

Barb's BookSpot: Episode 10
Perception and Perspective in Picture Story Books
September, 2016

COME HOME, ANGUS. Text © 2016 by Patrick Downes Illustrations © 2016 by Boris Kulikov. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Scholastic Inc.

Angus wakes up angry, and his mood colors the way he responds to everyone and everything in his path. The illustrator uses size and color to depict the strength of Angus mood. He is large on the page, set at an angle or off-center. He fills every page with himself, getting larger and larger until the point where he doesn't even fit on the page – we see only his legs. Angus decides he will run away, because no one understands him. As he runs, and enters into unfamiliar territory, we see his size diminish, he looks less certain, even scared, and as he shrinks, the world around dominates and surrounds him. The illustrator does a terrific job of using the relative size of the people and objects to set the tone and reveal the feelings of our main character. In the end, everyone and everything looks to be back in proper proportion. This is a great story for younger readers, who might be learning about emotions and feelings, as they can identify with Angus. For sophisticated readers, this book could easily be used for starting a conversation about how our moods and emotions color our perception of those around us, and how they might affect our decision making.

LOOK UP! Text and Illustrations © 2016 by Jung Jin-Ho. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Holiday House.

Every time I look at this nearly wordless book, I see something new, or find new reasons to smile. The story is very simple; it is related from the point of view of a girl who is looking down on a street scene from her window, high up. The illustrations on each page change just enough to allow readers to note the passing of time, to learn about the girl, to recognize the kindness in the response of passers-by. With the focus on what is happening down at street level, it is easy to miss details about the girl, but in the end, her world merges with the distant world below. Tiny details like the addition of color or the sprouting of a new seed add to the understanding of the story, and the feelings of the characters.

THE AIRPORT BOOK. Text and illustrations © 2016 by Lisa Brown. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Neal Porter Books/Roaring Brook Press, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group.

The Airport Book takes a typical family scenario, and follows it through in two ways. We meet a family getting ready to take a trip by air, and as they pack, navigate to the airport, stand in queues, and finally arrive; we witness all of the hectic scenes along the way. The toddler in the family has packed her stuffed monkey in a bag that is checked rather than carried on, and she is most concerned with where he is. From her point of view, little else matters during the whole trip. The pages are laid out so that at the bottom of each page tells another story, and readers can track the progress of the checked bags, while the top portion of each page shows the family's progress. The cast of characters is diverse and the comments in speech bubbles ring true as we see all sorts of passengers interacting. Anyone who has travelled with a toddler will relate to her antics, and all readers will be surprised to see what becomes of Monkey.

