

caused by events like the "Big Dry" of the thirties. Illustrations created with watercolour and coloured pencil by Karen Reczuch are a perfect compliment to the text. This accomplished illustrator breathes life and personality into her characters with animated facial expressions and gestures. The frustration of the depression is felt in the characters faces; their brows furrowed in concern and their bodies crumpled with exhaustion. Reczuch evokes the foreboding dusty atmosphere of the drought-ridden prairies with an artful combination of colour and texture. Her dry, sandy prairie glows in muted earth tones of rust, brown, and ochre.

Few books capture both historical content and personal feelings as *The Dust Bowl* does. It introduces children to an important part of Canada's history that is often overshadowed by discussions of The Great Depression. Readers are likely to feel a bond with Matthew as, like them, he is a child who loves his family and his home and does not want to lose either. Booth's inspiring story piques the interest of readers to the lives, plight, and hardships of the farmers who continue to live in the Canadian Prairies still today, each one casting his lot with Mother Nature and straining to hear the gentle patter of the life-giving rain.

LORI STEEVES & ALLISON MARIA HOLMES *McGill University*

AUBREY DAVIS. ALAN & LEA DANIEL, Illustrators

Sody Salleratus. Toronto: Kids Can Press (1997). Ages 3 - 7.

32 pp. \$14.95 (HC); \$5.95 (paper). ISBN 1-55074-224-8 & 1-55074-326-0.

One can hear why Aubrey Davis, a master storyteller, would have been drawn to this humorous retelling of a funny folktale. *Sody Salleratus*, the story of a small boy who is sent to the store to buy some Salleratus, the 19th century American word for baking soda, is a delight to the ear, and a treat for the eye. Words pour out of this book in a happy jumble of repetition and rhyme. This simple story begs to be shared "out loud" to readers and listeners of all ages, although the 3- to 7-year-old crowd might commandeer rights to this tale of the mysterious disappearance of a small boy, a girl, an old man, and, finally, an old woman. Without giving too much away, a big, hungry, and comically clumsy bear, and a small but heroic squirrel loom large in this story. The book is chock full of repetitive words such as *A-hippity-hop* and *Skumpity-skump* which are delicious words to wrap our tongues and ears around. The language throughout the book is simple and melodic, yet offers a challenge to its

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readers and storytellers. This text, to the delight of young readers and listeners, is a haphazard and unruly lot of words which fall over themselves almost as quickly as the big bad bear gobbles up the characters in the story! Fortunately, the words prove more palatable than the little boy and his entourage. But I don't want to give away too much of the story!

Aubrey Davis is an active member of the Storytellers School of Toronto and the College of Storytellers in London, England. His passion for storytelling is directed toward using his stories as a vehicle to encourage children with special needs to experience the delights of participating in a story. This story can easily be manipulated and presented in many different ways. Playing with elements of rhythm, inflection, voice, and character, it allows for any number of imaginative and captivating readings. About *Sody Salleratus* Aubrey Davis writes, "[this] is the kind of folktale that invites the reader to be dramatic and the audience to participate in the reading," an irresistible invitation that involves readers and listeners alike.

The illustrations by Alan and Lea Daniel suit the rollicking and riotous text to a "T". The pencil and acrylic textures on watercolour paper prance all over the pages of this book – colourful and bold, fleshing out the characters with whimsy and a wonderful sense of the absurd. These illustrations are as much fun to look at as to read the story.

This book has found a home on our bookshelves. If you're in the mood for a funny, fanciful folktale, with wonderful illustrations to boot, no matter what your age, *Sody Salleratus* is bound to please.

FIONA BENSON & DINA VOURDOUSIS *McGill University*

ROBERT HEIDBREDER. SCOT RITCHIE, *Illustrator*. *Eenie Meenie Manitoba: Playful Poems and Rollicking Rhymes*. Toronto: Kids Can Press (1996). All ages. \$14.95. 32 Pages. ISBN 1-55074-301-5.

The most striking element of this collection of poetry is its Canadian-ness. Reminiscent of Dennis Lee's *Alligator Pie*, Robert Heidbreder uses Canadian folklore, geography, and nature in rhyme to create amusing and sometimes nonsensical poetry. The thirty-eight short rhymes, which are indexed in alphabetical order at the back of the book, offer a glimpse of Canada from a child's eye view. Many of the verses are accompanied by instructions for actions or gestures to do while saying them. Because of these instructions, the book is well suited for use by teachers. Teachers might also find the references to various parts of