Garmanns Summer by Stian Hole

A Young Boy Is Nervous Because Summer Is Ending And School Is About To Start

This unique, award-winning picture book delves into the mind of a young boy who is afraid of starting school. Summer is nearly over. The old aunts have come to visit, and autumn is in the air. Everything is ready for Garmann's first day of school, but he is still nervous. And he can't believe that he hasn't lost a single tooth yet, despite his best efforts! Stian Hole has created a memorable and endearing character in Garmann, whose musings about fear and courage, life and death, beginnings and endings, help him understand that everyone is scared of something. Published in ten languages, Garmann's Summer was the recipient of the 2007 BolognaRagazzi Award, one of the most prestigious international prizes for excellence in children's book publishing, awarded each year in conjunction with the Bologna Children's Book Fair.

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My Personal Review:
Garmann's Summer was a book my daughter and I spotted by accident at the library. The unique cover had me intrigued as well as my daughter, and we promptly checked it out. To my surprise and delight, this Norwegian tale of six-year-old Garmann with all of his fears about beginning school in the fall resonated with both me and my little one. The illustrations are an interesting blend of photographs, collages and paintings. Each page is so vibrant and life-like that we found ourselves perusing each page at leisure, absorbed in the pictures as much as the story. Frankly, the story itself appealed more to me than it did my preschooler, though she loved looking at the pictures. This is a story about fears, and of realizing that all of us, young and old alike have our own set of fears - young Garmann worries about beginning school, of not having lost any teeth yet [compared to the twin girls next door], and as he asks his three old aunts who are visiting him for the summer about their fears - he realizes that they too have worries - about aging and its accompanying frailties, about death staring
them in the face, about the great beyond that awaits them in the afterlife, and even Garmann's dad, a violinist has his own fears.

A book like this, with its rather heavy and philosophical content, will appeal to adults and older children, but is also great for having discussions with younger children about their fears. A truly unique book that I intend to purchase for my home library. Highly recommended!

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