

familiarisé avec le monde des Muppets et de Kermit la grenouille.

Le texte, en vers octosyllabiques pour la plupart, est, comme les chansons et comptines de notre enfance, tout en rimes et allitérations, ce qui lui donne un certain rythme.

C'est un texte qu'il faut lire à l'enfant à haute voix. Il est tout à fait dans une certaine tradition orale, et populaire, française où on aime jouer avec la langue et où on se passe, de génération en génération, les "turlututu chapeau pointu" et "saperlipopette", avec ici des variantes du genre "et patati et pâte à tarte", "nom d'un têtard", et le juron du grand-père "cent mille milliards de nénuphars" (on croirait entendre le Capitaine Haddock!) et autres jeux de langue.

En somme, un album qui va plaire par son aspect rétro.

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#### ABOVE ALL: ROOFS OVER THEIR HEADS

**Houses of hide and earth: Native dwellings of the Plains Indians.** Bonnie Shemie. Tundra Books, 1991. 24 pp., \$12.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88776-269-7;  
**Houses of wood: Native dwellings of the Northwest Coast.** Bonnie Shemie. Tundra Books, 1992. 24 pp., \$13.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88776-284-0.

*Houses of hide and earth* and *Houses of wood*, the third and fourth of Bonnie Shemie's acclaimed native dwellings books, clearly meet the high standard established by earlier works in the series. Shemie's architectural training, and her obvious fascination with how native peoples traditionally solved their dwelling problems in different parts of the continent, result in detailed and accurate drawings. Her research is also evident in the texts, which link modes of living with particular kinds of accommodation in prose that is clear, appropriate to the subject, yet challenging to younger readers. For example, "The most common house was designed like an enormous shed, its wide front wall left undecorated. Roofs varied: gigantic feast houses might have mansard-style roofs, others pitched."

At the beginning of each book the subject groups are clearly distinguished (Plains Indians, Indians of the north-west Pacific coast), as are the exigencies of climate and lifestyle which condition their special housing requirements. So in the third volume, we are first introduced to "Life on the Western Plains," and in the fourth to "The Northwest Coast." Shemie then explores the availability of building materials in each situation, and this leads directly to an explanation of the use of these materials in the dwellings. Various kinds of buildings and their uses are illustrated, including those used for living, cooking, and ceremonial activities, educating the reader to relationships between distinctive lifestyles and accommodation in the geographical region covered by each book. While illustrations and texts usually present anonymous members of the group, in the

fourth volume Shemie has created an unnamed but individualized boy who takes part in many aspects of the building process, beginning with the gathering of necessary materials.

There's a lot of information here, but it is presented in such a way as to involve the enquiring reader. Text is always linked to line drawings, and pages of black-and-white text and drawing are interspersed with double-page coloured illustrations with appropriately brief descriptive notes. These softly-coloured pencil illustrations (also done by Shemie) are carefully arranged to reveal both interior and exterior views of the houses, and in each case include several people engaged in a range of typical activities.

Each component of these books—text, drawings, and coloured illustrations—is beautifully integrated with the others. The result is a successful combination of the twin aims of all good books, to teach and at the same time to delight.

**Stan Atherton** is a professor of English at St. Thomas University in Fredericton. His most recent book is *Martha Ostenso, a study of the Norwegian-Canadian novelist* (ECW Press, Toronto).

#### TESTED BY A GHOST OF THE PLAINS

**The ghost and Lone Warrior: An Arapaho legend.** C.J. Taylor. Illus. author. Tundra Books, 1991. Unpag., \$13.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88776-264-6.

C.J. (Carrie) Taylor, a Mohawk artist living near the Kahnawake Reserve in Quebec, author-illustrator of *How Two-Feather was saved from loneliness*, and Tundra Books bring us *The ghost and Lone Warrior*, a tale about life on the western plains before the age of the horse. This Arapaho legend shows the courage, endurance and spiritual values of those who hunted the buffalo on foot.

The text is spare and simple and the story moving and well-told. Lone Warrior is tested for courage and perseverance before he becomes chief. When leading a hunting party, he injures his ankle and is forced to remain behind. He overcomes pain, hunger, despair, cold and fear. Despite being crippled, he manages to kill a buffalo, and gives thanks to the animal he must kill to survive. The ghost of his ancestor chief, portrayed as a skeleton in a red cloak, reveals that he has subjected Lone Warrior to a series of tests which qualify him as a leader for his people and a hero for readers.

The story embodies traditional Native-American values while expressing a truth: it is often adversity that allows us to discover our strength and find meaning in life. There is incidental knowledge to be gained about the way of life of the time in this legend, such as surviving in a lean-to, hunting on foot. At the end of the book, there is factual information about the Arapaho, great buffalo hunters of the Plains.

The vibrant, evocative paintings are striking, using natural browns and