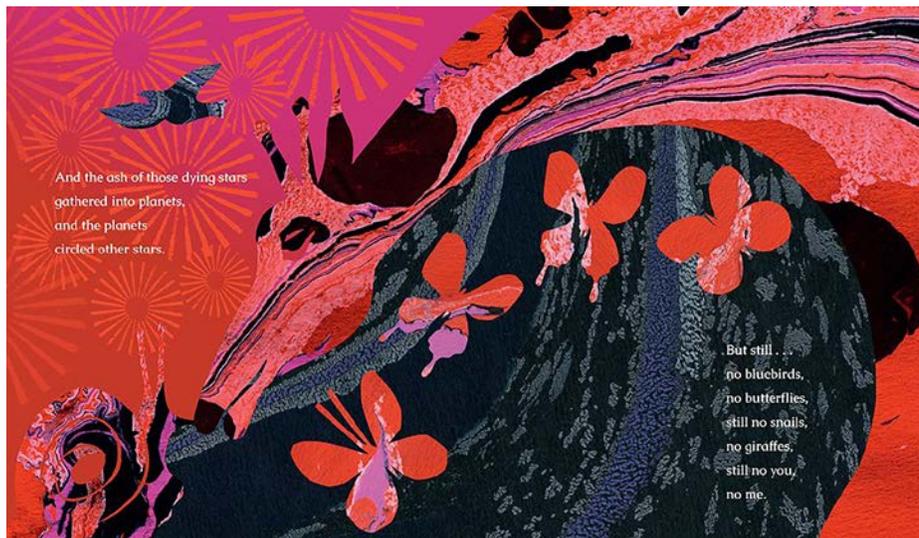
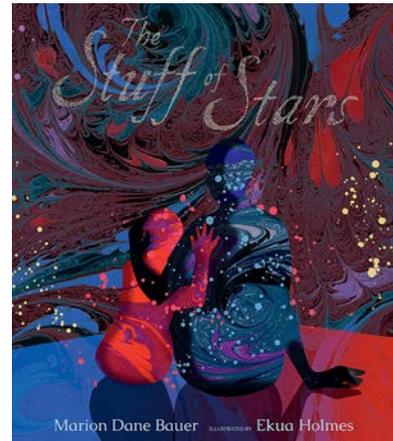


Marion Dane Bauer ❖ *The Stuff of Stars*

Celebrate with a Reading Ritual

I began writing my picture book *The Stuff of Stars* out of a profound sense of awe. I began with the mystery of the universe itself and with the miracle of life that blooms in our small part of that universe. I began in celebration of every human child born into all this wonder.

The Stuff of Stars is a book about beginnings, about birth days. I wrote it with the intention of rejoicing over momentous starting points, from the birth of the universe to the birth of a child. And of course, a child's birthday is something to be celebrated in a big way. But I'd also like to suggest a much smaller and more intimate way of celebrating: by sitting together with the birthday child and reading.

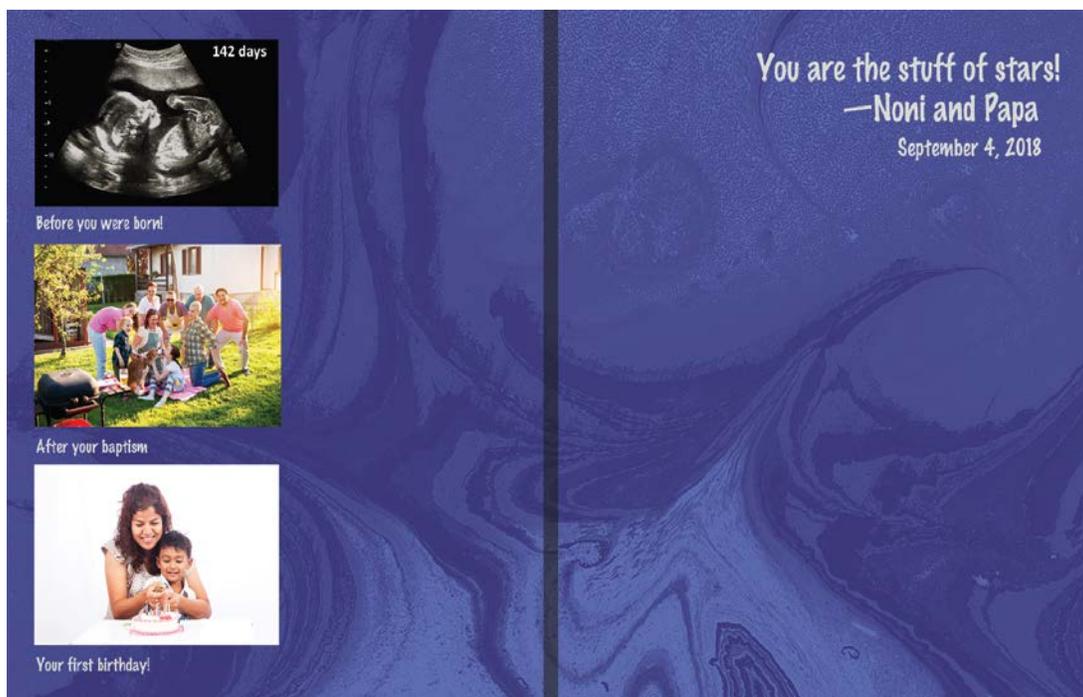


We all know from personal experience how meaningful it can be to share a ritual. Regularly reading aloud with a child is a wonderfully warm and satisfying ritual for both you and the child in question, and one you can create with your own child, a grandchild, a niece or nephew, or any other child who is close to your heart. Although you will want to share books with them all through the year, you could go a step further and create a special reading ritual for their birthday as well. Take a time apart

during that day and spend it sharing *The Stuff of Stars*, reminding this chosen child of their own miraculous beginnings and that they, too, are made of the stuff of stars.

To expand the ritual, you could take a photo of this shared reading time each birthday and glue each new photo onto the beautiful marbled endpapers of *The Stuff of Stars*. This simplified scrapbook is a way to create a personalized Birthday Book that is also an evolving keepsake, shared together from a child's one-week birthday forward.

You could also share this Birthday Book ritual with a friend or relative by giving them *The Stuff of Stars* as a personalized shower or baptism gift, including a note about how it can be turned into a Birthday Book. As the first photo, glue the baby's ultrasound photo, or a photo of yourself, the extended family, or a group of supportive friends, onto the endpapers.



If you are a Pinterest follower, you may also want to check out two of my boards for further ideas about ways to share *The Stuff of Stars*. One features ideas for celebrations such as birthdays and baby showers, and the other features possibilities for connecting young people to science.

The Stuff of Stars is all about the beginnings of things; perhaps this is a chance for you to start a new kind of celebration.