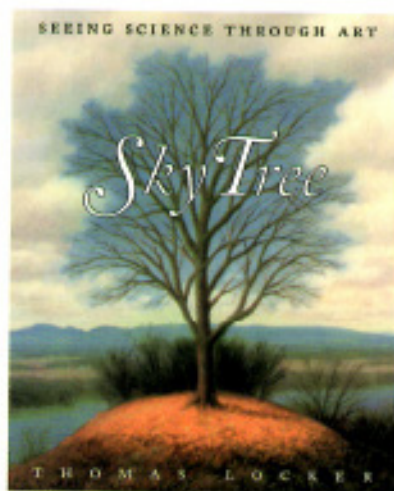


Reviews

Judith Cole and Marjie Van Gunten, Editors

The opinions stated are those of the reviewer and not of the editors or the American Orff-Schulwerk Association. The editors wish to thank those publishers and members of industry who graciously donate copies of books and material for review.



SKY TREE

Seeing Science Through Art

By Thomas Locker with Candace Christiansen

HarperCollins, 1995. \$16.95 cloth; \$6.95 paper.

When a friend shared this book with me several years ago, we both knew that it would become a favorite for generating one of those all-encompassing experiences so characteristic of Orff classrooms. Thomas Locker's lyrical prose and his breathtakingly beautiful illustrations of a tree invite sound and movement exploration and, thus, feed the soul of the emerging musician-dancer-poet.

Just one tree standing alone on a hill by a river is seen from cover to cover in this book. The illustrations were all painted in oils on canvas in a range of natural colors that reflect a tree's life through the seasons and elements. The paintings evoke a wide range of emotions, causing the reader to feel the warmth of the glowing sun on the tree's leaves in the summer as well as the chill when the tree is shrouded in winter's fog. The reader feels the violence of a summer tempest on the tree's branches as vividly as the stillness of those same

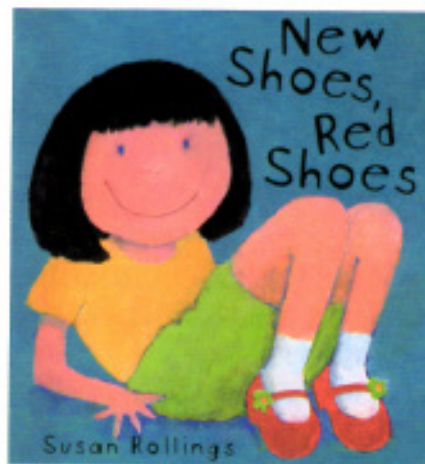
barren branches on a cold, winter evening.

Locker shows how a single tree, when painted against the ever-changing sky, can invite a deep sense of wonder. In the first of his 14 illustrations, we see the gentle, green summer tree with puffy white clouds against a brilliant blue sky. The same tree is transformed when it is shown against a dark, ominous sky, and the reader is sure to respond with a changing mood. We see bright orange and yellow pigments in autumn, muted golds and violets of fading evening light, gray and bare branches in winter mist, crow-filled naked branches in winter frost, soft white silence on a snowy day, millions of stars twinkling through empty branches on a clear night, and the yellow sun glowing hopefully with the spring's first buds.

The descriptive text draws the reader into experiencing summer breezes, cold nights, gathering and drifting clouds, streaming light and uncurling leaves. The river, seen in the distance beyond the tree, participates in the story as it ripples, glistens, freezes, thaws and provides nourishment. Turtles crawl, sleep and lay eggs in the mud as the sap rises to the tree's buds. Birds chirp, squabble, sing and beat their wings to fly. Squirrels race, scurry, hide nuts and huddle for warmth.

Teacher Candace Christiansen adds scientific depth by embellishing each illustration with a thought-provoking question about the changes that mark the tree's world. At the conclusion, further questioning provides opportunity for the reader to ponder moods and feelings caused by the artist's choice of colors and brush strokes. The reader is left to consider a final question about the relationship of the sky and tree when asked, "Why do you think this book is called *Sky Tree*?"

-Judith Cole



NEW SHOES, RED SHOES

By Susan Rollings

Orchard Books, 2000. \$15.95.

A little girl is going on a shopping trip to buy some new shoes with her mother. On her journey, she joyously discovers a world of fascinating footwear all around her - as if for the first time. From "low shoes and high shoes" to "big and noisy racing shoes," the little girl notices the differences and similarities of each pair of shoes she encounters. The brightly painted illustrations bring out the uniqueness of the shoes and the diverse individuals wearing them. British author and illustrator Susan Rollings has created a book that is a celebration of shoes and of life, expressing the wonder with which young children experience the world around them. The text is sure to entice children to snap their fingers and move their feet with its driving intensity and syncopated rhythms. "Happy shoes, dancing shoes, skipping to the party shoes." Beware: *New Shoes, Red Shoes* will convince little girls they too need a new pair of shoes!

-Carlos Abril