

Human Family Literature  
2003-2004  
Compiled by Peggy M. Johnsen

Kimmel, Haven. *Orville, A Dog Story*. (Clarion Books, 2003) ISBN 0-618-15955-X.

Wow! This is a powerful first voice story from Orville, a big ugly dog who smells the needs, wants, and wishes of the people around him. At the same time no one understands the needs, wants, and wishes of his barks. Heart-wrenching.

James, Simon. *Little One Step*. (Candlewick Press, 2003) ISBN 0-7636-2070-X.

As three ducklings brothers find their way to their mother, the youngest duckling learns that by taking one little step at a time he can cross forests and fields to mother. Great metaphor for those small Kaizen steps all learners must take in order to reach the goal!

Farish, Terry. *The Cat Who Liked Potato Soup* (Candlewick Press, 2003)  
ISBN 0-7636-0834-3.

The friendship between an old man and his cat, both of whom like potato soup, is stained after he goes fishing without her. Love story of two curmudgeons and how communication is key to a caring relationship.

Daly, Niki *Once Upon a Time* (Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2003) ISBN 0-374-35633-5

Sarie is a little girl living in South Africa. She loves school, but she has trouble reading aloud and the other children tease her for it. One day, she finds a book with her Auntie Anna that makes it easy to read, and soon she finds the confidence to do the same at school.

Tavares, Matt *Oliver's Game* (Candlewick Press, 2004) ISBN 076361852-7

Oliver loves baseball, and he loves helping his grandfather out in his nostalgia store. But one day Oliver finds a jersey, and his grandfather tells him the story of his own shot at the big leagues, and why he chose to go fight for his country instead.

Arnett, Robert. *Finders Keepers?* (Atman Press, 2003) ISBN 0965290026.

Arnett is the author of the highly acclaimed book *India Unveiled*, a travelogue illustrated with award-winning photography. This book was inspired by a young Indian boy that Arnett met on his travels in India and incorporates the author's heartwarming experiences during his travels through India and his impressions of the places he visited. It is a story brimming with optimism that brings our large world closer together. "This book is dedicated to the silent voice within each of us that prompts up to do what is right." Nice addition for Character Education literature collection.

Ray, Mary Lyn *Welcome Brown Bird* Ill: Peter Syvada (Harcourt, 2004) ISBN 0152928634

This book, written in Spanish and English, tells the story of two boys, one in North America and one in South America, who each look for the same small bird, the thrush, to come each year. Great for migration, multicultural, seasons, and lots of other studies.

Khan, Rukhsana. *Ruler of the Courtyard*. (Viking, 2003) ISBN 0670035831.

This Pakistani author (living in Canada) tells the great courage of young Saba to face her fears of the chickens in the courtyard and what she believes is a snake in the bath house. She finds the ability to overcome her fears, becoming the Ruler of the Courtyard! Layered message of the fear that children of war conflicted countries must experience.

Park, Frances and Ginger Park. *The Royal Bee*. (Boyds Mills Press, 2000) ISBN 1563978679.

This is based on the true story of two Korean sisters' grandfather's experience as a young boy in Korea. Only sons of wealthy families were allowed to go to school and Song-ho was very poor. Great story of a young boy's courage as well as his determination to gain an education.

Wilson, Karma. *Hilda Must Be Dancing*. (Simon & Schuster, 2004) ISBN 0689847882.

This is a delightful tale of Hilda Hippo who tries other, quieter, activities when her jungle friends are disturbed by her dancing. Nothing makes her happy until Water Buffalo suggests swimming and she finds a new way to express herself. Fun language and illustrations.

Lee, Paul. *A Song for Ba*. (Douglas & McIntyre, 2004) ISBN 0888994923.

Once again Paul Lee presents a powerful story around the trials of the Chinese immigrants and their painful transition endured as they adapted to the New World, while trying to keep their own culture alive. Wei Lim must decide if can accept the responsibility to play the female roles in the Chinese opera, not the role of a great man, in order to save the opera company. The ancient art form found in this book is the same used in *Ghost Train*, by the same author.

Turner, Pamela S. *Hachiko, The True Story of a Loyal Dog*. (Houghton Mifflin, 2004) ISBN 0618140948.

Relates the true story of a dog that accompanied his master to and from a Tokyo train station for a year and, after his master died, continued to wait for him there every day for many years.

Hopkinson, Deborah *A Packet of Seeds* Ill: Bethanne Andersen (Greenwillow, 2004) ISBN 0060090898

A girl named Annie tells of her family's journey west, of her mother's pregnancy and depression, and of how a garden plot and a packet of seeds from "home" helped them all find some joy again. Hopkinson is from Walla Walla.

Pinkney, Andrea Davis *Fishing Day* Illus: Shane W. Evans (Hyperion, 2003)  
ISBN 078680766-0

Reenie and her mother love to fish at Jim Crow River. But sometimes Peter Troop and his dad come and disturb their calm fishing days. but one day Reenie steps across the imaginary line and helps Peter out with his fishing, and a friendship of sorts is born.

Frame, Jeron Ashford. *Yesterday I Had the Blues*. (Tricycle Press, 2003)  
ISBN 1-58246-084-1.

A young boy ponders a variety of emotions and how different members of his family experience them, from his own blues to his father's grays and his grandmother's yellows.

Smothers, Ethel Footman *The Hard-times Jar*. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003)  
ISBN 0-374-32852-8.

Emma, the daughter of poor migrant workers, longs to own a real book. When she turns eight she must attend school, a school where everyone is the color of buttermilk, all creamy and white. There were none her color of chocolate-brown. The school is full of books! Honesty, longing, choices, and competency are themes worth exploring.

Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. *The Water Gift and the Pig of the Pig*.  
(Houghton Mifflin, 2003) ISBN 0-618-07436-8.

Radiant, elegantly textured illustrations capture the very heart of the unusual story about a divining rod, a beloved pig, and a quiet girl named Isabel with gift of her own to uncover. What are our gifts?

Gerstein, Mordicai. *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*.  
(Roaring Brook Press, 2003) ISBN 0-7613-2868-8.

Caldecott Winner for 2004. A lyrical evocation of Philippe Petit's 1974 tightrope walk between the World Trade Center towers.

Cronin, Doreen. *Diary of a Worm*. (Joanna Cotler Books, 2003) ISBN 0-06-000151-8.

Once again Cronin has provided a wonderfully humorous story. This time it is a hysterical journal about the daily doings and the hidden world of a lovable underground dweller: a worm. Great for journaling, relationships, and finding humor in our lives.

French, Jackie. *Diary of a Wombat*. (Clarion Books, 2002) ISBN 0-618-38136-8.

Great companion for Diary thematic books and also point of view of the Wombat interacting with humans. Relationships. Humor.

Bryan, Ashley. *Beautiful Blackbird*. (Atheneum Books, 2003) ISBN 0-689-84731-9.

Coretta Scott King 2004 award for Illustrator. Adapted from a tale from *The Lla-speaking Peoples from Northern Rhodesia (Zambia)*. The colorful birds of Africa ask Blackbird, whom they think is the most beautiful of birds, to decorate them with some of his "blackening brew."

Joosee, Barbara. *Stars in the Darkness*. (Chronicle Books, 2002) ISBN 0-8118-2168-4.  
Realistic language and powerful illustrations combine to create a hope-filled story of family love and show how one young boy's courage can make a difference.

Recorvits, Helen. *My Name is Yoon*. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003)  
ISBN 0-374-35114-7.

Disliking her name as written in English, Korean-born Yoon, or "shining wisdom," refers to herself as cat, bird, and cupcake, as a way to feel more comfortable in her new school and new country. Community.

Cox, Judy. *My Family Plays Music*. (Holiday House, 2003) ISBN 0-8234-1591-0.

A musical family with talents for playing a variety of instruments enjoys getting together to celebrate. Love and Belonging

Perez, L. King. *First Day in Grapes*. (Lee and Low Books, 2002)  
ISBN 1-58430-045-0.

Chico's and his family move up and down the state of CA picking fruits and vegetables. September is always grapes. This is a story of personal triumph and inner strength. Self-confidence. Community Competence

Muth, Jon J. *The Three Questions*. (Scholastic Press, 2002) ISBN 0-439-19996-4.

Based on a short story by Leo Tolstoy, Nikolai asks his animal friends to help him answer three important questions: "When is the best time to do things?" "Who is the most important one?" and "What is the right thing to do?" Community. Choices

Livingston, Irene *Finklehopper Frog* Illus: Brian Lies (Ten Speed Press, 2003)  
ISBN 1-58246-075-2

Finklehopper Frog sees everyone jogging and wants to join in. He gets himself a funky jogging suit and goes out, but others make fun of him. Finally he finds a friend who helps him appreciate how unique he is.

Crystal, Billy *I Already Know I Love You* Illus: Elizabeth Sayles (Byron Press, 2004)  
ISBN 0-06-059391-1

This is a sweet rhyming book about a grandfather speaking to his unborn grandchild about all the things he can't wait to do with her and show her.

Buehner, Caralyn *Superdog, The Heart of a Hero* Illus: Mark Buehner (Harper Collins, 2004) ISBN 0-06-623620-7

Dex is a small dog, and the other dogs make fun of him. Even a cat named Clevis mocks him. But Dex has the heart of a hero, so he works hard to get in shape and starts helping the others around him. Clevis still makes fun of him, until the day Clevis needs Superdog's help.

Banks, Kate *The Cat Who Walked Across France* Illus: Georg Hallensleben (Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2004) ISBN 0-374-39968-9

A beloved cat lives in a house by the sea in the south of France until its owner dies and it is shipped far north and forgotten. It decides to go on a journey to return to that house, and sees much of the beauty of France as it travels. A lovely book with paintings of some of France's most famous monuments.

Goodman, Susan E. *On This Spot* Illus: Lee Christiansen (Greenwillow, 2004) ISBN 0-688-16913-9

This book explains what the spot that is now New York City looked like 175 years ago, 350 years ago, all the way back to 540 million years ago. This backwards history shows how much things change, and then poses the question "What will the moon look like in 100 years?"

Shin, Sun Yung *Cooper's Lesson* Illus: Kim Cogan (Children's Book Press, 2004) ISBN: 0892391936

Cooper is a biracial boy, half white and half Korean, but he feels like he doesn't belong anywhere. When he steals a brush from the Korean grocer, Mr. Lee, he learns an important lesson about himself and his community. soft, expressive, realistic paintings in muted colors

Amado, Elisa *Cousins* Illus: Luis Garay (Groundwood Books, 2004) ISBN 0888994591

A little girl lives with her grandmother, Mimi, who loves books and has a nice house. But she also visits her Abuela, who lives in a large building with lots of other families. She becomes jealous of her cousin, who is catholic and will be receiving first communion soon, so she steals the beautiful rosary belonging to her Abuela. She feels terrible, and confesses what she's done.

Connor, Leslie *Miss Birdie Chose a Shovel* Illus: Mary Azarian (Houghton Mifflin, 2004) ISBN 0618305645

Miss Birdie leaves her home in Europe to come to America. When she chooses a keepsake from her home, she chooses a shovel, which proves much more useful than a doll or some china. She digs a garden, clears snow, builds a home, and makes a life America with the help of that shovel. colored woodcuts which include historical details

U'Ren, A. *Mary Smith* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003) ISBN: 0374348421

Mary Smith is a "knocker-up" in London. Before there were alarm clocks people paid knocker-ups to come wake them up on time. Some used poles, but Mary used a pea-shooter.

Tungman, Ann *The Most Magnificent Mosque* Illus: Shelley Fowles (Francis Lincoln Children's, 2004) ISBN 1845070127

Three friends, Samuel, who is Jewish, Rashid, who is Muslim, and Miguel, who is Christian, grow up playing in and loving the great mosque in the Spanish city of Cordoba. When the Muslims are defeated and driven out of the city in the 1400s, the

new Christian ruler wants to tear down the mosque. The three friends convince him that the beauty of the building transcends religion and the mosque is saved.

Fleming, Candace *Boxes for Katje* Illus: Stacy Dressen-McQueen (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003) ISBN: 0374309221

Katje lives in Holland after World War II and she, along with all her neighbors, are hungry and without many of life's necessities. One day she receives a box from a little girl in America. They start writing each other, and soon boxes of wonderful things are arriving from America. After they make it through the difficult winter, Katje and her mother send her American friend a box of tulip bulbs so they give something back to her. Colorful, highly textured drawings that include letters written by the two girls

Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux *Almost to Freedom* Illus: Colin Bootman (Carolrhoda Books, 2003) ISBN 157505342X

Sally, a doll belonging to a slave girl named Lindy, narrates this story about life as a slave, and then an escape on the underground railroad. Sally gets left behind in the rush when slave catchers come, but soon another runaway girl arrives and takes Sally for her own. detailed, expressive paintings showing slave life in the 1800's

Obiols, Anna *Dali and the Path of Dreams* Illus: Subi (Francis Lincoln Children's, 2003) ISBN 1845072820

Summary: A boy named Salvi finds a magic key under the sea. This key leads him on a journey full of imagination. Includes a brief biography of Dali at the end. fanciful, surreal illustrations reminiscent of Dali's paintings

Schachner, Judy *Skippyjon Jones* (Dutton, 2003) ISBN 0525471340

SkippyjonJones wakes up every day with the birds. This does not please his mother very much since he is a cat and he literally wakes up every day in a bird's nest. She sends him to his room to think about being more cat-like, but Skippyjon has a wild imagination. Soon he has imagined himself a heroic Chihuahua who leads a band of less brave Chihuahuas to defeat an evil villain.

Warhola, James *Uncle Andy's* (G.P. Putnam, 2003) ISBN 0399238697

James is one of seven children. His dad is a junkman and a closet artist. James is also the nephew of pop artist Andy Warhol. This is the story of one of their family trips to visit Uncle Andy in New York in 1962. Cartoonish, expressive paintings of family scenes, which incorporate reproductions of Andy Warhol's art

Schlein, Miriam *Little Raccoon's Big Question* Illus: Ian Schoenherr (Harper Collins, 2004) ISBN 0060521163

Little Raccoon wants to know when it is that his mother loves him the most. Is it when he first wakes up in the morning? When he plays with other raccoons? When he is a good swimmer? When? She tells him that she loves him most whenever "now" is.

Carle, Eric *Mister Seahorse* (Philomel, 2004) ISBN 0399242694

Mrs. Seahorse needs to lay her eggs, so she uses Mister Seahorse's pouch. He swims away and encounters many other fish, including quite a few other fathers who take care of their babies. painted collages, some pages have clear overlays to hide the fish Mister Seahorse encounters

Johnson, Angela *Just Like Josh Gibson* Illus: Beth Peck (Simon & Schuster, 2004) ISBN 0689826281

A girl tells the story of her Grandmama who loved baseball growing up in the 1940s. She wanted to be just like Josh Gibson, who was called the Babe Ruth of the Negro Leagues. The boys rarely let the grandmother play, but one day one of the boys gets hurt and they call on her to save the game.

Lewis, Paul Owen *The Jupiter Stone* (Ten Speed Press, 2004) ISBN 1582461074

A stone hurtles to earth, sits for millions of years, and then is found by a human boy on a beach. He writes a letter to NASA and they take the stone back into space where it is eventually found by a very different kind of child.

Fleischman, Paul & Kevin Hawkes *Sidewalk Circus* (Candlewick Press, 2004) ISBN 0763611077

In this wordless book a little girl sits on a bus stop bench and observes all the street activity around her while she watches advertisements for a circus go up on the buildings. Suddenly she starts seeing the workers and citizens as members of circus acts. The illustrations show the real person (a window washer, a chef, or a skateboarder) and then the shadow in the illustrations shows what she is imagining (trapeze artists, jugglers, and clowns.)

Baker, Jeannie *Home* Illus: Jeannie Baker (Harper Collins, 2004) ISBN 0066239354

In this wordless book, the illustrator shows readers the changes that occur through one window looking out into the neighborhood. The book begins with the birth of a little girl, Tracy, and ends when Tracy brings her own child back to visit. The illustrations show how the things in the room change, as well as showing changes to the yard and the neighborhood beyond. Elaborate multimedia collages showing much detail through a small window.

Kay, Verla *Homespun Sarah* Illus: Ted Rand (G.P. Putnam, 2003) ISBN 0-399-23417-9

Sarah, a growing colonial girl in the early 1700s, goes about her chores throughout the year as her dress gets tighter and tighter. Finally her mom makes her a new dress. realistic paintings with expressive faces and great details of colonial life

Myers, Walter Dean *Blues Journey* Illus: Christopher Meyers (Holiday House, 2003) ISBN 0823416135

This is a collection of Blues refrains, set as poems on everything from lynching to the joy of love and children. Myers explores the whole range of this art form, gives a history of the musical theory and language of the blues, and even includes a timeline and glossary at the end. dark, expressive paintings using mostly blues, black and brown tones

Kay, Verla *Orphan Train* Illus: Ken Stark (Putnam, 2003) ISBN 0-399-23613-9

Two brothers and a sister are put on one of the orphan trains and shipped west. David, the littlest, is chosen first. Later Lucy and Harold are each chosen and fortunately get to see each other on occasion. Simple, Rhyming text and colorful illustrations make this a sweet version of the Historical orphan trains

Fuchs, Bernie *Ride Like the Wind A Tale of the Pony Express* (Scholastic, 2003)  
ISBN 0-439-26645-9

Gorgeous paintings illustrate this exciting story of a Pony Express Rider and his horse. Johnny Free and his horse JennySoo start their leg of the Pony Express through dangerous Paiute land. when they reach the next station it has been burned to the ground, so they set off for the next stop. Johnny is attacked by Paiutes, but JennySoo makes it through with the mail and then comes back for Johnny.

Winters, Kay *Voices of Ancient Egypt* Illus: Barry Moser (National Geographic, 2003)  
ISBN 0-7922-7560-8

A wonderful and informative collection of first person poems written in the voices of each of the workers in Ancient Egypt. The Scribe, the Dancer, the Stonecutter, and many more each tell their story in these poems. An informational section in the back gives additional context for the poems and illustrations.