Both princes decided they wanted to go to the bazaar, so Harveer and Barinder went to ask their father if it was alright. Their father agreed but said that he wanted them to listen to some very important directions before they left."

"What were they?" asked the youngest.

"Well, the king told his sons to be careful and to only take the main road because although other roads were faster, the main road was safe. But, of course, Barinder hadn’t heard any of this because he was too busy interrupting and not paying attention. Before the two princes left, the king gave them gold coins and elephants to ride on."

"What were the elephants’ names?"

"Since people can’t understand elephant talk, no one bothered to ask them. Anyway, both princes started out on the main road, but Barinder often traveled slower, so he soon fell behind, and Harveer didn’t notice. After a while Barinder came to a place where another road branched out from the main road."

"Which one did he take?"

"Remember, Barinder hadn’t heard his father’s wise words, so he took the short road. Unfortunately, many robbers lurked near that road, and when they saw Barinder all alone they stole his elephant, his gold and even his clothes!"

"What happened to Harveer?"

"He had a wonderful time at the bazaar. He tried delicious food, watched talented dancers, and bet on mongoose and cobra fights. He returned home the next day, happy and stuffed with food, bringing a gift of a beautiful comb for his mother’s hair. Barinder returned home a week later, tired, starving and naked. His parents were very angry with him for not listening."

"Now, what is the lesson in this story?" the grandmother asked.

"Don’t ever take the shortcut road?" asked the children.

"Not exactly," she said. "Maybe next time I want to teach you a lesson, I’ll try a more direct method. But right now it is time for bed."

—Lisa Athwal, 17, Indian Irish, Toms River, NJ.
A fisherwoman navigates her boat in the Tonle Sap River near Cham village.

Grilled spider kabobs, anyone?

A classical Apsara dancer perfects her position.

Skipping Stones
Post Office Box 3939
Eugene, Oregon 97403

Sample. Please subscribe!