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### New in Paperback

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## New in Paperback

By Sarah Olson  
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The following books have recently appeared in paperback, either for the first time or after a long absence from the marketplace. All are recommended.

Adoff, Arnold. *Malcolm X*. Illustrated by Rudy Gutierrez. HarperTrophy, 2000. ISBN 0-06-442118-X. \$4.25. 53pp. Grades 3-6. An influential African-American leader of the midtwentieth century, Malcolm X, is introduced in this short biographical work. The story follows his life from just before to his birth, to his murder, to even today. Adoff has told the story respectfully and, besides some concluding generalizations, with relative objectivity. He does not skip or glorify Malcolm's dishonesty and drug use, and he makes a point to include Malcolm's later abstinence and condemnation of such things. The tone, pace, and diction make this work suitable for introducing Malcolm X to the older elementary school children of today.

Alcock, Vivien. *The Monster Garden*. Houghton Mifflin, 2000. ISBN 0-618-00337-1. \$4.95. 164 pp. Grades 3-6. Frances "Frankie" Stein is the only girl in an English family of scientists. Her father, a molecular biologist, smiles when he notices she is around but otherwise doesn't speak to her. Frankie thinks girls make him uncomfortable. When she finagles a lump of cells from her brother, giving in return a promise not to tell that he'd stolen it, she accidentally creates a little monster. Horrified by her success, she confides in a small circle of friends. Together they watch as "Monnie" grows into a large, web-footed creature. Frankie struggles to keep Monnie a secret from her family until one day she must bring the little monster to the ocean to let it go free. In the end, Frankie learns about loving and letting go and, in the process,

draws closer to the father she never really knew. Although the early descriptions of Monnie are truly horrible, this is an entertaining story with a surprisingly tender ending.

Appelbaum, Diana. *Giants in the Land*. Illustrated by Michael McCurdy. Houghton Mifflin, 2000. ISBN 0-618-03305-X. \$6.95. 32 pp. Grades 3+. *Giants in the Land* is an informative work that describes the choosing and harvesting of giant trees for masts in the King's Navy during colonial times. The striking black and white scratch illustrations begin on the cover and continue throughout the book, instilling in the reader an awe for the sheer size of trees, masts, and the ships they built. McCurdy depicts a colonial New England of grand proportions. This is an incomparable work; I cannot imagine it being done better.

Ariane. *Small Cloud*. Illustrated by Annie Gusman. Walker, 1996. ISBN 0-8027-7490-3. \$5.95. 24 pp. Grades K-3. Small Cloud is the misty child born from the Singing River and Big Sun in this folk presentation of the water cycle. When Small Cloud is old enough, he journeys across the world and meets other small clouds. Together, they create a dark rain cloud, which pours down on the needy earth below. After Small Cloud gives himself to the earth, he is born again from Singing River and Big Sun to begin the cycle again. The ruby illustrations draw attention away from the underlying complications of the text. This would be a good introduction for a simplified discussion of the water cycle.

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Bunting, Eve. *A Day's Work*. Illustrated by Ronald Himler. Clarion, 1997. ISBN 0-395-84518-1. \$5.99. 32 pp. Grades K-4. Fransisco is a young boy who must translate English for his Spanish-speaking grandfather so the two of them can get a day of work. When Fransisco and his *abuelo* are given the chance to work gardening, Fransisco promises the boss that he and his grandfather know all about it. But at the end of the long, hard day, pleased with their work, Fransisco and his grandfather discover they'd pulled the flowers and left the weeds! It is now that the true teaching begins; the grandfather teaches Fransisco, "We do not lie for work," and the two of them promise to come back and do their work right. The words and illustrations in this book ring with the truth and warmth of the immigrant experience—while the children are needed to escort their elders through society as translators, the elders can still teach the children the values that hold society together.

Cannon, Janell. *Trupp*. Illustrated by Janell Cannon. Harcourt Brace, 1998. ISBN 0-15-1695-3. \$7.00. 32 pp. Grades Pre-3. Trupp is a Fuzzhead, a catlike creature with an amazing gift for languages that, when an adult, will be six feet tall. Trupp lives with his family behind the red cliffs, until he decides he wants to see what the world is like. Warned about humans, he is advised to find clothing and wear it, because then humans will think he is one of them. On his travels, he meets a raven named Krok and Bernice, a kind, homeless woman who knows what Trupp really is. Together in the city, Trupp is able to do a service for Bernice, and in turn, Bernice is able to serve him. Trupp misses his family, though, and says a thankful goodbye to his new friends Bernice and Krok before he dances off into the distance. The Fuzzheads are strange but captivating in a beautiful way. This book is especially worth reading for the illustrations, which jump out at the reader, and for Bernice, who, maybe unintentionally, speaks a deep-rooted truth about the marginality of the homeless in our society. All in all, this is a kind of stunning book that may leave you

without words but with a desire to read it again and again.

Eckert, Allan W. *Return to Hawk's Hill*. Little, Brown and Company, 1998. ISBN 0-316-00689-0. \$5.95. 192 pp. Grades 3-6. Twenty-six years after winning a Newbery Honor award, Eckert wrote this sequel to *Incident at Hawk's Hill*. This book picks up where *Incident* ended—and the first few pages are a well-written recap of the previous book. To understand and enjoy *Return*, one does not have to have read *Incident*, but those who haven't yet will want to. *Return to Hawk's Hill* centers on the MacDonald family and their young son, Ben. When the villain Burton shows up near the family's home on Hawk's Hill, Ben runs away and hides in a rowboat on the river. Unfortunately, the boat has no oars, and Ben cannot bring it to shore. He is carried downriver until a tribe of Metis Indians rescue him. As this book chronicles the MacDonalds' search for their beloved Ben, it teaches an important lesson—strength, warmth, and charity can come from all people, regardless of ethnicity, race, or culture.

Goffstein, M. B. *Goldie the Dollmaker*. Illustrated by M. B. Goffstein. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997. ISBN 0-374-427405-2. \$4.95. 55 pp. Grades 3-6. Goldie Rosenzweig's dolls are famous for their sweet, friendly smiles. Goldie can create these masterpieces because she understands that she isn't making toys, she's making friends. Goffstein's subtle text and soft, modest illustrations make this award-winning work a joy to read.

Hoberman, Mary Ann. *The Seven Silly Eaters*. Illustrated by Marla Frazee. Harcourt Brace, 2000. ISBN 0-15-202440-9. \$6.00. 32 pp. Grades K-3. Mrs. Peters is the mother of a growing family that are wonderful in every way—except in their eating; they are all picky eaters! The oldest will only take his milk warm, the second will only drink freshly squeezed lemonade, the third only eats applesauce, all the way down until the seventh Peters child. It is evident that Mrs. Peters loves her children, but she is going CRAZY trying

to feed their individual tastes. On Mrs. Peters' birthday, the children want to make her a meal with each of their favorite foods. It is a disaster! The seven silly eaters shove the concoction into the oven and go, unhappily, to bed. When Mrs. Peters awakes, she is delighted with the beautiful smell coming from the kitchen, and she pulls from the oven a perfect pink cake! From then on, the Peters family eats only one thing that they take turns each day making—Mrs. Peters' birthday cake. Frazee's illustrations and Hoberman's story show a world full of real family life and love that makes me remember fondly what it was like to grow up in a large family with a strong, devoted, and sometimes crazy mother.

Hurwitz, Johanna. *Faraway Summer*. Illustrated by Mary Azarian. Avon, 2000. ISBN 0-380-73256-4. \$4.95. 151 pp. Grades 3-6. Dossi is sent from the Jewish tenements of New York to rural Vermont for a two-week Fresh Air Fund vacation in the summer of 1910. Though she misses her older sister and her friends in New York, she grows closer to the family she's staying with as she learns about the differences—and similarities—of worlds that seem so far apart.

Micucci, Charles. *The Life and Times of the Peanut*. Houghton Mifflin, 2000. ISBN 0-618-03314-9. \$5.95. 32 pp. Grades 2+. In just over thirty illustrated pages, Micucci provides a comprehensive review of the peanut. Each page is filled with facts and figures about the peanut's history, uses, influence, and travels.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Angel to Angel*. HarperCollins, 2000. ISBN 0-06-446242-0. \$5.95. 40 pp. Grades Pre-4. Myers has selected photographs of African-American mothers and children from the last two centuries and compiled them in this book of poetry. Turning each page brings new eyes and smiles to stare into and new words to think and to taste. Myers' poetry is suffused with an awe and honor for the love between mothers or mother figures and children.

Rockwell, Anne. *I Fly*. Illustrated by Annette Cable. Crown, 1998. ISBN 0-517-88569-7. \$6.99. 32 pp. Grades Pre-2. *I Fly* follows a young boy's flight to visit relatives. It begins with the "end of the tunnel that leads to the plane" and ends when the young boy walks out of the tunnel and into the terminal and the arms of his loving cousins. This delightful picture book faithfully recounts and explains from the boy's point of view each part of an airplane flight including takeoff, banking, and ear-popping—even the peanuts and soda! The boy looks excitedly out the window and explains what he sees on the grounds and in the clouds. The illustrations are warm and effective. I could not imagine a book better for introducing young children to the joy and excitement of riding in an airplane.

Rodowsky, Colby. *The Turnabout Shop*. HarperTrophy, 2000. ISBN 0-380-73192-4. \$4.95. 135 pp. Grades 3-6. When Althea, Livvy's mother and only relative, dies, Livvy is sent to Baltimore to live with her mother's old college friend, Jessie Barnes. Jessie Barnes owns an antique store called The Turnabout Shop, and she isn't like Althea; she isn't exciting, she isn't spontaneous, and she doesn't even have her ears pierced. Jessie Barnes does have something Livvy and Althea didn't, something Livvy didn't ever think she needed—a family. Aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents become a part of Livvy's life as she makes room in her heart for new friends and Jessie Barnes. Together, Jessie and Livvy must make new starts in life, and it all begins with The Turnabout Shop. With clarity and tact, Rodowsky lets us watch an engaging young girl work out the pain of losing a mother and grow into what a family gives best—love.

Shannon, George. *Stories To Solve: Folktales from Around the World*. Illustrated by Peter Sis. HarperTrophy, 2000. ISBN 0-380-73260-2. 55 pp. Grades 3-6. This collection of mind-stretching riddles includes the international favorites—the man dividing his fortune between his three sons, the man on the boat with the wolf, and even a Tibetan version of

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King Solomon and the two mothers! Each short riddle-story is directly followed by a clear solution. The illustrations by Sís, a Caldecott Honor illustrator, are an engaging accompaniment to the puzzles. Shannon and Sís have created a classic.

Weiner, Lori S., Aprille Best, and Philip A. Pizzo (eds.). *Be A Friend: Children Who Live With HIV Speak*. Illustrated by the children. Albert Whitman, 1996. ISBN 0-8075-0591-9. \$6.95. 40 pp. Grades 3+. Doctors at the National Institute of Health compiled works created by children afflicted with HIV and AIDS. The book is divided into three sections: "I Often Wonder . . ." includes entries addressing what children with HIV often wonder; "Living With HIV" comprises children's thoughts about how being ill affects their daily lives; "Family, Friends, and AIDS" focuses on messages from those whose loved ones have HIV or AIDS. Every page of this compilation speaks with tender, childlike honesty about life with HIV. The text and pictures ask frank questions about God, heaven, and what life would be like without daily medication, pain, and worry. This book nearly brought tears to my eyes. What an excellent way to introduce us all to the need for compassion and understanding toward those afflicted with this tragic disease.

Zemser, Bronwen. *Beyond the Mango Tree*. HarperTrophy, 2000. ISBN 0-06-440786-1. \$4.95. Grades 4-6. Sarina's father's work takes him away for long periods of time, leaving her to take care of her diabetic mother in their strange new country, Liberia. Sarina's mother is controlled by her illness and her fear; she won't let Sarina have what she wants most of all—a friend. But Sarina finds a friend in a slim, sweet Liberian boy named Boima, who teaches Sarina that friendship and understanding can change a person. The portrayal of Sarina's chemically/emotionally imbalanced mother and the death of Boima from yellow fever may disturb the reader, but what makes this book worth reading is Zemser's careful and engaging use of the Liberian-English dialect and a rare taste of the Liberian spirit.



By Sarah Olson

### Fathers

#### Complementary Fiction

Wyeth, Sharon Dennis. *Always My Dad*. Illustrated by Raul Colón. Dragonfly, 1997. ISBN 0-679-88934-5. 32 pp. **Grades K-2**.

Gardella, Tricia. *Just Like My Dad*. Illustrated by Margot Apple. HarperTrophy, 1993. ISBN 0-06-443463-X. 32 pp. **Grade Pre-1**.

With so many of our children living in single-parent homes, it is hard to know how to broach the topic of fathers. One must be both sensitive to those who don't have a father close at hand and understanding of those who do. Using *Always My Dad* and *Just Like My Dad* together can begin an effective exploration of children's love for their fathers, regardless whether the father is often home or often absent.

*Always My Dad* centers on a young girl who dreams of seeing her father. She understands that work takes him away, but it doesn't help the ache in her heart. When a summer at her grandparents' farm brings her father home, every moment is filled with happiness and fun, until he announces that he must leave again. Before he goes, he assures her that he loves her, and no matter where he is, he will always be her dad.

*Just Like My Dad* focuses on a young cowboy who describes the sights, smells, and sounds of working on a ranch with his dad, whom he loves, admires, and more than anything, wants to be like.