At night, a girl hears the sirens from the fire station near her house.

Even though it is dark outside, she knows where they are going: to a castle, to a garden, all the way to Pluto . . .

Dashka Slater and Nicoletta Ceccoli have crafted a dreamy ode to firefighters everywhere and the big, brave, spectacular feats they accomplish every day, and every night—all the world over.

Features:
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My Personal Review:
...and you would think that I'd be bored from reading it over and over, but somehow I am not.

This book isn't really about firefighters, it's about a young girl's imagination and what she imagines the firefighters do. She hears the fire engine's siren outside her window at night, and she spins these tales that are imbued with a dreamlike quality, almost as if she is drifting off to sleep. They douse a fire at a medieval castle inadvertently ignited by a dragon; he has stopped in for dinner and blown on his potatoes to cool them with his fire breath. They head to a fire all the way in Mexico that started when a woman eats a chili pepper in her garden that is so hot, embers shoot out from her mouth. The ladder crew retrieves a young boy who has bounced so high on his bed that he launched himself all the way to Pluto. He must return home because he doesn't have the right gear on, that is, a spacesuit and mittens. Of course, because it falls to the girl's imagination to name them, they don't have names like Joe and Dave. They have the names Penelope, Almondine, King and, the one conventional name, Bruce.
Imagine several four or five-year olds explaining to you their most fanciful ideas of what firefighters do and this is a composite of those stories. Every detail about the firefighters envisioned by the narrator is so completely true to a young child's imagination, thought-process and rationale, right down to the naming of the firefighters and the non sequitur enumerating of what foods they like to eat. Only a kid would include a list of foods each firefighter enjoys. It's actually quite hilarious. My two-year old daughter most enjoys doing her impression of the father of the boy who bounced to Pluto with her gruff grown-up voice yelling "Come down here right now, it's time for bed." Only a ridiculous grown-up would say something so deflating and practical at a time like that.

The dreamy quality of the illustrations perfectly compliments the text. Nicoletta Ceccoli always renders the most elegant images, here as in Little Red Riding Hood and Island in the Sun.

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