



FALL BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Foreign Exchange

by JOHN DONOVAN

The second Biennale of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB) has begun in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, where it will remain until late 1969. The recipient this year of the Grand Prix in this international exhibition of original art from children's books is Eva Bednarova, a young Czech artist. In addition, five artists exhibiting at BIB are customarily awarded Golden Apples, ten artists receive attractive medals and certificates, and there is a variety of other awards.

The United States is represented by seventy-six illustrations by sixteen artists, selected for BIB by a committee of the Children's Services Division of the American Library Association. Of them, Blair Lent's marvelous pictures in *From King Boggen's Hall to Nothing-at-All* (Atlantic-Little, Brown, \$3.95) received a medal, as did Eleonore Schmid's illustrations for Etienne Delessert's *The Tree* (Harlin Quist, \$3.95). Although *The Practical Princess*, by Jay Williams (Parents' Magazine Press, \$3.95), received its first and only publication in America, the work of its Dutch artist, Friso Henstra, was submitted by The Netherlands, not the U.S., and received a Golden Apple.

In a decade that has seen the beginnings of, or the increased influence of, several developments of international scope in children's literature BIB is the most recent activity. The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), organized in 1951 to be "a world conscience for international children's literature," has firmly established itself as the prestige of its Hans Christian Andersen Awards has grown

and the celebration of the IBBY-sponsored International Children's Book Day on April 2 each year has become more widespread. The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) set up a special section on library work with children in the 1960s; in its sixth year the annual Bologna, Italy, Book Fair, devoted exclusively to children's books, has emerged as an important place for children's book editors to meet their counterparts from abroad, and the prestige of the International Youth Library in Munich has increased almost as rapidly as its collection, which now numbers about 100,000 volumes.

There has, of course, always been an exchange among countries that publish children's books. Traditionally this has taken the form of arranging for the translation of foreign authors into various languages. But now there is greater participation from all over the world in the events bringing children's literature specialists together. It is significant that of the thirteen BIB jurors this year, one, Maurice Sendak, was an American, while others came from Brazil, Japan, and both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Some—a British children's book editor, for example—have wondered aloud if this increasing internationalism is really desirable, if, should the young people's literature community become "one world," children's books might lose the vigor and flavor local and national talents bring to books. Expressing another view, Anne Pellow-ski says in her book *The World of Children's Literature* (Bowker, \$18.75):

There has been a tremendous increase in the number of translations and exchanges, but the greatest proportion has involved the dozen or so countries which produce three-fourths of the world's books. Exchanges among these countries are not to be dispar-



JOHN DONOVAN, who is the executive director of the Children's Book Council, is the author of *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth the Trip*.

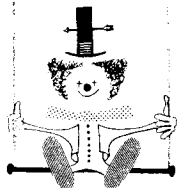
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aged, because there is as much need for understanding among them as there is anywhere else. Yet might it not be true that the commercial and governmental channels are so taken up with the volume of materials to be contended with from these dozen countries that they have no time, patience or resources left to explore sufficiently the possibilities of exchange with their neighboring nations and with others passing through the same phases of development?

Whatever one's attitude concerning this interesting trend, we and our friends abroad certainly do not agree when it comes to evaluating the art in children's picture books. BIB is before anything else an exhibit of art, and not of books in which pictures appear. Thus an American looking at BIB observed that the jury's president, the Czech artist Adolf Hoffmeister, must leave behind him the idea that the purpose of supplying illustrations for children's books is to make a book, and not just a picture.

In children's books each nation follows its own course. Countries like Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States, with a tradition of respect for this area of literature, have much to learn from their contacts with each other and from countries just now developing a children's literature. An appreciation of how far apart we are, as revealed by BIB, cannot fail to have a sobering effect on any children's literature enthusiast from America.

On the Fiftieth Anniversary of Children's Book Week in the U.S. (Nov. 16-22) it is encouraging, however, to reflect on the impact that event has had on other nations. Its success here has spurred various countries to sponsor children's book weeks of their own. The Scandinavian countries have them; so do Canada and Japan, The Netherlands and Iran. If the American conviction that a week should be set aside to celebrate children's books is taken up throughout the world, internationalists will take heart.

by ZENA SUTHERLAND

For the Youngest

Where Is Daddy? The Story of a Divorce. By Beth Goff. Illustrated by Susan Perl. Beacon Press. 28 pp. \$3.95. "Once there was a little girl called Janeydear. She lived in a house with her daddy and mommy and a dog named Funny." With this inauspicious note of writing-down begins the first book for very young children on divorce. Daddy disappears and Mommy explains that he isn't coming back; Daddy takes Janeydear to the beach and explains that there is going to be a divorce, which Janey doesn't understand. She and Mom-



-From "The Sky Dog."

my go to live with Grandpa and Grandma, Mommy gets a job, and Janey—more disoriented than anyone realizes—shows her anger by being sulky and then by hitting the dog. "He went away like you and Daddy and I hate him!" she screams. Then Mommy understands; she takes Janey to work with her so that her absence will be explained, and both she and Grandma talk to Janey and make it clear that adults are gone because they have to be, that Mommy and Daddy love her dearly. The writing is rather stiff, but the story offers no pat solutions and it may prove very helpful to parents. Ages 3-5.

The Very Tall Little Girl. By Phyllis Krasilovsky. Illustrated by Olivia H. H. Cole. Doubleday. 30 pp. \$3.50. To each his own woe, and the young child who is tall for his age is all too familiar with adult expectations. The little girl in this non-story was six inches taller than average, hard to fit, looked askance at because she played with simple toys, and was never chosen for an elf or a kitten in school plays. She *did* have some compensations: reaching the cookies on the highest shelf in the supermarket, being able to see over the heads of the others at movies, playing Mrs. Santa at Christmas. The illustrations are lively in cartoon style. The ending, however ("But best of all, being tall made her different from all the other little girls."), is not very convincing since the catalogue of disadvantages casts some shadow on being different; nevertheless, the aura of the book is merry and both the problems and delights very real. Ages 4-6.

The Sky Dog. Written and illustrated by Brinton Turkle. Viking. 30 pp. \$3.95. To a small child playing alone on a summer day there is an endless fascination in clouds drifting through the sky, and to a boy who has no dog of his own the fleecy outline of a sky dog can be captivating. So it was to the child who watched wistfully and could hardly believe it when a real dog, white and fleecy, padded up to him. Boy and mother take the dog home, advertising for an owner; when the end of vacation comes and the dog is unclaimed, the po-