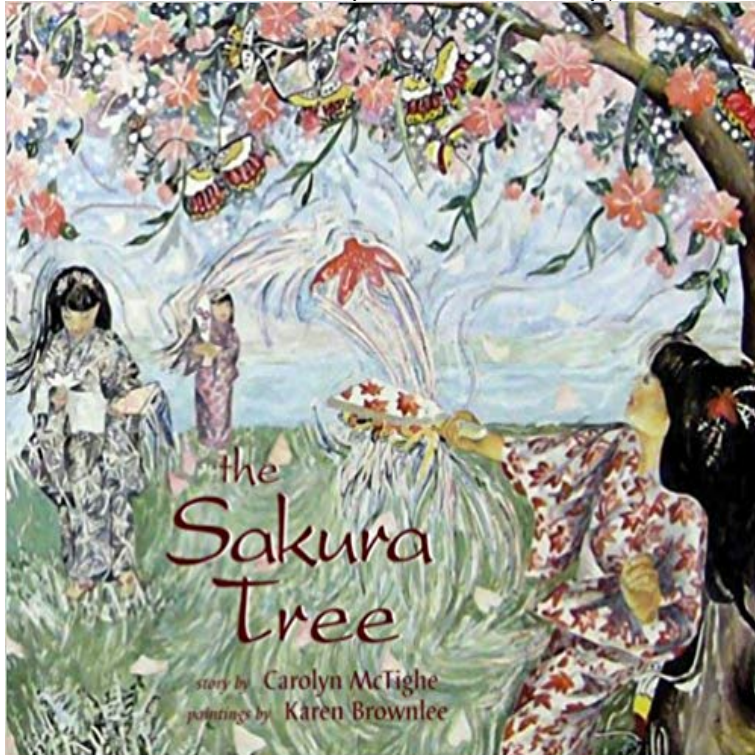


The Sakura Tree (Northern Lights Books for Children)



Alberta Childrens/Young Adult Book of the Year Nominee, 2008CCBCs Best Books for Kids & Teens, 2008Three girls sent away by a father who wishes for them a more prosperous life.Once there lived three Japanese sisters: The eldest sisters name was Aki, which means autumn. She was named this because she was as graceful as the gold and red colored leaves that swirl gently to earth in the autumn breeze. The middle sisters name was Fuyu, which means winter. She was named this because her skin was as fair as the whitest winters snow.The youngest sisters name was Haruko, which means spring. She was named this because her silky, black hair smelled of the sweetest spring blossoms.The gently eloquent tale follows the progress of three so-called picture brides who come to Canada in the early twentieth century, three girls sent away by a father who wishes for them a more prosperous life than he can provide in their hometown of Sendai. Reluctant as they are to leave home, the sisters are nonetheless obedient to their fathers wishes. Each takes with her one item that will remind her of their home. One brings a kimono, another a violin, but the youngest, Haruko, brings three seeds of the sakura tree. The sisters arrive on the shores of British Columbia, where their husbands await. Each joins the husband to whom she has been promised, and each has her own way of remembering the family and country she has left behind. Haruko plants the sakura seeds, each of which grows into a cherry tree. One spring, the blossoms swirl away in the wind, and are carried to the doorsteps of the two other sisters. The blossoms remind the sisters of Haruko and their Japanese home. Following the blossoms, they find Harukos home and the three are reunited under the sakura trees to remember their lives together. This is a book about the meaning of family and home and an exploration of Japanese culture in Canada.

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