Liberty University
DigitalCommons@Liberty University

All Children's Book Reviews | Children's Book Reviews

2009

Review: Song of the Water Boatman and Other Pond Poems

Rachel Schwedt
Liberty University, reschwed@liberty.edu

Janice A. DeLong
Liberty University, jadelong@liberty.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/child_bkrev

Part of the Comparative Literature Commons, and the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation
Schwedt, Rachel and DeLong, Janice A., "Review: Song of the Water Boatman and Other Pond Poems" (2009). *All Children's Book Reviews*. Paper 7.
http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/child_bkrev/7

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Children's Book Reviews at DigitalCommons@Liberty University. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Children's Book Reviews by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Liberty University. For more information, please contact scholarlycommunication@liberty.edu.

Sidman, Joyce, ***Song of the Water Boatman and Other Pond Poems*, illustrated by Beckie Prange. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 2005, ISBN 0618135472, Ages 10 and up.**
Awards: ASPCA Henry Bergh Children's Book Award for Poetry, BCCB Blue Ribbon Nonfiction Award, Caldecott Honor, Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award, Publishers Weekly Best Books of the Year

Description

Sidman states in spare prose the simple story of pond life ranging from the tiny duckweed to the impressive crane. Brief paragraphs understate the amazing stories that happen all around small bodies of water. For example, the story of the water bear that is only a fortieth of an inch long, and that is before he shrinks and shrinks with dry weather and other climatic changes. This little fellow may exist in his "tunnish" state for decades until blown back into the water where he resumes his life cycle. Another example of a water creature worth watching is the wood duck and her babies. When the little ones are only a day or so old and cannot fly, the mother duck bids them come to her by taking a flying leap out of the warmth and safety of their nest to the unknown water below--which they do--without hesitation. What trust they must have!

Along with the facts of pond life, Sidman has included flowing poetry with different rhythms to match each species of life. The spring peeper repeats the "ee" sound throughout the lines, perhaps reminding readers of spring nights when they heard this tiny frog as he declared his love for the entire world to hear. The painted turtle on the other hand, snuggles into the mud to take his, literally, breathless, warm winter nap imploring the sun to remember to wake him at the right time. His poem almost brings yawns from the reader.

Prange captures the mood of the animals, insects, and plants in her earth tones. Woodcut is the perfect medium for this focus on nature. Readers almost feel the texture of the cattails and hear the splash of the water. With some diminishing line or active creature always in the foreground readers are invited to join the mystery of the pond.

Critique

With awards in poetry, nonfiction, and illustration, this picture book defies confinement to one genre. The covers house a remarkable collection of poetry, prose, and award-winning art offering interest to both the right and left side of the brain. It is difficult to understand how any reader could doubt Intelligent Design after learning about the intricacy of even the tiniest form of life and its place in the cycle of life.