

THE LURE OF MEMORIES

A morning to polish and keep. Julie Lawson. Illus. Sheena Lott. Red Deer College Press, 1992. Unpag., \$14.95. ISBN 0-88995-082-2.

A morning to polish and keep is a gentle, comforting book about childhood memories and good family times. On the last day of the summer holidays, Amy and her family get up before dawn to go fishing. A knowledgeable and experienced fisherperson, Amy pores over her choice of lures—"Lead weights, spinners, stainless steel dodgers and leathery blue bucktail flies"—and finally settles on her favourite: "The Tom Mack spoon—the lure that flashed silver in the sun." In the cool dark of early dawn, the family warm themselves with cinnamon buns and hot chocolate. And in the quiet morning they wait for the sun to rise and the fish to start biting. Within moments, Amy catches a fish, but in the excitement that follows, she loses not only the fish but also her fishing rod. Her disappointment is devastating, but with a combination of her parents' caring attention, and her own inner strength, she overcomes her sadness and the day ends with joyous and unexpected results.

In memory, our senses come to life, and Lawson's concentration on sensuous experience heightens the reader's identification with this story. When the family leave the cabin in the early morning, all of our senses are called to participate: "we crunched along the beach, over pebbles, barnacles and broken shells. Slippery seaweed squished beneath our feet. My nose wrinkled with the clammy reek of low tide."

Sheena Lott's competent watercolour illustrations echo the tone of the text—from the quiet, cool, still-blue morning, to the sudden flash of warm sunrise hues and the sun's rays reaching deep down warming the sea and the fish below. (I felt some discomfort seeing the family moving about in the open boat without wearing life-jackets, but after all, this is a memory from the 1950s when few of us knew any better!)

Shawn Steffler is an artist/illustrator who lives in Corner Brook, Newfoundland. Her latest book, *Get me another one!* by Robert Munsch, is about fishing in the other ocean.