

<http://www.saraharonson.com/books/picture-books-2/>

[https://www.bookologymagazine.com/article/bookstorm\\_rube\\_goldberg/](https://www.bookologymagazine.com/article/bookstorm_rube_goldberg/)

**Just Like Rube Goldberg: The Incredible True Story of the Man Behind the Machines by Sarah Aronson, illustrated by Robert Neubecker #dw2020reads #kidlit #biography #campread2020**

**Dwayna Paplow (on facebook), dwRavenPuff (on Instagram and Litsy)**

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Quick! My emoji review: 🙌 A thin biograhpy but jam-packed with rich vocabulary, illustrations, and STEM concepts. For teachers & homeschoolers & sciencey parents, this little book is an excellent way to introduce physics, engineering, mechanics and more that I can't think of at the moment. For my further thoughts (spoilers)

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SPOILERS BELOW this is not a review; these are my unedited first impressions. I'll need to refer back these in this August's Camp Read-a-lot (which is about new children's literature, just ask if you want to join. This year it's free!).

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When this book arrived for me at the library, I guessed it was on the grade 2-4 reading list based on the length and cover art. BOY-O, was I WRONG. Turns out, this is aimed at grades 5-8 and rightly so. Don't let the cute cover and thin spine fool you.

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First thing I noticed? The clever hook on the inside flap. Not sure if the author wrote it or an editor or someone in the marketing dept but mawh \*chef's kiss.\*

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On the first few pages, I noticed how high the vocabulary aims! Award-winning - improbable - inefficient - official - determined - horrified - dismayed. This is an author who loves words.

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By page 7 or 8, my breath was taken away by illustrated maze of pipes illustrated. The text follows along a winding tube. This two page spread evoked memories of so many other board games I've played: Mousetrap, Waterworks, The Amazing Labyrinth.

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Several pages so the drudgery and the repetition it takes to hone drawing skills, and more commonly do menial tasks at a job.

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Page 9 or 10 (the pages are not numbered) took my breath away again. It's a two page spread of San Francisco burning. In the wake of George Floyd's murder, the Minneapolis protests, and riots, the illustration and the text instantly brought me to tears: "In the wake of disaster, it can be hard for people to focus on their dreams. It can be even harder to feel hopeful."

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Back to Rube who moved to New York. The bustle of the Big Apple becomes a Where's Rube in the illustrations. In this section they did include some of his original cartoons, but I wish they would've spread them out over the 2 pages differently. Too tight and crammed.

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Finally, the part of the book where the Rube Goldberg devices spread out across two pages and take center stage! Each machine only needs bare minimum of text since they are detailed and sequenced with letters and arrows. "Reading" devices is part maze, part connect the dots. It is a great way for kids to explain the mechanics in their own words. So many opportunities to introduce science concepts and engineering terms: gears, fulcrum, gravity, momentum, propeller, electricity, pivot, spring, force, pulley, battery, etc.

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And the ending is a word-tastic summary. Clever juxtaposition, just like the book flap.

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In the afterward, more details offer other ways to explore STEAM through Goldberg's eyes: automobiles, is Mike and Ike where the candy's name came from, Mousetrap (see other games mentioned), I'm the Guy cartoons which take reader's suggestions, political cartoons, sculpting. Another way to dig into his machines (not mentioned in the book): O.K. GO music videos.