

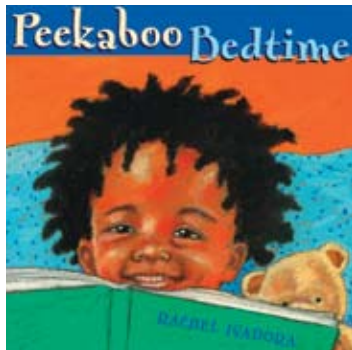


The Reading Chair

***Peekaboo Bedtime*, by Rachel Isadora. 2008. New York: Penguin Young Readers. 28 pp. ISBN 9780399243844. Ages birth to 4.**

Rachel Isadora's body of work is remarkable in its diversity. Her books offer multicultural and geographic diversity (with settings from South Africa to Harlem), diversity of artistic style (stark black-and-white images in *Ben's Trumpet*, bright printed paper collage in *The Princess and the Pea*), and diversity of subject (ballet in *On Your Toes*, language in *Yo, Jo!*). One of Isadora's newest books (she has published many in the past year) is a notable return to what she has done well in the past.

Peekaboo Bedtime, a sequel to *Peekaboo Morning*, is a turn-the-page guessing game about all those whom a boy sees on his way to bed.

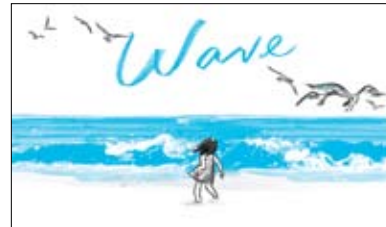


"Peekaboo! I see . . . my mommy[.] Peekaboo! I see . . . my blankie[.]" Each page contains a visual clue about what he'll discover on the following page. Bright illustrations depict a three-generation family, with a couple of pets too. The book incorporates elements of routine—waving to the moon, taking a bath, and replacing shoes with slippers for bed—that are part of establishing a successful bedtime. Both the family and the routine make for a comforting book about getting ready for bed.

***Wave*, by Suzy Lee. 2008. San Francisco: Chronicle. 40 pp. ISBN 9780811859240. Ages 3 to 6.**

In this wordless book, artist Suzy Lee captures the power of a wave from a young girl's perspective as she interacts with it on the shore. The reader's viewpoint stays fixed throughout the book, with the land, the girl, and a flock of birds on the left, rendered in

simple strokes of charcoal. They are set apart from the wave, painted on the righthand page in watercolor-like acrylics of light blue and white. The wave's repeated approach and retreat highlights the back-and-forth nature of its relationship with the girl. She dares the



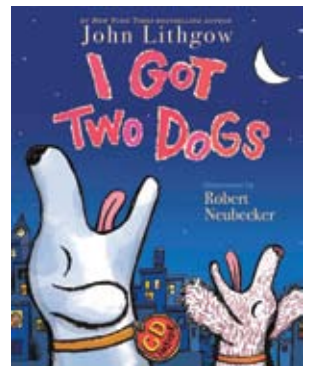
water to approach, dances in it, and then runs from it. The wave becomes a character—one that is timid, then playful, then powerful. Eventually, it douses the girl, but she

discovers an upside to this unpredictable friendship: the seashells that the wave washes up on the shore.

Lee harnesses the magic of the sea, and "reading" this wordless book provides a dazzling experience. It encourages children to verbalize and dramatize the animated interaction between the girl and the wave. Wordless books are a wonderful literacy tool!

***I Got Two Dogs*, by John Lithgow. Illus. by Robert Neubecker. 2008. New York: Simon & Schuster. 32 pp. ISBN 9781416958819. Ages 3 to 7.**

In this ode to the family dog, John Lithgow brings us a song about two happy-go-lucky canine characters, Fanny and Blue, who are "not too smart, but they're loyal and true." These dogs might never "win a prize," nor have they "learned a single trick." But with humorous, well-written lyrics, Lithgow drives home what's most important: Fanny and Blue are loyal and lovable, and it's impossible not to be devoted to them.



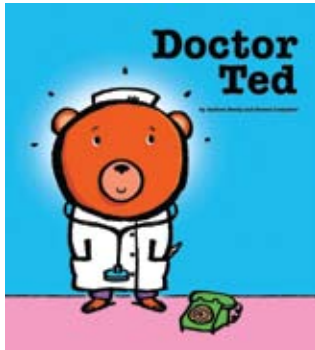
Isabel Baker, MAT, MLS, is president of The Book Vine for Children, a national company dedicated to getting good books into the hands of preschool children and their teachers. Isabel has worked as a children's librarian and is currently a presenter on early literacy and book selection.

Miriam Baker Schiffer, MFA, is a writer.

Chair illustration by Diane Greenseid.

Lithgow's rendition of the song, recorded on the accompanying CD, is upbeat and playful. He doesn't hold anything back! (We once set the CD to *Repeat* and just enjoyed it for half an hour straight.)

Neubecker (*Courage of the Blue Boy* and *Wow! School!*) uses rich, soft colors to depict these irresistible dogs. Each page contains a clear focal point. The pictures are less dense than those in the *Wow!* series, but they are just right for this book because children will be busy singing and turning pages to keep pace with the song. Prepare for an energetic group sing-along!



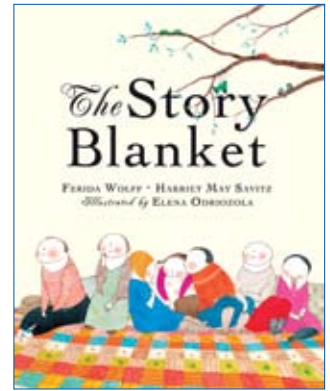
***Doctor Ted*, by Andrea Beaty. Illus. by Pascal Lemaitre. 2008. New York: Simon & Schuster. 32 pp. ISBN 9781416928201. Ages 3 to 7.**

Ted has a good imagination and a strong sense of purpose. When confronted with a classroom full of sniffles and a bump on his knee, he knows what's needed: Doctor Ted. And that's just

who he becomes. But who ever heard of make-believe involving a diagnosis of gingivitis? Well, today's children, who see and hear medical advertisements repeatedly, play doctor with an expanded vocabulary. This tribute to a child's imagination is fun and quirky and will be as entertaining for adults as it is for children.

Doctor Ted's commitment to medicine earns him respect at school, despite his not being a very good diagnostician. In the end, though, firefighting beckons louder than the stethoscope. With humor, this book captures the sense of importance with which children conduct imaginative play, and it recognizes their ability to constantly remake themselves.

***The Story Blanket*, by Ferida Wolff and Harriet May Savitz. Illus. by Elena Odriozola. 2008. Atlanta: Peachtree. 28 pp. ISBN 9781561454662. Ages 5 and up.**



This original story reads like a beautiful old folktale. In a tiny village in snow-covered mountains, a group of children loves to gather on Babba Zarrah's big blanket to listen to her stories. But what is Babba Zarrah to do when she notices that one of the children needs a new pair of socks in the dead of winter, and there is no yarn to be found? "Every question has an answer," she says, and this bit of wisdom becomes a refrain throughout the book as a mystery unfolds. The boy receives a pair of socks, and other members of the community receive much needed clothing as well, all resembling Babba Zarrah's blanket, which is shrinking down to nothing day by day.

When the villagers solve the mystery—Babba Zarrah has been knitting gifts from the yarn in her blanket—they know what to do. By the next morning, a little bit of yarn from every blanket in every household waits upon Babba Zarrah's doorstep, ready to become the next story blanket. Stylized, delicate illustrations offer lots of color in this heartening story about a community that pitches in to take care of one another.

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