



★ **Wolfstongue**

Sam Thompson

Anna Tromop, Illustrator

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A modern fable and adventure story, Sam Thompson's *Wolfstongue* follows a boy into a foxes' underground city in order to save the last wolves from enslavement. Here, anthropomorphized animals and pen-and-ink drawings illuminate the wrongness that stems from ascribing human systems—be they attributes, values, landscapes, or motivations—to wild things.

Bullied and called “Silence” because he gets tongue-tied, Silas is walking alone on a cycle path when he meets a wolf with a brass pin stuck in his paw. Once Silas removes the pin, the wolf disappears through a hole in the fence. No sooner has the wolf gone than foxes appear, saying they're tracking down a dangerous animal. Too stunned to speak, Silas remains silent. One of the foxes savages his ankle. When Silas is alone again, the wolf reappears and offers help, but the cure requires Silas to go beyond the fence. By accepting, Silas enters the lives of the creatures around him. His understanding of the world is changed in profound ways.

As Silas discovers a “vast forest hidden around the corners of the places he knew,” the wolf teaches him that there's “only one world.” But the solution for coexistence isn't remaking everything in the mold of human beings—it's honoring the nature and necessity of difference that exists beyond what's human. Even Silas's eventual role as *Wolfstongue* is a type of honoring that shows Silas's difference among humans. It's only by experiencing silence himself that Silas can empathize and understand the freedom found in the wordlessness of wild things.

A moving novel for young readers, *Wolfstongue* shows the power of words to shape the destiny of species through the imposition of human nature on a world we all share.

LETITIA MONTGOMERY-RODGERS (July / August 2022)

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