

She could feel her socks bunching” also keep the reader “inside” the story.

A “Bed of Peas” is my favourite story. Not grim at all, it is, rather, a love story set in an exotic locale, with the mysterious “Hassan the slave.” It moves beautifully into the story of “Rapunzel,” and its ending shows restraint and respect for the reader. This story succeeds partly because it resists the awkward syntax of “The Name,” and begins with the intriguing question: “What are the special properties of sand?”

Hoping that Galloway demands the editing her stories deserve, I look forward to more work from her.

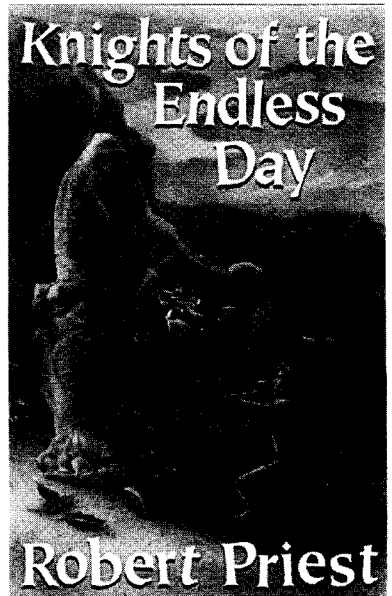
**Cornelia Hoogland** is a poet whose publications include *The Wire-thin Bride* (Turnstone, 1990), and *Marrying the Animals* (Brick, 1995). She is a professor of English in the Education Faculty at the University of Western Ontario.

### KNIGHT OF THE ENDLESS NAPPIES

**Knights of the Endless Day.** Robert Priest. Illus. Vic Vaccaro. Viking/Penguin Canada, 1993. 166 pp. \$16.99 cloth. ISBN 0-670-84862-X.

The title’s a dead give-away: language twists as much as plot does in Robert Priest’s revamped quest/fairy tale. The best plot turns turn upon language; I love the witty and unexpected homophone that ensures the repugnant Cornelius Hoophus RubFubbis Fubson McDango El Fub dePhubson gets his “pun”-ishment. That Priest’s language is often playful isn’t surprising since he’s a poet/songwriter; neither is the plot’s energetic movement, given its dramatic origins (the book is a novelization of Priest’s 1992 YPT production). Sometimes richness of language stands second to plot and playful absurdity; Priest’s words can be music-laden and I miss such fullness when it’s lacking. This reservation, however, is outweighed by more general delight.

At a time when scathingly parodic “politically correct” fairy tales top bestseller lists, Priest offers a politically *aware* fairy tale whose charm is similar to that which sustains Munsch’s *Paper Bag Princess*. Overturning nearly every convention of the heroic quest (one knight is sent to retrieve a giant clove of garlic), yet maintaining the subversive fairy tale pattern of the commoner who proves himself “aristocratic,” Priest raises questions of heroism, gender roles, pacificism and environmentalism. But he is never cloying or pedantic. Wearing a modified suit of armour,



whose breastplate lacks only a “baby on board” sign, and carrying a spear slung with a diaper bag, Ogo learns there’s glory in changing diapers. Sound improbable, unpalatable? In Priest’s capable hands this story is both funny and moving.

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## HEAVY SUBJECTS IN ZERO GRAVITY

**A Light in Space.** Wendy Orr. Illus. Ruth Ohi. Annick Press, 1994. 188 pp. \$14.95, \$4.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 1-55037-368-4, 1-55037-975-5.

Wendy Orr is an experienced author of juvenile fiction and she has tackled some tough themes in *A Light in Space*: the value of freedom; the importance of love, friendship and loyalty; the attraction of power; the capacity for evil in ordinary people. Whew! Sounds like a heavy, possibly depressing tale. But *A Light in Space* is neither of these things. While giving serious consideration to serious subjects, Orr manages to make her tale quite weightless. This is suitable for a story that alternates between twelve-year-old Andrew on earth and a treacherous journey in a mini-spaceship with a bad-tempered alien named Ysdran and her long-suffering Companion, Caneesh.

Andrew’s problems and the dual settings of the story are made possible by the telepathic communication that links the two main characters. No need for translators or the clumsiness of “codes” as Ysdran refers to languages, “We’re simply exchanging thought waves. It’s not nearly as complicated” (47). That last point, however, is the heart of the issue. While different languages may make communication difficult, skipping that hurdle altogether certainly doesn’t mean that understanding between vastly different beings is less complicated. Andrew thinks of his “cute and cartoony” (51) alien friend as a potential pet, a step up from Max, his dachshund, and much more exotic. Ysdran, on the other hand, has her own sinister plans, as she trains Andrew for his eventual role as her personal assistant and headslave.

Orr’s style is breezy and relaxed. Her pre-teen characters have believable voices; moms and

