

DBP Book Review

Name of Book: What is Goodbye?	Author: Nikki Grimes and Raul Colon
Publisher: Hyperion Books for Children	Date of Publication: April 2004
Name of Reviewer: Vince Faustino	Date of Review: October 28, 2006
Intended Audience (choose from Parents, Children, Professional, Other): Children (8-12 years old), Parents, Professional	
Purpose of the book: Jesse and Jerilyn's older brother died. In this book, their thoughts from the time they were informed of the death up to a year later were expressed in poetry. As they were of different developmental stages, their own interpretations of the same event were written side by side.	
Theoretical Basis: The developmental stage of a child greatly determines the way he would perceive events such as the death of a brother. This would include, but definitely not limited to, the finality of death, the cause of death and what happens after death. Similarly, the way death is explained to a child is developmentally-based e.g. giving more details to an older child. However, despite these developmental differences, each child should be allowed to grieve in their own way. Appreciation of their need to grieve provides for better understanding of the whole event.	
Strengths: The use of two children of different developmental stages gives a very good contrast to the understanding of sibling loss. Not only was this effective in showing the children's thought process but also in illustrating how the parents' direct and indirect reaction to the loss is perceived by each child. While I'm not a fan of poetry, the lines are easy reading and are easy to imagine that they were direct translations of the children's thoughts. The side by side presentation of each child's commentary magnifies the contrast between the two of them.	
Weaknesses: The poems were made after consultation with child psychologists and are therefore "normalized" reactions to sibling loss. While effective in giving an overview of the issue at hand, it is devoid of the individual subtleties of each grieving child. Each child, as we know, grieves differently.	
Recommendation of Reviewer (please choose one and put "X" in box next to selection):	
	Highly recommend for all parents

X	Highly recommend for parents with specific problems/issues
	May be useful to some parents
	Would not recommend
Additional Comments: This book highlights the children's disenfranchisement of their brother's loss. The loss is thought of as their parents and therefore not theirs. As a result, the children manifested their loss in inappropriate ways.	