

**Here we are at Blog #4, my little pop-up pet book and me.**

Because it is my book, I don't have to say "good-bye", but rather, I can now tell it that I appreciate what an extraordinary book it is. I'm grateful for this assignment prompting scrutiny and a deeper familiarity of a remarkable book that sat in the dark mausoleum of a taped shut gray plastic storage bin for years.

The theme of "Afterlives" has gotten me thinking in a few directions. First, examining its condition, which is near fine—read, but very gently used—is because, sadly, I kept it away from the group for which I bought it—my fourth grade art students learning about pop-up construction.

Having bought several impressive pop-up books to show to the class of nine-year-olds for their lesson, and finding that David Carter's exquisite *600 Black Spots* pop-up book was damaged irreparably in less than a minute when I allowed them to handle it, I decided to have them watch me turn the pages from then on, and thus saved (my pet) Bataille's *ABC3D* and Sabuda's *America the Beautiful* from a similar fate.

The Afterlives of many fragile "children's books" can include libricide, or reading material torture.

When the juvenile audience that a children's book is made for actually "has at" a book, it's not often pretty. My own kiddos, chewed, tore, scribbled and pulled apart many, many books. The first edition of Jolly Postman I bought them was quickly disheveled, and its letters lost, etc. I bought another copy for myself however, that's still intact in its plastic wrapper and preserved, like a fossil in amber, for someone in the distant future to examine carefully and hopefully, with great pleasure. The reason my pet book has an afterlife at all is, ironically, because I, alone, handled the "children's" book. That's an interesting idea to ponder; and of all books created for children, the pop-up has the most precarious life; it is the most vulnerable to destruction. All the complex moving parts are just asking for trouble in careless little hands.

