

The S.E.L.E.C.T. S.E.L.E.C.T. Nook



Educate
Select and Evaluate Literature to Empower Children & Teachers
Entertain
Excite

Volume 8, Number 1

Francesca Pomerantz, Editor
Ann Larrabee, Assistant Editor
www.salemstate.edu/selectnook

Spring 2009

About the S.E.L.E.C.T. Books at Salem State College

The S.E.L.E.C.T. Nook Newsletter shares information about new children's books with teachers and Salem State College faculty. The S.E.L.E.C.T. Nook Newsletter was founded by Dr. Jo Ann Brewer and the late Dr. Diane Bushner and is made possible through the generosity of the following publishers:

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Viking
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About the Book Reviews

Book reviews are written by undergraduate and graduate students studying children's literature in courses at Salem State College, as well as by faculty teaching the courses. The book reviews printed here are excerpted from longer papers.

The Book Reviewers: Spring 2009 Edition

The book reviews printed in this edition of the newsletter were written by graduate students enrolled in EDU 767: *Literature for Young Children*, and undergraduate students enrolled in EDU 334: *Literature for Children in the Elementary Grades* and EDU 346: *Science in the Elementary Grades*, as well as Francesca Pomerantz, Associate Professor of Education and Ann Larrabee, Assistant Editor.

Never Take a Shark to the Dentist: And Other Things Not to Do

Written by Judi Barrett

Illustrated by John Nickle

Atheneum Publishing 2008



This read-aloud written by Judi Barrett and illustrated by John Nickle will have you smiling and laughing along with the children. It is packed with clever and hilarious illustrations. Judi Barrett is also the author of such titles as *Animals Should Definitely Not Act Like People*, and *Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing*. Every character depicted in this book is an animal but they are personified, acting like people and wearing clothing! My favorite “never” is “Never take a giraffe to the movies.” It is a foldout in which a giraffe with a very long neck is drinking a soda with the longest straw made from many normal size straws stuck together one on top of the other. Not only is the giraffe blocking the other movie goers, who are all bunnies watching two bunnies kiss on the movie screen, but the giraffe’s head goes through the skylight of the movie theatre where pigeons are watching the same movie on a television!

There are thirteen cute, clever and amusing “nevers” and one “but always” that closes the book. This book will engage children ages 4-8.

Andrea Scheidler

Ducks Don’t Wear Socks

Written by John Nedwidek

Illustrated by Lee White

Viking Children’s Books 2008



Ducks Don’t Wear Socks by first time children’s book author John Nedwidek is a humorous story about a serious little girl and a silly duck. Emily is a somber young lady at the beginning of the story and gradually starts to lighten up as she is exposed to the antics of Duck. She tries almost anything she can to stay serious and not laugh, until in the end she gives in to the urge and laughs along with Duck... by being a duck!

The language used in this book is not very advanced and is well suited for children in kindergarten or first grade as an entertaining read-aloud. The typeface of the text changes when Duck yells out what he is wearing, from socks, to a tie and underwear. Students will surely get a good laugh from hearing this read aloud.

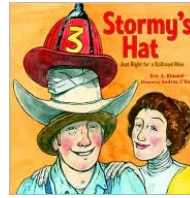
Illustrator Lee White created fine-looking illustrations that go along perfectly with the silly story line. It is through the illustrations that the reader gets only a quick hint at the fact that Duck is most likely Emily’s stuffed animal friend.

I would suggest this book as a read-aloud for kindergarten, first grade or younger. It is fun to read aloud and I suspect that young children would respond well to the silliness of the characters in the story.

Lindsay Burke

Stormy's Hat

Written by Eric A. Kimmel
Illustrated by Andrea U'Ren
Farrar, Straus & Giroux 2008



Stormy loves everything about his job as a train engineer. Well, almost everything. He cannot find a hat that is right for a railroad man. His friends have plenty of suggestions for hats that might work, but unfortunately, none of them do. Some are downright disastrous! After each hat causes him grief, Stormy's wife, Ida tries to give him a suggestion, which he quickly dismisses with, "Aw, don't worry your pretty little head. I'll figure out something." Once Ida has had enough of his shushing, she gives Stormy an ultimatum, "Either listen to what I have to say or stop complaining." Considering it has affected every railroad worker since the early 1900s, listening to Ida's suggestion is the best decision Stormy ever made.

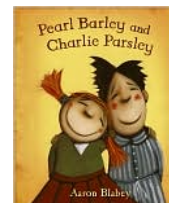
Eric A. Kimmel teamed up with illustrator, Andrea U'Ren for the first time to tell this spirited historical fiction story that is based on the actual creation of the hat that is still being worn today. Although the story is told rather simply, Kimmel's word choice stays true to the time period. He also makes excellent use of onomatopoeia to help make Stormy's locomotive come to life. In turn, U'Ren's illustrations are very colorful and appropriate for the time-period. The combination of Kimmel's words and U'Ren's pictures perfectly join together to create this inspirational story with a touch of feminism.

Children from kindergarten to grade 3 will appreciate this book's theme about listening to everyone's suggestions to solve problems. It can also be used to enhance content-specific vocabulary with words like locomotive, engineer, cab, and firebox. This book would be suitable to use in the classroom to enrich a social studies curriculum that focuses on inventions or strong women in history.

Jennifer Grant

Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley

Written and illustrated by Aaron Blabey
Front Street 2008



Everyone knows that opposites attract. This statement is especially true for Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley. These two characters are the best of friends, despite their many differences. They are different in every way! Pearl Barley is adventurous, loud, and a bit of a show-off. Charlie Parsley is quiet, loves to read, is very careful, and a bit of a worrier. However, when they are together, they complement each other perfectly and give each other a feeling of happiness.

Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley is Aaron Blabey's first picture book for children. He uses a short text with large, colorful illustrations. The illustrations are bold, humorous, and very expressive. They help convey the emotions of the characters, as well as carry the theme of friendship. Through the illustrations the reader gets a good sense of the personalities of Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley. Charlie Parsley blushes, hides, and sits quietly, while Pearl Barley talks, dances, and "runs amok".

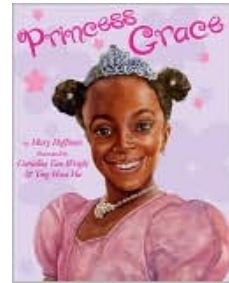
Children in grades K-2 will love to hear this story read aloud. Many conversations will likely be generated about unlikely friendships, embracing differences, having the courage to be true to ourselves, and the power of friendship.

Katie Flanagan

Princess Grace

Written by Mary Hoffman

Illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu
Dial Books for Young Readers 2008



Mary Hoffman's beloved Grace is back in her newest picture book, *Princess Grace*. Grace wants to be chosen for the princess float in the town's parade. She enlists her friends' help to find out how to dress the part. When they approach Grace's Nana for help with a costume, they realize that a princess doesn't do anything but look pretty and wait. They go back to their teacher, who brings them stories of princess warriors, like Amina of Nigeria and Pin-Yang of China. The whole class gets involved in this "princess research" and they convince their teacher to allow them all on the float, as princes and princesses from many lands. As an African princess in Kente cloth, Grace echoes her wise Nana's words, "There's more than one way of being pretty."

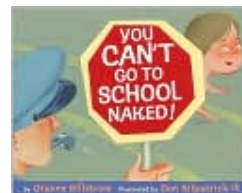
In this empowering story, Hoffman gives a gentle message of friendship and belonging. As in all her books, Hoffman deals deftly with issues of race and sexism. Bright and colorful watercolor paintings by Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu match the story well. Similar in style to Caroline Binch, who illustrated earlier "Grace" picture books, Van Wright and Hu have captured the character of Grace with their engaging illustrations. Although Hoffman references her other picture books, *Amazing Grace* and *Boundless Grace*, this book stands alone for readers new to Grace.

Betsy Singer

You Can't Go to School Naked!

Written by Dianne Billstrom

Illustrated by Don Kilpatrick III
Penguin Group 2008

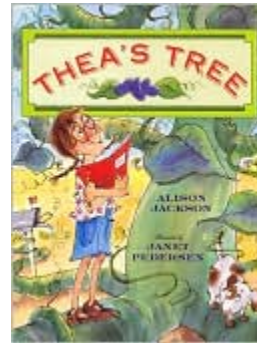


In this book, written by Dianne Billstrom, the title says it all. *You Can't Go to School Naked* is a wonderfully funny story about a boy who decides he doesn't like clothes and refuses to wear them to school. The book, based on an actual conversation between the author and one of her grandchildren, takes the boy through hilarious scenarios of what could happen if he actually went to school without clothes. His parents, of course, address the potentially disastrous situation, and explain to him the importance of wearing clothes. They ask him to imagine how hard it would be for him to go down the slide at school, or even worse, to slide into second base! This book appeals to the imagination every time you turn a page. The superb illustrations, by Don Kilpatrick III, complement the humorous theme, and truly bring the story to life. The book is a hysterical reminder for parents who have ever had to convince their child to get dressed, and children will love it for the silly situations, rhyme scheme and the witty solution. This is the first book for the author and illustrator, and I hope it's not the last.

Cheri Spencer

Thea's Tree

Written by Alison Jackson
Illustrated by Janet Pederson
Penguin Group 2008



Do you remember the story of Jack and his beanstalk? If you do, then you'll especially enjoy this funny tale of a young girl, Thea Teawinkle and her science experiment gone wild. We first meet Thea as she sets about on her school science project. She has been instructed to find something of interest and document it for a month. When she plants what appears to be just an ordinary purple seed in her front yard some extraordinary things begin to happen almost immediately.

Told through a series of letter exchanges, the story grows (literally) as Thea writes to various experts in the hopes of clarifying what is happening to her beanstalk. A botanist can't identify the plant. The bank clerk can't provide her any information about the gold coins. Even the Director of the Philharmonic Orchestra, "a busy man with no time for practical jokes," does not answer her questions about the singing harp found at the base of her now giant "tree."

Readers begin to make connections to the classic tale as the story unfolds despite the fact that Thea and her slew of experts are unable to do so. It should be noted, however, that without prior knowledge of the original Jack and the beanstalk story, readers may be as confused as the many characters in this book. Engaging illustrations perfectly complement the humor of the circumstance and the colorful watercolor and line drawings add to the "big" feel of the story.

With her subtle humor and a unique writing format, children's librarian and award-winning author Alison Jackson has created a book that can be tied into multiple lesson topics including: fairy tales, letter writing, science, point of view or just plain reading for fun! Alison Jackson has also written *I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Pie* and *The Ballad of Valentine*.

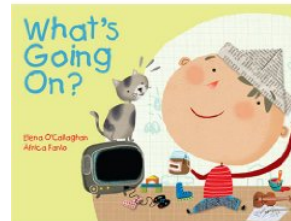
Lisa Scharffenberg

What's Going On?

Written by Elena O'Callaghan

Illustrated by Africa Fanlo

Kane Miller Books 2008



Any family that has experienced bringing a newborn into the house will enjoy reading this delightful story. A little boy, the protagonist, is wondering what has happened to Mom and Dad over the past few months. One day they were normal parents, as normal as parents are capable of being, and suddenly Mom is spraying bug spray in her hair and Dad is brushing his teeth with hair gel. The surprise ending comes when the clueless young boy reveals to the reader that his three month old sister is the only normal one in the house.

This whimsical story gives the kid's perspective on changes that occur in a household when a new member joins the family. We can see both Mom and Dad contributing to the household chores, on flashback pages which portray a time before the unusual behavior and sleep deprivation. We know the parents in this story used to be well kept people who enjoyed music, reading, and keeping a neat house. Suddenly there has been a significant change and their lives have been turned upside down.

The plot is interesting and the story suspenseful. It is fun to look at the before and after pages and guess what could be the cause of this mayhem. We are kept in suspense until the very end and readers can use their imagination to figure out just what is causing the strange behavior in this family.

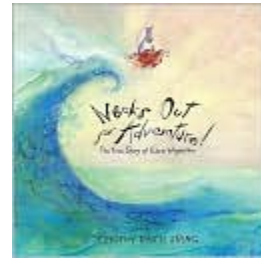
The reader can observe the changes in this family, the unusual behavior of the parents and disarray of the house through colorful and interesting illustrations that complement the story. There are many books in publication written to help families cope with the changes that come along with bringing a new baby into the house. This story really captures the idea in a unique and humorous manner.

This book is recommended for ages 5-9. It is a funny story to which many young students with baby siblings will be able to relate. This book would be a wonderful contribution to a pre-school or early elementary classroom library.

Melissa M. Turco

Necks Out for Adventure!: The True Story of Edwin Wiggleskin

Written and illustrated by Timothy Basil Ering
Candlewick Press 2008



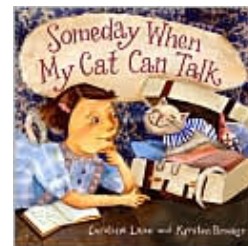
Sometimes it takes every bit of courage to break out of your shell, but that's exactly what Edwin the clam does in *Neck's Out for Adventure!: The True Story of Edwin Wiggleskin*. Author-illustrator Timothy Ering's tenth book, tells the tale of the wiggleskins, a colony of shellfish living nestled in mud on the ocean floor. This settlement of clams has always lived by one rule: 'Necks *out* to eat, necks *in* to hide'. No one ever questioned the decree until the day that Edwin broached the subject with his mother, inquiring the consequences of removing his shell to float along the current.

Although he is laughed at by the other clams in the colony, Edwin's new motto, "Necks Out for Adventure!" proves life-saving when they are caught in a fisherman's net. The only way for them to escape through the small holes in the net is by shucking their shells like Edwin advised. The illustrations, created using acrylic paint, are simplistic yet effective. Shucked clams, with visible innards, are not your typical storybook illustrations, making *Necks Out for Adventure! The True Story of Edwin Wiggleskin* stands out as a genuinely unique and creative story, while simultaneously conveying a positive message to young readers.

Lily Hager

Someday When My Cat Can Talk

Written by Caroline Lazo
Illustrated by Krysten Brooker
Random House Children's Books 2008



Someday When My Cat Can Talk, by Caroline Lazo is a wonderful fictional picture book to stir the imagination, as well as begin a discussion about cities and countries around the world. The girl in the story discusses the travels her cat would tell her if her cat could speak. Her imagination takes her cat on a boat ride across the ocean to the foggy coast of England, to the fashion shows in France, to the famous Opera house in Vienna, Austria, to finally frolic in the meadows of Holland until he returns home. The cat's destinations are supported by details of specific activities, places, or culture. The story concludes with a fact sheet that provides more detail about the specific things the cat sees or does, which is a good conversation starter when discussing geography.

Krysten Brooker's illustrations add to the overall essence of the story and refrain from stereotyping the people in the different places the cat travels. The illustrations are

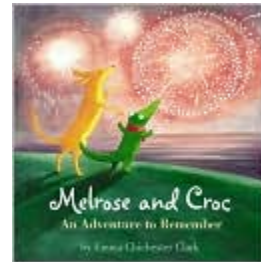
also unique in the respect that they appear to be pieces of paper cut out and placed together to form the pictures.

I really enjoyed this story because it stretches ones imagination and takes you on a journey. I think this story would be best used as an introduction to a unit on geography or cultural geography, especially with the added fact sheet. Students could come up with their own fact sheets based on the same countries and cities used in the story or to make ones about new countries they are learning about.

Becky Pydynkowski

Melrose and Croc: An Adventure to Remember

Written and illustrated by Emma Chichester Clark
Walker & Company 2008



Melrose and Croc: An Adventure to Remember by Emma Chichester Clark is a heartwarming picture book that exemplifies the true meaning of friendship. Melrose, a golden Labrador, and his friend Croc, the spunky crocodile, head to a villa by the sea to celebrate Croc's birthday. Melrose has big plans for his friend's special day including numerous presents and treats, but what Melrose really wants to give Croc is a special fish for his breakfast. Melrose borrows his friend Pierre's rowboat and sets out to sea. Although he is warned about an impending storm, he is determined to catch a fish for Croc. As the hours pass, Melrose has not returned, and as the dark sky rolls in Croc begins to panic. Croc finds out that Melrose is struggling on the thunderous ocean and organizes a search and rescue team with the help of the local lifeguards. When Melrose is tossed into the ocean by a crashing wave, Croc jumps into the deep blue in an attempt to save his best friend.

Clark poses the question of "What would you do to help a friend in need?" throughout this story. The overall theme of friendship resonates throughout every page. Clark's expressive voice shines through each character. Whether it is an exuberant Melrose, a panicked Croc, or an anxious Pierre, the unique voice of each character is clearly shown making this picture book a perfect choice to represent fluency and expression to any reader.

Clark serves a dual role as writer and illustrator and her pictures correlate perfectly with the text. Her soft, pastel illustrations are exceptionally detailed with several full page spreads that add meaning to the text. The text size and font are appropriate, as well as the detailed illustrations and can be easily viewed by a student sitting on a reading rug.

Clark has written and illustrated other children's books that have similar soft pastel colors. She has also written another Melrose and Croc book entitled *A Christmas to Remember*. Students can familiarize themselves with these characters and observe their interactions throughout their multiple adventures. More importantly, students can explore the ideas of true camaraderie and what to do when someone they care about is in dire need of help.

Nicole Goodhue

Piano Starts Here

Written and illustrated by Robert Andrew Parker
Random House Children's Books 2008



Robert Andrew Parker is well known for his art. He paints in watercolor mostly and has illustrated several children's books including the Caldecott Honor Book *Popcorn* and *Ma Goodness* by Edna Mitchell Preston. In *Piano Starts Here*, he writes about Art Tatum, a famous piano player. Most stories about this musician are about his adult life. Parker decided to write a children's book about Tatum's childhood. He uses as much factual information as he can and uses his imagination to fill in the gaps.

The book's theme is that even if you struggle, you should never give up on something you love. Art Tatum was interested in the piano even as a young child. His mother would sometimes sing and play the piano, but usually it just sat there making no noise. Art started to play it because his eyesight wasn't good, and he didn't like to go outside. As the years went by he grew increasingly fond of the piano but his eyesight didn't get any better. By the time he was ten he was playing in churches, at school, and even at a café around the corner from his house. As Tatum got better at the piano his eyesight got worse and it became harder and harder for him to see the piano keys. He used his hands and ears to find sounds and keys. He couldn't even walk to school so twins from next-door walked him to school everyday. He became so talented that when playing at bars and restaurants people hummed tunes and he could play them by ear. He enjoyed how happy music made not only himself, but also his father, mother and Reverend Johnson. Even as an adult any time he played the piano he thought, "No matter where I am, when the room fills with music, I remember all the people who helped me. The people I love."

Marci DiCara

Children's Literature and Science Topics

What Bluebirds Do

Written by Pamela F. Kirby
Boyd's Mills Press 2009

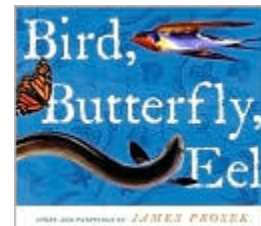


What Bluebirds Do is a nonfiction book that teaches by showing the reader how bluebirds live and care for their young. It is an amazing book told in beautiful full color photographs and easy to read text. The book describes the life of one specific group of bluebirds, the Eastern Bluebirds. The reader will finish this book feeling like a bluebird expert. At the end of the book, there are fascinating facts and pictures showing the three species or groups of bluebirds, which are the Eastern bluebirds, Mountain bluebirds, and the Western bluebirds. There is also some information about the history of how bluebirds were brought back from near extinction. I recommend this book to anyone of any age to learn and see how bluebirds live. It is an educational and enriching book to read.

Stephanie McGrath

Bird, Butterfly, Eel

Written and Illustrated by James Prosek
Simon & Schuster for Young Readers 2009



What I loved most about this book is the illustrations. Each page has detailed paintings of the habitats of birds, butterflies, and eels. It is through these rich illustrations that the migration cycles of each animal are depicted in a life-like fashion. This is a great book for second or third grade students who are learning about migration and the different ways animals travel. It is interesting to follow all three of the cycles at the same time which creates the opportunity for students to compare and contrast the three. I recommend this book to students learning about migration.

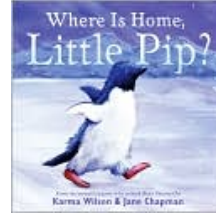
Traci Lyons

Assistant Editor, Ann Larrabee’s “Bates Best Bets”

Books reviewed in collaboration with my first grade class at the Bates Elementary School

Where Is Home, Little Pip?

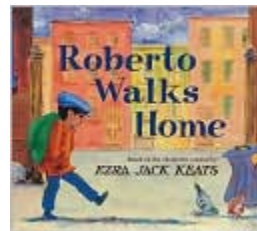
Written by Karma Wilson
Illustrated by Jane Chapman
Simon & Schuster 2008



Where Is Home Little Pip? is a story about a baby penguin named Little Pip who knows that she is supposed to stay close to home. Her home is a nest made of pebbles on the cold Antarctic shore. One day Pip gives chase to a beautiful, glittery feather that flutters by. Soon Pip finds herself far from her home and the protection of Mama and Papa. She meets several Antarctic creatures asking each of them, “where is home?” They tell her about home but speak of their homes, not Little Pip’s. Cold, tired, and frightened, Little Pip cries out into the cold and frigid wind for Mama and Papa. Little Pip soon learns the true meaning of *home*. This story is by the best selling duo behind *Bear Snores On*.

Roberto Walks Home

Written by Janice N. Harrington
Illustrated by Jody Wheeler
Penguin Group 2008



The characters in *Roberto Walks Home* are based on the characters created by renowned author Ezra Jack Keats. Roberto is so happy that his older brother Miguel is going to walk home with him from school. But when Miguel forgets and plays basketball with his friends, Roberto is left to walk home alone. Roberto arrives home and is furious. He goes to Miguel’s room and stomps and kicks to the point of exhaustion. After a wonderful dream, Roberto awakes to find his apologetic brother, Miguel. The colorful illustrations in this book follow the works of Ezra Jack Keats. We “walk the streets” with Roberto as he makes his way home. We see the man pushing a grocery cart piled with grocery bags and dirty clothes. We watch as Roberto passes the long dark alley with grease and garbage. We can almost hear the dog as he jumps up on the fence as Roberto walks by. This is a wonderful story of two siblings who love, fight, and find a way to forgive each other.

Madeline and the Cats of Rome

Written and illustrated by John Bemelmans

Marciano

Penguin Young Readers Group 2008



It has been close to 50 years since the last Madeline book was written by the grandfather (Ludwig Bemelmans) of this author, John Bemelmans Marciano. In this latest installment of Madeline, we find our beloved character visiting the city of Rome. Having escaped the gray skies of Paris, along with Miss Clavel and eleven other orphans, Madeline finds herself on an unexpected adventure. Madeline tries to capture a thief who has stolen Miss Clavel's camera. Soon a chase is underway and Madeline is running through the streets of Rome and soon discovers a multitude of orphaned cats in an old abandoned house. This wonderful story of right and wrong is rich in rhyme and contains wonderful illustrations that are true to the original illustrations of Madeline which follow the text of the story.

Imagine a Place

Written by Sarah L. Thomson

Paintings by Rob Gonsalves

Athenuem Books for Young Readers 2008



Imagine a Place is the companion to the critically acclaimed *Imagine a Night* and *Imagine a Day*. These stories remind us that imagination is powerful enough to take us anywhere we want to go. In *Imagine a Place*, the author transports the reader to many fantastical places. The paintings bring the author's words to life. The author asks the reader to imagine a place that makes you feel as free as a bird. Imagine a place that makes you feel it's always been your destination. Imagine a place that is made out of pure imagination. For example, "Imagine a place... where the tang of pine meets the salt of sea, where adventure finds a waiting heart." The artist's rendition of the page is a beautifully painted landscape that depicts the mountains and forests blending into the ocean where a young boy sits perched upon a rock watching surfers on the ocean. The paintings bring the author's poetic words to life. This book is appropriate for all ages and makes for a great read aloud.

In Brief

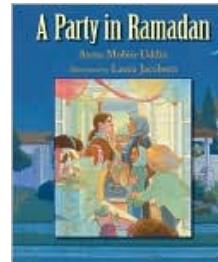
Editor's Picks

A Party in Ramadan

Written by Asma Mobin-Uddin

Illustrated by Laura Jacobson

Boyd's Mills Press 2009



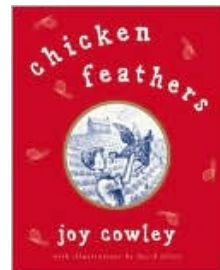
Leena plans to fast with her family for Ramadan, the Muslim holy month. Invited to a classmate's birthday party, she decides to go but not eat or drink. Despite the temptations of cake and lemonade, Leena keeps to her fast. She breaks the fast with her family that evening, enjoying the traditional foods and prayers. As the family begins eating dessert, two of Leena's classmates (one of whom is the birthday girl) arrive with their families, delivering the left-over birthday cake to Leena. Everyone enjoys the chocolate cake together and Leena feels especially thankful for her blessings. This book will educate children about Ramadan, generate discussion about the tradition of fasting in different religions, and facilitate cross-cultural understanding. It's a "must have" for classroom libraries. Recommended for grades 2-5.

Chicken Feathers

Written by Joy Cowley

Illustrated by David Elliot

Penguin Group (USA) 2008



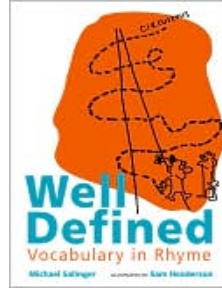
Joy Cowley, author of *Mrs. Wishy-Washy* and other books for beginning readers, has written a novel, *Chicken Feathers*, for older children. In the tradition of *Charlotte's Web*, Cowley creates the story of Joshua, who lives on a chicken farm with his pet chicken, Semolina. She can talk but only Joshua can hear her. The story has memorable characters, including Semolina, the tough-talking, sassy chicken, crabby Grandma who disapproves of chickens in the house, and Joshua's mother who is in the hospital on bed-rest expecting Joshua's baby sister. The story also has a problem: Eggs are disappearing from the chickens' nests on the farm and only Semolina knows where the eggs have gone. A good read-aloud or independent chapter book for children in grades 1-5.

Well Defined: Vocabulary in Rhyme

Written by Michael Salinger

Illustrated by Sam Henderson

Boyd's Mills Press 2009

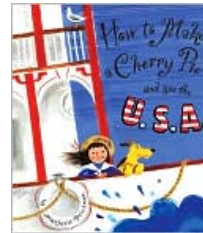


As Michael Salinger explains in his introduction to this marvelous book of poetry, he loves words. So he created poems about words. For each letter of the alphabet, he selected a word, such as “aggregate” and wrote a poem defining the word. For example: “**A**ggregate believes in group hugs/likes large parties, crowds of all sorts/loves a parade/any great grouping whether matched or mixed/will do the trick...” or “**B**erate should hand out earplugs/his lecturing tends to get loud/his criticisms long and severe/he means to demean, that’s clear...” The poems are playful and may inspire children to try their own vocabulary poems. Recommended for grades 4 and up.

How to Make a Cherry Pie and See the U.S.A.

Written and illustrated by Marjorie Priceman

Random House Children’s Books 2008



“In the mood for a cherry pie? Let’s get started. First, mix flour and salt in a bowl. What, no bowl?” So begins the reader’s journey with Marjorie Priceman around the United States to find the raw materials necessary to create the baking tools involved in baking the pie. We visit a coal mine in Ohio, as well as a cotton farm in Louisiana and get clay for the baking bowl in New Mexico, to name just a few of the stops on the journey. Along the way we learn that steel for the pie pan is made from coal, pot holders from cotton, and the glass measuring cup from sand. This is a good read-aloud book with connections to science and geography. A recipe for cherry pie is included. Recommended for pre-school through grade 3.

Francesca Pomerantz