

then contrasted with the more colourful and detailed applique montages that depict the excursion into fantasy. The technique suggests a real commitment to the truth that imagination enhances everyday experience. One wishes only that imagination in this case had been allowed a slightly larger compass.

Good Morning and *Good Night*, written by Jan Colbert, exhibit similar virtues, and suffer from similar defects. Both books depict a daily routine which takes off into the realm of the fantastic. A child, on waking, is transformed into a bird, a seal, a turtle, a frog, and a dragonfly; a child at the end of the day becomes a pig, a duck, a dog, a calf, and a cat. Once again, Fernandes's drawings are vivid, colourful, and rich in detail. Once again, the sequence is so logical and formulaic as to curtail the flight of the imagination.

The intrusions of fantasy and magic into ordinary experience are much more successfully rendered in Andreas Greve's *The Good Night Story*, the one book in this collection that dares to merge the standard genres. This is a sophisticated book, and somewhat beyond the grasp of fans of Lollypop or the sleepless princess. As well as overtly combining the domestic with the surreal, Greve executes some interesting variations on the classic frame narrative. A story told within the story takes on a life of its own — to the point of drawing the protagonist of the main story into its action, and requiring some diplomatic manoeuvres on his part to shut the whole thing down before it gets out of control. That elusive synthesis of consistency and reckless abandon that seems to be missing in the work of Fernandes and Colbert is deftly accomplished here. The blurring of bedtime story with dream, and of narration with participation, is admirable — as is the characterization of some rather artful animals who are first stalked by, and then insist on stalking a hunter. Aided by the watercolour illustrations of Kitty Macaulay, Greve has accomplished the difficult task of balancing fantasy and realism in such a way that each complements the other.

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Little Liars and Big Adventures

Mud Puddle. (New edition). Robert Munsch. Illus. Sami Suomalainen. Annick, 1996. 32 pp. \$4.95 paper. ISBN 1-55037-468-0. *Mom, the School Flooded!* Ken Rivard. Illus. Jacques Laplante. Annick, 1996. 32 pp. \$4.95 paper. ISBN 1-55037-474-5. *On the Go*. Roger Paré. Illus. author. Trans. David Homel. Annick, 1996. 24 pp. \$4.95 paper. ISBN 1-55037-408-7.

Mud Puddle is a revised edition of a story first published in 1979. Munsch has lengthened the text and while Suomalainen's artwork has definitely improved from the clumsy and unattractive pictures of the first edition, some

problems remain. There is a discrepancy between the repetitive and unnecessarily wordy description of the protagonist's shirt and pants which she must repeatedly button up the front, even though, as any observant two-year-old will be quick to point out, none of Jule Ann's shirts sport any buttons, nor are they visible on her pants. Other additions to the original text are more successful and fascinating to toddlers who are learning the names of body parts and enjoy their baths. Every time the omnipresent mud puddle ambushes Jule Ann and jumps on her, covering her and her dog from head to toe, she must have her ears, eyes, mouth and so on, washed out by Mummy, thereby increasing both the pleasure of getting muddier each time, and having more parts to wash, until even her belly button needs cleaning, and we all know how significant the omphalos is to little ones whose bellies are so rotund that they haven't yet noticed other areas of interest.

While Munsch's story is really about a little liar who loves wallowing in mud, we are spared any explicit moralizing on that count and can just enjoy the discrepancy between the text that insists on Jule Ann's innocence in the face of the mud puddle's awesome powers, and the illustrations which successfully depict her delight both with being submerged in mud and subsequently in bath water. At the end, those in search of a moral — cleanliness is next to godliness? — will find satisfaction when Jule Ann finally conquers the mud puddle by throwing two bars of smelly soap at it, after which she sits under a tree with a pail of suds blowing bubbles for her dog to catch. On the whole, this is an entertaining story that should be read in the dramatic mode to get lots of laughs, although you may find yourself skipping lines that seem superfluous both semantically and euphonically.

Mom, the School Flooded! is another story about a little liar who enjoys getting messy and, like small kids tend to do, attributes his state to natural disaster. Gus comes home soaking wet and proceeds to tell his mother some tall tales about a great flood that first engulfed his geography class, then the gym, the entire school and finally the school yard. The text is structured as a dialogue with Gus's stories "scrawled" in free-hand print and his mother's limited interjections ("Now, Gus, honestly ...") in regular typeset. The drawings are also imitative of children's art, brightly coloured and dynamic, El Grecoesque people with long spaghetti limbs and bodies like Poky and Gumby dolls. An attractive feature, for children who are old enough to assume the role of active text-maker, is the open-endedness, and the offer of different options: "Do you think Gus's mom believed his story? If you do, close the book. If you don't turn the page" followed by two more far-fetched scenes and a final invitation for children to join in the storytelling and come up with their own version of Gus's adventures. (Not recommended as a late-night bedtime story!)

On the Go is an entertaining little book written and illustrated by Québécois Roger Paré who is quoted on the back cover as saying: "What I really want for a children's book are illustrations that will have the quality of



a painting. I think that children are sensitive and feel what an artist can say with images. When the illustration is explicit enough, what writing I have to add is little in terms of quantity." The illustrations are indeed rich enough for much commentary, while the four rhyming lines to each are short and snappy enough to easily maintain the interest of very young children. The story deals with two little mice — Georgia and Gigi — who, after contemplating a globe, decide to take a trip to a forest, a jungle, a field of wheat, a mountain top and even the moon: a kind of Thelma and Louise duo who, however, set out on their travels not as the result of any conflict, but for sheer pleasure and adventure. They live in utopic harmony with a big black cat who sleeps curled on a rug between the two mice's beds and then flies them "over strange new lands." Their adventures include such challenges as scaling a steep mountain slope and participating in a race as passengers tucked away in the pocket of a kangaroo. Paré achieves a perfect balance between not saying too much and providing child and reader with images full of vocabulary and endless observations.

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