

Canadian publishing scene today.

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*Robin Baird Lewis, an established children's book illustrator (Red is Best, et al.), inoculates herself regularly with heavy doses of P.G. Wodehouse and Hunter S. Thompson.*

### Learning to Swim

*Stella, Star of the Sea.* Marie Louise Gay. Groundwood/Douglas and McIntyre, 1999. 32 pp. \$15.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88899-337-4.

This beautiful book is discovered, like one perfect shell, with a shock of pleasure. Deceptively simple prose and sly humour spin a timeless tale of siblings at the seashore. Young or old, readers have all been a Stella trying to share something loved with someone loved; or a Sam, overwhelmed by the world's complexity.

The text's comforting message is both concrete and metaphorical. Stella says star(fish) fell from the sky; when Sam points out they might have drowned, Stella explains "they learned to swim." Sam will follow suit, in the water and in life.

Whimsical illustrations employ a horizon line which suggests the immensity of the world viewed from a child's perspective. Shimmering colours hold the promise of a perfect summer's day.

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*Troon Harrison teaches creative writing and is the author of eight picture books and a YA novel.*

### Harper Winslow's Inspirational Writing

*A Fly Named Alfred.* Don Trembath. Orca, 1997. 144 pp. \$7.95 paper. ISBN 1-55143-083-5. *A Beautiful Place on Yonge Street.* Don Trembath. Orca, 1998. 192 pp. \$7.95 paper. ISBN 1-55143-121-1.

"Learn from me. Let my story inspire you": A pompous young writer speaks these words in Don Trembath's newest novel, *A Beautiful Place on Yonge Street*.