

Roberts exemplifies her awareness of the ability of all things to contain prophetic significance—the importance of finding meaning and meaning-making in every aspect of life; in this sense, the mundane gains profundity and, again, we are reminded that we have the power of choosing what to keep and what to forget. With various birds as her guides, with whom she has developed her own private language, she has embarked on making sense of life’s binaries that oftentimes cannot be reconciled.

The experience of reading *Auguries* is saturated with the silence one needs in order to hear, a vividness in the real and in the imagined, and raw emotion. It offers a quietude that we find when we are alone in the middle of nowhere or when we find ourselves in an intimate and private room. The liminal space we inhabit within the poems is one that is beautifully reconciled in the final line; we are taken to the room of realization where we see there is a beginning and an end, ease and dis-ease, humanness and non-humanness, and where finally “above us, our eyes // blinking, soft, / returned / to amazement.” Roberts’s attention to detail and willingness to dwell within areas seemingly void of excitement, is deserving of high praise and something worth teaching; it reminds us to let go and to give ourselves to wonder.

Kendalyn Mckisick, Fairbanks

A Yukon Winter Coat. By Rachel Finn. Independently published, 2017. 34 illustrated pages.

Reviewed by Deanna McLeod

Any exhausted adult who has read to a toddler or preschooler at bedtime knows the relief of words that flow easily when read aloud. And it’s a particular pleasure when the words and images tell a story that engage the bleary-eyed reader as well as the small listener—especially if the child pleads for the story again and again.

Since my own son is now thirteen and reading novels or biographies of innovators (or, let’s face it, watching YouTube), I confess I sometimes miss those days when we cuddled together with a stack of picture books. So I was excited to pick up Rachel Finn’s *A Yukon Winter Coat* and asked my son to help me review it.

Finn's debut publication is one of those books for kids that offers the whole package—not only easy flowing words, charming illustrations, a fun story, and a heartwarming conclusion, but also some facts that are subtly interwoven. (Disclosure: Finn and I are both employees of Yukon College although we have somehow never met and our work does not currently intersect.)

A Yukon Winter Coat tells the story of an animal who has arrived in the Yukon from a southern climate and is totally unprepared for the winter. After the local animals' initial surprise ("Up North? A hippo? No, no, no. / Let me tell you, that ain't so"), they offer to help the newcomer prepare for the coming cold, offering their local knowledge and resources—"With willow, feathers, / fur and pitch, / we will not have to sew a stitch!"

The story of reaching out to help the new kid on the block is one that has been told many times, of course (Paulette Bourgeois and Brenda Clark's *Franklin's New Friend*, for example). But Finn's captivating northern characters—those pink tongues!—and the Yukon and winter angles, provide a perspective that is fresh.

The book's back cover suggests it's for 0 to 5 year olds, but Finn's story about folks befriending those who seem most different will be appreciated by any age. (My son thought the upper age could be seven.)

The youngest children will respond to the easy rhyme and to the friendly animal faces—especially on the double-spread surprise page in the middle that's also my favourite.

For toddlers and preschoolers the book is also a terrific introduction to sixteen Yukon animals (nicely listed on the last page) and their strategies for surviving our winters.

For children at the older end of the age range and, really, for any of us, *A Yukon Winter Coat* invites both reader and listener to imagine how it might feel to be the stranger or the surprised host. The book even presents an opportunity to chat about some of the bigger issues—the challenges that forced migrants face in Canada and around the world, and the impacts on Yukon's Indigenous peoples when settlers arrived in their territories unannounced, uninvited, and needing local knowledge and resources to survive.

Like thirteen year olds, those in the zero- to five-year-old crowd have high standards. Perhaps the only thing more gratifying to a writer for children than engaging a preschooler, is holding a teenager's

interest for content aimed at little kids. So congratulations to Finn for achieving this with her first publication. The book is a celebration of generosity and diversity (and Yukon animals!), but it doesn't bonk us over the head with a moral message, and its humour doesn't patronize its young audience.

My son pointed out the "crisp" page design, the solid font choice, and the nice colour scheme. He also mentioned he prefers "the Yukon" rather than "Yukon" –and the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. (But that's a very small quibble, and we accept that Finn is in good company with the Yukon sans "the".)

A Yukon Winter Coat is a wonderful addition to the other northern-books-for-kids on the shelves here in Whitehorse, most of which are from our talented Alaskan neighbours. I look forward to Finn's next book.

Deanna McLeod, Yukon College

River of Light: Conversations with Kabir. By John Morgan. Artwork by Kesler Woodward. University of Alaska Press, Alaska Literary Series, 2014.

Reviewed by Clea Roberts

John Morgan's collection of poems *River of Light: A Conversation with Kabir* is a significant addition to the author's strong oeuvre and is a testament to the mystical power of the northern landscape and its denizens. The collection, beautifully illustrated by Alaskan artist Kesler Woodward, chronicles a week-long wilderness river trip in Southcentral Alaska. Morgan, inspired by the verse of Kabir, uses excerpts from the fifteenth-century Indian poet's work to articulate an investigation of mortality, spirituality, and what it means to be human.

One of the pleasures of Morgan's poems is the humility with which the speaker in the poems broaches the wilderness. In an *Orion* podcast on nature poetry, writer Christian Wiman mused how "nature both contains and expels us," and Morgan's poems seem particularly tuned to this truth. These poems deeply personalize the thin line between belonging and being separate from the natural world, "[t]hat