



Writers to Readers Weekly



Writers to Readers Weekly is a weekly newsletter for teachers of English, highlighting short works by contemporary writers for children and teens

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Ribbons in the Sky

It's dark.

I hear heavy footsteps clumping up the stairs. *Dad*, I think, and I wonder what time it is. Suddenly the door creaks open and his big shadow appears in the doorway.

"Wake up sugar-pop," Dad whispers.

"What time is it?" I ask.

He doesn't answer. Instead he searches around my room for my clothes. I realize he has a flashlight. That surprises me. When he comes and sits on the side of my bed I see that he has my winter coat, a sweater and my boots.

"Is the power off?" I ask him, because of the flashlight.

"Yes, hurry, before it comes on again."

I slip quickly into the sweater and throw the coat and boots over my pink pyjamas. It's all starting to seem exotic, like a great adventure and I can't help but giggle. Dad giggles too as we hustle out of the dark room.

The beam of the flashlight dances in the staircase as we head downstairs. I nearly stumble and dad picks me up and carries me like he hasn't done in ages. I squeal with excitement.

"Shhh," he whispers, "You'll wake Nana." We both peek into the room at the end of the hall but Nana is still sound asleep and snoring quietly.

"Where's Mom?" I suddenly wonder.

"She's outside." Dad answers and pushes the back door open. A freezing gust of night air sweeps over me and I snuggle into dad's shoulder, shivering. We head down the back steps and now the flashlight

is shining into the thick pine trees behind our house as dad puts me down into the snow.

He heads off at a run and I hurry behind.

"Are we going to the park?" I ask. The park is on the other side of the pine tree glade. I played baseball there in the summer.

"Yes," dad says, "Mom is there."

The snow and pine needles crunch under my boots as we run through the trees. It's so dark that all I can see is the beam of the flashlight glinting on the snow ahead.

Finally, we're through the pine trees and in the park. All the streetlights are all off so it's really dark but in the starlight I can see Mom standing there in the middle, looking up at the sky.

I look up too and can't believe what I see.

Ribbons! Multi-coloured ribbons in the sky. Ribbons waving like crazy silver and gold silk flags in a light breeze on a spring day.

"What do you think?" my dad says a big smile lighting up his face in the dark.

"What is it?" I ask, amazed.

"Aurora Borealis"

"Aurora what?"

"Aurora Borealis. Northern Lights. Aren't they fantastic?"

Dad can't take his eyes off the sky.

Neither can I.

Mom and Dad put their arms around me and hold me close. Together we stare up at the ribbons in the sky.

I know it's something I will never ever forget.

By Gabrielle Prendergast © 2009

About this week's author: G.S. (Gabrielle) Prendergast

Gabrielle Prendergast is an award winning writer, teacher and designer living in Vancouver, Canada. She writes picture books and middle grade and YA contemporary and historical as Gabrielle Prendergast. Her science fiction and fantasy is published as G.S. Prendergast. She has won the Monte Miller Award, the Westchester Fiction Award and The BC Book Prize as well as being nominated or short-listed for numerous other honors. Gabrielle has an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of British Columbia and has taught writing at Sydney University, San Francisco State University, UBC, Royal Canadian College and at numerous conferences. www.gsprendergast.com



Writers to Readers Weekly Study Guide



Comprehension Questions:

1. Who are the main characters in the story, *Ribbons in the Sky*?
2. During what season does the story take place? How do you know?
3. Who lives in the house with the main character?
4. Find two similes in the story.
5. Find two onomatopoeias in the story.

Discussion/Essay Questions:

1. Three different senses are used in the story. Find examples. Why do you think the author did this?
2. The story is about the first time the character saw the Northern Lights. Write a short story about the first time you saw something.
3. The story is written in present tense. What effect does tense have on your experience of this story?

Vocabulary – Use each word in a sentence

Exotic	Aurora	Glade
Gust	Glinting	Hustle

Books
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This
Week's
Author:

