

CCBC

Choices

2017



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CCBC

Choices

2017

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*Kathleen T. Horning, Merri V. Lindgren, Megan Schliesman,
and Emily McKnight Townsend*

Bios of the *Choices* authors are available on the CCBC web site at cbbc.education.wisc.edu/about/staffbio.asp

Introduction

We create *CCBC Choices* as part of our work as librarians at the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC), a library of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison (see Appendix III for more about the CCBC).

The CCBC received review copies of about 3,400 new books for children and young adults in 2016, which include most of the trade books published in English by corporate publishers in the United States, books by some smaller presses, as well as books from some educational publishers. It's impossible for us to read everything, but we do read extensively with the compilation of this annual list in mind. Our goal is to create a list of outstanding titles for youth from birth through high school age, one that reflects many aspects of the diverse country and world in which we live.

We don't have a formal checklist when considering books for *Choices*, but there are a number of factors we look at, including literary and artistic quality, accuracy, authenticity, and credibility. We may also consider a book because it offers unique or unusual content, especially when we know there is a need for and interest in books on its topic based on our discussions with individuals working directly with children and teens.

Throughout the year, we share our responses to books with one another in a reading log, each of us noting when it's a book we're especially excited about, or that we appreciate but also have questions or concerns. As the year goes on, we begin to meet and discuss the titles, always with an eye toward this final list. If we have questions about a book under consideration that we can't answer, because we lack experience, knowledge, or expertise, we seek the perspective of other readers, whether it's a content expert we find through professional circles or personal contacts.

There are many books we appreciated throughout the year that are not in *CCBC Choices*, from titles that we didn't all appreciate equally to those we all liked, but not quite enough to make them a *Choice*. When all is said and done, we strive to create a diverse list of books that we know we'll want to share, over and over, with teachers, librarians, and other adults who work with children and teens, and that we hope and believe they, in turn, will want to share with youth.

We know not every book in this edition of *Choices* will appeal to every child or teen—no book ever can. But among the 246 books we've chosen, we are confident you'll find numerous titles to delight, engage, inform, and affirm the children and teens in your professional and personal lives.

Organization of *CCBC Choices 2017*

CCBC Choices is organized into thematic and format categories to help teachers, school and public librarians, and others who work with children and teens quickly find books that meet their needs.

Picture books about people who actually lived have usually been placed in the Historical People, Places, and Events; Arts; or Biography and Autobiography section, unless the narrative is purely fictionalized. Novels set in the past have been placed in one of the Fiction categories. Graphic novels are assessed individually based on content and placed in the category that best suits each individual title depending on whether it is fiction or nonfiction. Appendix II can be used to identify all the nonfiction books of information.

The subject index can be used to find books about specific subjects and topics (e.g., Cats, Friendship) and in specific genres and formats (“Graphic Novels,” “Historical Fiction,” “Fantasy,” etc.).

Publication Information

All of the books in *CCBC Choices 2017* have a 2016 release date in the United States, although a few may indicate an earlier publication date. The citation for each book includes the thirteen-digit international standard book number (ISBN) for the edition in the CCBC collection. Most of the books are available in hardcover trade editions. Some are also, or only, available in library editions with reinforced bindings. A few are only, or also, available in paperback. Many are also available as e-books.

Annotations and Age Recommendations

We write the annotations in *CCBC Choices* to give a sense of the book itself and qualities we appreciate about it. The suggested age ranges for each title are meant to be general guidelines based on appeal and accessibility of the content. We know that some children and teens are ready for and will enjoy books recommended for older readers. Our suggested age recommendations cannot substitute for professional judgment and personal knowledge of individual readers, classrooms, and communities.

There is considerable overlap of ages in the two picture book categories as well as in the fiction categories. Given the wide range of individual variation among readers, we encourage you to look through both age categories for each genre. For consistency of organization, we have divided the books as follows:

- Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers: lower age recommendation is three or younger (e.g., Ages 1–4, Ages 3–6)
- Picture Books for School-Age Children: lower age recommendation is four or older (e.g., Ages 4–7, Ages 6–10)
- Fiction for Children: lower age recommendation is 10 or younger (e.g., Ages 9–12, Ages 10–14)
- Fiction for Young Adults: lower age recommendation is 11 or older (e.g., Ages 11–15, Age 13 and older)

Charlotte Zolotow Award Information

The Charlotte Zolotow Award, administered by the CCBC, is for outstanding writing in a picture book for young children (birth through age 7). The winner, honor books, and highly commended titles for the 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award have this information noted at the end of the annotation for each, just before the age recommendation. The titles are also listed under “Charlotte Zolotow Award” in the subject index.

More about the Charlotte Zolotow Award is available at ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/zolotow.asp



A Few Observations: Literature in 2016

Everything we do at the CCBC begins and ends with the books themselves. We examine every one of the hundreds of titles that come into the library each year, and subsequently read a number of them. As we do this work, we notice trends about the publishing year.

In 2016, we were struck by how many substantial and significant works of nonfiction for older children and teens about aspects of World War II we received, including *Sachiko*, *We Will Not Be Silent*, *Irená's Children*, *Sabotage*, and *The Plot to Kill Hitler*. We were less surprised, given what's happening in our country and around the world, and equally pleased to see a number of books about immigrants and refugees, including the informative *This Land Is Our Land*, the affecting *Somos como las nubes / We Are Like the Clouds* (one of far too few poetry collections in 2016), the pointed yet lovely *Refuge*, and the chilling *Watched*, among others.

As part of the CCBC's ongoing work around diversity in children's and young adult literature, 2016 marked the start of a new project for us: a diversity analysis of the picture books we receive. As we go to press for this publication, we haven't quite completed the work of looking at 2016 titles, but, anecdotally, we can say this: in picture books featuring humans (as opposed to animals or inanimate objects) as principle characters, the default is still to whiteness (that is, white characters). Having said that, we can also say that a definite trend is to make some main characters brown-skinned, with no identifiable culture or cultural content to the stories. While this cannot and should not be seen as a substitute for books with cultural content, it is not unwelcome when care is taken to avoid stereotypes in representation.

It was also, thanks in part but not whole to Canadian publishers distributing in the United States, an unusually bountiful year for Native picture books, including *My Heart Fills with Happiness*, *Leab's Mustache Party*, *The Owl and the Lemming*, *Thunder Boy Jr.*, and *We Are Not Alone*, among others.

The #OwnVoices movement was one of the most important developments of 2016 for all of us who care about books for children and teens. The hashtag, coined by author and disability advocate Corinne Duyvis (*On the Edge of Gone*), promotes the importance of books created by cultural insiders to the identity experience they portray. It's an idea that is both common sense and radical, and one that underscores the importance, too, of publishers seeking out new talent.

And speaking of new talent, among the debuts that excited us this year were Kate Berube (*Hannah and Sugar*), Katrina Goldsaito (*The Sound of Silence*), and Christine Kendall (*Riding Chance*).

Young adult literature continues to come in at a pace that leaves us astounded, with mental health and mental illness a theme among many, it seems. But one of the most striking things about a number of the books we read this year was their focus on issues and attitudes affecting girls and women, some of them fiercely courageous: *Asking for It*, *American Girls* (another stunning debut, by author Alison Uminger), *Burn Baby Burn*, *Female of the Species*, and *Rani Patel in Full*

Effect are among the titles we applaud. Sexual abuse of boys and family violence is the subject of the taut, singular, extraordinary *Golden Boys*.

With novels featuring gay male protagonists or secondary characters now a welcome norm in young adult literature, we were pleased to see an increase in novels featuring young women who are lesbian or bisexual, including *Girl Mans Up*, *Radical*, *Unbecoming*, and *Not Your Sidekick*. We were also happy to see outstanding books featuring transgender and gender fluid characters, including *When the Moon Was Ours* and *The Symptoms of Being Human*.

Finally, we were delighted to read a number of young adult books in 2016 by Latinx authors, many of which seamlessly incorporate magical realism, including *The Head of the Saint*, which was originally published in Brazil and is translated from the Portuguese, *A Fierce and Subtle Poison* (another noteworthy debut by Samantha Mabry), and the aforementioned *When the Moon Was Ours*.

CCBC 2016 Statistics on Multicultural Literature

In our continuing work documenting the number of books by and about people of color and First/Native Nations that we receive each year, we examine every book that comes into the library, doing additional research when needed to try to determine whether a book, and/or its creator, should be counted in our annual statistics. Of the approximately 3,400 books we received at the CCBC in 2016, most from U.S. publishers, here's the breakdown:

- 278 books had significant African or African American content
71 of these were by Black authors and/or illustrators
- 55 books had American Indian/First Nations themes, topics, or characters
21 of these were by American Indian/First Nations authors and/or illustrators
- 237 books had significant Asian/Pacific or Asian/Pacific American content
75 of these were by authors and/or illustrators of Asian/Pacific heritage
- 166 books had significant Latino content
58 of these were by Latino authors and/or illustrators

(The numbers will change slightly as we continue to receive a stray title or two. Check our web site for up-to-date statistics, and more on what and how we count: ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp)

These numbers are solely a reflection of quantity (or lack thereof) and have nothing to do with quality, which, as with everything we receive, varies widely.

In addition, many book creators of color are writing and/or illustrating books about people or subjects that don't have obvious cultural content reflecting their backgrounds. Among the 3,400 books we received in 2016, we counted 21 books by Black authors and illustrators; 1 book by an American Indian/First Nations author; 137 books by authors and illustrators of Asian/Pacific heritage; and 43 books by Latino authors and illustrators that did not reflect the cultural origins of those creators.

It's both an exciting and frustrating time for multicultural literature advocates. Some of the excitement is familiar: each and every year there are wonderful new books. Among the many 2016 titles we're eager to share with librarians and teachers across Wisconsin and beyond are *Ghost*, *Makoons*, *Outrun the Moon*, *Playing for the Devil's Fire*, and many others. Some of the excitement is a direct result of social media providing wider visibility to the current era of this advocacy work, giving the voices of people of color and First/Native Nations and their allies in the world of children's and young adult literature greater reach. The frustration is familiar, however. It's explained by numbers that haven't changed drastically in the 32 years we've been counting. It's explained by the fact that the conversations we are having now, about the importance of multicultural literature, about the importance of publishing books by authors and artists of color and First/Native Nations, about the importance of calling out racism in books for youth, still need to take place. And it's explained by the fact that these conversations have been going on in one form or venue or another for well over 70 years.

The field of children's and young adult literature has always been a reflection of our society, so the fact that we are still having these conversations is, on the one hand, no surprise. But it's also a field in which so many of us, from authors and artists to editors and publishers to librarians and teachers, believe in the power of books and reading to change the world.

We are dreamers and we are doers, and we *can* change the world by showing all children that they are seen, and valued, and respected, book by book.

It always comes back to the books. They are what keep us excited and inspired by the work we do, and every year is new again. On to the books of 2017!

The *Choices*

Science, Technology, and the Natural World

Barton, Chris. *Whoosh! Lonnie Johnson's Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions.* Illustrated by Don Tate. Charlesbridge, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-58089-297-1)

Lonnie Johnson once took an aptitude test that indicated he wouldn't make a good scientist. Luckily he ignored it. As a teen he led his team to a science fair victory, and as an adult he worked for NASA. But perhaps the biggest impact his work has had on today's children is as inventor of the Super Soaker. It was an accidental invention that occurred when he was working on a new cooling system for refrigerators and air conditioners. This picture-book biography shows Lonnie as an inquisitive, tinkering child who faced some obstacles growing up in Mobile, Alabama, in the 1960s. As Barton has done in previous books, he does not shy away from racial history, as he discusses some of the obstacles Lonnie has faced as an African American scientist. Tate's appealing illustrations show Lonnie's life-long determination as well as the technical details of his inventions. They include an amusing fold-out page that shows the blast of water from his prototype Super Soaker as part of a successful demonstration aimed at a board room full of toy company executives. (Ages 6-11)

Fleming, Candace. *Giant Squid.* Illustrated by Eric Rohmann. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2016. 36 pages (978-1-59643-599-5)

Giant squid live so deep in the ocean that few have ever been seen. Scientists have had to piece together a complete picture based on just parts of the creatures that have been found, mostly inside sperm whales caught by fishermen. Candace Fleming's haunting narrative captures the mystery and the majesty of this amazing animal, once thought to be a sea monster. The moody realistic illustrations create a strong sense of being deep undersea, and include a stunning double-fold-out page showing a giant squid reemerging from the shadows of the murky ink it has shot to protect itself from a barracuda. An author's note provides more information, including fascinating tidbits such as the fact that there are more photographs of Mars than of giant squid. *Honor Book, 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 6-11)

Jenkins, Martin. *Fabulous Frogs.* Illustrated by Tim Hopgood. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2016. 27 pages (978-0-7636-8100-5)

"This frog is **huge** (for a frog)." Indeed, the goliath frog found in western African that is pictured on the opening pages of this dynamic informational picture book barely fits on the two-page spread. A turn of the page reveals a scattering of diminutive, fingernail-sized frogs found in Papua New Guinea. Author Martin Jenkins and illustrator Tim Hopgood share their appreciation and enthusiasm for frogs of many types (and sizes and colors and other varied traits) in this gathering of fascinating frog facts. The clean, simple page design, conversational narrative, and arresting mixed-media illustrations work together

to create an inviting book of information for younger children. The primary narrative is accompanied by additional facts in a smaller font on most pages, telling more about the specific creatures. An index and suggested web sites for more exploration are included. (Ages 5–9)

Jenkins, Steve. *Animals by the Numbers: A Book of Animal Infographics*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016. 48 pages (978–0–544–63092–5)

“Numbers help us understand our world,” Jenkins writes in his introduction. “When it comes to animals, numbers are especially important. How big is a whale? How fast is a cheetah?” Each brilliantly colored double-page spread provides infographics on topics such as species size, biomass, speed, life spans, etc., all shown with various types of graphs and diagrams in which fascinating facts emerge. For example, all of the insects on Earth weigh almost 300 times as much as all of the humans on Earth. The giant anteater has the longest tongue of all animals (24 inches) but when length is considered in comparison to body size, the Morgan’s sphinx moth is the winner, with a tongue three times its body length. These and other intriguing facts abound in this highly visual look at the animal kingdom through a mathematical lens. (Ages 4–12)

McCloskey, Kevin. *The Real Poop on Pigeons! Toon*, 2016. 32 pages (978–1–935179–93–1)

In a comic-style book of information, a man who is decidedly not a fan of pigeons at the volume’s start is the subject of an intense PR campaign. A group of children dressed as pigeons offer basic facts about pigeons; tell about relatives of present-day pigeons, including Do-dos and doves; and identify strange birds that are the result of pigeon breeding. These include the curly feathered Frillback; the long-legged, big-footed white Maltese; and the blue-hued Victoria Crowned, the largest living pigeon, named for Queen Victoria of England. The children also show the man the artistic appeal of pigeons: Pablo Picasso named his daughter, Paloma, Spanish for pigeon, and included pigeons in several paintings. This is a fun and fascinating look at a common, and much maligned, bird. (Ages 7–10)

Stanley, Diane. *Ada Lovelace, Poet of Science: The First Computer Programmer*. Illustrated by Jessie Hartland. Simon & Schuster, 2016. 40 pages (978–1–4814–5249–6)

Born in 1815, Ada Lovelace was the daughter of a poet father (Lord Byron) and a mother (Lady Byron) who nurtured her curiosity in math, science, and technology. Ada loved both the arts and sciences. When her friend Charles Babbage asked for Ada’s help in explaining what the “Analytical Engine” he designed could do if it were built, Ada “had the vision to see, better even than Babbage himself, how much more a computer could do besides just processing numbers.” Ada took on the task of explaining how the machine’s ability to function required mathematical operations be converted into digital format, or code. In other words, she pioneered programming. This engaging, whimsical look at Ada’s brief life (she died at 36) and her extraordinary accomplishment in writing what is considered the first computer program shows that both knowledge and imagination are necessary for advances in technology and

science, and that Ada was gifted in both. An author's note tells more about Ada's *Notes* and their impact, and acknowledges some have challenged Ada's authorship (an idea Stanley refutes). A timeline, selected bibliography, and glossary are also included in a volume set against illustrations that are blithe but never make light of Ada or her work. (Ages 6–10)

Turner, Pamela S. *Crow Smarts: Inside the Brain of the World's Brightest Bird*. Photographs by Andy Comins. Illustrated by Guido de Filippo. (Scientists in the Field) Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016. 73 pages (978-0-544-41619-2)

Smarter than the average crow? The crows of New Caledonia are, and that's saying something. Crows are considered among the smartest animals on Earth. Dr. Gavin Hunt's research into the crows in the remote group of South Pacific islands has revealed that not only can they learn and problem-solve, and not only do they use things in their environment as tools (tasty grubs burrow deep into wood; enter a crow with a slim stick in its beak), but they *make* tools. Tearing a thin strip of pandanus leaf and then notching it creates a serrated edge that grubs stick to. Differences in the kind of tools made by different communities of crows on the islands suggest the possibility of distinct crow cultures, while research looking at the tools over time will help determine whether crows improve on their designs and pass that knowledge on (currently considered a trait only humans possess). Pamela Turner and Andy Comins spent time in the field with Hunt and visited lab studies of captive crows on the islands. Turner's informal, engaged narrative tone, peppered with dashes of humor, is a pleasure to read but also skillfully and clearly conveys the context and value of the research, while Comins's crisp color photographs are as captivating as the crows themselves. (Ages 9–14)

Valério, Geraldo. *My Book of Birds*. Greenwood, 2016. 60 pages (978-1-55498-800-6)

Geraldo Valério's lifelong love of birds inspired this enticing album of 50 North American birds, many of which he'd never seen until moving to Canada from Brazil. "Learning about birds makes me happy," he notes in his introduction. His delight is evident and infectious on every page of this volume that combines eye-catching, colorful collage art with conversational text providing brief descriptions of each bird in language that is both appreciative and precise. "This sweet little bird is lively and curious," he writes about the Black-capped Chickadee. Common ravens are "skilled and daring in flight." The collage art of the birds with elements of their natural settings was created with recycled paper from magazines and gift wrap. Endpapers featuring eggs and feathers (not to scale, it is noted) add to the immense visual appeal, while a brief glossary and list of sources and places for more information are included along with an index in a book that is accessible in different ways for a wide range of readers. (Age 6 and older)

VanDerwater, Amy Ludwig. *Every Day Birds*. Illustrated by Dylan Metrano. Orchard / Scholastic, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–545–69980–8)

Lovely cut-paper collage illustrations provide a close-up rendering of 20 common birds. Brief text describes a trait or two about each bird. Chickadee has a “wee black cap.” Sparrow “hops in brown.” Eagle “soars above the land.” Opening- and closing-page spreads encourage observation of birds, while the end matter provides tips for learning more about birds as well as additional information about each of the 20 birds included. (Ages 3–8)

Whiting, Sue. *Platypus*. Illustrated by Mark Jackson. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2016. 29 pages (978–0–7636–8098–5)

A concise text and realistic watercolor illustrations combine to show a day in the life of the Australian mammal that has fascinated scientists for generations. The platypus shares qualities with a duck (bill and webbed feet), a beaver (tail), a reptile (its walk), a bird (lays eggs), a snake (venomous), and a mammal (produces milk). This reclusive animal is seldom seen in the wild so this thorough account of its typical behaviors is most welcome. Additional facts in a slightly smaller typeface appear on every page. (Ages 6–9)

Seasons and Celebrations

Booth, Anne. *Refuge*. Illustrated by Sam Usher. U.S. edition: Little, Brown, 2016. 24 pages (978–0–316–36172–9)

A donkey narrates this spare, eloquent story of a man, a woman, a baby born in Bethlehem, and what happened next. Shepherds came, followed by kings. But after the visitors left, the man dreamed of danger, and it was time to go. “And we set off . . . hoping for the kindness of strangers. Again.” They travel through shepherds’ fields, and across a desert landscape. They rest. They journey on. “And we entered into Egypt . . . and we found refuge.” Soft washes and a subdued palette add to grace of a book that emphasizes kindness, compassion, and connections. (The UN Refugee Agency will benefit from the sale of each copy.) (Ages 4–8)

Doyle, Eugenie. *Sleep Tight Farm: A Farm Prepares for Winter*. Illustrated by Becca Stadtlander. Chronicle, 2016. 28 pages (978–1–4521–2901–3)

The transformation from autumn to winter on a small farm means “putting the farm to bed.” Strawberry plants must be covered with straw, the autumn harvest finished, oats and rye planted to replenish the fields. “*Good night, fields, peaceful and still.*” Brush is burned, wood is cut and stacked, hay bales placed as a windbreak for the hives of bees. “*Good night, bees, sheltered and safe.*” The repeated “good night” refrain follows a detailed accounting of many tasks that also give a sense of the abundant harvests that came before. The work, shared by every member of the farm family—mother, father, girl, boy—is realistically yet refreshingly non-gender-stereotyped. This contemporary story is set against warm, detailed folk-art illustrations that have a nostalgic, almost

idyllic feel. Everything looks cozy, which seems appropriate for a good-night story. (Ages 3–7)

Gomi, Taro. *Presents Through the Window*. Translated from the Japanese by Tadashi Yoshida. U.S. edition: Chronicle, 2016. 36 pages (978–1–4521–5138–0)

Santa goes from house to house on Christmas Eve, peeking in the windows to determine what gift to leave. Die-cut pages show the scene through each window. A small kitten? Santa leaves a bow. Black and white stripes? It must be a zebra so Santa leaves a striped scarf to match. A dark window? Clearly no one's home, so Santa doesn't leave anything. But the view through each window is limited, and every page turn reveals the entire room. The kitten is a stuffed animal clutched by a sleeping pig. The stripes were actually the necks of three white geese against a dark wall. The dark window isn't an empty house; it's the coat of a big black bear. What looks like crocodile teeth are the ears of a group of adorable sleeping rabbits, gifted with a single, extra large sweater. Luckily, the odd gifts are appreciated, with one of the mistakes even providing an extra gift for the bear when Santa assumes another house has twins. The fun is in the silliness, and in children being in on the joke, while good intentions mean the joke is never at Santa's expense. Simple figures and saturated colors add to the appeal. (Ages 3–5)

Haig, Matt. *A Boy Called Christmas*. Illustrated by Chris Mould. U.S. edition: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. 234 pages (978–0–399–55265–6)

“... if you're one of those people who believe that some things are impossible, you should put this book down right away. It is most certainly not for you. Because this book is full of impossible things.” Nikolas and his father don't have much, but being together has always been enough for Nikolas. Then a hunter offers Nikolas's father money in exchange for helping to locate Elfhelm, land of the elves. Miserable Nikolas is left with his Dahl-esque aunt and runs away. An injured reindeer, whom Nikolas helps and names Blitzen, joins him on the journey to find his father. Nikolas has heard stories from his father about the elves' magic, and goodness, and happiness, but with a few exceptions it's all in short supply when he finally reaches Elfhelm. A new leader there has practically outlawed kindness, and all humans are suspect since the recent kidnapping of a young elf. Nikolas realizes his father is one of the kidnappers and is determined to rescue the elf child. A warm, funny, spirited story has moments of poignancy, as when Nikolas sees his father in a new, upsetting light, but is nonetheless full of delight. Occasional black-and-white illustrations perfectly echo the droll narrative tone. (Ages 6–9)

Henkes, Kevin. *When Spring Comes*. Illustrated by Laura Dronzek. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–06–233139–7)

“Before Spring comes, the grass is brown. But if you wait, Spring will turn it green and add little flowers.” Page by page, Henkes highlights the small changes that come as winter turns to spring, returning again and again to the phrase “if you wait ...” Rich acrylic paintings feature two young children out in the natural world, experiencing and observing all spring has to offer—the

hatching birds, sprouting seeds, rain and puddles, bees, and boots. There's also a surprise snowfall, because spring "changes its mind a lot." And when spring finally arrives for good, waiting for summer can begin. This perfectly paced and elegantly illustrated celebration of seasonal changes is right on target for young children, with its sense of wonder at the world outside. (Ages 2–6)

Park, Bomi. *First Snow*. U.S. edition: Chronicle, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-4521-5472-5)

A small girl wakes up in the night to the soft sound of falling snow. "Pit, pit, pit against the window. Glistening, floating in the night." She puts on warm clothes, walks outside, and begins rolling the snow into a ball. She rolls the snowball out the yard, into the street, and through the darkened town. A speedy train passes as she goes "Fast Fast Fast." Through a fallow field, through a friendly nighttime woods full of animals. Finally, she is moving "Slow Slow Slow" with her huge ball of snow, passing from the night into a bright, snow-white field full of children who are also rolling huge snowballs and making ... snow figures! A magical, dreamlike story is told through a spare, lyrical text and stunning, textured, mostly black-and-white illustrations that are understated and exceptional. The art, which begins with nighttime black dominating, has occasional, subtle accents of other colors, and whimsical punctuations of bright red for the scarves, hats, and mittens on children and snow people. (Ages 2–6)

Sidman, Joyce. *Before Morning*. Illustrated by Beth Krommes. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016. 44 pages (978-0-547-97917-5)

Four wordless page spreads showing a mother and child making their way home in the winter dark start this cozy offering. Once they arrive, it's time for the mom to get ready for her job as a pilot. The thought of her leaving, it is clear, leaves the child bereft. "In the deep, woolen dark, / " begins the narrative, "as we slumber unknowing, / let the sky fill with flurry and flight." As the child sleeps and the mother heads to work, snow falls, lighting the dark, swaddling everything it touches. Across the city, including at the airport, it piles high. "Let urgent plans founder ... " With the flight canceled, the mother hitches a ride on a snowplow, arriving home to share breakfast with her family. An author's note explains the poem that comprises this text is an invocation—a wish. Brief yet bountiful lines of possibility are set against the exquisite warmth of scratchboard and watercolor illustrations that render a world at once magical and real, and in which the gender of the second parent and the child are open to interpretation. (Ages 3–7)

Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature

Akulukjuk, Roselynn. *The Owl and the Lemming*. Illustrated by Amanda Sandland. Inhabit Media, 2016. 28 pages (978-1-77227-120-1)

After hibernating through the long winter, a young lemming comes out into the fresh spring air, and busies herself gathering moss to eat. She's so hungry she doesn't notice the young owl that's swooped down next to her. The owl is hungry, too, and eager to make a meal of the lemming. He blocks the entrance to the lemming's den. She, in turn, challenges the owl to a match to see who can jump the highest. The owl readily agrees, knowing his wings will help him get much higher off the ground than the lemming. When he propels himself upward, the lemming runs into her den, closing the door. Safe! This traditional Inuit tale is predictable until the very end. When the owl tells his mother how he was tricked out of his dinner, she offers a surprisingly funny moral: Never play with your food. Cartoon-style illustrations complement the story's humor. (Ages 3-6)

Gerstein, Mordicai. *I Am Pan!* Roaring Brook Press, 2016. 72 pages (978-1-62672-035-0)

Pan, the Greek god of the wild, is definitely one of the funniest and most child-friendly denizens of Mount Olympus. Everywhere he goes, there's pandemonium (a concept that takes its name from him). The action bursts off the page in this hilarious graphic novel that completely captures the spirit of Pan. Episodic short chapters cover his birth, his childhood, how he invented panic, his love affair with the moon, his battle with Typhon, the invention of pan pipes and his marriage to Echo, the great music contest, King Midas's ears, and the Battle of Marathon. A final chapter, "Me, Dead?" posits that Pan is still around today in the "bee-buzzing, bird-singing spring mornings" when he can't help leaping and shouting. (Ages 7-12)

Molchadsky, Yael. *The Chameleon That Saved Noah's Ark*. Translated from Hebrew by Annette Appel. Illustrated by Orit Bergman. U.S. edition: Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-101-99676-8)

How did all those animals on Noah's Ark eat? It turns out Noah knows just what to feed every species, except for the chameleons. They reject everything Noah offers them. Meanwhile, Na'ama discovers worms invading their food supply. What to do? She's holding out a worm-filled pomegranate to show Noah when a chameleon tongue zips out and devours the worm. Aha! From then on, the chameleons are allowed their fill of the worms, except, of course, for the two Noah sets aside to save. Bergman's brilliantly colored acrylic paintings show a Black Noah with his multiracial family in this delightful offering. (Ages 3-6)

Murray, Alison. *Hare and Tortoise*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-7636-8721-2)

Interrupted mid-leap and mid-doze respectively, contestants Hare (*Leapus swifticus*) and Tortoise (Slow and steady) are introduced to readers like prize-fighters entering the ring before launching into their race. The traits highlighted for each, along with a course map, provide plenty of foreshadowing of what's to come (Hare has "NEVER been known to resist a carrot" and Tortoise "will always do her best"). This Aesop's fable stays true to the proscribed plot, but the catchy text, dynamic typography, and appealing illustrations lend energy and originality to a familiar tale. (Ages 3-7)

Tonatiuh, Duncan. *The Princess and the Warrior*. Abrams, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-4197-2130-4)

The princess Izta is known for her beauty but rejects all suitors until the warrior Popoca compliments her kind and beautiful heart. Her father admires Popoca's bravery as a soldier but hoped his daughter would marry a ruler. Still, he agrees Popoca may have Izta's hand in marriage after defeating Jaguar Claw, ruler of a neighboring land. Jaguar Claw tricks Izta into thinking Popoca is dead and gives her poison. Popoca, finding his beloved in a sleep from which he cannot wake her, does not leave her side, even as the snows begin to fall. Their two snow-covered forms eventually become two volcanoes. This traditional Aztec legend of eternal love is also an origin story for two volcanoes, Iztaccíhuatl and Popocatepetl, located south of Mexico City. This spirited retelling weaves in original elements and Nahuatl words—"the language Popoca and Izta would have spoken." An informative author's note places this version in the context of many others, and of various forms of art created to honor the two volcanoes. A glossary defining the Nahuatl words is also included. Tonatiuh's singular illustrations, inspired by Mixtec codices, provide striking visual accompaniment. *Highly Commended, 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 6-9)

Woollvin, Bethan. *Little Red*. U.S. edition: Peachtree, 2016. 24 pages (978-1-56145-917-9)

Little Red sets off through the forest to her Grandma's house in a tale that will not be unfamiliar to many children, at least at its outset. In the forest, Little Red meets a wolf, who growls and asks where she's going. "Which might have scared some little girls. But not this little girl." Little Red, it turns out, is not only brave, but she's smart—she's not about to be fooled or eaten by a wolf in Grandma's clothing. (Grandma, unfortunately, meets her demise.) A droll, fresh, spirited, singular retelling of *Little Red Riding Hood* gives Little Red both the ax and the agency. "Which was unlucky for the wolf." It's fun and it's bold and it's distinctively designed and illustrated, with thick-lined gouache and digital art in black, white, gray, and, of course, red. (Ages 4-8)

Historical People, Places, and Events

Asim, Jabari. *Preaching to the Chickens: The Story of Young John Lewis.*

Illustrated by E. B. Lewis. Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin, 2016.

32 pages (978-0-399-16856-7)

Congressman John Lewis's great oratory skills didn't just develop overnight. Even when he was a small child he was practicing for what he thought would be a life in the ministry, although it eventually became a political career. Growing up on a farm in Pike County, Alabama, young John didn't have many people around to serve as an audience, so he regularly preached to his family's chickens, mimicking the ministers he had heard in church. And the chickens really seemed to listen to him. They "nodded and dipped their beaks as if they agreed." Based on an anecdote Lewis included in his memoir, *Walking with the Wind*, Asim's eloquent account is handsomely illustrated with E. B. Lewis's sun-dappled, realistic watercolor illustrations. (Ages 4–8)

Atkins, Jeannine. *Finding Wonders: Three Girls Who Changed Science.*

Atheneum, 2016. 195 pages (978-1-4814-6565-6)

Three girls coming of age in three separate centuries, all facing limits on expectations and opportunities because of being female, and all making significant contributions to science. Their stories unfold in three verse narratives. "The Artist's Daughter" introduces Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717), who grew up loving nature, butterflies in particular. She was the first to observe, understand, and document the life cycle of moths and butterflies. Mary Anning (1799–1847) was "The Carpenter's Daughter." She found and helped unearth what turned out to be the first ichthyosaur fossil. "The Mapmaker's Daughter," Maria Mitchell (1818–1889), grew up in a Quaker family on Nantucket. She could repair a sextant as well as her father, and when the king of Denmark announced a prize for the first person to discover a new comet, Mary eventually won, after six years of closely, doggedly observing the skies. Personalities of the three come alive in fictionalized profiles full of small, meaningful details as they move from childhood to adulthood. An author's note and suggestions for further reading are included. (Ages 10–13)

Bascomb, Neal. *Sabotage: The Mission to Destroy Hitler's Atomic Bomb.*

Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic, 2016. 307 pages

(978-0-545-73243-7)

This riveting account chronicles Norwegian underground fighters' efforts to sabotage the German production of heavy water in Norway, being used by the Nazis in an effort to develop an atomic bomb during World War II. Most of the men had escaped the country after the Nazi invasion. Working with the British in England, they planned the mission and then parachuted back into Norway in the middle of winter, joining others who had remained from the beginning of the German occupation. The effort ended up far more complicated than hoped when the initial assault did not completely destroy the plant where heavy water was produced. When the Germans finally decided to shut the plant down

and move the existing heavy water, the partisans had to destroy the supply in transit, a mission that carried the emotional weight of risking civilian lives. A number of the partisans, whose commitment and endurance were remarkable, are introduced throughout a narrative informed by numerous interviews with their family members, as well as memoirs, diaries, and other primary source materials. Black-and-white photographs are included throughout, and ample notes are provided at volume's end. (Age 12 and older)

Bryan, Ashley. *Freedom Over Me: Eleven Slaves, Their Lives and Dreams Brought to Life*. A Caitlyn Dlouhy Book / Atheneum, 2016. 56 pages (978-1-4814-5690-6)

From historical documents he acquired, Ashley Bryan gives breath and life to 11 enslaved individuals listed on the Fairchilds Estate Appraisal of 1828. The document identifies most of them by name, and as boy, girl, woman, or man, along with their "value." The cold, brutal reality of a price attached to a human life is at the foundation of this work. But in imagining these individuals' histories, daily lives, hopes, and dreams, Bryan defies that erasure of humanness. For each person, he has created two poems and two paintings. The first poem/painting pair is a sober portrait, set against fragments of documents related to slavery, alongside a poem detailing elements of their lives and histories. The second poem/painting pair is a "dream" poem, and a vibrant, often joyful scene. In "Bacus dreams," the blacksmith tells how every strike of his hammer against hot metal is an outlet for his anger, a blow for justice. In "Charlotte dreams," she speaks of her artistry as a weaver, a means of self-discovery. In both these dream poems the speakers note the distance and difference between how their owners see them, and who they are. Across this extraordinary work, it is not only a sense of individual lives that emerge, but also of a community of individuals caring for one another. An author's note includes a reproduction of the estate appraisal, which every word in this work defies. (Age 9 and older)

Corey, Shana. *The Secret Subway*. Illustrated by Red Nose Studio. Schwartz & Wade, 2016. 40 pages (978-0-375-87071-2)

In the mid-19th century, Alfred Ely Beach came up with an idea to help solve New York City's congested streets: an underground train. Because it was unlikely to be approved he instead proposed building a system of underground tubes to carry mail. Once he had permission for that project, Beach hired workers to secretly dig a tunnel big enough for a train. After almost two months, the tunnel was 8 feet across and 294 feet long. More workers painted and decorated the interior, and then Beach invited local dignitaries and the general public to experience the "train of the future." It was a sensation, but Beach was refused permission to expand. Before long the secret subway lay dormant—forgotten for 40 years until it was discovered by workers digging a tunnel for the New York City subway system. Shana Corey used primary source documents to uncover this buried bit of fascinating history engagingly recounted. Artist Chris Sickels of Red Nose Studio constructed intricate three-dimensional tableaux that aptly convey the depth of the subterranean world. The interior of the dust jacket provides an illustrated guide to how the book's artwork was created,

from research to sketches to construction to photography, a story almost as interesting as the subway itself. (Ages 7–11)

Davis, Kenneth C. *In the Shadow of Liberty: The Hidden History of Slavery, Four Presidents, and Five Black Lives.* Henry Holt, 2016. 286 pages (978–1–62779–311–7)

The introduction of this singular, important work directly confronts the contradiction of founding fathers who fought for and spoke on behalf of freedom and liberty in the establishment of our nation while owning and relying on slave labor. “This book is about how the threads of slavery were woven deeply into almost every aspect of American society for centuries ... It is about wealth and political power and untold misery. It is also about the deep scars slavery left on America—old wounds that surface in racial conflict today.” It goes on to look at the lives of five enslaved individuals, Billy Lee, Ona Judge, Isaac Granger, Paul Jennings, and Alfred Jackson, who were the “property” of four presidents: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Andrew Jackson. Author Davis examines the complexities and confronts the contradictions that go back to the founding of America in this thoroughly researched and documented work while also illuminating the lives of five African Americans, most of whom actively pursued freedom. (Age 13 and older)

Dupuis, Jenny Kay, and Kathy Kacer. *I Am Not a Number.* Illustrated by Gillian Newland. Second Story Press, 2016. 32 pages (978–1–927583–94–4)

Irene Couchie is an eight-year-old Anishinaabe living happily with her family on the Nippissing Reserve in Northern Ontario. But when the Indian agent comes to their home to take her and her two brothers away to attend a residential boarding school, the only thing her parents can do to protect them is to tell them to never forget who they are. Life in the school is terrifying. Irene is separated from her two brothers and has her identity stripped from her—even her name. She is told that from now on she will be number 759. The year passes slowly. Irene faces harsh living conditions and cruel physical punishment for speaking her own language. When summer finally comes, she and her brothers return home, and her parents vow to never send them back after hearing what the children endured, hiding them when the agent returns. Based on the childhood experience of the author’s grandmother, the heart-wrenching story is illustrated with realistic paintings that convey Irene’s fear and sadness. (Ages 7–10)

Engle, Margarita. *Lion Island: Cuba’s Warrior of Words.* Atheneum, 2016. 163 pages (978–1–4814–6112–2)

In the 1840s, Spaniards brought Chinese laborers as indentured servants to work in the sugar cane fields of Cuba with African slaves. In the early 1870s, Chinese also came to Cuba from California, fleeing racism and racist-fueled violence. “California’s violence must be dragon-fierce / to make so many refugees seek new homes / on this island / of war.” This historical novel-in-verse set in 1870s Cuba weaves the stories of three young people during the war for freedom

from Spain, and from servitude for Cubans of Chinese and African descent. One of the principle narrators is Antonio Chuffat, the “warrior of words” from the title, a 13-year-old Afro-Cuban-Chinese boy who is free. He works for a Chinese man in Cuba writing to newspapers and powerful people in China to protest the agreement that sent the Chinese into servitude in Cuba. Antonio, a character based on an actual person, meets Wing and Fan, two wholly fictional characters, brother and sister whose family came from California. The three young people each play a different role in the fight against servitude and slavery of Chinese and Africans in Cuba in this story that illuminates intriguing and important dimensions of history. (Ages 10–14)

Freedman, Russell. *Vietnam: A History of the War*. Holiday House, 2016. 150 pages (978–0–8234–3658–3)

An account of the Vietnam War begins with a brief but essential look at the history of Vietnam and colonialism. The region was occupied by the Chinese for more than a millennium and then, beginning in the 19th century, by the French, while the Japanese invaded during World War II. Ho Chi Minh’s declaration of an independent Democratic Republic of Vietnam and his leadership in a war to rout the French and unify a country politically divided by Allied leadership in the aftermath of World War II coincided with the Cold War and U.S. fears of communism. This led to U.S. efforts to suppress open elections, rising U.S. military presence in the form of “military advisers,” and eventually the war. As the United States became more and more entrenched in fighting, opposition rose at home, while soldiers on both sides, and Vietnamese civilians, paid the terrible price. Freedman’s account is clear and compelling, and provides an understanding of both the political and human aspects of the war. A timeline, source notes, and selected bibliography are provided. (Age 12 and older)

Freedman, Russell. *We Will Not Be Silent: The White Rose Student Resistance Movement That Defied Adolf Hitler*. Clarion, 2016. 104 pages (978–0–544–22379–0)

As young adults in Nazi Germany in the 1930s, Hans Scholl joined the Hitler Youth, his sister Sophie the League of German Girls. They quickly became disillusioned. The White Rose Movement grew out of gatherings of Hans and a few friends in Munich in the early 1940s. As soon as Sophie knew Hans was behind the first White Rose flyer in 1942, encouraging Germans to resist fascism “before it’s too late,” she demanded to join their group. The movement’s weapons were words: flyers written and printed in secret, distributed with great planning and care. Their commitment was unwavering, right through their capture, interrogation, and brief trial. “I would do it all over again,” 21-year-old Sophie told her Gestapo interrogator. “I’m not wrong . . . *You* have the wrong world view.” Along with a third White Rose member who’d been captured (they did not reveal the names of others), Hans and Sophie were executed by guillotine in early 1943. A detailed account of intrigue and danger and heroism and heartbreak presents the Scholls’ courageous activism in the context of the terrible wrongs committed by the Nazi regime, and the greater good that the White Rose Movement sought to inspire. Ample black-and-white photos,

including candid snapshots of the Scholls, and other visual materials are part of a work that ends with source notes and a bibliography. (Age 12 and older)

Hagar, Erin. *Doing Her Bit: A Story about the Woman's Land Army of America*. Illustrated by Jen Hill. Charlesbridge, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-58089-646-7)

We've all heard about Rosie the Riveter but the Women's Land Army? This picture book offers a glimpse into a part of American history that's seldom told. During World War I, women volunteered and were trained to work on farms, both because more production was needed to support the Allies and because the young men who usually did the job were being called away. This account is fictional but it's based on a real place and real people as it follows one woman who signed up. She goes through the rigorous training and then the challenge of being taken seriously enough for someone to hire her and her colleagues and pay them the same wages men would earn for the same work. Gouache paintings offer both a sense of the historical time period and the hard work these women did on the homefront. (Ages 7-10)

Jarrow, Gail. *Bubonic Panic: When Plague Invaded America*. Calkins Creek / Highlights, 2016. 197 pages (978-1-62091-738-1)

Third in a series highlighting early 20th-century disease, this fascinating account merges the chronology of medical advancement with the social, cultural, and political history of the Bubonic plague. Opening chapters describe early accounts of plague from 542 through the 1800s, and advances in plague research and vaccines. Much of the volume focuses on the plague's arrival in San Francisco in 1900, and the efforts to contain its spread via quarantine, disposal of infected persons' belongings, rat eradication, and vaccination, with racism and politics playing a large role in public perception of the threat. The final chapters address the more recent spread of plague into the American Southwest, as well as its current prevalence in Africa. Significant back matter includes FAQs, a timeline, glossary, further sources of information, and source notes. (Age 12 and older)

Kulling, Monica. *On Our Way to Oyster Bay: Mother Jones and Her March for Children's Rights*. Illustrated by Felicita Sala. Citizen Kid / Kids Can Press, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-77138-325-7)

On July 7, 1903, Mother Jones started a protest march that led adults and children from Philadelphia to New York City in order to call for an end to child labor in the United States. This fictionalized account of the march focuses on two children, Aiden and Gussie, who work in a cotton mill and join the march. Through their eyes the logistics of the 16-day march unfold, as does a sense of the powerful woman who spent the latter part of her life fighting for the rights of ordinary workers. The children also contrast the wonder of new experiences on the march with their daily lives in the mill. Pencil and watercolor illustrations provide a strong sense of the era. (Ages 7-10)

Lang, Heather. *Fearless Flyer: Ruth Law and Her Flying Machine*. Illustrated by Raúl Colón. Calkins Creek / Highlights, 2016. 40 pages (978-1-62091-650-6)

An inspiring, dramatic account of pilot Ruth Law, one of the early female pioneers of aviation, and her trip from Chicago to New York in November, 1916. On the way, Ruth Law broke the American record for non-stop flight. Confident, a creative problem-solver, and passionate about flying, Ruth “knew every nut and bolt on her machine.” She wanted to buy a bigger plane, but couldn’t convince the owner to sell it to her, a woman, so she adapted the plane she had with additional gas tanks to hold more fuel. She charted the course, planned her route, and then soared. There were some tense moments on the journey, but it ended in history-making triumph. Quotes from Ruth are seamlessly integrated into a well-researched, thoroughly engaging narrative set against eye-catching textured paintings. Black-and-white photos accompany additional information about Ruth Law at book’s end. A bibliography, additional resources, and sources for the quotes conclude this exemplary informational picture book. (Ages 7–10)

Lewis, John and Andrew Aydin. *March: Book Three*. Illustrated by Nate Powell. Top Shelf, 2016. 246 pages (978-1-60309-402-3)

The third and final volume of U.S. Congressman John Lewis’s graphic novel memoir opens with the Birmingham church bombing in September, 1963, in which four Black girls were murdered. At the time, Lewis was a leader in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the tragedy, and additional violence that followed, fueled SNCC’s increased voting rights efforts. Details of those efforts, and the work of activists like Fannie Lou Hamer and Bob Moses, are the focus here as Lewis describes individuals whose skill and passion, and grief and anger, found purpose in activism to change our nation. The narrative’s climax is the signing of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. Lewis states, “That day was the end of a very long road. It was the end of the movement as I knew it.” Lewis’s memories are again framed by the January, 2009, inauguration of Barack Obama. As in the two prior volumes, the conversational narrative is direct and powerful, and paired with black-and-white panel art and occasional full-page illustrations. (Age 11 and older)

Mazzeo, Tilar. *Irena’s Children: A True Story of Courage*. Adapted for young readers by Mary Cronk Farrell. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2016. 257 pages (978-1-4814-4991-5)

Irena Sendler and others in the underground movement in Warsaw during World War II helped save 2,500 Jewish children from the Nazis. This compelling adaptation of a book for adults documents their work in a chronological account that is full of tension, but grounded by the commitment of Irena and her compatriots, some of them Jews themselves, to do what they knew to be the right and decent thing, the only thing possible, regardless of the risks. While Irena is the primary focus, small sections throughout the narrative follow the efforts of several others with whom she worked saving Jewish children, many of them from the Warsaw Ghetto, through clever, courageous, bold endeavors. Most of the children were placed with willing Polish Christian families. A work

of nonfiction shot through with poignancy concludes with a final chapter that follows the fate of Irena (who died in 2008 at age 98, a hero in Poland and beyond) and some of her key co-conspirators, an adapter's note, and endnotes. (Age 12 and older)

McCormick, Patricia. *The Plot to Kill Hitler: Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Spy, Unlikely Hero.* Balzer + Bray / HarperCollins, 2016. 174 pages (978-0-06-241108-2)

Short chapters make for a swiftly paced account of the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Born in 1906, he was a singular child in a large, progressive German family. Drawn to religion, he studied theology and pursued a career in the ministry. Bonhoeffer believed the German Lutheran church had a responsibility to have an impact on the lives of ordinary people, and to speak out against injustice. His ideas were further informed by a visit to the United States, when he saw the travesty of racism and experienced the energizing, uplifting Black Abyssinian Baptist Church. He returned to Germany and furthered his activism against the rising National Socialist Party. Eventually asked to serve as a spiritual guide to would-be Hitler assassins, Bonhoeffer concluded that putting an end to the atrocities taking place in Germany and across Europe meant setting pacifism aside. Along with his co-conspirators, he was eventually caught and executed, but his writings are considered critical works on the intersection of religion and social justice and were among those read and cited by Martin Luther King Jr. The compelling narrative includes occasional black-and-white photographs and concludes with source notes and a bibliography. (Age 12 and older)

Miller, Pat. *The Hole Story of the Doughnut.* Illustrated by Vincent X. Kirsch. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-544-31961-5)

Prior to 1847, little round cakes fried in lard were a dietary staple for sailors. They were easy to prepare and easy to eat. But Hanson Gregory, a 16-year-old cook's assistant aboard a schooner, listened to his fellow sailor's complaints about the cakes they called "sinkers" because the centers were so heavy with grease, and came up with a way to improve them: He took the top of a pepper shaker and cut the centers out before he fried them. They were a hit. Hanson shared the idea with his mother on his return home and she began to cook up dozens of "holey cakes" to sell on the docks. Soon all the ships' cooks began to make them, and doughnuts were spread far and wide. Gregory later became a ship's captain, and tall tales began to develop about his invention of the doughnut, some of which are delightfully incorporated into this narrative. A great deal of primary and secondary research went into recounting the doughnut's—or, more accurately, the doughnut hole's—entertaining history. Each whimsical watercolor illustration is framed within a circle, echoing the importance of the doughnut hole. (Ages 6–10)

Miller, Sarah. *The Borden Murders: Lizzie Borden & the Trial of the Century.* Schwartz & Wade, 2016. 288 pages (978-0-553-49808-0)

This arresting work doesn't determine whether Lizzie Borden killed her father and stepmother in Fall River, Massachusetts, in 1892, because there isn't enough factual information to support a definitive answer. Instead, it lays out

the evidence and arguments used by both Lizzie's prosecutors and her defense team. Drawing on court transcripts from the Borden trial and other primary and secondary source material, Miller's chronological account begins with Lizzie's discovery of her father's body and moves forward in gripping detail from the first hours, when it seems suspicion first fell on Lizzie; through subsequent days, weeks, and months; through the trial and the jury's eventual verdict of not guilty. It also offers a fascinating look at the role the media played in public perceptions and opinions, which shifted throughout events and were influenced by class and gender. Steps and missteps on the part of Lizzie, witnesses, police, and others humanize all involved. Did she or didn't she? The court of public opinion remains undecided. Two sections of black-and-white photographs (none gruesome), and detailed source notes and resources round out a book that invites spirited discussion. (Age 12 and older)

Osborne, Linda Barrett. *This Land Is Our Land: A History of American Immigration.* Abrams, 2016. 124 pages (978-1-4197-1660-7)

An account of the history of immigration in the United States from the time the first Europeans arrived shows how people have come for similar reasons across four centuries—religious freedom and/or economic opportunity, or as refugees escaping political persecution, or more recently, war. It also shows how each group after those first immigrants were met with various levels of distrust and suspicion. Chapters look at specific groups that came in large numbers, including the Chinese, the Irish, Jews from eastern Europe, and Latin Americans, and how the government responded with changing policies over time. Policies sought to either exclude, as in the case of the Chinese, or to limit immigrants coming from places other than western Europe in response to xenophobia fueled by stereotypes and fear: that the newcomers were dangerous, or would take away jobs, or would never assimilate—fears that continue to be voiced about immigrants today. A timeline of immigration and immigration policy, extensive source material, and an index are provided at the end of a work that includes numerous photographs. (Age 12 and older)

Richardson, Jael Ealey. *The Stone Thrower.* Illustrated by Matt James. Groundwood, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-55498-752-8)

Growing up in Ohio in the 1950s and 60s, young Chuck Ealey set his sights on getting an education, his hard-working mother's dream. Chuck began throwing stones at passing coal trains as a childhood game, doing it over and over until he could always hit his target. When he started playing football he did the same thing, practicing over and over. Chuck was Black, making it a big deal when his high school coach asked him to play quarterback. Players from a rival team were angry, but Chuck remained focused and poised, leading his own team to victory. A vivid picture book account of the childhood and young adulthood of Chuck Ealey, written by his daughter, includes an author's note in which she briefly recounts her father's record-breaking, undefeated career in high school and college, and the college degree that was his greatest victory. Undrafted by the NFL in the early 1970s because of racism, Ealey went on to a successful career in the Canadian Football League. Expressive pen-and-ink and acrylic illustrations accompany the fine narrative. (Ages 6-10)

Robbins, Dean. *Two Friends: Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass.* Illustrated by Sean Qualls and Selina Alko. Orchard / Scholastic, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-545-39996-8)

Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass each had a significant impact on America in their own right, but the two also became friends when they were both living in Rochester, New York, in the mid-1800s. There is a statue in Rochester of the two of them having tea, and Madison author Dean Robbins has imagined what that meeting might have been like and what they might have talked about based on their mutual interest in fighting for civil rights. The text also serves as an introduction to both Anthony and Douglass as people and as change agents in American history. Mixed-media illustrations are at once playfully inventive and historically respectful. (Ages 5–8)

Rockliff, Mara. *Around America to Win the Vote: Two Suffragists, a Kitten, and 10,000 Miles.* Illustrated by Hadley Hooper. Candlewick Press, 2016. 40 pages (978-0-7636-7893-7)

In 1916 Nell Richardson and Alice Burke started out from the East Coast in their yellow Baby Saxon, planning to drive to the West Coast and back to advocate for women's suffrage. The roads were bad and road maps were nonexistent but they were committed, stopping at towns and cities along the way to make speeches and to call attention to their cause. Rockliff has pieced together their journey by painstakingly researching reports in local newspapers of the towns where they stopped. Her account is filled with humorous anecdotes about these remarkable women who drove across the country and back at a time when such trips were unusual. Lively line drawings, shaded in yellow (the color of women's suffrage), complement the engaging text. (Ages 7–10)

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *Brown v. Board of Education: A Fight for Simple Justice.* Holiday House, 2016. 134 pages (978-0-8234-3646-0)

Thurgood Marshall first made a name for himself trying Civil Rights cases related to segregation beginning in the 1930s. In case after case, he and his colleagues in the NAACP Legal Defense Fund made small steps forward while looking for the perfect case to take to the Supreme Court. They found one in 1951 with *Brown v. Board of Education*. But that famous, landmark case was actually five cases heard together, each representing a different family in a different part of the country whose children attended segregated schools. Rubin meticulously provides details that led up to the famous case, including information about key players, including the students, their parents, and legal counsel on both sides. She details the legal history of *Brown* in clear language that is accessible to general readers. The way in which Marshall and his team built the case is fascinating, as are the many black-and-white photos of the people involved and the schools themselves, which showed the gross inequities under "separate but equal." Concluding chapters look at the challenge to actually integrate the schools, which was never given a definitive timeline, and the de facto segregation that continues today by virtue of housing patterns. (Age 11 and older)

Stelson, Caren. *Sachiko: A Nagasaki Bomb Survivor's Story*. Carolrhoda, 2016. 144 pages (978-1-4677-8903-5)

Sachiko Yasui was six years old when the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. Up until then, she had led a life under duress because of the war, but the bomb changed everything. In the immediate aftermath, she and her family sought shelter and medical help, but her surviving brothers soon died of radiation sickness. For many years Sachiko didn't speak of what happened but more recently, realizing that the truth would soon be lost, she chose to come forward to talk about the appalling event and its aftermath, both immediate and long term. Author Caren Stelson did extensive background research on various peace and civil rights movements (subjects that inform Sachiko's worldview today), as well as took many trips to Japan to interview Sachiko Yasui. Stelson also provides a historical context for the events leading up to the bombings, challenging the oft-repeated official narrative that it was done solely to save American lives that would have been lost in an invasion of Japan. Sachiko emerges as a woman both ordinary and extraordinary in this intense and gripping work. (Ages 11-14)

Sutcliffe, Jane. *Will's Words: How William Shakespeare Changed the Way You Talk*. Illustrated by John Shelley. Charlesbridge, 2016. 40 pages (978-1-58089-638-2)

Shakespeare is responsible for many of the words and phrases in use today in the English language, either because he coined them or, more often, because he popularized them with his plays. Words like "fashionable," "hurry," "well-behaved," and "excitement" were all put into common usage by Shakespeare. He was also responsible for common expressions today, such as "wild-goose," "all of a sudden," and "too much of a good thing." These and other words and phrases are cleverly introduced in an account of a single production of a play at the Globe Theatre during Shakespeare's time. For each of the words or phrases, the author tells what it meant in Shakespeare's time, what it means today, and in which play it first appeared. Pen-and-ink and watercolor illustrations are teeming with details, both historical and humorous. (Ages 8-14)

Tavares, Matt. *Crossing Niagara: The Death-Defying Tightrope Adventures of the Great Blondin*. Candlewick Press, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-7636-6823-5)

By the mid-19th century, Jean François Gravelet was already known as The Great Blondin, the world's greatest tightrope walker. But a trip to Niagara Falls in 1859 inspired him to step up his game. He was determined to walk from the American to the Canadian side of the Falls on a three-inch wide rope. People came from all around the area to witness the momentous crossing, in which Blondin not only walked from the United States to Canada, but also turned around and walked back. Throughout the summers of 1859 and 1860, Blondin walked back and forth across the rope for an ever-growing, captivated audience. Each time, he added new feats of daring, including walking across blindfolded and walking across carrying another man on his back. Matt Tavares has reconstructed the story of Blondin's remarkable feats mostly through contemporaneous newspaper accounts. His dramatic watercolor, gouache, and

pencil illustrations show the immensity of the Falls and the enormous distance from side to side, as well as providing a close-up view of what things looked like from high atop the tightrope. (Ages 6–11)

Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Freedom in Congo Square*. Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie. little bee, 2016. 32 pages (978–1–4998–0103–3)

A potent narrative begins, “Mondays, there were hogs to slop, / mules to train, and logs to chop. / Slavery was no ways fair. / Six more days to Congo Square.” Congo Square, the essential Foreword explains, was a legal gathering spot for enslaved and free Blacks in New Orleans. The first 14 couplets count down the days to Congo Square, documenting the work of enslaved men and women as they labored in fields and in houses, in despair and in defiance, Monday through Saturday. “The dreaded lash / too much to bear ... Run away, run away. Some slaves dared.” The remaining 11 couplets mark the transition to Sunday, and the gathering in Congo Square, spinning out details of music and dancing, chanting and singing, lifting spirits and hearts. The words are set against spare, expressive paintings in which stylized, elongated figures with little or no facial details carry out the heavy work of Monday through Saturday. The constrained figures break free once Sunday comes, moving with fluid joy and abandon. A glossary and an author’s note providing more historical context conclude this rich and stirring work. *Winner, 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Age 6 and older)

Biography and Autobiography

Barakat, Ibtisam. *Balcony on the Moon: Coming of Age in Palestine*. Margaret Ferguson Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2016. 217 pages (978–0–374–30251–1)

A follow-up to *Tasting the Sky*, a memoir of her childhood, easily stands on its own as Ibtisam Barakat describes her middle and late childhood and early young adulthood in the West Bank during the 1970s. An introduction by the author provides essential information to ground readers in the political reality in the Middle East that was the backdrop of her coming of age. Ibtisam is passionate about learning and education and eventually decides she wants to be a writer. While Ibtisam is in high school her mother, who left school in 6th grade, decides she wants to go back to her studies. It’s an idea Ibtisam’s father initially is reluctant to support (but eventually takes pride in), while Ibtisam throws herself into helping her mother prepare. One of the standout elements of this memoir is the way Barakat writes about her family with such exasperation, understanding, and tenderness, beautifully and honestly revealing details of their lives. It also illuminates the experience of being Palestinian, a “homeless people,” and of being a girl and young woman defying cultural and sometimes familial expectations to pursue her dreams. (Age 12 and older)

Fleming, Candace. *Presenting Buffalo Bill: The Man Who Invented the Wild West*. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2016. 273 pages (978-1-59643-763-0)

Before the Wild West of the American imagination was fabricated by Hollywood, it was fabricated by Buffalo Bill Cody. This blend of biography, history, and myth-busting gives an account of Buffalo Bill's life and the Wild West Show that made him famous and romanticized the West in mainstream culture. So much of Buffalo Bill's life as he told it was fiction, some created by the dime novelists who were writing about him in his own time and much by Cody himself. Author Fleming has made this part of her narrative. Each chapter moves forward the story of Cody's life as he and others told it but also includes a "Panning for Truth" section that compares the story to the factual evidence (or lack thereof) that historians have uncovered. The result is a sense of Buffalo Bill as an icon propagating a view of the "Old West" that never really existed, but that entertained the crowds who attended his shows, and that (mis)informed future generations. Fleming also addresses how Lakota and other Native performers used the show as an opportunity to leave the reservations with their families, something the U.S. government made almost impossible at the time, in this finely researched and documented work. (Age 12 and older)

Grande, Reyna. *The Distance Between Us*. Young Readers Edition. Aladdin, 2016. 322 pages (978-1-4814-6371-3)

This adaptation of Grande's adult book about her early childhood in Mexico and young adulthood in the United States is always moving, at times harrowing, and also inspiring. In Mexico, Reyna and her siblings live first with their emotionally distant but wealthier paternal grandmother, and then with their poor but loving maternal grandmother. Their parents are in El otro lado (the United States) to earn money. When their parents separate, their mother comes back to Mexico alone. Her commitment to her children is unreliable, while their father, still in the United States, doesn't seem to think about them at all. Then he returns for a visit with his new wife, and Reyna and her siblings convince him to take them with him back to the United States. After three dangerous tries to cross the border they arrive and begin to settle into their new lives. Reyna, 10, is learning English, attending school, and navigating a new family structure. Their father wants his children to succeed but also has a terrible temper, and he becomes more and more abusive as she and her siblings get older. Eventually, Reyna is able to leave for community college, where an extraordinary teacher helps her see herself as a writer. This memoir that touches on issues relatable to many teen readers always remains a personal and compelling story. (Age 13 and older)

Hooks, Gwendolyn. *Tiny Stitches: The Life of Medical Pioneer Vivien Thomas*. Illustrated by Colin Bootman. Lee & Low, 2016. 32 pages. (978-1-62014-156-4)

"Needles didn't scare Vivien Thomas. In fact, he designed the ones lying on the operating table in front of him." Working with Dr. Alfred Blalock of Vanderbilt and then Johns Hopkins University, African American Vivien Thomas was a skilled technician, inventor and teacher who developed medical techniques and

the equipment needed to implement them. For decades, he also taught doctors and medical students. And for decades his work went publicly unrecognized. In 1944, when Blalock pioneered surgery to save “blue babies,” he did so using Vivien’s process and equipment, with Vivien talking him through the surgery. But Vivien wasn’t mentioned in the accolades that followed. While racism was a fact of Vivien’s life and career, his self-respect, intelligence, and dignity are the focus of a work that concludes with the much-deserved recognition he received at Johns Hopkins, where his portrait now hangs with those of other distinguished faculty. More about Vivien, tetralogy of Fallot (“blue baby syndrome”), a glossary, and sources are included in this deftly written and illustrated picture-book biography. (Ages 7–10)

Lee, Sungju. *Every Falling Star. Amulet / Abrams, 2016. 320 pages* (978–1–4197–2132–8)

Sungju Lee’s comfortable early childhood was spent in Pyongyang, North Korea, where his father held an important position within the military. Three years after Kim Il-Sung’s death in 1994, Sungju and his parents made an abrupt move to Gyeong-Seong. Although his parents called it a “vacation,” it was clear that his father had lost his job and the move was punishment. Sungju witnesses poverty he never imagined in the lives of those around him, and soon experiences it in his own. After their savings run out, Sungju and his parents forage in the surrounding forest for food. Eventually his father heads to China in hopes of earning money. When he doesn’t come back, his mother leaves to ask an aunt for help. Neither parent returns, leaving Sungju to survive on his own. He and other boys he knows form a gang of *kotjebi*, homeless boys who steal to survive. They also fight other gangs for the right to stay and work a town. After five years of harsh living, Sungju is reunited with his grandfather, and then with his father, who had been trapped in China but finally made it to South Korea. The two have never given up hope of finding Sungju’s mother. An afterword of this gripping memoir explains that after getting his education, Sungju has worked with his father to rescue other North Korean defectors trapped in China. (Ages 10–14)

Michelson, Richard. *Fascinating: The Life of Leonard Nimoy. Illustrated by Edel Rodriguez. Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. 32 pages* (978–1–101–93330–5)

The recent blockbuster *Star Trek* movies have created a new interest in the 1960s television show and the actor who originally portrayed alien science officer Spock. Leonard Nimoy, the son of Russian immigrants, grew up in Boston in the 1940s. Interested in performing theater from childhood, Leonard also developed an early love for photography and worked at odd jobs to earn money to support his hobby. Eventually he moved to Hollywood, where he was a movie usher, soda jerk, and taxi driver before getting his first small part in a movie. Hired by Gene Roddenberry to play Spock in 1965, Nimoy realized the parallels between his parents’ immigrant position as aliens in the USA and the role of an extraterrestrial being and worked to create the character of an outsider. Intriguing details, such as the origin of the Vulcan hand greeting in a ritual Jewish Nimoy observed in boyhood visits to temple, as well as the

author's clear affection for his subject, add depth to this accessible biography. (Ages 8–12)

Sweet, Melissa. *Some Writer! The Story of E. B. White. Afterword by Martha White.* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016. 161 pages (978-0-544-31959-2)

Elwyn Brooks (E. B.) White, known to family and friends from early adulthood on as Andy, was shy and often anxious throughout his life. But with a pen in his hand, or a typewriter in front of him, he was entertaining and eloquent. Readers who know him as the author of *Stuart Little*, *Charlotte's Web*, and *The Trumpet of the Swan* will relish the stories here about those books. They will also love discovering White the young adventurer, White the amateur naturalist and avid outdoorsperson, White the urbane journalist, White the opinionated commentator and essayist and defender of democracy, White the humorist, White the family man, White the farmer, White the literary stylist and master of clarity, and much more. Author/illustrator Melissa Sweet brilliantly distills these qualities into an appealing, accessible portrait of White in a book that blends original watercolors, photographs, and collage with a clear (White would approve!) and engaging substantial narrative that integrates many quotes from White's professional and personal writing. The gorgeous book design offers a sense of effortless interplay between the visual elements and text. A timeline, ample citations and source material, an author's note and an afterword from writer Martha White about her grandfather and this book all add to a work that will bring delight to, and shows such respect for, young readers. (Ages 8–13)

Contemporary People, Places, and Events

Bolden, Tonya. *How to Build a Museum: Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture.* Viking / Smithsonian, 2016. 53 pages (978-0-451-47637-1)

The National Museum of African American History, which opened in September, 2016, was a long time coming. The seed of the idea and efforts to gain Congressional approval span almost a century, including 15 years of advocacy spearheaded by Congressman John Lewis that culminated in a bill approving the museum signed into law in December 2003. This account begins with that history and goes on to provide a fascinating look at the next 13 years. The museum, says Executive Director Lonnie Bunch, is not about African American history but about American history through the lens of African American experience. The physical design and construction took place simultaneously with outreach and education efforts and work to acquire and organize materials. This conversational narrative conveys the commitment and excitement and sense of responsibility of all involved, and includes fascinating anecdotes about specific objects and artifacts. The glimpse provided here of

what can be found at the museum is enticing, while the importance of the lives and experiences represented by the history documented in this book and within the museum's walls is a powerful implied refrain. Ample visual material including photos of many museum artifacts, and dynamic page design add to the volume's appeal. (Age 9 and older)

Brown, Lisa. *The Airport Book. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-62672-091-6)*

A family's airplane trips begins at home with packing. Then the mixed-race (Black/white) family—small boy, smaller girl, mother and father—arrives at the airport, checks in, goes through security, and gets settled on the plane. The flight includes safety instructions, snacking, and cloud-watching. After landing they must wait for their luggage before going outside and into the arms of the children's grandparents. Engagingly detailed page spreads offer intriguing and whimsical elements, from the family's interactions, to fellow travelers, some of whom can be followed or found again at journey's end, to airport signs and scenes. Meanwhile, the journey of the little girl's stuffed animal monkey in the cargo hold is detailed at the bottom of each page spread, and includes a surprising and sweet encounter with a live dog. Speech bubble dialogue adds additional humor to an inviting and informative primary narrative ("Inside the airport you stand in lines. You stand in lines to get your ticket. You stand in lines to check your bags. There are lines for the restrooms. There are lines to go through security.") It's a book that will delight young children, travelers or not. (Ages 3-7)

Understanding Oneself and Others

Brown, Margaret Wise. *The Dead Bird*. Illustrated by Christian Robinson. Harper, 2016. 24 pages (978-0-06-028931-7)

"The bird was dead when the children found it." Indeed, by the time the children find the bird, it's cold and stiff. "That's the way animals got when they had been dead for some time ..." The children dig a hole to bury the bird and hold a small funeral for it, "like grown people did when someone died." Brown's picture-book text for young children was groundbreaking when it was first published in 1938 for its matter-of-fact treatment of death. It is just as unusual today, nearly 80 years later. Christian Robinson's contemporary illustrations showing four diverse playmates in a city park makes it even more appealing to 21st-century children, and to grownups who want to talk to young children about what happens when someone dies. (Ages 3-6)

Galindo, Renata. *My New Mom & Me*. Schwartz & Wade Books, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-553-52134-4)

"When I first came to live with my new mom, I was nervous." The speaker in this picture book is a puppy, and the new mom a striped cat. Despite being animals, their strong feelings and realistic interactions are a spot-on portrayal

of the emotional landscape of a young child entering a new family. The young narrator's observations range from the novel ("I'd never had my own room before"), to the reassuring ("she takes care of me"), to the universal ("She does all the things that moms do—even the things that make me mad!"). When the puppy worries about looking different from the mom and paints on stripes to "fix it," Mom gently washes them off and says she likes that the two of them are different. Acknowledging dark moments along with brighter times and recognizing that both child and parent are navigating new ground set the stage for honest conversations in all kinds of families in this comforting, reassuring picture book. *Highly Commended, 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–8)

Lambert, Megan Dowd. *Real Sisters Pretend*. Illustrated by Nicole Tadgell. Tilbury House, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–88448–441–7)

Mia and Tayja—two sisters of different races—are playing a lively game of "Let's pretend . . ." imagining themselves as princesses, when Mia, the younger of the two, says, "Let's pretend we are sisters." Tayja responds, "No, Mia—we don't have to pretend that. We *are* sisters. *Real* sisters." Then the two reminisce about when Mia was adopted at age two, their childlike conversation sounding very much like the dialogue they were having while pretending, with "And then . . ." and "Oh, yeah, and she said . . ." Their exchange, depicted in dialogue bubbles, is natural in its account of their adoptions and includes details that would stand out to children, such as remembering that the judge let the older sister's stuffed lion bang the gavel. Watercolor illustrations focus on the two sisters in the present day, rather than their memories, and at the end of the story a complete family portrait shows that the girls have two moms, also of different races. (Ages 4–7)

Uhlberg, Myron. *The Sound of All Things*. Illustrated by Ted Papoulas. Peachtree, 2016. 32 pages (978–1–56145–833–2)

Both of the young narrator's parents are deaf, but his father has vague memories of hearing as a child and often asks his son to describe in detail the sounds of experiences they share. On a trip to Coney Island the boy's father asks him to describe the sound of the roller coaster they ride, and, later, the ocean waves. The boy, who speaks sign language to his parents, tells his dad waves are "loud." His dad signs, "Don't be lazy." The boy thinks and tries again, explaining that the pounding water sounds like a hammer. That's better, but the boy wants to say even more. A book of poems about the ocean turns out to be exactly what he needs. A story based on the author's own childhood is set in the 1930s and features illustrations that vividly capture time and place along with the warmth of the loving family at the center of the lengthy picture book narrative. (Ages 6–8)

Zuppari, Sam. *Jack's Worry*. Candlewick Press, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–7636–7845–6)

Jack plays the trumpet and looks forward to his first recital, until the big day arrives. He wakes up with a Worry, and that Worry grows bigger and bigger as he eats breakfast. He tries to get rid of it, but nothing works. Not even playing his trumpet, which usually makes him happy. "I don't want to go!"

When his mom asks why, it takes Jack a moment to look right at his Worry and understand what's inside: "I'm worried I'll make a mistake and you won't love me anymore!" A picture book about anxiety gets a big boost from the wonderful personification of Jack's Worry. Originally a smallish blue-green blob with scribbled eyes, it grows bigger and bigger, darker and darker, looming over Jack. But once Jack defines his Worry, and once his mom reassures him that she'll love him no matter how he plays, his Worry, while not disappearing altogether, becomes more than manageable. And when Jack gets to school and sees his friends, he also finds that he—and his now teeny-tiny Worry—are not alone. (Ages 4–8)

The Arts

Campoy, F. Isabel, and Theresa Howell. *Maybe Something Beautiful: How Art Transformed a Neighborhood.* Illustrated by Rafael López. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–544–35769–3)

Mira brightens up her own life and the lives of those in her neighborhood with the colorful pictures she creates. When she meets a muralist, they begin painting on walls around the neighborhood and soon the whole community is involved: shop owners and teachers, police officers and parents. And of course, children. Music blares and colors dazzle and the atmosphere—physical and emotional—is transformed. "Everyone painted to the rhythm. Salsa, merengue, bebop! Even Mira's mama painted and danced the cha-cha-cha!" A buoyant picture book is based on the true story of painter Rafael López, who with his wife, organizer Candice López, brought public art to a San Diego neighborhood, creating the Urban Art Trail. Rafael López illustrates this fictionalized account of that effort with dazzling mixed-media artwork that showcases the vibrant transformation. An author's note includes photographs of the actual murals and some of the young painters. *Highly Commended, 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5–9)

Grady, Cynthia. *Like a Bird: The Art of the American Slave Song.* Illustrated by Michele Wood. Millbrook Press, 2016. 40 pages (978–1–4677–8550–1)

The American Slave Song, or Spiritual, derives from the experience of enslaved Africans. A mix African rhythms and instrumentation with Christian-inspired hymns, they express pain, fear, and anger, as well as hope, resourcefulness, love, and faith. Thirteen of these songs serve as the inspiration for Michele Wood's richly detailed, powerful art. Wood's paintings in intense shades of blue, brown, and green have repeated motifs of struggle, persistence, and strength, with images of quilting, trees, fish, and the dove that graces every page. Grady's narrative provides historical and cultural context and connections for the slave song that inspired each work of art. Generous end matter, including notes on the design of the book, lyrics to the spirituals, a glossary, and a brief bibliography, as well as print and online resources for further reading, enrich

the reading experience and offer opportunities for further understanding of the subject. (Ages 9–14)

Liew, Sonny. *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye*. U.S. edition: Pantheon, 2016. 320 pages (978–1–101–87069–3)

This sophisticated graphic novel is a biography of Singapore comics artist Charlie Chan Hock Chye. He came into maturity and tried to make a career during political upheaval in Singapore as it became independent from Britain, joined a Malay Federation, and later broke away. Tensions between communists and the anti-communists all play out as Charlie tries to succeed as a comics artist, with more and more of his work serving as political commentary. Charlie never made it big in Singapore—too many factors, including costs and competition from big-name comics like Marvel—got in his way, preventing him from providing for his aging parents as he might have. Liew inserts himself as a character to explain some of the political complexities or refer readers to the extensive notes in the back. Copious excerpts and examples of Hock Chye’s work—from posters to strips to ongoing series like “Singapore Inks,” about an office supply store and its leadership, a commentary on the Singapore government—are part of the visual narrative. The complexity and quality of this work is astonishing. Even moreso is what is stated only in a short note on the copyright page: this is a work of fiction. The story of Singapore history in the mid-to-late 20th century as presented here is real; Charlie Chan Hock Chye is not. (Age 14 and older)

Orgill, Roxane. *Jazz Day: The Making of a Famous Photograph*. Illustrated by Francis Vallejo. Candlewick Press, 2016. 55 pages (978–0–7636–6954–6)

When Art Kane put out a call in 1958 for jazz musicians to gather in Harlem for a photograph, he had no idea what the response would be. Would anyone show up on the appointed day? One by one they did: singers and saxophone players, pianists and drummers, trumpet players and bassists. Dizzy and Duke, the Count and the Lion, Thelonious and Maxine and Mary Lou. Fifty-seven jazz musicians in all, from the well-known to newcomers to those known only on the local music scene. They came not to perform, but to laugh and talk and get in “Some Kind of Formation, Please!” Neighborhood children were there, too, sitting on the curb in front when Kane’s camera went “Click!” The famous black-and-white photograph he took is a magnificent fold-out feature of this work, which tells the story of that historic event through poems and paintings focusing on individuals, encounters, and the effervescent energy of it all. An introduction provides readers with a grounding, while an author’s note includes a numbered outline of the photo identifying the musicians. Brief biographies of each person, and ample resource material, round out this distinctive volume. (Age 10 and older)

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *A Poem for Peter: The Story of Ezra Jack Keats and the Creation of The Snowy Day*. Illustrated by Lou Fancher and Steve Johnson. Viking, 2016. 52 pages (978–0–425–28768–2)

As a child in the 1960s, Andrea Davis Pinkney was affected profoundly by *The Snowy Day*. It was the first book she encountered featuring an African American child like her. Her ingenious poem is a celebration of both the character Peter and of his creator, Ezra Jack Keats. Keats started out life as a poor Jewish boy in Brooklyn who dreamed of being an artist. Peter of *The Snowy Day* makes several of what Pinkney describes as “peek-a-boo” appearances throughout this lyrical account of Keats’s life, “waving at the reader.” When Keats was working early in his career as a comic-book artist, for example: “The brown-sugar boy / in a blanket of white / began to ignite by what kids saw, / and *didn’t* see, / in the not-so-funny comics / Ezra was made to draw. / *All* the heroes in *all* the comics / were always as white as a winter sky.” This tour-de-force is illustrated brilliantly with acrylic, collage, and pencil artwork that gives a true sense of Keats’s own artwork. (Ages 7–11)

Step toe, Javaka. *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat*. Little, Brown, 2016. 40 pages (978–0–316–21388–2)

“His drawings are not neat or clean, nor does he color inside the lines. They are sloppy, ugly, and sometimes weird, but somehow still BEAUTIFUL.” Step toe’s breathtaking homage to street artist Jean-Michel Basquiat is poetic both in its lyrical narrative and in its magnificent illustrations. Step toe makes no attempt to replicate Basquiat’s art style; rather he gives a sense of it through his own complex and original collage and paintings on wood. Born in Brooklyn to a Puerto Rican mother and Haitian American father, young Jean-Michel was always encouraged to draw and create. When he left home as a teenager and moved to Lower Manhattan, he began to paint graffiti art and poems throughout the city, always signing his work SAMO©. His brilliant artistry was soon recognized and he had success as a gallery artist before he died at age 27. Step toe’s triumphant tribute communicates the heart, soul, and drive of an artist. (Ages 7–11)

Wood, Susan. *Esquivel! Space-Age Sound Artist*. Illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh. Charlesbridge, 2016. 32 pages (978–1–58089–673–3)

Juan Garcia Esquivel was an avant garde musician born and raised in Mexico. Captivated by music and by sounds as a child, he had no formal musical training and “focused on how sounds could be arranged” as he started to create music of his own. “He was an artist, using dips and dabs of color to create a vivid landscape. But instead of paint, Juan used sound. Weird and wild sounds! Strange and exciting sounds!” As a young man he moved to New York City, and soon was creating music that had everyone talking—and listening! The artist known simply, emphatically, as “Esquivel!” became hugely popular in the 1950s into the 1960s, in the heyday of easy-listening “lounge” music. Now new generations are discovering his unique and playful stylings. An energetic narrative set against distinctive illustrations with elements of whimsy introduces the musician to young readers and listeners, while end matter includes where to read, listen, watch, and find out more. (Ages 8–11)

Poetry

Argueta, Jorge. *Somos como las nubes = We Are Like the Clouds.*

Illustrated by Alfonso Ruano. Translated from the Spanish by Elisa

Amado. Greenwood, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-55498-849-5)

“... the odyssey that thousands of boys, girls and young people from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico undertake when they flee their countries because of extreme poverty and fear of violence” is the subject of this powerful, bilingual collection of poems. The opening, title poem compares children and their dreams to clouds. Then the voice of a child in El Salvador offers warm images of neighborhood life, followed by references to gang members and violence. “Hit this one, hit that one. / I don’t want to be this one or that / one.” The journey poems speak through and to the experiences of many children, chronicling endless walking, the frightening *bestia* (train), the desert crossing. “My father says / if we keep singing, / we’ll scare away all the tiredness / and the fear / and become a song.” These migrants are individual children, with their own names and histories and hopes and dreams, a message eloquently reinforced in “We Introduce Ourselves to the Border Patrol.” And the idea that “We Are Like the Clouds” is irony, and perhaps necessity, in the face of the unwelcoming fence at the border. The two final poems can be interpreted as a literal dream, or as safety and happiness: an arrival. Author Jorge Argueta fled from El Salvador to the United States during that country’s war in the 1980s. His poems are set against paintings by Alfonso Ruano both realistic and symbolic. (Age 9 and older)

Fogliano, Julie. *When Green Becomes Tomatoes: Poems for All Seasons.*

Illustrated by Julie Morstad. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press,

2016. 54 pages (978-1-59643-852-1)

“just like a tiny, blue hello / a crocus blooming / in the snow” (march 22). A collection of poems full of lovely, often playful observations and turns of phrase moves through the seasons. In summer “you can taste the sunshine ...” (june 15). In autumn, “because they know / they cannot stay / they fade and fall / then blow away / because they know / they cannot stay / they leave / they leave / they leave” (october 15). Finally, there is winter, when “i would not mind, at all / to fall / if i could fall / like snowflakes ...” (january 5). The poems are titled with a date, and are set in every month across the year. With the exception of pumpkin-carving on October 31 there are no references to either religious or secular observances, another refreshing aspect of a book featuring perfectly paired illustrations. The art features diverse children in scenes with a soft, cozy, almost nostalgic feel. (Ages 4–8).

Raczka, Bob. *Wet Cement: A Mix of Concrete Poems.* **Roaring Brook**

Press, 2016. 43 pages (978-1-62672-236-1)

“I like to think of poems as word paintings. A poet uses words like colors to paint pictures inside your head. In concrete poems, or shape poems, the words also paint pictures on the page.” A concise definition of concrete poetry

introduces a collection of 21 elegantly simple, clever concrete poems. Even the poem's single-word titles are playfully apt in their arrangement of individual letters, while the poems themselves offer further visual delight in describing the concept or object of the title. If the first 20 poems don't also inspire young readers to try writing poems of their own, the final poem, "PoeTRY," is a direct invitation, and appears on the page as an inverted pyramid: "poetry is about taking away the words you don't need / poetry is taking way words you don't need / poetry is words you need / poetry is words / try." (Age 8 and older)

Weatherford, Carole Boston. *You Can Fly: The Tuskegee Airmen*. Illustrated by Jeffery Boston Weatherford. Atheneum, 2016. 80 pages (978-1-4814-4938-0)

"You are itching to fight. / How can America win, you wonder, / with one arm tied? With black troops / stuck as second-class soldiers, / barred from the skirmishes / in the skies?" (from "Anxious"). The story of the Tuskegee Airmen, the first African American pilots trained by the U.S. military, is told through finely crafted poems that use the second-person voice to great effect, giving a sense of immediacy to a narrative that takes place in the early to mid-1940s. The "you" of the poems goes from training, to waiting to be called into battle by a reluctant military, to flying with fellow Airmen as bomber escorts on missions over Germany. The Tuskegee pilots earn the nickname "Red Tail Angels" for the "jazzy" paint on the tails of their planes and the life-saving accuracy of their guns defending Allied flyers, all as racism rages at home. An "Epilogue" states, "You'll sit up front with lawmakers / when the first black president is sworn in. / And you will know your fight / was worth it." Understated scratchboard illustrations provide an affecting accompaniment to a narrative that concludes with an author's note, timeline, and resources. (Ages 10-14)

Concept Books

Ahn, Somin. *One Minute*. U.S. edition: Chronicle, 2016. 28 pages (978-1-4521-5564-7)

After explaining exactly what one minute is (60 seconds, the number of times a clock's second hand moves while the long hand moves just once), a small, pig-tailed girl goes on to give a more child-like perspective of one minute. You can blink your eyes twenty times in one minute or hug your dog. Sometimes one minute goes very fast (like when you're on a merry-go-round) and sometimes it's slow (sitting in a dentist's chair). This appealing introduction to time perception is illustrated with mixed-media line drawings by a first-time author/illustrator who lives in South Korea. (Ages 3-6)

Arena, Jen. *Marta! Big & Small*. Illustrated by Angela Dominguez. Roaring Brook Press, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-62672-243-9)

"To a lion, Marta is tranquila. Quiet, very quiet. / To a rabbit, Marta is ruidosa. Loud, very loud." The same textual pattern is used on each two-page spread,

cleverly describing an active little girl's qualities in terms of comparisons and opposites. Spanish adjectives are seamlessly incorporated into the text and for each one, the English word follows as an echo. When all of Marta's qualities are reiterated at story's end, the animal names appear in Spanish, easily decipherable from the clear picture clues. The appealing illustrations capture Marta's spirited nature and underscore the girl-power theme of the book, which ends with Marta described as "clever, very clever, like una niña." (Ages 2–5)

Borando, Silvia. *Near, Far*. U.S. edition: Minibombo / Candlewick Press, 2016. 40 pages (978–0–7636–8783–0)

Borando, Silvia. *Now You See Me, Now You Don't*. U.S. edition: Minibombo / Candlewick Press, 2016. 20 pages (978–0–7636–8782–3)

A pair of books features the same engaging cast of stylized, round-eyed animal figures, with each book exploring a different concept. *Near, Far* highlights one animal at a time across a series of page spreads. Two large, green, camel-like humps become a series of wavy green scallops that in turn become an entire crocodile in the opening series. Later, what looks like the tip of an elephant's trunk becomes what seems to be its head and eye but turns out to be a small bird when seen from far away. The concept of perspective as it relates to distance is sophisticated, but there is tremendous pleasure in each surprising reveal. In *Now You See Me . . .*, the entire cast of brightly colored animals appears on the opening page against a white background. With each subsequent page turn, the background changes to a color matching one of the animals so that it disappears—all except for its round white eyes and black pupils. Delightful, imaginative, and interactive, both books invite discussions and fresh ways of looking at the world. (Ages 2–4)

Carluccio, Maria. *D Is for Dress-Up: The ABCs of What We Wear*. Chronicle, 2016. 32 pages (978–1–4521–4025–4)

An alphabet concept book devoted to clothing ranges from simple words (Apron) to more complex (Ensemble), and some that are in-between (Bow tie & Bow, Costume, Dress Up). Digitally rendered illustrations look like woodblock prints and showcase soft hues and inviting compositions. The distinctive, multiracial cast is populated with diverse and unique children. While some of the gender roles depicted are traditional (for Ice skates, a boy is playing hockey and a girl is figure skating), others are not (the Apron is worn by a boy and the Jeans by a girl). Endpapers show empty hangers in the front, and the same hangers filled with the clothes featured in the book at the back. In between, pages tracking A through Z (Zippers) invite repeat visits to their appealing tableaux. (Ages 2–5)

Fleming, Denise. *5 Little Ducks*. Beach Lane, 2016. 32 pages (978–1–4814–2422–6)

"5 little ducks went out on Monday, / through the woods and far away. / Papa Duck called, 'Quack, quack, quack!' But only 4 little ducks came back." So begins the pattern of Papa Duck losing one little duck each time the family ventures out. But the distinctive illustrations created by pulp painting reveal

that each “lost” duck has actually befriended another animal—a flying squirrel, a wild turkey, a box turtle, a pig, and a child playing in a wading pool. Not to worry—all the little ducks do come back when Papa goes out looking for them on Saturday. Sharp-eyed children may also notice that a little frog has joined the duck family. A visual index at the back gives a bit of information about each of the animals featured in the book, including the child, Anna. (Ages 2–5)

Jeffers, Oliver. *The Hueys in What’s the Opposite?* U.S. edition: Philomel, 2016. 24 pages (978–0–399–25770–4)

A small Huey gets a lesson in opposites from a big Huey. The opposite of “up” (a pink cat climbs a tree) is “down” (cat does not come down from tree). The opposite of “high” (cat is still up in tree) is “low” (the bigger Huey cuts down tree with a saw). “Happy” is the small Huey finding a coin to buy a colorful drink (yay!). “Sad” is the drink dropped on the ground and spilled (boo!). The droll scenarios showcase a range of opposites (here and there, hot and cold, on and off) that sometimes veers into the charmingly less concrete, as when “unlucky” (small Huey stranded on an island under the hot sun) becomes “lucky” (a box floating by has a fan inside), only to become “unlucky” again (the fan requires electricity). The Hueys, ovals with faces and stick figure arms and legs, are drawn in pencil with punctuations of color in a book that can both amuse and stretch young children. (Ages 3–6)

Medina, Juana. *1 Big Salad: A Delicious Counting Book*. Viking, 2016. 24 pages (978–1–101–99974–5)

A playful concept book imagines salad ingredients as animals as it counts from one to ten: one avocado deer, two radish mice, three pepper monkeys, four carrot horses, etc. Medina uses photographs of actual vegetables set against a stark white background, and then adds black ink lines to embellish each vegetable in order to bring out the animal—nose, ears, and feet added to the radish mice, for example. All the animals mixed together add up to one big delicious salad, shown in a photograph of the salad in a big wooden bowl with two inked hands and arms holding it up. Even those who can already count to ten will enjoy seeing the vegetables transformed into appealing animals. (Ages 2–5)

Na, Il Sung. *The Opposite Zoo*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. 24 pages (978–0–553–51127–7)

When the gates close for the night at the Opposite Zoo, an inquisitive monkey goes exploring, looking for animals that exhibit opposite characteristics: awake/asleep, hairy/bald, tall/short, soft/prickly, etc. Lush watercolor illustrations show an array of zoo animals, and the monkey can be found somewhere in the background of each double-page spread. As the sun comes up, the monkey returns to its own enclosure and the final double-page spread provides a visual reprise of the animals seen on the previous pages as the zookeeper waves a welcome to all visitors. (Ages 2–4)

Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

Alexie, Sherman. *Thunder Boy Jr.* Illustrated by Yuyi Morales. Little, Brown, 2016. 40 pages (978-0-316-01372-7)

Thunder Boy Smith Jr. hates his name. Because his father is also Thunder Boy Smith, Thunder Boy Jr. is nicknamed Little Thunder, which sounds to him “like a burp or a fart.” He wants his own name, one based on his talents, like learning to ride a bike when he was three (*Gravity’s Best Friend*); or his interests, such as garage sales (*Old Toys Are Awesome*), or powwow dancing (*Drums, Drums, and More Drums!*); or his future dreams of traveling the world (*Full of Wonder*). “I love my dad but I want to be mostly myself.” It turns out his dad understands, announcing one day that it’s time for Thunder Boy Jr. to get a new name: Lightning! “My dad and I will light up the sky.” A story the author has stated is based on his own Spokane heritage is full of warmth and good-hearted humor. Lively, playful illustrations represent both Thunder Boy and the world of his imagination. Dialogue bubbles are used throughout, while Thunder Boy’s little sister, Lillian, mentioned once in the text, has a key role in the visual narrative. *Honor Book, 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–7)

Ashman, Linda. *Henry Wants More!* Illustrated by Brooke Boynton Hughes. Random House, 2016. 24 pages (978-0-385-38512-1)

A toddler continually demands “More!” and “Again!” so that his family members will repeat his favorite activities. Dad swings him overhead. Grandma plays his favorite song on the piano. His brother pulls him in a wagon, and so forth. The exhausted crew are all relieved when Henry finally falls asleep after his mom reads aloud book after book, but she can’t resist tiptoeing back for one more kiss. Each member of this interracial family interacts with Henry in an age-appropriate manner, and the rhyming text sets up a pattern that makes this a good choice for reading aloud. (Ages 2–4)

Austin, Mike. *Rescue Squad No. 9.* Random House, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-101-93662-7)

“Mayday! Mayday! Mayday!” The distress call launches Rescue Squad No. 9 into action. A boat and helicopter and their team of rescue workers speed to the aid of a young sailor and her dog when a storm strands them on rocks. Few words are needed in this action-filled story told primarily through the illustrations. Bright colors, bold figures, and skillfully crafted page composition lend movement and a sense of urgency to this successful rescue at sea. (Ages 2–6)

Austrian, J. J. *Worm Loves Worm.* Illustrated by Mike Curato. Balzer + Bray / HarperCollins, 2016. 24 pages (978-0-06-238633-5)

Two worms are in love and want to be married. Cricket offers to do the job. A best beetle and brides bees step up, too. Beetle and Bees then tick off other things the worms have to have before getting married: rings (they’ll wear them

as belts), a cake, flowers, a band to dance (or wiggle) to, a white dress, and a tuxedo. Worm and Worm agree to each, but all they really care about is being married. “But which one of you is the bride?” Both worms volunteer. “But one of you has to be the groom.” Both worms are willing. Each garbed in elements of both bride’s and groom’s wear, they’re ready. “This isn’t how it’s always been done,” Cricket intones. They’ll simply change how it’s done. “And so they were married . . . because Worm loves Worm.” Whimsy and humor make this playful story with an obvious message an entertaining success. The fun extends to illustrations that further convey the personalities (from stickler Cricket to enthusiast Bees to loving Worms) of all involved. (Ages 3–7)

Bernstrom, Daniel. *One Day in the Eucalyptus, Eucalyptus Tree.*
Illustrated by Brendan Wenzel. Katherine Tegen Books / HarperCollins,
2016. 32 pages (978–0–06–235485–3)

The premise is not unfamiliar: a dangerous creature, in this case a snake, eats a series of unsuspecting victims, here beginning with a boy, only to be outsmarted and meet its comeuppance. But everything about the telling is fresh and full of delight in this rollicking tale. “I’ll bet,’ said the boy, in the belly dark and deep, ‘that you’re still very hungry, and there’s more you can eat.’” Indeed, there is more, and each time the boy repeats this refrain the snake is encouraged to gobble up something else. Then the bulging-bellied snake takes one more bite: a small piece of fruit with a “teeny-tiny” fly. “Gurgle-gurgle came a blurble, from that belly deep and full.” It’s one bite too many and out they all come, ending with the brown-skinned boy and his “whirly-twirly toy.” Vibrant action words, playful descriptors, internal rhyme, and alliteration all energize a story that take place “in the eucalyptus, eucalyptus tree.” Colorful, digitally rendered illustrations add to the whimsy. (Ages 3–7)

Berube, Kate. *Hannah and Sugar.* Abrams, 2016. 32 pages
 (978–1–4197–1890–8)

Every day when Hannah gets off the bus after school, her papa is there to meet her, and Sugar is there to meet Violet. Every day Violet’s mom asks if Hannah wants to pet Sugar. And every day Hannah says, “No, thank you.” When Sugar goes missing, Hannah and Papa help look, but no one can find the dog. Sitting on her steps that night, Hannah “wondered how it would feel to be lost in the dark. She decided that it would be scary and that if she were lost she would be sad and probably hungry.” Then she hears a whimper. In the bushes next to her house she finds Sugar, whose leash is caught on a branch. Hannah wants to back away. Instead, she takes a deep breath, reaches out her hand for Sugar to sniff, then releases the catch of the leash. An immensely satisfying story is beautifully spare in the telling, with minimal words and skillful repetition. Uncluttered illustrations in a subdued palette are rich in narrative and emotional detail. *Highly Commended, 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–7)

Brosgol, Vera. *Leave Me Alone!* Roaring Brook Press, 2016. 40 pages
 (978–1–62672–441–9)

An old woman with a big family brings new meaning to the concept of single-mindedness in a story that travels from everyday domestic life to outer space

and back again. When her host of grandchildren wreak havoc with the yarn she needs to knit them sweaters, the woman tidies the house, drinks tea from her samovar, packs up her supplies, and heads out the front gate with a cry. “Leave Me Alone!” Stopping in the forest to knit, a bear family comes too close for comfort. “Leave Me Alone!” She sets out up the mountainside and finds a place to work. This time it’s mountain goats that intrude on her work. Again the angry cry, and she heads up to the top of mountain, then straight on to the moon. Solitude eludes her there as well, when a pack of little green aliens arrives. “Leave Me Alone!” It’s only inside a Black Hole in space that she finds absolutely peace and quiet. Spare white-lined illustrations on stark black pages show the industrious knitter finishing 30 sweaters. Job done, this no-nonsense worker heads home, and is mobbed by happy grandchildren to whom she distributes winter wear. “And she didn’t say a word.” Clever page design, silly yet sophisticated humor, playful language, and a satisfying, smile-inducing conclusion make for a winning picture book. (Ages 3–7)

Chan, Ruth. *Where’s the Party?* Roaring Brook Press, 2016. 32 pages (978–1–62672–269–9)

Georgie loves throwing parties for his friends, but on this particular day his spontaneous plans fall apart. No one can come. Feta has to make pickles. Lester has lightbulbs to change. Shy Ferdinand would rather stay home. Every other friend also has a reason. Georgie, who starts the day full of optimism, is eventually drooping with dejection. Poor Georgie. The humor and heartbreak of this story extends to the visual. Georgie is a sweet-faced gray cat. His friends include a dog, a giraffe, a hippo, a mouse, and a star-nosed mole. All of the animals are wide-eyed and full of expression, from sheepish to sly to sad. The playful illustrations are a skillful blend of full-scene and spots incorporating speech bubbles, and include a double-page spread tracing Georgie’s journey through his city neighborhood before he arrives back home to . . . Surprise! “We love you, Georgie!” Friendship and kindness—and, ok, cake—are all any party really needs. (Ages 3–7)

Côté, Patricia. *Where Are You Little Red Ball?* Illustrated by Yayo. Translated from the French by Maria Reva. U.S. edition: Tradewind Books, 2016. 22 pages (978–1–926890–12–8)

A small red ball’s resemblance to a variety of round red objects is the playful premise of this board book that asks what the little red ball might be. Could it be an apple on a tree, a Christmas bauble, a pompom? How about the cherry on ice cream or “the fuzzy top of a famous singer’s microphone?” It turns out the little red ball’s identity is both surprising and satisfying. Babies can enjoy finding the round red object on every page while toddlers and young preschoolers will appreciate the imaginative whimsy of story told through simple yet sophisticated line illustrations and a narrative that offers rich vocabulary. (Ages 6 months–4)

Dickson, Irene. *Blocks. Nosy Crow / Candlewick, 2016. 24 pages* (978-0-7636-8656-7)

Two kids. Two sets of blocks. Two separate building projects. When Benji, who is building with blue blocks, wants one of Ruby's red blocks, he takes it. She grabs it back. In the ensuing push and pull of "Mine!" they stumble and both of their towers come crashing down. "Uh-oh." Momentary regret becomes shared opportunity as Ruby and Benji begin building with both red and blue blocks—together. A square, slightly oversized picture book unfolds in clean-lined, uncluttered, inviting mixed-media illustrations. A handful of well-chosen words pair with images that have much to notice, like the fact that Ruby's clothes match the red blocks and Benji's match the blue. At volume's end they are joined by Gus, whose shirt and blocks are green. "What will they do now?" The answer in this picture book showing three racially diverse children is suggested on the closing endpapers. Isn't cooperation grand? *Highly Commended, 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 2-4)

Ehlert, Lois. *Rain Fish. Beach Lane, 2016. 32 pages* (978-1-4814-6152-8)

Ehlert returns to two favorite subjects, fish and found objects. The artist's eye sees all kinds of colorful fish swimming in the gutters after a rain where most people would just see trash. One fish, for example, is constructed from an odd sock, a twig, a leaf, a broken popsicle stick, a feather, and a crumpled grocery store receipt. Each collage has been carefully assembled but Ehlert has made them all look loosely constructed to reinforce the idea that the rain fish are all made of things anyone might find on the sidewalk or side of the road after a rain. You'll see them if you look for them, she tells the reader, but look fast because tomorrow they'll be gone. (Ages 2-5)

Fogliano, Julie. *Old Dog Baby Baby. Illustrated by Chris Raschka. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2016. 32 pages* (978-1-59643-853-8)

A family's old dog is perfectly content to spend the day snoozing but "here comes baby baby crawling across the kitchen floor." The dog has no choice but to wake up. He seems to enjoy the attentions of the baby, even the poking and paw-squeezing, but before long both dog and baby are stretched out together on the kitchen floor asleep. The gentle rhythmic text uses just a few words to show the loving relationship between the two, and the watercolor illustrations are comfortingly soft-edged, showing a rotund blonde baby. The rest of the family plays a minimal role but, when shown, includes two moms. (Ages 2-4)

Godwin, Laura. *Owl Sees Owl. Illustrated by Rob Dunlavey. Schwartz & Wade, 2016. 32 pages* (978-0-553-49782-3)

A little owl leaves his mama, brother, and sister sleeping in their nest and ventures out one night on his own. The entire story is told with just four words per page. "Stars Twinkle Mice Scamper" is accompanied by luminous illustrations that track the owl's journey, conveying the quiet wonder of the moonlit night. When the owl lands on a log over a body of water, he looks down and sees his own reflection. This is the only time the four-word pattern is broken in order to heighten the dramatic moment: "Owl / Sees Owl." The little owl then returns home, his journey described with words from the previous pages in reverse:

“Scamper Mice Twinkle Stars,” for example, and, finally, “Sister Brother Mama Home” in a book that is lovely both visually and textually. (Ages 2–4)

Gomi, Taro. *Over the Ocean*. Translated from the Japanese. U.S. edition: Chronicle, 2016. 28 pages (978–1–4521–4515–0)

“What is over the ocean? Maybe there is more ocean over the ocean.” A small girl standing on the shore of a seemingly endless sea ponders what might be on the other side. Farms? Cities full of tall buildings or small houses? Kids? If so, what might they be like? Are there animals she’s never seen, or a fair with fun rides? Is there night, and stars, or a country made of ice? Maybe there’s a beach, like the one she’s standing on. And perhaps that beach has a person just like her, wondering what’s out there. The girl’s thoughts are expressed through a spare narrative paired with lush-hued, clean-lined illustrations that convey the expansiveness of her imagination, and the rich possibilities of the wider world. Every page spread is anchored by the warm teal blue of the sea and her small figure, gazing out at all she sees in her mind’s eye. “I wish I could go there,” she thinks at book’s end. And one way or another, it seems certain she will, even if only in her dreams. (Age 3–6)

Graff, Lisa. *It Is Not Time for Sleeping: (A Bedtime Story)*. Illustrated by Lauren Castillo. Clarion, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–544–31930–1)

The typical post-dinner rituals of a family with a small child—washing dishes, bath time, putting on jammies, brushing teeth, etc.—are recounted in a cumulative text about a small boy insisting it’s not yet time to go to sleep. His patient parents run through their routine with gentle suggestions (“It’s getting dark.” “Don’t you look cozy?”). Each time the boy denies the inevitable by insisting, “It is not time for sleeping.” Castillo’s somber ink and watercolor illustrations show the boy gradually winding down, going from bright-eyed alert to heavy-lidded by book’s end. (Ages 2–4)

Gray, Rita. *When the World Is Dreaming*. Illustrated by Kenard Pak. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–544–58262–0)

“What does Little Rabbit dream / at the end of the day? / After the hopping, / the nibbling, the play. / Beneath a shrub in a hidden nest, / head to toe with all the rest, / what does Little Rabbit dream?” The dreams of Little Rabbit, Little Snake, Little Deer, Little Newt, Little Mouse, Little Turtle, and a small human dreamer are imagined in a lyrical patterned rhyming text set against soft watercolor and digital media illustrations. Their dreams range from the realistic (Little Rabbit dreams of “peas and carrots”) to the fanciful (Little Rabbit also dreams of cabbage leaves that make perfect wings for flying) in a gentle, inspired picture book that ends each musing with a soothing refrain: “Sleep, Little Rabbit, safe and warm, Dream until the light of morn.” (Ages 2–5)

Henderson, Kathy. *Babies Don’t Walk, They Ride!* Illustrated by Lauren Tobia. U.S. edition: Templar Books / Candlewick Press, 2016. 24 pages (978–0–7636–8182–1)

Babies don’t just ride; they glide, stroll, roll, and more in a pleasing picture book featuring a lively cast of babies and the adults in their lives moving across

the day. The rhyming text is set against vibrant, engaging detailed mixed-media illustrations that show the energy and inclusion of a multicultural city neighborhood and the many warm ways adults engage with babies in a story that ends with the quiet dark. There are many diverse babies and families to notice and follow throughout the book. The principle family appears white. (Ages 1–4)

James, Simon. *Rex*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–7636–7294–2)

A “terrifying tyrannosaurus” can’t shake the attention of a baby dinosaur that hatches in the cave where the big Rex sleeps. Imprinting on the adult, little Rex calls him Dad and copies his boulder-smashing, tree-uprooting, other-dinosaur-scaring behavior. At first the big dino tries to ignore him, but Rex is annoyingly persistent. Eventually he comes to accept his adoring shadow, although when Rex asks if he’ll be as terrifying as his dad when he grows up, the adult dinosaur feels he has to clarify the situation. “You know, I’m not really your dad. You found me in a cave.” Still, the two have bonded and they recognize that they are family. Cartoon-style illustrations hilariously show the tiny dinosaur mimicking everything his gigantic dad does in this winning story that’s sure to be a crowd pleaser in preschool story hours. (Ages 3–5)

Jarvis. *Alan’s Big, Scary Teeth*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–7636–8120–3)

Alan the alligator has built his jungle reputation on scaring the other animals. “It was what he did best.” A snoutful of pointy teeth play a big role in Alan’s frightful credibility, and he is careful to guard the secret that his teeth are, in fact, dentures. But Barry the beaver learns the truth and absconds with the detachable chompers. When Alan’s attempts at toothless scaring are a failure, he vents his loss of self-identity with loud and miserable tears, prompting the other creatures to offer to return his dentures. There’s one condition: Alan has to agree to stop scaring them. It turns out those big teeth have other uses, and Alan reinvents himself as a gardener, hairdresser, dentist, and scary storyteller. Despite the menacing dentition, Alan is nonthreatening from the get-go, depicted in rich jungle hues rendered with pencil, chalk, and paint and colored digitally, in illustrations bouncing with playful energy. *Honor Book, 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–6)

Kang, Anna. *Can I Tell You a Secret?* Illustrated by Christopher Weyant. Harper, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–06–239684–6)

A young frog shares a secret with readers and listeners: He’s afraid of water and doesn’t know how to swim. “You’re probably thinking, ‘But you’re a frog.’ I know. But I’m afraid.” The frog describes how he’s avoided the water (e.g., a doctor’s note) and, at the implied prompting of the book’s audience, finally shares the secret with his parents after a few false starts. It turns out they’ve known all along and are supportive in helping him take the next step. In this case, that would be learning how to swim. Anxiety, avoidance, and, ultimately, success all have their moment in a sensitive story full of quiet reassurance

and gentle humor. Blithe watercolor and ink illustrations are a sprightly accompaniment to this highly relatable picture book. (Ages 3–7)

**Kim, Aram. *Cat on the Bus. Holiday House, 2016. 32 pages*
(978–0–8234–3647–7)**

A stray calico cat looking for shelter from the cold (“Scat, cat!”) ends up on a city bus. An elderly Asian man sits next to the cat and the two begin to bond (“Purrrrrrrrr”). Before the man gets off the bus, the cat is wrapped in his scarf, asleep against his leg. After he exits the bus, one of the man’s gloves is left on the otherwise empty seat. But what about the cat? The man is shown from behind as he walks down the sidewalk, and there’s no sign of it. Or is there? The man isn’t wearing his scarf, and the small child who’d been seated behind them is watching him happily out the bus window. A turn of the page reveals all: The man arrives home and introduces a little girl to the scarf-bundled cat he’s holding. “Purrrrrrrr-fect.” This eloquent, almost wordless story unfolds through wonderfully composed, striking, clean-lined illustrations. Opportunities to talk about visual literacy and compassion abound. (Ages 3–7)

Kügler, Tina. *Snail & Worm: Three Stories about Two Friends. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016. 32 pages* (978–0–544–49412–1)

Three short stories in chapter format describe the initial meeting of Snail and Worm and two episodes in their friendship in a droll offering with a delightfully deadpan quality in the humorous interplay between the straightforward dialogue and the offbeat illustrations. In the opening chapter, “Meet My Friend,” Snail and Worm meet while playing with their respective friends, Bob the rock and Ann the stick. In “Snail’s Adventure,” Worm provides support and encouragement as Snail scales a tall flower, although neither he nor Snail notes the flower has bent low to the ground under Snail’s weight. (“Wow! They look like ants down there!” exclaims Snail from no more than an inch off the ground as several large ants march by.) Playful contradictions give readers and listeners a lot to notice and to laugh about in a book perfect for beginning readers or as a read-aloud. The deceptively simple and expressive art shows great thought and sophistication in its design and execution. (Ages 3–7)

**Lam, Maple. *My Little Sister and Me. Harper, 2016. 32 pages*
(978–0–06–239697–6)**

A big brother is thrilled to be entrusted with walking his little sister home from the school bus for the first time. He takes his responsibilities very seriously but his little sister is quite a handful. She sings an annoying song over and over, she picks up trash, and she chases a big dog but hides from squirrels. Her older brother is able to meet each challenge with age-appropriate responses, clearly mimicking what he has observed his parents do. When they get caught in a sudden downpour and the little sister trips and falls, big brother is there to console her, move her along, and assure her she is very brave. Appealing illustrations with minimal embellishment focus on the siblings, who are Asian, rather than the setting, while also telling much of the story, especially by showing the little sister’s antics and her big brother’s reactions to them. (Ages 3–6)

LaRochelle, David. *Monster & Son*. Illustrated by Joey Chou. Chronicle, 2016. 28 pages (978-1-4521-2937-2)

A day in the life of a father and son, from getting up in the morning till going to bed at night, is all pretty routine—unless the father and son happen to be monsters. Every double-page spread in this clever picture book portrays a different monster father (Godzilla, The Mummy, Loch Ness Monster, etc.) and his son, whose mundane activities take on a new twist in various monstrous contexts. The Creature from the Black Lagoon and his son fish with a net underwater, beneath unsuspecting human legs. Frankenstein tickles his son with several severed hands. And Baby King Kong yawns as his father holds him in the same arms he uses to clutch the Empire State Building. The rhyming text is sweet and doesn't mention the monsters at all, so much of the humor in the book is derived from the contrast between the sing-songy narrative and the illustrations where (not-so-scary) monsters wreak havoc. (Ages 3-5)

Lehrhaupt, Adam. *Chicken in Space*. Illustrated by Shahar Kober. Harper, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-06-236412-8)

Zoey the chicken persists in her plans to travel to outer space with her best pal, Sam the pig. Pip the mouse is not so enthusiastic: "Sounds dangerous," he warns. "Not dangerous," counters Zoey. "An adventure!" Each of the other invited farm animals add to Pip's skepticism with their own remarks, but that doesn't dampen Zoey's spirit—or her imagination, which is what she and Sam use to get off the ground (along with a few balloons). A patterned text and excellent pacing, along with the comical illustrations, make this a great read aloud choice. (Ages 3-7)

Liu, Sylvia. *A Morning with Grandpa*. Illustrated by Christina Forshay. Lee & Low, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-62014-192-2)

Mei Mei watches Gong Gong doing tai chi and wants to learn how it's done. The little girl's attempts to emulate her grandpa are enthusiastic, but it's hard for her to control her abundant energy as she turns every move into a chance to show off. Gong Gong clearly understands his granddaughter's self-centered behavior is simply part of being a child, and he is both patient and playful as he directs her. "Now that I'm good at tai chi, it's my turn to teach you something new," Mei Mei tells him before their roles are reversed: She becomes the encouraging teacher and Gong Gong follows her lead doing yoga. A bright, buoyant story featuring a Chinese grandfather and grandchild giving each other their undivided attention includes information about tai chi and yoga, including illustrated descriptions of Gong Gong and Mei Mei's tai chi movements and yoga postures, at volume's end. (Ages 3-7)

Malone, Cheryl Lawton. *Dario and the Whale*. Illustrated by Bistra Maseva. Albert Whitman, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-8075-1463-4)

At the end of each spring, Dario moves with his mother to a beachside town for seasonal work in the tourist industry. Meanwhile, a right whale and her calf swim north to the same bay where Dario is now living. All of Dario's actions on the beach—trying to make friends, accidentally bumping into someone, running along the beach flying a kite—are coincidentally echoed by the young

whale's movements as he chases a school of fish, bumps into a sea turtle, and launches out of the water. When Dario and the whale eventually come eye to eye, they form a friendship of sorts, looking for each other each day until the whale and his mother migrate away. The corresponding actions of the boy and the whale are cleverly developed on each page, both textually and in the evocative, richly colored illustrations, and reflect realistic, natural behaviors. On a deeper level, the overall theme of both Dario and the whale's transient lives is subtly expressed. Dario and his mother are Brazilian and the text includes occasional dialogue in Portuguese. (Ages 3–6)

Mandell, B. B. *Samanthasaurus Rex*. Illustrated by Suzanne Kaufman. Balzer + Bray / HarperCollins, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–06–234873–9)

Observant, creative, intelligent, and confident, *Samanthasaurus Rex* regularly acts outside of the typical expectations of her species and her gender. During a family hike up a mountainside, *Samanthasaurus* notes the darkening skies, fleeing pteranodons, and the smell of sulphur in time to rescue the others from an erupting volcano. A rope woven from ferns, light reflected to illuminate a darkening path, and roars that summon the pteranodons for a timely airlift save the day, and prompt her mother, father, and brother to view *Samanthasaurus* with new and well-deserved respect. This humorous tale of a small pink dinosaur displaying level-headed quick thinking in a moment of prehistoric crisis works to break down gender stereotypes for a young audience. (Ages 3–7)

Mann, Jennifer K. *Sam and Jump*. Candlewick Press, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–7636–7947–7)

Sam's best friend is Jump, a small stuffed rabbit. Sam and Jump do everything together. On a trip to the beach, Sam and Jump meet Thomas. The two boys have a wonderful day playing in the sand and water. But in the car going home, Sam realizes he left Jump behind. It's an awful night. "Sam could not eat his dinner. Even a bedtime story didn't help." His thoughts are filled with scenes of Jump in peril. The next day Sam heads to the beach right away. No Jump. But here comes Thomas. And who does he have with him? A child's deep emotional attachment to a stuffed toy is at the heart of this masterful picture book that also celebrates friendship. The perfectly spare text is paired with equally spare yet emotionally resonant illustrations. Joy, tension, heartbreak, relief, and joy once again. Sam is a white child and Thomas is brown-skinned. (Ages 3–6)

Marcero, Deborah. *Ursa's Light*. Peter Pauper Press, 2016. 32 pages (978–1–4413–1881–7)

"There were all the bears. And then there was Ursa." Ursa doesn't quite see the world as others do. Determined to fly, she studies other flying creatures and tries to imitate them. She tries building her own dandelion-inspired rocket. And she constructs bat-like wings. None of these attempts work out. Then Ursa notices an ad for a play audition, and she tries out for—and wins—the part of a shooting star. She gets to soar. In this remarkable picture-book debut, author/illustrator Deborah Marcero tells Ursa's engaging story with a perfectly paced text and distinctive pictures that are at once funny and uplifting. (Ages 3–6)

McAnulty, Stacy. *Excellent Ed*. Illustrated by Julia Sarcone-Roach. Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. 24 pages (978-0-553-51023-2)

“All of the Ellis children were allowed to eat at the table and ride in the van and sit on the couch and use the indoor bathroom. Except Ed.” Ed is prohibited from these activities because he’s a dog, not that Ed makes any distinction between himself and his human family. But because each of the other Ellis children excels at something—Elaine at soccer, Emily and Elmer at math, Edith at ballet, and Ernie at baking cupcakes—Ed goes in search of what he’s best at. The search leads to answers that are satisfying for Ed, and for readers and listeners, too. It’s hard to say which is more appealing in this sparkling picture book, Ed or the entire lively Ellis family, of which Ed is clearly a much-loved member. The wonderful narrative makes judicious use of repetition while the vivacious illustrations are full of humor and warmth. The Ellis family is Black, with children ranging from early elementary age to their teens, something typical for many families but not for many picture books. (Ages 3–7).

Meisel, Paul. *Good Night, Bat! Good Morning, Squirrel!* Boyd’s Mills Press, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-62979-495-2)

When Bat loses his home, he has a hard time finding a new one. One animal after another turns him away, but he finally finds the perfect spot inside a leafy nest up a tree. Squirrel’s already there, but she’s dozing and so Bat deposits the bugs he’s gathered on the bed and happily finds a twig to hang from and goes to sleep. Squirrel is startled and annoyed when she discovers the uninvited guest in the morning and writes an emphatic note telling Bat to leave. (“Dear Bat, Bug off! Sincerely, Squirrel”) When Bat finds the note he understands it to mean that Squirrel didn’t like the insects on her bed, so he politely moves them to a corner of the nest. That begins a series of misunderstandings, all conveyed through correspondence, with Squirrel telling Bat to leave, and Bat, ever the optimist, consistently misinterpreting her messages. Eventually Squirrel realizes that she’s come to appreciate the ever-cheery Bat, while Bat knows he’d be lonely without Squirrel, and so the duo agrees to be roommates. Appealing illustrations sweeten this charming comedy of errors featuring an odd couple of the animal world. (Ages 3–6)

Mike, Nadia. *Leah’s Mustache Party*. Illustrated by Charlene Chua. Inhabit Media, 2016. 26 pages (978-1-77227-081-5)

When Leah dresses as a pirate for Halloween she likes her painted-on mustache so much that she begins to wear one regularly. “Some days before school, Leah would ask her mom, ‘Could you please draw a mustache on my face for me?’ Leah’s mom would always smile and say, ‘Yes, of course, my Leah.’” When Leah’s birthday rolls around she wants a mustache party, where “everyone has to wear the biggest, best mustache they can!” Although a few girls from school initially balk at the idea, everyone gets in the spirit by the time the party day arrives. A spirited, upbeat story about a child free to follow her own interests is based on the author’s own family: Her note includes a photo of her daughter, Leah, wearing a mustache. Author Nadia Mike is Inuit, and the art realistically reflects Inuit people with a range of skin tones and hair color (Leah in the

story is red-headed, just like Leah in the photo), as well as the northern setting. (Ages 3–7)

Morales, Yuyi. *Rudas: Niño's Horrendous Hermanitas*. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2016. 32 pages (978–1–62672–240–8)

Niño's back and this time he's completely upstaged by las hermanitas—the lucha queens. In lucha libre there are two kinds of wrestlers—the Técnicos, those who play by the rules, and the Rudos, those who don't. The toddler twins are definitely in the second category. First introduced at the end of the popular *Niño Wrestles the World* when they awakened from their nap, here the duo is wide awake and running the show. The genius here is that all the Rudas' tactics are typical toddler behaviors. They defeat El Extraterrestre with the Poopy Bomb Blowout, and when the Olmec Head steps in to vanquish them with a diaper change, they go for the famous Nappy Freedom Break. They teethe on El Chamuco's tail and then point to the Guanajuato Mummy as the culprit and, most hilariously, grab two of La Llorona's children, saying "Gimme!" and "¡Mio!" In the end, only Niño can defeat them by employing a classic older sibling move—deflection. As with the first book, there is a playful blend of Spanish and English, and plenty to look at in the comic-style illustrations. (Ages 3–6)

Mühle, Jörg. *Tickle My Ears*. Translated from the German by Catherine Chidgey. U.S. edition: Gecko Press, 2016. 18 pages (978–1–776570–76–8)

In this interactive board book, little white rabbit is poised to react to actions from young readers and listeners, as directed by the narrative voice. Tap him on the shoulder [turn the page] and he turns around. Clap your hands [turn the page] and he'll put on his pajamas. Eventually the rabbit is tucked into bed. He needs only a good-night kiss and switching off the light. A darkened, final double-page spread shows the little bunny sleeping peacefully. A clever, child-friendly book invites involvement in a bedtime story. (Ages 18 months–3)

Murray, Alison. *The House That Zack Built*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2016. 24 pages (978–0–7636–7844–9)

The traditional patterned story is given fresh, original treatment in a lively picture book that begins with a little boy named Zack building a house of blocks beneath a tree. Enter a fly, which "buzzes on by" and is stalked by the cat, who knocks over the cream, which "roused the dog" who was "deep in a dream." There are also lambs "calm and serene" (not for long), a cow named Daisy (the source of the cream), and one big mess for Zack. Luckily, Zack is up to the task of restoring order. Rich and surprising word choice adds to the delight of this account that turns toward a satisfying conclusion before things go on too long, making this a wonderfully paced read-aloud for toddlers and preschoolers. Brightly hued digital illustrations on matte paper show the entire escapade taking place in a winsome farmyard. (Ages 2–5)

Portis, Antoinette. *Best Frints in the Whole Universe*. A Neal Porter**Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-62672-136-4)**

“Yelfrick and Omek have been best frints since they were little blobbies.” The language these two little aliens from the planet Boborp speak is sort of like English. But there are just enough near-misses to remind us that they are not quite like us. Their behaviors, however, are completely recognizable. “Frints on Boborp have been known to use their teef and not their words.” The two are shown as pink and purple blob-like creatures with long tails and sharp teeth (or teef). They mostly get along except when one of them refuses to give his frint a turp driving his new spossip. Children who like their humor served with a healthy dose of goofiness will enjoy the wordplay in this scifi picture book. (Ages 3–6)

Robert, Nadine. *Toshi’s Little Treasures*. Illustrated by Aki. Translated from the French by Yvette Ghione. U.S. edition: Kids Can Press, 2016.**32 pages (978-1-77138-573-2)**

A picture-book homage to the love of collecting is full of small treasures and small pleasures. Whenever Toshi and his grandma take a walk, Toshi collects things that interest him (e.g., a marble, a magnolia blossom, an acorn, a guitar pick, the tab from a soda can, a cricket casing). Expansive double-page spreads show each place they visit (river, town, forest, country, park, beach), with the many objects Toshi will eventually pick up scattered and labeled throughout the scene. Alternating spreads feature two single pages, one showing everything Toshi collected, the other showing objects that relate to the items (e.g., a pink magnolia tree, a guitar, a soda can), inviting readers to find the match for each of Toshi’s treasures (answers, if needed, are in the back). There’s so much to pour over, notice, and love in this picture book, including the relationship between Toshi and his grandma. A delicate touch and skillful use of white space make illustrations full of colorful objects and detailed scenes feel uncluttered. Toshi and his grandmother are Japanese. (Ages 3–7)

Rylant, Cynthia. *Little Penguins*. Illustrated by Christian Robinson.**Schwartz & Wade / Random House, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-553-50770-6)**

Five little penguins are thrilled to see the first snowflakes fall as winter begins. They don hats, mittens, socks, and boots and head out into the deep, deeper, very deep snow. After playing for a short while, they realize they’re getting cold so head back indoors, and remove their winter clothes—off! off! off! off! After some warm cookies and sippy cups, they all get tucked in for the night, secure in the knowledge that winter is here. Acrylic and cut-paper collage illustrations show the little black penguins in marvelous contrast to the deep white snow. (Ages 18 months–3)

Smith, Monique Gray. *My Heart Fills with Happiness*. Illustrated by Julie Flett. Orca, 2016. 22 pages (978-1-4598-0957-4)

“My heart fills with happiness when . . .” A comforting board book offers young children the opportunity for reflection, and for affirmation, too. Moments of happiness tucked into each and every day celebrated here include time with family (“I see the face of someone I love”), self-expression (“I sing”),

and the natural world (“I walk barefoot in the grass”). Author Monique Gray Smith (Cree/Lakota) has written a narrative lovingly grounded in First/Native Nations culture, community, and traditions (“I smell bannock in the oven ... I drum”). Illustrator Julie Flett (Cree/Métis) invites children into the book’s warm embrace with intimate and expressive gouache and digital collage illustrations of First/Native Nations children, or children and adults together in a book that invites all children to consider, “What fills YOUR heart with happiness?” (Ages 1–4)

Stosuy, Brandon. *Music Is ...* Illustrated by Amy Martin. Little Simon, 2016. 28 pages (978–1–4814–7702–4)

This purposefully inclusive board book celebrates music as something for everyone. The illustrations show distinctive, individual people of color with a range of ages and body types. There are women playing electric guitars and a man playing a harp, a little girl with two men—presumably her dads—and so on. Some of the concepts may be a bit advanced for a typical board book audience (Lo-fi vs. Hi-fi; “fuzzy” guitars), but definitions of the music terms are provided on the final page, a welcome element for any adult who may be unsure of something’s meaning. (Ages 1–3)

Taylor, Sean. *A Brave Bear*. Illustrated by Emily Hughes. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–7636–8224–8)

On a blazingly hot day, a father bear says, “I think a pair of hot bears is probably the hottest thing ever.” His small son suggests they go down to the river to cool off. But the trip is arduous for the small bear, and along the way he makes observations that follow the same pattern of his father’s original statement. “I think a jumping bear is probably the jumpiest thing in the world!” A few mishaps lead to more observations from the baby bear (“a brave bear is the bravest thing,” “a wet bear is the wettest thing”). Finally, they head home, in a satisfyingly poetic resolution: “On the way home, the sun was glowing. The air was glowing ... / Even tomorrow was glowing.” Illustrator Emily Hughes aptly matches Taylor’s tone by showing the playfulness and the intimacy of the father–son relationship without getting too sweet. (Ages 3–5)

Van Camp, Richard. *We Sang You Home*. Illustrated by Julie Flett. Orca, 2016. 24 pages (978–1–4598–1178–2)

“We sang you from a wish / We sang you from a prayer / We sang you home / and you sang back ...” The words in this board book are simple and yet sophisticated in their meaning as they communicate the unconditional love parents feel for their child. It’s as comforting as a lullaby, and the elegant illustrations by Cree/Métis artist Julie Flett complement Richard Van Camp’s text perfectly. They initially show a mom and dad sitting outside, singing up to the sky. Next they appear with a tiny baby in a carrier, watching a flock of birds move across the sky. Succeeding pages show the baby growing just a bit older until he or she is crawling. The final wordless page shows the parents in the same outdoor setting as the first page, this time the baby with them as they sing again to the sky. (Ages birth–2)

Velasquez, Eric. *Looking for Bongo. Holiday House, 2016. 32 pages*
(978-0-8234-3565-4)

A small, pajama-clad boy is on a morning hunt at home for Bongo. “*Dónde está Bongo?*” He asks Wela, his grandmother; Gato the cat; Daisy the dog; and his dad. He tries to ask his mom, but she’s busy. Even the delivery man at the door is questioned. No one knows where Bongo is. The boy finally finds Bongo, a small brown-and-white stuffed animal dog, peeking out from behind a set of bongo drums. “Tonight I will hold on to Bongo so he won’t run away.” It turns out Bongo isn’t on the run, but someone else is in this picture book with an ending that is surely a surprise to the boy and may be to child readers and listeners, although others may have noticed a certain look on the guilty party’s face earlier in the story. The illustrations in this picture book featuring an Afro-Latino family provide a wonderful sense of home and warmth and morning routine. (Ages 3–6)

Weaver, Jo. *Little One. U.S. edition: Peachtree, 2016. 32 pages*
(978-1-56145-924-7)

When spring arrives Big Bear leads her cub out into the world to teach Little One everything needed to survive—which animals are friendly, how to fish, how to swim, which berries to eat. The two journey through their world all spring and through the summer, finally circling back to their den as the snow starts to fall in order to curl up together and hibernate for the long winter ahead. Debut author/illustrator Jo Weaver shows an impressive talent for drawing realistic animals with just a touch of humanization to accentuate the close mother–child bond. Her accomplished soft charcoal drawings fill each page with beautifully rendered portraits of the natural world. (Ages 2–5)

Wong, Liz. *Quackers. Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. 32 pages*
(978-0-553-51154-3)

Quackers is a cat raised by ducks so he assumes he’s a duck, even though he doesn’t like a lot of duck things (slugs, duckweed, water) and sometimes feels misunderstood by the other ducks. Then he has a chance meeting with a barn cat named Mittens and soon joins other cats in the barn, where he finally feels like he fits in. Not only that, but the food is better and chasing mice is much more fun than swimming. But eventually he starts missing his old life—even the duckweed—and, more important, his old friends. A droll, understated text accompanied by distinctive watercolor illustrations is full of charm, warmth, and gentle humor as Quackers realizes he can be both duck and cat, but most of all he can simply be himself. (Ages 2–5)

Picture Books for School-Age Children

Archer, Micha. *Daniel Finds a Poem*. Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-399-16913-7)

Each day leading up to “Poetry in the Park,” Daniel asks a different animal what poetry is. And each animal has an answer. Poetry is “when morning dew glistens,” says Spider. It’s “when crisp leaves crunch,” says Squirrel. It’s “a cool place to dive into,” says Frog. By week’s end, when the event arrives, Daniel turns the many things he’s heard into a poem that reveals how poetry is senses, and observation, and language, and feeling. “On the way home, Daniel stops to watch the sunset sky reflecting in the pond. “That looks like poetry to me.” A quiet, purposeful story featuring brown-skinned Daniel features lovely, striking collage illustrations and invites children to notice the poetry in the small moments of their lives. *Highly Commended, 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4–8)

Boelts, Maribeth. *A Bike Like Sergio’s*. Illustrated by Noah Z. Jones. Candlewick Press, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-7636-6649-1)

Everybody has a bike but Ruben. He longs for one like his friend Sergio’s, but he knows his family can’t afford any kind of bicycle. So when Ruben sees a neighbor in the grocery store drop a hundred-dollar bill from her purse, he snatches it up and pockets it. It’s enough to buy him a bike like Sergio’s. Will he do it? Ruben thinks through this ethical dilemma over the next day or so and ultimately decides to do the right thing. “What you did wasn’t easy,” his dad tells him later, “but it was right.” Both text and pictures show a family living on the economic edge, facing realistic challenges in their day-to-day lives. *Highly Commended, 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5–8)

Bogart, Jo Ellen. *The White Cat and the Monk: A Retelling of the Poem “Pangur Bán”*. Illustrated by Sydney Smith. Greenwood, 2016. 28 pages (978-1-55498-780-1)

A graceful prose retelling of a 9th-century Gaelic poem thought to have been written by an Irish monk in a German abbey. In the poem, the monk compares the cat’s hunt for mice to his own search for knowledge. Sydney Smith’s watercolor and ink illustrations provide a strong sense of time and place while his use of sequential art, in some cases on wordless page spreads, gives the book a wholly modern feel. Mostly illustrated in somber tones, the pictures burst into color when showing an illuminated manuscript that is a visual echo of the poem itself. An author’s note places the poem into a historical context, saying it’s “a peek into the time and mind of one poet” but that it also resonates age after age with anyone who has ever worked alongside a beloved pet. (Ages 5–10)

Brown, Monica. *Marisol McDonald and the Monster = Marisol McDonald y el monstruo*. Illustrated by Sara Palacios. Spanish translation by Adriana Dominguez. Children's Book Press / Lee & Low, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-89239-326-8)

Marisol McDonald loves the letter M and almost everything beginning with that letter, except the monster that lives under her bed. Every night she wakes her family when she hears it. They try to convince her there's no such thing as a monster, while Marisol tries to conquer her fears by making a stuffed toy monster. But she still hears the bumps in the night. On the night everyone else finally hears them, too, an investigation reveals the amusing source (though sharp-eyed readers and listeners may have already figured it out). Marisol has an Anglo father and a Latina mother. The inclusion of Spanish words in the English text and English words in the Spanish text is natural and fluid. The mixed-media illustrations show Marisol as brown-skinned like her mother and red-haired like her father in this pleasing story. (Ages 4-7)

Charara, Hayan. *The Three Lucys*. Illustrated by Sara Kahn. Lee & Low, 2016. 40 pages (978-1-60060-998-5)

Luli loves his three cats, all named Lucy—Lucy the Fat, Lucy the Skinny, and Lucy Lucy. When he and his parents go to spend a weekend in Beirut with his aunt and uncle, they leave the Lucys behind with fresh water and a big bowl of food, knowing that will get them through a couple of days. But as Luli and his parents are returning home, bombs start to fall and they must retreat to the safety of his aunt and uncle's basement back in Beirut. They wait out the bombing for 34 days, until a ceasefire is declared and they can safely return home. Except for some dust and shattered windows, their house is fine, but where are the Lucys? Two of them have survived but the third, Lucy Lucy, cannot be found. Both the narrative and the art in this dramatic, child-centered story is specific to modern Lebanon but gives young readers a sense of daily life in any contemporary war-torn country. (Ages 5-8)

Colato Laínez, René. *Mamá the Alien = Mamá la extraterrestre*. Illustrated by Laura Lacámara. Children's Book Press / Lee & Low, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-89239-298-8)

When a little girl finds her mother's Resident Alien card in her purse, she is certain she has stumbled on a big secret—her mother is from another planet! Her mother has always seemed like a normal person, but does she speak another language besides Spanish and English? Do other aliens from her planet land their spaceship in her backyard when they come for a visit? Most of all, how does Mamá hide her alien appearance? When the daughter sees her mother wearing night cream and curlers in her hair, she's certain she's come upon the true alien Mamá. But her parents calmly explain that "alien" is one of those words with more than one meaning—it can mean someone from another country *or* from another planet. Whimsically illustrated, this funny story based on a child's misunderstanding is told in Spanish and English. (Ages 4-7)

Cole, Henry. *Spot, the Cat*. Little Simon, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-4814-4225-1)

A cat entranced by a bird on the ledge outside its apartment slips through the open window, the departure unnoticed by the boy reading nearby. It's the start of a city adventure for the intrepid feline, and an urgent quest for the boy once he discovers Spot (white cat with black spot) is missing. This intricate wordless story is rendered in detailed black pen-and-ink illustrations. Busy scenes of city life—buildings and bustling streets; an overhead view of kite flyers in a park; a parking lot farmer's market; a cavernous, Grand Central-like station, and more—not only offer the chance to spot the wandering cat on almost every page (there are red herrings too), but to notice other whimsical elements. The boy's journey is one of increasing worry, but sharp readers will note some near misses when he and Spot are close to each other. (The two pages when the boy looks most hopeless are notably Spot-less). It turns out Spot is perfectly capable of finding home again, and the reunion is sweet and satisfying. (Ages 4–7)

Cummins, Lucy Ruth. *A Hungry Lion or A Dwindling Assortment of Animals*. Atheneum, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-4814-4889-5)

"Once upon a time there was a hungry lion, a penguin, a turtle, a little calico kitten, a brown mouse, a bunny with floppy ears, and a bunny with un-floppy ears ..." The list goes on. But with each turn of the page, some of the animals disappear, until finally the narrator notes, "Umm ... I guess Once upon a time there was just a HUNGRY LION and a dwindling assortment of other animals." Just when children will think they've got it all figured out—that lion, whistling innocently, is clearly eating the others—Surprise! Here they all are, at a party. For the lion. With cake ("enormous, lovely four-tiered cake with buttercream frosting"). Whew! But then ... who turned off the lights? Oh! There's never a dull moment in this picture book, with its alternating cascade of language and sparsely stated moments, its perfect pacing, and its constant unsettling of readers' and listeners' understanding and expectations. Child-like illustrations offset the sophisticated text, adding to the overall effect of being deliciously undermined at every turn. (Ages 4–8)

Edwards, Michelle. *A Hat for Mrs. Goldman: A Story about Knitting and Love*. Illustrated by G. Brian Karas. Schwartz & Wade / Random House, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-553-49710-6)

Sophia helps her neighbor Mrs. Goldman by making pom-poms for the hats the older woman knits for their friends and neighbors. Making pom-poms is what Sophia is good at. Knitting is too hard for her. When Mrs. Goldman gives away her own hat to someone who needs it, Sophia worries about how cold she must be when they are out together. She decides to take matters into her own hands by knitting a new hat for Mrs. Goldman. The result, not surprisingly, is a hat that's lumpy and full of holes. How can Sophia give such an awful looking hat to someone who knits such beautiful ones? The answer lies in Sophia's special skill—20 pom-poms to cover all the holes. Mrs. Goldman loves her unique hat—a "mitzvah" she calls it. G. Brian Karas's cozy mixed-media illustrations are perfect for this warm story about a friendship between an elderly Jewish woman and her young Latina neighbor. (Ages 4–7)

Farish, Terry. *Luis Paints the World*. Illustrated by Oliver Dominguez. Carolrhoda, 2016. 32 pages (978–1–4677–5796–6)

The night before Luis's big brother, Nico, leaves for an army posting overseas, Luis paints a picture on the alley wall outside their home. "It's the world," he tells Nico. "So now you don't have to go." Of course Nico does go, but he sends back photos and messages about the places he sees. Luis begins incorporating images inspired by Nico's photos and descriptions of far away into his mural, which gradually grows along the alley wall. Time passes. Seasons change. Sometimes it's too cold for the paint to stick. Sometimes Luis and Mami don't hear from Nico. Luis worries, wondering when Nico will come home to the baseball and the flan that he loves, even though Mami warns him baseball and flan are not always enough, that sometimes people move on. As others in the neighborhood help with the mural, it becomes a colorful celebration of their community and of the wider world in a story that ends with a joyful reunion. An author's note explains how a mural project in her community inspired a story that will resonate with any child who is waiting for someone to come home. (Ages 5–8)

Goldsaito, Katrina. *The Sound of Silence*. Illustrated by Julia Kuo. Little, Brown, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–316–20337–1)

On the busy streets of Tokyo, Yoshio asks a koto player her favorite sound. She replies that the most beautiful sound to her is *ma*, the sound of silence. Yoshio tries to hear the sound of silence, but can't find it. Noise seems to be everywhere: kids at school, traffic on the street, his family's chopsticks and chewing during dinner. It's not until Yoshi is engrossed in reading a book in an empty classroom that he realizes he's hearing a moment of *ma*. "It had been there between the thumps of his boots when he ran; when the wind stopped for just a moment in the bamboo grove; at the end of his family's meal, when everyone was happy and full; after the water finished draining from his bath; before the koto's player music began—and hovering in the air, right after it ended. It was between and underneath every sound." A picture book set in Tokyo is illustrated with detailed pen and digitally colored scenes that are both expansive and intimate, much like the story is full of both activity and quiet. An afterword gives additional information about the Japanese concept of *ma*. *Highly Commended, 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4–8)

Ikegami, Aiko. *Friends*. Albert Whitman, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–8075–2550–0)

A child who has traveled far arrives at a new school. "She was different. And alone." Slowly she makes friends, first with animals and then with children. "They all started to play." When another student arrives, one who is also different and alone after arriving from a faraway place, the child who was new at the start of the story is among the first to welcome him. A spare text—a single simple sentence of a few words each on every page spread—pairs with soft-edged, comforting illustrations full of warmth and unexpected humor: The second new student arrives in a spaceship. He is a round-bodied, green-skinned traveler from another planet. The little girl at the center of the story is Japanese

in a picture book that can open a door to rich discussion about friendship. (Ages 4–7)

Jin-Ho, Jung. *Look Up!* Translated from the Korean by Mi Hyun Kim.

U.S. edition: Holiday House, 2016. 32 pages (978–0–8234–3652–1)

First published in Korea, this original picture book is drawn from the perspective of a little girl in a wheelchair who lives in a top floor apartment of a high-rise building. Looking out over her balcony at the people far below, she keeps shouting, “Look up!” All she—and readers—see are the tops of heads as people rush by on her busy street. Finally, a little boy hears her and stops to look up. He then lies on the ground so she can see all of him. This attracts attention and others begin to lie on the sidewalk, too. In the end the little girl goes downstairs to join her new friend. The sketchy black-and-white line drawings require readers to interpret the action that’s going on down on the street far below by seeing the world solely through the protagonist’s eyes. (Ages 4–8)

Klassen, Jon. *We Found a Hat*. Candlewick Press, 2016. 48 pages

(978–0–7636–5600–3)

Once again, Klassen turns to a favorite subject—the interactions between animals that are focused on the same hat. Here two turtles walking through a desert find a cowboy hat. It looks good on both of them, so who gets to wear it? They decide to solve the problem by leaving the hat behind, forgetting that they ever found it. But can they? The pictures go on to tell the story, with negative space and body language used to great effect, often contradicting the text. Even the position of a turtle’s eye speaks volumes in this droll understated story of the problems hat envy can stir up, and the surprisingly generous (given the previous “hat” books) resolution of this simple yet sophisticated work. (Ages 4–8)

Kulling, Monica. *Happy Birthday, Alice Babette*. Illustrated by Qin Leng.

Groundwood, 2016. 32 pages (978–1–55498–820–4)

“*It will be a day filled with surprises,*” Alice Babette thinks. “Alice’s first surprise was that there was NO surprise. Her friend Gertrude didn’t even say happy birthday.” Alice spends the day walking around Paris on her own. Meanwhile, Gertrude is planning a special, surprise meal for Alice, even though she can’t cook. She’s also writing Alice a poem, about a rose, and loses all track of time. An imagined story about Alice B. Toklas and Gertrude Stein is full of whimsy—and smoke! Alice returns home to a mess. But when Gertrude later reads the poem aloud, Alice loves it. The characters may be adults but everything in this story has child appeal, from the back-and-forth movement between Alice’s and Gertrude’s separate adventures throughout the day to the spirited writing to the charm of their distinctive personalities and the obvious fondness between them. Blithe pen-and-ink and watercolor illustrations are a perfect accompaniment. An author’s note does not explicitly state the two women were partners, instead noting that they “lived together for almost forty years.” (Ages 4–8)

Marshall, Linda Elovitz. *Rainbow Weaver = Tejedora del arcoíris.*
Illustrated by Elisa Chavarri. Spanish translation by Eida de la Vega.
Children's Book Press / Lee & Low, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-89239-374-9)

Ixchel longs to weave beautiful fabric like her mother and the other women of their Guatemalan mountain home. But there's not enough thread to spare for practice, so innovative Ixchel turns to alternative materials she finds around her. She learns that grass blades and raw wool can be woven on her homemade back-strap loom, but the finished product isn't something that will sell in the market. Finally she turns to the empty plastic bags littering the ground of her community. Washed, dried, and cut into strips, they can be woven into fabric that "looked like a beautiful rainbow, almost as pretty as the weavings of her mother, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers before her." Dual English and Spanish language texts effectively use pattern and repetition to tell this fictionalized story, while an author's note adds welcome background information about contemporary Mayan weavers who use thread from plastic bags to create products sold through fair trade cooperatives in countries including the United States. (Ages 4–8)

Maturana, Andrea. *Life without Nico.* **Illustrated by Francisco Javier Olea.**
Translated from the Spanish. Kids Can Press, 2016. 36 pages
(978-1-77138-611-1)

There are plenty of picture books about best friends moving away and they follow a similar pattern—shock, sadness, adjustment, and, finally, finding a new friend. This book has all of that with an added twist: Maia's best friend, Nico, returns after a year away and things are different. "Maia thought she'd be happy but instead she's worried. Her life has become so full. Will there be room for, Nico too?" The simple, straightforward narrative focuses on Maia's emotional responses to Nico's departure and return, while expressionistic illustrations perfectly capture the tone. (Ages 4–8)

Merino, Gemma. *The Cow Who Climbed a Tree.* **U.S. edition: Albert Whitman, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-8075-1298-2)**

"Tina was a very curious cow. She had a thirst for discovery." But forging a nontraditional path has its naysayers. Tina's three sisters meet her dreams with a constant refrain: "IMPOSSIBLE! RIDICULOUS! NONSENSE!" They say it when she imagines flying in a rocket ship, and they certainly say it when Tina tells her sisters about the friendly, flying dragon she's met. Still, when Tina isn't at breakfast the next morning they go in search of her, venturing beyond their farm for the first time. They can't help but notice the scenery is beautiful. And what they go on to witness is impossible, ridiculous, nonsense! But it's true: Tina is flying (well, parachuting; so are a pig and a penguin), her new dragon friend soaring nearby. This absurd and inspiring story is full of humor (e.g., Tina's stickler-for-tradition sisters are cows living in a house, eating their grass at a well-set table) and set against singular illustrations that are distinctive and lovely, combining abstract washes of expressive color with quirky and charmingly detailed characters. *Highly Commended, 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4–7)

Messier, Mireille. *The Branch*. Illustrated by Pierre Pratt. Kids Can Press, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-77138-564-0)

When a bad storm tears a little girl's favorite branch off a tree, she insists on keeping it. To her mother it's "just a branch" but to the girl it was "my castle, my spy base, my ship . . ." Only her next-door neighbor, Mr. Frank, understands the girl's dismay. "That branch is full of potential!" he tells her. Together they work on a project in his workshop—drawing up plans, measuring, sawing, drying, waiting, planning, drilling, varnishing—until the branch has been transformed into a bit of its former glory, as a swing. The hard work it takes to create the swing is realistically portrayed visually in a series of appealing vignettes. (Ages 4–7)

Miller, Pat Zietlow. *The Quickest Kid in Clarksville*. Illustrated by Frank Morrison. Chronicle, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-4521-2936-5)

Alta prides herself on being the fastest runner in Clarksville, Tennessee, hometown of Olympic star Wilma Rudolph. But Charmaine, of the new-shoes-just-like-Wilma's, is fast, too. She may even be faster than Alta, although it's hard to say: Alta is sure Charmaine tripped her when she won the race between them. Alta ended up with a hole in her sneaker. "Oh, baby girl," says Mama. "Those shoes have to last." On the day of a parade for Wilma Rudolph, Alta and her friends Dee-Dee and Little Mo make a huge banner, but getting the banner all the way to the parade isn't easy, and time is running out. Then Charmaine shows up and suggests they take turns carrying it—a relay, just like Wilma ran for one of her medals. A spirited story set in 1960 ends with an author's note featuring a photograph of Wilma Rudolph at the real parade held in her honor in Clarksville. The energetic illustrations are full of movement and feeling. (Ages 5–8)

Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux. *Don't Call Me Grandma*. Illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon. Carolrhoda, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-4677-4208-5)

Great-Grandmother Nell is "prickly" and "stern." At 96, she is also full of memories: the time her sour cherry prize won first prize, the days a Hershey bar cost a nickel, the childhood moment "her best friend said they couldn't be friends anymore because of her brown skin." A picture book that moves between moments in the present and memories of the past gains a sense of immediacy and engagement from the young narrator's present-tense, first-person voice, in which love and compassion hum beneath the surface, even as she sometimes finds it a challenge to connect with her older relative. Illustrations in two styles delineate between present and past and include a double-page collage suggesting a scrapbook, showing Great-Grandmother Nell's intersection with African American history and culture in the mid-20th century. (Ages 5–9)

Park, Linda Sue. *Yaks Yak: Animal Word Pairs*. Illustrated by Jennifer Black Reinhardt. Clarion, 2016. 40 pages (978-0-544-39101-7)

Homographs—words spelled and pronounced the same but with different meanings—are the subject of a playful picture book that pairs a variety of animals with their identically named actions. Chatty yaks yak. An annoying bug bugs his companions. Frightened quails quail in fear. Curious cranes

crane their necks. Greedy hogs hog all the apples. Each page spread features a single homograph pair and a whimsical scene in which one or more of the anthropomorphized animals are engaged in the act their name also represents. A definition for the action is provided on the page spread while a chart in the back lists all of the words (both animal and action) and their etymology. (In many cases, the action word comes from the animal's behavior.) What is the homograph pair for young humans? "Kids kid" of course! (Ages 5–8)

Perkins, Lynne Rae. *Frank and Lucky Get Schooled*. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2016. 32 pages (978-0-06-237345-8)

When Frank, a boy, meets Lucky, a dog, "Both of them were just pups. They had a lot to learn." That's exactly what school is for. For Frank and Lucky, the world is their classroom. With Lucky's help, Frank learns Botany pulling burrs from Lucky's coat, and Chemistry and the try-again aspects of experimentation attempting to remove the skunk smell when Lucky gets sprayed. (They study Astronomy under a night sky when Lucky is banished outside.) Lucky excels at listening during Reading, while Math is everywhere (How many biscuits? How much hair is it possible to shed?), even fractions ("how much of the bed is Lucky's, and how much is Frank's?") Art, History, Geography—lessons aren't lessons at all when Frank and Lucky are together. The detailed illustrations, full of speech-bubble dialogue and additional moments of humor, are a pleasure to pour over and a seamless part of the storytelling in this warm, clever offering. (Ages 4–8)

Rex, Adam. *School's First Day of School*. Illustrated by Christian Robinson. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Book Press, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-59643-964-1)

We know about children's anxiety on the first day of school but what about the school itself? Newly built Frederick Douglass Elementary is just as nervous about its first day as its students are. Before school starts, a man named Janitor mops and buffs the floors, and it's nice when it's just the two of them. But when the children start filing in—more of them than the school could have imagined—school begins to worry. It's clear not all of the kids want to be there, while others are afraid. The kids are also noisy and messy (although school gets even by squirting a boy at the water fountain). But school discovers it can learn a thing or two in kindergarten class. By the time the kids leave at the end of the first day, school is eager to have them come back. Christian Robinson's acrylic illustrations incorporate classic elements, like a flag, circle rug, and chalkboard with the alphabet above, in scenes showing a diverse, contemporary school in this perfect antidote for first-day jitters. *Highly Commended, 2017 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4–7)

Robertson, David A. *When We Were Alone*. Illustrated by Julie Flett. Highwater Press, 2016. 32 pages (978-1-55379-673-2)

A young Cree girl gardening with her kókom asks about certain habits she has observed: Her kókom always wears bright color and a long braid. She often speaks in Cree and enjoys spending time with her brother. There is a story behind each that is connected to kókom's years in Indian Boarding School. The

students were not allowed to wear bright colors, for example. “But sometimes,” Kókom says, “in the fall when we were alone, and the leaves had turned to their warm autumn hues, we would all roll around on the ground. We would pile the leaves over the clothes they had given us, and we would be colorful again. And this made us happy.” Each question and answer follows this same pattern, with Kókom describing small acts of resistance that helped her and her classmates survive emotionally. The beautiful, affecting narrative is accompanied by Julie Flett’s striking, culturally authentic illustrations that show the connection between the child and her elders. (Ages 5–8)

Rocha, Ruth. *Lines, Squiggles, Letters, Words*. Illustrated by Madalena Matoso. Translated from the Portuguese by Lyn Miller-Lachmann.

U.S. edition: *Enchanted Lion*, 2016. 32 pages (978–1–59270–208–4)

Living in a big city, Pedro is very conscious of signs, which just look like lines and funny squiggles to him. But once he goes to school and starts to learn to read, he begins seeing letters in the signs—first an A, then a D. The change in his perception is gradual, but before long he is able to read whole words on the signs. Flat, boldly colored illustrations show the signs as they look to Pedro throughout the story, so that readers can recognize words and then letters along with Pedro in this original take on learning to read. (Ages 5–8)

Sanna, Francesca. *The Journey*. Flying Eye Books, 2016. 40 pages (978–1–909263–99–4)

“... one day the war took my father.” A young child describes a family’s journey to escape its homeland, which has become a war zone. The potent, matter-of-fact narrative is set against striking illustrations that are stylized, beautiful, and harrowing. The mother does everything possible to reassure and protect her children as they travel, much of this conveyed through small yet critical details in the art. “In the darkness the noises of the forest scare me. But mother is with us and she is never scared. We close our eyes and finally fall asleep.” But as the children sleep in their mother’s arms she lies wide awake, and in tears. Over and over the emotional weight of the story is conveyed through affecting, sometimes heart-rending images juxtaposed with the voice of innocence. “I hope one day ... we will find a new home. A home where we can be safe and begin our story again.” There is no geographic specificity stated, but the journey from western Asia to Europe is implied in an account that includes tense moments of hiding, a secret border crossing, a crowded ferry, and travel by train beneath free-flying birds across many more borders in search of safety—a need that all children can understand. (Ages 5–9)

Sommerset, Mark. *Baa Baa Smart Sheep*. Illustrated by Rowan Somerset. U.S. edition: *Candlewick Press*, 2016. 24 pages (978–0–7636–8066–4)

A bored sheep. A pile of poo. Then along comes Quirky Turkey, a gullible gobbler if there ever was one. A brief exchange leads Quirky Turkey to ask, “What’s that?” Little Baa Baa explains that the pile of pellets is “smarty tablets,” which make one “More intelligent ... Brainier.” Not only that, but they’re free for turkeys. And so even though they look like poo, and smell like poo, Quirky

Turkey gobbles them up. “Oh no ... it **IS** poo!” cries Quirky Turkey. “See, you’re getting smarter already!” A hilarious picture book is told almost entirely through the two characters’ speech bubble dialogue, which features a masterful demonstration of evasion and subterfuge on the part of Little Baa Baa, and a variety of evocative facial expressions on the googly-eyed bird and wide-eyed, wise-guy sheep. Scatological humor isn’t for everyone, but for those who find it funny this offering is priceless. (Ages 5–10)

Wenzel, Brendan. *They All Saw a Cat*. Chronicle, 2016. 36 pages (978–1–4521–5013–0)

“The cat walked through the world, with its whiskers, ears, and paws ...” This lyrical phrase, repeated several times over the course of a clever and distinctive picture book, introduces a number of different animals that observe the cat on its travels. Each page spread visualizes what the cat looks like from a different creature’s point of view. A goldfish sees the cat as two huge, luminous eyes distorted through a curved bowl. A mouse sees a terror of teeth and claws. A bee sees pixel-like dots of color. A worm underground sees a cat-shaped heat signature. A skunk sees the cat up close, in black and white. A bat sees a shape of spotted light. A bird gets an overhead, distant view. But no matter who it is, “The cat knew them all and they all knew the cat.” The perception of 12 different animals, one a human child, is offered without additional descriptive commentary or explanation, other than naming the observer. There is much to consider and discuss in a work that playfully interprets science, perspective, and emotion to serve an artful, whimsical end. (Ages 4–8)

Williams, Vera B. *Home at Last*. Illustrated by Vera B. Williams and Chris Raschka. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2016. (978–0–06–134973–7)

When Lester (who looks about seven) is adopted by Daddy Rich and Daddy Albert, there’s a long period of adjustment for all of them. Even though they had known they would be a family for a while, it’s different when Lester moves from the children’s center into his new, permanent home. He refuses to unpack his small blue suitcase of action figures, but every night Lester takes one of them into his dads’ room and stands next to their bed, hoping he’ll be invited to sleep between them. And every night his dads lead him back to his own bed. It takes time—and talking—for all of them to understand one another, and for Lester to realize he’s truly home at last. An author’s note indicates that Williams had written the text and started the sketches for the book, then asked Chris Raschka to collaborate on the art when she realized she wouldn’t live long enough to complete it. The resulting artwork shows an inherent sense of unity, as well as the distinctive and recognizable styles of both artists. (Ages 6–10)

Books for Beginning Readers

dePaola, Tomie. *When Andy Met Sandy.* Cowritten with Jim Lewis. (An Andy & Sandy Book) Simon & Schuster, 2016. 24 pages (978-1-4814-4155-1)

This is the first in a new series about a friendship between two children, a red-haired white girl and a brown-skinned boy. When Andy notices a new kid at his playground, he wonders about who she is, whether she has friends, and what she likes to do. Sandy (the new kid) in turn wonders the same things about Andy. The two play separately for a while, and finally get together on the seesaw. Short, simple, declarative sentences are written in large typeface. Clean, uncluttered illustrations offer plenty of picture clues. As an added bonus, the endpages show a map of the entire background, with Sandy's house on one side and Andy's on the other. (Ages 5-7)

Haas, Jessie. *Bramble and Maggie: Snow Day.* Illustrated by Alison Friend. Candlewick Press, 2016. 51 pages (978-0-7636-7364-2)

As Maggie's family and neighbors get ready for a big snowstorm, Maggie is making sure her horse, Bramble, has extra hay to stay warm overnight in her stall. Bramble has other ideas, however, and goes on a middle-of-the-night adventure in the storm. "The snow settled on her back, as thick as a blanket. It kept her warm." By morning, Bramble is getting hungry and makes her way home, just in time to help in the morning-after cleanup. Snowstorm aside, this is a warm, cozy offering, the third in the *Bramble and Maggie* series. The engaging story and appealing illustrations make for a winning chapter book for advanced beginning readers. (Ages 4-7)

Lewin, Ted. *I See and See. (I Like to Read) Holiday House, 2016. 24 pages (978-0-8234-3544-9)*

In a very easy beginning reader that looks like a picture book, an African American boy walking to and from school notes things he sees that particularly interest him—a dog, a truck, flowers, a bird, a truck, a butterfly, a man (actually an arborist cutting branches), a truck, and a merry-go-round. At home, he sits on the floor and draws what he's seen. The repetition of "a truck" not only makes for easy reading but also shows exactly where this small boy's interests lie. The realistic watercolor art is not typical for beginning readers—it's more complex and nuanced, yet still offers great picture clues to accompany the minimal text. The sophistication of the artwork and age of the boy also make this a great choice for slightly older children struggling with reading. (Ages 4-6)

Long, Ethan. *Pug. (I Like to Read) Holiday House, 2016. 24 pages (978-0-8234-3645-3)*

"Pug sees Peg." Pug also sees Mom and Dad, and barks eagerly to let each one of them know he'd like to go outside and join Peg. Mom, cozily reading, and Dad, just in from the frigid cold and snow, are unconvinced. By the time Pug gets to Tad, asleep in bed, he's more determined than ever. When Tad

wakes up and is unmoved by Pug's pleas, Pug lifts his leg in a gesture known to every dog owner, and many children. "No, Pug, no." Tad's command is accompanied by resignation. "Go, Pug, go." And they're out the door. A delightful beginning reader in picture-book format features large font, and short words and sentences, while the art adds humor and depth to the story. The full-page scenes are uncluttered but rich with details, from the skeptical expression on Mom's face as she glances out the window at the snow, to the veracity of teenage Tad's bedroom. There's also a satisfying but easy-to-follow twist at story's end. (Ages 4–7)

Yoo, Paula. *Lily's New Home*. Illustrated by Shirley Ng-Benitez. (Dive into Reading!) Lee & Low, 2016. 32 pages (978–1–62014–249–3)

Yoo, Paula. *Want to Play?* Illustrated by Shirley Ng-Benitez. (Dive into Reading!) Lee & Low, 2016. 32 pages (978–1–62014–250–9)

What promises to be a great new series for beginning readers debuts with *Lily's New Home*, in which African American Lily has just moved to a New York City apartment building from a home that had a yard with flowers. She's uncertain about big-city life but her parents show her parts of her new neighborhood that remind her of home and introduce her to some of the rich multicultural elements a big city offers. And at the public library, Lily finds many familiar books. She also meets Pablo, a boy who also loves to read. In the second volume, *Want to Play?*, Pablo takes center stage, leaving his book behind to venture out and play with Lily and introduce her to other friends. They meet Mei and Padma on the swings and join Henry for a game of basketball. Both books have the simple, episodic storylines that are the hallmark of good easy readers, as well as short sentences, large font, and plenty of white space. The watercolor illustrations offer both context clues and cultural specificity. Yoo and Ng-Benitez have created truly engaging child characters living in a vivid, realistic world with just a few masterful lines of text and ink. (Ages 5–7)

Yoon, Salina. *Duck, Duck, Porcupine!* Bloomsbury, 2016. 64 pages (978–1–61963–723–8)

In a relatively easy beginning reader with three short, episodic chapters, Big Duck, Little Duck, and Porcupine are friends who go on a picnic, prepare for Porcupine's birthday, and pack for a camping trip. In each case, Little Duck is the brains/problem-solver, although he is usually ignored due to his youth and stature. For example, in the second chapter, Big Duck knows she has forgotten something (that it's Porcupine's birthday), even though Little Duck keeps offering visual clue after visual clue (a wrapped present, the invitation, pointing at the starred date on the calendar, etc.). Each episode presents a small conflict, writ large by Big Duck, and a satisfying resolution based on Little Duck's creative thinking. There is a lot of gentle, childlike humor in both text and illustrations. (Ages 5–7)

Books for Newly Independent Readers

Krishnaswami, Uma. *Book Uncle and Me*. Illustrated by Julianna Swaney. Groundwood, 2016. 149 pages (978-1-55498-808-2)

Nine-year-old Yasmin visits Book Uncle's Lending Library, located on a street corner near her apartment, every day. He calls her his Number One Patron. She usually borrows longer books, so the day Book Uncle suggests a picture book, she's disappointed but politely accepts it. After she reads the story, about doves trapped in a hunter's net working together to free themselves, she finds she can't stop thinking about it. "How strange that such a skinny book can leave so many questions in my mind." When Book Uncle is told by the city that he must shut down his library because he has no permit and can't afford one, Yasmin is devastated. Then she's determined. Together with her friends she draws attention to Book Uncle's plight during the mayoral campaign, challenging the candidates to support Book Uncle and literacy, and finding out in the process that the current mayor was behind the Lending Library's closure (he wanted to clean up the streets before his daughter's marriage at a nearby fancy hotel). Engaging, child-centered, and often funny, this easy chapter book set in a large Indian city is also a primer in community activism for young children. (Ages 7-10)

Lagercrantz, Rose. *Life According to Dani*. Illustrated by Eva Eriksson. Translated from the Swedish by Julia Marshall. U.S. edition: Gecko Press, 2016. 103 pages (978-1-776570-70-6)

Dani is spending the summer at a vacation house with her best friend's family while her dad recovers from an accident. She's already having a great time when her cousin and grandparents come to visit and things get even better. Even more wonderful is when her dad, who's been in the hospital, arrives as a surprise. "Up until now this story could have had a happy ending." The problem is that her dad has brought Sadie, a nurse, with whom he is falling in love. It soon becomes clear that springing Sadie on Dani without warning is a mistake, something Dani's grandparents clearly suggested ahead of time would be the case. Dani's behavior, like her dad's, is less than perfect, and the emotional realism is what makes this and previous books about Dani so authentic and childlike. They are also full of warmth and charm. Occasional black-and-white illustrations add to the overall appeal, while the ending hints at another book to come. (Ages 5-8)

LaReau, Kara. *The Infamous Ratsos*. Illustrated by Matt Myers. Candlewick Press, 2016. 55 pages (978-0-7636-7636-0)

Two rat brothers, Louie and Ralphie, live with their hard-as-nails father in a big city. They aspire to be as mean as their dad, so they constantly scheme ways to prove their toughness. Each episodic chapter recounts a different mean thing they plan and execute; however, each ends up having the opposite effect. For example, when they snatch a big bully's hat right off his head, they are lauded

for doing so—it turns out the bully had stolen the hat from a much smaller kid. When they make a sandwich with all the gross stuff in their fridge to give to a new student, Fluffy Rabbitski, it turns out to be all of her favorite foods. The chapters are short and snappy, and each one has a funny and surprising reversal. (Ages 6–8)

Nilsson, Ulf. *A Complicated Case*. Illustrated by Gitte Spee. Translated from the Swedish by Julia Marshall. (Detective Gordon) U.S. edition: Gecko Press, 2016. 104 pages (978–1–776570–59–1)

“Not in my forest,” says Detective Gordon, determined to find the culprit behind incidences of bullying, teasing, and exclusion that are leaving animals sad and upset. Detective Gordon, an aging toad, is finding it more and more exhausting to do field work. Luckily, his assistant, Buffy, is a young, spry mouse. It takes careful questioning, and eventually intervention, to get at the root of what’s happening and make everyone happy. There are already many rules in the forest about the way animals can treat one another. Nonetheless, the two write one new rule—“Everyone should always be able to play with everybody.” And Buffy summarizes the other rules simply: “When you do something, and you’re happy afterwards, then it’s allowed ... When you do something, and you’re a little sad thinking about it afterwards, that’s often forbidden.” As in this duo’s debut, *The First Case*, the warmth between them is lovely and genuine in a beautifully designed and illustrated work of easy fiction that also has wonderful moments of humor, from gentle to laugh-out-loud. (Ages 4–8)

Fiction for Children

Alexander, Kwame. *Booked*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016. 314 pages (978–0–544–57098–6)

“Average person knows about twelve thousand words. / Average president knows twice that, he says, *sounding like / Morgan Freeman.*” Nick, 12, is an only child whose parents are on the brink of divorce. While his mother is in Kentucky training race horses, Nick is home with his professor father, who is always badgering Nick to read the dictionary he wrote. Nick considers the dictionary, and by extension all reading, a chore. What Nick does like is soccer, his friend Coby, and April, a member of the school’s book club. It’s because of April, and Mr. Mac, the enthusiastic school librarian, that Nick starts reading. But it’s soccer that he lives for, and the upheaval in his life has made an upcoming, elite tournament in Dallas even more important to him. Then an injury makes it impossible for him to play. In a narrative in verse, Nick moves between first- and second-person (referring to himself as “you”) as he struggles with change, much of it unwanted, but some of it surprising for its unexpected goodness. The fast-paced plot is punctuated with soccer action, but the story plays even more with language than soccer balls, including some of the unusual words Nick has learned from his dad’s dictionary, which he defines in footnotes that are always illuminating and often amusing. (Ages 9–13)

Appelt, Kathi, and Alison McGhee. *Maybe a Fox*. A Caitlyn Dlouhy Book / Atheneum, 2016. 262 pages (978-1-4424-8242-5)

At the top of their dad's "do not" list is "do not go near the Slip," a dangerous section of the nearby river that surges underground. But 11-year-old Jules and 12-year-old Sylvie have gone to the Slip tons of times, usually to throw "wish rocks." One morning, fast, impulsive Sylvie dashes off to throw a rock and falls in by accident, drowning. The loss is devastating. Jules relied on Sylvie for a lot of things, including memories of their mom, who died when they were young. Her grief is aching and raw, even as Sylvie sometimes drove her crazy, especially with her need to always run fast. Why? Sylvie never explained. Now it seems she never can. At the same time Sylvie died, a fox cub was born nearby. Terra is kenneen, an animal spirit guide. The kit isn't sure what her purpose is; she only knows she has one. As she grows, Terra senses it is tied to the girl she sometimes sees, and who sometimes sees her. A climax that is both extraordinary and immensely satisfying on the story level brings Jules and Terra together in a way that is fated, but the novel's use of magical realism is never a means of avoiding the weight of grief. That the weight eventually begins to alight is not because of Terra, but because of time, and a discovery that confirms how much Sylvie loved Jules. (Ages 8-12)

Barnhill, Kelly. *The Girl Who Drank the Moon*. Algonquin, 2016. 388 pages (978-1-61620-567-6)

On the annual Day of Sacrifice, the Elders of the Protectorate leave the youngest baby in the village as an offering to the witch in the woods. And once a year a 500-year-old witch named Xan waits to rescue a baby that is mysteriously abandoned, taking it to a good home far away. One year Xan mistakenly lets a baby drink moonlight. The girl is enmagicked, and Xan keeps the child. Xan's companions, Gleck, a friendly, philosophical bog monster, and Fyrian, a sweet, tiny dragon who thinks he's enormous, complete young Luna's family. For safety, Xan encapsulates Luna's magic with a spell that holds until Luna turns 13. Meanwhile, Antain, growing up in the Protectorate, once witnessed a baby being taken from the mother for sacrifice. The woman went mad with grief and was locked in the Tower of the Sisters of the Star. After Antain marries a young woman who boldly left the mysterious sisterhood, they have a baby, the youngest in the village as the Day of Sacrifice approaches. Determined to hunt the witch down before that day arrives, Antain sets off, just as Xan's power is weakening, the woman in the tower escapes, and Luna comes of age. A story propelled by wonderful characters, deft plotting, and depths of human emotion leaves no doubt about love being stronger than sadness, grief, and fear. (Ages 9-13)

Bauer, Marion Dane. *Little Cat's Luck*. Illustrated by Jennifer A. Bell. Simon & Schuster, 2016. 211 pages (978-1-4814-2488-2)

A small calico cat, Patches, lives in a loving home with a girl she adores, but when she suddenly feels the need for a special place she escapes through a faulty screen and ends up lost just three blocks from home. She spies what looks like a perfect special place when she sees a dog house, but it belongs to Gus, the meanest dog in town. Both a mouseling and a squirrel a bit more worldly than

Patches warn her about the dog. Still, Patches slips in and gives birth to three kittens. It turns out Gus isn't really scary—he's just lonely. He falls hard for gentle, clever Patches and her kittens, and when it's time for them to leave, he doesn't want to let them go, growling, "Mine." But Patches is determined to get her kittens back home. This companion book to *Little Dog Lost* is written in short verse lines with a humorous voice that speaks directly to the reader. The story ends happily, but not before Bauer builds narrative tension that keeps sweetness restrained and readers on the edges of their seats. (Ages 6–9)

Cassidy, Sara. *A Boy Named Queen*. Greenwood, 2016. 77 pages (978–1–55498–905–8)

Most of the kids in Evelyn's grade 5 class don't know what to make of the new boy, with his long hair, pink shirt, bead necklaces, and name: Queen. Evelyn doesn't either, but when he's shooting baskets on his own at recess the first day, missing every time, she shows him how to make a bank shot. From that moment, they're friends. Queen takes the other kids in stride, telling Evelyn that he imagines he has a turquoise force field that mean comments bounce off. Evelyn's imagination, no less active, works differently. She wonders, for example, what her walk home from school would have looked like 100 years ago. When Evelyn enters the realm of Queen's easygoing, artistic family—his mom and dad are laid-back musicians (the dog is named Patti Smith)—Queen and his parents share the story of how he started calling himself Queen when he was four, wearing a purple velvet cape everywhere (his mother confesses it was actually velour). It couldn't be more different from Evelyn's staid home, but the love is the same. A short, charming novel distinguished by fine writing that reveals characters and relationships with wonderful clarity and great delight. (Ages 7–10)

Clanton, Ben. *Narwhal: Unicorn of the Sea*. (A Narwhal and Jelly Book) Tundra, 2016. 64 pages (978–1–101–91826–5)

When Narwhal and Jellyfish first meet, neither can believe the other is real. "I can't believe this! The thing I'm imagining is imagining that it is imagining me," observes a somewhat disgruntled Jelly. Even once Jelly is convinced Narwhal is real, and agrees that Narwhal's horn is awesome, Narwhal identifies Jelly as an imaginary friend. "We're friends?" Jelly asks hopefully. "Sure thing!" They seal the deal by eating waffles ("Nom Nom Nom"). That opening chapter in this droll graphic novel is followed by two more stories, "Narwhal's Pod of Awesomeness" and "Narwhal and the Best Book Ever." Two brief interludes include "Really Fun Facts" about narwhals and jellyfish (e.g., a narwhal's horn-like tooth can grow to up to 3 feet; a group of jellyfish is called a smack), and the "Narwhal Song" praising waffles and parties. Open-hearted Narwhal and dubious Jelly are a dynamite friendship duo. The simple, engaging line drawings are done with a limited, somewhat muted palette dominated by watery blue. (Ages 6–9)

Creech, Sharon. *Moo*. Joanna Cotler Books / HarperCollins, 2016.**278 pages (978-0-06-241524-0)**

Twelve-year-old Reena doesn't know what to expect when she moves from the city to a small Maine town with her parents and younger brother, Luke. She definitely didn't anticipate having to help their eccentric new neighbor, Mrs. Falala, with her menagerie of animals. Prickly Mrs. Falala doesn't act as if she wants Reena and Luke around, but gradually a genuine friendship develops between them. A relationship also develops between Reena and Mrs. Falala's Belted Galloway cow, Zora, whom Reena learns to care for and prepares to show at the fair. When an unexpected death occurs, Reena and Luke are able to temper their sadness with the richness of their new friendships and their recently developed passion for animals. The spare style of this novel in verse accentuates the credible development of trusting bonds between and among humans and their animals. (Ages 9-12)

Diaz, Alexandra. *The Only Road*. A Paula Wiseman Book / Simon & Schuster, 2016. 308 pages (978-1-4814-5750-7)

Jaime, 11, and his older cousin, Angela, leave their Guatemalan village because the gang that killed Angela's brother and Jaime's best friend, Miguel, when he refused to work for them is now turning its sights on the two of them. Their families borrow money to send the two on a journey they know is dangerous and uncertain, in hopes Jamie and Angela can get across the U.S. border and join Jaime's older brother, Tomás, who is working legally in the United States. On the road, which is often terrifying, Jaime and Angela find respite in moments of kindness from strangers, and in the connections they make with several other young travelers. They form a small family, but each of them is on a separate journey. Only Angela and Jaime can stay together, and only their fate is known, in the end. A novel that is often harrowing is also full of warmth in the bonds the children create, including one with a dog that accompanies them on their journey. This timely work includes an author's note, an extensive glossary of Spanish words, and a bibliography of further reading for adults and children. (Ages 9-13)

DiCamillo, Kate. *Raymie Nightingale*. Candlewick Press, 2016. 263 pages (978-0-7636-8117-3)

Raymie, 10, is determined to become Little Miss Florida Central Tire so her father, an insurance agent who recently ran off with a dental hygienist, will read about her in the paper and realize his mistake. At baton twirling lessons she meets Louisiana Elefante and Beverly Tapinski. This story set in a small Florida town in the 1970s moves quickly while capturing the hot, timeless feel of summer as the three girls form an unlikely, not-always-easy friendship. The bond among bold, brash, seemingly fearless Beverly; naive, sweet Louisiana; and uncertain Raymie develops through a series of funny yet heartrending escapades. It turns out that Louisiana and Beverly both have secrets and challenges, too. Louisiana shares hers openly, while Beverly's must be gleaned. But as the girls gradually discover things about one another, and about themselves, it turns out they all are bold and fearless and uncertain and sweet in a tender and funny novel that exposes the hope in their connection. For Raymie, who wants to be

special enough to bring her father home, friendship changes nothing, and yet it changes everything. (Ages 8–11)

Dumas, Firoozeh. *It Ain't So Awful, Falafel*. Clarion, 2016. 378 pages (978-0-544-61231-0)

Zomorod and her parents are in the United States for her dad's job as an engineer working at a California oil company. Zomorod, who has chosen the *Brady Bunch*-inspired name "Cindy" at school, narrates an often funny and always insightful account of her life as an Iranian immigrant in the late 1970s (an era that is vividly and often delightfully realized here). Her father is openhearted and upbeat but her mother has struggled to acclimate to their life in America. Zomorod, like her dad, is happy. Despite often being mistaken as Latina (no one has heard of Iran), she also has good friends. Then the Shah of Iran is overthrown and Ayatollah Khomeini comes into power, followed by the taking of American hostages. The crisis horrifies Zomorod's family. Meanwhile, everyone in America suddenly has something to say about Iran. Zomorod's mother finds purpose in helping other Iranians in their community feel less alone, but her dad loses his job and when he can't find another he begins to lose hope as the family faces returning to their radically changed homeland. Dumas's "semi-autobiographical" novel doesn't shy away from the racism Zomorod and her family experience. Her story is buoyed by this honesty, as well as the warmth of family, and the essential kindness of friendship. (Ages 9–13)

Erdrich, Louise. *Makoons*. Harper, 2016. 156 pages (978-0-06-057793-3)

The latest installment of Erdrich's *Birchbark House* saga focuses on Makoons, the twin brother of Chickadee, who was the central character in the previous volume. The boys and their extended family have moved to the Dakota Territory where they have to adapt to a new land and new ways. The twins, for example, are learning the necessary skills to become buffalo hunters. There is plenty of detail here about their daily lives and the interpersonal interactions, which are often amusing, but there is also an overriding sense of foreboding, as Makoons has had a vision that tells him of difficult times ahead for his family. As with the five earlier books based on the history of Erdrich's own Ojibwe family, the story is eloquently written and culturally authentic as it centers on the day-to-day activities of both children and adults at work and at play. (Ages 7–10)

Frailon, Zana. *The Bone Sparrow*. Disney-Hyperion, 2016. 228 pages (978-1-4847-8151-7)

Subhi has lived his entire life in a refugee camp in Australia, the first child born there a decade ago. He and his family are members of the Rohingya minority ethnic group from Burma (Myanmar). Subhi's best friend, Eli, is just a few years older, but when Eli angers camp authorities, he's transferred to the men's compound, separating the boys. Jimmie is a girl living nearby who sneaks into the camp one day with a notebook containing the stories her mother wrote down before she died. Jimmie struggles to read, but Subhi knows how, and when the two meet the stories become the impetus for friendship. As Subhi reads them aloud, Jimmie feels closer to her mother and Subhi to his father, a poet he knows only from *his* mother's stories. Subhi's and Jimmie's lives and

their friendship are compelling—two children in painful circumstances finding solace in each other—while the illumination of the often cruel conditions at the refugee camp form both the novel’s backdrop and one dimension of its riveting climax. An author’s note provides more information about the political complexities of refugees, human rights abuses in refugee camps in Australia, and the Rohingya, considered by the UN and Amnesty International to be “one of the most persecuted people on earth.” (Ages 10–13)

Gidwitz, Adam. *The Inquisitor’s Tale, Or, The Three Magical Children and Their Holy Dog*. Illustrated by Hatem Aly. Dutton, 2016. 363 pages (978–0–525–42616–5)

Three children on the run become determined to save Jewish texts from the flames of the Inquisition in this riveting, richly detailed story set in 13th-century France. Jeanne is a peasant who has visions and has fled her village pursued by men from the Church. William, son of a nobleman and a north African Muslim woman, is a monk in training. Extraordinarily strong, he’s been tasked with carrying a satchel of books to the monastery of St. Denis as punishment for disobedience. Jacob is Jewish, and has unusual gifts as a healer, but he is helpless when Christian boys on a rampage burn his village. Their separate journeys converge at an inn where the boys help Jeanne escape capture. The trio continues to Paris, where Jacob hopes to find his parents alive. Instead, they learn of King Louis’s plan to burn 20,000 Jewish texts. Realizing William was given the books he is carrying to save them from the flames, it becomes a race against Church and King to get them safely to St. Denis. Each guest at the inn where the children first met tells pieces of this story, a la *Canterbury Tales*, while the novel’s mysterious narrator, one of the eager listeners, brings the breathless account to a close. At times sobering as it reveals anti-Semitism and oppression during the Inquisition, this is ultimately a story of light and faith and hope and miracles, and friendship holds them all. Occasional black-and-white line drawings illustrate the trio’s adventures. (Ages 9–12)

Grimes, Nikki. *Garvey’s Choice*. WordSong / Highlights, 2016. 108 pages (978–1–62979–740–3)

Garvey is often teased at school for his weight, while his father’s disapproval weighs heavily on him at home. “‘Why can’t Garvey be / like his sister?’ I heard Dad / ask when I was eight. Mom said, / ‘That’s the wrong question. / Ask Garvey what interests *him*.’” Unlike his sister, Garvey could not care less about sports. But he loves to read, especially science fiction. He also loves music, and often hums, or sings alone at home, but has never considered trying out for middle school Chorus. It’s his best—and only—friend Joe who encourages him to do so. In Chorus, Garvey finds acceptance, and a second friend, Manny. Garvey shines when he sings, and it’s no surprise that his mom and sister are proud of him. But Garvey discovers singing is a source of surprising pride for a dad who, he learns, once sang in a band. A quietly triumphant novel told through Japanese *Tanka* poems (explained in an author’s note) follows an African American boy gaining confidence and finding connection doing something he loves. (Ages 9–12)

Harrington, Janice N. *Catching a Story Fish*. WordSong / Highlights, 2016. 221 pages (978-1-62979-429-7)

Katheren, called Keet by her family—short for Parakeet, because she never stops talking—loves telling stories. But when her African American family moves from Alabama to the north and she's teased at her new school for her southern accent, she stops talking in class. She makes a new friend in Allegra, who lives next door and who Keet nicknames Allie-gator, and continues to tell stories at home, but remains quiet at school. When her grandpa has a stroke and seems lost, Keet tells him a story every day, willing him to come back. She misses him, and she needs his support, faced with the terror of giving a "Dream Day" oral report. "My hands are grasshoppers / my heart is a kangaroo / my lungs are too small / my throat is a desert / my tongue ... / where's my tongue?" After seven weeks of silence the words come pouring out. "My voice is all the places I've been / and all the stories I've heard. / It's Grandpa, Grandma, Mama, Daddy, / and Nose. It's my uncles, aunties, / and my hundred-hundred cousins." Lovely characterizations, language, and word play propel a story about family, friendship, and the power of story to hold and express a heart. A poetry glossary defines the different types of poems that comprise the novel. (Ages 8-11)

Hashimi, Nadia. *One Half from the East*. HarperCollins, 2016. 256 pages (978-0-06-242190-6)

After Obayda's family moves from Kabul to the village where her father grew up, the 10-year-old, youngest of three girls, becomes a *bacha posh*—a girl who passes as a boy. Obayda, now Obayd, is initially reluctant. She likes being a girl, and doesn't know how to move through the world with a boy's swagger and certainty. Befriended by Rashid, an older *bacha posh*, Obayd soon is relishing the freedoms and privilege her older sisters do not enjoy, even in their progressive family. Obayd does things as a boy she never would have considered before, discovering a different kind of action and agency as she tries to help her father recover from injuries he suffered in a Kabul explosion. But there is nothing she can do to help Rashid(a) when her friend's time as a *bacha posh* ends abruptly in marriage to the village war lord. A fascinating, swiftly paced story firmly grounded in Obayd(a)'s perspective and experience makes clear gender has nothing to do with her physical or intellectual ability, only with how those abilities are perceived in a society where males are privileged. Throughout, Obayda's voice feels childlike and true. An author's note provides additional information about *bacha posh*. (Ages 9-13)

Holm, Jennifer L. *Full of Beans*. Random House, 2016. 195 pages (978-0-553-51036-2)

"I'm gonna give it to you straight: grown-ups lie." In the midst of the Great Depression in Key West, Florida, Beans Curry roams the town. Sometimes he's in charge of his baby brother; sometimes he prowls with his gang, looking to challenge their rivals to a serious game of marbles. The arrival of a New Dealer who hopes to transform Key West into a vacation spot is met with a good deal of skepticism, at least initially. But many adults end up volunteering to pick up garbage and paint the houses in bright, cheery colors to beautify the town. All the activity creates an opportunity for Beans to earn money, sorely needed at

home, when a local liquor runner hires him to pull fire alarms in the middle of the night. Beans's work creates a distraction so the man can smuggle his coffins full of booze down to the docks and out of town. It seems like easy money until Beans's conscience gets the best of him. An easy, breezy, entertaining novel not only chronicles how Key West was transformed into a travel destination, it also serves as a prequel to *Turtle in Paradise*, and explains how the inimitable Beans formed the Diaper Gang. A wonderful author's note with historical photos tells more about the New Deal efforts in Key West, including the role children played. (Ages 8–11)

Johnson, Varian. *To Catch a Cheat*. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic, 2016. 241 pages (978-0-545-72239-1)

Jackson Greene has sworn off con games since successfully thwarting an attempt to rig the 8th grade presidential election. Then he's sent a video that implicates members of Gang Greene, the team he put together, in school vandalism. The anonymous sender gives him a choice: Steal the answers to an upcoming social studies test or the video will be sent to the principal. African American Jackson knows the video was doctored but it was a skillful job; proving it won't be easy. Jackson, Charlie (struggling with jealousy over all the attention Jackson got for the election scam heist), Gaby, and the other members of Gang Greene agree to the job, but part of Jackson's plan is a double-cross: He's determined to catch the blackmailers, expose the real vandals, and foil the cheating attempt. In this welcome follow-up to *The Great Greene Heist*, the characters are still interesting, the diversity is still effortless, and the fun of a con job in a middle school setting, to serve the greater good, no less, still delights. (Ages 9–13)

Jung, Mike. *Unidentified Suburban Object*. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic, 2016. 265 pages (978-0-545-78226-5)

Chloe Cho's immigrant parents never talk about Korea so she's explored her heritage on her own. When her parents' reticence makes it impossible for Chloe to share a family story as required for a class, her parents finally reveal they aren't really Korean: they're aliens from another planet. They chose an all-white U.S. town to live in knowing everyone there would assume immigrants are ignorant. In turn, the residents of the town are so ignorant about Koreans that no one has ever assumed Chloe's parents are anything but what they claimed to be. Chloe's best friend, Shelley, who has learned about Korean culture with Chloe, is the only person who has always understood Chloe's eye-rolling annoyance and occasional anger at the many uninformed things people say to her. Learning that she isn't who, or even what, she always thought makes Chloe question everything, including Shelley's interest in her culture, until she discovers both how little has changed and how much the things that matter—true friendship and family love—have remained steadfast. Mike Jung's use of otherworldly "aliens" as a metaphor for how white Americans think about people of other races and cultures makes for a smart, funny, layered novel that is both blithe and insightful. (Ages 9–13)

Kelly, Erin Entrada. *The Land of Forgotten Girls*. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2016. 299 pages (978-0-06-223864-1)

Sol and her little sister, Ming, live with their abusive stepmother, Vea, in a small Louisiana town. They emigrated with the girls' father, but their dad returned to the Philippines and hasn't come back. Sol once believed the stories spun by their late mother about their adventurous Auntie Jove. She now knows Auntie Jove is a fantasy, but she tells the stories to Ming and Ming becomes convinced that Auntie Jove is coming to rescue them. A book that vividly depicts realities of emotional abuse and economic hardship is ultimately not about either of these things. Instead it's a deep exploration of the importance of trust and hope and imagination and emotional security in the lives of children. Sol's impulse to apologize to a girl she once teased, which is the start of a new friendship; brief glimpses of Vea before she was bitter; new stories Sol spins for Ming; and small kindnesses so essential to survival all unfold through interactions of complex and nuanced characters. When Mrs. Yeung, a Chinese woman living in their building, knocks on their door in the middle of one of Vea's tirades, Sol realizes the older woman is letting Vea know she is watching and listening, and letting the girls know they aren't alone. On the one hand, little in the reality of Sol and Ming's lives has changed by story's end. On the other hand, everything has. (Ages 9-12)

LaFleur, Suzanne. *Beautiful Blue World*. Wendy Lamb Books / Random House, 2016. 210 pages (978-0-385-74300-6)

Mathilde, 12, thinks her best friend, Meg, top of their class, will be chosen by the government to help in their country Sofarendé's ongoing war against invading Tyssia. But Mathilde is the one selected. Joining a group of gifted children on an estate masquerading as a private school, she discovers that their job is to apply their unique creative and analytical thinking to each day's most pressing situations, such as where to amass defenses against night raids. Surrounded by kids as smart or smarter than Meg, Mathilde doesn't feel like she belongs. But Mathilde's gift turns out to be her compassion, and as she builds trust with Rainer, the young Tyssian prisoner she's assigned to spend time with, they each humanize the enemy for the other. Mathilde realizes he has been traumatized, too, by a war in which he had little choice about fighting. And she does, indeed, learn something of value: The Tyssians will not hesitate to bomb a school. This compelling, accessible work of speculative fiction is set in an imagined world much like our own, with a setting reminiscent of Europe during World War II and themes that resonate today. A second book will continue Mathilde's story, which ends here in the midst of a chaotic escape as the enemy advances. (Ages 8-12)

Levy, Dana Alison. *The Family Fletcher Takes Rock Island*. Delacorte Press, 2016. 259 pages (978-0-553-52130-6)

During the Fletchers' annual August island vacation, Frog, the youngest, is determined to teach one of their cats to swim. Middle child Eli wants to overcome his fear of kayaking. Sam, the oldest, gets the role of Puck with the local theater group. And Jax, the same age as Eli, makes a new friend in Alex, who is staying next door. There's a mystery here, with a cheesy, over-

the-top villain, but the heart of the story is its relationships. A harsh truth is also revealed when Jax, who is African American, and Alex, who is Latina (and also, to Jax's surprise once he realizes it, a girl) are accused of theft. The island's inhabitants and vacationers are predominantly white and it's clear the kids were targeted because of their brown skin. It's Jax's first encounter with overt racism, a sobering, staggering incident that leaves him shaken. Making it even worse is the realization that no matter how much Papa and Dad love and support him, they can't truly understand what he's feeling because they're white. The honesty of the discussion, and the difficulty of this realization for all of them, is beautifully handled in a book full of warmth, but also humor and light. (Ages 7–10)

Lin, Grace. *When the Sea Turned to Silver*. Little, Brown, 2016. 370 pages (978-0-316-12592-5)

A historical fantasy weaves retellings of traditional Chinese legends into the story of a girl and boy, Pinmei and Yishan, searching for the Luminous Stone That Lights the Night. The new emperor kidnapped Pinmei's grandmother, the Storyteller, and Pinmei wants to find the stone and offer it in exchange. On their journey they meet those who've already faced loss at the hands of the emperor, who is conscripting men and boys to build a vast Wall. At first hesitant to share the stories she's grown up hearing from her grandmother, stories she knows like her own heart, shy Pinmei becomes a storyteller in her own right as they travel. Visually the legends are set apart with a distinct font, but there is satisfaction in the way they are also woven into the fabric of Pinmei and Yishan's quest, even offering clues: Not everyone Pinmei and Yishan meet is who and what they seem. There is also delight in how this story connects to the two earlier books in the cycle, *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* and *Starry River of the Sky*, although it, like the others, stands on its own. Exquisite book-making, including full-color plates and color accents on chapter headings, add to the pleasure of this enticing volume. (Ages 8–10)

Medina, Juana. *Juana & Lucas*. Candlewick Press, 2016. 88 pages (978-0-7636-7208-9)

Juana is a little girl living in Bogotá, Colombia. Lucas is her beloved dog. In a spritely conversational tone, Juana chats about the things she loves (her city, her dog, her abuelo, her best friend, Juli) and the things she doesn't (her school uniform). Each one of these is accompanied by a diagram-style illustration that points out key factors (Abuelo's love for chocolate, for example, and her uniform's itchy skirt). Overall, Juana is a bubbly, happy girl. Then she starts having to learn "the English" in school. And she hates it. She asks everyone she trusts to give her a good reason to study English, sure they won't come up with any. They all do, but only one of them convinces Juana it's worth the effort: an upcoming family trip to Spaceland in Florida, where she can meet her hero, Astroman. The charming narrative, somewhat autobiographical, integrates Spanish words into the English text and is accompanied by amusing color illustrations on every page. (Ages 7–10)

Nesbet, Anne. *Cloud and Wallfish*. Candlewick Press, 2016. 385 pages (978-0-7636-8803-5)

In the spring of 1989, Noah Keller's parents uproot him suddenly and dramatically for a move to East Berlin, where his mom has finally been approved to do research on the East German education system. In their new life Noah must follow rules about when and where he can speak openly (never in their apartment). His parents, though, are still his parents, making things a little less unsettling. Noah is not allowed to attend school for months, in part because of his stutter. His friendship with Claudia (Cloud), the girl who lives downstairs, is his salvation. Claudia is creative, unusual, and as lonely as Noah, stuck with her grandmother while her parents are on vacation. When Claudia learns her parents have died in a car accident, she spins an elaborate fantasy to deal with her grief. But it becomes clear to the reader, and eventually Noah, that her parents may, in fact, have escaped East Germany without her. Noah also begins to suspect, correctly, that his mother is a spy. Wonderful storytelling propels a novel in which each chapter ends with a "Secret File" providing factual information that gives historical context to events (e.g., how Germany was divided, the wall, life under communism). Noah and Claudia are heart and soul of this fascinating look at the extraordinary weeks and months leading up to the fall of the Berlin Wall. (Ages 10-13)

Parvela, Timo. *Bicycling to the Moon*. Illustrated by Virpi Talvitie. Translated from the Finnish by Ruth Urbom. U.S. edition: Gecko Press, 2016. 128 pages (978-1-776570-31-7)

A quirky, warm, funny illustrated chapter book chronicles the friendship between Barker the dog and Purdy the cat. Each entertaining episode relates an incident that establishes and expands readers' understanding of their individual characters and their relationship. Some differences are playfully grounded in animal behavior and stereotypes: Barker is more active during the day, Purdy at night; Barker is a responsible doer while, Purdy, at least initially, seems lazy and somewhat selfish. But Purdy turns out to be a planner and a dreamer, and if his plans sometimes overreach, all that quiet time can serve a real purpose, as on the day he's seemingly doing nothing only to finally come up with the beginnings of a song that he was thinking about all along. The satisfying stories, ranging from the absurd (attempting to fly to the moon) to the tender, often end with an additional punch of wry humor, and if the two friends seem like opposites, it's clear their bond is deep and true in a great read-aloud or independent reading choice. (Ages 6-9)

Pennypacker, Sara. *Pax*. Illustrated by Jon Klassen. Balzer + Bray / HarperCollins, 2016. 276 pages (978-0-06-237701-2)

Lonely Peter's only friend is Pax, the fox he found as an orphaned pup and raised. And Pax, who has never really known the wild world, is completely dependent on Peter. The two are separated when Peter's dad, about to join the war, takes him to live with his grandfather miles away. Pax, abandoned on the side of the road, has to survive on his own. Peter runs away from his grandfather's house, determined to find Pax, but an accident lays him up in the home of Vola, a reclusive veteran. Impatient to be on his way, Peter must

instead take time to heal. The more time he spends with Vola, the more he sees she is struggling to make peace with all she's seen and done as a soldier. Meanwhile Pax gradually bonds with other foxes, but never gives up hope or intention of finding his boy. Two survival stories, told from Pax's and Peter's alternating points of view, are set against the backdrop of a near-future second U.S. civil war (likely over water rights). The tense and moving novel is an exquisite exploration of connectedness—among humans and nature—as well as a heartrending look at the impact of war on people, animals, and the earth itself. It will grab readers from its opening paragraphs and hold them in a spell until a bittersweet but triumphant ending. Jon Klassen's muted, elegant illustrations add to the physical beauty of the singular book. (Ages 8–11)

Reynolds, Jason. *As Brave as You*. A Caitlyn Dlouhy Book / Atheneum, 2016. 410 pages (978–1–4814–1590–3)

Eleven-year-old Genie and his older brother, Ernie, are visiting their Virginia grandparents. It's Genie's first time meeting his grandfather, and he's fascinated to discover the older man is blind. In a story full of small dramatic arcs and ongoing mysteries—of the door the boys aren't supposed to open but that Genie does, of a room full of swallows, of the yellow house in the woods, of the unexplained tension between his father and grandfather, of the effect of the girl down the hill on his brother—Genie, a quiet, curious observer, deepens his understanding of himself, his grandfather, and the joy and pain and love that is family. Genie, so keen in his wondering; his grandfather, full of poignant regret, fierce pride, and barely acknowledged fear; his grandmother, all bustling efficiency and loving control; and Ernie's alternating confidence and caution are exquisite characterizations gracing a novel both funny and tender (poop patrol in the yard; their grandfather teaching Ernie to shoot; Ernie not wanting to fire a gun). It also beautifully captures the way summer days can feel shapeless, while forming themselves into a season of growth and discovery. (Ages 8–12)

Reynolds, Jason. *Ghost*. A Caitlyn Dlouhy Book / Atheneum, 2016. 181 pages (978–1–4814–5015–7)

Castle Cranshaw, aka Ghost, stands out at his middle school for his too-big, ratty clothes, crappy knock-off sneakers, and a temper that gets him in trouble. But to the coach of an elite city track team, Ghost stands out for his speed. Ghost has had a lot to run from in his life, including a father, now in prison, who once went after Ghost and his mom with a gun. It's a memory Ghost can't run from. Even though Ghost thinks of basketball as his game—never mind he doesn't actually play—Coach persuades Ghost to become one of four new runners on the team. Coach's rules and his rigorous training regimen are challenging, but Ghost is determined to show how good he is, and sure he'd run even faster if he had fancy track shoes like some of the other kids. In a spur-of-the-moment act, Ghost shoplifts a pair. He calls them his Silver Bullets and they do seem to improve his running, but they also mess with his head. Fast-moving, funny, and realistic, this first in a four-book series features a winning protagonist and distinctive secondary characters, from the no-nonsense, give-me-patience, cab-driving Coach, who mentors the kids on and off the track, to

Ghost's fellow new team members, Lu, Patty, and Sunny, who also have stories to tell. (Ages 9–12)

Sullivan, Tara. *The Bitter Side of Sweet*. Putnam, 2016. 299 pages (978-0-399-17307-3)

Like many children in Mali, 15-year-old Amadou and his little brother, Seydou, left their village in Mali in search of seasonal work to help support their family. But the boys were tricked and, two years later, they are still working on a cacao plantation in Ivory Coast for no pay, little food, and plenty of beatings whenever they fail to meet their daily quotas. And then Khadija arrives at their camp—an educated girl with the eyes of a wildcat. It turns out Khadija was kidnapped to silence her journalist mother. Together Amadou and Khadija begin to plot their escape, an act that becomes all the more critical after Seydou is gravely wounded and needs medical care. This tension-filled, well-plotted story reveals the horrors of child slavery that fuels much of the modern-day chocolate industry. The fast pace will keep readers on the edge of their seats as they follow Amadou, Khadija, and Seydou on their dangerous escape through unfamiliar, often threatening territory to safety at last. An author's note provides more background information on the exploitation of children in the cacao industry. (Ages 10–14)

Tougas, Shelley. *A Patron Saint for Junior Bridesmaids*. Roaring Brook Press, 2016. 262 pages (978-1-62672-403-7)

“There’s no Patron Saint for Junior Bridesmaids. How is that possible?” Mary’s invitation to be in her older cousin’s wedding launches a laugh-out-loud story genuine in its depth and warmth. Mary’s family is about to move to North Dakota to join her dad, who’s been there for a job since their small-town family hardware store failed. Middle school-aged Mary and her younger brother, Luke, are staying with their grandmother and bride-to-be Edie’s family in St. Paul for the summer while their mom, exhausted from holding things together at home alone, joins their dad to find a place they all can live. Mary’s been charged with keeping her mom’s big secret: Luke hasn’t had his First Communion. It makes for some artful dodging on Sundays. Mary also wants to help unassertive Edie, who struggles with social anxiety, have the wedding she wants. And she keeps thinking about Brent, the bully she punched just before the end of the school year. She hates him. What’s harder to acknowledge is that she was cruel to him, too. Through it all, Mary offers earnest and amusing prayers to various saints for help dealing with immediate predicaments and long-term worries. Her Catholic family and other characters are drawn with realism and affection in an entertaining, insightful novel about family, friends, enemies, faith, and compassion. (Ages 9–12)

Watson, Jude. *Sting*. Scholastic Press, 2016. 272 pages (978-0-545-86346-9)

Young teenage jewel thieves March, Jules, Darius, and Izzy have gone straight. But after Darius unwittingly invests their money with a con man, they lose everything. Hamish, their yoga-obsessed fence, who was a good friend of March and Jules’s dad, convinces them to steal three legendary—and cursed—

sapphires. “Fortune and hearthstone, then fealty fly,” reads the curse. And it’s true. They’ve lost their money. They’ve lost their apartment. And March’s anger at guilt-ridden Darius creates a rift in their self-made family. The Top Cats, a ruthless European gang of thieves, is after the jewels as well, creating an added level of danger. As in *Loot*, the heist in this sequel is complex, multifaceted, unbelievable, and a delight. Also as in the original, the emotional storyline is richly developed, with each of the four teens struggling with the significant shortcomings of their various parents. March is eventually able to acknowledge that as much as his dad loved him and Jules, Auggie also made choices that put the two of them in jeopardy over and over. What’s harder is for March not to do the very same thing. A triple-cross climax ramps up the fun of a book that also invites reflection on the meaning of family and forgiveness. (Ages 8–12)

Fiction for Young Adults

Acioi, Socorro. *The Head of the Saint*. Translated from the Portuguese by Daniel Hahn. U.S. edition: Delacorte Press, 2016. 181 pages (978–0–553–53792–5)

Fourteen-year-old Samuel travels to his father’s hometown to fulfill his mother’s dying wish that he light a candle at the statue of St. Anthony there. Samuel also plans to kill his father, who abandoned his mother and him years before. Candeia is a run-down village and Samuel finds no sign of his father when he arrives. Sheltering in a grotto in the nearby woods, he realizes it’s the giant head of the statue of St. Anthony, which was never completed. Inside the head, Samuel can hear local women praying to the saint, all of them longing for love. Samuel sees no reason why he shouldn’t help answer the women’s prayers. With the help of two young men he meets, Samuel begins nudging budding romances into blossom. Soon, women and pilgrims are flocking to Candeia and the small town slowly comes back to life. Samuel wonders who the voice of one mysterious young woman that is sweeter than all the others belongs to. He also wonders about his father, who was the unfinished statue’s engineer, and his wealthy grandmother, who has remained sequestered in her home for years. Mystery and comedy and goodness all are woven into the fabric of a story that also reflects the realities of poverty, politics, and religion in a small Brazilian town where a young man who arrived with nothing finds community, family, friendship, and love. (Age 12 and older)

Berry, Julie. *The Passion of Dolssa*. Viking, 2016. 478 pages (978–0–451–46992–2)

In 13th-century western Europe, the Inquisition is control through terror, as those whose beliefs or behaviors offend Church authorities face persecution as heretics. Dolssa is a young woman who says Christ is her true love. Even the threat of death cannot make her deny that he speaks to her. But it is her mother who is burned by Inquisitors as Dolssa watches. When her bonds are cut and a voice tells her to run, Dolssa flees. Spirited Botille and her two equally

confident, gifted sisters run an inn in the village of Bajas. When Botille discovers a dying young woman by a river, instinct or intuition or perhaps something else tells her to lie when a passing friar asks about a missing girl. Botille smuggles the young woman—Dolssa—back to her village, where the sisters secretly nurse her back to health. Dolssa remains hidden until a crisis forces her to call on her divine gift for healing. Word about her miracles spreads and the determined friar tracks Dolssa down. A taut narrative arc in this work of historical fiction is richly embellished with vivid period details and a cast of vibrant, singular, complex, contradictory characters. The story is tragic, funny, satisfying, and scathingly critical. It also leaves space for genuine faith and miracles and mystery and devotion, however one chooses to define it (earthbound romance included). A detailed author's note about the historical period concludes this intricate and astonishing work. (Age 14 and older)

Bow, Erin. *The Swan Riders*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2016. 376 pages (978-1-4814-4274-9)

Greta, former Duchess of Halifax and heir to the Pan Polar Alliance throne, chose to merge her body with AI (artificial intelligence) instead of execution, hoping she might change a world in which an AI known as Talis believes in peace through force and fear. Talis executes the children of world leaders who don't stay in line, and sometimes annihilates entire cities to make a point. As Greta goes through the potentially deadly adaptation to AI, she and Talis, occupying the body of a Swan Rider named Rachel, travel with two other Swan Riders, Francis Xavier and Sri. Swan Riders serve as Talis's enforcers and guards, and also allow him to take human form. Greta is a likely target for kidnappers or killers, but Talis ends up the focus of a calculated physical attack that severs Rachel from Talis's AI network, leaving the version of Talis in Rachel's body wholly, vulnerably human. And that's exactly the point: The attackers want Talis to remember his humanity—he *was* human once—and rethink his approach to peacemaking. They also want him to understand that Swan Riders suffer, and pay a huge price, when he uses their bodies to walk through the world. This sequel to *Scorpion Rules* explores questions of personal and political ethics through immensely satisfying, complex characters and plotting as it examines what it means to be human. (Age 14 and older)

Brown, Skila. *To Stay Alive: Mary Ann Graves and the Tragic Journey of the Donner Party*. Candlewick Press, 2016. 275 pages (978-0-7636-7811-1)

A novel in verse in the voice of 19-year-old Mary Ann Graves tells of her family's journey west by wagon in 1846. They eventually join another group that includes the Donner family. The travelers reach the foothills of the Sierra Nevada range late and the snows come early, stranding them in the mountains. With food scarce, Mary Ann, her father, and her older sister are part of a smaller group that attempts the pass, hoping to send back help for the others. They end up lost in a storm. Mary Ann's father, a driving force of optimism early on in the journey, a voice of pragmatism later, is one of the first to die. There is an absolute lack of sensationalism in this moving account of the Donner Party, and the grim decision to eat those who died. Mary Ann's voice stitches a story

of small, compelling details, creating a vivid sense of people, time, and place. And she describes the desperation from hunger and malnutrition that turn an unbearable, unthinkable choice into one that becomes numbly inevitable for anyone hoping to survive. An author's note tells more about the Donner Party's journey, and Mary Ann's life after she and other survivors were rescued. (Age 12 and older)

Budhos, Marina. *Watched*. Wendy Lamb Books / Random House, 2016. 265 pages (978-0-553-53418-4)

When Naeem is caught shoplifting, it further jeopardizes his already tenuous hope of graduating high school. Then he's offered a deal by police: spy on other Muslims in New York City and he won't be charged. In fact, they'll pay him for information. It could even become a real job. Naeem is both enticed and repulsed by the offer. He wants to help his family, and the cops make him feel like he's special, but he hates the idea of spying, and he hates that he doesn't think he has a choice. When Naeem encounters Ibrahim, a boy he hasn't seen in awhile, he realizes Ibrahim fits the officers' "lone wolf" profile: he's angry, isolated, and has been reading radical Islamic web sites. Naeem reluctantly reports him then becomes more and more uncomfortable as another operative steps in and further fuels Ibrahim's anger. Isn't this entrapment? Naeem feels trapped, too, in this taut, timely novel that addresses complex realities, from Islamophobia and police coercion to radicals who prey on Muslim youth feeling disillusioned, disconnected, and hopeless. Details of Naeem's daily life, his worries about school, and his relationships with family members, friends, and others within and beyond the diverse Muslim community ground this riveting work in even greater poignancy and realism, while the author's note provides background information on the truths behind this work of fiction. (Age 13 and older)

Chee, Traci. *The Reader*. (Sea of Ink and Gold, Book 1) Putnam, 2016. 442 pages (978-0-399-17677-7)

Sefia is on the run, in possession of a rectangular object with small marks that the group who kidnapped her honorary aunt is searching for. She has vague memories of her late mother showing her such markings and explaining they stand for sounds. Sefia finally decodes them and learns "this is a book." Reading its stories she especially enjoys ones about Captain Canek Reed, his colorful crew, and their adventures. In a moment of peril, Sefia and Archer, a mute boy she freed from captivity, are rescued by legendary Captain Reed in the flesh. When Sefia finds herself in the book, she understands it's a living thing, and an object of immense power. Memory and possibility overwhelm her as she realizes her parents died to keep it in hands they trusted. Meanwhile, Lon, the apprentice librarian in a guild striving to achieve peace among the kingdoms of Kelanna, is intrigued by the young woman who is the guild's Second Assassin. Their work involves both skill and magic. They train intently while defying their teachers by becoming close. Accomplished world-building and rich characterizations distinguish an intricate, action-packed fantasy following several storylines that converge. This first book in a trilogy considers big questions, including how decisions made to serve the greater good may defy

their best intentions. Reveals in the final chapters clarify the complex timeframe of a story to be continued. (Age 13 and older)

Diederich, Phillippe. *Playing for the Devil's Fire*. Cinco Puntos Press, 2016. 254 pages (978-1-941026-298)

In his small town outside of Mexico City, 13-year-old Boli spends his time helping at his parents' bakery, playing marbles with his friends (the devil's fire is a coveted marble he owns), and waiting for the next lucha libre match to visit his town. But his easy, predictable life changes after the severed head of the town's teacher is found in the square. That is soon followed by the discovery of another dead body. These two events make it impossible for the adults to continue shielding their children from the narcos who are taking over the town. When Boli's parents leave to find help from a greater authority, they don't return, which leads Boli to team up with a washed-out lucha libre fighter, El Chicano, to find answers. Diederich wisely chose to tell this gut-wrenching story of crime, violence, and corruption from Boli's innocent point of view. Tight, descriptive writing paints a picture of the town, its people, and their culture, and of a reluctant hero in El Chicano. (Age 12 and older)

Downham, Jenny. *Unbecoming*. David Fickling Books / Scholastic, 2016. 375 pages (978-0-545-90717-0)

Teenage Katie's mom, Caroline, resents having to care for her estranged mother, Mary, who has dementia. But for Katie, shunned socially since kissing her former best friend, spending time with the grandmother she is getting to know is a welcome distraction. Katie is trying to wade through her grandmother's vanishing memory, and butting up against her mother's unwillingness to talk about the past. But flashbacks illuminate the two women's divide and the parallels between their lives: Mary and Caroline both feel guilty about a number of things, including choices they made as parents. Katie finds herself drawn to Mary, who is kind, and whose comfortable sexuality as a young woman is the opposite of what Katie feels as she contemplates her attraction to Simona, a classmate rumored to be lesbian. Katie realizes how much between her mother and grandmother has gone unsaid or been misunderstood, and that important things in her own childhood have been kept hidden. This becomes part of the inspiration to speak her own truth as she finds the courage to come out. A quiet yet riveting novel captures the complexities and absolute messiness of feelings among characters who are neither right nor wrong, just vivid and real as they move toward greater openness and acknowledgement of the love they feel. (Age 14 and older)

Duyvis, Corinne. *On the Edge of Gone*. Amulet / Abrams, 2016. 456 pages (978-1-4197-1903-5)

It's 2035 and a comet is headed toward Earth. Preparations for the inevitable destruction have fallen along class lines—those who can afford it, or who have critical skills, are set to escape on self-sustaining generation ships. Those who can't are staying in underground shelters with little hope of long-term survival. Biracial (Black/white) Denise, her drug-addicted mother, and her trans sister don't come close to qualifying for safe passage on a generation ship, but Denise

is determined to get the three of them on board, even it means lying or sneaking on. Denise has autism—sometimes that hinders her, sometimes it helps, but always it is just part of who she is and how she views the world. Set in a futuristic Amsterdam, this compelling novel is tense, visceral, and extremely well crafted. It also offers a thoughtful exploration of ethical dilemmas: What would you be willing to do to survive? Whom would you save? And, in the face of pending doom, who deserves to live and who is expendable? (Age 14 and older)

Garvin, Jeff. *Symptoms of Being Human*. Balzer + Bray / HarperCollins, 2016. 335 pages (978-0-06-238286-3)

Riley feels feminine some days, masculine others, but never feels safe outwardly expressing this shifting identity so dresses in gender-neutral clothing. As a result, Riley experiences dysphoria almost daily. On the first day at a new high school, Riley is called “it” before even getting in the door. But Riley gradually becomes friends with Bec and Solo. At the suggestion of a therapist, whom Riley has been seeing since a suicide attempt the year before, Riley has also started writing. Blogging under the pseudonym Alix, Riley is a source of online support for other teens. Riley’s parents know nothing about the blog or Riley’s shifting gender identity. It’s Bec who takes Riley to a transgender support group, one Bec attends because her sister, Gabi, who committed suicide, was transgender. It’s there Riley learns the term “gender fluid,” and feels relief even without being ready to say “this is who I am.” A horrifying sexual assault eventually fuels Riley’s determination to speak out. Riley’s voice is compelling and Riley, Bec, and Solo are vivid characters with believable strengths and quirks and uncertainties in a novel that also succeeds because the emotional arc feels authentic, and ultimately cathartic. (Age 14 and older)

Girard, M-E. *Girl Mans Up*. HarperTeen, 2016. 373 pages (978-0-06-240417-6)

Pen has been best friends with Colby since they were kids. Now in grade 11, Colby has Pen strike up a conversation with whatever girl he likes before he makes his move. Pen, who is out to Colby but not her parents, hasn’t really thought much about her role in his love life. But she’s interested in Blake, Colby’s most recent target, herself, and it turns out Blake is interested in Pen, too. Then Olivia, Colby’s previous girlfriend, reluctantly reveals she is pregnant, and that Colby has made clear the situation is hers alone to deal with. As Pen navigates new relationships—romance with Blake, friendship with Olivia, whom she wants to support—she sees her oldest friend in new light. She’d like to remain friends with Colby, but he’s accusing her of being disloyal, and, more hurtful, of wanting to be a guy. She’d normally turn to her older brother for solace. She and Johnny are close, navigating a divide with their Portuguese immigrant-to-Canada parents. Johnny faces constant criticism for his choices, while Pen takes grief from her mother in particular for dressing like a boy. But after a recent blowup Johnny moved out, and Pen feels abandoned. Pen is gloriously imperfect and increasingly fierce in a novel that is nuanced and bold, gritty and passionate as she finds her voice. (Age 14 and older)

Graudin, Ryan. *Blood for Blood*. Little, Brown, 2016. 481 pages (978-0-316-40515-7)

A sequel to last year's *Wolf by Wolf*, an alternate history in which Germany and Japan were the victors of World War II, shifts among various perspectives but focuses primarily on Yael, Luka Lowe, and Felix Wolf in the aftermath of Yael's failed assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler. Yael, Luka, and Felix make a dramatic escape from the Germans and are moving across Eastern Europe. There is an uneasy alliance, shadowed by potential treachery. Like the prior volume, this one moves back and forth in time, illuminating moments from the past in each of their lives that shaped their outlook and current motivation. For Felix, that motivation is doing whatever necessary to protect his family. For Luka, somewhat to his surprise, it's doing whatever is necessary to prove his allegiance to this stranger, Yael, who has been posing as his former lover, Adele Wolf. And for Yael, haunted by her childhood in a Nazi concentration camp from which she escaped, it's doing whatever is necessary to salvage her mission and save friends in the Resistance who are in danger because of its failure. Tense and terrifically plotted, fans of the first book will be more than satisfied by this conclusion. (Age 13 and older)

Hand, Cynthia, Brodi Ashton, and Jodi Meadows. *My Lady Jane*. HarperTeen, 2016. 491 pages (978-0-06-239174-2)

Jane Gray's short time as Queen of England (nine days in 1553) is reimagined as a lighthearted blend of alternate history and fantasy. In 16th-century England, Edians, humans with the ability to transform into animals, are held in contempt by non-magical Verities, who want to purge England of magic. The resulting suspicion, animosity, and intrigue stand in for Protestant/Catholic religious hostilities of the time. Dying King Edward decrees that his beloved cousin, Jane, will become queen, arranging her marriage to secure the claim. It's all to keep his Edian-hating step-sister Mary off the throne. Jane, who had no desire to marry, let alone a man with a reputation as a womanizer, learns on her wedding night that Gifford is a horse. That is, he becomes a horse from dusk to dawn, a well-kept secret (it's not Gifford's only one). Edward discovers his Edian abilities and secretly flees, escaping Mary's attempt to poison him. On the run, he is helped by a capable thief named Gracie, and his sister Elizabeth. Jane ascends the throne and faces threats of her own, all while trying to make (horse)sense of her new husband. In the midst of it all comes a stunning self-discovery. There's a little romance, a little magic, and a lot of humor, both slapstick and sarcastic. The omniscient narrative collective's many droll asides are an abundant part of the fun. (Age 12 and older)

Hardinge, Frances. *The Lie Tree*. Amulet / Abrams, 2016. 377 pages (978-1-4197-1895-3)

When 14-year-old Faith's scientist father is accused of trying to pass off a fake fossil as authentic, public censure prompts the family to move from their Kent home to the site of an archaeological dig on a sparsely populated island. But scandal follows the family to the island, where Faith covertly investigates the mystery behind her father's secretive behavior. She discovers the Mendacity Tree, an obscure plant he's hiding that is nourished by lies rather than sunlight.

If well fed, it bears a fruit that reveals the truth when eaten. When her father dies suddenly, Faith is convinced he was murdered. She sets out to prove it, using the Mendacity Tree to aid her mission. Truth and lies shift uneasily as Faith sinks deeper and deeper into a quagmire of greed and treachery—including her own. The shifting world of natural science a decade after the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of the Species* plays an important role in this novel that compares and contrasts the behavior of complex characters and the intricacies of their relationships. At the center of it all is Faith, an intelligent girl who resents the limitations of the gender roles of her time, and yet judges her mother with the same stereotypical bias that she abhors. (Age 12 and older)

Hartley, A. J. *Steeplejack*. Tor Teen, 2016. 334 pages (978-0-7653-8342-6)

This fantasy blends elements of Victorian England with the political complexities of Apartheid South Africa in a story in which three ethnic groups—white Feldish colonialists; brown-skinned Lani people, who were brought “over the seas” to act as servants and laborers for the white colonialists; and the original, Black tribal inhabitants, the Mahweni—live together uneasily. In the capitol city of Bar-Selehm, 17-year-old Anglet Sutonga is the best steeplejack around, fixing and cleaning broken chimneys and spires high above the city. Though she left behind her Lani community and lives almost as an indentured servant, she is proud of her skill and enjoys her status in the steeplejack community. When the Beacon, an invaluable, glowing gem of luxorite goes missing and several suspicious deaths occur, including her own apprentice, a 10-year-old boy, Anglet accepts an offer to work for a young, white, opposition party politician to solve the murders and find the Beacon. As Anglet pieces the crimes and motivations together, she discovers lies, cover-ups, political machinations, and greed are all at play. With a large cast of ethnically, culturally, and economically diverse characters that defy stereotypes, the author offers an action-packed mystery as well as thoughtful commentary on the complexities of race, gender, class, and community. (Age 12 and older)

Hartnett, Sonya. *Golden Boys*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2016. 238 pages (978-0-7636-7949-1)

Colt Jenson, 12, and his family are unusual new arrivals in a working-class Australian neighborhood. Colt's dad, whom Colt despises for reasons that aren't wholly clear initially, is a dentist. Colt and his little brother have tons of cool toys and gear and their dad is friendly and welcoming to their new friends, encouraging them to hang out. Twelve-year-old Freya's dad is a printer whose arrival home each evening is a taut time as everyone in her family tries to determine how much he's drunk and how dangerous his mood will be. Freya, the oldest of six, finds herself confiding in Mr. Jenson, who offers a kind, sympathetic, non-judgmental ear. So when Freya's brother Declan says Mr. Jenson is “weird” and won't let their younger brother go over to Colt's alone, Freya is furious at what he's clearly implying. But readers know what Colt means: Mr. Jenson's friendliness feels wrong. It's too physical, too much. Colt knows, too, because it's happened before: his dad entices his friends. The trauma and tension are palpable in a novel brutally honest, right down to the ways in which adults look away from uncomfortable truths. This uneasy read

is exquisitely written. The complexity of these characters, both children and adults, is something to behold in a novel originally published for adults in Australia. (Age 14 and older)

Hutchinson, Shaun David. *We Are the Ants*. Simon Pulse, 2016. 451 pages (978-1-4814-4963-2)

Henry Denton is struggling with grief and guilt over his boyfriend Jesse's suicide the previous year. Henry also has a history of being abducted and released by aliens, and recently those aliens have given him a choice: press a button and save all humanity or let life on earth perish. As the calendar counts down toward the day when he will have to make a decision, Henry is looking for reasons to save his fellow humans but coming up short. His grief is compounded by intensified bullying at school, where he is known as "Space Boy"; a secret sexual relationship with a closeted classmate whose actions can be cruel; and difficult relationships at home. Then new kid Diego Vega offers Henry friendship that gradually blossoms into romance, challenging Henry's perspective on everything from his own self-worth to the ability of humans to rise above the grittiness and hateful things we sometimes inflict on one another. The big ideas Henry contemplates as well as his rough emotional state are balanced by his sharply funny voice, while the complexity of the primary and secondary characters and their relationships adds to the texture of this mature work. (Age 14 and older)

Johnston, E. K. *Spindle*. Hyperion, 2016. 355 pages (978-1-4847-2228-2)

At a celebration honoring young princess Zahrah, called Little Rose, a demon curses both her and her kingdom, vowing to possess the princess when she turns 18. Until then, any "making" that Little Rose does—anything creative—will better prepare her mind for the demon's possession. Meanwhile, makers in the kingdom, like the spinners and weavers, will grow sicker and sicker as they work. A piskey was able to counter the demon's damage with its own magical gift: if Little Rose spins, she will prick her finger on the spindle and fall asleep, so the demon cannot control her. The son of a weaver dying from the curse, Yashaa blames Zahrah for the tragedy of the kingdom, but when their paths intersect he realizes that not only is the princess blameless, she is a fighter striving to protect her people and resist the demon's curse. Accompanied by three of Yashaa's friends, Yashaa and Zahrah are determined to undo the curse before Zahrah turns 18. Greedy rulers and political machinations add tension to Yashaa and Zahrah's quest and budding romance in this companion novel to *A Thousand Nights*. Set within the same universe but many years later, this Sleeping Beauty tale stands marvelously on its own. (Age 13 and older)

Kendall, Christine. *Riding Chance*. Scholastic Press, 2016. 212 pages (978-0-545-92404-7)

Since his mom died, it's been hard for Troy, 13, to stay on an even keel in his tough Philadelphia neighborhood. When he and his best friend, Foster, get caught for petty larceny they are offered the chance to participate in a juvenile offender program working at a city stable, cleaning out horse stalls and, if they're interested, learning to ride. Unlike Foster, Troy discovers he has an affinity for horses. Step by step he learns how to trust them and how to earn

their trust in return, and before long caring for and riding his favorite horse, Chance, is always on his mind. He's also interested in one of the other riders, a kind, outspoken girl who seems to like him, too. The two men in charge of the program see Troy's potential and get him involved in the all-Black polo team they also run. The competition is typically upper-class white kids, but the bigger challenge for Troy is that the best player on his own team clearly has it in for him. And just when he needs a friend most, he and Foster are struggling to reconnect after a fallout. Author Christine Kendall has crafted a compelling and relatable story populated with well-developed, realistic characters in a debut that will keep readers turning the page. (Ages 11–15)

Kennedy, Katie. *Learning to Swear in America*. Bloomsbury, 2016. 340 pages (978–1–6196–3909–6)

As a giant asteroid hurtles toward Los Angeles, 17-year-old physicist Yuri Strelnikov arrives from Russia to help U.S. scientists frantically working to minimize the impact. On a break, Yuri meets 16-year-old Dovie. With a purple house, a pet bird named Woodie Guthrie, and an annual celebration of Dylan's first album release anniversary, Dovie and her free-spirited family are unlike anything analytical Yuri has known. As the scientists race against the clock, Yuri is frustrated that his untested but rigorously developed theories on anti-matter aren't considered. When the threat parameters change, Yuri takes a staggering risk that saves the day. He's a hero, but the U.S. government has no plans to let him go home: He was caught taking photos of the classified weapons he needed to understand in developing a solution. So Dovie and her older brother, wheelchair-user Lennon, come up with a plan. This fresh, funny book requires suspension of disbelief: everything from the ease with which Yuri moves in and out of NASA's high-security facility to Dovie's hippie family to the threat at the story's heart is over the top. But Yuri and Dovie, smart and thoughtful and deep, are genuine if singular teen characters in a story that is also rich in ideas—a work both blithe and intellectually satisfying. (Age 12 and older)

Kokie, E. M. *Radical*. Candlewick Press, 2016. 437 pages (978–0–7636–6962–1)

Bex, 15, is distrustful of the government and knows that Lucy, in town for the summer to visit her grandparents, wouldn't understand why Bex goes to Clearview. So she says nothing about the shooting club/survival training center near her rural Michigan home as they fall for each other. For Bex, who isn't out, dating Lucy is unexpected, uncertain, sweet, and thrilling, until a police stop illuminates the huge gap in how the two young women see the world. Bex is also growing uneasy about her older brother Mark's involvement with a group of young men at Clearview who defy the rules, intent on causing trouble. Mark's behavior toward Bex becomes threatening and violent before government agents arrest the young men for plotting to use explosives. Bex is arrested, too, and doesn't believe she can trust anyone in the system, including her well-meaning, court-appointed lawyer. Some of her fears about the system are not unfounded, and her mother is pressuring her to take the fall for Mark because she's a minor facing lesser consequences. Bex, her brother, and her parents are

all singular individuals in a struggling family dynamic. The leadership and most members of Clearview are also wholly believable in this unusually nuanced novel showing degrees of extremism. A thoughtful, at times passionate coming out story is woven into this insightful look at how Bex's thinking has been shaped, and is shifting by story's end. (Age 14 and older)

**Lake, Nick. *Whisper to Me*. Bloomsbury, 2016. 531 pages
(978-1-61963-456-5)**

At the beginning of her summer vacation, Cassie finds a severed foot in a high-top sneaker washed ashore at the beach. The police believe it most likely belonged to another victim of The Houdini Killer, who's been murdering sex workers in the area. The event triggers a voice in Cassie's head that starts to take over her life, threatening her with violence if she doesn't comply. As she struggles to deal with the voice, her overprotective father, and a past trauma no one talks about, Cassie enters an outpatient therapy program where she becomes friends with Paris, a charismatic college student who also has mental illness. When Paris disappears, Cassie is certain she's become a victim of The Houdini Killer and becomes obsessed with finding out what happened to her friend. All of this unfolds as she's also navigating a budding romance with a college student who's renting her father's garage apartment. The gripping novel told in flashback is framed as a letter to the boy and written in second person, offering Cassie's explanation of why she pushed him away, and why she's asking for another chance. Ultimately, Cassie's story is one of survival and healing. (Age 14 and older)

**Lee, C. B. *Not Your Sidekick*. Interlude Press, 2016. 283 pages
(978-1-945053-03-0)**

Jess Tran, 16 and daughter of C-Class superheroes Smasher and Shockwave (mild-mannered real estate agents in their daily lives), has shown no sign of developing meta-abilities. To distract herself from this disappointment, Jess gets an internship at a robotics company and discovers her secret crush, Abby Jones, also works there. More startling, the company is run by the Mischiefs, her town's C-Class villains. Jess's supervisor, M, wears the Mischief suit to maintain authority while the Mischiefs are away. M is so easy to talk to that Jess reveals her crush on Abby, who is, conveniently—or is that mysteriously?—always working elsewhere. Abby, of course, is M. She is also the daughter of the Mischiefs. The attraction between Jess and Abby is mutual, but then Abby reveals her parents have disappeared and she's certain Captain Orion of the Heroes League of Superheroes, whom Jess has always adored, is behind it. An entertaining story set in 22nd-century North America following chemical warfare that activated latent human superpowers is fresh, funny, and original. It's also to be continued. Chinese-Vietnamese Jess, daughter of immigrants, is bisexual in a future where a spectrum of sexuality and gender is accepted, while signs of xenophobia suggest a far-from-perfect world, one in which heroes and villains are not always easily defined. (Age 12 and older)

Lee, Stacey. *Outrun the Moon*. Putnam, 2016. 391 pages (978-0-399-17541-1)

Smart, spirited Mercy Wong, 15, negotiates her way into a prestigious, whites-only girls' school for the educational advantage she's sure it will provide. The racism Mercy and her Chinatown community experience is an essential part of an insightful and engaging work that is part boarding school story, with Mercy navigating relationships as a social and cultural outsider, and part riveting account of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. Prior to the earthquake, Mercy facilitates a meeting between the leaders of the Chinese Benevolent Association and a white-owned business that wants Chinatown customers—agreeing to do so was how she leveraged the business owner's support of her entry to the school. In the quake's aftermath, Mercy struggles with devastating losses to her family, her community, and the city a whole. But social and racial barriers break down as she and her classmates cooperate to survive. Sheltering in a city park along with thousands of others, real friendships begin to form as the young women extend kindness across lines of race and class to one another and other refugees. Author Lee notes that cross-cultural goodwill like this, common after the quake, sadly did not last. She also explains where she took liberties, especially regarding the gender and racial boundaries she allowed Mercy to cross. (Ages 11–15)

Mabry, Samantha. *A Fierce and Subtle Poison*. Algonquin, 2016. 279 pages (978-1-61620-521-8)

Lucas has spent every summer since he was 10 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The son of a hated gringo hotel developer and a Puerto Rican mother who left when he was small, he is unpopular at best, except with a small group of local boys he's been friends with from childhood. For years, people in the town have told stories about the house at the end of Calle Sol. It's always shuttered, surrounded by a wall, and everyone says it's been cursed. Still, there's a tradition of people throwing little bits of paper over the wall with their wishes written on them. When Lucas's love interest, Marisol, does this, she disappears soon after, washing ashore a few days later. And she isn't the first girl to have gone missing and later been found dead. Then a small slip of paper with one of Lucas's long-ago wishes shows up by his bedside. Lucas's curiosity gets the better of him and he jumps over the wall. What he finds there is Isabel, a girl whose very touch is deadly. Mysterious, dangerous, disturbing, and deeply intoxicating, Isabel has been keeper of all the wishes. And she—or someone on the other side of that wall—also may, or may not, be behind the disappearances of young women and girls. In a superb debut novel, Mabry explores myth, heroism, identity, and loss through magical realism. (Age 14 and older)

McGinnis, Mindy. *The Female of the Species*. Katherine Tegen Books / HarperCollins, 2016. 341 pages (978-0-06-232089-6)

Alex found her own way to render justice after the killer who kidnapped, raped, and mutilated her sister was set free for lack of evidence. Her calculated retribution was patiently planned and meticulously executed and his murder has never been solved. Now a senior in high school, Alex knows what she did isn't normal but feels no remorse. Weighted by darkness, she's resigned

herself to a life alone. Peekay, another senior, volunteers at the animal shelter with Alex. Alex tries to avoid anything resembling friendship, but Peekay is open and kind. Jack, star athlete and valedictorian, remembers the search for Alex's sister his freshman year. Now a chance meeting with Alex in their senior year has him wanting to know her better. Suddenly loner Alex finds herself with a boyfriend and a best friend. But Alex's rage at a world where men too easily and too often abuse women and girls flares on a night when Peekay is drugged at a party. Alex intervenes and prevents a rape, but her violent response is frightening to everyone. Alternating among the three teens' points of view, this engrossing novel confronts sexual violence and the often unspoken rage of women. Alex is both a metaphor for that rage and a sympathetic if unsettling character in a book that is righteously provocative and rightfully disturbing. (Age 14 and older)

McLemore, Anna-Marie. *When the Moon Was Ours*. Thomas Dunne Books / St. Martin's Griffin, 2016. 270 pages (978-1-250-05866-9)

Miel and Sam have been friends since the day Miel, drenched and scared, appeared in a field where a water tower had just been drained in Sam's town. Miel is haunted by snippets of memory that include a curandero father long gone, and a mother and older brother who drowned. In the wind she sometimes hears her mother's cries. But Miel has Aracely, the young woman who raised her, curer of lovesick, broken hearts, and Sam, who hangs the moon for her. Miel is one of the few who knows Sam is really Samira. He and his mother moved to town when Sam was small so he could live as a boy. The practice, from his mother's Pakistani heritage, is called bacha posh and typically ends in adolescence. But Miel understands that it expresses who Sam is, now and forever. The Bonner Girls, las gringas bonitas, are four sisters who once could make any boy fall in love with them, but not anymore. Ivy Bonner believes the roses that grow from Miel's wrist, the roses Miel see as her curse, can restore the sisters' power. When Ivy learns Sam's secret, Miel knows she'll do what Ivy wants to protect the boy she loves. Latin American magical realism is foundational to this lush, sensual, astounding work graced by characters that are exquisitely, exceptionally human. Thick with secrets, this is a story of love and family and the power of speaking one's truth. (Age 14 and older)

McNeal, Laura. *The Incident on the Bridge*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. 326 pages (978-0-375-87079-8)

Multiple viewpoints provide an account of the disappearance and search for Thisbe Locke, who goes missing on a night she visits her former boyfriend. Angry because he dumped her for someone else, Thisbe tells no one where she's going. Shifting perspectives include Thisbe's sister; a boy who likes Thisbe; a boy who saw Thisbe on the bridge the night she disappeared; and several different law enforcement authorities. Snippets of each individual's personal story and qualities of their character emerge as integral to the plot while the back-and-forth narratives reveal that they all have pieces of the puzzle without knowing it. As they gradually understand the significance of what they saw or know, the emerging picture transforms one kind of fear into another. At first the assumption is that Thisbe jumped from the bridge in a suicide. Eventually

it becomes clear she's been kidnapped. Thisbe's perspective, too, is part of the story, as is that of the mentally ill, increasingly unstable man who's taken her, his poignant, unsettling backstory revealing that he believes Thisbe is his sister, who died when he was a child. This increasingly tense thriller features two distinct and disparate sisters who connect when it matters most at the center of a story that underscores the importance of what we see and what we say in piecing together truth. (Age 14 and older)

Medina, Meg. *Burn Baby Burn*. Candlewick Press, 2016. 310 pages (978-0-7636-7467-0)

Nora López is finishing high school uncertain about the future. Encouraged to apply to the New York City Community College trades program, she can't imagine being able to go when her mom, Mima, struggles to pay the rent. When recent murders of young, dark-haired women in the city turn out to be the actions of a serial killer, who begins writing letters to the press signed "Son of Sam," the growing tension and fear is tangible. It pulses through Nora's Queens neighborhood and the city like the disco rhythms and intense heat so prevalent that spring of 1977. And it explodes into looting following the citywide blackout. But the more pressing danger for Nora is at home, where her younger brother, Hector, is increasingly violent and out of control. Cuban-born Mima says Hector is just a boy in need of a good girl to help him settle down. Mima's sexism and blinders infuriate Nora, but Nora is also too ashamed to tell her best friend, her boyfriend, her caring boss at the market, teachers, or anyone else what's happening. Son of Sam is caught, almost anticlimactically, even as the threat in Nora's personal life escalates. An exceptional novel captures the textures and turbulence of time and place and the complexities of Nora's relationships vividly. Even before Son of Sam is arrested, it's becoming clear that community rather than family is Nora's greatest source of safety, while her own resilience is her greatest strength, especially once she breaks her silence. (Age 13 and older)

O'Neill, Louise. *Asking for It*. U.S. edition: Quercus, 2016. 339 pages (978-1-78429-586-8)

Eighteen-year-old Emma is beautiful. Her appearance is central to all her relationships as well as to the power she wields as a popular girl in her school. She is also thoroughly unlikable, manipulating everyone around her and projecting a sense of entitlement. Her life changes dramatically after one night of partying. The next day an online video surfaces of several boys sexually assaulting unconscious Emma. As she scrambles to take control of the fallout, Emma finds people are not eager to come to her defense. Eventually she reports the rape and her story becomes a media hot topic. She rarely leaves her house and can't escape knowing everyone has seen the video, and most think she is to blame. But rape is a matter of consent and Emma never gave it to those boys. Her drinking and drug use, her sexy clothing, her flirting, her history of manipulation—none of that should matter. But in the court of public opinion they do and Emma—who thought she had so much power—is now powerless. In a book that exposes many of the contradictions young women face daily, the

author's dedication to leaving an untidy and unsatisfying ending makes this a raw and realistic read. (Age 14 and older)

Patel, Sonia. *Rani Patel in Full Effect*. Cinco Puntos Press, 2016.

314 pages (pbk. 978-1-941026-502)

Set in the early 1990s, 16-year-old Rani is living in Hawaii with her immigrant Gujarati Indian parents. Rani's mother quietly obeys her husband but is deeply unhappy in a marriage in which he is cold and unfaithful. If Rani's mother is overworked and unloved by Rani's father, Rani is his princess. Then Rani catches her father kissing a young woman not much older than she is. Her anger is fierce and her home life begins to unravel. At the same time, she's invited to join a secret rap group by her high school friend, Pono, and discovers an underground rap community on her island. Rani has a crush on Pono, but she's also attracted to Mark, the group's founder. Rap is the way Rani expresses her anger and pain, including pain about her father's sexual abuse. She's never told anyone about it until Mark becomes her boyfriend. At first he is gentle and supportive. But he's also a 31-year-old man and recovering drug abuser who eventually starts to abuse Rani. Still, she can't bring herself to leave him, a dynamic tied to the lasting psychological effect of the abuse at her father's hands. Rani's raps are fierce, and feminist, but speaking the truth about and to the people who've hurt her takes the support of others, and belief in her own self-worth. This gritty, triumphant novel includes an excellent author's note about the dynamics of abuse. (Age 14 and older)

Podos, Rebecca. *The Mystery of Hollow Places*. Balzer + Bray / HarperCollins, 2016. 291 pages (978-0-06-237334-2)

When Imogene's famous mystery-writer dad disappears without warning, her stepmother, a therapist who knows her husband's fragile mental health history, wants to make the search public rather than relying only on police. But Imogene talks her out of it, secretly convinced that her dad has gone to search for her long-absent mother, whom Imogene knows little about. With the help of her best friend, and the friend's college-age older brother on whom Imogene has a crush, Imogene applies everything she's learned reading her dad's books to find her mom, because in doing so she believes she'll find her dad. A novel that works as genre fiction is also a coming-of-age story in which Imogene's search leads to the agonizing, honest truth that the people we love are imperfect, sometimes even fragile. Hints of romance fizzle realistically while so much else blossoms, from Imogene's relationship with her stepmother to her understanding of frailty and forgiveness and the expansive nature of family. Mixed-race Imogene is part Chinese American. (Age 13 and older)

Pung, Alice. *Lucy & Linh*. U.S. edition: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. 340 pages (978-0-399-55048-5)

Fifteen-year-old Lucy, whose immigrant Chinese family lives in a poor neighborhood of Melbourne, is recipient of the first Equal Access scholarship offered by Laurinda, an upscale, private girls school. The economic and racial disparity between Lucy and her Laurinda classmates, most of whom are white and wealthy, is glaring. For them, Lucy realizes, "money is just numerical and

not frustratingly finite and concrete,” while the ways her race and culture are exoticized or demeaned are countless. She resents it but also can't help judging her own family and community harshly for how little they have. When Lucy is invited into the circle surrounding “The Cabinet,” the ruling trio of girls at the school whose cruelty is sometimes astonishing, she knows there must be a reason. She discovers it's to make sure she upholds the exact image of the Equal Access scholarship the school has in mind. Her anger at the revelation helps her heal the split she felt moving between two worlds: She'll accept what Laurinda has to offer on her own terms. There's a surprise reveal near this story's end but it doesn't overpower the beautiful, sharp, perceptive writing throughout a novel full of observations that are sometimes funny, always scathing. Finely developed characters, including Lucy's parents, two individuals with different natures but the same work ethic and love for their family, are another part of what makes this such a satisfying work. (Age 13 and older)

Savit, Gavriel. *Anna and the Swallow Man*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2016.

230 pages (978-0-553-51334-9)

Seven-year-old Anna is captivated by the tall stranger she meets on the streets of Krakow. Maybe it's because he is kind to her; maybe it's that he speaks many languages, like she does; maybe it's the way he charms a small bird. On her own since the Germans took her father, Anna follows him and the two become unlikely traveling companions. The Swallow Man, as Anna calls him, rarely stops walking and reveals little about his life, but he does teach Anna about Wolves (Germans) and Bears (Russians), the natural world, and to speak the language of Road. From all this Anna constructs a story to explain their constant travels. When a Jewish man named Reb Hirschl joins them, he brings laughter and music into Anna's life again. Reb and the Swallow Man have nothing in common, except Anna. Their shared desire to protect her is enough to bind them as the trio travels across Poland, into the Soviet Union, and back again to avoid the warring armies. Set during World War II, a story that movingly explores love, loss, survival, and sacrifice features an intellectually precocious child whose innocence slowly erodes in a world gone mad. The Swallow Man's secrets are never fully revealed, but there are clues as he himself enters the wilds of madness. With Anna's help he finds his way back, and then gifts her the chance for a future. Sophisticated language and ideas, often lyrically expressed, make this novel solidly young adult. (Age 13 and older)

Sepety, Ruta. *Salt to the Sea*. Philomel, 2016. 391 pages

(978-0-399-16030-1)

The sinking of the Nazi passenger ship *Wilhelm Gustloff*, killing an estimated 9,000 evacuees escaping the advancing Russian army in the last days of World War II, inspired this riveting, haunting novel. Joanna and Emilia are refugees; Florian is on the run for reasons he won't reveal. All three teens are desperate to reach the Polish port where German ships are waiting. Each is struggling with a secret and all are damaged by what they've experienced, unable to easily trust, but they form a makeshift family with other travelers. Teenage Alfred is a Nazi sailor at the port. Reviled by peers for his self-importance, he also exhibits sociopathic behavior that is, in its way, a personification of fascism. The fates of

the other three intertwine with Alfred after their harrowing journey to the port culminates in discovery of thousands more refugees than the waiting ships can possibly carry. Short chapters moving back and forth among the four points of view make for a swiftly paced story in which the characters are revealed in how they interact and through internal reflection that also illuminates their backstories. Oppression under Stalin, Nazi greed, the brutality of war, and the intriguing mystery of the legendary Amber Room are all part of a tense, tragic novel in which the fate of the ship will not be changed by fiction, even as some fictional characters do survive. An author's note gives more information about the *Wilhelm Gustloff* tragedy and other factual elements of the narrative. (Age 14 and older)

Shusterman, Neal. *Scythe*. (Arc of the Scythe, Book 1) Simon & Schuster, 2016. 433 pages (978-1-4424-7242-6)

In a future on earth when humans have become immortal, fatal disease and injury and even aging neutralized by the ability to regenerate, the population is kept in check by Scythes, individuals trained to kill, or “glean,” those whom they select. When teens Citra and Rowan are chosen as unwilling apprentice Scythes (saying no is not an option), they find themselves caught in the political machinations within the Scythedom. Scythes, says their mentor, Scythe Faraday, *should* abhor the taking of a life, but another faction gaining power relishes killing, and has been doing so with increasing violence. Citra and Rowan, already going through rigorous physical and mental training, know that they are competing for a single position, but the stakes grow higher when a rule change Faraday is helpless to challenge dictates that the first task of the winner will be to glean the loser. Timeless questions of whether the good of the many outweighs the good of the one, and ethical dilemmas exacerbated by power struggles and greed, invite contemplation, while martial arts combat training will entice thrill-seekers in this riveting work. (Age 14 and older)

Smith, Sherri L. *Pasadena*. Putnam, 2016. 228 pages (978-1-101-99625-6)

When her best friend Maggie's death is ruled suicide, Jude needs a better explanation for such a huge loss. Beautiful Maggie, living in an L.A. mansion and fascinated by old Hollywood, had just gotten early acceptance into Brown. Jude tries to find out about her friend's final hours, certain something sinister happened. Chinese American Maggie was the center of a diverse, otherwise disparate group of young adults who, Jude realizes, don't have much in common without her. Jude likes Joey, her not-quite boyfriend (Jude has trust issues, the origins of which are gradually revealed), and laid-back surfers Hank and Effie, but not the others. She decides to investigate what everyone was doing the night Maggie died. The style is crisp and tight in this noir-inspired work, full of sharp, vivid descriptions, skillfully drawn characters, and a subtle sense of foreboding. The wonderfully realized L.A. setting juxtaposes magical light and grittiness; struggle with excess, material and otherwise. Maggie and Jude's lives were opposites, too, and yet they clicked. Jude's search stirs up memories (Maggie is the only friend she told about being raped when younger) and brings the complications and imperfections of being human into relief. (Age 14 and older)

Stiefvater, Maggie. *The Raven King*. (The Raven Cycle, Book IV)**Scholastic Press, 2016. 439 pages (978-0-545-42498-1)**

Readers of the previous three books in the Raven Cycle will find immense satisfaction in this culmination of the series' plethora of storylines. Cabeswater is being unmade from the inside by a demon, and it threatens the world Adam, Gansey, Blue, and especially Ronan find vital. Gansey finds his King at last, but it's not the solution he believed it would be. Saving Cabeswater and his companions demands Gansey's sacrifice, but also the strengths and abilities of friends old and new as they problem-solve under pressure in a moment of crisis. Romance that has been building since book one reaches fruition for several characters, including Gansey and Blue, who struggle to escape the fatal destiny of the foretold kiss. Reading the earlier volumes is a must to follow the complex storylines, but this masterful conclusion is a pleasure worth waiting for, and the happy ending feels well-deserved by this compelling cast of teens who are living in our world while battling threats from other planes and other times. (Age 13 and older)

Umminger, Alison. *American Girls*. Flatiron Books, 2016. 290 pages (978-1-250-07500-0)

Anna, 15, ran away to her older sister Delia's in Los Angeles. She used her stepmother's credit card to buy a plane ticket, a cost Anna's now expected to repay. Delia's boyfriend, Dex, writes for a Disneyesque series called *Chips Ahoy!* Anna spends days with Dex while Delia goes to auditions and appears in her former boyfriend Roger's independent movie. Roger hires Anna to research Charles Manson for his film, and the inanity of *Chips Ahoy!* is stark contrast to the Manson murders, not to mention the uneasy life of beautiful Delia, whom Anna fears is being stalked. Anna can't understand what made young women follow Manson and commit such atrocities. How and why did they fall under his thrall? In a startling, original, complex debut novel, Anna's voice is sharp, witty, and also honest. Her mother is incredibly self-centered; her sister supportive but worrisome and frustrating; her stepmother annoying yet stable. The brilliantly realized Los Angeles setting also works as a means to magnify the ways women and girls everywhere are too often objectified, invisible, exploited, and sometimes abused. Anna's increasing clarity is poignant, and at times profound. "Los Angeles ... is not really so different from the rest of America." (Age 14 and older)

Whaley, John Corey. *Highly Illogical Behavior*. Dial, 2016. 249 pages (978-0-525-42818-3)

Solomon Reed, 16, is agoraphobic and has rarely left home since middle school. Lisa Praytor doesn't know Sol well but wants to forge a friendship and help him leave his house. She plans to use the experience as the basis of her college application essay—not that she tells Sol this. Lisa and her boyfriend, Clark, begin spending time with Sol. The friendship that develops among the three is genuine, bright, and lively, their exchanges funny and deep. Family developments challenge Sol to take small steps toward the outside world and Lisa and Clark support him with sensitivity and imagination. Then Lisa becomes convinced Sol, who comes out to her, is in love with Clark, and that

Clark, who says he isn't ready to have sex with her, is in love with Sol. Shortly after, Sol learns about Lisa's essay: His devastation is profound. Sol is smart and funny and poignantly aware of the impact of his mental illness on his life and his family, but that doesn't mean he can simply walk out the door. Nothing makes this clearer than descriptions of his panic attacks. Lisa is motivated by a desperate desire to leave home that undermines her judgment, while Clark has good sense and a good heart but doesn't reveal Lisa's plan to Sol until it's too late. All are highly illogical, and poignantly human, in a singular, entertaining story that dives deeply into the ethics and complexities of friendship. (Age 14 and older)

Wung-Sung, Jesper. *The Last Execution*. Translated from the Danish by Lindy Falk van Rooyen. U.S. edition: A Caitlyn Dlouhy Book / Atheneum, 2016. 132 pages (978-1-4814-2965-8)

On February 22, 1852, 15-year-old Niels Nielsen was the last person to be executed in Svendborg, Denmark. He had been charged with arson and the murder of the sheriff's son. This story opens just before dawn on the day of his execution. The boy waits in his prison cell in almost a dreamlike state, reflecting on his life and the circumstances that led to him being charged as the relentless clock keeps ticking and the hour of his execution approaches. He led a fairly miserable existence, wandering with his father, hungry and cold, looking for work. There were also rare moments of kindness from strangers, one of which connect to the actions for which he's being executed. His only company in his cell is a fly, and lonely Niels imagines conversations with him. The points of view of various people in the village, from the baker to the messenger to the carpenter who is building Niels's coffin, all add up to an unusual glimpse into a bit of history that is far from irrelevant today. (Age 14 and older)

Yoon, Nicola. *The Sun Is also a Star*. Delacorte, 2016. 348 pages (978-0-553-49668-0)

Over the course of a single day on which they have a chance meeting, alternating chapters move between Natasha, who has been in the United States with her Jamaican immigrant family since she was 8, and Daniel, the son of Korean immigrant parents who feels intense pressure to become a doctor. It's a monumental day for both of them even before their first encounter. Tasha is desperately trying to seek once last stay of her family's deportation and Daniel is on his way to an interview with a Yale alum for an application he doesn't care about. The perspectives and histories of other characters, from family members to people they encounter over the course of the day, like Irene, the security guard at the office building where INS is located, and Jeremy, the immigration attorney Natasha meets with, are also part of the story. Natasha, who loves science, and Daniel, who wants to be a poet, are both intelligent, and their exchanges are entertaining but also surprisingly deep in a novel that delves into political and historical aspects of race and culture as well as the dynamics of family and the delight of falling in love. Like the two main characters, this unusual love story is poetic and witty, blithe and thought-provoking. (Age 13 and older)

Appendices

Appendix I

Checklist of Books in *CCBC Choices 2017*

This quick-reference checklist of all of the books recommended in this edition of *CCBC Choices* is alphabetical by main title, followed by the author (just the first author is listed if there are more than one), and the page number where the complete citation and annotation can be found.

- 1 Big Salad*. Medina, Juana, 42
- 5 Little Ducks*. Fleming, Denise, 41
- Ada Lovelace, Poet of Science*. Stanley, Diane, 13
- Airport Book*. Brown, Lisa, 34
- Alan's Big, Scary Teeth*. Jarvis, 48
- American Girls*. Umminger, Alison, 99
- Animals by the Numbers*. Jenkins, Steve, 13
- Anna and the Swallow Man*. Savit, Gavriel, 97
- Around America to Win the Vote*. Rockliff, Mara, 28
- Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye*. Liew, Sonny, 37
- As Brave as You*. Reynolds, Jason, 81
- Asking for It*. O'Neill, Louise, 95
- Baa Baa Smart Sheep*. Sommerset, Mark, 65
- Babies Don't Walk, They Ride!* Henderson, Kathy, 47
- Balcony on the Moon*. Barakat, Ibtisam, 30
- Beautiful Blue World*. LaFleur, Suzanne, 78
- Before Morning*. Sidman, Joyce, 17
- Best Prints in the Whole Universe*. Portis, Antoinette, 54
- Bicycling to the Moon*. Parvela, Timo, 80
- Bike Like Sergio's*. Boelts, Maribeth, 57
- Bitter Side of Sweet*. Sullivan, Tara, 82
- Blocks*. Dickson, Irene, 46
- Blood for Blood*. Graudin, Ryan, 88
- Bone Sparrow*. Fraillon, Zana, 74
- Booked*. Alexander, Kwame, 70
- Book Uncle and Me*. Krishnaswami, Uma, 69
- Borden Murders*. Miller, Sarah, 26
- Boy Called Christmas*. Haig, Matt, 16
- Boy Named Queen*. Cassidy, Sara, 72
- Bramble and Maggie*. Haas, Jessie, 67
- Branch*. Messier, Mireille, 63
- Brave Bear*. Taylor, Sean, 55
- Brown v. Board of Education*. Rubin, Susan Goldman, 28
- Bubonic Panic*. Jarrow, Gail, 24
- Burn Baby Burn*. Medina, Meg, 95
- Can I Tell You a Secret?* Kang, Anna, 48
- Catching a Story Fish*. Harrington, Janice N., 76

- Cat on the Bus*. Kim, Aram, 49
- Chameleon That Saved Noah's Ark*. Molchadsky, Yael, 18
- Chicken in Space*. Lehrhaupt, Adam, 50
- Cloud and Wallfish*. Nesbet, Anne, 80
- Complicated Case*. Nilsson, Ulf, 70
- Cow Who Climbed a Tree*. Merino, Gemma, 62
- Crossing Niagara*. Tavares, Matt, 29
- Crow Smarts*. Turner, Pamela S., 14
- Daniel Finds a Poem*. Archer, Micha, 57
- Dario and the Whale*. Malone, Cheryl Lawton, 50
- Dead Bird*. Brown, Margaret Wise, 34
- D Is for Dress-Up*. Carluccio, Maria, 41
- Distance Between Us*. Grande, Reyna, 31
- Doing Her Bit*. Hagar, Erin, 24
- Don't Call Me Grandma*. Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux, 63
- Duck, Duck, Porcupine!* Yoon, Salina, 68
- Esquivel!* Wood, Susan, 38
- Every Day Birds*. VanDerwater, Amy Ludwig, 15
- Every Falling Star*. Lee, Sungju, 32
- Excellent Ed*. McNulty, Stacy, 52
- Fabulous Frogs*. Jenkins, Martin, 12
- Family Fletcher Takes Rock Island*. Levy, Dana Alison, 78
- Fascinating*. Michelson, Richard, 32
- Fearless Flyer*. Lang, Heather, 25
- Female of the Species*. McGinnis, Mindy, 93
- Fierce and Subtle Poison*. Mabry, Samantha, 93
- Finding Wonders*. Atkins, Jeannine, 20
- First Snow*. Park, Bomi, 17
- Frank and Lucky Get Schooled*. Perkins, Lynne Rae, 64
- Freedom in Congo Square*. Weatherford, Carole Boston, 30
- Freedom Over Me*. Bryan, Ashley, 21
- Friends*. Ikegami, Aiko, 60
- Full of Beans*. Holm, Jennifer L., 76
- Garvey's Choice*. Grimes, Nikki, 75
- Ghost*. Reynolds, Jason, 81
- Giant Squid*. Fleming, Candace, 12
- Girl Mans Up*. Girard, M-E, 87
- Girl Who Drank the Moon*. Barnhill, Kelly, 71
- Golden Boys*. Hartnett, Sonya, 89
- Good Night, Bat! Good Morning, Squirrel!* Meisel, Paul, 52
- Hannah and Sugar*. Berube, Kate, 44
- Happy Birthday, Alice Babbette*. Kulling, Monica, 61
- Hare and Tortoise*. Murray, Alison, 19
- Hat for Mrs. Goldman*. Edwards, Michelle, 59
- Head of the Saint*. Acioli, Socorro, 83
- Henry Wants More!* Ashman, Linda, 43
- Highly Illogical Behavior*. Whaley, John Corey, 99
- Hole Story of the Doughnut*. Miller, Pat, 26

- Home at Last*. Williams, Vera B., 66
- House That Zack Built*. Murray, Alison, 53
- How to Build a Museum*. Bolden, Tonya, 33
- Hueys in What's the Opposite?* Jeffers, Oliver, 42
- Hungry Lion or A Dwindling Assortment of Animals*. Cummins, Lucy Ruth, 59
- I Am Not a Number*. Dupuis, Jenny Kay, 22
- I Am Pan!* Gerstein, Mordicai, 18
- I See and See*. Lewin, Ted, 67
- Incident on the Bridge*. McNeal, Laura, 94
- Infamous Ratsos*. LaReau, Kara, 69
- Inquisitor's Tale*. Gidwitz, Adam, 75
- In the Shadow of Liberty*. Davis, Kenneth C., 22
- Irena's Children*. Mazzeo, Tilar, 25
- It Ain't So Awful, Falafel*. Dumas, Firoozeh, 74
- It Is Not Time for Sleeping*. Graff, Lisa, 47
- Jack's Worry*. Zuppari, Sam, 35
- Jazz Day*. Orgill, Roxane, 37
- Journey*. Sanna, Francesca, 65
- Juana & Lucas*. Medina, Juana, 79
- Land of Forgotten Girls*. Kelly, Erin Entrada, 78
- Last Execution*. Wung-Sung, Jesper, 100
- Leah's Mustache Party*. Mike, Nadia, 52
- Learning to Swear in America*. Kennedy, Katie, 91
- Leave Me Alone!* Brosgol, Vera, 44
- Lie Tree*. Hardinge, Frances, 88
- Life According to Dani*. Lagercrantz, Rose, 69
- Life without Nico*. Maturana, Andrea, 62
- Like a Bird*. Grady, Cynthia, 36
- Lily's New Home*. Yoo, Paula, 68
- Lines, Squiggles, Letters, Words*. Rocha, Ruth, 65
- Lion Island*. Engle, Margarita, 22
- Little Cat's Luck*. Bauer, Marion Dane, 71
- Little One*. Weaver, Jo, 56
- Little Penguins*. Rylant, Cynthia, 54
- Little Red*. Woollvin, Bethan, 19
- Looking for Bongo*. Velasquez, Eric, 56
- Look Up!* Jin-Ho, Jung, 61
- Lucy & Linh*. Pung, Alice, 96
- Luis Paints the World*. Farish, Terry, 60
- Makoons*. Erdrich, Louise, 74
- Mamá the Alien = Mamá la extraterrestre*. Colato Láinez, René, 58
- March: Book Three*. Lewis, John and Andrew Aydin, 25
- Marisol McDonald and the Monster = Marisol McDonald y el monstruo*. Brown, Monica, 58
- Marta! Big & Small*. Arena, Jen, 40
- Maybe a Fox*. Appelt, Kathi, and Alison McGhee, 61
- Maybe Something Beautiful*. Campoy, F. Isabel, 36
- Monster & Son*. LaRochelle, David, 50

- Moo*. Creech, Sharon, 73
- Morning with Grandpa*. Liu, Sylvia, 50
- Music Is*. Stosuy, Brandon, 55
- My Book of Birds*. Valério, Geraldo, 14
- My Heart Fills with Happiness*. Smith, Monique Gray, 54
- My Lady Jane*. Hand, Cynthia, 88
- My Little Sister and Me*. Lam, Maple, 49
- My New Mom and Me*. Galindo, Renata, 34
- Mystery of Hollow Places*. Podos, Rebecca, 96
- Narwhal*. Clanton, Ben, 72
- Near, Far*. Borando, Silvia, 41
- Not Your Sidekick*. Lee, C. B., 92
- Now You See Me, Now You Don't*. Borando, Silvia, 41
- Old Dog Baby Baby*. Fogliano, Julie, 46
- One Day in the Eucalyptus, Eucalyptus Tree*. Bernstrom, Daniel, 44
- One Half from the East*. Hashimi, Nadia, 76
- One Minute*. Ahn, Somin, 40
- Only Road*. Diaz, Alexandra, 73
- On Our Way to Oyster Bay*. Kulling, Monica, 24
- On the Edge of Gone*. Duyvis, Corinne, 86
- Opposite Zoo*. Na, Il Sung, 42
- Outrun the Moon*. Lee, Stacey, 93
- Over the Ocean*. Gomi, Taro, 47
- Owl and the Lemming*. Akulukjuk, Roselynn, 18
- Owl Sees Owl*. Godwin, Laura, 46
- Pasadena*. Smith, Sherri L., 98
- Passion of Dolssa*. Berry, Julie, 83
- Patron Saint for Junior Bridesmaids*. Tougas, Shelley, 82
- Pax*. Pennypacker, Sara, 80
- Platypus*. Whiting, Sue, 15
- Playing for the Devil's Fire*. Diederich, Phillippe, 86
- Plot to Kill Hitler*. McCormick, Patricia, 26
- Poem for Peter*. Pinkney, Andrea Davis, 38
- Preaching to the Chickens*. Asim, Jabari, 20
- Presenting Buffalo Bill*. Fleming, Candace, 31
- Presents Through the Window*. Gomi, Taro, 16
- Princess and the Warrior*. Tonatiuh, Duncan, 19
- Pug*. Long, Ethan, 67
- Quackers*. Wong, Liz, 56
- Quickest Kid in Clarksville*. Miller, Pat Zietlow, 63
- Radiant Child*. Steptoe, Javaka, 38
- Radical*. Kokie, E. M., 91
- Rainbow Weaver = Tejedora del arcoiris*. Marshall, Linda Elovitz, 62
- Rain Fish*. Ehlert, Lois, 46
- Rani Patel in Full Effect*. Patel, Sonia, 96
- Raven King*. Stiefvater, Maggie, 99
- Raymie Nightingale*. DiCamillo, Kate, 73
- Reader*. Chee, Traci, 85

- Real Poop on Pigeons!* McCloskey, Kevin, 13
- Real Sisters Pretend.* Lambert, Megan Dowd, 35
- Refuge.* Booth, Anne, 15
- Rescue Squad No. 9.* Austin, Mike, 43
- Rex.* James, Simon, 48
- Riding Chance.* Kendall, Christine, 90
- Rudas.* Morales, Yuyi, 53
- Sabotage.* Bascomb, Neal, 20
- Sachiko.* Stelson, Caren, 29
- Salt to the Sea.* Sepetys, Ruta, 97
- Sam and Jump.* Mann, Jennifer K., 51
- Samanthasaurus Rex.* Mandell, B. B., 51
- School's First Day of School.* Rex, Adam, 64
- Scythe.* Shusterman, Neal, 98
- Secret Subway.* Corey, Shana, 21
- Sleep Tight Farm.* Doyle, Eugenie, 15
- Snail & Worm.* Kügler, Tina, 49
- Some Writer!* Sweet, Melissa, 33
- Somos como las nubes = We Are Like the Clouds.* Argueta, Jorge, 39
- Sound of All Things.* Uhlberg, Myron, 35
- Sound of Silence.* Goldsaito, Katrina, 60
- Spindle.* Johnston, E. K., 90
- Spot, the Cat.* Cole, Henry, 59
- Steeplejack.* Hartley, A. J., 89
- Sting.* Watson, Jude, 82
- Stone Thrower.* Richardson, Jael Ealey, 27
- Sun Is also a Star.* Yoon, Nicola, 100
- Swan Riders.* Bow, Erin, 84
- Symptoms of Being Human.* Garvin, Jeff, 87
- They All Saw a Cat.* Wenzel, Brendan, 66
- This Land Is Our Land.* Osborne, Linda Barrett, 27
- Three Lucys.* Charara, Hayan, 58
- Thunder Boy Jr.* Alexie, Sherman, 43
- Tickle My Ears.* Mühle, Jörg, 53
- Tiny Stitches.* Hooks, Gwendolyn, 31
- To Catch a Cheat.* Johnson, Varian, 77
- To Stay Alive.* Brown, Skila, 84
- Toshi's Little Treasures.* Robert, Nadine, 54
- Two Friends.* Robbins, Dean, 28
- Unbecoming.* Downham, Jenny, 86
- Unidentified Suburban Object.* Jung, Mike, 77
- Ursa's Light.* Marcero, Deborah, 51
- Vietnam.* Freedman, Russell, 23
- Want to Play?* Yoo, Paula, 68
- Watched.* Budhos, Marina, 85
- We Are the Ants.* Hutchinson, Shaun David, 90
- We Found a Hat.* Klassen, Jon, 61
- We Sang You Home.* Van Camp, Richard, 55

- Wet Cement*. Raczka, Bob, 39
- We Will Not Be Silent*. Freedman, Russell, 23
- When Andy Met Sandy*. dePaola, Tomie, 67
- When Green Becomes Tomatoes*. Fogliano, Julie, 39
- When Spring Comes*. Henkes, Kevin, 16
- When the Moon Was Ours*. McLemore, Anna-Marie, 94
- When the Sea Turned to Silver*. Lin, Grace, 79
- When the World Is Dreaming*. Gray, Rita, 47
- When We Were Alone*. Robertson, David A., 64
- Where Are You Little Red Ball?* Côté, Patricia, 45
- Where's the Party?* Chan, Ruth, 45
- Whisper to Me*. Lake, Nick, 92
- White Cat and the Monk*. Bogart, Jo Ellen, 57
- Whoosh!* Barton, Chris, 12
- Will's Words*. Sutcliffe, Jane, 29
- Worm Loves Worm*. Austrian, J. J., 43
- Yaks Yak*. Park, Linda Sue, 63
- You Can Fly*. Weatherford, Carole Boston, 40

Appendix II

Informational Nonfiction Titles in *CCBC Choices 2017*

Because our thematic categories incorporate both fiction and nonfiction titles, we've created this appendix to make it easy to identify books of information in *CCBC Choices*. We have included informational picture books that have a fictional framing or supplementary narrative. Books with fictionalized dialogue throughout the narrative are not included, even when about an actual person or event. Poetry and graphic novels—typically cataloged as nonfiction—are not included unless they are books of information.

Picture Books

- Asim, Jabari. *Preaching to the Chickens*, 20
 Barton, Chris. *Whoosh*, 12
 Corey, Shana. *Secret Subway*, 21
 Fleming, Candace. *Giant Squid*, 12
 Grady, Cynthia. *Like a Bird*, 37
 Hooks, Gwendolyn. *Tiny Stitches*, 31
 Jenkins, Martin. *Fabulous Frogs*, 12
 Jenkins, Steve. *Animals by the Numbers*, 13
 Lang, Heather. *Fearless Flyer*, 25
 McCloskey, Kevin. *The Real Poop on Pigeons!*, 13
 Michelson, Richard. *Fascinating*, 32
 Miller, Pat. *The Hole Story of the Doughnut*, 26
 Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *A Poem for Peter*, 38
 Richardson, Jael Ealey. *The Stone Thrower*, 27
 Stanley, Diane. *Ada Lovelace, Poet of Science*, 13
 Steptoe, Javaka. *Radiant Child*, 38
 Sutcliffe, Jane. *Will's Words*, 29
 Tavares, Matt. *Crossing Niagara*, 29
 Valério, Geraldo. *My Book of Birds*, 14
 VanDerwater, Amy Ludwig. *Every Day Birds*, 15
 Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Freedom in Congo Square*, 30
 Whiting, Sue. *Platypus*, 15
 Wood, Susan. *Esquivell*, 38

Longer Books

- Barakat, Ibtisam. *Balcony on the Moon*, 30
Bascomb, Neal. *Sabotage*, 20
Bolden, Tonya. *How to Build a Museum*, 33
Davis, Kenneth C. *In the Shadow of Liberty*, 22
Fleming, Candace. *Presenting Buffalo Bill*, 31
Freedman, Russell. *Vietnam*, 23
Freedman, Russell. *We Will Not Be Silent*, 23
Grande, Reyna. *The Distance Between Us*, 31
Jarrow, Gail. *Bubonic Panic*, 24
Lee, Sungju. *Every Falling Star*, 32
Lewis, John and Andrew Aydin. *March: Book Three*, 25
Mazzeo, Tilar. *Irená's Children*, 25
McCormick, Patricia. *The Plot to Kill Hitler*, 27
Miller, Sarah. *The Borden Murders*, 26
Osborne, Linda Barrett. *This Land Is Our Land*, 27
Rubin, Susan Goldman. *Brown v. Board of Education*, 28
Stelson, Caren. *Sachiko*, 29
Sweet, Melissa. *Some Writer!*, 33
Turner, Pamela S. *Crow Smarts*, 14

Appendix III

About the CCBC

The Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) is a unique examination, study, and research library of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. A vital gathering place for books, ideas, and expertise, the CCBC is committed to identifying excellent literature for children and adolescents and bringing it to the attention of those adults who have an academic, professional, or career interest in connecting young readers with books.

The CCBC houses a noncirculating collection of new, retrospective, and historical books published for children and young adults. The library serves as a book examination center for Wisconsin librarians and teachers, and supports teaching, learning, and research by providing informational and educational services related to children's and young adult literature. This work is carried out in many ways, from ongoing evaluation of new books (resulting in the annual *CCBC Choices* publication) to the library's award-winning Intellectual Freedom Information Services, and from reference services to outreach programs across Wisconsin.

The CCBC is funded to serve students and faculty on the UW–Madison campus, and school and public librarians and teachers across Wisconsin. In addition to the UW–Madison School of Education, the CCBC receives support from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction through its Division for Libraries and Technology.

You can find out much more about the CCBC, and access many original, thematic bibliographies and a searchable database of CCBC-recommended books, on the library's website at **cbc.education.wisc.edu**

Appendix IV

The Friends of the CCBC

Interested in receiving *CCBC Choices* each year when it's published?

Join the Friends of the CCBC!

The Friends sponsor programs to develop public appreciation for children's and young adult literature and support special projects at the CCBC, including the annual *CCBC Choices* publication. The Friends also cosponsor the annual Charlotte Zolotow lecture that brings a distinguished author of children's books to the UW–Madison campus each fall, and provide funding for other public lectures on the UW–Madison campus.

Friends members receive a copy of *Choices* each March when it is published. Other annual membership benefits include a seasonal newsletter and announcements of CCBC news and events through the Friends listserv. Friends members also receive invitations to events open only to the membership. Membership is open to all.

Members of the 2016–2017 Friends of the CCBC board are Allison O'Brien, President; Erin Augspurger, Treasurer; Marianne Siess, Membership Secretary; Shannon Furman, Recording Secretary; and Minetta Lippert and Lynn Montague, Directors-at-Large. Essential Friends volunteers also include Book Sale Coordinator Maria Parrot-Ryan.

Please see the front of the booklet for a Friends of the CCBC membership form.

Indexes

Author / Illustrator / Title Index

The author/illustrator/title index provides access to all of the titles and creators of books selected for this edition of *CCBC Choices*, including authors, illustrators, translators, and editors or compilers listed on the title page of *Choices* books. Book titles and book creators cited in the *Choices* introduction and annotations are also included. (Page numbers are not provided for the appearance of the book or book creator in Appendices I and II.)

Book titles appear in CAPITAL LETTERS.

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Bogart, Jo Ellen, 57
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 Cole, Henry, 59
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This index provides subject access to the titles recommended in *CCBC Choices 2017* as well as to information mentioned in the front matter and Appendices III and IV. While the index is not comprehensive, themes and subjects were chosen with story time, classroom use, and reader's advisory in mind. In keeping with the CCBC's interest in providing access to multicultural literature, the index also includes the ethnic backgrounds of the persons, fictional and real, portrayed in this year's *CCBC Choices* selections. Subject entries are as specific as possible, and include cross-references to related subjects. For example, "Latinos" includes a cross-reference to "Mexicans and Mexican Americans" and other culturally specific sub-groups. Books featuring a main/major character that is brown-skinned, whose cultural identity is not apparent to us, are listed under "Brown-Skinned Characters." Books that are broadly inclusive (e.g., diversity in the art, often with no main character; a diverse cast of characters in a novel) are listed under "Multicultural Literature," although they may also be listed under one or more specific groups.

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