Excerpt from…

Fame and Glory

Barbara O’Connor

 “I’m coming,” I called, hurrying up after him.

 We stepped inside his room and I got the next shock of my day. That room was the best place I’d ever seen in all my born days. The walls were painted pure sky blue. Plants sat on shelves and trailed along tabletops. Tiny silvery fish darted around a fish tank by the window. It seemed like everywhere I looked was a cat, curled up on stacks of newspapers, stretched out on the lumpy couch, sleeping on the windowsill beside dirty coffee cups and cereal bowls.

 In one corner of the room was a birdcage. Inside it, two little yellow birds pecked at a bell and chirped the prettiest bird chirps I ever heard. Plants and fish and cats and birds were enough to make me love this room, but there was something else that made me think I wanted to stay there forever. Pieces of glass in all shapes and sizes hung from the ceiling on glittering gold threads. They swayed in the breeze from the open window, and when the sunlight hit them, rainbows danced all around the room. Across the sticky linoleum floor. Over the cot piled with rumpled sheets. Even along the tops of my shoes as I stood there taking everything in.

 “He’s not here,” Mr. Moody said, I jumped. I’d been so caught up in that room I’d nearly forgotten why I was there.

 “How come Harlem to run off like that?” he said. He lifted a cat off of a rocking chair and sat down. I watched him set that cat back down on his lap and stroke it.

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