



# The Language of Stars

*Louise Hawes*

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## **The Language of Stars** Louise Hawes

Sarah is forced to take a summer poetry class as penance for trashing the home of a famous poet in this fresh novel about finding your own voice.

Sarah's had her happy ending: she's at the party of the year with the most popular boy in school. But when that boy turns out to be a troublemaker who decided to throw a party at a cottage museum dedicated to renowned poet, Rufus Baylor, everything changes. By the end of the party, the whole cottage is trashed—curtains up in flames, walls damaged, mementos smashed—and when the partygoers are caught, they're all sentenced to take a summer class studying Rufus Baylor's poetry...with Baylor as their teacher.

For Sarah, Baylor is a revelation. Unlike her mother, who is obsessed with keeping up appearances, and her estranged father, for whom she can't do anything right, Rufus Baylor listens to what she has to say, and appreciates her ear for language. Through his classes, Sarah starts to see her relationships and the world in a new light—and finds that maybe her happy ending is really only part of a much more interesting beginning.

The Language of Stars is a gorgeous celebration of poetry, language, and love from celebrated author Louise Hawes.

## **The Language of Stars Details**

Date : Published May 31st 2016 by Margaret K. McElderry

ISBN : 9781481462419

Author : Louise Hawes

Format : Hardcover 304 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Contemporary, Poetry, Realistic Fiction

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## From Reader Review The Language of Stars for online ebook

### Dovic says

2 stars for the cover

1 star for the plot

1 star for the brilliant poem at the ending

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### Crowinator says

Actual rating: 3.5 stars

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### Megan Burns says

Sweet like sugar & equally as bad for you

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### Ashley B. says

I picked up this book, because I saw it at the library and I thought it would be okay. It was amazing! The main character seemed like a real person. The mentor/poet was not at all what you expect, in a good way. The poetry included in the book is beautiful. The plot paints a beautiful story between family, friends, and new people you meet along the way. This is now my favorite realistic fiction book.

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### Deborah says

3.5 stars

This was really good. And quite different to what I typically read. It was very lyrical and poetic ~~obviously. It had a timeless feel to it. There was very little plot but it was still enjoyable.~~

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### Krystl Louwagie says

This whole book felt a little obvious and also, I can't disagree that this older, famous man's special attention to this teen did feel suspicious to me. I couldn't really get into liking Rufus, I couldn't quite buy into his character. I believed more in his faults, which the narrator seemed to gloss over or ignore too much. I thought it was weird and creepy how he was able to charm everyone with little to no effort. I don't know, the messages and lessons learned in this book aren't bad ones-they're good for teens to buy into and learn from-but I just wasn't really buying it. Also, this maybe just a problem with my particular tastes in audio, but I hated listening to written sound effects everywhere in this book. It just wasn't for me, overall.

## Aileen H says

Probably a 3.5. Loved the concept/plot. It dragged on a bit and I started to lose a bit of interest toward the end.

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## Emma-Grace says

### 2/5 Stars

Unfortunately, there were just so many things that I disagreed with in this book.

The premise actually isn't too bad. Poetry plays a big role in the book and I thought it would be a coming of age story. You know, discovering yourself, how to stay true to yourself, that kind of thing. That just wasn't what I got in this book.

My biggest issue was the romance. The romantic lead's name is Fry and he was just *so* sexist. And not only that but even the main character would say things that were sexist. There were times when I really wanted these things to be challenged but they never were and it was so aggravating. For example, at one point in the story, the main character, Sarah, says that she wishes that she could be like a princess in the olden days because all they had to do was clutch their skirts. She didn't like that Fry didn't want her to be a damsel in distress. Another instance is when Fry compares girls to cars. Girls are human beings, cars are objects, there's a difference and the two should not be compared. However, this particular scene is not challenged.

The book in general was also slow moving. I did read it in a day (for the biannual bibliathon) however it definitely felt like it took a while to get through. I also found that the story was kind of predictable and did guess what was going to happen at the end.

Overall this book wasn't my favorite. I really wished I could've loved it however the sexism was extremely off putting.

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## Rosemary says

When a group of teenagers throw a wild and destructive party in what was the home of a famous poet, the judge orders the teens, including Sarah Wheeler, to repair the house and take a poetry class--taught by the poet, himself.

The Language of Stars beautifully celebrates creativity in youth and age, combining a story of redemption with the transformative power of poetry. While I'm not part of the novel's YA readership, I still found Sarah's journey compelling and poignant. Her sometimes foolish choices and her longings, disappointments and hopes brought back my memories of being Sarah's age and being inspired by a very special teacher who expanded my consciousness with the study and writing of poetry. Like Sarah, I learned that meaningful work and creative expression are a kind of salvation.

Louise Hawes intersperses her polished prose story with poems written by the various characters--Sarah, the

other students, and their master teacher--capturing each character's voice and experience so clearly in that individual character's verse that I sometimes forgot that one skillful writer created them all. The Language of Stars stirs and heightens the senses--a worthy accomplishment!

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### **MsAmanda Fay says**

DNF...wanted to love this. Poetry! YES!....but I picked it up and put it down too many times, and I don't know if I'll pick it up again. If I had to read the word popularity again, I'd scream.

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### **Zinzi says**

The Language of Stars, by Laurie Hawes is a coming of age tale about Sarah, a teen who loves to act. The book focuses on Sarah, her boyfriend, and his friend, as they deal with the aftermath and consequences of a party they throw at a famous poet's family home. The teens find themselves stuck taking a poetry class with none other than Rufus Baylor, the poet whose house they destroyed. Sarah ends up falling in love with poetry, making surprising, lifelong friendships, and finding truths about herself.

I really enjoyed this read, with very few critiques. I found myself connecting easily with Sarah, as she is a very realistic character. Laurie Hawes uses excerpts of poems she wrote and weaves them throughout the book, which ties the story together. Hawes writes with a clear, realistic, poetic voice, which I liked.

The only criticism I had of this book was the ending. I felt like every loose end got tied up, and there was no room for the reader's interpretation or thought. The story should have ended with room for speculation.

I would recommend this book to anyone who loves realistic fiction, poetry, and humor. This book is not a very difficult read, so I would not recommend it to anyone looking for a major challenge.

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### **Mel says**

More of a 3.5 really. "The Language of Stars" has a great premise based loosely on a real event when a bunch of teenagers were arrested for vandalizing Robert Frost's home and were sentenced to classes about his poetry as part of their punishment. Hawes reimagines it with a living poet, Rufus Baylor, who decides to teach the delinquents himself.

The good part was you can *feel* the love of poetry in every chapter. And the poetry of a "world famous poet" sounds professional so it isn't clunky when it's praised for its beauty. Although one con is there is way too much "our poet" and "greatest poet" embellishment that it gets too repetitive to maintain that allure and turns into saintly haigography. However the rest of the surrounding cast, from the social class starved mother to the self-absorbed boyfriend, were given complicated characterization that helped the interpersonal scenes.

But for all the pausing for moments of beauty and insight, the story dragged and retrode its lines. There were also moments of stylized script prose, written with sound effects that just didn't work well for characters or narration.

If you like slow meandering stories that focus on poetry and introspection this novel will speak your language.

### **Jeimy says**

In 2008 some teenagers broke into what had been Robert Frost's former home and trashed it. Their sentence included taking a course in Frost's poetry. Hawes used this story as an inspiration for this novel. Instead of a dead poet she used a local author who was still alive and who decided to teach a poetry course to the vandals.

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### **Kate Schoedinger says**

Great for grade 8-up based on a true event where teenagers vandalized Robert Frost's Vermont Home. Hawes took that event, moved the story to NC and had the famed poet himself teach the very students who burned his house to the ground while they rebuilt the home. Loved all of it.

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### **Maria Myka says**

"I guess the key to writing big  
is feeling big.  
You have to want  
and feel and taste  
more than you can ever  
get down on paper.  
That forces you to pay attention,  
take notes.  
And choose."

It took me a while to get into the rhythm of the book.  
But when words  
start to sound  
like lyrics...  
Smile.  
Take it in.

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