

Barb's BookSpot: Episode 7
Books With Beautiful Language
November 23, 2015

***Sharing the Bread: An Old Fashioned Thanksgiving Story* by Pat Zietlow Miller. Illustrations by Jill McElmurry. Published by Schwartz & Wade Books, a division of Random House Kids, 2015.**

This lovely story told in rhyme captures the spirit of sharing a traditional Thanksgiving meal with family. Everyone helps and has a job to do in preparation for the meal. The sepia tones in the illustrations, and the "old fashioned" attire and household décor take the reader back in time to when pumping water and stoking a cast-iron wood stove were part of the day's chores. Everything is homemade and Grandparents as well as children contribute. The rhyme scans beautifully and the pattern/predictable nature of the verse as well as the overall text make the story memorable as well as easy to read. Readers will want to join this family again and again to share their "made-with-love Thanksgiving spread."

***Water Can Be* by Laura Purdie Salas. Illustrations by Violeta Dabija. Published by Millbrook Press, division of Lerner Publishing Group, 2014.**

As readers move through the seasons, we see and learn about the many forms water takes and the role it plays in nature and in our lives. I am reminded of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of using kennings, compound words that use figurative language instead of more concrete words, to describe things. For example, the mirror-like surface of the pond is denoted "picture catcher" and on a page showing stormy seas, the text reads "ship breaker." Each page features one, two word description to support the illustration. The pairs of descriptions across each two-page spread rhyme, setting up a pattern which encourages memorization, fluent reading and predicting. The colorful, illustrations have an impressionistic feel, and include details which not only enhance the meaning of the text, but also provide touchstones for recognition and personal experience.

***Imagine a World* by Rob Gonsalves. Published Atheneum Books for Young Readers, imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2015.**

The illustrations in this book capture attention as they are optical illusions. I am reminded of the work by M.C. Escher, where it appears that you are looking at one thing, but it gradually transforms into another. The action in each illustration is captured by a short verse which creates a metaphor, expressed by both picture and text. The book, taken as a whole, becomes an extended metaphor for what the world is and could be, allowing for personal interpretation. Both the verses and illustrations provide food for thought and also an excellent model for both writing and interpreting text, and for understanding metaphor.

