



For immediate release:
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Maine author/illustrator debuts children's book celebrating the night sky.

Jamie Hogan takes on light pollution with a story rooted in nature and togetherness.

Portland, Maine—Maine author/illustrator Jamie Hogan thinks a lot about light pollution and preservation of dark skies, an issue attracting more and more media attention as stars become increasingly harder to see in many parts of the world. Her latest book, *Skywatcher*, hits shelves October 5 and draws upon a boy and his mother traveling to see stars many take for granted.

The book begins with the boy, Tamen, reading a comic book with a nod to Maine astronaut Jessica Meir, and daydreaming about the night sky and space. As the story unfolds, he and his mother set out to find the stars, leaving far behind technology and the city's glare.

Skywatcher invites children and adults alike to unplug and escape light-saturated skies to enjoy and appreciate nature at its best. Hogan's story also showcases the bond between mother and son and the discoveries that come with adventure. Colorful illustrations and subtle pictorial hints infuse readers with joy and a sense of hope.

Hogan's book is especially relevant today as artificial light overtakes more of the night sky. Consider these facts from the International Dark-Sky Association:

- Light pollution is increasing worldwide at twice the rate of global population growth.
- Eight out of 10 people live under a light-polluted night sky.
- Used indiscriminately, outdoor lighting can disrupt wildlife, impact human health, waste energy, contribute to climate change, and block our view of the universe.

Like Tamen in *Skywatcher*, many children and families must go to great lengths to experience the night sky ("[Dark Sky Tourism is on the Rise in the U.S.](#)," National Geographic, July 29, 2021). Efforts to preserve the night sky are also taking off. There are now 130+ certified International Dark Sky Places in the world. Twenty new locations, including Katahdin Woods and Waters in Hogan's home state of Maine, were certified International Dark Sky Places in 2020.

Nature is an underlying theme of many of the books Hogan has illustrated, including [Ana and the Sea Star](#) and [A Warmer World](#). Over the past 12 years, she's illustrated 14 children's books. She lives happily on Peaks Island, Maine. Learn more at jamiehogan.com.

Note to editors/reporters: Interview with Jamie Hogan, images from the book, and/or a .pdf copy of the book are available upon request. We also recommend NASA Solar System Ambassador Charles Fulco as a source. He and Hogan will discuss *Skywatcher* during a [virtual book launch](#) on October 5, put on by Print: A Bookstore.

Skywatcher

by Jamie Hogan

Tilbury House Publishers

9780884488972

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Pub and On-Sale Date: 10/5/21

\$18.95/Hardcover/32 pages

Ages 5-8, Grades K-3

Picture Book/Fiction/Stars/Night Sky

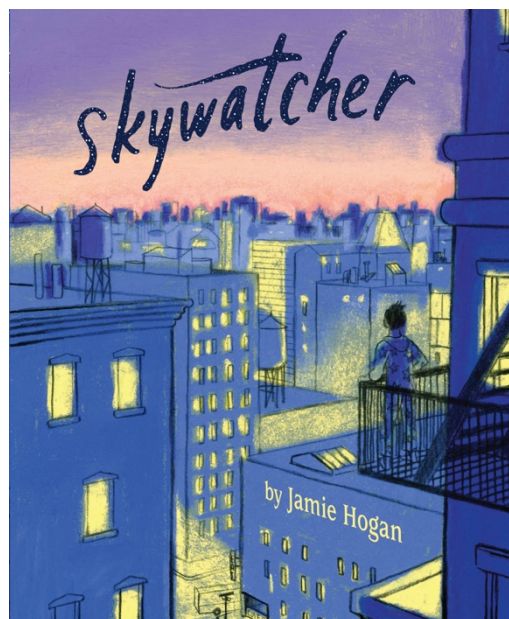
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“Beautifully illuminates the importance of our children experiencing the wonder of a dark sky, and our responsibility to preserve it.”

—Charles Fulco, NASA Solar System Ambassador



The story behind the story

In May 2018, a *Portland Press Herald* article, *Let there be dark*, caught Jamie Hogan's eye. The concept of protecting the dark skies was something she wanted to explore further, and the seed for *Skywatcher* was planted. Read the full backstory and see sketches from the book [here](#).

Shining a light on *Skywatcher*

- A story about the night sky: Tamen aches to see the stars, but none are visible in the light-polluted sky above the fire escape of his urban building. Even in the local park, the stars are hidden by city lights.
- A story about love and sacrifice: Tamen's mom, a nightshift nurse, takes him camping. For one magical night on the shore of a wilderness pond, the Milky Way in all its glory belongs to them.
- A story with powerful questions at its core: To whom does the night sky belong? Shouldn't it belong to everyone?
- Backmatter about dark-sky activism and national park programs complement the story.



Jamie Hogan

Hogan is an author, illustrator, and educator living three miles at sea on Peaks Island, Maine. She has illustrated 14 children's books including *Rickshaw Girl* (2008), a Jane Addams Peace Association Honoree and one of New York Public Library's 100 Best Children's Books of the Past 100 Years. She taught at the Maine College of Art for 15 years.

Learn more at jamiehogan.com.

The stars have aligned this holiday season with the publication of 3 books for children about the sky

Any of the trio would make a nice holiday gift for a child.

By Amy MacDonald
November 21, 2021

By a strange, almost cosmic, coincidence, this fall has seen the publication of three enchanting children's books within a few weeks of each other, each of which explores the mysteries of the universe, and in each of which Maine plays a starring role (pun intended).



"Skywatcher" written and illustrated by Jamie Hogan. Tilbury House, 32 pages, ages 6-8.

A young city dweller named Tamen longs to travel the galaxies, like the eponymous heroine of his favorite comic, Skywatcher. But you can't make a star trek without stars to guide you, and all he can see in the night sky is the glow of the city.

"Where are the stars?" he asks his mother as they walk past a pizza emporium bathed in the glare of its "Open 24/7" sign. I love her simple, non-judgmental explanation: "The city outshines them."

But she knows what he needs and the next weekend she spirits him far out of the city, through woods populated by pileated woodpeckers, Luna moths and screech owls, to an unspecified wilderness. They camp here — "in the middle of nowhere" — but the setting, with its rockbound, fir-pointed shoreline and the "wavering call" of the loon, could well be Maine. Here at last Tamen can see the stars, his favorite constellations, and most magnificent of all, the Milky Way.

In "Skywatcher," by Peaks Island's own Jamie Hogan, the writing is sweet and simple. Like Tamen's mother, Hogan wastes no words but lets the illustrations illuminate the story. Using mostly yellows and blues, she plays with the different palettes of light and dark: the harsh yellow glare of the city's street lamps and the dystopian glow of its skyline; the warm light of a campfire and the bottom-lit gleam of a flashlight on faces inside a tent. All of which contrast sharply with the cool white light of the moon, the starlight looking like "spilled glitter" and the faint eerie swirl of the Milky Way.

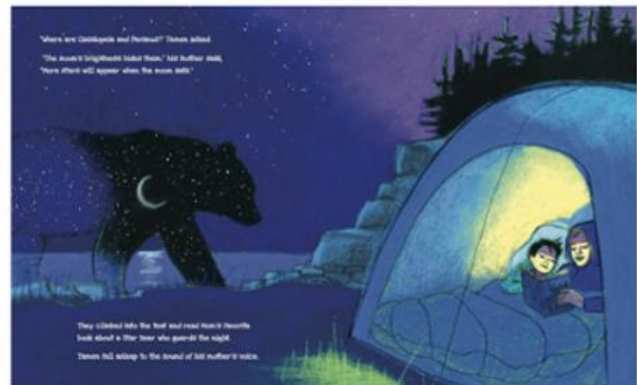
The awe that is inspired by finally seeing the universe that has always surrounded him is brought home by Tamen's observation as he takes in the sky's full splendor: "The black is SO big, but I feel like I'm part of it."

"You are. People are made of stardust," his mother responds. "The atoms in us were forged in stars long ago."

And that's really the point of the book: why it is important to be able to literally see our place in the universe, something that 80% of the world's population is unable to do, as so many people live in places where light pollution blots out the stars. "Our ability to see the stars is our window on the universe," Hogan writes in a postscript. Light pollution "threatens to close that window." She adds information on the night sky, and how to become a "skywatcher," visit a [Dark Sky Preserve](#) and "Defend the Dark" from threats of light pollution.

A new work from a Maine-based illustrator Jamie Hogan and Ralph Culver's first full-length collection

By Nina MacLaughlin
Globe Correspondent, Updated December 9, 2021, 5:30 p.m.



Jamie Hogan's new book "Skywatcher" focuses on light pollution and the beauty of the night sky. JAMIE HOGAN

Night lights

Maine-based illustrator Jamie Hogan, who lives 3 miles out to sea on Peaks Island, became aware of light pollution after reading a newspaper article about it. It ignited something in her mind, and she wrote and illustrated a children's book about exploring and defending the dark. "Skywatcher" (Tilbury House) tells the story of Tamen, who learns about the stars in a book, but when he goes outside in the city where he lives, can't find them. "Where are the stars?" he asks his mom. "The city outshines them," his mother tells him. They take a long drive together, out into the wild, where they set up a tent, and light a fire, and look up. The book reminds us — especially as we spend more time gazing at the glowing thing in our palm — the importance of aiming our attention upward, that seeing the Milky Way sweep across the sky reawakens our relationship to the universe, and makes us know that there's a much vaster world than the one illuminated by unnatural light here on earth. The end of the book includes resources for kids who want to become skywatchers and help curtail light pollution. The book is a celebration of the darkness, the mysteries of night, the importance of keeping places unpolluted by overlighting, and, most of all, as Hogan said in an interview, that "there's wilderness out there, and there's also wilderness within us, and we need to be connected to it."

'Skywatcher' by Jamie Hogan



Instead of children being afraid of the dark, author and illustrator Jamie Hogan wants to encourage them to explore it.

Author: [newscentermaine.com](#)
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