

Book Reviews

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

Canada useful when introducing unknown parts of the country to their students. Most areas of the country are mentioned at least once; however, there seem to be many references to the coastal provinces and remarkably few to the Yukon or Northwest Territories.

The illustrations are bright, and complement the text well. For each verse of poetry, there is a corresponding illustration. For readers who may not understand some of the terms, the illustrations are a perfect method to decode the unknown words. The characters look like they're having a ball, as they are depicted sledding down a hill, or catching a Brandon (Manitoba) cobra. While the people illustrated represent a variety of ethnic groups, there are predominantly fair-haired girls. The animal pictures are nothing short of charming. These are Scot Ritchie's strength. The gleeful multicoloured moose, on the eye-catching cover of the book, looks as though someone told him a rib-tickling joke. The bears are round and cuddly looking, as is the Sasquatch! The illustrations in this hard-cover book are gentle and completely non-threatening, which might encourage reluctant readers to browse through its pages, and make the connection between the words and the pictures.

On certain pages, there are short blurbs to explain the significance of certain elements in the poems. These are fascinating points of interest for the readers who may otherwise have been unaware of them, but they are too few. *Eenie Meenie Manitoba* has a variety of engaging facts within the poems, but more of the little information blurbs – perhaps about the places the poems mention – would have been an improvement. If the author wished to be all things to all people by providing ideas on how to use his poetry, he might have been more extensive in his inclusion of such pieces of Canadian geography and folklore information.

The verses are a pleasure to read aloud as well as silently, and instill a certain sense of pride in being Canadian, even if it does mean having a sea monster named Ogo-pogo, and a berry called Kinnikinnick! Some of the poems have an irregular rhythm, and as a result, attempts to chant them are frustrating, but overall this book is a welcoming collection of truly Canadian poetry for all ages.

SHARON LARRISSEY *McGill University*