EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED
WITH ANNOTATIONS

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.

Except for pre-school years, reading range is given for grade rather than for age of child.

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New Titles for Children and Young People


Set on St. John, in the Virgin Islands, a story about a family's coping with a hurricane is illustrated with paintings that are simple in composition, but bold in technique and the use of vibrant colors. Two small children, Eldra and Albie, tell their father of the strange flags (warning flags) they have seen on a flagpole. Father, a constable, goes off to warn others while Grandfather tells the children and their mother what to do. Their house is destroyed, so—during the lull of the storm's eye—each ties himself to a tree to wait out the buffeting of the hurricane. The story gives the sense of danger and excitement of the storm, and it is simply constructed and told; somehow, it lacks substance, perhaps because it gives no preparation but jumps immediately into the action of the storm and ends so abruptly.


Scolded and sent to bed, the dog Rover has a series of dreams in which he is the master, and his owner takes the part of the dog. There's some humor in the cartoon-style illustrations, and the rhyming is deft, but Armour has extended a situation gag into a long narrative poem, and the book suffers from repetition in pattern and a lack of variety in incidents, although there is some fun in the facets of the situation.


A suspense story set in France has as its protagonist an intrepid girl of eleven whose family has come for a year and, finding their apartment unavailable, has rented a haunted fifteenth-century castle. Gwen and her younger brother become involved in solving the mystery of the menacing caretaker who resembles a figure in the castle tapestry, an art object that has a portion cut out after the family has seen it intact. Gwen doesn't believe in ghosts—but she is certain she has seen one. The plot is not convincing, the writing style is capable, the characterization is variable; while Gwen is a strong character, her sleuthing goes a bit past credibility. The strongest aspect of the book is the suspense, which Bonham builds very nicely to a surprise dénouement.


First published in England, a story by a South American author and a Jamaican illustrator describes a child's first day at school—as told by his older sister. The style

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is very simple and direct, the pictures bold but also simple, with vigorous use of color. Shawn cried, a full-throated roar of dismay. But the kind, smiling teacher said there were "lots of nice kids," and Mom pointed out the toys, Shawn's sister the swing, and a friendly classmate the donkey, a real one, for riding. The story ends, "Shawn smiled a teeny weeny smile." But the smile tells all. This is the sort of book we need more of, the light, firm treatment of a universal experience in a story with minority group protagonists.


Billy is seventeen, more tolerated by friends than accepted; he is drifting through the summer, although his mother nags him about getting a job. It's hard for him to talk to people, easy for him to be used by others. One day at the beach, he begins aimlessly to build a sand castle; it grows into a project, attracts attention and even wins admiration; it becomes almost an obsession. He defends it against the police who say it must come down, he rebuilds it when some motorcycle toughs destroy it. And in making something of his own and defending it, he gains a confidence that enables him to become articulate and self-possessed. What Billy achieves is moderate and believable, and the group play, the shifting of power and allegiances among his friends is as perceptively drawn as is the relationship between Billy and his parents. When the castle is demolished by a giant wave, Billy accepts it, and the story ends, "The beach looked clean, and that made Billy feel good." A sharply-etched and perceptive story.


How nice to have so much of Carroll's delightful daftness in one volume, with poems from Wonderland, ciphers and riddle-poems, the famous "Hiawatha" parody, odd bits of humorous verse, and the saga of the Snark. The editor's biographical introduction and notes on the poems make the book all the more interesting and useful to Carroll buffs. An index is appended.


Based on a real family, this is the story of a young couple who, after having a child of their own, put into practice the compassion so many people express but do not implement. They wanted babies other people didn't—so they adopted seven children of mixed parentage, some American and others from abroad. There is no story line; there's also no pontificating about brotherhood. The book consists simply of an account of the induction into the family of one child after another, the problems the Garth family had with those who were shy or who couldn't speak English, the ways in which the children reacted to each addition. The author wisely refrains from plucking at heartstrings; she doesn't need to. She tells the story simply and directly, and it makes its own appeal.


The delicate details of Hyman's illustrations, raffish or serene in mood, add to the appeal of a small collection of poems that range from nonsense verse to selections that have the poignancy of a ballad. A few of the poems are just rhyming fun; others are more substantial, and the collection includes some narrative poems.

Looking deceptively like a picture book for very young children, this simplified retelling of a major Hungarian legend is illustrated with vivid collage pictures in which the figures are stiff, formalized woodcuts. Following the trail of the miraculous hind, the brothers Hunor and Magyar and their hundred hunstmen go far from home and find a land so bountiful they decide to stay; Hunor and Magyar wed princesses and their men wed fairy maidens, and thus the Hungarian nation begins. The writing is rather stiff, the text overshadowed by the illustrations. A final section by an art historian seems directed to adults; it interprets the legend in the light of history, describes the major figures (the hind is a symbol for the mother of the protagonists, Enéh, who traditionally led the nation to their new homeland), and analyzes the details of costumes in the illustrations.


An older sister assuages a small boy’s several fears in a question-and-answer pattern: “She’ll hate me.” “Oh, Jerome,” says Janice Marie. “Teachers hate flies and dirty erasers and . . . not new boys like you.” “‘Good’ says Jerome/ I’m glad they do.” “What’s black?” “Oh Jerome,” says Janice Marie, “black is a color like yellow or white. It’s got nothing to do with wrong or right. It’s a feeling inside/ about who we are and/ how strong and how free.” “‘Good/ says Jerome/ that feels like me.’” The questions should appeal because of their universality, the answers because they are encouraging; the repetition of pattern is an asset. The collage illustrations are strong in design and in the use of bright, dark colors. Not quite convincing: Janice Marie’s sagacity.


Written in an informal style, a survey of beliefs, experiments, and theories of psychic phenomena both in the past and in the present. While this is fuller than Aaron Klein’s *Beyond Time and Matter*, it is neither as well organized nor as well written; it has more the journalistic than the scientific viewpoint. The material is fascinating, however, and the descriptions of parapsychological phenomena—even those that have been proved fraudulent—will give readers a picture of the scope, fervor, and dissension in the field. A glossary, a selected bibliography, and an index are appended.

Corbett, Scott. *The Case of the Silver Skull*; illus. by Paul Frame. Little, 1974. 120p. $4.95.

Actually, the silver skull, a miniature that is part of a collection, plays little part in the latest of a series of books about a boy detective, Roger, who has been feeling some chagrin because his zeal had nearly led him to alert the police about a robbery. The “robbery” was a loan of a silver collection to a museum, and Roger has decided to avoid another such pitfall. But he is suspicious about a neighbor’s conversation; surely there are several clues that point to the fact that the neighbor is arranging a genuine robbery? Roger takes a chance, espies the thieves, and calls the police. The plot is adequately constructed and there is some suspense in the story, but the book is weakened by the flatly stereotyped characterization and by a jocose style that reaches—at times—a little too hard for humor.


Nick, who is adept at doing magic tricks, is walking his dog Bert one foggy day
when he sees a store with the sign, "Dr. Merlin's Magic Shop." The store is closed, so he investigates the alley; a dog comes out of the shop and Nick's dog follows him back in, so Nick goes in. Dr. Merlin says he is the world's greatest magician and always has been, and suggests a dog-scrambling trick (Nick and a poodle will emerge as two dogs, each half-Bert and half-poodle) that is indignantly spumed. He gives Nick a candy that Nick feeds to Merlin's dog, who promptly goes into a deep sleep. Nick thwarts and outwits Dr. Merlin, leaves, and notices that the store he first saw has disappeared. This may have a minimal appeal to fantasy-lovers, but it is slight and contrived, unconvincing as a fantasy, and not as skilled a blend (nor as funny) as Corbett's fanciful "Trick" books.


First published in England, a book that consists of eight short anecdotes about an animal doctor who is called on, each time, to come to the rescue in a stress situation. Example: a boxing kangaroo is fending off everyone in a supermarket; Boox stops him by ringing an alarm that sounds to the kangaroo like the end of a round. Example: Two men trade Boox a greyhound that has been losing races for a box of cookies; Boox discovers that the greyhound is losing because he's watching late shows on television and is sleepy. The double appeals of animal characters and nonsensical plots may amuse readers, but the writing style is pedestrian and the stories not much different from strip cartoons in substance.


Charles is a shepherd whose cloak is ragged, so he shears his sheep, washes and cards the wool, dyes it and spins it into cloth, and makes a beautiful new red cloak. The text is minimal, the story will give children an idea of the processes of handwork required to make cloth, but the story alone is static. What it needs, and gets from the illustrations, are action and lightness. Charlie's sheep are obstreperous: in every picture there's a sheep in the way, making the shepherd trip, or tugging at a skein, or standing obdurately on the cloth while Charlie tries to cut it.


One of a series of books that show contemporary women in various careers, this describes the day-by-day activities of Barbara Lamont, newscaster on a New York program, "Black News." Combining her career successfully with being a wife and mother, Ms. Lamont leads a busy and constructive life that should have an impact on young readers. Since her work consists of interviewing, editing, and taping, however, there is enough repetition in the text to dull it slightly.


A first-person account, although written "with" Derek Gill, is banal enough in style to have been written alone by the adolescent Robin, who set off to sail around the world when he was sixteen. The captions for the photographs, which are in color and attractive, give an idea of the abruptness and lifelessness of the writing: "I tried my skill at climbing a coconut tree. Fanning's main crop is copra," or "A shark is no
friendly visitor. Dove survived a hurricane in Tutuila.” Nevertheless, the voyage of the Dove took Robin into many exotic places, there is in any such story the added appeal of man-against-the-elements, and the fact that Robin fell in love with an American girl in Fiji, married her in South Africa, and left her to meet him periodically ashore while he continued his voyage alone gives the book inherent dramatic value.


Like Louise Meriwether’s *Don’t Ride the Bus on Monday,* this covers Rosa Parks’ childhood, her historic stand that precipitated the Montgomery bus strike, her increasing participation in the civil rights struggle, and the Supreme Court decision that ended the Jim Crow rule in transportation. Here, however, the writing has more vitality, and the author’s use of other incidents, earlier in Rosa Parks’ life, that had evoked her resentment, makes the stand this quiet, self-contained woman took more convincing.


A very good overview of psychological processes and animal behavior is clarified by descriptions of experimental research. Hall emphasizes individual differences in such areas as responses and reactions; her discussion of conditioning and reinforcement during learning is particularly lucid. While the text contains an occasional conclusion that seems unwarranted, the book as a whole is sensible, well-organized, and authoritative. It includes chapters on motivation, emotions, learning, memory, thinking, and personality. A glossary and a relative index are appended.


A companion volume to the author’s *Let’s Make Presents* comprises personal gifts, house presents, gifts for holidays, and recipes, with both adult and juvenile recipients in mind. The book begins with sensible general advice about economy, carefulness, procedures, and safety; it concludes with suggestions for innovative and inexpensive wrappings, and it suggests that the reader feel free to adapt and improvise. The projects are varied, the diagrams clear, the style of writing informal. Few projects are difficult in this useful book. A relative index is appended.


Photographs of children working with clay demonstrate the classroom activities on which this book is based. Hawkinson’s thesis, described in a preface for adults, is that clay play should be free and creative; the text therefore emphasizes ideas and suggestions rather than perfected art projects. While the author’s paintings are attractive, they contribute less here than they do in his earlier books, being used as a device; that is, a double-page spread of animal paintings, for example, is followed by another double-page spread of photographs and text, suggesting some steps in making a clay animal. Useful as a first book of clay play, but not very extensive although it offers some advice on getting and preparing clay, and has some good ideas for the beginner.


A story based on the author’s experience as a child on a South Dakota homestead
bordering an Indian reservation is written in a simple but stiff narrative style. Papa feels comfortable with the neighboring Sioux, but Mama is nervous when young braves are near, and is fearful on Susanna’s behalf. Susanna is curious and friendly, a small girl who pleases the Sioux by learning some of their language and by visiting them. The women of the reservation make a dress and moccasins for Susanna, and when they bring them to the house and Mama meets them, she loses her fear. “Susanna was happy,” the story ends, “for now, Mama knew that the Indians were their friends.” Convincing, realistic, and useful for the very young independent reader, the book gives some historical perspective but is tepid as a story.


Although this covers much of the same material as does Woodburn’s *The Whole Earth Energy Crisis*, the emphasis is on the possibilities and probabilities in developing new ways of using the world’s energy resources in the future. The problems of dwindling supplies of fossil fuels, pollution, increasing needs for energy resources, and concentrated use patterns are discussed in the first section of the book, and are followed by descriptions of new energy sources (solar, geothermal, etc.) and the ways in which energy can be extracted and transported. The text concludes with objective discussions of conservation and planning. Authoritative, clearly written, and mature in style and approach. An extensive bibliography and a relative index are appended.


Illustrated with many clear, enlarged photographs, this is a continuous text, written in a direct and simple style, that describes land and water snails and some related forms such as bivalves and cephalopods. Some of the book is devoted to the reproductive and feeding habits of snails as well as their structure; some of the text discusses keeping snails as pets. The book seems slightly padded by material about creatures other than snails, and the author several times uses “estivation” rather than “hibernation” for winter sleep, but the writing is adequate and the pictures handsome and informative. A relative index is appended.


A text that rhymes (with one jarring exception) describes the havoc wrought by a stiff wind that turned an umbrella inside out, whipped a judge’s wig from his head, tore some laundry off a line, et cetera. All of these and other objects form a sky-borne procession while their owners chase along in a line below. Although the ending is a bit abrupt, the book has the appeals of rhyme and cumulation, and the read-aloud audience should enjoy the scene in which all the objects come tumbling down, each on the wrong owner.


Their bird Violet was old, so Amy and Eva were not surprised when she died; they had a funeral which was attended by several friends. Amy read a poem and Eva sang a song, and punch was served. Moping about later, Eva was consoled by thinking about the cat: when the kittens came, one could be named Blanche just as the cat was, and when she died, there would be another Blanche . . . and so on. “Maybe nothing lasts forever,” the story ends, “but she knew a way to make it last a long, long time!” The story is simply written, the short sentences and simple vocabulary indicating an audience of independent readers rather than the read-aloud audience.
specified by the publisher. The illustrations are sunny and uncluttered, emphasizing
the author’s direct approach to the subject of death. While the approach is realistic,
there is a certain flat quality to the sisters’ behavior, and the intimations of immortal-
ity seem separated from the early part of the book, almost as though there were two
very short stories connected only by a child’s thoughts.

Kenealy, James P. *Better Camping for Boys.* Dodd, 1974. 96p. illus. $4.50.

Everything you wanted to know about camping but—for boys only? Written by a
professional guide, this gives sensible and detailed advice on equipment, clothing,
trail lore and camping skills, survival techniques, food-planning and cooking, safety
and first aid, using maps and compasses, and—not unimportant—preparing for trips
by exercising, planning routes and responsibilities, and gauging the kind and amount
of clothing and equipment (sleeping, shelter, cooking, stores, first-aid, and so on) one
will need. The writing is brisk and businesslike, the text well-organized. No index,
but the table of contents lists topics within sections.

Klein, Norma. *Confessions of an Only Child;* illus. by Richard Cuffari. Pantheon Books,
1974. 93p. Trade ed. $4.95; Library ed. $5.49 net.

‘‘Boy, your mother’s really getting fat!’ Libby said. ‘She’s not fat, dope,’ I said.
‘She’s pregnant.’ ” The prospect of a baby did not enchant Antonia. She liked things
just as they were, a family of three. Having Mom to herself most of the time, having
Dad to herself on the nights Mom went to law school, being an only—and happy
—child. Toe waits for the baby’s birth with trepidation and, when a premature
brother is born and dies, is surprised at her own sense of loss. The story ends with
the safe arrival of another brother the following year and a delightful scene in which
Toe and her classmates (the class is celebrating the birthday of Toe’s best friend)
have a candid discussion of birth, suggesting to the teacher that she get pregnant and
have her baby at school so that they can all watch. What the author achieves in this
book, as she has in her books for older readers, is a completely convincing picture of
real people. The dialogue is natural, the characterization skilled, and the relation-
ships between children and adults particularly deft.

$3.95; Library ed. $2.96 net.

There are a number of stories about retarded children, very few about the child
who is simply slow and who suffers the constant knowledge that he isn’t keeping up
with achievements of his peers. Often the teasing and irritation such a child provokes
exacerbate the situation. Here’s an antidote: a simply written book that can help
young children understand and sympathize with the slow child. It is written from the
viewpoint of Jamie’s older brother, and it makes very clear the fact that Jamie’s
family love and respect him. There is no story line, but the situation is touching (and
there’s comfort for all children in the knowledge that non-achievement isn’t damning)
and the style casual. The illustrations are also casual, simple, and pleasant.


An oversize book, profusely illustrated with reproductions of Van Gogh’s work in
color and in black and white, translated from the French, is primarily for an adult
audience but will certainly be interesting to young art lovers as well. The text is
chronological, merging biographical information with a massively detailed discussion
of the artist’s work (technically and aesthetically) and discussing the artists who
influenced him. The illustrative material includes many examples of a Van Gogh
interpretation of another artist's pictures; there are several well-known Millet pictures, for example, paired with the Van Gogh versions. A selective bibliography and a list of "Van Gogh in Museums" are appended.

Lavine, Sigmund. A. Wonders of the Cactus World; illus. with photographs. Dodd, 1974. 78p. $4.50.

A discussion of the characteristics of cacti, their various forms, ways in which cacti are useful to people and animals, and a few legends about cacti, are followed by a section of advice for the would-be collector of cactus plants. The text tends to be rambling within the sections, and there are several instances of careless writing style, but the information is accurate, the pictures interesting, and the subject one that is rarely covered in books for young readers. An index is appended.


A rather rambling historical chapter is followed by explanations of working techniques and a discussion of materials; the remainder of the book is devoted to a series of projects, in the course of which the various kinds of needlepoint stitches are explained. The explanations are clear, the photographs showing stitches not always so. All of the projects are carefully detailed, with comparatively little in the book to encourage creative initiative. It's useful, but no more so than many of the needlepoint books for adults, and less so than some of them. A glossary, a metric conversion chart, a list of supply sources, a list of books for further reading (including two for people who are lefthanded), and an index are appended.


In a clear and well-organized text, McClung describes the cycles of population growth and decline among animals that are affected by introduction of new species, overpopulation that uses up food supplies and the consequent starvation that lowers the population, and natural diasters. Man is the great enemy, because of deliberate efforts to control species and because of the encroachment into territory, the pollution he introduces, and the changes he makes in the environment through his own expansion. McClung then turns to a brief examination of the problems of human population growth, touching on the psychological effects covered so thoroughly by A. H. Drummond in The Population Puzzle but emphasizing the intricate problems of territory, food supply, and the scientific progress that has increased longevity. Lucid and objective, this is a good overview of a complex problem of our time. A divided bibliography and an index are appended.


Like the Rockwell book, reviewed, below, this is a title in the publisher's series of craft books for children. It includes instructions for most of the same techniques but is more clearly written, with better page layout and more informative illustrations.


Pedestrian illustrations, mediocre poetry. The title poem: "All along the way/ From here to there and so/ You can see sunshine wherever you go/ From Cranberry Corners/ To city stand/ You can hear music/ At every hand/ You can make friendships/ As firm as can be/ From home to hereafter/ And constantly." There are
few new ideas here, and the phraseology is often trite; the language occasionally is jarringly unpoetic.


Although the writing style is sedate, Moskin's story of a small girl's coping with responsibility is realistic and has interesting historical details. Set in New Amsterdam, the book describes Lysbet's pride (she's nine) when Ma, who has to visit a sister in Haarlem, leaves her alone in the house to make Pa's dinner and care for the pregnant cat. Lysbet does a good job of housecleaning, but goes off to ice skate and forgets to feed the cat. She rushes home to find the roof smoldering, alerts the fire brigade, and feels wretched. But Pa says she's done well by saving the house from destruction, and Lysbet is pleased with the five kittens born during the fire. The illustrations are attractive: tidy little drawings that show period details.


The lilting verse of a fanciful poem has the appeals of rhyme and rhythm, and the musical notation is included at the back of the book. The poem describes a string quartet in nature: four grasshoppers fiddling away while other creatures busily work and cast disapproving glances at the musicians. Some scowling fairies quiz the performers one day, but when night comes and they want to hear one more round of "Rilloby-Rill," the exhausted grasshoppers are lying in a row. The party's over. Lightweight stuff, but amusing; the illustrations have engaging details, but on most pages the combination of many colors and many details interferes with the effectiveness of the composition.


Two cookbook authors, one a teacher of cooking classes for children, have compiled another good cookbook for children; *Kids Cooking* was the first. There is a foreword to adults that children may enjoy, since it doesn't speak of them patronizingly; the text is preceded by safety rules, general information about ingredients, equipment, and baking techniques. Each of the three sections is divided into easy and less-easy recipes, with "here's what you need," on one page and "here's what you do," on the facing page. The instructions are clear, the print comfortably large, and the recipes likely to appeal even to the child who has never cooked before.


A compilation of recipes using ground beef, the majority of which are American, garnered from different parts of the world. The recipes are varied, and the step-by-step instructions are given clearly. A considerable portion of the text in each section gives background information of moderate interest, usually including some facts about national eating habits or other national dishes; for example, in the section on China and Japan, there is a discussion of basic diet, the lack of interest in dairy products in China, Cantonese cooking methods, Japanese use of fish as a staple diet item, et cetera. The recipes are preceded by several chapters that discuss the meat-eating of primitive man, the advent of the hamburger in chain restaurants, and how to buy and store hamburger. It's possible that much of this extraneous material will be of limited interest to some readers.

Blegvad's precise, small-scale drawings go nicely with this story from one of Australia's most popular children's authors; the concepts of adaptability, conquering fear, and an imaginary companion are smoothly woven into the narrative. Polly has just come to a small settlement where her father has a job, and she finds the children rather unfriendly. To bolster her morale, she imagines that a tiger she's admired at a zoo is her companion; when she shows courage at confronting a large dog (and the two indomitable old ladies who own him) Polly's classmates—who've already thawed realistically—are full of admiration—and Polly no longer needs her tiger. Not dramatic, but there is a problem-solution structure, and the style of writing is natural and easy.


An oversize book gives helpful hints for all sorts of tasks and occasions, the major and serious weakness of the text being that it has no organization whatsoever, neither alphabetical nor subject arrangement. There are suggestions for pet care, for safety measures, for finding one's way home, for threading a needle, for understanding the difference between A.M. and P.M., for a way to tell if it's going to rain, et cetera. Most of the ideas are useful, most of the instructions are clear, but the combination of random placement and of the discrepancy between the probable audience for riding a bicycle uphill and how to button a coat seems to indicate an uncertainty in communication.


A survey of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism covers the same material as does *Religions* by James Haskins (reviewed in the June, 1973 issue) but gives more background, since the author feels that the traditions and the mystical aspects of each faith are rooted in their beginnings. Rice concentrates on the essence of each belief and, in more flowing a style than Haskins or Seeger, reviewed below, goes into great detail about doctrine and worship, and discusses the relationships among the major religions. A relative index is appended.


Illustrations show, with varying clarity, the techniques used for making potato prints, linoleum block prints, collage prints, woodcut prints, et cetera. The instructions are step-by-step, needed materials are listed, and endpapers show some of the tools. The page layout is not as conducive to easy understanding as is that in MacStravic's book, reviewed above, and the inclusion of many prints made by the author's children adds little. The introduction is addressed to adults; while the book can be used by adults working with children (as can most craft books for children) the fact that the introduction is not addressed to the child indicates a rather young audience, while the tools and manual control needed for some of the printmaking are really for children in the middle grades.


"Being poor is . . . having two blankets for seven people in the family . . . wishing you could have meat whenever you want it . . . buying an old coat at a second-hand store and feeling lucky . . . feeling ashamed because you can't afford the school
movie . . . " Each statement or two is faced by a somber, effective drawing. Most of the books in this format have been successful, as was "Happiness Is a Warm Puppy," because of their humor. This accurate but depressing reflection of the meagre existence of the poor is intended, according to a note "About the Author," to express her commitment to "the idea that if children know about the adverse conditions of poverty, they will develop a desire to change these conditions." The book can be used as a stimulus for discussion, but it has some concepts that may have repercussions; for example, "Being poor is wanting to feel proud of your father because he has a job—but he can't find work," seems to suggest that one should not be proud of a father who can't find work.


While the complexity of some of the designs described negate the author's opening statement that "Creating a filament design is as simple as drawing a straight line," this is a book that should be an invitation and a challenge to the creative reader. The explanation of the basic process of drawing designs to be executed with string, or other filaments, is clear; the step-by-step explanations for individual projects not as lucid, with the photographs of finished projects often separated from the instructions. The author encourages the reader to create his or her own designs, and the color photographs show handsome creations that may well excite the reader's interest. Materials are simple and not expensive. A brief index is appended.


Shelley is sixteen, and she's been running since she was ten. Transferred from a children's shelter to a state training school, Shelley runs away with another girl—and she's caught again. The story gives a harrowing picture of the harshness with which children are treated for crimes no worse than Shelley's: running away from an intolerable situation. It exposes the pecking order, the lesbianism among the girls, the rigidity of some professional workers; it is candid about the mores and the language of the institution-hardened young. While Shelley's case is tragic, it remains a case; the author does a superb job of exposing the vicious aspects of an inadequate system, but Shelley, saved by a sympathetic social worker, seems only a device used to pinpoint abuses, not the focus of the book.


Two short stories are in picture book format but are much too sophisticated for most members of the read-aloud audience, not because of the subject or plot but because of Saroyan's style and vocabulary, and the latent content that demands more background than small children usually have. The first story is about an incident in the author's childhood in which the "Tooth Fairy" leaves only nine cents under the pillow. Speaking of a dead tooth, he says, "... Was it justice? You can bet your life it wasn't. Made me mad. Made me philosophical. Made me stop and think. What is a boy? What is the sun? Why do cops look like criminals? Why aren't poor people millionaires? ..." The second story is about Father's firing of an overbearing Valkyrie of a nurse, and the delightful romp that ensues with Father and his two motherless children. Charming—but wrong in format for the audience who can appreciate it.


A miserly old landlord sat grumbling on a fine spring day, watching the villagers
dance and sing; he swallowed a cherry pit, and a tree grew out of his head. In
desperation he pulled it out, leaving a cavity where fish soon appeared. Angry at
some boys who were fishing in his head, the old man jumped up, tripped on a rock,
and tumbled. His feet went into his head, and soon nothing was left of him but a
pond, a lovely pond near which the villagers danced and sang. The illustrations are
lovely, appropriate in mood and fine in detail; the style of the adaptation is simple but
lacks the cadence of the oral tradition; the story seems to indicate that selfishness and
greed are punished, but the message is less effective than it would be if there were
some contact between the old man and the villagers—save for the fishing incident,
the relationship is described rather than demonstrated.

Schwartz, George I. Food Chains and Ecosystems; Ecology for Young Experimenters; by

Despite a serious and fairly solid writing style and diffuse organization of material
in the early chapters, Food Chains and Ecosystems is a book that may well stimulate
individual investigation of relationships and structure within an ecosystem. It defines
ecology (too often used loosely today as a synonym for pollution) and distinguishes
between research by observation, and experimentation; it gives some safety warn-
ings about harmful flora and fauna, lists necessary equipment for recording, measur-
ing, and experimenting, and makes very clear the interdependence of living things
within an ecosystem, and the structure of the life chain it supports. Separate chapters
describe investigations of living things indoors, on land, in water, and in uncommon
places (rock crevices, acid bogs, etc.) and experiments are suggested throughout the
text. A bibliography, a list of sources of supplies, and an index are appended.


An authoritative and well-written discussion of five of the major eastern religions:
Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Shinto, and Taoism. The author gives excel-
lent historical background and describes for each religion the beliefs, the rituals, the
legends, the religious leaders or founders of the faith, the holidays, and the historical
development of each religion. An annotated bibliography and an index are appended.

Selsam, Millicent (Ellis). Questions and Answers about Horses; illus. by Robert J. Lee. Four
Winds, 1974. 63p. Trade ed. $4.95; Library ed. $4.46 net.

A question-and-answer format is used after a series of pages devoted to different
breeds of horses, with a half page—or less—of type facing brown or green watercolor
pictures. As happens with almost every question-and-answer book, the questions
often seem contrived: “Are there really wild horses still left anywhere in the world?”
is the first question; “Are horses used much today?” is the last. Selsam is always
accurate and informative, but her gift for clear and simple writing is hampered by the
format, although the book gives many facts about equine evolution, breeds, taking
care of a horse, and some information about gestation period, diet, ways of com-
municating, etcetera.

Snyder, Zilpha Keatley. The Truth about Stone Hollow; illus. by Alton Raible. Atheneum,
1974. 211p. $6.25.

A story with an emphasis on the supernatural is set in a small town during the
depression era. Amy’s father, crippled and jobless, has come back with his wife and
daughter to live in his sister-in-law’s home. Amy, brought up on her mother’s happy
recollections of the town, has adjusted completely; she is as disapproving of the new
boy, Jason, as any conforming classmate and like them, she trembles at the thought
of going to that haunted spot, Stone Hollow. Jason has no fear, however, and Amy's curiosity leads her to follow him. She cannot believe Jason's calm statements that he has seen some of the tragic events of the past—not until she has a piece of the stone with her in her own attic and, by its power, sees the truth about the past of her own family. Zilpha Snyder is a craftsman (craftsperson?) and her characters are always believable, her establishment of mood in fantasy always compelling. Amy is a child with vitality, but not a stereotypical pleasant child; Jason is a pure child, a juvenile Billy Budd. The only thing that may disappoint young readers in the story is that Amy's investigations never quite establish the truth of her family history; one of its strongest aspects is that Amy learns that the truth is not absolute, that it can vary with the individual viewpoint, and perhaps this is why the author has left Amy satisfied that she hasn't learned the full story.

Stevenson, Janet. *The School Segregation Cases;* (Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka and others); The United States Supreme Court Rules on Racially Separate Public Education. Watts, 1973. 61p. illus. $3.95.

While many of the incidents described here have been included in books about the struggle for equality by black people or in studies of civil rights, this draws together the several aspects of the fight for integrated schools and fair educational opportunities for black students in a cohesive and coherent survey. It begins with the student-inspired strike in a black school in Virginia, a strike for adequate facilities rather than for integration, and covers other major cases through to the momentous Supreme Court decisions of 1954 and 1955. Stevenson concludes with a dispassionate assessment of the failure of the hopes for implementation of the rulings that were meant to establish equal and integrated opportunity "with all deliberate speed." Straightforward, objective, and well-researched, a useful and well-written book. A bibliography of sources and an index are appended.

Unstead, R. J. *Living in a Medieval City;* illus. by Ron Stenberg. Addison-Wesley, 1973. 44p. $4.50.

One of a series of books about medieval times (others are *Living in a Castle, Living in a Crusader Land,* and *Living in a Medieval City*) is adequately illustrated and historically accurate; the writing style is brisk and straightforward. Unstead describes the people of Benfield, a small village owned by an absentee noble and administered by his absentee steward. The bailiff does the actual work of coordinating the work of the villeins and cottars who till the lord's demesne. Although Unstead doesn't give as full or vivid a picture as did Alfred Duggan in such books as *Growing Up in Thirteenth Century England,* he manages to inject some life into the characters, and the division into short books about one aspect of medieval life makes the subject easily assimilable. The books should be especially useful as supplementary curricular material.


An informative survey for those who are ignorant about rock, a trip down Memory Lane for the cognoscenti, this describes the various kinds of music that contributed to rock and the various types of rock music. Much of the book, chronologically arranged, is devoted to individual performers, composers, and groups, and the contributions or musical deviations of each; Van der Horst, a music critic, also discusses the changing attitudes toward rock music and the effects it has had on the recording industry. Lucid, well-written, with a touch of defensive fervor. A list of suggested readings and an index are appended.

Each recipe has ostensibly been contributed by a child; at any rate, each is faced by a picture of a child and a few lines about her or him. Example: "Vincent is an excellent artist. He draws fierce tigers and tightrope walkers. For artistic energy, Vincent eats peanut butter and raisin sandwiches that he makes his own special way." (Spread peanut butter, sprinkle raisins.) Most of the recipes are more substantial than this, but there is great variation in complexity. The captions for the pictures are irrelevant, occasionally inane; the recipes are concise and clear, with step-by-step instructions and lists of ingredients but not of utensils. Recipes are grouped by meals (morning, noon, and night) and are indexed but not listed in a table of contents. General instructions for safety and preparation for cooking precede the recipes. If these were collected as a class project, the inclusion of a contribution from every child is commendable—but as a cookbook, it's haphazard.


A small book, a small singing text, and small, gay pictures combine to provide a pleasant, if slight, book for the very young child who is just learning the cycle of seasons. For each season, the text follows the pattern of spring: "Sing a song of spring/Rain on the tree/Rain on the flowers/Rain on me." For each phrase, there's a double-page spread with ample white space and with economical use of line that is deft and evocative.


Baru the tiger cub had been told to stay away from the village near his jungle home, but one day he chased a butterfly and fell into a vat of red dye. At first Baru complacently enjoyed his new appearance, but he soon learned that he no longer had protective coloration and was relieved when rain washed away the red dye. Since then he has never left the safety of the jungle, and as for the hunter who almost caught him—who would believe a man who said he's seen a bright red tiger? The illustrations are attractive in their simplicity and softness, although they are repetitive; the story line is not strong but is nicely structured, and the writing style is capable.


A reference book for the poor speller uses double columns of print; on the left, every possible variant of a word, with the correct spelling in red and the others in black, while the right-hand column gives the correct spelling opposite the erroneous one. The primary weakness of the book is that it is often difficult to find the correct spelling; if, for example, one thinks "covert" is spelled "cuvert," one would have to have some idea that it is necessary to go from page 65 to page 59. Since each page has three sets of double columns, that means a good bit of searching. Second, since there are no definitions, a poor speller might use "cymbal" when "symbol" is the correct word. Some of the wrongly-spelled words seem contrived—that is, they are words that are polysyllabic, with the most difficult portions correctly spelled, but with easy syllables that are incorrect: eukalyptus, hippopotamus, sospicious. And a minor point: if one looks for the fish called plaice, it is simply listed as an incorrect spelling (for place).

An experienced teacher of science and of science education has compiled some home demonstrations that really are easy, safe, and clearly explained. The text is divided into five areas: experiments with balloons, mixtures, flashlights, shadow pictures, and ice. Materials are simple: a balloon, an empty milk carton, a bulb, a battery, aluminum foil, etc. The instructions are clear; the cartoon-style illustrations, reminiscent of Jeanne Bendick’s, lively and informative.

Wyse, Anne. *The One to Fifty Book*; by Anne and Alex Wyse. University of Toronto Press, 1973. 100p. illus. $2.75.

A counting book, chiefly in black and white but with unexpected splashes of color here and there, that uses a double-page spread for each number from 1 to 50. The book was prepared by a teacher using the pictures drawn by children in her classes over the years, children in England and in Canada, children who were white and Indian. Each set of pages has the number, the number in word form with the name of the objects shown on facing pages: 9 ships, 13 gingerbread men, 30 bananas, 39 girls, 47 beetles. On some pages the unit object is repeated, on others there’s an amazing—sometimes amusing—variety. It’s different, it’s creative, and it’s just as useful as any other counting book.


Some fact and some fiction are included in eleven stories about islands, ranging from a completely factual description of Surtsey to discussions of islands whose existence has been claimed but is doubtful, from the mystifying art of Easter Island to stories of island-based events that have had ghostly legends added to fact. The ghost stories are adequately told but there is less conviction in the narration of these tales than in the sense of scientific excitement that is communicated in the sections on Surtsey or the Galapagos. A bibliography and an index are appended.


A varied collection of tales, several of which have been included in other anthologies while others are less familiar. A few are crisp and pointed, like James Thurber’s “Interview with a Lemming” or Philip Farmer’s “The King of Beasts”; some, like Guy Endore’s “The Day of the Dragon” or “Zoo 2000” by Richard Curtis, envision the mutations of species in a future world. In a thoughtful introduction to the stories, Jane Yolen points out that whereas our ancestors used beast tales to explain the world’s beginnings, science fiction uses them as a warning; this note is sounded repeatedly in *Zoo 2000*.


If you get a spyglass and a badge that says “Detective” for a birthday present, naturally you look for a mystery to solve. Jeered at by his older brother and sister, Andrew persisted in looking for clues. Then came the strange white footsteps near his bed—and a mysterious box of turtles—so Andrew hid at night to watch. It was his brother Tom, who left a note of farewell from “The Midnight Ghost.” Tom doesn’t know Andrew knows—but he’ll find out that his teasing was unmasked, for, as the story ends, Andrew sends *him* a note saying, “Thank you for the turtles.” A good
family story, a realistic plot, a modicum of suspense, and a scope that's not too broad for the young independent reader: a good book, with enough action, direct writing style, and good-sized type.


Basil was a good king, but not a happy one. Pale and gloomy, he even moped on his birthday and couldn’t think of a wish when the Birthday Fairy came, so she gave him a surprise present—three children (plus the imaginary friend of the youngest) for a year. Since most of the story gives detailed evidence of the nuisance the children made of themselves and the way they disrupted the king’s life, it is not wholly convincing that on his birthday, a year later, he decided to keep the children. Again, he was given a surprise—a consort. The style is choppy, but the idea should amuse children and the ending, although not logical, should reassure them that adults love them despite their nuisance value. The pictures of stumpy, large-headed people have a comic flair that compensates for their stiffness.


A new approach is used in a story about a child’s view of death. Not sentimental, but gentle and poignant, the book is charming in its illustrations, its style, and in Lew’s memories of his grandfather and the joyful love his grandfather had shown. “I miss Grandpa,” Lew says one night. “You miss him! You were two when he died. Now you’re six and you never asked for him before.” But as they talk it becomes clear that Lew remembers Grandpa very well; Mother tells him things that she remembers, and says that now that they can remember him together it won’t be as lonely for each of them as it would be if each had to remember him alone. On all counts, nicely done.


Charlotte Zolotow’s name is familiar as a writer of particularly perceptive picture books; she is less well known as an editor of books for older children, but her sensitivity on their behalf is evident here as well. The title is taken from Samuel Butler’s, “... youth is like spring, an overpraised season.” In a varied collection of short stories, the bittersweet problems of adolescents, especially in their relations with parents and other adults, are explored. The authors include Nathaniel Benchley, Doris Lessing, Elizabeth Taylor, John Updike, Kurt Vonnegut, and Jessamyn West.
READING FOR TEACHERS

To order any of the items listed below, please write directly to the publisher of the item, not to the BULLETIN of the Center for Children’s Books.


Hopkins, Lee Bennett. Let Them Be Themselves; Language Arts for Children in Elementary Schools. 2d ed. Citation Press, 1974. 272p. $6.50; paper, $3.25.


