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.
C.U. Curricular Use.
D.V. Developmental Values.

* * *

THE BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN’S BOOKS (ISSN 0008-9036) is published monthly except August by The University of Chicago Press, 5720 S. Woodlawn, Chicago, Illinois, 60637 for The Center for Children’s Books. Betsy Hearne, Editor; Roger Sutton, Senior Editor; Zena Sutherland, Associate Editor; Deborah Stevenson, Editorial Assistant. An advisory committee meets weekly to discuss books and reviews. The members are Alba Endicott, Robert Strang, Elizabeth Taylor, Kathryn Pierson Jennings, Ruth Ann Smith, and Deborah Stevenson. Reviewers' initials are appended to reviews.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: 1 year, $24.00; $16.00 per year for two or more subscriptions to the same address; $15.00, student rate; in countries other than the United States, add $3.00 per subscription for postage. Japanese subscription agent: Kinokuniya Company Ltd. Single copy rate: from vol. 25, $2.50; vols. 17 through 24, 50¢. Reprinted volumes 1-35 (1947-1981) available from Kraus Reprint Co., Route 100, Millwood, New York 10546. Volumes available in microfilm from University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. Complete volumes available in microfiche from Johnson Associates, P.O. Box 1017, Greenwich, Conn. 06830. Checks should be made payable to The University of Chicago Press. All notices of change of address should provide both the old and new address. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN’S BOOKS, The University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE. Address all inquiries about subscriptions to The University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE. Review copies and all correspondence about reviews should be sent to Betsy Hearne, 1100 East 57th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

Second-class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois.

© 1991 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved.
Are you reading someone else's copy of The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books?

Order your own subscription and save 15%
The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

☐ Yes, please enter my subscription to The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, beginning with the current issue, at the rate checked below. The introductory rate represents a savings of 15%.

- Individuals
  - Introductory (J) $21.00
  - Renewal $25.00
- Institutions
  - Introductory (J) $24.00
  - Renewal $29.00
- Bulk (two or more subscriptions to the same address)
  - Introductory (J) $18.00 each
  - Renewal $22.00 each

Outside USA please add $5.00 for postage.

Payment Options

☐ Charge my ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa

Acct. # ____________________________
Signature __________________________
Exp. Date __________________________

☐ Check enclosed (payable to BCCB)
☐ Purchase order enclosed

Please return this form to The University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, IL 60637.
**New Titles for Children and Young People**


R  Gr. K-3. "Rebecca at Breakfast Time/ Becky By Lunch" is the exuberant young black narrator of this seasonal cycle of poems. Some are her simple outbursts of joy: "I/ Send/ This/ Spring/ Song/ Out/ For/ All/ To Shout/ And Sing/ Out For Spring/ Out For Spring/ Out For Spring." Others poems are observations about the natural world, some of them suggesting an older point of view than Rebecca's: "I Hear The Usual Thump/ And Know That One More/ Robin/ Has Hit The Glass Door/ In Love With Its Own/ Reflection." Understatement is sometimes used to comic effect: "Daddy Screamed A Perfect/ Cartoon Scream And Dropped The Heavy Cream/ And Dropped His Cake Pan/ And Ran/ Out Of Our/ Warm/ Kitchen/ Faster Than The Mouse Was/ Running The Other Way." The idyllic life of this rural family is disturbed only by the threat of storms, or of polluted air when the wind blows the wrong way ("We Stay In For the Rest of the Day"). With his variegated watercolor and pencil illustrations, Pinkney captures the mood or essence of each poem. Purple crocuses burst through snow, and dead leaves come "Out For Spring," while a wary, chased-from-the-kitchen mouse looks on. A master of color, Pinkney uses a full palette of spring greens. His flora and fauna are meticulously rendered, but the human figures, though lovingly portrayed, present occasional difficulties with their awkwardly drawn heads or faces. Because the uninhibited layout of the free verse poetry may be confusing to younger readers, this book would benefit from one-on-one sharing. It certainly invites repeated readings. RAS D.V. Family relations


R  3-5 yrs. The best way to learn respect for animals is by animals' response to mistreatment, and Andrew is a prime candidate for a lesson. He's lonely, but the cat that strays into his arms runs quickly away after being squeezed, twirled ("Let's be helicopters and whizz round and round"), and submitted to games of fire engine and acrobat. As Andrew chases the fleeing cat, a neighboring dog plays rough with him, leading Andrew to gentler behavior when the cat reappears through the window to sleep on his bed. Allen's full-color compositions are simple but spiced with expressive action; this Australian award-winner has a warm and knowing way of projecting the world of small children—for their own enjoyment. BH

R 4-6 yrs. First published in Sweden, this read-aloud story is just right in length, complexity, gentle humor, and integration of text and pictures for its intended audience. Clean watercolors show a tow-headed moppet and her fairly sedate grandfather (whom she's visiting at his island home), contrasting them with a lively extrovert, Grandfather's old friend Axel. Axel's nickname is Stretchit, and even the youngest listener can appreciate Stretchit's creative reminiscences (very tall tales) which leave Stina amazed and Grandfather repeatedly murmuring, dubiously, "Indeed." ZS

D.V. Older-younger generations


Ad Gr. 5-7. Tony is not looking forward to staying three weeks with his grandmother in Connecticut, until his parents allow him to spend his paper route money on a small sailboat. Grandmother makes arrangements for him to take sailing lessons from a local teenage girl. After Tony becomes adept enough to go sailing alone, he does what any good fictional eleven-year-old would do—gets into trouble. Amusing himself by looking for a treasure buried nearby, according to local lore, Tony finds he is competing with a menacing couple. A good detective, Tony not only finds his own clues, but also spies on his competitors for more. Avi keeps the action moving by placing Tony in exciting and sometimes dangerous situations, but relies on too many coincidences to pin the plot together. The biggest groaner is when Tony, shipwrecked on one of a chain of islands, finds his boat miraculously washed up on the beach of an island that he's been lucky enough to swim to in the dark. However, the reader doesn't have much time to ponder the coincidences as the story's fast pace pushes Tony's luck to an agreeable conclusion. KPJ


Ad Gr. 2-3. Berger describes the healing process, pointing out the roles played by red or white blood cells, and by the platelets. Clear and sequential, if minimally marred by a tendency to include exclamatory remarks ("Sometimes it is even hard to remember where you cut yourself!"), the continuous text ends with advice: wash the wound, cover it, and see a nurse or doctor if the bleeding won't stop. Illustrations include diagrams that show the stages in healing; these are both more attractive and more informative than the pedestrian, harshly colored pictures of children. Simply written for primary grades readers, this may be useful to read aloud to even younger children. ZS

C.U. Health


R Gr. 4-7. When Elliot forgets his key one day, he waits upstairs with his neighbor Stella Delight, who introduces him to the world of cooking in this pleasantly idiosyncratic (as the best are) cookbook. A Swedish
import, this book is a good example of how many things a book with a well-executed single focus can embrace. It’s chock-full of recipes of varying degrees of difficulty, handy hints, and presentation tips, but it also gives appropriate mentions of food history, human anatomy, animal welfare, and world hunger. Information comes in sections, starting with potatoes and their uses, moving through dairy products, salads, afternoon snacks, hamburgers, and more. The fictional frame works well, permitting the book to mention variants due to vagaries of taste (“Arthur thinks runny yolks are disgusting, so he usually turns his eggs over and cooks them on the other side, too”) and converting recipes from the abstract into the personal. Although the print is small, the many line-and-wash illustrations, photographs, and sidebars break up the dual-column format, making it appealing and accessible. A bibliography and index are included. DS


R Gr. K-2. These verses may be as unsubstantial as meringue, but they’re just as tasty. Frenzied action and cheerful noise are the focus of each of six poems that share the ebullient quality of Blake’s dashing line and humorous approach in illustration. One poem begins, for example, with “When William’s in his study/ and his thoughts are very deep/ We come and help him concentrate— / We go BEEP-BEEP BEEP-BEEP.” The audience will relish the noise, the rhyme, the rhythm, the “join in” refrain—and the delightful idea of disrupting the pursuits of adults. ZS


Ad 6-9 yrs. With a more conservative selection of paintings than Yenawine’s *Colors*, etc., reviewed last month, Blizzard’s book is also more generously designed. It asks the same kinds of (frequently inane) questions, ostensibly designed to “spark lively discussion and get children more involved in what they see.” What discussion might follow in response to the question “Do you think the dog likes the child?” (asked about Joseph Whiting Stock’s *Portrait of a Baby and a Dog*)? The answer will probably be “yes,” but where do you go from there? Some of the questions are better: “If you could touch this child’s dress, how would it feel?” (asked about the same painting), is a question that will involve children in the picture and will make them think about the painting process. Excepting Picasso’s *Maya with a Doll*, all the twelve examples are representational and prominently feature children; some of the other artists included are Renoir, Manet, and Goya, and the reproductions are large and clear. RS

C.U. Art appreciation
D.V. Perceptual acuteness


Ad 4-6 yrs. Two children are remembering a year-ago birthday: they had been enjoying spaghetti and cake and ice cream (three different flavors)
when, all of a sudden, "the bears came striding in!" "Big bears, little bears, kodiaks and grizzlies, mamas and papas and babies and toddler bears, great gray grumpy grandparent bears," all come to eat the spaghetti and . . . the children, who jump onto the table and call the cops. The story isn't much, but the havoc is satisfying, as are Bragg's energetic black-crayon and watercolor cartoons, crisply sprawled across double-page spreads. After rounding up the bears, the children receive medals from the police and rewards from the Zoo, and get their pictures in the paper—not a bad birthday, and now, one year later, it's about to happen again! RS

Bunting, Eve. Fly Away Home; illus. by Ronald Himler. Clarion, 1991. ISBN 0-395-55962-6. 32p. $13.95. R Gr. K-2. Andrew and his father (a widower who has a job as a weekend janitor) live at an airport; Andrew, who tells the brief and wistful story, is not yet of school age but is wise enough to understand that if you are homeless, you take care that nothing that makes you stand out. Dad and Andrew dress inconspicuously, keep moving, and do nothing to attract the attention of the security guards. Himler's quiet paintings echo the economy and the touching quality of the story, which is all the more effective in depicting the plight of the homeless because it is so low-keyed. ZS C.U. Social studies


M Gr. 9-12. The enticing cover art and jacket blurb promise a Lois Duncan-like thriller, but this novel has more serious (and more convoluted) aspirations. After accidentally killing his best friend Mead in a drunken argument, Peter keeps the body hidden and periodically calls Mead's parents, impersonating their son and assuring them that he's all right. Peter has several shaky motivations for his behavior ("I tried to keep Mead alive by pretending to be him"), but there isn't enough sufficiently sustained tension for readers to care much about his guilty secret and its eventual revelation, brought on by Peter's (perfect) black friend and her father. While the characterization of Peter's mother and his girlfriend is one-dimensionally unpleasant, Peter himself is powerfully, bitterly drawn—probably the truest portrait of a teenaged alcoholic we've had in YA fiction. But even here we are distanced from the boy's pain and anger by a pretentious writing style that occasionally dips into the incoherent ("The dead guts grumble and the foot goes forward to the place on the sidewalk where the light just begins") or ridiculous ("I hung the padlock on the latch; it dangled there like a sex organ on a robot and the sight of it aroused me in a way that made me feel dirty") and only gets in the way. RS

Christopher, Matt. Skateboard Tough; illus. by Paul Casale. Little, 1991. ISBN 0-316-14247-6. [168p]. $14.95. Ad Gr. 4-6. When a builder digs up a skateboard with the name "Lizard" on it, Brett is thrilled, since he's an avid skateboarder and Lizard is so much better than his old board. This is a three-ply plot: there's a competitive enmity between Brett and another skater; there's the question (not very convincingly presented) of whether Lizard has magical powers that make Brett
skate better; there's the range of adult acceptance, from Brett's mother's apparent disapproval to the elderly neighbor next door who spends her own money to build a rink on her property. Ardent skateboarders will probably enjoy reading about their sport, but the book is crammed with descriptions or definitions of stunts to an extent that slows the story, which is not up to Christopher's usual standard structurally or stylistically. ZS

D.V. Older-younger generations


Ad Gr. 5-7. Mary Anning started a career, unusual in the early 19th century, of collecting fossils and helping her father, who sold the "curios" in Lyme, England. Poor and uneducated, Anning was also intelligent and curious; at the age of twelve, she unearthed a dinosaur backbone and in 1911 dug out of the cliff at the shore a fossil ichthyosaur. Anning tells her own story, and she depicts very clearly the prejudices of the time (shocking behavior for a young girl to be out on the beach alone) and the state of paleontological knowledge. The imbedded information about fossils is interesting and the period details are vivid, but the story is weakened by an uneven pace and a style that is at times florid. ZS


R Gr. 5-7. "I've been in this new school here in Winterfield since Christmas," says thirteen-year-old Janet, "and I still haven't found one friend." What she has found is an eccentric old neighbor, Mr. Flower, who hires Janet to help him with a project: to turn ugly and neglected pony Pearl into a suitable present for Mr. Flower's little grandson Arthur. Despite her ignorance of horses, Janet finds her confidence and ability increasing at the stable, which is more than can be said for school, where glamor queen (and Mr. Flower's neighbor) Marigold Stass and her court "form a circle with me outside it." Janet gradually grows more comfortable in Winterfield, discovering Marigold's pretense (a mere acquaintance depicted as a boyfriend) and becoming friends with her, and finding a solution when Mr. Flower's adored Arthur refuses to have anything to do with Pearl. Janet's relationship with lonely Mr. Flower is touching and well-depicted with its tinge of sadness, but both the stable and school scenes have their funny sides. The first-person, present-tense narration is understated, making the book an easy but unpatronizing read. DS

D.V. Age-mate relations; Older-younger generations


R Gr. 6-9. "You'll be better off at your mother's, until I'm over this." Cassy's Nan sometimes sends her away like this, and Cassy once again goes in search of her peripatetic hippy-ish mother, Goldie, who this time has taken up residence in a derelict squat with a new boyfriend, Lyall, and his teenaged son Robert. Cassy, at first unwillingly, joins in their project—a multimedia educational extravaganza about wolves—but worries and wonders about why Nan sent her away, who the mysterious stranger was who came the
night before she left, and what the yellow lump of plasticine Nan tucked into Cassy's sack is for. This isn't as well-constructed as some of Cross' other thrillers, with the central image of the wolf belabored artificially into the story. And while the characterizations of Goldie, Lyall, and Robert are complex and convincing, Cassy's time with them—most of the story—seems flat, lacking the incredible tension of the briefer scenes at Nan's that open and close the book. The ending is a fierce and scary shocker, and well worth waiting for. RS

D.V. Family relations


M Gr. K-3. Watercolor pictures, too busy on some pages but clear on others, illustrate a book that is designed to help young children understand that there are different ways in which baby animals (including humans) are born and nurtured, with varied developmental motor skills, etc. This doesn't quite work, because at several points comments are made that may confuse listeners. For example, the question "Will our baby be born with its clothes on, Mommy?" elicits the answer "Oh no, Sophie, our baby will be born with nothing on at all. But, pregnant (in her "tummy") Mommy goes on, "Zebra foals are born with their stripes, puppies are born with all their fur..." etc. A strange comparison, and a strange question from Sophie, who has a younger sibling she must have noticed in his natural state. Later, Sophie asks "Can animals change too?" but Mommy's answer confuses metamorphosis and development. In sum, better intended than executed. ZS


R Gr. 3-6. While other books have documented the many different dwellings that animals construct for themselves, this one does an exceptional job of showing just how various bugs, birds, and mammals go about their building: "... Working from the top down, bees construct cells in vertical rows. Each cell is built on a slant so the honey will not run out. Gravity-sensitive hairs on a bee's body tell it which was is up and which way is down." Along with bees, Dewey includes chapters on radiolarians, spiders, termites, five kinds of birds, bats, mice, prairie dogs, and beavers. Soft pencil illustrations are large and clear, their compositions focused by the organic lines of straw and silk—and spit: the swiftlet's saliva-constructed nests are just one kind of animal shelter that kids will find fascinating. An index is included. RS C.U. Nature study


R 5-8 yrs. Uncle Willie spends his days volunteering for a soup kitchen, and one day he invites the young narrator, whom Uncle Willie cares for after school while Mom works, to help him feed the homeless. Although this is a book motivated by good intentions, it's also personable enough in detailing
the characters and their world—both verbally and visually—to avoid becoming didactic. The boy who has shown a natural nervousness in reaction to an old man collecting cans from the garbage, or to an old woman sleeping on a bench, responds differently when these persons acquire names and a social context in the kitchen. The kitchen crew itself, Shanta, Brother Mike, and George, demonstrate a friendly practicality that never becomes cloying. The color-pencil and wash illustrations observe the same balance between attracting the viewer with softly blended colors and avoiding the sentimentality of glamorizing an essentially sad situation. Without sacrifice of story, the total effect leaves young listeners with new considerations of society and social service, a theme too often neglected in picture books. BH

D.V. Older-younger generations; Social responsibility


Ad Gr. 1-3. In a cheerfully pan-ethnic if slightly contrived story, Carrie hunts through her neighborhood for her little brother Anthony ("He's such a moocher!") to tell him to come in for dinner. En route, she breezes through the homes Anthony has visited, doing her own share of mooching as she tastes the rice dishes (Indian, Vietnamese, Barbadian, Haitian, etc.) that each family is cooking, with a nicely authentic variation of response ranging from "Boy, was it delicious!" to "It tasted... interesting." The illustrations are awkwardly drafted and inconsistent, with Carrie's hair barrette migrating from page to page; and the overall yellowing of the pictures, intended presumably to convey early evening light, instead has a jaundiced effect which emphasizes their stodginess. The food doesn't really appear in the full-page illustrations but in decorative little balloons, and its sensual allure remains uncaptured. The cuisine/culture idea is useful and likely to appeal particularly to Carrie- and Anthony-type moochers. Recipes for the dishes are appended. DS

D.V. Intercultural understanding


Ad 4-6 yrs. Previously published in England in the 1950s and 1960s, this is a compilation of twelve books in the "Naughty Little Sister" series. The engaging illustrations are Hughes at her dependable best. The stories, while they have the appeal of bad boy/bad girl behavior, are written with a tone that dips into coyness: "... and do you know what that naughty bad girl did?" or, after giving an example of the N.L.S. being rude to an adult, the older sister who is the narrator says, "There—I knew you would be shocked at that." In sum, a wee bit precious, but since it deals with everyday life events, the book will probably garner listeners. ZS

D.V. Everyday life concepts


R 4-7 yrs. Rody is an Israeli kibbutznik known as Chicken Man because his work in the coop keeps him happy and the hens productive. However, the jobs rotate to keep work assignments fair and square, and the
chicken man gets reassigned to the laundry room, the dairy, the garden, and the children's house. Rody does his chores so cheerfully that others always want his job, but his heart is with the chickens—and theirs with him. When they stop laying, the work committee agrees on a permanent assignment for Chicken Man. This is one of those books that brings a faraway situation close to home with specific development and witty crafting. Edwards' story has the appeal of a cumulative folktale, and her humorous, thick-textured paintings are so matter-of-fact in their homely detail that kids can't help but identify with the humble hero, gifted with good nature as well as fowl instincts—oy va voy, what a gift. With his red, spiky hair and beak of a nose, Chicken Man even seems to resemble the birds to whom he sings. We should all know our gifts so well! BH

D.V. Adaptability


Ad Gr. 5-8. Kate has barely had time to unpack her luggage when trouble starts at Camp Windingo, where she has a job as a junior counselor. The bridge has been washed out in a storm, so there's no way to get medical help when all (well, almost all) the newly arrived campers get sick from tainted hot chocolate. And who stole Farmer Frank's rare birds? And who's the skulking stranger? This follow-up to Mystery at Bluff Point Dunes (BCCB 10/88) is another readable summertime mystery, but too much of the suspense is meant to be derived from Kate's forgetting ("I couldn't quite put my finger on it") previous and obviously planted clues. Still, it's nice to have a girl-detective (and camp counselor) with a sense of humor that comes in particularly handy in dealing with two obnoxious red herrings, campers Tracy and Heather: "'Quiet, you little twits!' I hissed under my breath." RS


Ad Gr. K-2. Various domesticated animals ramble around the Brundby market where Arne is seeking a birthday present for his nephew Tove's twelfth birthday. Owner of a fix-it shop, Arne works hard to shine and polish the second-hand pocketknife he finds; he likes the knife so much he decides to keep it and refurbish an old bicycle for Tove. To get the present to his nephew, Arne rides the bicycle, but when he reaches his destination, he sees that Tove already has a bicycle. So, with good grace, he gives the boy the wonderful knife he'd expected to keep for himself. Well-drawn, bouncy paintings show Arne in what appears to be an old-fashioned costume; little details in the pictures indicate that the setting is Danish. The text is adequately written, and it's appropriate in length and subject for a young audience, but it is stretched thin. ZS

D.V. Uncle-nephew relations


R Gr. 6-9. Ebullient, opinionated, and energetic, Theodore Roosevelt had succeeded to the Presidency when William McKinley died, and his popularity brought him a sweeping victory at the next election. Teddy (a
nickname he disliked) was vigorous and colorful, and Jean Fritz has portrayed him clearly, so that readers can judge for themselves the contribution he made to political history, to social reform, and to international relations. His career was so full and so diverse that it would be impossible to cover all aspects of events in which he was involved; the author has, therefore, focused on Roosevelt himself, giving—for example—details of his involvement in the Spanish-American War (pro-war before war was declared, enthusiastic participant after it began) without diverging to discuss, for example, the influential war-mongering of William Randolph Hearst. As in other biographies she has written, Jean Fritz gives a rounded picture of her subject and deftly blends the story of a person and a picture of an era. A section of author’s notes and a bibliography are appended.

ZS

C.U. History—U.S.


M Gr. 3-4. Taking the form of a classroom of children’s letters to a former substitute teacher, this book begins on January 2, 1991 and ends on February 18. The letters are filled with news and questions about the Gulf War in a way that’s a little calculated: Michael M. writes, “Here is my word list. Jessica said you were dying to see it. SORTIE—means 1 of our planes goes to a target like a germ factory and bombs it.” Alice tells Miss Loria about a discussion at home: “My mother and father are fighting about the war, yelling. My mother said we shouldn’t go to war, we should mind our own business, and not send soldiers to fight over oil in a place nobody even cares about?” With such determined all-sides issue-jamming, the effect becomes artificial. It’s too late for this book to treat the Gulf War in a timely fashion; in its discussion of kids’ fears of war in general, however, it may be useful in eliciting empathetic response. Occasional sketches imply a second or third grade class, but the hand of an adult behind these letters is too apparent. RS

C.U. Social studies

D.V. Fear, overcoming


R Gr. 4-7. Black and red are used in both text and diagrams for an effective depiction of the characters for Chinese, a language that has no alphabet. Goldstein explains the evolution of modern characters from their ancient originals, although she does not use such words as ideogram or pictogram. Directions for writing individual characters (with amplifying illustrations) are quite good in this “how to” book, but the general descriptions are less clear; for example, a character that stands for “horse” is accompanied by a diagram of the directions in which brush-strokes are made and the order in which they are made—but there is no explanation of the order in which characters in a scroll or page are read. Still, the reader who has done calligraphy or hieroglyphic writing should enjoy trying these, and all readers can appreciate the beauty and complexity of Chinese writing. ZS
Ad  Gr. 6-9. Princess Scheherazade has told her thousand and one tales and left the Sultan to take up residence in her own palace as Storyteller of the Kingdom. But now appears a stranger who disturbs her household and sense of freedom. In trying to run from him into the desert, she instead keeps him company through several dangerous exploits, for he is a suitor of many disguises. Unfortunately, although the tales within tales are involving, the plot episodes are sometimes contrived or too convoluted, while Scheherazade's romantic destiny is obvious from the beginning. However, she's a feisty heroine who can outwit Djiins and greedy old men, and Gorog's style is as fresh and clean as the writing in her earlier short story collections (BCCB 7/87, 11/88, 6/90). Fans of McKinley's Beauty (BCCB 12/78) may very well take on this fictional extension of a fairy tale despite its problematic development. BH


Ad  Gr. 2-4. The plot of this slapstick science fantasy is basically that two boys are captured by space-ship aliens, and deliberately act so abrasive that they are (not as planned originally) taken back to earth. Large print, short sentences, plenty of dialogue, and bug-eyed monsters will attract primary grades readers, but the plot development is silly and the writing style shallow. Few young readers will care. ZS


Ad  Gr. 4-6. Twelve-year-old Felicia's mother and new step-father hadn't planned to take the children on their honeymoon in Spain, but "due to circumstances beyond everybody's control," Felix (Felicia) and her new same-age stepsister Amy and ten-year-old stepbrother Phillip are tagging along, all unhappy. Because of some boastful lying by Felix, they are thought to be rich and are kidnapped. This creates action, danger, and suspense, but all three elements are achieved by an undue amount of structural contrivance, so that the whole plot seems implausible. However, the tension of the kidnapping and the predictably happy ending will probably appeal to many readers. This is far less convincing than Zilpha Snyder's *The Famous Stanley Kidnapping* (BCCB 12/79), which is set in Italy, and which is also a merged-family story in which the step-siblings are kidnapped because one of them has been overheard boasting about how rich her father is. ZS

D.V. Resourcefulness; Stepfamilies, adjustment to


R  Gr. 7-10. This first-person narrative by Huey, a high school senior, focuses on his problem with his English teacher but has a nice balance of interests: male and female friends, relationship with his father, volunteer work that has led to an interest in birds, and a problem of poor grades because of the
amount of time spent on other things. Nothing melodramatic here, but the weaving of parts of Huey's life is convincing and told with vigor, and the solution to his academic and romantic problems is convincing. The jacket illustration is silly and does not match the appeal of the story. ZS

D.V. Education, valuing and seeking


R Gr. 5-. In a handsomely designed book filled with intriguing historical photographs, the author does a clear and thorough job of tracing the construction and history of the Paris subway. Beginning with an overview of the city's earlier transportation systems of riverboats and horse-drawn omnibuses, Hovey describes how the long-awaited subway system finally was begun at the impetus of the 1900 Paris World Fair. The details of designing and digging, the mishaps and disasters and fires, may have had drama, but Hovey hasn't captured it. Her style is dry, and she fails to give a context for understanding and appreciating what is a rather specialized topic. "The 1960s saw realized on three Metro lines a revolutionary notion for increasing the efficiency of subway trains—rubber tires." How is this revolutionary? More to the point, are we interested? Although a map of the city and system would have helped readers better "see" the locations she discusses, the collection of photographs goes a long way toward supplying appeal: the upheaval of building a tunnel amidst the Grand Hotel and Paris Opera; a station converted into an ominous-looking factory by the occupying Nazis. A bibliography of the author's French sources and an index are appended. RS

C.U. Transportation


Ad Gr. 2-4. In her first book for younger children, Howard uses a protagonist, Alena, who appeared as an older child in an earlier book (*Edith, Herself*, BCCB 5/87). Alena looks to be (in pedestrian line drawings) about six years old here, and the story of her adjustment to a new home is based on the author's family journal. The family moves an hour's wagon-ride away from Grandfather's big house, but it takes some time for Alena to accept living in a chickenhouse until the new house can be built. Details of prairie life at the turn of the century are convincing, but the story is weakened by a plodding quality that makes it seem more the making of a narrative out of a reminiscence than imaginatively developed fiction with flow or vitality. ZS

D.V. Adaptability


R Gr. 6-8. When the two James girls and their friend, Maggie, spend a summer day exploring a "haunted" island on the St. Lawrence River, they run into danger. Drug runners have been using the small island as a drop-off between Canada and the U.S. The girls find the stash, but don't replace it in exactly the same spot, and, as they leave the island, Maggie's distinctive red hair is spotted by the criminals. What follows is a suspenseful waiting game around
the resort town, in which the girls and the drug runners search for and eventually find each other. The other elements of the plot—Maggie’s parents’ divorce, Jesse’s new romance, the arrival of grandparents—fill out the story without distracting from it while the suspense builds. The impact of the frightening adventure lies in its realism, from the nature of the crime to the two creeps who track down Jesse and Maggie. When the scare is over and the drug runners have been captured, the thought of a peaceful family vacation is a welcome relief. A good adventure story for girls. KPJ


R* 5-8 yrs. “Today our fathers are coming home! For ten months they have been away working in the mines.” Thus begins an account, all the more moving for its lack of overt political statements, of several South African children who prepare to celebrate with singing and homemade instruments. Alas, “it’s a long way from the mines,” and day passes into night and then into dawn before the truck finally arrives. The characters’ anticipation, patience, and joy speak loudest here, both in text and in brilliantly lit watercolor paintings. The rural, corrugated shacks are not glamorized, but neither are they squalid, for the focus is on faces and bodies in constant, expectant motion. In fact, the art features the same strength of imagination shown by the children. Deep hues, bold brushstrokes, and patient portraiture (though some expressions seem distorted) create sweeping contrasts of natural—and emotional—landscapes. Good company for Niki Daly’s city-set *Not So Fast Songololo* (BCCB 4/86). BH

C.U. South Africa
D.V. Father-child relations


NR 5-8 yrs. “They might act nice/ and offer you stuff./ Don’t stop to think twice/ before you think tough!” Despite the with-it tempo of the text, the anti-drug messages of this TV spin-off are patronizing and tonally dated, warning readers about sunglassed drug dealers who hang around schoolyards offering innocent children free samples, and “once they’ve trapped you in their net, they’ll squeeze for all that they can get.” The grooviness is labored, and confused in its use of the vernacular: “Kids stuck on drugs/ get stuck taking more./ Kids who pass drugs by/ are the kids who score!” The Ninja Turtles are appealingly cartooned, but the pictures of druggies and Good Kids are straight out of a 1950s health-handout. Too bad—the Turtles did a nice job with ecology in Rosser’s *ABC’s for a Better Planet*, reviewed last month. RS

C.U. Drug education

A description of the ways in which pre-Christian celebrations have been incorporated into current observances of the major Christian holiday is illustrated by reproductions of church windows and famous paintings, and by color photographs. There is useful information here about Easter traditions, and the tone of the text is reverent, but the book is weakened by poor organization of material, a plethora of exclamatory sentences, and a lack of notes or bibliography. Were there an index, the contents might be more accessible. ZS

C.U. Holidays; Religious education


R Gr. 7-. A quiet woman whose genetic research was the focus of her life, Barbara McClintock left Cornell, where some of her early and significant work was done, when her promotion was denied. Her discoveries about the cross-over of genetic material on chromosomes were not acknowledged for over thirty years; in 1983, when McClintock was over eighty, her contribution was recognized when she was awarded the Nobel Prize. Despite the unattractive appearance of the pages, with their double columns of solid-looking type, this is an appealing biography. The writing style is smooth, the tone is moderate rather than adulatory, and the descriptions of McClintock’s work and comments on her personal life are nicely balanced. A chronology, a bibliography, and an index are included. ZS

C.U. Biology
D.V. Perseverance


Ad Gr. 5-8. Ten stories from the popular Australian author are amusing, energetically styled, but a bit obvious, too often relying on predictable plot-twists for their effects. Several plots center on role-reversals between schoolyard bullies and their victims; the best of these is “The Stone Angel,” in which timid Audrey gets divine assistance in handling two mean girls with Hitchcockian aspirations: “Gracious, Audrey, you need your specs checked as well as your hearing! We always get off at this stop. Always have done, for two whole years.” In “A Perfectly Lovely Time,” little Laura’s morbid imagination makes her more than a match for two older boys who won’t let her in their treehouse: “In fact, your whole garden is rather dangerous, isn’t it? Witches and animal sacrifices and tree spirits and murdered skulls ... Perhaps we should all go and sit safely in . . . .” While rarely subtle, all the stories have a rough-and-ready pace and humor, propelled with lots of dialogue, that make them good brief encounters for reluctant and relaxing readers. RS


Ad Gr. 3-5. Alex had never heard of Rox Rox, the teen rock star, before being invited to audition for her rock video. But that doesn’t stop Alex
from becoming obsessed with the idea, especially since she will be cast as a junior version of the star. Alex soon becomes tiresome to everyone. Friends begin to avoid her, and who can blame them? Invited to a classmate’s beach party, Alex tries to convince her that everyone would rather listen to Alex play the piano than play volleyball because “playing volleyball would only mess up her hair.” It takes her awhile to realize how her behavior is affecting others, but Alex eventually reforms: “Becoming a TV star was making her life in California worse, not better. She was getting in trouble at school. Hurting her dad’s feelings by forgetting to buy him a present. Making him spend money he didn’t have. And losing friends, not gaining them.” Didactic? Yes, but readers can sympathize with Alex’s dreams of stardom, especially since they don’t materialize. Brief chapters and short sentences make this a good choice for rookie readers, who may enjoy finding out about Hollywood’s star-making machinery.


Ad Gr. 3-5. Huge and hairy, different species of tarantulas live on five continents, and their brown or black bodies are sometimes brilliantly marked with red, pink, or orange. Photographs show off these multi-colored spiders in their various habitats; other photos are close-up shots of tarantulas eating (one picture shows the Goliath bird-eater consuming a rat), molting, mating, and spinning. In a creepy, predatory sort of way, tarantulas are fascinating, but many of the interesting facts turn up in unlikely places throughout the text. For example, following a list of various habitats is a misplaced paragraph about what the largest spiders eat. The chapter called “The Tarantula’s Year” actually describes the whole life of a spider—which has been known to last 28 years. Finally, LaBonte’s conclusion (we should protect tarantulas from becoming endangered because they eat insects for us) seems forced after her earlier claim that each tarantula eats, at the most, an insect a week. They’ve already survived for 300 million years; most likely they’ll outlast us all. KPJ

C.U. Nature study


Ad Gr. 5-8. Eleven-year-old Anthea, who has just lost her parents in a yachting accident, comes from an opulent home to live with her uncle’s family in their chaotic rural household. To create her own space away from the clutter of renovation and blustering jealousy of a cousin her own age, Anthea enters a dream world inhabited by a young ghost who threatens to take her with him into final rest. Only human love, with all its messy temperament, can save her. Mahy has always realized her ventures into fantasy with a consistency of detail that made them credible. This time, the detail is present without the consistency. Statues loom, battles erupt, crayon arrows point the way through a nebulous limbo that is more confusing than ominous. The concepts are fascinating; their development needs sharpening. However, the writing has flashes of brilliance. The family relationships—except for an explanatory tone toward the end of the book—are shown rather than told, conveying a realistic
immediacy focused on the two girls. Their unfolding friendship, along with the suspenseful theme of an orphan in danger, will appeal to readers. BH
C.U. Cousins; Death, adjustment to; Family relations

R Gr. 7-9. Thirteen years ago, Dani Merritt was a premature baby, and she’s tired of hearing about it. She wishes her parents had something else to fuss about, but she regrets that wish when she meets an illegitimate nineteen-year-old half-brother whom no one else in her family knows about. Dani’s personality—insecure, stubborn, and restless—comes across through the book’s ample dialogue and first-person narrative (“I stood there, balancing for a moment between feeling sorry for myself and getting mad. Mad won, and I went charging out of the store after Laredo”). Her relationship with her best friend, Laredo, alternates realistically between superficial silliness (“Wooo! Cute!”) and intensity. Their mishaps with boys and school keep the story light so that the family drama does not overwhelm the story. Hitting on major areas of interest to teenage girls—boys, best friends, and family—this book won’t miss. KPJ
D.V. Brothers-sisters

Ad 3-5 yrs. Pale wash drawings illustrate the story of a young gray squirrel’s first several days of independence after he leaves his summer nest. Narrow escapes from a fox and hawk teach him caution in selecting a nest, and he’s forced to collect nuts and seeds when his raids on a bird-feeding station are curtailed by protective shields. The activities of the squirrel are competently depicted, though the text slips into an unfortunate anthropomorphism (“he played hide and seek with the hawk”). The dramatic encounters are further diminished by demure pastel shades and repetitive compositions. However, very young listeners who enjoyed this artist’s Mousekin series will appreciate the antics of a familiar city/suburban creature and the reassurance that he’ll survive. BH
C.U. Nature study

R Gr. 5-8. Twelve-year-old Gabriel resents his bossy older sister (“ever since she turned thirteen and started wearing a bra and braces, she’s ordered me around like a drill sergeant”), so he’s happy that Grandfather is only taking him—not Ginny—along for the annual sheep-shearing on Ghost Island off the Maine coast. Although Grandfather dismisses Gabe’s suspicions as the result of an over-worked imagination, Gabe is sure that someone else—a ghost?—is on the island. Characters’ motivations and actions are occasionally overexplained, resulting in some diminishing of suspense; yet the mystery is logically developed and solved, and a grudging alliance between Gabe and Ginny (who has come on to the island) credibly changes to one of mutual esteem. The island, with its hills and coves and secrets, makes an atmospheric setting crucial to a story that effectively blends contemporary family drama with a mystery from the past. RS
In what appears to be the first of Andersen Medalist Nunes’ books to be translated into English, young Claudio is missing his friend, “the painter,” who has suddenly died. The adults whisper of suicide, even though the painter’s friend Dona Clarice says he died “just as... just as everybody dies one day.” And she said good-bye and rushed off.” This is an intense portrait of a child painfully puzzling through the death of a friend and the secrets of adults, but the treatment is introverted and abstract, a medley of thoughts and whispers and colors and dreams, all true to a child’s emotional world but elliptically conveyed. “The page came away. I hid it at the back of the notebook. Then I attached it again to the other one. I separated it. I attached it. I separated it. I played. I attached it. And suddenly I wanted to try doing the same thing with the memory of my friend: to separate Friend here and why there.” The conclusion of the story is a lyrical celebration of a remembered friendship, “everything joined together and mixed up,” but its power will most likely be lost on a young audience. RS


“I hated to think of the fat, lonely winter that probably lay ahead of me—and just when I’d turned fourteen, the truly grown-up age I’d always dreamed of being.” Glenda’s summer romance is over, and she’s putting on weight again. A new friend, Giselle, who’s fatter than Glenda ever was, offers an intriguing possibility: *modeling*. “Plus-size” teen models are in demand, and it might be just the thing to get Glenda to stop mooning over her callous summer beau Justin and her weight gain. In this judiciously blended mix of school and friends and boys and clothes, Glenda once again is a steady heroine, neither as fat nor as lonely as she sometimes believes herself to be. Her modeling career is successful, but brief: self-conscious about parading down the runway, and nervous about looking her best, Glenda loses weight without even trying. No more plus-size for her, and waiting after the (slapstick-disastrous) show is friend Roddy, with an invitation for a date. Fat—or just plump—kids sometimes won’t be seen with a book with “fat” in the title; too bad, because Glenda makes an appealing role model and a good friend. RS


Given the particular appropriateness of the sobriquet to the topic, it’s a definite shame that Pringle had to go through the complexities of getting DC Comics’ permission to call his book *Batman*. Merlin Tuttle, both subject and photographer for the book, specializes in researching bat behavior, and Pringle fluently blends information about the scientist, the methods of research, and the bats themselves. Refuting many myths about bats (“less than half of one percent of bats contract rabies’), and making a cogent case for their protection, the book discusses bats and their
environments worldwide, and Tuttle’s color photographs are up close and personal, and in a few instances, even cute. An excellent companion to the author’s Wolfman (BCCB 4/83) and Bearman (BCCB 11/89), this has a reading list and an index. RS
D.V. Occupational orientation


R Gr. 3-5. Brittany is unfortunately stuck in the youngest of the three third-grade classes; worse, all the kids in her class were born in the summer months, so there are no birthday parties. This is a likable school situation comedy with all the dramas (including that staple, a best-friend fight) requisite to the genre. Give it to Babysitters-in-training—shorter and easier than most of the many other books of its kind, Regan’s quick tale is accompanied by occasional pencil sketches that are quirky enough to flatter readers’ maturity. RS


Ad Gr. 7-9. The narrator is Mary Cooper, who has been sent by her Tory family to stay with her older cousin Tempe Wick. Since both young women are ardent Patriots, Mary had expected to be welcomed. Tempe, however, is hostile and critical, especially when Mary befriends Tempe’s estranged brother Henry. Believed to be mentally ill, Henry is actually helping the cause of independence, his pretended affliction making him free to wander anywhere. That is important because a Pennsylvania regiment is camped on the Wick property, a New Jersey farm. Rinaldi has done a good job of meshing fictional and historical elements, and her writing style is competent. The pace of the story is uneven, however, and the plot is laded with cumbersome intricacies. An author’s note and a bibliography of sources are provided. ZS

C.U. History—U.S.—Revolutionary War
D.V. Devotion to a cause


R Gr. 2-4. “Well, let’s just say they lived sort of happily for a long time. Okay, so they weren’t so happy. In fact, they were miserable.” Although the Frog Prince has been transformed by the princess’ kiss, he still sticks his tongue out, hops around on the furniture, and whines for his pond. However, a trek through the forest in search of witches who will restore him to amphibious form leaves him glad to go back home, where kissing the princess effects an unexpected happy ending. Admirers of Scieszka’s The True Story of the Three Little Pigs (BCCB 9/89) will find this fun to use if a bit more contrived; the text depends on a series of fairy tale conventions strung together rather than on the solid subversion of one story. But kids won’t care. They’ll relish meeting these sleazy witches from Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, and Hansel and Gretel, not to mention the bumbling fairy godmother from Cinderella. And while the illustrations here don’t have quite the surrealistic zing
that distinguished *Pigs*, Johnson’s dark art does have a satirical twist and bug-eyed irreverence that will engender plenty of snickers from the audience. BH

C.U. Language arts


R* Gr. 5-. With rhythmic Yiddish storytelling patterns that are never exaggerated or clichéd, but with a stylistic resonance all his own, Segal spins a tale of Yosip the baker, who lives near a road between two Russian cities in “the place where nobody stops.” Of course, someone finally does stop there. After years of loneliness Yosip finds himself hosting a huge family, along with a less welcome annual visitation of the Czar’s army recruitment forces. Meet Yosip’s very first guest, Mordecai ben Yahbahbai, whom the czar’s officer would capture if Yosip did not hide him (in the flour bin) and whose wife describes him thus: “Whenever he talks, he always agrees with himself. That makes two of him against just one of me, so what chance have I against such logic and faith?” The fictional humor, folkloric plot, and vivid setting support a handful of richly cast characters, especially gentle Yosip, who loses each year’s encounter with the cossacks only to win in the long run. Fortunately, his love, pride, and rebellion — along with that of his adopted brood — is detailed in scenes that never give a moment’s hint of didactic intent. It’s a pleasure all the way, to read aloud or alone. BH

C.U. Reading aloud

D.V. Family relations; Loyalty


R Gr. 2-4. Like its predecessor, *Stories to Solve*, this collection combines the appeal of short, easy-to-read folktales with a riddling quality that turns the stories into solve-it-yourself mysteries. Shannon has been careful not only to select from widely varied cultural traditions, but also to cite his sources more carefully than most children’s book authors. From peoples of Southeast Asia, South and North America, Africa, and Europe, these include unusual motifs as well as familiar ones with a new twist. Not surprisingly, most are trickster tales. The governing characteristic is enigma, and there’s enough of it to keep kids guessing, either independently or in interactive story-hour sessions. Answers are given after each selection to keep young readers’ frustration levels to a minimum, while capacious pen-and-ink hatch drawings — well designed to frame and vary the text — serve the same end. BH

C.U. Reading, reluctant

D.V. Imaginative powers


Ad Gr. K-3. Although great-uncle Frederick testily objects (“Whales were important for their meat . . . don’t fill her head with
nonsense... ") when he hears Grandmother tell Lilly about how the beautiful 
whales sang to her when she was a child, it is Grandmother's romantic view that 
prevails. In dramatic but sentimental moonlit paintings, the illustrator reflects 
the poetic text, as Lilly has her own thrilling experience of seeing the whales 
leaping and singing in the moonlight. Jacket copy states that the book was 
inspired by the author's concern for an endangered species; while the text does 
not state this, it does—a bit theatrically—affirm the fact that whales are graceful, 
free, and wonderful to behold. ZS

D.V. Ecological awareness

Showell, Ellen Harvey. Our Mountain; [as told by by Jimmy and Corey Allder 
to the author]; illus. by Nancy Carpenter. Bradbury, 1991. ISBN 0-02-782551- 
5. 73p. $12.95.

Ad Gr. 3-5. Seventeen chapters averaging a few pages each 
describe a boy's mountain home, built 
by his parents and shared with a younger 
brother who roams the woods with him and several cousins. Some of the 
episodes have action, as in a bear's raid on the family's honey supplies; others 
are limited to description—a half page about a hard rain, for instance. One 
section, "Spiders," is only one sentence: "What I want to know is, why do 
spiders make their webs so neat?" The simple style, short sections, and literal 
pencil drawings put this idyllic picture of rural life in easy reach of readers who 
have just graduated to chapter books. The lack of plot makes the first-person 
narrative seem rambling and sometimes anti-climactic, but the total effect is 
amiable. BH

D.V. Pride in background and heritage

[240p]. $15.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad Gr. 7-10. The "Daddy" in the title of this based-on-a-true-story 
is a sensationalizing diminutive; narrator Preston always refers to his father as 
"Dad". What Dad did was kill Mom, an event reasonably apparent from the 
preface, which also tells us exactly how to feel about the story to follow: 
"Preston Scott's story is a story of overwhelming love—the kind of love that 
can change the world—and if you never before believed in the power of love, 
Preston's story will make you a believer." Well, the story is convincing 
enough, realistically detailing Preston's anger and sadness, and his gradual 
forgiveness of his father. The present-tense narration sometimes hyperventilates 
with cheap irony, particularly in the chapters before the murder, where readers are 
made too aware that the author knows something they—and Preston—don't. It's 
a peek-a-boo kind of suspense that seems at odds with the interestingly 
complicated theme of forgiving the unforgivable. As is often true in first-person 
YA novels, this narrator—even when he gets it wrong—explains too much of 
himself, with the distance afforded the other characters rendering them more 
visible and individual. Like all of Shusterman's books, this one has a 
propelling pace that will take readers right through the therapeutic patches, and 
the topic has a prurient appeal that guarantees popularity. RS

D.V. Death, adjustment to; Father-son relations

Ad  Gr. 5-7. Jason, the narrator, is in fifth grade; an avid collector of baseball cards and an enthusiastic Little League player, he’s stunned when his team’s coach announces that it’s Jason who will be cut and sent to a not-yet-formed expansion team. Slote has been a deservedly popular writer: his style is smoothly casual, his plots and dialogue usually convincing. Here the narrative has an aura of being concocted to make it possible to give information about the now-defunct Negro Leagues of baseball. Jason becomes convinced that a school custodian, Mack Henry, is really Buck McHenry, who in his youth was a major player in the Negro League. Mack Henry’s newly-orphaned grandson (Aaron Henry!) also believes it. So does another newcomer to the town, the daughter of a famous baseball broadcaster. The three are the nucleus of the new Little League team. The answer to the mystery about McHenry is logical, and the ending of the story pleases all the characters and will probably please all the readers, but any book that uses dialogue to give information as much as does this story tends to suffer as narrative. ZS

D.V. Age-mate relations


Ad  Gr. 4-6. The facts about the famed elephant who was brought by P. T. Barnum from the London Zoo are historical, and around them Smucker has woven a fictional story about a boy named Tod. Tod is ten when he goes to work as assistant to the elephant keeper of the Regent’s Park Zoo in 1865. The combined attractions of boy-loves-elephant and the circus background (after Tod stows away to follow Jumbo to the United States) will appeal to many readers. The writing is marred by anthropomorphism: an older elephant “looked skyward and shook his head. The new baby seemed to him downright foolish,” and by occasionally awkward phrasing. ZS


Ad  5-8 yrs. Tidy and gentle little pointillist paintings illustrate this hushed tale of a dead skunk, “a feast for all the creatures who could crawl or wing their way to it. The celebration lasted the rest of the summer.” Summer gives way to fall and winter, and spring brings a miraculous “treasure” as the skunk is revealed stripped of its fur and flesh, leaving behind its skeleton. “There were little teeth, set neatly into rows. There were ribs and vertebrae and tiny pieces that made up fingers and feet. Every piece was in place.” A little boy finds the treasure and carries it around all summer in a pouch attached to his bike, opening it “only for certain people to see.” Children who are fascinated by bones and such will appreciate the opportunity; others may find the tender treatment somewhat affected. RS

C.U. Nature study

[ 228 ]

**R** *Gr. 3-5.* In six chapters, eight-year-old Thomas manages to: distract his grandfather from reading, assemble a fishing trip, catch a big speckled trout, enjoy it for dinner, wangle a bedtime story, and fall asleep determined to pass it on to his own grandchild. A sequel to Stolz’ *Storm in the Night*, which was also illustrated by Pat Cummings but in picture book format (BCCB 2/88), this features the same two black characters in natural dialogue with each other and in natural harmony with their Gulf Coast surroundings. The text is easy to read, laced with gentle humor, and designed with rounded, black-and-white pictures in a pop-art style that gives the human close-ups a Campbell Kid look. A book that’s all the more effective for its low-key, companionable tone. BH

D.V. Grandfather-child relations


**R** *4-6 yrs.* Mixed-media pictures have an ingenuous, rather rumpled quality as they follow the lively (and often silly) adventures of Roberta and her friend Mimi, the narrator, in a light-hearted story from Sweden. Peering through a shoe store window, they have decided that the owner, Enoch, is probably a bandit. They are so curious about what is really in the stored shoeboxes that Mimi (seven) is convinced by Roberta (nine) to hide in the store when Enoch leaves to go fishing. All of this leads, in an unconvincing but entertaining story, to both girls adopting Enoch as a surrogate grandfather. ZS

D.V. Older-younger generations


**R** *Gr. 5-7.* Sarah, the narrator, describes the way she and Susanna had become good friends when the latter moved into the house next door. First published in England, the story is set in the present, but the events hinge on what happened fifty years before. The two girls have decided to make a playhouse out of an old air-raid shelter. Through their increasing knowledge of the two little girls who had played there in wartime, Sarah and Susanna begin to understand that an elderly woman may be silent and odd, but that she is not a witch. The witch theme is familiarly handled but appealing, the story is adequately written with well-defined characters, and is strongest in its believable development of intergenerational friendship and understanding. ZS

D.V. Friendship values; Older-younger generations


**R** *Gr. 2-5.* In a highly romanticized, legend-like tale (no notes connect this to actual Gypsy lore), Tompert recounts the heroics of a Gypsy tribe roaming the country of cruel King Walid. When the chief’s young daughter, Savina, dances before the king, he fears her power (“Anyone with such control over my people is a danger to my throne”). This doesn’t make much sense plotwise, since his people dislike Gypsies and don’t seem given to revolt,
but it's the trigger for his violent harassment of the tribe, which finally escapes when Savina dances some pursuing soldiers to exhaustion. Nolan's dramatic oil paintings will claim their share of attention, with firelit scenes focusing on a sensual, tambourine-wielding wild child in flowing white sleeves, a red skirt, and dark tresses. The king looks like a fat, ferocious opera singer exaggerating his poses, but the other characters are well portrayed against suspenseful backgrounds. Feature this with Noyes' *The Highwayman*, illustrated by Mikolaycak (BCCB 12/83), and other picture books appealing to listeners older than the usual preschool audience. BH

D.V. Loyalty


R Gr. 4-7. Like many of the best spooky stories, this is a cozy one, suffused by the atmosphere of a small town summer. Mathilda, a witch who began life over a century ago as a lonely, unloved little girl, has come back to her childhood town to make trouble—particularly for Rosemary's family, who has moved into her house. The witch's tricks are childish: she steals Rosemary's bike, sends a cat to spy on her, upends the playground equipment, causes a parade of toads to crawl through the town. But a little research in the town's archives, and an imaginative leap of empathy, bring Rosemary to an understanding of Mathilda, "a child who was so lonely her body ached. A house full of cold and silence." The alternation of Rosemary's and Mathilda's point of view is intensely effective; interpolations about other townspeople seem mannered. Rosemary is a cozy children's-book heroine, all wronged and misunderstood and right, and readers will cheer on her classic battle for a home. RS

D.V. Courage; Individuality, expressing


Ad Gr. 3-5. Fifth-graders Ginger Bidwell and Lucas Ridley had established a caustic enmity before her father and his mother married. Sharing a home did not improve matters, even though both children liked their stepparents. When Lucas' mother wins a contest, she's the only one (having no interest in sports) who isn't thrilled at the prospect of going to a Superbowl game. This is competently written but plotted in almost-slapstick pattern, with a series of mishaps culminating in the family's watching the game on television, crowded into a motel room with obnoxious relatives on a surprise visit and with an even more obnoxious family who have pushed their way in. This is the sort of disaster humor that many children find hilarious; they'll tend to overlook the implausibility of the story. ZS

D.V. Stepfamilies, adjustment to

Ryan White died in 1990, several years after a long and very public battle with AIDS and the concurrent prejudice it brought. There's no indication in the prefatory material as to how this book was put together, or what Ann Marie Cunningham's contributions were, but the first-person narrative is determinedly perky: "At first I had to have pentamidine shots in my thighs—yech!—but later I could get it intravenously." Ryan's account of his life is candid about the discrimination he encountered because of his disease, unabashedly starstruck about the celebrities with whom he became friends, and generally upbeat about living with AIDS. And about dying: "[Mom] knew I wanted the Reverend Ray Probasco to conduct my funeral . . . But Mom and I had never discussed the really important stuff: What I should wear." The picture here (and the photos, all sunny publicity shots) is of a likable, uncomplicated kid struggling gamely with a fatal disease. How he narrated the account of his last conscious moments before a final coma and death ("As the drugs took hold, I drifted back to a question some kid asked me once"), is not explained. There is an important and moving story at the core of this book, but it doesn't always come through the model poster-child tone and cheery celebrity anecdotes. Appended are Ryan White's testimony before the President's AIDS Commission, factual information on AIDS and its transmission, a directory of organizations and resources, and two tributes: a dignified paragraph from Elton John and a horrible little poem from Michael Jackson. RS

C.U. Social studies
D.V. Handicaps, adjustment to


R 5-8 yrs. Only briefly surprised that their lilypads can suddenly float and fly, the frogs by the thousands are soon carooming through the night sky. That's it, for premise and wordless story, as the frogs surprise a man (Wiesner himself) at his late night snack, sail into a clothesline of sheets, watch T.V. while an old lady sleeps unaware, and pester a dog who should have known better. Come the dawn, the frogs, Cinderella-like, are on their own, leaving behind lots of now-stilled lilypads while they march back to the marsh. Watercolor paintings are lavishly and deeply colored, but what saves this book from simply being a gorgeous gallery of paintings is its warmth and humor: these frogs are having a lot of fun. One gives a dapper wave to the midnight-snacker; another operates the TV remote control with its long pink tongue. In the same spread, one different drummer gazes longingly at a landscape painting on the wall while all its fellows are mesmerized by the video glow. And words aren't needed to convey the feeling of whoops when the midair frogs are grounded by the sunrise. Compositions are naturalistic but strongly patterned, with the occasionally Escher-ish design made all the more effective by realistic details. Realistic? Of course. And pigs might fly—they do here, on a gotcha final picture. RS
"An outstanding contribution**
from a dazzling author/artist team

The Tale of
the Mandarin Ducks

By
KATHERINE PATERSON

Illustrated by
LEO & DIANE DILLON

★ "Both text and illustration
  perfectly capture the spirit of
  this Japanese folktale."
  —School Library Journal (Starred)

★ "A graceful, imaginative
  retelling...some of the
  Dillons' most splendid work."
  —The Horn Book (Starred)

★ "An appealing folktale
  ...a good choice
  to read aloud."
  —Booklist (Starred)

◆ "The [Caldecott-
  winning] Dillons have
  outdone themselves."
  —*Kirkus Reviews (Pointer)

"Retold by the Newbery
medalist in language that
flows as gracefully as the
folds of a court kimono."
  —The New York Times

An ALA Notable Children's Book
An SLJ Best Book of 1990
A New York Times Best Illustrated Book of the Year

Full color. Ages 5–8. 0-525-67283-4. $14.95

LODESTAR BOOKS
An Affiliate of Dutton Children's Books, Penguin USA
THE LAST PRINCESS
The Story of Princess Ka'iulani of Hawai'i
By FAY STANLEY
Illustrated in full color by DIANE STANLEY

★ “This bittersweet drama will certainly capture the reader’s imagination. Diane Stanley's moving full-color paintings expressively re-create the human emotion of the story.” — Starred, Booklist

★ “As with Stanley’s other biographies, readers are transported into another very believable world. The full-page paintings are stunning, reflecting the beauty of the islands and the handsome, racially mixed people who live there.” — Starred, School Library Journal

“Ka'iulani makes a strong focus for this usually glossed-over piece of American history, and readers will be enlightened by Ka'iulani’s quiet determination in standing up to colonialism.” — Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

$15.95 RSBE/02-786785-4/Ages 6–9
RSBE indicates a side-sewn reinforced hardcover edition.

FOUR WINDS PRESS
An imprint of the Macmillan Children's Book Group
866 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022
"A treasure of a story"

ROXABOXEN

Alice McLerran
Illustrated by Caldecott Award-winning artist
Barbara Cooney

"This book celebrates how children and their imaginations make fanciful things become magically real and make them last forever. Don't miss it."
—School Library Journal (starred review)

"Roxaboxen is an idyllic town—a country of the mind... but it's magic is timeless."
—The Horn Book

"Cooney's intensely hued crayon drawings glow with sympathetic magic."
—The Bulletin (starred review)


Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books
A division of William Morrow & Co., Inc. 105 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016
The Bill of Rights

A cogent survey of the historical roots of the first ten amendments; how they were written 'to strengthen the standards of equality proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence,' and a brief exposition of each of their provisions, followed by accounts of how these have fared in the last 200 years. An excellent source that also makes engrossing reading.

-(pointer review) Kirkus Reviews

A Notable 1990 Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies (NCSS/CBC)

Ages 12 up. $14.95* (04805-X) $14.89† (04807-6)

Also by Milton Meltzer

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARIES
A History in Their Own Words
1750-1800
A 1987 ALA Best Book for Young Adults

Ages 12 up. $13.95* (04641-3)
$13.89† (04643-X)

VOICES FROM THE CIVIL WAR
A Documentary History of the Great American Conflict
A 1989 ALA Best Book for Young Adults

Ages 12 up. $13.95* (04800-9)
$13.89† (04802-5)

Crowell ISBN prefix: 0-690. *Trade ed †Library ed. Publisher's price only and in no way reflects the price at which available from any other source.

HarperCollinsChildren's Books
10 East 53rd Street, New York 10022
In South Africa, the children are waiting.

In eager anticipation, the children gather at the crossroads. Their fathers are coming home after working in the mines for ten months.

Caldecott Honor Book winner Rachel Isadora draws on her first-hand knowledge of the country to tell a vivid, touching story about life in South Africa's black townships, about the indomitable spirit of children, and about the universal joy of a family reunion.

Ages 4 up. 32 pp. TR $13.95/0-688-05270-3; LE $13.88/0-688-05271-1

AT THE CROSSROADS
by Rachel Isadora
"Like good jazz, Wanda's story sways to its own rhythm."

"This rich story is full of growing-up concerns, but it's the wrapper of racism that envelopes the characters and makes them unique.... Marino excels at evoking a place and especially at shaping characters whose motivations and moral lapses will instinctively be grasped by readers." — *Booklist* (starred)

"This novel teaches without being didactic, exploring both racism and alcoholism appropriately and powerfully." — *School Library Journal* (starred)

"While it is gently told, there isn't a hint of nostalgia in this coming-of-age story set in 1963 Georgia... an adeptly blended portrait of a family and the lovely visitor who changes it." — *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* (starred)

Ages 10 up. 0-316-54618-6 (14.45) $14.95

The Day That Elvis Came to Town
Jan Marino

LITTLE, BROWN and COMPANY
Henry takes adventure to new heights!

The best-selling hero of *Cross-Country Cat* and *Hot-Air Henry* is back! This time, Henry feels left out when the family adopts a puppy. His attempts to win attention fall flat until the dog gets himself into a fix and only an aerial artist like Henry can save him.

A drollly imaginative narrative and exquisitely detailed illustrations make Henry’s new adventure a delight for animal lovers of all ages.

Ages 5 up. 40 pp.
TR $13.95/0-688-08983-6; LE $13.88/0-688-08984-4

HIGH-WIRE HENRY

by Mary Calhoun ★ illustrated by Erick Ingraham

Morrow Junior Books

A division of William Morrow & Co., Inc. • 105 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016
"Destined to be a classic"

**THE WHEELS on the BUS**

By Paul O. Zelinsky

⋆ "A lively, sophisticated rendition of this preschool favorite." — *Kirkus Reviews* (Pointer Review)

"Art and engineering are woven together seamlessly ....in this brilliantly designed and produced pop-up.... The wheels literally go round, doors open and close, wipers swish, babies 'WAAH!' and mothers 'Shh!' as the bus bounces 'all over town.'" — *School Library Journal*

★ "A real trip...and, oh joy, this bus is on its way to the library!" — *BCCB*

1990 Parents' Choice Award
Redbook Top 10 Picture Books, 1990
Book-of-the-Month Selection

Music and refrain included. Full color.
Ages 2-8. 0-525-44644-3. $14.95

DUTTON
375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014
A Division of Penguin USA
The book is filled with Hearne's wonder and delight at the richness of the story and the visions of its many adaptations. Her prose is sprightly and clear as she teases out of each version its particular charms.

—Patrick Reardon, Chicago Tribune.

Hearne's book is generously illustrated with reproductions from many editions of Beauty and the Beast.

Paper $19.95 264 pages
29 halftones, 12 color plates

Mercer Mayer, from Beauty and The Beast by Marianna Mayer
Reproduced by permission of Four Winds Press

The University of Chicago Press 5801 South Ellis Chicago, IL 60637

Copies of articles from this publication are now available from the UMI Article Clearinghouse.

For more information about the Clearinghouse, please fill out and mail back the coupon below.

The UMI Article Clearinghouse offers articles from more than 11,000 copyright-cleared periodicals in a wide range of subjects. You can place your orders electronically, as well as by phone, mail, and telefacsimile. For more information, please complete and mail this coupon to UMI Article Clearinghouse, 300 North Zeeb Road, Box 11, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 USA. Or call toll-free for an immediate response: 800-521-0600. From Alaska and Michigan call collect 313-761-4700. From Canada, call toll-free 800-343-5299.

YES! I'd like to know more about UMI Article Clearinghouse.

Name
Title
Company/Institution
Address
City/State/Zip
Telephone (_______)

UMI
A Bell & Howell Company
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 USA
Are you reading someone else’s copy of

The Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books?

Order your own subscription and save 15%
The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

☐ Yes, please enter my subscription to The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, beginning with the current issue, at the rate checked below. The introductory rate represents a savings of 15%.

☐ Individuals  ☐ Institutions  ☐ Bulk (two or more subscriptions to the same address)

Introductory (J)  Renewal
☐ $21.00  ☐ $25.00
☐ $24.00  ☐ $29.00
☐ $18.00 each  ☐ $22.00 each

Outside USA please add $5.00 for postage.

Name ________________________________
Address ________________________________

City ________________________________ State/Zip ________________________________

Payment Options ____________
☐ Charge my ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa
Acct. # ________________________________
Signature ________________________________
Exp. Date ________________________________
☐ Check enclosed (payable to BCCB)
☐ Purchase order enclosed

Please return this form to The University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, IL 60637.
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.


"A beautiful, satisfying book."

Kirkus Reviews

COUNTRY CROSSING

Illustrated in full color by Ted Rand

By JIM AYLESWORTH

"Aylesworth is able to make the sounds in his text come alive... Rand has successfully interpreted the text with his beautiful illustrations... Together, author and illustrator have made the simple act of a train traveling through the night seem almost poetic."

—Starred, School Library Journal

"The question is, who will enjoy the book more, youngsters who listen or adults who share the book with them? A must for train buffs of all ages."—Booklist

$13.95 SBE/0-689-31580-5/Ages 4–7

SBE indicates a reinforced hardcover edition

ATHENEUM
An imprint of the Macmillan Children's Book Group
866 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022