

might find Montgomery's flowery language unusual in these days of terse prose. Some might find many of her descriptions excessive. Take her account of Magdalen Crawford in "A strayed allegiance": "The heavy masses of her hair, a shining auburn dashed with golden foam, were coiled in a rich, glossy knot at the back of the classically modelled head and rippled back from a low brow whose waxen fairness even the breezes of the ocean had spared."

This latest collection of L.M. Montgomery's stories, which are being carefully selected and edited by Rea Wilmshurst, are a useful addition to the work available by this very special Canadian writer. The sixteen tales are a wonderful, although of course romanticized, celebration of Prince Edward Island people and the seascape which she loved so much.

**Susan Inman** is a Registered Dance Therapist, teaches creative dance, tells stories, and is the mother of two children.

## CREATIVE WRITING IN THE CLASSROOM

**Write now! The right way to write a story.** Karleen Bradford. Scholastic-TAB Publications, 1988. 64pp., \$3.95 paper. ISBN 0-590-73175-0.

"Write a short story. For next Monday."

For many children, Karleen Bradford's book opens almost like a horror story. This assignment, to write a story given by an imaginary teacher, fills them with dread. Yet Bradford goes on to reassure her young readers that "it's *not* all that hard" and leads them step-by-step through the writing process. Beginning with how and where to find ideas, she shows how to create conflict, develop characters, set the scene and finally end the story. She also discusses the whys and why nots of outlining and suggests ways to overcome the curse of all writers: writer's block.

*Write now!* is written in an easy-to-read, conversational style. Bradford illustrates each step in the writing process, clearly and concretely, by developing several sample plots. These story lines are simple, realistic, sometimes funny, and always meaningful to the reader (for example, what if you have a fight with your best friend, or you get stuck babysitting an absolutely rotten kid?) Bradford leaves no doubt that stories can be written from the everyday happenings in the reader's life.

Bradford transforms an overwhelming task to a manageable, if not simple, exercise, and she does it with understanding and humour. Most importantly, she speaks to her readers as fellow-writers. She uses numerous examples from

her own work, discussing problems she had encountered ["Once, with another book, I had a terrible time with the first chapter . . ." (31)] and sharing secrets she has discovered ["Another trick is to start moving your characters around . . ." (35)]. The process of writing, according to Bradford, is the same for students and professional authors, never easy, but not impossible.

Only two flaws, both minor, mar this book. The first is Bradford's caution to the readers about using themselves as characters in their stories. She warns that "you might also find out something more about yourself than you knew when you started. Rather scary idea, that, sometimes" (24). Such a negative statement is jarring: Bradford could have suggested that such self-discovery is an exciting part of the creative process, not one to avoid.

The second problem is one of omission. While Bradford outlines the steps of writing within her text, the book would have benefitted from a summary or checklist, either after each chapter or at the end of the book. Such a list, and perhaps some writing exercises to go along with it, would make the book more useful to the child-writer as he worked his way through a story.

In all, however, Karleen Bradford's book is an excellent guide to the writing process. It has de-mystified the art of writing stories, and clearly shows "it's not all that hard." It has won itself a valuable place on my reference shelf.

*Anne Kelly has taught young children for nearly ten years. She lives in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.*

## UNE HISTOIRE ATTACHANTE

**Le voyage dans le temps.** Denis Côté. Illus. Stéphane Poulin. Montréal, La courte échelle, 1989. 92 pp., broché. ISBN 2-89021-095-2.

Si les voyages dans le temps sont impossibles et que deux enfants se retrouvent soudainement projetés en 1889, les loups-garous ont-ils alors, eux aussi, droit à l'existence? A travers les yeux interrogateurs de l'enfance, où les vérités sont toujours relatives, Denis Côté nous fait pénétrer, dans le troisième roman de son cru, dans l'univers magique du treizième, chiffre aux noirs augures, anniversaire du petit Québécois Maxime.

Découvrant dans sa chambre une vieille paire de bottines qu'il croit être un présent, le jeune garçon se fait évidemment un devoir de les essayer. Mal lui en prend! Il se voit aussitôt entraîné avec Jo, son amour de très tendre adolescent, dans le Vieux-Québec de 1889, sur les traces de la Charbonneuse, une érudite féministe d'avant-garde faussement accusée de sorcellerie et seule dépositaire du secret des mystérieuses bottines magiques.