



2004

Sweet By and By

Sandra L. Tidwell

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Tidwell, Sandra L. (2004) "Sweet By and By," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 25 : Iss. 3 , Article 17.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol25/iss3/17>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Hermes, Patricia. *Sweet by and by*. HarperCollins, 2002. ISBN 0380974525. \$15.99. 208 pp.

Reviewer: Sandy Tidwell

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Historical fiction;

Subject: Grandmothers--Juvenile fiction; Children and death--Juvenile fiction;

Eleven-year-old girl, Blessing and her grandmother, Monnie, live in a small house on Star Mountain, Tennessee. Her grandfather and her father died on the same day: before Blessing was born. Blessing's mother died when she was two years old. Now Monnie is sick with a troubling cough that isn't getting better, and Blessing is worried that her grandmother might also die and leave her all alone. Monnie and Blessing share a love of music: Monnie plays the fiddle and Blessing sings. When she picked up the fiddle for the first time, Monnie recalls to Blessing "...music just poured out...It just happened. And that's how I know that music is like a sweet child, bow it, and... it sings itself out." After a trip to town to see Dr. Harkins, Monnie tells Blessing that they need to talk about what Blessing will do when she's not around to care for her anymore. Blessing still has lots of music stored up inside her and sharing it will be one to the ways that will heal the feelings of anger, denial, and despair when she realizes that she will have to go on without Monnie.

This tender story is told from Blessing's perspective and Hermes reveals Blessing's thoughts through italics in the text. The reader will come to love the mountain people and the simple ways they care for each other, as well as the townspeople's efforts to help Blessing when her grandmother dies. The reader sees public welfare, social class distinctions, sickness, and death from a child's point of view.