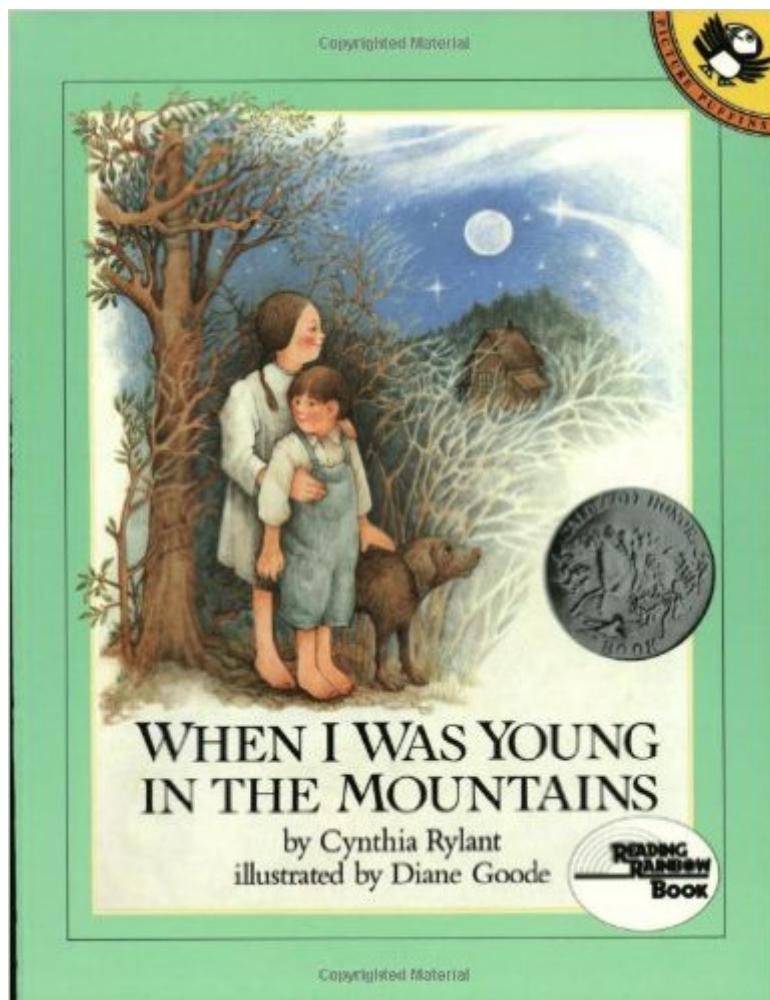


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# When I Was Young In The Mountains (Reading Rainbow Books)



## **Synopsis**

Caldecott Honor Book!"An evocative remembrance of the simple pleasures in country living; splashing in the swimming hole, taking baths in the kitchen, sharing family times, each is eloquently portrayed here in both the misty-hued scenes and in the poetic text."-Association for Childhood Education International

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: AD980L (What's this?)

Series: Reading Rainbow Books

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; Reprint edition (January 1, 1993)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140548750

ISBN-13: 978-0140548754

Product Dimensions: 7.8 x 0.1 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (74 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #4,535 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > Country Life #17 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Multigenerational #443 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction

Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 3

## **Customer Reviews**

When I read this book for the first time, I couldn't help but remember stories my grandmother told me about her life in the hollars of West Virginia as a young girl. Although I did not grow up in this state, I've taught school here for 20 years. Believe it or not, much of this story is alive and well in West Virginia and that is a wonderful thing. Life is simple, family is important and good morals are still taught in these mountains and valleys. This book is an accurate depiction of life in rural Appalachia. I've given it as a gift to my nephews and nieces who live in other states and are not as "in touch" with their West Virginia heritage. The illustrations are beautiful and compliment the story wonderfully.

Author Cynthia Rylant has written a tender story of her childhood days, living in the Appalachian Mountains not so long ago. Accompanied by the excellent illustrator Diane Goode, the book is a straightforward look at life amongst the best-known American mountain folk. Scenes of daily life include everything from needing a brave adult to accompany you out into the dark scary night (on your way to the outhouse) to getting baptized in the local swimming hole. The book is remarkable for its lack of overt sentimentality. Some might disagree with me, but I was struck by how this book did not fail to note the less than desirable elements of living in the wilderness. Swimming in a swimming hole of your own might be fun. Just watch out for snakes. And baths required an awful amount of work. Pumping the water. Carrying it to the house. Heating it. Goode's delicate illustrations accompany the text of this story perfectly. If Rylant says that the proprietors of the local store (Mr. & Mrs. Crawford) were identical, then gosh darn it, the people look identical. And I especially adored the moment when the narrator's grandmother kills a big nasty snake in the woods. The next picture displays the narrator, her brother, and two other red-headed childred posing sheepishly for a traveling photographer, gigantic dead snake draped across their heads. I cannot think of many other book that take place in Appalachia. And I certainly can't think of any that are better than this. A sweet good-hearted story, "When I Was Young In the Mountains" understands what it meant to live a difficult life with pleasure and human warmth.

Cynthia Rylant's enduring favorite "When I Was Young in the Mountains" is the tale of her own childhood growing up in the Appalachian mountains of West Virginia. The gently repetitive text details her everyday life, from swimming in a swimming hole (even if there were snakes!) to taking a bath to drinking cocoa made by her grandmother. Each page starts off with, "When I was young in the mountains . . ." By the final page, we see that not only did Ms. Rylant appreciate her low-tech, memory-making childhood, but she wouldn't have traded it for anything. Diane Goode's softly colored illustrations beautifully dovetail with the text, whether she's showing a river baptism, a nighttime trip to the "johnny-house" after too much fried okra, or a stint at the water pump. It's a lovely ode to the simple life, and to being happy with what you have instead of worrying about what you don't have.

I am a student at a University in West Virginia and I am currently enrolled in a Children's Literature course. I was required to read this book and I am glad that the book was so beautiful. I have always lived in West Virginia and this book hit very close to home. I can recall taking walks through cow pastures, jumping in swimming holes, eating corn bread and pinto beans (which is still one of my

favorite meals), relaxing on the porch swing at night and listening to the sounds of nature, and watching the stars shine over the mountains. One of my favorite parts of the story is the baptism. I too was baptized in a swimming hole. This story describes West Virginia in all its beauty.

This book showed us what is best about the mountains and the traditions of those living in those mountains. It has been so easy for our society to stereotype Appalachian mountain people as ignorant, backwards hillbillies that it is refreshing to see a depiction that shows mountain people in a different light. The old ways are disappearing. So are the mountains. The Appalachian mountains are one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world, containing one of the most diverse hardwood forests on earth. Mountain top coal removal, strip mining, and valley fills are destroying these mountains. Soon, the only way we will be able to show our children the beauty and wonder of these mountains will be through books and memories. "When I Was Young in the Mountains" will be a treasure in our house for generations. I encourage everyone to not only read this book, but also to support efforts to stop destructive, non-sustainable coal mining practices so we will be able to show our children and grandchildren more than just beautiful pictures of what once existed!

Reading this book was truly a joyous experience for me. I grew up in southern West Virginia and spent many days with my grandmother at her house out in the hills. Ms. Rylant's book reminded me so much of my own childhood! This book is beautifully written and illustrated, and brings to the reader a wonderful feeling of warmth and friendliness. Her descriptions are true-to-life, heartfelt, and easily understood by young children.

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