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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ PICTURE BOOKS

If I Could

Nancy Sweetland
Raven Tree Press (April 2002)
Unknown $16.95 (32pp)
978-0-9701107-7-0

What would it be like to turn from a worm into a butterfly? Or to become a song that someone would sing? Or a cloud? These are just some of the things that one little boy imagines he could be.

In this bilingual tale, the author and her illustrator husband use a young boy's imagination to make the reader wonder what it would be like to be something else.

This is Sweetland's sixth picture book. She has published short stories and poetry for both children and adults, and has won regional and national awards, including six Jade Ring Awards from the Wisconsin Regional Writers' Association and a Writer's Digest Short Fiction Award.

In his imagination the little boy changes into all kinds of things, from animals to clouds, and even into a song. After he goes through as many changes as his imagination can offer, he makes a little discovery: "It's fun to think about all those things, about flying and hopping and bells that ring — but I know who I am, and that's who I'll be, and I'm very glad that I'm just me!"

The rhyming story is interesting for its age group (ages four to eight) and the lush color illustrations keep the eyes entertained. At the end there is a small glossary of English and Spanish words so that the reader can learn to recognize a few foreign words in the story. Another bonus for the eco-conscious parent is that the book is printed with soy inks on recycled paper.

If I Could—Si Yo Pudiera is a enjoyable story of a small boy's dreams. His final revelation that it's good just to be oneself is a wonderful reminder for both young and old.

JENNIFER GRIFFIN (August 16, 2002)

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