Chasing the Milky Way

AUTHOR: Erin E. Moulton
PUBLISHER: Arthur A. Levin Books
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GENRE: Realistic Fiction, Sports, mystery
SETTING: The setting is Iowa during modern times.

SUMMARY:
Lucy Peevy knows that her way out of the trailer park is through science, and winning the BotBlock Jr. Robot Challenge is also just what she needs to jump start her college savings. With her best friend Cam by her side, Lucy knows she’s ready to unveil her JunnkBot PingPing 2000 to the world. But when her mentally ill mother has a bad episode, Lucy’s dreams of scientific glory give way to trying to stay one step ahead of the law. If she can’t keep it together, Lucy might have to consider a future of which her mother isn’t a part.

BOOK TALK:
Lucy Peevy knows that her one chance to get out of her run down trailer park is winning the BotBlock Jr. Robot Challenge. But the road to robotics’ success and the cash prize that goes along with it takes a side-trip when her mentally ill mother takes a turn for the worse. With her best friend Cam by her side, Lucy will have to pull out all the stops to make sure Mama, Cam, and her little sister Izzy make it to New Hampshire in one piece.

AUTHOR’S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:
Author’s Name: Erin E. Moulton
Erin E. Moulton has always had an artist’s heart. After a creative writing class in college, she knew that writing was her calling, so she set off to get her MFA from Vermont College. Like Lucy, Erin E. Moulton lives in New Hampshire and she is a YA librarian for a public library.

Author’s Website: http://www.erinemoulton.com

Other books written by the author:
Tracing Stars
Flutter
Labyrinth

SIMILAR BOOKS/BOOKS WITH A SIMILAR THEME:
The Secret Hum of a Daisy by Tracy Holczer (2014)
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Before her death, Lucy’s grandmother would say Lucy’s mother was “blasting off”. (pg. 17) What did she mean by this and how did Lucy know when her mother was about to “blast off”?

2. At the end of the second chapter, Lucy makes the comment, “We’re piloting our own ship.” Is this an example of foreshadowing? If so, give some examples of what foreshadowing is.

3. Lucy claims that Cam has been cursed with blind optimism. How do we see him demonstrate this throughout the book? (pg. 45)

4. Why does Gram use the phrase “Meditation of Misery” to describe the way Mama gets sometimes? (pg. 73)

5. Throughout the book, Lucy remembers past birthdays. Why do you think the author has linked these memories to the plot of the book?

ACTIVITIES WITH STANDARDS:

Science:
- Create a Robot
  Working in teams and using basic robotics skills, create a robot that can perform a simple task.

  **Standard 4: Science, Engineering and Technology**
  
  **7.4.1** Understand that energy is the capacity to do work.

  **7.4.2** Explain that energy can be used to do work using many processes (e.g., generation of electricity by harnessing wind energy).

  **7.4.3** Explain that power is the rate that energy is converted from one form to another.

Language Arts:
- Flashbacks
  Select one of the flashback scenes from *Chasing the Milky Way* and analyze how the memory moves the story forward and reveals a deeper understanding of Lucy and her mother.

  **Standard 8.RL.2.3** Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a work of literature propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
RELATED INTERNET SITES:


Suggestions for making a “junkbot” can be found at http://www.treehugger.com/gadgets/maker-faire-2012-make-simple-robots.html

Challenging Words
attributes (pg. 6)
silt (pg. 44)
transmitter (pg. 51)
optimum (pg. 51)
mollusks (p. 71)
magnetized (p. 83)
affirmative (p. 93)
delusional (p. 98)
frantic (p. 106)
paradise (p. 109)
metaphorically (p. 121)
cringe (p. 124)
reconnaissance (p. 126)
coping mechanism (p. 134)