

Home for A While



By Lauren H. Kerstein

Illustrated by Natalia Moore



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To all the children who have let me walk beside them for a while. May you always see your strengths. And to my mom, thank you for helping me see mine—LHK

For my parents, Liza and Darren. I cherish you both—NM



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Calvin clunked his suitcase up
the steps of another house.

This isn't your home,
his thoughts shouted.

Nobody wants you,
his feelings rumbled.





*"I'm so happy you're here,"
Maggie said.*

"Sure." Calvin thumped his backpack onto the floor.

He wasn't ready to unpack yet.



That night, Maggie asked,
"May I hug you goodnight?"

"Nah," Calvin replied.

"Well then, sweet dreams,"
Maggie said.



Calvin lay in the dark.

Nobody wants you.

This isn't your home.



"Go away!" Calvin whispered.
He shoved his feelings down,
down, down, until...

Maggie told Calvin about his new school.
His fear exploded.

Bounce
Bounce
Bounce



He thought bouncing
a basketball would
quiet his feelings.

