

Dear Deborah Wiles,

When I was in fifth grade, I read your book, *Each Little Bird That Sings*. Now I'm in eighth grade, and to this day the story of Comfort Snowberger lives on in my mind. In many ways throughout *Each Little Bird That Sings*, Comfort reminded me of myself. No, I don't actually live in a funeral home, but like Comfort, I've had to deal with the death of someone I loved. When I was four years old, my mother was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and less than a year later she was dead.

As Comfort said, "I just want to sit in my closet all day with my dog." I can relate. Shortly after my mom was diagnosed, we got a puppy and named her Belle. Belle grew as my mom got sicker, and after my mom finally gave up her battle against cancer, Belle became a huge part of my life. Like Comfort, I would sit in my room for hours on end, not wanting to do anything except be with Belle. Comfort talks about how she feels her dog, Dismay, understands her; I feel like Belle understands me, too. She was there for the major turning point in my life, and she's grown to understand my emotions. Sometimes her understanding is just enough to get me back to the right state of mind.

After my mother's death, I put on a mask. Everywhere I went, I acted like nothing was wrong, but inside I felt lonely. In the book, Comfort says "Everybody cried, because death is hard. Death is sad. But death is a part of life. When someone dies, it's your job to keep on living." This quote is true in so many ways. At first, I didn't know how to handle my mother's death. Comfort taught me a very valuable lesson. She and I had to realize that the person who died wouldn't want you to give up on life and wear a mask everywhere you went. After reading that quote, I found it easier to let go of the fact that my mother was gone, and to live the life she wanted for me.

I related to Comfort because she lost someone that was close to her, just like I did. It was as if while I was reading the book, Comfort and I were having a conversation. When she would put herself down, it made me realize that I was the one making myself sad about my mother's death. *Each Little Bird That Sings* taught me things I didn't think I could ever understand. This book taught me to be thankful for what I have and where I am today. I will never forget how Comfort Snowberger taught me to live my life.

Sincerely,

Grace

Grace Oslin, Grade 8
Oak Bluffs School, Oak Bluffs