

Cabrini Nguyen (Grade 6, St. Brigid of Kildare, Dublin, OH)
Level I Honorable Finalist
Letter to author Cynthia Kadohata concerning her book, *Kira-Kira*

Dear Cynthia Kadohata:

Emotions are like a storm. This is inside our head, bottled up in a jar where we can keep control of it. Your glass jar, however, is not indestructible; in fact, it cracks over time. Those gaps turn into holes. The storm struggles to get out all at once, and finally, the jar shatters. It rushes out all at once and that storm you worked so hard to keep in check comes crashing out, roaring in your head, taunting you. That emotional jumble throws you into a void where even the most eye-catching events don't seem to matter.

I was hesitant to read your book *Kira Kira*. But now, I'm glad I read it. Kate always got back on her feet. Even in hard times, she was strong and thought about her family instead of herself. This has helped me understand that with all the pain, comes great reward. Whatever sorrow life gives me shapes me into who I am. Everyone has the ability to overcome whatever the world throws at them. In all of our pain, suffering, and loss, we cannot let that storm rage on forever. We need to move on and see that we are not the only ones suffering. Katie missed her sister dearly, but instead of wallowing in her sorrow, she recognized her family's sorrow and cared for them. The reward may not seem like much, but love is the greatest reward we can receive. Katie has shown me that we are not the only ones suffering. I felt guilty for pestering my parents when I did, but those who can't even pay for the help must've felt guiltier than I.

I lost my mother when I was at the tender age of five. The first two years I couldn't even bear the thought of her. Just writing "Mom" had me in tears, but I always had good friends to comfort me. Although people disliked the fact that I almost couldn't handle myself, people never treated me like they treated Katie. People did not turn against my family as people turned against Katie's. Katie always seemed so strong to me. Even when Lynn passed, she still managed to move on. She felt the loss, but she didn't stop in her tracks. Life is like a train. It does not stop for anyone. We have to get back up, and get back on that train. I know the pain, the grief, the denial that she was in. When my mother was sick, no one ever thought she would die. We always believed that she would recover and we could live on in our happy little dream. But our dream didn't work out. My mother didn't make it. Suddenly, I didn't know what to do, I felt lost, forlorn, and most of all heavyhearted. But I realized the only way I could truly move on, was to let go. All the pain I went through shaped me, as it did Kira, into who I am. I would not be as determined and strong-willed [as I am today] if everything that's happened did not happen.

Sincerely,
Cabrini Nguyen