



2017

How it Feels to Fly

Lisa Packard

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Packard, Lisa (2017) "How it Feels to Fly," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 38 : Iss. 12 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol38/iss12/4>

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Book Review

Title: How it Feels to Fly
Author: Kathryn Holmes
Reviewer: Lisa Packard
Publisher: Harper Collins Publishers
Year: 2016
ISBN: 9780062387349
Pages: 359
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Outstanding



Review

Ballet is Samantha's life. Ever since she was little, Sam has always wanted to be a ballet dancer. Only one problem: her body decided to gain some weight. Being a plump ballerina is not good, especially when Sam wants to be a professional ballerina. When she has an anxiety attack during a performance and everyone sees, she's sent to a summer camp that helps performers overcome their anxiety. On a whim, she runs away from camp to audition for a ballet class, only to be rejected, but is offered a spot in a contemporary dance studio. Although contemporary dance isn't what she wanted, she is able to have better control of her anxiety and love herself for the way she is.

Holmes not only tells a story of an artist with goals and dreams, but an artist in a world with rules and regulations that she doesn't fit into. Sam's fear of failing and critical view of her body are issues that teens face every day. Not only can this story be used for people in the ballet world that have the pressure of being thin and strong and precise, it can be used for those who struggle with body image and weight. Teens who struggle with eating disorders will also find a voice in Holmes's novel. Sam's story is of a girl who didn't give up on her dreams, but changed them so that she can be happy. The experiences that Holmes describes are very personal and realistic. The author does a wonderful job of showing the importance of friendship and getting help when it's needed, even if it's embarrassing at first. This is definitely a book that will be read over and over again.