

Readings for 3/17
Ms. Darlene's Class

“A Fisherman Robbed”
by Thornton Burgess

Just out of curiosity, and because he possesses what is called the wandering foot, which means that he delights to roam about, Peter Rabbit had run over to the bank of the Big River. There were plenty of bushes, clumps of tall grass, weeds and tangles of vines along the bank of the Big River, so that Peter felt quite safe there. He liked to sit gazing out over the water and wonder where it all came from and where it was going and what kept it moving.

He was doing this very thing on this particular morning when he happened to glance up in the blue, blue sky. There he saw a broad-winged bird sailing in wide, graceful circles. Instantly Peter crouched a little lower in his hiding-place, for he knew this for a member of the Hawk family and Peter has learned by experience that the only way to keep perfectly safe when one of these hook-clawed, hook-billed birds is about is to keep out of sight.

So now he crouched very close to the ground and kept his eyes fixed on the big bird sailing so gracefully high up in the blue, blue sky over the Big River. Suddenly the stranger paused in

his flight and for a moment appeared to remain in one place, his great wings beating rapidly to hold him there.

Then those wings were closed and with a rush he shot down straight for the water, disappearing with a great splash. Instantly Peter sat up to his full height that he might see better.

“It’s Plunger the Osprey fishing, and I’ve nothing to fear from him,” he cried happily.

Out of the water, his great wings flapping, rose Plunger. Peter looked eagerly to see if he had caught a fish, but there was nothing in Plunger’s great, curved claws. Either that fish had been too deep or had seen

Plunger and darted away just in the nick of time. Peter had a splendid view of Plunger. He was just a little bigger than Redtail the Hawk. Above he was dark brown, his head and neck marked with white. His tail was grayish, crossed by several narrow dark bands and tipped with white. His under parts were white with some light brown spots on his breast. Peter could see clearly the great, curved claws which are Plunger's fishhooks.

“Our First Great Painter”
by James Baldwin

A long time ago there lived, in Pennsylvania, a little boy whose name was Benjamin West.

This boy loved pictures. Indeed, there were few things that he loved more. But he had never seen any pictures except a few small ones in a book.

His father and mother were Quakers, and they did not think it was right to spend money for such things. They thought that pictures might take one's mind away from things that were better or more useful.

One day Benjamin's mother had to go to a neighbor's on some errand. So she told Benjamin to stay in the house and take care of his baby sister till she came back.

He was glad to do this; for he loved the baby.

“Yes, mother,” he said, “I will watch her every minute. I won't let anything hurt her.”

The baby was asleep in her cradle, and he must not make a noise and waken her. For some time he sat very still. He heard the clock ticking. He heard the birds singing. He began to feel a little lonesome.

“Stone Soup”
by Marcia Brown

Three soldiers trudged down a road in a strange country. They were on their way home from the wars. Besides being tired, they were hungry. In fact, they had eaten nothing for two days.

“How I would like a good dinner tonight,” said the first.

“And a bed to sleep in,” said the second.

“But all that is impossible,” said the third. “We must march on.”

On they marched. Suddenly, ahead of them they saw the lights of a village.

“Maybe we’ll find a bite to eat there,” said the first.

“And a loft to sleep in,” said the second.

“No harm in asking,” said the third.

Now the peasants of that place feared strangers. When they heard that three soldiers were coming down the road, they talked among themselves.

“Here come three soldiers. Soldiers are always hungry. But we have little enough for ourselves.” And they hurried to hide their food.

They pushed the sacks of barley under the hay in the lofts. They lowered buckets of milk down the wells.

They spread old quilts over the carrot bins. They hid their cabbages and potatoes under the beds. They hung their meat in the cellars. They hid all they had to eat. Then — they waited.

The soldiers stopped first at the house of Paul and Francoise.

“Good evening to you,” they said.

“Could you spare a bit of food for three hungry soldiers?”

“We have had no food for ourselves for three days,” said Paul. Francoise made a sad face. “It has been a poor harvest.”