

Introduction and Editor's Note

This unthemed issue of *WOW Review* reflects the rich diversity of literature that represents the global community. In choosing books that were of interest to them personally, reviewers introduce both picture books and chapter books from a variety of genre that take readers into the countries of Israel, Palestine, Brazil, India, Cuba, Mexico, Iran, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Mali, and within the Korean American and Latino (Dominican Republic) cultures of the United States. Through compelling characters, both contemporary and historical, we are invited to share their lives—the humor, celebrations, conflicts, and social challenges—by entering these stories.

In some of these books, we immediately are drawn in by familiar situations: mother-daughter perspectives as described in *On the Swing* or family relationships in *How Tia Lola Saved the Summer*. We might laugh at Jamela's antics in *A Song for Jamela* as she helps in her aunt's beauty shop or float joyfully around Cuba with the characters in *Floating on Mama's Song: Flotando en la canción de mamá*. Or we might join in celebrating many African Brazilian traditions with the Mourrice at his nanny's house in *Carnavalia*.

In other titles, we may enter the story only to be more an observer of characters and contexts as we learn about situations and challenges removed from our daily experiences. *Islands' End* focuses on what happens when the lifestyles of Indigenous people are disrupted by a society that has both the problems and solutions of science and technology. *Faces in the Water* keeps readers intently focused on a story about female infanticide—a practice still in existence today. *No Ordinary Day* engages readers in considering leprosy—its stereotypes as well as its threat for people in other parts of the world.

We also might be reminded by these books that what we take for granted is often a precious commodity for others. The technology to facilitate our work might be seen in a new light after reading Yatandou whose village women are joyous over the grinding machine for grain that gives them more time to learn and, for many, time to be a child. Living in a community that is not a battlefield may become more significant when reading about others whose homeland is in conflict, such as in *Bottle in the Gaza Sea*, *Good Night, Commander*, or *Keeping Score*. We also might reconsider our own challenges to accomplishing what we desire in life as we stand amazed at the life challenges of the richly talented artist, *Frida Kahlo*, in *Frida: ¡Viva la vida! Long Live Life!*

Of course, the reviewers have provided insights that compel and, at times, caution our reading. It is only when we accept the invitation and set aside the time to read, to live within these stories that we become more informed and understanding of others with whom we share the global community.

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