

the berries were dry and shriveled and fell to the ground. He pried a cookie out of his pocket but it looked too dry to eat and he threw it away.

The chestnut edged up to the creek and drank, each gulp sending a ripple along his neck. Timmy got off again and splashed the water on his face. Squatting on his heels, he dangled his hand in the stream. He couldn't tell which happened first then, the low, surly growl or the horse shying, almost knocking him over. Before he could grab the reins, the chestnut veered and galloped toward the hill. Timmy looked quickly up the bank. The tawny cat, crouched under a willow a hundred yards upstream, watched him.

Timmy started walking backward slowly, his eyes never leaving the cat's. He had moved about fifty yards when he turned, panicked, and raced toward the crest of the hill. Cursing his heavy boots, he glanced over his shoulder. The cat was following, bounding effortlessly, closing the distance. Timmy ran harder, sweat pasting his shirt to his back.

He didn't dare look over his shoulder again; everything was blurry. He stumbled up the steps and threw open the screen door.

His mother's arms enfolded him and he wept. "Scout," she said quietly, "tell me about it."

He sobbed uncontrollably and clung to her. She waited patiently, smiling sorrowfully. "It . . . it came . . . after me. I could . . . couldn't stop it . . . at all . . . ever."

Haiku

by Andrea Carlisle

English, Jr.

Blue string of leaf smoke
wavering gray twilight air
over final ash