PRODUCTION NOTE

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library
"[Wemberly Worried's heroine] is back in another winning story ... perfectly complemented by adorable illustrations. The text, art, and design are particularly well suited to young children."

—School Library Journal

"Henkes has mastered the art of transferring his mouse children to the simplicity required for a board book.... A sweet treat worth waiting for."

—Kirkus Reviews

Ages 2 up. $6.99
Fes (0-06-050405-6)

Kevin Henkes's first picture book—now back in print!

All Alone

Full-color illustrations

All ages. • $14.99 Tr (0-06-054115-6)
$15.89 Lb (0-06-054116-4)

Greenwillow Books An imprint of HarperCollins Publishers
1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019 • www.harperchildrens.com
A LOOK INSIDE

3 THE BIG PICTURE
Boy Meets Boy by David Levithan

4 NEW BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Reviewed titles include:
13 * Fight On!: Mary Church Terrell's Battle for Integration by Dennis Brindell Fradin and Judith Bloom Fradin
14 * The Wolves in the Walls by Neil Gaiman; illus. by Dave McKean
31 * Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix by J. K. Rowling; illus. by Mary GrandPré
37 * Inside Out by Terry Trueman
40 * Zigzag by Ellen Wittlinger

42 PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS

43 SUBJECT AND USE INDEX
Ah, love, sweet love. It comes to tenth-grader Paul on an ordinary bookstore outing with friends when, in the Self-Help section, he meets the boy of his dreams: “I am aware of my breathing. I am aware of my heartbeat. I am aware that my shirt is half untucked. . . . There’s no way that Self-Help can help me now.”

Noah, new to town and Paul’s school, reciprocates the interest, and the two embark on the exciting beginnings of an idyllic relationship. In fact, in the tender prose, the pulsating sentiment, and the slightly embarrassing mutual absorption of the subject couple, *Boy Meets Boy* recalls classic romances such as *Seventeenth Summer*.

Levithan’s master stroke, however, lies in the setting, Paul’s fictional, unnamed hometown, for which Paul has great fondness. It’s an interesting place, operating fully within the rules of reality, but it’s a reality that doesn’t quite currently exist. There Infinite Darlene, the transvestite quarterback and Paul’s good friend, is also the homecoming queen; Paul’s kindergarten teacher helpfully notes on his report card that he is “definitely gay” (“and has very good sense of self”); P-FLAG is “as big a draw as the PTA”; and the local Boy Scouts have renamed themselves the “Joy Scouts” after renouncing the national association’s gay-unfriendly policies. Nor is this a single-issue or polemical utopia: the school janitors have made a fortune day-trading and just keep cleaning the school for pleasure; there’s a touching custom in the local cemetery, where each gravestone has a book attached so that people can read the writing of—or write to—the deceased. The offbeat location allows the book to contrast the lot of Tony, Paul’s good friend from the less egalitarian world of the next town over, with that of Paul and his cronies, but it more importantly relieves Paul’s relationship with Noah of political issues and permits the story to revel in being luxuriantly, sparkingly romantic.

All the staring into each other’s eyes and civic good fellowship could become somewhat cloying, but the book musters some powerful weapons against saccharinity. Firstly, it’s adroitly witty (“Conversation is not a strong suit,” Paul says of an annoying upperclassman; “in fact, I’m not sure it’s a suit he owns”). Secondly, there are distinct obstacles to bliss: Paul’s friend Tony is increasingly unhappy, Paul’s friend Joni is becoming a doormat girlfriend to a jerky guy, and Paul’s ex-boyfriend Kyle (who unconvincingly decided he was straight and consequently cold-shouldered Paul) is reopening lines of communication—and perhaps more. Since Noah’s still recovering from a previous cheating boyfriend, he’s uneasy about Paul’s close connections, and when gossip starts to fly about Paul’s closeness with Tony (false) and his reacquaintanceship with Kyle (true), it looks like Paul and Noah’s relationship is doomed.
It all gets worked out, of course, and it’s appropriate to this book that even the problems come as a result of Paul’s affection for people. The love story actually goes beyond the relationship between Paul and Noah, since Paul’s devoted to Tony (“More than anything in this strange life, I want Tony to be happy”), hopeful for Kyle’s peace, and determined that Joni deserves a better romantic fate than the one to which she’s currently subjecting herself.

Nor does it stop there: Paul’s narration evinces a tremendous delight in humanity in general and specific, in the many ways people connect with each other, in how much we can matter to one another. In a genre filled with darkness, torment, and anxiety, this is a shinningly affirmative and hopeful book; it’s fitting that the final sentence is “And I think to myself, What a wonderful world.” It may not quite be reality as any of its readers experience it, but, then, that’s what fiction’s for. (Imprint information appears on p. 23.)

Deborah Stevenson, Editor

NEW BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

AIKEN, JOAN  Midwinter Nightingale. Delacorte, 2003  248p
Trade ed. ISBN 0-385-73081-0  $15.95  M  Gr. 5-8

Aiken returns her well-traveled heroine Dido Twite to England and drops her right in the middle of a plot to seize the crown, the throne, and the country after the death of good King Richard. Dido and her friend Simon, Duke of Battersea (who is the heir apparent), work separately toward foiling both invasion and assassination in a plot that includes vengeful werewolves, treasonous relatives, and wicked siblings. Although the novel has many of the elements for which the author is justly lauded, this is a surprising offering in many ways, not the least of which is its lack of joy. The swift action cannot obscure a dark plot infused with an undercurrent of malice: the villains dispatch the innocent with a cold-blooded efficiency that borders on the sadistic, the hero and heroine are oddly passive in the face of the politics that is shaping their lives, and the spark of wit that Aiken can usually be depended upon to provide is almost wholly absent. Dido and Simon are so shallowly sketched that knowledge of their previous adventures is necessary in order to make their relationship sensible; in contrast, the villains are drawn in sensational detail. The denouement is clumsy (the villains do each other in in a scene of enormous contrivance) and the ending (Simon receives the crown while a heartbroken Dido sobs) is chillingly abrupt. Occasional moments of poesy lift the prose, but they are few and far between. Those seeking an adventurous read should look toward Aiken’s earlier works, or give Ibbotson (Journey to the River Sea, BCCB 4/02) or Lawrence (The Wreckers, 6/98) a try. JMD
Library ed. ISBN 0-06-028727-6  $17.89
Reviewed from galleys  R  Gr. 2-4

This friendly, eager introduction to various aspects of music covers a lot of territory, from what music is ("If you hum a tune, play an instrument, or clap out a rhythm, you are making music") to who has earned a place in the music pantheon ("Ludwig van Beethoven wrote symphonic masterpieces even after he became deaf"). There's a range of music theory, from definition of musical terms such as "pitch" and "volume" to an explanation of the components of written music. The book is also rife with performance information, including a brief overview of instruments (and a sample orchestral seating chart) and vocal parts, as well as an introduction to dance across the world and through the ages. Then there's a generous helping of music history, from classical Greece to contemporary pop and a whole lot in between. All this is sandwiched between simple, accessible explorations of the pleasures of music and performance. The sophistication level of the material is fairly variable, and there's little overall structure, so this is more an easygoing encyclopedia than a cohesive narrative (and some adults will object to the fairly lengthy focus on jazz and pop in the face of the omission of genres such as opera and country). That being said, however, there are a lot of enticing tidbits invitingly packaged here, making this browsable and unintimidating, and the juxtaposition of historical overview and discussion of the reader's own musical exploits makes an understated but bolstering point about context and tradition. The high-speed orchestral and historical overviews would make great starting points for curricular listening sessions or concert-hall visits. Unassuming line-and-watercolor vignettes make up the majority of the illustrations, leaving the layouts pleasingly energetic (generous white space and the large trim size keeps them from overbusyness); captioned illustrative panels and dialogue and thought balloons owe an obvious debt to comic books and help keep the thumbnail scenes and progressing timelines organized in a friendly manner. This will strike a sweet chord for many music teachers looking for a user-friendly companion to practical experience. There is no index, but a table of contents assists in location.  DS

ANDERSON, M. T.  *Strange Mr. Satie*; illus. by Petra Mathers. Viking, 2003  [42p]
Reviewed from galleys  R*  Gr. 3-5

Surrealist composer Erik Satie has suffered the avant-gardist's common fate of becoming widely accepted, so adults may not realize just how ahead of the curve he was in his day. Kids will, however, after exposure to this succinct biography, which explores Satie's artistic life and colorful habits. The book starts with his youthful dreams of music-making and failure at school, then describes his discovery of a brotherhood of artists in Paris and the subsequent blossoming of his music (including a return to school at age thirty-nine, to learn the rules he wished to break). There's a tacit linkage of his strange and unpredictable ways ("He did not take baths, but scraped himself with a piece of stone") with the random and startling aspects of surrealism ("Often he would name his pieces things like 'The Dreamy Fish,' or maybe 'In a Horse Costume'"), and there's open acknowledgment that his unpredictable temper undermined his relationships. The prose (set in short
lines with poetic ragged-right margins) evinces a grave wonderment suitable to its subject, and the details of Satie’s strange life will puzzle and intrigue youngsters, who may not have realized just how daring grownup music has been at times. Misty drifts of subtle color shade the pages, against which spruce, wide-eyed figures execute the everyday and the ridiculous with equal aplomb. Imaginative touches decorate the spreads, contrasting effectively with the matter-of-fact flatness of the planes of rich color; the interpretations of Satie’s absurdist musical pieces and guidelines are faithfully literal yet spiritedly surreal. This provides a logical step up from de Paola’s fictionalized portrait of the Parisian scene, Bonjour Mr. Satie (BCCB 3/91); it would also pair well with other biographies of twentieth-century artistic rebels, such as Mordicai Gerstein’s What Charlie Heard (BCCB 4/02). An author’s note provides a bit more factual detail, and a few titles are suggested for further reading. DS


Thirteen poems treat a baker’s dozen of mythical creatures from all over the world, the better to help travelers with identification and survival (“With this handy monster guide,/ You can take these beasts in stride”). Subjects range from popular critters such as the Sasquatch and the Loch Ness monster, folkloric beings such as Scandinavia’s trolls and the domovik of Russia, and less-limned threats such as the Mimi of Australia and the Adlet of Greenland. The global gallery of threat is an appealing notion, and the verses are amiably lighthearted and effectively rhythmical, tripping nicely off the readaloud tongue. Kids hoping for genuine scary monsters will be disappointed with the more mythological approach, however, and the accounts are sometimes confusing from a mythological standpoint as well: is there really a proscription against feeding the slender Mimis? how do the Siren-lured sailors meet their fate? The quick prose definitions boxed at the bases of the pages add a little more information but still leave many questions unanswered. Small’s illustrations offer specific travelers in the form of a brother and sister who, accompanied by their faithful hound, journey around the globe from one monster milieu to the next. Slender line contrasts with smudgy textured watercolors to depict various scenes of monstrous mayhem (while our better-informed travelers look on), and there are some entertainingly imaginative and sometimes satiric portrayals, with dopey tourists just asking to be trollmeat in Scandinavia and the Sirens a trio of brassy torch singers. Sometimes, though, the burlesque of old-fashioned travelogue leans an awful lot on that genre’s fondness for stereotype when it comes to the locals (and what’s an Inuit doing up a totem pole anyway?), and some opportunities to clear up the text’s ambiguities are missed. Scranimals (BCCB 10/02) is a better poetic tour of the unusual and occasionally ferocious, but this will still appeal to kids with a taste for lore and mayhem. DS


Ariadne Fellowes and her family have just moved from Florida to Dobbin, Tennessee. While her younger brother, Hector, seems to be adjusting just fine, soon-to-be seventh-grader Ariadne misses her best friend and the ocean, and she longs for her old home. School brings some relief in the form of possible new friends,
but what really keeps Ariadne going is her curiosity about May Butler, an odd girl she meets in the woods. When a library visit turns up an old book entitled *The Strange Case of Little May Butler*, Ariadne can come to only one conclusion: May Butler is a ghost, who needs Ariadne’s help to go home. This is a straightforward ghost tale with a doughy main character, a strong sense of history, and solid secondary players. Although the conclusion fizzes into a standard wrap-up, overall the plot has a gently compelling arc. Barrett’s ghost is not of the horrific, goosebump-inducing variety, but the near-fatal consequences of Ariadne’s investigation infuse this capably written tale with a pervasive sense of impending danger. Readers seeking spirited suspense without nightmares should look here. JMD

**Bateson, Catherine**  
*Rain May and Captain Daniel.* University of Queensland Press, 2003 138p  
Paper ed. ISBN 0-7022-3337-4  $13.50  R  Gr. 4-6

Twelve-year-old Rain is a resentful transplant from her Melbourne home to her mother’s childhood home in the country after her mother and father separate; Daniel is her eleven-year-old new neighbor, in his own words “phenomenally bright,” in his classmates’ opinion a nerd of the first order. The two form a friendship over the school holiday, casually growing closer over chess and neighborhood exploration while confiding bits of their lives (Rain still hopes for her parents to reunite, Daniel tires of his mother’s overprotectiveness), but when the beginning of school acquaints Rain with the fact that her new friend is social poison, Daniel fears their closeness is at an end. This Australian import is unassuming but deft, cheerfully weaving together its disparate plot elements and avoiding clichés in its treatment of familiar issues such as socially problematic friendships and split parents; even the matter of Daniel’s chronic heart problem settles naturally into the story rather than overpowering it. Language is colloquial and sometimes authentically raucous, while characterization is stealthily complex: Rain’s mom isn’t the ditz she initially appears, and even Julia, Rain’s father’s longtime Other Woman, redeems herself considerably by revealing herself as a Trekker and cheering Daniel, whom she barely knows, in the hospital. Though Daniel and Rain alternate narration, Rain is really the star here, and her ability to not only attain popularity but also drag Daniel along with her is both credible and a refreshing solution to the loyalty dilemma; her occasional poetic exchange with her mother via the refrigerator’s poetry magnets manages to be touching but not cloying. This is a fresh, lively, and readable exploration of a situation with which many readers will identify. DS

**Byng, Georgia**  
Library ed. ISBN 0-06-051407-8  $17.89  Ad  Gr. 4-6

Molly Moon is an orphan at the Hardwick House Orphanage, and her desolate lot worsens when her only friend, Rocky, gets adopted. When Molly finds a misshelved book in the library (thanks to an obnoxious Ugly American named Professor Nockman) called *Hypnotism: An Ancient Art Explained*, she discovers a talent for hypnosis and changes her life: she hypnotizes Miss Adderstone’s pug dog, Petula, into liking her, she hypnotizes the cook into making gourmet Italian food, and she hypnotizes an entire audience at a talent show into awarding her £6000 in prize
money. Off Molly then goes to New York City in search of Rocky, hypnotizing ticket agents, stewardesses, and hotel clerks at the Waldorf to get her way. What Molly doesn't know is that she is being followed by the no-good Professor Nockman, who wants the book—and Molly—so he can become a world-class criminal. Molly's adventures have the substance of cotton candy, frosted with a dollop of suspense. The plot is outlandishly convenient, and, since Molly's hypnotic power means her triumph is never in doubt, the sequence of wishes easily fulfilled gets a bit tedious. Closure is conveniently achieved: Rocky finds Molly, and they (yes, Rocky has the power, too) hypnotize Professor Nockman (at least temporarily) into being good. All ends well with a return to the orphanage to bring happiness and joy to the little orphans left behind. Although the trajectory loses altitude in the last third, this is still lightweight, if not mesmerizing, fun. JMD

Cerullo, Mary M. Life under Ice; illus. with photographs by Bill Curtsinger. Tilbury House, 2003 [38p]
ISBN 0-88448-246-4 $16.95
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 4-8

Cerullo, author of various books on marine biology (Octopus: Phantom of the Sea, BCCB 2/97, etc.), now turns her apparently waterproof hand to the denizens of the coldest water on the planet. Her text follows the work of nature photographer Bill Curtsinger as he dives beneath several feet of Antarctic ice to snap pictures of curious Weddell seals, a threatening leopard seal, some teeming krill, and various other inhabitants of the underside of the ice; there's also plenty of visual documentation of the topside of the ice, whether it be its looming glaciers or its colonies of waddling penguins. With streamlined prose, the author gives subtle shape to the account of Curtsinger's exploration while adding information about the ecosystem, its inhabitants, and its changes and challenges. While more caption information would have been welcome, the photography is stunning and effectively arranged, providing an atmospheric mini-tour of Antarctica underneath and on top of the ice. Even huge sea spiders are gleamingly photogenic in Curtsinger's pictures, and more immediately attractive subjects, such as appealing penguins and magnificent ice formations, are given imaginative treatment that provides more than a cursory pretty view. The immediacy of the photographs makes this a terrific companion to recent Antarctic narratives such as Dewey's Antarctic Journal (BCCB 2/01), and there's enough weirdness and beauty combined to draw reluctant readers as well as animal lovers and junior ecologists. End matter includes a list of relevant websites and a very brief bibliography as well as a glossary and a small map. DS

Cheng, Andrea The Key Collection; illus. by Yangsook Choi. Holt, 2003 117p
ISBN 0-8050-7153-9 $15.95 Ad Gr. 3-6

Jimmy's grandmother Ni Ni's increasing frailty is becoming worrisome, so the family encourages Ni Ni to move to California, where her daughter, Helen, a doctor, can care for her more easily. Both ten-year-old Jimmy and Ni Ni are initially shattered by the idea; no longer will Jimmy be able to look out his window at 3 A.M. to see Ni Ni's light still on, no longer will they make jiao zi (dumplings) together for an afternoon snack, no longer will Jimmy be able to retreat from peer friendships by heading for his grandmother's house. Though he misses his grandmother, Jimmy does grow from the experience: the new owners of Ni Ni's house
have children that Jimmy babysits, and he develops other friendships. When Helen sees how depressed Ni Ni is by the move, however, she sends for Jimmy, and he and his grandmother make plans to visit her childhood home of Shanghai together. This is a touching portrait of a particularly affectionate relationship between a young boy and his grandmother, and the author makes a believable case for an insecure ten-year-old's preferring his grandmother's company to that of the neighborhood boys. Unfortunately, the story occasionally drifts into sentimentality, especially regarding the significance of a bottle of discarded keys Ni Ni keeps in her basement, and the spare prose limps along haltingly; the short sentences that dominate the text may prove a boon to beginning readers, but they lack the lasting emotional power of more fluent prose. Soft pencil illustrations are decorative but literal; a recipe for jiao zi is included. KC

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-17840-5  $15.99  R  4-7 yrs

Timely questions, simple observations, and easy experiments guide preschoolers and primary graders on an exploration of air pressure. All demonstrations—which, of course, form the enticing core of this title—are conducted with readily available materials, from a large plastic bag to “trap the air” that can be felt with a squeeze, to a pencil and coathanger balance that shows the relative weight of air-filled and airless balloons, to a ball that simulates the pressure of slow and fast moving molecules. Streamlined and jargon-free though the text may be, it gets the basics across in kid-friendly terms: “Air is real stuff. It is just as real as this book or a bowl of soup. Like all real stuff, AIR is heavier than nothing.” Gorton’s strong, angular graphics feature a redheaded little gal with wide-set eyes and a powerful curiosity who alternately serves as wind-tousled subject of forces real but unseen and as demonstrator for each experiment. Although an opening note indicates that the text is intended as a readaloud, attractive hand-lettering and a fairly predictable vocabulary should encourage able readers within the target audience to join in. EB


Cuetara offers twenty-four brief verses about what babies do all day, and from “Waking” to “Crawling,” from “Pooping” to “Bathtime,” these kids are nothing if not busy. The first three lines of each four-line stanza is a pithy summation of a baby’s activities; the last line (in colored text) is a description of the baby itself: “Marcus drops and spills and throws,/ Covers everybody’s clothes./ Time for clean-up—get the hose!/ Messy little baby”; “One step, two steps, what a thrill!/ One more step and down goes Jill./ Wait, she’s up—and at it still./ Spunky little baby.” The verses have an irreverent gusto that will appeal to those readers aloud with less romantic views of the tyrants of babylord, as well as a bouncy, nursery-rhyme verve that will make these easy replacements for more traditional verses. The layout has the look of a photo album: each poem gets its own page and its own baby, the image of which is set smack in the middle, surrounded by white space and framed by a richly hued border. The illustrations have a slapdash energy that complements the tongue-in-cheekiness of Cuetara’s slyly funny verses. Move over, Mother Goose; make way for Cuetara’s lively lines. JMD
CUMMINGS, PRISCILLA  Saving Grace. Dutton, 2003  240p
ISBN 0-525-47123-5  $16.99  R Gr. 4-8

With Papa out of work in the middle of the Depression, a new baby on the way, a son in the hospital, and the hospitality of relatives strained to the breaking point, the McFarlands have no other choice than to send daughter Grace and her two younger brothers to a charity asylum. At eleven aware of her parents’ predicament, Grace takes the move stoically, but the cold building and colder people make her wonder if she’s really any better off. Soon, however, Grace gets the opportunity to visit with the Hammond family, who often host poor children over the holidays, and they take to each other with sincere affection. Grace is lavished with comforts and attention she’s never experienced, and she’s encouraged to discover that her ability to sign letters (learned from a deaf aunt) is a true boon to the Hammonds’ deaf daughter. The only thing standing between her and total happiness is the guilty knowledge that her parents and siblings do not share her good fortune. When the Hammonds’ married daughter asks to formally adopt Grace, the young girl must weigh the values of opportunity and family and make her own decision. Cummings bases her tale loosely on the experiences of her own mother-in-law, who served as a model for the Hammonds, and details of both the good life and the hard life in Depression-era America ring true. Grace may not be an orphan—indeed, she “suffers” from a surfeit of loving families—but she plucks at the sensitive heartstrings of orphan-story readers. Rest assured there’s a happy ending, but as a loyal orphan fan, I won’t give it away. EB

DE LINT, CHARLES  A Circle of Cats; illus. by Charles Vess. Viking, 2003  45p

Twelve-year-old Lillian spends most of her days wandering through the woods looking for fairies. One day, as the girl naps beneath an ancient beech tree, a snake bites her. In a delirium and close to death, she hears voices, voices that say they must change her in order to save her; when she awakens from her swoon, she discovers she’s a kitten—calico, in fact. At first Lillian the kitten wanders the woods seeking the fairies she believes have transformed her; the Apple Tree Man, however, informs her that her saviors were the cats of the wood, returning the kindness she has always shown them. A huge black panther, Father of Cats, restores her to her human self (the Apple Tree Man has a madstone soaked in milk to counteract the snake’s venomous bite) after obtaining her promise to someday return the favor, and Lillian returns home. The story is too obviously contrived, and the images are sometimes clichéd. Lillian’s peril is still suspenseful, however, and de Lint’s magic wood has a deep and dark allure. Vess’ human figures are awkwardly drafted, but his settings (and his cats) are romantically lush. The volume will likely please seekers of fantasy tales drawn by the promise of feline magic and the echoes of graphic-novel design. JMD

DESIMINI, LISA  Policeman Lou and Policewoman Sue; written and illus. by Lisa Desimini. Blue Sky/Scholastic, 2003  [32p]
ISBN 0-439-40888-1  $15.95
Reviewed from galleys NR  3-6 yrs

Here the preschool set can follow a “typical” day in the life of police partners as they make their rounds—typical, that is, if they patrol one of the sleepiest towns in the country. In between muffins for breakfast, grilled cheese for lunch, and chicken
for dinner, Lou and Sue squeeze in a parking ticket, a lost-dog retrieval, and a purse-snatching incident. "Policeman Lou and Policewoman Sue write up a crime incident report and give it to their sergeant. ‘It’s time to call it a day,’ says Policeman Lou. ‘Well done,’ says Policewoman Sue.” Lou and Sue have evidently spent so much time together that they’ve even grown to look alike, from their somewhat androgynous facial features to their stiff, waxy action-toy posture. All residents in the pasteboard-styled town, in fact, seem to share a zombie-like vacuity, as citizens point stiff-armed toward a fleeing robber and the sergeant appears to have dozed off over the paperwork. Although there may be some shred of accuracy to their respective policing roles, it won’t require much gender sensitivity to notice that Lou checks the merchants’ safety and Sue plays crossing guard; Sue comforts the elderly purse-snatching victim and Lou chases the perp; Lou drives the squad car and Sue writes the parking ticket; Sue cooks Lou’s favorite dinner at day’s end; and Lou even gets the book’s front cover, while Sue takes the back. “Our job is never boring,” they both say.” Most kids will beg to differ. EB


While searching for a place to lay her egg, Wycca the wyvern (property of Gideon, “the king’s own wizard”), goes through a magical bolt-hole and winds up in modern-day Cambridge, Massachusetts. Gideon follows, intent on retrieving Wycca and her offspring before they are captured and co-opted by his longtime enemy, the evil Kobold. Upon arrival, a lucky Gideon meets Professor Iain Merlin O’Shea, who, being a wizard himself, recognizes Gideon and takes him under his modern wing. Theodora Oglethorpe is an eleven-year-old residing in Cambridge, miserably enduring a summer without her best friends (away until August) and her father (away on business) when she finds something the time-and-space traveling Gideon has lost: the “Talent” card for the wyvern, part of a magical deck, without which he cannot call Wycca to him. The text limns the various activities of the various characters—Theo, Gideon, Wycca, and Kobold—as they move toward their inevitable, predictable confrontation. The difficulty here is that the everyday doesn’t have quite the same zing as the wizardly—Theo simply isn’t a compelling enough character to balance the allure of Gideon and Wycca. Since all the magical characters are adult (Theo’s own latent magical powers are not revealed until the conclusion), the novel’s focus is skewed towards the grownups, relegating Theo’s own part in the adventure to the peripheral. Downer neatly presents the collision of things magical and contemporary, however (including a sweet description of the hungry wyvern’s first encounter with chocolate), and although the fact that good will win over evil is never in doubt, there is enough suspense in the potential dangers inherent in the wyvern’s wanderings to keep would-be wyvern-keepers turning the pages. JMD

DUPRAU, JEANNE  *The City of Ember.* Random House, 2003  270p


The Builders of Ember left instructions for its future, but those instructions have been lost for generations; now Ember has a mistaken memory of its past and no understanding of its future. Light is artificially generated, food is grown in greenhouses, and order is maintained through a rigid system of rules and regulations,
rites and rituals. Orphan Lina Mayfleet and her classmate Doon Harrow have
turned twelve, and the rules of Ember state that the friends' school days are over
and their work days have begun. A trade with Doon makes Lina a messenger,
speeding through the streets of Ember; Doon goes to the Pipeworks to maintain
the underground substructure that supports the city. The two notice what the
adults apparently do not: Ember's food supply is dwindling, the lights that keep
the darkness at bay often fail, and the mayor's reassurances are specious. When
Lina finds a nearly indecipherable artifact with directions out of the city, she brings
it to Doon, and together they embark on a perilous journey to find the way be-
Yond the dark. Lina and Doon's quest for truth has a strong beginning and a solid
pace; unfortunately, the storytelling loses its way, stuttering over coincidence and
hard-to-believe revelations. Characterizations are a bit thin, but while the adults
appear stupefied by the artificial glare, Lina and Doon (despite their single-minded
intensity) are still likable players. The conclusion is overly convenient, but the
opening pages, with images of the lamplit city isolated by impenetrable darkness,
offer a powerful visual that will draw readers into Lina and Doon's adventure.

FLEMING, CANDACE Ben Franklin's Almanac: Being a True Account of the Good
Gentleman's Life. Schwartz/Atheneum, 2003 120p illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-689-83549-3 $19.95

Fleming spreads a smorgasbord of thematically arranged information about the
Founder's life and invites readers to sample their fill and come back for more at
their leisure. Six chapters cover all the expected highlights—boyhood, family,
Writings, philanthropy, scientific endeavors, wartime politicking, life abroad, and
miscellaneous remembrances—and the grazers' approach works reasonably well
for topics such as institutional establishments (e.g., library, hospital, fire depart-
ment) and inventions and experiments (such as the "Franklin" stove, bifocal eye-
glasses, the mathematical magic square). Casual browsing, however, is unlikely to
allow readers to integrate dispersed observations on the toll the Revolution took
on Franklin's relationship with his Loyalist son, or to appreciate just how many
irons the Renaissance man kept in his fire at any given period. Although Fleming
dangles promises of some of Franklin's spicier journalistic fare, kids will probably
find his scientific proposal for removing odor from flatulence relatively bland, and
quotes such as "He that is conscious of a stink in his breeches, is jealous of every
wrinkle in another's nose" plain abstruse. Limited attention spans may, nonethe-
less, be tempted by the lavish inclusion of period illustrations (exhaustively cred-
ited), generously quoted documents, easily digestible servings of boxed data, and
varied font and type size, and readers who want to retrieve an item lost in the
patchwork text can generally rely on the detailed index. Consider this an appetizer
for David Adler's B. Franklin, Printer (BCCB 2/02), but not a main course. EB

FLOOD, PANSIE HART Secret Holes; illus. by Felicia Marshall. Carolrhoda,
2003 125p
ISBN 0-87614-923-9 $15.95

When Sylvia Freeman moves from Florida to Wakeview, South Carolina, she real-
izes that her history is full of secret holes. For one thing, she finds a father she
never knew she had, and for another, it turns out that Jonathan, her dad, is grand-
son to Miz Lula Maye, making her one-hundred-year-old best friend her great-
grandmother as well. Miz Lula Maye teaches her about the secret places folks keep
important stuff, and she uses that information to seek out her mother’s hidden stash of letters, where an even bigger surprise awaits her: it turns out that her mother isn’t her mother after all, but her aunt, her mother having begun cancer treatments just after Sylvia’s birth and dying two years later. With the support of Miz Lula Maye’s wisdom and love, she comes to terms with her new family situation, and she and her mother find a real home after all. The characters tend toward clichés of African-American fiction rather than fully drawn persons, from the ancient progenitrix Miz Lula Maye, to the educated, well-spoken and overly formal Jonathan, to the cutup club-owner Uncle Jack, Jr., to Momma, Sylvia’s aunt/mother, an uneducated fieldworker at the end of her rope. Sylvia is a spunky character, however, and her first-person narration flows in easy-to-read dialect, with enough cultural references thrown in to evoke the seventies setting. Her ten-year-old voice reflects an apt egocentrism, and her retreat into theatrical illness whenever she is faced with hearing a new secret is as funny as it is touchingly realistic. Black-and-white illustrations support the text and accentuate the warm relationships between the characters; readers with their own complex family relationships will take heart at Sylvia’s happy ever after. KC

**FLORIAN, DOUGLAS** *Autumnblings;* written and illus. by Douglas Florian. Greenwillow, 2003 [46p]
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 2-4

This is the third in Florian’s seasonal series (see *Winter Eyes,* BCCB 11/99, and *Summersaults,* 5/02), but there’s no signs of slackening of creativity in these twenty-nine concise yet frisky poems. As usual with this poet, there’s an abundant harvest of youthfully accessible plays on words mingled with some keen and flavorful observations and turns of phrase. Suffused with affection for the season “when summer’s seams/ have come undone,” the verses evoke the autumnal experience from the end of baseball to the beginning of school, the coloring of leaves to the migrating of geese, Halloween to Thanksgiving. Short verse lines make the entries particularly suitable for reading aloud or reciting, while the occasional typographical play or pattern adds visual interest. The illustrations, luminous watercolors touched with colored pencils, often move beyond the decorative to witty visual commentary or elegant, streamlined scenes. This will make a crisp and atmospheric partner to autumnal holiday books, as well as inviting kids to pen their own seasonal reflections. DS

**FRADIN, DENNIS BRINDELL** *Fight On!: Mary Church Terrell’s Battle for Integration;* by Dennis Brindell Fradin and Judith Bloom Fradin. Clarion, 2003 181p illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-618-13349-6 $17.00 R Gr. 5-10

As the privileged daughter of a successful African-American businessman, Mary Church Terrell could probably have spent most of her life shielded from some of the worst abuses of the post-Reconstruction Jim Crow system. Well educated and happily married to a judge, Terrell seemed at first confident in and supportive of the “gradualist” strategies of Booker T. Washington and like-minded black citizens to raise the fortunes of their race. But if she “avoided major controversies as long as her husband was alive,” she came into her own as an octogenarian, ready
and willing to take on discriminatory practices in the nation's capital. Since Terrell's most famous achievements occurred so late in life, the Fradins could have been hard pressed to keep the biographical pot simmering through decades of a long life. Indeed, their final three chapters, which trace her efforts to integrate Washington D.C. lunch counters and to legally resurrect dormant antidiscrimination laws, could almost stand alone as a mini-lesson from the Civil Rights movement. However, coverage of Terrell's early years, in which her attitudes were shaped and her public positions evolved, are so thoroughly and engrossingly covered that, by the time readers reach the battle royale, they are well prepared to appreciate her successes as the culmination of a life of commitment and service. Detailed source notes, bibliography, and index, as well as a wealth of black-and-white photographs and document reproductions, are included. EB

1925 in Roslyn, Washington, sees hard times for the Europeans who have come to work the mines, since decreased demand for coal is causing layoffs and mobsters from Seattle are trying to take over smaller bootlegging operations. After Slava's brothers hop the grape train to Napa, California, and plentiful work, Slava is left to take care of his mother and little brother, responsibilities that endanger his future at school. Life continues with a wedding for Slava's sister, Mary, and a serious illness that leaves his younger brother, Philip, deaf, resulting in expenses that may lead to the loss of the family home. Yearning to find real work so that he can help his mother, he and his friend Perks, an African-American boy who has similar dreams, hatch a plan to follow Slava's brothers to California where they are sure they will succeed. Franklin paints a compassionate and detailed picture of first-generation American family life, warmly depicting the stubborn faith of mothers and the equally stubborn love of sons. Slava is dedicated to his family and his idea of what a man should be, even as he is resolutely a boy with a boy's awkwardness, fear, and bravado. The book substantially conveys the force of family members and friends strongly committed to each other; a combination of well-drawn, likable characters and genuine narrative suspense keeps the reader involved to the end. KC

Young Lucy hears noises in the walls ("They were sneaking, creeping, crumpling noises"), and although her mother, father, and brother tell her the noises are caused by mice, rats, and bats respectively, Lucy knows what it really is: "There are wolves in the walls." Of course, they don't believe her, and, of course (this being Gaiman, author of the eminently creepy Coraline, BCCB 11/02), Lucy is right. When the wolves come out of the walls, "it's all over," and the family flees into the night. Inspired by her successful sneak inside to rescue her pink pig-puppet, she leads her family "up the back steps . . . Through the back door—into the back hall—and into the walls." Eventually the family gets tired of walls and wolves and comes out spoiling for a fight; the wolves flee to "somewhere where there would never be any people in the walls who would come out in the middle of the night whooping and singing people songs and brandishing chair legs." Though the story runs on too
long, Gaiman has one creepy imagination, and his goosebump-inducing tale is given full visual throttle by McKean’s mixed-media, graphic-novel-style illustrations. The fragmented images, combining photographic elements and elegant drafting, are more than slightly off-kilter, and the uneasiness supplied by the distorted perspectives and fluctuating proportions adds an arresting eeriness to Gaiman’s fantasy (the slavering wolves are particularly unnerving). Hand this to a jaded third or fourth-grader and watch their eyes get big—the better to see you with, my dear. JMD


Sixteen-year-old Michael Racine just got a summer job as chief lackey at the environmental magazine The Earth’s Wife. Nora Blake and Walt Marcello (husband-and-wife founders of the journal) are determined to hang on to the principles of their magazine, despite the slick pretensions of their recently hired managing editor, Todd Mylnarski. Michael is essentially an eco-idiot, an energy-waster dependent on cable television and air conditioning, who is desperate for a hamburger in the strictly vegetarian household. Despite himself, Michael finds himself admiring the dedicated Nora, challenged by the blustering Walt, and dubious of the duplicitous Todd. When the editorial staff splits between principle and style, Michael steps forward and reveals a sneaky secret, saves the magazine’s editorial direction, and exposes an environmental health hazard. Gauthier (A Year with Butch and Spike, BCCB 6/98) leaves middle-school madness behind for a message-driven look at serious issues. The author doesn’t have the same handle on high-school sensibilities that she has on middle-school angst, however; Michael’s point of view is a bit distant and never quite convincing, and characterizations are oddly unbalanced (Walt and Nora are the most well-rounded characters, which makes Michael less than effective as the novel’s focus). The ecology-based humor is sometimes more forced than natural, and The Earth’s Wife and its oddball subscribers are held up for ridicule so often that it undermines the novel’s central conflict. Still, Michael’s change of heart toward both his coworkers and the principles they espouse is believable, and the humor sometimes works (the scene where Michael confronts Walt in a diner thinking he is having an affair when he is really there for baby back ribs is particularly funny). Original fans of Gauthier’s previous works are older now, and they may just find this title to be both reader-friendly and ecologically sound. JMD


Siblings Sam and Stella (Stella, Star of the Sea, BCCB 5/99, etc.) return in this satisfying bedtime mini-drama. Sam and his big sister are a-bed (“‘Stella,’ whispered Sam, ‘are you sleeping?’ ‘Yes,’ answered Stella. ‘Aren’t you?’”) when Sam expresses his need for Fred, the family dog, before he can contentedly close his eyes. Suggestions by Stella as to Fred’s location (“‘Did you look under your bed?’ ‘He’s not there,’ said Sam. ‘Fred sneezes when he’s under the bed’”) come to naught, and a reluctant but resigned big sister arises to help Sam locate the wandering Fred. Throughout the house the siblings search to no avail (sharp-eyed
youngsters will gleefully point to the doggy in the shadows of nearly every spread); it is only upon returning to bed that Sam joyfully locates Fred burrowed under a quilt. The dynamic between older sister and younger brother is delicately balanced, with a controlled piquancy that makes their interactions sweet without being sweetsy. Granted, the interpersonal dynamics are a parental dream—Stella is supernaturally patient, Sam is cutely questioning, and even Fred is an effective cog in the relationship machine—but there is a gentle quirkiness and quiet humor about the siblings that elicits a resonant thump of the heart. A twilight-blue palette infuses the airy watercolors with a sense of mystery suited to the duo’s moonlight meandering through the hushed house. The back cover calls this “A Small Stella and Sam Story,” but there’s nothing small about the satisfaction of a simple story well told. JMD


“How can we possibly find proof and evidence of activities that were purposely clandestine? Is there any way to recover a secret past?” Focusing on better and lesser known escape routes for runaway slaves from the early eighteenth century through Emancipation, Hansen examines the techniques and sources of evidence available to scholars pursuing this elusive trail. Thermal imaging and soil studies disclose the location of Fort Mose, built and defended by fugitives to St. Augustine in 1738; ships’ inspection lists document ex-slaves’ emigration to Canada under British protection at the end of the Revolution. Laws, architecture, oral histories, spirituals, Canadian archives, and even cryptic bas-relief in a church tunnel can shed light on routes and experiences—but only, as Hansen consistently reminds her readers, when corroborated by evidence from other sources. This title is as much about the how-to’s of historiography as about the UGRR itself, and readers who want to bask in the romance of narrow escapes, codes buried in spirituals, and a tightly defined (if secretive) network of dedicated abolitionists will find Hansen and McGowan opposed to accepting the lore at face value. Their interpretation of the UGRR encompasses over two centuries of impromptu kindnesses offered, emergent opportunities seized, and traces necessarily covered. Carefully sourced and amply illustrated with period pictures, documents, and charts, this is a strong selection in both slavery studies and domestic archaeology. EB


On the night before the first day of school, a young boy prepares himself, laying out his clothes and packing his backpack. Then he remembers that on the first day of school, you don’t know any of the important things like the other kids’ names, or what kind of snacks you’ll have, or where you’ll store your stuff, so he very sensibly decides that he will not attend school until the second day. His parents, of course, have other ideas, and they finally convince him that if he takes his stuffed monkey, Hank, to school with him, then Hank will know him and he will know Hank. When he gets to school, he meets his teachers and his classmates, one of whom has a stuffed bear for a companion, and learns all of the important first-day
stuff. Bright colors, uncluttered compositions, and appealing adult and child figures warm this safe if rather predictable story of first-day-of-school jitters. The illustrations offer readable emotions of a kindergartner offering a perfectly reasonable argument for not going to school, his parents' sleepy but tolerant morning faces, his classmates' varying degrees of nerves and structured busyness, and the teachers' open and welcoming postures. This doesn't quite have the pizzazz of McGhee's *Countdown to Kindergarten* (BCCB 10/02), and there's nothing surprising or out of the ordinary here, but there is a warm and gentle reassurance that everything's going to be just fine. KC

**Henkes, Kevin** *Olive's Ocean*. Greenwillow, 2003 [224p]
Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 4-8

A rather morbid premise underlies this tender coming-of-age story: the mother of Olive Barstow, a twelve-year-old girl killed in a bicycle accident, appears at Martha Boyle's door with a bit of Olive's journal. Apparently, Olive had three unrealized hopes at the time of her death—to see the ocean, to become a writer, and to befriend Martha. Martha is touched by her similarities to the dead girl, as she too wishes to be a writer, and she is in fact on her way to visit her grandmother who lives in a cottage overlooking the ocean. Her vacation becomes a meaningful rite of passage, involving a first crush, a first kiss, and a first betrayal, as well as many large and small epiphanies about life, love, death, and her place in the universe. If it sounds thoroughly clichéd, that's because it is, from plot to characters, but it is also affirming and not overly sentimental. Henkes' use of short chapters, many less than a page long, present much of the story in sensory poetic vignettes that limn the plot with a contemplative stillness; readers with a view toward the delicate melancholy of growing up, and the even more profound melancholy of not growing up, will find emotional affirmation here. KC

**Ibbotson, Eva** *Not Just a Witch*; illus. by Kevin Hawkes. Dutton, 2003 [192p]
Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 4-6

Heckie (Hecate Tenbury-Smith) is an animal witch; that is, she can change people into animals with her "Knuckle of Power." After moving to the small town of Wellbridge, she (logically) takes over its pet shop. Her real reason for being, however, is to organize the Wellbridge Wickedness Hunters, and in that end she is aided by local witches, by a dragworm (her wickedness-detecting familiar), and by a young boy named Daniel. Heckie changes an abusive rest-home owner into a warthog, an abusive chicken farmer into a fish, and an abusive bank robber into a mouse, and it's the last that gets her into big trouble. Her metamorphosis of the would-be robber is observed by sleazy furrier Lionel Knacksap, who proceeds to court Heckie and win her heart so he can convince her to turn three hundred prisoners from the local jail into snow leopards (he plans to kill the beasts and sell the skins to a sheikh who wants matching coats for the wives of his harem). Ibbotson (author of *Journey to the River Sea*, BCCB 4/02) has a knack for catchy characterizations: her players have appealing eccentricities and sympathy-inducing traits that capture readers' imaginations. Choppy sequencing and a too-episodic plot hinders cohesion here, however, and the preponderant adult point of view may
make it difficult for youngsters to stick to the action. Still, the lighter touches—
Heckie’s whimsical transformations, the dragworm’s stern-uncle demeanor, and
the Cinderella-like charm of the young Daniel—should be enough to hold readers
until the novel’s suitably jovial end. The expressive caricatures of Hawkes’ black-
and-white illustrations add comic spice. JMD

JOHNSON, ANGELA The First Part Last. Simon, 2003 131p
ISBN 0-689-84922-2 $15.95 R Gr. 7-12
Bobby’s sixteenth birthday came with some shocking news: his girlfriend, Nia,
was pregnant. Months later he’s trying to raise Feather, their baby, without bur-
dening his family any further, without quitting school, without losing touch with
his friends, and without Nia. There’s been a resurgence of literary teen parents
and especially teen fathers lately (such as Horniman’s Mahalia, BCCB 6/03), and
this tenderly told story is one of the most appealing. There’s some sentimentality
to the underpinnings (it’s finally revealed that Bobby’s adored Nia suffered ecl-
lampsia that sent her into an irreversible coma, which is what made Bobby decide
to raise Feather rather than putting her up for adoption), but that’ll please some
readers all the more. Even without that backstory, the lyrical expression of Bobby’s
devotion to his daughter and his fears about his great responsibilities (“She only
wants Daddy. That scares the shit out of me”) is moving indeed, with Johnson’s
finely wrought prose breathing intimacy into every line. The story is deepened by
realistic portrayals of Bobby’s loving but tough mother, who refuses to raise her
son’s child, and his softer, more forgiving father, but mostly it’s the unfolding tale
of Bobby and Feather as he tries to find the best way to raise his child, remember
her mother, and live his life. Many readers will be drawn by the photograph on
the cover (handsome young man tenderly holding a small baby), and they’ll find
the book well worthy of the cover’s promise. DS

JOHNSTON, TONY Go Track a Yak!; illus. by Tim Raglin. Simon, 2003 34p
ISBN 0-689-83789-5 $15.95 R* 5-8 yrs
The parents of a big-eyed baby are in a dither because “Baby won’t eat!” A crone
with an ulterior motive promises a solution if the parents will give her anything she
wants: “I’ll tell the secret. If—’ she smiled slyly, ‘if you promise me my heart’s
desire.’ (She had no heart. She was a liar.)” The desperate (but not too bright)
parents acquiesce, and the crone tells them the baby needs “yak juice.” Off Papa
goes (“TREK. TREK. TREK. TRACK. TRACK. TRACK”) to find a yak,
which, once located, proves to be a generous and faithful beast. The “yak juice”
(“You ninny, yak juice is yak MILK!” hollers the crone) is consumed by the fat
and sassy baby, after which the crone demands payment: “GIVE ME THE BRAT!”
The “big, sweet, black-eyed yak” kicks the crone over the snowy mountain, “And
they lived happily ever after. So did the yak. YUK. YUK. YUK.” Johnston’s
rhythmically bumptious rhyme is given outrageous cartoon caricature treatment
by Raglin, who uses pen and colored ink to render the irreverent images for this
literally wild-eyed visual takeoff on traditional tales. Varied fonts and colors em-
phasize dialogue and action, while thought balloons free-float amongst figures and
snowy terrain (the snow is in piles against white pages; the colors are concentrated
in the pseudo-folkloric costumes and the typefaces). Use this goofyly effective tale
for readers’ theater as well as storytime and watch the listeners yak it up. (Yuk,
yuk, yuk.) JMD
JUBY, SUSAN  *Alice, I Think.* HarperTempest, 2003  290p
Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-051543-0  $15.99  R  Gr. 7-12

Now that Alice is fifteen and has been homeschooled since the first grade, her parents are concerned that she needs to become more socially developed. Though she’s driven her first therapist out of the profession and she’s a bit stumped for development opportunities in her small British Columbia town, Alice is game to try, carefully making lists of her goals and career possibilities (“I think I will be a cultural critic. . . . Living in Smithers and being a home-schooled shut-in may even be an asset for a cultural critic”) and, out of a desperate effort to give her new therapist some satisfaction, opting to return to public school. It’s the unplanned events that lead to real growth, however: her first romance (with an extremely annoying boy), her interest following in the footsteps of her fashionable and dissolute (female) cousin Frank, her victimization at the hands of her old first-grade enemy (now a full-grown, if pint-sized, sociopath), a truly fine haircut, and a triumphant visit to a fish show. While the indications of Alice’s growth are modest indeed, the reward here is less protagonist maturation than narrative voice and unusual incident. Alice’s narration has an acerbity that recalls Polly Horvath’s heroines, and her assessments are often acute (of her mother, she says “I think she thinks that the way I am is something I’m doing to her”). There’s also an authentic adolescent cluelessness, however, which is sometimes purely funny but sometimes eerily authentic in its articulation of the distant relationship some young people have with adult views of reality (after the bully has beaten Alice’s face to a mass of bruises, she thinks, “I kind of liked them because usually most of my problems are in my head,” and she revels in milking her parents for guilt and sympathy). Like its heroine, the book is quirky, bright, and funny, and readers will enjoy making their acquaintance.  DS

JUNG, REINHARDT  *Dreaming in Black & White,* tr. from the German by Anthea Bell. Fogelman, 2003  112p
ISBN 0-8037-2811-5  $15.99  R  Gr. 5-9

The narrator, a contemporary disabled boy, is obsessed by a dream that develops in installments and places him in Germany during the early 1930s, when Nazis were targeting “defective” citizens for extermination. Named Hannes Keller in the dream, he enters it curiously at first but becomes increasingly unable to separate it from reality. Hannes’ Jewish math teacher is rounded up, his Jewish girlfriend flees with her family, and a Nazi overseer humiliates him publicly, applying pressure on his bureaucratic father to sign a consent form dooming him to a “home” that no one ever survives. The relationship between the two worlds becomes a central focus of the protagonist’s awareness rather than a conventional plot device. The kaleidoscopic dynamics of time, place, color, and emotion are subject to repeated consideration and comments that add a universal dimension to the specific settings. Especially notable is the author’s interweaving of motif—including an old photo of an injured African lion with which the narrator identifies—into a surrealistic combination of realities. The clean, minimalist style that delivers this complex tale-within-a-tale is well supported by veteran translator Bell’s practiced clarity. This is a rare treatment of a different kind of Holocaust victim, a subject rendered bearable by the distance of a dream—or is it distant after all? By the time the narrator has left the dream, he, like Hannes, has discovered that his mother
loves him as he is, but his father would rather not have him at all. Three informational sections follow the story's conclusion: a description of "The Ideology, Laws, and Propaganda" developed by the National Socialist Party for racial purity; the action of "Operation T4" for the "elimination of lives not worth living"; source notes that describe the chief documentary work on which the author based his story. BH

**Karr, Kathleen** *Gilbert & Sullivan Set Me Free.* Hyperion, 2003 [244p]
Reviewed from galleys

Libby Dodge is all of sixteen and doing time at the Sherborn women's prison in 1914 Massachusetts. Her arrival coincides with that of a new chaplain, Mrs. Wilkinson, whose notions of justice tend more toward reformation than punishment. She convinces the superintendent that musical diversions will promote rehabilitation, not to mention harmony among inmates, and after a successful Easter rendition of Handel's *Messiah,* she's ready to tackle a full production of *The Pirates of Penzance.* Libby and her close friend Ma McCreary land leading roles, and Libby begins to imagine possibilities of a life beyond crime that might await her at her release. Before the curtain falls on *Pirates* and on Karr's novel, Libby has to confront her demons in solitary confinement, lock horns with sly baby-killer Gladys, fend off the amorous advances of a fellow inmate, and rise to status of teacher's pet for Mrs. Wilkinson, who miraculously arranges for a music academy faculty to informally audition her rising star. Although Sherborn, the *Pirates* production, and even the saintly Mrs. Wilkinson are, as a note explains, based on fact, Karr takes every opportunity to direct the curses and benedictions of decidedly fictional Fate. After keeping Libby's crime a closely guarded secret, the revelation that she was a mundane thief comes as a bit of a letdown. Still, the jail setting is a definite draw, and kids hankering for a peek behind bars should agree that the more melodrama, the better. EB

**Koss, Amy Goldman** *Gossip Times Three.* Dial, 2003 170p

The three of the title are three seventh-grade girls, Abby, Bess, and Cristy (or at least, the narrator explains, that's what she's alphabetically dubbed them for the purposes of telling this story), whose friendship founders when boy-crazy Bess takes up with Zack, the boy Abby has publicly adored since third grade. There's more to the story than this, because the narrator (who drops clues revealing that she's Bess' older sister, Gilda) explains much of the writing of the story even as she pens it, offering insights into deleted passages, motivations for digressions, interventions of her writing teacher, Mr. Wordsmith, etc. Unfortunately, this isn't one of the more successful self-aware narratives—Gilda's stream of commentary diverts attention from a main plot that would otherwise generate a fair bit of interest, and in itself it's scattered (there are subplots for so many people that it's difficult to keep them straight, which undercuts humor as well as impact) and often tediously contrived, leading readers to wish Mr. Wordsmith might have intervened more often. Underneath it all, there are some accurate perceptions about middle-school friendships, the strain of changing priorities, and the difficulty of human relationships, but readers will have to dig through the detritus to find the good stuff. DS
KRAFT, BETSY HARVEY  
ISBN 0-618-14264-9 $19.00  
Ad Gr. 5-9

If the twenty-sixth president is still in need of a spokesperson, Kraft is a shoo-in for the job. After a brief introductory litany establishing that T.R. was a “patchwork of contradictions,” she delivers a cradle-to-grave account that adheres closely to Roosevelt’s own press, following his progress from one “bully” job to the next without much attention to context or consequence. Readers see Roosevelt whip the New York police force into order, whip the spoils system into order, whip the Spaniards into order at San Juan Hill, whip up a canal through Panama, wallop some Western wildlife and then whip up a conservation movement, and generally whip the nation along in an underexamined (at least by the author) romp of U.S. hegemony. When Kraft settles down for a closer look, she does a creditable job explaining such complex issues as intra-party division during T.R.’s stint as governor, and she wryly observes him as the “fun” parent who lets his children run rampant while he slips out of town to pursue his political concerns and vigorous enthusiasms. Reading about this strenuous life is anything but strenuous, as Kraft capitalizes on Roosevelt’s frenetic activity and infuses a strong sense of it into her text. Middle-schoolers willing to accept a celebration of T.R.’s accomplishment at face value should find this to be a lively account. Period photographs, quotations sources, timeline, bibliographic essay, and index are appended. EB

KROSOCZKA, JARRETT J.  
*Annie Was Warned;* written and illus. by Jarrett J. Krosoczka. Knopf, 2003 28p  
Trade ed. ISBN 0-375-81567-8 $15.95  
R 4-6 yrs

The title will attract young listeners to this offering, and the opening lines will keep them there: “On Halloween night, Annie sneaked out to the creepy old Montgomery mansion.” Despite warnings from her parents and big sister, Annie takes a flashlight and dashes through the trick-or-treat streets in response to a dare from her friend, James. Down the avenues and across the churchyard she goes, to where “the mansion loomed large in the night. Annie thought she heard whispers. Was it haunted?” Into the mansion the intrepid heroine goes—straight into a surprise party for her birthday: “It was the best scare she’d ever had.” Krosoczka is a deft hand at creating suspense in simple words and concrete images. The quick pace and underlying feeling of delicious dread makes this Halloween adventure a prime readaloud candidate. The tone is just right—is there danger or isn’t there? Is Annie silly to take the dare, or is she brave? What are the noises in the streets? Despite a certain flatness in the characterizations, the paintings’ contrasts between dark and light and the varied perspectives add to the atmosphere. Listeners are certain to demand flashlights for some make-believe nighttime sojourns of their own. JMD

LAING, KATE  
*Best Kind of Baby;* illus. by R. W. Alley. Dial, 2003 32p  
R 4-6 yrs

Sophie does not take the news of the impending arrival of a sibling with enthusiasm; in fact, when her friends ask (in a variety of ways) why her mother is getting so round, Sophie replies that her mother is having a baby mouse, or puppy, or...
monkey, or dolphin. Her parents gently correct her ("We are having a baby. A little baby human child") and when the day does arrive, Sophie comes around. Laing's humorous text has an understated wit, from Sophie's sound effects for each hoped-for animal sibling to the calm and explicit explanations from each of Sophie's patient parents. Granted, the conclusion goes predictably soft (Sophie decides, in scenes that go on too long, that a baby brother may actually be better than a pet), and the resolution requires unrealistically advanced skills from the infant, but the visuals keep the book from tipping into treacle. Alley's watercolor and pencil illustrations are an easy blend of cartoon and realism, with polished drafting that belies the comfortable look of the uncluttered compositions. Add this to the readaloud list—young listeners will respond to Laing's cautiously welcoming Sophie whether they are facing a soon-to-arrive sibling or not. JMD

**LAUBER, PATRICIA**  *Who Came First?: New Clues to Prehistoric Americans.* National Geographic, 2003  64p  illus. with photographs  
ISBN 0-7922-8228-0  $18.95  R  Gr. 4-8

To that ever lengthening list of stuff you thought you knew—and now discover you don't—it's probably time to add the theory that Native Americans descended from Asians who crossed the Bering land bridge in prehistoric times. Lauber examines a wealth of new evidence that suggests the story may not be that simple. Tool types of the presumed "Clovis" people have turned up in Europe; tools and human remains that seem to predate Clovis point to earlier settlement; new understanding of glaciation patterns cast doubt on migration patterns; and there's even a strong suggestion that migration may have proceeded northward from South America, or from eastern North America to west. Lauber is careful to distinguish material "evidence" from theory and to present views of scientists who aren't quite ready to jump onto a new paleontological bandwagon. Kid-friendly explanations do, however, show how new applications in linguistics, genetics, and physical anthropology cast serious doubt on previous ideas on settlement. Besides discussing scientific skirmishes over the value of evidence, Lauber looks thoughtfully at implications within Native American communities, whose claim on prehistoric human remains under NAGPRA (the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) becomes ambiguous as the racial origin of the bones is called into question. Color photos, maps, charts, and timelines enhance the text; a list of resources (heavy on reputable websites) will help interested readers keep abreast of the debate. EB

ISBN 0-8118-3509-X  $15.95  R  4-6 yrs

Classrooms full of figurative little monsters may be familiar to many professionals, but this one's full of real little monsters, all in alphabetical array. From Ann (who "has alligator skin") through Ed (whose "hair smells like sauerkraut") and Sid (who "has fifteen purple toes") to Zelda (who is "tall and getting taller"), the rhyming roll is called, and then the creepy class is assembled for a beastly readaloud. Before the story's conclusion, the class is fascinated by a particularly bizarre creature ("with blinking eyes, a bumpless chin,/ roundish ears and furless skin"), who is, of course, the human viewer. While the final stanzas are rather blandly crafted, the couplets are generally chirpy, the classroom provides a legitimate excuse for the catalogue,
and the final reverse-monster twist will be a crowd-pleaser. Each illustration extrapolates from the single textual specific to a complete, consistent, and individually gruesome monster. Though the visuals are more slick than subtle, there's an exuberant kindergarten feel to the classroom and schoolyard, enhanced by the monsters' eye-popping colors and happy participation in traditional activities such as sandbox play and jumping rope. Youngsters not yet ready for Gorey's *Gashlycrumb Tinies* will find this an amiably horrific alphabet. DS

LEVITHAN, DAVID  *Boy Meets Boy*. Knopf, 2003 [208p]
Trade ed. ISBN 0-375-82400-6  $15.95
Reviewed from galleys R* Gr. 7-12

See this month's Big Picture, p. 3, for review.

LEWIN, TED  *Lost City: The Discovery of Machu Picchu*; written and illus. by Ted Lewin. Philomel, 2003  42p

"Lost" and "Discovery" may not be the best terms for this account of Hiram Bingham's 1911 exploration of the Inca site; after all, there was nothing "lost" about it to the Peruvians who farmed the grounds near the ancient buildings. The find was, however, certainly news to the Yale expedition that sought (and mistakenly thought they had found) the fabled "lost city" of Vilcapampa. Lewin indicates in his source notes and afterword that his retelling is based solely on Bingham's journal and his own exploration and photo documentation of the site and surrounding region; the result skews towards Bingham's now largely superseded mystical interpretation of the site (including a child visionary who seems original to this work) as well as the breathlessness of period prose (and an inexplicable tendency to punctuate questions with exclamation points). A closing note tells a bit more about later excavation, but the focus of this title is squarely on the adventurer's thrill of rediscovery, and on the magnificence of the mountains and jungle that sheltered and protected the site from Spanish (and archaeologists') pillage. The watercolor landscapes rely overmuch on some jarringly lurid and unsubtle color combinations, but there's a fair amount of drama as they articulate dense foliage in painstaking detail, raise craggy purple heights and drop light-dappled falls, revering the skillful masonry that withstands centuries of weathering and jungle overgrowth. Although able readers will find a more detailed account in Rebecca Stefoff's *Finding the Lost Cities* (BCCB 3/97), there's an old-fashioned archaeological romance here that should set middle-graders dreaming of khakis, shovels, and fat research grants. EB

MARKLE, SANDRA  *Outside and Inside Big Cats*. Atheneum, 2003  40p illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-689-82299-5  $16.95 R Gr. 3-6

Markle begins her informative exploration of big cats by comparing them to the more familiar house cats. She compares their sleeping habits, their flexible feet and retractable claws, their eyes, their rough sticky tongues, and their whiskers, showing how these features enable them to be adept hunters and savage predators. Photographs of a partially masticated zebra and descriptions of how male cats take droplets of female cats' urine into their mouths to determine if a female is ready to
mate will rate high on the middle-graders' cool gross-out list, and the photograph of a partially skinned house cat is effective as well as riveting in its illustration of the various inner parts—intestines, lungs, stomach, heart, and windpipe—of her subject. Explanations are clear, immediate, and bracingly pragmatic, as in the equation of the human making of a fist with a lion's actions in catching an antelope, or the description of the use of the canine teeth (of which, the author reminds us, we have four) to bite and kill prey. This is nature red in tooth, claw, intentions, and innards—science without apology or euphemism. A glossary, an index, and questions for guided rereading are included. KC


Nine-year-old Zoe lives in the Antwerp, a door-manned building on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. She is leaving the activities of her privileged life ("eating hot pretzels on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, trying on sunglasses at the Columbus Avenue flea market and walking my dachshund, Mickey, along Riverside Drive") to fly to Venice, Italy, to visit her great aunt Dorothy Pomander (a.k.a. D. P.). Zoe and Mickey land in Venice and are swept away by Dorothy into a vaporetto, a boat-bus that travels the watery streets. Zoe admires D. P.'s art collection, visits the sites, and meets a singing gondolier. Somewhere in her travels Zoe loses Mickey, but Ludovico (the gondolier) finds and returns him, and eventually Zoe too must return ("I am majorly bummed that we have to fly home tomorrow"). The well-off girl has a blissful time exploring Venice with all that money and an indulgent aunt can provide, but despite the excitement caused by the temporary loss of Mickey, this is still pointed and travelogue-ish; Zoe tells her story in the form of a travel journal with days, times, and locations, making this essentially a sightseeing tour held together by wisps of plot. However, the offbeat charm of the line-and-watercolor illustrations keep this from becoming offputtingly self-indulgent: a bereted Zoe slyly resembles her elderly bespectacled aunt, the dachshund has the built-in absurdity of a walking sausage, and the sites and canals of Venice are rendered with a splashy, enthusiastic flair. While the audience for this tale may be limited, it is still a lively (if lengthy) introduction to Venice, and world-traveling tykes may find a model here for their own vacation journals. JMD


The hopeful residents of the soon-to-be town of Florence in the newly opened Oklahoma Territory stalwartly resist robber-baron efforts to con them out of their land claims; consequently, the railroad owner refuses to allow the train to stop at Florence, and the teeny burg is in danger of financial collapse. While the townsfolk watch their meager savings dwindle, they hatch a number of abortive plots to force the train to stop; their cooperative efforts bond them into a tight-knit community whose solidarity against the Red Rock Runner seems unbreakable until a traitor is suspected in their midst. Although the action ostensibly revolves around ten-year-old Cissy, her dreamer father, and her pessimistic mother, this is truly an ensemble production, with a large cast of archetypes (from the displaced Ponca chief to the
gun-totin', illiterate schoolmarm) driving the action. While McCaughrean has nothing as exotic here as Madagascar piracy (The Pirate's Son, BCCB 9/98) or Chinese aerialism (The Kite Rider, BCCB 7/02), the Florencers' schemes chug briskly by in inventively drawn episodes, and their blossoming bonhomie warms their most outlandish brainstorms. Fans of Kathleen Karr's historical romps will want to ride along. EB

MURPHY, JIM  *Inside the Alamo.* Delacorte, 2003 121p illus. with photographs
Trade ed. ISBN 0-385-32574-6  $16.95

The rallying cry for Texas independence, “Remember the Alamo!”, is probably better known to adolescents than the story behind it, and here Murphy replays the doomed defense of the makeshift fort and attempts to limn the character of the big name participants among both the Texas rebels and the Mexican army. Organizationally, this is not Murphy’s finest outing, with a frequently repetitive text, and sidebar data and intrusive highlighted quotations that could have been more profitably incorporated into the main body of material. Although he pauses to weigh the evidence for several pervasive Alamo legends (e.g., did Davy Crockett die inside the fort, or was he executed later? What was the condition of ailing Jim Bowie when Mexican soldiers reached his bedside?), his broad-brushed portrayals of defenders and attackers call for cautious reading. “Like many self-centered individuals, Travis rarely criticized his own conduct”; “[Santa Anna] was a greedy man, a political genius, a vain and arrogant fool, a good soldier, a great Mexican patriot, a cruel and cowardly commander, and an opium addict.” There are few nonfiction writers that rival Murphy as a storyteller, though, and his recreation of the siege is tense and immediate. A stockpile of period and later illustrations, many captioned to point out incongruities and anachronisms, are included, as are a list of persons known to be in the Alamo at the siege, an annotated bibliography, and an index. EB

MURRAY, MARTINE  *The Slightly True Story of Cedar B. Hartley (Who Planned to Live an Unusual Life)*; written and illus. by Martine Murray. Levine/Scholastic, 2003 [240p]
ISBN 0-439-48622-X  $15.95
Reviewed from galleys

Cedar B. Hartley, self-proclaimed “stark-raving feminist” and sometime “secret meanie,” has an acrobat’s body and a philosopher’s soul. Her unusual life, a few months of which are narrated in this Australian import, consists entirely in the everyday details of family, friends, and neighbors rendered wise and important by Cedar’s distinctive voice and her small but expressive drawings. An accidental meeting with a boy named Kite, whose parents are circus trainers, spurs Cedar’s nascent interest in acrobatics. Partly because she likes tumbling, and partly because she really, really likes Kite, she goes into training. When her neighbor’s dog needs an operation, Cedar decides to mount a show to raise money. The “let’s put on a show” plot may be a familiar one, but Murray imbues Cedar’s narration with individuality as Cedar watches all and records her impressions in such a way that the reader becomes her friend in the precise way that she defines friendship: “I know Caramella is my friend, because when we talk it makes me feel that what I
felt and saw and said in any kind of situation means something.” As Cedar says of her acquaintance Oscar’s notebook, this is “odd and small and quiet, not grand,” but it’s both an enjoyable story and a narrative gently filled with wonder. A brief glossary provides explanation for the Aussie slang. KC


The Myerses offer a half dozen retellings of well-known Bible stories, cast in the first-person narration of a major character. The tales proceed in no discernible order, leading off with Delilah’s breathy musings about her betrayed lover, Samson, then back to Reuben and Joseph, further back to Isaac and Abraham, and winding up in Egypt on the eve of the Exodus with Aser and Gamiel. Stories such as Abraham’s intended sacrifice cling close to Biblical events while delving into purported thoughts and motivations of individuals, in this case the befuddled victim, Isaac. Others, such as Samson and Delilah, are more fanciful and uneven; W. D. Myers limns Delilah as a shaky composite of fifteen-year-old innocent, political pawn, and remorseful lover, while C. Myers disregards the textual age setting and depicts her in the more traditional role of worldly-wise seductress. Readers well up on their Scripture will undoubtedly chuckle at Myers’ genteel treatment of Lot’s daughter “Zillah,” who ponders the mystery of her mother’s transformation into salt but throws on the literary brakes just short of seducing her father in the cave. Illustrations range wildly among staged photographs, collage, paintings, and sketches; golden wash gives the pages a faux-papyrus appearance, a curious affectation considering that Egyptian sources are maddeningly quiet on the subject of the Israelites. This is neither as gripping nor imaginative as Peter Dickinson’s *City of Gold* or Jan Mark’s *God’s Story* (BCCB 5/98), but collections featuring a broad selection of Bible retellings may want a copy on their shelves. EB

NAMIOKA, LENSEY  *Half and Half*. Delacorte, 2003 136p
Trade ed. ISBN 0-385-73038-1  $15.95  M  Gr. 4-7

As the daughter of a Scottish mother and a Chinese father, Fiona Cheng is caught between two racial heritages that she can’t reconcile. Her identity problem comes to a head when both her Scottish grandparents and her Chinese grandmother come to visit her, each with their own hopes for her performance at the Seattle folk festival. Will she join her Grandpa MacMurray’s Highland dance troupe, or will she wear the beautiful silk costume Nainai has made for her to portray the Chinese heroine of her father’s latest picture book? Through conveniently overheard conversations, Fiona and her brother Ron realize that Ron is the true object of his Grandpa’s ambitions to have a dancer in the family, so he reluctantly dons the kilt and attempts to learn the dance routines, while Fiona, equally reluctant because she loves dancing, preps for her role as dainty, demure Chinese princess. Namioka makes heavy weather of the theme of “filial duty,” a behavior that Fiona disdains in her father as he regresses to childish behavior whenever his mother is around, but which ultimately seems to be Fiona’s and Ron’s only motivation as well. Both children apparently want nothing other than to please their grandparents (who offer little motivation beyond cultural fidelity), even if it means mortifying embarrassment on Ron’s part and crushing disappointment on Fiona’s. Despite the
When Violet Paz is selected to perform Original Comedy for her high-school speech team, she doesn’t have to look any further than home for material. Violet’s family features a Polish mother who dreams of opening a Polish/Cuban bistro, a Cuban father obsessed with ironing and brightly colored shirts, an Abuela with a passion for fluorescent lipstick, and a dominoes-crazed Abuelo. A weekend-long domino party which was broken up by the police just as her Abuelo, “looking for all the world like the Cuban Statue of Liberty,” makes a mad dash with a flame-engulfed roast toward a cooler of beer and Cokes provides just the right occasion for her OC routine, but she must also muster the energy to prepare for her quinceañera, a traditional party for Cuban girls turning fifteen. Violet is determined to keep control of the planning so that this party doesn’t become a nightmare of traditions she has neither knowledge of nor affinity for, but as the planning progresses, she realizes that knowing more about Cuba might not be such a bad thing. Osa’s picture of family life is fresh and funny; Violet is a strong, assertive female lead with a dynamic supporting cast of family and friends. The first-person narration is a comic delight, blending raucous physical comedy with gentle teasing regarding the idiosyncrasies of Violet’s family and friends (“Our house is decorated in Spanish Colonial meets Early Thrift Shop, and so, it seemed, was my mother today”). The issues of assimilation, heritage, and the embargo are all raised in such natural contexts and with such complex associations and opinions among the characters that there is never a sense of an agenda, and yet uninitiated readers will surely want to learn more about Cuba, its music, and its traditions, as well as yearning for a quince of their own. KC

PAK, SOYUNG  Sumi’s First Day of School Ever; illus. by Joung Un Kim. Viking, 2003  32p
ISBN 0-670-03522-X  $15.99       Ad  4-7 yrs
On her first day in her new school, Sumi starts by learning that school is a lonely, scary, mean place. Her mother leaves her, she doesn’t know where she belongs among the big, noisy children, and a boy taunts her because of her Korean ethnicity. The only words she knows in English are basic greetings, but as she navigates through her day with the help of her teacher, she begins to make connections with other students and to revise her original impressions of school. Her love of drawing paves the way for her first friendship, and she realizes that school is a “not-so-lonely, not-so-scary, not-so-mean” place after all. Naïve figures in bright smudgy schoolroom colors feature body shapes that imply their characters’ emotions and attitudes; they also suggest more similarities than differences among the students, which may be visually confusing even as it’s philosophically good-hearted. This lacks the subtle humor of Helen Recorvits’ My Name Is Yoon (BCCB 4/03), and the trajectory is completely predictable; however, the effective narrative structure and simple text provide a satisfying movement from conflict to resolution. KC
“Okay,” says one of Marion Dane Bauer’s characters to another, who has been doing volunteer work for the wrong reasons, “just so long as it doesn’t count as a good deed.” Ironically, this collection has “good deed” generously inscribed all over it, beginning with Robert Wedgeworth’s prefatory description of ProLiteracy Worldwide—the recipient of partial proceeds from the book—and also with the opening of editor Gary Paulsen’s introduction, “Books saved my life.” Fortunately, most of the ten short stories stand on their own despite statements of intention that may put young readers off or simply delay them from getting at what happens next. Although each story focuses on a book or writing or reading in some way, shape, or form, there’s no instructive adulation inherent to any of them. In fact, literacy figures in rather surprising ways, including misleading journals and letters in M. T. Anderson’s creepy tale about a deserted ship; a perjured book report in Ellen Conford’s story of gendered revenge; and an abandoned baby’s rescue by a pickpocket who’s been taught “how to read with the Bible” so he can be a better thief, in Kathleen Karr’s story set during the 1893 Columbian Exposition of Chicago. Other contributors include Margaret Haddix, Jennifer Holm, A. LaFaye, Gregory Maguire, Ellen Wittlinger, and Joan Bauer, and their stories range from science fiction to fantasy and sharp-edged realism. The overall tone of the collection is restrained and somewhat sophisticated, appropriate to the readers who will be attracted by a book about books. BH

PINCHUK, AMY  *The Best Book of Bikes*; illus. by Tina Holdcroft and Allan Moon and with photographs.  Maple Tree Press, 2003  64p (Popular Mechanics for Kids)

Library ed. ISBN 1-894379-43-8  $21.95

Paper ed. ISBN 1-894379-44-6  $12.95  R Gr. 3-7

Top to bottom, front to back, across countries, and over time—just about anything related to cycling pops up in this lively introduction. A bit of bicycle history and trivia kicks it off (450 million bikes in China; is the da Vinci bicycle sketch a fraud?), then the focus shifts to contemporary rides. Here readers examine in detail the mechanical arcana, learn standard maintenance and roadside repairs, and pick up on the physics and strategies behind BMX stunts and long-distance racing. Diagrams are paragons of clarity, and plenty of color photos dish out extra eye candy. Pinchuk’s frequently overenthusiastic prose (“Get the inside scoop on the rad and crazy world of BMX racing”) suggests a visitor to, rather than a resident of, the Land of Adolescence, and older readers may wince a little at the chatter. Her information, however, is solid, the overview is thorough, and the index and glossaries of technological terms and rider jargon could haul many an adult up from cluelessness. It’s sick and phat—and that’s a good thing. EB


Library ed. ISBN 0-06-001023-1  $16.89  R Gr. 7-12


Seniors Nikki, Alicia, and Sam embark, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, on a *Pygmalion*-inspired plan wherein they each take one person “who is obviously untapped” and help him or her blossom. Nikki picks Brian Camarga, a gifted science nerd; Sam chooses Tia Terraletto, the “Girl Most Likely to Beat You With Chains,”
in the view of a shocked Nikki; Alicia refuses to acknowledge her choice, secretly selecting the dangerous and very attractive Morgan Weiss. As each of the trio's stories unfold, it becomes clear that they have their own individual dramas to play out that have only the most peripheral connection to the people they've selected: Nikki finds real respect for Brian (who teaches her more than she teaches him); Sam comes to grips with his own fortune-blessed life as he gets to know the troubled Tia; Alicia projects her romantic wishes and her emotions about her recent abandonment by her mother onto Morgan (who knows she's out of her league with him). Randle's characterization makes the somewhat stagey setup believable; each of the trio's voices ring true, especially chirpy, smarter-than-she-seems Nikki, who really is the sort of person who'd genuinely want to help others, who'd overlook the condescension inherent in such a plan, and who'd be honest enough to realize her mistake. Sam's story is particularly strong in its original and badly needed exploration of the moral burden of a good life: he's aware that there's no just reason behind the disparity between his and Tia's fortunes, but does that disparity make him guilty, obligated, or something else entirely? Readers will also wish to discuss the ethics of Sam's decision to report to the authorities something Tia has told him in confidence, which loses him her hard-won trust. A lot of authors overlook the kids whose lives aren't in turmoil, but Randle sensitively demonstrates the universal possibilities of growth and the truth in Nikki's own statement: "happy people, unhappy people—everybody is interesting." DS


The seventeenth-century Dutch Windjammer brothers' merchant fleet has been lost at sea while trying to establish trade with the New World. Uncle Lucien has, by all accounts, met a watery death; Hercules Windjammer has died of shame, grief, and stress at the demise of the family business; coldhearted banker Hugo van Helsen is closing in on what's left of the shipping line and on Hercules' beautiful widow; and now it's up to fourteen-year-old Adam Windjammer to try to save his mother, the family's business, and its respected name. As Adam dodges a vicious cutpurse and a nefarious "preacher" in cahoots with van Helsen, he's undermined by the apparent treachery of his father's trusted bookkeeper (ah, but is he really a traitor?) and aided by van Helsen's own feisty daughter (ah, but is she really on his side?). Whenever the drawn-out plot springs a leak, Richardson caulks it up with pitch and hokum—none-too-original plot twists, narrow escapes, and a theatrical climax involving a mysterious, turbaned Turk (hmmm, Sydney Greenstreet in *Casablanca*) and a poor-but-loyal-friends-kick-in-to-save-the-business ending straight out of *It's a Wonderful Life*. Richardson does dish up a tasty red herring—Adam's chase after the elusive Black Pearl won't fool horticulturally minded adolescents, but it's a safe bet most readers will follow the scent. This is a hefty read, but a brisk one, and a little booktalking will put some wind behind the circulation. EB


Sometimes an ogre just wants to feel pretty. At least, that's so with the furry little ogre that May Belle meets, who demands that she give him her new hat, and then
her gloves, and finally her feet. This last is the last straw, until May Belle figures out that what the ogre really wants is pretty pink toenails, which she paints for him. In their next encounter, May Belle bakes up three blueberry pies that disappear from her windowsill while cooling. Again, she grabs hold of that ogre and this time makes him bake a pie just for her in return. Finally, the lonely May Belle invites the equally lonely ogre to be her roommate, and they live and play happily ever after. May Belle is a feisty little personage, just the sort who would insist that her friendship with an ogre exist entirely on her terms. Winborn's illustrations suggest that May Belle is kin to David McPhail's characters; her large head with its thatch of blonde hair sits atop a diminutive body whose posture and attitudes imply boundless energy and excitability (the ogre himself appears to be close kin to May Belle's fuzzy pup). Beginning readers will revel in the way fearless May Belle turns this scary monster into a dear friend. KC


Because her first and favorite word was "no!" Amanda Jane Keeling has been called nothing but Rebel since she was two years old. When the rest of her family heads to Europe for a music competition, she decides to stay home and help her grandmother, from whom she inherited her rebellious tendencies, fix up an old house for boarders. Her grandmother's friend and business partner, Vi, has a grandson helping her, and soon Moses and Rebel find that they are kindred spirits—exceptionally tall young people with a passion for mystery, which they conveniently find. While walking their dogs, they witness a petty theft that turns out to be the tip of a criminal iceberg. Moses and Rebel follow all of the classical leads—muddy footprints, discarded jackets, wallets filled with counterfeit bills—and finally devise a scheme to lure the culprits to their home, even though they know that such a move is risky. Fortunately, Moses' uncle is a cop, and his late-night return from a fishing trip tidily corresponds with the counterfeit gang's break-in, resulting in a messy but ultimately harmless roundup of all the bad guys. More Scooby Doo than Nancy Drew, this mildly interesting mystery turns on too-convenient coincidences and fortuitous circumstances. Dialogue is generally stilted and authorial forecasting painfully intrusive, with chapters ending with lines such as "if they'd had a crystal ball their response would have been quite different." There is also a rather strange and persistent subtext of fourteen-year-old Rebel's sizing Moses up as potential marriage material. Still, there is sufficient action and predictable enough clue detection to catch the undemanding mystery fan, with the added bonus of two clever dogs whose detective work deserves some Scooby snacks. KC


"You know the world will always be difficult for a boy with a pumpkin for a head." So Otho's sage mother reminds him when she has restored his errant pumpkin head to his otherwise normal (though apparently detachable) body after its adventures. Plucked off its body by a bat who sees its potential as a home with its own food supply, Otho's head is dropped in the ocean, swallowed by a fish, expelled through the pressure of a squid, and picked up by a fisherman who has seen an
impressive array of fish in his day, but never a pumpkinfish. Fortunately, Otho's mother happens to be shopping in the fish market that day, so this adventure doesn't take what might have been a very nasty turn, and Otho is instead restored to wholeness. Rohmann returns to the artistic style of multi-color relief prints and playfully absurd fantasy that earned him the 2002 Caldecott for My Friend Rabbit, though here both the story and the illustrations are quieter and the humor less straightforward. The chunky black outlines and limited palette (orange, blue, and aqua) allow the shapes to take center stage; a comforting roundness rocks readers along on Otho's adventure. The plot never quite fulfills its enticingly weird premise, though, remaining blandly sequential rather than really developing. Be prepared for some very interesting theories from the more literal-minded about how Otho got a pumpkin for a head; these young folks will likely be very diligent about spitting out their seeds in future. KC


Harry Potter's latest adventure reveals an admirable hero somewhat the worse for wear: his grief at the death of Cedric, his fear of (and connection to) the evil Lord Voldemort, and his emotional distance from Professor Dumbledore combine to make Harry a bit short-tempered, a bit short-sighted, and a bit more recognizably human. Rowling eases readers back into Harry's world—and Harry's precarious existence—with nary a ripple: the suburban peace of the Dursleys' manicured lives is shattered by the intrusion of dementors, sent by a rogue in the Ministry of Magic and seeking to do Harry serious injury. A wizard rescue party retrieves Harry from the world of Muggles and sets him down amidst the Order of the Phoenix, a secret society that plots Voldemort's final downfall. With an escalating love life, academic complications at school, and a Ministry of Magic determined to ignore the obvious, Harry is in an adolescent uproar. Revelations about Sirius Black, Professor Snape, and Harry's late father cause the boy to question all he holds true, and his confusion clouds his judgment. A roaring set of practical jokes by Fred and George Weasley against a politically appointed, obnoxious new professor at Hogwarts lightens the tone just in time for the Order's tragic confrontation with Voldemort and his malevolent minions. Rowling cheerfully turns her own conventions on their ears, and the result is a surprising and enjoyable ride. While Harry's much-touted love interest fizzles before it fires, familiar characters achieve a bit more depth: Ginny Weasley starts to come into her own, Hermione employs a dryly wicked wit, and Dumbledore reveals, if not feet, at least a little toe of clay. It's no longer quite clear that all will work out in the end; the lines are being drawn, but, as exemplified by Percy Weasley, not everyone is on the right side. Rowling has managed to make Harry and his fate a bit less predictable, which, in the fifth of a seven-volume series, is a very good thing. JMD


Thirteen-year-old Lily Crabtree doesn't want to live in Great-Uncle Wesley's Victorian mansion in Cape May, New Jersey, but that's where she and her mother end up after her mom's latest romance fizzles. It's bad enough that living in a
seashore community in the winter is deadly dull, but Lily's cat, Julep, is staring at things that Lily can't see, an old Kewpie doll is following the girl around the drafty house, and things keep disappearing and reappearing with maddening regularity. Her mother thinks Lily is making it all up, but Lily knows that something strange is happening in the family house. A chance meeting with a boy named Vaz (short for Vasilios) gives Lily a romantic interest and an ally, and the two join forces to discover the murderous secrets hidden in her family history. Ruby divides her effectively creepy ghost tale into two parts, the day-to-day activities of the living and the day-to-day activities of the dead, in serif and sans serif fonts, respectively, and the actions of individuals present and departed are humorously balanced to provide both historical context and local color. The foreshadowing is smoky but discernible, and the cumulative pace is just right for a suspenseful tale of murderous betrayal, vengeful ghosts, and tragic rivalry. The atmospheres of haunted house and deserted seaside are delicately evoked, and concluding revelations move logically and inexorably into focus. Ruby doesn't horrify so much as she insinuates, in gracefully nuanced language that provides chilling support for the action. Make room for this first novel on that surefire ghost tale shelf. JMD

Said, SF Varjak Paw; illus. by Dave McKean. Fickling, 2003 256p ISBN 0-385-60415-7 $15.95 R Gr. 4-6

Varjak is the middle son in a pampered feline family of Mesopotamian Blues, a rare breed of cat with an illustrious (and mostly forgotten) history. When the cats' indulgent owner, the Contessa, dies, her house and her cats are taken over by the dastardly Gentleman, a wicked character with felonious designs and two unnerving black cats. Varjak, an enthusiastic listener to stories of the legendary Jalal (folk hero of the Mesopotamian Blues) told by his grandfather, the Elder Paw, escapes over the garden wall to seek a dog to help rescue his too-complacent cat family. Varjak then transforms, as Holly, a savvy alley cat, shows him how to survive on the streets, and dream visits from Jalal teach Varjak "the Way," a spiritual and physical discipline that turns him from soft house pet to nearly unbeatable hunter and fighter. He finally finds his canine ally in Cludge, a terrifying, slobbering, lonely, monster mutt, who follows Varjak to the Contessa's to save the Mesopotamian Blues (and, incidentally, discover the fate of disappearing street cats). The premise has both folkloric and cinematic echoes: an underestimated outcast achieves spiritual enlightenment through martial arts. While the plot is derivative, the prose is smooth, and the action is swift (and sometimes even harrowing); the setting has a dark, concrete allure that will keep readers roaming the streets with Varjak and his friends. The conclusion, though murky, is exciting (the Gentleman is turning real cats into toy cats by means and for reasons unknown), and the villain's being routed by Cludge is just if not entirely credible. Give this to feline fantasy lovers looking for a walk on the wild side. Illustrations, some in scratchy, angular black in white, some in monochrome peach, add to the atmosphere. JMD


Both literally and actually, Everest is no longer the rarefied mountain it used to be; the spate of recent Everest titles, including Salkeld's own Mystery on Everest: A
Photobiography of George Mallory (BCCB 9/00) means that there aren’t many new book routes to travel on this peak. Her approach here has a sufficiently fresh focus to make it worthwhile, however, in its sequential history, focusing on several different expeditions (some successful, some tragic, some both). Her sidebars tackle head-on some issues that are ignored or briefly alluded to in other Everest volumes: the economic significance of Everest climbing to the Sherpas, who have endured more losses than the visiting climbers on Everest; the ecological degradation of the mountain and the problems of measures designed to combat it; the pressure for boundary-pushers not just to climb Everest but to find ways to make history doing it. Color and black-and-white photographs sometimes suffer from unclear captioning, but there are some breathtaking vistas as well as helpful and informative diagrams of various expeditions’ paths. This is usefully complementary to Stephen Venables’ To the Top: The Story of Everest (BCCB 6/03), and it could also serve as a standalone introduction to climbing history for readers just embarking on their literary journeys. There are unfortunately no notes, but extensive end matter includes a detailed chronology, a biographical “hall of fame,” a list of Everest “firsts,” a glossary, a list of print and electronic resources, and an index.

SAN SOUCI, ROBERT D. Dare to Be Scared: Thirteen Stories to Chill and Thrill; illus. by David Ouimet. Cricket, 2003 159p ISBN 0-8126-2688-5 $15.95 R Gr. 4-8

San Souci, known for his retellings of traditional folktales and the Short and Shivery series, here offers thirteen original tales. From an urban-legend-type entry featuring telephone calls from a deceased relative, to a Nightmare on Elm Street parallel where dreams fuel reality, to a neo-folk tale avec boogey woman, to a sad but satisfying ghost tale, the author provides a smorgasbord of tasty terror treats. Ouimet provides one creepily evocative, full-page, inky black-and-white illustration—a stylistic cross between Stephen Gammell and Gahan Wilson—for every story (the seen-through-the-keyhole image of the little girl with sooty black eyes clutching a cell phone is particularly memorable); the title page of each tale features a thumbnail from the full-page image. The stories are tightly plotted and pithily told, and the conversational tone of the writing will inspire much reading aloud and storytelling around the campfire or at sleepovers. The cultural diversity of the protagonists assures that many readers will see themselves somewhere in this collection (although given the nature of many of the fates herein, that may not necessarily be a good thing). JMD


The red-haired narrator is awakened from his sound sleep by a “BAM! BAM! BAM!” on his front door, so downstairs he goes to investigate. Discovering that the would-be intruder is a skeleton, our hero races up the stairs in his “bedroom slipper bears” and dives under the covers; the skeleton follows, saying, “...I’m wearin’ no skin, so EVERYTHING shows—/ Comin’ up to find some skeleton
clothes!” Our hero is worried: “What did he mean by skeleton clothes?/ Waterproof skin and a nose that blows?/ Bones out shopping—/Good-bye skin!/ The door burst open/ and BONES walked in!” The skeleton isn’t looking for skin, however, but for sartorial splendor, and to that end he raids the boy’s closet (“rattling hangers, banging around,/ trying and tossing whatever he found”) and departs in an ectoplasmic, er, eclectic, outfit. Jobling uses a strongly geometric style and primary-school palette to lighten the tone of this shiver-touched tale. Schertle’s rhymes have an easy scansion and the story a funny payoff, and young storytimers looking for a little something scary will be happy with this bare-bones book. JMD


After fifteen-year-old California surfer boy Spencer gets whacked in the head with his board, he is rescued from death by a mermaid’s kiss: “Out of nowhere she appeared—golden yellow and sun-fire orange hair sparkled like tiny stars and flowed in the glistening water. The most wonderful pink-lipped smile flashed before me.” Of course, Spencer doesn’t realize she’s a mermaid; he thinks she’s a gorgeous babe who likes to swim in freezing water at 6 A.M. Lilly (short for Waterlily) is besotted with Earthdude, as she calls him, and, when she discovers he has somehow gotten her precious locket in the rescue, she swallows a concoction from Madame Pearl’s Potion Palace, changes her tail to two legs, and arrives at Seaside High to find both the necklace and the Earthee of her dreams. When they finally meet, Lilly and Spencer spend a lot of time gazing into each other’s souls/eyes; many exclamation points later, Spencer trades his legs for a tail so he and Lilly can be together forever. This is mer-legend with a Valley Girl twist; Schreiber’s take on the secret mer-civilization is that it’s just as acquisitive and vacuous as Earth, only underwater. The humor is obvious, depending on effusive, clichéd language, and the tone is coy and self-consciously aware. Still, this title has a catch-of-the-day premise that makes it a natural high-low choice, and (despite a cover that makes the fifteen-year-old Lilly look about ten) it is sure to be a frequent floater on the checkout tide. JMD


When Taylor is sent to live with her father and his new family for the summer, she is received with obvious rancor by her stepsister, Nicole. On her first night in the antebellum house, Taylor sees two ghosts, one a prank played by Nicole and her friend Cody, but the second a genuine specter. Later, Nicole sees the ghost as well—a woman who appears to be looking for something. As Nicole, Cody, Taylor, and Nicole’s younger brother, Peter, resolve to determine the object of her search, they are threatened by a sinister male spirit who seems to want to thwart the children’s investigation. The combination of Civil War history, tragic love story, and murder mystery within a contemporary ghost story is now an established pattern for Seabrooke (see *The Haunting at Stratton Falls,* BCCB 9/00, and *The Haunting of Holroyd Hill,* 6/95). Although the unraveling of the historical mystery is interesting, the threat posed by the male ghost is never convincing enough to be really scary; however, as with the author’s other books, this might inspire readers to investigate local haunts. The real plot here is a predictable domestic one
about sibling rivalry between steps; the energy of Nicole's and Taylor's dislike for one another is offered as a reason for the appearance of the rivalrous spirits in the first place, and their working together is what enables them to solve the ancient mystery. Although this plot is by now formulaic for Seabrooke, it's a formula that works well enough, and readers already acquainted with her work will find this book hauntingly familiar. KC


Blake, a fifteen-year-old paragon of steadiness and responsibility, has always acted as a sort of guardian to his younger brother Quinn, a metal-studded wild child who all too often seems to check out from reality. After a major spat in which Blake reminds Quinn he was born "an accident," Quinn takes off to a rave amusement park—"never in the same place twice. Attendance by invitation only." Blake, with two friends in tow, pursues Quinn to make amends, but the theme park turns out to be a nightmarish hall of horrors, in which each "amusement" tests the rider's deepest fears, and from which no fairgoer may leave without completing seven vicious rides. In the course of the evening, Blake is forced to confront a deeply buried memory—that he was the sole survivor of a school-bus accident—and come to grips with the guilt that has plagued him ever since. There's a lot of ersatz-Freudian hokum in Blake's encounters with his killer-whale mother and Ahab-like future stepdad, not to mention a dose of didacticism in his run-ins with the house of mirrors (in which he must literally break through his faulty self-images). The evening whips by at breakneck pace, though, and even the final revelation that this was probably all a hallucination brought on by a car accident proves more mild disappointment than dire letdown. Save this one for a gusty, rainy night and let the shivers rip. EB


Each of twelve luminaries of the WNBA gets a rhythmic poem describing her athletic gifts. The verses go the already metaphor-prone game of basketball one better, interpreting each player's moves in accordance with a particular image or simile (Margo Dydek is "Fly Swatter," Chamique Holdsclaw is the "Fire Starter," Teresa Witherspoon is "Hurricane T"). Some of the metaphors interfere rather than propel, and not all of the poems evince the sustained focus and energy of the best, but there's still plenty of enjoyable poetic and hoops action here. Smith has earned the title of Hoops Poet Laureate and he knows his b-ball, giving praise to a wide variety of skills and styles; his verses often have a throbbing rhythm that suggests rap as well as the pounding of players' feet on wooden floors, and he's often clever with internal rhymes and echoes that intricately structure the lines ("Braids bounce on break/ as ball bounces from shake/ and b-bake moves/ fueled by Philly-Funkdafied grooves"—"Dawn Staley: Bounce to This"). The multimedia-effect compositions and energetic layout evince the vitality of Smith's previous titles (Short Takes, BCCB 2/01), and the photographs of the athletes themselves are well chosen, picturing the players in moments of supreme effort, ferocity, and concentration; unfortunately, though, the matte pages in grayed-out shades and earthy camouflage hues are disappointingly drab, lessening the impact of the im-
The Bulletin

ages. Sports fans will nonetheless revel in the high-action verses, which will draw many reluctant readers, and they may wish to work up a public performance of their favorite or draft their own similar efforts (perhaps featuring themselves?). DS

ISBN 0-374-32852-8 $16.00
Reviewed from galleys R 6-9 yrs

Emma and her family are migrant workers, traveling from south to north with the crops. When they arrive in Pennsylvania to pick apples, Emma is surprised and more than a little scared to learn that she will be going to school instead of helping in the orchards; since integrated schools are still against the law in the south, this is the first time African-American Emma has gone to school with white people. Once at school, she finds it has its rewards, especially its books; although she knows she is not allowed to take them home from school, the temptation proves too strong for her. When her mother finds out that she has brought two books home for the weekend, she insists that not only must Emma return the illicitly borrowed items, but she must tell her teacher what she has done. Her mother then rewards her by sparing some money from the "hard-times jar" for Emma to buy some books of her own, wisely recognizing that hard times aren't just about physical needs and that the soul has hard times of its own. Acclaimed African-American gallery artist John Holyfield's elongated figures and vibrant colors lend grace and elegance to Smothers' image-rich prose. Emma's heart is in her eyes; Holyfield captures a dreamy look when she is writing or thinking, a tingling anticipation when she peers into the library for the first time, and a sad longing as she gazes at the hard-times jar. This could be an interesting companion to Vera B. Williams' classic A Chair for My Mother; it also has multiple cross-curricular applications with social studies units, as well as the potential to reawaken students to the value of a good book. KC

Tarpley, Natasha Anastasia Joe-Joe's First Flight; illus. by E. B. Lewis. Knopf, 2003 34p
Trade ed. ISBN 0-375-81053-6 $15.95 Ad 5-8 yrs

Joe-Joe and his father both yearn to fly the planes at the airport where his father works, but, as Tarpley points out in her historical note, in the 1920s "the field of aviation was segregated." Still, Joe-Joe can dream, and that he does one night, climbing into the cockpit, winging his way up to the moon, and singing a song that will bring moonlight back to the town of Blind Eye to restore hope to the "All-Original Flying Men" and keep their flying dreams alive. Tarpley's style is strong, but the text is lengthy, and the plot structure suffers when a realistic setup turns to fantasy without a recognizable transition. On one page, Daddy is talking about the unfairness of racism, and on the next, symbolism suddenly becomes fact as we learn that "all that lost hope formed a cloud over the town, and now even the moonlight and the stars can't break through." Despite the moon's disappearance, ordinary life continues for several days before Joe-Joe falls asleep, whereupon the rest of the book plays out the dream sequence until Joe-Joe can bring back the moon to a real town setting. Citing the powerful motif of "the people could fly" from Virginia Hamilton's adaptation of slave narratives, Tarpley almost—but not
quite—manages the same magical realism as Faith Ringgold does in *Tar Beach* (BCCB 3/91). Lewis' watercolors sweep land and sky, catch bodies in fluid motion and faces with quick nuance of expression, and offer dramatic contrasts of silvery light and pitch darkness. With some adult explanation distinguishing between actual and imagined events in the text, young listeners can lift off with this story. BH

**Timberlake, Amy**  *The Dirty Cowboy*; illus. by Adam Rex. Farrar, 2003 32p ISBN 0-374-31791-7 $16.00 R* Gr. 3-5

The titular cowboy is, as the title suggests, dirty, one might even say filthy ("The cowboy's stench stuck to passersby like mud splashed up from a wagon wheel"), so one day ("No one knows for sure what drives a man to it") he up and decides to take a bath. After traveling to the closest river, he parks his clothes with his trusty canine companion ("'Dawg!' he said. 'No one touches these clothes but me. Hear?'") and scrubs himself clean in the water. Unfortunately, the dog is unconvinced that this clean-smelling individual is his cowboy and refuses to yield the clothes, whereupon a battle royale ensues—which leaves the cowboy as dirty as he was in the first place. The text is somewhat long for a readaloud, but readers will revel in the tall-taling, sagebrush-flavored style, the malodorous situation, and the slapstick. The illustrations take the considerable comedy of the text and crank it up several notches: Rex's slickly highlighted figures have the gleeful grotesquerie of *Mad* magazine art, with cowboy, his horse, and his dog all bulging-eyed and spindly-legged. The compositions are creative and the scenes are rife with additional details, many highly silly; most likely to provoke guffaws, however, is the combination of the cowboy's obvious nekkidness with the deliberately coy obscuring, à la *Austin Powers*, of his least public parts with strategically placed critters, mud, flying articles of clothing, etc. This is a rootin' tootin' good read anytime, but it might be particularly well suited to the last day of the camping trip when baths are starting to sound mighty good indeed. DS


Teenaged Zach is waiting for his mother in a coffee shop when two other teenagers appear, brandishing guns and demanding the money from the cash registers. At the appearance of the cops, the wannabe robbers panic and take the denizens of the shop, including Zach, hostage in a back room. This would be bad news for anybody, but it's particularly problematic for Zach, who suffers from schizophrenia and who needs to get his medication on time to ensure his worst enemies, the attackers in his head, don't come back. As the afternoon wears on, Zach's skewed responses result in a connection with the older of the two invaders, who realizes that Zach's problems are even more monumental than his own; when the police negotiate a release of the other hostages, it's Zach who stays with the two frightened youths and who arranges for his psychiatrist to act as mediator for them. In *Stuck in Neutral* (BCCB 6/00), Trueman gave eloquent voice to a kid cut off from everyone by cerebral palsy; here he provides convincing and compelling narration for a boy who's cut off by his own traitorous mind. Chapter headings offer psychiatric notes that provide insight into the official take on Zach's situation (including
his recent suicide attempt), but they're really superfluous: Zach's a competent describer and demonstrator of his blunted affect and the pains he must take to differentiate reality from hallucination ("Their faces look pretty normal: Noses, eyes, mouths, ears and hair and eyebrows. So far so good. If I were just imagining them, they'd probably be missing some of those parts. So I think that probably I'm not imagining them. I think these are real kids with real guns"). There's a fair amount of contrivance in the story of the two robbers (they want to get money for their mother's chemotherapy, and their guns are only for show), but it's overshadowed by the vividness of Zach's viewpoint and the clear implication that his real plight outstrips a mere hostage situation any day. Fans of Cormier's high-tension works will enjoy this thought provoking and nail-biting story.

**U'Ren, Andrea**  *Mary Smith*; written and illus. by Andrea U'Ren. Farrar, 2003 32p ISBN 0-374-34842-1 $16.00 R 4-7 yrs

Mary Smith is a "knocker-up"—it's her job to rouse the town's sleepy citizens from their beds so that they can go about their daily duties. Starting hours before dawn at the baker's, she wields her trusty peashooter at his window until he assures her he's up. As the sun begins to rise, she rouses the train conductor, the laundry maids, and various other townsfolk, concluding with the grateful mayor. Upon arriving home, she's scandalized to find her daughter asleep in bed rather than off at school; it turns out, though, that the girl, clearly a chip off the old knocker-up, attempted to wake a sleeping classmate at his desk and was sent home after missing him and hitting the teacher. With all the bedtime stories about, it's refreshing to see a wakeup story instead, and this has a liveliness suitably tempered to still-awakening energy levels. The idea is an intriguing one in its own right, and vivacious youngsters accustomed to waking up adults will relish the thought of such an activity's importance (as well as the approved and authorized use of the peashooter). Textured watercolors suit the thin dawn light and the stony buildings of the village, while thicker paints brighten the yawning, folksy faces and describe the trajectory of the all-important pea. Contrasting views of life inside the awakening houses and the growing bustle of the village (alert viewers will notice Mary's customers going about their day) contrast with Mary's purposeful march through the streets. Use this as an anti-bedtime story or whenever soporific youngsters need a little rousing (peashooter not included). A note adds information about the history of knocking-up and the real Mary Smith.


When the English teacher loads a major research project about Henry Thoreau onto her uninterested eighth-graders, Beth Gardner ends up in a group of losers and assumes she'll have to take the helm to carry off a passing grade. However, Stuart turns out to be a true enthusiast—or at least he recognizes that enthusiasm will establish him in a position of authority and launch him toward junior-high stardom—and he steers them all into building a Walden-style cabin in nearby Wayburn Woods. Skinny, geeky Hollis turns into an avid naturalist, and chunky, grumpy Rachel takes to frontier housekeeping with a passion. Only Beth seems odd one out, but she undertakes to record their experiences for her contribution,
and her sharp observations about their group dynamic are telling indeed. Stuart loses interest and grabs an opportunity to take over and rebuild the school newspaper into his own personal mouthpiece, and Rachel turns into a true friend for Beth. Their physical and emotional investment in the cabin is threatened, however, when a local developer starts razing the woods, and help comes from a most unlikely source: the ever-politicicking Stuart. Vaupel incorporates a modest, palatable dose of Thoreau philosophy but wisely concentrates on how his thinking influences the experiences of the teens and, particularly, how their interest shifts subtly from Thoreau's views on nature to those on civil disobedience. The school year sprawls a bit, but the plot lines are neatly interwoven and the kids' interrelationships are convincing. Middle-schoolers finding Thoreau rather hard going will appreciate this accessible and immediate exploration (and demonstration) of his philosophy. EB

WARNER, SALLY  
_A Long Time Ago Today._  
Viking, 2003 [208p]  

Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 4-7

Dilly's mother, Elle, died when she was six, but Dilly still feels as though her mother is bossing her around from beyond the grave. Every summer, for instance, she and her dad go to the farm Elle bequeathed to Dilly instead of staying in California where Dilly's friends are, or would be, she reasons, if she could just stay home for once and spend her summer playing with them. This summer, Dilly is dismayed to find that her mother wrote her a letter before she died, leaving it in the care of Elle's best friend, Libby, who has decided that it is time for Dilly to read it. Dilly is furious: how dare her mother intrude on her life after all these years? As the letter has mysteriously gone missing, Dilly searches the old farmhouse, finding snips of diaries and letters that reveal that Elle was actually just as bossy as Dilly imagines her to be—and that nonetheless Libby and her father loved her very much. Dilly also realizes how much she is like her mother, as her relationship with her friend Sasha begins to echo her mother's with Libby. In the end, Sasha and Libby help Dilly read her mother's letter with an open heart. It's a three-hanky moment, but the lengthy buildup doesn't really justify the payoff; the only secret Elle carries to her grave is that she loved her daughter and she wishes they had more time together. Dead mothers are pretty standard fare in children's literature, and the text leans towards the clichéd rather than the original. The characters are honestly drawn, though, and they do show how selfishness and anger are ultimately less powerful than love. KC

WINTER, JEANETTE  
_Beatrix: Various Episodes from the Life of Beatrix Potter._  
Foster/Farrar, 2003  64p

ISBN 0-374-30655-9 $15.00

This petite biography (sized only slightly larger than Potter's own books) interweaves Potter's own autobiographical statements (identified by italics) with original narrative text in the first person to create an accessible early introduction to a favorite author. The focus here is on Potter's lonely childhood and her youthful development as a naturalist (keeping a panoply of small animals in her room) and artist (drawing her animal friends constantly while bitterly resenting more orthodox drawing lessons). The "various episodes" approach isn't entirely successful, since it deprives the title of the smoothly conveyed insight of the similarly con-
ceived *My Name Is Georgia* (BCCB 11/98), but it's a measured and thoughtful exploration of the popular author's young life. The details add color to the picture of Potter's development, and the intriguingly grave tone echoes Potter's own poker-faced expression (thus making this a title suitable for reading aloud to curious younger children as well). Since the main narrative focuses on feelings rather than facts, an appended brief biographical note fills out the picture. Instead of deliberately suggesting Potter's artistic style, Winter adheres to her own recent visual approach, where single-hued watercolor planes are accented with crisp-edged shadows and border shades, while orderly, regimented hatching additionally defines perspective; the tightly bounded squares of the scenes emphasize the restraints on young Beatrix' life, and the clear absorption and, often, unhappiness (especially in the cover picture) of the young artist helps illumine the life described in the text. Readers just beyond the *Peter Rabbit* years will be intrigued by this introduction to its author. DS

**WITTLINGER, ELLEN**  
*Zigzag.* Simon, 2003  264p  
ISBN 0-689-84996-6 $16.95  
R Gr. 7-12

It's the end of Robin's junior year, and as far as she's concerned, it may as well be the end of her life: her boyfriend and reason for living, Chris, is leaving for college next fall. When his parents send him on a surprise graduation trip to Italy, robbing the couple of their last summer together, Robin reluctantly agrees to join her newly widowed aunt and hostile younger cousins (Iris, thirteen, and Marshall, ten) on a meandering summer road trip from Chicago to California; at least that way she can visit her distant father and satisfy her curiosity about his new family. While some of the plot developments are on the predictable side (Iris proves to be bulimic, Robin sees the stresses in her cousins that their mother doesn't), Wittlinger creates a heroine of believable vulnerability and realistically limited patience ("It certainly was going to be fun getting to know my relatives a little better, especially the insane one with the eating disorder"). The road trip has its own loopy appeal, with visits to some classic highlights of the hinterlands such as the Corn Palace, and there are some genuine surprises along the way (an accident cuts the trip short, Robin's father offers her a welcome she never expected). Deftter still is the depiction of Robin's gradual evolution from clinging Home Town Honey, combing her boyfriend's letters for signs of infidelity, to a young woman with a broader view of life's forward movement and what it means for her (though faithful to Chris, she realizes there are other possibilities) and for others (her mother is becoming serious about her first boyfriend since the departure of Robin's father). Fans of Bauer's *Rules of the Road* may want to fuel up for this literary journey. DS

**YOLEN, JANE**  
*Roanoke: The Lost Colony: An Unsolved Mystery From History;* by Jane Yolen and Heidi Elisabet Yolen Stemple; illus. by Roger Roth. Simon, 2003  32p  
ISBN 0-689-82321-5 $16.95  
Ad Gr. 4-6

Squeezed in between the textbook chapter on Columbus and the chapter on the Pilgrims is the tantalizing enigma of the British colonists who ground in their heels on the (now) North Carolina island of Roanoke and, within three years, had disappeared without a trace. Yolen and Stemple reprise their history mystery format (*The Mary Celeste: An Unsolved Mystery from History*, BCCB 11/99) using a fictional girl historian to present the problem in a fairly dry narration, supplementing
her overview with spiral-notebook style explanations and post-it style vocabulary hints as needed. Although the authors have nothing new to offer in the way of evidence, their recap of theories and the questions designed to help readers sift and weigh relevant facts could intrigue independent readers or an entire history class. Roth’s pencil and watercolor pictures tend toward overdramatized tableaux, and if scenes such as settlers fleeing from a barrage of Indian arrows have an air of Road-Runner comedy rather than historic tragedy, they do handily etch the sequence of events. Kids intrigued by the whys and how-comes of history should enjoy the puzzle, as well as the social studies lesson that has questions but no quiz. EB


Morgause, Queen of Orkney, has ambitions for all her sons, but her fiercest focus is on her eldest, Gawaine. He is heir to the throne of Orkney and a knight at King Arthur’s court, and Morgause would have him—or one of his brothers—king of all Britain. Her machinations thus far have failed, but a plan by Merlinnus, wizard advisor to Arthur, opens a path for her to achieve her wicked ends. Arthur is king, but not all Britain swears allegiance to him, and his claim to the throne is tenuous. Merlinnus has conceived of a legerdemain that will cement Arthur’s claim: a sword thrust into a magical stone, to be drawn only by the rightful king. An exasperated Arthur goes along with the wizard’s plot, but Morgause has a plot of her own, and it is only through the watchfulness of Merlinnus’ mysterious assistant, Gawen, that she is foiled. Taking license with tradition, Yolen provides a seething combination of political expedience and magical machinations. The sharply drawn players jockey for position amidst the Machiavellian magic of witch and wizard, and, at the end of this episode, the possibility of happily ever after remains: “It was an old story but a good one.” Overlapping chapters drive the precipitous narrative, and the revelation of the sword as a contrived anointer of kings, along with the underlying recognition of power as a driving force in moral choices, contribute to making this a slightly cynical but still poignant piece of Arthuriana. JMD

In this followup to *The Best of the Latino Heritage: A Guide to the Best Juvenile Books about Latino People and Cultures* (BCCB 12/97), Schon offers an annotated bibliography of judiciously selected recent books. The bibliography is divided alphabetically by country/region (Argentina, Central America, Chile, Colombia, etc.), the books within each arranged alphabetically by author. Each entry includes bibliographic information, a suggested audience level, and a critical and descriptive annotation of the book. Covered material includes fiction, nonfiction, folktales, and reference tools; a series roundup identifies series titles that offer “overviews about the various countries, people, and cultures of Latinos.” Author, title, subject, and suggested grade-level indices are appended; the subject index is particularly extensive. Schon’s qualitative approach results in a trustworthy selection of available material. While some of the titles also appear in York’s book (reviewed below), a substantial percentage do not, and the stated approaches and purposes of the authors are different enough to make both titles useful purchases. JMD


York’s guide to Latino literature for youth is a selection of in-print (at the time of publication) titles with publication and plot information “designed to help librarians, teachers, parents, and students learn and teach about Latinos and find appropriate reading materials by Latinos.” The author emphasizes that she “has not attempted to rate or disqualify any works based on personal or professional evaluations,” but instead hopes to help readers to judge such titles for themselves. Materials covered include novels and chapter books, short stories, folklore, drama, poetry and anthologies, and nonfiction; books are arranged alphabetically by title, except in the nonfiction section where they are arranged by Dewey Decimal number. Each entry includes essential bibliographic information with a brief summary, and, where applicable, information about related subjects, setting, interest and reading levels, review citations, and awards. Notes as to whether or not tests have been created for titles included in reading programs such as Accelerated Reader or Reading Counts may be of particular interest. York provides suggestions for additional books (such as adult narratives and bibliographies), videos, and websites about Latino life and culture, and an alphabetical list of the authors included in the guide with available author websites. A list of publishers of Latino material and an author, subject, and title index are also appended. Coverage is a bit shallow, but York, a retired teacher, reiterates throughout that this title is an overview, a place to begin to explore Latino books for youth. Combine this with Schon (reviewed above) for a complementary approach to this body of literature. JMD
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.

Abuse—fiction: Randle
Adoption—fiction: Cummings
ADVENTURE: Aiken; Richardson; Salkeld
African Americans: Fradin; Hansen
African Americans-fiction: Flood; Johnson
African Americans-stories: Smothers; Tarpley
ALPHABET BOOKS: Leuck
Animals: Markle
ANTHOLOGIES: Paulsen
Anthropology: Lauber
Archaeology-fiction: Lewin
Art and artists: Winter
ARTHURIAN LITERATURE: Yolen Sword
Asian Americans-fiction: Cheng; Namioka
Asian Americans-stories: Pak
Aunts-fiction: Mauner
Aviation-stories: Tarpley
Babies-fiction: Johnson
Babies-poetry: Cuetara
Babies-stories: Johnston; Laing
Baths-fiction: Timberlake
BEDTIME STORIES: Gay
BIBLE STORIES: Myers
Bicycles: Pinchuk
BIOGRAPHIES: Anderson; Fleming; Fradin; Kraft; Winter
Biology: Markle
Books and reading-fiction: Paulsen
Books and reading-stories: Smothers
Brothers-fiction: Shusterman
Brothers and sisters-stories: Gay; Laing
Cats: Markle
Cats-fiction: de Lint; Said
Circuses-fiction: Murray
Civics: Desimini
Civil rights movement: Fradin
Clothes-stories: Schertle
Colonial life: Yolen Roanoke
Community helpers: Desimini
Cousins-fiction: Wittlinger
Cowboys-fiction: Timberlake
Crime and criminals-fiction: Aiken; Richardson; Said; Trueman
Cuban Americans-fiction: Osa
Death and dying-fiction: Henkes; Warner
Depression, the-fiction: Cummings
Disabilities-fiction: Jung
Dogs-fiction: Murray; Roberts, W.
Dogs-stories: Gay
Ecology-fiction: Gauthier
Environmental studies: Cerullo
Ethics and values: Gauthier; Randle; Vaupel
Explorers and exploring-fiction: Lewin
Families-fiction: Flood; Shusterman
FANTASY: Aiken; de Lint; Downer; DuPrau; Ibbotson; Jung; Rowling; Said; Schreiber; Yolen Sword
Fathers-fiction: Bateson; Flood; Johnson; Wittlinger
Fear-fiction: Shusterman
Fear-stories: Harris
Friends-fiction: Bateson; Koss; Levithan; Randle; Roberts, B.; Warner
Gays and lesbians-fiction: Levithan
Gender roles—fiction: Levithan
GHOST STORIES: Barrett; Ruby; Seabrooke
Grandmothers—fiction: Cheng; Henkes
Halloween: Krosoczka; Schertle
HISTORICAL FICTION:
  Cummings; Flood; Franklin; Karr; McCaughrean; Richardson; Smothers
History, U.S.: Fleming; Fradin; Hansen; Kraft; Yolen Roanoke
History, world: Lauber
Holocaust—fiction: Jung
HUMOR: Gauthier; Ibbotson; Johnston; Juby; Leuck; Murray; Osa; Rohmann; Timberlake
Hypnosis—fiction: Byng
Identity—fiction: Namioka; Osa
Illness—fiction: Bateson
Immigrants—fiction: Franklin
Immigrants—stories: Pak
Italy—fiction: Mauner
Journals: Mauner
Kings—fiction: Yolen Sword
Knights and chivalry—fiction: Yolen Sword
Latinos—fiction: Osa
Literature, American: Vaupel
Literature, children’s: Winter
LOVE STORIES: Levithan
Magic—fiction: de Lint; Downer; Rowling
Marine biology: Cerullo
Mental illness—fiction: Trueman
Mermaids—fiction: Schreiber
Mexico: Murphy
Monsters—fiction: Roberts, B.
Monsters—poetry: Ashman
Monsters—stories: Leuck
Mornings—stories: U’Ren
Mothers—fiction: Flood; Warner
Moving—fiction: Barrett; Bateson
Music and musicians: Aliki; Anderson
Music and musicians—fiction: Karr
MYSTERIES: Roberts, W.; Yolen Roanoke
Mythical creatures—fiction: Downer
Mythical creatures—poetry: Ashman
Nature study: Cerullo; Markle
Oceans: Cerullo
Orphans—fiction: Byng
Physical education: Pinchuk; Salkeld; Smith
POETRY: Ashman; Cuetara; Florian; Smith
Police—stories: Desimini
Poverty—fiction: Franklin
Pregnancy—stories: Laing
Presidents: Kraft
Prisons and prisoners—fiction: Karr
Reading aloud: Florian; San Souci; Winter
Reading, beginning: Roberts, B.
Reading, easy: Cheng; Rohmann
Reading, reluctant: Cerullo; Gaiman; Markle; Pinchuk; Smith
Relationships—fiction: Wittlinger
Religious instruction: Myers
RHYMING STORIES: Schertle
Romance—fiction: Levithan; Schreiber
SCARY STORIES: Gaiman; Krosoczka; San Souci; Schertle
School—fiction: Juby; Koss
School—stories: Harris; Pak; Smothers
Science: Cobb; Lauber
SCIENCE FICTION: DuPrau
Seasons: Florian
Ships and sailing—fiction: Richardson
SHORT STORIES: Myers; Paulsen; San Souci
Slavery: Hansen
SPORTS STORIES: Smith
Stepfamilies—fiction: Seabrooke
Storytelling: San Souci
Storytime: Cuetara; Harris; Krosoczka; Laing; Leuck; U’Ren
SUPERNATURAL STORIES: Ruby; Seabrooke
SUSPENSE: Byng; Trueman
Teen parents—fiction: Johnson
Trains—fiction: McCaughrean
Voyages and travel—fiction: Byng; Mauner; Rohmann; Wittlinger
Voyages and travel—stories: Tarpley
Witches—fiction: Ibbotson
Wolves—fiction: Gaiman
Writers and writing—fiction: Koss
"It's Stevenson's seventh Corn book, and he's at his best, with elemental words and ink-and-watercolor illustrations that make you see ordinary city things as if for the first time. The words and pictures always extend one another, opening up new views of what you thought you knew, [including] the story of pencil with the eraser gone ('Somebody must keep changing his mind')... There's much [here] to talk about at home and to get kids writing in the classroom." —Starred review / ALA Booklist

“[In] 25 new observations, catalogs, and stray thoughts, all as sweet and chewy as the six previous servings... [Stevenson's] poetry is as pithy and casual as his sketchy, masterful illustrations.”—Starred review / Kirkus Reviews

Ages 8 up. $15.99 Tr (0-06-053059-6); $16.89 Lb (0-06-053060-X)

James Stevenson's Corn Books

Candy Corn $15.99 Tr (0-688-15837-4)
Corn-Fed $15.95 Tr (0-06-000597-1)
$15.89 Lb (0-06-000598-X)
Cornflakes $15.99 Tr (0-688-16718-7)

Just Around the Corner
$14.95 Tr (0-688-17303-9)
$15.89 Lb (0-06-029189-3)

Popcorn $15.99 Tr (0-688-15261-9)
Sweet Corn $5.95 Pb (0-688-17304-7)
Fourteen-year-old Shannon and her kid brother Cody are staying [in Seattle] with their uncle, Neal, an animal rescuer for a shelter called Jackie's Wild Seattle. When Neal is hurt, Shannon steps in, putting herself in danger to save the animals. . . . As usual in Hobbs' books, this story is packed with action [and] authentic detail, especially about rescued animals. An especially good choice for reluctant readers.”

—ALA Booklist

"[An] exciting, poignant, and beautifully developed story. Based on a real wildlife center and the experience of some of its denizens, this will reach deep into the hearts of young readers."—School Library Journal

Ages 10 up. $15.99 Tr (0-688-17474-4)
$16.89 Lb (0-06-051631-3)

Among Will Hobbs' novels

Far North
$15.95 Tr (0-688-14192-7)
$5.99 Pb (0-380-72536-3)
"As a boy, my father learned to speak with his hands. As a man, he learned how to turn lead-type letters into words and sentences. My father loved being a printer."

New from Award-winning author MYRON UHLBERG

A deadly fire erupts in the noisy pressroom, and it is up to the deaf printer to save his fellow workers. But how will he tell them of the danger when they cannot hear him?

The Printer
written by Myron Uhlberg
illustrated by Henri Sorensen
ISBN 1-56145-221-1 / HC / $16.95
Sept / Ages 4-8

Author’s note provides information on communicating with American Sign Language (ASL)

Also by Myron Uhlberg...

Lemuel the Fool
Illustrated by Sonja Lamut
ISBN 1-56145-220-3 / HC / $16.95 / Ages 4-8
*A 2001 Notable Book for Younger Readers, Association of Jewish Libraries

Flying Over Brooklyn
Illustrated by Gerald Fitzgerald
ISBN 1-56145-294-7 / PB / $7.95 / Sept
*Ages 4-8

Peachtrees Publishers
1700 Chattahoochee Avenue • Atlanta, GA 30318-2112
Phone 800-241-0113 or 404-876-8761 • Fax 800-875-8909 or 404-875-2578
www.peachtrees-online.com
On Your Toes

A Ballet ABC
By RACHEL ISADORA

“...The beauty and wonder of ballet welcome the reader right from the cover. Pink toe shoes on beautifully arched feet and just a hint of tutu hold the promise of a glorious performance to come within the pages of this ABC. Isadora’s vibrant pastel paintings [in full color] pulsate with the excitement of a Grande jeté and a Pas de chat. Faces [of children] here display the fervent concentration or spirited happiness of the world of ballet from studio rehearsal to stage performance.”
— Starred review / Kirkus Reviews

Ages 3 up.
$16.99 Tr (0-06-050238-X) • $17.89 Lb (0-06-050241-X)

Also by Rachel Isadora

Ben’s Trumpet
A Caldecott Honor Book

$17.95 Tr (0-688-80194-3) • $6.99 Pb (0-688-10988-8)

Greenwillow Books
An imprint of HarperCollins Publishers
1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019 • www.harperchildrens.com
Coming Soon: The 2003 Guide Book to Gift Books

Books make great gifts, but picking the perfect books for your favorite youngsters can be daunting. Now the expert staff of The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books have created a guide to help you navigate the bookstore wilderness full of shiny new children's books.

Updated and expanded from last year's edition, the Guide Book to Gift Books will be available in October 2003 as a downloadable PDF file that you can print out and use for every holiday, birthday, or other gift-giving occasion on your calendar this year.

Listed books have all been recommended in full Bulletin reviews from 1999-2003 and are verified as currently in print. Entries are divided into age groups and include author, title, publisher, and the current list price.

Available October 2003 at: www.lis.uiuc.edu/giftbooks/
Attention Subscribers!

You may now access The Bulletin Online with an individualized username and password.

The Bulletin Online is available only to print subscribers, and includes the 1998–2003 volume years plus the current issues as they are published. The online version allows you to search the current issue or the entire database by author, title, age or grade level.

To access The Bulletin Online:
1. Go to http://www.prairienet.org/ccb/
2. When accessing The Bulletin Online for the first time, use the subscriber number that appears in the upper left-hand corner of the mailing label on your print copy as both your username and password. This subscriber number will usually be a four- or five-digit number but may also be a five-character letter/number combination.
3. After logging in for the first time, you will be required to change your password to something other than your username. This password is case sensitive and should be one word only. Please store this new password in a safe place. Your username (which is also your subscriber number) will not change.

Remember, The Bulletin Online is not licensed for public use; only individual print subscribers and institutional subscribers' staff are granted access, so please do not share your access codes. We are working to expand The Bulletin Online's capabilities and therefore create broader electronic subscription options for individuals and institutions.

Non-subscribers can learn more about The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books at: http://www.lis.uiuc.edu/puboff/bccb/

Please e-mail any feedback or questions to: bccb@alexia.lis.uiuc.edu.