



**There**

Written and Illustrated by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick  
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*When will I get There How will I know Will there be a sign that says, Here is there'*

A nameless young girl wonders and fantasizes about arriving “there,” a symbolic representation of what her future holds as she contemplates embarking on that journey. The author’s illustrations represent the openness of opportunity and the seemingly endless possibilities before her. As she questions what “there” will look like and what will happen, her thoughts are interspersed with the idea of not wanting to let go of childhood as she moves forward towards “there.” Her young spirit remains present in her certainty that when she gets to “there” she will still build snowmen and sandcastles. Her imagination also allows her to state with certainty that if a dragon appears at “there,” she knows how to conquer it. While she yearns to be “there,” she also yearns to maintain her youth and ability to dream.

While questioning her own path, she wonders if others are on the same path, on their own journey towards “there.” She also considers her own choices and her path towards “there,” and if she can make different choices on her journey. In the end she makes the definitive decision to remain a child for today, and tomorrow, start her venture towards “there.”

The illustrations, also by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick, truly make this book. While the text provokes thought, the pages are filled with vibrant colors, yet soft portrayals of a young girl on her picturesque journey towards adulthood. The variety of sea and landscapes are a perfect portrayal of the openness the future holds for many and the adventures that await. Read critically, however, there is the question of whether or not all children have such possibilities. The child is depicted somewhat culturally generic as far as specific features go although she is fair with blonde hair. While the future certainly seems wide open, cultural mores and traditions may not so easily be transcended.

Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick (<http://www.marielouisefitzpatrick.com/>) is an author and illustrator from Ireland, where she currently resides. While her other picture books have won many awards, this book in particular is the winner of the Bisto Book of the Year award in 2010, the Bisto Illustration Honor Award, and an Eric Carle Museum Best Picture Book of 2009. The Bisto award is considered the most prestigious book award (<http://www.childrensbooksireland.ie/>) in Ireland, and it is awarded annually. This award considers excellence in literary and artistic technique, respect, engagement, and experience.

This book is relevant and appropriate for all ages. While younger students may understand

the story on a surface level, older students can appreciate the depth, curiosity, and determination the young character has as she approaches her future. This book is reminiscent of *Oh, the Places You'll Go* by Dr. Seuss (1990). The book would also pair well with texts thematically related to a journey, such as *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho (2006), in which a young male protagonist, Santiago, is on a quest for a hidden treasure and in search of his destiny. Like the character in *There*, Santiago has an innocence about him, yet is determined to seek out his future.

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