

costs of commercial and technological overproduction and shame at human interruption of that bounty through hunting and killing. But I had forgotten how much respect and importance Mowat also gives children's writing and activism.

Still, as Mowat suggests in his foreword, let's not forget the fun. To quote my seven-year-old expert consultant, "I liked it. It was funny, especially the part ["The Coming of Mutt"] where the boy says 'would you want to buy a duck?'" Arf!

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Permission to Celebrate: Embracing Puberty for Girls

Sweet Secrets: Stories of Menstruation. Kathleen O'Grady and Paula Wansbrough. Second Story, 1997. 231 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN: 0-929005-33-3.

Sweet Secrets: Stories of Menstruation is a comprehensive tapestry of facts, short stories, and personal anecdotes that explores what is all too often a source of embarrassment or shame. This unique book celebrates the passage to womanhood while answering many of the questions teenage girls and young women have about their changing bodies.

In the empowering preface, Kathleen O'Grady and Paula Wansbrough briefly outline what each section in the book offers, and encourage their readers to start with a topic of interest. The text begins with a focus on facts, while touching on the cultural and social baggage associated with puberty and the female experience. A variety of personal vignettes and discussions work well at relieving the sometimes too earnest tone in the book's early narrative.

O'Grady and Wansbrough have compiled a great deal of practical information. Employing frank and non-judgmental language, they deconstruct myths and explore a wide range of issues surrounding female sexuality. Many of the scenarios and examples used are excellent, and are certain to spark discussion.

This is not a book for squeamish adults, however. "Thirteen and Normal," a compelling story by Carmen Rodriguez, includes a young girl's first view of sexually explicit material and a description of fellatio. Within the context of the story, it works quite well, but its inclusion may limit young readers' access to the book.

Nonetheless, O'Grady and Wansbrough have produced a rich resource of topical information that would easily serve as an addition to family health and sex education studies. The authors clearly wish to encourage dialogue, and they have integrated environmental, multicultural, social and health perspectives throughout the text. Their matter-of-fact approach is liberating, especially for those who may have difficulties getting straight answers to simple questions. Practical advice is prefaced with a heading, and is often boxed and highlighted within the text. This invites the reader to simply skim the book, and then stop and read when something attracts her attention.

Several of the stories and memoirs are exceptional. Mary Helen Stefaniak's "Outrunning Gravity" is a bittersweet coming-of-age tale, attaining its freshness when told from a father's perspective. "Blood," by Jane Eaton Hamilton, uses contemporary teen language and attitudes to effectively explore the ambivalent territory of curiosity and disgust. While the literary merits of the stories in *Sweet Secrets* vary in strength, each conveys important truths about women's complex relationships with their bodies.

The book finishes with an excellent glossary that includes medical or "real" words and several corresponding slang terms. The book is refreshing in its approach to anatomical and sexual considerations, though it is surprising that it contains no references to homosexuality. In every other respect, *Sweet Secrets: Stories of Menstruation* is an inclusive and affirming resource that will engage, enlighten, and inform its readers.

Ruth E. Walker's story, "Traditions," won Canadian Living's 1996 short fiction award. The mother of four children and a former foster parent, she is completing an English/Cultural Studies degree through Trent University.

Exploring Nature: Jaws, Paws and Claws

What's a Zoo Do? Jonathan Webb. Key Porter Kids, 1995. 90 pp. \$18.95 paper. ISBN 1-55013-609-7 (cloth), 1-55013-664-X (paper). *By the Seashore.* Tessa Paul. Crabtree, 1997. 32 pp. ISBN 0-86505-587-4 (RLB), 0-86505-595-5 (paper). *By Lakes and Rivers.* Tessa Paul. Crabtree, 1997. 32 pp. ISBN 0-86505-586-6 (RLB), 0-86505-594-7 (paper). *In Woods and Forests.* Tessa Paul. Crabtree, 1997. 32 pp. ISBN 0-86505-584-X (RLB), 0-86505-592-0 (paper). *In Fields and Meadows.* Tessa Paul. Crabtree, 1997. 32 pp. ISBN 0-86505-585-8 (RLB), 0-86505-593-9 (paper).

Author Jonathan Webb, in *What's a Zoo Do?* presents an excellent introduction to all aspects of the zoo, from its early beginnings as a playground for kings to its current role in the conservation and preservation of endangered