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God Went To Beauty School



Synopsis

A deeply compelling collection of poems about God and our everyday world from a Newbery medalist. Cynthia Rylant takes teens on an invigorating spiritual journey as she explores what God's life on Earth might be like. Rylant's reflective and often humorous verse follows God as he tries out human activities such as getting a dog, writing a fan letter, and making spaghetti. *God Went to Beauty School* combines the awesome with the everyday in an accessible, thoughtful "provoking, and intelligent manner.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The first Cynthia Rylant book I ever read was the picture book, "When I Was Young In the Mountains". The story was not long or drawn out, and the words in the books were simple and pure. You might expect that in a picture book anyway, but there's a difference between saying what you want clearly and directly and simply being brief. Rylant never says any more nor less than she has to. It's a talent that has served her well in the past and made possible the succinct eloquence that is, "God Went to Beauty School". I don't know if this book is profane or the holiest collection of poems I've ever read. I think maybe it's a little of both. Unabashedly Christian (with nods of the head to Buddhism) the book is a series of sweet simple views of how God goes about His day. 23 poems in all, the book shows God getting a dog, ordering a couch from Pottery Barn, seeing a movie, and so on. These are small vignettes that take a what-if stance and enjoy what they conjure up. The great danger of the book, I suppose, was that it might fall into that old, "What If God Was One of Us", trap. Some could argue that this book is unnecessary if you believe that Jesus was already God. Rylant

anticipates this point in the final longest poem, "God Died". The book is simultaneously funny and touching. I have heard that Bible study groups use the poems to study. That groups of people without religion will ponder the poems line by line. The nicest poem in the group is, to my mind, "God Went to India". I have heard that people have read this poem at funerals. That it encompasses something in all of us, touching us deeply, revealing the truth that everything changes from one thing into another. The book is small and it does not impose itself upon you. It invites you to read it and whether you love it or hate it, it will not attempt to convert you one way or another. It is a book to love.

So what would happen if God came down to earth, took the form of man, and decided to experience, first-hand, so many of the mundane things that humans do on a day-to-day basis? Would he be bored? Would he gain insights? What would happen at beauty school? Well, according to Cynthia Rylant, God would paint all the nails any color He wanted, then say, "Beautiful," and mean it. He would get a dog, go across the water (in a boat this time), buy a couch from Pottery Barn, take a bath (with his clothes on because he's shy), and even become a girl for a while. How readers respond to this book of poems depends entirely upon their open-mindedness and creativity. It would be easy to be offended by Rylant's position that God would enjoy trying on these human moments for a while (is that blasphemy?) or one could just as easily appreciate the novelty of the idea and enjoy hearing God's confusion at what he should do in order to better understand man. Either way, these poems are fresh and unique, and they cause the reader to think about life in ways that were perhaps ignored before. There is a spirituality in this writing, something that causes self-reflection and stir up some interesting discussions.

This poetry about placing god in "mundane" situations, dealing with them as if a mere human, is not only whimsical/fanciful. I implore you to read the poems multiple times (preferably after giving them some time to sink in) if they initially strike you as this shallow. Mrs. Ryant verses far transcends the trite, flippant or ... rolls eyes... blasphemous. These poems are refreshing, as they creatively hit the bullseye of imbuing everyday situations with godliness. There is plenty of genuine humor thinking about something traditionally associated with omnipotence becoming a nail stylist, having difficulty with credit card companies, or about owning a dog. And if a book can get across some genuine spiritual lessons to me all the while making me chuckle, if not outright laugh... it's worth having.

An uplifting book of 23 original and creative poems that will make you smile! This book is a quick

read, but thought provoking enough to read again and again. Rylant's creativity and humor make it enjoyable. Don't miss it.

This book was referenced in a workshop I attended, so I purchased it for my 13 yr. old granddaughter but after reading it, I purchased my copy. I think this is one of the loveliest books and it's a short one, that I've ever read. It is very spiritual and real. Much food for thought. Simple but beautiful. Funny, too.

I loved the whole idea of God being "normal", that he had a cold, that he would like someone else to have dinner with (because communion is just not the same as having dinner) I read this twice, smiled, thought, grinned, giggled. what a neat way of humanizing the Man Upstairs!

In an era of religious extremism and intolerance, this book reminds us that God is for everyone, and that we are each entitled to our own definition of who He/She is. The message that God may be among us or, more romantically, within us, puts more responsibility on us to live well and treat all beings with reverence. I recommend this book to Theists, Atheists, Humanists, Undecideds, and especially to young people who are forming their own beliefs. It's an inspiring, witty and accessible perspective on a big subject.

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