

Growing Readers Review

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Reading is Moving

As adults, we've all been moved by a good book, a great story or beautiful poetry or engaging information that speaks to us. Of course, the same thing happens with children. Witness the youngster who wants the same book read over and over. Something in words or pictures is appealing and—at least for the moment—no other book will do. These kinds of experiences will cultivate life-long readers.

Some books can not only be moving, but can lead children to movement. The right stories and pictures can capitalize on young children's natural inclination to be in motion. *Off We Go!* captures the exuberance of children as they hop, skip, and kick through the seasons. Young children will want to name the motions they see as well as imitate them as they develop control of their bodies.

Brontorina is larger than life both in spirit and size, but the latter limits her ability to move in a world of little boys and girls. Luckily, this dinosaur's desire, coupled with her teacher's creativity, allow Brontorina to become the dancer she always wanted to be. In this lovely tale, no dream is too big to be achieved.

The dancer, Martha Graham, also had a dream. She wanted to create an American ballet that told the pioneer story. She turned to Aaron Copland for the music and Isamu Noguchi for the set and *Appalachian Spring* was born. This is a story of ballet, but also of collaboration to produce great art.

We want our youngsters to read, but we also want them to move, to be healthy and fit. These three books bring the printed word and activity together in ways that are sure to charm young readers.

By Susan C. Brenner, EdD



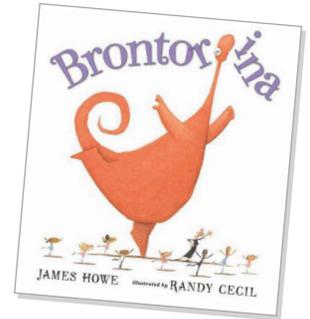
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BOOKS OF EXCELLENCE

PRESCHOOL

Brontorina

Written by James Howe; Illustrated by Randy Cecil



Imagine a dinosaur in ballet slippers. Well, that is exactly what acclaimed children's author, James Howe, and illustrator, Randy Cecil, have created in *Brontorina*, an endearing, funny and irresistible picture book. Brontorina Apatosaurus is an enthusiastic and kind dinosaur with an unlikely dream. She loves to dance and is determined to become a ballerina at the chic and sophisticated Madame Lucille's Dance Academy for Girls and Boys.

Madame Lucille recognizes that Brontorina is a dinosaur with a "ballerina in her heart." She invites Brontorina to join her class in spite of the many obstacles this enormous dinosaur must face along the way. Despite passion and her best efforts, Brontorina's enormous size, her apparent inability to "fit in among the smaller dancers," not to mention being unable to wear proper toe shoes, are just some of the many humorous, touching, and challenging obstacles this dinosaur must face and overcome to pursue her dream. The biggest challenge, by far though, is finding a space big enough for Brontorina and her dance partners to perform. In seeking a solution, Madame Lucille and her dancers think "outside the box" and a creative solution is found.

Brontorina is a charming book that inspires acceptance of differences, inclusiveness, and ingenuity, proving that "no problem is too big when the heart and imagination know no bounds."

About the Author and Illustrator:

About the Author: James Howe is a multitalented and prolific author, having written over 80 outstanding books for young readers. His first book, published in 1979, was *Bunnica, A Rabbit Tale of Mystery*. His acclaimed books have won more than ten Children's Choice Awards. Writing and performing his first play at the age of seven, Howe discovered his love for language and stories with his family and friends. His success as a children's author lies in his playful humor and ability to relate to young readers.

About the Illustrator: Howe states, "Randy Cecil is the perfect match for my words and expression." With his beguiling palette, style and sly sense of humor, Cecil creates a visual world where text and illustration blend perfectly together with warmth, humor, and passion.

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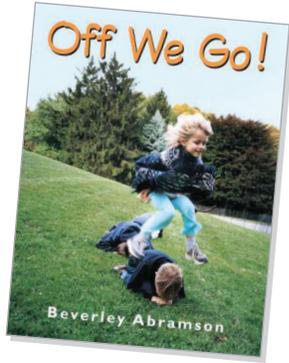
INFANT / TODDLER

Off We Go!

Written and Photographed
by Beverly Abramson

“Teeter. Totter. Fling it. Swing it!” *Off We Go!* exhibits just how active the world of toddlers and young children can be. Not only that, this book shows the obvious pleasure children find through physical play.

Beverly Abramson’s vivid photographs capture expressive children in a wide variety of movements and activities. Her words move across the pages, creating a rhythmic and rhyming journey for toddlers to follow. *Off We Go!* is sure to inspire toddlers to twirl, whirl, hop, skip, and tumble even more than they already do. And maybe, some toddlers will ask if this book can tag along on these adventures, too.



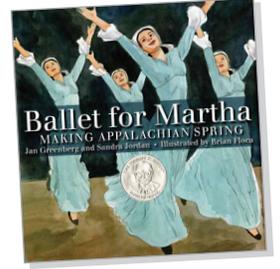
SCHOOL AGE

Ballet for Martha: Making Appalachian Spring

Written and Illustrated by
Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan;
Illustrated by Brian Floca

Martha Graham was a dancer who wanted to tell an American story of pioneer life. She asked composer Aaron Copland to create the music, and he did, basing the work on a Shaker hymn. She asked set designer, Isamu Noguchi to design a set to frame this unusual work. Out of their genius came *Appalachian Spring*, a ballet that has been an American icon for over 65 years.

Brian Floca used watercolor to illustrate the story in spare but striking pictures that give life to the ballet movements. Aspiring dancers may be motivated to read other books about the artists, and chances are all the young readers of this attractive book will be inspired to listen to *Appalachian Spring*.



NOTABLE BOOKS

I'm a Little Teapot

Illustrated by Annie Kubler • *Infant/Toddler*

Using the popular children’s song, children act out the well-known rhyme in this sturdy board book. Toddlers will want to move to the directions as you read.

Hands Can

Written by Cheryl Willis Hudson; Illustrated by John-Francis Bourke • *Infant/Toddler*

Hands can throw, and catch, and plant, and fix things. Little readers will want to “try their hands” at all these well-photographed activities.

Balancing Act

Written and Illustrated by Ellen Stoll Walsh • *Preschool*

Illustrated in delightful collages, two mice discover that balancing on a teeter-totter isn’t as easy as it looks, especially when joined by salamanders, frogs, and a bird.

Please Take Me for a Walk

Written and Illustrated by Susan Gal • *Preschool*

Who can resist the face of an adorable puppy pleading to go for a walk? No one can; which is why the reader joins this puppy on a walk around his friendly neighborhood.

Miss Lina’s Ballerinas

Written by Grace Maccarone; Illustrated by Christine Davenier • *Preschool*

A lyrical little tale of eight small ballerinas who must adapt their routines to accommodate a newcomer and thus become a dance line of nine. Lovely illustrations depict the girls at dance and practice.

Tops & Bottoms

Adapted and Illustrated by Janet Stevens • *School Age*

Young readers will delight in the schemes of clever Hare as he outsmarts his neighbor, the lazy Bear.

