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Children's Reviews

Counting and Poetry: Two Reviews

*Mary Ann Homan
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Hamilton Indiana*

Old Dame Counterpane. Written by Jane Yolen. Illustrated by Ruth Tietjen Cuncell. Philomel Books, 200 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10016. ISBN: 0-399-22686-9. 1994. 32 pp. US\$14.95.

Working hand in hand the author and illustrator have created a dreamy counting book for children. With her white hair piled high, her glasses inched down upon her nose, and in her work clothes, Old Dame Counterpane sits high in the sky upon her rocking chair. Beginning with the number *one*, she gently picks up her needle and begins stitching her quilt. Square by square the sun appears along with the sea, clouds, birds, animals, flowers, bees, towns, and you and me. She takes time out only for a cup of tea. The verses are lyrical, repetitive, and contagious.

Cuncell's watercolor illustrations are soft and round, and filled with hues of gold and violet. *Old Dame Counterpane* is wonderful for pre-school through third grade. Be prepared to share it many times, as once will never do — and then, of course, make your own watercolor quilt.



Winter Poems. Selected by Barbara Rogasky. Illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman. Scholastic, Inc., 555 Broadway, New York NY 10012. ISBN: 0-590-42872-1. 1994. 40 pp. US\$15.95.

When the frost is etched on the window and the tea kettle sings in the kitchen, it is time to pull *Winter Poems* from the shelf. From beginning to end, the poetry journeys from the last fall apples, through winter, and into the spring thaw. Barbara Rogasky has carefully selected twenty-five pieces of poetry which represent the winter months without mention of Christmas or Hanukkah. Among others, authors include Rachel Field, William Shakespeare, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Edgar Allen Poe, Robert Frost, and Carl Sandburg. The sparkling illustrations by Trina Schart Hyman enhance each poem with full page art and a story border. The artwork is based on the winter scenes found on the artist's New Hampshire farm. Author and illustrator, as well as other family members and farm animals, are represented in the illustrations. *Winter Poems* should be shared with children of all ages as an introduction to some of the great poets. Adults will love hearing the beloved poems once again — especially on a cold winter night in front of a roaring fire.

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Snowfall And An Imaginary Garden

Kimberly DeYoung

Rose Park Christian School, Holland Michigan

The Snow Angel. Written by Angela McAllister. Illustrated by Claire Fletcher. Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. ISBN: 0-688-04569-3. 1993. US\$14.00.

Who can doubt the magic of a new snowfall? Not Jack! When the new snow is spread like a blanket on the ground Elsa takes full advantage of it. She makes giant footprints and snow castles. She goes sliding down the hill. She spreads her arms and makes a beautiful snow angel. She tells her believing little brother Jack that the Snow Queen slept there. The next three mornings Jack tells his own tales about the Snow Queen. Could it be that he is a very good pretender, or does he know some snow truth? Elsa investigates. This is a delightful winter story with charming illustrations — a hot cocoa, warm blanket book which is sure to chase away your winter time blues.

Grandma's Garden. Written by Elaine Moore. Illustrated by Dan Anderson. Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. ISBN: 0-688-08693-4. 1994. US\$15.00.

Grandma's Garden is a realistic story filled with magical moments. Kim is at Grandma's house to help her wake up the garden. Together they plant the garden, cuddle through a thunderstorm, share the disappointment of a ruined garden, enjoy flying a kite, trick Jack Frost, and replant the garden. Kim doesn't think she can wait until summer when she can again go visit Grandma, but Grandma finds a way to make the waiting a little easier. This is a heartwarming story that everyone in the family will enjoy.