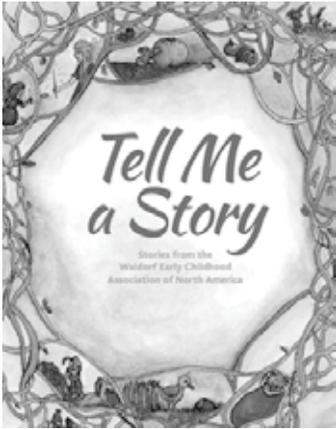


Tell Me a Story: Stories from the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America edited by Louise deForest (WECAN, 2013)



Treasures of a different kind are to be found in the new WECAN collection, *Tell Me a Story*. Following the successful publication of *For the Children of the World*, stories and recipes gathered from the member associations of IASWECE (the International Association for Steiner/Waldorf Early

Childhood Education), editor Louise deForest and WECAN managing editor Lory Widmer envisioned a similar gathering of stories from within our own North American association.

Waldorf early childhood educators from far and wide enthusiastically responded to their invitation, and from their contributions have been selected over 80 stories to enrich our story time, whether in the classroom or at home. They have been organized into seven sections titled *Simple Stories to Start With*, *Nature Tales*, *Stories for Seasons and Festivals*, *Working and Helping*, *Journeys and Wonders*, *Healing Stories for Special Situations*, and *Ending with Laughter*. The stories are short—most no longer than two pages—and give simple, sweet pictures of honest human life, goodness, and harmony. There is lots of humor as well, just the right kind to tickle the children’s fancy.

When I began reading these stories, I, of course, expected to like them. But I had no idea how I would become captivated and carried away myself into a protected land of childhood imaginations where good, generous, and moral qualities of human living would be affirmed and renewed. I didn’t know these needed renewing, but found myself refreshed and uplifted after each story.

In recent conversation with others studying the use of stories in our early childhood classes, we observed that stories that just tell about life and nature and thus give a wholesome introduction to life are missing for

our children. Our mechanized, technological times have divorced us from these cultural roots and left the children in a void, desperately hungry for simple tales that tell about the practical, human life and relationships that people have always valued. These are richly represented in *Tell Me a Story* through tales old and new. The children also need imaginations from nature so they can know the birds and flowers, the brooks and trees, the hot sun, stones, wind, and rain. In this book we are given many pictures of these as well, in uncomplicated but rich depiction.

Dr. Renate Long-Breipohl spoke about the “education of the feeling life” of young children at the recent WECAN East Coast conference. A goal in this education is to help the child along the path toward wanting to outwardly contribute to the world without being trapped inwardly by self-centered desires and emotions. Story can be our best friend in encouraging this constructive turning outward to the world. Fairy tales for the older children picture these soul elements, as through their images they portray “the I learning to make the right judgment through trials and dangers, achieving a state of harmony in the end.” (See “The Education of Feeling in Early Childhood,” in this issue.) The tales in *Tell Me a Story* offer the same elements in quiet, sometimes serious, sometimes humorous but always warm, humane voices to the children.

This book will provide weeks, perhaps even years, of enriched, delightful storytelling. Thanks to all who contributed their original creations and favorite stories from the past. What a treasure you have shared. ♦

—Nancy Blanning



Drawing by Jo Valens from *Tell Me a Story*