



The Dragon Lode

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## 1999 Notable books for a global society

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The Notable Books for a Global Society Committee, part of the Children's Literature and Reading Special Interest Group of the International Reading Association, has selected this year's list of outstanding trade books for enhancing student understanding of people and cultures throughout the world. For the 1999 list, the Committee considered fiction, nonfiction, and poetry published in 1998, written for students in grades K-12. The selections are grouped in the following thematic categories: Cultural and Personal Heritage, the Struggle for Freedom and the Devastation of War, and Moral Dilemmas and the Gift of Friendship. Books selected must have met one or more of the following criteria.

Books should:

- Portray cultural accuracy and

authenticity of characters in terms of a) physical characteristics, b) intellectual abilities and problem solving capabilities, c) leadership and cooperative dimensions, and d) social and economic status;

- Be rich in cultural details;
- Honor and celebrate diversity as well as common bonds in humanity;
- Provide in-depth treatment of cultural issues;
- Include characters within a cultural group or between two or more cultural groups who interact substantively and authentically;
- Include members of a "minority" group for a purpose other than filling a "quota";
- Invite reflection, critical analysis, and

- response;
- Demonstrate unique language or style;
  - Meet generally accepted criteria of quality for the genres in which they are written;
  - Have an appealing format and be of enduring quality.

Each entry includes bibliographic information, annotation, genre, suggested classroom activities, and a sampling of related books. Book levels—**(AI)** All ages, **(PR)** Primary, **(ME)** Middle Elementary, **(UE)** Upper Elementary, **(MS)** Middle School, **(YA)** Young Adult—indicate suggested audience interest, not reading levels.

## CULTURAL AND PERSONAL HERITAGE

**ALIKI.** *Marianthe's story one: Painted words/Marianthe's story two: Spoken memories.* New York: Greenwillow, 1998. Unpaged. ISBN 0-688-15662-2 (library); ISBN 0-688-15661-4 (trade)

ME, UE; Picture Book.

Reviewed by *Patricia L. Scharer*

Aliki employs a unique format to combine two separate stories into a single volume. *Marianthe's Story One: Painted Words* begins as Marianthe prepares to attend a new school, uncomfortable because the teacher and students do not speak her language. The teacher and students quickly recognize Marianthe's artistic abilities as she expresses her thoughts and feelings through paintings that bridge communication barriers. Gradually, she learns the new language to explain the stories in her paintings to the rest of the class. Readers can then turn the book over to read *Marianthe's Story Two: Spoken Memories* as she uses her new language to describe her family's reasons for leaving the village and coming to a new country. Aliki's full-color illustrations are done in colored pencils and crayon framed in white on each page.

### Teaching suggestions

- Discuss Marianthe's feelings portrayed in the text and illustrations to consider the range of emotions across both stories.
- Study the relationships between the two stories. Begin by rereading the first story. How does learning about Marianthe's

family and homeland affect the meaning of the first story during a second reading?

- Study Aliki's life story through web sites, books, and author biographies, and compare her stories with Marianthe's stories.
- Examine two of Aliki's illustrations that are in black-and-white rather than full color. Discuss why Aliki may have chosen to abandon color on that two-page spread and the effect of that decision on the reader's experience.

### Related books

*Going back home: An artist returns to the south* by Michele Wood and Toyomi Ingus. Children's Book Press, 1996.

*Immigrant kids* by Russell Freedman. E.P. Dutton, 1980.

*Klara's new world* by Jeanette Winter. Knopf, 1992.

*More than anything else* by Marie Bradby. Orchard, 1995.

*When I left my village* by Maxine Rose Schur. Dial, 1996.

### Other books by Aliki

*A medieval feast.* Crowell, 1983.

*Best friends together again.* Greenwillow, 1995.

*Communication.* Greenwillow, 1993.

*Feelings.* Greenwillow, 1984.

*Hello! goodbye!* Greenwillow, 1996.

*How a book is made.* Crowell, 1986.

*Mummies made in Egypt.* Crowell, 1979.

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**BIERMAN, CAROL.** *Journey to Ellis Island: How my father came to America.* With Barbara Hehner. Illustrated by Laurie McGaw. New York: Hyperion/Toronto: Madison, 1998. 48 pages. ISBN 0-7868-0377-0 (trade) ME, MS; Biography.

Reviewed by *Rosemary Bamford*

Carol Bierman tells the story of her father, Julius "Yehuda" Weinstein, and his family's journey from Russia to Ellis Island. After Yehuda's father and sister are killed by Germans and Yehuda is shot in the hand, the family travels by foot to Kiev for medical help. There the doctor saves Yehuda's badly infected arm, but unfortunately he has to keep it in a sling. Abe, the oldest son, sends money so the family can come to America, but Yehuda is

denied entry because of his arm. The boat captain intercedes, and Yehuda is admitted after a medical examination which involves running twice around Ellis Island. Yehuda returns to Ellis Island 75 years later to celebrate that run.

Fascinating period photographs and captions presenting factual information about immigrants and Ellis Island are combined with Bierman's narrative and McGaw's gentle watercolor illustrations. A glossary and recommended readings are included.

### Teaching suggestions

- Invite students to research and share stories about their family as well as community members' journeys to America. After reading this book and related books, they could interview parents, grandparents, or neighbors. These interviews could be charted on a graph and include countries represented, similar and different experiences, names that were changed, etc.
- Compare and contrast the information presented in the related books on Ellis Island to the photographs and captions in *Journey to Ellis Island*. Use a chart or Venn diagram to record findings.
- Encourage students to research more about the religious practices observed on the Jewish Sabbath. Why was Yehuda's mother upset that the doctors wanted to see Yehuda catch a ball with his injured hand? Discuss other activities that a Jewish child would not do on the Sabbath.

### Related books

*An Ellis Island christmas* by Maxine Leighton. Viking, 1992.

*Ellis Island: Doorway to freedom* by Steven Kroll. Illustrated by Karen Ritz. Holiday, 1995.

*I was dreaming to come to America: Memories from the Ellis Island oral history project*. Selected and illustrated by Veronica Lawlor. Viking, 1995.

*If your name was changed at Ellis Island* by Ellen Levine. Illustrated by Wayne Parmenter. Scholastic, 1993.

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**FLETCHER, SUSAN.** *Shadow spinner*. New York: Atheneum, 1998. 219 pp. ISBN 0-689-81852-1

MS, YA; Historical Fiction.

Reviewed by *Amy A. McClure*

Shahrazad, one of the most famous storytellers of all time, told the tales that formed the basis for *The Arabian Nights*. This engrossing novel offers an intriguing explanation of how she might have suffered "storyteller's block" and received help with some of her tales. Marjan, a young orphaned storyteller, is the shadow spinner referred to in the title. She is overheard telling an exciting story and is summoned to the Palace where she repeats the tale to the Princess who, in turn, uses it for several nights. Marjan becomes a harem handmaiden and is drawn into palace intrigues, resulting in an exciting story about the Persian culture, one that is traditionally underrepresented in children's literature. Particularly noteworthy are the "Lessons for Life and Storytelling" that begin each chapter with short essays on the power of language. "If you know how to use words, you don't have to be strong enough to wield a scimitar or have armies at your command. Words are how the powerless can have power" (p. 194). This is an excellent novel for showing how women used their wits and creativity to take control of their lives in a time when women were essentially powerless.

### Teaching suggestions

- Read aloud selected stories from *The Arabian Nights* and discuss the legends surrounding their evolution.
- Start a story and continue telling it for several days just as Shahrazad did. Challenge the children to keep it interesting and intriguing for as long as possible.
- Make Venn diagrams to compare the various female characters in the story: the beautiful, complex Shahrazad; her evil, crafty mother-in-law, Khatun; Zaynab, keeper of the harem's messenger pigeons, etc. Discuss how their personal qualities helped them survive treachery and intrigue.

### Related books

*The storytellers* by Ted Lewin. Lothrop, 1998.

*The storyteller's beads* by Jane Kurtz. Harcourt Brace, 1998.

*The Arabian nights: Tales told by Sheherazade during a thousand nights and one night*.

Retold by Brian Alderson. Morrow, 1995.

*Stories to solve: Folktales from around the world* by George Shannon. Greenwillow, 1985.  
*When stories fell like shooting stars* by Valiska Gregory. Simon & Schuster, 1996.

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**GOLLUB, MATTHEW.** *Cool melons—turn to frogs! The life and poems of Issa.*

Illustrated by Kazuko G. Stone.

New York: Lee & Low. 1998. Unpagged.

ISBN 1-880000-71-7

All; Poetry/Biography.

Reviewed by *Michael F. Opitz*

Presented here is a collaboration of verse and prose that together depict the life and work of 18th century haiku master Kobayashi Yataro, known as Issa. Selecting from thousands of Issa's haiku, Gollub provides translations of 33 poems, along with a brief biography of Issa. The combination makes this an excellent introduction to a noted Japanese poet. Each page features one haiku, accompanied by a watercolor and colored pencil illustration designed to represent the haiku visually. Japanese calligraphy serves as a border down the right or left side of each page, and the biographical information is interspersed throughout. An explanation about how the haiku were selected and translated and additional background information about the history of haiku closes the book. Taken together, readers are left with a window into the life of Issa, including his sad childhood, as well as some of his magnificent work. Readers may pen their own haiku inspired by the contents of this text.

### Teaching suggestions

- Immerse children in haiku by reading several collections of haiku. (See related books below for suggested titles.) After children have heard or read several haiku, discuss likenesses among all of the haiku.
- Invite students to try writing haiku without giving them the format. Once children have tried writing haiku, give them the form that is most commonly used: 17 syllables, three lines; line 1 = five syllables; line 2 = seven syllables; line 3 = five syllables. Invite them to use this criteria to evaluate their haiku and to make any necessary changes.
- Create a class book of haiku by inviting

students to submit at least one of their favorite haiku. Students could also be encouraged to illustrate their haiku in some way. Provide students with a copy of this collection.

- Invite children to explore other forms of poetry. Compare and contrast these to haiku.

### Related books

Additional collections of haiku can be found in:

*In the eyes of the cat: Japanese poetry for all seasons.* Compiled by Demi. Holt, 1992.

*Cricket never dies: A collection of haiku and tanka* by Myra Cohn Livingston.

McElderry, 1997.

*Grass sandals* by Dawnine Spivak.

Atheneum, 1997.

Other forms of poetry can be found in:

*Laugh-eteria* by Douglas Florian.

Harcourt, 1999.

*Doodle dandies* by J. Patrick Lewis.

Atheneum, 1998.

*Splish splash* by Joan Graham. Ticknor & Fields, 1994.

*Make things fly.* Edited by Dorothy Kennedy. McElderry, 1998.

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**HOYT-GOLDSMITH, DIANE.** *Lacrosse:*

*The national game of the Iroquois.*

Photographs by Lawrence Migdale.

New York: Holiday House. 1998. 31 pp.

ISBN 0-8234-1360-8

PR-UE; Informational.

Reviewed by *Michael F. Opitz*

Be not fooled by the title of this text! Indeed, the importance of lacrosse to the Iroquois both past and present is the theme that runs through this book. However, it is far more than a photoessay of the game which originated with the Iroquois. To better help readers understand the importance of lacrosse to the Iroquois, Hoyt-Goldsmith provides necessary background information about the Iroquois. She accomplishes this by dividing the text into several sections beginning with an explanation and accompanying map that shows the six nations of the Iroquois, continuing with a brief history of the game and a brief explanation about how the sport became popularized. She then offers information about differ-

ent forms of lacrosse, how a lacrosse stick is constructed, and some specific skills associated with playing the game. Migdale's photographs capture the essence of the explanations, making this book an appealing nonfiction text. Coming full circle, the text ends with an explanation about the importance of the game to the present-day Iroquois. A glossary and an index complete the book.

### Teaching suggestions

- Invite children to trace the history of other sports that are commonly played in the United States. Encourage children to construct a picture book to be shared with students in another grade.
- Teach children how to play lacrosse.
- Compare the rules used to play lacrosse with those of another sport such as hockey. How are they alike? How are they different?

### Related books

*Eagle song* by Joseph Bruchac. Dial, 1998.  
*Echoes of the elders: The stories and paintings of Chief Lelooska*. Edited by Christine Normandin. DK Publishers, 1998.  
*The eagle's gift* by Rafe Martin. Putnam, 1998.

### Other books by Hoyt-Goldsmith related to Native Americans

*Potlatch: A Tsimshian celebration*. Holiday House, 1998.  
*Buffalo days*. Holiday House, 1998.

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**LEWIN, TED.** *The storytellers*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard. 1998. 32 pages. ISBN 0-688-15178-7 PR; Picture Book.

Reviewed by *Joan T. Glazer*

Set in the city of Fez, Morocco, this contemporary story with its colorful and detailed illustrations takes readers through the ancient walled parts of Fez. Abdul and his grandfather begin their walk to work at dawn, wandering through the various souks, or marketplaces, where shops are clustered by trade. Finally, they reach their spot by the gate, spread their carpet, and prepare for their work of telling stories. A crowd gathers and grandfather holds them breathless with his tales of adventure and bravery. When the crowd diminishes, Abdul and his

grandfather head for home. The book is rich in details of contemporary life in the old part of Fez, with illustrations that give both close-up and extended views of the people and the setting.

### Teaching suggestions

- Have students compare Abdul's walk through the marketplace with a walk they might take through a local shopping mall.
- Let children tell a story they like to the class. Have them write a couplet to use to indicate that the story is complete, just as Abdul's grandfather concludes with "This story's bird has taken flight; to everyone a peaceful night."

### Related books

*From Miss Ida's porch* by Sandra Belton. Illustrated by Floyd Cooper. Four Winds, 1993.  
*Mr. Pak buys a story* by Carol Farley. Illustrated by Benrei Huang. Whitman, 1997.  
*The story of three kingdoms* by Walter Dean Myers. Illustrated by Ashley Bryan. HarperCollins, 1995.  
*Zorah's magic carpet* by Stefan Czernecki. Hyperion, 1996.

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**LUENN, NANCY.** *A Gift for Abuelita: Celebrating the Day of the Dead/Un regalo para Abuelita: En celebración del Día de los Muertos*. Illustrated by Robert Chapman. Flagstaff, AZ: Rising Moon/Northland. 1998. Unpaged. ISBN 0-87358-688-3 PR, ME; Realistic Fiction.

Reviewed by *Terrell A. Young*

In this beautiful and touching bilingual story, Luenn and Chapman combine their talents to give children an understanding of the Mexican holiday, Day of the Dead. Together they give us a sense of a young girl's mourning and memories of a beloved grandmother. Rosita loves her grandmother, her abuela, and her grandmother loves her; they are inseparable. Together they garden, make tortillas, tell stories, and braid yarn. Abuelita always has time for Rosita. Then, Abuelita becomes sick and dies before the chiles can ripen. Rosita greatly misses her grandmother, and her grandfather helps Rosita plan a special Day of the Dead gift for Abuelita. In making the gift, she remembers all the things she loved about her grandmother: the smell of her dress, the

sound of her hands when making tortillas, her stories and songs, and the wonderful times they shared. Chapman's full-color, cast-paper illustrations enhance the text and draw readers along.

### Teaching suggestions

- Have students think of people they love and cherish, and then draw pictures to illustrate good times they have had together.
- Encourage students to discuss the kinds of gifts they would make to honor a loved one.
- Seek examples of ways that other cultures celebrate or honor the lives of departed family members.

### Related books

*Abuela* by Arthur Dorros. Dutton, 1991.  
*Day of the Dead: A Mexican-American celebration* by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith. Holiday House, 1994.  
*Day of the Dead* by Tony Johnston. Harcourt Brace, 1997.  
*Days of the Dead* by Katherine Lasky. Hyperion, 1994.  
*Pablo remembers: The fiesta of the Day of the Dead* by George Ancona. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1993.

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**MORIN, PAUL.** *Animal dreaming: An aboriginal dreamtime story.* San Diego, CA: Silver Whistle/Harcourt Brace, 1998. Unpaged. ISBN 0-15-200054-2 (trade) PR-UE; Picture Book/Traditional Literature.

Reviewed by *Rosemary Bamford*

Every culture has creation stories. For the Australian Aborigines, the beginnings occurred during Dreamtime. Paul Morin traveled to the Northern Territories of Australia to hear the Dreamtime stories from Bill Neidjie, a Gagadju elder. In *Animal Dreaming*, Morin tells of Mirri's first walkabout to the outback to learn these stories as part of his rites of passage.

Mirri, a young boy, travels with an elder, Gadurra, to the special places to learn the stories. At the cliff paintings Gadurra tells him to watch the paintings. Mirri sleeps and wakes to Gadurra's telling of the *Animal Dreaming*. As Mirri watches the paintings, they seem alive. He learns how the birds and other animals fought over the wetlands until it became dark. The kangaroo, the long-necked turtle, and the emu met and each had a living dream that

shaped the earth and its features. The animals were at peace. Elegant paintings grace the flowing prose, and a glossary is included. The book jacket shows the author at the actual rocks in Australia.

### Teaching suggestions

- Share the author's note presenting key information to understanding the events in *Animal Dreaming* prior to reading the picture book. Explore with the students how the author's note helped them understand Mirri's experiences and the creation tale.
- Examine with students other creation stories to compare the events and animals included. Use a Venn diagram or comparison chart to visually observe the similarities and differences.
- Discuss the passing on of traditions, songs, dances, music, and stories often done by the elders of a culture and/or a family. Read Christine Normandin's *Echoes of the Elders* to learn about another individual who shared his culture's heritage.

### Related books

*Balyet* by Patricia Wrightson. Macmillan, 1989.  
*The dog who walked with God* by Michael J. Rosen. Illustrated by Stan Fellows. Candlewick, 1998.  
*Echoes of the elders: The stories and paintings of Chief Lelooska.* Edited by Christine Normandin. DK Publishing, 1997.  
*In the beginning: Creation stories from around the world.* Told by Virginia Hamilton. Illustrated by Barry Moser. Harcourt Brace, 1988.  
*Magic words* by Edward Field. Illustrated by Stefano Vitale. Gulliver/Harcourt Brace, 1998.

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**NYE, NAOMI SHIHAB.** (Selector).

*The space between our footsteps: Poems and paintings from the Middle East.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998. 144 pages. ISBN 0-689-81233-7  
 UE, MS; Poetry.

Reviewed by *Joan T. Glazer*

The poems and paintings of over 100 artists and poets from 19 Middle Eastern countries are organized by theme in this anthology and invite thoughtful consideration. Both mood and subject matter are wide ranging, from the humor in Shlomit Cohen-Assif's

poem, "Class Pictures," in which two children are a couple one time and not the next and others are out with the measles when pictures are taken on different days, to the joy of Riham Ghassib's painting, "New Year's Eve," with its dancing and celebration, to the anguish in Ibtisam S. Barakat's poem, "The Home Within," seeing his parents only in his imagination after being stopped at the border because his permit had expired. The content invites reflection and the artistry builds emotional bonds with these writers and artists.

### Teaching suggestions

- Have students select, copy, and illustrate a poem that has particular meaning for them. Encourage them to share their reasons for selecting the poem.
- Have the students, working in groups, select several poems and paintings they particularly like, and then find out what they can about the author or artist. The book gives one to two sentences about each, including where he or she lives and works. Students might even contact them through the Internet or e-mail.

### Related books

*Habibi* by Naomi Shihab Nye. Simon & Schuster, 1997.

*O Jerusalem* by Jane Yolen. Scholastic/Blue Sky, 1996.

*This same sky: A collection of poems from around the world* by Naomi Shihab Nye. Four Winds, 1992.



**SAN SOUCI, ROBERT D.** *Fa Mulan: The story of a woman warrior.* Illustrated by Jean & Mou-Sien Tseng. New York: Hyperion, 1998. Unpaged. ISBN 0-7868-2287-2 (library); ISBN 0-7868-0346 (trade) PR-UE; Folklore.

Reviewed by *Patricia L. Scharer*

Fa Mulan's father was distraught; he was drafted into the Khan's army and was too old to serve. In a daring plan, she disguised herself as a man and substituted for her father as the only way to save his life. Her abilities in battle were extraordinary, and she rose to the rank of general due to her courage and skills in combat. Her great victory in the final battle of the 12-year war earned recognition from the Khan who honored her and granted her

request to return home accompanied by five companions. There, her companions were visibly shocked when Mulan transformed into a woman in a silk robe and brocade slippers. In his author's note, San Souci explains the source materials which supported his retelling of this Chinese legend and the source of Mulan's inspiration, Yueh, an exceptional swordswoman with the perfect blend of *yin* (female, passive) and *yang* (masculine, active). Jean and Mou-Sien Tseng explain in their illustrators' note that they designed their acrylic illustrations in the Chinese scroll tradition with warm colors and highlights of red. The scroll begins to open on the title page; fabric-like borders on each of the following pages support the image that the story continues, as the scroll is unrolled.

### Teaching suggestions

- Discuss the portrayal of women in *Fa Mulan* and many of the books listed below. What were the implications of their gender at that time? What are the implications for females today?
- Study the culture of the Tang Dynasty through the text and illustrations of *Fa Mulan*, the poetry of *Maples in the mist: Children's poems from the Tang Dynasty*, and other informational texts.
- Explore portions of the story that highlight the strength of the combination of Fa Mulan's feminine and masculine traits. How does this emphasis on *yin* and *yang* contribute to the development of her character?

### Related books

*Beautiful warrior: The legend of the nun's kung fu* by Emily Arnold McCully. Scholastic, 1998.

*Her stories: African American folktales, fairy tales, and true tales* by Virginia Hamilton. Scholastic, 1995.

*Maples in the mist: Children's poems from the Tang dynasty* by Minfong Ho. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1996.

*Ten queens: Portraits of women of power* by Milton Meltzer. Dutton, 1998.

### Other books by San Souci

*Cut from the same cloth: American women of myth, legend, and tall tale.* Putnam, 1993.

*Sootface: An Ojibwa Indian tale.*

Doubleday, 1994.

*Suky and the mermaid*. Four Winds Press, 1992.

*The samurai's daughter*. Dial, 1991.

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**SWANN, BRIAN.** *Touching the distance: Native American riddle - poems*.

Illustrated by Maria Rendon.

San Diego, CA: Harcourt, 1998. Unpaged.

ISBN 0-15-200804-7

All; Poetry.

Reviewed by *Amy A. McClure*

Puzzle and riddle poems are particularly effective in helping children see how poets use words to describe things in unusual ways; much talk about imagery and word crafting evolves as children try to puzzle out the meaning of a riddle. This book can be a wonderful catalyst for thoughtful response. The fifteen riddle poems, drawn from Native American sources, are graceful and subtle, challenging middle-grade children to think divergently. For example, consider the following: "There is a place / I know and love well. / It is cut into gullies / where much water fell" (grandmother's face); or "I can touch something / far off / in the distance" (eyesight). Rendon's striking, mixed-media illustrations employ wood carvings, stone, fabric, metal, egg shells, and other unusual materials to create almost a three-dimensional effect. They simultaneously depict the riddle while also providing hints to the answer.

### Teaching suggestions

- Read the book aloud and encourage children to solve the riddles.
- Compare with other riddle poems like those by Valerie Worth.
- Have children select an object, create a riddle for it, and present it to the class.

### Related books

*All the small poems* by Valerie Worth. Farrar Straus Giroux, 1987.

*Splinters: A book of very short poems* by Michael Harrison. Oxford University Press, 1989.

*The house with no door: African riddle poems* by Brian Swan. Harcourt Brace, 1998.

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**WYETH, SHARON DENNIS.** *Something beautiful*. Illustrated by Chris K. Soentpiet.

New York: Doubleday, 1998. Unpaged.

ISBN 0-385-32239-9

PR, ME; Picture Book.

Reviewed by *Diane E. Bushner*

Author Sharon Dennis Wyeth and illustrator Chris K. Soentpiet have created a powerful picture book about a child's search for something beautiful. As the young girl looks throughout her city neighborhood, she finds one blight after another. Yet she does not become discouraged, but tries to repair the cosmetic blights of her immediate neighborhood. Eventually, her mother returns home from work. The mother and daughter express their admiration for each other.

Readers feel the calming influence and positive universality of this book, inspired by the author's childhood memories. The protagonist's self-concept is soaring. The illustrator captures the young girl's radiance in his realistic illustrations. These illustrations evoke something beautiful in the mind of the reader.

### Teaching suggestions

- Encourage children to share with their classmates positive stories of people treating others with respect and courtesy.
- Compare stories of children living in the city. How is the city depicted and how are the children treated?

### Related books

*I have an aunt on Marlborough Street* by Kathryn Lasky. Illustrated by Susan Guevara. Macmillan, 1992.

*Jonathan and his mommy* by Irene Hector-Small. Illustrated by Michael Hays. Little Brown, 1992.

*More than anything else* by Marie Bradby. Illustrated by Chris K. Soentpiet. Orchard Books, 1995.

*My great-aunt Arizona* by Gloria Houston. Illustrated by Susan Condie Lamb. HarperCollins, 1992.

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### THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM AND THE DEVASTATION OF WAR

#### BUNTING, EVE. *So far from the sea.*

Illustrated by Chris Soentpiet  
New York: Clarion, 1998. Unpagged.  
ISBN 0-395-72095-8  
ME, UE; Picture Book.

Reviewed by *Amy A. McClure*

A modern day Japanese family visits their grandfather's grave at the World War II Manzanar War Relocation Camp. He died there, ostensibly of pneumonia, but also from shame over his imprisonment and loss of freedom. Seven-year-old Laura is angry at the past injustice. Her feelings are juxtaposed with her father's desire to move beyond "this thing that happened years ago ... a thing that cannot be changed." The contrast in perspectives is unusual for a book on this topic, making it a useful, compelling resource.

Chris Soentpiet uses color for the present day scenes and black-and-white for the past, providing stark contrasts between the experiences of the modern day family and their ancestors. The different colors also help guide young readers through the flashbacks. The realistic, photographic quality of his water-color illustrations effectively conveys the suffering endured by these people. Particularly poignant is the picture of the father as a child, wearing his Cub Scout uniform in a futile attempt to show his patriotism and avoid imprisonment.

#### Teaching suggestions

- Compare this book with *The Bracelet* by Yoshiko Uchida, which is also about a family who must leave their home for internment in a war relocation camp.
- Have children research the battle of Pearl Harbor to gain a sense of why the relocation camps were established.
- Suggest children interview family members to discover their experiences in World War II. Compare with those described in the book.

#### Related books

*The children of Topaz: The story of a Japanese-American internment camp* by Michael O. Tunnell and George W. Chilcoat. Holiday House, 1996.

*The bracelet* by Yoshiko Uchida. Putnam & Grosset, 1996.

*Journey to Topaz: A story of the Japanese-American evacuation* by Yoshiko Uchida. Creative Arts, 1985.

*Baseball saved us* by Ken Mochizuki. Lee & Low, 1995.

*A fence away from freedom: Japanese Americans and World War II* by Ellen Levine. G. P. Putnam's, 1995.

*I am an American: A true story of the Japanese internment* by Jerry Stanley. Crown, 1994.

*Voices from the camps: Internment of Japanese Americans* by Larry Brimmer. Frederick Watts, 1994.

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#### KHAN, RUKHSANA. *The roses in my carpets.*

Illustrated by Ronald Himler.  
New York: Stoddart Kids, 1998. 26pp.  
ISBN 0-7737-3092-3  
UE; Picture Book.

Reviewed by *Marcia Baghban*

A young boy who is a refugee from Afghanistan dreams that he is running from bombs. His mother and sister weigh him down till he is hit, but he manages to awake before he dies. In his daily life he finds relief by learning a trade. He weaves carpets and hopes that he can make a future for the three of them. One day his sister is hit by a truck and nearly loses her legs. When he learns that she will be fine, he dreams again but this time his mother and sister run with him and they find a space with roses, the size of a carpet, where the bombs cannot reach them.

#### Teaching suggestions

- Investigate how someone becomes a refugee. Which countries in the world have produced refugees? What does a sponsor do? How does someone with "refugee status" immigrate to the United States?
- Study traditional patterns of Persian carpets. What are the mathematical bases for the arrangements of items? Were the colors defined in the book accurate? Draw a realistic or imaginary carpet.

#### Related books

*Afghanistan* by Sharifah Enayat Ali. Marshall Cavendish, 1995.

*My freedom trip* by Frances Park and Ginger Park. Boyds Mills, 1998.

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**LOBEL, ANITA.** *No pretty pictures: A child of war.* New York: Greenwillow Books, 1998. 193 pages. ISBN 0-688-15935-4  
MS, YA; Autobiography.

Reviewed by *Terrell A. Young*

Noted illustrator, Anita Lobel, paints a haunting portrait of a young Jewish girl growing up in Nazi-occupied Poland. It is a portrait of hiding, hunger, shame, terror, and of surviving dehumanizing conditions. It is her self-portrait.

Lobel was only 5 years old when the Nazis came marching into Poland. She and her brother, dressed as a girl to hide his circumcision, spent the next several years in hiding. Later, they were discovered at a convent on Christmas and taken to prison. From prison, they went from one concentration camp to another until the war was finally over. Sweden became her home and her refuge as she and her brother recovered from tuberculosis before being reunited with their parents and finally emigrating to the U.S. This compelling memoir presents a child's perspective of the Holocaust. Stark, black and white photographs help convey the gravity of the children's plight to readers.

### Teaching suggestions

- Invite students to research the Pale of Settlement during the time of Catherine the Great to see how this policy later aided the Nazis during World War II.
- Have students locate and mark on a map the various places where Anita and her brother lived during their time in hiding and imprisonment.
- Compare and contrast the children's experiences in hiding and in the concentration camps.

### Related books

*Halinka* by Mirjam Pressler. Henry Holt, 1998.  
*Kinderlager: An oral history of young holocaust survivors.* Edited by Milton J. Nieuwsma. Holiday House, 1998.  
*Thanks to my mother* by Schoschana Rabinovici. Dial, 1998.

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**MYERS, WALTER DEAN.** *Amistad: A long road to freedom.* Illustrated by Paul Lee. New York: Dutton, 1998. 99 pages. ISBN 0-525-45970-7 (trade)  
ME-YA; Nonfiction.

Reviewed by *Rosemary Bamford*

In 1807, Congress passed a law making it illegal to bring in any new people as slaves. Myers presents the account of a group of Africans who were kidnapped in 1839 and rebelled while aboard the *Amistad*. In their attempt to sail the ship back to Africa, they were recaptured and put on trial. The *Amistad* case took three years to settle, but the Africans were eventually given their freedom and allowed to return to Africa. For the first time, America had to address its conflicting positions on slavery and recognize that these men who were not raised as slaves were leaders. This excellent nonfiction book is complete with maps, poetry of the period, time lines, primary sources, archival photographs, prologue, epilogue, further reading, bibliography, and a detailed index. It documents well the events and would be a valuable resource.

### Teaching suggestions

- Compare and contrast the information provided in Myers' *Amistad* and Chambers' *Amistad Rising*. Encourage the students to explore why Chambers' *Amistad* is catalogued as fiction while Myers' is considered non-fiction. This would be an excellent opportunity to refine students' definitions of fiction and non-fiction.
- Compare both books to the movie *Amistad*. What liberties does the filmmaker take in telling this story?
- Read aloud *African Beginnings* which offers readers a different view of Africa and its various civilizations. What connections do the students draw about how the Africans in the *Amistad* case challenged our thinking about Africans?
- Read Feelings' *The Middle Passage* which offers readers a very immediate sense of what it may have been like to be the Black cargo on a slave trading ship. Compare it to the Middle Passage description in Myers' *Amistad*. Create a Venn diagram of findings.

**Related books**

*African beginnings* by James Haskins & Kathleen Benson. Paintings by Floyd Cooper. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard/Morrow, 1998.  
*Amistad rising: A story of freedom* by Veronica Chambers. Illustrated by Paul Lee. Harcourt Brace, 1998.  
*The captive* by Joyce Hansen. Scholastic, 1994.  
*The middle passage: White ships, Black cargo* by Tom Feelings. Dial, 1995.



**PARK, FRANCES, & PARK, GINGER.** *My freedom trip: A child's escape from North Korea.*

Illustrated by Debra Reid Jenkins. Homestead, PA: Boyds Mills, 1998. Unpagged. ISBN 1-56397-468-1 (trade) PR, UE; Picture Book.

Reviewed by *Patricia L. Scharer*

Frances and Ginger Park created *My Freedom Trip: A Child's Escape from North Korea* based on stories of their mother's experiences as a child in North Korea. Because it was too dangerous to attempt an escape together, Soo's father and mother planned their family's freedom trip from North Korea to South Korea one at a time with the help of Mr. Han. Through the voice of a young girl, readers experience tension, intrigue, and danger as Soo's father escapes, aided by Mr. Han, who later returns for Soo. She leaves her mother to begin her freedom trip by train with Mr. Han. They quietly exit the train at night when they reach the bottom of a tall mountain they must climb to freedom protected by the darkness. Keeping in mind her mother's words to "Be brave, Soo!" the young girl walks with Mr. Han until dawn, closer and closer to the river and freedom. Suddenly, however, the two are greeted at gun-point by a soldier demanding they return to their homes. "After a long, silent spell, the soldier lowered his weapon. He looked away from me. I heard him whisper, 'Go quickly, child.'" Soo runs with all her might rushing toward her father on the other side of the river. Sadly, Soo never sees her mother again. The text on one side of each two-page spread begins with a Korean character; both are placed upon cream-colored parchment-like paper. Paintings by Debra Reid Jenkins in deep,

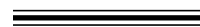
solemn colors cover all of one page and part of the adjoining page, powerfully illustrating this compelling tale of courage and hope.

**Teaching suggestions**

- Discuss the relationship between the Korean characters, text, and illustrations on each two-page spread. How do they influence the reader's experience?
- Explore the colors used to illustrate the story and discuss the paintings' contribution to the mood of each event.
- Consider the soldier's choices as he stopped Soo and Mr. Han. What may have been his motivation to release both of them?

**Related books**

*Grandfather's journey* by Allen Say. Houghton Mifflin, 1993.  
*Minty: A story of young Harriet Tubman* by Alan Schroeder. Dial, 1996.  
*Our journey from Tibet: based on a true story* by Laurie Dolphin. Dutton, 1997.  
*Passage to freedom: The Sugihara Story* by Ken Mochizuki. Lee & Low, 1997.  
*Peacebound trains* by Haemi Balgassi. Clarion, 1996.  
*When Jessie came across the sea* by Amy Hest. Candlewick, 1997.



**RINALDI, ANN.** *Cast two shadows.* San Diego, CA: Gulliver/Harcourt Brace, 1998. 281 pages. ISBN 0-15-200881-0 MS, YA; Historical Fiction.

Reviewed by *Diane E. Bushner*

Ann Rinaldi carefully researches the historical background of her books. This one occurs during the Revolutionary War and is set in British-occupied South Carolina. As the story opens, Caroline Whitaker's father has been put in jail for refusing to pledge allegiance to the king, the British soldiers have taken over the Whitaker house, and Caroline's friend is hung before her eyes. Caroline takes over the void in her household and receives permission from the British general to bring home her wounded brother. Her grandmother accompanies Caroline in the quest to find her brother. After she returns to the family home with her brother, the Whitaker family still provokes the British, who reside in their home. As the

Revolutionary War continues in the South, Caroline takes drastic measures to ensure that the British do not gain the house. This novel has a strong female protagonist.

### Teaching suggestions

- Contrast a story about the Revolutionary War that is set in a northern city with this one set in the South.
- Develop a newspaper from the perspective of the British to better keep the British apprised of what is happening.
- Focus on the female characters, and develop a feature analysis or a web for the female characters in this book.

### Related books

*Finishing Becca: A story about Peggy Shippen and Benedict Arnold* by Ann Rinaldi. Gulliver / Harcourt Brace, 1994.

*The winter of red snow: The revolutionary war diary of Abigail Jane Stewart* by Kristiana Gregory. Scholastic, 1996.

*Yankee doodle boy: A young soldier's adventures in the American revolution.* Told by himself. Edited by Joseph Plumb Martin and George F. Scheer. Holiday House, 1995.



**WALDMAN, NEIL.** *Masada.* New York: Morrow, 1998. 64 pages. ISBN 0-688-14481-0 UE-YA; Informational.

Reviewed by *Barbara A. Lehman*

The ancient fortress of Masada in Israel was the last stronghold of Jewish Zealots against the conquering Roman Empire after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. (A.D.). For three years, Zealots held off the Roman army until the fortress finally fell in 73 C.E. Rather than be captured, most of the resisters killed themselves, enhancing Masada's symbolism for Jews throughout the following centuries. For many years, its ruins, buried by an earthquake, were nearly relegated to legend. An account by historian Josephus Flavius in 75 C.E. was the only written record of Masada's saga, but archeologists' work since the rediscovery of the ruins in 1838 have confirmed Josephus's story. The author's black and white illustrations in acrylic and ink, maps of the region, and a time line support the narrative-like text. A glossary, bibliography, art notes, and index enhance its

informational quality.

### Teaching suggestions

- Construct a model of Masada fortress. Consult other books (see the book's bibliography) for additional information, if necessary.
- Find Masada on a map of modern Israel. If possible, locate pictures of the excavated Masada and its artifacts today (perhaps on the Internet). Develop a display about the fortress in the classroom.
- Write a script and dramatize the story of the siege of Masada.

### Related books

*Next year in Jerusalem: 3000 years of Jewish stories.* Retold by Howard Schwartz. Illustrated by Neil Waldman. Viking, 1996.

*The singing mountain* by Sonia Levitin. Simon and Schuster, 1998.

*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem* by Bernard Wolf. Dutton, 1998.

## MORAL DILEMMAS AND THE GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP

**AYERS, KATHERINE.** *North by night: The story of the underground railroad.*

New York: Delacorte, 1998. 176 pages.

ISBN 0-385-32564-9

UE, MS; Historical Fiction.

Reviewed by *Diane E. Bushner*

Author Katherine Ayres skillfully weaves this tale through the journal entries of 16-year-old Lucinda Spencer. The Ohio home of Lucy's family is a stop on the Underground Railroad for slaves seeking passage into Canada. Lucy is a strong female character who assumes increasing responsibility. At first she is a carefree 16-year-old with a boyfriend and a crush on another boy. Yet in the course of the story, Lucy, under the cover of caring for a sickly neighbor, assists in hiding a group of slaves. One of the runaway slaves dies in childbirth, yet Lucinda manages to save the baby. Lucy takes the child to Canada, but in so doing, she must sacrifice her family life in Ohio. From the novel, readers see the many sacrifices made by families along the Underground Railroad.

**Teaching suggestions**

- Compare this fictional account with a nonfiction version of the Underground Railroad story.
- Trace the development of Lucinda's character throughout the book. Pay attention to how she has changed.
- Act out scenes from the book using reader's theatre or improvisation.

**Related books**

*Dear America: A picture of freedom: The diary of Clotte, a slave girl* by Patricia C. McKissack. Scholastic, 1997.

*"Dear Friend": Thomas Garrett & William Still, collaborators on the underground railroad* by Judith Bentley. Cobblehill/Dutton, 1997.

*Get on board: The story of the underground railroad* by Jim Haskins. Scholastic, 1993.

*Jayhawker* by Patricia Beatty. Morrow, 1991.

*Steal away home* by Lois Ruby. Simon & Schuster, 1994.

*True north: A novel of the underground railroad* by Kathryn Lasky. Blue Sky/Scholastic, 1996.

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**BENNETT, JAMES W.** *Blue star rapture.*

New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998. 134pp. ISBN 0-689-81580-8

MS, YA; Realistic Fiction.

Reviewed by *Marcia Baghban*

T.J. Nucci is a decent high school basketball player, but his best friend, Tyron, is the one with a future at a Division One college. However, Tyron is slow academically, and T.J. decides to shepherd him through a basketball camp full of star players, coaches, and scouts. In the evenings, T.J. meets LuAnn, member of a cult-like camp, on a bridge separating the two groups. In contrast to Tyron who has no direction, LuAnn receives her total guidance from the Lord. T. J. confronts the politics of sports and religion while he questions his own motivations and learns to think for himself.

**Teaching suggestions**

- Brainstorm situations where friends have presented situations that were moral dilemmas. Each student writes one personal situation and the polished vignettes are

compiled into a class book, "Life Lessons."

- Research the basketball recruitment process. Make a Venn diagram contrasting college versus professional recruitment. Write a biographical sketch of a real or fictionalized "Most Valuable Player."

**Related books**

*Black hoops* by Patricia McKissack. Scholastic, 1999.

*Raven in a dove house* by Andrea Davis Pinkney. Harcourt, 1998.

*The skin I'm in* by Sharon G. Flake. Jump at the Sun/Hyperion, 1998.

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**FLAKE, SHARON G.** *The skin I'm in.*

New York: Jump at the Sun/Hyperion, 1998.

171 pages. ISBN 0-7868-0444-0

MS, YA; Realistic Fiction.

Reviewed by *Terrrell A. Young*

Maleeka Madison has problems fitting in with others at her school. Her hair is too nappy, her skin is too dark, her grades are too good, her clothes are too weird, and her teachers are too fond of her. She desperately tries to make friends and to be accepted by her peers. Her situation changes when she meets Miss Saunders, and the changes are not always for the better.

This is a compelling novel of a young girl's struggle with self-acceptance and acceptance by her peer group. Through her struggles and with her teacher's help, she learns "To look into the mirror and like what [she sees], even when it doesn't look like anybody else's idea of beauty" (pp. 19-20). Readers will find strong characters and an engaging plot in this book.

**Teaching suggestions**

- Invite students to find poems that relate to Maleeka at various parts of the book.
- Discuss physical characteristics and personality traits that may be valued by adults but not appreciated by peers. These can be compared with those that troubled Maleeka.
- Have students create a plot profile to graph Maleeka's emotional response to different incidents in the story.
- Note the changes in Maleeka from the beginning of the book to the end.

**Related books**

*Jazmin's notebook* by Nikki Grimes.  
Dial, 1998.

*Raven in a dove house* by Andrea Davis  
Pinkney. Gulliver, 1998.

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**KURTZ, JANE.** *The storyteller's beads.*  
San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace, 1998. 154  
pages. ISBN 0-15-201074-2  
UE, MS; Realistic Fiction.

Reviewed by *Joan T. Glazer*

Famine and warfare in Ethiopia in the 1980s force two young girls to travel from their homeland to Jerusalem. Sahay is a Kemant girl who begins the trip with her uncle; Rahel is a blind Jewish girl who begins her trip with her brother. They meet when both are hiding from attackers, and aid one another as they must travel on alone. At first suspicious and untrusting, they build a friendship that overcomes their initial prejudices. The stories that have given Rahel courage bring courage to them both. The book shows two clearly defined characters from different ethnic groups learning to accept and appreciate one another.

**Teaching suggestions**

- Have children take the role of either Sahay or Rahel and write what they might put in a letter to a relative left at home.
- Construct a class necklace of "storyteller's beads," with each child putting the name of a story he or she thinks gives courage or encouragement on one of the beads.

**Related books**

*Fire on the mountain* by Jane Kurtz. Illustrated by E.B. Lewis. Simon & Schuster, 1994.

*One day we had to run* by Sybella Wilkes.  
Millbrook, 1995.

*Shadow spinner* by Susan Fletcher.  
Atheneum, 1998.

*When I left my village* by Maxine Rose Schur.  
Dial, 1996.

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**WOODSON, JACQUELINE.** *if you come softly.* New York: G.P. Putnam's, 1998. 181pp.  
ISBN 0-399-23112-9  
YA; Realistic Fiction.

Reviewed by *Marcia Baghban*

Jeremiah feels good in his own Brooklyn neighborhood but now he is going to a fancy prep school in Manhattan. African American teenage boys don't exactly fit in, even when their parents are famous filmmakers and novelists like Jeremiah's. The first week of school he meets Ellie, a white Jewish girl. Their eyes lock and they begin to experience new feelings and first love. Together they build a relationship private and apart from the rest of the world, but the rest of the world doesn't leave them alone.

**Teaching suggestions**

- Keep a response log while reading this book. Relate personal experiences to the experiences and feelings expressed in this book.
- Write a different ending to this book. Describe what happens to each character with your ending.

**Related book**

*Lives of our own* by Lorri Hewett.  
Dutton, 1998.

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**ZEMSER, AMY BRONWEN.** *Beyond the mango tree.* New York: Greenwillow, 1998.  
166 pages. ISBN 0-688-16005-0  
MS, YA; Realistic fiction.

Reviewed by *Barbara A. Lehman*

Sarina, an only child whose parents have moved her family from Boston, Massachusetts, to Liberia, leads a very sheltered life. Her diabetic mother, who acts irrationally and abusively when she forgets to take insulin, fears losing Sarina, teaches her at home, allows no friendships with other children, and even ties her to a mango tree in their yard for hours at a time. One day as Sarina sits bound to the tree, a Liberian boy, Boima, cuts her free, and a friendship begins between them. Boima introduces Sarina to the world beyond the mango tree—the city and ocean she is never allowed to explore and the stories and customs of his culture. However, food begins to disappear from Sarina's house, and she discovers some of the missing items at Boima's house when she visits his family one day. Feeling betrayed, Sarina ends her friendship with Boima until her housekeeper, Te Te, helps Sarina understand that "whole world get more color than

black an' white" (p. 141)—that Boima's hunger was more important than taking the food. Complex themes of cultural privilege and inequality are explored, without easy answers provided. The author, who lived in Liberia for three years, authentically captures the Liberian dialect.

### Teaching suggestions

- Have students research the country of Liberia. What is its history, geography, culture? How does this information help readers better understand this book?
- Create a comparison chart between the characters and lives of Sarina and Boima. Who was "richer" and "poorer"?
- Have students discuss the meaning and

debate the truth of Te Te's words, "Whole world get more color than black an' white."

- Have students find an issue in their own lives that relates to the social and cultural disparity between Sarina and Boima. As individuals or as a class, plan and carry out a course of action (related to the insights Sarina gains) to deal with this issue.

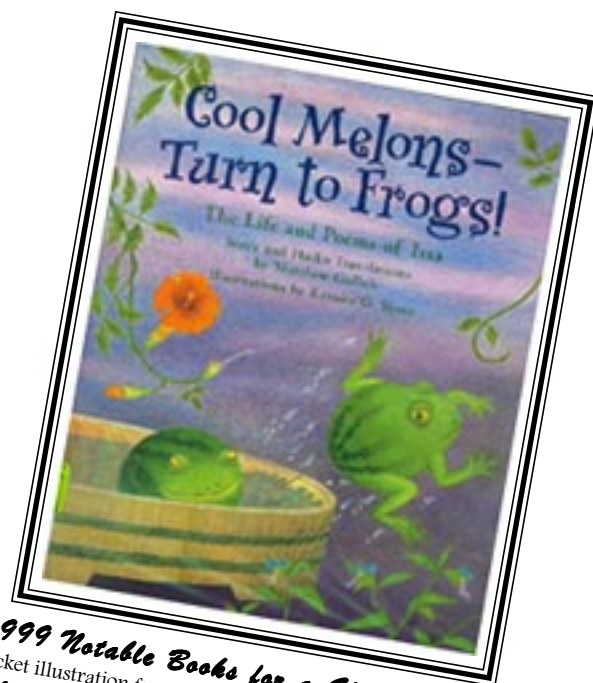
### Related books

*Dangerous skies* by Suzanne Fisher Staples. Farrar Straus Giroux, 1996.

*Where you belong* by Mary Ann McGuigan. Atheneum, 1997.

*Waiting for the rain* by Sheila Gordon. Orchard, 1987.

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