

## BOOK REVIEW

COSBEY, ROBERT. **All in Together, Girls: Skipping Songs from Regina, Saskatchewan.** Regina: University of Regina, 1980. 101p. pb.

This small book is the first analytical study of children's lore in Canada. Robert Cosbey, an ex-American then teaching at Regina University, collected skipping songs from skippers between 1972 and 1978. He presents 114 different songs and 57 variants from 21 separate schools in Regina.

He begins with some comments on the range of skipping and its history and then questions the general assumption that skipping is a group activity of girls developed at the close of the nineteenth century. He argues that skipping was already an established tradition by the middle of the nineteenth century and that we have no way of knowing how much older than that it may be.

He presents skippers as a folk group, discusses the sources, transmission, and changes of the rhymes, and describes and analyzes the performance of skipping. He says that children follow rigid rules: everybody gets a turn, and there is no competition. He analyzes the content of the texts, noting that some are used to foretell events, others express anxieties about sickness and death, some contain a somewhat satirical attitude toward adults, and some exhibit a complete naturalness about sexual encounters. He quotes:

Along came Johnny swinging on a chain,  
Down went his zipper and out it came.  
Three months later you could really tell.  
Nine months later out they came  
Two little greasers swinging their chains.

He notes that the informant who gave him this rhyme remarked: "It was not that the song was bad, but the adults always took it the wrong way. They took it literally while we took it as just another skipping song."

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