Rhodri Falcon, son of Owen, master falconer to a Norman lord on the border with Wales, has his fortune read at a fair. It foretells of war and of a king needing to be saved, and sends Rhodri on a quest to unlock the sword Excalibur. The legend of Arthur goes hand in hand with Richard the Lionheart’s Crusade to free Jerusalem, on which Owen accompanies his lord. Rhodri is led to a pool where he sees events unrolling before him and crucially watches his father’s entrapment, and is impelled to rescue his father’s heart, at the same time finding his own destiny. This rich and heady mix is interwoven with the religions that inspired the Crusades, Christianity and Islam, and describes the hatred of the Jews at this period of history. It is a long and engrossing read and will appeal particularly to boys of 12 and up. Each chapter is prefaced with a quotation and embellished with lino-cuts by Rand Huebsch, reminiscent of Charles Keeping’s illustrations for Rosemary Sutcliff. It would have been nice to see the source of the quotations listed to help lead young readers to them. JF