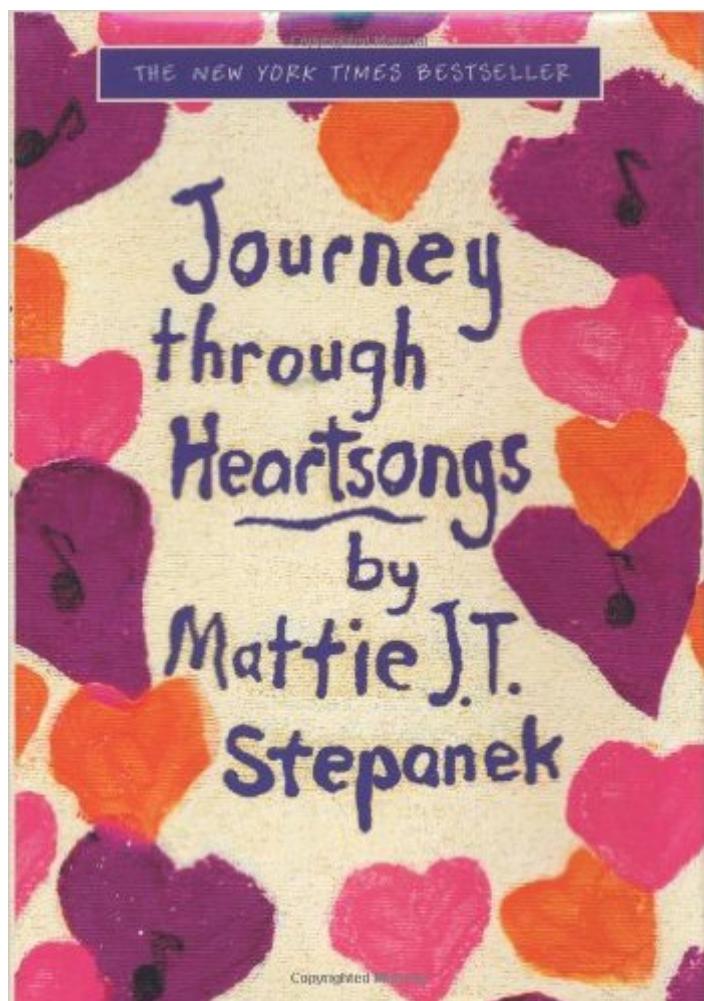


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# Journey Through Heartsongs



## **Synopsis**

Mattie J.T. Stepanek takes us on a Journey Through Heartsongs with more of his moving poems. These poems share the rare wisdom that Mattie has acquired through his struggle with a rare form of muscular dystrophy and the death of his three siblings from the same disease. His life view is one of love and generosity and as a poet and a peacemaker, his desire is to bring his message of peace to as many people as possible.

## **Book Information**

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Grade Level: 4 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Mattie Stepanek is an amazing young man. At 11 years old, his wisdom far exceeds his years and is reflected in his poetry. Mattie began writing poems (with his mother as scribe) at the age of three and describes himself as "Poet and Peacemaker." He stimulates the reader to examine the really important things in life ... to embrace life. Mattie also illustrated the book with wonderful storytelling finger paintings. With the challenges he has faced in his short life, it is amazing that he has such a mature, wise and positive attitude. Your appreciation of this young man and his work will be greatly enhanced if you should have the good fortune to hear him speak.

What a wonderful Journey Mattie's book is. The color and simplicity of the illustrations, the set up and flow of the chapters, and the incredible words of his poetry are just an amazing package.

Mattie's vision is such a pleasure, and his way of expressing himself a true gift. Looking forward to

more works from this incredible young man. Thank you Mattie J. T. Stepanek for opening up your poetry and sharing it with the world!

The book contains poetry written by young man far wiser than his youthful years. At his young age, Mattie has written more about life's lessons than some people will never learn no matter how long they live. Mattie knows about the trials and tribulations we each face in our day-to-day-living, about pain and sorrow, joy and hope. Although the book is not a lengthy one, there is more than just a few words to this book, there is a message which poignantly emphasises that we should live each day to the fullest, for we never know when it may be our last. If each person had the heart, spirit, wisdom and inner-beauty of Mattie, what a wonderful world it would be. This is a book suitable for all ages and would make an excellent gift for someone special on your list.

It has been said (accurately) many times: 11-year-old Mattie T.J. Stepanek's wonderful, often-haunting poems reflect a joy of life, an understanding of life, a full realization of what is important in life. His one-of-a-kind poems reveal a very wise, and perhaps very old, soul lurking in a very young body. And by now you've probably heard Mattie's story on television, read it in the newspaper, or read his bio in one of his books: in his young life he has had to deal with a rare form of muscular dystrophy, and has watched his siblings pass away one by one. He started writing poems at the age of three. But what you may NOT know is that this book truly differs from his first, earliest work, *Heartsongs*. His first was truly a work of art -- and in this book, he builds on his art and makes it a mite more personal. If his first book, *Heartsongs*, is a nifty little polished poetic gem, the self-styled "peacemaker's" second book, *Journey through Heartsongs*, is a natural sequel -- a highly-polished, multi-layered gem. For in THIS book of poetry, Mattie begins to broaden his subjects a bit to include works that more directly reflect his own personal life and struggles: the pediatric intensive care unit; an anniversary reflection on how he felt the day he learned his little brother passed on and what it was like for him to be at his brother's funeral; maintaining family unity amid tragedy (*The Holding On Family*); his new unsought role as the only child of parents of deceased children, and many other topics. Yet, in Mattie's artistic hands these subjects are tastefully handled in seamless poetry, 100 percent sincere -- so be forewarned that you may shed a tear or two. But there is a wide variety of other general subjects, too (the senses; the Vietnam War Memorial; angels; watches; wishing; growing up -- and many more). And in this volume (as in the first it is illustrated with his wonderful illustrations) you can clearly see his growth and maturation as he begins working through events in his life, questions of mortality, resolve, love, faith and the

simple things that we take for granted -- things that make our lives beautiful and meaningful. This is a wonderful book of personal poems by a beautiful wise soul (and I am not just writing this to butter him up because he is a black belt in karate). I read *Heartsongs* first, was deeply moved and impressed. And when I read this I thought it would be basically more of the same wonderful poetry (and realize this: I generally do not enjoy poetry). But this book is different: in *Journey through Heartsongs* I could literally watch his incredible talent blossom. A great book to read and to gift to anyone, of any age -- and I'll be buying more volumes of Mattie's poems for many many years to come.

11-year-old Mattie Stepanek has a gift -- even though he's battling a rare disease, he's triumphed over greater battles than anyone could imagine. In this, *Journey Through Heartsongs*, his beautiful writing reflects what he feels about life and the future, and what he wants to someday accomplish. He believes that everyone has a *Heartsong* inside them, something that enables a person to do good things, only people don't know they have it in themselves. By writing powerful poems, both sad and happy, heroic and brave, he reveals the magic in his gifts and the idea that a young boy like him can change the world. Filled with beautiful poems and inspiring writings and pictures, Mattie's poems come to life in this wonderful book that everyone will be inspired when reading it. I don't think there's one person in the world who won't love this book. I can't wait for Mattie's next *Heartsongs* book to be released.

If you ever find yourself wallowing in self-pity, read this book. Mattie helps us to see the rainbow behind EVERY(and I mean, every)storm. Send this to someone who always sees his glass 'half empty' (see poem he wrote about this). Written honestly and simply, it would even make a good book for reading aloud to young children (though I am reading it for an adult book discussion club). My only caution to prospective book buyers who are thinking of buying both of his books... I believe some of the same poems are in both (from looking at 's excerpt of the 1st). (...)

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