

Girl Coming in for a Landing



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From Publishers Weekly Adopting the voice of a sensitive girl approaching adolescence, Wayland (It's Not My Turn to Look for Grandma!) fashions a sequence of poems unfolding over the course of a school year. The speaker takes on such topics as kissing games, crushes and close relationships ("Leslie sprinkles my path/ with wonders/ under the grin/ of the moon"). Toward the end of the collection, she shares the excitement of having her first poem published ("I woke up early, / my body buzzy/ like a playground ball boing-ing down a long hallway"). While Wayland essentially captures the truth of the age, the poems themselves are uneven. Memorable images and sweet sentiments coexist with well-worn observations (addressing her older sister, the narrator says, "I still sometimes/ want to be you./ Did you/ ever want to be/ me?") and some preciousness ("Carlo plays cello. He's mellow./ Frank's full of drama and trauma." While the novel-in-verse format has been more effectively deployed elsewhere (e.g., Sonya Sones's *What My Mother Doesn't Know* or Virginia Euwer Wolff's *Make Lemonade* and *True Believer*), this work succeeds in making reading and writing poetry more accessible to teens who may otherwise find these tasks intimidating. Wayland's endnote includes specific suggestions for writing and submitting poems, noting that her Web site lists places where young writers can get published. Final artwork not seen by PW. Ages 12-up. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business

Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title. From School Library Journal Grade 7-9-This "novel in poems" covers the school year of a girl who is young enough to be shaving her legs for the first time but old enough to be learning how to kiss. Between fall and spring, she goes from an imaginary boyfriend to a real one to the loss of that boyfriend: "-all the space in the world/wouldn't be enough for him/and as close as he could ever come to me/would never/be close enough for me." From the humiliation of getting the "Susie Spineless Award" at the drama party to the exhilaration of having a poem published in a magazine, the unnamed heroine is a girl in transition, with all the intensity of emotion associated with adolescence. Readers will relate to her boredom in school: "Fed up with this dull/class, my mind pecks open its/cage and flies away." Other observations are more personal. Wayland remembers this time of life well; in fact, some of the poems are based on her own journals. She uses simple language in a graceful yet direct way. Readers will also find the book's compact size and sophisticated mixed-media illustrations on most pages appealing. Similar in form to Sonya Sones's Stop Pretending (HarperCollins, 1999), this is a quieter, more episodic, and perhaps more universal tale. Lauralyn Persson, Wilmette Public Library, IL Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition. See all Editorial Reviews

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