

Grief in the world of a child

Forever Close By

YULE HERMANS & ELVIS PEETERS

Five-year-old Yule and her mum search for freckles on each other's faces and make pictures out of them. Yule's form a starry sky, her mother says. That's how it goes every evening, until Yule's mother dies unexpectedly. From then on everything around Yule feels different, sterile and cold, as if the house and everyone in it are suddenly made of glass. Glass is dangerously breakable, and therefore forbidden territory for children. Yule can't truly reach anyone in a family immersed in grief. People don't come to the house anymore either, in fact they avoid it. Months later, Yule starts collecting things that remind her of her mother. Those warm memories remain, meaning that she's no longer trapped in her glass house full of sorrow. Slowly everything around her grows softer, more colourful and warmer.

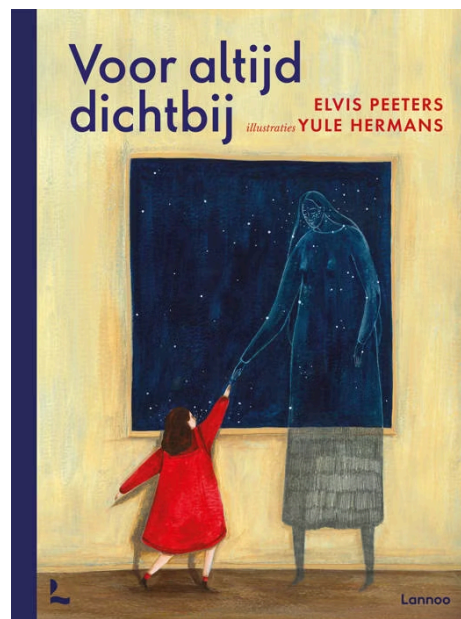
Not just for those who need such tender solace but for everyone else too, young and old. Highly recommended.

PLUIZUIT

'Forever Close By' is a book that brings warmth and comfort after the loss of a parent and makes it possible for children to talk about death. The sensitive writing is strong in its simplicity, the powerful poetic sentences fitting seamlessly with the fascinating illustrations. The figurative style of the pictures, playing on the borderline between realism and surrealism, beautifully amplifies the pain that speaks from the text. A personal but at the same time thoroughly universal story.

What does the loss of someone you love look like? Can you draw it, capture it in pictures? Elvis Peeters and Yule Hermans can.

HEBBAN



AUTHORS



Yule Hermans (b. 1996) studied illustration in Antwerp. She likes to depict stories in illustrations full of emotion and ambiance. In her atmospheric and poetic images, reality and magic are intertwined. Writing duo **Elvis Peeters** (b. 1957) writes fiction, poetry, scripts and children's books. They pour their social engagement and activism into beautifully crafted and unique narratives. In their novels, they succeed in addressing fascinating moral issues through what appears to be a simple story. In their picture books they're able to create maximum (poetic) effect with a minimum of words. Photo © Siska Vandecasteele

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TRANSLATION RIGHTS Liesbeth De Bruyne - liesbeth.debruyne@lannoo.be, Gunther Spriet - gunther.spriet@lannoo.be

TRANSLATION GRANTS Elise Vanoosthuysen - elise@flandersliterature.be