



## Longer Than Forevermore

written and illustrated by Martha Sears West

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A children's picture book that presents a story within a story about the enduring nature of love.

West (*Jake, Dad and the Worm*, 2013) uses soft, realistic artwork and simple language to tell a reassuring tale. The book opens and closes with stark, black-and-white silhouette illustrations of a young girl and a baby reading a book together ("I'll turn the pages and you can look at the pictures," the girl says). This frames the central, rhyming text, told from a plural first-person point of view, about the many ways that a person can be loved: "We love you when you're roaring, or as quiet as a mouse." This main section features bright, colorful images of pleasing landscapes, animals, and a young boy in what appears to be a somewhat digitized watercolor style. The text is simple, but it has a classic feel, and it avoids flashiness and humorous touches in favor of a serious but positive tone. It also isn't overly wordy; most pages contain just a single sentence, and this brevity will make the book work well as a read-aloud for younger children. (In this context, the young girl's phrase, "You were a good listener!," will ring true.) The soothing images and calm, reassuring language make it an ideal bedtime book, as well. Even if the pacing isn't always perfect, the rhyming text throughout gives the story a pleasing rhythm, as in lines such as, "More than all the grains of sand, which we could never count. And if we add them all...we'll love you more than that amount." The illustrations are often beautiful, but the printing quality diminishes them, making them look a bit fuzzy and distorted. It's not something that's likely to bother children, but it's still unfortunate that some of the images' sharpness has been lost.

This book's straightforward rhythm and appealing illustrations will likely make it a favorite of parents and young children.