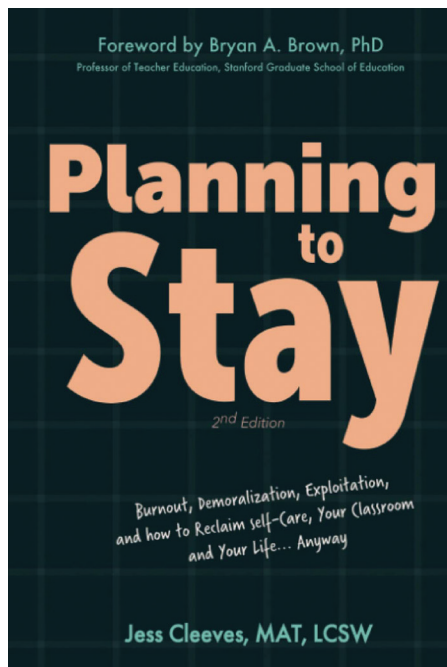


# BOOK REVIEWS

KIRSTIN MILKS & FRANK BROWN CLOUD, DEPARTMENT EDITORS

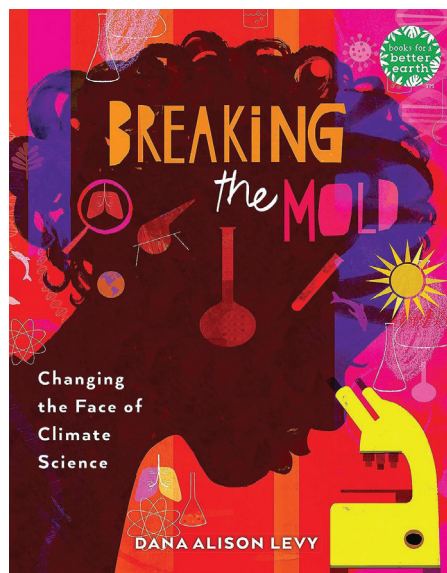


**Planning to Stay: Burnout, Demoralization, Exploitation, and How to Reclaim Self-Care, Your Classroom, and Your Life... Anyway.** By Jess Cleeves. 2023. Learning Humans. (ISBN 979-8988047001). Paperback. \$18.99. eBook also available.

**Breaking the Mold: Changing the Face of Climate Science.** By Dana Alison Levy. 2023. Holiday House. (ISBN 978-0-8234-4971-2). Hardcover. \$22.99. eBook also available.

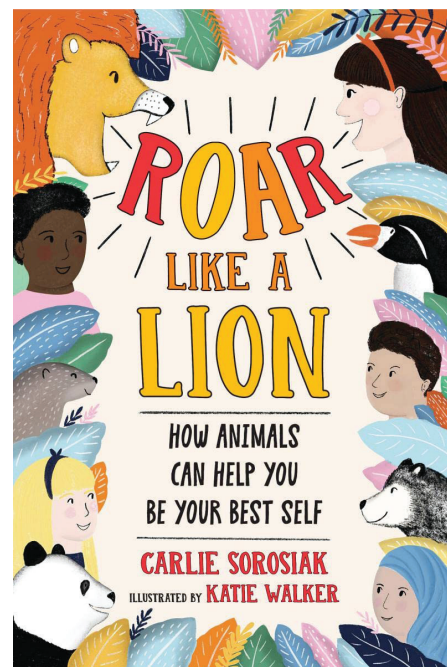
**Roar like a Lion: How Animals Can Help You Be Your Best Self.** By Carlie Sorosiak. Illustrated by Katie Walker. 2002. David Fickling Books (printed in the United States by Scholastic). (ISBN 1338802186). Hardcover. \$14.99. Paperback, eBook, and audiobook also available.

I am a high school teacher, and I love my work – but I cried every single day of the 2021–2022 school year. Like most of us employed in schooling at the time, I had found the previous year challenging, and eventually the stress of working with and



through the enormous trauma of our students, staff, and community felt overwhelming. I'm lucky I have an exceptional support network, including the exceptional coeditor of this column, but it became clear I had to make major changes in my experience and perception of school. (I did, and I'm in a much better, more sustainable place now, ready to continue our wonderful work and finding the fun in it.) I've been wondering recently about how to support other teachers who go through difficult professional times, as well as our students who are finding themselves more uncertain and adrift after the past few years. If you're where I was, or feel you might be getting there, *Planning to Stay* is a tremendous resource, and you will find lovely stories of biology and resilience in *Breaking the Mold* and *Roar like a Lion* that are perfect for sharing with students of all ages.

Jess Cleeves was a classroom teacher until 2021, when she became a counselor, and both her trainings are in conversation in *Planning to Stay*, a book designed to bring components of her therapeutic practice to teachers across the country. If



you're a person who benefits from theoretical schema, you'll find Cleeves's distinctions between burnout (an energy issue in this framing), demoralization (a value alignment issue), and exploitation (an issue of perceived social contracts) useful in pinpointing interventions to help you heal. Cleeves will also assist you in conceptualizing the push-and-pull of setting and maintaining career-setting boundaries, examining traditional aspects of organizational culture and where they fail us, exploring a community-focused definition of self-care, and building routines that will help you (re)create a fulfilling, more manageable professional life as an educator.

Most of this book follows, exactly, the plan I created from scratch to keep myself in teaching; I'm thrilled that readers out there won't have to reinvent the wheel, instead diving directly into well-organized, practical exercises that will illuminate a way forward. It's true there are a few typos, and some ideas in this book might feel like hard

medicine. Indeed, I found myself frustrated with this book several times while reading, but after reflection it became clear that my true frustrations were with myself. The negative emotions I experienced were, it turned out, the pain of realizing I am still holding onto ideas and habits that are holding me back. Cleeves's message continues to be one I deeply need.

In the classroom, how can we support students in building resilience, courage, and hope? First, we can share profiles of scientists working on important problems. *Breaking the Mold: Changing the Face of Climate Science* is a middle-grades nonfiction book that, as the youth say, understands the assignment. You'll find a magnificently diverse group of scientists in this book, working on a magnificently diverse set of questions that directly tie into climate resilience. The writing is great, the photos of the profiled scientists are deeply engaging and aimed at young people, and the sidebars will help learners of all ages engage with intersections of science, policy, identity, and justice. I can't wait to use these profiles to create 60-second microlectures, introducing my students to all the different ways that different people are addressing the climate crisis through life and environmental science.

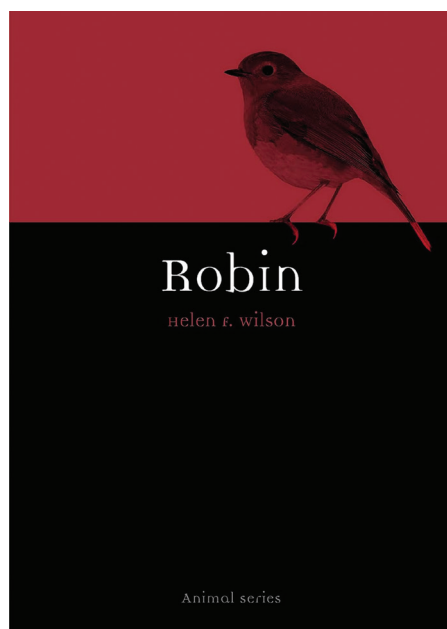
Second, we can leverage the wonder of the natural world to encourage social and emotional learning alongside scientific thinking. *Roar like a Lion* is a therapeutic book aimed at 8- to 12-year olds, but I'm certain that all of us who are teaching biology right now will benefit from it. It's full of entertaining summaries about animal behavior and cognition that tie into developing inner confidence and mental well-being. Oftentimes, books like these can veer too far into anthropomorphizing, but *Roar like a Lion* keeps the connections based squarely in research while still connecting with young people through whimsical illustrations with engaging text asides. I particularly appreciated the compassionate, consent-driven, trauma-informed section on listening to your "no," as well as the diverse representation of humans in the illustrations. The young folks in my house liked that the book features animals that are more common to many of our home habitats (raccoons! pigeons!) and those less common (penguins! chimpanzees!). *Roar like a Lion* seems perfect for your tween or early teen who is just coming out of their shell and/or needs help realizing that their shell is awesome. Plus, like *Breaking the*

*Mold*, this gentle yet inspiring book would be awesome inspiration for science-rich social-emotional learning in your K–12 classroom.

*Planning to Stay:*   
*Breaking the Mold:*   
*Roar like a Lion:* 

Kirstin Milks  
 science teacher  
 Bloomington High School South  
 Bloomington, IN  
 kmilks@mccsc.edu

**Robin.** By Helen Wilson. 2022. Reaktion Books Ltd. (ISBN 9781789146264). Paperback. 196 pp. \$19.95.



In *Robin*, Helen Wilson dives deep into the historical confluence of human culture and the European robin. The book begins by introducing the characteristics and relationships between the European, American, Oriental, and other robins. The majority of the text is focused on the history of the European robin in a human context, including literature, religion, and pop culture. Wilson provides examples of the robin's appearance in literary works from Frances Hodgson Burnett, Beatrix Potter, Shakespeare, Keats, and Wordsworth, to name a few. In these works, the robin appears to be both good luck in some instances and a bad omen in others. The robin also appears as a symbol in Christianity, associated with both blood and fire. It is often associated with Christian

values and morals. The religious connection was used in Victorian England to encourage charity, including helping the economically disadvantaged children or "poor robins" as they were known. In British popular culture, the robin has been a part of everyday life for hundreds of years. It has been found on everything from cigarette packages to stamps, and there are many stories of robins nesting in human artifacts including a skull. In one mix-up, an American robin appeared in the original *Mary Poppins* film where the European robin should have been. Not to worry, this error was corrected in the 2018 remake.

While not threatened or endangered, the ubiquitous robin has been a featured species in conservation campaigns, particularly in the protection of migrating birds. In the final chapter, Wilson looks forward to the future of robins and all songbirds in an increasingly urbanized landscape where their populations may be threatened by habitat fragmentation and declining insect populations.

After reading the book, I was unsurprised to read in her bio that Helen Wilson is a professor of Human Geography. In fact, it explained a lot for me. Her interest seems to be in the intersection of the robin (European, American, and others) and human society and culture. Sadly, this is not my interest. I was most intrigued by the chapters that included the natural history or behavior of the robin through summaries of primary research. These included examples in chapter five, where Wilson explains how scientists figured out that it is the red feather that induces a territorial response in robins. In chapter seven, she summarizes several studies of how urbanization, including light and noise might impact bird song, behavior, and future outcomes.

As an American unfamiliar with the European robin, it took me a while to orient myself to what bird this book was about. A phylogenetic tree or distribution map in chapter two would have helped me visualize these relationships and frame the rest of the book. While not necessarily my cup of tea, this book might be right up your street if you are an anglophile and appreciate Victorian history!



Kate Henson  
 University of Colorado  
 Boulder, CO  
 kate.henson@colorado.edu