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THE BULLETIN

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

May 1993
Vol. 46 No. 9



University of Illinois
Graduate School of Library and Information Science

University of Illinois Press

**"Cabbage Rose is a fresh heroine
and a plucky survivor."***

Cabbage Rose

By M.C. Helldorfer
Illustrated in full color by Julie Downing



★"Helldorfer's fluid prose is buoyed by Downing's lush watercolors, a series of luminous pages that chronicle Cabbage's blossoming life and talent. The clear-cut message here—the importance of valuing one's true worth—is especially timely in today's image-conscious society." —Starred, *Publishers Weekly*

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T H E B U L L E T I N

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED WITH REVIEWS

*	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.

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THE BIG PICTURE

Think of an Eel

written by Karen Wallace; illustrated by Mike Bostock

“Think of an eel. He swims like a fish. He slides like a snake.” The title/first line of Karen Wallace and Mike Bostock’s book is aptly chosen. Until a book of non-fiction comes along and makes you think, you don’t realize how many don’t. Of facts, we have plenty. The series titles that have tumbled off the presses over the last decade demonstrate, by default, an important point: information is power only when it’s presented in a powerful way. Here’s a series that has what so much nonfiction lacks—voice. Other elements (clarity, accuracy, organization, scope, currency, objectivity, honesty, authority, illustration, documentation, holistic treatment, and readability) are all important, but without voice, nonfiction too often goes unheard. An informational book may even be recommended blandly in review journals as “useful.” Read between the lines: the reviewer is faced with describing a book that seems to have nothing really wrong with it but is nevertheless unaccountably boring. The difference between a useful R and an enthusiastic R is voice.

In *Think of An Eel*, the voice is a distinctive blend of verbal and artistic styles that shapes the subject, from the selection of facts to the progression with which they’re presented. The endpapers depict developmental stages of eel growth in eye-catching watercolors and suggest a mysterious dynamic about to unfold. Young listeners who don’t even know they want to know about eels are quickly enlisted to learn, and they haven’t even reached the title page. Next, their eyes will slide across pages filled with long slender shapes in plenty of white space. Both compositions and text are varied, the former with different page frames, the latter with free verse in regular type and with special facts in italics. The life cycle that organizes the information is reflected in rhythmic graphic patterns of blue and green. Despite the designerly pages, the material is not romanticized: “The gulls are waiting. Beaks snap like scissors through wriggling water”; and later, “There’s eel-tomb and eel-cradle in the weedy Sargasso. After eighty days swimming, not eating, not sleeping, eel’s long, winding body is worn-out and wasted. He spills the new life carried deep in his belly, then sinks through the sea like a used silver wrapper.” And the book ends as it began, with the fertilized eggs hatching.

Each of the titles in this series has a distinctive voice that evinces itself in a different way. Some of the books are written in prose, some in poetry. The latter is difficult to pull off but is all the more impressive when it’s well done (remember Ruth Heller’s successful metered rhyming in *Chickens Aren’t the Only Ones* and in her other nonfiction series on science and grammar). *Think of a Beaver*, by the same author/artist team that created *Think of an Eel*, uses appropriately crisper

words and pictorial line work. *All Pigs Are Beautiful*, written by Dick King-Smith and illustrated by Anita Jeram, is a personalized, whimsical (just short of anthropomorphic) introduction to the porcine personality. Hindley and Chamberlain's *A Piece of String Is a Wonderful Thing* succeeds, despite a few forced rhymes and cartoonish effects, in inviting preschoolers to imagine the invention—and to consider the uses—of an indispensable object.

Yes, this is a series, and some titles are more successful than others, but the fact that each volume has not been forced into a standardized mold says something important: every subject must dictate a different treatment. Moreover, text and graphics carry equal weight, unlike much picture-book science that relies on brilliant photography to distract children from a sketchy, descriptive text that amounts to little more than captions. When you read a Read and Wonder book, you know it was written not by a committee or packager, but by someone with a distinctive personality and interest in the subject.

Although this happens to be a nonfiction series at the picture-book level, the same vocal effects should demarcate nonfiction series for older children (there are a number of nonfiction series titles, varied in quality and age range, reviewed in this issue). When Russell Freedman won the Newbery Medal in 1988 for his Lincoln biography (BCCB 1/88), we seemed to be on the verge of a renaissance of informational books for children from preschool age through young adulthood. What we have seen too often since then is an array of textbookish series limited by TV dinner formats—edible, but often unvaried and even more often uninteresting. There are exceptions, of course, and that's where librarians can exert their influence. It's important to apply all the standard criteria in evaluating nonfiction; but just as important, listen for *voice* in the books you read or find reviewed. When you hear it, buy it.

Betsy Hearne, Editor



NEW BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ALEXANDER, BRYAN *Inuit*; written and illus. with photographs by Bryan and Cherry Alexander. Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 1993 48p (Threatened Cultures)
ISBN 0-8114-2301-8 \$14.94 M Gr. 4-8

Crisp and well-captioned color photos convey a great deal of information about Inuit society and the Arctic environment, but the text suffers from a malady found in many heavily illustrated nonfiction series books: it's all over the place, seeming to serve primarily as visual relief from the pictures, rather than having an educational function of its own. The subject of hunting, for example, is brought up in at least three different places, and each time is introduced as a new topic. Photos and boxed paragraphs are often placed with little regard to the text around them, with a photo and box about Inuit art popping up amid a discussion of "land food" and "store food." While the text consistently draws a simplistic dichotomy between Inuit/environmentally-correct/old-ways and Anglo-Christian/polluting-and-

rapacious-scoundrels, it does give a varied introduction of Inuit (primarily Canadian) life; and while the format is not efficient, it's browsable. A glossary, reading list and directory, and index are appended. RS

ALIKI *Communication*; written and illus. by Alik. Greenwillow, 1993 36p
Library ed. ISBN 0-688-11248-X \$13.93
Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-10529-7 \$14.00 Ad Gr. 2-3

Alik's tidy pencil-and-watercolor sketches, vignettes, and cartoons illustrate a concept book that is a bit too ambitious for its format. The book begins with the basics of communication: talking, listening, laughing and crying, symbols, baby and animal noises, etc. but turns into a self-helpy manual about the importance of self-expression and reflective listening. The premise of the pep talk seems to be that unexpressed anger or problems will always be alleviated by telling someone; there's a couple of instances, such as a son and mother who communicate via the use of hand puppets about the kid's bad day or a baby who goes in for a little lap-sitting bibliotherapy ("Sometimes a book can communicate your feelings to you"), that seem both psychologically half-baked and not terribly cognizant of the primary-grades audience the format implies. All of the cartoon sequences of kids gathering their courage to speak up work out for the best ("whew! That was easy"); young readers will know better. The book is very loosely organized, but some of the sequences may resonate for particular readers, opening up some important one-on-one communication. RS

ALLEN, JONATHAN *Who's at the Door?*; written and illus. by Jonathan Allen. Tambourine, 1993 [25p]
ISBN 0-688-12257-4 \$11.95
Reviewed from galley R 3-5 yrs

"The big bad wolf . . . desperately wanted to eat the little pigs for dinner. But to do this, he had to get inside their house. It was a tough problem." This postmodern version of "a knock at the door" has the pigs unfooled ("What a hairy policeman! . . . Go and arrest yourself, Wolfie!") as the predator variously disguises himself, only to be out-disguised when he finally gains entry in a pig mask, hears a knock at the door, and confronts the three pigs camouflaged as an even bigger bad wolf ("Well, you look like a piggy," say the three pigs in their wolf suit. "Prepare to be eaten"). Kids will be fooled by none of this, which will do wonders for their ego and their deconstruction skills. They'll also have fun with the "split-page surprise" format, in which half pages disguised as doors open to reveal an extremely silly-looking wolf in his four costumes. Allen cleverly keeps the colors, shapes, and compositions simple, so the cartoons never become cluttered despite the balloon dialogue and complicated book design. The perfect counter for listeners who quake at scary tales, this will also get a thumbs-up from those who take it all in stride but aren't quite ready for Scieszka's *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by A. Wolf* (BCCB 9/89). BH

ALLEN, JUDY *Whale*; illus. by Tudor Humphries.. Candlewick, 1993 [32p]
ISBN 1-56402-160-2 \$14.95
Reviewed from galley M 4-7 yrs

Like the author and illustrator's *Tiger* (BCCB 11/92), this is an ecological fable framed as fiction. It's a stormy night, and Anya and her parents are motorboating

home to the shore after a visit to her grandparents on an island. Just as the radio brings reports of a shipwreck and subsequent oil slick, Anya spots a whale. The whale has a baby with it, and Anya's mother (intuitively, one supposes) realizes that the slick occurred in the whales' breeding grounds, and the whale is desperately trying to outswim the slick and protect its newborn. In an unfortunate lapse into fantasy, ghost-whales of all species, each displaying the scars or implements (harpoons) of death, suddenly show up and help the exhausted pair to safety. "This is magic," says Anya; no argument there. Such a sentimental conclusion is not only too easy, it also subverts the ecological theme: why save the whales if they can save themselves? Humphries' sea-washed watercolors of the moonlit whales have a romantic grandeur as appropriate to the mystical text as they would have been to a more sensible story. RS

ANCONA, GEORGE *Powwow*; written and illus. with photographs by George Ancona. Harcourt, 1993 48p
Trade ed. ISBN 0-15-263268-9 \$16.95
Paper ed. ISBN 0-15-263269-7 \$8.95 R Gr. 3-6

While his book may document events at a traditional Native American celebration, Ancona is careful to show us more than ancient beads and feathers. This particular powwow is the Crow Fair, where Indians of many tribes come together to compete in the four primary kinds of contemporary Indian dancing: Traditional, Fancy, Grass, and Jingle-dress. Each dance has its own conventions and costumes, and the sharp color photos show the incredible detailing of the elaborate clothing and headdresses that the dancers construct. (Each dancer also wears a large paper number that presumably is meant for the judges, though Ancona does not explain this.) The dancing is just part of the get-together, so there are also plenty of shots of friends chatting and eating, and family members watching appreciatively while a son or daughter dances. Modern touches are everywhere, from cups of Diet Pepsi and Foot Long Hot Dog stands to telephone wires and pre-fab teepees. The effect of such accents is neither ironic nor jarring; rather, it gives the old ways—in new forms—the breath of continuing relevance. RS

ANDRYSZEWSKI, TRICIA *The Dust Bowl: Disaster on the Plains*. Millbrook, 1993 64p illus. with photographs (Spotlight on American History)
ISBN 1-56294-272-7 \$14.40 R Gr. 4-8

With excerpts from a young girl's diary and many period photographs of the endless dust, Andryszewski's account of the Dust Bowl times has an excellent balance of ecological and economic discussion, along with personalizing anecdotal material. She describes how farming practices of the 1920s and '30s combined with the cyclical appearance of drought in the Midwest region to make disaster inevitable, and how the Great Depression and the resulting slide in farm prices made it impossible for many farmers to survive. The New Deal gets a slightly mixed review from the author, who applauds the changes in agriculture it brought (contour plowing, for example), but who also points out that crop reduction money only went to landowners, not renters, who were then kicked off their farms. The writing is clear and the layout is spacious; a closing chapter, "Can It Happen Again?", gives a contemporary context, citing problems of over-grazing and groundwater depletion that could bring disaster to the Plains once again. A source note, reading list and index are appended. RS

BARTONE, ELISA *Pepe the Lamplighter*; illus. by Ted Lewin. Lothrop, 1993 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-688-10269-7 \$13.93

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-10268-9 \$14.00

R 5-8 yrs

Pepe is a young boy living "a long time ago when there was no electricity and the streetlamps in Little Italy had to be lit by hand." Due to his father's illness Pepe must work to help support his motherless family, and he eventually finds a job lighting those streetlamps. Pepe is dismayed when his father denigrates the job as menial street work, but eventually his youngest sister causes him and his father to regain pride in his work. The story avoids sentimentality in favor of simplicity and a touch of lyricism (when Pepe lights the lamps he imagines each one to be a "small flame of promise for the future"); Pepe's quiet quest for familial respect and pleasure in his work is touching and rhythmically written. The early-American city scenes are dark but have a nice period luminescence in the myriad street and table lamps, and the earth-toned watercolors lend the bustling streets and interiors of Little Italy an air both somber and lively. This is a pleasing kid-centered slice of history that possesses a warmth and dignity to which contemporary youngsters will relate. DS

BENDICK, JEANNE *Tombs of the Ancient Americans*; illus. by Jeanne Bendick and with photographs. Watts, 1993 64p (First Books)

ISBN 0-531-20148-1 \$12.40

Ad Gr. 3-5

Tombs and mummies are a magnetic subject for most of us, including kids, and there's not nearly so much published on burial sites in the Americas as there is on those of ancient Egypt. Bendick's approach to the subject is a little circuitous, starting with a list of silly questions ("Do you think you would be good at solving ancient mysteries?") that frustrate the reader's curiosity rather than arousing it. Next there's an explanation of archaeology and a generalized introduction to the first settlement of the Americas. Finally, we get to the fascinating facts themselves: the tombs of the Peruvian Moche, Chimu, and Incas; the Mayan tomb of Pacal; the Great Temple of the Aztecs; the burial caves of the Mogollon; and the various mounds of the Mississippi cultures. The color photographs are more effective than the crayon drawings, which are attractive but potentially confusing in several cases (Is the king who's watching an Inca ballgame really a mummy, as the caption indicates? Why do the Aztec and Mayan tombs appear to be situated in North America? Why isn't there any indication of scale in the drawing of a one-person tomb that looms so large on the map of South America?). On the other hand, who can resist the breathless suspense in Albert Ruz' discovery of Lord Jaguar Pacal's elaborate sarcophagus? Or the satisfyingly simple Mayan mathematical system in which any number could be written with only three symbols? Readers who get past the discombobulated beginning will find plenty to interest them here. Glossary and index appended. BH

BIAL, RAYMOND *Amish Home*; written and illus. with photographs by Raymond Bial. Houghton, 1993 40p

ISBN 0-395-59504-5 \$14.95

R Gr. 3-6

While the author/photographer states that there are no pictures of people in his book because the Amish do not allow themselves to be photographed, he probably should have amended his statement to read *some* Amish; Richard Ammon's *Grow-*

ing Up Amish (BCCB 7/89) is just one photodocumentary on the Amish people that includes portraits. Nevertheless, Bial is a more interesting photographer than Ammon, and his pictures of horses, houses, and various utensils for living and working often have the effect of still-life paintings that say as much about what is not in the picture as they do about what's included. While the Amish may be the "plain people," disdaining personal and household adornment, Bial shows the eye for beauty revealed in the rich colors of clothes drying on the line and in the rose-colored walls of a bedroom. The text is admiring but not sentimental, mentioning, for example, the teen rebellion of Amish boys ("They may soup up their buggies with plastic reflectors, stereos, carpeting, dashboards, and speedometers"), and the book as a whole gives a spare and balanced picture, mirroring Amish beliefs. A reading list is appended. RS

BIERHORST, JOHN, ad. *The Woman Who Fell from the Sky: The Iroquois Story of Creation*; illus. by Robert Andrew Parker. Morrow, 1993 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-688-10681-1 \$14.93

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-10680-3 \$15.00

R* 5-9 yrs.

"Before the world was new, sky people lived on a floating island high in the air. The sun had not yet been created, but light shone from the flowers of a tall tree." When a sky woman hears "voices under her heart," she knows she will have children and tells her husband, who becomes jealous, uproots the tree, and pushes the sky woman through the hole toward the water below. Her every movement generates new creations, from the ducks who catch her to the muskrats who spread mud on the turtle's back where she lands. The earth, the stars, and the sun are her work, while her twin sons, gentle Sapling and hard-edged Flint, fill the earth with complementary forms of life. Bierhorst's text has a dignified simplicity well matched by Parker's impressionistic watercolors, which are sometimes lit with a fiery orange glow or plunged into deep-blue darkness. Neither words nor pictures overreach for literal, elaborate interpretation; both leave room for metaphoric imagination. Because of this, the concluding prayer of thanks offered up with campfire smoke is a natural outcome of the story, without the solemn pretension that has characterized some recent Native American lore in picture book format. Bierhorst's source note, too, is exemplary, with exact citations of all the published and unpublished sources on which he drew to adapt the tale. This will span a broad age range and varied spectrum of interests, especially as an accompaniment to children's cross-cultural exploration of myth and spiritual traditions. BH

CAVANAGH, HELEN *Panther Glade*. Simon, 1993 147p

ISBN 0-671-75617-6 \$15.00

M Gr. 4-6

Bill resents his parents' European summer trip without him, and he's at first unsure about spending that time visiting his great-aunt Cait, an archaeologist in the Florida Everglades. She's involved in the excavation of a Calusa burial mound, and her deep affection for her work and surroundings gradually finds a sympathetic spirit in Bill, who feels a bond with the Calusa cat-god and hopes to catch a glimpse of the rare Florida panther. Although the book has an exotic-locale appeal, it's clichéd and sentimental ("If you take the last letter and put it first, *earth* spells *heart*. Isn't that something?"), and between the main plot as described above, Bill's friendship with a local girl, her grandmother's gradual warming, Bill's interest in crafts, his concern about being small for his age, and so forth, there are too

many threads to the story. The plot moves from the formulaic to the ridiculous when Bill unintentionally embarks on a vision quest by getting lost in the Everglades overnight. There he meets the spirit of King Calos, who helpfully recants the aspect of Calusan culture—child sacrifice—that had put Bill off and then takes Bill into his sacred circle. This final act not only swamps the pedestrian plot but also undermines the message of respect for other civilizations, since that respect seems conditional on a culture's ability to rewrite their history to suit contemporary tastes. For a good vision quest book, try Susan Sharpe's *Spirit Quest* (BCCB 9/91); for a book on the real Florida panthers, try Clark's book reviewed below. DS

CLARK, MARGARET GOFF *The Endangered Florida Panther*. Cobblehill, 1993 54p illus. with photographs ISBN 0-525-65114-4 \$14.99 R Gr. 5-7

Clark has done her homework here, and her account of attempts to preserve the surviving Florida panthers—fewer than fifty are left—has individualized dimensions as a result. Interviewing several experts has yielded stories of personal encounter, from standard health checks on tranquilized animals to confrontation between a conservationist and a tense female panther defending her kittens. The radio banding program has contributed to an increased store of information on the secretive animals, which in turn has enabled officials to take steps such as the building of I-75 underpasses allowing panthers to cross highways safely within their home territory. Clark has a good sense of story, and the information here emerges narratively to good advantage. Color photographs lend you-are-there impact; and a map, list of wilderness parks, dateline of "Florida Panther Milestones," and index will help students out. BH

THE COUSTEAU SOCIETY *Albatross*; ISBN 0-671-86565-X. *Manatees*; ISBN 0-671-86566-8. *Otters*; ISBN 0-671-86567-6. *Whales*; ISBN 0-671-86564-1. Each book: Little Simon, 1993 18p illus. with photographs \$3.95 Ad 3-6 yrs

Nature photography magnificently reproduced in full color is the real centerpiece of this series; the text amounts to captions of one or two lines per page that follow the animals in their respective activities of egg-laying, nursing babies, munching crabs, or diving. Although sketchy, the information is clear. However, it is the pictures that inject personality into the presentation; the startling closeup of an albatross grooming its lifetime mate after a year of separation makes up a bit for the maddening absence of any explanation as to how they find each other "among thousands of other birds." It's coffee-table science, and none of the books have much sense of beginning, middle, and end, but they'll give young listeners and even beginning readers a first glimpse of realms beyond the inland world, urban or rural. BH

CWIKLIK, ROBERT *Stokely Carmichael and Black Power*. Millbrook, 1993 32p illus. with photographs (Gateway Civil Rights) ISBN 1-56294-276-X \$11.90 Ad Gr. 4-6

Starting with a speech in which he suggested "black power" as a slogan for demanding African-American rights, this brief biography touches on Carmichael's childhood in Trinidad and Harlem before concentrating on his role as a SNCC

representative, one of the youngest—and angriest—leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. Now a resident of Guinea, with his name changed to Kwame Ture, the subject gets sympathetic if superficial treatment here, with competent writing, black-and-white news photos, lists of dates and of books for further reading (three out of six titles are Millbrook Press publications about other black leaders), and an index. Despite the limitations of scope and documentation, the inherent drama of Carmichael's activities guarantees a readership for this; it's short enough to snag reluctant readers and involving enough to induce better readers to look for further information. BH

DEPAOLA, TOMIE *Tom*; written and illus. by Tomie dePaola. Putnam, 1993 32p
ISBN 0-399-22417-3 \$14.95 R 4-7 yrs

Another in the series of the author/artist's childhood reminiscences, this one is about Tommy's grandfather Tom, who provides a host of delights when Tommy comes to visit on Sundays ("We're named after each other, Tommy"). Tom and Tommy read the comics together, clean the furnace, visit the puppies next door or "just sit outside the cellar door and talk." The tone is tender, but there's no story and occasional explanatory parenthetical remarks restate the obvious. The plot picks up when Tom, a butcher, gives Tommy a pair of chicken feet that the boy uses to make trouble at school; this episode has a liveliness that would have been welcome throughout. dePaola's watercolor illustrations have facility and a great appeal for children, who may forgive the pottering around for the sake of the funny ending and the evident warmth of Tom and Tommy's friendship. RS

GILMORE, KATE *Jason and the Bard*. Houghton, 1993 [240p]
ISBN 0-395-62472-X \$14.95
Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 7-12

Jason's encounter with the Bard takes place during a summer Shakespeare festival at a small midwestern college, where he and several other teens are apprenticed for the purpose of learning the theatrical trade, performing small parts, and supplying technical labor and grunt work as needed. It's an exciting but exhausting program, and Jason, a model apprentice, finds himself assisting a demanding props mistress, learning his parts, understudying an uncertain lead actor, *and* playing detective to find out who's responsible for the unnerving practical jokes being played on the cast and crew. Gilmore doesn't manage to make Jason's crowded life clearer to the readers than it is to him; the book is overstuffed with plot (the practical joker mystery and its obvious culprit are unnecessary, as is Jason's budding romance with a fellow apprentice) and *dramatis personae* (with character development for only a few, not including the saintly Jason; it's also a problem to have a Peggy and a Penny and a Tony and a Tory). The dialogue throughout is too baroque even for stage-struck teens, with Briticisms abounding for no apparent reason other than general affectation. Through it all, however, the mechanics of rehearsal and preparation are absorbing and the teen apprentices' parent-free immersion in the adult field of their choice is enviable. The cast and crew's love of and devotion to drama is apparent, the theatrical lore is interesting, and the touches of *All About Eve*-ish melodrama enhance the allure. There's a lot to wade through, but junior thespians are likely to find it worthwhile. DS

GREENE, CAROL *Reading about the River Otter*; ISBN 0-89490-425-6; *Reading about the Peregrine Falcon*; ISBN 0-89490-422-1. Each book: Enslow, 1993 \$12.95 32p illus. with photographs (Friends in Danger)

R Gr. 1-3

Standardized in format, each of these series titles features full-page color photographs accompanying an easy-to-read nature narrative. Two animals from an endangered species are introduced by name (Rocky and Zip are the falcons, Slip and Slider the otters) and described in their habitat. Concluding sections explain the population decline (DDT for falcons, fur trapping for otters, diminished territories for both), list suggestions for concerned young readers to follow up on, and include more facts, along with a map. It's too bad the covers are cluttered with multi-colored titles, because the design within is mostly simple and clear, the pictures action-packed. Each volume has a glossary and index. The information is straightforward, with no condescension of tone, and the photographs are well reproduced. The facts are specific if sometimes canned: one book begins "Winter is almost over"; another, "Winter is here." Still, this bland style may prove an asset to beginning readers, who will most certainly be interested in real animals as a variation on the "talking animals" so often presented in easy-to-read format. The series will include books on the gray wolf, humpback whale, grizzly bear, and manatee, as well as the peregrine falcon and otter. BH

GROVER, WAYNE *Ali and the Golden Eagle*. Greenwillow, 1993 150p
ISBN 0-688-11385-0 \$14.00

R Gr. 5-9

Wonderfully farfetched if entirely possible, this is a fictionalized account of the author's stay in the remote high desert region of western Saudi Arabia. When Wayne, an American engineer, befriends thirteen-year-old Ali, he's introduced to the ancient art of falconry, a hunting technique that Ali's village depends upon for food. Together, Wayne and Ali capture a baby wild eagle from its nest, and Ali and his father train it to a superb degree, with Ali and Samson (as he names the bird) soon outreaching the feats of the most skilled hunters in the village and even, as is demonstrated in a nationwide competition, the crown princes of the royal family. The falconry lore and technique are detailed and intriguing; just as fascinating is the running account of life in Ali's village tucked far down a steep canyon. Mysticism (Ali telepathically communicates with Samson) combines with high adventure (Wayne takes Ali up in a glider to fly with Samson) for strong appeal. Even though we're not supposed to talk about "boys' books" anymore, this is a great one. (See Hahn, below, for other sexist remarks.) RS

HAHN, MARY DOWNING *The Wind Blows Backward*. Clarion, 1993 [272p]
ISBN 0-395-62975-6 \$13.95

Reviewed from galleys

R* Gr. 7-12

Lauren and Spencer, drawn together by their love of fantasy novels, were close in junior high (and she had harbored a secret crush on him), but come ninth grade, Spencer joined the in-crowd and never spoke to Lauren again. Now they're seniors, and Spencer, handsome, poetic and troubled, is back in Lauren's life: "He'd apologized for hurting me, he'd held my hand, he'd asked me to be his friend—he'd kissed me. I touched my mouth cautiously so as not to disturb any evidence that might still linger on my lips." This is a lavishly romantic novel, with all the moody intensity anyone could want. Lauren is quiet and bookish and looking for

someone with whom to share her deeply felt responses to poetry and life; Spencer has tried to escape the pain of his father's suicide by burying himself in popularity, but his despair only increases and he looks to Lauren for salvation. While Lauren's narration captures all the high emotions of first love, Hahn's writing is clean and unsentimental, her love scenes discreet but sexy, and her smooth fusion of serious themes of suicide and depression with a passionate love story has both dignity and wide appeal. With a romantic watercolor cover of a pretty Lauren and an even prettier Spencer in a car at night, this is going to be, hands down, the Girl Book of the Year. RS

HELMER, DIANA STAR *Belles of the Ballpark*. Millbrook, 1993 96p illus. with photographs
ISBN 1-56294-230-1 \$14.90 R Gr. 5-8

The popular movie *A League of Their Own* may spur interest in Philip K. Wrigley's wartime-inspired All-American Girls Professional Ball League. While Helmer's book doesn't have the personality of Macy's *A Whole New Ballgame*, reviewed below, it is an informative overview of the league's beginnings and recruitment of players, growth during the war years, and eventual decline. Chapters also cover changes in rules, life on the road, minor league activity, and the renaissance of interest during the 1980s in the league's history. Helmer peppers enough anecdotes and photographs throughout to avoid a summary tone; index, chronology and bibliography are appended. RS

HESLEWOOD, JULIET *Introducing Picasso*. Little, 1993 [32p] illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-316-35917-3 \$15.95
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 4-6

Visually, this is a terrific introduction to Picasso: it's chock-full of vivid reproductions of his paintings, his sculptures, other artists' works that influenced him; it's also sprinkled with brooding and quizzical photos of the artist himself. The text is simple and fairly clear, although occasionally not as explanatory as one might wish (the section on Picasso's Blue and Rose periods, for instance, never defines "rose" and is illustrated with a painting containing blues, roses, blacks, and browns). The chapters proceed by theme, which occasionally makes things chronologically confusing but is appropriate for a book more concerned with the artist's work than his life (even the biographical information is artistic rather than personal). It's an eye-catching and accessible overview which, by concentrating on visuals, conveys the excitement and iconoclasm of Picasso's work in a way children can understand. A timeline and index are included. DS

HEWETT, JOAN *Tiger, Tiger, Growing Up*; illus. with photographs by Richard Hewett. Clarion, 1993 32p
ISBN 0-395-61583-6 \$13.95
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 3-6

Tara, although definitely a tiger, looks less like the Blakean vision at which the title hints than a window display at FAO Schwartz: she is a fuzzy and adorable piece of kittenish felinity. She's a resident of Marine World Africa USA, and the book documents her rearing by Marine World employees Mary and Lynn, until the

kitten is of an age and size to join the adult tigers on "Tiger Island." The text is straightforward and clear, although there are a few omissions: it's not explained why Tara was taken from her tiger mother at five days, and she's treated so much like a house pet that there really ought to be a caveat about wild animals still being wild. No matter, really: what's important are the photos of Tara as she cuddles with her understandably besotted caretakers and grows into those huge paws. You don't even have to booktalk this—just flash one of the multitude of irresistible pictures and your audience will come running; as a readaloud, this could also keep younger kids purring. DS

HINDLEY, JUDY *A Piece of String Is a Wonderful Thing*; illus. by Margaret Chamberlain. Candlewick, 1993 32p (Read and Wonder)
ISBN 1-56402-147-5 \$14.95 Ad 4-7 yrs

See the Big Picture, p. 273, for review.

HULL, ROBERT, comp. ed. *A Prose Anthology of the Second World War*. Millbrook, 1993 64p illus. with photographs
ISBN 1-56294-223-9 \$12.90 Ad Gr. 5-8

"Thirty million people died in the Second World War. . . . Sometimes we need to go back to experiences in the singular to make sense of these huge numbers." A brief but intelligent introduction paves the way for a primary-source anthology that is awkwardly designed but nevertheless telling in its broad range of voices, including Jews, Nazis, troops, and civilians of many nationalities and both genders. The bold-face explanations between the selections, as well as the italicized definitions at the bottom of the page of text, both appear to be captions when they are placed next to photographs; sometimes they are and sometimes they aren't. A European Jewish boy's description of life in a boys' school in England is illustrated by a picture of a girl with two dolls; the explanation of the Victoria Cross seems to label a picture of refugees lined up on a dock; yet Churchill shows up above his own words. However confusing its appearance, the material itself will prove a valuable supplement to textbook accounts that distance readers from the events. Important dates, a glossary, a six-title list of books for further reading, source notes, and an index conclude the book. BH

JAUCK, ANDREA *Assateague: Island of the Wild Ponies*; written by Andrea Jauck and Larry Points. Macmillan, 1993 32p illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-02-774695-X \$14.95 Ad Gr. 4-6

Starting with spring, this book gives a season by season overview of how the wild relatives of Misty of Chincoteague survive and flourish in their island preserve. The authors mention and show life other than the ponies, too, with deer, sea birds, and marine life appearing throughout, plus some descriptions of vegetation and overall ecology. The text, although clear, lacks a narrative thread, seemingly written around the photographs, which makes it all the more confusing when the words and pictures don't jibe (a paragraph discussing how ponies usually give birth at night is accompanied by a photo of a mare foaling in broad daylight; text describing the mother piping plover sitting on her eggs and chicks partners a picture of eggs and chicks but no mom). Kids will also have questions (how do the cars get to the island? If it's over a bridge, why don't the ponies leave that way?) that the

text doesn't answer. The pictures are terrific, however (even the composite on the cover), and the reader gets a strong sense of bucolic pony life on the island. This is a good elementary look at one natural habitat as well as an appealing read for friends of Misty and ponies generally. There is one map, and an address for further information is included. DS

JOHNSON, ANGELA *Julius*; illus. by Dav Pilkey. Jackson/Orchard, 1993 32p
Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08615-1 \$14.99
Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-05465-9 \$14.95 R 4-7 yrs

This gleeful celebration of silliness starts out with just the right hint of what's coming: "Maya's granddaddy lived in Alabama, but wintered in Alaska." So when he brings her "something for my special you" and it turns out to be even better than a horse or an older brother ("She'd always wanted one or the other"), Maya is thrilled to meet Julius, an Alaskan pig ("a big pig"). Julius climbs out of the box doing a polar bear imitation, wreaks havoc in the house, keeps Maya company in multiple endeavors (e.g., "peanut butter from the jar, without getting any on the ceiling"), and in turn learns some things from Maya (how not "to act like he lived in a barn"). Maya's parents are less than thrilled, but of course that's the main attraction of the situation, which steadily veers out of control in all the ways children love—noise, mess, late TV, sneaking into stores to try on clothes ("Julius liked anything blue and stretchy"), and generally transforming order into chaos. The fact that these characters are black—except for Julius, of course, who is pink when not rolling in flour—makes this an exceptionally refreshing break from the folklore and nostalgic childhood memories that have dominated African-American picture books lately. Pilkey's paintings are a major factor in the hilarity. He translates a keen sense of the ridiculous into vivacious hues and wildly varied patterns without ever getting cluttered. The picture of the family at breakfast, for instance, features flowered wallpaper framed in patchwork—a very pretty sight except for the coffee dribbling down the page from one of Julius' many spills. These are not idealized parents either; their expressions range from critical disapproval to desperate disapproval. It's the kids who have all the fun, and they do it with an abandon reminiscent of Sendak's free spirits. Despite the vast artistic differences, readers will recognize a tone common to both: wheeeee! BH

JONES, TERRY *Fantastic Stories*; illus. by Michael Foreman. Viking, 1993 128p
ISBN 0-670-84899-9 \$16.99 Ad Gr. 4-7

Jones, film director, former member of Monty Python, and author of *Terry Jones' Fairy Tales*, etc., has here collected twenty-one of his original folklike tales. Stories include "The Improving Mirror," about the disastrous consequences of a mirror that makes people's reflections look better than they do; "How the Badger Got Its Stripes," a pourquoi tale; "The Slow Ogre," about the eponymous monster and the small child who triumphs over him. Jones has a good ear for storytelling rhythm ("There once was a mermaid who pitied the sailors who drowned in the windy sea") and repetition (the Gatekeeper's Daughter's refrain of "Daddy, don't let him in!" punctuates "The Slow Ogre") which lifts these stories above the level of most would-be-fantastical short stories. Foreman's line-and-watercolor illustrations keep things generally light-hearted and properly fantastical. Unfortunately the ends of the stories are often abrupt or disappointing, not only baldly moralistic but disconcertingly topical ("The Flying King" turns out to be a parable about the

hazards of automobiles), and both the humor and narratorial asides can be inane. Still, for kids who like drollery in fairy tales (milder than Scieszka's satirical *The Stinky Cheese Man*) this might be an appealing readaloud or private exploration. DS

JUKES, MAVIS *I'll See You in My Dreams*; illus. by Stacey Schuett. Knopf, 1993 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-679-92690-9 \$15.99

Trade ed. ISBN 0-679-82690-4 \$15.00

Ad 5-8 yrs

"If she were a skywriter, she would wait for the sky to turn pink and blue—the colors of dusk or dawn." Thus begins an eloquently written, undeniably moving, and ultimately adult litany of farewell to a loved one. The first half details a girl's fantasy of flying her uncle's plane and skywriting "Good-bye . . . I love you . . . I'll see you in my dreams" across the clouds where her uncle can see it through his hospital window. Then comes a puzzling switch in the pivotal word "would," which has been used to mean "if I could" in the first half of the book. In the second, after two brief sentences in the simple past tense ("She was not a skywriter. She was a little kid"), which effectively refocus the listener on reality, the text suddenly returns to "would" in a completely different sense, referring to events that may have happened or may be about to happen on a real plane trip to see her dying uncle. This third change is at best unnecessary and at worst confusing. "Her mother would try to prepare her"—did she or didn't she? What's going on here? We do know, in a mystical way, that the child is going through a series of head trips and probably one plane trip. The sunset to nighttime colors that cast a dramatic glow over the first half of the book reflect again off the last two pages, tying together fantasy and reality. However, Schuett's paintings are at their best in the subtler tones that depict a panel of instruments, a darkening landscape of fields, or a brown leather aviator's jacket. Altogether, this is a heartfelt creation which, if it succeeds in reaching beyond the personal experience it's depicting to communicate with young listeners, will touch them deeply; if not, it will leave them puzzled indeed. BH

KAYE, MARILYN *Real Heroes*. Gulliver/Harcourt, 1993 [144p]

ISBN 0-15-200563-3 \$16.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 5-8

Kevin adores his tough-cop father Charley, and he's relieved that Charley seems to be bouncing back after the departure of Kevin's mother. Kevin also finds reassurance from his understanding gym teacher, Mr. Logan, so it's a blow to him to discover that Mr. Logan is HIV-positive. Kevin's father, currently a media celebrity for performing an heroic rescue (correctly seen by his superiors as an act of foolish risk), is chosen to spearhead the drive to get Mr. Logan out of the school, which forces Kevin to examine his own loyalties. The characters of faithful but confused Kevin and his proud, hurt, and frightened father are well-depicted, as is the changing relationship between the two. Unfortunately much of the novel falls into formula: other characters are stereotypes of villainy (Kevin's homophobic friend and his father) or virtue (Mr. Logan, about whom Kevin's friend Emily says "in wonderment": "He can still smile at us with all this going on. . . . What a brave man"); the plot is coincidence-driven, with televisions turned on at just the right moment and private information accidentally conveyed through computers or

unguarded files, and often preachy AIDS information is lodged uneasily in people's dialogue. The story remains readable, however, and, to Kaye's credit, it eschews a neat wrap-up: Mr. Logan resigns, and Kevin, who has refused to respond to his estranged mother's overtures, doesn't see her at the end either, although the possibility of rapprochement has increased. The father-son story is what's really important here, and readers will find that part of the book most involving. DS

KING-SMITH, DICK *All Pigs Are Beautiful*; illus. by Anita Jeram. Candlewick, 1993 32p (Read and Wonder)
ISBN 1-56402-148-3 \$14.95 R. 4-7 yrs

See the Big Picture, p. 273, for review

KLEIN, ROBIN *Dresses of Red and Gold*. Viking, 1993 177p
ISBN 0-670-84733-X \$12.50 R* Gr. 5-9

The Melling sisters and their obnoxious cousin Isobel, first introduced in *All in the Blue Unclouded Weather* (BCCB 4/92), are back in another sequence of slice-of-life short stories. Grace, the oldest girl, has left home for a dressmaking course, but the rest go on with their squabbles, scrapes and unlikely alliances. The tone is basically humorous, with one or the other of the girls getting herself—or just as often, being snared—into trouble, as when Cathy brags to friends about her big fancy birthday party, only to have to produce it when the friends show up with presents. (Dad saves the day with an impromptu treasure hunt: “steal a nail off the roof of the police station lock-up.”) The slapstick is balanced by some touching moments, none more poignant than when Vivien, in the hospital to have her tonsils out, discovers that Miss Bradtke, the old woman who is her roommate, has died: “She simply wasn't there at all, but appeared to have slipped very quietly and gently out of the room.” Miss Bradtke had been introduced in an earlier story in the sequence; similar links provide narrative continuity and some small ironies. A couple of the stories have too-neat endings, but the voice is always fresh and engaging. The postwar rural Australian setting is easy to get settled into, and the girls each have their distinctly bratty idiosyncrasies that make them an entertaining group to get to know. RS

KUDLINSKI, KATHLEEN *Earthquake!: A Story of Old San Francisco*; illus. by Ronald Himler. Viking, 1993 [64p] (Once Upon America)
ISBN 0-670-84874-3 \$12.99 R Gr. 4-6

Philip is twelve, proud of his ability to help with his father's San Francisco livery stable, when disaster strikes the city in 1906. Kudlinski depicts the famous earthquake and fire as Philip sees it: first the quake, which injures the horses (one so severely that Philip's father shoots her) that make up the family's livelihood; then the eerie silence and confusion, punctuated by the sound of gas explosions, as Philip's father leaves him with the horses and tries to get the family to a safe place; then finally the fires crossing and re-crossing the city, leading to Philip's evacuation with the horses as the army begins to dynamite his street in an effort to make a firebreak. The book is more effective for Kudlinski's decision to stick to Philip's point of view rather than trying to shoehorn a multitude of historical details into the plot; the complete destruction of Philip's life as he knows it is story enough, even though it doesn't address the massive death and tragedy that the event caused. (There's even some subtle emphasis on how the earthquake marked, in many ways, a shift to automobiles and modern times in San Francisco, with Philip's father

planning to turn to auto repair rather than the livery business.) A slight subplot about Philip's ability with the horses is unnecessary but too small to distract from the focus on the main story. A historical note about the earthquake is appended. DS

LAWSON, JULIE *The Dragon's Pearl*; illus. by Paul Morin. Clarion, 1993 32p
ISBN 0-395-63623-X \$15.95 R 5-8 yrs

Presumably an original tale with some folkloric motifs, this is set in China, where a boy named Xiao Sheng parlays his poverty for a fortune by cheerfully pursuing—even during a drought—his search for grass to sell as fuel or fodder. What he eventually finds, under a lush field, is a magic pearl that multiplies whatever it touches, including rice and gold. Xiao Sheng and his mother become rich, attracting a pair of greedy villains. In the ensuing struggle, the boy swallows his pearl, turns into a dragon, and breathes rain-bearing clouds upon the village. Morin's three-dimensional textures and chiaroscuro effects may be familiar to viewers from his art work for Molle's *The Orphan Boy* (BCCB 4/91); here, the tone is darker but the composition less stark, with some pictures strongly resembling tapestry. Story and illustration are an elaborate fit, resulting in a book that will introduce children who have enjoyed European folktales featuring objects that multiply to their owners' advantage ("The Wonderful Pot," "The Lad Who Went to the North Wind," etc.) to a more sophisticated literature. BH

MCDANIEL, LURLENE *Baby Alicia Is Dying*. Bantam, 1993 [176p]
Paper ed. ISBN 0-553-29605-1 \$3.50
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 6-9

The title clues you in—this is a tearjerker in the classic tradition. Desi, a science brain, is unmoved by the social opportunities of her freshman year in high school, and she instead begins to work at a foster care facility that houses babies born HIV-positive. Soon ChildCare, and particularly baby Alicia, becomes the mainstay of Desi's days, and she finds satisfaction in providing for Alicia the kind of maternal care that she feels neither of them have received from their own mothers. Desi endures negative reactions from friends, family, and strangers (on Desi's school locker, "spray-painted red letters left a hateful message: 'Get Out, Nigger Queer Lover'"), but she's finally devastated by the decline and eventual death of the baby whom she thinks of as her own. There are no particular plot surprises here (Desi does eventually overcome her pain and return to work at ChildCare, and she and her mother have a rapprochement after Alicia's death), and the information on AIDS and HIV, although extremely up-to-date, is occasionally intrusive. McDaniel makes Desi's passion believable and understandable, however, and she paints other characters, such as Desi's lab partner Brian and Alicia's teenage mother, with gentleness and skill. The story is gripping and emotional, and those who come to scoff may stay to weep. DS

MACHOTKA, HANA *Outstanding Outsides*; written and illus. with photographs by Hana Machotka. Morrow, 1993 32p
Library ed. ISBN 0-688-11753-8 \$14.93
Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-11752-X \$15.00 R Gr. 2-4

Machotka continues her piquantly specific series on biology via anatomy (*Breath-taking Noses*, BCCB 7/92, etc.) with a look at skins, shells, scales, feathers, and—

well, just plain outsides. The book follows her previously employed form: a closeup photo of the outside of the critter in question ("This dome shaped shell belongs to a . . ."), then a double spread describing and picturing the subject more fully ("The shell of this box turtle is made up of hard, bony plates that are joined together. . ."). The unique quality of a particular outside covering doesn't always come through photographically (kids may not be able to tell, for instance, that the fuzzy-looking tarantula has "a hard skeleton on the outside"), but the pictures and text are engaging and reasonably explanatory. Like the others in the series, this is an accessible and easy introduction to biology from a pragmatic viewpoint, and it's all the more salutary for its underlying implication that we humans are hardly the biological norm we imagine ourselves. DS

MCMAHON, PATRICIA *Chi-Hoon: A Korean Girl*; illus. with photographs by Michael F. O'Brien. Caroline House/Boyd's Mills, 1993 [64p]
ISBN 1-56397-026-0 \$16.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 3-5

Eight-year-old Chi-Hoon is the focus for this photodocumentary, which takes the girl through a typical week in Seoul as she goes to school, visits relatives, goes sightseeing, and spends time at home with her family. The color photographs are excellent, uncaptioned but generally well-placed in the unfortunately crowded double-column text. Less touristy than many similar books, this has lots of detail and personality, and Chi-Hoon's rebellious streak makes her more interesting than the good girl she longs to be (in order to win a prize at school). Sometimes the text is too complicated, as in a long discussion of Korean names, and sometimes it is oversimplified, as in a passage that implies that the country is still ruled by royalty. Aside from some tense moments between Chi-Hoon's parents and grandparents about the proper role of girls and women, the book is apolitical, but its authentic perspective on one girl's (relatively privileged) life make it a good family story as well as valuable material for social studies classes. RS

MACY, SUE *A Whole New Ballgame: The Story of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League*. Holt, 1993 140p illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-8050-1942-1 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-9

Probably the biggest difference between Helmer's *Belles of the Ballpark*, reviewed above, and this title is that Macy's book has a whole lot more baseball. She does play-by-plays of a couple of tense games, includes statistics for the all-star players, and highlights various no-hitters, home-runs and gaffes that give a sense not just of what the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League meant, but of what it was. Not that social issues are slighted in either book: while Helmer includes more material on the genesis of the League, Macy takes more of a feminist perspective, examining the encouragement and prejudice the women players faced, and what kinds of lives they went on to after the league folded. Macy's writing is lively, and she gives a good sense of the various players, such as Peoria Redwings player Faye Dancer, who was pals with a Mob kingpin: "Once he even asked me if I wanted anyone killed. I told him maybe the umpire, but I made sure he knew I was kidding." Lots of often campy photographs, including a "dream team" gallery

of baseball cards, enliven the text; a source note, reading list, and an index are also appended. RS

MARGOLIES, BARBARA A. *Warriors, Wigmen, and the Crocodile People: Journeys in Papua New Guinea*; written and illus. with photographs by Barbara A. Margolies. Four Winds, 1993 40p
ISBN 0-02-762283-5 \$14.95 R Gr. 4-6

In this exceptionally exotic photoessay, Margolies visits two Papua New Guinean tribes: the Huli people of the interior highlands, whose men decorate themselves with elaborate wigs and body paint; and the more Westernized people of the Sepik River, who use the river as a "highway" connecting villages only fairly recently at peace with one another. In both places, Margolies uses a young person as a lens for her travelogue, but the effect is never stagey as it was in her previous book, *Kanu of Kathmandu* (BCCB 11/92). The text is brief, sketching the daily lives of the two very different groups, and it's to Margolies' credit that while she knows what American kids will find fascinating, she never turns her subjects into curiosities. Color photos are intense and revealing, especially in her beautiful portraits of the "Wigmen" in full adornment. While a book like this one does not have the full outline of "facts" featured in most geography series books (see the Alexanders' *Inuit*, above), it does a far more effective job of drawing readers into a different way of life. RS

MATAS, CAROL *Daniel's Story*. Scholastic, 1993 [128p]
ISBN 0-590-46920-7 \$13.95
Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 4-7

Published in conjunction with the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, this is based on scenes from an exhibit about a boy who serves as a "carefully researched composite of the many children who lived through the Holocaust." Unlike Matas' involving portrayals in *Lisa's War* (BCCB 9/89) and *Code Name Kris* (1/91), the novel never seems to take on a fictional life of its own but remains almost a descriptive explanation of Jewish suffering at the hands of the Nazis. The distance is partially due to the device of Daniel's rumination over photographs, stressing long passages of narrative over action ("But how different to be running from one warm house to another than to be trapped day and night in an unheated school when the temperature is twenty-five degrees and people are suffering from frostbite and malnutrition"). Daniel's relationship with a first love is interrupted by expository comments ("By the time the ghetto was sealed off from the rest of the world, in April 1940, there were 160,500 people there. By 1943 there were around 80,000 of us left, the rest having died or been sent away in one of the many transports"). Even dramatic moments are vague; when Daniel steps off the train at Auschwitz, we learn that "many in the car are dead" but not how or why. Dialogue often seems contrived: "It was all that nettle soup they fed us," I answer. 'Little did they realize that it was just chock-full of vitamins and minerals and everything.'" The book is unarguably well-informed and well-intentioned, and reading it will certainly add to the impact of attending the museum exhibit; but it's paradoxically true that particular individuals' stories such as Leitner's *The Big Lie* (BCCB 1/93) convey a more universally effective sense of experience than generalized situations such as this one. BH

MAYO, GRETCHEN WILL, ad. *Meet Tricky Coyote!*; Library ed. ISBN 0-8027-8199-3; Trade ed. ISBN 0-8027-8198-5. *That Tricky Coyote!*; Library ed. ISBN 0-8027-8201-9; Trade ed. ISBN 0-8027-8200-0. Each book: ad. and illus. by Gretchen Will Mayo. Walker, 1993 Library ed. \$13.85, Trade ed. \$12.95 [32p]

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 2-4

Although Mayo's companion volumes repeat the same afterwords (explaining Coyote's place in Native American tradition) and acknowledgments, the five easy-to-read stories featured in each volume differ distinctively. All ten tales are short and funny, with helpful notes at the end of each giving a bit of background on the selection and tribe of origin; exact sources are cited in a bibliography, which also lists additional titles for further study. A few of the tales show European influence—"Burrrrrrrrrrp!," collected in 1916 from the Canadian Salishan people, is a variant of "The Wolf and the Fox" (Grimm #73)—and there's a version of "Tortoise and the Hare" called "I Win," which features Coyote and Turtle. Most of the stories will be unfamiliar to young readers, however, and the title tale, "Tricky Coyote," will hook practicing readers as Coyote tricks a cowboy out of his hat, shirt, pants, and horse and rides off laughing, leaving Fancy Man wearing only boots and long underwear. The illustrations depict a playful tan coyote outlined in thick yellow and cavorting against a background of innocent pastels. It's not the sly artistry of Janet Stevens' *Coyote Steals the Blanket* (reviewed above), but it's a friendly staple that livens the format and will wear well with use; these beat textbook readers by a mile. BH

MOCHIZUKI, KEN *Baseball Saved Us*; illus. by Dom Lee. Lee & Low, 1993 [32p]

ISBN 1-880000-01-6 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

M 5-9 yrs

"One day, my dad looked out at the endless desert and decided then and there to build a baseball field." The resemblance to *Field of Dreams* should not be discounted in this story set in an unnamed internment camp for Japanese citizens during World War II. When the narrator's brother, Teddy, arrogantly talks back to their father, Dad decides that there's not enough to do around the camp and organizes a baseball field/barn-raising to have the field cleared and watered, and bleachers built and uniforms sewn from mattress covers. Baseball becomes the thing to do, and the narrator, who usually strikes out and occasionally gets a single, is in a crucial game, batting at the bottom of the ninth inning, two outs, one man on base and they're trailing by one run. But not for long—goaded by the presence of the anonymous, ever-watching, sunglassed tower guard, the boy hits a home run and wins the game: "I looked up at the tower and the man, with a grin on his face, gave me the thumbs-up sign." The desert camp setting is bleak, somberly captured in Lee's ochre-toned paintings, but the story is as familiar as Horatio Alger. Later, after the family has returned home, the boy responds to racial taunts at school by hitting another winner and gaining the enthusiastic approval of his Caucasian teammates. As is often true of books from alternative presses, the political consciousness here is very contemporary, but the children's-book vehicle it rides in is dated and sentimental. The writing is better than the plot, and the pictures, while occasionally stiff and monochromatic, convey an appropriate desolation that doesn't always jibe with the upbeat story. RS

MORI, KYOKO *Shizuko's Daughter*. Holt, 1993 227p
ISBN 0-8050-2557-X \$15.95

R* Gr. 8 up

A first novel that truly bridges the interests of young adults and adults, this is written in a spare, intricately balanced style interweaving several viewpoints without losing sharp focus. The book opens with the calm, carefully deliberated suicide of eleven-year-old Yuki's beautiful but unhappy mother, Shizuko, who turns on the gas while her daughter's taking a music lesson at the piano teacher's house. Most of the remaining fifteen scenes, each dated sometime in the next seven years, detail Yuki's grief, survival, and understanding of her mother's death, but this journeys far beyond a "problem novel" in scope. It is a fully realized portrayal of a Japanese family to the depth of three generations and at least six individuals, including the cold father and stepmother whom Yuki defies, as well as the warm grandparents whose richly traditional patterns of living bring aching recollections of Yuki's mother. The tension of the characters themselves serves as driving action. The strong will and sense of artistry that isolate Yuki finally save her, and readers will be moved beyond cultural boundaries by the author's ability to render nuances of childhood with an immediacy devoid of nostalgia. Most impressive, technically, is Mori's flow of a narrative voice that subtly translates aesthetic observations into readers' experiences—the color and texture of flowers, of clothing, of pottery, of human love's pain and release. Such authenticity illuminates the fictional realities and motivations without intrusion or distraction, so that readers will feel themselves enlightened by an encounter with that rare achievement, a powerfully understated story. BH

MUREZ, DIANE *A Day on the Boat with Captain Betty*; illus. with photographs by Steve Murez. Macmillan, 1993 32p
ISBN 0-02-767430-4 \$14.95

Ad 5-8 yrs

Two young boys (children of the author and photographer) go island hopping along the Florida coast, where they birdwatch, search for sea shells, observe manatees, do some fishing, and explore a mangrove swamp. The color photographs are vivid, inviting, and varied in composition. The text is a little more problematic; it's dialogue loaded with information that sounds more like a lecture than a natural conversation between Captain Betty and the boys. Nevertheless, the wildlife is intriguing, however it's presented, and adults who are reading this aloud—it looks like a picture book despite the small print—can tailor the facts to the audience. The book will be of interest to families preparing for a vacation, to students exploring marine ecology, and to kids who love fooling around with boats. BH

PARASKEVAS, BETTY *Junior Kröll*; illus. by Michael Paraskevas. Harcourt, 1993 34p
ISBN 0-15-241497-5 \$13.95

M 5-8 yrs

Junior Kröll, who according to a publisher's note has been "a weekly feature in *Dan's Papers*, Bridgehampton, New York, since June 8, 1990," makes his picture-book debut here in fifteen poems limning his escapades. Junior, almost always pictured in his "brand new, navy blue, double-breasted suit/ With shiny brass buttons and a tiny bow tie," has mishaps with a pot pie, upsets a garden club meeting, rescues some lobsters from their dinner-table fate, and charms his elderly acquaintances and relatives. The slapstick of the adventures is occasionally amusing (although the friendlier encounters are cloyingly sentimental—"The old lady

laughed for the first time in weeks;/ Junior the thief had brought color to her cheeks”), but the poems scan poorly and are rather involved for a Junior-Kroll-age audience. More importantly, the mild and predictable adventures lack punch: Junior possesses none of the oomph of will-of-iron kids such as Thompson’s Eloise and Dahl’s Matilda, and the viewpoint is likelier to appeal to adults thinking of children than children themselves. The illustrations feature strong and speedy lines, sometimes filled in with or tinted by brushy gouache and sometimes standing alone, with lively figures and frequently tilting angles; they picture Junior as a restrained-looking young lad whose mixing-bowl haircut, conservative garb, and inscrutable expression make him resemble a follower of the late Chairman Mao. If strongly encouraged by adult enthusiasm, kids may find the drollery in the illustrations and the silliness of the adventures entertaining. DS

PARNALL, PETER *Water Pup*; written and illus. by Peter Parnall. Macmillan, 1993 [144p]

ISBN 0-02-770151-4 \$13.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-8

Even more than Parnall’s *Marsh Cat* (BCCB 11/91), this will grab animal lovers from the beginning, when an old, pregnant, yellow Labrador is abandoned by her owner and lives to bear and suckle her pups, but not much longer. The only female and the smartest of the litter, Lop is the heroine of this story, an involving account of physical and social survival. Lop manages not only to fend off starvation, but also to attach herself to a family of foxes that nurtures her need for companionship. Halfway through the book, Parnall introduces new characters of the human variety, a difficult maneuver which he pulls off smoothly, after the first little jolt, by recounting the fox’s desperate winter raid on a farmer’s chickens. Naturally, the farmer and his son track the culprit. They find Lop in the den, and the dog must now survive the vicissitudes of civilization. Parnall seems to have immersed himself in natural history to the point of developing a comfortable familiarity that’s reflected in the story’s content and style. The point of view is consistently canine when Lop is center stage, and the plot never becomes a vehicle for descriptions of fauna and flora. On the contrary, facts serve to heighten suspense or pace it with humor: a favorite refrain, after Lop has first investigated some new creature, is “She ate him”—quick and clean as a fairy tale but always true to the laws of hunger in the wild. The villain is overdrawn (“The man’s lips parted, revealing the coated brown teeth in what might have been regarded as a grin, down in a sewer somewhere”), but this fits Parnall’s occasionally naive tone (“They were cat kibbles, but when you don’t have a dog, you generally don’t have a lot of dog food around!”), which also has its appealing aspects. The book will capture both dog lovers and kids interested in woodlore; or read it aloud to lure students into an environmental unit. BH

QUALEY, MARSHA *Revolutions of the Heart*. Houghton, 1993 184p

ISBN 0-395-64168-3 \$13.95

R* Gr. 7-12

Cory meets Mac when she accompanies her mother Margaret and her Indian friend Roxanne to a powwow one evening near their small town in northern Wisconsin. While there are Indian kids in Cory’s high school, they keep—or are kept, actually—to themselves, so her budding romance with Mac is definitely news, never more so than when the town becomes divided over the issue of Indian fishing rights, and Cory and her brother find themselves on opposite sides. Qualey’s first

young adult novel was the excellent *Everybody's Daughter* (BCCB 3/91); with this second book she definitely proves herself a natural for the genre. Cory is a smart, smart-mouthed, heroine with a sense of humor about herself; while the character of Mac is somewhat idealized, he's an appealing love interest. The dynamics within Cory's family are funny and real if ultimately shadowed, and it's unfortunate that the flap copy reveals Cory's mother's death, a crisis that is skillfully prepared and sensitively handled by the author. The Indians in the book never succumb to nouveau stereotyping as ecological nature-children; there are several teasing moments, as when Roxanne explains powwows to Cory and her mother: "The first thing you should know is that they start with a blood initiation involving select male virgins." Qualey can move from the comic to the sad or dramatic with ease, and the dialogue is quick and characterful. Turning down a date with a boy who sneeringly asks if she likes Indians better, Cory swiftly ripostes, "Better than you." Good for her, and it's good to see such confidence matched by such confident writing. RS

RANA, INDI *The Roller Birds of Rampur*. Holt, 1993 298p

ISBN 0-8050-2670-3 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 8-12

"I had to get to grips with four parallel problems. I was female; I was educated and I would go on being as educated as my brain could handle; I was Indian living in England; and I had no traditions that told me what to do." These are compelling conflicts, and the setting—sixteen-year-old Sheila Mehta's return to a family farm near Rampur after a traumatic jilting by her English boyfriend—are vivid. There's even a dramatic and moving climax in which a young friend's husband is murdered during Sheila's pilgrimage to a local shrine. Unfortunately, this incident, along with the suspenseful family dynamics and vivid details of travel, is nearly buried in monologues about religious, philosophical, social, and political life. Grandpa, particularly, talks and harumphs his way interminably through several chapters, which reduces the strong-voiced narrator to echoes ("'Beyond our capacity to think!' I repeated. Well, *that* certainly was a new thought!") or silence ("'Oh?' I said. I seemed to say 'oh' a lot around Grandpa"). It's a tribute to the author that the characters in this ambitiously long first novel predominate over a naive and occasionally awkward style ("The greatest soggy maw of fatalism and resignation was covering the event! The tragedy had made as much of a ripple as a pebble dropped into a vast scummy lake, causing small concentric circles, widening to join, and disappearing into, the generalized ache of living"). For patient readers, the fictionally realized aspects of the story are memorable enough to overcome the exposition disguised as conversation; ideally, a story reaches beyond the circle of its characters' experience, but this is a novel whose appeal may be limited to readers especially interested in India. BH

REISS, KATHRYN *Dreadful Sorry*. Harcourt, 1993 [272p]

ISBN 0-15-224213-9 \$16.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 7-10

Molly's terrifying recurrent nightmare about a girl in an old house presents itself with increasing frequency after Molly, always scared of water, is confronted with a school swimming test. Her mother, an excessively rational lawyer, dismisses Molly's fears until a boy at a party throws Molly into a pool and she almost drowns. Molly feels that this boy, Jared, and she are linked somehow, but it's not until Molly goes

to visit her father and stepmother on the Maine coast that she learns the secrets and tragedy that bind her and Jared together. Back in the early years of the century Jared (as Hob) loved Molly (as Clementine), an orphan working as a servant/tutor for her rich uncle's family, who lived in the old Maine house that Molly's father is renovating. More conventionally structured than the author's previous time-slip fantasies (*Time Windows*, BCCB 4/92 and *The Glass House People*, 10/91), this is a spooky and satisfying past-life romance that should appeal to readers of Barbara Michaels and similarly cozy gothic writers. Molly and Jared are a sympathetic pair whose attraction to each other makes a contemporary teen-type foil to the more turbulent relationship between Hob and Clementine, whose intentions toward her village suitor were not nearly as pure as his towards her. Clementine is a complicated ghost for whom readers will feel equal amounts of sympathy and censure, a fabulous symbiosis. RS

ROBERTS, BRENDA C. *Sticks and Stones, Bobbie Bones*. Scholastic, 1993 83p
Paper ed. ISBN 0-590-46518-X \$2.95 R Gr. 4-6

Few paperback-original school stories have the snap and economy of this one, which features a brainy but shy new-girl-in-school, Bobbie, fighting against the odds when she incurs the wrath of Myra, the class bully. "Myra was actually not a bad-looking girl, if you didn't mind large." Bobbie's having worn those red tights on her skinny legs the first day of school had occasioned Myra's initial scorn ("Don't rub 'em together, girl. They might catch on fire"), but now she's in real trouble because the teacher has asked her to help grade quizzes, and Myra has sent a thoughtful note: "If you get my test, you no what to do." The plot is focused, the action occurring over just a couple of days, and each character in the African-American cast is distinctly drawn. After much dramatic confrontation, Bobbie and Myra negotiate a wary truce, but let's hope it's not the end: these kids deserve a series. RS

RUBY, LOIS *Miriam's Well*. Scholastic, 1993 [288p]
ISBN 0-590-44937-0 \$13.95
Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 7-12

Related in alternate chapters by high school classmates Adam Bergen and Miriam Pelham, this is the story of their unlikely romance during Miriam's diagnosis of and treatment for bone cancer. Adam's a Jewish underachiever interested in "typical male pursuits," especially his pretty, popular girl friend Diana. Miriam's a prim, fundamentalist Christian whose church forbids medical healing. Their relationship starts the day an English teacher assigns them a project together—the same day Miriam faints in class—and develops during a hospitalization and court battle that draws national attention when Adam's father, a lawyer, defends Miriam's right to refuse treatment. The author deepens Miriam's ambivalence by portraying the religious group and its leader with respect and by showing that all parties are sincere in seeking her best interests, even while they are prone to interpret her best interests in light of their own. Though Adam seems exaggeratedly flip at first, his conflict with his father is realized gradually and subtly, and his maturation by the end of the novel, as measured against the friends he has outgrown in the course of his experience with Miriam, is convincing. The conclusion is all the more realistic for combining physical recovery with emotional pain. Occasionally the dialogue seems selfconsciously clever ("Do you realize, Adam, that this holiday weekend you'll be having your first tofu turkey and also going to your first bone

scan?"), but in general the conversations are natural and credible. It's hard to know whether Adam's remark after their visit to the Indian Center ("Oh, so you think you'd make a terrific Indian squaw: Going out to shoot dinner with babies strapped to the front and back of you") reflects misplaced sophomoric humor or authorial irony, but it does conflict with Adam's budding sensitivity. Apart from these quibbles, Ruby has explored some controversial issues of religion and civil rights, without making her characters mouthpieces. That's a real achievement, and one that high school readers will appreciate even as they speed-read to find out what happens next. BH

SKURZYNSKI, GLORIA *Get the Message: Telecommunications in Your High-Tech World*. Bradbury, 1993 64p
ISBN 0-02-778071-6 \$16.95 R Gr. 4-7

Face it: you probably don't know any better than the kids how a car phone really works, so this easy introduction to telecommunications could be just the thing for both them and you. Skurzynski covers plain old phones, cellular phones, beepers, fax machines and video phones, clearly explaining the various technologies (radio towers, satellites, fiber optics) that make them possible. Her explanations of scientific principles, such as radio waves, are equally comprehensible and accompanied by clear diagrams (the many color photographs are more often atmospheric than informational). A running story about two teens using the various tele-devices gives the book a frothiness that's occasionally fatuous, as when Kristin uses a color fax machine to send her grandmother a photo from the homecoming dance. (Incidentally, the author's assertion that the first facsimile system was used in the 1840s to send "news photos" cannot be true: early facsimile machines could not transmit photographs, which were also experimental at that time.) Still, this is loaded with a strong blend of the interesting and the informative, and kids will especially enjoy a look into the future, when technology will make it possible for them to spend basically their entire lives in front of the television. A glossary and index are appended. RS

SLEATOR, WILLIAM *Oddballs*. Dutton, 1993 [176p]
ISBN 0-525-45057-2 \$14.99
Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-8

Like Paul Zindel's *The Pigman and Me* (BCCB 12/92), this autobiography reveals scenes from the childhood of an irreverent writer-to-be, or, in Sleanor's own terms, an "oddball." And like Zindel's book, this one attributes the process of becoming an oddball to the influence of a profoundly quirky family. Where Zindel struggled to survive, however—revealing pain as well as humor—Sleanor evidently thrived without pause on his permissive parents' steady encouragement to violate social taboos. The ten stories here show four children growing up with minimal supervision by their mother, a pediatrician, and father, a university physiologist—all close-knit and secure enough to play constant tricks on each other and the rest of the world. Their "games"—from anonymous phone calls for help to a bus game where two friends torment a third to shock the other passengers—seem designed to show how stupid most adults can be, along with the children they raise. Some situations are genuinely funny, as in Sleanor's early car game with his sister, which they called BM ("We'd wrap ourselves up in an old brown blanket in the back of the station wagon and tell each other our life stories as excrement"); others seem—forgive the pun—strained, as in faking a concert breakdown by an "insane pianist"

(Sleator's sister). When Sleator *tells* us something is or should be funny (in one story of a home drama production, he repeatedly interrupts the humorous development to describe how hard everyone is laughing), the tone becomes self-consciously subversive. Overall, however, there's enough spontaneous detail to generate a gleeful readership, especially among fans of Sleator's popular science fiction, but also among oddball readers themselves, those who have enjoyed young adult memoirs such as Zindel's, or Roald Dahl's *Boy* (2/85). BH

STEFFOFF, REBECCA *Women of the World: Women Travelers and Explorers*. Oxford, 1993 152p illus. with photographs (Extraordinary Explorers)
ISBN 0-19-507687-7 \$20.00 R Gr. 5-9

Steffoff chronicles the life and peregrinations of several of the best known women explorers and travelers, including Isabella Bird Bishop, Mary Kingsley, Alexandra David-Neel, Freya Stark, and five others whose stamping grounds range from the Arctic to the Himalayas and through mountain ranges, deserts, and jungles around the world. The biographies are competently written, incorporating excerpts from each woman's writings to demonstrate individual attitude and style. The explorers are a varied lot with varied personalities (Steffoff is open about prickly dispositions and politically incorrect attitudes) and their contributions have been variously received; some are important as writers, some contributed military information, some expanded geographical and anthropological frontiers. The format is textbook-stodgy, with maps often poorly annotated and photographs not always relevant (although the portraits are fascinating); the picture-essay (in a color insert) on "Mary Kingsley's African Trophies" is interesting but seems out of place. Despite these drawbacks, however, the enterprising lives of the women shine through, and kids—particularly girl kids—may find that these stories of intrepid explorers lend some piquancy to geography and history as well as providing excitement in their own right. An afterword describing other women travelers, a chronology, a good bibliography, and an index are included. DS

STEVENS, JANET, ad. *Coyote Steals the Blanket: A Ute Tale*; ad. and illus. by Janet Stevens. Holiday House, 1993 32p
ISBN 0-8234-0996-1 \$15.95 R* 4-8 yrs.

"I go where I want, I do what I want, and I take what I want," brags Coyote, so when Hummingbird warns him not to touch the beautiful blankets "up ahead," we know he will, and we know he'll suffer the wrath of the rocks on whom the blankets are draped. With a bold mix of crayon and watercolor, a motion-picture page design, and the unerring sense of animal anatomy that she exaggerated to such funny effect in *The Bremen Town Musicians* (BCCB 11/92), Stevens rivets a viewer's attention on this extended chase scene. Her desert colors, sandstone shapes, and loose-limbed, scraggly-whiskered coyote will keep every eye moving to keep up with the characters. The cover shows Coyote quivering with canine defiance, and he will need all the energy he can muster to escape the huge rock determined to get its blanket back ("RUMBLE, RUMBLE RUMBLE"). Neither mule deer nor Big Horn Sheep can stop this stone; it takes modest, moral little Hummingbird to free Coyote's flattened tail so the trickster can run off with more blankets. An apt story hour companion for Goble's *Iktomi and the Boulder* (BCCB 7/88), this proves an inherent kinship between Coyote's line of action and Janet Stevens' line of artwork. BH

SULLIVAN, GEORGE *How an Airport Really Works*. Lodestar, 1993 122p illus.
with photographs
ISBN 0-525-67378-4 \$15.99
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 4-7

Sullivan does a steady job of synthesizing the many technical and social variables that go into making an airport work. Or not work: "Once in a while, a passenger's bag fails to show up in the baggage-claim area." While frequent fliers may veer from such blithe imprecision, young readers will appreciate Sullivan's practiced blend of summary description and interesting anecdote; a chapter called "Behind the Scenes" has some particularly intriguing information about "bird annoyance devices" designed to minimize the real safety hazards posed by flocks of birds near runways. Otherwise, there are chapters on weather, airport planning and design, various terminal operations such as security, and the problems airports face in light of ever-increasing numbers of passengers and flights. Black-and-white photos add interest; a glossary and index are appended. RS

SWEENEY, JOYCE *The Tiger Orchard*. Delacorte, 1993 [240p]
ISBN 0-385-30841-8 \$15.00
Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 9-12

Zack's terrifying nightmares about a mysterious man and a tiger have driven him to a psychologist, much to his mother's disdain. Mom and Zack's younger brother Josh get along fine, but Zack, a misfit artist, feels like an outsider in the family and longs for the father who died when Zack was little. Well, so his mother says. As Zack's nightmare progresses, it unlocks a childhood memory of his parents' divorce and his father's attempt to take Zack away with him. The psychologizing is '50s movie-melodrama with a '90s twist: as Nancy, Zack's psychologist, tells him, "Your main problem wasn't nightmares. It was co-dependence." Zack goes to meet his father (alive and well and regularly sending child support), who is perfect, and he then goes back to face his mother and her stony lack of forgiveness for either father or son. This is enjoyable melodrama, but the author thinks the characters are more complicated than they really are; likewise, a sexy subplot about Zack and his girlfriend Clara (burdened with her own nightmare) is appealing but off the subject. Easier to read and less convoluted than Chris Crutcher's soap-sagas, this will be appreciated where those books are popular. RS

WALLACE, KAREN *Think of a Beaver*; illus. by Mick Manning; ISBN 1-56402-179-3. Candlewick, 1993 \$14.95 32p (Read and Wonder) R 4-7 yrs
Think of an Eel; illus. by Mike Bostock; ISBN 1-56402-180-7 Candlewick, 1993 \$14.95 32p (Read and Wonder) R* 4-7 yrs

See the Big Picture, p. 273, for review.

WALSH, JILL PATON *Matthew and the Sea Singer*; illus. by Alan Marks. Farrar, 1993 46p
ISBN 0-374-34869-3 \$13.00 R* Gr. 2-4

"Once there was a little girl called Birdy who paid a shilling for a living boy," saving him from a cruel orphan master on the ferryboat rowed by her father. Thus begins Walsh's companion to *Birdy and the Ghosties* (BCCB 2/90), and the story continues with the compressed pace of a fairy tale, or rather a legend; for the

unwanted orphan boy, Matthew, has a golden singing voice that leads to his kidnapping by seal-folk, whose pups sound "like old rocks rubbed together." It's Birdy who rescues Matthew again, refusing the treasure offered by the seal-queen and training a pup to sing (a comic sequence—it stays wet in the church font) as ransom for Matthew's return. The exchange is dramatic when Matthew finally matches his bright voice to the pup's dark one: "You could grasp the whole world in your mind." Like all fairy tales, this one ends happily, with the hint of Birdy's eventual marriage to Matthew, who might still be heard occasionally joining his voice with the seal's at the edge of the sea. Walsh is as effective in layering short stories with depth and style as she is elaborating complex novels. In spite of the text's easy reading level, it will prove less an exercise for practicing readers than an étude for their enjoyment, and Marks' watercolors have a bit of lightly mythic resonance about them, as well as an ambiance of Celtic coastline. BH

WILD, MARGARET *Space Travellers*; illus. by Gregory Rogers. Scholastic, 1993 [32p]

ISBN 0-590-45598-2 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

M 5-8 yrs

Homeless, Zac and his mother Mandy sleep in a playground space rocket and Zac imagines they are flying into the stars, so he's a little disappointed when his mother tells him she has found them a place to stay. Although there is an attempt here to convey the difficulties of not having a place to live, the overall tone is idyllic, not only in the depiction of the cozy camaraderie of Zac and Mandy and their fellow homeless friends Ron, Simon, and Dorothy but also in the quick solution to the problem: not only have friends of Mandy's invited them to stay for a while, Mandy tells her homeless friends that when it's cold and rainy, they can stay too. Might be difficult getting Dorothy inside, though: she's pleased as punch to be taking over the rocket, and "Zac can tell she is just itching for it to be night." Pastel crayon illustrations are inviting and comfortable—kids won't be able to wait for their turn in the rocket. RS

WOLFSON, EVELYN *The Iroquois: People of the Northeast*; ISBN 1-56294-076-7. *The Teton Sioux: People of the Plains*; ISBN 1-56294-077-5. Each book: Millbrook, 1993 \$13.90 64p illus. with photographs (Native Americans)

R Gr. 5-8

This series on Native American cultures offers several advantages for students researching the subject. First of all, the emphasis of each book on a different group makes abundantly clear the diversity of peoples across the continent, including richly varied traditions and lifestyles that evolved in different geographical regions. Secondly, the series presents a fairminded assessment of the social spectrum preceding Europeans' settlement, and how devastating that settlement was to all Native Americans. Wolfson is careful to air Indian viewpoints, as when she notes: "It amused confederacy sachems that Europeans could not carry speeches, or even sentences, in their heads. They had to put their thoughts on paper to remember them." The texts are necessarily generalized, considering the amount of information covered in such brief, homogenized series packaging. However, they are competently written and illustrated (drawings, photographs, maps—mostly in full color), with solid bibliographies in addition to glossaries, chronologies, and indices. Teachers and librarians will welcome these volumes as a refreshing balance to materials on Irish, Italian, and other more recent immigrants to the U.S. BH

YOLEN, JANE, comp. *Weather Report*; illus. by Annie Gusman. Wordsong/Boyd's Mills, 1993 [64p]

ISBN 1-56397-101-1 \$16.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 6-9 yrs

Divided into sections covering rain, sun, wind, snow, and fog, this anthology of fifty-two poems shows a great breadth of styles and selections, including both contemporary children's poets (Yolen, Livingston, Merriam, Moore) and classic Americans (Dickinson, Longfellow, Frost, Hughes). Staples such as Sandburg's "Fog" and Rossetti's "Who Has Seen the Wind" are here; it's also nice to have Shakespeare's "Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind" and Archibald MacLeish's "The Snow Fall": "Listen!/ This is the snow./ This is the slow/ Chime/ The snow/ Makes." Black-and-white graphic motifs illustrate the selections, and sometimes the page design gets a bit busy and repetitive, but the collection is a useful resource and almost all the poems make for fine reading aloud. An author, title, and first line index is appended. RS

YOUNG, ED *Red Thread*; written and illus. by Ed Young. Philomel, 1993 32p
ISBN 0-399-21969-2 \$14.95

R 5-8 yrs

Wei Gu's search for a wife, which has been unlucky, seems further doomed when an old man from the spirit world shows him the future bride heaven has in store for him: an ugly three-year-old carried on the back of a half-blind old woman in the vegetable market. Wei tries to change his fate by hiring a servant to stab the girl, only to discover, when he eventually marries, a mark on his wife's forehead revealing that she is the orphan he almost murdered. Typical of folktale amorality, the hero's villainy goes unpunished—it even wins the day: "After this day the couple grew even closer"—after which they have a son who prospers. Like Lafcadio Hearn's *The Voice of the Great Bell* (BCCB 9/89), which Young also illustrated, this will ruffle some feminist feathers (see the thought-provoking exchange on that book in the letter section of *School Library Journal's* February, 1990 issue). And like all of Young's books, this one is intelligently designed, with the red thread that links "a couple's feet together when they are born" also linking together these pages in the form of a red line running above the text, which is compressed along the bottom of each double spread. The pastel and watercolor illustrations are velvety in texture and most effective when the hues are tonally modulated; occasionally the contrasts get a bit too blatant for the subtle effects at which Young usually excels. Although the CIP cites this as Chinese folklore, there are no notes or other clues in the book to suggest background or substantiate a source. BH



PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS

Opie, Iona. *The People on the Playground* (Oxford University Press, 1993. 240p., ISBN 0-19-811265-3, \$23.00)

Who says professional reading can't be fun? Iona Opie's account of playground culture may be one of the most entertaining books you'll read all year. *The People on the Playground* chronicles two years' worth of Opie's weekly visits to a British school, watching seven through eleven-year-olds during what Americans would call recess. Officially she comes to collect the lore of games, rhymes, and jokes for which she and her late husband Peter are famous; in reality she also observes the mercurial social construct of the playground full of kids as it seethes around her. There's no narrative progression (which makes this a great book to read bit by bit in stolen moments), and the only running threads are recurring games or roles (unless you count the periodically reappearing legend of someone's putting a football through a school window).

What's here is a collection of games both intricate and pointless and some of *the* most vulgar jokes you've ever encountered (if you sneer, you're honor-bound not to tell any of them yourself). There's also an assortment of endearing and fantastic characters, including Iona Opie as she portrays herself—Alice in Wonderland, a “serious and enquiring person” among other very different serious people—creating an irresistibly funny conjunction as she veers between being hapless audience member, hopeful voice of reason, aficionado of novel toys, and private commentator of the future personalities of “her” children. Who else would describe the popularity of an updated old rhyme about a cat with measles by stating “The introduction of another animal and two new diseases has had the vivifying effect of a new spring fashion”? Opie also has useful expedients when diplomacy is overtaxed by repetition or excess, such as beating her sources to their own punch line or drawing their attention to higher authority (“‘You'd better go in,’ I retorted unfairly. ‘[The teacher] arrived long ago’”). Personalities and brand names have explanatory footnotes, but British—and perhaps specifically regional—terms sometimes go unexplained, which makes some games (“twizzling,” for instance) seem mysterious and exotic.

Like Jane Goodall, another observer, Opie also is a good judge of the global as well as a meticulous chronicler of the specific. Pleasures of reading aside, this is an in-depth survey of a world most people have time to see only in flashes; all of the truths about playground gestalt are revealing, some surprising, some expectable. So put your feet up, enjoy, and gain a better understanding. DS

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A new edition of *Children's Books: Awards and Prizes* is now available from the Children's Book Council. The book lists nearly two hundred awards, with criteria, sponsor's address, and a complete list of recipients for each award. Coverage includes both adult and children's choice awards, and awards for the U. K., Canada, Australia and New Zealand are included along with the U. S. (Trade ed. \$85.00, ISBN 0-933633-01-7; Paper ed. \$57.50, ISBN 0-933633-02-5. 404p.) Copies may be ordered from the CBC, Attn: Order Center, 350 Scotland Road, Orange, NJ 07050. Add \$3.50 per order for postage and handling; schools and libraries may be billed when order is accompanied by purchase order or official letterhead.

SUBJECT AND USE INDEX

Keyed to *The Bulletin's* alphabetical arrangement by author, this new index, which will appear in each issue, can be used in three ways. Entries in regular type refer to subjects; entries in **bold type** refer to curricular or other uses; entries in ALL-CAPS refer to genres and appeals. In no way meant to be a cataloging aid, this rather idiosyncratic index is instead intended to lead readers to those books that could fill a particular gap in a collection, to help teachers and librarians find books that might be useful in various school or recreational settings, and to help in those requests for a "love story" or a "scary story." In the case of subject headings, the subhead "stories" refers to books for the readaloud audience; "fiction," to those books intended for independent reading.

- African Americans—biography: Cwiklik
 African Americans—fiction: Roberts
 African Americans—stories: Johnson
 AIDS—fiction: Kaye; McDaniel
 Amish: Bial
 Archeology: Bendick
 Archeology—fiction: Cavanagh
 Arctic Regions: Alexander
 Art history: Heslewood
 Aunts—fiction: Cavanagh
 Australia—fiction: Klein
 Aviation: Sullivan
 Baseball: Helmer; Macy
 Baseball—stories: Mochizuki
 BIOGRAPHIES: Cwiklik; Heslewood; Sleator; Steffoff
 Bullies—fiction: Roberts
 California—fiction: Kudlinski
 Child care—fiction: McDaniel
Children's literature: Sleator
 China—stories: Lawson; Young
 Civil Rights: Cwiklik
 Communication: Alik; Skurzynski
 Dance: Ancona
 Death—fiction: Jukes; McDaniel; Mori; Qualey
 Disasters—fiction: Kudlinski
 Dogs—fiction: Parnall
 Dragons—stories: Lawson
Ecology: Allen, Judy; Alexander; Andryszewski; Clark; Greene
 Emotional problems—fiction: Hahn; Sweeney
Ethics and values: Ruby
 Everglades: Clark
 Everglades—fiction: Cavanagh
 Explorers: Steffoff
 FAIRYTALES AND FOLKTALES: Allen, Jonathan; Bierhorst; Lawson; Stevens; Young
 Falconry—fiction: Grover
 Family problems—stories: Sweeney
 FANTASY: Jones; Reiss; Walsh
 Farm life: Andryszewski; Bial
 Fathers and sons—fiction: Kaye
 Fathers and sons—stories: Bartone
 Florida: Clark; Murez
 Florida—fiction: Cavanagh
 Flying—stories: Jukes
 FUNNY STORIES: Jones; Sleator
 Grandfathers—stories: dePaola
 HISTORICAL FICTION: Klein; Kudlinski
History, American: Bendick; Wolfson
History, U. S.: Andryszewski; Cwiklik; Kudlinski
History, world: Hull
 Holocaust—fiction: Matas
 Homelessness—stories: Wild
 Horses: Jauck
 Illness—fiction: Ruby
 Islands: Jacuk
 India—fiction: Rana
 Italian Americans—stories: Bartone
 Japan—fiction: Mori

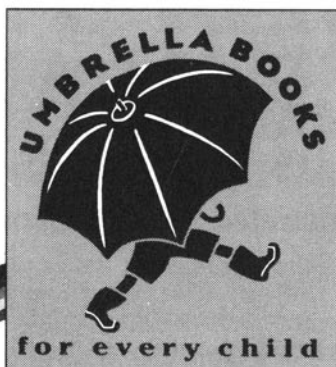
- Japanese Americans—stories:
 Mochizuki
 Jews—fiction: Matas; Ruby
 Korea: McMahan
Language arts: Alike
LOVE STORIES: Hahn; Qualey;
 Reiss; Sweeney
 Maine—fiction: Reiss
 Mothers and daughters—fiction:
 McDaniel; Mori
 Native Americans: Alexander;
 Ancona; Bendick; Wolfson
 Native Americans—fiction:
 Cavanagh; Qualey
 Native Americans—folklore:
 Bierhorst; Mayo; Stevens
Nature study: Clark; Cousteau;
 Greene; Hewett; Jauck; King-
 Smith; Machotka; Murez;
 Parnall; Wallace
 Papua New Guinea: Margolies
 Pigs—stories: Johnson
POETRY: Paraskevas; Yolen
Reading aloud: Hewett; Murez;
 Walsh; Yolen
Reading, beginning: Cousteau;
 Greene
Reading, easy: Mayo
Reading, family: Alike
Reading, reluctant: Grover; Roberts
Religious education: Bial; Bierhorst;
 Ruby
 Saudi Arabia—fiction: Grover
SCHOOL STORIES: Roberts
 Seals—fiction: Walsh
SHORT STORIES: Jones; Klein
 Sisters—fiction: Klein
Social issues: Kaye; McDaniel;
 Qualey; Wild
Social studies: Alexander; Margolies;
 McMahon
 Sports: Helmer; Macy
Story hour: Allen, Jonathan;
 Bartone; Bierhorst; dePaola;
 Hindley; Johnson; King-Smith;
 Lawson; Stevens; Wallace
 Summer vacation—fiction: Gilmore
 Teachers—fiction: Kaye
 Theater—fiction: Gilmore
 Transportation: Sullivan
 Uncles—stories: Jukes
 Weather—poetry: Yolen
 Whales—stories: Allen, Judy
 Wisconsin—fiction: Qualey
Women's studies: Helmer; Macy;
 Steffoff
 World War II: Helmer; Hull; Macy
 World War II—fiction: Matas
 World War II—stories: Mochizuki
 Zoos: Hewett



Correction:

In our review of Lee Bennett Hopkins' *Through Our Eyes* (BCCB 2/93) we stated that all of the poems had been previously published; in fact three of the sixteen selections are new.

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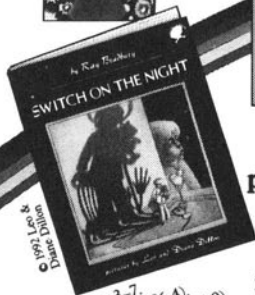
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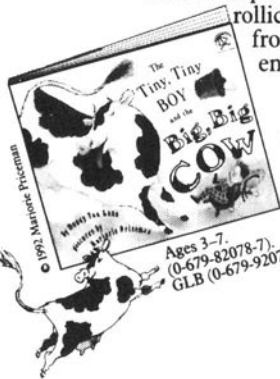
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—*Pointer, *Kirkus Reviews*

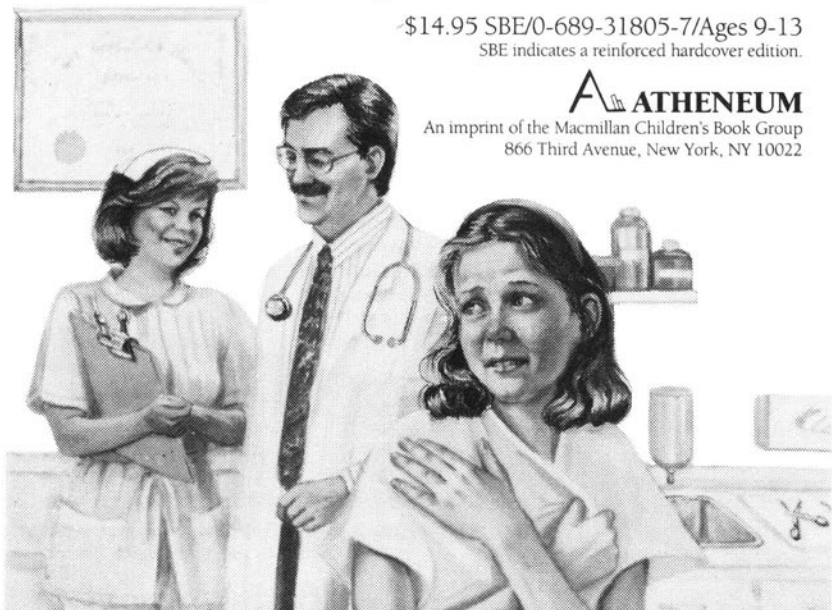
■ “With Alice now in seventh grade, Naylor continues to write with wit about the face and embarrassment of growing up female today. There are beautifully paced laugh-out-loud episodes: Alice’s physical exam — with a new *male* doctor; her banter with Lester, both furious and affectionate....Whether the messages are about family, friendship, feminism, or sex, the tone is gentle; and people have a lot of fun.” —Boxed, *Booklist*

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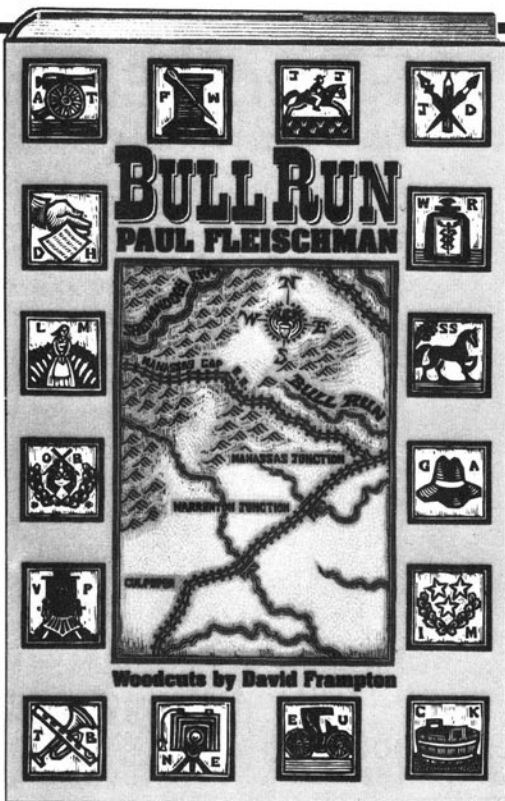
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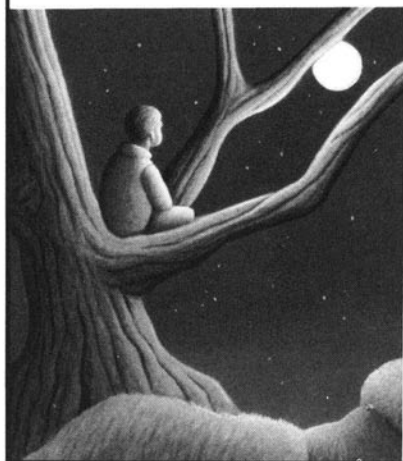
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(Winter 1993), edited by
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This timely issue of **Library Trends** discusses and analyzes multicultural children's literature over time as well as its availability and promotion within various settings. The focus is on literature by and about African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American people.

Library Trends is published by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois. Single copies are \$18; annual subscriptions are \$60 (\$65 foreign). To order, contact the University of Illinois Press, Journals Department, 54 East Gregory Drive, Champaign, Illinois 61820.

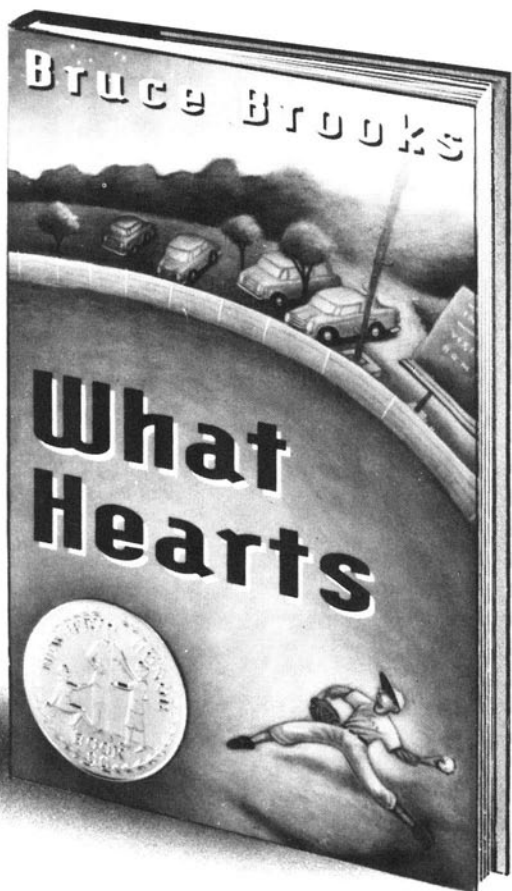
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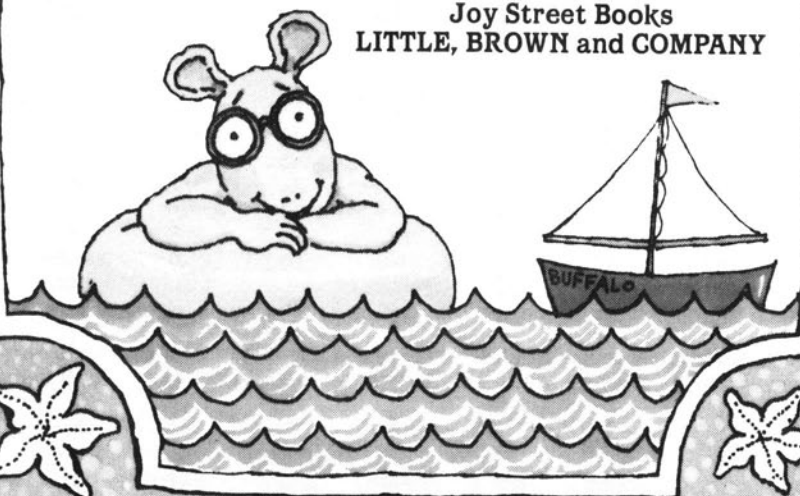
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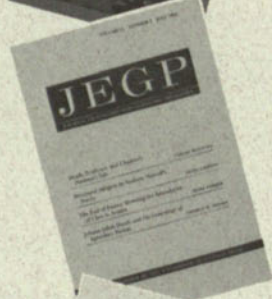
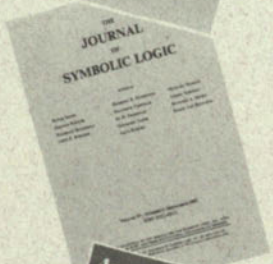
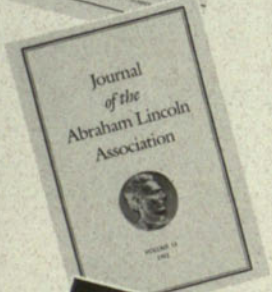
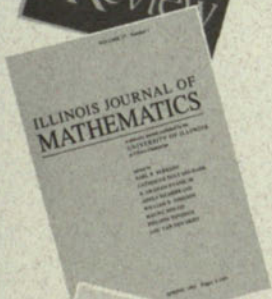
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