

CCBC

Choices

2001

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School of Education

University of Wisconsin–Madison

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(ISBN 0-931641-11-X)

CCBC Choices was produced by the Office of University Publications, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Cover design: Lois Ehlert

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Acknowledgments

Thank you to Friends of the CCBC member Tana Elias for creating the index for this edition of *CCBC Choices*. Thank you also to Friends member Lois Ehler, who created the cover design six years ago.

We value the responses and insights of participants in CCBC Book Discussions throughout 2000.

Cheers to all participants in the annual CCBC award discussions of books published during 2000. The CCBC held Randolph Caldecott, John Newbery, Coretta Scott King, and Michael L. Printz award discussions in November and December, 2000. Special thanks to Madge Klais, who coordinated Madison Metropolitan School District staff participation in the Coretta Scott King and Michael L. Printz discussions.

Many thanks to participants in the *CCBC-Net* community for sharing comments about some of their favorite books of the year and the outcomes of regional or local award book discussions.

Great appreciation to the individuals with specialized interests and expertise who—at our request—evaluated one or more books or volunteered their comments, especially Anne Altshuler, Lee Bock, Peggy Choy, Melba Jesudason, John Kruse, Brian Larson, Merri Lindgren, Linda Mundt, Susan Santner, and Naomi Shiraishi. Special thanks to Anne Altshuler and Merri Lindgren, who read and provided written commentary on a great many books.

The Friends of the CCBC, Inc., is a membership organization that sponsors programs to develop public appreciation for children's literature and supports special projects at the CCBC. Membership is open to all. Information about membership can be found in Appendix V.

The Friends of the CCBC underwrote the professional design, typesetting, layout, printing, and binding of *CCBC Choices 2001*. Members of the 2000–2001 Friends of the CCBC, Inc., Board of Directors are: President Margaret Jensen, Vice-President Jane Botham, Recording Secretary Maureen Conklin, Treasurer Pam Nibbe, and Directors-at-Large Val Edwards, Susan Herr-Hoyman, and Laureen Yoshino. Committee chairs include Nancy Beck and Don Crary. The *Newsletter* editor is Tana Elias.

We appreciate the Friends' ongoing commitment to providing university students and faculty, teachers, school library media specialists, public librarians, and others with an attractive, easy-to-use edition of this publication. All of our reading, selection, and writing for *CCBC Choices* occurs during evenings and weekends throughout the year. In this respect, the three of us created *CCBC Choices 2001* as members of the Friends of the CCBC, Inc.

Kathleen T. Horning, Ginny Moore Kruse, and Megan Schliesman

Introduction

Many perspectives on books for children and young adults are available to those associated with the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC), a library of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Additional information about the CCBC can be found near the end of this publication.

We created *CCBC Choices* within the environment of the Cooperative Children's Book Center. As a book examination center and research library, the CCBC receives review copies of almost all of the trade and alternative press books published in English in the United States for children and young adults during the year. Each week during 2000, we examined newly published books. We subsequently read many of them. We discussed hundreds formally or informally with other librarians and educators in Wisconsin and elsewhere in the nation. Many were also discussed on *CCBC-Net*, the national electronic book discussion group moderated by the CCBC.

The CCBC receives daily requests for information about contemporary and historical books for children and young adults. We know firsthand from teachers and librarians, from university faculty, and from students who are studying to become teachers and librarians that they want to find books with accurate information on matters important to the young people in their classrooms, schools, and libraries. The people we meet know that today's children and young adults have many questions and need information in order to better understand their society, the people they know, and even themselves. Our colleagues are looking for books that are commended for these reasons.

Book discussion is an important factor in our process of choosing books for *CCBC Choices*. We hold monthly discussions, open to any adult who would like to attend, to look critically at some of the new books we have received at the CCBC. Generally, these books are so new that they have not yet been reviewed in the professional journals. We strive through discussion to articulate our first critical responses to the books in question, using CCBC Book Discussion Guidelines (see Appendix III).

In addition to these monthly discussions, we host annual awards discussions, using the criteria for eligibility and excellence established by national book award committees. The awards discussions provide an opportunity to look critically at some of the year's outstanding children's books. In late 2000, we held discussions of books eligible for the Caldecott Medal, the Coretta Scott King Award, the Newbery Award, and the Michael L. Printz Award. See Appendix IV for the results of those discussions.

In *CCBC Choices*, we bring a wide range of books to our colleagues' attention. We hope everyone who uses this publication is aware that each book recommended here is not necessarily for every child, every classroom, or every family. We are confident, however, that everyone using *CCBC Choices* will find a significant number of books that will delight, inform, or stimulate the innate curiosity of many of the children and young teenagers for whom our colleagues have some level of professional, academic, or career responsibility.

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 38 years with Harper Junior Books and an author of more than 65 picture 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, where she studied with Professor Helen C. White.

The award is administered by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, a children's literature library of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Each year, a committee of children's literature experts selects the winner from the books published in the preceding year. The winning author receives a cash prize and a bronze medal designed by UW-Madison Art professor Philip Hamilton and based on an original drawing by Harriett Barton of HarperCollins. The award is formally presented in the fall, prior to the annual Charlotte Zolotow Lecture on the UW-Madison campus.

Any picture book for young children (birth through age seven) that is first published in the United States and is written by a U.S. citizen or resident is eligible for consideration for the Charlotte Zolotow Award. The book may fall into any genre of writing (fiction, nonfiction, poetry, or folklore) as long as it is presented in a picture-book form and aimed at an audience of young children. The committee works with a shortlist of titles selected by the CCBC professional staff. Committee members may suggest additional titles they think should be included on the shortlist; however, all titles are subject to the approval of the CCBC professional staff. Books written by Charlotte Zolotow are not eligible for the award.

In addition to choosing the award-winning title, the committee may select up to three 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 fourth annual Charlotte Zolotow Award Committee were: Tana Elias, chair (librarian, Madison Public Library, Madison, Wisconsin); Amy Brandt (librarian, Sun Prairie Public Library, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin); Ginny Moore Kruse (director, Cooperative Children's Book Center, UW-Madison); Merri Lindgren (Baraboo, Wisconsin); George Theoharis (principal, Falk Elementary School, Madison, Wisconsin); and Kathleen T. Horning, ex officio (librarian, Cooperative Children's Book Center, UW-Madison).



Charlotte Zolotow Award, 2001

Winner: **Kate Banks**
for *The Night Worker*.
Illustrated by Georg Hallensleben.
(Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and
Giroux, 2000)

Honor Book: Christopher Myers for *Wings*. (Scholastic Press, 2000)

Highly Commended:

Christian, Peggy. *If You Find a Rock*. Illustrated by Barbara Hirsch
Lember. (Harcourt, 2000)

Cronin, Doreen. *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type*. Illustrated by
Betsy Lewin. (Simon & Schuster, 2000)

Harjo, Joy. *The Good Luck Cat*. Illustrated by Paul Lee.
(Harcourt, 2000)

Kajikawa, Kimiko. *Yoshi's Feast*. Illustrated by Yumi Heo.
(Melanie Kroupa / DK Ink, 2000)

Pinkney, Sandra L. *Shades of Black: A Celebration of Our Children*.
Photographs by Myles C. Pinkney.
(Scholastic Press, 2000)

Van Laan, Nancy. *When Winter Comes*. Illustrated by Susan Gaber.
(Anne Schwartz / Atheneum, 2000)

Observations about Publishing in 2000

How Many Books Were Available for Sale During 2000?

The most recent edition of *Children's Books in Print* (R.R. Bowker, 2000) states that there are 188,900 books from 10,000 U.S. publishers currently available for purchase in the United States. This number represents an astonishing increase of 38,400 books from one year ago. The 1990–91 edition of *Children's Books in Print* (R.R. Bowker, 1990) cited a total of 66,268 books in print, which means there are nearly three times as many books available now than a decade ago.

Clearly, there is an abundance of books written, edited, and published especially for the children and young teenagers of this nation, as well as an abundance of choices for individuals seeking out books for the young—whether for personal or professional reasons.

How Many Books Were Published During 2000?

During calendar year 2000, we estimate that at least 4,500–5,000 new trade books for children and young adults were published in the United States. This is a number similar to our estimates for each of the past five years.

Estimates of the number of new books vary according to who is counting and which new books are included in the totals. CCBC estimates are typically conservative. We do not include reprints, paperback editions of titles published earlier, large-print books, book-club editions, novelty books, and other categories often reflected in the numbers provided by the book industry—most or all of which are included in the 188,900 books currently available for purchase. In addition, the CCBC number represents the work of 75 to 100 trade-book and alternative-press publishers—nowhere near the 10,000 publishers represented in the *Children's Books in Print* statistic. As a result, our estimate of the number of new books has remained steady in recent years.

Collections of children's and young adult literature at the CCBC generally do not include books published for adults, even though some books published for adults do appeal to (and occasionally are claimed by) teenagers.

How Many Books Are in CCBC Choices 2001?

There are 228 books listed in *CCBC Choices 2001*. Of these, 48 represent the first published works of 26 authors and 22 illustrators; 33 were originally or simultaneously published outside the United States (seven of these are translations); 13 were published by seven small, independently owned and operated publishers. To our knowledge, 115 of the books we recommend in

CCBC Choices 2001 have not appeared on any of the other nationally distributed lists of the year's best books as of February 2, 2001.

Most of the books in *CCBC Choices 2001* are published for an audience ranging in age from infancy to 14 years—the upper age in the definition of “children” used by the book awards committees of the Association for Library Service to Children of the American Library Association (ALA). A few of the books in this edition of *CCBC Choices* are recommended for older ages as well.

As we comment on some of the books published in 2000 on the following few pages, please note that not every book we discuss has been selected as a *CCBC Choice*. Books that are not recommended *CCBC Choices* are designated by the inclusion of publisher information after their titles.

Searching for Multicultural Literature

Currently there is no agreement in the children's literature community on a single definition for the word “multicultural.” Nor is a single definition necessary. At the CCBC, we designate books by and about people of color as multicultural literature.

Multicultural literature continued to be highly visible in 2000 in terms of overall numbers. For the ninth consecutive year, many children's book publishers released new books by and about people of color. However, the special flyers, catalogs, and mailings so common during the 1990s have almost vanished, and it is important to realize that these numbers still represent only a very small percentage of the total number of new books published for children and young adults each year. Still, we are hopeful the publishers recognize that the continued creation of high-quality multicultural literature is important for all children, and that the Coretta Scott King, *Américas*, and Pura Belpré awards (and their honor books and commended lists) are formal acknowledgments of excellence in multicultural publishing that certainly matter to teachers, librarians, and parents.

Most of the literature journals, book review magazines, and other professional publications concerning education, librarianship, books for children and young adults, and/or reading featured reviews, interviews, bibliographies, and articles about multicultural literature. This continued a trend of the 1990s. We continue to worry, however, that the collective interest of American teachers, librarians, parents, publishers, and booksellers who are outsiders to specific cultural and ethnic groups is moving away from multicultural literature. It is critical that multicultural literature be viewed as a substantial component of children's book publishing, rather than as a passing fad or as a so-called “politically correct” phenomenon. Only then will its past be honored and its future as an integral part of children's and young adult literature guaranteed.

If individuals and groups within the children's and young adult literature community begin to operate under the premise that they have all the multicultural books they need, the publishing of excellent new books will dwindle, new writers and artists will not be nurtured, and the perspectives on multicultural experience in our country will be lost. The continued—and increased—publication of a wide range of voices from a wide range of cultural

perspectives will help ensure that all children and young teenagers will find validation in what they read, as well as a stronger understanding of what it means to be a citizen of their communities, their nation, and the world.

Books by and about Africans and African Americans

The number of books created by Black authors and illustrators increased slightly in 2000. (The CCBC's designation "Black" includes book creators from the Caribbean, England, and other countries if their works are produced by U.S. publishers. Some books with topics related to Caribbean countries are also designated as Latino.)

CCBC statistics also include books by Black book creators regardless of whether the books contain cultural substance. Of the roughly 4,500–5,000 books for young people published in the United States in 2000, the CCBC documented 96 that were created by Black authors and/or illustrators. (The CCBC documented 81 books in this category in 1999, 92 in this category in 1998, 88 in 1997, 92 in 1996, 100 in 1995, 82 in 1994, 74 in 1993, 94 in 1992, and 70 in 1991.) The 96 titles represent the published work of 78 individual authors and illustrators.

Approximately 150 books specifically about African and/or African American history, culture, and/or peoples were documented at the CCBC during 2000, compared to 150 in 1999, 183 in 1998, 216 in 1997, 172 in 1996, 167 in 1995, and 166 in 1994.

We noticed a dearth of contemporary realistic fiction by African American writers in 2000. Young-adult authors Walter Dean Myers and Jacqueline Woodson continue to be responsible for most of the output in this area, and this year they both published books set in New York City. Harlem is the central character in Myers' marvelous collection of short stories *145th Street. Miracle's Boys*, Jacqueline Woodson's poignant novel about three teenage brothers surviving on their own, reveals the many ways individual stories are intertwined. We were happy to see a first novel from promising young author Lori Aurelia Williams, *When Kambia Elaine Flew in from Neptune* (Simon & Schuster), and hope that it will be the first of many.

African American writers continue to explore aspects of Black history in books for children and young adults. Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard tells a family story set just after the U.S. Civil War in *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys*, illustrated by E. B. Lewis. First-time author Shannon Lanier, a descendant of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings, has pulled together a collection of interviews and first-person essays by other Jefferson descendants, both white and Black, in *Jefferson's Children*. Oral history was also the technique Alan Govenar used to collect personal stories from Osceola Mays, whose life spans the 20th century. These stories appear as short chapters in *Osceola: Memories of a Sharecropper's Daughter*. Harriette Gillem Robinet sets an appealing mystery in Montgomery, Alabama, during the time of the famous bus boycott in *Walking to the Bus-Rider Blues*.

Distinctive art styles and innovative design were the hallmarks of several books by African Americans in 2000, ranging from Christopher Myers' brilliant collage illustrations in *Wings* to R. Gregory Christie's expressionistic paintings in *Only Passing Through: The Story of Sojourner Truth*, by Anne

Rockwell. Leo and Dianne Dillon continue to break new ground as consummate illustrators with *The Girl Who Spun Gold*, by Virginia Hamilton; here they have spun gold themselves, right into the artwork. Inventive book design also appeared in books for teenagers, including: *Savion: My Life in Tap*, by Savion Glover and Bruce Weber; and *Tall Tales: Six Amazing Basketball Dreams*, by Charles R. Smith, Jr.

Along with the new, we were especially pleased to see the return of some old favorites, now back in print after a long time: *Children of Long Ago*, by Lessie Jones Little; *How God Fix Jonah*, by Lorenz Graham; and *The Times They Used to Be*, by Lucille Clifton. We are grateful to publishers who demonstrate their commitment to keeping multicultural literature in print so that it can find a new generation of readers.

We heard from teachers and librarians who were sharing books with children from kindergarten through grade five that *Shades of Black: A Celebration of Our Children*, by Sandra L. and Myles C. Pinkney, resonated deeply with children of all races. Perhaps, in addition to responding to the excellent text and photographs, these children are telling us that they are hungry to talk openly and directly about racial differences, something they see every day, but rarely see affirmed.

Books by and about Latinos

At the CCBC, we try to keep track of all that is published for young people and to notice trends and changes. This project often proves a greater challenge for us than one might expect. Typically, we have not been able to provide reliable documentation about the number of books by other racial or ethnic groups that compares to what we can provide on Black book creators.

However, an increased number of books by Latinos and about Latino themes and topics since 1993 encouraged us, beginning in 1994, to make a concerted effort to document the numbers of such titles. In 2000, we counted 54 new titles by Latinos and/or about Latino topics. In 1999 there were 64 titles, in 1998 there were 66 titles, in 1997 there were 88, in 1996 there were 103, in 1995 there were 70, and in 1994 we counted 90 Latino titles.

It is discouraging to see this number decrease significantly for the fourth year in a row, especially since there were only 24 titles in 2000 produced by Latino authors and artists. Moreover, we would expect that the two awards established in the 1990s to draw attention to outstanding Latino books for children and young adults would be encouraging publishers to seek out works to add to this important body of literature. The Américas Award, with its mission to provide visibility for excellent books about Latin America and Latinos in the United States, was established in 1993 and is administered through the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee's Center for Latin America. The Pura Belpré Award was established by REFORMA and the Association of Library Services for Children, a division of the American Library Association, to formally acknowledge outstanding writing for youth by a Latino writer. This biannual award was first given out in 1996.

Five small presses continue to publish the majority of reliable bilingual books or dual language editions, as well as new work by Latino authors and artists. These presses are Arte Público, Children's Book Press, Cinco Puntos,

Groundwood Books, and Lee & Low. According to our records, these five small presses alone accounted for nearly a quarter of all Latino-related books published for children and teens in 2000—which shows the importance of seeking out books from small, independent presses.

What the Latino books may lack in quantity in the year 200, they certainly make up for with quality. We were pleased to see substantial novels with Latino protagonists this year, including: *The Color of My Words*, by Lynn Joseph; *Something Wicked's in Those Woods* (Harcourt), by Marisa Montes; and *Esperanza Rising*, by Pam Muñoz Ryan. For older readers, there is the brilliant short story, *The Composition*, written by Chilean author Antonio Skármeta and illustrated by Alfonso Ruano. First published in Venezuela in Spanish in 1998, the translated edition has been issued in the United States and Canada by Groundwood Books. Although it can easily be read as an indictment of the Pinochet regime, its meaning extends to any type of repressive government.

Antonio Skármeta is one of several authors of adult literature who turned to writing for the young in 2000. Julia Alvarez retold an intriguing folk tale from her youth in the Dominican Republic in *The Secret Footprints*, and Juan Felipe Herrera drew on childhood memories of how he felt about going to a school where no one spoke his language in *The Upside Down Boy / El niño de cabeza*. Ana Castillo wrote poetry inspired by a traditional Aztec chant in *My Daughter, My Son, the Eagle, the Dove* (Dutton), while Rudolfo Anaya eulogized labor activist Cesar Chavez with *Elegy on the Death of Cesar Chavez* (Cinco Puntos). A chapter from Francisco Jiménez's outstanding memoir *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* (Houghton, 1998) was recast as a picture book in *The Christmas Gift / El regalo de Navidad*. These adult authors join the children's authors listed above, as well as several others, in greatly enriching the Latino literature available to youth in the United States.

Books by and about American Indians

Unfortunately, the number of books published each year about Native people has been on a steady decline during the past few years. This year we documented 40 books on American Indian themes and topics. In 1999, we counted 41, down from the 54 we counted in 1998. In 1997, we counted 64 books. In 1996, there were 50 books. And in 1995, we found 83 that fell into this category.

The overall quality of the books continues to improve, however. Source notes and specificity about a book's content are always an aid to evaluating books of information; they are especially valuable in books by American Indians and about American Indian themes. An increasing number of books now designate the specific Indian nation that is the source of a topic or the subject of a story. More books also recognize the importance of nomenclature and are using the names by which specific American Indian peoples refer to themselves. We are optimistic that such specificity will continue in future books of fiction, information, and folklore concerning American Indian topics, and we are hopeful that the numbers of such books will again increase in future years.

Our records show that 14 specific Indian nations were represented among the 39 books about American Indian themes and topics documented at the

CCBC during 2000. Fourteen nations were noted in 1999, 24 nations in 1998, 37 nations in 1997, 22 nations in 1996, and 32 nations in 1995.

As has been the case for the last decade, Abenaki author Joseph Bruchac accounts for a significant portion of the authentic Native literature being published by mainstream presses. This year his works included the biography *Crazy Horse's Vision*; the fictionalized biographies *Sacajawea: The Story of Bird Woman and the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Harcourt) and *Squanto's Journey: The Story of the First Thanksgiving* (Harcourt); and an original collection of one-act plays, *Pushing Up the Sky: Seven Native American Plays for Children*.

We were especially happy this year to find Native women writing three picture books that feature contemporary Native girls. Jan Bourdeau Waboose's *SkySisters* deals with two Ojibway sisters who go out on a winter night to see the Northern Lights. First-time author Cynthia Leitich Smith makes a promising debut with *Jingle Dancer*, her picture book about a Muscogee/Ojibway girl seeking help from her elders so she can make a jingle dress for the upcoming powwow. And adult author Joy Harjo shows that she is skilled at writing for children in *The Good Luck Cat*—a breakthrough book in that the main character's Native heritage is incidental to the story. So fine is the writing in *The Good Luck Cat* that it was named one the highly commended titles for the Charlotte Zolotow Award. We hope that these books will be followed by many more about the lives of Native children today.

Books by and about Asian Pacifics and Asian Pacific Americans

This year, we counted 57 children's books with Asian Pacific and Asian Pacific American themes. In 1999 there were 61 books, in 1998 there were 50 books, in 1997 there were 66, in 1996 there were 49, in 1995 there were 91, and in 1994 there were 65. While the numbers continue to spike up and down, for the first time we are beginning to see more of a balance between books about contemporary Asian Pacific American children and the more typical topics of children's books about Asian Pacifics: war and folklore.

That's not to say that we don't appreciate excellent folklore or well-written history and historical fiction set in war times. Indeed, this year we were especially pleased to see the first book from Kimiko Kajikawa, who retold a traditional Japanese story with wit and verve in *Yoshi's Feast*, illustrated by Yumi Heo. And Caldecott-winning artist Ed Young provided stunning illustrations for the Chinese folk tale, *The Hunter*, retold by Mary Casanova. We also appreciated Linda Sue Park's compelling historical novel, *The Kite Fighters*, set in 15th-century Korea.

Happily, we also found several picture books featuring contemporary Asian Pacific American children. They include two concept books with Chinese American protagonists: *Round Is a Mooncake: A Book of Shapes*, the first book by Chinese American writer Roseanne Thong, with illustrations by relative newcomer Grace Lin; and *1, 2, 3, Go!*, by Huy Vuon Lee—the latest in a series of books by Lee that explore inventive ways of incorporating Chinese characters into stories. Andrea Cheng also introduces Chinese numbers into her story of a Chinese American girl adjusting to family changes in *Grandfather*

Counts, illustrated by Ange Zhang. The child in this story is biracial, as is the protagonist in poet Janet S. Wong's delightfully onomatopoeic picture-story *Buzz*, which introduces a talented new illustrator, Margaret Chodos-Irvine. We also appreciated the interracial friendship between an Asian American girl and an African American boy in Carole Lexa Schaefer's *Snow Pumpkin*, illustrated by Pierr Morgan.

Books from Other Countries

Forty-six books first published in the United States in English after being translated from other languages were documented at the CCBC during 2000. Of these translated books, only seven were of a length substantial enough to make them eligible for the Batchelder Award. Six translated books were selected for this edition of *CCBC Choices*, including *Samir and Yonatan*, by Daniella Carmi, a story originally published in Israel and featuring a Palestinian protagonist; *The Key Is Lost*, by Ida Vos, a Holocaust novel based on the author's own childhood experiences in Holland; and *Philipok*, one of Tolstoy's many stories for young children, beautifully illustrated by Gennady Spirin, who remembers the story as a childhood favorite. We also recommend a wordless picture book from France—*A Day, A Dog*, by Gabrielle Vincent. The drama in this completely visual story is so sophisticated that it will find an audience with older children and teenagers as well.

This edition of *CCBC Choices* contains 28 books published elsewhere in English before being published in the United States or becoming available here through distributors. Two of the most talked-about books of the year—anywhere—were from England: *The Amber Spyglass*, by Philip Pullman, and *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, by J. K. Rowling. Less anticipated perhaps, but certainly no less welcome, were two other award-winning novels from England: *River Boy*, by Tim Bowler, and *Kit's Wilderness*, by David Almond, both exceptionally fine novels in which the present seems to meld with the past.

New Zealand's prolific Margaret Mahy never seems to sleep. Nor does she falter when it comes to superb storytelling, whether in a picture book such as *Down the Dragon's Tongue* or in the young adult novel *24 Hours*. Both are included in *CCBC Choices 2001*, as is *Max*, the latest amusing and endearing portrait of an unconventional family by Australian author/artist Bob Graham. Also from Australia comes *Welcome with Love*, by Jenni Overend and Julie Vivas, an unusual picture story about a home birth, as seen through the eyes of the soon-to-be second-youngest child in the family.

Our neighbors to the north weigh in with some outstanding picture books, including two by Canadian authors best known in the United States as novelists: Sarah Ellis makes her picture-book debut with *Next Stop!* an original, tender-funny story set on a city bus, and Ken Oppel provides a spirited tall tale with a plucky girl protagonist in *Peg and the Whale*. One can nearly feel the cold air in Jan Bourdeau Waboose's outdoor winter story, *SkySisters*, beautifully

illustrated by Brian Deines, who has clearly seen more than a few icicles in his day!

Fiction: From Reality to Fantasy, Present to Past

From detailed historical novels to dramatic, thoughtful, sometimes funny contemporary stories to a range of intricate fantasies, the 2000 publishing year offered a rich variety of high-quality fiction.

Among the many wonderful books set in the past is Adam Bagdasarian's stunning young-adult novel, *Forgotten Fire*, which recalls the 1915 Armenian genocide in Turkey with stark realism and a haunting voice.

Karen Cushman returns to the Middle Ages with *Matilda Bone*, describing with her trademark blend of humor and warmth the growth of a self-righteous young girl into a person of true compassion under the influence of a tough and good-hearted bonesetter. Pam Muñoz Ryan also writes of a girl who undergoes a personal transformation in *Esperanza Rising*, set during the 1930s in Mexico and the United States. Ryan's appealing and distinctive narrative follows the journey of 12-year-old Esperanza from her privileged life in Mexico across the border, where she and her mother join hundreds of others as field laborers in a workers' camp and Esperanza must reassess who she is.

In *Stowaway*, Karen Hesse spins a detailed and compelling work of fiction from the little-known life of Nicholas Young, an 18th-century boy who was a member of Captain James Cook's first voyage to explore the Southern Hemisphere. Harriet Gillem Robiner's resourceful young Black protagonist, Alfa Merryfield, in *Walking to the Bus-Rider Blues*, lives in Montgomery, Alabama, during the Civil Rights bus boycott of the 1950s. Robiner's novel is a mystery deftly enriched by the social and political times of its setting. Linda Sue Park skillfully sets a story about two different but very appealing brothers in 15th-century Korea in *The Kite Fighters*.

Perhaps one of the most overlooked and delightful books of the year is *At the Sign of the Star*, by Katherine Sturtevant. Sturtevant's Meg Moore is the clever, spirited daughter of a bookseller in 1677 London who finds that the conventions of a woman's life rub her the wrong way. Meg itches to write and to be like Aphra Behn, the well-known woman playwright of the time. Sturtevant brings Restoration London to vibrant life through Meg's sharp eyes.

Ana Rosa's desire to write makes her a 20th-century kindred spirit of Meg's in Lynn Joseph's beautifully written *The Color of My Words*, about a quiet and contemplative observer of life in a small Dominican Republic village. Ana Rosa's hunger to put words on paper is as fierce as the government forces who want to tear down the neighborhood where she lives. Through words, she finds the means to take action and transcend grief.

Like Ana Rosa, Joey Pigza is resilient in Jack Gantos's funny, touching, and sometimes harrowing *Joey Pigza Loses Control*. Joey, who first appeared in *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key* (Farrar, 1998), is a boy with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and Gantos's first-person narrative is a masterpiece of writing from inside a character's mind. So, too, is *Stuck in Neutral*, Terry Trueman's riveting and thought-provoking debut novel written from the point of view of a darkly witty, highly intelligent, and sensitive

teenage boy with severe cerebral palsy. Shawn cannot communicate—no one knows there is a lively mind inside his body—and he is convinced that his father wants to kill him out of compassion.

There were a number of outstanding fantasies published in 2000. Among them is Philip Pullman's long-awaited *The Amber Spyglass*, the third book in the *His Dark Materials* trilogy. This book will be welcomed by many who have eagerly awaited word of protagonists Lyra and Will. First-time novelist William Nicholson introduces two new spirited protagonists, Kestrel and Bowman Hath, in *The Wind Singer*, the first book of his planned *Wind on Fire* trilogy.

Robin McKinley offers a retelling of *Sleeping Beauty* set in a rich and fully imagined world of fairies, humans, and creatures of the wild. Megan Whalen Turner's *The Queen of Attolia* continues exploring the complex and intriguing characters and world she first wrote about in *The Thief* (Greenwillow, 1996). Of course, there is also J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, which debuted to unprecedented sales and media attention. More important, this volume continues the funny, fresh storytelling Rowling firmly established with the first three Harry Potter books.

Several novels grounded in the real world deftly, sometimes brilliantly, explore other planes and possibilities. The most extraordinary of these is David Almond's *Kit's Wilderness*, a literary *tour de force* set in a small town in present-day England and peopled with rich, well-rounded contemporary characters as well as with ghosts and spirits of the past. Almond's storytelling is highly imaginative and amazingly well-realized. Tim Bowler's *River Boy* also blurs the line between fantasy and reality—what is real and where our minds can take us—as teenage Jess meets a mysterious young stranger on the river who is linked with her ailing grandfather's past.

Margaret Mahy's exhilarating *24 Hours* is based in reality but moves slightly beyond it. Mahy's superb mastery as a storyteller enables her to create a convergence of characters and situations that are just on the outside edge of the probable. Yet she manages to illuminate human connections and compassion.

Picture Books: Something for Everyone

Over the past decade or so, picture-book publishing has reflected an expanded idea of its audience. Historically viewed as a medium for young and very young children, picture-book publishing as a whole now encompasses something for readers of almost any age, and the books published in the year 2000 are no exception.

One of the most exemplary books of the year demonstrates the excitement and energy generated when picture-book text and picture-book art are true partners. *So You Want to Be President?*, Judith St. George's quirky and delightful catalog of presidential facts and tidbits, is droll and witty, and David Small perfectly matches the author's tone in his wonderful art. Children and young adults alike can enjoy this volume. They will also like *Henny-Penny*, a hip and funky retelling of the Chicken Little story that Jane Wattenberg wrote and then illustrated with hilarious photo assemblages.

There were some other wonderfully humorous books we especially appreciated, including Susan Meddaugh's *Martha and Skits*, which marks the

return of Meddaugh's talking dog in one of her funniest outings to date. Peter Collington and Marsha Wilson Chall also explore the humorous possibilities of pets that take on human traits in *Clever Cat* and *Bonaparte*, respectively, while Doreen Cronin finds fresh and funny material in the barnyard in the outrageous *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type*. Bob Graham once again proves to be a master of warm and humorous storytelling for young children with *Max*, featuring another of his singular, quirky, and completely lovable families.

Along more realistic lines, Joy Harjo's *The Good Luck Cat* marks the lyrical children's writing debut of this noted Native writer for adults, and Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard's *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys* imagines a compelling and lively story loosely based on the history of a real African American family.

In *Wings*, Christopher Myers writes a fantasy firmly rooted in real life as he examines how difference can be a source of great pain but also a cause for celebration when it receives the respect it is due. Peter Sís explores a child's understanding of the world in *Madlenka*, in which he also redefines the space within a picture book. Amada Irma Pérez's protagonist creates a space of her own in the warm and appealing *My Very Own Room / Mi propio cuartito*.

Among the books we especially appreciated for very young children are two that look at a rarely examined (at least in picture books) reality: parents who work at night. Kate Banks has written a lovely and lyrical view of a father's work from his young son's imaginings in *The Night Worker*, while Eileen Spinelli's *Night Shift Daddy* describes the rituals a small girl and her father share to mark his departure each night and his return each morning. And Nancy Van Laan's lilting *When Winter Comes* is another view of a warm family question-and-answer ritual as a child and two adults explore the outdoors during a snowfall that transforms the world from autumn to winter.

Biography and Autobiography: Lives in Focus

It was a remarkable publishing year for biographical writing, a fact reflected in the number of biographies and autobiographies included in this edition of *CCBC Choices*. Among the many intriguing and compelling biographies published in 2000, three of our favorites profile individuals with strong connections to Wisconsin. Tom Lalicki's *Spellbinder* examines the unusual life and driven personality of escape artist and showman Harry Houdini, an Austrian native who spent part of his youth in both Appleton, which he claimed as his hometown, and Milwaukee. Ann Bausum's *Dragon Bones and Dinosaur Eggs* reveals the fascinating life of Beloit native Roy Chapman Andrews, the explorer and adventurer who traveled the world and eventually became the director of the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Naturalist Frances Hamerstrom, who spent most of her adult life living and working in Wisconsin, is one of six inspiring women who are the subjects of *Girls Who Looked Under Rocks*, by Jeannine Atkins.

There were a number of lively picture-book biographies for young readers, including Lesa Cline-Ransome and James Ransome's *Satchel Paige*, a fresh look at the African American baseball pitcher. Children will not need to have heard of Paige to appreciate his story. Joseph Bruchac introduces the great Lakota leader Crazy Horse to children in *Crazy Horse's Vision*, distinctively illustrated

by artist S. D. Nelson. Walter Dean Myers wrote a biography of Malcolm X for young adults in 1993 (*Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary*, published by Scholastic). In *Malcolm X: A Fire Burning Brightly*, he skillfully condenses the life of a complex individual into a brief narrative that illuminates the turning points in the African American activist's life. With Leonard Jenkins's sophisticated illustrations, this is an example of a picture book for older children that will have great appeal to some young adult readers. So, too, will *Frank O. Gehry: Outside In*, in which Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan lend understanding to the life, and especially the dazzling art, of this still-working architect.

Longer biographies for older children and young adults often have highly visual elements. One of the most dynamic of these from the year 2000 is *Savion: My Life in Tap*, a distinctive blend of biography and autobiography profiling the life of tap dancer Savion Glover and presented with an energetic design. In *Real Life: Six Women Photographers*, by Leslie Sills, includes both written and photographic portraits of its subjects as well as examples of their creative work. And Andrea Davis Pinkney's *Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters* truly does shine with sparkling storytelling prose and Stephen Alcorn's dramatic and evocative art.

Two of the year's most complex and compelling portraits for young adults are Marc Aronson's *Sir Walter Raleigh and the Quest for El Dorado* and Mirjam Pressler's *Anne Frank: A Hidden Life*. Aronson has turned his interest in a man who has fascinated him since childhood into a balanced and intricate look at the individual and his times. Pressler, one of the world's foremost Anne Frank scholars, reveals much more than we've known before about Anne Frank and each of the individuals with whom she shared that tiny attic space. In the process, Pressler repeatedly invites readers to consider what those individuals might have been thinking and feeling during those unimaginably difficult times.

Other Books of Information: History, Activism, Affirmation

In addition to the many outstanding biographies and autobiographies published in 2000, there were other excellent books of information guaranteed to engage a broad range of interests and to enhance many classroom endeavors.

The Nazi Holocaust continues to be an important topic of exploration in books for the young, and we appreciated a number of books offering new information and perspectives for children and young adults. These included Susan Bachrach's *The Nazi Olympics*, which looks at how Adolf Hitler used the international sporting event intended to promote goodwill as a propaganda tool for his ideal of Aryan supremacy. The volume also profiles a number of Jewish people both in the United States and abroad who faced difficult decisions about participating in those games. In *Darkness Over Denmark*, Ellen Levine examines the singular and astounding effort of the Danish people to save Denmark's Jews during the Nazi occupation of that country. No other country in Europe even tried to do what the Danish government and

population achieved, in part because no other country in Europe looked so clearly upon the Nazi's intended victims as, first and foremost, fellow citizens. Frank Dabba Smith writes a brief and powerful commentary to accompany the extraordinary photographs taken by Holocaust victim Mendel Grossman while he was a prisoner in the Lodz Ghetto in *My Secret Camera*.

Two distinctive books examine how their subjects made the unexpected transformation from mere citizen to citizen activist. Molly Bang's *Nobody Particular* is an inspiring look at Diane Wilson, a shrimper who found herself almost single-handedly taking on the chemical companies that were severely polluting the Texas Gulf in the 1980s. In *Pedro and Me*, Judd Winick writes of his own emergence as an AIDS educator and activist, motivated by the deep friendship he formed with Pedro Zamora when the two became house-mates for MTV's *Real World* TV series. Winick, a cartoonist, presents his narrative in a cartoon-graphic style. Interestingly, Molly Bang also uses black-and-white cartoons as one of three narrative strands in her volume.

Two other books are important and thought-provoking explorations of race. Sandra and Myles Pinkney's *Shades of Black* combines a lyrical, poetic text with beautiful photographs of Black children to affirm the many physical differences embraced in the word "Black" as it refers to race. Shannon Lanier and Jane Feldman trace the legacy of Thomas Jefferson and his slave, Sally Hemings, in *Jefferson's Children*. Lanier, one of the Jefferson-Hemings descendants, met and interviewed a great many of his relatives, some who had no idea that their heritage was part African American, and some who continue to reject outright the claim of Hemings's descendants that they are Jefferson's descendants, too.

As do all high-quality books of information, these volumes invite young readers to consider the past, the present, and the future of their world. We are especially happy to note that the 2000 publishing year was the first in which nonfiction was considered for its own annual award—the ALA/ALSC Robert L. Sibert Informational Book Award.

Book Publishing and Book Buying: So Many Choices

The increase in the number of books published during the last decade of the 20th century represents decisions made by U.S. publishers to invest in children's books. Such investments are made with the expectation that, in all parts of the nation, people are eager and ready to buy books for the young. Indeed, much evidence continues to indicate that store sales of children's books support much of the children's and young-adult book-publishing industry (as well as books for adults in several publishing houses) in the United States at this time.

The increase also represents an overwhelming number of choices. These choices begin with publishers, who decide which manuscripts to produce, which illustrators to employ, which books to advertise heavily, which authors to send on tour, and so on. Book industry representatives make decisions about paperback editions and reprints with specific consumers in mind. All of these

decisions have an impact on the book-buying public: they determine what books we will ever see in print and, once books are published, which ones most book buyers are likely to hear about. At the same time, the book industry must expect that potential consumers will buy more than the best-sellers, the most heavily promoted books, or the most familiar authors. Otherwise, they would not invest in the hundreds and hundreds of other titles they produce.

Commercial sales in bookstores are driven by parents and other adults, and by young people themselves—in the case of popular books that older children are eager to obtain for their own recreational reading. The other significant group of children's book consumers is the so-called institutional market—the public librarians, school library media specialists, classroom teachers, child care providers, and academic librarians responsible for collections of literature for the young. Individuals within these groups select and purchase books for use by more than one child, family, or student. Institutional sales most often utilize public funding and are responsible for building collections that represent the diverse needs and interests of their users.

Consumers of books for children and young adults have the luxury—and the difficulty—of making choices because of the large number of titles available. Whether their decisions are spontaneous and unplanned or based upon complex judgments, total amount of money available for book buying, comparisons, special interests, or unique needs, the fact that choices do exist cannot be overvalued among those who are committed to seeking out high-quality books for the young.

The Cooperative Children's Book Center offers an environment for discovery and learning, for making up one's own mind about the new books published each year and for making comparisons to books from other years and decades. We create *CCBC Choices* to identify the outstanding titles of the current publishing year in the hope that it will provide librarians, teachers, parents, and others with assistance in navigating the wide and exciting array of choices available to them.

CCBC Choices is a guide, not a rule book. While we certainly have made an effort to find as many of the outstanding books of the year as possible, inevitably, other books will come to our attention in the coming months and years. We will wish that we had included them. Likewise, as mentioned earlier, not every book is for every child. The purpose of *CCBC Choices* is to offer a wide variety of books for a wide variety of individuals. We have attempted to compile a guide that provides choices of high quality for everyone, not a core selection for all.

The *Choices*

The Natural World

Bulla, Clyde Robert. *A Tree Is a Plant*. Illustrated by Stacey Schuett. (Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science) HarperCollins, 2001. 31 pages (0-06-028171-5) \$15.95

An easy-to-read text introduces trees as the largest plants on earth, using an apple tree to explain how trees grow from seeds and change through the seasons. The clear, concise narrative is accompanied by bright pastel paintings showing a diverse cast of children enjoying the shade, branches, and fruit of the apple tree. In addition to appealing to beginning readers, this would also be suitable for reading aloud to preschoolers and kindergartners. (Ages 4-7)

Davies, Nicola. *One Tiny Turtle*. Illustrated by Jane Chapman. Candlewick Press, 2001. 28 pages (0-7636-1549-8) \$15.99

A baby loggerhead turtle, no bigger than a bottle cap, lives far so far out to sea that "land is only a memory." She swims and survives, returning 30 years later to the beach where she was hatched to lay her own eggs. A compelling, lyrical narrative gives an account of her life and is accompanied by realistic watercolor paintings and by informative text in smaller typeface that provides supplementary information. (Ages 3-7)

Ehlert, Lois. *Waiting for Wings*. Harcourt, 2001. 28 pages (0-15-2026088-8) \$17.00

The stages of butterfly chrysalis development are pictured on pages that vary in size from 7 x 6" to 12 1/4 x 10 1/4." A universal nature story begins on the inside cover of this unique book. Each double-page spread reveals a new stage of the cycle. The text, which begins only after the first several pages, is rhymed and spare, offering what can't be shown visually: "Out in the fields, eggs are hidden from view / clinging to leaves with butterfly glue." Children watch as a chrysalis becomes the colorful insect they might see in fields, parks, or backyard gardens, or while visiting butterfly exhibits in public museums or conservatories. Ehlert's visual abstractions show children the cycle of change, while retaining the wonder. Her design underscores the miracle and drama of creation. Vibrant colors and bold shapes mark the graphic art of her painted collage assemblages. Amidst the natural suspense and visual glory is solid information, such as how butterflies get nourishment by unrolling their tongues. Such a book offers more than anyone can see from personal observation and enhances our ability to look at nature. In the five final pages of this strikingly beautiful volume, readers will discover identification information and directions for growing a butterfly garden. Artist Lois Ehlert is known in many nations for designing new ways to use page spaces and colors in her highly visual books about the natural world. *Waiting for Wings* is no exception to the high standard she's established. (Ages 3-9)

Goodall, Jane. *The Chimpanzees I Love: Saving Their World and Ours*. A Byron Preiss Book / Scholastic Press, 2001. 80 pages (0-439-21310-X) \$17.95

Jane Goodall has been the subject of many books for young people, but here she tells her own story specifically for children. Generously illustrated throughout with engaging color photographs, Goodall's book recounts how she came to be a scientist without a college degree at a time when women were not allowed to travel alone into the bush. (Goodall's mother accompanied her for the first few months.) Most of this autobiography, however, focuses on the things Goodall has learned about chimpanzee behavior by observing them in the wild over a period of nearly 40 years. Chimps she first observed as infants are now the elders in their tightly knit groups, giving Goodall an extraordinary vantage point for her study of family bonds among the species most closely related to humans. (Ages 8-14)

Guiberson, Brenda Z. *The Emperor Lays an Egg*. Illustrated by Joan Paley. Henry Holt, 2001. 32 pages (0-8050-6204-1) \$16.95

Stunning cut-paper collages illustrate a dramatic account of emperor penguins caring for their eggs and hatchlings in the icy environs of Antarctica. The males and females work together to assure the survival of their species. Once the female penguin lays an egg, her mate takes over. He keeps the egg warm in his brood pouch while the mother and other females travel 90 miles into the open sea in search of food. A great deal of time, attention, and cooperation goes into the raising of the young emperors. (Ages 4-7)

Lasky, Kathryn. *Interrupted Journey: Saving Endangered Sea Turtles*. Photographs by Christopher G. Knight.

Candlewick Press, 2001. 40 pages (0-7636-0635-9) \$16.99

When ten-year-old Max and his mother find a Kemp's ridley turtle on a cold Cape Cod beach, its body temperature has dropped to 50 degrees Fahrenheit, 25 degrees below that of a normal turtle. Max and his mother are volunteer members of a group that patrols the beaches in fall and winter, attempting to rescue Kemp's ridley turtles, who enjoy the warm bays and lush food supply of the Cape area in summer but become incapacitated and die after cold weather arrives. This photo-documentary account of the endangered Kemp's ridley turtle successfully alternates its focus from the turtle discovered by Max to the status of the species. The text clearly explains the plight of the turtle, and realistically states that even seemingly active rescued turtles have only a 50 percent survival rate. An especially fascinating section describes the difficulty a veterinary team has in determining whether a turtle is dead or alive, as turtles can survive with heart rates so slow as to be almost imperceptible. As one veterinarian puts it, "With turtles . . . death is a relative term." The many color photographs throughout this cogent and well-designed informational book range from excellent to disappointing, with some out of focus or grainy. (Ages 7-11)

Pringle, Laurence. *Sharks! Strange and Wonderful*. Illustrated by Meryl Henderson. Boyds Mills Press, 2001. 32 pages (1-56397-863-6) \$15.95

Sharks have been a much-maligned creature in popular culture over the years but, as Laurence Pringle points out in this reasoned introduction, humans are a much greater threat to sharks than sharks are to humans. Once again, Pringle shows his mastery at meeting young children where they are and then expanding on the knowledge they are already likely to have. "If you drew a shark, you would probably give it a long slender body," he tells us before launching into a cogent comparison of the varying body shapes of four distinctive shark species who have evolved to suit their environments. Meryl Henderson's accompanying realistic watercolor illustrations show sharks in their natural underwater habitats, each species labeled with its name and length. She uses other sharks and ocean creatures to show scale consistently, and includes one painting of a tooth of the now-extinct Megalodon at actual size. In a mere 32 pages, Pringle provides the basics concerning physiology and behavior, always placing them within the context of adaptation and survival. He concludes with a sober note about the ways in which human shark hunting is not only depleting shark populations worldwide, but also upsetting the natural balance of ocean ecology. No matter what attitude about sharks young readers bring to this book, they are likely to come away with a deeper respect for these creatures that have survived for more than four million years. (Ages 4-8)

See also: *Backyard Bedtime*; *Desert Town*; *Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins*; *Gift from the Sea*; *lizards, frogs and polliwogs*; *Loki & Alex*; *Sleepy Book*; *Turtle Splash!*;

Seasons and Celebrations

Geisert, Arthur. *Nursery Crimes*. Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 2001. 32 pages (0-618-06487-7) \$16.00

A French-immigrant couple, Jumbo and Marva, establish a small tree nursery near Ames, Iowa. They live with their children in an amazing domicile fashioned from parts of an old caboose, a school bus, a country church, and other salvaged pieces. Besides learning the family's salvage-yard and tree-trimming businesses, their 12 children are knowledgeable about raising giant pumpkins. Everything helps to "make ends meet." As the story begins, the children are busy crafting topiary turkeys for upcoming Thanksgiving sales. Their carefully shaped topiaries disappear overnight, the crime must be solved, and the sheriff isn't helpful. Obvious clues lead to sly, unneighborly Voler and his crew, who are notorious topiary thieves. The clever children devise a way to catch the robbers. Their plan necessitates using pumpkins and remembering a sales secret about their topiaries. The characters in this zany story are all Geisert's signature pigs, similar to those featured in earlier books: *Pa's Balloon and Other Pig Tales* (1984); *Pigs from A to Z* (1986); *Oink* (1991); *Pigs 1 to 10* (1992); *Oink Oink* (1993); *Haystack* (1995); and *Roman Numerals I to MM* (1996). Once again, Geisert incorporates ingeniously linked objects, ladders, and slides for his mechanically gifted pigs. In addition to his sly plays on words in the title and elsewhere in the text, Geisert's extraordinary colored etchings in *Nursery Crimes* are what some adults might view as a subtle, wacky celebration of rural folk art. But children will enjoy them in all seasons for their mystery and fun. (Ages 4-8)

Gerber, Carole. *Blizzard*. Illustrated by Marty Husted. Whispering Coyote Press / Charlesbridge, 2001. 32 pages (1-58089-064-4) \$15.95

"Outside, the ground is cold and white. Inside, my home is warm and bright" begins this satisfying picture

book for young children. A small boy describes what is happening, both outside and inside his home, during a snowstorm. While the snow “swirls and blows” deeper and deeper into drifts, he warms his toes by the fireplace, drinks hot cocoa, and snuggles under a quilt. Pairs of simple sentences and their accompanying illustrations contrast the wild beauty of the storm with the snug comfort of the boy’s warm house. As the storm abates, the boy ventures out into a calm, cold, crystalline nighttime to make a snow angel. Then it’s back inside and off to bed, but not before he takes one more look at his sleeping angel. (Ages 2-4)

Goldin, Barbara Diamond. *A Mountain of Blintzes*. Illustrated by Anik McGrory. Gulliver Books/Harcourt, 2001. 32 pages (0-15-201902-2) \$16.00

As Shavuot approaches, Sarah devises a plan so that she and her husband, Max, can earn some extra money and buy the ingredients for blintzes, a traditional Shavuot food. But even as Sarah and her husband squeeze time from their busy schedules and hectic lives to take on more work, their five children devise a plan of their own in this humorous, warm-hearted tale of a large, poor, Jewish farm family in the Catskills during the early 1900’s. Barbara Diamond Goldin loosely based her story on a traditional Chelm fool’s tale. The full-color illustrations were created in watercolor. (Ages 4-7)

Harrison, Michael and Christopher Stuart-Clark. *The Young Oxford Book of Christmas Poems*. Oxford University Press, 2001. 160 pages (0-19-276247-8) \$19.95

Although this anthology of 130 poems for older children, teens, and adults contains familiar seasonal works, it’s distinctive because of the many modern poems and poets not usually represented in such collections. Expect that most of the poets will be from the United Kingdom. Look for Christmas poetry by Countee Cullen, Seamus Heaney, Diana Hendry, Miroslav Holub, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Ted Hughes, Sylvia Plath, Carol Shields, and Dylan Thomas. The scope ranges from Advent themes at the beginning to “Gate of the Year” by M. Louise Haskins near the end. Some readers may wish that the book had included brief biographical information about each poet, or that e. e. cummings’s name would have been printed sans capital letters. There is genuine cause for seasonal cheer when discovering that in the index of titles and first lines, each is differentiated by font style. Full-color illustrations by a large number of artists grace most pages of this volume that can serve either as a reference book or as a handsome gift. (Ages 11- adult)

Hest, Amy. *The Friday Nights of Nana*. Illustrated by Claire A. Nivola. Candlewick Press, 2001. 24 pages (0-7636-0658-8) \$15.99

A young girl spends the day helping her grandmother prepare to host a large family gathering for Shabbat dinner. In Jennie’s detailed description of the preparations, a warm portrait of the special relationship between the grandchild and her grandmother emerges. (“Nana washes the good china and irons all the wrinkles in her lace tablecloth. I fold napkins with lace borders.”) Delicate watercolor illustrations create the sense of invitation right into this loving home. (Ages 4-7)

Hoyt-Goldsmith, Diane. *Celebrating Ramadan*. Photographs by Lawrence Migdale. Holiday House, 2001. 32 pages (0-8234-1581-3) \$16.95

Ibraheem is a fourth-grader living with his American Muslim family in Princeton, New Jersey, where he attends an Islamic school. The opening 14 pages explain Islam, including lists of the Five Pillars of Islam and the Five Daily Prayers, summaries of the prophet Muhammad’s revelations, brief explanations of the Islamic calendar, and information about the *Qur’an*. A helpful three-color map shows where most Muslims live. A caption explains, “many of the world’s more than one billion Muslims live in countries where Islam is the dominant religion . . . [and] . . . where diverse Muslim cultures have developed.” Color photographs with brief accounts of Ibraheem and his family taking part in religious practices accompany the factual material. When Ibraheem observes Ramadan, he prepares for daily fasts before daylight and participates in rituals when he breaks his fast at sunset. The Eid al-Fitr holiday marks the new moon and the end of the month of Ramadan. Ibraheem’s Egyptian grandmother’s recipe for the Eid cookie *ghorayyibah* is included. The author emphasizes the connection between Ramadan and the responsibility of all Muslims to treat people who are hungry with generosity. One strength is the book’s clarity about the great diversity of Muslims; Ibraheem’s mother’s traditions come from Egypt, his father’s from Bosnia. At the end are a 38-word glossary and an index. Although most Muslims would probably prefer the word “observing” rather than the series title “celebrating,” this book provides an accessible, reliable source of information about ways American Muslims practice Islam. (Ages 5-11)

Joose, Barbara. *A Houseful of Christmas*. Illustrated by Betsy Lewin. Henry Holt, 2001. 32 pages (0-8050-6391-9) \$14.95

When Granny hosts the entire family for dinner on Christmas Day, her house is filled to the brim with relatives. “Whhhhh went the wind. Shhhhh went the snow.” They eat, they open presents, and they sing songs. Then they get ready to go, but the storm outside is raging. “You can all sleep here!” Granny tells them. So it’s blankets and pillows on the floor, and mini-dramas in every corner. Little Otto is afraid there are monsters. Uncle Bert is dreaming of his firefighter days. Aunt Ivy can’t sleep next to three squirming boys. “Tick tick tick went the grandfather clock. Whhhhh went the wind. Shhhhh went the snow.” Barbara Joosse captures the wonderful chaos of a large family gathering in this warm holiday romp illustrated with black pen lines and watercolor washes.” (Ages 3-6)

Mayer, Marianna. *The Real Santa Claus*. Phyllis Fogelman Books / Penguin Putnam, 2001. 32 pages (0-8037-2624-4) \$16.99

The famous poem “A Visit from St. Nicholas” is reprinted without illustration at the beginning of this elegant book that examines the real person on whom that poem is based. The real Nicholas lived during the fourth century in what is now Turkey. Throughout the centuries the legends of his generosity have inspired musicians, playwrights, sculptors, and painters. Mayer’s fictional narrative is illustrated by more than two dozen paintings featuring the man who became Bishop Nicholas. Beautiful full-color reproductions of these masterworks represent careful selection and exacting attention to the printing process. The small typeface can encourage young readers ready to learn more than the typical legend in the famous poem. Someone wanting more information can see *The Truth about Santa Claus* by James Cross Giblin (Crowell, 1985). Mayer does not speculate about the recent literary controversy concerning the poem’s true authorship. She credits books about saints as her sources. The artwork selected and acquired for this beautiful volume is chiefly from European artists such as Tintoretto and Fra Angelico. Artwork from a book of hours, and even several greeting cards, is also reproduced. The author’s commentary sums up what can be agreed upon about the real Santa Claus: “The compelling evidence of his generosity supplied by history, legend and art portrays for me a simple true-to-life human being with a fineness of character that both reflects and encourages the generosity we are all capable of...” (Ages 7-11)

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Mim’s Christmas Jam*. Illustrated by Brian Pinkney. Gulliver Books / Harcourt, 2001. 32 pages (0-48-201918-9) \$16.00

Mim’s belly-hum jam is one of the highlights of Christmas for young Saraleen and Royce and their father, Pap. Just one taste, and Pap starts “whistling a deep, hooty tune.” But this year, Pap is off in New York City, helping to build the subway, and he won’t be home for Christmas. “Let’s make a batch of belly-hum for Pap,” Mim suggests to her children to cheer them up. They send the jam off to Pap in New York, where the mean-tempered foremen of the dig site have ordered everyone to work on Christmas Day. But when Pap gives Mean and Evil, as the workers call the two foremen, a taste of Mim’s spectacular jam, they change their minds--Mim’s jam is that good. Andrea Davis Pinkney deftly blends warmth and humor in this story about a proud, loving African American family in 1915. An author’s note provides a very brief history on the building of the New York Subway. Brian Pinkney used luma dyes and acrylic on scratchboard to create his distinctive illustrations. (Ages 5-8)

Rosen, Michael J. *Chanukah Lights Everywhere*. Illustrated by Melissa Iwai. Gulliver Books / Harcourt, 2001. 24 pages (0-15-202447-6) \$16.00

Each night of Chanukah, a five-year-old boy celebrates with his family. And each night, he finds additional lights at home or around his urban neighborhood that mirror the number of candles lit in the menorah that evening. “I switch on the lamps out front and suddenly there are three more lights, like in our menorah!” The brightly colored acrylic illustrations have a warm, cozy feel, as when light pours through the windows of their brownstone home onto the darkened, snowy streets outside. There are many details for children to enjoy on repeated readings, such as the number of cats in each picture, which matches the number of candles lit in the menorah that night. A very brief explanation of the origins of the holiday follows this cheerful story. (Ages 4-7)

Samuels, Allison. *Christmas Soul: African American Holiday Stories*. Illustrated by Michele Wood. Jump at the Sun / Hyperion, 2001. 48 pages (0-7868-0521-8) \$17.99

Contemporary African American celebrities share stories of their memorable childhood Christmases in this beautifully designed book presented in an album-like format. Each double-page spread is devoted to one individual. The 20 short vignettes are presented on the right-hand pages, and distinctively styled visual interpretations of those stories by contemporary artist Michelle Wood appear in vibrant, full-color paintings on the left. A striking border design fills the space between the two pages. Among the stars who share their memories of Christmases past are Halle Berry, Mary J. Blige, Kobe Bryant, Jamie Foxx, Aretha Franklin, LL Cool J, Monica, Shaquille O’Neal, and Denzel Washington. Brief biographical information is

provided about each contributor to this handsome volume. (Age 9 and older)

Serfozo, Mary. *Plumply, Dumply Pumpkin*. Illustrated by Valeria Petrone. Margaret K. McElderry, 2001. 32 pages (0-689-83834-4) \$12.95

"Peter's looking for a pumpkin, a perfect, plumply, dumply pumpkin. . . Not a stumpy grumpy pumpkin, but a sunny, sumptuous pumpkin." This playful, rollicking Halloween story about a search for the perfect pumpkin to carve is a mouthful to say, but oh so much fun to listen to, as Mary Serfozo uses rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, and assonance to delightful effect. The full-color, digitally rendered illustrations show Peter as a small tiger and feature several other animal characters. But it is with their ears, not their eyes, that children will enjoy this tongue-twister of a story. (Ages 4-7)

Turner, Sandy. *Silent Night*. Atheneum, 2001. 32 pages (0-689-84156-6) \$16.00

This hilarious picture story features a contemporary Santa and a yippy dog, the only one who notices the round, red-garbed intruder. While the dog sees Santa, the humans he lives with see only the dog that wuffs, barks, and yaps! His protests are also the only words the author uses to tell this otherwise visual story, but they repeat often as Santa's presence increasingly agitates the dog. Cartoonist Sandy Turner's artwork is primarily black line drawings on a cream-colored background, but the artist has used color sparingly and to dramatic effect, with the bold red of Santa's suit on every page. This highly entertaining picture book for children will be popular with adults as well! (Ages 5-8)

See also: *Bunny Party*; *Henry's First-Moon Birthday*; *Iguanas in the Snow*=*Iguanas en la nieve*; *Sea, Sand, Me!*; *Race of the Birkebeiners*; *Tree Is a Plant*

Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature

Lunge-Larsen, Lise. *The Race of the Birkebeiners*. Illustrated by Mary Azarian. Houghton Mifflin, 2001. 32 pages (0-618-10313-9) \$16.00

Cross-country skiers gather in Hayward, Wisconsin, each winter to test their skill in the annual American Birkebeiner ski race. But centuries ago, the Nordic warriors who gave that event its name performed a cross-country "race" with life-and-death consequences. The dramatic story and its aftermath unfold in this breathtaking book, which is illustrated with handsome woodcuts by Mary Azarian. In the early 13th century, the Birkebeiners, so-called for the birch leggings they wore as their only armor, were the loyal warriors of Norway's king. On Christmas Eve in 1206, the Birkebeiners received the call to save the life of the king's baby son, Prince Håkon. The baby and his mother, Inga of Varteig, had been in hiding since the child's birth three months after the king's death. Now the Baglers, the would-be usurpers of the throne, were closing in. On that Christmas Eve, Inga, Prince Håkon, and eight Birkebeiners began the journey by ski across the mountains that were "the tallest and stormiest in all of Norway" to reach the safety of the northern districts. Lise Lunge-Larsen tells of that journey and the astounding courage of Inga of Varteig, who saved her son and Norway's future. (Ages 6-9)

MacDonald, Margaret Read, reteller. *Mabela the Clever*. Illustrated by Tim Coffey. Albert Whitman, 2001. 32 pages (0-8075-4902-9) \$15.95

The rhythm, pacing, and language characteristic of fine oral storytelling propel this suspenseful, crowd-pleasing tale adapted from the Limba people of West Africa. A sly cat determined to outwit a village of mice has the tables turned by the smart young mouse who remembers all her father taught her and "lived to tell the tale." Children will love joining in on the song-like refrain in a book that actively invites both verbal participation and the opportunity to get up and act out the story. Richly colored acrylic illustrations provide the backdrop for the tale. *Highly Commended, 2002 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4-8)

Wiesner, David. *The Three Pigs*. Clarion, 2001. 40 pages (0-618-00701-6) \$16.00

It all starts out quite fine and familiar with "once upon a time," but things quickly take a very unusual turn in David Wiesner's brilliantly conceived version of "The Three Little Pigs." "Hey, he blew me right out of the story!" exclaims the first little pig after the wolf does his huffing and puffing. And though it takes the wolf a little while to notice, the three little pigs have, indeed, made their escape. They cavort with glee against the otherwise blank pages, then fold one into a paper airplane, board it, and soar into the air. A rough landing leads to a scary foray in a nursery rhyme book full of saccharine illustrations. They leave with the cat-and-the-fiddle tagging along, entering a tale of castles and dragons. When the dragon is about

to be slain, the pigs help him escape. Their continued passage through different books eventually leads them back to the original story. But this time, the pigs take charge, and the dragon makes a very powerful ally. Children, young teenagers, and adults, too, will find great pleasure and humor in the unexpected turns of this tale. *Winner, CCBC Caldecott Award Discussion (Age 4 and older)*

Willey, Margaret. *Clever Beatrice: An Upper Peninsula Conte*. Illustrated by Heather Solomon. Atheneum, 2001. 32 pages (0-689-83254-0) \$16.00

This lively retelling of a French-Canadian conte tale from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan offers a twist on tradition by casting a young girl as its hero. When Beatrice and her mother run out of food and money, Beatrice sets off to the other side of the woods to challenge the rich giant “who loves to gamble on his own strength.” Three times, Beatrice bets the giant that she can beat him in contests of physical strength. She succeeds each time by using her strongest assets: a quick tongue and a nimble mind. Beatrice never has to lift a finger, but she convinces the giant he’s lucky to have gotten off so cheaply with the gold she wins. Beatrice’s straight-faced besting of the giant in Margaret Willey’s richly textured story is truly a delight. Heather Solomon’s graceful illustrations extend the spirit of this wonderful tale with understated humor by capturing both the physical contrast between Beatrice and the giant and the interplay of giants with the human world. *Winner, 2002 Charlotte Zolotow Award; Honor Book, CCBC Caldecott Award Discussion (Ages 4-8)*

See also: *Dragon’s Son; I Had a Rooster; Nursery Classics; Rowan Hood; Seeing Stone; Troy*

Historical People, Places, and Events

***Anne Frank in the World: 1929-1945*. Compiled by the Anne Frank House. Translated from the Dutch. U.S. edition: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001. 143 pages (0-375-81177-X) \$18.95**

Anne Frank continues to fascinate young people, and her important story continues to be explored in new ways in literature for the young. This compilation of photographs from the Anne Frank House Museum in Amsterdam goes beyond the few familiar pictures of Anne found in other books and incorporates photos documenting German aggression and the Holocaust. The text is comprised of short, informative narratives that precede each photographic section and provide a good background to the climate and events in Germany and the Netherlands surrounding Anne Frank and her family from the 1920’s through the war’s end. Two especially welcome aspects of the narrative are the discussions of the lack of widespread protest by the populace to the increasingly restrictive and punitive measures against the Jews, and of the anti-Semitism and other types of intolerance that continue today. Two unfortunate errors in the text are a mistaken reference to Theresienstadt being in Germany rather than Czechoslovakia (it is correctly stated in one place and incorrectly stated in another) and the identification of the disease that killed Anne and her sister, Margot, as typhoid. It was actually typhus. Nonetheless, this volume has much for young-adult and adult readers to examine and consider. (Age 12 and older)

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *Black Potatoes: The Story of the Great Irish Famine, 1845-1850*. Houghton Mifflin, 2001. 184 pages (0-618-00271-5) \$18.00

Memories of the Irish Potato Famine from 1845-1850 were so devastating for the survivors that few ever talked about it, even among their own family members. But Susan Campbell Bartoletti has managed to uncover enough first-person anecdotes to personalize her balanced account of the history and politics behind the Great Famine. This book also includes information gleaned from newspapers and public records, in addition to secondary sources. Her narrative, accompanied by period sketches, chronicles the effects of years of potato blight which led to massive starvation, disease, emigration, and the complete failure of an economic system based on absentee landlords and tenant farming. (Ages 11-14)

Blumberg, Rhoda. *Shipwrecked! The True Adventures of a Japanese Boy*. HarperCollins, 2001. 80 pages (0-688-17484-1) \$16.95

At age nine, in 1836, Manjiro Nakahama started fishing to support his mother and younger siblings after his father died. Five years later, the boy set out from a small Japanese coastal village with four other men. A violent storm pushed the boat far out to sea before crashing it on the rocks near an uninhabited island. The castaways survived for five months on seaweed, shellfish, and albatross before an American whaling ship rescued them. Quick-witted Manjiro learned English while aboard the ship. He soon began to communicate easily with the Westerners whose mannerisms and appearance seemed so foreign. Because Manjiro lived in

an era when Japan intentionally isolated itself from the rest of the world, he became the first Japanese person to visit the United States. He kept a record of his observations by writing and sketching in a journal as he traveled throughout the world on whaling ships. In spite of his adventures and success as a whaler, he wanted, above all, to return to Japan--a near impossibility given that country's strict laws against foreign travel. Rhoda Blumberg's captivating account is greatly enriched by the political and social details she provides. We come to understand Manjiro as a man comfortable in two diverse cultures. The handsomely designed, oversized volumes is generously illustrated with period illustrations, including many sketches by Manjiro. (Ages 8-14)

Bolden, Tonya. *Tell All the Children Our Story: Memories and Mementos of Being Young and Black in America*. Harry N. Abrams, 2001. 128 pages (0-8019-4496-0) \$24.95

The first recorded birth of an African child in North America occurred in 1624. From that day forward, African American children have struggled to grow up in a nation that has often viewed them as inferior. African American parents, grandparents, and elders have always tried to give their children as much happiness as possible, although a simple, carefree childhood has been next to impossible. Well-selected quotes from primary source material serve to illustrate this engaging account as much as do the historical photographs, paintings, and drawings of African American children and their personal effects. Some of the children represented here, such as Phillis Wheatley, Ruby Bridges, Muhammad Ali, and Michael Jackson, became famous even as children, but most were resilient children trying to lead ordinary lives under extraordinary circumstances. Their stories have been passed down both orally and in writing, and are documented here as a testament to their strength, intelligence, and determination that children in future generations would have better lives. As one elder told his granddaughter after explaining how he had had his eyes burned out as punishment because he had taught himself to read: "Promise me that you gonna go all the way through school, as far as you can. And one more thing, I want you to promise me that you gonna tell all the children my story." (Ages 8-16)

Cole, Joanna. *Ms. Frizzle's Adventures: Ancient Egypt*. Illustrated by Bruce Degen. Scholastic Press, 2001. 40 pages (0-590-44680-0) \$15.95

Ever wonder how the indomitable Ms. Frizzle of Magic School Bus fame spends her summer vacations? Here we see her accompanying a group of unsuspecting adults and children who are traveling to Egypt. True to form, the Frizz takes over when Herb the tour guide gets separated from the group, and she manages to transport them all back to Ancient Egypt. This 9 1/4 x 12 1/4" volume has a completely different cast of characters than we're used to, but it employs many of the same devices: a blend of fact and fantasy using comic strip conventions. Here, the factual information is printed on clay tablets and papyrus scrolls, and the ancient Egyptians speak in pyramid-shaped dialogue bubbles. (Ages 6-11)

Freedman, Russell. *In the Days of the Vaqueros: America's First Cowboys*. Clarion, 2001. 70 pages (0-395-96788-0) \$18.00

Before cowboys roamed the ranges of the West, and before they occupied the imaginations of countless writers, filmmakers, artists, and children, *vaqueros* in Mexico were perfecting the skills that we typically associate with cowboys: riding, roping, herding, branding. From the 16th century, the Spanish conquerors of Mexico forced the Mexican Indians to work on their haciendas, caring for the large herds of cattle. These *vaqueros* became skilled riders and ropers, and inventive creators of special saddles, clothing, and techniques that would later be thought of as the trademarks of the American cowboy, such as chaps, spurs, and roping with lariats (lassos). Even the cowboy hat is a descendent of the sombrero. But *vaqueros* were viewed as servants in Mexico, while the "independent" cowboy who later emerged in this country became a romantic icon. This, author Russell Freedman notes, is perhaps the biggest reason why *vaqueros* have remained almost invisible in mainstream history. In sparkling prose, Freedman documents the history of the *vaqueros* and their legacy, providing unique information in a volume illustrated with period paintings, drawings, and photographs. (Ages 10-14)

Grace, Catherine O'Neill and Margaret M. Bruchac. *1621: A New Look at Thanksgiving*. Written by Catherine O'Neill Grace and Margaret M. Bruchac with Plimoth Plantation. Photographs by Sisse Brimberg and Cotton Coulson. National Geographic Society, 2001. 48 pages (0-7922-7027-4) \$17.95

What really happened at the first harvest gathering between Wampanoag Indians and English settlers? So little was documented then that, over time, the event has become mythologized and celebrated as the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday. Based on the in-depth research conducted in recent years at the Plimouth Plantation

living history museum, Grace and Bruchac separate fact from fantasy and provide an account of what most likely happened. Color photographs from a three-day reenactment that occurred at Plimoth Plantation in 2000 add accurate cultural and historical details. (Ages 7-14)

Hopkinson, Deborah. *Fannie in the Kitchen: The Whole Story from Soup to Nuts of How Fannie Farmer Invented Recipes with Precise Measurements.* Illustrated by Nancy Carpenter. An Anne Schwartz Book / Atheneum, 2001. 32 pages (0-689-81965-X) \$16.00

Young Marcia Shaw enjoys helping her mother with household tasks and looks forward to more responsibility after the new baby is born. So Marcia is initially disappointed when her parents hire Fannie Farmer to assist with the cooking. Fannie proves to be a skillful cook and an excellent teacher, and she quickly wins Marcia over by sharing her knowledge of cookery, something the young girl thinks of as magic. "Preparing food well isn't magic. It's an art and a science that anyone can learn," Fannie assures her. But when Marcia has trouble keeping everything in her head, Fannie begins to write it down for her, leading to the invention of the modern recipe. Hopkinson's spirited story is based on real events in Fannie Farmer's life before she took a position at the Boston Cooking School, as an author's note reveals. Hopkinson cleverly breaks the story into sections named after a seven-course meal. The details she chooses to illustrate Farmer's culinary savvy are likely to interest children--how to know when to flip a pancake, for example, and three ways to tell if an egg is fresh. Nancy Carpenter's whimsical illustrations are an excellent match for the author's tone, as they successfully blend detailed Victorian line art for background objects such as stoves and oil lamps (and even Marcia's parents), with light-hearted cartoon-style renditions of Fannie and Marcia. (Ages 7-10)

Kerley, Barbara. *The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins.* Illustrated by Brian Selznick. Scholastic Press, 2001. 48 pages (0-439-11494-2) \$16.95

Waterhouse Hawkins was a British artist who was fascinated by dinosaurs. In the mid-19th century, no one had figured out what dinosaurs actually looked like. Hawkins wanted to change that. His passion was to make these prehistoric creatures come to life, at least in the public imagination. With a scientist as an advisor, he sculpted a small clay model, then a life-size one. Then he constructed the final life-size creation with a skeleton of iron and a "skin" of brick, tiles, and broken stones. His dinosaurs went on display at the Crystal Palace in London to great acclaim, and Hawkins was invited to create something similar for a new museum in New York's Central Park. City politics and vandals ultimately crushed that endeavor. Still, Hawkins created life-size skeletons and paintings of dinosaurs that awed Americans in other institutions, including the Smithsonian Museum. Barbara Kerley and Brian Selznick have teamed to create a vivid, fascinating profile of a unique individual and his singular work. Both the author and the artist have provided an extensive note on their research. (Age 9-13)

Loew, Patty. *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal.* Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2001. 148 pages (0-87020-335-5) \$39.95; pbk. (0-87020-332-0) \$21.95

This unprecedented published history of Wisconsin's Indian nations for the general public is a wonderful resource for older teens and for teachers of any grade. Patty Loew, an enrolled member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, writes in her introduction, "This is by no means an exhaustive study of the tribes in the state. It is my earnest attempt, however, to explore Wisconsin's rich native heritage in a collection of compact tribal histories. . . . I confined my discussion to the twelve Indian nations . . . whose presence predated Wisconsin statehood and who have maintained a continuous residence here." Those nations are the Ho-Chunk, the Menominee, the Potawatomi, the Oneida, the Mohican, the Brothertown, and the six bands of Ojibwe. An opening chapter examines the early history of native peoples in the state, including the Effigy Mound Builders and the Mississippians, noting the connections of these cultures to contemporary Wisconsin native peoples. The book documents the impact of European arrival in a general way in the second chapter. Subsequent chapters discuss individual tribes and their histories, including the too-often-tragic impact of white settlement, but also the richness of tribal cultures and traditions. Loew emphasizes the uniqueness of each nation. She also addresses the challenge of documenting a chronological "history" of peoples who organize their pasts thematically and for whom "stories unfold in a circular fashion." This important work fills a void in the histories of many of Wisconsin's native peoples. (Age 14-adult)

Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. *The Lamp, the Ice, and the Boat Called Fish: Based on a True Story.* Illustrated by

Beth Krommes. Houghton Mifflin, 2001. 48 pages (0-618-00341-X) \$15.00

In 1913, a boat called *Karluk* was carrying scientists, part of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, up the coast of Alaska. Also on board was an Iñupiaq family. The mother, Qiruk, kept the crew in warm clothing with her skill at sewing sealskin coats, pants, and boots. The father, Kurraluk, hunted food for the group. Their two children were eight-year-old Pagnasuk and two-year-old Makpii. This exquisite book pairs Jacqueline Briggs Martin's elegant, graceful prose and Beth Krommes stunning scratchboard illustrations in the dramatic true story of what happened to the travelers when the *Karluk* became stuck in an ice floe. The group was stranded in the middle of the Arctic's frozen waters for more than a year. Abandoning the damaged ship (which later sank), they set up an encampment on the ice. The captain and others set off across the dangerous ice floe in search of rescue, while those who stayed behind relied on the skills and knowledge of the Iñupiaq family to survive. Exquisitely detailed, the prose and art provide an intimate look at this Iñupiaq family, their culture, and their traditions, in the context of an incredible survival story. Additional information provided in this 9 x 11" volume includes a complete list of the individuals on board the *Karluk* and three wonderful black-and-white photographs showing Qiruk, Kurraluk, Pagnasuk, and Makpii. *Honor Book, CCBC Sibert Award Discussion* (Ages 8-14)

Moss, Marissa. *Brave Harriet: The First Woman to Fly the English Channel*. Illustrated by C. F. Payne. Silver Whistle / Harcourt, 2001. 32 pages (0-15-202380-1) \$16.00

The first American woman to receive a pilot's license was a newspaper writer named Harriet Quimby. This spirited, fictionalized, first-person narrative tells of that feat, and of Harriet's determination to be the first woman to fly solo across the English Channel. Friend and fellow pilot Gustav Hamel discourages Harriet, offering to fly disguised as her so she can claim the credit. But Harriet responds, "A hero's welcome for a fraud! No thank you! You may be worried about what I can do but *I'm* not!" "Harriet was successful in her attempt, finding the experience of flying over water beautiful and exhilarating. However, her claim to fame was lost in the furor over another huge news story that occurred the same day--the sinking of the Titanic. The full-color illustrations show Harriet's flight from ever-changing perspectives. (Ages 5-8)

Noguchi, Rick and Deneen Jenks. *Flowers from Mariko*. Illustrated by Michelle Reiko Kumata. Lee & Low, 2001. 32 pages (1-58430-032-9) \$16.95

A young Japanese American girl and her family return to California after spending three years in an internment camp during World War II. Mariko misses her friends from the camp, and the kids at school aren't friendly. Her father's once-successful gardening business is gone, along with his truck and the tools he needs to start over. "Mariko knew her parents were worried. Through the thin walls of the trailer late at night, she could hear them whispering, their words circling the dark rooms like birds without a safe place to land." This picture book realistically portrays the difficulties faced by Japanese Americans after the war and ends with hope built on the family's hard work, determination, and love. The stylized illustrations use multiple media and techniques, including ink and gouache resist, scanning, and computerized coloration. (Ages 5-8)

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *There Goes the Neighborhood: Ten Buildings People Loved to Hate*. Holiday House, 2001. 96 pages (0-8234-1435-3) \$18.95

Throughout history, the neighbors and the public have met great architectural feats like the Eiffel Tower and the Guggenheim Museum with a hue and a cry. Each of the ten buildings featured here inspired a flurry of negative comments before, during, and after construction. The Washington Monument, for example, was compared to a stalk of asparagus, and Mark Twain called it "the memorial chimney." The derisive nickname used in 1902 for New York City's Fuller Building is today its common name: the Flatiron Building. And one neighbor hated Frank O'Gehry's Santa Monica home so much that he fired a shot through Gehry's living-room window. Some of these buildings were creatively designed to solve real problems: the Walker Community Library in Minneapolis was built underground to save space and energy, for example, and the original McDonald's restaurants incorporated the golden arches both to attract attention and to express a futuristic look in the 1950s. Others, such as Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria, seem to have been exercises in power and ego. No matter the amount of public outcry, all of the buildings included here have attracted hordes of visitors. Perhaps the most amusing of these was author Guy de Maupassant, who dined regularly in an Eiffel Tower restaurant because it was the only place in Paris that didn't offer a view of the building. (Ages 9-14)

Warren, Andrea. *We Rode the Orphan Trains*. Houghton Mifflin, 2001. 132 pages (0-618-11712-1) \$18.00

Between 1854 and 1929, an estimated 200,000 orphaned or abandoned children in the United States, most of them from the East Coast, traveled by train to towns and cities across the nation and were made available for adoption. Andrea Warren documents the personal stories of eight children who rode the Orphan Trains, noting that all of the surviving Orphan Train riders are aging, making the task of recording their experiences now a critical one. Each of these eight was fortunate to end up in a loving home, although there were a few frightening starts. Some people saw the Orphan Train children as a source of cheap labor, and there are many known cases of abuse and neglect. But the adult agents cared for the children on the train journey and tried to check on each child, both in the days following a placement and again a year later. Those visits made all the difference to several of these children, who were removed from their first placements and later ended up in loving families. Each of these riders felt some sense of abandonment over the course of her or his life. Some have been able to learn about their birth parents and to make peace with their emotions about the adoption. Others have not. Photographs of each individual as a child and today accompany these personal histories. Warren has also written about the Orphan Trains in the equally compelling *Orphan Train Rider: One Boy's True Story* (Houghton Mifflin, 1996). (Ages 9-12)

Winter, Jonah. *Béisbol! Latino Baseball Pioneers and Legends*. Introduction by Bruce Markusen Rodríguez. Lee & Low, 2001. 32 pages (1-58430-012-4) \$16.95

Great ballplayers from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela are highlighted with a brief biographical profile accompanied by a stylized color painting. The profiles focus on the 14 players' remarkable athletic accomplishments, as well as on some of the challenges they faced as pioneers in the field during a time when only fair-skinned Latinos were accepted into the U.S. Major Leagues. (Ages 7-11)

See also: *All the Way Home*; *B. Franklin, Printer*; *Béisbol!*; *Breaking Through*; *Bull's Eye*; *Caleb's Story*; *Carver*; *Fair Weather*; *Gift from the Sea*; *Goin' Someplace Special*; *Greatest*; *Helen Keller*; *John & Abigail Adams*; *Joshua's Song*; *Land*; *Mim's Christmas Jam*; *Missing from Haymarket Square*; *Other Side*; *Race of the Birkebeiners*; *Single Shard*; *Slap Your Sides*; *Tomboy of the Air*; *Traveling Man*; *Vincent van Gogh*; *Voice from the Wilderness*; *Witness*

Biography and Autobiography

Adler, David A. B. *Franklin, Printer*. Holiday House, 2001. 126 pages (0-8234-1675-5) \$19.95

A contemporary once described Benjamin Franklin as a "singular man of peculiar character and extraordinary talents." But he preferred to be known as "B. Franklin, Printer." Everything about Adler's absorbing biography captures this "singular man" and his times. The engaging narrative uses well-selected direct quotes from Franklin, his family, his friends, and his colleagues. Adler culled these with careful research into primary and secondary sources. The beautifully designed volume also gives a sense of Ben Franklin by employing typeface and typographical devices from his own printed papers and monographs. With interests ranging from politics and civics to mathematical puzzles and scientific thought, Franklin was a true Renaissance man. Adler brings to life this intelligent, witty, slightly eccentric freethinker who, despite his great successes, always thought of himself as a common man. (Ages 9-14)

Brown, Don. *A Voice from the Wilderness: The Story of Anna Howard Shaw*. Houghton Mifflin, 2001. 32 pages (0-618-08362-6) \$16.00

Born in 1847 in England, Anna Howard Shaw grew from a precocious child into a woman of lasting influence. After emigrating to America, her family lived in Massachusetts, where they were active abolitionists. When Anna was 12 the family moved again, to Michigan, where they endured the challenges of settling in a rural region. There was no organized school for Anna and her siblings. Anna realized even during those stark years that she was called to be a leader. She later wrote that as a girl she wanted to "talk to people and tell them things . . . Just why, just what, I did not yet know, but I began to preach in the silent words, to stand on stumps and address the unresponsive trees." She earned a theology degree, became a clergywoman, and then a doctor, as well, entering fields not generally open to women of that time. She was angry because women worked "at half men's wages, not because their work was inferior, but because they were women." Brown writes that Anna "vowed to open the minds of people who would hobble women's dreams." As a result of Anna's zealous efforts to win women the right to vote, she succeeded Susan B. Anthony to formally lead the American suffragist movement. She is known today as one of the first women

to become a minister and for her role in gaining rights for women. This picture book bears the title of Anna Howard Shaw's autobiography. Her words served as the chief source for the abbreviated biographical sketch account Brown wrote and illustrated with artwork created with pen and ink and watercolor. (Ages 5-8)

Cummins, Julie. *Tomboy of the Air: Daredevil Pilot Blanche Stuart Scott*. HarperCollins, 2001. 80 pages (0-06-029138-9) \$16.95

Pioneer aviator Blanche Stuart Scott once said of herself: "I always liked speed and I had a very good sense of balance." She also had an ample dose of daring and indulgent parents who encouraged her to pursue her interests from an early age: when, at 13, she had smashed up her seventh bicycle, her father refused to buy her another one. Instead, he bought her a Cadillac. The year was 1902 and there were not yet any rules about driving, but Blanche's habit of speeding recklessly through the streets of Rochester, New York, inspired a special session of the Rochester City Council to see what they could do to "stop this child from driving." As a young woman, Blanche turned her interests from driving to flying. She trained with Glenn Curtiss, chief rival of the Wright Brothers, in a time when pilots flew not only to entertain the masses with dangerous stunts but also to help early aeronautical engineers perfect the flying machine. In the years that followed, she not only achieved a number of firsts which helped advance the art and science of flying, but also capably faced the constant barrage of social criticism – and even several assassination attempts – aimed at her as a woman in a male-dominated profession. Her sharp wit and spirited outlook are evident in the numerous direct quotes throughout Cummins's meticulously researched and well-documented text. Scott's aviation career, unfortunately, was grounded after a serious accident in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1913, which led to 41 broken bones and an eight-month recuperation. She went on to produce independent films and work as a screenwriter in Hollywood, returning to the air briefly in 1948 to set one more record as the first woman to fly a jet plane. The author did make several unfortunate generalized statements about the role of women in society in the text, stating, for example, that few women worked in the era when Scott was a young woman. Of course there were thousands of working women, but few of them were in Scott's privileged economic class. Still, this compelling biography of a courageous, independent, and intelligent woman will no doubt leave you wondering why Blanche Stuart Scott isn't a household name. (Ages 8-12)

Greenberg, Jan and Sandra Jordan. *Vincent van Gogh: Portrait of an Artist*. Delacorte Press, 2001. 132 pages (0-385-32806-0) \$14.95

Jan Greenberg and Sandra are two of the most accomplished writers for the young on subjects relating to art. Here, they have written a compassionate portrait of Vincent Van Gogh, whose stirring, vibrant works of art never achieved great renown in his own lifetime. Van Gogh experienced emotional difficulties and periods of depression throughout most of his adult life. His relationships with others were often impassioned and difficult. The authors profile this brilliant artist with great sensitivity, and provide readers with the means to look at his art, some of which is reproduced in this volume, in meaningful, insightful ways. Van Gogh's greatest supporter personally and artistically was his brother Theo. That relationship was preserved through letters, and those letters are part of the extensive works cited by the authors in the research they conducted to create this illuminating biography. (Ages 9-14)

Lawlor, Laurie. *Helen Keller: Rebellious Spirit*. Holiday House, 2001. 168 pages (0-8234-1588-0) \$22.95

As someone who achieved a great deal against the odds, Keller has long been a popular topic of children's biographies, just as she became a celebrity in her own time. While Lawlor provides plenty of well-documented evidence of Keller's remarkable achievements, she also writes compellingly of her complex relationship with her controlling teacher, Annie Sullivan, and of Keller's radical political and social beliefs. Both Keller and Sullivan emerge as flawed but gifted human beings living in an era when women struggled to achieve anything beyond their preordained roles. *Honor Book, CCBC Sibert Award Discussion* (Ages 9-14)

Macy, Sue. *Bull's-Eye: A Photobiography of Annie Oakley*. National Geographic Society, 2001. 64 pages (0-7922-7008-8) \$17.95

Annie Oakley first came to wide attention as a sharpshooter in Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show late in the 19th century. Years later, depictions of her life by Hollywood and Broadway would turn this legendary marksmanship pioneer into a myth of sorts, as the storytellers changed her life to suit their plots. Here Sue Macy returns to the facts, and captures the essence of this strong, determined, forward-looking woman. Born in Ohio, the daughter of Quakers, Annie began shooting after her father died, when she was still a girl.

Her mother was horrified, but Annie took to it naturally, and she knew she could put food on her family's table. Her childhood was difficult in the years after her father's death, and as an adult her philanthropic work included helping widows, orphans, and young women who wanted to continue in school. As a young adult, she met Frank Butler, another sharpshooter, when someone paired them in a shooting match. That pairing continued for the rest of Annie's life in a marriage that was both a business and personal partnership and that lasted 50 years. This highly visual, winning account of Annie Oakley's life is illustrated with many archival photographs. (Ages 10-14)

Myers, Walter Dean. *Bad Boy: A Memoir*. HarperCollins, 2001. 214 pages (0-06-029523-6) \$15.95

A notable author of books for children and teens has now written about his own life in a memoir that offers an honest and intriguing look at his past, and a lively, forthright commentary on the challenges of growing up that will resonate for today's young-adult readers. Walter Dean Myers was hungry to learn as a child living with his adoptive parents in the vibrant energy of 1940s and 1950s Harlem. But he kept his love of books a secret from most of his friends and classmates. He didn't want to seem different. "As I approached my twelfth birthday I was six feet tall and physically aggressive. . . . I was also a reader. . . . I was completely comfortable alone in my room with a book, more comfortable than in any other situation." Myers can laugh at the child he was, and he can also question many of his choices and actions without wholly condemning the boy who made them. Many readers will see themselves in young Walter Dean Myers, eager to be cool, lying without reason, disappointing loving parents for the lure of excitement on the streets. Hopefully those same readers will also see some aspect of themselves in the bright, curious, excitable boy and young man that Myers so engagingly presents. A collage of black-and-white photos of Myers as a child and teenager is the cover design beneath the dust jacket of a surprising and wonderful memoir. (Age 11 and older)

Myers, Walter Dean. *The Greatest: Muhammad Ali*. Scholastic Press, 2001. 172 pages (0-590-54342-3) \$16.95

Muhammad Ali's career is the focus of this captivating biography, which incorporates lively accounts of some of his key fights. But author Walter Dean Myers also reveals a man worthy of admiration for much more than his feats in the ring. Gaining recognition as a boxer during the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War, Ali refused to compromise his personal convictions, even when his actions jeopardized his career, as they did when he filed as a conscientious objector and, later, refused induction into the U.S. Army. When Ali joined the Nation of Islam, many thought he was a pawn of its leaders. Myers, however, sees a man who lived by his religious faith and his fierce belief in Black independence and pride. Myers's own admiration for Ali clearly influences this biography but does not obstruct or obscure it; this book shines a light on the character behind all the bluster and boasting that also characterized Ali. Myers does not wholly ignore Ali's personal life. But the author chooses to focus on the public man and provides an inspiring commentary on this decision. "In his private life, Ali is revealed to be a man of human faults and human weaknesses," Myers writes in his introduction. "I appreciate the 'normal' Muhammad Ali, but I choose to write about The Greatest. . . . I look upon him as an American, as a fighter, as a seeker of justice, as someone willing to stand up against the odds, no matter how daunting those odds, no matter how big his foe." (Age 11 and older)

Rumford, James. *Traveling Man: The Journey of Ibn Battuta, 1325-1354*. Houghton Mifflin, 2001. 32 pages (0-618-08366-9) \$16.00

Ibn Battuta's travels began in 1325 when, at age 21, he left his home in Morocco to make the journey to Mecca. Over the next three decades, this Muslim scholar traveled by foot, ship, horse, and camel through Africa, the Middle East, and Asia at a time when the earth was thought to be flat and Jerusalem was considered the center of the world. James Rumford's longtime interest in Islamic mapmaking and Arabic calligraphy led him to retell and illustrate the fascinating story of the 14th-century sojourner who recorded his own story in Arabic in 1355. Dazzling watercolor paintings and a conversational first-person narrative bring him to life for 21st-century children. Honor Book, CCBC Robert F. Sibert Award Discussion (Ages 8-11)

St. George, Judith. *John & Abigail Adams: An American Love Story*. Holiday House, 2001. 147 pages (0-8234-1571-6) \$22.95

In this account of the Adams's long marriage, information gained from Abigail and John's letters to each other intertwine as much about family life, politics, health, and travel as they reveal about historic events of

their shared career. The method of sending and receiving mail in and of itself will astonish young readers. Letters sent, for example, from Abigail in Massachusetts to John in France could sometimes take months to arrive. He would read her opinion about something and respond in writing, but often his response reached her too late for his thoughts to have an impact on a necessary decision about their property or family matters. These partners in marriage and in politics might air a serious disagreement in writing, but their responses to each other might cross. Regardless of long separations, personal and political struggles, and tragedies, their relationship remained steady and affectionate. The distinctive personality of each shines through the absorbing information amply illustrated by varied archival materials. Careful attention to every aspect of book production is evident. A family chronology, bibliography, and list of illustration credits precede the index. St. George has written expertly about other historic figures and places. *So You Want to Be President!* (Philomel, 2000) features the U.S. presidents as an aggregate. (Ages 11-15)

See also: *Anne Frank in the World*; *Anthropologist*; *Béisboll*; *Brave Harriet*; *Breaking Through*; *Christmas Soul*; *Carver*; *Ray Charles*; *Real Santa Claus*; *Shakespeare*; *Shipwrecked!*; *Shout, Sister, Shout!*; *Side by Side*; *Tell All the People Our Story*; *We Rode the Orphan Trains*; *Woody Guthrie*; *Yellow House*

Contemporary People, Places, and Events

Ajmera, Maya and John D. Ivanko. *Back to School*. Foreword by Dr. Marilyn Jachetti Whirry. SHAKTI for Children / Charlesbridge, 2001. 32 pages (1-57091-383-8) \$15.95

Photographs of children in classrooms all over the world enliven this brief text that affirms the universal importance of education. "There are many kinds of schools" are the large-type words on one two-page spread containing photographs of Aboriginal children taking notes in an Australian classroom, children in Mali studying outdoors, children in India studying outside at night, and two home-schooled children in France. Subjects such as reading, writing, math, science, geography, language, physical education, and art all are included in the short narrative of this friendly, appealing volume. (Ages 5-7)

Batten, Mary. *Anthropologist: Scientist of the People*. Houghton Mifflin, 2001. 64 pages (0-618-08368-5) \$16.00

When Magdalena Hurtado was growing up in Caracas, Venezuela, she sometimes accompanied her mother, a doctor, into remote rural areas. These treks exposed Hurtado to many different ways of living. Her interest in people and in cultural differences led her to the field of anthropology, and she is currently on the staff of the University of New Mexico. Crisp color photographs accompany a cogent narrative that describes Dr. Hurtado's day-to-day fieldwork among the Aché people, a hunting-gathering group in the rainforest of Paraguay. She uses research methods common to many cultural anthropologists to focus on her own particular area of interest as a human evolutionary ecologist: why women choose particular men as mates over others. A completely absorbing account of a contemporary anthropologist engaged in groundbreaking research, this should interest and inspire many young scientists in the making. (Age 9-14)

Geisert, Bonnie and Arthur Geisert. *Desert Town*. Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 2001. 32 pages (0-395-95387-1) \$16.00

Desert Town is one of a quartet of books the Geiserts have created picturing small town America throughout the seasons of a single year. Each of the four books in the sequence published by Houghton Mifflin, which also includes *Prairie Town* (1998), *River Town* (1999), and *Mountain Town* (2000), can be enjoyed without looking at the others. Because each book is set in an entirely different landscape, it's possible to see how that particular landscape affected each town historically and in recent years. The four towns have undergone permanent, even drastic change since they were first settled. Many pages in one book can be compared to those in one or more of the other three: topography, seasonal weather, recreation, housing, schools, stores where people shop, work some people do, transportation, Saturday nights. One can notice how buildings of various types or activities for children, teens, and adults in each town change from season to season, or within twelve months. The width of the 8 1/4 x 11 1/4" books doubles when they're wide open. It's possible then to see the span of a main street head-on or most of the community from a birds-eye view. The colored artwork created by Arthur Geisert, a master etcher, contains an almost unbelievable amount of architectural and sociological detail and encourages scrutiny and thought. The Geiserts imply without sentimentality that although small changes occur in a town within a brief year, the former landscapes of American small towns changed rapidly not so long ago. Look closely. Everything matters. (Ages 5-9)

Kuklin, Susan. *Hoops with Swoopes. Jump at the Sun / Hyperion, 2001. 32 pages (0-7868-0551-X) \$15.99*

Followers of the WNBA aren't the only ones who will appreciate this energetic and engaging book featuring Sheryl Swoopes, the two-time Olympic gold-medallist in basketball and star of the WNBA. Thanks to Susan Kuklin's dramatic color photographs, Swoopes, dressed in eye-catching primary blue and red or yellow with black, is a bold, dynamic figure on every white page. Kuklin masterfully suspends time and movement on film. Her photographs of the body in motion are fascinating, especially for very young children. Slightly older children may enjoy mimicking Swoopes' actions as captured in the photographs and described in a rhythmic, pace-changing text that offers many possibilities for imitation. "Dribbledribble. She plays from the tips of her fingers--to the tips of her toes. . . . Her game is passing--and catching--and driving down the court." Swoopes shows the intensity and artistry of an athlete at the top of her form. ("Her game is believing in the team--and herself.") Older readers, especially those with an interest in basketball, may find instruction and inspiration in Swoopes, who emphasizes in a note at the start of the text her belief in working on the fundamentals of the game and the importance of believing in yourself, whatever you choose to do. (Ages 4-10)

Lin, Grace. *Dim Sum for Everyone! Alfred A. Knopf, 2001. 24 pages (0-375-91082-4) \$14.95*

A young Chinese girl and her family go out to a restaurant for *dim sum*, and everyone chooses his or her favorite among the "many little dishes": sweet pork buns, fried shrimp, turnip cakes, egg tarts, and more. "Everyone eats a little bit of everything" before they are through in this short, lively text set against vibrant full-color art. A wonderful author's note provides an explanation of *dim sum* history and customs. Delightful end papers show many *dim sum* dishes with their English and Chinese names. (Ages 4-6)

Rendon, Marcie R. and Cheryl Walsh Bellville. *Farmer's Market: Families Working Together. Photographs by Cheryl Walsh Bellville. Carolrhoda, 2001. 48 pages (1-57505-462-0) \$23.93*

Farmer's Market focuses on two Minnesota families who grow vegetables and flowers that they sell at the St. Paul Farmer's Market. The Thaos are a Hmong family whose first members came to the United States in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. The Kornder's German and Polish ancestors first came to this country in the 1890s. For both families, farming involves multiple generations, with everyone from children to elders sharing in the year-round work. The text evokes the colorful sights and delicious smells of an abundant farmer's market. It also affirms the strong sense of cooperation and commitment present in each of the farming families. Information about farm equipment and techniques is a seamless part of the narrative, while the color photographs provide a lively, eye-catching accompaniment. (Ages 7-11)

Takabayashi, Mari. *I Live in Tokyo. Houghton Mifflin, 2001. 32 pages (0-618-07702-2) \$16.00*

Detailed watercolor paintings illustrate the first-person account by seven-year-old Mimiko, who lives in downtown Tokyo with her parents and four-year-old brother, Kenta. From January to December, each month holds a special cultural activity or event for Mimiko to talk about, including *shodo* (calligraphy), *Hinamatsuri* (Doll's Festival), and *sado* (tea ceremony), as well as everyday things such as attending school, participating in sports, and playing with cousins. Mimiko is a friendly, energetic girl whose childlike enthusiasm is sure to rub off on young readers in the United States. (Ages 5-9)

See also: *Baby's Coming to Your House; Celebrating Ramadan; Christmas Soul; Good Night; Hoops with Swoopes; Indian Nations of Wisconsin; My Day, Your Day; Nobody Particular; Out of War; Shout, Sister, Shout!; Side by Side; Red Is a Dragon; There Goes the Neighborhood; We Need to Go to School*

Issues in Today's World

Bang, Molly. *Nobody Particular: One Woman's Fight to Save the Bays. Henry Holt, 2001, c2000. 46 pages (0-8050-5396-4) \$18.00*

In the early 1980s, Diane Wilson, a shrimper from Calhoun County, Texas, discovered that the Gulf waters where she worked were among the most polluted in the country. The chemical plants in Calhoun County were dumping toxins without restriction into the bay. Wilson began asking questions and challenging the polluters. She slowly emerged as an environmental activist thanks to her inability to ignore what was happening. Molly Bang has woven the story of Diane Wilson into three distinct narrative strands. Black-

and-white cartoon-style drawings with dialogue and thought bubbles provide details of Diane's life and work, including conversations that took place as she embarked on her struggle to clean up the bay. Additional black-and-white drawings accompany a first-person narrative in Diane's voice that describes events as they unfolded. Bang has set these two narratives against full-color illustrations of the natural world in which this drama was taking place, providing a third narrative that describes the fragile yet resilient ecosystem Diane Wilson fought to save. (Note: this book was included in *CCBC Choices 2001* with an initial publication date of 2001. However, release of the book was delayed until 2002, which is why it also appears in this edition of *CCBC Choices*.) *Winner, CCBC Sibert Award Discussion* (Ages 9-14)

Cameron, Sara. *Out of War: True Stories from the Front Lines of the Children's Movement for Peace in Columbia*. By Sara Cameron in conjunction with UNICEF. Scholastic Press, 2001. 186 pages (0-439-29721-4) \$15.95

More than 2.7 million Colombian children went to the polls on October 25, 1996, and affirmed their right to life and to peace. The Children's Movement for Peace in Colombia, which sponsored the action, began in the mid-1990s as a coalition of young people committed to creating a nonviolent future in their country. The 40-year civil war in that nation has led to ongoing massacres, kidnappings, and displacement. Drug wars have further fueled the violence, as has widespread poverty. "Colombian cities have some of the worst murder rates in the world, due to the lack of justice and huge chasms between rich and poor, urban and rural populations," writes Sara Cameron in her introduction to this collection of nine compelling first-person profiles of young people involved in the Children's Movement. Each of the nine has been a victim of violence. Juan Elias's father was murdered. Martiza is fighting a battle that she isn't sure she'll win to stay out of gangs. Beto lives in a violent home. The Children's Movement empowers them, and they empower the Movement with their energy, their courage, and their willingness to believe that they can and will make a difference. They are also pragmatic beyond their years, speaking the tragic knowledge that the peace they are striving for may not be realized for another generation. Yet they hold to their vision with conviction. Cameron dedicates the book "to all children who live with violence." (Ages 12-16)

da Costa, Deborah. *Snow in Jerusalem*. Illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu. Albert Whitman, 2001. 32 pages (0-8075-7521-6) \$15.95

The Jewish boy Avi and the Muslim boy Hamudi don't know each other at the opening of this story set in the walled Old City of contemporary Jerusalem. But each boy knows and loves the beautiful white stray cat that comes to visit him regularly. When the cat doesn't show up for awhile, each boy becomes worried and goes in search of her through the ancient, ethnically diverse city, and that is how they meet. Once they find the cat, each boy wants to keep her for himself. But when they discover she has kittens and realize the free-spirited cat likes them both, they work out a peaceful resolution that suggests a future friendship. An author's note provides brief additional information on the history of Jerusalem and its diverse populations today. The full-color illustrations were created with watercolor and pencil. (Ages 6-10)

Roberts-Davis, Tanya. *We Need to Go to School: Voices of the Rugmark Children*. Groundwood Books / Douglas & McIntyre, 2001. 48 pages (0-88899-425-7) \$15.95

"Childhood Matters" is the title of the opening chapter of this singular documentary, which presents the voices of children in Nepal who are former carpet factory workers. Once exploited and abused as cheap labor, the 23 children who speak in this volume are now living in, and attending school at, facilities run by Rugmark, an organization that monitors carpet factories in Nepal, India, and Pakistan and certifies carpets made by adults who earn a decent wage. An outgrowth of that work has been Rugmark's efforts to remove children from the harsh conditions in other factories and provide them with a safe place to live and go to school. Author Tanya Roberts-Davis is barely out of childhood herself, but she has been involved with Free the Children, a Canadian organization that focuses on child-labor issues, since she was 12. In 1999, at age 16, Roberts-Davis traveled to Nepal and spent six weeks living with and talking to children at the Rugmark Centers. The personal stories, poems, and artwork those children presented to Roberts-Davis are collected here, along with the author's overview of the economic conditions in Nepal that have led to so many exploited children and information on organizations around the world that are working toward change. (Age 10 and older)

See also: *Anthropologist*; *Chimpanzees I Love*; *Group of One*; *Interrupted Journey*; *One of the Problems of Everett Anderson*; *Other Side of Truth*; *Sharks!*; *1621*; *Slap Your Sides*

Understanding Oneself and Others

Clifton, Lucille. *One of the Problems of Everett Anderson*. Illustrated by Ann Grifalconi. Henry Holt, 2001. 24 pages (0-8050-5201-1) \$16.95

"A room can be lonely / when a boy not grown, / sees his new friend Greg / with a scar or bruise mark on his leg." Everett Anderson feels sad, wondering if it's true that his friend falls down the stairs and hurts himself every day. Adult readers will recognize the signs of an abused child immediately, but Everett comes to this realization slowly, wondering how he should respond. When he finally is able to talk to his own mother about it, she assures him he has done the right thing, that she'll take charge, and that Everett can return to being the best friend he can be to Greg. Clifton's gentle, understated story will provide a good, safe place for opening a discussion with children about ways to respond to difficult situations. (Ages 4-8)

Harris, Robie H. *Goodbye Mousie*. Illustrated by Jan Ormerod. Margaret K. McElderry, 2001. 24 pages (0-689-83217-6) \$16.00

"When I woke up this morning, I tickled Mousie's tummy. But Mousie didn't wake up." A small boy's reaction to his pet mouse's death is handled with great sensitivity by his parents and with great skill by author Robie Harris. "I have something very sad to tell you," the boy's father says with his arm around the child. "Mouse is . . . dead." In this important and comforting story, the child expresses his anger, and then grief, with tears. But he also has other outlets as he prepares a box in which to bury Mousie, putting in some of his pet's favorite things, and then goes through the ritual of a burial. His confusion and fear about death are also touched upon. "Dead," says Daddy, "is very different from sleeping." Harris's text is an exemplary treatment of a difficult subject for children and adults alike. Jan Ormerod created her full-color, full-page art in black pencil lines with watercolor washes. (Ages 3-6)

Masurel, Claire. *Two Homes*. Illustrated by Kady MacDonald Denton. Candlewick Press, 2001. 32 pages (0-7636-0511-5) \$14.99

A preschool-age boy who spends time living with both of his separated parents describes his life with each in a straightforward narrative that accentuates the positive, child-centered details of his life. "I have *two* favorite chairs. A rocking chair at Daddy's. A soft chair at Mommy's." Both parents clearly love young Alex, who has no doubts about that fact. Soft watercolor, ink, and gouache illustrations accompany the text. (Ages 3-5)

Thomas, Shelley Moore. *A Baby's Coming to Your House!* Photographed by Eric Futran. Albert Whitman, 2001. 32 pages (0-8075-0502-1) \$15.95

This book for toddlers and preschool-age children discusses the many changes that take place when a family prepares for and welcomes a new baby by birth or adoption. The open, friendly, conversational tone covers everything from dirty diapers to doting relatives to a child's inevitable concern over all the attention the baby receives: "Even though you are bigger, your mommy and daddy will always have time to look at you and check on you, to snuggle you and care for you." Expressive color photographs show racially diverse families celebrating both the new arrival and the older child. (Ages 2-5)

See also: *Amber Was Brave*, *Essie Was Smart*; *Color of Absence*; *Fly!*; *Group of One*; *Name Jar*; *Understanding Buddy*; *Zero Grandparents*

The Arts

Christensen, Bonnie. *Woody Guthrie: Poet of the People*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2001. 32 pages (0-375-81113-3) \$16.95

A handsomely designed picture book biography provides an apt introduction to the life and work of Woody Guthrie, who always used his art to call attention to the plight of common workers. In the stunning illustrations, heavy black lines give the mixed media paintings the appearance of woodcut prints. The lyrics of several of his songs are excerpted here, and all seven verses of "This Land Is Your Land" are also included with a note that it always troubled Guthrie to hear the verses about hardship dropped. (Ages 7-10)

Cooper, Elisha. *Dance!* Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2001. 32 pages (0-06-029418-3) \$15.95

Elisha Cooper brings what has become his trademark blending of quiet, keenly detailed writing and subdued yet highly expressive art to a book that follows the work of a professional dance company preparing for an opening night. As with his other books in the same style, *Country Fair* (1997), *Ballpark* (1998), and *Building* (1999), all published by Greenwillow, Cooper writes about the bustle of activity suggested by his subject. The delight is in the details and also the design. In *Dance*, Cooper focuses not only on the dancers, who “lie in a puddle on the floor” after a grueling rehearsal and practice over and over as the days pass, but also on other aspects of behind-the-scenes activity, such as costumes, lighting, and publicity. On some pages the words are laid out to suggest the shape of the action or object being described. There is wit, grace, and a sense of intimacy in both the writing and the watercolor-and-pencil art of *Dance*. (Ages 6-11)

Marcus, Leonard S. *Side by Side: Five Favorite Picture-Book Teams Go to Work*. Walker, 2001. 64 pages (0-8027-8778-9) \$22.95

In a brief introduction Leonard Marcus discusses collaboration and suggests several ways in which picture book teams get started. They might be partners in their personal lives. Perhaps a book editor matches an artist and author with each other. Maybe they were introduced by a mutual friend. Some work together throughout their joint careers, and some collaborate for a only a short while. The book creators and books discussed in this profile of five author/artist teams are Arthur Yorinks and Richard Egielski (*Louis the Fish*, Farrar, 1980), Alice Provensen and Martin Provensen (*The Glorious Flight*, Viking, 1983), Jon Scieszka, Lane Smith, and Molly Leach (*The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*, Viking, 1992), Julius Lester and Jerry Pinkney (*Sam and the Tigers*, Dial, 1996), and Joanna Cole and Bruce Degen (*The Magic School Bus Explores the Senses*, Scholastic, 1999). Excellent decisions were made in selecting both the teams profiled and a book to represent the work of each. There's variety galore in terms of the five books, each pair's working habits, and the preferred medium of each artist. The interviews with these book creators contain information not usually found in other sources. Visual information includes color photos of each author and artist, replicas of early pages from manuscripts and artwork, and reproductions from each published book. A glossary and index are at the end of this dynamic volume. (Age 8 - adult)

Orgill, Roxane. *Shout, Sister, Shout! Ten Girl Singers Who Shaped a Century*. Margaret K. McElderry, 2001. 148 pages (0-689-81991-9) \$18.00

The title comes from a song popularized in the 1930s by the Boswell Sisters, and aptly represents the spirit of this fine collective biography. For each decade of the 20th century, Roxane Orgill has selected a singer who not only characterizes the decade but represents one of the many different types of popular music: vaudeville, blues, jazz, country, movie musicals, Broadway musicals, cabaret, folk, and rock. In response to individual readers who may question the author's choice of one singer over another, or the complete absence of artists such as Patsy Cline, Aretha Franklin, Janis Joplin, and Joni Mitchell, Orgill explains the basis for the tough decisions she had to make in her introduction. She more than meets her stated objective--to focus on women singers who contributed not only to their genre but to American culture in general--through her intriguing accounts of the lives of Sophie Tucker, Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Ethel Merman, Judy Garland, Anita O'Day, Joan Baez, Bette Midler, Madonna, and Lucinda Williams. (Ages 11-16)

Rosen, Michael. *Shakespeare: His Work and His World*. Illustrated by Robert Ingpen. Candlewick Press, 2001. 96 pages (0-7636-1568-4) \$19.99

“What's so special about Shakespeare?” asks the author at the beginning of a graphically engaging account of the bard's life. Rosen interprets some of what is known about the noted playwright's life and times. Quotes from the plays and even summaries of some of them are interspersed within a lively narrative printed in varying type sizes. Ingpen's distinctive pencil and watercolor artwork is everywhere, occasionally commanding an entire double page spread. A detailed chronology and a bibliography are at the end of this melodramatic amalgamation of information and images designed to attract and keep the attention of young adolescents. (Ages 11-14)

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *The Yellow House: Vincent van Gogh & Paul Gauguin Side by Side*. Illustrated by Jos. A. Smith. Published in association with The Art Institute of Chicago. Harry N. Abrams, 2001. 32 pages (0-8109-4588-6) \$17.95

For two months in the fall of 1888, Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin shared life and art while living in Vincent's small house in Arles, France. In anticipation of Paul's arrival Vincent painted the house and

decorated it with some of his sunflower paintings. Although the two artists had met earlier in Paris, neither realized how their great differences would become magnified while they painted in close proximity to each other. Vincent had been influenced by the Impressionists to use colors in new ways. He liked to paint what he saw outdoors immediately, using broad strokes of his paintbrush. Paul preferred to ponder and sketch what he would later slowly paint indoors, incorporating images from his imagination into his landscapes and portraits. In day-to-day living Vincent was talkative and messy, while Paul was quiet and tidy. Vincent's emotional well-being deteriorated rapidly. This brief biographical picture story is true to the letters and other evidence of the tempestuous weeks during which each artist created lasting work. Twelve of their paintings are reproduced in the book. Smith's watercolor and gouache artwork illustrate the time, place, and people. Rubin had access to documents used in preparation for the exhibition "Van Gogh and Gauguin: The Studio of the South" at the Art Institute of Chicago during late 2001 and early 2002. Rubin and Smith's notes about the challenge of creating this book, along with the source notes and art credits at the back of the 12 1/4 x 9 1/4" volume, underscore the veracity of their sure-handed glimpse of the drama that took place in the Yellow House. (Ages 6-10)

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. *I Had a Rooster: A Traditional Folk Song*. Foreword by Pete Seeger. Viking, 2001. 28 pages (0-670-03521-1) \$17.99

A familiar, cumulative folk song involves a first-person narrator who sings, "I had a rooster and the rooster pleased me . . ." then describes a menagerie under a greenberry tree. In this edition of *I Had a Rooster*, the singer-narrator is a blond, fair-skinned child, while the assemblage of creatures is a cat, duck, cow, pig, sheep, and lion. Each makes its customary meow, quack, or other sound. The final addition to this particular raucous gathering is a baby who says, "waah, waah." There's no need to know how to sing in order to enjoy this book, because the noises will be fun for everyone involved, as will the project of remembering a gradually longer list of creatures and their sounds. Vaccaro-Seeger's vibrant expressionistic paintings show the child narrator happily involved in imaginative play. The practical, spiral-bound pages of durable paper invite multiple uses. A two-page foreword offers Pete Seeger's comments about collecting and sharing folk music. Some of his original, child-tested drawings for his rendition of the song are reprinted. The audio CD enclosed in the back of the book will give today's children a chance to hear Pete's recently recorded version, along with two other songs by Mike and Peggy Seeger. The late musicologist Ruth Crawford Seeger (Mike and Peggy's mother and Pete's stepmother) contributed the ingenious page design, which uses stair-step lengths, so the order of the cumulative creatures and sounds becomes self-evident. The entire book was a family project; Mike is the artist's father-in-law. (Ages 2-7)

See also: *Bad Boy*; *Ballerina!*; *David's Drawings*; *Heart to Heart*; *Real Santa Claus*; *Single Shard*; *Three Pigs*; *Vincent van Gogh*; *Words with Wings*

Poetry

Alarcón, Francisco X. *Iguanas in the Snow and Other Winter Poems/Iguanas en la nieve y otros poemas de invierno*. Illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez. Children's Book Press, 2001. 32 pages (0-89239-168-5) \$15.95

"Here children / learn to sing / with their hearts," writes poet Francisco Alarcón in "Ode to Buena Vista Bilingual School," one of 17 poems in this marvelous bilingual (Spanish and English) collection. Alarcón writes with playful humor about his beloved city of San Francisco and about winter in the snow-laden Sierra Nevada mountains. Specificity of place does not limit the poems' accessibility, however. They are vibrant, welcoming, and child-friendly. Maya Christina Gonzalez's energetic, joyful artwork is a perfect accompaniment. As in their previous bilingual books about seasons and Mexican American life--*Laughing Tomatoes and Other Spring Poems* (1997), *From the Bellybutton of the Moon and Other Summer Poems* (1998), and *Angels Ride Bikes and Other Fall Poems* (1999)--Alarcón and Gonzalez have teamed up for a lively celebration of season and culture. (Ages 5-9)

Florian, Douglas. *Lizards, Frogs, and Polliwogs*. Harcourt, 2001. 48 pages (0-15-202591-X) \$16.00

Will Douglas Florian ever run out of ideas for smart, funny pairs of poems and paintings about the natural world? Luckily, the answer so far has been no. In *Lizards, Frogs, and Polliwogs*, he writes about reptiles and amphibians. As in his previous "poems and paintings" volumes describing creatures of nature (*beast*

feast (1994), *in the swim* (1997), *insectlopedia* (1998), *mammalabilia* (2000), and *on the wing* (1996), all published by Harcourt), the book blends facts, wordplay, wit, and art. This collection is humorous in a delightful and exacting way. Florian puts all the information necessary to appreciate the jokes he makes out of attributes from each creature right on the page. The full-page paintings are watercolor and collage. (Ages 6-10)

Greenberg, Jan, ed. *Heart to Heart: New Poems Inspired by Twentieth-Century Art*. Harry N. Abrams, 2001. 80 pages (0-8109-4386-7) \$19.95

Teens with an interest in either poetry or the visual arts will find much to contemplate in this singular collection of paired poems and artworks. Jan Greenberg, author of a number of fine books about art for young adults with Sandra Jordan, invited contemporary writers to choose a painting, a photograph, or another work of 20th century American art and write a poem inspired or “stimulated” by it. The result is a series of intriguing pairings that offers young-adult readers a glimpse of the genesis and creative processes behind the original poems in this volume. It also affirms that the inspiration for poems can be found everywhere, and that what a poem or painting means does not begin with some secret and sophisticated knowledge but rather draws its strength from the mind of each individual who takes time to consider the work. As one of the poets, X.J. Kennedy, says in Greenberg’s introduction, “Perhaps you can image a different story inspired by this painting. Look at the picture long and I think that you too will find it overflowing with possibilities.” (Age 12 and older)

Grimes, Nikki. *A Pocketful of Poems*. Illustrated by Javaka Steptoe. Clarion, 2001. 32 pages (0-395-93868-6) \$15.00

Nikki Grimes’s collection of 14 playful poems is all about the feel, weight, and importance of words. The poems, written in the voice of a young Black girl named Tiana, are examinations of what different words mean to her, what they make her think, and how they make her feel. In the opening poem, “Tiana,” she writes about her name: “Mama says, like me, it’s precious.” She writes about “Moon” as a “night word.” “Hot” is a “thirsty word.” “Harlem” is a “restless word.” Each short poem explores its title word in Tiana’s fresh, open voice, with wonderfully child-centered imagery. Each poem is presented on a two-page spread that also features a haiku relating to the word or idea being explored in Tiana’s voice, or to the time of year. What a wonderful way to think about the importance of a single word, and of choosing words carefully, for poem-making, or for everyday life. Adding to the power of this slim volume are Javaka Steptoe’s cut-paper and found-object collages. These are more than mere backdrops for the words--they are visual poems. (Ages 8-14)

Medina, Tony. *DeShawn Days*. Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie. Lee & Low, 2001. 32 pages (1-58430-022-1) \$16.95

The engaging narrator of this child-centered collection of poems begins with an invitation to readers: “I’m DeShawn Williams / I’m ten years old / come see who I live with-- / who I love!” Through poems and pictures, we meet DeShawn’s extended family: his mother, grandmother, uncle, aunt, and cousin Tiffany, all of whom live in DeShawn’s house in an urban neighborhood. DeShawn’s observations about his family, friends, school, and neighborhood show the typical concerns of many ten year olds. His grandmother is his confidant (“I could tell her anything / she never tells my secrets”). His cousin Tiffany (“she’s ten too / and tall and tough”) is both friend and rival. Deshawn spends most of his free time playing with Tiffany, his best friend Johnny Tse, and other kids on his block. He loves his neighborhood but hates the ever-present graffiti so much that it gives him nightmares. Uncle Richie comforts him (“Don’t worry DeShawn / it’s just words / they can’t hurt you”). The violence Deshawn sees on the evening news also scares him; when he mentions it to his teacher in a later poem, it inspires a classroom letter-writing project. Overall, DeShawn comes across as a realistic, exuberant, self-assured, yet vulnerable child, who gets plenty of emotional support from the elders in his family and at school, especially when he must face the death of his beloved grandmother. R. Gregory Christie’s fine acrylic paintings capture both the physical and emotional aspects of DeShawn’s character by using a style that effectively exaggerates heads, hands, and eyes. (Ages 6-11)

Mora, Pat, editor. *Love to Mamá*. Illustrated by Paula S. Barragán. Lee & Low, 2001. 32 pages (1-58430-019-1) \$16.95

This collection, which features contributions from 13 Latino poets, celebrates mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers--woman who nurtured, embraced, loved, and inspired the writers. Some poems are in English, some in Spanish and English, enriched with the flavor of words like “abuela,” “caballera,”

“Mami,” and “M’ija.” These personal poems carry meaning that transcends the individual and culture. There is something for all older children and teens to take from the experience of reading or listening to the poems. Each two-page spread features a single poem accompanied by a bold, brightly colored, stylized painting. The artwork is pencil, cut-paper, and gouache, with additional enhancement on computer. (Age 10 and older)

Nelson, Marilyn. *Carver: A Life in Poems*. Front Street, 2001. 103 pages (1-886910-53-7) \$16.95

No doubt for many young adults, George Washington Carver’s name brings to mind only a spare remembrance from a history book or a photograph on a Black History Month poster. Some may be fortunate to have deeper knowledge of this greatly gifted man best known for his agricultural work as a botanist. Carver was also a painter, a musician, and a teacher and researcher at Tuskegee Institute during Booker T. Washington’s tenure. Carver was committed to improving the lives of others, especially poor Black farmers in the South. In this exquisite book of poems, Marilyn Nelson creates an extraordinary biography from more than the dates, events, relationships, and accomplishments in the life of George Washington Carver. She conjures his powerful presence as she writes of a life centered and made whole by deep religious faith, a passion for nature, a hunger for learning, and a heart of unmatched kindness from the time Carver was a small boy. In these poems, she gives voice to Carver and others in his life, and even to the world of nature where he found so much fascination and pleasure. The result leaves readers feeling they know Carver from the inside out. *Honor Book, CCBC Coretta Scott King Author Award Discussion* (Age 12 and older)

Rochelle, Belinda. *Words with Wings: A Treasury of African American Poetry and Art*. HarperCollins, 2001. 48 pages (0-688-16415-3) \$16.95

This terrific book for older children and teens pairs 20 poems by African American writers with 20 paintings by African American artists. This lively and powerful compilation introduces a range of African American writers and artists of the past 150 years, celebrating their creativity and their diversity in style, in experience, and in point of view. In her inspiring introduction, editor Belinda Rochelle emphasizes the role each child or young-adult plays as a participant in poetry and art. She writes, “We must help give the poems and art their wings by bringing to them our own experiences and histories, and our willingness to let them take us somewhere new.” Rochelle has modeled one way of doing just that in her choices for this volume, pairing Georgia Douglas Johnson’s poem “Your World” with Robert Scott Duncanson’s painting “Landscape with Rainbow,” and Alice Walker’s poem “Women” with William H. Johnson’s painting “Harriet Tubman.” (Ages 10-16)

Smith, Charles R. *Short Takes: Fast-Break Basketball Poetry*. Dutton, 2001. 32 pages (0-525-46454-9) \$17.99

Charles Smith, Jr., has created another dynamic collection of poems about basketball in *Short Takes*. Like Smith’s other books with a basketball focus, *Rim Shots* (1999) and *Tall Tales* (2000), both published by Dutton, Smith combines his motion-filled photographs with poems that jump, arc, dribble, and pound across each two-page spread. The photographs in the dazzling page design cannot be separated from the poems themselves--each piece is a blend of words and images. Smith’s wonderful note at the end of the book comments on how he created both the visual images and the written words for this volume and will be of special interest to aspiring artists and writers. (Age 10 and older)

See also: *Amber Was Brave, Essie Was Smart; Four in All; Love That Dog; Midnight Ride of Paul Revere; What My Mother Doesn't Know; Witness; Young Oxford Book of Christmas Poems*

Concept Books

Collicutt, Paul. *This Boat*. U.S. edition: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001. 24 pages (0-374-37495-3) \$15.00

Ten different pairs of boats and ships are compared and contrasted with detailed realistic color paintings and a patterned text (“This boat uses paddles. / This boat uses propellers.”) The various vessels featured include a submarine, an aircraft carrier, a tugboat, a junk, a sailboat, a steamship, and a motorboat-- each shown in action. Paul Collicutt has done similar books for young children about trains (*This Train*) and airplanes (*This Plane*). (Ages 2-4)

Falwell, Cathryn. *Turtle Splash! Countdown at the Pond*. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2001. 32 pages (0-06-029462-0) \$15.95

“Ten timid turtles are lounging in a line. Started by a bullfrog . . . now there are nine.” A rhythmic, rhyming countdown book descends from ten to one as various other creatures startle or lure each turtle into the water. By the story’s end, the ten turtles are together again, burrowing in the mud under the water for the night. The full-color, mixed media collages are a graceful, textured backdrop for the text. The author/illustrator also provides brief information about each of the creatures and instructions for making leaf prints, one of the techniques used in creating the artwork. (Ages 3-6)

Thong, Roseanne. *Red Is a Dragon: A Book of Colors*. Illustrated by Grace Lin. Chronicle, 2001. 32 pages (0-8118-3177-9) \$13.95

As with their earlier *Round Is a Mooncake* (Chronicle, 2000), Roseanne Thong and Grace Lin have teamed to create a bicultural concept book--this one about color. The young child narrator finds examples of things that are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink, and brown in objects unique to her Chinese heritage, as well as in items that all children will know. (“Red are melons / cool and sweet / Red are lychees / a summer treat”) Lin’s bright gouache illustrations provide the backdrop for Thong’s rhyming text, and a glossary provides definitions of those things that are distinctly Chinese in the narrative. (Ages 3-5)

Wells, Rosemary. *Bunny Party*. Viking, 2001. 24 pages (0-670-03501-7) \$15.99

Ruby and Max are at it again. This time, they’re preparing for Grandma’s birthday party. Ruby, of course, is in charge. But Max is her willing helper--how else can he be sure that *his* guests are seated at the table? So while Ruby gives orders, Max works havoc on the seating arrangements, substituting his Jellyball Shooter Spider for Ruby’s Rapunzel doll, and his Can’t-Sit-Up-Slug for Ruby’s Tooth Fairy. Numbers from one to ten are featured in this latest Max and Ruby outing. The full-color art was created with mixed media. (Ages 3-5)

See also: *Blizzard*; *Five Creatures*; *What Pete Ate from A-Z*

Books for Babies and Toddlers

Bailey, Debbie. *Good Night*. Photographs by Susan Huszar. (Talk-About-Books) Annick Press, 2001. 12 pages (1-55037-698-5) \$5.95

Photographs of diverse children accompany the brief text of this board book describing many familiar elements of a typical bedtime routine. “I can put on my pajamas . . . Do I really have to go to bed?” Several children appear in more than one photograph, including a young boy with Down syndrome who is also on the cover of this friendly bedtime book for toddlers. (Ages 18 months-3 years)

Barton, Byron. *My Car*. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2001. 32 pages (0-06-029624-0) \$14.95

Byron Barton’s signature bold, flat colors illustrate a simple declarative text in which Sam tells us about his car--how he cares for it and how he drives it. He drives it each day to his job as a city bus driver, leading to a satisfying conclusion: “But when I work I drive my bus.” The clarity of the text and illustrations make this perfect for reading aloud to groups of toddlers. Young car-and-truck enthusiasts will want to hear this book again and again, so get ready for the never-ending road trip. (Ages 1-3)

Burningham, John. *Hushabye*. U.S. edition: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001. 32 pages (0-375-81414-0) \$14.95

John Burningham’s tuneless lullaby begins with a series of short (one- to two-sentence) vignettes about tired creatures in need of rest. There is a mother cat, a baby, three tired bears, the man in the moon, and others. Each ends on the softest of notes: “Hushabye.” In the second half of this musical text, each creature finds a place to rest, affirming that all is well. Young children will love the drowsy cadence of this hypnotizing picture book. It ends with comforting words for the child listener that conclude, “Your head’s on the pillow. You’ll soon be asleep. Hushabye. Hushabye. Hush.” The vignettes are illustrated with black-and-white spot drawings on one page, and full-color paintings on the other. (Ages 18 months-3 years)

George, Kristine O’Connell. *Book!* Illustrated by Maggie Smith. Clarion, 2001. 31 pages (0-395-98287-1) \$9.95

“I like the way you open. I can turn your pages by myself. I like the way you close. I can put you on my shelf.” The gift of a book inspires the imagination of a small, brown-skinned child. This story underscores both the endless possibilities inherent in creative thought and the sense of accomplishment so important to

young children. From the moment the child unwraps the book, it becomes the focus of imaginative play. The child “reads” the book to the cat, wears it like a hat, even takes it on a wagon ride to a “secret place,” describing each action in a phrase that begins “I can.” Finally, the child, who could be a boy or a girl, finds the lap of a grown up and experiences the book in a more traditional way . . . before taking it to bed. The celebratory, rhyming text is set against the warm, vibrant palette of the acrylic illustrations. This book’s thick, durable pages ensure that it won’t fall apart if children mimic the actions of the child in the story or come up with their own ideas for what to do with a book. (Ages 18 months-3 years)

Hill, Susan. *Backyard Bedtime*. Illustrated by Barry Root. HarperFestival / HarperCollins, 2001. 12 pages (0-694-0137-X) \$5.95

“It’s bedtime for vegetables, carrots, and beans / Turnips and pumpkins, potatoes and greens / Curl close the vine, now, my little sweet pea / I’ll sing you an earth-song--Hush, hush, sleep, deep.” This is the first of seven softly lilting verses that begin by marking the end of the day for others (amphibians, birds, insects, trees, “houses ‘round town,” and “babes in their beds”) and end by lovingly urging the child to sleep with a special good-night phrase. Susan Hill’s text is rich with sounds and images. It is set against Barry Root’s subdued world of sleepy nighttime creatures (even the pumpkins are yawning in this bedtime board book). (Ages 9 months-2 years)

Hubbell, Patricia. *Sea, Sand, Me!* Illustrated by Lisa Campbell Ernst. HarperCollins, 2001. 32 pages (0-688-17378-0) \$14.95

A young girl describes her day of fun and sun at the beach in a spirited rhyming text distinguished by Patricia Hubbell’s delightfully playful language. “We jump, jump, jump / in the curly-whirly wave. / Cold water doesn’t scare us / ‘cause we’re brave, brave, brave.” Hubbell has a wonderful ear for sound: the sand is “scritch-scratchy,” the sea is “swishy-swashy.” Toddlers will enjoy the spirit of this lighthearted summertime romp throughout the year. (Ages 2-4)

Payne, Nina. *Four in All*. Illustrated by Adam Payne. Front Street, 2001. 32 pages (1-886910-16-2) \$15.95

Four words connected in meaning comprise each line of Nina Payne’s book-length poem, which is made up of seven rhymed couplets (“earth air fire water / mother father son daughter”). The 56 words name concrete objects and concepts, so that their meaning is clear, even if the poem as a whole at first seems to elude meaning. But look again at artist (and son of the poet) Adam Payne’s cut-paper collage illustrations--it is in them that the narrative thread lies. His sensuous, deeply hued images, perfectly matched to the words, depict the story of a young girl’s fantastical journey away (though not too far away) from home and her joyous, triumphant return. The presence of a story may prove most appealing--or comforting--to adults. Young children will respond first and foremost to the individual images conjured by the artist and the rhythmic, chant-like quality of the poem read as a whole. (Ages 2-4)

Siddals, Mary McKenna. *Morning Song*. Illustrated by Elizabeth Sayles. Henry Holt, 2001. 32 pages (0-8050-6369-2) \$15.95

“Good morning, good morning, good morning!” Toddlers will want to join the joyful refrain of this “morning song” as an ebullient young boy welcomes a new day. Between each “good morning” chorus, the child greets everything he sees: from his fingers and toes to the blankie on his bed, the cup on his nightstand, and the sun playing peek-a-boo behind the drapes of his bedroom window. The simple rhyming text exudes a wonderful sense of anticipation even as it celebrates the moment. The full-color illustrations are not as strong as the text but echo its tenor in the color shift from the deep blues in a drapery-darkened room to exploding washes of yellow sunlight . . . of course it’s going to be a great day! (Ages 18 months – 3 years)

Wilson-Max, Ken. *Max’s Starry Night*. Jump at the Sun / Hyperion, 2001. 24 pages (0-7868-0553-6) \$14.99

When young Max and Little Pink, his pig, go outside to wish on a star, Big Blue, his elephant, is afraid to come because it’s too dark. The next day, Little Pink teases Big Blue about being afraid, until Max points out that Little Pink is afraid of swinging on the high swings, but Big Blue never teases him. Then Max comes up with a way for all three of them to enjoy the stars in this sweet and satisfying story set against bold, richly colored paintings and featuring a creative, brown-skinned child. (Ages 2-4)

Wong, Janet S. *Grump*. Illustrated by John Wallace. Margaret K. McElderry, 2001. 24 pages (0-689-83485-3) \$16.00

A tired, grumpy mommy and a playful, energetic baby who won't take a nap are the subjects of this warm, lively story that is a sheer delight to hear and read aloud. The rhythm, weight, and sound of the carefully chosen words ("A Grumpy heavy stump-thump thumping" up the stairs) and judicious use of repetition and rhyme ("Baby's going to take a nap now. / Baby's going to take a nap now. / Baby's going to take a nap now. Take a nap now / little lump") achieve masterful pacing shifts, reflecting the mood, tone, and action on each page. The watercolor illustrations showing a blond mother and little boy were done in watercolor. *Highly Commended, 2002 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 18 months-3 years)

See also: *Blizzard; Plumply, Dumpy Pumpkin; Sleepy Book*; section on Picture Books for Younger Children

Picture Books for Younger Children

Ballard, Robin. *My Day, Your Day*. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2001. 24 pages (0-688-17796-4) \$14.95

"My day is at day care. Your day is at work. Bye-bye. See you later." Little ones who see these boldly colored illustrations and hear the accompanying short, child-centered sentences will enjoy the immediacy of familiar activities. A child building with blocks is featured in a full-page illustration showing an active group of preschoolers. On the opposite page, that same child's working parent can be discovered using blueprints, visiting a construction site, and looking at a completed building. On another pair of pages, a child washes up at day care, while that child's parent repairs someone's plumbing. Subsequent page spreads also link day care "work" with related adult activities. In the opening and closing sequences, the children arrive at day care and leave their daytime caregivers. The same family members can be discovered in each scene. Each family wears clothing of corresponding colors for easy identification. Children will enjoy matching each of the preschoolers with their picture book parents. By pointing out what some grownups might be doing at their day jobs, this matter-of-fact book also develops the concept that ordinary preschool activity can be similar to the work days of those adults. A subtle subtext intimates that preschool preferences might also indicate future job skills or career preferences similar to those of a child's own parent. (Ages 2-5)

Henkes, Kevin. *Sheila Rae's Peppermint Stick*. Greenwillow Books / HarperFestival / HarperCollins, 2001. 20 pages (0-06-029451-5) \$6.95

When little Louise wants a lick of big sister Sheila Rae's peppermint stick, Sheila Rae taunts her. "You can have one lick if . . ." she offers, challenging her little sister to guess how many stripes are on the stick, and then to reach it while Sheila Rae holds it high over her head. "If I had two, I'd give you one," Sheila Rae tells Louise. And Sheila Rae is true to her word when her scheme to keep the peppermint stick all to herself backfires in Louise's favor. This original board book from Kevin Henkes is a crisply told, sweetly satisfying story of two mice, one peppermint stick, and love. (Ages 2-5)

Ormerod, Jan. *Miss Mouse Takes Off*. HarperCollins, 2001. 24 pages (0-688-17870-7) \$14.95

Only a few words accompany Ormerod's pictures in an affectionate, contemporary story about the plane trip of a little girl, her mother, and the child's stuffed animal, "Miss Mouse." This child carries her well-worn, floppy legged, easily recognizable traveling companion throughout each ordinary procedure for plane travelers. Together, she and Miss Mouse go through airport check-in and simple security procedures. They board, eat airplane food, watch an airplane movie, and become somewhat acquainted with passengers in nearby seats. At one point near the end of the flight, Miss Mouse is nowhere to be found. Children seeing this book will recognize the alarm the young traveler feels while her friend is missing. They'll have the advantage of knowing exactly where Miss Mouse is, however, because Ormerod has provided a visual clue. Ormerod proves repeatedly in earlier books and in this one, too, that she knows and understands preschoolers, and that she likes them a lot. (Ages 2-5)

Russo, Marisabina. *Come Back, Hannah!* Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2001. 32 pages (0-688-17383-7) \$15.95

While her mother tries to get a few things done, little Hannah keeps crawling away to explore the things she sees and hears around her house. Hannah dumps books off the shelf, plays with the pots and pans, and follows the *jingle jangle* of the dog's collar. "Come Back, Hannah" calls her mother over and over. Young listeners won't be able to resist joining that refrain in this wholly child-centered story about a baby's

various encounters with her world. Russo used gouache for the vibrant illustrations. *Highly Commended, 2002 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 2-5)

Simont, Marc. *The Stray Dog. From a true story by Reiko Sassa. HarperCollins, 2001. 32 pages (0-06-028933-3) \$15.95*

"It was a great day for a picnic." These are the first words of a story based on an actual event that happened to Marc Simont some years ago. The real story begins several pages earlier with Simont's artwork showing a family of four packing the car in preparation for a picnic in the park, driving across a New York City bridge, and establishing themselves at a site. Once there, they notice a frisky little dog. The children play with the dog, and they even name it Willy. The dog seems to have no people, and he has no collar. When the boy and girl want to take Willy home, their adults prevail. "He must belong to somebody, and they would miss him," they say to the children. As it turns out, throughout the week, each member of the family misses Willy, and each is shown thinking about the pup. The next weekend they head for the same picnic table and set out a food dish to encourage Willy, if he's nearby, to join them again. He's close to them, all right, but now a dog warden is chasing him. Children will relish seeing how the boy and girl spontaneously solve the ownership dilemma. Simont's watercolor paintings provide details even the youngest can follow, and they perfectly reflect the varying moods of the story. (Ages 2-5)

Sís, Peter. *Ballerina! Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2001. 24 pages (0-688-17944-4) \$14.95*

Peter Sís's picture books for young children are often rooted firmly in imagination--the author-artist clearly understands the seamless relationship between fantasy and reality for the young. *Ballerina* is no exception, but readers of this appealing book are likely to stretch their muscles as well as their minds. On the first page, they meet Terry, a young girl who loves ballet. A black-and-white line drawing shows Terry in her bedroom, where a large, empty mirror hangs on the wall. On each successive page, Terry uses a different outfit or prop to launch her body and mind into the world of dance. "She puts on her red leotard and dances a fire dance" is the text on one page featuring the simple line-drawing of Terry leaping in her leotard. On the facing page, the once-empty mirror shows an image of how Terry sees herself--a flamboyant, grown-up dancer soaring over flames in a fiery red outfit. Terry imagines herself dancing *The Nutcracker* and *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella* and *Swan Lake*, a tiger dance and a spring dance, in a book that mirrors the behavior of many young children and encourages both bodies and spirits to soar. (Ages 3-7)

Wells, Rosemary. *Felix Feels Better. Candlewick Press, 2001. 32 pages (0-7636-0639-1) \$12.99*

After too many chocolate blimpies and not enough sleep, little Felix isn't feeling well. Mama tries chamomile tea, sugared prunes ("You'll feel perkier with the prunes") and fresh air before deciding a trip to Dr. Duck is in order. Felix is a little afraid that Mama won't stay with him at the doctor's office, but she does. Dr. Duck listens to Felix's heart, looks in his ears, and takes his temperature. Two spoonfuls of doctor-dispensed Happy Tummy and a long nap later, this forlorn young guinea pig is his energetic self again in Rosemary Wells's reassuring, gently humorous story illustrated in watercolor, ink, and other media. (Ages 2-5)

See also: *Bunny Party; Clever Beatrice; Dim Sum for Everyone; Four in All; Firday Nights of Nana; Goodbye Mousie; Hushabye; Max's Starry Night; Sea, Sand, Me!; Turtle Splash!; Two Homes*

Picture Books for Older Children

Babbitt, Natalie. *Elsie Times Eight. Michael di Capua Books / Hyperion, 2001. 32 pages (0-7868-0900-0) \$15.95*

A well-intentioned fairy godmother wreaks havoc when she mistakenly thinks Elsie's parents have asked for eight Elsies. Imagine eight identical little girls fighting over a single cat, squeezing into a tiny bedroom, and making all that noise! Luckily the family runs into the fairy godmother as they are run out of town for making such a racket. She puts things right--almost. Would anyone like a cat? Natalie Babbitt's good-humored original tale is a delight. The full-color illustrations add to the story's old-world, fairy-tale feel. (Ages 4-7)

Banks, Kate. *A Gift from the Sea. Illustrated by George Hallensleben. Translated from the French. U.S. edition: Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001. 32 pages (0-374-32566-9) \$16.00*

A quiet, beautifully restrained text embraces something as huge as the history of the earth in the context of something small, understandable, and wholly familiar to a child. When the boy picks up a rock he finds on the beach, “he didn’t know that the rock had been spewed from a fiery volcano and cooled in the shade of a thousand years.” Or that it had once been part of a cave, that later a city grew around it, and that when the city crumbled, “the rock became a landmark for travelers.” As she covers thousands of years of history to tell how the rock changed and moved over time, Kate Banks repeatedly uses the phrase “He didn’t know” in reference to the child who now counts the rock among his treasures. The refrain endows this masterful narrative with a sense of wonder and discovery. Banks’s words are precise and graceful. Georg Hallensleben’s paintings capture quiet mystery. (Ages 4-7)

Browne, Anthony. *My Dad*. U.S. edition: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001. 24 pages (0-374-35101-5) \$16.00

Dad is an amazing person. He’s courageous (“My dad isn’t afraid of ANYTHING, even the Big Bad Wolf”). He possesses a phenomenal range of athletic abilities (“He can wrestle with giants, or win the fathers’ race on sports day, easily”). In fact, he excels at just about everything (“He’s fantastic at soccer, and he makes me laugh”). This very ordinary-appearing father is shown at the pinnacle of his son’s affections, whether he’s leaping over the moon or balancing on a clothesline tightrope, all while clad in a plaid bathrobe and striped pajamas and in need of a shave. Children will appreciate the blatant humor of this father’s attributes, while adults will enjoy the image of Dad belting it out on stage as one of the Three Tenors, while the famous tuxedoed personalities on either side appear a bit disgruntled. The final four pages boil the book’s message down to its essence: “I love my dad. And you know what? HE LOVES ME! (And he always will.)” (Ages 4-7)

Choi, Yangsook. *The Name Jar*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2001. 32 pages (0-375-80613-X) \$16.95

On the bus heading to her first day in an American school, Korean Unhei tells her name to a fellow passenger. After he mispronounces it and thoughtlessly teases Unhei, she becomes reluctant to tell her new classmates her name, stating that she hasn’t chosen one yet. Brimming with suggestions, the other students fill a jar with offerings of Daisy, Tamela, and Miranda. As she contemplates her choices, Unhei realizes that her own name is special, and worth keeping. Her classmates agree, and with a little coaching they master the correct pronunciation. Many children share Unhei’s fears of not fitting in with her peers. Her ability to overcome her worries and remain true to herself offers a realistic solution to her problem. The illustrations feature a diverse classroom of young school-age children. (Ages 4-6)

Creech, Sharon. *A Fine, Fine School*. Illustrated by Harry Bliss. Joanna Cotler Books / HarperCollins, 2001. 32 pages (0-06-027736-X) \$15.95

The classic wisdom that there can be “too much of a good thing” is humorously portrayed in this story of a principal who loves his school. As the book opens, Tillie attends school on a typical five-day-a-week schedule. She spends her free time climbing trees, playing with her dog Beans, and pushing her little brother on the swing. Beans and her brother miss Tillie while she’s at school, but her life is in balance. Things start to go awry when the proud principal adds Saturday to the school week, then Sunday, next holidays, and at last, the final straw--no more summer vacation. Intent on the prospect of unlimited academic opportunities, the principal is blind to the fact that students and teachers alike are on the verge of collapse from his unrelenting schedule. It’s up to Tillie to point out the error in his methods, as she outlines the types of learning that aren’t taking place: Beans isn’t learning to sit, her little brother isn’t learning how to swing, and she hasn’t learned how to climb very high in a tree. Being the wise man he is, the principal revises the schedule to its original format, allowing him once again to revel in his “fine, fine school!” The comical illustrations are perfectly suited to the story and are filled with additional visual jokes. (Ages 4-8)

Diouf, Sylviane A. *Bintou’s Braids*. Illustrated by Shane W. Evans. Chronicle, 2001. 32 pages (0-8118-2514-0) \$14.95

More than anything else, Bintou would like to have beautiful braids in her hair, as do all the older girls and women in her West African village. Even after her grandmother tells her a story that explains the tradition, Bintou still wishes to be 16, so she can have long braids with gold coins dangling on the ends. The small girl’s deeply felt wish is beautifully evoked through the French/Senegalese author’s lyrical narrative and the American artist’s stylized oil paintings. (Ages 4-8)

Falconer, Ian. *Olivia Saves the Circus*. An Anne Schwartz Book / Atheneum, 2001. 32 pages (0-689-82954-X) \$16.00

Olivia is back, and her vivid imagination is on the loose. When it's her turn to tell the class about her vacation, Olivia embarks on a wild and wonderful story about the day her mother took her to the circus and all the performers were out sick (with ear infections). "Luckily, I knew how to do everything," says this irrepressible little pig, who relates each of the magnificent circus feats she performed. As in the original *Olivia* (Atheneum, 2000), this droll, witty story is illustrated in charcoal on gouache. The black-and-white artwork is enhanced with lively, judicious touches of red and pink--for Olivia's long johns, hair bows, the circus ring, stripes in her tights. The story begins and ends in Olivia's bedroom, where a beautiful photograph of the ageing Eleanor Roosevelt, arms raised gracefully over her head, hangs on the wall: kindred spirit, indeed. (Ages 4-7)

Falwell, Cathryn. *David's Drawings*. Lee & Low, 2001. 32 pages (1-58430-031-0) \$16.00

On a snowy school day, introspective David pauses to look closely at a bare tree standing alone on a snowy hillside. Later, at school, he draws the tree, just as he remembers seeing it. He seems unperturbed when, one by one, his classmates ask to add things to his drawing: grass, leaves, a person, clouds, a dog, a cat, and a rainbow. In the end, David's drawing looks nothing like the tree that inspired it, but he is nonetheless happy with the class's picture. And back at home, David will have another opportunity to draw the tree, just as he remembers it. Torn paper and fabric collages convey both cold, wintry exteriors, and the warm, busy interiors of the classroom. The short, patterned text conveys both the sense of community in the classroom and the solitary individualism of the young African American artist. (Ages 4-7)

Graham, Bob. "*Let's Get a Pup!*" Said Kate. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2001. 32 pages (0-7636-1452-1) \$14.99

Ever since the family cat died, "there were only Kate's two feet to keep each other company" in her bed. One morning, Kate wakes her parents by declaring that it's time for a new pet. Her grown-ups concur. The three agree that the new pet must be a small, cute, and playful pup. They excitedly leave their breakfast uneaten and rush to an animal rescue center. They find exactly the pup they were looking for. Or do they? It isn't that easy to lose one's heart to just any dog. Children will recognize Kate's urgent need for a pet. They'll also be comfortable with the gently humorous, understated ambiguity of this family's decision-making process. They'll feel at home with the clutter of this particular home, and they'll delight in the surprise ending. Once again, Graham has hit the mark with a warm story expanded by illustrations bearing his signature humor and attention to detail. With wonderful writing and uniquely detailed pictures, he has created a quirky, down-to-earth contemporary family on the cusp of change. (Ages 4-7)

Jenkins, Emily. *Five Creatures*. Illustrated by Tomek Bogacki. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001. 24 pages (0-374-323-1-0) \$16.00

A young girl describes the attributes of people and animals that live in her house in a series of delightful, sometimes hilarious observations and comparisons. The "five creatures" are the girl, her parents, and her family's two cats. There are "three who can button buttons," "four who can open cupboards" (two cats, two grownups), "five who love birds . . . but not all in the same way." Young readers and listeners can identify which member or members of the family each statement describes in the warm, lighthearted illustrations. No doubt many children will also launch into observations about members of their own households and families--a great way to extend the pleasures of the story. *Honor Book, 2002 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3-6)

Kalman, Maira. *What Pete Ate from A-Z*. G.P. Putnam, 2001. 36 pages (0-399-23362-8) \$15.99

It's remarkable that children's authors and illustrators can continue to come up with fresh ideas for the old tried and true alphabet book. Maira Kalman's zesty illustrated story casts the 26 letters in a completely new light with the introduction of Pete, an incorrigible dog who will eat anything. Pete's owner, a young girl named Poppy Wise, gives us an alphabetical list of what Pete has eaten to date and tells the story of his eating habits with understated humor and amusing alliteration. Early on in the story, at the letter E, Poppy makes a list for Pete, and the reader, of things that are edible, along with a list of inedible things. It's the inedible things that Pete finds most appetizing: a doll, a glue stick, a key, a quarter. Why? The answer provides the story's satisfying resolution and, of course, begins with Z. More than a mere list of the strange objects Pete has eaten, we also get a capsule history of each culinary event. In the process, we learn quite a bit about Poppy, her brother Mookie, her cousin Rocky, and their friends Doreen and the Twinkle Twins, not to mention the eternally peeved Mrs. Parsley, Doreen's mother. Kalman's slightly skewed, zany art style is perfectly suited to this most appetizing alphabet book. (Ages 4-7)

Leiner, Katherine. *Mama Does the Mambo*. Illustrated by Edel Rodriguez. Hyperion, 2001. 32 pages (0-7868-0646-X) \$15.99

Sofia misses a lot of things since Papa died, and sometimes she misses her Mama's dancing most of all. Mama loved to dance with Papa, swaying to a slow, soft song or stepping and spinning to a pulsing beat. A year after Papa's death, the neighbors tell Sofia that it's time for Mama to find a partner who can dance the mambo with her at Carnival. Eduardo is willing, and Mama seems to like him, but "Eduardo's feet seem put on backwards." No matter how much they practice, he can't dance. But Mama isn't worried. She knows just who her Carnival partner will be in this lyrical, uplifting picture book about moving on from grief. The Cuban setting is enriched by the Spanish language woven into the text, and by Cuban native Edel Rodriguez's full-color artwork, which was created with pastel, gouache, spray paint, and woodblock ink prints. (Ages 5-8)

Look, Lenore. *Henry's First-Moon Birthday*. Illustrated by Yumi Heo. An Anne Schwartz Book / Atheneum, 2001. 32 pages (0-689-82294-4) \$16.00

Jen, Jenny (but never Jennifer!), a.k.a. Older Sister announces at the beginning of this engaging picture story that she's been in charge of the household since her mother gave birth to her little brother Henry exactly one month ago. And certainly this assertive, rather bossy little girl thinks she's in charge. Astute readers will notice that it's really her Chinese grandmother, GnínGnín, who's running the show. In a droll conversational style, Jen give a step-by-step account of the preparations for a family celebration to mark her little brother's first month of life, his first-moon birthday party. Together, Jen and her grandmother prepare special food, write good-luck words on red cloth with black ink ("the real stuff," Jen tells us), boil "a million eggs," clean the house, bathe ("GnínGnín scrubs me clean as celery"), and put on special dresses. When the guest arrive, Jen tells us she's in charge of making sure the cousins don't wake Henry. ("I do a good job until--I can't resist--I pinch him once when no one's looking.") Yumi Heo's humorous stylized pencil and oil paintings give a good sense of the bustling activity of a busy household from a young child's perspective. Jen would try the patience of many adults. Lucky for her--and for readers--she has a grandmother who understands her completely and who is equal to the task of caring for her. As Jen tells us: "I look in the mirror and see that we are a pair, like favorite shoes, side by side." *Highly Commended*, 2002 *Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4-7)

Maloney, Peter and Felicia Zekauskas. *His Mother's Nose*. Dial, 2001. 40 pages (0-8037-2545-0) \$15.99

"From the day Percival Puddicombe was born, he was not his own man," the story begins. While most children grow up hearing about some physical feature, personality trait, interest, or ability they acquired from a family member, poor Percival, it seems, has nothing that is his alone. Not only does he have his mother's nose and father's eyes, he has his aunt's ear for music and his uncle's head for numbers. From here the story takes off with a literal interpretation of the common expression, as all of his family's afore-mentioned body parts suddenly disappear. When Percival disappears as well, the family faces an even greater problem because the sketch artist at the Bureau of Missing Persons has absolutely nothing to go on. (Ages 5-8)

McClintock, Barbara. *Molly and the Magic Wishbone*. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001. 32 pages (0-374-34999-1) \$16.00

Molly is given one wish--just one wish--after finding a magic wishbone. Molly is taking care of her younger siblings while their mother is ill, and each child has his or her own idea of what extravagance she should wish for. When their rabbit appears to be sick, the younger children are convinced Molly should use her wish to cure it. But Molly is up to the task of handling things on her own. The same is true when one of the children breaks Mama's best bowl. Molly, mature and responsible, is still child enough to decide that a closet full of beautiful dresses is just what she wants. Then she discovers her youngest sister, Phylis, is missing. Phylis has gone out into the cold, snowy streets in search of her own magic wishbone. When Molly has no luck finding her, the solution is obvious, and the ending is as happy as anyone could wish. There's a definite Victorian feel to the story and setting. That's no surprise, since it is loosely based on Charles Dickens's "The Magic Wishbone." But Barbara McClintock's wintry Victorian world is populated wholly by animal creatures. Molly and her family are cats, with an admirable lack of cuteness in their appearance. The Dickensian streets are filled with a wide range of other creatures--all decked out in Victorian garb. (Ages 4-7)

McKissack, Patricia. *Goin' Someplace Special*. Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. An Anne Schwartz Book / Atheneum, 2001. 32 pages (0-689-81885-8) \$16.00

In a story based on Patricia McKissack's own childhood growing up in Nashville in the 1950s, a young African American girl repeatedly faces racial discrimination as she crosses her city by bus and by foot to reach the destination she calls "Someplace Special." 'Tricia Ann has certainly seen the Whites Only and Colored Section Jim Crow signs many times before, but she's always had Mama Frances with her. Making her first solo journey through the city, with her grandmother's permission, 'Tricia Ann is at times frightened and unsure. Luckily for this spirited young girl, she not only has a grandmother who has nurtured her with love and self-respect but also a community that cares. Other adults she meets remind 'Tricia Ann to "Carry yo'self proud," and to remember what her grandmother has taught her. When 'Tricia Ann completes her journey, readers learn that "Someplace Special" is the public library. In an author's note, McKissack explains that the downtown Nashville library was one of the few places in her childhood city that was integrated and had no Jim Crow signs. It was a place she felt welcome, and where she came to understand why "reading is the doorway to freedom." Jerry Pinkney's pencil and watercolor illustrations provide a richly detailed visual backdrop for McKissack's story. *Honor Book, CCBC Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award Discussion* (Ages 5-9)

Miller, William. *Rent Party Jazz*. Illustrated by Charlotte Riley-Webb. Lee & Low, 2001. 32 pages (1-58430-025-6) \$16.95

Sonny works for the coal man, shoveling coal down the chutes and earning ten cents a day to help at home. Every morning, as part of his job, he travels into the French Quarter of New Orleans, where Sonny hears musicians playing. After Sonny's mother loses her job at the fish canning factory, Sonny shares his worries about paying the rent with Smilin' Jack, one of the trumpet players. Smilin' Jack tells Sonny about the rent parties they used to have in Mississippi, when neighbors would gather with good food and music, and all the money donated went to the family in need. When Smilin' Jack offers to play at a party for Sonny and his mother, Sonny eagerly rushes home with the news. His mother is skeptical, but the generosity of Smilin' Jack and their neighbors is overwhelming. This book set during the Depression celebrates African American community and music. An author's note provides additional information on rent parties, and their particular link with jazz music in some parts of the country. The acrylic paintings brim with energy and color. (Ages 7-11)

Myers, Christopher. *Fly! Jump at the Sun / Hyperion, 2001. 32 pages (0-7868-2373-9) \$15.99*

Jawanza is not allowed to leave his apartment building and play on the busy street. He spends a lot of time at the window, watching the people below and the pigeons that flock around his building. That's how he meets Roderick Jackson Montgomery the Three. The older man raises pigeons on the roof of Jawanza's building. Soon Jawanza is on the rooftop, too, trying to decipher the language of the birds and the ways of Roderick Jackson Montgomery the Three, who is gruff and friendly, mysterious and forthright, touched and wholly sane all at once. "Boy, if you don't listen you won't learn nothing. God gave you two ears and only one mouth, because he wants you to listen more than you talk!" In this soaring, poetic story, Christopher Myers has written about a lonely African American boy who finds friendship--and freedom--on the unlikely confines of an urban rooftop. Myers's exquisite artwork is full of color and motion in this beautifully designed volume. (Ages 8-11)

Pinkwater, Daniel. *Irving and Muktuk: Two Bad Bears*. Illustrated by Jill Pinkwater. Houghton Mifflin, 2001. 32 pages (0-618-09334-6) \$15.00

Every year the town of Yellowtooth, in the frozen North, celebrates the New Year with a Blueberry Muffin Festival. And every year Irving and Muktuk,--two polar bears who are no better than they should be--try to steal the blueberry muffins. Luckily for Yellowtooth, it's hard to put one over on Officer Bunny. The year Irving and Muktuk pose as orphan penguins looking for muffin handouts, it's Officer Bunny who realizes that penguins are native to the South Pole, not the North. The year Irving and Muktuk pose as Girl Scouts taking cookie orders and demanding blueberry muffins as payment, it's Officer Bunny who realizes they're not wearing regulation uniforms and must be imposters. And the year Irving and Muktuk pose as blueberry muffins and are stored in the muffin warehouse, it's Officer Bunny who sees Muktuk drooling and catches them once again. The interplay between Daniel Pinkwater's droll text and Jill Pinkwater's comical illustrations boosts the humor of this over-the-top story. Officer Bunny's keen-eyed thwarting of the would-be muffin thieves is all the more hilarious because Irving and Muktuk in their various disguises are still so obviously polar bears. (Ages 4-8)

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Mice and Beans*. Illustrated by Joe Cepeda. Scholastic Press, 2001. 32 pages (0-439-18303-0) \$15.95

“When there’s room in the heart, there’s room in the house, except for a mouse.” Luckily for Rosa María, the mice in her house don’t take offense at that saying, or at the mousetrap she sets night after night as she prepares for her niece Catalina’s seventh birthday party. Instead, as Rosa María cooks enchiladas, rice, and beans and squeezes fresh lemonade, the mice are closely monitoring all preparations and checking the “to do” list. The day of the party, just as Catalina takes her first swing at the piñata, Rosa María realizes she forgot to fill it! But candy spills out when the little girl gives it a satisfying “Whack!” Pam Muñoz Ryan’s amusing tale is a flavorful blend of English narrative with Spanish phrases. How *did* those mice fill that piñata? Joe Cepeda’s full-color illustrations, which span each two-page spread, provide the answer. (Ages 4-7)

Scieszka, Jon. *Baloney (Henry P.)*. Illustrated by Lane Smith. Viking, 2001. 32 pages (0-670-89248-3) \$15.99

Henry P. Baloney is late for school on Tuesday--again--and his teacher, Miss Bugscuffle, has had it. “That’s it . . . Permanent Lifelong Detention . . . unless you have one very good and very believable excuse.” Needless to say, Henry, a little guy from another planet with a very large, very active imagination, has no shortage of excuses, which he rolls into one incredible adventure. Jon Scieszka’s “decoding” of Henry’s account (he writes in an afterword that the transmission came directly from deep space) is a delightful blending of a child’s fanciful storytelling and wordplay in which many of the nouns in English have been replaced with words from other languages. Why was Henry late? He misplaced his zimulus (pencil) and ended up in a razzo (rocket) heading toward the planet Astrosus (unlucky). The meaning of the words can usually be understood by their context and by the clues in Lane Smith’s amusing illustrations, which were created, it is noted, by a “machine-assisted human, and/or human-assisted machine.” A “decoder” at the end of the story gives the language of origin and literal meaning for all of the non-English words. One of Molly Leach’s dynamic design elements includes printing those words in a different color from the rest of the text. This book can set the stage for more creative storytelling and playful encounters with language. (Ages 6-10)

Smith, Charles R., Jr. *Loki and Alex: The Adventures of a Dog and His Best Friend*. Dutton, 2001. 32 pages (0-525-46700-9) \$14.99

A dual point of view puts a clever twist on the story of an African American boy and his dog at play in a city park. The narrative is told in two first-person voices. We see the world of Loki the dog in black and white. The world of Alex the child comes in full-color photographs. While young children will easily identify with Alex’s worldview, they will likely be amused, or pleasantly surprised, by Loki’s viewpoint. He doesn’t, for instance, like going down the slide as much as Alex thinks he does, and he is extremely serious about their game of tug-of-war. The familiar situation and gentle humor combine to make this an excellent introduction to the concept of point of view. (Ages 4-7)

Steen, Sandra and Susan Steen. *Car Wash*. Illustrated by G. Brian Karas. G.P. Putnam, 2001. 32 pages (0-399-23369-5) \$15.99

When Dad takes the family’s mud-splattered car to the car wash, a brother and sister go along for the adventure. And what an adventure they have! As soon as they enter the darkened tunnel of the car wash, the two imagine that they’re inside a submarine, looking out at the foamy sea. They survive an attack by a giant octopus and a sea monster with big claws. What’s that behind the seaweed--a shark? No time to find out because a hurricane is coming! The children’s deep sea adventure is accompanied by whimsical collage illustrations that manage to show both the realities of the car-wash interior and the imagined undersea world. Experienced car-wash adventurers who are old enough to understand the humorous and subtle interplay between fantasy and reality will best appreciate this amusing picture story. (Ages 4-7)

Stock, Catherine. *Gugu’s House*. Clarion, 2001. 32 pages (0-618-00389-4) \$14.00

Kukamba is a small girl in a Zimbabwe village who loves spending time with her grandmother, Gugu, an artist who forms huge animals and birds from clay. The little girl makes her own small animals, too, and is thrilled when her grandmother tells her she has the talent to be a fine artist someday. But she is crushed when the rains come and destroy her grandmother’s extraordinary creations. Gugu helps her understand what happened as part of nature’s cycle of constant renewal in a colorfully written, finely paced story set against full-page watercolor illustrations. Author/illustrator Catherine Stock explains in a note that the

character of Gugu is based on her friend Mrs. Khosa, an artist and storyteller in Zimbabwe. A photograph of Mrs. Khosa on the inside jacket also features one of her amazing life-size clay animals. *Highly Commended, 2002 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5-8)

Taravant, Jacques. *The Little Wing Giver*. Translated from the French by Nina Ignatowicz. Illustrated by Peter Sís. U.S. edition: Henry Holt, 2001. 32 pages (0-8050-6412-5) \$14.95

Once, birds and butterflies had no wings. That was before a little boy distributed wings to them, and to bugs, and to other creatures of the world—even to windmills. He did that because “perhaps God had realized that He’d forgotten to give out wings and sent the little boy to complete His creation.” The boy’s basket of wings was never empty, and he was generous. One day, the young child grew very tired, and the creatures reciprocated with a special gift for him. Peter Sís created artwork for the original French edition of this story, and he is a perfect match for the text. His delicate pastels elegantly interpret this uniquely joyous fantasy. This brief picture story produced in English with such care maintains the charm and transcendence of the original publication. Adults who recall *The Little Prince*, by French writer Antoine de Saint Exupéry, might discover a similarly wondrous experience. This endearing edition has the potential to emerge as a little classic. (Ages 4-7)

Uribe, Verónica. *Buzz Buzz Buzz*. Illustrated by Gloria Calderón. A Groundwood Book / Douglas & McIntyre, 2001. 24 pages (0-88899-430-3) \$15.95

Juliana and Andrés are ready for bed, but an annoying mosquito won't let them sleep. "bzzZZZZZZzz bzzzzZZZZZZzzz bzzzzZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ." The children flee the house, but the pesky mosquito follows. In the jungle, they plead with a howling monkey, a coral snake, and a toothy alligator to make that mosquito leave, but with no success. When the yellow owl whisks them back to their city home, the mosquito is still in pursuit. But just outside the children's bedroom window, that mosquito meets its match at last: "Schlurrrp" goes the night frog. This playful, language-rich story by Chilean writer Verónica Uribe was originally published in Venezuela. Columbian artist Gloria Calderón's lovely print illustrations capture an inky black jungle on a moonlit night to extraordinary effect. (Ages 4-8)

White, Carolyn. *The Adventure of Louey and Frank*. Illustrated by Laura Dronzek. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2001. 24 pages (0-688-16503-6) \$14.95

Frank, a soft brown bear, and Louey, a slender white rabbit, are best friends, although they don't always see eye to eye. The two agree to make a boat out of an old shoe and sail out to sea, and the adventure begins when they come upon the perfect spot for a picnic: a big blue rock--or is it a whale? Louey insists that the whale is a rock, even when Frank points out the "rock" has a blow hole. "What luck!" says Louey. "We found a rock with a geyser!" After a somewhat idyllic picnic, the friends meet with misfortune when their boat sails away without them, a storm blows in, and their "rock" sinks. They save themselves by clinging to a log--or is it a fish? "It's got pricklers," says Louey. "It's a fish." This time, it turns out, Louey is right but they do make it safely to shore on the fish's back, all the while arguing about whether they have seen a rock or a whale. The pair can agree on one thing, however: "It was an adventure." Short sentences and a subtle use of internal rhyme make this story a natural for reading aloud. The brightly colored acrylic illustrations provide clues for young children as to which of the two friends is correct in his assertions. Dronzek's paintings have an elegant dreamlike quality that's perfectly suited to the fantasy adventure. Louey, in fact, looks quite a bit like Sendak's Mr. Rabbit in Charlotte Zolotow's classic *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present*. (Ages 4-7)

Woodson, Jacqueline. *The Other Side*. Illustrated by E. B. Lewis. G.P. Putnam, 2001. 32 pages (0-399-23116-1) \$16.99

A fence stretches through the town where Clover, the young African American narrator of this story, lives. It is the dividing line between the Black and white sides of the community. The young white girl she sees playing every day, rain or shine, on the other side intrigues Clover. Soon she and other girl, Annie, are talking. While neither is allowed to climb over the fence, they sit together on top of it day after day to the surprise of Clover's friends, who jump rope nearby. Finally, Annie climbs over with Clover to join the jump rope game. Jacqueline Woodson's hopeful story takes place around the middle of the 20th century, but its message carries great weight at the start of the 21st. The fences to be climbed over today may be more symbolic than literal, but children can nonetheless understand the importance of crossing those divides and making connections. E. B. Lewis's lovely, light-filled illustrations embody the optimism of the story. *Winner, CCBC Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award Discussion* (Ages 5-8)

See also: *Amber Was Brave*, *Essie Was Smart*; *Book of Beasts*; *Brave Harriet*; *Chanukah Lights Everywhere*; *Dance!*; *Desert Town*; *Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins*; *Fannie in the Kitchen*; *Flowers from Mariko*; *Mabela the Clever*; *Mim's Christmas Jam*; *Mountain of Blintzes*; *Nursery Crimes*; *One of the Problems of Everett Anderson*; *Race of the Birkebeiners*; *Silent Night*; *Snow in Jerusalem*; *Three Pigs*; *Voice from the Wilderness*; *Yellow House*

Easy Fiction

Cowley, Joy. *Agapanthus Hum and Major Bark*. Illustrated by Jennifer Plecas. Philomel, 2001. 44 pages (0-399-23322-9) \$13.99

Agapanthus Hum goes to the animal shelter in search of a kitten, but she comes home with a dog. "This is a bitser dog," says her mommy. "A bit of this. A bit of that." Her little dog is "whizzy," like Agapanthus herself, full of energy and motion. The two of them make a winning combination in this easy chapter book featuring Joy Cowley's wonderfully whizzy writing and Jennifer Plecas's charming illustrations. (Ages 5-7)

Edwards, Michelle. *Zero Grandparents*. (A Jackson Friends Book) Harcourt, 2001. 58 pages (0-15-202083-7) \$14.00

Calliope loves second grade, especially math. Then her teacher announces the school will be having a Grandparents Day. But Calliope's grandparents are all dead. Mrs. Fennessy tells the students they can bring a special friend if they can't bring a grandparent. She also suggests they share grandparents, and Calliope's two best friends, Howie and Pa Lia, are both willing to share. But Calliope wants her own grandparent. When she's looking at the family photo album and thinking about her grandmother Flory Sopha, who died before she was born, Calliope comes up with a way to participate fully in the special day. Wearing the soft shawl Flory Sopha once knitted, she tells the class what she knows about this woman, who was a lot like Calliope herself. Michelle Edwards's sparkling transitional reader is the second entry in her Jackson Street Friends series about three young girls who are best friends. The first story, *Pa Lia's First Day* (Harcourt, 1999), features Pa Lia, who is Hmong, as its protagonist. A forthcoming book, *The Talent Show*, will be about African American Howie. (Ages 5-8)

Haas, Jessie. *Runaway Radish*. Illustrated by Margot Apple. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2001. 56 pages (0-688-16688-1) \$15.95

Radish's first little girl was Judy. She was too small to make him do anything. "Radish liked that." Radish's next little girl was Nina. She was also too small to make him do anything. "Radish liked that." What Radish the pony doesn't like is the fact that each of his little girls grows up, becoming too big to ride him. When Judy is too big he goes to Nina. Now that Nina is too big, what will Radish do? Radish runs away to Judy, and she (now old enough to drive!) has a wonderful solution in this superb chapter story by Jesse Haas. Margot Apple's black-and-white illustrations lend a timeless visual quality to a book that children will enjoy reading or hearing read aloud. (Ages 5-8)

Horowitz, Ruth. *Breakout at the Bug Lab*. Illustrated by Joan Holub. Dial, 2001. 48 pages (0-8037-2510-8) \$13.99

Max the Madagascan cockroach is no ordinary pet. "When most people see him, they do not talk baby talk. They do not try to pat him. Mostly they back away. Sometimes they scream." Two brothers try to avoid a disaster when Max breaks out of his tank in their mother's bug lab just before a fancy ceremony to rename the building. With visions of screaming reporters and a fleeing Ruby L. Gold--the building's benefactor--the boys hunt down their beloved cockroach with the help of a mysterious older woman called One-Shot Lil. Who is she really? It's a satisfying, not-too-surprising revelation at the end of this lively transitional reader illustrated in full color. (Ages 5-7)

Laurence, Daniel. *Captain and Matey Set Sail*. Illustrated by Cladio Munoz. (An I Can Read Book) HarperCollins, 2001. 62 pages (0-06-028956-2) \$14.95

Gruff Captain is a "yo-ho-ho-and-a-bottle-of-rum" kind of pirate, while gentle Matey would rather sing "Row row row your boat." Captain wants to name their new parrot Polly. Matey wants to call her Spot. Two seemingly unlikely shipmates are delightful foils in this easy-to-read illustrated book divided into four separate chapter stories. Even though one is called "Captain," the two are clearly equals and the best of friends in Daniel Laurence's not-too-sweet, very funny volume. (Ages 4-7)

Little, Jean. *Emma's Yucky Brother*. Illustrated by Jennifer Plecas. (An I Can Read Book) HarperCollins, 2001. 64 pages (0-06-028348-3) \$14.95

Emma is excited to be getting a little brother. Her family is adopting Max, who is four. But Emma's enthusiasm quickly dims. The first time she meets Max, he calls her cookies yucky and likes her best friend, Sally, better than Emma herself. The next time he comes, he cries for his foster mom. In a short, easy, engaging chapter book, Jean Little skillfully gives voice to both Emma's and Max's feelings as they make the somewhat rocky but ultimately joyful transition from strangers to siblings. Jennifer Plecas's full-color illustrations show an interracial friendship in Emma and Sally, who first appeared together in *Emma's Magic Winter* (HarperCollins, 1998). (Ages 5-7)

Livingstone, Star. *Harley*. Illustrated by Molly Bang. SeaStar Books, 2001. 64 pages (1-58717-048-5) \$14.95

The young llama Harley is supposed to be trained as a pack animal. But it seems no one asked Harley's opinion. He spits and shoves and kicks when the trainer comes. Far away from Harley is a woman rancher whose sheep are being attacked by coyotes. The rancher decides to get a guard llama, and Harley is chosen. Harley is good at guarding, but the sheep don't like him, and he's lonely. Can he make friends with the bullying ram? Star Livingstone's easy-to-read, chapter-book-sized story about real people and animals who live near her home in Massachusetts is written in short, simple sentences for newly independent readers. ("The sheep are restless. / They crowd together. / The coyotes sound close.") Molly Bang's full-color illustrations look as if they were created in pastels. (Ages 5-7)

McDonald, Megan. *Judy Moody Gets Famous!* Illustrated by Peter Reynolds. Candlewick Press, 2001. 126 pages (0-7636-0849-1) \$15.99

Judy Moody would like a little attention, please. She wants her picture in the paper like her classmate Pinch Face Jessica Finch, who is the Queen Bee of the Northern Virginia spelling competition. She'd like to be on the news like her little brother, Stink, who was born years before in a jeep on the way to the hospital. Judy schemes ways to become famous, but her various attempts end in disappointment, if not disaster, in another fresh story featuring Megan McDonald's sometimes petulant, always hilarious protagonist. When Judy finally does something that gets the media attention she craves--removing, repairing, and returning the worn-out dolls at the children's hospital--no one knows it was her. It turns out that being the Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell of the doll world and making the hospital kids happy--even anonymously--provides Judy with more than enough satisfaction. Although it's a bit unrealistic to imagine a third-grader accomplishing such a feat on her own, children will love Judy's exploits. Occasional black-and-white illustrations appear throughout the narrative of this great chapter book for independent readers or for reading aloud. (Ages 5-8)

See also: *Book of Beasts; Granddaddy and Janetta Together; The Lamp, the Ice, and the Boat Called Fish*

Fiction for Children

Chan, Gillian. *The Carved Box*. Kids Can Press, 2001. 232 pages (1-55074-895-5) \$16.95

Callum Murdoch did not travel all the way from Scotland to Upper Canada to work as a common farm laborer. Callum is a scholar, who dreams of becoming a teacher or a lawyer. When his father dies, so do the 15-year-old's options, and he is forced to live with his uncle's family--pioneers who are carving a farm out of virgin wooded land. An impulsive decision to rescue a beaten dog from her abuser costs Callum his small reserve of cash, but the good will behind his act pays off. This realistic portrait of the physical demands and relentless work of establishing a pioneer farm combines everyday family life with an unexpected element of fantasy, as it becomes increasingly clear that "Dog" is far more than your average canine. (Ages 10-14)

Creech, Sharon. *Love That Dog: A Novel*. Joanna Cotler Books / HarperCollins, 2001. 84 pages (0-06-029289-X) \$14.95

Jack hates poetry. He hates reading it and he hates writing it. So when his teacher, Miss Stretchberry, forces him to write one poem every week, Jack pours out his displeasure in poetic form. Over the course of the year, we see him develop, both as a poet and as a human being. From his writing, we can tell specific poets he's being forced to read in school--William Carlos Williams, Robert Frost, William Blake--not only because Jack makes specific (nasty) comments about their work but because we can see their poetry shaping Jack's own writing. (For the reader's convenience, these specific poems are reprinted in the back of

the book.) A deeper story also emerges from Jack's writing: Something has happened in his past that he doesn't like to talk about. Writing proves to be therapeutic for him, as well. The turning point for Jack comes with a school visit from his favorite author, Walter Dean Myers, whose poem "Love that Boy," from *Brown Angels*, provides the inspiration for Jack's own poem, "Love That Dog." This event signals the emergence of the poet Jack, who has learned to use words to express his innermost feelings. *Honor Book, CCBC Newbery Award Discussion* (Ages 9-12)

English, Karen. *Strawberry Moon*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001. 128 pages (0-374-47122-3) \$16.00

Like many children, Imani and her little brother Blair love their mother's stories of her childhood and have heard some of them so many times they know them by heart. Their parents are facing an upheaval, and an annual summer trip to visit their great aunt begins with Imami's anger at her mother for taking her away from her father. During the drive, their mother tells the stories once again, but this time Imani hears them in a new way. They allow her to imagine how her mother coped with her parent's separation at the age Imani is now. By the time the three arrive at Great Aunt Dot's, Imani has backed away from her anger and gotten a new perspective on her own family situation. Her mother's stories of a momentous year in her childhood, the mistakes she made, and the aunt who supported her through it all range from funny to poignant in this finely paced novel about two generations of an African American family. (Ages 9-12)

Giff, Patricia Reilly. *All the Way Home*. Delacorte Press, 2001. 169 pages (0-385-32209-7) \$15.95

Mariel loves Loretta, the nurse who adopted her from the polio hospital where she was once a patient. But she secretly longs for her mother, who exists only as a faint memory. Brick loves his family's apple orchard, the first real home he and his hard-working parents have had. When the orchard is devastated by fire, he must leave while his parents travel elsewhere to try to earn the money needed to keep the farm viable. Mariel and Brick both love the Dodgers and cheer their team on as it plays a winning season. When their paths unexpectedly cross, the two become friends who decide to work together to solve both their problems: finding Mariel's lost mother and reuniting Brick's family on the apple farm. Just like the occasional underdog team that rises to win the pennant, Mariel and Brick manage to answer their questions through their combined efforts and the strength of their friendship. (Ages 8-11)

Harlow, Joan Hiatt. *Joshua's Song*. Margaret K. McElderry, 2001. 176 pages (0-689-84119-1) \$16.00

Joshua Harper and his mother are struggling financially since his father died of influenza. Even though his family lives in a wealthy Boston neighborhood, Joshua's father had few assets when he died. Filled with grief, anger, and not a little self-pity at having to find a job, Joshua gets work as a newsie at age 13. Joshua is good at hawking newspapers. And, in getting to know one of the other newsies, Angelina (a young girl who poses as a boy), Joshua learns about the poverty in Boston's North End. He is dismayed that the newspapers haven't written about the conditions there, and that the government hasn't done more to help the people in the neighborhood. On one of his visits to the North End, Joshua gets caught in what is known as Boston's "Great Molasses Flood" of 1919, when a tank holding 2.5 million gallons of raw molasses burst, killing and injuring those in its path. There is a tense, dramatic climax before loose ends are neatly tied for young readers. An author's note provides a lengthy discussion of the "molasses flood," as well as information on the influenza pandemic of 1918 and newsies. (Ages 8-11)

Honey, Elizabeth. *Fiddleback*. U.S. edition: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001. 203 pages (0-375-80579-6) \$14.95

A diverse group of Stella Street neighbors anticipates an idyllic and lazy holiday camping trip in the picturesque Australian outback. The moms, dads, kids, older neighbor, and dog indulge in classic camping activities (exploring their site, enjoying campfire food, and plenty of swimming). But their vacation is anything but lazy as the days go by. What do the menacing loggers intend to do to this untouched spot? Who is pilfering their food supplies? When a storm washes out the only route home from their camp, it is *not* a good time for the very pregnant Mom to go into labor! The children are witnesses to that amazing event in this funny and touching novel. The author's breezy narrative style invites readers to join this realistic group of friends, whose nonstop action, plausible interrelationships, and absorbing ups and downs keep the plot spinning towards its finale. (Ages 9-12)

Ibbotson, Eva. *Dial-a-Ghost*. Illustrated by Kevin Hawkes. Dutton, 2001. 195 pages (0-525-46693-2) \$15.99

The Dial-a-Ghost Agency specializes in pairing the ideal ghosts with humans who are seeking specters for their homes. It's a highly specialized service indeed, but one that has found its niche. Customer satisfaction is high until the day of a momentous mix-up: The pleasant Wilkinson ghosts and the thoroughly nasty

Shriekers are accidentally sent to the wrong locations. The convent nuns who are inadvertently saddled with the Shriekers put up with the unpleasantness as best they can, but conniving Fulton Snodde-Brittle is completely disappointed in the mild Wilkinsons. Snodde-Brittle had requested truly evil ghosts in the hope of scaring his nephew Oliver to death, since Oliver is heir to the estate Snodde-Brittle and his wife hope to acquire. But the Wilkinsons are amiable and nurturing to young Oliver. Both humorous and agreeably gory (Sir Pelham Shrieker's forehead "has been bashed in by a horse's hoof, so that it was just a mass of splintered bone; his left ear hung by a thread") this clever ghost story neatly ties up all loose ends by the satisfying conclusion. (Ages 9-12)

Jones, Diana Wynne. *Mixed Magics*. U.S. edition: Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2001. 138 pages (0-06-029705-0) \$15.95

Chrestomanci, a powerful enchanter and possessor of nine lives, prevails throughout the four short stories included in *Mixed Magics*. The stories take place in an alternate universe, previously encountered in *Witch Week* (Greenwillow, 1982) and *The Lives of Christopher Chant* (Greenwillow, 1988). The universe of this book is similar to the one we know, but it's vastly different when it comes to the subject of magic. In "Warlock at the Wheel," the funniest of the tales, a fugitive warlock attempts to escape from Chrestomanci's world, only to be waylaid by a precocious bully of a child, who makes him yearn for the prison sentence he faced back home. Cat Chant must overcome his resentment of a potential rival, when together the two confront the malevolent "Stealer of Souls." Along with "Carol Oneir's Hundredth Dream" and "The Sage of Theare," these stories offer a welcome foray into Diana Wynne Jones' intricately realized magical world. (Ages 9-12)

Kornblatt, Marc. *Understanding Buddy*. Margaret K. McElderry, 2001. 113 pages (0-689-83215-X) \$16.00

Silent, withdrawn Buddy White, a new kid in Sam Keeperman's school, is an easy target for the other kids' teasing. But Sam won't join in. He knows Buddy's mom died over the summer in a car accident. Buddy's mother worked for his family as a cleaning woman. Sam can't imagine what it would be like to lose his mom, and he is not sure what to say to Buddy. But his first awkward gestures toward Buddy slowly blossom into friendship. At the same time, Sam's relationship with his own best friend--who doesn't like Buddy--is jeopardized. This novel set in Madison features a contemporary Jewish American child (and, in Buddy, a contemporary child whose family members are Jehovah's Witnesses) whose questions about death, life, religion, and the meaning of friendship are explored with honesty and sensitivity. (Ages 9-12)

MacLachlan, Patricia. *Caleb's Story*. Joanna Cotler Books / HarperCollins, 2001. 116 pages (0-06-023605-1) \$14.95

When his older sister, Anna, moves to town, she gives Caleb a journal and asks him to write about everything that's happening on the farm. Caleb has no idea what he'll write--words on paper don't come easily to him, and what can he write that will interest his sister? Then Caleb finds a stranger taking shelter in the barn during a snowstorm. It turns out the gruff, unfriendly old man is Caleb's grandfather, who abandoned Jacob, Caleb's father, as a child. Jacob cannot forgive his father, who never even wrote the family a letter, but Caleb discovers another dimension to his grandfather's history when he learns the man can't read or write. A second fierce storm sets up the climax of this engaging novel for younger readers set during World War I. Children can enjoy the drama of this story whether or not they are familiar with the author's two earlier books featuring Caleb and his family, *Sarah, Plain and Tall* (Harper & Row, 1985) and *Skylark* (HarperCollins, 1994). (Ages 8-10)

Morgenstern, Susie. *A Book of Coupons*. Translated from the French by Gill Rosner. Illustrated by Serge Bloch. U.S. edition: Viking, 2001. 62 pages (0-670-89970-4) \$12.99

How could a new teacher be so *old* wonder the students on the first day of the school year. "My name is Hubert Noël," he tells them. "Ever since I was young . . . people have called me Santa." He presents each child with a gift-wrapped package, and inside is a book of coupons. "One coupon for being late to school . . . One coupon for losing your homework . . . One coupon for not listening in class . . . One coupon for copying from your neighbor . . . One coupon for getting out of trouble . . . One coupon for singing at the top of your lungs whenever you like." The coupon book is just the first of many wonderful surprises the children have in store over the course of a remarkable school year in Monsieur Noël's class. Their teacher may look old, but he is young of heart and mind. He respects and challenges them, and they respond to all the gifts--of knowledge, of attention, of experience, of love--that he has to offer. Susie Morgenstern's short, charming, full-hearted novel is set in France, where the U.S.-born author lives. (Ages 9-12)

Park, Linda Sue. *A Single Shard*. Clarion, 2001. 152 pages (0-395-97827-0) \$15.00

In 12th century Korea, young Tree-Ear is an orphan living with elderly Crane-Man. Crane-Man and the boy are both outcasts, but the two share a close and loving bond. Ch'ulp'o, where they live, is a village known throughout Korea and beyond for the lovely Celadon green glaze of the pottery created there. Tree-Ear is fascinated by pottery making, especially the work of potter Min, the finest in the village. When Tree-Ear accidentally breaks one of Min's creations, he goes to work for Min to compensate the potter for his loss. Once the debt is paid, Tree-Ear continues working for the gruff and taciturn Min, hoping that he will eventually get a chance to create something at the potter's wheel. In the meantime, he takes every opportunity he can to learn and experiences startling, and wonderfully evoked, moments of deeper understanding of the mysteries of the art. He also shares the benefits of his work, such as the daily meal provided by Min's kind wife, with Crane-Man. A visit from the royal emissary, who has the power to assign coveted pottery commissions, ultimately has life-changing implications for Tree-Ear. Linda Sue Park's novel is hard to put down. An author's note provides additional historical information on the creation of Celadon pottery in Korea. (Ages 9-12)

Peck, Richard. *Fair Weather*. Dial, 2001. 139 pages (0-8037-2516-7) \$16.99

The year is 1893, and the World Columbian Exposition is opening in Chicago. For 13-year-old Rosie Beckett, who lives with her family on a rural Illinois farm, the Exposition might as well be in a different country. The expense and extravagance of traveling all the way to Chicago is unimaginable. However, when Aunt Euterpe sends train tickets for Rosie, her older sister Lottie, and their younger brother Buster to visit her in Chicago and attend the Exposition, Rosie's horizon broadens in unanticipated ways. The siblings' eccentric and uninvited Grandfather accompanies them on their journey. The four of them dive headlong into all the Exposition has to offer. At the same time, the sisters plot to deliver Aunt Euterpe from her prolonged period of mourning, and alleviate her feelings of exclusion from Chicago high society. Grandpa and Buster provide comic relief, while Rosie and Lottie hold their own in an unfamiliar urban setting, returning home both enriched, and appreciative of their unique family. Cameo appearances by historical figures Buffalo Bill and Lillian Russell add to the rich historical setting. (Ages 10-15)

Roberts, Ken. *The Thumb in the Box*. Illustrated by Leanne Franson. A Groundwood Book / Douglas & McIntyre, 2001. 95 pages (0-88899-421-4) \$14.95

A great read-aloud that will also delight young independent readers is set in a small Canadian village off the coast of British Columbia. As seen through the eyes of young Leon, no one in New Auckland is ordinary. Singular, quirky, extraordinary individuals populate his village. Annie Pritchard is a famous artist who painted her largest work on the floor at the center of the community's indoor basketball court--a gift to the village she loves. Leon's best friend, Susan, is "a genius when it came to facts." But, Leon reveals, "she could always be fooled by something that wasn't in a book." That's how Leon knows Susan is sure to fall for the old "thumb-in-the-box" trick of "Little" Charlie Semanov that no one under ten can resist, just as he fell for it himself. And then there is Big Charlie, the mayor, who can't persuade a member of Parliament that New Auckland needs only a water pump, not a fire engine. But when the unwanted engine arrives, along with the member of parliament and the media, Big Charlie is ready. The savvy reception he's orchestrated involves the entire community in a series of increasingly hilarious missteps. Finally, the village gets exactly what it needs after all. Ken Robert's easy novel is full of humor and warmth. (Ages 7-10)

Robinet, Harriette Gillem. *Missing from Haymarket Square*. Atheneum, 2001. 143 pages (0-689-83895-6) \$16.00

This novel set in 1886 Chicago features a 12-year-old African American girl whose father, a union organizer, has disappeared. Dinah Bell hears from other workers on the street that he's been arrested. With her friends Olive and Ben, Austrian immigrants who share cramped living quarters with Dinah, her parents, and others, she follows that lead to the jail and finds him. Then he disappears again--the police have turned him over to the Pinkertons, the private detectives who often resort to violence when trying to prevent the unions from taking hold. Dinah's loving father is one of the reasons she is so self-sufficient, but she has also learned how to survive because of the hard lessons in her daily struggle against poverty, racism, and exploitation. Her mother, who lost an arm in a factory accident and who now sees only the bad side of every situation, further burdens Dinah. Eventually, Dinah sees her mother is doing the best she can. Despite all she is up against, Harriette Gillem Robinet's determined, spirited protagonist is remarkably upbeat. The author built her narrative around actual events, most notably the May 1, 1886, Chicago workers march that saw 80,000 people demanding an eight-hour day, and the Haymarket Riot that was its aftermath. Dinah,

who works in a factory, takes part in that historic march despite threats from her employer. An extensive author's note provides background information on the situation of immigrant and American poor in Chicago that led to the historic events behind this novel. (Ages 10-14)

Rodda, Emily. *Rowan of Rin*. U.S. edition: Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2001. 151 pages (0-06-029707-7) \$14.95

When the stream flowing from the Mountain dries up without warning, the villagers of Rin are desperate to discover why their vital water source has failed. A trip up the Mountain to search for the blockage is the obvious course of action. Quiet Rowan is a loner, considered capable only of caring for the bukshah herd, so the villagers question his inclusion in the group that seeks the cause of the stream's failure. However, as the other members drop out of the climb, Rowan discovers that his own hidden strengths carry him through. Rowan rises to the aid of his fellow villagers again, in *Rowan and the Travelers* (0-06-029775-1). As his neighbors fall into a mysterious sleep, from which they cannot be awakened, Rowan is compelled to locate an antidote to their slumber. In his search for answers, he journeys to the treacherous Pit of Unrin, accompanied by the unreliable nomadic Travelers. Confronted by danger and uncertainty, Rowan must rely on his intelligence and determination to save the villagers from their relentless sleep. Rowan is an unpretentious and likable hero in these classic fantasy quests, which are readily accessible to young readers. (Ages 8-11)

Saldaña, René. *The Jumping Tree: A Novel*. Delacorte Press, 2001. 181 pages (0-385-32725-0) \$14.95

Rey Castañeda lives in Nuevo Peñitas, Texas, "a stone's throw from Mexico." In the funny, tender narrative, Rey describes his extended Mexican American family on both sides of the border; his adventures and misdeeds with his best friend, Chuy; and his challenges and triumphs at school. Each chapter is a vignette in the life of this boy who is becoming a man. Throughout the novel, we see Rey's confusion as he tries to determine what kind of a man he wants to become. He observes the differences--and the tensions--between his *machismo* uncles and his father, who has made a conscious decision to be a different kind of man. His father has also chosen a life in the United States so that his children can get a good education, even though it means leaving his beloved Mexico and living in constant economic struggle. His father is a proud Chicano. Rey is, too, but he wonders if his dad shouldn't stand up for himself more. And sometimes Rey wonders, as he studies the history of Texas in school, where the truth about *his* people is in the books they read. The boy's friendships change when the more studious Rey chooses a different path from bright troublemaker Chuy. The author moves seamlessly between moments of high humor and moments of gravity, with much rich material in between. He just as seamlessly weaves Spanish words and phrases that can be understood in context into this debut novel of depth and insight. *Honor Book, CCBC Newbery Award Discussion* (Ages 11-14)

Springer, Nancy. *Rowan Hood: Outlaw Girl of Sherwood Forest*. Philomel, 2001. 170 pages (0-399-23368-7) \$16.99

Rosemary's mother, Celandine, had told her about her father, the outlaw who robbed the wealthy and was generous to the poor, who lived in an outlaw camp, surrounded by his band of fugitives. These are only tales until the day when Rosemary's mother is brutally murdered by the lord's henchmen, who misunderstand the power of Celandine's woods magic. Deserted and desperate, Rosemary decides to search for her father, but fearing his possible rejection of a girl, she poses as a boy named Rowan. Rowan/Rosemary soon attracts her own small group of misfits. Together, they rise unexpectedly to Robin Hood's aid, proving Rowan's ability to live up to her father's legend. Adventure combines with unanticipated plot twists in this new take on the Robin Hood tale, providing a welcome young female protagonist to join the traditional cast of characters. (Ages 8-12)

Williams, Vera B. *Amber Was Brave, Essie Was Smart*. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2001. 72 pages (0-06-029460-4) \$15.95

Amber and her older sister, Essie, must rely on each other. Their mother is at work, there's little to eat, and not much to play with other than Wilson the Bear and, of course, each other. There's Amber's question: "Tell me just one more time, Essie . . . Where is Daddy?" The sisters try to wrap their minds around the fact that forging a check is the same as stealing, because that's why there's such a big family secret. Williams has created a unique narrative embedded in 28 brief, unrhymed poems. An unusually skilled writer, Williams tenderly characterizes two children who know, and also don't realize, how fragile their family's well-being has become. The text is preceded and followed by an "album" of paintings, and occasional

drawings can be found amidst the poems. A gifted painter, Williams uses the album, drawings, and delicately placed rainbow colors to further explore the emotions of a loving, beleaguered little family. In this unforgettable volume, she's created a new form, checked sentimentality at the door, and provided an example of how love and the human spirit are the emotional furniture where children can rest. *Winner, CCBC Newbery Award Discussion* (Ages 7-11)

See also: *Enchantress from the Stars; King of the Wind; Mouse and His Child; Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*

Fiction for Young Adults

Brashares, Ann. *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*. Delacorte Press, 2001. 294 pages (0-385-72933-2) \$14.95

Magical jeans that look incredible on all who wear them, regardless of variations in the owners' sizes and shapes? Far-fetched, to say the least, but this fantastic premise ties together the summer stories of four friends, each of whom encounter challenges during the season they spend apart. Lena, Tibby, Bridget, and Carmen vow to pass the jeans from one to another during the course of the summer, never washing them, lest they weaken the pants' amazing qualities. The four teens face issues including a new stepparent, overwhelming shyness, the need to explain an embarrassing and misunderstood encounter with a boy, a cynical attitude about a rock-bottom job at a discount chain store, and a relentless drive to experience physical intimacy at any cost with an attractive but older camp counselor. These are presented with credibility, humor, and compassion in a way that allows the plot to escape becoming overly sentimental. The different story lines are competently interwoven, and the friends emerge at summer's end stronger for their experiences. (Ages 13-16)

Cormier, Robert. *The Rag and Bone Shop*. Delacorte Press, 2001. 154 pages (0-385-72962-6) \$15.95

Since 12-year-old Jason was the last person to see his seven-year-old neighbor alive, he quickly becomes the suspect in the murder that has rocked the small Vermont town where he lives. But Jason seems to be completely innocent, not only of the girl's murder but also of the underhanded tactics used by Trent, an expert interrogator who's been brought into the case to get a confession out of the boy. Readers will be kept on the edge of their seats by the riveting story, told in the opposing points of view of both Trent and Jason, and will likely change their minds about Jason's innocence at least two or three times in the course of their reading. (Ages 12-16)

Crossley-Holland, Kevin. *The Seeing Stone*. (Arthur Trilogy, Book One) U.S. edition: Arthur A. Levin Books / Scholastic Press, 2001. 342 pages (0-439-26326-3) \$17.95

The structure of this latest addition to the ever-growing body of Arthurian-based fiction--100 short chapters--is ideally suited to the interwoven stories of Arthur de Caldicot, a young boy in the year 1199 who has the ambition of becoming a knight. His namesake is King Arthur of Camelot fame. When Merlin, a friend of his father's, gives young Arthur an obsidian "seeing stone," Arthur begins to view excerpts from King Arthur's history in its shiny surface. As the vignettes accumulate, Arthur sees striking coincidences between his own life and King Arthur's past. Tension mounts as political and social events in the current time reflect the unrest of the past. The Caldicot household is portrayed in gritty Middle Ages realism, including the amputation of the hand of a supposed thief, the death of Arthur's infant brother, a serving girl's relationship with Arthur's older brother, and the resulting pregnancy. Young Arthur struggles to accept the rigidity of the class and economic structure of his time. Poised on the brink of adulthood, he is plagued by the uncertainty of his future and rising questions about his past. At the story's conclusion, Arthur heads out to Jerusalem and the Crusades, leaving readers eagerly anticipating book two of the Arthur Trilogy. (Ages 10-15)

Dickinson, Peter. *The Ropemaker*. Random House, 2001. 384 pages (0-385-72921-9) \$15.95

For 20 generations, two families have maintained the power that keeps the Valley safe from marauding intruders. When that protective magic begins to fail, something must be done to restore it, or the Empire's soldiers will overrun the people of the Valley. Tilja, her grandmother, Tahl, and his grandfather set out to search the Empire for the man who originally gave their two families the ability to protect their homeland. The group's likelihood of finding him seems slight, but it's the only hope they have. Tilja feels especially ill-equipped to face the task, as she has recently discovered that--unlike her grandmother, mother, and

sister--she lacks the ability to perform the family magic. That lack, however, proves to be Tilja's own unique power when the group's journey into the Empire becomes treacherous. Tilja's search for her own identity is a consistent underlying theme of this challenging quest. Skillfully crafted, *The Ropemaker* is an exceptional addition to the fantasy genre for teenagers. (Ages 12-16)

Flake, Sharon G. *Money Hungry. Jump at the Sun / Hyperion, 2001. 187 pages (0-7868-0548-X) \$15.99*

Raspberry Hill is 13 years old, and an established entrepreneur. Selling candy, house cleaning, even skipping lunch – she is willing to try almost anything legal to earn money. Raspberry's fixation with money is rooted in her desire for financial security. She and her mother share an apartment in the projects, but before that they spent time living on the streets. Raspberry is determined to never be without a home again. Her money-making mania swells to the point of causing rifts between Raspberry and her friends, and with her mother. That tension with her mother reaches its climax in a stunningly dramatic scene of misunderstanding. Accused of being greedy and obsessed, Raspberry is caught between wanting to repair the damaged relationships, and her drive to create a safety net for her life in this gripping portrait of a struggling and determined African-American girl. The novel also looks at issues of racial tensions and identity in the character of one of Raspberry's best friends, who is conflicted about her mixed African American and Korean heritage. (Ages 12-16)

Fleischman, Paul. *Seek. A Marcato Book/Cricket, 2001. 167 pages (0-8126-4900-1) \$16.95*

Paul Fleischman continues his experimentation with format and voice in *Seek*. In this novel the author describes as a radio drama and laid out like a script, Fleischman employs a collage of 52 voices--some fully-developed characters, others mere snippets of sound that help propel the narrative. At the center of *Seek* is teenager Rob, whose father left when he was a baby. One of Rob's most important possessions is the tape of one of his musician and disc jockey father's old radio shows. Told in both the present and in past flashbacks, the book chronicles Rob's quest to find his father on the airwaves. He starts by tuning in to stations in and around San Francisco. Later he tries picking up far-off AM stations late at night, and then he turns to shortwave radio. Rob's quest is a private, poignant one. It rises above tragedy because he is surrounded by love. Rob is growing up in a singular, intellectually stimulating environment, with a strong, loving mother, grandparents, and aunts. As he grows, he finds friends and new interests. All of their voices, and a few words from a deejay in Louisiana, a baseball announcer in a distant city, an evangelist spreading the Word, and many others, form the tapestry of *Seek*. Classroom teachers will especially appreciate the author's guidelines for presenting *Seek* as reader's theater. (Age 14 and older)

Geras, Adele. *Troy. U.S. edition: Harcourt, 2001. 340 pages (0-15-216492-8) \$17.00*

Xanthe and Marpessa may have been on the sidelines during the famed Battle of Troy, but they are front and center in this richly detailed young-adult novel that begins ten years into the war that was the subject of Homer's epic *The Iliad*. The two adolescent sisters work within the walled city of Troy, Marpessa as a maid to the infamous Helen and Xanthe as a nurse who cares for wounded soldiers carried in from the battlefield, as well as for Hector and Andromache's infant son. From this vantage point they not only see the destructive effects of the war but they also have frequent encounters with the Olympians, Aporhodate in particular, who constantly interfere in the lives of mortals. True to the spirit of the Greek classics, the lives of many are intricately interwoven in a complex tapestry set against the backdrop of history and featuring mature themes. (Age 16 and older)

Gilmore, Rachna. *A Group of One. Henry Holt, 2001. 184 pages (0-8050-6475-3) \$16.95*

Both of Tara's parents were born in India, but the 15-year-old has always thought of herself as Canadian and bristles when anyone tries to label her based on her heritage. Then her neatly packaged view of herself and others is challenged by a visit from her paternal grandmother. It's the first time Tara has met Naniji, whom she knows only from photos and vague stories about her involvement with the Quit India movement to end British rule of India. Aware of tension between her mother and Naniji, Tara is angry when she hears the story her mother reluctantly tells about feeling scorned by Naniji because her own parents left India for the West and because she doesn't follow many traditional customs. Tara is prepared to keep Naniji at a distance. But in spite of herself, Tara is interested in what Naniji has to say. When Tara interviews her grandmother for a class assignment, Naniji tells the harrowing story of her 14th birthday, when British soldiers stormed her home and arrested her brother and mother. In writing the experience to share in her class, Tara feels, for the first time, a deep connection to her heritage. She also senses a profound awareness

of her own brown skin and a perception of herself as “other” as she thinks about her mostly white classmates, who will be listening to the story. A lively, likeable, very human protagonist and her family are at the heart of Rachna Gilmore’s honest and deeply probing novel. (Age 12 and older)

Hesse, Karen. *Witness*. Scholastic Press, 2001. 161 pages (0-439-27199-1) \$16.95

The only Black residents of a small Vermont community in 1924 are 12-year-old Leanora Sutter and her father. Six-year-old Esther Hirsh and her father are the only Jewish people in the town. Both families become targets of the Ku Klux Klan in Karen Hesse’s compelling novel. This story, told through free verse poems in the voices of 11 characters, addresses the impact of hatred on its victims as well as the moral implications of those who commit violent actions and those who do nothing to stop them. In addition to the two girls, Hesse’s characters include a fire-and-brimstone preacher whose actions defy his teaching; the farmer who houses the Hirshes and who comes to love the little girl and admire her father, despite her discomfort with the fact that they are Jewish; a shopkeeper who becomes more and more involved with the Klan; the town constable, who is reluctant to get involved until events take an almost-tragic turn; and a teenager who is at first enamored of the Klan but later is unable to carry out their wishes. It can be a bit difficult to keep everyone straight. But a character list at the start of the novel, along with a photograph representing each fictional character, provides a helpful reference. The 11 characters, and the actions they take, affect one another deeply over the course of the story. It is in that ability to affect--and connect--that hope can be found in this novel set against the backdrop of racism and complacency. (Ages 12 and older)

Howe, James, ed. *The Color of Absence: Twelve Stories about Loss and Hope*. Atheneum, 2001. 238 pages (0-689-82862-4) \$16.00

These 12 short stories by well-known authors of fiction for teens focus on loss in many forms. Annette Curtis Klause’s jaded vampire uses and discards young women without a second thought, but becomes unaccountably attached to a stray cat in “Summer of Love.” Cooter finally gets to know his father only to lose him to HIV in “What Are You Good At?” by Roderick Townley. Other heroes of these stories experience such losses as a beloved grandparent’s failing memory and the end of a burgeoning romantic relationship when an unplanned pregnancy develops. Naomi Shihab Nye evokes memories of loved ones by the foods associated with their lives in “Shoofly Pie.” Jimmy Sims is a professional baseball player who must weigh the loss of the season against the potential loss of his wife in “Season’s End,” by Walter Dean Myers. Collectively, the stories offer insight into the types of loss that confront many adolescents. (Ages 12-16)

Jiménez, Francisco. *Breaking Through*. Houghton Mifflin, 2001. 193 pages (0-618-01173-0) \$15.00

“I lived in constant fear for ten long years, from the time I was four until I was fourteen years old.” In this opening sentence of *Breaking Through*, Francisco Jiménez summarizes much of the emotional landscape chronicled in his first novel, *The Circuit* (University of New Mexico Press, 1997). In this new book, Jiménez picks up his story at age 14. No longer on the migrant circuit, Francisco and his family relish the stability of living in one place. This is threatened when the border patrol finds out that Francisco, his older brother, Roberto, and their mother are in the United States illegally. Rather than separate, the whole family returns to Mexico. When they come again to the United States, it is with the paperwork that means they will no longer have to fear discovery. Francisco and Roberto contribute more and more to the economic support of their family, living by the incredible work ethic their father has modeled. They go to school during the day, working evenings and weekends. At school, Francisco shines with the support of some wonderful teachers, counselors, and friends, who help him toward college and his hope of becoming a teacher. At home, years of constant struggle have taken a physical and emotional toll on their father. His dark moods are exacerbated when Francisco begins to act “American,” taking interest in popular music and talking back. Their mother smoothes things over, holding her family together and encouraging her children’s dreams in this inspiring and compelling work of autobiographical fiction. (Age 12 and older)

Kerr, M.E. *Slap Your Sides*. HarperCollins, 2001. 198 pages (0-06-029481-7) \$15.95

This singular novel begins in 1942 with Radio Dan’s patriotic radio broadcast urging the American citizens of his Pennsylvania town to continue to respond to the war effort. Throughout the thought-provoking story, Radio Dan’s broadcasts are interspersed with 13-year-old Jubal Shoemaker’s first-person accounts of the toll his brother’s Bud’s status as a conscientious objector takes on everyone in one way or another, and with Bud’s letters to Jubal. Bud’s status causes a rift between the brother’s parents and within the community at large. It damages Jubal’s relationship with Daria, who is Radio Dan’s daughter. The title refers to a patriotic

song Daria sings on her father's program. Draft resistance is compared to conscientious objection within Kerr's fast moving story, as are several perspectives on killing. Can one who participates in any way in military service still be considered a pacifist? What about a pacifist who has killed a person in order to protect someone he or she loves? All of the characters - teenagers and adults, males and females - express varying points of view at one time or another within the novel. Some of them shift opinions as the war continues, or after bombs are dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or when Bud is victimized for being a c.o. Dialogue references to slang, the movies, styles, and books from the years of World War II accurately establish the decade as well as the turmoil on the home front. Kerr's note at the end states that she "remembers clearly the hometown boy who chose not to fight when all the other young men, including her brother, were marching off to war." There were no easy answers then, and there are no facile conclusions in this novel, only questions, many questions. (Ages 12-15)

Macy, Sue. *Girls Got Game: Sports Stories and Poems*. Henry Holt, 2001. 152 pages (0-8050-6568-7) \$15.95

In *A Whole New Ball Game* (Holt, 1993) and *Winning Ways* (Holt, 1996), Sue Macy wove her passion for women's athletics and her research skills into compelling nonfiction narratives about women and girls in sports. *Girls Got Game* goes beyond facts to emotional truths in nine short stories and nine poems by different women. Each story features a young female protagonist involved in athletics, from softball to synchronized swimming, horseback riding to tetherball, basketball to soccer. They are girls with struggles many young readers will recognize, whether or not they are sports-minded themselves. Sometimes that struggle is highly personal, as in Virginia Euwer Wolff's short story "Water," in which a young athlete is drained by the endless quest for perfection. Sometimes the struggle resonates with broader social issues, such as the age-old strains of sexism that are played out to subtle and infuriating perfection in Felicia E. Halpert's "Summer Games." In that story, the sweetness of a young girl's first love grows bitter after she beats the boy in a camp tetherball tournament and he turns his back on her. The nine poems in the collection also cover a range of sports and offer sweat, grit, and celebration at the thrill of doing something well or courageously. A brief biography of each contributor describes her experiences with athletics. Sue Macy's introduction is a marvelous personal essay on growing up as a sports-loving girl with little outlet for her enthusiasm in the days before Title IX. (Ages 11-16)

Na, An. *A Step from Heaven*. Front Street, 2001. 156 pages (1-886910-58-8) \$15.95

As a small girl living in Korea, Young Ju Park leads a relatively carefree life, although she is often aware of the unhappiness of her father, mother, and paternal grandmother. Young's four-year-old mind reasons that they are all unhappy because her grandfather has gone to live in heaven. When she and her parents board an airplane, she assumes that they are going to join him. Instead, she finds herself in the unfamiliar United States with no grandfather. Worse, Young's grandmother has stayed in Korea. They have come to America for a better life, Young's parents tell her. But her parents still seem unhappy--understandably, since they're living with relatives and working menial jobs. In the years that follow, even the birth of a cherished son and the purchase of a home don't make things better. Young's father sinks deeper into alcoholism and depression. For Young, attending school where everyone speaks English and expects her to act like an American girl is challenging enough. But at home she's expected to uphold Korean cultural values, something that gets harder to do as she grows older. An Na's stunning first novel depicts Young's development by showing the complexities of her world, screened through her mind. We see Young, even as a small child, trying to piece events together on an intellectual as well as an emotional level. Her struggle to comprehend her family life leads to a mature understanding of her mother, allowing Young to take some courageous steps into the adult world. (Age 13 and older)

Naidoo, Beverly. *The Other Side of Truth*. U.S. edition: HarperCollins, 2001. 252 pages (0-06-029628-3) \$15.95

On the opening page of this riveting novel, 12-year-old Sade's mother is murdered, the victim of a corrupt Nigerian government that is seeking to prevent Sade's journalist father from writing about the oppression there. Little more than 24 hours later, Sade and her ten-year-old brother, Femi, are alone on the streets of London. They were smuggled out of Nigeria for their own safety. But the plans to deliver them into their uncle's care have gone terribly wrong. They are exiles, perhaps even orphans, and numb with grief. They end up in the foster care system, where adults genuinely want to help them. Yet Sade knows--for their own safety and the safety of their father, who may or may not have escaped--that she can't reveal who she and her brother really are. Then Sade learns that her father is in London. He escaped from Nigeria under a false name. Now the Nigerian government claims he murdered his wife, and the British government is holding him for extradition. What lengths will Sade go to persuade people of the truth? All that her father and

mother taught her haunts, and eventually fortifies, Sade as she feels her way through life as a refugee. Beverly Naidoo's moving novel works on multiple levels, from its bracing indictment of political corruption and oppression to its portrait of two children reeling from grief and shocking change. The story ends with Sade and Femi reunited with their father. (Ages 11-14)

Nicholson, William. *Slaves of the Mastery*. Illustrated by Peter Sís. (The Wind on Fire, Book Two) U.S. edition: Hyperion, 2001. 434 pages (0-7868-0570-6) \$17.99

The second volume in *The Wind on Fire* trilogy won't disappoint readers who enjoyed last year's *The Wind Singer* (Hyperion, 2000). Kestrel, Bowman, the delightful Pinpin (now a mature seven-year-old and going by her given name of Pinto), and their parents are back, five years older and just as independent and free-thinking as they were in Book One. The people of Aramanth have enjoyed their recent freedom from the oppressive Morah, but their newfound autonomy has left them undefended against forces from the distant Mastery. Invaders strike at night, decimating Aramanth as they pillage and burn the town, taking its residents prisoner. Only Kestrel manages to evade capture. After a horrific forced march to the Mastery, the prisoners are relieved to reach the grand city's borders, where it seems that they may be treated well. As Kestrel attempts to reach her captive family, her parents become suspicious of the way their fellow Aramanthians appear almost to welcome their slavery. The family members preach caution, but their neighbors disregard them. Looming ominously over the story's events is the Master, a powerful leader who somehow elicits universal servitude despite his acts of violence and cruelty. As Kestrel and Bowman attempt to free their family, events unwind in unexpected ways, showing that the people and circumstances they judged to be inherently evil may merit different interpretations. An engrossing plot, combined with evolving, multi-layered characters, creates a distinctive fantasy world to be savored as we await Book Three. (Ages 12-16)

Nix, Garth. *Lirael*. HarperCollins, 2001. 487 pages (0-06-027823-4) \$16.95

On her 14th birthday, Lirael is so dejected that she contemplates suicide. For years, she has been anxiously awaiting "the Sight," an ability to "see" future events, which appears in the daughters of the Clayr at age 10 or 11. Feeling like a misfit, Lirael is grateful to get the job of Third Assistant Librarian. Although she shuns any social interaction that would remind her of her missing Sight, Lirael enjoys her job, where she encounters "fell creatures, old Charter spells that had . . . become unpredictable, mechanical traps, even poisoned book bindings," in other words, "the regular hazards of a librarian's life." As the years pass, she becomes a master of Charter magic, yet she still longs for the Sight. When Lirael is sent away from the Clayr on a dangerous mission "seen" to be her destiny, she sets forth bravely, accompanied only by the magical Disreputable Dog. Meanwhile, Prince Sameth feels tortured by his impending adulthood and his overwhelming fear of assuming the honored but dangerous role of Abhorsen, an occupation that demands frequent trips into the realm of Death. Attempting to avoid the training for that future, Sameth sets out on a journey of his own. His quest soon intersects with Lirael's. This sequel to *Sabriel* (HarperCollins, 1996) easily lives up to the high marks of its predecessor, being rich in sympathetic characters, smooth plot development, and moments of breathtaking action. The book closes with a cliffhanger, setting the stage for the next volume. (Ages 12-16)

Ryan, Sara. *Empress of the World*. Viking, 2001. 213 pages (0-670-89688-8) \$15.99

At a summer camp for gifted teens, Nicola Lancaster falls in with a group of funny, quirky kids that includes Battle, the beautiful girl whom Nicola found herself sketching in her notebook during orientation. Over the coming days, Nicola finds herself drawn more and more to Battle and thinking for the first time about her sexuality. Awkward and uncertain, she and Battle finally acknowledge the undeniable with a kiss, and their relationship blossoms. The summer-camp set-up for Sara Ryan's debut novel is a bit awkward. The dialogue, peppered with typical swear words found in almost any group of teens, is at times forced. But the author more than hits her stride in her sensitive, tender portrait of two girls falling in love. Nicola and Battle's relationship echoes the intensity and sweetness of any new affection. Even in the bubble of her happiness, Nicola is keenly aware of the reactions of those around her. These range from support to "no big deal" to definite signs of hostility. But it is Battle's own demons, which have nothing to do with sexuality and everything to do with a troubled family, that create the real problems for Nicola. This is another strength of the novel: sexuality does not in any way define the well-rounded characters, and the threat to Nicola and Battle's relationship lies in the emotional boundaries and communication that challenge any couple. The physical relationship between Nicola and Battle is deftly implied, with references to intimacy without explicit scenes. (Age 14 and older)

Salisbury, Graham. *Lord of the Deep*. Delacorte Press, 2001. 182 pages (0-385-72918-9) \$15.95

Mikey, age 13, is proud to be working as a deckhand for his stepfather Bill, aboard Bill's Hawaiian charter fishing boat. Bill seems adept at knowing just how much work Mikey is able to perform, and Mikey soaks up Bill's understated appreciation and respect, determined to live up to his stepdad's expectations. A pair of obnoxious customers makes Mikey question Bill's integrity, however. They treat Bill and Mikey rudely and then threaten to sabotage the struggling charter business if Bill does not support their manufactured account of landing a trophy fish without Mikey's help. The fishing scenes shine with authenticity, a splendid backdrop to Mikey's discovery that right and wrong are less concrete than he had previously thought. Readers will especially appreciate the solid framework of this boy's strong and loving bond with his stepfather. Mikey's mixed-race heritage (white/Polynesian) is part of his identity, but not the focus of this lively novel. (Ages 10-14)

Shreve, Susan. *Blister*. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2001. 153 pages (0-439-19313-3) \$15.95

Sones, Sonya. *What My Mother Doesn't Know*. Simon & Schuster, 2001. 257 pages (0-689-84114-0) \$17.00

At almost 15, Sophie is trying to make sense of her intense emotions, unreliable hormones, and ever-changing feelings. A novel told through a series of prose poems speaks in Sophie's lively, gut-level honest voice. Her confusion as the rapture she once felt just thinking about her boyfriend Dylan cools to ambivalence, and then to irritation, is refreshingly realistic. So, too, is her fascination at meeting someone who seems to love her wholly for her mind--an exchange taking place on the internet that tests Sophie's self-possession in a chilling moment of revelation. Sophie's relationship with her mother is punctuated by typical teen frustrations, with an undercurrent of something more serious. Her mother's behavior suggests she is a woman battling depression, and that Sophie knows something isn't right. But it is Sophie's growing attraction to a boy named Murphy, who has been the butt of his classmates' jokes for years, that proves to be her biggest test of character and strength. This novel deftly embodies the angst, frustration, humor, and joy of adolescent life. (Age 13 and older)

Taylor, Mildred D. *The Land*. Phyllis Fogelman Books / Penguin Putnam, 2001. 375 pages (0-8037-1950-7) \$17.99

The Land, like several of Mildred Taylor's other books in The Logan Family Saga, is a prequel to *Song of the Trees* (Dial, 1975) and *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (Dial, 1976), the two titles that introduced Cassie Logan and her family to readers. *The Land* reaches back a generation further than Taylor has ventured. Its hero is Paul-Edward, Cassie's future grandfather, who grows from child to young man in this substantial volume. Paul-Edward's mother is a former slave. His father is a white Georgia landowner. The relationship between his parents is complex, to say the least, but love seems to be at its core. Paul-Edward and his older sister have always been accepted by their father as his children, and accepted by their white half-brothers as well. Yet they live with their mother in a small cabin on their father's Georgia land. Paul-Edward loves the land, and as a small boy he can't imagine leaving it. But as he grows he comes to learn, in heartbreaking ways, that being his father's loved child does not mean he can stay on the land. In a bitter break from his white family, Paul-Edward leaves his home, determined to make his own future. As always, Taylor's characters are not stereotyped on either side of the color line. And even some "despicable" actions can be judged only by understanding the larger context of the times. Nothing is easy in this challenging, complex novel. That's what makes it so rich and so honest. *Winner, CCBC Coretta Scott King Author Award Discussion* (Age 14 and older)

Thomson, Sarah L. *The Dragon's Son*. Orchard Books / Scholastic, 2001. 181 pages (0-531-30333-0) \$17.95

Sara L. Thomson's debut is a fresh rendition of the Arthurian legend, rooted in the earliest surviving stories about Arthur from medieval Welsh tales and blended with elements of later versions. In her brief introduction, Thomson writes, "I wanted to give a voice to characters who don't often get to speak for themselves." And so her telling of this most famous story comes in four parts--each from a different point of view, each moving the story along its fateful path. First comes Nimue, the ferryman's daughter who falls in love with Myrddin, the bard blessed--or plagued--with visions of the future. Then there is Morgan, half-sister and first queen of the prophesized king, who is banished from Arthur's life by Myrddin, but who gives birth to Arthur's twin sons, Gwyned and Menaud. The handmaiden Luned continues the story, describing how Arthur's heir, Gwyned, came to be raised by her lady in the midst of great heartache. Finally Arthur's other son, Menaud, finishes the story of how his father came to die by his own hand, his lifelong bitterness dissolving into grief. Deft handling of the complex plot and intriguing characters makes

for a richly detailed story. (Age 12 and older)

Wolff, Virginia Euwer. *True Believer*. Atheneum, 2001. 264 pages (0-689-82827-6) \$17.00

LaVaughn describes life at age 15 as “a whole mess of things, new thoughts, sorry feelings, big plans, enormous doubts, going along hoping and getting disappointed, over and over again.” In a life already filled with the challenges of being a teenager and being poor, things become even more difficult when LaVaughn’s two best childhood friends join a closed-minded church youth organization, and the threesome starts to grow apart. At the same time, her mother begins a relationship with Lester, whom LaVaughn views with suspicion. At school, her after-school college preparation class is a fierce and heady challenge—her teacher, Mrs. Rose, is determined that the students reach for the best in themselves, that they will “rise to the challenge, which is life.” Above all, LaVaughn is consumed by her infatuation with Jody, a boy who lives in her apartment building, while barely noticing Patrick, her supportive lab partner in science. Eventually, LaVaughn will see Jody kissing another boy and feel as if her world has been completely upended. But she *will* rise to the occasion, eventually arriving at a depth of understanding that true friendship requires—in Virginia Euwer Wolff beautifully written, emotionally stirring novel. The author flawlessly develops characters and themes—of friendship, of love, of trust, of what it means to be a “true believer”—with a stunning economy of language in this continuation of LaVaughn’s story that began in *Make Lemonade* (Henry Holt, 1993). *Honor Book, CCBC Printz Award Discussion* (Ages 13-16)

Zusak, Markus. *Fighting Ruben Wolfe*. U.S. edition: Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2001. 219 pages (0-439-24188-X) \$15.95

In a stunning U.S. debut, Australian novelist Markus Zusak chronicles the struggles of two teenage brothers growing up in a close-knit working-class family. Awkward Cameron admires his slightly older brother, Ruben, who seems to excel at everything Cameron values, from romance to athletics. The two are used to sparring in their backyard, sharing a single pair of boxing gloves between them, so when the opportunity arises for them to earn a bit of pocket money by participating in amateur boxing matches, they readily agree. Not surprisingly, Ruben quickly rises to the top, while Cameron, the underdog, battles just to stay in the ring. The boys’ boxing matches become a subtle metaphor for their lives as Wolfes, a resilient family that pulls together in hard times, too proud to accept government assistance when their dad is out of work. Above all, Zusak’s fast and funny novel is about the complex relationship between the two brothers, who care deeply for each other but can’t talk about it except through the good-natured barbs they exchange like punches and counter punches. *Winner, CCBC Printz Award Discussion* (Ages 12-16)

See also: *Enchantress from the Stars*

New Editions of Old Favorites

Engdahl, Sylvia Louise. *Enchantress from the Stars*. Illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon. Walker, 2001. 288 pages (0-8027-8764-9) \$18.95

First published in 1970, when it was named a Newbery Honor Book, *Enchantress from the Stars* remains a fresh and accessible work of science fiction more than 30 years later. A stowaway on her father’s spaceship, Elana eagerly anticipates the adventure of encountering new civilizations, but she is unprepared for the reality of cultures different from her own. The Federation Anthropological Service, of which her family is part, demands that its members commit to aiding evolving populations without revealing the Federation’s sophisticated technology and advanced social structure. The current mission takes place on the medieval world of Andrechia. The Andrechians face invasion by a more advanced civilization that won’t hesitate to wipe out the native people, whom it considers less-than-human, if they interfere with the mining activities of the Imperial Exploration Corps. The Federation’s goal is to provide the Andrechians with the tools to discourage the Imperial mining. Eager to help, Elana is hindered by her emotional involvement with a young Andrechian woodcutter, who believes her to be a magical Enchantress, and whom she feels the Federation is unfairly manipulating. Meanwhile, a Medical Officer with the Imperial contingent is bothered by his colleagues’ dismissal of the Andrechians as non-human. The voices of these three young protagonists offer distinct perspectives as events unfold in Engdahl’s examination of how societies view each other. The Andrechian portion of the narrative takes the form of a traditional folk tale, an apt framework for delineating the different stages of cultural evolution of the book’s characters. (Ages 11-15)

Galdone, Paul. *Nursery Classics: A Galdone Treasury*. Introduction by Leonard S. Marcus. Clarion, 2001. 160 pages (0-618-13046-2) \$22.00

Four of Galdone's robust picture book folktales for very young children are reprinted "as is" in an appealing, welcome compilation: *The Three Little Pigs* (1970), *The Three Bears* (1972), *The Little Red Hen* (1973), and *Cat Goes Fiddle-i-fee* (1985). Every word and image are here as published in their original separate editions, unlike most so-called "treasuries" of classics for children. This one is also actually manageable in size and weight, it opens flat and remains that way as long as readers wish. None of this can be taken for granted in most anthologies of classics today. According to Leonard Marcus's superb four-page introduction, Galdone took little for granted himself while doing the research for each book. This handsome volume was designed for children to actually enjoy. That, too, was typical of Galdone's popular and timeless versions of timeless tales. (Ages 2-5)

Griffith, Helen V. *Granddaddy and Janetta Together: The Three Stories in One Book*. Illustrated by James Stevenson. Greenwillow Books/HarperCollins, 2001. 79 pages (0-06-029148-6) \$15.95

A handsome single volume includes three previously published stories (*Granddaddy's Place*, *Granddaddy and Janetta*, and *Granddaddy's Stars*) about timid Janetta and her indomitable Grandpa, who seems gruff on the outside but whose droll stories reveal his surprisingly playful nature. The new format, designed to look like a chapter book rather than a picture book, will appeal to newly independent readers, and the large typeface set on cleanly designed pages will make it accessible as well. Most of Stevenson's original artwork appears here as black-and-white spot illustrations. (Ages 7-9)

Henry, Marguerite. *King of the Wind*. Illustrated by Wesley Dennis. Simon & Schuster, 2001. 172 pages (0-689-84697-5) \$21.00

A beautifully produced new edition of a Newbery Award-winning novel begins with a horse race featuring Man o' War in Windsor, Ontario, and then goes back in fictional time to an earlier story about the great horse's beginnings. Readers meet a Moroccan horse boy, Agba, during the sacred month of Ramadan. Agba works in the Sultan's stables. It's Agba's commitment to Sham, the Arabian horse for which he's given responsibility, and the way in which Henry has unfolded the story about the boy and the stallion, that command attention in this swiftly moving story. Agba and Sham persevere in France and England through one travail after another. The foreword by Joseph D. Landes, Jr., the Rand McNally publisher of this book and Henry's *Misty of Chincoteague*, contains some of his memories of the author. Henry's amazing source notes at the end of the novel are reproduced as part of the "as is" reprinting of the novel within this volume. New material at the end includes several photographs and two paintings by Wesley Dennis reproduced in full color. Two pages from the manuscript materials for this book are reproduced; one is from the handwritten manuscript notes for chapter four, and the other is a typed manuscript page with revisions and evident taping. (Ages 9-12)

Hoban, Russell. *The Mouse and His Child*. Illustrated by David Small. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2001. 244 pages (0-439-09826-2) \$16.95

A clockwork mouse and his father consigned to life in a junkyard are determined to become self-winding. To accomplish that, they must find a way escape from the tyranny of Manny Rat. There's a mysterious Last Visible Dog (spell that last word backwards), a tramp whose Christmas Eve benediction is "Be happy," and much more. The author is the same Russell Hoban who wrote the beloved Francis books for preschoolers and the renowned novels *Turtle Diary* and *Riddley Walker* for adults. This novel has been an enormously satisfying and memorable fantasy for readers of all ages. The noted American artist David Small created the pen-and-ink drawings gracing many pages of this handsome new edition. He is quoted as claiming that this book, first published in England in 1967 and considered by some to be one of the great works of its century, is one reason he became involved in the field of children's literature. With such appreciation for the novel's complexities, Small developed fresh, enjoyable ways to make it visually appealing to a whole new audience. This extraordinarily elegant presentation of a classic fantasy deserves the attention of accomplished young readers today, and far into the future. (Ages 10-14)

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*. Illustrated by Christopher Bing. Handprint, 2001. 32 pages (1-929766-13-0) \$17.95

To open this special edition of the classic narrative poem is to think for an instant that it's possible to pick up the quill pen resting on the inside cover of what appears to be an album. A replica of a letter from Thomas Gage written on April 18, 1775, is actually pasted there. Like the Deposition of Paul Revere

replicated on the inside back cover, the letter is ready to be unfolded. Before any words of the poem appear, readers also discover a plan for a secret expedition to Concord. The sturdy paper on which the poem finally appears, the semblance of antique objects, old paper and the artwork purporting to be engravings more than 200 years old all contribute to a memorable visual and tactile experience with language that actually has stood the test of time. (Ages 9-12)

Mathis, Sharon Bell. *Ray Charles*. Illustrated by George Ford. Lee & Low, 2001. 40 pages (1-58430-017-5) \$16.00

First published in 1973, this picture book biography was the first recipient of the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration, for its evocative black-and-white artwork by George Ford. Nearly 30 years later, both the text and pictures still stand as an outstanding introduction to the life of the great singer who faced personal and professional obstacles. Sharon Bell Mathis has added a new introduction and afterword to bring the material up to date. (Ages 7-10)

Nesbit, E. *The Book of Beasts*. Illustrated by Inga Moore. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2001. 54 pages (0-7636-1579-X) \$16.99

Ever since J. K. Rowling told someone that her favorite author from childhood was E. Nesbit, there has been renewed interest in Nesbit's books: *The Story of the Treasure Seekers* (1899), *Five Children and It* (1902), *The Phoenix and the Carpet* (1904), and *The Railway Children* (1906). This particular story was first published in 1900 in a collection of stories by Nesbit titled *The Book of Dragons*. Inga Moore's full-color illustrations rendered in ink, oil pastels and oils perfectly complement her abridgment of Nesbit's original text. Lionel is a little boy who was busy playing one day when he learned that he was going to become King. "He had never expected to be a King any more than you have." His royal predecessor had sold the royal crown to buy books. A generation of citizens saved to purchase a new crown, which Lionel now wears, but it's the books that make Lionel perk up. He's escorted to the King's grand library, but the Prime Minister, Chancellor and even the Nurse all advise him not to be a "naughty little King" and open a book. But he does just that. As he opens *The Book of Beasts* whatever he sees on a page comes to life, whether it's a Butterfly, or a Blue Bird of Paradise, a Red Dragon, a Manicora, or a white-winged Hippogrif. Moore's humorous images and occasional ballooned dialogue add to the delight of this marvelous introduction to Nesbit's fantasies. (Ages 3-7)

Taylor, Mildred D. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. 25th Anniversary Edition. Phyllis Fogelman Books / Penguin Putnam, 2001. 276 pages (0-8037-2647-3) \$17.99

Mildred D. Taylor's Logan family saga began in 1975 with publication of the fine book *Song of the Trees*, but it was this Newbery-Award-winning novel that brought young Cassie Logan and her family to the deserving attention of millions of young readers and adults in many nations. Set during the Depression in rural, segregated southern Mississippi, this is a richly told, memorable portrait of a proud, loving, African American family deeply rooted in their land and their community. They are devoted to all that their property and family represent with regard to the complex struggles of their past and their realistic optimism about the future. This fine edition features a new introduction by the author, who reflects on the writing and publication of the most famous of her books. She also comments on her nine-volume Logan series and how it is based on the history of her own family. (Age 10 and older)

Zolotow, Charlotte. *Sleepy Book*. Illustrated by Stefano Vitale. HarperCollins, 2001. 32 pages (0-06-027873-0) \$15.95

How do bears, turtles, horses, kittens, and other creatures sleep? Subdued and elegant paintings on wood by Stefano Vitale offer sleepy-time images of these and other creatures to accompany Charlotte Zolotow's soothing words that describe each creature at nighttime. How do little boys and girls sleep? "When the night comes and the wind whispers gently in the trees and the stars sparkle and shine" they sleep "warm under their blankets in their beds." This appealing new edition of a classic bedtime book proves that master writer Zolotow's words are timeless. The original edition of *Sleepy Book* was published in 1958 with artwork by Vladimir Bobri. It returned to print in 1988 with illustrations by Ilse Plume. Welcome back once again, *Sleepy Book*. (Ages 2-4)

See also: *Molly and the Magic Wishbone*; Section on Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature

