

## Small Town Life

*The Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs* by Betty G. Birney. Illustrated by Matt Phelan.



(Grades 4-6—J Birney)

Ebin McAllister spends every evening after the farm chores poring over a book about the Seven Wonders of the World. His small town of Sassafras Springs seems terribly dull, and he can't wait to get away. His father makes a deal with him. If Ebin can find seven wonders in Sassafras Springs, then his father will buy him a train ticket to go visit far-off relatives. Eben tells his story in first person, but each “wonder” is related by the person telling the story. The “wonder” stories are self-contained within chapters.

*Becca at Sea* by Deirdre Baker (Grades 4-6—J Baker)

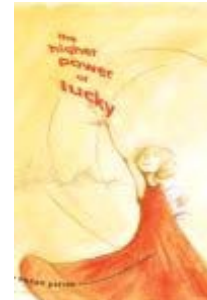
Becca makes repeated trips to her grandmother's cabin by the sea during the time her mother is pregnant with Becca's first sibling. Each time Becca has a different kind of adventure, some dangerous. Her assorted relatives and friends bring Becca a variety of experiences, but she longs for a friend her own age. Despite some scary events, this is a gentle book of family and friends and paints a picture about life on a small island.

*Way Down Deep* by Ruth White (Grades 3-6—J Ruth)

The people of the West Virginia town of Way Down Deep are more like family than neighbors. When a toddler with red curly hair is found all by herself in town and Miss Arbutus offers to take her in, the town feels that is an excellent decision, and the townspeople help with her support. Most of the story takes place around the tenth anniversary of Ruby's arrival in town. This book makes you wish you could live in a town like this. Even a would-be bank robber finds love and support in Way Down Deep, though he is ever after called Robber Bob—he doesn't mind.

*The Higher Power of Lucky* by Susan Patron (Grades 4-6—J Patron / Book on CD)

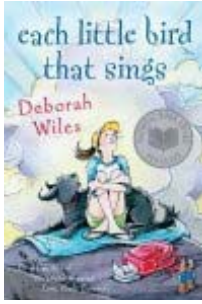
Lucky Trimble lives in a very small town in the California desert. Everyone knows everyone else, and they are almost an extended family. Lucky lives with her guardian, her father's x-wife who left France to take care of Lucky after her mother was killed by lightning. In the first few pages of the novel, Lucky overhears a conversation about the “higher power” and about a dog bit on the scrotum by a rattlesnake. Two questions occupy her mind: 1. What is meant by higher power? 2. What is a scrotum? The book is the story of Lucky discovering that she really has a new mother, someone she can trust to look after her until she grows up. (Winner of the 2007 Newbery Medal)



*Thumb on a Diamond* by Roberts, Ken. Illustrated by Leanne Franson. (Grades 3-6—J Roberts)

Thumb and his friend Susan have a plan to get the school board to pay for the children in their remote fishing village nestled between mountains and the sea to travel to Vancouver so they can see tall buildings, cars, and a real baseball diamond with grass. Their plan is to be the regional baseball champions, simple because none of the coastal towns have room for a baseball diamond, so no one can play. Of course, Thumb and his friends don't know how to play either. This is part sports story, but also a family adventure with the family being the people of their little village.

*Each Little Bird that Sings* by Deborah Wiles (Grades 4-7—J Wiles)



Comfort Snowberger lives in the family's funeral home with her parents and dog Dismay and an elderly great aunt and uncle. When her great uncle dies peacefully, Comfort is furious with her young cousin Peach, a sniveling little boy, who carries on in a manner not appropriate for funerals. Now her beloved great aunt has died, and Comfort has to put up with Peach again. This is a story with heart and humor, and also a heart-thumping disaster. Comfort has trouble with her former best friend Declaration and pressure from her parents to be Peach's friend. She remains a sympathetic character with the courage to do what is right

despite high personal costs.

*The Aurora County All Stars* by Deborah Wiles (Grades 4-7—J Wiles)

House Jackson is the star picture on the town's team that only has one real baseball game a year, and now that is threatened by the town's anniversary pageant that is to be held the same day and the same time. Adding to House's worries is the death of an old man who House had been secretly reading to for more than a year. House discovers all things are connected with baseball at the center. This is done as only Deborah Wiles can in this third book placed in the same small town, following *Love, Ruby Lavender* and *Each Little Bird that Sings*.