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WOW REVIEW

READING ACROSS CULTURES
VOLUME XII, ISSUE 4

Summer 2020
Visual Narratives

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WOW Review: Volume XII Issue 4

Summer 2020

Visual Narratives

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Volume XII Issue 4: Visual Narratives

Introduction and Editor's Note

This issue is a slight departure from the usual format of *WOW Review*. Our theme is visual narratives, books that tell stories visually with minimal written text. While these books are sometimes referred to as wordless or silent books, we prefer visual narratives to emphasize the rich meanings that can be communicated artistically.

In addition to reviews of six visual narratives in this issue, we include two related reviews that highlight the importance and power of images in communicating across cultures and languages. One is a review of *Perception: A Photo Series*, a photographic essay that challenges racial slurs of Indigenous peoples. Another is information on the IBBY Lampadusa project that provides visual narratives from around the world for resident and refugee children on a tiny island in the Mediterranean. Through this project, children who have lost everything are invited to hear and tell stories and imagine a better future.

Several of the visual narratives reviewed in this issue celebrate the all-important imagination of children. In *Blue Rider*, a child takes a ride into imagination on the back of a blue horse. In *Flotsam*, a child looks at photos found in an old camera that floated in on the tide. The fantastical and imaginative ocean worlds are captured in the color photos along with black and white photos that capture previous “finders” and photographers of the old-fashioned camera.

Other books profile social issues. In *Owl Bat, Bat Owl*, the two species learn to live and work together, building a community across divides. Kindness in a community is highlighted in *A Circle of Friends* when one boy share his loaf of seeded bread with a homeless man who in turn uses some of the seeds to feed birds. Community action is the focus of *Letters to a Prisoner* when a father is unjustly imprisoned, but eventually released when thousands of people deluge the prison with letters requesting his release. Finally, environmentalism is taken up in *Most of the Better Things in the World* as a tiger travels across pristine landscapes.

WOW Review has profiled other visual narratives in past issues. Use the search function to look for “wordless” or “visual narrative” to find a complete list. *Hello Mr. Hulot* (David Merveille, 2013), *Here I Am* (Patti Kim & Sonia Sanchez, 2014), and *The Island* (Armin Greder, 2008) are examples that demonstrate the range in subject matter that can be told with only images and their appeal to readers of all ages, young children through adults.

We invite you to read and savor the way images can tell the whole story! As you read, consider submitting a review for our future issues. The editors welcome reviews of any children’s or YA book that highlights intercultural understanding and global perspectives around these themes:

Volume 13, Issue 1 – Open theme (Fall 2020) – submission deadline: September 1, 2020. Reviews of a children’s or YA book that highlights intercultural understanding and global perspectives.

Volume 13, Issue 2 – Themed (Winter 2021) – submission deadline: November 15, 2020

The editors welcome reviews of books that feature another language. The author may insert another language into the text (She said “Voilà!” as she drew une grande ligne with a flourish), or may include two languages next to each other (He glanced at him / Il lui a jetté un coup d’oeil).

Susan Corapi and Prisca Martens, Co-Editors



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**Connecting Across Languages and Cultures through Visual Narratives:
IBBY Silent Book Lampedusa Project**

A library for the island's children, so that they can learn to tell the difference between the horizon and the border, for children just passing through, so that Lampedusa can be more than just a staging post on their journey. Because through books we can build an ethos of welcome, respect and participation. **Guisi Nicolini, Mayor of Lampedusa**

In response to the waves of refugees from Africa and the Middle East arriving on the Italian island of Lampedusa, the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) launched the project "Silent Books: From the World to Lampedusa and Back" in 2012. The project involved creating the first library on Lampedusa, a remote island in the Mediterranean and the first port of call for thousands of immigrants arriving from across the sea on their way to a new life. The people of Lampedusa were used to being abandoned by national authorities and had few public services. The children living on the island (about 600) did not have access to books beyond their school textbooks and had not experienced what a library could offer. The goal of this library was to help local and immigrant children recognize that their lives are not limited by political conflict and to make life connections across languages and cultures.

The project also included creating a collection of outstanding silent books that could be understood and enjoyed by children across languages and cultures. These books tell stories through visual images and are rich in sensations, dreams, and memories. Silent books, a term used in Europe, are known as wordless books or visual narratives in the U.S. The Italian section put out a call to other IBBY sections around the world, asking for the best of the best of their silent books. Translation was not an issue because there were no words, just superb storytelling with images. Children who spoke different languages could "read" these stories. The criteria for selection included books that:

- narrate a journey, during which characters are open to the world at large
- project an ethos of welcome and respect, of coexistence and friendship
- show the curiosity of childhood
- tell stories because children need a world of stories to build understanding, exchange memories, and make sense of life
- invite new stories and new dreams
- portray agency where characters take an active role in society
- help readers gain a knowledge of themselves and others
- prompt questions about worlds that are different than that of the reader
- talk about the passage of time and the cycle of life and nature
- relay small moments of happiness

This collection has toured as an exhibition at various venues in Italy, Europe, the U.S., and around the world. To date, there have been four collections of Silent Books: 2013 (110 books from 23 countries), 2015 (51 books from 18 countries), 2017 (79 books from 20 countries), and 2019 (67 books from 16 countries). Within each collection there is a selection of Honor Books, selected for their originality, complexity, historical value, and subject matter. They provide a sweeping overview of the world of wordless book publishing around the world.

Silent books are rich, original and have a powerful narrative force. Resources on the IBBY/Silent Books site offer suggestions on effective ways to use the books when crossing linguistic or cultural barriers. IBBY Italia has compiled *10 tips for reading silent books in a community that does not speak a common language*. IBBY Sweden has produced a booklet giving ideas about how to use the Silent Books with children: *Silent Books: A Handbook on Wordless Picture Books with Narrative Power*. IBBY also wrote a report of the initial development of the project and the activities, *Silent Books: From the World to Lampedusa and Back*.

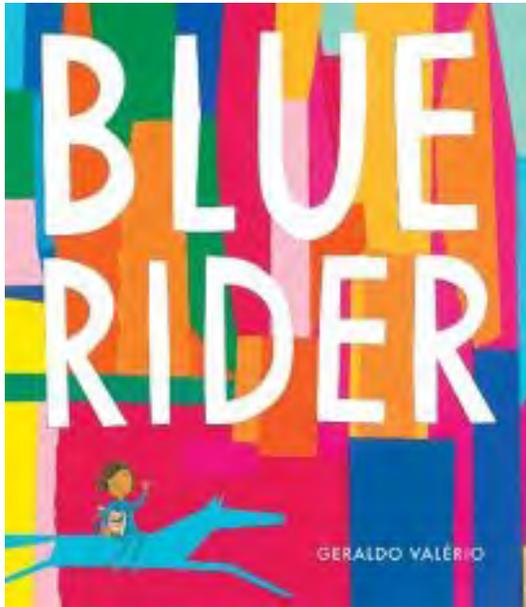
All of the Silent Book lists and resources on using them can be found on the IBBY website.

Mariella Bertelli, a librarian and storyteller who has worked in the Lampedusa library, sums up the power of stories and particularly Silent Books this way:

The barrier-free nature of these wordless books – outside of language, culture, age and intellectual ability – adds a totally democratic element to the reading experience. This fundamental concept goes hand in hand with IBBY’s mission that it is through children’s books that we can create more tolerance and understanding among the people of the world. (*IBBY Sweden, Silent Books: A Handbook on Wordless Picture Books with Narrative Power*)



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Blue Rider

Written and illustrated by Geraldo Valério
Groundwood Books, 2018, 44 pp.

ISBN: 9781554989812

Bold colors graphically highlight the white letters of the title, *Blue Rider*. A child dressed in blue, riding a blue horse and holding a book that mirrors the book cover waves to readers with a smile. The color on the cover and the decoration on the title page draw readers into this book. As the story begins, the first double-page spread illustrations are more subdued with shapes outlining a city followed by pages of rectangles representing an apartment building. Neutral colors with a

touch of blue set the tone for a young child outlined in beige and featured in one of the rectangles. As readers follow the child to the busy city streets, they see people hurrying, attending to their phones or other interactions, again in neutral tones with touches of blue. Suddenly the child spies a book on the ground with a blue horse on the cover and she walks away with the book and a huge smile on her face.

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This summary doesn't do justice to the expressionist use of color and shape nor to the unique message about the imaginative powers within a book. The particular abstract style in this book is the result of the author being influenced by the German Expressionist art group, *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider). The group formed in the early 1900s and artists were guided by a belief in the spiritual and symbolic role of color and form, the promotion of modern art of the time, spontaneity in painting, and primitivism. Such an abstract approach can speak to how art is transformative in the world around us, but in this book it also serves to address the imaginative worlds a book can bring to a child, thus learning about art as well as the power of story.

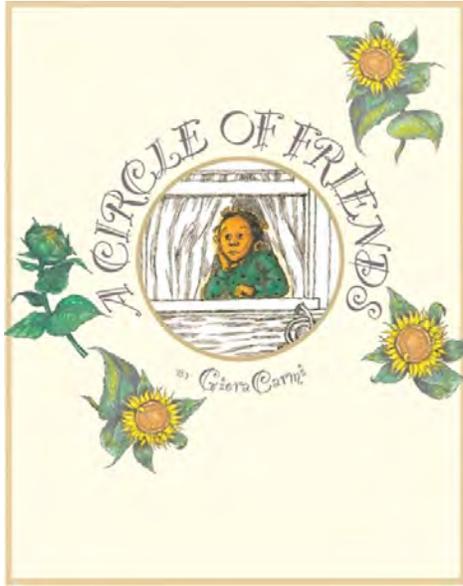
In considering the power of books and the imagination, two other picturebooks come to mind. *One is Redwoods* by Jason Chin (2015); the other is an older title that uses metaphor to share this power, *Book* by George Ella Lyon and Peter Catalanatto (1999). While these are not visual narratives, the visual texts are significant in the meaning created by the reader.

Born in Brazil, Geraldo Valério lives in Toronto and publishes internationally. He has created two other recent visual narratives: *Friends* (2019) and *At the Pond* (2020).

Janelle Mathis, University of North Texas



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A Circle of Friends

Written and Illustrated by Giora Carmi

Star Bright Books, 2003, 40 pp

ISBN: 9781932065008

At a time when empathy, caring, and gratitude are much needed, *A Circle of Friends* gives young readers a heartwarming visual narrative that shows how one child's act of kindness made a difference in the world. On the opening page of this story, author-illustrator Giora Carmi introduces the main character, a boy, thoughtfully looking outside his upstairs window. Carmi renders the boy's home, the window, and the nearby tree in pencil line drawings while portraying the boy himself in color. The boy's facial expression could be interpreted as wistful or wondering or even

bored. While the majority of the illustrations in this book are pencil drawings, the visual narrative is enhanced by Carmi's use of color to spotlight new information or the main ideas on each page. From the green money, to the muffin, its seeds, and the sunflower, visual readers will quickly pick up on the story components painted in color. This technique helps the youngest readers navigate the meaning in each new scene and follow the story line to a satisfying conclusion. There is only one printed word in the story, "bakery," so this book can easily be read and shared in any language.

The story begins when the boy's mother gives him money to spend. The boy goes to the bakery on the street level of their apartment building to buy a favorite treat—a sunflower-seed muffin. When he takes a large bite out of it, the boy notices a homeless man sleeping on a nearby park bench, his worldly possessions tied up in a bag. The child tucks the muffin, minus one bite, into the sleeping man's arms and runs home.

When the man awakens, he is amazed by this treasure. Carmi's closeup drawing of the man's wide smile and muffin stuffed cheek captures his delight. While eating the muffin, the man looks up and sees a nest in the tree. He scatters the muffin's sunflower seeds along the bench, and the parent birds swoop down and take seeds back to their nest to feed their fledgling.

The homeless man gives the baby bird yet another seed that he had saved in his pocket. The young bird takes the seed from the man's hand and deposits it in the flowerbox outside the boy's window. With the help of fertile soil and rain, the seed germinates. This circle story ends where it began—with the boy gazing out the window but this time, on a bright yellow sunflower with a sweet look of surprise on his face.

Whether or not this boy realizes the sunflower grew as the result of his gift of a muffin does not matter. The messages of empathy and caring ring true. The grateful homeless man and the boy's gratitude for the flower complete the circle of friendship that was set in motion by a simple recognition of someone else's need.

A Circle of Friends can be paired with other picturebook titles involving empathy, caring, and gratitude. Possible titles include: *We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga* (Traci Sorell and Frané Lessac, 2018); *The Last Stop on Market Street* (Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson, 2015); *Each Kindness* (Jacqueline Woodson and E. B. Lewis, 2012); *Good People Everywhere* (Lynea Gillen and Kristina Swarner, 2012); and *Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed* (Emily Pearson and Fumi Kosaka, 2002). Also on the theme of empathy and caring, *The Invisible Boy* (Trudy Ludwig and Patrice Barton, 2013) offers the opposite visual experience in which Barton first sketches the main character Brian in faint black and white while rendering all of the other characters in vibrant color.

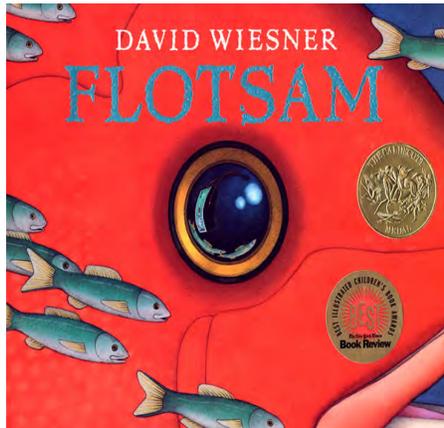
Other circle story picturebooks with similar themes can extend readers' enjoyment as well as their literacy learning: *I Am a Story* (Dan Yaccarino, 2016), *Miles of Smiles* (Karen Kaufman Orloff, 2016), *Miss Rumphius* (Barbara Cooney, 1985), and *Secrets I Know* (Kallie George and Paola Zakimi, 2017).

Author-illustrator Giora Carmi was born in Israel and immigrated to the United States in 1985. He has earned honorable mentions and awards from the Jerusalem International Book Fair, Simon Rockover Award, American Jewish Press Association, and a Sydney Taylor Book Award for his illustrations in *The Chanukkah Guest* written by Eric A. Kimmel.

Judi Moreillon, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign



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Flotsam

Illustrated by David Wiesner
Clarion/Houghton Mifflin, 2006,
40 pp ISBN 978-0-618-19457-5

David Wiesner transports readers to new worlds and past times with his breathtaking illustrations in *Flotsam*. We are introduced to a young boy at the beach with his family. He explores the beach with the same curiosity and awe that characterizes people's fascination with new and interesting things. He is inspecting all manner of wondrous things one can find at a beach, both alive and inanimate, when he finds an old fashioned, underwater camera with a roll of film.

After getting the film developed, he is astonished at the photographs. They reveal an underwater world that can hardly be dreamed of: breathtaking underwater technologies, cities, lifestyles, and creatures that are familiar, unfamiliar, and out of this world. The last photograph is almost the most wondrous of all. He knows what he must do. He puts a new roll of film in the camera, takes a picture of himself holding the last photograph, and throws the camera back into the ocean so that it may continue to bring amazement to those who find it. Winner of a Caldecott Medal in 2007, this book is a stunning and flawless example of storytelling through visual images.

The Melville Underwater Camera, as shown in the book, appears to be a camera from the early 1900s based on the clothing worn by the people in the oldest of the photographs. The camera looks like the Brownie box camera created by Eastman Kodak. These cameras were inexpensive and readily available so that anyone could have a camera and enjoy personal photographs. The box camera had very few settings and was easy to operate. In *Flotsam*, the boy is able to take the film from the camera to a nearby developing service and get a new roll of film. Many of these cameras are still operated today since the rolls of film required are available. However, the Brownie box cameras were made out of cardboard and were by no means waterproof. The Melville Underwater Camera is a wonderfully fantastical object invented for this book to amaze the imagination of the reader.

There is something incredibly moving about seeing photographs whether they are personal photographs, another person's photographs, or photographs of different areas and times of the world. Photographers allow the viewer to live vicariously through their own past lives or through the lives of others. There is a reason why photographs are considered their own art form. A photograph conveys the life and emotion of a thing or event that cannot be conveyed in the same way through words in a book. *Flotsam*, though a fantasy book, is a representation of how photographs can transport people across time and place.

If “eyes are a window to the soul,” then what we see contributes to who we are. A camera is like an eye that can share what is seen with more than one person; so, to go along with the metaphor, we can look out from someone else’s soul. David Wiesner yoked our natural delight in connecting the ‘unattainable’ sights of photographs with our natural delight in the imagination to create *Flotsam*, a timeless piece of literature.

Many of David Wiesner’s other visual narratives make excellent book pairs including: *Tuesday* (1991), *June 29, 1999* (1995), and *Sector 7* (1999). Wiesner often employs the fantastical to drive the engaging plots of his books. Nonfiction books would pair well too, including: *Otis and Will Discover the Deep: The Record-Setting Dive of the Bathysphere* by Barb Rosenstock and illustrated by Katherine Roy (2018), *Big Book of Sea Creatures* by Minna Lacey and illustrated by Fabiano Fiorin (2012), *Shark Lady: The True Story of How Eugenie Clark Became the Ocean’s Most Fearless Scientist* by Jess Keating and illustrated by Marta Álvarez Miguéns (2017), *Manfish: A Story of Jacques Cousteau* by Eric Puybaret (2015), and *Sea Creatures* by Seymour Simon (2018). Other pairs might include: *Deep Underwater* by Irene Luxbacher (2018), *Fish Girl* by David Wiesner (2017), and *Ocean Meets Sky* by Terry and Eric Fan (2018).

David Wiesner grew up in New Jersey and always had a skill and interest in art. He went to Rhode Island School of Design to study art and visual storytelling. One of his jobs after college was designing illustrations for *Cricket*, a children’s magazine. He has also designed the cover art for novels. He travels to speak to students about art. He typically uses watercolors as the medium of his art. Many of his books use visual images without words. He has received a Caldecott Medal for *Flotsam* (2006), *The Three Pigs* (2001), and *Tuesday* (1991). He received Caldecott Honors for *Mr. Wuffles!* (2013), *Sector 7* (1999), and *Free Fall* (1988).

Madeline Brooks, Beach Park, IL



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Letters to a Prisoner

Jacques goldstyn



Letters to a Prisoner

Illustrated by Jacques Goldstyn

Author Note Trans. from French by Angela Keenlyside

Owlkids Books, 2017, np

ISBN 978-1-77247-251-7

This visual narrative highlights the power of the written word. It was inspired by the Amnesty International letter-writing campaigns to support people jailed for expressing their opinions on social justice issues. A father and daughter attend a peaceful protest, where he is arrested by the army and sent to solitary confinement. His emotions range between hope, nostalgia, boredom, and misery as the days go by; his only companions are a mouse who creeps out from a hole in the wall and a bird who visits him through the

barred window of his cell. As he dissolves into despair, the bird starts to bring him letters of support, but each one is confiscated and burned by his guard. The smoke carries his message throughout the world, leading to a deluge of mail and a flight to freedom on wings made of letters—along with a joyous reunion with his daughter.

The book is dedicated to Raif Badawi, a Saudi writer, dissident, activist, and creator of the website Free Saudi Liberals, and his family. He has been in prison since 2012 for “insulting Islam through electronic channels.” In an author’s note, translated from French by Angela Keenlyside, Goldstyn says he was inspired to create the book based on his participation in Amnesty International’s Write for Rights letter-writing marathon.

The cartoon-style illustrations include many pages with multiple vignettes to provide viewers with a sense of the passage of time and the unfolding action (or inaction in the prison cell). These vignettes create frameless panels, telling the story through poignant pen-and-ink drawings with watercolor washes. The symbolism within these sketches encourages thought and discussion.

The book was first published in French and based in the illustrator’s background as a cartoonist and activist in French Canada. Jacques Goldstyn was born and raised in Montreal; taught how to draw by his father and spendt his time drawing every single day. He became a geologist and worked in the gold mines in Abitibi and the petroleum industry in Alberta. Rediscovering his love of drawing, he became a cartoonist for science youth magazines (*Les Débrouillards*) in French Canada and a political cartoonist for the *Montreal Gazette*. He uses his pen to explain new scientific gadgets or concepts to young readers with the goal of helping readers think logically about the scientific concepts. In contrast, his goal for political cartoons is for his audience to interpret an issue or person for themselves (Valiz, 2018).

Goldstyn has written and illustrated several books for children, including *Bertolt* (2017), which features an imaginative boy whose best friend is an oak tree, highlighting belonging, love and loss. *The Eleventh Hour* (2018) focuses on life, death and the futility of war through the story of two friends from Canada who go to war against Germany in 1914.

The themes of organizing for protest and activism and the plight of political prisoners can be further explored by pairing this book with other titles. One particularly powerful picturebook connection is *The Stamp Collector*, written by Jennifer Lanthier and illustrated by Francois Thisdale (2012), about a people's poet who becomes a political prisoner in China when his writing is deemed dangerous. He is not allowed to receive letters of support, but his guard keeps the stamps and eventually passes on the letters. The issue of confinement and injustice can be further explored through the many picturebooks on Japanese-American internment camps, WWII concentration camps, forced labor camps, and refugee detention centers.

The theme of freedom and human rights can be pursued through *Dreams of Freedom* from Amnesty International UK (2015) with quotes about different aspects of freedom, and *My Little Book of Freedoms* illustrated by Chris Riddell (2017) to show 16 different freedoms. The theme of protest can be explored through *Rise Up! The Art of Protest* (Jo Rippon, 2020) in the photographs of protest posters from the last one hundred years around social justice issues, while *Peaceful Fights for Equal Rights* by Rob Sanders and illustrated by Jared Schorr (2018) introduces the concepts of protest, resistance and activism for children. For older readers, *Free? Stories about Human Rights from Amnesty International* (2010) contains contemporary short stories and poems, related to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and written by a range of authors about young people who are victims, perpetrators or activists.

Given our current context of global unrest and increasing social injustice, this visual narrative is a reminder of the power of the written word, and the need to rise above attempted suppression of the human ability to challenge and resist.

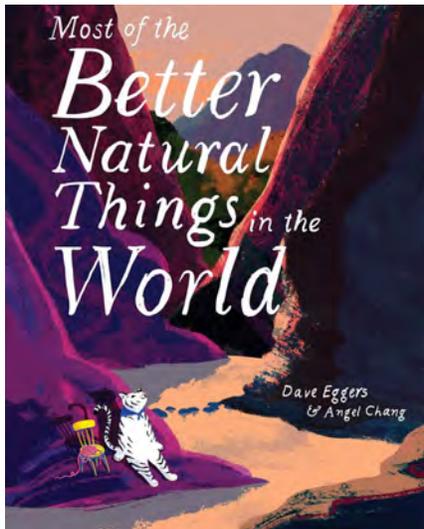
Reference:

Valji, Salim (2018). Illustrator Jacques Godstyn, a.k.a. Boris, is drawn to a challenge. *Montreal Gazette*, February 3, 2018. <https://montrealgazette.com/entertainment/local-arts/illustrator-jacques-goldstyn-a-k-a-boris-is-drawn-to-a-challenge/>

Kathy G. Short, University of Arizona



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Most of the Better Natural Things in the World

Written by Dave Eggers

Illustrated by Angel Chang

Chronicle Books, 2019, 52 pp

ISBN: 978-1-4521-6282-9

Each page of this Kirkus and Booklist Starred Review picturebook reveals a single word and depicts a tiger journeying through the landscape with a chair on its back. Steppe, Gorge, Valley...Vista with a fold-out spread that is simply stunning...Foothills, Badlands, Tundra... Where is Tiger going? Why is Tiger carrying a chair? When Tiger reaches Taiga, we get the answer.

I spent quite a bit of time on each page. I was fascinated

with the changing landscape and, in particular, with “Oasis” and how Chang cleverly embeds this feature in the shape of Tiger’s eye. In addition to Eggers’ hand-lettered text and Chang’s mixed media illustrations, the picturebook contains a glossary with definitions for each of the different geological features, and the endpapers feature a stylized map of the world. As a further bonus, a portion of the proceeds supports YEP, the Young Editors Project, connecting children’s authors with their young readers (Book Jacket).

This picturebook can be shared with children, middle schoolers, high schoolers, college students, and teachers. From finding out what they think about the illustrations to what they already know about the biomes, this picturebook could be a springboard into further explorations of biomes and geographical features. In addition, Tiger’s journey begs for questions: Where is Tiger going? Why is Tiger carrying a chair on its back? How is Tiger going to make it across the gorge or through the cloud forest or out of the gulch? Who is Tiger going to meet along the way? These questions and others serve as great prompts for students to write stories of their own, whether individually, in small groups, or as a whole class.

Most of the Better Natural Things in the World pairs well with a number of books, including *Beastly Biomes*, written and illustrated by Carly Allen-Fletcher (2019); *Many Biomes, One Earth* by Sneed Collard III and James M. Needham (2009); *The Wondrous Workings of Planet Earth: Understanding Our World and Its Ecosystems* by Rachel Ignatofsky (2018). It would also pair with books in the *Biomes of North America* series by Rebecca L. Johnson, such as *A Journey into a Lake* (2004); *A Journey into a River* (2004); *A Journey into a Wetland* (2004); *A Journey into an Estuary* (2004); *A Journey into the Ocean* (2004); *A Walk in the Boreal Forest* (2001); *A Walk in the Deciduous Forest* (2001); *A Walk in the Desert* (2001); *A Walk in the Prairie* (2001); *A Walk in the Rain Forest* (2001); and *A Walk in the Tundra* (2001).

Dave Eggers is a well-known author and co-founder of The International Congress of Youth Voices. He is the winner of many awards including the Muhammad Ali

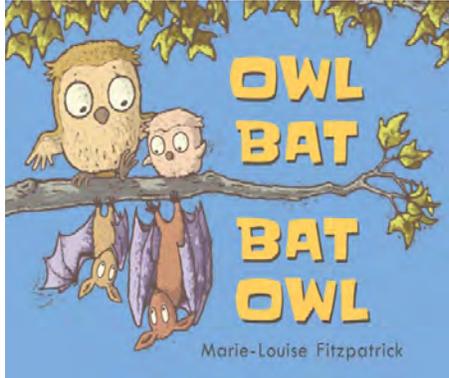
Humanitarian Award for Education and the TED Prize. He has been a finalist for the National Book Award, the Pulitzer Prize, and the National Book Critics Circle Award. He lives in northern California with his family. For more information, please see his website: <https://daveeggers.net/>

Angel Chang is an illustrator in Taiwan. She has won a number of awards for her art and her collaboration with Dave Eggers is her first picturebook. For more information, please see her website: <https://angelchangart.com/>

T. Gail Pritchard, Texas A&M University



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Owl Bat, Bat Owl

Written and illustrated by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick
Candlewick Press, 2016, 32 pp
ISBN: 978-0-7636-9161-5

A family of owls sleeps on a branch in a treetop. A family of bats suddenly joins them. Eight pairs of eyes wide open. The owls move to the left. There is tension, uncertainty, and fear in the air. A small owl visits one of the small bats. Ooh, bad idea! The small owl returns atop the branch. All animals are back asleep. Then it happens. Strong and wild spiral currents shake bats and owls equally. Where are the small bats? And the small owls? Scared eyes, terrified eyes,

concerned eyes, compassionate and supportive eyes. When the moon reaches the sky, the big owl and the big bat help each other to find the small ones. Back on the branch, there is no need to move left or right, bats and owl are at center, and together, they are ready to play and welcome others.

Through owls and bats, the author shows the uneasiness, fear, and defensiveness often present when facing an unknown situation, an unheard or unwitnessed perspective. The larger animals show these emotions, while the smaller ones make several attempts to play with each other. The characters come closer after sharing a traumatic experience. The storm forces them to see each other past their differences, to trust, and work together to save all. This book creates spaces for readers of all ages to enter conversations about inclusion, caring, and community. In current times, *Owl Bat, Bat Owl* is a needed story about hope and restoring humanity through social responsibility.

The illustrations are created digitally. Starting with the endpapers, readers can see white spiral dashed lines on a blue background suggesting wind currents. The title page adds small green leaves and butterflies floating above and below an invitation that reads: "Turn the book upside down and see what it's like to hang out with the bats!" A white background frames every double-spread illustration, except when the wind turns into a furious storm. In this double-page spread, the author plays with size, positionality, movement, and emphasis to indicate that the magnitude of the storm goes beyond the corners of the story world. Eye contact between the owls and the bats, a constant throughout the story, is utilized in this part of the story to follow the smaller animals being carried away by the strong winds. The larger animals could represent anyone able to care for small ones. However, the book jacket and the author's website refer to the large owl as Mama Owl. These distinct messages can support explorations around concepts, such as family and children's agency.

Owl Bat, Bat Owl can be paired with other books with animal characters searching and offering refuge, while moving from fear toward understanding and empathy, such as *Shelter* (Céline Claire, 2017) and *Room on Our Rock* (Kate and Jol Temple, 2019). Another potential pairing includes books that present perspective as a filter for exploring similarities and differences, such as *Up Above and Down Below* (Paloma Valdivia, 2012), *They All Saw a Cat* (Brendan Wenzel, 2016), and the all-time classic *Voices in the Park* (Anthony Browne, 1998).

Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick is an Irish author and illustrator, whose primary goal as a creator of children's literature is "charting the personal journeys we make in early childhood, the small events which change us, the little battles and triumphs as we grow up" (official website). Four of her picturebooks have received awards such as the Children's Book Ireland Book of the Year awards. *Owl Bat, Bat Owl* is a CCBC Choices 2018 pick for Picture Books for Young Children. This is her first visual narrative. Her growing collection of picturebooks and short novels can be explored at marielouisefitzpatrick.com.

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Perception: A Photo Series

Written and photographed by K. C. Adams

Highwater Press, 2019, 120 pp

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While *Perception* does not fit the literal description of a visual text, it fits the concept of telling a story mainly through pictures. K. C. Adams, an artist and educator from Winnipeg, Canada, tackles racist stereotyping through a series of photographs that were originally displayed on billboards, bus shelters, and posters around the city. This book is a collection of the photos that confronted head-on the disparaging remarks that Métis, First Nations and Inuit hear as they go about their daily lives.

Each page is part of a black and white two-photo study of the emotion that words can engender on a face.

The first page in the pair superimposes a racial slur on the photo that captures the emotion the person felt when listening to the word. The slurs are words that Indigenous people frequently hear: welfare mom, government mooch, tax burden, trespasser, hooker, squaw, token Indian, etc. The eyes are pained, lips closed, sometimes with pursed eyebrows, sometimes with a frown, and sometimes with a vacant look. At the bottom of the page is the challenge to look again. The second page is the smile the person feels as they think about a time when they felt affirmed for who they are. Superimposed on the photo are words they use to describe themselves: wife, mother, Sun Dancer, taxpayer, homeowner, professor, Gemini Award winner, soccer player, etc. Their eyes are bright, sometimes crinkly, and smiles are wide. Their faces invite the readers to engage with them, get to know them.

Through these photographs, K. C. Adams confronts stereotyping by documenting in a facial expression the difference between dealing with incorrect perceptions in contrast to descriptions that reflect the real person. In the introduction, Katherena Vermette, a Governor General Literary Award winner for her book of poems *North End Love Songs* (2012), describes the experience of sitting for the photographs. She relates how, with a few words, K. C. was able to get her to go deep into the experience of walking down the street and being honked and leered at and feeling invisible. Then, in a reversal, she was asked to think about a time she felt loved for who she is. The difference in the facial expressions is what makes this visual essay so powerful. Cathy Mattes, in her critical essay at the front of the book, states that for true reconciliation to occur between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, we all need to remember “that first glances and opinions are often wrong, limited, or misguided” (p. 20).

She cites art scholar Grant Kester who believes that socially engaged art can challenge dominant representations of a community, giving the broader public a more layered or complex understanding of that community, resulting in greater empathy (p. 21). Such is the power of these photographs.

Telling a social story through photos is not new, so pairing K. C. Adams' work with that of well-known social documentary photographers like Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine or Dorothea Lange works well. Lange's life and work in particular has been documented for younger readers in *Dorothea's Eyes: Dorothea Lange Photographs the Truth* (Barb Rosenstock and Gerard Dubois, 2016), *Dorothea Lange: The Photographer Who Found the Faces of the Depression* (Carole Boston Weatherford and Sarah Green, 2017), and *Migrant Mother: How a Photograph Defined the Great Depression* (Don Nardo, 2010). There are equally wonderful books profiling the work of Lewis Hine that prompted Congress to pass child labor laws, or the work of Jacob Riis documenting the inhumane living conditions in immigrant tenement housing. Book pairs that discuss emotions abound because of the emphasis in education on social emotional well-being. However many are didactic. One that isn't and engages with the artistic representation of emotions is *The Color Monster: A Story About Emotions* by Spanish author/illustrator and art therapist Anna Llenas (2018).

K. C. Adams is an award-winning Cree/Ojibway artist based in Winnipeg. Her work can be found in many national and international collections. She was the set designer for the First Nations-inspired Royal Winnipeg Ballet's *Going Home Star: Truth and Reconciliation*. She is an instructor in Visual and Aboriginal Art at Brandon University. Her work can be seen on her website.

Susan Corapi, Trinity International University



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