

cake. Pelletier's "naive" art offers a wealth of fascinating images of country life in a past era, plus the fun of trying to spot a mouse hiding in each picture. Again there are plenty of potential talking points, such as the sulky horses and handmade quilts. His style, like Reid's method, encourages children to see the possibilities in their own art work.

Adults Moving On

Lavender Moon. Troon Harrison. Illus. Eugenie Fernandes. Annick, 1997. 32 pp. \$16.95 cloth, \$6.95 paper. ISBN 1-55037-9, 1-55037-0. *Jeremiah Learns to Read*. Jo Ellen Bogart. Illus. Laura Fernandes and Rick Jacobson. North Winds/Scholastic Canada, 1997. 32 pp. \$17.99 cloth. ISBN 0-590-



24927-4.

These stories about people who make a decision to change their lives give children an interesting perspective on the adult world. When *Lavender Moon* decides to find out where the highway bus goes, it is after she has run a bus-stop café for twenty years; and by the time *Jeremiah* starts to learn how to read, he is old enough to have grandchildren to help him. Children are aware that they are constantly changing, but it will be illuminating for many of them to discover that "grown-ups" may not be finished growing, even when they are grey-haired.

The resolutions of these adult quests offer an interesting contrast. *Lavender Moon* is a bit of a flower child, wearing a star in one ear and a moon in the other; and the bus she drives through fields and desert to the ocean is gradually transformed by her art. At the conclusion of her story, she

has achieved an integration of her former and new lives, and she is described as now being perfectly happy. Jeremiah is a multi-talented farmer who. Like Lavender, is good at his job. When he walks with a group of children down a country lane to their school, he is not leaving his goal, he has not moved from dissatisfaction to contentment, but has acquired yet another gift to share with the people he loves.

Although Jeremiah's story is recommended for ages six to nine, and Lavender's for ages four to seven, the latter is more sophisticated than the former, and probably would appeal to older readers/listeners. Eugenie Fernandes's illustrations are full of motion and colour and are an invitation to see the world as full of possibilities and adventure. The pictures accompanying Jeremiah's story are more serene and realistic; the people and landscape are comfortably solid. Lavender is in her middle ears and apparently has no family, and as such is probably not a figure strongly connected with youngsters' experience. Her story is enjoyable and worth sharing with children as a way of enlarging their understanding of what their lives may become. Jeremiah is a compelling figure of love; he approaches his chores with dignity and dedication and he enjoys passing on his acquired lore. As an archetypal grandfather, he will exert a charm on younger readers who will enjoy the idea of the young teaching the old. The message that an individual can always make choices to make life an ongoing adventure makes both these books worth reading; *Lavender Moon* is full of appealing ideas, but *Jeremiah Learns to Read* speaks more directly to the heart.

TV Watchers' Picture Books

Melody Mooner Takes Lessons. Frank B. Edwards. Illus. John Bianchi. Bungalo Books. 1996. 24 pp. \$15.95 cloth, \$4.95 paper. ISBN 0-921285-47-7, 0-921285-46-9. *The Toad Sleeps Over*. John Bianchi. Illus. author. Bungalo Books. 1995. 24 pp. \$4.95 paper. ISBN 0-9212285-40-X. *The Lab Rats of Doctor Eclair*. John Bianchi. Illus. author. Bungalo Books. 1997. 32 pp. \$18.95 cloth, \$6.95 paper. ISBN 1-921285-49-3, 1-921285-48-5. *The First Big Bungalo Boy Book: Three Stories High*. John Bianchi. Illus. author. Bungalo Books. 1995. 72 pp. \$8.95 paper. ISBN 0-921285-42-6.

The dominant shaping factor of Bianchi's illustrations of his own texts is the cartoon. Googly eyes, "lightbulb" ideas, darkly dramatic backgrounds, and frenzied action are elements young readers accept as a norm. The pictures tend to move the story along, rather than invite leisurely examination. They are bold and funny and have a happy non-threatening spirit that infuses even the scenes of danger and fear.

Bianchi's texts are adventurous, generally tending to feature male protagonists, and rely on familiarity with TV stock situations. *The First Big Bungalo Boys Book* has three stories about four "tree ranchers" who ride the ranges on trees, rather than horses, and whose enemies include a band of beavers. The stories rely on familiarity with westerns, African safari stories, and hockey games which may reflect Bianchi's childhood viewing habits