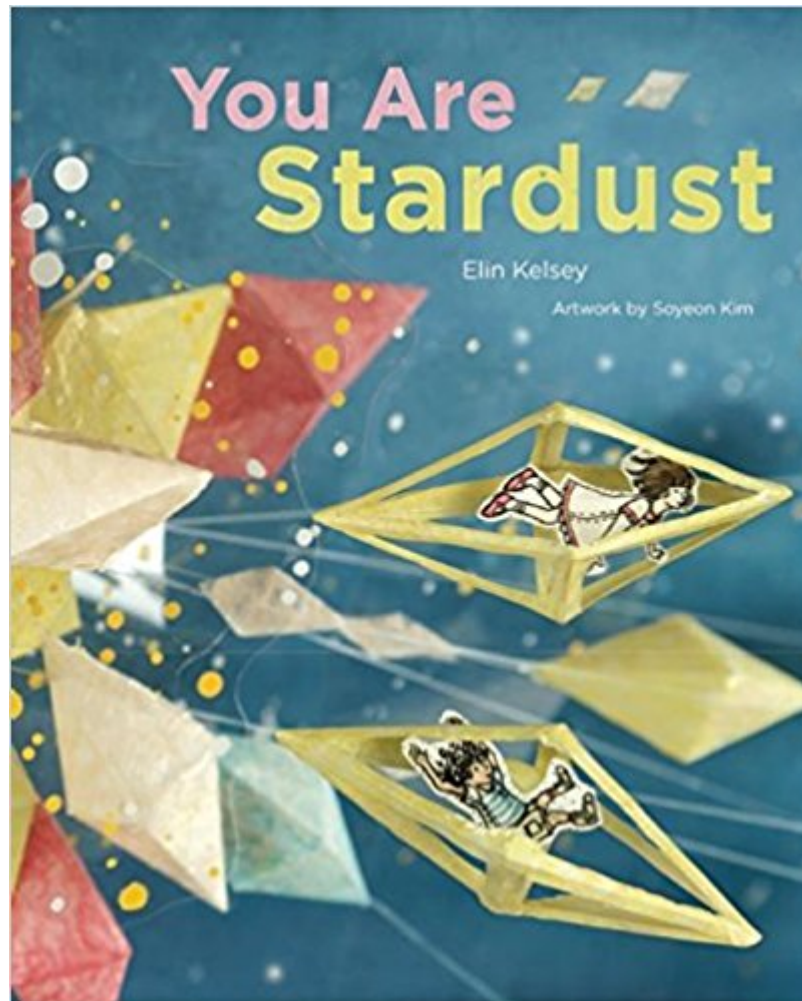




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You Are Stardust



Synopsis

You Are Stardust begins by introducing the idea that every tiny atom in our bodies came from a star that exploded long before we were born. From its opening pages, the book suggests that we are intimately connected to the natural world; it compares the way we learn to speak to the way baby birds learn to sing, and the growth of human bodies to the growth of forests. Award-winning author Elin Kelsey, along with a number of concerned parents and educators around the world, believes children are losing touch with nature. This innovative picture book aims to reintroduce children to their innate relationship with the world around them by sharing many of the surprising ways that we are all connected to the natural world. Grounded in current science, this extraordinary picture book provides opportunities for children to use their imaginations and wonder about some big ideas. Soyeon Kim's incredible diorama art enhances the poetic text, and her creative process is explored in full on the reverse side of the book's jacket, which features comments from the artist. Young readers will want to pore over each page of this book, exploring the detailed artwork and pondering the message of the text, excited to find out just how connected to the Earth they really are.

Book Information

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Age Range: 4 and up

Grade Level: Preschool and up

Customer Reviews

PreS-Gr 2-Bright dioramas created with pen-and-ink, pencil crayon, watercolor, dried flowers, and cut paper fancifully illustrate this exploration of human beings and the world around them. Beginning with stardust, the economical text takes readers from their atoms all the way to their relationship with the natural environment. Each page attempts to shock or surprise: "The water swirling in your glass/once filled the puddles/where dinosaurs drank." "You may sprout even taller/in the spring and summer, just/like the plants in your garden." Readers learn interesting facts about themselves and are urged to make parallels to the planet at large. Meanwhile paper cutouts of children travel from page to page in the mixed-media dioramas, illustrating the text's assertions in a fantastical way. The art and text don't quite come together seamlessly in the book's design, but each one provides much to consider and absorb. While striving to make these big connections in nature, the text presents thoughtful ideas but sometimes anthropomorphizes the animals. An author's note includes a link that explores the science behind the broad statements in the book.-Julie Roach, Cambridge Public Library, MA
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Right away, Kelsey gets metaphysical: "You are stardust. Every tiny atom in your body came from a star that exploded long before you were born." Cue the whoas. Kelsey then offers multiple examples of how we humans came from nature. "Like fish deep in the ocean, you called salt water home. You swam inside the salty sea of your mother's womb." Yes, it's peculiar, as is the assertion that your glass of water is the same water sipped by thirsty dinosaurs. Yet these oddball leaps at marrying the natural world with typical kid thoughts are evocative: "Each time you blow a kiss to that world, you spread pollen that might grow into a new plant." Kim's diorama art is entire scenes constructed of real flowers, leaves, and other materials inside wooden boxes and featuring characters suspended from string is photographed with a shallow depth of field, making images more three-dimensional than actual 3-D. Kim's way of literally tying us to nature is as abstract, and as intriguing, as Kelsey's. The jacket flip-side offers how-she-did-it photos of each diorama. Grades K-2. --Daniel Kraus

Absolutely captivating truths about how we are related to the world around us are presented in an almost magical way. Beautifully illustrated, too. Some days my children ask questions on every page, other days they look at the pictures and enjoy the rhythm of the world. One of our favorite books.

It's incredibly important to raise children with scientific literacy and an understanding on how the natural world actually works. A joy for any secular parent and an absolute necessity for everyone else.

I was awed and stunned as I read this inspiring book for the first time. After subsequent readings to my own children as well as parents and children in Parents' Place classes, the elegance and sensitivity conveyed in Elin's words and have not been diminished. I am inspired to look beyond my modern feelings of isolationism, to realize that I am and always have been connected physically (not didigitly) to the world around me!

You are Stardust will definitely appeal to the child of beginning school level and is an easy introduction to the field of science. It will peak their curiosity and is a positive character reinforcement.

Such a beautiful book. The pictures are wonderful. I love the message. I read it to my 4-year-old son for the first time last night and he was amazed. It opened up a lot of great questions and discussions. It's lovely. Such a great message. I would recommend this book to all parents.

Beautiful, scientific and spiritual. My 5.5 year old enjoys it very much and it really helps address the cycle of life and miracle of existence... perfect for the child of agnostics who still find wonder in the world. I think that the concepts introduced so gently and positively help set the foundation for other ventures into life science, astronomy, and physics. For instance, my son skinned his hand on the playground and, amidst the tears, told me it was ok because he would grow new skin, "just like in we are made of stardust, mummy."

bought this for my science-minded 6 year old's birthday. I do see what the negative reviews are saying that it's not a teaching book - definitely you will be disappointed if you buy this expecting a non-fiction book about space and atoms and nature. There are some wonderful books like that out there (I should know, my kid has amassed quite a collection himself!). I bought this for him because I wanted him to have some poetry, art-y books too, to experience science as more than facts and figures, but as the wonder and connection to the world around him. I will see if he likes it, but as far as I'm concerned, I love it for what it is - a lovely, lyrical book that should spark a child's imagination,

but with a basis in real scientific fact.

What a fabulous notion to place in the mind of a child....We are made of stardust! Ms. Kelsey is well known for her books on the environment, both for children and adults, but she has outdone herself in this lofty endeavor. Married to inspired illustrations is a text that sets my mind to wonder (and MY childhood was 60 years ago). Reading it to a young friend's young daughter was a transforming experience for me. Thanks, Elin!

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