Clarion Review

Picture Books

My Purple Toes
Blair Hahn
Tate Nation, illustrator
My Purple Toes, LLC
978-0-9844556-4-5
Four Stars (out of Five)

Reading to children is one of the most important activities a parent or caregiver can do. Reading to a child fosters their creative thinking, language and listening skills, and helps to build memory. Reading also teaches children to recognize colors, numbers, and images, and helps develop fine motor skills. Of course, and perhaps most importantly, it is a wonderful way to spend time with a child and let them know that they are loved.

Printed on heavy cardboard, board books are intended for infants and toddlers because they are durable, contain fewer words than most picture books and offer bright illustrations. A good board book generally contains rhythmic, rhyming or repetitive language. It engages the young child, making them an active participant in the story.

My Purple Toes, by Blair Hahn is an absurd, humorous story about a father with purple painted toenails. He prances through the book singing “I have purple toes! Purple toes are silly. Purple toes make me smile!” As the book moves through each page, the reader is invited to point out his purple toes and to find who else has purple toes. The reader sees the reaction of each family member to the father’s foot fashion, including mother’s resignation, sister’s amusement and brother’s embarrassment. We see father’s toes enjoying spring, summer, fall and winter, but most of all enjoying his home and family.

This book is likely to amuse any adult reader, and because very young children tend to respond to the cues of adults, it will be enjoyed by the whole family. The text is very light and simple but through the vehicle of purple toes, children are exposed to the concept of four different emotions, and the four seasons. The illustrations that accompany the text are equally simple but have enough going on in them to provide additional entertainment. For example, there is a purple-toed frog on every page as well as a few other creatures crawling around

father’s feet. This provides the adult an opportunity to discuss what each animal is and where one might expect to find them.

Perhaps because it is not full of important life lessons, deep meaning, or even especially memorable characters, or extraordinary illustrations, *My Purple Toes* is very enjoyable. The book is fun! There is no better tool for engaging a young child in learning than a fun book.

Catherine Thureson