



**Sleep Stories
And Chapters
Tales in the Style of
*Home of the Brave***

**By Mead School Emerald
& Lapis LA Classes**

SLEEP STORIES AND CHAPTERS - TALES IN THE STYLE OF HOME OF THE BRAVE

BY MEAD SCHOOL EMERALD & LAPIS LA CLASSES

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The Formatting Team

Formatting Coordinator - Sawyer

Cover Art /Title Page - Connor

Book Order - Jade

Troubleshooter - Tony

Technology - Augie, Kyle

Applegate Research - Dean

The Editing Team

Editing Control System - Eliza

Editors - Austin, Casey, Eliza, Isaac

This book is dedicated to the struggle of refugees everywhere.

Welcome, Parents and Friends

Welcome, parents of Emerald and Lapis! This trimester we have been working very hard to produce the work you are about to see. We very much want you to read the whole book and view all of our writing, but that is entirely up to you. If you are looking for someone's specific work, the index link is here: [Link to Index](#). Below is a glossary of names and terms commonly referenced in the book.

GLOSSARY

- Kek - An eleven-year-old South Sudanese refugee who is resettled in Minneapolis, Minnesota, with his aunt and cousin; he is the main character.
- Ganwar - Kek's fifteen-year-old cousin who, with his mother, Nyatal, is resettled a year earlier than Kek; he fights frequently at school. He lost a hand in the attack on Kek's village.
- Lou - A widowed farmer who gives Kek and Ganwar a job working on her farm; owner of the cow, Gol.
- Gol - A cow who reminds Kek of home, so he names her Gol, which means *family*.
- Hannah - Kek's American friend, who helps him adapt to life in America.
- Dave - An American man who works for a resettlement agency. His job is to help Kek adjust.
- "Flying Boat" - The term Kek uses to describe an airplane.
- "Bad Men" - The term Kek uses for the Sudanese militia that attacked his village.
- Lual - Kek's older brother who was killed in the militia attack.

What Does It Mean to *Write In The Style Of...*

By writing in the style of Katherine Applegate, we had to explore and mimic the author's stylistic choices, such as metaphor, line breaks, and word choice. Joy hoped that by having us write like Katherine Applegate did in *Home of the Brave*, we would gain a deeper understanding of how she wrote the book, and why she wrote it the way she did. In her interview with *Kid Lit Craft* on March 14, 2017, Katherine Applegate said,

"I think the best writing advice [I] ever got was to take a book you love, and then just copy it. Literally. Type in the words. Feel why the choices were made, having already read it a couple times so you know it. It's an interesting exercise—try it sometime—because you find yourself asking why every choice was made" (kitlitcraft.com/blog).

This is exactly what happened to us when we began imitating Applegate's style. As Applegate learned, we had to "think musically," and we had to think about "how [each line break] sounds" in order to figure out where to put those line breaks. We spent classes breaking down Applegate's word choices for Kek's voice and analyzing when she chose repetition or alliteration as techniques to tell the story in Kek's rhythm. In conclusion, we feel that not only have we done a good job in imitating the voice of Katherine Applegate's *Home of the Brave*, but we also learned how authors develop a specific writing style for each book they write.

-- Eliza Raben with Joy Lenters

Introduction to Applegate's Use of "Sleep Stories"

In *Home of the Brave*, Katherine Applegate includes chapters that she calls Sleep Stories. Here, she shows Kek's nightmares from the traumatic events he has experienced while facing a civil war followed by a dangerous trek to reach a refugee camp. The Sleep Stories are written in free verse like the rest of the book, but Applegate deliberately shortens each free verse line to reflect the momentary quality to dreams as each image floats by, and then is gone. These are the dreamlike elements she portrays by using figurative language such as metaphors and personification. She also employs those sudden changes of environment that can happen in a dream - "morphing," Joy calls them - when a visual or auditory element changes shape or sound... These sleep stories include Kek's recurring theme - not being able to speak in a moment of urgency or not being heard when he does call out in an urgent moment. Then there are those standard dream motifs, such as mixing up people and places, as in when the men who attack Kek's village appear on the airplane carrying Kek to America or when Minnesota snow falls on Kek's African village. The Emerald and Lapis LA groups deconstructed the way that Applegate wrote the Sleep Stories, and we wrote our own Sleep Stories in the same style as Applegate. Most of us wrote two Sleep Stories; some of them are from the point of view of one of the characters from *Home of the Brave*, and some of them are written from the writer's point of view. The Sleep Stories are organized alphabetically by the writer's last name, but you can use the [Index](#) to find a specific story if you want. Enjoy!

-- Augie DeRose with Joy Lenters

Sasha Caplan
Emerald L.A.
Ed. Isaac Ylitalo

SLEEP STORY I

*I am in my America home.
Lual is there with Mama and Father,
and my aunt is cooking food on the stove.
Ganwar is talking to Lual in a strange different language.*

*I ask my mother what Ganwar and Lual are saying,
she looks at me and in her
eyes I see the sunlight glistening.
But then I see a giant fire storming from the
pupil of her eyes.*

*The magical lights go out
and then the bad men come
and they take out their guns
and start saying words
that ring in my ears
until all I hear is a faint scream of Father and Lual.*

*I see Mama reach out to me,
but all I can do is stand there
and watch the bad men kill and hate for a reason
I will never know.*

*When the magic lights turn on again,
I see Lou walk into the house
and say,*

*you shouldn't have left
and I watch as I see
Gol fade away,
and even through
all of this,
I am standing still,
watching blankly at Gol
disappearing from my life.*

SLEEP STORY II

*I am in a grazing field,
Gol is there,
and Lual, Mama, and Father.
I give Gol a hug and then I tell Mama and Father
of everything
I've done in America.*

*How my boy has grown,
Father says.
But it would be better
with you, Mama.
I say.
Mama gives me a stern look
and says,
My silly boy, I can be with you every day if you find me.
I look at her and then I see desperation in her eyes
Dave the helping man is going to find you
I say with hope,
but inside
I feel like Dave
cannot find her.*

*You should listen to her,
Father says,
Come and find her.
Gol's eyes widen
I can feel her
trying to tell me something.
if only I could understand.
Mama looks at me with a smile,
and I feel scared.
It is like hide and seek, Kek,
She looks at Gol.
It will be fun.
Lual pats my back,
but all I feel
is a cold breeze
passing through.*

*I feel Gol passing by me
and the grass
whishing makes a whisper in my ear.
Kek,
I hear,
Your village is destroyed.
I look over to Lual and Father
but then
they disappear,
like nothing was ever there.*

*The trees, once vibrant with life,
have all died now.*

*The ground begins to crack
and Gol falls into a chasm,
Now I hear a final moo,
I feel a tear slip down my face.
I run to Mama
I can't let you go
I say.
But then Mama is gone...
I need to find her.*

Augie DeRose
Lapis L.A.
Ed. Austin Shapiro

SLEEP STORY I

(From Ganwar's point of view)

*I am in our tent in the village.
At first,
it is quiet,
but then I hear the buzz of the flying boats coming.*

*I follow my father and uncle
and my cousin Lual
and the other men of the village
to try to give the children and mothers time to run.
There is chaos as the men come
with knives and guns.
A tent is burning.*

*I see my cousin, Kek,
and his mother, running.*

But I cannot watch them.

*We try to stop the attackers,
but the men of our village are failing.
Those of us that are left,
we run.
A cloud of bullets fly after us like angry bees.
I feel the burning sting of one on my arm,
but I keep going.*

*I run,
through the dead trees
and I hear the crunching snow
and I am at the apartment,
and it is quiet.
The men with guns are gone.
And I see Lual
and I move towards him,
but he vanishes.*

SLEEP STORY II

(From Mama's point of view)

*I am running with Kek,
and the stampede of people
trying to escape,
and I hear the gunfire,
raining down on the village.*

*I see Lual and Dak running towards the flames.
I cry out,
but they vanish into the fire.
I pull Kek along.*

I fall.

I see men with guns in the distance.

Kek says something to me,

but I cannot hear him

over the screams of the people.

I shout for him to go,

to leave me.

He runs,

and he disappears into the trees.

I crawl into the bushes,

with my face against the ground.

Everything is black.

I hear buzzing

and crackling

and shouting

coming closer.

A loud bang echoes through the air.

I see the faint light of fires coming closer.

I slowly get to my knees.

There is fire everywhere.

I look towards the trees,

where Kek vanished,

but I cannot see them

through the dark gray smoke.

I run into the smoke,

*towards the trees,
but the smoke clears
and it is day
and the trees are gone.
And so is Kek.*

*I start walking,
looking at the blue sky
and the yellow sun.
Hoping that I find
someplace where I am safe.
Someplace where I will see Kek and Lual and Dak again.*

Connor Flood

Lapis L.A.

Ed. Austin Shapiro

SLEEP STORY I

*I am standing.
Around me, the village burns,
and snow gently falls.
The moon slowly morphs into
the eyes of a dying baby,
before the sky erupts in flames.
The sound of guns is surrounding me,
yet the bullets do no harm, for they turn into snowballs.
Then Dave appears next to me.
He takes my hand, and the surrounding landscape becomes
the snow covered land of dead trees.
Ganwar replaces Dave,
and Gol is on my other side.*

*I stand there, screaming for Mama,
but the words become silent, gray fog.
Gol says, Mama is here, you just need to look,
in Dave's voice.
Slowly the moon turns to Mama's face, smiling down at me.
I cry tears of joy, which become white, cold snow,
like knives falling down your face, making tiny little cuts.
And then, that face becomes a flying gun,
speeding right towards me,
before I awake.*

SLEEP STORY II

(From writer's point of view)

*A normal morning.
Vegemite toast with butter and avocado,
makes a normal breakfast.
The waves crashing on our beach.
We just admire them.
No reason to be afraid,
no reason to feel scared
or anxious,
no fear of human contact,
just normal again.*

Noah Grob

Emerald L.A.

Ed. Eliza Raben

SLEEP STORY I

*I feel the hot grass under my feet
and the blazing sun on my back.
Not burdened yet with the regret*

*of leaving my mother,
or the death of my brother and father.
I sit down next to
one of the few trees
in the savanna
and see Gol grazing the grass.
But then out of nowhere
I'm toppling onto Gol's back,
riding through dozens upon dozens of dead bodies
of the people from my village
covered in blood.
I push Gol faster and faster,
desperate to escape this horrible place
Finally, I reach the end of the field.
Instead of seeing the familiar and peaceful sight of the savanna
I reach a busy place.
I'm running through a path now of dark stone
and it is unbelievably cold
and I feel my eyes burning
and white little puffs start coming down from the sky,
and it is becoming colder and colder.
I jump off of Gol's back
tumbling into a car
with a belt around my body choking and strangling me
and my friend, Dave, saying
It's okay, Kek. It will all be over soon...*

SLEEP STORY II

*I'm perched on a little patch of grass.
I see big white tents looming in the distances
and somehow I know it will be safe there
but then out of nowhere*

*a stampede of people start running toward the tents, bad people.
They carry knives and different weapons of all sorts.
I try to move to help the innocent people
inside the tents but I can't,
I'm frozen in place.
Now my ears are ringing with the shouts of people.
The scene has dived into chaos.
There are bodies of bad and good sprawled out across the land.
But just as sudden as it had started,
I am back with my family in our old hut.
They are laughing and talking.
I feel I should be happy too,
but I know this isn't right.
Then their laughing comes to a sudden stop
as they drop dead on the spot,
with the life drained out of their eyes.
I see the men with knives behind their bodies
but I cannot speak or move or do anything but watch.*

Olivia Klar

Emerald L.A.

Ed. Austin Shapiro

SLEEP STORY I

*I wake up in my tent alone,
but I smell breakfast being cooked by Dave.
When I step outside,
all I can see
is a cattle herd full of Gols.*

They're not different cows like usual.

*It's just all Gols,
like she multiplied.*

*Way off into the distance I can see Lual,
trying to ride on one of the Gols,
screaming like a wild man in terror.*

*THE MEN ARE COMING! THE MEN ARE COMING!
Lual says his final words as he gets shot.*

*When the Gols hear the gunshot,
they all start stampeding in my direction.*

Right as one of the Gols is about to trample me,
I am in school at my desk,
with Hannah trying to wake me up saying,
Kek, wake up, Kek.
Time to go home.

SLEEP STORY II

*I am in my village all alone,
but there is a slight whisper in my ear saying,
Move forward, Kek, it will be ok.*

*Once I walk outside, I am stepping through a swamp full of dead bodies.
When I take a closer look,
they are the bodies
of Hannah, Dave, Nyatal,
Ganwar, Lual, Mama, and Father.*

*I close my eyes not to look at the horrible sight,
but when I open my eyes, I am strapped to a chair*

*in a dark room with
a bright light shining onto me.
When, out of the dark, Hannah, Ganwar, and Lual run up to me,
their eyes swirling in different directions.
All three of them are laughing creepily in my face.
I close my eyes again, but when I open them,
I don't teleport.
I am in the same space,
but when Hannah, Ganwar, and Lual come up to me this time,
their color changes rapidly
all over their bodies with their eyes doing the same thing,
but swirling like a rainbow, changing the color
with the speed of bullets coming out of a gun.*

Zaac Lake

Emerald L.A.

Ed. Casey Rosenthal

SLEEP STORY I

*Cows graze around me, swaying softly like swamp grass.
My father carries dried grass to the feeding trough.
The cows moo softly as the snow falls.*

*The giant black birds of death rain eggs of fire and darkness down.
Men with knives and hate appear through the snow.*

*I am alone, dead trees go on and on, snow falls and falls.
Cold knives of pain poke through my coat, and buildings reaching to the sun
block all light out.
I am with my mother
We run.*

*We arrive at a place with tents, women, and children.
My brother is gone, my father is gone.
And the snow falls and falls.*

SLEEP STORY II

*I am part of a circle.
Laughter echoes off our huts.
My father stands in the middle telling stories to the children.*

*My brother and cousin stand outside the circle,
making jokes and whispering to each other.
Dave walks over and tells me it's time to go.
I ask for one more story but my father's gone.*

*Now my mother tells me it's time to go, but I ask for one more story.
Cows run by as fire spreads.
I am in the flying boat and the laughter begins again.*

*My mother tells me to run but I ask why.
Lual looks at me angrily and asks why I left them.
My mother looks up, saying to run.*

*And I am alone and the road stretches ahead of me.
On the sides of the road, dead trees stand like cold skeletons waiting to crumble.
For miles I walk on and on.*

Jade Moore
Lapis L.A.
Ed. Casey Rosenthal

SLEEP STORY I

(From writer's point of view)

*My coronation had started, and I was late.
I was nervously making my speech
when, suddenly, everyone melted around me.
I appeared in the woods.
I was surrounded by trees and plants.
I looked around, scared and afraid.
I didn't see anyone,
so I tried to fly,
but I couldn't take off.
My wings had been destroyed.
It felt like my back was on fire.
I tried to scream for someone,
but I wasn't making any noise.
I began to run, faster and faster,
until my wings got caught on something.
I turned around.
A person with no face was grabbing my wings.
I tried to scream again.
It was like someone had grabbed my throat.
Then I woke up in a cold sweat
to my alarm at midnight,
my back in extreme pain.*

SLEEP STORY II

(From writer's point of view)

*I am running along an open field.
I don't see anyone else.*

*All I see
are a few horses.
The sun is setting,
and the sky is filled with an orange glow.
Then, I see a rabbit. I chase it into the sunset.
The soft pat of its feet is swallowed by my
loud rustle.
But then, the sun goes down
and my peaceful field turns into
darkness.
Is anyone there? I ask,
and I choke as I speak.
Hello... a voice growls
from the darkness.
I freeze in place.
I am screaming, but no sound comes out.
Suddenly, someone grabs me hard.
I wake up with chills,
my heart beating out of my chest.*

Kyle Motill
Lapis L.A.
Ed. Isaac Ylitalo

SLEEP STORY I

*Guns, fire, death all around me.
My village is raided,
and my mother is gone.
A piece of yellow and blue appears in my hand.
It's blurry, while my vision fills with blood
as I disobey my mother's orders,*

*and I drop.
The screaming and crying stops.
My mother cries next to me in a room full of light
like the one at the camp.
I'm in a bed with big railings.
I look over at my father and my brother Lual.
Men in white coats are there
I take a deep breath in,
but I can't breath,
and I try to yell,
but nothing comes out.
Just clouds of vapor.
Then, I see a blue-gray plastic bag over my head.
I open my eyes, and I'm with Ganwar,
no death,
no bodies,
and still no mother.*

SLEEP STORY II

(From Mama's point of view)

*I wake up with Kek.
There is a fire,
and guns,
and a plane.
I take Kek's hand, and we run.
We run until I fall.
I tell Kek to run.
He refuses.
I tell him again.
He says his legs are sore.
Hide, hide in the trees, I say.
He runs, but he doesn't realize he's grabbing my dress.*

*It rips, and he runs into the woods.
A few minutes later,
a man helps me get up.
Run! he says,
as he gets my dress unstuck.
Then, I go, but the trees turn into a dark void that engulfs the man.
I see Kek on the floor with bloodshot eyes.
As I get closer, there is a bird -
a buzzard pecking at Kek's lifeless body.
Then, I wake in the tent of our village
one hour before it happens.*

Tony Piazza
Lapis L.A.
Ed. Eliza Raben

SLEEP STORY I

(From writer's point of view)

*I am at Grandma's house,
playing in my bedroom.
I see my cousins.
I hear a lullaby from downstairs.
I want to go down the stairs,
so I do.
The singing has ended.
I climb on the bed where my grandpa lies, lifeless.
I wake up.
I feel useless, so I remind myself that
I was too young to do anything.
All of a sudden I hear the singing again
I want to go back.
Back to when I was young,*

and sing.

All I have to honor him
is to become smarter, even smarter
than *him*.

SLEEP STORY II

(From writer's point of view)

I'm walking in the woods behind my old house.

*The trees sing with the wind,
and the snow crunches under my feet.*

The cold air bites at my mouth.

As I walk,

I see an old, broken statue of a person.

I wonder who it is.

The statue's blank stone eyes stare unseeing at the ground.

The emptiness of its gaze, haunting me.

It has been here for a long time, far longer than me.

All of a sudden, I see the old house.

I question why.

Why we had to leave.

*A sudden wave of sadness runs across my body,
remembering all of the time I lived there.*

I step into the house.

*I remember the smell of the house,
and the feeling of the rugs rubbing against my feet,
and the cracking of the fireplace,
and the warmth of my father.*

Eliza Raben

Lapis L.A.

Ed. Isaac Ylitalo

SLEEP STORY I

I am on a flying boat with Lual and Father.

They are talking to me,

but I cannot hear what they say.

I ask them to speak louder, please, but the words come out in English,

and they only stare at me blankly before they keep talking,

soundless like the deep night.

Suddenly there is a bang,

and the flying boat shivers as if cold,

and the sky outside the round windows turns to fire,

and the flying boat falls into a dizzying spiral,

plunging like a bird with a broken wing.

I look around for Lual and Father, the smoke clouding my eyes,

and find them right before they are pulled upwards,

and dissolve into white clouds.

The flying boat lands with a crash,

bouncing and skidding along barren ground

before it stops at the entrance to a city of ragged tents.

The flying boat is smoking and twisted,

and I have to clamber over

chunks of metal that jut like broken ribs into the belly of the flying boat.

I push my way out into hard afternoon sunlight,

and walk into the endless land of tents.

SLEEP STORY II

(From writer's point of view)

I am walking along a field of

dry, barren dust, carrying a heavy stone.

Two boys are there with me.

*One carries a large stone-like mine,
his hair, red
like a dying fire.
The other's hair is dark, and
in his hands he holds a long rod of steel.
I don't know
how long we walk,
but finally we come to a river,
a wide, flat ribbon of soft grey.
It seems peaceful, inviting, and calm.
But then the water starts to churn,
the surface twisting and writhing
like something alive.
The river explodes into fragments of mist as
a kelpie- a huge,
powerful gray-green horse with
water rolling off its
ice-slick hide in sheets-
rears up from the river.
My heart pounds with fear, but
the two boys are calm.
The second boy,
the one with the metal rod,
leaps at the kelpie.
A line of silver is his rod swinging down
before it hits the kelpie's shoulder with a crack.
Blood sprays over me,
and the monster shrieks. I'm shrieking too now,
howling as the burning blood sears my skin
like a hundred tiny claws.
The pain fades and my vision clears*

*just in time for me to see the boy with the rod slip under
the water,
dragged down by the creature we fight.
He doesn't reappear,
but the kelpie does.
This time it is the red-haired boy who
charges, throwing his stone at the kelpie's face.
Again, the blow hits.
This time though,
I know that the blood will burn.
I spin and try to run, frantic, but
my legs feel as thick and unwieldy as
blocks of wood,
and nothing seems to work right.
Again, the blood washes over me,
and again my skin is raked
by little claws that burn instead of cut.
The boy with red hair falls
to the ground,
pounded by churning hooves.
This time, though,
I am not scared. I am angry.
I rush at the monster,
leap, and
smash the stone right into
the kelpie's head.
It sways, and
like a fallen tree, sinks dead into the river.
As it falls, bright ruby drops
spray from its wounds.
I don't run. I can't run.*

*The acid blood of the dead kelpie washes over me
one final time.*

And this time,

the claws dig deeper,

tunneling inside of me and leaving

trails of pain like fire behind them.

They hit something deep inside of me,

something important.

The world blackens like it's been charred by fire

as I fall.

Casey Rosenthal

Lapis L.A.

Ed. Austin Shapiro

SLEEP STORY I

I am in the flying boat.

Lual, Mama, and Father are there.

They are talking in this gibberish language.

But...

Lual looks out the window.

They're here! he yells.

Hide! Run!

But Lual, I say, there is nowhere to run or hide, we are trapped in the boat!

I look out, but I can't see, all I see is black clouds.

BAM!

Suddenly, the flying boat shudders with pain.

The men with guns arrive,

and the noise of the guns fill the air.

More flying boats,

from the men with guns,

drop pieces of metal, the size of Father's finest cattle on the ground.

*They billow out in huge red smoke, and tear up the ground.
The flying boat struggles.
The engines catch fire, and start coughing in pain.
We fall.
When we hit the ground, everyone is gone.
It is only me, Mama, and Ganwar.
All the trees are dead, the ground is dotted with blood and dead bodies.
Here there are many tents.
A man named Dave
says he will help, but I can't speak.
All that comes out of my mouth is white clouds of steam that disappear in the sky.
Dave brings me to a land of sadness and cold.
Here there are rows and rows of brick houses.
Ganwar and my aunt are there.
We wait.*

SLEEP STORY II

(From Ganwar's point of view)

*I am playing in our village.
Kek is there.
He is high up in the acacia tree, believing he can fly.
A man, he says Dave is his name,
tells me to come.
The world turns upside down.
Dave tells me to say, Airplane.
I speak, but nobody hears me
The militia comes to take away our men.
I try to run, but I fall.
I fall with my aunt to a dead land.
The acacia trees and all the great oaks turn grey, and they shrivel up.
The world is white, covered in flakes of cold snow that bite my skin like angry flies.
I try to speak again, but, still, nobody hears me.*

Me and my aunt wait.

We wait for Kek.

Jack Schenck

Emerald L.A.

Ed. Eliza Raben

SLEEP STORY I

I am with Dave and Hannah, back in my hut at the village.

At first I see no one else, and then

a single cow emerges.

It is Gol.

We stroke her and pet her,

but then the men with guns come

and they shoot her.

I start to cry,

but then suddenly we are on a flying boat.

Hour after hour,

day after day, we stay on the flying boat,

but the flying boat doesn't land.

All of a sudden I feel

a bump,

and then I see a dark shape getting larger in the window,

and I scream.

It is another flying boat about to crash into us,

but then I am in my class at school,

and when I look at my classmates,

all I see are

hating eyes staring deep into my soul.

SLEEP STORY II

*I'm on the so-fa,
and I look around,
and there are people everywhere, staring at me.
I try to speak,
but all that comes out are hating words,
and I can't close my mouth.
Everyone is starting to talk to me, but I can't hear them.*

Arabella Serfilippi

Emerald L.A.

Ed. Isaac Ylitalo

SLEEP STORY I

*I feel the dry dirt on my feet.
I brush it off with a fast
sweep of my hands and walk
into the tent. Behind me I hear
a fast flap of the tent's fabric closing,
but all I see is white light burning my eyes.
My stomach turns, and my vision blurs.*

*I close my eyes tight
but when I open them again I am at the grocery store.
Standing right in front of me is Mama, Father, and Lual.
They stare with dark cold eyes that used to be warm and loving,
and then they yell.
You left us! You left your family!*

*Their voices sting my ears
in a million different types of pain.*

*I go to cover my ears,
but there is blood where I once had ears.
I close my eyes tight
once again
hoping that it will all go away.*

*When I open my eyes once more,
I am frozen in place in my village,
but no one is there.*

*Then, I look down,
and see the bodies of my friends and family.
I stare at their stone-cold faces,
tears drip down my face like a waterfall.
I see blood and madness.
I cannot move.*

SLEEP STORY II

*I look around me, and all I see is darkness.
I feel nothing; I see nothing.
It's like every living thing just died.
I want to feel as if I was ensnared in my
families' arms.
I hope they will come rushing through the darkness,
and bring only light,
but they do not come.
I want to hope, but my mind says no,
but my heart says yes.*

*I close my eyes and I hope and hope.
It feels like hours that I have been hoping for.
I slowly open my eyes, and I see them!*

*But then they vanish into a mist.
I hear the whispers of their words in my ears.
Please help us, Kek. Help us!
I turn to face the other side in shame of what I did,
but what I see is madness,
I see bloodshed bodies and death.
I see me, with a trail of bodies.
I follow it.*

*I come to a throne with an evil me perched on top,
and my family members' heads on spikes.
With blood dripping with a
Plop--plop--
Then, he speaks.
This is your doing, Kek. YOU killed your family.
Then, a spike comes from the ground and pierces me in the heart.
I feel as if hope has failed me,
and the whole world fades away.*

Austin Shapiro
Lapis L.A.
Ed. Casey Rosenthal

SLEEP STORY I

*I walk with Mama through the barren land of snow.
The snow is piled high,
up to my knees.
We have been walking for a long time,
but my legs do not ache.
Mama, I ask,
why are all the trees dead?*

*I don't know, Kek, she replies and touches my cheek.
Suddenly, Mama stops walking.
She starts to listen for something.
Her face becomes very alert.
Stop, Kek, she says.
I obey, and she keeps listening.
I listen, too.
I hear peoples' feet crunching in the snow.
Come, my child, Mama says,
and pulls me behind one of the dead trees.
The crunching stops.
Mama steps out from the shelter of the tree.
In less than one second, I see snowballs,
flying through the sky at Mama.
I rush out to try and help her.
Run, Kek! she yells, but I cannot leave her side.
I begin to get hit with snowballs all over my body.
I reach my arms out
to try and block the snowballs,
and they harmlessly collapse when they hit my hands.
Mama, I say with a smile, they are harmless!
But for some reason, my voice is not heard.
Come, Kek. Run!
I follow Mama away.
We run to the side,
through the barren land.
We stop,
and there are no more snowballs.
We look up at the sky,
and the trees' green leaves
come back like magic, right in front of our eyes.*

*The snow disappears from the ground,
and my eyes already feel better.
We look ahead,
and now there are many trees and bushes in front of us.
Mama leads me through the land of trees
to a place with dark green tents.
There is a person in front of the tents,
but I do not know who yet.
As we come closer, I see it's Dave.
I haven't seen him since the flying boat came down out of the sky.
You'll be safe here, Dave says to us,
and Mama nods.
We walk into the land of many tents.*

SLEEP STORY II

(From Ganwar's point of view)

*I'm in the apartment.
Kek and
his mother are there,
but my mother isn't.
Kek is watching TV,
and his mother is in the kitchen
washing some dishes.
Where's my mother? I ask Kek's mother.
Kek's head turns from the TV to me
as if it was a crazy question.
And how did you get here? I ask, again, to Kek's mother.
He looks at his mother,
and then back at me.
Where's my mother,
I repeat when no one answers.*

*She is gone, Ganwar,
Kek replies in a sad voice.
She died when the rest of our family got attacked in the village.
But she's alive! I exclaim.
She's here. Living in America with us!
Kek shakes his head.
No, Ganwar, we're lucky that they got you over here, he says.
I've been here for a year with Kek,
Kek's mother pipes in,
to answer my second question.
I'm leaving now, says Kek,
and he turns off the TV.
Where are you going? asks his mother.
Out with friends, he replies.
Be home by eight, she calls.
Sure, Kek says, and shuts the door.
When the door closes,
it turns into night,
and Kek is sleeping on the couch above me.
I get up and tap his shoulder
to wake him up.
Kek, I whisper, wake up.
What is it? he asks.
What's going on here, Kek? I ask.
He looks at me with a puzzled look.
Where's my mother, and how did yours get here?
Me and my mother got here by plane a year ago,
and your mother isn't here.
She never will be.
She was lost when the village was attacked.
But she's here! I exclaim.*

*It must be in your dreams, Ganwar, he says.
Their ghosts are haunting you.*

Isaac Ylitalo
Lapis L.A.
Ed. Eliza Raben

SLEEP STORY I

*I'm in the village, everything is burning. I see Mama in the tall grass.
I try to yell to her that everyone is dead... but I can't speak, all I can do is cough.
She is disappearing into the smoke.
The smoke clears, and everything is gone.
I see a flying boat in the sky.
It lands and a man tells me to come in.
I'm in the flying boat. There is a storm around me
and I'm all alone
nobody is there...
The flying boat lands.
When I exit the flying boat, there is nothing but sun and dead trees and cold
there is a man whose mouth moves but all I can hear is nonsense.
Then he says that his name is Dave.
He brings me to an odd box. He opens it and tells me to go inside.
It starts moving.
Then it stops, like a gazelle realizing it is safe from the lion.
When I exit the box he brings me to a building. Much bigger than my village huts.
When I go inside I see Father and Lual, but no Mama.
There is also my cousin and aunt, and her husband and kids.
But still no Mama.*

SLEEP STORY II

*Once there was a boy who could not walk.
He tried and tried and tried.*

*Nothing helped, though he tried as hard as he could.
When the men with guns came he could not run.
He tried to drag himself through the grass.
When the men found him, they asked where the other boys were.
They said that if he told them they would let him live.
The boy would not say.
They cut off his toes one by one.
He would not tell.
They used pliers to crush his teeth.
He would never tell.
They tortured him.
He would not tell them that the boys were hiding at the top of the old acacia tree.
They threatened to kill him.
He would not give up the location of the boys.
The men left him for the lions, like hunters just wanting the hunt and not the prize.
The boys came down from the old acacia tree and brought the boy to the camp.
They gave him the most food.
No one knew except the boy that it was his final meal.
When night came, the boys tried to make him comfortable.
But it was all in vain.*

Sawyer Young

Lapis L.A.

Ed. Eliza Raben

SLEEP STORY I

(From writer's point of view)

*I am outside with
my brother and mother.
I play with a ball.
I play for a long time*

*until we go in.
My brother playfully pushes me
but I still fall.*

*I fall through the floor.
I tumble and spin,
feeling the air against my face
as I get butterflies in my stomach.
I hit and bounce off the walls,
falling faster and faster.*

*I hit the ground hard on my back
everything hurts
I struggle to breathe
I can't move
I can't see
I cry out for help
but no sound comes out
I'm stuck crying
like a bird that hit the window too hard*

*then I wake up
sobbing in bed...*

SLEEP STORY II
(From Mama's point of view)

*I am in my tent,
like the rest of my village.
Kek is beside me,
he whispers,
I love you, Mama
I hug him close*

*Kek and Lual go outside
to look at the moon.
I follow.
We look up
at the bright shimmering light.*

*All of a sudden
I hear screams.
The moonlight becomes
a burning fire,
drowning the tent where we slept
I see Lual running to help.
I call out to him
Please! Come back!
But my voice is swallowed
by the roaring flames.*

*I look away
as the fire takes Lual.
The fire becomes angry men with guns,
and they come for me
and I see Kek grab my dress.
We must go,
he says,*

*and we run for the trees.
As I lose my grip on Kek's hand
the trees take Kek away,
but he laughs and giggles,
The trees are kind,
I think,*

but I hear the men coming.

I run again

*until I hear Lual,
screaming for help.*

I look up to see him

but it is just a sad little bird.

I trip on a root,

and then the men come,

and I hear Kek calling me.

Wake up, Mama

A Word about our Chapter Stories...

“Chapter Stories” is a term coined by Joy for the free verse “chapters” that Applegate writes to identify different events as they occur in the book. It is yet another form of writing we deconstructed together and then mimicked to learn more about the techniques that Applegate uses as a writer. Unlike writing Sleep Stories, when writing “Chapter Stories”, we do not just write the story in the style of Katherine Applegate. Instead, we write a story that can slide right into the book like it was meant to always be there. For these stories, we put them in order according to when they appear in the book, so you, the reader, can experience reading them chronologically as if they were a part of *Home of the Brave*. Enjoy!

-- Sawyer Young with Joy Lenters

Tony Piazza

Lapis L.A.

Ed. Eliza Raben

FLYING BOAT

(Takes place right before “SNOW”)

I step inside the big white boat with long wings

to the sound of talking in my language.

I find my seat on the winged boat, and to my amazement it starts to run,

faster and faster, until it leaps from the ground and glides up.

Somehow, its stiff, featherless wings keep it in the air.

I feel my body rising.

My ears pop like the fire at the village.

I finally decide to look out the round window

and I see inside the clouds.

I want to start a conversation with the lady next to me, so I do.

She is very kind,

even with that sad look she holds.

It does not take long until the boat lands

I do not get out

I am going somewhere they call Mini-so-da?

I wonder where or what that is.

But we are somewhere called Floor-e-da

I notice a lot of people exit

and a lot of paler people enter.

One pale woman sits next to me.

I try to talk with her, but when I do

she just stares at me
and mutters,
What?
I look at her, confused.
She turns back to look at her glowing rectangle.
I decide to keep to myself.

I guess Americans do not like to talk much,
at least not as much as we do.
We finally land at Mini-soda,
and everything is dead.

Austin Shapiro
Lapis L.A.
Ed. Casey Rosenthal

FLYING BOAT

(Takes place right before “SNOW” but after “FLYING BOAT”)

I am walking through the home
of the flying boats.
The helper lady is walking with me,
guiding me through the hallways.
The flying boat from Africa returned to Earth here.
The helper lady tells me we’re in Washington D.C.

As we walk down the big hallway,
I trip over someone else’s leg,
and I fall to the ground,
landing on my hands and knees.
Are you okay, Kek? the helper lady asks with her gentle voice.
I learned these words at the camp in Africa.

I nod my head to tell her yes.
I get up, and we keep walking.

The helper lady brings me to another big door,
just like the one in the flying boat home in Africa.
In the big door,
I walk down a long box into the flying boat.
When I get to the door of the flying boat,
another helper lady greets me.

She has long curling hair,
flowing from underneath a small hat on top of her head like a waterfall,
a little paler than the sun.
Hi, she says, and waves her hand at me, I'm Jessica.
My name is Kek, I say.
When she smiles, a great big smile, I am proud that I said something
in English that makes people happy.
She takes my hand and brings me to a chair on the wall
in the front part of the flying boat.
I sit down.

When the flying boat runs away from the Earth, my insides feel like a river,
flowing fast with fish.

Once my stomach has returned to feeling normal,
Jessica comes over to me.
Do you want any peanuts? she asks.
Pea - nuts? I ask, confused.
Pee-nutz, she says, here, they taste good.
She hands me a small bag
with little sand colored things inside.

How do I get to the pea - nuts? I wonder.

I scratch

and pull

and push

and squeeze

the bag of pea - nuts,

but nothing happens.

One of the other helper ladies

in the sky-colored coat

comes over to me.

Do you need help opening the bag? she asks.

Yes please, I say, and nod my head.

She takes the bag,

and it pops open.

She gives it back, and I take one of the pea - nuts.

I put it in my mouth.

It tastes bad, like mud.

So I spit it out onto the floor.

The loud voice in the wall of the flying boat

says something,

but I don't understand it.

Jessica gives me a big cup of water.

I don't want such clean and beautiful water

to go to waste, so I drink it all.

Now, I have to go to the bathroom.

I try to ask Jessica where is the bathroom,

but I forget how,

and all that comes out
is nonsense.

I don't know what to do,
she doesn't understand me,
so I start to cry.

Other people look at me
like a gunshot has been fired
right next to me.

Tears run down my face,
and onto the ground
like little raindrops falling from the sky.

Eliza Raben

Lapis L.A.

Ed. Isaac Ylitalo

UP-WALKER CALF

(Takes place at the same time as "WHAT THE HECK" and "GOD WITH A WET NOSE")

(From Gol's point of view)

I nudge the thick, cold snow,
seeing if there is any grass trapped under it.
The snow clings to my nose and freezes it.
I huff a little in disappointment,
tiny breath clouds fading in front of my eyes.
When will the milk-taker come with grass?
It does not taste very good
dry and stale and yellow like it has died,
but it is food.

I stomp my hooves for warmth,

the movement making dents in the frozen white ground.
I swing my head up
tired of staring at blank ground
and gaze up at the sky
soft and muted, with the dark web of sleeping trees on the sides.
Always behind me is the growl of shining maybe-predators
running through their strange, narrow pasture that smells of tar and rock.

A maybe-predator snarls louder than the others,
and I wonder if it is dangerous.
The maybe-predator is blood-color.
It huddles along the side of the rock-tar pasture
and I wonder why it does not run like the others.
Maybe it is injured.
The side of the maybe-predator jolts open,
and an up-walker slides out.
I watch it warily
and prick my ears in surprise as another up-walker bounces from
the belly of the maybe-predator.

It is only a calf
smaller than the first up-walker
and it looks almost like one of the sleeping trees
thin and dark against the snow.
It struggles to match the pace of the taller one
like a calf following after its mother.
They do not look like predators
but I keep watching them in case they decide to attack.

The up-walker calf steps towards me
and puts out one front hoof.

Its hooves look like the milk-taker's
long and slender and delicate.
I walk forward carefully
and the up-walker touches my coat lightly
bare, peltless hoof warm against my side.
It runs its hoof along my damp, cold flank.
I flinch a little at first, but then relax
since the up-walker calf is not hurting me.
I can tell now that this one is not a predator.

Jade Moore

Lapis L.A.

Ed. Casey Rosenthal

Dave's Story

(Takes place in between "INFORMATION" and "SCHOOL CLOTHES")

Kek do you know why I decided to work with refugees,
Dave asks suddenly.
I shake my head.

Ever since I was a little boy,
just like you Kek, Dave said looking back at me,
I wanted to help people.
My mother was a nurse, so naturally I started off wanting to be a nurse too.

Dave pauses to look at me.

A nurse is like a doctor's assistant.

I nod to show I understand.

That only lasted a little while because a few months later I came home and told my mom I wanted to be a firefighter.

Excuse me,

but what is a firefighter?

I ask puzzled.

A firefighter sounds like a very strange job. Dave laughs softly. Sorry Kek,
I forget you don't always understand me.

A firefighter is a person that
puts out big, dangerous fires
and makes sure people don't get hurt by them.

Oh, I say
dragging the word out
like I heard
on the tv machine.

This continued to change around twice a month, Dave continues, until I got to college.
It was only me and my mother for my whole life
so we didn't have much money.
I ended up going to college a year late. By the time
I got to college, we had been hearing about the refugees coming from Sudan.

I look down at my feet sadly,
the don't-move-belt pressing on my neck.

I woke up one morning,
closer to the end of my
college years, and I
finally knew what I wanted to do, Dave says,
I wanted to help the refugees.

When I got out of college,

I got the job I work at now.

I smiled wide,
thankful that there were people like Dave in this world.

Isaac Ylitalo
Lapis L.A.
Ed. Eliza Raben

MAMA

(Takes place in between “INFORMATION” and “SCHOOL CLOTHES”)

(From Mama’s point of view)

Kek barely made it from the militia.
If he was but a second later to hide.
They would have seen him.
Someone came and put a bag over my head.
I do not know who it is.
They gagged me, tied me up, and carried me.
After what seemed to be hours, they stopped and untied me.

In the night, I was sure it was the militia that had captured me.
I could not escape them then, my leg was hurt.
There I stayed for three days, not putting up a fuss.
I knew I could escape after they went to sleep.

My leg was better.
I ran and ran.
I found a group of people.
They said they were looking for a refugee camp.
I went with them.
We walked for ten days, until we found a camp.

There, somebody told me that there was an inquiry looking for me.
The helping people at the camp said they would bring me over to America.
They claimed Kek had made it over there.
They told me that the next time a flying boat came, they would take me to America.

Zaac Lake
Emerald L.A.
Ed. Casey Rosenthal

CLASS FRIEND

(Takes place in between "CATTLE" and "LUNCH")

Me and one of my new class-friends
walk down the corridor together.
She says something in words I don't recognize.
When she realizes I don't understand,
she switches to English
she said it was nice to meet me.

I smile and say it was nice to meet her too.
We stand there looking, and
smiling at each other for a moment.

Then a woman with dark hair and red on her lips
bursts out of a door.
The moment the girl sees her
the smile drips off her face.
I have to go,
she says quickly,
and runs off.

I stand there for a moment wondering

who the woman with the strange lips is.
But before I can ask,
I am swept away by the river of students
coming my way.

When I ask Mr. Franklin about her,
he says that some people come to America
seeking shelter but sometimes get much more
then they bargained for.

I look up at him showing that I don't understand,
he looks down at me and smiles,
Kek, you know how you came here
fleeing your old life?
I nod slowly to show I understand.
Well, some people never escape it.

Oh, enough of this!
He says,
Go have some lunch!

Casey Rosenthal
Lapis L.A.
Ed. Austin Shapiro

STORIES

(Takes place in between "NOT-SMART BOY" and "MAGIC MILK")

I am walking home with Hannah.
I am very sad, and disappointed.
We cross through the alley.
How did you even get here anyway,

she asks.

That is a very long, and painful story, I say.

Let's sit down, Hannah says.

We have all the time we want.

I sit with Hannah in the gloom of night.

I was in my village.

Me and Ganwar were playing.

I was so happy then.

I had Mama, Father, Lual, and Ganwar with me.

Then they came.

The men with guns.

They came to take the women, and kill the men.

I was terrified.

I ran with Ganwar, we ran to the forest.

We hid.

That night we watched the village burn in silence.

We walked with the other boys to a place with many tents.

It was a hard journey.

Many of us died from hunger, and the tigers.

We made it to the camp and we knew all was safe.

Then we waited there for many moons, until Ganwar went to America.

I wished him good luck before he left.

Then, I waited more.

Many long hard nights, in the cold.

Then, I got picked to come to the great America too.

Hannah stands in the silence.
I guess we better go now, she says.
Okay, I say. Let's try to mend my dishes.

Olivia Klar
Emerald L.A.
Ed. Austin Shapiro

THANKSGIVING

(Takes place between “BUS” and “LAST DAY”)

Hannah tells me about a tradition
called Thanksgiving where people have big meals
with lots of food, and a big thing called a parade.

The day of thanksgiving, Hannah comes to my apartment.

She drags me outside.

Come on, Kek! We can't miss the parade! she says.

What's a parade? I ask.

A parade is when a bunch of people gather around the street,
and watch big balloons fly by with a bunch of people holding
them and lots of big carts called floats with streamers,
she says.

What's a balloon? I ask.

A balloon is a big piece of rubber blown up with air,
and they float up in the sky,
Hannah replies.

Just as the parade starts,
everyone around us starts to scream and yell in excitement,
and so does Hannah, so I join in.

Me and Hannah have to cover our ears because
it is so loud.

During the middle of the parade,
Bright-colored ribbons are shot out everywhere
out of things that look like guns.

What are those? I ask.

Those are called streamer cannons.

Don't worry, Kek,

Hannah assures me,

those won't hurt you.

After the parade, we go to Hannah's apartment,
with our ears ringing like Ganwar and Lual
screaming at me back at the camp,
but this is 1000 times louder.

Jack Schenck

Emerald L.A.

Ed. Eliza Raben

LOST

(Takes place In between "HEARTS" and "WHITE GIRL" but before "LOST AND FOUND")

Me and Hannah are at the mall.

We have bought the dishes and we are about to get in the elevator,
when I see a blue and yellow dress that looks
exactly like my mother's

I run to it just as

the woman in the dress turns the corner. I follow her as fast as I can,
but then she wades into a surging crowd of people.

I push in after her, but lose sight of her in the chaos.

I freeze. I don't know where I am.
I shout Hannah's name,
but no one responds.
I go back to the shop, but she is not there.
Then I go to the elevator, but she is not there either.
Maybe she went to look for me,
I think hopefully.
I wait and wait for Hannah, but she doesn't come.
I am losing hope
when I finally see her.
Suddenly I start to cry, and she comforts me with soft words.
We take the bus home with the dishes.

-

Sawyer Young
Lapis L.A.
Ed. Eliza Raben

LOST AND FOUND BOX

(Takes place In between "Hearts" and "WHITE GIRL" but before "LIFE IS PERFECT")

We get on the bus,
before it starts moving
I reach into my pocket,
it's not there! I say,
what? Hannah asks,
I am silent for a second.
We have to go now! I exclaim.

Before she can respond
we rush back into the store.
What did you lose? Hannah asks,

I am silent again.
You can tell me. I can keep a secret.
It's not a secret. I finally say.
It's a piece of my mother's dress.
oh,
that must be very important to you,
She says kindly, like a warm summer day.

We start to search the shelves.
I start to lose hope.
It's the last thing I have to remember her,
I say, Until she comes back,
I can't hold it back anymore,
I start to cry.

Hannah comforts me.
It's ok, we will surely find it.
Hannah wraps her arms around me.
And gives me a big hug.
I hesitate. But then accept.

We finish checking the shelves.
I can't find it,
I say sadly.
I know! Hannah says,
we can check the lost and found!
What is a lost and found? I say.
I wonder how something can be lost
but also found.
When people find things left on the shelves,
they can put them there so the owners can find them,

she says.

I check the lost and found box.

We search through it.

We are almost at the end of it.

I am worried,

I say

But at the very bottom,

this must be it! Hannah says

I look to Hannah's hand, and

I see her holding a piece of yellow and blue fabric.

You found it! I say happily.

I am really glad that Hannah has found it,

and that she showed me

the lost and found box.

Thank you, I say.

No problem, that's what friends do!

I like having a friend, I say.

Arabella Serfilippi

Emerald L.A.

Ed. Isaac Ylitalo

LIFE IS PERFECT

(Takes place In between "HEARTS" and "WHITE GIRL")

I look down and see fresh manure,

I scoop it up with my shovel.

I look at Ganwar, and he looks at me.

I think maybe to tell Ganwar a joke,

He looks more glum than usual.

I stutter,
Ganwar, why does the chicken cross his legs. . .
Ganwar's eyes judge me.
Ummmm. . .
Why does the cow cross the grass on the street. . .
Finally Ganwar talks. . .
Kek stop! You are saying it wrong!!! It is not like at home, everything here isn't perfect!
So stop acting like it.

I stomp away in the mud. Until finally, Lou calls us inside.
When I walk in, Ganwar is already sitting in a chair with a plate of fresh cookies in front of him.
He looks at me,
I turn my head,
he turns his head, and I look at him. . .
Finally he talks.
I'm sorry Kek, I just had a bad day at school, that's all.
I forgive him, and we hug and eat cookies together.

Kyle Motill
Lapis L.A.
Ed. Isaac Ylitalo

BLACK BOYS

(Takes place in between "WHITE GIRL" and "SCARS")

I wake up to banging on my window. Pop--pop--pop, like popcorn in the microwave from the tv night.
I go over and see the boys that me and Hannah met the night before,
throwing the white balls at me yelling at me
Get out here black boy.

Ganwar wakes up on the couch.

What's that?

Then he walks over to the window,
and squints and asks,

Are they those bullies you were talking about?

I ask, What are bullies?

Bullies are people that hurt your feelings... or worse, Ganwar says.

Oh, they were bullies to us before
when me and Hannah were walking home, I say.

Ganwar walks over to the door,

I ask him, Where are you going?

Out to see those jerks he says,

I catch up to him.

When we get outside he says to the boys,

HEY!

They tell Ganwar, What? without seeing me.

You have been picking on my little cousin, haven't you? he says.

They laugh and say, Really that weirdo is your cousin?

Then Ganwar says Yeah you got a problem with that?

their faces go white as they realize Ganwar is serious

I-I did not mean what I said Yeah he didn't they lied.

Then Ganwar goes and pushes one of the kids to the Ground.

Stop! I say to Ganwar as the other one runs away.

No, they were picking on you, he says.

I shove Ganwar away or at least I try, because I could not move him in the slightest.

Somebody down the street, sees this, and runs, holding his glowing brick up to the boy yelling,

i'm going to call the police if you don't leave right now! Ganwar steps away,

Then I realize he's yelling at Ganwar.

Why is he afraid of these police?

As the man helps the boy up, Ganwar and I walk back to the apartment without saying a word.

-
Augie DeRose

Lapis L.A.

Ed. Austin Shapiro

POOL

(Takes place between “SUMMER” and “MORE BAD NEWS”)

A few days later,
Hannah takes me on the bus
to the swimming hole
that is called a pool.

It is shaped like a brick,
and the water is a second blue sky.
There are many children,
laughing and playing.
Some in the pool,
some in long chairs,
under the shade of fake trees.

Hannah takes me to a place beside the pool
where I change into clothes to wear in the water.
We walk back to the swimming hole.
The sun like a warm fire with our backs to it.

When I jump into the water,
I feel like a fish.
The cool water quenching the heat of the sun.
We swim for a long time.

Then, Hannah says, C' mon,
I want you to try the slide.
She points to a thing like a bent waterfall.

We climb out of the water,
and Hannah goes first,
up the ladder next to the bent waterfall.

I climb up next,
and I look down at the rushing river in front of me.
I climb into it,
holding tight to the sides.

Go already!
Says the boy behind me
With a voice that wants me to move.
I let go.
Then I speed down the slide
like a boat caught in rapids,
and I shoot out the end
into the water.

I think I like this slide,
I tell Hannah.
She smiles.

We swim for a while,
and go down the slide again,
and Hannah shows me a long board
that you can bounce on and jump off.

But now it is time to get back on the bus.
We change out of our water clothes
and go back into our normal ones.

As we walk to the bus,
I notice something white
poking out of Hannah's pocket.
What's that?
I ask as we get on the bus.

Just a letter,
she says with a smile.

I smile too,
remembering the paper she filled with words,
to her mother who is not a foster.

Thank you, she says.
Why are you thanking me? I ask.
She punches me playfully.
You got me to write that letter, she answers.
You convinced me not to lose hope.

Connor Flood
Lapis L.A.
Ed. Austin Shapiro

MUSIC

(Takes place between "WHITE GIRL" and "SCARS")

Hannah lets me inside her apartment.
It is a warm home,

with pretty carpeting and all sorts of pictures on the wall.

She leads me to her room.

C'mon, I have something to show you,

she says with a slight smirk.

I wonder what she means by her smirk.

She walks in and flops down on her bed

like a dead fish.

It is a soft bed ,with a complicated-looking pattern.

She takes out this little clear box

with windings of black tape on the inside.

What is that? I ask her.

Oh that, she chuckles, that's a cassette tape, it's something you record music onto.

She smiles.

I recorded some music that, well, I thought you would like,

she adds, this time quieter.

I feel my face heat up with blush,

though, I try to hide it with a slight smile.

She takes the little box and puts it inside a larger box,

a box that is mostly a grey color and has many buttons.

Is that cassette tape too? I ask.

No, Kek, that's a cassette player. It plays the music,

she explains.

She closes the little drawer, and she put the clear box in,

and presses a button with a sideways triangle on it.

I hear music,

similar to the music back at home,

but it's in the English words,

and it's sung in a soft and high voice.

There is an instrument playing that has an entrancing effect,

much like my people's music,
but it's different sounding.
I can make out one word.
The word is honey.

This is *Honey*, by an Australian band
called King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard,
Hannah says.

I am very confused because that name seems to tie up my tongue in a knot.
The singer's name is Stu,
and this song is saying how the person the song is directed to,
is sweet, like honey,
and that Stu wants to protect that person from any harm that can come to them,
Hannah tells me.

I start thinking of my mom,
and how she was sweet like honey,
and how I wish I could've protected her better,
and how I wish I could find her,
and how I would love to hear her sweet voice again.

My mind wanders to Gol,
and how I could save her,
and I could get her a better home,
a permanent home,
and how I could protect her like Stu wishes to protect the honey.

I wipe the tears that start to form around my eyes.

You O.K.? Hannah asks.

I'm O.K., just the music makes think
about things that I think about far too often.

Hannah frowns slightly.

Well would you like it to stop?

she asks in a concerned, worried voice.
I shake my head.
I like the music,
just not the things I think because of it.
Hannah smiles slightly.

We listened to a lot of other music by that
Lizard-Gizzard-King Wizard band,
some that scream and turmoil,
like a Gazelle trying to escape a Lion's grasp,
and others that make me feel sleepy,
some that relax me and take me to another place,
and there are some that I fall in love with.

Honey is one.

There is also one called *Straws in the Wind*.

The singing on that one is special,
and then there is the song of something like
a flying banana.

The name makes me laugh,
but the songs remind me of life back home,
especially the instruments Hannah called guitars.

Sasha Caplan
Emerald L.A.
Ed. Isaac Ylitalo

RACIST BOYS

(In between "SUMMER" and "MORE BAD NEWS")

I am coming back
from the swimming hole,
Hannah has taken the bus back.

I am walking.

I come to the doorway
of the apartment,
three boys
appear to be waiting for me.

Hello,

I say in my best English words.

I did not know he could talk?

A kid with dark brown hair says.

I can,

I say.

I learned English in my camp.

The three boys smile
a little grin
at me,
like Lual would after we did mischief at the camp.

Is it a joke?

I smile as well to not be rude.

Where are you from?

Another kid says.

I am from a place with many cows and tents,

I say.

I watch the three kids walk away from me,
they talk,
but I cannot hear what they are saying.

After a bit they walk back to me.

One with silver squares in their mouth says that I am dumb and black.

At my old home,

black was a color of evil and hate.

What have I done wrong

to be part of such evil and cruelty,

Mama and Father

would have been very disappointed in me.

When Hannah comes back

I am too sad

to have the

chocolate cow milk,

the sky

that was once sunny

is now sad

and gloomy.

I just want to sleep

like Gol does

when the sun hides in the tent of stars..

But I still see

Mama and Father

disappointed in me

when I close my eyes.

Hannah asks me what is wrong,

I worry that if I tell her

that I am part of evil and darkness

that she will not be my friend anymore.

I do not want her to not be my friend.

But I tell her of what the tall boys said to me,
because I like
to tell people of
everything I have seen,
but today
I do not like telling Hannah of what I have been told.

When I become quiet again
Hannah is not angry at me,
her eyes appear friendly,
but her face looks scared.
Could Hannah be scared of me?

Hannah begins to talk, I listen and hope that we are not no longer friends.
When Hannah talks I hear sadness in her voice,
but she is trying to hide it from me.
She tells me of how being black in America
does not mean being evil.
I am happy to hear that the boys were not saying I was evil,
I even smile happily.
Hannah looks at me like she has a question
but she does not say anything.

She then says that there is something called racism,
I do not understand what that means
I tell her.
She puts out her hand
and then asks me to put out my hand.
We hold each other's hand
and then she asks me if I see a difference.
But all I see are the colors that my village would use

to make beautiful images
of cattle and triumph.

She looks at me and says
I do not want you to be sad, Kek.
Let's have some chocolate milk.
Maybe I will tell you another time.

I follow Hannah to what she calls a fridge as she gets the chocolate cow milk.

Noah Grob
Emerald L.A.
Ed. Eliza Raben

GOL'S ADVENTURE

(Takes place in between "RUNNING AWAY" and "BUS")

I work hard at school. I am tired.
I get into Dave's car and without a word,
strap the belt around me.
I am glad Dave does not ask me anything.
When we get to my apartment, I finally speak.
Can I go see Gol? I ask.
I hope that Dave will let me go.
Yes, Kek, you may go, he says.
I walk to the bus stop
and wait in the room with the sitting table.
Then the bus comes screeching to a stop in front of me.
The doors fly open, and I jump in.
I slip a few of the little shiny pieces of metal into the slot and walk to the back of the bus.
Finally, we arrive at Gol's home.
I'm surprised that I don't see her grazing in the grass.

I walk into her field.

I look in her barn, and I still don't see her!

I start to panic.

Where could she be?

I say out loud.

I am about to run into Lou's house to ask where Gol is,
when beeping and loud sounds begin coming from the road.

I run toward it and a nervous feeling flows through me.

I see Gol's scared face in the middle of the road
with cars and trucks surrounding her.

I run into the street and try to pull her out,
but she's transfixed on the headlights of a car.

I keep pulling and tugging until my arms get tired.

The cars keep inching closer and closer,
and the beeping is getting louder and louder.

Finally Gol budes and starts trotting away,
now listening to my commands.

I am relieved when I finally get her out of the street,
and I tell Gol out loud:

Never run away like that again.

She gives a satisfied grunt, almost in response.

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