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## Children's literature: What's on the horizons

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Aliki. 1998. *Marianthe's story one: Painted words and Marianthe's story two: Spoken memories*. NY: Greenwillow. ISBN: 0-688-15661-4. 64 pp.

In this beautiful picture book, Aliki offers the reader, through the character of Marianthe, a somewhat autobiographical narrative in two parts. In One, we learn about Mari's experiences as a *new* immigrant starting a *new* life in America at a *new* school. Through drawing and painting, she communicates with her new teacher and classmates and begins to understand the "...sticks and chicken feet, humps and moons" of written English and the "...sputters, coughs and whispering wind" of spoken English. She makes friends and through the wise words of her mother deals well with the children who are not yet able to be friends. In Two, Marianthe shares with her classmates the story of her birth in her native country and the whys of her family's eventual move to America. Aliki's dedication reads, "For those dedicated, unsung teachers who change and enrich lives."

Coleman, Evelyn. 1998. *The riches of Oseola McCarty*. Illustrated by Daniel Minter. Morton Grove IL: Albert Whitman & Co. ISBN: 0-8075-6961-5. 48 pp.

In this biography of Oseola McCarty, a washerwoman from Hattisburg, Mississippi who endowed a scholarship fund at Southern Mississippi University, we learn the values that have allowed her to lead a simple, yet, long and fulfilling life. Hers is a life dedicated to family, hard work, church and community. By 1995 Oseola McCarty had saved enough money from her small earnings to start a scholarship fund of

\$150,000 for deserving African American students. Illustrated with black and white block prints, the reader experiences with Ola (as her family and friends called her) some of the amazing changes she witnessed in the United States from 1908 when she was born until 1997 when this book was completed. She experienced life under the southern Jim Crow laws as well as the Civil Rights Movement. When asked what she would tell children to always remember, she replied, "If you do work that you're proud of, you will always have self-esteem. There is nothing more important than getting your education. And you should always do the work that you love." In a note at the end, the author reminds us to remember and applaud the work of "The day laborer, the construction worker, the service station attendant, the grocery store clerk — even the teacher — (who) seldom gets more than a nod and a thank you." The four chapter book is reader friendly to beginning chapter book readers. It also includes information for starting a savings plan and a list of resources for further information.

Hoban, Tanya. 1998. *Of colors and things*. NY: Tupelo. ISBN: 0-688-16389-0. 11 pp.

An ALA Notable book, this board book provides young children with eleven pages divided into four squares each. Each page has an object in each square. Three of the four objects are of the same color while the fourth object has multiple colors. For example, the page with three orange objects includes a fourth picture of a set of six keys each one a different color. The colors represented in the book are yellow, red, green, orange, blue, grey, brown, yellow, green, red, and black. It is a book that will capture the interest and imagination of preschool children and provide the stimuli for wonderful conversations.

Hobbs, Will. 1998. *The maze*. NY: Morrow Junior Books. ISBN: 0-688-15092-6. 198 pp.

In this compelling novel, Will Hobbs shares the experiences of fourteen-year-old Rick Walker who escapes from a juvenile detention center. Rick stops running when he finds himself in The Maze which is a cluster of canyons in Utah. Rick is befriended by Lon Peregrino whose remote camp he stumbles upon. Lon is a loner whose job it is to monitor the reintroduction of a pair of California condors into the region. The condors are threatened by two ruthless and unscrupulous men who are robbing Indian artifacts from the canyons. Through his friendship with

Lon and their mutual concern for the condor, Rick discovers a great deal about himself and life in general.

Simon, Seymour. 1998. *Venus*. NY: Mulberry. ISBN: 0-688-16161-8. 32 pp.

Once again, Seymour Simon has compiled a collection of extraordinary photographs young readers will find intriguing. The book itself not only offers information about the planet Venus, it also provides information about the ways in which space photography is done. For example, various pictures are derived from the Orbiter spacecraft radar maps and others from the Soviet Union's Venera spaceship which actually landed on Venus. The book ends with questions the United States hopes to answer using the Magellan spacecraft's radar photography. The Magellan was launched in 1990.