



The Little Philosophers and the Conscious Stream of Wisdom: Listening to Our Nature

Juel Maerz

FriesenPress

(32pp)

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Lovely and musing, the picture book The Little Philosophers and the Conscious Stream of Wisdom suggests that stirrings of wisdom exist in every child.

Two curious young friends talk to water in Juel Maerz's sensitive picture book *The Little Philosophers and the Conscious Stream of Wisdom*.

Spring has arrived, and so two children ride their bikes down to a brook, taking their favorite books with them. They love to read and learn, and they've discovered an intriguing new word: "wisdom." Sitting near the water, they observe the sunlight dancing on its surface, listen to the wind in the trees, and wonder what their new word means.

The children are rewarded when the living, conscious water speaks to them, explaining how wisdom reveals itself in the cycles of nature and saying that everything they see had its origin in the cosmos—as do they. The water teaches them how to calm their minds and observe the world around them with love and without judgment. It tells them that the wisdom of the cosmos lives within them, and the friends enjoy the feeling of being part of all that is.

The poem introduces complicated philosophical concepts with an advanced vocabulary, though its progression is also patient to encourage learning and conversation. But its unnecessary commas and awkward sentence structures lead to a sometimes uneven rhythm. Still, the rhyming text pairs well with the book's active, lively watercolor illustrations, which successfully portray the complex beauty of nature. They create a gentle, soothing atmosphere, making extensive use of circular and wave patterns and of blue and muted tones that are enhanced with spots of bright, complementary colors. They are designed to pique the audience's imagination.

The Little Philosophers and the Conscious Stream of Wisdom is a picture book that celebrates the vivacity of nature.

KRISTINE MORRIS (April 10, 2023)

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