



Girl Coming in for a Landing

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*You walk into class—
my head clears.*

*No kidding.
You are my aspirin.*

One girl. One school year. All poems. From friends to first dates, school dances to family fights, this inspiring collection captures the emotional highs and lows of teen life with refreshing honesty and humor. With an authentic voice full of wit and insight, *Girl Coming In for a Landing* is just like high school: impossible to walk away from unchanged.

Girl Coming in for a Landing Details

Date : Published March 9th 2004 by Yearling (first published 2002)

ISBN : 9780440419037

Author : April Halprin Wayland

Format : Paperback 144 pages

Genre : Poetry, Young Adult, Coming Of Age, Realistic Fiction

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From Reader Review *Girl Coming in for a Landing* for online ebook

Bethany says

This book caught my eye when I was in the poetry section at the library. I was a bit leery since it had a YA sticker plastered on its spine, but I opened the book and read the first poem:

Writing Poetry

*In the middle of the night
I turn on my light*

*then slowly peel
off layers of me
with the press of each key.*

I knew I had to read this book.

I still wasn't sure I'd like it, though. They were poems written from the viewpoint of a fourteen (or maybe thirteen?) year old girl. (Whose name I don't know, come to think of it. So pardon me as I refer to her in pronouns.) Some of her adolescent musings I could no longer identify with (and I definitely couldn't identify with her kissing boys at such a young age), but this was actually a wonderful book! It could be read as a novel, it could be read as a collection of poetry. The story wasn't laid out clearly in so many words. Often it had to be read in the spaces between poems. (Aren't I making a lot of sense?)

My favourite poems were definitely the ones about her and her writing.

I Have To Write

*I have to write.
A splinter pushed up through my skin
and I can't sleep
until this sliver of words
works its way out.*

But there were other beautiful moments as well. The ones that stand out in my memory at the moment are the poems about her Great Aunt Ida, and this line in a poem to her sister:

*Sister-sister-sister take this in:
there's nothing better than knowing
knowing inside me and outside in the high clouds, too,
that you are in this strange-wonderful-awful-justsilly place
this world with me.
Nothing better.*

(But I am very sentimental about sisters lately, as mine is getting married and moving away this year.)

Elizabeth says

Girl Coming in for a Landing combined both poetry and graphics to help tell the story of a young girl describing her life in one year. Each poem, although different, worked together to tell the greater story of this young girl's life. She shared her joy and pain, excitement and sadness. The book incorporated graphics and also included a format of the words being shaped in a picture that described the poem. The poems varied in humor and seriousness. The book would be appropriate for adolescents for the most part as the content includes common struggles and themes experienced by adolescents. The book may also be a good motivator to encourage students to pursue writing poetry. The author's note at the end also encourages students to pursue writing poetry, even if they do not initially succeed. Some poems such as the ones from the party could have been exempt, yet the book could have been just as good. This book seems like a great fit for younger adolescents and early readers, but these few poems would not be a good influence on the students. These few poems could be eliminated and the book would be just as good. I enjoyed the storytelling through poems that was exhibited in this book.

R.L. says

April Halprin Wayland combines lyrical poetry with teenage personality and experience for an enjoyable read with as much substance as beauty. Stunning, creative, and delightful.

Sydney says

Very nice, quick poetry read. I loved the illustrations / images accompanying the poems.

Angela Todd says

A book of poems. This was an interesting way to tell a story, yet a very profound way of development. Poetry is a great way to express oneself. The main character, in whom the perspective is based, wrote about an entire school year in poetry. Through this poetry, the reader found out personal details about the girl's life as well as her thoughts and feelings about particular subjects. The development throughout this story matures with the girl as she goes through a school year. All the topics were struggles of adolescence--boys, love, discovery, and healing. These are stages that every adolescent girl goes through at this stage in her life. Love and boys can be fascinating. You love him, then you hate him, and then you love him again. This cycle continues through adolescence. Boys are associated with broken hearts and first loves, crushes and first kisses. Everything a girl dreams of in her adolescent years. Also, the process of discovering who you are is a big part of adolescence. A girl wants and needs to find her place--a place where she can feel safe and wanted. Discovering this place is an adventure of the adolescent years. Healing. This is a big word. Her first broken heart will take lifetimes to heal. Relationships with boys, friends, and even family will be tested, and she will be hurt. It is part of the process of learning to heal and move on with life. This book tells the story of a girl in this stage of her life. It is a good representation of the life of an adolescent girl and her struggles, failures, insecurities, and joys.

Marissa Miller says

Even though it was a quick read, I enjoyed April Halprin Wayland's *Girl Coming in for a Landing*. This was my first experience reading a novel in verse and I found its content consistent with the life of an adolescent (crushes, sibling relationships, break-ups, sexuality). What I enjoyed most about the novel was that it reminded me of my own struggles and victories of adolescence; I was also around 14 when I published my first poem. Authenticity, then, is the novel's strongest feature. Girls can relate to the narrator's interactions with characters Carlos, Yen-Mei, and Great Aunt Ida, and they can relate to the narrator's (whose name, I just realized, is omitted) reflections on menstruation, teachers, and kissing (!). The novel's structure - - entirely in verse -- also provides a higher appeal to readers, and may subsequently inspire their own writing. However, I do think the novel is a little one-sided, as there isn't a lot of material an adolescent *boy* can draw from.

Nonetheless, there are many benefits to reading a "verse" novel. Poetry has a unique appeal due to its reflective nature. Where else can a writer be as raw and as profound as when writing a poem? Differing perspectives also provide the reader a lot of room for discussion and opinion -- a great trait for a classroom!! Poetry also utilizes a multitude of literary elements, such as metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, more so than prose. Wayland is great because she uses several different forms of poetry, such as a sonnet, word poems, free verse, limerick, etc to appeal to the reader. She's also very witty and creates some powerful imagery: "and I can only tell what I am feeling/by reading/those long lines of letters/still damp/as they emerge." Without this, I believe her "novel" would have suffered and, again, would have been a bit one-sided.

The only complaint I have with this novel is the fact that Wayland calls it a "novel." To me, a novel has an exposition, rising conflict, and resolution --the basic Freytag structure. But Wayland only loosely connects these events, and some of her characters are not completely resolved by the end of her book (whatever happened to Leslie?). However, one can argue that Wayland seamlessly develops her narrator and does provide an intriguing plot for her characters to follow. As a whole, I don't think it is fair to compare her verse novel to a prose novel. There are many differences between the genre to begin with, and I think that the reader does walk away from the novel feeling a bit enlightened and encouraged by this girl who loves to write. Is there anything better to transmit to students?

Paul Mosier says

I read this volume over the course of about a month in a few sessions. The effect was that of getting to know a girl in a year of her life. The poems themselves were at times piercing. I cried spontaneously several times within the course of just a few lines. True, I am the susceptible sort. But this really is a charming, moving story told in poems, and an excellent example of how it can be done. Recommending it to my 14 year old daughter.

Amanda says

About a month ago I started revisiting some of the books of my childhood and for some reason I just could not place this one other than that the cover looked like the sky and that it was written in verse. Now after rereading as an adult I know why this book stuck in my subconscious. Writing has always been my refuge

and this book reminded me so much of who I was at the time.

Shannon says

Super fast read...really. 127 pages of a story told in verse. I enjoy the fresh approach of verse written novels. This one does well at story telling and poems both as one and as separate endeavors. There is some kissing, but language is clean.

Sophia Tallon says

Okay so my mum said why don't you read this? I thought, how awful can it be? It seemed fairly interesting and I like some poetry. Anyhow, I didn't like it. There were some okay poems but a lot were just dumb or pointless. My least favourite poem was Period. because she talks about how she can't wait to get her period and blahblah and how she'll call it an exclamation point instead cos it'll be so cool! Really? I'm a girl and trust me there's absolutely no part of a period that deserves an exclamation point unless you have uber bad cramps and you say "Ergh!!!" a lot out of annoyance. OVERALL THIS IS A WASTE OF TIME!!!!

Chrislyn says

Not being a poet myself, I greatly admire those who can do it. With *Girl Coming in for a Landing*, Wayland gives us a story written in verse. Most of her poems are written in free verse (you'll have to excuse me if I use the wrong poetry terms) and tell the progressive story of a girl going through various stages of adolescent life. With very few words, she expresses vividly the emotional impact of a close sister-sister friendship, a first kiss, and an aggravating English teacher. In the author's afterward, Wayland recounts the events and advice from others that lead to her success as a published poet. Reading this, I picked up on the ways she used her experiences to shape her poems. Seeing those connections helped me understand where Wayland was coming from. She accounts for the advice she got from various teachers and shows, with her poems, how she put it into practice. It is encouraging to me as a student to know that Wayland used her struggles and experiences to fuel her writing.

The visual is very important so the illustrations by Elaine Clayton added another layer of comprehension to the story for me. Each one was so uniquely done in a variety of mediums. They threw another dimension into each poem. The sketches, the collages - they helped put the story into context. For example, on page 62 is the poem "Procrastination." In it Wayland likens her avoidance of the homework on her desk to dogs "circled in the grass/ round and round," going nowhere. The picture is a sheet of paper with a circle drawn over and over with the pencil laying to the side of the drawing. The repetitive motion of the circle is a second comparison to the procrastination the poem talks about. The words and pictures of *Girl Coming in for a Landing* come together beautifully to create a work of art that will remind you of your own childhood and inspire you to use the talents you possess.

Ben Peltier says

April Wayland's novel *Girl Coming in for a Landing* uses only poems to further the plot of the novel. This technique makes an interesting read and inspires much emotion in the reader.

Because the novel is written entirely in poems, the narrator is really the only character that the readers know very much about. She mentions her family and some of her friends, but she does not give many details about them, and they do not really speak unless it is through the narrator. This is very different from most stories, but because of the original nature of this novel, I do not think this lack of description detracts from the work as a whole. The emotion that is inspired by the narrator's poems more than makes up for the lack of description. Also, by being written entirely of poems, the novel is so different from the norm that it cannot be judged in a standard manner.

Personally, I found the book to be difficult to put down. I was enthralled in the emotion of the poems, and because the novel is entirely short poems, I kept wanting to read just one more. Another reason why I liked these poems was because they were so honest and thought provoking. Wayland cleverly articulates some very awkward parts of growing up and does so in such a way that causes the reader to think deeper about much of life. April Wayland's *Girl Coming in for a Landing* is written in a new and fascinating style that stirs up emotion and causes readers to really think about life.

Amanda (Born Bookish) says

Girl Coming In For A Landing was different from most other novels in verse that I've read. While all of the poems did work together to tell one story, I felt as if each poem worked better on its own than as one big flowing story. It just felt disjointed to me.

The story was told from first person point-of-view, therefore we never even learned the name of our main character. While there was a small cast of side characters they were not a main focus of the story nor were they memorable enough for me to even remember their names. The first person point-of-view did not work to the benefit of the reader. Most of the time whenever the main character would say "we did this" or "we did that" you had no clue which person she was talking about. I was always thinking to myself you did that with who?? WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!

My favorite thing about the book was all of the illustrations, which were done by Elaine Clayton. Each page was like a work of art, tying in with each poem and really helping to bring the words to life. For me, this really added to the overall reading experience.

I feel like this book focused more on the poetic side of things, than telling a complete story. My favorite poem from the book was the passage entitled "TAKING VIOLIN."

"I open my case
tighten my bow
pluck a string to tune.
I love to listen to it chirp across the echoing room.

My friends are in class

reading about
a famous English King.
But I am training this wooden bird upon my arm to sing.”

Overall, I just wasn't able to connect with this story. It ended and I was just like huh? It all felt so pointless. Like what did I even just read about for the last hour?

Amy Simonson says

I hate these star systems, because they have definitions like "Liked it" on three star, and my three-star means, it was okay, which is their two, but this has little to do with the book other than the fact that it was an Amy-two and a Goodreads-three.

Wayland's style of writing at first made me raise an eyebrow, but once one gets past one's preconceived notions, it's good book. I like that it's a different style, as it is all in verse, and is still pretty easy to follow. It was a very quick read, though I think with discussion the poems will be enriched and deepen.

As another reviewer said, the story still flows though the speaker does not fill in every detail. Having this book in verse leaves more reader-response room where the reader can fill in her own life experiences. For a male, I would be interested to see how his perspective would differ as experiences between the sexes are obviously quite varied.

I didn't get involved with the poems until pretty late in the book as the main character moved along and progressed more rapidly. However, I am concerned that I did not appreciate this book for what it really is. It's a book of poetry that is charting out a young girl's year in school, and for this, it's pretty decent. As much as I hate to bash on it, though, I have the feeling that there's something better out there. I would not choose to teach this book in my class unless it would be from a few different poems in studying different genres. Even for the short length and unique style, I think there are more narrative pieces of poetry to learn from.

Noninuna says

[I was shocked with a shadowy nude photo of a girl on one of the pages. I mean, is that even appropriate for high school/middle school kids? (hide spoiler)]
