

**Daniel's Dog.** Jo Ellen Bogart. Illus. Janet Wilson. North Winds Press, 1990. 32 pp., \$11.95 cloth. ISBN 0-590-73344-3; **Fred's TV.** Clive Dobson. Illus. author. Firefly, 1989. Unpag., \$12.95 \$4.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 0-920668-60-1, 0-920668-59-3.

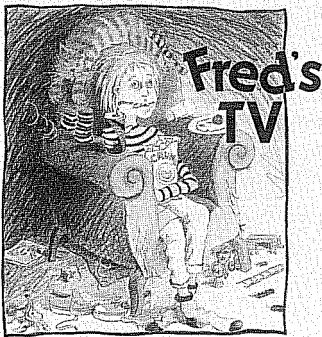
Two picture books for the younger set deal in different ways with the necessity for adaptability in the face of unwelcome change.

Daniel's problem is as old as family life, but just as unexpected and shattering every single time it happens. The little boy has a new baby sister. She's tiny and beautiful, and he really loves and welcomes her. BUT...

His mother, his very own mother, spends an enormous amount of time taking care of the baby, bathing her, changing her, holding and cuddling her. Lovely illustrations show a young mother smiling down at the infant who for the moment absorbs her entire attention, while in the background a small boy hovers between wistfulness and jealousy. Daniel's solitary games grow louder and angrier, while mother remains oblivious to his attention-getting ploys.

Children find different ways of working through the readjustment of family dynamics. Daniel's solution is the arrival on the scene of Lucy, his "ghost dog", a present, he says, from his dead grandfather, who "always has time for me, no matter what". *Somebody*, even if it has to be an imaginary somebody, is going to put Daniel *first*.

Rich, warm colours – indeed, fiery colours to suggest Daniel's frustrations – brighten a lovely evocation of a handsome black family, and are generally extremely attractive, with the unfortunate exception of awkward cover art which somehow seems to misplace Daniel's foot.



Written and Illustrated by Clive Dobson

In Dobson's *Fred's TV*, Fred is a junior couch potato, glued to the TV set, until, exasperated, father explodes. Limiting the hours of watching hasn't worked (Fred cheats); putting the set in the basement simply puts FRED in the basement; so father drags the trouble-maker into the wintry backyard. TVs are indoor creatures. When it rains, the set, plugged into an extension cord, takes the revenge of a mistreated appliance by shorting out. As Fred sits bereft, staring at the useless shell, a skinny black bird lights upon it.

So begins a new and healthier passion in Fred's life. Soon little footprints mark the snow; the TV set has become a meeting and eating place for birds.

Fred still watches the set, but now with lively, active interest quite unlike his TV-induced stupor.

The story is improbable, to be sure, but its message about the indiscriminate TV slavery that turns bright youngsters like Fred and his friends into zombies with glazed eyes is a worthwhile one.

The illustrations, even more clearly than the text, convey the change from grayish-green, wall-eyed Fred the TV slave, to vigorous, interested Fred the bird-watcher. Even his cat looks healthier under the new regime.

Both Daniel and Fred face withdrawal symptoms: Daniel craves his mother's attention, Fred misses his all-absorbing TV. In both cases, the boys solve their own problems in their own ingenious ways. Not a bad idea to plant in receptive young minds.

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## FREUD ET LA POLITIQUE

**La fille aux cheveux rouges.** Joceline Sanschagrin. Montréal, La courte échelle, 1989. 91 pp., 7,95\$ broché. ISBN 2-89021-096-0.

Ce n'est pas innocemment qu'on écrit des livres pour les enfants. Autrefois les intentions des autres étaient très claires dès les premières pages. Avant le dix-neuvième siècle, on donnait à lire aux enfants beaucoup de prières et de maximes morales. Aujourd'hui on est plus subtil et plus varié; on écrit plus de romans et moins de maximes pour les enfants. Mais les préoccupations des auteurs demeurent, comme dans *La fille aux cheveux rouges*.

Voici donc pour Freud: Wondeur, comme bébé, a été abandonnée sur un balcon. Après une enfance dont on ne sait rien, elle est partie à la recherche de son père, qui avait laissé une note dans les langes du bébé. Au début du roman, elle se trouve dans une obscure salle souterraine à moitié remplie d'eau, et donnant dans un canal. "Mon père est sûrement passé par là", se dit-elle en s'engageant dans le canal. Au Quai des Brumes dans le souterrain, elle rencontre Moussa, garçon évadé de prison. Après quelques péripéties, les deux jeunes émergent à la lumière du jour sur la trace du père.

Après cette naissance métaphorique, Wondeur et Moussa se trouvent dans une grande ville-dépotoir. Moussa ramasse une poupée décapitée qui fait "Mam-a-nnn!" quand on l'incline. "Moussa! il ne faut pas nous perdre!" s'écrie Wondeur. Décidément, les mères n'ont pas la cote dans ce roman. Non seulement Wondeur ne sent aucun besoin de la mère absente qu'elle ne mentionne ja-