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Review of *I Talk Like a River* by Jordan Scott

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I Talk Like a River

Scott, Jordan

Illustrated by Sydney Smith

Neal Porter Books. New York: Holiday House, 2020.

9780823445592

“The river is a natural and patient form, forever making its way toward something greater than itself. Yet as the river moves, it stutters, and I do too.” These words, poignantly written by the author about himself, summarizes this book perfectly. The story, based on the author’s childhood, follows a young boy after an especially hard day at school, due to his stutter. When his dad picks him up from school, he reassures the boy that it was just a “bad speech day”—other days will be better. The two go to the river, and there they sit in silence. The father points to the river and says, “That’s how you speak.” At that moment, the boy has an epiphany, illustrated beautifully in a page that extends to be twice as long. The churning, twisting, lapping of the river water, never the same twice, is a constant reminder for the boy throughout the end of the book. He goes on to gain the confidence to talk about the river in front of his class, finding joy in the uniqueness of his voice. I would highly recommend this book to any parent or teacher looking to expand their library, regardless of whether they are familiar with children who have similar speech impairments. Although the story would especially resonate with children who struggle with speech, I think it is also important for children with normal speech pathology. Doing this ensures that they are aware of patterns they might encounter in school, and how their reactions may impact those students negatively. Using this book appropriately in a classroom or home setting would allow for children to think about how they talk, ask questions, and be exposed to the idea that while disabilities make people different, it also makes them unique and equally special. **Highly Recommended** *Katie Gosman, Centennial Library Intern, Cedarville University.*