



2006

### Full Issue

Children's Book Review

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Carter, Don. *Old Macdonald Drives a Tractor*. Illustrated by Don Carter. Roaring Brook Press, 2007. ISBN 978-1-59643-023-5. \$14.95. [24] p.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Toddler, preschool

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Picture Books; Contemporary Realistic Poetry;

Subject: Farm Life—Juvenile literature; Tractors—Juvenile literature; Stories in rhyme—Juvenile literature

"Work, work here. Work, work there." Instead of the animals on Old MacDonald's farm, readers are introduced to the different farm equipment Old MacDonald uses to accomplish his tasks. While driving his tractor, he pulls a plow, a cultivator, a seed drill, a sprayer, a combine, a spreader, a harvester, a baler, and a flatbed trailer. The words are a creative adaptation of the familiar "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" song.

Carter's interesting colorful illustrations are made of various building supplies, including foam board, drywall compound, and acrylic paint. As each new machine is introduced, the history of farming tasks and how they have been and are now completed can be discussed. Classes can also contrast farms then and now. Can also be incorporated into music/activity time as the group sings/acts out the farmer's duties as the pages are turned.

Dale, Penny. *The Boy on the Bus: A Sing-Along Storybook*. Illustrated by Penny Dale. Candlewick Press, 2007. ISBN 9780763633813. \$15.99. 32 p.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Toddler, preschool

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Poetry; Sing Along Storybooks;

Subject: Children's songs--United States--Texts--Juvenile fiction; Buses--Songs and music--Juvenile fiction; Domestic animals--Songs and music--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

"All aboard! Ready, steady, go!" The driver in this red bus is a little boy, and he is off for an adventure! Instead of transporting people, this special bus has animals on board. Seven ducks are waiting at the first stop, next are three pigs, and at the next are two cows, a horse, eight chickens, and two goats! The bus is now full, but there are 29 sheep animals who want to be the next passengers! Readers may wonder how so many sheep could possibly fit inside. The answer: some will ride on top! "The boy on the bus says, 'What a crowd! Climb up here! Careful now!' The boy on the bus says, 'Hold on tight! Ready, steady, go!'"

The words are a creative adaptation of the "The Wheels on the Bus" finger play and song. The verses reflect the animals which have just come on board: "The pigs on the bus go oink oink oink..." This could also be used as a "find it" book, as the illustrations accurately show the correct number of each animal (except for the 29 sheep). Preschoolers will enjoy the fun illustrations of smiling animals holding on for the noisy ride. After repeated readings, children would enjoy singing the verse, and perhaps making simple puppets or dressing up as animals for a simple play.

Cabrera, Jane. *Ten in the bed*. Illustrated by Jane Cabrera. Holiday House, 2006. ISBN 0823420272. \$16.95. 32 p.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Toddler, Preschool

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Poetry; Picture books;

Subject: Songs--Juvenile fiction; Counting rhymes--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Parents will recognize the title of this picture book as a counting game they may have played with their children, which goes "There were ten in the bed and the Little One said, 'I'm crowded! Roll over!' So, they all rolled over and one fell out! There were nine in the bed ...." *Ten in the Bed* is a charming version with fun additions! The Little One is a mouse dressed in blue footed pajamas complete with stocking cap, and the nine others in bed are other animals. The Little One says, "Move over, move over" and the rhyme changes as each animal falls out of the bed. For example, when it comes to the monkey's turn (the monkey is a doctor) the rhyme goes, "So they all groaned over and the doctor fell out." Animals include a rabbit (astronaut); a girl dog (princess); a bear (pilot); a boy dog (pirate); a chipmunk (ballerina); a monkey (doctor); an alligator (trumpeter); a cat (cook); and a duck (snorer).

The boldly colored illustrations show the animals left in bed reflecting the same occupation as the animal who is about to fall out—such as the alligator who trumpets away as the others dance in bed under a disco ball and the monkey with his stethoscope ready to examine the six remaining bandaged animals. This is a cute bedtime story and reverse counting book.

Kirk, Daniel. *Library Mouse*. Illustrated by Daniel Kirk. Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2007. ISBN 978-0-8109-9346-4. \$15.95. [32] p.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Toddler, preschool, primary

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Picture books;

Subject: Libraries—Juvenile fiction; Authorship—Juvenile fiction; Mice—Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews

Sam is a library mouse. At night he comes out of his little hole in the wall and reads to his heart's content. He likes to read all kinds of books: picture books, biographies, poetry, and mysteries. With so much information and ideas in his head, Sam decides to write a book and calls it *Squeak! A Mouse's Life*. He puts it on the shelf in the biography section and waits. Sure enough, the next day it is discovered by the children. In the nights that follow, Sam continues to write mouse-sized books. The librarian features one at library story time, and the children become anxious to meet Sam. Sam is too shy to meet the children, so he thinks up a unique solution for "Meet the Author" day.

Not many librarians would like it if a mouse was living in a hole in a wall by any of their collections, but they will all love the message Sam sends to young patrons—everyone can be an author! Writing is fun! Sam, who has read books about writing, emphasizes the best writing advice: "Write what you know!" After reading this book to children, give them mouse-sized books and pencils and your shelves will be "full of books written and illustrated by people who had never written a book before, telling stories that had never been told."

Franson, Scott E. *Un-brella*. Illustrated by Franson, Scott E. Roaring Brook Press, 2007. ISBN 9781596431799. \$15.95. 32 p.

Reviewer: Rita Christensen

Reading Level: Toddler, preschool, primary

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Picture Books;

Subject: Weather—Juvenile fiction; Stories without words; Umbrellas—Juvenile fiction; Magic—Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews

Have you ever wished for glorious sunshine on a wintry day? "Un-brella" makes this fantasy a reality through clever, wordless illustrations. A wide-eyed little girl peers outside her window to behold a splendid winter wonderland. She searches through her summer trunk and is soon jaunting through snow-covered terrain in her beach attire. Upon opening her un-brella, a ray of light radiates down from the sunshade and melts the snow surrounding her. Flowers and grass appear beneath the little girl's feet; wherever she walks she leaves a trail of summertime—insects, sunflowers, slides, and thistles. When summer finally does arrive, our heroine longs for snowflakes and sled rides. She simply dons her winter garb and opens her un-brella to create a flurry of snow showers.

Franson's eye-catching illustrations bustle with activity to hold the reader's attention. The color palette used is stunning and creates a clear contrast between summer and winter landscapes. The computer-generated artwork resembles paper cut-outs, giving the illustrations a delicate and intricate quality.

Excellent to use at school or home to introduce young children to a variety of subjects: seasons, weather, nature, change, animals, color, shape, and of course umbrellas.

Grambling, Lois G. *Here Comes T. Rex Cottontail*. Illustrated by Jack E. Davis. Katherine Tegen Books, 2007. ISBN 9780060531294. \$15.99. [32]p.

Reviewer: Jan Staheli

Reading Level: Preschool

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Holiday stories;

Subject: Easter—Juvenile fiction; Dinosaurs—Juvenile fiction; Sharing—Juvenile fiction; Books—Reviews;

The Easter Bunny has a cold and asks T. Rex and his two dinosaur buddies to fill in for him on Easter morning. T. Rex makes a bunny costume and practices hopping, but is not very good at it—he breaks all the eggs. So the friends go out to find more eggs, from duck, goose, turkey, and even owl eggs. They spend the night coloring the eggs, and in the morning they deliver them, only to find that they are all cracking open and hatchlings are popping out all over. It is the noisiest Easter ever.

The pictures are bright and funny. T. Rex wears long floppy ears and bunny slippers and has whiskers taped on his face. The story, however, is rather lifeless, and the illustrations are a bit confusing. Not the best in its genre but an acceptable addition to a library's holiday books.

Wagner, Lisa. *Cool Sweets & Treats to Eat: Easy Recipes for Kids to Cook*. ABDO Publishing, 2007. ISBN 9781599287263. \$22.78. 32 p.

Reviewer: Gillian Streeter

Reading Level: Preschool, Primary

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Snack foods--Juvenile literature; Desserts--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

Wagner's book represents the next step in cookbook evolution—where adult and previous children's cookbooks deal mainly in words and occasional illustrations or photos of finished dishes, here the reader finds a complete visual ingredient and tool glossary. The photos and layouts are bright, as is the text. There are symbols identifying tools and difficulty level, and each step is numbered (and some of the steps are pictured). There is also a breakdown of basic cookery terms, such as grating, mixing, and chopping, at the front of the book.

The cooking is very simple and straight-forward; the recipes are specifically for snack foods, none of which contain meat (though variations on the nacho recipe mention cooks can add taco meat). The ABDO links page listed under "Websites" does not appear to list this book nor does it have any cooking links, though it does have some listed for nutrition. Helpful parts of the book include an alphabetical index, a note to adult helpers at the beginning of the book, a table of contents, and the wonderful photographs of the cooking process, materials, tools, and foods. Some readers may find the layout a bit too bright and busy, but it mostly comes across as fun.

Hurwitz, Johanna. *Mostly Monty*. Illustrated by Anik McGrory. Candlewick Press, 2007. ISBN 9780763628314. \$15.99. 86 p.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Primary

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction;

Subject: Asthma--Juvenile fiction; Schools--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

This book is about Montgomery Gerald Morris, a.k.a. Monty, a first-grader who is about to turn six years old. Monty has asthma and it has affected not only his physical body, but also his emotions, his thinking patterns, and his self-esteem. Monty feels like it is his asthma that keeps him from having friends and having fun like other children. He wants to be somebody else; he wants to have a pet; and he wants friends! Monty's thinking begins to transform from his interactions with his first grade teacher, Mrs. Meaney. The school secretary Mrs. Remsen, and Monty's neighbor, Mrs. Carlton, also help Monty recognize that he has specific talents, interesting ideas, can do things that are fun, and can make friends.

Hurwitz weaves into the story line factual information about asthma and corrects misunderstandings about this particular health challenge. The author has a good feel for telling a story from a child's point of view. McGrory's illustrations are very expressive, as shown in one particular illustration found on page 49. This illustration shows Monty watching the teddy bear he brought home from Mrs. Carlton's garage sale, go 'round and 'round in the dryer. You can feel Monty's emotions as he hopes that laundering the bear will make him safe for him to keep. The story is very up-beat. By the end of the book, Monty is "feeling pretty good. It wasn't because his asthma hadn't bothered him in many weeks. It wasn't from eating ice cream with fudge sauce. It wasn't even from having new friends. It was mostly because he was glad to be himself. He liked being Monty after all." (p. 86)

Hest, Amy. *Remembering Mrs. Rossi*. Illustrated by Heather Maione. Candlewick, 2007. ISBN 9780763621636. \$14.99. 147p.

Reviewer: Marsha D. Broadway

Reading Level: Primary

Rating: Excellent

Genre: contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Death--Juvenile literature; Parent and child--Juvenile literature; New York (N.Y.)--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews

Annie Rossi's mother has died unexpectedly. Although she loves her professor father and their life in New York City, eight-year-old Annie misses her mother and the way Mommy took care of her. As Annie and her father experience everyday life, they share happy and sad times while they cope with their loss and grief. Daddy may forget to take Annie to the library or mismatch her pajamas, but Annie is not above using his birthday as a ploy to ask for a new dog. Annie finds comfort in the new information she learns about her mother from a scrapbook that her teacher mother's sixth-grade class created. Dad writes his own memories in a journal which he shares with Annie during their summer vacation at the beach.

Hest has created genial characters who must learn to grieve, grow, and enjoy life despite their realistic imperfections. The supportive father soothes Annie when her anger flares, and together they find ways to keep Annie's mother close while they let her go. This book, which focuses on positive coping skills, could be useful in family discussions about death and grief or in bibliotherapeutic interventions.

Janeczko, Paul B., comp. *Hey, You! Poems to Skyscrapers, Mosquitoes, and Other Fun Things*. Illustrated by Robert Rayevsky. HarperCollins, 2007. ISBN 9780060523473. \$15.99. 40p.

Reviewer: Eliza Nevin

Reading Level: Primary

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Poetry; Informational books

Subject: American poetry—Juvenile literature; Humorous poetry—Juvenile literature; Books—Reviews

*Hey, You!* is a collection of poems written to objects, such as skyscrapers, mosquitoes, and tennis shoes. The book includes a brief introduction explaining how poems express feelings about objects and encouraging young readers to write their own poems.

The poems by noted authors such as George Ella Lyon, X.J. Kennedy, Nikki Grimes, and others are short and clever. They are a gentle introduction to the form. Rayevsky's watercolors are soft yet vibrant and help the reader to picture the subject of each poem. The consist use of characters and images throughout the book helps to tie the varied poems together. A great bedtime or classroom read-aloud.

KIDSLABEL. *Spot 7 Animals*. Chronicle, 2007. ISBN 9780811857222. \$12.95. 40 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Primary, intermediate

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Toy and movable books;

Subject: Animals--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

Originally published in Japan, the *Spot 7* series asks readers to look at two seemingly identical photographs and spot seven differences between the two. A riddle accompanies each picture set, which describes an item in one or both of the pictures. The first page explains the concept and offers a bonus challenge of finding a certain number of additional objects using only the right hand pages. In *Spot 7 Animals* all the pictures have an animal theme, either stuffed, plastic, alive or extinct. The scenes are imaginative and will entertain young animal lovers.

The last page of the book provides answers to the riddles and hints for finding the differences between the photos. If the hints are not enough, there is also a link to Chronicle's website where full pictures with the differences circled can be found. Fans of the *I Spy* or *Where's Waldo?* books will enjoy this series. This book may be especially useful in teaching kids to notice small details and in developing memory skills.

Winner, Cherie. *Circulating Life: Blood Transfusion from Ancient Superstition to Modern Medicine*. Twenty-First Century Books, 2007. 9780822566069. \$29.27. 112p.

Reviewer: Eliza Nevin

Reading level: Primary, Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Informational books

Subject: Blood—Transfusion—Juvenile literature; Blood—Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews

Although its medical use is familiar and common in the twenty-first century, blood was a mysterious substance five hundred years ago. This book covers the history of medical discoveries about blood. It also explains the parts of blood and how they function in the body. The book discusses recent research and new developments regarding blood's use in the medical field while acknowledging that research moves so fast that the book itself will soon be outdated.

Winner writes for Washington State Magazine and holds a Ph.D. in zoology from the Ohio State University. Her interesting explanations of the uses for blood will appeal to primary readers, but the scientific details may be difficult for younger students to understand. A glossary of scientific terms helps teach the complex scientific concepts. The book also includes a selected bibliography and suggestions for further reading. A fun and helpful addition to a classroom or a children's library.

Raczka, Bob. *Here's Looking at Me: How Artists See Themselves*. Millbrook Press, 2006. ISBN 0761334041. \$9.95. 32 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Primary, intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Self-portraits—Juvenile literature; Artists—Psychology—Juvenile literature; Books—Reviews

Self-portraits can be done in many different styles, mediums, and in settings, as Raczka's short work shows. Along with explanatory text, fourteen artists' self-portraits are included—some familiar (Van Gogh, Rockwell), some less so (Gentileschi, Chagall).

Raczka asks questions to encourage readers to look closely at the paintings and provides small bits of analysis that youngsters (or even uninitiated young adults) can easily understand. The tone is light and informative without being patronizing. Perfect for budding artists and art critics.

McGinty, Alice B. *Eliza's Kindergarten Surprise*. Illustrated by Nancy Speir. Marshall Cavendish, 2007. ISBN 9780761453512. \$14.99. 29 p.

Reviewer: Holly Dickman

Reading Level: Primary, intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction;

Subject: First day of school—Juvenile fiction; Mother and child—Juvenile fiction; Schools—Juvenile fiction; Books—Reviews

As she says goodbye to her mommy, Eliza braces herself for her first day of kindergarten. Eliza's mother kisses her own fingers and slides the kiss into Eliza's front pocket, so that Eliza can carry it with her throughout the day. As her mother leaves, Eliza feels sad and lonely, and when she checks in her front pocket, it feels empty where the kiss once was. Throughout the day at school, Eliza finds things around the classroom and playground that remind her of her mother. Eliza decides to keep the items in her pocket. During craft-time, when Eliza felt the day could not get any worse, she has a brilliant idea. She makes a doll resembling her mother out of the items she has picked up around school. With a napkin for a dress, yarn for hair, and blue buttons for shoes, Eliza's doll is complete. She puts the doll in her front pocket, and now Eliza can enjoy kindergarten because her mother is always with her!

Illustrator Speir uses acrylic paint to create darling illustrations that not only reinforce the story line, but also give the reader a chance to get to know Eliza through her expressive face. The illustrations are colorful and lively, able to keep any reader's attention. This tender story of the strong love between a mother and daughter will be an enjoyable read-a-loud at home. The author also addresses many schoolchildren's fear of the first day of school, making the book a useful addition for a young elementary classroom.

Maizels, Jennie. *Things to Do Book*. Illustrated by Jennie Maizels. Candlewick Press, 2007. ISBN 9780763633714. \$15.99. 20 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Primary, intermediate

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Toy and movable books; Picture books; Informational books;

Subject: Games--Juvenile literature; Book—Reviews;

Maizels has put together a creative resource for children to entertain themselves inexpensively. *Things to Do Book* is divided into eight sections filled with activity and game ideas for any location, from the beach to the supermarket. Elementary age children will enjoy the numerous peek-a-boo flaps. The activities are challenging (some physically, some mentally) and will keep children entertained. The pages themselves are busy and colorful—the reader might not be able to take everything in on the first pass. Children will most likely find one thing on the page and choose that activity rather than look at every item on the page.

Though most of the activities and games are easy and cheap, many are messy (painting indoors, papier-mâché, baking) or potentially disruptive (loud car games, games in the supermarket). After looking at the games for nighttime, children may not want to go to sleep either. This book might be better used by adults to find kids' activities to supervise even though the design is clearly intended for children's direct use.

Freedman, Russell. *The Adventures of Marco Polo*. Illustrated by Bagram Ibatoulline. Scholastic Books, 2006. ISBN 043952394x. \$17.99. 63 p.

Reviewer: Cassandra Fugal

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Explorers--Italy--Biography--Pictorial works--Juvenile literature; Polo, Marco--1254-1323?--Pictorial works--Juvenile literature; Asia--Description and travel--Pictorial works--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

Marco Polo was not the first European to travel the Silk Road to China but the stories of his adventures spread throughout Europe. But to Thirteenth century Europe the stories of his journey to the court of Kublai Khan and his adventures in his empire seemed too fantastic to be true. Using different versions of Polo's own story, *The Description of the World*, Freedman recounts Marco Polo's voyage in this well written and accessible story for the modern reader. Ibatoulline's beautiful illustrations replicate artwork that depicts the time period or the places to which Polo traveled. In addition to Polo's own story, Freedman uses many other sources to give the reader a historical background of the time period and the places that Marco Polo visited. Freedman also uses these sources to introduce the debate that has raged for centuries: are the adventures Marco Polo described in *The Description of the World* true? Did he in fact travel to China and serve Emperor Kublai Khan? Freedman creates the right balance between depicting Marco Polo's adventures and debate that surrounds them. And Freedman lets the readers decide for themselves the truth of Marco Polo's adventures.

Holmes, Sara Lewis. *Letters from Rapunzel*. HarperCollins, 2007. ISBN 9780060780739.  
\$15.99. 184 p.

Reviewer: Angel Pearce

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Fathers and daughters--Juvenile literature; Depression, Mental--Juvenile literature;

Gifted children--Juvenile literature; Books—Reviews;

“Once upon a time, there was a girl. Let’s call her Rapunzel.” Cadence, a modern day Rapunzel, is alone, waiting to escape her tower: Homework Club. Homework Club is not unlike the tower one finds in the classic fairy tale *Rapunzel*. What is this young girl waiting for? She is waiting for her father. She believes that an evil spell has hold of him. A spell which the doctors call Clinical Depression and her mother calls "CD".

Cadence writes letters to someone whom she believes to be her father's confidant, hoping that he will know the way to break the spell on her father. From these letters, the reader comes to know and understand this young woman as she struggles to make sense of her world. Her story will make readers laugh and many times it will make readers cry. Is there a place for Rapunzel when the world she knows is turning around? Readers will enjoy this serious but funny book about Cadence a.k.a. Rapunzel. This book would make a terrific literature circle book for fourth grade and up.

Olson, Gretchen. *Call Me Hope*. Little, Brown, 2007. ISBN 9780316012362. \$15.99. 288 p.

Reviewer: Holly Dickman

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction;

Subject: Child abuse--Juvenile fiction; Mothers and daughters--Juvenile fiction; Schools--Juvenile fiction; Books—Reviews

Hope is battered by her mother's abusive words. Despite the eleven-year-old's desperate attempts to please her mother, her efforts often evoke anger as her mother yells abusive phrases such as "stupid" and "hopeless". Hope does all she can to escape her mother's verbal abuse, but it never seems to be enough. Fortunately, Hope is not alone. She has the support of two women who run a second-hand store, one particular classmate, her caring older brother, and the story of Holocaust survivor, Anne Frank. Through these relationships, Hope's resilience to withstand her mother strengthens. As the most important event of the sixth grade approaches (a week long camping trip), conflict mounts when Hope decides she must take a stand against her mother's angry words.

Hope's story gives a realistic and painful depiction of the negative effect verbal abuse can have on a child. At the end of the book, a list of "Hope Notes" provides helpful ideas on how readers can deal with verbal abuse in their own lives. Although sprinkled with slight profanity, *Call Me Hope* would be a useful addition to middle and high school libraries.

Fleming, Thomas. *Everybody's Revolution: A New Look at the People Who Won*. Scholastic, 2006. ISBN 0439634040. \$19.99. 96 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Minorities--Juvenile United States--History--18th century--Juvenile literature; Pluralism (Social sciences)--United States--History--18th century--Juvenile literature; United States--History--Revolution--Juvenile literature, 1775-1783--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews

Paul Revere was the son of a Frenchman; John Paul Jones was born in Scotland; Crispus Attucks was black; and Robert Shurtleff was a woman--All of them played a role in the American Revolution. Fleming's stated goal in this book is to illustrate that the Revolutionary War was not simply a war between "two groups of Englishmen...on opposite sides of the Atlantic" but rather a struggle that was fought by people from various places and backgrounds.

There is little detailed history about any one person, but what the book lacks in depth, it makes up in breadth. Fleming covers contributions from Europeans, African Americans (both slave and free), American Indians, women, and children. *Everybody's Revolution* is a useful starting point for discussions on cultural diversity and contributions, as well as for basic research on any person named in the book. Readers will recognize some familiar names as well as learn other little-known fascinating stories. The only difficulty that some readers may encounter with this book is that in highlighting the courageous contributions of many people, it seems to glorify war itself too much.

Bryant, Jen. *Pieces of Georgia*. Knopf, 2006. ISBN 0375932593. \$15.99. 166 p.

Reviewer: Marsha D. Broadway

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Grief--Juvenile fiction; Fathers and daughters--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Thirteen year-old Georgia is artistic; so *was* her mother. Both she and her father are still grieving. At the request of the school counselor, Georgia writes journal entries to her mother, who died when Georgia was seven. Then a benefactor gives her a free membership to the Brandywine River Museum. Through art and free verse Georgia gains understanding of her loss, herself, her parents, and her best friend.

Mourning the death of a parent may take years of adapting to the loss. This book, with its sparse words and vivid emotions, will capture young readers from a wide audience and could be useful in bibliotherapy.

Brashich, Audrey D. *All Made Up: A Girl's Guide to Seeing through Celebrity Hype*. Illustrated by Shawn Banner. Walker, 2006. ISBN 0802780741. \$9.95. 160 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Informational books

Subject: Girls in popular culture--Juvenile literature; Self-perception in adolescence--Juvenile literature; Beauty, Personal--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

Former model and teen magazine editor, Brashich attacks society's obsession with celebrities and the unhealthy, unrealistic bodies they have. Starting with a confession of her own history of buying in to all the hype, Brashich adds a realistic view of the media frenzy surrounding celebrities, as well as commentary about teenage self-esteem and worthier role models. Each chapter ends with thought provoking questions about media beauty and self-perception that the author invites people to answer and to comment about on her blog.

Written in informal prose and with Banner's cartoons adding a little splash, this book offers ideas, confidence boosters, reality checks, and common sense. *All Made Up* is a must for any home with pre-teen and teenage girls, as well as for middle and high school libraries.

Ichord, Loretta Frances. *Double Cheeseburgers, Quiche, and Vegetarian Burritos: American Cooking from the 1920s Through Today*. Illustrated by Jan Davey Ellis. Millbrook Press, 2007. ISBN 9780822559696. \$25.26. 64 p.

Reviewer: Holly Dickman

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Cookery, American--History--Juvenile literature; Food habits--United States--History--21st century--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

“What's been cooking in America during the past 100 years?” This creative informational text on the evolution of American food offers the answer. Beginning with the 1920s, Ichord discusses the influences of culture, wartime, and technology on recipes and eating habits. Ichord then moves into the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century and writes about the importance of international foods and popular food movements. Finally, the text ends with the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the realities of the American diet.

This book has been cleverly sprinkled with decorative illustrations, and each chapter ends with a suitable recipe for the reader to try at home. In the appendix, the reader can find ways to scale the recipes to produce enough for a classroom of 32 students. The information written in this book is entertaining and appropriate for intermediate readers. Ichord has designed a captivating read which provides broad knowledge of the history of America's foods. The source notes, bibliography, and index in the back of the book also provide helpful information for the reader who wants more. This book would be useful for a report on American culture, or for simply gaining personal knowledge on the history of foods in the United States.

Pierce, Tamora. *Beka Cooper: Terrier*. Random House, 2006. ISBN 037581468X. \$18.95.  
581 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fantasy stories; Adventure stories;

Subject: Police--Juvenile fiction; Magic--Juvenile fiction; Fantasy; Books--Reviews

Sixteen-year-old Beka Cooper begins her training with the Provost's Guard in the capital city of Corus from Pierce's well-known Tortall universe. This story, however, takes place two hundred years before familiar and liked characters such as Alanna, Daine, Alianne, and Keladry start their adventures. Readers will see a whole different world than the one they thought they knew, both because of the time shift and because most of the action takes place far away from the palace and the nobility that previous stories have introduced.

Beka herself is an interesting character. She is both diligent and smart, but she tries her hardest to avoid the spotlight because she is shy. The cast of characters assembled around her are equally believable. However, even with Beka's magical ability to speak to the dead, the story somewhat strains credibility as she, a trainee, manages to solve (granted, with help) two separate mysteries in one night.

The book is in journal format, first person from Beka's perspective—a first for Pierce, but very well done. Because Beka is the oldest of five children and has a supportive foster father (the Lord Provost himself), her story also has the potential to show a greater family dynamic than Pierce has used previously. Overall, this tale is a welcome addition to the kingdom of Tortall.

Turner, Ann. *Hard Hit*. Scholastic Press, 2006. ISBN 0439296803. \$16.99. 167 p.

Reviewer: Marsha D. Broadway

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Fathers and sons--Juvenile fiction; Grief--Juvenile fiction; Death--Juvenile fiction;

Books--Reviews;

Mark, a tenth grader, has a near perfect life—a reliable best friend, a beautiful new girlfriend, a great pitching arm, and a devotion to baseball. Unexpectedly his dad is diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and his life and his family are thrown into unknown territory. Through sparse free verse, Mark struggles with fear, anger, faith, expectations, and change as his dad dies.

“No one tells you what it is like; there is no road map for death.” Turner has written a sensitive novel that addresses grief and loss and all the accompanying emotions. This book may help teens who face their own journey through grief or who have friends who are grieving. School counselors may find *Hard Hit* a reliable choice for bibliotherapy.

Hooper, Mary. *The Remarkable Life and Times of Eliza Rose*. Bloomsbury, 2006. ISBN 1582348545. \$16.95. 336 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Historical fiction;

Subject: Gwyn, Nell, 1650-1687--Juvenile fiction; Identity (Psychology)--Juvenile fiction.;

London (England)--History--17th century--Juvenile fiction; Books--reviews

When Eliza's stepmother kicks her out of the house, she goes to London to find her father. However, she ends up arrested for thieving. Rescued by Ma Gwyn's "kindness," she finds herself set up to be a prostitute. Ma's daughter Nell saves Eliza from that fate on a whim more than anything else. From there Eliza takes on a number of roles as she tries to make a living, find her father, and discover a place to call home.

Eliza is a kind and likable character, part naive country girl and part independent woman, who learns and adapts quickly. The story is rich with historical details of life in seventeenth-century London. A short glossary of historical characters and places is included at the end. Hooper's writing style is easy to read and flows quickly. Although the title character does not participate in any unsavory activities, the society in which she lives overflows with prostitution, unwed intimate relations, and adultery. Some young readers might be offended.

Block, Francesca Lia. *Psyche in a Dress*. Joanna Cotler Books, 2006. ISBN 0060763728.  
\$15.99. 116 p.

Reviewer: Eliza Nevin

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Folklore; Fiction;

Subject: Mythology, Greek--Juvenile fiction; Psyche (Greek deity)--Juvenile fiction; Actors and actresses--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Block, in her erotic, fragmented poetry-prose, gives the characters in *Psyche in a Dress* the names and story lines of Greek myths. Psyche, the soul, is a seventeen-year-old girl trapped in her filmmaker father's visions of art. She performs for his cameras but yearns for her missing mother. When Eros, her first lover, comes to her she is so taken by his beauty that she thinks she is not enough for him, a god, and scares him away. She then becomes Echo to Narcissus, Eurydice to Orpheus, and travels to her own personal hell, becoming Hades's lover, in her attempts to sacrifice enough to bring Eros back. He comes back only to give her their child, Joy. Psyche is now Demeter to her daughter's Persephone as she tries to save Joy from her own Hades. Eventually, Eros returns to her as she learns how to love herself as a goddess.

Block creates in this book a modern, rich world of intoxicating flowers and lovers. Psyche's world is enchanting and beautiful, but dangerous and frightening as well. Her father she describes as "her [mother's] own hell god." Psyche's chapters alternate with chapters expanding on the lives of the other significant characters she meets. The many stories of the gods and goddesses in this book are mature—sex seems to be a requirement for closeness, although closeness does not always accompany it. The book, however, is engaging as it brings mythology to life for readers mature enough to handle it. This book may be a starting point—or accompaniment—for learning about Greek mythology.

Vaught, Susan. *Trigger*. Bloomsbury, 2006. ISBN 1582349207. \$16.95. 292 p.

Reviewer: Eliza Nevin

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction; Fiction;

Subject: Brains--Wounds and injuries--Juvenile fiction; Gunshot wounds--Juvenile fiction;

Suicide--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews

Seventeen-year-old Jersey Hatch is going home after a year in a rehab center, but he still can't remember how he got there, the year leading up to his stay in hospitals and therapy, or why there is a bullet scar on his right temple. With a broken body, Jersey embarks on a journey to find some answers and reconnect with his terrified family and friends, who insist on continuing to ask Jersey why he shot himself in the head—something he doesn't believe he did.

Vaught, a neuropsychologist, tells an authentic story inspired by her many suicidal adolescent patients. Jersey's thoughts as he tries to live a normal life with a hole in his brain are always bitterly funny and often heart wrenching. Readers will experience an incredibly powerful, mysterious story as they discover answers with Jersey. The subject matter of suicide may be disturbing, but the honest portrayal of Jersey's struggles will open readers' eyes to the realities of mental health problems and suicidal tendencies among teenagers.

Flinn, Alex. *Diva*. HarperCollins, 2006. ISBN 0060568437. \$16.99. 261 p.

Reviewer: Cassandra Fugal

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Singers--Juvenile fiction; Interpersonal relations--Juvenile fiction; self-confidence--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Caitlin McCourt wants to be a diva. Not the "look at the \$500 shoes my daddy bought me" type diva, but a real diva: an opera diva. To follow her dream she leaves her "friends" and attends a performing arts high school. But if she hoped changing schools would fix all her problems, she was wrong: her mother does not understand her nor her love of opera (not to mention Caitlin has to cope with her mother dating a married man); she escaped physically from her abusive ex-boyfriend but is still tied to him emotionally; and she cannot leave behind the overweight girl she once was and accept the beautiful young woman she has become.

Through first person narrative, emails, and blog posts the reader becomes engrossed in Caitlin's life as she shares her dreams, her fears, and her determination to become a diva. Even those who don't like opera will gain an appreciation for it as Caitlin relates the music and stories she loves to her life.

Hamilton, Sue. *Masters of Horror (The World of Horror)*. ABDO Publishing, 2007. ISBN 9781599287706. \$24.21. 32 p.

Reviewer: Holly Dickman

Reading Level: Young adult, all

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Biographies; informational books;

Subject: Horror tales, American—History and criticism—Juvenile literature; Authors, American—Biography—Juvenile literature; Horror tales, English—History and criticism—Juvenile literature; Authors, English—Biography—Juvenile literature; Books—Reviews

Famous authors, actors, and directors from the 19th century to the present day are featured in this collective biography. Although each person came from different places and decades, there is one common factor among each of the talented artists: they all loved horror. Starting with Mary Wollstonecraft Shelly, author of *Frankenstein*, moving to horror film director Alfred Hitchcock, and ending with famous 20th century horror film actor Vincent Price, the reader meets 14 individuals who have greatly influenced "The World of Horror."

This book features each horror specialist with a brief biography about his or her life. Biographies include information like birthplaces, important dates and accomplishments, and significant personal relationships. Each biography is brief yet interesting. The reader is able to see the personal and professional sides of the accomplished individuals. Along with each biography are pictures of the individual and a small picture of some of their works. The book ends with a useful glossary of terms and an index page. A quick and interesting read that will captivate the attention of horror lovers of all ages. Especially beneficial to middle and high school libraries.

McLimans, David. *Gone Wild: An Endangered Animal Alphabet*. Illustrated by David McLimans. Walker, 2006. ISBN 9780802795632. \$17.85. 40 p.

Reviewer: Holly Dickman

Reading Level: All

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Endangered species--Juvenile literature; English language--Alphabet--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

A is for Chinese Alligator in this creative alphabet book where each letter of the alphabet represents an animal on the endangered species list. Unique art on each page show characteristics of various wild animals through the letter that they represent. For example, the letter *H* is transformed into a Bushman Hare as large bunny ears stretch out the top of the letter, and a rabbit nose on the center line of the *H*. Along with each animal-designed letter, McLimans includes a small box of information which has a mini illustration of the animal, the class of the animal, where the animal lives, what threatens the animal, and the status of the animal on the endangered list.

Although the only colors in this book are black, red, and white, this animal alphabet demands attention. McLimans demonstrates the importance of captivating an audience through the pictures in this 2007 Caldecott honoree. Each page is set up in a clean, uncluttered fashion, easily leading the eyes to each creatively drawn letter and sidebar. At the end of the alphabet, the author has included a drawing and additional information for each animal featured in the book. This book will change the way its audience sees the alphabet and animals forever. *Gone Wild* would be a great addition to any home or school library accessible to young children, and would be especially interesting to animal lovers of all ages.