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Commotion in the Ocean

Giles Andreae David Wojtowycz Illus.
Little Tiger Press (August 1998)
Unknown $14.95 (32pp)
978-1-888444-39-1

Continuing the poetic pattern of their collaboration Rumble in the Jungle, Andreae and Wojtowycz shift their setting from the jungle to the ocean in another collection of poems for young children, ages 3-7. The longer title poem introduces the young reader or listener to some of the marine animals met in the book.

With the exception of three poems, each page has a four- to five-line simple verse about one animal that has a connection to the sea. The accuracy of the rhymes varies, with the description of the species being secondary to making the poem work. Also, some of the vocabulary is too advanced for the intended age group so explanations may be necessary, especially for the curious youngster who wonders just what the swordfish is up to when he skewers a few fish.

Brightly colored, page-filling illustrations enhance the child appeal of the book. As with the poems, appeal takes precedence over accuracy in portraying the marine creatures. However, preschoolers will enjoy seeing bright green, rosy-cheeked turtles with long eyelashes and a purple-spotted pink octopus mother hugging her children. The shark's large teeth give the creature an appropriately ferocious look as it chases frightened starfish off the page.

The simplicity of the rhymes may encourage primary grade students who are just beginning to write their own poetry. Originally published in Great Britain, the book is a slight, somewhat humorous entry with cheerful, bold illustrations which contribute to its appeal to children, but is not likely to create a lot of commotion at the checkout desk.
JANIS ANSELL (September / October 1998)

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