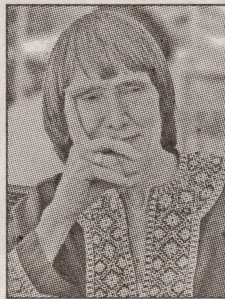


# Beautifully illustrated children's book

**"Huck's Way Home"**  
by Kristina Rodanas  
**Woodstock**  
**Foundation, 2018**

Huck and Finn are American Milking Devon twin calves, and they are about to be sent to the Billings Farm in Woodstock, Vermont. Before they leave, the beautiful long-horned cows among whom they've lived gather to give them advice: "Stay together so you can protect each other; if you're afraid of the dark, look at the stars." But most important, "Should you ever get lost, perk up your ears and listen. Then follow your feet home." The last piece of advice becomes very important when the calves arrive at Billings Farm. Finn is unloaded first and led to the barn, but Huck sees a butterfly and chases it across a field. Soon he sees people chasing him, and terrified, he runs off, through the orchard, along

a busy road and into a cemetery, where he hides behind the stones. When things quiet down, he trots into the woods and up a mountain, where he sleeps for the night, exhausted and lonely, but comforted by the stars. In the morning, he remembers the good advice he has received, listens carefully, and follows his tracks back to Billings Farm, where he is joyfully welcomed by the cows he has heard mooing, the farm help, and his twin.



## One-Minute Book Reviews

Laura Stevenson

This is a charming story, straightforward and based on the accidental adventures of a real calf that came to Billings Farm. The splendid illustrations, sketched on location, capture the mixture of pastoral and 21st century Vermont: Huck hides behind the Billings family tombstone, runs by an ornate bridge, and sleeps beneath the electric star on Mount Tom. As he awakens the next morning, a double-page illustration portrays his listening ears as foreground in



*Kristina Rodanas has written and illustrated more than 25 books for children. While writing and illustrating "Huck's Way Home," Rodanas immersed herself in her subject, often visiting with Huck and his brother, Finn, at their home at Billings Farm & Museum. Formerly of Cape Cod, MA, Rodanas now resides in Woodstock.*

a vista of the fields and trees of the country before him, a truly memorable picture.

For children, Huck's story is one about the scariness of freedom, the value of determination, and the way to find your way back home when lost. For adults, it also provides a bit of Vermont history. American Milking Devons date back to the 17th century, when they were first imported to Plymouth Colony. They were a "triple purpose" cattle breed, valued for their strength as oxen, but also for the cows' ability to produce milk with high butter fat, and for their reputation as "easy-keeping"

beef cattle. In a world that no longer needed triple purpose cattle, they almost went extinct, with only 100 left in the 1970s. Now, however, there are some 600, cherished by people who value their history. It is said that theirs is the breed that appears on Vermont's flag and on its seal. Rodanas's beautiful book will introduce children to this hardy, intelligent breed, while reminding them the importance of following their tracks back home if they are lost.

*Laura Stevenson lives in Wilmington and her most recent novels are set on Boyd Hill Road.*

## Young artist to have her work featured in church exhibit

BRATTLEBORO- During November and December, the foyer gallery at All Souls Church will feature an exhibit of recent paintings by New England Youth Theatre Adventure Program participant Melody Squires, of Guilford.

What makes this exhibit particularly special is that Melody's artist statement reveals that she has cerebral palsy and is confined to a wheelchair. Because she cannot use her hands, she uses a headstick: Imagine a helmet with a rod-mounted paint brush.

Before she began studying at the River Gallery School, Melody had only filled in other people's drawings with her choice of paint colors. After meeting Ross Smart, her teacher at RGS, she learned to draw her own images, first with liquid graphite. Now Ross follows the movement of Melody's headstick with a pencil to create her design outlines.

The show was installed earlier this week. The All Souls Arts Committee invites church members and the general public to an artist's reception on Saturday, November 2, from 2 to 4 pm. Stop in to say hello to Melody and learn about her unique creative process. Cider and other nonalcoholic beverages will be served with sweet and savory treats.

Located at 29 South Street, the driveway to All Souls Church is across the road from the new West Brattleboro fire station and village green. A large parking area is at the top of the drive, where a paved lane at right leads along one side of the building to two ramped handicap entrances.

The foyer gallery is otherwise open weekday mornings, during worship and other public events in the building, and by appointment. Call the church office at (802) 254-9377 for further information.