ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

JUVENILE FICTION

Worry Wart
Lisa Kildahl
Helena Bogosian, illustrator
Parables & Books
978-0-9833188-8-0
Four Stars (out of Five)

Poor Chole Lore! Her life is so consumed with worries that she even worries about worrying. And when she worries, a large wart appears on the side of her nose, making her constant worry even more, well, worrisome.

As Chloe goes about her day, she worries about such things as her dog possibly getting lost, her next door neighbor not coming out to play, slipping and falling on the ice, her stuffed animals becoming animated and scaring her, and her best friend moving away. No matter how much she tries, she cannot stop worrying about things she has no control over. For Chloe, the solution is simple: not to allow events to "lead us along like the tail of a kite," but to remember that "we are the potters and we shape the clay."

Because this type of anxiety is often found in young people who fret over things like the weather or their family's safety, this is a a timely and important topic. There are not many picture books available that deal with this concern. *Wilma Jean and The Worry Machine* by Julia Cook is probably the most well-known work for children that directly covers the issue, making *Worry Wart* a nice addition to the genre.

The book's greatest strength is the colorful illustrations. Each page bursts with vibrant clay figures and interesting, eye-catching movement. Even though Kildahl writes about a more serious topic, the touches of humor in many of the images make Chloe and the other characters pop off the page. The detail is delightful, including the piles of mozzarella on the counter at the pizza place and the baseball glove in Chloe's front yard. Youngsters will enjoy simply looking at the pictures, even if they aren't able to read the words.

The main concerns here are occasional poor word choice and an inconsistent rhyme scheme. For example, the text reads, "She worried that Frannie, her neighbor next door/ would come out to play or stay indoors galore." The meaning of the statement is not clear, and the use of the word "galore" fits the rhyme but makes little sense. The inconsistent rhyme scheme is

best demonstrated by the lines, “There will always be uncertain worry events / that come into our lives and that just don’t make sense.” Moments like these could have been more concisely edited to improve the cadence.

Overall, the engaging clay scenes in *Worry Wart* outweigh the problems with the text. Young people will thoroughly enjoy looking at the fun tableaux on each page, even if the rhyme scheme is a little off.

Lynn Evarts