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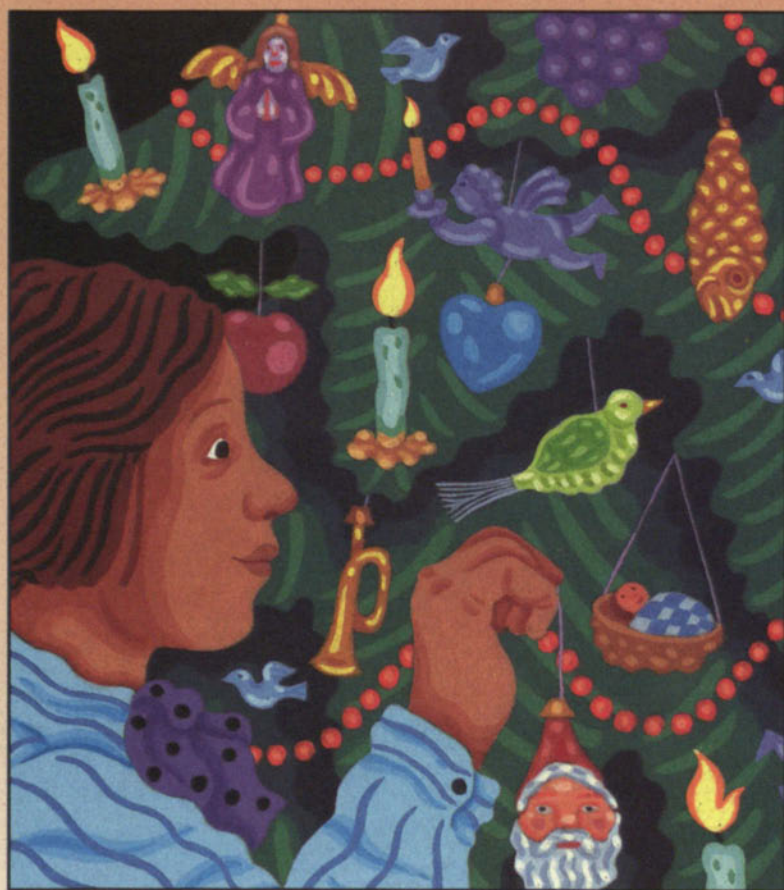
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THE BULLETIN

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

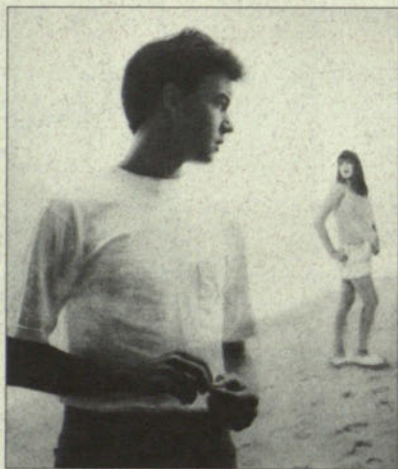
December 1994
Vol. 48 No. 4



University of Illinois
Graduate School of Library and Information Science

University of Illinois Press

*"Kids will recognize their world."**



I Am Wings

Poems About Love

By **Ralph Fletcher**
Photographs by **Joe Baker**

★"Written from the point of view of a smitten young man, these 33 short, free-verse poems narrate the ups and downs of a teen romance. . . . A black-and-white photograph begins each section . . . and provides visual closure. Students will readily identify with this fine book" —STARRED, *SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL*

"Short, unrhymed verses speak with the touching intensity of untutored, hard-felt emotions. They will strike home with most teenagers, who'll recognize the feelings expressed here and will appreciate a volume of poetry written entirely in their own language." —*THE HORN BOOK*

"The spacious design of the book, with clear type and a few photographs (including a cover picture in pink and blue), will lure readers of both sexes to the ever-popular theme. The rhythm is casual and conversational, the feeling gentle. This is romance."

—*BOOKLIST**

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T H E B U L L E T I N

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

December 1994
Vol. 48 No. 4



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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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Cover illustration by Jeanette Winter, from *The Christmas Tree Ship* ©1994 and used by permission of Philomel Books.

THE BIG PICTURE

The Christmas Tree Ship

written and illustrated by Jeanette Winter

A sailing ship, bound from the northern woods to the big city, laden with pine trees just in time for the holiday season—how magical, how wintry, how . . . Christmassy! But Jeanette Winter is not one to let such an inviting motif rest easy. In such books as *Diego*, written by her son Jonah Winter (BCCB 11/91), *Klara's New World* (9/92) and Mary Ray's *Shaker Boy* (11/94), this painter has demonstrated a taste for the offbeat, the difficult, or painful subject, using deeply saturated colors and prismatic shading in a deceptively folklike style to sophisticated ends, both artistically and in service to the quirky narratives she illustrates.

Based on a true event, *The Christmas Tree Ship* is no exception. Every winter since 1887, Captain Herman has chopped Christmas trees from the Michigan woods, loaded them into his schooner, and sailed them down Lake Michigan to the eagerly waiting citizenry at the Clark Street Bridge in Chicago. In 1912, however, he encounters a fierce sea storm and, after sending a message in a bottle (it's not stated if this is a fictional embroidery) to his wife, Hannah, and his daughters, is lost at sea. That year's trees never arrive, but the next Christmas finds Mrs. Herman and the girls taking over the voyage: "When the snows of November blew in again, Hannah knew what she must do."

Odd drama for a Christmas picture book, you might say, but only in contrast to the lavish, often catalogish fare that puts plenty of lights on the tree but forgets about the power of a good, strong story. Christmas can be as much a holiday of shadows as is Halloween, something both Dickens and the Bible knew. Adults think about the people no longer around for the celebration, older kids remember Santa Claus; most everyone—not just Scrooge—can think of Christmases past but never quite done with. *Nostalgic* is only half the story, *bittersweet* doesn't quite cover it. In this book clearly intended for the traditional picture-book audience (unlike the gussied-up productions that speak more to adults), Jeanette Winter wisely relates the sorrow of Captain Herman's death with a tidy and plain-spoken simplicity ("Hannah grieved for her husband. Hazel and Pearl and Elsie missed their dear father"), and then she's done with it, giving kids room to fill in the words with as much or as little sadness as they can handle.

Neither do the pictures dwell on loss. In the rich greens of the trees, glowing candles in the Chicago windows, and mystery of the swirling winter night, Winter gives the holiday its due magic, brushed with honesty but untouched with lugubriousness. Her eccentric and expressionist palette (pink sails and blue clouds, for example) is a welcome relief from the red-and-green of so much Christmas fare, and gives the book not only a signature but an intriguing middle distance—not quite fairy tale, not quite reality. A *story*: that place where dreams and history (and holiday) meet.

Roger Sutton, Editor

NEW BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ADLER, C. S. *That Horse Whiskey!* Clarion, 1994 152p
ISBN 0-395-68185-5 \$13.95

Ad Gr. 4-7

Thirteen-year-old Lainey makes an agreement with a local stable owner to retrain a spoiled horse in return for a part of the proceeds from selling him, which she will put towards buying a horse of her own. Whiskey is smart, stubborn, and beautiful, and Lainey can't help falling in love with him as she diligently tries to prove to herself and to others—especially to her father—that he is a good horse and that she is as capable as any boy. While the sideplots—Lainey's budding friendship with a boy out from New York, her changing relationship with her parents—aren't always incorporated smoothly into the main story, many readers will appreciate Lainey's determined labor to save Whiskey from the unpleasant fate that befalls useless horses, and they'll enjoy the growing mutual affection between girl and horse. Equestrian purists may prefer a more savvy horse tale such as Lynn Hall's *Flying Changes* (BCCB 7/191), but all will rejoice when Adler brings Lainey, Whiskey, and their New York friend together at the happy finale. DS

AGARD, JOHN, comp. *A Caribbean Dozen: Poems from Caribbean Poets*; comp. by John Agard and Grace Nichols; illus. by Cathie Felstead. Candlewick, 1994 93p
ISBN 1-56402-339-7 \$19.95

R Gr. 3-6

Actually, as Agard and Nichols confess in their introduction, there is a full baker's dozen of thirteen poets represented here. It's therefore appropriate that so many of the poems are concerned with eating (Valerie Bloom's "Ode to Twelve Chocolate Bars," David Campbell's "Corn and Potato," Opal Palmer Adisa's "Fruits," and John Lyons' "Mammie's Coo-coo and Callaloo," among others); there are also poems about creatures (Pamela Mordecai's "Rabbit Poem" and Grace Nichols' "For Dilberta"), natural phenomena (Dionne Brand's "River"), identity (James Berry's "Isn't My Name Magical?") and other topics. The poems have a fresh lucidity and vitality that, combined with a lyrical sense of rhythm, make them a treat to read aloud as well as alone, and the occasional use of dialect adds music without sacrificing clarity ("Mama, don' do it, please,/ Don' cook dat chicken fe dinner,/ We know dat chicken from she hatch/ She is de only one in de batch/ Dat de mongoose didn' catch . . ." from "Chicken Dinner" by Valerie Bloom). Felstead varies the style and medium of her illustrations from page to page, here offering a dreamy pastel portrait, there a cheerful line-and-watercolor cartoon, still elsewhere a mixed-media collage with abstract Matisse-ish figures; this variation emphasizes the diversity of the poetry while underlining its common origin. Each poet's section begins with a short autobiographical blurb that's a bit more sophisticated in tone and format than the rest of the book; additional brief biographies and an index of first lines are included. DS

ANGELOU, MAYA *My Painted House, My Friendly Chicken, and Me*; illus. with photographs by Margaret Courtney-Clarke. Potter, 1994 40p
ISBN 0-517-59667-9 \$16.00

Ad 5-8 yrs

"I am Thandi, a Ndebele girl in South Africa," says the eight-year-old narrator,

and she shows us her best friend the chicken, her village of painted houses, and her family and pastimes. Angelou's text has a friendly, singing quality, helped by the repetition of "of course" ("The women wear their best blankets and best neck rings and very good leg rings, of course"); Courtney-Clarke's photographs of the villagers and the intricately beautiful paintings on their houses are sharp and immediate, although they are sometimes reduced to a size that makes details hard to distinguish. The format of the book, however, occasionally clouds the issue of audience: the text is too simple for a read-alone audience, but the games with print going across pages and appearing in different sizes and colors (and not always with sufficient contrast with the background) will be lost on the lap crowd and difficult for readers-aloud to convey. The text also leaves questions unanswered. Where did the occasional marginal drawings come from—did Thandi draw them? Where do the mules that take Thandi to the city live? Which of the pictures are taken in the city? This is ultimately a glossy entry, with some composition problems, in the old "children of many lands" genre, but the direct address and sly humor of the text will woo some young viewers. DS

ARNOLD, CAROLINE *City of the Gods: Mexico's Ancient City of Teotihuacán*; illus. with photographs by Richard Hewett. Clarion, 1994 48p
ISBN 0-395-66584-1 \$14.95 Ad Gr. 3-5

This pastiche of archeology, history, and travelogue examines the ruins of the ancient Mexican city whose past is so deeply buried that even the Aztecs speculated about its origins when they named the site City of the Gods. Textual organization is somewhat erratic, with a survey of the geographical setting sandwiched between "Exploring the Ruins" and "Religion," and a chapter on building the city following long after detailed discussion of its monumental architecture. Although Arnold implies that excavation and research continue at the site, rendering many "facts" about Teotihuacán open to debate, readers are not offered varied interpretations of building use or social and religious customs; in fact, no reference to specific field workers or scholars is made at all. Still, there is a motherlode of raw data here waiting to be mined by report writers exploring the earliest American cultures; a glossary (pronunciation guides are included within the text itself) and index are included. Panoramic photographs of the pyramids, avenues, and plazas capture the eerie solemnity of the site, and steeply angled close-ups of the Citadel temple and the Pyramids of the Sun and Moon display the ancient masons' artistry to advantage. EB

ARNOLD, KATYA, ad. *Knock, Knock, Teremok! A Traditional Russian Tale*; ad. and illus. by Katya Arnold. North-South, 1994 26p
Library ed. ISBN 1-55858-330-0 \$14.88
Trade ed. ISBN 1-55858-329-7 \$14.95 Ad 3-7 yrs

One by one animals come across a *teremok*, or small hut, and crowd inside in this cumulative rhyme. "Knock, knock, knock. Who lives in the teremok? It's me, the Fly, queen of the sky. Who are you? I am the Mouse, who needs a new house. Let's live together." The animals gradually increase in size (and some in ferocity) up through a fox, a pig, and a wolf, until a bear comes along. When they tell him to go away, he tries sitting on the roof, but the house is smashed and, in a very abrupt ending, "everybody barely escaped!" We have seen many versions of this story, including Mirra Ginsburg's *Mushroom in the Rain* and Jan Brett's *The Mit-*

ten, but this may be the bounciest. Arnold's illustrations, with their thick black lines and strong colors, give each of the clothed animals a lively, quirky feel. However, each animal, once inside the teremok, is painted exactly the same way in each succeeding picture, which negates the funny idea of the animals having to squeeze together and makes the pictures rather static. The house is decorated with wheat, mushrooms on strings, and a picture of Lenin (which is ripped in half when the house falls), which may relate to the author's note at the beginning that she sees the tale as an "allegory of the collapse of the Soviet Union." How that works isn't particularly clear, but kids will be too busy knock-knocking along to care. SDL

AVI *The Barn*. Jackson/Orchard, 1994 106p

Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08711-5 \$13.99

Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-06861-7 \$13.95

R Gr. 5-7

In this short novel set in 1850s Oregon, nine-year-old Ben is sent from boarding school back to his family's farm when his father suffers a completely incapacitating stroke. Ben's father cannot talk or move; it falls upon Ben, after discussion with his older brother and sister, to care for their father, feeding him and changing his soiled clothing. After some days of this, Ben becomes convinced that his father can blink his eyes to mean *yes*; Ben then becomes convinced that Father wants them to build a barn, a difficult task and probably pointless, too, as each of the children has expressed a desire to leave the homestead. The theme here is hermeneutical as well as spiritual: how do we know what we hear? does affirmation come from response, or from within? These are hard and subtle questions, but Avi asks them in terms of a taut, untheoretical story, told with spare economy and action that moves with the ideas. Although the novel—and the words—are short and to the point, the style is sometimes overdeliberate, too apparently controlled. Even given his relatively expansive education and native intelligence, Ben is not entirely convincing as a nine-year-old—at least today's nine-year-olds won't find him so—and his closing conversation with his siblings (after Father has died, never seeing the now-finished barn) has a taste of the late twentieth century about it. Still, there's a sharp and unadorned picture of the harshness of homestead pioneer life, and an immediacy of pain that transcends setting. RS

BARBER, BARBARA E. *Saturday at The New You*; illus. by Anna Rich. Lee &

Low, 1994 [32p]

ISBN 1-880000-06-7 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 4-7 yrs

Shauna loves Saturdays, because that is the day she gets to spend at her mother's beauty parlor, The New You. She tells all about the day there, with all of its interesting sights and smells. We hear about the customers, in particular about five-year-old Tiffany, who "can sure act like a baby!" Shauna wishes she could help more, and tells her mother, "I can do that!" but her mother replies with a smile, "Maybe you can, but Tiffany is *my* customer." All the events are small ones, but Shauna's voice is lively and her observations keen. Barber makes readers feel as if they have really spent the day with Shauna and Momma, and she makes a day spent working hard at a beauty parlor seem very appealing. Particularly touching is the end, when Shauna, who is both real and likable, brushes out her exhausted mom's hair. Rich's paintings are just right, matching the warm story with warm, soft colors, and the depiction of the African-American cast has an expansive spirit. SDL

BERLETH, RICHARD *Mary Patten's Voyage*; illus. by Ben Otero. Whitman, 1994 40p
ISBN 0-8075-4987-8 \$14.95 Ad Gr. 3-6

Just as Neptune's Car heads into the perilous waters around Cape Horn, Captain Joshua Patten lies unconscious below deck, stricken with tuberculosis; first mate Keeler is locked in his cabin; second mate Hare can't read a chart or plot a course. But the captain's eighteen-year-old wife, Mary, has navigational skills that rival her husband's; taking command of the ship, she guides it through a five-week ordeal rounding the Cape and safely into port at San Francisco with no hands lost. Berleth's tale is a fictionalized account of an actual clipper race from New York to San Francisco in 1856. While he focuses on Mary's heroism amid the storms that rack the ship, Berleth also portrays the resistance of some of the crewmen to Mary's command—resistance that brings a charge of mutiny upon the first mate. Second mate Timothy Hare's narration tends to gush ("For any ashore who wonder what love and faith and courage can still achieve, I offer this story"), and his frequent lapse into seafaring lingo will send landlubbers scurrying for the glossary at the back of the book. Gouache paintings, with a somewhat fusty look and rigid composition, are more useful in explicating the rigging than enhancing the drama. A brief epilogue that tells of the captain's death in 1857 and Mary's death several years later does not mention the mates or other crew members featured in this account, and no source notes are provided; thus the reader is left to navigate an uncharted course between history and fiction. EB

BRINK, CAROL RYRIE *Goody O'Grumpity*; illus. by Ashley Wolff. North-South, 1994 32p
Library ed. ISBN 1-55858-328-9 \$14.88
Trade ed. ISBN 1-55858-327-0 \$14.95 Ad 4-7 yrs

Ashley Wolff expands Carol Ryrie Brink's 1937 poem with new illustrations: here Goody the cake-baker is a Pilgrim in a white cap. And when she bakes a cake everything around waits in anticipation: "That tall reeds danced by the mournful lake,/ The pigs came nuzzling out of their pens," but most importantly, "the children flocked by dozens and tens." The children wait to lick the bowl when Goody's through, then they hang around smelling the spices as the cake bakes, and they're finally rewarded with pieces of the warm cake. The poem is not particularly substantial, but it's bouncy and sweet. Wolff's watercolored linoleum block prints possess, as usual, a vigor that informs their simplicity. Unfortunately Wolff has made the cake into a yeast cake—tasty when cooked, to be sure, but not a batter that would make children want to "lick the dish when Goody was through," and one whose three-hour preparation time is at odds with the immediate gratification suggested in the text. There's a recipe in the back for a spice cake with all the ingredients—allspice, nutmeg, cinnamon, lemon—mentioned in the poem; the book would make for a nice reading interlude while the cake bakes, although that would still leave you with quite a bit of time to fill. DS

BROOKE, WILLIAM J. *Teller of Tales*. HarperCollins, 1994 170p
Library ed. ISBN 0-06-023400-8 \$14.89
Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-023399-0 \$15.00 R Gr. 6-9

Brooke's first two books (*A Telling of the Tales*, BCCB 5/90, and *Untold Tales*, 9/92) were sophisticated, layered, and funny retellings of folklore; in *Teller* he has

added another level—he is telling tales about retelling tales. The background story is that of an old man who is learning to tell old stories through the new medium of type; he is encouraged, taunted, and eventually loved as a father by a tough and streetwise young girl whom he takes into his home. Using these two characters sometimes as tale-telling mouthpieces and sometimes as folkloric *dramatis personae*, Brooke tells versions of “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” “Goldilocks,” “Little Red Riding Hood,” and “Rumpelstiltskin,” with the tales shaped to shed both light and mystery upon the relationship between the man, Teller, and the girl, whose name continually changes. This is conceptually elaborate but smooth and compact to read; the stories, which Teller says “are meant to illuminate the originals, not corrupt them,” generally perform that task quite well, and the frequent wit lends a playfulness to the enterprise. The occasional paens to the power of story are touched with a self-conscious sentimentality that crops up in the work as a whole now and then, but the book is still an entertaining and unusual read. In addition to fans of the earlier books, kids who liked *The Magic Circle*, or who regretfully think themselves too old for *The Stinky Cheese Man*, will appreciate the blend of tradition and exploration here. DS

BROOKS, MARTHA *Traveling On into the Light and Other Stories*. Kroupa/Orchard, 1994 147p

Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08713-1 \$14.99

Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-06863-3 \$14.95

R Gr. 7-12

Eleven stories appear in a new volume by the author of *Paradise Cafe* (BCCB 12/90). Brooks has penned a variety of sensitive stories about the past and the present, parents and lovers, good times and bad, yet through it all she displays her usual quiet accuracy and intuition. These are not ironic punch-lined stories à la O. Henry or Saki, but rather slices of life and observation: in “Moonlight Sonata,” a boy takes his girlfriend to the place where his father killed himself; in “The Tiniest Guitar in the World” a boy explains to the principal how and why he made a guitar out of a root beer can; in the title story, a girl goes to visit her artist father and the man for whom he left her mother; the last three stories are a loose trilogy, set in the early ’60s, about a teenage couple dealing with their growth and their losses. Brooks’ delicate yet strong scenes of life won’t disappoint fans of her previous work; try one as a readaloud for teens on a quiet afternoon. DS

BROWN, JANE CLARK *George Washington’s Ghost*; written and illus. by Jane Clark Brown. Houghton, 1994 87p

ISBN 0-395-69452-3 \$13.95

Ad Gr. 3-5

Sick of their unending diet of turnips, the Noodle family decides to take their traveling marionette show back on the road throughout the young American republic even without their master puppeteer, the late Poppa Noodle; Celinda, the youngest child, envies the important work her older siblings perform while she is inevitably left holding the horses. But when their big draw—a spiffily uniformed likeness of General Washington, who fights a red coated lion with his silver sword—is lost to an unethical wheelwright, Celinda gets her chance to operate the most difficult puppet of all, the skeleton, in a plot to recover General George and save the show. Celinda’s scrapes are predictable but steadily paced, and Brown nicely evokes the enthusiasm Washington could generate after the Revolution, providing insight into how the patriot may have become mythologized in popular imagination. But the plot suffers from too many promising story lines that come to dead

ends—a sideshow dwarf's escape from wicked employers, Celinda's tall tales of her exploits with runaway horses, her run-ins with the villainous Purple Hair, and her chance encounters with a young cow-tender all tease readers into expecting more action than Brown delivers. Realistic and friendly pencil sketches appear throughout. EB

BURNINGHAM, JOHN *Courtney*; written and illus. by John Burningham. Crown, 1994 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-517-59884-1 \$16.99

Trade ed. ISBN 0-517-59883-3 \$16.00

Ad 5-7 yrs

"We would really like to have a dog," the children said," and they get a dog—but not an ordinary one. Nobody at the Dogs' Home wanted Courtney, which seems extraordinary considering that he cooks dinner, waits at table, plays the violin, and juggles to entertain the baby. The children are delighted with him until one day he inexplicably disappears (the disloyal parents intone, "If they are not thorough-breds, you cannot rely on them"), leaving the children heartbroken. That summer, when danger threatens the happily boating children, a mysterious force saves them; the text remains innocent, but sharp eyes will spot Courtney on the cliff above the beach. This is an engaging but rather odd story: the two parts—before and after Courtney—don't knit together too well, and the book will provoke more questions than it answers. Why did Courtney leave the family in the first place? Why doesn't he acknowledge rescuing the children, or was that merely payback for rescuing him from the Dogs' Home? Will he follow them through their lives, saving them from all peril? Such a talented canine will charm quite a few viewers, however, as Burningham, with his usual ability to make silent animals personable and friendly (see *Aldo*, BCCB 7/92), depicts Courtney as a walrus-ish yet debonair individual who never loses his air of mystery. Young viewers will appreciate the bond between the unsung dog and the perceptive children; make sure they see Courtney standing watch on the penultimate page so that they can revel in knowing more than the narrator. DS

CHMIELARZ, SHARON *Down at Angel's*; illus. by Jill Kastner. Ticknor, 1994 32p

ISBN 0-395-65993-0 \$14.95

Ad 4-7 yrs

Two little girls are devoted to their lonely neighbor, Angel, a Bulgarian immigrant who makes beautiful inlaid wood tables in his cellar and who always slips them chocolate bars on the sly. As Christmas nears, the children are concerned because they have no gift to offer Angel in return for his year of treats, and so their mother suggests they bring him a box of homemade goodies, products of summer cooking and canning. The four enjoy Christmas Eve together, listening to opera on the radio, and Angel presents them with one of his magnificent tables. Dangling from this comfortable tale, however, are loose ends of several other possible story lines: the girls' father was killed in a war (possibly World War II?), Angel's wife left him because of his past drinking problem, neighborhood children tease Angel because of his blind eye and heavy accent (which is not evident in the text's dialogue). These details are as distracting as they are provocative, raising more questions than they answer. Kastner's muted, hazy oil paintings set a cozy mood, but neither Angel's damaged eye nor his intricately inlaid woodcraft is captured in enough detail to visually reinforce the girls' supposed fascination with them. The theme of heartfelt gift-giving during hard times makes this an acceptable, if somewhat bland, Christmas season purchase. EB

COLEMAN, EVELYN *The Foot Warmer and the Crow*; illus. by Daniel Minter. Macmillan, 1994 32p
ISBN 0-02-722816-9 \$14.95 R Gr. 3-6

Coleman spins a grim tale indeed of a slave who—with the aid of a bird—bests his master. Hezekiah was one of his master's favorites, until he decided to run away. He is caught and whipped, but a crow who has befriended him whispers of a dark secret from the master's childhood and counsels Hezekiah to "learn all you can about your master and use his weaknesses to your advantage." Overhearing that the master talks in his sleep, Hezekiah asks to become his "footwarmer," a slave that sleeps at his master's feet. Gathering in the master's midnight ravings, Hezekiah then confronts him with his deepest fears and runs away again, this time protected by the crow, who sits outside the master's bedroom window "clawing the windowsill, his blackness spilling into the room" and reminding him of when he was a little boy and killed the crow's mother, coming back day after day to watch her chicks die. The master goes crazy, "ranting and raving in that room until he died," and it's a welcome jolt to see a story about slavery that ends with such a satisfying peck of revenge. Clearly, this isn't a picture book for young children, but older ones will relish the honesty and the ironic humor, and Minter's carved and painted wood illustrations offer a satirical grotesquerie of characters (the master pink and blustery, Hezekiah wide-eyed in both fear and freedom) that has a comic edginess best appreciated by those beyond the traditional story-hour age RS

CONE, PATRICK *Grand Canyon*; written and illus. with photographs by Patrick Cone. Carolrhoda, 1994 48p
Library ed. ISBN 0-87614-820-8 \$14.21
Paper ed. ISBN 0-87614-628-0 \$7.95 Ad Gr. 3-5

This survey of Arizona's natural wonder introduces readers to the canyon's geology, morphology, early inhabitants, and contemporary status as a National Park. In the opening chapters, Cone describes rock genesis and canyon-wall formation with a sure hand; students will appreciate his concise explication, well-chosen color photographs, and easy-to-decipher charts which bring the earthbuilding process, well, down to earth. But chapters which discuss life around the canyon are weaker, offering little more than a cursory list of tribal names, flora and fauna, and various perils of encroaching civilization. In one baffling passage Cone states, "During the first century A.D., a new people called the Hisatsinom, moved into the canyon area"; three sentences later, "The Hisatsinom lived in the canyon from around 600 B.C. to A.D. 1140." Canyon trivia, glossary, and index complete this volume, which will be of greater interest and use to young earth scientists than to would-be anthropologists. EB

COOPER, ILENE *The Worst Noel*. Viking, 1994 [128p] (The Holiday Five)
ISBN 0-670-85058-6 \$13.99
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 5-8

This second installment in the Holiday Five series (see BCCB 9/94 for the first) focuses on Kathy, who is dreading the prospect of spending Christmas with her father and his second family. The visitation agreement specifies that Dad "gets" her for Christmas, and besides, Kathy's mother has already arranged to spend the holiday on a cruise with a friend. Kathy loves her father, but feels she has come to take second place in his affections, and it's a credit to the author that, in fact,

Kathy is somewhat right. It's refreshing to see a divorce story that perceives the subtleties of separation, not facetiously marking everything down to "misunderstandings." While Kathy's plan to spend Christmas instead with her friend Erin (poor but happy in her large Irish Catholic family) is not quite convincing in the subterfuges Kathy undertakes to manage it, the emotional pull to what Kathy sees as a real family is very real. Balancing out the angst is a pleasing mixture of five best friends shopping and talking and enjoying the season, and genre fans should find the book a pleasing diversion. RS

DECLEMENTS, BARTHE *Tough Loser*. Viking, 1994 118p
ISBN 0-670-85619-3 \$13.99

Ad Gr. 4-6

Jenna's brother Mike can't seem to control his temper, especially when his eternally outclassed hockey team loses yet another game. And Jenna herself can't seem to control her affection for one of her mother's new chow puppies, even though she's been warned that the pups, "one-person dogs," are being sold, and it would be unfair to get attached to one. Written in DeClements' plain, straightforward style, this novel mixes family and school goings-on in a way that is appealingly busy, but never quite balanced or blended. There's hockey action, pup-play, schoolyard pranks, a horseback-riding accident, and Jenna's model-stagecoach school project, but no individual subplot has enough to do with the others. Although the dog drama is too cozily resolved, the problem of Mike's tantrums is more realistically left open, and his struggle to control his anger provides the book with an emotional force that could have been more liberally and evenly distributed. As ever, though, DeClements is right there with her characters and her readers, who will appreciate the honest empathy. RS

DEEM, JAMES M. *3 NBs of Julian Drew*. Houghton, 1994 227p
ISBN 0-395-69453-1 \$14.95

R Gr. 7-10

In what must have been a copyeditor's nightmare, fifteen-year-old Julian writes his diaries in a kind of code, with abbreviations and numbers substituted for letters: "ABBREVS + NOs: 170V3them." Sense and story are unfolded simultaneously, as readers gradually puzzle out the code and Julian's sad story of being neglected and abused by his father and stepmother, as well as his longing for his dead mother: "1M155U. Do U understand it? Here's another: 170V3U." ("I miss you"; "I love you.") The device could easily have become gimmicky or frustrating, but it's cannily deployed and creates a singularly lonely voice for Julian, who isn't so much attempting to hide his thoughts from his family as he is trying to hide or distance them from himself. Never seen beyond the boundaries of his "NBs," his notebooks, though, his situation is somewhat unconvincing. His parents, 43 and 543 (he and she), are unrelievedly monstrous (as when 543, to punish Julian for wetting his bed after she's locked him in his room, forces him to drink what he fears is urine but is actually apple juice); Julian finally RA, runs away, after she puts bars on his bedroom window to keep him from sneaking out. The third NB, which details Julian's flight from Arizona back home to West Virginia where he gets an apartment and finally makes peace with his mother's memory (or ghost) is entirely implausible, but there's a hint here and there that this last notebook is in fact a story, something his English teacher has been encouraging him to write. Most readers will start this novel perplexed (and some will stay that way throughout) but Julian's private language will exert curiosity and the hell of his life provoke both empathy and a slightly morbid fascination. RS

DISHER, GARRY *Ratface*. Ticknor, 1994 185p
ISBN 0-395-69451-5 \$14.95

Ad Gr. 5-9

When Max and Christina meet a reporter lurking around their secluded farm, they begin to learn the truth about the White League, a cult that the two were "adopted" into as younger children. And when their "mother" (whom they privately call "Moaner"), "father" ("Slinger"), and cult leader ("Ratface") bring a new child to the farm, Max and Christina decided to run away, taking with them the younger boy, who tells them he was kidnapped. Although the writing is expository and sometimes superficial when describing the cult and its attractions and dangers ("Whenever troubled by doubts, they would look to the White League. It gave meaning to their lives"), the adventure story is a good one, with Ratface just a step behind the kids as they flee the compound for the wide world beyond. As with Edward Myers' *Climb or Die*, reviewed below, the dual protagonists are more efficiently differentiated than they are developed as characters, but they ably serve as a human focus for the action. Robin Klein's *People Might Hear You*, also about two young people escaping a cult, is psychologically more subtle and even more suspenseful, but Disher's book still finds adventure in adversity. RS

DUNLOP, EILEEN *Finn's Search*. Holiday House, 1994 155p
ISBN 0-8234-1099-4 \$14.95

Ad Gr. 5-7

Finn and his friend Chris (previously appearing in *Finn's Island*, BCCB 7/92) are facing a few new challenges: a piece of land traditionally supposed to be a Roman camp is in danger of commercial development, and the developer's son, a noted bully, is paying them an alarming amount of attention. Readers will guess early on that the lonely bully has renounced his evil ways, and it's no surprise that Finn and Chris (who verges on crybabyhood in this book) find enough Roman remnants to make destruction undesirable. The rural Scottish setting and treasure-hunt theme as the boys search for relics keep the book entertaining, if not as atmospheric as the original. Kids who haven't read the first book may take a few chapters to figure out who's who and what's where, but fans of the previous book will enjoy picking up Finn and Chris's story where it left off. DS

DUQUENNOY, JACQUES *The Ghost's Dinner*; written and illus. by Jacques Duquenooy. Artists & Writers, 1994 48p
ISBN 0-307-17510-3 \$9.95

R 3-5 yrs

This modest picture book first published in France relies on one tiny joke for its interest—but it's the kind of joke that preschoolers don't get easily tired of. Henry the ghost has invited his ghost friends, all looking like little sheeted Halloween visitors, over to dinner, where—here's the gimmick—they each turn the color of what they are drinking or eating: "Here. Try the spinach juice." Pumpkin soup turns them orange, the salmon makes them pink, cheese makes them yellow with little holes, and Henry's "secret ghost dessert recipe" makes them invisible. Hot chocolate gives them color again, but how to get back to their white sale specials? Milk! Hey, it's a better plot than you'll find in many a more lavishly appointed picture-book extravaganza, and Duquenooy's neatly finished paintings have a droll sophistication that appoints Henry a home (castle, actually) of understated elegance and that may well hold your own interest when asked to read the book for the fourteenth time. RS

FALWELL, CATHRYN *The Letter Jesters*; written and illus. by Cathryn Falwell. Ticknor, 1994 48p
ISBN 0-395-66898-0 \$14.95 Ad Gr. 2-4

"Letters are everywhere!" announces the opening text in this book on typefaces; the book explains that styles of letters are called typefaces, that "each typeface has a name," and that "there are hundreds of typefaces." Examples of various typefaces, explanations of measurement in points and of lower and upper case follow, as well as simultaneous description and demonstration of the visual effects of various typefaces. Unfortunately, much is confusing here: Falwell lists typefaces before explaining that they have names, differentiates poorly between variations (such as roman and italic) of typefaces and typefaces themselves, and she never acknowledges the role color plays in her own presentation (her "playful" letters, for instance, are playful more because of their festive hues than from their typeface). The format isn't particularly clear, with the jesters, who cavort about among the letters, distracting from the focus rather than helping point the explanations. This may, however, help draw kids' attention to an aspect of reading and bookmaking they had not previously considered; the spread that shows six dogs, each appearing under "Dog" set in a different appropriate typestyle, is a good illustration of the effects typefaces can produce. DS

FRIEDMAN, CARL *Nightfather*; tr. from the Dutch by Arnold and Erica Pomerans. Persea, 1994 133p
ISBN 0-89255-193-3 \$18.50 R* Gr. 6-9

After the narrator's father describes starving in the concentration camp, "he gets up, but the bread ration continues to hover over the table like a ghost. I look at it helplessly and feel a sudden disgust for the cherries my mother is serving. How very lucky we are." Contained in these brief lines is the conflict and irony of a novel that focuses not on the experience of the Holocaust itself, but on the memories that shape survivors' lives and take heavy tolls on their children. How lucky is the narrator for constant exposure to stories of Nazi torment? "What do you want to be when you grow up?" our teacher asks. 'Invisible,' I say. 'So the SS won't catch me.'" With the father's stories and the children's reactions, we travel along parallel paths: the experience of the camps, which is specified here in all its horror, along with the imagined experience and guilt of loved ones "left out." Although the scenes at first seem disjointed, they gain shape and momentum as the father works his way toward "liberation" and reunion with his sweetheart, the children's mother, for an ending that unites the past and present. Unusual in both technique and perspective, this translation from the Dutch has a stark authenticity that deepens Holocaust literature for children. BH

FROMM, PETER *Monkey Tag*. Scholastic, 1994 336p
ISBN 0-590-46525-2 \$14.95 Ad Gr. 5-7

Eli and Thad, twelve-year-old twins, find both of their lives altered when Thad injures himself severely while playing a game of monkey tag—swinging by the hands underneath the highest part of the bleachers. After spending a long time in the hospital, Thad comes home using a wheelchair, and his parents protect him from everything, including Eli. Eli refuses to accept his parents' treatment of his brother, and he and Thad goof off, hang out with friends, and work together on

Thad's mobility as he progresses from wheelchair to crutches to braces to, finally, walking unaided. The undercurrent running throughout these trials is Eli's reexamination and repudiation of his Catholic faith, a serious spiritual questioning rarely seen to this degree in children's literature, and the topic is fairly treated here. Eli's loyalty to his brother and the twins' relationship are also convincingly and compassionately depicted. The novel—which is set in 1970, for no apparent reason—is quite long, however, and while the absence of dramatic climax in either Thad's recovery or Eli's theological conclusions is realistic, the story loses momentum and leaves questions (will Eli actually leave the church? Will his parents ever confront him about his disbelief?) unanswered at the end. This is still far more thoughtful than many disability dramas, and it's got a generous helping of boyish energy, which will engage many readers. DS

GIOVANNI, NIKKI, comp. *Grand Mothers: Poems, Reminiscences, and Short Stories about the Keepers of Our Traditions*. Holt, 1994 168p
ISBN 0-8050-2766-1 \$15.95 Ad Gr. 7-12

Twenty-seven segments are included in this ancestral collage; some emerge as memorable stories while others run to genealogical description or fade into fragmentary history. The approach is multicultural, with a conscientious balance of African-American, Native American, Asian-American, and European-American contributors who range from famous to newly published, from young to old. Since the tone and form are varied, readers who find the quality uneven can browse to passages that hold their interest. One of those will surely be Susan Power's "The Roofwalker," in which a Sioux woman remembers the day her handsome, politically committed father left the family and drove his van away with a new girlfriend. It's a gripping scenario. A few of the memoirs, on the other hand, make you feel as if you had to be part of the family to care. Certainly not every young adult will be attracted to the subject of grandmothers, but students researching their roots will appreciate the varied models of narrative. BH

GOODMAN, JOAN ELIZABETH *Songs from Home*; written and illus. by Joan Elizabeth Goodman. Harcourt, 1994 214p
Trade ed. ISBN 0-15-203590-7 \$10.95
Paper ed. ISBN 0-15-203591-5 \$4.95 Ad Gr. 5-7

Anna has spent her life vagabonding around Europe with her father, but she's beginning to question their life together. Her father doesn't have a job, and in order to subsist, they roam the city singing to tourists for tips. Whenever she asks anything about her late mother or the rest of her family, her father clams up. Anna is finally settling down in Rome, making good friends at school and at the *pensione* where she lives, when an acquaintance from her father's past turns up and incites Anna's longing for her distant family. The book suffers from a few problems: Anna's life with her father is never quite believable, the reason for her father's estrangement from his family seems insufficient, and the emotional climaxes—Anna's confession to her friend that she lives not in an expensive mansion but in a low-rent *pensione*, and her eventual decision to return to America without her father—pass by surprisingly quietly. It's still a picturesque story, however, and the people, especially Anna's schoolfriend Fiorella, her family, and the *pensione's* kind maid, Maria, are good literary company. Despite the book's slightness, young readers will enjoy the local color of its Roman setting and Anna's exotic and glamorously shabby existence. DS

HALL, DONALD *I Am the Dog, I Am the Cat*; illus. by Barry Moser. Dial, 1994 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-1505-6 \$15.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-1504-8 \$15.99

R 5-9 yrs

Barry Moser's Rottweiler makes two appearances this season (see also Harper, reviewed below); here he shares the stage with the cat, who puts up with her canine co-star, but only just: "The dog amuses me. He cares about what people think! I wash his muzzle." Hall's duologue contrasts the ways and means of the two pets, including their strategies for dealing with those whom they call *them*, by which they mean us: "Dog: Making the acquaintance of babies, I allow them to pull my hair. I do not like it, but I allow it, for I am the dog." "Cat: When babies come into the house, I try to *vanish*. Babies are crazy! Babies *sit* on you!" The declarations are mock-majestic, and you'll want to pick two kids to read them aloud, but don't let anybody miss Moser's watercolor paintings, boldly composed (as in a head-on portrait of the dog jawing a bone) and slyly conceived (as when we see, from the dog's point of view, the cat reclining disdainfully while the dog withholds the ball from his master). RS

HARPER, ISABELLE *My Dog Rosie*; illus. by Barry Moser. Blue Sky/Scholastic, 1994 [32p]

ISBN 0-590-47619-X \$13.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 3-6 yrs

Isabelle Harper is Barry Moser's young granddaughter, and it falls to her to care for Rottweiler Rosie when Grandpa goes off to his studio to work. She feeds him (cat food), reads to him (*Carl Goes Shopping*, what else?), and takes him out to play, and through it all (even the indignity of having a rubber nose put over his face) Rosie remains a stalwart, sometimes stubborn, always loving companion. Who's taking care of who? is the implicit question here, and it's answered in the solid contentment of Moser's watercolors, posing the sturdy figures of Isabelle and Rosie against plain white backgrounds, focusing us on their mutual amity. The perspectives are close enough that you feel like scratching Rosie's chin, and there's an imaginative employment of the double-spread splits, pointed in a life-becomes-art-becomes-life picture of Moser reaching across the page gutter to hold Isabelle's hand, with a sketch of the same picture placed on the drawing table behind him. RS

HASELEY, DENNIS *Getting Him*. Farrar, 1994 154p

ISBN 0-374-32536-7 \$16.00

Ad Gr. 6-9

A freak accident—Harold the weird child genius hides out in his parents' car and accidentally backs it over Donald's dog—sets in motion Donald's plans for revenge and social success. Donald is in sixth grade but yearns for the approval of the local eighth-graders, and they will give it to him on one condition: he must befriend Harold, learning his greatest weaknesses, and apprise the eighth-graders so that they can find a cruelly appropriate way to torment Harold in grand style. At first, Donald relishes the chance to avenge his still-limping dog, but he has second thoughts as he gets to know the unhappy Harold and his obsession: Harold waits for a visit from interplanetary beings inhabiting a planetary satellite of Sirius. The boys go ahead with their plan, pretending to be alien visitors abducting the willing Harold, and both he and Donald suffer a great and painful disillusionment

about friendship. This is a sober tale of human responsibility and ethics, sort of a *Killing Mr. Griffin* for younger but more cerebral readers. Haseley's prose is sleek and inviting but his viewpoint, expressed through Donald's first-person narration, is frequently adult; it's also not clear why the book is set in the 1950s, although it does make Harold's gullibility and the night roaming of the boys more credible. Donald's ambivalence is painted in complex and convincing strokes, but although Harold's unhappiness is evident, the grounds for that misery are insufficiently explained. Nonetheless, the smooth flow of the words and the quiet suspense about Donald's betrayal will find the book an audience. DS

HAVILL, JUANITA *Saving Owen's Toad*. Hyperion, 1994 124p

Library ed. ISBN 0-7868-2024-1 \$14.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-7868-0029-1 \$14.95

Ad Gr. 3-5

Nine-year-old Owen does not get along with his thirteen-year-old brother, Richard. While Owen is the more sensitive, introspective soul, Richard is a wheeler-dealer, getting himself and others in trouble on a regular basis. Owen is interested in toads and other creatures and is pleased when his grandmother tells him that his grandfather also liked observing "creeping, crawling, hopping things," so he only reluctantly agrees to help Richard with his newest scheme of catching toads to sell to neighbors as bug-catchers. Finding a three-legged toad, Owen decides to keep him for a pet even though Richard is determined to have them all, and eventually an accident brings the brothers to a better understanding. This story of a younger brother learning to stand up to a forceful older brother develops Owen's point of view nicely, but its themes are unfocused. At first, it appears to be a story of the boys' father being away—"Toad parents don't stick around" is on the first page—but it never develops in that direction. Likewise, a subplot about hunting takes over the last chapter, but adds little to the overall picture. A little humor à la Beverly Cleary would have made Owen a warmer character, but children will admire his spunk by the end of the story. SDL

HAYES, JOE, ad. *Watch Out for Clever Women! Cuidado con las Mujeres Astutas! Hispanic Folktales*; illus. by Vicki Trego Hill. Cinco Puntos, 1994 77p

Trade ed. ISBN 0-938317-21-0 \$16.95

Paper ed. ISBN 0-938317-20-2 \$10.95

R Gr. 3-6

Told in both English and Spanish, these five stories are flavored with southwestern details that will enrich diets of European lore. The tale of a daughter who counters her father's greed by asking if the smell of food satisfies his hunger may sound familiar from the Yiddish variant but has its own distinctive twists. And, as Hayes notes, there's a Russian counterpart to the story here about the wife who protects her husband's newfound gold by persuading him that tortillas rain down from the sky; of course no one believes anything he says, including the news about his gold. Hayes' experience as a storyteller shows up in his trust of the tales as being best perpetuated through clear, simple retellings. It's too bad he doesn't discuss any of his sources more specifically than an acknowledgment that "the traditional part is based on things people tell me and on what I learn from reading the work of folklorists and anthropologists." The brief introduction is otherwise helpful, and capably drafted pencil drawings decorate a spacious text. Bilingual children, students of Spanish, and storytellers will get equal mileage out of this one. BH

HILDICK, E. W. *Hester Bidgood: Investigatrix of Evill Deedes*. Macmillan, 1994 141p
ISBN 0-02-743966-6 \$14.95 Ad Gr. 4-7

It's 1692, and the Massachusetts town of Willow Bend is abuzz with rumors of the witch-hunt in nearby Salem. The discovery of an unconscious cat, its fur burnt with the symbol of the cross, convinces the citizens that the cat is Mistress Willson's familiar and that the devil is in their midst. But thirteen-year-old Hester and her friend Rob, who has been raised among the Indians, apply their respective skills to the task of uncovering a human agent behind the mischief. Colonial life is, on the whole, convincingly portrayed (although paper for the detectives' note-taking is unrealistically widely available), and Hester and Rob make a well-balanced team with her wit, his tracking skills, and their common sensitivity to the neighbors' foibles. However, the investigation itself is conducted with dry precision, and the protracted denouement struggles to provide the excitement the main storyline has thus far lacked. A concluding reference to "the scoring of [Hester's] first victory" may portend further chronicles of devilry in Willow Bend. EB

JANSSON, TOVE *Moominpappa's Memoirs*; written and illus. by Tove Jansson; tr. by Thomas Warburton. Farrar, 1994 162p
ISBN 0-374-35045-0 \$16.00 R Gr. 4-6

If the Moomins have been gathering dust on the shelf since the height of their popularity in the 1960s, the first English edition of this 1968 Jansson entry may spark a revival among a new generation of readers. Stuck at home suffering from a terrible cold, Moominpappa puts his time to good use by setting down his adventures from the time he ran away from the strict and repressive Hemulen orphanage until he met and married the inestimable Moominmamma. His memoirs (which he admits to enhancing for maximum dramatic effect) are recorded with mock solemnity that sets the absurd antics of junk-collecting Muddlers, nose-gnawing Nibblings, and other bizarre characters into high comic relief. And as the Moomin family responds with delight to each exciting new chapter Moominpappa reads to them, Jansson interjects through their comments some sly thoughts on the autobiographer's art. A felicitous introduction for newcomers to the Moomin tales. EB

JORDAN, SHERRYL *Wolf Woman*. Houghton, 1994 162p
ISBN 0-395-70932-6 \$13.95 Ad Gr. 6-10

Set in what is probably early Christian Britain or Ireland, this novel spins a *Clan of the Cave Bear*-like tale of a girl, Tanith, found as a child living among wolves by a clan of violent raiders. Adopted by the tribe chieftain, Tanith is viewed with much suspicion by some of the other members, who believe her affinity with the feared wolves is evidence of evil. While there's a certain amount of repetition as Tanith shuttles between the clan and the freedom of "running with the wolves"—shades of another bestseller—the story builds momentum as Tanith becomes forced to choose between the man who loves her and the company of a wolf clan, led by a wolf she names Ashok, that has accepted her. The dichotomy between rapacious humans and noble wolves (which only kill prey that "choose" to be killed) is too easy, but romantic readers will empathize with Tanith's dilemma and her passions, given full, if somewhat anachronistically '90s, cry after her clan has slaughtered the

wolves: "Are your brains dead, and your hearts with them? Ashok understood the plan, the great giving and taking, the harmony! But not you! Not you!" Tanith's ultimate rejection of human society, even in its kinder manifestations she discovers in the peaceable clan of her beloved, closes the novel on a note of splendid defiance, and most readers will hope for a sequel. RS

KARL, JEAN *America Alive: A History*; illus. by Ian Schoenherr. Philomel, 1994 120p
ISBN 0-399-22013-5 \$22.95 R Gr. 5-8

While the plethora of titles focusing on a single event, person, or issue in American history is certainly welcome, there's always going to be the kid who wants the whole story. And here it is—selectively told, to be sure; as Karl writes in her foreword, "This is a personal history; it is history as I see it." Still, at least in regard to major historical events and social movements, there's darn little she doesn't at least touch upon, from the prehistoric crossing of the Bering Strait to the election of Bill Clinton in 1992. The writing is clear and informal, gracefully segueing between topics ("Educated people did know it [the world] was round, but didn't know its size. Can't be too big, though, thought Christopher Columbus") and occasionally displaying a dry wit ("Most colonists liked life in America, but they did not all like each other"). While the perspective is generally objective, with gentle reminders of what the blacks and the women and the Indians were doing while the white men waged wars, Karl is in some places more opinionated than in others, as in her discussions of the Reconstruction Era and of the threat of world Communism. There are a few bloopers (most notably, the placement of Sutter's Mill *west* of San Francisco) but that's a quibble in a book filled with telling detail. Karl's sense of historical continuity gives the book a narrative chain that makes it read like a story—a *big* story—and Ian Schoenherr's compact paintings are darkly, richly hued, capturing both personages (Anne Hutchinson, Crispus Attucks, and Joe McCarthy are among the dozens neatly placed in the borders) and emblematic scenes ("Waiting for the end of winter at Morristown," "Surviving in a sodhouse on the Great Plains"); sometimes they're a little oblique, as in the picture of a boy labeled "Puerto Rican." While notes and a suggested reading list would have been nice, they would have been dauntingly formidable and there are an index and bibliography of adult sources. RS

KERR, M. E. *Deliver Us from Evie*. HarperCollins, 1994 175p
Library ed. ISBN 0-06-024476-3 \$14.89
Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-024475-5 \$15.00 R* Gr. 9-12

A Missouri farm is the setting for this compelling story of the Burrmans, a family whose stability is disrupted first by the blossoming romances of the three teenaged children and then by the destructive floodwaters of the Mississippi. Chief among the book's memorable characters is Evie, the unconventionally attractive Burrman daughter (a "young Elvis Presley" with a talent for machinery repair) who falls in love with Patsy Duff, the beautiful and rebellious daughter of the powerful local banker. The narration of fifteen-year-old Parr, the youngest Burrman, strikes a tone of gentle irony as he tells of Evie's coming out and the family's and community's varied responses of bewilderment, hostility, and tentative acceptance, set against a background of the seasonal burdens of farm work and Parr's own erratic first romance with the devoutly religious Angel. Although the plotting is somewhat me-

chanical and the symbolism not always subtle, these are minor quibbles in a remarkable YA novel that creates a vivid picture of the power of Nature (the uncontrollable flooding river) and human nature (the stereotypical "butch" qualities that Evie will not, or cannot, suppress) on the Burrmans and their community. Unusual among YA novels with gay/lesbian content in its depiction of rural, church-centered life, this is vintage Kerr, a novel whose engaging characters, realistic dialogue, and thoughtfully presented dilemmas make it a strong candidate for secondary classroom discussion. CHRISTINE JENKINS

KIMMEL, ERIC A., ad. *Iron John*; illus. by Trina Schart Hyman. Holiday House, 1994 [32p]

ISBN 0-8234-1073-0 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 6-9 yrs

While the title page credits Kimmel as adaptor of this Grimm tale, his revisions and additions are so extensive as to constitute a takeover. He omits the opening scene describing Iron John's capture (which, as Kimmel notes, is somewhat tangential to the story at hand), but the most significant changes come after Iron John has made the king's son leave the forest for tainting the spring. Now known as Walter, the young man meets three princesses (not one), has a Cinderella whirl at a ball (not in Grimm) and is ultimately injured in battle, with wounds that can only be healed by "the tears of a maid who loves him truly." That last touch is also Kimmel's, who by this time has so altered the original story that Walter here falls in love with a garden girl, not the princess, and takes her off to wedded bliss. With its romance and many magics, this is more a fairytale than a folktale, but the story is smooth and may appeal to a post-Robert Bly audience more than would the sometimes enigmatic Grimm. Marilee Heyer's version (*Iron Hans*, BCCB 12/93) stays more closely to its source, but Heyer's pictures are fussy and glamorized. The tale is far better served by Trina Schart Hyman's oil paintings (a new medium for this illustrator); drawing as well with as a brush as she does with a pen, Hyman finds a subdued luminosity in the shadowy greens of the forest setting and textures shapes and surfaces in a homely way that acknowledges both the fairytale world Kimmel has created as well as the plainer place encountered by the Grimms. RS

KING-SMITH, DICK *The Swoose*; illus. by Marie Corner. Hyperion, 1994 46p
Library ed. ISBN 1-56282-659-X \$12.89

Trade ed. ISBN 1-56282-658-1 \$12.95

Ad Gr. 2-4

The time has come for Mom to broach the delicate matter of Fitzherbert's paternity: all the other goslings in the barnyard were sired by the old gray gander, but Fitzherbert is the offspring of a *grande passion* between his goose mother and a magnificent white swan ("Oh, the music of his great wings! It was love at first flight!") He may, in fact, be the world's only living swoose—swan + goose. A quest to find his father leads Fitzherbert to Windsor Castle, where the royal ornithologist recognizes the *rara avis* for the treasure he is, and the widowed Queen Victoria is so charmed by Fitzherbert's comically obsequious bow that she smilingly announces, "We are amused." Had King-Smith ended here with a happily-ever-after, the reader might be satisfied with this droll historical fantasy, but an additional chapter involving a French chef and a visit by Victoria's foreign cousins seems awkwardly tacked on and breaks the tone of the tale. A gallery of energetic pen-and-ink sketches accompanies the text. EB

LAFFERTY, LIDA *Born Early: A Premature Baby's Story for Children*; by Lida Lafferty and Bo Flood; illus. with photographs by Rebecca Young. Songbird, 1994 38p
Paper ed. ISBN 0-9641413-0-2 \$8.95 R 3-7 yrs

Despite a text obviously geared to young listeners, this volume will attract readers well into the middle grades with its dramatic black-and-white photographs and simple, yet remarkably complete, portrayal of the hospitalization of a premature baby. Focusing on the experience of Carrie—born three months early, weighing under three pounds—the authors briefly review facts concerning normal gestation and then turn to the loving efforts of the neonatal intensive care unit to protect and nurture the struggling infant. Without minimizing the severity of the preemie's distress, the text relieves the fears older siblings may have regarding those mysterious hospital goings-on from which they are largely excluded and, together with Young's photos, makes sense of the tangle of tubes and machinery they may encounter on a hospital visit. Frequent spatial comparisons are deftly geared to the youthful audience: "Carrie's lungs were tiny, each about the size of a tea bag." Bibliographies of children's and adult books on conception, birth, and preemies are appended; a comprehensive glossary of medical terminology will be welcomed by parents. Although the flimsy, stapled soft-cover binding may limit its library shelf life, this volume is nonetheless a worthwhile purchase for institutions and families. EB

LARSON, KIRBY *Second-Grade Pig Pals*; illus. by Nancy Poydar. Holiday House, 1994 87p
ISBN 0-8234-1107-9 \$14.95 Ad Gr. 2-4

Quinn is worried because everyone else in her class has brought something in to celebrate National Pig Day, and she can't think of anything to bring. She is distracted and cheered by meeting a new girl in school, Manuela, who seems very friendly, but the next day Manuela has been taken over by Quinn's enemy Annie May. By the end of this short chapter book, Quinn has won her friend back by bravely borrowing a book from a scary teacher for the pig celebration and giving it to Manuela. Adults might find Quinn rather whiny but children may enjoy reading her travails as she agonizes, in true-to-life second-grade fashion, over the pigs and Manuela. Larson does bring the activity of a school classroom to life well, but the humor seems forced, and we never get any insight into the book's villainess, Annie May. Poydar's watercolors, reproduced in black and white, are lively and depict a multiethnic classroom. SDL

LASKY, KATHRYN *Beyond the Burning Time*. Blue Sky/Scholastic, 1994 273p
ISBN 0-590-47331-X \$13.95 Ad Gr. 7-10

As did Ann Rinaldi in *A Break with Charity* (BCCB 9/92), Lasky uses the comparatively recent scholarship of Boyer and Nissenbaum (whom she cites in a research note and bibliography) to explore the economic rivalries that may have caused the attention-begging hysterics of a clique of adolescent girls to blow up into the infamous Salem witchcraft trials of the late seventeenth century. The story is here told through the experience of the fictional Mary Chase, who, along with her freethinking widowed mother, watches the gathering darkness of witch-naming (and the cynical exploitation of same) with dismay and increasing fear. While Lasky doesn't stint on atmosphere ("The men's black steeple-crowned hats

poked darkly at the winter sky") she resists melodrama, for the most part allowing the history center stage. In fact, the primary fictional thread—Mary's mother is accused, tried, and sentenced to hang, but is rescued by Mary and her brother—is not the strongest in the story, partially because the rescue seems far-fetched, and partially because Mary and her mother seem too in touch with the hindsight of the present day. Still, they are cogent, involved, and involving observers and through them Lasky leaves readers with a wise eye on the past. RS

LESSEM, DON *Jack Horner: Living With Dinosaurs*; illus. by Janet Hamlin. Scientific American/Freeman, 1994 48p (Science Superstars)

Trade ed. ISBN 0-7167-6546-2 \$14.95

Paper ed. ISBN 0-7167-6549-7 \$4.95

R Gr. 4-6

Dr. John Horner, who prefers to go by plain Jack, discovered his first dinosaur fossil on his father's ranch in Montana when he was eight years old and claims that from that moment on his interest lay solely in dinosaurs, particularly duckbilled dinosaurs. Despite dyslexia and a general lack of interest in most school subjects (flunking out of college seven times), he has become one of the world's foremost paleontologists. His first major discovery came when he noticed that some fossils collected at the turn of the century contained dinosaur eggshells, leading him to a huge area of dinosaur nests with baby bones in them. Thus *Maiasaura*, or good mother dinosaur, was found, allowing scientists to learn much more about the way certain dinosaurs lived. Jack Horner is still very active, working as advisor on *Jurassic Park* and continuing to lead expeditions and analyze findings. Author Lessem, a friend of Horner's, writes with zest, showing the determination and excitement that accompanied Horner's explorations. He fills in the necessary scientific information with concise explanations, but keeps his focus on the person. Chapters are short, with many pencil illustrations that add interest and help clarify the science, making the book a good choice for reluctant readers. An address for the Dinosaur Society is given, along with a bibliography made up almost entirely of books by Lessem and Horner. SDL

LEVIN, BETTY *Away to Me, Moss*. Greenwillow, 1994 161p

ISBN 0-688-13439-4 \$14.00

R Gr. 5-8

The central images here—a border collie, Moss, whose movements are out of control because his master, Rob, has had a stroke rendering *his* movements out of control—make an unusually layered dog story, told from the viewpoint of a ten-year-old neighbor involved with both victims. Zanna is dismayed when she goes to pick out a puppy and finds Moss chained miserably in the barn; there's no room for canine miscreants on a sheep farm, but Rob, the only one who could channel Moss's fierce work drive, is limited to a wheelchair and a few indecipherable words that first repel and later intrigue Zanna when she begins to see patterns of meaning in them. The plot comes close to overload with Zanna's own crisis: her mother, who administers speech therapy to Rob, and her father, working at a job in California, are undergoing a trial separation, and this thread seems more hastily spun than the careful development of the main story. Ultimately, however, the stress of both Zanna's and Rob's families is skillfully paralleled, and Zanna's relationship with Moss is—save for a single fortuitous benevolence—realistically resolved. Meanwhile, the sheepdog trials generate plenty of intense moments, with Moss's training as vividly detailed as Rob's progress and Zanna's maturation. BH

LISLE, JANET TAYLOR *Looking for Juliette*. Jackson/Orchard, 1994 120p
 Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08720-4 \$14.99
 Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-06870-6 \$14.95

R Gr. 3-5

The investigators of magic (not the "toy store variety," but the kind that "[hides] out in the ordinary") return for their second adventure, looking for Angela Harrall's missing cat, Juliette, who has been entrusted to animal lover Poco while Mr. Harrall and his daughter temporarily reside in Mexico. Struck by a passing car and tossed into the air, Juliette was last seen fleeing into nowhere by the young neighborhood eccentric Walter Kew, who lurks beneath the low brim of his baseball cap to avoid the bad spirits that follow him. Walter and the girls hold stealthy consultations with his trusted Ouija board; it has always kept him in touch with his deceased parents, and he relies on its sagacity to help them trace Juliette to the prime suspect—Miss Bone, a retired schoolteacher who is caretaker of the Harrall's vacant home. After several darkly atmospheric Ouija sessions and an abortive confrontation with the shadowy Miss Bone exhaust the children's leads, Juliette simply reappears, as cats are wont to do, unharmed, nonchalant, and unapologetic (bear in mind, Poco talks with her, and would know!), but sporting a mysterious little box of catnip around her neck. As in Lisle's series debut (*The Gold Dust Letters*, BCCB 7/94), the children's verbal precocity adds understated humor and a touch of melodrama, and again, a sober thread runs through the plot, which circles around Walter's obsession with his parents' death, a mystery which no adult seems at liberty to discuss. But in this adventure, rather than being subjected to an adult's painstaking elucidation, the children themselves discover Ouija's unreliability and Miss Bone's innocence. Lisle leaves the door ajar for a third passage into the unknown—perhaps involving Walter's antecedents and a large casserole dish? EB

LYONS, MARY E. *Deep Blues: Bill Traylor, Self-Taught Artist*. Scribners, 1994 42p (African-American Artists and Artisans)
 ISBN 0-684-19458-9 \$15.95

Ad Gr. 3-6

Bill Traylor was born an Alabama slave in 1856 and spent his life in poverty; his talent was discovered in 1939 by a young artist, who arranged for a showing of Traylor's work and fortunately collected it for posterity, thus making possible its contemporary rediscovery. Apparently few biographical details are available about Traylor's life, so Lyons extrapolates from his paintings, from the lives of other poor African-American farmers, and from the events of the time. This blend of fact and surmise is less successful in this book than it was in Lyons' *Stitching Stars* (BCCB 12/93) in this same series: here it's difficult to tell which is which, and some of the biographical readings of the pictures seem far-fetched and labored. The art, however, is absorbing: Traylor's figures have sinuous shapes and piercing eyes, and they float on their (mostly cardboard) backgrounds like gleeful spirits. Kids will particularly enjoy his occasional visual jokes, such as using the logo on his cardboard surface as the navel of his subject. As a biography this is unable to rise above the paucity of sources, but it's an appealing introduction to an accessible but little-known American artist. A list of sources and an index are included. DS

MCGUIRE, RICHARD *Night Becomes Day*; written and illus. by Richard McGuire. Viking, 1994 34p
 ISBN 0-670-85547-2 \$13.99

R 3-7 yrs

A string of associations form the text of this picture book: "Bright becomes sun/

And sun becomes shine/ Shine becomes sparkle/ And sparkle becomes stream." Some of the chains link together logically, such as "Street becomes highway," while others rely on the illustration, as a building goes up to the sky and "building becomes cloud." The pictures have a snappy commercial art style reminiscent of the 1930s, with solid blocks of ink forming strong-edged shapes. Humorous touches are sprinkled through the illustrations, as when children throw a paper airplane at a car whizzing by. The city scene in particular is a marvel of motion and sweep, with a street going on into the distance filled with activity, and a building on the opposite end stretching up into the sky. Even the endpapers tie in, as a "Tree becomes paper/ And paper becomes news [a newspaper]/ News becomes trash [going into a recycling bin]/ And trash becomes new"—turned into wrapping paper, which are the endpapers as well. The rhythms of words and pictures could make this an incantatory bedtime favorite. SDL

McKENZIE, ELLEN KINDT *The Perfectly Orderly House*; illus. by Megan Lloyd. Holt, 1994 32p
ISBN 0-8050-1946-4 \$14.95

R 4-7 yrs

With a motto of "What you throw away today, you'll surely need tomorrow," an Old Woman finds her "small bit" of a house crammed so full she can't find the things she needs. Craving more organization, she convinces her brother Sam to build her a house made up of a series of rooms, one for each letter of the alphabet. The Attic holds aprons, apples, an anvil; in the Basement, the bowls, buckets, baskets and other items beginning with B will go, and so on through the alphabet. When the house is completed with a Zoo, the Old Woman invites her neighbors for a party and returns home to her now extremely orderly small bit of a house. With her sprightly telling and the very funny party in which the guests search through the house for the different foods and utensils by letter, McKenzie makes a good story out of what could have been merely a cure idea. Lloyd's colored-ink illustrations keep up the cheerful spirit and add innumerable alphabetic details for children to discover. SDL

McMILLAN, BRUCE *Sense Suspense*; written and illus. by Bruce McMillan. Scholastic, 1994 32p
ISBN 0-590-47904-0 \$15.95

Ad 4-6 yrs

A Puerto Rican setting (Culebra Island) provides McMillan with a tropical accent for the familiar game of photographic synecdoche: look at a close-up photo at an unfamiliar pattern or shape; turn the page to see the object revealed in its entirety. Here the game is spiced up with sensory multiple choice—along with guessing the object, kids are supposed to figure out which of the five senses the object stimulates. Thus a deep-pink curve turns into a flower to be smelled; coarse white threads are revealed to be a baby goat being touched by some island children. As McMillan acknowledges in a "Using this book" paragraph, there are no wrong answers, but since a stubborn kid could build an argument for almost any of the senses matching any of the pictures, the page-turning can be a bit of a letdown: that colorful parrot is sitting on someone's hand; are we looking at it, touching it, or hearing it? The last is the preferred answer, but hearing is probably the most difficult of the senses to pin down in a photograph. Hana Machotka's *Outstanding Outsides* (BCCB 3/93) and Margaret Miller's *My Five Senses* (BCCB 4/94) are just two of many picture books to take on either of the concepts McMillan covers

here; while the book is an attractive offering (with English and Spanish texts), it's probably an optional purchase for most collections. RS

MCNAUGHTON, COLIN *Captain Abdul's Pirate School*; written and illus. by Colin McNaughton. Candlewick, 1994 33p
ISBN 1-56402-429-6 \$16.95 R Gr. 3-5

Apparently retired from the active pirate biz, Captain Abdul (see *Jolly Roger and the Pirates of Abdul the Skinhead*, BCCB 1/89) has opened a school for young recruits where "Pickles" has been sent by Dad: "He says it will toughen me up." Despite initial misgivings, Pickles learns a lot: cannon-firing, counterfeiting, "pirate swear words." All is well until Pickles overhears a plan in the teachers' lounge to kidnap the kids and hold them for ransom, and so decides to lead a mutiny. It's a breezy, irreverent fantasy punctuated with enough wit and mild ribaldry so that the picture-book format won't put off those kids old enough to get the jokes. Harum-scarum ink-and-watercolor illustrations yo-heave-ho the humor, and a surprise reminiscent of Kemp's *The Turbulent Term of Tike Tyler* is sprung on the very last page. RS

MAHY, MARGARET *The Greatest Show Off Earth*; illus. by Wendy Smith. Viking, 1994 186p
ISBN 0-670-85736-X \$13.99 R Gr. 4-7

While celebrated for her perceptive realistic fiction and intense, moody fantasies, Margaret Mahy also has a madcap streak a mile wide, amply demonstrated in this comic space opera involving orphans, pirates, clowns and great green slugs. The orphans, Delphinium, "the cleverest calculator on Space Station Vulnik," and Jason, the Station's "library," are accidently whoooshed into space while playing with the buttons in a skip-ship. They land on a flying circus, where at first all the fun seems to be missing, but which soon becomes the setting for a grand battle: pirate queen La Mollerina and her fiancé *cum* lackey Bamba Caramba versus the children and the clowns. Due to some heavily burlesqued foreshadowing, readers will know the real identities of Mollerina (Delphinium's careless babysitter), Bamba (Jason's long-lost big brother) and the clowns (Delphinium's missing, presumed dead, parents) long before the children do, but that makes the farce more fun, and there's still the problem of those pesky space-slugs. Mahy's inventiveness is rampant, and there's plenty of tongue-in-cheek suspense to keep the story rolling. Short chapters, funny names, and knock-knock jokes make the book a zippy pick for reading aloud. RS

MARTIN, BILL JR *The Maestro Plays*; illus. by Vladimir Radunsky. Holt, 1994 42p
ISBN 0-8050-1746-1 \$15.95 Ad 4-7 yrs

While *maestro* properly refers to a music teacher or conductor, the one in this book is a one-man band, who plays "PROUDLY. HE PLAYS LOUDLY. He plays slowly/ He plays oh..ly" Oh..ly? Well, it rhymes—which seems to be the governing logic for a picture book that has plenty of brass, verbally, and plenty of flash, visually, but doesn't quite find the melody. Bill Martin's simple text is fun to read aloud for the sounds it makes ("He plays flowingly, glowingly/ knowingly . . . / showingly . . . / goingly") but it is facilely rhymed and doesn't have enough ideas

beyond the stream of adverbs, and too many of the words—"nippingly," "drippingly"—ain't words. Made-up or not, though, the words bounce right along with Radunsky's big and bold cut-paper images of the maestro, pictured as a clown, running through his somewhat limited repertoire accompanied by animal pals, with the red pigs dancing à la Matisse being particularly fetching. The book is an eye-catcher and in many ways an ear-catcher as well, but it looks and sounds too much like a movie from which everything's been cut but the special effects. RS

MATAS, CAROL *The Burning Time*. Delacorte, 1994 [113p]

ISBN 0-385-32097-3 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 5-8

Seizing dramatic moments in history (*Lisa's War*, BCCB 9/89; *Sworn Enemies*, BCCB 4/93; etc.) is Matas' specialty, and here the experience of a sixteenth-century French girl whose mother is accused of witchcraft becomes almost an adventure tale. There's little subtlety or ambiguity about the characters, but readers will be compelled by the action, which includes harrowing scenes of Rose's witnessing her mother's torture and then administering a fatal potion to save her from further pain. Through historical documentation and fictionalization, the dynamics of witch hunting have become well known, and this story is a model of the social conflicts classic to such situations. The first-person narrative is accessible and easier to read than more substantial novels we've seen on New England's victims (*The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, *Tituba of Salem Village*), while the protagonist's romance and escape will draw kids who are reluctant to read. For lively class discussion, pair this with Donna Jo Napoli's eerie fantasy, *The Magic Circle* (BCCB 4/93), an equally brief but more complex tale about a midwife suspected of black magic. BH

MAYNE, WILLIAM *Hob and the Goblins*. Dorling Kindersley, 1994 140p

ISBN 1-56458-713-4 \$12.95

R Gr. 4-7

Hob (previously appearing in *The Green Book of Hob Stories*, BCCB 10/84, etc.) is a household spirit, like a brownie, who looks after a dwelling and its inhabitants; as the story opens, however, he's wandering about in search of a place to belong. He first tries to inhabit a bus, but that doesn't work out. Eventually he adopts the bus driver and his family as they move to a new house. Unfortunately their new home is beset by something evil that only Hob recognizes: their new neighbor is a witch, the children's new playmates are goblin children, and under the house lies the vengeful goblin king protecting his treasure. Despite overwhelming odds and clever plotting against them, Hob and his family, with the aid of some technology (the bus driver's old bus), eventually defeat the goblins and take back their house. Mayne's portrayal of Hob, the knowing but simple guardian of house and family, is sufficiently vivid and individual to keep preciousness generally at bay, and the family's gradual realization and appreciation of his existence is credible and amusing. The plot loses some momentum at the final showdown involving various creatures ranging from dwarfs to goblins, but the world of Hob and his humans (and his continuing arguments with the family budgie) is well-imagined, and Mayne writes with both charm and menace. Kids who liked Susan Cooper's *The Boggart* (BCCB 3/93) may enjoy this; it's an even better bet for youngsters who are beginning to relish the supernatural but aren't quite ready to leave Winnie-the-Pooh behind. DS

MILLER, MARY JANE *Going the Distance*. Viking, 1994 151p
ISBN 0-670-84815-8 \$14.99

R Gr. 4-6

Loren's artistic parents have spent their lives—and hers—moving around. Now, just when Loren thinks she's going to be able to spend sixth grade in Florida, her parents leave for Italy and send Loren off to her grandmother in Illinois. Loren settles in there, getting to know the same-age twins next door, competing on the swim team, and beginning to date. She starts to chafe under her parents' long-distance control of her life, and when they decide to move the family to New York upon their return, she rebels. Miller portrays a more unconventional family than is usual for her, but Loren is a recognizable and appealing protagonist, who loves reading romances but is unsure about her feelings for the boy next door; her parents, while not as considerate of their daughter as they should be, are not painted as monsters. The ending is realistic, too: while Loren's parents realize that she's growing up in ways they've been blind to (and her mother adjusts to Loren's cutting off the long hair that made her a perfect model for her mother's paintings) and they decide she can finish out the school year where she is, the family is still moving to New York. Readers who have enjoyed Miller's other work will find the easy reading and slightly exotic touches here to their liking. DS

MOZESON, I. E. *Jerusalem Mosaic: Young Voices from the Holy City*; by I. E. Mozeson and Lois Stavsky. Four Winds, 1994 [175p] illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-02-767651-X \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 7-10

"It's a crappy country; what can I tell you?" says bitter eighteen-year-old Omer. Still, he concludes, "If I survive the army and the hellhole in Lebanon that they throw me into, you'll find me right here. It's the only place." This kind of ambivalence is a brave inclusion for a book whose target audience may be heavily Zionist, but the thirty-six young people interviewed here show an honest range of philosophical, ethnic, and social diversity. Most of the subjects have strong opinions and share them: fourteen-year-old Moslem Sa'ana, who believes that a marriage negotiated by her father is the best way for her, condones her brother's involvement in killing collaborators. Irreverent sixteen-year-old Limor, Israeli-born of Russian descent, resents Russian newcomers who "smell bad" and "take all the money and all the jobs from everyone else," but she's equally critical of the ultra-religious ("The haredim are stupid, and they live a stupid life"). This is a mosaic that aims to show humanity, not nobility, for a realistic glimpse of a complex Middle Eastern crossroads. The only flaw is perhaps inherent in the medium: while the pieces of a visual mosaic appear simultaneously to reveal patterns, readers who absorb these brief segments one at a time may find it hard to make connections that are not readily apparent and are never analyzed or summarized in the text. However, students will value the candid representation of Israel's commonest conflicts, which have also been aired in Ashabraner's *Gavriel and Jemal* (BCCB 12/84) and Laurie Dolphin's *Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam: Oasis of Peace* (4/93). A demographic profile of interviewees, a glossary, a bibliography, an index, and black-and-white photographs are included. BH

MYERS, EDWARD *Climb or Die*. Hyperion, 1994 180p
ISBN 0-7868-0026-7 \$14.95

Ad Gr. 4-7

In an effort to get to the family's Rocky Mountain cabin amidst a screaming bliz-

zard, Danielle and Jake's father impulsively detours down a mining road. The car collides with a tree, badly injuring both their father and mother, and Danielle and Jake have to go for help. The highway is too far back, so the kids decide to climb to a weather station atop a nearby mountain instead. Hoping to rely on Danielle's rudimentary mountaineering skills and Jake's build-a-better-mousetrap ingenuity, they set out into the snow and into an elemental conflict with nature. Climb or die, says the title, and that basically sums up the story, as the two kids, squabbling and working together, battle the mountain. It isn't subtle but it moves fast, and the cliffhanging chapter endings and enticing cover painting of the kids on the side of the snowy mountain will rope in reluctant readers. RS

PANZER, NORA, comp. *Celebrate America in Poetry and Art*. National Museum of Art, Smithsonian Institution/Hyperion, 1994 96p illus. with photographs
Library ed. ISBN 1-56282-665-4 \$18.89
Trade ed. ISBN 1-56282-664-6 \$18.95 R Gr. 5-10

Not to be confused—or, more likely, *sure* to be confused—with Laura Whipple's similar anthology, *Celebrating America*, reviewed below, this is a collection of American poems, illustrated with American art (from the National Museum of American Art), conveying aspects of the American experience. Panzer has included a wide variety of poems written by poets famous and obscure, nearly forgotten and brand new, such as Langston Hughes and Gloria Anzaldúa, May Swenson and Ralph Waldo Emerson; she has a knack for finding worthy but unhackneyed offerings from much-anthologized poets and for finding the one good poem from otherwise mediocre writers. The art, which includes paintings, photographs, and photographs of sculptures, is imaginatively chosen but not confusingly so, and the illustrations tend to favor strong lines, intense color, and a contemporary feel; artists represented include Thomas Hart Benton, William Johnson, and Elizabeth Catlett. The text and artwork are knit together with an abundance of white space and with titling in thick but informal black type, which makes each page strong but unfussy. While the thematic logic of the book's five sections is not always clear, and some of the illustrations could have been larger, this collection has an energy and diversity that gives it child appeal as well as teacher appeal; the back cover alone, which features Mike Wilkins' rendition of the Preamble of the Constitution via license plates, will get kids interested in the book. Brief, useful biographies of the writers and artists are included, as is an index of both paintings and poetry. DS

PENNER, LUCILLE RECHT *The True Story of Pocahontas*; illus. by Pamela Johnson. Random House, 1994 48p (Step into Reading)
Library ed. ISBN 0-679-96166-6 \$7.99
Paper ed. ISBN 0-679-86166-1 \$3.50 M Gr. 1-3

The life of Pocahontas from her childhood with her family through her kidnapping by Captain Argall, her marriage, and her trip to England is told in this easy reader. The historical details seem fairly accurate, although at no point is it mentioned that many historians believe the story about Pocahontas saving Captain John Smith was made up by Captain Smith in his memoirs—it is simply presented as true. The narrative is oddly written in the present tense (“When Pocahontas is ten years old, three English ships appear”) and is sometimes a little patronizing (“One man points a big stick. Boom! Boom!”). Soft, earth-toned watercolor

illustrations are competently executed, and the costumes of both Indians and the English add interest, but while Johnson depicts the men in the story with a variety of expressions and characteristics, Pocahontas's face is generically pretty, with little sign of a personality. There are no historical notes. SDL

PLATT, RICHARD *Stephen Biesty's Cross-Sections Castle*; illus. by Stephen Biesty. Dorling Kindersley, 1994 32p
ISBN 1-56458-467-4 \$16.95 R Gr. 5-9

In the tradition of the author/illustrator team's *Incredible Cross-Sections* and *Cross-Sections Man-of-War* (BCCB 1/94), *Castle* is the double-spread by double-spread exposé of life in a fourteenth century castle. While each spread has a theme ("Trades and Skills," "Defense and Siege," "Food and Feasting"), the impression is generally one of cheerful anarchy, with hordes of people crawling like ants through the cutaway castle as pointered captions explain their tasks and smaller separate illustrations allow readers a slightly closer look at particularly intriguing pastimes or practices. "Testing the purity of beer was the job of the ale conner. He poured a pool of ale onto a wooden bench and then sat in it. . . Poor quality beer was sugary and would glue him to the seat" describes a man arising from a bench leaving his pants behind. The use of color and Anno-like minutiae, as well as the grab-bag feel to the format, give this book a different demeanor than Macaulay's *Castle*; kids who liked that will probably like this too, but kids who felt intimidated by Macaulay's dense blocks of text will appreciate the browsability of this entry and the generous helping of gory and gross details about warfare, waste disposal, and punishments. The explanations aren't always as clear as they should be, and some of the British jokes will be lost on American readers, but this will find a wide audience; you could even show it to readers of Cushman's *Catherine Called Birdy* (BCCB 6/94), who might enjoy a different look at medieval life. DS

POLACCO, PATRICIA *Tikvah Means Hope*; written and illus. by Patricia Polacco. Doubleday, 1994 40p
ISBN 0-385-32059-0 \$15.95 R 5-8 yrs

Justine's neighbor, elderly Mr. Roth, is preparing for the Jewish harvest holiday Sukkoth. Justine and her friend Duane help Mr. Roth build his Sukkah in the yard, creating a small room for their feast out of brightly patterned cloth, and tying fruits and gourds to decorate it. On their shopping trip to the market, they see the orange glow and realize that the hills of Oakland, where they live, are on fire. They stay in a school gym while the fire burns for two days, and when they return to their neighborhood, they find it completely devastated. Miraculously, the Sukkah has survived untouched, as has Mr. Roth's cat, Tikvah, whose name in Hebrew means "hope." Polacco's illustrations of watercolor and pencil are loose and lively, interspersed with real photographs inserted into frames, and real posters on a bedroom wall to heighten the reader's understanding that many real possessions were lost. Polacco has recreated a true event skillfully, evoking the terrifying feelings but also ending on an uplifting note. The one unfortunate aspect of the book is that its cover gives no hint of the subject matter, and parents sitting down to read a nice book with a cheerful title and a cat and flowers on the cover may be disconcerted. In her author's note at the end, Polacco tells about Oakland today as it recovers from the fire. SDL

PORTE, BARBARA ANN *Something Terrible Happened*. Jackson/Orchard, 1994 214p

Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08719-0 \$16.99

Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-06869-2 \$16.95

Ad Gr. 5-8

Gillian is nine at the start of the book; her white father is long gone, but she's happy with the strong distaff side of her family of "Island women"—mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, all proud of their Caribbean heritage. Tragedy strikes when Gillian's mother falls ill with AIDS, and as she deteriorates Gillian is sent off to stay with her father's brother's family in Tennessee. After her mother's death, Gillian remains in Tennessee, puzzling out her place in the world, finding peace with her uncle, aunt, and cousin, and rejoicing in her grandmother's impending move to the area. Porte tenderly depicts Gillian's attachment to her family, her grief for her mother, and her maturation from nine-year-old to eighth-grader by the book's end. Despite the similar theme (and cover art) this is not up to the standard of *Toning the Sweep* (BCCB 6/93): this book's breadth, combined with its love of interpolated stories (there are source notes in the back for the included folktales) and letters makes the pace slow and the plot rambling; it's not clear why the first-person narration comes from an adult friend of the family or why the tense shifts from past to present in the final chapter. The final effect is dreamy and somewhat adult, but there's a verisimilitude in the wandering and an intimacy in the portrayals that keep the book an absorbing read. DS

RANDOM HOUSE BOOK OF BEDTIME STORIES; illus. by Jane Dyer. Random House, 1994 141p

Library ed. ISBN 0-679-90832-3 \$18.99

Trade ed. ISBN 0-679-80832-9 \$18.00

Ad 4-7 yrs

Almost anything can be a bedtime story, which is a good thing for this anthology, more a compilation of mostly familiar tales than it is a collection specifically centered on a go-to-bed theme or tone. The Three Billy Goats Gruff are here, so is Goldilocks, and so is a retelling of Wilde's "The Selfish Giant," expurgated so that the giant does not die in the end. Although some of the old favorites have been newly retold for this collection, there's nothing here that's not better served elsewhere, and while Jane Dyer's watercolors are pretty and peaceful, this volume can't replace the many excellent picture-book versions of the same tales, such as Beatrix Potter's self-illustrated *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. There are twenty-one stories in all, most from the public domain; more recent selections include stories by Marjorie Sharmat, Joan Aiken and Joanne Ryder. RS

ROBBINS, KEN *Water*; written and illus. by Ken Robbins. Holt, 1994 48p

ISBN 0-8050-2257-0 \$16.95

Ad Gr. 4-6

In an elegant change from more "efficiently" written and illustrated science books, Robbins uses a casual, sometimes poetic, tone in his writing along with his hazily hand-tinted photographs to pay tribute to one of the four classic elements, with similar treatments of the other three (earth, fire, and air) planned to follow. The book is beautiful to look at, giving a nostalgic wash to waterfalls, seascapes, and even ice cubes, but the text is often bumpy, both in the shifts between subtopics and within the sentences themselves, which too often employ gracelessly ordered comma-clauses or use *it* without a clear antecedent: "In certain places, water

surfaces in a most unusual, spectacular way. Deep in the earth, it's hot enough to melt a rock." While the writing could flow better, the pictures are a cool drink in an often arid genre. RS

SCHERTLE, ALICE *How Now, Brown Cow?*; illus. by Amanda Schaffer. Browndeer/Harcourt, 1994 32p
ISBN 0-15-276648-0 \$14.95 R* Gr. 1-4

Given the common maxim that good poems create their own visual images, it's unusual to have a picture-book collection in which the art and verse play off each other with such natural dexterity as these. Schaffer's oil paintings, which could win a place on gallery walls because of their strong brushstroke textures and compositional wit, play up to the poems instead of overwhelming them. For instance, in "The Cow's Complaint" ("How unkind to keep me here/ When, over there, the grass is greener"), a full-page spread is devoted to bright green forage in the foreground, topped by two brown boards sandwiching the pink nose, desperate tongue, rolling eyes, and flattened ears of a cow trying to get at what she can't have. It's a portrait revealing most of us in bovine guise. The poetry itself ranges—without milking the subject dry—from whimsical ("Taradiddle," in which "They never found the dish and the spoon") to lyrical ("Cows Coming Home"), philosophical ("A Cow Looks Down the Highway"), and funny ("Drivin' the Cows"), but it's all proof positive, in case you ever doubted, that there's always room for moo . . . er, more unexpected specialty items in children's literature. BH

SCHNUR, STEVEN *The Shadow Children*; illus. by Herbert Tauss. Morrow, 1994 88p
Library ed. ISBN 0-688-13831-4 \$13.93
Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-13281-2 \$14.00 R Gr. 5-8

In this novel set just after World War II, Etienne, eleven, has always spent his summers with his grandparents in the French village of Mont Brulant, but this summer is different: his grandmother has died, and the village seems bereft of young people, save for a floating band of silent, hungry refugees. Etienne doesn't understand why Grand-père refuses to help the children, in fact refuses even to acknowledge their existence, but as the summer progresses he learns the shameful secret and ghostly legacy of the village, which had revealed its hidden Jews to the Nazis during the war. Despite some portentous writing and some speechmaking by Grand-père ("there are no easy choices in wartime, only agonizing, heartbreaking ones") the story conveys the unnerving atmosphere of the village and the despair of its ghosts—or memories—that replay for Etienne the night the German train came to take the children east. There are some technical glitches: one ghost, a teacher, hands Etienne a book that we never hear about again; the same ghost, in replying to Etienne's protest that the war is over, replies "Yes, for us it is," on one page and "Not for us," a couple of pages later. But on the whole, the narrative is steadily spun and the moral dilemma of the villagers well-worked into the drama of the story. RS

SHERROW, VICTORIA *The U.S. Health Care Crisis: The Fight Over Access, Quality, and Cost*. Millbrook, 1994 144p illus. with photographs (Issue & Debate)
ISBN 1-56294-364-2 \$15.90 Ad Gr. 7-12

Sherrow in her first chapter makes a case that there *is* a health care crisis, then gives

a good outline of the history of hospitals and medical care in the United States and the way their improvement has led to higher costs. The debates over access to health care and whether or not it is a "right" are explored, and Sherrow details the various attempts to contain costs through the use of HMOs and other medical plans. The concluding chapter discusses the (recently defeated) Clinton health care plan. The author explains the issues clearly, but fails to bring her information to life well; a few health care anecdotes are sprinkled through the book, but they are generally too brief and lack follow-through. Her research seems thorough, with a source list and bibliography included, but since only secondary sources of information such as books and articles were used, the book reads much like a term paper. Photographs are murky, using anonymous descriptions such as "this doctor"; editorial cartoons liven things up. A few charts or graphs would have helped clarify the lists of numbers and percentages. Sherrow includes in an appendix a list of items that a health care plan must address. SDL

SPEDDEN, DAISY CORNING STONE *Polar, the Titanic Bear*; illus. by Laurie McGaw and with photographs. Madison/Little, 1994 64p
ISBN 0-316-80625-0 \$16.95 R Gr. 3-6

Based on her family's real-life adventures in the early twentieth century, Spedden's story, narrated by a Steiff teddy bear called Polar, opens as the bear is being made in the factory. Polar goes everywhere with his young master Douglas, from Madeira, where the boy comes down with the measles and his nurse Muddie Boons fights off the mice and rats, to Panama, Bermuda, Algiers, and other exotic ports. Then they board the *Titanic*, and five days later Douglas is loaded onto a lifeboat and rescued with the rest of his family and Polar, too. Though having the bear narrate the tale seems a bit precious to modern readers, Spedden's writing is vigorous and vivid. In the last few pages, Leighton H. Coleman III, Spedden's relative, fills in some of the details of the privileged world the Speddens inhabited and of the sinking of the *Titanic*. Photographs and postcards from Spedden's albums are mixed together with watercolor paintings. The book's audience may be somewhat limited by the combination of story and history, but *Polar* captures a way of life very well, and *Titanic* buffs will enjoy this personal account of the disaster. SDL

ST. GEORGE, JUDITH *Crazy Horse*. Putnam, 1994 180p
ISBN 0-399-22667-2 \$17.95 R Gr. 5-9

Since most of what is known about the Oglala warrior Crazy Horse centers on his feats in battle, St. George wisely focuses on his hero status among the Sioux, supporting biographical material with a vivid picture of Native culture and combat strategy. Although her sympathy clearly lies with the Sioux, she never idealizes her subject into a poor, swindled Noble Savage. Crazy Horse and his warriors are portrayed as individualistic, often arrogant, young men, plagued by rivalries, jealousies, and lack of group discipline, skilled in a style of warfare in which the bravery of counting coup meant little against the superior firepower of the United States Army. An honest historian, St. George looks squarely at the brutalities of Plains Indian warfare—scalpings, mutilations, etc.—but always explains their spiritual significance. Likewise, she judges Crazy Horse according to Sioux virtues of bravery, fortitude, generosity, and wisdom, concluding that bravery and generosity came easily to him, wisdom grew with age, but his lapse in fortitude (he eloped with another warrior's wife) jeopardized peace within his tribe. While this volume will not be first choice for report writers seeking quick dates, data, and pictures

(although a lengthy bibliography and an index are included), it will satisfy more serious readers ready to consider an interpretation of the great warrior's character and motivation. EB

STEIG, WILLIAM *Zeke Pippin*; written and illus. by William Steig. di Capua/HarperCollins, 1994 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-205077-X \$14.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-205076-1 \$15.00

Ad 5-8 yrs

Steig's newest hero, Zeke Pippin, a pig, is "moseying" along when a harmonica falls off the garbage truck at his feet. Trying it out, he discovers he is a "natural musician," but when he plays for his family, they fall asleep. Peeved by their "insulting behavior," he sets off on a raft with his harmonica. He quickly realizes that the harmonica puts people to sleep, but when he tries to return home, he is attacked first by a trio of tough-talking dogs, then by a coyote. With the help of the magical harmonica, he is able to escape each danger and is greeted ecstatically at home, where he goes on to play his new, unmagical harmonica before "enraptured audiences." Steig's vocabulary is typically rich and unconventional—the coyote is "death-dealing," and later a "wretched carnivore." His artwork in pen and ink and watercolor uses a brighter palette than do some previous works, ranging from the cheery blues and greens of Zeke's happy time floating down the river, to the darker grays and browns of his frightening adventures. Faithful Steig fans, however, will recognize too many elements from his past works, with *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, *The Amazing Bone*, and *Spinky Sulks* all contributing parts of the plot, and though Steig refers to Zeke's ingenuity, the plot does not develop thoroughly enough for any ingeniousness or real determination to be seen. Though not as satisfying nor as original as other Steig works, Zeke's story is still easy on the ear and a good choice for story hour. SDL

STEWART, ELISABETH J. *On the Long Trail Home*. Clarion, 1994 106p

ISBN 0-395-68361-0 \$13.95

M Gr. 3-6

This fictionalized account of Stewart's great-grandmother's escape along the trail of the Cherokee removal in 1838 traces the flight of Meli and her brother Tahli from an encampment in Kentucky back to their homeland in the mountains of North Carolina. Although the siblings' hunger, weariness, injuries, and separations provide the grist for a good adventure story, readers gain little insight into the infamous Trail of Tears from which the children escape. Dialogue reinforces those stereotyped images of Indians and frontiersmen popularized at Saturday matinees: Indians—"So many suns. Then you go. We take you partway. We are friends to Cherokees. Not friends to white men"; Frontiersman—"Take keer of the little gal." While the children's eventual reunion with their father may satisfy readers who thrive on survival stories with happy endings, others will regard Meli's headlong rush to North Carolina, the land from which her people are being systematically removed, more an exercise in foolhardiness than heroism. EB

TOLAN, STEPHANIE S. *Who's There?* Morrow, 1994 235p

ISBN 0-688-04611-8 \$14.00

R Gr. 5-7

After their parents were killed in a tragic accident, Drew and her brother Evan stayed uncomfortably with friends until family was found to take them in. Now they're living with their father's estranged father and long-lost sister, and they're

settling in to small-town life. Drew makes friends with Will, a local boy, and even Evan, who has refused to speak since the death of his parents, seems happier. Soon, though, Drew hears mysterious sounds and encounters objects inexplicably moving, and she realizes the house is haunted. When it seems clear the apparition is that of her angelic step-grandmother, Amalie, she and her fellow ghost-hunter Will are relieved, but the threatening actions of the ghost (she attacks Drew and chases her out of the house) make it clear that Amalie was not the person she pretended to be. The climax weaves together the intervention of a second ghost (Evan's namesake, drowned by Amalie as a child), the uncovering of past secrets (Amalie's spiteful, truth-telling journal is discovered), and Evan's joyous recovery of his speech. This is a cheerfully unlikely but entertaining ghost story that hits all the right spooky buttons, and while Amalie's motives aren't entirely clear, her evil and dangerous spirit makes a good villain. Despite the menace, it's a more soft-edged and secure tale than Pam Conrad's implacably and wonderfully horrific *Stonewords* (BCCB 5/90), so readers just embarking on the unfriendly-ghost genre may wish to start here. DS

WERLIN, NANCY *Are You Alone on Purpose?* Houghton, 1994 204p
ISBN 0-395-67350-X \$13.95 Ad Gr. 6-9

Thirteen-year-old Alison feels that her parents focus all their attention on her autistic twin brother, Adam; Harry, devastated by the death of his mother, is a foul-mouthed bully, dealing with his pain by tormenting everyone, especially his passive father. Alison's family begins to attend services at the temple where Harry's father is the rabbi, and Alison accompanies her brother to the rabbi's house when he gives Adam private instruction for his bar mitzvah. When a diving accident leaves Harry a paraplegic, he and Alison are thrown together at his father's house, and they begin a friendship that eventually ripens into romance. The story is somewhat predictable and the psychology of the characters often obvious, but the emotions run strong enough to keep the story involving. Alison's self-effacement in light of her hot-tempered mother, abstracted father, and needy brother is credible, and her eventual standing up for her rights is heartening (and more convincing than Harry's rapprochement with his father). Overall, it's a bit contrived, but kids will enjoy the drama and the enemies-become-sweethearts twist of the book. DS

WHIPPLE, LAURA, comp. *Celebrating America: A Collection of Poems and Images of the American Spirit.* Philomel, 1994 79p illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-399-22036-4 \$19.95 Ad Gr. 5-10

Like Panzer's *Celebrate America*, reviewed above, this is a collection of American poetry illustrated by American art, here taken from the Art Institute of Chicago. Like Panzer, Whipple takes her poetry from a variety of sources, making particularly interesting use of Native American lyrics from Central as well as North America, and of textiles as well as paintings and photographs. Unfortunately the format, with slender borders framing each page and boxing in the decorated running head at the bottom, is rather stodgy, lacking the visual punch of Panzer's collection. Despite the inclusion of much contemporary material, the selections of art and poetry also have an old-fashioned feel to them that makes the book seem rather distantly respectful rather than excited about its subject; nor do the poems, overall, match the caliber of those in the other volume. This is safe rather than stunning, but it's still an enjoyable series of juxtapositions of art and verse that

offers a brief artistic examination of the American spirit. An index of first lines, another of poets and artists, and notes on the artwork are included. DS

WILDER, LAURA INGALLS *Dance at Grandpa's*; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-023879-8; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-023878-X.

Winter Days in the Big Woods; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-023022-3; Trade ed. ISBN 0-02-023022-3.

Each book: illus. by Renée Graef. HarperCollins, 1994 32p Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$12.00 Ad 3-6 yrs

Plot is not the strongest aspect of Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House in the Big Woods*, but these two picture book adaptations dispense with narrative entirely, focusing instead on the cozy ambiance that makes Laura's Little House so inviting. *Winter Days* is drawn from the second chapter, *Dance at Grandpa's* from the eighth; what's missing along with the story are the more startling particulars (such as the time Laura woke to see a dead deer hanging outside her window) that give the series its honesty and intimacy. What's left are more generic and idealized images of pioneer living, all more or less quoted verbatim from the original, but devoid of context. While *Winter Days*, especially, seems almost like an activity book in its catalog of homey projects, both books are gently written (even the typeface is cozy) and the full-color illustrations, "inspired by the work of Garth Williams with his permission," are soft and soothing with their woodsy-warm interiors and Christmas-card snow scenes. These adaptations never get too scary for bedtime and might well serve as taste-whetting introductions to the real saga. RS

WILSON, ELIZABETH B. *Bibles and Bestiaries: A Guide to Illuminated Manuscripts*. Pierpont Morgan Library/Farrar, 1994 64p illus. with photographs ISBN 0-374-30685-0 \$25.00 R Gr. 5-9

While one might balk at such a hefty price tag for a somewhat arcane topic, this handsome work is engaging enough to generate young readers' interest in early bookmaking and justify the cost. Wilson limits her subject to Western European codices from the fifth century through the Renaissance, reflecting the scope of the Pierpont Morgan Library collection from which the lush illustrations for this volume have been carefully selected; Byzantine Christian, Jewish, and Islamic manuscripts from the same period are, however, also briefly highlighted. A discussion of the relationship between medieval books and the spread of Christianity introduces the material of prime interest to a young audience—the craft of the parchment makers, scribes, illuminators, and binders, and the details in their handiwork which reveal their artistry, errors, and even attitudes toward their work. A chapter on "best sellers" (herbals, apocalypses, etc.) may be particularly valuable to teachers and students seeking supplemental material on the Middle Ages. A glossary, illustration credits, bibliography, and a brief list of public collections of illuminated manuscripts are included; Wilson's text, however, lacks citations and sources. EB

WINTER, JEANETTE *The Christmas Tree Ship*; written and illus. by Jeanette Winter. Philomel, 1994 32p ISBN 0-399-22693-1 \$14.95 R* 5-8 yrs

See this month's Big Picture, p. 117, for review.

WOOD, JAKKI *One Tortoise, Ten Wallabies: A Wildlife Counting Book*; written and illus. by Jakki Wood. Bradbury, 1994 26p
ISBN 0-02-793393-8 \$14.95 R 3-6 yrs

From one tortoise to 101 elephants, animals parade across this counting book. Five “rollicking, rascally raccoons” are followed by six “swinging, clinging, mischievous monkeys”; also seen are animals such as toucans, leopards, seals, and wallabies. Wood’s watercolor-and-ink illustrations joyfully portray each animal with plenty of amusing details as the animals frolic along. The colors are pleasingly intense, although mixing purples and blues in with the more normal animal tones of browns and grays may confuse younger children. Another puzzling aspect for observant viewers is that animals such as bears have their rather scary claws intact but have no teeth. Her adjectives, such as “flip-flappy, slip-slappy,” match well with the critters and make for lively reading aloud, and her pictures make for a good counting challenge, as some of the animals are babies, or are camouflaged against each other. The book ends with a surprise, showing all 101 elephants on the front and back of two connected fold-out pages. Unfortunately, the final page with the word “elephant” on it is also the book’s endpaper, which may prove a problem for libraries. SDL

YEP, LAURENCE, ad. *The Junior Thunder Lord*; illus. by Robert Van Nutt. BridgeWater, 1994 32p
ISBN 0-8167-3454-2 \$15.95 Ad 4-7 yrs

“Those at the top should help those at the bottom.” The axiom’s first occurrence sets the theme; its second appearance could be considered reinforcement; but by the third iteration it is clear this tale of a generous merchant’s encounter with a huge brute has a Big Message. When he was a young and not-so-bright student, Yue had been tutored by a clever classmate; now Yue’s conscience urges him to befriend the uncouth Bear Face, whom he meets at an inn during a period of drought. The grateful lout follows Yue around, saves him from drowning at sea, and then lifts him into the sky to squeeze rain from the clouds. Bear Face is actually a minor thunder dragon, exiled by his dragon brothers for bad behavior; now he promises Yue’s village will always have enough rainfall because “when I was at my lowest, you lifted me up.” Yep’s tale, taken from a seventeenth-century Chinese collection, tends to ramble; comically intended idioms such as “What a botch-up!” and “I go away for a little while and you let things slide” break the fairy-tale tone. Van Nutt’s paintings neatly capture Yue’s good-natured innocence and Bear Face’s appalling manners, but despite an abundance of detail, they lack texture and depth. Many children may empathize with Yue’s early school problems and chuckle at Bear Face’s breach of etiquette; they certainly will get the moral. EB



PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS: RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS

Thwaite, Ann. *The Brilliant Career of Winnie-the-Pooh: The Definitive History of the Best Bear in All the World*. Dutton, 1994. illus. with photographs. 192p. ISBN 0-525-45248-6. \$25.00.

The title here is a bit misleading; this book really is a roughly chronological collection of Milneiana and Poohiana, tied together with Thwaite's affectionate and personal text. Pictures of the original stuffed animals, copies of newspaper articles, reproductions of Milne's letters (and those take some deciphering!), and facsimiles of early drafts of Milne's work give a good idea of the impact of the original books and their film, literary, and merchandising spin-offs over the decades. Adult Milne fans and scholars will welcome the realia and new details, which nicely complement Thwaite's biography of the writer. DS

Helbig, Alethea K.. *This Land Is Our Land: A Guide to Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults*; by Alethea K. Helbig and Agnes Regan Perkins. Greenwood, 1994. 401p. ISBN 0-313-28742-2. \$49.95.

In the preface, the authors state their concern with "the issue of quality in multi-ethnic books of imaginative literature," and they clearly explain the purpose and methodology of this guide to those books published from 1985-1993. Sections are divided by ethnic group (African American, Asian American, Hispanic American and Native-American Indian are the four groups represented here) and then, within each group, into Books of Fiction, Books of Oral Tradition, and Books of Poetry. Annotations (alphabetic by author within each category) are opinionated but measured and thoughtful, usefully weighing good and bad points of every book included in a refreshing contrast to gushier and less practical bibliographies. Each of the 570 annotations includes publication information and recommended age level; indices of titles, writers, grade level, and subjects are included. DS

Herb, Steven. *Using Children's Books in Preschool Settings: A How-To-Do-It Manual*; written by Steven Herb and Sara Willoughby-Herb. Neal-Schuman, 1994. 181p. Paper ed. ISBN 1-55570-156-6. \$32.50.

The authors of this manual take a usefully broad approach to the subject: sections are included on child and language development, literary types, setting up a storybook corner, bringing literature into children's homes, and various other relevant topics, so that the treatment is a nice mixture of the theoretical and the pragmatic. While there are occasional book suggestions, bibliographized at the end of each chapter, the tips on activities and strategies are the book's real strength. Herb and Willoughby-Herb are enthusiastic but realistic, addressing such problems as restless listeners, disliked books, and language barriers, while offering imaginative play suggestions that will be of use to old pros as well as to neophytes. Six brief appendices are included, on topics including new children's books, magazines for children, books about children's literature, and organizations that serve the needs of children; there is an index. DS

SUBJECT AND USE INDEX

Keyed to *The Bulletin's* alphabetical arrangement by author, this index, which appears 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 the case of subject headings, the subhead "stories" refers to books for the readaloud audience; "fiction," to those books intended for independent reading.

ADVENTURE STORIES:

Disher; Myers
 African Americans—biographies:
 Lyons
 African Americans—fiction:
 Coleman; Porte
 African Americans—stories: Barber
 AIDS—fiction: Porte
 ALPHABET BOOKS: McKenzie
 Archaeology: Arnold, C.
 Architecture: Arnold, C.
 Art: Falwell; Lyons; Panzer;
 Whipple; Wilson
 Babies: Lafferty
 BEDTIME STORIES:
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 House; Wilder
 BIOGRAPHIES: Berry; Lessem;
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 Wilson
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 Brothers—fiction: Fromm; Havill
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 Christmas—stories: Winter
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 Dogs—stories: Burningham; Hall;
 Harper
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 Fathers and daughters—fiction:
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 FAIRYTALES: Arnold, K.;
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- History, Middle Ages:** Platt;
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- World War II—fiction:** Friedman;
Schnur



The review of the *Annual '94*, in the November Professional Connections section, incorrectly listed the publisher as Picture Book Studio. The *Annual* is published by North-South Books.



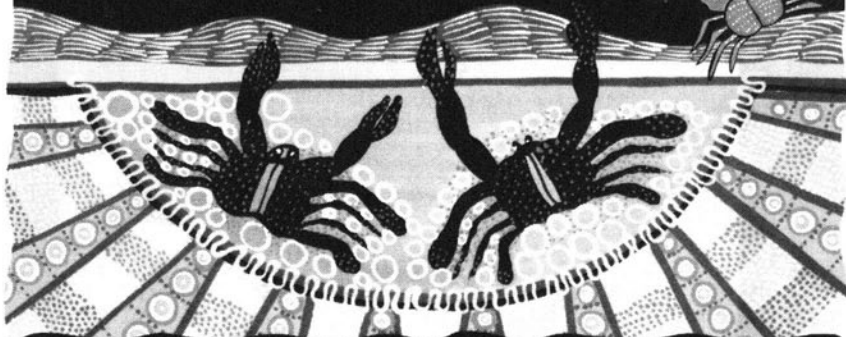
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**Publishers Weekly*



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★ Starred by ALA Booklist, School Library Journal
and Publishers Weekly

The
DAYDREAMER

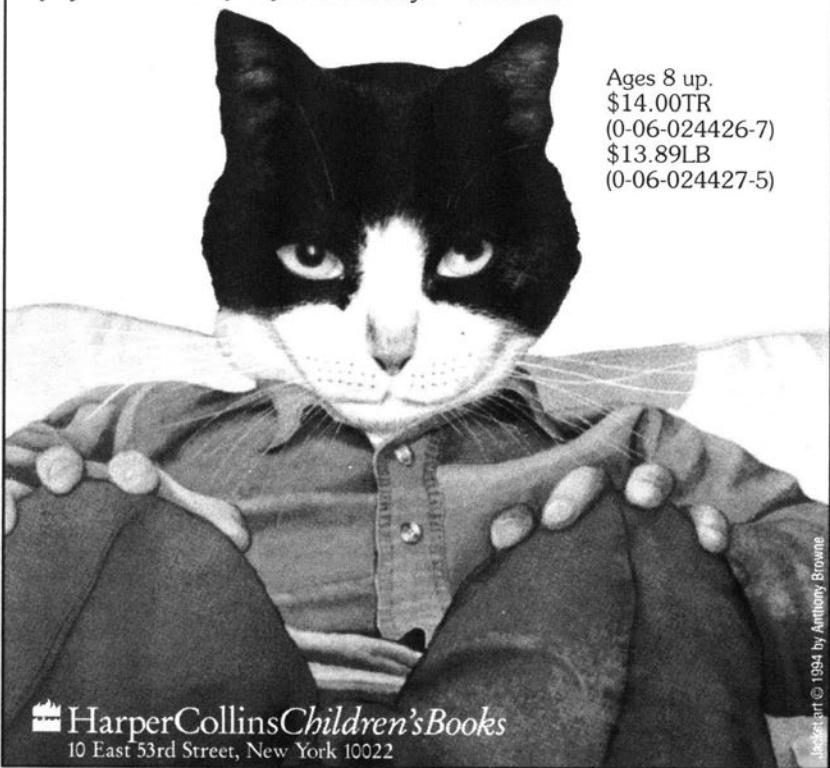
I A N M C E W A N

illustrated by **ANTHONY BROWNE**

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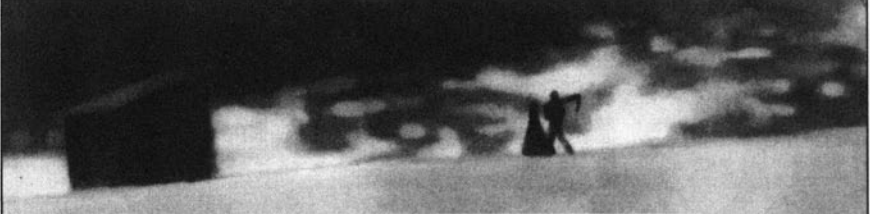
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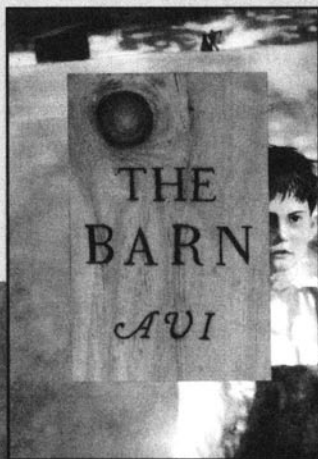
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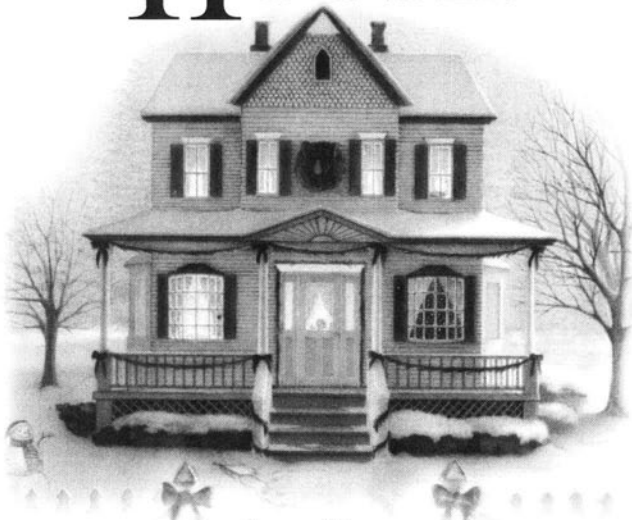
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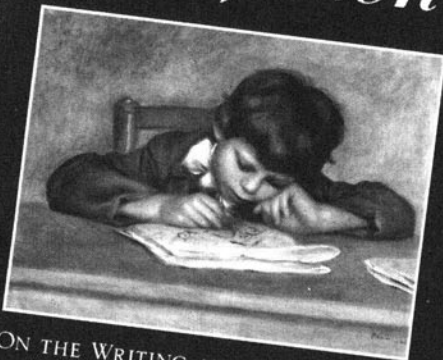
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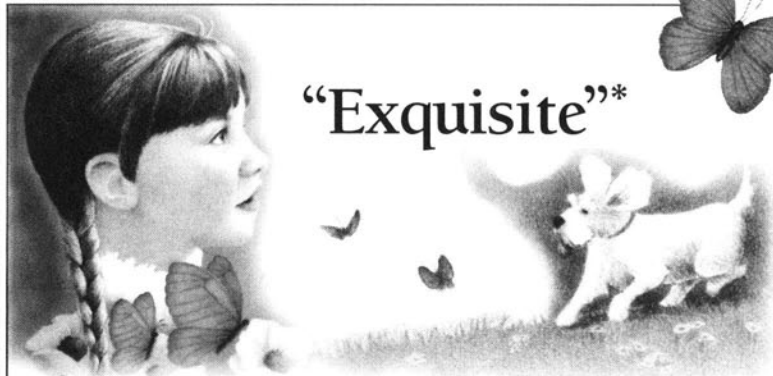
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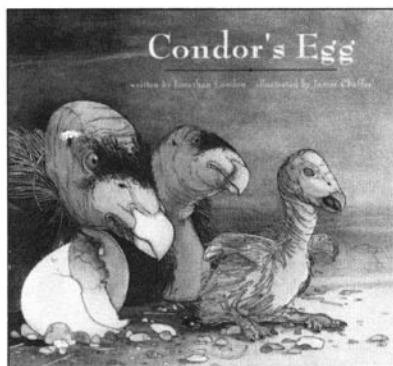
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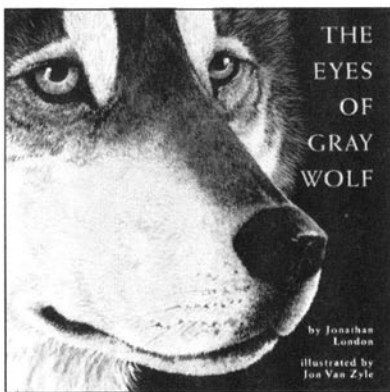
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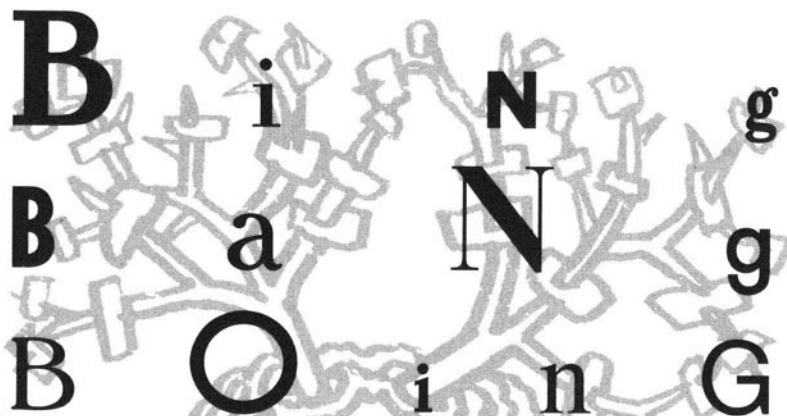
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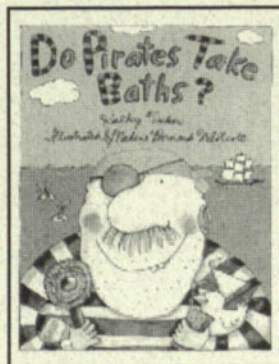
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