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On Angel Wings

Marsha D. Broadway

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Reviewer: Marsha Broadway
Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate
Rating: Excellent
Genre: Christmas stories;
Subject: Jesus Christ--Nativity--Juvenile fiction; Shepherds--Juvenile fiction; Books--reviews;

A grandpa once again relates to his children and grandchildren the events of the night that the angel Gabriel visited his family on the hillside outside of Bethlehem. Being the youngest of the shepherds, he was selected to watch the sheep while the others followed the star to the stable. Alone and complaining, the boy was revisited by the genial Gabriel who took him to the stable where he held the baby and gave him his shepherd's crook. A gentle and warm narrative makes this story a good choice for families to share at Christmas time:

“. . . he smiled, and it was a smile that I have never forgotten, a smile of such love that it moves my heart to this day whenever I think of it.”

Blake's familiar watercolor and ink illustrations inject not only light and wonder but also tenderness and love that are almost as real as the sadness seen in Michael Rosen's Sad Book. Amid the blues and grays of the night, golds and reds illuminate Gabriel, the angelic choir, and the Christ Child. Many adult readers may question the arrival time of the wise men. Most Bible scholars estimate their arrival some months after and not on the night of the nativity, but the gentleness of the story overcomes this slip in the timeline.