

Cricket



the realm of imagination



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the realm of imagination

March 2016 Volume 43 Number 6



PHOTO BY SUSANNA BEAN

COVER AND BORDER

by Jonathan Bean

“Oxbow Harbor”

Woodblock print

Jonathan Bean lives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania—in a yellow building, on the third floor, above a café, in a small apartment where he keeps all his money and jewels on the doorstep so thieves can find them but sleeps with his drawings under the mattress. He can sometimes be spotted down the street at his favorite bookstore, The Midtown Scholar, or around town drawing people, or on his roof watering his garden. If you tell him he has the best job in the world he will not disagree. His most recent book, *This Is My Home, This Is My School*, was published last Fall by FSG.

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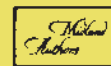


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THIS ONE'S
FOR YOU.

MEWY YAY!

Dear Everybuggy,

I know I am the trillionth person to say this, but your mag rocks! My favorite buggy is Sluggo.

I have four chickens and a gerbil. The chickens' names are Flurry, Racer, Pookie, and Chicken Nugget. The gerbil's name is Donut. My favorite books are *The Hobbit* and *Adam of the Road*. My favorite story so far is "Bigger Than Death" (October 2014). Thank you to all of the people who put their time and effort into making *Cricket* magazines. Never put down the pen.

Rowan Hoover, age 11
Dallas, Texas

Dear Marty, Sluggo, Cricket, etc.,

I love dogs. Pussywillow, you might think I'm crazy, because I am—crazy for dogs, at least. I have two dogs, one cat, six goats, just under seventy hens, three roosters, and eleven chicks.

Weather here is very funny. On the weather report it said there was supposed to be a tornado today, but there hasn't been one here for about ten years.

Tater, what is your favorite thing to do? Mine is reading your magazines and writing. I'm looking forward to your next issue!

Lily Spangler, age 10
Sebastopol, California

Dear Lily,

I like reading, too, but I'd have to say my favorite things to do are to solve problems and invent.

Spuds and French fries,
Tater

Yo, Ugly Bird,

You are epic! I don't think you are ugly at all! I know I'm the 250,000,000,000th kid to say this, but *Cricket* mag is epic! (I like the word epic!)

I'm homeschooled, and it's epic. I'm a big fan of the Beastie Boys, and my fave series is the Harry Potter books.

Keegan S., age 10
Sacramento, California

Dear Cricket,

I know that this is the billionth time you've heard this, but I'm going to say it anyway! Your mag is so awesome! Cricket, you are my favorite buggy. You're so confident and determined.

I have sixteen chickens, three dogs, and two cats. I have two crazy little sisters. I want to be an author when I grow up and I am writing a series of books called *The Bandit Dude*. I am an extreme tomboy and I play tennis and guitar and skateboard.

Poppy C.
Tucson, Arizona

Dear Cricket Family,

The first time I picked up a *Cricket* magazine was in my local secondhand bookstore about six years ago. I thought it looked interesting, so I bought it, not knowing it would start an addiction! I have been getting *Cricket* for about five years now and even though I passed the suggested reading age a while ago, I still read each issue cover to cover. My favorite parts of the magazine are "Old Cricket Says," Ugly Bird's crosswords, and the Cricket League contests. I want to say a big thank you to everybuggy and all the *Cricket* editorial staff for continuing to make such a wonderful magazine for all of us *Cricket* lovers to enjoy. Keep up the good work!

Jenna Lawrence, age 17
Gordo, Alabama

Hello, Cricket!

I just wanted to send you this little drawing. I hope you like it. Have a lovely St. Patty's Day!

Glena S. Duz
Colorado Springs, Colorado

WOOOOO!
EPIC!



Dear Glenna,

Thanks for the awesome drawing of us. We'll hang it in a place of honor. Happy St. Patty's Day to you! Erin go Bragh!

Cricket

TRILLIONTH, BILLIONTH,
OR ZILLIONTH—WE
LOVE ALLLLL OUR
LETTERS! WE LOVE
HEARING FROM YOU!



Greetings, Cricket Country!

I bet I'm the zillionth person to say this, but your mag rocks! I love to read the comics and the Letterbox.

I enjoy camping, texting, rowing (the sport), and reading. I live in a giant house in the country with eight siblings, two cats, one dog, and thirty-two chickens. My favorite book series are *The Heroes of Olympus* and *Harry Potter*.

Pussywillow, you are sooo cute. My favorite buggy is Ladybug, because I act like her.
R. Q., age 11
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Hey, Cricket!

I just had to tell you that I love your magazine! I love that it has a bunch of stories in it. One of my favorite stories is "The Girl Who Writes the Future" (November/December 2014–May/June 2015). It's awesome!

Some of my favorite books are *Spirit Animals*, *Fablehaven*, *The Arkadians*, and *Rooftoppers*. My favorite author is Brandon Mull. He wrote the first book of *Spirit Animals* and the whole series of *Fablehaven*. I can't wait for the next issue of *Cricket*!

Sela G., age 10
Traverse City, Michigan

GODDIE! NEW
BOOKS FOR MY
READING LIST!



Hi, Everybuggy!

I love everything about your mag! I loooove reading, drawing, and animals! Some of my favorite books are *Septimus Heap* and . . . *Septimus Heap*! I am a huge fan of *Septimus Heap*. If you are looking for a good series, go to the library and read *Septimus Heap*! Mary Grace (October 2015), rock on, girl! I didn't know anyone but me liked the *Septimus Heap* series!

My favorite buggy is Pussywillow. She's soooo cute!

Faith, age 12
Easley, South Carolina

Dear Pussywillow,

This letter is especially for you, because there are no letters for you in the Letterbox! I have a cat named Sasha. I think you would get along well. She is super playful and sweet.

Everybuggy, you have an awesome mag! My fave story was "Gifts of Ramadan" (May/June 2015). I also want to tell you about a book I read called *I Am a Cat*. It is an adult book about a cat's ideas.

Edith
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania

Dear Ladybug and Company,

Your mag is the only reason I bother to look at the mail! I love the extremely diverse stories and characters, the Favorite First Sentences, and especially the Letterbox. I think Ladybug is a strong and spunky leader and everyone should stop calling her bossy and mean because it probably hurts her feelings and besides, she just has a vibrant personality.

I have a cat, a dog, and five chickens. I play clarinet, mediocre piano and ukulele, and ultimate Frisbee, and I love swimming. I love the book series *The White Rabbit Chronicles* and I think that Cassandra Clare is the best author ever. Fun Fact About me: I am a dog person and I love Bernese mountain dogs in particular.

Willa the Ninja
Seattle, Washington

p.s. If you guys ever meet a mosquito, please tell her to stop biting people so much, because we don't enjoy it. Keep on rockin'.

Hi, Everybuggy,

I love your magazine! My favorite parts are the crossword puzzles and the Letterbox. My favorite buggies are Cricket and Pussywillow.

My hobbies are reading, riding my bike, playing instruments, acting, and learning about history. My favorite books in the world are *Harry Potter* by J.K. Rowling, *Warriors* by Erin Hunter, and *A Million Ways Home* by Dianna Dorisi Winget. I also

love reading historical fiction.

Audrey S., age 10
Martinez, Georgia

p.s. I love writing short stories.

Dear Cricket Editors,
I would first like to announce that your magazine is fantastic and appeals to all standards of

ANOTHER
LETTER FOR
YOU, PUSS.

MEWY
LOVVVVVE!



literature—one of the things I like best about it. I've been a subscriber since age seven. You guys have got everything awesome in your magazine: contests, cross-bird craziness, interesting tidbits from Old Cricket, arts and crafts ideas, historical context, poetry, all kinds of stories, and an adorable array of comical cartoon characters!

My absolute favorite part about reading *Cricket* is walking away knowing something interesting, whether it's world culture related, historical, or just plain random—it's something, and I love reading for knowledge and pleasure, both of which your mag covers!

I love to write poetry and short fiction and so I entered your October 2015 poetry contest and sent you a short poem about an October night from my window. I hope you like it!

Lily E. Labella, age 12
Port Washington, Long Island, New York

Dear Everybuggy,

First off I want to say that I stand at the post office at the beginning of each month, waiting for *Cricket* magazine. I live on the Sunshine Coast in British Columbia and I love it here! I live on twenty-seven acres, most of it just forest, with a creek running through it. One of my favourite books of all time is *Becoming Naomi Leon* by Pam Muñoz Ryan.

Last summer, at my grandparents' house, I met a cricket, and she told me her name was Rosa Lee. I asked her if she knew any of the buggies, and guess what? She is a cousin of Cricket! She wants to organize a family reunion here, so maybe you could come and visit.

I have found a way to dispose of Ugly Bird! Enchant him with tales of a land full of unsuspecting buggies, far away, and give him "directions" to this paradise. Make it farrrrrr away, or else he will fly back quickly!

Megan K., age 11
Sechelt, British Columbia, Canada.
p.s. Cricket, you should try volleyball; it's really fun. So should Ladybug and everybuggy else!

Dear Megan,

Your home sounds like paradise to us! Please send directions we can give to Ugly Bird. Tell Rosa Lee, I'd love to come to the reunion. Just be sure it's far from the place we're sending Ugly Bird.

Love,
Cricket
p.s. We love volleyball!

CHIRPS FROM CRICKET'S LETTERBOX AND CHATTERBOX

My favorite color is green. My favorite buggies are Muffin and Pudding. Chill out, Ladybug!

Mary Weaver, age 11
Easley, South Carolina

I love your magazine. There are so many amazing articles and stories. My favorite right now is "Stray Magic" (January 2015).

Lily, age 13
Bethesda, Maryland

The CB is probably my favorite place on Earth. I would never think of leaving—heck, I'll be here when I'm in a nursing home! The Chatterbox is like a little secret universe full of books and paper and pens and limitless imaginations. . . .

Nora the Singer
CBer Picturing! Chirp at Cricket,
Chatterbox

Where do you want to travel? IRELAND!
IRELANDIRELANDIRELAND! Irish mythology is so interesting, the climate is exactly what I like, and The Giant's Stairs!

St.Owl, Recarnated
Everywhere
Survey! Down to Earth,
Chatterbox

"Puck, I know you know that your bag of pranks is in my coat pocket. I am not giving you this coat!"

Puck smiled. Now she knew where Joan had hidden it.

One by one the CBers arrived. Hotairballoon complimented Katydid on her new hat, which was bright green. Poetic Panda, full of grace, glided down the street as if she were an Olympic ice dancer (which was sort of true, as the roads were frozen over) with her head buried in *The Complete Poems of Robert Frost*. . . .

Twenty-one CBers together, thought Will T. There is bound to be a catastrophe. . . .

Wilson W., Gateway
Happy Birthday, Pudding's Place,
Chatterbox

Send letters to **Cricket's Letterbox**, P.O. Box 300, Peru, IL 61354, or email us at cricket@cricketmedia.com. Please include your complete name, age, and address. Letters may be edited for length.

Visit the Chatterbox at:
cricketmagkids.com/chatterbox

SOMETIMES MY HEAD
IS SO FULL OF STORIES
I CAN'T WRITE FAST
ENOUGH...



Cricket Country



AS BEST AS I can recall, it all started when the cat sneezed.

“Rain a-comin’,” said Granny.

Now, that summer of nineteen-aught-eight was one of the driest in memory—even in Granny’s memory, and she was likely eighty years old. (I say likely because she never would admit to it.)

“Rain?” I said. “There’s nary a cloud in the sky!”

“Don’t matter,” says Granny. “A cat sneezin’ always means rain. My rheumatiz is worse’n usual, too.”

“Yesterday,” said Daddy, “I seen one of the sows a-carryin’ a stick in her mouth.”

Mama looked up from the bowl of peas she was shelling. “This mornin’ the coffee pot boiled over. Another sure sign of rain.”

I sighed. “Them things got no basis at all in *science*.” I’d been going to school for a while, you see, and thought I knew just about everything.

Mama smiled and shook her head. “Send a boy off to get educated, and he makes fun of you.”

“Well, really,” I said. “They’s ways of telling the weather, all right, but sneezin’ cats ain’t one of them. Neither is pigs carrying sticks in their mouths.”

“We’ll see,” said Daddy.

Every day after that somebody noticed something that was a sure sign of a big rain coming. First it was the guinea hens clucking louder than usual and the crickets chirping more. Then it was the call of the yellow-billed cuckoo, which some folks call the “rain crow.”

NOAH COUNT AND THE ARKANSAS ARK

BY GARY BLACKWOOD

Illustrated by
Barbara Bakos

text © 2016 by Gary Blackwood,
art © 2016 by Barbara Bakos



And then it was the milk going sour sooner than it should. Also the fact that on Sunday you could hear the church bells ringing way across the river in Memphis.

One day me and Daddy took a walk along the levee; that big ole dirt bank was all that lay between our farm and the mighty Mississippi.

“Wisht they’d a-built her a foot or three higher,” said Daddy. “If’n we get a real gully-washer, I don’t know that she’ll hold.”

He must’ve been even more worried than he sounded, because that very night he commenced to build the Ark.

Daddy didn’t call it the Ark. He just called it a raft, and that’s all it was, just logs tied together. It was sure enough a big one, though—big enough to carry us Appletons and most of our belongings, plus all the hens and pigs and cows and horses. The Ark was the name given to it by the neighbors when they drove by our place and saw what he was up to.

As you might expect, it wasn’t long before Daddy got him a new name, too. Folks took to calling him Noah, or sometimes Noah Count—like No Account, you see? I guess they thought they were being funny. I didn’t see the humor. To me it was just downright embarrassing. When we were in town buying nails, I overheard one feller say, “He’s a-tryin’ to be the whole Old Testament when he ain’t nothin’ but a plain, common Arkansas farmer.”

Lucky for me school was out, or I’d’ve had my hands full, fighting all the boys that would’ve called my Daddy crazy.



All that joshing didn’t seem to bother Daddy much. “When that big rain comes,” he said, “they’ll be laughing out the other side of their mouths.”

“What if it don’t come?” I said.

“Oh, it’ll come. You see the moon last night? Had a big old ring around it, with three stars inside the ring.”

“What’s *that* mean?”

“Means we got three days to finish buildin’ that there raft.”

I believe Mama wondered a little bit about Daddy, too, but nonetheless she pitched in and helped him. Even Granny did her part. Me, I just made myself as scarce as possible.

WHO MADE UP THOSE
CRAZY WAYS TO PREDICT
THE WEATHER?



HOW DO
WE KNOW
THEY’RE
MADE UP?



THERE’S A SCIENCE TO WEATHER
PREDICTION, AND SNEEZY CATS
HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.



PUSS! NEED A
HANKIE?

MEWY-
CHOO!



One evening, as they were putting the finishing touches on the Ark—I mean the raft—our rooster flapped up onto a fence-post, threw back his head, and let loose a cock-a-doodle at the sun, even though it was setting and not rising. I figured maybe he was just confused, but Daddy nodded like he expected nothing less. “You know what they say.”

“What?”

“If’n a rooster crows when he goes to bed, he’ll get up next morning with a wet head.”

I rolled my eyes and looked up at the sky. Still no sign of a cloud.

IN THE MIDDLE of the night, I woke up to the sound of thunder and the feel of rain blowing in through the open window.

It kept on pouring rain all the next day, and the next, and the day after that. The Mississippi rose up between its banks, all muddy and full of tree limbs and such, until it was most of the way to the top of the levee. Finally a section of the levee just gave way, and the river came rushing across our fields.

“Get the animals onto the Ark—I mean the raft!” shouted Daddy.

The cows and horses and hens were spooked by the sight of all that water, but finally we got them on board. And then we

HE WAS RIGHT! THE
PREDICTIONS CAME TRUE.



IT WAS A
COINCIDENCE! THERE IS
NO SCIENCE IN SNEEZY
CATS!

HA! WE
KNOW, DON'T
WE, PUSS?



MEWY.

fetches food and water and valuables, including my schoolbooks. By that time, the Ark was commencing to float.

"Pole her out into the river!" said Daddy.

"Cain't we just stay here?" said Granny.

"This whole place'll be underwater for days and days," said Daddy. "We got to find us some high ground."

We had a hard go of it, keeping that raft steady in the raging river, but we were a sight better off than the folks on land. Some were rowing around in jon boats, trying to rescue their bedraggled livestock. Some were sitting up on the roofs of their houses. We waved to them. It was about all we could do.

"They ain't pokin' fun at you now," said Granny.

"I'm sorry, Daddy," I said.

"For what?"

"For thinking you was crazy."

He shrugged. "Onliest difference between sane and crazy is whether you turn out to be right."

A big paddle wheeler was trying to make its way upriver. When we floated past, every soul on board pointed and waved and cheered. The captain saluted us with a blast on his steam whistle.

The river swept us along so fast, we must've floated twenty miles or more before Daddy said, "There's a good spot." He steered us in toward the bank, and Mama tossed out a line with a grappling hook that cotched on a tree.

WE SQUATTED ON that high ground for more than a week before the water finally went down. Then, since we were a little bit famous, a steamboat captain offered to tow us back up the river to our farm. Some of the crops had got drowned, and the floor of the house was covered in mud, but all us Appletons and our animals were safe.

Come September, I went back to school, but never again did I think poorly of my folks for not being educated. I guess there's more than one kind of education.

In October some people came and built up the levee again and made it higher this time. All the same, Daddy kept the Ark close to hand. I mean, God told Noah there would never be another flood, but Daddy wasn't some Old Testament feller—just a plain, common Arkansas farmer. 🐜

NOTE This story is based on an actual incident that took place in June 1908.

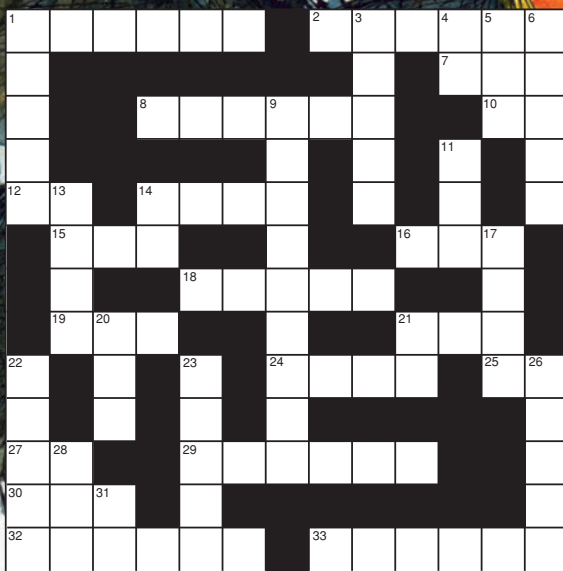
A BOAT
NAMED
JON?
THAT'S
WEIRD.



HA HA HA!
A

JON BOAT
IS A TYPE
OF FLAT-
BOTTOMED
FISHING
BOAT.





Solution on page 47

WHAT A
RIDE!

WE COULD SELL
TICKETS AND
MAKE A MILLION!

Across

1. Structure across a river
2. Swiftly running currents
7. Skin browned by the sun
8. Direction a river takes
10. Short for mother
12. Hush!
14. Flows along border of state with same name
15. To possess
16. Tugboats _____ barges on rivers
18. Narrow river canyon with cliffs on either side
19. A dragon _____ lays its eggs on or near water
21. River bottom
24. River in Egypt
25. _____ White wrote *Charlotte's Web*
27. Short for orange juice
29. Mississippi River's nickname: _____ River
30. A paddle
32. Machine that scoops up mud from river bottoms
33. River that flows through London, England

Down

1. Slopes bordering river
3. Wide awake
4. Italy (abbreviation)
5. Barrier built by beavers
6. Serpent; also a river in the Western U.S.
9. Texas river
11. Spanish for river
13. The horny part of a horse's foot
14. *Life _____ the Mississippi* by Mark Twain
17. "Across the _____ Missouri"
20. Opposite of *high*
21. To exist
22. What happens when a river overflows
23. Opposite of *right*
26. Ferries, tugs, and canoes
28. Glass container for jam or jelly
31. Prefix meaning "back" or "again"

LET'S NOT
GET CARRIED
AWAY...

by Capsized Castellón
and Puddles Conahan

THE SECRET

PART I

BY LINDA
WIMBERLY



THE SOUND RIPPED through the air and jerked me awake. I covered my ears and curled my body into a tight ball, trying to hide from the noise exploding around me. Rain and hail drummed the roof. I pressed my hands even harder against my ears, but the drumbeats grew louder and louder every second. Rain splashed down sideways, smacking against the windows. The sky flashed with a ghostly light, and you just knew that right after that strange-looking light, the whole world was going to shake and quiver, open up and swallow you whole.

I looked at Bobby. His eyes were wide and his body stiff as he stared out the car window. He hadn't looked at me yet, but if he had, he would've seen me pushing as far as I could into the corner of the back seat. I was trying to be strong, being the oldest and all, but down deep I knew I wanted to go crawl into a hole and escape the howling storm just as much as he did.

A bolt of lightning slashed through the darkness, and at the same time thunder boomed loud and long. The whole time that thunder growled, the car vibrated and rattled for what seemed like forever. I was sitting straight up by then, and when the wind shook the car like a rag doll, Bobby looked back at me with tear-filled eyes.

"You afraid?" he asked.

"Nah," I said, letting the word carry the breath I'd been holding.

"Are you sure?"

"Of course I'm sure. I'm not afraid of an old storm!"

Bobby hesitated. Then he whispered, "Me, either."

Bobby looked at me real hard, like he was trying to see the inside of me. I looked back at him for a while, but then decided the best way to convince him I wasn't afraid was to act like I was going back to sleep. I sat there with my eyes shut, trying to will my body to stop shaking while waiting for the storm to pass. Finally, the thunder moved away, and the rain slowed to a stop. I opened one eye and looked over at Bobby, and I had to smile because he was again asleep. That's how it is with Bobby and me. Mama always calls it trust, but all I know is that there's a special feeling between us.

While I was leaning against the car door, pretending not to hear all the pounding and screeching around me, I started thinking about how storms are sort of like nightmares. You want to wake up and have everything be back to normal, but when you do open your eyes and the nightmare's still there, you know you can't shut out all the terrible things in this world. Mama says that's why we have to believe in something. She says if we believe, it gives us something to hold on to while the storm's passing through. I think I know what she means, and Bobby tries to understand it, too. But remembering all this important stuff about life gets a little hard when you're right in the middle of one of life's storms.

My name is Lacey. Lacey Hunter. I'm twelve years old and Bobby, who just turned nine, is my little brother. People say I'm tall for my age, but I've never given it much

thought. Bobby and I have always been pole bean thin, and I guess tallness just goes along with that. My eyes are on the dark side of blue, but Bobby's eyes are green with little speckles of light brown and pale yellow. Our reddish-brown hair curls here and there and always seems to be flopping over our eyes. Any way you look at us, we're just like everybody else our age. At least, that's how I'd like to think about us. Truth is, I guess we're like others in the way we look, but because of other things, we're very different.

Our differentness officially began yesterday, but the way I see it, things really started to change months before.

AT FIRST, WHEN I'd think about the night Daddy didn't come home, I tried to be hopeful and keep thinking he'd be back in his chair for supper some night soon. But there came a day when I had to just see it like it was. He went to work one Thursday morning in February, and he never came back. I guess I should have known something was changing. He and Mama had been talking a lot at night, sometimes talking loud behind closed doors. They tried to keep it quiet so as not to wake Bobby and me, but the thin walls between our bedrooms couldn't stop their voices from waking me up every time. The mornings after these late night talks, there was an empty silence that hung over Mama and Daddy.

Now Mama doesn't talk about him except to tell us how much he loves us. We know better than to ask too many questions,

'cause if we start with the questions, she gets that look on her face. Sort of a faraway look. Then she gets real quiet, and her words start to slow down. It's like watching her drown in a deep well of memory, and all we can do is stand there and wait. We know that whenever that memory decides to pass, she'll smile that crooked little smile of hers, and the clouds will move away from her dark blue eyes. That's when we know Mama's ready to stretch a piece of sunshine over a shady spot. And that's when she wraps her arms around us and tells us everything's going to be all right. We always look out the window after she comes out of her quiet place. Mama says it's a special window, full of hope in a world of uncertainty.

We live in a smallish town just big enough to be comfortable. It isn't so small that there's nothing to do, but it isn't so big that you get lost in it. We've wandered all over town with our dog, Max—through the cemeteries, through the peach and apple orchards, over by the two movie theaters, and especially in the middle of downtown where all the businesses are. We know which parks are the most fun to play in, who sells the most flavors of ice cream, and which parades the high school marching band will be in.

Last week started like every other week of the summer. It was Monday, and every Monday morning Bobby and I would strike out for the library. Max led the way with an old rope hanging from his collar, pulling us down the sidewalk in every different direc-

WE COULD ALL USE A HOPE
WINDOW, NOW AND THEN...





tion. I mainly held the rope, but I let Bobby think he was holding on, too. We knew most of the people in the houses along the way, and some of them would wave at us when we walked by. Others would duck their heads and pretend they didn't see us. But when we got to the white house on the corner, just as we expected, there was Mr. Thompson. He seemed to be waiting for us every Monday. He'd call to us and then start chuckling about the way Max pulled us along as we walked. Max seemed to know we needed to stop and talk to Mr. Thompson, 'cause all of a sudden he'd quit his pulling and lie down in the grass.

It always took awhile for Mr. Thompson to come down off his porch and amble over to where we were waiting. Then he'd lean over and ruffle Max's fur, talking to him like he was a long-lost friend. Bobby and I'd just stand there, holding on to the rope, waiting for the old man to finish talking to Max. He'd talk some to us, too, but most of the time he was talking to Max. About the time Max would stand up and start walking around in circles, we'd know it was time to say goodbye, tell Mr. Thompson we'd see him next Monday, and head off again. The last thing we'd see on that street was Mr. Thompson waving, and we always wondered

if he was waving at us or waving at Max. We figured it was probably Max!

We had to turn left after Mr. Thompson's house and go down a steep hill to get to the library. About halfway down, we had to pass this big, old gray house, and much as we tried to pretend it wasn't anything but a house, Bobby and I both were scared of it. The house was just plain creepy. It leaned to one side, and what paint was left on it was flaking and dirty. There were two broken windowpanes on one side of the house, and the front door looked like somebody had beat it with a baseball bat. More than once, we had heard somebody yelling inside, so every time Bobby and I got near that house, we started running, and for the rest of the way down that hill, we ran, hoping Max would go faster and faster. Now, to be honest, it wasn't hard to get Max to go faster. The hard part was keeping up with him! But we just leaned into the rope and let him pull us down the hill. Then, when we were safely past the house and close to the end of the street, we'd fall in a heap and giggle, out of breath like you wouldn't believe. But we knew we'd made it past that scary old house one more time.

When we got to the library, we had to tie Max up to the pole next to the front door. He didn't like having to stay outside, but those ladies in the library didn't allow him inside. This particular day, Max decided he didn't want to wait outside. When he saw the door open, he pulled free of the rope and took off. He ran through that library like it was a

WHAT DOES A DOG
WANT AT THE
LIBRARY?



MAYBE HE WANTS
TO CHECK OUT THE
BOOKS. (HA HA)





racetrack and he was the fastest greyhound in town. In and out and in between all those big shelves, under tables, upstairs, downstairs, Max led those gray-haired, bespectacled ladies on a chase that would have made any rabbit-sniffing hound dog proud. Why, they were moving faster than anything I'd ever seen in my life. The way the ladies were fussing and carrying on, you'd have thought Max was the most terrible dog in the world. Bobby and I were laughing so hard our stomachs ached and tears were rolling like rivers down our faces. Then we looked at each other and scrambled to our feet. Bobby went one way and I went the other, and we caught Max and ran for the front door. We laughed all the way home, and I'm pretty sure Max was laughing, too.

MAMA CAME HOME late that night. We could tell she'd been crying even though she busied herself in the kitchen and kept saying everything was fine. Bobby and I tried to cheer her up by telling her about Max in the library, but we could tell she wasn't listening much. During supper she mostly let us do the talking, and sometimes I thought I'd see her eyes get watery. I helped with the dishes and then told Mama I'd get Bobby ready for bed. Later on, Mama came into the bedroom, hugged us both, and told us how much she loved us. I think she wanted to say something more but didn't know how to put the words together.

to be continued



After the Storm

by Beverly McLoughland

So many
blueblack mussel shells
lie scattered
on the beach this morning,
like shards
of ancient pottery,
as though the lightning
of last night's storm
had shattered
the fragile bowl
of sky.

Illustrated by Vikki Chu

text © 2016 by Beverly McLoughland, art © 2016 by Vikki Chu

THE PETTICOAT SKIPPER

by Josephine Rascoe Keenan

“MARY, WHAT ARE you doing out here on the riverbank?”

“Watching the steamboat come in,” I said, turning my gaze from the river and glancing up at my mother.

“Wasting time is more like it. Seems like ever since you finished high school all you do is daydream by the river.”

“Ma, can I tell you a secret? I want to be a riverboat captain someday.”

“That day will never come.

Riverboat captains don’t wear petticoats, speaking of which, yours is showing. Hike it up! You’ll never catch a husband with it dangling down below your skirt. And hustle. You’re late.”

I slipped into my father’s store through the back door, hoping he’d think I’d been working in the storage room.

“I see you, Mary,” he said, putting the lid back on the cracker barrel. “Every time they holler ‘Steamboat round the bend!’ I know you’ll be late for work. Young Captain Gordon Greene’s up front looking for some necessities. Go assist him.”

My knees went right weak when the riverboat captain turned his handsome face toward me. He drew a sharp breath, and so did I. His eyes took on a strange light. I could barely say, “Welcome to Marietta, Ohio, Captain. How can I be of service?”



“You could become my wife,” the captain said, in a voice so low, I dared not trust my ears to have heard him right.

“Beg pardon, sir?” I could feel my face burning.

Illustrated by Sue Todd

text © 2016 by Josephine Keenan, art © 2016 by Sue Todd

A PETTICOAT IS A
RUFFLED UNDERSKIRT.



"I . . . I need a shaving brush."

After that day, Captain Greene visited my father's store whenever he passed through Marietta. One day he announced, "I've just bought my first steamboat, the *H. K. Bedford*."

"Congratulations, Skipper," my father said.

"I envy you," I said. "I'd like to be a riverboat captain and have people call me Skipper."

Father bristled. "Next thing we know you'll be wanting to vote."

Captain Greene held out his hand to me. "Would you settle for being the *wife* of a riverboat captain?"

On November 18, 1890, when I was twenty-two and he was twenty-eight, I married Captain Gordon Greene.

"Hold tight, Mary!" he said, lifting me up into his arms. "Since I can't carry you across a threshold, I'll carry you up the gangplank. We'll have a steamboat honeymoon and make our home here on the river."

I loved the dusky smells of river warehouses and the sight of goods on the wharves ready to be loaded. My blood ran faster when the showboat steamed by with its calliope piping bright tunes. A nip of excitement filled the air when the steamboat whistle blew. Folks rushed to the riverbanks to see her tall stacks puffing smoke billows and the paddle wheel splashing through the water.

Serving as a lifeline to folks living on the river, we transported all kinds of supplies on

THE ERA OF STEAMBOATS

On August 7, 1807, Robert Fulton inaugurated the world's first successful commercial steamboat service. Ridiculed by some as "Fulton's Folly" while it was being built, Fulton's boat, the *Clermont*, completed the 150-mile voyage from New York City to Albany in 32 hours, traveling at an average speed of 5 miles per hour.

Fulton is often credited with inventing the steamboat, but an earlier steamboat, built by John Fitch, completed a successful trial on August 22, 1787. Propelled by steam-powered oars rather than a paddle wheel, one of Fitch's steamboats began carrying passengers and freight on the Delaware River between Trenton, New Jersey, and Philadelphia in 1790. But Fitch's business venture failed after just three trips.

Before the age of trains or decent roads, the steamboat was critical to opening up

the American frontier west of the Appalachians. Folks came to depend on steamboats for the hauling of freight and goods, and for travel that expanded their vision and knowledge of the growing United States.

The golden age of steamboats, when luxurious boats with crystal chandeliers plied the Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio Rivers, peaked between 1850 and 1870. The Civil War began the end of this golden age, as the Missouri and lower Mississippi Rivers were blockaded, and steamboats carrying troops and supplies were often fired upon from the riverbanks.

Ultimately, steamboats became victims of progress as railroads, also using the technology of steam propulsion, flourished and expanded across the country.



the steamboat. The big pine packing boxes held yard goods. (That's fabrics sold by the yard, not flower seeds!) We hauled all kinds of things—shoes, dresses, and overalls for dry-goods merchants like my father. We brought machinery and sugar, salt and flour. Kegs and barrels of beer, whiskey, and brandy rumbled up and down our gangplanks. Folks came into town from their farms to trade eggs, butter, apples, and meat for “store-boughten” goods from the steamboat. All this freight, except the passengers, which we called “walking freight,” was moved by roustabouts, the hardest workers on the river.

“Come on, Mary,” Gordon called to me after the loading was done my first day on

board the steamboat. “Let’s go on deck and listen to the roustabouts let loose with their harmony.”

The *H. K. Bedford* cut through river ripples glittering in the late afternoon sun, while folks sitting out on their porches along the Ohio applauded the melodious singing as we passed by.

“Here comes the captain wid a snicker and a grin,” sang the roustabouts. “Wheelhouse Puddin’ all over his chin.”

“What’s Wheelhouse Puddin’?” I asked the cook.

He grinned. “It’s bread pudding with a steamboat name.”

Cook fed the passengers delectable foods famous in the regions we traveled: hot-water cornbread and fried catfish in the south, a Kentucky burgoo so thick a spoon would stand up in it, and filé gumbo and Cajun jambalaya in New Orleans.

Hard as we tried to stick to a schedule, the river current dictated how fast we moved. If the river was high, boats could go fifteen miles an hour in midstream! But in the hot summer the current slowed, and so did we. We completely stopped whenever we saw produce or livestock waiting on the riverbank to be picked up. Once we stopped to let a woman get off the boat for a minute to gossip with another on the riverbank.

“Gordon, can’t we go any faster? We stop at every cow path!”

“We load as fast as we can, Mary, but if, say, a chicken gets loose, we have to chase it back to its coop!”

A BURGEOO
IS A THICK
SOUP OR
STEW WITH
CORN,
TOMATOES,
AND ONIONS.



FILE'
IS A
SPICE AND
THICKENING
POWDER
MADE OF
SASSAFRASS
LEAVES.





The passengers slept in staterooms, so called because the suites were named after states. A whole deck was named for our biggest state in those days, Texas, and that's where Gordon's and my stateroom was. I loved steamboat life, except for one thing—I still wanted to be a riverboat captain.

One day Gordon said, "I dream about steamboats. Someday I want to own a whole fleet of 'em. But right now, I want to buy just one, and I don't have the money to pay another captain."

"I know someone you wouldn't have to pay."

"I can tell by your conniving look that you're up to something, Mary."

"Let me be the captain of the new boat!"

"You don't have a license."

"I can get one. I'm learning the river and how to steer the boat."

Gordon scratched his chin. "Well, I don't know."

"I can do it, Gordon! Give me a chance."

"All right, see that sand bar in the river? You have to memorize where it is, so you don't run the boat aground."

That night in the pilothouse, after we'd unloaded and turned around to head back the way we came, Gordon said, "Mary, remember that sand bar I pointed out this afternoon? I'm relying on you to tell me where it is."

"But, Gordon, it's dark!"

"So it is! I told you being a captain isn't easy. A journey's success and the lives of the passengers depend on the pilot's accurate reading of the river. And the river is fickle. As soon as you think you know the location of sand bars and snags, the depth of the water

and the current, it'll all change. You've got to know what's coming ahead from the feel of the boat and the way the water looks, its swirls and ripples, day and night, in all kinds of weather."

It wasn't easy, but I memorized every turn and twist of the river, every foot of it. I learned to navigate around shifting sand bars, snags, rocks, and fluctuating river depths. When it came to steering the steamboat, sometimes I had to put both feet on the spokes of the pilot wheel to hold her steady. But in 1896 I got my pilot's license, and in 1897, a master's credential, making me a captain, the first woman in the history of the river to accomplish both feats.

Gordon bought that second steamboat, the *Argand*, and he gave it to me. I started with the West Virginia run, from Parkersburg



to Wheeling, and I was determined to be a good captain. I had my deck hands unload the minute we pulled into port, and right away we bested the time of the *Lexington*, our biggest competitor. At the end of my first week I had made \$6.60! I took my turn at the wheel after dark, because folks weren't used to seeing a woman riverboat captain.

It's been said that the course of true love never did run smooth. Well, the course of steamboat piloting didn't either. Once, near Steubenville, Ohio, a gigantic explosion rocked the boat. Every window blew out. Folks onshore said the steamboat lifted clean out of the water! At first I thought the boilers had blown, but that was wrong—the engines kept running. Turned out, the wake of our steamboat had set off forty quarts of nitroglycerin sitting in a nearby rowboat.

My worst scare came in 1899 when I was lounging in my cabin and the wind slammed my door shut so hard the crew had to break it down. By the time I got below to the second deck, the pounding rain had soaked through the old calico wrapper I had on. The passengers, who'd been dancing, were down on their knees praying. I kept my head and acted like I wasn't scared, when all the time I was praying as hard as they were.

"Hear that noise, like a train coming through?" I yelled. "It's a cyclone! Don't panic, folks. Captain Mary won't let you drown. Lie down on the floor, quick, and hold on to something secure!"

The ship ran aground on a sand bar. We had some broken furniture and some bruised and scared people, but I saved every






A GHOST ON BOARD THE DELTA QUEEN

Captain Mary allowed no liquor to be served on the *Delta Queen*. After her death at 79, in 1949, in Room 109, a barge bearing the name *Captain Mary B* crashed into the *Delta Queen*. Folks said Mary's ghost caused the crash, which interrupted the first serving of alcohol in the new saloon. Mary's apparition began to appear wearing 1930s clothing. Many saw the ghost pass through the lounges, then vanish. One night Captain Mike Williams was awakened by a whisper in his ear. The only person on board, he leaped up, frightened, and followed the sound of a slamming door to the boiler room where water was gushing into the *Queen* from a broken pipe. Captain Williams believed that the benevolent ghost of Mary Greene woke him to save the boat. Another night Myra Fruge, who'd just joined the crew as a purser, got a call from Captain Mary's old room. The voice of an elderly woman complained of being sick and cold. Myra called Captain Williams to assist with the situation. But Room 109 was vacant. The Captain and Myra became friends, fell in love, and married within the year, believing that their meeting that night was arranged by Captain Mary's ghost playing matchmaker.

single one. The secret I never told them was I couldn't swim a lick.

In 1904, when I was expecting my youngest of three boys, we got stuck in an ice jam on the Kanawha River for three weeks. The baby was due any day, but there wasn't a thing I could do but let Mother Nature have her way, right in the middle of the river.

But it turned out fine, and as soon as we thawed loose, I took that boat, the *Greenland*, twelve hundred miles down the Ohio River and into the Mississippi, from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to the World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri. The Ohio was dead low at the time. In fact, to borrow a phrase from Mark Twain, "The water was so low the catfish had to stand on their heads to keep their gills wet." The *Greenland* had its paddle wheels on the side, which was more difficult to navigate than a sternwheeler with the paddle wheel on the back. But I steered her safely all the way to St. Louis. Rivermen said what a feat of navigation that trip was—for anyone, not just a woman!

Gordon's dream of having a fleet came true. My dream came true, too, of a grand steamboat flying the Greene Line flag as she graced the sparkling waters like a great swan. Her home was in Cincinnati, Ohio, and she reigned over the mighty rivers from Pittsburgh to Cairo, and Saint Paul to New Orleans. And when folks saw her steaming by, they said, "There goes the great *Delta Queen*, piloted by Captain Mary, the Petticoat Skipper." 

A HAUNTED BOAT!
EEK. GIVES ME THE
SHIVERS.



EVERYTHING GIVES
YOU THE SHIVERS,
GEORGE.

WHEELHOUSE PUDDIN'

BY JOSEPHINE RASCOE KEENAN



DURING THEIR GOLDEN age, steamboats competed to give passengers the kind of luxurious experience associated with the best hotels, featuring crystal chandeliers, gilded mirrors, well-appointed rooms, and fine dining. Those days of luxury may be past, but you can still enjoy this favorite steamboat dessert.

What You'll Need:

- 10 slices home-style white bread, about half a loaf (8 to 10 ounces)*
- 4 cups milk
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted, plus a little more to butter the dish
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 eggs, beaten
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup seedless raisins

What to Do:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Cut bread slices into 1- to 2-inch cubes and place in large bowl. (You can trim the crusts first, if you like.)
2. Pour milk over bread cubes and allow to soak until most liquid is absorbed—about 20 to 30 minutes. (Bread will be pretty mushy!)
3. Stir remaining ingredients into bread mixture, adding the raisins last.
4. Rub bottom and sides of a $1\frac{1}{2}$ quart (6 cup) casserole dish with a little butter and pour in bread mixture.
5. Bake 45 to 60 minutes, until the puddin' sets.
6. Serve warm to your favorite steamboat roustabouts. Ice cream makes it even better!

*Cinnamon bread or a sweet egg bread like challah or brioche also work well.

THE BIRKEN

“**WOMEN AND** children first!” These are chilling words for anyone on a ship to hear, since it means their vessel is about to sink. The most famous disaster at sea was probably the loss of RMS *Titanic* on April 15, 1912, after the ship struck an iceberg and sank, taking more than 1,500 lives. Believed to be unsinkable, the *Titanic* carried lifeboats for only one-third of its passengers. The calm demeanor of the men as the lifeboats were filled and sent away has become legendary. Several lifeboats were lowered with empty seats since there weren’t women or children nearby to fill them.

But why women and children first? It was another shipwreck, sixty years earlier, that gave rise to the custom.

Before the age of steel ships, radios to call for help, accurate maps and weather forecasting, and laws that forced ship owners to provide sufficient lifeboats, any accident at sea would usually be fatal to most of those on board. Horrible tales of men drowning just yards offshore were common. Many ships were old, unsafe, and loaded with too much cargo. Shipping companies would buy decrepit ships, paint them, and change their names, giving the impression that they



The Wreck of the Birkenhead. Color lithograph by Charles Edward Dixon, c. 1920.

were new vessels. Men often contracted to work on a ship before seeing it. If they later decided the ship was too unsafe and didn’t want to go aboard, they could be arrested and put in prison. Most sailors preferred to risk perishing on these deathtraps to languishing in jail, where they wouldn’t earn any money while their families starved.

HEAD DRILL

by Howard Bass



Because of the dangers of rocks near the coastline, most shipwrecks took place within sight of land. Of course, if a ship sank in the middle of the ocean, survivors faced even worse problems. With no radios or flares, they could drift for days, weeks, or even months before being rescued or reaching land. In tropical waters,

castaways suffered extreme sunburn while food and water ran out. Hopelessness and madness would follow. In desperation many drank seawater, which is saturated with salt, leading to extreme dehydration and death. Catching a fish without a fishing rod or bait was very unlikely. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, an unwritten rule, known as the “custom of the sea,” evolved. Never openly acknowledged, it allowed cannibalism if there was no other choice. It was very clear to sailing men that even if they survived the loss of the ship without drowning (and many of them could not swim), being stranded at sea could be an even worse fate. The rules of civilized society did not hold on the ocean.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Great Britain had become the world’s greatest financial power, mainly because of its fleet. British merchant ships sailed to Africa, India, China, and the Americas, carrying colonists and merchandise and bringing raw materials back to British factories to be made into finished goods for trade. Despite Great Britain’s being relatively small compared to its European neighbors, its army controlled large areas of the world.

The army's great advantage was its training. The British redcoat was a professional, and because Britain was always looking to expand its influence, its soldiers saw much fighting. During the Napoleonic Wars in the early nineteenth century, soldiers were trained to stand where they were even though enemy cannons were firing directly at them. In fact, it was considered to be a sign of cowardice if a soldier flinched when a cannonball came hurtling at him. This may sound cruel and possibly a bit crazy, but discipline on the battlefield was vital. A unit on foot could be run down by cavalry. Soldiers were trained to form a square, pointing their rifles and bayonets outward. As long as the square rigidly held its formation, enemy cavalry could not break it. This training helped Great Britain and its allies defeat Napoleon, and later won Britain many colonial wars, particularly in Africa.

Victory after victory left the nation feeling almost invincible. The idea that Great Britain *should* be the world's most powerful country became deeply ingrained in the people and government, who came to believe that Britain was better than other nations in everything. It was taken for granted that Britain's role in the world was to "civilize" native peoples by bringing them Christianity and white overlords.

On February 26, 1852, the British troopship *Birkenhead* was sailing to South Africa, carrying not only soldiers and sailors but also some of the wives and children of British officers stationed at Cape Town. The captain was in a hurry and hugged the shoreline to make the trip shorter and faster, feeling his charts

were accurate enough to safely accomplish this task. At about 2:00 a.m., however, the *Birkenhead* hit an uncharted rock and began to sink. Hundreds below decks were drowned in their bunks as the survivors rushed to the upper deck. Men manned the pumps, trying to keep the ship afloat, but an unfortunate order by ship's captain Robert Salmond doomed the vessel. Hoping to free the ship from the rocks, he ordered the *Birkenhead*'s paddle wheels to be put into reverse, which tore a great gash in the hull. The ship tilted suddenly and started to go under.

The men could only get three lifeboats cast off for the more than six hundred aboard. The women and children were afraid of being tossed aside as the young men tried to save their own lives. But while the men struggled with the ship, the women and children were placed in a small cutter and rowed away. Captain Salmond soon realized that the situation was hopeless, and as the *Birkenhead* began to break up, he shouted to the men, "Swim for the boats! It is your only hope of salvation." Then a remarkable thing happened that made the *Birkenhead* story legendary.

Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Seton saw immediately that the hundreds of desperate men would overwhelm the lifeboats. He raised his hand and pleaded with his soldiers, "The cutter with the women and children will be swamped. I implore you not to do this thing and I ask you to stand fast!" Even though most had only been in the army two or three months, the soldiers held ranks, silently awaiting their deaths in the shark-infested waters. More than 400 men perished in the wreck as



The Wreck of HMS Birkenhead off the Cape of Good Hope.
Lithograph by Thomas Marie Madawaska Hemy, 1892.

struck till the time she totally disappeared, far exceeded anything I thought could be effected by the best discipline.”

The *Birkenhead* changed the way the British viewed sailors lost at sea. On May 19, 1884, the racing yacht *Mignonette* left Southampton, England, for Sydney, Australia. On board were four crew, including seventeen-year-old Richard Parker. On July 5, the boat sank during a gale some 700 miles from land. The men were able to escape with just two cans of turnips, but no fresh water. About two weeks later, after drinking seawater, Parker fell into a coma. The other three, desperate and starving, decided to kill Parker and eat him. They were finally rescued on July 29, but when they told their tale, they were promptly arrested and charged with murder. Parker’s brother, a sailor himself, shook hands with the three men, and public opinion was behind the defendants. Two of the three, however, were found guilty, despite the unwritten rule of the “custom of the sea,” mainly because of the way the men of the *Birkenhead* had acted. (Their sentences were soon shortened to six months in prison.)

The judges wrote, “The duty, in case of shipwreck, of a captain to his crew, of the crew to the passengers, of soldiers to women and children, as in the noble case of the *Birkenhead*; these duties impose on men the moral necessity, not of the preservation, but of the sacrifice of their lives for others, from which in no country, least of all, it is to be hoped, in England, will men ever shrink, as indeed, they have not shrunk.” 🦋

the *Birkenhead* sank within twenty minutes of striking the rock. From that day on, allowing women and children to board the lifeboats first is known as the Birkenhead Drill.

The *Birkenhead* incident was held up as proof of the superior national character of the British. Queen Victoria ordered that a monument to the bravery and selflessness of the soldiers be erected in the Royal Hospital Chelsea, a retirement home for soldiers who were unable to serve due to injury or old age. There were paintings of the incident, and author Rudyard Kipling wrote about it in a popular poem called “Soldier an’ Sailor Too.”

A surviving officer, Captain Edward Wright, wrote, “The order and regularity that prevailed on board, from the time the ship

WHAT A TRAGEDY.
SO SAD!



VERY SAD. SUCH
BRAVE SOLDIERS.



It's 1918, and James lives with his mother and grandfather in Albany, New York. World War I is raging, and James's father is fighting in Europe while his mother works nights at a munitions factory. James's grandfather, who fought in the Civil War, is fixated on a local legend that a ghost train passes through town every year at midnight on April 26, the anniversary of the day President Lincoln's funeral train stopped in Albany in 1865. Grandpa says that he saw the train once with Grandma long ago. James and his friend Billy don't believe the legend, but James promises to take Grandpa to wait for the ghost train—and to keep it quiet from his mother.

"TODAY'S APRIL 26,

Grandpa," I told him after Ma went to work that day. He was sitting in his rocking chair staring out the window. When he heard the news, he got up so fast that he almost fell onto the floor.

"Make it snappy, James! It's time to go!"

"Careful, Grandpa! Let me give you a hand. We have plenty of time."

"I have to get something first." He went to his bedroom and returned wearing his tattered blue Civil War cap. His curly gray hair stuck out from under it.

PART TWO TRAIN

BY LINDA ANDERSON

"Are you planning to wear that?" I thought he looked foolish and I didn't want anyone making fun of him.

"Of course, James! It's in honor of President Lincoln."

I sighed. "Just sit down again, Grandpa. We're going very soon."

A little while later, Billy appeared at the back door. "Guess what?" he whispered. He couldn't stop grinning.

"You don't have to whisper. He can't hear you from the living room."

"Mary and Helen will be coming with us!"

"What? You told them we're going to see the ghost train? Why did you do that?"

"So that they'd come with us, what else? Girls love spooky stuff."

This was terrible news. I didn't want anyone else to know that Grandpa was nutty. But there was a way out.

"They can't go with us," I said. "Their parents won't let them come without a chaperone."

"I already thought of that," Billy said triumphantly. "Your grandpa will be the chaperone! Their parents don't know he's, well . . ."

"Nutty," I said miserably. "Although Ma says he's just getting old. Look, Billy, this isn't going to work. What do you think will happen when Grandpa doesn't see the ghost train? What if he starts crying or something? I don't want the girls to see that."

"You're always worrying about things," Billy said breezily. "It will all work out. Who do you fancy, Mary or Helen?"

I thought for a moment. "Well, if I have to choose between the two of them, it would be Mary." I thought of her shiny black hair and pretty brown eyes.

"That works for me," Billy said. "Let's go see if your grandpa is ready to go."

"Oh, he's ready all right. He's been ready for months."

We started out after dark. Grandpa said the train came at midnight but I had to fudge the time a little because I knew Ma would be home by midnight and we needed to be back before then.

We walked to Mary's house. She and Helen came out on the porch. Mary's mother followed behind with a little blond boy clinging to her skirt.

"Hello, Mrs. Davis," I said. "This is my grandpa, Mr. Smith."

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Smith," Mrs. Davis said. "How kind of you to chaperone the girls this evening. I told Mary all about the ghost train."

"It's no trouble at all," Grandpa said. He took off his cap and held it in his hands.

A **CHAPERONE** IS AN OLDER PERSON WHO ACCOMPANIES YOUNG PEOPLE ON A DATE OR OUTING.



DOES MRS. DAVIS BELIEVE IN
THE GHOST TRAIN, TOO?



I GUESS SO!



IS EVERYBUGGY
IN THIS TOWN
CRAZY?



OR, MAYBE THERE IS
A GHOST TRAIN.

"I see you fought in the war," Mrs. Davis said. "My father did, too. What regiment were you in?"

"I served with the New York Ninth Artillery," Grandpa said proudly. "They called us Seward's Pets after Secretary of State William Seward. Mr. Seward was stabbed in his sickbed by Booth's henchman Lewis Powell at the same time that Booth was shooting President Lincoln in Ford's theater."

"What a terrible thing to do," Mrs. Davis said.

"Oh, Mr. Seward survived and he ended up buying Alaska a few years later. Did you know that I shook Mr. Lincoln's hand when he came to visit our regiment?"

"You did? How wonderful that must have been!" Mrs. Davis exclaimed.

I had never heard Grandpa say that he had shaken President Lincoln's hand before. I figured it was time to go before Mrs. Davis realized that Grandpa was a little, well, confused. "We better get going," I said quickly. "We don't want to miss the train."

"Such fun," Mrs. Davis said. "Have a good time!"

The night was warm and clear and the stars sparkled brightly in the dark sky. Billy and Helen hung behind us, talking softly together. Every once in a while Helen would giggle.

Mary and I walked together with Grandpa between us so we could catch him in case he stumbled and fell.

"Are you good in geometry, James?" Mary asked. "Because I really need help with it."

"Sure I can help you, Mary," I said, my heart beating faster. "Maybe you can come to my house after school tomorrow. My mother doesn't work on Saturdays."

"Oh, that would be lovely." Mary smiled at me, and I fell in love right there and then.

"I need some help with *Huckleberry Finn*," I said. "All that symbolism and everything."

"*Tom Sawyer* is easier, but I can help you with *Huckleberry Finn*. It's not so hard once you know what to look for."

"Over there!" Grandpa shouted suddenly. "The tracks are down there behind the trees."

We stepped carefully down the steep embankment to the railroad tracks. Grandpa, Mary, and I stood close to the tracks. Billy and Helen stood a little apart from us, totally lost in each other. I felt very silly. At some point we would have to say the train wasn't coming and leave. I hoped Grandpa wouldn't make a fuss.

"Where are all the other people?" Grandpa asked looking around. "Has everyone forgotten what President Lincoln did for this country? He saved the Union and freed the slaves, you know."

"I'm sure they'll come soon, Grandpa." I didn't add that no one was there yet because we were about two hours too early.

"Are you cold, Mr. Smith?" Mary asked. "You're shivering."

Grandpa didn't answer. He was watching the tracks to the east. "Do you see that?" he asked. "The tracks are turning blue. That means that the ghost train is coming soon."

The tracks looked the same steel gray to me.

"I see a light!" Billy cried out.

"Don't you try to make a fool out of me, boy!" Grandpa shouted angrily. "There's no light coming yet."

Billy laughed.

"I'm getting cold, Billy," Helen giggled. "Let's go to where it's warm."

Billy and Helen climbed quickly back up the embankment and disappeared.

"Don't go too far!" I yelled after them. This night was getting worse and worse.

"I'm cold, too," Mary said.

"Give your sweetheart your jacket, James," Grandpa said. "She's shivering. I can see her breath."

Mary smiled at me, so I didn't say anything to Grandpa about him calling her my sweetheart. I gave her my jacket, and she put it on. It looked good on her, although it was much too big.

"Don't be scared," Grandpa said to Mary. "No matter what you see, nothing will hurt you."

A dark cloud came out of nowhere and covered the bright moon.

"It's getting so dark and foggy that I can hardly see anything," Mary said.

"There!" Grandpa cried out. "There's the light coming right towards us! Step back!"

I didn't see any light, but Grandpa and Mary were staring at something coming down the tracks. They stepped back from the tracks at the same moment. Mary grabbed my arm and pulled me next to her.

"Be careful," she whispered. "Let it pass."

"Let what pass?" I asked in bewilderment. "What's happening?"

"The pilot train is passing, James," Grandpa said. "Look! The skeleton soldiers are playing their instruments."

"The skeleton soldiers?"

"They're sitting in a circle, playing black instruments that glow," Mary said. Mary's long hair blew back in a strong breeze that had also just sprung up out of nowhere. "There's the conductor with his black baton. One soldier is playing a flute and another the violin. The drummer is waiting for his turn. Hush! Can't you hear the music? It's a funeral dirge."

I couldn't see or hear a thing and I thanked Mary silently for playing along for Grandpa's sake. Then their heads jerked suddenly to the right like they were watching something pass by.

"The next train will be the funeral train, carrying the body of President Lincoln," Grandpa said. "Maybe you'll see that one, James."

I was confused now. Was there really a ghost train that I couldn't see?

More clouds covered the stars, and it got even darker. I could hardly see Grandpa and Mary, who were standing right next to me, let alone a ghost train.

"There's another light!" Grandpa said in a trembling voice. "Here he comes, James! President Lincoln is coming. See, there's the blue-and-white headlight on the engine!"

Mary peered into the darkness. "There it is! The funeral car is draped with black crepe.



Oh! There's President Lincoln's coffin! It's covered with the American flag."

"They're all here!" Grandpa gasped. "I didn't see them before."

"Who's all here, Grandpa?" I couldn't tell what he was looking at in the murky darkness.

"Don't you see them, James? They're the soldiers of the Civil War come to honor President Lincoln. Look!" he cried out, "There's my comrades Henry and Little Ned and, oh, there's Cheerful Charlie who lost both his legs at Petersburg. They're all in a line saluting President Lincoln." Grandpa started to weep. "He never knew all the good he did. They killed him before he ever knew." He raised a shaking hand and saluted the swirling darkness.

The dark clouds passed over the moon and it became brighter. Grandpa started to slump over like he was about to faint.

"We better take him home," Mary whispered. "He doesn't look too good."

"What about Billy and Helen?"

"Don't worry about them. They'll find their way home and if not, well, then that's their problem."

I'll never know how we managed to get Grandpa home that night. He was so weak that Mary and I had to hold him up the whole way. We gave him some whiskey and put him in bed before Ma got home from work. I was very worried. I should have never taken him to see the ghost train.

I tossed and turned all night dreaming of ghostly soldiers swirling around my bed.

"GRANDPA'S STILL IN bed," Ma said at breakfast the next morning. "He seems very tired today."

I shifted uncomfortably in my chair. "Will he be all right?"

"I hope so. He did eat a little oatmeal. I just don't understand what happened. He was fine yesterday."

We went to Grandpa's bedroom after we finished eating. He was lying on his back, clutching his blue soldier's cap in his hands. He smiled when he saw us.

"How are the clocks running today?" he asked. "Did the time stop for six minutes?"

"They do seem to be running a little slow this morning, Pa," Ma said.

"How are you feeling, Grandpa?" I asked. I felt terrible seeing him look so frail. It was all my fault.

"Don't you worry, James," Grandpa said as if he were reading my mind. "I feel better than I have in years, and it's all thanks to you. I'm just a little tired, that's all." His face crinkled in a wide smile. "We had the most wonderful time last night, didn't we though? I finally took my grandson to see President Lincoln's ghost train."

"You saw the ghost train last night, Pa?" Ma smiled indulgently. "Are you sure you weren't dreaming?"

"Oh, it was real, all right," Grandpa said. "Only this time I saw my comrades saluting President Lincoln." He looked straight at me. "I'll be with them the next time the train comes round."

"No!" I shouted.

"I'll be fine, James," Grandpa said. "Don't you worry about me."

"Did you see the train, too?" Ma smiled at me with her let's play along with Grandpa look.

My throat closed up but I managed to say, "Not this time, Ma, but I'll keep going until I do."

"Here's my cap," Grandpa said holding it out to me. "Make sure you wear it when you go."

"Thanks, Grandpa, I will." I took the cap from him, tears stinging my eyes.

"Isn't your sweetheart coming to visit you today?" he asked.

I nodded, trying not to cry.

"Then go get ready for her. I want to sleep now."

He winked at me, settled back in bed, and closed his eyes. Ma and I left his room. I went to the living room, got out my books, and waited for Mary.

She arrived a little later, looking fresh and pretty. My heart leapt when I saw her.

"How's your grandpa today?" she asked. "Is he feeling better?"

"Not too good. He's tired out from last night."

"I'm sorry to hear that," Mary said softly. "He was so excited when he saw the ghost train. I guess it was too much for him."

"You were very kind to Grandpa last night, Mary."


"What do you mean?"

"I mean pretending to see the ghost train and all."

Mary raised her eyebrows. "Do you think I was pretending, James?"

"You mean you actually saw the ghost train? We weren't even there at the right time!"

Mary smiled sweetly. "Maybe you'll see it when we go next year, James. Now let's start studying."

I bent my head down to open *Huckleberry Finn* so that she wouldn't see the silly grin that was spreading over my face. I didn't care whether she had seen the ghost train or not. She wanted to see me again, and that's all that mattered. 

Author's Note

This story is based on the folk legend of President Abraham Lincoln's ghost train, which is said to make its appearance on the route that his real funeral train traveled on its 1,700-mile journey from Washington, D.C., to Springfield, Illinois, in the spring of 1865. In addition to Albany, Lincoln's funeral train stopped in Philadelphia, New York City, Buffalo, Cleveland, Chicago, and other major cities, where thousands of people waited in long lines to view President Lincoln in his coffin. It is estimated that millions more, a third of the North's population, saw the funeral train pass through their villages and towns, many lighting torches and bonfires as the train traveled through the night between the big cities.

There were thousands of Civil War veterans still alive during World War I. Over fifty thousand veterans, both Union and Confederate, attended the fiftieth anniversary reunion of the Battle of Gettysburg in 1913.



Lincoln Laughs

Lincoln was often made fun of because of his looks, but he took it all in good humor and often joked about it himself. He once told his private secretary, "Common-looking people are the best in the world; that is the reason the Lord makes so many of them."



When he was still just an Illinois lawyer, Lincoln was walking along a dusty road when he was overtaken by a stranger driving his wagon to town. Lincoln wanted a ride, but didn't want to ask directly for fear of being turned down. "Will you have the goodness to take my overcoat to town for me?" he said.

"With pleasure," the driver replied. "But how will you get it back again?"

"Oh, that's easy. I intend to remain in it."

Once, during a debate, Lincoln's opponent called him "two-faced." "I leave it to my audience," Lincoln replied. "If I had another face, do you think I'd wear this one?"



Some of Lincoln's friends were arguing about whether it was better for a man to have long legs or short legs. During the discussion Lincoln came into the room, and they asked his opinion.

"Well," he said thoughtfully, "I should think a man's legs ought to be long enough to reach from his body to the ground."

After Lincoln became president, he still polished, or blacked, his own boots. Most men in such an important position would have made a servant do the filthy job. One morning Senator Charles Sumner called at the White House and was shocked to find the president doing his boots. "Mr. Lincoln!" cried Sumner. "Gentlemen don't black their own boots in Washington!" Lincoln kept on blacking and calmly replied, "Then whose boots do they black?"



THE FORTY THIEVES

PART THREE

BY CHRISTY LENZI

Twelve-year-old Morgiana and her little brother, Jamal, are slaves in the household of a rich merchant in Baghdad. One night the Forty Thieves, led by a man with a face as cold as the devil's, storm the house and kidnap the women and children, including Morgiana and Jamal. When the thieves stop to rest, Morgiana cuts her and Jamal's bonds with a knife she's secreted in her sleeve, and they slip away.

Back in Master's household, Morgiana is summoned to play the lute for a special guest—the fortuneteller Abu-Zayed. After playing, Morgiana eavesdrops from behind a curtain and learns that Master will die childless and threadbare. In the end, says Abu-Zayed, any dignity Master has left he will owe to the charity of his brother, Ali Baba, a poor woodcutter.

The next morning Morgiana goes to wake Jamal and is shocked to see he has a black eye. She scolds him for sneaking out at night again with Badi, one of the bathhouse boys. Morgiana resolves to disguise herself in boys' clothing and follow him that evening to see what mischief he's up to. Is it possible he's joined one of the child street gangs?

I HURRY THROUGH

the darkening city, trailing Jamal and Badi at a distance. A purple streak lingers on the edge of the horizon, giving the streets a smoky hue. The moon hangs like a great silver bowl in the sky. Snatches of light flicker from windows. I've never seen Baghdad after sunset prayers, when all proper females are safely tucked away for the night.

As Jamal and Badi near the bathhouse, they're joined by a group of older boys wearing brilliant white *qamis* and turbans like Badi's. I straighten my own turban—it feels heavy and strange. Luckily, I didn't need to bind myself on top. Even though I'm almost thirteen, my chest is still flat as pan bread. My knife is tucked into the belt around my waist.

Soon Jamal and the bathhouse boys are on the move. I race after them through the deserted market square and around a corner near the mosque. It's not long before the street turns into a shoddy lane. Dilapidated huts replace the fine houses. The fragrance of

Illustrated by Anna Bron

text © 2016 by Christy Lenzi, art © 2016 by Anna Bron







jasmine turns to putrid garbage. It's as if one world's magically melting into another.

I reach the rubble and stench of the city dumping grounds and lose the bathhouse boys as they join other groups streaming down into the maze of trash heaps. In the center, a small fire burns. Where's Jamal?

"What gang do you fight with?" A tall, wiry boy with ragged clothes joins me. He doesn't wear a turban, and his curly hair looks like a bird's nest. I cringe as he squints at my green eyes.

I make my voice deep. "I'm not in a gang." I start walking.

"Come here!"

I hesitate, my heart pounding. "I'm new," I say, turning around. "I don't know anything about it."

The boy's eyebrows rise, and his face eases into a grin. "We'll teach you. You can be in our gang—we're the best." He gestures to a dozen skinny, homeless-looking boys behind him. "There's a meeting tonight with all the gangs, so we could use you. Red Beard will be here, too; he's our leader." He spits near my foot.

"Everybody calls me Stinger," he says. "Because of this." He shoves his fist toward my face, inches from my chin.

I wince.

He's mounted a wildcat's fang on a ring around his middle finger.

"What do people call you?" Stinger demands.

"I'm . . ." I grasp at the first word that pops into my head. "Khubz." I almost choke

with nervous laughter. *Khubz* is the name for flat pan bread.

Stinger slips a mallet from the belt at his waist and twirls it in his fingers. "I hope you brought a weapon, Khubz."

I nod and pat my knife as I scan the crowd for Jamal.

"There he is!" Stinger says, as if he's reading my mind. But he's pointing at a horse and its rider, a tall man with kohl-darkened eyes and high cheekbones. His beard is dyed a striking red; his clothes and turban, a garish orange. The leader of the child gangs. A young boy wearing a woven helmet perches before him on his saddle.

Jamal.

"That little donkey!"

Stinger shakes his head. "Looks like Red Beard picked himself another lamb as his little pet." He laughs and nudges his friends. "We'll see how long this one lasts."

"Why, what's going to happen to him?" I struggle to sound calm.

"Everybody wants to ride with Red Beard. It means you might ride in his place one day. When he picks somebody, the boys rough up the kid later to see what he's really made of."

"But he's so little—this is crazy!"

"I know." Stinger puffs out his chest.

"Red Beard should choose someone older—a gang leader who knows how to fight!"

"What's going to happen? What's the big meeting about?"

Stinger's face lights up. "Red Beard tells us which gangs are going to fight against each

THAT STINGER
IS SCARY!



I GUESS THEIR GANG IS A LITTLE
DIFFERENT FROM OUR FRIENDLY
LITTLE GANG OF BUGS.



other tonight and which ones are going to break into the shops.”

“He *tells* you to fight each other?”

“That’s how the games are played. While the chosen gangs pretend to fight, the others break into the stores and loot. To anyone peering out the window, it looks like one gang is fighting off the looters and protecting the neighborhood.”

“Fighting and stealing from shops is a *game*?”

“We don’t get to keep the stuff—Red Beard’s men round it up and report who did the best fighting. That gang wins and gets to celebrate at Red Beard’s camp with his men. The best boys will join them when they’re older, and then they’ll get to keep the stolen stuff. Red Beard always chooses an older boy to replace a man when he loses one.”

Stinger twirls his mallet. “But that’s not all. There’s talk about a secret bigger than you ever dreamed of. If you end up riding with

Red Beard for good, he'll let you in on it." He shoves the mallet back into his belt. "I aim to be one of the few who finds out."

Stinger gallops down the hill, joining the crowd. I follow him.

Red Beard's voice rises above the din, and everyone quiets down. "I've called you here today on a business matter." The flames cast flickering light and shadows over his features and blackened eyes, giving him a ghoulish look. "A wealthy merchant on Umar Street has gone on a journey. Fortunately, he paid the bathhouse gang to protect his property. When he returns, he shall hear how valiantly they fought for him. Of course, it's a shame he'll also discover his property looted despite their greatest efforts."

The boys chuckle and nudge each other. Jamal sits straight and tall in front of the man, his face beaming as if he's just found Cook's secret store of sweets. I cringe, thinking of what Stinger and the boys might do to him after the battle.

Red Beard takes the woven helmet from Jamal's head and throws it to one of the bathhouse boys. The boy proudly tears off his turban and puts the helmet on.

"Take four gangs—two to fight, two to break in," Red Beard orders. He pulls out another helmet and scans Stinger's group. I think he's looking at me. My skin crawls. Instinctively, I reach for my scarf to cover my face. Red Beard freezes when he catches my careless gesture.

"You, there—"

I shrink back.

Stinger says, "That's Khubz. He doesn't know anything. It's his first time."

The man continues to address me. "Take two gangs and fight against the others." He throws the helmet at me.

Without thinking, I reach out and catch it.

The man smiles faintly beneath his red beard. Does he know I'm in disguise?

"No new kid's going to lead my gang!" Stinger snatches the helmet and pushes me. The fang on his ring cuts my cheek. He pulls the helmet on and starts yelling orders to his gang as I get to my feet.

After the two helmeted leaders organize their troops, they light torches from the fire and pass them around. When all's ready, Red Beard raises his sword in the air and shouts, "To Umar Street!"

A wild cry rises from the gangs, and everyone surges up the hill, torches glowing. I can't keep Jamal in my sights as the flood of bodies carries me off toward Umar Street.

The bathhouse boys arrive at the merchant's first, positioning themselves in battle formation in the middle of the street. The helmeted boy rides on the back of another boy, like a warrior on a horse, his stick-sword thrust into the air. Stinger, too, jumps onto the back of one of his friends and raises his mallet.

Loud crashes erupt near the house. The looters have begun their work. The boys break down the doors and windows of the shop and warehouse. The two leaders give a war cry and their "horses" bolt forward.

The rush of gangs follows, and I'm knocked over as the boys gallop toward one another,





waving their weapons in the air and shouting. I struggle to push my way out of the mob. If any citizens dare investigate the scene, they will think one gang is protecting the neighborhood by warding off a rival.

The flash of a small white qamis near the wall catches my eye. Badi. A bigger boy plows into him, knocking him backward, then lifts his club, ready to strike. A surge of energy courses through me, and I race over. I grab the older boy's club and sling it over the wall. He rushes at me like a demon.

I twirl away easily and slip behind him in one graceful move. Club-boy turns and lunges for me again, but I duck and spring away from him like a cat. He loses his balance. With a push, I send him tumbling over the wall.

My blood races, my arms tingle. I'm breathless. This is as exhilarating as dancing.

Soon a great cheer rises from Stinger's boys as the bathhouse gang runs away. The looters have finished their job, and several men on horseback arrive with Red Beard. My brother still perches on the man's saddle, his face glowing. All the boys gather around. I need to get to Jamal before Stinger does. I run to join them.

"Now what happens?" I ask.

"We celebrate in Red Beard's camp!" Stinger gazes at the leader. His smile fades as he looks at Jamal. "First I'll make lamb stew out of Red Beard's little pet. He won't recognize the kid by the time I get through with him."

Stinger points at my brother and yells, "Hey, you little turd—your bathies lost, and you didn't even fight." He scratches his chin with the fang on his ring so Jamal can see. "Come down and show us what kind of warrior you really are!"

I grab Stinger's arm. "No!"

He almost drops his mallet in surprise.

"He's mine," I say. "You stole my helmet—now it's my turn." I shove Stinger aside. "I'll make sure he never rides with Red Beard again."

Stinger stands there gawking as I push my way through the boys. He laughs behind me. "Flatten him like pan bread, Khubz!"

If I stop moving, I'll never do what has to be done. The wind of fate whips at my back, pushing me up to Red Beard's horse. "Put the boy down."

Red Beard shoves me away with his foot as if I were a bothersome puppy.

I swallow my fear. "Give me the boy!"

I grab Jamal's wrist and pull. He slides off into my arms, kicking and wriggling against my hold. Red Beard laughs as he watches us struggle. He turns his horse and shoots away, galloping toward the woods. Stinger's gang bolts after him, cheering.

I smile down at Jamal's frightened face.

"You're coming with me, little donkey."

His eyes grow round as kettle drums when he recognizes me.

"Morgiana!" he squeaks. He stops struggling and wraps his arms around me. "I want to go home."

to be continued

Appointment in Samarra

Retold by Lonnie Placchia

A Sufi Tale

A MERCHANT OF Baghdad was sipping tea in his garden when his servant ran up to him, breathless and trembling.

"Master," he cried. "I have just seen Death in the marketplace. She tugged at my sleeve as I passed, and when I turned she pointed at me with such a ghastly stare that I knew she had come for me."

"So you have seen Death," the merchant replied calmly, "as each man must. I understand your alarm."

"I must leave Baghdad and go far away from Death. I have a brother in Samarra. I will go there tonight, Master, and escape my fate."


"Samarra is more than a day's journey. Can you reach it by nightfall?"

"I will ride like the wind!"

"Then take my swiftest horse, and go with my blessing."

As the hoofbeats of the fleeing servant faded in his ears, the merchant, curious, set out for the marketplace. There he confronted Death.

"My servant has done no harm. Why do you point at him and disturb him with your ghastly stare?"

Death smiled. "I did not mean to frighten him. I was merely surprised to see him in Baghdad when I have an appointment with him this evening, at his brother's house in Samarra." 

Illustrated by Stephanie Brown

art © 2016 by Stephanie Brown





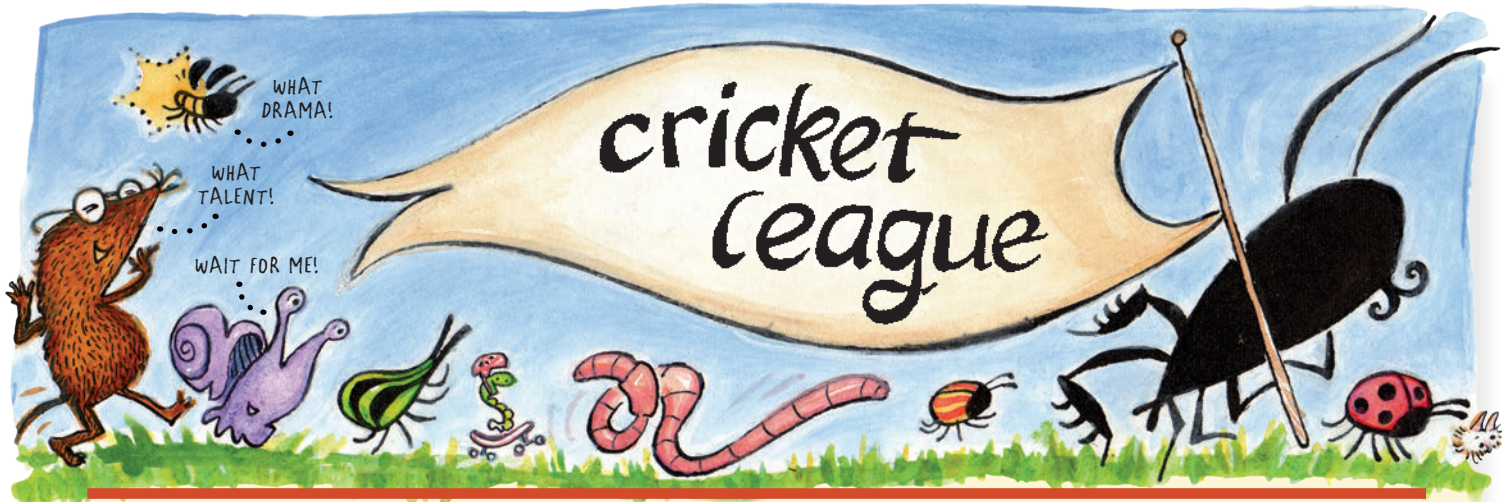
The Cold Gray Days of Winter

by Charles Ghigna

In the cold gray days of winter
When the sky turns iron blue
And the leafless trees stand silent
With nothing left to do,

There comes a cry across the land
That carries seeds of spring,
The echo of the distant hawk,
The sun upon his wing.

JD 2015



WINNERS
NOVEMBER 2015 ART CONTEST
Winter Joy



First prize 10 and under

Sophia Self, age 8
Birmingham, AL



First prize 11 and up

Riley L., age 13
Dillon, CO



Second prize 10 and under

Hope Davis, age 9
Greensboro, NC



Second prize 10 and under

Sydney Schneider, age 9
Homewood, AL



Second prize 11 and up

Katelin Rose Miron, age 13
Dubuque, IA



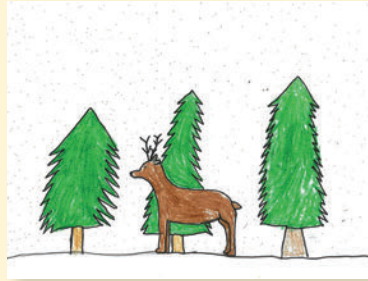
Second prize 11 and up

Miriam E. Shames, age 12
Caledonia, MI
Fox in the Snow



Second prize 11 and up

Sophia Sunkin, age 12
Trabuco Canyon, CA



Third prize 10 and under

Kinsley Lacina, age 9
Matthews, NC



Third prize 10 and under

Kathryn Whelen, age 8
Birmingham, AL



Third prize 11 and up

Emma Rose Gowans, age 12
Swansea, SC

Cricket & Ladybug: Abandon Ship!





Third prize 11 and up

Taylor Lynn Hahn, age 13
Dubuque, IA



Third prize 11 and up

Calista Smith, age 13
Asbury, IA



Third prize 11 and up

Addie Spahn, age 13
Dubuque, IA

NEW ART CONTEST

Ah, life on the Mississippi. Drifting lazily downriver like Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, catching fish, dangling your toes in the water, skipping school—No, wait! Forget that part. As Old Cricket says, rivers and writers and dreamers all seem to flow together. For this month's contest, everybuggy wanted to see your best drawing of life on the river.

Will you draw a historic river scene with steamboats or perhaps much older types of vessels, or your own cool raft with all the comforts of home? Perhaps you will focus on animals that live along—or in—the river. You might draw a river bustling with traffic like the Thames in London, or a quiet bridge over the Seine in Paris. Or your imagination might take you to a rushing river in Alaska, or the Nile or Zambezi in Africa, the Ganges in India, or up the Amazon in a canoe. Or you might draw a river from mythology or that exists only in your imagination.

Whatever floats your boat, everybuggy will be poling their raft to the Cricket Country mailbox, waiting to welcome aboard your best drawing of a river scene. And always remember “the custom of the river”: If your boat runs into trouble, it's Ladybugs and Pussywillows first! Ahoy!

Contest Rules

1. Your contest entry must be your very own original work. Ideas and words should not be copied.
2. Your entry must be signed by your parent or guardian, saying it is your own original work, that no help was given, and granting Cricket permission to publish prizewinning entries in the July/August 2016 issue or on our website.
3. Be sure to include your name, age, and full address on your entry.
4. Only one entry per person, please.
5. If you want your work returned, enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for each entry.
6. Incomplete entries cannot be considered. Your entry will be incomplete if you forget to include your age or a signature verifying that your work is original.
7. Your entry must be received by March 25, 2016.
8. Send entries to **Cricket League**, P.O. Box 300, Peru, IL 61354. (No faxes or email submissions, please!)

Honorable Mention

Maryn B., age 11, Scituate, MA. **Heather Baeza**, age 12, Spring Hill, FL. **Mariel Biedler**, age 7, Westville, OK. **Erin Bughman**, age 13, Dubuque, IA. **Amelia Chief**, age 9, Los Angeles, CA. **Clara Endacott**, age 11, Omaha, NE. **Carson J. Fisher**, age 12, Peosta, IA. **Leah Furney**, age 9, Evanston, IL. **Hae Bin Han**, age 12, Dubuque, IA. **Laney Herman**, age 14, Dubuque, IA. **Gillian Jaeger**, age 11, Dubuque, IA. **Kate Lowe**, age 9, Birmingham, AL. **Aditi N. Tarkar**, age 14, Louisville, KY. **Ishani N. Tarkar**, age 9, Louisville, KY. **Eva Zlochower**, age 8, Parkland, FL.

To see more winning Cricket League entries, visit our website:
cricketmagkids.com/contests

Solution to Crossbird Puzzle

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| O | | | | | | D | R | | W | | L | |
| B | E | | E | L | I | | N | | W | O | | F |
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“SWEET THAMES! RUN softly, till I end my song,” wrote the sixteenth-century poet Edmund Spenser. Rivers and writers get along well together. There must be a mysterious attraction. So many novelists—and painters, poets, and songwriters—have drawn inspiration from rivers. Dickens was fascinated by London’s Thames, and James Joyce by Dublin’s Liffey. In one of his best-known songs, Stephen Collins Foster longed to be “way down upon the Swanee River” even though he’d never actually seen it. And the “great gray-green, greasy Limpopo River, all set apart with fever trees” is where Rudyard Kipling’s Elephant’s Child got his trunk.

Talking about rivers, we can’t overlook Samuel Clemens, who fell in love with the Mississippi and became a steamboat pilot long before he became a famous writer. He found his new name on the river: “Mark Twain,” a boatman’s term meaning “two fathoms,” or twelve feet of water. Later, he turned the river into *Life on the Mississippi*, a rib-tickling, uproarious book of travel and autobiography. The mighty waterway always flowed through his veins. In Hartford, Connecticut, he even had a house built to look like a Mississippi steamboat and in it wrote many of his finest stories.

Whether or not we write about them, we have our own special rivers. Like all rivers, they start small, wind their way through changing landscapes, growing wider and deeper as other streams join them. Life on the Mississippi? Simply: our lives.

Old Cricket

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on the scientists.



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