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***When Dad showed me the Universe* by Ulf Stark illustrated by Eva Eriksson**

Publisher: Gecko Press

RRP \$19.99

In this delightful picture book, the young boy's father is keen to educate his son about the immensity of the universe. The pair wrap up warm and the father leads his son through the village, telling him many interesting facts along the way. They walk on until there are no more streetlights and finally stop on a small hill.

"Is this it?" the boy asks. His father nods.

While his father gazes up at the stars, the boy explores the ground and discovers a snail from the universe creeping over a stone, a blade of grass swaying in the winds of the universe, a thistle flower, and his father's reflection in a small pond. He's enraptured by the beauty of the universe.

But - "Don't be silly," his father says. "You're supposed to look up."

His father points out and names the stars in the sky. However, in the boy's tired eyes the stars all swim together like specks of dust in the living room when the sun shone.

In an amusing 'down to earth' moment, the father realises the perils of not watching where he puts his feet. The child laughs and recognises the value of noticing the small things that are part of the universe. In this wise tale, father and son each have a different view of the world - both are right.

Eva Eriksson's softly-coloured night scenes are imbued with details that accentuate the beauty of the world at whatever perspective it is observed. The boy's innocent face is adorable, while the father is shown as a loving parent who is reminded of how to see through a child's eyes. A reassuring warmth and security enhances the village sights and the evening adventure.

The review copy is a soft-cover publication - plus a hardcover edition is available for \$34.99.

Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett

