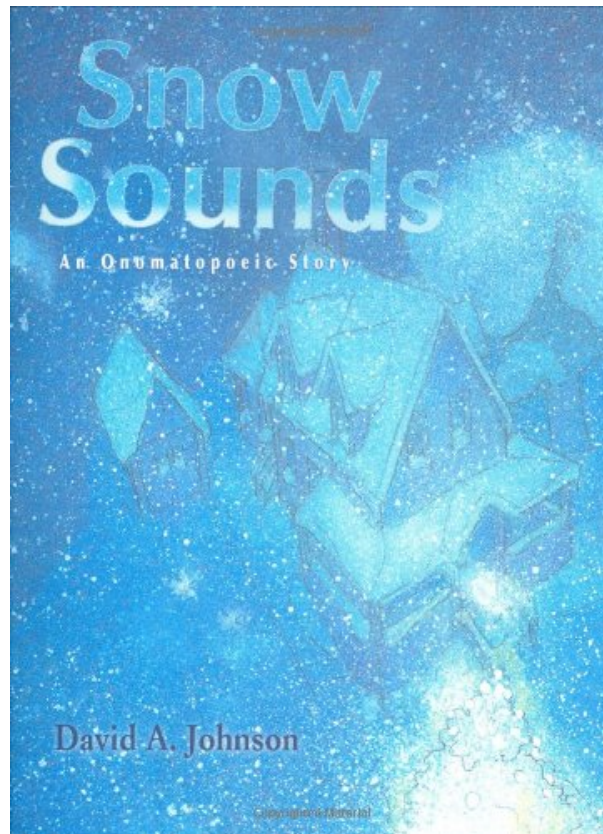
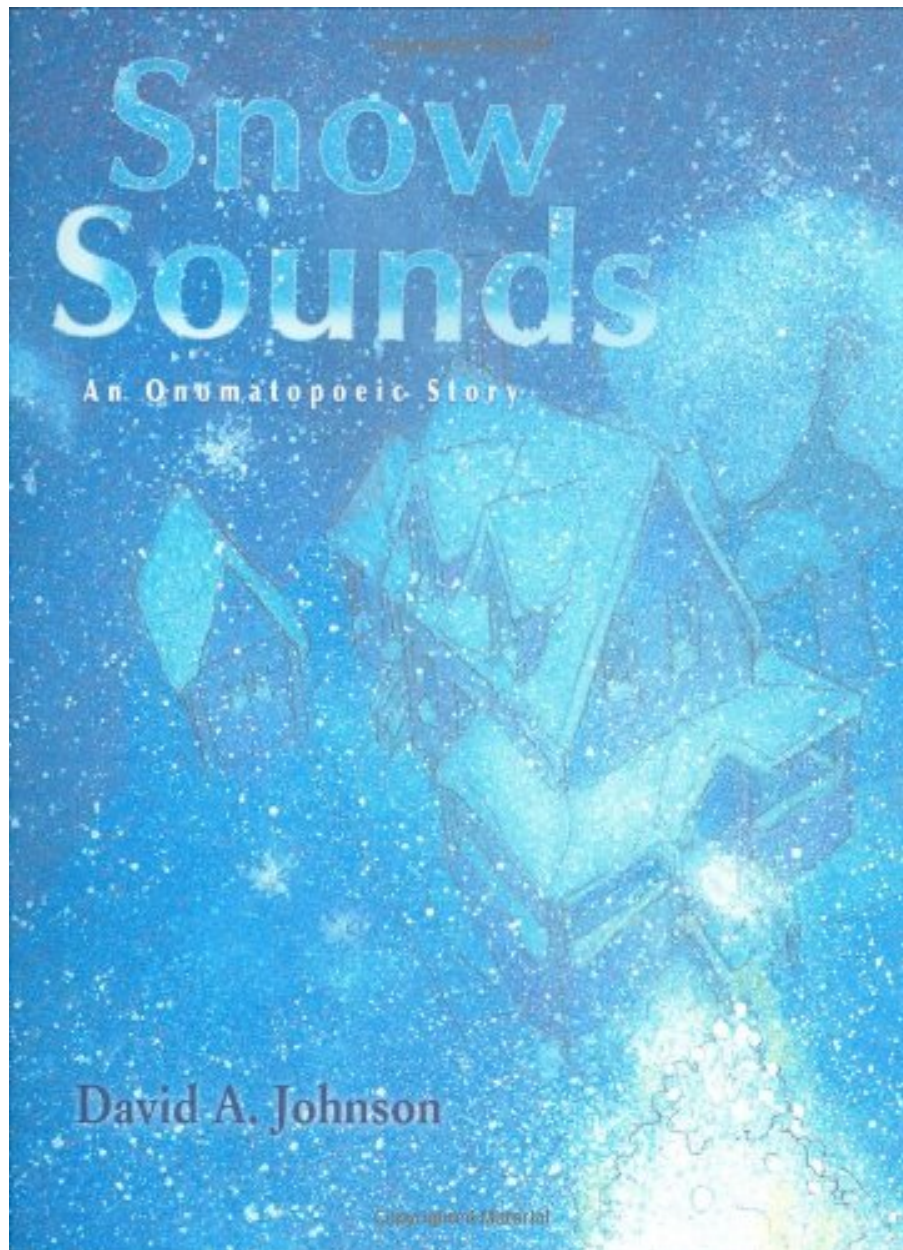


SNOW SOUNDS: AN ONOMATOPOEIC STORY BY DAVID A. JOHNSON



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From School Library Journal

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From Booklist

Every word is a sound in illustrator Johnson's authorial debut, and the pictures tell the story. In his signature style of frosted, crystalline textures and muted tones, Johnson's art shows a young boy waking on a snowy morning and preparing for school, while snow is being cleared away outside. The fun comes from the onomatopoeic text: the "snore" and "purr" of the cozy first image, showing the sleeping boy and his cat, to the "jingly clink vroom" of the closing scene's school bus. Johnson uses visual techniques to amplify each word's meaning. The predawn "hush" appears in dove-gray letters that almost fade into the background, while later, after everyone is awake, the school bus' "honk" is printed in sharp red. This book has a quiet charm that will span age groups. Preschoolers will simply enjoy repeating the sounds and inventing their own, while teachers may want this for early elementary poetry units. Pair the book with Kate Banks' *The Great Blue House* (2005), which also celebrates sounds and the words that describe them. Gillian Engberg
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Sweep, crunch, swoosh, scrape . . . All night long, snow falls silently, bringing forth a world blanketed in white—and a very noisy day.

For at dawn's light, machine, man, and child begin to dig out: first the big highway grader and snowplow, then the smaller town plow, a father's snow blower, and a boy's shovel . . . But will the streets get cleared in time?

Spare poetry and elegant watercolor paintings cleverly bring to life this unique story of snow removal and the fun onomatopoeic sounds accompanying it.

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Most helpful customer reviews

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

I did not know that it just consisted of words that expressed what a sound might sound like. I thought it was a story book

By Susan Phillips

I bought this book for our almost 6 year old daughter. I did not know that it just consisted of words that expressed what a sound might sound like. I thought it was a story book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Beautiful book

By Dippy Diner

This book appeals to a wide age group of children. Important for a grandparent with limited room in the bookcase. It was given as a gift to a 1yr old, but 2 and 4 yr old grandkids got a kick out of it too. Nice way to introduce books to children with few words in their speaking vocabulary. Beautifully illustrated.

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Wishing you joy in the morning

By E. R. Bird

Your average American citizen lives his or her life in a state that is too often blissfully ignorant of the horrors that surround them. Each day they traipse unknowingly into the void, never suspecting that one day, when they least expect it, the unthinkable may happen. They may be required to (gasp shudder) locate a good onomatopoeic story. Oh, I know what you're saying. "It could never happen to me." "Other people get those kinds of requests." "I'm too young to have to worry about searching out the word `onomatopoeic' in a library's on-line catalog." Well fellow citizens, I tell you that unless you prepare for this most awful of occurrences you may someday find yourself seriously and undeniably onomatopoeicless. Fortunately, there is a solution. A solution in the form of one Mr. David A. Johnson. Though he has not yet found himself the proud owner of a household name, Mr. Johnson's work is instantly recognizable to one and all. Even if you are firmly convinced that you've never seen one of his illustrations, prepare to be corrected in this belief. As for his delightful "Snow Sounds: An Onomatopoeic Story", it's a real treat. Capturing perfectly the feel of cold winter mornings, the anticipation that leads to Christmas break, and the experience of having to leave a delightfully warm bed when not a speck of light comes from the sky, the book is a woolly winter gem.

It's the 23rd of December, and a young boy sleeps soundly on a frosty snowy morning. Woken by his mom

so that he'll get to school on time, we see both inside and outside the house. Outside, trucks salt, slush, and smooch the snow on the roads, making it safe for travelers. Inside the boy goes through his morning ritual. These two narratives come together when the boy goes outside to shovel the house's walkway, just in time for the bus to arrive. He almost forgets a Christmas present inside (for his teacher or for himself?) but his mom manages to pass it to him just in time. Told entirely in sounds, everything from the crinkle of the present's wrapping paper to the chug of the snowblower comes to brilliant life when accompanied by Johnson's lively pictures.

We would be amiss if we were to say that Mr. Johnson's book was the first of its kind. I took one little look at "Snow Sounds" and immediately was reminded of Lynn Rae Perkins' wonderful, "Snow Music", published years before she earned herself a Newbery Award. "Snow Music" is perhaps the number one onomatopoeic winter tale. From the whispered words "peth peth peth" that describe the sound of falling snowflakes to a truck salting the road, Perkins captured Midwestern winter to a tee. But Johnson's eastern Connecticut tale is just as snowy and devotes itself to a different kind of telling. While Perkins would include dialogue and even a kind of poetic turn here and there, Johnson sticks to his guns. It's onomatopoeic sound or nothing. Some of these make it infinitely clear that the author knows from whence he writes. Anyone who has grown up in a part of the country prone to snow will recognize the "Whomp" sound that comes when you step outside of your home on a wintery morning in your thick protective boots. Or how about the "Crash Crush Clank" of the plows as they make a berth in the early morning hours? Every sound found here has its place in real life.

And then there is Mr. Johnson's style to consider. I have heard some people say that his images in this book are too light and airy, and I respectfully disagree. The fact that this book was made merely with watercolor and ink on paper boggles my little mind. I mean, let's talk about Johnson's use of light. One of the earliest images in this book is of the boy's house from above before the sun, such as it is, has risen. The family Christmas tree is entirely covered in a thick white coat, but several lights shine through, offering one of the two points of illumination on the page. The other light comes from a distant splatter of white, far far away on some distant road. You might be able to see it clearly, but Johnson has found a way to replicate the look of slight vision-obscuring splatters of snow. He knows how to make droplets of paint burst from the page like actual sparks of pure white light. And his grasp of pre-dawn darkness is unrivaled. I know of no other picture book that has ever done as good a job at truly displaying this time of day. Even when the day has lightened and the boy is going to school, you can still tell that the sky is overcast, even without seeing it. If there were a picture book award given solely on the basis of "quality of light", I don't think there's a title that's come out this year that could even come close to rivaling this book's style.

I don't want to tell you how to spend your money. Okay... fine. That's a lie. I would LOVE to tell you how to spend your money. I would love it if every recommendation I made was followed to the letter and purchased forthwith. If nothing else, however, I would like you to see whether or not you've bought enough onomatopoeic books for your picture book collection. Do you see a gap in this area? Well, how about early morning wintery stories? Do you have a lot of those? Honey, I don't see how you can afford NOT to go out and purchase "Snow Sounds" if you're lacking in either area. It's beautiful and truly without compare. Other books should be able to boast so much.

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