

“Where will it take me?": Water and the Urban Child in Marc Martin's *A River*

In keeping in mind scholar Jenny Bavidge's idea that children do “have a radically different way of experiencing urban space,” this paper explores the urban child's relationship with the environment through the physical and imaginative depiction of water in Marc Martin's picture book, *A River*. Originally released in Australia in 2015, *A River* was made available to North American children for the first time in 2017. Opening with a young city girl's view of a long, snaking river seen from her bedroom window, Martin's narrative expresses “a desire to tell a story about connectedness to land and environment,” as well as the power a youthful imagination can have in encouraging an awareness of the world outside your own locality (Fetherston). The urban child takes a particularly important role in the negotiation between the magnificence of and the susceptibility of natural places – and the question that titles this paper, “Where will it [the river] take me?”, offers one way in which the urban child is shown to bridge the two together in a contemporary time.