

The Baritone Cat. Mora Skelton. Illus. Janet Wilson. Lester Publishing Ltd., 1994. 32 pp. \$16.95 cloth. ISBN 1-895555-52-3.

Sam is a feisty tortoiseshell cat* with a "big, warm voice" who sings about the joys of freedom and his disdain of close relationships. In fact, Sam prides himself on not coming when he's called. But Sam's circumstances change and he finds himself on the street — "cold, forlorn and unwelcome." As the weather gets colder, and Sam gets hungrier, he is forced to change his approach — with heartwarming results. After initially biting Joanne, the child who befriends him, Sam "commands" himself: "Don't bite. Don't wriggle. Don't stick your claws into her.... Give it a chance to work."

The story is based on the author's own cat, which no doubt adds to its realistic and appealing simplicity. Janet Wilson's gentle illustrations blend well with the text both in terms of placement on the page and their softly glowing colours. In particular, she has captured the moods of this tough little character. The book will be especially appreciated by those of us who know a small furry creature who has changed his or her tune to gain entry to our heart ... and our home. This book is recommended for ages four to nine, but will definitely appeal to cat lovers of all ages.

Jennifer Charles has a journalism degree from Carleton University and is a scientific editor at the Environmental Technology Centre in Ottawa.

* Editor's note: The chances of a tortoiseshell cat being male are between one in 200,000 and one in a million.

Beauty and the Beast Rap. Sonja Dunn. Illus. Susan Darrach. Moonstone Press, 1994. 32 pp. \$7.95 paper. ISBN 0-920259-50-2.

Beauty and the Beast is here given the rap treatment. It really doesn't work. In language and garish illustration the old fairytale is in this version downsized to mediocrity. At times the rap beat is strong, but in places it challenges the ingenuity of the would-be rapper to figure out where to place the stresses. Rap has its place in history and in the folk arts. It has shown itself to be a vigorous and innovative language factory. But its place is not among the fairy tales, maybe not even among printed works.

Allan Sheldon has taught English and Children's Literature at Medicine Hat College in Alberta for many years.

Going to the Fair. Sheryl McFarlane. Illus. Sheena Lott. Orca Book Publishers, 1996. 32 pp. \$7.95 paper. ISBN 1-55143-062-2.

The third collaboration between McFarlane, Lott, and Orca Books, this story departs from coastal themes to explore agricultural fairs. The subject holds potentially wide appeal, and is accessed through the experiences of four children as they pursue varied interests during a day at a fair. It is commendable that two of them are Oriental, suggesting cultural diversity. It is also commendable that (in