



# Toasting Marshmallows: Camping Poems

*By Kristine O'Connell George*

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Everything that happens when you go camping can be an adventure, from getting dressed inside your sleeping bag on a chilly morning to meeting a moose to sharing secrets in a tent at night. Kristine O'Connell George turns the memorable moments of a family outing into spirited, evocative verse, and Kate Kiesler's vivid paintings provide a cast of characters and the perfect setting. The captivating poems and pictures in *Toasting Marshmallows* will leave readers with wonderful memories of a camping trip—even if they've never been on one!

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## **Toasting Marshmallows: Camping Poems** By Kristine O'Connell George Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

From School Library Journal

Kindergarten-Grade 4-George has penned 30 sublimely simple poems that capture the sights, sounds, smells, and sensations of a family's camping trip, from pitching the tent to pulling up stakes and returning home. All of the selections convey a child-focused sense of wonder as the campers explore the lakefront and surrounding terrain, enjoy the marvels of the natural world, relish meals round the campfire, and toast marshmallows ("This is art-/a time of serious reflection/as my pillowed confection/slowly reaches golden perfection"). The poems are varied and inventive, replete with marvelous images and universal truths. There's even a selection devoted to the "Mosquito Song." Each one is accompanied by a well-executed and evocative acrylic painting. Some of Kiesler's artwork sweeps across double pages to provide a dramatic vista—a meandering hiking trail, a field of wild mustard, a star-studded night sky—while other pictures reveal small, but equally telling details. In "Flannel," the child is shown holding her pine-, smoke-, and moss-scented camping shirt to her face, paired with the words, "I keep it hidden/in my bottom drawer-/where no one will find it/and wash away/my memories." A terrific idyll for summertime sharing, even for confirmed couch potatoes.

*Luann Toth, School Library Journal*

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## **Review**

George deftly describes the satisfying sequence of familiar events in a summer camping experience in this collection of 30 related poems perfectly paired once again with Kiesler's inviting oil paintings (*The Great Frog Race and Other Poems*, 1998 etc.) The daily rhythms of a camping trip are presented from the "Tent" to exploring an "Abandoned Cabin" to observing "A Doe." Shared common experiences include "Sleeping Bag": "It's so cold outside. I'm getting dressed inside/my sleeping bag. I wriggle, scootch, scrunch, and jiggle. Flop/Front flips, back flips—I'm a caterpillar/in a cozy cloth cocoon/that zips." Short pieces like "Mosquito Song" demonstrate pointed wordplay with a witty use of alliteration and onomatopoeia. "It's Meeeeeeeeeeeeee!/Mosqueeeeeeeeto!/Is that you, Dinner?/Greeeeeeeeetings." Kiesler expresses the changing vistas of the countryside from the uneasy, dark palette of the double-page spread for "Storm" to the bright, sunshiny view of a field for "Wild Mustard." The changing layout of each page gives a sense of surprise to the most ordinary of events, the words of the concrete poem, "Eavesdropping," "Tipping/a slender/silver ear" placed in the shape of a crescent moon, the stanzas of "Flashlight" positioned in the beams of light to name just a few. Altogether an engaging trip.

## **Kirkus Reviews**

Like their previous collaboration, *The Great Frog Race and Old Elm Speaks*, this volume by George and Kiesler is as delicious as a toasted marshmallow treat. George's poems are well crafted, varied and easily accessible. The topics range from a tent-shaped poem about the careful raising of the family's canvas lodging to post-trip unpacking, in which a child tucks away a flannel shirt perfumed in scents of pine, wood fire and forest moss in her "bottom drawer—/where no one will find it/and wash away [her] memories." Though Kiesler's human figures are sometimes wooden, she suffuses her acrylic landscapes with light filtered through leaves. A few of the illustrations seem too idyllic and scrubbed (in "Abandoned Cabin," its "crumbling fireplace" looks newly constructed; in another, the brother's "grubby hands" seem freshly washed). Yet George's poems shine, the images clear and startling. A "panther cloud crosses the sky"; after a storm, a "confetti of birds... dance another rain shower." A concrete poem in the shape of a waning moon is

exquisite: "Tipping/a slender/silver ear,/Moon tries/to pretend/she isn't/listening/to our/secrets." Readers will definitely want S-mores.

Publishers Weekly, Starred

"fine collection brings the outdoors up close...direct, satisfying poems that will engage kids at school, across the curriculum, or at home." Booklist, ALA, Starred Review

The poems are varied and inventive, replete with marvelous images and universal truths. . . .A terrific idyll for summertime sharing, even for confirmed couch potatoes.

School Library Journal, Starred

The pleasure and surprise of going camping are conveyed in eighteen brief poems. . . .Richly colored paintings enhance the verses.

Horn Book Guide

Whether playful or profound, the exquisitely crafted poems reverberate with eloquent yet effortless language, while the radiant acrylic artwork hints at the awe-inspiring mysteries of nature.

SLJ Best Books of the Year

From the Inside Flap

Small me, in a small tent staked to a huge planet, rolling slowly through open space -- alone.

Everything that happens on a camping trip can be an adventure: Getting dressed inside your sleeping bag on a chilly morning. Rowing across the lake with Mom, exploring a dark cave with Dad. Discovering an abandoned cabin . . . meeting a moose . . . or simply sitting still under a tree, watching and listening. Pitching a tent in the woods is only the beginning!

Award-winning poet Kristine O'Connell George turns a flashlight beam on the moments that make up a family camping trip and records them in humorous, evocative, vividly imagined verse redolent of the scent of pine needles and the sound of bees. Kate Kiesler's vibrant paintings add visual magic to the collaboration, which will leave you with lively memories of a camping trip -- even if you've never been on one.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Arthur Elsberry:**

Playing with family within a park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with buddies is thing that usually you have done when you have spare time, and then why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. Just one activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition info. Even you love Toasting Marshmallows: Camping Poems, you can enjoy both. It is great combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh seriously its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its identified as reading friends.

#### **Maria Gardner:**

This Toasting Marshmallows: Camping Poems is new way for you who has interest to look for some information as it relief your hunger associated with. Getting deeper you in it getting knowledge more you

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**Jane Kim:**

On this era which is the greater man or woman or who has ability to do something more are more special than other. Do you want to become one of it? It is just simple solution to have that. What you need to do is just spending your time not very much but quite enough to get a look at some books. One of the books in the top record in your reading list is actually Toasting Marshmallows: Camping Poems. This book and that is qualified as The Hungry Hillside can get you closer in getting precious person. By looking upwards and review this publication you can get many advantages.

**Kimberly Moore:**

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