

finally receives a letter from her father. He asks her to join him. However, what she sees when she arrives there is not her father but his ghost!

Following the ghost's instructions step by step, she creates a magic train, and helps her father and many other souls stop their pain and find their way home. A fantastic but sad story, *Ghost Train* echoes the voice of *Tales from Gold Mountain*, only this time the voice that Paul Yee gives to the early Chinese immigrants is louder and stronger. He deals with his subject seriously: the focus is the railway and the train for which Choon-yi's father and so many other ill-treated Chinese labourers have died. Together with Choon-yi, readers learn about these people's bitter lives. Once again, the story emphasizes Paul Yee's point that "we should not forget [the past]," which he made in the "Afterword" of *Tales from Gold Mountain*. *Ghost Train* is a powerful story in which Yee connects the dead with the living, the earth with hell, and dreams with reality.

A wonderful match to Yee's story are Harvey Chan's illustrations. A sad tone is set by their dark and heavy colouring and a ghostly atmosphere is created by a background of fire and blood. The giant train that connects the continent contrasts with the small figures of Choon Yi and her father, who appear so weak, helpless and lost.

It is worth noticing that as in the award-winning story *Roses Sing on New Snow*, the protagonist of this book is a girl. Both girls can create magic: Maylin in *Roses* cooks a new dish which enchants the governor of South China, and Choon Yi paints a train that is full of ghosts. There is a main difference between the two stories, however: one praises the New World and the other condemns it.

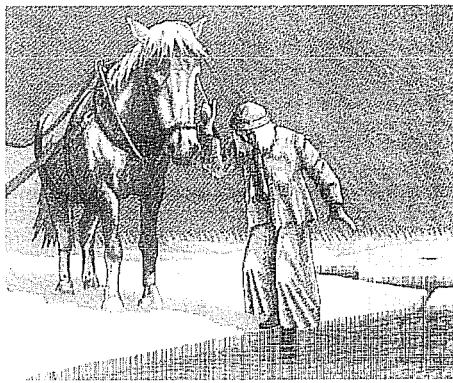
Still, like *Roses Sing on New Snow*, *Ghost Train* is a valuable contribution by Paul Yee and Harvey Chan to the education of young people about North America's past.

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A STORY OF SURVIVAL

Courage in the Storm. Thomas H. Raddall. Illus. Are Gjesdal. Pottersfield Press, reprinted 1995. 52 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-919001-42-4.

Courage in the Storm offers a glimpse into rural life in Nova Scotia at the turn of the century. Life is hard for Greta and her son and in an effort to earn money, Greta decides to make and sell birch brooms. The painstaking and laborious method of construction is described and illustrated in detail. Greta's journey to sell the brooms involves her in another fight for survival. When she becomes lost



in a blizzard, she must struggle to overcome the dangerous and unstable river ice.

The full-page black-and-white illustrations depict the blizzard images wonderfully. In other scenes, they add to the atmosphere of the story's setting. The story is well-written, but has a slower pace than many of today's children's stories. All the elements in *Courage in the Storm* including the texture of the pages, contribute to giving it the look, sound, and feel of long-ago.

Joanne Robertson, author of *Sea Witches* and of the soon-to-be-released *The Harvest Queen*, is also a teacher and a librarian.

WHOSE STORY IS IT?

Belle's Journey. Marilyn Reynolds. Illus. Stephen McCallum. Orca, 1993. 32 pp. \$14.95 cloth. ISBN 0-920501-90-7. **La Diabliesse and the Baby.** Richardo Keens-Douglas. Illus. Marie Lafrance. Annick Press, 1994. 32 pp. \$15.95, \$5.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 1-550370993-3, 1-550370992-5. **A Handful of Seeds.** Monica Hughes. Illus. Luis Garay. Lester Publishing/UNICEF, 1993. 32 pp. \$16.95 cloth. ISBN 1-895555-27-2. **Hansel and Gretel.** Retold and illus. Ian Wallace. Groundwood/Douglas & McIntyre, 1994. 32 pp. \$14.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88899-212-2. **The Last Quest of Gilgamesh.** Retold and illus. Ludmila Zeman. Tundra Books, 1995. 24 pp. \$19.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88776-328-6. **Noguchi the Samurai.** Burt Konzak. Illus. Johnny Wales. Lester Publishing, 1994. Unpag. \$16.95 cloth. ISBN 1-89555-54-X.

Concerns about story unite these six picture books for younger readers. Four of the books — *La Diabliesse and the Baby*, *Noguchi the Samurai*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *The Last Quest of Gilgamesh* — are retellings of tales deeply rooted in tradition. One other, *Belle's Journey*, derives from the teller's own tradition as it pertains to her mother's childhood in Saskatchewan. *A Handful of Seeds* was purposefully invented to offer "a message of hope on behalf of the thirty million