

Kids love books  
gwynne spencer  
po box 121  
mancos colorado 81328  
(970) 533-7484  
(970) 533-9183 fax  
pengwynnes@aol.com

### THIRTY YEARS OF ROTTEN DAYS

Men In Black notwithstanding, most moms know how to tell the aliens from the real earth children. You say, "I do not like them, Sam-I-Am..." and the earth child says, "I do not like green eggs and ham". Or perhaps you start out with "In the Great Green Room...." And the alien child looks at you like you were from...outer space! Classic children's books not only enrich our children's lives—they add to the adult vocabulary the way Judith Viorst's now-30 years-old **ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE HORRIBLE NO GOOD VERY BAD DAY** (Simon and Schuster, \$5.99 pa, \$15 hc) has taught us "I could tell it was going to be a terrible horrible no good very bad day." It's like Aurora in Steel Magnolias telling her friends, "I've just been in a very bad mood for forty years," but funnier.

No household on earth ought to be devoid of at least one copy of this book. There are days when the cat throws up in your shoes, the stove catches fire and the refrigerator is growing science projects in the bottom drawer when you can only add, "I think I'll move to Australia". Without classic picture books, we wouldn't have the articulate ability to recite heartfelt refrains from children's literature. Whether you are a baby bird looking for its mother and finding only Snorts, or a relentlessly pirouetting Angelina crying out "I have to dance!" your life can be enriched by children's stories even if you don't have any kids. Picture books make great presents for adults and your local friendly independent bookseller will be happy to make recommendations for any and all occasions.

But when the drive shaft of your car falls out forty miles from nowhere in the middle of the Reservation or you drive away from the gas pump forgetting to take the nozzle out, there is only one book that will soothe the gaping hole in your psyche: **Alexander and the Terrible Horrible No Good Very Bad Day**. Buy it and share it.

Gwynne Spencer is author of **WHAT'S COOKING IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE** (Linworth, 2001), **RECIPES FOR READING** (Linworth, 2002) and **HAVE TALENT WILL TRAVEL: A GUIDE TO AUTHORS, STORYTELLERS AND ILLUSTRATORS WHO WILL VISIT YOUR SCHOOL AND LIBRARY** (Linworth, 2002). You can contact her at [gwynnespencer@aol.com](mailto:gwynnespencer@aol.com).