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Nature-loving mom pens book to get kids thinking eco-friendly

I've tried to instill an appreciation of the natural world in my son, Evan, from a very young age. All work stops in our house for a good sunset; we take insects that wander into the house back outside whenever possible; he and his dad built a bird feeder for the neighborhood Chickadees this past winter; and he and I are busy planning what to include in our backyard butterfly garden this year.

So, when Robyn Ringgold's book, "My Mom Hugs Trees" arrived at Reminder Publications just in time for Earth Day, I figured it was a book Evan and I could relate to.

Press material that accompanied this whimsical story of a mom who hugs trees, talks to plants, thanks the sun and moon for their light, and (like me) takes bugs outside in paper cups, says the story was inspired by a conversation Ringgold heard between one of her daughters and a friend.

Ringgold, it seems, is much like the mom in her story. Her daughter is like the book's slightly confused young girl who doesn't quite know what to make of her mom's actions.

As we started reading, Evan shrewdly pointed out that I wasn't exactly like the mom in the book because I won't let bugs crawl on me; I'm more like the little girl, who's afraid when a bug crawls on her (a very true observation!). And though some of the things the mom does such as singing with the birds and asking flowers if it's OK to cut them seemed a bit "weird" to my seven-year-old boy, he liked reading the rhyming text and found the expressions the illustrator gave the little girl "pretty funny."

When I asked him what he thought of the book, he said without hesitation, "I like it." That's high praise from my skeptical reader, who turns down most of the books I suggest at the library!

The hardcover, "My Mom Hugs Trees" by Robyn Ringgold is priced at \$15.95. It's available at Barnes & Noble Bookstore and online at Amazon.com.



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