

**CYRM Resource Book  
Intermediate Nominees  
(Grades 3-6)  
2007-2008**

***Each Little Bird That Sings***

by Deborah Wiles

Gulliver Books, Harcourt, 2005.

***The Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs***

by Betty G. Birney

illustrated by Matt Phelan

Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2005.

***Worth***

by Alexandra LaFaye

Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2004.



California Young Reader Medal  
**Intermediate Ballot**  
**2007-2008**

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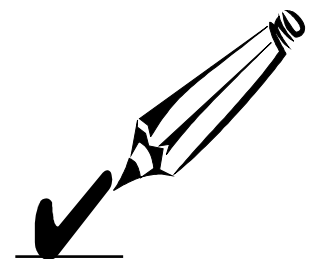
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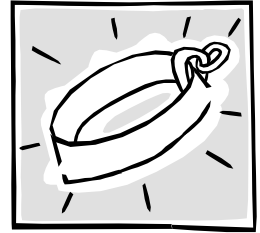
\_\_\_\_\_ *The Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Worth*



# ***Each Little Bird That Sings***

by Deborah Wiles



## **Synopsis**

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Comfort Snowberger has attended 247 funerals; not a surprise since her family runs the town funeral home. Readers will find that it hasn't spoiled her outlook on life. Far to the contrary, even though she encounters deaths in her own family, Comfort knows dying is apart of living. Her larger concerns are avoiding her crazy cousin Peach and trying to figure out why her best friend, Declaration, suddenly won't talk to her.

Comfort's voice throughout the book is what makes this book such a delight. Although written as a first person narrative, there are other gems, written by Comfort and others, sprinkled in that add to the charm of this book. Kids will love Comfort and her unique family.

## **Hooks**

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- Do your grandparents live with you? Would you like them to?
- Who bugs you the most?
- Do your parents ever make you play with someone you don't like?
- Have you ever been to a funeral or memorial service? What was it like?

## Meet the Author—Deborah Wiles

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Deborah Wiles was born in Alabama and spent much of her girlhood in Mississippi. She used to play the piano in an unlocked church when she was a girl, as well as taking long walks and listening to her relatives tell their stories. Her career as an author began with writing nonfiction. Now she writes picture books and children’s novels that borrow material she remembers from her own childhood. She has worked as a teacher, a school bus driver, and even as an underwear salesperson. Now she also teaches writing to adults. Ms. Wiles has two grandchildren and loves to garden.

For more information, see:

<http://www.deborahwiles.com>

and

<http://www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-wiles-deborah.asp>





## Funerals and Funeral Homes

- Bartek, Mary. *Funerals and Fly Fishing*. Henry Holt and Company, 2004.
- Cooney, Doug. *The Beloved Dearly*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2002.
- Peck, Richard. *The Teacher's Funeral*. Dial Books, 2004.
- Pellegrino, Marjorie White. *I Don't Have an Uncle Phil Anymore*. Magination Press, 1999.
- Woodruff, Elvira. *The Secret Funeral of Slim Jim the Snake*. Holiday House, 1993.

## Death and Dying

- Blume, Judy. *Tiger Eyes: a Novel*. Bradbury Press, 1981.
- Buchanan, Doris. *A Taste of Blackberries*. Crowell, 1973.
- Carrick, Carol. *The Accident*. Illustrated by Donald Carrick. Seabury Press, 1976.
- Henkes, Kevin. *Olive's Ocean*. Greenwillow Books, 2003.
- Hermes, Patricia. *You Shouldn't Have to Say Good-bye*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982.
- L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Ring of Endless Light*. Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1980.
- Miles, Betty. *The Trouble with Thirteen*. Knopf, 1979.
- Paterson, Katherine. *Bridge to Terabithia*. Crowell, 1977.
- Wiles, Deborah. *Love, Ruby Lavender*. Harcourt, 2001.

## Floods

- Moonshower, Candie. *The Legend of Zoey: a Novel*. Delacorte Press, 2006.
- Petersen, P. J. *Rising Water*. Simon & Schuster, 2002.
- Van Allsburg, Chris. *Ben's Dream*. Houghton Mifflin, 1982.

## Relationships

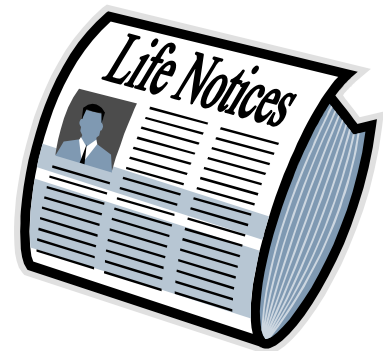
- Tolan, Stephanie S. *Surviving the Applewhites*. HarperCollins, 2002.
- Bornstein, Ruth. *Butterflies and Lizards, Beryl and Me*. Marshall Cavendish, 2002.

## Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions for *Each Little Bird That Sings*

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- Throughout the book, Comfort, Declaration, and others usually use good manners when there is a lot of tension or stress. Do you use good manners at times like these? Why are good manners important at times like these? What happened when Comfort and Declaration forgot their manners and were mean to each other?
- Did a good friend ever hurt your feelings or drop you? Tell about it.
- Comfort writes a list of “Top Ten Tips for Good Funeral Behavior.” Reread them, then make up your own list of Good Behavior for a different type of event such as weddings, birthday parties, or other family gatherings.
- When does this story take place? Is it a long time ago or nowadays? Give examples from the story to support either answer.
- Declaration’s Grandma Lucy gives her a lot of advice about how “young ladies” should behave. Which advice do you think was helpful? Which advice do you think was not helpful? Support your answer with your own connections and/or examples from the book.



# ***The Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs***

by Betty G. Birney



## **Synopsis**

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Eben McAllister longs to see the world outside of his boring 1920's farming community. He's been reading about the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World at school, and yearning to see more of the world when he isn't doing farm chores.

Eben might get a chance if he meets his pa's challenge to find Seven Wonders in his own hometown of Sassafras Springs. Feeling defeated in the beginning, Eben sets out with his dog and discovers one can find wonder in many different ways.

The charm in this book is the delightful stories told by his neighbors. Eben learns that there is much more to Sassafras Springs than meets the eye, or the ear, for that matter.

## **HOOKS**

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- What's the longest trip you have ever taken?
- Where in the world do you wish you could go? What would you like to see?
- Has your mom or dad told you a story about when they were young or when you were young? Could you retell it?
- What is the most wonderful thing you've seen in our town/city?
- Eben will be looking for wonders in his own town. What do you think he will find?



## Meet the Author—Betty G. Birney

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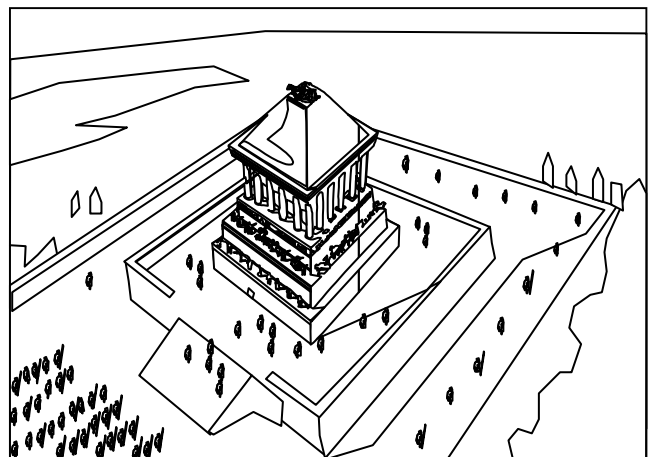
Betty Birney was born and grew up in Missouri, and now lives in California. She does her writing in a little blue house where she is visited by her dog and also, sometimes, lizards who wander along. Ms. Birney writes scripts for television shows and computer games, as well as books for children of different ages. She loves telling stories and has different ones to tell in different formats. Ms. Birney has adapted classic stories for Disney and also has published many original picture books and novels, including *The Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs*. Because she has won many awards for her books, her old school in Afton, MO, inducted her into the district's Hall of Fame. She likes to play the piano and computer games, as well as read for fun.

For more information about Betty Birney, see her website at:

<http://www.bettybirney.com>

and

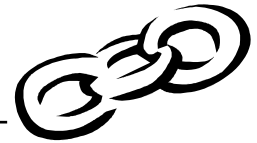
*Contemporary Authors Online* (Gale 2007).





# Connections for *The Seven Wonders of SassafRAS Springs*

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## Small Town Life

- Cottrell Boyce, Frank. *Framed*. HarperCollins, 2005.
- Martin, Ann M. *Ten Kids, No Pets*. Holiday House, 1988.
- Peck, Richard. *A Long Way from Chicago*. Dial Books for Young Readers, 1998.
- Peck, Richard. *A Year Down Yonder*. Dial Books for Young Readers, 2000.
- Smith, D. J. *The Boys of San Joaquin: A Novel*. Atheneum Books for Younger Readers, 2005.
- Stowe, Cynthia. *Dear Mom, in Ohio for a Year*. Scholastic, 1992.
- Wolff, Virginia Euwer. *Bat 6: A Novel*. Scholastic Signature, 1999.

## Seven Wonders of the World

- Caselli, Giovanni. *Wonders of the World*. Dorling Kindersley, 1992.
- Cazet, Denys. *Minnie & Moo and the Seven Wonders of the World*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2003.
- Cox, Reg and Neil Morris. *The Seven Wonders of the Modern World*. Silver Burdett, 1996.
- Hoffman, Mary. *Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Illustrated by M. P. Robertson. Frances Lincoln Ltd, 2003.
- Mason, Paul. *Lost Treasure*. Black Rabbit Books, 2005.
- Silverberg, Robert. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. Illustrated by Paul Williams. Crowell-Collier Press, 1970.
- Stilton, Geronimo. *The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid*. Illustrated by Matt Wolf. Scholastic, 2004.

## New 7 Wonders

<http://www.new7wonders.com/index.php>

This is a project to identify seven wonders of the modern world. At this web site you can learn about the 21 nominees and the Seven Wonders of the New World. There is also information on the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

## Learn what and where The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World were:

<http://ce.eng.usf.edu/pharos/wonders/list.html>

## Nonfiction about the architecture and building of some wonders by David Macaulay:

- Pyramid*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1973. Also available in video at some libraries, PBS Home Video.
- Castle*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1977.
- Cathedral*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1999. Also available in video at some libraries, PBS Home Video, Turner Home Entertainment, Atlanta, GA.
- Mosque*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 2003.

## Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions For *The Seven Wonders of Sassafra Springs*

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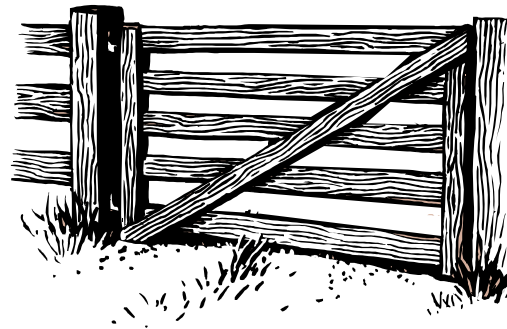


- Do you agree with Eben's seven wonders? Support and/or criticize at least two of his choices.
- Eben lived in a time and place where there was no TV, radio, computers, video games, or even movies. How did he spend his days? Which of his pastimes do you think you might enjoy?
- Think about your town or city. What is the most wondrous thing in your hometown?
- Some wonders of Sassafra Springs are more wondrous because of the story that surrounds them. Does your family have an old story of a wondrous event or experience? Tell about it, using descriptive language.



# ***Worth***

by Alexandra LaFaye



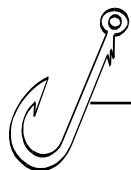
## **Synopsis**

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Nathaniel Peale lives with his parents in Nebraska of the late 1800's. His family is homesteading after losing a farm in Illinois to locusts. At a time like this, an invalid isn't much help to a family. So when an accident occurs during a rain storm, Nate is left with a broken thigh and overwhelming feelings of uselessness.

When the farm work becomes too much for Nate's father, he adopts an orphan boy from one of the Orphan Trains. Both Nate and his mother are furious. Not only did Nate's father make this decision on his own, but Nate and his mother feel the father is replacing Nate.

When turf wars break out between ranchers and farmers, Nate's family finds it needs every member to contribute in order for the family to survive. John Worth, the adopted boy, finds that although he was originally adopted in lieu of a hired hand, he can be a part of this injured family.



## **Hooks**

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- Have you ever wanted a brother or sister? Why or why not?
- What is an orphan? Where do they live?
- How do you help your family? How could you help your family more?
- Have you ever been angry at a friend because of a misunderstanding?



## **Meet the Author—Alexandra LaFaye**

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Alexandra LaFaye writes under the names of A. LaFaye and R.T. LaFaye . As a child, she loved to learn about new things and wrote stories about the things she discovered while investigating historical phrases and ideas. Her 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher predicted that she would become an author, and today she indeed writes historical fiction. Ms. LaFaye’s favorite writers include Robert Cormier and Patricia McLachlan, both of whom also write for children. Sometimes when she is working on a book, she writes the story out by hand, instead of using a computer. Ms. LaFaye was born in Wisconsin and went to college in the Midwest. She has also lived in New York, Virginia, and Arkansas. Her books, including *Worth*, have received awards from both children and adult critics. Her hobbies include storytelling and watching movies.

For more information about A. LaFaye, see:

*Contemporary Authors Online* (Gale 2007)

<http://www.state.lib.la.us/empowerlibrary/WORTH.pdf>

and

<http://www.alafaye.com/>





### Orphan Trains

- Bunting, Eve. *Train to Somewhere*. Illustrated by Ronald Himler. Clarion, 1996.
- Cushman, Karen. *Rodzina*. Clarion Books, 2003.
- Littlefield, Holly. *Children of the Orphan Trains*. Carolrhoda Books, 2001.
- Nixon, Joan Lowery. *A Family Apart*. Bantam Books, 1987.
- Nixon, Joan Lowery. *In the Face of Danger*. Bantam Books, 1988.
- Warren, Andrea. *Orphan Train Rider: One Boy's True Story*. Houghton Mifflin Children's Books, 1998.
- Warren, Andrea. *We Rode the Orphan Trains*. Houghton Mifflin Children's Books, 2001.

### Orphan Train history, a small snippet:

<http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/about/orphantrain>

### Orphan Train website:

<http://www.orphantraindepot.com/EducationalMaterial.html>

### Frontier and Pioneer Life

- Coulombis, Audrey. *The Misadventures of Maude Marche, or Trouble Rides a Fast Horse*. Random House, 2005.
- Hopkinson, Deborah. *A Packet of Seeds*. Greenwillow Books, 2004.
- Larson, Kirby. *Hattie Big Sky*. Delacorte Press, 2006.

### One Room Schoolhouses

- Avi. *The Secret School*. Harcourt, 2001.
- Bial, Raymond. *One-Room School*. Houghton Mifflin Children's Books, 1999.
- Clements, Andrew. *Room One: A Mystery or Two*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2006.
- Hill, Kirkpatrick. *The Year of Miss Agnes*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2000.
- Tate, Eleanora E. *Front Porch Stories at the One-Room School*. Illustrated by Eric Velasquez. Bantam, 1992.

### Greek Mythology

- Druitt, Tobias. *Corydon & The Island of Monsters*. A.A. Knopf, 2006.
- McMullan, Kate. *Phone Home, Persephone!* Illustrated by David LaFleur. Hyperion, 2002.
- Riordan, Rick. *The Lightning Thief*. Scholastic, 2005.
- Riordan, Rick. *The Sea of Monsters*. Scholastic, 2006.
- Shipton, Paul. *The Pig Scrolls by Gryllus the Pig*. Candlewick Press, 2004.
- Yolen, Jane and Robert J. Harris. *Jason and the Gorgon's Blood*. HarperCollins, 2004.

## Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions for *Worth*

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- Do you think you would have reacted like Nate did to John?  
Why or why not?
- Who was the wisest character in the story?  
Give examples of his or her signs of wisdom.
- Explain how the ranchers and the farmers made peace.  
Do you think it will last?  
Why or why not?
- When the boys grow up, what should be done about the farm?  
Explain your answer.
- Do you think John will get to go to school once Nate can help around the farm again?  
Why or why not?

