

Mini-Reviews

The Lighthouse Dog. Betty Waterton. Illus. Dean Griffiths. Orca, 1997. Unpag. \$15.95 cloth. ISBN 1-55-073-8.

The title *The Lighthouse Dog* immediately suggests a story of a dog's heroic potential. Molly's misadventures, typical for any energetic puppy, are only compounded by her size. Betty Waterton uses the formula of initial nuisance turned eventual favourite to celebrate heroes who come in all shapes and sizes. It is a tired plot, and one that depends heavily on the book's illustrations to bring life to an otherwise predictable storyline. Still, children are usually sympathetic to tales about underdogs who come through in the end. And they may be able to see humour in some lines: "Molly ate two dishpans full of dog crumbs. Then she took Corky the cat off the chesterfield and placed him on the piano. After that, she stretched out on the chesterfield herself, and went to sleep."

Dean Griffiths's illustrations emphasize Molly's physical size. Positioned from a wide variety of perspectives, they help reiterate the author's primary message: there is more than one way to see the world and its participants, including a bumptious dog like Molly. Yes, her physical size is initially cumbersome, but it is also what enables her to function best as a rescue dog, capable of saving drowning sailors. Like Ann Blades' dog in *Mary of Mile 18*, Molly earns her keep by the story's conclusion.

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Share the Sky. Ting-xing Ye. Illus. Suzane Langlois. Annick, 1999. Unpag. \$17.95 lib. bdg., \$7.95 paper. ISBN 1-55037-579-2, ISBN 1-55037-578-4.

Share the Sky is a very sweet story about a Chinese girl, Fei-fei, who loves kites. One day a letter arrives from her parents asking her to join them in North America. Kites have been a symbol for a lack of roots and for "drifting" in Chinese literature, in the sense that Fei-fei's grandfather says of her father in the story, "Fei-fei, your father has been like a kite, blown up here and down there." Ye, however, has given a new and positive meaning to kites in *Share the Sky*. Fei-fei (the name means flying), like the colourful kites, flies high and freely across boundaries and cultures. All her doubts and worries are gone soon after she comes to the new land; to her relief, sky can be shared.

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