

in traditional Indian clothing, and so on. May Apple even conveniently recalls passages from history books! Because the action of the novel, particularly during the adventure in the past, lacks a clear sense of direction, and because few of the characters are vividly developed, the didactic intent of the many references to social and political history is very obvious. In Smucker's *Underground to Canada* such passages were much more effectively concealed by the urgency of the story itself.

White mist has no magic, although it does have an honest concern for important social problems and the teenagers who are about to inherit them. What might be magical in this novel is simply improbable, and the transition from present to past is confused by too many pretexts and devices. Without some real sense of magic, fantasy cannot succeed; and without much artistry, fantasy does not easily cohabit with social realism. More artistry is needed in order to turn the diligent research and social consciousness of this novel into absorbing fiction.

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A DELIGHTFUL ANTHOLOGY

Prairie jungle: songs, poems and stories for children, Wenda McArthur & Geoffrey Ursell. Illus. Dennis Nokony. Thunder Creek Publishers, 1985. 105 pp. \$7.95 paper. ISBN 0-919926-45-2.

There are a lot of animals in the *Prairie jungle* that you wouldn't find anywhere outside the pages of a wonderful children's story book. Written especially for children in the 6-12 age group, *Prairie jungle: songs, poems and stories for children* can be enjoyed by children as young as three if they have a parent available who is willing to read and hum to them. I discovered this on a rainy autumn day, when, lacking any of the prescribed 6-12 year olds, I found my three and a half year old a very willing test subject.

Prairie jungle is a well-rounded volume consisting of fifteen songs, twenty-five poems and ten short stories. Each of the songs is accompanied by music for piano or guitar or banjo, for that matter. For those of us who are musically inclined, the melodies are simple and straightforward. For the tone deaf, the words are often funny enough on their own. You can make up your own simple melody or use an old standby, such as "Yankee Doo-

dle". When my test subject and I tried this last suggestion, the results were often hilarious, occasionally alarming, but rarely dull.

The twenty-five poems range in sentiment from Lois Simmie's "Trip to the zoo" which is bound to be appreciated by any little girl who has been forced to wear a "sensible" outfit (which she hated) to the simple yet eloquent "Elevators" by Rhonda Hunter or "Prairie enchantment" by Catherine M. Buckaway. "Suzy saw a lion" and several of the other poems are reminiscent of Dennis Lee's nonsense type rhymes. The see-saw rhythm and the silly lyrics will delight readers of all ages. Visually interesting, Jon White's "Coyotes" is nearly impossible to read. However, a compensation for young readers is the opportunity to pretend to be a coyote and do some howling. I didn't care for the sentiments expressed in Connie Kaldor's poem "Belly button." Singing the praises of one's belly button strikes me as ridiculous, but maybe if you are seven years old, you can appreciate this one.

The ten short stories included in the volume are first-rate. I particularly enjoyed "Hallowe'en cackles" and "Vincent and the magic rock". Many of the stories and poems in the *Prairie jungle* centre around the prairie provinces just as the title might suggest. There are many references to the city of Saskatoon, the prairie wind and even "a slough (that) gives back a crow's reflection".

Although the poems and stories are a pleasure to read, the songs are weak by comparison. It would be nice to have them on a record or tape, especially for those who lack the instruments/talent to bring them to life. Dennis Nokony's cartoon-like illustrations are always appropriate and are an invitation to the pre-school set to get out their crayons and coloring pencils. Altogether, *Prairie jungle* is a delightful and amusing anthology.

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UN FASCICULE SUR LES ANCIENS AMÉRINDIENS

Ekahotan, la semeuse de maïs. Les Amérindiens des forêts de l'Est, James Cass. Traduction Serge-André Crête. Saint-Laurent, Etudes Vivantes, 1983. 24 pp. 4,75\$ broché. ISBN 2-7607-0186-7.

Saviez-vous que certains Amérindiens des forêts de l'Est portaient des