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BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR

HILDREN'S BOOKS

OCTOBER 1987 VOLUME 41 NUMBER 2







EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED WITH ANNOTATIONS

- * Asterisks denote books of special distinction.
- R Recommended.
- Ad Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.
- M Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.
- NR Not recommended.
- SpC Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.
- SpR A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.
- C.U. Curricular Use.
- C.V. Developmental Values

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Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

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Number 2

New Titles for Children and Young People

Alexander, Alison. Science Magic: Scientific Experiments for Young Children; by Alison Alexander and Susie Bower; illus. by Carolyn Scrace. Prentice-Hall, 1987. ISBN 0-13-795311-9. 37p. \$10.95.

Ad 5-8 yrs. Nineteen easy experiments are organized into five sections: "Moving Heat," "Colorful Light," "Mirrors and Images," "Water Works," and "Tones, Tunes, and Telephones." Each experiment occupies a double-page, heavily illustrated spread, with a list of the materials needed, instructions, and a brief explanation of the natural phenomenon being demonstrated. One experiment, for instance, involves putting a balloon over a soda bottle half filled with cold water, then placing the bottle in a bucket of hot water to watch the balloon expand, or in cold water to watch it collapse ("Hot air needs more space than cold air, so some of the air is pushed into the balloon, making it stand up"). The art is garish but lively, and it shows clearly what is being done. If only one caption didn't say "You can lie the bottle on its side!" Useful for family or classroom projects. BH

C.U. Scientific recreation

Ancona, George. *Turtle Watch*; written and illus. with photographs by George Ancona. Macmillan, 1987. ISBN 0-02-700910-6. 47p. \$13.95.

R Gr. 2-5. A photodocumentary records the work of oceanographers as they try to rebuild the sea turtle population on the northeast coast of Brazil through a project called TAMAR. Every night during the nesting season, they track down the turtles, transfer the eggs to a safer location, and protect the released hatchlings on their way to the sea. An important part of the project is educating fishermen and their children to the importance of preserving what they used to eat or sell—six out of seven species of sea turtles in this hemisphere are endangered. The details of the turtles' egg-laying, of the project's operation, and of two local children's participation are vividly projected in both pictures and text. The ending seems abrupt—one wishes for more information on the habits and characteristics of the sea turtle, but the book is successful within its defined focus; it will serve as a springboard to further exploration on the part of students intrigued by this absorbing, carefully designed presentation. BH

C.U. Biology

D.V. Environmental concepts

- Avi. Romeo and Juliet: Together (and Alive) At Last! Orchard/Watts, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08321-7; Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-05721-6. Library ed. \$11.99; Trade ed. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Gr. 5-8. When his best friend Saltz falls in love with shy Anabell, Ed tries to help out by casting the two in a slapped-up-quick, after-school production of

Romeo and Juliet. It's a cute, albeit overextended, idea, and while the plotting holds no surprises, Ed's wry narration, a motley group of (oddly unsophisticated) eighth-graders, and plenty of congenial high jinks and pratfalls keep things moving. Saltz himself is an unlikely, and therefore all the more fun, Romeo: "He shuffled along as usual, now and again stopping to hitch his pants, tie a shoelace, fix a sock, all the stuff that had broken down since leaving his house fifteen minutes before." This is a sequel to S. O. R. Losers (reviewed in the December, 1984 issue). RS

Beatty, Patricia. Charley Skedaddle. Morrow, 1987. ISBN 0-688-06687-9. \$11.75. Reviewed from galleys.

R* Gr. 5-7. In one of Beatty's best historical novels, set during the Civil War, a tough boy from a Bowery gang enlists as a drummer boy with the 140th New York Veteran Volunteers. Charley is twelve, anxious to see battle and gain revenge for the older brother who had been killed at Gettysburg. Alas, when battle comes. Charley is terrified and runs away, eventually taking refuge with an elderly, taciturn woman who lives alone in a rural community. Gradually, Charley learns to care for Granny Bent and for the beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains; gradually, she accepts and becomes fond of him. In time, he expiates the guilt and shame he feels as a deserter and proves (without melodrama) to himself and others that he does have courage. This is a rite-of-passage story as well as a wartime adventure story: it speaks out against war and slavery without obscuring of the medium by the message. Despite the cute title, this is less flippant than most of Beatty's books, not as funny but much more substantial. The setting is vivid, the characterization strong, and the structure solid. The author's appended notes give background information, distinguish between what in the book is fact and what is fiction, and explain her modified use of mountain dialect. ZS

C.U. History D.V. Courage

Bible, adaptations of. *The Book of Adam to Moses*; ad by Lore Segal; illus. by Leonard Baskin. Knopf, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-394-96757-7; Trade ed. ISBN 0-394-86757-2. Library ed. \$14.99; Trade ed. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R Gr. 4-7. A retelling of part of the first five books of the Old Testament is based on a comparison, Segal's eloquent and informative preface states, of some of the most important versions in English and in German. What Segal has done is simplify the language and give cohesion to the narrative without sacrificing sonority, sequence, or flow. The tone is reverent, the language comprehensible. Baskin's black-and-white illustrations are handsome in their dramatic sweep and strength. ZS

C.U. Religious education

Borland, Hal. *Plants of Christmas*; illus. by Anne Ophelia Dowden. Crowell, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04650-2; Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04649-9. 28p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad Gr. 5-7. Meticulously detailed botanical paintings of plants that have been part of the Christmas tradition are on the verso pages. Facing each is a page that gives every plant's common and scientific names, and that describes ways in which the plants have been used (oak for the Yule log, for example, or mistletoe for peace

and for romance) and includes legends pertaining to them. Not substantial (only twelve plants are considered), but handsome. ZS

C.U. Christmas

- Brown, Ruth. Our Puppy's Vacation; written and illus. by Ruth Brown. Dutton, 1987. ISBN 0-525-44326-6. 32p. \$10.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R 2-5 yrs. As pedestrian as the title and concept may sound, this is an inspired book, not only because of the strong art and endearing main canine, but because every small child will identify with the playful activities featured on each page. The opening picture shows a puppy, slightly bleary from travel in the back of a station wagon, surrounded by an adoring bunch of kids who promptly take him to the beach for a romp with the sea gulls, the waves, a frog—anything that moves. Subsequently, he digs up a mole, licks a dripping ice cream cone, alienates bees, befriends farm animals, falls in a heap by the fire—"And that was only the first day!" The animal expressions are alive, the humans well drawn; the Cornish setting is radiant, and the whole composed with palpable texture and light. Well worth the trip! BH
- Bunting, Eve. Ghost's Hour, Spook's Hour; illus. by Donald Carrick. Clarion, 1987. ISBN 0-89919-484-2. 32. \$12.95.
- R 4-7 yrs. A prize for Halloween but cathartic for any night of the year, this is a powerful evocation of childhood fears. When the narrator is awakened in the middle of the night by scary noises, he and his dog Biff make their way to his parents' room only to find them gone. The trip down the stairs takes a lot of courage, with a bonging clock and a sudden encounter with the mirror scaring boy and dog almost right off the page. All ends well, with both bedded down on the couch beside Mom and Dad, who had moved because of the wind banging a branch against their window. Bunting is proficient at the spare narrative and sound effects that accumulate for such a realistic depiction here. It is Carrick's watercolor paintings, however, that galvanize the text into action. The vivid contrasts of light and dark, along with sudden shifts of shape, color, perspective, build tension, catch the breath, and keep the eye moving. Satisfying as story, art, and empathy. BH
 - C.U. Halloween-Stories
 - D.V. Fear, overcoming
- Clifford, Eth. The Man Who Sang in the Dark; illus. by Mary Beth Owen. Houghton, 1987. ISBN 0-395-43664-8. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. 3-5. A gentle but involving period piece in which 10-year-old Leah, her little brother Daniel, and their mother adjust to the poverty and loneliness of Depression life after Papa's death. The cheap apartment building into which they move becomes a community as the elderly owners befriend the children, Mama falls in love with the owners' nephew—a blind musician living on the floor below, and Daniel decides not to stay with a wealthy patron who has offered to adopt him. The ending, when they all buy a house together, is almost too good to be true, but the warm family feeling generated by this kind-hearted group will persuade readers to suspend their disbelief and savor the old-fashioned setting. BH
 - D.V. Interpersonal understanding

- Climo, Shirley. A Month of Seven Days. Crowell, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04656-1; Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04658-8. Library ed. \$12.89; Trade ed. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Gr. 5-7. Part third-person narrative, part journal, this Civil War story is set in Georgia in 1864. Father is serving in the Confederate Army, and Zoe (12-year-old protagonist, journal writer) is alone with her younger brother and pregnant mother when a Yankee captain and some of his men take over the house and demand cooking and other services. Zoe is both angry and fearful, but—like her sensible mother—she puts up with what she must. Unlike her mother, Zoe tries several schemes to frighten the superstitious captain. At the end of a week, the soldiers leave, but not before Zoe has learned that some Yankees are honest and kind and that some of her neighbors are secretly helping with the war effort, as she herself courageously does. This is written adequately, and the characters are well-defined if not always depicted with nuance, but the structure seems too dense, with too much happening in only seven days and too much depending on the gullibility of the Yankee captain. ZS

D.V. Courage

- Cole, Brock. The Goats; written and illus. by Brock Cole. Farrar, 1987. ISBN 0-374-32678-9. 184p. \$11.95.
- **R*** Brock Cole's picture books have hinted at his writing talents, but Gr. 5-8. here is proof of an unusual capacity for sustaining fiction. Two outcasts, a boy and a girl, are left by their fellow campers on an island with no food or clothes. In a much larger sense, these two are social misfits, already marooned from their families and peers. They know it and, in an urgent but steadily credible story, they create a relationship that is unique, yet puts them back in touch with the rest of the world. There are many levels here. The action of survival and evasion of authorities when the children run away will hold readers on a plot basis. The main characters' vulnerability, desperate connection, and eventual expansion into trust of some black, inner-city, fresh-air camp kids create a different kind of suspense which is climaxed by a triumphant commitment after their success almost tears them apart. Their progress is marked by the emergence of each from an almost nameless anonymity to comfortable familiarity with each other and themselves. The style does not miss a beat, either in narrative or dialogue, asserting itself without ostentation. Brock hints at sacrificial myth in the boy's story of a haunting experience in a Greek cave, supposedly inhabited by a god to whom worshippers sacrificed goats. Yet the symbolic allusions here and elsewhere reflect rather than obtrude, even when reinforced by references such as a deputy Sheriff's trapping them in his goat-farm jeepster. Several complicated thematic questions of social cruelty and moral obligation arise subtly, through concrete development. This is an unflinching book, and there is a quality of raw emotion that may score some discomfort among adults. Such a first novel restores faith in the cultivation of children's literature. The bookmaking, including Cole's watercolor cover and penand-ink chapter heading sketches, is meticulous. BH
 - D.V. Friendship values; Boy-girl relations
- Cole, Joanna. Evolution; illus. by Aliki. Crowell, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04598-0; Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04596-4. 31p. (Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science). Library ed. \$12.89; Trade ed. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. 1-3. As is typical of this series, the text is lucid, simple, and sequential; the drawings are carefully labelled and are nicely integrated with the text, and the format is spacious, with broad margins and good-sized print. The text is

continuous, moving from the introduction of fossil remains to an explanation of the evolutionary process and the concept of survival of the fittest, and to the emergence of modern humans. ZS

C.U. Science

- Conrad, Pam. Seven Silly Circles; illus. by Mike Wimmer. Harper, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-021334-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-021333-7. Library ed. \$10.89; Trade ed. \$10.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Gr. 3-6. Nicki, the protagonist of I Don't Live Here (reviewed in the January, 1985 issue), imprints her face with seven bright red circles while fooling around with a rubber-tipped arrow. Too embarassed to appear in front of her friends, she tries to hide in her room and even, during her parents leaf-raking party, behind a mask until a family emergency makes her forget about her appearance. As a story standing on its own, this has some problems: Nicki's friend Jeffrey suddenly appears halfway through the book without introduction, and the basic episode seems overextended. As an easy read for fans of the first book, however, it will be a popular choice. BH
 - D.V. Everyday life concepts
- Cooney, Caroline B. Among Friends. Bantam, 1987. ISBN 0-533-05446-5. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Even when the Awesome Threesome was still a going concern. Jen-Gr. 7-10. nie—popular, brilliant, talented—had always been its center. But now, at the beginning of junior year. Hillary and Emily are resentful of Jennie's everincreasing success at, it seems, everything: "A person should know when to back off. Jennie only knows when to surge on ahead." Jennie, sought after by almost all the boys, goes after the one who won't have her. Paul "Classified," so called for his utter secrecy about his family life. This all unfolds in a series of diary entries kept for English class by the Threesome, Paul, and two other classmates. It's a worn, too-convenient device, sometimes giving us too many sides of the same story, but teens love the form, and the voices and narrative are strong enough to keep things moving. Most of the focus is on Jennie and Paul, and how family circumstances have driven them to extreme behavior. In Jennie's case, particularly, the motivation is unconvincing because the stereotyping of her success-driven parents is so extreme: "their best trophy of all: their daughter." Much better drawn is the aching tension among the Threesome: mean, often lacerating, but poignantly resolved in the end. "And the hug with Emily-oh, the hug with Emily—oh, the hug of a friend who forgives you and you forgive her—oh, that was a hug to see." RS
 - D.V. Boy-girl relations; Friendship values
- Cooper, Ilene. *The Winning of Miss Lynn Ryan*; illus. by Susan Magurn. Morrow, 1987. ISBN 0-688-07231-3. \$11.75. Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Gr. 5-7. Fifth-grader Carrie has a crush on Miss Ryan, a new, pretty teacher who favors the child who is neat, conforming, and popular. Carrie can't write a report that doesn't have ink blots or spelling errors. Forced by parental dictum to spend time with Luke, the class pariah who is absorbed in the study of insects, Carrie slowly comes to realize that Luke has intelligence and integrity, and that her adored Miss Ryan (who cannot see Luke's worth because he doesn't fit her conventional pattern) is superficial and rigid in her attitude. The classroom dynamics and the protagonist's inner conflicts are well realized, the scene in which

Carrie watches the emergence of a butterfly from its chrysalis deeply moving. The depiction of Miss Ryan tends toward the stereotypical, and the ending is a bit pat, but this is a good example of an amusing story that has, despite its slightness, both nuance and popular appeal. ZS

- D.V. Group acceptance: Individuality, expressing
- Dixon, Jeanne. The Tempered Wind. Atheneum, 1987. ISBN 0-689-31339-X. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. 7-9. Gabriella has had an isolated, overprotected childhood, and when she is orphaned, at the age of thirteen, she is reluctantly taken in by an aunt who arranges a scholarship at the Young Ladies Christian Academy—but neither the home nor the school experience is a happy one. The story, set in the 1940s, is told convincingly by Gabriella, now 17, as she looks back on that unhappy time and the move to Montana (answering an ad for a farm chore girl, lying about her skills) where she finally finds a career, an admirer, and friends. Gabriella is a dwarf, and her story is candid, often bitter, as she describes the prejudice that adds obstacles to her physical limitations. The first-person characterization is strong, and the narrative style compelling despite some exaggeration in the depiction of minor characters. ZS
 - D.V. Adaptability; Courage; Handicaps, overcoming
- Donahue, Marilyn Cram. *The Valley in Between*. Walker, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-8027-6745-1; Trade ed. ISBN 0-8027-6731-1. Library ed. \$15.85; Trade ed. \$14.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. 6-9. In a novel that is set in the San Bernardino valley in the years 1857-1862, Donahue focuses on the family of a doughty heroine, Emmie, who is twelve when the story starts. Emmie's parents are Union sympathizers, sensible people who see that there are good and bad in every kind of human, including the Indians and Mormons reviled by the bigoted. The book has a good balance of personal narrative—as Emmie grows older, falls in love, and learns tolerance toward people like a crusty old aunt—and the panorama of documented events that climax with the flood of 1862. This has no important historical figures, but it's fine historical fiction giving a vivid picture of a community affected by internal and external changes; it is written with good pace and flow. A chronology, a list of suggested readings, and a bibliography of sources are included. ZS
 - C.U. History—U.S.
 - D.V. Intercultural understanding
- Facklam, Margery. Spare Parts for People; by Margery and Howard Facklam. Harcourt, 1987. ISBN 0-15-277410-6. \$14.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. 7-. Surveying the advances in medicine that make today's transplants, implants, and therapy possible, the authors do an excellent job of showing how scientists build on the work of others (sometimes on failures or errors) and how each new technique and discovery is part of a broad picture as well as an individual achievement. The work of bioengineers, biochemists, and electronics technicians is cited as well as the more visible work of doctors on the fast-moving frontier where so much has happened and so much more is predicted. Case histories afford some contrast to the research described, and both are exciting and dramatic. A glossary and a bibliography are appended. ZS
 - C.U. Science

- Farber, Norma, ed. *These Small Stones*; ed. by Norma Farber and Myra Cohn Livingston. Harper, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-024014-8; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-024013-X. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- **R*** An imaginative idea with innate child appeal has benefitted from two Gr. 4-6. dedicated poets' simmering of selections over several years. These are 60 poems about small things "In my Hand," "On the Ground," "In the Air," "Outside," "On the Table," or as "A Piece of It All." The organization is arbitrary: the first section treats of marbles (Valerie Worth), matches (X.J. Kennedy), and jumping beans (Mary Ann Hoberman); the second sings of sandpipers (Charlotte Zolotow) and beach stones (Lilian Moore): the third celebrates fireflies (Elizabeth Madox Roberts), mosquitoes (Jose Emilio Pacheco), etc. What lifts the anthology above the average is the number of poems with that ineffable quality of verbal surprise that arrests a reader and sends him or her back again for an immediate second reading. There is also a thoughtful balance in tone, technique, and cultural context. Several poets are represented at their simplest but best: Lillian Morrison in "Burning Bright," Julia Cunningham in "Little Bird," and Livingston herself in "Math Class." Her afterword discusses the development of the work before Norma Farber's death. Children who "study the lives on a leaf" will find a kindred voice in Theodore Roethke's description or, again, in Pablo Neruda's assertion, "Fleas interest me so much " BH

C.U. Literature—poetry

- Fine, John Christopher. Oceans in Peril; written and illus. with photographs by John Christopher Fine. Atheneum, 1987. ISBN 0-689-31328-4. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. 7-12. With missionary zeal, an expert in maritime affairs presents the facts of ocean pollution and the implications for our present and future dependence on food from the sea. Beginning with the example of conch depletion on an island off the coast of Venezuela, Fine details the effects of reef destruction, species overkill, toxic waste contamination, and environmental imbalances resulting from overpopulation and deforestation of the land. Though sometimes repetitive and slanted by rhetorical phrases such as "the merchants of war," the text makes a strong case for each person's taking responsibility before "we are condemned, poisoned by our own misadventure in progress." A bibliographic section includes organization periodicals, books, and some universities and graduate schools offering specialties in ocean science. A stimulating book for ecological research and discussion. BH

C.U. Biology

D.V. Environmental concepts

Garden, Nancy. The Door Between. Farrar, 1987. ISBN 0-374-31833-6. 183p. \$13.95.

- Ad Gr. 5-7. Third in a fantasy series (Fours Crossing, Watersmeet) set in a small New Hampshire town, this follows the traditional pattern of the struggle between good and evil as Melissa and her friend Jed pursue the mystery of a pack of vicious ghost dogs and try to avert the doom planned for Fours Crossing by the evil hermit of the earlier books. Garden is a writer with strong narrative sense, so that her story has good flow and pace; what her novel lacks is clean structure and the ability to stand on its own rather than depend on iterated references to past events. ZS
- Gondosch, Linda. Who's Afraid of Haggerty House? illus. by Helen Cogancherry. Dutton/Lodestar, 1987. ISBN 0-525-67198-6. 134p. \$11.95.

Ad Gr. 3-5. In a sequel to Who Needs a Bratty Brother? (reviewed in the February, 1986 issue), sixth-grader Kelly makes a new friend when she calls at the Haggerty house, reputedly haunted, to sell Christmas cards. There are seances (patently spurious) and an intriguing attic and pleasant old Mrs. Haggerty. At home there are squabbles with friends. What this has is plenty of small-scale action, characters who are defined but tend to be stereotyped, and an ending to satisfy sentimental readers, with a Christmas sequence in which Mrs. Haggerty is given a puppy, is thrilled because the son she hasn't seen for a long time comes home, and Kelly has a rapprochement with her friends. Not substantial but mildly amusing. ZS

D.V. Older-vounger generations

- Gordon, Ruth, ed. *Under All Silences: Shades of Love*. Harper, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-022155-0; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-022154-2. Library ed. \$12.89; Trade ed. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R* Gr. 9-. Rich but never heavy, this collection of 66 love poems offers a taste of Maya Angelou, Adrienne Rich, Kenneth Rexroth, e e cummings, Kenneth Patchen, Amy Lowell, and a range of others, including many translations from non-Western cultures and/or earlier times. Although varied in mood from the gently affectionate to the passionately sexual, the poems share an intimate I-thou tone that will involve young readers immediately, whether they are browsing or making their way through the carefully juxtaposed selections. A few choices—Yeats' irresistible "Song of Wandering Aengus," for instance—are well known, but many are not popularly anthologized, and the expressions of love common to contemporary, ancient Egyptian, or Medieval Japanese poets make a striking statement about emotions that young people of today share with those in other periods and places. More informal than McCullough's Love Is Like the Lion's Tooth (reviewed in the June, 1984 issue), this is an intensely personal but generally moving anthology. BH

C.U. Literature—poetry

- Halam, Ann. The Daymaker. Orchard/Watts, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08310-1; Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-05710-0. 173p. Library ed. \$11.99; Trade ed. \$11.95. Reviewed from gallevs.
- R Gr. 6-10. In a far-future society where magic has replaced technology, 10-year-old Zanne is sent away to Covenant school, where she learns to control and deepen the magic-making skills inherited from her mother. Magic comes easily to Zanne; always a headstrong girl, she is fascinated instead by stories of the old days before magic and the Covenant: "Couldn't people move mountains without magic?" After discovering a hidden cache of forgotten machines, Zanne becomes determined to find the fabled (and forbidden) Daymaker, which can make machines run without magic. Halam's prose is stately and often powerful, and while the story is slowed down with explorations of the moral intricacies of magic and technology, this material is fresh and thought-provoking, and adds a dimension to the world-building often slighted in fantasy fiction. The ending indicates the possibility of a sequel; it would be most welcome. RS
- Hamilton, Virginia. A White Romance. Philomel, 1987. ISBN 0-399-21213-2. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. 9-12. Through her running partner, Didi, Talley Barbour gets involved with a charismatic drug dealer named David and with Didi's boyfriend, an addict called Roady. This is the story of two couples, vividly characterized both as

individuals and as a self-made "family" with dynamics shifting according to the needs and demands of each. The emotional, sexual, and racial tensions are honestly drawn as these four, all from broken homes, try to ease their loneliness with some kind of caring company. Even villainous David, who manipulates Talley into an affair and then dumps her when she's courted by a "straight" black athlete, Victor, shows a vulnerable spot for his old buddy Roady. Roady's decision to give up drugs is welcome if a bit mystifying in origin—Victor's relationship with Talley is a more credibly developed resolution. The action here is internal except for a few memorable scenes, one set in a high school hall lined with lockers, another at a rock concert; yet Talley's journey from child to adult makes an absorbing first-person narrative that will touch contemporary young readers. BH

D.V. Boy-girl relations; Intercultural understanding

Harris, Joel Chandler. Jump Again! More Adventures of Brer Rabbit; ad. by Van Dyke Parks; illus. by Barry Moser. Harcourt, 1987. ISBN 0-15-241352-9. 40p. \$14.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R Gr. 3-5. Five more stories in the same format as Jump include "Brer Rabbit, He's a Good Fisherman," "The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story," "How Brer Weasel Was Caught," "Brer Rabbit and the Mosquitoes," and "Brer Rabbit's Courtship." The text here is not quite as relaxed and musical as in the previous book. The "ain'ts," "gimmes," and "doins'" have been replaced with standard expressions which, while respectful of the original elements, don't translate with the same storytelling rhythm. In addition, Julius Lester's more complete collection (The Tales of Uncle Remus, reviewed in the July/August, 1987 issue), which is adapted in a lively style of its own, offers brisk competition. However, Barry Moser's paintings are still artistically spicy and obstreperously true to the animal characters, and young readers, who won't care about nuances of idiom, may find this a more approachable format. BH

C.U. Storytelling D.V. Ingenuity

Haseley, Dennis. *The Counterfeiter*. Macmillan, 1987. ISBN 0-02-743120-7. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad James is sixteen, has few friends, and—although there is little Gr. 7-9. tension between him and his parents—is aware that his desire to be an artist rather than go to college has no parental support. Two things loom large in his life; one is his infatuation with Heather (schoolmate, harpsichord player, poetry lover, polished speaker of French) and the other is his dogged production of a counterfeit \$500 bill, a project that had begun casually and had become a passion. James cashes the bill and invites Heather to go from Cleveland to Montreal for lunch. There she confesses that she's involved with another boy, so James suggests that she go home, as planned, after lunch; he stays in Montreal and finds solace (and presumably a renewed dedication to his goal) in sketching. He decides to let his parents know that he will stay on briefly. This has an unusual situation, but it is so slowly and repetitively developed as to limit the book's substance and perhaps also its appeal. The writing style is competent and the characters adequately but not deeply drawn; a minor flaw is the incorporation of some elements that make no observable contribution to the plot, such as the encounters with slovenly friend Harold. The story seems unfinished rather than open-ended, amoral rather than immoral, ZS

D.V. Boy-girl relations

Hearne, Betsy. Love Lines: Poetry in Person. Margaret K. McElderry, 1987. ISBN 0-689-50437-3. 68p. \$7.95.

Books written by a Bulletin staff or committee member receive a brief descriptive announcement rather than an evaluation and rating.

Gr. 9-. A collection of 59 lyric poems about love explores the joys of discovery, the riches of relationships, and the sorrows of loss.

C.U. Literature—poetry

D.V. Interpersonal understanding

- Herzig, Alison Cragin. *The Ten-Speed Babysitter*; by Alison Cragin Herzig and Jane Lawrence Mali. Dutton, 1987. ISBN 0-525-44340-1. 144p. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. 5-8. As exuberant and entertaining as its title, this is a prime example of a book whose crafting lives up to its popular appeal. Fourteen-year-old Tony arrives at his summer live-in babysitting job to find that his employer is about to leave him and his young charge. Duncan, in the house alone while she visits the Bahamas. Tony copes with a series of catastrophes that are due partly to his own inexperience, partly to natural disasters, and partly to two burglars. Between sunburn, a hurricane blackout, a hatching mallard egg, peed-on sheets, and crank phone calls. Tony makes friends with a girl his own age, biking five miles back and forth to the beach with Duncan wobbling happily on his kiddy seat. While the house deteriorates, the inhabitants flourish in spite of some odd sleeping, eating and bathing patterns. The humorous details of Tony's endless weekend forge the situation into a non-stop story with resourceful, individualistic characters and a climactic ending that involves Duncan's favorite staple--Jello. By the authors of Oh, Boy! Babies! BH

D.V. Resourcefulness

- Hildick, E. W. The Ghost Squad and the Prowling Hermits. Dutton, 1987. ISBN 0-525-44330-4. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Gr. 4-6. In this addition to a series of detective stories in which the characters are ghosts or live people who communicate with them (computer messages, touches by icy fingers) the elaborate structure of the ghost community sags by its own weight. It's still a concept that will appeal to many readers, and there's humor in the dialogue, but the development is uneven. Both the good-guy ghosts (children) and their live young friends work desperately to outwit the evil plans of Dr. Purcell (ghost) by which hermit ghosts—under certain conditions—move in to inhabit living bodies. ZS
- Hilton, Suzanne. The World of Young Herbert Hoover; illus. by Deborah Steins. Walker, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-8027-6709-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-8027-6708-7. Library ed. \$13.85; Trade ed. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Gr. 4-6. Black-and-white illustrations of mediocre quality (poor figure drawing) add little but period details to an adequate account of Herbert Hoover's boyhood in Iowa and (after being orphaned) in Oregon. This hasn't the weakness of many juvenile biographies, an effusive or adulatory tone, but it is written in a plodding style, with awkward phrasing and some repetitiveness. It is clearly based on careful research, however, so that it is dependably informative. Chronological notes give facts about Hoover's adult life, and a bibliography of sources is appended. ZS

- Hilts, Len. *Quanah Parker*. Gulliver/Harcourt, 1987. ISBN 0-15-200565-X. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Gr. 5-9. Unabashedly fictionalized in dialogue and in ascribing thoughts to the subject, this biography is nevertheless grounded in research and has an extensive bibliography. Unfortunately, the author's note on sources does not identify for young readers which aspects of the text are fact and which are imagined. The narrative is well-written, for the most part, and that fact, together with the extraordinary aspects of Quanah Parker's leadership of the Comanche resistance, charges the book with the magnetism of a good historical novel. There are a few slips—Quanah Parker at one point says to himself, "Hey, at least I'm joining the hunt"—that stretch the thin line that Hilts is walking in this type of presentation, but the book will bring alive the tragic drama of Native American defeat in the face of pioneer expansion. BH
 - C.U. History—U.S.—Frontier and pioneer life
- Hurwitz, Johanna. *Russell Sprouts*; illus. by Lillian Hoban. Morrow, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-07166-X; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-07165-1. Library ed. \$10.88; Trade ed. \$10.25. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. 1-2. Hurwitz at her ingenuous best has an infallible ear for the way young children talk, and an empathy that fortunately excludes sugar icing. In this series of episodes in the life of a first-grader, the writing has a directness and candor and humor that are reminiscent of Beverly Cleary's writing for younger children. Russell has small adventures that arise from the new experiences he's having at school, and most beginning readers, as well as the read-aloud audience who enjoyed earlier books about Russell, will enjoy them—and the cozy illustrations—as much as they did the first books about Russell. Maybe they'll enjoy the report card he produces (to rate his parents) even more. ZS
 - C.U. Reading, beginning
- Jones, Diana Wynne. A Tale of Time City. Greenwillow, 1987. ISBN 0-688-07315-8. \$11.75. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. 6-8. It's 1939, and a trainload of excited, apprehensive English children who are being evacuated to rural safety have just reached their stop. Vivian, eleven, fears a range of mishaps—but it never occurs to her that she'll be kidnapped by two boys from Time City, a place outside time, a place where past and future people and ghosts flow in and out. The city's existence is threatened, and Vivian (passed off as a visiting cousin) shares with the boys the dangers, adventures, and discoveries that lead to a legend's return and to the unmasking of the evil pair who plan to take over Time City. This lacks the humor that is usually an attractive component of the author's work, but it has her characteristic facility as a storyteller and as a designer of plots that are innovative and wholly conceived. ZS
- Kesden, Bradley. Sex, Drugs, and AIDS; produced by Oralee Wachter and Lynne Smilow. Bantam, 1987. Paper ed. ISBN 0-551-34454-4. 76p. (illus. with photographs). \$3.95.
- NR Gr. 7-12. Inaccurately billing itself as "the first book that talks frankly to teens about AIDS" (see books by Margaret Hyde and the Silversteins), this is adapted from an educational video hosted by teen actress Rae Dawn Chong. The adaptation is uneasy, with grainy photos, an unnattractive mix of layout designs, and balloon-captioned dialogue that is hard to follow. The real problem, though, is

that most of the solid information here is found in the eight-page question-andanswer appendix, while the book proper leaves too much out. In one vignette, for example, a girl is telling her friends that she prefers condoms to the Pill, an either/or opposition that begs more questions (not answered until the appendix) than it answers. Miss Chong tells us that there are only two kinds of sex—vaginal and anal intercourse—that can spread AIDS, a hasty generalization that, again, is cleared up in the appendix, but many kids won't read that far. We're also told that it's perfectly OK to share makeup; while this may not spread AIDS, it is never a good idea. RS

C.U. Sex education

Kipling, Rudyard. *Gunga Din*; introduction by Kingsley Amis; illus. by Robert Andrew Parker. Harcourt, 1987. ISBN 0-15-200456-4. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R Gr. 3-6. A stunning picturebook edition of a Victorian poem, this represents the artist at his personal best and the writer at his most Colonial. The Indian water-carrier Gunga Din is, of course, the hero of the piece, but the vilification he takes from the British troops—as voiced by the typical barrack-room, beer-tilting narrator—may be more musical than comfortable for contemporary young readers. The watercolor and gouache paintings project the irony of the soldiers' military misery, their reliance on a "blackfaced crew" as beasts of burden even during the 1857 Indian Mutiny. The layering of white on night blue or on midday orange gives a textured depth to these clean compositions, sharply defined by black pen outline and strong, rhythmic shapes. For older readers than the usual picturebook audience (and there's calculated appeal for adults, witness Kingsley Amis' brief introduction), this will serve as a prime example of narrative art as well as an introduction to Kipling's narrative poetry. BH

C.U. Literature—poetry

D.V. Courage

Kitchen, Bert. Animal Numbers; written and illus. by Bert Kitchen. Dial, 1987. ISBN 0-8037-0459-3. 24p. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R 3-5 yrs. Like his Animal Alphabet (reviewed in the May, 1984 issue), Kitchen's large-scale paintings are marvelously effective, with his animals twined about, or perched on, or contained within, the large digits that are set off by white space on the oversize pages. The numbers go from one to ten, then come 15, 25, 50, 75, and 100. The final page has facts about each animal, giving its name, which is not on the original page; this emphasizes the fact that it's a counting book but may prove frustrating to some children, who may wonder what animals 6 and 7 are (shrew and opossum). ZS

Klass, Sheila Solomon. *Credit-Card Carole*. Scribner, 1987. ISBN 0-684-18889-9. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad Gr. 7-10. Sixteen-year-old Carole Warren is shocked when her father gives up his flourishing dental practice for a new career as an actor, her mother goes back to work, and they ask that she cut up her credit cards and earn her own spending money. The premise is an interesting one, though overstated; the Warrens are repetitively established as a family of devoted shoppers in the beginning, for instance. Carole's foil is boyfriend Jim, who rebels against his conservative banker father by eschewing materialism in any form and supporting humanitarian causes. There is a sub-plot in which one of Carole's friends helplessly watches her mother being bilked of her savings by a grasping boyfriend and rescued by a truehearted suitor. Carole's conversion to higher values is a bit glib, but that's

consistent with her personality—this is a light-hearted look despite the weighty theme. BH

D.V. Money—acquisition and use: Value building

- Klein, Norma. My Life as a Body. Knopf, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-394-99051-X; Trade ed. ISBN 0-394-89051-5. Library ed. \$13.99; Trade ed. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. 8-10 Augie is a senior at a small, progressive private high school in Manhattan, and she's far from enthralled when the school counselor asks her to tutor a new student. Sam, who has suffered physical and mental damage because of an accident. Sam is confined to a wheelchair, and Augie is uncomfortable and selfconscious at first; as Sam improves, the two begin to talk, become friends, and eventually become lovers. They are found in flagrante delicto by Sam's mother. Time, parental censure, and separation (Augie goes to the Rhode Island School of Design) bring a painful rift—and in time this pain also passes. This is a subtle and sophisticated novel, believably told by Augie, four-letter words included. It deals perceptively with romantic and physical love felt for (and by) a person who is handicapped, but has wider implications for all young people who suffer adolescent pangs of indecision, ambivalence, and inadequacy. Klein's portrayal of Sam's parents (protective, acquisitive, critical) and of Augie's (gentle, tolerant, intellectually absorbed) are particularly sharp. Good style, good characterization, interesting theme, and natural dialogue are strong points in a perceptive story, and they compensate nicely for an uneven development of plot. ZS

D.V. Handicaps, adjustment to

- Komaiko, Leah. *Annie Bananie*; illus. by Laura Cornell. Harper, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-023261-7; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-023259-5. 32p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.95.
- R 4-7 yrs. "Annie Bananie, My best friend, Said we'd be friends to the end." In verse, the narrator bemoans her best friend's moving away, remembering all the fun they had together, and all the dares each got the other to take: "Made me brush my teeth with mud, Sign my name in cockroach blood." Halfway through this litany, and rather abruptly too, she quits complaining, and starts consoling: "Make some new friends, Try to write..." while reminding Annie that she'll never find another friend "like me." The situation's a common one, the rhyme scheme pleasantly bouncy, and Cornell's bright line and water color illustrations have an energetic, off-the-wall humor. RS

D.V. Friendship values

- Lelchuk, Alan. *On Home Ground*; illus. by Merle Nacht. Gulliver/Harcourt, 1987. ISBN 0-15-200560-9. \$9.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. 5-7. Back in 1947, when Aaron was almost ten, three men dominated his life. The first was Burt, a young veteran still suffering from war wounds but always willing to take Aaron to a Dodgers game. The second was Jackie Robinson, whose courage as an athlete and a black pioneer Aaron witnessed first hand. The third was Aaron's father, a Russian Jewish immigrant never quite at home in the new country. All three men were tough in their own way, on their own home ground, and it is the culmination of the book when Aaron, after adoring Burt in his Brooklyn territory and Jackie Robinson in the stadium, finally sees his father "at home," galloping splendidly on a huge horse in the country, and understands their conflicts enough to overcome them. This is a subtle first-person

narrative, almost an adult short story, but there's plenty of baseball talk peppering the character dynamics. The combination of brevity and depth will make it an ideal period piece for reading aloud and discussion of roots and parent-child relationships. RH

D.V. Father-son relations

- Levinson, Marilyn. A Place to Start. Atheneum, 1987. ISBN 0-689-31325-X. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Gr. 7-9. The narrator is adolescent Grant, who is worried about the tension between his parents; Mom is away from home more and more in her new job as a salesperson of computer software; Dad is increasingly jealous of her relationship with her boss. Grant and his younger sister are desolate when Dad leaves, and Grant is angry when he discovers that his mother is having a romance with his favorite teacher. He finds it hard to be forgiving, but his adjustment is helped by the comfort he gets from a new friend, Samantha. A bit shaky grammatically, the story is adequately written, perceptive in dealing with a stress situation, but slow-paced. ZS

D.V. Family relations

- Maestro, Betsy. A More Perfect Union: The Story of Our Constitution; illus. by Guilio Maestro. Lothrop, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-06840-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-06839-1. 48p. Library ed. \$12.88; Trade ed. \$13.00.
- R Gr. 2-4. In undertaking the difficult task of simplifying the Constitutional Convention of 1787 into picture-book format, the Maestros have succeeded in producing a smooth, informationally balanced text and some impressive double-page spreads, though the closeup figures are stiff and awkward. Beginning with a map and description of the states' disunity, they focus on the delegates' arrival in Philadelphia, the ensuing debates, the compromises made and principles agreed on, and the finalizing of the document that was ratified the following year. A five-page appendix summarizes the articles of the constitution, names the signers, gives a table of important dates, offers some interesting notes, and lists the amendments. Since Jean Fritz' Shh! We're Writing the Constitution (reviewed in the July/August, 1986 issue) is for a slightly older audience, this will be most useful as the earliest introduction available to the Constitution. BH

C.U. History—U.S.—Pictorial presentation

- Mayper, Monica. *After Good-Night*; illus. by Peter Sis. Harper, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-024121-7; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-024120-9. 24p. Library ed. \$10.89; Trade ed. \$10.95.
- R 4-6 yrs. Illustrated with pointillistic black-and-white drawings that nicely evoke the insubstantial aura of a night-time bedroom, this story poem captures, through both sound and image, the woozy time between waking and sleeping, when "a secret ocean hisses in the toilet tank" and Nan "hears her cave-bear mother snore: sound asleep." As Nan falls further into sleep herself, Sis's pictures become bigger and stranger: Nan's brothers sleeping down the hall become two monkeys asleep in a tree above Nan's bed; the "tocks and rocks and bongs" of the mantel clock become rows of sheep and snails and swans. In the last spread, Nan sails in her bed above the house, across an endless forest, "fast asleep." Beautifully and quietly done, this is perfect for that very-last bedtime story. RS

- Meyer, Carolyn. *Denny's Tapes*. Margaret K. McElderry, 1987. ISBN 0-689-50413-6. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- Gr. 8-10. Seventeen-year-old Denny hasn't seen his father (black) for years, since his mother (white) was remarried to a white doctor whose daughter, Stephanie, had seemed a pest when both children were younger. Now Stephanie lives with them, and she and Denny are in love, but are not lovers. When his stepfather finds the two embracing, he angrily evicts Denny. That is when Denny decides he will tell his story in a series of tapes as he drives from Pennsylvania to California to find his father, stopping en route for visits with both his grandmothers. This is candid, sympathetic, and often perceptive, but it is weakened by the facts that the entries are not always convincing as tapes, being long-winded and often sounding (particularly in quoted dialogue) as though they were written rather than spoken, and that the whole book has an aura of purposiveness, almost more an exploration of an interracial situation in its various ramifications than a story with its own momentum. ZS

D.V. Interracial understanding

- Narahashi, Keiko. *I Have a Friend*; written and illus. by Keiko Narahashi. Margaret K. McElderry, 1987. ISBN 0-689-50432-2. 29p. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R 2-4 vrs. A deceptively simple picture book is full of graphic echoes that capture the eve as effectively as the text will catch children's fancy. The firstperson narrative is only one line per page: "I have a friend/ who lives/ in my house" establishes, in the first three pages, the little boy and his shadow central to each subsequent full-page painting. The illustrations are bordered by spacious white margins that set off the interplay of light-yellow and shadow-blue washes as the child cavorts in the park or on the beach. The ending has a poetic twist: "In the morning/ he will be waiting with the sun./ He is vesterday's night/ left behind for the day." Yet the dominant tone is playful, and young listeners will quickly respond to the book as a game, identifying the friend as a shadow though the narrator never does. To confound the mystery, there is a more substantive friend in almost every picture, a little black dog whose slitted white eyes exactly reflect those of the boy's shadow. The curving contours of each dreamlike composition. the superimposed shapes, the lyrical motion, and the child-centered perspective will move children through this book over and over again. BH

D.V. Imaginative powers

- Nixon, Joan Lowery. A Family Apart. Bantam, 1987. ISBN 0-553-4532-5. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Gr. 5-7. Announced as the first volume in the Orphan Train quartet, this is based on a real program, the Children's Aid Society's placement of orphans who travelled from New York City to the West to be adopted by residents there. In this story, set in 1860, widowed Mrs. Kelley realizes she cannot support her six children and gives them up for adoption. The protagonist is the oldest girl, Frances, who disguises herself as a boy so that she can be paired with her baby brother for adoption, and they are indeed taken together by a very nice family. "Frankie" is rather quickly discovered to be Frances, and everyone is happy about it. This tale is framed (to no advantage) by a contemporary setting and a grandmother who tells the whole-book story. This has sentimental appeal, sympathetic if not subtly-drawn characters, and historical interest. It suffers, albeit not gravely, from a predictability that is based in part on stock situations (clearly, the story of brother Mike, planned as the second book, is going to be one about an

- adoptive family as unpleasant as his sister's is pleasant) and from an aura of must-get-those-facts-about-slave-markets-and-the-Underground-Railroad-in-there. ZS D.V. Adaptability: Brothers-sisters
- Price, Susan. The Ghost Drum: A Cat's Tale. Farrar, 1987. ISBN 0-374-32538-3. 187p. \$12.95.
- R Gr. 5-10. Confidently pulling together a disparate lot of folk motifs, Price (in the unnecessary and annoying guise of a cat-narrator) tells of the intertwining fates of Chingis, taken by a witch in infancy and raised to be a Woman of Power, and Safa, the unwanted son of a czar, who commands the baby to be locked in a tower forever. From the homely enchantment of Chingis' house that walks on chicken legs to the extravagance of the czar's palace, and the beautiful but deadly ice-apples of the sorcerer Kuzma, this quasi-Russian world is shot through with magic, rendered with an incantatory repetition of both language and story patterns. RS
- Provensen, Alice. *Shaker Lane*; written and illus. by Alice and Martin Provensen. Viking Kestrel, 1987. ISBN 0-670-81568-3. \$14.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. K-3. "The people who lived on Shaker Lane took things easy," and when the ramshackle world of Norbert and Charlene La Rose and the Whipple boys and Bobbie Lee Peach is disturbed by the threat of eminent domain for a reservoir, the neighbors leave as laconically as they lived. As Virgil Oates puts it, "Can't swim." It's always autumn in the Provensens' paintings of this quiet rural drama, with the browns and russets of land and sky providing a comfortable background for the rickety houses and piled-up yards of Shaker Lane's inhabitants. There's plenty of wry humor here, and the whole has a tone of inevitability rather than tragedy—even the painting of the new reservoir rising over the tops of the deserted houses is quietly beautiful. A cool spring green intrudes with the spread depicting the modern subdivision on newly christened "Reservoir Road," but Shaker Lane gets the last word in the person of Old man Van Sloop, now living on a houseboat. "I like the water." RS
- Radin, Ruth Yaffe. *Tac's Turn*; illus. by Gail Owens. Macmillan, 1987. ISBN 0-02-775790-0. 80p. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Gr. 3-5. The sequel to Tac's Island has Tac (Thomas Andrew Carter) setting out for a visit to Steve's home near Philadelphia. Both boys have mixed feelings, which emerge as Steve shows off his familiar territory and Tac feels very much an outsider. The boys bicker and even hurt each other in testing their new friendship through everyday episodes like biking falls and backyard camping. The last day turns more dramatic when they enjoy a hot air balloon ride that Tac has won at a bike-race drawing. Generally, however, this is a low-key albeit realistic one-week slice of two boys' lives. BH
 - D.V. Friendship values
- Rylant, Cynthia. Children of Christmas: Stories for the Season; illus. by S. D. Schindler. Orchard, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08306-3; Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-05706-2. 38p. Library ed. \$11.99; Trade ed. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Gr. 4-6. A collection of Christmas stories; should have seasonal appeal. They are brief, capably written, and touching in the O. Henry tradition, mingling sophistication and sentiment. One tale is about an elderly derelict, but most have child protagonists, most are bittersweet rather than sweet. The problem with these stories is that while they are about children (with format, vocabulary, and

illustrations that suggest a juvenile audience), they seem more likely to appeal to adult readers than to children. ZS

C.U. Christmas

- Sachar, Louis. Sixth Grade Secrets. Scholastic, 1987. ISBN 0-590-40709-0. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- M Gr. 4-6. Laura is the leader of a trio of girls who form a club and swear to keep each other's secrets; they invite some boys to join, demanding commitment to an embarrassing revelation as a condition of acceptance. There's also a long (too long) period of fooling the teacher by writing anonymous messages on the blackboard. This has the sort of humor that appeals to most middle grades readers (shrill, often silly, fraught with name-calling), and it's adequately written. The characterization is shallow, and the plot seems overextended. ZS

D.V. Boy-girl relations

- Silverberg, Robert. *Project Pendulum*; illus. by Moebuis. Walker, 1987. ISBN 0-8027-6712-5. \$15.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Gr. 7-10. Silverberg's concept is intriguing: identical twins Eric and Sean have been chosen from other volunteer-twins to participate in a project that will take them, separately, in wider and wider arcs of time, into the past and the future. Thus, Project Pendulum. It's an appealing concept and the writing has pace and vigor; there are moments of high drama and flashes of wit. What makes this less than Silverberg's best is the format, as the short accounts of the pendulum-swing visits proliferate to the extent of losing impact. ZS
- Smith, Lucinda Irwin. *Growing Up Female: New Challenges, New Choices.* Messner, 1987. ISBN 0-671-63445-3. 156p. illus. with photographs. \$10.79.
- M Gr. 7-10. The author calls this "a book about choices," and organizes her text into chapters on the historical background of women's liberation, contemporary roles and goals, decisions, relationships, appearance and health, and general perspective. Both the author's commentary and the interviews with notable figures such as Billie Jean King, Cheryl Tiegs, and Peggy Fleming have a slick, quick magazine tone that is not always bolstered by information. The section on birth control choices, for instance, has three sentences on the pill with no mention of any controversy about side effects. Generalities abound: "Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, through mass production, fashionable clothes became affordable and accessible to everyone." The positive aspects of the book are its easy appeal and emphasis on the range of possibilities teens can take advantage of if they don't fall into traditional traps; several questionnaires are calculated to involve readers. With black-and-white photographs, a one-page bibliography, and index. BH

D.V. Sex roles

- Snyder, Carol. Leave Me Alone, Ma. Bantam, 1987. ISBN 0-553-05442-2. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Gr. 6-8. The narrator, Jamie, is fourteen and wishes her mother, who tends to carp, could be more like Grandma. Somehow, when Grandma tells Jamie to do something, it doesn't sound critical. Still, Jamie is aware that her own whining "Leave me alone, Ma," is the same thing Mom says to Grandma. (Despite the frequent use of the phrase, Jamie otherwise refers to or addresses her mother as "Mom.") This is more situation than plot, as Jamie tries to cope with the fact that her best friend resents the growing affection between her brother and Jamie, to get

her parents to realize that demands of jobs are spoiling family life, to help a younger child with a difficult home situation. Periodically (but not believably), Jamie writes to the Mayor of New York to complain about civic failures or tell him about herself. This has moments of humor, cohesion but little substance, and sympathetic characters with little depth. ZS

D.V. Boy-girl relations; Friendship values; Parent-child relations

Speare, Jean. A Candle for Christmas; illus. by Ann Blades. Margaret K. McElderry, 1987. ISBN 0-689-50417-9. \$9.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R 5-7 vrs. Nurse Roberta bustles too much, but she's kindhearted in understanding Tomas' anxiety on Christmas Eve when his parents have not returned from a trek to their cattle range. She even takes him back to his own house, lights a fire, and decorates a tree. But then she's called out on an emergency, and Tomas is left to keep the place warm and wait. Suddenly he wakes from a drowsy dream of a giant candle, runs to retrieve his own candle from the window outside, and finds his parents just arrived after a hard cattle drive through the snow. The story is a traditional one with which any child can identify, from feelings of desertion to happy ending. The watercolor paintings catch the cold setting of a British Columbia Indian reservation during a forty-below winter. The outdoor scenes are almost brittle with still, gray-white tones livened by spots of color. Contrasting with these are warm interiors of plain, homey rooms, the last a scene of parents and child united on a patchwork quilt that softly repeats the colors of the Christmas tree. BH

Townsend, John Rowe. *The Persuading Stick*. Lothrop, 1987. ISBN 0-688-07260-7. \$10.25. Reviewed from galleys.

R Gr. 4-6. Beth is a third child, undemanding at home and often disregarded by her classmates. Then one day she finds a strange silvery stick that seems to give her power, a power she asserts half proudly, half fearfully. With the help of the stick, she persuades her mother to have her friends over for tea, her teacher to let the class out early for recess, an old shopkeeper to provide ice cream free for her friends. But Beth is always drained after using the stick, aware of its dangers and unable to get rid of it. The last, climactic use of the "magic wand" comes with her persuading her brother not to commit suicide, after which she realizes "I couldn't do anything with the stick that I wouldn't have been able to do without it." This is a compact story with tight pace and quickly established characterization. The dialogue, brevity, and teasing crossover from science fiction to realism will make it appealing for independent readers or classroom reading aloud. BH

D.V. Self-confidence

Van Allsburg, Chris. *The Z Was Zapped*; written and illus. by Chris Van Allsburg. Houghton, 1987. ISBN 0-395-44612-0. 54p. \$15.95. Reviewed from galleys.

SpR 5-8 yrs. ... not to mention B (badly Bitten), F (firmly Flattened), N (Nailed and Nailed again), or any of the others in Van Allsburg's letter-by-letter destruction of the alphabet. Each of the 26 acts of the "play" (performed by the Caslon Players) is devoted to a single center-stage letter and the particular mayhem being visited upon it. Captions are on the versos of the pictures, providing a guessing-game element that may be fun for the first go-through but that ultimately irritates, working against the simple-yet-sinister tone of the book. The Conté-pencilled menace here is quiet, still and sophisticated, etched with impeccably gray shadows. "D," for example, drowning in a trompe l'oeil fishbowl, has the elegant repose of a corpse in a British mystery. Even the more innocuous scenes, like the "I," "nicely

- iced," become perverse in context, as we infer the intent of the icing to be not decoration but suffocation. Handsome, impish, maybe even brilliant in its own peculiar way, but who is this book for? RS
- Wersba, Barbara. Love is the Crooked Thing. Harper, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-026367-9; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-026366-0. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. 7-10. In the first book about (and narrated by) plump Rita Formica, sixteen, she is desolate as the story ends, for her lover Arnold—twice her age, quiet and gentle—has agreed with her parents that he is too old for her, and has left town. In this sequel to Fat: A Love Story (reviewed in the June, 1987 issue), Rita decides that she will somehow get the money to go to Zurich and find Arnold; she has no address but knows he's in that city. Wersba manages, just, to keep Rita's visit (undisclosed to parents) credible, and to make the means (working for a paperback romance mill) refreshingly amusing. This is just as adroit as the first book and just as witty, but a bit more bittersweet. ZS
- Westall, Robert. Rachel and the Angel and Other Stories. Greenwillow, 1987. ISBN 0-688-07370-0. \$10.25. Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Recurring images link the seven fantastic stories collected here: the Gr. 8-12. fallen angel of the title story who challenges Rachel to name a "good and just man" or face the destruction of her town; the mysterious waif who appears outside the shop window of a lonely antique dealer in "A Nose Against the Glass" (more than a nod to Wilde's "The Selfish Giant" here). "Urn Burial." "Peckforton Hill." and "The Big Rock Candy Mountain" (previously published in Robin McKinley's collection Imaginary Lands, reviewed in the April, 1986 issue) all tell of secrets hidden in the earth. The two angel stories are gorgeous tales of beauty surrounded by darkness, but most of the others, while clever, suffer from over-compression of too many ideas and themes, coming across as too-short novels rather than long short stories. The last, "Artist on Aranor," is an extended nightmare of sadistic misogyny, detailing the treatment of two beautiful female robots at the hands of a "silly" man. While this one ends with what Westall obviously believes to be a "feminist" message, it isn't really, leaving the story thematically ambivalent and decidedly unpleasant. RS
- Whelan, Gloria. Next Spring an Oriole; illus. by Pamela Johnson. Random House, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-394-99125-7; Paper ed. ISBN 0-394-89125-2. (Stepping Stone). Library ed. \$5.99; Paper ed. \$1.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. 2-4. Historical fiction at an easy level is hard to find, and this pioneer story, narrated by 10-year-old Libby Mitchell on her journey from Virginia to Michigan in 1837, is smoothly written and appealing. The wagon trail is not easy, and Whelan is careful to include a taste of the physical and emotional hardships, from the discomfort of head lice to tension between Mama and Papa. She's also careful in her presentation of the Potawatomi Indians, who figure in the story when the Mitchells nurse one of their children back to health after a bout of measles. Papa mentions the whites' unfair treatment of the Indians, and later the little girl's family shows up with food to help the Mitchells survive their first winter. There's even an ecological theme in Papa's love of the trees he refuses to girdle for farming, but the story, though brief, is well enough developed to outweigh the messages. BH
 - C.U. History—U.S.—Frontier and pioneer life

- Wilson, Willie. *Up Mountain One Time*; illus. by Karen Bertrand. Orchard/Watts, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08325-X; Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-05725-9. Library ed. \$12.99; Trade ed. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- M Gr. 4-7. The young mongoose Viggo waits, with some trepidation, for the time when he will leave the city to live in the bush, one day, "but not too too soon." But when his mother fails to return from a hunting expedition, Viggo realizes it is now time to leave his comfortable home and wise friend Clovis (a goat) and seek his ancestral haunts. Judging by the lilting almost-patois of Viggo's speech, this appears to be set in the Caribbean, but it could be any sleepy tropical town, an unfortunate lack of specificity that extends to Viggo himself, who never seems particularly mongoose-like, but could be any young wandering animal, tempted by the (relatively) easy living of the city but longing for the beauty and freedom of the wild. The narrative style, while lyrical, lazily shifts between Viggo's point of view and an omniscient one, slowing the story and confusing the boundaries of the fantasy element. RS

D.V. Independence

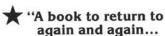
- Wittman, Sally. *The Boy Who Hated Valentine's Day*; illus. by Chaya Burstein. Harper, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-126594-9; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-026593-0. 29p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.
- R Gr. K-3. Cheerful illustrations in bright colors have an informal quality, with more vigor than polish. The story is told with direct simplicity, and although not structurally impressive, it has a final turn of events that should amuse the audience. Having been pushed into a position of saying he didn't like Valentine's Day (which he did), Ben was ignored by his classmates: no valentines in his box in second grade. In third grade, Ben had a wonderful idea: imitating the signatures of his peers, he gave himself a valentine from every child in the room. Then he felt sorry for a newcomer, and gave all his faked valentines to the new boy. And then—that's the twist. ZS

D.V. Kindness

- Yolen, Jane, ed. Spaceships and Spells: A Collection of New Fantasy and Science-Fiction Stories; ed. by Jane Yolen, Martin H. Greenberg, and Charles G. Waugh. Harper, 1987. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-026797-6; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-026796-8. Library ed. \$12.89; Trade ed. \$12.95, Reviewed from galleys.
- Ad Gr. 5-8. Despite the title, only a few of the thirteen stories collected here (all published for the first time) are even nominally science fiction; one of these, John Forrester's "Beneath Their Blue, Blue Skins" is a very good story about a girl who finds herself on the "wrong" side of an inter-species war. The others, and most of the fantasy stories which form the rest of the anthology, are unexceptional, flaccidly plotted around insubstantial premises. Two other stand-outs, though: Robert Lawson's White Goddess story, "The Silver Leopard," and Elizabeth Helfman's "Voices in the Wind," a tender story of a lonely old couple who wish themselves into hearing voices in the wind and rain. RS

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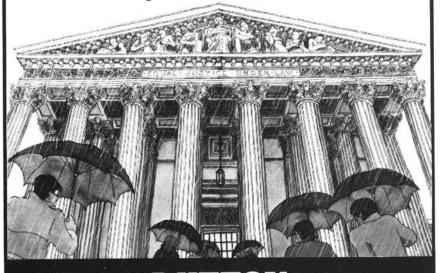
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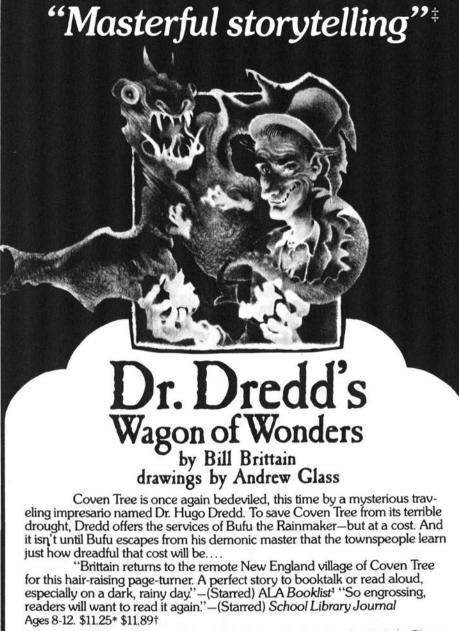
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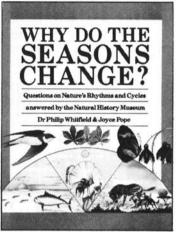
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- To order any of the items listed below, please write directly to the publisher of the item, not to the Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books.
- "Best Science Fiction/Fantasy" (of titles published in 1985-86), VOYA, April, 1987.
- Bosmajian, Hamida. "Tricks of the Text and Acts of Reading by Censors and Adolescents," Children's Literature in Education, Summer, 1987.
- Bush, Margaret, Ed. "Professional Education for the Youth Services," theme issue, Top of the News, Winter, 1987.
- Campbell, Patty. Sex Guides. Garland Publishing, 1987. 374p. \$27.
- Graves, Ruth. The RIF Guide to Encouraging Young Readers. Doubleday, 1987. 324p. \$16.95; paper, \$8.95.
- Helbig, Alethea K. and Perkins, Agnes Regan. The Dictionary of American Children's Fiction, 1960-1984. Greenwood Press, 1987. 914p. \$65.
- "In Spring Hearts Turn to Poetry and Love: A Theme Issue," The ALAN Review, Spring, 1987.
- MacLeod, Anne. "Nancy Drew and Her Rivals: No Contest Part II," The Horn Book, July/August, 1987.
- Meek, Margaret. "Symbolic Outlining: The Academic Study of Children's Literature," Signal, May, 1987.
- Rochman, Hazel. Tales of Love and Terror: Booktalking the Classics, Old and New. American Library Association, 1987. 120p. \$15.95. Videotape: VHS/Beta, 3/4" Umatic; 25 min., \$135.
- Senick, Gerard J., ed. Children's Literature Review: Excerpts from Reviews, Criticism, and Commentary on Books for Children. Vol. 13. Guest essay by Milton Meltzer. Gale Research, 1987. 300p. \$80.
- Somerville, Mary. "Facing the Shortage of Children's Librarians: An Upbeat Strategy for Recruiting and *Keeping Professionals* in the Field," *American Libraries*, June, 1987.
- Wilms, Denise and Cooper, Ilene, eds. A Guide to Non-sexist Children's Books Vol.II: 1976-1985. Academy Chicago Publishers, 1987. 240p. \$17.95; paper, \$8.95.
- Yesner, Bernice L. and Jay, Hilda L. The School Administrator's Guide to Evaluating Library Media Programs. Shoe String Press, 1987. 236p. \$26; paper, \$19.50.

