

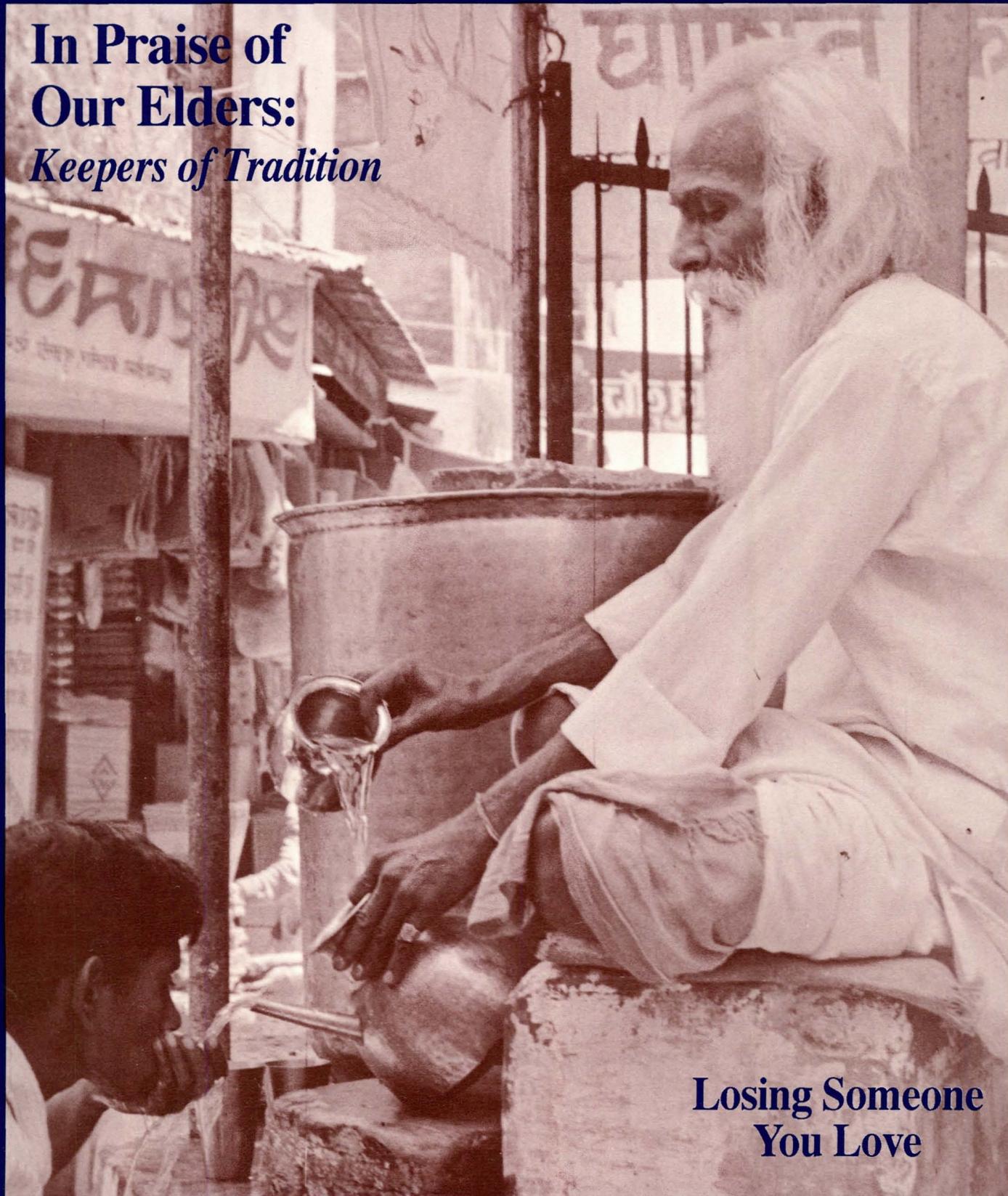
# Skipping Stones

Volume 9, No. 1

A Multicultural Children's Magazine

Display until March 15  
US \$4.75 CAN: \$5.75

**In Praise of  
Our Elders:  
*Keepers of Tradition***



**Losing Someone  
You Love**

# Skipping Stones

A Multicultural Children's Bimonthly Magazine

Volume 9, No. 1

ISSN 0899-529X

Jan.- Feb. 1997

## In Praise of Our Grandparents and Elders

- 4 My Grandmother's Hug • Grama and Uppa
- 5 Wow! The Things She Has Done • Gramps
- 6 *Mina Svenska Äldern* • A Picture of Courage
- 7 A Helping Hand • Printed Memories
- 8 Falling in Love • Language of His Own
- 9 Meghana's Nana and Grandma
- 10 Our Family Garden
- 11 A Bowl of Milk
- 12 Honoring Our Elders: *poems and prose*
- 14 Sheila and Shimmer: *The story of an interfaith family*
- 17 Usted Pregunta Porque Cantamos: *You ask why we sing*

## Life and Death: Cycles of Change

- 19 Wiedergeboren: *Born Again*
- 20 The Summer That Never Rained • Saturday
- 21 Take My Hand • To Rick • A.I.D.S. Awareness
- 22 Painful Thoughts • In My Mind • Gone
- 23 Life and Death • Silence • Mountains
- 24 My Summer in Trinidad, West Indies
- 25 Willa Woke Up Wondering
- 26 Life and Death Changes • Directions
- 27 There's Never a Right Time to Say Goodbye
- 28 Without a Goodbye: *A story of friendship*

## Regular Departments

- 3 Letter from the Editor
- 18 Dear Hanna
- 31 Bookshelf: *Books for Your Multicultural Library*
- 32 Noteworthy News *from North, South, East and West*
- 33 Pen Pals: *Making International Friends*
- 34 Have You Ever Thought...? • Coming Attractions
- 35 A Guide for Parents and Teachers
- 36 My Grandma: *A Cherished Mentor*

©1997 by *Skipping Stones*. Opinions expressed in these pages reflect views of the contributors, and not necessarily those of *Skipping Stones, Inc.*

### Recycled Paper

In the spirit of ecological sensitivity, we choose to print with soy ink on recycled and recyclable paper.

*Skipping Stones* is a nonprofit children's magazine that encourages cooperation, creativity and celebration of cultural and linguistic diversity. We explore and learn 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 your suggestions, submissions, subscriptions and support.

**Editor and Publisher:** Arun Narayan Toké

**Editorial Staff:** Rachel J. Elliott

Hanna Still

Rachel Clark

**Accountant:** Bidyut Prava Das

**Interns:** Casey Breton

**Volunteers:** Mildred Wilson

### Acknowledgements

**Cover:** Water, the crystal-clear life stream flows freely from this Indian elder to quench the thirst of a young passer-by. Photo: Arun Toké, Haridwar, India

**Board of Directors:** Paulette Ansari, Nancy Bray, Bill Hessling, Dick Keis, Stephen Mallery, Ron Marson, Joachim Shultz, Hanna Still, Arun Toké.

**Special Thanks to:** German Nieto-Maquehue, Press Works and many teachers whose students' work is featured in this issue. We also extend our gratitude to our contributors and subscribers.

*Skipping Stones* is an educational and charitable organization with a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Donations to *Skipping Stones* are fully tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. We invite you to support our 50% discount and free subscriptions to low-income subscribers by making a tax-deductible donation. Financial support provided in part by *Tops Learning Systems, Stillwaters Fund-Tides Foundation and Selco Credit Union.*

### 1995 Golden Shoestring Award

for Excellence in Educational Journalism by the Educational Press Association of America



*Skipping Stones* (ISSN 0899-529X) is published bimonthly, except July/Aug. by *Skipping Stones, Inc.*, 1309 Lincoln St., Eugene, OR 97401-3978.

**Subscriptions: Institutions: \$35; Individuals: \$25;** (Airmail: \$5 extra; Low-income discount: 50%); Single/back issues: \$5 (\$6, air) each. Application to mail at Periodicals Rate is Pending at Eugene, OR. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Skipping Stones*, PO Box 3939, Eugene, OR 97403-0939.

For subscriptions, submissions and reprint permission, please contact:

**Skipping Stones Magazine**

Post Office Box 3939

Eugene, OR 97403 USA

Tel. (541) 342 - 4956



## Letter from the Editor

My father was orphaned in his childhood. And my mother lost her mom at an early age. In those days, the life-expectancy in India (and in many other countries) was not very high. My maternal grandfather lived in another city for many years, so I grew up, for the most part, without any grandparents to play with. And our son Shyam is also growing up without grandparents as all his grandparents have passed away.

In India, as in so many other 'developing' countries and rural communities, it is very common for families to live close together. Sometimes a dozen or more family members — grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins... live under one roof. It is a supportive environment to grow up in. Here in the U.S., away from our relatives, we wish we had the company of elder family members to enjoy, and to help raise Shyam.

Recently, a number of new residential facilities for the elderly had to be shut down in Cairo, Egypt, because senior citizens preferred to live with their own families. Extended families work in mutually beneficial ways. Elders share their life experiences and pass on their acquired knowledge to younger generations; they receive physical care and joy in return. Aging parents, grandparents and elders have an important role and great respect in extended families.

However, in 'developed' societies nursing homes and other residential institutions for the elderly have become very common. Some 1.8 million senior citizens live in long-term care facilities in the U.S. alone. Visit with a few senior citizens living in a nursing home and ask them how they feel about living there. Do they miss interactions with youth? Do they feel neglected? We all need to feel we have purpose, dignity, freedom and love, to have joy in our life.

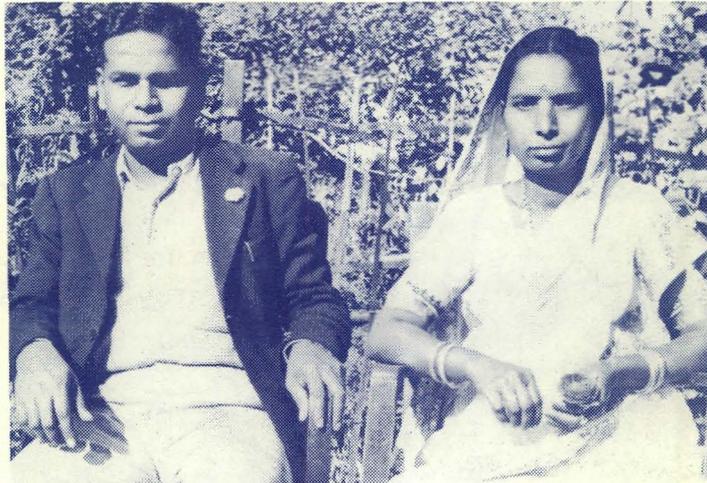
This issue features two important themes: Honoring Our Grandparents and Elders *and* Losing Someone You Love. As you read this issue, you may discover that love and loss often come together, hand-in-hand, as two wheels of the same life cycle.

When I was a young teen, I witnessed my mother's funeral. Hindus believe that we have a soul in our body, and it is liberated when we die.

Death is thus seen as a *liberation rather than a loss*.

Hindu funeral rites are very elaborate, lasting up to two weeks, with many prescribed prayers to help the spirit go on its way. During the funeral services, the dead person's body is set under a tree, in a temple courtyard, and after worship and prayers, food offerings are placed nearby for crows living in the trees.

It is believed that crows will come down to eat only when the spirit hovering around will let them. The spirit will linger when its desires are not fulfilled.



*Shyam's grandparents, Bhagirathi and Hemant Priya Das*

If crows do not come to accept the offerings, elder relatives take turns expressing any likely concerns of the dead, and assuring the spirit that they will take on the responsibility. When the spirit is satisfied with the promises, it lets go and the crows alight on the food. Then, cremation of the dead body releases the elements back to nature.

In a traditional Hindu school of thought the human life is divided into four *Āshramas* (stages) to help define a person's duty and role at a given time. Play and studies, marriage and family life, guidance to the family and contribution to the society, *and, finally*, renunciation—giving up all responsibilities—to prepare for one's final journey to the spirit world, all have a prescribed time and place.

How would you describe *your* life? With a haiku, a lullaby, a hard rock song, a rap, or a spiritual? Perhaps, an unfinished painting? A jigsaw puzzle? Or, a cosmic dance—a balancing act—with a purpose.

Some people think of life as a play in which they are one of the many actors who simply do what the director tells them to do; no questions asked! The script is already written. For them, we come on this planet when our role begins and leave when our role is finished. Others come and carry on the never-ending play. People who believe in reincarnation, think that our souls or spirits are the true actors in this real life play. When we die, our spirit leaves this body to go backstage to change robes. It returns as another character, not necessarily in a human form, when called upon by the higher power—the director of this Universal Studio.

*Arun Narayan*

# In Praise of . . .

## My Grandmother's Hug!

It was a sunny day at my Grandmother's lake house, near Rio de Janeiro. I was playing in the water with my friends, my little sister and my grandmother. When my mother was not watching, we all jumped from the bridge. When we fell in the water, it made a splash! My mother heard from inside the house and said, "What's going on out there?" I said, "We were just splashing in the water."

When it was getting dark and cold, we went back to the house. When I got there, I was shivering. My grandmother said, "Don't worry! You will soon be warm again." But I did not get warm. I said, "Grandma, please do something, or I will turn to ice!"

"I will make some bean soup. Maybe that will help..." she said. The soup was delicious, but I was still cold. She said, "Perhaps a hot bath will help you." The bath felt good, but I was still cold.

Then she said, "I only have one more thing—a hug!" So she held me very tight. I felt warm hands squeezing me, and her beautiful voice singing a song. My heart got warm from her hug.

—Renata Mascarenhas, 8, Salvador, BRAZIL

## Gramma and Uppa

My Grama is Lucy McCarr. She has gray, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, wrinkly skin, and she likes to laugh a lot. She used to make handmade things like hats, gloves and socks. She liked to cut fish, dry fish, pluck birds, skin a beaver, pick berries, and travel like me.

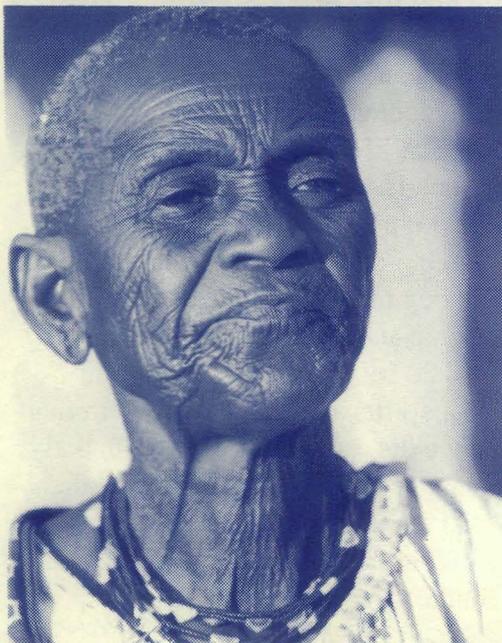
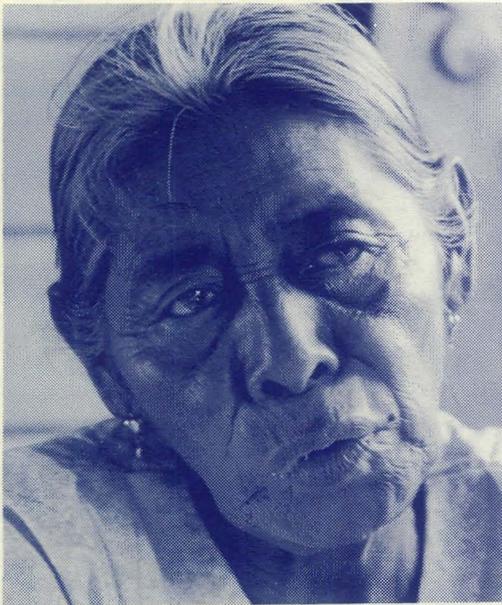
She goes to Eddie Hoffman Senior Center, which is a place for old people that do things like exercise, sing church songs, and make things out of anything. She used to do many things before she had a small stroke. Now she can do little things.

My Uppa David has black hair, with no gray hair. He is tall like my Grama. He likes to go ice fishing and hunting. He makes boats out of wood and *taluyags* (Blackfish nets).

I used to help my Grama make *akutaq* (Eskimo ice cream). I would lie beside her when she was sleeping. When she woke up a little while after, she would tickle me. I used to go *mannaqing* (ice fishing) and snowmachine riding with my Uppa. I liked hearing him tell me stories, or talk with his friends in Yup'ik.

My Grama and Uppa have helped me learn to respect elders, and show kindness to others.

—Janelle McCarr, 16, Yup'ik Eskimo, Kwethluk, Alaska



**Grandmothers on page 4**, top to bottom: Sra. Nora, a Rama Indian in eastern Nicaragua (*Photo: Claudia Gordillo*), a grandmother in the Ukraine (*Photo: Elena Datzenko, 14, Kiev, Ukraine*), Elder in Zimbabwe (*Photo: Tina Friedman*)

**Grandfathers on page 5**, top to bottom: Arnold Lamb of England (*Photo: Hanna Still*), Les Thomas, a Native American spiritual leader (*Photo: Arun Toké*), Palestinian Elder (*Photo: Galen Martin*)

# Grandparents and Elders



## An Understanding Soul

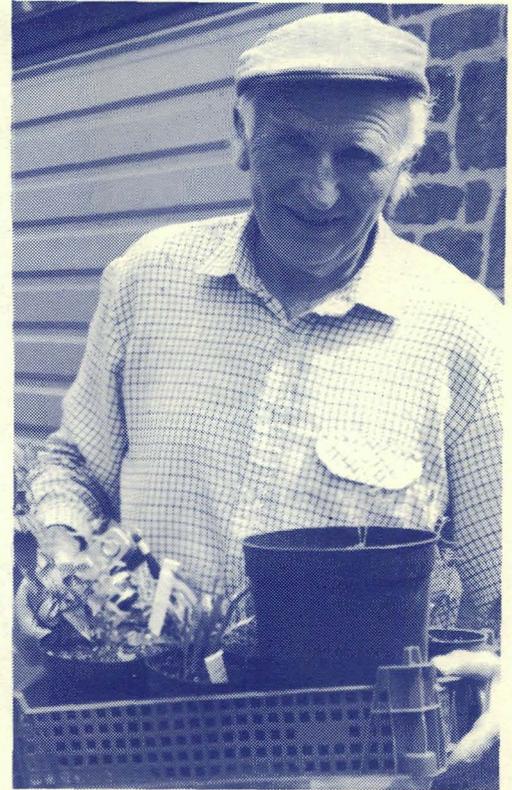
In my experience, there is always a special person who stands out and treats you like royalty. In my case it was my Grandpa.

He was the nicest person in the world to me. He never lost his temper, even when my grandma lost her's and threw dishes on the floor. He would just sit there and wait until she was done, and then talk with her calmly.

He had to deal with many things in his lifetime. In fact, I am quite surprised that he could be so understanding all those years. Between my mother being extremely ill, my father abusing her, and raising me, my grandpa still had enough love and patience to help everyone. To tell the truth, he only had one fault; he was always late no matter what.

Unfortunately, he died when I was five years old. I truly do miss him, his jokes, the ice cream bars he would buy after dinner, even his lateness.

—Heather Carollo, 15, of European, African and Native American heritage, Makakilo, Hawaii



## Gramps

they're kind, sharing and happy.  
They give you hugs  
and do their best to play with you.  
They call you pet names  
and make jokes about you,  
*But*, they're not mean jokes.  
They try with all their patience to hang around you.  
Even if you're young  
they treat you  
Equally.

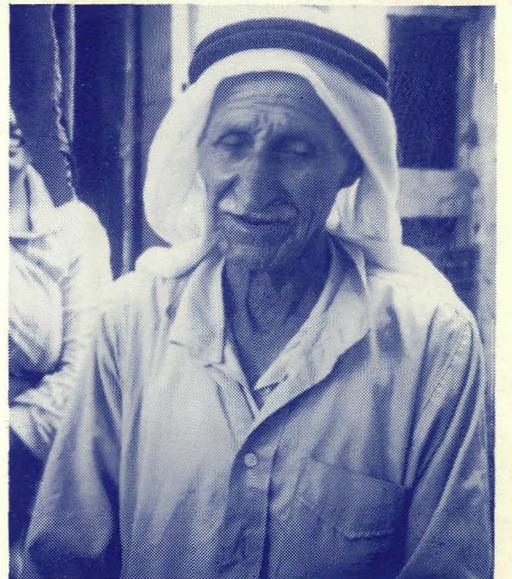
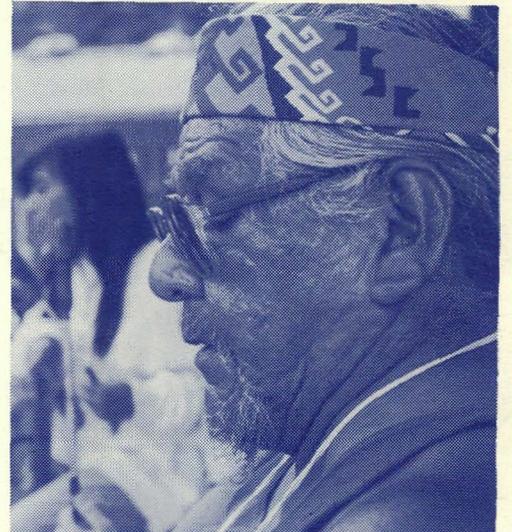
—Juan Pablo Ardilo, 11, Colombian, San José, COSTA RICA

## Wow! The Things She Has Done

My grandmother, Sylvia Beatrice Shamoian, is a very special lady. Whenever I am feeling down, she cheers me up and makes me laugh. She has done some very funny things over the past few years. Let me tell you about one of the funniest ones:

One day my grandmother decided to bring her car to the Minit Car Wash for a good cleaning. After her car was done going through the wash, two men starting cleaning her windows. One of the men climbed into her backseat to wash the inside of the windows. My grandmother thought they were all done so she drove away from the car wash. All of a sudden she heard the man in the backseat yelling, "Hey lady, I'm still back here." My grandmother said, "Oh no! I'm so sorry. I'll bring you back." When she dropped the man off everyone was laughing. I think my grandmother was very embarrassed that she had tried to kidnap the car wash man.

—Jaclyn Shamoian, 11, Armenian, Irish and English descent, Spencer, Massachusetts



## Mina Svenska Äldern

Mina vänner Märta och Lennart bor i Sverige. Som många svenskar, bor de en del sin sommar i ett litet hus på landet. När mina föräldrar och jag kom in i deras liv som invandrar från USA, bad de oss att åka med till stugan vid havet. Medan vi plockade lingonbär i tallskogen och rodde ut på havet och sprang omkring på stranden, blev Märta och Lennart snart två av mina mest-gillade äldern i världen.



Jag var hos dem ännu en gång i år, nitton år senare. Vi körde strax till Hölick. Under dagarna kom jag at förstå bättre varför jag hade tyckt så mycket om dem. De är otroligt snälla. När jag på kvällen steg in i min egen lilla stuga, hade Lennart varit där tidigare och tändt lampan och värme, och satt på den lilla radion. På bordet bredvid sängen låg boken, som jag hade tittat i i huset, och en banan, i fall jag skulle bli hungrig. Och det syns som om de är ganska nöjd med varandra, som två stucken som är gamla vänner. Medan de spelade kort tillsammans efter frukost för den tredje dagen i raden, förklarade Märta att de gör det *varje* morgon. "Det håller hjärnan och fingrarna i användbart skick!" sa Lennart, med skojande blick. När de är ute och fiskar, för att få lite mat till middags på Hölick,ror Märta medan Lennart skötar nätet.

## My Polish Grandpa—A Picture of Courage

I am Polish, and every Christmas my family celebrates by carrying on special Polish traditions. For example, we pass around *Oplatki*, which is a religious wafer stamped with sacred figures, and we tell what we are thankful for.

One thing that my grandpa was thankful for was returning home from World War II safely. With much courage my paternal grandpa, John Jackovich, joined the Polish army on November 3, 1930. Unfortunately on October 2, 1940, my grandpa was sent to a concentration camp in southern France. A group of 804 people was forced to live there under harsh conditions.

## My Swedish Grandparents

*My friends Märta and Lennart live in Sweden. Like many Swedes, they spend part of their summers in a small house away from town. When my parents and I entered their lives as immigrants from America, they invited us to come along to their summer "stuga" by the sea. As we picked lingon berries in the pine forest, rowed out on the water and ran around on the beach, Märta and Lennart quickly became two of my favorite "grandpeople" in the world.*

*I visited them again this year, nineteen years later. We drove straight to the house at Hölick. During those days I came to understand better why I had liked them so much. They are extraordinarily kind and thoughtful people. When I stepped into my own little cabin for the night, Lennart had been there before me to turn on the lamp, the heater, and the small radio. On the nightstand lay the book I had been reading in the house, and a banana in case I got hungry. Also, they seem very content with each other, like two people who are old friends. As they played their game of cards together after breakfast for the third day in a row, Märta explained that they do this every day. "Keeps the head and fingers working!" said Lennart, with a twinkle in his eye. When they are out fishing for dinner at Hölick, Märta rows while Lennart tends the net.*

—Rachel Clark, Eugene, Oregon

Twice my grandpa made an attempt to escape with no luck and was arrested. The third time, he succeeded by hiding under the false bottom of a ship. He ended up in northern Africa where he had to endure yet another camp. Finally, he was released after the war. He traveled to Washington state where his relatives lived. Later, he moved to East Chicago, Indiana with his wife, Francis Kyepski. He worked for 25 years at Inland Steel. My grandpa's Catholic faith was very important to him, and for many years he set up the nativity display at his church, St. Stanislaus.

—Julia Jackovich, 16, Downers Grove, Illinois



### **A Helping Hand**

*Carlyn Whitehill did this painting at the age of 73. It was inspired by two elderly women at a nursing home. The woman in the chair is keeping in touch with her family through writing, and she is being encouraged and assisted by a friend.*

*Carlyn took care of her ailing mother for 18 years until her mother passed away at the age of 98. As Carlyn approaches 80, she spends a considerable amount of time painting, sewing, reading and cooking. She has been married to her husband, Stanley, for almost 55 years now. When asked what the purpose of life is, she said, "I do the best that I can. I have learned a lot about life by watching my growing grandchildren and my aging mother at the same time. When we die, I believe we go back to where we came from—to what the universe is made of."*

### **Printed Memories**

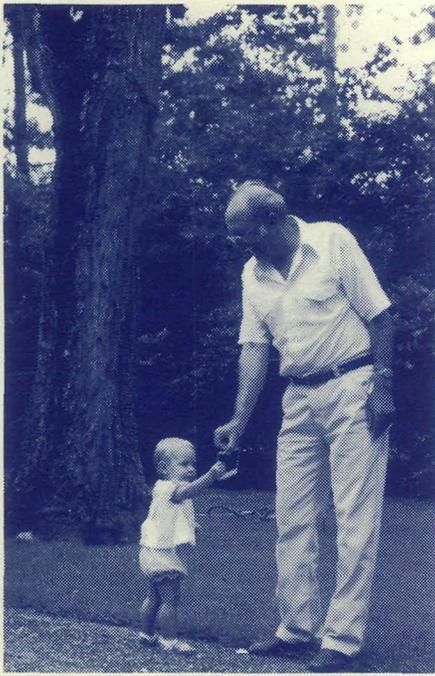
Even though my grandparents live only about 20 minutes away from me, time still prevents us from seeing each other frequently. One day, as I was writing a thank you letter to my grandma and grandpa, I was thinking about how I would like to communicate more and get to know my grandparents better. I came up with an ingenious idea to have pen pals within the family. Here is what my grandparents said about my idea:

"We were so pleased to get your letter! What a

great idea to have pen pals in the family— to stay closer! And sometimes it is easier to say things in letters, isn't it? Besides, we always look forward to the mailman coming each day, don't you?"

Through all this letter writing I have gotten closer to my grandparents and have realized that they are really cool. They even use slang phrases that I would use. I will cherish these printed memories forever and will be able to share them with my children.

—Kerry Kelly-Cochrane, 12, Encinitas, California



## *Falling in Love*

I rolled my eyes. Grandparents are old people with an old mentality and an old way of life. Their evenings consist of completing a puzzle, listening to a weather transistor radio or going to bed extremely early. Grandparents move slowly. They don't understand that

Generation Why is a time of excitement.

My grandfather on my dad's side was diagnosed with lung cancer in January of 1993. It was March, my long awaited spring break had finally arrived, and I was to spend my week of freedom in a cramped space of boredom.

Grandpa's breath was short, and sometimes he couldn't speak at all. His stories of Native Indians in old Florida were scarce. He slept the days away, yet my dad wanted me to spend time with this deteriorating man.

I wanted to go to the beach. I wanted to buy new clothes. I wanted to get out of that stuffy apartment! But I had no choice—it was me and Grandpa.

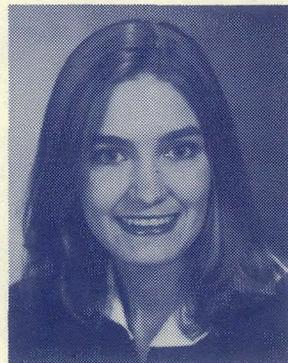
We did a puzzle of Monet, watched old Alfred Hitchcock movies and gazed at the ocean from his bedroom window, remembering the fishing trips we had shared years before. I began to love my grandfather. He became a part of me, and I think I became a part of him.

Grandpa died on July 23, 1993. Although I knew it would happen, I still cried. I wonder if I would have cried if I hadn't spent that extra time, my week of freedom, with him.

I risked getting too close and facing heartache. I risked my emotions falling to pieces. It felt good. I closed my eyes, took a step off the edge and fell in love.

—Jessica Silverman, 17,

Houston, Texas



## *A Language of His Own*

"Hey there!" Grandad shouted to me as I ran by him. "Where's the fire?"

"Fire?" I shouted. "Where? Did you call 9-1-1?"

Grandad laughed so hard his face turned bright red. "No, Danny, there's no fire." Grandad stopped to catch his breath. "You were running like the wind, which is what people sometimes do when there is a fire. It's just an expression."

Grandad used a lot of expressions. Once after a long day of work he came home, sighed, sat down and said, "My dogs are tired."

Now I have two dogs—Mitzi and George. When they are tired they throw themselves down on the floor and pant. But Grandad doesn't have any dogs.

"Ah, that's better, Grandad said. He had taken his shoes off and was rubbing his feet.

"You mean your feet are sore?" I asked.

"Yep," Grandad replied. "My dogs are tired."

He had another dog expression, too. He used it when I ran into the coffee table in the living room and hit my leg hard. "It sure does smart when you bark your shin, doesn't it, Danny?" Grandad asked.

"Yep," I replied, deciding to play along with him.

"It sure does hurt when you bark your shin."

Saturday morning I woke up late and ran downstairs to find Grandad. "You were supposed to wake me up early to go fishing," I reminded him.

"I know," Grandad said. "But you were so busy sawing logs I didn't have the heart to wake you."

"But I was sound asleep! How could I have been sawing logs?" Grandad started to chuckle, and then I knew it was another one of his expressions.

At the dinner table that night, Grandad asked us what we wanted to do when we grew up. When it was my turn to answer, I said that I wanted to see the world.

"Do you now?" Grandad asked. "You sound like me, Danny. When I was a young man I traveled all over. When I settled down with Grandma she told me she was glad I had gotten over my itchy feet."

"Itchy feet," I repeated. "That means the only way to scratch them is to walk around, and travel a lot?"

"Yep," said Grandad. "You've got itchy feet too!"

Grandad winked at me. He knew that I finally understood his language. Someday, if I ever have my own grandkids, I think I'll teach Grandad's language to them.

—Janet Vreeland, Royal Oak, Michigan

# Meghana's Nana and Grandma

Grandma Champaka received little Meghana at the Madras International Airport. She held her hands, pressed them warmly and looked at her lovingly. Meghana missed her other grandmother Rebecca's warm hug.

It was Meghana's first trip to India. Outside, the crowd was dense. Voices screamed, "Taxi, Coolie, Amma, Madam."

Grandma held Meghana's hand and juggled through. She hired an auto. The three wheeler was just enough for the two of them and the luggage. The driver honked continuously as they speeded off.

Passing the paddy fields, warm air blew Meghana's hair. "Nana drives everywhere. How come you don't, Grandma?" she asked.

"It's expensive to maintain a car," said Grandma.

Unlike Nana's, Grandma's apartment had little furniture. Meghana sat on a small wooden stool, watching her Grandma prepare fresh lemonade. The table fan swirled to keep the room cool.

"Your *sari* is pretty, Grandma," said Meghana.

"It is six yards of material, but I feel cool and comfortable. Tomorrow, I will wrap you in one of my best silks, and we will take a picture," replied Grandma.

"Nana only wears Western clothes. When I grow up, you will see me in *sari*'s and dresses," said Meghana.

Grandma smiled.

Meghana woke up early to see and hear the roosters cock-a-doodle-doo, the chickens cluck, the crows caw, the cows moo and the nightingales sing.

"Nana takes me to the zoo. But here, I find all the animals on the streets," chuckled Meghana.

One morning, Meghana brushed Grandma's long gray hair.

"Nana often goes to the beauty salon. Have you ever trimmed your hair, Grandma?" she asked.

"We old women in India do not cut our hair, because when I was young, hair was shaved off a widow's head," explained Grandma.

When they visited their relatives, Grandma and Meghana traveled by double-decker buses. Meghana enjoyed watching the crowded bazaar from the upper deck. Often, she saw monkeys snatch away bananas.

Sometimes, she watched the snake charmers. And elephants on the streets amazed her.

"Nana takes the highways. And sometimes I get carsick," said Meghana.

One afternoon, Grandma wound the rope around the wooden churner attached to two hooks with loops. She asked Meghana to pull each end of the rope alternately. The churner whirled white cream in the steel bowl and out plopped fresh butter. Meghana was excited.

The two of them squatted on the floor. Meghana poured hands full of rice in a hole, on the top of two round slabs. Grandma rotated the top stone. The grains went down and out came the fine rice flour between the two grinding stones. Grandma prepared tasty snacks using the iron pan over the small stove.

Meghana remembered the delicious cakes made by her other grandmother in the electric oven.

While Grandma laundered the clothes on a flat granite stone with her bare hands, Meghana played with the soap suds. Suddenly, Meghana stood stunned as she saw Grandma spread the clothes on a high rope using a bamboo stick.

"The sun will dry the clothes nice and crisp," explained Grandma.

"Nana washes and dries clothes in the machine. I get a shock sometimes," said Meghana.

Grandma rolled up the coir mats and broomed the rooms. She mopped the mosaic floor with an old towel.

Every day, Grandma lit oil lamps in her home shrine and went to the Hindu Temple on Fridays. Meghana mentioned about her trips to church with Nana.

Grandma joined her hands in prayer. "The Lord is One," she said.

At bedtime, Meghana enjoyed listening to stories from the great Indian epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, but she still missed Nana's fairy tales.

One day, Meghana spoke to Nana and her parents on the phone. "We miss you... Write letters," they told her. And Meghana did...

*Dear Mom and Dad:*

...A riddle for you. My grandmothers are different, but they do have something in common...Guess what?

Her parents curiously turned over the page to read, **THEY BOTH LOVE ME!**

—Shobha Shamu Ramapriya, Billerica, Massachusetts



# Our Family Garden

Long ago, a happy couple started their life together. They married, had three children and raised them with love, prayer and guidance. The father was hard working and loved to work in his garden. Every year he planted many seeds and watched the plants and flowers grow. The mother, a loving woman, enjoyed cooking vegetables from the garden for her family and anyone else who needed them.

The parents worked everyday in the garden, turning the soil and planting the seeds so they could grow strong roots. They prayed for good weather and worked hard to grow healthy plants and strong children.

In time, the couple became grandparents as their children grew up, moved away and had children of their own. Even though the children had become adults, they knew there was much to learn from their parents. So they would visit, and help them with their garden. It always made the couple happy to have a full house and full table of children and grandchildren.

One of the daughters asked her parents how she could help guide her children to reach their full potential. Her father told her, "Children are like plants. You need to water them daily with love. Give them support so they can grow, yet they need enough room so that they can grow in their own direction."

The daughter listened. She went home with her family and they worked on a garden of their own. They planted. They watered. They prayed. And they watched their crops grow.

Soon it was time for this daughter's children to go in their own directions. She would talk to her parents about her children. She was worried that they might leave home before they were ready. Her mother would

say, "You know, watching your children grow can be like watching the birds. If you keep on watching, they will come back. Just keep praying. Just keep watching, and they'll come back."

Another generation had grown, and the couple now became great-grandparents, as their grandchildren started to have children.

Sometimes their grandchildren would visit and help with their garden because they knew there was much to learn. One granddaughter asked them how they raised three children so well; she realized it was a lot of work. Her grandmother told her, "Yes, it is a lot of work; but raising children is like taking care of a garden. The hard work isn't worth it unless you take the

time to enjoy it. Children grow up so fast. Parents need to have fun with their children, and the children should not be in such a hurry to grow up."

And so the granddaughter listened. She went home with her family, and they worked hard. They planted. They laughed. They played, and they watched their crops grow.

As the great grandchildren grow, they too will learn about the Garden. The couple keeps on going and the garden keeps on growing because the family needs and depends on them. The great grandparents continue to pray over all their crops because raising a family is like growing a garden. It's a lot of hard work; but the harvest is so beautiful.

—Lynette Adams from Lakewood, California, contributed this piece written by her niece and nephews: Nicki (9) and Kyle (11), Wesley Beckemeyer (6) and Jordan Adams (2). Other family members also contributed with their input. This piece was presented to the happy couple of this story, Buster and Marie Schraufnagel, in celebration and honor of their 50th Wedding Anniversary.



# The Bowl of Milk

The swaying trees cast mobile shadows on the empty driveway, the pale moon just a glimpse of silver between their leaves. The dark of night envelopes me, as it creeps up to where I am sitting, alone on a wooden step leading up to the porch. In my hands is a bowl of milk for the stray cats.

The milk glimmers like a mirror, and all of a sudden, I am reminded of the time at the lake, when Grandpa was alive. We sat side by side, fishing rods bobbing in the flowing water.

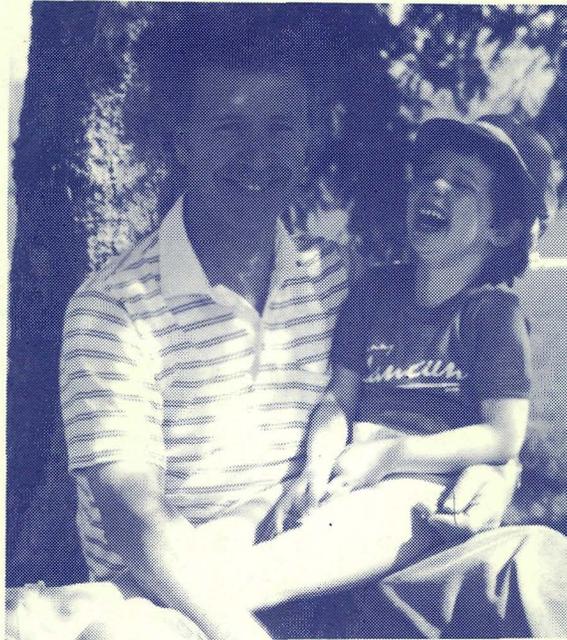
I don't remember if we caught any fish that day, but I clearly remember looking into the water and seeing our reflection. Together we looked content, at peace.

Grandpa helped Janie and me build a treehouse near the lake. We built it high above the ground and painted it green in hopes that it would be camouflaged by the leaves and remain our secret.

It was a beautiful treehouse. Janie and I spent a lot of our childhood up there. Grandpa would sometimes come up, and tell us wonderful stories of the farm he grew up on and how he had to wake up early in the morning to feed the chickens before the long walk to

My grandpa is a nutcase. He likes to tell stupid jokes. One joke is, "When I die I want to die peacefully like my grandpa in his sleep. Not like the passengers in his car." I would tell you all of them, but I would need a dictionary. I would call it, The Dictionary of Stupid Jokes. He loves movies, stupid ones too. I think that's where he gets it from. He is serious long enough to play chess, which is one of his hobbies.

—Anthony Tangman, Gr. 4, Indianapolis, Indiana



school. There was more to the stories than that. There was always a magical touch to them. Grandpa was known for his magical touch. It shined in his eyes, which were deep blue, childlike, with the oldest of old age wisdom.

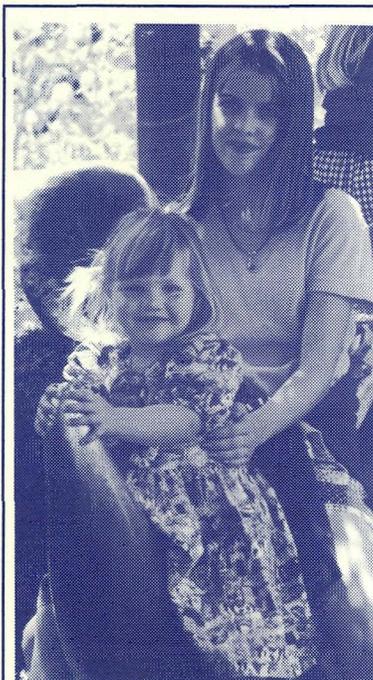
Grandpa told us that the farm came alive in the mornings. The animals talked, the grass and wheat danced, and the breeze sung to him.

It was Grandpa who comforted me when Janie went off to college. I missed her so much. To take my mind off of it, Grandpa took me outside to feed the stray cats that roamed the area. We placed a bowl of milk on the grass before us, sat on the step and waited. Soon, many cats of all different breeds came to feed.

Their eyes darted nervously as they lapped up the milk. In the twilight, their eyes seemed to have a magic in them, similar to Grandpa's.

I now place the bowl of milk on the grass just like Grandpa showed me and wait for the stray cats. It's amazing how many memories come alive in a bowl of milk.

—Marie Hoy, 15, Mississauga, Ont, Canada



When I was little, My grandma said, "I was a rural child at heart." "Oh, grandma, I remember That old bed you made for me! With corn fields around, And animals floating above. Laying on that sweet grass, With your sweet song In my heart, You'll be with me always."

—April Threlkeld, 12, Encinitas, California. She writes, "I am 75% Irish, and my grandpa was all Irish."



# Honoring Our Elders

We arrive at Grandma's and like a circle, we go around and give kisses and hugs...I walk around my grandmother's house, taking in all the details... drinking in the smells of cooking that fill her house. I take in the sights, smells and sounds so that I shall remember them when I am not there.

—Christine O'Conner, 12,  
West Grove, Pennsylvania

Margaret always wears sweat pants and a shirt that has pockets by the side to keep her black bull beside her. Black Bull is the tobacco that most elders chew around here.

She and my grandfather take a steam on Wednesdays and on Saturdays...When it comes to bingo and fiddling, she won't stay home...

—Samantha Jackson, 15, Yup'ik, Kwethluk, Alaska



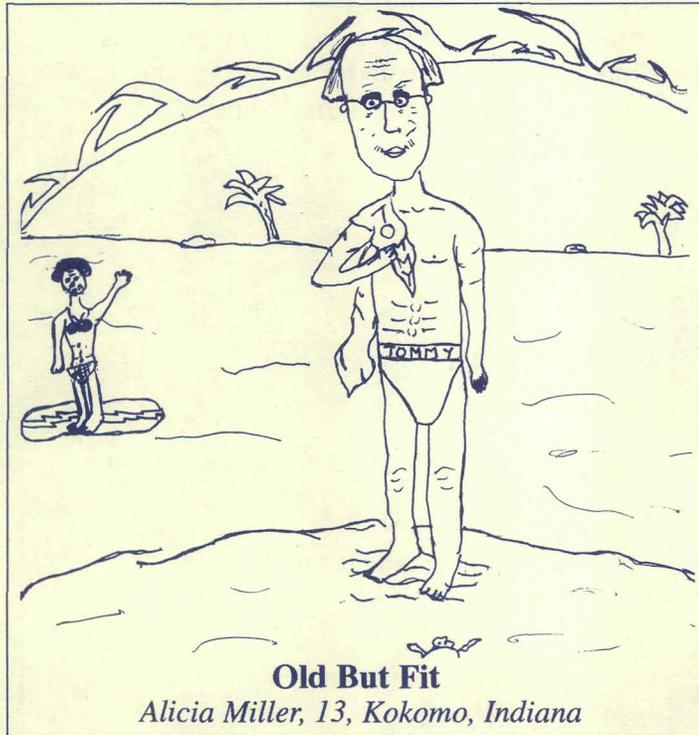
My grandma and I love to paint. We sit down in her cozy apartment. We paint mountains, with beautiful flowers, swaying in the wind.

If we mess up we laugh. I don't see her often, but I think of her a lot. I think of her in her long silky dress, blackflat shoes, sitting at the table, painting a beautiful picture.

—Carrie Byrne, 10,  
Acworth, Georgia

As I look at my Papa, I see a kind-hearted old man. When I look at him I see his eyes twinkle behind his glasses. I see his gray hair gleaming with silkiness. His wrinkles scamper through his face trying to find a place to end. His nose squints with curiosity. I love my Papa. He will always be, forever.

—Lyndsey Alford, 10, Kennesaw, Georgia



## Old But Fit

Alicia Miller, 13, Kokomo, Indiana

Memories stick to her like glue. One time I fell in her creek. She gave me a big hug and a humongous towel. She said I was a big stinker when I was two. And she sings so much that her sound tumbles through my head like boulders.

—Daniel Sykes, 10, Acworth, Georgia

Almost every evening we took a walk on the beach with her. Grandma would let her hair flow in the cool crisp breeze, and talk about how precious we were as babies, and how pretty and handsome we are.

—Lauren McKeon, 11, Kennesaw, Georgia

When I was really small, about three years old, I had the worst time pronouncing words. One of them was grandfather. "Okay," my grandfather would say slowly, "grraaannndd-ffaaaather." I tried and tried, but I couldn't say it. Then he got a great idea. Say papa, he told me. I couldn't articulate that either.

The next day I went to spend the afternoon with him. I went right up to him and said, "Poppop!" He was surprised and happy, even though I couldn't pronounce it quite right.

I also have a nickname I got from my Poppop. Every time I went over to his house, he'd say, "It's Sean again!" and give me a great big hug. And now my nickname is Sean-Again (Although I prefer not to be called that in school). That's how we both got our nicknames.

—Sean Mullins, 10, Greenfield, New Hampshire

My only Grandpa is a grand old guy. He takes me to the gym every year I come. Right when I get there, he squeezes me so tight.

When I walk in his house it has a wierd smell. It always smells like he's cooking. It makes me very hungry. He's a superior cook. I love his unusual omelets, with little pieces of pepper in them. I love that special taste in his gumbo.

—Brady Cowarill, 10, Kennesaw, Georgia

## Grandma Maggie

Maggie Kinegak is the only person I know the best. She is 76 years old. Maggie is a kind and generous person who tells stories about her childhood on up to when she was married. Maggie and I gather lots of wood together, cut fish, tell stories and also pack water from the river for dish washing. She tells me things I never knew before, like how they used to hold their weddings. She also told me not to get mad at my sisters because in a few years or more I might regret what I said to them in the past. The last thing I say to her is *Kenkamken*, which means, "I love you" in Yup'ik.



—Pauline Nicori, 15, Yup'ik Eskimo, Kwethluk, Alaska  
Photo: Pauline's Grandma Maggie (left) and relatives

## My Neighbor

My old neighbor lives next door  
Her name is Mrs. Jenkins  
At one time she was called Ellie  
But that was long ago  
She's old now  
But I see the little girl  
That face  
With windswept hair and  
freckles  
Peering through the  
wrinkles  
And she's eleven  
Like me.

—Jennifer Silverman, 11  
Simsbury, Connecticut

## In Your Mind

In the close of your mind	There was something
Your knowing is the seed	I wanted
Which reminded you of things	To be there
You did long ago	It was thunder
In your mind	In the light again
Of the distance of the light	And the dark again
Dreaming in the light	Half light and half dark

—Talia Ann Bolnick, 4, Los Angeles, California

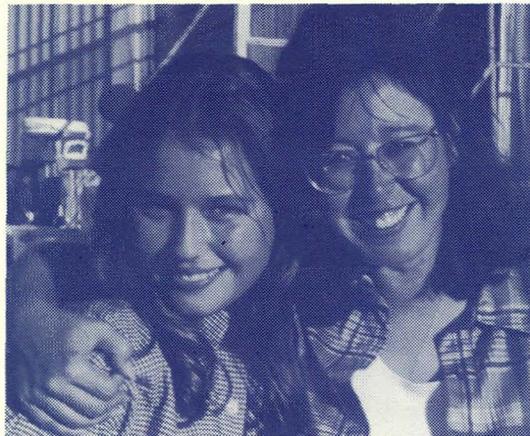
## How Does Your Culture Treat the Elderly?

I believe that we do not treat the elderly with respect. Back when my country was young, people looked up to the elderly for their knowledge and wisdom. Elders were treated with respect by everyone.

Now in America, we stick the elderly in nursing homes when they get hard to handle. We do not respect their intelligence. We think they don't know what they are talking about when in reality they do know. The elderly are thought to be easy victims for robbers because they are looked upon as weak and fragile.

If we respect and listen to the elderly maybe we can prevent some of the bad events from happening.

—Maria Argoud, 12, Encinitas, California (photo: above)



## Mr. Cappuccio

Just a stranger looking for another class,  
"Where are the other students?" I ask.

Mr. Cappuccio is a coffee man,  
Medium height, black hair, mischievous grin,  
A real character.

Teaches me all the great poets.  
He gives me a wing and a smile  
And motivates me to jump off the edge  
To be an aberration.

Writing is his vocation,  
To submit his mind with a pen,  
He teaches me to think,  
And I am different for him.

He is someone I respect  
And what better way to thank him  
Than a gentle poem  
Over a hot cup of coffee.

—Zach Warren, 15, Charleston, West Virginia. He writes, "This poem was written about my poetry teacher at the Hill Summer Program in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. I turned out to be the only student in his class. Mr. Cappuccio opened my eyes to the beauty and wealth of poetry. We became closer than Abbot and Costello. I write Mr. Cappuccio often and will be visiting him in New York to hear some famous poets."

# Sheilah and Shimmer

Sheilah lived with her mom, her dad and a dalmatian named Shimmer. Sheilah and Shimmer spent lots of time together. They chased one another and cuddled together on the floor. Shimmer even slept in Sheilah's room.

Sometimes Sheilah watched Shimmer sleep. Once in awhile, Shimmer would let out a bark, and Sheilah would wonder what her dog might be dreaming. Was Shimmer chasing a rabbit? Splashing in the river? Or rushing after a fire truck?

Sheilah had her own dreams too. Once she dreamt that she and Shimmer could fly. Long after Mom and Dad were asleep, when the lawn was turning silver under the moon, and the white pines were swaying in the breeze, Sheilah and Shimmer began to feel lighter and lighter. Sheilah was paying so much attention to this wonderful feeling, this lightness, she didn't notice how her feet had left the ground. She was rising above the treetops. Looking down, she saw her house, and the fireflies blinking on and off in her yard. She was just starting to wonder if she would rise forever, when she heard Shimmer whisper, "Follow me."

Sheilah was surprised but only for a moment. Sheilah told herself, "Of course Shimmer can talk!" Then she asked Shimmer, "Where are we going?" Shimmer didn't answer but headed north past the nightclouds that sailed silently across the sky. As Shimmer flew ahead, she changed. Her coat turned feathery, and she grandly spread out new wings. Sheilah laughed and thought, "Of course. Shimmer can become a Great Spotted Owl."

"Here is an ocean of air to swim in!" Shimmer smiled, "This is where the breath of one forest is joined with another." Then Sheilah saw that they were above a great forest full of birchwood and beeches. She thought she would like to fly forever with Shimmer. But even as she thought so, she noticed she was drifting gently downwards. Meanwhile Shimmer flew out of sight.

As Sheilah called for Shimmer, she awakened from her dream, longing to fly, but also glad Shimmer was really a dog asleep beside her.

Now it was a very interesting fact of Sheilah's life that she and her father had different religions. Sheilah was Jewish like her mother. Her father was Christian. At times, Sheilah was confused that her mom and dad

didn't believe the same things about God. When Sheilah was younger, she thought maybe she was part Jewish and part Christian. Her dad said, "Well, it's true you share a part of me just like you share a part of your mom, but you are being raised Jewish, not Christian." Dad and Mom added, "We don't see how you could have both religions at one time. So it's up to us to choose for now even if you choose something different when you grow up."

Something being a fact doesn't tell a person how she might feel about it—no, not at all. Sheilah wasn't always sure what she felt. She knew there were other differences between her and her father. He was a man, and she was a girl who would grow up to be a woman. His favorite color was blue, and hers (this week) was emerald

green. On their last summer vacation, he especially liked a long bicycle ride they took. She thought the waterslides were much more exciting.

Once in awhile she and her father (and her mother, too) would argue over who could do what, when and for how long. Still, most of the time, these were differences that didn't make a lot of difference, as far as feelings were concerned.

Sheilah had heard scary things about being different or having different faiths. She heard about other places in the world where they had wars between people who didn't believe the same things or didn't look the same way or didn't live the same way. She heard that people right in her hometown hated people who looked different or had different faiths.

Now Sheilah knew other children whose mothers or



fathers had started out believing in one religion but changed when they got married. Her friend Jessica at the religious school she attended said, "My mom became a Jew after she married my dad. Why doesn't your dad convert?"

So one night during Seder, Sheilah decided to ask what it meant to 'convert.' It turned out to be a good way to learn about her family.

Seder, the celebration of Passover, was a time for everyone in the family to gather at her grandparents' house, to pray, sing and eat together.

After the Seder meal, there was plenty to talk about. Sheilah especially enjoyed the stories about people and pets in the family. This Seder the grown-ups were talking about a wedding that would happen in the summer. A cousin who was a Jew planned on marrying a Christian. No one at the table knew if the cousin or her future husband planned to convert.

Then Sheilah asked, "What if they both decided to convert?"

"Then they would still have a problem because they would still have different religions," Grandma explained. "But they wouldn't have as much heartache as my Aunt Naomi when she married a non-Jew. Her family sat *shiva*."

"What's *shiva*?" Sheilah wanted to know.

"When somebody dies and her family is very sad and misses her, they sit *shiva*. It's a special way of saying goodbye to someone you will never see again," Grandma said. "Sometimes parents believe very strongly that their grown-up child must marry a person who shares their same beliefs. If their son or daughter does not marry as they wish, they act as though their son or daughter had died."

Sheilah thought *that* was especially sad. She wanted to know what had happened to her great great aunt. No one seemed to know because it all happened long ago before Sheilah's mother was born. Sheilah's grandmother thought her Aunt Naomi would be very old by now—in her nineties at least. She wasn't even sure she was alive, but she could find out from a cousin.

Sheilah said, "I hope we can find great-great Aunt Naomi. I'd like to send her a letter." Grandma looked

thoughtful for a moment then said, "You know, Sheilah, I would like to do the same thing! I'll call my cousin tomorrow."

Later that evening Sheilah learned about the cake her mom and dad had at their wedding. It was half vanilla and half chocolate. Dad thought that was "symbolic." Two flavors could be put together in the same cake to represent two people respecting each other's religious differences in their marriage. Mom said it wasn't symbolic at all. She just liked chocolate and vanilla. But Mom and Dad agreed, "We don't have to believe all the same things in order to

love and care for one another or to raise a child." Sheilah was glad to hear that!

In early autumn, Sheilah heard that there was going to be a demonstration in her hometown. The demonstration was going to be a kind of march or parade, but this parade was awful to think about. It would be made of people who belonged to hate groups. They seemed to hate just about anyone who was different from them in appearance, lifestyle or beliefs. During the demonstration a fight broke out. Fortunately,

no one was badly hurt.

In response, people from Sheilah's temple joined with people from other temples and churches in town and held a rally to show support for one another. Sheilah went with her parents.

This all happened near the High Holy Days—the Days of Awe—some people liked to call them. Everybody in Sheilah's family was disgusted that the demonstration took place at all, but some said it was better to allow the demonstration. "It's bad," said her uncle, "but it would be worse for everyone if it hadn't been allowed." Only if people can express beliefs that are hateful, will we keep the freedom in our country to express ourselves at all."

Not everyone agreed. Others in Sheilah's family thought that allowing the demonstration was not right because the beliefs that were demonstrated were so very hateful! People who held those same beliefs once controlled many countries in Europe and caused the Holocaust.

Sheilah remembered last year when she visited the Children's Museum. They had a special photo exhibit of children with tapes so that you could listen to the children's own words. So many children were killed then. A special day, *Yom HaShoah*, was set aside to help people remember.



At the museum there was a service in which Sheilah and others from her school sang. Older people who had survived the Holocaust, their grown-up children, and their children's children stood up and came forward to light candles and remember. Sheilah was glad to see a good friend of her grandparents there. She was surprised when he rose from his chair, walked slowly down to the gathering of survivor families and lit a candle.

Dad was pretty quiet during the days when everyone else was talking about the demonstration. Sheilah overheard him explain to Mom that he really wasn't used to thinking and worrying about hate demonstrations against Jews.

"I knew Jews all over the world have had to think and worry about it a lot. And I thought it was terrible that they had reason to worry. But since I wasn't Jewish, it wasn't the same thing. Then I married a Jewish woman and I thought about it and worried about it more. Then I had a Jewish child, and I started thinking and worrying even more."

Sheilah wondered if that was why recently he waited at the temple for her while she was at school instead of just picking her up afterwards. Sheilah noticed more dads than usual hanging around. "Keeping an eye on things, maybe," Mom shrugged. Mom seemed tense, too.

But at least this time nothing else happened. The High Holy Days came and were still full of awe: sunshine, changing colors, endings and new beginnings. Even Dad started acting silly again.

And then the letter from Great, Great Aunt Naomi arrived. She wrote that she was very pleased to hear from them, and went on to say, that she adored dalmatians and could Sheilah please come visit and bring Shimmer?

In late autumn, Sheilah, her parents and Shimmer went on a long drive to see Great, Great Aunt Naomi. After many miles of stories, they came upon a large forest. As they drove through it, Sheilah had a feeling that she had seen it all before.

On the other side of the forest they found the town where Naomi lived. She was very glad to meet everyone. Mom cried. They all talked and walked the grounds with Shimmer. Naomi said, "My husband and I had a dalmatian like Shimmer. She loved to run in the woods near our home. Not far from here there's still some of the old forest left."

Naomi had lot of stories to tell about Zippy, who had been a fire dog, the mascot at the fire station where Naomi's husband had worked before he died many, many years ago.

Naomi told us of how she felt great sorrow when her parents would not accept her marriage. She said it

felt like she had really died when they sat *shiva*. She tried to call, but they hung up the phone. She tried to write, but they never wrote back. It was as if she had become a ghost. After a long time trying not to be a ghost in her mother's and father's lives, she had moved with her husband here, and they made it home.

She was often lonely, but she kept in touch with old friends by letters and a few times, they traveled to each other's homes, especially for Seder. She had no children but she fell in love with nature and went to school to study it. When Zippy wasn't on duty at the fire station they would go for walks in the woods. While she looked for unusual plants, Zippy would tear off down the trail or up the gullies until it was time to go home.

Naomi said that the time with her dog, Zippy, in the woods was one of the most magical in her memory. "I think about our adventures together often... and we have new adventures in my dreams." Sheilah was reminded of her own dreams about Shimmer.

"Sometimes we fly over the wetlands and forests together," Naomi chuckled to herself. Sheilah was speechless at first then stammered, "Aunt Naomi, I have dreams I can fly too! With Shimmer!"

Aunt Naomi laughed, "Do you Sheilah? Isn't that wonderful!" They hugged each other tightly.

Maybe it was because they had the same dreams or maybe it was because they both had dalmatians for pets, whatever the reason, Sheilah decided to tell Aunt Naomi how troubled she was about religious differences. She told her about the demonstration of the hate groups and how it worried her and then about *Yom Ha Shoah*. Finally Sheilah's words tumbled out in such a rush of emotion that she was surprised at herself, "Aunt Naomi, my dad isn't Jewish! Mom and I don't have the same

religion as him!" Her tears told her it bothered her more than she had thought.

Aunt Naomi listened closely to Sheilah smiling kindly. Then she said, "Sheilah, what is your favorite kind of pet?" "Oh, that's easy to answer. I like spotted dogs best of all," Sheilah replied.

"I do too," Naomi nodded. "But you know I've never seen two dalmatians that were quite the same. I love their variety!"

Sheilah was quiet. After awhile, she said, "I guess it really is okay that Dad and I have different religions. Maybe it's better than okay. Maybe it pleases God when people who have different religions love each other."

Naomi smiled. "I think you are right, Sheilah."

—Matthew Galvin and his daughter, Sarah, age 10, from Indianapolis, Indiana, wrote this story together.



## Usted Pregunta Porque Cantamos

(Coro)

Usted pregunta porque cantamos  
Usted pregunta porque cantamos  
Usted pregunta porque cantamos

Si cada hora viene con su muerte  
Si el tiempo es una cueva de ladrones  
Los aires ya no son los buenos aires  
La vida es nada más que un blanco  
movil.

Cantamos porque el río está sonando  
Y cuando sueña el río sueña el río  
Cantamos porque el cruel no tiene  
nombre

En nombre tiene nombre su  
destino. (coro)

Si nuestros bravos quedan sin abrazos  
La patria se nos muere de tristeza  
Y el corazón del hombre se hace añicos  
Antes aún que explote la vergüenza.

Cantamos porque el niño y porque todo  
Y por algún futuro por el pueblo  
Cantamos porque los sobrevivientes  
Y nuestros muertos quieren que cantemos. (coro)

Si estamos lejos como un horizonte  
Si allá quedaron arboles y cielo  
Si cada noche siempre alguna ausencia  
Y cada despertar un desencuentro.

Cantamos porque el grito no es bastante  
Y no es bastante el odio ni la bronca  
Cantamos porque creemos en la gente  
Y porque venceremos la derrota! (coro)

—Oswaldo Torres, Chile, *Movimiento Canto Nuevo*, 1980's.

Anita Rios is a 94-year-old great-grandmother from Mexico. She lives in two different places— La Tinaja, an isolated village in the mountains and Huajimic, a more developed village that has had electricity for the last 20 years. Anita has five grandchildren that help her a lot, making her strong everyday. Some of them have taken over her work—taking care of cattle, chickens... “Things were better before when everyone was around. Many children are moving to the city or “El Norte”—the United States,” she tells us. Anita took care of one of her grandchildren, Anita Rojas, since she was only one year old. Anita Rojas moved to the U.S. at the age of 17. When the two Anitas are together, they have heart to heart talks that remind them of the old days. And, the older Anita passes on traditional recipes to the younger Anita, such as how to make glue, a recipe that has been passed down through the generations.

*Photo of Anita Rios by Rachel Elliott.*

## You Ask Why We Sing...

(Chorus)

You ask why we sing  
You ask why we sing  
You ask why we sing



*If each hour comes with its death  
If time is a cave of thieves  
The air is no longer clear  
Life is no more than a moving target.*

*We sing because the river makes a  
sound  
And when the river dreams, the river  
resounds*

*We sing because cruelty has no name  
At the same time its fate has a name.  
(Chorus)*

*If our brave remain without embraces  
Our country dies of sadness  
And the human heart breaks into pieces  
Even before it explodes the shame.*

*We sing for the child and for all  
For a future and for the people  
We sing because the survivors and our  
departed want us to. (Chorus)*

*If we are as far away as the horizon  
If there are still trees and sky out there  
If every night there still remains an absence  
And every farewell a dissolution.*

*We sing because a cry is not enough  
Neither is hate nor an outburst  
We sing because we believe in the people.  
And because we shall overcome any defeat! (Chorus)*



# DEAR HANNA

*Dear Readers:* I am in the midst of a coincidence too significant to ignore. Just as we are working on this issue of *Skipping Stones*, focusing on Elders, and Life and Death, a routine physical exam revealed that I have cancer cells growing in my body. Rather than answering a question today, I decided to share with you my reactions and feelings during these six weeks following the news of my cancer.

A story I had written previous to the November discovery of cancer is more appropriate than ever:

## Soul Sisters

“Grandma,” Amanda’s tear-filled voice spoke into the telephone. “My parents are going on an Arctic expedition next year. They suggested I go to a boarding school! But I’d much rather come live with you! Can I? Please, Grandma!...Oh goodie! See you as soon as summer vacation starts...Thanks!”

What a glorious year Amanda had with Grandma. The days were filled with taming squirrels, riddle contests, canoeing lessons, putting on skis, building a moss house and attending a country school of only 64 students.

“Oh Grandma,” Amanda burst out on one of their adventures to find the darkest place in the woods, “you are sure going to miss me next year, aren’t you!”

“Well, Amanda, in a way I will miss you,” the answer came. “But in another way I won’t, because I’ll have you with me, inside of me, all the time.”

Less than a year after Amanda returned to her parents and city life, Grandma had a stroke. Amanda and her parents visited her frequently. On one such visit, Grandma spoke slowly to Amanda, “I’ve had a good long life. I really feel ready for my life journey to end now. But, if you want me to, for your sake, I’ll try to hang on...”

“Grandma,” Amanda jumped in, holding Grandma’s hands tightly, “How can you say that? Don’t you remember what you said to me? I remember every word: ‘Sure, in a way I’ll miss you. But in another way, I won’t, because I’ll have you with me, inside of me, all the time.’”

My reactions following the evidence of cancer cells in my body fit very appropriately into the life perspective of Amanda and Grandma.

- A serene and peaceful feeling came over me; I am in very open relationships with my children, my mother and my friends. When tensions arise, I tend to bring them up with people at the earliest possibility. Thus, I rarely have uneasy feelings lingering in my heart.
- I am a strong believer that the only constant characteristic of life is *change*. For sure, I’ve learned the most during and after periods of new events in my life.
- I check in with myself to get clear on what my true feelings and best insights are about a topic, and base my actions on those feelings: what work to do, with whom to spend time, what’s important to discuss, etc.
- Life is a gift; each day is a treasure. Longevity is not guaranteed.
- I suspect if we feel good about the choices we make in our lives, we do not need to fear death. It’s the natural, final phase of the cycle of every life.



*In Peace and Serenity,*

Questions? Comments? Write to—

**Dear Hanna**

c/o *Skipping Stones*

Post Office Box 3939

Eugene, Oregon 97403 USA

*Illustration by Kurt Cyrus,  
Eugene, Oregon*

## Wiedergeboren

An einem langweiligen Mittwochnachmittag startete ich aus dem Fenster und hörte all die kleinen Regentropfen auf meinen Balkon prasseln. Es war ein deprimierender Januartag im Jahre 1992 als ich anfing einige Dinge mit anderen Augen zu sehen und meine ganze Lebenseinstellung veränderte.

Ich versuchte mich vergeblich auf meine langweiligen und komplizierten Matheaufgaben zu konzentrieren als plötzlich das Telephon klingelte. Ich nahm den Hörer ab, meldete mich, wartete, und einen Moment später hörte ich die aufgelöste Stimme meiner Mutter schon fast flüsternd sagen, "Deine Großmutter ist gerade im Krankenhaus gestorben." Meine Mutter schluckte laut und ließ einen traurigen Seufzer von sich als sie bemerkte, daß ich nicht fähig war ihr zu antworten. Ich war wie weggetreten und mein Herz fühlte sich an, als hätte jemand ein Messer hineingesteckt.

Obwohl ich immer wußte, daß meine Großmutter seit einem Jahr Krebs hatte und mir auch im Klaren war, daß sie jeden Tag sterben konnte war es unbegreiflich für mich. Ich habe mir nie viele Gedanken über ihren Tod gemacht, aber nun ist alles schneller geschehen als ich es erwartet hatte. Die nächsten Minuten waren mit meinem untröstlichen Weinen ausgefüllt, ein schuldiges Weinen. Ich fühlte mich einsam, hilflos und wünschte mir, noch ein einziges, letztes Mal mit meiner Großmutter zu sprechen, ihr in die Augen zu sehen und ihr zum ersten mal sagen wie sehr ich sie liebte.

Plötzlich tauchten alle alten Erinnerungen in meinem Kopf auf, all meine bösen Gedanken über sie, all die unhöflichen Gesten ihr gegenüber und all die wunder-vollen Dinge, die sie für mich getan hatte. In meinen Augen war sie immer die Großmutter mit dem perfekten Make-up, elegantesten Kleidern und dem schönsten Schmuck. Ich hatte nie an all die Liebe gedacht, die sie mir geben wollte.

Und wenn ich nun zurückblicke, bemerke ich, daß ich ein blindes Kind war. Nach Omas Tod wurde mir bewußt, daß ich sie sehr geliebt habe und das sie meinen Respekt verdient hätte. Auch wenn ich noch viel Zeit brauchte, um über den Tod meiner Großmutter hinweg zu kommen, kann ich jetzt, vier Jahre später, zugeben, daß mir diese ganze traurige Geschichte eine Lektion erteilt hat. Eine Lektion, die man in keinem Buch lesen kann, eine Lektion von Herzen.

## Born Again

*I was staring out the window, watching all the little raindrops dripping on my balcony. It was a depressing January day in 1992 when I started seeing a few things with different eyes and suddenly changed my whole attitude about life.*

*While I was trying to concentrate on my boring math questions, the telephone rang. I picked it up, said hello, waited and after quite a long time I heard my mum's nervous and shocked voice almost whispering, "Your grand-*

*ma just died in the hospital." I heard her swallowing loudly and taking a deep breath of sadness when she noticed that I was not iable to respond.*

*I felt a deep pain in my heart, as if somebody had just stuck a knife through it. I knew that my grandmother has had cancer for one year and could die any day.*

*I had never really thought. about her approaching death, but now everything had happened much faster than I had expected.*

*The next minutes were filled with unbearable weeping, tears of guilt. I felt lonely and helpless. I just wished, I could talk to my grandma once more, look at her once more, and tell her for the very first time, how much I loved her.*

*Suddenly all the memories turned up in my head—all the bad things I had said and thought about her and all the good things she has done for me. In my eyes, she has always been the grandma with perfect make-up, elegant clothes and the nicest jewelry. I have never thought about all the love she wanted to give me.*

*But now, when I look back, I notice that I was a blind child. After my grandmother's death, I have realized how much I loved her and how much she has deserved my respect. It took me quite a long time to get over her death. But four years later, I can say it gave me a lesson. A lesson which cannot be read in any book—a lesson of the heart.*



# The Summer That Never Rained

Growing up I used to hate rainy days. They always made me feel blue. Now, the rain brings back memories of a special summer in my life.

It was the summer my cousin Scott came to stay with my parents and me. His parents were on an archaeological dig in Mexico, and because of Scott's health, he couldn't join them. Scott had leukemia. When I first found out he was to stay with us, I wasn't exactly thrilled. I immediately assumed I was to be in charge of babysitting. Being twelve, Scott had certainly passed what I considered to be the child care age. My parents felt he needed constant care because of his illness. What a way to spend my last summer before going to college.

The day Scott arrived I had to cancel a date so I would be there to greet him. I sat around the house and pouted. Things changed though, after the very first night he was here. I usually don't hit it off with younger kids at first, but Scott was so different. He seemed older than twelve. Talking was so easy for us. He had a way of making me open up to him. It was one of his special qualities.

During the period Scott stayed with us, I learnt a lot about him as well as about myself. We came to be very close.

Everything I had thought about Scott, before I met him, couldn't have been more false. He had more energy and a love of things than I had. Or, at least what I thought I had. He somehow brought these qualities out in me.

During Scott's first week with us, we had a terrible rainstorm. We were going to go to a bonfire that night, but had to cancel because of the weather. This upset me because I hated sitting around the house, feeling all bottled up.

Scott couldn't understand the change in my mood that night. He told me right out I had no reason to feel the way I did. He said I should make the best of every situation because you never really know how many more you'll have. He went on to say he had accepted the fact that he was going to die sooner than average people were. And, because of this, he had to make the best of every moment.

I sat in silence for a minute trying to recover from the shock of what he had said. I had known he was sick, but I never thought about him actually dying. Death was something I couldn't really grasp. No one close to me had ever died. Sensing my confusion, Scott decided to show me what he meant.

Despite the foul weather outside, he made me get up and do things with him inside. We played cards and watched a scary late show together. I realized life was not only made up of the big things I liked doing most, but also of the little things I hadn't really paid attention to before.

That summer went by too quickly for me, but I was never bored. Even the rain didn't bother me anymore. I was always able to find something to interest me.

That fall, Scott and I kept in touch by mail. His health began to deteriorate rapidly though, and soon his letters stopped altogether. His mother continued to write and inform me of his condition. Early in the spring of the following year, Scott died. I felt so empty inside, as if some part of me had been removed.

Scott is still a part of my life though. He lives in my memories. The time I most often think of him is when it rains. That summer we shared together was very special. To me, it was the summer that never rained.

—*Edie Pedersen, Niagara Falls, Ont., CANADA*

## Saturday

Saturday morning  
My newly washed hair  
Smelling of sweet  
Rose petals  
Dripping onto the carpet  
I watch the droplets of water  
Delicately fall from my golden hair  
And then disappear  
Into its thick fibers  
Tantalizing fragrances  
Escape from the kitchen  
And seep through the crack

Beneath the bedroom door  
But I'm too excited to eat  
I watch through the window  
As I run my finger along the  
White window panes  
Paint chipping in my hand  
Its color now  
Reminds me of the  
Sterileness of your heart  
The sun's rays filter in and  
Fall upon my  
Innocence

My new outfit so crisp  
And fresh  
I put it on for you  
A lonely child  
Waiting for your car  
A phone call  
Waiting for anything  
Waiting for time  
Waiting for you  
Waiting for a father

—*Jennifer Yendrick, Gr. 12,  
Millburn, New Jersey*

## A.I.D.S. Awareness

### Take My Hand

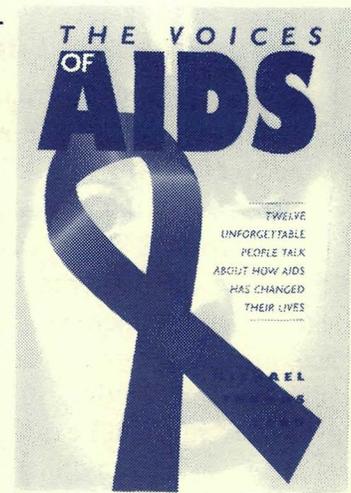
Alone and frightened of the darkness  
The days are long  
Life is hiding  
No more loving arms thrown around my neck  
Can you take my hand now  
I'm tired and lonely  
Give me hope, don't desert me  
Don't reject me  
All I need is love and understanding

Today is me  
Tomorrow someone else  
It's you and me facing the danger  
We've got to stand up  
And shed some light  
In the fight against AIDS  
—Mpho S. George, 15  
Francistown, BOTSWANA

### To Rick

I met a man whose heart was pure  
But his body was diseased  
He came to us, confessed his sins  
Like a poet on humble knees  
His words were a warning of despair  
And a prayer for our souls  
He touched me, and his pain I felt  
But I can't really know  
He faced my crowd with no shame  
Only a message to give  
I wanted to cry that by his death  
He wished for me to live  
Although I doubt I'll ever see him  
I send him thanks and love  
And I pray someday again to meet him  
In the great above.  
—Jacob Graham, 14, Wittenberg, Wisconsin.  
*This poem was inspired by a man who was recently diagnosed as being in stage 4 of the H.I.V. infection, commonly known as A.I.D.S. Rick came to talk with Jacob's class about how he contracted the disease. He stressed the need for awareness and good decision making.*

**The Voices of AIDS: Twelve Unforgettable People Talk About How AIDS Has Changed Their Lives** by Michael T. Ford (1995. William Morrow and Co., 1350 Ave. of the Americas, NYC, NY 10019) Suitable for ages 12 and up. In addition to 12 moving interviews which reveal the human side of AIDS, the book also provides some important facts about HIV:



### How You Can Get HIV

- sharing an infected needle to inject drugs
- through any sexual activity where another person's body fluids come into contact with open cuts on your mouth, vagina, penis or rectum
- getting a blood transfusion with infected blood
- by an infected mother passing it along to her unborn or nursing child

### Some of the Ways You Can't Get HIV

- kissing someone with HIV
- sharing silverware with someone with HIV
- using the same toilet as someone with HIV
- performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation for someone with HIV
- going to school with someone with HIV
- shaking hands or hugging someone with HIV
- being sneezed or coughed on by someone with HIV

### Things You Can Do to Help

- ask your teacher or principal to invite an AIDS education group to speak at your school. Many AIDS organizations will provide speakers free of charge if you ask them.
- find out who your congresspeople are and write to them, asking that they support funding for AIDS education and research.
- volunteer to be a buddy to someone with AIDS or to help out in some other way at an AIDS organization or in a hospital with an AIDS unit.
- keep informed about AIDS so that you can talk to your friends and family about it. If you hear someone saying something negative about people with AIDS or saying something that isn't correct, educate them.
- write to your local television stations and ask them to run public service announcements about AIDS. Write to the producers of your favorite shows and ask them to include safer-sex messages in their programs.
- participate in AIDS walks and other events to raise money for AIDS organizations.

## Painful Thoughts

The night I lost my best friends was the hardest part of my life. That painful night comes to my mind so clearly and so often. It was like I was there to witness it all. I lie awake some nights and go into deep thoughts about what happened. Then I start hearing the cars hitting and the metal of the cars twisting and crunching. I hear glass shattering. I lie there wondering if she's screaming or if she's just lying there. What were her last thoughts while she lies there waiting, slowly dying. It's happening right in front of me, and I can't do a thing. I see the cars collide, and I can't do anything but sit there and stare. The sounds of the crunching metal and shattering glass makes me cringe and tears sting my eyes as I swallow hard and try to hold them back. Is this pain ever going to go away? Are the sounds and visions ever going to vanish?

—Mandy Baker, Galena, Montana. She writes, "This poem tells how I felt when my best friend died. I see death as a natural part of life, but it's still hard when you lose someone special to you. You may have many regrets and never get to make up for them, but you always have good memories too."

## Gone

I want you to look into my eyes,  
But yours are closed  
I want you to get up,  
But your stiff body wants to stay  
I want you to say something,  
But your faint smile  
Stays plastered in dismay  
I'd like to hug you,  
But I'm not sure who you are  
Though at one point in my life,  
I loved you  
I'd give anything to give you a kiss,  
But you're not there  
I know it's you,  
But it's only your outer self  
Your inner self long gone  
Your hair combed nicely,  
But the make-up they used  
Buried your well known face  
I want to say I love you,  
But I can't  
Because you're past tense.

—Rosalynn Iliucci, 13,  
Liverpool, Nova Scotia, CANADA

## In My Mind

Inside my mind,  
you're waiting on hills;  
Sitting so still, waiting for me.  
Why did you die?  
You left me behind,  
Left me to cry for you.  
There's not a day that goes by  
That I haven't wanted you  
by my side.  
I have to let you go  
Why did they take you away?  
Take me away with you.  
Here by myself, left in my own  
Hell  
I built for myself, Built for myself,  
Take me away, with you;  
Maybe I'll stay,  
Stay here all day.  
Maybe I'll find, Deep in my mind,  
A way to let you go,  
Let you go.

—El Chavo Jose Ruiz, Gr. 7,  
San Antonio, Texas

## Dear God,

By now you must know my dad is dead.  
It happened ten years ago when I was in bed.  
My aunty and uncle came with the bad news.  
I always thought my dad I'd never lose.  
He never said good-bye.  
I guess he was too scared to cry.  
He wasn't a Father who was always there.  
But that didn't mean he didn't care.

He was my dad, my only one.  
And when he was around we'd have so much fun.  
I look at all the memories we had made.  
The pictures, the tapes and the picnics in the shade.  
God, could you tell him I miss him and tell him "Hi"  
Tell him I love him and most of all, tell him good-bye.

— Candace Mendoza, 15, Asian and  
Spanish heritage, Makakilo, Hawaii

## Losing Someone You Love

Art by Alexis Scott, Gr. 8,  
Springfield, Ohio

## Blue

In a world filled with confusion and hurt,  
the child sits alone,  
with only her feather bed to comfort her.  
The pencil and paper to her left,  
are the only witnesses to her feelings...  
only they  
are quiet enough to hear  
her silent pleas of forgiveness.  
She gazes out at the life  
beyond her window sill.  
Grey clouds roll into the sky,  
promising a storm.  
The Earth holds its breath.  
Her face is matched by a solemn sky,  
and the rain represents  
the tears she is too proud to show.  
The hypnotic pitter-patter  
of each drop  
begins to make her swollen eyes droop.  
The storm lasts only long enough  
for the Earth to be replenished  
as the girl lies,  
sleeping on a pillow  
now soaked with tears.  
Only in her dreams  
does her soul find peace.

—Brooke Herron, 15, Riverton, Wyoming

## Life Is

I asked an old man, what is life  
And this is what he said to me,  
Life is a terrible thing  
When you get older you'll see

I asked an old woman, what is life  
And this is what she said  
Life is a hard day's work  
From time to get up, till time for bed

I asked my pastor, what is life  
And he looked down into my eyes  
Life is an experience we should cherish  
Until the day we die

I asked God, what is life  
And this is how he answered my prayer  
Life is love, family and faith  
And people who will always care

I asked myself, what is life  
And from all the things that I've learned  
I think life is a priceless gift  
To those who are concerned

—Derek W. Chase, 13,  
Baltimore, Maryland

## Mountains

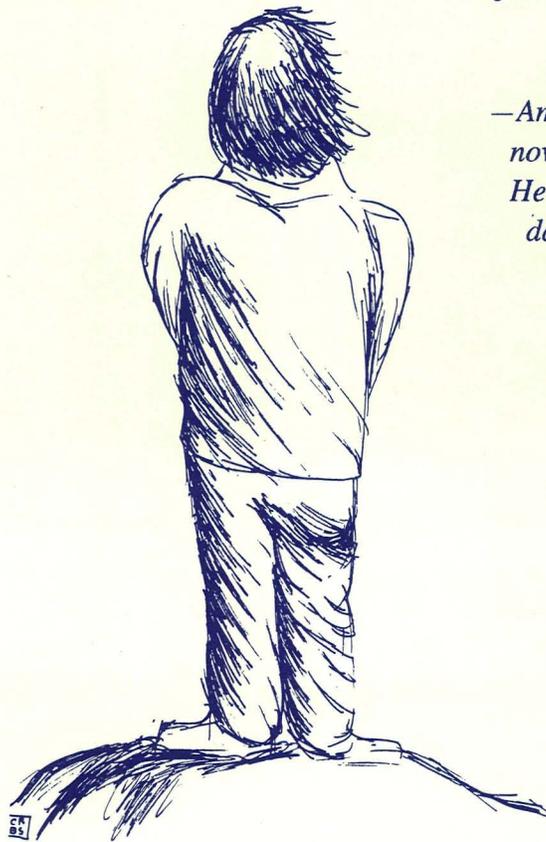
Mountains  
An empty valley  
A challenge  
Like our lives  
And we, we are spirits  
That hunger  
Hunger for a  
Challenge  
Feeding on a challenge  
Not for excitement  
But to bloom  
Like a flower  
Growing courage  
Yearning for our next feeding  
Not knowing what it is

—Jerome Placido, Grade 6,  
Moreno Valley, California

## Silence

Alone  
just before sleep  
overcomes your mind  
when you lay there  
motionless  
waiting for  
unconsciousness  
The thick endless silence  
fills the air  
floating in as a blanket of  
peace and darkness

—Liza Springmeyer, Gr. 7,  
Salt Lake City, Utah



## Solitude

—Art by Christopher Silverman, 14,  
Simsbury, Connecticut

## Life and Death

The porcupine is nestled against the tree  
The bear is in the forest

A mouse scurries across the ground  
The eagle flies swiftly in the sky  
Swift, swift, swift

The butterfly comes out of its cocoon  
The bee buzzes in the meadow  
Flower petals fly away in the wind  
This is Life

A single rain drop falls  
The storm is just beginning

Lightning crashes  
The rain comes  
Down, down, down

Soon it is over

The forest is gone  
All is bare

This is Death.

But the broken trees

Will join Mother Earth and make more trees

The trees will be a forest  
And another Life is made

—Amark Patra, 10, is from India and  
now lives in Carry, North Carolina.  
He wrote this poem for his mom the  
day after his father died of cancer.

## Ten Digits

My hands  
ugly wrinkled  
scarred from many fights with cats  
and trips to the cold hard  
sand paper pavement.  
They look old and  
tired like a 70 year old man's face  
after only 19 years of life.  
Veins, tendon and bone  
appear underneath the  
rough, dry skin to  
tell a story of all they have  
seen.

—Jason Bart, 19, Spokane,  
Washington

# My Summer in Trinidad

Trinidad is a small island in the Caribbean. My mom was born there, and my grandma died there. Grandma was cremated three days after she died on a hill above the sea not far from her home.

On July 27, 1996 my Grandpa had a memorial ceremony for my Grandma. Eight of my cousins, all my aunts and uncles, my mom and I went to my grandpa's house in a village named, Avocat, for the ceremony. My grandpa has a large home, but since



there were so many people staying at the house, we slept on mats on the floor.

My grandma's ceremony was a Hindu *puja* to help us remember her soul. My grandpa first made an altar for the ceremony. It had a small banana tree and garlands of tropical flowers on

a mud base. The *pundit* (a Hindu priest) lit fires in tiny clay bowls called *deyas*. He also lit sandalwood incense sticks and put *tikkas* (round, white finger markings) on everybody's foreheads. He chanted mantras and made food offerings to the sacred fire on the altar.

My Uncle Danny sat at the altar with the pundit and made offerings of milk, rice and *ghee* (clarified butter) to the sacred fire. The pundit and my uncle were wearing white *kurtas* and *dhotis*. The pundit kept saying, "Swami Kee Jai," (Long live...) and the guests all repeated this after him. The pundit's assistant beat a gong during the three hour ceremony to evoke the presence of the gods.

After the pundit finished the *puja*, we all ate with our fingers from special *soharee* leaves, which were about a foot wide and two feet long. There was *roti* (a flat bread), curried mango, rice, pumpkin, eggplant and a hot coconut salad. I ate tons of *roti*!

Two days later, the pundit performed two other prayers called *Shiva Puja* for Shiva (the Hindu god

of destruction and creation) and *Ganesha Puja* for Ganesha (the Hindu god of good luck). Elephant-headed Ganesha is the remover of obstacles.

Grandma's memorial ceremony brought all my cousins and I together for the first time. One day there was a huge rainstorm. We stood outside under a gutter pipe and our clothes got soaked. The water was as warm as a hot towel, and it felt good.

Keisha, who is nine years old like me, liked to climb a mango tree with me in my grandpa's backyard. There are beautiful tropical flowers in the yard such as hibiscus, ixora and bougainvillea. There are also lots of fruit trees such as papayas, oranges, mangos and bananas. We picked fruit from these trees to eat with our meals.



My grandpa has a hammock under the house where it is cool. He relaxed in his hammock after working everyday in the yard. At night, he relaxed in his rocking chair upstairs. I think he was very sad because he missed my grandma. My grandpa and grandma were married when he was sixteen and she was fourteen years old.

—Rajiv Smith-Mahabir, 9, Berkeley, California

## Losing Someone You Love

Losing someone you love,  
can never be forgotten.  
When my grandma left the world  
I felt pain in my soul.  
But I have to remember  
the moments we were together  
So my dad told me  
we all have to come to an end.  
I will always remember  
that we all have to keep going  
and that life is a gift.

—Manrique Chacón, 12, San José, COSTA

# Willa Woke Up Wondering

Willa woke up wondering, where is Nana now? She could hear Mama crying through the bedroom wall, and Daddy shuffling down the darkened hall to get more tissues. The funeral had been today.

Willa knew that Nana was dead. She knew she'd never see her smile or feel her hugs or taste her apple cobbler again. Or laugh with her about their "ghostly joke" or sing their favorite songs. But everyone said a part of her would never die, the part they called the spirit of the soul.

Willa tiptoed to the sink to get a drink of water. "Can't sleep either, Granddaughter?" Grandad leaned against the door.

Willa wiped her mouth and asked him, "Where is Nana now?"

Grandad took Willa to the window. "See those stars shining? Well, that's where your Nana is. Twinkling bright up there, so you'll never forget her."

When Grandad tucked her in, Willa switched her pillow to the foot of her bed. She watched the stars, thinking about lights that never go out.

When the sun woke her, Willa got dressed and went into the kitchen. Daddy was at the table, eyes closed, hands folded.

There were no stars out now, and Willa worried. "Where is Nana now?"

Daddy looked up.

"Nana's in heaven with God where no one is ever sick or in pain again. And someday we'll all be together forever there, too."

Willa ate her cereal and thought about God and forever places.

When Willa got to school, Ms. Webster told her how sorry she was. Willa's class talked about people they loved. Many of them knew someone who had died—Nathan's grandpa, Tyrone's cousin, Zoe's aunt, Nigel's next-door neighbor.

Kaushik raised his hand. "That's why my family never kills any living thing, even an insect," he explained. "It might be a person that has come back as something else."

Sook Moon said, "We believe that our ancestors' spirits are everywhere, all around us. When I feel the wind blow, I think that maybe my great-grandma's spirit has come all the way across the ocean to visit me."



Willa sighed when a gentle breeze ruffled her hair. She watched with awe as a yellow butterfly winged its way through the alley. And suddenly every dog and cat, squirrel and bug looked different to her somehow.

Later when Uncle Jess and Aunt Doreen came over, Willa and her family looked at pictures of Nana in the photo albums.

Uncle Jess was an anthropologist. He told Willa about the beliefs of peoples around the world, "Some Aborigine people believe that your spirit goes back to a *dreaming place*, like a rock or a tree or a bubbling stream. And spirits in dreaming places can always watch over their surroundings and their loved ones."

"Just think of spending eternity in the oak that overlooks our home," added Aunt Doreen.

Mama brought in a tray of cheese cake. She set it down and pointed to her heart. "Nana will always live on right here," she said. "And in the faces of all who are related to her and love her."

As Willa stood on the porch to say good-bye to Uncle Jess and Aunt Doreen, she noticed that Nana's garden was beginning to bloom. Fireflies blinked among the sweet-scented roses. Stars twinkled with heaven's light, and Willa's heart pounded extra hard when an owl hoo-hoo-hooted high in Nana's favorite silver maple.

Soon after Mama tucked Willa in, she crept out of bed to look in the mirror. She smiled hard to

deepen the dimple in her cheek that everybody said she got from Nana.

Willa stared at her face for a long time and smiled. "I know where you are now, Nana," she whispered.

—Virginia Kroll lives in Hamburg, New York. She is the author of many children's books, including, *Sweet Magnolia*. Photo: Virginia with her granddaughter, Olivia (6).



Grammy

-Art by Olivia

## Life and Death Changes

We know that death is untimely, and when it happens we wonder why has it happened to us, and hence who then should it happen to?

In 1993, I lost my grandmother. I couldn't believe it. I kept thinking that I was going to hear somebody saying it's not true.

Losing someone you know, someone you love, is so painful. You start thinking about death. What is it anyway? So many things would come into my head. I was so afraid of everything, even life itself. I asked myself what's the reason for living then?

Some elders of our family noticed I was going through a terrible time so they talked with me, making me think of other things, not death. That's the way life is. We grieve when we lose someone, but it will all come to pass.

Our culture—the Shana and Zezuru tribes—have a way of doing certain things when a person dies. It doesn't matter if the person died in an accident or from an illness. The tribe still wants to know why that person has died. So after the burial they go to the spirit medium of the tribe and ask, "What has eaten

our child?" And, the spirit medium tells them.

After this, the possessions of the person who has died are given to the relatives. If it is a man who has died, his clothes and whatever he had are distributed. If it's a woman, our culture does not allow the children of the deceased to have her clothes because it is said that the children will then have an ill omen.

After about a year, there is an appeasing of the Spirits (*Kurova guva in shona*). This is whereby the elders brew beer. This beer is only brewed by grandmothers who can no longer give birth.

Then the tribe celebrates. They actually go to the grave of the deceased person in a single file. This is called making the spirit enter the homestead.

If it was a married man who died, leaving a wife behind, she chooses a man who will take her husband's place. In other words, someone will inherit her. This is done by putting some water in a dish and then handing the dish to the man she is willing to stay with. When all this has been done, the tribe knows that the person has been properly buried.

—*Fortunate Muchuwah, 16, Harare, ZIMBABWE*

---

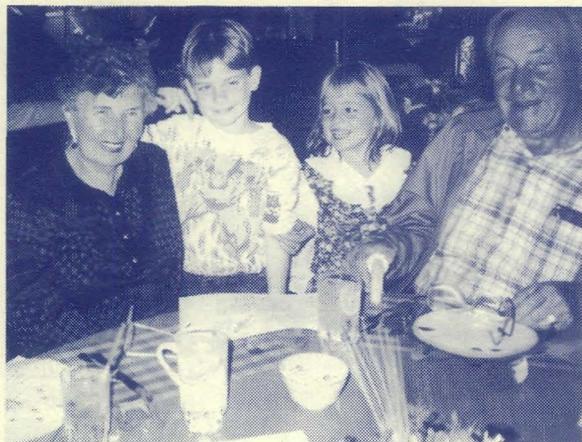
*This is part of a eulogy written by Eric Siegel (11) and his sister, Emily (8), from Encino, California, to honor their grandfather. It was read by the Rabbi at the funeral:*

My grandpa helped me start my baseball card collection. He was the only one that really understood the value of baseball card collecting. He could always make a situation funny no matter how serious it was. He loved me and my sister very much. I pray that he is in a good place. I will always love him a lot. He was not only my grandpa, but a very special friend.

—*Eric*

I only had eight years to be with my grandpa, but I loved him all my life...In his last days of life, I helped take care of him... I will never forget all the good stuff about him.

—*Emily*



*Photo: Nana and Poppy having Thanksgiving dinner with Eric and Emily in 1993.*

## Directions

Reaching my hands up.

Can I touch Heaven?

If I lean over,

I can touch the Earth.

So can I?

I'll try.

But first,

I fold my hands gently

in my lap,

and close my eyes.

Why? I can reach

with my heart

and my voice.

I imagine that my arms

are flapping like

wings.

I am rising, quickly

through the air,

at such a speed,

that I soon leave

the galaxy.

At the edge of the universe is Heaven.

My fingers caress the gates and feel them swing open.

The angels around me, singing, praising God.

I join with them, putting my whole self into it.

Beautiful music, like no other floats to my ears.

I open my eyes and find myself kneeling on the floor in my room.

—*Celia M. Wilson, 15, Newcastle, Washington*

# *There's Never a Right Time to Say Good-bye*

I still haven't decided whether I've gained more than I've lost from the situation. From one point of view, those beautiful days with my dog, Thumper, were the best days of my life. At the same time, however, her death crushed me.

Thumper was more than a perfect pet, she was a large part of my family. Being the runt of her litter, she was the most well-tempered dog.

From the moment my parents saw this cute, Newfoundland Labrador puppy, they were in love. Her pitiful whines of loneliness got her cardboard bed moved from the kitchen to the bedroom on the first night. With my father's comforting hand inside the box all night, the content puppy thump, thump, thumped her tail all night long. That's how she got her name.

By the time I was born, Thumper had grown quite a bit larger, but she was still gentle and very loyal, unlike our cat, Spot. Spot had a mean disposition and seemed to hate everyone. Even Thumper, being over ten times the size of Spot, put up with constant ambushes by this cat. Spot would bat Thumper's long, soft nose between her paws, bully, scare, and confuse her constantly.

When I first began walking, I would use her long hair to pull myself up whenever I fell down. And she was the best patient a three-year-old doctor with a plastic stethoscope ever had. As I grew older, Thumper took up a full time job as my sister. And just like a sister, she'd listen to anything and everything I had to say. I could tell she actually cared about my problems.

I suppose you could call it shock that hit me when the reality of Thumper's health hit me. I'd never known life without this wonderful dog. I'd never been faced with the death of a loved one and had no idea of the harshness headed in my direction. From the day I turned ten, the issue of death constantly surged in my brain. It terrified me to think of life without living. I couldn't make any sense of this unstoppable destiny



everyone is faced with. I hadn't begun to extract the important lessons of faith from church, so I was perplexed. I only wished I could comfort Thumper and explain death. I'd never before felt so helpless. My parents informed me that Thumper would have to go soon, but I was new to the situation and tried my best to play cool. I knew we had to be unselfish, and put

her to sleep, but it was tearing my heart out.

The night before my Dad took her to the vet, I slept downstairs on the couch, right next to her. I tried my hardest not to appear sad and rested my hand on her all night. It seemed the only thing I could do. I soaked up every last embrace.

And now I know I wouldn't give up my relationship with Thumper for anything, not even the pain of her death, because that pain won't always be there. I'd like to believe that she is in heaven now, dancing in fluffly clouds, chasing butterflies... I know a tiny child from my past is there playing with her. That's how I can keep her alive.

—Amanda Spitzer, 13, Newington, Connecticut

## **The Unloved**

What would the unloved do  
Only they know  
Once a caress was so dear  
Now it is unknown  
Unhappy and unloved,  
Its eyes reproach us  
So thin I could see its ribs  
A ragged tail thumped the ground for any little  
Service I did it  
Brown and white, a swirl of colors  
I felt in my heart that moment,  
That it was not unloved anymore

—Amy Chuong, 9, Arlington, Texas

# Without a Goodbye

My friend, Katya, lived beyond where the eye could see, past the hard, crunchy snow of the Ukrainian farmlands, into the never-ending land of sky and white cold. It was 10:00 p.m., mid-march, 1916. The night was brutal, frigid, limb-aching. In January, Cossack invasions of our tiny village had scared all of us; Jew and non-Jew alike. But I was sixteen and yearned to visit my friend. My down jacket begged, "Take me and run!" Only one mile to Katya's house, but in five degree weather, could I complete my journey and not freeze to death?



The full moon flamboyantly lit the white plains. In my woolen hat and mittens, I strode out into the land of no horizons. I walked briskly until my side began to ache. The sharp air hit my lungs like an axe on dry wood, biting deeper into my soul. "Foolish Lena," I thought. pre-dawn farm chores had driven my sister, brother and parents to an early slumber, but I worried that Mama might awaken and find me missing. I ran faster.

As I rounded the crescent slice of snow, I knew Katya's house was near. The golden light from her kitchen window appeared. I bounded toward the front steps of the porch and thumped my way to the front door. Someone was coming!

"What are you doing here, Lena?" Katya questioned anxiously. "Is someone sick? You're all wet and cold. Come in. I have some soup on the stove."

"No," I said. "I want you to come home with me."

"What?" Katya asked in amazement.

"I want you to walk me home," I repeated.

Katya looked at me as if I had three ears. "Lena, it's late and bitter cold," she whispered. "Please tell me why you really came."

I said nothing.

"So I could walk you home?" Katya said with growing astonishment.

"Yes! Yes!" I could barely contain myself.

The wind blew gusts of icy air past the open door. Katya shivered. "How will I get back?" she asked.

"I'll walk you home," I said. A corner of my mouth began to smile. "C'mon. Please?"

Katya nodded a yes. I was exhilarated. Closing the door softly behind her, Katya took my hand, and we glided across the porch slats smooth with snow. As we ran we saw the high moon, the opalescent snow; we felt the hard crunches of our boots, not noticing the cold around us. We had no real objective, except to walk each other home all night.

Finally, at 2:00 a.m. Katya and I crumpled onto my kitchen floor, stiff and stupidly happy. We talked and laughed until dawn. When my mother discovered us, she quickly changed our clothes, nourished us with tea and almond bread and waited until later to question our behaviour. We slid into bed beside one another, silently savoring our secret adventure. That morning my father had to take out the horse and cart and ride to Katya's house to explain her whereabouts and to assure her parents that she was alright. Two days later, thawed and recovered, Katya reluctantly left. As our fathers talked a few feet from us, we hugged and looked forward to seeing each other at school.

Katya and I had been friends since eighth grade. We had met while skating on the frozen pond near our school. We had collided, each falling backward, thumping onto the impenetrable ice. We gathered ourselves together and skated back to the bench. I took out a book from my schoolbag.

"How can you sit and read in the cold air? Don't you freeze?" asked Katya.

"No. I don't even notice the temperature. Anna Karenina never noticed the temperature because she was in love. Nothing stopped her love. Nothing stops me from reading."

"You are a silly school girl. Are you waiting for your Vronsky? By the pond?"

How could she make fun of me? Of Tolstoy? Of Madame Karenina? She was insensitive and crass. I vowed not to speak to her again.

"Let me see your book." She grabbed Tolstoy from

my mittened hands and raced onto the pond. Swirling in her gray and pink checked cape, she flipped pages and read aloud dramatically, taking different character's parts. She was a twirling orator. I become enchanted. I had never met such a joyful person.

I began to bring Katya home. She began to notice my brother, Peter. She would suck in her breath quickly when she saw him. I never thought of my brother as handsome or of being much of anything, except my brother. Brooding. Milking the cows. Reading mathematics books. We barely spoke.

But Katya would make him smile. "Peter, why are you so gloomy?" she would say. Then she'd run up and tickle him. I never knew he had so many teeth until Katya made him smile.

On some Friday nights my parents would invite Katya to stay with us for Shabbos dinner. She would become quiet as we set the table with lace, candles and Kiddush cups for the Sabbath. Katya was amazed that we put aside our chores at sunset. She loved the custom of welcoming the Sabbath Bride as a Queen of Peace and hummed with us as we sang our songs to greet the Sabbath, swaying to the hypnotic rhythms of Eastern melodies.

One cold Shabbos afternoon, as Katya was rekindling the flames on the hearth, we heard a dreaded noise outside. One week ago it was German soldiers who had stomped through our streets. Now it was Cossacks who drew closer to our house. My mother hurried Katya and me, Masha and Peter into the cellar. A Cossack, a boy about my age, marched up the porch steps, grabbed my father and beat him with the blunt end of a large gun. I watched through the cellar window with eyes that could not bear to see.

Katya was staring at my father. Her arms were wrapped around her shivering body. Her face stone cold, disbelieving. "Why, Lena. Why?" She turned to me and shook me by the shoulders.

"We are Jews, Katya. You would never be treated like this. But we are outcasts. Many people hate us. Russians and Germans. Why? I cannot answer you."



I paused. "Not all Russians think and act like those Cossacks, but my parents are trying to get visas to leave the country. It is very bad for Jews in Russia. We must leave before they kill our family."

"You can't leave me," she whispered fiercely. "You can stay with me and my family. We can take care of you until the danger is past. Oh, Lena, I'll die if you leave."

She folded herself in half, slumped sideways and sobbed into my skirt. I felt numb. I could not believe that this was happening.

The soldier had apparently grown tired and cold and finally rode away. Mama came running with ice and some schnappes, and we all helped carry my father upstairs. Exhausted from the struggle, all he whispered before he faded off to sleep was, "I'm alright, mein kindt...we will gather our strength and leave. Soon, Mama. Very soon."

One week later Cossack soldiers marched through a nearby town, rounded up the Jews and killed them in fields of snow. Gone. In a flash. Soon after, on a clear winter night, we quickly left our home. My Mama wrapped our silver Shabbos

candlesticks in thick cloth, and Papa took his prayer book. Mama picked up Masha and hid her under the straw of our horse-drawn cart. Peter and I hid under heavy blankets. My father steered the cart across many borders, showing fake passports and eventually arriving in Holland to board a steamer bound for America.

Novemeber 17, 1916

New York City

Dear Katya,

*It has been six months since I have been here and I have not heard from you. What must you be thinking? We had to travel across Europe at night for weeks, staying in the homes of relatives and strangers.*

*I miss you everyday. I hope you are not angry with me for leaving without a goodbye. Goodbye. The word sticks in my throat.*

*I play with the idea that you will come to visit us. My Papa says that you are not receiving my letters and that is why I have not heard from you. I don't understand what harm a letter can do. But if you are not free to write to me, what will I do?" I am so angry*

*and helpless, thinking that my words may never reach you. Are you there?*

*Life in America is not easy. My mother works as a seamstress in a store above a restaurant. My father sells fruits and vegetables on the street. We live in little places crowded on top of one another. I long to see the big sky. Sometimes you can barely see the moon. There are no cows. And much noise.*

*I go to school at night to finish high school. During the day, I help Mama sew.*

*Peter still mopes. He talks about becoming a writer like Tolstoy. He wants to go to the university, but we do not have the money.*

*No one wants to speak of our life in Russia. I so much want to see you so we can talk. You must be finished with high school now. I long to hear from you. I hope someday I will.*

*Love, Lena*

I sealed and addressed the letter. I put on my down jacket and went out into the pale November day to mail it. The damp air felt refreshing. I walked for a long time, through unfamiliar streets, quickly crossing trolley tracks, leaping over steamy street grates. I stopped briefly to look into a bakery window. Two young girls were buying bread for their families. I smiled at them and held up a mittened hand to wipe the frosted window pane.

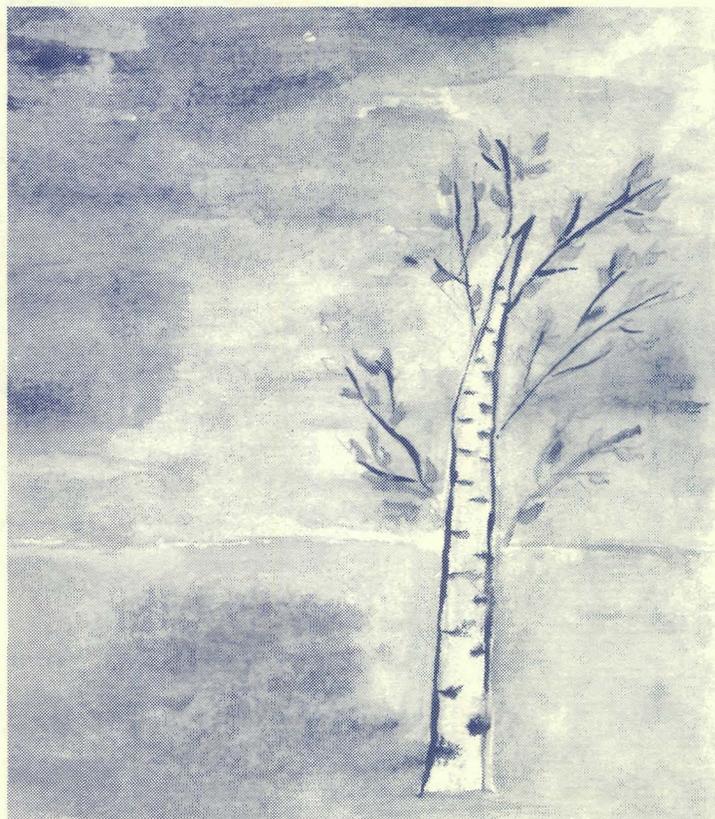
I see Katya in the schoolyard, standing on her hands, upside down on the silvered ground.

“Sing with me, Lena! ‘I am a little birch tree...’ I smile as she suddenly turns and runs to me. “Look Lena, a birch twig. Feel how smooth.” I place it in my jacket, take her hand, and skip back to class.

Smiling at the memory, I slid my fingers into my jacket pocket; there was the birch twig. I held it close, feeling what Katya gave to me: a sense of trust and the memory of cartwheels on the frozen land of our faraway home.

© Joyce Norris Chartor, Natick, Massachusetts. She writes, “My parents are from Russia, and my mother told me many stories about her life there... I am a first generation American Jew.”

Art on pages 28–29 by Form 2 students in Moscow, RUSSIA.



*Birch Tree* —Katia Tvanovskaja, 14, Visaginas, Lithuania



## **The Prey**

With the balance of an eagle in flight  
and  
The swiftness of a fox at night  
You glide and slide on the ice  
With blades as claws to grip with  
and  
Coats as feathers to soar with  
and  
The ice is like the prey  
That you fly above.

—Rachel Kenney, 13, Kensington, Maryland

**Grand Mothers** ed. by Nikki Giovanni (*Henry Holt and Co., New York, NY*). A collection of short stories, poems, reminiscences about grandmothers from many different cultural traditions. Gwendolyn Brooks, Susan Power and Maxine Hong Kingston are just a few of the outstanding authors whose work enriches this book. A little bit of magic for everyone—humor, sorrow, unforgettable personalities... Ages 12 and up.

**Grandfather's Story** by Brenda Lena Fazio (*Sasquatch Books, 1008 Western Ave., Seattle, WA 98104*). Gorgeous illustrations accompany this story about a grand-father rediscovering a purpose to his life through the passing on of traditions and wisdom to his grandson. Ages 6-10.

**My Grandpa Has No Garbage** by Ann H. Sutherland, illustr. by Kathryn Graham-Wilson (*Vision Books Int., 3360 Coffey Lane, Santa Rosa, CA 95403*). A wonderful, environmentally conscious story starring grandpa as the hero who never has any garbage because he recycles, composts and finds creative uses for materials so that he doesn't waste resources.

Also, fun recycling recipes—constructive uses for your garbage. Ages 6 and up.

**Celebrations Around the World** by Carole S. Angell and **Create a Celebration** by Ellen M. Pals (*Fulcrum Pub., 350 Indiana St., #350, Golden, CO 80401*).

*Celebrations Around the World* is a 218 page multicultural handbook, listing festivals and holidays from various countries, along with their background and activities. Included are: Green Corn Ceremony (Creek Indians), Kadooment Day (Barbados), Moon Festival (Hong Kong), Saint Barbara's Day (Poland), etc. And, *Create a Celebration* helps you create your own theme parties, holidays and special occasions.

**More Random Acts of Kindness** by Editors of Conari Press (*Conari Press, 1144 65th St. Ste. B, Emeryville, CA 94608*). The sequel to *Random Acts of Kindness*, this book is a compilation of more true stories and acts of kindness that provide hope and inspiration in our world—"simple acts that often left profound change in their wake." All ages.

**The Long Silk Strand** by Laura Williams; Illustrated by Grayce Bochak (*Boyd's Mill Press*). Set in ancient Japan, this is the story of a special love between a grandmother and her granddaughter. Every night Grandmother ties a piece of silk thread, representing a story from her life, to a growing ball of threads. When Grandmother dies, the girl discovers the unraveled ball and climbs the strand to the sky. Ages 6 and up.

**Living with a Brother or Sister with Special Needs:**

**A Book for Sibs** by Donald Meyer and Patricia Vadasy (*University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA*).

An excellent resource, for families with special needs children, especially valuable in helping children work through hard questions that arise from living with a sibling that has a disability. The 140 page book is written for young readers to help them understand various disabilities and explore ways to make life easier and more fulfilling for the whole family. Ages 10 and up.



**Bubbe & Gram: My Two Grandmothers** by Joan Hawxhurst, illustr. by Jane K. Bynum (*Dovetail Pub., P.O. Box 19945, Kalamzoo, MI 49019*). A supportive story for children in interfaith families. A young girl tells how she learns and celebrates the traditions and holidays of Judaism and Christianity with her two grandmothers, Bubbe and Gram. For young readers.

**The Memory Box** by Mary Bahr, illustr. by David Cunningham (*Albert Whitman and Co., 6340 Oakton St., Morton Grove, IL 60053*). Zach and his grandparents create a Memory Box to save special memories. They revisit it often as a way to help them cope with Grandpa's Alzheimer's. A loving, hopeful story. Ages 8 and up. *Other books by Albert Whitman & Co. on life and death related issues include: The Spirit of Tío Fernando/El espíritu de tío Fernando*, by Janice Levy, a bilingual story about the Day of the Dead, *Savitri: A Tale of Ancient India*, by Aaron Shepard and Vera Rosenberry. A richly illustrated classic tale of courage, love, wit and will. Ages 8-15.

**Noble Work: The Right Livelihood Awards** honor people and organizations that are working for a positive change in our world. The 1996 winners:

- **Kerala Sastra Sahithya Parishat** of Kerala, India, for its work with people-based, sustainable development education, including programs in energy conservation, health and social justice.

- **The Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia** for their work for human rights reform in the Russian military services, and for their brave opposition to the recent tragic war in Chechnya.

- Ecological economist, **Dr. Herman Daly** of the USA, for his dedication in formulating an economic approach that integrates key elements of ethics, quality of life, environment and community. *And,*

- **George Vithoulkas** of Greece, for his unique contributions to human health and welfare through his practice and teaching of homeopathy as a science.

**December First** is observed as the annual **World AIDS Day** to increase our awareness of people with AIDS. There are over 22 million people with the HIV infection which might result in full-blown cases of AIDS. Each year over 3 million people get the HIV infection. Currently, some 1.5 million people die each year due to AIDS related illnesses. Over 90% of the AIDS toll occurs in developing countries in Africa, Asia ... Also see page 21 for AIDS Awareness.

Advancements are being made in computer software to make it more accessible to **people with disabilities**. Voice commands for the blind, or unicorn style ultrasonic pointers for people who are unable to use their hands, are readily available in developed countries. While many public programs and broadcasts have close captions or visual interpretation for the benefit of hearing-impaired audience. But theatre for the blind is still a place. Unfortunately, people with disabilities still face many obstacles and discrimination in most countries. Even in countries like Japan, many public spaces and transport systems are still inconsiderate of the needs of physically-challenged people. We have a long way to go to make our streets, buildings, world, user-friendly for all.



**Conservation is Making Money:** "A penny saved is a penny earned" goes an old saying. And these days many 'Energy Service' companies are making handsome profits by saving energy and thus energy costs for factories and companies. For example, one such company, Honeywell, consults and manages an energy conservation program for a glass manufacturing company, saving them over a million dollars each year in energy costs. Computer controlled processes and lighting increases not only the energy efficiency, but also the quality of the product and the productivity of the workers. (Author and researcher, Dr. Amory Lovins, of the Rocky Mountains Research Institute, who has professed energy conservation for almost two decades now, maintains that energy conservation is not only good for the environment, but also makes perfect economic sense). A number of electric utility companies offer financial incentives such as rebates, no-interest loans, free energy audits, etc. to homeowners that implement energy-saving appliances such as solar hot water heaters or improvements such as insulation or better windows, to cut down their energy use.

**Out of Sight, Out of Mind?** A number of cities in the U.S. have begun implementing laws that prohibit "camping" in the city. Atlanta, San Francisco, Eugene, San Antonio... the list goes on. There are several million homeless people in the U.S. In Atlanta alone, there are between 15 and 20 thousand people on the streets each night, whereas there are only 2700 beds in shelters for the homeless.

As many as two million **Rwandan refugees** in central Africa continue to struggle for their basic needs and are still trying to find a safe place to live. Over a million refugees are returning to their hometowns in Rwanda. They fled two years ago in an attempt to escape the terrible violence between the Hutus and Tutsis.

**National TV Turnoff Week** is set for April 24-30: During the last week of April 1997, millions of Americans will join together to keep their TV sets off for seven days. Over 25 national organizations, including the President's Council for Physical Fitness and Sports, have endorsed this national event sponsored by **TV-Free America**. If you need help organizing a TV-Free Week in your school, library or community, contact them at 1611 Conn. Ave. NW, #3A, Washington, DC 20009 or call (202) 887-0436.

# PEN PALS

## USA

**Nikki Khosla**, girl, 15  
30 F Chicopee Dr.  
Princeton, NJ 08540-1734 USA  
Int: sports, music, friends

**Brandon Norman**, boy, 10  
100 Judland Heights  
Charlestown, NH 03603 USA  
Int: sports, theater, music, drums

**Christine Sevilla**, girl, 10  
c/o Violetta Alonzo  
20 Parma Dr.  
Bethpage, NY 11714 USA  
Int: rollerblading, reading, soccer

**Diana Care**, girl, 11  
10370 Menhart Lane  
Cupertino, CA 95014 USA  
Int: sports, music, horsebackriding  
Write in English or Spanish.

**Sarah Resnick**, girl, 9  
901 N. Negley Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206 USA  
Int: writing, cooking, chess

**Kristina Dhillon**, girl, 10  
1361 Alderbrook Lane  
San Jose, CA 95129 USA  
Int: piano, drawing, reading

**Samantha Fromstein**, 11  
13129 Old West Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92129 USA

**Millicent A. Olawale**, boy, 9  
and **Jamize R. Olawale**, boy, 8,  
Int: sports, reading, travel. Want  
pen pals from Africa, Europe and  
Asia. Write to them both at:  
2556-23rd Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94116 USA

**A Kindergarten class** wants to be  
pen pals with a class in South  
Africa. Please write to:

*Seaview Elementary School*  
*Jeanie Hedeem's Class*  
2000 Southwood Dr.  
San Pablo, CA 94806 USA

## GERMANY

**Kristin Schack**, girl, 13  
Eichenstrasse 20  
07549 Gela, GERMANY  
Int: cinema, sports, music.  
Write to her in English or German

**Michele Scheinert**, girl, 15  
Schürenkampstr. 39  
45964 Gladbeck, GERMANY  
Int: reading, letters, slow music

## SWITZERLAND

**Melanie Knüsel**, girl, 15  
Landskronstrasse 12  
4118 Rodersdorf SWITZERLAND  
Int: judo, music, fun, penpals

## SWEDEN

**Caroline Andersson**, girl, 14  
Bergklintvägen 18  
19460 Upplands, Väsby,  
SWEDEN  
Int: swimming, reading, music

**Linda Fransson**, girl, 13  
Hövdadvägen 43  
240 14 Veberöd, SWEDEN  
Int: read, write letters, music

**Bruno Ng**, boy, 12  
Luzernvägen 12  
227 38 Lund, SWEDEN  
Int: guitar, skating, discos, pool

**Rasmus Ragnarsson**, 13  
Falkstreet 7  
57333, Tranås, SWEDEN  
Int: penpals in US, hockey, golf

**Hanna Lindblad**, girl, 16  
Bruksvägen 4  
S-690 45 Åsbro,  
SWEDEN  
Int: aerobics, music,  
movies, penpals

**Annelie Abramsson**, girl, 12  
Vattjom 2187  
864 91 Matfors  
SWEDEN  
Int: soccer, music,  
penfriends

**Anders Brunnström**, 14  
Handslagarev. 11  
240 14 Veberöd, SWEDEN  
Int: dancing, music, friends

**Maria Gustafsson**, girl, 17  
Landshödingev. 34  
S-26252 Ängelholm, SWEDEN  
Int: animals, letters, music

**Christel Homegaard**, girl, 15  
V. Strömgatan 6  
287 22 Strömsnäsbruk, SWEDEN  
Int: read, music, penpals

**Anna Dahl**, girl, 16  
Ekgatan 43 A  
213 63 Malmö, SWEDEN  
Int: music, dancing, writing, fun

**Mia Lovén**, girl, 14  
Backavägen 16  
S-246 31 Löddeköpinge  
SWEDEN  
Int: friends, piano, letters, dogs

**Isabella Frost Szabo**, girl, 12  
Herrgårdsstigen 21.  
181 62 Lidingö, SWEDEN  
Int: sports, parties, fun

**Frida Brhun**, girl, 13  
Saltsjöbadsv. 11  
23432 Lomma, SWEDEN

## FINLAND

**Eva Vihström**, girl, 15  
Nämndemansv. 2D16  
21600 Pargas, FINLAND  
Int: dancing, friends, volleyball

## GHANA

**Kwaku Ofori Appiah**, boy, 9  
(int: everlasting friendship, flying)  
and **Adomako Boateng**, boy, 10  
(int: football, writing, reading):  
*Ridge Experimental School*  
P.O. Box 128  
*Sunyani B/A, GHANA W/A*

**Charles A. Sapong**, boy, 15  
Adventist Jr. Sec. School  
P.O. Box 2  
Techiman B/A, GHANA W/A  
Int: writing letters to pen pals

**Charles F. Dzikumu**, boy, 15  
St. James Secondary School  
P.O. Box 954  
Sunyani B/A, GHANA W/A  
Int: poetry, music, reading

**Asiedu Ernest**, boy, 17 (Int:  
music tennis, reading) and  
**Myame Stephen**, boy, 16 (Int:  
sports, bible study, letters) Write:  
*Almighty Secondary School*  
P.O. Box 1356  
*Sunyani B/A, GHANA W/A*

## ZIMBABWE

**Nathaniel Chogurwei**, boy, 15  
(int: soccer, video games) and  
**Micky Hombasha**, boy, 14 (int:  
tennis, video games) Write:  
3704 42nd St., Highfield  
Harare, ZIMBABWE

**Shadreck Jonasi**, boy, 17  
No. 4 Ruwanga Rd.  
Mandara, Harare, ZIMBABWE  
Int: swimming, volleyball, soccer

**Chrispen Rusinehama**, boy, 16  
21 Hopestone Rd.  
Highlands, Harare, ZIMBABWE  
Int: soccer, movies, travel

**Raviro Musendekwa**, girl, 13  
(int: dance, music, hockey)  
and **Tendai Musendekwa**,  
girl, 17 (int singing, swim-  
ming):  
Kadoma Training Institute  
P.O. Box 420  
Kadoma, ZIMBABWE

**Leopold Muchenga**, boy, 15  
3813 Old Highfield P. O.  
Harare, ZIMBABWE

## SOUTH AFRICA

**Johannes Masombuka**, 17  
P.O. Box 656  
Hammanskraal, 0400 S. AFRICA

## MALAWI

**George Mhango**, boy, 17  
P.O. Box 340  
Mzuzu City, MALAWI AFRICA  
Int: singing, gospel music

## NAMIBIA

**Lee Letta Kakwenah**, girl, 15  
P.O. Box 7786  
Windhoek, Katutura  
NAMIBIA 9000 AFRICA  
Int: singing, drawing, high jump,  
jokes, dancing, family

## SRI LANKA

**Friendship Sri Lanka** wants  
pen pals. Gavinda Gunawardane  
1049 Pannipitiya Rd,  
Battaramulla, Colombo, S.L.

## C.I.S. COUNTRIES

4761 Visaginas, LITHUANIA  
68 Energetiku Street, Flat 18  
**Veronika Pugachova**, girl, 15  
Int: music, outdoors, English

47-61 Visaginas, LITHUANIA  
20 Vilties St., Flat 28  
**Juza Ozlov**, girl, 17  
Int: music, dance, bodybuilding

2017 Vilnius, LITHUANIA  
Taikos 227-12  
**Agne Dubonyte**, girl, 15  
Int: fashion, letters, travel

4761 Visaginas, LITHUANIA  
H. Visagino 16-43  
**Natasha Rudskaja**, girl, 15  
Int: music, dancing, sports

4761 Visaginas, LITHUANIA  
Visagino 10-12  
**Yaroslav Petrovski**, boy, 13  
Int: computers, music, English

4761 Visaginas, LITHUANIA  
20 Vilties St., Flat 16  
**Alex Shurik**, boy, 17  
Int: bodybuilding, music, friends

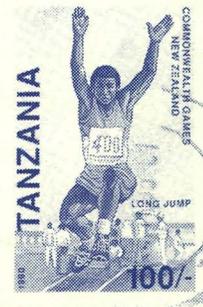
277075 Kishinev, MOLDOVA  
Ul. Energetikov, 15/2, kv. 26

**Misha Bogush**  
girl, 14  
Int: English,  
letters, soccer

220136 Minsk  
BELARUS  
62/255

Lobanok St.  
**Olga Chelei**,  
girl, 14 Int: pen  
pals, music,  
sports

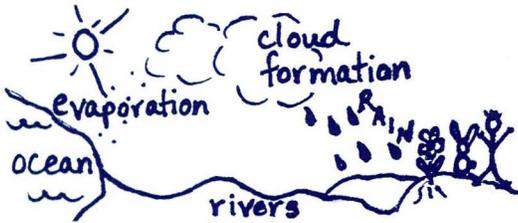
163051 Arkhangelsk, RUSSIA  
ul. Timme, d. 6/3, kv. 33  
**Veronika Ugryumova**, girl, 17  
Int: karate, languages, meditation





**I. Life Comes in Cyclical Patterns**

Every living thing has a lifespan—a life cycle. Each phase of the cycle fulfills a necessary role. Trace the cycle of water as a class, making a chart to show the phases of the cycle.



Use this as an introduction to talking about the life cycles of plants, animals...humans. Have you thought about the different stages of life and the purposes of each stage?

Draw the life cycle of a person:

- Is it circular or linear? why?
- What are some of the stages?
- What happens in each stage?
- What are some of the feelings and actions associated with each stage?
- What is the purpose of each stage in the life cycle of a person?
- What must one do in each of the stages to be ready for the challenge of the next?

**II. Clearing The Air**

Read *Wiedergeboren (Born Again)*, the bilingual writing on p. 19. Then hold a discussion on resolving feelings instead of sitting on them. Sometimes grief over a person's death is made especially hard because one wishes for another chance to talk to the person who has passed away, to clear the air. This experience may prod you to clear feelings with people as they arise rather than ignore them.

Think of someone you know from whom you are alienated. You may have feelings such as anger, hurt or guilt in your relationship with this person. It may be helpful to discuss these feelings with someone you trust.

Sometimes it's difficult to know how to approach a person when there are hard feelings. *A suggestion:* In the classroom, home or in another group, take turns doing the following: Describe the situation. Then sit back and listen while others take turns offering their suggestions on how to go about resolving the bad feelings. Their suggestions may help you decide what plan could work for you. Most often, you will be surprised to find that the other person is grateful that you took the first step to resolve hard feelings.

**III. The Memory Box**

Create a special box or container to store memories of a special person in your life—such as a grandparent—someone you may not get to see every day. What you decide to place in the box could be anything that helps you remember something significant about the person and your relationship with him/her: a written account of a special day, a photo, a song, a leaf you picked up on a special walk, childhood memories, crafts you made together, an emotion... Tell this special person about the memory box, and perhaps they might contribute things to it as well. On a special day each year, look at the items in the memory box together.

**IV. Create a Commemoration Celebration**

Has someone close to you or one of your classmates passed away? In the tradition of Day of the Dead celebrated in Mexico, observe a special day to celebrate their Life. Ideas for such a celebration might include:

- **An Altar:** Invite students and/or family members to contribute a special object (photograph, writing, something that the person loved, a type of food they enjoyed, a gift received from or shared with the person, etc.) for the altar. Each person can share why he/she chose a particular item.
- **A Sharing Circle:** Sing songs, read stories, play games—the favorites of person who has passed away. Recount special experiences or funny stories about the person with other family members / students / friends who have gathered.
- **A Trip:** Perhaps the setting is very important to this special day of celebration. Honoring the memory of someone's life might involve travelling to a place of importance to the person: a special tree to picnic under, a hike up a significant mountain, the ocean...

**Resources For Parents and Teachers:**

**Death and the Classroom: A Teachers Guide to Assist Grieving Students** by Kathleen Cassini and Jacqueline Rogers (*Griefwork of Cincinnati, 1445 Colonial Dr., Suite B, Cincinnati, OH 45238*)

**Lifetimes: A beautiful way to explain death to children** by Bryan Melonie and Robert Ingpen (*Bantam Books, NY*)

**Wisdom of the Elders: Sacred Native Stories of Nature** by David Suzuki and Pater Knudtson (*Bantam Books, NY*)

**Roots of Survival: Native American Storytelling and the Sacred** by Joseph Bruchac (*Fulcrum Publishing, 350 Indiana St., #350, Golden, CO 80401*)

**Life Worth Living: The Eden Alternative in Action** by William H. Thomas, M.D. (*VanderWyk & Burnham, MA*)

**Also See Bookshelf—page 31**

## My Grandma: A Cherished Mentor

I felt at home in Taiwan, but I always wondered about my mom. My grandma would make sure that I didn't forget my mom though. She'd show me her picture, and tell me stories about the times gone by. Even though my mom was not there physically, Grandma made sure she was in my heart.

My grandma raised me and taught me values that have helped me throughout my years in school. I still remember her words, "Respect yourself. Respect others." Sometimes that was difficult. Especially when I moved to the United States to live with my mom. I was different; I looked different; I didn't even speak any English. I was the new kid from Taiwan. People made fun of me. I still remember the first day of school in the third grade. I felt like an animal in the zoo, kids my age staring at me with those stern eyes. I'd get angry and make fun of other people, forgetting the desperate feeling of needing a friend. When I thought about my grandma during these times, I felt ashamed. Had I forgotten all she taught me?

I've learned so much from my grandma. She loves my grandpa unconditionally, willing to go through everything that he goes through. Right now my grandpa has cancer, and I know that my grandma would never leave his side. Her courage and strength has gotten her and my grandpa through this ordeal. She says, "True love will never die even if the one you love dies." She's tough and tenacious, but she's also gentle. She loves her children and is always there when they have a problem or just need to talk to her.



She's inspired me to become anything I want to be. Her inspiration has led me to decide that I want to become a teacher so that I may influence other children. Her words remain in my heart. They have led me towards the achievements I've made throughout my life. I can't even imagine what my life would be like if my grandparents had not taken me back to Taiwan. My grandma is and always will be a mentor who I will love and cherish forever.

—Michele Wang, 17, New York, NY

---

### *Skipping Stones*

P. O. Box 3939

Eugene, OR 97403-0939

- Sample Copy. Please subscribe.
- Last Issue—Please renew your subscription. Thanks.

