EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED
WITH ANNOTATIONS

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

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

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1973 LC:73-77140 xii, 484 p. 6 x 9
New Titles for Children and Young People

Adler, David A. *A Little at a Time*; illus. by N. M. Bodecker. Random House, 1976. 75-8068. 27p. $4.95.

Bodecker’s deft, precise drawings show a grandfather and grandchild spending a long, happy afternoon together. They walk through the park and talk. Repeatedly the child asks why or how things come to be, and Grandpa always answers “A little at a time.” That’s how the rubbish accumulates on the streets, that’s why the tree is so tall, that’s the way Grandpa enjoys eating ice cream. At the museum the child, who is beginning to get the message, suggests that scientists must have put the dinosaur bones together a little at a time. When they are home, Grandpa answers a last question. How does he know so much? Why, by asking questions, just like his grandchild, he learned a lot—but a little at a time. Nice in its encouragement of curiosity as well as patience, this also gives a pleasant picture, through its all-dialogue text, of the comfortable relationship between the old man and the child. It is a bit slow paced and may have, for some children, too little action.


Although these brief tales of friendship for beginning independent readers do not flow quite as smoothly as Lobel’s stories of frog and toad, they have the same ingenuous quality, a quality reflected in the dumpy, engaging figures of the witch, ghost, and goblin. The book is useful as additional material for the beginning reader, and the stories reflect familiar everyday experiences and emotions. Goblin has trouble flying his kite until he realizes that no kite will fly if there is not wind; he looks forward to his birthday, convinced he will then know the answers to such puzzling questions as why the wind blows and how mountains get to be so big—and is disappointed at not waking to instant knowledge but appeased when his friends give him an encyclopedia.

Anders, Rebecca. *A Look at Old Age*; photographs by Maria S. Forrai. Lerner, 1976. 75-38467. 30p. $4.95.

Photographs of good quality face a few lines of print in a text that shows old people living with families, in institutions, or in retirement communities. Some work at jobs or hobbies, others are idle. Some are well and some ill, but all show the infirmities of their years. The book presents a spectrum, but not a complete one, and it does not make clear the fact that many old people in our society are in dire emotional or financial need, but it does close with the fact that “Old people, though close to death, are very much a part of life. They still love life, other people, and each other.” The book lacks focus, but it can serve adequately as a stimulus for discussion.

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Blake, Clarence N. *Quiz Book on Black America*; by Clarence N. Blake and Donald F. Martin; decorations by Rosalyn Hawthorne. Houghton, 1976. 76-22210. 206p. $6.95.

Two black educators have compiled a series of brief quizzes, grouped by subject (slavery, organizations) or by vocation (medicine, movies) that emphasize the contributions of black men and women to life in the United States in the past and present. Some of the quizzes are multiple choice; some are matching sets; the answers to each quiz are printed (upside down) immediately following the questions.


Brady’s drawings bring out fully the appeal of the tiny white-footed mouse, with its big, bright eyes, and of the even tinier newborn in its litter of three. The text is written in diary form, as the author watches the development of the babies from blind, helpless newborn nurslings to frisky sixteen-day-olds. The writing has humor and affection, yet it’s light, brisk, and informative; it’s simple enough for independent reading and is also the sort of book that the preschool child enjoys poring over after it’s been read aloud.


A pleasant, if rambling, account of a child’s imaginative play: “A desert is a kind of land / Where all the ground is made of sand / Most desert lands are far away / But this is one where I can play . . .” and the small girl goes on to talk of sandbox activities. The “mountain” is a jungle gym in a playground, the canyons cowboys ride through are the canyons of city streets, et cetera. Some day, the girl dreams, she would like to travel to real mountains and forests—but for now, she decides “. . . I will explore / Whatever’s just outside my door.” The soft pencil drawings are realistic, showing an attractive black child; the text has the appeals of rhyme and rhythm and, for city children, familiar sights and pursuits. The child’s imaginative play and her awareness of wider horizons have a universal quality, but the quiet tone, the sedate pace, and the lack of plot may limit appeal to readers.


Old Mr. Hilton lives alone in the Georgia countryside, his once-busy gristmill idle most of the time; his married daughter urges him to come to Atlanta and live with him, but he resists adamantly until he is ill. Then he promises that he will move next winter. All alone, Mr. Hilton has been talking to a scrappy rooster that has gone feral since his owners, next door, moved away; “Wild Wings,” the old man calls him, and compares himself to the chicken: proud, solitary, and self-sufficient. He wants to take this bit of his old life with him, but when the time to move comes, Mr. Hilton decides that Wild Wings should have his freedom while he can. This has a poignant message about old age and dependency, but it may not appeal to some young readers, and there is a static quality to the text that is not compensated for by a device like the interaction between animals in De Jong’s *Along Came a Dog* or by any plot line; this is a series of episodes and, while the writing is smooth, the wistful inevitability of the situation is depressing.


Large print and a simple writing style make this brief biography appropriate for readers in the primary grades. There is very little dialogue, most of the text being factual; the writing style is crisp and informal, the tone objective. The book has a
good balance of information about Chris Everts' personal life and her career as a tennis star.


Four more titles of the "Little Books" series first published in England are perfectly scaled, by their subjects, their brevity, and their direct simplicity, to appeal to the young child. In *The Blanket,* a boy looks for his piece of bedtime comfort; he can't find it nor can the members of his family. They look and look; the boy finds it under his pillow and contentedly goes to sleep. In the second book, a small child empties the contents of a cupboard and is urged to replace every pot and pan; in the third, a friend's dog pays a visit that is totally destructive, and this one ends, "I wish the dog could stay with me forever." The last book is a testament to best-friendship. And all of them have pictures in Burningham's distinctive style: uncluttered, amusing, and vigorous, with restrained and adroit use of color.


The camaraderie of those joined in misfortune is as evident, as touching, and often as wryly amusing here as it is in Marjorie Kellogg's *Tell Me That You Love Me, Junie Moon.* Of the three children in a foster home, Carlie is the oldest, an adolescent whose brittle and sophisticated toughness hides an aching need for love. She's been brutally treated by a hostile stepfather; Harvey is thirteen, confined to a wheelchair because both legs were broken when his father (alcoholic, missing the wife who had run off to join a commune) accidentally ran over him; eight-year-old Thomas J is lonesome for the octogenarian twins (hospitalized) who have taken care of him since he was abandoned at the age of two. It's Carlie who has called them all pinballs, people who just get sent somewhere to be out of the way. No choice about their lives. But, with loving patience on the part of their foster parents (beautifully understated) and with a growing affection for each other, the three children gain security and enough assurance to feel that they do have some control about the direction of their lives. This could have been sugar soup, but Byars does a superb job of creating vivid characters who change convincingly in reaction to each other. The exposition is smooth, the dialogue excellent.


Lisette, who has lived in a small French village, is both excited and apprehensive about going to Bangkok with her divorced father, a photographer. They stay on the palace grounds, since Alex is illustrating a book that includes art treasures. One of these is a rare jade Buddha, and it disappears in mysterious circumstances; Lisette is instrumental in locating it and exposing a gang that steals national art treasures. The king is appreciative. Lisette has a mild romance with an Australian lad; Alex falls for Professor Goodfellow, the author of the book he's working on. There's some local color worked in, but the writing style is mediocre, the characters drawn with no depth, and the plot is labored.


Barbara and Rich are being cared for by a "nice old lady," Mrs. Cunningham,
while their parents are away. They find a wizard in a bottle, a wizard who has an umbrella that grants wishes, and with Harry (the wizard's name is Harrison Peabody) they have a series of misadventures, most of which hinge on the fact that the magic only functions when it is raining, so that they get trapped. However, in repetitive and not very convincing fashion, their ploys are not discovered, nor is Harry, whom they hide in their attic. Mrs. Cunningham always calls to them from another room, never has any suspicions, accepts every lame excuse. A labored fantasy.

Childress, Alice. "Let's Hear It For The Queen"; illus. by Loring Eutemey. Coward, 1976. 76-16075. 48p. $6.95.

Despite the title, it is the Knave of the familiar rhyme ("The Queen of Hearts / She made some tarts . . .") who is the central figure in a play that is easy to stage, block, and costume; hand props are minimal. A girl conceives the idea of dramatizing the rhyme, and she herself takes part in the play; after the theft of the tarts she is the defendant's lawyer, winning an acquittal for the tart-stealer and a round of applause for the Queen who "baked some swingin' cookies." This hasn't the craftsmanship of the author's When the Rattlesnake Sounds, but it has brisk movement, humor, and a good role combination for a children's play: a small cast but opportunity in some scenes for many bit players.


Soft pencil drawings illustrate a story about a child who repeatedly loses things; Molly's mother says her head must be filled with noodles. There's a great hunt for a lost shoe so that Molly can go with her mother on a shopping trip. The shoe turns up, but not one mitten, so Molly wears a sock over one hand and firmly clutches her stuffed animal pet, Moe, a stegosaurus. Mother promises a treat if Molly doesn't lose anything. But she does: Moe. Disconsolate, Molly refuses food; and then she thinks, and there is Moe, just where she remembered putting him, in the bag of potatoes. So Molly happily eats her treat. The illustrations are nicely detailed, and the familiarity of the situation should appeal to young children.


In 1876, eleven-year-old Maiju and her parents come from Finland to homestead in the Minnesota wilderness. This story of the perils and pleasures of pioneer life is strong in its evocation of setting and its understanding of the loneliness of the isolated family as well as their deep ties to the homeland and to their countrymen in the new land. For Maiju and her mother there is the burden of father's death in a December blizzard, and their determination to hold and farm their land with the help of relatives and friends. The plot is more anecdotal than line-structured; the book is weakened somewhat by the dialogue, which is often repetitive and—especially in the case of Maiju—seems oversimplified. For example, Maiju (by now age twelve) responds when her father, working in town after a crop failure, says he will be home in March: " 'Home in March,' Maiju sang. 'Home again.' " Or, when her father says he will stay home an extra day: " 'A whole day,' Maiju sang, 'a whole day—Iša will be with us a whole day more.' "


Nobie and her friend Victor are taking a walk when Nobie finds a penny with her birth year on it, which is of course lucky, since one has three wishes. Nobie wishes it weren't so cold—and the sun comes out; when they're back in Nobie's kitchen, the two quarrel. "Man, I wish you would get out of here." 'Inadvertently, wish #2, and
Victor leaves. Nobie’s Mama tells her the best thing to wish for is good friends. “Usually when I hear the grown people talkin’ bout different things they want, they be talkin’ bout money . . .” Nobie goes outdoors, thinking of what a good friend Victor has been, and there he is, grinning at her. So Nobie knows that penny-luck is real, her third wish has come true. This is a realistic story of friendship; the lucky penny is an embellishment to a theme that has been used in other books, but this is a nice variant. The pictures, some in grey and black, and some in color, use mixed media; they are bold and uncluttered but page-filling and heavy.


Although she had loved animals since childhood and wanted to work with them, Jane Goodall was handicapped by not having academic qualifications. She was given a job by Louis Leakey while visiting a friend in Africa, and it was at his instigation that she undertook the study of chimpanzees that has made her famous. For several years Goodall attended university classes in the winter, eventually acquiring the doctorate that qualified her as a scientist meriting foundation subsidies. The book gives adequate attention to her personal life, but may disappoint readers who are interested in her work, since there is only a page or two about her findings. The soft pencil drawings are occasionally informative rather than decorative; the writing style is dry but clear; the print is large and well-spaced.


In a rather somber story of the depression era, fourteen-year-old Jack gets a job to help the family finances. His mother is in a mental home, his musician father is irresponsible, and there are two younger children. Working in a private club, Jack has noticed that the manager hides money in his sleeping bag, and he steals it. He knows the money is from kickbacks, he knows it’s still wrong to steal—but the rent is overdue. The story ends with Jack and the manager, who doesn’t dare report the theft, making an arrangement whereby Jack can pay back the balance of the sum, since he has already returned what he didn’t need to pay the rent. The story has some period details to give it color, and it has no sugar icing: Jack’s efforts (including the theft) to keep the family together are not successful, since Dad sends the younger children to stay with relatives, and goes off to the wandering life he really wants. Dad, the weakling, is the strongest character in the book (as a literary creation) and the title is an index to Jack’s eventual acceptance of his father—but the story moves away from Dad, who seems intended to be its focus, to the detriment of the book’s cohesiveness.


Coolidge’s ability to bring a period and its people and events to life are as evident as her painstaking scholarship in this perceptive, analytical study of Lincoln’s years in office. Inexperienced, held in contempt by many in his own newly-formed party, the new President slowly gained popularity with the voters as he struggled with inept military men, experienced politicians who assumed they could control him, and his own need to decide priorities among the serious issues of war, of slavery, and of long-term and short-term goals. A section of photographs is bound in; a chronology and a full relative index is appended.


A gripping novel, beautifully crafted, is written on three levels that merge as the
story progresses, building into a dramatic whole that has suspense and a tense poignancy. Adam Farmer describes, in a taut present tense account, his bicycle trip to Vermont to see his father. It is clear that Adam is excited, apprehensive, and determined—and it comes as an odd shock to the reader when his narrative is first interrupted by a question-and-answer column that seems to be a psychiatric interview. The interview sessions continue to pierce the narrative flow, and they lead to the third level, Adam’s reminiscences that are evoked by the sessions. What Cormier brings off in brilliant fashion is that these sessions (which quickly establish themselves as psychiatric probes) and the memories do two things simultaneously: they clarify Adam’s problems, the reasons for his trip and his anxiety, and at the same time they create suspense because it is not clear how the timing fits, when and where the interviews take place, but it is clear that a crisis is looming. As the story progresses, the facts about Adam’s childhood emerge: his father had changed the names of the family members and had created a fictitious background in order to protect them all from retribution because of testimony he had given at a government hearing. As for the ending: it would be unfair to readers to divulge it, but it is stunning.


Profusely illustrated with photographs of players and action shots, this describes the beginning of the game in 1891, the quick popularity of basketball, the early teams and first professional games. It focuses on the stars, the games (professional, collegiate, and Olympic) and the contests of the recent past. Although there is no section devoted to a description of basketball and its rules, the book is otherwise quite comprehensive and the competent, informal writing style plus the subject should make it appealing to fans or players of the game. An index is appended.


Fifteen, Joe had just graduated from elementary school and was trying to get a job. His father had decamped when Joe was a baby; his mother drank too much and carped at him. Yet when his mother died, Joe was desolate. And he worried about the social worker who wanted to get him placed in a foster home. What the author has done that weakens the book is something that happens often with a first novel: there’s too much in it. Joe gets a job at a bowling alley where the proprietor is kind; the proprietor’s daughter is malicious when Joe spurns her advances; Joe moves into the apartment of a gentle, retarded adult co-worker; the janitor of the building is vengeful; Joe gets a crush on a young woman who lives in the building, and it all winds up with a hearing in which Joe is helped by an ACLU lawyer, the social worker who has been (to Joe) hounding him and who supports his plea that he be declared an “emancipated teenager” who can support himself. The court also decides that Joe can help the retarded friend; the malicious girl is repentant, et cetera.


Derek, a college basketball star and a fine student, accepts his uncle’s offer of a temporary job, acting as guide to a retired London bartender (chosen because his name is Pimm) who will do a promotion tour sponsored by the company that sells Pimm’s Cup, a mixed gin drink. But quiet little Mr. Pimm is no more enchanted with the hoopla than Derek is, and the two decide they will go off on their own; they enjoy it tremendously until they run into a spot of trouble in a small town where Derek’s help is regarded as interference. Having gained perspective by the end of the trip, Derek decides he doesn’t want to be just a jock, that he will finish college before he goes on to whatever the next step is. While the events and the conclusion are not
very firmly tied together, the story has good style and original, believable characters (although Derek himself is not a strong character) and a consistent viewpoint.

Farber, Norma. *Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast*; drawings by Tomie De Paola and others. Addison-Wesley, 1977. 76-40264. 43p. Trade ed. $6.95; Library ed. $5.21 net.

An entertaining potpourri of stories and poems, each of the six illustrated, in black and white, by a distinctively different artist, has zest and humor. In a folk-like tale, a forgotten batch of dough rises to the sky, irritating the almost-eclipsed moon; in a less effective fanciful tale, a woman blows bubbles that never break but fill her home. One of the poems is about riding a unicorn, another is a Bunyanesque hero tale; a narrative poem describes the plight of a New Yorker who’s left her shopping basket on a bus, and the last poem is a dialogue between an indulgent royal father and his drooping daughter. Varied, breezy, and useful for reading aloud to younger children.

Freeman, Don. *The Chalk Box Story*; written and illus. by Don Freeman. Lippincott, 1976. 76-10169. 35p. $5.95.

The lid of a box of chalk sticks pops open, and the chalks decide to make a picture. Blue draws a sea and sky, yellow a sun and an island, brown a boy and a tree trunk and so on. The boy signals a black passing ship, which ignores him, but a green turtle gives the boy a ride to the ship, which then sails off into the sunset. Satisfied, the chalks return to their box and close the lid. The grafting of a story on to what is basically a book about colors seems a bit artificial, but the book could be a stimulus to the imaginations of young artists.


A familiar folktale is given a medieval setting in Galdone’s lively, sunny pictures, which have the effect of posters with their clear blocks of color. A hungry child is given the magic pot by an old woman in a forest, and she and her mother live happily thereafter. Until. Until the little girl is out one day, and her mother remembers how to start the pot producing porridge, but can’t remember the words that stop it, and a torrent of porridge flows down the village. The girl comes to the rescue, and the whole population wades around the street eating porridge. The version doesn’t have the punch that Tomie de Paola’s *Strega Nona* does, since it lacks the element of deserved retribution, but it’s an adequate version, and the pictures are attractive and amusing.


Goodall abandons the use of alternate page and half-page in a wordless picture book that, while nostalgically charming, may direct its appeal to adults more than to children. There are two child characters whose activities through one long, golden summer day are followed in the pictures, but they play a passive role on many of the pages: watching a cricket match, attending a wedding, dropping in on a jumble sale, etc. They go to school in the morning, visit a friend, watch a train go by, and so on. It all affords Goodall a fine opportunity to paint clothing details, the elaborate furniture and ceremony of the era, a pub, a country kitchen and the family kitchen (very “Upstairs, Downstairs”) and the splendor of an Edwardian upper-class wedding.


In 1777, sixteen-year-old Sybil Ludington had seven younger brothers and sisters who annoyed her by following her about as she did her chores. One night, when the
other children were asleep, Sybil heard a tired rider telling her parents that Danbury was burning, and she offered to carry on. She dressed quickly and galloped off to spread the news that Danbury was burning, the British soldiers were marching, and there was a muster at the Ludington home. When she returned home, Sybil went to bed at dawn, exhausted. Then came her brothers and sisters with their usual explanation, when she asked why they wouldn’t leave her alone: “We want to watch.” The sibling preoccupation with their older sister is not convincing and seems too heavily stressed, being used as a repeated pattern at the beginning of the book. The story combines the current interest in the bicentennial year and in feminism, but the plot seems overextended and the treatment unbalanced. The illustrations, alternately black and white and sweetly pastel, are tidily drawn but greeting-card-bland.


This is Kate’s story, but it is about her younger sister Joss. Joss has a loving heart, a gift for friendship; she and Kate are close friends even though Kate knows Joss is their parents’ favorite. Joss is almost everyone’s favorite. Her dream comes true on her eleventh birthday when she gets a horse, and one day she and Kate tie the horse to a tree and climb another tree to picnic; Joss falls from the tree and breaks her neck. Because the author has so powerfully drawn the special quality Joss has, especially as seen through Kate’s eyes, the conclusion of the story has tremendous impact. Kate lives through the period of numbness, the pain of her own and her parents’ grief, the service, and the ambivalent reaction to condolences in a daze. She knows things will get better, but ends, “It’s the now that hurts.”


An admirable book both for the material it contains and for the superb illustrations and format, this is one of the most comprehensive and lucid texts on the subject. Greenfeld discusses the roles of each participant in the book-making process and of the steps in production, literary and physical. Illustrations include reproductions of manuscript stages, reports, financial forms, contracts, layout, type faces, preparations for illustrations, and the work of the designer as well as facets of color printing, order forms, and reviews. The facts are authoritative, the arrangement of them is logical, and the writing is smooth and knowledgeable. A glossary, a bibliography, and an index are included.

Grimm, Jakob, Ludwig Karl. *Eric Carle’s Storybook; Seven Tales by the Brothers Grimm;* illus. and ad. by Eric Carle. Watts, 1976. 75-44951. 93p. Trade ed. $4.95; Library ed. $6.90 net.

Carle’s brilliantly colored pictures, handsomely designed but occasionally cluttered with detail, dominate his simplified retellings of the Grimm tales. The style of the adaptation does not always keep the cadence of traditional material (“Let’s fix the mean old thing,” says a robber in “The Three Golden Hairs,”) although it has more vitality than some adaptations. Other tales are “Hans in Luck,” “The Fisherman and His Wife,” “Tom Thumb,” “Seven with One Blow,” “The Youth Who Wanted to Shiver,” and “The Seven Swabians.”


Designed as a high interest, low vocabulary book, this collective biography should attract hockey fans older than those in the indicated reading range. It briefly de-
scribes the careers of Stan Mikita, Bobby Clarke, Ken Dryden, Bobby Orr, Phil Ad Esposito, and Denis Potvin. The information is adequate, giving a few facts about the players' childhoods but concentrating on the highlights of their careers and their outstanding abilities; the tone verges on adulatory, however, and the book is further weakened by the writing style. In the Mikita biography, for example, Mikita is quoted as saying that, at the age of eight, he agreed to come to Canada with an aunt and uncle because he "thought that Canada was America," and the next paragraph begins, in an abrupt transition, "Then Stan found himself at the railroad station . . ."


A far better book than most of Hall's horse or dog stories, this begins with Carey's description of her friend Ann's excited anticipation of the girl's first horse show. But Ann's horse is shot by a crotchety neighbor when it gets into his garden, and Ann's deep grief is exceeded by her anger and her desire for revenge. Carey tries to help Ann adjust to her loss, tries to talk her out of making a recriminatory gesture, but fails: Ann destroys all the roses in the garden her neighbor prides himself on. And that's the way the story ends, with no last-minute softening. Both girls know that anger brings only bitterness and that there will be consequences, but Ann has needed a release of hostility and Carey has needed to stand by her friend even though she disapproves. As told by Carey, the story is remarkably effective; this is in part because the writing itself is sound, partly because Carey as speaker can be both participant and commentator, and partly because Carey, while chiefly concerned with the problems of Ann's grief and their friendship, includes other facets of her life—other friends and her family.


While this biography of the tennis star gives a great deal of information about her career, it is weakened by the format, which is not chronological but moves back and forth in time, and by the writing style, which is casual and conversational but marred by florid writing ("Always ladylike, golden, feminine . . ." or, "Evonne is elusive, shy, having an air of mystery about her, like a gentle woodland creature.") and by a recurring preoccupation with the clothing worn by Evert and other players. However—there's plenty of game action for fans to enjoy, and the glossary and scoring rules that are appended in addition to the index should prove useful.

Haskins, James S. The Story of Stevie Wonder; illus. with photographs. Lothrop, 1976. 75-37517. 126p. Trade ed. $5.50; Library ed. $4.81 net.

Casual and conversational in tone, astute in analysis of the musician's work, and objective although admiring, Haskins' biography should appeal to all Stevie Wonder fans and inform those not familiar with his career. Born blind, Steveland Morris changed his name when he became a phenomenal star, at the age of twelve, with his first hit record. Despite a failed first marriage and a serious automobile accident, the singer and composer has been resilient enough to retain the ebullience that, with his range and vocal control, have won a vast audience and many awards. A discography and an index are appended.


Oliver Cromwell was only a plowman in 1630, when the teller of this tale was born and was named for him, for the young Oliver's shiftless father much admired the [ 125 ]
strong-willed, contentious Master Cromwell. Young Oliver's life, seen in retrospect when he is an old man in America, changed completely when his beloved mother died in 1641 and he went with his father as camp followers of the Parliamentary Army. Haugaard does a fine job in this historical fiction, focusing attention on the vicissitudes of Oliver's life and on the ordinary people he meets but relating the lives of such people to the cross-currents and fierce allegiances of a divided country. The fictionalizing is used for fiction; Haugaard never falls into the pit of inventing adventures for the historical characters. The writing style has vigor, the plot is well-constructed and paced.


Dealing in the first chapter with "General Suggestions and Hints," Hautzig briefly discusses planning and organizing but stresses leisure time projects; the second chapter discusses safety measures and rules in and out of the home, most of which pertain equally to children whose parents are at home: what to do if you have your keys stolen, do's and don'ts for bicycling, etc. Other chapters give advice on doing chores, on saving money or handling household appliances, on caring for pets or younger siblings, or on preparing meals. The advice is sensible and useful, but some of it is not really geared to children who are home alone as compared to those who have a parent or parents at home, and there is a rather noticeable emphasis on crafts and projects. A divided bibliography and an index are appended.


An extensive list of sources and a full relative index give minor reference use to a book that has both biographical and historical interest. Hodges gives some of the facts about Malory's life directly, but most of them appear as his own reminiscing when he was in prison, an old man writing his Morte Darthur. The chapters are entitled "Gareth," "Lancelot," "Arthur," et cetera, and in each one Hodges describes the historical events in which Malory participated and ascribes his interpretation of an Arthurian figure to one of his royal or noble contemporaries. "Guinevere," for example, is thought to be based on Catherine, Henry V's queen, but that chapter begins with a description of Malory in prison, many pages that report Henry's campaign in France, and rather little about Queen Catherine. Because the text shifts back and forth, and because there are so many historical and literary details, the book may prove too difficult for readers not already familiar with English history and/or Arthurian legend.


Hogrogian's illustrations (some brisk little black and white line drawings; some ebullient, richly colored pencil drawings) have an earthy humor; her retelling of an amusing folktale is direct and unassuming, letting the humor emerge without directing the reader's attention to it. Two robbers, one of whom operates by day and the other by night, discover, when they meet on their journeys, that they are both engaged to the same perfidious girl. They decide to see which of them is more clever, and most of the story is concerned with the ploys they pull off in this contest, which concludes with the two clever robbers deciding they are too good for the faithless girl and that they will go into business in their new high-potential territory.
In a series of books that describe tribal groups of Native Americans according to their chief way of garnering food (hunters, fishers, gatherers, etc.), Jacobson supplies authoritative details about cultures. The material is arranged chronologically and includes information about the tribal situation today, the writing style is dry, portions being fictionalized—perhaps unnecessarily for readers old enough to find the small print comfortable and the minutiae interesting. The author correlates ways of life to natural resources and is objective about Indian-white relationships, following the living patterns of food-gathering tribes of the Great Basin of the West (Utah, Nevada, and surrounding states) as changing climate, seasons, and encounters with other tribes and later with white people changed their life-styles in ancient and recent times. A glossary, a bibliography of sources, a selected reading list, and an index are appended.


Mama gazes at her roses from the kitchen window, and Papa reads his paper by moonlight on the porch; Baby sleeps, and Grandma looks at his face in the moonlight; one child is in the house, one outdoors. Brother comes in and goes to bed, Papa and Mama do likewise. The house is still, the moon "reaches its long pale arms to touch the house far below." With only incidental action, the text seems too static to appeal to many children; it is dreamy without being poetic, and its strongest quality is in presenting an extended family in a moment of peacefulness, but even that aspect is diminished by the fact that there is little interaction between family members. Kessler’s night sky is appropriate, but his pictures are otherwise not attuned to the dreamy quality of the text, and in a few places the text and illustrations are not well matched.


There are fourteen songs in this collection of parody lyrics, with notation provided for the melodic line. "On top of spaghetti, all covered with cheese," to the tune of "On Top of Old Smokey (sic)" or "There's a long, long nail a-grinding, up through the hole of my shoe..." An unusual melody is given for "Turkey in the Straw." These are versions popular with children, often adapted by children; they have the sort of humor that is especially popular for group singing. The illustrations are pop-grotesque and the binding is too tight to permit the book to lie flat, a weakness that can be irritating in any music book.


Black and white sketches, soft in line, show a medieval setting for a folksy, humorous tale of magic. Bertie and Jack live in a cottage and squabble affectionately in a rustic dialogue larded with Kennedy’s invented words (“churny” milk, “splashering” in the stream); when Jack finds a blue stone he is convinced has come from heaven, Bertie is dubious—until she turns into a chicken. A series of brinkmanship adventures follows, with the blue stone’s magic saving one or both each time, and when the last magic changes a baby into an infant angel Bertie and Jack are rather relieved to have the whole tiresome business over with. The dialogue is occasionally heavily quaint, but it’s alleviated by the light tone. Because each chapter is self-contained, the book is well suited to installment reading-aloud.

Eighteen-year-old Krii, who tells the story, is quiet and introspective. She has come to London to study ballet and is not seeking social life, let alone a love affair, but she is intrigued by Jonathan, especially when he stops pressuring her after she explains that she doesn't want to have an affair. But Krii changes her mind, and she and Jonathan become lovers. He tries to involve her with other people, but Krii is still hiding. She comes back to school, after a vacation, to the stunning news that Jonathan has married someone else and for a time she stays in London, even sleeping with Jonathan. Then Krii really hides; she goes back to the United States and enrolls at Barnard. At the close of the story Jonathan shows up; he is separated from his wife, and there is an implication that the relationship may be resumed. Klein’s theme is evident in the final dialogue, in which Krii says her new glasses are tiring: “I see things so horribly clearly. I don't know if I really like it. I don't know if I want to see things as clearly as all that.” “You'll get used to it,” Jonathan replies. Candid, as are all Klein’s books, this suffers from slow pace and flat characterization.


Profusely illustrated by the work of a skilled photographer, this is a record of a ten-year-old dancer’s participation in the preparation and performance of the New York City Ballet’s *Nutcracker*. Stephanie is in her fourth year of study at Balanchine’s School of American Ballet, and she is the speaker in a candid, conversational text that is extremely effective in conveying the dedication and affection in the ballet dancer’s life. Stephanie prattles knowledgeably about her classes, her friends and family (mother was a dancer, older sister is a student also), the rigors of training, the excitement of auditions, and the sober task of learning her role (Mary) when she is chosen. The book is full of the professionalism of serious dancers, however young, and of the excitement of backstage events. Terrific.

Lattimore, Eleanor Frances. *Adam’s Key*; illus. by Alan Tiegreen. Morrow, 1976. 76-13013. 128p. Trade. ed. $5.95; Library ed. $5.21 net.

The youngest of five children, six-year-old Adam is unhappy because he has only hand-me-down clothes and toys. When he finds a shiny key that looks new, he half believes his next oldest sister, who insists that the key is magic. It proves to be a master key and, in several episodes, it is useful in opening doors when people are locked out. When Adam has his seventh birthday, he receives many new toys but his best present is being allowed to move into the big room where his two older brothers sleep. Somehow, he discovers, he no longer needs the key to make him feel important. The writing style is bland, the tone of the book static, but the everyday life experiences should have the appeal of familiarity; this is a realistic but spiritless family story.


Serious but not somber, LeShan’s text is candid about grief and encouraging about its eventual diminution; this is, however, not written simply to solace the child, but to describe honestly and fully all of the emotions aroused by the death of a parent, the stages of numbness, anger, resentment, mourning, and acceptance of the bereavement as a fact. Brief anecdotes illustrate the ways in which children may react or adjust to special circumstances: guilt suffered because there is a momentary relief after a long illness or because of a hasty word; fear of one’s own death or that of the remaining parent; the need for other people; the need for understanding the grief-reactions of others in the family; relationships with other children, et cetera. The
writing is direct, sympathetic but never saccharine, in this excellent addition to the growing literature on death for children and young people. A divided bibliography is appended.


When Daria wins a dish at a carnival, she is frightened by the fact that it seems to evoke a scent, a voice, and a face; her cat’s terror corroborates the strange event. And it happens again, once witnessed by her best friend; Kelly is horrified and becomes distant. The only person who understands is Dari’s new friend, Rob, even when he knows that the voice is her grandmother’s, even when he knows that it has called her a love child. Rob, whose father is psychologist, has also had extrasensory experiences. Daria learns to adjust to her powers; she also learns that her grandmother had been a medium, and she and Grandma have several long chats. Levitin writes well, and she makes Daria’s occult experiences believable, but Kelly’s aversion to what is happening is not convincing, nor is the rigid hostility of Daria’s mother.


Third in a series of stories about doughty Maggie McKinley, a Glaswegian lass who has been enthralled by the stories her Granny tells about the family’s Highland background. Here Maggie and her boyfriend James go off to bike and hike in the north country; James is less interested than Maggie in local history, and he’s jealous when a Canadian hiker, Phil, shares Maggie’s enthusiasm. In fact, Maggie finds that she responds more to Phil’s one kiss than all the protestations of love and pressure for an early marriage from James. Maggie really wants to go to college, but her family feels they need her help—so Maggie gets a job. As always, Lingard treats issues that concern young people—dependence, life goals, peer relationships—and, as always, she is realistic in maintaining the credibility of events as they are proscribed by social and financial pressures. The characters and dialogue are convincing, the writing style competently restrained.


An only child, sedate and shy, eleven-year-old Maria cannot tell her preoccupied parents that she is sure she hears noises from the past: a creaking swing, a barking dog. And when she sees a sampler made—but not finished—by a child who lived in the same house a century earlier, Maria suspects an old tragedy. This borderline fantasy has a logical and surprising ending, and it develops along with a most realistic story line in which Maria makes friends with one of the children in a noisy, large family next door. Nicely structured and smoothly written, this English story has suspense and momentum, sharp characterization, and natural dialogue.


The familiar nursery rhymes in this oversize book, first published in England, have no less appeal than they have in other editions, but the illustrations—a blend of greeting card and comic strip styles—weaken it, as do the crowded pages.


As they did in *A Natural History of Giraffes,* the author and the illustrator have each done a splendid job, the whole indeed greater than its parts. Mochi’s cutouts are perhaps even more striking here, the dramatic striping of the zebra an excellent subject for the medium. MacClintock, a mammalogist, examines every aspect of
zebra species, structure, history, and behavior with quiet authority and a relaxed but brisk writing style. A glossary, a list of suggestions for further reading, and an index are appended.

Maralngura, N. *Djugurba; Tales from the Spirit Time*; by N. Maralngura and others; rev. ed. Indiana University Press, 1976. 64p. illus. $6.95.

First published in Australia, a compilation of myths and legends collected by Aborigine students in a teacher training program is illustrated with colorful drawings that have the vigor and awkwardness of children’s work. The stories, many of them *pourquoi* tales, incorporate familiar folk motifs and devices; many of them are about animals (“How the Kangaroo Got His Tail”), explain natural phenomena like the rainbow, or describe the adventures of supernatural creatures. The writing has the directness and cadence of oral tradition, and the tales are excellent for reading aloud or telling.


Living in the unspoiled beauty of quiet Montalvo Bay on the California coast, Ernie Hutchins is horrified when he learns that real estate developers are planning to level a hill and build a sizeable project. Ernie is president of his high school student body, and he has deplored the firing of a popular teacher, Bob Orsino; he knows that the development project can be blocked if a sympathetic County Board Supervisor can be elected, and he organizes the young people of the area in a campaign to elect Orsino rather than the dirty tricks incumbent. While the author’s views on clean politics, conservation of wilderness areas, and the strength and dedication of adolescents are positive aspects of the book, the story has didactic overtones, and what begins as a book about a teenager ends as a story about the intricacies of an election campaign, with Ernie more of a vehicle than a protagonist. The writing style is competent, however, and the characters are varied if occasionally stereotyped (the Utterly Evil developers; the Stodgy, Stupid Incumbent).

Mother Goose. *Granfa’ Grig Had a Pig and Other Rhymes Without Reason from Mother Goose*; comp. and illus. by Wallace Tripp. Little, 1976. 76-25234. 96p. Trade ed. $7.95; Paper ed. $4.95.

Oh, they’re the same rhymes, all right, but what Wallace Tripp does with his hilarious illustrations makes this Mother Goose collection very different. There are a few representational (even one romantic) illustrations, but most of them are ingeniously conceived and so bedecked with side comments that the book should be highly enjoyed by adults or older children who have the happy task of reading the verses aloud. For example: Old King Cole’s conductor is Toscanini, who is saying, in a balloon caption, “Ignorante! Imbecile! Molto cantando . . . Bitte da capo!” “Terribile.” An apple a day keeps the doctor away? “Scram, you quack! You hippocratic oaf!” The scene for “Robbin and Bobbin” is a rural pie-eating contest, complete with scoreboard, groaning contestants, and a quack doctor hawking his cure-alls. Great fun.


An American working in a British shipyard during the Civil War, sixteen-year-old Jim is urged by his brother, a Yankee spy, to furnish information about the vessel he’s working on, *The 290*, which is being built for the Confederacy. A loyal southerner, Jim joins the crew and sees action on the ship, renamed *Alabama*. While on a raiding mission, Jim seizes a chance to go to Port-au-Prince, where there is a slave warehouse owned jointly by his father and Ruiz Cicerone, and manages to release a
large number of slaves. It is a minor flaw that the story of this rescue seems sharply separated from the rest of the book, but it crystallizes O'Dell’s point: one can be loyal to a cause without approving of every facet upheld by other supporters of that cause. The characters and the writing style are of high calibre, and the naval details are authentic and exciting.


A quarter boy, regardless of sex, is the clock figure that comes out on the quarter-hour. The dilapidated Indian woman who is the quarter boy of an English town clock arouses the artistic interest of Charlie, who’s been hired to do a refurbishing job. Charlie tells the story in a light, humorous style, as his temporary job turns into a research project and the resulting favorable publicity leads to permanent employment. He also becomes interested in the mousy girl he’d known in school, especially after he’s observed Christine from the clock tower. Is the wrapped bundle she’s holding tenderly the baby that’s been kidnapped recently? The mystery lends spice to a story that has good style, brisk pace and dialogue, and that gives a lively picture of the community.

Paterson, Diane. *Smile for Auntie*; written and illus. by Diane Paterson. Dial, 1976. 76-2285. 29p. Trade ed. $4.95; Library ed. $4.58 net.

Most children have experienced the discomfort of being expected to respond to the overtures of an adult; this should spark a recognition reflex in young children. It is a slight book, with an extended situation rather than a plot, but the situation is seen from the child’s viewpoint and the treatment—in text and bold, simple drawings—is comic. Baby sits in hostile apprehension while Auntie speaks: “Smile for Auntie... I’ll sing a song... I’ll do a little dance... I’ll make funny faces at you... I’ll stand on my head... ” and so on. Auntie’s monologue is the only text, and Baby stolidly ignores it. On the last page, after Auntie has stalked off saying “I’ll go away and never come back!” Baby beams joyfully.


Photographs of high calibre illustrate a text that describes the work of a tugboat crew operating in New York Harbor. The boat is the *Julia C. Moran*, and her crew’s day begins at 4 a.m. with a large breakfast before they dock or undock ships assigned by the fleet’s tug despatcher. Plowden gives a great deal of information about harbor vessels, particularly the liners and tankers the tugs assist; he describes details of docking and undocking procedures and supplies a list of bell signals, a chart of the harbor, and an explanation of the marine time system. Text and pictures are nicely integrated, the writing style is clear, and the material is well organized. This has less material about the personal lives of the crew members than does Peter Burchard’s *Harbor Tug* (reviewed in the June, 1976 issue) and is therefore more pertinent as well as more cohesive.


Rain Dove, a Cherokee of the sixteenth century, begins her story with a cycle of four evil omens that were seen by members of her village. She describes her family, the People of the Seven Clans who live in her village, her marriages, and the terrible scourges of illness and persecution that came with pale-skinned strangers who were so inexplicably hostile. Rockwood has that gift of the best writers of historical fiction, ofimmersing herself so completely in the spirit as well as the facts of a past culture that the details that give color and verisimilitude are incorporated into the
Savitt, Sam. *Vicki and the Brown Mare*; written and illus. by Sam Savitt. Dodd, 1976. 76-12503. 156p. $4.95.

Realistic action pictures of horses, drawn in pencil, illustrate the story of a girl’s dedicated care and training of a frisky mare. Skylark has been throwing her owner, who asks Vicki to retrain the animal and who later gives her to Vicki. A professional trainer becomes interested in Vicki’s efforts and helps her, but the horse needs more skilled attention than Vicki can give; she sells Skylark to a man who wants to donate the mare to the United States Equestrian Team for the Olympics. In the last sequence, Vicki proudly watches a well-trained Skylark, months later, perform in a Madison Square Garden Horse Show. Like many horse stories, this has little about other aspects of the protagonist’s life to give the book balance; it is better than the books written to formula, however, since Vicki accepts her limitations and doesn’t ride off into the sunset with blue ribbons flying, in a dazzling finish. The writing style is mediocre, the characterization minimal.


Although he explains that the animal we call the plains buffalo is in fact the bison, Scott uses the more familiar term in another volume in the excellent photo-essay series in which text and pictures are of uniformly high quality and carefully correlated. The text gives a great deal of information about the buffalo’s habits, habitat, appearance, growth, and patterns of mating and breeding; it also describes the many ways in which the Plains Indians used the buffalo, but did not abuse it, killing only enough to provide food, clothing, and shelter from meat and hide. With the western immigration came the white settlers’ slaughter: between 1870 and 1890, the buffalo population was reduced from 60 million to less than 600 animals. The thriving buffalo herds today are due to the efforts of a few conservationists rather than to legislation, although the movement now has many supporters. Scott lists the preserves where buffalo can be seen in the United States and Canada.


Four brief tales about two squirrels. In the first, one of them fusses about, looking for a yellow hat to take on a trip. She decides to buy a new hat to go with her yellow dress, loses it, finds it, remembers she threw away the yellow dress, and decides that she’s had enough excitement and won’t go on the trip. The other stories have a similar meandering structure; while there is a mild humor in the situations and the book is useful as additional material for beginning independent readers, this hasn’t the ebullience of the George and Martha stories or the gentle affection of Lobel’s tales of Frog and Toad.


As in other books by this naturalist and artist, the text is competently organized, comprehensive, clear, and authoritative, and the softly colored drawings are impeccably detailed and handsome. Simon begins with a discussion of the collecting of shells and the products used by people (snails as food, purple dye from the Murex group, shells used as money or ornaments) and provides two chapters of general information, “Evolution and Anatomy,” and “Growth and Structure of the Shell,”
before discussing groups of snails in succeeding chapters: land, fresh-water, and marine snails as well as those gastropods that are less well known because they have no shells. Throughout the text, Simon describes structure, reproduction, habitat, diet, and—extensively—shells and shell color. Either the pictures or the text would stand alone; together they provide a valuable resource and an aesthetic tour de force. The writing style is direct and serious but not dry. A bibliography, a glossary, and an index that includes common and scientific names are appended.


Although no sources are cited, the jacket for this biography states that it is based on the reminiscences of a fur trader who knew the Crow warrior and chief. The writing style is direct and the tone objective; despite a fairly heavy use of dialogue it has no aura of being unduly fictionalized. The character delineation is not deep but it is clear and consistent; the author is candid about the fact that Lonesome Star, born a Gros Ventre and captured and raised by Crow Indians, lived as husband and wife with another woman. The book is sound as a biography, and it also gives a sympathetic and detailed picture of the Plains Indians, particularly of the Crow culture and the importance of horse stealing. Lonesome Star, who won the name of Woman Chief, was murdered, while on a peace mission, by some Gros Ventres.


Richly detailed black and white drawings illustrate a fantasy that is lightly framed by a step-into-another-world device. Gregory, while in a toy store, steps past a warning sign on a curtained display of toy bears and into the lair of a bear, a pleasantly voracious bear who confesses that he likes to eat only those who are in peak condition. So Gregory remembers, throughout a long series of fanciful adventures, to cough and sniffle often enough to remain uneaten. He accompanies Bear and Sir Rosemary, a dauntless knight (female) on a mission; they must reach the sleeping prince of the kingdom before the slow advance of ice that is part of the evil spell destroys the land. There's plenty of action, good dialogue, and humor, and the role-reversal may amuse readers, but the pace is uneven and the author tends to lean repetitively on some of the facets of the story—such as Bear's always wanting to eat whomever he encounters.


First published in England as When the Siren Wailed, this is the story of a Cockney family separated during the London blitz. Dad serves in the Navy, Mum gets a factory job, and the three Clark children are evacuated and are billeted with elderly Colonel Stranger and his housekeeper in a Dorset town. The children adapt well to the new and more rigorously disciplined way of life, but when the Colonel dies, they rebel against their second sponsor and run off to London to find their mother. Mum, bombed out and in a hospital, is happy to see them but sends them back to the country; the story ends happily when Dad returns, wounded, and they all are reunited and settle in a cottage left by the Colonel. Some of the terminology will be unfamiliar to readers (the wartime trains "is something chronic," a woman complains) but can usually be understood because of the context. Streatfeild's style is lively and her descriptions colorful; the characters are well-drawn and the dialogue is excellent. While the problems and fortunes of the children should engage readers, it is the atmosphere of wartime England—both in London and in the country—that gives the book its strength.
The subject is one that appeals to children, the telling is appropriately simple and direct for young children, and the illustrations are bright and tidy—but the book doesn’t quite come off, perhaps because it turns on a change of attitude that is unconvincing. A stray cat is taken in by a family who think it’s charming, except for the father. “The father” keeps pointing out that the cat is a nuisance as it knocks over lamps, falls in the bathtub, claws furniture, hides objects under the rug, etc. Each time the father objects, others point out that the cat will improve, that it is sweet and has a soothing purr, or that it is soft and warm. Father, the perennial objector, then decides that the cat is soft and warm, and that it deserves another chance.


Based on Brown’s autobiography, published in 1847, this extends the story of his life to the end of the Civil War, continuing to use the first person form. Born a slave in 1814, William saw his mother and sister sent to the slave markets, and he vowed to become free; in 1834, he escaped, later taking the name of Wells Brown to honor a Quaker who helped him reach Buffalo. Here he worked on a lake steamer, helping many other black refugees reach Canada. Self-educated, Brown became an author and lecturer, speaking in the United States and England in support of the abolitionist movement. His story is candid and dramatic, and Warner interprets it forcefully, continuing the account of his later years in the same vein of matter-of-fact reportage as in the portion based on the autobiography. The later years, when Brown became the first black author of a play, a novel, and a history in this country, are filled with references to luminaries here and abroad, but it is as an indictment of slavery that the book, in its first half, is most effective. A list of Brown’s major works is appended.


Julio, who has just moved with his older sister to a new housing project, is called “chicken” by Cosmo and his two friends. To prove to these older boys (they’re fourteen) that he’s not chicken, Julio snatches a purse; repenting, he anonymously sends the owner some money and gets a job so that he can send the full amount stolen. Becoming friendly with an older boy who also works in the coffee shop, Julio joins his new friend in guitar-strum duets. Cosmo and his gang show up and become so interested that they all start a rock group and plan to perform in schools. The print is clear, the writing style (first person) is simple, and the subject may make the book useful for slow older readers, but the lack of vitality in the story and the didactic message militate against the book’s appeal.


A brisk and sensible text discusses tooth formation and structure, decay and other oral problems, and diet. It also describes the work of dentists and hygienists, orthodontic devices, and proper care of the teeth. The book is, despite an occasional generalization, useful, comprehensive, and well-organized; it is weakened somewhat by illustrations that lack labels or that are poorly placed. The illustrations also include several rather puerile cartoons, such as a ferocious dog in the dental chair, with dentist cowering and a small boy saying, “Didn’t you ask me to recommend some friends?” An index is appended.

Like Rappaport's "Banner, Forward!" this pictorial narrative describes the training of a Seeing Eye dog from puppyhood to expert guiding of an owner. Connie David's dog Blythe spends a year with a farm family who follow the training instructions given by The Seeing Eye, Inc., then goes to the school for further training; the final stage is working with her new owner as they help each other learn. Connie and Blythe go home, and the text then describes the ways in which Blythe makes it easier and safer for Connie to move about. Since Connie's job as a teacher of handicapped children has moments of pathos, this is perhaps more touching at times than the Rappaport book, but otherwise they are equal in coverage, interest, writing style, and quality of photographs.


A Hopi Indian tale is pleasantly illustrated and nicely retold, and it has the appeal of animal characters and of an incorporated rhyme (with music provided at the back of the book). What may have been very effective when told as a story, since Wolkstein is a superb storyteller, is less effective in print, since the tale has neither climax nor focus (i.e. it is not an explanatory tale, not humorous, and not pointed) but describes a chipmunk and a squirrel who together steal and eat peaches from an orchard. Chipmunk makes a squirrel-song that celebrates his friend's prowess ("Squirrel cries Kree-Kree... Squirrel goes fast lickety split.") and at first Squirrel doesn't like the song; then he joins in singing it and, inspired by the praise, runs faster than ever.


Fresh and imaginative, Worth's new poems have a combination of vigor and delicacy that is echoed by Babbitt's small, precise drawings. There is no labored quality, the verse is free but disciplined, and the poems—direct and deceptively simple—offer those illuminating perceptions of familiar things that are the essence of the poet's vision and function.


A pleasantly varied collection of poems about love and liking, with illustrations that are similarly varied—from prim decorated frames to hearts-and-flowers or a Japanese landscape. Some of the selections are taken from poetry written for children (Farjeon, Kuskin, Livingston) and some from poetry for adults; some are anonymous and several are from the Far East. Save for a poorly-constructed rebus (the picture of an eye sometimes stands for the long, sometimes the short "i" sound) that is an anonymous selection, the poems are of good quality.


Casey's father, Barney, is an inveterate gambler and dreamer; since her mother's death she has become toughened by their wandering life, more protective toward her father than he is toward her. When Barney is hospitalized, Casey is taken over by her uncle's family, but they are horrified by her behavior and sophistication, and she is
taken to the Chinese neighborhood of San Francisco to live with a grandmother she hardly knows. There is a story line, and a well-constructed one, but it is Casey’s adjustment to her Chinese heritage that is the most trenchant aspect of the story: her growing love for her grandmother, her new perspective on her own childhood, her acceptance of herself as a “child of the owl,” a reference to a long folktale told (beautifully) by her grandmother. This is a most impressive book: impressive in its depiction of Chinatown, in its strong characterization, vigorous style, and in its perception.

Zemach, Margot, ad. *It Could Always Be Worse; a Yiddish Folk Tale*; ad. and illus. by Margot Zemach. Farrar, 1976. 76-53895. 27p. $7.95.

While Zemach retells a Yiddish version of the folktale, this will remind many readers of Sorche Nic Leodhas’ *Always Room for One More* or other variants of the story about a house so crowded that the only way to make the owner feel comfortable is to stuff it with even more people or creatures so that when the extra guests leave, the original population seems pleasant by comparison. Here a poor man goes to his Rabbi to complain that a wife, six children, and his mother make home a bedlam; the Rabbi insists that the man bring in all his beasts—and when the latter go, home seems quiet, peaceful, and roomy. Zemach’s pictures are always engaging, with strong use of line, subdued and deft use of color, and humor, but this is one of the best vehicles she’s used for her distinctive style.


Two members of a high school therapy group run by the school psychologist grope toward real friendship and understanding, in a story that is ebulliently zany, at times seeming exaggerated, at times very funny. Edna is withdrawn, resisting her mother’s constant nagging about getting a date; “Marsh” Mellow is a borderline psychotic who tries to convince Edna to help him rescue his father, whose letters he produces. Father (who, according to Marsh, used to take him off on long trips on which both were sexually invincible) is in a mental home, persecuted by government agencies. Marsh’s mother, whom he calls Schizo Suzy, is an alcoholic. Marsh and Edna have several wild experiences (a house party at which most of the adolescent guests have stripped, and at which the house burns down) before the final escapade, in which Marsh coaxes Edna to run off with him to help save his father. Their car is wrecked, and the two land in a cemetery where Marsh admits, for the first time, that his father is dead; he wrote the letters himself. The story is sophisticated, candid, not quite believable in what happens—but it is more than convincing in its perceptiveness and its sensitivity to the anguish of the unhappy adolescent. In their own way, Edna and Marsh, for all the abrasion they feel at times, help each other move toward self-acceptance and stability.
BIBLIOGRAPHIES

*A Book List for the Jewish Child*, comp. by the Jewish Book Council. 55p. $75 from JBC, 15 E. 26th St., New York, NY 10010.


Awards: The 1977 Newbery Medal went to Mildred Taylor for *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (Dial). Newbery Honor Books were William Steig’s *Abel’s Island* (Farrar) and Nancy Bond’s *A String in the Harp* (Atheneum).

The Caldecott Medal went to Leo and Diane Dillon for *Ashanti to Zulu*, written by Margaret Musgrove (Dial). Caldecott Honor Books were *Fish for Supper* by M. B. Goffstein (Dial), *The Contest* by Nonny Hogrogian (Greenwillow), *The Golem* by Beverly McDermott (Lippincott), *Hawk, I’m Your Brother* by Byrd Baylor, illustrated by Peter Parnall (Scribner), and *The Amazing Bone* by William Steig (Farrar).