

A Cool Charm?

LINDA MARSHALL

Olive A dog/un chien, Philip Stratford. Tundra Books, 1976. 24 pp. \$.69 paper.

Pouf A moth/une mite, Peter Angeles. Illustrated by Araneus. Tundra Books, 1976. 24 pp. \$.69 paper.

Ella An elephant/un elephant, Jan Andrews. Illustrated by Patricia Bonn. Tundra Books, 1976. 24 pp. \$.69 paper.

Bufo A toad/un crapaud, Marla Stevenson. Tundra Books, 1976. 24 pp. \$.69 paper.

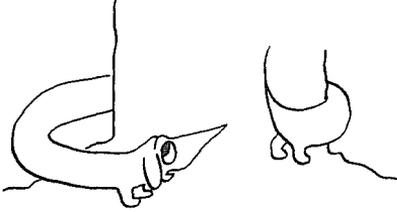
With one exception, Tundra's illustrated English/French animal stories strike me as being somewhat cool in their appeal to young sensibilities. Philip Stratford's *a dog/un chien* makes us care about the tribulations of Olive, a dachshund, and rejoice in her concluding (and fruitful) embrace of Oliver; but the other animals in the series—a moth, an elephant, a toad—conduct their half-humanized lives calmly, interrupted only by a fortuitous marshmallow, a rainshower, or mothball.

Ella the elephant shows concern for her family by providing them with lily-pads against the wet, but she and her canopied pals are ultimately viewed by the cold eye of frog and fish ("Weird!"). The moth, Pouf, lives dangerously, attracted to candles, sickened by mothballs—but still she and her friends *reviennent quand meme*, saucy and indestructible. Composedly awaiting another marshmallow, Bufo the toad sits, looks, eats bugs. Only weiner-shaped Olive lives a full life of anxiety and joy; the rest persist in unnerving tranquillity.

It would be hard if children could not delight in books which are sure to entice parents. Each of the soft, neatly stitched book costs a modest \$.69, a price which considerably increases their attractiveness. The line-drawings, livened by one bright colour in each booklet, are deft and amusing, though Ella suffers most from miniaturization. The green-spotted, leggy, goggle-eyed Bufo, said to be a toad, looks suspiciously like a frog, except when he momentarily assumes the contours of the ingested marshmallow. Olive and Pouf, reduced to their essentials, are most successfully realized: Olive's elongation and Pouf's yellow flight path permit ingenious variations on a theme.

One day, she met herself

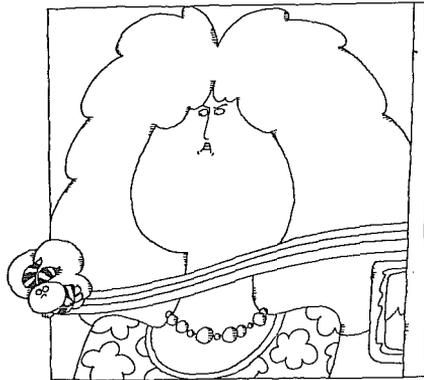
Un jour, elle se rencontre



going around a tree.

autour d'un arbre.

Your mother doesn't. When she sees one she says
"Pouf! "



Ta mère ne les aime pas. Elle dit "Pouf! " quand elle voit une mite.

NOTE: PICTURES AND TEXT
HAVE BEEN REDUCED
40%.

Besides making the books available to both anglo- and francophones, the bilingual texts will no doubt satisfy the desires of elders to make the new generation less wary of the other official tongue. Like everything edible that comes wrapped, tinned or bottled, these tasty little books bravely speak two languages.

Linda Marshall teaches Medieval and Romantic Literature at the University of Guelph.