

Real Soon Raccoon! What to Say After "See You Later Alligator" and "After While Crocodile"

Roger Sperberg

Jill Kimball, Illustrator

Watchung Plaza Books (May 2001)

(20pp)

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Inspired by a family game that started after a conversation in the lobby of the author's apartment building, *Real Soon, Raccoon* is a simple and amusing book of good-bye lines. In the style of "See you later, alligator; after while, crocodile," Sperberg's first offering for children surely will engage preschoolers with its rhythmic prose and slightly surprising illustrations.

The idea started simply enough. Upon leaving the building, a neighbor said, "See you later, alligator," to which Sperberg's son, Sam, replied, "After while, crocodile." Sam's mother, illustrator Jill Kimball, added "Real soon, raccoon." Sperberg said after that, he, his wife, and son would exchange similar lines as he left for work each day. The book grew out of these exchanges.

Real Soon, Raccoon offers eight fanciful illustrations by Kimball, a New York artist. Primarily a painter, Kimball also has written and illustrated a children's book about moving, and provided cover art for a book about angels. Much of her work is displayed in corporate galleries throughout the world. She holds a master of fine arts degree from Hunter College.

Sperberg, who studied writing at the University of Southern Mississippi, specializes in writing about computers and publishing. Previously, he co-wrote a ninety-minute drama that aired on PBS' *American Playhouse*; published numerous short stories and poetry; and wrote a children's play. Since the publication of *Real Soon, Raccoon*, he has completed manuscripts for a new series of children's books.

This is a lively and entertaining book that offers amusing word play and colorful illustrations that will delight both children and their parents.

DAWN WILLIAMS (May / June 2001)

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