

entry into Canadian culture. Sangwine avoids predictable outcomes, however, as Friendly's visit to school becomes disruptive and more than just a bit messy.

Bernadette Lau's exceptional illustrations easily capture the natural expressions and attitudes of today's school child. Her effective use of colour and composition fully supports the book's text. Employing a blend of cultural symbols, Lau evokes the duality that is part of Ming's new life, and accordingly, underscores the story's central conflict and tension.

In just over 25 pages, Sangwine's book provides parents and teachers with a wide range of issues for discussion including the culture and history of China, the importance of a natural habitat for wildlife and most importantly, the loneliness of isolation and the value of friendship.

Sangwine has drawn on her experience as a teacher of English as a Second Language to create this book. Her respect for the difficult struggle of learning a new language, and understanding a new culture, is apparent. While this is her first children's book, Sangwine has published non-fiction in a variety of magazines, and has twice been a runner up in the *Toronto Star's* short story contest.

A Turtle Called Friendly is suitable for children in both primary and junior grades, especially ages eight to eleven. Many adults will find themselves both delighted and fully engaged in this children's book.

[**Editor's Note:** Although the turtle in the true story that inspired this book was a snapping turtle, the turtle in Bernadette Lau's illustrations for the book (which Jean Sangwine describes as "part fact, part fiction") is not.]

Ruth E. Walker's story, "Traditions," won Canadian Living's 1996 short fiction award. The mother of four children and a former foster parent, she is completing an English/Cultural Studies degree through Trent University.

Artful Initiations East and West

The Basketball Player. Roch Carrier. Illus. Sheldon Cohen. Trans. Sheila Fischman. (French: Le Joueur de basket-ball.) Tundra Books, 1996. Unpag. \$15.95 cloth. English, ISBN 0-88776-367-7. French, ISBN 0-88776-368-5. *Tiger's New Cowboy Boots.* Irene Morck. Illus. Georgia Graham. Red Deer College P, 1996. Unpag. \$17.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88995-153-5.

The most interesting relations between these books emerge, not through the differences in their settings (Quebec and Alberta), but in their literary qualities. Whether set in Carrier's familiar homeground or Morck's foothills, these initiation tales succeed because the writers know how to tell stories.

To be sure, the settings are very different. For three decades, Carrier has returned with love, irony, and anger to Church, to family, to the charged relations between les Anglais and his villagers. More importantly, he has created a voice and style that blend autobiography and memory with invention

and story to form a distinctive fictional world. Whether it is *The Hockey Sweater* or *The Basketball Player*, *La Guerre*, *Yes Sir!* or *Floralie, Where Are You?*, the voices in Carrier's fiction often recall the fears and wonders of childhood and the ironies of adult hindsight looking back on childhood. Here, a fictional autobiographer relates the story of a boy's reluctant transformation into a basketball player. As well, the story reflects wryly on the significance of books — "all the books you must read if you want to travel far along the road of life" as the narrator repeats, the refrain gathering irony.

The language is artfully spare, and Sheila Fischman's translation, as always, is luminous. I was intrigued by Sheldon Cohen's illustrations: beginning with his library with English and French titles, the picture of Rocket Richard, of barbells and baseballs, Cohen renders the interplay between boyhood and books, sports and language that animates Carrier's story.

Irene Morck's story uses a pair of new boots rather than basketball, a city boy's day herding cattle rather than a novice seminarian's trials away from home as the plotline, a third-person rather than first-person point of view to tell a related story. Tyler learns that it is not the new boots that will impress his country cousins; the boots, to his accumulating dismay, get coffee stained, then get scratched, muddied, and waterlogged as the long day unfolds. Rather, it is his perseverance in herding an orphaned calf that signals one more step in growing up, one step closer to his cousin Jessica. The story, appropriately, is more plainly told than Carrier's, and the illustrations nicely match the pace and tone: Georgia Graham's cowboys and their clothes, the Herefords and the horses, the foothills and the river, are less distorted and fanciful than Cohen's depictions. Graham is sensitive to the rhythm, the meaning, and the mode of Morck's story, and the total effect — as with Carrier's latest — is an engaging story and an attractively made book.

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Canadian Landscapes

The Wind Wagon. Celia Barker Lottridge. Illus. Daniel Clifford. Groundwood/Douglas & McIntyre, 1995. 46 pp. \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-88899-234-3. *Little Net Fisher*. Jacques de Thorenc. Illus. Carlo Italiano. Trans. Jane Frydenland. Roussan, 1994. 70 pp. \$6.95 paper. ISBN 2-921212-36-6. *Harold and Harold*. Budge Wilson. Illus. Terry Roscoe. Pottersfield, 1995. 45 pp. \$7.95 paper. ISBN 0-919001-94-7. *Sharla*. Budge Wilson. Stoddart Kids, 1997. 168 pp. \$5.99 paper. ISBN 0-7736-7467-5.

My students tell me that Canadian children's books should reflect the land we live in. These stories fulfil that criterion. The landscape of the prairies, the Gaspé coast, the shoreline of Nova Scotia and the bay at Churchill all figure promi-