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I Hear A City: A Picture Book for Three-Four-and Five-Year-Olds

By

Adam Schneider

Mentor: Salvatore Vascellaro

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Master in Science in Education

Bank Street College of Education

2009

Abstract

I Hear A City: A Picture Book for Three-Four-and Five-Year-Olds

I Hear A City is an original children's book that delineates the daily routines of a city and the people who live within it. The book is designed to be read with three-four- and five-year olds because its content corresponds with that age groups interests and their desire to understand their surroundings. *I Hear A City* recounts the story of the life of a city and the universal routines that exist there. The ideas and events expressed within the book are basic and relate to young children. The life and activities of a city and its inhabitants are integrated and fluid and many daily occurrences and repetitive and habitual routines are paid scant attention to by adults, but stand out as significant to young children.

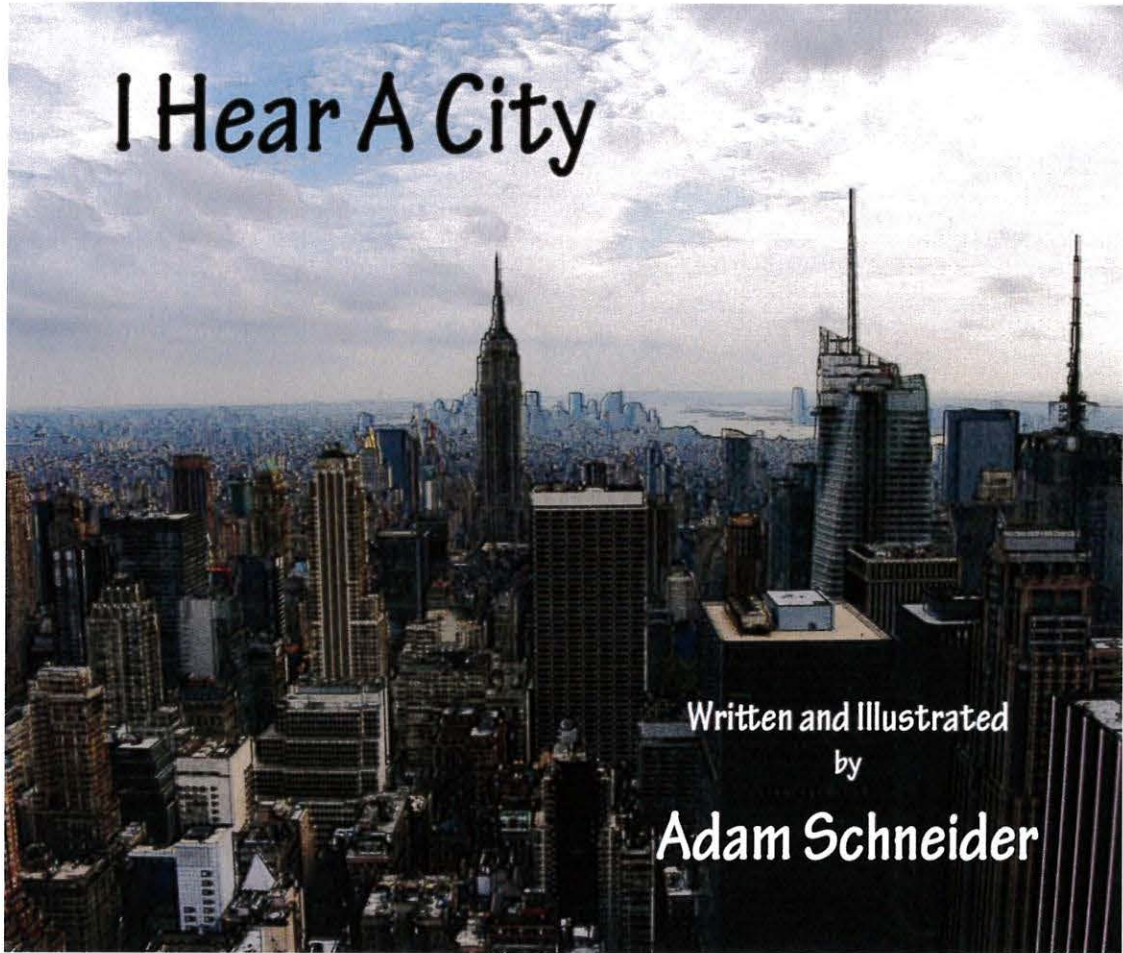
The Introduction explains the motivation for writing the story, the intention behind it and the inspiration for it. The Introduction also includes the rationale for the style of illustrations that complement the verse structure: how the story is told. Incorporated within the Similar Books section is a description of other children's books that deal either with the life of a city or with some sort of routine. *I Hear A City* is a merging of both content areas and ideas. In the section *I Hear A City* and 3's, 4's and 5's, the book is evaluated and analyzed in the context of the writings of Lucy Sprague Mitchell and Claudia Lewis in terms of what is developmentally appropriate subject matter, what type of writing styles are suitable for young children and what kinds of illustrations should be used.

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I Hear A City

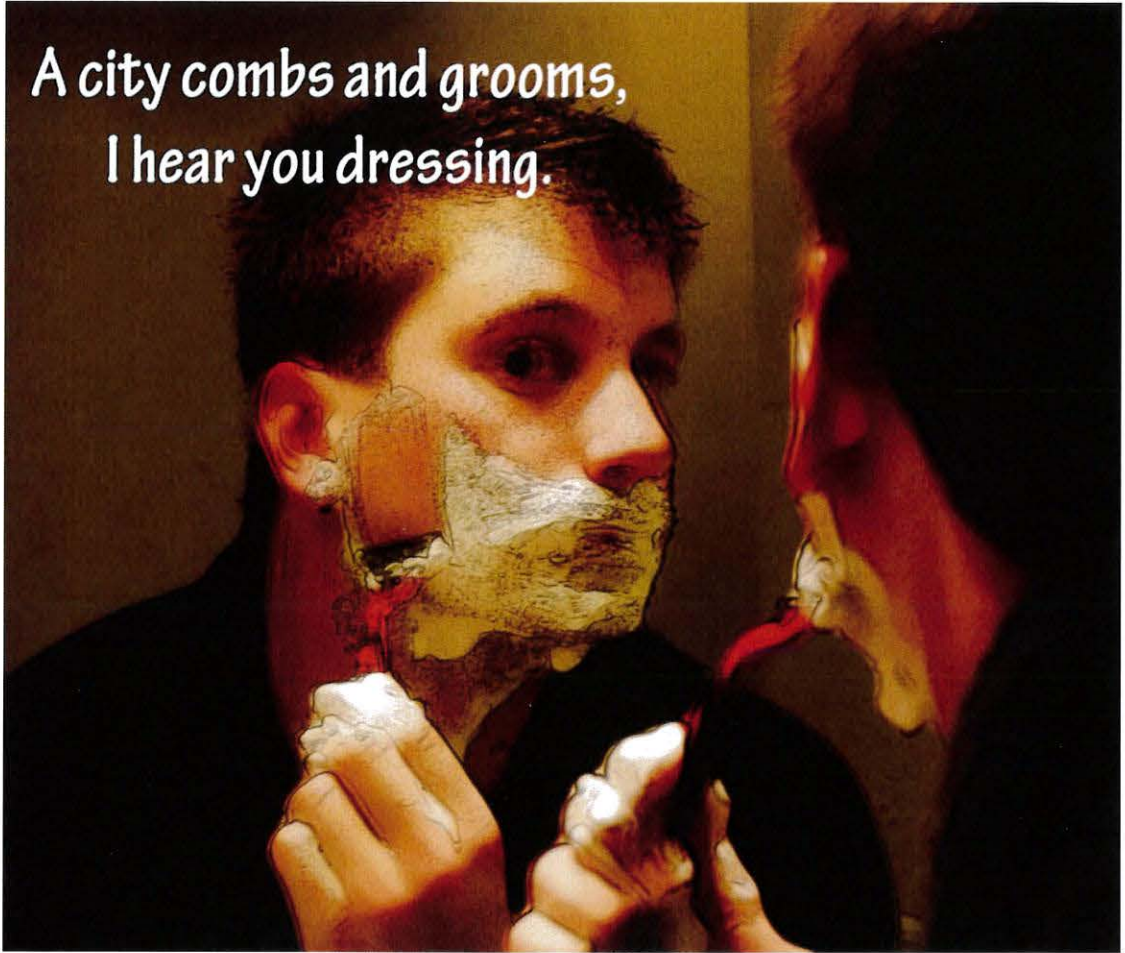
Written and Illustrated
by
Adam Schneider

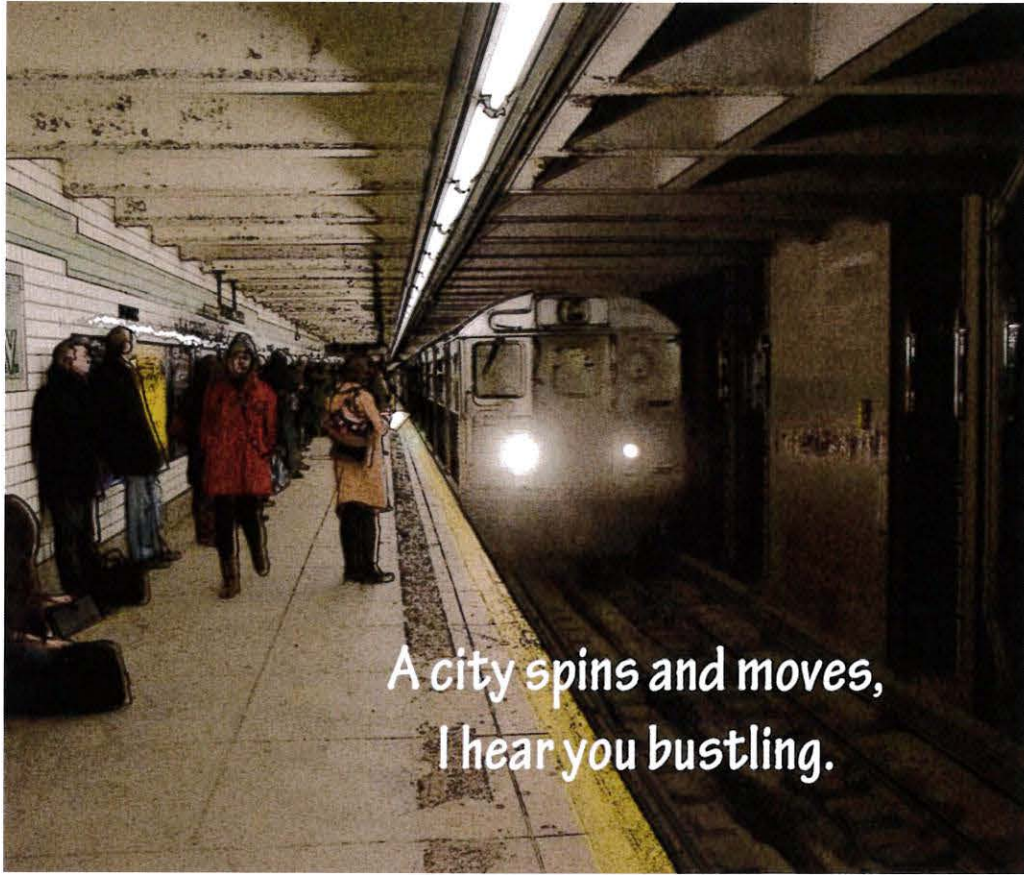




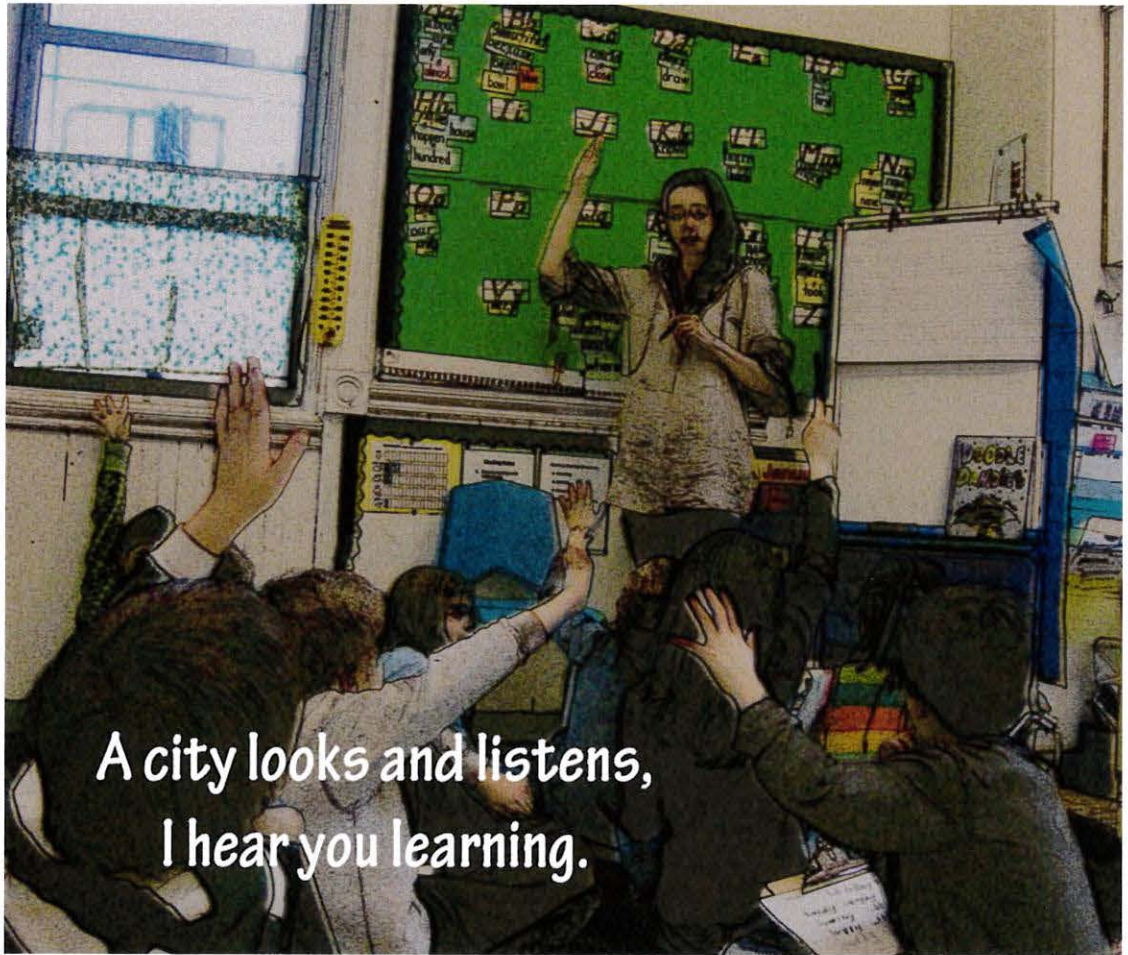
*A city beeps and buzzes,
I hear you waking.*

A city combs and grooms,
I hear you dressing.



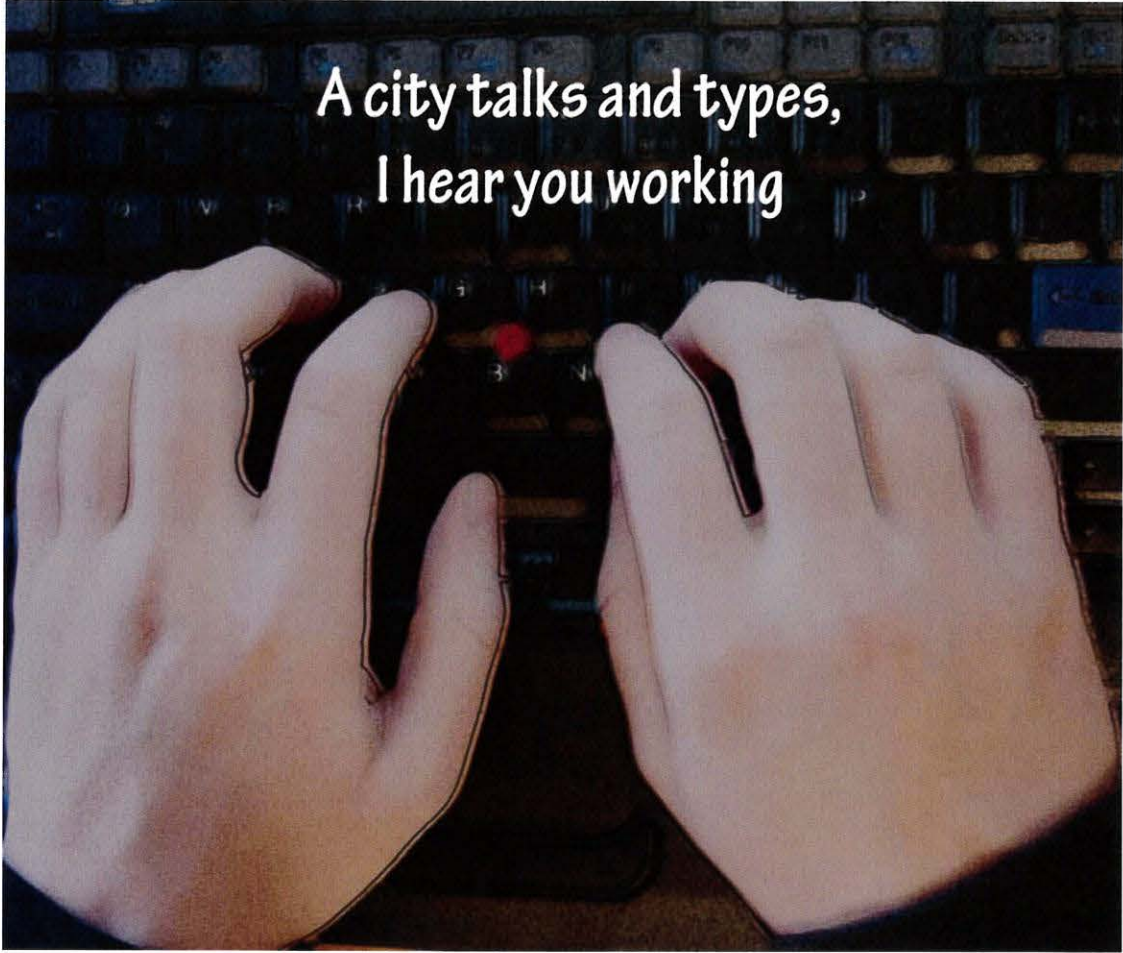


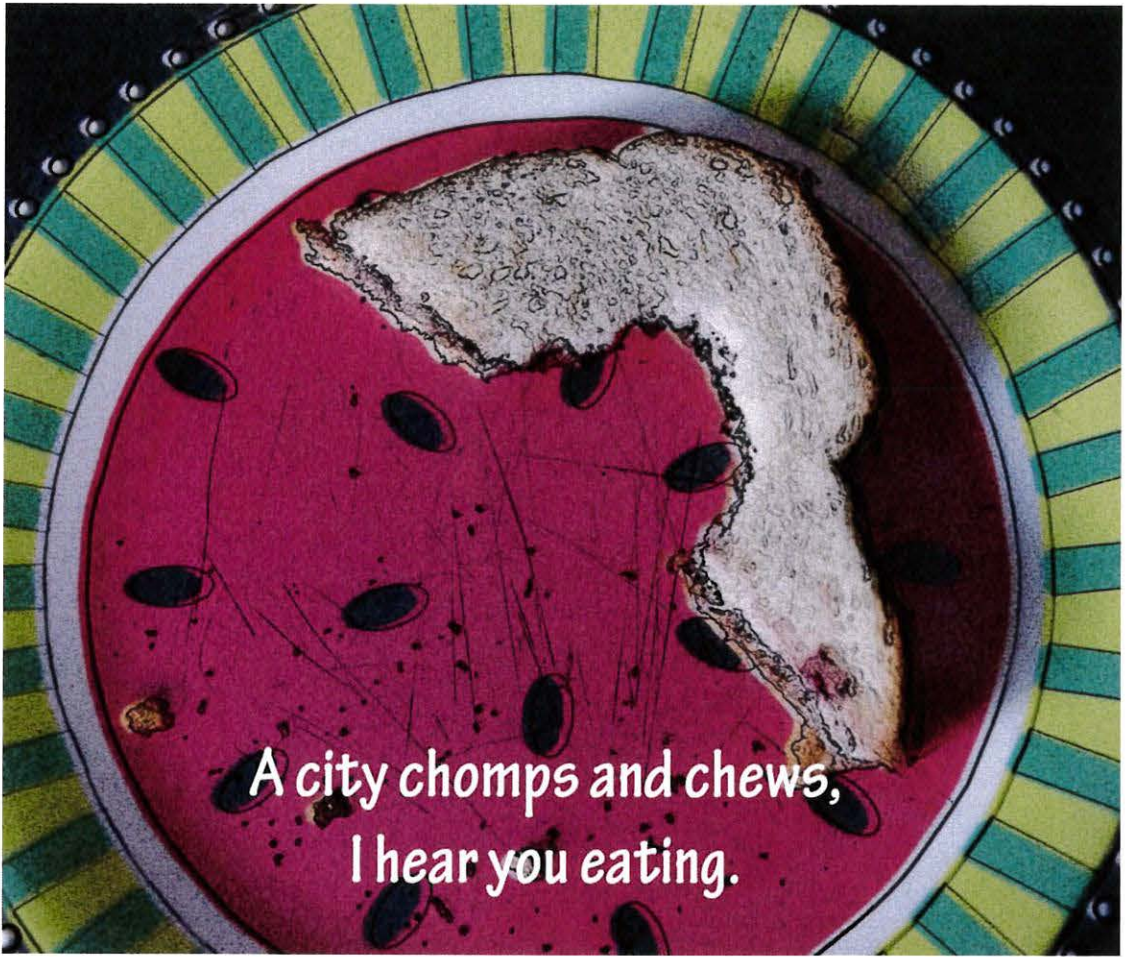
*A city spins and moves,
I hear you bustling.*



A city looks and listens,
I hear you learning.

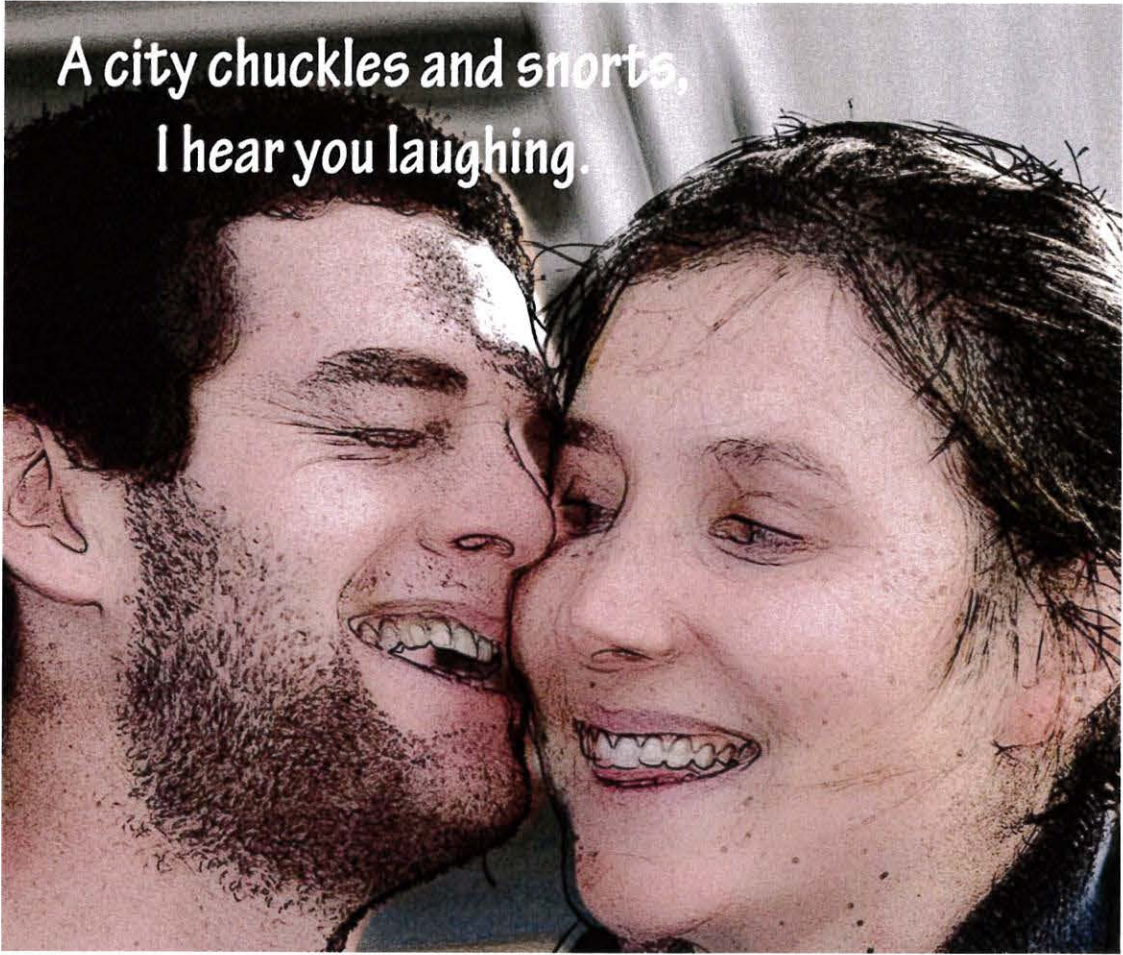
A city talks and types,
I hear you working

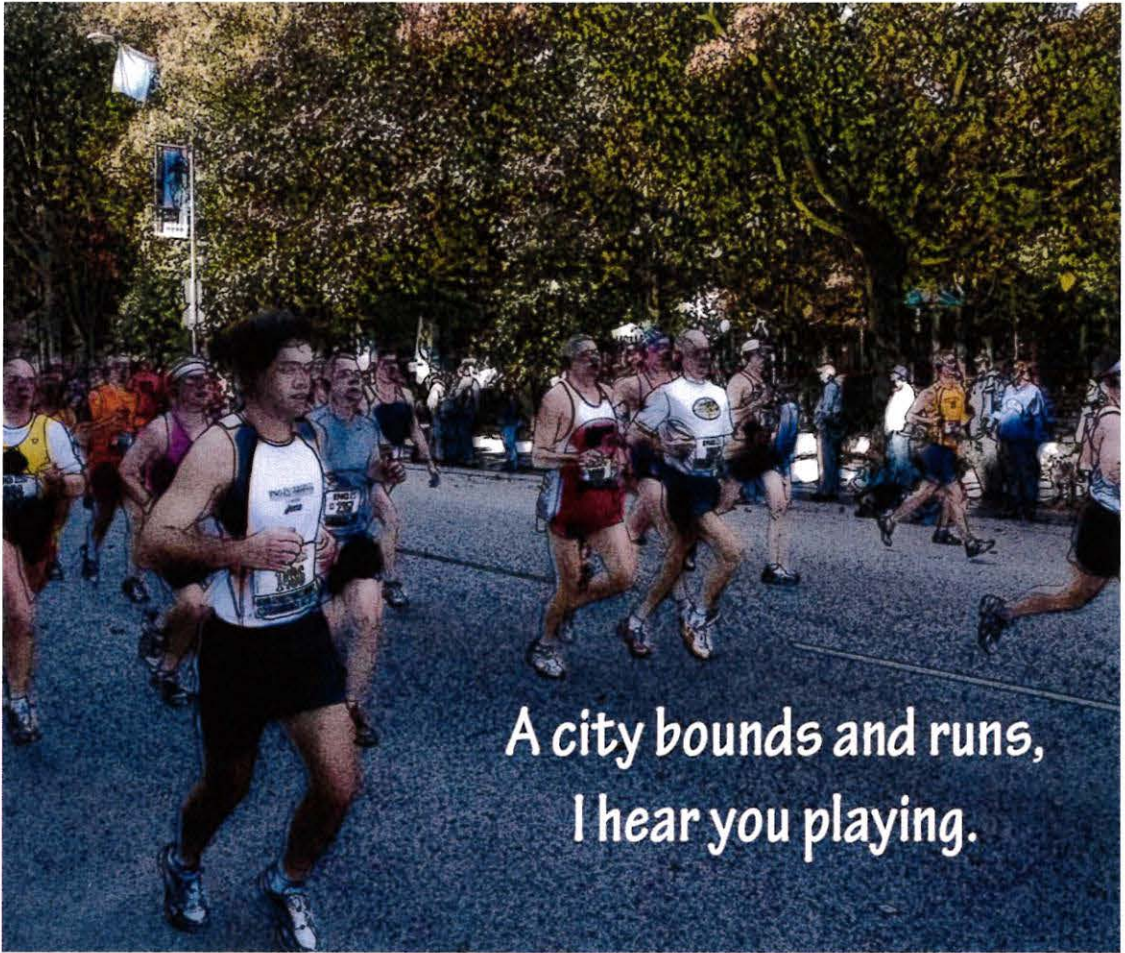




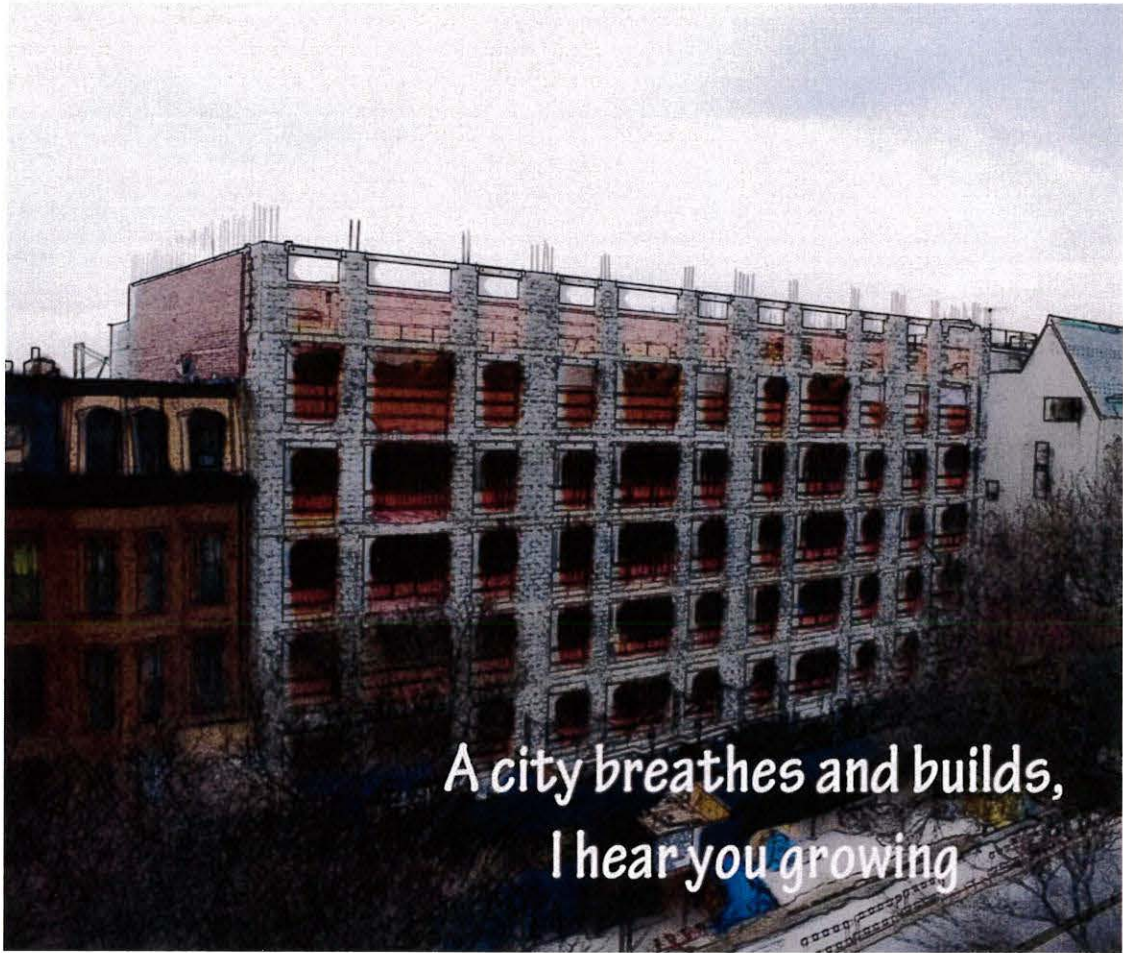
A city chomps and chews,
I hear you eating.

A city chuckles and snorts,
I hear you laughing.

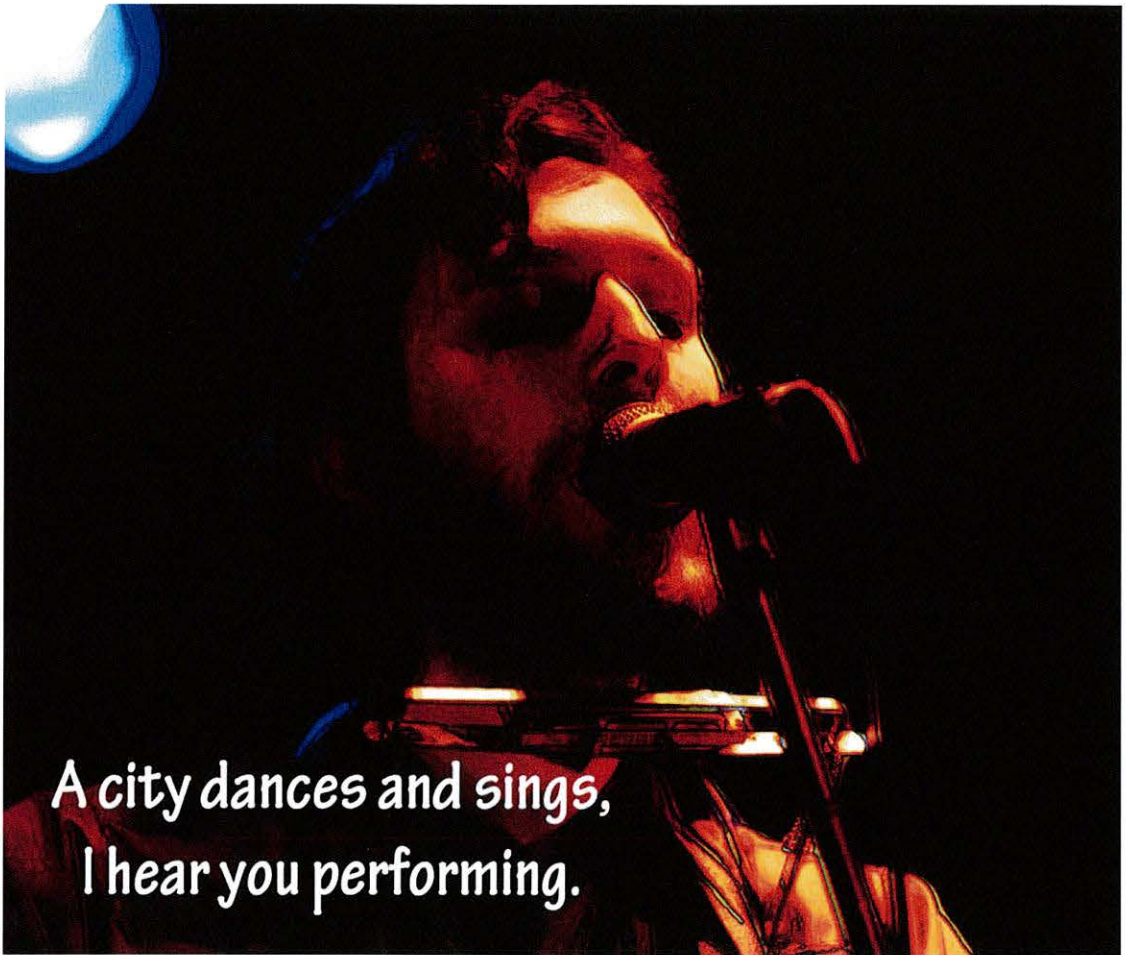




*A city bounds and runs,
I hear you playing.*



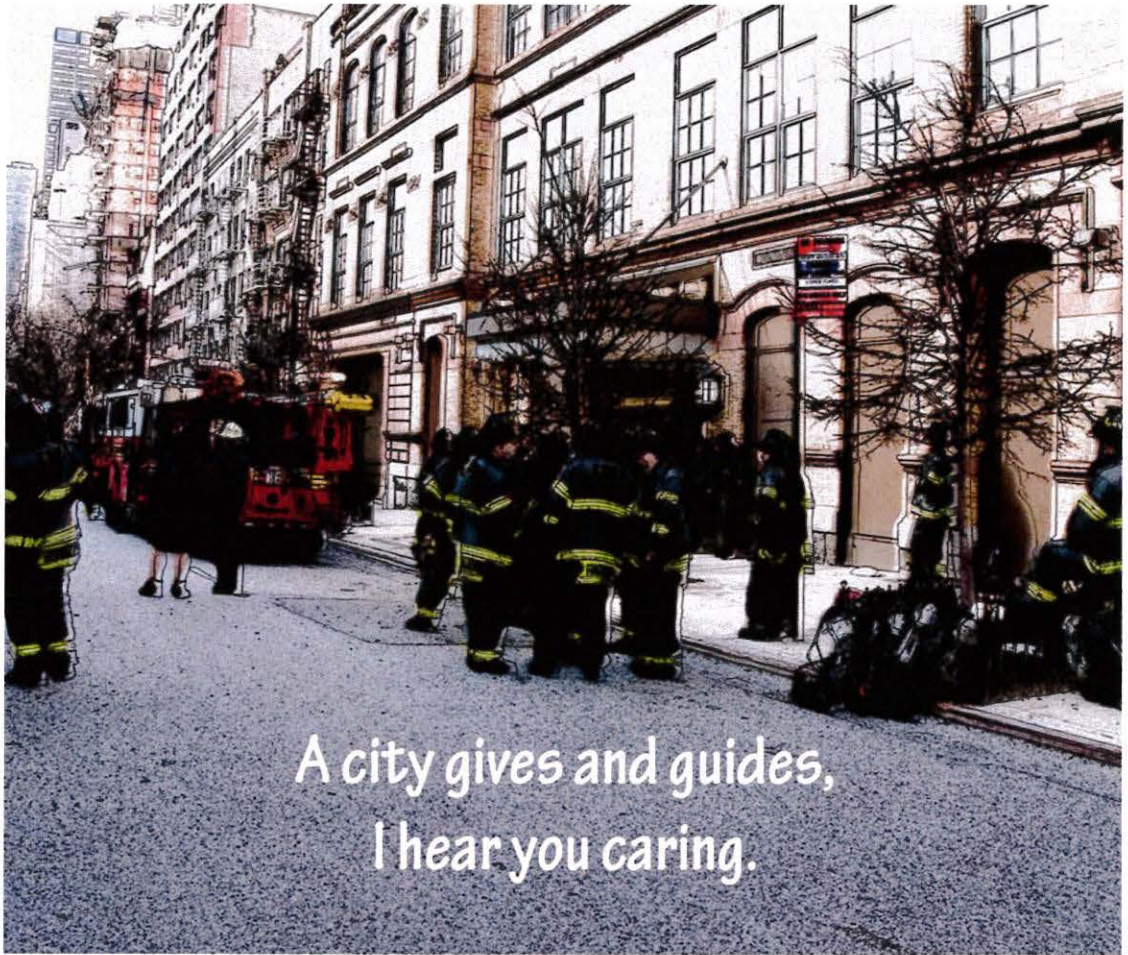
A city breathes and builds,
I hear you growing



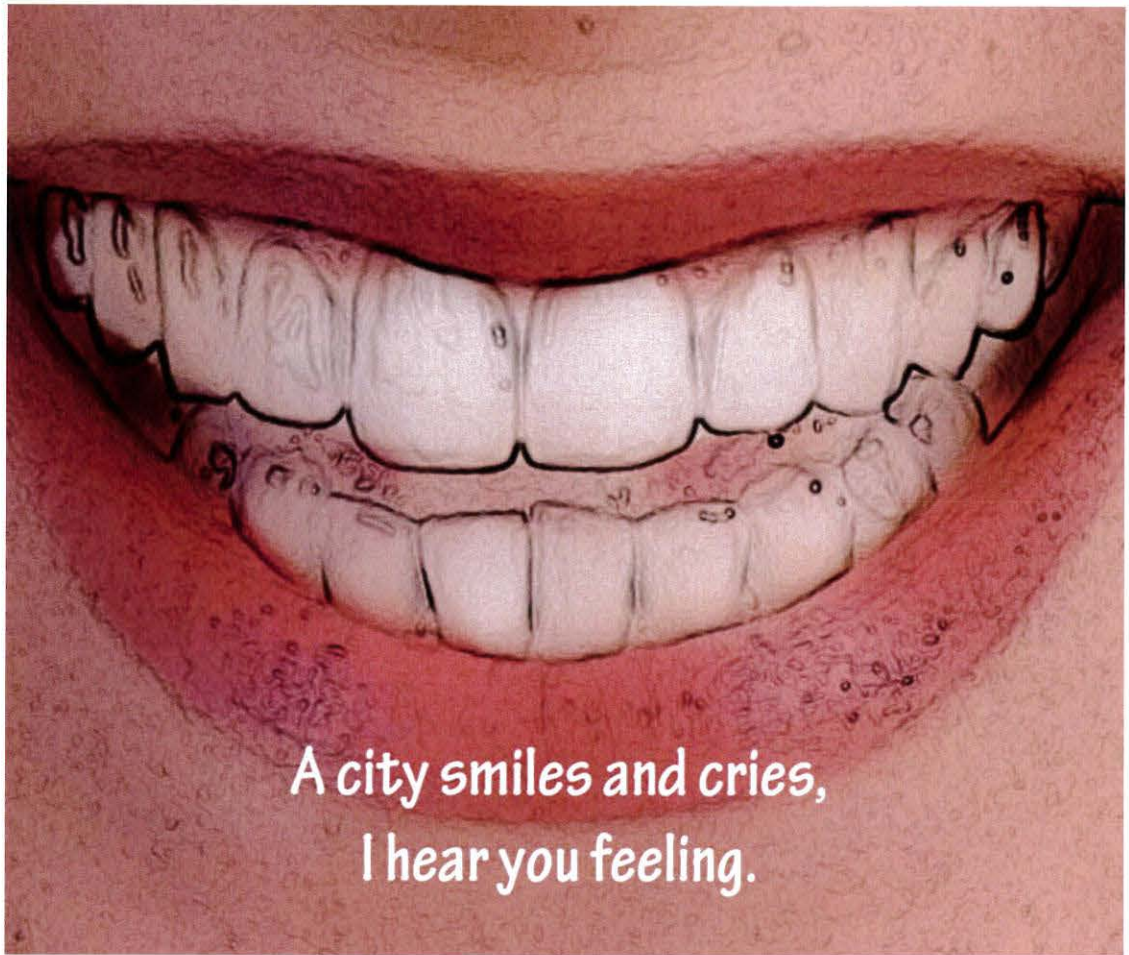
*A city dances and sings,
I hear you performing.*



A city creates and composes,
I hear you inventing.



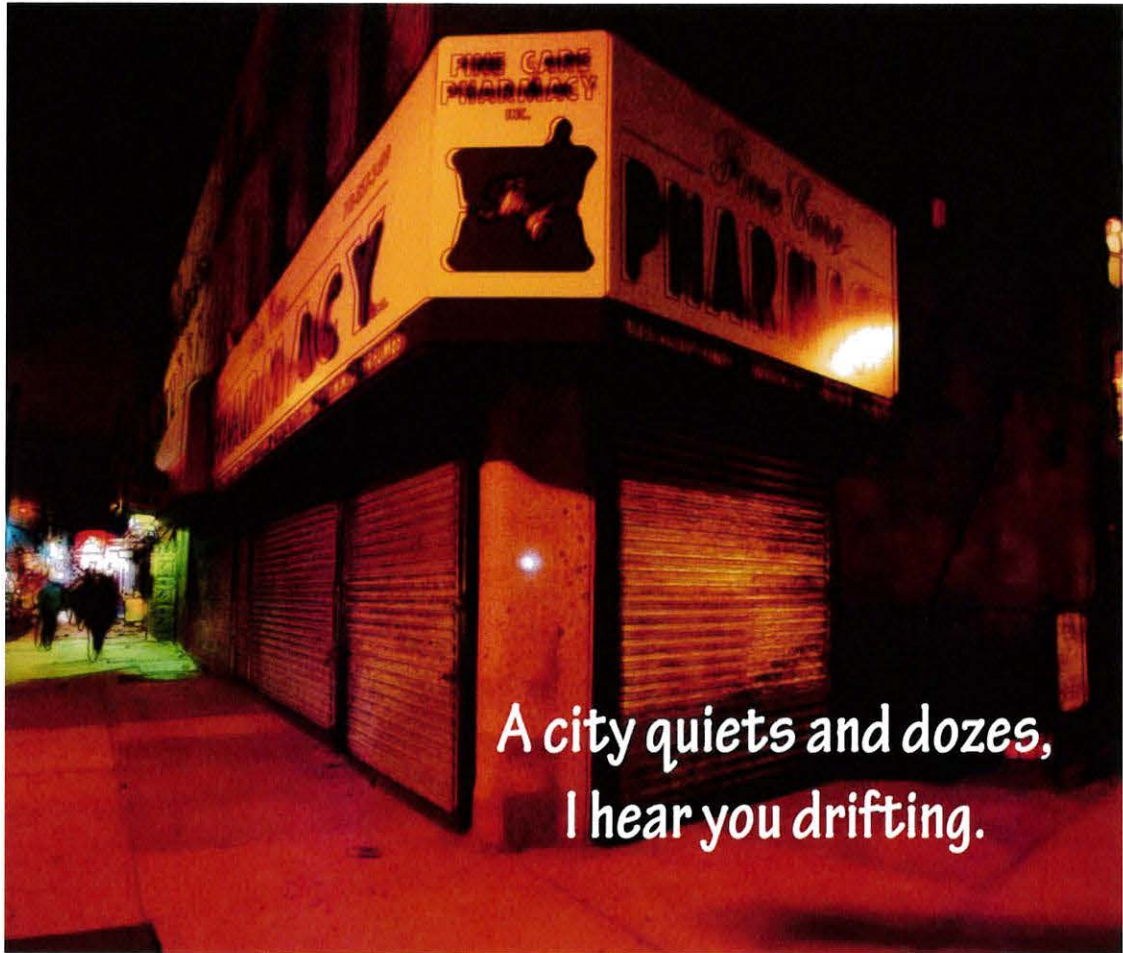
*A city gives and guides,
I hear you caring.*



*A city smiles and cries,
I hear you feeling.*

A city hugs and holds,
I hear you helping.

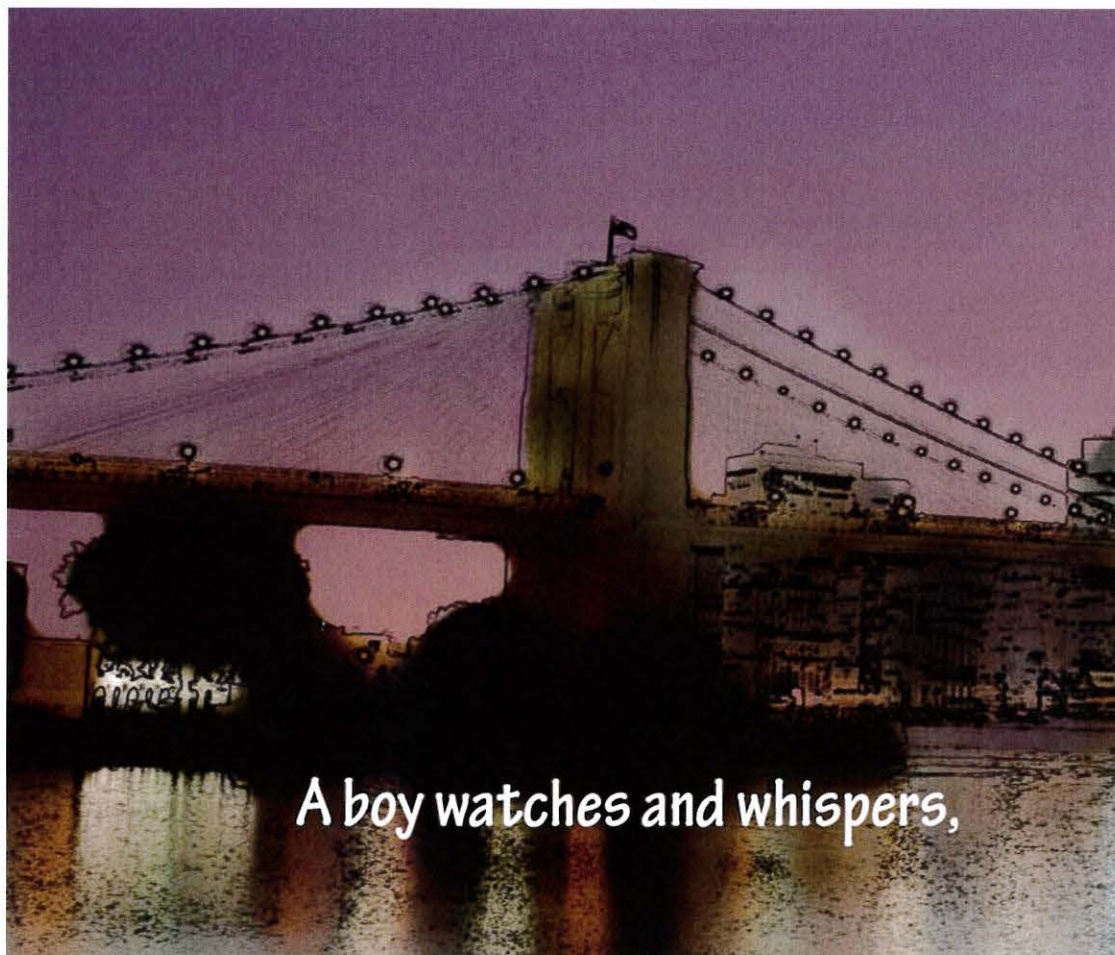




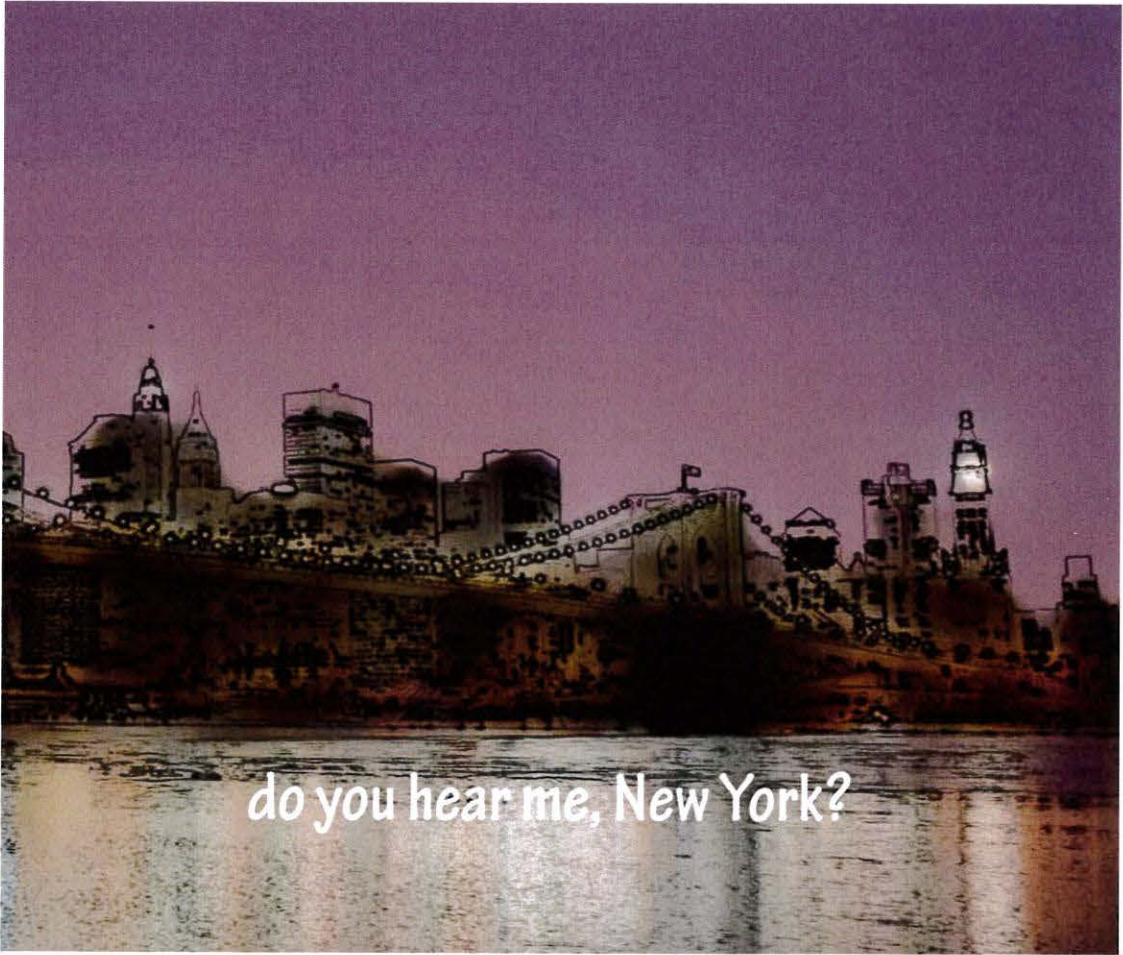
*A city quiets and dozes,
I hear you drifting.*

*A city slumbers and snores,
I hear you dreaming.*





A boy watches and whispers,



do you hear me, New York?

Introduction

As a child, there were three children's books that I thought of as utterly wonderful. My absolute favorite was and still is the *Philharmonic Gets Dressed*, (Kuskin, 1982), followed by *The Story of Ferdinand* (Leaf, 1985), and *The Way Things Work*, (Macaulay 1988). *The Philharmonic Gets Dressed* (1982), set in New York City, recounts how the 105 members of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra prepare themselves to go to work. Karla Kuskin takes the orchestra members through the routine of getting washed, dried, dressed, and ready to go to work. They travel by many modes of transportation with their instruments to Philharmonic Hall where they come together as a group to play music. Marc Simont illustrated the book with wonderfully humorous pictures that serve to enhance the story; in some cases he shows the entire person, but in other cases he presents only feet or part of a body. In these seemingly simple drawings he shows the orchestra members in their various stages of undress and dress, each with their own way of dressing and some even struggling with their clothing; among the funniest are the members putting on their underwear, socks and pants. What is also striking is the idea that the members of the Philharmonic have lives and routines outside of the orchestra, and each member also has a routine and a set attire to prepare for work, the job of making beautiful music. *The Story of Ferdinand*; first published in 1936 was created in an afternoon by Munro Leaf as vehicle to help his friend Robert Lawson display his expressive pen and ink illustrations. The story recounts the history of Ferdinand, a peaceful flower-loving bull who has no aspirations to fight in a bullring, but at an inopportune moment is stung by a bee. His jumping, snorting and ferocious behavior so impresses the matadors that he is taken to Madrid to fight; rather than fight

he just wants to enjoy the scent of the flowers from the women's hair. In addition to providing cultural information about the bullfights and the participants, there is the underlying idea that it is acceptable and commendable to ignore peer pressure and follow one's own path. Ferdinand showed me about individuality, and the desire and willingness to act independently, rather than conforming to others' expectations or peer pressure.

The Way Things Work (1988), makes the complicated seem uncomplicated and allows the expanding mind to look at inventions, machines and devices and comprehend how they all work. David Macaulay's introduction to everyday things beginning with the mechanics of movement, gear and levers, combined with his amazing and entertaining illustrations, many of the machines were operated by woolly mammoths, kept me fascinated. This book has seen many iterations and is constantly being updated with advancements in biology, microchips and new technology, but the principle of exploring and understanding always stays the same. I still can look at the lock in a door and remember the illustration from the book.

Though appearing different in form and theme, these works actually provide a foundation for *I Hear a City*. While *The Story of Ferdinand*, may not seem to have a direct influence on *I Hear a City*, there is still a set routine that is followed for the bullfight; what causes the deviation is Ferdinand himself, not the established patterns and rituals of the bullfight. *I Hear a City* presents a "story" about the routine and day-to-day life of a city. The book begins in the morning, with the sounds of arising and getting ready for the day, and follows the routines and movements that are familiar to most city dwellers. It concludes with the quieting and settling down of the city at the end of the day. From a perspective of *The Way Things Work*, the city is like a huge machine and

each routine makes up parts of its cogs and wheels. Each person, as an individual, plays a specific role, as do the member of the Philharmonic, and has at least one characteristic or activity to which anyone can relate. The tasks contained are simple, commonplace, everyday routines that are often taken for granted by adults, but a child would find them important and be aware of each of the discrete rituals and activities.

I came upon the idea for *I Hear a City* while riding on the New York City Subway commuting to student teaching. When I used to work in insurance, before pursuing a career in education, there was something seemingly romantic about commuting on the train or bus. There is a sense of community and being part of a whole when the train is packed and people are quiet listening to ipods, reading books and newspapers, dozing off, or just daydreaming. The ambient noise is from the train itself: the screeching of the brakes, the rumbling of the tracks as is the rocking motion and the jolting forward and backward at each station. In the hodgepodge of passengers that make up the car, each has a specific place to go, each to do a specific task, but at that instant on that train they are all part of the mishmash of humanity. The feeling holds until “ding-dong” and it is my stop, and the entire surreal moment vanishes.

Now, after thinking a great deal about how children perceive the work around them, I see that this one simple everyday occurrence, which can easily be discounted by adults as mundane and routine, can be fresh and exciting and the way children see so many things in life. Often on the subway, especially in the first or last train car, children will peer through the windows to see the track appearing and disappearing under the train, watching as the train navigates curves, captivated by the speed, the lights and the mystery of the tunnels.

I kept deliberating on the best way to demonstrate the regular and ordinary in a new way by imbuing it with freshness, a way to show how amazing these tasks can really be. I finally decided to convey this quality through verse. My verses are a patterned routine, but in a sense a routine that dances and tumbles and can convey a certain *joie de vivre* that prose cannot. I wanted to keep the verse simple and short because the ordinary daily the routines are that way, simple and regular. I wanted to reflect this fact as much as possible in the writing. I did not see a need to create complicated verses when the action being described was not complex. I merely wanted playful simple words to accompany the basic routines.

The process of writing took rewrite after rewrite to get the exact conciseness I desired. Initially and in many of the preliminary drafts the words “New York” concluded each verse, for example, “A city spins and moves,/I hear you bustling New York.” As I reworked the text, I saw and heard that “New York” refrain as cumbersome and overly repetitive, especially since that repetition is substantial in the arrangement of each line. Every pair of lines follows the pattern of “A city _ and _, I hear you _.” The result was a succinct pattern that conveyed my thoughts, which allowed me to eliminate the “New York” from the lines:

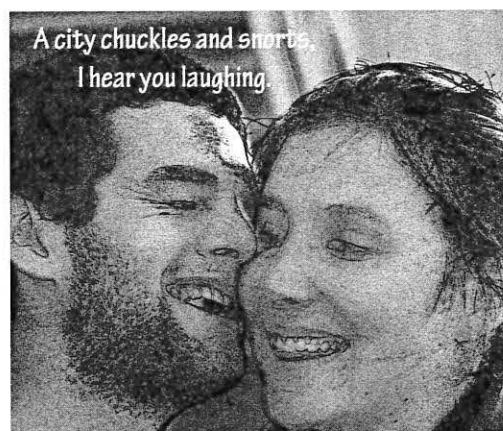
A city beeps and buzzes,
I hear you waking.

A city combs and grooms,
I hear you dressing.

The omission of New York also helped to broaden the location, though in the last line it is revealed that the daily rituals occur in New York. Until that final line, this routine

could exist in almost any city or suburban anywhere in the world; only a truly rural setting would deviate dramatically in routines.

I concluded the writing process when I realized that I had included the necessary routines and patterns of life that are integral to city life and had incorporated actions, reactions, emotions and feelings that are universal. After the writing was completed, I was left with the choice of illustrating it or leaving it as a plain manuscript. Since I am an avid photographer and experienced user of digital media, it seemed there had to be a way to merge my skills to create a unique image that lacked the exacting detail of a photograph but conveyed the idea of what was written on the page. I discovered a method to create faux water color/pen and ink pieces from photographs. This technique is generally used in only landscape and architectural type pieces, and I was sure it would suit those illustrations. After experimentation, though, I discovered that the effect rendered on faces seemed beautiful in itself.



The blurred tones and lack of precision create a fluid image that enhances the rolling verses of the book by not narrowing or defining the experience.

Similar Books

There are thousands of picture books dealing with daily life, the movement and energy of a city or a combination of both, and *I Hear a City* has some elements in common with them, but it also takes a different approach from many of them. Picture books in general contain simple language and structure and often have word repetition to reinforce the ideas and language patterns. Some contain sentences, others single words or no words at all; some tell a simple story, others are essentially visual; some rhyme, others do not, but all of them are illustrated. After reading and examining numerous picture books dealing with routines and city life, *I Hear a City* does provide a unique and innovative addition to the picture book genre.

Many of the books involve the sights and sounds of a city using a series of words rather than sentences. Robert Neubecker's *Wow! City!* recounts his two-year-old daughter Izzy's reactions to her visit to the city. Each of her exclamations follow a set pattern of "Wow!" and then a noun, e.g., park parade, fire engine and finally city. Her enthusiasm is conveyed by such outbursts as "Wow! Airplane!" and "Wow! Buildings!" and "Wow! Museum!" It is her excitement at what she sees and the bright illustrations that express this excitement. Another book that makes use of very simple wording is *Listen to the City* (2000) by Rachel Isadora. She combines pop-art illustrations with the sounds of the city; her picture of people rushing around, for example, is a view of many feet accompanied by such words as "clomp," "click," "clack," "tip," "tap." Urban activity and noises come in the form of gerunds in Marilyn Singer's *City Lullaby* (2007). This counting book that begins at ten and goes backward is a compilation of all sorts of city sounds and noises that a baby in a stroller sleeps through. The refrain of "In the

stroller, Baby's sleeping" emphasizes all the sounds the child sleeps through including "horns beeping... phones ringing... garbage trucks wheezing and mashing... car alarms whooping... buses grumbling."

While many books use very simple words and onomatopoeia, some books have no words at all or the words are used to name locations and do not contribute to any action or motion. In the case of Zoran Milich's books, *The City ABC Book* (2001) and *City 123* (2005), there is no text at all. Photographs of city buildings, vehicles, objects and locations are used to show the letters of the alphabet and numbers one through ten. Both *The Inside-Outside Book of New York City* and *Christmastime in New York City* by Roxie Munro are beautifully and intricately illustrated and show many of New York City's sights and events. The only words, however, that accompany these detailed pictures are those that identify either the specific location or activity depicted in the illustration.

Although the wording is fairly simple and repetition and onomatopoeia are used, *I Hear a City* is very different from *Wow! City!* (2004), *Listen to the City* (2000), *City Lullaby* (2007), *The City ABC Book* (2001), *City 123* (2005), *The Inside-Outside Book of New York City* and *Christmastime in New York City*. The text of *I Hear a City* is set up as a series of compatible paired lines comprised of complete sentences. The first line begins with "A city..." and the action is described in the present tense; the second line of the pair begins with "I hear you..." and ends with a gerund. This juxtaposition of wording and immediate action with sustained reaction indicates an on-going pattern of life in combination with city sounds and activities.

The routine and activities described in *I Hear a City* begin in the morning, go through the day and end at night. The morning is described as “A city beeps and buzzes, / I hear you waking. / A city combs and grooms, / I hear you dressing. / A city spins and moves, / I hear you bustling.” It continues by recounting things that occur during the day: education, work, meals, play, construction, performances. The book also lists less concrete things: “A city gives and guides, / I hear you caring. / A city smiles and cries, / I hear you feeling. / A city hugs and holds, / I hear you helping.” The text concludes with the city sleeping and a boy wondering.

An accounting of daily life is also presented in *Time to Get Up, Time to Go* (2006) by David Milgrim. Unlike *I Hear a City* which essentially deals with daily life and routine in general, this book, with its rhymed text, is a chronicle of one little boy’s day. It follows him and his stuffed blue doll from when he awakens until bedtime. “There’s time for play, chores and cuddling in a little boy’s busy day.” He is engaged in non-specific gender activities and both plays with friends and cares for his doll as a parent would. He feeds it, reads to it and even deals with a boo-boo.

Another book that deals with a specific child is Emily Jenkins’ *What Happens on Wednesdays* (2007). This book is also about a specific child and is told from the point of view of little girl who describes her Wednesdays from early morning until bedtime, including her pre-school day, and the routine and deviations that typically occur on that day. What make Wednesdays special to her is her interaction with her father on that day. *Every Friday* (2007) by Dan Yaccarino is another book that celebrates a special routine between a parent and child. In *Every Friday* a boy is the narrator and in very simple sentences he explains why Friday is important to him. It is the day he and his father

leave the house early to go to the diner for a pancake breakfast. The routine never varies, nor does the walk they take the city sights they see, the person who serves them or the special nature of Fridays. Both *What Happens on Wednesdays* and *Every Friday* deal with a child in the city; *What Happens on Wednesdays* takes place in Brooklyn and the setting for *Every Friday* is a city in general. They differ from *I Hear a City* because both books deal with explicit characters and situations and are in narrative form. While all three works are written in the first person, the intent is very different in *I Hear a City*. These works all share how important these predictable sequences are to the children.

Audrey Wood's books, beautifully illustrated by Don Wood, also deal with particular aspects of daily life. In the case of *The Napping House* (1984), the daily nap ends with a twist. The book revolves around a cumulative list of characters all of whom begin to nap on top of each other. This book uses the present progressive tense to move the action along as the characters and their actions are repeated. As with *The Napping House*, *King Bidgood's in the Bathtub* (1985) takes what would be a routine and typically uneventful activity and turns it into something out of the ordinary. In this book the king takes a bath, but will not leave the tub and commands that all his court and the court activities take place in the bathtub. The language is simple and the text is composed of simple declarative or exclamatory sentences interspersed with the repetition of "King Bidgood's in the bathtub, and he won't get out!" Though *I Hear a City* uses simple language and repetition, the entire tenor, tone and intention is different from Wood's works.

In the next three books bedtime is presented in three different ways. *Goodnight Moon* (1991), Margaret Wise Brown's classic, originally published in 1947, is written in

rhyme and shows how a child (bunny) says goodnight to everything in and around the bedroom. The implication is that this ritual occurs every night at bedtime. Peggy Rathmann (1998) presents the routine of bedtime in the form of a countdown in *10 Minutes Till Bedtime*. In this book the dad begins the bedtime countdown, and in fact the only text is the countdown itself. What makes this bedtime atypical is the boy's pet hamster who, rather than being docile and caged, exhibits frenetic activity is dressed and serves as a guide and greeter for the many more clothed hamsters who arrive with their vehicles and their playthings. Instead of the count down serving as a winding down time, what calm may have existed before the arrival of all the hamsters has been completely destroyed and as bedtime gets closer and the boy tries to complete his bedtime routine, they all become more active until the one minute warning is sounded and the rush is on for the hamsters to leave and for the boy to get into bed. The bedtime ritual turns into a raucous event in *Good Night Pillow Fight* (2004) by Sally Cook. This very funny book, written in very simple but clever rhyme, depicts the many struggles parents have putting their children to bed. It clearly takes place in a city and the action takes place in multiple apartments. For every parental suggestion, the children have a humorous and boisterous response until finally the exhausted parents manage to get their children into bed.

Goodnight Moon is peaceful and sweet, *10 Minutes Till Bedtime* is filled with activity and *Good Night Pillow Fight* is rife with tumultuous commotion. *I Hear a City* presents a city settling down for the night with the lines, "A city quiets and dozes, / I hear you drifting. / A city slumbers and snores, / I hear you dreaming." *Goodnight Moon* (1991) and *10 Minutes Till Bedtime* (1998) both deal with specific characters and both involve animals while *Good Night Pillow Fight* (2004) and *I Hear a City* do not. The

most complicated language of the four works occurs in *I Hear a City*, and though repetition is part of both *Goodnight Moon* and *I Hear a City* the language patterns are very different.

While all of the published works discussed are engaging to children and all share attributes with *I Hear a City* their purpose and feeling differ from it. *I Hear a City* is a salute and a tribute to the city itself as it recounts the daily routines of its inhabitants. The verses contain both the rhythm and motion of city by using set sentence patterns, general statements, onomatopoeia, personification and other descriptive language to convey the idea of just what makes up the character of a city.

I Hear a City and 3's, 4's & 5's

Young children have an affinity for their surroundings and everyday routines, and in fact, they also find comfort and security in them. It is interesting to note that in the Introduction to her book, *Another Here and Now Story Book* (1937), Lucy Sprague Mitchell stated that including stories about the familiar and normal surroundings to young children was an experiment in the first publication of the book in 1921. Subsequently each time it has been revised, a higher proportion of stories of these types were included since young children responded so positively to stories that reflect things they know and see and with which they are familiar.

In her chapter on three-year olds and its literary interest, Mitchell (1937) states, "His interests are not so narrowly personal at age 2; he observes many more details in things and people around him...His world has widened... His pattern sense has elaborated and responds immediately to simple designs in sound and rhythm" (p. 39). The three year old child is beginning to notice and piece together his surroundings. The concluding line "Do you hear me, New York?" is based on the logical progression of events and the regular routines of life. Many threes have ridden on the subway, been in a school setting, and get dressed every morning. Mitchell notes that they begin to observe patterns at this age. Each two-line verse from *I Hear a City* is written with a specific refrain beginning with "I hear." This constant repetition allows children to experience and guess how the lines will read based on previous pages. The two line groupings also convey the idea of cause and effect: a pair of actions produces a reaction.

A city beeps and buzzes,
I hear you waking.

A city combs and grooms,
I hear you dressing.

A city spins and moves,
I hear you bustling.

Logically, if the three-year old child's point of view of the surrounding world is beginning to expand, then the four year old is developing this sense even further. "Their growing interest in details of processes is striking. A train is no longer just a big, noisy, elevated, electric or steam – with a wealth of supporting evidence. Almost everything that a four-year-old has observed through direct experience he likes to have elaborated" (Mitchell, 1937, p. 78). The ever-expanding life around is constantly growing, changing, extending, all leading up to the child's ability to connect the patterns that make up their daily routine and the ritual changes that occur every day. The child is growing, learning and becoming ever more aware of his/her surroundings. The youngster is seeing, hearing, doing and processing it all, trying to deduce, reason and understand what is going on in his/her world .

As described by Mitchell (1937), their language is "still a play of words over and above its meaning" and "their stories must give them the pleasure of rhythm and sound and pattern" (p. 80). It is the same with fours who show an interest in words that move, bob, and dance around. Words from *I Hear a City* like "chortle" and "chomp" are highly descriptive, but they also have a sound likeness that appeals to young children, a whimsical playful idea that supplements the simple action that is being described.

A city chuckles and snorts,
I hear you laughing.

A city bounds and runs,
I hear you playing.

The upper age that *I Hear a City* is geared towards is that of five-year olds. The five-year old mind begins to yearn for more experiences and seeks to enjoy “vicarious experiences closely related to their own.” They can comprehend fact-based information about things from their surroundings like cars and trains. With the knowledge they have, they want to expand and develop their repertoire of experience. The five-year-old can retell an event, often in a group, but that does not mean they also do not still enjoy having similar experiences recounted to them (Mitchell, 1937, p. 144). The line “Do you hear me, New York?” plays with this desire. Not all the experiences in *I Hear a City* are had by every child or every person; rather they are a mixture of common general ones. The five-year old does comprehend the ones he has not experienced because he can relate them to experiences he has had; these also add interest. There are several in the book that strike a direct connection to his life. Additionally, “they want humor. They want emotional tone. They want loveliness of sound, of rhythm, of pattern. And like the rest of us, they want it on their own maturity level” (p. 145). Lines, like the following, demonstrate emotional tone mixed with rhythm, sounds and pattern to play to the desires and fancies of the child.

A city breathes and builds,
I hear you growing.

A city dances and sings,
I hear you performing.

A city creates and composes,
I hear you inventing.

A city gives and guides,

I hear you caring.

A city smiles and cries,
I hear you feeling.

A city hugs and holds,
I hear you helping.

Claudia Lewis' (1981) book, *Writing for Young Children*, discusses in depth the reasons why young children have certain connections to and affinities for how things are written. Rhythm is a primary and fundamental feature that young children notice early. Rhythms exist everywhere and *I Hear a City* shows that they can exist anywhere. Lewis writes, "anything that moves has its way of moving, its rhythm. The movements of the shoeshine man are practiced and skillful and snapped off with an easy repetitive twist" (p. 55).

A city talks and types,
I hear you working.

A city chomps and chews,
I hear you eating.

Rhythms in life are pervasive, structured and unstructured, effervescent and ubiquitous, but in language they need to be "constructed of sounds—vowels and consonants put together in syllables of varying weights and colors and time values. Almost any child can understand this" (Lewis, 1981, p. 57). Rhythm is comprised, as Lewis says, of sounds and patterns. She notes that children have an "instinct for finding vowel and consonant combinations that put the right movement into their words (p. 64). Words and patterns from *City* demonstrate why children would be intrigued by the rolling language within it.

A city creates and composes,
I hear you inventing.

A city gives and guides,
I hear you caring.

A city smiles and cries,
I hear you feeling.

The organization of composing the suitable sounding words into rhythmic sentences and then into the appropriate context, fashions the language so it creates natural patterns that children will like and be attracted to (Lewis, 1981, p. 72). *I Hear a City* is written in a simple verse styling that exists as a pattern with static words and dynamic ones to create an even yet constantly developing and moving idea and story. The underlying repetition exists within pattern, words and verse. The use of gerunds heightens the sense of movement as well as active communal participation balanced against the more concrete and definitive first line of the paired verses. This patterned repetition is the structural language framework for the book.

Lewis (1981) calls repetition for children a “necessity and delight.” Lewis, along with Mitchell (1937), looks to context for appropriate subject matter. They must “convey the author’s own feeling for wonder, on the child’s penetrating level of seeing. Many of these books deal with the surrounding world of people and work.” The notion of the surrounding world is exactly what *I Hear a City* looks to for inspiration. It presents the everyday world and places the language into an appealing arrangement for young children to be amused by and to understand.

There are two vital components to a picture book, the words and the illustrations. The language in *I Hear a City* is certainly appropriate for young children in accordance

with time-tested research of both Lucy Sprague Mitchell and Claudia Lewis. In the *Another Here and Now Story Book*, the illustrator Rosalie Slocum in her "A Word on Pictures" explains the issue of pictures and how they should be formed for the young child's mind. She argues that a certain concreteness and definition must be in the illustrations. Children rely on recognizing objects by shapes and, so the lines from which they are composed must be clearly defined. Slocum also says that if the forms are reduced to simple lines and shapes while still preserving the original form, it is ideal for young children (xix). The pictures should also convey some kind of emotion or mood, and this can be expressed through colors and shading.

The illustrations that I developed are taken from photographs, so the element of realism still exists within them. However, they have been altered and changed to create stronger lines and somewhat blurred images, but they still retain the initial subjects. The abstracting of the pictures makes them more universal; by taking out distinctive features, they become more general and accessible. The pictures all contain real people and objects, just not specific ones.

Conclusion

I Hear a City, like most picture books, may be used by teachers and parents to read to young children, or for children to look at by themselves. Being read to by a teacher in a classroom fosters a sense of community and illustrates what is engaging, fun and exciting about reading. Having a parent read to a child promotes a very special closeness between parent and child and encourages the child to look at books independently. Traditionally this non-fiction genre of the concept book has been the primary medium to reach three to five-year olds to give them an appreciation for books, reading and knowledge. Often their age and maturity level and prior contact with books influences what they see in the books and what they understand.

Many picture books make use of repetition to reinforce basic ideas and language patterns. Mitchell (1937) consistently expressed the view that in addition to using language to communicate, children also enjoy the rhythm and sounds that language produces. This use of language is frequently found in children's books including *I Hear a City*. Many books written for young children have their roots in mundane activities, for it is the ordinary and routine that provides the security of the familiar, which helps in establishing their place in the world. It also affords children the ability to recognize what is unusual since they cannot appreciate what is odd or unfamiliar until they understand the ordinary. By combining the activities and routines of city with daily life, children can identify with many of the references in *I Hear a City* and can discuss what is familiar and what is not.

As the name implies, picture books are filled with graphics and illustrations and are an integral part of the books. They serve not only to enhance the “story,” but they also capture the attention of young readers. The illustrations, whether they are elaborate works of art in their own right or more simple line drawings need to have a sense of realism about them, so young children can recognize what is being presented. *I Hear a City* makes use of realistic images as the basis of the illustrations.

This work, through its use of language and illustrations helps to define and expand the environment and comprehension of the real world for young children. *I Hear a City* also supports their growing awareness of and interest in the simple and ordinary aspects of their world and serves as a celebration of these facets of their lives.

Annotated Bibliography

Brown, M. W. (1991). *Goodnight moon*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

This classic bedtime story has a bunny saying goodnight to everything in the bedroom while the bunny's mother sits in a rocker watching and listening. Many of the goodnight references relate to nursery rhymes and children's stories. There is the sense that this is part of the going to sleep process for the bunny (child). The illustrations by Clement Hurd are done primarily in red and green with blue and yellow as the secondary colors and are filled with details that help strengthen the idea of the story.

Cook, S. (2004). *Good night pillow fight*. New York: Joanna Colter Books.

This very funny book filled with Laura Cornell's comical illustrations turns the bedtime ritual of trying to get children to sleep into a hilarious event. There are multiple apartments filled parents trying to put their children to bed while the children resist, and each parental suggestion is met with wild activity. The parental "Good night" is answered by "Pillow fight!" The reply to "Kiss my cheek" is "Hide and seek!" The threat of "I'm Warning You" is "Peek-a-boo!" Finally it is the parents who are exhausted as the children settle into bed. The language is clever with the rhyming responses encouraging laughter rather than sleep.

Isadora, R. (2000). *Listen to the city*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The pop-art illustrations and the simple text describe the sounds of a typical day in the city. It begins with the alarm clock ringing as “Rise and shine.” Each sight and activity is described by similar very simple wording while in some cases onomatopoeia is used: the whoop, whoop of a helicopter, the beeps and honks of taxis, trucks and cars, the screech of the subway.

Jenkins, E. (2007). *What happens on Wednesdays*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux

This book is a celebration of routine as a pre-schooler describes her day from very early morning when she drinks her milk and her mother drinks coffee until her dad puts her to bed as he does every Wednesday. Within this framework her routine is further defined by the usual Wednesday people and events: bagels and coffee and a juice box taken to the dog park where she meets her friend, and they play with the same dogs each week and then it’s off to school. School also has an established routine, which never varies; then her mother picks her up and they read and nap and do other things, but the really nice thing about Wednesdays is that her father comes home early from work. The illustrations by Lauren Castillo are warm and they enhance the story.

Lewis, C. (1981). *Writing for young children*. New York: Anchor Press.

Lewis outlines the main points in a children’s book from setting to plot to rhythm and sound. In the course of her explanation, she describes how children perceive what is written for them and what they expect at different ages. The book details not only how to write effectively for children of specific ages, but also what a teacher can expect from the writing of children.

The book is also useful vehicle for helping in the selection of age appropriate book.

Milgrim. D. (2006). *Time to get up, time to go*. New York: Clarion Books.

This rhymed text with its simple cartoon-like illustrations shows how a little boy and his stuffed blue doll spend a busy day. From early morning when he awakens through all his activities, he is the parent to his doll: feeding it, bringing it where he and it play in the park and in a wading pool, bandaging it, cooking for it, reading to it. This simple picture books describes a routine day of a toddler filled with activity and investigation.

Milich. Z. (2001). *The city ABC book*. Tonawanda, New York: Kids Can Press.

The book is composed of black and white photographs of familiar architecture and sights of a city. The letters of the alphabet are emphasized in red and can be found in the most common and everyday objects and structures.

Milich. Z. (2005). *City 123*. Tonawanda, New York: Kids Can Press.

This counting book uses urban scenes to count from 1 to 10. Sometimes the number appears on the item itself as in the case of a cement mixer and train, or it could be eleven French fries, or a combination of both.

Mitchell, L. S. (1937). *Another here and now story book*. New York: E.P. Dutton.

This book acts a mini-reference piece for choosing age appropriate books for teachers to use in the classroom. It is an updated version of a previous edition and

even though it is 70 years old, it still provides fantastic suggestions for children ranging from ages 2 to 6. Each chapter highlights a specific age and builds on the developmental processes of children at a specific age by providing general information about such things as patterns, what each age group finds amusing and the importance of the children's enjoyment of language. The chapters also provide examples of children's work, either as composites written by Mitchell, told to her by children or written by children themselves; they all begin with the idea of here and now, for that is where their experiences begin.

Munro, R. (1985). *The inside-outside book of New York City*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company.

Munro's tribute to New York City comes in the form detailed illustrations showing both the inside and the outside of buildings and structures. The words are limited to identifying the particular site and a description and small history are presented on the final page. Some of the sites and scenes presented from the outside and then the inside are the Flatiron building as seen from the outside and a panoramic view of the surrounding streets and buildings from inside, the American Museum of Natural History's exterior and some exhibits within and the Statue of Liberty's crown and then the view of the harbor.

Munro, R. (1987). *Christmastime in New York City*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company.

This is a beautifully illustrated picture book showing the magic of the Christmas season in New York City. The only words in the body of the book are those identifying the specific scenes beginning with the Thanksgiving Day Parade including Rockefeller Plaza, Radio City Music Hall, Park Avenue and ending with Times Square on New Year's Eve. The last page of the book gives detailed information about the specific places that are illustrated and named within the book.

Neubecker, R. (2004). *Wow! City!* New York: Hyperior Books for Children.

This very large picture book is also illustrated by Robert Neubecker with bright double-paged pictures of crowds and city scenes and activities is filled with energy. The text is simple and everything that Izzy, his two-year-old daughter, sees is preface by the word, "Wow." She exclaims in monosyllabics about the locations and objects she sees by naming them including airplane, taxi, bridge, tunnel, subway, people and lights. What is startling and extraordinary for Izzy is a routine part of city life and its sounds and rhythms.

Rathmann, P. (1998). *10 minutes till bedtime.* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The countdown to the bedtime routine takes a strange turn as soon as the dad yells "10 minutes till bedtime." The boy's pet hamster dressed as a tour guide greets a large family of hamsters dressed in striped jerseys, and welcomes them and many more hamsters into the boy's bedroom. They continue to arrive as the child goes through his bedtime routine. The illustrations are packed with activity and as the minutes until bedtime decrease the activity

becomes more frantic. The only text is the countdown; during that time the boy engages in all the bedtime rituals of having a snack, putting on his pajamas, brushing his teeth and after some diversions finally getting into bed.

Singer, M. (2007). *City lullaby*. New York: Clarion Books.

This reverse cumulative counting book, filled with bright illustrations by Carll Cneut, is packed with the sounds of the city and onomatopoeia to reinforce the urban noises and frantic activity that makes up a city. Through all the garbage can bashing, cell phone ringing, buses grumbling and car alarms sounding the child sleeps soundly in the stroller. The sounds of the city are the baby's lullaby and it takes just one of something unexpected to awaken it.

Wood, A. (1984). *The napping house*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers.

In this book the daily nap ends with a twist. Audrey Wood's text is based on the premise that in the house people and animals are sleeping on top of each other. The list of sleepers is repeated as a new one is added; eventually they are awakened by a flea and the reverse sequence is recited demonstrating cause and effect. Don Wood's illustrations are humorous, beautiful and expressive.

Wood, A. (1985). *King Bidgood's in the bathtub*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers.

This is the exuberant story a routine that goes awry and of a king who refuses to leave the bathtub despite all the efforts of the knight, duke, queen and his

court. He eats, plays, fishes and parties in the tub until an unlikely person figures out how to get the king out of the tub. The language follows a simple pattern with variations on the same structure. Don Wood's wonderful illustrations are lush, elaborately detailed, and they convey the sense of fairy tale characters in a fairy tale setting.

Yaccarino, D. (2007). *Every Friday*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, Incorporated.

This story is about a special routine between a father and son that takes place every Friday. The child is the narrator and in very simple sentences he describes his walk and pancake breakfast at the diner with his father. Every Friday they walk to the diner, and every Friday they pass the same familiar city sights and note the hustle and bustle as they meander, and every Friday Rosa, the waitress, brings pancakes for breakfast and as they leave she always says, "See you next Friday." The child treasures his special time with his father. The illustrations are stylized retro 1950s-looking and are inviting and friendly.