

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SELECTED PEACE CORPS WRITERS'  
CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

PEACE CORPS 50th ANNIVERSARY  
SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

Ashabranner, Brent K. (**Peace Corps Deputy Director, India; Country Director, 1964–69**). *Children of the Maya: A Guatemalan Indian Odyssey*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1986. Library of Congress Permalink: <http://lccn.loc.gov/85032537>

Publisher's Summary: "Examines the plight of Mayans who have fled the violent political situation in Guatemala and settled in a community in southern Florida."  
Age range: 8–11.

Gerson, Mary-Joan (**Nigeria, staff spouse, 1965–67**). *Omoteji's Baby Brother*. Illustrated by Eliza Moon. New York: H.Z. Walck, [1974]. Library of Congress Permalink: <http://lccn.loc.gov/73019251>

Publisher's description: "A young Nigerian boy thinks of a very special gift for his new baby brother's naming ceremony."

Goodsmith, Lauren (**Mauritania, 1989–91**). *The Children of Mauritania: Days in the Desert and by the River Shore*. Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books, 1993. Library of Congress Permalink: <http://lccn.loc.gov/92046145>

Publisher's description: "Follows the lives of two children from two of Mauritania's cultural groups: a Moorish girl and a Halpoular boy." Age range: 8–11.

Kessler, Cristina (**Honduras, 1973–75; Kenya, 1975–76; Seychelles, 1976–78**). *Konte Chameleon, Fine, Fine, Fine*. 1st ed. Honesdale, Pennsylvania: Boyds Mills Press, 1997. Library of Congress Permalink: <http://lccn.loc.gov/95080781>

Publisher's description: "Spirited retelling of this West African folk tale features two memorable and endearing characters—Konte Chameleon and Doctor Jalloh—who are brought to life through Christian Epanya's lush and lively illustrations. Children will laugh with Konte and Doctor Jalloh and marvel at one

of nature's fascinating creatures—the changing chameleon. The colorful and repetitive language makes this picture book a perfect choice for reading aloud.”

Kessler, Cristina. *Our Secret, Siri Aang*. New York: Philomel Books, 2004. Library of Congress Permalink: <http://lccn.loc.gov/2003024075>

Publisher’s description: “Twelve-year-old Namelok is thrilled when she finds a mother black rhino and her new baby in the bush while collecting firewood for her Maasai tribe. She vows to protect them, visit them, and most important keep them a secret so that poachers will not try to hurt them. But when her initiation into womanhood threatens her secret visits, Namelok must say goodbye to her beloved animal friends. Before she can, though, she makes a horrifying discovery, one that sends her on a harrowing journey into the bush in a search for poachers, which soon becomes a desperate struggle for survival.”

Age range: 10–12.

Knight, Margy Burns (**Benin, 1976–77**). *Africa is Not a Country*. Illustrated by Anne Sibley O’Brien. 1st ed. Brookfield, Connecticut: Millbrook Press, 2000. Library of Congress Permalink: <http://lccn.loc.gov/00022205>

Publisher’s description: “People tend to look at Africa as a place with certain characteristics rather than as a diverse continent made up of many countries with their own customs. From the beauty of the plains to the skyscrapers of the major cities, this book follows the activities of children in various countries” Age range: 8–11.

Monninger, Joseph (**Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta), 1975–77**). *Hippie Chick*. 1st ed. Asheville, North Carolina: Front Street, 2008. Library of Congress Permalink: <http://lccn.loc.gov/2007051976>

Summary: “After her sailboat capsizes, fifteen-year-old Lolly Emmerson is rescued by manatees and taken to a mangrove key in the Everglades, where she forms a bond with her aquatic companions while struggling to survive.” Age range: 11–14.

Perry, Dennis (**Benin, 1972–74**). *Yakabou Must Choose*. Louisville, Kentucky: Chicago Spectrum Press, 2001. Library of Congress Permalink: <http://lccn.loc.gov/2002278614>

Summary: “After being accused of stealing, fifteen-year-old Yakabou is banished from Kolokonde, his village in Benin, West Africa, and sent to live with his

grandfather who teaches him the traditional ways of African farm life.” Age range: Young Adult

Rumford, James (**Chad, 1971–74; Afghanistan, 1974–75**). *Rain School*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, 2010. Library of Congress Permalink: <http://lccn.loc.gov/2009049701>

Publisher’s description: “It is the first day of school in Chad, Africa. Children are filling the road. The children arrive on the first day of school and build a mud structure to be their classroom for the next nine months until the rainy season comes and washes it all away.” Age range: 3–7.

Schaefer, Carole Lexa (**Micronesia, 1967–69**). *The Biggest Soap*. Pictures by Stacey Dressen McQueen. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. Library of Congress Permalink: <http://lccn.loc.gov/2003048512>

Publisher’s Summary: “It’s laundry day on a South Pacific island, and Kessy [who lives in the Truk Islands] is proud that Mama has chosen him to go to Minda’s Store to buy the biggest soap. But he’ll have to hurry if he wants to get back in time for the storytelling that accompanies the washing, so off he goes—as fast as a typhoon wind! Along the way there are plenty of surprises, but Kessy returns with just enough soap to finish the wash and in time to tell stories galore from his big adventure.”

Stuve-Bodeen, Stephanie A. (**Tanzania, 1989–90**). *Mama Elizabeti*. Illustrated by Christy Hale. New York: Lee and Low Books, 2000. Library of Congress Permalink: <http://lccn.loc.gov/99047890>

- ❖ Winner of 2001 award for Best Children’s Writing presented by Peace Corps Writers

Summary: “Mama Elizabeti is the story of a young Tanzanian girl learning the ins and outs of caring for a child. When a baby sister arrives, Elizabeti helps her parents out by taking charge of Obedi, her younger brother. She soon learns that caring for a real live baby brother is a lot more work than playing with her much-loved rock-doll, Eva. Not only does Obedi squirm and get in the way, but he’s a heavy load on her back while she does her daily work of cleaning clothes, sweeping, and carrying water. In the end, however, she discovers that Obedi’s smiles and hugs give her a lot more than she can get from inanimate Eva.”

Tchana, Katrin (**Cameroon, 1985–88**). *Sense Pass King: A Story from Cameroon*. New York: Holiday House, 2002. Library of Congress Permalink: <http://lccn.loc.gov/00035094>

Summary: “In this delightful retelling of a folktale from the Northwest Province of Cameroon, author Katrin Tchana and illustrator Trina Schart Hyman share an engaging and richly textured tale of a gifted young girl who triumphs over a jealous and deceitful king. The narrative and illustrations of this book beautifully present a character and a story that are both distinctly Northwest Cameroonian and widely appealing. Exploding with bright colors and patterns, this playful picture book celebrates the warmth of a close-knit island community and the independent spirit of its youngest member.”  
Age range: 5–8.

Temple, Frances Nolting (**Jamaica, Ethiopia, 1969–71**). *Taste of Salt: A Story of Modern Haiti*. New York: Harper Trophy, 2005, 1992. Library of Congress Permalink: <http://lccn.loc.gov/2005574709>

Publisher’s description: “Djo has a story: Once he was one of “Titid’s boys,” a vital member of Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide’s election team, fighting to overthrow military dictatorship in Haiti. Now he is barely alive, the victim of a political firebombing. Jeremie has a story: Convent-educated Jeremie can climb out of the slums of Port-au-Prince. But she is torn between her mother’s hopes and her own wishes for herself...and for Haiti. Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide has a story: A dream of a new Haiti, one in which every person would have a decent life...a house with a roof...clean water to drink...a good plate of rice and beans every day...a field to work in. At Aristide’s request, Djo tells his story to Jeremie—for Titid believes in the power of all of their stories to make change. As Jeremie listens to Djo, and to her own heart, she knows that they will begin a new story, one that is all their own, together.” Age range: 12 and up.

Williams, Karen Lynn (**Malawi, 1980–83**). *When Africa Was Home*. New York: Orchard Books, 1991. Library of Congress Permalink: <http://lccn.loc.gov/90007684>

Publisher’s Summary: “After returning to the United States, Peter’s whole family misses the warmth and friendliness of their life in Africa; so Peter’s father looks for another job there.” Age range: 3–8.