

CCBC

Choices

2014

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with

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School of Education

University of Wisconsin–Madison

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Contents

Acknowledgments	4
Introduction	5
Organization of <i>CCBC Choices 2014</i>	6
The Charlotte Zolotow Award	8
A Few Observations on Publishing in 2013.	10
The Choices	
Science, Technology, and the Natural World	14
Seasons and Celebrations	20
Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature	21
Historical People, Places, and Events	23
Biography and Autobiography	32
Contemporary People, Places, and Events	35
Understanding Oneself and Others	37
The Arts	38
Poetry	40
Concept Books	43
Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers	45
Picture Books for School-Age Children	57
Books for Beginning Readers	69
Books for Newly Independent Readers	70
Fiction for Children	71
Fiction for Young Adults	84
Appendices	
Appendix I: Checklist of Books in <i>CCBC Choices 2014</i>	106
Appendix II: About the CCBC	112
Appendix III: About the Compilers	113
Appendix IV: The Friends of the CCBC, Inc.	115
Friends Membership Form	116
Author/Illustrator/Title Index	118
Subject Index	125

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

Introduction

CCBC Choices is created by librarians at the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC), a library of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison (see Appendix II for more about the CCBC).

The CCBC receives review copies of about 3,200 new books for children and young adults annually, which includes most of the trade books published in English by corporate publishers in the United States. By creating *CCBC Choices* we hope to draw attention to some of the outstanding books published for children and young adults from among the thousands we receive. Did we find every great book published in 2013? We have no doubt we did not. We always discover books we wish we'd received and read in time to include. But we also are thrilled to be recommending the 233 titles we did choose. We are confident that among them you will find numerous titles to meet the needs and interests of the children and teens in your professional or personal lives. Every book won't be for every child, but there is something for everyone here.

We are often asked how we choose books for *CCBC Choices*. Reading everything that comes into the library would be impossible, especially as most of the reading we do is after the work day ends. But every book is examined by a librarian, and many of them are read by one or more of us. Throughout the year we share our thoughts about the books we've read in written reading logs and informal conversations. Sometimes our enthusiasm is shared; sometimes our responses are mixed. But, gradually, consensus about some titles begins to emerge, although sometimes it's a process requiring multiple exchanges. Ultimately, the books we agree on are the books that make it into *CCBC Choices*.

We don't have a formal rubric or checklist of criteria a book must meet, but there are a number of factors we consider. Literary and artistic quality top our list, but we also pay close attention to accuracy, authenticity, and credibility. If we have questions we're unable to answer, we look for informed opinions from expert content reviewers, especially with regard to the depiction of race, culture, and other dimensions of experiences we may not be personally qualified to evaluate.

Sometimes we're challenged by books that we greatly appreciate for one or more reasons but that also raise questions in our minds. We depend upon further discussion, thinking, research, and sometimes other opinions to determine how those strengths and short-comings balance, and to determine whether the book ends up a *Choice*.

We may also consider a book because it offers unique or unusual content, especially when we know there is a need and interest in books on that topic based on our discussions with teachers, librarians, and others who work directly with children and teens. We also factor in what we know about children and teens as readers.

In the end, we know that the books that excite us the most are the ones we are most excited to share. Lucky for us—and you!—every year we find titles we can't wait to talk about, and books that leave us feeling fortunate to work in a field that gives us the opportunity to read and share the work of so many talented authors and artists. Thanks to them, and the editors and publishers who bring their work to all of us, the field of children's and young adult literature is full of excitement. Even better, it's full of books that can touch, challenge, and even change the hearts and minds of children and teens.

Organization of *CCBC Choices 2014*

The organization of the books in *CCBC Choices* into thematic and format categories has been developed over the years to help teachers, school and public librarians, and others who work with children and teens quickly find books that meet their needs. We often make refinements from year to year in the organization, in part due to our ever-growing understanding of what our colleagues who work directly with youth want and need, and in part to reflect the books we have chosen in a particular year.

Books in this edition of *CCBC Choices* have been placed into one of the following thematic categories when appropriate:

- Science, Technology, and the Natural World
- Seasons and Celebrations
- Historical People, Places, and Events
- Contemporary People, Places, and Events
- Understanding Oneself and Others
- The Arts

The remaining books have been placed into one of the following genre or format categories:

- Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature
- Biography and Autobiography
- Poetry
- Concept Books
- Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers
- Picture Books for School-Age Children
- Books for Beginning Readers
- Books for Newly Independent Readers
- Fiction for Children
- Fiction for Young Adults

Picture books about people who actually lived have usually been placed in the Historical People, Places, and Events section or the Biography and Autobiography section, unless the narrative is more fancy more than fact. 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.

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

Age Recommendations

We provide suggested age ranges for each title. These are meant to be general guidelines based on appeal and age-appropriateness 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: younger age recommendation is three or younger (e.g., Ages 1–4, Ages 3–6)
- Picture Books for School-Age Children: younger age recommendation is four or older (e.g., Ages 4–7, Ages 6–10)
- Fiction for Children: younger age recommendation is 10 or younger (e.g., Ages 9–12, Ages 10–14)
- Fiction for Young Adults: younger age recommendation is 11 or older (e.g., Ages 11–15, Age 13 and older)

Publication Information

All of the books in *CCBC Choices 2014* have a 2013 publication date. A few have 2012 copyright dates but weren't published until 2013. The citation for each book includes the current price and thirteen-digit international standard book number (ISBN) for the edition in the CCBC collection in 2013. 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.

The Charlotte Zolotow Award

The Charlotte Zolotow Award is given annually to the author of the best picture book text published in the United States in the preceding year. Established in 1997, the award is named to honor the work of Charlotte Zolotow, a distinguished children's literature editor for thirty-eight years with Harper Junior Books and an author of more than seventy picture-book stories, including such classic works as *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present* (Harper, 1962) and *William's Doll* (Harper, 1972). Ms. Zolotow attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison on a writing scholarship from 1933 to 1936. She studied with Professor Helen C. White.

The award is administered by the CCBC. Each year, a committee of children's literature experts selects the winner from the books published in the preceding year. The committee works with a shortlist of titles they develop along with input from the CCBC professional staff. All titles are subject to the approval of the CCBC professional staff.

Any picture book for young children (birth through age seven) originally written in English and published in the United States in the preceding year is eligible for consideration for the Charlotte Zolotow Award. The book may be fiction, nonfiction, or folklore, as long as it is presented in picture book form and aimed at the birth through seven age range. Easy readers and poetry collections are not eligible. Books written by Charlotte Zolotow are also not eligible for the award.

In addition to choosing the award-winning title, the committee may select up to five Honor Books and up to ten titles to be included on a Highly Commended list that will call attention to outstanding writing in picture books.

The selection committee is comprised of five members who are appointed to a two-year term by the CCBC professional staff. These appointments are based on knowledge of children's books, demonstrated ability to evaluate children's books and discuss them critically, and/or direct experience working professionally with children from birth through age seven.

Members of the 2014 Zolotow Award committee were: Megan Schliesman, chair (Librarian, Cooperative Children's Book Center; Madison, Wisconsin); Barb Huntington (Library Consultant, Retired; Madison, Wisconsin); Kristine Klopp (Library Media Specialist; Boulder, Colorado); Lynn Montague (Youth Services Librarian, Sun Prairie Public Library; Sun Prairie, Wisconsin); and Duy Nguyen (Teacher, Emerson Elementary School; Madison, Wisconsin).



2014 Charlotte Zolotow Award

- Winner:** *The Dark*
 Written by Lemony Snicket
 Illustrated by Jon Klassen
 Little, Brown, 2013
- Honor Books:** *Building Our House*
 Written and illustrated by Jonathan Bean.
 Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013
- My Cold Plum Lemon Pie Bluesy Mood*
 Written by Tameka Fryer Brown.
 Illustrated by Shane W. Evans.
 Viking, 2013
- Sophie's Squash*
 Written by Pat Zietlow Miller.
 Illustrated by Anne Wilsdorf.
 Schwartz & Wade / Random House, 2013
- This Is the Rope: A Story from the Great Migration*
 Written by Jacqueline Woodson.
 Illustrated by James Ransome.
 Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin, 2013
- Year of the Jungle*
 Written by Suzanne Collins.
 Illustrated by James Proimos.
 Scholastic Press, 2013
- Highly Commended Titles:**
- Big Snow* written and illustrated by Jonathan Bean.
 Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013
- Max and the Tag-Along Moon* written and illustrated by Floyd Cooper.
 Philomel, 2013
- My Blue Is Happy* written by Jessica Young and illustrated by Catia Chien.
 Candlewick Press, 2013
- Niño Wrestles the World* written and Illustrated by Yuyi Morales.
 A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2013
- The Silver Button* written and illustrated by Bob Graham.
 U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2013
- Stripes of All Types* written and illustrated by Susan Stockdale.
 Peachtree, 2013
- When No One Is Watching* written by Eileen Spinelli. Illustrated by David A. Johnson. Eerdmans, 2013

A Few Observations on Publishing in 2013

Refreshing! We wrote that in notes about our reading, or said it as we informally discussed books, quite a lot over the past year. Often, we were referencing the portrayal of sex and sexuality in young adult literature. There was a matter-of-factness, occasionally a frankness, to teens and sex that we appreciated, with the act itself often angst-free and pleasurable. (Relationships? Those can be complicated.) We hope we continue to see more books like Julie Halpern's *The F-It List* and Alaya Dawn Johnson's *The Summer Prince*, which acknowledged the reality of sex in some teens' lives.

We also continued to enjoy young adult literature that pushed against the upper end of the age spectrum (see *The Summer Prince*, above). Once again, we found more and more books featuring characters beyond the age of eighteen, or that focus on the lives of adults as well as teens.

At the other end of the spectrum, way at the other end, we relished a number of fine picture books. But finding terrific new books for babies and young toddlers was much harder this year than last. Among those we were thrilled to discover were several books by Native authors and artists—what a delight! Julie Flett's *Wild Berries*, her collaboration with author Richard van Camp on *Little You*, and Quanaq Mikkigak and Joanne Schwartz's *Grandmother Ptarmigan*, from Inuit publisher Inhabit Media, were so welcome.

From Kathi Appelt's response to a friend's challenge to "Write something funny," *The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp*, to the blithe Bollywood-inspired adventure in Uma Krishnaswami's *The Problem with Being Slightly Heroic*, we loved the books that made us laugh this year. We also appreciated when the laughter came in the midst of stories exploring substantial topics. Among books that deftly balanced the dark and the light were Amy Timberlake's *One Came Home*, Rita Williams-Garcia's *P.S., Be Eleven*, and Meg Medina's *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass*.

Substantial is the word for some of the best non-fiction this year, too. There are always some terrific short volumes for elementary-age children, but we were delighted with the heft—intellectual and otherwise—of some of the books for older children and teens, including *Yoko Ono: Collector of Skies* by Nell Beram and Carolyn Boriss-Krimsky, *The Nazi Hunters* by Neal Bascomb, and *Emancipation Proclamation: Lincoln and the Dawn of Liberty* by Tonya Bolden.

We'd love to see more great poetry books for the youngest, and for older children and teens, but delighted in Jane Yolen's *Wee Rhymes*, for the nursery set, and in Joyce Sidman's *What the Heart Knows* for middle school and middle grades. One thing we especially miss is the era when every year seemed to bring one or more terrific, thematic young adult poetry anthologies, although we did appreciate one slim volume with a big punch: *Indivisible: Poems for Social Justice*, edited by Gail Bush and Randy Meyer.

Counting on Multicultural Literature

And speaking of books we're looking for.... The CCBC receives most of the new trade books published each year by large trade publishers in the United States, and every year we document the number of books we receive by and about people of color. We've been doing this in one way or another for almost thirty years.

Every few years there is a flutter of media attention surrounding the dearth of multicultural literature for children and teens. Editors and publishers, authors and illustrators, librarians and teachers, and parents are interviewed about the low numbers of books in comparison to the overall total number of books published. But the importance of creating and publishing and purchasing and sharing outstanding books by and about people of color is constant. Whether or not stories are running in the *New York Times*, in your local paper, or on your local radio station, children and teens are in need of books that speak to who they are.

We received approximately 3,200 books at the CCBC in 2013. Of those,

- **93** books had significant African or African American content
- **67** books were by Black authors and/or illustrators
- **34** books had American Indian themes, topics, or characters
- **18** books were by American Indian authors and/or illustrators
- **61** books had significant Asian/Pacific or Asian/Pacific American content
- **88** books were by authors and/or illustrators of Asian/Pacific heritage
- **57** books had significant Latino content
- **48** books were by Latino authors and/or illustrators

The multicultural content across the books represented by these numbers varies widely with regard to accuracy and authenticity. The books represented by these numbers include everything that came into the library with a 2013 publication date, from formula series non-fiction books (e.g., a “Countries of the World” series including titles such as *Kenya* and *Venezuela*) to stand-alone trade titles to paperback originals. It should also be noted that the number of books by authors and illustrators of color does not represent the number of book creators of color—many individuals wrote or illustrated more than one book.

We know the numbers are important, but they are far from the only important thing to consider when it comes to multicultural publishing for children and teens. The books themselves matter. Of course the more books there are, especially books created by authors and Illustrators of color, the more opportunities librarians, teachers, and parents have of finding outstanding books for young readers and listeners that can speak to the experiences of individual children while affirming their presence as part of a larger world.

If we were going to identify only one thing about multicultural publishing in 2013 that stood out, it was books by and about Native Americans. We have eight—eight!—books in this edition of *CCBC Choices* by and about American Indians and First Nations peoples. They include two novels by American Indian authors, Tim Tingle's *How I Became a Ghost* and Eric Gansworth's *If I Ever Get Out of Here*. There are also four picture books and one work of non-fiction. It's interesting to note that of the eight books we are recommending, five were published in Canada,

two of them by a small Inuit publisher. Of the three published here in the United States, one is from an independent publisher. Only two of the books with Native content we have included in *Choices* are from mainstream U.S. publishers.

We are also pleased, after a dismal 2012, to see an increase in the number of Latino picture books, including Yuyi Morales's buoyant *Niño Wrestles the World*. We are also always on the lookout for picture books about contemporary African American children, and were pleased to see titles such as *Max and the Tag-Along Moon* by Floyd Cooper and *This Is the Rope* by Jacqueline Woodson, which seamlessly ties the present to the past. We also appreciated how Loretta Seto weaves traditional tales into a contemporary story of a young Chinese American girl in *Mooncakes*.

Among offerings for older readers, a few of the most arresting and inventive books we read, multicultural or otherwise, were graphic novels, including the brilliant pairing of *Saints* and *Boxers* by Gene Luen Yang, and *I See the Promised Land*, offering a destiny-driven perspective on Martin Luther King, Jr., with Arthur Flowers providing the narrative to accompany art by (East) Indian Patua artist Manu Chitrakar.

As we said, the numbers are important but it's the books themselves that make a difference. These and other titles, whether recommended here in *CCBC Choices* or by multicultural book award committees and other groups committed to paying attention to, and focusing attention on, the importance of multicultural literature, are one of the ways we all can have an impact. We can read them, we can purchase them, we can share them with children and teens. It's true that kids don't just identify with books about characters that look like them—a reality that works across racial and cultural lines. But too many children for too many years were invisible in literature for youth. Too many children are still far from visible today. Some of us can't imagine that experience—lucky us. Others of us find it far too familiar. Let's all work to make sure every child has a wealth of literature from which to choose—books that speak to the many dimensions of who they are and what they aspire to be.

The *Choices*

Science, Technology, and the Natural World

Butterworth, Chris. *See What a Seal Can Do.* Illustrated by Kate Nelms. Candlewick Press, 2013. 28 pages (978-0-7636-6574-6, \$14.99)

“If you’re down by the sea one day, you might spot a seal, lying around like a fat sunbather or flumping along the sand.” Lyrical, descriptive language and appealing mixed media illustrations highlight the characteristics and behavior of gray seals. Diving deep, catching mackerel, evading a killer whale on the hunt, and returning to the beach to sleep are some of the events in one gray seal’s day. While a large-font narrative tracks the seal’s activities, offset single sentences in a smaller italicized type add snippets of relevant factual information. (Ages 4–8)

Cate, Annette LeBlanc. *Look Up! Bird-Watching in Your Own Backyard.* Candlewick Press, 2013. 51 pages (978-0-7636-4561-8, \$15.99)

“You may not have a yard, but you do have the sky. Look up!” Busy pages and cartoon-like conversation bubbles encourage reluctant naturalists to give birding a chance by emphasizing how easy it is to do anywhere, from the window of a city apartment building to suburban backyards and beyond. Bird-watching requires no expertise and few supplies, but close observation—watching and listening—is key. There’s a wealth of information about bird appearance and behavior packed into this slim, highly visual volume in which author/illustrator Annette LeBlanc Cate shares her enthusiasm for and knowledge about birding, along with her silly sense of humor, with young readers. (Ages 7–10)

Jenkins, Steve. *The Animal Book: A Collection of the Fastest, Fiercest, Toughest, Cleverest, Shyest—and Most Surprising—Animals on Earth.* Houghton Mifflin, 2013. 208 pages (978-0-547-55799-1, \$21.99)

In this treasure trove of information, Steve Jenkins relates fascinating facts about 300 different animals, looking at them in sections that examine various qualities, traits, and behaviors (Family, Animal Senses, Predators, Defenses, and Animal Extremes, such as size, habitat, and life span). An introductory chapter talks about the scientific classification of “Animal” as a kingdom that includes two groups—vertebrates and invertebrates—with various subgroups. The penultimate chapter, “The Story of Life,” looks at evolution, natural selection, variation, mutation and other elements of survival, extinction, and change that have shaped life on earth. As always, Jenkins combines dramatic, eye-catching collage images of the many animals he’s exploring with clever and succinct writing that focuses on one or more intriguing elements about each. Some of the artwork has been reused from his earlier volumes, but it and other illustrations are fresh and dynamic in this new context. And where does he get his ideas? In the closing chapter, “Making Books,” Jenkins documents the process for making his books, from the original idea through research, preliminary art, final illustration, and production timeline, to give kids a sense of what goes into the book they hold in their hands. (Age 7 and older)

Jenkins, Steve, and Robin Page. *My First Day*. Illustrated by Steve Jenkins. Houghton Mifflin, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-547-73851-2, \$16.99)

In contrast to human babies, many newborn animals are capable of independent behavior shortly after birth. A range of newborn abilities is exemplified by animals as diverse as a kiwi (“As soon as I hatched, I was ready to take care of myself”), a wood duck (“On my first day, I jumped out of my nest ... fell a long, long way ... and paddled after my mother), and a manatee (“When I was just an hour old I was able to swim—and breathe—on my own”). While some of the creatures fend for themselves from the beginning, others, including polar bears, golden snub-nosed monkeys, and sea otters, require a parent’s care. Masterful collage illustrations and a brief, engaging text are well-suited for young naturalists, and a final section offers a paragraph of additional information about each of the twenty-two species highlighted. (Ages 2–5)

Levine, Sara. *Bone by Bone: Comparing Animal Skeletons*. Illustrated by T. S. Spookytooth. Millbrook Press, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-7613-8464-9, \$26.60)

A creative comparison of humans to other vertebrates points out similarities and differences by imagining how we’d look with added bones in our spine (a tail) or without arm or leg bones (just like a snake). If our finger bones grew so long that they reached our feet, we’d resemble bats, and really big neck vertebrae would make the human form closer to that of giraffes. Information about a host of animals will be painlessly absorbed because of the clever concept in which it is presented, amped up by humorous illustrations showing children with the structural modifications described in the text, the most memorable of which is a human body sans bones—essentially a puddle of skin and a pair of unanchored eyeballs. (Ages 4–8)

Linden, Joanne. *Fiddleheads to Fir Trees: Leaves in All Seasons*. Illustrated by Laurie Caple. Mountain Press, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-87842-606-5, \$12.00)

The opening page spread of this lovely volume features a poem titled “Fiddleheads” (“Tight green coils like scarved scrolls on a violin...”) and facts about these feathery leaves on baby ferns in spring. The final double-page spread features a concrete, evergreen-shaped poem, “Balsam Fir” (“In one breath memory awakens the twinkling lights, glittering ornaments, and brightly wrapped packages. An elegant princess is clad in her holiday garb.”), and more about the flat needles of this tree popular at Christmas. In between are twelve additional poems and information about other types of leaves found across the seasons, including the drooping leaves of the willow in summer and the trembling leaves of the quaking aspen in fall. The poems are set against wonderfully composed, deep-hued illustrations further reflecting the beauty of the natural world. (Ages 5–9)

Markle, Sandra. *The Long, Long Journey: The Godwit's Amazing Migration.* Illustrated by Mia Posada. Millbrook Press, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-7613-5623-3, \$23.94)

Exemplary writing and gorgeous illustrations distinguish an informational picture book about the bar-tailed godwit, whose amazing migratory flight is first undertaken when it's four months old. Sandra Markle describes one young female that hatches in June in Alaska. Over the next two months she learns to hunt for food, hide from predators, and, eventually, to fly. By the end of September, almost all the adult godwits have left, but the young birds are eating as much as they can to prepare for the journey ahead. In October, they leave. "Although not one young bird has made this flight before, together they know the route to take." They fly for eight days nonstop before finally arriving on the coast of New Zealand, where their annual arrival is celebrated by the human population. Markle's finely crafted narrative, set against Mia Posada's graceful and dramatic collage illustrations, elicits a strong emotional response without ever anthropomorphizing her subject. (Ages 5-8)

Markle, Sandra. *Snow School.* Illustrated by Alan Marks. Charlesbridge, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-58089-410-4, \$16.95)

A mother snow leopard teaches her cubs how to survive among harsh conditions in this rich picture book text that follows twin siblings from one week of age until they are able to live independently more than a year later. Through example the mother teaches her offspring how to be quiet while hunting, to stay on their feet in order to catch quick prey, to find shelter in a storm, and to always stay clear of humans, all while growing up in an environment that is often dangerous. Watercolor and pencil illustrations capture the beauty of the animals and their home in the Hindu Kush Mountains of Pakistan. A few additional facts about snow leopards and a list of resources are included. (Ages 4-7)

Montgomery, Sy. *The Tapir Scientist. Photographs by Nic Bishop. (Scientists in the Field)* Houghton Mifflin, 2013. 80 pages (978-0-547-81548-0, \$18.99)

Found in South America, tapirs have remained unchanged since the Miocene era. This engaging "Scientists in the Field" offering follows a research group led by Brazilian scientist Pati Medici, who is tagging and studying tapirs in the Pantanal of southern Brazil, Paraguay, and Bolivia. Author Sy Montgomery and photographer Nic Bishop accompanied Medici on the research trip, giving readers an eyewitness, firsthand account chronicling excitement, frustrations (especially early on), and eventual successes. Montgomery brings the many different roles (and personalities) of research team members into focus, from the specialist in tracking, the (dart gun) shooter, and the two vets, to Pati herself, who manages to remain optimistic even when things are looking doubtful. Her genuine love and appreciation for tapirs, and for her work, are obvious. Information on the Pantanal ecosystem, and the understanding of at least some local farmers that working in partnership with native plants and animals is critical to the long-term health of the ecosystem and to their own success, place the work of the researchers in broader context. (Ages 10-14)

Ridley, Kimberly. *The Secret Pool.* Illustrated by Rebekah Raye. Tilbury House, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-88448-339-7, \$16.95)

“Even if you are lucky enough to find me shining on the forest floor on an early spring day, you might mistake me for a puddle—which I most certainly am not! I’m a watery jewel called a vernal pool.” A lyrical narrative is supported by additional text on every page spread providing accessible facts about vernal pools. These temporary areas of water that form in spring and last (typically) until autumn serve as a breeding ground for several creatures in forest ecosystems, such as wood frogs, spotted salamanders, and fairy shrimp. Both narratives follow the activity across the several months of a vernal pool’s existence. Once the pool is dry, things continue to happen in the spot where it once shined as the cycle of decay and renewal nourishes the environment that will enable the vernal pool to support new life the next time it forms. Illustrations with a rich, woody palette provide an up-close look at activities in and around the vernal pool. (Ages 5–9)

Roth, Susan L., and Cindy Trumbore. *Parrots Over Puerto Rico.* Illustrated by Susan L. Roth. Lee & Low, 2013. 40 pages (978-1-62014-004-8, \$19.95)

For millions of years, hundreds of thousands of beautiful green and blue Puerto Rican parrots lived in the island’s rain forests. The island’s original settlers were no threat. But the birds were eventually impacted by political and social change. European ships didn’t just bring invaders but black rats that ate parrot eggs. As the human population grew, habitat was lost, and fewer and fewer parrots remained. In 1968, the Puerto Rican Parrot Recovery Program began. Parrots were raised in captivity but had little success surviving if they were released. By 1975, only thirteen Puerto Rican parrots were living in the wild. Through trial and error, scientists have developed new approaches to saving the parrots and encouraging the growth of wild populations, which are starting to thrive once again. Susan L. Roth and Cindy Trumbore cover an immense span of time that encompasses social, political, and natural history on the island, as well as ongoing scientific research, in this fascinating account of these birds’ fall and rise. Roth’s vibrant collage art is a stunning backdrop in this volume that concludes with a brief photo essay featuring the work of scientists trying to save the birds. (Ages 7–11)

Rusch, Elizabeth. *Eruption! Volcanoes and the Science of Saving Lives.* Photographs by Tom Uhlman. (Scientists in the Field) Houghton Mifflin, 2013. 76 pages (978-0-547-50350-9, \$18.99)

One of the most critical decisions to be made when a volcano eruption threatens is whether to issue an evacuation order. If the threat turns out to be unfounded, the evacuation order will not only have disrupted thousands of lives and often fragile economies, it also means people will be less likely to heed the next order to leave—an order that could save their lives. Elizabeth Rusch chronicles the work of scientists at the Volcano Disaster Assistance Program of the U.S. Geological Survey, based in the Pacific Northwest, and their colleagues in various parts of the world where eruptions threaten. They work collaboratively to monitor quickly changing situations and determine whether

alerts and evacuation orders should be issued. She focuses on two specific eruptions, looking at how scientists from Indonesia and the Philippines worked with VDAP staff to monitor and evacuate people around Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines in 1991, and Mount Merapi in Indonesia in 2010. In the midst of a pending eruption, scientists in the U.S. work collaboratively with their international colleagues, including locally trained observers, drawing on evidence from satellites around the world, to help make these critical decisions in this fascinating entry in the “Scientists in the Field” series. (Ages 11–14)

Rusch, Elizabeth. *Volcano Rising*. Illustrated by Susan Swan. Charlesbridge, 2013. 32 pages (978–1–58089–408–1, \$17.95)

Volcanos are most often referenced in terms of their power of destruction. Here, author Elizabeth Rusch chronicles their presence as a creative force on earth. In an engaging informational narrative graced with bursts of onomatopoeia, she explores how slow flows from volcanos add to the land above and beneath the sea. Volcanos “grow taller and wider. They form majestic mountains. And they build new islands where there were none before.” The primary narrative is accompanied by additional information on each page spread providing specific examples of places where volcanos have and continue to add to land mass on earth. A “Volcano Vocabulary” and selected bibliography round out a volume featuring bold collage illustrations. (Ages 6–9)

Sayre, April Pulley. *Here Come the Humpbacks!* Illustrated by Jamie Hogan. Charlesbridge, 2013. 40 pages (978–1–58089–405–0, \$17.95)

“Flippers paddle. Flukes push. In every ocean on Earth, humpback whales swim.” Richly hued charcoal pencil and pastel illustrations accompany a text that narrates a mother and calf humpback from the youngster’s birth through their migration from the Caribbean Sea north to the feeding grounds of Stellwagen Bank off Massachusetts and back again. Their journey includes encounters with escort whales, orcas, a whale-watching boat, and other humpbacks. The description of the pair’s trip is supplemented with several text blocks that offer additional information about humpback whales and their environment. (Ages 5–8)

Stewart, Melissa, and Allen Young. *No Monkeys, No Chocolate*. Illustrated by Nicole Wong. Charlesbridge, 2013. 32 pages (978–1–58089–287–2, \$16.95)

An engaging look at the interconnected, interdependent nature of an ecosystem revolves around ... chocolate? Yes! Cocoa trees in the rain forests of Central and South America are a terrific example of how one life form depends on so many elements, and so many other creatures, to survive and thrive. You can’t have chocolate without cocoa beans, which need cocoa pods, which form from cocoa flowers. The leaves on those cocoa trees provide food for the flowers, and those leaves need maggots. That’s right. And the stems of those leaves need lizards, which eat damaging insects (no, not the maggots). Where do the monkeys come in? If it weren’t for monkeys, new cocoa trees wouldn’t grow, because the only way cocoa seeds spread is by animals pulling the pods down and ripping them open to eat the insides, leaving the seeds behind. Each page

spread expands on a single element of this process that is part of the cumulative life force of the ecosystem that gives us chocolate. (Ages 5–9)

Stockdale, Susan. *Stripes of All Types*. Peachtree, 2013. 32 pages (978–1–56145–695–6, \$15.95)

A finely crafted, brief rhyming text notes many instances of stripes in the animal world. The repeated use of the same alliterated sound in pairs of phrases (“Prowling the prairie / perched on a peak”) that are part of a longer couplet (“Crawling on cactus / and camped by a creek”) is marvelous, as is the rich word choice. A wonderful text for reading aloud or for advanced beginning readers, the narrative is paired with the striking illustrations showing the array of striped creatures referenced. More about the purpose of the stripes on each animal is provided in brief information at book’s end. A final page spread invites children to identify each of the animals by a close-up image of just its stripes. *Highly Commended, 2014 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–6)

Thimmesh, Catherine. *Scaly Spotted Feathered Frilled*. Houghton Mifflin, 2013. 57 pages (978–0–547-99134–4, \$17.99)

What did dinosaurs really look like? Catherine Thimmesh explores that question in an intriguing look at the work of paleoartists, who base their paintings, drawings, sculptures, and other visual renderings of dinosaurs first and foremost on scientific evidence. The bones, it turns out, are the easy part. What was on top of them? Skin? Scales? Feathers? Paleoartists, some of them scientists themselves, start with dinosaur bones and other fossilized evidence, but that’s only the beginning of their research. To determine what dinosaurs looked like they delve into many branches of paleoscience to learn as much as they can about the creature, its habitat, and diet. They look for clues in birds and reptiles, too—the closest living relatives of the dinosaurs. But they still must use their imaginations to extend what is known until the realm of the unknown through educated guesswork. Comments from a number of different paleoartists are part of the discussion in this fascinating, handsomely designed volume in which almost every page spread features a full-page image of their work. (Ages 10–13)

Ward, Jennifer. *What Will Hatch?* Illustrated by Susie Ghahremani. Walker / Bloomsbury, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–8027-2311–6, \$12.99)

Eggs of eight different animals are presented with a few carefully selected words (“Sandy ball”) paired with the question “What will hatch?” An equally spare answer (“Paddle and crawl – Sea turtle”) augments the illustration of the brand-new juvenile. A balanced array of animals goes beyond birds (goldfinch, penguin, and robin) to include a caterpillar, crocodile, platypus, sea turtle, and tadpole. Egg shapes are die-cut, with the page turn cleverly revealing the result of each hatching. A few pages of additional information at the book’s end introduce young children to the term “oviparous” and relate egg facts for each species (time in egg, parents’ incubation behavior, number of siblings). Simple gouache on wood illustrations, while not always strictly representational, are consistently lovely with a warm palette of gold, green, and brown. (Ages 1–3)

Seasons and Celebrations

Agee, Jon. *Little Santa*. Dial, 2013. 40 pages (978-0-8037-3906-2, \$17.99)

Ever wonder how Santa Claus got his start? According to this humorous picture book, he was born to a grumpy North Pole family, the youngest of five children. Unlike his miserable siblings, little red-suited Santa loved playing in the snow, baking gingerbread, and climbing up the family's chimney. Just as the family is ready to move to Florida, they find themselves snowed in, and jolly little Santa volunteers to climb up the chimney to look for help. Along the way he rescues a flying reindeer trapped in the snow and shimmies down the chimney of the first house he finds, which turns out to be full of industrious elves, who build him a sleigh. Much of the humor in Agee's story comes from the rationales he devises for the familiar but over-the-top characteristics of the Santa Claus we know today. His illustrations offer an amusing counterpoint between upbeat little Santa and his grouchy Florida-bound family, as well as many unspoken details, such as how the elves transform the Claus family's otherwise humdrum lives. (Ages 3-6)

Bean, Jonathan. *Big Snow*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-374-30696-0, \$16.99)

A young, brown-skinned boy's eager anticipation of snow is beautifully drawn out over the course of a day that occasionally tests the patience of his mom, not to mention her skills in the art of distraction. "Do you think it will snow taller than the grass?" "Is it going to be a big snow?" David's questions always lead his mom to suggest another activity to keep him occupied. He helps her make cookies, but the flour reminds him of snow. He helps clean the bathroom, but the suds remind him of snow. He helps make the bed, but those cool, white sheets remind him of snow. Checks of the weather mark the progress of the storm, which is described in terms of his latest activity. "The snow was covering everything, white and cool." After lunch comes a nap, when the snow falls so hard and so fast that it blows in the door, covering floor and furniture in deep drifts that disappear when his dad arrives home, waking David from his dream. But the big snow has transformed the world. Jonathan Bean's lyrical, skillfully crafted picture book is a playful yet realistic look at a memorable day in the life of a young child. *Highly Commended, 2014 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 2-5)

Griffith, Gretchen. *When Christmas Feels Like Home*. Illustrated by Carolina Farias. Albert Whitman, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-8075-8872-7, \$16.99)

For young Eduardo, the move from his unnamed Latin American homeland to the United States is a transition made easier by a few familiar things, most notably the Nativity set he carved with his grandfather. Yet his new house still doesn't feel like home. His mother says it will when they put up the Nativity at Christmas. Tío Miguel acknowledges that it will take time: First the mountain "will turn the color of the sun," then "the pumpkins will smile." Tía Sofia adds

that his new school will feel familiar “when your words float like clouds from your mouth.” But all these things are impossible! Yet one by one, as Eduardo adjusts and makes friends, these and other impossible things happen: Trees change color then turn bare as skeletons; Halloween brings carved, smiling pumpkins; with the first cold weather he can see his breath. Child-friendly details mark the passage of time as a boy adjusts to a new home—and new seasons—in an upbeat look at the immigrant experience that still captures a sense of longing. (Ages 5–8)

Snyder, Laurel. *The Longest Night: A Passover Story*. Illustrated by Catia Chien. Schwartz & Wade, 2013. 36 pages (978–0–375-86942–6, \$17.99)

The Passover story of the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt is told in the voice of a young slave girl who witnesses the ten plagues and eventually makes the journey with thousands of others to freedom. Laurel Snyder’s rhyming narrative conveys the strife, the uncertainty, and the fear, but also moments of reassurance. “Strangely, Aba seemed to wait / Calmly for each harsh new fate, / Sat and whittled in his chair, / I sat too, and said a prayer.” With the order to flee comes chaos, but also hope. “Made our way to sifting sands, / Scrambling feet, but clasping hands. / Thirsting, thrilling, full of fright— / None of us were slaves that night.” The muted palette of Catia Chien’s illustrations reflect the grittiness of the girl’s life, but brightens symbolically with the crossing of the parted sea at story’s end. In an author’s note, Snyder remembers listening to the Exodus story during Passovers as a child. “The story was mostly Moses and Pharaoh bargaining for the lives of everyone else ... I wanted to know what it was like to be a child of Israel. I couldn’t quite picture it. This book is my answer to the curious girl I was.” (Ages 4–8)

Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature

Bryan, Ashley. *Can’t Scare Me!* Atheneum, 2013. 32 pages (978–1–4424-7657–8, \$16.99)

“Tanto, tanto, I’m wild and free. / Grandma’s stories can’t stop me.” So begins the song of a brave little boy who ignores his grandma’s warnings of a two-headed monster. He knows he can charm even a multi-headed giant with his flute playing. And mostly he’s right—until he meets the two-headed monster’s older brother, who uses the little boy’s bravado against him as he encourages him to come closer and closer so that he can grab him and put him in his sack. The giant orders his cook, Jane, to prepare the boy for dinner, and Jane finds the little boy’s song so irresistible that he manages to escape. This lively retelling of a folktale from the Antilles is written in a lilting style that begs to be read aloud. The vivid tempera and watercolor illustrations offer a rainbow of hues suggesting a tropical setting. (Ages 4–7)

Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. *Grandma and the Great Gourd: A Bengali Folktale*. Illustrated by Susy Pilgrim Waters. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2013. 32 pages (978–1–159643–378–6, \$17.99)

Traveling through the jungle in India to visit her daughter, an old woman named Grandma meets a fox, a bear, and a tiger in turn. She convinces them each she's far too skinny to eat. "See how bony I am? I'll be a lot juicier on my way back from my daughter's house." For the return journey, her daughter seals Grandma inside a giant gourd to keep her safe and gives her a push. She rolls through the jungle, encountering each animal once again. "I'm just a rolling gourd, singing my song. Won't you give me a push and help me along?" It almost works. But the fox finally figures out Grandma's inside. That's when Grandma's loyal dogs come to the rescue. A lively retelling of a traditional, humorous Bengali tale is distinguished by many fresh examples of onomatopoeia (dhip-dhip, khut-khut-khut, gar-gar, gar-gar), not to mention a strong, smart, clever main character. The vibrant illustrations are distinctively stylized. Steeped in warm, bright colors, they incorporate an array of decorative patterns into the backgrounds. (Ages 4–8)

Mikkigak, Qaunaq, and Joanne Schwartz. *Grandmother Ptarmigan*. Illustrated by Qin Leng. Inhabit, 2013. 24 pages (978–1–927095–52–2, \$13.95)

When a little ptarmigan who won't go to sleep asks his grandma for a story, she finally indulges him with a brief tale of cold little lemmings who want to get warm. "They want to crawl up your back, under your armpits, around your neck." And she tickles him. The little ptarmigan jumps up in fright, flapping his wings so hard he flies for the very first time. "And that is why baby ptarmigans fly so young." The fresh, alluring storytelling in this Inuit tale features repetition and wonderful word choice. The illustrations offer a counterpoint to the narrative in which the baby ptarmigan is frightened and flies away, leaving the grandmother to lament ("Nauk Nauk"). He's never too far from her and, in one of the final images, is shown happily tucked into his nest. (Ages 2–4)

Pinkney, Jerry. *The Tortoise and the Hare*. Little, Brown, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–376-18356–7, \$18.00)

Jerry Pinkney's not-quite-wordless treatment of the classic Aesop fable features a cast of animal characters rendered with a keen eye for detail and movement, set against the muted backdrop of a lovely desert landscape. Words comprising the moral build cumulatively across a series of pages ("Slow...Slow and ... Slow and steady ..."). Wordless spreads between the appearance of each new word show the continuing action (or, in the case of the Hare, occasional inaction). Pinkney uses a mix of full-page and panel illustrations, and there is much to discover for anyone who spends time with his gorgeous images. His decision to put clothing on the animals was, he explains in a note, a way to distinguish them from the landscape, and he hopes is suggestive of the splashes of color provided by desert blooms. While the ending of the story may come as no surprise, its aftermath is: the Hare is a good sport, and congratulates his opponent. (Ages 4–8)

Qitsualik-Tinsley, Rachel, and Sean Qitsualik-Tinsley. *The Raven and the Loon.* Illustrated by Kim Smith. Inhabit, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-927095-50-8, \$16.95)

There was a time when Raven and Loon were both plain white. “Raven hated anything boring. And without colour, he bored even himself!” He flies back and forth, “trying not to go crazy with boredom.” Finally, he visits Loon and decides they should make each other a pretty coat. The coat Raven makes for Loon is, indeed, beautiful as he paints a pattern on her feathers with soot. When it’s Loon’s turn to decorate Raven, she’s hampered by his incessant talking and squirming. Raven moves once too often and her work is ruined. Furious that he’s still a single color, although now it’s black, he throws a lamp at Loon, flattening her feet. Their long memories explain why Raven is black, and Loon has flat feet, to this day. A delightful retelling of an Inuit tale is accompanied by comical illustrations that underscore the story’s humor. (Ages 3–6)

Historical People, Places, and Events

Bascomb, Neal. *The Nazi Hunters: How a Team of Spies and Survivors Captured the World’s Most Notorious Nazi.* Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Inc., 2013. 245 pages (978-0-545-43099-9, \$16.99)

A gripping tale of espionage and intrigue is also intensely emotional as it recounts the mission to locate and capture Adolf Eichmann, mastermind of the Nazi’s “Final Solution,” and bring him to trial in Israel. Eichmann was discovered in Buenos Aires, living under an assumed name in circumstances so meager there was doubt he was the right person. Is this really what Eichmann had become: a factory worker living in a poor, remote part of the city? For the Israeli intelligence agents and others who carried out the mission in May, 1960, it was a struggle to equate the evil responsible for the deaths of many of their family members and millions of other Jews with the aging, meek man they kidnapped. Getting Eichmann out of Argentina was tricky. The Argentine government wasn’t unsympathetic to Nazis. The agents held him for more than a week in a secret safe house before smuggling him out of the country. This painstakingly researched account is detailed and compelling from its opening page, and deftly reveals both the intricate planning and execution—which required spur-of-the-moment changes at times—as well as the feelings of the many individuals involved. It also reveals the impact of Eichmann’s capture and trial. The Holocaust was shrouded in shame and silence for most survivors, but this was a powerful, cathartic event, and they began to share their stories. The many survivor stories, memoirs, and other personal accounts of the Holocaust that exist today are part of a body of literature that began to emerge with this event, which affirmed the power and importance of speaking the truth. (Age 13 and older)

Berne, Jennifer. *On a Beam of Light: A Story of Albert Einstein.* Illustrated by Vladimir Radunsky. Chronicle, 2013. 52 pages (978–0–8118-7235–5, \$17.99)

A picture book look at the life of Albert Einstein makes clear that imagination had as much to do with his accomplishments as did calculations and critical thinking, and that the space and time to let his mind wander were essential to everything he did. A child who talked late and little, Einstein was fascinated by the compass his father brought him—it opened his mind’s eye to the unseen workings of the world around him. Riding a bicycle one day, he saw beams of sunlight and wondered what it would be like to ride on one. “And in his mind, right then and there, Albert was no longer on his bicycle ... he was racing through space on a beam of light. It was the biggest, most exciting thought Albert had ever had. And it filled his mind with questions.” Science and numbers intrigued him. Later, so did motion. So he studied, factored, and wondered. Jennifer Berne’s lyrical narrative is light on facts about Einstein’s personal life but pays tribute to his magical thinking. Vladimir Radunsky’s quirky, spirited illustrations are the perfect accompaniment. (Ages 5–9)

Bolden, Tonya. *Emancipation Proclamation: Lincoln and the Dawn of Liberty.* Abrams, 2013. 120 pages (978–1–4197-0390–4, \$24.95)

“As we waited for all of America to repent—to repudiate slavery—we wept, we raged, we prayed. Over beatings and brandings and bullwhippings. Over the rapes. Over families fractured on auction blocks. And then there was all that stolen labor.” In a narrative that demands readers connect the politics of the time to the human costs of slavery, Tonya Bolden explores the rocky path Abraham Lincoln walked on the way to issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. Looking at the Constitution’s tenets on slavery (although, she notes, the document never uses the word “slave”), at Supreme Court decisions, and at the messy politics surrounding the Civil War, she documents Lincoln’s statements and thinking, which changed over time. Bolden reveals he was a man who, when first elected, indicated he had no intent to oppose the 13th Amendment as originally proposed—it would have banned Congress from ever abolishing slavery in states where it already existed. His moral compass shifted with time, but he was always too radical for the pro-slavery states, far too hesitant and lacking in conviction for abolitionists. He was a proponent of freed Blacks emigrating to other countries—an idea that didn’t gain much traction. Ultimately, he was a man who, regardless of personal belief, was burdened by trying to keep the nation whole. This arresting, important read is appended by a timeline, glossary, and extensive notes and source documentation. (Age 13 and older)

Brown, Don. *The Great American Dust Bowl.* Houghton Mifflin, 2013. 80 pages (978–0–547-81550–3, \$18.99)

“It fell across our city like a curtain of black rolled down. We thought it was our ... doom.” Don Brown’s informative and affecting graphic novel look at the Dust Bowl examines its causes and effects from the perspective of both science and social history. He covers the geologic history of the Plains, and the changing ways people and animals used the land. When the grasslands were stripped to plant crops to meet the European food shortage during World War I, farmers

were living high. Then prices fell, the Great Depression struck, and a drought hit. The stage was set for ecological and human disaster. Brown's writing is straightforward and spare, at times poetic, as he takes readers through the years of the Dust Bowl, sharing dramatic and painful experiences of people who lived during the devastating time. His poignant illustrations are heavily shaded in dusty tones of brown and yellow. Readers can see and feel the heat of the sun and the thickness of the dust, as well as the weight of worry, fear, and despair in the bodies and faces of people and animals alike. A final page spread discusses droughts that have taken place in the Plains since the 1930s (most recently in 2012), and offers a selected bibliography and source notes for quoted material. (Age 10 and older)

Bunting, Eve. *The Cart That Carried Martin.* Illustrated by Don Tate. Charlesbridge, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-58089-387-9, \$16.95)

"The cart was old. Its paint had faded. It was for sale outside Cook's Antiques and Stuff. Nobody wanted it." But when someone finally did, the store was closed. The two men decided to borrow it. It was painted green. Two mules named Belle and Ada were hitched to it. "Ordinary mules for an ordinary funeral ... That was what he wanted." A stirring picture book describes the procession and funerals for Martin Luther King, Jr. "The church throbbed with the sounds of singing. The songs were not sad but there was a terrible sadness in them anyway. Men and women and children wept." The humble cart was carrying a great man whose life and dreams could not be overshadowed by his death. There are moments in the writing and illustrations both that are especially effective and moving as they capture the essence and intensity of feelings at the time of King's death. A photograph of the cart during the funeral procession appears at book's end with brief information about King. (Ages 5-8)

Burleigh, Robert. *Look Up! Henrietta Leavitt, Pioneering Woman Astronomer.* Illustrated by Raúl Colón. A Paula Wiseman Book / Simon & Schuster, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-4169-5819-2, \$16.99)

Henrietta Leavitt was fascinated by the stars as a child and studied them when she went to college. She got a job at an observatory, but, as a woman, was rarely allowed to use the telescope. She worked in a room with other women recording, measuring, and calculating the results of what the men had observed. She was not expected to think. But she did. Henrietta began recording patterns she noticed in the blinking of stars, and eventually realized what they meant: She'd figured out the way to determine the true brightness of a star, which was essential to measuring its distance from earth. "Yes, I am an astronomer!" An artful picture book account of this late-nineteenth-century pioneer captures a sense of wonder and also Henrietta's curiosity and intelligence. End matter provides more information about Henrietta and her discovery, as well as source information. (Ages 5-8)

Cheng, Andrea. *Etched in Clay: The Life of Dave, Enslaved Potter and Poet.* Lee & Low, 2013. 143 pages (978–1–60060–451–5, \$17.95)

Andrea Cheng examines the life of Dave the Potter (who took the name David Drake after the Civil War ended) through a verse novel that tells his powerful, poignant story of endurance, artistry, and rebellion. Cheng's poems reveal Dave's hunger for words and learning and self-expression, and the pain of living in slavery. He was trained by and worked for Potteryville Stoneware in Edgefield, South Carolina, where founder Abner Landrum developed unique glazes. Dave later worked for Landrum's brother and nephew, Lewis Miles, a kind man who nonetheless did not think to free Dave. Dave endured multiple, lifelong separations from people he loved: his first wife, Eliza; his second wife, Lydia; and Lydia's two sons, whom he had taught to read. The poems are in the voices of these and other individuals, all listed in a cast of characters near the beginning of the volume. Cheng incorporates some of the inscriptions Dave carved into his pots into her poems, and the novel as a whole gives a context for those words, showing them as a form of rebellion. Lovely, occasional black-and-white woodcut prints punctuate a work that includes back matter with more information on Dave and his poems and pottery in Edgefield, South Carolina. Cheng talks about her interest in Dave in an author's note that precedes her list of sources. (Age 11 and older)

Coy, John. *Hoop Genius: How a Desperate Teacher and a Rowdy Gym Class Invented Basketball.* Illustrated by Joe Morse. Carolrhoda, 2013. 36 pages (978–0–6713–6617–1, \$16.95)

In 1891, James Naismith became the third teacher to take on a gym class full of unruly, energetic older boys. He tried indoor football. Indoor soccer. Lacrosse. The students excelled at injuring one another. That's when he remembered Duck on a Rock, a game he'd played as a child involving stones. It required accuracy over strength. Obviously, stones were not a good idea with this group. But what about trying to throw a ball into a goal off the ground? Accuracy would be essential. There were no boxes available for goals, only peach baskets, but the students were hooked from the first time they played. The game's popularity quickly spread. In 1892, when a group of women asked Naismith if they could play he replied, "I don't see why not." In 1936, basketball became an Olympic sport, with Naismith honored during the opening ceremonies. John Coy's picture-book account of the creation of basketball is given sophisticated visual treatment by Joe Morse. His distinctive style, with slightly elongated, angled figures and a muted palette, will appeal to older readers, as will his final image showing a group of contemporary players on the court. (Ages 7–11)

Engle, Margarita. *The Lightning Dreamer: Cuba's Greatest Abolitionist.* Harcourt, 2013. 182 pages (978–0–547–80743–0, \$16.99)

A verse novel introduces the inspiring Gertrudis Gomez de Avellaneda, known among family and friends as Tula, who grew up in early nineteenth-century Cuba with the heart and soul of an abolitionist and feminist. At thirteen, Tula is a voracious reader and writer but does both somewhat secretly in her wealthy family. Inspired by the work of Cuban poet Jose Maria Heredia, who lives in exile in the United States because of his radical stance against slavery in

Cuba, she begins writing plays with antislavery messages. Tula's unsympathetic, widowed mother does not understand her smart, spirited daughter and promises her, at fourteen, to an older man in marriage. A family tragedy releases Tula from the marriage and she later falls in love with Sab, a former slave, but her love is unrequited—Sab is in love with his former owner's daughter, who is, in turn, betrothed to a wealthy man. Still, Sab becomes Tula's inspiration. "Can a free person / really understand one whose dreams / must fly up and soar / high above the depths of slavery? ... Is my imagination enough / or do I need to add the ways / in which I myself / have felt enslaved?" In an author's note, Margarita Engle explains that Tula's novel *Sab*, which she wrote at age twenty-two, argues against the slavery of Africans and indigenous peoples, and the slavery of women being forced into marriages they do not want. Back matter includes more information about Tula and Heredia, as well as references. (Age 13 and older)

Flowers, Arthur. *I See the Promised Land: A Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Illustrated by Manu Chitrakar. Designed by Guglielmo Rossi. Greenwood Books / House of Anansi Press, 2013. 154 pages (978-1-55498-328-5, \$16.95)

A singular graphic novel about Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Civil Rights Movement is told in the voice of fictional griot Rickydoc Trickmaster. "I am a Hoodoo Lord of the Delta and power is what I do." This vibrant, destiny-driven perspective on King is both honest and opinionated—it emphasizes his gift of words and his power to call the people together, to tie the Civil Rights Movement to the larger claim for human dignity. "At the mass meetings he kept the good colored folk of Montgomery fired up ... Told them we won't stop until we've won our full freedom in this country and redeemed the soul of America. Note that move now; that redeem the soul of America bit. That little bit of ideological orchestration. This what make Martin Luther King special. He saying this not just about us. This about saving everybody ... Equating the Black struggle with the struggle for human dignity. This is where he find his fa." Author Arthur Flowers offers a distilled and powerful view of society up to and including that time of tension between resistance and submission, of the real and realistic fears of death among those who stood up for their dignity, of the rampant racism in the North and the South that manifested in different ways. Sophisticated and electrifying, the narrative is set against the vibrant art of Indian Patua artist Manu Chitrakar, and grew out of a workshop in which Patua artists were invited to apply their traditional visual storytelling style to new tales (hence the Bengali-inspired garb on King and everyone else). A "Conversations Across Cultures" essay at book's end describes how the two elements—words and visual narrative—were created and brought together. "Editorial Notes" provide more information on people and events referenced in the narrative. (Age 15 and older)

Freedman, Russell. *Angel Island: Gateway to Gold Mountain. Chinese poems translated by Evans Chan.* Clarion, 2013. 81 pages (978-0-547-90378-1, \$17.99)

In 1970, the discovery of the thousands of poems etched in Chinese on the walls of an abandoned building on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay changed the island's future. The park ranger who found the poems understood their significance and soon there was a concerted effort among Asian Americans to preserve the Angel Island Immigration Station as a historical landmark. This is the framing story for Russell Freedman's account of Angel Island as the first stopping point for thousands of people entering the United States on the west coast. Freedman focuses primarily on Chinese and, to a lesser extent, Japanese immigration, but also looks at other Asian immigrants as well as European immigrants such as Jews during World War II fleeing Europe via China. The shameful history of restrictive immigration laws against the Chinese is given close treatment in a work that incorporates some of the poems carved by Chinese immigrants awaiting word of their fate. Black-and-white photographs, source notes, and a selected bibliography are included. (Age 12 and older)

Hopkins, H. Joseph. *The Tree Lady: The True Story of How One Tree-Loving Woman Changed a City Forever.* Illustrated by Jill McElmurry. Beach Lane Books / Simon & Schuster, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-4424-1402-0, \$16.99)

Most middle-class girls growing up in the 1860s were not encouraged to study science or actively work outside, but Katherine Sessions did both, graduating from the University of California in 1881. She especially loved trees, but found few in San Diego where she worked as a teacher. While most assumed nothing would grow in the desert climate, Kate did the necessary research, traveling and writing letters in her hunt for plants suitable to the environment. With the help of volunteers, Kate spearheaded a drive to plant thousands of trees in preparation for the Panama-California Exposition to be held in San Diego in 1915. After successfully creating a plant-rich environment in Balboa Park for the Exposition, Kate Sessions continued to pursue her passion for gardening for the rest of her life. Jill McElmurry's gouache illustrations track the gradual transformation of a sandy-brown setting to one of lush green. (Ages 5-8)

Kelly, David A. *Miracle Mud: Lena Blackburne and the Secret Mud That Changed Baseball.* Illustrated by Oliver Dominguez. Millbrook Press, 2013. 36 pages (lib. 978-0-7613-8092-4, \$16.95)

Lena Blackburne "just wanted to be a great baseball player ... But he wasn't." Lena played in the big leagues in the early twentieth century, but he was never going to be famous. Eventually, he became a coach, and found himself pondering the problem of soggy baseballs. The balls were water-laden because players soaked them to take the shine off new balls. Other methods to break in new balls had equally unsatisfactory results. Until Lena thought of mud. Not just any mud, but the mud at his favorite fishing hole at his home in New Jersey. It was smooth and gooey but gritty, too. Lena coated new baseballs and let the mud dry. When he wiped it off, the balls weren't soggy, and they weren't shiny. They were perfect for playing ball. Seventy-five years later, major league baseball teams still coat new baseballs with the "Baseball Rubbing Mud" that

Lena started marketing back then. In fact, it's the only thing they're allowed to use. This quirky and intriguing bit of baseball history is engagingly recounted in this picture book account that provides additional information in the author's note. (Ages 6–9)

Lewis, John, and Andrew Aydin. *March: Book One*. Illustrated by Nate Powell. Top Shelf, 2013. 121 pages (pbk. 978–1–60309–300–2, \$14.95)

As he gets ready to join the distinguished guests at the January, 2009, inauguration of Barack Obama as the first African American president of the United States, Senator John Lewis recounts memories from his childhood and the early days of the Civil Rights Movement to a young family who stops by his office. Lewis, the son of Alabama sharecroppers, was hungry to learn as a child. He snuck away to his all-Black school on days when his help was needed in the fields. He started preaching as a boy and was attending divinity school in Nashville when he began training in nonviolent civil disobedience and participating in lunch counter sit-ins. The sense of unity in the face of racism and discrimination inspired and encouraged him, as did his fellow activists, many of them students like himself, and a preacher named Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. A powerful black-and-white graphic novel brings this first part of Lewis's journey into vivid relief. Among the most powerful scenes is a series of panels in which the young activists must painfully hurl racist slurs and spit on one another as they prepare themselves to respond nonviolently to the hatred they will face. (Age 13 and older)

Pinborough, Jan. *Miss Moore Thought Otherwise: How Anne Carroll Moore Created Libraries for Children*. Illustrated by Debby Atwell. Houghton Mifflin, 2013. 40 pages (978–0–547–47105–1, \$16.99)

Anne Carroll Moore defied expectations for girls and young women growing up in the late nineteenth century, and redefined library services to children in the first part of the twentieth century with the radical idea that libraries should be places that welcome young people. She advocated for spaces designed just for children, and collections and services built around their needs. A child-centered narrative with a delightful refrain detailing time and time again the way Anne Carroll Moore “thought otherwise”—saw beyond what *was* to what she wanted and the way she thought things should be—is full of engaging details in both the story and Debby Atwell's charming, folk-inspired art. “Today libraries across America have thousands of books for children. And thanks to the help of a little girl from Limerick, Maine, who had ideas of her own, any child can choose a book from a library shelf, curl up in a comfortable seat to look through it—and then take it home to read.” (Ages 5–9)

Rockwell, Anne. *Hey, Charleston! The True Story of the Jenkins Orphanage Band*. Illustrated by Colin Bootman. Carolrhoda, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–7613–5565–6, \$16.95)

Think about doing the Charleston and images of flappers may dance in one's head. But the song and dance originated with an African American orphanage band in Charleston, South Carolina, in the early twentieth century. Reverend Daniel Joseph Jenkins asked for old instruments—many of them Civil War

relics—and hired music teachers in the hopes his charges could learn to perform, and did they ever! He eventually sent them to New York City, where their style of African-influenced song and dance caught on big-time. They traveled all over, including London on the eve of World War I. When war broke out, Reverend Jenkins gave the money they'd earned to stranded Americans so they could purchase tickets back home on the same ship carrying the band. Once the ship reached the safety of American waters, the now familiar call rang out, "Hey Charleston! Give us some rag!" An engaging, informative picture book narrative is followed by an author's note and selected bibliography. (Ages 7–10)

Sandler, Martin W. *Imprisoned: The Betrayal of Japanese Americans During World War II*. Walker / Bloomsbury, 2013. 176 pages (978–0–8027-2277–5, \$22.99)

A striking juxtaposition opens this history of the imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II: Japanese American soldiers liberating prisoners at the Dachau concentration camp in Germany while "tens of thousands of their relative and friends back home ... were being held against their will." Author Martin Sandler then provides background information on the Japanese coming to America starting at the turn of the twentieth century—the racism they faced as well as the roots they established, especially in California agricultural communities. The detailed accounting of what happened following the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor is enriched by vignettes about and stories from individual Japanese Americans who were held captive by their government. Discussion of the political climate and response documents the few courageous enough to speak out against the imprisonment, like the governor of Colorado at the time, and the many who jumped on the bandwagon of hysteria. Sandler draws on many oral histories and a wide range of other source material, all clearly documented, in this standout history that concludes with a chapter that looks at efforts of Japanese Americans to reach out to Muslims in America following 9/11. (Ages 11–14)

Sheinkin, Steve. *Lincoln's Grave Robbers*. Scholastic Press, 2013. 214 pages (978–0–545-40572–0, \$16.99)

By the end of the Civil War, fifty percent of the paper money in circulation was counterfeit, and much of it could be traced to one extremely gifted engraver, Ben Boyd. When Boyd was finally caught and sent to prison in 1876, the Secret Service, originally a division of the U.S. Treasury, considered it a major victory. Members of Boyd's gang hatched an elaborate plot to break into Abraham Lincoln's crypt in Springfield, Illinois, steal his body, and hold it for ransom, hoping to trade it for Ben Boyd's freedom. They did extensive background research, hired trustworthy criminal specialists and body snatchers, and had the plan worked out down to the last detail. What they hadn't counted on was Patrick Tyrrell, the head of Secret Service operations in Chicago. Tyrrell was on to their plot, and he had his own intricate plan to catch them in the act, which involved other Secret Service agents, private detectives, and a criminal informant who was a trusted member of Boyd's team. Only readers know every detail as both sides of the story unfold through the actions of the con men and the Secret Service agents tracking them. Author Steve Sheinkin's gripping story

is reconstructed from historical documents, newspaper accounts, court records, and eye witness reports, in an account that will keep both history and thriller fans on the edge of their seat. (Ages 11–16)

Skead, Robert. *Something to Prove: The Great Satchel Paige vs. Rookie Joe DiMaggio.* Illustrated by Floyd Cooper. Carolrhoda, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–7613–6619–5, \$16.95)

On February 7, 1936, two of the greatest players in baseball history met at a game in Oakland, California. Satchel Paige was a veteran of the Negro Leagues, but everyone knew he was the most talented player in any league. In fact, the game had been arranged to test out a potential new player for the Yankees: a kid named Joe DiMaggio. Could Joe get a hit off one of Satchel's pitches? As the all-Black Satchel Paige All-Stars played the all-white Dick Bartell All-Stars, Joe and Satchel faced off four times, with Satch on the mound and Joe at bat. A lively and dramatic account of the game and those encounters is the focus of a picture book that also underscores the respect that major league players and scouts had for Paige's talent, and the racism that kept him from the major leagues for another twelve years. (Ages 6–9)

Smith, Icy. *Three Years and Eight Months.* Illustrated by Jennifer Kindert. East West Discovery Press, 2013. 44 pages (978–0–9856237–8–4, \$20.95)

After the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong during World War II, Choi's mother is taken away by soldiers while he remains with his Uncle Kim. Conditions in Hong Kong are terrible—women and girls are taken away; others are forced into slavery; many are dying of starvation—but Choi and his friend Taylor are treated kindly by one Japanese soldier, who helps them get jobs on a military base. This not only provides them with more food, it puts the boys in the position to steal medical supplies and pass on information to Uncle Kim. They also discover where Choi's mother and other women are being held—a small comfort that's better than none at all. Icy Smith, whose father was a slave of the Japanese in Hong Kong as a child, writes a compelling yet restrained account of this time and place in history. The hardships are vivid but she refrains from revealing too many details for a child audience. This lengthy, illustrated picture book story for older readers includes an informative essay with black-and-white photographs providing more information about the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong. (Ages 7–10)

Stone, Tanya Lee. *Courage Has No Color: The True Story of the Triple Nickles, America's First Black Paratroopers.* Candlewick Press, 2013. 147 pages (978–0–7636–5117–6, \$24.99)

In 1943, Sergeant Walter Morris, a guard at Fort Benning, Georgia, saw how his fellow Black soldiers were struggling with morale. He began leading his men through the ground training exercises he saw the white paratroopers doing. No one had given him permission, but he wanted to prove to them that they were just as capable as white soldiers. Instead of being reprimanded, Morris got official go-ahead for formation of the first Black paratrooper unit, the 555th Parachute Infantry Company. Tanya Lee Stone follows Morris and other soldiers through the first training classes, and their subsequent expectation

that the newly minted Triple Nickles would be sent into battle—the war in Europe was raging. Instead, they were sent to fight forest fires in the Pacific Northwest and California as smoke jumpers. A repeated theme in Stone’s narrative is how the members of the Triple Nickles had to swallow bitterness over and over. But they did, performing the jobs they were asked to do with distinction because they knew the long road was important. Stone introduces a number of the unit’s members, some of whom she interviewed as part of her research. She also provides broader social context for the racism that defined much of the experience of Black soldiers both within and beyond the military during World War II. Her author’s note is an informative discussion of her research and decision-making as a writer—the difficulty of gleaning some facts, and the choices she made at certain points as she gained information and insight through reading and first-person interviews. Numerous black-and-white photographs, and detailed source notes, are included. (Ages 12–16)

Stone, Tanya Lee. *Who Says Women Can’t Be Doctors? The Story of Elizabeth Blackwell.* Illustrated by Majorie Priceman. Christy Ottaviano Books / Henry Holt, 2013. 40 pages (978–0–8050-9048–2, \$16.99)

When Elizabeth Blackwell was growing up in the 1830s and early 1840s, women doctors were unheard of. As a child, Elizabeth never thought about studying medicine, although she was hardly a girl to turn down a challenge. Maybe that’s why she couldn’t let go of the idea once an older female friend suggested it to her. A young woman by then, Elizabeth was intrigued. Some people supported her, but others laughed, which made her more determined. She applied to medical schools and received 28 rejections: No women allowed. “She refused to give up. She was as stubborn as a mule. Quite rightly!” Finally she received a “yes,” from a school that had let their male students decide. The students had done it as a joke. Elizabeth showed them it was no laughing matter. She graduated in 1849 with the highest grades in her class, the first woman doctor in America. Spirited illustrations accompany this lively picture book account that ends with Elizabeth Blackwell ready to launch her career. An author’s note tells of the continued resistance Elizabeth initially faced practicing medicine, and her pioneering work providing medical services for poor women and children and establishing a hospital and medical colleges for women. (Ages 6–9)

Biography and Autobiography

Beram, Nell, and Carolyn Boriss-Krimsky. *Yoko Ono: Collector of Skies. Amulet*, 2013. 177 pages (978–1–41977-0444–4, \$24.95)

Artist. Musician. Feminist. Activist. This arresting look at Yoko Ono’s life, art, and music begins with her childhood of economic privilege, although the years of World War II in Japan were hard ones. By the time she returned to the United States at age twenty (she had lived here for a time as a young child), she was interested in a career in music but her creativity and vision couldn’t be contained

in a single form or genre. She worked above all with ideas, breaking down boundaries between artist and audience as a pioneer in the areas of performance and conceptual art. This is an accessible, intelligent look at Ono as a singular, visionary artist constantly challenging herself, constantly experimenting, and constantly demanding that the audience be part of the artistic process to complete the meaning of her works (she believes that everyone is an artist). As seen here, Ono and John Lennon were kindred spirits with similar humor and intelligence and vision. Early on, their lives together were lively and challenging by turns but eventually settled into something that sustained them both until John's tragic death. Vilified by the public and media in the years before he died, Ono was embraced in the aftermath, and both responses demonstrate the fickleness of celebrity culture, just one of many fascinating aspects of this work. Ample photographs are included in a beautifully designed book that draws from rich source material, including original interviews, all of which are cited. (Age 14 and older)

Beyer, Ramsey. *Little Fish: A Memoir from a Different Kind of Year*. Zest Books, 2013. 272 pages (978-1-936976-18-8, \$15.99)

When Ramsey Beyer was eighteen, she left the small, sheltered, predominantly white middle-class Michigan town she'd lived in her entire life for art school in Baltimore. This graphic novel chronicles a first year at college that is, in its way, idyllic. She lives in an apartment with two young women and they quickly form a tight group with several others. These friendships, along with challenging classes, largely define her first year. There are no major fights or fallouts; a lot of hard work but only one instructor who makes her feel hopeless about being an artist. At the same time, this is an engagingly honest account of her genuine desire to broaden her world. Ramsey's friends introduce her to political activism (veganism, GLBTQ issues), and expand her musical tastes. And over the course of the year she discovers a new passion when she changes her major to animation. She even starts falling in love, and her uncertainty and hesitation about this is as real as her innocence. Beyer's black-and-white art is uncomplicated but appealing, while the narrative includes some of the actual journal entries and lists she kept during this time. (She's a compulsive list maker.) Her desire to challenge herself and seek out new experiences is balanced by her strong sense of self: Ramsey remains grounded as she expands her understanding of and experience in the world. (Age 12 and older)

Freedman, Russell. *Becoming Ben Franklin: How a Candle-Maker's Son Helped Light the Flame of Liberty*. Holiday House, 2013. 86 pages (978-0-8234-2374-3, \$24.95)

Seventeen-year-old Ben Franklin's arrival in Philadelphia after running away from his job as a printer's apprentice at his brother's Boston shop opens this biography of a man who seemed able to successfully talk his way through almost every situation in which he landed. That event sets the stage for demonstrating the important role his charismatic personality played in Franklin's life successes, both professionally and politically in this intriguing biography. Author Russell Freedman accentuates Franklin's range of skills as a business person, inventor, writer, politician, and ambassador, all propelled by his intellectual curiosity and

social savvy. At first a supporter of British rule, Franklin is transformed into a committed leader in the drive for American independence, although it results in estrangement from his son William. It also takes him far from home for extended stays in Europe, where he was living at the time of his wife's death. Numerous art reproductions add visual interest to almost every page of this handsomely designed volume, which also includes a timeline and bibliography. (Ages 9–13)

Marcus, Leonard S. *Randolph Caldecott: The Man Who Could Not Stop Drawing*. Frances Foster Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013. 64 pages (978-0-374-31025-7, \$24.99)

The famous nineteenth-century British illustrator who today is credited with inventing contemporary picture books always drew, even on scraps of paper at his first job as a bank clerk. His talent soon got him jobs illustrating for magazines and adult books, and his work caught the eye of engraver Edmund Evans, who hired Caldecott to illustrate a series of children's picture books. Caldecott's picture book illustrations introduced innovations that are now considered conventional, such as adding bits to the story that were not in the narrative. But what he was most known for was his pictures that seemed to jump right off the page. Leonard Marcus's lively and well-documented biography of Caldecott gives readers a clear sense of who Caldecott was and why his work was important in its time, and continues to influence illustrators today. Copiously illustrated with Caldecott's own artwork, the book itself is a work of art befitting its subject. (Age 12 and up)

McCarthy, Meghan. *Daredevil: The Daring Life of Betty Skelton*. A Paula Wiseman Book / Simon & Schuster, 2013. 40 pages (978-1-4424-2262-9, \$16.99)

Captivated by airplanes from childhood, eight-year-old Betty Skelton sent letters to manufacturers requesting information because "my father wants to buy an airplane." She studied the pamphlets that arrived, and by age twelve was flying by herself, although "It wasn't quite legal then so I couldn't tell anybody," she later recalled. At sixteen she had a pilot's license, but couldn't become a commercial pilot according to the gender constraints of the 1940s. Instead she became a stunt pilot and broke altitude records before retiring in the 1950s. Betty's passion for flying was transferred to race-car driving, and then boat jumping. She successfully trained to return to the air as the first female astronaut with the Mercury 7, but NASA did not include her in the final crew. Although the text glosses over some relevant details (just how did young Betty learn to pilot?), it captures her relentless energy and drive, as do the lively acrylic paint illustrations. (Ages 4–8)

Tavares, Matt. *Becoming Babe Ruth*. Candlewick Press, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-7636-5646-1, \$16.99)

Before Babe Ruth was a hard-hitting, hard-partying baseball player, he was a kid named George getting in trouble on the streets of Baltimore. In 1902, his frustrated parents sent him to Saint Mary's Industrial School for Boys, where he became one the "inmates." A lot about Saint Mary's was harsh, but

there was also baseball and Brother Matthias, who spent hours teaching young George how to improve his game. Because of his youth, George was given the nickname Babe in his early days in the Major Leagues. He went on to become a huge celebrity but he never forgot Saint Mary's as Matt Tavares reveals in this surprisingly warm story about a not-quite-larger-than-life figure who had a soft spot for his old school and teacher and helped them through one particularly challenging time. (Ages 6–9)

Winter, Jonah. *You Never Heard of Willie Mays?! Illustrated by Terry Widener. Schwartz & Wade, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–375–86844–3, \$17.99)*

An energetic tribute to baseball icon Willie Mays dazzles with irresistible enthusiasm. “By all accounts, though, Willie didn’t need too many pointers—he was a natural. He was the kid all other kids wanted on their team—the one who ran a little faster, hit a little farther, played a little harder than anyone else.” Jonah Winter follows Mays from his childhood in Birmingham to the Negro Leagues at age fifteen to Major League Baseball in the early 1950s, where he was one of the few Black players, acknowledging the racism he faced at every point but focusing on his triumphs. As a child, Willie had wanted to be the next Joe DiMaggio. As an adult, “. . . he was like Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb, and Jo DiMaggio all rolled into one. Heck, even Joe D. had to admit: Willie had the best arm that ever was.” Terry Widener’s illustrations provide an arresting backdrop to a book that includes text boxes with baseball statistics about Willie and other players on many pages. (Ages 6–9)

Contemporary People, Places, and Events

Ada, Alma Flor, and F. Isabel Campoy. *Yes! We Are Latinos. Illustrated by David Diaz. Charlesbridge, 2013. 96 pages (lib. 978–1–58089–383–1, \$18.95)*

An introduction titled “Our Indigenous Roots” discussing the native peoples of Mexico and Central and South America is the entryway into a celebration of diversity within Latino culture in the United States. Thirteen fictional children then tell about their lives in verse narratives that are followed by short informational essays providing background on the cultural history the child represents. Each verse begins with the child stating who they are: “My name is Juanita. I am Mexican. I live in New York. I am Latina . . . My name is Santiago. I am Dominican. I live in Detroit. I am Latino . . . My name is Felipe. I am Panamanian and Venezuelan. I am black. I live in Chicago. I am Latino . . . My name is Lili. I am Guatemalan. I am Chinese. I live in Los Angeles. I am Latina . . .” The verse narratives are poems grounded in details of family and memories and desires. The essays provide facts about the history of the child’s country/culture of origin and migration to the United States. In truth, no single book can capture the incredible diversity within Latino culture in

America. What this book does do is offer a sense of the breadth and depth of the culture and history, along with hopes and dreams, that can be represented by individual lives. Numerous resources for continuing to explore the topic of Latino diversity are suggested at book's end. (Ages 9–13)

Ellis, Deborah. *Looks Like Daylight: Voices of Indigenous Kids*. Foreword by Loriene Roy. Greenwood / House of Anansi Press, 2013. 252 pages (978–1–55498–120–5, \$15.95)

Forty-five contemporary Native youth in Canada and the United States, most of them teens, share details about their lives in this gathering of voices that resounds with hopes for the future and echoes with pain from the distant and not-so-distant past. The kids come from many different Indian nations. Some live on reservations (called “reserves” in Canada), some in cities. Some have had lives of stability, some have struggled, and continue to struggle, within or outside of families facing challenges. Many of the young people find grounding and solace and strength in their culture. Native and non-Native readers alike will find elements of their stories relatable. Deborah Ellis provides an introduction to the volume as a whole that gives an overview of the politics that have come to shape many realities of Native lives. She also provides an introduction to each profile. But it is the voices and lives of the kids that stand out, whether they are young artists or activists, horse-lovers or budding engineers, or struggling with harsh things that have happened, in need of support and finding their way. (Age 12 and older)

Kidder, Tracy. *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World*. Adapted for young people by Michael French. Delacorte Press, 2013. 272 pages (978–0–385-74318–1, \$16.99)

An adaption of the adult book of the same name (published in 2002) looks at Dr. Paul Farmer's work providing health care for impoverished people in Haiti and other parts of the world. Farmer's work, rooted in compassion, is fascinating from scientific, social, and ethical perspectives. With degrees in medicine and medical anthropology, his focus starts with his patients but expands to embrace the context of their lives. The nonprofit he founded, Partners in Health, began with his work in the central plains of Haiti creating a sophisticated medical clinic providing care to all. Treating patients there, he realized the need for systems to address global inequities in health care. In fact, Farmer's work treating patients informs everything else he does. Without it, he argues, his efforts to affect global health policy would be impossible. It's not enough to treat diseases like multi-drug-resistant TB while ignoring the poverty and other conditions that contribute to them. Farmer sees his work as a moral imperative, but that doesn't mean answers are always easy in terms of what do in specific situations. Troubling, challenging, thorny questions and arguments for and against different courses of action are part of his work with patients and with policy alike. The scope of his impact extends from the lives of the people he's treated to those affected by policies he's helped develop. It may also extend to young readers moved by his fierce commitment to preserving health and human dignity. (Ages 12–15)

Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table.* Illustrated by Eric-Shabazz Larkin. With an afterword by Will Allen. Readers to Eaters, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-9836615-3-5, \$17.95)

As a child, Will Allen hated working in his family's garden. "He planned to quit on planting, picking, pulling weeds, leave those Maryland fields for basketball or white-shirt work." It turns out he did both, playing professional basketball in Belgium, then getting "white-shirt" work in Wisconsin. But while helping a Belgian friend dig potatoes during his basketball days, he made a life-changing discovery: He "loved digging in the dirt." Living in Milwaukee after playing ball, Will noticed how few people, especially in poor neighborhoods, had access to fresh vegetables. He bought an inner-city lot that included six greenhouses, got friends to donate fruit and vegetable waste to create compost, added red wiggler worms and figured out—through trial and error, and with hands-on help from neighborhood kids—how to gradually transform the polluted soil to grow healthy food. Will devised ways to use every inch of space, growing food in the ground, and also in pots and baskets and buckets and boxes. He added hoophouses for more growing room, and vats of water to raise fish. He named his venture "Growing Power," and not only began feeding people in the city, but teaching people in his neighborhood, around the country, and around the world how to be urban farmers. This lively introduction to Will Allen's groundbreaking work features a buoyant narrative by Jacqueline Briggs Martin set against Eric-Shabazz Larkin's energetic illustrations. It's impossible not to be inspired by their account of the creativity of Will's venture and the hope inherent in its success. (Ages 5-14)

Understanding Oneself and Others

Beaty, Daniel. *Knock Knock: My Dad's Dream for Me.* Illustrated by Bryan Collier. Little, Brown, 2013. 40 pages (978-0-316-20917-5, \$18.00)

A little boy's daily "Knock Knock" ritual with his father—pretending to be asleep when Papa knocks before throwing himself into his father's arms and being told "I love you"—comes to a sudden and inexplicable end on a morning when the knocking never comes. Papa's not there to help the boy get ready for school, or cook him eggs, or help with homework. Days turn to months. Eventually a letter comes from his father, offering advice for the present and future: "Knock Knock down the doors that I could not. Knock Knock to open new doors to your dreams ... Knock Knock with the knowledge that you are my son and you have a bright, beautiful future. For despite my absence, you are still here." The lack of explanation regarding where the father has gone is both unsettling—as it should be—and powerful. It enables many children who are dealing with absence or loss to put themselves into this moving, affirming story. Bryan Collier's illustrations show an African American child who is clearly loved by both an absent father and a very present mother. In an author's note, Daniel Beaty shares how his father was his primary caregiver when he was

a small child, then was incarcerated. After one upsetting visit, Beaty didn't see him for many years. (Ages 4–9)

Cobb, Rebecca. *Missing Mommy.* Henry Holt, 2013. 28 pages (978-0-8050-9507-4, \$16.99)

"Some time ago we said good-bye to Mommy. I am not sure where she has gone." In a book that stays true to a young child's perspective, a preschool-age child describes many different feelings after Mommy has died, offering comfort through validation. The simple format acknowledges a range of emotions (uncertainty, worry, guilt, fear, anger) with just a touch of humor, as in the picture of the child filling the cat's bowl, spilling as much as goes in while the narrative states "... we help each other to try and do all the things Mommy used to help with. Daddy says I do them very well." The family consists of the young narrator, an older sister, and Daddy. Everyone grieves, but also shares memories and moments of hope. The illustrations are childlike but with a sophisticated emotional dimension. The young narrator could be either a boy or a girl. (Ages 3–7)

Cocca-Leffler, Maryann. *Theo's Mood.* Albert Whitman, 2013. (978-0-8075-7778-3, \$15.99)

On Mood Monday at school, Theo has a hard time deciding what he's feeling after sharing the news that his mom had a baby. Each of his classmates suggests a possibility based on the feelings they have to share about recent experiences. Eric is happy because he got a new bike. Lily is jealous because her sister won another trophy. Ameen describes feeling afraid when he got lost in the mall. And so on. Theo thinks about it, and realizes he is feeling all of the same feelings as the other kids, but for different reasons: happy, for example, that his grandma will be staying for a week; afraid of dropping the baby. He's also jealous, sad, proud, and mad. In other words, "I feel like a big brother!" The fact that feelings are not always immediately clear is treated with engaging simplicity in this appealing story. (Ages 3–6)

The Arts

Bryant, Jen. *A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin.* Illustrated by Melissa Sweet. Alfred A. Knopf, 2013. 36 pages (978-0-375-86712-5, \$17.99)

Horace Pippin loved to draw when he was a child, using whatever materials he had at hand. Once he started work as a young teen to help support his family he still drew whenever he could. Then Horace went off to fight in World War I and was injured. No longer able to lift the arm with which he drew, he used one hand to hold the other up and began creating scenes burned in wood, and then continued painting. His subjects were the images that filled his mind—of times of war, of scenes from daily life, of stories from the Bible, of meaningful moments in history. Jen Bryant's lovely narrative tribute to the

self-taught African American painter embraces Horace's humility and grace. Illustrator Melissa Sweet's thoughtfully composed, often moving mixed-media illustrations draw inspiration directly from Pippin's palette, as well as details from his life, and words that he spoke: Quotes from Horace Pippin are incorporated into the art. A historical note provides a photograph of Pippin and more information about his life and work. The picture book biography concludes with notes on the author's and illustrator's research, source notes, and ample resources for further inquiry. (Small reproductions of several of Pippin's paintings appear on the back endpapers.) (Ages 5–9)

Greenberg, Jan, and Sandra Jordan. *The Mad Potter: George E. Ohr, Eccentric Genius.* A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2013. 53 pages (978–1–59643–810–1, \$17.99)

The folded shapes and crenellated forms created by potter George E. Ohr may not look that distinctive now, but the striking pots he shaped were like nothing else seen in the late 1800s. And they were largely unheralded at the time. But Ohr was more than the genius he knew himself to be; he was a personality and a showman in Biloxi, Mississippi, where he had his potter's studio. But beneath all his dazzle was incredible talent: He spun out pots and pitchers and vases and vessels with twists and turns that were sometimes quirky and playful and sometimes, simply, strikingly beautiful. He experimented with glazes. And he thrived on his own eccentricity (although his family did not). Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan provide a lively introduction to this American artist who was all but undiscovered until the final decades of the twentieth century, long after his death. Their final chapter shows his influence on contemporary pottery, and even contemporary architecture—a museum dedicated to Ohr designed by Frank Gehry was inspired by his forms. Detailed source notes follow a primer on “How to Look at a Pot.” (Ages 11–15)

Krull, Kathleen, and Paul Brewer. *The Beatles Were Fab (and They Were Funny).* Illustrated by Stacy Innerst. Harcourt, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–547–50991–4, \$16.99)

An energetic, entertaining narrative about the Fab Four follows the group from its early days to the heights of Beatlemania, with an emphasis on their quirky humor and love of music-making, and how fame affected it all. Among the tidbits engagingly recounted: “When they wrote ‘She Loves You,’ Paul’s father begged them to change its ‘yeah, yeah yeah’ line to a more proper ‘yes, yes, yes,’ but Paul laughed the idea off with a ‘no, no no.’” In interviews, they moved easily from self-deprecation to droll humor to dry wit. Eventually, the ever-growing legions of fans turned into screaming hordes, going from something the band found funny to something that eventually became alarming. It was one of a number of things that marked the beginning of the end of Beatlemania, but young readers can feel a bit of the excitement in this animated account accompanied by pitch-perfect illustrations. (Ages 7–10)

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *Diego Rivera: An Artist for the People.* Abrams, 2013. 56 pages (978-0-8109-8411-0, \$21.95)

This short biography of artist Diego Rivera focuses on his artistic training and influences, from his schooling of the European masters to his fascination with the work of Mexican folk artist José Guadalupe Posada. It was Posada's lithographs and etchings of music, stories, and daily life that proved especially influential in Rivera's celebration of Mexican culture and indigenous people. Bountiful illustrations and art reproductions throughout this handsomely produced volume document the artist's progression throughout his career and highlight his political path, including the murals he created in the United States honoring workers and their industry. (Ages 8–12)

Tan, Shaun. *The Bird King: An Artist's Notebook.* Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Inc., 2013. 123 pages (978-0-545-46513-7, \$19.99)

"Staring at a blank piece of paper, I can't think of anything original. I feel utterly uninspired and unreceptive. It's the familiar malaise of 'artist's block' and in such circumstances there is only one thing to do: Just start drawing." Following this thoughtful introduction, which goes on to say more about creativity and the creative process, Shaun Tan opens the door to a treasure trove of visual gems, sharing sketches and drafts of both published and unpublished works. The book is divided into sections titled "untold stories"; "book, theater, and film"; "drawings from life"; and "notebooks." Each section begins with a brief introduction by Tan followed by page upon page of sketches, drawings, and paintings. Only the "drawings from life" section offers a glimpse of the world as it really looks, for Tan's works most often reflect the realm of his unique imagination, where fantastic creatures or impossible scenarios are suddenly possible and vivid, sometimes frightening, sometimes poignant, and always fascinating. A "list of works" at book's end provides more information about each drawing—including the final version (film, poster, book) if there was one. (Age 11 and older)

Poetry

Bush, Gail, and Randy Meyer, editors. *Indivisible: Poems for Social Justice.* Foreword by Common. Norwood House Press, 2013. 94 pages (pbk. 978-1-60357-417-4, \$12.50)

"America is not easy. It's a land of high ideals and stirring icons, but it's also a land of harsh realities ... This is where poetry comes in. We celebrate the incredible achievement of individuals as we turn our gaze from hunger and homelessness in the streets. We have a difficult time matching our words with our actions" (from the Introduction). Is poetry the answer? Not necessarily. Not always. But the poems here offer the opportunity to deeply consider the disconnect that often exists between the ideal and reality of our nation, whether it's rooted in the actions of government or the interactions between two human beings. A number of the topics touched upon, such as race and gender discrimination, are

expected, but the ways they are explored can surprise. One poem may feel like a slap in the face it's so bold; another tickles the consciousness with its subtlety. A broad and diverse range of poets are represented in a dynamic collection that may affirm and challenge, enlighten and inspire. (Age 15 and older)

Hughes, Langston. *Lullaby (For a Black Mother)*. Illustrated by Sean Qualls. Harcourt, 2013. 24 pages (978-0-547-36265-6, \$16.99)

An African American mother's lullaby speaks of "A necklace of stars / Winding the night" and the "Great diamond moon, / Kissing the night." Above all, it speaks of love for the "Night black baby" she adores in Langston Hughes's poem "Lullaby (For a Black Mother)." This picture book edition pairs the soothing, lyrical, loving words with illustrations by Sean Qualls that show the adoration between mother and child as well as appreciation for the natural world that night and daytime reveal. A "Note about the Poet" provides brief background information on Langston Hughes and his affirming works celebrating Black children and their dreams. (The poem was originally published in Hughes's collection *The Dream Keeper and Other Poems* in 1932.) (Ages birth-5)

Kennedy, Caroline, compiler. *Poems To Learn by Heart*. Illustrated by Jon J. Muth. Disney / Hyperion, 2013. 191 pages (978-1-4231-0805-4, \$19.99)

Caroline Kennedy, compiler of *A Family of Poems* (Hyperion, 2005), has put together another treasury, this time encouraging readers to make poems their own. "If we learn a poem by heart, it is ours forever—and better still, we can share it with others, yet not have to give it away." Thoughtful introductions preface the volume as a whole and each thematic section (self; family; friendship and love; fairies, ogres and witches; nonsense poems; school; sports and games; war; nature). From the perfect opening poem, Rita Dove's "The First Book," ("Open it. / Go ahead, it won't bite. / ... It's not like it's the end of the world— / just the world as you think / you know it") to the final section of "extra credit," offering lengthier poems and passages to savor and memorize, there is a wide range of poetry and poets represented here, from classics to contemporary offerings, and from playful to deeply moving. Two students from DreamYard Prep, a small Bronx high school, were involved in the selection of poems, and a piece called "Voices Rising" from the school's slam team is one of the poems included. (Ages 7-14)

Sidman, Joyce. *What the Heart Knows: Chants, Charms & Blessings*. Illustrated by Pamela Zagarenski. Houghton Mifflin, 2013. 65 pages (978-0-544-10616-1, \$16.99)

"Since earliest human history, we have used language to try to influence the world around us ... We may no longer believe that words can make crops grow, prevent illness, or keep rivers from flooding. But we still believe in the power of words themselves." Joyce Sidman's introduction is the perfect entry into her collection of poems divided into "Chants & Charms," "Spells & Invocations," "Laments & Remembrances," and "Praise Songs & Blessings." The poems in each section are full of dreams but also the spirit and substance of our everyday lives. From a "Chant to Repair a Friendship" to an "Invitation to Lost Things" (Come out, come out / from your hidden places, / hair clips,

homework, phones”), from an “Invisibility Spell” to slip away from the shame of being taunted to a “Blessing on the Smell of Dog” and “Blessing on the Curl of a Cat,” Sidman celebrates the music of language, the significance of words, and the meaning of moments and memories that may be small but are never insignificant. The beautifully designed, elegant volume features full-page and decorative spot illustrations by Pamela Zagarenski. (Age 9 and older)

VanDerwater, Amy Ludwig. *Forest Has a Song*. Illustrated by Robbin Gourley. Clarion, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–618-84349–7, \$16.99)

Poems describe what a girl wonders about the things she notices on walks through the woods across the year. In early spring she reads “Forest News” in the snowy footprints of various animals. Spring also reveals the story of a “Fossil,” reverberates with a tree frog’s “Proposal,” and imagines the life of a “Lady Slipper”: “Were you at the Forest Ball? / Were you having fun? When the clock struck midnight / did you have to run?” Summer is a “Spider” and thoughts of baby animals at “Dusk.” In autumn, there are the secrets of a “Squirrel” storing food, and the “Song” of geese on the wing. Winter brings “Snowflake Voices” and a “Farewell.” These and other poems of observation and playful contemplation are set against lovely, delicate illustrations. (Ages 5–9)

Wheeler, Lisa. *The Pet Project: Cute and Cuddly Vicious Verses*. Illustrated by Zachariah Ohora. Atheneum, 2013. 36 pages (978–1–4169-7595–3, \$16.99)

“Can I have a pet?” When the narrator of this humorous collection of poems asks that question, her scientist parents ask her to formulate a query, conduct research, and reach a conclusion regarding what type of pet to get. Her query: “What is the best pet for me?” To collect information, she visits a farm and a zoo. She treks through the woods. She borrows some beasties to try out at home. This playful riff on scientific research is told through poems that document the girl’s observations and conclusions about a wide range of animals. Verse that is light on fact and heavy on humor nonetheless collectively models the scientific process, albeit with a tongue-in-cheek spirit that is echoed in the illustrations. As for the girl’s conclusion regarding what pet to get? “My research found / that all around / tiny animals abound / They need no care. / They need no fuss. / They’re not aware / that there is us . . . / I go to Mom and Dad with hope: / ‘May I have a microscope?’” (Ages 5–8)

Worth, Valerie. *Pug and Other Animal Poems*. Illustrated by Steve Jenkins. Margaret Ferguson Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013. 40 pages (978–0–374-35024–6, \$16.99)

Eighteen poems about animals offer surprising, lovely, and sometimes poignant perspectives on their subjects. “Firefly” begins, “Tracked along the / Glitter of its / Slow constellation, / Scooped from the / Dark and caged / In the hollow / Of two hands.” “Mouse” tenderly describes the appearance of a creature with “papery ears” and “slim paws” that has been caught by the cat and left on a doorstep. “Geese” captures how human observers may imbue what we see or hear in the animal world with meaning, describing cries “like grieving” and, later, a “noisy rejoicing.” Valerie Worth’s fine poems are paired with Steve

Jenkins's beautifully detailed collage image of each animal, with each page spread a striking composition balancing poem and art. (Ages 9–13)

Yolen, Jane. *Wee Rhymes: Baby's First Poetry Book.* Illustrated by Jane Dyer. A Paula Wiseman Book / Simon & Schuster, 2013. 112 pages (978-1-4169-4898-8, \$19.99)

"Upside daisy, / Oh so crazy, / Look out—all fall down. / Pick you up / And dust you off, / And kiss away that frown" ("All Fall Down"). A collection of original nursery rhymes interspersed with occasional Mother Goose classics emphasizes playful language, sounds, rhythm, and the joy of rhyme-making moments in daily life. Babies and toddlers will delight in the merry tone and silly sounds of Jane Yolen's verse, which is rooted in familiar routines and objects of early childhood: diaper-changing, eating, dressing, toys, and of course the presence of loving adults. Jane Dyer's illustrations show an array of diverse, sweetly rounded faces and adult caregivers in a book sure to inspire some original sound- and wordplay. (Ages birth–3)

Concept Books

Browne, Anthony. *One Gorilla: A Counting Book.* Candlewick Press, 2013. 28 pages (978-0-7636-6352-0, \$16.99)

Anthony Browne's visually stunning picture book begins with 1 gorilla gazing out from the page. This is followed by 2 orangutans, then 3 chimpanzees, and so on, until a variety of primates numbering one to ten have been revealed. On every page spread, the animals are beautifully rendered with exquisitely detailed features. And whether there is 1 or 2 or 10 of them, they are all individuals. Not only is there variation in coat color and facial structure among the same kind of animal, but abundant personality comes through their facial expressions and their eyes. Following "10 lemurs," in a shift that is matter of fact yet arresting, Browne turns this into a simple science book by illuminating the fact that humans, too, are another kind of primate. It's an idea expressed simply and beautifully and accessibly, and followed by a page spread of diverse human primate faces full of both humor and poignancy. (Ages 2–7)

Goldstone, Bruce. *That's a Possibility! A Book About What Might Happen.* Henry Holt, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-8050-8998-1, \$16.99)

An introduction to mathematical probability takes readers on a comprehensible tour through relevant vocabulary and concepts, providing engaging scenarios to illustrate each. "If something can happen, it's a possibility." Which means, of course, "something that can't happen is impossible." But between these two extremes are a range of related concepts: beyond certainty—when something is sure to happen—some things are more likely than others. Things more likely to happen than not are probable. Things possible but not likely are improbable. Odds describe the chances that something will happen in numerical terms. Each idea is represented by one or more playful photographic scenarios, and

as understanding builds, the examples become more complex, so that Squidgy the stuffed bear, who has 10 different shirts and 10 different pairs of pants, is shown dressed in each of 100 possible outfits. But the odds of him wearing a leopard-print shirt and purple pants tomorrow? Only one in 100. (Ages 6–9)

Mamada, Mineko. *Which Is Round? Which Is Bigger?* Translated from the Japanese. U.S. edition: Kids Can Press, 2013. 28 pages (978–1–55453–973–4, \$16.95)

A seemingly simple concept book takes a sophisticated turn with every other flip of the page, encouraging young children’s critical thinking skills. “Which one is round?” The opening page spread poses this question about a round red apple, and a long-nosed, linear animal (an anteater, perhaps?). The answer is obvious. But with a turn of the page, the apple has been eaten and all that’s left is the hourglass shape of the core, while the animal is now curled up into a tight ball, asleep. “Which one is round? What do you think?” The rest of the book asks additional questions about a series of different pairings. Every time, a turn of the page repeats the original question about the pair, but transforms the appearance of one or both subjects. It changes the answer from one that is obvious to one that is open to interpretation, inviting children to consider more than one answer, and to articulate the reason behind their own response. Clean-lined, uncluttered design and art make the subjects of each pairing the visual focus of every spread. But it’s the juxtaposition of illustrations and inquiry that energizes this creative offering. (Ages 3–7)

van Genechten, Guido. *Big and Small. (Odd One Out)* Translated from the Dutch. U.S. edition: Clavis, 2013. 16 pages (978–1–60537–149–8, \$12.95)

van Genechten, Guido. *In, Out, and All Around. (Odd One Out)* Translated from the Dutch. U.S. edition: Clavis, 2013. 16 pages (978–1–60537–150–4, \$12.95)

A pair of interactive board books will provoke all kinds of conversation with a delightful and increasingly challenging series of questions related to the illustrations. Each book features three questions on every double-page spread, two of them unique to the illustration, and one repeated across the spreads. In *Odd One Out: Big and Small*, the repeated question is “And who is ready to go to a party?” In *Odd One Out: In, Out and All Around*, it’s “And who is ready to go to a dance?” Each illustration features a different group of the same kind of animal. They are nearly identical, but the questions are designed to single several of them out. A page showing eight alligators asks “Who has lost all his teeth?” and “Who is long and who is short?” Young children can study the picture to find the answers. Identifying the one ready to go a party (or a dance) requires even closer observation as the clue to the repeated question is a small, black-and-white element added to the color illustrations (in this case, one of the alligators is wearing a crown). The growing challenge is due to the greater subtlety in the variations among the animals and/or the increase in the number shown on a spread (e.g., thirty almost identical hedgehogs). The final page spread shows the group of animals at the party and the dance, making it possible to go back and find those individuals in illustrations where

the challenge may have been too great. Finding the answer is not always easy, but kids who love to pore over illustrations will find it a delight regardless. (Ages 2–4)

Wolff, Ashley. *Baby Bear Counts One.* Beach Lane Books / Simon & Schuster, 2013. 40 pages (978–1–4424–4158–3, \$16.99)

A follow-up to *Baby Bear Sees Blue* (Beach Lane / Simon & Schuster, 2012) has the little cub continuing to learn about his world as autumn winds down. “Mama, who woke me?” he asks after hearing a thocking sound. It’s a woodpecker, Mama explains. “Baby Bear counts 1.” Acorns fall on his head and Mama explains squirrels are collecting nuts. “Baby Bear counts 2.” Beavers, deer, crows, and other creatures getting ready for winter give Baby Bear the opportunity to eventually count all the way to ten. But with the arrival of winter comes a sky full of snowflakes too numerous to count. Repetition and onomatopoeia are incorporated into a satisfying story set against beautifully composed and colored linoleum print illustrations. (Ages 2–5)

Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

Bean, Jonathan. *Building Our House.* Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013. 44 pages (978–0–374–38023–6, \$17.99)

A young girl describes her family’s effort over the course of eighteen months to build the house in which they will live. A trailer placed on the land they’ve purchased provides shelter, while the dad, mom, two kids, and extended family and friends provide the labor and lots of love. Seasons change and change and change again as a hole is dug, the foundation is poured, and beams are hewn (by hand) and fitted together before a roof and sides go on. Then work begins inside. “We plumb while the wind howls. And wire while the drifts pile up.” Jonathan Bean’s warm, well-crafted story is both playful and informative, full of intriguing details described in a narrative in which every thoughtfully chosen word and carefully placed comma shapes the wonderful flow. There are also whimsical details and elements of the story told only through the art, whether it’s the kids playing under the wheelbarrow, the antics of the cats, or the progression of the mom’s pregnancy and the arrival of a new baby by the time they move out of the trailer and into the finished house. An already captivating picture book includes a note in which Bean writes about his parents and the five years they spent building a house by hand. He includes photographs of himself and his sisters, all young children, engaged in the process. *Honor Book, 2014 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–7)

Boyd, Lizi. *Inside Outside*. Chronicle, 2013. 36 pages (978–1–4521-0644–1, \$15.99)

A child engages in seasonal and creative activities both inside and outside in a wonderful, wordless picture book in which each scene foreshadows things to come. The first full-page spread shows the child inside, getting ready to plant seeds in pots. Winter coat and scarf hang on the hook near the door; winter boots can be found midst the jumble of toys on the floor. Through the die-cut windows snowmen peek in. A turn of the page finds the child outside with the snowmen while the windows now frame a picture on the inside wall from the preceding page. Winter turns to spring then summer then fall in Lizi Boyd's delightful offering that encourages prediction and inspires storytelling. It's a pleasure to look for the various creatures that recur in every scene (dog, cat, two mice, and a turtle, for a start) and to follow the busy child's myriad activities from one scene and season to the next. The whimsically detailed gouache illustrations were rendered on brown kraft paper, adding immense warmth to the already cozy scenes. (Ages 2–5)

Bunting, Eve. *Big Bear's Big Boat*. Illustrated by Nancy Carpenter. Clarion, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–618-58537–3, \$12.99)

"When Big Bear grew too big for his little boat, he gave it to Little Bear. Now he was building a big boat for himself." When Big Bear's new boat is done, it's just what he wanted—exactly like his little boat, but bigger. Then Beaver says it needs a mast. Otter says it needs a top deck. Blue Heron says it needs a cabin. "Maybe you're right," Big Bear tells them each in turn. He builds a mast, a deck, and a cabin, and now the boat is all wrong. So he makes it right again, and when he puts the boat into the lake, there is Little Bear, with his boat, too. "How nice it is to be us, Big Bear thought. Two brown bears in two fine boats sailing on a blue, blue lake." Eve Bunting's understated story is full of charm and gentle affirmation. Nancy Carpenter's illustrations are equally warm and pleasing. (Ages 3–6)

Cooper, Floyd. *Max and the Tag-Along Moon*. Philomel, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–399-23342–5, \$16.99)

Max discovers the moon is a constant companion on the drive home from his Granpa's house. "The long ride home was swerby-curvy. This way and that, all the way. And the moon seemed to tag along." Wonderful word choice chronicles Max's journey home with the moon overhead, until "Dark clouds tumbled across the night sky." The moon his Granpa said would always shine for him has disappeared. But as he's falling asleep, the clouds fade and the moon returns. Floyd Cooper captures the magic of the moon and a grandparent to a small child in this picture book about a young African American boy. Cooper's hallmark illustration style is especially adept at reflecting the wonder of moonlit landscapes. *Highly Commended, 2014 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–6)

De Séve, Randall. *Peanut & Fifi Have a Ball*. Illustrated by Paul Schmid. Dial, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–8037-3578–1, \$15.99)

Fifi tries everything to get her little sister Peanut to let her play with her new blue ball. Grabbing it doesn't work. Neither does wheedling, "Pleeceeeaaaase."

She gets a wastebasket for basketball. She makes the ball a hat. She pretends to be a fortuneteller in need of a crystal ball. Peanut is interested in none of it, until Fifi returns with a seal named Bob and big plans. “We can teach him tricks and join the circus and travel all over the world!” Peanut is in, just as Fifi decides she’d rather do something else. But all is well by the end of this droll picture book in which the spare palette (muted green, blue, and orange) and spare style of the digitally rendered figures on cream-colored pages have a sensibility both nostalgic and futuristic, in addition to their obvious humor and charm. (Ages 3–6)

Empson, Jo. *Never Ever*. U.S. edition: Child’s Play, 2013. 32 pages (978–1–84643–552–2, \$16.99)

A little girl lamenting the fact that nothing exciting ever happens to her is seemingly oblivious on her walk. First, there’s a flying pig following her. Then a purple gorilla, that’s joined by a lion and one of the turtles she stepped on crossing a stream. A giant lizard with a wide-open mouth escapes her notice, even when she marches straight into its belly. When it spits her back out (she apparently doesn’t taste very good), she continues to complain that nothing exciting “ever, ever . . . ever, ever . . . ever, ever . . . ever, ever . . .” happens. The visual humor builds as she climbs an incline revealed, in a two-panel fold-out (and up) page, to be a woolly mammoth, where she settles down on its head to go to bed. The ending offers young readers and listeners the chance to ponder: Is the fact that she sleeps on top of a woolly mammoth the reason she’s so unimpressed by everything that came before? Or is she oblivious to the mammoth, along with everything that came before? (Ages 3–6)

Flett, Julie. *Wild Berries*. Translated by Earl N. Cook. Simply Read Books, 2013. 32 pages (978–1–897476–89–5, \$16.95)

Clarence has gone blueberry-picking with his grandma since he was so little she had to carry him on her back. Now he carries his own bucket. As he picks the berries, his lips turning purple from eating them as he goes (he likes the sour ones that pop in his mouth), he takes time to notice creatures small and large: an ant, a spider, a fox sneaking by. He ends his outing with an offering of berries for the birds. The young Native boy’s tradition of berry-picking is described in a spare, lyrical narrative that incorporates a word or phrase in Cree along with its English counterpart on each page. Author/illustrator Julie Flett (Métis/Cree) pairs her poetic text with beautifully composed illustrations that are stylized and full of warmth. (Ages 3–6)

Fogliano, Julie. *if you want to see a whale*. Illustrated by Erin E. Stead. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2013. 32 pages (978–1–59643–731–9, \$16.99)

A poetic picture book details how much can be seen when the search for one thing leads to the discovery of others. The search for a whale starts with a window, and an ocean and “time for waiting and time for looking and time for wondering ‘is that a whale?’” (No, it’s a bird.) There are all those roses to ignore, “and all their pink / and all their sweet / and all their wild and their waving” to not notice. Don’t pay any attention to the small green inching insect, “keep both

eyes on the sea.” Julie Fogliano’s lyrical narrative is as much about daydreaming as it is about what can be literally seen, and as much about having the time and the figurative space to let imaginations wander as it is about meeting a concrete goal. Erin E. Stead brings a light touch to the art with her soft palette and delicate lines in a book that’s small in size but has an expansive feel. The possibilities—like the ocean itself—seem endless. (Ages 3–6)

Fox, Mem. *Good Night, Sleep Tight*. Illustrated by Judy Horacek. U.S. edition: Orchard / Scholastic, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–545–53370–6, \$16.99)

Bonnie and Ben’s favorite babysitter, Skinny Doug, has a treasure trove of nursery rhymes to share in this clever presentation that frames the rhymes in the context of a story about two young charges not eager for bedtime. “‘We love it! We love it!’ said Bonnie and Ben. ‘How does it go? Will you say it again?’” This refrain is their response each time Skinny Doug recites a rhyme. But he always has a new one to share. “‘... I’ll tell you another I heard from my mother ...’” Inevitably, the game is eventually over. “Good night, Sleep tight!” The playful illustrations show Bonnie, Ben, and Skinny Doug as participants in each of the nursery rhyme scenarios in addition to reflecting the warmth of their relationship as they go through the ritual of bedtime. (Ages 3–6)

Gomi, Taro. *Mommy! Mommy!* Translated from the Japanese. U.S. edition: Chronicle, 2013. 20 pages (978–1–4521–0834–6, \$6.99)

A sweetly comical board book features a pair of chicks repeatedly searching for their mother. “Mommy! Mommy!” There she is, behind the fence. “Here I am!” Now she’s behind the shrubs, only her ruffled pink frill visible. But it turns out to be a flower. “Oops!” Is that her behind the rocks? Yikes! It’s something large and pink and frilly with gnashing teeth. How about peeking out behind the roof of the barn? No, it’s the rippled sun rising. But who’s that next to the sun? It’s mommy! Taro Gomi’s spare, repetitive text is funny, but the real charm is in the stylized illustrations featuring two big-eyed, boxy chicks with the suggestion of tail feathers, and their bigger boxy mother, not to mention the rectangular pink menace. Young children will enjoy the humor and drama both. (Ages 6 months–2)

Graham, Bob. *The Silver Button*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–7636–6437–4, \$16.99)

With elegant mastery, author/illustrator Bob Graham suspends a single moment in time across almost the entire thirty-two pages of this picture book. As Jodie is about to add the final button to the duck’s boot in her drawing, her little brother Jonathan pushes himself up. “He swayed, he frowned, he tilted forward ... and took his first step.” As Jonathan takes that step, other things are happening all over town. In the next room, the children’s mother plays her penny whistle. A pigeon nests under the roof outside, and one of its feathers floats gently past the window. A jogger passes by on the sidewalk, an ambulance on the street. One block away, “a soldier said good-bye to his mom.” In the park, Sophie and her granddad made a house of leaves. At Mercy Hospital, a baby was born. Graham offers a wider and wider angle on a moment that is

both monumental and ordinary, and then pulls the focus tight again: “Then down came Jonathan on his little pink knees.” Carefully chosen details and wonderful pacing distinguish the thoughtful narrative, while Graham’s warm, lively illustrations are full of tenderness and whimsy. *Highly Commended, 2014 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–6)

Harris, Robie H. *When Lions Roar*. Illustrated by Chris Raschka. Orchard / Scholastic Inc., 2013. 32 pages (978–0–545-11283–3, \$16.99)

There is a growing sense of emotional and sensory overload in the first half of this picture book in which a child narrates a list of things that are frightening (the roar of lions at the zoo, the crack of lightening, the bark of a big dog, yelling daddies and mommies). The child’s response is to “Shut my eyes tight. ‘Go away,’ I say. ‘Scary! Go away.’” This is followed by calm, with the child describing a world in which both a literal and figurative storm have passed (the sun has come out, mommies are singing, daddies are dancing, there are small quiet things to notice). Robie Harris’s narrative conveys both the chaos and the relief, with Chris Raschka’s expressive, colorful line illustrations adding to the effect. (Ages 3–6)

Hest, Amy. *When Charley Met Grandpa*. Illustrated by Helen Oxenbury. Candlewick Press, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–7636-5314–9, \$15.99)

Henry is excited for Grampa to meet his new puppy, Charley. He and Charley head out on a snowy Sunday to meet Grampa at the train station, and wait a long time before the train finally comes. Will Grampa and Charley like each other? There a little uncertainty and a few moments of high drama before all is well in Amy Hest’s charming picture-book story. “That night Charley jumped on the bed with Grampa. He looked in Grampa’s eyes and Grampa looked back, which is code for I love you, I love you, I love you.” Lovely descriptions and details distinguish a finely paced narrative graced with Helen Oxenbury’s warm, charming illustrations. (Ages 3–6)

James, Simon. *Nurse Clementine*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–7636-6382–7, \$15.99)

Clementine puts her birthday gift of a nurse’s kit to immediate use, treating her father’s banged toe, her mother’s headache, and the dog’s paw. Each patient receives a hefty bandage with orders to leave it in place for a week. Her brother Tommy is a harder sell. He resists Clementine’s offers of treatment, but calls for help when he gets stuck high in a tree. Rising to the situation with professional calm, Clementine catches him as he slips to the ground, and Tommy returns the favor by allowing Clementine to bandage the small scrape on his arm. While Clementine’s nursing uniform suggests a bygone era, her desire to act as family first responder and the resulting interactions feel both contemporary and credible. (Ages 3–6)

Jenkins, Emily. *Water in the Park: A Book about Water & the Times of Day.* Illustrated by Stephanie Graegin. Schwartz & Wade, 2013. 36 pages (978-0-375-87002-6, \$16.99)

Over the course of a summer day in a city park, time is measured by the hour as dramas and pleasures small and large unfold. “Just before six o’clock, turtles settle on rocks. They warm their turtle shells in the light. Good morning park!” Soggy and their humans show up between six and seven, when the first babies appear. By ten, the playground is packed with children and caregivers. At eleven, park volunteers water the flowerbeds. At noon, “it’s time for lunch. Maybe a nap.” And so it goes, hour by hour, on through the afternoon and into the evening. A few children (and dogs) show up several times throughout the day, but the park itself, with its ever-changing cast of characters and myriad, constantly varied activities, is the focus, as is the steady advance of an unseen but ever-present clock toward day’s end, marked by darkness. “Good night, park.” Emily Jenkins’s engagingly detailed and perfectly paced narrative is set against Stephanie Graegin’s equally wonderful illustrations. There’s so much to look at and discover across the pages of the story, and the hours of the day. (Ages 3–6)

Leathers, Philippa. *The Black Rabbit.* Candlewick Press, 2013. 36 pages (978-0-7636-5714-7, \$14.00)

Poor Rabbit. He wakes up and leaves his burrow on a beautiful sunny day only to discover he’s being followed by a big black rabbit. When Rabbit runs, Black Rabbit chases him. When he stops and turns around, the huge Black Rabbit is there. Rabbit finally manages to escape Black Rabbit in the “deep, dark wood.” But the appearance of two big eyes followed by a mouth full of sharp teeth, all belonging to a wolf, has him on the run again. He speeds out of the woods with the wolf on his heels. Just when it seems he’s about to be devoured, guess who appears and scares the wolf away? Philippa Leathers’s merry tale has a slight sense of foreboding, but it’s more than matched by the pleasure readers and listeners will have being in the know. The illustrations make Rabbit’s misunderstanding clear from the outset, while the contrast between his sweet, dainty self and his looming shadow, not to mention the somewhat frightening yet comical wolf, makes it all the more fun. (Ages 3–6)

Meshon, Aaron. *Take Me Out to the Yakyu.* Atheneum, 2013. 36 pages (978-1-4424-4177-4, \$15.99)

A love of baseball spans two countries in this volume which compares and contrasts a child’s experience taking in a ballgame at the stadium with his American pop pop with watching yakyu at the dome with his Japanese ji ji. Each double-page spread uses color and placement to clearly distinguish between the two countries. Pre-game anticipation and post-game satisfaction are universal, while souvenirs, food concessions, and audience cheers are distinctive to each locale. Supplementary material offers an English/Japanese glossary and fascinating facts about differences in the game by country. A two-dimensional flat style of illustration creates a visual ambiance that feels simultaneously retro and contemporary. (Ages 3–6)

Miller, Pat Zietlow. *Sophie's Squash*. Illustrated by Anne Wilsdorf. Schwartz & Wade, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-307-97896-7, \$16.99)

When Sophie chooses a squash at the farmers' market, her parents see a dinner dish. But Sophie sees a friend. "I call her Bernice," Sophie said. "I'll call for a pizza," said her mother. Bernice and Sophie do everything together, from story time at the library to somersaults in the garden. Eventually Bernice isn't quite as bright and firm as she once was. First black splotches appear ("freckles," Sophie insists), and as winter approaches she begins getting, well, squashy. Another trip to the farmers' market yields advice: fresh air, dirt, and love are what Bernice needs. Sophie makes her a bed of soil in the yard, and Bernice sleeps there all winter long while Sophie bonds with Ace the goldfish. Spring brings a joyous reunion, and a surprise: Bernice has sprouted leaves. Sophie and Ace picnic with Bernice all summer, but even greater changes are in store in debut Wisconsin author Pat Zietlow Miller's fresh, witty, finely paced picture book. Anne Wilsdorf's spirited illustrations perfectly match the tenor of a story full of humor and warmth. Sophie's absolute devotion and her parents' admirable restraint both are a delight. *Honor Book, 2014 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3-7)

Moore, Eva. *Lucky Ducklings*. Illustrated by Nancy Carpenter. Orchard / Scholastic Inc., 2013. 32 pages (978-0-439-44861-1, \$16.99)

When Mama Duck decides to take her brood of five ducklings for a walk through town, all goes well until she walks easily over a storm sewer grate. One by one, her ducklings following along behind fall through the openings. Luckily there's a witness who calls for help, but the fire department can't lift the grate. A bystander with a truck is finally able to attach a cable and pull it off, which allows a fire fighter to rescue the ducklings one by one. Based on a true story, Eva Moore's patterned text takes full advantage of the drama of the page turn, and she expertly uses the repetition of the ducklings' names—Pippen, Bippen, Tippen, Dippin, and Little Joe—to focus the attention of young listeners. Realistic illustrations offer a range of visual perspectives, including vertical panels showing each duckling's fall through the grate. (Ages 2-5)

Morales, Yuyi. *Niño Wrestles the World*. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2013. 36 pages (978-1-59643-604-6, \$16.99)

A young, masked, underwear-clad boy takes on one opponent after another as he imagines the toys strewn on his floor as full-size wrestling rivals. Luckily, Niño has a series of patented moves to guarantee victory. He does in the Guanajuato Mummy with the Tickle Tackle. Olmec Head is defeated by the Puzzle Muzzle move. And El Chamuco is ruined with the Popsickle Slick. But the ticking clock warns of coming dread: "His sisters' nap is over. Time for Niño to tangle with Las Hermanitas!" Has Niño met his match in these two darling, diaper-clad girls? A vibrant picture book that integrates Spanish words and expressions into the English text is a dynamic and engaging portrait of a child's pretend play. Full of energy and humor, Yuyi Morales's words and pictures will have young readers and listeners cheering. An author's note provides information about Lucha libre, a "theatrical, action-packed style of professional wrestling that's popular throughout Mexico and many Spanish-speaking countries." Niño's

story is rich with specific cultural references but universal in appeal. Among the elements adding to the fun are endpapers offering profiles of Niño and all his opponents. *Highly Commended, 2014 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–6)

Murray, Alison. *Little Mouse*. U.S. edition: Disney / Hyperion, 2013. 28 pages (978–1–4231–4330–7, \$16.99)

“Sometimes, when I’m being very quiet and cuddly, my mommy calls me her little mouse.” The small girl who narrates this story finds that funny because she sees herself differently: Tall like a giraffe. Strong like a bull. Brave and scary like a lion. Loud as an elephant. She can even fly like a bird. None of these creatures are mentioned in the narrative, however. Instead, they are prominent features of the illustrations as the things the little girl says about herself are demonstrated by the girl, and mirrored or reflected in the pictured animal’s behavior. It all suggests her vibrant imagination at work, and reflects a dynamic and positive sense of self. The fact that most of the animals are quite large, and she is quite small but undaunted, only adds to the charm of Alison Murray’s whimsical, satisfying story. (Ages 2–5)

Nakawaki, Hatsue. *Wait! Wait!* Translated from the Japanese by Yuki Kaneko. Illustrated by Komako Sakai. U.S. edition: Enchanted Lion, 2013. 24 pages (978–1–59270–138–4, \$14.95)

A series of typical toddler encounters are captured in a few simple lines of text accompanying illustrations that excel at depicting both the fascination and frustration that are part of a toddler’s experience. The story is told in pairs of page spreads. Over the course of the picture book, the young child on the cover notices a butterfly, a lizard, and two pigeons. “Wait! Wait!” But just as the child gets closer, the creatures flutter or wiggle or flap away. Help finally comes in the form of a grown-up, who picks the child up to ride, shoulder-high. Hatsue Nakawaki’s art has a nostalgic but not sentimental feel, and masterfully reflects the physical relationship of small children to the world around them. There is rich word choice in the spare text. (Ages 1–3)

Oldland, Nicholas. *Up the Creek*. Kids Can Press, 2013. 32 pages (978–1–894786–32–4, \$16.95)

When a trio of friends sets out to canoe together one sunny day, their tendency towards frequent disagreements immediately threatens to ruin the outing. When moose wants to steer, bear and beaver realize they do too. But with all three animals in the back of the canoe, the uneven weight load causes it to capsize. One mishap follows another, and a rough ride through unexpected rapids nearly does them in. It’s only when they decide to work as a team that they are able to reach shore safely at last. A traditional message of cooperation is boosted to humorous heights by illustrations, created in Photoshop, of the stubbornly opinionated woodland creatures on the verge of navigating the creek sans paddle. (Ages 3–6)

Park, Linda Sue. *Xander's Panda Party*. Illustrated by Matt Phelan. Clarion, 2013. 40 pages (978-0-547-55865-3, \$16.99)

Xander wants to have a Panda Party at the zoo where he lives. But he's the only panda there so he invites all the bears to a "bear affair" instead. Then Koala informs him that she's actually a marsupial. "Marsupials—we're rather rare. Will I not be welcome there?" Xander tries again, this time promising a "hearty party" for all the mammals at the zoo. But Rhinoceros refuses to come without his oxpecker bird. So Xander invites mammals and birds. Crocodile chimes in: "Birds and reptiles—long ago, we were related, don't you know? If you didn't, now you do. Can't the reptiles join in too?" Finally, Xander's friend Amanda Salamander comes up with the perfect solution in this playful picture book that cleverly integrates a little bit of science into its masterful rhyming text. Whimsical illustrations are the perfect accompaniment to the narrative, while the author's note provides additional information about the various animals in the story. (Ages 3–8)

Schwartz, Amy. *Dee Dee and Me*. Holiday House, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-8234-2524-2, \$16.95)

Hannah's older sister, Dee Dee, takes whatever she wants, and takes over when she can. Assigning roles to play in games of pretend she always gives the best ones to herself. When Hannah's friend Patsy comes to play, Dee Dee monopolizes Patsy's time. Dee even cuts apart Hannah's pretty apron to make a purse. Enough is enough! Hannah refuses to play with Dee Dee and spends an enjoyable morning on her own. Then there's a knock on her door. It's Dee Dee. She's replaced the missing eye on Hannah's beloved Brown Bear, and she wants to play. Amy Schwartz acknowledges the reality of being bossed and overwhelmed by an older sibling in a story that has satisfying elements of repetition within a narrative that shows two sisters who both are more than they first appear. Reaching her limit helps Hannah assert herself, negotiating new terms for their play, while Dee Dee reveals a more generous side she'd had little incentive to show. Colorful, clean-lined illustrations add to the child-appeal. (Ages 3–7)

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. *Bully*. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-59643-630-5, \$16.99)

Not a bully but a bull takes center stage in Laura Vaccaro Seeger's eloquent look at name-calling and insults. "Go away!" a big bull tells a smaller one, the rejection unmistakable on the small bull's face. When the small bull is then approached by a group of animals inviting him to play, he puffs himself up and says, "No!" But he doesn't stop there. He calls the chicken a chicken. He calls the turtle a slow poke. He calls the pig a pig. His anger intensifies each time, and even though the words at face value are generally factual (a chicken is a chicken and a pig is a pig, after all), intent is everything here. When a billy goat counters with a name of his own for the bull, everything changes. "Bully!" Suddenly the bull, which had been growing larger with each insult he hurled, deflates. Despite its seemingly obvious message, Seeger's book leaves plenty of space for readers of the words and pictures to observe, reflect upon, and discuss the characters' thoughts, feelings, and actions. The spare text is comprised only

of the words the animals exchange, while the bold illustrations are simple in composition but complex in terms of gesture and feeling. (Ages 3–6)

Seto, Loretta. *Mooncakes*. Illustrated by Renné Benoit. Orca, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-4598-0107-3, \$19.95)

A young Chinese North American girl describes her first time staying up to celebrate the autumn Moon Festival. There are round mooncakes to eat. “They make a circle for me and Mama and Baba. They make a circle for my family.” There are round paper lanterns to light. And there is the circle of Mama and Baba’s arms. The night also includes storytelling as the parents share three Chinese legends about the moon with the little girl. They are the perfect length for stories parents would tell a small child, and so integrate seamlessly into the narrative of this picture book that is full of warmth. It’s in the simple, beautiful language, and in the loving depiction of family. The story’s cozy feel is echoed in the illustrations’ warm tones. Discovering that the three legends are reflected in the decorations on the family’s teapot adds to the pleasure. (Ages 3–7)

Shannon, George. *Turkey Tot*. Illustrated by Jennifer K. Mann. Holiday House, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-8234-2379-8, \$16.95)

A tale reminiscent of “The Little Red Hen” introduces Turkey Tot, whose optimism and inventiveness are not to be trifled with. Determined to reach the fat blackberries hanging from a high bush, Turkey Tot repeatedly tries to get Chick, Pig, and Hen to help with his plans to reach them. If they had balloons to go with the string he found they could float up. With sticks he could use the hammer and nails he found to make a ladder. What about a teeter-totter out of a board? Chick, Pig, and Hen are consistently critical of Turkey Tot’s ideas. “He’s been different since the day he hatched.” George Shannon’s lively and amusing story is wonderfully paced, with a playful refrain and satisfying ending that pays tribute to Turkey Tot’s perseverance, creativity, and pluck. Jennifer K. Mann’s quirky illustrations are a perfect fit—the image of Turkey Tot on his tin-can stilts is not to be missed. (Ages 3–7)

Sobrinio, Javier. *Night Sounds*. Translated from the Spanish by Elisa Amada. Illustrated by Emilio Urberuaga. U.S. edition: Groundwood, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-55498-332-2, \$16.95)

When the sleeping animals of the rain forest are awoken by loud cries issuing from a box, their first instinct is to pacify the crier by providing whatever it needs. Cold? An orangutan fetches a warm blanket. Thirsty? A tapir provides a bowl of fresh water. Scared? A rhinoceros brings a doll for company. Momentarily placated each time, the crying quickly resumes with a new request. Finally a tiger delivers the little one’s Mummy—an elephant!—and it appears that all will be able to sleep again at last. Imagine their frustration when “wuu wuu wuuuuu” echoes through the forest yet again. These wails are coming from the village, and it’s the baby elephant who shouts advice, “It wants a kiss! That child must have a kiss! Then we can all go back to sleep.” Featuring creatures of southern and southeast Asia, this bedtime tale sports intense colors, varied emotions, and droll comedy, including the incongruity of an elephant (no matter how young) fitting inside a small wooden box. (Ages 3–6)

Stein, David Ezra. *Ol' Mama Squirrel.* Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-399-25672-1, \$16.99)

Maternal instinct in the natural world is embodied in Mama Squirrel, who erupts into defensive behavior when any potential danger approaches her nest. Cats, dogs, kites, airplanes—all flee from Mama's scolding "Chook, chook, chook!" Only a grizzly bear is not so easily intimidated, and Mama's reprimands make him even more determined to procure a meal of fresh squirrel. Not easily cowed, Mama Squirrel sets off to spread the alarm to her peers throughout the park. An overwhelming battalion of mama squirrels arrives in the nick of time to scold the bear and send him running under a hail of old nuts. The vision of Mama Squirrel charging to rally her troops, righteous determination in the set of her snout while her youngsters barely manage to cling to her back, would indeed make anyone reconsider a confrontation. (Ages 2–5)

Teckentrup, Britta. *Run Home, Little Mouse.* Translated from the German. U.S. edition: Kids Can Press, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-77138-033-1, \$14.95)

Black pages and die-cuts both enhance the drama of a board book in which a little lost mouse is trying to find its way home at night. The die-cuts show glowing eyes in the dark, with a turn-of-the-page revealing the creature Little Mouse must pass. First it's a fox. Then there's a weasel, an owl, a cat, a crow, and two bats. Finally, Little Mouse encounters almost a dozen eyes. "Who's there, Little Mouse? It's ... your family!" The stylized look and overall muted tones of the trees and animals against the black pages are striking in this distinctive offering that effectively uses repetition in the narrative and surprise in the reveals. (Ages 6 months–2)

Van Camp, Richard. *Little You.* Illustrated by Julie Flett. Orca, 2013. 22 pages (978-1-4598-0248-3, \$9.95)

A board book from two Native Canadian artists—author Richard Van Camp (Dogrib) and illustrator Julie Flett (Métis/Cree)—is as comforting as a loving embrace for babies and young children. The sense of security is in the lyrical narrative, a gentle, rhyming text that speaks of parents' joy in and appreciation for their child ("Little you / little wonder / Little wish / gentle thunder"). And it's in the art, beautifully composed scenes showing loving interactions, or the baby lovingly observed. The striking illustrations have a wonderful sense of color and balance and design as well as delightful elements of playfulness, and older babies and toddlers will find something to look at on every page, from fish to stars to butterflies to the baby—always the baby. The child could be boy or girl in this board book brimming with warmth. (Ages birth–3)

Wells, Rosemary. *Time-Out for Sophie.* Viking, 2013. 24 pages (978-0-670-78511-7, \$15.99)

Cause and effect of one's actions are played out as Sophie tests her boundaries and earns repeated time outs. She throws her dinner on the floor—twice. She dumps the neatly folded laundry out of the basket—twice. With each second infraction, Sophie's parents put her in a lonely time-out. Tables turn when Sophie grabs Granny's glasses, despite being asked not to. Putting down the picture book she was sharing, Granny gives *herself* a time-out. It's more than

Sophie can bear, and she returns the glasses and settles next to Granny on the couch for her read-aloud session. Typical toddler behavior and its consequences are both believable and entertaining in this decidedly human family of mice. (Ages 1–4)

Yokococo. *Matilda and Hans*. U.S. edition: Templar / Candlewick Press, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–7636-6434–3, \$16.99)

Cats Matilda and Hans seem to be opposites in every way. Matilda is quiet. Hans is loud. Matilda is well-behaved. Hans always misbehaves. One night Hans lets all the animals out of their cages at the zoo. The next day Matilda tells the police where to find Hans. Author/illustrator Yokococo's story may elicit genuine unease at this point among listeners and readers. Is this tattling? What about gender stereotypes? Not to worry. In a picture book that is far more sophisticated than it first appears, the capture of Hans delivers a delightful surprise that acknowledges a truth that even very young children will recognize: We all sometimes behave in ways both good and bad. Careful observers of the marvelous, stylized illustrations in this whimsical, seemingly simple story may enjoy going back and discovering the visual clues that are there all along. For example, Matilda is only shown by the bright light of day, while Hans is always pictured at night in this clever, artful offering. (Ages 3–7)

Young, Jessica. *My Blue Is Happy*. Illustrated by Catia Chien. Candlewick Press, 2013. 28 pages (978–0–7636-5125–1, \$15.99)

Colors, feelings and concepts converge in a story that finds a small girl comparing her perception of various colors with the perceptions of other people. Her sister thinks blue is sad, "Like a lonely song." But to the girl, blue is happy, "Like my favorite jeans / And a splash in the pool on a hot day." Yellow is cheery like the sun to her mom. To her, yellow is worried, "Like a wilting flower / And a butterfly caught in a net." Her dad thinks brown is ordinary (paper bag). She thinks it's special (chocolate syrup). The fresh associations and vivid, concrete descriptions of abstract feelings and ideas will surely inspire young readers and listeners to think about new ways to describe what they see, think, and feel. *Highly Commended, 2014 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–6)

Yum, Hyewon. *This Is Our House*. Frances Foster Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–374-37487–7, \$16.99)

"This is the house where my grandparents arrived from far away with just two suitcases in hand." It's the house where the young narrator's mother was born, took her first steps, and shared a room with her brothers. It has the kitchen where her grandmother made her mother's favorite soup, and the front door her mother left through on her way to college. It's where the young narrator's parents lived when they got married, and it's the house she herself is growing up in now, where she took her first steps and eats same kind of soup her mother ate as a child. Family and traditions across the generations are the focus of a comforting picture book full of small details of the kinds of things that have special meaning within a family. Three generations of the family are shown living together at story's end: the grandparents, the parents, and the young girl telling the story. Hyewon Yum's thoughtful and observant picture book

narrative is paired with soothing illustrations that include a full-page image and one representing a scrapbook photograph. (Ages 3–7)

Picture Books for School-Age Children

Averbeck, Jim. *The Market Bowl*. Charlesbridge, 2013. 32 pages (lib. 978–1–58089–368–8, \$16.95)

Mama Cécile and her small daughter Yoyo make their living by selling bowls of their delicious homemade bitterleaf stew every day at the local market. When Yoyo is certain she is ready to make the stew on her own, she takes a few shortcuts. Mama Cécile declares the results only good for the goats. But proud Yoyo is determined to sell her stew, so she takes it along to market. She and Mama Cécile have asked Brother Coin to bless their market bowl, binding them to accept any fair price they are offered. When Yoyo is offered much less than she hoped for her own bowl of stew, she refuses to sell it, angering Brother Coin. It's up to Yoyo to use her wits and her culinary skill—without shortcuts this time—to appease Brother Coin and regain the blessing for their market bowl. This clever, original story draws on the cultures and customs of Cameroon, and a recipe for bitterleaf stew, Cameroon's national dish, is included at the back of the book. Although the story is timeless, details in the illustrations place it in a contemporary Cameroonian village. (Ages 4–7)

Becker, Aaron. *Journey*. Candlewick Press, 2013. 40 pages (978–0–7636–6053–6, \$15.99)

In a completely wordless story, a young girl with a red crayon draws a door in her bedroom wall and opens it onto a fantastical world. Her first stop is a magical forest with a stream running through it. The girl draws a boat with her crayon to see where the stream will take her and she arrives in an elaborate walled city. And here is where the danger begins. Each new setting she travels to offers some sort of challenge, which she faces with her wit and her magical red crayon. Halfway through, the rescue of an exotic purple bird also becomes part of her mission. Lushly detailed illustrations provide a lot for the eye to explore, and young readers will want to follow the adventure to see where she goes and how she cleverly escapes danger each time. In what may be an homage to Crockett Johnson, in the end she returns the bird to a boy with a purple crayon, and the three of them set off on a bicycle with one red wheel and one purple wheel. (Ages 4–8)

Best, Cari. *Beatrice Spells Some Lulus and Learns to Write a Letter*. Illustrated by Giselle Potter. Margaret Ferguson Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–374–39904–7, \$16.99)

The day Beatrice finally learns how to spell her name is the day she discovers her passion: spelling. Her grandma, Nanny Hannah, spells words for Beatrice

all day long, explaining that she pictures them in her head to spell them right. Beatrice tackles “kindergarten.” Success! Nanny Hannah calls Beatrice her “Spelling Bea.” Beatrice begins noticing things, like the silent “e” at the end of some words, and how two short words can make one long one, like “sidewalk.” She notices (and corrects) misspellings, too. But she can’t find anyone else to share her interest at school until she gets the idea to transform her turn at “Show and Tell” into “Show and Spell.” Her presentation about her T-A-R-A-N-T-U-L-A named Rose is not only a hit, but inspires a spelling frenzy. Cari Best’s unusual, inspired story (that does, indeed, include letter-writing at the end) is perfectly paired with Giselle’s Potter’s entertaining, offbeat illustrations. (Ages 5–8)

Brown, Tameka Fryer. *My Cold Plum Lemon Pie Bluesy Mood*. Illustrated by Shane W. Evans. Viking, 2013. 24 pages (978-0-670-01285-5, \$16.99)

Jamie describes his moods throughout the day in terms of colors associated with what’s he doing. First he’s in a purple mood, eating a cold plum and drinking grape juice. Then he’s in a “gray kind of place / Storm brewing inside / That I hide / ‘Cause I don’t want any trouble space” after his big brothers kick him off the couch. Green is all pleasure after his little sister asks him to draw a dragon. Black is brooding anger when his brothers tease him. Orange is energetic and upbeat, like the basketball he’s playing. Red is urgent, like a fire-engine, as he races home after the game. Dinner is yellow, is lively, is good food (corn pudding, chicken curry) and family. Blue is cool time alone as he washes dishes. The lively narrative is emotionally vivid, with word choice and line length skillfully changing the pacing to suit each mood Jamie describes. Realistic family dynamics (teasing, arguing, playing together, jostling for the biggest piece) play out in brief bits of dialogue and in the illustrations showing Jamie and the other members of his African American family. *Honor Book, 2014 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5–8)

Cline-Ransome, Lisa. *Light in the Darkness*. Illustrated by James E. Ransome. Jump at the Sun / Hyperion, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-4231-3495-4, \$16.99)

During slavery, some African Americans would secretly gather in the dark of night to learn how to read. Young Rosa isn’t sure why her mother is waking her the first time they attend a school in a hole dug into the earth. But she soon becomes an eager student. Then comes word two men were caught early in the morning on their way back from the school and severely punished. Rosa’s mother is too afraid to go back, but Rosa grows more insistent as time passes, and they finally return. At first they are the only students, and when they hear approaching footsteps, Rosa imagines “a lash for each letter” she’s learned. Courage and self-determination are the big themes of a vivid story that stays rooted in Rosa’s perspective. The drama is enhanced by the plays of dark and light in the deeply toned illustrations. An author’s note provides additional information on pit schools. (Ages 5–8)

Collins, Pat Lowery. *The Deer Watch*. Illustrated by David Slonim. Candlewick Press, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-7636-4890-9, \$15.99)

During an annual stay at a summer cottage, a young boy sets out with his father in the early morning hoping to catch sight of a deer. They see an egret and a red-winged blackbird, and encounter a crew and noisy bulldozer on a work site. Anticipation heightens when they arrive on conservation land, and the child finds it hard to stay quiet and still while they wait out a rain shower. Their patience is finally rewarded with the sight of a passing doe and her two fawns. Although he tells his mother about the experience later, the boy holds part of the memory inside, recalling how the deer had appeared so briefly “—as if they’d come from nowhere like Dad said, or as if our two worlds crossed for just a magic while.” A quiet tone, imagery-rich language, and textured oil paint art allow readers—regardless of their location—to vicariously experience the wonder of the fleeting encounter. (Ages 4–8)

Collins, Suzanne. *Year of the Jungle*. Illustrated by James Proimos. Scholastic Press, 2013. 40 pages (978-0-545-42516-2, \$17.99)

A masterful picture book excels at revealing a young child’s experience during the year her father is away at war. Suzy’s dad has to go to a place called Viet Nam. She imagines flying in the jungle—her favorite cartoon is set in a jungle—with her cat, Rascal. She is the youngest in a family determined to shelter her from things she’s not ready to understand. Over the year there are many unsettling events. One of her dad’s postcards says “Pray for me.” He sends her a birthday card in winter, but her birthday is in summer. She accidentally sees a news report about Viet Nam. “Later I hide in the closet and cry.” The postcards stop. Suzy’s flights of imagination become darker, tainted by fear she can’t express. It’s only when her dad returns that she can finally speak that fear, if indirectly, when she tells him, “Rascal didn’t think you were coming back.” Suzanne Collins mines her own childhood memories, transforming them with tremendous skill into a story that is resonant and truthful and timeless and remarkably child-centered. James Proimos’s illustrations are stylistically simple but wisely executed, full of sensitivity and power and poignancy, along with occasional moments of whimsy (that cat!). *Honor Book, 2014 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4–9)

Cooper, Elisha. *Train. Orchard / Scholastic Inc., 2013. 32 pages (978-0-545-38495-7, \$17.99)*

An East Coast commuter train leaves a station and the big city behind. In a small town it slows and a big blue passenger train roars by. Eventually the passenger train pulls into the station of a Midwestern city. In the nearby rail yard, a freight train is being loaded and then heads out. It rolls across the Great Plains. In the low hills of the mountains, an overnight passenger train goes by. It curves along high narrow passes and eventually speeds across a wide-open landscape in the night. In the morning, there is breakfast for passengers as a high-speed train comes into view. This train races toward the coast, coming

into a modern city station. “And with a slowing turn into the station and an easing of speed and a sigh of breaks and a gentle last *thunk*, the train stops.” A picture book journey by trains moves across the U.S. landscape from East to West Coast. Authentic rather than nostalgic (with occasional artistic license described in the author’s note), the narrative and delicate, detailed watercolor illustrations capture speed and grace and grit (depending on the type of train). Sweeping exterior scenes as well as captivating train interiors give a sense of the train experience as both participant and observer. (Ages 4–7)

Deacon, Alexis. *Cheese Belongs to You! Illustrated by Viviane Schwarz.* Candlewick Press, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-7636-6608-8, \$15.99)

Rat Law is simple: Find some cheese and it belongs to you. Unless a bigger rat wants it. Or a quicker rat. Or a stronger rat. Scary, hairy, dirty—there’s always someone higher up the rat chain waiting to take the cheese. “If a big, quick, strong, scary, hairy, dirty rat wants it, then cheese belongs to her.” Unless a gang of rats comes along. Will it never end? It eventually does in this sly and funny collaboration between author Alexis Deacon and illustrator Viviane Schwarz that has the original finder of the cheese triumphant when a battle breaks out among the scores of other claimants. The marvelous art features very ratlike rats (far from cute despite the clothing, comical with an edge) in white, red, and black against a blue background, along with the coveted yellow cheese. The mayhem of the climax is a wordless page spread, but the energy of the rollicking narrative builds to that moment, which is followed by a sweetly funny conclusion that brings words and images together once again. (Ages 5–8)

Fleming, Candace. *Papa’s Mechanical Fish.* Illustrated by Boris Kulikov. Margaret Ferguson Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013. 40 pages (978-0-374-39908-5, \$16.99)

“Sometimes Papa tries inventing helpful things, like collapsible coat hangers that are easy to store. Sometimes he tries inventing unusual things, like edible socks. And sometimes he tries inventing playful things that just—only just—don’t work” When the young narrator asks her Papa if he’s ever wondered what it’s like to be a fish, his imagination is off and running once again. Papa’s try-try-again attempts to create an underwater, fishlike boat are far more than a flight of fancy, and far from the subject of ridicule in a family that admires this dreamer and doer, although their appreciation is not without pragmatism. (“Uh-oh,” says the baby when Papa first gets a faraway look in his eye). He’s an optimistic, irrepressible inventor who understands the value of failure as a source of important information and further inspiration. Candace Fleming’s engaging, finely crafted story features a nineteenth-century family that is always up for whatever Papa thinks of next. Her author’s note discusses eccentric Chicago-area inventor Lodner Phillips, who is the inspiration for this story. Boris Kulikov’s illustrations get right into the spirit of things, incorporating black-and-white schematics of Papa’s ideas, and extending the humor, but never at Papa’s expense. (Ages 5–8)

Garland, Sarah. *Azzi In Between*. U.S. edition: Frances Lincoln, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-84780-261-3, \$17.99)

Azzi lives in an unnamed, war-torn nation with her parents and grandmother. In spite of the war, their lives are fairly comfortable until the day her father returns home and tells them they need to leave the country quickly, taking only the few things they can carry. Azzi clutches her stuffed bear, her mother takes a hand-woven blanket, and her father grabs a bag of beans. Grandma, claiming she's not at risk, stays behind. Azzi and her parents drive through the night until they reach a boat, which takes them to a strange land where they rebuild their lives and start over. Sarah Garland uses sequential art to tell this gripping story of a contemporary refugee child who faces the challenges of having to learn a new language and new customs while maintaining those of her home country. The lack of specificity and universal experiences makes this a story that will resonate with children from many parts of the world. Much of the emotion is communicated through the expressive pen-and-ink and watercolor illustrations, and the text is perfectly paced. Remarkably, Garland manages to make Azzi's story hopeful without sugarcoating her experiences. (Ages 6-11)

Gerstein, Mordicai. *The First Drawing*. Little, Brown, 2013. 40 pages (978-0-316-20478-1, \$17.00)

Inspired by cave drawings made more than thirty thousand years ago in what is now France, and the child's footprint found nearby, this book imagines a young Paleolithic artist who notices familiar images hidden in the world around him. He points out a woolly mammoth in the clouds and a bear-shaped stone to his family members, but none of them see what he does. It's not until a close encounter with an actual woolly mammoth that he thinks to outline the creature's shape later that evening on a cave wall lit by firelight. Finally others can share his vision, and although they call it magic, the boy shows them how to draw too. The final page shows a contemporary version of that first artist, telling readers "And that's how—if you'd been around more than thirty thousand years ago—you might have invented drawing. And it's *still* magic!" (Ages 4-8)

Gordon, Gus. *Herman and Rosie*. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-59643-856-9, \$17.99)

Big city dwellers Herman and Rosie enjoy their urban lives, but each is also a little lonely. Although they have similar interests and live on the same block, they pass on the crowded streets without ever making contact. When they undergo simultaneous rough patches (Herman loses his sales job, Rosie's weekly gig singing at a jazz club comes to an end), both are bogged down by the blues. But a beautiful day snaps them out of their respective funks, and by evening a shared appreciation of a "groovy little jazz number" brings the two together at last. Herman's a sweater vest-wearing crocodile and Rosie is a deer with a love of toffee, but together the unlikely duo star in a quintessential love story of destiny in which young readers can enjoy their parallel paths and predict the inevitable outcome. (Ages 4-7)

Grey, Mini. *Toys in Space*. U.S. edition: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-307-97812-7, \$16.99)

“That summer night, for the first time the toys were left outside. The sun went down, the sky grew dark, and, for the very first time . . . they saw THIS.” This being the dazzle of the stars in the sky. It’s overwhelming for some of them, and when Blue Rabbit asks for a story, WonderDoll spins a tale of a starry sky, and a spaceship, and a sad, glove-like alien called the Hootopize who beams up seven toys left out in a yard, hoping to find its lost Cuddles. Mini Grey’s warm, witty adventure features a cast of distinctive characters in a sweetly funny story. The seven toys left out in the yard are not only the characters in WonderDoll’s story, but provide an ongoing commentary about it. Dynamic illustrations incorporating panels and speech bubbles are an essential part of the humor. (Ages 4–8)

Jiang, Ji-li. *Red Kite, Blue Kite*. Illustrated by Greg Ruth. Disney / Hyperion, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-42312753-6, \$17.99)

After his father is sent to a labor camp, a little boy stays connected to him through their shared love of kite-flying. First Baba is able to visit once a week and they fly kites together. Then, when Baba explains he will no longer be able to visit, he tells the boy to fly his red kite each morning, and he will fly his blue kite each evening. “Every day Baba and I ‘talk’ with our kites. My red kite soars and dips, shouting over the thick forest, ‘How are you, Baba? I miss you.’ Baba’s blue kite swirls and circles, replying, ‘I miss you too, little Tai Shan.’” Ji-Li Jiang’s emotionally taut story set during the Cultural Revolution in China captures a small child’s sense of fear and loneliness, and his father’s determination to let him know how much he loves him. Jiang uses beautiful language to tell a hard but happily ending tale. Greg Ruth’s images show the increased hardship faced by the boy’s father, but also the love that surrounds the child. An author’s note provides background on the Cultural Revolution that sets the stage for this story inspired by the childhood experience of her friend. (Ages 5–8)

Kearney, Meg. *Trouper*. Illustrated by E. B. Lewis. Scholastic Press, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-545-10041-0, \$16.99)

A dog remembers the time before he came to a home where he is loved, a time when he ran with a pack of strays until they were caught, a time when he and the others were caged, a time when his old companions of the streets were chosen one by one until only he was left. “My heart was a cold, starless night—until your face shone through the bars like a mini sun . . . Now we’re home!” Home means bowl and bones and bed and boy. Clearly, home means joy. Meg Kearney’s moving narrative is shaped from fine language and deep feeling both in this picture book about a three-legged dog’s journey to home that is based on the story of her own family’s pet, and beautifully illustrated by E. B. Lewis. (Ages 5–8)

Lamb, Rosy. *Paul Meets Bernadette*. Candlewick Press, 2013. 40 pages (978-0-7636-6130-4, \$14.00)

Paul, the goldfish, leads an uneventful, solitary life. That is, until Bernadette, drops into his fishbowl. Bernadette is a goldfish with a fresh perspective on life. She challenges Paul's perpetual circling, asking him to look to the world outside the bowl. Out there is a curvy yellow banana boat, a forest of colorful flowers in a vase, and other fanciful sights. Paul's quite sure he spies two fried eggs right outside the bowl, but Bernadette assures him that they are the sun and the moon. Soon, Paul is over the moon for Bernadette and her creative way of looking at everyday objects. Increasingly detailed creamy, candy-colored oil paintings are a perfect accompaniment to the simple prose and never-rushed pacing in this charming story of active imaginations and infatuated fish. (Ages 5-8)

Lester, Alison. *Sophie Scott Goes South*. U.S. edition: Houghton Mifflin, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-544-08895-5, \$17.99)

Join nine-year-old Sophie Scott as she travels to Antarctica with her father, captain of the icebreaker ship *Aurora Australis*, to deliver people and supplies to Mawson Research Station before winter. Details abound in book featuring a winning combination of journal-style narrative and multiple forms of illustration. Her account of everyday life aboard the ship includes diagrams of the ship, sailor-specific vocabulary, named drawings of the entire crew, and a chronicle of her surroundings and activities. Multiple photos, drawings, and paintings of icebergs and seals, penguins, and other Antarctic wildlife, a cross-section of an iceberg formation, and Sophie's story of using a rope to find her way in a blizzard are highlights of her time in Antarctica. This book will appeal both to kids who are sticklers for facts and those who like to spend hours poring over illustrations. (Ages 5-9)

MacLachlan, Patricia. *Nora's Chicks*. Illustrated by Kathryn Brown. Candlewick Press, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-7636-4753-7, \$15.99)

In her new home on the American prairie, Nora misses the hills and trees of her Russian homeland, but also people. "There's no one to talk to." Susannah is a girl who lives in a distant house, but even though she visits with her mother, and waves when Nora and her father drive by in the wagon, both girls are too shy to make it a friendship. A small stray dog presents a possibility for companionship, but he'd much rather play with Nora's little brother. Then her father brings home chicks and two geese "for eating." Nora stubbornly insists the chicks are too beautiful to eat, and her father gives them to her. "Something all your own." The chicks become chickens that follow Nora around. She's still lonely, just not quite as lonely, until the day Susannah and her mother return a missing chicken. Nora's shyness disappears, and her friendship with Susannah blossoms. A lyrically told story captures loneliness and longing that a loving family cannot fully ease but a newly made friend can soothe. Graceful watercolor illustrations show the beauty and isolation of the prairie and the warmth of Nora's family. (Ages 4-8)

McNamara, Margaret. *The Apple Orchard Riddle*. Illustrated by G. Brian Karas. Schwartz & Wade, 2013. 36 pages (978-0-375-84744-8, \$15.99)

When Tara's class takes a field trip to an apple orchard, her teacher gives them a riddle to solve: "Show me a little red house with no windows and no door, but with a star inside." The kids go on a tour of the orchard and learn a lot about apples. Everyone is pondering the riddle, too, with no success. But while the other kids ask questions about the apples and the cider press, Tara, who's sometimes teased for being dreamy, is observing and thinking. When everyone else gives up on finding the riddle's answer, Tara says, "I think there is a star inside this apple, where nobody can see it." Even though she can't see the star, she can imagine it being there. Another classmate scoffs—who cares about a star you can't see? But the teacher cares, and when he cuts another apple in half according to Tara's instructions, the star inside is revealed. Margaret McNamara affirms the value of being a thoughtful dreamer in a picture book that perfectly, sometimes humorously, captures recognizable personalities of elementary-age children. (Ages 5–8)

Monroe, Chris. *Cookie the Walker*. Carolrhoda, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-7613-5617-2, \$16.95)

Cookie the dog's initial motivation for walking upright on her two hind legs is convenience—she can reach the candy dish, she can turn on the TV, she can pull damp towels off the towel racks. ("They're very comfortable.") But once she's noticed by humans, her feat quickly escalates her to stardom. She goes from a dog show to a circus to reality TV, each promoter sealing the deal by offering Cookie snacks (and, in one case, a fanny pack). Cookie's canine friend Kevin can't help noticing that Cookie is getting more and more run down. One day Cookie laments, "I just don't know how to end it, Kev. I just don't know." Grounded, clearheaded Kevin states the obvious: "You could just stand down." Chris Monroe develops an absurd premise into a picture book that hits the humor mother lode. Monroe's clever writing and quirky art are a winning pair in this fresh, original, offbeat offering that manages to be both silly and sophisticated. (Ages 5–9)

Olshan, Matthew. *The Mighty Lalouche*. Illustrated by Sophie Blackall. Schwartz & Wade, 2013. 36 pages (978-0-375-86225-0, \$17.99)

Lalouche is a postman in Paris in the late 1800s. "He was small, Lalouche, and rather bony, but his hands were nimble, his legs were fast, and his arms were strong. For company, he kept a finch named Geneviève." All of these things are important after Lalouche ends up out of work, replaced by an electric car. With a bird to support, he responds to an advertisement for sparring partners at the Bastille Boxing Club. "We pay cash." He's almost laughed out the door he's so tiny. It also turns out he's so quick that his opponents tie themselves in knots trying to hit him. He defeats the Grecque, Ampère, and the Piston. Then comes the Anaconda and it seems he's met more than his match. "But one should never underestimate a man who loves his finch." Matthew Olshan blends absurdity and sweetness in this hilarious story of a humble man devoted to his bird, with Sophie Blackall's amusing illustrations, punctuated by tenderness, providing perfect accompaniment. (Ages 5–8)

Perlov, Betty Rosenberg. *Rifka Takes a Bow*. Illustrated by Cosei Kawa. Kar-Ben, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-7613-8127-3, \$17.95)

Rifka's parents are actors in the Yiddish Theater, and the little girl often spends time there. Sometimes she visits the other actors backstage as they get ready. "There are beads and ribbons hanging over mirrors and pretty dresses hanging on the racks. The actresses laugh and joke and tell each other not to say bad words in front of me." Sometimes she explores beneath the stage with Papa, a magical world of old props. And on one particular night, bored during the show, she climbs a set of stairs backstage and suddenly finds herself in the middle of the performance. But she handles it all as if she were born to it. A story based on author Betty Rosenberg Perlov's childhood memories has an engaging voice and many intriguing details, which are incorporated into Cosei Kawa's warm, whimsical illustrations. An author's note provides more information about the Yiddish Theater in New York City in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (Ages 4-8)

Reid, Barbara. *Picture a Tree*. U.S. edition: Albert Whitman, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-8075-6526-1, \$16.99)

A bare-limbed tree can be a drawing on the sky. The interplay of trees with clouds or birds can be a game of dress-up. Trees arching over a street can be a tunnel. An expanse of treetops viewed from up high can look like an ocean. In an inspired tribute to trees and imagination, Barbara Reid combines a spare, thoughtful narrative and playful illustrations featuring intricately detailed human characters created in plasticene that are set against painted backgrounds. Reid invites children to think about trees creatively, and to not just look at them but interact with them as well, whether it's to seek refuge within their branches or shade beneath their leaves. There is so much to discover in her illustrations, in which the human figures and trees often mirror one another. (Ages 4-7)

Rex, Adam. *Moonday*. Disney/Hyperion, 2013. 40 pages (978-1-4231-1920-3, \$16.99)

Falling asleep on the ride home one night, a girl awakes in her bed the next morning to find the moon she'd been admiring through the car window is now in her own backyard. "Morning had missed us. In darkness, the town awoke and went to work." Everyone is moonstruck without even knowing it. The teacher writes "1+1=moon" on the board. People yawn and drift through the day. Meanwhile, the girl's mom hides the moon under a patchwork of blankets, and the tide drifts into their yard. Adam Rex's picture book is a beautifully balanced blend of words and pictures. The spare, lyrical storytelling takes a funny premise and makes it softly surreal, so that the humor is sleepy and muted and perfect for the dreamlike tone of a story that ends with another car trip, to lure the moon back into the sky. The girl falls asleep in the car once again, setting up the idea that it's all just a dream. But what a dream! (Ages 4-8)

Rosenthal, Amy Krouse. *Exclamation Mark*. Illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld. Scholastic Press, 2013. 48 pages (978-0-545-43679-3, \$17.99)

A playful picture book looks at punctuation and difference and finding joy in being one's self. Really! An exclamation mark hates standing out among all the

periods. No matter how hard he tries to fit in, he can't. Then he meets someone who can't stop asking him questions. "What's your favorite ice cream? When's your birthday? Know any good jokes?" And on and on, until ... "Stop!" He didn't know he could speak with such force! He experiments. "Hi! ... Howdy! ... Wow! ... he discovered a world of endless possibilities." His new friend is impressed. "Isn't he something?" To which his old friends respond, "There was never any question in our minds." Amy Krouse Rosenthal's clever narrative is given perfect visual treatment by Tom Lichtenheld. The pages of the book appear to be children's blue-lined handwriting paper—the perfect tableau for the simple, expressive black-ink renderings of the characters. (Ages 7–10)

Snicket, Lemony. *The Dark*. Illustrated by Jon Klassen. Little, Brown, 2013. 44 pages (978–0–316-18748–0, \$16.99)

The dark lives in Laszlo's basement during the daytime. "At night, of course, the dark went out and spread itself against the windows and doors ..." Laszlo doesn't like the dark, but he stands at the top of the steps and says hello to the dark every morning, hoping that if he visits the dark in the basement, the dark won't come visit him in his room. "But one night, it did." It turns out that the dark, which has a voice "as creaky as the roof of the house, and as smooth and cold as the windows," wants Laszlo to come downstairs. And what Laszlo finds in the basement changes everything. Lemony Snicket's playfully serious picture book doesn't make light of many children's very real fear of the dark. Instead, it acknowledges that fear, elegantly traversing the tension that comes with it to arrive at the point of possibility, where the dark can be, well, illuminating, and a lot less scary. Jon Klassen provides terrifically understated illustrations as a backdrop. *Winner, 2014 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4–8)

Spinelli, Eileen. *When No One Is Watching*. Illustrated by David A. Johnson. Eerdmans, 2013. 24 pages (978–0–8028-5303–5, \$16.00)

"When no one is watching, I dance. I leap and I spin and I prance 'round the room ... When no one is watching, I dance. When everyone's watching, I hide. I hide like the cat alongside the big chair, I scrunch myself down and pretend I'm not there." A young introvert has no problem expressing herself when she's alone, but when other people are around she'd rather not be noticed. Eileen Spinelli's lilting narrative skillfully uses the rhythm, pacing and word choice to reflect the duality. There is no judgment, just matter-of-factness about her desire to be away from the crowd. But she also values connection, and in her friend Loretta, who is "shy too," she has found a kindred spirit, someone with whom she can be silly or quiet. "Together we don't care who's watching at all." *Highly Commended, 2014 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4–7)

Suneby, Elizabeth. *Razia's Ray of Hope: One Girl's Dream of an Education*. Illustrated by Suana Verelst. CitizenKid / Kids Can Press, 2013. 32 pages (978–1–55453–816–4, \$18.95)

Growing up in a small town north of Kabul in Afghanistan, Razia dreams of going to school, just as two of her brothers do. Her hopes soar when she learns that a new school for girls is being built in her town, and her grandfather agrees she should go to school. But most of the men in her family don't think that

girls need an education. They want Razia to work in the family's orchard. Razia knows there's nothing she can do, but her curiosity takes her to the school once it is built and she meets the teacher, whose name is also Razia. The teacher pays a visit to Razia's home and convinces Razia's family to let her attend school. Although the story is fictional, the teacher is based on Razia Jan, a real person, and an afterword gives more information about this fascinating woman committed to educating girls. The illustrations, which combine painting and photo collage, use a style reminiscent of the work of Patricia Polacco. (Ages 6–9)

Weill, Cynthia. *Mi familia calaca = My Skeleton Family.* Photographs by David Hilbert. Paper Mache by Jesús Canseco Zárate. Cinco Puntos Press, 2013. 32 pages (978–1–935955–50–4, \$14.95)

A girl named Anita introduces each member of her family in a picture book with a simple, bilingual narrative. Her family members include her brothers Miguel (“He’s a brat. / Él es muy travieso.”) and Juanito (“He’s so cute! / Él es tan lindo.”), her parents, grandparents, and great-grandmother. Even the dog and cat get a nod. What makes this book stand out is the juxtaposition of the straightforward text with its whimsical illustrations. Paper-mache artist Jesús Canseco Zárate has rendered each character as a skeleton, although Anita never mentions this unusual fact about her family. A brief note at book’s end explains, “In Mexico the skeleton is a beloved and humorous figure. Its origins go back to pre-Columbian times.” And this is a book that will surely bring smiles, especially with the care Zárate has taken with details, such as the yellow duck on baby Juanito’s romper, Anita’s flowered dress, the father’s natty hat, and great-grandmother’s walker, to name a few. (Ages 4–7)

Wiesner, David. *Mr. Wuffles! Clarion, 2013. 32 pages (978–0–618-75661–2, \$17.99)*

Mr. Wuffles is a cat disdainful of every effort by his human to engage him. Then he discovers aliens—yes, little green people!—inside a toy spaceship. But the spaceship is no toy to the aliens; it’s their way home once they figure out how to repair it. Sneaking past the cat on foot, they find refuge—and aid—beneath the radiator, where the walls are covered in dramatic cave-like paintings of the cat’s encounter with various insects. Several ants and a ladybug provide sustenance (small cheesy crackers), and visual communication becomes the key as more drawings are used to hatch a plan. Various objects—a red pencil eraser, a yellow marble, a blue M&M—become critical to the plot’s success in a story that concludes with a breathtaking escape. It’s disappointment for Mr. Wuffles and triumph for all the rest. An almost wordless picture book told through panel illustrations once again reveals David Wiesner’s bold, spirited imagination in full force. But it’s more than fun, as the complex language of the aliens, represented by symbols, and the sophisticated drawings of the insects underscore the power and agility of pictures to convey ideas and emotions and tell stories. (Ages 5–10)

Wild, Margaret. *The Dream of the Thylacine.* Illustrated by Ron Brooks. U.S. edition: Allen & Unwin, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-74237-383-6, \$16.99)

“Trapped am I, in cage of twisty wire, cold concrete. Prowl Rage Howl. Know you not that I am tooth and claw—see me hunt through bracken and bush, see me swagger across wild lands, see me glory at the edge of a cliff.” A powerful book about captivity and extinction blends a spare, stream-of-conscious-like narrative imagining the voice of the last known thylacine, which died in captivity in the late 1930s, with two visual narratives. One is lush, full-page spreads of the thylacine in the wild as it dreams of its former life as part of the natural world. The other is an unsettling series of black-and-white photographic images blending blurred stills of the animal in captivity taken from a BBC documentary in 1937 with wood walls and wire fencing. A brief note provides more information on this carnivorous marsupial, also known as the Tasmanian Tiger, that is now believed to be extinct. (Age 9 and older)

Willems, Mo. *That Is Not a Good Idea!* Balzer + Bray / HarperCollins, 2013. 40 pages (978-0-06-220309-0, \$17.99)

When a sly, dapper fox first spots a blue-bonneted goose, he immediately thinks, “Dinner!” He offers to take her on a stroll. He invites her into the deep dark woods, and then into his kitchen. Again and again, she agrees. And each time, with increasing alarm, the fluffy yellow chicks who’ve been following the action interject, “That is NOT a good idea!” Mo Willems follows the journey of the fox and the goose on page spreads split between a single illustration on one side and a white-on-black, silent film-inspired dialogue box on the other. The young goose chicks, on the other hand, shout with ever-greater urgency across the expanse of double-page spreads, before finally tucking in to a nice supper at the end. “More soup, children?” asks the goose. “Well, we DID try to warn him.” It turns out the storyteller is slyer than the fox. (Ages 5-9)

Woodson, Jacqueline. *This Is the Rope: A Story from the Great Migration.* Illustrated by James Ransome. Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin, 2013. 32 pages (978-0-399-23986-1, \$16.99)

When is a rope something more than a rope? When it’s a toy a child jumps with, and a tether to fasten belongings to the roof of a car. When it’s a line for drying freshly washed diapers in a big-city apartment, and the means for starting new friendships, with jumping again. When it secures a young woman’s belongings as she heads off to college, and when it’s the heart of a story that ties one generation to the next. Jacqueline Woodson pays tribute to the generations of her own family and of countless African American families who journeyed north as part of the Great Migration, following dreams and establishing new lives while never losing sight of the past, in a narrative voiced by a contemporary child who recounts how the worn, frayed rope she has grown up with is part of her family’s history. The finely paced, lyrical narrative is paired with shining illustrations by James Ransome. *Honor Book, 2014 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5-8)

Books for Beginning Readers

Coudray, Philippe. *Benjamin Bear in Bright Ideas!* **Toon Books / Candlewick Press, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-935179-22-1, \$12.95)**

An unusual entry in Toon's comic series for beginning readers features one-page comic strips, each with a clever visual punchline. For example, Benjamin Bear says to a fish swimming in a bowl, "Let's go play at your house" and, after dumping the fish in the lake, dons the upside-down fish bowl to wear as a diver's helmet before entering the lake himself. Or, after seeing his rabbit friend jump over a stream, Benjamin Bear builds a bridge for the rabbit, who proceeds to jump over the bridge. It's one laugh after another in this engaging easy reader. The humor is simple enough for new readers and sophisticated enough so that older children will enjoy it, too. (Ages 5-8)

Henkes, Kevin. *Penny and Her Marble.* **Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2013. 48 pages (978-0-06-208203-9, \$12.99)**

When Penny finds a marble in her neighbor Mrs. Goodwin's yard she can't resist taking it home. Later she sees Mrs. Goodwin looking for something outside, and Penny begins to worry. She hides the marble in a drawer. She stays close to Mama all afternoon. She isn't very hungry at dinner. She dreams about the marble that night. The next day, she puts the marble back, only to discover Mrs. Goodwin had left it out hoping someone like Penny would see it and take it home. "Penny rolled the marble between her fingers. It seemed even more shiny and smooth and blue than before." Kevin Henkes is so adept at translating the emotional world of young children into entertaining stories that bring a smile and a sigh of satisfaction that it can be easy to forget how much skill goes into them. The latest "Penny" book for advanced beginning readers is as winsome and appealing as the others. (Ages 4-7)

Lin, Grace. *Ling & Ting Share a Birthday.* **Little, Brown, 2013. 43 pages (978-0-316-18405-2, \$15.00)**

Ling and Ting are back, and getting ready to celebrate their birthdays. The not-quite-identical twins (they have slightly different haircuts) each get birthday shoes in the opening chapter of this beginning chapter book. But one pair is red and one pair is green, prompting them to wear one from each pair so they match. Perfect! In the five chapters that follow, birthday plans continue, highlighting how even though the girls like dressing the same, they have different interests (Ling, who likes to read, buys Ting a book; Ting, who likes to play with toys, buys Ling a yo-yo), and different ways of approaching a task (cake-baking success and failure), but their love for one another guarantees harmony in the end. Grace Lin's follow-up to *Ling & Ting: Not Exactly the Same!* (Little, Brown, 2010) features lively, colorful illustrations. (Ages 4-7)

Liniers. *The Big Wet Balloon*. Toon Books / Candlewick Press, 2013. 32 pages (978-1-935179-32-0, \$12.95)

Saturday is the best day of the week because there is so much to do. But what happens when it rains? Big sister Matilda shows her reluctant little sister Clemmie that there's plenty to do outside on a rainy day, from jumping in puddles to catching raindrops in your mouth. It's all fun and games until the sun starts to peek through and Matilda decides to give Clemmie's red birthday balloon to the rainbow, much to her sister's dismay. The comic-book format of this easy reader requires children to read both the pictures and the words that appear in dialogue balloons in a gently humorous story depicting a sibling relationship. (Ages 5-7)

Books for Newly Independent Readers

McKay, Hilary. *Lulu and the Cat in the Bag*. Illustrated by Priscilla Lamont. U.S. edition: Albert Whitman, 2013. 112 pages (978-0-8075-4804-2, \$13.99)

McKay, Hilary. *Lulu and the Dog from the Sea*. Illustrated by Priscilla Lamont. U.S. edition: Albert Whitman, 2013. 108 pages (978-0-8075-4820-2, \$13.99)

Irrepressible, animal-loving Lulu is back in two new breezy outings. In *Lulu and the Cat in the Bag*, Lulu's grandma, Nan, has come to stay with Lulu and her cousin, Mellie, while their parents are on vacation. Nan is decidedly not an animal lover, and the arrival of a breathing burlap bag on the doorstep has her in a panic about what might be inside. The marigold cat it proves to be isn't too thrilled, either, and bolts when Lulu opens the bag. But she returns when Nan isn't looking, making herself at home on Lulu's bed. When the cat disappears, it's Lulu's turn to panic. The outcome of her search for the missing feline is surprising to everyone—perhaps Nan most of all. In *Lulu and the Dog from the Sea*, Lulu's parents take Lulu and Mellie on a trip to a seaside cottage. After spotting a stray dog on the beach, Lulu is determined to capture the canine and take care of it. Mellie, meanwhile, is determined to build a kite from the complicated kit she has brought along. Hilary McKay, masterful at writing funny books about families and friends alike, once again offers up a cast of singular, delightful characters in two outstanding books for newly independent readers continuing the series about brown-skinned Lulu that began with *Lulu and the Duck in the Park* (U.S. edition: Albert Whitman, 2012). (Ages 4-8)

Vanden Heede, Sylvia. *Wolf and Dog.* Illustrated by Marije Tolman. Translated from the Dutch by Bill A. Nagelkerke. U.S. edition: Gecko Press, 2013. 91 pages (978-1-877579-47-9, \$16.95)

“Dog is Wolf’s Cousin. Wolf is Dog’s cousin. That’s strange because: Wolf is wild. And Dog is tame.” The differences and similarities between these canine relatives provide ample material for this funny and charming easy novel in short verse lines. Wolf has bad table manners while Dog is a tidy chef, but both are familiar with the nuisance of flea bites. And although only Dog can read, Wolf enjoys nothing more than a good rhyme; in fact, he believes “rhyme’s sublime.” While each tries to outwit the other, both are nearly undone by a feisty forest cat. The social dynamics are a gem—wolflike, doglike, and childlike. Small illustrations help strike just the right note of warmth and whimsy. (Ages 6–10)

Fiction for Children

Appelt, Kathi. *The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp.* Atheneum, 2013. 326 pages (978-1-4424-2105-9, \$16.99)

Young raccoon brothers Bingo and J’Miah, are scouts in the bayou’s Sugar Man Swamp, where they monitor the Voice of Intelligence in the rusted-out DeSoto in which they live (lightning occasionally charges the car’s radio). If there’s a threat, they’re to awaken the Sugar Man, a Sasquatch-like creature who’s been sleeping for sixty years. Twelve-year-old Chap Brayburn wonders how he’s going to come up with the money Sonny Boy Beaucoup is demanding for Chap and his mom to stay in their home. Sonny Boy, meanwhile, is joining forces with North American gator-wrestling champ Jaeger Stitch to start a “Gator World Wrestling Arena and Theme Park.” Dreaming of fortune, Sonny Boy has decided to disregard the blood oath his ancestor swore to protect the swamp or face the wrath of the Sugar Man. Chap wishes he could show people how special the swamp is. He could if he had the photo his late grandpa, Audie, took of an ivory-billed woodpecker back in 1949, but it was lost along with Audie’s prized DeSoto during a terrible flood years before. There’s little doubt all will end well in Kathi Appelt’s delightful novel that moves back and forth among these and other interconnected stories. But rich writing steeped in the oral tradition and unexpected twists and turns make the journey a pleasure. Expressive language, a deeply rooted sense of place, and distinct and memorable characters are all part of the magic in a novel full of humor that speaks to the power of legend, and to the possibilities when good hearts prove strongest. (Ages 8–11)

Balliett, Blue. *Hold Fast.* Scholastic Press, 2013. 274 pages (978-0-545-29988-6, \$17.99)

Blue Balliett’s most recent story has a cryptic opening chapter that sets the stage for a mystery with serious undertones. Early’s father, Dash, has disappeared on his way home from work at the Chicago Public Library. It soon becomes clear that Dash’s disappearance is linked to the “extra” work he was doing helping process donated books. Dash thought all was aboveboard, but the police are

quick to assume the missing man was involved in a crime. The more Early tries to discover what happened, the clearer it becomes that something criminal was going on without Dash's knowledge. Smart, observant Early must figure out a way to understand numerical patterns and wordplay in hopes of solving her dad's disappearance. But this story is also an affecting look at homelessness and the power of dreams. Without Dash's income, Early, her little brother, and mother end up in a shelter. The reality and emotional impact of life without a permanent home are poignantly portrayed through vivid, child-centered details. At the same time, African American Early has been raised in a family that believes in aiming high and working hard to achieve their dreams. The Langston Hughes poem "Dreams" is their touchstone, and its message proves transformative. The story's ending, full of optimism, is not the most realistic dimension of the novel but it's one to embrace. Because sometimes, it's the unjaded eyes of a child that can look at old problems in new ways—seeing possibilities rather than barriers, offering hope rather than hopelessness. (Ages 8–11)

Black, Holly. *Doll Bones*. Illustrated by Eliza Wheeler. McElderry Books, 2013. 244 pages (978–1–4169–6398–1, \$16.99)

Zach, Alice, and Poppy's friendship has always revolved around an ongoing game they play together, involving imaginary characters and an ever-expanding storyline. But now that they are in middle school, Zach has begun to worry how his basketball teammates would react if they knew what he was doing. His father throws Zach's game action figures in the trash, determined to push him to grow up and to protect him from potential humiliation. Enraged and embarrassed, Zach can't admit to Alice and Poppy what has happened, and instead announces that he is done playing. He gets drawn back in after Poppy becomes certain the old bone china doll they call the Queen, who rules their game from a spot inside a locked display cabinet, is haunting her. She believes the doll was made from the skeleton of a dead girl who wants the doll buried in her family's grave. Reunited in a common goal, the three friends set out in the middle of the night to return the doll bones to their proper resting place in another town. During a quest that includes stealing a boat and breaking into a public library, the trio is often at odds, discovering the real world is more difficult to navigate than the imaginary one in which they've spent so much time. Focused on young people straddling the border between childhood and adolescence, this novel of friendship serves up a satisfying mix of creepiness and contemporary realism. (Ages 9–13)

Brahmachari, Sita. *Mira in the Present Tense*. U.S. edition: Albert Whitman, 2013. 284 pages (978–0–8075–5149–3, \$16.99)

Mira's twelfth birthday is bittersweet. It's the day she starts her period. And it's the day her beloved grandmother's coffin arrives. Nana Josie hasn't died, but she's terminally ill with cancer and has ordered the plain coffin so she and Mira can paint it with images of things she loves. It's one of the ways Nana Josie is very open about dying. Sometimes too open, as far as Mira is concerned—it can be a little overwhelming. At school, Mira, who is very quiet, begins to find her voice—literally and on the page—through a writing workshop led by a

local author. One of the other participants is a boy named Jide, and the two of them discover they like each other, a lot. The excitement of these new feelings are something Mira enjoys even as she struggles with Nana Josie's illness. When Nana Josie goes into hospice, though, it all begins to feel like too much. Sita Brahmachari's novel about a biracial (East Indian/white) girl in Britain is a deeply moving look at an entire family moving through the experience of loss and grieving. But the author deftly balances this with moments of lightness, and skillfully handles the sorrow, including a subplot about Jide, who has a profound understanding of loss as a survivor of the Rwandan genocide. Richly developed characters full of individuality, including some charming quirks, deeply ground this fine story. (Ages 10–13)

Cheng, Andrea. *The Year of the Baby*. Illustrated by Patrice Barton. Houghton Mifflin, 2013. 162 pages (978–0–547-91067–3, \$15.99)

In a follow-up to *The Year of the Book* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012), Anna Wang is worried about her baby sister Kaylee, recently adopted from China, who isn't gaining weight. When she isn't worrying about Kaylee or about finding a science project for class, Anna enjoys her friendships with Laura and Camille. These elements merge when the girls devise a science experiment charting Kaylee's food intake with the hypothesis that she will eat more when they are singing to her than when they are not. This story about family and friendship also examines racism in an age-appropriate manner. Anna isn't sure how she feels when Laura says that she looks just like Kaylee—is it simply because they are both Chinese? When Laura's mom thinks all Asian people are smart, Anna wonders how this makes Camille, who is Chinese and struggles in school, feel. These small moments of questioning, tension, and forgiveness combine with the larger arc of the baby-centric science project, resulting in a fresh and engaging story. (Ages 7–10)

Choldenko, Gennifer. *Al Capone Does My Homework*. Dial, 2013. 214 pages (978–0–8037-3472–2, \$17.99)

Now thirteen, Moose Flanagan is still living on Alcatraz Island, where Al Capone is a prisoner and Moose's father has just become assistant warden. The promotion worries Moose, who knows prisoners are always more interested in targeting a warden for harm than a mere guard. Moose's concerns intensify after a fire in their apartment on a night he is home alone with his older sister, Natalie. Was their apartment targeted because of their dad's job? Just as awful, some neighbors are convinced Natalie is responsible for the fire. As far as Moose knows, both of them were asleep when it started. But Natalie's behavior (today she would probably be identified as autistic) has always made it hard for some people to accept her in the small, insular community of prison workers and their families. The warden appoints a task force to investigate the fire, but Moose and other kids, including the warden's daughter Piper, and Moose's friends Annie and Jimmie, launch their own investigation and unintentionally stumble onto a dangerous con game. Gennifer Choldenko's third and final Alcatraz novel, set in 1936, continues to explore themes of family and friendship, growth and change. The unique setting is vividly realized, while her singular characters and their relationships are dynamic in a story filled with tension, humor, and

poignancy. Particularly moving is Moose's conflicting sense of responsibility for and resentment toward Natalie; and their parents' competing desires to shelter Natalie and help her as she strives to be more independent. (Ages 10–14)

Creech, Sharon. *The Boy on the Porch*. Joanna Cotler Books / HarperCollins, 2013. 151 pages (978-0-06-189235-6, \$16.99)

One morning John and Marta wake up and find a boy on their porch with a note: "Please take kair of Jacob ... Wil be bak wen we can." Jacob doesn't talk but he taps, and draws and paints and drums. They guess he is about six. As days pass into weeks and then into months, John and Marta think often about telling the sheriff—they know they should. When they finally do, they are far past the point of no return in loving Jacob, and he loves them. The sheriff is willing to look the other way, until the boy's father returns. In the aftermath of losing Jacob, John and Marta realize they have a lot of love to give, and become foster parents to a series of children across the years. Sharon Creech's short, sweet, satisfying story requires suspension of disbelief, but the lack of specificity regarding the exact period when it's set (most likely sometime in the last half of the twentieth century) works in the novel's favor, as does the lovely simplicity at the center of a story that would be full of complexities were it happening in the real world: it's about the lasting power of love. The appeal of John and Marta and moments of quirkiness and humor all add to the charm. (Ages 7–10)

Crowder, Melanie. *Parched*. Harcourt, 2013. 154 pages (978-0-547-97651-8, \$15.99)

A compelling survival story is set in a future unsettled by global warming. Sarel lives in the desert on a small homestead. Her family's well still draws water, but the nearby river has run dry. They survive by growing desert-hardy plants. When a gang in search of water attacks, they don't find the cleverly hidden well or Sarel, but Sarel's parents are killed, the house burned, the garden destroyed. In the city, Musa is being held by the Tandie gang for his skills as a dowser. Musa escapes on a water-hunting trip, fleeing into the desert. In his fevered wanderings, Musa follows the hum in his head that means water. Sarel walks miles every day in hopes of finding plants to restart the garden, but when the well shows signs of drying up she knows it's time to leave. Alternating chapters follow each of the children's stories, with interludes from the point of view of Nandi, the lead dog of Sarel's family pack, who knows that the boy who can find water is on his way. When weakened Musa stumbles onto Sarel's homestead, Sarel resentfully helps him, delaying her departure. She doesn't want to tell him her plans, just as Musa doesn't want to share knowledge of his gift, or the water he can sense somewhere near. Melanie Crowder's debut novel is a harrowing but ultimately hopeful story, beautifully told. Finding the courage to trust each other is almost impossible after what Sarel and Musa have experienced, but it's no different from water: essential to their survival. (Ages 9–13)

DiCamillo, Kate. *Flora & Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures*. Illustrated by K. G. Campbell. Candlewick Press, 2013. 240 pages (978-0-7636-6040-6, \$17.99)

Flora's been pretty cynical since her parents' divorce. She spends most of her time reading superhero comics while her self-involved mom works on her next romance novel and her dad, with his lack of confidence, flounders. But when Flora sees a hapless squirrel sucked up by a vacuum, she's on the scene in an instant performing CPR (she learned it in the back of a comic book). "For a cynic I am a surprisingly helpful person," she thinks. The squirrel not only lives, but is changed by the experience. He understands what Flora says. And he can write—poetry no less—plunking out deep, thoughtful verses on the typewriter belonging to Flora's mom. Flora names him Ulysses (for the model of vacuum that was almost his demise) and thinks of him as a superhero in real life. Ulysses may not be able to save the world, but he just might be able to save Flora, restoring her belief in friendship and family. Kate DiCamillo's witty, wonderful work of magical realism is patently absurd with its flights of fancy and wordplay, but that's its charm. The lively prose narrative is punctuated by interludes of black-and-white panel illustrations by K. G. Campbell that showcase small vignettes of action while referencing the comic-book form. (Ages 8–10)

Dowell, Frances O'Roark. *The Sound of Your Voice, Only Really Far Away*. Atheneum, 2013. 231 pages (978-1-4424-3289-5, \$16.99)

This sequel to *The Kind of Friends We Used to Be* (2009) and *The Secret Language of Girls* (2004), both published by Atheneum, follows friends Marilyn and Kate through the second half of seventh grade. The former best friends have found some common ground once again despite their vastly differing interests and styles. Both are struggling with how to balance internal desires with outside pressures and expectations, with boys complicating the picture for each of them. Marilyn isn't comfortable with her fellow cheerleaders' pressure to give up things and people she cares about. She likes being popular, but is it worth such a high price? Kate, critical of Marilyn for succumbing to the pressure, realizes she's done the same thing when she abandons a friend's proposal for a school project to help her maybe boyfriend with another—one she doesn't believe is as worthy. Frances O'Roark Dowell continues to develop these two characters whose successes and failures will be recognizable to many readers. While the cheerleaders in the novel are unfortunate stereotypes, Kate and Marilyn are distinct and realistic characters—two girls who are gradually becoming more confident in being true to themselves. (Ages 10–13)

Farrant, Natasha. *After Iris*. U.S. edition: Dial, 2013. 272 pages (978-0-8037-3982-6, \$16.99)

Each member of thirteen-year-old Blue's family is dealing with the death of Blue's twin sister Iris three years before in different ways. For Blue's parents, it's absence and arguing: Blue's mom has gone back to work in a high-pressure job for a beauty company that has her traveling all over the world. Blue's dad is spending most of his time working out of town, too, leading Blue's older sister, Flora, to believe he's having an affair. But when the two are both home,

they fight. Zoran is a doctoral student who's been hired to stay with the kids, who range from eight-year-old Jasmine to sixteen-year-old Flora, with Blue and ten-year-old Twig in between. Wonderful moments of levity and over-the-top humor are infused into a novel grounded in so many real feelings as the grief of this family is slowly revealed. The story is told through Blue's first-person written diary and scenes describing her video-diary, and as the narrative progresses there are revelations about all of the characters, including Zoran, who came to England at the age of six as a Bosnian refugee. The deft balance of zaniness and deep emotions is reminiscent in the best way of the work of author Hilary McKay. (Ages 10–13)

Frost, Helen. *Salt: A Story of Friendship in a Time of War.* Frances Foster Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013. 138 pages (978–0–374–36387–1, \$17.99)

“If we / sit down to eat with James / and his family, will he and I be able to play / a song together on our whistles? / That's what he hopes for, / the question I see in his eyes: / Are you still my friend?” On the brink of the War of 1812, James is the child of white settlers who run the trading post outside Fort Wayne in Indian Territory and Anikwa is a boy living in the nearby Miami Nation village. The two communicate through gestures and a handful of words they've taught one another whenever they meet in the woods or at the trading post. James's parents, especially his mother, view the people in the Miami village as friends. But the Miami are being encouraged by the British to take sides against the Americans in the pending war. Most people within the fort are now suspicious of their Miami neighbors. After Anikwa's village is burned, the villagers must flee, heading west without winter stores in hopes of finding refuge with neighboring tribes. The trading post is also ravaged by fire. Poems in the two boys' alternating voices chronicle how their tentative friendship is challenged by the rising tensions and fear that lead to assumptions and misunderstandings. Author Helen Frost also illuminates the complicated, untenable position in which Native tribes found themselves as American expansion continued west. The introduction to this artful and carefully researched novel provides historical context for the story, and brief notes tell more about the poetic forms she uses and this time and place in history. (Ages 9–12)

Gewirtz, Adina Rishe. *Zebra Forest.* Candlewick Press, 2013. 200 pages (978–0–7636–6041–3, \$15.99)

Annie and her little brother Rew live outside a small, worn town and love playing in the woods they've nicknamed Zebra Forest because the birches and oaks look like stripes from a distance. Their father is dead. Their mother abandoned them. If Gran, who struggles with depression, isn't always reliable, Annie, at eleven, has learned to be. Annie and Rew learn of the nearby prison riot and breakout in a startling way: the appearance of a prisoner in their home, who effectively takes them hostage. But Gran recognizes him, and when the children understand who he is, everything they thought they knew about their family unravels. Annie has spent years fantasizing what her father, Andrew, would have been like. Faced with the reality of him, she must reconcile the two. He is desperate and therefore potentially dangerous, and yet there's more to him

than desperation and she's almost never truly afraid. Rew, meanwhile, is angry for many reasons. For him, things are as black and white as the nearby trees and he's eager to find a way to turn Andrew in. Debut novelist Adina Rische Gewirtz demands a huge leap of faith in asking readers to accept the coincidence that an escaped prisoner unwittingly ends up at the home of his mother and children, but it's a leap that's worth it. Her narrative is taut with emotion and yet her storytelling is nuanced in every other way, with characters that are vivid and complicated, and worth believing in. (Ages 9–13)

Gibbs, Stuart. *Spy Camp*. Simon & Schuster, 2013. 321 pages (978-1-4424-5753-9, \$15.99)

Middle schooler Ben Ripley is looking forward to hanging out with his best friend at home for the summer after enduring his first year at a CIA-run boarding school for future spies. But it turns out summer school is required. The camp setting eases the sting a little, until Ben discovers SPYDER, the secret organization wanting to overthrow the CIA and dominate world espionage, wants Ben to join them. They've given him twenty-four hours to say yes, or die. He tells his friend, super student Erica Hale, but the CIA sends her father, Alexander, to help instead. Unfortunately, Alexander's reputation as a super spy belies his limited talent and gift for bumbling. Stuart Gibbs keeps the premise fresh and funny in this sequel to *Spy School* (Simon & Schuster, 2012), with new revelations about the Hale family spy dynasty in particular while continuing to develop Ben and other characters. The setup to the climax involving a Civil War reenactment is especially hilarious in this action-packed, tongue-in-cheek offering. (Ages 9–12)

Henkes, Kevin. *The Year of Billy Miller*. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2013. 229 pages (978-0-06-226812-9, \$16.99)

Seven-year-old Billy Miller starts second grade with a mix of anxiety and excitement. By the end of the first day anxiety wins out. There's a bossy girl at his table who doesn't like him. Even worse, he's worried his teacher, Miss Silver, thinks he was making fun of her (he wasn't). Billy lives with his stay-at-home artist dad, his high-school English teacher mom, and his three-year-old sister, Sal. In a novel divided into sections titled Teacher, Father, Sister, Mother, Kevin Henkes follows Billy over the course of his second-grade year by chronicling events that illuminate these four important relationships in his life. Each section follows its own arc while fitting seamlessly into the novel as a whole as Henkes skillfully relates details and events of Billy's life that will resonate with readers navigating similar social and emotional terrain. Billy wants to fit in and stand out. He wonders. He worries. He is loved, but doesn't always like what the people who love him—and whom he loves—do. Sometimes he falls short on patience as a big brother, and sometimes he excels at being wonderful. A novel substantial in every way is completely accessible to young children reading independently, or listening to it read aloud. There's plenty of white space, and occasional spot illustrations in storytelling defined by rich characterizations and fine plotting. The book is often funny, but also thoughtful and touching and serious. Life is like that when you're seven, after all. (Ages 6–9)

Hill, Kirkpatrick. *Bo at Ballard Creek.* Illustrated by LeUyen Pham. Henry Holt, 2013. 278 pages (978-0-8050-9351-3, \$15.99)

“Bo had two fathers and no mothers, and after she got the fathers, she got a brother too. But not in the usual way.” Nothing about her family is unusual to Bo, and everything is wonderfully matter-of-fact, in Kirkpatrick Hill’s sparkling chapter book set in an Alaska mining town in the 1920s. Five-year-old Bo is being raised by the two men who took her in after her mother, a “good-time girl,” gave her up as a baby. Arvid, a Swede, and Jack, an African American, love Bo like she’s their own, because she is. They are a tight-knit family and part of the tight-knit community of miners, Eskimos, and others in their small frontier town. Bo loves nothing more than having her fathers tell stories, especially when they’re stories about her. But she also helps them cook for the miners, plays with her Eskimo friends, and goes visiting. Each chapter is a vignette with its own dramatic arc in this marvelous choice for reading aloud with a cast of memorable characters. Humor, adventure, and lots of love abound in a book that gives a sense of the challenges of living in such a remote place, and that affirms the essential idea that a family is defined first and foremost by love. (Ages 6–8)

Hopkinson, Deborah. *The Great Trouble: A Mystery of London, the Blue Death, and a Boy Called Eel.* Alfred A. Knopf, 2013. 249 pages (978-0-375-84818-6, \$16.99)

In the London of 1854, Eel’s position as pub errand boy is a welcome step up from his previous work as a mudlark, digging coal and other valuables out of the river. But when he’s accused of stealing on the job, his attempt to prove his innocence is stymied. The tailor, who can vouch for Eel’s honesty, is gravely ill with cholera and unable to defend him. Eel has another job cleaning animal cages at the home of Dr. John Snow, and when the doctor finds out about the cholera outbreak, he enlists Eel’s help: Snow believes cholera is spread through water, but his idea goes against the public and medical belief of the time—that it’s spread through bad air. Eel helps the doctor by interviewing survivors in his neighborhood, to test Dr. Snow’s theory that all got water from the Broad Street pump. Everyone thinks the Broad Street water is the sweetest around; even with evidence how can Dr. Snow convince the local committee to remove the pump handle? By finding an oddity—a case in which someone who drank Broad Street water but lives far away from the outbreak grew ill. And Eel does, but is kidnapped by his bad-news stepfather before he can report his findings. This historical medical mystery combines the methodical approach of Dr. Snow’s real-life science with Eel’s personal story (including a younger brother he’s attempting to hide from their stepfather) and vivid details of life during this difficult time. (Ages 8–12)

Kadohata, Cynthia. *The Thing about Luck.* Illustrated by Julia Kuo. Atheneum, 2013. 269 pages (978-1-4169-1882-0, \$16.99)

Twelve-year-old Summer and her younger brother, Jaz, live in Kansas, but spend months every year on the road, following the wheat harvest. Summer’s parents and grandparents are combine drivers and join the Parker crew each season. This year, with her parents in Japan helping relatives, it’s just Summer

and Jaz and their grandparents. Jiichan is driving a combine and Obaachan is the cook for the harvest crew, with Summer as her assistant. Cynthia Kadohata's thoughtful novel is grounded in Summer's point of view, which broadens and brightens over a season of incredible hard work and unexpected challenges. Summer is convinced her family is plagued by bad luck, but it turns out luck is like people—never simple. From her prickly grandmother, to critical Mrs. Parker and other members of the crew, to Jaz, who has a hard time socializing and a hard time with anger when he's frustrated and who is never defined or explained with a label, Summer is challenged to embrace the complications and contradictions that come with people and with life. It's not about luck, it's about perspective, and the willingness to try. Kadohata's characters are revealed, slowly, skillfully, and beautifully, over the course of this quietly compelling narrative that also illuminates a fascinating dimension of American farm life. (Ages 10–13)

Kelley, Jane. *The Desperate Adventures of Zeno & Alya.* Feiwel and Friends, 2013. 201 pages (978–1–250–02348–3, \$15.99)

A self-centered African gray parrot named Zeno is on his own in Brooklyn after his owner dies. In search of his favorite food—banana nut muffins—he finds it just inside the third-floor bedroom of a girl named Alya. Alya, who has leukemia, can't stop thinking about that parrot after he flies away. She is about to start the next round of treatment and decides she needs Zeno, who kept saying “Try” when she couldn't reach the muffins because she was too weak to walk across the room. Zeno, meanwhile, has been kidnapped and sold to a wealthy woman from the suburbs. But he's heard through the bird grapevine that the girl with banana nut muffins is looking for him, and he's determined to find his way back to her. “Does magic really exist?” Alya asks her mom, and her mom tries, kindly, to say no, not in the real world. But it turns out it does. Jane Kelley's novel is an irresistible mix of humor and warmth, magic and the messiness of real life. Alya is scared and has almost given up. Her family doesn't always know the right thing to do. Zeno is egotistical, entertaining, and poignant as he learns about the meaning of words he knew but never understood, like “friend” and “home.” His teachers are a heroic pigeon named Bunny, and, of course, Alya, in a story that is unabashedly moving, but also funny and tense and so very satisfying. (Ages 8–11)

Krishnaswami, Uma. *The Problem with Being Slightly Heroic.* Illustrated by Abigail Halpin. Atheneum, 2013. 274 pages (978–1–4424–2328–2, \$16.99)

After meeting her idol, Bollywood star Dolly Singh, in *The Grand Plan to Fix Everything* (Atheneum, 2011), young Dini is now caught up in the whirlwind that is life whenever Dolly is around. Dolly has come to the United States for a premier of her latest film as part of an international festival at the Smithsonian. Dini, visiting Baltimore and her best friend, Maddie, with her father while her medical mom remains in the Indian village of Swampnagiri, is determined to help Dolly have everything she needs to make the premier perfect. So she's working with Maddie on a special dance, trying to get a baker to make the rose petal cake (what would the premier be without one?), and then there's the matter of finding an elephant (ditto), not to mention worrying over the mystery

of Dolly's missing passport. Uma Krishnaswami's second breezy, buoyant novel about Dini and Dolly and friends has no shortage of coincidences, which means, of course, everything will work out in the end. But getting there is such a pleasure. Krishnaswami's fresh, lively writing is full of rich language and word play and an irresistible sense of fun. A great read-aloud choice, this novel will delight listeners and independent readers alike. (Ages 7–10)

Matti, Truus. *Mister Orange*. Translated from the Dutch by Laura Watkinson. U.S. edition: *Enchanted Lion*, 2012. 159 pages (978–1–59270–123–0, \$16.95)

Since Linus's older brother Albie joined the army to fight against the Nazis in Europe, everyone in their large family has moved up a notch in terms of responsibilities. Linus is now delivery boy for the family grocery in their vibrant New York City neighborhood. He misses Albie but finds solace in Albie's drawings of Mr. Superspeed, a superhero Albie created and who Linus imagines is keeping Albie safe. Linus also enjoys visiting Mr. Orange, his nickname for the new customer who has a crate of oranges delivered once a week. A painter from Europe, Mr. Orange lives in an apartment with spare furnishings, lots of light, and bright white walls. It's such a contrast to Linus's cramped home, and Linus likes how uncluttered everything feels. Mr. Orange's journey to America is the opposite of Albie's overseas, but it is also a journey that has to do with ideas and freedom, something Linus knows Albie is fighting for, and something that the jazz music Mr. Orange listens to and the bold, unusual painting featuring blocks of colors that he is creating seems to be about, too. Linus's deepening understanding of the hard things that can happen in life as he experiences changes in his family and neighborhood is juxtaposed with his discovery that this new kind of art can evoke a sense of possibility inside him. An afterword provides more information on Dutch artist Piet Mondrian, Mr. Orange's true identity, and "Victory Boogie-Woogie," the painting his character is working on in this singular novel. (Ages 10–13)

McKay, Hilary. *Binny for Short*. Illustrated by Micah Player. U.S. edition: *Margaret K. McElderry*, 2013. 291 pages (978–1–4424–8275–3, \$16.99)

With money tight after her father's death, Binny and her family moved to a smaller flat. Binny's beloved dog, Max, was farmed out to stay with Granny until prickly Great Aunt Violet gave the dog away. Aunt Violet becomes the target of Binny's intense and focused hatred. In fact, Binny tells Aunt Violet that she hopes she'll die. Remarkably, Aunt Violet does, bequeathing a small seaside cottage to Binny. The cottage and village are a much better situation for Binny's family, but Binny struggles with guilt over her death-wish for Aunt Violet. She's also obsessed with trying to track down Max, who is the focus of all her feelings of loss. Gareth, an unhappy next-door neighbor visiting his dad and stepmom, helps to distract Binny despite frequent clashes between them. A framing story involves Binny and Gareth trapped on a rock in the sea with a fast-rising tide. It progresses in short italicized sections throughout the book, with the situation growing increasingly tense. In between, the narrative gradually fills in details about the family's adjustment to life in the village, with Binny's young brother James (who wants to raise chickens and grow poisonous lettuce) and big sister

Clem adding comic relief, and additional pathos as they, too, struggle with grief and loss. A novel that is quintessentially Hilary McKay features a quirky yet lovable family of distinctive individuals who make it through a difficult time with love and humor. (Ages 9–12)

Mills, Claudia. *Zero Tolerance*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013. 231 pages (978-0-374-33312-6, \$16.99)

Sierra Shepard is an honor student who has always followed the rules. So on the day she accidentally brings her mother's lunch to school, she turns it in as soon as she discovers the paring knife inside. But her middle school has a zero tolerance policy on weapons and misbehavior. Her principal, told of the incident just as he's proudly touting the policy and its many positive results to a visitor, refuses to consider the circumstance. To her dismay, Sierra faces in-school suspension, to be followed by a mandatory expulsion hearing. She's now spending her days among kids she's always judged harshly for getting in trouble. To her surprise, she discovers that, like hers, their stories are not always a simple case of right versus wrong. In the meantime, the media has latched onto Sierra's plight thanks to her father, a high-powered attorney who is furious about what's happened. Sierra's situation is affecting every aspect of her life, and the way she sees everything and everyone is changing. Claudia Mills excels at revealing the complexity of both child and adult characters and their relationships in a novel that upper elementary and early middle school students will be eager to discuss: Could something like this happen at their school? (Ages 9–12)

Murdock, Catherine Gilbert. *Heaven Is Paved with Oreos*. Houghton Mifflin, 2013. 201 pages (978-0-547-62538-6, \$16.99)

Sarah Zorn is the best friend of Curtis Schwenk, younger brother of DJ Schwenk of *Dairy Queen* (Houghton Mifflin, 2006) fame. Sarah is a very analytical, logical kid in a small Wisconsin town and doesn't see why people can't accept that she and Curtis are just friends. But now, in the summer before eighth grade, she's a little unsettled by the fact that Curtis seems to like another girl. Sarah is trying to not think about this as she heads off to Rome with her grandmother, Z. Sarah's always known Z had her dad out of wedlock and turned him over to her parents to raise while she went off to find herself in California. But on their trip together Sarah learns more than she thinks she wants to know or is ready for about the rest of the story. She's really angry by the time they return. Why did Z share her pain and sadness? What is she supposed to do with this new information? Catherine Gilbert Murdock explores the tension and unease that kids can face as they mature and find out new things about the adults in their lives in a novel that is funny and warm and at times surprising. Murdock explores the complexities of relationships and the resilience of love through a girl whose mind is wired for organization and order and routine, and who is facing the challenge of learning to be a little more flexible and open. (Ages 10–13)

Phelan, Matt. *Bluffton: My Summers with Buster*. Candlewick Press, 2013. 223 pages (978-0-7636-5079-7, \$22.99)

Bluffton was an actors' colony just outside Muskegon, Michigan, established in 1908 by Joe Keaton to give Vaudeville performers a place to relax during the summer months when theaters were too hot to draw an audience. For Joe's son, Buster, Bluffton was a place where he could be a kid, pursuing his love of baseball and hanging out with kids his own age instead of starring in his parents' act. A graphic novel spanning three summers is told from the point of view of Henry Harrison, a fictional boy who lives in Muskegon. He becomes Buster's summer friend and dreams of being a performer himself. Life in Muskegon is anything but glamorous, but to be on the stage! Everything is wonderfully understated in Matt Phelan's storytelling, from the color palette to the dialogue to the way he fills in Henry's life between each of the summers with several brief, elegant, wordless page spreads. A handful of years can bring maturity and new depth of understanding, and just how Henry changes, and how his relationship with Buster affects and reveals that change, is gracefully told. (Ages 9–13)

Reinhardt, Dana. *Odessa Again*. Illustrated by Susan Reagan. Wendy Lamb Books, 2013. 195 pages (978-0-385-73956-6, \$15.99)

Odessa Green-Light still has a hyphenated last name, but her family has been de-hyphenated since her parents' divorce. Determined to stop her dad's pending remarriage, Odessa discovers that if she jumps on a certain spot in the bedroom of the house she's just moved to with her mom and brother, time turns back. The first time she goes back twenty-four hours. The next time she goes back twenty-three. Odessa figures this means she has twenty-two chances left, but that's plenty of opportunities to undo a bad grade on a quiz, erase an embarrassing moment, or be nicer to her little brother. Plenty of opportunities to make things better or to make them worse: to create some good luck (is it luck of you know in advance what will happen?), or to make her future stepmother angry in hopes she'll call off the wedding. As Odessa's chances to change things dwindle, she begins to think more carefully about what she can change, what she wants to change, and what really matters to her in Dana Reinhardt's breezy novel. (Ages 7–10)

Rhodes, Jewell Parker. *Sugar*. Little, Brown, 2013. 272 pages (978-0-316-04305-2, \$16.99)

Five years after the Emancipation Proclamation, Sugar works in the sugarcane fields of a plantation on the Mississippi River. An orphan, Sugar abhors her name with its constant reminder of the crop that has defined her life in many hard ways. Although some of the recently freed slaves have headed north, those with the fewest resources—like Sugar—are stuck in the cane fields and inescapable poverty. A friendship with Billy, the son of the plantation owner, gives Sugar some pleasure and freedom in her daily life, but no one among Billy's family or Sugar's fellow workers approves of their relationship. When the plantation owner brings in a group of Chinese laborers to help with the harvest, the other African Americans feel threatened and resentful of the newcomers until Sugar makes the overtures that ultimately allow the two groups to find connections.

This accessible and compelling tale, set at a time about which little has been written for children, focuses on the transformative power of compassion and humanity. While Billy's attitudes may be unrealistically progressive for the era, they mark a sense of hope found in few African American books of historical fiction. (Ages 8–12)

Tingle, Tim. *How I Became a Ghost: A Choctaw Trail of Tears Story. (How I Became a Ghost, Book 1)* Roadrunner Press, 2013. 141 pages (978–1–937054–53–3, \$18.95)

"I am a ghost. I am not a ghost when this book begins, so you have to pay very close attention." Isaac is a ten-year-old Choctaw boy chronicling his family's removal from their homeland in 1830. Isaac has begun having visions in which friends and neighbors die: first in the fires that white soldiers set to rout them out of their village, then from disease when blankets infested with small pox are given out. He can later see their ghosts, which become a source of comfort and guidance for him. On the forced march out of Choctaw territory, Isaac becomes a big brother to a little girl traveling with her parents. She freezes to death one night, and her ghost tells Isaac that her teenage sister is being held captive by the soldiers. With the help of another Choctaw boy, a shape-shifter who transforms into a panther, Isaac sets out to rescue the girl. Tim Tingle's breathless historical novel integrates spiritual elements as seamlessly into the narrative as they are integrated into Choctaw culture in the story. Isaac does, indeed, become a ghost along the journey, but his remarkable, compelling voice continues its telling, and his presence is no less palpable or powerful for his family and friends. Isaac's calm acceptance of his imminent death does nothing to diminish the horror of what is happening to his family and people, but another notable element of Tingle's storytelling is that he reveals that horror in a way that won't overwhelm readers the same age as his protagonist. (Ages 10–13)

Ursu, Anne. *The Real Boy.* Illustrated by Erin McGuire. Walden Pond Press / HarperCollins, 2013. 341 pages (978–0–06–201507–5, \$16.99)

Oscar works for Master Caleb, a magician, and has only hazy memories of the orphanage where he once lived. He enjoys the predictability of his work gathering herbs in the forest and preparing them for use in Caleb's trinkets and potions. When Master Caleb's apprentice is killed while Caleb is away, Oscar must run the magician's shop. Oscar understands herbs and trees and cats—he has quite a few—but finds people a mystery. Their facial expressions confuse him; social niceties seem pointless. He gets help from Callie, the healer's apprentice, who knows how to deal with everyone from the peasants and magic smiths of the Barrows where they live to the rich, shining citizens of the city of Asteri. When the perfect children of Asteri start growing strangely ill, Callie and Oscar are summoned to help. A trip to the forest for herbs reveals a swath of devastation and destruction that soon finds its way to the Barrows, and it seems that there may be more than one menace to deal with. In searching for answers, Oscar discovers a chilling secret that he's certain reveals an awful truth about himself—one that would explain why he finds people so difficult to understand. Anne Ursu's novel is a delight to read, with two sympathetic and engaging protagonists, an original plot, and an intriguing connection to a

classic work. Her characterization of Oscar, and ultimate affirmation that there is absolutely nothing wrong with his way of being in the world, is deftly and beautifully done. (Ages 8–11)

Williams-Garcia, Rita. *P.S. Be Eleven. Amistad / HarperCollins, 2013. 274 pages (978–0–06–193862–7, \$16.99)*

Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern are back in Brooklyn after spending the summer of 1968 with their mother Cecile in Oakland (*One Crazy Summer*, Amistad / HarperCollins, 2010), and dramatic changes are in store. First, Pa has a girlfriend, Miss Marva Hendrix. Then Delphine starts sixth grade expecting to have Miss Honeywell, the most mod of teachers. Instead, she gets Mr. Mwila, on an exchange program from Zambia. And a new group—five singing and dancing brothers named Jackson—have the sisters and the nation mesmerized. When Miss Marva Hendrix offers to take them to see the Jackson 5 at Madison Square Garden, Pa insists they earn half the money for tickets, and Delphine assumes she'll be in charge, like always. Miss Marva Hendrix appoints Vonetta to manage their earnings. Delphine predicts disaster. Vonetta doesn't fail. Uncle Darrell comes home from Vietnam, but elation turns to worry when he struggles with drugs. It's so disturbing that their grandma, Big Ma, always dependable if demanding, begins to falter. "Be eleven," Cecile writes Delphine at the end of each letter. She is eleven. What does her mother mean? But Delphine knows Cecile's message is rooted in love, just like Big Ma's home training. And now there is Miss Marva Hendrix, who thinks a woman could run for president someday, further expanding Delphine's understanding of being young and Black and female. The modeling and mothering provided by all three of these women buoy Delphine and her sisters in ways they don't always understand but surely feel. Rita Williams-Garcia once again captures time and place with sparkling clarity in an inspired look at childhood and growth and change. (Ages 9–12)

Fiction for Young Adults

Black, Holly. *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown. Little, Brown, 2013. 419 pages (978–0–316–21310–3, \$19.00)*

After a party at which everyone else is killed by vampires, Tana escapes with her ex-boyfriend Aidan and the vampire Gavriel, who is, for some reason, at odds with their attackers. Tana is bitten during the narrow getaway, and Aidan is already Cold from his recent bite, beginning his transformation from human to vampire. Worried that she will go Cold too, and not wanting to endanger her family by going home, Tana heads with the other two to the nearest Coldtown, a city quarantined to keep vampires and those at risk of turning away from the rest of the population. There are also groupies, drawn by the glamour and excitement of life in Coldtown as played out on the city's live feed. The reality of life in Coldtown is much grimmer than seen on TV, however; it's a treacherous pit of exploitation and excess. Upon crossing Coldtown's borders,

Tana and Aidan are thrown in with some of those groupies, while Gavriel seeks to enact revenge against a powerful peer. Then Tana discovers her younger sister has entered the city and is determined to find her and get her out. Tana is a wonderful protagonist, both strong and scared, wanting to do the right thing but not always know what that might be. Devastated at the prospect of becoming a vampire herself, she also can't deny her deep attraction to Gavriel in a novel in which bloodlust and sensuality coexist with a stark portrayal of the abuse of power and the universal appeal of the dark side. (Age 14 and older)

Carson, Rae. *The Bitter Kingdom*. (Girl of Fire and Thorns, Book 3) Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2013. 433 pages (978-0-06-202654-5, \$17.99)

"The Girl of Fire and Thorns" trilogy comes to a close in a novel that begins with Elisa, ruler of Joy D'Arena, and her companions rescuing Hector, leader of her guard, and journeying into the dangerous kingdom of Invierne. Elisa makes a chilling revelation when she discovers the secret behind why the animagi of that kingdom are so desperate for her presence there, and learns more about the Invierne spy Storm who has declared himself loyal to her. Exiting Invierne proves more treacherous than the journey there, and it's also a race against time: She's learned the animagi of Invierne are intent on attacking Joyan allies, while her own kingdom is facing a civil war. Through it all, Elisa's romance with Hector continues to develop and, more important, her knowledge and confidence continue to grow. She learns more about the Godstone she bears, more about her responsibilities as ruler, and emerges as a leader who realizes the strength she must rely upon is not god-given but within her. Rae Carson's novel full of action and political intrigue raises questions about the abuse of power and distortion of religion, but also includes wonderful moments of self-discovery for its strong female protagonist. (Age 13 and older)

Dubosarsky, Ursula. *The Golden Day*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2013. 149 pages (978-0-7636-6399-5, \$15.99)

In Sydney in 1968, a class of eleven girls goes on a field trip to the nearby gardens with their teacher, Miss Renshaw. Every time she takes them there, she reminds them the trips are "secret." On this day, the gardener, Morgan, a friend of Miss Renshaw's, takes them down to the beach to see Aboriginal paintings in a nearby cave. But inside the cave it's eerie and dark and the girls leave in a panic. Miss Renshaw and Morgan don't come out. The girls finally return to the school without their teacher, but don't tell where they've been. One girl finally breaks the silence and it's a relief to them all. Not long after, the school holds a memorial service for Miss Renshaw, although the children have no clear understanding of what happened. Time passes and one of the girls, Cubby, becomes friends with Icara, another classmate, but it's a friendship that leaves her uncertain: Icara can be hot or cold, and Cubby eventually realizes Icara's constructed an elaborate fantasy about her absent mother. Ursula Dubosarsky's remarkable novel plays out through the gauzy curtain of memory but also the haze of uncertainty that is so much a part of childhood. Adult lives and adult decisions radically impact children, and this is shown through the extraordinary incident involving Miss Renshaw and the more ordinary yet painful drama of

Icarus's life: The silences that surround so many things leave children without the means to make sense or make peace. Dubosarsky uses dark and light like a painter, while her elegant narrative is punctuated by moments of humor that temporarily relieve a tension that is both understandable and inexplicable. The novel's final pages are simply astounding in a story that maintains its hold long after the cover is closed. (Age 14 and older)

Farizan, Sara. *If You Could Be Mine*. Algonquin, 2013. 248 pages (978-1-61620-251-4, \$16.95)

Sahar is a seventeen-year-old Iranian girl in love with her best friend, Nasrin. Nasrin loves Sahar, too, but a same-sex relationship is forbidden in Iran both culturally and by the government. When Nasrin gets engaged to a doctor, Sahar is determined to find a way for she and Nasrin to stay together. She believes she's found the answer when she meets her cousin Ali's friend Parveen, who is transsexual. Although homosexuality is illegal in Iran, transsexuals are considered to have a medical condition and the government supports and funds sexual reassignment surgery. Sahar wants to have surgery and become a man so she and Nasrin can be together. She doesn't feel like she's trapped in the wrong body like other transsexuals she meets, but she's so desperate she's willing to lie as Nasrin's wedding date nears. She's also naïve until a consultation with a doctor opens her eyes to the reality of what she's contemplating. Nasrin, too, is naïve—she's unwilling to give up her life of wealth and privilege and thinks she can marry and still be with Sahar secretly, an idea Sahar finds intolerable. Sara Farizan's debut novel is an eye-opening look at political and cultural oppression grounded in the story of a believable, likeable, passionate young woman in love. Sahar's exposure, through her gay cousin, to dimensions of the gay and lesbian culture doesn't ease her pain but it does help her realize she may not always be alone. (Age 13 and older)

Gansworth, Eric. *If I Ever Get Out of Here*. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic, 2013. 359 pages (978-0-545-41730-3, \$17.99)

Lewis Blake is the only Tuscarora reservation kid tracked with the "brainiacs" in junior high. Sixth grade was a social disaster—it turns out white kids don't get Indian humor—so he starts seventh grade in 1975 determined to have a better year. He's even cut off his braid in hopes of fitting in. George, a recent arrival to the nearby air force base in upstate New York where they live, becomes his first, and only, white friend. The two initially bond over a mutual love of music, especially the Beatles and Paul McCartney and Wings. Surprised that George's military father and German mother genuinely welcome him into their home, Lewis knows he'll never be able to reciprocate the invitation. Money has been tighter than ever since his grandfather died, and the house where he lives with his mother and Uncle Albert is literally falling down. So he lies about why George can't come over, although in many ways Lewis has much more in common with George than with Carson, his closest friend on the reservation. In a narrative full of humor and rife with tender, honest, and unsettling truths, author Eric Gansworth explores identity, and what it means to find and be a friend. Gansworth's first foray into young adult literature lovingly captures both time and place, and reveals characters whose complexities bring sadness, joy,

and survival into full relief. In a novel that exposes racism both subtle and overt (seen most vividly in the subplot involving the school's unwillingness to punish the son of a school donor who is bullying Lewis), Gansworth also celebrates two very different but equally loving families. (Age 11 and older)

Gardner, Sally. *Maggot Moon*. Illustrated by Julian Crouch. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2013. 279 pages (978-0-7636-6553-1, \$16.99)

Fifteen-year-old Standish lives in a ruined building with his grandfather in dismal Zone Seven. Like others who haven't been arrested or disappeared, he attends a strict, regimented school. But he's an oddity there: a boy who can't read. Standish's best friend, Hector, and his parents, originally from the Motherland, lived in the same building as Standish and Gramps, and the two families shared resources and ideas—both dangerous things. Even more dangerous was that Hector and Standish sometimes secretly went under the wall into the forbidden zone. On one of those trips Hector made a stunning discovery. Not long after, Hector and his parents disappeared. Futuristic dystopia? Not quite. Readers will have to piece together the clues, but they're all there in Sally Gardner's brilliant, nuanced alternate history set in Great Britain during the 1960s. Gardner imagines the Germans as victors of World War II in Europe and determined to conquer the rest of the world. Domination plays out in ways both large and small, from fascist control of British society to schoolyard bullying. But what would happen if the Germans could convince other countries that they'd won the race to the moon and plan to mount a weapon there? Black-and-white line drawings tell a grim metaphorical tale of suffering and survival, adding further tension to this riveting story told by a sweet, intelligent dreamer of a boy whose heart is full of so much love that he is able to conquer his fear in an attempt to thwart the Germans' plan. (Age 13 and older)

Gratz, Alan. *Prisoner B-3087*. Based on the true story by Ruth and Jack Gruener. Scholastic Press, 2013. 260 pages (978-0-545-45901-3, \$16.99)

A novel based on the actual experiences of a Holocaust survivor follows Yanek Gruener from 1939 through his release from Dachau in 1945. During the intervening years, Yanek and his family see their neighborhood in Kraków, Poland become a ghetto after the Nazi occupation and eventually lose their home. For a time they live in a pigeon coop on an apartment building rooftop, but when his parents are grabbed from the street while out buying bread, thirteen-year-old Yanek is left alone. Yanek is sent to Plaszków, a nearby labor camp, and from there he's moved to the Wieliczka Salt Mine, then Trzebinia, Birkenau, Auschwitz, and other camps, ending up at Dachau in 1945 when it is liberated by U.S. troops. Yanek's story is one of horror upon horror, but his determination to survive helps him make it through incarceration in ten concentration camps. In an afterword, Alan Gratz states that he has altered Jack Gruener's experiences with his permission to "paint a fuller and more representative picture of the Holocaust as a whole." (Age 14 and older)

Halliday, Ayun. *Peanut*. Illustrated by Paul Hoppe. Schwartz & Wade, 2013. 206 pages (pbk. 978-0-375-86590-9, \$15.99)

A family move provides Sadie with the perfect opportunity to create a new—if misguided—school persona. By faking a severe peanut allergy, she'll be interesting to her new classmates and earn their instant sympathy. And in fact, although the mean girls she meets initially aren't worth the effort, Sadie does make a few new friends and even acquires an origami-folding, Luddite boyfriend named Zoo. However, trying to stay true to her peanut-allergy alter ego is a challenge. Not only does she have to constantly remember her "condition," Sadie has to side-step the school nurse's increasingly urgent requests for a health form signed by her mom. The charade is exposed when a teacher believes Sadie has eaten a bake-sale cupcake containing nuts. Paramedics are called to the school, and soon everyone knows Sadie has lied. Her new friends are furious and Zoo feels betrayed. Sadie's humiliation and regret are painfully credible, but a glimmer of hope for the future sparks when Zoo makes an overture to stay connected. This fast-paced graphic novel employs a piece of red clothing to make Sadie immediately identifiable in the otherwise black-and-white illustrations. (Age 13 and older)

Halpern, Julie. *The F-It List*. Feiwel and Friends, 2013. 248 pages (978-1-250-02565-4, \$16.99)

When Alex, who recently lost her dad, discovers her estranged best friend Becca has been diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, reconciliation is followed by Alex's promise to help Becca complete her "bucket" list. Even though Hodgkin's treatment has a good success rate, Becca wants Alex to be her stand-in, completing things on the list while she undergoes chemo. At school, Alex pursues a friendship/mutual attraction with Leo Dietz. They share a love of horror movies and, soon, intense physical encounters, which help her check one or two things off the list. Quite simply, she likes the way he makes her body feel (the book's refreshingly matter-of-fact treatment of sex is one of its many strengths). But Leo is becoming attached, and that scares Alex. When Leo experiences a traumatic loss, Alex completely fails at showing support. Meanwhile, Becca's chemo leaves her incredibly sick, but she finds respite following Alex's progress with the list, and in her developing friendship/romance with Caleb, the hunky homeschooled teen next door. Alex is gruff and edgy and appealing, still in pain from losing her dad and upset by her friend's illness. Her general unease with emotional encounters is painfully and often humorously believable. She isn't unfeeling, but doesn't know how to show that she cares. The dialogue is funny, and the key relationships—the friendship between Alex and Becca, including its rough edges, and the developing romance between Alex and Leo—feel vivid and real, as do the brief glimpses of Alex's life at home in a family working through grief. (Age 14 and older)

Johnson, Alaya Dawn. *The Summer Prince*. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Inc., 2013. 289 pages (978-0-545-41779-2, \$17.99)

Four hundred years in the future, the South American city of Palmares Três (in what is now Brazil) is a tiered wonder dependent upon technology to function. Every year, the people vote for a Summer King, a young man who marks the

next Queen with his blood when he's sacrificed in Winter. June Costa and her best friend, Gil, are supporters of Enki, a teenage boy from the Verde, the lowest level of Palmares Três. Enki wins and at his first public appearance he and Gil fall in love. June is jealous at first—she has a crush on Enki—but then discovers Enki is an artist, just like her, and is using his position to draw attention to the plight of the people in the Verde. The Aunties who rule with the Queen are suspicious of new technology and rely on the old and outdated. They don't want Palmares Três to become like Tokyo 10, where most people are simply data streams, no longer able to live in a body. But Enki has managed to get his hands on new tech—body modifications that have allowed him to tap into the city's central nervous system. This is how he creates his political art, and June becomes his eager partner. Then she finds out she's one of ten nominees for the Queen's Award, and she must choose what's more important—trying to win the award, which guarantees her future, or creating art that is true and meaningful. A vividly drawn, sexually frank novel exploring the importance of connection and things that make us human and whole is full of complex, surprising characters whose relationships are as complicated and changing as real life. (Age 15 and older)

Kim, Derek Kirk. *Still Life*. Illustrated by Les McClaine. (Tune: Book 2) First Second, 2013. 200 pages (pbk. 978-1-59643-760-9, \$16.99)

In volume two of the Tune series, Andy Go is now on the planet Praxis in his zoo cage, which is a replica of his parents' home with one wall glassed in for visitors. Five hundred cable channels and his favorite foods on a tray almost compensate for the lack of bathroom privacy, until Andy learns that the contract he signed was not for a single year, but for the rest of his life, with no time off. Conversations through an air vent with Mo, the occupant of the adjacent cage, fill in the details of zoo life on Praxis and reveal the plan to bring a human female into Andy's habitat in the hopes that mating rituals can be observed. Andy begs to be reunited with Yumi, his unconsummated art school crush. The alien Dash, fascinated by the concept of art (it's been outlawed on Praxis for generations), agrees to Andy's request on the condition that he will teach her to draw. The plan backfires when the Yumi who shows up is from an alternative universe, one in which she and Andy have been in a relationship and where she is furious at him for cheating on her. Despite her anger, this Yumi, an aspiring journalist, sees the opportunity for the story that could ensure her career and she intends to complete the necessary research before making her escape back to earth. A surprise ending and lots of humor—much of it scatological—advance hapless Korean American Andy's ongoing tale. (Age 16 and older)

Knox, Elizabeth. *Mortal Fire*. U.S. edition: Frances Foster Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013. 436 pages (978-0-374-38829-4, \$17.99)

Sixteen-year-old Canny is a math prodigy and the daughter of Sisema Mochrie, a Ma'eu woman and New Zealand national hero who saved two downed airmen during World War II by paddling them in an outrigger 500 miles, avoiding capture by occupying Japanese forces. When her mother and stepfather take a trip to the Shackle Islands, where her mother grew up, Canny must accompany her older half-brother Sholto and his girlfriend Susan to a coal-mining town

on the peninsula, where they are conducting oral history interviews. Canny, who has always been able to sense when magic is present, feels it as soon as they arrive. There's a house she can see that Sholto and Susan cannot. In it she finds Ghislain Zarene. He looks like a seventeen-year-old boy but in reality is a man who's been held captive and un-aging by his family's magic for years. Slowly the story behind current events in the valley and an unsettling history unfold. Both involve a longstanding Zarene family tragedy and Canny's relationship with her own mother. Elizabeth Knox has penned a rich, challenging historical fantasy that occupies the same alternate world as her earlier *Dreamweaver* duet. She weaves numerous strands into an intricate tapestry touching on multiple themes—gender, race, class, sexuality, honesty, loyalty, love. The growing sense of mystery and wonder is mesmerizing in a story that will satisfy readers eager to tackle a complex, ambitious work. (Age 14 and older)

Konigsberg, Bill. *Openly Straight*. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic, 2013. 320 pages (978-0-545-50989-3, \$17.99)

Rafe came out in middle school in Colorado. His classmates were okay with it and his parents were beyond supportive. He began working as an advocate for gay teens, giving speeches and presentations, and ended up feeling like a poster child for being gay. It's part of what led to his decision to transfer to a boy's boarding school in New England in his junior year of high school and assume a new identity as a straight kid. His best friend back home is furious that he would betray himself. His parents are confused and hurt. But from Rafe's perspective, he's not ashamed of his identity, he's just tired of being labeled and defined by it. And indeed, from his first day at his new school, everything is different. He's embraced by the jocks, and doesn't feel like he's living a lie until he falls in love with his new friend Ben. An athlete who doesn't tolerate homophobic comments, Ben is sensitive and honest, and vulnerable after his roommate's struggle with depression. As Rafe grows closer to Ben, he begins to realize Ben can't help but feel he's been lied to once he learns the truth. Humor and emotional honesty are deftly balanced in this probing, truly funny novel about coming out—again. (Age 14 and older)

Kuehn, Stephanie. *Charm & Strange*. St. Martin's Griffin, 2013. 216 pages (978-1-250-02194-6, \$17.99)

Sixteen-year-old Andrew Winston Winters believes he has a monster inside him and is terrified of letting it out and hurting someone. Chapters labeled "matter" chronicle Win's life in the present at his Vermont boarding school, where he is obsessed with the monster's inevitable emergence. Even Chemistry, a subject at which he excels, cannot hold him: The particles of his life are in disarray. Although his former roommate, Lex, has been a jerk, his concern for Win is genuine. So, too, is new student Jordan's once she realizes Win needs help. Alternating chapters titled "antimatter" provide details about Win's life as middle child Drew in a family of three kids. At first, it seems that their father is merely controlling and unkind. But Drew, who is sometimes out of control, can almost always rely on his older brother, Kevin, and they all adore his little sister, Siobhan. The deeper author Stephanie Kuehn skillfully leads readers into the past, and the closer she looks at one particular summer, the more disturbing

the picture becomes, until the tragedy of all three of the children's lives becomes undeniable. This deft and powerful novel exploring the impact of sexual abuse on children, and especially on one boy, is steeped in tragedy, but Win is a survivor. He feels guilty about this at the story's beginning: Kevin and Siobhan are gone. But by story's end, he is beginning to understand, and even embrace it, with more than resignation; with something leaning toward hope in a novel written with beautiful prose and a sense of quiet urgency. (Age 15 and older)

LaFevers, Robin. *Dark Triumph. (His Fair Assassin, Book II)* Houghton Mifflin, 2013. 387 pages (978-0-547-62838-7, \$17.99)

In the second volume of the "His Fair Assassin" series (featuring young women trained in a convent to serve Death by killing according to his will), Sybella moves to the forefront while Ismae of *Grave Mercy* (Houghton Mifflin, 2012) plays a minor role. Sybella lives on the constant edge of danger in her father d'Albret's household, masquerading as a loyal daughter while hoping to see Death's marque upon him. Her father is evil, but she looks for the marquee in vain. She is able to eliminate some of d'Albret's allies, but her situation becomes even more threatening when she must deal with her brother Julian's unwanted sexual attention. While following an order from the abbes to free the Beast, a prisoner held in the dungeon, Sybella is transported away from d'Albret's household despite her vow to stay until she has killed her father. Then she falls in love with the wounded Beast, the only person who understands the passion Sybella brings to killing and who mirrors it with his own, and faces her own horrifying past. A historical fantasy set in fifteenth-century Brittany mines the political intrigue of the time and place, providing a rich backdrop against which a gripping story of personal turmoil and courage plays out. (Age 14 and older)

Lanagan, Margo. *Yellowcake: Stories*. U.S. edition: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013. 223 pages (978-0-375-86920-4, \$16.99)

Stories rooted in fairy tales, myths, religion, and politics all have a place in this demanding work that showcases author Margo Lanagan's unique imagination and incredible gift for storytelling. Astonishing original plotting—even in stories inspired by oft-told tales—and language characterize a collection that is brilliantly arranged and brilliantly told. The first two stories feel somewhat hopeful, and then comes the darker third offering. By the fourth story, readers don't know what to expect, which is a hallmark of this author who balances brightness with despair. "An Honest Day's Work" is strange and unsettling, "Into the Clouds on High" oddly comforting, and "Ferryman" sweetly sad. The most mature and disturbing entry is "Catastrophic Destruction of the Head," which offers an unflinching look at the violence of soldiering and war, and of the transformative effect it can have on a once-gentle soul. It is a tale for mature readers, but one that is sadly resonant with our world today, as are so many of her stories despite their not-quite-of-this-world settings. In an author's note Lanagan discusses the genesis of the stories in this, her latest literary accomplishment. (Age 15 and older)

Marchetta, Melina. *Quintana of Charyn.* (The Lumatere Chronicles, Book Three) U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2013. 515 pages (978-0-7636-5835-9, \$18.99)

Melina Marchetta continues to develop the complicated plot and complex characters and relationships from *Finnikin of the Rock* and *Froi of the Exiles* (both U.S. editions published by Candlewick) in ways that are both surprising and satisfying. While Froi searches for the missing Quintana in Charyn, traveling with the parents he's only recently met, Finnikin and others from Lumatere are in Charyn as well, looking for Froi and wondering if he has turned against Lumatere because he loves Quintana, the Charyn queen. Meanwhile, Queen Isaboe of Lumatere and her cousin, Lucian, are struggling with what do about the Charyn refugees in the Lumatere valley. They don't know that Quintana is with them—a refugee among the refugees, hiding with Lucian's estranged wife Phaedra and the other women in the valley. Quintana has always seemed crazy, but in fact she has a fierce sanity and these women who initially scorn her come to love and protect her as they realize the sacrifices she made for the people of Charyn. She suffered years of abuse to protect them, especially other girls. Like the first two books of the trilogy this tale full of politics and power—both good and bad—does not shy away from true evil, but it shines the light brightest on the redemptive, healing power of love. (Age 13 and older)

McNeal, Tom. *Far Far Away.* Alfred A. Knopf, 2013. 371 pages (978-0-375-84972-5, \$17.99)

The benevolent spirit of Jacob Grimm has haunted teenager Jeremy Johnson since he was a child. Jeremy lives in the small American heartland town of Never Better, and the ghost has provided far more support and guidance across the years than the boy's depressed, reclusive father. A loner by circumstance (no one wants to befriend the kid who hears a voice in his head), Jeremy is shocked but pleased when classmate Ginger Boultinghouse invites him to the bakery for cake. Later, Jeremy is quick to agree when Ginger asks him to participate in a harmless prank against the well-liked baker. Jeremy is caught by the seemingly vindictive Deputy McRaven but doesn't rat on Ginger, and a friendship blossoms. In a town quick to judge, Jeremy has finally found a real friend. But there is malevolence in the air. Jacob, the novel's narrator, senses it but doesn't know the source, although Deputy McRaven seems a likely candidate. By the time Jacob realizes his mistake, both Jeremy's and Ginger's lives are in peril. Never Better feels like the gingerbread house in the forest, and Tom McNeal lulls readers into a false sense of ease, despite Jacob's repeated warnings, before revealing danger inside. He uses fairy tale archetypes and patterns that add texture and depth to what could be a contemporary news story of a deranged criminal. The gruesomeness is largely psychological or implied, and is always counterbalanced by Jacob's presence, as his genuine concern for Jeremy and others is never in doubt in a novel in which many of the characters reveal unexpected depth. (Age 14 and older)

Medina, Meg. *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass.* Candlewick Press, 2013. 260 pages (978-0-7636-5859-5, \$16.99)

Sixteen-year-old Piedad “Piddy” Sanchez isn’t sure what she’s done to attract the hatred of tough girl Yaqui Delgado at her new high school. Rumor has it that her newly acquired shaking ass is the problem, or it could be her honor-student status, or her too-white-to-be-Latina skin. Piddy, whose heritage is Cuban and Dominican, is off balance even before Yaqui’s threat. Her developing body, her best friend’s happy new life in a better neighborhood, her unknown father, and her purposeful exclusion from the Latina lunch table all challenge her sense of identity. As Yaqui’s threats become real and hallway harassment escalates into violence outside of school, Piddy’s fear and loneliness become palpable. Her old neighbor Joey, whose abusive home makes him no stranger to violence, offers Piddy solace in touch without asking questions. Yet Piddy’s reluctance to reveal the bullying to family and friends only adds to her feeling of helplessness. Her hardworking, ever-anxious mother; her mother’s glamorous best friend; and even the women at bustling Salon Corazón, where she works on weekends, can help tether and support Piddy if she can bring herself to speak the truth. Meg Medina masterfully touches on many themes—class, ethnicity, individuality, identity, bullying—in this gritty yet refreshingly realistic story that is not without humor or hope. She introduces a rich and diverse Latino community full of multidimensional characters and complex lives, and acknowledges there is no simple solution to Piddy’s situation. But it begins with breaking her silence. (Age 13 and older)

Moskowitz, Hannah. *Teeth.* Simon Pulse, 2013. 246 pages (978-1-4424-6532-9, \$17.99)

Rudy’s family moved to a remote island to treat his younger brother Dylan’s severe cystic fibrosis. Dylan is now getting better thanks to consuming the magical fish found in the surrounding waters. At first Rudy feels isolated on the island, then he meets two other teenagers: Diana, who has grown up on the island, and Teeth, half-boy, half-fish, who lives in the ocean. Rudy and Diana hook up dispassionately, while Rudy’s deepening relationship with Teeth affects him deeply. Teeth tries to sabotage the fishermen’s efforts to catch the magical fish, whom he considers his brothers. The fishermen regularly abuse Teeth in return. As Rudy gets closer to Teeth, he is moved by this strange boy’s clarity and conviction and harsh, honest assessment of the world as he understands it. He’s also intrigued by questions about Teeth’s past. When Teeth’s efforts to free the fish from nets become more successful, the abuse escalates. So, too, do Dylan’s symptoms as fish become scarce in the market. Teeth’s suffering at the hands of the fishermen is unbearable to see, but if Rudy helps him and the fish continue to go free, it means watching his little brother struggle, and probably die. Hannah Moskowitz’s messy, complicated novel challenges readers in the best ways. There is no right moral answer, just unsettling questions in a story that is rich with mystery and a strong sense of place, and in which the developing love between Rudy and Teeth is never explicitly stated but beautifully revealed. (Age 14 and older)

Myers, Walter Dean. *Darius & Twig*. Amistad / HarperCollins, 2013. 201 pages (978-0-06-172823-5, \$17.99)

African American Darius dreams of getting out of his impoverished Harlem neighborhood and into college, but his grades aren't scholarship material and a scholarship is the only hope he has. A talented writer, he has a story under consideration by a literary journal but they want him to rework it and he's not sure he wants to do so. Darius's best friend, Dominican American Twig, is in his first season on the track team, where his success is a surprise to almost everyone. But Darius knows how hard Twig works at running. Darius's mother cautions him to not take too much satisfaction in Twig's accomplishments, implying he shouldn't abandon his own dreams. Most of Darius and Twig's peers think the future holds nothing but unemployment and hanging out on the street, and the two boys feel like they get hassled for daring to want more. A purposeful novel reveals small scenes and big dramas in the lives of Darius and others in his community. Older adults disgusted by and sometimes quick to dismiss the troublemaking kids they see, the track coach's astonishingly racist thinking about Twig, the frustration of other teachers who want more for their students, and the daily struggle for economic survival of Darius's mom are all vividly revealed, as is the dramatic impact of violence. Racism, poverty and the danger of hopelessness are palpable, but so, too, is hope. Darius and Twig are two boys who in spite of challenges are learning to be, as Darius finally understands it, their best selves. (Age 13 and older)

Myers, Walter Dean. *Invasion*. Scholastic Press, 2013. 212 pages (978-0-545-38428-5, \$17.99)

A gripping novel about the D-Day invasion during World War II follows a young soldier named Woody. Woody's experience during the invasion and the days and weeks immediately following offer a gut-wrenching look at a soldier's life. Moments of intense anxiety, such as just before Woody enters the water during the invasion, and the confusion and frenzy of battle are especially compelling, but no less telling is Woody's complete disconnect from reality when it comes to measuring time and distance. So when Woody and his unit have been battling for weeks he's sure it's months, and when he's certain they must be miles inland from the French coast, it turns out to be a distance that would be almost meaningless on a map during any other time but war. Friendships may be measured in days; courage can be a quiet thing. Woody occasionally runs into Marcus Parry, an African American friend from home who's a truck driver in an all-Black support unit. Myers not only touches on the racism and limited opportunities for Black soldiers at this time, but Marcus becomes a measure of how much Woody has changed over the course of weeks when he doesn't even recognize Woody near story's end. (Age 13 and older)

Ness, Patrick. *More Than This*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2013. 472 pages (978-0-7636-6258-5, \$19.99)

Teenage Seth drowns in the chilly waters of the Pacific Northwest only to awaken, feeble and dehydrated, in the long abandoned house of his British childhood. Trying to make sense of the inexplicable world in which he's found himself—the entire town appears lifeless—Seth struggles to find the basic

necessities he needs to survive. He meets teenage Regine and young Tomasz on one of his scrounging forays, and they warn him about the Driver, a menacing individual who seems intent on hunting all three of them down. They also begin to explain the world in which Seth has found himself, and he mightily resists what they tell him. As more and more proof presents itself, Seth is forced to revisit painful moments from his long-ago childhood, and recent events that sent him walking into the ocean intent on dying. If he believes Regine and Tomasz, then much of Seth's life is a lie. If he rejects what they tell him, then they are the lie, and he's come to care too much about them to believe that, either. Masterful rather than manipulative, the ambiguity of Patrick Ness's wholly original and compelling novel gives readers a richly developed array of possibilities but leaves the meaning-making up to them when it comes to divining the situational truth of Seth's story. But some truths exist at every point along the continuum of possibilities laid out or waiting to be imagined: Meaningful relationships matter, and a life is so much more than can be measured or felt at any single moment in time. (Age 13 and older)

Perkins, Mitali, editor. *Open Mic: Riffs on Life Between Cultures in Ten Voices*. Candlewick Press, 2013. 127 pages (978-0-7636-5866-3, \$15.99)

Ten authors for young adults explore the intersection of culture and identity in a variety of styles and tones, from humorous to loving to conversational to let's-face-the-truth matter of factness. That range is highlighted by notable pieces from Gene Luen Yang, G. Neri, Francisco X. Stork, Naomi Shihab Nye, and Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich, and prefaced by Mitali Perkins's introduction, in which she recommends humor as the ideal tool for negotiating potentially tense conversations about "growing up between cultures." Some of these selections are funny while others take a different approach, but all offer welcome entrée into a subject zone often approached with caution. (Age 13 and older)

Quirk, Katie. *A Girl Called Problem*. Eerdmans, 2013. 243 pages (pbk. 978-0-8028-5404-9, \$8.00)

In 1967, thirteen-year-old Shida and most of the rest of her Sukuma village of Litongo, in Tanzania, are moving to the ujamaa village of Njia Panda. The larger village has a school and a nurse and nearby fields where crops can be grown cooperatively. It's all part of Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere's vision: He wants boys *and* girls to be educated, and for citizens to work together so that individual lives and the nation as a whole will prosper. Shida, already known for her skills as a healer, is eager to attend school and to spend time learning from the village nurse. Her mother, full of bitterness for a hard life, isn't sure it's a good idea. Luckily Shida's well-respected grandfather, Babu, is sure. But many things aren't easy. One of the two male teachers at the school is wonderful, the other is angry at having to educate girls. The family cow disappears. Clothes of the girls attending school go missing. The cotton crop they've all been working on is sabotaged. Who or what is behind it all? When Shida's young female cousin falls ill, many including Babu believe a curse is to blame, but Shida doesn't necessarily agree. Katie Quirk examines the tension between traditional beliefs and changing values in an engaging, empowering story centering on the

challenges faced by women and girls and the dreams of a new nation. A brief photo essay, glossary, and note from the author provide additional context for the novel. (Age 12 and older)

Rowell, Rainbow. *Eleanor & Park*. St. Martin's Griffin, 2013. 328 pages (978-1-250-01257-9, \$18.99)

When Park first spots Eleanor, it isn't love at first sight as the ill-at-ease girl looks for a seat on the bus. " 'Jesus-fuck,' Park said softly, nodding to the space next to him, 'just sit down.' " But Park's initial distaste slowly becomes attraction as they bond over mutual interests, especially music. Although Park hardly hangs with the popular crowd in high school, Eleanor is a true outsider, moving through the world like someone who doesn't believe she's worthy of love. Recently back with her family after time in foster care, Eleanor has no privacy in their cramped home, where there's never enough money and too little safety with her mother's dangerous boyfriend on the scene. Meanwhile, biracial (Korean/white) Park is increasingly at odds with parents who don't seem to understand who he is or how he expresses himself. Both his dad's anger and his mom's dismissal of Eleanor hurt. Eleanor and Park's alternating perspectives follow them from the time of their initial encounter through their growing intimacy in a tender and complicated love story. Rainbow Rowell drills down to the deepest levels of her characters as the beautifully developed relationship between Eleanor and Park is affected by the tumult in their lives. Prejudice and assumptions due to class, race, and other dimensions of appearance (Eleanor's weight, Park's choice to wear eyeliner) are portrayed as they play out in real life—in ways both subtle and overt. Believable, well-developed secondary characters add to the richness of a novel in which everyone is aching, infuriatingly, poignantly human, for better and for worse. (Age 14 and older)

Rowell, Rainbow. *Fangirl*. St. Martin's Griffin, 2013. 438 pages (978-1-250-03095-5, \$18.99)

"You make it sound like you broke up." It feels that way to Cath since she and her twin sister, Wren, started their freshman year of college in Nebraska. While Cath stocks up on protein bars and peanut butter to avoid going to the dining hall, where she might make a mistake, Wren and her roommate Courtney are in 24/7 party mode. Cath wants to be a writer, and she is already the anonymous author of popular fanfiction about Simon Snow, protagonist of a Harry Potter-esque series. But her school work includes a demanding writing class in which the professor dismisses fanfiction, stating it isn't original to work with someone else's characters. Cath vehemently disagrees, but it's a blow. Cath is also navigating new relationships, something she's never been comfortable with. She slowly connects with her roommate Reagan, an un-nurturing soul with a good heart. But is Levi interested in something more than friendship? What about her writing classmate, Nick? Through it all, Cath misses the closeness she once had with Wren, and then begins to worry as Wren's partying spins out of control. She's also worried about their dad, who's bipolar and not always stable. As Cath navigates her first year of college with all its conflicting demands and concerns, her greatest challenges come in stretching beyond her comfort zone. In doing so, she begins to assert her voice as a writer, a daughter,

and a sister. A young woman coming into her own in these and other ways is the heart of Rainbow Rowell's novel looking at new adulthood with sensitivity, honesty, and humor. (Age 14 and older)

Sales, Leila. *This Song Will Save Your Life*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013. 274 pages (978-0-374-35138-0, \$17.99)

The uncool kid for as long as she can remember, Elise spent all summer before sophomore year studying teen and fashion magazines. Most of her obsessions have led to great creative or academic successes. But her attempt to fit in is a failure on the very first day of school. From a darkly funny and poignant chapter chronicling Elise's plan to commit suicide, Leila Sales's richly realized novel jumps ahead six months. Little has changed at school, but Elise discovers Start, an underground dance club. Elise has always loved music, and it's not long before learning to DJ becomes her new passion. Char, the DJ at Start, is a charismatic young man who can be sweet but is also selfish in ways Elise can't see. He offers to tutor her, though his lessons eventually become far more personal—Char is very good at getting what he wants. Elise's family and classmates know nothing about her night life at Start, but when she gets an offer from the owner of the club to have her own gig, everything unravels. Elise's talent threatens Char, and she's not sure taking the job is worth losing his affection. Maybe it's just better to be ordinary—hasn't the ways she's excelled over the years been exactly why she's such an outsider? An emotional novel with a singular plot is wholly credible thanks to a cast of characters who are messy and human in ways that feel very real. So, too, does Elise's eventual acceptance of the ways she does, indeed, shine, as something to celebrate rather than hide. (Age 14 and older)

Sax, Aline. *The War Within These Walls*. Illustrated by Caryl Strzelecki. Translated from the Dutch by Laura Watkinson. U.S. edition: Eerdmans, 2013. 175 pages (978-0-8028-5428-5, \$17.00)

The Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939 brought harassment and humiliation, then devastation for Jews. Misha and his family live in the area that becomes the Warsaw Ghetto, and the teenager is so angry. More and more families are crammed into their apartment. Food becomes scarcer and scarcer. He finds purpose sneaking out through the sewers to find food for his family. But the day he sees a German soldier shoot a flamethrower through the sewers is the day he becomes paralyzed by fear. So his little sister takes over the missions. One day she doesn't return. "It tore me apart, that I didn't dare go look for her." Misha finds purpose again when he's invited to join the group organizing a resistance of deportations to the camps in 1942. "We fought. For days. / We fought as no Jew had fought before. / But it was not enough. / Not nearly enough. / Mordechai was right. / We were not fighting to win. / We were fighting for an honorable death." A spare yet emotionally vivid account of life and death in the Warsaw Ghetto pairs an unflinching narrative that offers moments of heart-stopping honesty with black-and-white illustrations that are also evocative in a beautifully designed, arresting volume. (Age 14 and older)

Sedgwick, Marcus. *Midwinter Blood*. U.S. edition: Roaring Brook Press, 2013. 262 pages (978-1-59643-800-2, \$17.99)

A novel unfolds through seven interconnected stories that begin in 2073, with a journalist named Eric Seven arriving on Blessed, a remote Scandinavian island. He's there to investigate vague rumors about the islanders' immortality. Eric feels a strong connection to a young woman named Merle who lives on the island, and uncertain of the goodwill of an elder named Tor. Unaware the tea provided as part of island hospitality is obscuring his memory, Eric forgets why he came. An anonymous message reminds him. Spurred by this and a secret encounter with Merle, he investigates, only to have his story come to a stunning and shocking climax. "I, thinks Eric Seven, have lived this before." Each of the subsequent stories pulls readers back through time: to an archeological dig in 2011; to World War II in 1944; 1902; 1848; to the tenth century; and, finally, to a "time unknown." In each of the stories, Eric and Merle are present on the island, the roles they play shifting and changing but always connected: mother and son, brother and sister, friends, lovers. They are fated to be together, but why? The answer comes in the oldest story, but with each account, more is revealed about the mysteries of the Island of Blessed. Challenging and satisfying, this is a book ripe for discussion and discovery: of connections between and among the stories, and of the power of love and the danger of power. Wonderfully drawn characters across the stories and a distinct tone and mood within each one further distinguish this alluring work. (Age 14 and older)

Sepety, Ruta. *Out of the Easy*. Philomel, 2013. 346 pages (978-0-399-25692-9, \$17.99)

Josie has lived in the French Quarter of New Orleans since she was seven and her mother returned to the city to work for Willie Woodley, a madam running a house of prostitution. Now seventeen, Josie dreams of heading off to college in the North. If her mother has been extraordinarily selfish and unreliable through the years, Josie is fortunate that other adults have not, from Willie—who has been a steadfast if prickly source of love and support—to Willie's assistant Cokie to local bookseller and writer Charles Marlowe, whose son Patrick is her best friend. Josie's self-absorbed mother announces she's heading to Hollywood with her criminal boyfriend, Cincinnati, just after Josie learns the kind tourist who stopped by the shop the day before has been found dead at a local nightclub. One of Josie's jobs is cleaning each morning at Willie's, and in her mother's room she finds a watch inscribed to the dead man. She gets caught up in the man's death even as she tries to help Patrick preserve his father's dignity (Charlie is suffering from dementia) and tries to map her own future. With her sights set on going to Smith, Josie must decide how much of herself she is willing to compromise in pursuit of her dreams. Ruta Sepety's novel set in 1950 New Orleans not only captures that time and place with literary distinction, but is populated with wonderfully realized characters in a story that is at once gritty and full of hope. (Age 14 and older)

Smith, Sherri L. *Orleans*. Putnam, 2013. 324 pages (978-0-399-25294-5, \$17.99)

After a series of devastating hurricanes and the spread of a lethal disease known as Delta Fever, the U.S. government has given up on New Orleans and sealed the once vibrant city off behind a wall. In 2056, remnants of the old social order remain, like the nuns who care for the sick and tend to the skeletons of the dead that fill the Superdome. But a new social order has arisen: tribes based on blood type, because Delta Fever's severity is determined by type of blood. Fen is an OP—O Positive—a blood type in demand for transfusions. OPs are at risk of being kidnapped and held for bloodletting. When Fen's tribe is attacked, she escapes with her tribal leader's newborn baby, determined to get this child orphaned at birth out of Orleans. Daniel is a young scientist searching for a cure for Delta Fever. He hopes the answer lies in the data he will find at the Institute, a research center set up in the city in the early days of the disease. He enters Orleans illegally with all the protective gear modern science can offer but with no knowledge or instinct of how to survive. Fen and Daniel meet and become reluctant allies. She is his means to survive and find the Institute; he is her means of getting the baby out. A narrative that alternates between their two distinctive points of view—Daniel wide-eyed and fearful; Fen hard-edged and resigned, both with compassion they can't deny—paints a vivid picture of survival in this ruined city that still harbors life. (Age 13 and older)

Stiefvater, Maggie. *The Dream Thieves*. (The Raven Cycle, Book II) Scholastic Press, 2013. 439 pages (978-0-545-42494-3, \$18.99)

Readers familiar with the complex world created in *The Raven Boys* (Scholastic Press, 2012), will appreciate this second volume in the series that continues to expand the ambitious tale. The first book focused on Gansey's ongoing quest for the ley line that will lead to the tomb of a Welsh King, Blue's fear of falling in love, and her developing relationships with Gansey and his followers. This book belongs primarily to Ronan—the abrasive teen whose violent and self-destructive behavior shields a painful family history. Ronan's entry into a disturbing dream world and the impact of his actions there on the real world create moments of almost unbearable tension, while his uneasy path between religion and myth gives insight to his constant state of conflict. Adam, Noah, Gansey, and Blue's stories lend supporting notes to Ronan's travails while continuing to develop, and the appearance of Mr. Gray, a coldblooded assassin and love interest for Blue's mother, offers plot twists while unexpectedly provoking sympathy in another rich and compelling read. (Age 13 and older)

Stroud, Jonathan. *The Screaming Staircase*. (Lockwood & Co., Book One) Disney / Hyperion, 2013. 390 pages (978-1-4231-6491-3, \$16.99)

In this parallel universe, London residents are at risk from hostile "Visitors"—aka ghosts. Adults lack the ability to see ghosts, so it's left to young people to put up a fight. Several agencies (think private eye meets *Ghostbusters*) serve Britain in this capacity. Lockwood and Company, run by charismatic Anthony Lockwood along with studious George Cubbins and risk-taking Lucy Carlyle, is the only agency without an adult supervisor and as such is viewed as unreliable and rebellious. Lucy narrates her early career with Lockwood and

Co. as their clever and brave attempts at ghost removal often end in botched results, lending credence to their detractors' claims. Eventually they are driven to accept a high-risk, high-reward job in order to repay debts and save their company's reputation after one of their investigations goes horribly wrong. This smart middle-grade adventure, alternately funny and scary with fallible characters that grow emotionally and intellectually, sets the stage for the continuing escapades of Lockwood and Company. (Ages 11–15)

Taub, Melinda. *Still Star-Crossed*. Delacorte Press / Random House, 2013. 342 pages (978–0–385-74350–1, \$16.99)

Three weeks after the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, the Capulets' and Montagues' unstable truce has Verona on edge. Juliet's cousin Rosaline feels no loyalty to either side, since the Capulets have shown her little kindness since the death of her father and its accompanying financial ruin years before. When her Uncle Capulet agrees to Prince Escalus's peace plan to unite Rosaline and the Montague Benvolio in marriage, Rosaline refuses to cooperate. Not only does she find Benvolio arrogant, her heart has secretly belonged to Escalus since she was a child. Escalus blackmails Rosaline, giving her no choice but to agree. Rosaline then conspires with her betrothed: If the two of them can figure out who is trying to continue to stir up trouble between the families, they won't have to marry. To Rosaline's surprise, she begins to find unexpected pleasure in Benvolio's company. Then it turns out Escalus's heart is not as cold and calculating as she feared. Author Melinda Taub has spun a delightful new story on the foundations of Shakespeare's tragedy. Her narrative sparkles with rich language, dialogue, plotting, and wit. There is mystery, romance, treachery, and murder, not to mention a ferocious race against time. And there is Rosaline: smart, strong, feisty, and certain to follow her heart. A terrific author's note outlines where Taub took liberties with characters whose backgrounds and fates were left unexplored (or presumed different) in *Romeo & Juliet*. (Age 12 and older)

Timberlake, Amy. *One Came Home*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2013. 257 pages (978–0–375-86925–9, \$16.99)

The largest Passenger Pigeon nesting on record happened in South Central Wisconsin in 1871. Millions of birds spanned an area of at least 850 square miles. Amy Timberlake's novel sets a compelling human tale against this fascinating history of the natural world. Thirteen-year-old Georgie lives in a small Wisconsin town in the nesting area. She likes working in the family store and likes being known as the best shot in town. Georgie's older sister, Agatha, longs to attend college at the university in Madison. Weeks before, Agatha ran away with a group of pigeons—people who follow the pigeons for economic opportunity. Now, the badly decomposed body of a young woman has been found in the woods outside a neighboring town. The dress on the body is Agatha's. So, too, is the color of the woman's hair. Georgie refuses to believe Agatha is dead, and flashbacks reveal their sometimes prickly but deeply loving bond. Determined to find Agatha, Georgie follows her trail along with Billy McCabe, Agatha's former suitor. Georgie's fresh, lively, and surprisingly funny voice propels a narrative rich with language and metaphors suited to the setting

and time period. Nothing is predictable, from Georgie's relationship with Billy McCabe to what the two of them discover in a tale about women and girls and decency and deceit that is full of humor and tenderness. Timberlake provides more information about her research, the nesting, and the tragedy of the now extinct Passenger Pigeon in an author's note. (Ages 11–14)

Wein, Elizabeth. *Rose Under Fire*. U.S. edition: Disney / Hyperion, 2013. 360 pages (978–1–423-18309–9, \$17.99)

Rose is a young American pilot working with the Air Transport Auxiliary in Britain during World War II. After attempting to knock a Doodlebug (unpiloted flying bomb) off course, she is corralled by two German planes, captured, and imprisoned at the Ravensbruck concentration camp. Rose's survival is dependent on her fellow prisoners, who are experienced in the scabbling and subterfuge, bartering and brazenness necessary to live another day in that place. Among them are "Rabbits"—women who are survivors of medical experimentation at the hands of Nazi doctors. Some of them are severely disfigured or crippled; all bear wounds that can't be seen. But they are ferocious in their determination that the stories of what they endured will make it beyond the walls of Ravensbruck and out into the world. Elizabeth Wein's tense companion to *Code Name Verity* (U.S. edition: Hyperion, 2012) explores another dimension of women's experience in Europe during World War II. The narrative follows Rose to liberation, where the courage of the "Rabbits" as the Nuremberg Trials commence help Rose continue her journey toward healing, and search for justice. One of the many pleasures in this taut read is the incorporation of poetry. It is a way Rose's spirit remains free during her imprisonment, and becomes something she can offer other prisoners. An author's note provides information on the historical events into which this fictional story is embedded, including some of the real people who inspired a number of characters. (Age 14 and older)

Whitman, Sylvia. *The Milk of Birds*. Atheneum, 2013. 363 pages (978–1–4424-4682–3, \$16.99)

Nawra is a fourteen-year-old Muslim girl living in a refugee camp in the Darfur region of Sudan. Through a nonprofit called Save the Girls, she is paired with K. C., a Richmond, Virginia, teen, to exchange monthly letters. A novel that moves back and forth between the two girls chronicles their correspondence and their lives. In the camp, where living conditions are awful, Nawra cares for her silent and barely functional mother, who has been traumatized by what she and Nawra have gone through—events that are gradually revealed. Eventually Nawra tells K. C. that she's pregnant—she was raped on their journey. Later she almost dies giving birth. K. C. is initially furious her mother signed her up for the correspondence program and doesn't write Nawra for the first four months. She struggles in school with undiagnosed learning disabilities and faces constant pressure from her mom to try harder, while her dad seems uninterested. Sylvia Whitman's novel is effective and compelling on multiple fronts. Both girls try to understand each other's culture without judgment. But the truth is their experiences are vastly different. Once K. C. begins exchanging letters with Nawra in earnest, a genuine friendship develops, and she goes

from reluctant correspondent to a teenager deeply moved. The pain of Nawra's story is intense, but her voice is engaging and vivid, and the back-and-forth of the narrative provides respite from the horrors she sometimes describes. (Age 14 and older)

Woolston, Blythe. *Black Helicopters*. Candlewick Press, 2013. 166 pages (978-0-7636-6146-5, \$15.99)

Young teen Valley and her older brother Bo have always lived in hiding with their father. In their remote forest home, they've had almost no exposure to the outside world and know only what their father tells them. And what he's told them over and over across the years is not to trust "Those People," the government. They could arrive any time in black helicopters, like the ones that were flying overhead when their mother died. He's also taught them how to survive, so when their dad doesn't return from one of his mysterious missions, the two of them know just what to do, until everything starts to go wrong. Told in terse first-person prose, a novel that moves back and forth between the present day, in which Valley is venturing out into civilization on a mission of her own, a vest full of explosives strapped to her chest, and the past becomes tauter and tauter. In flashbacks, Valley reveals how she and Bo took refuge with an encampment of survivalists who know their dad, and soon both of them are being used by the camp leader. In the present, Valley must improvise when her mission goes awry. She ends up with two hostages, a teenage boy and his little brother. Blythe Woolston's riveting narrative is remarkable and unsettling and incredibly discussable as she probes the mind of a girl whose understanding of the world has been (mis)shaped by propaganda and paranoia her entire life, with results both poignant and tragic. (Age 13 and older)

Yakin, Boaz, and Nick Bertozzi. *Jerusalem: A Family Portrait*. Based on a story by Boaz Yakin and Moni Yakin. Art Director Chris Sanderson. First Second, 2013. 385 pages (978-1-59643-575-9, \$24.99)

A substantive graphic novel set in a four-year period beginning in 1945 follows the fate of a single family and those connected to them as Palestine and Jerusalem are on the edge of sweeping changes. A family feud of Biblical proportion is part of the backdrop, and the tension and fighting within the family mirrors the tension and fighting in Palestine at the time. Through the older sons, various aspects of activism and politics in Jerusalem at this time play out: Avraham has just returned from serving with the British in World War II and joins the Communists, where his voice is united with other Palestinians—Jews, Arabs, and Christians—demanding economic justice. David takes his turn going off to war once Avraham returns, and eventually a young Italian Jewish woman shows up at the door: his pregnant wife, who has seen things she can't talk of in Europe. Elias is secretly involved with the Zionist movement, working toward establishing an independent Jewish state. The United Nations vote to partition Palestine is shown in a breathless series of pages here as the characters who've become familiar—Jewish and Arab—listen to nations casting their vote. In the aftermath, once peaceful relationships between Jews and Arabs dissolve into a war that is awful on all sides, leading to an ending that is tragic and feels unfinished, suggesting the possibility of a sequel. (Age 16 and older)

Yang, Gene Luen. *Boxers*. Color by Lark Pien. First Second, 2013. 328 pages (978-1-59643-359-5, \$18.99)

Yang, Gene Luen. *Saints*. Color by Lark Pien. First Second, 2013. 170 pages (978-1-59643-689-3, \$15.99)

A brilliant pair of graphic novels explores events surrounding the Boxer Rebellion in early twentieth-century China through two characters who age from childhood to young adulthood and stand on different sides of the conflict. *Saints* tells the story of Four-Girl, who feels unloved by her family and starts receiving religious instruction from a kind Chinese Christian acupuncturist (although her greater motivation, at least initially, is the snacks served by the man's wife). Taking the saint's name Vibiana when she converts to Christianity, she has a powerful connection to Joan of Arc, witnessing Joan's faith and struggles through visions, and sometimes conversing with her. Vibiana joins a priest named Father Bey inside a walled Christian mission community, helping care for orphans as rumors of a group called the Society of the Righteous and Harmonious Fist spread. The Boxers, as they are also known, attack and kill Christian missionaries and converts, whom they perceive as devils. *Boxers* follows the story of Bao, a boy eager to learn martial arts. His older brothers scoff, but a mysterious teacher secretly instructs Bao, and eventually sends him to be trained in the ritual by which he can embody a god when he fights. The death of his teacher at the hand of British soldiers inspires Bao and others to form the Society of the Righteous and Harmonious Fist, to destroy the soldiers, missionaries, and Chinese Christians who are undermining the economy and Chinese religious and cultural traditions. Bao and his followers attack Vibiana's mission before continuing to Peking, where the final, tragic standoff between the Boxers and the British takes place. Gene Luen Yang's dazzling pairing features scenes of the same events from vastly different perspectives while offering equally respectful depictions of religion and spirituality. The actions inspired by religious beliefs are open to criticism but the beliefs themselves are not, so that the Boxers embodying their gods as they go into battle is no different from Vibiana's visions of and conversations with Joan of Arc. The conflicting motivations, beliefs, and desires of Bao and Vibiana are revealed but never judged. The books can be read in either order, but reading them both is essential to garner the full impact and insights. Yang's clean-lined visual style and sense of humor both lighten this remarkable look at history, religion, and culture that is substantial but never weighty. (Age 14 and older)

Zarr, Sara. *The Lucy Variations*. Little, Brown, 2013. 304 pages (978-0-316-20501-6, \$18.00)

Eight months ago, Lucy, a classically trained pianist wunderkind, walked off stage at a major competition in Prague, furious that her grandfather had withheld news of her grandmother's death back home in San Francisco. Her grandfather, a rigid force in their family, announces she has made her choice: She's done with piano (meaning he's done supporting her career). Lucy thinks she's happy about it until she meets her ten-year-old brother Gus's new piano teacher. Gus, also a major talent, is being taught by Will Deva, a former prodigy whose approach is much more relaxed than anything Lucy or Gus is familiar

with. Will asks Lucy if she wants to play again and Lucy finally admits the answer is yes. But can she really return to music on her own terms? Then Lucy's wonderful relationship with Gus—they can understand each other like no one else—frays when she begins to develop a crush on Will, who doesn't necessarily discourage her attraction despite being married. What Lucy can't see is that Will is hoping her return will boost his own career. Sara Zarr's novel about an extraordinarily talented young woman offers insight into the life of a child prodigy. In Lucy's case, she is a mix of maturity beyond her years and self-centered teen, and caught between the desire to define herself, meet other's expectations, and wanting to just be a typical teen—a dimension of life explored through her relationship with friends Reyna and Carson. (Age 13 and older)

Zinn, Bridget. *Poison*. Hyperion, 2013. 276 pages (978–1–4231-3993–5, \$16.99)

Potions master Kyra is on the run after a failed attempt to assassinate Princess Ariana, heir to the throne. The fact that the princess is also her best friend doesn't deter Kyra from wanting to succeed at her self-imposed mission. Kyra's had dire visions in which Ariana causes the complete destruction of the kingdom. With the princess now in hiding, Kyra ends up in possession of a pig with special hunting abilities to track her down. The small creature has an endearing disposition that Kyra tries to resist, not to mention a soft spot for dog biscuits. And then there's Fred. Handsome and friendly, this wanderer Kyra meets in the woods is really the last thing she needs. But he did provide the dog biscuits, along with a name for the pig (Rosie), and a helping hand at a desperate moment. So when Fred is later accosted, Kyra comes to his aid, although she risks revealing her own considerable fighting skills, making it hard to maintain her disguise as nothing more than another wayfarer. She doesn't want a traveling companion but seems fated to have found one in Fred—a proposition she finds both vexing and pleasing. Bridget Zinn's buoyant novel brims with adventure, mayhem, intrigue, humor, and romance, along with surprising twists and revelations right up to the end. (Ages 11–15)

Appendices

Appendix I

Checklist of Books in CCBC Choices 2014

This quick-reference listing 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). The *Choices* category in which each book is located is also provided. Full citation information for the books, including publisher and ISBN, is listed with the full entry in the *Choices* categories. Browse the categories (see page locations, below) or use the author/title index to locate the exact page on which the full entry is located.

Science, Technology, and the Natural World (Natural World): pages 14–19

Seasons and Celebrations (Seasons): pages 20–21

Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature (Folklore): pages 21–23

Historical People, Places, and Events (History): pages 23–32

Biography and Autobiography (Biography): pages 32–35

Contemporary People, Places, and Events (Contemporary): pages 35–37

Understanding Oneself and Others (Understanding): pages 37–38

The Arts (Arts): pages 38–40

Poetry (Poetry): pages 40–43

Concept Books (Concept): pages 43–45

Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers (PB Preschoolers):
pages 45–57

Picture Books for School-Age Children (PB School-Age): pages 57–68

Books for Beginning Readers (Beginning): pages 69–70

Books for Newly Independent Readers (Independent): pages 70–71

Fiction for Children (Fiction Children): pages 71–84

Fiction for Young Adults (Fiction YA): pages 84–104

- After Iris*. Farrant, Natasha. (Fiction Children)
- Al Capone Does My Homework*. Choldenko, Gennifer. (Fiction Children)
- Angel Island*. Freedman, Russell. (History)
- Animal Book*. Jenkins, Steve. (Natural World)
- Apple Orchard Riddle*. McNamara, Margaret. (PB School-Age)
- Azzi In Between*. Garland, Sarah. (PB School-Age)
- Baby Bear Counts One*. Wolff, Ashley. (Concept)
- Beatles Were Fab (and They Were Funny)*. Krull, Kathleen. (Arts)
- Beatrice Spells Some Lulus and Learns to Write a Letter*. Best, Cari.
(PB School-Age)
- Becoming Babe Ruth*. Tavares, Matt. (Biography)
- Becoming Ben Franklin*. Freedman, Russell. (Biography)
- Benjamin Bear in Bright Ideas!* Coudray, Philippe. (Beginning)
- Big and Small*. van Genechten, Guido. (Concept)
- Big Bear's Big Boat*. Bunting, Eve. (PB Preschoolers)
- Big Snow*. Bean, Jonathan. (Seasons)

- Big Wet Balloon*. Liniers. (Beginning)
- Binny for Short*. McKay, Hilary. (Fiction Children)
- Bird King*. Tan, Shaun. (Arts)
- Bitter Kingdom*. Carson, Rae. (Fiction YA)
- Black Helicopters*. Woolston, Blythe. (Fiction YA)
- Black Rabbit*. Leathers, Philippa. (PB Preschoolers)
- Bluffton*. Phelan, Matt. (Fiction Children)
- Bo at Ballard Creek*. Hill, Kirkpatrick. (Fiction Children)
- Bone by Bone*. Levine, Sara. (Natural World)
- Boxers*. Yang, Gene Luen. (Fiction YA)
- Boy on the Porch*. Creech, Sharon. (Fiction Children)
- Building Our House*. Bean, Jonathan. (PB Preschoolers)
- Bully*. Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. (PB Preschoolers)
- Can't Scare Me!* Bryan, Ashley. (Folklore)
- Cart That Carried Martin*. Bunting, Eve. (History)
- Charm & Strange*. Kuehn, Stephanie. (Fiction YA)
- Cheese Belongs to You!* Deacon, Alexis. (PB School-Age)
- Coldest Girl in Coldtown*. Black, Holly. (Fiction YA)
- Cookie the Walker*. Monroe, Chris. (PB School-Age)
- Courage Has No Color*. Stone, Tanya Lee. (History)
- Daredevil*. McCarthy, Meghan. (Biography)
- Darius & Twig*. Myers, Walter Dean. (Fiction YA)
- Dark Triumph*. LaFevers, Robin. (Fiction YA)
- Dark*. Snicket, Lemony. (PB School-Age)
- Dee Dee and Me*. Schwartz, Amy. (PB Preschoolers)
- Deer Watch*. Collins, Pat Lowery. (PB School-Age)
- Desperate Adventures of Zeno & Aya*. Kelley, Jane. (Fiction Children)
- Diego Rivera*. Rubin, Susan Goldman. (Arts)
- Doll Bones*. Black, Holly. (Fiction Children)
- Dream of the Thylacine*. Wild, Margaret. (PB School-Age)
- Dream Thieves*. Stiefvater, Maggie. (Fiction YA)
- Eleanor & Park*. Rowell, Rainbow. (Fiction YA)
- Emancipation Proclamation*. Bolden, Tonya. (History)
- Eruption!* Rusch, Elizabeth. (Natural World)
- Etched in Clay*. Cheng, Andrea. (History)
- Exclamation Mark*. Rosenthal, Amy Krouse. (PB School-Age)
- Fangirl*. Rowell, Rainbow. (Fiction YA)
- Far Far Away*. McNeal, Tom. (Fiction YA)
- Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table*. Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. (Contemporary)
- Fiddleheads to Fir Trees*. Linden, Joanne. (Natural World)
- First Drawing*. Gerstein, Mordicai. (PB School-Age)
- F-It List*. Halpern, Julie. (Fiction YA)
- Flora & Ulysses*. DiCamillo, Kate. (Fiction Children)
- Forest Has a Song*. VanDerwater, Amy Ludwig. (Poetry)
- Girl Called Problem*. Quirk, Katie. (Fiction YA)
- Golden Day*. Dubosarsky, Ursula. (Fiction YA)
- Good Night, Sleep Tight*. Fox, Mem. (PB Preschoolers)

- Grandma and the Great Gourd*. Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. (Folklore)
- Grandmother Ptarmigan*. Mikkigak, Qaunaq. (Folklore)
- Great American Dust Bowl*. Brown, Don. (History)
- Great Trouble*. Hopkinson, Deborah. (Fiction Children)
- Heaven Is Paved with Oreos*. Murdock, Catherine Gilbert. (Fiction Children)
- Here Come the Humpbacks!* Sayre, April Pulley. (Natural World)
- Herman and Rosie*. Gordon, Gus. (PB School-Age)
- Hey, Charleston!* Rockwell, Anne. (History)
- Hold Fast*. Balliett, Blue. (Fiction Children)
- Hoop Genius*. Coy, John. (History)
- How I Became a Ghost*. Tingle, Tim. (Fiction Children)
- I See the Promised Land*. Flowers, Arthur. (History)
- If I Ever Get Out of Here*. Gansworth, Eric. (Fiction YA)
- If You Could Be Mine*. Farizan, Sara. (Fiction YA)
- if you want to see a whale*. Fogliano, Julie. (PB Preschoolers)
- Imprisoned*. Sandler, Martin W. (History)
- In, Out, and All Around*. van Genechten, Guido. (Concept)
- Indivisible*. Bush, Gail. (Poetry)
- Inside Outside*. Boyd, Lizi. (PB Preschoolers)
- Invasion*. Myers, Walter Dean. (Fiction YA)
- Jerusalem*. Yakin, Boaz. (Fiction YA)
- Journey*. Becker, Aaron. (PB School-Age)
- Knock Knock*. Beaty, Daniel. (Understanding)
- Light in the Darkness*. Cline-Ransome, Lisa. (PB School-Age)
- Lightning Dreamer*. Engle, Margarita. (History)
- Lincoln's Grave Robbers*. Sheinkin, Steve. (History)
- Ling & Ting Share a Birthday*. Lin, Grace. (Beginning)
- Little Fish*. Beyer, Ramsey. (Biography)
- Little Mouse*. Murray, Alison. (PB Preschoolers)
- Little Santa*. Agee, Jon. (Seasons)
- Little You*. Van Camp, Richard. (PB Preschoolers)
- Long, Long Journey*. Markle, Sandra. (Natural World)
- Longest Night*. Snyder, Laurel. (Seasons)
- Look Up!* Burleigh, Robert. (History)
- Look Up!* Cate, Annette LeBlanc. (Natural World)
- Looks Like Daylight: Voices of Indigenous Kids*. Ellis, Deborah. (Contemporary)
- Lucky Ducklings*. Moore, Eva. (PB Preschoolers)
- Lucy Variations*. Zarr, Sarah. (Fiction YA)
- Lullaby (For a Black Mother)*. Hughes, Langston. (Poetry)
- Lulu and the Cat in the Bag*. McKay, Hilary. (Independent)
- Lulu and the Dog from the Sea*. McKay, Hilary. (Independent)
- Mad Potter*. Greenberg, Jan. (Arts)
- Maggot Moon*. Gardner, Sally. (Fiction YA)
- March*. Lewis, John. (History)
- Market Bowl*. Averbeck, Jim. (PB School-Age)
- Matilda and Hans*. Yokococo. (PB Preschoolers)
- Max and the Tag-Along Moon*. Cooper, Floyd. (PB Preschoolers)
- Mi familia calaca = My Skeleton Family*. Weill, Cynthia. (PB School-Age)

- Midwinter Blood*. Sedgwick, Marcus. (Fiction YA)
- Mighty Lalouche*. Olshan, Matthew. (PB School-Age)
- Milk of Birds*. Whitman, Sylvia. (Fiction YA)
- Mira in the Present Tense*. Brahmachari, Sita. (Fiction Children)
- Miracle Mud*. Kelly, David A. (History)
- Miss Moore Thought Otherwise*. Pinborough, Jan. (History)
- Missing Mommy*. Cobb, Rebecca. (Understanding)
- Mister Orange*. Matti, Truus. (Fiction Children)
- Mommy! Mommy!* Gomi, Taro. (PB Preschoolers)
- Mooncakes*. Seto, Loretta. (PB Preschoolers)
- Moonday*. Rex, Adam. (PB School-Age)
- More Than This*. Ness, Patrick. (Fiction YA)
- Mortal Fire*. Knox, Elizabeth. (Fiction YA)
- Mountains Beyond Mountains*. Kidder, Tracy. (Contemporary)
- Mr. Wuffles!* Wiesner, David. (PB School-Age)
- My Blue Is Happy*. Young, Jessica. (PB Preschoolers)
- My Cold Plum Lemon Pie Bluesy Mood*. Brown, Tameka Fryer. (PB School-Age)
- My First Day*. Jenkins, Steve. (Natural World)
- Nazi Hunters*. Bascomb, Neal. (History)
- Never Ever*. Empson, Jo. (PB Preschoolers)
- Night Sounds*. Sobrino, Javier. (PB Preschoolers)
- Niño Wrestles the World*. Morales, Yuyi. (PB Preschoolers)
- No Monkeys, No Chocolate*. Stewart, Melissa. (Natural World)
- Nora's Chicks*. MacLachlan, Patricia. (PB School-Age)
- Nurse Clementine*. James, Simon. (PB Preschoolers)
- Odessa Again*. Reinhardt, Dana. (Fiction Children)
- Ol' Mama Squirrel*. Stein, David Ezra. (PB Preschoolers)
- On a Beam of Light*. Berne, Jennifer. (History)
- One Came Home*. Timberlake, Amy. (Fiction YA)
- One Gorilla*. Browne, Anthony. (Concept)
- Open Mic*. Perkins, Mitali. (Fiction YA)
- Openly Straight*. Konigsberg, Bill. (Fiction YA)
- Orleans*. Smith, Sherri L. (Fiction YA)
- Out of the Easy*. Sepetys, Ruta. (Fiction YA)
- P.S. Be Eleven*. Williams-Garcia, Rita. (Fiction Children)
- Papa's Mechanical Fish*. Fleming, Candace. (PB School-Age)
- Parched*. Crowder, Melanie. (Fiction Children)
- Parrots Over Puerto Rico*. Roth, Susan L. (Natural World)
- Paul Meets Bernadette*. Lamb, Rosy. (PB School-Age)
- Peanut & Fifi Have a Ball*. De Séve, Randall. (PB Preschoolers)
- Peanut*. Halliday, Ayun. (Fiction YA)
- Penny and Her Marble*. Henkes, Kevin. (Beginning)
- Pet Project*. Wheeler, Lisa. (Poetry)
- Picture a Tree*. Reid, Barbara. (PB School-Age)
- Poems To Learn by Heart*. Kennedy, Caroline. (Poetry)
- Poison*. Zinn, Bridget. (Fiction YA)
- Prisoner B-3087*. Gratz, Alan. (Fiction YA)
- Problem with Being Slightly Heroic*. Krishnaswami, Uma. (Fiction Children)

- Pug and Other Animal Poems.* Worth, Valerie. (Poetry)
- Quintana of Charyn.* Marchetta, Melina.(Fiction YA)
- Randolph Caldecott.* Marcus, Leonard S.(Biography)
- Raven and the Loon.* Qitsualik-Tinsley, Rachel. (Folklore)
- Razia's Ray of Hope.* Suneby, Elizabeth. (PB School-Age)
- Real Boy.* Ursu, Anne.(Fiction Children)
- Red Kite, Blue Kite.* Jiang, Ji-li. (PB School-Age)
- Rifka Takes a Bow.* Perlov, Betty Rosenberg. (PB School-Age)
- Rose Under Fire.* Wein, Elizabeth. (Fiction YA)
- Run Home, Little Mouse.* Teckentrup, Britta. (PB Preschoolers)
- Saints.* Yang, Gene Luen. (Fiction YA)
- Salt.* Frost, Helen. (Fiction Children)
- Scaly Spotted Feathered Frilled.* Thimmesh, Catherine. (Natural World)
- Screaming Staircase.* Stroud, Jonathan. (Fiction YA)
- Secret Pool.* Ridley, Kimberly. (Natural World)
- See What a Seal Can Do.* Butterworth, Chris. (Natural World)
- Silver Button.* Graham, Bob. (PB Preschoolers)
- Snow School.* Markle, Sandra. (Natural World)
- Something to Prove.* Skead, Robert. (History)
- Sophie Scott Goes South.* Lester, Alison. (PB School-Age)
- Sophie's Squash.* Miller, Pat Zietlow. (PB Preschoolers)
- Sound of Your Voice, Only Really Far Away.* Dowell, Frances O'Roark
(Fiction Children)
- Splash of Red.* Bryant, Jen. (Arts)
- Spy Camp.* Gibbs, Stuart. (Fiction Children)
- Still Life.* Kim, Derek Kirk. (Fiction YA)
- Still Star-Crossed.* Taub, Melinda. (Fiction YA)
- Stripes of All Types.* Stockdale, Susan. (Natural World)
- Sugar.* Rhodes, Jewell Parker.(Fiction Children)
- Summer Prince.* Johnson, Alaya Dawn.(Fiction YA)
- Take Me Out to the Yakyu.* Meshon, Aaron. (PB Preschool)
- Tapir Scientist.* Montgomery, Sy. (Natural World)
- Teeth.* Moskowitz, Hannah. (Fiction YA)
- That Is Not a Good Idea!* Willems, Mo. (PB School-Age)
- That's a Possibility!* Goldstone, Bruce.(Concept)
- The Year of the Baby.* Cheng, Andrea. (Fiction Children)
- Theo's Mood.* Cocca-Leffler, Maryann. (Understanding)
- Thing about Luck.* Kadohata, Cynthia. (Fiction Children)
- This Is Our House.* Yum, Hyewon. (PB Preschoolers)
- This Is the Rope.* Woodson, Jacqueline. (PB School-Age)
- This Song Will Save Your Life.* Sales, Leila. (Fiction YA)
- Three Years and Eight Months.* Smith, Icy. (History)
- Time-Out for Sophie.* Wells, Rosemary. (PB Preschoolers)
- Tortoise and the Hare.* Pinkney, Jerry. (Folklore)
- Toys in Space.* Grey, Mini. (PB School-Age)
- Train.* Cooper, Elisha. (PB School-Age)
- Tree Lady.* Hopkins, H. Joseph.(History)
- Trouper.* Kearney, Meg. (PB School-Age)

- True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp*. Appelt, Kathi. (Fiction Children)
- Turkey Tot*. Shannon, George. (PB Preschoolers)
- Up the Creek*. Oldland, Nicholas. (PB Preschoolers)
- Volcano Rising*. Rusch, Elizabeth. (Natural World)
- Wait! Wait!* Nakawaki, Hatsue. (PB Preschoolers)
- War Within These Walls*. Sax, Aline. (Fiction YA)
- Water in the Park*. Jenkins, Emily. (PB Preschoolers)
- Wee Rhymes*. Yolen, Jane. (Poetry)
- What the Heart Knows*. Sidman, Joyce. (Poetry)
- What Will Hatch?* Ward, Jennifer. (Natural World)
- When Charley Met Grandpa*. Hest, Amy. (PB Preschoolers)
- When Christmas Feels Like Home*. Griffith, Gretchen. (Seasons)
- When Lions Roar*. Harris, Robie H. (PB Preschoolers)
- When No One Is Watching*. Spinelli, Eileen. (PB School-Age)
- Which Is Round? Which Is Bigger?* Mamada, Mineko. (Concept)
- Who Says Women Can't Be Doctors?* Stone, Tanya Lee. (History)
- Wild Berries*. Flett, Julie. (PB Preschoolers)
- Wolf and Dog*. Vanden Heede, Sylvia. (Independent)
- Xander's Panda Party*. Park, Linda Sue. (PB Preschoolers)
- Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass*. Medina, Meg. (Fiction YA)
- Year of Billy Miller*. Henkes, Kevin. (Fiction Children)
- Year of the Jungle*. Collins, Suzanne. (PB School-Age)
- Yellowcake*. Lanagan, Margo. (Fiction YA)
- Yes! We Are Latinos*. Ada, Alma Flor. (Contemporary)
- Yoko Ono*. Beram, Nell. (Biography)
- You Never Heard of Willie Mays?!* Winter, Jonah. (Biography)
- Zebra Forest*. Gewirtz, Adina Rische. (Fiction Children)
- Zero Tolerance*. Mills, Claudia. (Fiction Children)

Appendix II

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 this literature to the attention of those adults who have an academic, professional, or career interest in connecting young readers with books.

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.

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.

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 www.ccbc.education.wisc.edu/

Appendix III

About the Compilers

Kathleen T. Horning is the director of the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. For nine years she was also a children's librarian at Madison Public Library. She is the author of *From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books* (revised edition: HarperCollins, 2010). With Ginny Moore Kruse, she coauthored *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1980-1990*, and with Ginny Moore Kruse and Megan Schliesman, *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1991-1996*. Kathleen is a past-president of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) of the American Library Association (ALA), and a past president of the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY). She has chaired the Americas Award Committee, under the auspices of the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP), University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee; ALA/ALSC's 1997 Mildred Batchelder Award Committee; ALA/ALSC's 1995 John Newbery Committee; and three Charlotte Zolotow Award Committees (administered by the CCBC), including the 2010 committee. She also chaired USBBY's Hans Christian Andersen Award Committee, which selected U.S. nominees for the international award in 1992. She has served as a member of many other book award and evaluation committees, including the ALA Rainbow List, the NCTE Lee Bennett Hopkins Awards, the ALA/EMIERT Coretta Scott King Award, ALA Notable Children's Books, and the 1990 Newbery Committee. She is currently a member of ALA/ALSC's 2015 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award Committee. She received the Scholastic Library Publishing Award from the American Library Association in 2009 for her outstanding leadership in the field of librarianship and children's and young adult literature. Kathleen frequently lectures to librarians on issues in evaluating literature for children and young adults, and she delivered the 2010 May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture for ALA/ALSC. She has a B.A. in Linguistics and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies, both from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Merri V. Lindgren is a librarian at the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Merri was the editor of *The Multicolored Mirror: Cultural Substance in Literature for Children and Young Adults* (Highsmith, 1991), and a former columnist for the *Wisconsin State Journal*, writing about children's books. She served on the ALA/ALSC Quicklists Consulting Committee from 2010 to 2012. Merri was a member of the ALA/ALSC 2010 Caldecott Award Committee. She also served on ALA's first Odyssey Award Committee (2008), a joint award of ALSC and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). She served on the 2001 Charlotte Zolotow Award committee and chaired the 2002, 2006, 2007, 2012, and 2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award committees. Merri has worked as a youth services librarian at the Helen M. Plum Memorial Library in Lombard, Illinois, and as an instructor of Adolescent

and Young Adult Literature at Edgewood College. She is a former trustee of the Baraboo (Wisconsin) Public Library. Merri graduated from UW–Madison with a B.A. Degree in Psychology and has a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Megan Schliesman is a librarian at the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She has been a coauthor of *CCBC Choices* since the 1993 edition. She has been a columnist for *Library Sparks* magazine since fall of 2006. With Kathleen Horning and Ginny Moore Kruse, she also coauthored *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1991-1996*. Megan currently serves on the ALA/ALSC Board of Directors and is a past member of the ALA/ALSC Intellectual Freedom Committee. She was chair of the ALA/ALSC 2011 Laura Ingalls Wilder Committee, and a member of the ALA/ALSC 2005 Newbery Award Committee. She currently chairs the Charlotte Zolotow Award Committee, administered by the CCBC, and has chaired or served on six prior Charlotte Zolotow Award committees. Megan manages the CCBC Intellectual Freedom Information Services and “What IF ... Questions and Answers on Intellectual Freedom” forum. She has written articles on intellectual freedom for several library and education journals. She is past chair of the Wisconsin Educational Media and Technology Association (WEMTA) Intellectual Freedom Special Interest Group, and a past member of the Wisconsin Library Association Intellectual Freedom Roundtable board. She is also a former member of the South Central Library System Board of Trustees in Wisconsin. She has a B.A. degree in English from UW–Whitewater and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Emily McKnight Townsend is a librarian at the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. While a student in the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Emily worked at the CCBC as a reference assistant and as the Intellectual Freedom Information Services Coordinator. She also served on the Read On Wisconsin Advisory Committee in 2010. Prior to coming to the CCBC, Emily worked in the Ruth Enlow Libraries of Western Maryland as the project manager for Grantsville Grows, a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant, where she developed and implemented early literacy library programming in rural libraries. She holds a B.A. degree in Religious Studies from the University of Virginia, a M.A. degree in Communication Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

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.

Members of the Friends 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 2013-2014 Friends of the CCBC, Inc., Board of Directors are President Betsy Berman, Vice-President Maegan Heindel, Recording Secretary Sarah Wendorf, Membership Secretary Jamey Stanosz, Treasurer Jacqueline Houtman, and Directors-at-Large Catherine Baer and Michelle Wyler. In addition to the board volunteers, the Friends book sale coordinator is Amy Wenger. The Friends Newsletter is edited by Jean Elvekrog, Susan Herr-Hoyman and Michael Kress-Russick.

Please see the next page for a Friends of the CCBC membership form.

Join the Friends of the CCBC!

Individual Memberships

- \$10 Student/Retiree
- \$20 Personal
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- \$50 Supporting
- \$100+ Patron
- \$500+ Distinguished Patron

Institutional Memberships

- \$75 Honor (2–5 individuals)
- \$150 Award (6–10 individuals)
- \$500 Distinguished (11–15 individuals)
- \$1,000+ Corporate

Make check payable to: **Friends of the CCBC, Inc.**

Mail to: **Friends of the CCBC, P.O. Box 5189, Madison, WI 53705**

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- Please do NOT add me to the Friends listserv.

Indexes

Author/Illustrator/Title Index

The author/illustrator/title index includes 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 introduction, annotations, and end matter (with the exception of Appendix I) are also included. Book titles appear in CAPITAL LETTERS. Page numbers in **bold print** refer to the page on which an annotation appears.

A

Ada, Alma Flor, 35
 AFTER IRIS, 75
 Agee, Jon, 20
 AL CAPONE DOES MY HOMEWORK,
73
 Allen, Will, 37
 Amada, Elisa, 54
 ANGEL ISLAND, **28**
 ANIMAL BOOK, **14**
 Appelt, Kathi, 10, 71
 APPLE ORCHARD RIDDLE, **64**
 Atwell, Debby, 29
 Averbeck, Jim, 57
 Aydin, Andrew, 29
 AZZI IN BETWEEN, **61**

B

BABY BEAR COUNTS ONE, 45
 BABY BEAR SEES BLUE, 45
 Balliett, Blue, 71
 Barton, Patrice, 73
 Bascomb, Neal, 10, 23
 Bean, Jonathan, 9, 20, 45
 BEATLES WERE FAB (AND THEY WERE
 FUNNY), **39**
 BEATRICE SPELLS SOME LULUS AND
 LEARNS TO WRITE A LETTER, **58**
 Beaty, Daniel, 37, 38
 Becker, Aaron, 57
 BECOMING BABE RUTH, **34**
 BECOMING BEN FRANKLIN, **33**
 BENJAMIN BEAR IN BRIGHT IDEAS!,
69
 Benoit, Renné, 54
 Beram, Nell, 10, 32
 Berne, Jennifer, 24
 Bertozzi, Nick, 102
 Best, Cari, 58
 Beyer, Ramsey, 33
 BIG AND SMALL, **44**
 BIG BEAR'S BIG BOAT, **46**

BIG SNOW, 9, **20**
 BIG WET BALLOON, **70**
 BINNY FOR SHORT, **80**
 BIRD KING, **40**
 Bishop, Nic, 16
 BITTER KINGDOM, **85**
 BLACK HELICOPTERS, **102**
 BLACK RABBIT, **50**
 Black, Holly, 72, 84
 Blackall, Sophie, 64
 BLUFFTON, **82**
 BO AT BALLARD CREEK, **78**
 Bolden, Tonya, 10, 24
 BONE BY BONE, **15**
 Bootman, Colin, 29
 Boriss-Krimsky, Carolyn, 10, 32
 BOXERS, 12, **103**
 BOY ON THE PORCH, **74**
 Boyd, Lizi, 46
 Brahmachari, Sita, 72, 73
 Brewer, Paul, 39
 Brooks, Ron, 68
 Brown, Don, 24, 25
 Brown, Kathryn, 63
 Brown, Tameka Fryer, 9, 58
 Browne, Anthony, 43
 Bryan, Ashley, 21
 Bryant, Jen, 38
 BUILDING OUR HOUSE, 9, **45**
 BULLY, **53**
 Bunting, Eve, 25, 46
 Burleigh, Robert, 25
 Bush, Gail, 10, 40
 Butterworth, Chris, 14

C

Campbell, K.G., 75
 Campoy, F. Isabel, 35
 CAN'T SCARE ME!, **21**
 Caple, Laurie, 15
 Carpenter, Nancy, 46, 51
 Carson, Rae, 85
 CART THAT CARRIED MARTIN, **25**

Cate, Annette LeBlanc, 14
 Chan, Evans, 28
 CHARM & STRANGE, **90**
 CHEESE BELONGS TO YOU!, **60**
 Cheng, Andrea, 26, 73
 Chien, Catia, 9, 21, 56
 Chitrakar, Manu, 12, 27
 Choldenko, Gennifer, 73
 Cline-Ransome, Lisa, 58
 Cobb, Rebecca, 38
 Cocca-Leffler, Maryann, 38
 CODE NAME VERITY, 101
 COLDEST GIRL IN COLDTOWN, **84**
 Collier, Bryan, 37
 Collins, Pat Lowery, 59
 Collins, Suzanne, 9, 59
 Colón, Raúl, 25
 Common, 40
 Cook, Earl N., 47
 COOKIE THE WALKER, **64**
 Cooper, Elisha, 59
 Cooper, Floyd, 9, 12, 31, 46
 Coudray, Philippe, 69
 COURAGE HAS NO COLOR, **31**
 Coy, John, 26
 Creech, Sharon, 74
 Crouch, Julian, 87
 Crowder, Melanie, 74

D

DAIRY QUEEN, 81
 DAREDEVIL, **34**
 DARIUS & TWIG, **94**
 DARK TRIUMPH, **91**
 DARK, 9, **66**
 De Séve, Randall, 46
 Deacon, Alexis, 60
 DEE DEE AND ME, **53**
 DEER WATCH, **59**
 DESPERATE ADVENTURES OF ZENO
 & ALYA, **79**
 Diaz, David, 35
 DiCamillo, Kate, 75
 DIEGO RIVERA, **40**
 Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee, 22
 DOLL BONES, **72**
 Dominguez, Oliver, 28
 Dowell, Frances O'Roark, 75
 Dream Keeper and Other Poems, 41
 DREAM OF THE THYLACINE, **68**
 DREAM THIEVES, **99**
 Dubosarsky, Ursula, 85, 86
 Dyer, Jane, 43

E

ELEANOR & PARK, **96**

Ellis, Deborah, 36
 EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION,
 10, **24**
 Empson, Jo, 47
 Engle, Margarita, 26, 27
 ERUPTION!, **17**
 ETCHED IN CLAY, **26**
 Evans, Shane W., 9, 58
 EXCLAMATION MARK, **65**

F

FAMILY OF POEMS, 41
 FANGIRL, **96**
 FAR FAR AWAY, **92**
 Farias, Carolina, 20
 Farizan, Sara, 86
 FARMER WILL ALLEN AND THE
 GROWING TABLE, **37**
 Farrant, Natasha, 75
 F-IT LIST, 10, **88**
 FIDDLEHEADS TO FIR TREES, **15**
 FINNIKIN OF THE ROCK, 92
 FIRST DRAWING, **61**
 Fleming, Candace, 60
 Flett, Julie, 10, 47, 55
 FLORA & ULYSSES, **75**
 Flowers, Arthur, 12, 27
 Fogliano, Julie, 47, 48
 FOREST HAS A SONG, **42**
 Fox, Mem, 48
 Freedman, Russell, 28, 33
 French, Michael, 36
 FROI OF THE EXILES, 92
 FROM COVER TO COVER, 113
 Frost, Helen, 76

G

Gansworth, Eric, 11, 86, 87
 Gardner, Sally, 87
 Garland, Sarah, 61
 Gerstein, Mordicai, 61
 Gewirtz, Adina Rishe, 76, 77
 Ghahremani, Susie, 19
 Gibbs, Stuart, 77
 GIRL CALLED PROBLEM, **95**
 GOLDEN DAY, **85**
 Goldstone, Bruce, 43
 Gomi, Taro, 48
 GOOD NIGHT, SLEEP TIGHT, **48**
 Gordon, Gus, 61
 Gourley, Robbin, 42
 Graegin, Stephanie, 50
 Graham, Bob, 9, 48, 49
 GRAND PLAN TO FIX EVERYTHING,
 79

GRANDMA AND THE GREAT GOURD, **22**
 GRANDMOTHER PTARMIGAN, 10, **22**
 Gratz, Alan, 87
 GRAVE MERCY, 91
 GREAT AMERICAN DUST BOWL, **24**
 GREAT TROUBLE, **78**
 Greenberg, Jan, 39
 Grey, Mini, 62
 Griffith, Gretchen, 20
 Gruener, Jack, 87
 Gruener, Ruth, 87

H

Halliday, Ayun, 88
 Halpern, Julie, 10, 88
 Halpin, Abigail, 79
 Harris, Robie H., 49
 HEAVEN IS PAVED WITH OREOS, **81**
 Henkes, Kevin, 69, 77
 HERE COME THE HUMPBACKS!, **18**
 HERMAN AND ROSIE, **61**
 Hest, Amy, 49
 HEY, CHARLESTON!, **29**
 Hilbert, David, 67
 Hill, Kirkpatrick, 78
 Hogan, Jamie, 18
 HOLD FAST, **71**
 HOOP GENIUS, **26**
 Hopkins, H. Joseph, 28
 Hopkinson, Deborah, 78
 Hoppe, Paul, 88
 Horacek, Judy, 48
 HOW I BECAME A GHOST, 11, **83**
 Hughes, Langston, 41, 72

I

I SEE THE PROMISED LAND, 12, **27**
 IF I EVER GET OUT OF HERE, 11, **86**
 IF YOU COULD BE MINE, **86**
 IF YOU WANT TO SEE A WHALE, **47**
 IMPRISONED, **30**
 IN, OUT, AND ALL AROUND, **44**
 INDIVISIBLE, 10, **40**
 Innerst, Stacy, 39
 INSIDE OUTSIDE, **46**
 INVASION, **94**

J

James, Simon, 49
 Jenkins, Emily, 50
 Jenkins, Steve, 14, 15, 42, 43
 JERUSALEM, **102**
 Jiang, Ji-li, 62

Johnson, Alaya Dawn, 10, 88
 Johnson, Crockett,
 Johnson, David A., 9, 66
 Jordan, Sandra, 39
 JOURNEY, **57**

K

Kadohata, Cynthia, 78, 79
 Kaneko, Yuki, 52
 Karas, G. Brian, 64
 Kawa, Cosei, 65
 Kearney, Meg, 62
 Kelley, Jane, 79
 Kelly, David A., 28
 Kennedy, Caroline, 41
 Kidder, Tracy, 36
 Kim, Derek Kirk, 89
 KIND OF FRIENDS WE USED TO BE,
 75
 Kindert, Jennifer, 31
 Klassen, Jon, 9, 66
 KNOCK KNOCK, **37**
 Knox, Elizabeth, 89, 90
 Konigsberg, Bill, 90
 Krishnaswami, Uma, 10, 79, 80
 Krull, Kathleen, 39
 Kuehn, Stephanie, 90
 Kulikov, Boris, 60
 Kuo, Julia, 78

L

LaFevers, Robin, 91
 Lamb, Rosy, 63
 Lamont, Priscilla, 70
 Lanagan, Margo, 91
 Larkin, Eric-Shabazz, 37
 Leathers, Philippa, 50
 Leng, Qin, 22
 Lester, Alison, 63
 Levine, Sara, 15
 Lewis, E.B., 62
 Lewis, John, 29
 LIBRARY SPARKS, 114
 Lichtenheld, Tom, 65, 66
 LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS, **58**
 LIGHTNING DREAMER, **26**
 Lin, Grace, 69
 LINCOLN'S GRAVE ROBBERS, **30**
 Linden, Joanne, 15
 LING & TING NOT EXACTLY THE
 SAME, 69
 LING & TING SHARE A BIRTHDAY, **69**
 Liniers, 70
 LITTLE FISH, **33**
 LITTLE MOUSE, **52**

LITTLE SANTA, **20**
 LITTLE YOU, 10, **55**
 LONG, LONG JOURNEY, **16**
 LONGEST NIGHT, **21**
 LOOK UP! (Burleigh), **25**
 LOOK UP! (Cate), **14**
 LOOKS LIKE DAYLIGHT, **36**
 LUCKY DUCKLINGS, **51**
 LUCY VARIATIONS, **103**
 LULLABY (FOR A BLACK MOTHER), **41**
 LULU AND THE CAT IN THE BAG, **70**
 LULU AND THE DOG FROM THE
 SEA, **70**
 LULU AND THE DUCK IN THE PARK,
 70

M

MacLachlan, Patricia, 63
 MAD POTTER, **39**
 MAGGOT MOON, **87**
 Mamada, Mineko, 44
 Mann, Jennifer K., 54
 MARCH, **29**
 Marchetta, Melina, 92
 Marcus, Leonard S., 34
 MARKET BOWL, **57**
 Markle, Sandra, 16
 Marks, Alan, 16
 Martin, Jacqueline Briggs, 37
 MATILDA AND HANS, **56**
 Matti, Truus, 80
 MAX AND THE TAG-ALONG MOON,
 9, 12, **46**
 McCarthy, Meghan, 34
 McClaine, Les, 89
 McElmurry, Jill, 28
 McGuire, Erin, 83
 McKay, Hilary, 70, 76, 80, 81
 McNamara, Margaret, 64
 McNeal, Tom, 92
 Medina, Meg, 10, 93
 Meshon, Aaron, 50
 Meyer, Randy, 10, 40
 MI FAMILIA CALACA = MY SKELETON
 FAMILY, **67**
 MIDWINTER BLOOD, **98**
 MIGHTY LALOUCHE, **64**
 Mikigak, Qaunaq, 10, 22
 MILK OF BIRDS, **101**
 Miller, Pat Zietlow, 9, 51
 Mills, Claudia, 81
 MIRA IN THE PRESENT TENSE, **72**
 MIRACLE MUD, **28**
 MISS MOORE THOUGHT
 OTHERWISE, **29**
 MISSING MOMMY, **38**
 MISTER ORANGE, **80**

MOMMY! MOMMY!, **48**
 Monroe, Chris, 64
 Montgomery, Sy, 16
 MOONCAKES, 12, **54**
 MOONDAY, **65**
 Moore, Eva, 51
 Morales, Yuyi, 9, 12, 51
 MORE THAN THIS, **94**
 Morse, Joe, 26
 MORTAL FIRE, **89**
 Moskowitz, Hannah, 93
 MOUNTAINS BEYOND MOUNTAINS,
36
 MR. RABBIT AND THE LOVELY
 PRESENT, 8
 MR. WUFFLES!, **67**
 MULTICOLORED MIRROR, 113
 MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE FOR
 CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS,
 1980-1990, 113
 MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE FOR
 CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS,
 1991-1996, 113, 114
 Murdock, Catherine Gilbert, 81
 Murray, Alison, 52
 Muth, Jon J, 41
 MY BLUE IS HAPPY, 9, **56**
 MY COLD PLUM LEMON PIE BLUESY
 MOOD, 9, **58**
 MY FIRST DAY, **15**
 Myers, Walter Dean, 94

N

Nagelkerke, Bill A., 71
 Nakawaki, Hatsue, 52
 NAZI HUNTERS, 10, **23**
 Nelms, Kate, 14
 Ness, Patrick, 94, 95
 NEVER EVER, **47**
 NIGHT SOUNDS, **54**
 NIÑO WRESTLES THE WORLD, 9,
 12, **51**
 NO MONKEYS, NO CHOCOLATE, **18**
 NORA'S CHICKS, **63**
 NURSE CLEMENTINE, **49**

O

ODESSA AGAIN, **82**
 Ohora, Zachariah, 42
 OL' MAMA SQUIRREL, **55**
 Oldland, Nicholas, 52
 Olshan, Matthew, 64
 ON A BEAM OF LIGHT, **24**
 ONE CAME HOME, 10, **100**
 ONE CRAZY SUMMER, 84
 ONE GORILLA, **43**

OPEN MIC, **95**
 OPENLY STRAIGHT, **90**
 ORLEANS, **99**
 OUT OF THE EASY, **98**
 Oxenbury, Helen, 49

P

P.S. BE ELEVEN, 10, **84**
 Page, Robin, 15
 PAPA'S MECHANICAL FISH, **60**
 PARCHED, **74**
 Park, Linda Sue, 53
 PARROTS OVER PUERTO RICO, **17**
 PAUL MEETS BERNADETTE, **63**
 PEANUT, **88**
 PEANUT & FIFI HAVE A BALL, **46**
 PENNY AND HER MARBLE, **69**
 Perkins, Mitali, 95
 Perlov, Betty Rosenberg, 65
 PET PROJECT, **42**
 Pham, LeUyen, 78
 Phelan, Matt, 53, 82
 PICTURE A TREE, **65**
 Pien, Lark,
 Pinborough, Jan, 29
 Pinkney, Jerry, 22
 Player, Micah, 80
 POEMS TO LEARN BY HEART, **41**
 POISON, **104**
 Polacco, Patricia, 67
 Posada, Mia, 16
 Potter, Giselle, 58
 Powell, Nate, 29
 Priceman, Majorie, 32
 PRISONER B-3087, **87**
 PROBLEM WITH BEING SLIGHTLY
 HEROIC, 10, **79**
 Proimos, James, 9, 59
 PUG AND OTHER ANIMAL POEMS, **42**

Q

Qitsualik-Tinsley, Rachel, 23
 Qitsualik-Tinsley, Sean, 23
 Qualls, Sean, 41
 QUINTANA OF CHARYN, **92**
 Quirk, Katie, 95

R

Radunsky, Vladimir, 24
 RANDOLPH CALDECOTT, **34**
 Ransome, James E., 9, 58, 68
 Raschka, Chris, 49
 RAVEN AND THE LOON, **23**

RAVEN BOYS, 99
 Raye, Rebekah, 17
 RAZIA'S RAY OF HOPE, **66**
 Reagan, Susan, 82
 REAL BOY, **83**
 RED KITE, BLUE KITE, **62**
 Reid, Barbara, 65
 Reinhardt, Dana, 82
 Rex, Adam, 65
 Rhodes, Jewell Parker, 82
 Ridley, Kimberly, 17
 RIFKA TAKES A BOW, **65**
 Rockwell, Anne, 29
 ROMEO & JULIET, 100
 ROSE UNDER FIRE, **101**
 Rosenthal, Amy Krouse, 65, 66
 Rossi, Guglielmo, 27
 Roth, Susan L., 17
 Rowell, Rainbow, 96, 97
 Roy, Loricene, 36
 Rubin, Susan Goldman, 40
 RUN HOME, LITTLE MOUSE, **55**
 Rusch, Elizabeth, 17, 18
 Ruth, Greg, 62

S

SAB, 27
 SAINTS, 12, **103**
 Sakai, Komako, 52
 Sales, Leila, 97
 SALT, **76**
 Sanderson, Chris, 102
 Sandler, Martin W., 30
 Sax, Aline, 97
 Sayre, April Pulley, 18
 SCALY SPOTTED FEATHERED
 FRILLED, **19**
 Schmid, Paul, 46
 Schwartz, Amy, 53
 Schwartz, Joanne, 10, 22
 Schwarz, Viviane, 60
 SCREAMING STAIRCASE, **99**
 SECRET LANGUAGE OF GIRLS, 75
 SECRET POOL, **17**
 Sedgwick, Marcus, 98
 SEE WHAT A SEAL CAN DO, **14**
 Seeger, Laura Vaccaro, 53
 Sepetys, Ruta, 98
 Seto, Loretta, 12, 54
 Shannon, George, 54
 Sheinkin, Steve, 30
 Sidman, Joyce, 10, 41, 42
 SILVER BUTTON, 9, **48**
 Skead, Robert, 31
 Slonim, David, 59

Smith, Icy, 31
 Smith, Kim, 23
 Smith, Sherri L., 99
 Snicket, Lemony, 9, 66
 SNOW SCHOOL, **16**
 Snyder, Laurel, 21
 Sobrino, Javier, 54
 SOMETHING TO PROVE, **31**
 SOPHIE SCOTT GOES SOUTH, **63**
 SOPHIE'S SQUASH, 9, **51**
 SOUND OF YOUR VOICE, ONLY
 REALLY FAR AWAY, **75**
 Spinelli, Eileen, 9, 66
 SPLASH OF RED, **38**
 Spookytooth, T. S., 15
 SPY CAMP, **77**
 SPY SCHOOL, 77
 Stead, Erin E., 47, 48
 Stein, David Ezra, 55
 Stewart, Melissa, 18
 Stiefvater, Maggie, 99
 STILL LIFE, **89**
 STILL STAR-CROSSED, **100**
 Stockdale, Susan, 9, 19
 Stone, Tanya Lee, 31, 32
 STRIPES OF ALL TYPES, 9, **19**
 Stroud, Jonathan, 99
 Strzelecki, Caryl, 97
 SUGAR, **82**
 SUMMER PRINCE, 10, **88**
 Suneby, Elizabeth, 66
 Swan, Susan, 18
 Sweet, Melissa, 38, 39

T

TAKE ME OUT TO THE YAKYU, **50**
 Tan, Shaun, 40
 TAPIR SCIENTIST, **16**
 Tate, Don, 25
 Taub, Melinda, 100
 Tavares, Matt, 34, 35
 Teckentrup, Britta, 55
 TEETH, **93**
 THAT IS NOT A GOOD IDEA!, **68**
 THAT'S A POSSIBILITY!, **43**
 THEO'S MOOD, **38**
 Thimmesh, Catherine, 19
 THING ABOUT LUCK, **78**
 THIS IS OUR HOUSE, **56**
 THIS IS THE ROPE, 9, 12, **68**
 THIS SONG WILL SAVE YOUR LIFE, **97**
 THREE YEARS AND EIGHT MONTHS,
31
 Timberlake, Amy, 10, 100, 101
 TIME-OUT FOR SOPHIE, **55**
 Tingle, Tim, 11, 83
 Tolman, Marije, 71

TORTOISE AND THE HARE, **22**
 TOYS IN SPACE, **62**
 TRAIN, **59**
 TREE LADY, **28**
 TROUPER, **62**
 TRUE BLUE SCOUTS OF SUGAR MAN
 SWAMP, 10, **71**
 Trumbore, Cindy, 17
 TURKEY TOT, **54**

U

Uhlman, Tom, 17
 UP THE CREEK, **52**
 Urberuaga, Emilio, 54
 Ursu, Anne, 83

V

Van Camp, Richard, 10, 55
 van Genechten, Guido, 44
 Vanden Heede, Sylvia, 71
 VanDerwater, Amy Ludwig, 42
 Verelst, Suana, 66
 VOLCANO RISING, **18**

W

WAIT! WAIT!, **52**
 WAR WITHIN THESE WALLS, **97**
 Ward, Jennifer, 19
 WATER IN THE PARK, **50**
 Waters, Susy Pilgrim, 22
 Watkinson, Laura, 80, 97
 WEE RHYMES, 10, **43**
 Weill, Cynthia, 67
 Wein, Elizabeth, 101
 Wells, Rosemary, 55
 WHAT THE HEART KNOWS, 10, **41**
 WHAT WILL HATCH?, **19**
 Wheeler, Eliza, 72
 Wheeler, Lisa, 42
 WHEN CHARLEY MET GRANDPA, **49**
 WHEN CHRISTMAS FEELS LIKE
 HOME, **20**
 WHEN LIONS ROAR, **49**
 WHEN NO ONE IS WATCHING, 9, **66**
 WHICH IS ROUND? WHICH IS
 BIGGER?, **44**
 Whitman, Sylvia, 101
 WHO SAYS WOMEN CAN'T BE
 DOCTORS?, **32**
 Widener, Terry, 35
 Wiesner, David, 67
 WILD BERRIES, 10, **47**
 Wild, Margaret, 68
 Willems, Mo, 68
 WILLIAM'S DOLL, 8

Williams-Garcia, Rita, 10, 84
 Wilsdorf, Anne, 9, 51
 Winter, Jonah, 35
 WOLF AND DOG, **71**
 Wolff, Ashley, 45
 Wong, Nicole, 18
 Woodson, Jacqueline, 9, 12, 68
 Woolston, Blythe, 102
 Worth, Valerie, 42

X

XANDER'S PANDA PARTY, **53**

Y

Yakin, Boaz, 102
 Yang, Gene Luen, 12, 103
 YAQUI DELGADO WANTS TO KICK
 YOUR ASS, 10, **93**
 YEAR OF BILLY MILLER, 77
 YEAR OF THE BABY, **73**

YEAR OF THE BOOK, 73
 YEAR OF THE JUNGLE, 9, **59**
 YELLOWCAKE, **91**
 YES! WE ARE LATINOS, **35**
 YOKO ONO, 10, **32**
 Yokococo, 56
 Yolen, Jane, 10, 43
 YOU NEVER HEARD OF WILLIE
 MAYS?!, **35**
 Young, Allen, 18
 Young, Jessica, 9, 56
 Yum, Hyewon, 56, 57

Z

Zagarenski, Pamela, 41, 42
 Zárate, Jesús Canseco, 67
 Zarr, Sara, 103, 104
 ZEBRA FOREST, **76**
 ZERO TOLERANCE, **81**
 Zinn, Bridget, 104
 Zolotow, Charlotte, 8

Subject Index

This subject index provides access to the titles in *CCBC Choices 2014* as well as to information about the CCBC and publishing in 2013 mentioned in the introduction and end matter. While the index is not comprehensive, themes and subjects were chosen with story time, classroom use, and reader's advisory in mind. Additionally, 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, "Africans and African Americans" includes a cross-reference to "Tanzanians" and other culturally specific sub-groups.

A

Abolition

- Emancipation Proclamation, 24
- Lightning Dreamer, 26

Abuse. *See also* Sexual Abuse

- Eleanor & Park, 96
- Teeth, 93

Activism

- March, 29
- Milk of Birds, 101
- Summer Prince, 88

Adoption

- Year of the Baby, 73

Adoption (Animal)

- Trouper, 62

Adventure Stories

- Doll Bones, 72
- Journey, 57
- Spy Camp, 77
- Poison, 104

Aesop's Fables

- Tortoise and the Hare, 22

Afghanistan

- Razia's Ray of Hope, 66

Afghanistan

- Razia's Ray of Hope, 66

Africa. *See* Cameroon, Sudan, Tanzania

Africans and African Americans. *See also*

- Cameroonians, Dominicans and Dominican Americans, Sudanese, Sukuma People

- Bo at Ballard Creek, 78
- Can't Scare Me!, 21
- Cart That Carried Martin, 25
- Courage Has No Color, 31
- Darius & Twig, 94
- Emancipation Proclamation, 24
- Etched in Clay, 26

- Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table, 37

- Hey, Charleston!, 29

- Hold Fast, 71

- I See the Promised Land, 27

- Invasion, 94

- Knock Knock, 37

- Light in the Darkness, 58

- Lullaby (For a Black Mother), 41

- Lulu and the Cat in the Bag, 70

- Lulu and the Dog from the Sea, 70

- March, 29

- Max and the Tag-Along Moon, 46

- My Cold Plum Lemon Pie Bluesy Mood, 58

- Orleans, 99

- P.S. Be Eleven, 84

- Something to Prove, 31

- Splash of Red, 38

- Sugar, 82

- This Is the Rope, 68

- You Never Heard of Willie Mays?!, 35

Alaska

- Bo at Ballard Creek, 78

Alcoholism

- Fangirl, 96

Allen, Will

- Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table, 37

Allergies

- Peanut, 88

Alternate Histories

- Maggot Moon, 87

American Indians. *See also* Choctaw

- Indians, Eskimos, First Nations Peoples(Canada), Miami Indians, Tuscarora Indians

- Looks Like Daylight, 36

Angel Island

- Angel Island, 28

Animals. *See also* Bears, Birds, Cats, Deer, Dogs, Ducks, Foxes, Geese, Goldfish, Mice, Pandas, Pets, Rabbits, Seals, Snow Leopards, Raccoons, Rats, Squirrels, Tapirs, Thylacines, Whales, Wolves

Animal Book, 14
 Bone by Bone, 15
 Bully, 53
 Little Mouse, 52
 My First Day, 15
 Night Sounds, 54
 One Gorilla, 43
 Pug and Other Animal Poems, 42
 Stripes of All Types, 19
 Turkey Tot, 54
 Up the Creek, 52
 Xander's Panda Party, 53

Antarctica

Sophie Scott Goes South, 63

Anticipation

Big Snow, 20
 Deer Watch, 59

Antilles Origin

Can't Scare Mel, 21

Anxiety

Penny and Her Marble, 69
 Year of Billy Miller, 77

Apples

Apple Orchard Riddle, 64

Argentina

Nazi Hunters, 23

Art and Artists. *See also* Illustrators,

Painters, Potters

Bird King, 40
 First Drawing, 61
 I See the Promised Land, 27
 Little Fish, 33
 Mister Orange, 80
 Scaly Spotted Feathered Frilled, 19
 Still Life, 89
 Summer Prince, 88
 Yoko Ono, 32

Asian Pacifics and Asian Pacific Americans.

See also Afghanis, Chinese and Chinese Americans, Indians and Indian Americans, Japanese and Japanese Americans, Koreans and Korean Americans

Bird King, 40

Astronomy

Look Up! (Burleigh), 25

Autism

Al Capone Does My Homework, 73

Autumn

Baby Bear Counts One, 45

Australia

Golden Day, 85

de Avellaneda, Gertrudis Gomez

Lightning Dreamer, 26

Aviators

Daredevil, 34
 Rose Under Fire, 101

B

Babies. *See also* New Baby

Little You, 55
 Year of the Baby, 73

Babysitters

Good Night, Sleep Tight, 48

Baseball

Becoming Babe Ruth, 34
 Miracle Mud, 28
 Something to Prove, 31
 Take Me Out to the Yakyu, 50
 You Never Heard of Willie Mays?!, 35

Basketball

Hoop Genius, 26

Bears

Baby Bear Counts One, 45
 Benjamin Bear in Bright Ideas!, 69
 Big Bear's Big Boat, 46

Beatles (Band)

Beatles Were Fab (and They Were Funny), 39

Bedtime

Good Night, Sleep Tight, 48
 Lullaby (For a Black Mother), 41
 Night Sounds, 54

Behavior

Matilda and Hans, 56
 Time-Out for Sophie, 55

Bengali Origin

Grandma and the Great Gourd, 22

Beyer, Ramsey

Little Fish, 33

Bilingual Books (Cree/English)

Wild Berries, 47

Bilingual Books (Spanish/English)

Mi familia calaca / My Skeleton Family, 67
 Niño Wrestles the World, 51

Bipolar Disorder

Fangirl, 96

Biracial Families. *See* Multiracial Families

Birds. *See also* Godwits, Loons, Parrots,

Ptarmigans, Ravens

Look Up! (Cate), 14

Birthdays

Ling & Ting Share a Birthday, 69

Blackburne, Lena

Miracle Mud, 28

Blackwell, Elizabeth

Who Says Women Can't Be Doctors?, 32

Blueberries

Wild Berries, 47

Board Books

Big and Small, 44

In, Out, and All Around, 44

Little You, 55

Mommy! Mommy!, 48

Run Home, Little Mouse, 55

Bosnians

After Iris, 75

Boxer Rebellion

Boxers, 103

Saints, 103

Brazil

Summer Prince, 88

Brothers

Thing about Luck, 78

Zebra Forest, 76

Bullying

Bully, 53

If I Ever Get Out of Here, 86

Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass, 93

C**CCBC. *See* Cooperative Children's Book Center****CCBC Choices**

age recommendations in, 7

choosing books for, 5

organization of, 6

Caldecott, Randolph

Randolph Caldecott, 34

Cameroon

Market Bowl, 57

Cameroonians

Market Bowl, 57

Cancer. *See* Leukemia, Lymphoma**Cats**

Lulu and the Cat in the Bag, 70

Matilda and Hans, 56

Mr. Wuffles!, 67

Charlotte Zolotow Award, 8–9**China**

Boxers, 103

Red Kite, Blue Kite, 62

Saints, 103

Chinese and Chinese Americans

Angel Island, 28

Boxers, 103

Ling & Ting Share a Birthday, 69

Mooncakes, 54

Red Kite, Blue Kite, 62

Three Years and Eight Months, 31

Saints, 103

Sugar, 82

Year of the Baby, 73

Choctaw Indians

How I Became a Ghost, 83

Christmas

Little Santa, 20

When Christmas Feels Like Home, 20

Cholera

Great Trouble, 78

Civil Rights Movement

I See the Promised Land, 27

March, 29

College

Fangirl, 96

Little Fish, 33

Colors

My Blue Is Happy, 56

My Cold Plum Lemon Pie Bluesy Mood, 58

Comic Books

Flora & Ulysses, 75

Mister Orange, 80

Communication

Mr. Wuffles!, 67

Community

Bo at Ballard Creek, 78

Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table, 37

Water in the Park, 50

Comparisons (Concept)

Big and Small, 44

In, Out, and All Around, 44

Which Is Round? Which Is Bigger?, 44

Concentration Camps

Prisoner B–3087, 87

Rose Under Fire, 101

Conservation

Parrots Over Puerto Rico, 17

True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp, 71

Construction

Building Our House, 45

Cooking

Market Bowl, 57

Cooperation

Up the Creek, 52

Cooperative Children's Book Center,

about, 112

Correspondence

Milk of Birds, 101

Counterfeiting

Lincoln's Grave Robbers, 30

Counting

Baby Bear Counts One, 45

One Gorilla, 43

Cousins

Lulu and the Cat in the Bag, 70

Lulu and the Dog from the Sea, 70

Cree Indians

Wild Berries, 47

Cuba

Lightning Dreamer, 26

Cubans and Cuban Americans

Lightning Dreamer, 26

Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass, 93

Cultural Revolution (China)

Red Kite, Blue Kite, 62

Cystic Fibrosis

Teeth, 93

D**Dave the Potter.** *See* **Drake, Dave****Death and Dying.** *See also* **Grief and Loss**

Mira in the Present Tense, 72

Deer

Deer Watch, 59

Depression (Economic)

Great American Dust Bowl, 24

Depression (Psychological)

This Song Will Save Your Life, 97

DiMaggio, Joe

Something to Prove, 31

Dinosaurs

Scaly Spotted Feathered Frilled, 19

Disabilities. *See also* **Autism, Learning****Disabilities, Mutism**

Splash of Red, 38

Discrimination. *See also* **Racism**

Daredevil, 34

Look Up! (Burleigh), 25

Who Says Women Can't Be Doctors?, 32

Divorce

Flora & Ulysses, 75

Odessa Again, 82

Doctors

Great Trouble, 78

Mountains Beyond Mountains, 36

Who Says Women Can't Be Doctors?, 32

Dogs

Cookie the Walker, 64

Lulu and the Dog from the Sea, 70

Parched, 74

Trouper, 62

When Charley Met Grandpa, 49

Wolf and Dog, 71

Dominicans and Dominican Americans

Darius & Twig, 94

Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass, 93

Drake, Dave

Erched in Clay, 26

Drought

Great American Dust Bowl, 24

Parched, 74

Ducks

Lucky Ducklings, 51

Dust Bowl

Great American Dust Bowl, 24

Dystopias

Orleans, 99

E**Economic Hardship.** *See also* **Depression (Economic), Poverty**
Out of the Easy, 98**Ecosystems**

No Monkeys, No Chocolate, 18

Tapir Scientist, 16

Education

Darius & Twig, 94

Girl Called Problem, 95

Light in the Darkness, 58

Razia's Ray of Hope, 66

Eggs

What Will Hatch?, 19

Eichmann, Adolf

Nazi Hunters, 23

Einstein, Albert

On a Beam of Light, 24

Emancipation Proclamation

Emancipation Proclamation, 24

Emotions. *See also* **Fear**

Bully, 53

F-It List, 88

My Blue Is Happy, 56

My Cold Plum Lemon Pie Bluesy Mood, 58

Theo's Mood, 38

England

After Iris, 75

Great Trouble, 78

Maggot Moon, 87

Environmental Themes. *See also***Conservation, Ecosystems, Extinction, Global Warming**

Great American Dust Bowl, 24

Eskimos

Bo at Ballard Creek, 78

Espionage. *See* **Spies****Evolution**

One Gorilla, 43

Extinction

Dream of the Thylacine, 68

One Came Home, 100

Extraterrestrials

Mr. Wuffles!, 67

Still Life, 89

Toys in Space, 62

F**Fables.** *See* **Aesop's Fables****Fall.** *See* **Autumn**

Families. *See also* **Brothers, Fathers,****Grandfathers, Grandmothers, Mothers, Sisters, Siblings**

- After Iris, 75
- Al Capone Does My Homework, 73
- Azzi in Between, 61
- Binny for Short, 80
- Bo at Ballard Creek, 78
- Boy on the Porch, 74
- Building Our House, 45
- Darius & Twig, 94
- Desperate Adventures of Zeno & Alya, 79
- Eleanor & Park, 96
- Flora & Ulysses, 75
- Hold Fast, 71
- If I Ever Get Out of Here, 86
- Little Santa, 20
- Little You, 55
- Mi familia calaca / My Skeleton Family, 67
- Mira in the Present Tense, 72
- Missing Mommy, 38
- Mister Orange, 80
- Mooncakes, 54
- My Cold Plum Lemon Pie Bluesy Mood, 58
- Nurse Clementine, 49
- Odessa Again, 82
- Papa's Mechanical Fish, 60
- P.S. Be Eleven, 84
- Sophie's Squash, 51
- This Is Our House, 56
- This Is the Rope, 68
- This Song Will Save Your Life, 97
- Time-Out for Sophie, 55
- Year of the Baby, 73
- Year of the Jungle, 59
- Zero Tolerance, 81

Family Secrets

- Mortal Fire, 89
- Zebra Forest, 76

Farming. *See also* **Urban Farming**

- Apple Orchard Riddle, 64
- Thing about Luck, 78

Fantasy

- Bitter Kingdom, 85
- Coldest Girl in Coldtown, 84
- Dark Triumph, 91
- Dream Thieves, 99
- Far Far Away, 92
- Flora & Ulysses, 75
- Midwinter Blood, 98
- Mortal Fire, 89
- Odessa Again, 82
- Poison, 104
- Real Boy, 83
- Screaming Staircase, 99
- Still Life, 89
- Teeth, 93

- True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp, 71
- Yellowcake, 91

Farmer, Paul

- Mountains Beyond Mountains, 36

Fathers

- Bo at Ballard Creek, 78
- Charm & Strange, 90
- Deer Watch, 59
- Knock Knock, 37
- Red Kite, Blue Kite, 62
- Year of Billy Miller, 77
- Zebra Forest, 76

Fear

- Black Rabbit, 50
- Dark, 66
- Desperate Adventures of Zeno & Alya, 79
- Eleanor & Park, 96
- Invasion, 94
- When Lions Roar, 49
- Year of the Jungle, 59

Feelings. *See* **Emotions****Firefighters**

- Lucky Ducklings, 51

Fish. *See* **Goldfish****First Nations Peoples (Canada).** *See also***Cree Indians, Inuit Origin**

- Little You, 55
- Looks Like Daylight, 36

Folklore. *See also* **Folklore, Mythology, and****Traditional Literature** section

- Far Far Away, 92
- Mooncakes, 54

Foster Children

- Boy on the Porch, 74

Foxes

- That Is Not a Good Idea!, 68

Franklin, Benjamin

- Becoming Ben Franklin, 33

Friends of the CCBC

- about, 115
- membership form, 116

Friendship

- Binny for Short, 80
- Bluffton, 82
- Charm & Strange, 90
- Darius & Twig, 94
- Doll Bones, 72
- Flora & Ulysses, 75
- Far Far Away, 92
- F-It List, 88
- Fangirl, 96
- Golden Day, 85
- Heaven Is Paved with Oreos, 81
- If I Ever Get Out of Here, 86
- If You Could Be Mine, 86
- Milk of Birds, 101
- Nora's Chicks, 63
- Openly Straight, 90

Paul Meets Bernadette, 63
 Peanut, 88
 Problem with Being Slightly Heroic, 79
 Real Boy, 83
 Salt, 76
 Sound of Your Voice, Only Really Far
 Away, 75
 When No One Is Watching, 66
 Year of the Baby, 73

G

Gardening

Azzi in Between, 61

Gays. *See also* Lesbians

More Than This, 94

Openly Straight, 90

Geese

That Is Not a Good Idea!, 68

Ghost Stories

Doll Bones, 72

How I Became a Ghost, 83

Screaming Staircase, 99

Girls and Women

Bitter Kingdom, 85

Daredevil, 34

Dark Triumph, 91

Girl Called Problem, 95

Lightning Dreamer, 26

Look Up! (Burleigh), 25

Milk of Birds, 101

Miss Moore Thought Otherwise, 29

One Came Home, 100

P.S. Be Eleven, 84

Quintana of Charyn, 92

Razia's Ray of Hope, 66

Rose Under Fire, 101

Tree Lady, 28

Who Says Women Can't Be Doctors?, 32

Yoko Ono, 32

Global Warming

Orleans, 99

Parched, 74

Goldfish

Paul Meets Bernadette, 63

Godwits

Long, Long Journey, 16

Grandfathers

Max and the Tag-Along Moon, 46

Take Me Out to the Yakyu, 50

Thing about Luck, 78

When Charley Met Grandpa, 49

Grandmothers

Beatrice Spells Some Lulus and Learns to
 Write a Letter, 58

Heaven Is Paved with Oreos, 81

Lulu and the Cat in the Bag, 70

Mira in the Present Tense, 72

Thing about Luck, 78

Wild Berries, 47

Zebra Forest, 76

Graphic Novels

Benjamin Bear in Bright Ideas!, 69

Big Wet Balloon, 70

Bluffton, 82

Boxers, 103

Great American Dust Bowl, 24

I See the Promised Land, 27

Jerusalem, 102

Little Fish, 33

March, 29

Peanut, 88

Saints, 103

Still Life, 89

Great Migration

This Is the Rope, 68

Grief and Loss

After Iris, 75

Binny for Short, 80

Cart That Carried Martin, 25

F-It List, 88

Knock Knock, 37

Missing Mommy, 38

Gruener, Jack

Prisoner B-3087, 87

H

Haiti

Mountains Beyond Mountains, 36

Historical Fiction

Al Capone Does My Homework, 73

Bo at Ballard Creek, 78

Bluffton, 82

Boxers, 103

Dark Triumph, 91

Girl Called Problem, 95

Golden Day, 85

Great Trouble, 78

How I Became a Ghost, 83

Jerusalem, 102

If I Ever Get Out of Here, 86

Midwinter Blood, 98

Mister Orange, 80

One Came Home, 100

Out of the Easy, 98

P.S. Be Eleven, 84

Prisoner B-3087, 87

Rose Under Fire, 101

Saints, 103

Salt, 76

Still Star-Crossed, 100

Sugar, 82

War within These Walls, 97

Holocaust

Nazi Hunters, 23

Prisoner B-3087, 87

Rose Under Fire, 101

War within These Walls, 97

Homelessness

Hold Fast, 71

Homophobia

If You Could Be Mine, 86

Hong Kong

Three Years and Eight Months, 31

Humor

After Iris, 75

Black Rabbit, 50

Cheese Belongs to You!, 60

Cookie the Walker, 64

Exclamation Mark, 65

F-It List, 88

Flora & Ulysses, 75

Grandma and the Great Gourd, 22

If I Ever Get Out of Here, 86

Little Santa, 20

Lulu and the Cat in the Bag, 70

Lulu and the Dog from the Sea, 70

Matilda and Hans, 56

Mi familia calaca / My Skeleton Family,
67

Mighty Lalouche, 64

Mr. Wuffles!, 67

Niño Wrestles the World, 51

Night Sounds, 54

Ol' Mama Squirrel, 55

One Came Home, 100

Openly Straight, 90

Papa's Mechanical Fish, 60

Pet Project, 42

Poison, 104

Problem with Being Slightly Heroic, 79

Sophie's Squash, 51

Spy Camp, 77

Still Life, 89

That Is Not a Good Idea!, 68

Toys in Space, 62

True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp,
71

Turkey Tot, 54

Up the Creek, 52

Wolf and Dog, 71

Xander's Panda Party, 53

I**Identity**

If I Ever Get Out of Here, 86

Open Mic, 95

Openly Straight, 90

Yes! We Are Latinos, 35

Illness. See also Alcoholism, Bipolar**Disorder, Cholera, Cystic Fibrosis,****Leukemia, Lymphoma**

Orleans, 99

Illustrators

Randolph Caldecott, 34

Imagination. See also Pretend Play

Doll Bones, 72

First Drawing, 61

Journey, 57

Little Mouse, 52

Never Ever, 47

Peanut & Fifi Have a Ball, 46

Paul Meets Bernadette, 63

Picture a Tree, 65

Immigrants. See also Refugees

Nora's Chicks, 63

When Christmas Feels Like Home, 20

Immigration

Angel Island, 28

India

Grandma and the Great Gourd, 22

Indians and Indian Americans

Grandma and the Great Gourd, 22

Mira in the Present Tense, 72

Problem with Being Slightly Heroic, 79

Indonesia

Eruption!, 17

Inuit Origin

Grandmother Ptarmigan, 22

Raven and the Loon, 23

Inventions

Papa's Mechanical Fish, 60

Turkey Tot, 54

Iran

If You Could Be Mine, 86

Iranians

If You Could Be Mine, 86

Israel

Jerusalem, 102

Nazi Hunters, 23

J**Japan**

Take Me Out to the Yakyu, 50

Japanese American Internment

Imprisoned, 30

Japanese and Japanese Americans

Angel Island, 28

Imprisoned, 30

Take Me Out to the Yakyu, 50

Thing about Luck, 78

Three Years and Eight Months, 31

Yoko Ono, 32

Jews and Jewish Americans

Jerusalem, 102

Longest Night, 21

Nazi Hunters, 23

Prisoner B-3087, 87

Rifka Takes a Bow, 65
War within These Walls, 97

K

Keaton, Buster

Bluffton, 82

King, Martin Luther, Jr.

Cart That Carried Martin, 25
I See the Promised Land, 27

Kites

Red Kite, Blue Kite, 62

Koreans and Korean Americans

Eleanor & Park, 96
Still Life, 89

L

Latinos. *See also* Cubans and Cuban Americans, Dominicans and Dominican Americans, Mexicans and Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans

Summer Prince, 88
When Christmas Feels Like Home, 20
Yes! We Are Latinos, 35

Learning Disabilities

Milk of Birds, 101

Leaves

Fiddleheads to Fir Trees, 15

Leavitt, Henrietta

Look Up! (Burleigh), 25

Lennon, John

Yoko Ono, 32

Lesbians

If You Could Be Mine, 86

Leukemia

Desperate Adventures of Zeno & Alya, 79

Lewis, John

March, 29

Libraries

Hold Fast, 71
Miss Moore Thought Otherwise, 29

Lincoln, Abraham

Emancipation Proclamation, 24
Lincoln's Grave Robbers, 30

London

Great Trouble, 78

Loons

Raven and the Loon, 23

Lying

Openly Straight, 90
Peanut, 88

M

Mays, Willie

You Never Heard of Willie Mays?!, 35

Mexicans and Mexican Americans

Diego Rivera, 40
Niño Wrestles the World, 51

Miami Indians

Salt, 76

Mice

Penny and Her Marble, 69
Run Home, Little Mouse, 55
Time-Out for Sophie, 55

Migration

Here Come the Humpbacks, 18
Long, Long Journey, 16

Mondrian, Piet

Mister Orange, 80

Moon

Max and the Tag-Along Moon, 46
Mooncakes, 54
Moonday, 65

Moon Festival

Mooncakes, 54

Moore, Anne Carroll

Miss Moore Thought Otherwise, 29

Moral Decisions

Teeth, 93

Mothers

Mortal Fire, 89
Ol' Mama Squirrel, 55
Out of the Easy, 98
Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass, 93
Year of Billy Miller, 77

Multicultural Literature. *See also* Africans and African Americans, American Indians, Asian Pacifics and Asian Pacific Americans, and Latinos

comments on, 11
statistics, 11
Indivisible, 40
Open Mic, 95

Multiracial Families

Mira in the Present Tense, 72

Music and Musicians

Beatles Were Fab (and They Were Funny), 39
Herman and Rosie, 61
Hey, Charleston!, 29
If I Ever Get Out of Here, 86
Lucy Variations, 103
This Song Will Save Your Life, 97
Yoko Ono, 32

Muslims

Azzi in Between, 61
If You Could Be Mine, 86
Milk of Birds, 101

Mutism

Boy on the Porch, 74

Mysteries

Al Capone Does My Homework, 73
Hold Fast, 71

- Golden Day, 85
 - Great Trouble, 78
 - One Came Home, 100
 - Out of the Easy, 98
- N**
- Naismith, James**
 - Hoop Genius, 26
 - New Baby**
 - Theo's Mood, 38
 - New Orleans**
 - Out of the Easy, 98
 - Novels in Verse**
 - Etched in Clay, 26
 - Lightning Dreamer, 26
 - Salt, 76
 - War within These Walls, 97
 - Nursery Rhymes**
 - Good Night, Sleep Tight, 48
 - Wee Rhymes, 43
- O**
- Ohr, George E.**
 - Mad Potter, 39
 - Ono, Yoko**
 - Yoko Ono, 32
 - Oppression.** *See also Racism, Slavery*
 - If You Could Be Mine, 86
 - Maggot Moon, 87
 - Red Kite, Blue Kite, 62
 - Summer Prince, 88
- P**
- Paige, Satchel**
 - Something to Prove, 31
 - Painters**
 - Diego Rivera, 40
 - Splash of Red, 38
 - Paleontology**
 - Scaly Spotted Feathered Frilled, 19
 - Palestine**
 - Jerusalem, 102
 - Palestinians**
 - Jerusalem, 102
 - Pandas**
 - Xander's Panda Party, 53
 - Paratroopers**
 - Courage Has No Color, 31
 - Parks**
 - Water in the Park, 50
 - Parrots**
 - Parrots Over Puerto Rico, 17
 - Desperate Adventures of Zeno & Alya, 79
 - Passenger Pigeons**
 - One Came Home, 100

- Patience**
 - if you want to see a whale, 47
 - Pets**
 - Pet Project, 42
 - Philippines**
 - Eruption!, 17
 - Phillips, Lodner**
 - Papa's Mechanical Fish, 60
 - Pippin, Horace**
 - Splash of Red, 38
 - Poetry.** *See also Poetry* section
 - Angel Island, 28
 - Etched in Clay, 26
 - Fiddleheads to Fir Trees, 15
 - Lightning Dreamer, 26
 - Rose Under Fire, 101
 - Salt, 76
 - Yes! We Are Latinos, 35
 - Potters**
 - Etched in Clay, 26
 - Mad Potter, 39
 - Poverty.** *See also Homelessness*
 - Darius & Twig, 94
 - Eleanor & Park, 96
 - If I Ever Get Out of Here, 86
 - Pretend Play**
 - Niño Wrestles the World, 51
 - Nurse Clementine, 49
 - Sophie's Squash, 51
 - Primates**
 - One Gorilla, 43
 - Prodigies**
 - Lucy Variations, 103
 - Probability (Math)**
 - That's a Possibility!, 43
 - Prostitution**
 - Out of the Easy, 98
 - Publishing,** trends in, 10–11
 - Puerto Ricans**
 - Parrots Over Puerto Rico, 17
 - Puerto Rico**
 - Parrots Over Puerto Rico, 17
 - Punctuation**
 - Exclamation Mark, 65
- R**
- Rabbits**
 - Black Rabbit, 50
 - Raccoons**
 - True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp, 71
 - Racism**
 - Angel Island, 28
 - Courage Has No Color, 31
 - Darius & Twig, 94
 - How I Became a Ghost, 83
 - If I Ever Get Out of Here, 86

- Imprisoned, 30
 - Invasion, 94
 - March, 29
 - Open Mic, 95
 - Salt, 76
 - Something to Prove, 31
 - Sugar, 82
 - You Never Heard of Willie Mays?!, 35
 - Rats**
 - Cheese Belongs to You!, 60
 - Ravens**
 - Raven and the Loon, 23
 - Reading**
 - Light in the Darkness, 58
 - Refugees**
 - After Iris, 75
 - Azzi in Between, 61
 - Milk of Birds, 101
 - Religion**
 - Boxers, 103
 - Saints, 103
 - Rivera, Diego**
 - Diego Rivera, 40
 - Romantic Relationships**
 - Bitter Kingdom, 85
 - Coldest Girl in Coldtown, 84
 - Eleanor & Park, 96
 - F-It List, 88
 - Mortal Fire, 89
 - Peanut, 88
 - Poison, 104
 - Still Star-Crossed, 100
 - Rome**
 - Heaven Is Paved with Oreos, 81
 - Romeo and Juliet**
 - Still Star-Crossed, 100
 - Running**
 - Darius & Twig, 94
 - Ruth, Babe**
 - Becoming Babe Ruth, 34
- S**
- Scandinavia**
 - Midwinter Blood, 98
 - School.** *See also* **Education, Teachers**
 - Apple Orchard Riddle, 64
 - Beatrice Spells Some Lulus and Learns to Write a Letter, 58
 - Charm & Strange, 90
 - Golden Day, 85
 - Openly Straight, 90
 - Orleans, 99
 - Peanut, 88
 - Year of Billy Miller, 77
 - Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass, 93
 - Zero Tolerance, 81

- Science and Scientists**
 - Eruption!, 17
 - Great Trouble, 78
 - Look Up! (Burleigh), 25
 - Mountains Beyond Mountains, 36
 - On a Beam of Light, 24
 - Parrots Over Puerto Rico, 17
 - Scaly Spotted Feathered Frilled, 19
 - Tapir Scientist, 16
 - Tree Lady, 28
- Science Fiction**
 - More Than This, 94
 - Summer Prince, 88
 - Yellowcake, 91
- Seals**
 - See What a Seal Can Do, 14
- Seasons.** *See also* **Autumn, Winter**
 - Fiddleheads to Fir Trees, 15
 - Forest Has a Song, 42
 - Inside Outside, 46
- Sessions, Katherine**
 - Tree Lady, 28
- Sexual Abuse**
 - Charm & Strange, 90
 - Dark Triumph, 91
- Short Stories**
 - Open Mic, 95
 - Yellowcake, 91
- Shyness**
 - When No One Is Watching, 66
- Siblings.** *See also* **Brothers, Sisters**
 - Charm & Strange, 90
 - Niño Wrestles the World, 51
- Sisters**
 - After Iris, 75
 - Big Wet Balloon, 70
 - Dee Dee and Me, 53
 - Fangirl, 96
 - Ling & Ting Share a Birthday, 69
 - One Came Home, 100
 - Peanut & Fifi Have a Ball, 46
 - P.S. Be Eleven, 84
 - Year of Billy Miller, 77
- Skelton, Betty**
 - Daredevil, 34
- Slavery**
 - Emancipation Proclamation, 24
 - Etched in Clay, 26
 - Light in the Darkness, 58
- Snow**
 - Big Snow, 20
- Snow Leopards**
 - Snow School, 16
- Social Justice.** *See also* **Civil Rights Movement**
 - Indivisible, 40
- Space Aliens.** *See* **Extraterrestrials**

Speculative Fiction. *See also* **Science Fiction**

- Midwinter Blood, 98
- Orleans, 99
- Parched, 74

Spelling

- Beatrice Spells Some Lulus and Learns to Write a Letter, 58

Spies

- Dark Triumph, 91
- Lincoln's Grave Robbers, 30
- Spy Camp, 77

Sports. *See* **Baseball, Basketball, Running, Wrestling****Squirrels**

- Flora & Ulysses, 75
- Ol' Mama Squirrel, 55

Sudan

- Milk of Birds, 101

Sudanese

- Milk of Birds, 101

Sukuma People

- Girl Called Problem, 95

Surprise Endings

- Matilda and Hans, 56
- That Is Not a Good Idea!, 68

Survival

- Black Helicopters, 102
- Milk of Birds, 101
- Orleans, 99
- Parched, 74
- Rose Under Fire, 101
- War within These Walls, 97

Suspense

- Black Helicopters, 102
- Far Far Away, 92

T**Tan, Shaun**

- Bird King, 40

Tanzania

- Girl Called Problem, 95

Tapirs

- Tapir Scientist, 16

Teachers

- Razia's Ray of Hope, 66
- Year of Billy Miller, 77

Theater

- Rifka Takes a Bow, 65

Thylacines

- Dream of the Thylacine, 68

Time (Concept)

- Silver Button, 48
- This Is Our House, 56
- Water in the Park, 50

Time Travel

- Odessa Again, 82

Toys

- Toys in Space, 62

Trail of Tears

- How I Became a Ghost, 83

Trains

- Train, 59

Transgendered Persons

- If You Could Be Mine, 86

Translated Books. *See also* **Bilingual Books**

- Big and Small, 44
- In, Out, and All Around, 44
- Mister Orange, 80
- Mommy! Mommy!, 48
- Night Sounds, 54
- Run Home, Little Mouse, 55
- Wait! Wait!, 52
- War within These Walls, 97
- Which Is Round? Which Is Bigger?, 44
- Wolf and Dog, 71

Travel

- Sophie Scott Goes South, 63
- Train, 59

Trees

- Picture a Tree, 65
- Tree Lady, 28

Tuberculosis

- Mountains Beyond Mountains, 36

Tuscarora Indians

- If I Ever Get Out of Here, 86

Twins

- After Iris, 75
- Fangirl, 96
- Ling & Ting Share a Birthday, 69

U**Urban Farming**

- Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table, 37

V**Vampires**

- Coldest Girl in Coldtown, 84

Vernal Pools

- Secret Pool, 17

Vietnam War

- Year of the Jungle, 59

Violence. *See also* **War**

- Black Helicopters, 102
- Darius & Twig, 94

Volcanoes

- Eruption!, 17
- Volcano Rising, 18

W**War.** *See also* Vietnam War, War of 1812,**World War II**Azzi in Between, 61
Milk of Birds, 101**War of 1812**

Salt, 76

Whalesif you want to see a whale, 47
Here Come the Humpbacks, 18**Winter**

Big Snow, 20

Wisconsin

One Came Home, 100

Wolves

Wolf and Dog, 71

Wordless BooksJourney, 57
Inside Outside, 46
Mr. Wuffles!, 67
Tortoise and the Hare, 22**World War II**Courage Has No Color, 31
Imprisoned, 30
Invasion, 94
Mister Orange, 80
Prisoner B-3087, 87
Rose Under Fire, 101
Three Years and Eight Months, 31
War within These Walls, 97**Wrestling**Mighty Lalouche, 64
Niño Wrestles the World, 51**Writers and Writing**Darius & Twig, 94
Fangirl, 96
Lightning Dreamer, 26
Mira in the Present Tense, 72**Z****Zoos**

Xander's Panda Party, 53

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