PRODUCTION NOTE

University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign Library
Youngsters who have experienced the tense, giddy pleasure of a good stare-down contest will recognize Duck and Gander's freeze-in-place challenge. And what pros they are! Buzzing bees, cavorting bunnies, swooping crows, gusts of wind leave them unruffled.

— Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

Stars, School Library Journal

“Schindler's delicate pastel illustrations lend a soft quality to the humor and warmth of Silverman's tale of friendship.”

— Booklist

Ages 4-7 / 0-02-782685-6 / $14.95
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EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED WITH REVIEWS
* Asterisks denote books of special distinction.
R Recommended.
Ad Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.
M Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.
NR Not recommended.
SpC Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.
SpR A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.

The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books (ISSN 0008-9036) is published monthly except August by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the University of Illinois Press, 1325 S. Oak, Champaign, IL 61820.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES
1 year, institutions, $35.00; individuals, $29.00. In countries other than the United States, add $7.00 per subscription for postage. Japanese subscription agent: Kinokuniya Company Ltd. Single copy rate: $4.50. Reprinted volumes 1-35 (1947-1981) available from Kraus Reprint Co., Route 100, Millwood, NY 10546. Volumes available in microfilm from University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Complete volumes available in microfiche from Johnson Associates, P.O. Box 1017, Greenwich, CT 06830. Subscription checks should be made payable to the University of Illinois 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, University of Illinois Press, 1325 S. Oak, Champaign, IL 61820.

Subscription Correspondence. Address all inquiries about subscriptions and advertising to University of Illinois Press, 1325 S. Oak, Champaign, IL 61820.

Editorial Correspondence. Review copies and all correspondence about reviews should be sent to Roger Sutton, The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, 1512 N. Fremont St., #105, Chicago, IL 60622

Second-class postage paid at Champaign, Illinois
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Drawings by Debra Bolgla. This publication is printed on acid-free paper.

Cover illustration by Paul Hunt, from Look for Me by Moonlight ©1995 and used by permission of Clarion Books.
Look for Me by Moonlight
by Mary Downing Hahn

It’s a classic gothic set-up: a young woman, out of sorts with herself and the world, finds herself in a romantic but sinister seaside inn. Tales of ghosts and past tragedies haunt the place. No one seems to understand her until a tall, dark, older, handsome stranger comes to stay and perceives the depths beneath her unassuming mien. Soon and inevitably, he spirals her into an unending circle of darkness. All this, and a title taken from Noyes’ classic romantic poem The Highwayman. Yum, yum.

Mary Downing Hahn has long been adept at turning the conventions of formula fiction to her own ends. The winner of numerous children’s-choice awards, she knows what kids expect from a story, and, to her credit, doesn’t necessarily take the easy way out—her Time of the Witch, for example, is one of the very few novels for children in which the strange old lady everyone thinks is an evil witch actually turns out to be just that. That book, though, and most of her others, are solid middle-grade fare: nothing gets too scary. Now Hahn’s fans are growing up, and with this book she seems to be going along with them.

Cynda, the heroine of Look for Me by Moonlight, is sixteen, and a cranky sixteen at that. When her mother and second husband decide to move to Italy for three years, she comes up to Maine to live in an old inn run by her father and his new family: “Maybe Mom thought it was Dad’s turn to cope with me. Maybe I was her revenge.” Cynda takes everything as a slight: her pretty (and pregnant) stepmother, her father’s concentration on his writing, her young half-brother Todd’s position as adored and spoiled only child. So she’s ripe and anxious for attention when the mysterious and handsome Vincent, “called” by Cynda at the window when she sees his sleek car drive by, shows up at the inn and is all too willing to take advantage of her adolescent feelings of injustice. Vincent isn’t interested in sex, but while traditional ravishment is not to be this maiden’s fate, you’d never know it from Cynda’s narration: “My neck throbbed painfully, reminding me of what I’d done in the dark with Vincent, shameful things that separated me from Will, from everyone. Things I could never tell.” Will is a sweet teenaged boy who is interested in Cynda, but whose attentions pale beside the power of Vincent’s vampire kiss.

This is hot stuff, and more erotic in its effect than it would have been if Hahn had placed the sex on the surface. As in The Turn of the Screw, the corruption is both explicit and unnamed. Cynthia Grant’s Uncle Vampire is a book about a girl who disguises sexual abuse as vampirism; Hahn’s book has it both ways, with the bloodsucking both terrible reality and sexual nightmare. What’s even more audacious, Cynda, despite herself, likes it. And in a further Jamesian twist (“... if the child gives the effect another turn of the screw, what do you say to two children—?”), Vincent takes for his victim five-year-old Todd as well: “Todd
sighed and lifted his face. 'Kiss me, Vincent. I like how your teeth feel.'" The fact that the siblings eventually destroy their abuser does nothing to deny his attraction.

When Hahn and I were talking at a conference a couple of years ago, she told me she was a little worried about her loyal ten-to-twelve year-old audience reading what was then her latest book, *The Wind Blows Backward* (BCCB 5/93), a YA novel about a love affair between two high school students. Well, that was nothing. The (discreet) sex in *The Wind Blows Backward* was tender, fumbling, and unfrightening. Here it is not only discreet, it isn't in the book—and more persuasively demonstrates its unruly power by its absence. This book admits a truth uncommon in contemporary YA fiction: there is no such thing as safe sex. Forget bodily fluids (although Cynda, tainted by Vincent's saliva and tempted beyond resistance by a plate of bloody-rare beef, cannot)—the threat comes from the inherently untameable urge, and from the dangers that arrive with wishes granted. Cynda, after all, invited Vincent in.

I don't think Hahn has anything to worry about with her younger fans. They will lap this up this as a straightforward scary story: a girl and her little brother get ensnared by a vampire, kill him (with the ghostly help of Vincent's previous victims), and live happily ever after. Older readers ready for the sexual undertones will perhaps also see the dark heart of an old legend and how the power of each continues to feed on the other. Hahn's a long way from *Wait Till Helen Comes*, and she measures the distance with skill and daring. (Imprint information appears on page 276.)

Roger Sutton, Editor

NEW BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ABLE, DEBORAH *Hate Groups*. Enslow, 1995 104p illus. with photographs (Issues in Focus) ISBN 0-89490-627-5 $17.95 Ad Gr. 7-12


Enticing covers (photo of a KKK cross-burning on *Hate Groups*; bonfire of books on *Free Speech*) enclose competent if lackluster surveys of two hot topics. Each book is clearly organized through chapters and subheads and takes a primarily historical approach to its subject, but while coverage is broad, it's not that deep. When either book tries to conceptualize its focus in any kind of theoretical way, or tries to build an argument, the series-drone of the writing and the limitations of space fail the complexities of the controversy. *Hate Groups* dances around the idea that hate speech should be censored, but it won't quite make the commitment; *Free Speech* segues from a brief discussion of the MacKinnon/Dworkin antipornography ordinances into a paragraph about the thousands of different magazines available to consumers. While neither book is as provocative as you'd think it
Ancona, George  *Cutters, Carvers & the Cathedral*; written and illus. with photographs by George Ancona. Lothrop, 1995  32p
Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-12056-3  $15.00  Ad  Gr. 3-5

Ancona begins at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, showing a carver working on a limestone column with a chisel and mallet, then travels to Indiana, where the limestone is quarried. He shows how dynamite blasts the earth away to reveal the seam of limestone; we then see the laborious task of cutting out enormous blocks using machines and muscle power. Returning to New York, he introduces us to the variety of masons and carvers who work on the limestone slabs, as well as to the draftsman using a computer to make templates. Ancona’s photographs catch the magnificence of a cathedral and the hard, precise work that goes into quarrying the stone and making the carvings and statues. He introduces the workers with pictures and quotations, presenting them as a community of artisans from around the world, but all are described so briefly that neither their jobs nor their personalities are explored. The space limitations of a thirty-two-page book have forced Ancona to leave out so much information that while we do read that work on the building began 100 years ago, we never learn the denomination of the Cathedral, who its architect was and whether his original plans are still being carried through, or that it is the largest Gothic cathedral outside of Europe; we are told, abruptly, that work on the cathedral has stopped—what are all those workers doing now? And though they might have detracted from the handsome book design, captions for the photographs would have been helpful. This tantalizing glimpse into a career seldom explored today both delights and frustrates. A glossary is included.

Anno, Mitsumasa  *Anno’s Magic Seeds*; written and illus. by Mitsumasa Anno. Philomel, 1995  34p
ISBN 0-399-22538-2  $15.95  R  4-8 yrs

A wizard gives Jack two golden seeds, each about the size of a softball, and instructs him to bake and eat one seed and to plant and care for the second. When Jack obeys, the resulting plant bears two fruits which produce two seeds, and for six years Jack repeats the cycle of eating one and planting the other. The seventh year, he decides to get through the winter without eating a seed and plants them both. The next year, he ends up with four seeds, planting three and eating one, and on each succeeding page, Anno challenges readers to figure out how many seeds were planted. As the years progress, the math becomes trickier: Jack begins saving some of the seeds and selling some, but in the tenth year a hurricane blows almost everything away. Jack has saved one bag of ten seeds, and the cycle begins again. As a story, this is too repetitive, but as a series of intriguing math problems, the book works well, providing counting practice for the youngest, counting by twos and tens for kindergartners and first graders, adding and subtracting for older students, and multiplication by twos for third graders. Comically angular people and an assortment of sprightly animals add to the fun, and Anno’s soft earth-toned watercolors are arranged elegantly with lots of white space, always carefully setting
the different seeds apart according to their destination. Despite its necessarily monotonous quality, this is a solid choice for school and public libraries. SDL

ANTLE, NANCY  
*Sam's Wild West Show*; illus. by Simms Taback. Dial, 1995  [40p]  (Dial Easy-to-Read)
Reviewed from galleys  
R Gr. 1-3

In the immortal words of the illustrious town marshal, "I'll be sheep dipped" if this ain't the most ebullient equestrian entertainment ever to inspire the easy-reader crowd. When Sam's Wild West Show rides—and flies—into town, the "folks came from all over just to look." Sam and his entourage of bow-legged cowgirls, drooping mustachioed cowboys, and patient horses ("Sam jumped rope on top of a galloping horse") make for very funny reading, not to mention rib-ticklin' viewing. Pen-and-watercolor scenes depict a colorful melodrama energized with applause signs, cowpokes in polka-dotted bandanas and lime green hats, and unshaven villains. Sam fortuitously stumbles into a whole mess of trouble when outlaws Flo and Bo ride into town: "They were ugly. They looked mean. Even their horses looked ugly and mean." The marshal skedaddles, the mayor and the banker git real scared real quick, and the townsfolk elect Sam as marshal. With wit, a whip, and the help of his friends, Sam dashing saves the day. He rides off into the sunset (in his hot-air balloon), but keep an eye out for this rascal—he just might show up again, and if he does, kids will be clamoring to learn a new rope trick or two. HMW

ASCH, FRANK  
*Water*; written and illus. by Frank Asch. Gulliver Green/Harcourt, 1995  32p
ISBN 0-15-200189-1  $14.00  Ad 3-6 yrs

With a minimum of words and a maximum of color, Frank Asch explores water in its various forms. He begins with three of its weather-related forms: "Water is rain. Water is dew. Water is ice and snow." Appropriately enough, watercolor is the medium for each intensely hued painting as Asch shows, for instance, a close-up of blades of multicolored grass dripping with multicolored dew. For most of the book, we follow a boy who first plays with a toy sailboat and then rides in a large sailboat, towing the toy behind, through a variety of bodies of water. He then rescues a cat stranded in a tree and continues down a river into a city scene crammed with people using water in various ways. In its attempted blend of story and science, the book seems choppy and disjointed, but particularly careful observers may find connections between most, if not all, of the paintings. The book's central problem, however, (aside from the erroneous statement that "water is what fish breathe") is that Asch has painted everything in multiple rainbow hues, which, though attractive, means the water is not differentiated from anything else in the pictures. While not being the most effective of learning tools, this picture book may help readers appreciate water in its many forms. SDL

BODKIN, ODDS  
*The Banshee Train*; illus. by Ted Rose. Clarion, 1995  [32p]
Reviewed from galleys  
R 5-8 yrs

If the 1929 spring storms and flooding don't present enough danger to Train
Number 1, headed out from Denver to Troublesome and Steamboat Springs, there's also the large problem of the mysterious train that seems to be pursuing it down the tracks—headed right for Gore Canyon, where a train and "all souls aboard" had been lost twenty years ago. In a time when so many picture books match extravagant art with ho-hum stories, this book will be a welcome relief for story hours that need a little action. The writing is both charged and fluent, incorporating lots of train-talk made clear by context, and the foggy, atmospheric watercolors catch all the fine detail of the train and its (spectral) pursuer. Rose makes the mountain landscape, where the brave trainmen are caught between certain terror and sudden death, beautiful but menacing. Relax—all ends well, just in time. RS


Amy and her family move from Wyoming to Taiwan to tell the Chinese "about the one true God in heaven." Amy wants to learn Chinese and make "chop suey" friends to convert to Christianity, but she also yearns for "peanut butter," i.e. Western friends at her International School. (This metaphor is heavily overused.) The sights and smells of Taiwan, vividly conveyed, both exhilarate and repel Amy, and at first she keeps bravely plunging into the new world. At school, American Jessica quickly befriends her, but demands that she choose between friendship with Jessica and with a Chinese girl named Mickey. Gradually Amy becomes discouraged with the difficulty of making Chinese friends and with the struggle to please both Jessica and her conscience. When Amy finally asks God to solve her problem, Jessica's parents split up and she moves away, leaving Amy free to be friendly with whomever she pleases; Amy does not wonder why God has solved her problem at Jessica's expense. In most ways, this is a typical story of a girl wrestling with the problems inherent in a big move and in making friends, with the religious viewpoint exploratory more than proselytizing, informing not overwhelming the plot. The first-person narration is competent if a bit stiff, and Brammer conveys the mixed emotions of a cross-cultural move well. Reviewed from an unillustrated galley. SDL


In this undocumented chronicle, Bruchac recounts the early years of the young Lakota boy who grows from an unprepossessing child named "Slow," to a youth whose careful and deliberate actions bring honor to the name, to a young warrior whose courage in defeating the Crow earns him his father's vision name Tatan'ka Iyota'ke—Sitting Bull. The narration, at first formal and restrained, marks time with the boy's measured development; then, with a startling cry of "Hiyu'wo!" Slow springs into battle, and both hero and tale rush headlong into the climactic victory scene. Bruchac does not reveal the English translation of Tatan'ka Iyota'ke's celebrated name until the end, a dramatic effect that may be lost on younger listeners yet unacquainted with Sitting Bull. Baviera's illustrations—cunningly brushed onto rough canvas to resemble painted hides—are often too darkly atmospheric to
be shared in a group and the text initially moves as slowly as its subject. Still, this title will be especially welcome in classrooms as an introduction to the Lakota leader. EB


Forten's journals, kept with some regularity from her school years through the time of her marriage to Francis Grimké at the age of forty-one, provide the basis for this biography of a well-to-do African-American woman with personal and familial connections to the abolitionist movement and other liberal causes of her day. Given the book's subtitle, readers learn surprisingly little about Forten's experiences as a teacher of the newly emancipated children on Hilton Head Island (her actual duties apparently received little comment in her journal), but they will catch tantalizing glimpses of several historical figures the young woman counted among her close acquaintances—abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, war hero Robert Gould Shaw, poet John Greenleaf Whittier. Although Burchard occasionally adopts the tone of Forten's flowery prose in his own narrative, he nonetheless faces squarely Forten's color bias regarding the "contrabands" and the blind eye she turned toward slaves' sacking abandoned plantations. Forten's enthusiasms and observations offer readers a look into the cultured, educated black community of the mid-nineteenth century, a group less frequently studied than their enslaved contemporaries. A bibliography and index are included. EB

**Carrick, Carol** *Banana Beer;* illus. by Margot Apple. Whitman, 1995 32p ISBN 0-8075-0568-4 $14.95 Ad 4-7 yrs

Charlie's father drinks too much, embarrassing Charlie in front of his friends, shouting at him, and causing disruption in the whole family. Charlie even wonders if it's his fault that his father drinks, but discovers that trying to be a "better boy" doesn't help—in fact, nothing does. After getting upset in school while attempting an assignment to draw a "wish," Charlie gets a little support from his understanding teacher, who explains that Charlie's dad does love him, but that Dad's drinking makes him angry. What distinguishes this book from any number of other bibliotherapeutic picture books about alcoholism is the fact that all the characters are orangutans, thus the "banana beer" of the title. While this may be a ploy to provide some alleviative distance and to allow Margot Apple's colored-pencil illustrations to show such scenes as Daddy drunkenly stumbling over Charlie's toys (a drama that could be pointless anxiety-provoking had the characters been human), children in a home like Charlie's will certainly get the picture. RS

**Cecil, Laura, ad.** *The Frog Princess;* illus. by Emma Chichester Clark. Greenwillow, 1995 32p ISBN 0-688-13506-4 $16.00 R 5-8 yrs

When the queen tells her sons to take brides, it is the third son, Marco the dreamer, who ends up with a frog; when the queen declares that the son with the cleverest wife will become king, Marco's talented frog-wife wins the contest by (figurative) leaps and bounds. Of course, Marco’s acceptance of his frog spouse breaks her enchantment, she transforms into a beautiful princess, and they live happily ever after as king and queen. Cecil tells her tale with precision and humor (Marco
excuses his bride's non-appearance at court by explaining that "she has a croak in her throat") and allows the tale's natural folkloric rhythm to carry the pace along. Clark presents a swell cast of watercolor and charcoal characters, demonstrating particularly successful creativity in the goofy hairdo department. Some kids may be slightly confused by the cover, which shows an androgynous Marco who might fit the title as well as his froggy companion, but that's a cavil—youngsters will giggle at the fatuous elder brothers and will enjoy the three bridal tests, especially the puppy-training component (Marco's wife teaches her dog to count on an abacus and play the guitar). A brief source note explains that this version is adapted from an Italo Calvino telling. DS

COERR, ELEANOR  

This title packs plenty of appeal for the beginning chapter-book audience—fleecy horses, threatening wolves, Indian raids, bamboozled robbers, and the heady knowledge that it's all at least as true as any of Buffalo Bill Cody's own hyperbolized accounts ever were. However, several glitches in text and illustration are, while not deadly, most definitely annoying. Bill, who meets the criteria on the Pony Express poster soliciting "Young, skinny fellows under 18," is challenged by the employer because he is fifteen and thin. Bill's home station, marked on a map in one illustration, disappears into the binding's stitching. No pronunciation hints are offered, and if "Sioux" and "Paiute" are challenging to sound out, imagine what primary schoolers will make of "Red Buttes." Still, with a little adult explanation and coaching to smooth over the rocky stretches, kids should find this a pretty exciting ride. EB

COFER, JUDITH ORTIZ  

Twelve linked short stories explore teenage life in or about the Paterson, New Jersey barrio. With sympathy and insight, Cofer tells of various kids, such as a girl sent to spend the summer in Puerto Rico with her grandparents, a boy helped by his teacher to find unsuspected power in poetry, a girl uneasy about working with a mentally retarded man at her poolside summer job, a boy whose duty hour with his grandfather takes a surprising turn; the kids flit through one another's stories, providing continuity and a rich sense of layering. While the stories vary in plot and theme, underlying them all is Cofer's deep respect for the possibilities and potential in these youngsters and for the fragility and strength of the bonds with family and friends: the final story, "White Balloons," about a theater group that goes on after its leader dies of AIDS, addresses both the limits and the loyalty of the community. Another common theme here is the experiential gap between the older, stricter, Spanish-speaking generations and the younger, seemingly wilder, city-bred teens. The voices here have a bite and authenticity that will appeal to kids, too (about her Anglo crush, Bob Dylan Kalinowski, one girl says, "He flirts with every girl in school. Even me. That's what I really like about Bob Dylan—he's democratic"). The combination of interweaving of characters, intensity of emotion, and deft control of language makes this a rewarding collection. DS
COLE, SHEILA  What Kind of Love?: The Diary of a Pregnant Teenager. Lothrop, 1995 [192p]
ISBN 0-688-12848-3  $14.00
Reviewed from galleys  R  Gr. 6-10
When Valerie begins her diary in June, she clearly is in denial; although she has not had her period for several months, she keeps hoping it will begin soon. It takes her another three weeks to take the pregnancy test, because she had sex only once and "can't be pregnant. I'm only fifteen!" Her boyfriend initially encourages her by talking of marriage and rhapsodizing about the baby, but once his furious father puts him in a prep school on the other side of the country, his thoughts turn more to college and an independent future. Valerie's parents have strongly encouraged her violin-playing and want her to give the baby up, saying, "We're in no position to help you, and even if we had the money we wouldn't. It'd only help you ruin your life." As the pregnancy progresses, Valerie's violin career moves forward, and by November, she has realized that the most loving and responsible course for her to take is adoption. Cole writes frankly about sex and pregnancy, acknowledging the sweetness of small babies but also the physical discomforts and occasional embarrassments of teen pregnancy and childbirth. She notes at the beginning that she bases her character on conversations with teenage mothers, teachers, and social workers, and while her writing is blunt and unpoetic ("Duh"), it is authentic both in tone and feeling. There are no surprises here, just solid, truthful writing about a teenager wrestling with the greatest of dilemmas. SDL

COTTONWOOD, JOE  Quake!: A Novel. Scholastic, 1995 [112p]
ISBN 0-590-22232-5  $13.95
Reviewed from galleys  Ad  Gr. 5-8
It's October 17, 1989, and Franny hasn't seen her childhood best friend, Jennie, in five years. Now they are uneasily together at Franny's home in the Santa Cruz mountains while their parents attend the World Series in San Francisco. You got it—Quake! reads the title, and the book follows the brave if extremely predictable actions of the two girls as they cope with the disaster and, in the process, rediscover their friendship. Jennie, whose head seems permanently stuck to her music-blasting earphones, proves a crack first-aider. Franny surprises herself as she adeptly turns off gas lines at neighboring houses and, with Jennie's help, lifts a car to rescue the old man trapped beneath. Aside from the girls' search for Franny's missing dog, there's no real narrative beyond the chain of events; aside from three offstage grocery-store looters, everyone in the village is cooperative and some—such as the girls—heroic: "the best kind of hero... Unrehearsed. Fumbling. An everyday sort. A small hero." It's unusual to see girls spotlighted in a disaster story; this one, easy to read and unintrospective, should appeal to reluctant readers of both sexes. RS

CREWS, DONALD  Sail Away; written and illus. by Donald Crews. Greenwillow, 1995 [32p]
Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-11053-3  $15.00
Reviewed from galleys  R*  3-7 yrs
A family of four heads out for a day of sailing; first they "row the dinghy out to our sailboat," and turning the motor on they "putt... putt... putt... Under the
bridge” to the open water where they can hoist the two sails. Enormous blue letters shading into white spell out “WHOOSH!” as the wind hits the sails, but what starts out as a pleasant trip turns scary when the clear blue sky turns gray and the small waves become “angry seas.” However, the storm dies down and they “motor toward port. putt... putt... putt... ’” through the twilight and darkness and are once again “moored!” The book’s format may remind readers of *Freight Train* (BCCB 2/79) as will the play between light and dark, but the sea and sky create a completely different feel; the perilous adventure is more reminiscent of *Shortcut* (10/92). Crews achieves some striking effects: the bridge looms over the tiny boat, and throughout the book the wind is palpably blowing into the faces of the people, pushing on the sails, and whipping up the seas. The one misstep (aside from the apparent absence of a rudder) is a spread showing the sailboat in four positions tacking across the water, which will seem to nearly all children to be four sailboats that look remarkably alike: putting a name on the boat might have lessened the confusion. Still, the final pages with the colors of the sunset glinting on the water and lighting up the boat and the lighthouse shooting out its beams make any flaw forgivable. While too many books make sailing look placid and gentle, Crews captures it at its ferocious, thrilling best. SDL

**CRUTCHER, CHRIS** *Ironman.* Greenwillow, 1995 [192p]
ISBN 0-688-13503-X $15.00
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 7-12

After quitting the football team and calling the coach an “asshole,” high school senior Bo is forced to join the “Nak Pack,” an anger-management group for misfits led by teacher Mr. Nakatani, a pint-sized Japanese American who thinks like Polonius and talks like a cowboy: “You can fight bein’ here all you want, pardner, but when all the horses are in the corral, you gotta live with yourself an’ how you respond to the people you think are makin’ your life hell.” If you like Crutcher, this is vintage stuff: Bo’s narration, in the form of letters to talk show host Larry King, is beguiling; Mr. Nak’s preaching—there’s a lot—is sensible and leavened by his twang; Bo’s fellow Nak-packers are a motley and moving crew, none more so than Shelly, a classic Crutcher tough-girl object of love and romance for Bo. Bo is in training for a triathlon (bicycling, running, swimming) so the book gets lots of exercise to balance out the talk, and the race is made especially tense by the fact that Bo’s emotionally abusive father is helping out one of his competitors. The book is a lot like Crutcher’s others (and Lionel from *Stotan!* is one of Bo’s teachers), so if you haven’t succumbed before you aren’t likely to now, but fans will welcome the winning formula. RS

**DANZIGER, PAULA** *You Can’t Eat Your Chicken Pox, Amber Brown;* illus. by Tony Ross. Putnam, 1995 [112p]
ISBN 0-399-22702-4 $12.95
Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 2-3

In Danziger’s last sortie, *Thames Doesn’t Rhyme with James* (BCCB 1/95), the heroine doesn’t see much of London due to the attractions of her beau; in this one, the somewhat younger protagonist misses many of the same sights due to chicken pox. Amber has gone to London with her aunt Pam, and unfortunately the side-trip to Paris to see her father, recently separated from her mother, is foiled by the virus. Not to worry, too much—Dad comes to London to see Amber, and while
he reassures her of his love, he also reminds her that there is no chance he and her mother will get together again. This sequel to *Amber Brown Is Not a Crayon* (BCCB 6/94) is not as well-focused as its predecessor, with the trip itself lacking excitement or punch and the divorce-blues theme lacking much new to say on a subject covered with more nuance in many other books. The writing has the terse stop-go style that Danziger has been into lately, but it is not employed with the crispness that worked so well for *...Is Not a Crayon*. Amber does remain a spunky heroine, though, and her fans will be interested in seeing just what she's been up to lately. RS

**DeFelice, Cynthia, ad.** *Three Perfect Peaches: A French Folktale Retold by The Wild Washerwomen Storytellers*; ad. by Cynthia DeFelice and Mary DeMarsh; illus. by Irene Trivas. Jackson/Orchard, 1995 32p
Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-06872-2 $15.95  Ad 6-10 yrs

Everything comes in threes in this tale of a princess who craves three peaches so much that she will die without them. Three brothers each set out over three days with baskets of peaches, but the first two brothers treat an old woman rudely along the way. The first brother tells the woman his basket holds “rabbit droppings” and the second brother tells her “horse manure”; so, of course, that’s just what the baskets hold when presented to the princess. Learning from their mistakes, the youngest brother offers the old lady a peach and is rewarded with a magic whistle which will make whatever he wants come to him and, if lost, will return to his pocket when he claps three times. The whistle comes in handy when the king, not wanting his daughter to marry a shabby country boy, sets the third brother an impossible task and then tries to get the whistle away from him. The authors have carefully transcribed their phrasing and intonation with ellipses, italics, and other techniques so that the story reads very much as a storyteller would tell it; however, the humor sometimes seems pointed towards adults rather than children. While the snobby king gets his comeuppance (and has to kiss a horse’s butt—kids will love it), the hero is not especially lovable either; one also wonders why the king doesn’t put the whistle to use after he has gone to such great lengths to obtain it. Trivas’ droll watercolor illustrations contribute greatly to the fun; she mixes witty detail with sumptuous color and a good dollop of energy, but it does seem very strange that the “silver” whistle is clearly gold in each picture. The authors cite one written source and explain that they have elaborated on it. SDL

**Dunrea, Olivier** *The Painter Who Loved Chickens*; written and illus. by Olivier Dunrea. Farrar, 1995 32p ISBN 0-374-35729-3 $15.00  R 5-8 yrs

In one of those peculiar coincidences that encourages one’s belief in an ordered cosmos, Olivier Dunrea and Barbara Porte (see *Chickens! Chickens!*, reviewed below) have each crafted a picture book about a painter of chickens. Dunrea’s story is of a city-dwelling man who paints all kinds of things for his living, but who truly loves only to create pictures of chickens. He thinks that no one will appreciate his barnyard oeuvre so he never offers it for sale, but eventually a wise customer happens in and declares the painter’s chicken work “magical”; the ensuing success allows the artist to buy his long-desired farm and raise and paint chickens to his
heart's content. Dunrea's gouache paintings are tidy and stylized, with smooth flat surfaces and chicken details abounding in a gemütlich Low-Countries setting. Each spread has a full-page painting on the recto and a captioned image of a particular breed of chicken (Silkie, Barred Rock, etc.) on the verso above the text, and it's too bad that there's no more information about these breeds in the back of the book. This doesn't have quite the zip of Porte's poultry piece, and the story seems a bit spun out, but Dunrea's sympathy for chickens (previously demonstrated in The Broody Hen, 11/92) comes across clearly, and the book is a pleasant parable about the rewards of doing what you love. DS

ELLIS, SARAH Out of the Blue. McElderry, 1995 120p ISBN 0-689-80025-8 $15.00 R Gr. 5-7

Megan thinks that the secret her parents are keeping involves a surprise present for her twelfth birthday, but it turns out to be bigger than that: years ago, Megan's mother gave up a baby girl for adoption, and Mum and twenty-four-year-old Natalie have now found each other through an adoption registry. Everyone else, even Megan's strong-willed little sister, Betsy, likes Natalie, but Megan is filled with suspicion and questions as she begins to adjust to this change in her life and family role. The author tells her story with warmth and sensitivity, turning what could have been just another problem novel into a rich family story. Where some authors overexplain simple characters, Ellis allows small but penetrating glimpses of complex ones: we really don't get to know Natalie (and Megan really doesn't know her yet either), for instance, but she's clearly neither the demon Megan fears nor the angel her mother had imagined. The humor of everyday life blends with the story of an unusual situation to make a strong, affectionate, and readable portrait of a girl and her family. DS

EMBERLEY, REBECCA, ad. Three Cool Kids; ad. and illus. by Rebecca Emberley. Little, 1995 [32p] ISBN 0-316-23777-7 $15.95 Reviewed from galleys R 3-8 yrs

The Norwegian folktale "The Three Billy Goats Gruff" gets an urban update: instead of a grassy hill, the three Cool kids' sights are set on another vacant lot down the street, with "sweet green grass and delectable weeds to eat." An enormous sewer rat takes the place of the troll, but when Little Cool's sneakers go "squinch, squinch, squinch" across the street and the rat screeches at him, the youngest kid doesn't try to tempt the rat with the larger meal the sibling would make, instead squealing, "Oh! How rude! ... My big sister is coming, and she will tell you what's what!" Sister Middle Cool does, and then Big Cool not only tells the rat off but makes a huge racket with his horns against the sewer grate and shakes the rat down into the sewer. This story has always had great appeal to the youngest audiences, who often feel powerless in the face of their own trolls, but Emberley here has modernized the story and given it an appeal for older children with its urban setting and defiantly sassy attitude. Her collage illustrations also eliminate any babyish feeling (and offer a truly scary-looking rat), and her use of textured paper for fur works particularly well. It seems odd that she offsets the plus of adding a female character as the middle goat by making her stereotypically preoccupied with her appearance, but overall, this version is one that even cooler kids will cheer. SDL

Cameron has abridged and simplified the autobiography of a native of Benin who was captured and enslaved in the mid-eighteenth century, who was sold numerous times, who served on a British vessel in the war against France, who was held by masters on the American mainland and in the West Indies, and who eventually purchased his own freedom. Readers whose knowledge of the Peculiar Institution is limited to the nineteenth-century plantation system will be fascinated with the details in this account—particularly Olaudah’s experiences as a captive on African soil, his adventure as a gunpowder handler on a warship, and his comparisons of slave life in the English colonies and the West Indies. However, many of Equiano’s comments concerning the English may jar modern sensibilities: “I knew Englishmen weren’t spirits, just men with more knowledge than us Africans”; “[Captain Doran] was very kind. If any of his slaves behaved amiss, he did not beat or mis-treat them, he only sold them.” Although Cameron provides adequate notes concerning the extent of her editing and the aftermath to Equiano’s narration, her lack of specific comment on the style of his writing and its historical context may lead naive readers to view him with unjust harshness, rather than seeing him as a diplomatic anti-slavery spokesman to a genteel European audience. EB

ESBENSEN, BARBARA JUSTER  The Dream Mouse: A Lullaby Tale from Old Latvia; illus. by Judith Mitchell. Little, 1995  [32p]  ISBN 0-316-24975-0  $15.95  Reviewed from galleys  M  3-6 yrs

A “dream mouse” travels through the twilit town, leaving dreams from the “load of sleep” in his cart for the wakeful children: “Child, I bring you this dream of a white swan. Out on the still lake she swims in a snowy shirt, whiter than linen. Even your big sister, beating the flax all day, cannot make linen as white as this.” Loosely based upon images from Latvian folksongs, each of the dreams is tender and fanciful, but the book is not the “lullaby” suggested by the subtitle. Instead, it’s a collection of pretty scenes that tips into the haziness of so many dream books, which, while true to the free-floating nature of their inspiration, lack the metaphorical and narrative cohesion necessary to a satisfactory picture book. The illustrations, too, while achieving a dreamy atmosphere through the use of offbeat colors and some lurid shading, have too little to do with one another even as they painstakingly and overliterally recreate the images in the text. RS


More sophisticated than folktales, these nine stories are liberally adapted from Chinese operas, early novels, and legends. Most of the plots involve aristocratic mini-dramas: a high-born bride discovers her groom is really a woman disguised as a man and convinces the emperor to see the humor of the situation; a precious jade threatens to draw its owner into a destructive war; and in the title story, a wealthy young woman gives away a wedding present from her mother, only to be richly rewarded for her generosity many years later. Fang, who in an author’s note describes her family’s tradition of reading and storytelling, has done extensive re-
search and provided background and source notes for each selection. There's also a glossary, along with a pronunciation guide and occasional light pencil illustrations. The collection will have special interest to students of Chinese culture, but a story such as "The Two Miss Peonys"—about a carp-spirit who chooses to become human for the sake of the man she loves—will make an intriguing read-aloud for fans of "The Little Mermaid," and storytellers as well as young readers who have exhausted the European fairy tale canon can savor the somewhat mysterious tone of this classic sampling. BH


Twelve-year-old Lydia is not pleased to be shunted off for the summer to the camp where her older sister works as a counselor, but her parents' recent divorce makes the plan necessary. Her disappointment increases when her chances for a camp friendship are limited to timid Karen or the bullying Carla: "What a choice, thought Lydia. Karen or Carla. If only there was a box you could check off marked 'None of the above.'" Lydia does gradually and grudgingly grow closer to both girls, but her displaced anger at her father leads her to a rash theft from Karen and into ensuing trouble. The psychology of the characters is somewhat programmatic, and their motivations, like the book's plot, tend towards the obvious instead of the subtle. Feuer's at her best in depicting Lydia's friendship dilemma—neither Karen nor Carla is a particularly engaging companion, and kids will understand the necessity that drives such summer alliances while acknowledging the moral questions that surround them. DS


It's dastardly trickery and nail-gnawing melodrama, a "What's in Fox's Sack"-type tale perfectly packaged for the youngest listeners, as Red Hen runs afoul of voracious Sly Fox. The razor-toothed villain wheedles his way into her hut on the pretext of needing his socks mended; trapping her atop a cabinet, he spins himself around until the dizzy damsel plops right into his open sack. But our prudent heroine always carries a needle, thread, and scissors, so while her captor dozes, she snips her way to freedom, leaves a large stone substituting for her in the sack, and flees to her cottage for "a strong cup of tea." Sly Fox, eager for "din-din," dumps the stone into the boiling water and the rest, as they say, is history. Double-page paintings feature simple, stylized shapes, frequently tipped and angled for an extra jolt of energy, and ominous purple shadows hurled upon the ground and walls offer an extra measure of tension. The audience will enjoy details of Sly Fox's untidy den, strewn with bones of his last meal, while the adult readers-aloud will appreciate the portrait of the vixen/odalisque tacked beside his bed. EB


Young Pierre spends the summer weekends in a country cottage next to the Magritte residence, and one day, when things at his house are too quiet, he goes to visit the
neighbors. He watches Magritte paint, meets a family visitor, goes for a walk, plays croquet, and has dinner before returning home. Of course, this is the Magritte household, so the visitor is Dali, and the images are laced with references to Dali and Magritte (the man with the apple in front of his face, à la *The Son of Man*, presides over dinner, when it rains cats and dogs it literally rains cats and dogs, and the best spread, a homage to *Carte Blanche*, shows the gaps between the trees becoming gaps in the people); smaller surrealisms also abound, such as a melting clock on the wall and a window showing rain and sunshine respectively and simultaneously in two different panes. Garland’s oils are controlled and sedate, with softly glowing hues, but the art is stodgily drafted and sometimes awkward and sentimental where the real Magritte’s is clear-eyed and contemplative. This doesn’t provide the multitude of puzzles that David Legge’s surreal *Bamboozled* (*BCCB* 3/95) does, and it’s a pity that its linkage to Magritte isn’t made clearer by citations of specific paintings. It’s still an intriguing introduction to surrealism, however, and kids will enjoy the “what’s wrong with this picture?” game; they might also enjoy hunting for the artist’s dedication to his son (“Kevin is Pierre”) worked into every page. DS

**GARLAND, SHERRY** *Indio.* Gulliver/Harcourt, 1995 [304p] (Great Episodes)
Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 6-9

The predictable cycle of farming and hunting life in the pueblo has withstood drought, flood, and Apache raids; therefore, despite her grandmother’s death and her brother’s abduction during an enemy attack, Ipa looks forward to marriage into a neighboring clan, confident of a secure and stable future. But on the eve of her wedding a new enemy appears—Spanish operatives who seize Ipa, her beautiful cousin Xucate, and other villagers to labor in the silver mines. Ipa’s younger brother is seriously injured in the mines, Xucate is raped by the mine owner, and Ipa herself, in a somewhat sensational turn of events, is accused of murder. Garland delineates the relationship between mine owners and the neighboring mission with considerable skill, and she offers a tender, if improbable, love story in the bargain, as Ipa is reunited with a Spaniard who had once passed through her pueblo. However, given that Ipa is initially presented as the likely heir to community traditions, it is somewhat baffling that her volatile cousin Xucate from the start resists Spanish acculturation while Ipa assimilates with comparative ease. Likewise, no compelling reason is given for the older brother’s defection to the Apaches, and the characters ultimately become archetypes for Garland’s vision of a doomed culture. Introductory notes discuss the author’s use of the few known facts of sixteenth-century Jumano pueblo culture. EB

**GEORGE, JEAN CRAIGHEAD** *To Climb a Waterfall;* illus. by Thomas Locker. Philomel, 1995 [32p]
ISBN 0-399-22673-7 $16.95
Reviewed from galleys M 5-8 yrs

George’s dedication, “To the children who will climb the waterfall,” begins this rather ponderous evocation of the inspirational power of nature. A second-person narration takes readers (and the pictures’ nameless child-wanderer) on a journey up a frothy, lavender-hued waterfall, which cascades through a tamed wilderness.
Locker's serene, classical paintings match the meditative text with hazily atmospheric grandeur-sweeping scenery, tranquil waters, and a dusty peach sky enhancing the feeling of calm. The problem is that waterfalls aren't calm at all, and both the text and the art turn what surely must be noisy excitement into distant and abstract serenity ("The waterfall is now part of you. Take it with you wherever you go, and you will never be bored again"). Each step of the journey is carefully prettified: the child is able to climb the waterfall barefooted (and take a swim without even getting wet), and animals are oblivious to human intrusions. Any potential for adventure is lost in this all-too-safe stroll. Still, the changes in visual perspective do invite the audience into a relaxing, non-threatening exploration of nature. HMW


"The reason I can't speak is I was born with some bits missing from my throat," writes Rowena Batts in a memo to her classmates on her first day in a new school, but, fear not, her disability never comes between Ro and trouble. In Blabber Mouth, the trouble comes primarily from school bully Darryn Peck, whose teasing Ro rewards by stuffing a live frog into his mouth and taping it shut; in the sequel Sticky Beak, she must deal with the fact that her rowdy, eccentric father has married her beloved teacher Ms. Dunning, and that they are expecting a baby. Both books feature Rowena's impulsive, blustering narration and Gleitzman's slightly manic humor; while Blabber Mouth finds its jokes in everyday school life (such as a would-be friend who takes Ro on as a "community service project"), Sticky Beak is slapstickey and a bit over the top (a potty-mouthed parrot plays a large role) and will best be comprehended and enjoyed by fans of the first. In neither book is Rowena's disability sentimentalized or, conversely, overcompensated for: whether being a complete pain in the neck or worrying that her sibling-to-be will also be mute, Ro makes her wishes known through sign language ("I switched on the lamp so he could hear me"), never failing to make an impact on her fellows—as when she throws a dessert jelly into a fan—or readers. The setting and slang are Australian; U.S. readers will easily follow Ro's lead in picking up clues from the context. RS


This is the fourth book about Janetta and her grandfather (see Grandaddy and Janetta, BCCB 4/93, etc.), and here Janetta is thrilled because Grandaddy, for a change, is going to come and visit her. Once Grandaddy arrives, however, she's afraid Baltimore won't measure up to the wonders of the old man's farm ("At Grandaddy's place there were chickens on the porch, and from the windows you could look out at the vegetable patch and the railroad track. Here you just saw buildings"). Grandaddy, of course, charms Janetta back into self-confidence and cheer, and he has a wonderful time seeing the sights (Janetta's cat, her school, her
playground, her feather collection, and the stars they share outside their windows) until he has to return home. Griffith manages to keep the story of this pair fresh even in the fourth volume: Grandaddy is near-perfect, but he's droll enough, with his tale-spinning and his talk of his beloved mule, that he never cloys, and Janetta's anxieties will be recognizable to many youngsters. Stevenson's art offers warm and cheerful scenes of companionship and some light-hearted vignettes (the mule on the White House lawn, for instance) illustrating Grandaddy's stories. This would make a successful readalone, with its neat, simple chapters, as well as readaloud, and kids who know G & J won't want to miss this new installment. DS

HAHN, MARY DOWNING  _Look for Me by Moonlight._ Clarion, 1995  [208p]
Reviewed from galleys  R*  Gr. 7-12
See this month's Big Picture, p. 261, for review.

HALL, ELIZABETH  _Venus among the Fishes;_ written by Elizabeth Hall and Scott O'Dell. Houghton, 1995  [160p]
ISBN 0-395-70561-4  $15.95
Reviewed from galleys  M  Gr. 4-6
Coral, a dolphin, is on a dangerous mission to find safe waters for her diminishing herd. After White Fang and his gang of killer whales attack her home, she and her younger brother Snapper search for their adventuring brother, Silver. Predictably, they encounter friend and foe along the way ("If Sea Fan had not kept her head, at least one of us would now be shark dinner"); humans, of course, are their biggest threat, capturing Coral along with her orcan nemesis. The book becomes a _Lassie_ meets _Free Willy_ drama as Coral saves White Fang, falls in love with her human trainer, and is reunited with her brother. The anthropomorphic plot borders on the absurd: Silver tries to commit suicide by colliding with the tank wall after his mate Spray dies, Coral is insanely jealous when her male trainer starts swimming with his (human) female partner, and Coral performs the Heimlich maneuver on Spray in a last-ditch attempt to save her life. The dolphin point of view is occasionally delivered with a semblance of science, but the attempt to integrate human emotions with dolphin "sound pictures" results in B-movie-like dialogue: "'Gone,' he signaled. 'My Spray. Gone Forever. Why live?"' Hall, O'Dell's widow, took over the research and writing on this book in a commendable attempt to complete O'Dell's manuscript, but the result is unfortunately murky and stays in the shallows. HMW

Ad  Gr. 3-5
The Los Angeles subway is shown from its earliest planning stages on, through the draining of a park lake to make a worksite, the archaeological dig for artifacts from Old Chinatown, the boring of the tunnel and all of the many engineering details that must be carried out, to the design of the station and the training of the drivers. What goes on beneath the ground in a city holds a certain fascination both for children and adults; add the rush and noise of underground trains and the thrill of powerful construction machines, and you should have an automatic winner. Un-
Fortunately, the technical descriptions are detailed but not always clear, and readers often get no help from the uncaptioned photographs. An index is helpful; a legendless map on the endpapers is not. Still, the Hewetts deliver a good deal of information, and while children in Los Angeles may be the most enthusiastic audience, many others can satisfy their curiosity about subway construction. SDL


Living in a trailer on Welsh Mountain in Pennsylvania, twelve-year-old Maizie has been caring for her father and baby sister since her mother left them four years ago. She and her sister Grace cut out pictures for their Wish Books of a "Wish Mother," "Wish Baby Brother," a "Wish Mamaw and Papaw" (grandparents), and a "Wish Horse." Not being just a dreamer, Maizie takes on a summer job being a "moonstriper" at the Blue Moon Nursing Home to earn money to help her hard-drinking father pay the electric bill and to save for a strawberry-roan pony. As she pursues her goals, several adults prove helpful, among them Amelia, an old lady at the nursing home with a tart but philosophical tongue, Maizie's Aunt Virginia, who teaches her to drive, and Chris, a Navajo nurse. Maizie copes with the difficulties of her life in a stalwart, matter-of-fact way, which keeps the book from being dreary but makes her unrealistically plucky. Though she claims to have new hormonal mood swings they are never in evidence, so at the end when she finally "gets very angry" with her runaway mother it's startling, especially since the book ends on this note of disillusionment. Although they're rather sketchily drawn, the varied crew of supporting characters adds texture to the story, and the rural setting lends color. High's writing is well paced, and, overall, readers will find Maizie both likable and admirable. SDL


Hopkins collects twenty poems by a variety of writers on the subject of space: the moon, the sun, stars, planets, and meteorites. Most, including his own two, are fairly contemporary, except for "Star light, star bright," and one by Sara Teasdale from the 1930s. Jane Yolen speculates on the moon's distress at the trash left behind by astronauts; Eve Merriam wonders what the other planets see on Earth; Ashley Bryan suggests "Sing to the sun/ It will listen/ And warm your words. . . . Sing to the moon/ It will hear/ And soothe your cares." J. Patrick Lewis manages to succinctly explain something of the mystery of black holes: "A star that's just/ Too fat to hang/ Far out in space/ May pop—and bang!/ Its insides get/ So blazing hot—/ One day it's there,/ The next it's not!" Hopkins groups the poems together nicely, as when, for instance, Barbara Juster Ebensen's conclusion "white/ glittering/ too many to count" leads smoothly into Karla Kuskin's "Counting the stars/ As they glitter bright white" which not only lends flow but improves the book's usefulness as an easy reader. The poems are well chosen and on a topic many children favor, and Sweet's watercolors capture their mix of wonder and joy well. SDL
HUTCHINS, HAZEL J. *Within a Painted Past*; illus. by Ruth Ohi. Firefly/Annick, 1994 160p
Trade ed. ISBN 1-55037-369-2 $14.95
Paper ed. ISBN 1-55037-989-5 $4.95 Ad Gr. 4-7

Elements of fantasy and historical fiction blend in this story of twelve-year-old Allison Moore, who pops through paintings in her Aunt Mavis' guest room to aid nineteenth-century siblings Lily and Jo-Jo as they encounter snowstorms, grizzly bears, and possible exile from Alberta to the home of a cruel couple in Eastern Canada. The time-shift trick to the tale is not particularly nifty, and each successive character accepts the revelation of Allison's fourth-dimensional trekking with remarkable ease; purist followers of this genre are not likely to be impressed. However, historical-fiction buffs may enjoy details of Lily's workaday life in a Canadian mining town and empathize with Allison's admiration of the independence and self-possession of Lily, an adolescent forced to shoulder many responsibilities of adulthood. Pen-and-ink drawings, too cute for the tone of the narrative, are more distracting than illuminating. EB


"Redwaaaaalll!!" The battle lines are tautly drawn and the valiant Redwall mice embark yet again on a fearsome fur-raising adventure. This is the seventh book in the series, and Jacques musters his finely honed skills to create a lively tale depicting the warrior friends Mariel and Dandin (previously seen in *Mariel of Redwall*, BCCB 3/92) as they help woodland creatures in Southward combat the foxwolf usurper Urgan Nagru ("Try saying it both ways, it comes out the same. That's to let my enemies know that I can come at them backward or forward, both ways. But I have no enemies, they're all dead") and his treacherous mate, silvery Silvamord. Meanwhile, Joseph the Bellmaker and four companions set sail upon a quest to find the wandering Mariel and aid her in overcoming the blight of the south. This land-and-sea epic has plenty of tension—kidnappings, killer sharks, dead-of-night escapes, and daring skirmishes with the evil foxes and their rat hordes. Cunning, bravery, and sheer grit ("Muscle and sinew stood out on the old badger's scarred hide as she swung the ram, flattening rats against both walls") prevail on the side of good, and although some of the dialogue is strained ("Acorn for your thoughts"), the unwavering action is addictive. Jacques stretches his tried-and-true formula and successfully introduces new characters (there is actually a *good* rat for once—who loves blackberry scones), settings, and situations for beloved Redwall. Old fans will cheer and new ones will be drawn in like mice to cheese. HMW

JOHNSON, ANGELA *Humming Whispers*. Jackson/Orchard, 1995 121p

For ten years Sophy has been coping reasonably well with her older sister Nikki's schizophrenia; the loving support of Aunt Shirley, with whom the young women live, the devotion of Nikki's boyfriend, and above all the joy Sophy finds in dance have buoyed her up through those spells that compel Nikki to lose herself in the streets for days at a time. Now, however, Sophy has begun to see an unfamiliar face replacing her own in the mirror, the box beneath her bed is filling with items
she "collects" from local stores, and she must face the possibility that she may also be a victim of the illness Nikki first manifested when she was Sophy's age, fourteen. Through Sophy's intimate first-person narration, Johnson paints a riveting portrait of a young woman who watches her self-control slipping away and learns from her damaged but resilient sister how to face her fears. Focusing on relationships rather than on symptoms and treatments, Johnson ably demonstrates the pervasive effects of mental illness on an entire family; as Aunt Shirley observes, "None of us would get out of this one untouched." EB

KING-SMITH, DICK


Readers who never so much as considered having a guinea pig for a pet will probably want to rush out and buy one by the time they finish this picture book. Through the chatty, personal text and Jeram's ink and watercolor pictures we learn a little guinea pig history, anatomy, care and feeding. King-Smith is never dry ("Guinea pigs are such sensible animals. They're awfully easy to keep, because they aren't fussy"), he adds many entertaining details ("Their water bottle often needs washing, because they like blowing pieces of food back up the spout"), and he tells us about some of his former pets, concluding with his memories of two favorites, now buried beneath an apple tree: "I'm not sad about this—just happy to remember what a lot of pleasure I've had from all my guinea pigs." Jeram's illustrations are informal but never cartoonish, with expressive pen-and-ink scratchy lines, and both richly saturated and delicate colors. Large type, lots of white space, and drawings intertwined with text make this a good choice for beginning readers as well as for reading aloud. SDL

KUKLIN, SUSAN


Kodomo means children, and here Kuklin focuses on seven of them to give a picture of contemporary Japanese child-life. Each child gives a brief first-person narrative (whether interviews were conducted through a translator is not stated) telling of school activities or participation in traditional customs such as a tea ceremony or martial arts. Kuklin's decision to divide the book by locale (three kids from Hiroshima and four from Kyoto) and, additionally, to concentrate on schooling in Hiroshima and customs in Kyoto inadvertently gives the impression that the second city is more fun than the first; "About Hiroshima" and "About Kyoto" pages give information about the cities but are only tangentially related to the interviews. There's also a page on Japanese writing at the end, and explanations of facts glanced at in the text are placed in the margins, looking like captions to the color photos but in fact functioning as footnotes. (An explanation of yen, for example, is placed next to a photo in which the only currency to be seen is a U.S. greenback.) This isn't as pulled-together a presentation as we've come to expect from this talented photojournalist, but the book is quite browsable and the excellent photos offer their own rewards—expect particularly heavy wear on the pages that show nine-year-old Keiko and eight-year-old Masaaki at their respective martial arts classes. RS
Paper ed. ISBN 1-886427-00-3  $9.75  Ad  Gr. 5-10

Paper ed. ISBN 1-886427-01-1  $9.75  Ad  Gr. 5-10

These two paperback collections compile stories and essays originally published in Merlyn’s Pen, a magazine devoted to writing by teenaged authors. The alluring “uncensored” claim on the back cover of *Short Takes* leads to a bit of a letdown—none of the pieces (short stories, memories, observations) would shock even the most straight-laced creative writing teacher, and both volumes suffer from a somewhat unnervingly bland anonymity of voice. While the writing is too careful (and sometimes demonstrates an overreliance on a thesaurus) there are some good ideas in the fiction, particularly; with its ghouls and space monsters and ancient curses, *White Knuckles* will be the volume of choice for both readers and budding writers. “La Maison Cherbignac” reads entertainingly like one of Jo March’s melodramas, and “The Boarder” demonstrates the sensibility if not the style of Flannery O’Connor, with its low-key depiction of a strange family that cannot understand why all its boarders keep moving out. RS

MCDONALD, MEGAN  *Insects Are My Life*; illus. by Paul Brett Johnson.  Jackson/Orchard, 1995  32p
Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-06874-9  $14.95  R  5-8 yrs

Amanda Frankenstein is a budding entomologist. She collects dead bugs, and skin casings, and even mosquito bites, and she spends her free time chasing down insects “under rocks, hidden on leaves, in sidewalk cracks.” Her affinity gets her in some trouble from classmates when she starts school (“When Amanda danced in circles like a bee, no other bees followed. When she pulled out her Mexican jumping beans for show-and-tell, no one believed there were caterpillars inside”), but she finally meets a fellow obsessive, Maggie, who adores reptiles as earnestly as Amanda loves insects. While the ending is a bit neat (and it’s odd that knowledgeable little Amanda seems to use the terms “bug” and “insect” interchangeably), McDonald demonstrates a light touch and a pretty sense of particularity (“During circle time, Ms. Scorpio read *The Very Quiet Cricket*, and Amanda made the cricket sound, ‘Cree! Cree! Cree!’ because the computer chip in the back of the book was broken”). Johnston’s illustrations in watercolor, colored pencil, and pastel show all the kids as solid and blocky individuals; the soft lines and muted colors balance out Amanda’s determined and slightly dorky visage. A sturdy and endearing paean to kids in a topic-intensive phase and to kids’ general individuality, this might prompt audience discussion of favorite fields or their own rocky starts at school. DS

MADGWICK, WENDY  *Citymaze!: A Collection of Amazing City Mazes*; illus. by Dan Courtney et al.  Millbrook, 1995  40p
ISBN 1-56294-561-0  $12.90  R  Gr. 2-6

Before Carmen Sandiego there were Risk, Game of the States, and the venerable Viewmaster travel reels. Continuing the tradition of these low-tech geographical
amusements is this collection of city-maps-turned-labyrinths, which educate and delight. Each double-page spread features a breezy guidebook description and concisely drawn map of a portion of the city (twelve cities, on five continents), and a tourist nightmare—you must trace your route between two points through a maze of traffic jams, construction sites, "no entries," restricted turns, and dead ends. The mazes are first-rate, offering a range of challenge from a comparatively direct circuit around Sydney to an intricate serpentine meander through Venice. Solutions are provided at the back of the book, together with additional information about the city and a guide to landmarks located in and near the mapped areas. The natural tendency of kids to attack mazes with indelible markers and pens may limit the library shelf life of this title; in a classroom, under the vigilant eye of a teacher, readers could be encouraged to trace the pilgrims' progress with a harmless finger. Bon voyage. EB


In this book by a popular Australian novelist, Ellie and six of her friends have been off on a camping trip in the bush, and they discover upon their return home that their families have disappeared and that an unnamed foreign power has conquered their country. This is a magnetic premise, and the book has appealing dollops of survival themes (Ellie et al. learning to live hidden from the enemy in the bush), sabotage (there's a thrilling scene when the teens blow up a bridge), and romance (Ellie is torn between her physical attraction to fellow saboteur Homer and her intellectual closeness to another, Lee). It's too bad that the suspense is undercut by the first chapter, which reveals that Ellie is writing down in retrospect the story of the group: since we know from the first page that Robyn is alive and well, there's little tension in the scene which details her rescue from the near-clutches of the invaders. Too, the characters are not rendered with enough distinction from each other, so it's not always easy to tell—or care—what is happening to whom. It's true that any story of teens against hostile adults will have appeal, and if Marsden's writing does not here display the dramatic economy of his previous book, Letters from the Inside (BCCB 10/94), he still has a handle on teenaged angst writ large. RS


A is for asparagus and B is for butterfly in this picture book, which is an alphabet guessing game. In her introduction, the author says, "Patterns are everywhere in the natural world: on fish and flowers, fruits and vegetables, animals and insects, in the sky and in the water." Each lower-case letter of the alphabet is filled in with a pattern found in nature; a turn of the page reveals the plant or animal in its entirety. Some of the patterns will be easy to solve (S for strawberry, T for tiger), while others provide more of a challenge but are guessable, such as P for pineapple. However, a few of the answers would simply be impossible even for older children and adults, clearly unfair in an identification book: how many readers will guess kingfisher for K, or unicornfish for U? The book's design and its clean paper-cutout illustrations stand out, especially because of the care taken to match the
facing pages, with the red, green and black of the kingfisher, for instance, echoed in the red and black letter "L" on a green background (although it's too bad kingfishers aren't green). However, the entertaining concept and well-executed artwork cannot compensate for the reader's feeling that the author has cheated a little in the game. SDL

Trade ed. ISBN 0-94075-30-0  $14.95
Paper ed. ISBN 0-94075-31-9  $6.95  R 4-8 yrs

Annie loves music as much as the rest of her family does, but although they are musically talented, she cannot find an instrument that doesn't make her listeners wince. When she tries the recorder, it "squeaked and squawked like chickens at feeding time," and when she sings and plays piano, "her performance made everyone squirm in their chairs." When she writes a poem about it and gives it to her father, however, she gets the reassurance she needs that "not everyone can write poetry and draw beautiful pictures the way you can." While being a little too tidy, and possibly leaving children with the impression that they can tell immediately if they are good at something that may in fact take many lessons to do well, this story addresses a concern to which many young readers will relate. Rich's warm paintings (featuring an African-American cast) are both cozy and comical; when the author compares the sounds of an instrument as Annie plays it to something else, Rich shows it intruding on the quiet suburban house (as when, for instance, a truck roars through the living room). She paints people skillfully, and the pained expressions on the faces of Annie's listeners are especially funny. Annie's family is real and likable, and the message of each person finding his or her own gifts a worthwhile one. SDL

**MEYER, CAROLYN**  *Drummers of Jericho*. Gulliver/Harcourt, 1995  [336p]
Trade ISBN 0-15-200441-6  $11.00
Paper ed. ISBN 0-15-200190-5  $5.00  Reviewed from galleys  M Gr. 7-10

Pazit Trujillo, new girl and only Jew in the vaguely situated town of Jericho, can handle, just, participating in the school band's medley of Christian hymns, but when the director announces that the band's steps will culminate in the form of a huge cross moving across the football field, she refuses to march. Following in the steps of Lasky's *Memoirs of a Bookbat* (BCCB 4/94) and Peck's *The Last Safe Place on Earth* (2/95), this novel pits the good guys against the fundamentalists, and it's hardly a fair fight. Pazit's father goes ballistic and calls the local ACLU, the issue becomes headline news, the other band members harass Pazit with whispers of "Jew bitch" in the hallways and leave a gift-wrapped dead rat on her doorstep. Only Billy, scared of losing his friends, but knowing what's right, stands up for her—literally, in the obligatory school board meeting scene, where the "Christians" shout their slogans and hiss "the other side" as represented by Pazit's stepmother, a hippie-ish potter who, along with the wise black school nurse, delivers the Message in case readers couldn't figure it out on their own. Narrated from Pazit's and Billy's points-of-view in alternating chapters, the book is suspenseful but fundamentally unrealistic in its calculated setup, and while Pazit and Billy are themselves sturdy enough characters, they're awash in a sea of stereotypes. RS
MILTON, JOYCE Big Cats; illus. by Silvia Duran. Grosset, 1994 48p (All Aboard Reading)

The ferocious growling cheetah on the cover is certain to attract some reluctant readers, who won’t be disappointed with the first vignette—Milton begins with a leopard catching a zebra. Readers who like their kitties cuddlier will enjoy the baby cougars, lions, and leopards as well as the section on domestic cats. Those with a taste for the supernatural will go for the page on weretigers, though it doesn’t fit with the rest of the book. Plenty of pictures, amateurishly executed, and short sentences will also appeal. Unfortunately, while children will learn a little about several cats, they will learn more about poor grammar. In her zeal for concocting short sentences, Milton does not always include a noun and a verb (“Or animals to hunt.”) and she tediously begins sentences with conjunctions fifteen times in forty-eight pages. Additionally, one of the more interesting illustrations, a map showing where the big cats live around the world, loses a large section to the tight binding. Poor writing and illustration and scattershot information make this one kid magnet most libraries will want to pass up.

NAYLOR, PHYLLIS REYNOLDS Alice the Brave. Karl/Atheneum, 1995 [144p]
ISBN 0-689-80095-9 $15.00 Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 6-8

Fortunately, Naylor doesn’t seem to be running out of epithets or adventures for the redoubtable Alice (of Alice In-Between, BCCB 5/94, etc.), but the title here is at first questionable: Alice’s gang spends the summer hanging out by Mark Stedmeister’s pool, and Alice is secretly petrified—petrified—of water. Swimming isn’t the only summer activity: Alice and her friends Elizabeth and Pamela all do a bit of growing up, especially when they read extracts of the exotic text of Tales from the Arabian Nights (and find it bewildering—“From the look on her face, [Elizabeth] was still mulling over the maidenhead, but I was struggling with the Yemeni wrigglings, while Pamela had probably progressed past the Abyssinian sobbings and was all the way to Upper Egyptian heat”). Naylor’s humorous precision about the trials of adolescence is unmatched, with Alice in a quandary as to how to inform Pamela that she needs to use deodorant or failing miserably as a hospital visitor when she sympathetically likens the patient’s hysterectomy to her friend’s getting her long hair cut off. And, as usual, Al’s family comes through for her in the clutches: her brother, Lester, takes her out to a private pool, and even if the cops do get involved (the pool belongs to a sometimes girlfriend, who is out of town), Alice still learns to face the water with equanimity by the end of the day. There’s nobody quite like Alice, yet she’s like everybody—it’s always good to see her making a splash.

OUGHTON, JERRIE Music from a Place Called Half Moon. Houghton, 1995 [176p]
ISBN 0-395-70737-4 $13.95 Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 5-8

As the summer of 1956 approaches, the hottest issue to face Half Moon, North Carolina is whether the Vacation Bible School should be open to the local Indian children. Edie Jo Houp, age thirteen, is quite frankly afraid of her Indian neigh-
bors; she has seen Cherokee Fish rough up a boy in gym, and she and her brother have been threatened by a gang of "half breeds" while driving in their car. However, when Edie Jo begins to know—and possibly love—Cherokee, she reevaluates her prejudices and questions her parents' actions and values. Cherokee's tragic death becomes the catalyst for Edie to lay her fears to rest, offer a gesture of friendship to his grieving sister, and "accept people for who they were." Oughton takes the issue of integration to a personal level as she limns the ethical inconsistencies of Edie's family with deft strokes. Daddy may really believe in racial equality, or he just may enjoy a public argument; Grandma is at once the church peacemaker, and, through her insensitive remarks, also the unwitting cause of an arsonist's attacks; Mama resists integration, yet pays a funeral visit to Mrs. Fish because "losing a child doesn't hurt less if you're an Indian." Oughton crafts her prose as skillfully as her characterizations. Adult Edie's narration captures the graceful idiom and easy confidentiality of the best spinners of family yarns; the three poems from Edie's journal could stand on their own merit apart from their context within the novel. This bittersweet tale is deeply satisfying both as coming-of-age story and as social problem novel. EB

PORTÉ, BARBARA ANN  
Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-06877-3  $14.95  
R  4-6 yrs

With rhythmic prose and occasional internal rhymes meted out by a practiced storyteller, this buoyant story will snag listeners with its infectious silliness. It's about a man who draws nothing but chickens: "chickens in the sunshine and chickens in the rain, chickens on rooftops and chickens pecking grain." Country folk have no use for chicken pictures, and city folk don't know from chickens, so it's not until he meets a woman who loves him as well as his pictures—and who has the business sense to parlay poultry paintings into major money—that the man makes his fortune. The rite-of-passage journey, triumphant resolution, and happy marriage make this a contemporary fairy tale with down-home twists of humor that are extended in Henry's paintings, stylized in a naïve mode with flat perspectives and brilliant color contrasts. Maybe the chickens look a bit like guinea fowl in profile, but the riotous spirit is clearly defined, with blue or red birds driving yellow cabs, green ones carrying black briefcases, and multihued others cavorting throughout the imaginative compositions. The characters are African American, the theme is follow your dream, and the book is a lot of fun. BH

RODOWSKY, COLBY  
*Sydney, Invincible.* Farrar, 1995  [144p]  
ISBN 0-374-37365-5  $14.00  
Reviewed from galleys  R  Gr. 6-9

Sydney (of *Sydney, Herself*, BCCB 10/89) is back, and her junior year has offered her a few special challenges: she's been appointed editor of the school newspaper, her mother and stepfather are going to have a baby, and her boyfriend's parents are getting divorced. Sydney finds herself rising to the demands of editorship despite the vague guidance of the paper's faculty sponsor, but she takes on more than she can handle when the paper's staff decides to do an expose of the cafeteria. Rodowsky manages to tell a story with many complications quite simply, so that Sydney's having to take a class from her teacher-mother and her embarrassment at her
mother's very public pregnancy blend smoothly into the yearbook story. The ethical questions surrounding the paper's exposé (which turns out to be a hatchet job) are convincingly presented, although the dreamy, pseudo-artistic, and ultimately disloyal faculty sponsor never quite rings true as a character. Sydney herself is an immensely solid and likeable narrator, and fans of the first book won't want to miss out on this latest installment of her story. DS


As one might expect from Mr. Rogers, this is a gentle, matter-of-fact, and reassuring approach to the topic of adoption. The text addresses the young listener directly, explaining that "you could belong in your family by being born into it, or you could belong in your family by being adopted into it" and suggesting that "there may also be some times when you wonder about being adopted." The emphasis, however, is on families and their strength through bad times and good. Rogers' unaffected delivery has a way of making scary things unscary, which should help parents as much as kids, and his concrete suggestions for kids dealing with the issue (talk to your family, draw pictures, or pretend about it) will be a help to kids who may not have thought about those options. The illustrations are sharp, clear color photographs following the daily tasks of three different families; all the families look real, if unrealistically tidy, and there may be a subtle message in the fact that you can't tell if all the kids are adopted or not. The text may be a bit padded, and it would have been nice to see more variety in the pictured families (while the cast is multi-racial, they're all in two-parent, strictly nuclear setups), but this will help kids and adults deal calmly with an often anxiety-provoking subject. DS


"Traded my moccasins for those whiteman's shoes,/ I got both feet in two canoes"—this line from "Reservation Blues" expresses the immensity of loss, both personal and cultural, which permeates this collection of over forty poems, short stories, memoirs, songs, and legends written by contemporary Native American writers. The breadth of contributions takes readers on a literary journey across the entire back of Turtle Island (all of North America) and includes some well-known authors (Joseph Bruchac, Louise Erdrich, Leslie Marmon Silko) as well as many works by lesser-known voices. The mix is loosely arranged (vague headings such as "Standing Up" and "Finding a Way" begin each of the six sections) and occasionally enigmatic, but the variety nonetheless fosters an appreciation of ancestral ties and storytelling traditions. Many of the selections are adult reminiscences about growing up—forced schooling, coming of age fears, and cultural estrangement—and most of them address the struggles with modern alienation and with weakening traditions. In Glen Cooper's memoir, "The Moose," he sees his father cry for the first time because the moose he killed is contaminated by pollutants, and in "A Mountain Legend" a young Cree boy meets a ghost of the past and is victorious in overcoming his present-day fears. The collection is uneven, and sometimes aes-
thetic quality is sacrificed for social didacticism ("Everything has changed since white people came here; it’s all mixed up now—too much candy, too much booze and drugs. The people forget the old ways."—"Sara’s Gift") but the book would work well in classrooms as a reminder to students of how native cultures have enriched North American literature. Occasional photographs and drawings, a cultural/linguistic map, and author notes are included. HMW


In this brief but thorough discussion of plate tectonics, Sattler covers collision and subduction, rifting, faulting, and related earth-building processes. The text moves smoothly from description of plates, to plate movement and resultant geomorphology, to consideration of the impact of plate movement on future human activities. Eschewing overworn accounts of earthquake and volcanic devastation, Sattler enlives the hard science with subtler suggestions for Earth’s distant future: “New York City may be sitting on . . . a fault” that could split Long Island in two; “either the Great Basin area or the Rio Grande Rift will someday separate enough to open a new ocean.” Report writers and students seeking material to supplement textbook lessons will particularly appreciate Maestro’s comprehensible diagrams and maps, as well as the index and reading list which features a host of readily accessible periodical articles. This title will claim a place even in basic science collections and will be useful to readers well into junior high. EB


Annie Rye, age ten, and her two older sisters, Maybaby and Brat, are living for the summer with their grandmother Moriah in rural Georgia in this sequel to Down in the Piney Woods (BCCB 6/92) that, according to the author’s note, is based on her 1950s childhood. Annie Rye tells her first-person narration in a southern African-American dialect (“Brat or Maybaby neither one ain’t got they mind on fishing”) which makes for tough going until the reader adjusts, and the opening chapter sets the scene but has little action. Readers who persist, however, will be rewarded. Annie Rye is suspicious of Betty Jean, the friendly-seeming granddaughter of the white landowner for whom Moriah cleans and cooks. After Brat gets whipped, at the landowner’s demand, for sharing a soda with Betty Jean, Annie Rye is certain she was correct in her suspicions, and her grandmother’s heartbeat (“Like a hurt so far down she can’t dig it out”) at having to whip Brat makes her feel even worse. The next day, though warned not to, the three sisters can’t resist wading in a polluted pond, and Annie Rye is sworn to secrecy when her sisters dunk their heads in the contaminated water. The resulting eye infection almost leads to tragedy, and adds another layer to the complicated relationship between the two families. Annie Rye makes a vivid character, strong-willed and passionate, and her descriptions of the now-exotic-sounding occurrences of her life (such as the clay-eating neighbor who straightens the girls’ hair, and the techniques of boiling clothes clean in a kettle with lye soap) help recreate this particular time and place for the Nintendo generation. SDL
In a new version of this traditional gardening tale, clever Hare, who has "lost a risky bet with a tortoise," outsmarts lazy, rich Bear. He offers to turn the land in front of Bear's house into a vegetable garden, giving Bear the top half of every vegetable and taking only the bottoms for himself and his family. Bear is annoyed at harvest time when Hare has a nice pile of carrots, turnips and beets, so Hare graciously reverses the deal for the next garden but comes out ahead just the same. Stevens retells the story with vigor and humor, but the artwork is the real star. The book opens lengthwise, which with most picture books would be a gimmick, but with the top, bottom, and middle theme here, it's an ingenious twist. Visual jokes abound; observant children will notice many details like the furnishings in the Hare family house, which include a plastic pop-can-ring ladder and a clothespin chair, while adults may get a particular kick out of watching the shutters fall off the lazy Bear's house and the continuous fight against dandelions in the garden. As always, Stevens' animals are quirky but never cutesy, with the Hare family all pointy joints and long ears, and the bear looking both fierce and rumpy. And not only does Stevens paint a luscious vegetable, she paints on vegetables—the flap copy states that she crafted her own vegetable-based paper for the original art. In the satisfying conclusion the Hares are now prosperous and Bear industrious, while readers have enjoyed a great story and even learned a few vegetable facts. SDL

This is the second time Temple has taken recent events in Haiti as the basis for fiction; here she has moved up almost to the present (just before Aristide's return) to tell the story of a young girl, Paulie, and her family's plans for an illegal escape across the Caribbean to "Mee-ya-mee." Their preparation of the boat is threatened by the ominous presence of the macoutes, army thugs who "prowled among them, took their chickens, beat up the teacher so there could be no more school." Jean Desir, Paulie's best friend's big brother, poses a particular danger—no one knows whose side he is really on. While Jean Desir demonstrates some inner conflict, the characters for the most part are flat and idealized as poor, good, and brave. Temple's storytelling, though, is strong enough to pull them along. There's enough action to keep kids going through some of the more didactic passages, and the sea journey has the pace and appeal of great-escape fiction. RS

"Her life—with sheep, rocks, plants, sky, and the wool for her hands to work with—is harmonious." It's a hardwon harmony, since Katie Henio has survived ceaseless work in a harsh climate and terrain to become a great-grandmother who steadies her family in Navajo traditions. It's also hard to structure a description of this harmony into the sequential organization of a book format, and Thomson's photodocumentary, while vivid, sometimes seems to jump around in zig-zag pat-
terns. However, between the perceptively composed photographs (both color and black-and-white) and the smoothly incorporated interview quotations, the book makes rich browsing and wakes readers to an existence where education is a herd of sheep, and where past melds with present in a more intuitive and spiritual pathway than many children travel. BH


"... for children and their parents," reads the subtitle, but it may well be that adults will constitute the primary audience for Viorst’s latest collection of verse. Not because the selections are difficult—children’s poets such as Myra Cohn Livingston, David McCord and Eve Merriam routinely employ more sophisticated imagery and meter—but because the humor of most of the poems tends to come from what adults think is funny about childhood, not from what children find funny themselves: “Who decided that vegetables are something a growing child needs?/ Who decided that wonce is spelled o-n-c-e?” While Viorst is capable of getting some nicely jaunty rhythms going, as in a jump-rope chant of the fifty, well, forty-nine states, most of the poems overstay their welcome, as in a seventy-three line retelling of “The Fisherman and His Wife,” and they often end in a shaggy-dog punchline that comments ironically on all that has gone before. However, fans of If I Were in Charge of the World and Other Worries (BCCB 7/82) may well be looking out for this companion, so buy for demand. RS


The text here consists of fifteen short poems from Richard Wilbur’s Opposites (BCCB 7/73) and More Opposites; each poem examines an antonymical relationship in rhymed verse that ranges from the quick couplet (“What is the opposite of riot?/ It’s lots of people keeping quiet”) to the longer, more conceptually involved stanza (“I wonder if you’ve ever seen a/ Willow sheltering a hyena?/ Nowhere in nature can be found/ An opposition more profound . . . ”). The “Runaway” part of the title comes from Henrik Drescher’s illustrations and settings: with his trademark vividly hued and anarchic pastiche, Drescher has filled the pages with defaced old portraits, cut-out newspaper letters, pen doodles, impossible animals, and various and sundry extraneous materials. The effect is energetic, for sure, and there’s an appealing gaudy sinisterness to the sharptoothed people and animals that frequent the pages; sometimes the art plays cleverly upon the poem, as when the verse meditating on the possible opposites of “trunk” (two possibilities are an elephant’s tail or a wrapped package) sits atop a brown-paper parcel in the shape of a pachyderm. Unfortunately the poems are often inclined towards the slight and the art completely buries them: Wilbur’s sly juxtaposition of the weeping willow and laughing hyena, for instance, is overpowered by the double-spread length of Drescher’s spiky, steely-eyed hyena, and the illustrations frequently go off on their own disorganized mission rather than playing—or working—with the concepts in the poem. Nonetheless, while this doesn’t have the artistic or conceptual finesse of The Stinky Cheese Man, kids may enjoy the similar testing of artistic boundaries and the creepy critters that frolic through the pages. DS
WILLIAMS, CAROL LYNCH  Adeline Street.  Delacorte, 1995  [128p]
ISBN 0-385-31075-7  $14.95
Reviewed from galleys

In this sequel to Kelly and Me (BCCB 3/94), Leah tells the story of the year following the death of her sister and near-twin, Kelly. The family makes it through their first Christmas without Kelly; Leah and her friend (and maybe soon her boyfriend) Tom have some bike-riding adventures; a new girl with a troubled home life moves to town and makes friends with Leah; and, finally, Leah discovers that her mother is going to have a baby. Over every episode and every chapter is Leah's constant wrestling with her grief for Kelly and her gradually easing guilt at surviving. Williams again displays an easy gift for evocation of place and voice; the Floridian setting is specific, and immediate, and Leah's narration is authentic in its blend of sorrow and adjustment. Readers may be a bit confused if they start here instead of with the previous volume, and the book perhaps is oversupplied with lesser tragedies, such as Leah's and Tom's accidental shooting of a neighbor's rooster and Leah's grandfather being rather casually run over by a truck; in the first book this darkness seemed to foreshadow Kelly's eventual death, but it does begin to seem as if Leah is simply exceedingly unlucky. The conviction and tenderness of the story, however, make it a rewarding read, and those who enjoyed the previous book will appreciate Leah's realization that gradually "life would be better for us all."  DS

WYETH, SHARON DENNIS  Vampire Bugs: Stories Conjured from the Past; illus. by Curtis E. James.  Delacorte, 1995  80p
ISBN 0-385-32082-5  $13.95

"Once there was a witcher woman who could catch lightning and ride it across the sky..." So begins the first of six spooky stories Wyeth has gathered, adapted, or written for this collection. Characters include Little Mose, the son of a slave woman swapped to another plantation; New Orleans voodoo queen Marie Le Veau and her daughter; a boy and his father's ghost. The strong parts of this collection are Wyatt's pleasing turn of phrase and the novelty of the material here—there aren't any old chestnuts. Unfortunately, the plots are often poorly paced and stumble in crucial places: "Akiba's Singing Water," for instance, stands out as a promising ghost story but turns instead into a talky dream. Kids will still appreciate the unusual fantasy in tales such as "Little Mose" and "Vampire Bugs," particularly if the stories are read aloud in a darkened room. Black-and-white illustrations are smokily intense but stiff and darkly reproduced; good source notes and bibliography are included.  DS

YEP, LAURENCE, ad  Tree of Dreams: Ten Tales from the Garden of Night; illus. by Isadore Seltzer.  BridgeWater, 1995  [94p]
ISBN 0-8167-3498-4  $13.95
Reviewed from galleys

As ineffable as dreams may seem, these ten stories about them are surprisingly solid, coherent, and invariably involving. From Japan, India, China, Greece, Brazil, and Senegal, Yep has drawn a choice selection: the first is a magical tale of badgers rewarding a couple for their kindness; the last is a riddle story with remarkable resemblances to the Biblical Joseph and his dreams. In between comes a varied parade of active plots and unusual characters, highlighted by smooth but never pretentious narrative and a natural incorporation of dialogue. In addition to
a poetic preface and an informative afterword, the stories are each introduced by a densely hued oil painting, populated with figures of drolly un-dreamy solidity, and a brief comment. Except for two specific acknowledgments, however, the bibliography does not match specific stories with their sources. We must trust that the clarity and grace of Yep's adaptations bear witness to his care in authentically reflecting earlier versions. BH


Long after hearing this story-poem, listeners will find themselves chanting the chorus: "And silver the coins and silver the moon;/ Silver the waves on the top of the sea;/ When the pirate ship comes sailing in;/ That gallant *Vanity.*" Yolen never forces a rhyme or makes a misstep in this true adventure about the female pirates Mary Reade and Anne Bonney. The story is a thrilling one, as Captain Calico Jack Rackham and his men stay below decks playing cards and drinking while Anne and Mary attempt to fight off the "bristling man-o'-war" the *Albion:* "So shoulder to shoulder and back to back;/ Stood Mary and stood Anne;/ Never was it said that they/ Were feared of any man." Of course all are taken, and when Anne passes by Calico Jack's prison cell, she tells him, "If you'd fought like a man,/ My Jack, you'd need not die." The men are hanged, but Anne and Mary are both pregnant and therefore escape the gallows; according to Yolen's note at the end, Mary may have died in prison, but the story chooses the happiest of the possible scenarios, as "Anne and Mary's children's children/ Round their households play," while Jack and his men rise from their graves to sail a ghostly *Vanity.* Shannon's acrylic paintings are magnificently dark and spooky. Rich and full of accurately portrayed historical detail, these are illustrations that children will want to pore over, especially those of the two ships. The faces of the pirates are particularly vivid and intense, and each painting has a hand-lettered caption, which sometimes includes the words supposedly used in real life, as when Anne tells Rackham, "Hang like a dog!" The closing note gives just enough factual background to send readers back to the beginning to read it through again: "Silver the coins and silver the moon. . . ." SDL

ZEINERT, KAREN  *Free Speech: From Newspapers to Music Lyrics.*

See Able, p. 262, for review.

Note: Sheila Kelly Welch's *A Horse for All Seasons,* reviewed in the January issue of the *Bulletin,* is illustrated by the author; Sandy Rabinowitz, credited as the illustrator in our heading, was responsible for the cover art only.
CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARDS 1995

The Newbery Medal will be awarded to Sharon Creech for *Walk Two Moons* (HarperCollins). The Newbery Honor Books are *Catherine, Called Birdy* by Karen Cushman (Clarion) and *The Ear, the Eye and the Arm* by Nancy Farmer (Jackson/Orchard).

The Caldecott Medal will be awarded to David Diaz for *Smoky Night* (Harcourt), written by Eve Bunting. The Caldecott Honor Books are *Swamp Angel*, written by Anne Isaacs and illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky (Dutton), *John Henry*, written by Julius Lester and illustrated by Jerry Pinkney (Dial), and *Time Flies*, written and illustrated by Eric Rohmann (Crown).

The Coretta Scott King Award will be presented to Patricia C. and Fredrick L. McKissack, authors of *Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters* (Scholastic) for writing and to James E. Ransome for *The Creation* (Holiday House), written by James Weldon Johnson, for illustration. King Honor Books for writing are Jacqueline Woodson’s *I Hadn’t Meant to Tell You This* (Delacorte), Patricia C. and Fredrick L. McKissack’s *Black Diamond: The Story of the Negro Baseball League* (Scholastic), and Joyce Hansen’s *The Captive* (Scholastic). King Honor Books for illustration are *The Singing Man*, written by Angela Shelf Medearis and illustrated by Terea Shaffer (Holiday House) and *Meet Danitra Brown*, written by Nikki Grimes and illustrated by Floyd Cooper (Lothrop).

The American publisher receiving the Mildred L. Batchelder Award for the most outstanding translation of a book originally published in a foreign language is Dutton Children’s Books for Bjarne Reuter's *The Boys from St. Petri*. The honor book is *Sister Shako and Kolo the Goat* by Vedat Dalokay (Holt).

The Laura Ingalls Wilder Award will be given to Virginia Hamilton.

The Scott O'Dell Award for historical fiction will be given to Graham Salisbury for *Under the Blood-Red Sun* (Delacorte).

The Canadian Library Association’s Best Book of the Year for Children is *Some of the Kinder Planets* by Tim Wynne-Jones (Kroupa/Orchard). The Best Book of the Year for Young Adults is *Nobody’s Son* by Sean Stewart (Maxwell Macmillan). The Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Award for illustration goes to Leo Yerxa for *Last Leaf First Snowflake to Fall* (Groundwood).

The Carnegie Medal was awarded to Robert Swindells for *Stone Cold* (Hamish Hamilton).

The Kate Greenaway Medal was awarded to Alan Lee for *Black Ships before Troy: The Story of The Iliad*, written by Rosemary Sutcliff (Delacorte).

The 1996 May Hill Arbuthnot Lecture will be delivered by Zena Sutherland.
The Margaret A. Edwards Award will be given to Cynthia Voigt.

NCTE's Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children goes to *Safari beneath the Sea: The Wonder World of the North Pacific Coast* by Diane Swanson (Sierra Club); Honor Books include *Wildlife Rescue: The Work of Dr. Kathleen Ramsay* by Jennifer Owings Dewey (Boyd's Mills), *Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade against Child Labor* by Russell Freedman (Clarion), and *Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters* by Patricia C. and Fredrick L. McKissack.

Much of the above information was graciously provided by the Children's Book Council, which offers a materials brochure listing their many helpful publications. To receive this, send a request, enclosing 6” x 9” SASE with 2 oz. first-class postage, to the Children's Book Council, 568 Broadway, Suite 404, New York, NY, 10012.

**SUBJECT AND USE INDEX**

Keyed to *The Bulletin's* alphabetical arrangement by author, this index, which appears in each issue, can be used in three ways. Entries in regular type refer to subjects; entries in bold type refer to curricular or other uses; entries in ALL-CAPS refer to genres and appeals. In the case of subject headings, the subhead "stories" refers to books for the readaloud audience; "fiction," to those books intended for independent reading.

- Adoption—fiction: Cole; Ellis
- Adoption: Rogers
- African Americans—fiction:
  - Johnson; Smothers; Wyeth
- African Americans—stories:
  - Medearis
- African Americans: Equiano
- Alcoholism—stories: Carrick
- ALPHABET BOOKS: Marshall
- Architecture: Ancona
- Arithmetic: Anno
- Art and artists—stories: Dunrea; Garland, M.; Medearis; Porte
- Art: Wilbur
- Aunts—fiction: Danziger
- Australia—fiction: Gleitzman; Marsden
- BEDTIME STORIES: Esbensen
- BIOGRAPHIES: Bruchac; Burchard; Coerr; Equiano
- California—fiction: Cottonwood
- Canada—fiction: Hutchins
- Cats: Milton
- Censorship: Zeinert
- Chickens—stories: Dunrea; French; Porte
- Child abuse—fiction: Williams
- China—fiction: Fang
- Christians—fiction: Brammer; Meyer
- Cities: Madgwick
- Colorado—stories: Bodkin
- CONCEPT BOOKS: Anno
- Current events: Able
- Death—fiction: Williams.
- Disasters—fiction: Cottonwood
- Divorce—fiction: High
- Dolphins—fiction: Hall
- Dreams—fiction: Yep
- Dreams—stories: Esbensen
- Escape—fiction: Temple
- Ethics and values: Able; Meyer; Rodowsky
- FANTASY: Hall; Hutchins; Jacques
Fathers and daughters-fiction: Danziger
Fathers and sons-fiction: Crutcher
Fear-fiction: Naylor
FOLKTALES AND FAIRYTALES: Cecil; DeFelice; Emberley; Fang; French; Yep
Foxes-stories: French
Friends-fiction: Brammer; Cottonwood; Feuer; Naylor
FUNNY STORIES: Gleitzman
Gardening-stories: Stevens
Geology: Sattler
Grandfathers-stories: Griffith
Guidance: Carrick
Guinea pigs: King-Smith
Haiti-fiction: Temple
HISTORICAL FICTION:
Garland, S.; Oughton; Smothers
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Insects-stories: McDonald
Japan: Kuklin
Jews-fiction: Meyer
Journalism: Rodowsky
Latinos-fiction: Cofer
London-fiction: Danziger
LOVE STORIES: Garland, S.
Mazes: Madgwick
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Mice-fiction: Jacques
Mothers and daughters-fiction: Ellis; High
Music-stories: Medearis
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Native Americans: Bruchac; Thomson
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Pennsylvania-fiction: High
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Pioneer life-fiction: Hutchins
Pirates-stories: Yolen
POETRY: Hopkins; Roman; Viorst; Wilbur; Yolen
Pregnancy, teen-fiction: Cole
Prejudice-fiction: Oughton; Smothers
Prejudice: Able
Reading aloud: Wyeth
Reading, beginning: Antle; Coerr; Hopkins; Milton
Reading, easy: Danziger; Griffith; King-Smith
Reading, family: Rogers; Viorst
Reading, reluctant: Cole; Cottonwood; Crutcher; Madgwick
Refugees-fiction: Temple
Religious education: Ancona; Brammer
Sailing-stories: Crews
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School-fiction: Rodowsky
School-stories: McDonald
Science: Asch
Sheep herding: Thomson
SHORT STORIES: Cofer; Kulpa; Roman
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Social studies: Kuklin
Space-poetry: Hopkins
SPORTS STORIES: Crutcher
Story hour: Bodkin; Cecil; Crews; DeFelice; Dunrea; Emberley; French; Garland, M.; George; Griffith; King-Smith; Marshall; McDonald; Medearis; Porte; Stevens; Yolen
Summer-fiction: Feuer; Naylor
Survival-fiction: Marsden
Taiwan-fiction: Brammer
Time travel-fiction: Hutchins
Trains-stories: Bodkin
Transportation: Hewett
War-fiction: Marsden
Water: Asch
Waterfalls-stories: George
West, the-fiction: Antle
West, the: Coerr
Work: Ancona
Writing: Kulpa
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Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

“The writing is simple, and the book is filled with enough detail and dialogue to hold young readers' attention. The warm, muted watercolors are filled with action.”
School Library Journal

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School Library Journal

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*Booklist*