

A select bibliography of Newfoundland children's books, 1970-1990

Cathy Simpson

Résumé: *Cathy Simpson propose une bibliographie sélective de la littérature pour la jeunesse écrite par des auteurs résidant à Terre-Neuve et au Labrador et publiée par des maisons d'édition de la région.*

This bibliography is necessarily selective. It includes only literature published in Newfoundland and books written by Newfoundland and Labrador residents for the trade market up to the young adult level. Textbooks, anthologies, and non-fiction are excluded. Also excluded are books in translation or under licence from foreign publishers and books written and published outside Newfoundland by writers not normally resident in the province. Although every attempt has been made to find and record all the books that fit these criteria, there will be omissions. For the purpose of this list, we have defined a Newfoundland writer as any native-born Newfoundlander or any ordinary resident of Newfoundland whose books reflect the Newfoundland experience or environment – a definition which has caused us regretfully to exclude more than one distinguished author.

Sources

1. Provincial Public Library microfiche catalogue, dated August 7, 1991.
2. Publishers' catalogues and backlists.
3. *CCL* Index-in-progress, 1975-90.
4. Back issues of *CCL* through Issue 63.
5. Publications of the Canadian Children's Book Centre, including back issues of *Children's Book News*.
6. Librarians, booksellers, the Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators, and Performers.

Format

Author, title, publication data. Annotation. Awards. *CCL* review. Approximate interest level: (P/to Grade 3; J/Grades 4-8; S/Grade 9+; A/all ages).

Barnhouse, Dorothy P. *Quest of the golden gannet*. Breakwater, 1979. 97 pp. ISBN 0-919948-61-8.

A young boy embarks on a quest to find his father, supposedly lost at sea. Adventure/mystery novel set on a ship bound for Newfoundland in the 1600s, rich in authentic historical and nautical details. Unattributed line drawings of fine quality. Beaver Award for Juvenile Fiction. *CCL* 14:61. J,S.

Burt, Robert. *Notsomuch a rainbow*. Illus. Wilfred Reid. Creative Publishers, 1989. 32 pp. ISBN 0-920021-63-8.

Three fairy people abandon their colony in the New World and return to their homeland. A rather sad tale lacking real appeal for young children. Read-aloud picture-storybook with coloured pencil illustrations.

Cook, Michael. *The fisherman's revenge*. Playwrights Canada, 1985. 85 pp. ISBN 0-88754-385-5.

A fisherman who cannot pay his debts to the evil merchant is assisted by his lovely daughter's gallant suitor. An easily-staged romantic comedy for six actors. Commissioned by the Newfoundland and Labrador Travelling Theatre Company for a provincial tour in 1976. *CCL* 57:92. S.

Dawe, Tom. *Landwash days: Newfoundland folklore, sketches, and verse for youngsters*. Illus. author. Newfoundland Book Publishers (1967) Limited, 1980. Unpag. ISBN 0-920508-15-4.

Collection of light verse about seashore animals, birds, and the fisherman's way of life, interspersed with first-person anecdotes of the author's childhood. Large-format paperback, rather unattractive line-and wash drawings. P/J.

---. *A gommil from Bumble Bee Bight and other nonsense verse*. Illus. Sylvia Ficken. Harry Cuff Publications Limited, 1982. 56 pp. ISBN 0-919095-19-4.

Limericks by an accomplished poet, cleverly exploiting Newfoundland sayings, vocabulary, and placenames. Distinctive line illustrations with one colour. P.

---. *Angishore, boo-man, and clumper: a Newfoundland folk alphabet*. Illus. Sylvia Ficken. Harry Cuff Publications Limited, 1983. 64 pp. ISBN 0-919095-50-X.

Alphabet rhymes in format "A is for..." with two illustrated pages per letter. Delightful use of Newfoundland dialect. Attractive line-and-stipple drawings, border designs. P.

---. *Alley-coosh, bibby, and cark: a second Newfoundland folk alphabet*. Illus. Sylvia Ficken. Harry Cuff Publications Limited, 1987. Unpag. ISBN 0-921191-11-1.

A repetition of the successful combination of the preceding, this time in full colour. *CCL* 52:84. P.

---. *Winter of the black weasel*. Illus. Anne MacLeod. Breakwater, 1988. Unpag. ISBN 0-920911-16-1.

An account based on Micmac legend tells the origin of the animosity between the Micmac and Red Indians or Beothucks. Ostensibly a picture storybook for primary level, but better-suited to middle grades because of the themes of death and extinction, a sad ending, and full-colour illustrations graphically depicting blood, terror, and hatred. J.

Doucette, Judith M. *Amanda's baking lesson*. Illus. Anne Furlong. Jespersen Press, 1986. Unpag. ISBN 0-920502-86-5.

A little girl's first attempt – not really a lesson – at baking goes awry. Slight read-aloud story, rather heavy line drawings. P.

Feather, Jean Hayes. *Sawtooth Harbour Boy*. Illus. Lisa Calvert. Thomas Nelson and Sons (Canada) Limited, 1973. 128 pp. ISBN 0-176-32913-7.

A fisherman's son growing up in a Newfoundland outport in the 1920s resolves to become a doctor, and struggles against all odds to get his education. Authentic details of outport life and Newfoundland culture; well-drawn characters in a well-told narrative. Glossary of Newfoundland vocabulary. Woodgrain-textured pencil drawings. J.

---. *Fanny for change*. Illus. Angela King-Harris. Breakwater, 1987. 80 pp. ISBN 0-920911-31-5.

A young girl in Famish Gut in the 1930s discovers that she can change some things, such as her own plump appearance, and that she can learn to accept other things, such as the name of her community. Pen-and-wash vignetted illustrations. Canadian Children's Book Centre Our Choice. CCL 50:68. J.

Gale, Donald. *Sooshevan: Child of the Beothuck*. Illus. Shawn Steffler. Breakwater, 1988. Unpag. ISBN 0-920911-15-3.

A Beothuck girl demonstrates her maturity by going on a lonely expedition, guided by her grandmother's spirit, to rescue her injured father. Full-colour illustrations incorporate genuine Beothuck motifs and artifacts. French edition available, translated by Anne Thareau and Scott Jamieson (ISBN 0-920911-82-X). Canadian Children's Book Centre Our Choice; Honourable Mention, Alcuin Society/Canadian Children's Book Centre for Excellence in Text, Illustration, and Overall Quality. P.

Gibson, Judy. *The secret of Devil's Cleft*. Illus. author. Jespersen Press, 1987. 112 pp. ISBN 0-920502-88-1.

Before a Royal visit, three St. John's children rather coincidentally manage to uncover a terrorist plot, and thus save the lives of the Prince and Princess of Wales. J.

Hall, Pam. *On the edge of the eastern ocean*. Illus. author. GLC Publishers Limited, 1982. Unpag. ISBN 0-88874-055-7.

A young puffin meets the wise and kindly ghosts of the now-extinct Great Auks who warn him of the dangers of environmental pollution. Read-aloud modern legend in free verse. Large format picture storybook, with lively and evocative watercolours of seabirds by award-winning illustrator. A.

Harley, Peter. *The clothes lion*. Illus. C. Anne MacLeod. Jespersen Press, 1986. Unpag. ISBN 0-920502-90-3.

A lion learns that, in the eyes of the public, you are what you wear. Scanty colour sketches inaccurately registered. P.

---. *One, two, Baccalieu*. Illus. Marie A. Stamp. Jespersen Press, 1988. 38 pp. ISBN 0-920502-85-7.

Large-format paperback of multi-stanza verses on Newfoundland themes, in-

cluding placenames, animals and birds, and children's activities. Bold, light-hearted line and stipple drawings. P.

Kavanagh, Ed. *Amanda Greenleaf visits a distant star*. Illus. Tish Holland. Moonstone Press, 1986. 54 pp. ISBN 0-920259-11-1.

A water nymph from another world visits this unhappy "Blue Star" and returns to her own with the gift of music. Fantasy with inordinately heavy line-and-wash illustrations. *CCL* 47:73. P.

---. *Amanda Greenleaf and the spell of the water witch*. Illus. Janice Udell. Moonstone Press, 1987. 56 pp. ISBN 0-920259-12-X.

A water nymph persuades a not-really-evil witch to help her save the lives of two waterfall residents. Fantasy with a moral. Evocative, softly-toned pencil drawings. *CCL* 58: 116.

'Longside Players. *The cat's meow: Selected plays 1984-1989*. Ed. Ed. Kavanagh and Glen Rockwood. Creative Publishers, 1990. 178 pp. ISBN 0-920021-79-4.

Collection of nine plays for children of all ages by a group of physically- and mentally-challenged adults dedicated to the integration of the disabled in society. Lively and delightful performance-tested plays, with small casts and simple staging, suitable for production by school theatre groups. A.

Mackey, Gell. *Raggets!* Jespersen Press, 1990. 93 pp. ISBN 0-921692-26-9. A boy is led through a series of unbelievable adventures by an underground creature. Ill-conceived plot, offensive details, unacceptable ending. U/S.

Manuel, Ella. *That fine summer*. Illus. Lise Sorenson. Jespersen Press, 1980. 94 pp. ISBN 0-920502-22-9.

Eleven-year-old Mahala stays with her grandfather in a Newfoundland outpost for the summer and befriends an Innu boy. Authentic details of Newfoundland pastoral milieu, colourful dialogue. Strong pencil line-and-tone drawings by well-known Newfoundland artist. J.

McCarthy, Michael J. *The journey home*. Gage: Canadian Topliner series, 1980. 146 pp. ISBN 0-7715-1660-6. Previously published by Macmillan of Canada, 1978: ISBN 0-7705-16394.

An orphaned young offender fleeing mainland justice rediscovers his self-respect and happiness while hiding out in a Newfoundland fishing village. S.

---. *The treasure of Kelly's Island*. Illus. Sylvia Quinton Ficken. Harry Cuff Publications Limited, 1983. 94 pp. ISBN 0-919095-51-8.

Two teenage boys and a Newfoundland dog search for pirate treasure on an offshore island and uncover a drug-smuggling operation. S.

---. *Escape!* Jespersen Press, 1989. 77 pp. ISBN 0-921692-26 9.

Fifteen-year-old Chuck, a boy from Ontario who is the victim of an abusive and criminal step-father, escapes to a Newfoundland community during a school exchange trip. S.

Major, Kevin. *Hold fast*. Clarke, Irwin and Company Limited, 1978. 170 pp. ISBN 0-7720-1175-3.

Fourteen-year-old Michael, sent to live with relatives after his parents' death, struggles to survive. Generally considered to be one of the best Canadian young

adult books. Canada Council Award for Children's Literature; Canadian Association of Children's Librarians "Book of the Year; Ruth Schwartz Children's Book Award; *School Library Journal* Best Book; Hans Christian Andersen Honor List. *CCL* 14:81.

---. *Far from shore*. Clarke, Irwin and Company Limited, 1980. 189 pp. ISBN 0-7720-1312-8.

Fifteen-year-old Chris hangs out with the wrong crowd and ends up in court, but a friend's near-drowning tests his maturity. Narrative told from multiple viewpoints. Canadian Young Adult Book Award; *School Library Journal* Best Book. *CCL* 22:50. S.

---. *Thirty-six exposures*. Delacorte Press, 1984. 156 pp. ISBN 0-385-29347-X. During their last few weeks of high school, Lorne and his friends experiment with independence and go too far, with tragic results. Narrative structure of thirty-six "snapshot" chapters reflects Lorne's obsession with photography. *CCL* 43:56. S.

---. *Dear Bruce Springsteen*. Doubleday Canada Limited, 1987. 135 pp. ISBN 0-385-29584-7.

Through a series of long unanswered letters to his favourite rock star, a 14-year-old rock band leader sorts out his problems with his parents' separation and his budding love life. *CCL* 51:78. S.

---. *Blood red ochre*. Doubleday Canada Limited, 1989. 146 pp. ISBN 0-385-29794-7.

Through the disturbing character of Nancy/Shanawdithit, the last known Beothuck, a teenage Newfoundland boy experiences the violence of the early encounters between aboriginal and immigrant peoples. Narrative structure of two alternating realistic stories, one contemporary and one historical, blending at the conclusion in a time-travel episode. Runner-up, Canadian Library Association Book of the Year; Runner-up, Young Adult Canadian Book Award. *CCL* 61:59. S.

Miles-Cadman, Margaret. *Little Fan and the fountain fairy*. Illus. author. Breakwater, 1989. Unpag. ISBN 0-920911-72-2.

A couple of kittens make wishes on a magical backyard fountain. *CCL* 60:129. P.

Moore, Tom. *Goodbye Momma*. Illus. Gerry Squires. Breakwater, 1976. 70 pp. ISBN 0-919948-18-9.

A man recalls how, as a young boy, he learned to come to terms with his mother's death and his father's subsequent remarriage. *CCL* 14:65. J.

---. *Tom cods, kids and confederation*. Illus. Rosemary Savoury. Jespersion Press, 1979. 65 pp. ISBN 0-920502-10-5.

A group of children in a Newfoundland outport in the late 1940s engage in their own version of the Confederation debate, as they see their community divided by the issue. *CCL* 25:83. J.

Obed, Ellen Bryan. *Borrowed black.* Illus. Hope Yandell.

Breakwater Books Limited, 1979. Unpag. ISBN 0-919948-69-3.

Read-aloud fantasy of a rather fearsome creature, explaining why the moon looks cracked and sheds silver on water. Very poorly-designed, with gloomy line-and-watercolour illustrations. *CCL* 20:61. P.

---. *Borrowed black: A Labrador fantasy.* Illus. Jan Mogenson. Breakwater, 1990. Unpag. ISBN 0-920911-14-5.

Complete redesign of the preceding. All new illustrations; striking full-page watercolours express the mythic quality of the text. Canadian Children's Book Centre Our Choice; Third Place, Alcuin Society Award for Excellence in Book Design. *CCL* 58:114. P.

---. *Little snowshoe.* Illus. William Ritchie. Breakwater, 1984. Unpag. ISBN 0-919519-29-6.

A little snowshoe hare tries to find his mother, who is camouflaged in the wintry forest. Easy-to read large format picture book with stipple-and hatched drawings. Canadian Children's Book Centre Our Choice. *CCL* 39/40:130. P.

---. *Wind in my pocket.* Illus. Shawn Steffler. Breakwater, 1990. Unpag. ISBN 0-920911-74-9.

Collection of delightful poems "with the true poet's touch" (*CCL* review) based on the cycles of the northern seasons. Full-page brightly-coloured illustrations express the vitality of the text. *CCL* 62:95. P.

Palmer, Tammey. *You're the bumble in my bee.* Jespersen Press, 1986. 63 pp. ISBN 0-920502-74-1. J.

Phillips, Linda, Peter Ringrose, and Michael Winter. Ask me no questions. Prentice-Hall Canada, Inc., 1990. 204 pp. ISBN 0-13-050568-4.

After her younger sister attempts suicide, 15-year-old Leslie decides to find help to deal with the fact that their father has sexually abused them both. Canadian Children's Book Centre Our Choice. *CCL* 62:109. S.

Pippy, John H.C. *Beware the fugitora.* Breakwater, 1989. 136 pp. ISBN 0-920911-65-X.

Two boys who try to assist an alien survivor of a spaceship crash experience separate adventures, one aboard a spacecraft, and the other back in time of the Beothucks, who are disturbingly depicted as bloodthirsty and cruel. J/S.

Pittman, Al. *Down by Jim Long's stage: Rhymes for children and young fish.* Illus. Pam Hall. Breakwater, 1976. Unpag. ISBN 0-919948-29-4.

A Newfoundland classic: verses about fish by a renowned poet. Line drawings with brightly-coloured highlights. Canadian Library Association Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award. *CCL* 12:45 (1976 edition); *CCL* 58:11 (reprint) P.

---. *One wonderful fine day for a sculpin named Sam.* Illus. Shawn Steffler. Breakwater, 1983. Unpag. ISBN 0-919948-86-3.

The ugliest fish in the sea finds true love and learns that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. A Newfoundland children's favourite read-aloud picture-storybook with full colour illustrations. P.

- Porter, Helen Fogwell.** *January, February, June or July.* Breakwater, 1988. 199 pp. ISBN 0-920911-27-7.
A 15-year-old girl has her first traumatic experiences with sex, pregnancy, and abortion. Canadian Library Association Best Young Adult Canadian Book Award; shortlisted for W.H. Smith/Books in Canada Best First Novel Award. S.
- Priddle, Floyd.** *The survival squad.* Breakwater, 1990. 192 pp. ISBN 0-920911-45-5.
A group of young people struggle to survive in the violent aftermath of a nuclear holocaust. Written by a 17-year-old, interesting chiefly for that reason. CCL 64:73. S.
- Renouf, Miriam.** 10 little caplin. Illus. Deborah Diemand. Jespersen Press, 1984. Unpag. ISBN 0-920502-46-6.
A clichéd counting-down game based on a well-known small fish. Cartoonish and rather crude colour illustrations. P.
- Renouf, Miriam, and Bora Merdsoy.** *A whale by the tail.* Illus. Mandy Jones. Jespersen Press, 1982. 30 pp. ISBN 0-920502-07-5.
A young humpback whale becomes entangled in a crab trap and eventually is freed by some divers. Read-aloud picture storybook unfortunately marred by careless editing and unfocussed black-and-white photo illustrations.
- Russell, Stella.** *The discontented hippopotamus.* Illus. Linda Russell. Harry Cuff Publications Limited, 1982. 12 pp. ISBN 0-919095-31-3.
A hippopotamus wonders about his name. Poor design, crude drawings in grey tones. CCL 41:70. P.
- Smith, Juanita J.** *Reena and the Riser.* Greenwood, 1989. 124 pp. ISBN 0-88899-100-2.
Science-fiction novel with Star-Trek-like plot and characters, all of whom are adult. Written by a 13-year-old. S.
- Steffler, John.** *Flights of magic.* Illus. Shawn Steffler. Porcepic Books, 1987. 48 pp. ISBN 0-88878-265-9.
After a move to a new neighbourhood, Ruth loses herself in a new book, which magically leads her back home to meet her new neighbours. Nominated for Governor General's Award for Children's Book Illustration. CCL 51:102. P.
- Story, Alice.** *Beneath the barrens.* Illus. Angela King-Harris. Breakwater, 1989. 104 pp. ISBN 0-920911-66-8.
While exploring the barrens, Kate and her cat encounter a magical underground world, where they help to solve a conflict between two ancient enemies. J.
- Stuckless, Janice.** *A dream come true.* Jespersen Press, 1990. 71 pp. ISBN 0-921692-34-X.
A story of first love between a 15-year-old girl embarrassed by her hearing aids and a boy who develops AIDS. Published when the writer was 18. S.

Whelan, Pat and Arlene Luke. *A silly codfish tale/un conte en l'air d'une morue amusante.* Illus. Ronan Kennedy. Jesperson Press, 1989. 32 pp. ISBN 9-921692-14-5.

A tale in verse in which a codfish looks forward to being eaten. In English, with French translations on the same page. *CCL* 62:95. P.

Cathy Simpson is a former primary school teacher, now a freelance writer and editor living in Lewisporte, Newfoundland.