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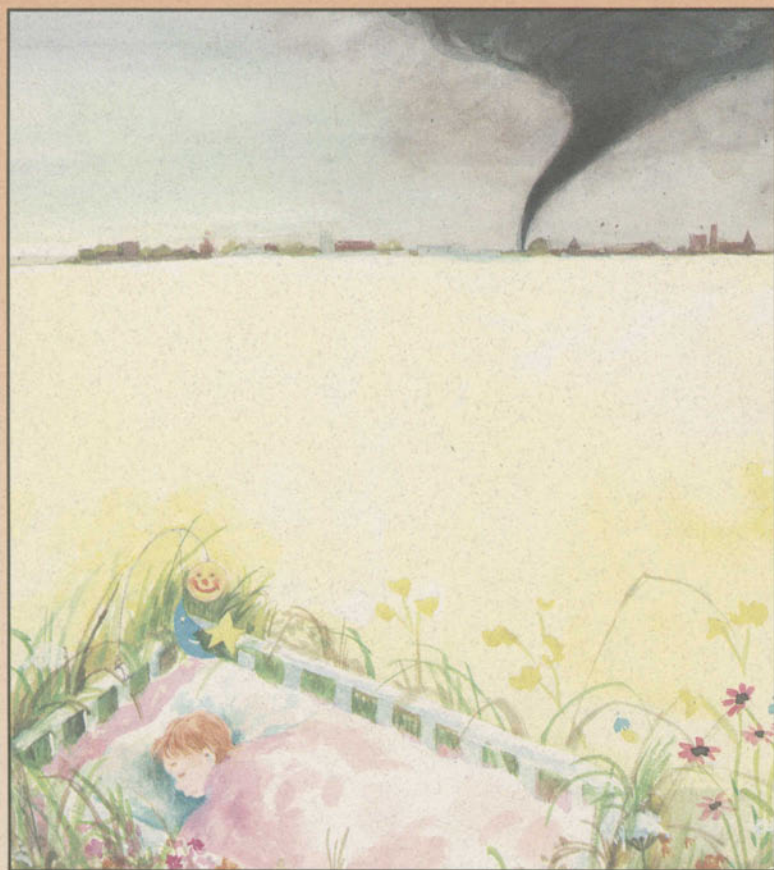
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THE BULLETIN

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

March 2000
Vol. 53 No. 7



University of Illinois
Graduate School of Library and Information Science

University of Illinois Press

◆ *Kirkus Reviews* Pointer and ★ *Starred in School Library Journal*

Homeless Bird

by Gloria Whelan


◆ “The time is present, but this tale of an arranged marriage is as ancient as India. Koly [is married] off at 13 [to a] sickly young bridegroom. He dies before their marriage is consummated, and she finds herself a widow in service to a spiteful mother-in-law. Whelan maintains Koly’s perspective so precisely that readers begin to take for granted the limitations and formalities by which she is bound, and to understand that her [sewing skill]—the means of her salvation—is a gift not granted to every widow. Her path to a new life and work in the wake of many hardships is spun out against an exotic background. [And] with its vividly realized setting and characters the tale is both fascinating and chastening.” —Pointer review / *Kirkus Reviews*



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★ “A satisfying story with loving detail about traditional Indian life, the harsh reality of feudal customs that persist today, and the complexity of cultural change.” —Starred review / *SLJ*

Ages 8–12. \$15.95TR (0-06-028454-4) • \$15.89LB (0-06-028452-8)

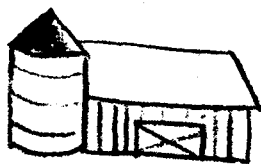
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T H E B U L L E T I N

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

March 2000
Vol. 53 No. 7



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EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED WITH REVIEWS

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

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THE BIG PICTURE

One Lucky Girl

by George Ella Lyon; illus. by Irene Trivas

There's lots of scary stuff out there, as any preschooler will attest; every step further from home seems to bring a new parcel of problems that Mom and Dad cannot mitigate. Perhaps most frightening are those violent acts of nature that pepper the TV news—fire, floods, hurricanes, twisters—against which there seems to be no adequate defense. Frightening, yes, but equally alluring; few children of even the tenderest age can resist a peek at disaster, especially if it's someone else's disaster, and especially if it all ends happily. What, then, could be more enticing than a picture-book cover featuring a baby slumbering amid wildflowers in an open field while a coal-black cloud spews debris on the not-so-distant horizon? Has it passed the baby by, or is it headed her way? What child won't clamor to find out?

Hawkeye, brother of baby Becky and narrator of the story, tells about the summer day in which, without warning, a tornado churns its way through his trailer camp, shredding mobile homes and tossing them off their sites. His shell-shocked family has barely recovered from the force of the winds that passed over them when they realize that their home is gone, and Becky with it. Now Hawkeye must use all his perceptive ability to track down his sister, hoping for the best yet fearing the worst.

Lyon understands that for most listeners it's ferocious Mother Nature, not Hawkeye, who's the star of this show, and that youngsters' tolerance for the niceties of rising action has its limits. Her pacing, dictated by the parameters of the standard thirty-two page picture-book format, is a masterful roller coaster of roiling emotion. Two double spreads with a mere ten lines of text set the scene; by the third spread the sky has darkened, and by the fourth the first drop of eagerly anticipated terror has arrived: "Right then it got sick quiet—no breeze, no bird cry. I could see a black finger of wind twisting toward us. 'Tornado!' somebody yelled. *We hit the dirt.*" Then comes destruction, then a quiet pause for disbelief, then another gut-wrenching dip as the family realizes the baby is gone: "All the screams nobody had screamed tore out of my mother's mouth. . . . 'Becky!' she hollered into the sky."

Trivas matches Lyon thrill for thrill, with blended pastel opening scenes of a sunny yellow picture-perfect day breaking abruptly into a dense ebony twister tinged with demonic red, a riotous confusion of whirling debris, and again the sun spreading its warmth and peace over the wreckage. Against the indefensible expanse of prairie and under the looming pressure of the funnel cloud, people and structures appear all the more fragile and vulnerable.

In the end, however, Lyon and Trivas know there is only so much panic a child audience can withstand, and, as sure-handedly as they manipulate their thrills, they speed the distraught family along to its happy ending, racing Hawkeye

through rubble-strewn fields until he spots Becky: "It looked like. . . it couldn't be, but it looked like—a dream, the best dream you could ever have, the one where you find your treasure." Swathed in her pink blanket, tenderly guarded by the smiling sun-and-moon mobile arching above her white slatted crib, lucky Becky is as resilient as the verdant prairie grasses and brilliant wildflowers around her.

A delightful flurry of shivers, followed by the comforting relief of a family unharmed and inseparable—this is the action picture book at its best. Doubtless some stubborn listeners may mistrust the benign ending and protest, "This couldn't really happen." Reassure them with the lead lines of the jacket flap, "Here is a true story . . ." (Imprint information appears on p. 248.)

Elizabeth Bush, Reviewer



NEW BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ADOFF, ARNOLD *The Basket Counts*; illus. by Michael Weaver. Simon, 2000 48p
ISBN 0-689-80108-4 \$17.00 R Gr. 4-8

The speaker in the first of this collection's twenty-eight basketball poems, "We Start With Early Morning," explains that "on the bus my books are in the/ b a c k p a c k on the floor./ The ball is always in my hand," and it seemingly stays there until the last poem when he brings the ball "inside to the table/ for the post/ game/ in ter view s." In between, a variety of speakers describe aspects of the game such as the "soft/ clang/ b a n g i n g of/ r u s t y/ chains/ that/ hang/ down/ from/ h o o p s," the "s h a r p e s t wheelchair/ wheeelies," and their failures and successes on the court. The insider perspective of these evocative shaped-speech poems is complemented by the dynamic but straightforward street-art-inspired illustrations. The gouache images possess the sandy texture of pastels, and they put a diverse mix of faces and bodies to their voices and subjects. While some kids may find the overt didacticism of many poems inspiring, others may tune out the familiar adult voice of poems like "Most Players Don't Go Pro," in which the speaker argues that players "must keep the books as open/ as the o p e n shot." Nonetheless, the clear physical descriptions of time spent with the "pebble rubber ball" should resonate with those who know that basketball is the stuff of poetry. Inbound this one to them. FK

AGEE, JON, comp. *Elvis Lives! and Other Anagrams*; comp. and illus. by Jon Agee. Farrar, 2000 [80p]
ISBN 0-374-32127-2 \$15.00 R Gr. 3-6
Reviewed from galleys

Having previously dabbled in palindromes (*Go Hang a Salami, I'm a Lasagna Hog!*, BCCB 10/96, etc.) and oxymorons (*Who Ordered the Jumbo Shrimp?*, BCCB 11/

98), Agee now turns his pen to anagrams. Though some of these entries are original, most are mined from other sources (which are credited in the back, along with a bibliography of additional tomes on wordplay); all are treated to Agee's signature vigorous-lined cartoonage. The quality is uneven, with some of the anagrams failing to engage creatively with their originals, especially at a child-reader's level. Many, however, are spirited and pithy: "Southern California/ Hot sun, or life in a car" is wryly apt; "Astronomer/ Moonstarrer" and "Piet Mondrian/ I paint modern" are cleverly definitive; and "Pub's motto/ Bottoms up" is a witty jest. The illustrations carry the imaginative energy in many of the spreads, such as the mime artists "Lionesses/ Noiseless" or the boa constrictor encircling a victim and asking for "One hug?" to which she responds, "Enough!" Young word gamers will appreciate this lively assortment; you may want to follow up by pointing them to websites for anagram creation. DS

ALEXANDER, SALLY HOBART *Do You Remember the Color Blue? and Other Questions Kids Ask about Blindness*. Viking, 2000 [80p] illus. with photographs ISBN 0-670-88043-4 \$15.99

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 3-7

Alexander, author of *Mom Can't See Me* (BCCB 11/90) and other books about her blindness, here takes an even more direct approach to the subject, answering the questions that she's been asked in her author visits with kids. The thirteen questions range from the practical ("How do you read?") to the medical ("If your eyes don't see, do they work at all?") to the philosophical ("Would you rather be blind or deaf?"). Though generally apolitical, Alexander obliquely addresses larger social issues through her own personal experiences, tellingly relating, for instance, her frustration at the hospital's official refusal to let her care for her newborn baby; she also offers some fresh insights into aspects young readers may not have thought about ("Friends always wonder how I knew I was attracted to a date when I couldn't see") in an easy and confiding manner that will keep youngsters from feeling guilty for wondering. Interspersed between responses are sections devoted to additional details, such as "Helpful Tools" (featuring Brailled clothing tags, a talking clock, etc.) and "A Dog Guide History"; black-and-white photos, some useful, some filler, appear throughout and provide images of Alexander's tools and life (that, ironically, she herself cannot see). The author's clearheaded and pragmatic approach ("There is no perfect substitute for vision") refreshingly resists mythologizing, and her balanced account will give kids a feeling for a life that on the one hand seems very different and on the other could be anybody's. Appended are a blindness exercise, a doctor's note about blindness, and addresses for further information. DS

BACHRACH, SUSAN D. *The Nazi Olympics: Berlin 1936*. Little, 2000 [132p] illus. with photographs Trade ed. ISBN 0-316-07086-6 \$21.95 Paper ed. ISBN 0-316-07087-4 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5 up

Far more than a sports history, this compelling title examines the importance of sport and physical development in Nazi ideology and sheds light on the reasons for U.S. participation in the games, even as information about Nazi persecutions made

its way into the American press. The presentation is organized into chronological sections covering the rise of Nazi Germany, sport in the Reich, debate over a possible U.S. boycott of the games, and the host propaganda throughout the Olympics. Within each section, brief, concise chapters make the respective positions of the Reich, the Olympic Committee, the competitors, the boycotters, and the U.S. federal government clear even for readers with limited knowledge of the period. Each chapter is amply illustrated with thoroughly captioned photos (a color insert will be included in the final copy), and appendices include a bibliography and index as well as a timeline and charts of early modern Olympic games and 1936 participant countries. Bachrach eschews editorial comment, allowing readers to empathize as they will with various historical factions on their decisions to join or boycott the games; only in her afterword does she make her own stance explicit: "Many people falsely think that by capturing four gold medals in track and field events and becoming the hero of the Olympics, Jesse Owens destroyed the Nazi myth that claimed superiority of an Aryan master race. . . . In reality, Owens' performance at Berlin . . . had little impact on Nazi racism." The final chapter's chilling photo gallery of publicly lauded European athletes who were to lose their lives in the Holocaust is the most eloquent testimony. EB

BATTLE-LAVERT, GWENDOLYN *The Music in Derrick's Heart*; illus. by Colin Bootman. Holiday House, 2000 32p
ISBN 0-8234-1353-5 \$16.95 Ad 5-8 yrs

Harmonica virtuoso Uncle Booker T. plays music that comes from his heart. At the end of each day he leaves his harmonica with his nephew Derrick, who hopes to play as well as his uncle and practices daily, even sleeping with the harmonica. Derrick's skills grow, but he doesn't manage to achieve true music until "old Arthur" (arthritis) visits Uncle Booker T.'s hands, whereupon Derrick, to console his uncle, at last plays from his heart and his uncle rewards him with the gift of the harmonica. Though the text runs on a bit, the sentiment is sweet and wistful rather than heavy-handed; the narrative flows smoothly, and provocative figurative language and rhythmic phrases ("Derrick and Uncle Booker T. scampered away, away, away") sustain interest. Impressionistic illustrations reminiscent of James Ransome are imbued with light and painted in pine greens, indigo blues, and earthy browns. The characters are expressive, occasionally catching the viewer in their direct gaze. Like the author, Bootman also attends to details that capture the story's gentle nostalgia (boys in overalls, front porch sitters, laundry on the backyard line). This may need the intercession of an adult with a sense of family history to make a connection for young listeners, but kids will still identify with Derrick's energetic struggle to learn a new skill. JNH

BERG, BARRY *Opening Moves: Michael Thaler, the Making of a Very Young Chess Champion*; illus. with photographs by David Hautzig. Little, 2000 44p
ISBN 0-316-91339-1 \$15.95 Ad Gr. 3-5

This glossy photoessay documents the rise of young chess champion Michael Thaler. The reportorial language follows Michael's entry into the world of juvenile chess competition, including descriptions of training, championship games, and the commitment necessary for success. The text includes the young chess master's "seven precepts" (lessons he has learned through chess competition), several games depicted move by move, and a reiteration that he is still just a normal kid. While the

production values here are relatively high (the color photos are technically proficient, and Michael is an engagingly photogenic subject), the intended audience is unclear. No information about the rules of chess is included, and foreknowledge of the moves and strategies of the game is necessary to make sense of much of this title. The afterword by Michael's father about being a "chess dad" is obviously aimed at parents but even here useful information is very sketchy. References to national chess organizations and a list for further reading would have made this a more valuable book. JMD

BIERHORST, JOHN, ad. *The People with Five Fingers: A Native Californian Creation Tale*; illus. by Robert Andrew Parker. Cavendish, 2000 32p
ISBN 0-7614-5058-0 \$15.95 R Gr. 3-6

"There was a world before this one, and all the animals were in it," but there weren't any humans. Coyote, in the role of divine creator, takes charge, proclaiming, "This earth cannot stay naked." Assisted by the Gopher brothers, Eagle, Grizzly Bear, Blacktail Deer, and other animals, Coyote prepares the earth for the coming of the humans. His plan to give the people hands like his own is thwarted by Lizard, who, knowing that "the people can't make baskets with round hands," makes sure they have five fingers like her. Bierhorst's economy of text gives a rugged elegance to Coyote's declared plan for the people and results in effectively streamlined storytelling. Parker's watercolors contribute to a sense of the primordial as characters emerge from gauzy cloud, light, and mist to take their places. The earth-and-sky tones of the palette merge into blended horizon lines that give a sense of space to the uncluttered compositions, and the illustrations carefully avoid anthropomorphizing the animal characters. An introductory cultural note mentions the numerous American Indian nations of California and their many languages, but the absence of a specific source note for this particular origin tale makes its own origin unnecessarily generic. JMD

BLAKESLEE, ANN R. *Summer Battles*. Cavendish, 2000 [128p]
ISBN 0-7614-5064-5 \$14.95
Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 5-9

When Kath arrives with her little sister Posy at their grandfather's home for the summer of 1926, she can tell that something is wrong. Grando explains to her that the Ku Klux Klan is organizing in Peaceable, his small Indiana town; he's a target not only because, as a minister, he preaches against the Klan, but also because he employs Serena, a "colored person," in his home. After listening closely to Grando's sermons, Kath begins to connect the assumptions that the Klan makes about Serena because of her race with judgments she herself has made against a stiff-seeming piano teacher and the diminutive town barber. Her self-improvement includes humanizing setbacks, as she wavers between deepening her understanding of prejudice and her occasional childish fits, telling Grando, "I think you're prejudiced against me." While Kath's struggles are engaging, other characters are sketchily portrayed, and when unlikely events lead Kath to singlehandedly save her grandfather from a Klan tar-and-feathering, the story concludes too abruptly for readers to savor the victory. Despite these shortcomings, the topic of the Klan's activities, particularly in a Northern state, is both historically captivating and ripe for curricular connections. Blakeslee's writing conveys the still heat of a long summer in a troubled town, and Kath's experiences may inspire readers to uncover a few prejudices of their own. KM

BRADBY, MARIE *Momma, Where Are You From?*; illus. by Chris K. Soentpiet. Orchard, 2000 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-531-33105-9 \$17.99

Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-30105-2 \$16.95

Ad 5-9 yrs

This mother's poetic answer to her daughter's insistent question ("Momma, where are you from?/ Where are you from, Momma?") introduces the abstract idea that we are formed by our past experiences as Momma describes her origins: "I'm from Monday mornings, washing loads of clothes in the wringer washer and peach baskets full of laundry to hang on the clothesline strung from tree to tree—the sun bleaching the sheets, the wind whipping them dry." Not all Momma's childhood memories are warm: she recalls wondering "why the sidewalk ended at the edge of my neighborhood, and why my brothers and sisters didn't go to the school right up the street" but instead were bussed "past school . . . after school . . . after school . . . until [they] came to a school where all the children were brown." In general, however, her recollections reflect the perspective of a child whose sense of her place in the world was affected by family and neighborhood more than these clear injustices, and her memories lead her questioning daughter to the satisfying realization that she too is "from" this place. A relentless yellow glare unfortunately suffuses the illustrations and the identities of past and present characters become somewhat confusing. Still, visual details and involving perspectives may draw viewers into this place "where the edge of town met the countryside" and pull them into the circle of children who "played 'One-Two-Three Red Light,' while the adults listened to ball games on the radio." While this is a bit abstract and retrospective for young listeners, they may be similarly inspired to ask questions that allow them to explore their parents' past and their own. FK

COLE, BROCK *Buttons*; written and illus. by Brock Cole. Farrar, 2000 [32p]
ISBN 0-374-31001-7 \$16.00

Reviewed from galleys

R 7-10 yrs

Cole's original story has the feel of a traditional fool or dunderhead tale, and it may remind adult readers of "The Three Sillies" in its compendium of the not-so-bright lights that illuminate the pages. An old man "who ate so much his britches burst and his buttons popped one, two, three, into the fire" takes to his bed. His three daughters endeavor to replace his buttons: the elder swears to marry a rich man (with lots of buttons); the middle daughter disguises herself as a man and joins the army (the uniforms have lots of buttons); and the youngest promises to run in the field by the river, apron outstretched (to catch any buttons that fall from the sky). The two older girls find true love and forget their mission; the youngest however, keeps her promise daily, even though "not a single button fell into her apron. No, not even a cuff link." A young cowherd, dazzled by "the way her brown legs flashed through the green grass," tells her of an old oak tree that has "a frequent fall of buttons." All's well that ends well: father gets new buttons, the family is reunited, and the youngest daughter and the cowherd (sans buttons) are married. Cole's watercolors are a slice of Regency couture, with striped vests, empire waist gowns, and curly tresses done up in a pageant of pastels; audiences will remember his *Winter Wren* (BCCB 10/84), although these paintings have more vigor. The tone of Cole's text, like the tone of the best noodlehead tales, is one of pompous but good-natured silliness, and while Cole recognizes his characters' foolishness, he evinces a genuine affection for them. The vivid dialogue and

theatrical motions (the father puts his hand to his head and cries “We are undone!”; the eldest daughter, hand to her bosom, sways with romantic fervor) provide opportunities for creative dramatics that will rock even less willing participants with laughter. JMD

COONEY, CAROLINE B. *What Janie Found*. Delacorte, 2000 181p
ISBN 0-385-32611-4 \$15.95 Ad Gr. 7-10

As the whole world knows, Janie (of *The Face on the Milk Carton*, BCCB 2/90, etc.) has been undergoing various turmoils after the discovery that the people she knew as her parents are actually the parents of her kidnapper, Hannah. Now her adoptive father lies in a coma in intensive care, and Janie, trying to clear up his affairs, discovers that he has secretly been sending payments to Hannah for years. Janie determines to meet the woman who destroyed her life and takes off to Colorado, ostensibly to visit her birth brother at college there, with another birth brother and with Reeve, former boyfriend seeking reinstatement, in tow. Janie’s saga is classic potato-chip reading; fans will chow down until the bag is empty. This is despite the fact that Cooney’s produced tastier snacks: there are a lot of unresolved plot threads lying around (and according to the jacket flap, this is the concluding volume in the series), and some of the characterizations are problematic (it’s not clear why Janie’s brother Steven is so stuck on his pushy and obnoxious girlfriend). Since Janie’s chronicle has been one of melodrama and operatic action, it’s a bit of a letdown to reach a closure dependent on internal resolution (Janie decides not to meet her kidnapper); the end therefore seems less conclusive than cliff-hangery. There’s still plenty of breathless angst here, though—should Janie continue to send payments to her kidnapper? Does her father love his daughter gone astray better than the one standing by his hospital bed?—and readers who’ve consumed the earlier adventures will eat this one up. DS

DEUKER, CARL *Night Hoops*. Houghton, 2000 [256p]
ISBN 0-395-97936-6 \$15.00
Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 6-9

Tenth grade promises to be the year Nick Abbott sees his hoop dreams begin to come true, as Dad tears out Mom’s rose garden to install a basketball court and older brother Scott abandons his own promising high-school basketball career in favor of jazz band, leaving the athletic spotlight to shine on Nick alone. The coveted slot on the varsity roster is no guarantee of the good life, though—Dad’s parental aggressiveness breaks up the family; Trent, the juvenile delinquent across the street, makes Nick’s life a misery; plummeting grades threaten his team eligibility; his own cockiness as rookie point guard promptly consigns him the bench. As Nick makes his painful way toward the playoffs, he begins to appreciate that teamwork pays off in the long run and realize that basketball may be the ticket to Trent’s redemption. Once again Deuker strikes a happy balance between issues and action, examining topics such as parental pressure and the edgy relationship between play makers and their less gifted teammates while transporting his readers right into the bleachers with vivid play-by-plays. While this title doesn’t quite crackle with the electricity of *Painting the Black* (BCCB 6/97), fans will be well satisfied to share Nick’s epiphany: “Seniors and sophomores, first stringers and bench warmers, we were all one, all doing things together that we couldn’t have done on our own.” EB

EDWARDS, JULIE ANDREWS *Little Bo: The Story of Bonnie Boadicea*; illus. by Henry Cole. Hyperion, 1999 90p
 Library ed. ISBN 0-7868-2449-2 \$17.49
 Trade ed. ISBN 0-7868-0514-5 \$16.99 Ad Gr. 3-5

An abandoned but plucky kitten (Little Bo, the runt of the litter) becomes the beloved companion of a kind sailor (Billy, first mate on a herring boat) in this old-fashioned short novel. Little Bo's struggle to find a safe home is overshadowed by a storm at sea and a brave rescue (Billy saves a shipmate from being swept off the deck) but young readers will appreciate the inclusion of more adventurous elements. Eleven episodic chapters are ideally arranged for reading aloud, and the large blocks of text are relieved by a generous helping of spot art. The anthropomorphized animal characters are depicted in the cartoony oils as bright-eyed and expressive (alley cat Bounder, father of the litter, is one of the more attractive rogues in children's literature). While the story is slight and the ending anticlimactic (after the ship's captain refuses to allow Bo to stay, Billy walks into the sunset with Bo perched on his shoulder), young readers will be attracted to the perky Little Bo and her escapades at sea. JMD

FLOCA, BRIAN *Dinosaurs at the Ends of the Earth: The Story of the Central Asiatic Expeditions*; written and illus. by Brian Floca. Jackson/DK Ink, 2000 [32p]
 ISBN 0-7894-2539-4 \$15.95
 Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 3-5

Floca leads dinosaur buffs on a fictionalized recreation of Roy Chapman Andrews' 1922-3 expeditions into Mongolia, where his team unearthed a previously undiscovered *Psittacosaurus* and a nest of fossilized dinosaur eggs. A young assistant named George Olsen seems to be responsible in this account for all the major finds, but Floca's end note fails to indicate explicitly whether George (or, for that matter, paleontologist Walter Granger) is real or fictitious, leaving the reader at sea regarding the veracity of events as described. The combination of backbreaking, tedious labor and pure serendipity that leads to important discoveries is clearly conveyed, however, as the team painstakingly uncovers the fragile bones only to have them threatened by a sandstorm, and George slides clumsily into a gorge, where he spots the eggs. Watercolor scenes dominated by improbable shades of yellow and orange feature slightly cartoonish figures (animal and human) that make rescuing a mud-mired jeep, sweltering in the 100°F+ temperatures, and crashing down a rocky slope look like entirely too much fun. Still, there's enough here to pique interest and send readers off to research the expedition in more detail. Endpapers supply information on subsequent interpretations of Chapman's discoveries. EB

FLORIAN, DOUGLAS *Mammalabilia*; written and illus. by Douglas Florian. Harcourt, 2000 [48p]
 ISBN 0-15-202167-1 \$16.00
 Reviewed from galleys R 5-8 yrs

Continuing his poetic rounds through the animal kingdom, Florian returns to the warmblooded beasts, offering encomia to animals from Aardvarks ("... Aardvarks look better/ By faar in the daark") to Zebras ("How many zebras/ Do you see?").

His poetic style is increasingly epigrammatic, so the collection doesn't have quite the variety or freshness of *beast feast* (BCCB 7/94) and the earlier animal anthologies, but it's a witty array nonetheless. Though he employs some concrete effects, the poems are particularly rewarding in their rhythm and soundplay, making entries such as "The Coyote" (" . . . I love/ A vowel/ For I am coyo^oote") beg to be read aloud. Florian's returned to more technically straightforward gouache in his illustrations, but the creative distortions (there's something Thurberesque about the shape of many of the animals) and the odd goofy touch (a woodpecker hammers away at a leg on the stubborn mule, for instance) keep things far from dull. This is a worthy addition to Florian's pixilated poetic stable of natural history. DS

GIBBONS, GAIL *Rabbits, Rabbits & More Rabbits!*; written and illus. by Gail Gibbons. Holiday House, 2000 32p
ISBN 0-8234-1486-8 \$16.95 Ad Gr. 2-4

It's hard to resist a rabbit, and Gibbons offers up a raft of them in this accessible overview of the endearing lagomorphs. The book covers history and anatomy, habits and behavior, focusing particularly on rabbit ways and on the care of pet rabbits. While the chunks of information are interesting, they're skimpy (the book offers little more information than an encyclopedia article); the construction is disjointed and sentences choppy, and errors and misleading statements (the use of the word "tame" in place of "domestic" gets particularly confusing) creep in. The illustrations are cheerful if sometimes awkward cartoons; their frequent annotations are unevenly helpful, since the breed names are never matched with breed characteristics and the anatomical labels aren't always clear. Young rabbit fans will want more than this, but Gibbons is child-friendly enough that this could provide them with a starting point. DS

GILLILAND, JUDITH HEIDE *Steamboat!: The Story of Captain Blanche Leathers*; illus. by Holly Meade. Kroupa/DK Ink, 2000 [34p]
ISBN 0-7894-2585-8 \$16.95
Reviewed from galleys R 5-8 yrs

At eight years old, Blanche Douglas is fascinated by the Mississippi and precociously aware that its surface masks myriad secrets; at twelve she is determined to become a steamboat captain. Marriage at twenty-one to Captain Leathers does nothing to alter her dream; in fact, life aboard the *Natchez* allows her to study the river's vagaries night and day ("A faint shadow: That means WATCH OUT, a sandbar lurks below, waiting to capture any boat that strays too near!"). With the apparent support of her husband, Blanche passes the oral exam in New Orleans, moves on to the navigational exam in which she must pilot the steamboat upstream on "a starless, moonless night, black as ink," and earns the distinction of becoming, in 1894, the first woman steamboat captain in the country. Mead's paint and collage compositions capture Blanche in all her dreaminess and determination and the Mississippi in its many moods. Particularly effective are night scenes in which the *Natchez* floats between nearly indistinguishable indigos of river and sky, and the spread in which self-confident Blanche, backed by fiery orange, charts a stretch of river hazards for a punctilious board of examiners who appear as black silhouettes in the foreground. Blanche Leathers arrives just in time to join her pioneering sisters in the Women's History Month display. EB

GOVENAR, ALAN, ed. *Osceola: Memories of a Sharecropper's Daughter*; illus. by Shane W. Evans. Jump at the Sun/Hyperion, 2000 [64p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-7868-2357-7 \$16.49

Trade ed. ISBN 0-7868-0407-6 \$15.99

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 4 up

Childhood experiences, family stories of rural life in segregated Waskom, Texas, and the sociocultural history of a black Texas community are relayed through the memories of Osceola Mays, an African-American sharecropper's daughter. Govenar transcribes this oral history as a first-person monologue, allowing Mays' compelling voice and poignant storytelling to pull readers through twenty-one brief chapters covering a range of topics from "My Hometown" and "How I Got My Name" to "The Civil War" and "Juneteenth." The narrative seems like a direct address to the reader: "Every day when I went to school, I remembered stories and poems that Mama taught me. I would say poems over and over to myself, that way Mama was always with me. Mama loved poems and I wanted to keep them alive after she had passed on." The text is accompanied by single-page illustrations and smaller vignettes in a faux-naïve style that depict the rural setting and scenes from Mays' family history. The palette ranges from citrusy oranges to rusty reds, set against muted turquoise. Osceola's face is expressive and articulate while other characters are left purposely distorted, like crudely molded clay. Readers may find themselves pondering their own memories after encountering Osceola, while teachers will find a resource for exploring African-American culture, oral history, storytelling, or creative writing. JNH

HARLOW, JOAN HIATT *Star in the Storm*. McElderry, 2000 [160p]

ISBN 0-689-82905-1 \$16.00

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 4-7

Twelve-year-old Maggie lives a quiet rural life on Newfoundland in 1912 until a law is passed outlawing all non-shepherding dogs in her little village. Maggie refuses to part with her beloved Newfoundland, Sirius, despite a hostile neighbor's insistence that he's a sheepkiller (and despite that neighbor's power, as boat-owner, over Maggie's fisherman father). Maggie's attempts to secrete Sirius rather than send him away fail, however, and it looks like she'll lose her dog until a storm at sea endangers the neighbor's daughter and requires water-dog Sirius to assist in the rescue. This is circumscribed and old-fashioned, with Maggie a stock spunky historical heroine and the plot developments predictable and Disneyesque, largely because of the thinness of character development. What's appealing here are the details of early twentieth-century island life, such as Maggie's getting ice for a sick friend by rowing out into the harbor and chipping it off of an iceberg, and Sirius is, of course, pert-near irresistible as well as heroic. An undemanding and picturesque read, this will offer youngsters a nice safe adventure. An afterword (providing real historical background for the story of fictional Maggie) and a map of Newfoundland are included. DS

HERMAN, GAIL *Just Like Mike*; illus. by Meryl Treatner. Delacorte, 2000 [80p]

ISBN 0-385-32542-8 \$13.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 2-4

Michael's mother is getting remarried, and that means a lot of upheaval for Michael in the form of a new school, new stepdad, and new name: Michael Jordan. Since

Michael adores basketball but lacks any noticeable talent at the game (“I don’t want to be Michael Jordan. Michael Jordan is the best basketball player ever, and I’m the worst”), the name is an invitation for teasing in his new third grade. Though Michael does indeed get teased, he also manages to develop a socially effective reputation as a clown, brush up his basketball skills, and find a new niche as an actor. Aside from the plot-driven insistence of Michael’s mother on the name change, this is a credible and low-key adjustment story, and its gentle but unprissy treatment of the subject will reassure kids who are uncomfortable with more raucous or slapstick reads. Herman protects her protagonist from any serious cruelty, but the uneasiness of his situation (“I wish those girls would make fun of me instead of trying to be nice. That’s way worse!”) makes for sufficient tension. The simple language and uncomplicated sentences are particularly accessible to struggling readers, and though they may get less basketball action than they’d hoped for, they’ll empathize with Michael’s dilemma. Black-and-white illustrations are on the stiff side, but Michael has the realistic look of the new kid next door. DS

HOBBS, VALERIE *Charlie’s Run*. Farrar, 2000 [176p]

ISBN 0-374-34994-0 \$16.00

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 4-7

Charlie, a naïve eleven-year-old, believes if he runs away from home his parents will reconsider their decision to divorce. Boy Scout extraordinaire, he packs his knapsack with camping equipment and a few supplies and sets out to teach his folks a lesson. Charlie falls in with a fourteen-year-old runaway named Doo, who, after being sexually assaulted by her stepfather, set his house on fire and stole a car. The two wanderers land in Venice Beach where they crash for the night with two streetwise teenage drug dealers (Charlie, who is the proud earner of a CPR merit badge, saves the life of one dealer when he overdoses). Doo and Charlie get picked up by the police; Doo goes to juvie and Charlie goes home. Since it is a foregone conclusion that this Boy Scout will emerge relatively unscathed, there is little suspense in this predictable plot. While the pace of the opening pages drags, Hobbs’ characterizations are involving enough to carry the plot, and the action picks up considerably when Doo and Charlie get to Los Angeles. Readers should have little difficulty reaching their final destination. JMD

HOBERMAN, MARY ANN, ad. *The Eensy-Weensy Spider*; illus. by Nadine Bernard Westcott. Little, 2000 27p

ISBN 0-316-36330-8 \$12.95

R 3-6 yrs

By now the spout-scaling spider has probably made more thankless ascents than Sisyphus, but for preschoolers who can’t get enough of the classic fingerplay Hoberman provides a host of fresh verses. The little pink spider in her flowered blue hat explores her environs in a dozen rhymes (eleven original), which find her swimming with a frog, marching with a bug band in a parade, wandering down a spooky, shadowy park path after sunset, and other kid-pleasing activities. Hoberman makes the most of the spider’s multipedal possibilities with a trip to the shoe store (“We’d like to buy three pair”), scraped knees (she’ll need six Band-Aids for that one), and general clumsiness (she tends to trip over her own legs). If arachnid-savvy listeners protest all these “sixes” for an eight-legged creature, be assured that Westcott’s spider always has at least two appendages in use as arms at any given time. The fanciful line-and-watercolor bug wonderland is on the cutesy side, but

it's as cheery and inviting as a viewer could wish, with its cast of grinning, crayon-colored critters acting as the friendliest of guides, guardians, and good neighbors to the little spider who makes her first ventures out of Mama's cozy web. Musical notation and hand motions are included only for the original rhyme, but little kids will have no trouble supplying some new ones as long as an accommodating adult is willing to sing this again and again and again . . . EB

HOROWITZ, ANTHONY *The Devil and His Boy*. Philomel, 2000 [128p]
ISBN 0-399-23432-2 \$15.99

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-8

Orphan Tom Falconer has nothing to lose but a backbreaking job in near bondage to a pair of thieving innkeepers, so when a mysterious nobleman on horseback offers to take him to London, Tom never looks back. They've hardly put distance between themselves and the inn when a highwayman murders Tom's benefactor during a robbery; with his dying breath the stranger urges Tom to hurry on to "Moorfield." London is a labyrinth of crime and confusion to rural Tom, and he's immediately taken up by the leader of a gang of beggars, who tries to sever Tom's legs to make him a more pitiable street figure. Tom's luck seems to go rapidly down from there, as he becomes enmeshed in a Spanish plot to assassinate the queen. The action is fast and furious as Tom dodges the highwayman and the hangman before discovering his true royal identity. Horowitz capitalizes on some of the more unsavory historical characters of the Elizabethan age, as well as the Bard and the Queen herself, and turns the rumor of Elizabeth's illegitimate child into a period adventure that refuses to take itself or any of its fact-based cast too seriously. Readers with a penchant for macabre wit will especially relish Horowitz's flair for detail ("[pox-eaten] Sebastian tried to pick his nose, remembered it wasn't there, and bit his nail absentmindedly instead") and chuckle with satisfaction as all villainous heads are finally mounted on pikes. A note on historic background is included. EB

JOHNSON, ANGELA *Down the Winding Road*; illus. by Shane W. Evans. Jackson/DK Ink, 2000 [32p]
ISBN 0-7894-2596-3 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad 5-8 yrs

A girl contemplates her family's annual visit "to the Old Ones' house," to see the uncles and aunts who raised her daddy and who "live down the winding road." The text goes on to describe the warmth of the greeting, the celebratory feasting, and the gratifying indulgence of the children, with the poetry of Johnson's quietly lyrical prose emphasized by ragged right margins ("Then we walk again along/ the winding road for home,/ slowing down a bit for the Old Ones"). The book suffers from an absence of story, being overdependent on family closeness to provide plot point as well as emotional reward. The affection is gratifying, however, and it might lead kids to contemplate and share about their own family gatherings. The illustrations provide the main impact here: Evans' richly hued oils depict a luxuriantly verdant countryside perfectly suited for a childhood idyll. His people are personable and individual; though the faces sometimes seem unintentionally stiff, they usually are imbued with the memorable asymmetries of long life and strong character, with personal accoutrements to match (particularly in the credible variety of headgear on both sexes), and everybody seems authentically like somebody

you'd meet and pass time with down at the corner store. The familial bonds are palpable in every scene, with one spread featuring some of the most authentic family hugs in the picture-book lexicon. Use this as a counterpart to a noisier family story such as Woodson's *We Had a Picnic This Sunday Last* (BCCB 9/98), or just to expand the increasing category of warm and positive African-American stories of home and loved ones. DS

KAPLAN, HOWARD *Waiting to Sing*; illus. by Hervé Blondon. Jackson/DK Ink, 2000 [40p]

ISBN 0-7894-2615-3 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 3-5

A retrospective air informs this account of a boy who's "family's story was played on the piano." The narrator embarks on the family tradition with "Für Elise," laboring away under the loving eye of his mother; when his mother gets sick, "Für Elise" is what she liked to hear." When his mother dies, the boy's relationship with music is chilled, until finally his father's piano-playing brings him back. There's a hushed poetry to the text that's technically impressive but emotionally distancing, and the effects and events will be oversubtle and overlengthily presented for much of the young audience. The pastel illustrations run to the bittersweet orange-informed hues of late afternoon, which adds to the past-tense flavor; the creative compositions are visually interesting, but the minimalist faces similarly resist reader engagement with the narrator's experiences. Young readers with a taste for nuanced mood pieces may nonetheless warm to this quiet story of a boy's adjustment to loss. DS

KIMMEL, ERIC A., ad. *Grizz!*; illus. by Andrew Glass. Holiday House, 2000 [32p]

ISBN 0-8234-1469-8 \$16.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 3-6

Lucky Doolin is a cowboy "back in the days when an automobile was just a buggy with a gas engine and the Wright brothers were still trying to get their flying machine off the ground." Unfortunately, Lucky is unlucky in love (the father of his beloved Shelby refuses to let her marry a cowboy) so the disappointed buckaroo takes off, ostensibly to seek his fortune. What he finds is a slick card sharp (with horns and hooves) who offers him a lifetime of good luck if he won't wash, shave, comb his hair, cut his nails, or change his clothes for seven years. Lucky agrees, and sure enough, he gets rich, richer, richest, and seven years roll smellily by. Meanwhile, back at the Rocking M Ranch, slick lawyer Parmelee Jones is black-mailing Shelby into marriage; his dastardly plan is foiled by Lucky, who, in the time-honored tradition of folktales and westerns, shows up at the last minute to save the day (and who wins his bargain with the devil because of the difference between Central and Mountain time). Kimmel's retelling of this folktale (found in German and Russian traditions, among others) has a rip-roaring hilarity that is expertly reflected by Glass' seriously funny illustrations. The pastel and watercolor images are textured with broken lines, scratches, and dashes that shimmer with energy. Lucky goes from being handsome and clean-cut to being such a sorry sight his aroma almost wafts from the pages, and Wild West motifs (cacti, horses, coyotes, railroad stations, etc.) add local color. Pair this with Alan Schroeder's *The*

Tale of Willy Monroe (BCCB 6/99), also illustrated by Glass, for a lively example of the Americanization of traditional tales. Detailed source notes are included. JMD

LEVY, ELIZABETH *Seventh Grade Tango*. Hyperion, 2000 [144p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-7868-2427-1 \$16.49

Trade ed. ISBN 0-7868-0498-X \$15.99

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-7

Rebecca starts seventh-grade ballroom dance classes with a reputation as a “Killer Dancer”; this appellation isn’t a flattering one, since she earned it by breaking her friend Scott’s toe in mid-gavotte the previous year. Teamed with Scott for ballroom, however, she finds that she has real talent, as does Scott. She also has a crush on the teacher, which makes Scott jealous; he’s hardly in a position to complain, however, since Rebecca’s friend Samantha has claimed him as a boyfriend, which makes Rebecca, pushed by Samantha into party kissing games, jealous herself. While there’s a hasty edge to the writing and Scott’s a bit too good to be true, the preteen-romance story is amiably unfurled, with Rebecca’s uneasiness about Samantha’s bossy precocity well captured. The ballroom dance plot is pleasingly unusual, and the details are diverting; Levy boldly ignores the air of geekdom that lingers over junior-high dance and creates a plausible world where a good seventh-grade tango is an admirable thing. Youngsters yearning to trip the light fantastic—and maybe secretly to kiss their supposedly platonic friends—will waltz right through this one. DS

LOGUE, MARY *Dancing with an Alien*. HarperCollins, 2000 [144p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-028319-X \$14.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-028318-1 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 6-8

When Tonia saves a beautiful but strange young man from drowning, she finds herself in love for the first time. Branko, who claims to be an exchange student from Romania, is actually a tall and sexy alien from another planet. In narration that alternates between the two characters, Tonia is busy falling in love while Branko contemplates the babies he and Tonia will make to help insure the survival of his species, whose female population was decimated a generation ago. The story is marred by lapses in logic, such as Branko’s seeming ability to breathe underwater one day and yet nearly drown the next. Tonia’s abrupt switch from romantic cynic to love-swamped teenager is more matter of fact than passionate, and Branko’s awkward alien ways make it difficult to see the appeal. However, for girls who dream of love from a world completely outside of their own, Branko’s extraterrestrial existence may be justification enough. In a quick turnaround at the end, love sets Tonia free; Branko realizes he cares too much for her to subject her to the life of reproductive confinement that awaits the women lured to his planet, and he rides his spaceship off into the sunset. Tonia is left to watch the stars and dream of love, and romantically inclined UFO aficionados may wish to join her. KM

LYON, GEORGE ELLA *One Lucky Girl*; illus. by Irene Trivas. Jackson/DK Ink, 2000 [32p]

ISBN 0-7894-2613-7 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

R* 4-7 yrs

See this month’s Big Picture, p. 235, for review.

MACK, TRACY *Drawing Lessons*. Scholastic, 2000 [176p]

ISBN 0-439-11202-8 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-8

Rory is looking forward to starting seventh grade, which seems nearly grown up to her; she's also looking forward to teaming her artistic talent with her father's in a birthday mural for her mother. The strains of her parents' marriage become too much, however, and her beloved father leaves. Rory can't bring herself to tell anyone or to resume her art, in which she has been very much a pupil of her father, and she grows more and more distant from friends and teachers as her father's departure proves to be permanent. First novelist Mack paints Tracy's distress and increasing isolation effectively and realistically; while Rory's tendency towards adult use of metaphor occasionally adds a false touch to her narration, her engagement with her art is believably depicted. The end isn't entirely surprising (Rory finds rapprochement with her father and begins painting in her own style), but it's satisfying and plausible. Readers who've enjoyed Zibby Oneal's novels about gifted young women will appreciate this portrait of a young artist going through a difficult time. DS

McPHAIL, DAVID *Drawing Lessons from a Bear*; written and illus. by David

McPhail. Little, 2000 32p

ISBN 0-316-56345-5 \$14.95

Ad 4-8 yrs

An imposing and artistically inclined brown bear is the narrator of this exhortation to embrace the creative life. The bear talks about how even when he was a cub he drew whenever he got the chance; the more he drew, the better he got, until he reached his present success: "Many years have passed. I am a big bear now, but I still love to draw. I am invited to dine with kings, and queens, and presidents. (I even draw pictures for them on napkins!)." Bear encourages young listeners to consider themselves artists ("I was born a bear, and I will always be a bear. But I am an artist, too, because that is what I have decided to be") even going so far as to cheerlead them in a shout of "I AM AN ARTIST!" It's hard to believe that McPhail pulls this one out of its sentimental quicksand, but, even with a hackneyed conclusion, he does. The pictures radiate reassurance and cozy warmth from the ovoid shapes of the illustrations to the golds and violets of the sunset-hued light. The text is contemplative and narrow in scope, but the bear is thoroughly engaging and may well convince budding artists to take stronger root. This simple vocational piece lends itself to a multitude of curriculum uses. JMD

MAYNARD, BILL *Pondfire*. Putnam, 2000 [96p]

ISBN 0-399-23439-X \$15.99

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 4-7

Jed's the son of the volunteer fire chief; in his attempt to emulate his widely admired father and overcome his trepidation about fire ("I kept trying to learn more about fires so they wouldn't scare me so much"), he's already blotted his copybook by causing one destructive conflagration. Now other fires are beginning to blaze around town, and people are suspecting Jed. Already keen to uncover the real culprit, Jed grows even more determined when one of the fires results in his father's serious injury and in his father's chief detractor's taking over the fire department.

The book starts out with a great hook ("It wasn't much of a swamp, but we were in the middle of it. And it was on fire") and continues in that vein, keeping interest sparking throughout. The side plots (Jed's enmity with some difficult classmates, his grandmother's life in a nursing home, his father's coma) are heartily corny, as is the plot resolution, but there's heated excitement and high action aplenty. The pace is swift, and it's hard to beat the testosterone-rich heroism surrounding the final dramatic conflagration (a derailed train carrying fuel provides explosions as well as flames) as Jed shows his fire-fighting talents in the face of danger. Kids not looking for the sophistication of Maurice Gee's *The Fire-Raiser* (BCCB 12/92) will find this a crackling good read. DS

MAYO, MARGARET, ad. *Brother Sun, Sister Moon: The Life and Stories of St. Francis*; illus. by Peter Malone. Little, 2000 [70p]
ISBN 0-316-56466-4 \$16.95
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 3-6

Mayo combines biography and folklore in this look at Francis of Assisi, founder of the Franciscan Order. A succinct biography of the mendicant friar precedes eight legends of the miracles and blessed events associated with him. The story of St. Francis' conversion from a rich and idle young man to a believer who gives up everything for his faith is a powerful one; the tales of his miraculous way with birds and beasts are the stories that make him a favorite saint, especially among younger children. Simple, restrained language and a respectful but friendly tone give this title just the right amount of reverent pizzazz to make it a Sunday school favorite accessible to a wide range of readers and listeners. Malone's arresting paintings feature elegant spare lines and intensely saturated opaque golds, blues, and reds combined in stylized compositions that subtly echo religious iconography and missal art. Mayo mentions the existence of biographies and lore written about the Christian saint but never names any, offering specific source notes for only one tale. Still, libraries seeking to expand their comparative religion section with a high-quality title shouldn't miss this one. The lyrics for "The Canticle of Brother Sun" are also included. JMD

MYERS, WALTER DEAN *145th Street: Short Stories*. Delacorte, 2000 151p
ISBN 0-385-32137-6 \$15.95 R Gr. 7-12

Myers' collection of ten short stories set in New York City's Harlem opens with "Big Joe's Funeral," wherein Big Joe decides to have his funeral while he can still enjoy it. The humor of Big Joe's celebration of the beyond is followed by the tragedy of "The Baddest Dog in Harlem," in which a young boy is killed by careless police gunfire; and a boxer on his way down goes back to the ring to earn money against the wishes of his loving wife in the multilayered story of "The Fighter." Faith, family, and neighborhood unity are recurring motifs in Myers' collection, and complex but subtle character portrayals add depth and nuance. Narrative voices vary: the chatty first-person narrations are close-up, front-porch observations of what's been happening on the block; the third-person narrations provide a distance that adds clarity to the pathos of the tale being told. Each story builds on the others and supplies another facet of the community Myers carefully and lovingly constructs. As a whole, this is a model compilation of interconnected tales that are strong standing alone but stronger still standing together. JMD

OSBORNE, MARY POPE *Adaline Falling Star*. Scholastic, 2000 [176p]
 ISBN 0-439-05947-X \$16.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 4-7

Adaline Falling Star, daughter of fabled scout Kit Carson and his Arapaho wife, is left with white relatives in St. Louis when her father accompanies John C. Fremont, "The Pathfinder," on a trip through the Rocky Mountains. Adaline is unable to adjust to life with her cousins; their overt racism and mistrust provoke her worst qualities. Her cousin's destruction of Adaline's corn-husk doll and other personal belongings in an attempt to "wash the Indian out of her" causes Adaline to run away. Convinced her father has broken his promise to return for her, she heads for home; she is soon joined by a mongrel dog who becomes her constant companion. The packed plot is held together by Adaline's first-person narration; her voice is emotional, intelligent, and touchingly naïve. The highly fictionalized Adaline is the only well-articulated character; the two-dimensional peripheral characters lack substance and individuality. Adaline's ruminations on her mixed-race parentage and familial roots are background chatter for what is essentially a *Journey of Natty Gann* survival story—young girl searches for her father accompanied by canine sidekick—and her ultimate reunion with her father is in no doubt. JMD

PACKARD, EDWARD *Big Numbers: And Pictures That Show Just How Big They Are*; illus. by Salvatore Murdocca. Millbrook, 2000 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-7613-1570-5 \$22.40

Trade ed. ISBN 0-7613-1280-3 \$14.95

Ad Gr. 1-3

From one to one quadrillion, peas are the article of choice to demonstrate the relative, well, bigness of numbers. Pea-eating Pete, of the round spectacles and backwards baseball cap, starts with a single pea on a plate, increases his serving to one hundred peas, then a thousand (heaping plateful), one million (overflowing table full), one billion (overflowing houseful) . . . you get the picture. There's a lot going on in each crowded, Technicolor spread. Critters parade along the sidewalk with a caption explaining how far a (fill in the number) of them would stretch; the number is written out in words, numerals, and scientific notation (with exponent); the number is expressed in multiples of other numbers ("A million is a thousand thousands"); cartoon characters kibitz about the growing pea pile ("Yikes! Where's the table?"). Jovial as all this may be, it gives a better sense of volume than of numbers. The quadrillion peas that make a mountain covering Pete's town is a green lump, conveying little idea of the actual number of discrete units that comprise it. If a curriculum demands that very young children contend with meganumbers, by all means give this a try. To convey large numbers in a visually explicit format, however, choose from David Schwartz's *How Much Is a Million?* (BCCB 7/85), Demi's *One Grain of Rice* (BCCB 2/97), or even Arthur Geisert's *Roman Numerals I to MM* (BCCB 3/96). EB

PALATINI, MARGIE *Good as Goldie*; written and illus. by Margie Palatini. Hyperion, 2000 [24p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-7868-2435-2 \$15.49

Trade ed. ISBN 0-7868-0502-1 \$14.99

Reviewed from galleys

R 3-5 yrs

It's such a trial to be a role model to a younger sibling, as oh-so-mature Goldie is quick to point out. She decries baby brother Nicholas' limited life skills ("Guess

what? He doesn't eat with a fork or a spoon. Yech! He's a very sloppy eater"). One glance at the watercolor pictures, though, clues the audience that the pot's calling the kettle black. Nicholas may have a bowl on his head and a bottle enroute to the floor, but Goldie herself has tipped over her milk, trashed her dinner plate, and spooned as much meal onto her face as into her mouth. "Nicholas can't read books like me," says Goldie complacently. No, indeed. But while baby chomps on a book spine, Goldie peruses her volume upside down. Goldie's verbal self-righteousness is well matched by the slit-eyed, sidelong glances she casts at her brother and her droll smugness at her own accomplishments. Oversized print, a cheery palette, and uncomplicated scenes on pristine white backgrounds perfectly complement Palatini's on-target selection of milestone achievements, making this an excellent choice for preschoolers defining their own position in the family hierarchy. EB

PETERS, JULIE ANNE *Define "Normal."* Little, 2000 [144p]

ISBN 0-316-70631-0 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 7-10

Eighth-grader Antonia is accustomed to success through diligence at school, but she's afraid a new challenge may be too much for her: she's supposed to peer counsel the rebel Jazz, whose dyed hair, eyebrow ring, and tough friends intimidate Antonia. While it'll be no surprise to readers that Antonia's initially judgmental attitudes ("She was a what. A subhuman. A foreign body to steer clear of in the hallway. All punkers were") give way to a greater understanding of Jazz, the book cleverly moves beyond that predictable result when it turns out that Jazz, acting under secret orders, is actually peer counseling Antonia. The girls' budding friendship is a bit of a setup in literary terms as well as in literal terms, but it's still convincing, as is Antonia's initial determination that preservation of her family in the face of her mother's debilitating depression is her own private responsibility. The book effectively makes some quiet points about the dangers of walling yourself into a particular identity: gifted musician Jazz keeps her talent secret from her punk friends, and Antonia's terrified of being anything other than the super-reliable good kid. Peters (author of *How Do You Spell Geek?*, BCCB 10/96) has a gift for adding some original flavor to solid school-and-friends dramas, and this gives the different-as-day-and-night friendship story heart that readers from both sides of the equation will appreciate. DS

PETERSEN, P. J. *I Hate Weddings*; illus. by Lynne Cravath. Dutton, 2000 [112p]

ISBN 0-525-46327-5 \$15.99

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 2-4

Poor Dan (star of *I Hate Company*, BCCB 11/94): his divorced father's getting married to Joan, whom Dan has only met once, and he doesn't even get the man-to-man prewedding visit he was expecting, instead having to bunk up at Dad's fiancée's house with her kids. While young Riley adores Dan instantly, resentful Hannah is trouble, and with a few tricks from her Dan has managed to turn himself into a problem rather than the good guest he's genuinely trying to be ("I didn't want Dad to forget about his old son. I had to do better with Joan"). Despite setbacks, Dan et al. make it unscathed to the wedding, where Dan saves the day with a great act of heroism (removing Riley's pet tarantula from Joan's wedding

dress mid-ceremony) all the more heroic for its remaining largely a secret. Petersen has Dan's voice down pat: plagued by uncertainty amid all the curves being thrown him, Dan's still a good, well-meaning, and ruefully funny middle-grade guy. The book wisely provides its angst through realistic human stress, making its characters credibly flawed rather than conveniently villainous and providing immediate new-family benefits in the worshipful Riley and cool step-uncle Tony. It's a breezy read with a sympathetic hero and a tarantula at a wedding—what's not to like? Reviewed from an unillustrated galley. DS

PIERCE, TAMORA *The Circle Opens: Magic Steps*. Scholastic, 2000 [272p]
ISBN 0-590-39588-2 \$16.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 5-8

The first title in this new series (a spinoff of Pierce's Circle of Magic quartet) finds fourteen-year-old mage Lady Sandrilene fa Toren (the Sandry of *Sandry's Book*, BCCB 11/98) nursing her uncle Duke Vedris through his convalescence after a heart attack. Her nursing includes accompanying the Duke on his daily rides through the city; during one such ride Sandry discovers Pasco, a twelve-year-old boy who can dance magic, and becomes his teacher. Another ride does not end quite so pleasantly: Sandry is present when the grisly murder of a shady merchant is discovered, and she becomes instrumental in the solving of the crime. This novel, even more than the opening title in the Circle of Magic series, serves more as set-up than as a well-developed story of its own. The characterizations are less richly layered, relying on the previous series to fill in the blanks, and the descriptions of Pasco's magic-making dances do not reflect the same complexity as the descriptions of the other magical workings. The occasional insertion of modern slang is disconcerting, there is a bit more talking than doing (which is unusual for the plot-driven Pierce), and it is unclear which character is the novel's primary focus. The murder and suspense angle of the tale is well thought out, however, and the villains of the piece deserve their ultimate gory end. The relationships between Sandry and her older mentors—her uncle, the law-enforcement officer Wulfric—are subtly and often humorously depicted. Despite an occasional thinness, there is more than enough action and suspense to keep fans of the previous titles dancing right along. JMD

RADIN, RUTH YAFFE *Escape to the Forest: Based on a True Story of the Holocaust*; illus. by Janet Hamlin. HarperCollins, 2000 [80p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-028521-4 \$13.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-028520-6 \$13.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 3-6

Radin's based-on-history tale is told by Sarah, a young Jewish girl observing the impact of the Nazi invasion of Poland. Her parents, brother David, and her brother's fiancée, Lili, manage to eke out a subsistence level existence as Nazi-enforced deprivation escalates. As the hardships and dangers grow, David argues for an escape to the forest and the partisans; unable to convince his parents of his argument, he remains to keep the family together. Rounded up for transport to Treblinka, the family faces almost certain death until David and Lili get lost in the crowd and Sarah's parents tell her to flee and live. Alone, Sarah makes her way to the Bielski partisans and reunion with David and Lili. Radin captures the stark horror of a family living under extreme circumstances. Stylistically simple but strongly plot-

ted, the narrative makes good use of suspense and contrast. The bravery and closeness of Sarah's family is clearly defined; juxtaposed against the increasing Nazi threat, their eventual sundering has substantial impact. Radin includes two notes, one giving biographical information on the real Sarah, and the other a historical note on the Bielski partisans. The story is divided into chapters by season and year, which will enable classroom teachers to provide context by making connections to other wartime events. Black-and-white line drawings of domestic items and theme-related images are interspersed throughout. JMD

RASCHKA, CHRIS *Moosey Moose*; ISBN 0-7868-0581-1; *Sluggy Slug*; ISBN 0-7868-0584-6; *Whaley Whale*; ISBN 0-7868-0583-8; *Wormy Worm*; ISBN 0-7868-0582-X. Each book: written and illus. by Chris Raschka. Hyperion, 2000 [17p] \$3.99

Reviewed from galleys

M 1-3 yrs

This series aims to teach "young children to read using simple sounds paired with easy word repetitions." Ultra-spare storylines (*Whaley Whale* hides, *Sluggy Slug* won't go, *Moosey Moose* is mad, *Wormy Worm* wiggles) feature three or four words in large text on one page; on the facing page is a related illustration. The texts are uneven (a representative sample of a more successful attempt is "*Sluggy Slug* won't go. No, *Sluggy Slug* will not go. *Sluggy Slug* says no. 'No'") and illogical (even the youngest listener is going to wonder what *Whaley Whale* is doing out of the water). The lack of context clues (to encourage word recognition) and the use of complex consonant combinations and contractions make these well-intentioned titles too difficult for the intended audience of young emergent readers. Raschka's talent is such that he can make even the simplest concept at least visually appealing; unfortunately, these construction-paper-colored figures, outlined in black like coloring book images for tiny fingers and jumbo crayons, are attractive but insufficient. JMD

RODOWSKY, COLBY *Spindrift*. Farrar, 2000 [112p]
ISBN 0-374-37155-5 \$15.00

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 6-8

Thirteen-year-old Cassie Barnhart is upset and confused when she sees her brother-in-law Mickey secretly kissing another woman. She doesn't tell her family about the incident and struggles to believe the best, defending Mickey even after her sister seeks a divorce upon discovering further evidence of his infidelity. Cassie sees herself as a problem-solver ("I fix things: smooshed-down sand castles on the beach, lopsided bird's nests that the birds have long since abandoned, clocks, and sometimes life. At least I try") but suddenly her life is out of control: her sister is moving back home with a new baby, her grandmother wants to remarry and sell the *Spindrift*, the family home, and Mickey is a stranger. The straightforward narrative has a conversational tone and, told from Cassie's perspective, it flows smoothly from incident to incident. Cassie is given some emotional depth, and her growth and actions evolve naturally from the plot. With the exception of Mickey, who seems a little too much the classic cad, the adults are believably drawn; realistically, these grownups do have needs of their own. Cassie's difficulties with change and human disappointment will resonate with readers, although her naïveté makes her seem younger than her age would indicate. The predictable story is

wrapped up tidily: Cassie tells her teacher everything that has happened to her, and Mrs. Quattlemayer tells her to “store it up, Cassie. Store it up and sort it out. And maybe someday you’ll write about it.” JNH

ROSS, MICHAEL ELSOHN *Nature Art with Chiura Obata*; illus. by Wendy Smith and with photographs. Carolrhoda, 2000 48p (Naturalist’s Apprentice)
ISBN 1-57505-378-0 \$19.93 Ad Gr. 4-7

The life and art of Japanese-American *sumi-e* artist Chiura Obata are described in this combination biography, nature journal, and art instruction book. Ross conveys basic information about Obata’s childhood in Japan, his personal life, and his work as a maturing artist in the United States, where he painted the aftermath of the San Francisco earthquake, the wildlife of Yosemite National Park, and Topaz, the detention center where he and his family were imprisoned during World War II. The writing is accessible but choppy, and at times the text has the rhythm of controlled-vocabulary prose: “When Zoroku [Obata] was seven, he began his training in *sumi-e*. This art form uses a type of ink called *sumi* and specially shaped brushes for drawing and painting. *Sumi-e* takes years to learn. For nearly two years, Zoroku painted lines and circles without resting his elbows on the table. It was hard work, but he learned to paint with a steady hand.” Clearly captioned black and white photographs and reproductions of Obata’s paintings are interspersed throughout the work along with fifteen art exercises and information blocks about the natural world. Obata’s *sumi* paintings reveal an expressive beauty in their precise lines, delicate washes of color, and eloquent balance of negative and positive space. Overall, the art and nature exercises add little to the work, and readers will regret that more of Obata’s inspirational paintings were not included in their stead. Report writers will gratefully find a timeline, a short glossary, a useful biography, and an index. JNH

SIMMONS, JANE *Daisy and the Beastie*; written and illus. by Jane Simmons. Little, Brown, 2000 [32p]
ISBN 0-316-79785-5 \$12.95
Reviewed from galleys R 2-5 yrs

There’s nothing like two youngsters going off in search of adventure to pique the interest of young listeners. Duckling Daisy (*Come Along, Daisy!*, BCCB 9/98, etc.) and her little brother Pip go in search of “the Beastie” from Grandpa’s story. On their journey they encounter a variety of farm animals and their young, which encounters provide opportunities for imitative vocalizations from the ever-enthusiastic Pip. The two exploring ducklings hear a noise from the shed (“Run, Pip, run!” cried Daisy. ‘It’s the Beastie!’”) and flee to their grandfather, only to discover that “the Beastie” is really three kittens, “and Daisy and Pip played with the kitten beasties all day long.” Daisy and Pip’s mini-odyssey is going to make a lively addition to storytime; chances for participatory animal sounds abound (“Honk! Honk!” said the goslings. ‘Honk!’ said Pip”) and the right dramatic reading will give this reassuring tale a suspenseful resonance that is just the right intensity for preschoolers. The illustrative action is depicted on double-page spreads large enough to be seen from the back of the room, with compositions that balance light and color while they contrast big and small (tiny ducklings against huge sow and piglets, etc.). Simmons’ illustrations have that sunny palette readers will recall

from Daisy's previous outings, and the depictions of the animal characters, both ducks and others, are just as winning. JMD

SINGER, MARILYN *On the Same Day in March: A Tour of the World's Weather*; illus. by Frané Lessac. HarperCollins, 2000 [40p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-028188-X \$15.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-028187-1 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 1-3

A companion to *Nine O'Clock Lullaby*, a tour of the world's time zones, this picture book shows the weather conditions prevailing from the Arctic to Antarctica and fifteen places in between on "the same day in March." Lively folk-art inspired gouache spreads illustrate one to ten lines of text, showing how "the biggest snow fort ever/ is nothing but a dragon-shaped patch/ in somebody's backyard" after the chinook blows through Alberta, Canada; how "sunlight sparkles on the market" in Dakar, Senegal and "dazzles on the sand" in Barbados; how people in Darjeeling, India respond to the sight of "hailstones all over the hillside"; and how "a tiny twister" in the Texas Panhandle managed to "suck up a bucket of water/ and give Grandma's dirty old truck the first wash it's had in weeks." Though the poetry is uneven, the specificity of the text and the clearly individualized illustrations effectively communicate the basic message that "on any given day in March, somewhere in the world, it may be raining, snowing, or hailing. It may be sunny, foggy, or windy." The author's brief explanation of the impact of the earth's rotation on global weather would be a good jumping-off point for a more effective physical demonstration, one of the many ways this book could be used across the curriculum, whether you read it in March or save it for a rainy day. FK

SOUHAMI, JESSICA, ad. *No Dinner!: The Story of the Old Woman and the Pumpkin*; ad. and illus. by Jessica Souhami. Cavendish, 2000 28p

ISBN 0-7614-5059-9 \$15.95

R 4-7 yrs

An old woman, "so bent and frail that she was nothing but skin and bone," goes to visit her granddaughter on the other side of the forest. On her way she meets a wolf, a bear, and a tiger; despite the animals' urgent hunger, she convinces them to wait until later to eat her, because she is sure to "get nice and fat" at her loving granddaughter's house. Clever genes must run in the family: to keep her from being eaten, the granddaughter hides her grandmother in a hollow pumpkin so she can roll home without being seen by the hungry beasts. The tiger and bear are easily deceived, but the wolf has "never heard a TALKING pumpkin," and, his curiosity aroused, he discovers the old woman. With one last trick the old woman gains her home, "happy, fat, and safe." Souhami illustrates her spare, fast-moving tale with watercolor ink and charcoal illustrations. The characters and setting are boldly rendered, constructed of solid geometric shapes in poster-paint-like opaque colors, and set against stark white pages in uncluttered compositions. The hungry animals loom hugely over the old woman, and, on the way home, they take up much of the available space. That sense of size-related danger is stylistically reinforced by the use of capital letters, larger typefaces, and bold lettering in the text itself when the beasts address the wily woman. This crisply tellable rendering is "based on a popular folktale, 'The Old Woman and the Pumpkin,' told across the Indian subcontinent." Dramatic visuals and concise language make this a tasty storytime treat. JMD

STEIN, STEPHEN J. *Alternative American Religions*. Oxford, 2000 [156p] illus. with photographs
 ISBN 0-19-511196-6 \$22.00
 Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 8-12

Stein examines the emergence of New Religious Movements (“NRMs”) and their leaders in the United States from Roger Williams and his colonial dissenters through Marshall Applewhite and Heaven’s Gate in 1997. Chronologically organized in broadly defined eras, each chapter’s discussion centers on a particular theme—colonial peace movements, communitarian sects in the early to middle 1800s, apocalyptic believers in the middle to late 1800s, women healers and occultists at the turn of the last century, urban black churches in the early and middle 1900s, and late twentieth century cults. Although this schema illuminates patterns in the development of NRMs, it may lead readers with little background in religious history to view these themes as time-bound (how about apocalyptic movements in the late 1900s, or male healers and occultists at any period?). The tone is generally pedantic (“Rising economic success accompanied the geographical and numerical expansion of the Shakers”), but primary source inserts for each chapter and an abundance of period illustrations move the discussion along. Researchers of a particular NRM may want to take a peek in the excellent index to see if their quarry is included here before tackling the entire volume; readers seeking more in-depth information can consult the appended bibliography. EB

TABACK, SIMMS, ad. *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*; ad. and illus. by Simms Taback. Viking, 1999 34p
 ISBN 0-670-87855-3 \$15.99 R 3-5 yrs

Taback has reillustrated his 1977 version of a well-known and popular Yiddish folk song. While the image of Joseph himself will be familiar to readers of the earlier title, the artist has enhanced his original concept in mixed-media illustrations (watercolor, pencil, gouache, ink, and collage) that include saturated colors, busy patterns, and the same die-cut technique used in his previous book, *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly* (BCCB 3/98). The sometimes overcrowded compositions teem with inside humor and subtle commentary on all things Yiddish: samplers feature theme-related proverbs, the lead story on the front page of a discarded newspaper reads “Rabbi from Chelm Visits Kazrilevke,” a card from Joseph’s sister reads “Zayn Gezundt,” and photos of famous Jews (Sigmund Freud, Sholom Aleichem) hang on the walls. Musical notation and English lyrics for “I Had a Little Overcoat” (*Hob Ich Mir a Mantl*) are included, as is an author’s note linking the story’s moral (“making something out of nothing”) to his being able to redo the pictures for this popular title. Adults fond of the 1977 version or of Phoebe Gilman’s adaptation *Something from Nothing* (BCCB 2/94) will appreciate this visually clever revision. The simple, cumulative text lends itself to group sharing, and now, thanks to Taback’s re-imaging, so do the pictures. JMD

UPDIKE, JOHN *A Child’s Calendar*; illus. by Trina Schart Hyman. Holiday House, 1999 32p
 ISBN 0-8234-1445-0 \$16.95 R 5-8 yrs

This newly reillustrated version of Updike’s poems takes listeners through the calendar year via verse. Each month receives four brief stanzas in tight ABCB rhyme;

while the pattern gets a little wearing and some of the scansion and images are a bit forced, there are still some pithy and fresh turns of phrase (“The trees are bored/ With being green./ Some people leave/ The local scene”—“August”); the specificity about various seasonal aspects is pleasantly evocative. Hyman adds impact to the cycle by embodying it in a bustling interracial family cozily ensconced in the New England countryside, and her tableaux are lovely without losing sight of realism or humor. The most magnetic family member is the sturdy preschooler, who proffers a newly uprooted daffodil to his dismayed mother in April, stands gleefully sultless on the beach in August, and peers wistfully at the sparkling Christmas tree in December. Warm and friendly, this’ll come in handy when you need a paean to the progressing year. DS

WALLACE, KAREN *Scarlette Beane*; illus. by Jon Berkeley. Dial, 2000 [32p]
ISBN 0-8037-2475-6 \$15.99

Reviewed from galleys

R 4-8 yrs

When Scarlette Beane was born, her face was “as red as a beet, and the ends of her fingers were green,” and her mother said “she will grow tall and strong and do something wonderful.” At the age of five, Scarlette gets her first garden and displays an enormous talent for making things grow: “Her carrots were as huge as tree trunks. Her onions were as big as hot-air balloons. Her parsley was as thick as a jungle.” Neighbors gather to harvest the gigantic veggies and indulge in some delicious vegetable soup. That night, trowel and seed packets in hand, Scarlette goes out to the meadow and plants the seeds in the light of the moon and “as she covered them with earth, the ends of her fingers flashed like green stars.” The next day “in the middle of the meadow stood a castle made of vegetables,” and Sarah and her folks move in. The theme (the wonder of growing things) may lean toward the corny, but Wallace’s stoutly positive text has an appealing simplicity and humor. Berkeley’s acrylics are rendered in an intense palette (his veggies aren’t just the biggest, they are the greenest and the reddest) that makes horticultural miracles easy to believe. The overall-clad Scarlette, her loving parents, and their brightly garbed multi-ethnic neighbors bustle through the pages planting, harvesting, and soup-eating, good-naturedly having their second helpings under the picnic table when it begins to rain. Unusual perspectives and sharp contrasts between light and dark combine in balanced, uncrowded compositions large enough to use with a group. Large text with generous leading makes this a good choice for beginning readers as well. Endpapers loaded with succulent produce will have listeners wondering if there isn’t something to this vegetable-soup thing after all. JMD

WHITE, LINDA ARMS *Comes a Wind*; illus. by Tom Curry. Kroupa/DK Ink, 2000 [32p]

ISBN 0-7894-2601-3 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 5-8 yrs

Mama’s hopeful that her two grown boys, Clement and Clyde, can put aside their obsessive competitiveness for a visit on her birthday, but it doesn’t look promising. Even the sign of a breeze (“Looks like it comes a wind”) is an occasion for a yarn-off about the biggest wind ever. Soon it’s apparent that *this* wind is actually the biggest ever, since it hurls livestock and buildings through the air and sails Mama up to the weathervane on top of the barn; the brothers throw competition aside and work together to bring Mama back to earth. The longhorn flavor of the tall-

taling brothers is droll and appealingly childlike. Though the plot blows out a bit abruptly, the great chaos of outhouses and cattle flying through the air will tickle young audiences, and they'll appreciate the recurring elements ("Squeak, squeak, squeak went the windmill" heralds each big blow). Curry, also illustrator of Lowell's downhome *The Bootmaker and the Elves* (BCCB 12/97), textures his acrylics as thickly as oils but keeps a lightness in the exaggerated figures, whose long faces and casually applied features give them a *Toy Story* look (while Mama is serene under a neatly bunned expanse of cerulean-blue hair). If you're focusing on weather or looking for an offbeat tall tale, this'll be a breath of fresh air. DS

WORMELL, MARY *Why Not?;* written and illus. by Mary Wormell. Farrar, 2000 [32p]
ISBN 0-374-38422-3 \$15.00
Reviewed from galleys Ad 2-4 yrs

Barnaby is a scalawag of a kitten, responding to his mother's admonitions ("Don't chase the chickens, Barnaby!"; "Don't scare the birds, Barnaby!" etc.) with "WHY NOT?" His question is answered by a succession of bigger animals (rooster, crow, etc.) that each say "Because I'll chase you!" or a variation thereof. Barnaby gets in a tight spot when, despite his mother's warning, he squeezes under the hay bales; the arrival of all the animals he's bothered on his walk motivates him to pull himself out, after which "he ran up the garden path and back to his mom in time for supper." Little listeners will easily follow this very simple cumulative tale, appreciating the recurrence of similar events and repetitive language. Wormell's colored block prints are reminiscent of Ashley Wolff, though with more delicacy of line; the wryly expressive faces of the animals add a needed touch of humor to the somewhat bland compositions. The story is slight but useful, and storytime listeners are bound to catch on to that "WHY NOT?" refrain with ear-splitting enthusiasm. JMD

WRIGHT, BETTY REN *The Moonlight Man.* Scholastic, 2000 [176p]
ISBN 0-590-25237-2 \$15.95
Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 6-9

Fifteen-year-old Jenny and her younger sister, Allie, are hoping their new house (their seventh abode in five years) will be the final stop on their father's restless journey to escape his grief over their mother's death. Jenny's desire to stay put is one reason she doesn't tell her father about "the moonlight man" and his dog, the ghosts that haunt their house and yard. A third ghost sobbing in the cellar of the house next door propels Jenny into an investigation of the past that reveals an accidental death, lost love, and a shade with vengeance on his mind. Jenny tells the story through her journal, an inconsistent and clumsily superimposed literary device that clutters up the straightforward narrative of this relatively simple ghost story (Jenny's direct address of the reader is especially disingenuous). Despite the dependence on coincidence and unexplained ghostly powers, doomed weddings and vengeful hauntings are pretty heady elements, and Wright puts them together in an undemanding page-turner. If Jenny is sometimes just a little too perkily perfect to be believable, there are still some scary moments that will make this an easy sell to ghost-story lovers and reluctant readers. JMD

YACCARINO, DAN *Deep in the Jungle*; written and illus. by Dan Yaccarino. Schwartz/Atheneum, 2000 34p
ISBN 0-689-82235-9 \$16.00 R* 5-9 yrs

The mighty lion may be king of the jungle, but he's hardly a benevolent despot: "The leopards brought him food, the gorilla brushed his mane, and the elephant gave him shade. The animals couldn't stand him one bit." The lion is lured away by the flattery of a fast-talking human into what's supposed to be his big showbiz break but turns out to be a circus lion-taming act. The lion puts an end to his career gone wrong by chowing down on the lion-tamer ("Well, then, I'm afraid I must eat you up. Jungle law, you know"). Upon return to the jungle, he atones for his past misdeeds by saving his fellow animals from yet more human exploitation by tricking another interloping man into his capable jaws. The text is humorously laconic, especially in its airily matter-of-fact acceptance of the lion's anthropophagic solutions. The showbiz aspects are amusingly slick, and it's a hoot to see the big cat trounce the fat cats. The visuals parallel the poker-faced anarchy of the story with matte pages, sans serif print, and solid figures in vignettes rather than full page art, giving the book the look of a mid-century Margaret Wise Brown/Leonard Weisgard project. Yaccarino puts more emphasis on the strength and richness of the colors, however, as well as on the toylike smoothness of the figures, which makes the man-eating cheerfully jokey rather than violent. Sly even about being sly, this happily cavalier readaloud will set young audiences roaring. DS

YOLEN, JANE *Off We Go!*; illus. by Laurel Molk. Little, 2000 26p
ISBN 0-316-90228-4 \$12.95 Ad 2-6 yrs

A swamp full of baby fauna make appropriate noises as they extol the virtues of visiting grandmother's house: "Tip-toe, tippity toe,/ Over the leaves and down below,/ Off to Grandma's house we go,/ Sings Little Mouse.// Hip-hop, hippity hop,/ Through the slime and over the slop,/ Off to Grandma's, never stop,/ Sings Little Frog." There's one too many little animals in this cumulative romp (the duckling rhyme is the least successful), which causes the sing-song saga to become wearing, but an imaginative reader-aloud is going to have a melodramatically good time. Molk's watercolors have a bright-eyed and bushy-tailed expressive attitude, with a delicacy of line and shading that gives them a robust grace. The scenic idylls have a cool green charm enhanced by white light, in a natural world that has spiders but no mosquitoes; expert drafting helps draw the line between pretty and cute. JMD



CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARDS 2000

The Newbery Medal will be awarded to Christopher Paul Curtis for *Bud, Not Buddy* (Delacorte). The Newbery Honor Books are *Getting Near to Baby* by Audrey Coulombis (Putnam), *26 Fairmount Avenue* by Tomie de Paola (Putnam), and *Our Only May Amelia* by Jennifer L. Holm (HarperCollins).

The Caldecott Medal will be awarded to Simms Taback for *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*, adapted by the illustrator (Viking). The Caldecott Honor Books are *Sector 7*, written and illus. by David Wiesner (Clarion); *The Ugly Duckling*, ad. and illus. by Jerry Pinkney (Morrow); *When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry*, written and illus. by Molly Bang (Scholastic); and *A Child's Calendar*, illus. by Trina Schart Hyman and written by John Updike (Holiday House).

The Coretta Scott King Award for writing will be presented to Christopher Paul Curtis, author of *Bud, Not Buddy* (Delacorte), and the award for illustration goes to Brian Pinkney for *In the Time of the Drums*, text by Kim L. Siegelson (Jump at the Sun/Hyperion). The King Honor Books for writing are *Francie*, by Karen English (Farrar); *Black Hands, White Sails*, by Patricia C. and Fredrick L. McKissack (Scholastic); and *Monster*, by Walter Dean Myers (HarperCollins). King Honor Books for illustration are *My Rows and Piles of Coins*, illustrated by E. B. Lewis, written by Tololwa M. Mollel (Clarion); and *Black Cat*, written and illus. by Christopher Myers (Scholastic).

The Pura Belpré Award for narrative goes to Alma Flor Ada for *Under the Royal Palms: A Childhood in Cuba* (Atheneum, 1998) and the award for illustration goes to Carmen Lomas Garza for *Magic Windows: Cut-Paper Art and Stories* (Children's Book Press, 1999). Honor Books for narrative are *From the Bellybutton of the Moon and Other Summer Poems* by Francisco X. Alarcón (Children's Book Press, 1998) and *Laughing Out Loud, I Fly: Poems in English and Spanish* by Juan Felipe Herrera (HarperCollins, 1998). Honor Books for illustration are *Barrío: José's Neighborhood*, written and illustrated by George Ancona (Harcourt, 1998); *The Secret Stars*, illustrated by Felipe Dávalos, written by Joseph Slate (Cavendish, 1998); and *Mama and Papa Have a Store*, written and illus. by Amelia Lau Carling (Dial, 1998).

The American publisher receiving the Mildred L. Batchelder Award for the most outstanding translation of a book originally published in a foreign language is Walker and Co. for Anton Quintana's *The Baboon King*; honors go to R&S Books for *Vendela in Venice*, by Christina Björk, illus. by Inga-Karin Eriksson; Farrar, Straus, and Giroux for *The Collector of Moments*, written and illus. by Quint Buchholz (Farrar); and Front Street for *Asphalt Angels* by Ineke Holtwijk.

The Michael L. Printz Award for a book that exemplifies literary excellence in young adult literature goes to Walter Dean Myers for *Monster* (HarperCollins). Honor books are *Hard Love* by Ellen Wittlinger (Simon), *Skellig* by David Almond (Delacorte), and *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson (Farrar).

The 2001 May Hill Arbutnot Honor Lecture will be delivered by Susan Cooper.

Chris Crutcher is the 2000 winner of the Margaret A. Edwards Award for Outstanding Literature for Young Adults honoring an author's lifetime contribution in writing books for teenagers.

The Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction goes to Miriam Bat-Ami for *Two Suns in the Sky* (Front Street/Cricket).

The ALSC Distinguished Service Award goes to Peggy Sullivan.

The Canadian Library Association's Best Book of the Year for children is Tim Wynne-Jones's *Stephen Fair* (Kroupa/DK Ink). The Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award goes to Kady MacDonald Denton for *A Child's Treasury of Nursery Rhymes* (Kingfisher).

The Carnegie Medal was awarded to David Almond for *Skellig* (Delacorte).

The Kate Greenaway Medal was awarded to Helen Cooper for *Pumpkin Soup* (Doubleday).



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: Floca;
Horowitz; Pierce
- African Americans: Govenar; Myers
- African Americans–fiction:
Blakeslee; Herman
- African Americans–stories: Battle-
Lavert; Bradby; Johnson
- Aliens–fiction: Logue
- American Indians–fiction: Osborne
- Animals: Gibbons
- Animals–folklore: Bierhorst
- Animals–poetry: Florian
- Animals–stories: Simmons;
Wormell; Yaccarino; Yolen
- Arithmetic: Packard
- Art and artists: Ross
- Art and artists–fiction: Mack
- Art and artists–stories: McPhail
- Basketball–fiction: Deuker; Herman
- Basketball–poetry: Adoff
- Bears–stories: McPhail
- BIOGRAPHIES: Alexander; Berg;
Gilliland; Govenar; Mayo; Ross
- Blindness: Alexander
- Brothers and sisters–fiction: Radin
- Brothers and sisters–stories: Lyon;
Palatini
- Brothers–fiction: Deuker
- Brothers–stories: White
- Cats–fiction: Edwards
- Cats–stories: Wormell
- Chess: Berg
- CONCEPT BOOKS: Packard
- Courage–fiction: Maynard
- Cowboys–stories: Kimmel
- Creativity–stories: McPhail
- Crime and criminals–fiction:
Cooney; Hobbs; Maynard
- Crime and criminals–stories:
Horowitz
- Dancers and dancing–fiction: Levy
- Death and dying–fiction: Kaplan
- Depression–fiction: Peters
- Dinosaurs–fiction: Floca
- Disabilities: Alexander
- Disabilities–fiction: Peters
- Divorce–fiction: Hobbs; Mack;
Rodowsky
- Dogs–fiction: Harlow
- Earth sciences: Singer
- Ethics and values: Deuker
- Families–stories: Johnson
- FANTASY: Pierce
- Fathers and daughters–fiction:
Cooney; Mack; Osborne; Wright
- Fathers and daughters–stories: Cole
- Fathers and sons–fiction: Deuker;
Kaplan; Maynard; Petersen
- Fire–fiction: Maynard
- FOLKTALES AND FAIRYTALES:
Bierhorst; Kimmel; Souhami;
Taback
- Food and eating–stories: Wallace
- Friendship–fiction: Deuker; Levy;
Peters
- FUNNY STORIES: Cole; Petersen;
Yaccarino
- Gardens and gardening–stories:
Wallace
- Ghosts–fiction: Wright
- Grandfathers–fiction: Blakeslee
- Grandmothers–fiction: Rodowsky

Grandmothers—stories: Souhami

HISTORICAL FICTION:

Blakeslee; Harlow; Horowitz;

Osborne; Radin

History, U.S.: Bachrach; Govenar;

Stein

History, world: Bachrach

Holocaust, the: Bachrach; Radin

Islands—fiction: Harlow

Kidnapping—fiction: Cooney

Language arts: Agee

LOVE STORIES: Logue

Magic and magicians—fiction: Pierce

Mothers and daughters—fiction:

Radin; Rodowsky

Mothers and daughters—stories:

Bradby

Mothers and sons—fiction: Herman;

Kaplan

Mothers and sons—stories: White

Music and musicians—fiction:

Kaplan

Music and musicians—stories: Battle-

Lavert

Numbers: Packard

NURSERY RHYMES: Hoberman

Olympic Games: Bachrach

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Paleontology—fiction: Floca

Pet care: Gibbons

POETRY: Adoff; Florian; Singer;

Updike

Rabbits: Gibbons

Racism—fiction: Blakeslee

Reading aloud: Bierhorst; Edwards;

Florian

Reading, easy: Herman

Reading, reluctant: Maynard;

Wright

Religious education: Mayo; Stein

RHYMING STORIES: Hoberman;

Yolen

Runaways—fiction: Hobbs

Saints: Mayo

School—fiction: Herman; Levy

SCIENCE FICTION: Logue

Seasons—poetry: Updike

SHORT STORIES: Myers

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Rodowsky; Wright

Sisters—stories: Cole

South, the: Blakeslee

Spiders—stories: Hoberman

Sports: Bachrach

SPORTS STORIES: Deuker;

Herman

Storytelling: Bierhorst; Cole;

Kimmel; Souhami; Taback

Storytime: Hoberman; Simmons;

Souhami; Taback; Wallace;

White; Wormell; Yaccarino;

Yolen

TALL TALES: Kimmel; White

Tornadoes—stories: Lyon

Uncles—stories: Battle-Lavert

Voyages and travel: Gilliland

Voyages and travel—fiction:

Edwards; Floca

Weather—poetry: Singer

Weather—stories: Lyon

Weddings—fiction: Petersen

West, the—stories: Kimmel; White

Women's studies: Gilliland

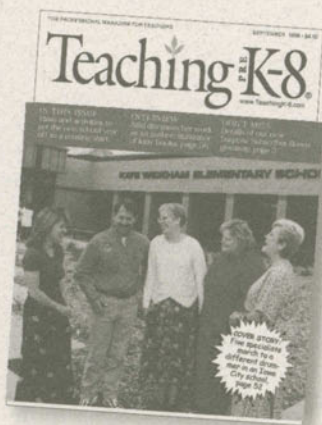
World War II—fiction: Radin



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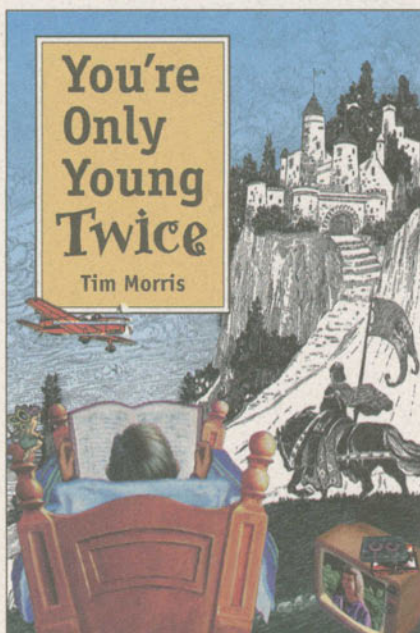
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