

Sneaking Past the Border Guards

—Perry Nodelman



In spring, apparently, an old man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of borders. My editorial in the Spring 2006 issue of *CCL/LCJ* focused on the idea that "[t]here was never a time when Canadian childhoods were not strongly influenced by ideologies of childhood developed elsewhere, or when Canadian young people did not read Canadian books in the context of a wider experience of reading literature, viewing movies and TV, playing games, using furniture, and toys and wearing underwear (and prom dresses) produced beyond Canadian borders" ("Canadian'? 'Children's'? 'Literature'?" 1). I quoted part of that same sentence in last year's Spring issue, in the context of a discussion of the significance of the fact that, although they were writing about texts produced in Canada, many of the scholars whose work appeared in that issue came from beyond the Canadian border. And now, here it is spring

again, and here I am thinking of borders again, and quoting the same quote again.

I found myself thinking about borders this time as I heard news of this year's winners of the prestigious awards given by the American Library Association (ALA) for children's books published in the USA. As a Canadian specialist in children's literature located about a hundred kilometres beyond the American border but only a few kilometres from an excellent children's bookseller whose stock includes more American books than Canadian ones, I was bound to be interested in who won the ALA awards. Furthermore, I'd been reading a lot about which books might win in extensive discussions on blogs and listservs all over the internet. I'm not aware of an equivalent discussion about possible winners of the most significant Canadian children's literature awards—the Governor General's Awards

for children's literature illustration and text or the equivalent awards given by the Canadian Library Association (the Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award, the Young Adult Canadian Book Award, and Book of the Year for Children). Despite the preliminary announcement of a shortlist, the Governor General's or Canadian Library Association awards just don't excite enough widespread interest or media coverage ever to enter much into my consciousness before or even after the announcement of the winners. And in an unsettling way, the ALA winners have as much, or even more, significance for Canadians involved in children's literature as the Governor General's do, because they establish continent-wide trends that have a huge impact on Canadian publishers and consumers in the context of an increasingly continental book market—an impact the Canadian award winners simply don't have. As Editor of this journal, I certainly understand that even when I focus my attention on texts for children published in Canada, I can't properly make sense of them without knowledge of how they are published, purchased, and read in the context of that larger North American market and the many American books that fill Canadian bookstores and the lives of Canadian children. That's an interesting border issue all on its own. Can a distinctly Canadian children's literature continue to exist in these

circumstances?

As it happens, the history of the ALA awards is riddled with questions about borders. Most obviously, the terms for the Newbery medal for "the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children" declare that the award is "restricted to authors who are citizens or residents of the United States" ("Terms and Criteria: John Newbery Medal")—an act of border patrol that sometimes prevents some of the most highly regarded books that are currently being read by American children (the Harry Potter series, for instance) from being considered, but that allows an author like Christopher Paul Curtis, a long-time Canadian resident with American citizenship, to have a book named a Newbery Honor Book (this year's *Elijah of Buxton*) and even actually win the medal—as he did for *Bud Not Buddy* in 2000. I suspect that my review of *Bud Not Buddy* might be the only review of a Newbery winner ever to appear in this Canadian-oriented journal. Not surprisingly, that review focuses on questions of borders: "That *Bud Not Buddy* might be considered a Canadian children's novel raises interesting questions about what might constitute Canadian children's literature" ("Canadian in Michigan?" 73).

While "the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children" is most often a novel, this year's winner is Laura

Amy Schlitz's *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village*, a collection of dramatic monologues originally intended for live presentation. As I learned from various listservs in the days following the announcement of the awards,¹ a lot of people involved with children's literature found it surprising that something so unconventional had taken the award. Schlitz's book had hardly been mentioned in earlier discussions about possible winners. Nevertheless, it joined not only the large number of novels that have previously won Newberys, but also two books of poetry (Nancy Willard's *A Visit to William Blake's Inn: Poems for Innocent and Experienced Travelers*, the 1982 winner, and Paul Fleischman's *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices*, the 1989 winner), two biographies (Cornelia Meigs's *Invincible Louisa: The Story of the Author of Little Women*, the 1934 winner, and Russell Freedman's *Lincoln: A Photobiography*, the 1988 winner), and the winner of the first award in 1922, Hendrik Willem van Loon's deliciously wacky universal history, *The Story of Mankind*. So this is a border that never really existed and that has been crossed before, if not all that often.

But with, I think, the sole exception of *A Visit to William Blake's Inn*, the committees that choose Newbery winners haven't crossed another border: the one that divides picture books from other forms

of children's literature. The main reason is that the ALA awards not only respect but also, in a forceful way, insist on that border: there is a separate award for picture books, the Caldecott Medal, which goes each year to "the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children" ("Caldecott Medal").

The Caldecott and Newbery terms suggest the problem with any and all borders: the very fact that they are artificial impositions of the human will on inherently unbordered phenomena like the natural landscape or the myriad spectrum of kinds of books people are capable of writing means that they keep out some of the things that they might have intended to keep inside, or that might even ideally ought to have been inside. In contemporary Canada, there is almost always a story in the news about someone who has been unfairly denied entry or forced to leave the country because of immigration laws. And how likely is it that a Newbery committee might decide some year that "the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children" was from the author of a picture-book text? I can say from experience that trying to compose a short text with the idea that it will appear accompanied by pictures that don't yet exist but that will later reveal the depths of meaning and emotions that the text already, presumably, contains and implies is not



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an easy thing to do. Good picture-book texts are tiny works of genius, as deceptively simple as a Shakespearean sonnet. But since the only ALA award for picture books is for their illustrators, their writers become alien outsiders beyond the border of Newbery-land, deprived of what is, surely, their right to be as celebrated as those who illustrate their work.² And the same goes for those who provide illustration for children's novels: their art might have helped to make novels distinguished enough for the authors to win the Newbery, but it doesn't qualify as distinguished art for picture books.

As it happens, it was the choice for this year's Caldecott medal that has excited the most controversy, and that made me think once more about borders. The winner is Brian Selznick, for *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, a book that, before the award was granted, a lot of people didn't even think of as a picture book. For most of us, most of the time, the phrase "picture book" (or for Europeans, sometimes, the word "picturebook") refers to a fairly short book—usually thirty-two pages—intended for younger children.

Conventionally, then, picture books have brief texts—most often from 400 to 600 words—in fairly simple and straightforward language, divided into sections of more or less equal length and spread throughout the book, with a section on each double-page spread, accompanied by illustrations (usually in colour) that occupy most of at least one side of each double-page spread. In recent years, there has been a growing number of more sophisticated picture books designed to appeal to older audiences, but still with very brief texts in relatively simple diction, divided into sections and spread equally throughout the book, and with relatively more complex art nevertheless occupying most of at least one side of each double-page spread.

Hugo Cabret defies these conventional expectations in many ways. It is a fat, squat book that on first appearance looks like it might be the reprint of a massive Victorian novel, and its first thirty-two pages are followed by 500 or so more. The only colour is in the cover illustration, and as well as page after page of drawings by the author/illustrator, the book also includes a number

of photos—a still from a Harold Lloyd film, some early French photos of trains, and a number of drawings and stills from films by George Méliès, the early French filmmaker, who appears as a character in the story. While most of the pages occupied by pictures have no text, there are also, at various points, sections consisting exclusively of text. *Hugo Cabret* seems more like a graphic novel than like what I and many others usually think of as a picture book. But then, unlike most graphic novels, it uses none of the techniques of comic-book artists—no series of smaller pictures on the same page, no speech balloons or words describing sounds—and its many pages of single pictures that spread across both sides of a double-paged spread do indeed make use of the conventional forms of the picture book. It is like a conventional picture book seriously bloated and bleached by the sun.

Nevertheless, the members of this year's Caldecott committee could justify their choice by pointing to the terms of the award, which say, "A 'picture book for children' as distinguished from other books with illustrations, is one that essentially provides the child with a visual experience. A picture book has a collective unity of story-line, theme, or concept, developed through the series of pictures of which the book is comprised" ("Terms and Criteria: Randolph

Caldecott Medal"). *Hugo Cabret* may not be most people's usual idea of a picture book, then—but it does fit *this* definition of "picture book."

Nevertheless, by awarding this medal to Selznick, the committee was indulging in what amounts to a brave act of border crossing—inviting others to expand their ideas about what a picture book might be. And there's no doubt in my mind that *Hugo Cabret* deserved the award. I suggested earlier that it uses the conventions of the picture book, but those are often also the conventions of film, and Selznick's expanded picture book reads something like a film would if it were placed inside the covers of a book. Each page is surrounded by a black border, so that the image reads like what we might see on a screen in a darkened theatre, and Selznick uses a large repertoire of the techniques of framing and point of view first developed by early silent film makers; indeed, many of his pictures are takes on famous sequences in early movies by Lloyd, Méliès, and others, and the delightfully overdone melodramatic atmosphere thus evoked makes the over-the-top events of the plot seem charming rather than silly. *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* is an admirably inventive book.

Without, I assume, being aware of each other's deliberations, the Newbery and Caldecott committees together also transgressed borders in another way: they gave the picture-book award,

usually understood as the realm of books for younger, less experienced readers, to the longer and, in some ways, more complicated of the two books.

Nor were they the only ALA committees to cross borders. The Michael L. Printz award for “the best young adult book” went to Geraldine McCaughrean’s *The White Darkness*, a book by a citizen of the United Kingdom first published there in 2005 and shortlisted for the British Carnegie medal “for an outstanding book for children and young people” (“Michael J. Printz Award”; *The CILIP*). But this border-crossing was not an act of transgression; unlike the Newbery and Caldecott, the Printz Award does allow for books by foreigners, and since it was first awarded in 2000, it has gone to books first published in the UK three of seven previous times. As a genre, YA books tend to represent transgressions of the boundaries of what is conventionally considered appropriate in children’s literature—but even then, it seems that British publishers are often likely to allow more interesting or award-worthy transgressions than American ones usually are.

So, perhaps, are Australian publishers. Another supposedly leading contender for the Printz was a book with almost no words (none in any recognizable language, at least) except for its title, Shaun Tan’s unsettlingly brilliant *The*

Arrival, a story about an immigrant’s move across borders from one strange land to another even stranger one, told in complex and evocative monochromatic pictures. As well as being an intriguingly complex reading of the horror and glory of border crossing, *The Arrival* might be the most border-breaking book ever published as literature for children: before being considered in many listserv discussions as a possible Printz winner, it actually won the Children’s Book Council of Australia’s Award as the 2007 Picture Book of the Year (the CBCA website’s listing of the winner and honour books for this award adds a border-conscious warning, “NOTE: Some of these books may be for mature readers” [“The 2007 Winners”]). Had it been by an American, it might well have been a contender for the Newbery and the Caldecott as well as the Printz.

While four books by Americans were named as Printz Honor books, the leading contender according to listserv conversation before the award was announced, Sherman Alexie’s *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, was not—thus, perhaps, keeping a dangerously subversive depiction of life on and off an Aboriginal reserve safely out past the borders of prize-worthiness. It seems that mainstream children’s literature practitioners south of the US-Canada border are even more prone to marginalize stories about



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Aboriginal people than those of us north of it. While no book with an Aboriginal author or protagonist has won the Governor General's Award for children's literature (text), two Aboriginal illustrators have received the Governor General's illustration award for depictions of Aboriginal materials in recent years: Allen Sapp's illustrations for Dave Bouchard's *The Song within My Heart* in 2003, and Leo Yerxa's *Ancient Thunder* in 2006. Apparently, books on Aboriginal subjects are still mostly consigned to the reservation of bookstores' or libraries' Aboriginal bookshelves, not mixed in on the regular shelves or on the awards lists.

Indeed, books by and/or centrally about people of specific ethnic and cultural backgrounds tend generally to be restricted within the borders of their ethnic or cultural ghettos in both Canada and the US. Books by and/or about African Americans have been unlikely to win the Newbery both before and since the ALA's introduction of the Coretta Scott King Award "[t]o encourage the artistic expression of the African American experience via literature and the graphic arts,

including biographical, historical and social history treatments by African American authors and illustrators" in 1970 ("About the CSK Award"). As far as I can tell, the 2000 Newbery winner, Curtis's *Bud, Not Buddy*, was the first and last to depict African American life since the other two exceptions: Virginia Hamilton's *M. C. Higgins, the Great* in 1975 and Mildred D. Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* in 1977. No book about Hispanic Americans has won the Newbery before or since the ALA introduced the Pura Belpré Award, "presented to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth," in 1996 ("Belpré Medal"). For authors like Alexie, unfortunately, there is as yet no ALA award for Aboriginal writing to win instead of the Newbery or Printz—although the recent proliferation of ALA awards to honour books in niche categories—the Belpré in 1996, the Printz in 2000, the Sibert for informational books in 2001, the Geisel in 2006—suggests there might be one

someday soon. These attempts to be inclusive—to extend praise to kinds of books previously not marginalized—have tended to support exclusion.

They do so in other ways also. Some people taking part in listserv discussions prior to this year's ALA award announcements thought that Alexie's novel might take the Newbery as well as the Printz. But that was unlikely. Since the Printz, created in part because the Newbery's criterion of an audience up to fourteen was preventing books for older teens from being considered, was first awarded in 2000, it's been fairly clear that the intended audience of Newbery winners has tended to be younger. Convention tells us that children tend to read books about people a little older than themselves, and last year's Newbery winner, Susan Patron's *The Higher Power of Lucky*, is about a ten-year-old (and a dog's scrotum—but that's another question of border defiance that I won't go into here), as was 2005's *Kira-Kira* by Cynthia Kadohata. While the 2006 winner, Lynne Rae Perkins's *Criss Cross*, is about fourteen-year olds, they are nice, innocent kids in a nice, innocent town who don't lead the kind of sex-crazed, drug-ridden, angst-driven, problem-heavy lives conventional in young adult literature, and, consequently, seem safely younger and safely Newbery-ish. By creating the Printz to include YA books, the ALA seems to have reinforced their exclusion from the main arena of

the Newbery. Once you put up a border around a certain kind of anything in order to benefit the people inside, you might well prevent them from moving outside and beyond that border. Borders are funny that way.

Children's literature in general is a telling example of that—albeit a more consciously intentional one. In *Centuries of Childhood*, Philippe Ariès suggests the extent to which children's literature is a matter of drawing borders between what children should and should not read in identifying its beginnings as “towards the end of the sixteenth century,” when “the idea originated of providing expurgated editions of the classics for the use of children” (109). Border guarding—keeping out what is un-childlike, keeping children's minds in a safely bounded place of limited access to knowledge and innocent security—has been the major function of children's literature ever since.

In my experience, when most people think about children's books, they think mostly about what books children shouldn't have access to. Asked to evaluate a children's book, even children themselves tend to try to ferret out any evidence—too-hard words, too-tough ideas, too-intense emotions—that it might not be safe enough for children younger than themselves to read. Even people who think of children's literature

as expanding children's horizons nevertheless insist it do so in ways limited enough to suit children's supposedly limited capabilities.

Furthermore, just about every occasion on which children's literature makes the newspapers or newscasts stems from suspected border transgressions. The story is almost always the same: an adult somewhere has been shocked to come upon something inappropriately un-childlike in a children's book or school or library, and wants it gone, put safely outside the borders of children's literature where it can no longer be so dangerously contaminating. In a recent example in Canada, the Halton, Ontario Catholic school board removed copies of Philip Pullman's *The Golden Compass* from its libraries late in 2007. According to the *Toronto Star*, "an internal memo was sent to elementary principals that said 'the book is apparently written by an atheist where the characters and text are anti-God, anti-Catholic and anti-religion'" ("School Board Pulls 'Anti-God' Book"). The board later rejected the recommendation of its own book committee to reverse the decision, and banned not only *The Golden Compass* but also the subsequent books in Pullman's trilogy.

Soon after the Halton stories hit the news, a Catholic board in Calgary also removed it. According to Judy MacKay, the superintendent

of instructional services for the Calgary Catholic School District, "I believe that it's inaccurate to suggest that the board has banned the book. . . . It's simply a process where we take very seriously concerns about instructional resources and so this is not in any way a reflection of a ban" ("Golden Compass Pulled from Calgary Catholic Schools"). In other words: this is good border guarding, not oppressive wall building. Following a review of the book—and some bad publicity—the Calgary officials reinstated it, saying they had decided to use its counter-religious themes as a teaching opportunity for Catholic students. Not so in Ontario, where, as I write, Pullman's trilogy remains in a state of deportation, safely beyond the borders of Halton Catholic schools.

The conflicting decisions of these two boards suggest that, however absolutely individuals believe they know what is and isn't appropriate for children, the borders of children's literature aren't fixed, and never have been fixed. Like all borders, they are always subject to dispute, for it seems that the mere fact of claiming a territory and building a wall around it is an incitement to those it leaves outside to try to get in, to push the wall back or knock it down altogether. Good fences tend, in fact, to make fence-resisting neighbours.

And we may well have entered a climate prone to serious border challenges. A decade

ago, Maria Nikolajeva suggested, in an article with the provocative title “Exit Children’s Literature,” that “an ever-growing segment of contemporary children’s literature is transgressing its own boundaries, coming closer to mainstream literature” (222). She concluded that “sooner or later, children’s literature will be integrated into the mainstream and disappear” (233). This year’s ALA awards may suggest that she’s right. Are the walls tumbling down?

Perhaps they are. The Harry Potter frenzy seems to have put some cracks in the wall by encouraging a lot of adults to read and enjoy books ostensibly intended for children (although few of those adults have gone on to read other less media-worthy, and therefore less respectably adult-worthy, children’s novels). Recent books published for children or teenagers but with what many people have identified as adult content might be making more cracks. Consider, for instance, Mal Peet’s *Tamar*, a YA novel that centrally concerns a romantic triangle involving not teenagers but adults—a local girl and two British agents dropped behind enemy lines in the Netherlands in World War II. Despite its unusual focus on adults, *Tamar* won the Carnegie medal as the “outstanding book for children and young people” in the United Kingdom in 2005 (*The CILIP*). Even more unconventionally, Marcus Zusak’s *The Book Thief*, originally published as a

novel for adults in Australia, has been republished in the U.S. as a YA novel, perhaps because Zusak’s earlier YA novels had created a specific market for his work. It was a Printz Honor book in 2007.

But if there are cracks, there are also scaffoldings and underpinnings to combat them. In *Tamar*, the narrative line about adults in World War II alternates with a second story about the teenaged granddaughter of one of the British agents, and is, like the Harry Potter series or Beatrix Potter’s *Tale of Peter Rabbit* or so many other texts for young people, centrally about the impact of knowledge of an ancestor’s story on a young protagonist. And while *The Book Thief* is narrated by Death and includes horrific details of what happens to a young Jewish orphan and others in Germany during World War II, its bleak surface hides a gooey heart of pure children’s literature convention. In a number of surprising ways, it’s much like *Anne of Green Gables*: a refreshing, innocent young orphan comes to town, physically attacks a boy who comes to love her, and through her charming and insistent ingenuousness, changes not only the lives and characters of the people she lives with but also the lives of many other repressed and isolated people in the vicinity. It represents the common conventions and values of children’s fiction as thoroughly (if secretly) as *Hugo Cabret* does those of children’s picture books.



In this case, then, the borders of children's literature are re-established, as an adult book gets reshaped to fit the apparently still-relevant and ongoing conventions of the genre.



Meanwhile, a recent YA novel published in the USA, Jaclyn Moriarty's *The Spell Book of Listen Taylor* turns out to be, as she writes in her blog, "a revised version of *I Have a Bed Made of Buttermilk Pancakes*," a novel she wrote for adults that was published in Canada by Anansi in 2005 (Moriarty herself is a border-hopper who lived in Canada when Anansi published her book but has since returned to her native Australia). According to Moriarty's blog, the result of her revisions, made at the request of her American editor, is "a different story, and one that is aimed more at young adults" (*I Have a Bed Made of Buttermilk Pancakes*). In this case, then, the borders of children's literature are re-established, as an adult book gets reshaped to fit the apparently still-relevant and ongoing conventions of the genre.

A comparison of Canadian author Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* and *Swimming in the Monsoon Sea* also reconfirms the durability of the conventions of literature for young people. While the two books are about two different but nevertheless similar characters, young Sri Lankan

boys first becoming aware of and acknowledging that they are gay, the first, more episodic novel was published as literary fiction for adults, while the second, marketed as a YA book and shortlisted for the 2005 Governor General's Award for Children's literature (text), more clearly follows the fable-like structure typical of YA fiction: it focuses only on the events that allow its protagonist to arrive at self-understanding. It's instructive that Selvadurai's acknowledgements include thanks to his publisher, the longtime children's book editor Kathy Lowinger, "who cast her silver net into the turbulent monsoon sea of my words and drew in this novel." The novel she drew in has a lot in common with other YA books. As it has throughout its history, the field of children's literature most successfully operates by maintaining the borders—by allowing the astonishing power and durability of its conventions to reshape or de-fang or absorb that which works to subvert it. My forthcoming book, *The Hidden Adult*, is an extensive attempt to show how that happens and figure out why.

Something similar seems to operate not only

in the field of children's literature criticism, but also in the academy generally. Conceptions of periodicity in literary study—the idea that there's a *weltanschauung* or something specifically and discoverably shared by all writing in a certain time, a "Victorian frame of mind," for instance—have been seriously challenged in recent decades by ideas about class, about popular literature, about women's writing, and so on. But while ideas of period are unpopular, most university literature departments continue to offer the same old courses defined by the same old periods. Furthermore, rarely does a course in American fiction include American novels written for children. The borders between the adult-literature courses and the children's-literature courses still stand firmly—as generally do the ones between literature courses, film courses, and music-history courses. And despite the currently powerful hegemony of cultural studies, a discipline whose insistence on the complexity of contexts in which cultural artifacts are produced seems to require a wide range of disciplinary resources, the lines between literary studies and sociology, psychology, or even history also still stand firmly. The many academics who practise various forms of cultural studies nevertheless usually do it in traditional departments of sociology or literature.

But there are, now, programs focused on

cultural studies, sometimes even multi-disciplinary ones—and a call for papers that recently arrived in my inbox for the University of California Riverside's Fifteenth Annual Graduate Humanities Conference sums up a currently powerful idea:

In recent years, critical theory has worked hard to challenge the cartography of scholarly inquiry. As a result, distinguishable borders between previously exclusive disciplines, critical approaches, and "schools of thought" have been increasingly punctured, washed out, and otherwise blurred. We can no longer read or write from a "sedentary point of view," but must instead negotiate an ever-shifting landscape that requires new maps. . . . In developing this year's theme, we are hoping to formulate panels in which modes of thinking about literature, theory, religion, art, popular culture, philosophy, and the sciences engage and then modify accepted cultural conventions. ("CFP")

Within our own discipline, the call for papers for one of the sessions at this year's ACCUTE conference in Vancouver, which will consider the founding of a new Canadian association for research in young people's texts and Cultures, is titled "Shifting Borders of Childhood, Youth, and Adulthood" and asks for papers that explore "real

and represented 'borders' between 'childhood,' 'youth,' and 'adulthood.'"

Regular readers of *CCL/LCJ* are surely unlikely to be surprised by any of that. In recent years, we've published essays on any and all aspects of the literature and culture of youth, from university pedagogy to the Degrossi TV series, from early settler tales to prom dresses. The current issue will inform you not only about how a number of people feel about Sebastien Chapleau's plea for more attention to texts by children themselves but also about issues in the writing of biography and a wide range of quite different kinds of texts for children. We have, I believe, done a pretty good job of puncturing, washing out, and otherwise blurring distinguishable borders between previously exclusive disciplines, critical approaches, and "schools of thought." And in doing so, I am convinced, we've been able to offer richer insights into the culture of Canadian childhood and the various texts that circulate in and around it.

Nevertheless, we remain *CCL/LCJ: Canadian Children's Literature/ Littérature canadienne pour la jeunesse*. Just as the old map of traditional course names and specialty boundaries continues to be imposed on the ever-shifting landscape of varying theoretical perspectives, we still impose the old map of that narrowly defining name on

the ever-shifting landscape we hope to represent. In doing so, furthermore, we may be keeping a range of people not traditionally associated with literature or literary study but nevertheless concerned with the texts and culture of childhood from becoming aware of this journal as a venue for discourse of interest to them. Has the time come to retire a name for the journal that declares a border we've stopped guarding, and find one that better represents the scope of its interests?

Doing so might raise fears that we're giving up on Canadian children's literature and helping along its gradual demise as anything distinctive about it is erased by the pressures of a North American and increasingly global marketplace. On the other hand, however, taking down the wall might equally allow texts for children's literature and discourse about them to circulate more freely and more widely beyond Canadian borders. And, as even the most border-breaking of the award-winning books I've discussed nevertheless retain generic characteristics of children's literature, I suspect that Canadian books and discourse thus freed will continue to strike perceptive readers as being recognizably Canadian, recognizably a product of a specific cultural and economic context requiring specific kinds of understandings. Removing a barrier doesn't necessarily change the nature of what moves either way across a newly opened border.



With the beginning of volume 33 of *CCL/LCJ*, the terms of a number of the members of the journal's Editorial Advisory Board have come to an end. The editors would like to thank Cornelia Hoogland, Teya Rosenberg, and Judith Saltman for their contributions over the last two years. We'd also like to welcome new members of the advisory

board who are now starting two-year terms: Natalie Coulter, Margaret Mackey, Laura Robinson, and Deborah Stevenson. We also thank Marlene Kadar, Françoise Lepage, and Suzanne Pouliot for agreeing to continue on the Editorial Advisory Board for another two-year term.

Notes

¹ There was extensive discussion in the fall of 2007 and the first few months of 2008, leading up to and after the naming of this year's ALA award winners, on Childlit, Adbooks, and the Co-Operative Children's Book Center (CCBC), among other topics. The archives of all three discussions are available online: <<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~mjoseph/childlit/about.html>>; <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/adbooks/>>; <<http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/ccbcnet/default.asp>>.

² The ALA also offers The Theodor Seuss Geisel Medal, first presented in 2006, for "the author(s) and illustrator(s) of the most distinguished contribution to the body of American children's literature known as beginning reader books published in the United States during the preceding year" ("Geisel Award"), so that the writers of just this one very specific kind of picture-book text are considered award worthy.

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Perry Nodelman's latest book is *The Proof that Ghosts Exist*, the first novel in the Ghosthunters trilogy, written in collaboration with Carol Matas and published by Key Porter in April 2008. His new academic book is *The Hidden Adult: Defining Children's Literature*, scheduled for publication by Johns Hopkins University Press in fall 2008.