

tantly fantastic side-by-side with scientific facts, Porter simultaneously sabotages our ability to accept the fantastic *and* lessens the credibility of the scientific facts when they do occur. The factual and the fantastic are jumbled together indiscriminately, negating the book's educational potential. The reader does not know whether or not to believe that different breeds of whales actually interact together (if true, this would be a very interesting and educational bit of information), or if pods of whales actually do destroy kelp beds.

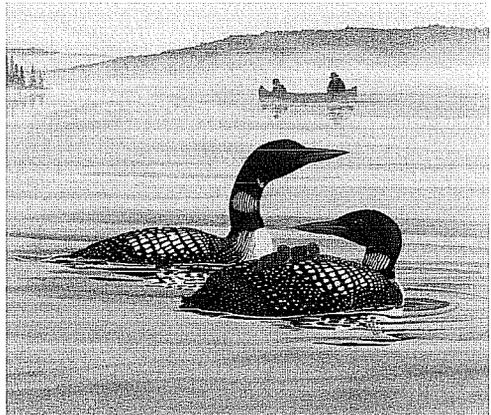
And finally, there is the clichéd ending. Apparently Sam, the Giant Squid with homicidal tendencies is just misunderstood, upset that his ocean garden was razed in the past by whales. Nancy the Narwhal saves the day by transforming Sam into a laughing squid with a touch of her horn. Everyone immediately becomes friends and the whales tritely assure Sam that things have changed and that they now know "that it is important to keep the garden healthy and clean." Thus conflict is resolved with the wave of a wand, I mean horn. This is one deep-sea story that could use a little more depth.

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Seasons of Passage

Morning on the Lake. Jan Bourdeau Waboose. Illus. Karen Reczuch. Kids Can, 1997. Unpag. \$15.95 cloth. ISBN 1-55074-373-2. *A Winter's Tale.* Ian Wallace. Illus. author. Douglas and McIntyre/Groundwood, 1997. Unpag. \$15.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88899-286-6.

Led on journeys by a grandfather and a father, the main characters in *Morning on the Lake* and *A Winter's Tale* experience a close communion with the natural world.



*Illustration from Morning
on the Lake*



Illustration from
A Winter's Tale

Summer and winter are the backdrops for these “rites of passage,” inspired by the relationships between the children and the animals in the seasonal landscapes.

Jan Bourdeau Waboose, in *Morning on the Lake*, shares with the reader her Ojibway culture and her extensive and detailed observations of the summer in northern Ontario. Noshen, the young boy, follows and respects his grandfather, Mishomis, who provides the spiritual wisdom and practical knowledge upon which the journey depends. Rather than remaining observers of an external natural world, Mishomis and Noshen actually function as part of that world as exemplified in their contact with the loons, the eagle and the wolves, and as emphasized in Mishomis’s final celebration of his grandson as one whom “the wolves have welcomed” because he “too [is] a night animal in these woods.” The journey or initiation involves a progression from morning to night, during which the encounters with the animals become progressively more startling and challenging. The challenge of assuming silence and patience, associated with the episode with the loons, escalates to the mastery of fear in the encounter with the eagle and culminates in the defeat of terror in the late night meeting with the wolves.

Karen Reczuch’s illustrations show a discerning sensitivity for the details of the natural world and the intricacies of human expressions, effectively connecting emotional responses with the physical place. Noshen, as narrator, proclaims in each of the three sections or stories that the particular time (morning, noon or night) being depicted “is his [Mishomis’s] favorite time, and so it is mine.” The apparent contradiction of this repeated assertion at each juncture emphasizes the circular and spiral structure of this collection of three stories, in which the harmony of human and natural relationships is not simply repeated, but becomes more profound with each telling.

Ian Wallace’s *A Winter’s Tale*, like *Morning on the Lake*, effectively describes and illustrates the season and animals affecting the child, but is less thematically and

structurally ambitious than Waboose's book and is appropriate for slightly younger readers (four to seven). Abigail's winter camping trip with her father and brother leads to her adventure with a fawn trapped by fishing line wrapped around its legs. Abigail plays an heroic role in setting the fawn free, her intervention partially making up for the human carelessness which trapped the fawn in the first place. An urban visitor to the spectacular winter bush, Abigail takes pictures to show to her mother who stayed behind in the city. Wallace emphasizes the importance of relating this unique experience to those not fortunate enough to witness it, whereas Waboose highlights the solitude and privacy of Noshen's experiences. Similarly, the noise of Abigail and her brother Eugene contrasts with the silence of Noshen, while the separation of Wallace's children from the natural world and the animals, as seen in the spectacular illustration of the deer leaping to freedom, contrasts with the union and harmony conveyed in Waboose's book. Less reverent than Noshen, Abigail enthusiastically celebrates her exposure to unusual scenes which will not come her way again for some time.

For the urban child, the journey is an adventure to be photographed and talked about as an unusual foray into a harsh, but beautiful landscape and season. For the rural Ojibway child, the journey is an initiation into a landscape much closer to home. Both children undergo a profound change, reaping the benefits of an older generation determined to pass on skills and values associated with the natural world. The reader reaps the benefits as well, perhaps responding more powerfully to Noshen's awe and reverence than to Abigail's excitement and curiosity, but recognizing the importance of the passage of the seasons and of the passage of the child through these seasons.

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A Boy's Hands and Men's Stones

The Stoneboat. Teddy Jam. Illus. Ange Zhang. Groundwood/Douglas & McIntyre, 1999. Unpag. \$15.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88899-368-4.

The Stoneboat, by the writer/illustrator team of Teddy Jam and Ange Zhang, skillfully evokes the depths of a boy's fears, his courageous desire to see justice enacted, and his simple, instinctive way of knowing people share a common need for another person's hand — to lift, to help, to share, and ultimately, to hold while walking life's stony path.

Jam's use of concrete images to evoke theme is matched by Zhang's use of light and shadow, close-ups, and distortion to create focus. For example, Jam uses tools such as a pitchfork, a stoneboat, and a fishing rod to show how Mr. Richard — a large, wealthy, rural loanshark — and the narrator — a skinny, poor, vulnerable boy — are first tenuously and, finally, lastingly connected by their shared experience. When Mr. Richard falls into fast-moving water while spearfishing, he holds