

# Writer's Digest

12th Annual International Self-Published Book Awards  
Commentary Sheet

**Author:** Olive Evans

**Title:** *The Thrift Store Bears*

**Category:** Children's & Young Adult Books

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning "poor" and 5 meaning "excellent", please evaluate the following:

Structure and organization: 5

Grammar: 5

Cover design: 5

Judge's commentary:

***1. What did you like best about this book?***

This is a fantastic book! Each poem is complete in itself, but each also leads on to the next; the poems alternate between poignant and funny; all are appealing. The poems vary in length and structure, and all the bear characters are distinct. The 'thrift store bear' aspect should greatly appeal to kid readers, as many children have a soft spot in their hearts for 'rescuing' discarded stuffed toys; I especially like that the bears in the poems tie in to real life bears the author owns. The thrift store angle also makes the book interesting to all age groups, as teddy bear collectors should love the book.

The poems impart gentle, positive lessons to the reader; a tiny bear exercising to get strong; that even ordinary bears have something good inside. And while 'poetry' may not appeal to all children, this is nicely offset by the companion music CD.

The CD is wonderful; the narration is perfect, and the music beautifully fits the poems; sad and slow for Tiny Bear, then bouncy as he gains confidence; chatteringly perfect for Millicent the Chatterbox Bear; blue-grassy for Scrappy the Arkansas Bear. Definitely will appeal to kids – and adults.

The illustrations are wonderful: colorful, well detailed, and exquisitely expressive. Each bear comes to life on the pages of the book ... and judging from the photos on the dust jacket, ably and exquisitely capture what the real bears look like.