

Editor's Shelf

editor's shelf by Larry Shea

The purpose of Editor's Shelf is to highlight the following: new editions of important previously published works; reissues of significant works that had been out of print; U.S. editions of works published elsewhere in English; additional volumes in a publisher's series that *MultiCultural Review* has reviewed; translations; previously published works that have been reissued in a new form, such as audiocassettes, audio CDs, floppy disks, CD-ROM, or DVD; and online reference sources. Paperback reprints are not included unless the reprint contains at least some new material. The initial releases in a publisher's series and works that have undergone major changes in the course of their republication in new edition or new media will receive full-fledged reviews in *MCR*. The Publisher Directory contains addresses and phone numbers of publishers whose works appear in Editor's Shelf.

NEW EDITIONS

Bradshaw, Timothy, ed. ***The Way Forward? Christian Voices on Homosexuality and the Church***. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2004. 256 pp. Second ed. ISBN 0-8028-2777-2, \$16.00 (pb).

This collection of essays by British theologians and religious leaders was first published in 1997 as a response to a statement of seven theologians titled the "St. Andrew's Day Statement." That statement (which is included here) attempted to begin a dialogue on the proper attitude the church—in this case, the Church of England—should have toward homosexuality. In a new introduction to this edition, the theologian Stephen W. Sykes poses the question of whether a traditional view of the immorality of homosexual behavior (if not feelings) can be put forth without being seen as an attack on the gay and lesbian members of a community.

The 12 contributors of essays here (including Rowan Williams, the current Archbishop of Canterbury) respond to the St. Andrew's Day Statement from a spectrum of political and theological views. The longest essay, by Anthony Thiselton, gives a detailed exegesis of various Biblical passages related to homosexuality. The general atmosphere is one of trying to find common ground while still holding fast to one's own principles.

The essays here are the same as in the original publication. This edition adds a new introduction, a new foreword, updated biographies of the contributors, and an updated list of further readings. *The Way Forward?* makes a thoughtful contribution to the discussion on this topic, though its overall Anglican perspective may limit its relevance for some readers.

Early, Gerald. ***One Nation Under a Groove: Motown and American Culture***. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2004. 248 pp. Revised and expanded ed. ISBN 0-472-08956-0,

\$15.95 (pb).

In his revised introduction to this 1995 book, Early notes that he was interested in examining the impact of music from Motown largely because it helped to crystallize the formation of "a black public and a black public taste that was taken seriously as an expression of a general aesthetic among a broad class of Americans." He begins his discussion with an account of the relationship between Frank Sinatra and other Italian singers of the 1950s with the growth of rock 'n' roll, as well as with black performers and musicians. (The great Motown star Marvin Gaye is quoted as saying that the person he really wanted to be as a singer was Sinatra.) He then recounts the story of Berry Gordy's founding and running of the Motown studio, which launched the careers of such performers as Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross and the Supremes, and the Jackson Five. Throughout the book, Early considers the place of these artists and the music they made in the wider culture and in the racial politics of the period.

For this edition, the author has made a few corrections in its fairly short text (its four chapters take about 130 pages). Newly added to the book are edited interviews from music magazines with Gordy, Wonder, Gaye, and Ross. A selected bibliography of books on Motown is also updated.

Lydon, Michael. ***Ray Charles: Man and Music***. New York: Routledge, 2004. 464 pp. Updated ed. ISBN 0-415-97043-1, \$22.95 (pb).

First published in 1998, this updated edition of a comprehensive biography takes the story of this great musician to October 2003, eight months before his death. The author writes that at that time, due to his ill health, Charles had disbanded his touring group for the first time in nearly 30 years, a sign that the end was near.

The biography begins with Charles's early years (he became blind at the age of seven), but the bulk of the book is a year-by-year account of Charles's musical career through the 1950s and '60s, with descriptions of recording sessions and life on the road. His tumultuous personal life is also recounted, included his drug addictions and arrests, womanizing, and illegitimate children. At times, the writing turns a little gossipy; one chapter, "Busted in Boston: 1964," begins: "Ray's winter in L.A. turned out to be not the idyll of the year before, but an ordeal to be survived, and, such being the fickle nature of romance, the same woman provided both the pleasure and the pain." However, the tremendous amount of detail and analysis of Charles's career makes this a good source for those who want to learn more about how he became an icon of American music. The book concludes with source notes, a bibliography, an annotated discography, and a thorough index.

Makkai, Adam; Boatner, M.T.; and Gates, J.E. ***A Dictionary***

of American Idioms. Hauppauge, N.Y.: Barron's, 2004. 448 pp. Fourth ed. ISBN 0-7641-1982-6, \$14.95 (pb).

This volume, originally published in 1975 and last updated in 1995, is an alphabetical collection of more than 8,000 words and expressions idiomatic to American English. Each entry includes possible variants of the expression, the part of speech it is generally used as, a definition, and one to three examples of sentences using the idiom. The introduction is given in English, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish, as non-native speakers are a major audience for the work. A number of the idioms included truly would make little sense at all to someone unfamiliar with American English who looked them up word by word in a regular dictionary—"keep your eyes peeled," "vicious circle," and "call on the carpet," to name a few. Some entries are words such as "brainwash," "red-handed," and "sidekick" that one would find in any dictionary, though their presence among all the metaphors and expressions here does cause a reader to think about their literal meaning more than one usually would.

The dictionary has some cross-references for variants of idioms; readers looking up "heaven knows" are referred to the entry at "God knows." One problem is that those unfamiliar with certain expressions may not know where to look. A person wondering about what is in "humble pie" will have to look in the E section for "eat humble pie." And readers using the book to increase their knowledge of American English will need to understand a fair amount simply to make sense of the examples. It should be noted that some common expressions using expletives are included. Also, while the book well defines words and expressions, it does not give their origins, which can be a fascinating study in itself. Still, those who don't know American English well will probably find the dictionary to be helpful for lighting up some of its unusual corners. Those who are native speakers may enjoy browsing through it, stopping to ponder such questions as how quickly a person could really say "Jack Robinson."

Weber, David J., ed. **Foreigners in Their Native Land: Historical Roots of the Mexican Americans.** Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2004. 320 pp. 30th anniversary ed. ISBN 0-8263-3510-1, \$21.95 (pb).

In this anthology of texts first published in 1973, Weber assembles a portrait of Mexicans in the United States. Each of five chapters has about ten selections each, with chapter introductions that give historical background as well as short introductions to the texts. These firsthand accounts are mostly from the nineteenth century, though the first selection is from the 1595 instructions an official of New Spain (Mexico) received before colonizing New Mexico. In a new foreword, Arnaldo de León notes that in creating the book Weber was not limiting his study of the Chicano experience to the twentieth century, as many scholars have done, or even only going back as far as the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo as others would. Instead, he seeks to explore the deeper roots of the Mexican-American experience and culture.

Besides the new foreword, this anniversary edition contains a new afterword from Weber. The rest of the text and the chapter notes appear to be unchanged from the earlier edition.

REISSUES OF OUT-OF-PRINT WORKS

Ariyoshi, Sawako. **The Doctor's Wife.** New York: Kodansha, 2004. 280 pp. Trans. from Japanese by Wakako Hironaka and Ann Siller Kostant. ISBN 4-7700-2974-8, \$16.00 (pb).

This novel, published in Japan in 1966, was translated into English in 1978. Ariyoshi (1931–84) was the author of a number of novels—such as, in translation, *The River Ki*, *The Twilight Years*, and *Kabuki Dancer*—with stories that considered various social issues. This novel is based on actual historical events. The doctor's wife of the title is Kae, married to Hanaoka Seishu (1760–1835). In the early 1800s Seishu developed a method of anesthesia (called *tsusensan*) long before similar experiments with ether and chloroform were performed in the West. Seishu used his anesthetic as part of his efforts toward the first operations to treat breast cancer.

The novel takes place in 15 scenes spread over 20 years. Its main concern is the relationship between Seishu's wife, Kae, and his mother, Otsugi. Through the difficult relationships among these three characters, the author explores the domestic roles of women in this period against the backdrop of the doctor's career. Most of the novel is the imaginings of Ariyoshi based on the accounts, records, and diaries left by Seishu; the last section gives more of a historical summing up of this remarkable story.

Kawabata, Yasunari. **House of the Sleeping Beauties and Other Stories.** New York: Kodansha, 2004. 160 pp. Trans. from Japanese by Edward Seidensticker. ISBN 4-7700-2975-6, \$16.00 (pb).

Kawabata (1899–1972) became Japan's first Nobel laureate for literature in 1968. The three stories in this collection were first published together in English in 1969. Each of them has a haunting atmosphere that combines eroticism with menace. The title story (which is novella length) tells of a series of nights that an elderly man named Eguchi spends at a brothel where the owner provides him with the unusual experience of sleeping (nothing more is supposed to happen) in the same bed with an unconscious young woman.

The other two pieces are of short-story length. The first is "One Arm," an odd tale of a man who is given an arm by a young woman (she simply removes it and lays it before him) to keep for the night. He converses with the arm and substitutes it for one of his own. The third story is "Of Birds and Beasts," originally published in 1933 (the other two stories are from the 1960s). It tells of a middle-aged man who is reminiscing about a long-ago affair and who has a fixation on birds and other animals.

The edition has a foreword by the late writer Yukio Mishima, which discusses only the title story. Mishima calls this story an "esoteric masterpiece," which he defines as a

work in which “a writer’s most secret, deeply hidden themes make their appearance.” This seems to be an apt description for all three of these stories of obsession.

Romero, Oscar. *The Violence of Love*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2004. 236 pp. Compiled and trans. from Spanish by James R. Brockman, S. J. ISBN 1-57075-535-3, \$15.00 (pb).

This volume, first published in 1988, is a collection of excerpts from the homilies of Romero, the archbishop of El Salvador who was assassinated in 1980. (The editor and translator is also the author of *Romero: A Life*.) The passages are arranged chronologically with the date of sermons given; the first one is from March 14, 1977, shortly after Romero was named archbishop, and the last one is from March 20, 1980, and was delivered moments before he was killed. The book is divided into chapters with titles such as “A Pilgrim Church,” but the arrangement is not, in fact, truly thematic.

Most of the passages are from five to twenty lines long and are presented on the page in a manner similar to poetry. Although the homilies that Romero delivered were clearly inspired by and meant to address the violent situation in El Salvador of that period, he does not refer specifically to the events of his time. Instead, this volume can be read as meditations on the place of the Church and its followers in the world and as a self-portrait of the beliefs of this remarkable figure.

Spellman, A. B. *Four Jazz Lives*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2004. 274 pp. ISBN 0-472-08967-6, \$18.00 (pb).

In 1966, this book was first published as *Four Lives in the Bebop Business*. Its four subjects—Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman, Herbie Nichols, and Jackie McLean—were figures in the avant-garde jazz movement whose conversations with poet and critic Spellman formed the basis for his portraits of their lives, music, and influence. Nichols died in 1963 (his chapter is by far the shortest here), but the others have continued to follow their own distinctive career paths, and—particularly in the case of Taylor and Coleman—have received many honors.

The text of the book is the same as the 1966 edition, and the author has added a new introduction with some updates on the careers of the three living subjects of the book, who are now in their seventies. An updated bibliography and discography for each musician is also included.

Ueda, Makota, ed. *The Mother of Dreams: Portrayals of Women in Modern Japanese Fiction*. New York: Kodansha, 2004. 228 pp. ISBN 0-47700-2976-4, \$17.00 (pb).

The short stories in this anthology, which originally appeared in 1986, are grouped under five topics: the Maiden, the Wife, the Mistress, the Mother, and the Working Woman. An introduction by the editor discusses the place each of these images of women has in Japanese society and, historically, in Japanese literature. Among the 16 authors (both male and female writers are included) are Mori Yoko, Kaiko Takeshi, Ariyoshi Sawako, and the Nobel laureate Kawabata

Yasunari, who is represented by three very short stories that resemble prose poems. Each author’s story is preceded by a one-page biography; in the small type the book employs, these bios are fairly extensive. Throughout the book, the original Japanese title is given for all stories included and all works of literature referred to.

With its thoughtful introduction and editing, and the variety of notable writers included, *The Mother of Dreams* provides an interesting approach both to Japanese literature and to the situation of women in Japan. It is unfortunate, though, that the book does not appear to have any different stories from its 1986 publication. None of these authors was born after 1940, and it would be interesting to hear some more contemporary voices as well.

U.S. EDITIONS OF BOOKS PUBLISHED ELSEWHERE IN ENGLISH

Mda, Zakes. *She Plays with the Darkness*. New York: Picador, 2004. 224 pp. ISBN 0-312-42325-X, \$12.00 (pb).

Mda is a South African novelist and playwright. His earlier works include *The Heart of Redness* and *Ways of Dying*. The paperback publication of this 1995 novel, appearing for the first time in the United States, is intended to coincide with the hardcover release of his newest book, *The Madonna of Excelsior*.

She Plays with the Darkness tells the story of an African brother and sister from the 1960s through the 1990s. The two grow up in a remote mountain village in Lesotho, which Radisene leaves to pursue success in the lowland capital of Maseru. He begins as a teacher, and later becomes involved in an insurance scam that takes much of the money from the settlements offered to the families of accident victims. His sister, Dikosha, known for her beauty and for her singing and dancing, never leaves the village. To the amazement of the villagers, she also never seems to age. Fiercely independent, she rejects the advances of a local boy-turned-soccer-star and eventually goes years without even speaking. *She Plays with the Darkness* is a strongly imagined, uncompromising look at these characters and the world they inhabit.

Van Camp, Richard. *The Lesser Blessed*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004. 128 pp. ISBN 1-55054-525-6, \$12.95 (pb).

The narrator of this first novel, which was published in Canada in 1996 and is now available in the United States, is, like its author, a Dogrib Indian. Larry Sole is a 16-year-old growing up in a small town in northern Canada. In the novel, he tells of his experiences dealing with bullies at his school, his abusive father, his first experience with drugs, and his strong attraction to a girl in his school. His narration—which, like just about any novel with a 16-year-old protagonist, owes a little to Holden Caulfield—is funny, honest, profane (sometimes very much so), and at times poetic and hallucinatory. In the acknowledgments at the end of the book, Van Camp credits the inspiration he received from a number of alternative rock musicians,

mostly from the 1980s. His novel is filled with the energy of rock music and with an appropriate amount of adolescent angst for its complicated hero.

NEW VOLUMES IN SERIES

African-American Biographies

Schraff, Anne. *Wilma Rudolph: The Greatest Woman Sprinter in History*. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2004. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7660-2291-9, \$20.95.

The first chapter of this biography for middle school students exemplifies how remarkable Rudolph's life story is. In it, she wins a bronze medal at the age of 16 in a relay event at the 1956 Olympics. Only four years before, her legs were still in braces from a bout of polio, and she had just recently begun to compete in track. Before finishing high school, she would give birth to her first child, and two years after that Rudolph would win three gold medals at the 1960 Olympics, setting world records along the way.

Along with the athletic triumphs, the parades and celebrations held in her honor, and the meetings with famous people (such as a friendship with another 1960 Olympic gold medalist, the young Cassius Clay), this book also recounts the many difficulties of Rudolph's life. In her time, amateur athletes were truly that, and the endorsement money of today was not available. In the last few chapters, Rudolph is said to have found her calling by starting a foundation to help young athletes; she died at 54 in 1994 of brain cancer. The book ends with a chronology, chapter notes, and some suggested further reading, including Rudolph's 1977 autobiography.

American Catholic Identities: A Documentary History

Davis, Cyprian, O.S.B., and Phelps, Jamie, O.P., eds. *"Stamped with the Image of God": African Americans as God's Image in Black*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2003. 184 pp. ISBN 1-57075-351-2, \$25.00 (pb).

This book is part of a nine-volume series that collects a wide variety of documents from different perspectives on American Catholic history. Among the other volumes are ones on gender identities, European and Asian immigrants, and Latino Catholics. The 66 documents in this volume include letters, church documents, official statements, and excerpts from articles and books. These range from "A Black Woman's Letter to Pope Pius IX" from 1853 to a pastoral letter from 1953 that desegregated the Catholic parishes in North Carolina.

The editors have divided the documents into ten parts and provided an introduction for each part, along with a short introduction

for each selection. The book also includes a foreword by the editor of the series, Christopher J. Kauffman, and an index. Not all of the documents here will be of strong historical interest, but together the breadth of their subjects, periods, and places of origin shows how deeply the roots run for the sometimes overlooked community of African-American Catholics.

Cover-to-Cover Novels


Sorenson, Margo. *Funny Man Gets Rolling*. Logan, Ia.: Perfection Learning, 2004. 104 pp. ISBN 0-7569-1639-9, \$12.95 (cl); ISBN 0-7891-6100-1, \$5.95 (pb).

Derrick Farley, also known as "Funny Man," is an African-American eighth grader whose main interests in life are playing football (he is a star wide receiver) and cracking jokes, with the dream of someday becoming a famous comedian. In this sequel to the book *Funny Man*, Derrick must survive a three-week period of fulfilling a community service project at a retirement home and writing a paper about it, while also trying to get a raise at his after-school job as a busboy in order to help his family more. According to the unlikely but very strict rules of his middle school, if he does not finish the project in January and write an acceptable paper on it, he can be made to repeat the eighth grade. Also, if he does not have a passing midyear English grade, he won't be allowed to play football in the ninth grade.

The books in this series are intended for students who may be reading below grade level, though the reading level is reasonable for most middle schoolers. The narration is third per-

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son, but the story is largely told from Derrick's perspective, as when he refers to his teacher as "Dowling the Dragon" and imagines her fiery breath and sharp claws. In a few scenes, a computer at school talks back to Derrick onscreen, and we are told that the same computer had earlier helped him out by telling what to write for an important school paper. It is hard to know whether to take this as a supernatural electronic event or as the result of Derrick's overactive imagination. The conflict between stern adults (especially the Nurse Ratchet-like director of volunteers at the retirement home) and the sometimes irresponsible Derrick is driven home a little strongly, but everything works out well in the end for this generally likable character.

Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers

Lupton, Mary Jane. **James Welch: A Critical Companion.** Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2004. 184 pp. ISBN 0-313-32725-4, \$35.00.

This study of the Native American novelist and poet begins with a chapter that serves as a short biography, followed by one that analyzes how the history and culture, and particularly the oral storytelling tradition, of his Blackfeet tribe are reflected in his work. The next chapters analyze five novels by Welch (who died in 2003): *Winter in the Blood* (1974), *The Death of Jim Loney* (1979), *Fools Crow* (1986), *The Indian Lawyer* (1991), and *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* (2000). His 1994 nonfiction book *Killing Custer* is discussed more briefly in the biographical chapter. In the chapters on novels, sections discuss such topics as point of view, plot, and structure, with some discussion for each book on the use of animals in Welch's work.

One interesting feature common to books in this series is that each chapter ends with a section looking at the novel from a different school of criticism. *Winter in the Blood*, for example, is considered from the point of view of ecological criticism; other chapters end with examples of archetypical criticism, an existential reading, and Marxist and feminist approaches. An extensive bibliography divided by subject is included, as well as a series foreword. Among the thirty or so other authors included in this second series of literary companions are Maxine Hong Kingston, Jamaica Kincaid, and Julia Alvarez.

Cultures of the World

Levy, Patricia. **Nigeria.** New York: Benchmark/Marshall Cavendish, 2004. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1703-6, \$25.95.

Malcolm, Peter, and Losleban, Elie. **Libya.** New York: Benchmark/Marshall Cavendish, 2004. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1702-8, \$25.95.

Pateman, Robert. **Kenya.** New York: Benchmark/Marshall Cavendish, 2004. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1701-X, \$25.95.

Rosmarin, Ike, and Rissik, Dee. **South Africa.** New York: Benchmark/Marshall Cavendish, 2004. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-

1704-4, \$25.95.

Sheehan, Sean. **Turkey.** New York: Benchmark/Marshall Cavendish, 2004. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1705-2, \$25.95.

Sheehan, Sean. **Zimbabwe.** New York: Benchmark/Marshall Cavendish, 2004. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1706-0, \$25.95.

With the publication of the above titles, this series of country guides for middle school students now has 30 entries. Each has chapters on the country's geography, history, government, economy, environment, people, daily life, religions, languages, arts, leisure activities, festivals, and food. One strong feature is the large color photos, with many showing ordinary people from the country, as well as some of typical scenes and notable places.

The back matter for each book includes several maps (a general one, and economic and cultural maps); a page of facts about the country and its people; a time line matching national and world events; a glossary; a list of books, web sites, and videos; a bibliography; and an index. For middle school students who are reading at least on grade level (the text here is clear and straightforward, but fairly substantial in its length and vocabulary), these well-illustrated volumes provide a good source of information about these countries.

Issues in Focus

Altman, Linda Jacobs. **The American Civil Rights Movement: The African-American Struggle for Equality.** Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2004. 128 pp. ISBN 0-7660-1944-6, \$20.95.

Intended for students in grade six and up, this volume provides a history of the struggle of African Americans for civil rights, with a focus on the 1950s and '60s. The first chapter recounts the abolition of slavery and the Reconstruction period; the second one tells of the beginnings of the civil rights movement in the first half of the twentieth century, with accounts of such figures as Marcus Garvey and A. Philip Randolph. The last seven chapters take the story from the court cases and boycotts of the 1950s through the upheaval of the 1960s. After telling of the 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., the author sums up further developments in civil rights in the book's final two pages.

The text is accompanied by about 20 black-and-white photos and illustrations of significant figures and events. It ends with a chronology, chapter notes, glossary, list of books and web sites for further reading, and an index. Though the series title mentions "Issues" (other volumes include ones on abortion, human rights, and Internet censorship), this particular work serves more as a compact history of an important historical period for middle school students, and not as a presentation of the various perspectives in a controversial topic.

Latin America Readers

Chomsky, Aviva; Carr, Barry; and Smorkaloff, Pamela Maria, eds. **The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics.**

Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2004. 736 pp. ISBN 0-8223-3197-7, \$26.95 (pb).

Following earlier entries in this series on Peru, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico, this hefty volume collects articles, travel accounts (such as Columbus's 1492 logbook describing the large island he believed to be Japan), poems, short stories, photos, cartoons, and more from throughout the history of Cuba. The majority of the authors of the selections are Cuban or Cuban-American, though the perspectives of scholars and writers from other countries are also included. The editors include a general introduction, in which they state that their aim is to present a portrait of that is balanced thematically and chronological, without trying to maintain a specific balance of views for and against the Revolution. A short introduction for each entry gives some context on the writing and its author (clearly indicating a specific date of composition or publication for all entries would have been helpful).

A chapter-by-chapter list of works for further reading is included; the publication information provided for the selections in the book also forms an extensive reading list on its own. As with the other titles in this series, the book is not so much for the casual traveler as it is for someone who would like to better understand the history, culture, and people of this island. Such a reader will find dozens of selections from a variety of perspectives that would be difficult to find elsewhere, especially if one does not read Spanish.

The Library of Author Biographies

Burshtein, Karen. **Walter Dean Myers**. New York: Rosen, 2004. 112 pp. ISBN 0-8239-4020-9, \$26.50.

Like many of his characters, Myers, the author of a number of young adult novels, grew up in Harlem and struggled to find his way through difficult circumstances in his family, school, and community. His books include the Newbery Honor-winning *Scorpions* (1988) and *Somewhere in the Darkness* (1992). This biography, written at a middle-school reading level, is particularly good at following Myers as he grows up with a speech impediment and eventually finds his calling in writing. Some of his books are briefly described, particularly in how their themes relate to Myers's experiences and concerns.

The very extensive back matter (it takes up about a third of the book) includes an interview with Myers, a time line, excerpts from *School Library Journal* reviews of seven of his books, selected lists of his publications and the awards they have received, a glossary, a web address with relevant links, a list for further reading, a bibliography, source notes, and an index. Among the other authors recently added to this series are Richard Peck, Jerry Spinelli, and Jane Yolen.

Literature as Windows to World Cultures

Kevane, Bridget. **Latino Literature in America**. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2003. 158 pp. ISBN 0-313-31793-3, \$49.95.

The chapters in this critical survey for high school and

college students discuss in detail works by eight contemporary authors: Julia Alvarez, Rudolfo Anaya, Sandra Cisneros, Junot Díaz, Cristina García, Oscar Hijuelos, Judith Ortiz Cofer, and Ernesto Quiñonez. The book's introduction gives a short history of Latinos in the United States and the Hispanic literary tradition. After a few pages of biographical information, most of each chapter is taken up with a fairly detailed explication of one or two significant works by each author. For example, the chapter on Cisneros discusses *The House on Mango Street* (1984) and *Woman Hollering Creek* (1991), and that on Hijuelos covers *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* (1989). Kevane describes the plot and characters of each book, with a focus on themes that are common to authors of Hispanic origin writing in the United States.

The works discussed here are contemporary (almost all published within the past 20 years), and the background of the authors is varied. Included here are ones who were born (or whose parents were born) in the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Each chapter has a list of suggested readings, and the book includes a selected bibliography. Students in classes on Latino literature might well be assigned several of the works discussed here, and this volume could serve to provide information and analysis about such works and introduce readers to related ones.

No-Nonsense Guides

Sardar, Ziauddin, and Davies, Meryll Wyn. **The No-Nonsense Guide to Islam**. London: Verso, 2004. 142 pp. 1-85984-454-5, \$10.00 (pb).

Usdin, Shereen. **The No-Nonsense Guide to HIV/AIDS**. London: Verso, 2004. 144 pp. ISBN 1-85984-459-6, \$10.00 (pb).

Originally published in Britain, this series offers guides to contemporary issues (other volumes include ones on terrorism, globalization, poverty, and climate change) from a liberal perspective. The volume on the HIV/AIDS pandemic offers blunt talk on how it can be spread (one chapter is titled "Sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll—the science of HIV") along with an account of the progress of the disease and the stumbling blocks in trying to control it. Much attention is given to countries such as South Africa where the impact of the disease is greatest.

The volume on Islam gives a more historical account, beginning with the establishment and precepts of the religion and moving up to the issues of today. The authors decry the bigotry many exhibit toward Islam, while acknowledging how the Muslim world must reform itself to overcome such problems as the lack of democracy, the oppression of women, and the violence within Muslim societies and against the West.

Both books end with a list of contacts for information, a bibliography, and an index; the volume on Islam also includes a glossary and a time line.

Our Cultural Heritage

Cunningham, Kevin. **Canadian Americans**. Chanhassen,

Minn.: The Child's World, 2004. 32 pp. ISBN 1-59296-178-9, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Franchino, Vicky. **British Americans.** Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2004. 32 pp. ISBN 1-59296-179-7, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Franchino, Vicky. **Spanish Americans.** Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2004. 32 pp. ISBN 1-59296-183-5, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Heinrichs, Ann. **French Americans.** Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2004. 32 pp. ISBN 1-59296-180-0, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Heinrichs, Ann. **Norwegian Americans.** Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2004. 32 pp. ISBN 1-59296-182-7, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Rosenberg, Pam. **Jewish Americans.** Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2004. 32 pp. ISBN 1-59296-181-9, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

With these six volumes, this series for students in the middle elementary grades now includes entries on 24 different American ethnic groups. Each volume traces the history of a particular group in America, beginning with the earliest immigrants and ending with a chapter on the influence the group has had on American culture. Often included is a section on famous Americans (those with Norwegian heritage include Marilyn Monroe, Hubert Humphrey, and Renee Zellweger). The text is accompanied by numerous photos and illustrations, with short "Interesting Facts" scattered throughout; in the Spanish American volume, we learn that the phrases "two bits" and "pieces of eight" came from the practice of cutting early Spanish money into pieces to make the right change.

The books include a time line, a glossary of words bolded in the text, a list of books and web sites for further reading, and an index. They provide solid historical background on each of these groups, though not much in the way of practical cultural information (such as recipes, crafts, or real-life accounts of children) that can make it easier for students to relate to and become involved in the tradition of these communities.

Primary Sources in American History

Byers, Ann. **The Trail of Tears: A Primary Source History of the Forced Relocation of the Cherokee Nation.** New York: Rosen, 2004. 64 pp. ISBN 0-8239-4007-1, \$29.25 (list), \$21.94 (school and library).

Wolny, Philip. **The Underground Railroad: A Primary Source History of the Journey to Freedom.** New York: Rosen, 2004. 64 pp. ISBN 0-8239-4008-X, \$29.25 (list), \$21.94 (school and library).

The volumes in this series for students in grades five to eight give a clear and detailed account of topics in American history. (Other entries include ones on the Lewis and Clark expedition, Grant and Lee at Appomattox, and an immigrant's arrival at Ellis Island.) Like other series of books with titles that mention "primary sources," many are illustrations, documents, letters, and maps from the period described. One distinctive feature here is the section at the end of the book that provides the full (or sometimes excerpted) text of several of the documents, letters, treaties, or laws pictured in the book. The *Trail of Tears* volume, for example, includes a transcription of the entire 1790 letter that George Washington wrote to the U.S. Senate concerning the Cherokee nation. In *The Underground Railroad*, the excerpts from nineteenth-century documents are followed by a "modern English translation" of the text. This may be useful for students, but it does make it unnecessary for them to try to understand the original words of such texts as the Emancipation Proclamation.

The books each end with a short glossary, lists of organizations and books for further research, a list describing the source of all images shown, and a bibliography.

A Proud Heritage: The Hispanic Library

Burgan, Michael. **Christopher Columbus: Opening the Americas to European Exploration.** Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2004. 40 pp. ISBN 1-59296-142-8, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

Kent, Deborah. **The Changing Face of America: Hispanic Roots, Hispanic Pride.** Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2004. 40 pp. ISBN 1-59296-143-6, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

Kent, Deborah. **Frida Kahlo: An Artist Celebrates Life.** Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2004. 40 pp. ISBN 1-59296-170-3, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

Kent, Deborah. **Mario Molina: Chemist and Nobel Prize Winner.** Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2004. 40 pp. ISBN 1-59296-167-3, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

Stein, R. Conrad. **The Conquistadors: Building a Spanish Empire in the Americas.** Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2004. 40 pp. ISBN 1-59296-144-4, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

Stein, R. Conrad. **Emiliano Zapata: Revolutionary and Champion of Poor Farmers.** Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2004. 40 pp. ISBN 1-59296-166-5, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

Stein, R. Conrad. **Hernando Cortés: Conquistador and Empire Builder.** Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2004. 40 pp. ISBN 1-59296-169-X, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

Stein, R. Conrad. **Pancho Villa: Mexican Revolutionary Hero.** Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2004. 40 pp. ISBN 1-59296-171-1, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

These new volumes in a series for students in the middle elementary grades cover a wide range of topics on Hispanic history in the Americas. As in *Journey to Freedom*, a similar series on African-American history from this publisher, the majority of the books are biographies, with a few on more general topics. *The Changing Face of America* may be a bit too general, as it attempts to cover nearly everything about the Spanish influence in North America, with figures from the conquistadors to Castro; it is only the last of its four chapters that discusses the present impact of the Hispanic community in the United States.

The books tell their stories in clear prose with numerous color photos and illustrations (which is especially helpful in a volume such as that on the painter Kahlo). They attempt to present a balanced view of their subjects; in the Cortés biography, the brutality of his conquest of Mexico is described, though the author argues that a complete picture of his life must include the deep impact he had on the creation of Mexico.

The books end with a time line, a list of books and web sites for further reading, and a glossary of words that have been bolded in the text (one glossary entry in the Cortés volume unfortunately defines “grizzly” as something that is bloody or gory).

Rookie Biographies

Evento, Susan. **Mary McLeod Bethune.** New York: Children's Press/Scholastic, 2004. 32 pp. ISBN 0-516-21720-8, \$19.00 (cl); 0-516-25830-3, \$4.95 (pb).

With two to four sentences of simple text in large type per page, this biography is written for students in the first or second grade. Accompanied by mostly black-and-white archival photographs, it tells the story of Bethune (1875–1955), the pioneer African-American educator and founder of Bethune-Cookman College.

Beginning readers should be able to follow the clear text, though young students may not truly understand the importance of a figure who was a leader in the fight for equality in education. One difficulty with the book is that the photos don't have captions; presumably, adding more text in smaller type was considered to be too much for early readers. With some of the photos, it is unclear whether what is portrayed is actually from Bethune's life or a more general photo of, for example, a typical schoolroom of the time. And for other photos, such as one of Bethune speaking before an unidentified Eleanor Roosevelt, more information would be helpful.

Rough Guides

Ravi Shankar: India's Sitar Legend—Pioneer and cultural catalyst. CD. 71 minutes. London: World Music

Network, 2004. \$16.98.

The Rough Guide to African Rap: Rappers, Rebels, and Ragamuffins. CD. 66 minutes. London: World Music Network, 2004. \$16.98.

The Rough Guide to Bollywood Legends: Lata Mangeshkar. CD. 77 minutes. London: World Music Network, 2004. \$16.98.

The Rough Guide to Bollywood Legends: Mohd. Rafi.—Vocal artistry from the king of Bollywood. CD. 74 minutes. London: World Music Network, 2004. \$16.98.

The Rough Guide to Gypsy Swing: Django's Legacy—Gypsy virtuosity meets American jazz. CD. 66 minutes. London: World Music Network, 2004. \$16.98.

The Rough Guide to Italia Nova: Italian Underground: The hybrid generation. CD. 72 minutes. London: World Music Network, 2004. \$16.98.

The Rough Guide to Mambo: Dance the Mambo—Driving rhythms & swinging horns. CD. 66 minutes. London: World Music Network, 2004. \$16.98.

The Rough Guide to the Music of Argentina: Tango and beyond—Milonga, chacarera & chamam. CD. 66 minutes. London: World Music Network, 2004. \$16.98.

The Rough Guide to the Music of Ethiopia: African Funk, Soul & Swing from Addis Ababa. CD. 74 minutes. London: World Music Network, 2004. \$16.98.

The Rough Guide to the Music of Kenya: Roots Benga, Coastal Taarab, Urban Rap. CD. 65 minutes. London: World Music Network, 2004. \$16.98.

The Rough Guide to the Music of Morocco: Desert Sounds from Casablanca to Marrakech. CD. 66 minutes. London: World Music Network, 2004. \$16.98.

These eleven CDs, like the earlier ones from this valuable and well-established series, fall into several types. Some are surveys of a country—here Argentina, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Morocco—that try to give a portrait of the variety of the music produced there. Others introduce listeners to a particular genre, such as mambo, gypsy swing (with several tracks featuring the guitarist Django Reinhardt), and African rap. The CD of the last of these, with some tracks in English, may provide some interesting comparisons for fans of American rap. The “Italia Nova” entry covers a genre that few probably know exists: the combination of traditional Italian musical forms and contemporary beats referred to here as the “folktronica scene.” Several CDs are career retrospectives of individual artists: the sitarist Ravi Shankar and the Indian singers Lata Mangeshkar and Mohd. Rafi.

The booklet for each CD contains an introductory essay

on the genre or performer, and a biographical paragraph on the artist for each track (the CDs on individual artists have longer biographies along with more musical analysis and background for each selection). The CDs in this series make available much of the world's music in a highly accessible, informational, and enjoyable form.

Slavery in American History

Edwards, Judith. ***Abolitionists and Slave Resistance: Breaking the Chains of Slavery***. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2004. 128 pp. ISBN 0-7660-2155-6, \$20.95.

McNeese, Tim. ***The Rise and Fall of American Slavery: Freedom Denied, Freedom Gained***. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2004. 128 pp. ISBN 0-7660-2156-4, \$20.95.

Worth, Richard. ***The Slave Trade in America: Cruel Commerce***. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2004. 128 pp. ISBN 0-7660-2151-3, \$20.95.

This new series, which has seven entries in all, is written for students in grade six and up. The books divide their study of the subject by themes rather than by chronology. *The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* is the closest here to an overall history of the subject. Its first chapter tells the story of Josiah Henson, a Kentucky slave who escaped to Canada in 1830 and later published an autobiography. The following chapters begin with the origins of the slave trade and move through up to abolition and emancipation. Other volumes in the series tell more particular parts of the history. Besides the above two on the slave trade and the fight against slavery before the Civil War, other entries are on plantation life, uprisings and runaways, personal accounts of slaves, the politics of slavery, and African-American history from emancipation to today.

Each of the volumes here has one or two black-and-white photos and illustrations in each chapter; many chapters also have a "Source Document" of a primary account. The books end with time lines relevant to each book's subject; source notes; and lists of readings, web sites, and historic places.

Spiritual Biographies for Young Readers

Shaw, Maura D. ***Thich Nhat Hanh: Buddhism in Action***. Woodstock, Vt.: Skylight Paths, 2004. 32 pp. ISBN 1-893361-87-X, \$12.95.

In this book for children age seven and up, the life and teaching of the Buddhist monk is presented as an example to follow for living peacefully and mindfully. In fact, throughout the book its subject is referred to as "Thây," a word meaning "teacher." Accompanied by drawings, photos, and two of his poems, the text tells the story of how Thich Nhat Hanh worked to stop the fighting in his native Vietnam before his exile in the mid-1960s. In 1982 he founded a Buddhist community in France called Plum Village.

The book suggests several exercises, such as a meditation timeout, that children can do to become more peaceful and

spiritual. It is difficult to convey what makes Thich Nhat Hanh special or what his teachings truly entail in a 32-page book written at this level. However, some of the metaphors used, like one on growing different types of seeds of feelings inside us, may help younger readers to grasp some of the concepts. The two other volumes in this series are a biography of Gandhi and a book on ten spiritual people who have changed the world.

Student Almanacs

Student Almanac of Hispanic American History. Volume 1: From European Contact to the U.S.-Mexican War 1492-1848. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2004. 144 pp. ISBN 0-313-32606-1, \$40.00.

Student Almanac of Hispanic American History. Volume 2: From the California Gold Rush to Today, 1849-Present. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2004. 144 pp. ISBN 0-313-32607-X, \$40.00.

Set ISBN 0-313-32605-3, \$80.00.

These volumes for students in junior high and above follow an unusual format. Four chapters in each volume narrate a particular stretch of the history of Hispanic people in America, including a time line running at the bottom of the page. (Despite the first book's title, the first chapter of Volume 1 covers the pre-Columbian period for the three cultural ancestors of most Latinos: the Spanish, Africans, and Native Americans.) Each chapter ends with a glossary of people, places, and terms that have been bolded in the discussion along with a page reference. Some maps, black-and-white photos and illustrations, and sidebars (such as one on the Columbian exchange of biological species between the Americas and Europe) are included. Some of the more interesting sidebars give original texts from the period; one is a letter from the Mexican general Santa Anna to the people of Texas after the fall of the Alamo, in which he gives the Mexican point of view on the war.

The volumes end with different glossaries, and then with an identical resource section, bibliography, and index (in which "I" and "II" are used to distinguish references to each volume). The resource section is rather oddly divided; it includes separate sections of history and biography resources for before 1848 and since 1876, but not in-between. The format does allow for a variety of ways to present the material: historical narrative, time lines, encyclopedia-style entries, and short glossary definitions. Once students grasp the way the almanac is set up (though this is made a little more cumbersome by the division into two volumes), they will find these to be useful resources for learning about general background or specific people, places, and events in Hispanic-American history.

Super Sports Stars

Rappoport, Ken. ***Ichiro Suzuki***. Berkeley Heights, N.J.:

Enslow, 2004. 44 pp. ISBN 0-7660-2137-8, \$18.95.
Rappoport, Ken. **Alex Rodriguez**. Berkeley Heights, N.J.:
Enslow, 2004. 44 pp. ISBN 0-7660-2138-6, \$18.95.
Thornley, Stew. **Ken Griffey, Jr.** Berkeley Heights, N.J.:
Enslow, 2004. 44 pp. ISBN 0-7660-2133-5, \$18.95.

These biographies for students at a third- to fourth-grade reading level contain lively text and numerous color photos, most of them of these players in action. The focus is on the development of each player's career, particularly in terms of records set and milestones reached. Each player's accomplishments are presented as inspirational, though usually not in a heroic, clichéd sports biography way (except perhaps for some references to Ichiro—who prefers to be known by his first name only—wielding his bat as a warrior's weapon).

The books end with complete tables of year-by-year statistics (including one for Ichiro's years in Japan's Pacific League that is erroneously labeled "Pacific Coast League," which is a U.S. minor league). Most terms in each list of "Words to Know" will be familiar to any young baseball fan reading the book; a short list of other books to read and web sites and an index are included. One definite drawback to these three biographies is that their accounts, and the statistical tables, end after the 2002 season. This is why Rodriguez, the Yankee third baseman, is still playing shortstop for the Texas Rangers in his biography.

Supreme Court Cases Through Primary Sources

Anderson, Wayne. **Brown v. Board of Education: The Case Against School Segregation**. New York: Rosen, 2004. 64 pp. ISBN 0-8239-4009-8, \$29.25.

Anderson, Wayne. **Plessy v. Ferguson: Legalizing Segregation**. New York: Rosen, 2004. 64 pp. ISBN 0-8239-4011-X, \$29.25.

Some of the particulars of the Supreme Court's 1954 decision overturning school segregation are fairly well known, particularly in this year of its fiftieth anniversary. The 1896 decision it overturned, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, is certainly not as familiar. The above two volumes in this series for middle school students tell the stories of each case in careful detail. (Others in the series include ones on the *Miranda* case regarding the rights of the accused, and on the *Roe v. Wade* abortion rights case.) The "Primary Sources" in each are mostly period photos, and illustrations of such items as the initial pages of legal opinions, other documents, and newspaper articles and cartoons (a list of sources for the illustrations is included). A few written primary sources, such as quotes from court opinions, are provided, though not many. The books end with a glossary, a short list of recommended reading, a bibliography, and an index.

Less information is available today on the *Plessy* case. For example, no photo exists of Plessy, a man who was one-eighth black who tried to sit in a whites-only railroad car, and little is known of his life after the decision. With a narrower scope, the author is able to go into greater detail in some areas of the story, such as including short portraits of

each of the nine Justices who decided the case. Among the interesting facts recounted here: the Supreme Court at that time was obliged to hear every case appealed to it, which was one reason the case was not settled for about four years after it was first brought. Also, the decision made very little impact when it came out—in the *New York Times*, the decision was only reported in the paper's railroad column. The volume on *Brown* does reconstruct something of the racial situation that existed at the time, and it describes the other related cases that the Court considered at the same time. These two books will give students a sense of the complex forces that shape social and legal change at particular periods in our history.

Teen Life Around the World

Falola, Toyin, ed. **Teen Life in Africa**. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2004. 354 pp. ISBN 0-313-32195-9, \$55.00.

Slater, Judith J., ed. **Teen Life in Asia**. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2004. 306 pp. ISBN 0-313-31532-9, \$55.00.

Each of these volumes for students in high school and above describes life for teenagers in 15 countries. (The three other books in the series cover the Middle East; Europe; and Central and South America and the Caribbean.) Different authors, working under nearly identical formats, handle each country. Most of the writers are U.S. academics, writers or academics from the particular country, or Americans who have lived or worked there. After a chapter introduction, sections discuss a typical teen's day, family life, food, education, social life, education, entertainment, and religion. Despite the diversity of the authors, almost all the text has a similar dry tone, though most sections are filled with detailed information that will give young readers a good sense of how life in these countries differs from that in their own.

Each chapter ends with notes and a resource guide of books, articles, and web sites (these vary from a few entries to a page or so). Though the books contain much useful information, each is illustrated by only one or two black-and-white photos for each country, so students may not be easily drawn into picking them up. The books also tend to describe from the outside, rather than present any voices of actual teenagers in these countries, which could have made the accounts of teenage life more immediate and fun.

Top 10 Countries of Recent Immigrants

Harkrader, Lisa. **India**. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2004. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7660-5180-3, \$19.95.

Imbriaco, Alison. **Vietnam**. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2004. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7660-5182-X, \$19.95.

Lieurance, Suzanne. **The Philippines**. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2004. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7660-5175-7, \$19.95.

McCarthy, Pat. **Canada**. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2004. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7660-5176-5, \$19.95.

The ten countries in this series for middle school students are those that, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, have the largest groups of recent immigrants; besides those above, the other countries profiled are China, Cuba, El Salvador, and Mexico. Each title begins with four pages that describe about 30 web sites related to the country. No web addresses are given, and students are directed to go to Enslow's site at www.MyReportLinks.com to access these sites and other "Quick, Safe, and Up-to-Date" links about the country and its people. After a page of facts about the country and a general introduction, each book has chapters on the nation's land and climate, culture, economy, history, and community within the United States. Color photos of the nation's people and places accompany the text, along with a country map. The books end with one or two pages of chapter notes, a page of suggested further reading, and an index.

In keeping with the theme of Internet links, each page has a border like a computer window, including scroll buttons and a menu bar across the top. A number of the illustrations are within Microsoft Internet Explorer windows, and some are even captures of screen shots, with the text cut off at the bottom of the window. These Internet images include a full web address in the window; a Magellan portrait in the Philippines volume, for example, is apparently to be found at www.mariner.org/age/images/lg_ferdie.jpg. With the strong effort made to resemble the Internet here, these books seem to be aimed at students who won't read any information that is not within a computer screen.

A True Book

De Capua, Sarah. ***How People Migrate***. New York: Children's Press/Scholastic, 2004. 48 pp. ISBN 0-516-22799-8, \$23.50.

Ditchfield, Christin. ***Knowing Your Civil Rights***. New York: Children's Press/Scholastic, 2004. 48 pp. ISBN 0-516-22800-5, \$23.50.

This series aims to educate students in the lower elementary grades in various subjects in civics; other volumes include ones on freedom of speech, making a law, and being a governor. The books employ simple text in very large type, accompanied by a number of color photos. The volume on immigration provides a fairly thorough grounding in the requirements for entering and staying in the United States. The details given for such subjects as the workings of the diversity visa lottery may be beyond what students at this level will need to know; in a community with a large number of immigrants, though, such information may be of greater interest.

The volume on civil rights focuses first on those found in the Bill of Rights, and it then describes the struggles for equal rights fought by African Americans, women, and the handicapped. Both books end with short lists of books, organizations, and web sites; a glossary defines the words bolded throughout the text.

We Are America

Hossell, Karen Price. ***Dominican Americans***. Chicago:

Heinemann, 2004. 32 pp. ISBN 1-4034-5020-X, \$24.22 (list), \$16.95 (library).

Hossell, Karen Price. ***Pakistani Americans***. Chicago: Heinemann, 2004. 32 pp. ISBN 1-4034-5023-4, \$24.22 (list), \$16.95 (library).

Hossell, Karen Price. ***Thai Americans***. Chicago: Heinemann, 2004. 32 pp. ISBN 1-4034-5025-0, \$24.22 (list), \$16.95 (library).

Peterson, Tiffany. ***Greek Americans***. Chicago: Heinemann, 2004. 32 pp. ISBN 1-4034-5021-8, \$24.22 (list), \$16.95 (library).

Peterson, Tiffany. ***Japanese Americans***. Chicago: Heinemann, 2004. 32 pp. ISBN 1-4034-5022-6, \$24.22 (list), \$16.95 (library).

Peterson, Tiffany. ***Swedish Americans***. Chicago: Heinemann, 2004. 32 pp. ISBN 1-4034-5024-2, \$24.22 (list), \$16.95 (library).

Each of these books for students in the lower elementary grades begins and ends with the story of a single immigrant. In the volume on Greek Americans, as an example, the first chapter tells how Nicholas Kefalides, a young medical student, left Greece in 1947 to continue his studies in America. The last chapter recounts his story up to the present.

In between, the volumes contain chapters on the country of origin for each group, the earliest immigrants who came from there, their experiences living and working in the United States, and the elements of their culture each group has brought with them (such as holidays, food, and the arts). A few famous members of each group are mentioned, such as the Swedish-Americans Jenny Lind, Greta Garbo, and Candice Bergen.

A chart at the back of each book depicts the numbers of immigrants from the group over different periods. Also included are a list of three books for further reading, a glossary, and an index. Accompanied by the 12 earlier volumes in the series, these books will give many young students who are the children, or grandchildren, or perhaps great-grandchildren of immigrants a good amount of information about their people's homeland and experiences in America.

What Is...?

Boritzer, Etan. ***What Is Death?*** Santa Barbara, Calif.: Veronica Lane Books, 2000. 38 pp. Illus. by Nancy Forrest. ISBN 0-9637597-4-4, \$14.95.

Boritzer, Etan. ***What Is God?*** Santa Barbara, Calif.: Veronica Lane Books, 2004. (originally published by Firefly, 1990). 38 pp. Illus. by Robbie Marantz. ISBN 0-920668-89-5, \$14.95.

These two books attempt to help children understand more about these difficult questions. (A third work by this author, titled *What Is Love?*, also takes on a very large topic.) Both have pages of relatively short text faced by full-page

illustrations done in a colorful, cartoon-like style (though by different illustrators). The text in each takes a broad, encompassing view of these questions, and takes care to include the viewpoints of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and other religious traditions, as well as that of nonbelievers. The book on death does not shy away from the subject, as it begins by describing how all things eventually die and later depicts a service with a casket at a gravesite. Some illustrations, though, may be difficult for children to relate to the text. A description of the soul is accompanied by a picture of three boys playing basketball, who are outlined in colors that possibly represent their souls. A young girl who read the review copy of this book thought the lines meant that the boys were spirits or ghosts, and perhaps she is right.

After including a number of points of view, the two books finish with relatively comforting messages. In the book on God, it is that since there are so many opinions on God and so many places that some people find him, then he (or He, or She) really is everywhere in a sense, and is even within us. When considering death, the author states that perhaps it is similar to the way that throughout our life we leave one stage behind and move on to another, and that living on after death can be achieved through the good we do. These two books can serve to open up discussions, but not all parents with specific beliefs will favor the more general message they present. And without explanation from a parent or teacher, some children may be a little confused or disturbed by some of the images or information within.

World of Dance

AlZayer, Penni. ***Middle Eastern Dance***. Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2004. 124 pp. ISBN 0-7910-7645-8, \$22.95.

This is the sixth book in a series that covers both folk and artistic forms of dance from cultural, historical, and practical perspectives. The other volumes are on African, Asian, European, and modern dance; there is one on ballet as well. The first chapter here, “Middle Eastern Dance Comes to America,” gives an extremely detailed account of how belly dancing, and Middle Eastern culture in general, came to the attention of Americans at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. This story, and the subsequent account of inauthentic Middle Eastern dancing in America in the years that followed the Exposition, may help to explain some Western attitudes toward Middle Eastern dance, but it does not seem to deserve the length it is afforded here.

The succeeding chapters examine various forms of Middle Eastern dance, including dances from North Africa and the Arabian Gulf, religious dances (such as the “whirling dervishes” of Turkey), and the “dabkeh” dance of Lebanon and its surrounding countries. The last two chapters consider the evolution of women’s belly dancing and the more controversial solo male dancing. A final section gives some detail on the steps in a typical belly dance and a dabkeh. There is just one photo in this section for each dance and no drawings. Such an attempt to capture a visual art mostly in words shows some of the difficulty that the rest of the book has in portraying its subject (although a number of photos are

included). For a serious student of dance—it is written at a level appropriate for students in junior high and above—this book will provide a thoughtful introduction to the many facets of its little-known subject. The book also includes a chronology, a glossary, and lists of videos, web sites, and books. To truly understand the subject, it would be best to view also one or more videos of dance such as those listed.

World Writers

Leslie, Roger. ***Isak Dinesen: Gothic Storyteller***. Greensboro, N.C.: Morgan Reynolds, 2004. 128 pp. ISBN 1-931798-17-6, \$21.95.

Some of this biography for students in grades six and above concerns the writing achievements of the Danish author of *Out of Africa* and *Seven Gothic Tales*. The majority of it, though, is taken up with the remarkable assortment of romantic entanglements, marriage crises, health problems, financial difficulties, and exotic African adventures that filled many of her 77 years. One rather concentrated example of her difficulties is this passage from 1930, when Dinesen was 45: “She had trouble eating and sleeping and lost sensation in her arms and legs. Suffering from a combination of amebic dysentery, anemia, malnutrition, depression, and, as always, syphilis, she could barely think clearly.” The author puts forth all the complicated elements of her life plainly and allows readers to make most judgments for themselves.

The book ends with a time line, lists of major works, a bibliography, source notes, an index, and a list of several web sites for further research. This biography demonstrates that Dinesen was a fascinating (and probably to those around her, sometimes infuriating) person, and readers of it may well be drawn to read some of her works.

NEW EDITIONS IN OTHER MEDIA

Corder, Zizou. ***Lion Boy***. Minneapolis: High Bridge, 2003. 7 compact discs; 8 hours. \$29.95.

This audio version of a popular novel aimed at children ages eight to thirteen is well narrated by the British actor Simon Jones. It tells the story of Charlie Ashanti, a young boy with an English mother and an African father, who returns to his home in London to find that his parents have disappeared. He then embarks on an exotic adventure where he uses his surprising ability to talk the language of cats to communicate with ordinary street cats from London to Paris, as well as the lions of a remarkable floating circus. Charlie teams up with the lions in his search for his missing parents and has numerous adventures along the way.

“Zizou Corder” is the name used by the mother/daughter team that has written this first part of a projected trilogy. As its hero is a British boy who must use his wits to make his way through unbelievable situations, comparisons to Harry Potter are inevitable, but this novel creates a uniquely imaginative world of its own. 