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Dear Sharon Creech,

Turning, turning, flipping, flipping, mind racing, questions appearing. This is what it's like when you're in the middle of a great book. And this is what it was like for me while reading your book *Chasing Redbird*. I was assigned to read your book back in 3rd grade when I really didn't know what struggles life could have. I enjoyed the book but I didn't really get the meaning. Now I am going through my teen years and I am experiencing many of the things that Zinny did. I can refer back to it anytime a problem comes into my life. *Chasing Redbird* has truly made an impact on my life.

The first element of your book I related to has to do with all of the losses Zinny experienced throughout the story. She had to deal with the death of Rose when she was just a little girl. Also, Aunt Jessie had passed and Uncle Nate died later, both of whom were very close to her. About a year after I read your book for the first time my very loving grandma passed on. I tried to think of how Zinny dealt with her losses, which wasn't always the best way. Still, thinking back on how she handled it, whether I had to do the same or opposite, helped me

Lately I can relate to your book just simply through living life as a teen, which really isn't simple all the time. I was only 8-9 when I read your book the first time so I didn't really catch Zinny's "teen life" then. But now that I am 14, I find more and more struggles she goes through are happening to me and my peers around me. The first example is the little teen puppy love we all get, in her case the one with Jake. Sometimes they seemed like they were riding a roller coaster, except they weren't together in the same seat. They were on a collision course with one another. But by the end of the book they pretty much straightened out their differences and found comfort together. Another aspect of life that played a big part on Zinny in this book is that feeling that nobody understands you. It's like you just want to get away from the real world. Zinny was pretty much able to do this when she discovered her trail. I haven't discovered a secret trail or anything but every night I have to walk one of my dogs (his name is Tony) up a couple of blocks and back. This isn't particularly my favorite thing to do but while I'm out there alone it helps me to think about my life and things like that. I think everyone would like to get away occasionally and I am glad, like Zinny, that I have found my way.

Like I said at the beginning, your book *Chasing Redbird* has truly made an impact on my life. Thinking back it was probably the first novel I ever read that I really enjoyed and could relate to. It was great that I was able to share so many similarities with Zinny; this helped me enjoy your writing much, much more and it was a great book to begin with. If I ever hear of a new book written by you I will be sure to pick it up. Because I know it will keep my mind racing while I keep the pages turning.

Your thankful reader,
Cole Rhatigan

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