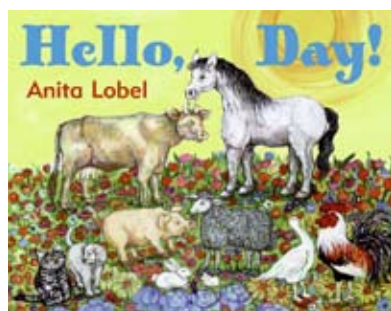




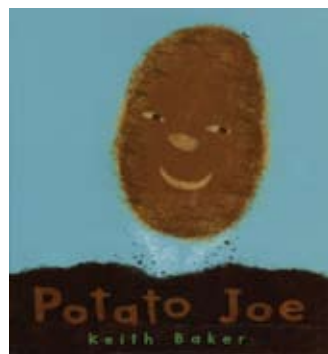
The Reading Chair

***Hello, Day!* by Anita Lobel. 2008. New York: HarperCollins. 32 pp. ISBN 9780060787653. Ages birth to 3.**

Nobody does color like Lobel, and she devotes an entire page to the illustration of each of the farm animals featured in this day in the country. Painterly renditions of a cow, a sheep, a horse, and more are accompanied on the opposing pages by simple language describing what each animal “says” (moo, baa, neigh). Young children love practicing animal sounds. Lobel’s twist—telling readers what the animals are really saying—lends an element of discovery and delivers a satisfying wrap-up to the colorful day.



***Potato Joe*, by Keith Baker. 2008. Orlando, FL: Harcourt. 40 pp. ISBN 9780152062309. Ages 1 to 4.**



Just as *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* is an alphabet book with a plot (letters climb a tree), this is a counting book-cum-story—one about a patch of potatoes that spend the day above ground. Creative counting is interspersed with well-timed rhymes: “One potato, two potato, hello, Joe! Three

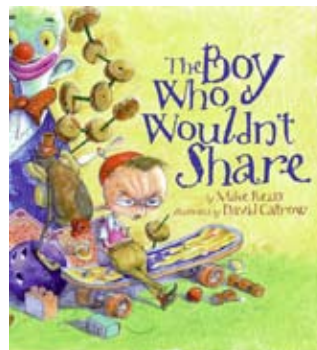
potato, four potato, tic-tac-toe! Five potato, six potato, in a row!” These playful potatoes come face-to-face with inclement weather, other garden vegetables, and even a crow. Ultimately, they must return to the dirt where they belong.

Baker’s judicious use of color transforms what could have been a drab patch of dirt-bound potatoes into something quite lively. *Potato Joe* captures the essence of a good children’s book. That it covers counting, rhyme, garden science, and nutrition is a side note to what’s most important: it produces a feel-good and satisfying reading experience that children will request again and again.

***The Boy Who Wouldn’t Share*, by Mike Reiss. Illustrated by David Catrow. 2008. New York: HarperCollins. 32 pp. ISBN 9780060591328. Ages 2 to 6.**

It’s hard to go wrong with a book written by the former head writer for *The Simpsons* and illustrated by the artist who brought us the best-selling *I Ain’t Gonna Paint No More!* Reiss has created a big brother who is the ultimate toy hoarder: “Edward was a frightful boy who wouldn’t share a single toy,” especially not with his sister, Claire. Rhyme amplifies the fun, and emotion emanates from Catrow’s colorful illustrations, as always.

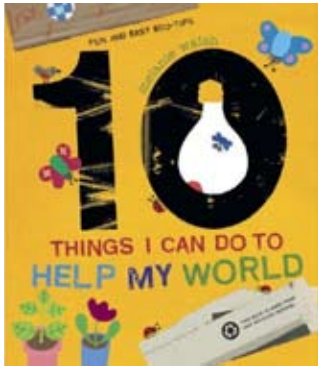
Unfortunately for Edward, his selfishness catches up with him when he gets stuck under his pile of toys. “When Edward’s mom came in with fudge, Edward found he couldn’t budge. His mother didn’t see him there, and so she gave it all to Claire.” Edward’s remorse is enough to garner a large helping of generosity from his easygoing sister. She sets him free and shares the fudge. Edward can’t help but be in her debt . . . at least for the rest of the day.



Isabel Baker, MAT, MLS, is president of The Book Vine for Children, a national company dedicated to getting good books into the hands of preschool children and their teachers. Isabel has worked as a children’s librarian and is currently a presenter on early literacy and book selection.

Miriam Baker Schiffer, MFA, is a writer.

Chair illustration by Diane Greenseid.



***10 Things I Can Do to Help My World*, by Melanie Walsh. 2008. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press. 40 pp. ISBN 9780763641443. Ages 3 to 7.**

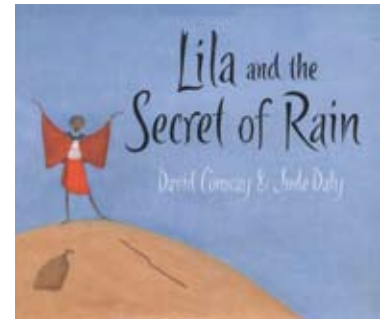
Ten “fun and easy eco-tips” will show readers the ways in which their everyday practices are intertwined with the welfare of the world around them. The book includes information about saving energy, conserving water,

properly disposing of trash and recyclables, caring for plants and animals, and reducing waste. Bold die-cut illustrations add another dimension of appeal by providing a flip-the-page guessing game. Questions prompt children to consider what they should do when they see a running faucet or a light on in an empty room.

Younger readers will understand the child-friendly tips, and older readers will enjoy the extra explanation in smaller print on each page, for example, “You save eighteen glasses of water” when you turn the faucet off while brushing your teeth. This book of directives is a launching pad for classroom discussion and for extended activities that can involve parents as well. [We’ve implemented a few of the tips in our own lives! It’s impossible not to after learning how these simple changes can make a significant difference.]

***Lila and the Secret of Rain*, by David Conway. Illustrated by Jude Daly. 2007. London: Frances Lincoln; 2008 ed. Distributed by Publishers Group West, Berkeley, CA. 28 pp. ISBN 9781845074074. Ages 3 to 7.**

When a heat wave and drought come to Lila’s village in Kenya, everything comes to a stop. It is too hot to work the land and milk the cows, and the crops are failing. “Without water there can be no life,” Lila’s mama tells her. In this beautiful intergenerational story, Lila’s grandfather imparts to Lila the secret of rain: To end the drought, she must climb the tallest mountain and share the saddest story she knows with the sun. As she cries to the sun about her grief for her withering village, the skies begin to cry with her, and rain falls upon the land.



Daly’s delicate and moving desert landscapes evoke heat and thirst and, ultimately, the satiety and celebration that follow when the skies give life back to the village. In this compelling story, the secret of rain is also that one person’s hard work can save the world.

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