

● Selected for Review

Reviewer: MURIEL CROSBY

Readings from Childhood Education: Articles of Lasting Value. D. Keith Osborn, chairman of Anthology Committee. Washington, D.C.: Association for Childhood Education International, 1966. 414 p.

Reviewed by MURIEL CROSBY, Assistant Superintendent for Educational Programs, Wilmington Public Schools, Wilmington, Delaware.

In commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of *Childhood Education*, the official journal of the ACEI, this anthology of 150 articles, which in the judgment of the committee of ACEI leaders seemed of lasting value, has been published.

Over the years, *Childhood Education* has been a prestige journal among professional periodicals. Its list of contributors reads like a roster of national and international great teachers of the twentieth century. Kilpatrick, Zirbes, Hopkins, Gesell, Havighurst, Keliher, Snyder are but a few of the writers whose work appears in this anthology of *Readings from Childhood Education*.

The pros and cons of the value of anthologies are subjects of lively debate. In this instance, the pros seem to outweigh the cons, for the current generation of young teachers may recog-

nize some of the names of former great teachers as simply names in their History of Education textbooks and be unfamiliar with the actual writings of many of the educators represented in the anthology. Many of their published works from the past are unavailable, out of print, or hard to come by. For many young teachers, the anthology will provide a link to the past and an awareness of the fact that the present has its roots in the past. This will be a happy discovery for many young readers.

At the same time, the roster of writers represented includes few, if any, among the current generations of teachers under fifty years of age. It would seem that one of the important obligations of professional organizations and journals would be the discovery of young, potentially outstanding educators and writers. Surely, among active educators, between 25 and 50 years of age, there must be some who have produced writings of "lasting value," the criterion established for the inclusion of articles in this anthology. If this is not true, it constitutes a serious indictment of the "great teachers" of the past. This, to my way of thinking, represents a serious criticism of the anthol-

ogy, and indirectly of the journals or of the selection committee, or of ACEI.

Organizing the contents of an anthology is always a problem. Those who select articles must attempt to fit them into a structure of some kind to assist the reader in his interpretation. The structure evolves from the material at hand, as well as from the skills and insights of the editing committee. In the major sections of the anthology, "This We Believe," "The Child," "The Teacher," "The Classroom," "Inspirations from the Past," and "Today's Child—Tomorrow's World," the committee has done a commendable job although, obviously, there is much overlapping.

The cover design, format, and general appearance of a publication should always be an "invitation" to read. Unfortunately, this anthology does not measure up in appearance and attractiveness. The binding is particularly weak and will never hold up under even moderate and careful use.

In summary, the ACEI has made a valuable contribution for the professional reference shelf and, hopefully, to the education of teachers.

Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle . . . And Other Modern Verse. Compiled by Stephen Dunning, Edward Lueders, Hugh Smith. New York: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1966. 160 p.

Reviewed by MURIEL CROSBY.

This anthology of modern verse has brought together in a single collection a delightful range of poems and verse for all ages, placing the responsibility of selection appropriate to children, situations, and times upon the teacher and, hopefully, upon the children who

use this book. It recognizes that tastes are eclectic and that children develop eclectic tastes only through experience with many kinds and styles of writing.

Many of the poems relate to common experiences, adding new dimensions that stir the imagination and develop an awareness of the power of words to bring added meaning to a common experience, as typified in William Jay Smith's "The Toaster."

*A silver-scaled Dragon with jaws flaming
red*

*Sits at my elbow and toasts my bread,
I hand him fat slices, and then, one by
one,*

*He hands them back when he sees they
are done.*

Some poems serve the purpose of helping the reader take a new look at the commonplace, as Gerald Raftery must surely achieve in his poem, "Apartment House."

*A filing-cabinet of human lives
Where people swarm like bees in tun-
neled hives,*

*Each to his own cell in the towered
comb,
Identical and cramped—we call it home.*

The introspective, mature young reader may "take a shine" to the abstract, more sophisticated poetry of poets like Gregory Corso. His "Poets Hitchhiking on the Highway" is a poem to ponder upon, to question.

Among the poets represented are some old favorites, including Sandburg, de la Mare, Frost, and Millay. But younger, newer poets' works comprise a major portion of this book. This is good—especially for teachers who often cling to old, known favorites and bind the children into the same narrow world.

Only two aspects of this anthology disturb me. The sometimes brittle, sophisticated adaptations of old favorites, like "Hey Diddle Diddle" and "Little Miss Muffet" make me feel that the originals are time tested and can hardly be improved upon. Perhaps this is a personal bias. And I deplore the section on "Interpretation." It is a textbookish feature which in effect says, "These poems are not really for enjoy-

ment; to justify them in school, we must pick their bare bones and make them teachers' teaching tools."

In summary, this is a collection of merit, presented in a quality production job in which the combination of color of cover and end pages (true watermelon colors), title, splendid photographs, and contents are in harmony. I recommend it highly to those who would bring child and poetry together.

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