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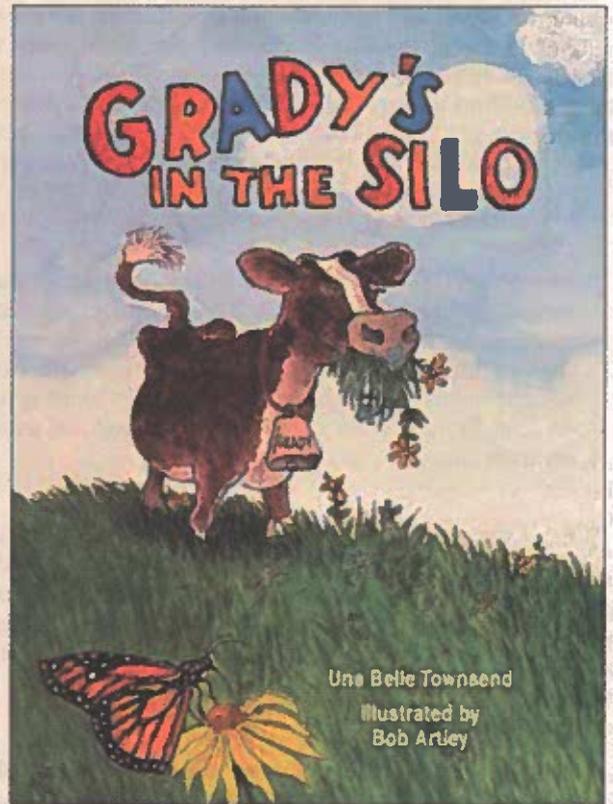
Grady's in the Silo by Una Belle Townsend

The children's book *Grady's in the Silo* is a charming retelling of an actual event from the year 1949. Back then, Bill Mach, the Yukon, Oklahoma farmer in the story, had a problem of silo-sized proportions. In fact, his dilemma was so newsworthy that it garnered both national and international headlines. After thousands of people read about Bill's predicament, they sent him letters of advice.

The advice varied, but it all centered around rescue ideas for Bill's cow Grady, who had inextricably jumped into the farmer's silo. In the book itself, the cow's tale is naturally told in four parts: Grady's sickness, Grady's jump, Grady's rumination, and Grady's escape. But it's harder to pinpoint the funniest sequence in the story. Is

it the image of a life-jacketed Grady swimming in a silo full of water? Or is it the grand finale when practicality trumps absurdity? According to Yukon-based author Una Belle Townsend, children like the Grady who floats.

Ms. Townsend should know. An educator with 25 years of experience, she currently serves as the school librarian, Title I Reading teacher, and English Language Learning facilitator at Riverside Elementary School in El Reno, Oklahoma. "Reading to Kindergarteners is what I enjoy most," says Una Belle, whose book *Grady's in the Silo* won a 2004 Oklahoma Book Award. "Because a



Una Belle Townsend
Illustrated by
Bob Arley

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makereading rhymed & repetitious

For very young readers, or for the very young who struggle to read, Una Belle Townsend recommends *The Three R's: Make Reading Rhymed and Repetitious*. Why rhyme? "It feels good to read rhymes," says Townsend. "If a child still balks at reading, I offer to read a page, then ask the child to read a page. Before long, the child is reading solo."

Why repetition? Choosing books that builds on a family of words increases confidence. "If a child already knows words on a page, he's not afraid to turn to the next page," says Townsend. "But if he sees words he doesn't know, he might just want to shut the book!"

How to Find Books with Rhyme and Repetition

- ✓ Visit MetroLibrary.org and search for "Stories in Rhyme."
- ✓ Download free books tailored to three different levels of readers at ProgressivePhonics.com. Clever rhyming text is color-coded—children read the red print; adults read the black print.
- ✓ Consider this short list of kid-pleasing titles: *Down by The Station* by Will Hillenbrand; *Dreamland* by Mary-Chapin Carpenter; *Hattie Hippo* by Christine Loomis; *Puffins Climb, Penguins Rhyme* by Bruce McMillan; and *Sail Away Home* by Bruce Degen.

rich oral tradition preceded my book's publication, most local children have heard about Grady." But that doesn't keep kids from adding their own spin to the story.

Back in 1949, ideas for rescuing the cow from her silo prison included disassembling—or tunneling under—the towering structure. Fifty years later, the suggestions are more straightforward. After reading the book, more than one student has asked Townsend, "Why didn't they just use a Star Trek 'zap' to get Grady out?"

Ms. Townsend has clearly written a book that bridges the generation gap. Case in point: a local grandmother recently bought a copy of Grady's in the Silo for each of her fourteen grandchildren. Reading the story not only cultivates a child's connection to a piece of Canadian County history, it also teaches children that ingenuity and compassion are qualities that never go out of style. ♦

Lori Williams is a freelance writer who specializes in writing about international adoption and the special needs child. Lori resides in Bethany with her husband Dean and daughter Aurelia.



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