From The Lone Star State

to The Mountain State

By Audrey Sun Whitman
There was a slight chill to the air. The clouds whispered through the shining moonlight. The bright stars blinked. Although it was spring, the stars seemed like winter stars and the Moon like an autumn Moon. It felt cold and peaceful. A blanket of bluebonnets covered the ground like tree leaves in the fall. What began as one whisper from one cloud spread to all the clouds, all the stars and to the moon, until everything in the world made noise.

This would be Katie’s last time laying in a field of bluebonnets, gazing at the Texas stars. Her dad got a new job and they were moving to West Virginia.

"It’s better for not just me, but the whole family," she overheard her dad say to her mom. "Plus I think Katie would really enjoy it there. It is called the Mountain State after all, and you know how much Katie loves exploring."
Rumpity-rump, Clickety-clack.

The car rumbled and shook. The back trailer rattled with bags and loose items. It was at times annoying. The car stopped for a bright red glowing light up above. Katie was almost in West Virginia. She felt scared and nervous. She took a deep breath.
The car stopped...

"Oh no!" she thought.

"Are you ready?" said Mama.

Katie wasn't ready but she said, "Sure I guess..."

She missed a million things about Texas but most of all, she missed those Texas stars that she had gazed upon every night. She tripped while getting out of the car because she could not help but stare at the light blue house. It had a red-tiled roof, and on each side of the house there were bushes with white, pink and red roses.
She turned her gaze to what seemed like endless woods surrounding her and the most beautiful mountain in front of her. Then, she saw something unexpected—magenta colored flowers covering an open field. A white bunny hopped in between the flowers. When the bunny stopped and looked back, a dozen more bunnies jumped after her. She smiled. Maybe she would like West Virginia after all.

**Sizzles, bubbles, snaps.**

The sounds of Mama’s cooking were soothing. Dinner was her favorite—barbecue pork, seasoned and spiced to perfection. But it was a little awkward. There, sitting next
to her, was a complete stranger named Lily. She was her next door neighbor and she and her mother had been invited to dinner at Katie's house. She had brown hair, hazel eyes and pink glasses. Her eyes lit up as she shoved barbecue pork in her face. "THIS IS SO GOOD!" she exclaimed. Katie chuckled.

The girls went out to play. The setting sun made Katie shiver. Her surroundings seemed different in the dim light.

Lily shouted, "Race you!"
The girls started running through the woods to the open field. A pine tree poked Katie and she yelled "Ow!"
Lily ran back to her new friend and asked, "Are you alright?"
Katie nodded and ran to the field covered in rhododendrons. By this time, the sun had disappeared behind the mountain. She plopped onto the delicate flowers. Lily followed. The girls looked at the darkening sky and wondered when the stars would come out. And Katie knew she would love it here.