

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, &  
Professional Papers

Graduate School

---

1996

### Assessment of the creative project Anna

Lauree Ann Sayler

*The University of Montana*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd>

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

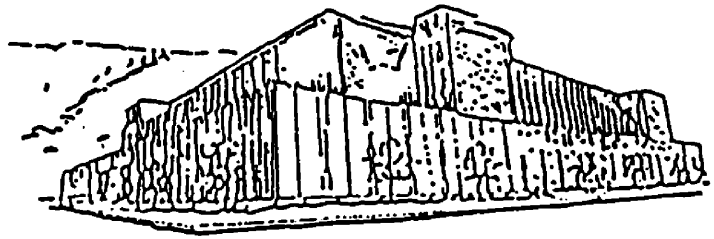
---

#### Recommended Citation

Sayler, Lauree Ann, "Assessment of the creative project Anna" (1996). *Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers*. 7859.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/7859>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).



Maureen and Mike  
**MANSFIELD LIBRARY**

The University of **MONTANA**

---

Permission is granted by the author to reproduce this material in its entirety, provided that this material is used for scholarly purposes and is properly cited in published works and reports.

**\*\* Please check "Yes" or "No" and provide signature \*\***

Yes, I grant permission   X    
No, I do not grant permission       

Author's Signature Maureen A. Sawyer

Date May 28, 1996

Any copying for commercial purposes or financial gain may be undertaken only with the author's explicit consent.



ASSESSMENT OF THE CREATIVE PROJECT  
ANNA

by

Lauree Ann Sayler

B.M.E. University of Montana -- Missoula, 1984

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of


Master of Interdisciplinary Studies


in Arts Education

University of Montana

1996

Approved by:

  
Chairperson

  
Dean, Graduate School

6-6-96

Date

UMI Number: EP38660

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI EP38660

Published by ProQuest LLC (2013). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

## ABSTRACT

Sayler, Lauree Ann, Masters, May 1996

Arts Education

Interdisciplinary Studies in Arts Education Creative Project Assessment of Anna.

Chair: Randy Bolton 

Anna is a children's story written from an exploration of self and family history. The fictional character of Anna connects the actual histories of the maternal women in the author's life. Family photographs are used to illustrate the story as Anna remembers a day in her childhood. The day was spent with her sister and her grandmother. The three attend a dance recital and then Anna's first piano lesson. Anna remembers growing up and also away from her family as she pursues a musical career. Anna realizes the importance of family as she returns to hers.

Anna was created and researched by author Lauree Sayler. Each word, phrase and sentence in Anna can be and is analyzed in terms of the part of the family history that it represents. Anna was written with the assistance of six third graders, who wrote, critiqued, and analyzed the story.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT PROPOSAL

THE CREATIVE PROJECT

*the pattern*

*the fabric*

*the threads*

*the pins and needles*

*the weaving*

*the tapestry*

*my reflections*

APPENDIX

Anna

Analysis of Anna

Family lineage charts

Student writings

Query letter

Submission letter

One rejection letter

Invitation to Book Premier

Student Assessment

Video of presentation

BIBLIOGRAPHY

## ANALYSIS

### COVER

This is a photo of my mother, Marvene LaVern Zurich Raunig, holding on to her mother, Effie Montana Ek Zurich. Except for the last photo, Anna throughout the story will be represented by pictures of my mother.

### TITLE

Why Anna? Ann is my middle name, Lauree Ann Raunig Sayler, and is also my daughter's middle name, Kelly Ann Sayler. My maternal grandmother's middle name was Montana. Combining these I came up with Anna.

### TITLE PAGE (1)

Why this photo? My student editors found this picture in my collection. They liked the coats, the tights, the shoes, the hair ribbons, and the smile. We decided to use it on the title page. It is a photo of my mom, Marvene and her sister, Audree Ann Zurich Wood, who are Anna and Maggie in the story.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (2)

### DEDICATION (3)

I chose to dedicate the book to my mom because of her interest in her history, and for the previous genealogical work she had done that made my research easier.

### PAGE 4

This is a photo of the house in Great Falls, Montana, that my maternal grandmother, Effie, grew up in. In the story, this is where Anna, Maggie, and Grammy live.



## PAGE 5

Why windy leaves? Growing up in Central Montana, I can remember lying in bed thinking that the house would blow away because it was so windy.

Why Grammy? Kelly calls her two grandmothers "Grammy". Grammy in the story is my maternal grandmother, Effie.

Why Maggie? Maggie is represented by photos of my aunt, Audree, and by photos of my great aunt, Ina Jane Ek Lohrke. The name Maggie was chosen because it fit the time period.

## PAGE 6

This is a photo of my mother, Marvene, and her sister, Audree.

In the story they are Anna and Maggie.

## PAGE 7

Why do Anna and Maggie share a bedroom? This represents my mother, Marvene and her sister, Audree in their childhood. They shared a bedroom.

Why "stuck like glue"? This is a phrase used by Kelly's paternal grandmother to describe Kelly when she is around either one of her grandmothers.

Why does Anna snuggle under a quilt? I have a quilt made by my paternal great-grandmother, Maud Mae Morrison Ford. I used to sleep under it when I stayed with my grandparents when I was little and we were snowed out of our ranch. My paternal grandmother, Clara Isabel Ford Raunig, gave it to me about ten years ago.

Why does Anna play the piano? Anna represents the part of me that is the pianist. I started piano lessons when I was six years old. My maternal grandmother had given me a little electric organ that I just started playing one day. I taught myself to play a song by reading the patterns in the organ book. My parents heard me playing, asked if I wanted to take lessons, and got me started. I took piano lessons for the next 16 years.

Why does Maggie dance? Maggie represents a part of my mother, Marvene. Mom took

dance lessons when she was little. Maggie, in most of the pictures, is represented by Ina. Ina also took dance lessons.

#### PAGE 8

This is a photo of my maternal grandmother, Effie. In the story she is Grammy.

#### PAGE 9

Why is Grammy singing? Why is she singing this song? My grandmother, Effie, was very musical. When my mom was growing up, Grandma played the piano at the Elks Club in Great Falls, Montana. When we got our piano Grandma used to play for me a lot. She played by ear, not by reading. She taught me how to play Chopsticks, and Heart and Soul. She used to play and sing It Ain't Gonna Rain.

Why cinnamon toast? It was a special breakfast my mom used to make for me.

Why the first piano lesson? I remember everything about my first piano lesson. The place, the teacher, the music. It did change my life, just like it changed Anna's.

#### PAGE 10

same as cover photo

#### PAGE 11

Why did Grammy have soft, smooth hands? My grandmother worked with her hands. She played the piano, crocheted, knitted, and made crafts. Her skin was very smooth and wrinkled. I held her hands a lot when we were together. When I got older our hands were the same size. She gave me her wedding band for that reason.

#### PAGE 12

This is a photo of my great aunt, Ina, in a dance recital. Ina is on the right. She took dance lessons from her future sister-in-law.

**PAGE 13**

**Why did Anna believe that Maggie was thinking about something else? With the photo of Maggie (Ina) looking off to the side, the opportunity to foreshadow Maggie's future was given. At this point in the story a difference between Anna and Maggie begins.**

**PAGE 14**

**This is the only photo that is not from my family. I bought this photo while in undergraduate school at UM.**

**PAGE 15**

**Why is "start to play, stop, and play again" important? For me, it took eight years of lessons with the wrong teacher to learn to practice the right way: play a small section, stop and think, correct the mistakes, and play correctly. This phrase represents a practicing method for me. I loved getting to my lesson early so that I could listen to the student before me.**

**Why does Anna remember this first piano lesson? "Pumpkin" was the name that my first piano teacher called me. I remember everything about those first lessons: the songs, the room, her knitting basket. I remember all my piano teachers quite well. Mrs. Mrochen helped me to play with emotion and Mrs. Muller was my teacher during high school. She had a grand piano that I loved to play. Mrs. Muller prepared me for college level playing. How and why did Anna know she would "like it here"? I was referring to myself liking the world of piano playing. There was only a short time, while I was in junior high, that I ever talked about quitting lessons. By Anna "liking it here" piano playing had already become a part of her being, as it had for me.**

**PAGE 16**

**This is a photo of Marvene, Audree, and Effie.**

**PAGE 17**

**Why did Anna remember this day? This day was important in molding Anna's life. Piano lessons changed my life also.**

**PAGE 18**

**This is a photo of Marvene a few years later.**

**PAGE 19**

**Why was having Grammy and Maggie at the recitals important? Recital Day was very important to me. My parents attended each of my piano recitals. My grandparents were at many of them, also. Performing was hard for me. Doing well was a big accomplishment.**

**PAGE 20**

**A photo of Ina.**

**PAGE 21**

**Why? Anna leaves home to symbolize a need to grow personally and artistically, which is what I did when I went to college and when I moved to the Seattle area. Maggie quits dancing to symbolize a growing apart of Anna and Maggie. This growing apart also reflects the lives of Marvene and Audree in reality. Maggie quitting dancing also symbolizes the suicide of Ina.**

**PAGE 22**

**A photo of Ina.**

**PAGE 23**

**Why did Anna go back home? Anna achieved her goals with her music and now felt a need for her family. She needed to be there for them and to find out if they were still there**

for her.

PAGE 24

A photo of me, Lauree.

PAGE 25

Why does Anna return after twelve years? When I started this project, it had been twelve years since my maternal grandmother had died. I have also been teaching for twelve years. Anna returning to find Grammy and Maggie there for her symbolizes my mother's dream to make amends with her sister.

PAGE 27

The poem collage that started this project.

## **CREATIVE PROJECT PROPOSAL**

### **INTENT OF THE PROJECT**

I will write a children's story. This printed work of fiction will be based on my personal story in connection with maternal women in my family (my maternal grandmother, my mother, myself, and my daughter). This book will be illustrated with family photographs. I envision this book to be the story of Anna. Anna will be a character that will be created from the threads that connect me with these women.

### **BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE**

In both of my field projects, writing and family have been the focused areas. In writing letters to my daughter, I discovered my past. I came to an understanding that I am the way I am because of my history. This realization made me more comfortable with and confident in myself. After spending my second summer (in the program) in a creative writing apprenticeship, I proposed for my next field project, to write poetry about my family as a continuation of telling my story. I began by capturing a moment in a poem and realized that I needed to capture a feeling instead. I began writing poems about my family, in general, but soon was focusing on the women in my family. Towards February, I felt a real emptiness because I hadn't written about myself yet. I started centering on me. I feel that this needs to continue. By choosing a children's story as the format, I will be forcing myself to expand my writing style.

## **APPROACHES, METHODS, AND PROCEDURES**

**I will read about the writing process, ways of thinking, and writing for children.**

**I will "interview" my mother about her story and my grandmother's story, listening for connections to my story and my daughter's story. These connections could be similar interests at a certain age, dreams of places to travel, artistic similarities, etc.**

**I will read poems, stories, and articles written about women by women.**

**I will learn about book layout for publication, pursue publication for this work, and publish the work myself.**

**I will elicit the help of the third graders at my school through a sharing of stories and ideas. I will present rough drafts and record the students comments and suggestions for improvements.**

## **TIMELINE**

**August - read material**

**September through October - gather information (history and photos)**

**November through February - write story (submit to advisor every six weeks)**

**March - layout book**

**April - finalize and print**

**May - present to Florence-Carlton Third Graders in an opening (performance setting) in our school library.**

**June - present to Creative Pulse**

## ANTICIPATED RESULTS

Through this masters program, I am discovering a voice through writing that has put me in touch with an exploration of myself. Through writing I have begun to find value in my personal style rather than fault. Through writing I have become more sensitive to my own needs in terms of being about to voice things that in the past would have been held in. I am making connections with the women that are and were essential to me. As a way to honor and further explore these connection I propose this project.



## THE CREATIVE PROJECT

### *the pattern*

The idea for the creative project Anna, was to connect and interweave the lives of my maternal grandmother, my mother, myself, and my daughter in a children's story about a fictional character named Anna. The story was to be written in such a way that Anna was a bit of each of the women. The story was to be illustrated with family photos. These photos were not going to tell the story, that is the story would not be written from looking at the series of collected photos, but would enhance the written word.

This idea would also give me the opportunity to explore my personal connection with the women who are and were essential to my being. Anna, therefore, became the culminating project of a self-exploration that began with letters to my unborn daughter and poetry about my family and led to an artistic approach to telling my story through a character named Anna.

### *the fabric*

From August through October my mother and I visited about her family. First about her childhood: dance lessons, things she did with her sister, where her mom worked, and any "musical or artistic" thing she could remember. Then we moved on to talking about my maternal grandmother. We discussed where she grew up, what things she enjoyed doing in high school, and her family. That led us to talking about Ina, my grandmother's sister.

During this time, Mom started bringing out family photographs. Through her genealogy work she had photographs sorted according to families. She gave me two of my childhood photo albums, two of her childhood photo albums, one Zurich photo and history album, two Ek photo and history albums, one Johnson photo and history album, and two

antique albums with wedding photos of my great-grandmother and her three sisters. All of these albums also had lineage charts to accompany them. I spent many hours reading, looking, and learning about my maternal family history. I began collecting unique photos from the albums. I found "look-a-likes": my mother and my daughter, and my aunt and my great-aunt, I found music and dance photos, and I found photos that made me more curious about my story. Eventually the character of Anna began to formulate in my mind.

### *the threads*

When I decided to write a children's book I knew I would need the help of actual children, but I didn't know exactly how that would or could happen. In talking with my sister-in-law, a third grade teacher, we decided that I should "take it to the kids". She explained to her class of twenty-five that I was writing a children's book and could use the help of some children. She explained that it would be a long project that would be worked on during one morning recess a week. That following Wednesday morning at 10:00 I had eleven anxious writers burst into my classroom. Ryan spoke up first, "Mrs. Sayler, I'm here to write a story for you, so you can get your degree from the university!" That set the mood for the following two months in which we wrote the story of Anna. By this time I knew the story would be about Anna, her sister Maggie, and their Grammy. I had narrowed down my photo collection to about sixteen photos that were of these three characters, plus some photos of places and situations in which the characters might find themselves. The students looked through the photos, learned that Anna would play the piano and that Maggie would dance, and then wanted to write. From the beginning, the students took over the project. They came in my room, looked at the photos, and decided that each student would write about one of the photos or one of the characters for the following week.

The following week six students returned to my room "to write a story", these six became my writers. I had four different storyline ideas that I presented to them. In a very

blunt, matter-of-fact style, which I would come to know quite well, they told me they only liked one of the ideas. This was the one with which they would like to work. We began working from that point. I would read until a hand "shot up", which was very often. The student would either tell me that they really liked or disliked something that I had just read. My system for recording this was a smiley face for a "like it" and a sad face for a "don't like it". This worked well for the students' writings also.

One student, Liz, brought a story idea that second week. She wrote a general story about the pictures she remembered. She read one line that the other students and I instantly liked, "...Gramie said, 'You must choose what you want to be.' " Liz presented her story to us, filled in smiley and sad faces where comments were made and then left her story with me. I said I would consult her writing as I wrote for the following week. I stressed that the story would use the students' ideas in some way, but it still had to be a story about my history.

Some weeks the students would bring writings and some weeks they wouldn't. We struggled with getting some action going in a way that seemed unnatural to the story. I tried having Maggie forget something at home, which seemed trite. The students didn't like forgetfulness, arguments, or silliness. We wrote about a walk in the park, going to lunch, and going to a concert, before we realized that we were just filling pages and not getting to the story we wanted to tell. Then the importance of following your dream emerged along with the importance of family. Every word, nuance, and innuendo became important as we strove to tell our simple story.

### *the weaving*

Finding the ability in myself to let my students lead me into the story was very difficult. I learned to be quiet, to listen to and write down their ideas, to explain only when asked, and to ask why. I assumed that the students wouldn't see the same story that I did in

the pictures. But this was incorrect. They saw a version of the story, heard my ideas, and added their fresh, young thoughts to make a delicate weave. Together we decided on words such as "snuggled" and "bubbly". They wanted to know why Anna had a favorite quilt, and I wanted to know why they loved to sing It Ain't Gonna Rain. We spent much more time together than our once a week recess. They'd catch me coming from my car in the morning, coming from lunch at noon, and would just happen to stop by at afternoon recess with an idea. A day didn't go by that one of the students didn't ask to see what I had written the night before.

We worked with "Grammy's soft, smooth hands" and her "gentle eyes" for days deciding if the words were the right ones. At other times we knew instantly if the word was right. From the time the students heard "windy leaves" they loved the phrase, and the same was true of "Come on, pumpkin." We had a long discussion over Maggie and whether or not she should quit dancing. Eventually we agreed that she should, but we all agreed for a different reason. A few felt it would show that the girls could be different but still be close later in life, others felt that Maggie never liked to dance, and to me it represented a family suicide.

We spent one day discussing why this day (Anna's first piano lesson day) was so memorable to Anna. Liz said it was "that that was the day Anna decided what she wanted to be", Lindsey said "it was that she spent the day with Grammy and Maggie, and that she liked Maggie's recital that much", and Owen said it was because Anna did the "stuff she liked a lot, all in one day". And I learned from this conversation, that it didn't really matter why I thought it was important. I now knew that the reader could and would decide why it was memorable himself or herself. I learned that the story was now universal and personal. I knew what the story meant to me, and now others could decide what the story meant to them.

Through the weaving of the Anna story, my writers and I wove our own stories. I

know more about them and they about me than any other students I have taught. We've shared family stories, private ambitions, and secret fears... and have grown to love the character of Anna.

*the pins and needles*

I have learned and experienced many things since the beginning of this project: word processing, query letters, restoring photos, layout and design, dummies, and book bindery, just to name a few.

After purchasing a word processor, I learned that I could do my writing, book layout and final printing on the processor. I felt that this would give me better control over the project. This was especially true, after I had talked with graphic designers and photographers, who wanted to do this part of the project for me. After the story was written, I enjoyed trying different styles, fonts, and print sizes to find the right look for the book.

A goal of the project was to attempt getting the book published. After reading a few books on writing for children, I came across Children's Writer's and Illustrator's Market. I selected three publishers, wrote a cover letter and a query, and mailed them. I received three rejection notices. The good thing was sending them, the unfortunate thing was that the query idea is not what the story turned out to be like. On March 4, I sent a cover letter, a manuscript and a dummy to nine publishing companies. A manuscript is the story typed without photographs, it must be double-spaced with large side margins, and a dummy is a "handmade" mock-up of the book. Hopefully someone will decide to publish Anna.

When the students and I had selected our photos for the book, my education on photograph restoration began. I first went to photographers about the photos that I thought needed to be copied onto negatives and then sized, this was a very expensive project. Luckily, my mom suggested talking to Kinko's. Kinko's could enlarge or reduce the photos

on a color machine beautifully. I had then only two photos that needed to be "restored". One photo was of my mom, her sister, and their grandfather, I needed only my mom in the photo. Photographics could take the other two people out, fill in the shadow of the one remaining, and add the outdoor background. The other photo that Photographics worked with was the last photo in the book, in which they took out the background people and added a gray background.

I also struggled with how to bind the book. I had many offers to teach me how to bind the book myself, but decided to go with a profession bindery instead. Schaffner's Bindery was very helpful in teaching me what I needed to know in order to make my decisions about the binding. Mr. Schaffner told me his preferences of paper weight, copy shops, cover colors and fabric. Then allowed me to make my own decisions.

### *the tapestry*

The "presentation" of Anna began before 8:00 a.m. on a Wednesday morning in February. The afternoon before I had gotten a call from the printer that the books were finished. As I got out of my car at school the next morning carrying a box of books, Owen was instantly by my side, "What's in the box?" he asked with a smile. I said the books and told him to bring the other five to my room at morning recess to see it. He said he'd get them "right now" and ran off. By the time I got to my room the kids were with me. They patiently waited for me to set the box down, then they "dove" in. First they looked for the pictures of themselves, then, as if planned (but obviously not) they began to read aloud together. It was beautiful.

I gave each of my authors their own copy of the book that day, and wrote a special thank you to each one for his or her special contribution to the story. I thanked them for such things as their honesty, excitement, dedication, innocence, and insight. Each of them in turn signed each of the twenty copies of the book. We talked about meeting in a few

weeks to discuss the premier reading and their t-shirts. (When the students found out that we would be presenting Anna to their class and others, they thought of wearing "Anna t-shirts". Each student then picked a different photograph from the book for their t-shirt. They also reminded me that I must have one.)

The next day at afternoon recess, they showed up in my room, each with a construction paper thank you card. Owen thanked me "for the speleic things you gave us!", Andrea and Kandis thanked me "for letting us help you.", Lindsey said, "You are the best", and Liz said the book was "the best preasat I ever had." We visited for a bit about what their families had to say about the project. Ryan said he had forgotten the book in his backpack so he hadn't shown it to anyone yet. Owen said his mom was so proud of him that she couldn't say anything. And Liz said that her mom liked it so much that she took it to her school to show her fifth grade students. (Her mom teaches at Hellgate Elementary.)

March was uneventful for my young authors. I was busy with sending the Anna manuscript to publishing companies and preparing for the book presentation. I got the t-shirts printed later in the month and that got our small group together again. The students drew pictures for the invitation to the book premier reading and started discussing the presentation.

A week or so before the premier our presentation was clear as to what everyone would do. By 1:45 on Wednesday, April 24, I had six nervous, anxious, excited third graders in my room, grinning at each other in their own Anna shirt. As our guest arrived in the library our nerves began to show. First came my family, then their third grade classmates, our superintendent, and then the university faculty with their international guests.

The presentation went smoothly, even with my crackling, emotional voice. The students read Anna with feeling and love, proudly presented our library with a copy, and answered questions with grace and style. Our special time together doing this project was

drawing to a close.

*my reflections*

As I sit, holding the book Anna, I can't help remembering my first summer in the Creative Pulse. Journal? Write about what I'm thinking, feeling? How? If someone would have said I'd be writing a book for my creative project, I would have died laughing. The thought of a creative project itself was scary enough.

I think that the book really began when I started my first journal entries to Kelly in September of 1993, but I didn't know it then:

Journal - September 29, 1993

Dear Baby,

I don't know yet if this book of "my story" will be something special for me to share with you or something for you to read years from now. But as for right now this is how my writing will start -- my memories being shared with you.

I cried as I read that in my first field project presentation, just as emotionally as I read aloud the Anna dedication on April 24, 1996:

to my mom  
to my family  
with lots of love

Some things will never change. I'm glad. The understanding connecting look that Kandis (one of my third grade authors) and I exchanged after I had read that tearful dedication was unforgettable. Just a few minutes before, I saw her eyes fill with tears as her mom walked into the library for our presentation. For that moment, Kandis and I spoke words of the heart.

I remember being frustrated before I began the project, although I knew what it was that I wanted to do. After I got the proposal on paper, I thought the "faculty" would bring it into focus for me. I'd heard horror stories about how "they" tore proposals apart for being too exact or not detailed enough. I thought I'd get some real direction from the faculty



feedback, instead I got "...sounds good, good luck!" Instead of taking that as a compliment

I wrote:

Journal - ...I felt let down by not being pushed to look at my proposal from a different angle.

Now that makes me laugh...why didn't I "look at it from a different angle" myself! I must have realized that. That entry is scribbled out in my journal.

After summer school, when I got back to my abnormal, normal routine, I realized that there was still a part of me that let a few classmates devalue my worth and significance. Through comments such as "the faculty must not be as interested in your project...it's just a childrens' book", and "Just wait until you get 'the letter'", I had begun to question my project. So with that in mind, when my "letter" came I was confused, at first. "...colleagues, not judges", but I wanted a judge! "We have confidence", "...we trust you", I then realized that the faculty and I knew that I could do this book, and it was a worthwhile undertaking.

I followed that advise of my "colleagues" and wrote a lot of ideas during October. I have pages and pages of different stories about Anna. It surprises me how in all those words a few key lines can be drawn out:

Journal - Oct. 30, 1995

Anna woke up to the sound of windy leaves hitting her bedroom window.

Journal - Oct. 31, 1995

I rolled over to look at Maggie, just as she rolled over to look at me.

Journal - Nov. 6, 1995

She reached for my hand and said, "Come on, pumpkin". I knew I would like it here.

My first meeting with the third graders was set for November 8th, and I didn't have a clue what I was going to say to them or do with them. I had collected quite a few family photos, I had even spent a day at antique shops buying photos that caught my eye! And I had eighteen pages of story ideas about Grammy, Maggie, and Anna. I decided to lay out

the photos and planned to read to the students. The students came in, looked at the photos, asked some questions,...and we were off!

What I learned in the next eight week was phenomenal!

Journal - Nov. 15, 1995

The students commented on how our stories would blend as we developed the characters together...their ideas and comments have given me a lot to think about and to write about. I'm very pleased with how today went.

Journal - Nov. 22, 1995

This age, it seems, likes a basic, simple story line. I read to them a section that inferred a feeling of unspoken understanding that they did not get at all. I need to remember this.

Journal - Dec. 6, 1995

It's so hard to write so few words and have them say a lot...what we write has to be straight forward, but with a lot of depth and meaning.

By Christmas break, the basic story was finished. The story had come together quickly, with the kids pushing me hard to write. Now it needed time to settle.

I didn't look at the story at all over Christmas break. Then in January, I started looking for any grammatical errors and any type of confusion. When I met with the students again we started analyzing. "Why do you like that part?" "Why do you think Maggie quit dancing?" Their answers helped to assure me that the story said what we wanted. It also brought the characters to life. We know much more about Anna, Maggie, and Grammy than we wrote in this book.

It still amazes me how focused on this project my whole life became during this past year. With everything I saw, read, and did, in the back of my mind was Anna. I remember reading Forest Child, by McGee and Banfill, to Justin and Kelly one night in January. All of a sudden Justin nudged me, I had stopped reading and was just staring at the book. The text was written on the left hand page and the most beautiful illustrations were on the right hand page. Even though the text was complete in itself, in this book the text was there to enhance the illustrations. I realized then, that in my book the photos must go on the left, to enhance the text on the right. Up until that point the book was laid out the

other way around:

Journal - January 4, 1996

Revelation! Pictures must go on the left page of book, story must go on the right page of book.

As I read All But the Waltz, by Mary Clearman Blew, I became very interested in the Lewistown history because I lived and taught there for seven years. But in looking at the photographs, my eye zeroed in on the line framing around the photos and how that would make my photos look clearer also:

Journal - January 26, 1996

Started line framing the photos, what a big improvement.

So, as I sit holding the Anna book, I'm proud of my accomplishment of truly writing a childrens' book of fiction based on my maternal history. I'm thankful for the diversity in my student authors, with whom the book couldn't have been written without. I can honestly and confidently say that there is nothing I wish I could change about the book. I feel that Anna has made significant changes in the lives of the students. I feel that Anna is a part of them now, and that they have learned from Anna about following their dreams and about the importance of family. I believe that they have also learned those things from me. I have learned, from Anna, the importance of sharing myself and my gifts. My teaching and my rapport with my students have changed so much over the past three years it is unbelievable. I have more confidence in what I teach and in the methods I use to teach. Through the Creative Pulse I've learned that exploration and discovery are keys to the learning process. I've learned that I can reach students through many "intelligences" and still get to the same "musical" point. For example, I teach note values through the logical-mathematical intelligence using equations, the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence using body-shapes for notes, and the linguistic intelligence using an explanation. I've also learned to read body language as a way to evaluate my teaching and the students' learning. The Creative Pulse has taught me to seek the ultimate way to reach the students, not to settle for the mediocre method. I've learned to trust the students when they have suggestions or

ideas to try. I now give them license to discover and ownership of their discoveries. I like being in my classroom because the students are working as hard or harder than I am working. The students have taken control of their learning and of their projects, they set their own standards of excellence. They no longer ask what is their grade, they have chosen to do their best. My rapport with the students has changed because of my artistic endeavors over the past three years. As I started writing, I became more interested in having my students write and also in reading about what they wrote. As I got to know my students, not as musicians or non-musicians, but as writers, they also got to know me. I began to realize that although music was what I was teaching, the learning went way beyond musical. It's ironic, but as I let visual art, creative writing, dance, and drama come alive in my classroom, the music and musical understanding of the students increased.

My fifth graders will soon begin working on their final project for this school year. The project is a melodic composition about someone important. I'm interested in the "program music" they will compose, but I very much look forward to hearing the story that goes with the music. They have become comfortable enough in my classroom that sharing a story will be natural for them.

In my classroom it is hard to think of myself as the teacher. My lessons have become so student directed that their creativity leads to the exploration and learning. Consistently the students are asking to try something different, or alter or change the activity to fit with their curiosity. The students have learned that I value and encourage their ideas. I find that I'm sharing so much more of my art and myself when learning happens in this give-and-take style. This, I've learned from writing Anna. I've learned to let go and let the students lead themselves in to the learning with my gentle guidance. In that way, we all learn and grow together.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alcosser, Sandra. A Fish to Feed All Hunger. Boise, ID: Ahsahta Press, 1986.
- Blew, Mary Clearman. All But the Waltz. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.
- Bedard, Michael. Emily. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- Buening, Alice P. and Christine Martin. Children's Writer's and Illustrator's Market. Cincinnati, Ohio: Writer's digest Books, 1995.
- Cook, Mariana. Fathers and Daughters. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1994.
- Cooney, Barbara. Island Boy. New York: Puffin Books, 1988.
- . Miss Rumphius. New York: Puffin Books, 1982.
- Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1995.
- Goldberg, Natalie. Writing down the Bones. Boston: Shanbhala Publications, Inc. 1986.
- Martz, Sandra. When I an Old I Shall Wear Purple. Watsonville, CA: Papier-Mache Press, 1987.
- . I am Becoming the Woman I've Wanted. Watsonville, CA. Papier-Mache Press, 1994.
- Olds, Sharon. The Dead and the Living. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992.
- Raunig, Marvene. et al. The Gulch Area History. Great Fall, MT: Advanced Litho Printing, 1990.
- Ringwold, Faith. Tar Beach. New York: Crown Publishers, 1991.
- Steiner, Vera John-. Notebooks of the Mind. New York: Harper and Row, 1985.
- Wagner, Jenny. On Writing Books for Children. NWS 2065, Australia: The Book Printer, 1992.
- Wooley, Catherine. Writing for Children. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.

## **APPENDIX**

Anna  
by  
Lauree Sayler





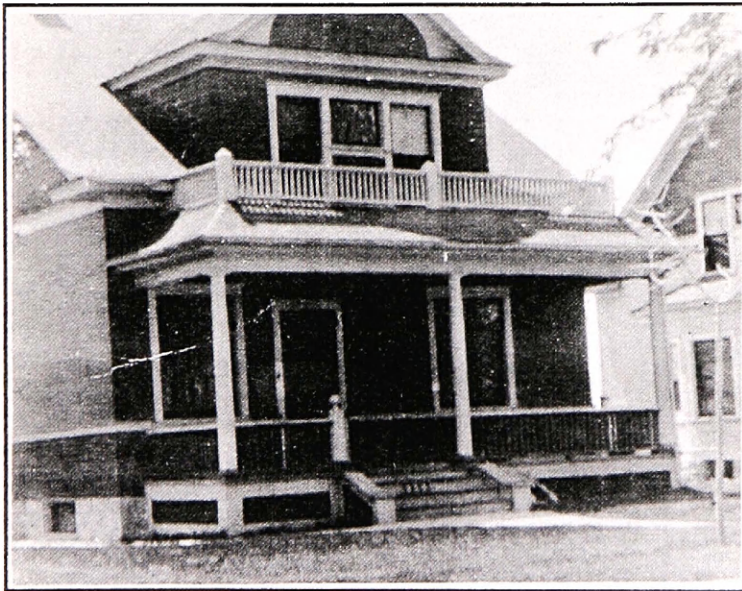
*Andrea McCarthy  
Liz Ashworth, Lindsey Dominick  
Owen Janes, Kandis Raymond, Ryan Koemans*

*These imaginative, spirited young people have sewn their threads  
of innocence and passion into the tapestry that we call Anna.*

*Special recognition to photographer, David J. Spears, for "Girl and Piano  
Play" on page 14.*



*for my mom,  
for my family,  
with lots of love*



Anna woke up to the sound of windy leaves hitting her bedroom window.

"Maggie, Anna" Grammy whispered, "time to get up."

"Okay, Grammy."



I rolled over to look at my sister Maggie just as she rolled over to look at me. We giggled.

Stuck like glue, that was Maggie and me, I thought as I snuggled back under my favorite quilt.

"Anna, you're gonna play the piano all over the world someday," Maggie would say.

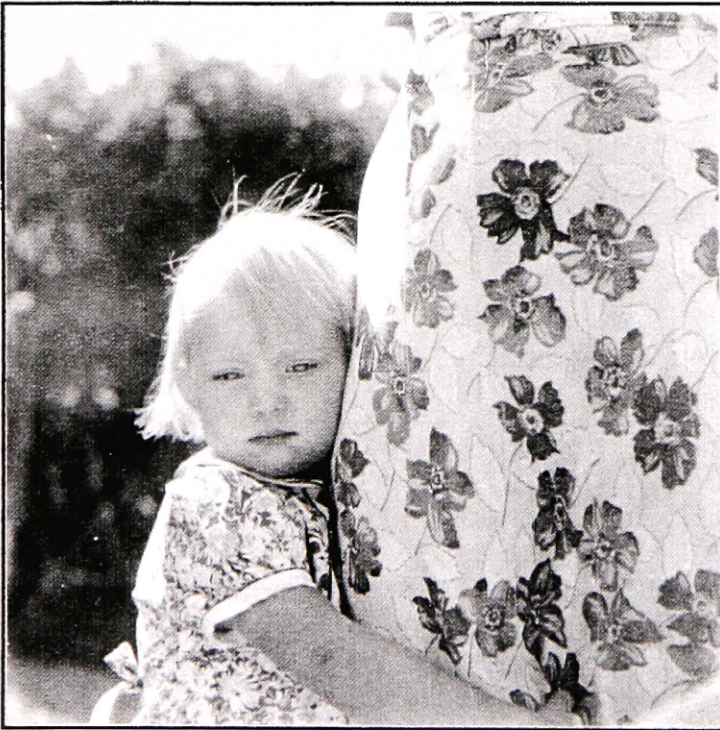
And I'd answer, "Maggie, you're gonna dance forever."



We could hear Grammy singing in the kitchen, "It ain't gonna rain, it ain't gonna rain, it ain't gonna rain no more. How in the heck can I wash my neck, if it ain't gonna rain no more?"

"Girls, breakfast is ready!"  
Grammy yoohooed.

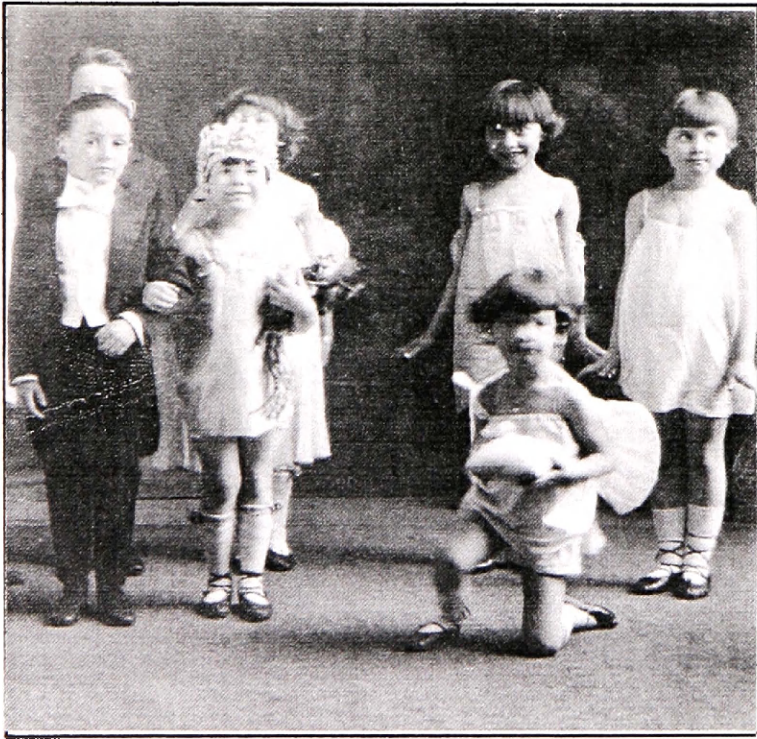
We scooted out of bed and ran down the stairs. As we ate our cinnamon toast and slurped hot chocolate, Grammy told us about our day. This morning was Maggie's ballet recital, then my first piano lesson.





"Girls," Grammy said as we walked to Maggie's recital, "you must think about what you want to be when you grow up."

We nodded as we held tight to Grammy's soft, smooth hands.



Maggie danced in a wedding ballet that day. She seemed a little lost, it was almost as if she was thinking about something else. That wasn't like Maggie, she was usually so bubbly.



Grammy, Maggie, and I were a bit early for my piano lesson. We could hear the student before me start to play, stop, and play again. Soon the lesson was over and Mrs. Muller came to meet me.

She smiled, reached for my hand, and said, "Come on, pumpkin."

I knew I would like it here.



There isn't a day that I  
remember better than that  
warm autumn Saturday.

Time spent with Grammy  
and Maggie was so  
carefree, yet so magical.





Through the years,  
Grammy and Maggie were  
at every piano recital.

Grammy's gentle eyes  
would ask, "Anna, do you  
know what you want to  
be?"

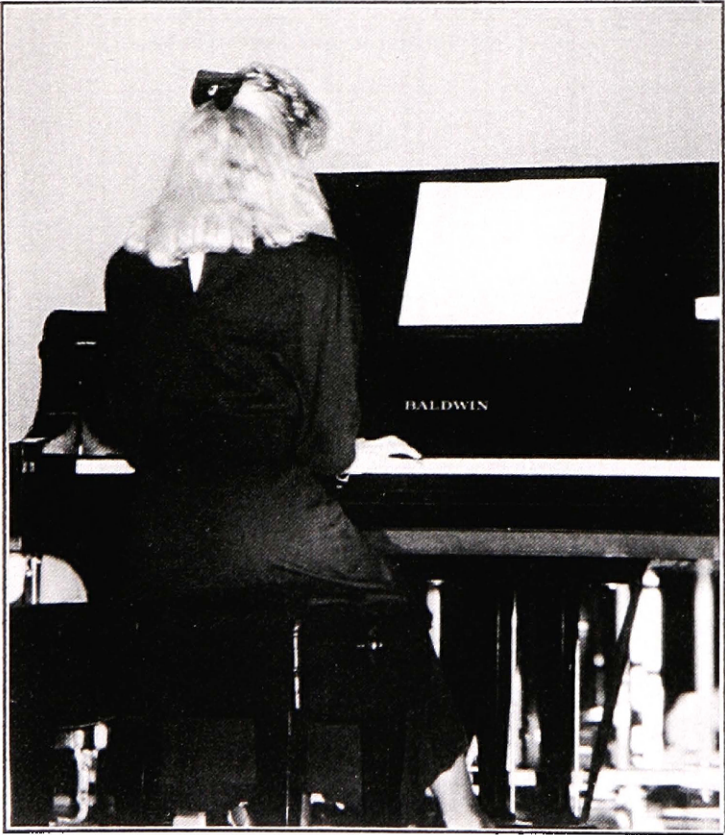


When I left home to study  
the piano, Maggie quit  
dancing.

Our lives became very  
different and we drifted  
apart.



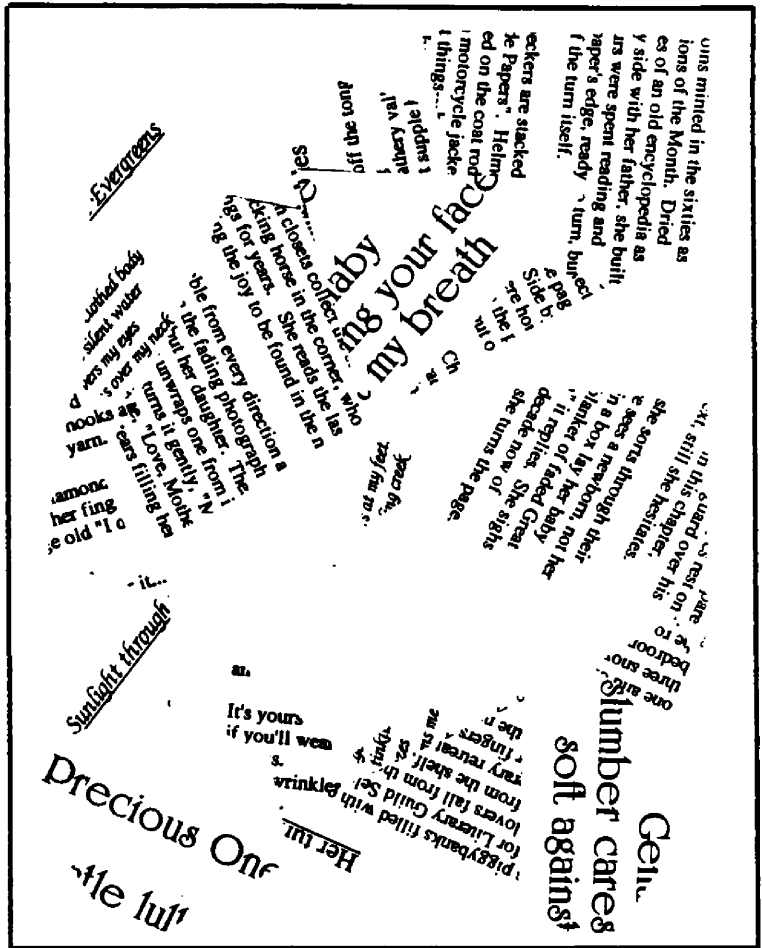
The next time I walked across the stage where I had played my first piano recital, I could still hear Maggie's voice, "Anna, you're gonna play the piano all over the world someday."



It had been twelve years  
since I had left.

I looked towards the  
audience.

There in the front row,  
just like years ago, sat  
Grammy and Maggie.



This four poem collage was my inspiration in connecting the lives of my grandmother, my mother, myself, and my daughter to weave the story of Anna.  
 Lauree Saylor, January 1996



Anna, Maggie, Gramie, a true sto

Gramie lived with Anna and Maggie in a wonderful old house. Gramie was a painter. When Anna and Maggie grew up

Gramie said, "You must choose what you want to be." Maggie wanted to be a dancer and Anna wanted to

be a piano player. Maggie takes dancing lessons. This is where Anna

takes piano. This is what \_\_\_\_\_ looks like when she's older. This is

what \_\_\_\_\_ look like when she

older. This is Maggie at a ball  
t. And Anna playing the piano.

11-29

Owen

ana was in a rush to go to recitel). when finally

got ther she was a little late . she was nexet on stage .

MAGGY got her dancing shoes on ; then she got on the stage. granny and Maggie were watching .

Then Maggy fellt like dancing wheth her piono ~~music~~ music

Then Maggie whent on stage to dance .Granny

laught and cheered .The dancing and playing

wened all night . "When they came home

they soek hand s and said good night

to echother and said good night agen and went to sleep

Then they heared granny saiy good nihgt .like evry night.

tTHE E<sup>N</sup>D

lindsey

11-29

Hi? I am Maggie I like  
to dance and my sisters  
name is Anna she like  
to play the piano. I live  
with my Grammy and my  
sister Anna. I think we  
are a good music group.  
Because I dance and you  
play the piano and Grammy  
sings. Grammy said that it  
was time for Maggie's dancing  
lesson. So Maggie ran up  
stairs and got her coat and  
went back down stairs to  
Grammy. And then we  
left. Anna my sister had piano  
lesson she liked them. We  
had a piano in our house.  
Our house was big sort of  
we had one dog for Grammy  
me and my sister Anna goes  
to go for a walk with are  
dog.

October 8, 1995

Stemmer House Publishers, Inc.  
2627 Caves Rd.  
Owings Mills, MD 21117

Dear Ms. Holdridge,

I am a graduate student completing a master's degree in interdisciplinary studies at the University of Montana. This unique degree emphasizes arts education through creative writing, visual arts, drama, dance, and music. To complete this degree I have proposed to write a picture book. I have explored my personal history by writing a journal of letters to my daughter and I have written a collection of poems about my family and my past. As a continuation of this personal story, I am now writing a picture book, using six generations of maternal photos and histories. This picture book will be the story of Anna, a fictional character, who is blended and molded from the histories of the maternal women in my family.

I am currently an elementary music teacher in my twelfth year of teaching. I teach in a K-12 school with 980 students in Western Montana. I have taught private piano lessons for ten years, and I conducted church handbell choirs for six years while teaching in Central Montana. I live with my husband, two year old daughter, and seven year old stepson in Missoula, Montana. Through the master's program at UM, I have discovered a passion for writing about my family, my heritage, and myself.

I write this query in hopes of finding a publisher interested in a historical children's story that emphasizes the unique gift a child brings to the world. I look forward to hearing from you concerning this idea. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Lauree Saylor  
4000 Fieldstone Crossing  
Missoula, MT 59802  
406-721-8527

March 4, 1996

Ms. Stephanie Owens Lurie, Editorial Director  
Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers  
866 Third Ave.  
New York, NY 10022

Dear Ms. Lurie,

Enclosed please find a manuscript and dummy for the children's story entitled Anna. This picture book is a work of fiction based on my maternal history. The book uses six generations of maternal photos to tell the story of Anna, a young girl who remembers the day of her first piano lesson. Anna is a work of poetry in which Anna discovers a love of music, but more importantly, learns about unconditional love.

This book is the final project in my completion of a master's degree in interdisciplinary studies at the University of Montana. This unique degree emphasizes arts education through creative writing, visual arts, drama, dance, and music.

I am currently an elementary music teacher in my twelfth year of teaching. I teach in a K-12 school with 980 students in Western Montana. I have taught private piano lessons for ten years, and I conducted church handbell choirs for six years while teaching in Central Montana. I live with my husband, two-year old daughter and eight-year old stepson in Missoula, Montana. Through the master's program at UM, I have discovered a passion for writing about my family, my heritage, and myself.

I send this simultaneous submission in hopes of finding a publisher interested in a historical children's story about youth, music, and love.

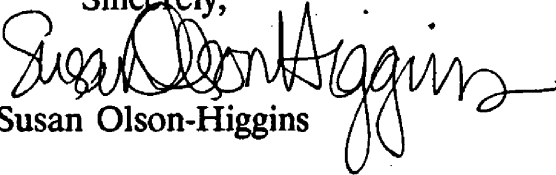
Sincerely,

Lauree Saylor  
4000 Fieldstone Crossing  
Missoula, MT 59802  
406-721-8527

A Way to Grow Publications  
PUMPKIN PRESS PUBLISHING HOUSE  
P.O. BOX 139  
SHASTA, CA 96087

Thank you for submitting your manuscript to Pumpkin Press Publishing House. It has been an honor and a privilege to review the beautiful work and creative gifts you have shared. After earnest consideration, however, and with regret, it is not possible to publish it at this time.

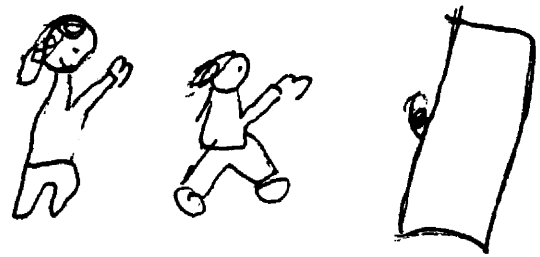
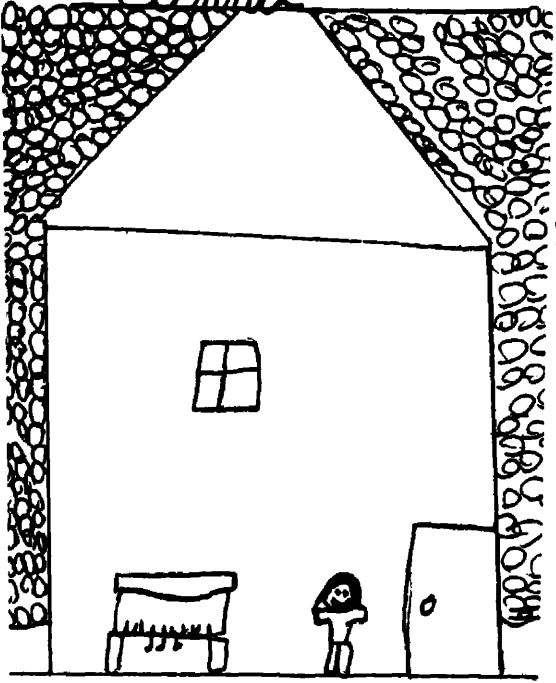
Sincerely,

  
Susan Olson-Higgins

Wonderful!

Anna

Anna is a book that is of Mrs. Saylor's kids role. Loreen Saylor is the music teacher and also the author of Anna!



You are invited to the premier reading of Anna

April 24, 1996  
2:30 p.m.

Florence-Carlton School Library  
Florence, Montana



Please come to Anna!

You are invited  
To Anna

being presented by  
Mrs. Lauree Saylor

ANNA!

Liz Ashworth, Lindsey Dominick, Owen Janes,

Ryan Koemans, Andrea McCarthy, Kandis Raymond



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## My favorite part of the story was...

Dee - When Anna and her sister would look at each other.

Courtney, Mara, Ciera, Paden - When they heard Grammy singing.

Cody D. - When Grandma was singing.

Justin - The recital.

## The story's characters reminded me of...

Dee - Mrs. Sayler

Courtney - Our old neighbors, because the littlest girl looked like Anna, her name was Frankie.

Justin - my cousin

Ciera - My own grandma when she was little.

Mara - No one in particular.

Alicia - An old fashioned movie.

Kolbi - Andrea

## What would you change about the book and why?

Dee, Courtney, Cody S., Justin, Paden, Mara - Nothing.

Cody D. - I would change some of the words to make it as true as I could.

Ciera - I would change the part where Maggie quits dancing because she might  
of been real good.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

**How does the story make you feel?  
What happened that made you feel that way?**

Kolbi - OK, because it was not too sad and not too joyful.

Megan - It made me feel happy because she got real good at playing the piano.

Tom A. - It made me feel kind of sad because the family broke apart.

Cody S. - This story makes me feel good.

Brian - It makes me feel happy because you picked the name from your family.

**If you were going to tell someone about Anna, what would you tell them and why?**

Brent - That it is a very caring book.

Nicolle - That it played a big part in your life.

Kailun - That my classmates wrote it.

Tom A. - Anna is a book with good pictures and a great storyline, because it is partly true.

**What would you like to ask Mrs. Saylor?**

Nicolle - How did you get the pages in a real book?

Brian - How did you come up with the name from the name?

Kailun - Do you know when the book will be published?

Cody S. - Do you get a prize?

Tom A. - Will you write another book?

Thomas - What year was this in?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Did you like the photographs? Why or why not?

Brent - Yes, because they're old fashioned.

Scott - I liked the photographs because they are good.

Andrena - Yes I did like the pictures because they were telling something about the story that the words didn't.

Justin - Yes, I likes the pictures because they were pictures of your family.

## What did the book help you learn about yourself or someone you know?

Brent - That anybody can make a book.

Andrena, Justin, Paden, Dee, Ciera - I learned about Mrs. Saylor's family.

Megan - I learned that Anna was good at playing the piano.

Nicolle - It helped me know it's ok to do things with your family.

## Did the book leave you with something to think about? What?

Brent, Andrena, Justin, Dee, Mara - No.

Scott - Yes, What happens to Anna?

Paden - Did Maggie and Anna get back together?

Nicolle - It let me think about my family.

Ciera - Was it true that the sisters went their separate ways?



