



Salmon Creek

By Annette LeBox

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One of the most fascinating stories in nature is the life cycle of the Pacific salmon. This lyrical, beautiful non-fiction picture book tells the story of one coho, Sumi, from her birth in a remote creek, to her final hours when she spawns and then dies.

All phases of Sumi's life are shown from her trip down river to the ocean; her time as a fully mature fish swimming in the great seas; to the most fascinating and mysterious period in the life cycle of these magic animals, the determined return against great obstacles to her birthplace.

Many thousands of people come to witness these last great moments in the lives of salmon because it is such a moving and interesting phenomenon. As wild salmon become rarer due to our exploitation of their environment and the consequent destruction of their habitat, as well as of our abusive over-fishing practices, their story engages us more than ever. This book is a plea for protection of salmon and of the natural world which they inhabit. An afterward presents the factual basis for the book and amplifies on the poetic text.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 1-3-Reczuch's illustrations capture the natural beauty of stream and ocean in which the intriguing life cycle of the coho salmon occurs. With so much inherent drama in the facts, LeBox's decision to tell the story as a romanticized account of a fish named Sumi is unfortunate. While still in her egg, Sumi hears the mystical song of her dying mother, and her life becomes devoted to following a poetic dream, narrated in prose laced with couplets such as, "The males grew fangs and fierce hooked noses./Their scales became the color of roses." A time line of the fish's life cycle and an essay on threats to the salmon follow Sumi's story. Books such as Molly Cone's *Come Back, Salmon* (Sierra Club, 1992) demonstrate how real stories effectively told can be more compelling than cloying personifications. Let this book swim by with some wistful regret that the lovely art wasn't better served.

Kathy Piehl, Minnesota State University, Mankato

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 3-6. Sometimes in rhyme, sometimes in free verse, this stellar picture-book combination of fiction, science, and ecology allows children to accompany a coho salmon, Sumi, through her life cycle, beginning with Sumi snug in a newly laid egg, "pale orange sun," and ending as Sumi lays eggs of her own. Reczuch's powerful watercolors accurately picture the salmon and its varying environments: roaring rapids, quiet ponds, a mist-shrouded creek. In one striking picture sequence, the tranquility of a fresh water stream on a snowy night is shattered as a gull thrusts its beak through the water, hungry for fry. The narrative pace quickens to reflect the drama: "Spring arrived again with a torrent of water. / Rushing, rumbling, roaring, tumbling! / The current carried the fry, head first, downstream, / Past ducks and herons with hungry beaks, / Past gulls and dippers eager to feast. / The creek hurled the fry over rocks and sweepers, / Tossed them against roots and tangled creepers." Filled with facts, this visually striking effort concludes with a time line of the coho's life cycle, information about the fishes' threatened habitat, and suggestions of how children can help minimize the perils the coho face. *Ellen Mandel*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Doris Moreno:

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Charles Owens:

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