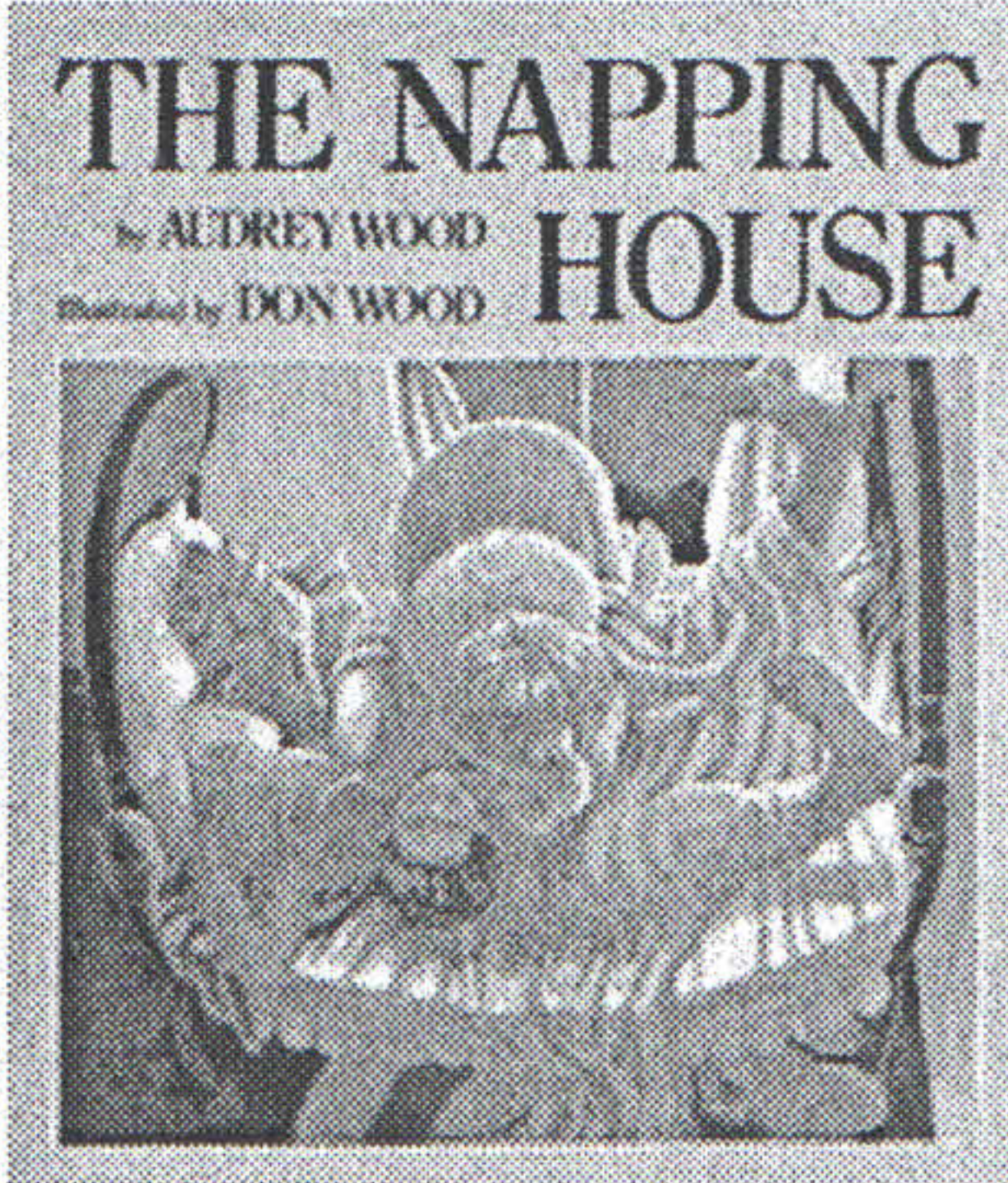




## The Village School's Children's Book of the Month



**'The Napping House'**  
By Audrey Wood,  
illustrated by Don Wood



**Book reviewed by  
Jocelyn Langer  
Village School Spanish,  
art and recorder teacher**

The soft blue light that tints the illustrations of Audrey and Don Wood's "The Napping House" might at first seem insignificant. The book's cover is blue; the folds of the curtains cast a blue shadow, as do the wrinkles of the grandma's night gown; the mirror reflects blue light, and even the dog's fur is tinged with blue. A sleepy feeling radiates from the pages, almost causing the reader to yawn.

"The Napping House" might seem like the perfect bedtime story, complete with a drowsiness that seeps through the blue-lit pictures, and narrated with a soothing, rhythmic tone: "There is a house, a napping house, where everyone is sleeping." The reassuring repetition reinforces the sleepiness: "And in that house, there is a bed, a cozy bed, in a napping house, where everyone is sleeping." On the cozy bed lies a grandmother, who is joined by a child, a cat, a dog, and a mouse, as the pages pass.

Even the Spanish translation of this book, "La casa adormecida," captures the rhythmic, repetitive quality: "Hay una casa, una casa adormecida, donde todo el mundo está dormido." The predictability of the text is comforting to children, regardless of their mother tongue: "Hay un gato, un gato soñoliento, sobre un perro amodorrado, sobre un niño..."

Regardless of the language of the text, however, the viewer can't help but notice a brightness that begins to seep into the illustrations at the point when the flea bites the mouse, who scares the cat, who claws the dog, and by the time the child and the grandma fly into the air and tumble out of bed, a bold, golden light has permeated the pages and lit up the entire bedroom of the napping house, "where no one now is sleeping." Perhaps this is not the perfect bedtime story after all, but rather a cozy morning read-aloud.

Audrey and Don Wood, an author/illustrator team, have published over a dozen books together. Audrey, who is usually the author of the couple's collaborative works, has also illustrated several of her own books, while Don is predominantly an illustrator. The Woods have won numerous honors, and "The Napping House" alone has received 14 awards.

With so many awards, it is no wonder that "The Napping House" has been translated into Spanish, but it is not the dozens of accolades that make it an ideal teaching tool. The Village School's Spanish program features this book year after year because its familiar vocabulary such as gato and perro, along with a predictable sequence of events and charming illustrations, allows students to follow the plot and appreciate the humor regardless of their level of Spanish fluency.

Whether you're reading this book in English or Spanish, in the classroom or at home, "The Napping House" is a lovely book for children ages 2 to 8. Although it might be best suited to reading during the day, both the soothing blues and the vibrant yellows are sure to engage young readers, morning, noon, or night.