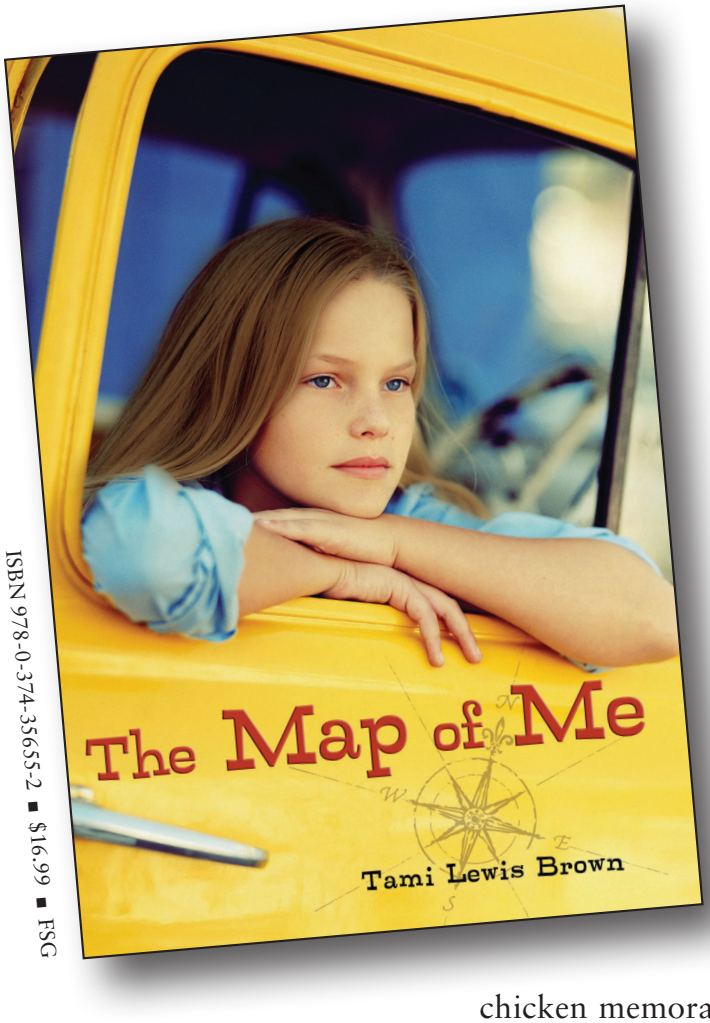
The Map of Me
ACTIVITY KIT



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The Map of Me

BY

Tami Lewis Brown

"I COULDN'T LOOK. No turning back. We were off."

The note Momma left on the fridge says only: "I HAVE TO GO." But go where? Margie is convinced she knows the answer. Momma hasn't run *away*—she's running *to* the Rooster Romp at the International Poultry Hall of Fame, in search of a deluxe limited edition Henny Penny Coin Canister to add to her precious flock of chicken memorabilia. And it's up to Margie to bring her home. So Margie commandeers her daddy's Faithful Ford, kidnaps her obnoxious nine-year-old sister, Peep, and takes to the open road. So what if she's only twelve?

"Combines pathos and humor for an emotionally resonant story." —PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

"A wonderful book. I love stories where the children find the courage to teach the adults what they need to know." —PATRICIA MacLACHLAN, author of the Newbery Medal winner *SARAH, PLAIN AND TALL*

"I love this story. I felt like I was in the car with Margie and Peep, so strong was their yearning, so big were their hearts, and so urgent was their mission." —KATHI APPELT, author of the Newbery Honor book *THE UNDERNEATH*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Describe Margie and then describe Peep. What would it be like to have Peep in your class?
- What's it like when Daddy comes home from work? Why does his presence create tension in the family?
- Margie thinks "M<P; Margie is less than Peep." Why does she feel this way? Is it true?
- When Margie and Peep come home from school and find their mother gone, what do they do? In what ways does Margie try to act "responsibly" given the situation?
- How does Daddy react when Margie and Peep arrive at the store to tell him Momma has left?
- Why does Margie believe that Momma has traveled to the International Poultry Hall of Fame? Do you think that's where she's gone?
- Why does Margie decide to drive Daddy's car? Why does she bring Peep with her? Does Margie feel in control behind the wheel? Why does she throw the map out the window?
- Describe Margie's visit to the rest stop. How does she feel about the family she encounters there?
- When the car skids to a stop, Margie wishes she could have one "do-over" in her life. If she got it, she vows: "I WOULD NOT LISTEN TO ANYONE BUT MYSELF." How would this change her life and her character? Later Margie says, "But there was no such thing as a do-over. Not in real life. There were just mistakes. And my mistakes came back around again and again, no matter how hard I tried to move on." What does this tell you about how Margie sees herself?
- What happens when Margie and Peep finally arrive in Flench and the International Poultry Hall of Fame? Does it match their expectations?
- How does Aunt Blanche try to help Margie see the positive aspects of her journey to find Momma? What does Margie come to realize about why Momma may have left?
- What happens when Daddy comes to get Margie and Peep? Did you expect the novel to end differently?

ACTIVITIES

The Map of Me begins with Margie and her little sister Peep doing a homework assignment inspired by the map J. R.R. Tolkien's son created for Tolkien's novel *The Hobbit*. Design your own "map of me" using a 12" x 18" sheet of white construction paper, colored pencils, and markers. Begin by drawing an outline of yourself. Use words, colors, and pictures to draw a representation of who you are. Who are the important people in your life? What secrets do you keep hidden in your heart? What happy and sad memories do you have? What small objects/mementoes are important to you? Where have you traveled? Fill in the outline with pictures and words. If you use symbols or colors, include a key with your "map of me" to describe what the symbols stand for and what the different colors mean.

Margie's decision to "borrow" her father's car and to head off in search of her mother is told through Margie's point of view. Margie includes her conversation with Peep as she decscribes her decision to drive to the International Poultry Hall of Fame. What do you think Peep was feeling behind the words she shared with her sister? What is Peep's point of view as they drive off in search of their mother? Rewrite the section of the story where Margie starts the journey in their father's Ford from Peep's point of view.

Margie is unfamiliar with the roads on their route and drives a great distance in the opposite direction from their intended destination. She finally discovers a map at a rest area and is able to trace the route she needs to follow to get to Flench on her hand with a borrowed ballpoint pen. Design a "hand map" for Margie (page 4). Think of all the important things that Margie touched on the course of the journey to find her mother, beginning with Momma's note. Write or draw each important item on the hand outline. Discuss the importance of each item on your hand map when you share it with a partner or a literature discussion group.

Every nook and cranny in Margie's house is filled with her mother's chicken collection. In fact, Margie describes her mother's set of chickens as "the biggest collection of chickens in the state of Kentucky." Her mother has everything from poultry potholders to pitchers. What types of things do your friends and classmates collect? Baseball cards? Rocks? Create a mini museum of everyone's collections. Have each collector briefly describe his or her reasons for collecting and identify the best or most special piece in the collection.

Select a character from *The Map of Me* and create a scrapbook for this character. Think of what experiences and items would be meaningful enough to your selected character to be included in a scrapbook. For example, Peep might include her homework assignment of "the map of me" with an A+ written across the paper. Momma might include advertisements for poultry knickknacks for sale. First, generate a list of items that your character would hold dear. Using construction paper, found objects, and art supplies create these mementoes for your character and glue them inside a scrapbook constructed of several sheets of paper stapled together.

What do you think the future holds for Margie and Peep as they grow into adults? They both possess strong personalities and opinions. Given what you know of their temperament and skills what might the girls grow up to be? Use the Predicting the Future worksheet (page 5) to draw and caption what the future might hold for these two characters.

Reread chapter 6 and then complete the Visualization Chart (page 6) with information from the chapter that addresses the five senses. What sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches are described in this chapter? After completing the chart, use the listed information to create a detailed illustration that could accompany chapter 6. Include the sensory details you gleaned from the chapter.

The activities in this kit were created by Leigh Courtney, Ph.D. She teaches first and second grade in the Global Education program at a public elementary school in San Diego, California. She holds both master's and doctoral degrees in education, with an emphasis on curriculum and instruction.

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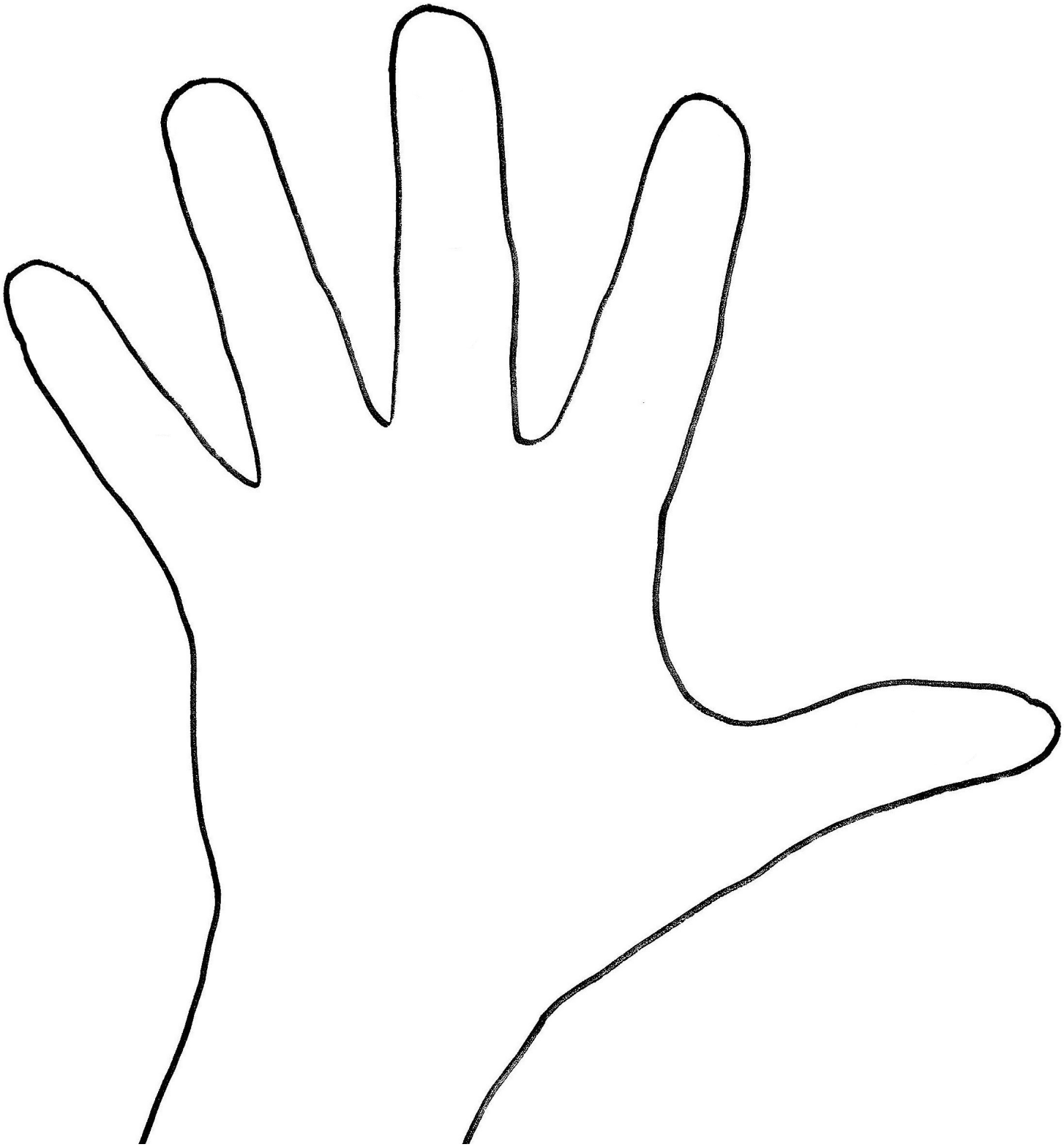
Margie's Hand Map

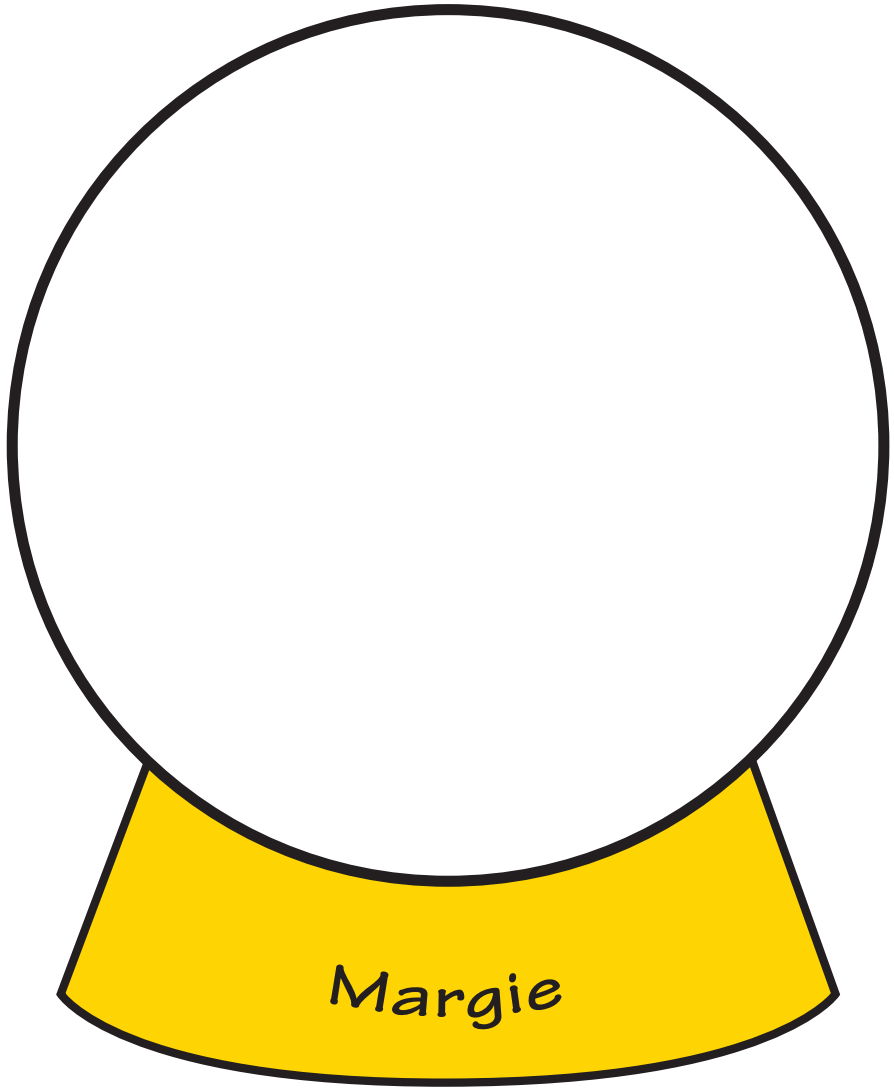
Think of all the important things that Margie touched on the course of the journey to find her mother, beginning with Momma's note. Represent each important item on the hand below.

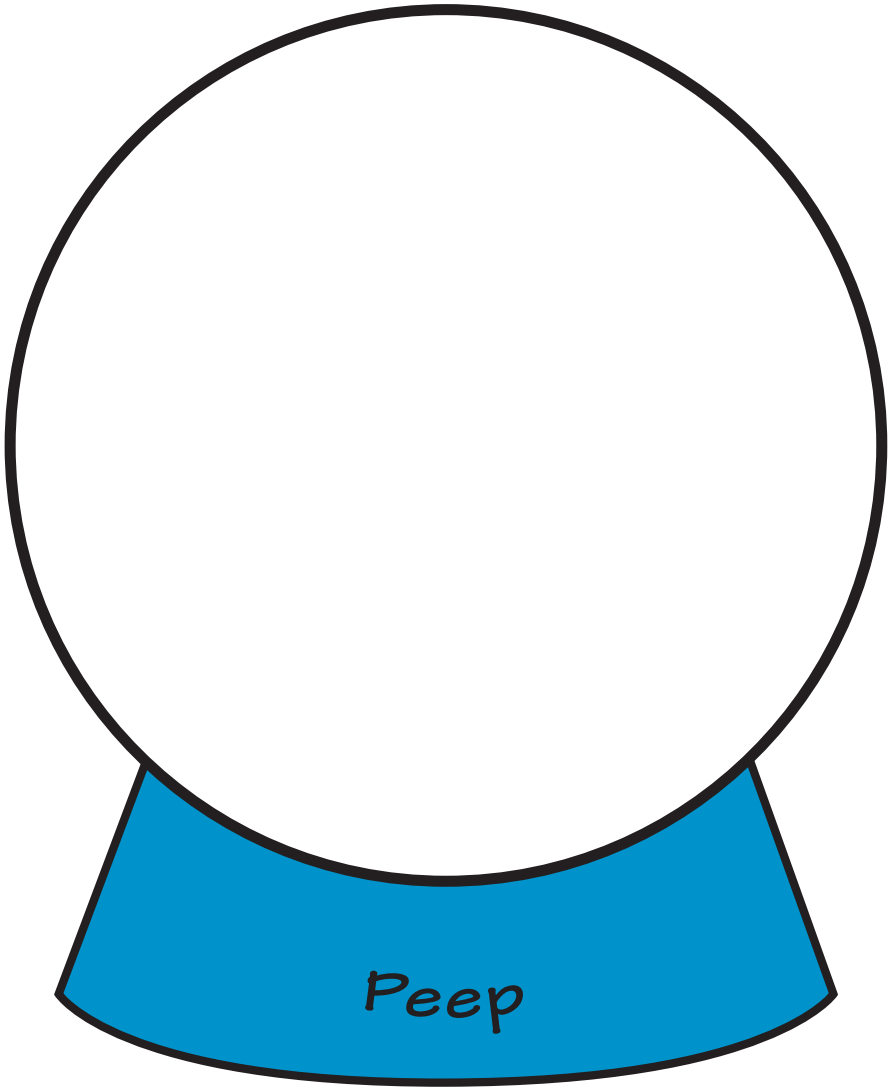


Predicting the Future

Name _____

What might the future hold for Margie and Peep given what you know of their characters from *The Map of Me?* Draw and caption a future for each.





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Name _____

Visualization Chart for The Map of Me

Reread chapter 6 of *The Map of Me* and pay close attention to the sensory details that the author includes in her description. List examples below of details from the story that address the five senses. Use this information to design a colorful illustration that could accompany this chapter in the novel.

SENSE	STORY INFORMATION
Sights	
Sounds	
Tastes	
Touch	
Smells	

Name _____

Paper Loop Chick Craft

Margie's Momma loves her chicken collection. Make your own flock of chicks worthy of inclusion in the International Poultry Hall of Fame!

Supplies

Yellow construction paper
Scissors
Glue
Yellow feathers
Orange pipe cleaners
Colored markers

Instructions

Cut a 2" x 8¾" strip of yellow paper. Roll it into a loop and glue the ends together. Cut the pipe cleaners so you have two 4½" sections. Twist these to make two three-pronged feet and glue them to the bottom of the loop. Glue two feathers inside the loop so that the majority of the feathers stick out each side to create wings. Glue one feather to the back of the loop so that the majority of it sticks up above the chick's body. Use colored markers to add eyes and a beak.

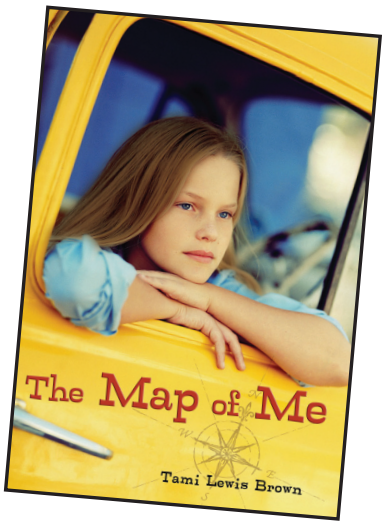
Tami Lewis Brown

Author Tami Lewis Brown grew up on a farm in Prospect, Kentucky. She and her sister rode horses every day. They had lots of dogs and cats and a duck named Sweet Feed. Everyone in Ms. Brown's family was an airplane pilot and soon she learned to fly, too. Her love of flying influenced the subject matter of her first book for children, *Soar, Elinor!*, a picture book biography of Elinor Smith, who at sixteen became the youngest person to ever receive a pilot's license.

Soar, Elinor! was named one of the *Washington Post*'s Best Children's Books of 2010 and a 2011 CBC/NCSS Notable Children's Book. It was also selected as one of 2011's Top 10 feminist books for children by the American Library Association's Amelia Bloomer Project.

The Map of Me is Tami Lewis Brown's first novel for young readers. By setting the story in Kentucky, Ms. Brown was able to draw upon all the sights, smells, and sounds of her childhood to create Margie's world.

Ms. Brown holds an MFA in Writing for Children from Vermont College. She earned her bachelor's degree from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. A former practicing attorney, she also worked as writer-in-residence and librarian at The Sheridan School in Washington, D.C. She lives with her family in one of the oldest houses in Washington.



Soar, Elinor!
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Learn more about Ms. Brown's life and work by visiting her website, www.TamiLewisBrown.com. She's a regular contributor on the popular blog "Through the Tollbooth."