

What is My Song?

Dennis Linn, Sheila Fabricant Linn, Matthew Linn



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The young hero Deo looks at his life to ask its God-given purpose or "song," in this eloquent, lyrical story, a retelling of an East African fable, by the Linns. Along the way, he discovers answers to other important questions-the nature of life, particularly when life begins, and death. He begins by straightforwardly asking: "When did I begin to be me?" He learns that life begins before birth ("I began to be me even before I was born"). He learns that his God-given purpose or "song" in life-to be a "protector" of all people, including himself-is to be remembered, oftentimes with help, and used for the good of all, and God. In illustration, together with the scenes of Deo saving his little sister, baby brother and himself in dangerous situations, there is the dramatic presentation of the pivotal scene where Deo forgets his purpose and temporarily blinds another village boy Matani for taking and tearing his fishing net. It is only after the village gathers and sings Deo's song to remind him of his purpose, that he remembers who he is and offers to become Matani's "eyes" for him until he can see, physically, and perhaps, spiritually.

For the scene ends with Deo singing Matani's song to him, suggesting that Matani's purpose in life, like Deo's, involves taking care of people. Deo ends his story with the knowledge that he will die, accompanied by a final song, and that he will return to God. Steeped in the imagery of Africa and the cadences of song, this story, which includes illustrations by the artist Francisco Miranda and a note to parents, is a delight for young adult readers as well as a good read-aloud for younger children. It contributes moral conviction without moralistic preaching.



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