

to bridge José's past, present and future. The guests are both Hispanic friends from the shelter where the family first lived, and newer friends from school. The "sweet smell, the mix of cake spices and ginger he remembered from Grandmother's, ... the Spanish voices he did not need to strain to understand, ... a piñata full of candies" contrast with the new experience of making a snowman. The gift of a puppy replaces Pinto, the family dog that was abandoned when they fled. The possibility of not only adapting, but of belonging is poignantly expressed when "[F]or the very first time, José felt that the long road that had led him here could be a road to happiness he had not known since an evening long ago in the kitchen of his Uncle Ramón."

The Long Road provides us with an opportunity to talk to children about political conflict and exile in realistic and understandable terms, while focusing on the potential that all journeys hold. This book would be valuable to both children who have had to endure the experience of exile, and to those who have never pondered such a reality. Regardless of, or even due to, their differences, children can identify with José's sense of alienation and loss, as well as with the joy of finding friendship and a sense of self that allows for difference.

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Keepers of Nature, Keepers of Stories

Keepers of the Night: Native Stories and Nocturnal Activities for Children. Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac. Illus. David Kanietakeron Fadden. Fifth House, 1994. 168 pp. \$16.95 paper. ISBN 1-895618-39-8. *Tales Alive.* Susan Milord (reteller). Illus. Michael Donato. Vermont: Williamson, 1995. 128 pp. \$19.95 paper. ISBN 1-913589-79-9.

"In Native North American tradition the family is the center of the community, the meeting place of all of a person's relationships" (*Keepers of the Night* 123). In western society where capitalism dominates, the workplace is the centre of community, and personal life is marginalized, through the rendering of time as a scarce resource. We are in desperate need of visions of how to live that reach beyond the consumer hysteria of mass culture and the frenetic competition of a global economy.

Keepers of the Night, the third in the fine Keepers series, offers such a vision. Caduto and Bruchac provide a holistic and interdisciplinary curriculum that includes Native stories, traditions, information about the natural world at night and extensive field-tested activities: the book will be of significant value for teachers and youth group leaders pursuing environmental studies with school-age children. With the exception of the Native stories (in larger print), it acts more as a reference guide for leaders, with comprehensive instructions for night-time activities, detailed information about the natural world (from star

constellations to the mating dance of the woodcock, spiralling up into the sky), and an emphasis on ethical qualities of care for others and for the earth.

Tales Alive flattens rather than enriches a sense of specific cultures because the particularities of culture and location are lost when the stories are all told in the same voice. Intended for the use of children seven to twelve years old, Susan Milord offers ten tales in large print, each from a different world culture, plus a variety of activities after each, described so that children can do them with little adult assistance. The cultures selected range in general location from Argentina to Russia, with an Inuit tale representing Canada. Each country is located on a tiny logo-like map heading the activities sections, with its flag, major languages, and capital city. Its purpose in orienting children is clear, but to attribute specific cultures to nation states reduces the differentiation of cultures and gives an appearance of unity that belies the difficulty aboriginal groups have had in attempting to address real grievances with national governments.

In both books, what impresses is, first, the inventiveness and moral economy of the tales, rich and delightful to read, and, second, the way the activities extend the reality of the story, connecting it to daily life and thus embedding the story in children's experiences. To go out into the night and see the constellation of the Pleiades, after reading the Onandaga tale "The Seven Star Dancers," is to understand the patterns of stars differently, not as mere scientific fact, but connected to living social and historical traditions.

Storytelling of cultural tales remains of paramount importance because embedded in stories is the group's cultural knowledge of how to behave well towards others and towards the earth. In "The Great LaCrosse Game," for instance in the *Keepers* book, the animal kingdom is divided into two teams, those with wings and those with fur. One small winged and furry animal doesn't know which side to join. Otter insists no one should be left out, and of course, Bat makes the winning goal for his side. One of the great lessons of aboriginal cultures is that everyone counts; to be present is to be part of the Circle of Life, and to be acknowledged for the contribution one makes to the life of others.

The illustrations are important in both books, and are of three types: full-page story illustrations, activity illustrations, and illustrations of the natural world. *Tales Alive* features full-colour pictures, although the activity illustrations in pale mauves and grays look insipid. However, the line drawings of animals — hare and walrus and toad — are life-like and vibrant. In *Keepers of the Night*, Carol Wood's drawings of native implements and constellations are clear and tidy. Kanietakeron's story illustrations are crude in style, with a rugged forcefulness. Jo Levasseur's black-and-white scratchboard portraits of nighttime are, however, magnificent. These black-and-white works of art go beyond superb draughtsmanship to create a wonderful depth of night space and lovingly crafted night animals. The spotted owl in a Douglas fir, and the mother bear with cubs drinking from a lake as the moon rises, are worth the price of the book. (Why is Kanietakeron recognized both on the cover and in a bio section, and the other two illustrators only in the acknowledgement section: does one have to be Native?).

Regarding their impact, *Keepers of the Night* is more cohesive, comprehensive and focused in the world it presents, and offers a wealth of little-known

information. *Tales Alive* offers less information but is aimed directly at children. Both books will be popular with teachers. Note that Caduto and Bruchac remind us not to change the stories, reinventing different endings and so on, but to respect the structure of each tale as it stands, out of respect for its cultural origins. These stories can be enjoyed as they are for the gifts they tacitly offer as commentary on how to live on the earth.

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Raffi Songs to Read Only Partially Successful

Everything Grows. Music and lyrics Raffi. Photo-illus. Bruce McMillan. New York: Crown, 1993. Unpag. \$4.99 paper. ISBN 0-517-88098-9. *Like Me and You.* Music and lyrics Raffi and Debi Pike. Illus. Lillian Hoban. New York: Crown, 1994. Unpag. \$16.50 cloth. ISBN 0-517-59587-7. *Rise and Shine.* Music and lyrics by Raffi, Bonnie Simpson, and Bert Simpson. Illus. Eugenie Fernandes. Random House Canada, 1996. Unpag. \$19.95 cloth. ISBN 0-679-30819-9. *Tingalayo.* Music and lyrics by Raffi. Illus. Kate Duke. New York: Crown, 1993. Unpag. \$4.99 paper. ISBN 0-517-56926-4.

These four books are part of the Raffi Songs to Read series. The books take a single song and add illustrations appropriate to the lyrics. At the end of each book, the melody and chord symbols, along with the lyrics, are provided for musically literate parents and children. As stand-alone books, these are only partly successful. The melodies are not always easy to learn. For example, the rhythm in *Rise and Shine* is syncopated, which makes it tricky. *Everything Grows* is also more rhythmically difficult than most children's songs. This is, of course, less of a problem if the child and parent already know the tune. The lack of guitar tablature along with the chord symbols may pose difficulties for amateur guitarists who wish to play and sing the melodies.

The other problem with these books is that the lyrics are divided unevenly to link up with the illustrations. If there is only one phrase per illustration, you are forced to move quickly; if there are several phrases, you can linger, but the unevenness can be difficult for a child who wants to look at the pictures as well as sing the song.

Of the four books, *Rise and Shine* has the best illustrations. They are bright depictions of various regions of Canada. However, as mentioned above, the tune and rhythm are difficult to pick up. *Tingalayo's* catchy melody and charming illustrations make it the most successful blend. The other two books were nicely, but not memorably illustrated.

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