

SKYE'S DREAM: A bug from underground is moved by her dreams to venture the colorful world above and discovers what she is truly capable of.

This whimsical narrative begins in a subterranean environment where the main character, Skye a brown nondescript bug, keeps having a dream, but she's unsure what it is or what it means. She is dreaming that she can fly but she doesn't know what flying is yet because she's never flown before. She is awakened by a blue feather and believes it could be a hint about her dreams. When she goes on an adventure above ground to get some answers, she finds a new colorful world of flying bugs and birds. She is called back home but ventures up again and is captured. The queen dragonfly, Queen D, who rules the flying bug world knows she is a caterpillar who will turn into a beautiful butterfly and feels threatened. Jet, her blue bird friend, explains to Skye that dragonflies started a rumor long ago that caterpillars live underground and do not fly. Generations of caterpillars believed the lie but Skye's dream pointed her to the truth. Now that she's seen what it is to fly, she just has to look inside to discover her true identity and grow her wings. She is helped by her bird friend, who shows her what flying is and tells her the truth about what she can do if she believes in herself. When left alone she turns inside and grows her wings. Then, just as her community comes to look for her, they see her flying above their brown bug heads. She tries to explain that they can do this too, but they do not believe it just yet. Together the flying bugs convince Queen D that no one bug should rule and they can all fly together.

At a time when creativity and vision is blurred by 24-hour news cycles and violence all around, the central theme of this children's picture book is self-belief and the power of dreams. When writing it, I wondered, how can anyone (especially children) know what they are capable of or create a vision if they've never seen the possibilities? This book encourages challenging the status quo, embracing change, and the importance of individual growth. The story also touches on themes of disbanding generational beliefs, facing the fear of the unknown, and freedom found in discovering one's true identity and abilities.

Skye's Dream

Sleeping, dreaming, sweetly at peace

I know something big is inside of me

Underground is where I find my community

It's a warm, peaceful place where everyone is family

When I escape in dreams, different and new

Everything is possible in my hazy view

Purple, blue, yellow, orange, green

In my dreams I see all of the things I can be.

A ticklish touch wakes me up

A soft, fuzzy, strange thing has graced my hut

I've never seen this before

It's probably not something I should ignore

Hmmm, I wonder if it's from that space I've always wondered about

That everyone knows not to go up into or look out

Someone's got to know the deal

I've got to know what it is

So I ask around, I show my friends

We agree to look around where the wall ends

Beyond, we find a new world of sound and color

Creatures and plants not like the others

Ashley Aya Ferguson

“Gimme that!” something yells at us.

“That’s my blue feather!” Thank you very much.

“Oh. It came to me when I was asleep. I didn’t know it was yours...

What is this? Where does it go?”

“Uh these are feathers and I use them to FLY”

He says matter-of-factly and soars into the sky

He drops back down after showing his skills

“You can do this too....”

We look over the hills

“Huh?” We look at ourselves where wings should be

“You were born to fly.” He said “But you didn’t hear it from me!”

We hear calls out to us from far below

Somebody told on us. It’s time to go.

We burrow back into our hole

Questioning everything we thought we knew

We were born to fly? What did that mean?

Nobody we know can do those things.

I try to tell everyone about flying

Wings? Feathers? They think I’m lying

“Everybody! There’s more we can do!

If they can fly, we can too!”

They weren’t picking up what I was putting down

Ashley Aya Ferguson

I feel like we'll always be bound to the ground
But I saw it and I know it is real
I hate how alone this is making me feel

I'm going back! Even if I have to go alone.
I crawl back out of my cozy home.
As the sun rises, I see Jet.
"Oh you're back?! Can you fly yet?"

"Seize her!" I hear voices close by say
Before I know it, I'm in the dark, locked away

Looking around I feel scared, lost and sad
This isn't good. This is going to be bad

Jet finds me and tells me through the gate
Why this is now my fate
"You see long ago butterflies ruled
and dragonflies were jealous and cruel
They told all the young caterpillars a rumor, a lie
That they thrive in the dark and are not able to fly"

For generations they believed it
Other bugs kept it a secret
And the caterpillars all missed the critical time
They couldn't grow wings, and they didn't learn to fly

Scared, sad, confused and alone

Ashley Aya Ferguson

I cry, remember my friends and think of home
No one believes me and where are they now?!
I want to fly too, but I don't know how...

“Girl, feeling sorry for yourself will get you nowhere”
Just grow your wings and fly... out there
Jet pointed up and out of the holding space
“Wait...why are you telling me this, won't Queen D feel betrayed?”

“She's been wrong for far too long
I think we could all get along
I know you can do this. You can be the one
to do something you've never done!

“Look inside yourself and trust the process”
I fold my arms and create a hideaway
I lose myself inside the space

Something is happening, I'm not the same
The old skin shed and fell away
Behind me are wings beginning to sprout
And any moment now, I'll be able to fly out!

If I rise up and believe
Just like the vision I saw in my dreams
I can get up and zoom through the air
If I try, I can get out of here!

Ashley Aya Ferguson

The search party arrives just in time
To see me in my glorious prime
I'm so glad they see what I can be
When I listen to what's inside and believe

“Dream you can, and you will”
I told everyone from under the hill
Some were open, others didn't want to try
Some of them wanted to keep believing the lie

Eventually birds and butterflies convinced Queen D
That we can fly together in harmony
Outnumbered, she finally let her jealousy go
And now, generations of flyers know what they know

Just dream.