

care-givers that they are capable and expected to have some responsibility in their daily dilemmas.

Intrinsically different from the previous three books, *We Are All Related* is an artistic exploration and expression of diversity in personal heritage. Its pages display collages made by children from an elementary school in Vancouver, accompanied with statements about the child's heritage/cultural origin, and quotes from their "elders." Initially, I responded to *We Are All Related* by classifying it as a fantastic project for the children whose collages are featured, but not at all appealing as a book to be read by people disconnected with the project. I found the size and shape of the book awkward and was disappointed by the seeming lack of narrative, convinced that, without a plot-laden story, a young reader would be very much less than riveted. My group of grade three (age eight) reviewing consultants disagreed. They conceded that it is not a text which lends itself well to oral storytelling, but responded to the book not at all as I had expected. There seems to exist among children a universal appreciation for the artwork of other children. The collages were received as deeply impressive, praised as "cool" and "very carefully done." Bright colours are prevalent, and the combined use of photos, colour, child drawings and potato print borders is quite striking. Structure and rhythm is achieved within the collages by the consistent use of border, and through the use of sentence starters: "My family comes from ," "This photograph shows ," etc.

Most important, I realized that by looking for a plot, I missed the detailed, beautiful stories on every page of this book, and was relieved that the young readers I spoke with had been able to identify and delight in those stories, even if I had not. The press release itself stresses that the collages tell more about the cultural heritage of these children — and hence, about us, collectively, as Canadians — than words possibly could.

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Is There a Lesson in Here?

Franklin's Class Trip. Paulette Bourgeois and Sharon Jennings. Illus. Brenda Clark. Kids Can, 1999. 32 pp. \$12.95, \$4.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 1-55074-470-4, 1-55074-472-0. *The Butterflies' Promise.* Julie Ovenell-Carter. Illus. Kitty Macaulay. Annick, 1999. 32 pp. \$15.95, \$6.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 1-55037-567-9, 1-55037-566-0. *Dirty Dog Boogie.* Loris Lesynski. Illus. author. Annick, 1999. 32 pp. \$16.95, \$6.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 1-55037-573-3, 1-55037-573-5. *Mr. Reez's Sneezes.* Curtis Parkinson. Illus. Sami Suomalainen. Annick, 1999. 24 pp. \$15.95, \$6.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 1-55037-557-7, 1-55037-556-3.

Of these four books written for the three- to seven-year age group, two entertain for the sake of a message, one casually slips in some counsel, and the fourth is written strictly to amuse. *Franklin's Class Trip* falls into the first category; its message is that visiting the museum is not boring, but Lots of Fun. The Royal Ontario

Museum in Toronto has opened a new Discovery Gallery for families, featuring "Franklin's World," and its theatre premiered a theatrical concert based on this book, which describes the good times experienced by Franklin and his classmates and which is all too clearly designed to enhance the ROM's image as a friendly family centre. Although the book appeals to youngsters through their familiarity with Franklin and his friends, this series has been undergoing a change, particularly in its illustrations. Since about 1993, Clark has been working with various assistants for her illustrations, which now have a flatter, more commercial appearance, perhaps more suited to television and videotapes. The characters have become much more humanized — always on their hind legs, wearing more clothing, and using children's toys and sports equipment, as well as having access to radios and telephones. In the earlier books, Franklin and his friends swam in ponds, climbed trees, and flew in a richly detailed forest environment. Now, the natural world has receded into a background for their urban lives. As these characters become more like human children, their identity as animals becomes merely a cute device.

The Butterflies' Promise uses the flaming beauty and mysterious disappearances and reappearances of the monarch butterfly to symbolize the message that nature and art are powerful sources of joy and healing. Text and illustration work together to infuse a realistic natural world with a sense of magic. The story begins with Milly and her grandfather toiling happily in a garden bursting with the superabundance of nature: "tomatoes spilled off trellises and pumpkins plumped in the sun. There were rose-bushes and bush beans and bushy little strawberries always ready with a treat." When Grandpa becomes seriously ill, Milly's gardening skills are put to good use when she helps her parents recreate Grandpa's garden in the grounds of a nursing home. She is also able to bring pleasure to him and his fellow patients by her ability to play the violin and to draw a multitude of amusing pictures. Macaulay's illustrations add whimsical jokes to this celebratory tale; in Grandpa's garden his "scarecrow" resembles a large bunny where birds are welcome to settle; butterflies meld into fairy-folk who have tea-parties, go camping, and sell refreshments at a nectar stand. Even inside Milly's house little folk are dancing in the corners and a painting on a wall is a visual pun. This is a book that does not blink in the face of unhappy reality, but instead shows how a sense of wonder infuses reality with joy and hope and that children have the capacity to enrich the lives of others.

Dirty Dog Boogie (an irresistible title) is a collection of comical rhymes about ordinary life (including ditties on sock fluff between your toes and splashes of sunlight in a house) and about poems (including one about hating poems, which ends in a defiant non-rhyme). While it is great fun to read aloud to one or two children, I imagine some of these pieces would be much more effective in a group. Lesynski uses her lively drawings to suggest chanting rhythms to underpin the title poem, which would work well with twenty kids, but not with two. While the book definitely falls into the "fun for fun's sake" camp, its joy in wordplay and rhythm encourages the love of language that can liberate young writers. Lesynski creates a sense of collaboration with her readers — showing herself stumped for an illustration to "Sunpuddles" and asking for help — again an invitation to the reader to *do* something. Such prodding to use your own words, to listen for the rhythms of ordinary speech, and to pay attention to this funny world is probably needed now more than ever before. This is a "clap-your-hands and stamp-your-feet" kind of

book and is aimed at producing lots of giggles.

There seems to be absolutely no serious intent to *Mr. Reez's Sneezes*. Its absurd story is based on comic exaggeration — a tried-and-true form of comedy. Mr. Reez is jet-propelled by his pepper-induced sneeze out of his apartment window to a whole lot of places, causing some things to happen. An adult reader will perhaps be troubled by trying to figure out what direction Mr. Reez is going, as he flies over an African terrain, then a Moscow-like city, then a tropic rain forest, then, apparently, South America. Things happen as he flies through the air, and some of the incidents are amusing in themselves, but there is little sense of one event leading to another — they just pile up aimlessly until another sneeze happens to fly him home. Some pictures show him flying left across the page and some right, which adds to the sense of confusion, but Suomalainen's water colours are whimsical and appealing.

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Anne Analyzed

L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture. Eds. Irene Gammel and Elizabeth Epperly. U of Toronto P, 1999. 267 pp. \$25 cloth. ISBN 0-8020-4406-9.

This collection of nineteen essays draws together a very diverse body of work on L.M. Montgomery's engagement with, and impact on, Canadian culture. The contributors include creative writers as well as academics from a variety of disciplines, and the volume as a whole combines approaches derived from cultural studies, social history, and textual and materialist criticism, together with narratives of individual readers' encounters with the Montgomery books. The literary critical pieces examine Montgomery's vision of the cultural distinctness of her region and country, while her negotiation of the cultural shifts which took place in Canada during her lifetime is the focus of several historically-based chapters. A further group of essays analyse the popular consumption of Anne Shirley through text, film, and cultural tourism.

The editors have successfully organized these disparate elements into a cohesive whole by means of their lucid introduction and thoughtful structuring of the book. It is clear that many of the authors have read each other's contributions since they comment on one another explicitly and include useful cross-references. This sense of dialogue between the chapters reflects the genesis of the book in two international symposia at the University of Prince Edward Island. The collection is almost entirely composed of new work with the exception of two pieces which, one suspects, were included for the sake of the authors' names. One of these, Margaret Atwood's Afterword to the McClelland and Stewart NCL edition of *Anne of Green Gables*, is intelligent and entertaining but is readily available in the original format. The other is a *New Yorker* piece by Calvin Trillin, "What do the Japanese see in *Anne of Green Gables*?". The sarcastic tone of this article is far from illuminating in the