



In *Sky* the subject matter is more adequately expressed in the sub-title as the book's major focus is our solar system and activity in space. In *Earth*, our planet is examined from its birth to the changes it has undergone over the eons. The author explains land features, the importance of water, earthquakes and other natural phenomena. In *Air*, David Allen succeeds in making air a tangible topic by explaining air pressure, wind, temperature, cloud formation, and pollution. All books in this series provide good reference material for young readers.

As a further compliment to the study of our environment, we have an addition to the Green World Series, *The nature book*. This entertaining book encourages children to observe and explore the immediate world around them and to familiarize themselves with the plants, animals, and "green" concepts. Factual information is combined with a hands-on approach to learning by using puzzles, games, activities and experiments. Compatible gardening, animal behaviour, and other topics are addressed in simple, well-focused lessons. All the illustrations and diagrams are in black and white and the book is printed on recycled paper.

These books educate, promote scientific inquiry, and instill an awareness of our place in the world and are therefore highly recommended.

**Jo-Anne Mary Benson** is a reviewer for several magazines, newspapers and journals.

## SEAFOOD FOR THOUGHT

**Chung Lee loves lobsters.** Hugh MacDonald. Illus. Johnny Wales. Annick Press, 1992. Unpag., \$14.95, \$4.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 1-55037-217-3, 1-55037-100-2;

**Silversides: the life of a sockeye.** Hubert Evans. Illus. Kim Lefave. Nightwood Editions, 1991. Unpag., \$4.95 paper. ISBN 0-88971-152-6.

*Chung Lee loves lobsters* is a picture book set in Charlottetown P.E.I. In this story two young brothers follow Mr. Chung Lee down to the harbour expecting to see him cook and eat the live lobster he has just bought at their mother's restaurant. Instead, Chung Lee sets the lobster free explaining to the mystified boys that he cooked lobsters for many years to earn a living and now "... every month I buy one live lobster and give it its life to please the spirits of its ancestors that I have hurt."

I found this to be a gentle, touching story. Without being didactic it addresses the need to respect the lives of all creatures, and to avoid causing unnecessary

suffering. Mr. Chung Lee seems sincere in his actions, and the fact that the boys do not completely understand why he frees the lobster makes the story more believable. Unfortunately, the constant inclusion of the younger boy's malapropisms is irritating and superfluous to the story. Without them the book would have been more focused and less condescending.

The story is strengthened by full-page, softly-shaded watercolours. Illustrator Johnny Wales has used light and perspective to capture the mood of Charlottetown in the waning hours of a summer afternoon. There is, however, one illustration that does not correspond to the text. In the story Chung Lee has just come out of his house, but the picture shows him going in.

*Silversides: the life of a sockeye* follows the life of a Pacific salmon from the time it hatches until it returns to its birthplace to spawn and die. It was written in the 1920s by a British Columbia sportsman and writer. After sixty-five years out of print it has been reissued by Nightwood as part of its "Forest Friends" series. This book should have remained out of print. It is written as an animal biography in a style that is dated and, I feel, no longer acceptable in a book that purports to teach factual information. The fish are given human characteristics and emotions. For example, when Silversides learns to swim we are told "... he thought himself a very fine fish indeed." Later in the story instinct is equated with bravery: "a brave fish he is who travels hundreds of miles to answer the call of the sea." While some degree of anthropomorphism can work in realistic animal fiction, the human characteristics should come from the actions of the animals and must not be imposed upon them.

Aside from the style, this book is flawed by inaccurate information. It says that Silverside's eggshell was very tough but he found a weak spot and broke a hole through it. Salmon do not actually hatch in this way. Rather, their shell is absorbed as they grow from egg to alevin to fry. Silversides is also portrayed as the leader of a school of fifty, but schools of salmon do not have leaders.

Although Kim Lefave's wood cut illustrations have not captured the majestic qualities the author attributes to the salmon, the layout for the book is very clever. The salmon swim through rivers, which flow across the page. The rivers tumble from one page to the next as the salmon are swept over a log jam on their journey to the sea. The illustrations, however, cannot rescue the flawed and dated text.

**Nancy Cohen** is *Children's and Young Adult Librarian at the Moncton Public Library*.

## THE WORLD OF TREES

**A tree in a forest.** Jan Thornhill. Greedy de Pencier Books, 1991. Unpag., \$14.95 cloth. ISBN 0-920775-64-0.

*A tree in a forest* is an imaginatively-executed non-fiction work on the life cycle of a maple tree. Extending the style established in her concept picture-books (*Wildlife ABC* and *Wildlife 123*) to an advanced level for an older audience, this book combines Thornhill's signature elements: illustrations that are large, framed,