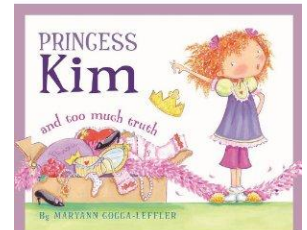


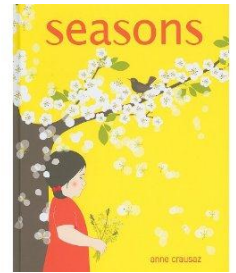
Before the academic year draws to a close, we want to share reviews of some of the titles that have arrived at the Center for Children's and Young Adult Books. This semester we've seen many classes and individual students use books in the center. In fact, this issue of *Book Notes* contains reviews written by some students in a children's literature class. One of their assignments was to analyze books and write a review of one of them in the style of *Book Notes*. We're happy to share some of those with you. We also took a large number of nonfiction titles to Spotlight on Books in northern Minnesota. The teachers and librarians who attended the conference enjoyed looking at and talking about the books on display and listening to rapid-fire reviews of some of them. To see the complete list of books, visit our website at <http://lib.mnsu.edu/collections/ccyab/> While you're there, you can check out lists of titles that have come in recent months and read past issues of *Book Notes*. If you're coming to Mankato this summer, why not drop by the CCYAB to examine our hundreds of new books for yourself?

Picture Books

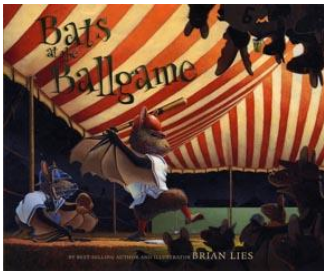
After Mrs. Della reminds her class that honesty is important and telling the truth is the right thing to do, Kim strives to live up to that goal. Maryann Cocca-Leffler shows the unintended consequences of absolutely honesty in *Princess Kim and Too Much Truth* (Albert Whitman). Kim renounces her nickname of "princess" because she really isn't one. Then she proceeds to tell her friends and relatives what she really thinks about their clothing, hairstyles, and art projects. She quickly gets labeled a tattle-tale after she lets the teacher know who had walked into the classroom with muddy boots. She makes Kevin feel bad by reminding him he's not really an astronaut after he reads his poem about soaring through space. By lunchtime, Kim decides that telling the truth doesn't work well. A conversation with her friend Violet offers a partial solution. Instead of telling the whole truth, Kim can say something she *does* like about a situation. By focusing on a positive aspect, she can avoid hurting people's feelings. At the end of the day, she decides that pretending to be a princess sometimes doesn't really involve lying. The illustrations add humor to this helpful, low-key exploration of the subtleties of truth telling.—KP



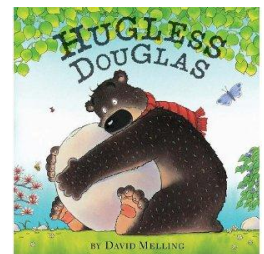
Anne Crausaz's book about *Seasons* is deceptively simple (Kane Miller). A girl observes her natural surroundings as the year cycles from spring through summer, fall, and winter to return to a new beginning. However, she does more than look at her surroundings. She listens to the silence of snow, smells the basil and mint in the garden, tastes the sweet and sour flavors of blackberries, and feels a ladybug tickling her finger. Each season engages all her senses and will prompt young listeners to come up with their own examples to share. Although the book's format isn't large, the clear illustrations can be used with a small group because of their fine layout and impressive graphics. They extend the text without overwhelming it. A book worth reading at any time of year.—KP



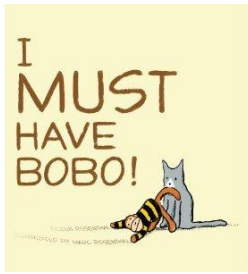
Author-illustrator Brian Lies has returned with *Bats at the Ballgame* (Houghton Mifflin), a fun-filled adventure of a night enjoying America's national pastime...with bats! Before the game, vendors flutter around selling "mothdogs" and "cricket jacks." Then the grounds crew sets up the field while fans show tickets and find their places in the stands. The umpire calls out "Welcome, fans and now...play ball!" The game proceeds with the swoop and swing of bats, strike outs, the seventh inning stretch, and a big collision at home plate. Was the bat safe, or did the catcher have the ball? The action is described with simple rhymes that help readers feel the magic of the game in the hidden world of bats. Lies' acrylic pictures range in size from two page spreads to smaller illustrations in unframed silhouettes. The fact that spectators hang upside down from the rafters above the action adds an unusual perspective. Lies gives his readers a broad knowledge of the American game and the choice of vocabulary words while adding a great use of rhyming phrases. *Bats at the Ballgame* is sure to be an enjoyable read-aloud. —TM



Poor *Hugless Douglas* (Tiger Tales) cannot find the perfect hug! When Douglas the bear wakes one morning, he sets out on an adventure to find the hug that is just right. But, big hugs from rocks, tall hugs from trees, and comfy hugs from leaves do not quite fit. After his walk through the forest, Douglas discovers that the best hugs come from someone that he loves very much – his mommy! Written and illustrated by David Melling, the book includes silly facial expressions from the forest creatures, a reference of creative hugs on the last page, bright colors, and various literary elements such as alliteration and rhyme. A book meant to be shared with a loved one who gives the best hugs! – EW



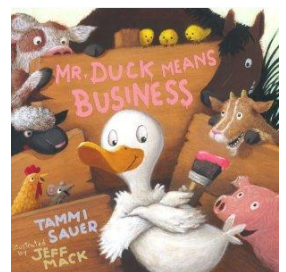
Young Willy is certain that he can't make it through the day without his sock monkey, which is why he lets everyone know that *I Must Have Bobo!* (Simon & Schuster) Bobo gives



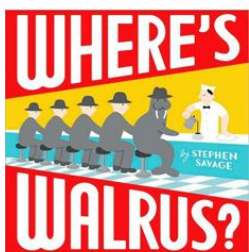
Willy the courage to go down the slide and walk past a strange dog. Bobo stays with Willy while the little boy draws crayon pictures and erects a fort out of blocks. Unfortunately, there is someone else who also wants Bobo: a gray cat named Earl. Whenever Bobo disappears, Willy knows that Earl is to blame. Preschoolers will understand Willy's concerns for keeping Bobo close at hand and appreciate Emily Rosenthal's simple story. They will also be able to spot Bobo's tail in Marc Rosenthal's illustrations as Earl tries to make off with the

monkey. The final pages make clear that the hide-and-seek relationship between Earl and Willy will resume again after the little boy's nap.—KP

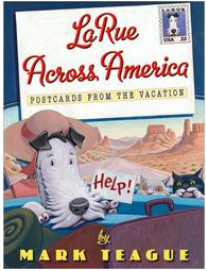
Many people like some time to themselves to sit and enjoy a good book, watch TV, or even take a nap, but who wants to be alone all the time? In Tammi Sauer's book **Mr. Duck Means Business** (Simon & Schuster), Mr. Duck learns how important it is to have friends. One hot summer day when Mr. Duck decides to go for a swim, pig jumps into the water, disturbing Mr. Duck's peaceful afternoon. Mr. Duck is not too pleased but his anger only intensifies when along comes Cow, Goat, Sheep, Horse, and Chicken to further ruin his day of relaxation. Mr. Duck is so upset that he immediately tells them all to leave for GOOD. After a whole week spent completely alone, Mr. Duck decides that a little noise is OK, sometimes. Considering that Sauer grew up on a farm in Kansas, it seems fitting that she chose to fill the story with farm animals. Jeff Mack's use of acrylics makes the animal textures stand out. The bright colors and intricate detail on each page help this story to come alive. The book shows the importance of friends and how lonely it can be when we scare people away. —WP



Although readers have been trying to spot tiny Waldos in picture books for several decades, Stephen Savage's wordless picture book, *Where's Walrus?* (Scholastic), features a zoo animal that is easier to spot as he journeys through the city. After Walrus escapes from his tank, the frantic zookeeper chases him through various urban locales. Walrus, however, successfully disguises himself by donning hats to blend in with surroundings, ranging from an Edward Hopper diner to a department store window. After Walrus' true identity is revealed during a stunning performance at a diving exhibition, the zookeeper comes up with an idea designed to keep Walrus closer to home and attract more people to the zoo. This clever and satisfying circular story can be read by anyone with imagination and a talent for spotting the marine mammal in various settings.—KP



Anyone who has been disappointed by a last-minute change in vacation plans will sympathize with Mark Teague's postcard-writing dog in *LaRue Across America* (Scholastic).

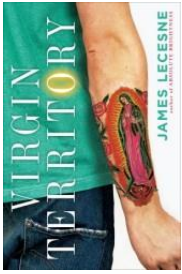


Yes, Ike the corresponding terrier is back, this time documenting a cross-country journey with his owner, Gertrude LaRue, plus two cats. The cats belong to their neighbor, Mrs. Hibbins, who was hospitalized with heatstroke and had no one to care for her pets. Unfortunately, the road trip means that Mrs. LaRue has to cancel the cruise to Mexico she had booked for herself and Ike. As usual, Ike's account of events is contradicted by the illustrations. His postcards to Mrs. Hibbins portray himself as a hero with the cats as villains. For example, his description of the visit to the observation deck of the Empire State Building claims that the felines turned on him viciously when he tried to hold them up for a better view, while the illustration shows him perilously close to the edge. Of course, the reader will see that there is plenty of blame to share among all three animals. Mrs. LaRue looks increasingly grim as they travel across the United States, until an auto breakdown in the desert leads to a serendipitous encounter with someone who can get them on a cruise after all. This book, as earlier La Rue escapades, is designed for readers in elementary grades who can discern the differences between the text of the postcards and the visual representations of Ike's imagination and reality.—KP

Fiction

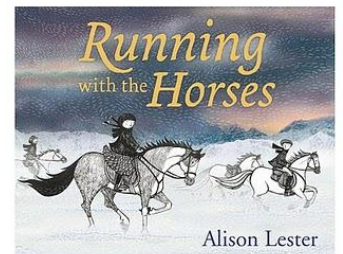
On West Fourth Street in New York City, there is a small basketball court known as the Cage. In *Pick-Up Game: A Full Day of Full Court* (Candlewick), edited by Marc Aronson, nine young adult writers tackle one day at the Cage, each writing a short story that follows the one before. Common characters, as well as the use of Charles R. Smith's poems and photographs to begin every chapter, tie the stories together, but the authors bring their own distinctive viewpoints to their narratives. From author Bruce Brooks we experience the Cage through KaySaan, a book nerd who would rather calculate the average number of dribbles per player than play, until he begins to experience the physics of the game for himself. From Rita Williams-Garcia we meet the Spike-Lee wannabee who becomes obsessed with filming Dominique, a girl who just wants the chance to play. Joseph Bruchac gives us Mohawk steelworker BB, who suffers from lung disease but joins the game anyway, as a tribute to both his father and to the basketball player he himself might have been. The stories touch on many issues that might interest the adolescent reader, including homelessness, PTSD, living with a disability or chronic illness, and the death of a parent. However, it's the action and dialogue on the court where, story after story, the writing truly shines. Other contributors include Walter Dean Myers, Andy Rapp, Willie Perdomo, Sharon G Flake, Robert Burleigh and Robert Lipsyte.—JC



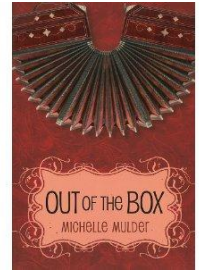


After his mother died nine years ago, Dylan and his father moved from New York City to Jupiter, Florida. Since then, things have been out of focus for Dylan: Jupiter's not home, he and his father act like roommates, and he can't remember his mother's face. Dylan's just (barely) passing through his life, until the day the Virgin Mary appears on a tree at the golf course where Dylan caddies. The sighting draws a crowd, including Angela, Desiree and Crispy, children of worshippers who travel the country following reports of Virgin Mary appearances. Through his friendship with the three, Dylan starts to really live his life. He experiences a summer of excitement, first love, and a reconnection with his father. The strength of *Virgin Territory* (Egmont) is in author James Lecesne's characters. There is Marie, Dylan's grandmother, who suffers from Alzheimer's but is still able to share stories about her fully lived life. There is Doug, Dylan's father, grappling with his grief over the loss of his wife. There's beautiful, unpredictable Angela, whose story keeps changing. And then there's Dylan, through whom the reader learns that taking a risk is part of the process of finding out who you are. While enjoyable, this novel is a bit quirky, with the inclusion of passages from Walt Whitman and Bob Dylan, a mystery character, and recurring references to the status of Pluto as a planet. —JC

Inspired by stories of the rescue of Lipizanner stallions from Vienna's Spanish Riding School during World War II, Alison Lester crafted a fictional account of how Nina and her father escaped over the mountains to safety with some of the famous animals. In *Running with the Horses* (North-South), Nina insists on riding Zelda, her favorite old cab horse, even though her father tries to discourage her. The old mare saves Zelda, her father, and a groom more than once as they outrun advancing soldiers. First she leads them to an alternate route out of the city to avoid streets blocked with rubble. Later she stops them from plunging into a ravine when they try to head across a bridge that had been blown apart. The arduous trek in deep snow eventually wears down the mare, but Nina and her father manage to encourage her to walk the final miles to the home of Nina's grandparents. The illustrations feature an interesting juxtaposition of Nina, her father, their groom, and the horses rendered in black-and-white drawings against cityscapes and landscapes with color. Although the book will have special appeal to horse lovers, the narrative excitement will attract a larger audience of elementary school readers as well.—KP



Thirteen-year-old Ellie is excited to be spending the summer with her free-spirited Aunt Jeanette. At home with her parents, Ellie does exactly what is expected of her. She takes self-defense, French, and violin classes and gets good grades. She mediates her parent's disagreements, calms her mother's mood swings, and keeps the household running smoothly. With Aunt Jeanette, Ellie has the chance to relax, make friends, pursue her own interests, and be a kid. Ellie, who is a huge fan of tango music, is thrilled when she finds an Argentinean bandoneón in Jeanette's basement. Her excitement turns to intrigue when she discovers a secret in the instrument's case. As Ellie uncovers the story of the bandoneón and the tragedy that befell its owner's family, she learns to set boundaries within her own dysfunctional family. Though it deals with some serious issues, including homelessness, mental illness and the history of the "disappeared" in Argentina, *Out of the Box* (Orca) isn't preachy or overbearing. Adolescent readers will easily relate to Ellie's attempt to establish her own identity separate from the expectations of her parents. Because author Michelle Mulder's writing is succinct and well-paced, she manages to fit a good deal of story into 150 pages. —JC

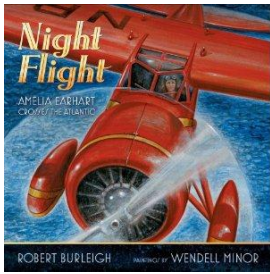


Non Fiction

For those of us who went to school before 2006, there were nine planets, and we all memorized their order using goofy mnemonics like My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto). Then, in 2006, scientists decided Pluto was no longer a planet. David A. Aguilar's **13 Planets: The Latest View of the Solar System** (National Geographic) describes the most current scientific consensus, which counts eight classical planets and five dwarf planets, including Pluto. In this book, the Sun and each planet get a two page spread, one of the pages showing the planet in the type of stunning graphic depiction for which National Geographic is renowned, and the other containing texts and tidbits about the planet. Several moons, the asteroid belt and other heavenly bodies are given the same treatment. Each page of text has a small illustration and description of the god or goddess for whom the object was named. A fascinating short appendix includes a glossary, a chart that compares weight on Earth with that on other planets, a comparison of facts about the different planets, and a demonstration of how to put solar system object in perspective (if the Sun is a grapefruit, Mercury would be the size of a grain of salt and 18 feet away). Even for readers who aren't scientifically minded, this is an interesting and beautiful book.—JC



Although readers will know that Amelia Earhart's Atlantic crossing was successful, the drama generated in words and pictures in *Night Flight* (Simon & Schuster) makes for exciting reading. Because our world is so interconnected, it is almost impossible to imagine someone



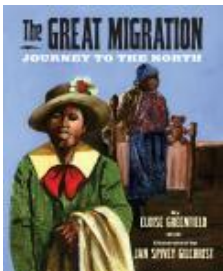
beyond the reach of communication with anyone on land or sea. In fact, after Earhart's altimeter breaks, she no longer knows how far above the ocean's surface her plane travels through the darkness. In spare, poetic language, Robert Burleigh recounts her efforts to stay awake, her struggles to control the plane when ice forms on the wings, the dangers of gas leaking from a gauge behind her in the cockpit. His sentences pulse with energy. "The friendly night becomes a graph of fear," he writes. "The Atlantic stares up with its huge uncaring eye." Wendell

Minor's paintings are equally dramatic. Jagged lightning bolts streak across inky skies. Dawn reveals layers of clouds that tumble in patterns but obscure the sight she craves: land. Readers and listeners definitely will want to learn more about Earhart in the afterword and perhaps delve into some of the books and internet resources listed after the main text. A great resource for middle grade readers.—KP

A Dazzling Display of Dogs (Random House) is a compilation of poems about pooches written by Betty Franco. The 34 short poems about the lives of dogs range from taking a stroll with Lottie to bedtime with Brownie. Michael Wertz illustrated this book by creating the whimsical pictures out of the words of the poem on each page. Humor slips its way into the mix in numerous poems, including "Misleading Sigh" where you have to read between the lines to discover Willy the beagle's traits. Both children who cannot read and the adults reading to them will enjoy the bright colors and interesting pictures of pups displayed with each poem. Jump into the pages and experience what it's like to have a doggone good day! -- KS

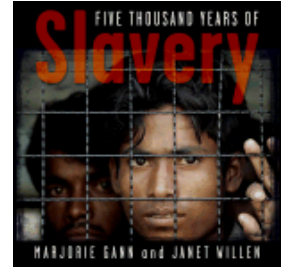


Over a million African Americans left the southern part of the United States to move north between 1915 and 1930. Eloise Greenfield gives poetic voice to some of the people she imagined made the trek in *The Great Migration: Journey to the North* (HarperCollins).

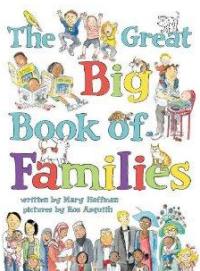


Readers meet young people sad to leave their friends, a man who feels torn between the green land around him and the promise of a better life, a woman who "can't wait to get away." We accompany the crowds on their journey by train past fields of cotton, tobacco, and beans as they head toward cities with names like Chicago, Cleveland, and Detroit. The arrival areas of stations are crowded with members of extended families reunited as they seek a more promising future. Jan Spivey Gilchrist uses a variety of artistic techniques to illustrate the text. Both author and artist have personal connections to the events. Greenfield was four months old when her family moved from North Carolina to Washington, D.C. Gilchrist's mother moved to Chicago from Arkansas while her father came to that city from Mississippi. Elementary school students might want to investigate their own families' journeys after learning about this major migration.—KP

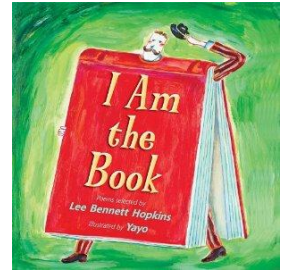
Marjorie Gann and Janet Willen tackle a disturbing but important issue in *Five Thousand Years of Slavery* (Tundra). If most people in the United States think of slavery at all, they probably consider the topic as it relates to 19th-century history, the abolition movement, the U.S. Civil War, and the Emancipation Proclamation. As this volume makes clear, those episodes are only a small part of a far-reaching reality that extended around the globe for centuries and persists today. Whether in South America, Asia, Africa, or the Middle East, people enslaved their fellow human beings. Sometimes people sold their children or themselves to pay off debts. Others were enslaved after they were captured in battles or seized by pirates or traders seeking a profit. Still others were born into slavery, with one class of society considering another inferior and thus destined to serve without freedom. Gann and Willen do not shrink from including details about the harsh working and living conditions slaves endured or the punishments they received if they tried to escape. What is most shocking is that slavery continues and that some goods available for low prices in the West are “bargains” because the workers that produce them work as slaves. Senior high students and adults can learn about current antislavery organizations by visiting the websites suggested. For more information about all the topics covered in the book, readers can consult the bibliography provided at the authors’ own site.—KP



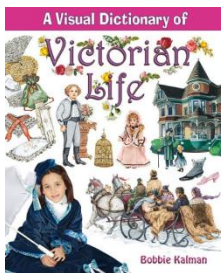
May Hoffman explores the various ways humans live together in *The Great Big Book of Families* (Penguin). She notes that some children live with a mommy and daddy while others have two mommies or daddies or live with only one parent. Some families include lots of relatives while others have only two people. Families can live in all sorts of homes, take various kinds of vacations, celebrate different holidays, and engage in many hobbies. Ros Asquith’s illustrations include children and adults of many races, sizes, ages, and dispositions. Each topic such as jobs, schools, food, and transportation receives a double-page spread that includes four to six larger vignettes in the center with a border of related objects. For example, the pages dealing with pets are ringed by animals while the clothes pages feature stacks of garments on the sides with clotheslines along the pages’ top and bottom. Neither author nor illustrator shies away from tough realities such as homelessness or unemployment. In the “jobs” section, for example, a little girl shoves her piggy bank across the table while her parents look worried about a stack of bills. Children and parents can be sad or angry as well as joyful and kind. As the text above the portraits on the final pages notes: “Most families are all of these things some of the time.” Most readers will find some aspects of their family’s life reflected in the pages and also stop to think about how others live differently.—KP



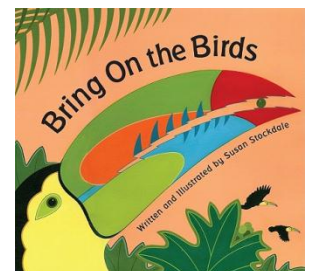
Lee Bennett Hopkins has selected works by 13 poets in a compilation sure to delight bibliophiles: *I Am the Book* (Holiday House). Some testimonials come from readers, such as the speaker in Kristine O’Connell George’s poem: “Riding home from the library,/ don’t need a window seat./ Got a great new book to read,/ eleven more beneath my feet.” In other poems, a book speaks for itself, like the paperback abandoned on a beach, waiting for a new reader in Michele Krueger’s “Paperback Plunder.” Others celebrate poetry or remind us of the riches captured in the pages of a “well-loved book.” As Naomi Shihab Nye reminds us: “This is a wealth/ we never lose.” Yayo’s clever illustrations incorporate imagery from the poems to transform books into a variety of objects. Books become part of a whale’s tale, a conch shell, a tag for a tea bag. Spotting the images adds to the fun for listeners. Yes, listeners. Like most poems, these are meant to be shared by reading aloud.—KP



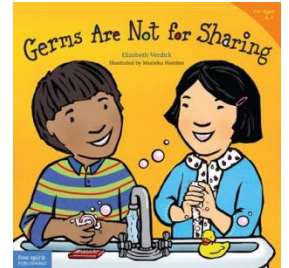
Bobbie Kalman’s *A Visual Dictionary of Victorian Life* (Crabtree) gives readers a picture of how American and Canadian families were influenced by the reign of Queen Victoria in England from 1837 to 1901 and how some of those influences continue to this day. Topics are covered in two-page spreads and include housing, fashion, leisure activities, children’s games, Christmas traditions, childhood, modes of transportation and art. The six to twelve year old reader will see many things that look familiar, such as bicycles, Christmas trees, Victorian-style houses, and jump-ropes, and some things that might not, such as candles on Christmas trees, household call boxes, chamber pots and bustles. Captioned pictures include illustrations, photographs and reproductions that taken together form a flowery, fancy, ornate impression of the Victorian Era. This is one of a series of Visual Dictionaries by Crabtree, which cover a variety of topics, including Christmas Long Ago, A Colonial Community, Native Communities, The Old West, and A Pioneer Community.—JC



Susan Stockdale’s acrylic illustrations take viewers on a worldwide avian tour in *Bring On the Birds* (Peachtree). The full-page illustrations can be shared with a small group or enjoyed by browsers. The simple rhyming text does not identify the species that are portrayed, but that information is included after the main text. Brief paragraphs about each bird include the continents on which it can be found. Among the unusual birds are red-billed oxpeckers riding on a giraffe’s neck and white-tailed ptarmigans blending into their snowy surroundings. However, there are also more familiar backyard birds such as the red-bellied woodpecker and American robin. Budding ornithologists will need additional resources to find more details, but this introduction will pique their interest.—KP



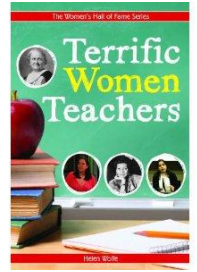
Germs! They're everywhere: in the air, in food, and on all the things you touch. Elizabeth Verdick's *Germs Are Not for Sharing / Los germen no son para compartir* (Free Spirit) teaches readers how germs are spread and how to keep from sharing them. Though vague on the specifics of why germs are bad, this book focuses on the all important skill of hand-washing, dedicating several pages to the description of how and when this should be done. The target four-to-seven year olds are bound to absorb this message, especially through repeated readings. Marieka Heinlen's illustrations of children are simple and colorful. Oversized germs with faces and limbs appear periodically throughout the book to share information. The bilingual text and diverse array of individuals that appear on the pages make this book accessible and appealing to a wide range of children. *Germs are Not for Sharing* is part of Free Spirit's Best Behavior Series, which includes the titles *Words are Not for Hurting* and *Hands are Not for Hitting*.—JC



Jeanette Winter turns to the world of science for her latest biography for young readers in *The Watcher: Jane Goodall's Life with the Chimps* (Random House). She emphasizes Goodall's fascination with animals from the time she was a young girl in England. After leaving school, she worked to save enough money for a passage to Africa, where she planned to get a job working with animals. When Louis Leakey hired her to live with and observe chimpanzees in Tanzania, Goodall found her calling. For weeks and months, she watched carefully and moved quietly, but no chimps appeared. When she came down with malaria, she almost gave in to despair. Eventually, though, her patience paid off when the chimps let them move near them. For years, she took notes on their behavior, which led to her groundbreaking publications on chimpanzee behavior. She reluctantly left Africa when it became clear that she had to speak out against the destruction of the chimpanzees' forest homes and the humans who arrived to kidnap baby chimps to sell as lab animals, pets, and circus performers. Winter's distinctive acrylic paintings combine simple lines and patterns with flat panels of color. Although a picture book biography can touch only on the basics of a person's life, Winter suggests additional sources for those who want to learn more. All readers might look more closely at the world around them after reading this introduction to Goodall's work.—KP



Afghani refugee Malalai Joya returned to her homeland in 1998 only to find that conditions were terrible for women and girls under the ruling Taliban. She decided to help her people by starting a health clinic for women and a secret school for boys and girls. At the age of 25, she was elected to Afghanistan's new parliament. Despite attacks and repeated threats to her life from men who oppose a woman's participation in public life, Malalai Joya continues to speak out in favor of women's rights to education and health care. Helen Wolfe's *Terrific Women Teachers* (Second Story) tells Joya's story and that of nine other exceptional educators. The reader learns about Onésime Dorval, a 19th century Metis woman who provided the first bilingual English and French education in Canada and Friel Dicker-Brandeis, who taught art to children while interned in the Nazi concentration camp at Terezin. Each story is told in a straight-forward, easy to read manner. Potential teachers, as well as any reader whose life has been touched by a teacher, will find inspiration in the success of these remarkable women, which has often taken place in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. –JC



Book Reviews written by:

KP—Kathy Piehl, CCYAB Director
JC—Jennifer Christianson, CCYAB Graduate Assistant
TM—Theresa Mergens, English 325 student
WP—Whitney Park, English 325 student
KS—Kelsey Sabatino, English 325 student
EW—Elizabeth Wright, English 325 student

Books Reviewed in this issue:

Aguilar, David. *13 Planets: The Latest View of the Solar System*. National Geographic, 2011. ISBN 9781426307706. \$16.95.

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