

TRADE WINDS

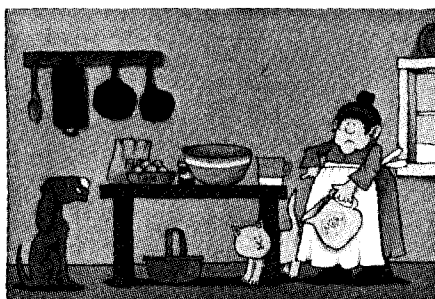
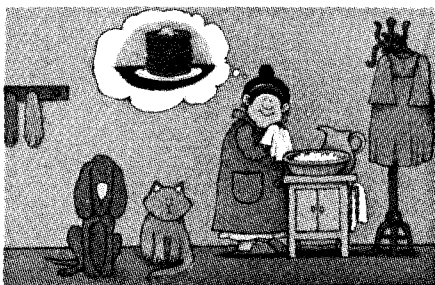
Children's Books: Best of the Season

by William Cole

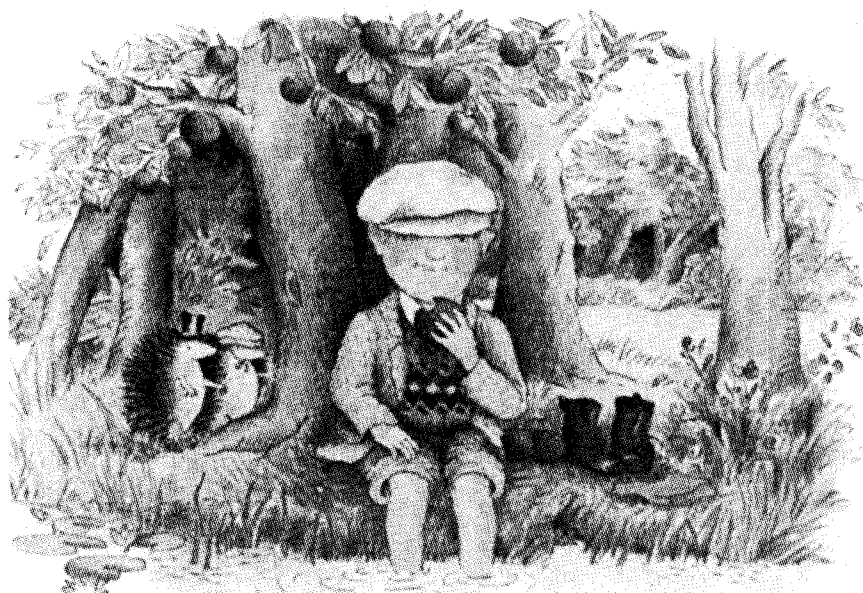
EACH SEASON, by some magic, one children's book turns up that far outshines all the others. Last fall, it was Peter Spier's *Noah's Ark*, which, I'm happy to say, went on to win the Caldecott Award, the top prize for picture books; in the spring of 1977, I raved about *The Bear Who Wanted to Be a Bear*, by that heavily unlabeled Swiss team, Jörg Steiner and Jörg Müller. And I can think back to a year that had a Steig—always an event—and one with Shel Silverstein's poems. This spring is much like any previous one: It has brought one masterpiece of a book, a handful of really fine ones, 30 or 40 that either are painlessly informative or tell good stories, and a bunch of dreck. Oddly, there's been an influx of books by Japanese authors and quite a few wordless ones.

For Older Children (Roughly Eight to Eleven)

The best book of the season—it will be a classic forever—is a wordless book by a Japanese, *Anno's Journey*, by Mitsumasa Anno (Collins+World, \$6.95). A man in a rowboat arrives on a coast, purchases a horse, and rides it through 20 greatly detailed spreads of northern European villages, market squares, and rural scenes. The book moves chronologically from the Age of the Horse to the Age of Steam. Anno is playful:



From *Pancakes for Breakfast*.



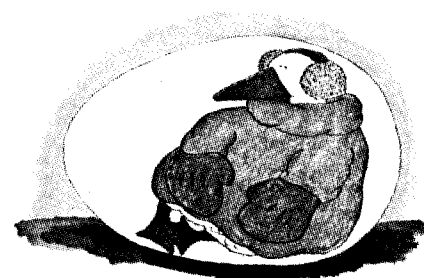
From *Jeremiah in the Dark Woods*.

Look carefully and you'll find a bust of Beethoven in a window, a Ping-Pong game in progress, Don Quixote and windmill, and reproductions of the "Bridge at Arles," "The Angelus," and other great works of art. I've been through the book four times, and I'm sure I've still missed a lot. A bargain, and a wonderful look at the way people live. For children eight to eleven. And me. And you...

There are some good, informative books about animals. *Rounds with a Country Vet*, by Richard B. McPhee (Dodd, Mead, \$6.95), follows in text and photos a young vet in upstate New York dairy country. He gets rather more intimate with animals than I'd care to, and some of the pictures are unsettling, but the book is real. ○ *Horse and Pony Care in Pictures*, by Edward Holmes, illustrated by Eric Kincaid (Arco, paper \$4.95), tells and shows everything from tack and togs to currying and jumping. ○ Someday I hope to see an example of the creature celebrated in *The Barn Owl*, by Phyllis Flower, illustrated by Cheryl Pape (Harper & Row, \$4.95). The book tells how these mysterious night swoopers bring up a family. ○ *The Gray Kangaroo at Home*, by Margaret Rau, illustrated by Eva Hülsmann (Knopf, \$5.95), is a clever and informative book about the strange hoppers from birth to death, alongside such novelties as the koala, the numbat, the

quokka, and the kookaburra. ○ *A Spider Might*, written and illustrated by Tom Walther (Sierra Club/Scribner's, \$6.95 cloth, \$4.95 paper), explains things spiders can do that we can't, such as squirting out threads into rising air currents and "ballooning." Cleverly done. ○ That talented team of Carol and Donald Carrick take an unlikely chap and turn him into a sympathetic character in *Octopus* (Clarion/Seabury, \$6.95). Did you know that octopuses can change color and raise bumps of contentment?

Here are a couple of true stories and some made-up ones. *A Curiosity for the Curious*, by Helen Reeder Cross, illustrated by Margot Tones (Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, \$7.95), tells how Hachaliah Bailey, of Somers, New York, imported the first elephant to America in the early 1800s and exhibited it all over New England, travel-



From *MacGooses' Grocery*.

ing by night so people wouldn't get a free look. ○ *Along Came the Model T: How Henry Ford Put the World on Wheels*, by Robert Quackenbush (Parents', \$6.50), shows what makes a car go. Did you know that a Tin Lizzie cost only \$380 in 1927? ○ Here's a charming tale, *Jeremiah in the Dark Woods*, by Janet and Allan Ahlberg (Viking, \$6.95), in which Jeremiah's grandmother makes some tarts and then they're stolen. The lad is sent into the woods to find the thief, and in the course of his adventures he meets the Mad Hatter, Goldilocks and the three bears, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, and a dinosaur. Very inventive. ○ Edward Packard has done something new in *Deadwood City*, illustrated by Barbara Carter (Lippincott, \$6.95). He begins his story with our hero riding into a western town, and then he offers his readers alternative twists of plot. Take your pick. (An earlier book by the same team, *Sugar Cane Island*, is just out in an Archway/Pocket Books paperback for \$1.25.) ○ Ten good stories about kings and queens, today's rarities, are in *A Book of Kings and Queens*, by skilled folklorist Ruth Manning-Sanders (Dutton, \$7.95). Magic, spells, and monsters—and lovely illustrations by Robin Jacques. ○ Kids will have a jolly time with *Eddie Spaghetti*, by Edward Frascino (Harper & Row, \$5.95), a mischievous Italian-American boy in Yonkers, New York, in the 1940s. He does things like punch extra holes in the piano roll of "Tea for Two," and his mother yells and hits him. Such things *did* happen. ○ The primitive illustrations are strong in *Peter Pitseolak's Escape from Death* (Delacorte, \$7.95), written and illustrated by Peter Pitseolak, an Eskimo, before his death, in 1973. The book, with introduction and editing by Dorothy Eber, is the true adventure of a hunter and his son blown off course in a boat with a dead outboard motor. ○ Two docents, Kate Sedgwick and Rebecca Frischkorn, found that kids appreciate a painting more if they are told something of its background. They've taken 21 famous paintings featuring children (Manet's "The Fifer," Wyeth's "Faraway"), added stories, true and otherwise, in *Children in Art* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, \$6.95). ○ I need say little about three good, informative books that might point a child toward a career if he's so inclined: *Bridges*, by Scott Corbett, illustrated by Richard Rosenblum (Four Winds, \$6.95); *The Dam Builders*, by James E. Kelly and William R. Park, drawings by Herbert E. Lake (Addison-Wesley, \$6.95); and *Pete's House*, a photo-text book that follows the building of a house, by Harriet Langsam

Sobol, photos by Patricia Agre (Macmillan, \$7.95). ○ "Our auld dog,/He doesn't mind,/He'll knock off your dinner,/Then bite your behind." That's a street rhyme from *What Do You Feed Your Donkey On?: Rhymes from a Belfast Childhood*, collected by Colette O'Hare, illustrated by Jenny Rodwell (Collins+World, \$6.95). Lovely, moody pictures of that dreary city.

For Younger Children (Roughly Three to Eight)

One Old Oxford Ox, by Nicola Bayley (Jonathan Cape/Atheneum, \$6.95), is the most glowingly illustrated book of the season. Bayley has executed detailed drawings for a dozen alliterative sentences taken from an old counting rhyme: "Six sportsmen shooting snipe"

shows—with complete success—six russet foxes in a swamp. ○ Edward Lear's rhyme *The Pobble Who Has No Toes* has been illustrated by Kevin W. Maddison (Studio/Viking, \$5.95) in full, delicate color, with the principals dressed in Victorian costume. One of the onlookers to the Pobble's problem is Lear himself, in first-rate caricature. ○ Patricia Lee Gauch has extrapolated from an old folk song in *On to Widecombe Fair*, illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman (Putnam's, \$7.95). The pictures are detailed, lively, and funny, and the text of the song about Tom Pearse, Bill Brewer, and the rest of that gang is included. ○ *Cock-A-Doodle-Do*, by Juliet Kepes (Pantheon, \$6.95), is for the youngest children. A brightly colored tale in which a chick, a la Konrad Lorenz, thinks a tiger is his mother and



From *One Old Oxford Ox*.



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follows her around. ○ Prolific Tomie de Paola brings us *Pancakes for Breakfast* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$7.95 cloth, \$1.95 paper), a wordless story in which a sweet old lady sets out to make pancakes only to find she's missing most of the ingredients. So a neighbor helps out. ○ The same author/illustrator also brings us *The Popcorn Book* (Holiday House, \$6.95), full of how-to and what-is-it information. The Colonists ate popcorn in cream for breakfast. "Old maids" are unpopped kernels. Like that. Instructions for popping. ○ Illustrator James Marshall is another busy man, appearing this season with *MacGooses' Grocery* (Dial, \$5.95), text by Frank Asch, and *The Stupids Have a Ball* (Houghton Mifflin, \$5.95), text by Harry Allard. In the first tale, we have a store run by the MacGoose family, an egg who complains about the temperature, a sign advertising "cream of june bug soup," and nonsense of that sort, adding up to a good time. In the second story, the Stupids give a party to which Father comes as General George Washing Machine and Mother wears "some beautiful spaghetti." And Grandfather comes down the chimney dressed as the Easter Bunny. All-out humor, and good. ○ *Fables You Shouldn't Pay Any Attention To*, by Florence Parry Heide and Sylvia Worth Van Clief, pictures by Victoria Chess (Lippincott, \$6.95), is a cheerfully cynical book of tales in which the good guys come out on bottom, indolence pays, and the truthful child gets spanked. Good training for the future. ○ *The Bear Who Liked Hugging People*, by Ruth Ainsworth, illustrated by Antony Maitland (Scribner's, \$6.95), contains 13 stories about bears, mermaids, pussycats. All well told and illustrated in such a way that you *have* to read the stories. ○ *Backstage*, by Robert Maiorano and Rachel Isadora (Greenwillow, \$5.95), is a sparsely texted story of a little girl entering a stage door and going through the many backstage rooms till she arrives in the costume room. Kids interested in ballet and theater will love it. ○ *The Frog Band and Durrington Dormouse*, by Jim Smith (Little, Brown, \$6.95), is an oversized, richly illustrated story in the Rip Van Winkle vein. A witch puts Dormouse to sleep, and he awakens years later to find a wicked fox messing about with his estate. Rural England. ○ I loved *Garth Pig and the Ice Cream Lady*, by Mary Rayner (Atheneum, \$8.95), in which Garth is kidnapped by a wicked wolf disguised as an ice-cream vendor. His nine siblings rescue him. ○ Peter

Continued on page 66

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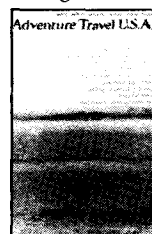
You may be wondering why we call our newsletter BALLOON. There are two reasons.

First, the balloonist has a unique vantage point—a wide, all-encompassing view of the earth. So does BALLOON. Our correspondents are stationed around the globe (in Italy, France, Hong Kong, Australia and dozens of other countries), feeding us a constant stream of on-the-scene reports. They tell us—and you—about places, events and ideas you'd literally never learn about anywhere else. It's all put together by BALLOON's editor, Richard Berman—a professional travel writer and certified Travel Fanatic.

Second, the *spirit* of ballooning—that soaring, joyous feeling of freedom and adventure precisely captures our editorial style. We think writing and reading about travel should be interesting as travel itself. So our articles and reports are exciting. Colorful. Fun to read. And just a bit offbeat. In sum, as exhilarating as a balloon ride.

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The Collectors

by Doris Grumbach

BOOK COLLECTORS are animated by a variety of passions. Some collect books because of their rarity and the difficulty involved in obtaining them; others, because they have a fondness for an author or an affection for a period; still others, because a subject fascinates them. They all invariably enjoy the pleasures of the chase. They love to come upon a "find" that dealers have missed or have mistakenly underpriced because they have not recognized its true value. Every avid collector has a story about a book marked a dollar and worth fifty that he found in an out-of-the-way spot. Antiquarian fairs however are not the places for such thrills: Dealers who exhibit at them know what they have and precisely what every volume is worth in the open market.

What people collect has always interested me. Wayward Books of which I am a half owner exhibited at the third Antiquarian Book Fair, held early this spring in Rosslyn, Virginia. While there, we were asked for books on lace, mushrooms, fans, bats, caves. The owner of a Washington art gallery is interested only in books that are photographically illustrated. One young man collects books on the circus and bought the only one we had on hand, a life of *The Mighty Barnum*. A young doctor whose interest is arctic exploration bought our beautiful copy of Sir William Parry's *Journal of a Voyage for the Discovery of a North-West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific*, and my partner was desolate at seeing it go. It was a book we had bid for successfully at Christie's, in London, and it represented our only victory over such book giants as Magg's and Dawson's, who were bidding against us. "All our pretty ones," my partner mourned, echoing Macduff. Her attitude is not uncommon among antiquarian booksellers, who like to make money but are often loath to part with their best books.

To our booth came a collector of Lafcadio Hearn and another whose want list read: Edwin Drood items, Blackmore, and Thomas Love Peacock. We were asked for books on scrimshaw and whaling and on fashion magazines of the nineteenth century; for anything on Francis Scott Key, plant distribution, the oil regions of Pennsylvania, and Lithuanian history; and for edi-

tions of *Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Book of Common Prayer*. Also for anything about Haiti. One collector wanted nothing but Byron; another was looking for books by Ronald Firbank and by Evelyn Waugh.

The seller of out-of-print books quickly becomes aware of literary fashions. We not only see the oddities that collectors fasten on but we also learn what authors are still selling well in their original editions. William Faulkner and F. Scott Fitzgerald are in great demand, but Henry James and Ernest Hemingway are not—except for their very early and/or scarce works. Edith Wharton brings very little. Ironically, the exception is her *The Decoration of Houses*, which has sold well since 1897 and which has just been reprinted by Norton. First editions of Ian Fleming's James Bond novels go fast, but not those of Robert Graves or the Sitwells. Salvador Dali's illustrated books, Ben Shahn's, and Rockwell Kent's are much sought after. Wesleyan University Press has noticed the enduring popularity of Kent and is reissuing a beautifully faithful facsimile of *N by E* (1930) this spring.

Illustrated books still attract attention: At least three dealers at the fair had original, signed, and limited editions of books illustrated by Arthur Rackham. And perhaps because of a renewed interest in the small press, books on the printing arts are much in demand.

The customers are fun, but the great pleasure of the book business is the company of fellow bookmen and -women. True, a few are nasty little foxes out for every cent, but most are not. On the whole, there is no more knowledgeable, decent, agreeable, and entertaining group of business people. At the booth next to ours—run by a young man named David O'Neal and his wife, who have a book business adjoining their home in Peterborough, New Hampshire—I saw four extraordinary incunabula (books printed before 1501) and a fine leaf from the Gutenberg Bible (c. 1455). Across the aisle, Barry Weidenkeller, from Arlington, Massachusetts, who calls his business *The Printer's Devil*, had an interesting collection of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century volumes on medicine and science. Edward Lefkowitz's booth contained only

books on the sea, on islands, and on nautical science—all in beautiful shape, all fascinating. Peter Stern was showing his collection of detective fiction and Sherlockiana; a number of dealers had antique maps and atlases; and Whitlocks was interested in early books in fine bindings.

A good percentage of the thousands who went to the fair left with books under their arms. Most of the 49 exhibitors were pleased with their sales, and the people from Concord Hill School, in Chevy Chase, Maryland, were happy with the proceeds they received from the admission fee (this year 2,000 people paid \$2 apiece to enter) and from the booth fee paid by the dealers. The exit from the exhibition hall was guarded by a tall young man who was not influenced by the wares. During the short lulls in his duties, he immersed himself in a ragged paperback entitled *Coma*. And as we were packing up to leave, the last visitor to our booth, the wife of a fellow bookseller from Newark, Delaware, left us with her want list: anything about the gingerbread man. Just that, nothing more.

...And *I Worked at the Writer's Trade* (Viking, \$12.50) contains graceful, discursive chapters on literary history from 1918 to the present that reflect Malcolm Cowley's own critical experience and his personal knowledge of writers. Cowley's endurance as a commentator on the writers of his time is due to his keen critical eye and his un-failing good taste. In these essays, most of which have appeared before but which are now updated with footnotes and bridging sections, we see his kindly distrust of his critic's trade. His discussion of "the sapping and pruning" of Ernest Hemingway's reputation by reviewers, his piece on the neglect of the poet S. Foster Damon, his defense of the art of storytelling (to which he thinks critics are indifferent), and his recollection of his pleasure when Erskine Caldwell's popularity was restored through paperback editions "long after the critics had forgotten" his work all elevate the power of the writer and lower that of the reviewer, which perhaps is as it should be. At eighty, Cowley is still well worth reading and rereading; this volume gives us that pleasant opportunity. ●