

The Horn Book Guide  
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Betsy R. Rosenthal *My House Is Singing*; illus. by Margaret Chodos-Irvine  
32 pp. Harcourt 4/04 ISBN 0-15-216293-3 16.00  
(Primary)

In the first poem in this inviting picture book, a young girl wakes up feeling grateful for her house: "It's one giant hug, / wrapping itself around me, / no matter what. It's my house." In the last, she "drift(s) to sleep / in my cocoon." Nestled in between are twenty-six verses that celebrate home and its comforts. The short poems and welcoming illustrations convey the experience of spending a day with the narrator as she appreciates what makes her house special to her. Reflections on the familiar—from "My Bedroom Slippers" to the phone ("The Interrupter") to cooking smells ("The Kitchen's Perfume")—make the poems approachable and accessible. There's lighthearted humor, as in the four-line musing "The Smoke Detector": "Why is it that / whenever I make my toast / a little crispy, / you tell on me?" Thoughts on favorite things ("Hallway Chair," "Rocking Chair") and spaces ("My Hideaway," "The Stuff Place") contribute to the comfortable tone. Rhyming and blank verse, as well as a few concrete poems ("Ants!," "Our Picture Gallery," "Tired Lightbulb"), add variety. Like the homey verse, Chodos-Irvine's flat, patterned illustrations are more impressionistic than realistic, leaving lots of space for readers to contemplate the music of their own dwellings. K.F.