to do his own writing, and finally became a master of the economical text, Tibo first produced *Annabel Lee* an astonishing accompaniment to Poe's poetry; now he follows with a more formidable book, *Simon and the snowflakes*.

Tibo again uses the airbrush to create delicate nuances of light and shade. He uses a small horizontal format and frames simply his left and right pages. Left-hand pages are mainly white and contain the brief bold text along with (by wonderful inspiration) a little rectangular box cut from the actual artwork on the full page facing picture. The reader detective can spend happy minutes identifying the very snowflake, the very tree in the full page which has been abstracted to the page of the text. Tibo has hereby invented a way of making readers look very closely. His text is as subtle as his painting which is very subtle indeed.

Some books can as well or better be illustrated by a second person, but there may be in the world of picture books a kind of efferent-aesthetic continuum, to use terms established by Louise Rosenblatt in *The reader, the text, the poem*, 1978. Perhaps the closer the book aspires to art the greater the likelihood that its creator is one person. It may be that the best marriages between text and visuals in picture books are the secret ones, so secure in their relationships that there is no need to broadcast them to the world.

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THE GHOSTLY VOICES OF THE STORYTELLER

The ghost of Peppermint Flats and other stories. Ted Stone. Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989. 112 pp., $11.95 paper. ISBN 0-88833-229-8.

In Ted Stone's ghost stories a casual and conversational narrative voice invites the reader to establish an intimate relationship with the storyteller. The first sentence of the first story – "It was me and Melvin Michaels who did it" (1) – involves the young reader, who feels that he or she is entering the narrator's very personal and private world. The most successful of the fourteen stories in this collection are the ten told from the child's point of view, often by a first-person retrospective narrator. The impulsive shedding of burdens and secrets offers the reader sudden and powerful moments of recognition.

The supernatural realm depicted in *The ghost of Peppermint Flats and other stories* is often a world more accessible to children than adults. Fear, imagination and the will to believe lead to experiences from which the more skeptical adult is excluded. Adults traditionally deny "such things as ghosts" (22). But they can be affected despite resistance, and can be in awe of supernatural experience, indirectly and unknowingly endorsing the power and value of a

ghostly realm, as does Sarah's father in the closing sentence of "Buffalo bones": "You've found the last buffalo bones anybody will ever find in this valley" (69). The narrator and young reader experience a secretive superiority over rational parents and teachers – a superiority based on the vision, emotion and knowledge derived from the contact with the supernatural.

Contemporary settings and familiar surroundings are here seen as less than ideal – "Even Tom Sawyer would have had trouble in Maple Valley" (11) – but there is still opportunity for superstition, treasure hunting, daring and graveyards. Ted Stone has noted in his introduction to *13 Canadian ghost stories* (1988) that although Canada might seem an "inhospitable place for ghosts," tales of spirits and hauntings "are told around campfires from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island" (vii). Stone's Canadian settings in several selections in *The ghost of Peppermint Flats and other stories*, particularly winter and prairie scenes, evoke the elemental power traditionally associated with these vast landscapes. The boundless and somewhat bleak Canadian settings are certainly the most distinct and memorable in this collection.

Minor weaknesses in the book include humour that fails to amuse, the tiresome repetition of certain motifs (headless ghosts), and some superficial plots. "Ghosts around the campfire" is a particularly weak story which fails because of its predictability. The four stories not told from the child's point of view interrupt the unity of the work. "Agnes and Albert Applebee," "The ghost on Rattlesnake Hill," "The ghost of Plum Valley," and "Luke Curtis finds a cure" suddenly remove the reader's sympathy and involvement with the child. The magical moments of recognition are lost, and the reader is disappointed.

Ted Stone has claimed that "You don't have to be interested in the occult or the macabre to fall under the power of a good ghost story" (*13 Canadian ghost stories*, viii). In *The ghost of Peppermint Flats and other stories* apparently supernatural events may have plausible explanations, such as daydreaming, hallucinations, nightmares, and even mundane misunderstandings. In other stories, plausible explanations are complicated by a vision of the occult. Different explanations for strange events elicit a number of responses: fear, wonder and laughter. The supernatural world manifests itself in places ranging from the conventional haunted house to a computer, preventing the comfort and complacency of prediction. The reader of this collection of short stories will indeed "fall under the power" of the ghost story, captivated not by the occult, but by a compelling narrative voice.

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