



Blue Bubble Gum

Martha Goldner

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In her delightful children's picture book, *Blue Bubble Gum*, Martha Goldner showcases the short life of a wad of gum.

In minimalist style, the book begins simply, with a drawing of a flat stick of gum and the word "Gum." The next several pages each add more text that goes with different drawings. For example, the second page says, "Bubble gum," the third, "Blue bubble gum" and the fourth, "A wad of blue bubble gum."

In a sense, the wad of gum becomes the book's main character, although it's not personified and doesn't initiate any action. But additional pages describe how "Cars ride over it," and "It gets stuck on shoes." The three final pages show and tell what to do when the gum's taste is gone: "Spit it out," "Wrap it up," and "Throw it away."

Wonderfully simple, the book makes the most of its limited text, playing with language in ways that will capture children's attention and make them smile ("An ooey-gooey, sticky-tacky, wicky-wacky wad of blue bubble gum"). Rhyme is prominent, but not forced ("A blue bubble gum globule in the pool"). The text has a sing-song quality to it, and reading it, silently or aloud, is thoroughly enjoyable.

At its best, the book combines visual elements with simple, appealing text, like a two-page spread that shows a freckle-faced boy blowing a bubble along with one word, "Blow!" while the next page shows the exploded gum all over his face, with the word, "Oh!"

The hand-drawn illustrations are the main flaw of the book. While warm and kid-friendly, they are also somewhat unpolished and amateur-looking, and the reproduction process seems to have been muddy on a few pages.

Still, *Blue Bubble Gum* is a fun picture book for young children who are just discovering the wide range of enjoyment that reading can bring.

Also available in hardcover and ebook.