

# Harvest Home

By Jane Yolen, Illustrated by Greg Shed

Published by Harcourt, Inc.



Reviewed by  
Liz Gilpatrick

**W**hen I taught, I loved celebrating autumn and harvest time with children. In this era of supermarkets and fast food, it seemed doubly important to me that children dance, play, sing and speak about the cycles of planting and harvest, as well as the community rituals and celebrations that accompanied the gathering and storing of crops.

The call-and-response verses Jane

Yolen has crafted in *Harvest Home* lend themselves to interpretations that could range from melodic settings to choric speech. Each verse is set to the same rhythmic scheme, making it easy to speak or sing; to drum or dance – the possibilities seem endless.

Greg Shed's illustrations lend a soft, colorful realism, and they fairly glow with autumn color, while simultaneously showing younger students how tools like scythes were used in gathering grain before the days of gasoline-powered farm implements. The text is probably best suited to

older elementary students.

The verses celebrate both community and the sense of gratitude people have always conveyed for a bountiful harvest. On the last page, Yolen explains the origins of the corn husk doll, and includes directions for making the age-old harvest symbol.

Books as worthy as this one make me want to return to the classroom – if only for a few weeks – to enjoy creating alongside children. As is the case with all of Yolen's work, the language is worthy of a child's time and creative efforts. *Harvest Home* is a timeless book you can use again and again.

