

Mini-Reviews

When I Went to the Library: Writers Celebrate Books and Reading. Ed. Debora Pearson. Greenwood, 2001. 128 pp. \$18.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88899-423-0. Ages 8-12.

This anthology of stories brings together nine Canadian authors in one attractive hardcover volume. Edited by Debora Pearson, with a spirited introduction by Michele Landsberg, the stories were commissioned to honour children's libraries and librarians. It is very much a mixed bag, as is to be expected when a diverse group of talented writers takes on the subject of libraries, books, and reading. Some stories are predictable, such as Carlotta wanting to find out about leukemia in Budge Wilson's "Carlotta's Search," or Henry Higham learning to appreciate libraries in Jean Little's "Mrs. Grinny Pig, Tickle Wiggle, and Henry." Others take the theme to imaginative new heights: Paul Yee's evocative story of a young immigrant bride in "Fly Away" and the unusual twist on libraries and librarians in Ken Setterington's "Rose's Wish." The rollicking lead story by Ken Roberts, "Dear Mr. Winston," is worth the price of the volume; it's a story that begs to be read aloud to any young audience. Sarah Ellis, Celia Barker Lottridge, Marc Talbert, and Tim Wynne-Jones also contribute their talents to suggest that children's libraries and librarians are worth celebrating. Their stories are worth reading.

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Trunks All Aboard: An Elephant ABC. Barbara Nichol. Illus. Sir William Cornelius Van Horne. Tundra, 2001. Unpag. \$18.99 paper. ISBN 0-88776-536-X.

This delightful book begs to be read aloud. Award-winning author Barbara Nichol was inspired by letters and drawings sent home from a European trip by Sir William Cornelius Van Horne to his grandson in Montreal in 1909. Many of the drawings were of "Grandpa" as an elephant, and Nichol has "put the pictures to work" to create her *Elephant ABC*. Each illustration contains not only one of Sir William's elephants but also a copy of the date and origin of the correspondence. The rhyming couplets below each illustration take the reader on a rhythmic journey, "Trunks All Aboard" through the alphabet.

The journey taken, however, is not just a simple linear one through the letters of the alphabet. Using Sir William's elephants, Nichol brings the world of the early twentieth century into the world of young readers in the early twenty-first century. Sir William's world was an elegant one of steamship travel, steamship trunks, top hats, and cigars. The very name Cornelius Van Horne takes the reader even further back, this time into Canadian history of the late nineteenth century. It was Sir William