

CCBC

Choices 2009



THE UNIVERSITY
of
WISCONSIN
MADISON

CCBC

Choices 2009

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Contents

Acknowledgments	4
Introduction	5
Organization of <i>CCBC Choices 2009</i>	6
The Charlotte Zolotow Award	8
Thoughts on Publishing in 2008	10

The *Choices*

The Natural World	20
Seasons and Celebrations	24
Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature	26
Historical People, Places, and Events	28
Biography and Autobiography	32
Contemporary People, Places, and Events	38
Issues in Today's World	40
Understanding Oneself and Others	42
The Arts	44
Poetry	47
Concept Books	50
Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers	51
Picture Books for School-Age Children	65
Books for Beginning Readers	74
Books for Newly Independent Readers	77
Fiction for Children	78
Fiction for Young Adults	94

Appendices

Appendix I: Alphabetical List of Books in <i>CCBC Choices 2009</i>	120
Appendix II: The Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC)	126
Appendix III: Obtaining CCBC Publications	132
Appendix IV: The Compilers of <i>CCBC Choices 2009</i>	133
Appendix V: The Friends of the CCBC, Inc	135

Author/Title/Name Index	139
Subject Index	148

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*Kathleen T. Horning, Merri V. Lindgren,
Tessa Michaelson, and Megan Schliesman*

Introduction

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

The CCBC receives review copies of about 3,000 new books for children and young adults annually, including most of the trade books published in English by corporate publishers in the United States. Our goal in creating *CCBC Choices* is to highlight some of the outstanding titles published for children and young adults among the 3,000 or more we receive. In choosing titles, we look for books that are well-written and that will appeal to the needs and reading interests of children and teenagers. We also seek titles that hold the same appeal for teachers, librarians, and others who use books with children and teens. It is a highly subjective process in many respects. As we look for books that are accurate, interesting, and engaging, we often agree on titles to include. But sometimes we disagree and further discuss those titles. *Choices* is a reflection of the consensus we have reached.

The 247 titles included in *CCBC Choices 2009* represent great breadth and depth in literature for children and teenagers. Every year we are amazed and delighted by what authors and artists accomplish, and every year we are thrilled at being able to bring them to your attention in this way.

After *Choices* goes to press, we're likely to find titles we overlooked—books we would have included had we known about them in time. There are always some gaps in what we receive from publishers, no matter how hard we—and they—try to avoid them. We also simply miss some terrific reads. We often learn about one or more of these titles when we see them on other annual best-of-the-year lists offering perspectives on excellence in publishing.

We know that not every book in *Choices* will be suitable for every child or teen. But we also know that librarians, teachers, parents, caregivers, and others face an enormous challenge in navigating the thousands of new books available for purchase each year, and an enormous challenge in meeting the diverse reading needs and interests of children and teens today. We have created *CCBC Choices* keeping that challenge in mind, and are confident that it offers books that will interest, engage, entertain, and inspire everyone from babies through teens.

Organization of *CCBC Choices 2009*

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

Books have been placed into one of the following thematic categories when appropriate:

- The Natural World
- Seasons and Celebrations
- Historical People, Places, and Events
- Contemporary People, Places, and Events
- Issues in Today's World
- Understanding Oneself and Others
- The Arts

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

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

Picture books about people who actually lived have been placed in the Historical People, Places, and Events section or the Biography and Autobiography section. Novels set in the past have been placed in one of the Fiction categories. Graphic novels are assessed individually based on content and placed in the category that best suits each individual title.

The subject index can be used to find books across all of the categories about specific topics and in specific genres and formats ("Graphic Novels," "Historical Fiction," "Fantasy," etc.).

Age Recommendations

We provide suggested age ranges for each title. These are meant to be general guidelines based on appeal and age-appropriateness of the content. We know that some children and teens are ready for and will enjoy books recommended for older readers. Our suggested age recommendations cannot substitute for professional judgment and personal knowledge of individual readers, classrooms, and communities.

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

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

Publication Information

The citation for each book includes the current price and thirteen-digit international standard book number (ISBN) for any edition we were able to find in print in early 2009. Most of the books are available in hardcover trade editions. Some are also or only available in library editions with reinforced bindings. A few are only, or also, available in paperback. This information will be helpful when looking for the books in *CCBC Choices* at your public library, school library media center, or bookseller.

The Charlotte Zolotow Award

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

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

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

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

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

Members of the twelfth annual Charlotte Zolotow Award Committee were Megan Schliesman, chair (librarian, Cooperative Children's Book Center, Madison, Wisconsin); Tammy Boyd (reading specialist, Madison, Wisconsin); Svetha Hertzler (head of youth services, Middleton Public Library, Middleton, Wisconsin), Tessa Michaelson (librarian, Cooperative Children's Book Center, Madison, Wisconsin), and Jolen Neumann (school librarian, Madison, Wisconsin).



2009 Charlotte Zolotow Award

Winner: *How to Heal a Broken Wing*
written and illustrated by Bob Graham.
U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2008

Honor Books: *How I Learned Geography*
written and illustrated by Uri Shulevitz.
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008

How Mama Brought the Spring
written by Fran Manushkin. Illustrated by Holly Berry.
Dutton, 2008

In a Blue Room
written by Jim Averbeck. Illustrated by Tricia Tusa.
Harcourt, 2008

A River of Words: The Story of William Carlos Williams
written by Jen Bryant. Illustrated by Melissa Sweet.
Eerdmans, 2008

Silent Music: A Story of Baghdad
written and illustrated by James Rumford.
A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2008

Highly Commended Titles:

The Butter Man written by Elizabeth Alalou and Ali Alalou. Illustrated by Julie Klear Essakalli. Charlesbridge, 2008

The Chicken of the Family written by Mary Amato. Illustrated by Delphine Durand. Putnam, 2008

The Cow That Laid an Egg written by Andy Cutbill. Illustrated by Russell Ayto. U. S. edition: HarperCollins, 2008

Dance with Me written by Charles R. Smith, Jr. Illustrated by Noah Z. Jones. Candlewick, 2008

Don't Worry Bear written and illustrated by Greg Foley. Viking, 2008

Growing Up with Tamales = Los tamales de Ana written by Gwendolyn Zepeda. Illustrated by April Ward. Spanish translation by Gabriela Baeza Ventura. Piñata Books / Arte Público Press, 2008

Hen Hears Gossip written by Megan McDonald. Illustrated by Joung Un Kim. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2008

Old Bear written and illustrated by Kevin Henkes. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2008

Thoughts on Publishing in 2008

Note: In the commentary that follows, books not included in the *CCBC Choices 2009* list include publisher information after the title.

The publishing world has not been immune to the economic challenges and change we've seen around the country and around the globe over the past twelve months. The number of large trade houses has been consolidated once again as companies acquired other companies. Sometimes a publisher is able to retain its editorial vision in these transitions. Sometimes that vision, and the house itself, is subsumed. This matters because while the economics of publishing, like the economics of everything else, demand fiscal success, talented authors and artists need talented editors and visionary publishers who can see beyond the bottom line. They need publishing houses that can imagine the future, and are committed to seeking out new talent, nurturing developing writers and editors, and supporting voices that reflect the world in which children and teens are growing up and coming of age.

We continued to see plenty of books in 2008 that reflect an interest in bottom-line publishing, from a plethora of paperback series tie-ins to TV shows and movies to a fair number of celebrity-penned (or ghost-penned) titles. Publishers also continued to ride the fantasy wave, although we wonder how much longer it will last. For now, our fiction shelves still groan under the weight of heavy tomes of magic and wonder. While we found few of them truly noteworthy, what *is* worth noting is publishers' willingness to give new writers in this genre—above any other—a chance. Not everyone writes a first book that is outstanding, or even great, and we commend the practice of helping writers develop their talents, something harder and harder for editors to do in this bottom-line world. But we do wish a greater balance could be struck so that the nurturing of new and emerging talent didn't have to be overwhelmingly (but far from solely) genre-driven.

First-Rate Fantasy and Sci-Fi

Of course, some of the new fantasy we saw was terrific, from Kean Soo's sweetly funny graphic novel *Jellaby* to Kristin Cashore's breathtaking young adult novel *Graceling*. We look forward to seeing more from Elizabeth C. Bunce, who deftly wove fantasy into a historical setting in *A Curse Dark as Gold* (Scholastic). And Ingrid Law had a remarkably fresh start with her novel *Savvy* (Dial).

We were also more than charmed by fantasy offerings from several veteran fiction authors, most notably Nancy Werlin's *Impossible*, an outstanding young adult read. But perhaps nothing astonished us more this year than the chilling futures imagined in a pair of exceptional young adult science fiction offerings: *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins and *The Knife of Never Letting Go* by Patrick Ness. Both of these books begin trilogies that we can't wait to see continue, and both imagine futures in which one or more aspects of life in our world today have been taken to an extreme. We consider each of them among the finest young adult novels of the year.

Cory Doctorow sticks closer to the present day, and closer to recent reality, with his first young adult novel, the insightful *Little Brother*, which isn't as much science fiction as cautionary tale about what happens when our government uses fear tactics to convince everyday citizens that their safety is jeopardized by the U.S. Constitution—civil rights be damned. And in *The Adoration of Jenna Fox*, Mary E. Pearson looks at a not-so-far-away time when the possibilities of science lead one teen to an identity crisis with moral and ethical implications.

Top-Notch YA Lit

We were happy to see an upsurge in works of fiction for children in 2008. Perhaps most notable among them, for its lyricism and its incredible, original storytelling, is Kathi Appelt's *The Underneath*. Appelt, heretofore an author of picture books, branched into fiction with this remarkable work. But it was the quality of the young adult literature published in 2008 that truly left us awestruck.

Beyond fine fantasy and science fiction titles, there was notable historical fiction, especially M. T. Anderson's *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Volume II: The Kingdom on the Waves*. He left us amazed at the virtuosic accomplishment of his two-volume work. Like M. T. Anderson in *Octavian*, Laurie Halse Anderson looks at the tension between slavery and the ideals of liberty and justice at the time of our nation's founding in *Chains* (Simon & Schuster). Joseph Bruchac's *March Toward the Thunder* offers a distinct Native perspective on one summer of the Civil War, while Anne Fine takes a somber and sobering look at life in Stalinist Russia in *The Road of Bones* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux). And in *Sunrise Over Fallujah*, Walter Dean Myers looks at the very recent past with a novel set in Iraq just at the start of the war in 2003.

Wonderful contemporary fiction for teens ranged from the hilarious to the haunting. High humor distinguishes *Good Enough* by Paula Yoo, even as it addresses a teen's very real need to break free from her parents' expectations. Likewise, *Two Parties, One Tux, and a Very Short Film about the Grapes of Wrath* by Steven Goldman delivers laughs along with a satisfying story about friendship. John Green's *Paper Towns* (Dutton) has serious overtones with the disappearance of a teenage girl, but it also has plenty of humor, including one of the funniest scenes penned in a long while when the girl's friends embark on a post-graduation road trip in the hopes of tracking her down.

Among the more solemn offerings this year were two books about children and sexual predators: Norma Fox Mazer's *Missing Girl* (HarperCollins) and Elizabeth Scott's *Living Dead Girl*, which challenges readers to think more deeply about our discomfort with confronting harsh truths. Sex as a substitute for love, and the manipulation that so easily accompanies it, is portrayed in Coe Booth's complex *Kendra* (Push), which is honest about physical pleasure and the confusion of one sexually active teen. Barry Lyga looks at our culture's facile appropriation of the idea of heroism in *Hero Type* (Houghton Mifflin). Issues in other parts of the world take center stage in books such as Allan Stratton's *Chanda's Wars*, set in a fictional African country but looking at the very real human rights issue of child soldiers, and Anne Laurel Carter's *The Shepherd's Granddaughter*, about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Of course, not everything published for young adults wowed us. As in recent years, “chick lit” continued to be one of the market-driven segments of young adult publishing, with shopping as hook if not theme and frothy or fancy or high-fashion cover-appeal on many books. The content of these range from lightweight to surprisingly literary, reminding us to hold close the old adage about books and their covers. (Catherine Gilbert Murdock’s satisfying and funny fantasy *Princess Ben* comes to mind as an example of one of the finer reads.)

Coming Out

There was easily ten times the number of books about gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (GLBTQ) characters published this year than there were just a decade ago. Happily, the sheer quantity led to variety in terms of type and theme. The books range from the serious, such as *Suicide Notes* (HarperTeen) and *Absolute Brightness* (Laura Geringer/HarperCollins), to the whimsical, as in *My Most Excellent Year* (Dial). There were sports stories, such as Jeff Rud’s *Crossover* (Orca) and Bill Konigsberg’s *Out of the Pocket*; short stories (David Levithan’s *How They Met, and Other Stories*), and even formula series fiction. Examples of the latter include Paul Ruditis’s *Entrances and Exits* (Simon Pulse), the fourth volume in the “Drama!” series that features a gay protagonist; and *Belinda’s Obsession* (Lobster Press), the latest entry in Patricia G. Penny’s romance series, “Not Just Proms & Parties,” that deals with a budding romance between two lesbian teens.

We were pleased to see more ethnic diversity than ever before in GLBTQ books, with offerings such as *After Tupac & D Foster* and *M+O 4evr* (both African American); *Love & Lies* and *Down to the Bone* (both Cuban American), and *Skim*, a graphic novel about a biracial (Asian/white) teen. While still only a handful of titles, it seems like a deluge in an era when there are so few multicultural GLBTQ books for teens. Also heartening is the fact that of the five novels listed above, three are first novels by authors of color.

While the number of books about bisexual and transgender youth continues to be small, we did note the first protagonist who could be classified as a questioning teen. In *Debbie Harry Sings in French* (Henry Holt) by Megan Brothers, seventeen-year-old Johnny thinks he’s probably straight but he’s not sure why he enjoys dressing like a woman. Over the course of this short novel, he explores who he is and why he feels more comfortable in the gay community than he does in his high school. Lauren McLaughlin also explores the concept of gender in her first novel *Cycler* (Random House), about a teenage girl who, once a month when she should be menstruating, turns into a boy.

The vast majority of GLBTQ books published in the United States for young readers fall into the category of young adult fiction. But this year there were a few notable examples of other types of writing. Linas Alsenas’s groundbreaking work of nonfiction, *Gay America*, provides older children and teens with a welcome history that places today’s fight for gay civil rights in historical context. Two books for very young readers are also worth noting: *10,000 Dresses* by Marcus Ewert (Seven Stories Press), the first U.S. picture book about a transgender child, and *Uncle Bobby’s Wedding* by Sarah Brannen (Putnam), a picture book about a gay wedding featuring a cast of guinea pigs. It would be hard to imagine a sweeter,

more innocuous book on the subject; still, it's destined to be the target of book challenges as long as gay marriage remains a hot-button topic. But for gay and lesbian families who are looking for more representation in picture books, it's heartening to see an expansion of choices, albeit small.

Everything's Ducky in Picture Books

We've already noted the continued presence of plenty of new books marketed with teenage girls in mind. But chick lit moved beyond the province of young adult fiction in 2008 with a preponderance of picture books featuring poultry. The chicks we found in picture books ranged from a gaggle of geese (*Look Out, Suzy Goose*), to dozens of ducks in titles such as *Duck*; *Hannah Duck*; *What's Up, Duck?*; *Santa Duck* (Putnam), *Clever Duck* (Roaring Brook); and others. And then there were the layers and fryers: *Hen Hears Gossip*, *The Chicken of the Family* (one of the funniest picture books we read), *Louise, The Adventures of a Chicken* (HarperCollins), *The Cow That Laid an Egg* (the chickens play a pivotal role), *Big Chickens Fly the Coop* (Dutton), and many more.

On another plucky note, we continued to see a rise in original board books for babies and toddlers. There was a period in the 1990s when it seemed almost every board book we saw was an abridged (both text and art) edition of a lengthier picture book. While some books translate wonderfully to the board book format, many don't. We were thrilled to see more new books created and published especially with the youngest audience in mind, including *No No Yes Yes* and *Baby Happy Baby Sad* by Leslie Patricelli, *Baby! Baby!* by Vicky Ceelen, *Haiku Baby* by Betsy Snyder, and others.

A welcome cousin of the board book is the picture book with sturdy cardboard pages that can hold up well to the pulling of eager young hands. They also allow for more creative bookmaking, with fold-out or lift-the-flap features. Several outstanding examples in 2008 included *Dance with Me*; *My Dog*, *My Cat*, *My Mama*, and *Me*; and *Round Like a Ball*!

Another thing that had us crowing in 2008 was a number of fine picture books set in other parts of the world, including James Rumford's *Silent Music* (Iraq), Margi Preus's *The Peace Bell* (Japan), and a pair that emphasize family storytelling: *How Mama Brought the Spring* (Bellarus) by Fran Manushkin and *The Butter Man* (Morocco) by Elizabeth and Ali Alalou. Katie Smith Milway's *One Hen* (Kids Can) is a fictional story set in Ghana that introduces children to the concept of microfinance. And Uri Shulevitz delivers the world in the singular *How I Learned Geography*, based on his own childhood experience living as a refugee in Turkestan after fleeing Warsaw at the start of World War II.

World-Wide Voices

These picture books set in other countries, along with novels such as *The Shepherd's Granddaughter*, *Chanda's Wars*, *Climbing the Stairs*, *The Girl Who Saw Lions* (Roaring Brook Press) and others can give readers here in this country essential glimpses of places inhabited by their peers around the globe. This idea is extended even further with books in translation. U.S. publishers who put resources and effort into acquiring and translating books originally published in other countries

are not just offering readers here in the United States insight into the wider world, but also giving them the opportunity to read the very same stories as children in those nations. *Manolito Four-Eyes* is a part of a popular fiction series in Spain. *Moribito: Guardian of the Spirit* (U.S. edition: Arthur A. Levine / Scholastic) comes to readers here from Japan. The picture books *A Day with Dad* (Sweden), and *Garmann's Summer* (Norway) show how common concerns of children transcend the specifics of language and place, as do the novels *Piggy* and *Rits*, both originally published in the Netherlands. Translated books also can illuminate distinct situations around the world, often revealing that it's not just children but nations that share common concerns, as evidenced in *Crazy Diamond*, about refugees living in Germany.

The international sensibility of literature published in the United States is also enhanced by books that offer U.S. readers ways of understanding global issues and concerns. Deborah Ellis's short story collection *Lunch with Lenin* looks at teens around the world whose lives are impacted by drugs, while she interviews children in the United States and Canada who have one or more parents serving in the military in Afghanistan or Iraq in *Off to War* (Groundwood Books / House of Anansi Press). The inspiring *We Are All Born Free* features work from a global array of artists, each of who illustrates one of the thirty articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Life Stories and Other Nonfiction

An abundant area of nonfiction publishing in 2008 was picture book biographies. These essential works offer children glimpses into notable lives. A pair of books on Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai, one from Jeanette Winter (*Wangari's Trees of Peace*) and the other from Claire A. Nivola (*Planting the Trees of Kenya*) complement each other in their approaches. Barbara Kerley's *What to Do about Alice?* (Scholastic) looks at the childhood and early adulthood of Alice Roosevelt, spirited daughter of President Theodore Roosevelt. Two jazz giants are featured in books by Robert Andrew Parker—introducing children to the life and work of Art Tatum in *Piano Starts Here*—and Carole Boston Weatherford, imagining the sounds of John Coltrane's childhood in *Before John Was a Jazz Giant*. Even the famed racehorse Seabiscuit is a worthy subject, in Meghan McCarthy's *Seabiscuit the Wonder Horse*.

Even as we noticed a boon in the biographies, we saw the number of new and outstanding folktales and books of poetry decline, along with the overall number of stand-alone trade nonfiction titles in general. Still, we delighted in folktale discoveries such as Alice McGill's *Way Up and Over Everything*, about enslaved Africans flying to freedom, and Sean Taylor's *The Great Snake*, a beautiful collection of stories from the Amazon River. And poetry collections, while spare in number, were rich in content, with volumes such as Marilyn Nelson's *The Freedom Business* and Naomi Shihab Nye's *Honeybee* among the highlights.

There were some incredible books of history as well. From *Ain't Nothing But a Man*, about a historian's search for the real John Henry, to *Gay America*, chronicling social change and the newest civil rights movement, important perspectives on the past occupy our new nonfiction shelves alongside insightful books about modern

times, including Susan Kuklin's singular *No Choirboy*, offering the voices of young prisoners who were sentenced to death row as teens.

Presidential Reading

Publishers were also tuned into 2008 as a presidential election year. In fact, looking at some of what they published makes one wonder if they didn't have a crystal ball. Both John McCain and Barack Obama were subjects of picture book biographies: *My Dad, John McCain* by Megan McCain (Aladdin) and *Barack Obama: Son of Promise, Child of Hope* by Nikki Grimes (Simon & Schuster). Perhaps biographies of other potential presidential frontrunners were in the works but never saw the publication light of day. It's clear, however, that a number of books about Abraham Lincoln and his presidency were being written long before anyone knew the new, forty-fourth president would be compared to, and have a symbolic connection with, the sixteenth. Among them are Candace Fleming's extraordinarily insightful *The Lincolns* and Nikki Giovanni's *Lincoln and Douglass: An American Friendship* (Henry Holt).

There were also several novels that seemed eerily prescient, including one about a presidential daughter who is also a child of color (*First Daughter* by Mitali Perkins, published by Dutton) and one about the daughter of a female presidential candidate (*As If Being Twelve and Three Quarters Isn't Bad Enough! My Mother Is Running for President* by Donna Gephart, published by Delacorte).

Multicultural Writing (and Illustrating, Too!)

For years we have been documenting the number of books we receive annually at the CCBC by and about people of color. We don't do this out of habit, or as a meaningless exercise, we do it to add quantitative evidence to what is empirically obvious: in numbers, books published for children and young adults don't reflect the world youth inhabit and the lives they live. We do it in the hopes that these still-alarming statistics, which do not speak to who we are as a nation, will raise awareness of the continued need to seek out and publish books that accurately and authentically portray multicultural experiences, so that literature for children and young adults will collectively represent our diversity.

We received approximately 3,000 books at the CCBC in 2008. Of those,

- 172 books had significant African or African American content
- 83 books were by Black book creators, either authors and/or illustrators
- 40 books featured American Indian themes, topics, or characters
- 9 were created by American Indian authors and/or illustrators
- 98 had significant Asian/Pacific or Asian/Pacific American content
- 77 books were created by authors and/or illustrators of Asian/Pacific heritage
- 79 books had significant Latino content
- 48 books were created by Latino authors and/or illustrators

These statistics represent only quantity, not quality or authenticity. A significant number—well over half—of the books about each broad racial/ethnic grouping are formulaic books offering profiles of various countries around the world.

Additionally, the number of books created by authors and illustrators of color does not represent the actual number of individual book creators, as many created two or more books.

But the statistics also represent some outstanding works for children and teens across genres and formats, from picture books and fiction to poetry, folktales, biography, and other works of nonfiction. Of these, many stand out—singular stories speaking of singular experience that also often illuminate culture and cultural experience.

Louise Erdrich continued her chronicle of nineteenth-century American Indian experience in *The Porcupine Year*, which picks up the story of the Ojibwe girl Omakayas, last seen in *The Game of Silence* (HarperCollins, 2005). Now forced to leave their home, Omakayas's family is on the move in a story based in part on Erdrich's own family history. Joseph Bruchac, the most prolific Native author for children and teens, was inspired by family history to research and write what became *March Toward the Thunder*, about an Abenaki boy serving in the Union army during the Civil War. Nicola Campbell's picture book *Shin-chi's Canoe* looks at Native boarding schools through the story of a boy enduring his first year away from home.

Both An Na and Paula Yoo examine perspectives on being a Korean American teen with wit and tenderness. In *The Fold*, Na looks at the impact of living in skin that does not conform to traditional (Western) standards of beauty, while Yoo examines parental expectations for first-generation children to succeed in America. Cynthia Kadohata traverses intriguing ground on the subject of family in the novel *Outside Beauty* (Simon & Schuster). Jaime Adoff looks at a biracial (Black/white) boy making startling discoveries about his personal family history in the context of his struggle with depression in *The Death of Jayson Porter* (Jump at the Sun / Hyperion). And Francisco Jiménez chronicles his move away from family, to college and the future, in *Reaching Out*, which continues his memoirs in novel form.

We were pleased to see Jiménez's book was one of a number of Latino novels, which included Matt de la Peña's *Mexican Whiteboy* (Delacorte), Benjamin Alire Sáenz's *He Forgot to Say Goodbye* (Simon & Schuster), *Down to the Bone*, *Love & Lies*, and others.

We were also pleased to see a number of promising authors and artists of color either creating their first trade books for children and teens or continuing their young careers in 2008. Among the new and emerging voices and visions we appreciated were Nicola I. Campbell (*Shin-chi's Canoe*), Ina Cumpiano (*Quinito, Day and Night*), Mayra Lazara Dole (*Down to the Bone*), Zetta Elliott and Shandra Strickland (*Bird*), Tonya Cheri Hegamin (*M+O 4evr*), Naomi Hirahara (*1001 Cranes*), Suzy Lee (*Wave*), Moying Li (*Snow Falling in Spring*), Sherri L. Smith (*Hot, Sour, Salty, Sweet*, published by Delacorte), Allison Whittenberg (*Life Is Fine*, published by Delacorte), and Gwendolyn Zepeda (*Growing Up with Tamales*).

But we were again disappointed by how few new picture books showed contemporary children of color. We were happy to see *Bird*, *Grandfather's Story Cloth*, *Growing Up with Tamales*, *Monsoon Afternoon*, *My Two Grannies*, *Rain Play*, and *Wave*, among others, but this area of publishing continues to languish, and when it comes to new books showing contemporary Native children, the numbers are abysmal. In fact, the only 2008 picture book featuring a contemporary

American Indian child that we documented here at the CCBC was *Niwechihaw=I Help*, a bilingual (Cree/English) book published by Groundwood Books / House of Anansi Press. *The Littlest Sled Dog* (Orca) features a dog rather than a child or children but does offer a glimpse of a contemporary Inuit village. And *The Drum Calls Softly* (Red Deer Press) is a bilingual (Cree/English) picture book in the voice of a child who might be contemporary or from the past, although the stunning illustrations by Native artist Jim Poitras (Cree, Salteaux, and Métis) have a historical sensibility.

We know that there are editors and publishers who care deeply about ensuring a continual output of wonderful new books that reflect the lives of children and teenagers today, but we also know that their passion for publishing multicultural literature cannot always carry the day in meetings with bottom-line number crunchers wanting to know whether such books will sell. We hope that librarians, teachers, caregivers, parents, and others will use their purchasing power to help committed editors and publishers make a convincing argument.

Our time to survey the books of the 2008 publishing year has ended, and the 2009 books have already started to arrive here at the CCBC. As we look at the shelves of brand new books waiting to be cataloged, we find ourselves getting excited all over again. We know that the coming twelve months will bring us extraordinary literary discoveries and amazing reading experiences. We look forward to sharing them with you.

The *Choices*

The Natural World

Campbell, Sarah C. *Wolfsnail: A Backyard Predator*. Photographs by Sarah C. Campbell and Richard P. Campbell. Boyds Mills Press, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-1-59078-554-6, \$16.95)

Drama on a small scale unfolds in this introduction to the wolfsnail, a gastropod that feeds on snails and slugs. A sentence or two per page and large close-up photos document a wolfsnail as it follows a slime trail across a hosta leaf in search of prey. After a brief retreat into its shell when a bird lights nearby, the wolfsnail catches a small snail and uses its tooth-lined tongue to scoop the meat from the shell. A glossary, fact page, and additional information on wolfsnails are included at the book's close. (Ages 4-7)

Chrutowski, Rick. *Big Brown Bat*. Henry Holt, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8050-7499-4, \$16.95)

On a hot summer night, in a dry farmhouse attic that's the perfect nursery, a mother bat gives birth to her brown bat pup. Over the course of the summer months, the baby bat grows into an independent youth and is weaned from its mother's milk. Now it must learn to capture prey—a lesson that is re-created in an intense scene with vivid text and an image portrait of echolocation. Straightforward sentences convey important aspects of bat biology while at the same time expressing an earnest appreciation for these unique mammals. Rick Chrutowski's warm and realistic illustrations created from heavily layered colored pencil drawings on watercolor wash beautifully portray the bats and their environs in a story that concludes as the weather grows colder and the bat colony migrates to a rocky cave, the location of its winter hibernation. (Ages 5-8)

Crosby, Jeff, and Shelley Ann Jackson. *Little Lions, Bull Baiters & Hunting Hounds: A History of Dog Breeds*. Tundra, 2008. 72 pages (trade 978-0-88776-815-6, \$19.95)

When a child starts begging for a pet dog, it often turns into an endless argument. When the child begins requesting a specific *type* of dog, the pleading gets serious. Jeff Crosby and Shelley Ann Jackson provide a wealth of information about the origins of dogs as (hu)man's best friend. Divided into four sections, the book focuses on the primary purposes dogs have served throughout time: the hunting, herding, working, and companion breeds. A brief historical context is provided for each breed, describing how it came into existence and what roles it served. For example, in the hunting section, where an athletic and golden-haired Visla is pictured with its master in a two-page spread, the text reads: "The Visla (pronounced VEESH-la) developed from hunting dogs brought to Hungary from Central Asia by the Magyar tribes during the Middle Ages.... Vislas became such prized hunters that they were favorites of wealthy barons and powerful warlords. They were always treated as part of the family so they are extremely affectionate pets." Small inset maps and fact sidebars grace many of the spreads. Realistic paintings add energy and excitement, although the depictions of the dogs are more visually appealing than the people. With the increased popularity

of designer dogs such as labradoodles, pomapoos, and puggles, this rich volume illuminates the original breeds and their place in human history. (Ages 8–12)

Deem, James M. *Bodies from the Ice: Melting Glaciers and the Recovery of the Past*. Houghton Mifflin, 2008. 58 pages (trade 978-0-618-80045-2, \$17.00)

Melting glaciers is a frequent topic in today's headlines, and one that is explored on anthropological and environmental levels in James M. Deem's fascinating work. Explaining the scientific aspects of glacier formation as well as geographic conditions, Deem discusses how glaciers operate like "a giant conveyor belt—essentially a moving river of ice." With force and power, glaciers churn up, and turn up, mountain debris. This debris sometimes includes human remains that offer amazing insights into the past. From discoveries of an iceman in the Alps to ancient children of the Andes and the remains of native North Americans, Deem reveals how mysteries of human history are decoded from glacial meltings worldwide. Fascinating photographs complement the captivating narrative. (Ages 10–15)

Frost, Helen. *Monarch and Milkweed*. Illustrated by Leonid Gore. Atheneum, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-1-4169-0085-6, \$17.99)

Milkweed plants serve monarch butterflies in several ways, from being the ideal home for eggs, to feeding the newly hatched caterpillars, to providing the foundation from which the chrysalis will hang. Poetic language and glowing acrylic and pastel illustrations highlight the symbiotic relationship between plant and insect, while traveling through the rotation of seasons, growth, and migration. When spring re-appears, the cycle begins anew as "Roots reach down. / A tip of green presses out and up, toward warmth and light. / Milkweed's first spring leaf unfurls. / Far to the south, in Mexico, Monarch rides the wind toward it." (Ages 6–10)

Gillum, Sandy. *Loon Summer*. Field Notes, 2008. 48 pages (trade 978-0-9801201-0-3, \$15.75)

Five individuals contributed the extraordinary photographs that accompany ecologist Sandy Gillum's captivating account of a loon family on a small Wisconsin lake. A few days after the male loon appears, his mate arrives. The pair is soon taking turns sitting on two eggs in their artificial island nest (the island was built by nearby residents especially for loon nesting). Not long after, two fluffy black chicks are accompanying their loon parents on the water, or sometimes hitching a ride on their backs. Scientists band the babies and check on the already-banded adults. All is well—until a rogue loon appears on the scene. When the family disappears not long after the rogue loon's arrival and increasing threats, an observer who has been watching the drama unfold since spring fears the worst for the chicks, who cannot fly. To her amazement, she finds both the adults and their chicks over the course of the next two days. The ungainly-on-land birds have portaged over rough, unfamiliar terrain, waddling with the young loons across dry land to a safe new home one-quarter mile away. (Ages 6–10)

Jackson, Ellen. *The Mysterious Universe: Supernovae, Dark Energy, and Black Holes. (Scientists in the Field)* Houghton Mifflin, 2008. 60 pages (trade 978-0-618-56325-8, \$18.00)

Another great entry in the Scientists in the Field series follows astronomy professor Alex Filippenko, whose specialty is dark matter and dark energy. We see him at the University of California, Berkeley, where he has been voted “Best Professor on Campus” five times (when you see the Black Hole costume he wears on Halloween, you’ll know why), and accompany him and a graduate student to Hawaii to observe a supernova in the Keck Observatory. It’s fascinating to catch the inner workings of a high-tech observatory and to get a glimpse of the work that astronomers do. For example, one night the technology malfunctions, and Alex must adapt and improvise by using a different spectrograph and whittling down the list of objects they planned to observe. A companion narrative explains many of the scientific concepts he mentions, such as supernovae, black holes, the Big Bang theory, the expansion of the universe, red shift, blue shift, and more—all in clear, concise terms and in the context of Alex’s efforts. Nic Bishop’s crisp color photographs are augmented by breathtaking NASA photos. (Ages 9–14)

Jenkins, Steve, and Robin Page. *Sisters & Brothers: Sibling Relationships in the Animal World.* Houghton Mifflin, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-618-37596-7, \$16.00)

Artist Steve Jenkins and author Robin Page use sibling relationships as a premise to offer information on more than twenty creatures from the animal, bird, and insect worlds. The facts shared in the short narratives are fascinating. An entire litter of one of the world’s smallest mammals, the European shrew, can fit comfortably in a teaspoon—that’s up to ten babies that will travel together as a caravan, biting the behind of the one in front to stay together. Spotted hyenas’ sibling fights are often to the death, while the strongest black widow spider hatchlings eat their weaker brothers and sisters. Each page spread blends intriguing bits of information with Jenkins’s trademark illustrations—beautiful cut-and-torn-paper collage art depicting the creatures in action. There’s also humor in brief, witty tag lines such as “Girls rule!” on the page with the all-female New Mexico whiptail lizards and “Mommy’s busy right now” accompanying information about the millions of termite brothers and sisters who live in a colony, all from the eggs of a single queen. As with this author/illustrator duo’s other books, additional facts about each creature are included at the volume’s end. (Ages 6–10)

Markle, Sandra. *Finding Home.* Illustrated by Alan Marks. Charlesbridge, 2008. 32 pages (lib. 978-1-58089-122-6, \$15.95)

A female koala and her joey survive a forest fire, but burned trees mean no food, so she sets off with her baby on her back in search of something to eat. The long journey brings her to a place of strange and sometimes fearful sights and sounds—a neighborhood of houses and people. Because koalas are rarely seen outside of the bush, the pair are a source of great fascination before they return to the forest once more. Sandra Markle weaves information about koalas into a narrative of quiet tension and occasional

moments of high drama. Alan Marks's illustrations amplify the story's tone. An author's note provides information on the koala named Cinders, whose story informed Markle's narrative. Cinders traveled twelve miles to the edges of a suburb in search of food after her habitat was destroyed in a bushfire. (Ages 5–9)

Markle, Sandra. *Sneaky, Spinning Baby Spiders*. Walker, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–0–8027–9697–4, \$16.99)

Crystal clear close-up photos provide readers with visual access to the world of baby spiders, also known as spiderlings. From egg sac to molting to silk production, the behavior and characteristics of young spiders and their parents are explained in fascinating detail. Spiderlings “become adults when they're able to mate and produce young of their own,” a period of growth which may take less than a year or more than five years, depending on the species of spider. End materials include a glossary and index, a world map indicating where the spiders in the book were photographed, and a few final captivating facts. (Ages 7–10)

McLimans, David. *Gone Fishing: Ocean Life by the Numbers*. Walker, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–0–8027–9770–4, \$16.99)

A whimsical, stylized look at ocean-faring creatures blends its playful approach with a serious theme. McLimans renders various fish, waterfowl, and other sea life in the shape of the numbers 1 through 10. Each subject is either endangered, experiencing population loss, or living in threatened habitats. The graphically striking black-on-blue (counting up from 1 to 10) and blue-on-black (counting down from 10 to 1) images are accompanied by brief facts about the creatures. Additional information about the oceans is provided in “ocean life by the numbers,” “ocean threats by the numbers,” and “our blue planet” pages. This volume will appeal to budding environmentalists as well as lovers of the sea and fans of art and graphic design. (Ages 5–10)

Schulman, Janet. *Pale Male: Citizen Hawk of New York City*. Illustrated by Meilo So. Alfred A. Knopf, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–0–375–84558–1, \$16.99)

As in other fine recent picture books, Janet Schulman relates the true story of the red-tailed hawk who settled in New York City only to be evicted with his mate from their upscale digs atop a swanky apartment building overlooking Central Park—until public outcry put the wealthy (human) residents to shame. But Schulman's account stands out in several ways. First, she tells more of the story, beginning back in 1991 with the first sightings of the adolescent hawk in Central Park and concluding in 2005 with another hawk who has settled in the city—believed to be a son of Pale Male. She also builds on the natural drama inherent in the story's outline with captivating details and moments of humor. When the first of Pale Male and his mate's chicks is learning to fly, she writes, “The fledgling spent the day half-flying, half-hopping from balcony to balcony until Pale Male gave his brave baby a first lesson in how to fly like a self-respecting hawk.” Meilo So's watercolor

illustrations provide a few dizzying perspectives and plenty of humor, warmth, and charm. (Ages 5–9)

Turner, Pamela S. *Life on Earth—and Beyond: An Astrobiologist's Quest.* Charlesbridge, 2008. 109 pages (trade 978–1–58089–133–2, \$19.95)

How do scientists today study life on Mars? One critical way is by studying the environments on earth that most closely mirror what scientists know and theorize about the biology of our nearest planetary neighbor. Pamela Turner's account of astrobiologist Chris McKay's work and research describes experiments he has conducted in some of earth's most inhospitable and challenging climates, from frigid Antarctic ice and oceans to near-barren deserts to lush—and very buggy—Siberian forests. Today, because of his research, McKay advises NASA on where to land space probes, based on his theories about which regions of Mars are most likely to show signs of life. Turner writes with humor, including quirky subheadings and chapter titles such as "Rip Van Microbe: Siberia, Northern Russia." McKay's personality also comes through. His hope is that if life is ever found on Mars, it will be different from life on Earth. "Truly alien life would be a lot more interesting. It would mean that there are lots of ways to get going in this universe. Who knows what we'll find?" Ample photographs of McKay's expeditions illustrate each chapter in this outstanding science volume. (Age 10 and older)

Seasons and Celebrations

Kohara, Kazuno. *Ghosts in the House!* Roaring Brook Press, 2008. 24 pages (trade 978–1–59643–427–1, \$12.95)

Moving in to a big old house at the edge of town, a young girl and her cat need to take care of one thing before they get settled—get rid of the ghosts! While this attractive orange and black book has the appearance of a Halloween story, it's really about a clever girl with creative house-cleaning strategies. Donning her witch apparel, the girl and cat fly about sweeping the tissue-thin ghosts into a basket, loading them into the washing machine, and hanging them out to dry. Woodcut-like images effectively illustrate the simple story, and the depictions of the girl, cat, and ghosts are especially appealing. Best of all, the laundered ghosts become nice curtains and cozy blankets to accent their new home! This un-scary story is sure to delight the preschool set. (Ages 2–4)

Lin, Grace. *Bringing in the New Year.* Alfred A. Knopf, 2008. 24 pages (trade 978–0–375–83745–6, \$15.99)

Eager anticipation of a holiday is a universal experience of childhood, and the young girl counting down the preparations for a family celebration of Chinese New Year is no exception. She's a happy participant as her parents and siblings get ready for the big event. "Jie-Jie sweeps the old year out of the house. / Ba-Ba hangs the spring-happiness poems. / Ma-Ma makes the get-rich dumplings. / Mei-Mei gets a fresh haircut. / And I put on my new

qi pao dress for the New Year feast. Now will the New Year come?" The holiday arrives with loud firecrackers, bright lanterns, special foods, and a lucky dragon. Boldly-colored gouache illustrations and a very brief text invite young children to share in the holiday celebration. A two-page note at the book's end provides additional explanation of Lunar New Year customs and traditions. (Ages 3–7)

Manushkin, Fran. *How Mama Brought the Spring*. Illustrated by Holly Berry. Dutton, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–0–525–42027–9, \$16.99)

Rosy can't bear to leave the warmth of her bed on a cold winter morning. Despite her mother's calls, she declares she wants to stay in bed until spring. This statement elicits a story from her mother's childhood in Minsk, Belarus—a story that enlivens Rosy enough to sit up and listen. Back when her mother was a girl, she too wanted to stay in bed on a winter morning. "Suit yourself," her Mama had told her. But when Rosy's mom smelled something wonderful wafting from the Minsk kitchen, she was soon dressed and busily helping to prepare a mysterious concoction of eggs, milk, flour, cheese, and sugar. As the culinary magic increased in the kitchen, outdoors the temperature was rising. The sparkling sun and sweet scents seemed to have awakened the plants and animals. At last, the family sat down together to enjoy an enchanted meal of blintzes and celebrate the awakening of spring. Of course, after hearing this story, Rosy needs just a few things to get her out of bed—eggs, milk, flour, cheese, and sugar! Warm and whimsical illustrations evoke a folk-art feel, while colorful calico fabrics frame central images and page spreads. Deliciously rich descriptive language and beautiful art distinguish a picture book that provides a nourishing multigenerational family story and will awaken an appetite for seasonal celebrations. A recipe for cheese blintzes is included. *Honor Book, 2009 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5–9)

Purcell, Ann. *Maple Syrup Season*. Illustrated by Jill Weber. Holiday House, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–0–8234–1891–6, \$16.95)

"'Sap's rising!' Grandpa shouts. The family cheers and claps mittened hands." So begins maple syrup season for the Brockwell family. Cousins, moms, dads, and grandparents all lend a hand in the multi-step process for making maple syrup. From tapping trees to hanging buckets and from boiling sap to testing the grade, this age-old harvest is described in clear and friendly language. Pastoral artwork shows inviting scenes of the snowy woods and the steamy sugarhouse, while a contemporary feel is portrayed through the family's winter wear and the modern machinery. A variety of creative page layouts offer different perspectives for viewing the syrup-making timeline, including the tangential antics of sugar-thirsty woodland creatures. Before all the fresh syrup is bottled up, the family takes a break to make some maple taffy in the snow—a sweet reward for all their hard work. While the illustrations make this look like a picture book story, the tone of the text is more informational. Together, pictures and words offer a cozy and inviting glimpse at a family tradition and an accessible introduction to food production. Information on maple syrup lore and a maple syrup glossary are included. (Ages 5–9)

Ray, Mary Lyn. *Christmas Farm*. Illustrated by **Barry Root**. Harcourt, 2008. 40 pages (trade 978-0-15-216290-0, \$17.00)

Ready to move on from petunia and sunflower gardening, Wilma eventually settles on the idea of growing balsam trees. She orders “sixty-two dozen small starts” and enlists the help of Parker, her five-year-old neighbor. After measuring straight rows and digging holes, the pair plants all 744 trees. They care for the young trees as the years pass. Although some are lost to mice, deer, moose, and bad weather, 597 trees are finally ready to sell the year Parker turns ten. Between individual sales and a city tree lot purchase, almost all the balsams are gone by Christmas, leaving Wilma and Parker ready to order seedlings for spring planting. Warm watercolor and gouache illustrations capture the quiet comradeship of the neighborly duo during the regular cycling of the seasons, as trees and boy grow up together. (Ages 5–10)

Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature

Alley, Zoë B. *There's a Wolf at the Door: Five Classic Tales*. Illustrated by **R. W. Alley**. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2008. 34 pages (trade 978-1-59643-275-8, \$19.95)

This oversize picture book presents five familiar stories, all involving the same wolf. Written and illustrated in a graphic novel style, these humorous versions of “The Three Little Pigs,” “The Boy Who Cried Wolf,” “Little Red Riding Hood,” “The Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing,” and “The Wolf and Seven Goslings” are both sly and silly. The volume begins with a smartly dressed wolf in top hat and ascot heading out for a delicious dinner. As three little pig brothers set about building houses for themselves, “very soon, a hungry wolf appeared, smelling fresh pork chops on the wind.” Recognizable actions and phrases follow, with the huffing puffing wolf being told off by each of the brassy pigs declaring, “Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin!” Defeated by the swine brothers, the wolf follows a sign to “Greener Pastures,” where he encounters a very bored shepherd guarding...er, watching his flock. The exasperated pastoral worker reflects, “What this pasture needs is some excitement! Some danger! Some predators!” so he subsequently cries “Wolf!” to get the attention of the villagers. As the wolf zigzags through the five stories, readers will appreciate identifiable details as well as offbeat twists and turns. The volume concludes with the wizened wolf deciding to try vegetarianism rather than sheep’s clothing. Perhaps the wolf will meet up with Jack and his beanstalk? (Ages 5–10)

McGill, Alice. *Way Up and Over Everything*. Illustrated by **Jude Daly**. Houghton Mifflin, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-618-38796-0, \$16.00)

“You see, my great-grandmama’s mama told her and she told me about this story about a long time ago when Africans could fly just like birds—way up and over everything.” This variant of a tale in which slaves fly to freedom

begins when a group of Africans, newly delivered from their capture, are brought to the plantation where a woman name Jane works and is witness to their miraculous escape. Too impatient for his new slaves to be trained, Ol' Man Deboeaux barks to the overseer, "They work today." But when the silent and frightened flock of Africans find themselves in the wide open field, something magical happens: Taking one another's hands, they spin in a circle and send themselves soaring and disappearing into the sky. The story becomes legend as Jane passes it down to her children, who continue telling it down the generations. This powerful tale, rich with language and imagery, is complemented by distinctive folk-art watercolor illustrations. (Ages 6–10)

Taylor, Sean. *The Great Snake: Stories from the Amazon*. Illustrated by Fernando Vilela. Frances Lincoln, 2008. 61 pages (trade 978–1–84507–529–3, \$19.95)

A tropical travelogue for school-aged children, Sean Taylor's journey along the Amazon River is recounted in the tales from this collection. The vivid voices of the storytellers he met are brought to life in his retellings, stunningly illustrated by the bold and colorful woodcuts of Fernando Vilela. Animal folktales, love stories, ghost stories, and trickster tales take place in the roaring waters and dense forest of the Amazon. Between each story, the author explains the tale's significance in the context of his travels. For example, "The Tortoise and the Vulture" comes from a mix of cultures—native Brazilians, European settlers from Spain and Portugal, and Africans brought to South America in the slave trade. The author writes, "Sometimes I think the people tell so many extraordinary stories because they are surrounded by so many extraordinary creatures. Sometimes I think it is because so much mystery lies in the water and the rainforest." Whatever the reason, these stories bring a richer understanding of this incredible region. (Ages 5–10)

Wiley, Margaret. *The 3 Bears and Goldilocks*. Illustrated by Heather M. Solomon. Atheneum, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–1–4169–2494–4, \$16.99)

The inverted title is the first clue that a familiar fairy tale has been flipped on its end. The second clue comes when Goldilocks's father—a caring man—warns his daughter about adventuring where she's not welcome. Just like her uncontrollable head of curls, the brazen blond girl goes her own way, leaving her father's advice by the wayside. Soon she discovers the unattended woodland home of the bears, and the story reroutes to a recognizable scene. Goldilocks tastes the porridge and tests the beds of Mama, Papa, and Baby Bear but is dismayed by the hovel they live in. Scooping out beetles and fish scales from the porridge—terrifically illustrated in Solomon's signature multimedia style—Goldilocks cannot imagine how these forest folks live! When the bears return, they are angered by the state of their freshly swept home and confounded by the small-toothed, barely clawed, almost bald creature in their beds. Waking up to the sharp snouts and stares above her, Goldilocks escapes through a window and runs all the way home, suddenly keen to her father's wisdom. (Ages 4–7)

Historical People, Places, and Events

Alsenas, Linas. *Gay America: Struggle for Equality*. Amulet, 2008. 160 pages (trade 978-0-8109-9487-4, \$24.95)

This informative, engaging account of GLBTQ lives in the United States over the past 100-plus years documents critical history while providing a fascinating look at how social and political attitudes have influenced and been influenced by individual lives. Alsenas opens his essential work with a look at relationships and attitudes prior to the twentieth century. He then embarks on a chronological account of GLBTQ culture, which both reflected and responded to social attitudes as well as political advances and frustrations in the quest for equality under the law. As he looks at the twentieth and the first part of the twenty-first centuries, his profile includes the earliest organized activism and sweeping public celebrations of pride that are commonplace in large cities today. He also notes how key events spurred new modes of activism, which ranged from quiet quests for acceptance and change from within the social structure to angry wake-up calls for action, especially in response to the AIDS crisis. His volume offers a perspective on sweeping social change while offering glimpses of individual lives that are both testament to how far GLBTQ visibility and activism have come, and how far our society and our laws still need to go to provide equal rights and safety for all. (Age 12 and older)

González, Lucía. *The Storyteller's Candle = La velita de los cuentos*. Illustrated by Lulu Delacre. Children's Book Press, 2008. 30 pages (trade 978-0-89239-222-3, \$16.95)

Hildamar and her cousin, Santiago, pass the public library on their way to school, and it always looks so inviting. But Titi Maria explains, "We don't speak English and the people in there don't speak Spanish." And so they never go inside. It's one more thing that makes New York City in winter so unlike the warm and welcoming island of Puerto Rico, which was until recently their home. When the new librarian, Pura Belpré, visits their classroom to tell stories, she assures the children that "*la biblioteca es para todos*"—the library is for everyone. Hildamar and Santiago still need to convince their hesitant parents and other grown-ups that everyone in *El Barrio* is welcome in the library, but all doubts are eased on their first visit, when Pura Belpré involves adults and children alike in preparations for a community celebration. Set during the Depression, the fictional narrative is based on the essential and lasting impact of real-life storyteller and librarian Pura Belpré, the first Puerto Rican librarian employed in New York City. Ms Belpré understood the importance of reaching out and welcoming all members of the community into the library. The powerful impact of her philosophy is emphasized in a bilingual (English/Spanish) story about the joy it brings to two children and the larger immigrant community of which they are a part. (Ages 5–9)

Krensky, Stephen. *Comic Book Century: The History of American Comic Books. (People's History) Twenty-First Century, 2008. 112 pages (lib. 978-0-8225-6654-0, \$30.60)*

Stephen Krensky's history of comics in the United States during the twentieth century gives young readers an intriguing perspective on this high-interest topic. Noting that comics, like popular culture in general, not only reflect the times in which they were (and are) created but also offer reflection and commentary upon them, Krensky connects what was happening in comics publishing—and often in the comic storylines themselves—to the broader social and political history of the United States. While always coming back to the readers of many ages to whom comics have appealed, and the characters and storylines that inspired devotion, Krensky illuminates the relationship between comics and society. He starts with comic strips and early bound volumes of the 1920s and early 1930s, then moves into the golden age of comics that stretched from the late 1930s through World War II. Next he chronicles the backlash against comics during the Cold War, struggling times during the 1960s, and finally the resurgence of comics—and innovation in the field—in the latter part of the twentieth century. Dynamic visual elements further energize a volume offering X-ray insight into this form of artistic and cultural expression. (Age 10 and older)

McCarthy, Meghan. *Seabiscuit the Wonder Horse. A Paula Wiseman Book / Simon & Schuster, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-1-4169-3360-1, \$15.99)*

The underdog story of Seabiscuit the racehorse is brilliantly articulated to a young audience with the expressive words and paintings of author/illustrator Meghan McCarthy. Seabiscuit, cartoonishly depicted with googly eyes and full-teeth grin, began his career as anything but a champion. However, with the belief of his owner, the bond with his jockey, and the intuitive care of his trainer, the once lazy horse grew sleek and fast. REAL FAST. Explaining the tough times of the 1930s, McCarthy shows how fans identified with the misfit horse: "...a horse that looked just like them! Beat-up. Imperfect. An underdog. A horse with courage!" A heartwarming and humorous story, complete with an informative author's note and source list, *Seabiscuit* will likely infect young readers with "Seabiscuit-itis"—a malady of the times. (Ages 5–9)

McClafferty, Carla Killough. *In Defiance of Hitler: The Secret Mission of Varian Fry. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. 196 pages (trade 978-0-374-38204-9, \$19.95)*

In 1935, Varian Fry, an American journalist, went to Germany to determine if reports about the growing mistreatment of Jews were true. While in Berlin, Fry witnessed a mob gathered around Nazi storm troopers vandalizing Jewish-owned stores. " 'This is a holiday for us,' a German youth said to Varian." The experience had a profound effect on Fry. Returning to the United States, he became involved with the Emergency Rescue Committee (ERC)—an organization assembled to rescue artists and scientists from Europe before they were taken by the Nazis. The ERC sent Fry to Marseilles, France, with \$3,000 and a list of names for rescue. Fry was an unlikely candidate for

the mission in many ways, but he made up for it with his passion. Fry's mission was to assist in the escape of 200 individuals within two weeks, but he quickly discovered the need for more time and more resources. As Fry's experience unfolds, the author introduces an unforgettable cast of characters who worked with Fry on a complex and secretive scheme to rescue enemies of Hitler. Fry's actions tie him resolutely to the cause, while his relations across the Atlantic with the ERC and his wife become strained as the months slip by. This mesmerizing history is complemented by photographs as well as comprehensive records of the author's research. (Age 12 and older)

Nelson, Kadir. *We Are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball*. Foreword by Hank Aaron. Jump at the Sun / Hyperion, 2008. 88 pages (trade 978-0-7868-0832-8, \$18.99)

"Seems like we've been playing baseball for a mighty long time. At least as long as we've been free. Baseball's the best game there ever was. It's a beautifully designed game that requires a quick wit, a strong body, and a cool head." So says "Everyman," the narrator and history teller in this impressive work. The strong love for baseball that pulses through the text is matched by a passion for the history of the Negro Leagues. As the narrator recounts important games and discriminatory attitudes, he also enlivens memories of key players and their personalities and evokes a stirring sense of place—be it on a baseball diamond shimmering in the heat, on a rowdy bus ride, or in the midst of a heated conversation between game officials. The book's title comes from Rube Foster, founder of the Negro National League, who stated, "We are the ship; all else the sea," in reference to the creation of a separate organization for Black baseball players. Likewise, Kadir Nelson's *We Are the Ship* is a bold and triumphant declaration expressed through vivid narration and breathtaking oil paintings rich in color and emotion. (Age 10 and older)

Nelson, Scott Reynolds with Marc Aronson. *Ain't Nothing But a Man: My Quest to Find the Real John Henry*. National Geographic, 2008. 64 pages (trade 978-1-4263-0000-4, \$18.95)

Historian Scott Reynolds Nelson started out researching the undocumented story of African American railroad workers in the South in the days when rock was being blasted and track was being laid. One lead he followed was the legend of John Henry. What could that tale—told and retold in song and story—reveal about Black railroad laborers? Soon, however, his research focused on John Henry himself—was he a myth or real man? In this fascinating documentation of Nelson's research journey, also chronicled in Nelson's adult book *Steel Drivin' Man: John Henry: The Untold Story of an American Legend* (Oxford University Press, 2006), Marc Aronson carries readers along with Nelson into railroad tunnels and reading rooms, Civil War records and traces of a prison disgrace. Nelson pieced together the facts they reveal and questions still unanswered to offer a theory on the life behind the legend of John Henry. The result is a truly thrilling look at how history is revealed—at how meticulous research and intuitive leaps that raise hairs on the back of one's head can deepen understanding of the past. The use of

numerous documentary photographs and other images from the nineteenth century add a powerful visual dimension, although some artists' renderings reflect racial stereotypes and an explanation acknowledging this would have been welcome. Nevertheless, this volume is insightful, inspiring, and will be, for many, impossible to put down. (Age 10 and older)

***Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out.* With an introduction by David McCullough. Candlewick Press, 2008. 241 pages (trade 978-0-7636-2067-7, \$29.99)**

This hefty tome is a treasure trove of tidbits and perspectives on the goings-on at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Spanning more than two hundred years of history, the volume is a collection of reflections about the White House from 108 authors and illustrators. An introduction by historian David McCullough explores the idea that the President's residence is also the home of the citizens—"It is our White House, after all. It is our story, after all." These sentiments are echoed by the text and images that follow. A variety showcase, the offerings span multiple genres and include essays, poetry, documents, dialogue, artwork, and articles of imagination all designed to inform and inspire. The real gem in this collection is the variation of opinions presented on certain topics—for example, the differing views on how the portrait of George Washington was saved when the White House was torched by the British in 1814. Whether sampled like a smorgasbord or read section by section, this is a flavorful selection. (Age 9 and older)

Porcellino, John. *Thoreau at Walden.* From the writings of Henry David Thoreau. With an introduction by D. B. Johnson. Hyperion, 2008. 99 pages (trade 978-1-4231-0038-6, \$16.99)

"To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but to so love wisdom as to live according to its dictates...a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust." John Porcellino's graphic novel uses Henry David Thoreau's own words to recount the time the nineteenth-century American philosopher spent on Walden Pond. It begins with Thoreau's decision to live in nature, and reveals him writing, thinking, observing, and working the land. It also shows people who stopped by to visit him—he was something of a local tourist attraction in his day—as well as the night he spent in jail for refusing to pay his poll tax, an event that led him to write his famous essay "Civil Disobedience." Porcellino uses direct quotes from four sources: the book *Walden*, the essays "Civil Disobedience" and "Walking," and Thoreau's own journal. Interspersed among the thoughtful and inspirational text panels are series of wordless panels that reflect the long periods of silence Thoreau enjoyed. In his author's note, Porcellino remarks that one of the advantages of graphic novels is their ability to show silent introspection in a way that textual narratives can't. The selection and arrangement of quotations, all meticulously documented, are superb and offer great insight into Thoreau and his writing. (Ages 10–15)

Rappaport, Doreen. *Lady Liberty: A Biography.* Illustrated by Matt Tavares. Candlewick Press, 2008. 40 pages (trade 978-0-7636-2530-6, \$17.99)

The Statue of Liberty has long served as an important symbol in our nation's history. From its inception, Lady Liberty has been a gift of friendship, a beacon of hope, and an icon of freedom. Author Doreen Rappaport tells the statue's story through the eyes of those who were part of her early history. Lady Liberty was born from a romantic idea of Frenchman Édouard De Laboulaye and brought to life by fellow countryman and sculptor Auguste Bartholdi. The construction and funding process took many years before the public unveiling of the completed statue on October 28, 1886. Majestic watercolor, ink, and pencil illustrations convey the long and emotional process of bringing the project to life. Poems from the perspectives of people involved on both sides of the Atlantic, from notable power figures to everyday citizens pitching in pennies, recount the creation of the Statue of Liberty and its placement in New York's harbor. Interesting historical insights—about the construction materials, the fundraising, and even the weather—bring life to this monumental “biography.” (Ages 10–14)

Sandler, Martin W. *Lincoln through the Lens: How Photography Revealed and Shaped an Extraordinary Life.* Walker, 2008. 97 pages (trade 978-0-8027-9666-0, \$19.99)

It's hard to imagine a time when the U.S. president wasn't photographed at every event from every possible angle, but that's how it was when Abraham Lincoln first took office in 1861. Photography was a recent invention and Lincoln became the first U.S. president to have his life and time documented with photographs. And Lincoln seemed to understand intuitively how to use this medium to his benefit. He wore simple clothes and deliberately mussed his hair before posing for a photograph to accentuate his folksiness. When posing with the Union officers with whom he was often at odds, he made sure he would dominate the photograph by standing in the center and wearing a stovepipe hat so that he would tower over the other men. He credited photographer Mathew Brady with winning him the White House, due to a widely circulated photograph of Lincoln standing in front of a pillar, next to a stack of books. Martin W. Sandler documents Lincoln's rise to power through a chronological arrangement of photographs, accompanied by the fascinating stories behind each one, along with what they tell the modern reader about Abraham Lincoln. (Age 9 and older)

Biography and Autobiography

Bardhan-Quallen, Sudipta. *Up Close: Jane Goodall.* Viking, 2008. 218 pages (trade 978-0-670-06263-8, \$16.99)

Teen readers might think they already know Jane Goodall's story—her prominent work as a primatologist is legendary. But this engrossing read is more than a retelling of her celebrated career. Intimate details about Jane's development as a person and scientist are presented against a vivid

backdrop of time and place. From growing up an independent young girl in the British countryside to fearlessly going to Kenya at age twenty-two, Valerie Jane Morris-Goodall thrived on exploration of the natural world. As a schoolgirl, she established a nature club for her friends. "Valerie Jane had strict rules for joining—each girl had to be able to recognize ten birds, ten dogs, ten trees, and five butterflies or moths. . . . As leader of the Alligator Society, Valerie Jane also gave herself the code name Red Admiral (the name of an eye-catching butterfly)." During a time when there were few women in the field of science, let alone groundbreaking pioneers, Jane Goodall's experiences living with African chimpanzees paved the way for a new kind of research and deepened the world's understanding of primates. (Age 13 and older)

Berne, Jennifer. *Manfish: A Story of Jacques Cousteau.* Illustrated by Éric Puybaret. Chronicle, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8118-6063-5, \$16.99)

"Bubbles rising through the silence of the sea, silvery beads of breath from a man deep, deep down in a strange and shimmering ocean land." Jennifer Berne's lyrical introduction begins a fascinating look at the life work of explorer Jacques Cousteau. Berne relates how Cousteau's career as an underwater explorer and documenter of life beneath the ocean's surface combined two of his childhood loves: water and movie-making. But it was a life-changing glimpse of the world beneath the water through goggles that led Cousteau to discover his passion. Working with two longtime friends, he created the aqualung that enables divers to breathe underwater, and he came up with a way to protect his movie camera so that he could film the undersea world that fascinated him. As Berne explains, those films gave people all over the world a new understanding of ocean life, and later offered up some of the first warnings of the toll of human pollution on life beneath the sea. Fluid lines, watery hues, and distinctive figures distinguish Éric Puybaret's illustrations in this beautifully designed picture book biography. (Ages 5–8)

Brighton, Catherine. *Keep Your Eye on the Kid: The Early Years of Buster Keaton.* Roaring Brook Press, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-1-59643-158-4, \$16.95)

Silent film star Buster Keaton was known for incredible stunts that blended physical feats with keen comic sensibility and timing. Here Catherine Brighton focuses on Keaton's childhood and young adulthood spent in Vaudeville and on the road. Her muted color illustrations have an old-fashioned cinematic or comic-book feel, with many pages featuring multiple panels, while the spare narrative is written in Keaton's dryly funny first-person voice as he reflects on his early years of stage shows and travel with his parents. ("As for school, I went only one day. Miss What's-Her-Name said, 'You, Keaton, give me a sentence with the word *delight*.' Without thinking, I said, 'It's dark, turn on delight.' ") A developing fascination with the movies—a real threat to Vaudeville—caused tension with his father, so he set off to make his own name. Most young readers will be unfamiliar with Keaton, and a brief introduction at the volume's opening would have been a helpful lead-in to this picture book biography, but there is much to

intrigue and delight in the volume's detailed images and accompanying text. A closing author's note provides more information about Keaton and some of his films. (Ages 7–10)

Bryant, Jen. *A River of Words: The Story of William Carlos Williams*. Illustrated by Melissa Sweet. Eerdmans, 2008. 36 pages (trade 978-0-8028-5302-8, \$17.00)

This is just to say . . . Jen Bryant's artful and astute picture book biography of poet William Carlos Williams is to be savored, like plums from the icebox. Language rich with description and metaphor underpins an informative, accessible narrative that conveys a great deal about the poet's life and work. "Instead of counting the beats or making the end-words rhyme, he let each poem find its own special shape on the page." The Passaic River in his hometown was a source of inspiration for Williams from childhood on, and Bryant uses the river both literally and as an idea throughout a narrative that delicately balances the concrete and the lyrical. Judicious use of repetition with the phrase "And it was true" brings readers and listeners back again and again to some of the essential facts that informed and defined the poet's work and creative life. Melissa Sweet's watercolor, mixed media, and collage illustrations combine rich visual images with the poet's words. Additional poems appear on the endpapers, and a timeline is included at the end of this singular volume. *Honor Book, 209 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 7–10)

Clinton, Catherine. *Phillis's Big Test*. Illustrated by Sean Qualls. Houghton Mifflin, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-618-73739-0, \$16.00)

The works of Phillis Wheatley, the first published African American poet, were highly regarded at the time they were written. But some also considered them suspect. How could a young female slave have penned such beautiful verse? Catherine Clinton recalls Phillis Wheatley's examination before a group of men to prove she was the author in this fascinating picture book history. As Phillis worriedly awaits the test, she reflects upon the events that led her to that day. Born in Africa, she had been a child when she came to the Wheatley household as a slave, purchased as a "gift" for Master Wheatley's wife. Phillis became close with the family and was educated by the Wheatley's children. From Bible stories to sonnets, and in English, Greek, and Latin, Phillis's young mind was inspired by all she was taught, and soon spun words into poems of her own. It is the realization that the poems she has created can never be taken from her—she holds them in her memory and her heart—that gives Phillis the confidence to face the examining board in this richly imagined story based on fact. Sean Qualls's acrylic and collage paintings pair marvelously with Clinton's elegant and pensive words in a work that offers young readers a glimpse at the life of a lesser-known literary figure as well as a look at larger issues such as racism and sexism. (Ages 6–10)

Crowe, Chris. *Up Close: Thurgood Marshall*. Viking, 2008. 248 pages (trade 978-0-670-06228-7, \$16.99)

Civil rights history has "Thurgood Marshall's fingerprints all over it," writes Chris Crowe in a captivating biography of the lawyer and civil rights defender

who became the first African American to serve on the United States Supreme Court. The personality of Crowe's subject shines through in a narrative that chronicles the groundbreaking, history-making cases in which Marshall was involved, most notably *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which marked the critical legal turning point for desegregation in schools. But Crowe also looks closely at Marshall's childhood, education, and the early cases that shaped him into the lawyer who helped win significant civil rights victories. Writing about Marshall's cocky attitude and colorful pranks in high school, Crowe notes that this was when the future lawyer first became familiar with the U.S. Constitution, since the principal required Marshall to memorize sections of the document as punishment for his misbehavior. Fun-loving Marshall knew how to be serious when it mattered when he got to college, but it took time and experience for him to become someone who actively challenged the racism that was an everyday part of his own and thousands of other lives. He ended up doing so from both sides of the bench in our nation's highest court, and his work and his words continue to offer inspiration. (Age 12 and older)

Delano, Marfé Ferguson. *Helen's Eyes: A Photobiography of Annie Sullivan, Helen Keller's Teacher.* National Geographic, 2008. 63 pages (trade 978-1-4263-0209-1, \$17.95)

Marfé Ferguson Delano shines a light on the woman who was Helen Keller's famed childhood teacher but also her friend and assistant for decades. Her eye-opening biography of Annie Sullivan begins by detailing Sullivan's difficult childhood. That cruel period saw Annie, who was partially blind and living in an orphanage, develop a fierce determination to go to school, especially after she learned there were schools especially for blind children. At fourteen the impassioned girl pleaded for a chance to learn and was transferred to the Perkins School for the Blind. It was there she was not only educated but also learned about the education of the blind, knowledge that was as invaluable as her bold spirit when she took on the teaching job that would make her famous. During her time at Perkins, Sullivan also had operations that helped recover part of her failing sight. Delano's narrative goes on to describe Annie's initial time with Helen Keller, and then the years that they shared as she became "Helen's eyes," accompanying her to boarding school, Radcliffe, and, eventually, around the world. They even performed in Vaudeville! Sullivan's personal life was always tied to Keller. Although she married, it was a marriage that could not sustain her devotion to Helen. She died in the home they shared, with Helen holding her hand. Numerous photographs enhance this fine, handsomely designed volume. (Ages 10-15)

Fleischman, Sid. *The Trouble Begins at 8: A Life of Mark Twain in the Wild, Wild West.* Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2008. 224 pages (trade 978-0-06-134431-2, \$18.99)

In an unforgettable storytelling voice, rich with spirited language and wit, author Sid Fleischman brings the literary identity of Mark Twain to life. Starting with his subject's humble beginnings as Samuel Clemens in small-town Missouri, Fleischman highlights Twain's critical childhood and

adolescent experiences while providing an accessible historical backdrop for the author's young life and times. As the subtitle suggests, this handsomely produced biography spotlights the pivotal years in which the impish and adventurous Sam Clemens becomes Mark Twain on page and in person. Colorful chapters such as "The Buffalo That Climbed a Tree," "Thieves, Murderers, and Desperadoes," and "The Great Holdup" chronicle the author's life-changing experiences in Utah and California. A follow-up on his post-Wild West years, including his marriage and family and life of fame, conclude the textual portrait of a man famous for his quips, short stories, and novels. Historical photos and illustrations are placed throughout, and the book includes extensive references, a timeline, and "A Mark Twain Sampler" for readers less familiar with his work. (Ages 10–14)

Fleming, Candace. *The Lincolns: A Scrapbook Look at Abraham and Mary.* Schwartz & Wade, 2008. 181 pages (trade 978–0–375–83618–3, \$24.99)

A scrapbook format ingeniously presents the lives of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd from childhood through death. Brief snippets and full-page entries recounting moments small and large combine to create intimate portraits of two complex individuals. The oversize volume's exciting page designs call upon a variety of fonts, photographs, archival documents, and illustrations to supplement the written text. Fleming's biography doesn't shy away from the less flattering aspects of the couple, including Mary's attempts to hide her extravagant spending on White House refurbishment, and Abraham's inability to forge a close relationship with his son Robert. From home life to the political arena, the sixteenth president and his wife are rendered in fascinating detail, set within the landscape of the United States during a time of change and upheaval. (Age 12 and older)

Li, Moying. *Snow Falling in Spring: Coming of Age in China during the Cultural Revolution.* Melanie Kroupa Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. 176 pages (trade 978–0–374–39922–1, \$16.00)

Moying Li adds to the small body of children's and young adult literature about growing up during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Her memoir begins when she is four years old, during the Great Leap Forward that signaled the beginning of the revolution. At first, her family and neighbors embraced the ideals enthusiastically but gradually they come to realize, and experience firsthand, fear and oppression at the government's hands. Moying is surrounded by family who love her, who value education—and who are determined to survive. After her father is sent to a labor camp, he manages to smuggle a reading list home to Moying and her brother so that they can continue their education on their own, after the schools have shut down. The books she reads sustain her through long years of struggle. As Moying grows, so too does her understanding of what is happening around her. In addition to providing a firsthand account of life in Beijing during the Cultural Revolution, the author weaves in stories from her parents' and grandparents' pasts. Most intriguing are those about her intelligent and strong-willed grandmother, who at age three refused to let her aunt bind her feet and who was educated in a time when few girls were. Moying's

strong sense of self and thirst for education seem to have come directly from her grandmother, a tremendous source of influence and inspiration. (Ages 11–14)

Ray, Deborah Kogan. *Wanda Gág: The Girl Who Lived to Draw*. Viking, 2008. 40 pages (trade 978-0-670-06292-8, \$16.99)

Millions of Cats is considered to be the first modern picture book, and one still known by many children today. Deborah Kogan Ray looks at the childhood and early career of its creator, Wanda Gág, in an inspired and inspiring biography that recounts Gág's passion for creating art from the time she was young. Growing up in New Ulm, Minnesota, she spoke German until starting school. But what set Wanda and her family apart from even their German-speaking neighbors was the high regard that art held in their home. Her father labored as a decorative artist during the week, but on Sundays he "was happy in his soul" because he could paint from his heart. Quotes from Gág's diary express key ideas that Ray uses as a launching point to write about the artist's life ("I simply couldn't understand while all people didn't draw."), while full-page illustrations depict a scene from the narrative. Additional material at the volume's end briefly details Gág's career following the contract she signed for *Millions of Cats*, the diary she started keeping at age fifteen, and Ray's research. (Ages 7–11)

Scieszka, Jon. *Knucklehead: Tall Tales & Mostly True Stories about Growing Up Scieszka*. Viking, 2008. 106 pages (trade 978-0-670-01106-3, \$16.99)

Jon Scieszka's enormously funny childhood autobiography not only tells larger than life stories about growing up with five brothers but more than answers the age-old question posed to writers, "Where do you get your ideas?" The tall volume looks like an oversize comic book, and while the text is divided into traditional chapters, the pages are illustrated with numerous photos, images, and scanned relics. The thirty-eight chapters are short—at most only a few pages in length. Practical chapter titles like "Home, Sweet Home" and "Schooling" give a broad sense of the wise-cracking stories they contain. "Cooking" begins: "I learned how to cook because I like to stir oatmeal more than I like to pick up dog poop." From there Scieszka goes on to explain his strategy for chore assignments in his large family. In "Sorry, Mom," he relates how roughhousing with his brothers often led to accidents: "You know that little bone in the front part of your shoulder? The collarbone? Did you know you can break that bone with just seven pounds of pressure?" A black-and-white school photo of his younger brother Gregg, complete with hunched shoulders, bow tie, and angelic smile concludes the chapter, along with Scieszka's comment that "Gregg's collarbone got good at fixing itself. I think we broke him three or four times....Which explains why we have a lot of pictures of Gregg looking like a third-grade pro football player." Not to be missed is the hilarious index at the end, making this memorable autobiography one to be paged through again and again. (Ages 8–13)

Turner, Pamela S. *A Life in the Wild: George Schaller's Struggle to Save the Last Great Beasts.* Melanie Kroupa Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. 103 pages (trade 978-0-374-34578-5, \$21.95)

Wildlife scientist and conservationist George Schaller has conducted original research on a dazzling variety of animals, including gorillas, tigers, lions, snow leopards, pandas, antelopes, and more in twenty-five countries around the world over nearly five decades. This man who has lived and worked among wild animals most of his adult life has never been injured on the job. He was among the first scientists to understand the importance of living among the animals he was studying, respecting them as wild creatures, approaching them without assumptions, and drawing conclusions based on what he observed. Schaller has contributed new ideas and understanding about the animal species he has studied and about ways of studying them, and he has extended that work into a lifelong commitment to protecting and preserving world ecology. Pamela Turner's account of Schaller's life and career (including a doctorate from UW-Madison) includes numerous photographs of Schaller, his family (who often lived with him in remote locations), and his research subjects and the environments in which they live. Ample sources for further exploration round out this inspiring volume. (Age 10 and older)

Contemporary People, Places, and Events

Nivola, Claire A. *Planting the Trees of Kenya: The Story of Wangari Maathai.* Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-374-39918-4, \$16.95)

As a child in the highlands of Kenya, Wangari Maathai did not know that she would grow up to be the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. She only knew that she cared for the emerald-covered earth where fig trees, olive trees, crotons, and flame trees grew as far as the eye could see. Wangari left Kenya as a young woman to study biology in the United States. When she returned home, only five years later, she barely recognized the landscape she loved. Small farms that had once dotted the hillsides had expanded; large plantations had been established. As far as Wangari could see, dusty brown earth and tree stumps littered the land. The economy and landscape had changed drastically, and not for the better—Kenya was suffering. Wangari decided to plant trees. She urged women and children to plant trees as well, and taught them how. With delicate, detailed paintings and thoughtful prose, Claire A. Nivola conveys the challenges Wangari Maathai faced in the development of the Kenyan Green Belt Movement. Since Wangari began her work thirty years ago, more than thirty million trees have been planted in her country. (Ages 8–12)

O'Brien, Tony, and Mike Sullivan. *Afghan Dreams: Young Voices of Afghanistan*. Photographs by Tony O'Brien. Bloomsbury, 2008. 69 pages (trade 978-1-59990-287-6, \$18.99)

Tony O'Brien and Mike Sullivan introduce readers to children living in Kabul and in rural Afghan villages through intimate photographic portraits and brief narrative profiles that offer a glimpse of their lives and dreams. The introduction provides readers with a brief but essential grounding in the geography and current political turmoil of the Afghan nation as well as the ongoing war being fought there by the United States, and the poverty that dominates so many children's lives. The faces and profiles that follow represent the hope that is Afghanistan's future in a volume that will help children here put faces and stories with the name of a country that many will recognize from the news. (Ages 9–14)

Rosen, Michael J. *Our Farm: Four Seasons with Five Kids on One Family's Farm*. Darby Creek, 2008. 144 pages (trade 978-1-58196-067-9, \$18.95)

Author and photographer Michael J. Rosen spent more than a year chronicling the life of the Bennett family in central Ohio through interviews and vibrant photos. The Bennetts—Mom, Dad, Caleb (age 17), Chase (age 15), Cayne (age 10), Grey (age 8), and Ali (age 4), plus Simon, Bo, and Angus (the dogs)—live on 150 acres in the Appalachian foothills. There the family raises cows and chickens and grows hay and vegetables, all for consumption. In chapters based on the seasons, family members describe the details of their days, including work and play. Cayne notes, “The chicks will eat from your hands if you just hold the grain down near them in your open hands. First, they are a bit skittish, but then they come and eat a little... sometimes you can feel their beaks, like you are getting pinched.” Regarding the grape arbor on the property, Chase explains, “We have one huge vine that went along the cow fence and then along the creek. You could swing from the hill out over the creek and then—if you held on—swing right back to the top of the hill.” From sweaty work baling hay to the glory of a cool dip in the swimming hole, and from the pride of canning jam and raising chicks to the peacefulness of spending so much time outdoors, the Bennetts find harmony in the land and with each other. *Our Farm* offers readers a personal look at one farm family's life and how that life might look familiar to, or very different from, their own. (Ages 8–14)

Stern, Sam, and Susan Stern. *Real Food, Real Fast*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2008. 128 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3533-6, \$16.99)

British teen Sam Stern has been cooking since he was three years old. After publishing his first cookbook at fourteen, Sam is back with his second, a bright, bold cookbook for busy teenagers. Color-coded tabs divide the book into sections featuring foods that can be prepared in 5, 10, 15, 20, or 30 minutes. Like his idol, Jamie Oliver, Sam Stern is a celebrity chef. He speaks to young cooks with a fresh attitude and authority. “Cooking's a bit like filling your iPod. You want a lot of tunes in there. Hip-hop. Soul. Bit of jazz....” Advising his peers on shopping for quality ingredients and the benefits of using leftovers, the author notes that “Fast food doesn't

have to be junk food.” Recipe pages feature crisp photos of ingredients and preparation techniques as well as shots of Sam and his friends (“mates”) dining on his dishes. The busy page spreads feature ingredient lists, cooking directions, suggested variations, and other bits of advice to communicate the joys of cooking. Recipes include variations on toast, spicy hummus, speedy baked trout, brilliant beefburger, and tostadas. Many ethnic dishes are included, as well as some vegetarian and vegan options. Beyond providing a collection of quick recipes, Stern suggests how teens can take responsibility in creating the fuel needed for their active lives—and have fun doing it. (Age 12 and older)

Winter, Jeanette. *Wangari's Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa.* Harcourt, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-15-206545-4, \$17.00)

Jeanette Winter's striking acrylic illustrations, in a warm palette of colors, bring a vibrant sense of importance to the story of Wangari Maathai and the Green Belt Movement in Kenya. Beginning with Maathai's childhood growing up beneath an umbrella of green in the shadow of Mount Kenya, Winter's words root readers in a faraway landscape. Following Wangari's study-abroad experience in the United States, she returns home to find the land deforested, with serious consequences to her people and the agriculture. Wangari launches a mission to replant the trees of Kenya, and she gradually recruits an army of women across the land to join her—despite social and political obstacles. Together they plant more than 30 million trees, and the land is renewed. An author's note provides information on the chronology of events as well as details on the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Wangari Maathai in 2004. This straightforward and vivid picture book biography both works on its own and complements other materials on this topic. (Ages 5–9)

Issues in Today's World

Javna, John, Sophie Javna, and Jesse Javna. *50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth.* Hyperion, 2008. 128 pages (pbk. 978-1-4013-2299-1, \$12.95)

Author John Javna makes it clear in his introduction that this is not a revised edition of the original *50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth*, which was published in 1989 by Earthworks. He took the original out of print twelve years ago, after becoming convinced that the small acts it advised, from using cloth bags to composting, don't get at the root of environmental problems. Indeed, Javna writes that he became disillusioned about making a difference until his teenage children renewed his commitment. This time around, he takes an issues approach: Each of the fifty things are issues to explore and act on, whether supporting electric cars, solar energy, and organic farming or making a statement through the power of one's vote. For each issue—and he advises choosing one on which to focus—he offers an organizational partner, a nonprofit that readers can turn to for more information. He then suggests actions that “Start Simple” (e.g., a movie night, with a suggested film to

learn more about a specific issue) and build. A companion Web site offers additional information on the topics and actions, and the top of each page lists where to find more on the Web for each area. Javna's teenage children contribute their thoughts to a volume that, while aimed at adults, will appeal to many older teens. (Watch for a completely new *50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth* from publisher Andrews McMeel in March 2009.) (Age 13 and older)

Kuklin, Susan. *No Choirboy: Murder, Violence, and Teenagers on Death Row*. Henry Holt, 2008. 212 pages (trade 978-0-8050-7950-0, \$17.95)

After a brief italicized paragraph giving context to the crime, the first chapter in this powerful work opens with the frank and immediate voice of an adolescent sentenced to death. Told in passages from the present as well as in flashbacks, three young men offer raw insight on their life behind bars and tales from their individual experiences in judicial systems that support capital punishment. Author Susan Kuklin provides the framework for this emotionally and politically charged book, but the bulk of the content comes directly from her interviewees. Now past their teenage years, the inmates reflect on their crimes, their sentences, and the punishments to body and mind incurred in prison. In addition to chapters on these three, Kuklin also includes the perspectives of persons outside of prison through interviews with family members. The first dialogue comes from a young man whose older brother was given the death sentence, and the impact it has had on his life. The second dialogue tells the story of two siblings whose young lives have been shaped by the grief stemming from the death of their brother, whose murderer is in prison for life without parole. The final chapter gives testimony from the lawyer for two of the prisoners, offering a legal vantage on their lives and their crimes. This compelling and unforgettable volume is a discussion piece for a range of concrete subjects—violent acts, the U.S. legal system, capital punishment, human rights—as well as philosophical concepts of self-worth, redemption, and forgiveness. (Age 14 and older)

***We Are All Born Free: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Pictures*. In association with Amnesty International. Frances Lincoln, 2008. 64 pages (trade 978-1-84507-650-4, \$19.95)**

In honor of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, created by the United Nations in 1948, the thirty articles in the document have been simplified by Amnesty International and creatively illustrated by a cadre of internationally recognized children's illustrators. The text, and its significance, might need more context than the introductions offer, but the pictures are profound for the messages they convey. German artist Ole Könnecke brings humor to Article 8 ("We can all ask for the law to help us when we are not treated fairly") with his depiction of an apologetic cat in cooking garb standing before a stern avian judge who's listening to the anxious arguments of a tiny mouse with a missing relative. British artist Jane Ray powerfully captures Article 5 ("Nobody has any right to hurt or torture

us”) with an image of an doll with blood on its clothes. This collection offers stunning and symbolic interpretations of the timeless, and timely, declaration that explains the kind of world children and adults should have the right to live in. (Age 5 and older)

Understanding Oneself and Others

Benjamin, Floella. *My Two Grannies*. Illustrated by Margaret Chamberlain. Frances Lincoln, 2008. 24 pages (trade 978-1-84507-643-6, \$16.95)

Alvina's grandmothers don't seem to have much in common. One likes brass bands, the other likes Calypso. One likes Jack and the Beanstalk, the other likes Anansi. One grew up in rural England, the other in Trinidad. They both come to take care of Alvina when her parents go away for their tenth anniversary, and initially their styles and tastes clash. But their love for Alvina helps them to overcome their differences and even begin to enjoy each other's company as the three spend time together. Alvina, a biracial child with a white dad and a Black mom, offers a spirited account of her two grandmothers finding their common ground. (Ages 3-6)

Foreman, Jack. *Say Hello*. Illustrated by Michael Foreman. Candlewick Press, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3657-9, \$15.99)

A simple rhyming text and evocative charcoal and pastel line drawings convey a story of longing and acceptance. In the beginning, a lonely dog yearns for companionship as it wanders through town. Seeing a group of children involved in a ball game, the playful pup joins in and is quickly accepted. Also eyeing the happy kids from afar is a shy boy. Unsure of why he's left out and uncertain about entering the game, the boy's loneliness grows. Suddenly, with the easy efforts of a slobbery kiss and welcoming smiles, the dog and the children greet the boy and invite him in. For children on the outside looking in or on the inside looking out, *Say Hello* is a reminder of how simple gestures make a difference. (Ages 4-7)

Holmberg, Bo R. *A Day with Dad*. Illustrated by Eva Eriksson. Translated from the Swedish. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3221-2, \$15.99)

With so many children growing up with divorced parents who have joint custody, it's surprising there aren't more picture books like this one. After Tim moves to a new town with his mom, his dad takes the train to visit him for the day. They spend quality time together—going to a movie, eating at Tim's favorite pizza place, and reading at the library. Everywhere they go, Tim proudly introduces his dad to the people they meet, while Tim's dad looks on with slightly embarrassed pleasure. It's hard for the two to part at the end of the day, but before Dad's train leaves he takes Tim on board and holds him up for the passengers to see. “Excuse me...,” Dad announces, “well, this is Tim. He is my son. He is the best son anyone could have.” And Tim looks on with pride and pleasure, and not the least hint of embarrassment.

Eva Eriksson's expressive colored-pencil illustrations show the deep affection between father and son, as well as their sadness when Dad boards the train alone. But the text ends on a hopeful note: "Tim and Mom watch the train until they can't see it anymore. Even though Tim can't see the train, the tracks are still there. And one day soon, along those tracks, the train will come back. The train will come back with Dad. And Tim will spend another day with Dad." (Ages 4–7)

Kostecki-Shaw, Jenny Sue. *My Travelin' Eye*. Henry Holt, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8050-8169-5, \$16.95)

A young girl with amblyopia finds that she sees the world differently from those around her. For Jenny Sue the challenge comes neither in having an eye that wanders nor in the teasing that comes with it, but in dealing with the plan to "fix" her wayward pupil. When her mother takes her to an ophthalmologist, he puts a patch over Jenny Sue's other eye and her sense of self becomes diminished along with her line of vision. But with her mother's help and some creativity, she soon turns the patch into colorful expressions of her way of seeing the world. Doing so helps her realize that she hasn't lost her unique sense of perspective, even if her vision is changing. When the doctor removes the patch and announces that her "lazy eye" has woken up, Jenny Sue knows it was really awake all along. But she also realizes, "My travelin' eye had grown stronger. And more confident. I think it just needed some special attention." Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw's picture book is based on her own childhood experience. The author/illustrator's vivid, upbeat story is accompanied by bright, colorful illustrations that speak to the young protagonist's optimistic outlook on the world. (Ages 4–8)

Ludwig, Trudy. *Trouble Talk*. Illustrated by Mikela Prevost. Tricycle Press, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-1-58246-240-0, \$15.95)

Maya is excited to befriend the new girl at school, Bailey, when their teacher selects Maya to be Bailey's Welcome Buddy. Soon the two girls are friends, and while Maya enjoys Bailey's bubbly energy and jokes, a few incidents start to make Maya uneasy about Bailey's way of talking and teasing. Then Bailey spreads a rumor around school about Maya and her family. After speaking to Ms. Bloom, the school counselor, Maya learns that there is a name for Bailey's behavior: trouble talk. "Spreading rumors, saying hurtful things, and sharing information that isn't hers to share are examples of the kind of talk that leads to nothing but trouble," Ms. Bloom explains. With Ms. Bloom's help, Maya identifies strategies for avoiding trouble talk. Even though Bailey crossed a boundary, Maya realizes that it is possible, with time, to rebuild trust if a person is willing to change. The realistic scenarios presented in this powerful picture book will resonate with readers and help them explore unhealthy relationships. Multimedia illustrations enhance the emotional aspects of the situation. The foreword, author's note, discussion questions, and additional resources provide valuable information for parents and educators. (Ages 6–10)

The Arts

Albert, Michael. *An Artist's America.* Henry Holt, 2008. 48 pages (trade 978-0-8050-7857-2, \$17.95)

Artist Michael Albert describes his artistic vision and the development of his unique style, which draws on elements of pop culture, in an intriguing volume. Albert is best known for his collages, and this showcase reveals how his work has grown increasingly complex in both theme and execution. His creation of works from consumer packaging, for example, reveals how iconographic images such as a Cheerios box, the Trix bunny, Cap'n Crunch, and a Campbell's soup can (an intentional homage to Andy Warhol) are recognizable even when rearranged. Other works created from letters and words cut from packaging offer up a plethora of proverbs and clichés—the Gettysburg Address and the Pledge of Allegiance, among others. Albert's artwork is bright, eye-catching, and accessible for older children and teens. Offering an intriguing perspective on America and consumer culture, Albert concludes with an overview of workshops he does with children, and information on how readers can make their own collage. (Age 8 and older)

Greenberg, Jan, and Sandra Jordan. *Christo and Jeanne-Claude: Through the Gates and Beyond.* A Neal Porter Book / Flash Point / Roaring Brook Press, 2008. 50 pages (trade 978-1-59643-071-6, \$19.95)

Artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude create singular, ephemeral works of art at venues that vary from the wilds of nature to the brick and mortar of buildings, but almost always allow for art of incredible scale: a 1,500-foot orange curtain spanning a Colorado valley; pink polypropylene fabric surrounding eleven islands off the coast of Florida; an aluminum-coated wrap around the imposing Reichstag in Berlin. Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan introduce readers to this unique duo of artists and their works. "It has no purpose. It is not a symbol. It is not a message," Jeanne-Claude said about "The Gates," their extraordinary project that featured 7,500 "shimmering saffron panels" unfurled throughout New York's Central Park. Respecting their subjects' philosophy, Greenberg and Jordan focus on the process the artists use in creating their fleeting projects—a process that comprises grand artistic vision and meticulous design and engineering, as well as a lot of red tape to navigate in the various locales they have chosen as canvas. A book that opens the door to conversations about art, audience, artist, and also emphasizes Christo and Jeanne-Claude's commitment to sustainability, which includes using recycled and recyclable materials and making sure their canvas—landscape, building, etc.—is left unmarred. (Age 10 and older)

Johnson, Stephen T. *A Is for Art: An Abstract Alphabet.* A Paula Wiseman Book / Simon & Schuster. 40 pages (978-0-689-86301-1, \$16.99)

In a sophisticated, clever exploration of visual and language arts, artist Stephen T. Johnson offers an alliterative caption explaining each alphabetically-themed illustration he created for the volume. A photograph showing a huge stack of hot-pink inflatable mattresses entitled "Meditation

on the Memory of a Princess” features the caption, “Motionless, a man-made, monochromatic magenta mass mimics multiple mattresses and makes a massive mound near a mini mauve marble.” In addition to offering readers interesting interpretations of letters through collage, painting, and sculpture, Johnson incorporates playful interaction with an “I spy” alphabet hunt. Whether paged through or pensively pondered, this skillfully designed book creatively questions the idea of art for a range of readers. (Ages 7–14)

Nichols, Travis. *Punk Rock Etiquette: The Ultimate How-to Guide for Punk, Underground, DIY, and Indie Bands.* Flash Point / Roaring Brook Press, 2008. 138 pages (pbk. 978-1-59643-415-8, \$12.95)

Even those who have no interest whatsoever in forming a band and going on the road will find Travis Nichols’s graphic novel how-to guide a riot. Artist and musician Nichols brings his talent with a pen together with his experience as a member of more than a dozen bands to create a hilariously funny and extraordinarily informative handbook for would-be and practiced young rockers. Chapter topics range from forming a band, writing and recording music and booking gigs to transportation, packing instructions, and a recipe for a healthy snack on the road. There’s information on stage etiquette (respect for the audience and other bands), collecting payment, and post-show etiquette (think about the ramification of the one-night stand). Merchandising tips include step-by-step instructions for screen printing t-shirts, producing CD sleeves, and making the most of the web. The practical narrative is written with genuine respect, but the delivery is laugh-out-loud funny. The illustrations include diagrams and examples, and an ongoing cartoon feature about a band (comprised of animal characters) living out the dream. (Age 14 and older)

Parker, Robert Andrew. *Piano Starts Here: The Young Art Tatum.* Schwartz & Wade, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-375-83965-8, \$16.99)

“When I am at the piano, I close my eyes. I play clouds of notes, rivers of notes, notes that sound like skylarks singing and leaves rustling, like rain on a rooftop. I forget that my eyes aren’t good. I have everything I need.” Robert Andrew Parker blends facts and imaginative details to depict the life and music of pianist Art Tatum in a stirring picture book biography. Parker weaves family, music, and community into the melody of Tatum’s life, much like Tatum’s style of creating new music from many strands: “I can play one song and then weave another song in and out and through it.” The African American musician was born in Toledo and grew up in the first part of the twentieth century. Parker’s exquisite watercolor illustrations display a subtle shift in tone and feel as Tatum matures from a child eager to play and experiment into a brilliant adult musician in a book that concludes with additional information about Tatum, a bibliography, and best of all, Parker’s own reminiscence of hearing Tatum play live in 1946. (Ages 6–9)

Voake, Charlotte. *Tweddle-Dee-Dee*. Candlewick Press, 2008. 24 pages (trade 978-07636-3797-2, \$16.99)

Charlotte Voake's illustrated rendition of "The Green Leaves Grew Around," a traditional folk song known in variant forms far and wide (such as "The Green Grass Grows All Around"), features tender, blithe watercolor and ink illustrations awash in pale green leaves. The large tree that is the scene of the action features a branch, a bird, a nest, and eggs that hatch into hungry baby birds, all of which is detailed in the cumulative verse that will have young listeners joining in with gusto. Although not referenced in the lyrics, the scampering squirrels, two young children, and tiny cat pictured in the illustrations add additional charm and whimsy to the volume. The entire cast becomes a chorus on the endpaper, which shows them all gathered around a piano singing to the music, for which musical notation is also provided. (Ages 2-5)

Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Before John Was a Jazz Giant: A Song of John Coltrane*. Illustrated by Sean Qualls. Henry Holt, 2008. 28 pages (trade 978-0-8050-7994-4, \$16.95)

Looking back on the life of legendary jazz saxophonist John Coltrane, author Carole Boston Weatherford offers readers a literary soundtrack for the musician's childhood. "Before John was a jazz giant, he heard hambones knocking in Grandma's pots, Daddy strumming the ukulele, and Mama cranking the phonograph." From hambones to funeral hymns, the author identifies influential sounds created by the people and events in young Coltrane's life. Moody and whimsical mixed-media illustrations by Sean Qualls effectively capture these sound effects. Bopping bubbles and sweet strands of song drift from page to page, tying Coltrane's musical inspirations together with reverberating ribbons and rings of sound. This inventive picture book biography has appeal beyond an audience of juvenile jazz enthusiasts—Weatherford's poetic words motivate readers to take an "all ears" approach to their own lives. A note from the author following the text provides a summary of Coltrane's upbringing and career, as well as a list of selected listening and further reading. (Ages 5-8)

Whitehead, Kathy. *Art from Her Heart: Folk Artist Clementine Hunter*. Illustrated by Shane W. Evans. Putnam, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-399-24219-9, \$16.99)

"The art that poured from Clementine's heart and mind gives us a window to her life on the plantation. A window we would have missed if Clementine Hunter had waited for a perfect time to paint." A self-taught artist, former slave Clementine Hunter began painting in middle age, using leftover supplies and scrap materials from the artists she served at Melrose plantation. Modest about her work, Clementine gave her paintings away and later sold them for twenty-five cents. Her paintings were eventually recognized not only for the cultural scenes they captured but for the context in which they were created. The folk artist's fame spread, and paintings that were once clipped to the clothesline were later displayed in prominent galleries. Clementine Hunter's

story is well framed by the author and suitably illustrated with mixed media. Images of Hunter's works, as well as a bibliography and author's note, conclude this picture book biography. (Ages 5–9)

Poetry

Engle, Margarita. *The Surrender Tree: Poems of Cuba's Struggle for Freedom.* Henry Holt, 2008. 169 pages (trade 978-0-8050-8674-4, \$16.95)

Rosa is a slave until the day in her young womanhood when her owner frees her so that he, too, can fight for Cuba's independence from Spain. "Should I fight with weapons / or flowers and leaves?" asks Rosa the healer. She chooses flowers, and with her husband José and others she sets up hospitals in the jungle to treat the sick and the wounded. Across three wars in the struggle for a free land, Rosa sees slavery abolished in Cuba, and then concentration camps established by the Spanish government. Through it all she treats the hurt and heartache of war. When Spain finally surrenders, it is not to the Cuban fighters but to the Americans: "as the Spanish flag is lowered . . . the American flag glides upward. / Our Cuban flag is still forbidden." Cuban American poet Margarita Engle spans almost fifty years as she transforms nineteenth-century Cuban history into a vivid story. Almost all of the speakers in Engle's multiple-voice narrative are based on the lives of real individuals—characters who speak to the arrogance and cruelty of conquest and the yearning desire to be free. At the center is a woman who was named Rosario Castellanos Castellanos, or Rosa *la Bayamesa*. Facts about her life and other individuals who voice the poems, as well as additional information about Cuba's quest for independence, are detailed in the author's note and timeline concluding this stirring account. (Age 12 and older)

Greenberg, Jan, editor. *Side by Side: New Poems Inspired by Art from Around the World.* Abrams, 2008. 88 pages (trade 978-0-8109-9471-3, \$19.95)

Jan Greenberg invited poets across the globe to choose a work of art and write about it. The result is this beautifully designed collection showcasing selected poems and the pieces of art that inspired them. There is a stunning and varied array of both art and poetry here, and the interplay between the two enriches each. In his poem "The Scream," German poet Günter Kunert imagines the thoughts of the two figures standing on the bridge behind Edvard Munch's tortured subject in the famous painting of the same name; in "The Pears," Argentine poet María Teresa Andruetto conjures a magical childhood memory from Picasso's painting *A Dish of Pears*; Eritrean poet Ghirmai Yohannes arrives at a revelation while considering Lawrence F. Sykes's photograph *Massawa Moment* in the poem "Who Needs a Story?" There is astonishment, discomfort, and delight in the relationships explored in this deeply thoughtful anthology. Most of the poems were written in and translated from languages other than English, and all of the translated poems

appear in both their language of origin and in English. Biographical notes on the poets, translators, and artists are also included in this singular work. (Age 12 and older)

McKissack, Patricia C. *Stitchin' and Pullin': A Gee's Bend Quilt.* Illustrated by Cozbi A. Cabrera. Random House, 2008. 40 pages (trade 978-0-375-83163-8, \$17.99)

This carefully crafted poetry collection thoughtfully combines the excitement of a young African American girl's first quilting project with a celebration of the history and culture of Gee's Bend, Alabama. The town and its quilting tradition have long been recognized for their uniqueness. The poems honor the community's past while recognizing the roles and rituals of generation as they tell the story of a grandmother and granddaughter assembling a quilt. Rich illustrations convey feeling and the details of their handcraft. From the final poem entitled "Finished," the girl is pleased with the end product, though her work is not done: "But I am not complete... / There are hundreds of ideas in my head. / Quilts that are about me, / the place where I live, / and the people / who have been here for generations." An authoritative introduction and author's note at the conclusion yield helpful insight on the extraordinary people and traditions of Gee's Bend. (Ages 7-11)

Nelson, Marilyn. *The Freedom Business, Including a Narrative of the Life & Adventures of Venture, A Native of Africa.* Illustrated by Deborah Dancy. Wordsong / Boyds Mills Press, 2008. 72 pages (trade 978-1-932425-57-4, \$18.95)

Venture Smith was born in Guinea, a prince of his father's regional kingdom. Captured by slave traders at age six and brought to America, he worked for thirty years as a slave before buying his own and his family's freedom, and then struggling to secure a future. His remarkable story is known to us today in part because Venture Smith told it in his time—his is considered the first slave narrative. Venture is the inspiration for Marilyn Nelson's latest addition to her body of work illuminating African American experience. Her poems here reflect and extend the power of Venture's own words. Venture's narrative appears on the left hand side of each page spread, while an accompanying poem by Nelson, demanding reader's further consideration of the pain, irony and cruelty of Venture's story, is on the right. In a poem titled "How I Came By My Name," opposite a section of narrative in which Venture reflects back on when he was still called Broteer, still in Africa, but already captured and being traded for rum and fabric, Nelson writes, "... Four casks of rum and a piece of cloth... The boy who was Borteer / disappeared. A business venture took his place... / Breath, dreams, pulse, traded for cloth and alcohol, / were *capital*. There was *profit* in the pain, / the chains. *Venture*. There were whole worlds to gain." The words of this singular volume are set against somber abstract illustrations by Deborah Dancy. (Age 13 and older)

Nye, Naomi Shihab. *Honeybee: Poems & Short Prose.* Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2008. 164 pages (trade 978-0-06-085390-7, \$16.99; lib. 978-0-06-085391-4, \$17.89)

Reading these poems and essays by Naomi Shihab Nye makes one wonder: Is she someone to whom extraordinary things happen, or is she someone who gives extraordinary meaning to ordinary things? The answer seems to be both. It's evidenced in the experiences she recounts in short essays such as "Museum," about a hilariously memorable teenage encounter with art, and "Gate A-4," about an uplifting affirmation of connectedness among once-disparate travelers who share the gift of togetherness—the unexpected sense of community is seeded by a distressed Palestinian woman in the Albuquerque airport. Along with essays are poems that celebrate the sweetness and wonder of the world, and poems that agonize over its sting. In "Consolation" she writes: "This morning the newspaper / was too terrible to deliver / so the newsboy just pitched out / a little sheaf / of Kleenex." Nye's most overtly political collection to date, she offers her perspective on politics and the president and war, but also people and moments in her daily life—and ours as well, perhaps—that are meaningful in ways both small and large. (Age 13 and older)

Smith, Hope Anita. *Keeping the Night Watch.* Illustrated by E. B. Lewis. Henry Holt, 2008. 73 pages (trade 978-0-8050-7202-0, \$18.95)

As chronicled in *The Way a Door Closes* (Henry Holt, 2003), thirteen-year-old C. J.'s world was turned upside down when his father walked out on their family. Since then, C. J. has taken on the role of night watchman at their house, making sure that everyone is safe and sound. When C. J.'s father returns to their lives, C. J. is not sure he can trust him in the role he abandoned. Told in powerful and accessible poems, and illustrated with E. B. Lewis's tender and metaphoric watercolors, the seasons and emotions of C. J.'s year cycle through. Hope Anita Smith soundly portrays anger, fear, and hope in this second volume about an African American family learning to heal. (Ages 11–15)

Thomas, Joyce Carol. *The Blacker the Berry.* Illustrated by Floyd Cooper. Joanna Cotler Books / Amistad / HarperCollins, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-06-025375-2, \$16.99)

Playful, loving, and poignant poems honor the many shades of black found in a palette of skin tones. Some verses are confident and celebratory ("I am biscuit brown / brown as a biscuit / All warm and waiting / for berries / that I carry / to the kitchen and can") while others are deep and reflective ("I look white / I am as light / as snowberries in fall / 'I walk that walk / I talk that talk' / Yet / Still some say / 'You're not really Black!' "). Realistic illustrations, rich with color and emotion, portray a range of children and families in this invaluable addition to school and public libraries. (Ages 4–8)

Concept Books

Cumpiano, Ina. *Quinito, Day and Night = Quinito, día y noche.* Illustrated by José Ramírez. Children's Book Press, 2008. 22 pages (trade 978-0-89239-226-1, \$16.95)

Young Quinito describes members of his family and activities in his daily life as a series of comparisons highlighting opposites in this engaging concept book. "My Mami is **short**. My Papi is **tall**. I'm not **short**. I'm not **tall**. I'm just the right size." Quinito also wakes up at just the right time, unlike his sister, Clara, who wakes up early, and his brother, Juan, who wakes up late. Rain makes him sad, sun makes him happy. Clara runs slowly while Juan runs fast. Ida Cumpiano manages to express Quinito's winning personality in a brief bilingual (English/Spanish) narrative illustrated by José Ramírez with lush, rich colors on textured canvas and featuring a beautiful brown-skinned boy and his intergenerational Latino family. (Ages 2–5)

Goldstone, Bruce. *Greater Estimations.* Henry Holt, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8050-8315-6, \$16.95)

Eye training. Clump counting. Box and count. Bruce Goldstone offers strategies and examples of how to estimate in this numerically challenging follow-up to *Great Estimations* (Henry Holt, 2006). As in his original volume on how to strategically guess at the number of objects in a group, Goldstone uses eye-catching photographs of items to be estimated, from the number of rubber ducks in arrangements growing larger on successive pages to the number of seeds on a dandelion, and much more. He also includes estimation exercises on how to figure height, weight, size, and volume. Each page's puzzler includes a hint on the strategy to use in a book that offers skill-building and opportunities for practice that can be easily extended beyond the page. (Ages 7–11)

Hills, Tad. *Duck & Goose 1 2 3.* Schwartz & Wade, 2008. 18 pages (trade 978-0-375-85621-1, \$6.99)

Hills, Tad. *What's Up, Duck? A Book of Opposites.* Schwartz & Wade, 2008. 18 pages (trade 978-0-375-84738-7, \$6.99)

A pair of endearing concept books features a small duck and her playtime companions. *What's Up Duck?* includes nine examples of opposites in the interactions among the duck and her friends (a goose, another duck, and a bluebird). From "front" to "back," the lovely little book has tremendous appeal. In *Duck & Goose 1, 2, 3* the same group showcases the numbers one through ten through their play. Amusing illustrations—these small birds are simply painted and charmingly irresistible—suggest a warm, fuzzy feeling of affection shared by the four feathered friends in the volumes—simply ducky! (Ages 2–4)

Morales, Yuyi. *Just in Case: A Trickster Tale and Spanish Alphabet Book*. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-1-59643-329-8, \$17.95)

On his way to his friend Grandma Beetle's birthday party, Señor Calavera is stopped by Zelmíro the Ghost, who reminds the skeleton to take a gift. But what should Señor Calavera get her? "The thing she would love most," suggests Zelmíro. There are many things Grandma Beetle loves—one for each letter of the Spanish alphabet in Yuyi Morales's wonderfully illustrated, humorous tale. Zelmíro fulsomely praises each of Señor Calavera's choices in turn, from una Acordeón (accordion) to una Lotería (a game) to Yerbabuena, an herb to "soothe her day." But, he asks repeatedly, is it what Grandma Beetle would love the most? It turns out Zelmíro has an idea of his own in a story that offers a surprising turn on the final page of the tongue-in-cheek tale. Richly detailed illustrations are full of vibrant colors, warmth, and whimsy, making the skeleton and ghost anything but scary in this follow-up to *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book* (Chronicle, 2003). As in the original, the Spanish words here are smoothly defined in context. (Ages 4–8)

Tafuri, Nancy. *Blue Goose*. Simon & Schuster, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-1-4169-2834-8, \$15.99)

Farmer Gray drives away in his gray pick-up truck, leaving his colorless farm in the hands of a blue goose, white duck, red hen, and yellow chick. While he's away, each of the four paints every bit of the barnyard in its own color: The duck paints the fence white, the chick paints the flowers yellow, the hen paints the barn red, and the goose paints the barn roof blue. Soon the animals begin mixing colors. The hen and the goose paint the barn doors purple, the hen and the chick paint the shutters orange, the goose and the chick paint the grass green, and the duck and the goose paint the skylight blue. They finish just in time to lift the chick up high to paint the sun yellow before Farmer Gray returns home to a full-color barnyard. And when night falls, the blue goose returns to paint everything blue, except for the moon. With bold lines, flat colors, and a simple storyline, Tafuri introduces young children to the concept of mixing primary colors to make secondary colors. (Ages 2–4)

Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

Averbeck, Jim. *In a Blue Room*. Illustrated by Tricia Tusa. Harcourt, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-15-2-5992-7, \$16.00)

Like many children, Alice needs things to be just so before going to sleep at night. Bouncing on her bed, way past bedtime, Alice explains that she can sleep only in a blue room—blue is her favorite. Tricia Tusa's cozy ink, watercolor, and gouache illustrations show that Alice's room is anything but

blue, though. To soothe her, Mama brings Alice a vase of flowers with a gentle scent and a cup of warm tea, but still Alice needs blue. Tucked in with a silky-soft quilt, Alice's request grows quieter as special lullaby bells are hung in the open window of her homey room. Surrounded by pale yellow walls and calmed by her mother's kindness, Alice is almost ready for sleep. "The moon...Mama," Alice murmurs. Mama whispers, "Here it comes." In that moment, Alice's bedside lamp is clicked off and the room is bathed in blue light. Nighttime has come, and the moon's pale illumination emits a tranquil glow over Alice, who is now sound asleep in her blue room. Color-rich language grounds a loving look at a bedtime ritual that offers a comforting new view of "lights out." *Honor Book, 2009 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–6)

Back, Matthew J. *Be Gentle with the Dog, Dear!* Dial, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8037-3250-6, \$14.99)

Life is pretty insufferable when you're a dog named Tag living with a toddler named Elisa. In spite of her parents' constant reminders to be gentle with the dog, Elisa is anything but. She squeezes him too hard, pulls his tail, sits on him, and even takes his favorite toy. But it ends happily with the first time the baby pets the dog on her own ("Gen-tle. Gen-tle."), which comes as quite a surprise to the cringing canine. This first picture book by a new author/artist shows a talent for understatement that's coupled with a distinctive, humorous art style. Matthew J. Baek makes excellent use of negative space and the drama of turning the page to show how threatened the dog feels whenever the baby is around. Baek is also very good at drawing babies—he really understands their center of gravity and how their little bodies move, something that comes across well even in his highly stylized illustrations. The story features an interracial family with a white mom and an Asian American dad. (Ages 2–4)

Becker, Bonny. *A Visitor for Bear*. Illustrated by Kady MacDonald Denton. Candlewick Press, 2008. 56 pages (trade 978-0-7636-2807-9, \$16.99)

Nestled in a comfy home in the woods, Bear keeps a private life with a large sign nailed to his front door that boldly states: NO VISITORS ALLOWED. No one has bothered Bear for a long time, until one morning when his breakfast is interrupted by a tapping at the door. Opening it to a small, gray, bright-eyed mouse, Bear points to the sign and shoos the mouse away. Moments later, back in the peaceful confines of his kitchen, Bear opens a cupboard and finds . . . the mouse! Infuriated, Bear sends the mouse packing, despite its polite request for a bite to eat. This incident repeats itself with increasing hilarity and tension as Bear boards the windows and plugs the bathtub drain, while the mouse continues to pop up in unexpected places. Bear can only take so much. When the cute, coy mouse begs to stay, Bear caves in—but only for teatime, and then the mouse must go. Sitting by the fire with a bit of cheese and a spot of tea, Bear's final surprise comes when he realizes how pleasant company can be. The large pages in this picture book offer ample white space that showcases the homey, pastel-hued watercolor illustrations of Bear, his home, and his new friend. (Ages 3–6)

Billingsley, Franny. *Big Bad Bunny*. Illustrated by G. Brian Karas. A Richard Jackson Book / Atheneum, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-1-4169-0601-8, \$16.99)

Try to imagine *Peter Rabbit* meets *Friday the 13th*, and you may just get *The Big Bad Bunny*. Mama Mouse tucks her babies into soft beds inside a cozy tree stump, while outside (i.e., the opposite page) looms the Big Bad Bunny. He has long sharp claws and pointy yellow teeth, and he's coming to get YOU. Meanwhile, Mama, oblivious to the threat, kisses Little Tippy, Little Flurry, and Little Baby Boo-Boo—but what's this? Baby Boo-Boo is missing! Mama runs into the forest to search for her baby and eventually finds him, wearing fake bunny ears and a fake cotton tail, playing the role of the Big Bad Bunny. Boo-Boo continues the role all the way home. Where Mama *pitter-pats*, he *CRASHES*; where Mama *splishes* across a stream, he *KA-SPLOSHES*. By the time Mama tucks Boo-Boo into bed, his imaginary game has ended, although Mama acknowledges the power of play by saying good-night to Big Bad Bunny. The dual narrative makes this a more complex picture story than one usually finds for this age group, and it may be challenging to read aloud. But children who are fans of ferocious creatures, especially creatures tucked safely within the pages of a book, will no doubt want this story again and again, so adult readers will get plenty of practice. (Ages 3–6)

Cecil, Randy. *Duck*. Candlewick Press, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3072-0, \$15.99)

"Duck was a carousel animal who longed to fly. She knew her carved wooden wings were not made for flying. But she couldn't stop thinking about it, even when the carousel was whirling around." There is a hole in Duck's heart—both literal and figurative—and Randy Cecil's text and images convey her longing with equal parts poignancy and humor. Textured oil paints capture the whimsy and at the same time cast a slightly somber shadow. One day, Duck's daydreams are deferred when a small yellow duckling turns up at the park, walks right up to Duck, and announces himself with an affirmative "Quack!" Duck and Duckling are together from that moment on. As Duckling's feathers turn from fuzzy and yellow to mature and white, Duck realizes that while Duckling can learn to play and hunt for bugs from her, he can never learn to fly. Duck seeks out a flock of fliers, and in a tender moment of truth, she sends Duckling up, up, up, soaring away into the clouds, her rainbow scarf around his neck, while she stays rooted to the ground. In what could have been a bittersweet conclusion to this tale of love and loss, Duckling returns to Duck the following spring to tie up loose ends...with the rainbow scarf, of course. (Ages 3–7)

Ceelen, Vicky. *Baby! Baby!* Random House, 2008. 20 pages (trade 978-0-375-84207-8, \$6.99)

Photographer Vicky Ceelen couples photos of human babies and animal babies in a captivating wordless board book. Ceelen cleverly pairs babies in similar poses—a teething toddler is matched with a toothy rabbit, and a sprawled-out sleeping newborn is positioned next to a toes-splayed and tummy-down toad. From tiny tongues poking out to little fingers covering

mouths, the human and animal babes are shown as perfect complements of each other. Pastel borders frame the eleven photo duets, offering gentle contrast to the infant close-ups. Little ones will love looking at these babies of all sizes and species. (Ages birth–2)

Cotten, Cynthia. *Rain Play*. Illustrated by Javaka Steptoe. Henry Holt, 2008. 24 pages (trade 978–0–8050–6795–8, \$16.95)

Sprightly rhyming couplets advance a simple story of children at play in a park when it begins to rain. “See the breeze / toss the trees. / Plip, plop. / Drip, drop.” The kids make the most of watery opportunity, jumping in puddles and finding things that float, until “Flash! Boom!” Thunder and lightning send everyone rushing for the car. “Wipers swish. / Sneakers squish” as they head for the snug comfort of home. Javaka Steptoe’s beautiful, textured collage illustrations show a jubilant—and wet!—group of African American children and a dad engaged in the “rain play” that Cynthia Cotten’s lively narrative describes. (Ages 3–6)

Cyrus, Kurt. *Tadpole Rex*. Harcourt, 2008. 40 pages (trade 978–0–15–205990–3, \$16.00)

The cover image on this large-sized picture book shows a striking contrast between the huge Tyrannosaurus Rex with sharp claws and teeth and the small and slippery frog at its feet. Born in a puddle created by the dinosaur’s wet footprint, a tiny tadpole’s life begins. Observing the prehistoric beasts around and above him, the undeveloped amphibian waits for his young body, and ego, to grow. “Patience and time. That’s all it took. Suddenly Rex had a whole new look. Rex didn’t hide in the goop anymore. Out came his inner tyrannosaur!” Fantastic computer-generated illustrations, filled with lush plants and realistic reptilian textures, depict surprising comparisons of size and scale. Although Tadpole Rex has grown into a full-sized frog, he’s still just a speck in the eyes of the giant dinosaurs looming over him—yet his self-esteem is enormous as he imagines himself to be as fearsome as his neighbors. This highly visual and humorous tale will appeal to a range of children, including dinosaur lovers. The successful rhyming text is punctuated by effective use of onomatopoeia. A note from the author elaborates on the idea of an “inner tyrannosaur” and explains the existence of frogs in primordial times and the present. (Ages 3–8)

Ernst, Lisa Campbell. *Round Like a Ball!* Blue Apple, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–1–934706–01–5, \$15.95)

“I’m thinking of something that is . . . round like a ball.” Lisa Campbell Ernst’s captivating guessing game reveals a new clue on each page spread as the people in her story—and readers and listeners, too, of course!—offer ideas on what the answer to her riddle might be. As the possibilities narrow with each additional attribute (it’s round like a ball and . . . beautiful . . . always moving . . . has many colors . . .), the excitement builds. Ernst’s bright illustrations incorporate a clever die-cut into the design. The round hole gets larger with each turn of the page, revealing more and more of the object she is describing in greater and greater detail. It’s not a pearl or a

gumball machine, a berry or a rock. It is, in fact, the earth, which is shown in big, bold, beautiful color against a space-dark sky in a glorious four-page fold out that concludes this satisfying picture book featuring cardboard pages. (Ages 3–7)

Fleming, Denise. *Buster Goes to Cowboy Camp*. Henry Holt, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–0–8050–7892–3, \$16.95)

You can tell right off from Buster's body language that he's not going to enjoy staying at the kennel when Brown Shoes drops him off. In spite of the fact that the Sagebrush Kennel has tried to make things fun by having themed activities related to cowboy life for their dog guests, Buster is an unwilling cowpoke, at least initially. He hangs back from most of the activities the first day and can't sleep a wink in the bunkhouse at night. The next day, surprise success in a game of Buckaroo Ball helps Buster begin to relax and have a bit of fun at Cowboy Camp. Before long, he's helping to gather wood for the campfire, joining in the cowboy sing-along, and eagerly awaiting a new day of cowboy fun when he hits the hay at night. Short chapters comprised of short sentences are accompanied by boldly colored illustrations in the artist's signature batik style. The back cover includes a glossary of "cowpoke words" such as *chuck wagon*, *pardner*, and the all-important *yee-haw*. (Ages 3–6)

Foley, Greg. *Don't Worry Bear*. Viking, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–0–670–06245–4, \$15.99)

When Bear observes Caterpillar constructing a cocoon, he wonders what it means. Caterpillar tells Bear that he'll need to stay inside for a while, but he promises to return. A born worrier, Bear isn't so sure. He makes repeated visits to Caterpillar's cocoon to check that he's not bothered by the wind and rain, the winter snow, and the dark of night. Each time Caterpillar reassures Bear that he's fine and tells his friend not to worry. But when Bear discovers the empty cocoon, "he started worrying all over again." His fears are laid to rest when a newly emerged silk moth alights on Bear's paw to speak the familiar words of a friend: "Don't worry, Bear," he says, "I'm right here!" The story's gentle message is matched by simple illustrations of Bear and Caterpillar on uncluttered backdrops of muted earth tones. *Highly Commended, 2009 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–6)

Fosberry, Jennifer. *My Name Is Not Isabella*. Illustrated by Mike Litwin. Monkey Barrel Press, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–0–9802000–7–2, \$19.99)

An original story for budding feminists follows a little girl through her day, beginning with her mother waking her up in the morning: "Good morning, Isabella. It's time to get up and out of bed." The girl responds, "My name is not Isabella." She informs her mother that her name is Sally and she is "the greatest, toughest astronaut who ever lived." Over the course of the day, she becomes Annie (Oakley), Rosa (Parks), Marie (Curie), and Elizabeth (Blackwell), taking on the characteristics of each woman in her imaginary play. Each time, her mother plays along, and there's a nice surprise ending when the little girl states at the close of her day, "My name is Mommy." An author's note gives a brief biographical blurb on each of the great women

Isabella aspires to be, including Isabella's Mommy. Illustrator Mike Litwin's original style shows characters with huge round heads set on tiny bodies, which sometimes has a jarringly humorous effect. (Ages 3–6)

Gorbachev, Valeri. *Turtle's Penguin Day*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-375-84374-7, \$16.99)

When Father Turtle reads Little Turtle a bedtime story about penguins, he has no idea the story will have a transformative effect on his son. Dreaming about the black and white birds, Little Turtle wakes up in the morning wanting to *be* a penguin. After slipping into his red slippers and finding an old black coat to hang over his head and back, Little Turtle is confident that his white belly completes the appearance of an arctic bird. Waddling past his parents on the way to the school bus, Little Turtle announces that he is going to have a "penguin day." At school, all of his friends are delighted with his costume, and soon everyone is playing along, shuffling fragile eggs on their feet, belly-sliding down the playground slide. At home, Little Turtle ends his day with goldfish crackers—because penguins like to eat fish. Valeri Gorbachev's humorously sweet story about the power of books to inspire imaginative play ends with a playful twist at Little Turtle's bedtime that will have young readers and listeners imagining plenty of monkey business for Little Turtle next. (Ages 3–6)

Graham, Bob. *How to Heal a Broken Wing*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2008. 40 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3903-7, \$16.99)

"High above the city, no one heard the soft thud of feathers against glass." A dramatic story slowly unfolds in this spellbinding picture book that follows the fate of an injured pigeon. No one sees the bird fall onto a busy city sidewalk. No one notices it lying there until a young boy named Will comes up from the subway. "A loose feather can't be put back . . . but a broken wing can sometimes heal." The bird is taken home at Will's insistence, and is carefully tended by the boy and his parents before a triumphant return to the city and release into the sky. The marvelous visual storytelling includes full-page and double-page spreads varying with multiple panels on a single page, revealing in fine detail the striking moments and affecting scenes. Will is always easy to find in a bright red coat or shirt that singles him out from the gray city streets and their inhabitants, and from his more soberly attired parents at home. The entire color palette shifts to brighter hues as the bird's healing progresses. What might have been an effective wordless book takes on an even greater richness and emotional weight with an elegantly spare narrative in which every word matters. *Winner, 2009 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–8)

Gravett, Emily. *Monkey and Me*. U.S. edition: Simon & Schuster, 2008. 24 pages (trade 978-1-4169-5457-6, \$15.99)

"Monkey and me, Monkey and me, Monkey and Me, We went to see..." The rhyming refrain on every other page is the same, but what changes is the body language of the little girl playing with her stuffed monkey. Each time, she pretends to be a particular animal, so that astute young readers

can predict whether she and Monkey will see penguins, kangaroos, bats, elephants, or monkeys. Each species is shown on the alternating wordless page spreads. The pattern and picture clues offer a predictability that will make this both a good read-aloud and a good book for children who are just beginning to read on their own. The spirited two-color line drawings capture the energy of a playful child who wears herself out by the end of the book and falls asleep. (Ages 2–6)

Gray, Nigel. *My Dog, My Cat, My Mama, and Me!* Illustrated by Bob Graham. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2008. 20 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3639-5, \$8.99)

A charming lift-the-flap book with pleasing illustrations by Bob Graham will engage readers with its slightly silly plot about multiple births. A little girl notices that her dog gets fatter and fatter, but she's not sure what the matter is. Noticing the dog emerge from a cupboard looking thinner than before, the girl discovers that the pregnant pooch has delivered two puppies in its confines. Next, when her cat grows chubby and hides in a box, she finds three kittens under the cardboard flaps. Told in humorous rhymes, the story builds as the young girl's mother gets bigger and bigger. The biggest surprise comes when her mama returns from the hospital with a buggy full of brothers—the number of whom will delight readers who have been keeping count. (Ages 2–5)

Henkes, Kevin. *Old Bear.* Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2008. 24 pages (trade 978-0-06-155205-2, \$17.99)

"By the time Old Bear fell asleep for the winter, it was snowing hard." A subdued late-autumn palette shows Old Bear curled up snugly on the opening spread of this spare and lovely picture book. But soon Old Bear is dreaming of spring, and in his sleep he is a young bear again, frolicking in colorful flowers. Old Bear's journey through the seasons and into his youth continues as he sleeps. When he finally awakens, it is to a world made new again by the real arrival of spring, and Old Bear is ready to enjoy it. Warm, inviting watercolor and ink illustrations convey a sense of quiet and of celebration in the beauty of nature in a gentle, wonderfully paced story that packs rich descriptions into a handful of carefully chosen words on each page. *Highly Commended*, 2009 Charlotte Zolotow Award (Ages 2–6)

Himmelman, John. *Katie Loves the Kittens.* Henry Holt, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8050-8682-9, \$16.95)

Katie is a small white and brown dog with a big, big heart, and when her owner brings home three tiny kittens, she is overjoyed. "Katie loved those kittens so much. As soon as she saw them, she howled, 'AROOOOO!' AROOOO!" But Katie's howling terrifies the kittens, and when her owner admonishes her, Katie curls up into a little ball of sadness. It's one misstep after another for Katie in this funny, warmhearted picture book that ultimately ends with tail-wagging bliss. Author and artist John Himmelman conveys Katie's moods—from exuberant enthusiasm to abject misery and

back again—in marvelously expressive illustrations that are an essential part of this irresistible tale. (Ages 3–7)

Horáček, Petr. *Look Out, Suzy Goose*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–0–7636–3803–0, \$14.99)

Suzy Goose needs some peace and quiet—something she can't find in a flock of noisy honking geese. “Flip, Flop, Flip, Flop . . .” Suzy plods off to the forest to be by herself. She doesn't realize that a few uninvited guests are following her trail. First a fox and then a wolf and bear set hungry eyes on the meal train parading through the trees. The bright, bold images of the animals stand out against the dark and foreboding forest landscape created with a mixed-media technique. As Suzy finds her patch of peacefulness, dark shadows loom around her, only to be frightened away by an earsplitting owl. Compared to the owl, suddenly the cacophony of Suzy's flock doesn't seem so bad. Young readers will enjoy the dramatic build-up and onomatopoeic footsteps in Petr Horáček's second Suzy Goose story. (Ages 3–5)

Horse, Harry. *Little Rabbit's New Baby*. U.S. edition: Peachtree, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–1–56145–431–0, \$15.95)

The topic of siblings and new babies is a familiar one in the realm of children's picture books. This emotional terrain is delicately and humorously traversed in a story offering great appeal to young readers (especially if their “only child” status is about to change) and a few details deliberately intended for an adult audience. At first overjoyed with the idea of being a big brother, Little Rabbit's expectations shift when he visits Mama in the rabbit hospital (an extremely productive unit, as evidenced by the wall-to-wall beds). “But there wasn't just one baby. There were three babies! Papa had to sit down. The nurse gave him a cup of tea. Three babies!” There are other surprises in store for the new big brother—his baby siblings aren't ready to play or keep company the way Little Rabbit anticipates. With time, everyone grows into their new roles in this well-paced, delightfully illustrated picture book. (Ages 3–6)

Kruusval, Catarina. *Franny's Friends*. Translated from the Swedish by Joan Sandin. U.S. edition: R&S, 2008. 24 pages (trade 978–91–29–66836–0, \$16.00)

Franny's friends are a crew of stuffed animals with distinct names: Croakie Crow, Beary Bear, Honey Bunny, Ginger Giraffe, Dashie Doggie (a dachshund), Little Heddy Hedgehog, and Itty Bitty Kitty. One morning, Franny announces that they are going on an outing. Packing a picnic basket and dressing her friends in cardigans, scarves, and bonnets, Franny and her party are off! The friends organize themselves and follow Franny in a cheerful line according to her directions—down the stairs, up the hill, through the trees, and to the picnic spread. All is well until Little Heddy and Itty Bitty Kitty go missing. Combing the grass and shouting in the woods, the remaining pals search for the missing little ones until they are reunited. Headed home, the kitten and hedgehog get new places in line where they can be protected and watched by their big friends. Translated from the Swedish,

the simple, playful, and cozy book captures the essence of a child's inventive play. Uncluttered pastel illustrations show distinct Scandinavian details, such as the snack buns and the forest flora, while portraying the assuredness of an imaginative and loving little girl and her adoring and expressive toy friends. (Ages 2–5)

Lee, Suzy. *Wave*. Chronicle, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8118-5924-0, \$15.99)

The powerful ocean is no match for a small girl and her posse of seagulls, especially when the girl has mastered an understanding of how waves work. At first she's frightened by the water coming at her when she's on the beach, but once she understands that the waves will pull back again and again, she becomes all powerful. She stands just outside their reach and commands them with her small body—angry, scary, and taunting. Each time a wave recedes, it appears to be responding to her actions. The ocean finally appears to win the game when a big wave comes far into shore, completely washing over the child. But when it deposits all sorts of shells and starfish in its wake, the little girl is the final victor. She leaves the beach happily with her mother, waving goodbye to the ocean over her shoulder. The completely wordless book cleverly uses the gutter of the double-page spreads as the shoreline. Two distinct art styles and media also heighten the dramatic contrasts: the child and gulls are realistically drawn with black charcoal, while the ocean is abstractly rendered in bright blue acrylic paint. (Ages 3–6)

Lindgren, Barbro. *Oink, Oink Benny*. Illustrated by Olof Landström. Translated from the Swedish by Elisabeth Kallick Dysegaard. U.S. edition: R&S, 2008. 24 pages (trade 978-91-29-66855-1, \$16.00)

Benny has put his potatoes and sticks aside for a while to play with his little brother, who is walking now but still has the ever-present binky in his mouth. On their way out the door, their mother warns them to stay away from the mudhole, so of course that's exactly where they head. At first they're content just to run around it in circles with a group of friends, until the inevitable happens: mean old Rafe pushes Benny's baby brother into the mudhole. When an older girl named Klara rescues him, Benny decides he would like to be rescued too, so he manages to fall into the mudhole himself. Barbro Lindgren's gently humorous tale of a mischievous pig is made even funnier by Olof Landström's wry illustrations. (Ages 3–6)

Matsuoka, Mei. *Footprints in the Snow*. U.S. edition: Henry Holt, 2008. 24 pages (trade 978-0-8050-8792-5, \$16.95)

When Wolf finds a set of footprints in the snow leading from his front door, he decides to follow them, hoping they will lead to a new friend. But, thanks to fairy tales, Wolf has a bad reputation—all of the animals he meets on his journey refuse to talk to him, assuming he only wants to eat them. When he finally finds that it was Duck who made the footprints, all he can do is think about how tasty Duck would be. He pounces—and is awakened by bathwater! It turns out his journey has only been an imaginary one through his house. We see toy versions of all the animals he encountered strewn throughout the

rooms as Wolf runs to answer a knock at the door, only to find footprints in the snow, leading away from his front door. This is a perfectly paced picture book with a pleasing narrative pattern, clear and humorous illustrations, and a completely satisfying surprise ending. (Ages 3–6)

McDonald, Megan. *Hen Hears Gossip.* Illustrated by **Joung Un Kim.** Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-06-113876-8, \$16.99)

Pecking for bugs in the barnyard one day, Hen detects a juicier morsel when she overhears Pig whispering to Cow. Better than bugs, Hen loves gossip, and she hurriedly passes on the news to Duck: “Psst....Sadie the Dog has a thorn!” And so a game of telephone ensues as Duck tells Goose who tells Turkey. The feathered friends are all agree with the gossip...until they realize that they have heard different kernels of truth. Completing the circuit by running back to Hen, Turkey calls, “Hen! Hen! You’re lazy, fat, and ate all the corn!” “WHHAAT?” cried Hen. I did *NOT* eat all the corn!” At this moment, the confusion uncoils as the rumor is traced back to its roots. The hilarity of the hullabaloo is perfectly portrayed with mixed-media collage illustrations by Joung Un Kim. Clever positioning and paper selections lend animation and expression to the barnyard friends. This satisfying story works well as a read-aloud, and school-age children will likely chuckle about Cow’s real announcement that “a baby calf was born.” *Highly Commended, 2009 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–7)

Patricelli, Leslie. *Baby Happy Baby Sad.* Candlewick Press, 2008. 24 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3245-8, \$6.99)

Patricelli, Leslie. *No No Yes Yes.* Candlewick Press, 2008. 24 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3244-1, \$6.99)

Brightly hued board books pay an understanding tribute to the expressions and emotions in a baby’s day. Colorful acrylic scenes show a diaper-clad baby with a singular strand of curled hair atop its head. The rosy-cheeked babe alternately smiles an ear-to-ear grin with a red balloon in hand (“Baby HAPPY”) and pouts with a forlorn frown as the balloon drifts skyward (“Baby SAD”). Similarly, the baby hears “No NO” when coloring on the walls (and on the pet dog) and an encouraging “Yes YES” when scribbling on paper. The fresh and funny books showcase the cadence and conversation while keeping up with a busy baby—one who likes to float toys in the toilet, dump dinner overhead, and wail at bedtime. These books ask to be read again and again—happy readers will cheer, “Yes YES!” (Ages birth–2)

Ravishankar, Anushka. *Elephants Never Forget!* Illustrated by **Christiane Pieper.** U.S. edition: Houghton Mifflin, 2008. 40 pages (trade 978-0-618-99784-8, \$16.00)

Stunning, stylized artwork expressed in just three colors—black, lavender, and cream—appears to be traditional woodcut or print images but are actually digitally created pictures. These bring a fresh yet old-fashioned feel to this unusual jungle story about family. After a terrible thunderstorm, a young

elephant finds himself separated from his family. From the riverbank, the lost and lonely pachyderm observes a herd of water buffalo resting and playing in the water, and shyly he joins in. Suddenly he finds himself following as they race away from a prowling tiger. Soon the elephant calf is seen as just another member of the water buffalo family: "The elephant cleared the buffaloes' path. He helped them take a shower bath." Growing tall and strong, the elephant now protects the herd from the dangerous tiger. Although he makes a trumpet call while the buffaloes bellow, the assimilation is comfortable and companionable—until a herd of elephants appear on the opposite shore of the river. "Tooooot! Tooooot! Tooot! The elephants called. Belloow! Belloooooow! The buffaloes bawled." Large, lively lettering and playful rhyming text perfectly capture the young elephant's conundrum. With which family will he stay? His dramatic decision might surprise some, but it lends itself well to discussion about identity and belonging. (Ages 3–7)

Salariya, David. *All About Me! A Baby's Guide to Babies.* U.S. edition: Random House, 2008. 14 pages (trade 978-0-375-84529-1, \$7.99)

The left side of each page spread in this sturdy board book lists important attributes of being a baby or young toddler, while the right side features an adorable baby modeling the trait. "I am a splashy baby—I can splash with my hands, I can splash with my feet, I can splash my bath all over the place!" reads the text opposite a black and white photo of an Asian baby covered in bubbles. "I am a very clever baby" concludes each spread. Repetitive text in bold lettering encourages an interactive reading experience about babies' favorite subject—themselves! (Ages birth–3)

Savadier, Elivia. *Will Sheila Share? A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press,* 2008. 24 pages (trade 978-1-59643-289-5, \$12.95)

"Will Sheila share?" The answer, conveyed by young toddler Sheila's tight-fisted body language, is clearly a resounding "No!" Sheila won't share when it comes to things like her bunny and her ball. But Sheila can share sometimes—cereal from a box, green beans from her plate, a hug and a kiss with Nana. And when Nana points out how Jess is sad when Sheila won't share a strawberry, Sheila rises to the occasion. There's no heavy-handed message in Elivia Savadier's forthright picture book featuring a racially diverse family. Instead, she offers a refreshing glimpse of reality in the form of a small child just beginning to learn what it means to share, and not always willing to participate in the act. When Sheila does share, however, it becomes cause for a celebration. (Ages 2–4)

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. *Dog and Bear: Two's Company.* A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-1-59643-273-4, \$12.95)

In a follow-up to last year's popular *Dog and Bear: Two Friends, Three Stories* (Roaring Brook, 2007), the dachshund and teddy bear companions are back for three more chapters detailing their friendship. In "Ice Cream," Dog gets angry at Bear, for reasons unknown to the reader, and threatens to run away from home. Bear refuses to escalate the conflict and instead makes helpful suggestions about items Dog might want to pack in his suitcase. In the end,

Dog decides to stay after Bear offers him a bowl of ice cream before he leaves. In the second story, Dog makes a surprise birthday cake for Bear but ends up eating everything except the candle before Bear shows up. Bear is happy with just a candle and the knowledge that Dog remembered his birthday. In "Sweet Dreams," Dog has trouble falling asleep and asks Bear to bring him a cup of tea, a dog biscuit, a bowl of soup, his book, and more, until Bear is so exhausted that he's the one who falls asleep. Seeger's distinctive uncluttered style uses heavy black outlines and muted primary colors painted with broad strokes to add character to these direct descendants of Lobel's *Frog and Toad*. (Ages 3–6)

Smith, Charles R. Jr. *Dance with Me*. Illustrated by Noah Z. Jones (Super Sturdy Picture Book) Candlewick Press, 2008. 20 pages (trade 978-0-7636-2246-6, \$8.99)

"Lift your legs up and down. / Twirl your hips round and round. / Wiggle, waggle to the sound. / And move to the beat." Irresistible rhythm and catchy language will have babies and toddlers bouncing to this delightful read-aloud. The story shown in the illustrations follows children gathering with cake, gifts, and balloons for a birthday celebration. A recurring chorus of "Shake, shake, shake it, baby! / Come and dance with me!" invites even the youngest listener to join in on the fun. Heavyweight pages will hold up to vigorous repeat readings. *Highly Commended, 2009 Charlotte Zolotow Award*. (Ages birth–3)

Snyder, Betsy. *Haiku Baby*. Random House, 2008. 12 pages (trade 978-0-375-84395-2, \$6.99)

Several small details make this board book for babies and toddlers stand out. Colorful tabs on the side provide easy opening for tiny hands as well as pictorial clues to the poems inside. Flipping to the green ginkgo leaf, for example, an autumn scene opens the poetic spread. The Chinese character for leaf is introduced next to the English word. As a red collage fox dashes after a falling leaf, the text reads: "yoo-hoo, peekaboo! / wind plays tag with autumn leaf— / catch me if you can!" Sweet and silly illustrations of animals in nature complement the haikus about the seasons, sun, and moon. (Ages birth–3)

Spanyol, Jessica. *Bob and His No. 1 Van*. Candlewick Press, 2008. 20 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3744-6, \$5.99)

Spanyol, Jessica. *Clemence and His Noisy Little Fire Engine*. Candlewick Press, 2008. 20 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3745-3, \$5.99)

Spanyol, Jessica. *Giorgio and His Star Crane Train.* Candlewick Press, 2008. 20 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3743-9, \$5.99)

Spanyol, Jessica. *Keith and His Super-Stunt Rally Racer.* Candlewick Press, 2008. 20 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3742-2, \$5.99)

Meet the MiniBugs! Bob, Clemence, Giorgio, and Keith are the title-featured roadsters in a new series of remarkable books sized for small hands and featuring sturdy pages. Each title begins with a detailed description of the driver and his chariot of choice: "Come and meet a friendly MiniBug named Keith. 'Hello Keith.' Keith really likes drinking milk, doing stunts, and driving fast. Today Keith is going to play games with his Super-Stunt Rally Racer. It has lots of special features." Arrows and captions draw special attention to the technical and personalized qualities of each vehicle. For example, Giorgio's star crane train has a hook, a winch, and a cable, while Clemence's fire engine has a secret drawer for a blanket. Whether it's a round of crash and splash with Giorgio and his paint cans, a concert of joyously loud honking with Bob, stunt jumping with Keith, or playing hose-down with Clemence, these MiniBugs know how to have some four-wheeled fun. There's no road rage here—just a lot of smashes and crashes as the MiniBugs exercise maximum speed and exude good cheer. Clearly modeled after children's imaginative play with toy vehicles, Jessica Spanyol's charming illustrations and hand-drawn lettering have made driving look more exciting than ever. (Ages 3–5)

Sutton, Sally. *Roadwork.* Illustrated by Brian Lovelock. Candlewick Press, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3912-9, \$15.99)

Youngsters obsessed with big machines will enjoy this delightful addition to the cadre of construction vehicle books. Sally Sutton's well-patterned rhyming text lays out the step-by-step process of building a new road—from loading the dirt to packing the ground and from rolling the tar to painting the lines. "Seal the road. Seal the road. Make it hot and squishy. Spread the sticky tar and stones. Sploshy! SPLASHY! SPLISHY!" A heavy bold font captures the serious business of the work, while phrases filled with onomatopoeia bring it to life. Brian Lovelock's clear depictions of the machines at work, and the men and women who operate them, are showcased on big spreads dotted with gritty bits of color and texture. (Ages 3–5)

Swanson, Susan Marie. *The House in the Night.* Illustrated by Beth Krommes. Houghton Mifflin, 2008. 40 pages (trade 978-0-618-86244-3, \$17.00)

This "song about the starry dark" begins with a young girl arriving home in the evening. The spare, cumulative story builds: "In the house burns a light. / In that light rests a bed." On the bed is a book, and through the pages of the story the girl embarks on a journey of the imagination, soaring with a bird through the night sky before she returns to the warmth and comfort of home. Striking black-and-white scratchboard illustrations are punctuated by judicious washes of gold that radiate warmth. These form both a backdrop for and a complement to the lyrical text, which resonates with sounds and

images to savor in a comforting yet surprising journey toward day's end.
(Ages 2–5)

Willems, Mo. *The Pigeon Wants a Puppy!* Hyperion, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–1–4231–0960–0, \$14.99)

Wishing for a pet is a familiar childhood longing, and many parents have listened to earnest yet semi-empty promises to feed, walk, and care for a variety of animal fixations. Reason is pushed aside in this book by a certain someone who *really* wants a puppy. Presenting himself with politeness, the pigeon butters up readers and then leans in strong with his persuasive powers. “By the way, do you know what I want? What I’ve wanted forever...? At least since last Tuesday...” Bounding across pastel pages with personality and familiar pomp and plumage, the pigeon assails readers with his longing for a puppy. That is, until one shows up—a slobbery, wet-nosed, tail-wagging pooch that is larger than life, or at least larger than the pigeon. Pigeon’s pet craving is short-lived... until his next obsession! The latest installment from a familiar feathered friend offers laugh-out-loud humor and sage advice for would-be pet owners. (Ages 3–6)

Wolf, Sallie. *Truck Stuck*. Illustrated by Andy Robert Davies. Charlesbridge, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–1–58089–119–6, \$14.95)

Sitting in a traffic jam is not good for tempers, but can it be good for business? Two kids find a profitable way to cool down drivers when they set up a lemonade stand on a busy road. All sorts of vehicles cruise past until a big truck gets stuck under a viaduct. The ensuing bottleneck creates a cloud of swirling exhaust and a cacophony of honking horns. “Let us through—we’re stuck too! Jobs to do. Recycling truck, excavator, limousine, exterminator. All stuck. Move that truck!” Bumper to bumper, the impatient drivers aren’t going anywhere soon, but their sour attitudes are sweetened when they head to the lemonade stand to quench their thirst and converse about the gridlock. With police on the scene and a TV crew too, tension grows as tow trucks are unable to get the big truck unstuck. Short, rhythmic sentences narrate the drama, and the digitally manipulated pen and ink drawings provide cheery, colorful visual clues to the storyline. In the end, a clever solution provided by the kids lets a lot of hot air out of the situation and gives new meaning to the phrase “when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” (Ages 2–5)

Yamamura, Anji. *Hannah Duck*. U.S. edition: Kane/Miller, 2008. 24 pages (trade 978–1–933605–74–6, \$15.95)

This handsome picture book translated from the Japanese features crisp and colorful woodcut illustrations on paper with a pleasing tactile quality. Hannah Duck and her fellow pet companions, Gigi the parakeet and KameKame the turtle, live a peaceful and content life in a comfortable home. Life is tranquil and good, except on Sundays. That’s when Hannah Duck goes for a walk to the park. Though she can’t admit it to her friends, going to the park does not please her. Every week, she reports on the sights and sounds of her excursion, until one Sunday when she can pretend no longer. “Gigi, I’m not going on any more walks. The truth is...,” Hannah Duck started, then

stopped. This was hard. "I don't like walks. They scare me." In this quiet and honest moment, the significance of identifying one's personal limitations is palpable. After a reflective pause, Gigi says what any good friend would propose, "What if I come with you?" And so the two journey to the park, where Hannah Duck discovers the beauty that lies beyond the boundaries of her comfort zone. A serene and simple story that explores fear and trust. (Ages 3–6)

Picture Books for School-Age Children

Ahlberg, Allan. *The Pencil*. Illustrated by Bruce Ingman. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2008. 48 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3894-8, \$16.99)

A pencil begins to draw on an empty canvas. "The pencil drew a boy. 'What's my name?' said the boy. 'Er...Banjo,' said the pencil. 'Good,' said Banjo. 'Draw me a dog.'" Everything the pencil draws demands to be named, and with an identity come wants and needs. Soon the blank world is illustrated with the boy, his dog, a cat, and an entire community. Then a paintbrush is commissioned and *presto!* Color fills the black-and-white voids. While there is potential for the story line to follow the path of a boy and a purple crayon, Allan Ahlberg's amusing adventure turns a corner when an eraser is introduced to the scene. The excitable eraser begins to rub things out and soon rubs everyone the wrong way. Not until the pencil is backed into a corner by the encroaching eraser is a brilliant solution conceived. Bruce Ingman's simple and well-imagined acrylic illustrations bring Ahlberg's clever story to life—complete with lifelike smudges and bits of used-up eraser. (Ages 5–9)

Alalou, Elizabeth, and Ali Alalou. *The Butter Man*. Illustrated by Julie Klear Essakalli. Charlesbridge, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-1-58089-127-1, \$14.95)

Too hungry to wait patiently for the couscous dinner to cook, Nora moans to her Baba that she's "staaarving!" Taking Nora on his knee, Baba shares the story of the butter man from his own childhood in Morocco. After a season of drought and poor harvest, food became scarce in his home, and Ali's father left to look for work across the mountains. Soon bread was the only thing left to eat, and the piece his mother gave him each day was smaller and harder than the piece on the day before. In an effort to distract Ali from his hunger, his mother suggested that he go outside and wait for the butter man. If the butter man passed by, Ali could ask for a bit of butter to spread on his bread. The butter man didn't pass by on that day, or any of the following days, but Ali was occupied by watching the villagers on the road, "forgetting for a while the gnawing feeling in [his] stomach." Finally, one of the travelers on the road was his own father, returning from across the mountains and carrying vegetables and a piece of meat. Folk-art paintings show Nora and her Baba in their contemporary kitchen at the story's opening and conclusion, and depict

Ali and his parents in their Moroccan village. An author's note and glossary provide additional information about life in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco. *Highly Commended, 2009 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5–9)

Amato, Mary. *The Chicken of the Family*. Illustrated by Delphine Durand. Putnam, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–0–399–24196–3, \$16.99)

Henrietta doesn't want to believe it when her two older sisters tell her she's really a chicken. Still, she is worried. "I am not a chicken. I am not a chicken," she chants to fall asleep that night. The next morning, however, there's an egg in her bed and two stray feathers on the floor. Feeling like she doesn't fit in with her family anymore, Henrietta heads off to nearby Barney's farm. Soon she's hopping, flapping, and strutting happily with all the hens. When her sisters try to avoid punishment by admitting it was all a joke and urging Henrietta to come home, the joke is on them. Henrietta likes being a chicken and would just as soon stay on the farm—the hens are much nicer than her sisters. "Always got room for another free-ranger," says farmer Barney. Mary Amato's fresh and funny take on sibling dynamics is buoyed by lively details and perfectly paired with Delphine Durand's comical illustrations. *Highly Commended, 2009 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4–7)

Aston, Dianna Hutts. *The Moon Over Star*. Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. Dial, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–0–8037–3107–3, \$17.99)

In the summer of 1969, young Mae feels growing anticipation as the hour for the moon landing draws near. "A spaceship would land on the moon today, / And I dreamed that maybe one day, / I could go to the moon, too." Mae and her cousins pretend to be the astronauts, and she is full of facts to share—about the moon being 240,000 miles away, and about President Kennedy's declaration in 1961 that America would land on the moon. As the family gathers around the television to watch Neil Armstrong take the first steps on the moon, even Mae's grandpa, who thinks money spent on the space program could do so much more good here on earth, seems impressed. "I reckon that's something to remember," he says. As for Mae, it's something to inspire dreams. Dianna Hutts Aston's poetic narrative is set against Jerry Pinkney's stirring graphite, ink and watercolor illustrations in which scenes of African American Mae and her family are interspersed with the vision of her imagination and the astronauts' experiences in space. (Ages 7–10)

Campbell, Nicola I. *Shin-chi's Canoe*. Illustrated by Kim LaFave. Groundwood Books / House of Anansi Press, 2008. 40 pages (trade 978–0–88899–857–6, \$18.95)

This sequel to *Shi-shi-etko* (Groundwood, 2005) details the Indian boarding school experience of Native children in the United States and in Canada, where this story is set. Forced by law to leave home to attend government-run schools where their language and culture are suppressed, siblings Shi-shi-etko (called Mary at school) and Shin-chi (David) are not allowed to speak to one another so strict are the rules and so regimented the hours of their day. When he can bear missing his family no longer, Shin-chi sends the tiny carved canoe his father gave him down the river toward home. He knows

he and Shi-shi-etko will follow when the school year finally ends. Days turn into weeks, and then months. There are bright spots, like Shin-chi's new friend, John. But the brightest of all is when June arrives he and Shi-shi-etko are homeward bound at last. A graceful narrative from Nicola Campbell (Interior Salish and Métis) is set against Kim LaFave's sepia-toned artwork that deftly contrasts the warmth of the outdoor world, even in winter, with the sterile boarding school environment. (Ages 7–10)

Cutbill, Andy. *The Cow That Laid an Egg*. Illustrated by Russell Ayto. U.S. edition: HarperCollins, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-06-137295-7, \$16.99)

Marjorie is down in the dumps because she's not talented like the other cows—she can't do handstands or ride a bicycle. So the chickens confabulate to hatch a plan to help. "I'VE LAID AN EGG!" shrieks Marjorie upon discovering the black-spotted egg that the chickens slipped into her pen. Soon the barnyard's abuzz with talk of Marjorie's talent. The other cows aren't happy with being shown up, and are suspicious of the egg's origins. Just when this outrageous tale couldn't get wilder, the egg hatches, and without further ado the baby chick announces "MOOOOOOOO!" to its bovine mother. Andy Cutbill's tale is an unbelievable but hilarious read-aloud, illustrated with Russell Ayto's equally mirthful cartoonish images and collage on brightly colored panels. *Highly Commended, 2009 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4–9)

Elliott, Zetta. *Bird*. Illustrated by Shadra Strickland. Lee & Low, 2008. 40 pages (trade 978-1-60060-241-2, \$19.95)

Gray skies and bare branches are the somber winter backdrop for a serious picture book about a young boy trying to make sense of tragedy and sadness. Mehkai's nickname is Bird, and birds are one of the many things he likes to draw. He also likes spending time with Uncle Son, an old friend of his grandfather's. "I like talking to Uncle Son 'cause he treats me like I'm grown, not like I'm some little kid who can't understand anything." Bird talks to Uncle Son about what happened to his older brother, Marcus, who taught Bird to draw and always encouraged him. But Marcus began taking drugs, and as the sickness of addiction overwhelmed him he was less and less the brother Bird knew. Bird wanted to know how to fix Marcus, but his Granddad explained some things can't be fixed. Marcus's death was followed by the death of Bird's heartbroken grandfather. Now Bird finds solace in drawing pictures, listening to Uncle Son, who tells him a story about their African American ancestors flying to freedom, and thinking about his brother and grandfather "high above the clouds, where everything is calm and still." (Ages 8–12)

Esbaum, Jill. *To the Big Top*. Illustrated by David Gordon. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-374-39934-4, \$16.95)

The circus coming to town was once the pinnacle of excitement for children in many small towns. Jill Esbaum captures the sense of anticipation and awe in a picture book set in the early 1900s. Benny and his friend Sam race the

circus train as it rolls into the rail yard and are soon eyewitnesses to the hustle and bustle of activity. There's even an odd job or two for them, hauling water and hay for the elephants that help raise the big top and setting up the bleacher seats under that canvas dome. They earn a nickel each and a pair of tickets to the show that will follow after the circus parade marches through town. Benny spends his nickel on a candy apple; Sam spends his on popcorn that he doesn't want to share. The brief drama of a lost ticket is resolved with an act of friendship in a story that chronicles "the best day ever" for two boys. David Gordon's illustrations contrast the dazzling colors of the circus wagons and costumed performers with more subdued hues depicting the people and buildings in the boys' hometown and the hard work of setting up the circus. (Ages 4–7)

Fraee, Marla. *A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever*. Harcourt, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-15-206020-6, \$16.00)

James and Eamon spend a week at Eamon's grandparents' house while they attend a nearby Nature Camp during the day. The two best friends have a great time together, not necessarily at Nature Camp but during their off hours. Actually, neither boy seems to have much interest in nature. All week they turn down Grandpa Bill's suggestion to go to a special penguin exhibit at a local museum, and they have no desire whatsoever to play outside. Instead, they watch TV, play video games, and stuff themselves with Grandma Pam's banana waffles. Much of the humor comes from an incongruity between text and illustrations. For example, where the text says, "At night, James and Eamon slept on a blow-up mattress with an automatic pump," the art shows the boys jumping up and down on the mattress. The text, in fact, describes events as an adult would want them, while the pictures show what the boys are really doing. Most amusing and poignant is the poor grandfather, wanting so much to share his passion for penguins with two boys who couldn't care less. But it turns out something has sunk in. On the last night, the boys venture outside, and against a moonlit ocean backdrop, using rocks, shells, and sticks, they build an Antarctic scene, complete with penguins. Upon leaving the next day, "they walked like a couple of penguins all the way out the front door." It's a perfect ending to the boys' best week ever. (Ages 4–7)

Gerdner, Linda, and Sarah Langford. *Grandfather's Story Cloth = Yawg Daim Paj Ntaub Dab Neeg*. Illustrated by Stuart Loughridge. Shen's Books, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-1-885008-34-3, \$16.95)

Chersheng is hurt that his beloved grandfather no longer remembers who he is all the time and speaks of wanting to go "home," back to Laos. When Chersheng's mother gets out the story cloth Grandfather made while at a refugee camp in Thailand, the older man sits down with Chersheng and relates the story told in the cloth: of his family's life in Laos, of the coming of soldiers and war, and their flight to Thailand. There the story shown in the cloth ends, inspiring Chersheng, who loves art, to pick up its thread. Using paper, scissors and glue, he creates a story collage of "your American memories" for his grandfather—memories that include Chersheng and his brother and all that their family is today. A bilingual (English/Hmong)

picture book sensitively weaves a child's feelings about a grandparent's Alzheimer's Disease with his family's history of coming to the United States. The lengthy picture book narrative is illustrated with tender scenes of family life and images of the story cloth. (Ages 6–10)

Hole, Stian. *Garmann's Summer*. Translated from the Norwegian by Don Bartlett. U.S. edition: Eerdmans, 2008. 40 pages (trade 978-0-8028-5339-4, \$17.50)

This unusual picture book from Norway tells of Garmann's sixth summer—a summer during which he anxiously awaits the start of his first year at school and the loss of his first tooth. Surreal collage illustrations show dreamlike scenes with fanciful birds and flowers, and people with exaggerated head sizes and facial expressions, capturing Garmann's childlike perceptions of things familiar and things imagined. Visiting Garmann's family are three elderly aunts, Augusta, Borghild, and Ruth. Weathered and wrinkled women with pearl necklaces and pearly dentures, these ancient ladies are from a different land and time, Garmann believes. Still, he asks them each in turn, "What are you scared of?" Piecing their answers together with the responses from his parents, Garmann ponders fear on both philosophical and personal levels. Meanwhile, summer comes to a close, signaling the departure of the aunts and the arrival of school. "Thirteen hours to go before school starts. And Garmann is scared." Garmann still hasn't lost a tooth, nor does he feel ready for school, but based on his summer full of observations Garmann concludes that perhaps we are never ready to fully face our fears. This thoughtful and original book offers an imaginative look at the inner mind of a young child, as well as providing a tender and amusing summertime story for a range of readers. (Ages 6–10)

Jackson, Alison. *Thea's Tree*. Illustrated by Janet Pedersen. Dutton, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-525-47443-2, \$16.99)

For her "Future Scientist Project," Thea Teawinkle of Topeka, Kansas, plants a seed in her yard. When the ground turns purple and the dirt starts bubbling, her teacher suggests she write some local specialists for more information. With each letter, Thea describes the most recent change her plant has undergone. Could it be an African rubber plant, she excitedly queries? Not in Topeka, says botanist Bertram Beaman. Could it be a giant Venus flytrap, she anxiously inquires? Not in Topkea, says Anna Applebaum of the Arboretum. After two weeks, the plant is sky high. Thea finds a golden egg beneath it, and strange noises are rumbling above. Could there be a giant ostrich up there, she hopefully asks? Not in Topkea, says zoologist Zoe Zimmerman. Alison Jackson's tongue-in-cheek story is told almost entirely through the amusing correspondence between Thea and a host of "experts," none of whom can see the big picture or will consider the impossible. Many readers and listeners, however, will understand perfectly well what is going on—if the golden egg doesn't give it away, the singing harp and the giant footprints surely do in this highly original homage to *Jack and the Beanstalk*. (Ages 5–8)

Jenkins, Emily. *Skunkdog*. Illustrated by Pierre Pratt. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-374-37009-1, \$16.95)

"Dumpling was a dog of enormous enthusiasm, excellent obedience skills—and very little nose." In spite of the description of our main character in the opening line, the illustration shows her as having quite a remarkable proboscis. In fact, she more closely resembles an anteater than a dog. What we soon learn, though, is that Dumpling has a very weak sense of smell—a disadvantage for any dog. Since she can't smell anything, she has no interest in sniffing anything, including other dogs, and consequently she has no dog friends. For Dumpling's owners, it's a particular disadvantage because she can't seem to stay away from skunks. Several unfortunate encounters with a local skunk earn her eponymous nickname, Skunkdog. But Dumpling doesn't care, and she actually becomes quite friendly with a skunk who takes up residence in her doghouse. Emily Jenkins's wry text is well complemented by Pierre Pratt's humorous cartoon-style illustrations. (Ages 4–7)

Keller, Laurie. *The Scrambled States of America Talent Show*. Henry Holt, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8050-7997-5, \$16.95)

They're back! The wacky-minded and fun-loving Scrambled States of America return with a variety show like no other. From performances of boy band "The New States on the Block" (starring New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, and New York) to Pennsylvania's plunking on the Liberty Bell, and from upper and lower Michigan's ventriloquist skit to Minnesota the Magnificent's magic show, the states strut their stuff. Backstage, a crew of states takes care of props and costumes under the management of show director Indiana. Everyone's part of the production, but the flurry of excitement is having ill effects on Georgia—according to Dr. Globe, who x-rayed her cities and counties, she's got stage fright. Laurie Keller's accurate, affable, and original depictions of the states offer readers both a hilarious story and a geography lesson. Witty wisecracks, ingenious asides, and engaging personalities make this a delightful read for those unfamiliar with the Scrambled States and an enjoyable reunion for those who have been waiting for an encore. (Ages 7–10)

Kimmel, Eric A. *Stormy's Hat: Just Right for a Railroad Man*. Illustrated by Andrea U'Ren. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-374-37262-0, \$16.95)

Railroad engineer Stormy Kromer drives the Red Stack line from St. Paul to Chicago. He loves his work, but he doesn't love his hat. In fact, he doesn't love any of them. His derby hat blows off in the wind when the train goes into a tunnel. The paper pressman's hat he tries bursts into flame from a rogue cinder. Every night he comes home and complains, and every night his wife, Ida, tries to help, but Stormy always interrupts: "Aw, don't you worry your pretty little head . . . I'll figure out something." The night Stormy comes home with a pounding headache from the heavy fireman's hat he's borrowed, Ida has had enough. "My head isn't little. It's as big as yours. Either listen to what I have to say, or stop complaining." And what Ida, who turns out to

be a seamstress, has to say is that she can make him the perfect hat—she just needs him to describe what it should look like. Eric A. Kimmel's droll picture book tells the (mostly) true story of how the traditional railroad workers' hat came to be. Andrea U'ren's terrific illustrations perfectly complement the humor while making it clear all along that Ida may be able to give Stormy exactly what he's looking for. (Ages 5–8)

Monroe, Chris. *Monkey with a Tool Belt*. Carolrhoda, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8225-7631-0, \$16.95)

Chico Bon Bon is never without his trusty—and heavily loaded—tool belt. “He builds a dock for the ducks and a clock for the clucks . . . He'll need all his drill bits to fix up this ramp, plus a chisel, a frizzle, and a giant C-clamp.” When Chico is kidnapped by an organ grinder in search of a new monkey (“His old monkey, Bobo, had run away earlier that week with the help of several circus tigers”), he draws on creative thinking and many specialized tools (including measuring tape, pencil, mini file, hole razzler, and bendy extender) to implement a twelve-step escape plan. Chico Bon Bon is admirably enterprising, taking every challenge seriously. But his story is endearingly absurd, and the many fascinating items in his tool belt, from the reliably realistic to the delightfully contrived, are a wonder to behold. (Ages 4–7)

Muth, Jon J. *Zen Ties*. Scholastic Press, 2008. 40 pages (trade 978-0-439-63425-0, \$17.99)

This follow-up to *Zen Shorts* (Scholastic Press, 2005) once again features the giant panda (literally) Stillwater and human siblings Karl, Addie, and Michael. The story introduces Stillwater's nephew, Koo, who speaks in statements of seventeen syllables (“Hi, Kool!”), but the plot centers on the children's relationship—or lack of relationship—with their older neighbor Miss Whitaker. She yells at them; they don't like her. But Stillwater, who likes them all, intervenes, bringing the four together. He encourages them to move beyond perceptions to knowledge, and soon the retired teacher and the three children are sharing the gifts of friendship, wisdom, and small acts of kindness. Jon J Muth's lovely watercolor illustrations convey both the weight and whimsy of a story that is gently pointed and filled with charm. (Ages 5–8)

Perkins, Lynne Rae. *The Cardboard Piano*. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-06-154265-7, \$17.99)

Debbie is learning to play the piano. Her best friend Tina wishes she could learn, but her family doesn't have a piano or keyboard. After Debbie's teacher tells her about a famous composer who practiced on a pretend piano, Debbie makes a cardboard piano for Tina. Debbie is meticulous, and when she's finally done the keyboard looks just like the one on a real piano. She can't wait for Tina to use it. But the keyboard holds no magic for Tina, and a few days later she gives it back. Lynne Rae Perkins's thoughtful picture book avoids high drama and instead offers marvelous insight as Debbie works through her hurt feelings and doubt by assessing what she knows about Tina,

their friendship, and the things they like to do. Trying out the cardboard piano herself, she realizes that the best part—the music— isn't there. Perkins story, which feature a biracial friendship, is told through the narrative as well as dialogue bubbles that are part of the marvelous, wonderfully detailed illustrations. (Ages 5–8)

Preus, Margi. *The Peace Bell*. Illustrated by Hideko Takahashi. Henry Holt, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8050-7800-8, \$16.95)

As an American visitor and Yuko, her Japanese friend, follow a lane through the rice fields, Yuko's grandmother tells them of her childhood. As a young girl she loved cherry blossoms and the rising moon, but she especially "loved the deep *KA-DOON* of an ancient temple bell" that always rang at midnight on New Year's Eve. After the war, when there were shortages of many things, she particularly missed the bell, which the town had donated to the war effort for its metal. Years later, she still misses the bell and is amazed to hear that it was never melted down and ended up in America. Now, Americans in Minnesota are sending the bell back to its home. Renamed the Peace Bell, it's given a new tower in a hilltop park, where it rings in the "hope for peace in the hearts of people all over the world." A final note tells the true account of a temple bell from the Japanese town of Ohara, which sat in the Duluth, Minnesota, City Hall for eight years following World War II. It was returned to Ohara in 1954 as a gesture of goodwill and renamed the American-Japanese Friendship Peace Bell. Japanese acrylic paints were used in Hideko Takahashi's appealing illustrations. (Ages 6–10)

Ray, Jane. *The Apple-Pip Princess*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3747-7, \$16.99)

Jane Ray's original and handsomely decorated fairy tale is about three brown-skinned princesses competing to be their father's eventual successor. The king gives them seven days to "do something to make your mark—something to make me proud." Clever Suzanna sets out to build the highest tower in the world to remind everyone of her importance. She commands the citizens to bring her all the wood they possess. Vain Miranda, not to be bested, strives to build an even taller tower, and demands that the kingdom's subjects bring all the metal they own for the construction. Quiet Serenity plants an apple seed in land that has been barren since her mother's death. Each day she plants another. Villagers join her with seeds of their own, and with the help of the treasures from the simple wooden box she chose from among her late mother's belongings, the land is soon in bloom, as is her father's heart. Ray's fanciful, heartening story of renewal features artfully whimsical illustrations that incorporate eye-catching details and lovely gold accents. (Ages 4–8)

Rumford, James. *Silent Music: A Story of Baghdad*. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-1-59643-276-5, \$17.95)

Ali lives in Baghdad and is passionate about learning to write Arabic. For him the calligraphy is not just about communication but also about the beauty of the characters and what they represent. He likes other things, too, especially soccer, but the letters are what he loves most of all. "Writing a long sentence

is like watching a soccer player in slow motion as he kicks the ball across the field, as I leave a trail of dots and loops behind me.” Ali’s hero is Yakut, a famous calligrapher who lived in Baghdad eight hundred years ago. Then, as now, there was a war in Baghdad. And like Yakut, Ali writes to “fill my mind with peace.” Beautifully designed and written, James Rumford’s picture book is grounded in both small details—of Ali’s home and family—and big ideas. Above all is Ali’s knowledge that there are easy words and hard ones, and “peace”—*salam*—is one of the hard ones to get right. Arabic characters grace the pages of the book, incorporated into illustrations inspired by pictures taken in Iraq by photographers and American service personnel. *Honor Book, 2009 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 7–10)

Sheth, Kashmira. *Monsoon Afternoon*. Illustrated by Yoshiko Jaeggi. Peachtree, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–1–56145–455–6, \$16.95)

When a young boy sees “dark clouds roll like ocean waves across the sky” he knows that the monsoon rains are about to begin. His grandmother, mother, father, and brother are all too busy to come out to play, but Dadaji makes the time. The boy and his grandfather sail paper boats, walk in the rain, and swing on the banyan tree. Dadaji tells his grandson how monsoon arrived when he was a boy, just as it does now. “‘Will monsoon come when I become a dadaji?’ ‘Yes, it will,’ Dadaji replied.” Descriptive language captures the close relationship between the two as they experience the welcome change in weather together. (Ages 4–8)

Shulevitz, Uri. *How I Learned Geography*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–0–374–33499–4, \$16.95)

In an autobiographical story, Shulevitz recounts an event from his childhood, when his refugee family had fled to Turkestan. At a time when his family was poor and hungry, his father spent what little money they had on a map of the world instead of on food. After getting over his initial anger and disappointment, young Uri developed a fascination with the map, at first for the bright colors and then for the details that would spur his artistic imagination as he dreamed of faraway places he could visit vicariously. The artist’s whimsical pen-and-ink and watercolor illustrations show the places in the child’s imagination coming to life as he flies over continents, picturing what they would be like. An endnote includes a photograph of the author at age seven and two drawings he made while he was a child: a map of Africa, drawn at age ten, and a marketplace in Turkestan, drawn when he was thirteen. All in all, it’s a wonderful tribute to Shulevitz’s father, who obviously understood that sometimes it’s more important to nourish the soul than the body. *Honor Book, 2009 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5–8)

Smith, Lane. *Madam President*. Hyperion, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–1–4231–0846–7, \$16.99)

Witty text and clever illustrations pair perfectly in Lane Smith’s funny portrayal of a young girl with presidential aspirations. As she imagines her day and duties, readers must interpret adult concepts, such as giving executive orders, in a child’s context (“More waffles please!”). From the power of the

veto (no to tuna casserole in the lunchroom) to the importance of selecting cabinet members (Mr. Potato Head as Secretary of Agriculture), this pint-sized Executive in Chief has a lot of responsibilities—including a memo to clean up the “Disaster Area” known as her bedroom—in a playful look at presidency for school-aged children. (Ages 7–11)

Zepeda, Gwendolyn. *Growing Up with Tamales = Los tamales de Ana.* Illustrated by April Ward. Spanish translation by Gabriela Baeza Ventura. Piñata Books / Arte Público Press, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978–1–55885–493–2, \$15.95)

Six-year-old Ana helps out when her family makes tamales at Christmas by mixing the dough. But her older sister, Lidia, is eight, “so *she* gets to spread the dough on the corn husk leaves. I wish I was eight, so that my hands would be big enough to spread the dough just right.” Ana begins imagining what she will be able to do when she is older. Thinking about being eight, then ten, twelve, fourteen, sixteen, and eighteen, she considers the many new things to look forward to, from riding her bike to school at ten, to not being scared of anything at twelve, to driving at sixteen. And at each age she thinks about “when Christmas comes around” and what new role she will have in making tamales. Still, Lidia will always be two years older and, it seems, always have the more coveted role in tamale making. So when Ana images herself eighteen, she decides she will open her own tamale factory. “Lidia will be twenty. If she wants to, she can come and work for me.” Gwendolyn Zepeda’s original, highly appealing bilingual (English/Spanish) story is filled with familiar longing and child-centered details, and features warm, colorful paintings by April Ward. *Highly Commended, 2009 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 6–9)

Books for Beginning Readers

Arnold, Tedd. *Fly High, Fly Guy!* Cartwheel / Scholastic, 2008. 30 pages (trade 978–0–545–00722–1, \$5.99)

When Buzz’s parents decide to take a road trip, Buzz wants to know if Fly Guy, his pet fly, can come along. “He’s too little and might get lost,” his parents advise, so Fly Guy stays home...only to fly out of the trunk at the first destination. No matter where they are—the beach, the amusement park, the museum—his parents are sure that Fly Guy will get lost. But with his superior homing skills (and hiding skills), Fly Guy is never far from Buzz. The tables are turned when Buzz’s parents get lost on the drive home and Fly Guy comes to the rescue. A succinct and smartly written beginning reader about a boy and his fly is pleasantly illustrated with cartoonish art. (Ages 4–7)

Chaconas, Dori. *Cork & Fuzz: The Collectors.* Illustrated by Lisa McCue. (A Viking Easy-to-Read Book) Viking, 2008. 32 pages (trade 978-0-670-06286-7, \$13.99)

The short muskrat named Cork and the tall possum named Fuzz are back with more fun and friendship in this energetic story by Dori Chaconas, with animated illustrations by Lisa McCue. Cork and Fuzz are busy looking for shiny stones for their collections. Fuzz is also busy collecting other objects—pinecones, food, long sticks, and feathers. Cork thinks Fuzz collects too many things, but at the same time he envies Fuzz's feather. The feather, though, causes a flurry of chaos for the two friends when a batch of what appeared to be shiny stones hatches into a nest of baby ducks, who think feather-holding Fuzz is their mother. Suddenly the two collectors need to collect their wits and get out of there! Playful dialogue and an amusing adventure make this an excellent and appealing choice for beginning readers. (Ages 5–7)

George, Jean Craighead. *Goose and Duck.* Illustrated by Priscilla Lamont. (An I Can Read Book) Laura Geringer Books / HarperCollins, 2008. 48 pages (trade 978-0-06-117076-8, \$16.99)

After the egg he finds hatches, a little boy finds himself face to face with a baby goose. "He stared at me. I stared at him. And I became his mother. That's how it is with birds." The young goose imprints himself on the boy, copying his every move. Soon the boy and goose are joined by a newly hatched duckling. The copying game becomes a chain as the goose mimics the boy and the duck mimics the goose. The slightly silly antics are mellowed by Priscilla Lamont's tender watercolor artwork. After a midnight excursion lands the two birds at the police station, the little boy realizes that his feathered friends are getting ready to leave the nest. "That's how it is with birds," the little boy reminds himself. The gentle messages about caretaking and the rhythms of nature are expressed with humor and warmth in this book for young readers. (Ages 4–6)

O'Neill, Catharine. *Annie and Simon.* Candlewick Press, 2008. 57 pages (trade 978-0-7636-2688-4, \$15.99)

Annie and her big brother Simon are siblings who get along really well—most of the time. Annie's a big talker and a big dreamer. Her excitement for inventing hairstyles and special drinks is supported by the yapping of her happy dog, Hazel. Simon is a patient young man who strums his guitar as well as he steers a canoe. His adoration of Annie is evident in the special outings he plans and in the unconditional love he offers when Annie makes a mess of things. Readers making the bridge to chapter books will appreciate the four stories included in *Annie and Simon* for their quiet humor, lovely watercolor illustrations, and engaging plots. (Ages 5–7)

Silverman, Erica. *Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa: Rain or Shine.* Illustrated by Betsy Lewin. Harcourt, 2008. 40 pages (trade 978-0-15-205384-0, \$15.00)

The fourth book about Cowgirl Kate and her trusty steed Cocoa furthers the adventures of the two friends, despite the gray clouds on the horizon. Kate's chipper attitude is well-matched with Cocoa's sensitivities. When thunder

rolls in, she wants to finish the fieldwork while he wants to head for the protection of the barn. When Cocoa is too vain to don his equine rain sheet, Kate helps convince him of warmth over fashion. With their companionable ways, the western twosome show that their friendship endures whatever the weather. (Ages 5–7)

Speck, Katie. *Maybelle Goes to Tea*. Illustrated by Paul Rátz de Tagyos. Henry Holt, 2008. 60 pages (trade 978–0–8050–8093–3, \$16.95)

Tired of crumbs and castoffs, Maybelle the cockroach is determined to taste the finer things in life, like the Chocolate Surprise cookies that snooty Mrs. Peabody plans to serve at her Ladies Tea. Despite the good advice of her friend Henry the flea about not being seen, Maybelle can't resist venturing forth from under the refrigerator after a fly named Maurice buzzes into the Peabody kitchen and helps himself to the treats with no regard for the rules. When Ramona the cat spots them both, Maybelle takes cover in a cucumber sandwich and quickly finds herself on a platter in the midst of the refined ladies who have gathered for the party. This follow-up to *Maybelle in the Soup* (Henry Holt, 2007) continues to charm. Not only do the bugs get the better of humans and animals both, but the pesky fly Maurice redeems himself in Maybelle's opinion with a heroic streak that saves the day in this chapter book for skilled beginning readers. (Ages 5–8)

Willems, Mo. *I Love My New Toy! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)* Hyperion, 2008. 57 pages (trade 978–1–4231–0961–7, \$8.99)

Willems, Mo. *I Will Surprise My Friend! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)* Hyperion, 2008. 57 pages (trade 978–1–4231–0962–4, \$8.99)

Two of the newest books about Elephant and Piggie comically convey some common problems in friendships. In *I Love My New Toy!* Piggie is overjoyed with her new toy, even though she doesn't know exactly how it works. When Gerald accidentally breaks it, it appears that their friendship might be broken as well. After a friendly squirrel fixes the toy, Gerald and Piggie realize they need some time to play with each other rather than with a toy. Likewise, the pals remember what games they're good at after an attempt to hide and surprise each other fails in *I Will Surprise My Friend!* These successful beginning readers by Mo Willems rely on expressive thought balloons and repeated phrases from the enthusiastic duo, Elephant and Piggie. (Ages 4–7)

Books for Newly Independent Readers

Cowley, Joy. *Chicken Feathers*. Illustrated by David Elliot. Philomel, 2008. 149 pages (trade 978-0-399-24791-0, \$15.99)

What's not to love about an old talking chicken named Semolina with a penchant for home brew? Josh adores his pet, but the truth is that Semolina can be troublesome. For one thing, she'll only talk to Josh, so no one believes him when he insists that she speaks. For another, Semolina's taste for home brew got him in trouble with his dad, who thinks Josh was sneaking a sip. Finally, Josh's stern grandma, who has come to stay while his mom is in the hospital with pregnancy complications, refuses to see Semolina as anything but a dirty chicken, and when Semolina understandably takes offense she is less than well-behaved. But Semolina is Josh's best friend. Furthermore, she and she alone can tell Josh where and how a fox is sneaking into the chicken coop. Joy Cowley has penned more than just a tale of a feisty fowl. It's also a story about family and friendship. At its center is a boy navigating changes and anxieties both huge (the pending arrival of a baby sister if all goes well, the challenging personality of his grandmother) and subtle (his changing feelings for his neighbor Annalee, once just a playmate, now also a "girl"). Playful language, memorable characters—both human and poultry—and occasional black-and-white illustrations that lend a nostalgic feel round out this winning, warm, and funny story. (Ages 7–10)

Kenmore, Tim. *Alice's Birthday Pig*. Illustrated by Mike Spoor. U.S. edition: Eerdmans, 2008. 54 pages (trade 978-0-8028-5335-6, \$12.00)

Alice is the middle child in the Singer family. Her older brother, Oliver, is smart and annoyingly smug about it, at least as far as Alice is concerned. Her younger sister, Rosie, is a force to be reckoned with—she's terrorized the children at almost every preschool in town. Alice herself has only one small quirk: she's never been able to say the word "animal." It always comes out "aminal." A school field trip to a farm should be her undoing, but Alice knows how to talk her way around the problem. What *is* her undoing is the little pig with the lame leg she meets that day. She falls head over heels, and when her birthday comes around, it's the only thing she wants. Even when her parents make it perfectly clear they don't think a pig is a good idea, she doesn't give up hope. Tim Kenmore's chapter book features an unusually entertaining family and a surprisingly satisfying twist that draws the story to a close. (Ages 6–9)

McKissack, Patricia C. *The Home-Run King*. Illustrated by Gordon C. James. (Scraps of Time, 1937) Viking, 2008. 92 pages (trade 978-0-670-01085-1, \$14.99)

Jimbo and Tank can hardly believe that famous home-run hitter Josh Gibson is staying at their house. His team, the Homestead Grays, is playing the Tennessee All-Stars, and Negro League teams rely on families to house the

players, especially in towns like Nashville where white hotels won't let Black people stay. Gibson's visit inspires the brothers to talk the ballpark owner, Mr. Mundy, into sponsoring and coaching a team for neighborhood boys. Mr. Mundy agrees, and soon the Red Roosters are playing their first game. But by the time it's over, Tank has quit the team. He just couldn't resist showing off, trying to hit like Josh Gibson. Now even Jimbo is mad at him for messing up their chance to win. The latest entry in Patricia McKissack's "Scraps of Time" series that weaves historical African American people and events into a fictional family history is full of appeal, from its sports-infused narrative to the very real fun and frustration shared by siblings Tank and Jimbo. (Ages 7–10)

Fiction for Children

Abrahams, Peter. *Into the Dark: An Echo Falls Mystery.* Laura Geringer Books / HarperCollins, 2008. 300 pages (trade 978-0-06-073708-5, \$16.99)

When it comes to mystery, River Heights has got nothing on Echo Falls. Ingrid Levin-Hill is every bit as clever as Nancy Drew, and although she would tell you that it is Sherlock Holmes who is her literary mentor and idol, she's Nancy Drew through and through, right down to chasing criminals with mud-splattered license plates. In the third installment of this mystery series, Ingrid's beloved Grampy is accused of murdering a conservation agent who was found dead on his land. Ingrid is certain her grandfather is innocent, but she's also certain his curmudgeonly personality and hatred of the Department of Conservation will make him appear guilty if he ever goes to trial. When all the evidence begins to point toward Grampy, it's up to Ingrid to find the real killer. In doing so, she uncovers some major family secrets. Those secrets—and witty dialog—raise this story far above the average Nancy Drew mystery. (Ages 9–13)

Appelt, Kathi. *The Underneath.* Illustrated by David Small. Atheneum, 2008. 311 pages (trade 978-1-4169-5058-5, \$16.99)

On its surface, this is a novel about an alligator, a snake, a mangy hound dog, and a couple of cats. But look underneath and there's something much deeper in Kathi Appelt's first novel, set in Louisiana bayou country. Appelt's lyrical story weaves two narrative strands. One, set in the present day, involves Ranger, an old hound who has been chained for ages to the side of a ramshackle house by his owner, Gar Face. Ranger's baying has attracted a lonely calico cat that joins him in *The Underneath*, the small space beneath the front porch that affords them protection from Gar Face's cruelty. The cat, her two kittens, and Ranger become a family. The second strand tells how an ancient snake came to be trapped in a jar beneath a centuries-old tree in the bayou. Going back a thousand years, it reveals Grandmother Moccasin's sense of betrayal and desire for revenge after her daughter, Night Song, grew up and left her, choosing to transform into a human woman when she fell in love with a man. In short chapters that move back in

forth in time and between various points of view, the two narratives are tied together by a strong sense of place and by the creatures who live there, including the Alligator King who lies in wait beneath the water. Appelt's prose is exquisite and begs to be read aloud. But this is not a sweet bedtime story for small children. Although it is beautifully written and features cute, furry critters, it is ultimately a novel that wells up from the murky depths of muddy backwaters where one is either predator or prey, and where love and redemption are sometimes fleeting, slippery like a snake's shimmering skin, and ultimately transformative. (Ages 9–14)

Avi. *The Seer of Shadows*. HarperCollins, 2008. 208 pages (trade 978-0-06-000015-8, \$16.99)

Fourteen-year-old Horace works as an apprentice to a photographer who has just been hired by a wealthy grieving woman. She wants him to take a portrait of her so that she can place it next to the grave of her recently deceased daughter. Sensing fiscal opportunity, the photographer decides to take advantage of the woman's distress by using double-exposure to make it appear as though the ghost of the dead daughter has been captured by his camera. What he doesn't know is that the woman really is being haunted by the girl, who turns out to be not her daughter but a niece whom she treated cruelly before her death. Horace learns these details through conversations he has with the woman's servant girl while doing his own secretive picture taking at their home under his boss's orders. To his dismay, he discovers the images he takes really are haunted by the ghostly image of the girl, whose spirit is out for revenge. Part ghost story, part mystery, this engaging novel set in New York City in 1872 offers a strong sense of time and place, as well as fascinating details about early photography. The author is particularly skilled at using formal, old-fashioned language to give a sense of history, but he's smart enough not to overdo it. (Ages 9–11)

Balliett, Blue. *The Calder Game*. Illustrated by Brett Helquist. Scholastic Press, 2008. 379 pages (trade 978-0-439-85207-4, \$17.99)

In this third installment of Blue Balliet's art mysteries, everything is hanging by a thread. Focusing on the artwork of Alexander Calder, particularly on his mobiles and stabiles, the mystery deals with the disappearance of two Calders—the protagonist Calder Pillay, and an Alexander Calder sculpture. Calder Pillay, a twelve-year-old from Chicago, is on a business trip with his father in a small town near Oxford. When he goes missing, his good friends Petra and Tommy fly to England to search for clues. But while Petra and Tommy are both friends of Calder's, their relationship with one another is prickly. Certain that their expertise with words and symbols will aid them in finding their friend, it isn't until they join forces that they start to make real progress, cementing their own friendship in the process. Like a Calder mobile, the pieces and players in Balliet's story are in constant motion. Petra and Tommy become desperate to understand the message of the British graffiti artist Banksy, the motives of certain town residents, and the twists and turns in an old hedge maze. Also embedded in a story certain to inspire

thinking and conversation about art—what it is, how it is or is not valued—are clever clue-containing illustrations by Brett Helquist. (Ages 8–12)

Broach, Elise. *Masterpiece*. Illustrated by Kelly Murphy. Christy Ottaviano Books / Henry Holt, 2008. 292 pages (trade 978–0–8050–8270–8, \$16.95)

On James Pompaday's eleventh birthday, he receives two gifts that will forever change his life. The first is a pen-and-ink set from his artist father and the second is the start of an unexpected friendship. James has never been very artistic and he's never had many friends, let alone one who is a common house beetle. Marvin lives with his entire beetle family inside the Pompaday's kitchen cabinet. Unlike James, Marvin fancies himself an artist, and while James is asleep, Marvin can't resist trying out James's pen-and-ink set. The work he creates is a miniature masterpiece, which he leaves as a gift for James. Complications quickly develop as James is credited with creating the amazing work. The tiny landscape captures the attention of two curators at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, who marvel at its resemblance to the great works of Albrecht Dürer. A fast-paced art-history mystery unfolds and James and Marvin become calamitously caught up in an art-heist as intricate as Dürer's (and Marvin's) miniature prints. While *Masterpiece* is showcased as a caper its true colors shine as a story about the friendship between boy and beetle. Black-and-white line drawings by Kelly Murphy visually contribute to the plot. (Ages 8–11)

Connor, Leslie. *Waiting for Normal*. Katherine Tegen Books / HarperCollins, 2008. 290 pages (trade 978–0–06–089088–9, \$16.99)

For twelve-year-old Addie, life is never stable for very long. When she and her mother move into a mobile home on the corner of a run-down lot next to a train overpass, it doesn't exactly seem like the fresh new start it's supposed to be. But it's the best her former stepfather can offer after his breakup with Addie's mom. It soon becomes clear that Addie might have been better off with her stepdad Dwight than with her biological mother. Mommers, as Addie calls her, is an "all-or-nothing" person. Sometimes she's high on life, joking with Addie and feeling positive about money-making opportunities. Other times she's angry with the world and unable to care for Addie, much less herself. Meanwhile Addie is desperate to hold things together in the hope that something better is just around the corner. When Mommers gets involved in a doubtful business venture and disappears for days at a time, Addie struggles to feed and clothe herself on her own. Luckily for Addie, there are people looking out for her—her caring stepdad, the convenience store owners on the corner, and her distant paternal grandfather. While the resolution almost seems better than Addie could have wished for, it's a fitting conclusion for a young girl yearning for stability and unconditional love. (Ages 10–14)

Creech, Sharon. *Hate That Cat*. Joanna Cotler Books / HarperCollins, 2008. 153 pages (trade 978-0-06-143092-3, \$15.99)

Sharon Creech returns to the young poet Jack in this follow-up to *Love That Dog* (Joanna Cotler Books / HarperCollins, 2001). "You understand / my / brain." Jack writes in a poem to Ms. Stretchberry, expressing his pleasure that she will be his teacher for another year. In *Love That Dog*, Jack wrote his way around and finally into the grief he felt over the death of his dog. In *Hate That Cat*, his poems express his initial disdain and eventual admiration for the stray cat in his neighborhood, as well as his observations about and delight in the kitten he can't help but love. His poems also reveal details about his family life, including a mother who cannot hear but "paints words with her hands." Jack's self-awareness as a poet continues to blossom as he strives to get the right words on paper to express his thoughts and observations. He knows frustration when he falls short, but more often he knows the pleasure of saying what he means: "And although I was embarrassed / to stand up in front of everyone / and sign all those words / for my mother . . . when I saw my mother's face / it felt good to me / it felt good to me / it felt good / to / me." The poems shared by Ms. Stretchberry that inspire some of Jack's own writing are included at the end of this second irresistible story about a boy feeling his way through the world with the help of a terrific teacher and the gift and the art of poetry. (Ages 8–11)

Delaney, Joseph. *Attack of the Fiend*. Illustrated by Patrick Arrasmith. (The Last Apprentice: Book Four) U.S. edition: Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2008. 532 pages (trade 978-0-06-089127-5, \$16.99)

Delaney, Joseph. *Wrath of the Bloodeye*. Illustrated by Patrick Arrasmith. (The Last Apprentice: Book Five) U.S. edition: Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2008. 511 pages (trade 978-0-06-134459-6, \$17.99)

Spook's apprentice Thomas Ward continues to develop his skills at fighting the creatures of the night. In the fourth volume of his adventures, *Attack of the Fiend*, the stakes are high: Three clans of witches are uniting in an attempt to raise the Devil himself, unleashing an era of darkness. Things get personal when the safety of Tom's own family is threatened, and he is driven to use every bit of his knowledge and craft as disaster looms. In the fifth entry in the series, *Wrath of the Bloodeye*, Tom is sent to train and develop new skills with the spook Bill Arkwright. In the north where Bill lives near the sea, Tom learns about water witches and discovers that the most fearsome of them, Bloodeye, is intent on confronting him. When he learns that Bloodeye is the daughter of the Devil himself, Tom realizes that new danger is spreading far and wide. Meanwhile, tension deepens between Tom and the Spook over Tom's friend Alice, a young witch who walks a fine line between good and evil, and student Tom begins to realize the Spook's ways of doing things are not necessarily the only way. John Delaney's satisfyingly scary series consistently delivers to young readers who crave a creepy read, with characters who continue to grow and change and plots that are surprisingly fresh. Forbiddingly dark illustrations at the start of each chapter intensify the eerie mood. (Ages 10–14)

Dowd, Siobhan. *The London Eye Mystery*. U.S. edition: David Fickling Books / Random House, 2008. 322 pages (trade 978-0-375-84976-3, \$15.99)

When Ted's teenage cousin Salim disappears between the time he got on the giant ferris wheel known as the London Eye and the time the passengers in the car in which he was riding disembark, it's a mystery that baffles everyone from his family to the police. As hours pass and unease grows for Salim's safety, Ted begins to make a list of possible answers, from the logical to the improbable to the seemingly impossible. Only his older sister, Kat, is willing to listen—something highly unusual, as she generally is far too involved in her own life to pay him much attention, but this is a highly unusual circumstance. Ted, who has Asperger's syndrome, has spent a lot of time practicing social interactions to ease his way in the world, but he's a master at seeing details and patterns and things out of place, and considering their meaning. He needs both the skills that come to him naturally and the ones he works so hard to master as he and Kat try to figure out what happened to Salim. The dynamics of Ted's family—both immediate and extended—are funny, touching, and wholly believable, a dimension all the more critical as they also turn out to be at the heart of Siobhan Dowd's engaging and intriguing mystery. (Ages 10–14)

Dowell, Frances O'Roark. *Shooting the Moon*. Atheneum, 2008. 163 pages (trade 978-1-4169-2690-0, \$16.99)

Jamie Dexter is "Army through and through." Her dad is the Colonel, chief of staff at Fort Hood, Texas. Her older brother, TJ, has recently enlisted and is off to Vietnam. Jamie would go herself if she could. At twelve, she settles for working at the rec center on base, assisting Private Hollister, who's in charge, with odd jobs when she isn't engaging him in a spirited game of gin rummy. Jamie is fiercely proud of TJ and can't imagine why the Colonel wanted him to wait until after college to enlist. Now she can't wait to get his first letter. But when it comes, it's written to her mom and dad and disappointingly spare. For Jamie, there is only a roll of exposed film with a request for her to develop it. Every subsequent letter from TJ has a roll of film for Jamie. She realizes that the pictures are his way of telling her about his life and the war in which he is serving, and that the photo of the moon he always includes bridges the distance between them. As Jamie's skill in the darkroom grows, she is able to bring out greater detail and clarity in the prints, just as the photos themselves begin to reveal more of the tragedy that is war. At the same time, things in the rest of Jamie's life grow increasingly unclear. Already puzzled by the Colonel's lack of enthusiasm for TJ's enlistment, she begins to wonder about the role her father plays in sending soldiers off to war, especially when Private Hollister announces he, too, may be headed for Vietnam. Frances O'Roark Dowell's nuanced and finely told story features a cast of complex characters, at the center of which is a feisty, funny girl who finds so much of what she once knew to be true gradually shadowed by doubt. (Ages 10–14)

Erdrich, Louise. *The Porcupine Year*. HarperCollins, 2008. 193 pages (trade 978-0-06-029787-9, \$15.99)

In the third volume featuring Omakayas, the Ojibwe girl is twelve years old and embarking on a journey with her family in the year 1852. Forced from their home on what is now known as Madeline Island, they travel by canoe along the shore of Lake Superior through the rivers of Northern Minnesota in search of a new home. In an exciting opening chapter, Omakayas and her brother Pinch are swept away by the rapids and assumed dead. Unable to resist the opportunity to make mischief, the pair walk into a grieving camp masquerading as their own spirits, triggering a stunned response which quickly turns to a mixture of relief and reproach. During the course of the year Omakayas experiences personal and physical maturity, and is recognized as a woman. As in her earlier books in the series, *The Birchbark House* (Hyperion, 1999), and *The Game of Silence* (HarperCollins, 2005), Ms. Erdrich crafts a seamless story of family, community, and place, encompassing humor, tragedy, and everyday life, all viewed through a child's experience. (Ages 8–12)

Frost, Helen. *Diamond Willow*. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. 111 pages (trade 978-0374-31776-8, \$16.00)

Twelve-year-old Willow's first solo dogsledding trip starts joyfully, with a twelve-mile journey to her grandparents' cabin. It ends tragically when Rosy, the beloved lead dog, is blinded on the way back home after running into a fallen tree on a curve where Willow failed to slow down. Willow's shame and guilt turn to anger when she realizes that her parents plan on putting Rosy down. She considers Rosy her friend and confidant, and friendship doesn't come easily for Willow. Willow also hasn't given up hope that Rosy will see again. Sure that her grandparents will let Rosy stay with them, Willow enlists the help of her one good friend, Kaylie, to accompany her on another dogsled journey to her grandparents' place. Poet Helen Frost's story is set in a fictional town in Alaska's interior. Willow is part Athabaskan, and the spirits of her ancestors, embodied in a host of wild creatures, play a critical role when Willow and Kaylie end up lost in a blizzard. Each of Frost's narrative, concrete poems—all variations on a diamond shape—have a hidden message emphasized in boldface type. They are the essence of feeling in each poem, just as the animals in Frost's story are the essence of a loved one. The revelation of a secret kept far too long brings the story to a rich emotional climax that affirms Rosy's place in Willow's heart and family and encourages Willow to open her heart to happiness and let others in. (Ages 10–14)

Gaiman, Neil. *The Graveyard Book*. Illustrated by Dave McKean. HarperCollins, 2008. 312 pages (trade 978-0-06-053092-1, \$17.99)

On the night his parents and sister were murdered in their beds, a young boy toddled out of his crib and home, and thereby avoided a similar fate. He wanders into the nearby cemetery, where long-dead Mr. and Mrs. Owens vow to adopt and raise him, although the other cemetery spirits are unsure about this plan. In a community meeting, Silas—the child's soon-to-be mentor and guardian—states: "For good or for evil—and I firmly believe

that it is for good—Mrs. Owens and her husband have taken this child under their protection. It is going to take more than just a couple of good-hearted souls to raise this child. It will . . . take a graveyard.” Given the name Nobody (or “Bod”) and the “Freedom of the Graveyard” (an existential travel pass to live among the dead), the child flourishes in this caring community. Smart dialogue is dashed with bits of humor—the residents’ tombstone epitaphs and memories from their living years provide ongoing comedy—and elements of eeriness abound. Bod visits the land of ghouls and speaks with ancient spirits in his graveyard wanderings. He’s also protected by many: Silas ensures that he’s fed and clothed, Mr. and Mrs. Owens are strict with his bedtime and education, and other souls instruct him through their life experiences. Ethereal illustrations in tones of black provide ghostly visuals—although not often necessary or fitting. As Bod grows older, he grows more curious about his origins and life outside the graveyard fence. In the meantime, the murderer hired to kill his family is intent on finishing the job. A dramatic climax will likely catch readers off guard, but it provides a satisfying conclusion to an exceptional story. (Ages 10–14)

Gibaldi, David. *Listening for Crickets.* Henry Holt, 2008. 178 pages (trade 978-0-8050-7385-0, \$16.95)

To distract himself and his little sister from the ugly sounds of his parents arguing late into the night, ten-year-old Jake tells imaginative stories. As a boy with webbed toes and large ears, it’s easy for Jake to pretend he’s a bat, a gentle winged night watchman. During the day, other problems worry Jake—his sister Cassie’s asthma, his performance in his special reading class, and how his family is going to stick together. However, Jake has a good amount of resilience, plus the supportive friendship of his goofy pal Luke and the watchful eye of his neighbor Mrs. Pittmon. He also builds a protective shelter hidden in the backyard hedge—a place called the “Dragon’s Nest” where he and Cassie can hide. While Jake’s reading and comfort at school begin to improve, life at home unravels to the point of physical violence. This tender novel shows the reflective and protective tendencies of a young boy as he finds ways to deal with the hurt, and hope, at the core of his family. (Ages 9–12)

Giff, Patricia Reilly. *Eleven.* Wendy Lamb Books / Random House, 2008. 164 pages (trade 978-0-385-73069-3, \$15.99)

Sam finds images of the number eleven cropping up in his dreams and in hazy memories of his life before coming to stay with his grandfather when he was very small. Now turning eleven, he is obsessed with the need to understand their meaning after spotting the fragment of an old newspaper with the word “missing” next to a picture of a toddler wearing a sweater he knows well—because it was his. Sam adores his grandfather Mack and the rhythm of their lives together. Mack’s two good friends who live and work nearby complete their tight-knit, loving family. Could he really belong to someone else? Sam can’t read well, and he enlists the help of a new girl in his class at school to help in his research. Caroline is witty and smart and doesn’t judge Sam because he can’t read. But her willingness to assist him is dependent

upon his agreeing they won't become friends—her family never stays in one place long enough to make friendship anything other than painful in the end. A class project to build a medieval castle showcases Sam's considerable woodworking skills but also provides an excuse to spend time with Caroline, his partner, investigating Sam's ever-more-murky past. But it's what the two learn about themselves in the present that proves just as important, as each finds a new outlook on personal challenges when need dovetails with desire. Warm and richly realized main and secondary characters distinguish a novel about family and friendship that is imbued with a sense of mystery. (Ages 9–12)

Gifford, Peggy. *Moxy Maxwell Does Not Love Writing Thank-you Notes. Photographs by Valorie Fisher.* Schwartz & Wade, 2008. 159 pages (trade 978-0-375-84270-2, \$12.99)

Peggy Gifford again delivers a fast-paced story that takes place over the course of an afternoon in the life of irrepressible Moxy Maxwell. It's just after Christmas, and Moxy has to write thank-you notes. Her mom wants them done *today* because Moxy and her twin brother Mark are leaving tomorrow to visit their actor dad in L.A. With visions of being "discovered" while in Hollywood, Moxy can't focus. Her little sister, Pansy, has offered to dictate Moxy's letters of gratitude, but Moxy hits on a better idea: a fill-in-the-blank form letter to express her sincere appreciation to each and every person who has gifted her. All she needs is the use of her stepdad Ajax's new copy machine—the one that no one but Ajax is supposed to touch. The ensuing disaster, documented along with other memorable moments of the afternoon in black-and-white photos taken by Mark, is laugh-out-loud hilarious. But the disappointment and anger when the L.A. trip is canceled is anything but funny as Gifford deftly turns the story to one that looks at very real family dynamics, and the love that will sustain two kids facing a difficult truth about their dad. As in *Moxy Maxwell Does NOT Love Stuart Little* (Schwartz & Wade, 2007), Valorie Fisher's photographs are a wonderful accompaniment to the short, pithy, and surprisingly poignant narrative. (Ages 8–11)

Hale, Shannon, and Dean Hale. *Rapunzel's Revenge.* Illustrated by Nathan Hale. Bloomsbury, 2008. 144 pages (trade 978-1-59990-070-4, \$18.99; pbk. 978-1-59990-288-3, \$14.99)

A spirited graphic novel twines characters from two traditional fairy tales into a fresh, funny new story. When Rapunzel discovers that her "mother," Gothel, stole her as a baby, the girl rebels and is locked up in a tree that has grown to towering proportions by Gothel's use of magic. Rapunzel's hair grows copiously, too, fashioning the means of her escape. Swinging to freedom, she is determined to rescue her real mother from Gothel's mines, where she has toiled for years. Rapunzel soon meets Jack, a young man with troubles of his own, whose only companion is a goose unwilling to lay eggs. After Rapunzel rescues Jack from a sticky situation with a rapid crack of her lariat braids, they become inseparable. Their clashing values (Jack is not above a little larceny for a good cause—the best cause being his own well-being) and droll exchanges can't mask their growing fondness for each other.

Likewise, their knack for stumbling into trouble is mitigated by their ever-growing finesse at getting out of it, often helping the citizens whom Mother Gothel has been terrorizing with her magic along the way. Shannon and Dean Hale establish the humor with Rapunzel's self-deprecating storytelling and the lively exchanges between characters, while Nathan Hale's full-color panel illustrations fulfill the possibilities of this witty tale full of long-haired heroism. (Ages 10–15)

Henkes, Kevin. *Bird Lake Moon*. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2008. 179 pages (trade 978-0-06-147076-9, \$15.99)

When twelve-year-old Mitch's parents divorce, he goes to spend the summer with his mother and grandparents in their cottage on Bird Lake. Mitch feels angry, sad, and lonely, and he retreats into his imagination, pretending the long-vacant cottage next door belongs to him. He sweeps the front porch, cleans out the bird bath, and carves his initials into the porch's wooden railing. He even resolves to keep the splinter he gets from the railing so the house will be a part of him. Mitch's future plans are disturbed, however, when another family shows up to spend a week at the cottage. From his position in the crawl space underneath the front porch, he learns that they own the house, and he decides to try scaring them away by making them think the house is haunted. What Mitch doesn't know is that ten-year-old Spencer and his family haven't been to the lake for years because it was the site of his older brother's drowning when he was four and Spencer was just two. Every small thing Mitch does to make them think the house is haunted is read by Spencer as a sign from his dead brother. Masterfully told with alternating points of view, Henkes shows the developing friendship between two boys who are each withholding information from the other. Only the reader knows the full story, and the dramatic tension builds as each boy gets closer to finding out the truth. (Ages 9–12)

Hirahara, Naomi. *1001 Cranes*. Delacorte Press, 2008. 230 pages (trade 978-0-385-73556-8, \$15.99)

Twelve-year-old Angela Kato's parents are splitting up and have sent her to Los Angeles to spend the summer with her grandparents. Scared and bewildered, Angela also resents having her life turned upside down. That resentment is heightened when she is put to work helping her grandparents, who run a flower shop, prepare a traditional Japanese display of 1001 origami cranes for a wedding. She's not particularly adept at folding the cranes, but her grandmother insists she keep at it despite the demands for perfection from the difficult bride. Angela's also not particularly close to her grandmother, who seems to have more kind words and feelings for a troubled young girl in the neighborhood than for Angela or almost anyone else, including the older neighbor next door with whom Angela is spending time (although not always willingly). Angela's developing friendship with Tony, a boy she meets while skateboarding, heightens the tension when she is determined to see him regardless of her grandmother's disapproval. Angela's authentic voice, and her realistic behavior—and misbehavior—make for a fresh story about

a girl just beginning to discover that human hearts of all ages are as complex and delicate as the folds of an origami crane. (Ages 10–14)

Jenkins, Emily. *Toy Dance Party: Being the Further Adventures of a Bossyboots Stingray, a Courageous Buffalo, and a Hopeful Round Someone Called Plastic.* Illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky. Schwartz & Wade, 2008. 159 pages (trade 978–0–375–83935–1, \$16.99)

StingRay, Plastic, and Lumphy are back in another utterly charming chapter book from Emily Jenkins detailing what the toys are up to when the girl who owns them is out. From the opening chapter featuring a courageous and hilarious attempt at a snow rescue (involving plastic dinosaur placemats and a spatula) to the final pages involving an unfortunate (or not) incident with nail polish, this sequel to *Toys Go Out* (Schwartz & Wade, 2006) matches the first volume for winning appeal. There are revelations (who knew the toy mice had names?) and a significant new addition to the cast: a rubber shark the girl has christened Princess DaisySparkle (“Spark” to all who would be her friend). Spark’s arrival is a bit unsettling for insecure StingRay, but the real threat to them all is that the little girl is getting older. The silent Barbies seem to hold more and more of her attention. There’s not as much specialness for the toys anymore, and that’s a sad and scary thing. High humor, poignant tenderness, acute observations, and intense emotion true to the experiences of childhood are all part of this novel featuring unforgettable characters whose exploits will continue to satisfy and delight, whether shared as a read-aloud or read independently. (Ages 7–10)

Lindo, Elvira. *Manolito Four-Eyes.* Illustrated by Emilio Urberuaga. Translated from the Spanish by Joanne Moriarty. U.S. edition: Marshall Cavendish, 2008. 144 pages (trade 978–0–7614–5303–1, \$15.99)

Humor isn’t lost in this translation of a novel from Spain about Manolito García Moreno—aka Manolito Four-Eyes—a one-of-a-kind young narrator. The voice of ten-year-old Manolito is big and bold, and he spares no details as he tells it like he sees it. From the tiny apartment where he lives with his parents, his baby brother “Bozo” (Manolito claims that he forgot his real name), and his grandpa, Manolito complains about his mother’s unnecessary rules while at the same time relating tender moments with his beloved grandpa (who is a “whole lotta cool”). At school, glimpses are shown of Manolito’s up-and-down relationship with his best friend, “Big Ears,” his strategies for dealing with his tormentor Ozzy, and the perils of field trips and costumed performances with Miss Asunción. While Manolito declares that he would give up his life in the Madrid neighborhood of Carabanchel to claim the throne of a king, it’s clear that despite his rants he is perfectly content as the prince of his own realm. A great classroom read-aloud, this spunky novel also features occasional line and brush illustrations. (Ages 8–11)

Look, Lenore. *Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School, and Other Scary Things.* Illustrated by LeUyen Pham. Schwartz & Wade, 2008. 172 pages (trade 978-0-375-83914-6, \$15.99)

Alvin Ho is afraid of many things, including elevators, tunnels, thunder, substitute teachers, wasabi, scary movies, shots, and school. In fact, he's so afraid of school that Alvin is unable to speak while he's there. Although he is Firecracker Man at home, as "noisy as a firecracker on Chinese New Year," at school he is "as silent as a side of beef." This creates problems for Alvin, such as when a substitute teacher (scary!) assumes Alvin's silence is a subversive prank. For a semi-mute boy, Alvin's voice comes through loud and clear in this accessible and funny novel, generously illustrated with line drawings. Short chapters relate the ups and downs of Alvin's life as he struggles with the unwanted friendship of Flea (his desk buddy and a GIRL), piano lessons at ancient Miss Emily's obviously haunted house, a traumatic appointment with his therapist, and an unfortunate decision to "borrow" his father's sacred childhood superhero toy for show-and-tell. (Ages 7–10)

Mass, Wendy. *Every Soul a Star.* Little, Brown, 2008. 322 pages (trade 978-0-316-00256-1, \$15.99)

Ally has spent most of her life at the Moon Shadow campground in rural Montana. She is full of anticipation for her first total eclipse, an event that will draw campers from around the world at summer's end. Bree is looking forward to a summer spent improving her chances at a modeling career. Jack is paying the price for failing science with summer school looming. Wendy Mass draws these three distinct and disparate young teens into the circle of one another's lives, and the lives of those they touch. When Bree discovers her scientist parents are giving up their city lives to run a campground and further their work, she simply cannot believe it, not even when they arrive in the middle of nowhere. The arrival of Bree's family prompts Ally's parents to disclose that they are moving to Chicago at the end of summer to give Ally and her brother the chance to live in the larger world. Neither girl can fathom the difference this will mean to her life. Meanwhile, Jack has ended up at Moon Shadow in lieu of summer school—his science teacher invited him to be his assistant on an eclipse-watching tour. For Jack, who has little self-confidence, the pressure to not mess up feels huge. The full eclipse that is the novel's climax is a stunning—and beautifully described—reflection of these three characters' new ways of seeing themselves and one another by story's end. Narrated in their three separate voices, and featuring a solid cast of secondary characters, this is a quiet and deeply affecting novel about changes both small and large. (Ages 10–14)

McKay, Hilary. *Forever Rose.* U.S. edition: Margaret K. McElderry, 2008. 291 pages (trade 978-1-4169-5486-6, \$16.99)

Just when you thought Hilary McKay's Casson family stories were complete, along comes book number five—the "final visit," according to the jacket. Highly original and sometimes outrageous, the Cassons continue to delight in a story that is once again laugh-out-loud funny and full of warmhearted feeling. With her dad in London and her siblings' lives changing, youngest

child Rose is feeling left out and left behind. She doesn't like the emptiness at home (even the hamsters are gone); she wants things the way they used to be. But Rose doesn't know where her sister Caddy went after breaking off her engagement, and Saffy and Indigo are caught up in high school activities and related dramas (although they always make time for Rose when they can). Saffy's friend Sarah, horrified at Rose's adamant resistance to reading, is determined to find her a book she will love, and Indigo's friend David, facing his own family crisis, has moved his unwieldy drum kit into the Casson home. When Rose's teacher Mr. Spencer cancels the class Christmas celebration, it's one more bit of comfort and familiarity gone by the wayside for Rose. So when her friend hatches a plan for a secret overnight at the zoo, Rose is not up to resisting. McKay's novel features typical Casson chaos: always a bit fanciful, but featuring funny and sympathetic characters; lovely language; and moving, wholly realistic observations about family life and friendship. (Ages 9–13)

Nielsen, Susin. *Word Nerd*. Tundra, 2008. 248 pages (trade 978-0-88776-875-0, \$18.95)

Overprotected Ambrose is doing school by correspondence, which keeps him safe from bullies, but his mother would be horrified if she knew he's struck up a friendship with Cosmo, the ex-con son of their landlords. It wouldn't matter that Cosmo is really trying to put his life back together, and it wouldn't matter that Ambrose is lonely. So Ambrose's mom doesn't know that he and Cosmo are hanging out every Wednesday night—at a Scrabble club. Ambrose excels at Scrabble, although he still has a lot to learn about how to play the game and how to handle both wins and losses with less swaggering, less petulance, and more grace. Always a misfit, the twelve-year-old finds himself for the first time fitting in with a group—adults who have their own quirks and challenges—while tough Cosmo is proving to be an excellent mentor, and even a friend. Keeping it all from his stressed-out mother is proving to be as much of a challenge as helping Cosmo avoid the thug who is hounding him for the money Cosmo owes in Susin Nielsen's winning, warm-hearted novel that is full of humor and tenderness. (Ages 10–14)

O'Connor, Barbara. *Greetings from Nowhere*. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. 198 pages (trade 978-0-374-39937-5, \$16.00)

Aggie, Willow, Loretta, and Kirby have nothing in common, it appears, other than staying at the same run-down Sleepytime Motel in the middle of the Smoky Mountains. Aggie is a widow in her eighties looking to sell the empty motel, although for her it holds a lifetime of memories. Willow is the shy child of the man who wants to buy Aggie's motel, but by moving there Willow fears her absent mother won't know where to find her if she should return. Loretta, a much-loved daughter on vacation with her adoptive parents, yearns to feel a connection with the mountains her birth mother once visited. And Kirby is a sullen and troubled boy on his way to military school when his mother's car breaks down and they must stay at the motel. In ways each individual never could have predicted, their lives are transformed by their

overlapping experiences at the Sleepytime Motel. Told in alternate voices, each chapter offers quiet perspectives on how we see ourselves and others, and how even the smallest action can make a difference. (Ages 9–12)

Preller, James. *Six Innings: A Game in the Life*. Feiwel and Friends, 2008. 147 pages (trade 978–1–312–36763–3, \$16.95)

The boys who play for Earl Grubb's Pool Supplies have made it to the league championship. Set during the six innings of the championship game, this short novel is framed and interspersed with scenes from the perspective of Sam, the one player not on the field because he has bone cancer. James Preller's swiftly paced story follows the action and the experiences of Sam and other members of the team over the course of the six-inning game. The talented players hope to shine, the marginal ones hope they won't embarrass themselves, and as the narrative moves from player to player, it becomes clear that not everyone is able to focus on the action. There is Sam's best friend Mike, for example, who is trying to bridge the distance that Sam has put between them. There are dramas small and large in the lives of the players, and moments of high anxiety and sweet relief both on and off the field in a book offering plenty of baseball action along with a heartening story. (Ages 9–13)

Riordan, Rick. *The Battle of the Labyrinth*. (Percy Jackson & the Olympians: Book 4) Hyperion / Disney, 2008. 361 pages (trade 978–1–4231–0146–8, \$17.99)

Percy Jackson, home from another adventurous summer at Camp Half-Blood, can't even make it through freshman orientation at his new high school before a new round of Grecian drama begins. The culmination of Kronos's power is nigh unless Percy and his Olympian comrades can thwart his efforts to fully form and defeat the gods of Mount Olympus, starting with an attack on Camp Half-Blood, Percy's home away from home. Embarking on an unplanned quest through an underground labyrinth (growing like an uncontrolled weed from Daedalus's original wonder), Annabeth leads Percy, Tyson, and Grover down a path marked with deadly twists and turns. At critical intersections, the group faces challenging tests of courage and intelligence. Following the unmistakable and successful style of the previous books in the series, Rick Riordan deftly introduces new characters and interesting concepts from Greek myths while also keeping pace with the overall development of the teen characters and series focus. With its humorous dialogue, inconceivable situations (e.g., The Game Show of Death), and relationship crescendos, *The Battle of the Labyrinth* is a maze worth getting lost in. (Ages 10–14)

Rodman, Mary Ann. *Jimmy's Stars*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. 257 pages (trade 978–0–374–33703–2, \$16.95)

When eleven-year-old Ellie's older brother Jimmy is drafted into World War II, she joins the ranks of those who wait and worry on the home front. Ellie has classmates, teachers, and neighbors with loved ones in the war, but are any of those soldiers as special as Jimmy? Can anyone understand how she feels? For Ellie, the answer to that question comes in fits and starts

over the course of this complex and moving story that also brings details of neighborhood, school, and family life in 1943 into full relief. Mary Ann Rodman incorporates the best and the worst of those times into Ellie's story, from the lively music and sense of common purpose to the racism revealed in the common use of the term "Japs." For Ellie, Jimmy's absence does more than upset the rhythm of her daily life; it also opens her eyes to things she never noticed before. As the people around her deal with uncertainty and fear, and as Ellie experiences unthinkable loss, she must come to terms with the way war changes things and find a way to move on. In doing so, she finds that looking to the future with hope, and even humor, is the best way to honor the memory of her spirited brother. (Ages 10–14)

Russell, P. Craig, adaptor and illustrator. *Coraline*. Based on the novel by Neil Gaiman. HarperCollins, 2008. 185 pages (trade 978-0-06-082543-0, \$18.99)

Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* (HarperCollins, 2002) successfully sauntered the fine line between suspenseful and scary for the older school-age set. The creepy appeal of the original text (featuring occasional illustrations by Dave McKean) is further developed in this graphic novel adaptation by illustrator P. Craig Russell. *Coraline*, a preteen girl, moves into an old Gothic mansion with her busy parents. With time on her hands, *Coraline* discovers a door in the house that seemingly leads to nowhere—until one day it provides passage to a set of apartments that are eerily identical to the ones she came from. Here she meets her "other" mother and father—replicas of her true parents except for the lavish attention they provide, and their sinister, sewn-on button eyes. P. Craig Russell's illustrations deliciously capture the other mother's menacing yet maternal character in panels that show her chomping on beetles while at the same time caressing *Coraline* with sharply manicured nails. When *Coraline* refuses her other mother's invitation to stay, she finds herself caught in a trap, and in order to escape she must find her real parents and save the souls of three ghost children. *Coraline*, both a plucky heroine and a frightened child, progresses through the nightmare in her purple pajamas, armed with determination. The tension is flawlessly paced in the panels. A range of perspectives portray gruesome close-ups of *Coraline*'s doughy other dad and red-eyed rats, as well as ghostly panoramas of *Coraline*'s descent into dark lairs. Sometimes what is imagined in the mind's eye is more fearsome than reality, so some readers already familiar with the story may find the original more frightening than this graphic novel version, while others may find this take on the story more than satisfyingly scary. (Ages 10–14)

Soo, Kean. *Jellaby*. Hyperion, 2008. 143 pages (trade 978-1-4231-0337-0, \$18.99)

In an engaging graphic novel, Portia's miserable day ends well when she finds a large purple monster outside her house. Despite its enormous size and sharp teeth, the monster seems friendly enough—infantile even. He's obviously lost and hungry. Portia invites him in and feeds him a tuna sandwich, though he's just as happy eating her mother's vase of flowers. They form an instant bond but Portia understands enough of the world to know that it would be

best to keep him hidden, something that's hard to do because he's obviously a social creature. Before long, Portia's friend, Jason, has had an encounter with him, and the two kids conspire to try to help the creature they've named Jellaby find his way home. Jellaby, with his wide innocent eyes and charming jagged underbite, is one of the most distinctive and memorable children's book characters in recent memory. Readers will be clamoring to know what happens next in a story to be continued. (Ages 7–14)

Springer, Nancy. *The Case of the Bizarre Bouquets: An Enola Holmes Mystery.* Philomel, 2008. 170 pages (trade 978-0-399-24518-3, \$14.99)

Springer, Nancy. *The Case of the Peculiar Pink Fan: An Enola Holmes Mystery.* Philomel, 2008. 183 pages (trade 978-0-399-24780-4, \$14.99)

Nancy Springer logs two more satisfying entries in her Enola Holmes mystery series, set in Victorian London and featuring a discerning detective who is the much younger sister of Sherlock Holmes. Enola uses disguises and an ingenious front as office girl for a made-up detective to engage in her work solving mysteries. In *The Case of the Bizarre Bouquets*, her sleuthing parallels and ultimately surpasses the efforts of Sherlock—both are independently trying to find the missing Dr. Watson. Enola is eager to avoid crossing paths with either Sherlock or her brother Mycroft, because both men are intent on sending her to boarding school to prepare her for life as a proper young lady. It's just such a life, and its limits for women, that her mother escaped, leaving Enola with a tremendous longing but the financial and intellectual resources to make her own way. And it's just such a life, complicated by a few nefarious characters, that has trapped Enola's acquaintance Lady Cecily in *The Case of the Peculiar Pink Fan*. Enola has the same keen intellect as her older brother, but she brings something extra to her detective work—compassion for the plight of London's most vulnerable, from the poorest who live on the streets to upper-class women like Cecily, who is being forced into an unwanted marriage. Enola's fierce determination to control her own destiny defines her as much as her intelligence, creativity, and kind heart in these stories that bring the streets and lives of Victorian London into high relief. (Ages 9–12)

White, Ruth. *Little Audrey.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. 145 pages (trade 978-0-374-34580-8, \$16.00)

In a novel drawn from her early childhood, author Ruth White tells of her family's struggling existence in a coal-mining town from the vantage of her eldest sister, Audrey. Audrey dislikes the "Little Audrey" jokes she's teased about—jokes based on a silly girl from the newspaper comics. Little Audrey of comics fame always finds herself making the best of outrageous situations, whereas Audrey White doesn't find much to laugh about when her father comes home drunk or her depressed mother can barely scrape together a meal for her and her sisters, the "three little pigs." Writing in a fresh voice and distinct dialect, Ruth White creates a strong visual impression of their painful, hardscrabble life in 1948 rural Virginia. Despite the gritty tone, moments of tenderness make *Little Audrey* a meaningful read, and there is hope born of tragedy by the novel's end. (Ages 10–14)

Woodson, Jacqueline. *After Tupac & D Foster*. Putnam, 2008. 153 pages (trade 978-0-399-24654-8, \$15.99)

Jacqueline Woodson offers a deep and tender look at friendship and growing up in a novel that spans almost two years in the lives of three African American girls in the mid-1990s. The story's unnamed narrator and her best friend, Neeka, have been like sisters since infancy. They move in and out of each other's homes with the certainty of belonging, and share angst and frustration over loving mothers who keep a tight watch over everything they do. When D Foster enters their lives, she is a complete unknown, and parts of her life remain a mystery over the next two years. D is eleven, too, but she lives with a foster mother who lets her wander the city, trusting D to stay out of trouble and come home each night. And she does. D is determined to have a future—find her Big Purpose—and that means playing by the rules. She is looking for friendship, and the two best friends find it easy to expand their hearts and embrace her. D shares their love of Tupac Shakur, whose songs speak truths they understand and dreams they hope for, and she has more freedom than either of them imagines possible for her own life. All three girls have seen and experienced much that is unfair, from D's lengthy time in foster care to the homophobia that Neeka's flamboyantly gay older brother Tash has had to endure (even Pac, they note, doesn't have nice things to say about people like Tash). But all three girls are smart, sensitive, and open-hearted, and these are strengths that, together with the bond they share, fill Woodson's novel with so much hope for their future. (Ages 10–14)

Yep, Laurence, with Dr. Kathleen S. Yep. *The Dragon's Child: A Story of Angel Island*. HarperCollins, 2008. 133 pages (trade 978-0-06-027692-8, \$15.99)

Noted author Laurence Yep has often drawn on the Chinese American immigration experience in his works of historical fiction for children. Here Yep collaborates with his niece, an assistant professor of Asian American studies and sociology, to illuminate the Angel Island experience through family history. The fictional story is based on the experiences of Laurence Yep's father and grandfather on their journeys from China to the United States. Angel Island in San Francisco was considered the Ellis Island of the West and served as a processing and detention center for immigrants from 1910 to 1940. Anti-Chinese immigration laws required new and returning Chinese to pass an intense examination to confirm their identity before entering the country. Ten-year-old Gim Lew Yep, who is leaving his village in China for the first time to live and work with his father in San Francisco, is terrified of failing the interrogation that awaits him at Angel Island. His fear is compounded by his desperate desire to prove himself to his father. Tension escalates with each short chapter as the emotional and physical journey unfolds. A descriptive author's note at the beginning and end of the book, plus photographs and a bibliography, will have greater appeal to adult readers, but the heart of this volume is an engaging historical work for children. (Ages 9–12)

Zimmer, Tracie Vaughn. *42 Miles*. Illustrated by Elaine Clayton. Clarion, 2008. 73 pages (trade 978-0-618-61867-5, \$16.00)

A distance of forty-two miles is what JoEllen travels each week between her mom's house in downtown Cincinnati and her dad's farmhouse outside of the city. It's not just the commute between households that's wearing on twelve-year-old JoEllen, but also the fracturing she feels in her identity. At her dad's house, she's called Joey and spends her time fishing and riding horses with her cousin Hayden. With mom, she goes by Ellen and giggles with her girlfriends about school, hobbies, and future dreams. As her thirteenth birthday approaches, JoEllen decides, "My two lives / are going to meet / and shake hands. I'm going to have: / one celebration / one cake / and one song, / with all my favorite voices / singing together." Spare poems accented with whimsical scrapbook-style collages tell the journey of a young teen who wants to her life to be whole rather than disparate parts. (Ages 10-14)

Fiction for Young Adults

Abbott, Tony. *The Postcard*. Little, Brown, 2008. 358 pages (trade 978-0-316-01172-3, \$15.99)

Thirteen-year-old Jason has come to Saint Petersburg, Florida, to help his father clean out his grandmother's belongings after her death. Jason had never met his grandmother, and his father has never talked much about her, or his own childhood. Surprised to see his father cry at his grandmother's funeral, Jason's even more surprised by the strange cast of characters who show up, and the fact that the funeral director keeps referring to his grandmother as "Marnie" rather than her real name, Agnes. Finding a thriller magazine from the 1940s among his grandmother's possessions, Jason discovers a serialized story (amusingly written in the style of Raymond Chandler) about a character named Marnie, who is mixed up with questionable characters bearing a distinct resemblance to the odd mourners. But the story has no conclusion—a note at the end indicates that the author died without writing more. Jason is soon following a series of clues that not only lead to the discovery of additional chapters but also draw the strange assortment of people at the funeral into his life. The real-life events and people are intertwined with the improbable events and characters of the magazine story. They all not only reveal secrets about his father's family but also help Jason to acknowledge his parents' struggling marriage. With old postcards of city landmarks a prominent feature, the Saint Petersburg setting becomes another character in this story that blends over-the-top elements with a teen's very real struggle to come to terms with the uncertainty in his family. An additional element—and delight—for Wisconsin readers plays out in the resolution of one aspect of the mystery in this entertaining novel. (Ages 11-13)

Almond, David. *The Savage*. Illustrated by Dave McKean. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2008. 79 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3932-7, \$17.99)

Weaving between recent past and present, this intense exploration of magic and the monster within is about boy named Blue Baker who is mourning his father. Blue writes a story called “The Savage,” about a wild boy living in the woods on the edge of town. The Savage is violent and angry and eats anything he can catch. He also watches the humans who pass by his woods, which is how he observes Blue and his younger sister, who strike a deep and hidden chord of tenderness inside him. He also notices Hopper, the mean boy who harasses Blue. Where Blue feels powerless toward Hopper, the Savage feels only anger and sets out to punish the bully. The lines between Blue’s story and the real world blur when Hopper is threatened: Is the Savage real or is Blue—a bullied child grieving the loss and protection of his father—on the verge of acting out his violent fantasy? David Almond’s story about the transformative power of creativity features Dave McKean’s powerful illustrations reflecting the intense emotional chaos. That chaos is finally calmed when Blue/the Savage chooses to not cross over a frightening line. (Ages 11–15)

Anderson, M.T. *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Volume II: The Kingdom on the Waves*. Candlewick Press, 2008. 592 pages (trade 978-0-7636-2950-2, \$22.99)

Volume Two of M. T. Anderson’s extraordinary narrative takes up where the previous volume left off, with Octavian Nothing and his former teacher, Dr. Trefusis, escaping to Boston. But the Rebel troops soon have them fleeing again, this time south to Norfolk, Virginia, where Octavian joins the British army and Lord Dunmore, who promises freedom to all Black men joining what is known as the Ethiopian Regiment. Octavian and his regiment spend months aboard ship off the coast of Norfolk, waiting to take on the Rebels. Despite being reunited with several old friends, he finds that his classical education makes it hard to fit in with the other men of African descent. Still, Octavian is fascinated by the diversity of their histories and cultures, and by their stories of pain, suffering, and escape. Most of this story that offers readers a singular perspective on the Revolutionary War is told through Octavian’s journal entries, supplemented by letters from others who hold his fate in their hands. Written in the style of an eighteenth-century novel, Octavian’s thoughtful reports reveal his maturation from boy to man as he learns from first-hand experience rather than books. He becomes something of a philosopher, noting the hypocrisy of the Rebels’ fight for liberty as well as the self-serving pursuits of the British, who he eventually realizes have no intention of freeing the Black men who serve them. His observations are keen and heartbreaking. Each sentence in this masterful piece of writing is so carefully crafted that it will tempt rereading for the sheer joy of language. The characterizations, both primary and secondary, are superb. And, although this is historical fiction, it has much to say about our own times. (Age 14 and older)

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *The Boy Who Dared*. Scholastic Press, 2008. 202 pages (trade 978-0-439-68013-4, \$16.99)

Helmuth Hübener was just seventeen when he was charged with high treason and executed by the Nazis. His crime was listening to enemy radio broadcasts on an illegal radio, spreading the news by typing up reports of what he had heard and secretly distributing copies around Hamburg with the help of friends. As the novel opens, Helmuth is alone in a prison cell, awaiting his execution. Flashbacks reveal details of his short life, from being raised by his widowed mother to his spiritual life as a member of the LDS church, his involvement in the Jungfolk, and his boyish interest in detective work. Inquisitive and intelligent, Helmuth resents being chastised when he begins to question the propaganda fed to him in school, so he seeks answers from another source: the radio his older brother has locked away in a closet to avoid breaking the new Radio Law. Helmuth starts to listen to it at night when everyone else is asleep. He is shocked by what he hears from the BBC and other sources, and wants other Germans to know about the lies they are being fed by their leaders. Helmuth's acts of courage and resistance resulted in his being the youngest German citizen executed by the Nazis. Susan Campbell Bartoletti first learned of Hübener when she was doing research for her book *Hitler Youth* (Scholastic, 2005), and additional research—much of it primary research that included interviews with Helmuth's friends and family—led to this novel. Bartoletti accomplishes the seemingly impossible task of building dramatic tension in a story whose outcome we know from page one. We read on, hoping somehow for a different ending. There never will be one, but Helmuth's questioning voice lives on in the pages of this compelling work. (Age 12 and older)

Blundell, Judy. *What I Saw and How I Lied*. Scholastic Press, 2008. 284 pages (trade 978-0-439-90346-2, \$16.99)

"When Alice fell down the rabbit hole, she fell slow. She had time to notice things on her way down—*Oh, there's a teacup! There's a table!* So things seemed almost normal to her while she was falling. Then she bumped down and rolled into Wonderland, and all hell broke loose." This observation comes from fifteen-year-old Evie, reflecting on her own fall from childhood to adulthood. The setting is post-World War II America, and young Evie is keen on everything returning to normal. Her stepfather, Joe, back from his station in Europe, has established a successful small business and it seems to Evie and her mother that they will soon be swimming in diamonds and furs. Joe adores Evie's mother—a bombshell whose womanly ways Evie attempts to imitate even as her mother seems intent on keeping her a kid. When Joe whisks Evie and her mother off to Florida for a spontaneous vacation, they end up at one of the few hotels open during the off season. An undercurrent of tension between her mother and stepfather builds as Joe becomes focused on making a business deal with the husband of another couple at the hotel. Meanwhile, the arrival of a young man who served with Joe's in the army has Evie in the throes her first big crush, so that she is blind to the signs that his appearance is more than coincidence and the attention he pays her may not be devotion. A novel of a girl coming of age and falling in love transforms

into a film noir-like tale of passion and deception. Sins of all sorts—wartime treachery, false identities, infidelity, crimes of the heart—are carefully spun into an intriguing web of lies that Evie must unravel to decide where her own devotion lies. (Ages 13–16)

Brooks, Kevin. *Black Rabbit Summer*. U.S. edition: *The Chicken House* / Scholastic, 2008. 488 pages (trade 978-0-545-05752-3, \$17.99)

Kevin Brooks is without a doubt one of the most interesting young adult authors to come out of the United Kingdom in the past several years. Like his earlier books, *Black Rabbit Summer* reflects his interest in detective novels and deals with teens facing repercussions and fallout from decisions they didn't think through. Sixteen-year-old Pete, the narrator, and his once-close childhood friends Eric, Nicole, Pauly, and Raymond have grown up and apart since their days in primary school. Twins Eric and Nicole are about to move to France with their family. Before they leave, Nicole wants to get the group together in their old hideout and then attend a local carnival, just for old time's sake. It quickly becomes obvious that they have nothing in common any longer—their interactions are awkward, their class differences more sharply defined. At the carnival, they go their separate ways. But the disappearance of a local teen celebrity at the carnival soon implicates gentle Raymond, who was seen with her and who has also disappeared. Pete is certain that his old friend—his true friend—is innocent. Determined to prove it, he begins to retrace Raymond's steps that night, and in doing so he stumbles upon the footprints of all the others from the hideout. It turns out his old friends have secrets. Those secrets lead Pete down surprising paths, taking readers right along with him as the twists and turns draw ever closer to the heart of at least one mystery. (Ages 13–16)

Bruchac, Joseph. *March Toward the Thunder*. Dial, 2008. 298 pages (trade 978-0-8037-3188-2, \$16.99)

Fifteen-year-old Louis Nolette doesn't join the Fighting 69th Irish Brigade for his dedication to the Union. Louis is Canadian and Indian—the Civil War is not his war by any measure. But he has incentive nonetheless. The money he gets for a signing bonus and the wages he will earn can help his mother buy land. Just as important, Louis is wondering what it would be like—if it would be possible—to be considered an equal among white men. It's a feeling the Abenaki boy has never known. So he lies about his age and joins the Union Army. Joseph Bruchac's meticulously detailed and riveting novel of the Civil War follows the fortunes of Louis and the rest of his "mess," the soldiers with whom he does indeed form a bond of friendship. Over four months during the spring and summer of 1864, Louis knows boredom and battle, fatigue and fear beyond measure as a member of the Fighting 69th on the Virginia campaign. As an Indian, Louis has a distinct outlook on his fellow soldiers and the war, yet he is undeniably one of them as well, part of a group of men (and one woman in disguise) who would die for one another.

Louis's story looks at the war that summer both on and off the battlefield, illuminating the horror of war and the occasional incompetence of its leaders while always keeping the bond that forms among soldiers at the heart of the story. (Age 12 and older)

Caletti, Deb. *The Fortunes of Indigo Skye*. Simon & Schuster, 2008. 298 pages (trade 978-1-4169-1007-7, \$15.00)

Indigo Skye is a high school senior with no big plans for the future. She loves her current job as a waitress at the local diner, the kind of place where the regulars are like family and newcomers garner lots of speculation. After Indigo spots a pack of cigarettes in the coat of quiet newcomer to the restaurant, her respect for his privacy dissolves in an anti-smoking diatribe. He responds by leaving her a thank you note and a \$2.5 million tip. Deb Caletti has carefully set up what happens next by spending ample time early on grounding readers in the life of this smart, down-to-earth teenage girl and her family and friends, characters who feel authentic, with lives of dreams and regret, humor and heartbreak, and everyday struggles to pay the bills. As a result, the impact and uproar of the stranger's act is all the more powerful. When her attempt to give the money back is refused, Indigo is suddenly rich, and sure money won't change her. She's seen enough of it among other kids at her high school to know it can't buy things that really matter. But money seems to change the people around her, who suddenly want things that never mattered to them before. At first unable to see that she herself is not immune, Indigo's sense of self slowly loses its focus in a novel that is an absolute pleasure to read. Caletti's rich, descriptive writing offers many moments of contemplation and insight in a story that is nonetheless swiftly paced, and exceedingly satisfying. (Age 12 and older).

Carter, Anne Laurel. *The Shepherd's Granddaughter*. Groundwood Books / House of Anansi Press, 2008. 224 pages (trade 978-0088899-902-3, \$17.95; pbk. 978-0-88899-903-0, \$12.95)

Amani loves herding sheep with her grandfather, following her heart up the mountain each day. But the Israeli-built highway that her family and other Palestinians are not allowed to use is coming closer, and soon there are signs that a settlement is being built not far from where she takes the herd to graze. Amani's heartbreak is compounded by the realization that her beloved grandfather is dying, while the arrest of her uncle, and later her father, by Israeli soldiers heightens her fear. Anne Laurel Carter's fine novel casts a light on the experiences of Palestinians losing their homes, their livelihood, and sometimes their freedom as Israeli settlements expand on the land that Palestinians and Israeli's alike consider home. Her narrative is built on rich details of Amani's life in scenes that showcase the tenderness, tension, humor, and love that is part of being a family. While firmly rooted in the Palestinian perspective, the narrative offers insight into the mindset of the Israeli settlers, who believe their right to the land is God-given. It also showcases a variety of opinions among the Jewish people, including an American-born boy who has joined his father at the settlement. At first certain of their place there, Jonathan grows increasingly more uncomfortable,

and then adamantly opposes the violence the settlers and army use against Amani's family and town. There is also a rabbi, and later a lawyer, involved in the peace movement and offering legal assistance and support to Amani's family and others. At the center of the turmoil is the coming-of-age story of a girl having to reinvent her idea of what her future will be. (Age 13 and older)

Cashore, Kristin. *Graceling*. Harcourt, 2008. 471 pages (trade 978-0-15-206396-2, \$17.00)

Katsa—a disarmingly strong female protagonist—is a “graceling,” someone who possesses a special skill or talent. Katsa's skill is also her burden—she is an unbeatable assassin whom her uncle the king uses as his enforcer, a role Katsa despises. With a reputation as a deadly fighter, Katsa has few close allies, save her wizened advisor and brotherly cousin. When a stranger comes to their court, a graceling prince from a distant kingdom, Katsa meets her first true rival. Po seeks information regarding his kidnapped grandfather. Distrustful of each other's strengths and knowledge, Katsa and Po lock horns, but their physical and emotional struggle soon leads to mutual if guarded respect. Embarking on a joint mission to discover the reason behind the kidnapping of Po's grandfather, the two become friends, and then lovers. Their close bond becomes essential to their survival when they face an opponent whose grace is to manipulate people's perception of truth—something far more frightening than any physical power. Sharp dialogue, intense action, and a mysterious plot reveal the deep layers in this rich fantasy from debut author Kristin Cashore bursting with adventure, magic, and romance. Of particular note is the relationship that develops between Katsa and Po, who experience tremendous growth as individuals in addition to becoming a couple whose lives are inextricably intertwined. (Age 13 and older)

Chotjewitz, David. *Crazy Diamond*. Translated from the German by Doris Orgel. U.S. edition: *A Richard Jackson Book* / Atheneum, 2008. 252 pages (trade 978-1-4169-1176-0, \$17.99)

This complex novel translated from the German tells the seemingly clichéd story of the rise and steep fall of a teenage pop star from humble beginnings, but there are many layers for readers who look beneath the surface. At age nine, she was smuggled into Germany from Croatia in her uncle's amp case. Mira M., as she's now known to her fans, writes lyrics that convey her wish to surpass generic stardom. But when her dead body is found, her tragedy seems like a familiar headline. The chapters are organized as “tracks” on a two-part CD, with music and music culture playing a prominent role in the text. The mystery surrounding Mira's murder/suicide is explored through the perspectives of those who knew her best, in segments alternating between voices from the present and flashbacks. Melody, Rose, and Jackson are three who have differing thoughts on Mira's life and death, in part due to their own tragic life stories of illegally emigrating from Ghana in a shipping container. With Mira, they grew up in and out of a homeless community, navigating a new life in Hamburg together. Also involved in the events leading up to Mira's death is Kralle, a young woman whose relationship with the group is

tenuous, and Zucka, the son of the record producer who “discovered” Mira. Doubt surfaces regarding the origins of Mira’s most famous lyrics in the eyes of her “frenemies,” exposing the heart of this multifaceted story about gains and losses of trust and identity. (Age 14 and older)

Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. Scholastic Press, 2008. 420 pages (trade 978-0-439-02348-1, \$17.99)

This gripping novel is set in the future, in a time when North America is called Panem. The country has been divided into twelve districts, each with a special function. Katniss is a sixteen-year-old girl from District 12, the poorest area. Since her father died in a coal mining accident, it has fallen on her to provide for her family, which she does by crossing a fence into an off-limits area to hunt small game and gather edible plants. There’s a tradition in Panem: Each year two teens between the ages of twelve and eighteen are selected by a lottery system to participate in the Hunger Games, a televised reality show in which contestants must not only survive in the wild but fight to the death. Katniss is one of the “tributes” from District 12, and the survival skills she has developed will serve her well in the competition. But will she have the heart to kill the other contestants? This first volume in a trilogy that promises intense emotion and fast-paced action probes the realities of a corrupt political system built on secrecy and fear, the ethics of reality television and blood sports, and the lengths human beings will go to in order to survive. (Age 12 and older)

Cumbie, Patricia. *Where People Like Us Live*. Laura Geringer Books / HarperTeen / HarperCollins, 2008. (trade 978-0-06-137597-2, \$16.99)

Libby is new to Racine and the working-class neighborhood of Rubberville. She is both relieved and alarmed when Angie arrives on her doorstep. Angie is all rough edges and bravado, and from the first hour they know each other, there is trouble and tension, but Libby needs a friend. The girls’ interactions shift from innocent (a shared passion for horses, styling each other’s hair) to daring to deeply confusing for Libby. Gradually, Libby begins to realize that Angie’s brash attitude masks desperation, and even fear, whenever her mother’s boyfriend, Kevin, is around. When Libby discovers Angie and Kevin having sex, Angie insists it’s okay and demands Libby keep it secret. Patricia Cumbie’s debut novel keenly captures the wrenching contradictions that are true to being a teenager, when maturity and insight coexist with naïveté and confusion. Cumbie also sensitively portrays a family struggling with money issues, and how each of Libby’s parents are burdened by the desire to maintain their values and dignity while facing the pressure of paying the bills—a reality that is complicated when Libby’s dad goes on strike. With so much of Libby’s own life affected by adult choices out of her control, her decision regarding Angie becomes an act of courage and independence. There isn’t a clear time frame for this story, which feels like it’s set in the 1970s but references present-day technology, but vivid characters and emotions and exceptional descriptive writing stand out. (Age 12 and older)

Doctorow, Cory. *Little Brother*. A Tom Dougherty Associates Book / Tor, 2008. 382 pages (trade 978-0-7653-1985-2, \$17.95)

Marcus is a seventeen-year-old hacker in San Francisco who loves playing computer games and subverting his school's online security system to do so. He and his three friends skip school one day to play an online game that involves going to real places to search for clues. But just as they're getting started, the Bay Bridge is blown up by terrorists. Marcus and his friends are picked up by National Homeland Security and taken to a secret prison where they are held for several days and interrogated. Marcus had enough gadgets on his person to arouse suspicion. Once they let him go, he's so angry that he gets even by establishing an army of teen hackers in order to fight the government's ever-increasing infringement on civil liberties and to expose NHS for the sham that it is. Using the secret identity "M1k3y," he becomes a hero throughout geekdom—and a marked man everywhere else. The government would love to get its hands on him. The problem is, they have no idea who he is, and he always manages to stay one step ahead of them. On its most superficial level, *Little Brother* functions as a fast-paced action novel that's impossible to put down. But you don't have to scrape very far beneath its surface to appreciate its truly subversive nature. For the more technologically inclined, it offers the tools to stage a techno-revolution, and for the more politically inclined, it offers the impetus for wanting to do so. (Age 13 and older)

Dole, Mayra Lazara. *Down to the Bone*. HarperTeen / HarperCollins, 2008. 367 pages (trade 978-0-06-084310-6, \$16.99)

Laura and Marlana, both sixteen, have kept their love a secret for two years out of necessity. They have both witnessed a lot of homophobia in the Miami Latino community where lesbians are derisively referred to as *tortilleras*. Laura fears rejection from her traditional Cuban American mother, and Marlana, from her extended Puerto Rican family, should anyone learn about the joy they feel both physically and emotionally in being together. Their fears turn out to be well founded when Sister Asunción intercepts a love letter from Marlana to Laura in her Catholic school classroom; Laura is kicked out of school and home, and Marlana is sent back to Puerto Rico to be married off to a man. Luckily Laura is taken in by her best friend, Soli, and her mother, Viva, and they become her new family as she struggles to put her life back together. Through all her adversity, Laura maintains her sense of humor and an optimistic outlook on life. She's a survivor who is determined to be happy, even if it means making those she cares about unhappy. Mayra Lazara Dole's breezy style and wry dialog offer a fresh new voice in both GLBTQ and Latino literature for teens. (Age 14 and older)

Dowd, Siobhan. *Bog Child*. U.S. edition: David Fickling Books / Random House, 2008. 321 pages (trade 978-0-385-75169-8, \$16.99)

A taut, tightly plotted story is set principally in Northern Ireland in 1981, in the midst of the Troubles. Teenage Fergus is focused on earning grades that will get him into college and away from the strife that plagues his family and his country. Fergus's brother, in jail as a terrorist, has decided to go on a

hunger strike. Fergus, who runs regularly in the hills above town, is getting pressured to “do his part” for the cause and start leaving small packages in designated drop points. Fergus has no desire to get involved in terrorist action, but his contact offers hope that Fergus’s jailed brother could benefit from his willingness to help. On his runs, Fergus strikes up a friendship of sorts with the young Welsh soldier guarding the border—this “enemy,” Fergus realizes, is a kid just as trapped by circumstance as Fergus and others in his own town. Oddly, the one bright spot is the body Fergus discovers while stealing peat with his uncle from a bog just over the border. Two thousand years old, the remains have brought a scientist and her daughter to town. Fergus’s waking hours have him thinking about Cora, the scientist’s daughter, while his dreams are filled with scenes from the life of the Iron Age girl whose body he found—someone who seemed to live during another time of troubles that cast new light on his own. Rich, seamless storytelling illuminates the lives of characters during tense and challenging political times in Siobhan Dowd’s exceptional novel. Those characters are finely developed and skillfully revealed, sometimes in ways that surprise or even shock, in a story that finds both humor and hope in the midst of tragedy. (Age 14 and older)

Durbin, William. *The Winter War*. Wendy Lamb Books / Random House, 2008. 229 pages (trade 978-0-385-74652-6, \$15.99)

The Winter War between Finland and Russia began in the fall of 1939, when Russian troops invaded Finland with an eye toward claiming land in the southeast for “security reasons.” It lasted for 105 days. Citizens became soldiers, and although hugely outnumbered, they were largely successful in defending their soil. It was in the negotiations to bring peace that Finland lost, ceding 35,000 square kilometers of land it has never recovered. William Durbin’s novel is set during the three-and-a-half months of fighting through the winter of 1939–1940. When teenage Marko’s village is shelled, his best friend is killed. His father is already somewhere on the front, and Marko is now more determined than ever to fight, despite his polio-weakened leg. His chance comes when one of his teachers, now a unit commander, asks him to be a message runner behind the front lines. Marko is soon paired with taciturn Karl, a refugee from a region already overrun by Russian troops, and the two young soldiers are witness to the anything-but-glory side of war, as well as part of the comradeship that gets them through the most difficult times. An author’s note provides additional information on the Winter War that forms the backdrop for this compelling, and thoroughly researched, story. (Ages 11–14)

Ellis, Deborah. *Lunch with Lenin and Other Stories*. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2008. 169 pages (pbk. 978-1-55455-105-7, \$14.95)

Deborah Ellis writes candidly about teenagers whose lives have been affected by drugs in this singular collection of short stories. The ten stories cover a range of territory, both geographically and emotionally. From working on an opium farm in Afghanistan to selling crystal meth in the Philippines, and from observing glue sniffers in a Mexican town to purchasing medical marijuana illegally, the teens in these stories may not be drug dealers or drug

users but they are still dealing with the profound impact drugs have on their lives or their immediate world. Ellis writes without judgment—rather she invites readers to examine how drugs and alcohol affect individuals, relationships, communities, and society from a variety of vantages. (Age 13 and older)

Farr, Richard. *Emperors of the Ice: A True Story of Disaster and Survival in the Antarctic, 1910–13*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. 217 pages (trade 978–0–374–31975–5, \$19.95)

When Apsley George Benet Cherry-Garrard was twenty-three years old, he was chosen from a pool of 8,000 applicants to accompany a small band of men led by Robert F. Scott on an expedition to the Antarctic. Wealthy, Oxford-educated Cherry, as he was called, possessed no special skill or ability to make him an outstanding candidate, but over the next three years this youngest member of the team not only proved capable of enduring extreme conditions but also contributed substantially to the group's accomplishments and survival. Extensive research provides a solid factual backdrop for Richard Farr's fictionalized account of the journey from Cherry's imagined perspective. Named Assistant Zoologist, Cherry and two other men spent a month trekking from Cape Evans camp to the winter nesting area of the emperor penguins in an effort to collect unhatched eggs for study. Vivid descriptions of temperatures dipping below minus 70 degrees Fahrenheit and of Force 11 winds draw readers into the Antarctic landscape of Cherry's experience. Later, he is a member of the group that supports Scott's attempt to reach the Pole but is not selected as one of five men to make the last, fatal push. Numerous photographs and illustrations complement this thoroughly engaging novel of exploration, which includes a clear chronology and source notes. (Age 12 and older)

Geus, Mireille. *Piggy*. Translated from the Dutch by Nancy Forest-Flier. U.S. edition: Front Street, 2008. 110 pages (trade 978–1–59078–636–9, \$14.95)

"Dizzy" Lizzy Bekell is misunderstood by her peers. Autistic, the twelve-year-old whiles away hours at the bus stop, watching the neighborhood boys play together but unable, and unwelcome, to join them. Lizzy's careful routines at home with her mother and at her special school are interrupted when a new girl moves to town and forcefully befriends her. Margaret is brash and bold. Her fierceness alarms and awes Lizzy, who is pleased to have a friend but unsure of how to handle Margaret's moodiness. The intense and manipulative relationship emanates uncomfortable foreshadowing. Lizzy's uneasiness grows as Margaret, negatively nicknamed "Piggy," hatches a retaliation plan against the neighborhood bullies. Lizzy's voice provides powerful narration as she recounts the disastrous scenario to police investigators. The shifting from past to present closely parallels Lizzy's own transitions between internal and external realities. This quiet novel resonates with realistic conflict. The drama builds effectively, but the final blow arrives after the travesty has unraveled. (Ages 11–14)

Goldman, Steven. *Two Parties, One Tux, and a Very Short Film about the Grapes of Wrath*. Bloomsbury, 2008. 307 pages (trade 978-1-59990-271-5, \$16.99)

Mitchell Wells is the kind of teenager who feels awkward just about all the time. He survives school and other social situations solely with the help of his best (and only) friend, David. When David shares that he is gay, Mitchell is sure that everything will be okay—but he begins questioning whether this means he's gay, too, and a new awkwardness develops in the boys' friendship. Life at school is complicated by a claymation film Mitchell impulsively decides to submit in lieu of a required paper on the *Grapes of Wrath*. A classmate's parent registers a complaint against the film's commentary ("a visual interpretation of biblical themes") as offensive. Could it have been the naked clay Eve with button breasts, or the dancing Steinbeck Ken doll? Plagued by worry over the school administration's response to the complaint, Mitchell has other concerns, too: he has a date to prom with the girl of his fantasies. . . but why does the popular beauty want to go with him? Meanwhile, David seems increasingly distant, Mitchell's sister Carrie is trying to set him up with a girl named Amanda, and Carrie's best friend M. C. is inexplicably evolving from a household fixture to a person of interest in Mitchell's life. Mitchell's voice is laugh-out-loud funny as he agonizes his way through junior year fixated on sex, friendship, and academic trials, with a culminating prom scene that steals the show. (Age 14 and older)

Hazen, Lynn E. *Shifty*. Tricycle Press, 2008. 188 pages (trade 978-1-58246-257-8, \$15.99)

Fifteen year old Soli doesn't really know where he came from, and though he's trying to figure out where he's going, trouble keeps finding him. Nicknamed "Shifty" for his habit of getting into scrapes, Soli struggles to keep a grip on the good things he has going for him. At the moment, he's in a decent foster home. His tough foster mother Martha insists on using his real name because she believes in using people-first language. To her, Soli, Sissy, and the baby are not "foster kids" but "kids living in a foster home." Soli mocks Martha's conventions (referring to the newborn as "baby-first crack baby") but her rules also provide him with the support and understanding he needs. However, when Martha's physical problems worsen, she allows Soli to drive her vehicle illegally to help with errands. Prone to "borrowing" her van anyway, Soli once again finds himself in a web of problems. When a new social worker begins investigating the matter, Soli realizes that his home-first foster home has become something he doesn't want to mess up. Soli's relationships with Martha and Sissy and his growing understanding of himself are compelling components in this surprising young adult novel about a boy whose heritage is probably mixed-race. (Ages 12 and older)

Hegamin, Tonya Cheri. *M+O 4evr*. Houghton Mifflin, 2008. 165 pages (trade 978-0-618-49570-2, \$16.00)

Eighteen-year-old Opal looks back on her lifelong friendship with Marianne, the biracial daughter of an Amish woman who has left her community. Although Opal seems to have everything going for her—she's academically

gifted and has a steady and loving family—she'd give it all up if Marianne would only love her in same the way she loves Marianne. Opal has been enamored since their childhood days, when she and Marianne would lie together under a blackberry bush, passing berries back and forth from mouth to mouth. This game awakened Opal's sexual feeling for Marianne, a feeling that grew through adolescence but that she has kept hidden away. The land they live on is haunted by the ghost of an escaped slave named Hannah who also suffered a tragic, unrequited love generations earlier. Hannah's story intertwines with that of Opal and Marianne, and leads to the same sad ending. A short, spare narrative offers complex characters and packs in a lot of emotion without ever becoming melodramatic. (Age 14 and older)

Jiménez, Francisco. *Reaching Out*. Houghton Mifflin, 2008. 196 pages (trade 978-0-618-03851-0, \$16.00)

Francisco Jiménez continues his novelized memoir in this sequel to *The Circuit* (Houghton Mifflin, 1999) and *Breaking Through* (Houghton Mifflin, 2001). Now at Santa Clara University, Francisco (or "Frank") finds that all of the work he put into getting there make it hard for him to enjoy the pranks and silliness of senior class members when he first arrives. Instead, he devotes intense amounts of time to studying and assignments. Jiménez's narrative style is easygoing and wholly engaging as he recounts his four years of college, during which he finds himself growing into a natural leader. At the same time, he wishes there were more he could do help his family, whom he has only physically left behind. College marks many turning points for Jiménez. He meets the woman he would go on to marry, he finds new affirmation for his own academic promise, and he discovers that Spanish-speaking language and cultures are a valued area of study. Perhaps most important, he decides to no longer hide his past. When he admits to a priest that his family initially crossed the border from Mexico illegally and he is not a U.S. citizen, it is like a weight being lifted. Jiménez is now a chaired professor of Modern Languages and Literature at Santa Clara University. In writing about his life while he was a student there, he is never preachy about either the challenges he faced or lessons he learned. Instead, it is genuine emotion that carries his storytelling, whether its frustration at the veiled racism of fellow students or, more often, genuine appreciation for the support of the family, friends, and strangers who helped him succeed. (Age 12 and older)

Jongman, Mariken. *Rits*. Translated from the Dutch by Wanda Boeke. U.S. edition: Front Street, 2008. 236 pages (trade 978-1-59078-545-4, \$17.95)

Thirteen-year-old Rits has been living with his Uncle Corry since his mother had a breakdown. Corry is hardly ready for prime-time parenting: He has no clue how to offer comfort and support to a boy full of worry and anxiety, nor does it even occur to him that he should. Prone to bouts of hypochondria and panic, Rits finds solace and purpose in two goals: making a movie and learning to cook. The movie is inspired by his new friend Rita's intriguing and sometimes mysterious family history, which leads Rits to embark on a stint of documentary filmmaking. And the cooking is inspired by Corry's nutritionally challenged lifestyle. The narrative is composed of Rits's journal

entries, full of observations that are painful, tender, and so very funny at times. Rits is spot-on sure of the things he *knows* are true about the world (many of which are only true if you're thirteen) yet unsure of so much else as he bears the burden of not knowing what will happen to his family as it seems to unravel around him. But there is hope, too—in Rits's sweetly developing relationship with Corry; in his deepening friendship with Rita, the girl next door (well, across the street); and even in the efforts of Rits's very imperfect parents to do their best by him in the days to come—leaving a lasting impression in this singular story. (Ages 11–14)

Konigsberg, Bill. *Out of the Pocket.* Dutton, 2008. 264 pages (trade 978-0-525-47996-3, \$16.99)

Bobby Framingham is a successful high school quarterback who dreams of recruitment to Stanford before turning pro. Bobby's a confident guy who wishes that he could be honest with his teammates and family about his sexuality, but he worries that being openly gay could jeopardize his athletic future. He's done his research, and he knows that there has never been a publicly gay player in the history of the NFL. After coming out to his best friend, he's relieved that Austin seems okay—kind of—with the information. As it turns out, Austin can't keep the news to himself, and others on the team aren't so accepting. Eventually Bobby's secret is exposed in the school newspaper, which leads to national coverage. Reactions from peers, family, fans, and the media range from homophobic intolerance to unexpected support. This tumultuous stage of Bobby's life is both exacerbated and put in perspective when his father is diagnosed with lymphoma. Bobby struggles to master new skills on the field that require him to function "out of the pocket," at the same time as he is forced to leave his comfort zone in the real world. Ultimately it appears that Bobby will bring his winning ways to both arenas. (Age 13 and older)

Larbalastier, Justine. *How to Ditch Your Fairy.* Bloomsbury, 2008. 304 pages (trade 978-1- 59990-301-9, \$16.99)

Fourteen-year-old Charlie lives in New Avalon, a world similar to ours with one major exception: Most people have invisible fairies that offer some sort of advantage. There are good-hair fairies, clothes-shopping fairies, loose-change-finding fairies, and never-getting-lost fairies. Charlie is stuck with a parking fairy—whenever she's in a car, the perfect parking spot will appear. For a teen who doesn't yet drive and who doesn't even particularly like cars, it's a real burden. Adults always want her to ride with them. Even worse, Andrew Khassian Rogers, a senior jock who's twice Charlie's size, has a habit of picking her up at school—literally—and carrying her out to his car when he needs to run errands. Charlie's classmate Fiorenze Burnham-Stone has the fairy most teenage girls desire—an all-boys-will-like-you fairy. Charlie is surprised when Fiorenze, whom she's never liked, confesses to hating her own fairy. Soon the two are conspiring to trade. Relying on theories posited by Fiorenze's mother, a fairy researcher, the teens find themselves engaging in increasingly drastic measures first to swap their fairies and then, when each gets a taste of the other's world, to ditch them altogether. The blithe,

wholly enjoyable tale features witty dialogue and memorably funny scenes, to which Larbalastier's invented New Avalon teen-speak adds a great deal of flair. (Ages 11–14)

Lester, Julius. *Guardian.* Amistad / HarperTeen / HarperCollins, 2008. 144 pages (trade 978-0-06-155890-0, \$16.99)

Julius Lester tackles the brutal subject of mob lynching in a slender novel that reads like a one-act play. Set in the Deep South in 1946, the story is told from the perspective of a white teenage boy. Fourteen-year-old Ansel is beginning to notice things—his feelings for the pastor's daughter Mary Susan, for example, and how his friendship with Willie, a Black teen who works at his father's store, is frowned upon. Ansel's understanding of himself and his community is radically transformed after Mary Susan is raped and murdered by the cruel, arrogant son of the wealthiest family in town. Ansel stumbled onto the crime in its final moments, but before he can make a statement the finger is pointed at Willie's father, a gentle disabled man. Knowing that his friend's father is innocent, Ansel frantically looks for justice, only to be blockaded by his father: "I don't like this anymore than you do. Don't you think I don't know it's wrong? ... You're going to come with me to get the rope, and we're going to stay around and watch whatever happens, whether we want to or not." Willie's father is hung from a tree in the town's center by an angry mob. In the aftermath, Ansel makes his escape from a father and town he can no longer bear with the help of his mother, a browbeaten woman determined to free her son from a future in that place. In the story's epilogue, it is clear Ansel never truly escapes from the horror he witnessed as a young man. An author's note, appendix, and bibliography on the topic of lynching conclude this powerful novel. (Age 13 and older)

Levithan, David. *How They Met, and Other Stories.* Alfred A. Knopf, 2008. 244 pages (trade 978-0-375-84886-5, \$16.99)

Bored one day in high school physics, author David Levithan began to write a short story about love, using the concepts and vocabulary he was learning in class ("She feared fusion would only bring fission, with the mass deficits too great and the energy spent too time-consuming to make the romantic endeavor worthwhile."). It became a Valentine's Day gift for his high school friends and the start of an annual tradition that he has continued to this day. Many of the eighteen short stories in this collection are from his Valentine's Day offerings, including "A Romantic Inclination," the physics class story he wrote at age sixteen; "Memory Dance," written a year later; and "the escalator, a love story," written when he was in college. Five stories in *How They Met* have been previously published in other collections; others are original to this volume. Each story deals with romantic love, particularly the giddy sort that defines so much of adolescence. Half of the stories feature gay main characters falling in and out of love, and Levithan excels at these. His well-rounded characters are shown with depth and humor, and when their families are added to the mix, as they are in "Princes" and "What a Song Can Do," the result is nothing short of brilliant. Whether the characters are straight or gay, all of the stories are ultimately about the same things:

What attracts one person to another? What miracle of chance brought them together? And, as the author first mused as a sixteen-year-old in a high school physics class: “After the initial impulse, would the momentum remain constant?” (Age 14 and older)

Lockhart, E. *The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks*. Hyperion, 2008. 345 pages (trade 978-0-7868-3818-9, \$16.99)

Over the course of her fifteenth year, Frankie Landau-Banks transforms from a bunny rabbit to a basset hound. Nicknamed “Bunny Rabbit” by her father, and treated like the baby of the family, Frankie is a slightly nerdy girl who’s used to life on the sidelines—until she develops a curvaceous figure over the summer. When fall comes, she’s the center of attention at her co-ed boarding school. At first it’s her appearance that’s eye-catching, but as peers get to know Frankie, they appreciate her humor, interests, and candor. Frankie manages to keep one foot in the door of her old world, while stepping into a new world of popularity complete with a permanent seat at the cool table and a clever and companionable boyfriend. Yet Frankie is not truly satisfied, or even happy, because there’s one door that remains closed to her—membership in the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds. The Loyal Order is an all-male secret society at Alabaster Preparatory Academy with a long history of traditions and practical jokes. Not only will her boyfriend not speak to her about it, but he condescendingly believes that Frankie is not of the same caliber as his fellow Bassets. Undeterred and in denial, Frankie tracks the trail of the Bassets to hush-hush meetings, where she uncovers their secrets. Posing as a member of the Loyal Order online, Frankie begins issuing directives for humorous hijinks that raise the Basset legend to a whole new level. Although anonymous, Frankie finally feels like she belongs. In the end, she is exposed, but not before bringing to light issues of gender equality and freedom of expression with her peers and administrators. (Age 13 and older)

Murdock, Catherine Gilbert. *Princess Ben: Being a Wholly Truthful Account of Her Various Discoveries and Misadventures, Recounted to the Best of Her Recollection, in Four Parts*. Houghton Mifflin, 2008. 344 pages (trade 978-0-618-95971-6, \$16.00)

In “Part One: In Which Fate Deals Me a Savage Blow, Leaving Me to My Own Pitifully Meager Devices,” Princess Ben (short for Benevolence) recounts the tragedy of losing her royal parents and the suffering she endures when moving from her modest abode to formal life inside the castle of her stern aunt, the queen. Grieving, Princess Ben turns to food for comfort and is soon criticized by the court for her slovenly appearance. Unfit, in more ways than one, to undertake the responsibilities of the title she’s acquired, Ben is forced to complete hours of training and lessons by day while at night she is banished to a tower chamber far from the castle pantry. It is at her precise hour of need that Ben finds a magical doorway into a room furnished with an ancient spell book intended for her discovery. Suddenly, Ben’s life takes on new meaning as she gains powerful skills and knowledge. She gains the confidence and insight to see herself and those around her

in a different light, including the aunt whose actions she understood only as torment. Just as startling, Ben realizes the fate of her beloved kingdom is in her hands. Through masterful and humorous storytelling, author Catherine Gilbert Murdock weaves a fresh yet old-fashioned fairy tale full of multilayered characters, with sly references to familiar tales sprinkled in. (Age 12 and older)

Myers, Walter Dean. *Game*. HarperTeen / HarperCollins, 2008. 218 pages (trade 978-0-06-058294-4, \$16.99)

With basketball his ticket to college, Drew Lawson is more than a little frustrated when the new kid on his high school team, who hails from Prague of all places, begins to garner favoritism from the coach—at least that's how Drew sees it. Drew only has to look on the street corners of his neighborhood to see examples of people who are out of the game. Maybe their dreams died; maybe they were just beaten by the challenges of life. He doesn't want to be one of them, but his future depends on a college basketball scholarship, which in turn depends on his showing his best stuff during his final high school season—if the coach will let him. Walter Dean Myers's narrative is so firmly grounded in Drew's point of view that readers get incensed on Drew's behalf, and only gradually realize, right along with him, that the coach is considering Drew's best interests together with those of the team as a whole. The swift-paced basketball action will be a big draw for many readers in a book that also illuminates racial politics, family dynamics (especially between Drew and his lively sister), and male teen relationships—including Drew's friendship with buddies on and off the team and his initially tense interactions with Tomas, the Czech player, that ultimately approach something like friendship. (Age 12 and older)

Myers, Walter Dean. *Sunrise Over Fallujah*. Scholastic Press, 2008. 290 pages (trade 978-0-439-91624-0, \$17.99)

Robin Perry is the nephew of Richie Perry, the main character in Walter Dean Myers's *Fallen Angels* (Scholastic, 1988). Thirty years after his uncle fought in Vietnam, Robin has enlisted in the service and has been sent to Iraq. Readers follow him through the first few months of the war, a period when most Americans believed it would be over in a few months. Robin has been assigned to a Civil Affairs unit, which serves as a liaison between the military and Iraqi civilians. Initially he is optimistic about his duties, but when he sees the work can't take away the grief, fear, and anger the Iraqi people live with on a daily basis, he begins to take a more realistic view of his role, a view that soon extends to the American military in general. As with *Fallen Angels*, Myers is at his best when depicting the developing relationships, both good and bad, among the young soldiers in the same unit. He also excels at showing the terror and confusion that young soldiers feel when it's not always clear who the enemy is. Robin's letters home put an upbeat spin on everything that's going on, eerily echoing the official reports that were coming from the field at a time when soldiers themselves began to recognize that they would be in Iraq longer than anyone else could imagine. (Ages 13 and older)

Na, An. *The Fold*. Putnam, 2008. 280 pages (trade 978-0-399-24276-2, \$16.99)

Korean American teenager Joyce Park is annoyingly obsessed with her looks, which she wishes were better, and her love life, which is nonexistent, although she dreams of dating popular John Ford Kang. Then Joyce's wealthy aunt, Gomo, a big believer in self-improvement, bestows each member of Joyce's family with a gift of Gomo's own choosing. For Joyce's beautiful older sister Helen, it's unwanted matchmaking. For Joyce's mother, it's unwanted eyebrow tattoos. For Joyce herself, Gomo offers plastic surgery, so that her eyelids can have a fold. Joyce is thrilled with the effect on her own self-esteem—and the response of a group of popular teens—when the surgeon temporarily tapes her eyelids, but she's not absolutely certain about moving ahead with the surgery. Joyce's family is loving and funny, yet complex dynamics further cloud her decision-making. Joyce's parents feel steamrolled by Gomo's generosity, unable to refuse because of all she has done for their family. Meanwhile Gomo, who seems to focus only on superficial appearance, reveals the painful racism she experienced in the past that sheds new light on her desire to fit American standards of beauty. And it turns out that Helen is not just unhappy about the matchmaking, she is also mourning a painful loss of love and friendship—a revelation that self-absorbed Joyce has been blind to for far too long. An Na deftly explores issues relating to appearance and esteem, as well as the tensions and joys that come with being a family, in a book about a teen who starts out shallow and plumbs far greater depths by story's end. (Age 12 and older)

Ness, Patrick. *The Knife of Never Letting Go*. (Chaos Walking: Book One) U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2008. 479 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3931-0, \$18.99)

Twelve-year-old Todd is the last boy left in Prentisstown. Germ warfare between the settlers who founded Todd's community and the native inhabitants of the planet led to the death of all women and girls when Todd was still a baby. The men who survived were left with Noise—the audible thoughts of every nearby living being, both human and animal. Noise can't be shut out, and the chaos can be overwhelming. But in the woods one day, Todd senses a blank space, an absence of Noise. Todd's two guardians have an unexpected response: They produce a backpack full of supplies and tell Todd he must run away: His life is in danger if he does not flee. On the run, Todd meets Preacher, the Prentisstown minister, and discovers the source of the mysterious "silence"—an orphaned girl about his age whose thoughts he cannot hear, and whom Preacher seems intent on harming. Todd's fate and the fate of the girl are soon inextricably linked—at first by circumstance and soon by choice—in Patrick Ness's taut and harrowing survival story. Ness explores the worst and best of human nature, from the corruption of power and religious fanaticism to compassion, understanding, tolerance, and friendship. At the story's core is a fierce and tender boy trying to make sense of the present and past in a world where nothing he once thought true can be trusted, and the spirited girl and devoted dog who journey with him into

the unknown. Readers will be stunned by the many twists, turns, and revelations Ness offers, one of which comes on the final page in this first volume of the “Chaos Walking” trilogy. (Age 12 and older)

Pearson, Mary E. *The Adoration of Jenna Fox*. Henry Holt, 2008. 266 pages (trade 978-0-8050-7668-4, \$16.95)

Identity, relationships, and emotions play pivotal roles in this intriguing novel by Mary E. Pearson. Waking up from a year-long coma, seventeen-year-old Jenna Fox finds that nothing in her life is familiar. Her doting and protective parents are unwilling to offer much in the way of explanations—except for giving her a box of family movies chronicling central snippets of her life. Strictly monitoring Jenna’s health care and controlling her interactions with the outside world, Jenna’s devoted parents seem beyond loving. Readers, along with Jenna, struggle to put together the pieces of her life both before and after the accident. Like many teens, Jenna tries to reconcile the various definitions of herself while also negotiating boundary changes in her relationships with others. Brief and reflective poems that bookend the chapters offer insight into Jenna’s deepening understanding of who she is and what she’s made of. Set in the near future, this novel presents realistic issues related to biotechnology and medical ethics. Also embedded in the story are the challenges these issues impose on civil rights, the environment, and religious beliefs. This multilayered novel is equal parts love story, science fiction, and mystery. (Age 12 and older)

Pfeffer, Susan Beth. *The Dead & the Gone*. Harcourt, 2008. 321 pages (trade 978-0-15-206311-5, \$17.00)

Arriving on the heels of *Life as We Knew It* (Harcourt 2007), Susan Beth Pfeffer here offers a parallel perspective on the life-altering impact of an asteroid hitting the moon. Alex Morales, a high-school senior with college ambitions, is a likeable young man who works at a New York City pizza joint, serves at his Catholic church, and cares for his siblings. On the night the asteroid hits the moon, knocking it out of orbit and instigating catastrophic climatic changes on Earth, Alex is juggling his responsibilities as usual. With his father away visiting family in Puerto Rico and his mother working late at the hospital, Alex is in charge at home. On that fateful night, he has no idea the level of responsibility that will soon bear down on his shoulders. In the days, weeks, and months that follow, Alex’s world, along with the universe as he knows it, spins madly and horrifically out of control. From spotty electricity and food supplies to none at all, and from the kindness of strangers to a “fend for oneself” mentality, the tension and terror resulting from this cataclysmic event are palpable. Alex soon realizes that there are more unknowns than knowns about the situation. Taking stock as best a seventeen-year-old can, he vows to protect his two younger sisters no matter what. At the heart of such grimness lies Alex’s faith—his religious convictions and the support of his parish community add an uncommon richness to this young adult novel. Shown candidly through Alex’s eyes, *The Dead & the Gone* is an all-too-believable story of survival. (Age 13 and older)

Reinhardt, Dana. *How to Build a House*. Wendy Lamb Books / Random House, 2008. 227 pages (trade 978-0-375-84453-9, \$15.99)

Seventeen-year-old Harper Evans flies cross-country from trendy Los Angeles, California, to small-town Bailey, Tennessee, where she has signed up to spend a summer building homes in an area devastated by tornadoes. The instructive chapter titles—"Lay the Foundation," "Put Up Walls," "Insulate Yourself"—offer a chronology of her volunteer experience as well as a metaphor for the personal issues Harper is forced to deal with. Before her departure, Harper's father and adored stepmother had split up. Not only is Harper's idea of home shattered, but her relationship with her best friend and stepsister, Tess, is seriously damaged. Harper's anger and confusion fuel her energy for the habitat project in the "Here" sections, and flashbacks to "Home" shed light on the troubling circumstances she fled. The transformative power of a summer away is experienced by the teens in Harper's volunteer group in the form of romantic flings and post-curfew adventures, and Harper finds herself falling in with new friends and a new relationship. Teddy, her love interest and the recipient of the new house her group is building for his family, provides Harper with the support and comfort she needs. Biracial (Black/white) Teddy and his family are almost too perfect, but that's due in part to Harper's focus on the faults of her own family. With the help of the offbeat humor and wisdom of her project guide Linus and the development of a surprising new skill set, Harper finds the comfort of home within herself. (Age 14 and older)

Schmidt, Gary D. *Trouble*. Clarion, 2008. 297 pages (trade 978-0-618-92766-1, \$16.00)

"If you build your house far enough away from Trouble, Trouble will never find you," Henry's father is fond of saying. But Trouble does find Henry and his family when his older brother, Franklin, is hit by a car while jogging. The last word he says to Henry is "Katahdin"—a mountain in Maine that the brothers had planned on climbing together. Franklin once suggested that Henry didn't have the guts for it, so Henry takes Franklin's utterance as both a command and a challenge, and decides to secretly set off after school is out. He convinces his friend Sanborn to go along, and they hit the road hitchhiking with Black Dog, a stray Henry rescued from drowning. When they are finally picked up, it's by Chay Chouen, the teenage boy who was arrested for killing Franklin. Chay had gotten off with what many considered a slap on the wrist, generating bad blood between the white citizens and Chay's Cambodian immigrant community. Henry doesn't want to be in a car with Chay, but it's the only ride they've been offered. Soon it's clear that Chay is fighting many demons and is taking flight. Over the course of what becomes a shared journey, Henry and Chay come to understand each other as the truth about what happened that night on the road, and about the kind of person Franklin was and Chay is, are revealed. Part road trip, part survival story, this is above all a journey to redemption. Gary D. Schmidt's descriptive passages are stunning and memorable, whether he's writing of

the beauty of the natural landscape or the antics of Black Dog. The novel that looks at racism, class issues, and the power of personal integrity is rich in symbolism as well. (Age 13 and older)

Scott, Elizabeth. *Living Dead Girl*. Simon Pulse, 2008. 170 pages (trade 978-1-4169-6059-1, \$16.99)

The title of this haunting novel describes the psychological state of a kidnapped and sexually abused girl. Short, episodic chapters told in blunt first-person narrative detail Alice's existence with her captor, Ray. Vivid but not gratuitously graphic scenes convey her daily life of terror. Taken when she was ten while on a school field trip, she is now fifteen—and Ray wants a new little girl. Alice, in many ways numb to her physical and psychological imprisonment, aids Ray in his search for the next victim only because she believes that her time will then be up. Ray's repeated references to "623 Daisy Lane," Alice's childhood home, are evidence of his manipulative and threatening ways: From the beginning, Alice feared he would harm her parents if she tried to get away. A gripping story of horrifying criminal behavior stands out because of the insight it offers on Alice's inability to flee, as well as on society's inability to acknowledge uncomfortable and disturbing truths. (Ages 14 and older)

Skrypuch, Marsha Forchuk. *Daughter of War*. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2008. 210 pages (pbk. 978-1-55455-044-9, \$14.95)

Teenagers Marta and Kevork had become separated from one another in the year following the Armenian genocide in Turkey. They had fallen in love during the chaos and terror, and had promised they would find one another if they ever became separated. Now, in 1916, they are each determined to fulfill that promise. Kevork finds himself disguising his Armenian identity as he passes as an Arab in the Syrian market where he works. He is desperate to find a way back to his betrothed—back to the orphanage where he and Marta met—and a covert job helping other refugees offers him the opportunity he's been looking for. What he doesn't know is that Marta was forced to leave the orphanage and live as a Muslim woman, married to a Turkish man. Now pregnant, she has been left at the orphanage gates once more by the First Wife of her husband, who wants to rid her household of other heirs. Now Marta lives in anticipation and agony—anxious to reunite with her nearby sister and desperate to know if Kevork will ever return. And if he does, will he still accept her, let alone her child? Told in alternating third-person narratives, this sweeping story of love, loss, horror, and hope recounts two teens' journeys during a dramatic historical episode. A map and historical note provide accessible context for readers to navigate the terrain of this haunting yet beautiful novel. (Age 14 and older)

Stratton, Allan. *Chanda's Wars*. HarperTeen / HarperCollins, 2008. 384 pages (trade 978-0-06-087262-5, \$17.99)

Chanda, a teenager living in an unnamed sub-Saharan African country, is the sole caretaker for her younger sister, Iris, age 6, and her brother, Soly, age 5. Her mother died six months earlier from AIDS, and Chanda promised

her she would take care of them. When Iris and Soly are kidnapped during a rebel raid, Chanda feels she must keep her promise to her mother, so she and another teenager, Nelson, go on a dangerous quest to track the rebels and rescue the children. Allan Stratton's sequel to *Chanda's Secrets* (Annick Press, 2004) touches on the complex politics and economics that leaves the government of Chanda's country turning a blind eye as some of its youngest citizens are kidnapped by guerilla armies for use as soldiers and slaves. Chanda and Nelson know the odds are they will die trying to save the children, but they also know they have to try. Stratton's detailed author's note positions him as a knowledgeable writer about human rights issues in African nations, including the horrifying reality of children who are brutalized and turned into soldiers. His choice to make the setting a fictional rather than real African nation is almost certainly one that protects real people while reflecting a truth that crosses geographic borders. The outcome for the characters in his story is a hopeful one, despite the trauma they endure. (Ages 12–15)

Tamaki, Mariko. *Skim*. Illustrated by Jillian Tamaki. Groundwood Books / House of Anansi Press, 2008. 141 pages (trade 978-0-88899-753-1, \$18.95)

In this slice-of-life graphic novel, high school student Kimberly Keiko Cameron (nicknamed Skim) is a Wicca in training who feels out of place in the Catholic girls' school she attends ("my school = goldfish tank of stupid"). Her teachers and classmates are all aflutter because the ex-boyfriend of one of the students, Katie, has committed suicide. When Katie shows up a few days later with two broken arms, the rumor circulates that she jumped off a roof in a suicide attempt of her own. The school goes into overdrive with special counseling sessions, a gigantic collage sympathy card for Katie, and the establishment of a new club, Girls Celebrate Life (GCL). Skim is one of the students marked for special help because she refuses to participate in these activities, and she seems to be sad and lonely. And she is, but not over the suicide—just in normal adolescent ways: She and her best friend, Lisa, are clearly growing apart, and Skim has a massive crush on Ms. Archer, her English teacher—a crush that is not completely unrequited. After the two of them share a kiss, Ms. Archer begins to put a professional distance between herself and her student, something that makes life even more difficult for Skim. This serio-comic graphic novel featuring a contemporary girl of Japanese descent delves beneath the superficial everyday activities in high school to show the innermost thoughts and feeling of a single outsider student who is struggling to endure it all. (Age 14 and older)

Thompson, Kate. *The Last of the High Kings*. U.S. edition: Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2008. 323 pages (trade 978-0-06-117595-4, \$16.99)

It's been fifteen years since J. J. Liddy returned from T'ir na n'Og, the land of eternal youth in Irish lore. In that time, he has become a husband, father of four, and celebrated fiddler. But his world is not as perfect as it appears. His uncontrollable daughter Jenny is more comfortable outdoors and shoeless than she is at school. His son Donal has his mind wrapped around something that he won't discuss with anyone but an elderly neighbor.

And then there's the presence of a strange white goat on a hilltop near their home. Jenny says it talks to her. Music tied together Kate Thompson's first book about the Liddy family, *The New Policeman* (Greenwillow, 2007), but despite J. J.'s desire for harmony, his family and environment are in a state of discord now. The world-renowned musician must use all of his senses to recognize the sour note. What J. J. doesn't know is that Jenny has learned she is a changeling from the fairy world. The goat she speaks with is a Púka, and the mythical creature leads Jenny to distrust her human family and the world in which she lives. As Jenny makes a dangerous deal with the Púka, J. J. takes an even greater risk that returns him to T'ir na n'Og. When Donal's secret project is at last revealed, the Liddys are able to save their family, and the entire world, from a destructive underground force by rightfully crowning the last of the high kings of Ireland. (Ages 11–15)

***Up All Night: A Short Story Collection.* Laura Geringer Books / HarperTeen / HarperCollins, 2008. 227 pages (trade 978-0-06-137076-2, \$16.99)**

Usually the hours between sunset and sunrise are spent at rest—unless there is something keeping you up all night. Then the late evening and early morning hours become period and place of strange vulnerability. In six very different stories, introduced by publisher Laura Geringer, young adult authors Peter Abrahams, Libby Bray, David Levithan, Patricia McCormick, Sarah Weeks, and Gene Luen Yang reveal nighttime excursions and personal explorations. Ranging from a drunken night with girlfriends after a rock concert to a determined teen's mission to give herself driving lessons, and from tender conversations between siblings about life and death to candid dialogues between strangers and friends in the twilight hours, this masterful short story collection offers food for thought as a midnight snack. (Age 13 and older)

Venkatraman, Padma. *Climbing the Stairs.* Putnam, 2008. 247 pages (trade 978-0-399-24746-0, \$16.99)

After her father is beaten and permanently injured by police at a protest for Indian independence from Britain, teenage Vidya and her family must move in with relatives who live by far more traditional Brahmin practices than Vidya's progressively-minded parents had. Vidya once planned on a university education. Now she is ordered to spend her days after school taking care of a young child and silently serving meals to the men, who debate independence, nonviolence, and whether to fight with the British against the threat of Japanese invasion as World War II rages beyond their nation's borders. The library upstairs is the only place Vidya feels connected to her old dreams. It is also the place where she converses with Raman, a young man visiting the family who seems to understand her desire for an education, for nonviolence, and for an independent country and life. Debut author Padma Venkatraman writes about a girl who finds her heart both broken and buoyed in unexpected ways in a story that vividly juxtaposes Vidya's personal family tragedy against the complex social and political times in which the richly realized characters live. (Age 12 and older)

Werlin, Nancy. *Impossible*. Dial, 2008. 376 pages (trade 978-0-8037-3002-1, \$17.99)

Nancy Werlin offers just the right mix of fantasy and reality in a deliciously tense tale about a contemporary teenager who discovers she has inherited a longstanding family curse. Lucy Scarborough's birth mother Miranda is now a homeless, mentally ill woman sometimes seen roaming the town. But Lucy's own life with her adoptive parents is almost idyllic, until the night of her senior prom. Raped by the shy boy escorting her, Lucy is at first certain of only one thing in the pain and confusion that follows: The boy was not himself. And Lucy is absolutely right, as readers already know. A seemingly charming man who has been insinuating himself into Lucy's family is really the arrogant, evil Elfin Knight, and Lucy is the latest in a long line of Scarborough women to whom he has laid claim. The discovery that she is pregnant leads Lucy to the long-forgotten letter that teenage Miranda wrote while awaiting Lucy's own birth. In it Lucy learns a man called the Elfin Knight cursed a long-ago Scarborough woman who refused him. Ever since, Scarborough women become pregnant at eighteen, and then go mad if they can't complete three impossible tasks by the time the baby is born. The tasks have been passed down for generations in the folk song "Scarborough Faire," but the song offers no clues on how to complete them. That's where Lucy's fortitude, and the love, support, and ingenuity of her family come in. From her adoptive parents to the boy-next-door—who's been in love with her for years—Lucy is far from alone as she seeks to put an end to the Elfin Knight's hold on her family in this immensely satisfying original fairy tale. (Age 12 and older)

Wilson, Martin. *What They Always Tell Us*. Delacorte Press, 2008. 293 pages (trade 978-0-385-73507-0, \$15.99)

James and Alex are teenage brothers whose childhood closeness is long gone. Their relationship was further strained at the start of the school year, when Alex drank Pine-Sol at a party. Alex can't say for certain why he did it—he felt disconnected from his friends and nothing seemed to matter. Now he's the "crazy" kid at school, while James is a senior with everything going for him—good grades, good looks, and college a sure bet. But James, who can't fathom Alex's rash act, has more in common with his brother than either realize. He's finding it harder and harder to care about anything other than getting out of their small Alabama town. As James's emotional state becomes more and more disaffected, Alex's begins to improve, in large part because of Nathen, whose genuine friendship and encouragement helps Alex see himself and his life in a brighter light. A tender romance develops between them, and seeing his brother happy and discovering the reason why has a powerful effect on James, especially after Alex confesses how frightened he about the "fag" notes found in his locker. For the first time in a long time, James feels like he can be genuinely supportive of his brother. The depth of his feeling and caring for Alex begins to have its own transformative effect on his life in Martin Wilson's debut novel. A memorable story about two

brothers finding their way back to themselves and one another, and the ripple-effect it has in their lives, is also a sweet and sometimes sensual love story. (Age 14 and older)

Wittlinger, Ellen. *Love & Lies: Marisol's Story*. Simon & Schuster, 2008. 256 pages (trade 978-1-4169-1623-9, \$16.99)

This sequel to *Hard Love* (Simon & Schuster, 1999) opens four months after the first novel ended. It should be the start of Marisol's freshman year in college, but she's made the decision to take a year off before starting at Stanford so that she can write a novel and try out independence. She and her friend Gio have signed up for the same novel-writing course in an adult education program, and Marisol falls head-over-heels in love with the instructor, Olivia Frost. Her infatuation with the older, more experienced woman soon begins to overshadow everything else in her life. She can't see, for example, that Lee, a young woman her age, newly out and newly moved to Cambridge, is crazy about her. Fictionalized versions of Marisol's life play out in her novel as Wittlinger draws subtle parallels between the two, and the novel, like Marisol's love life, begins to take on a life of its own. But it also becomes a way for Marisol to figure out what's really in her heart. The lines her characters speak often come as a revelation to her, helping her to figure out things she hadn't consciously known about herself or others. Through it all, this Puerto Rican-Cuban teen remains the character readers came to know and love in *Hard Love*: unflinching, unsentimental, and wickedly funny. (Age 14 and older)

Yoo, Paula. *Good Enough*. HarperTeen / HarperCollins, 2008. 322 pages (trade 978-0-06-079085-1, \$16.99)

Patti Yoon is a first-generation Korean American high school senior who has worked hard all her life to make her parents happy. Their happiness is directly tied to Patti's academic success. It's not enough that she's destined to be her class valedictorian and is an accomplished violinist, she must also get at least 2300 on her SATs and be accepted by Harvard, Yale, and Princeton (HYP for short). The wheels start to come off of Patti's success cart when she first lays eyes on Cute Trumpet Guy (Ben Wheeler) during tryouts for All-State Orchestra. Patti has been concertmaster for the past three years, and she is a shoe-in again this year, but Cute Trumpet Guy distracts her so much during her audition that she flubs a few notes and ends up as Assistant Concertmaster. Throughout the school year, Ben becomes a major distraction, and Patti struggles with wanting to please her parents and wanting to be master of her own fate. For one thing, she thinks she might actually want to go to Juilliard to study music rather than HYP. With Ben's help and encouragement, she secretly applies. There have been a number of good young adult novels over the past several years about first-generation Asian American teens facing this sort of conflict. What lifts this one above the rest is Yoo's tongue-in-cheek humor about parents' expectations. Chapters frequently begin with lists that have titles such as "How to Make Your Korean Parents Happy, Part 4," and Yoo manages to share the humor in Patti's situation without belittling Patti's parents' aspirations for their daughter's future. (Ages 13-16)

Zarr, Sara. *Sweethearts*. Little, Brown, 2008. 217 pages (trade 978-0-316-01455-7, \$16.99)

Jennifer Harris is teased mercilessly by her elementary-school classmates, who call her “Fattifer” and make fun of her lisp. Her only friend is another social outcast, Cameron Quick. Jennifer and Cameron have a connection that helps them both survive tough times at home and at school. When Cameron disappears suddenly in fifth grade, rumors circulate that he has died. Jennifer’s overworked single mother will only say that he has “gone to a better place.” Fast-forward to Jennifer’s senior year in high school. She’s moved, changed her name to Jenna, and lost weight; in short, she has completely reinvented herself. Now she has a gorgeous boyfriend and hangs with the popular kids. Her life seems to be picture-perfect until Cameron shows up as a new student at her school. Cameron’s reappearance makes Jenna reevaluate who she really is and who her friends are, as well as question why her mother lied to her so many years before, letting her believe Cameron was dead. She must also face the frightening event that happened to her and Cameron when they were nine, something that is slowly and skillfully revealed to readers through a series of flashbacks. In her second novel, Sara Zarr once again shows her gift for portraying teens living on the margins through complex childhood and adolescent social dynamics. Her understated depiction of the conflict in Jenna’s family, and keen look at the dynamics of family abuse that have clouded Cameron’s life, adds further depth and verisimilitude to an original and engaging novel. (Age 13 and older)

Appendices

Appendix I

Alphabetical List

of Books in *CCBC Choices 2009*

This quick-reference listing of all of the books in this edition of *CCBC Choices* is alphabetical by author (except when a book has no identifiable author), followed by the main title. The *Choices* category in which each book is located is also provided. Full citation information for the books, including publisher and ISBN, is listed with the full entry in the *Choices* categories. Browse the categories (see page locations, below) or use the author/title index to locate the exact page on which the full entry is located.

The Natural World (Natural World): pages 20–24
 Seasons (Seasons): pages 24–26
 Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature (Folklore): pages 26–27
 Historical People, Places, and Events (History): pages 28–32
 Biography and Autobiography (Biography): pages 32–38
 Contemporary People, Places, and Events (Contemporary): pages 38–40
 Issues in Today's World (Issues): pages 40–42
 Understanding Oneself and Others (Understanding): pages 42–43
 The Arts (Arts): pages 44–47
 Poetry: pages 47–49
 Concept Books (Concept): pages 50–51
 Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers (PB Preschoolers):
 pages 51–65
 Picture Books for School-Age Children (PB School-Age): pages 65–74
 Books for Beginning Readers (Beginning Readers): pages 74–76
 Books for Newly Independent Readers (Independent Readers): pages 77–78
 Fiction for Children (Fiction Children): pages 78–94
 Fiction for Young Adults (Fiction YA): pages 94–118

Abbott, Tony. *The Postcard* (Fiction YA)
 Abrahams, Peter. *Into the Dark* (Fiction Children)
 Ahlberg, Allan. *The Pencil* (PB School-Age)
 Alalou, Elizabeth, and Ali Alalou. *The Butter Man* (PB School-Age)
 Albert, Michael. *An Artist's America* (Arts)
 Alley, Zoë B. *There's a Wolf at the Door* (Folklore)
 Almond, David. *The Savage* (Fiction YA)
 Alsenas, Linas. *Gay America: Struggle for Equality* (History)
 Amato, Mary. *The Chicken of the Family* (PB School-Age)
 Anderson, M.T. *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Volume II* (Fiction YA)
 Appelt, Kathi. *The Underneath* (Fiction Children)
 Arnold, Tedd. *Fly High, Fly Guy!* (Beginning Readers)
 Aston, Dianna Hutts. *The Moon Over Star* (PB School-Age)
 Averbeck, Jim. *In a Blue Room* (PB Preschoolers)

- Avi. *The Seer of Shadows* (Fiction Children)
- Baek, Matthew J. *Be Gentle with the Dog, Dear!* (PB Preschoolers)
- Balliett, Blue. *The Calder Game* (Fiction Children)
- Bardhan-Quallen, Sudipta. *Up Close: Jane Goodall* (Biography)
- Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *The Boy Who Dared* (Fiction YA)
- Becker, Bonny. *A Visitor for Bear* (PB Preschoolers)
- Benjamin, Floella. *My Two Grannies* (Understanding)
- Berne, Jennifer. *Manfish* (Biography)
- Billingsley, Franny. *Big Bad Bunny* (PB Preschoolers)
- Blundell, Judy. *What I Saw and How I Lied* (Fiction YA)
- Brighton, Catherine. *Keep Your Eye on the Kid* (Biography)
- Broach, Elise. *Masterpiece* (Fiction Children)
- Brooks, Kevin. *Black Rabbit Summer* (Fiction YA)
- Bruchac, Joseph. *March Toward the Thunder* (Fiction YA)
- Bryant, Jen. *A River of Words* (Biography)
- Caletti, Deb. *The Fortunes of Indigo Skye* (Fiction YA)
- Campbell, Nicola I. *Shin-chi's Canoe* (PB School-Age)
- Campbell, Sarah C. *Wolfsnail* (Natural World)
- Carter, Anne Laurel. *The Shepherd's Granddaughter* (Fiction YA)
- Cashore, Kristin. *Graceling* (Fiction YA)
- Cecil, Randy. *Duck* (PB Preschoolers)
- Ceelen, Vicky. *Baby! Baby!* (PB Preschoolers)
- Chaconas, Dori. *Cork & Fuzz* (Beginning Readers)
- Chotjewitz, David. *Crazy Diamond* (Fiction YA)
- Chrustowski, Rick. *Big Brown Bat* (Natural World)
- Clinton, Catherine. *Phillis's Big Test* (Biography)
- Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games* (Fiction YA)
- Connor, Leslie. *Waiting for Normal* (Fiction Children)
- Cotten, Cynthia. *Rain Play* (PB Preschoolers)
- Cowley, Joy. *Chicken Feathers* (Independent Readers)
- Creech, Sharon. *Hate That Cat* (Fiction Children)
- Crosby, Jeff, and Shelley Ann Jackson. *Little Lions, Bull Baiters & Hunting Hounds* (Natural World)
- Crowe, Chris. *Up Close: Thurgood Marshall* (Biography)
- Cumbie, Patricia. *Where People Like Us Live* (Fiction YA)
- Cumpiano, Ina. *Quinito, Day and Night = Quinito, d'a y noche* (Concept)
- Cutbill, Andy. *The Cow That Laid an Egg* (PB School-Age)
- Cyrus, Kurt. *Tadpole Rex* (PB Preschoolers)
- Deem, James M. *Bodies from the Ice* (Natural World)
- Delaney, Joseph. *Attack of the Fiend* (Fiction Children)
- Delaney, Joseph. *Wrath of the Bloodeye* (Fiction Children)
- Delano, Marfé Ferguson. *Helen's Eyes* (Biography)
- Doctorow, Cory. *Little Brother* (Fiction YA)
- Dole, Mayra Lazara. *Down to the Bone* (Fiction YA)
- Dowd, Siobhan. *Bog Child* (Fiction YA)
- Dowd, Siobhan. *The London Eye Mystery* (Fiction Children)
- Dowell, Frances O'Roark. *Shooting the Moon* (Fiction Children)
- Durbin, William. *The Winter War* (Fiction YA)

- Elliott, Zetta. *Bird* (PB School-Age)
- Ellis, Deborah. *Lunch with Lenin and Other Stories* (Fiction YA)
- Engle, Margarita. *The Surrender Tree* (Poetry)
- Erdrich, Louise. *The Porcupine Year* (Fiction Children)
- Ernst, Lisa Campbell. *Round Like a Ball!* (PB Preschoolers)
- Esbaum, Jill. *To the Big Top* (PB School-Age)
- Farr, Richard. *Emperors of the Ice* (Fiction YA)
- Fleischman, Sid. *The Trouble Begins at 8* (Biography)
- Fleming, Candace. *The Lincolns* (Biography)
- Fleming, Denise. *Buster Goes to Cowboy Camp* (PB Preschoolers)
- Foley, Greg. *Don't Worry Bear* (PB Preschoolers)
- Foreman, Jack. *Say Hello* (Understanding)
- Fosberry, Jennifer. *My Name is Not Isabella* (PB Preschoolers)
- Frazee, Marla. *A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever* (PB School-Age)
- Frost, Helen. *Diamond Willow* (Fiction Children)
- Frost, Helen. *Monarch and Milkweed* (Natural World)
- Gaiman, Neil. *The Graveyard Book* (Fiction Children)
- George, Jean Craighead. *Goose and Duck* (Beginning Readers)
- Gerdner, Linda, and Sarah Langford. *Grandfather's Story Cloth = Yawg Daim Paj Ntaub Dab Neeg* (PB School-Age)
- Geus, Mireille. *Piggy* (Fiction YA)
- Gifaldi, David. *Listening for Crickets* (Fiction Children)
- Giff, Patricia Reilly. *Eleven* (Fiction Children)
- Gifford, Peggy. *Moxy Maxwell Does Not Love Writing Thank-you Notes* (Fiction Children)
- Gillum, Sandy. *Loon Summer* (Natural World)
- Goldman, Steven. *Two Parties, One Tux, and a Very Short Film about the Grapes of Wrath* (Fiction YA)
- Goldstone, Bruce. *Greater Estimations* (Concept)
- González, Luc'a. *The Storyteller's Candle = La velita de los cuentos* (History)
- Gorbachev, Valeri. *Turtle's Penguin Day* (PB Preschoolers)
- Graham, Bob. *How to Heal a Broken Wing* (PB Preschoolers)
- Gravett, Emily. *Monkey and Me* (PB Preschoolers)
- Gray, Nigel. *My Dog, My Cat, My Mama, and Me!* (PB Preschoolers)
- Greenberg, Jan, and Sandra Jordan. *Christo and Jeanne-Claude* (Arts)
- Greenberg, Jan, editor. *Side by Side* (Poetry)
- Hale, Shannon, and Dean Hale. *Rapunzel's Revenge* (Fiction Children)
- Hazen, Lynn E. *Shifty* (Fiction YA)
- Hegamin, Tonya Cheri. *M+O 4evr* (Fiction YA)
- Henkes, Kevin. *Bird Lake Moon* (Fiction Children)
- Henkes, Kevin. *Old Bear* (PB Preschoolers)
- Hills, Tad. *Duck & Goose 1 2 3* (Concept)
- Hills, Tad. *What's Up, Duck?* (Concept)
- Himmelman, John. *Katie Loves the Kittens* (PB Preschoolers)
- Hirahara, Naomi. *1001 Cranes* (Fiction Children)
- Hole, Stian. *Garmann's Summer* (PB School-Age)
- Holmberg, Bo R. *A Day with Dad* (Understanding)
- Horáček, Petr. *Look Out, Suzy Goose* (PB Preschoolers)

- Horse, Harry. *Little Rabbit's New Baby* (PB Preschoolers)
- Jackson, Alison. *Thea's Tree* (PB School-Age)
- Jackson, Ellen. *The Mysterious Universe* (Natural World)
- Javna, John, Sophie Javna, and Jesse Javna. *50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth* (Issues)
- Jenkins, Emily. *Skunkdog* (PB School-Age)
- Jenkins, Emily. *Toy Dance Party* (Fiction Children)
- Jenkins, Steve, and Robin Page. *Sisters & Brothers* (Natural World)
- Jiménez, Francisco. *Reaching Out* (Fiction YA)
- Johnson, Stephen T. *A Is for Art* (Arts)
- Jongman, Mariken. *Rits* (Fiction YA)
- Keller, Laurie. *The Scrambled States of America Talent Show* (PB School-Age)
- Kennemore, Tim. *Alice's Birthday Pig* (Independent Readers)
- Kimmel, Eric A. *Stormy's Hat* (PB School-Age)
- Kohara, Kazuno. *Ghosts in the House!* (Seasons)
- Konigsberg, Bill. *Out of the Pocket* (Fiction YA)
- Kostecki-Shaw, Jenny Sue. *My Travelin' Eye* (Understanding)
- Krensky, Stephen. *Comic Book Century* (History)
- Kruusval, Catarina. *Franny's Friends* (PB Preschoolers)
- Kuklin, Susan. *No Choirboy* (Issues)
- Larbalastier, Justine. *How to Ditch Your Fairy* (Fiction YA)
- Lee, Suzy. *Wave* (PB Preschoolers)
- Lester, Julius. *Guardian* (Fiction YA)
- Levithan, David. *How They Met, and Other Stories* (Fiction YA)
- Li, Moying. *Snow Falling in Spring* (Biography)
- Lin, Grace. *Bringing in the New Year* (Seasons)
- Lindgren, Barbro. *Oink, Oink Benny* (PB Preschoolers)
- Lindo, Elvira. *Manolito Four-Eyes* (Fiction Children)
- Lockhart, E. *The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks* (Fiction YA)
- Look, Lenore. *Alvin Ho* (Fiction Children)
- Ludwig, Trudy. *Trouble Talk* (Understanding)
- Manushkin, Fran. *How Mama Brought the Spring* (Seasons)
- Markle, Sandra. *Finding Home* (Natural World)
- Markle, Sandra. *Sneaky, Spinning Baby Spiders* (Natural World)
- Mass, Wendy. *Every Soul a Star* (Fiction Children)
- Matsuoka, Mei. *Footprints in the Snow* (PB Preschoolers)
- McCarthy, Meghan. *Seabiscuit the Wonder Horse* (History)
- McClafferty, Carla Killough. *In Defiance of Hitler* (History)
- McDonald, Megan. *Hen Hears Gossip* (PB Preschoolers)
- McGill, Alice. *Way Up and Over Everything* (Folklore)
- McKay, Hilary. *Forever Rose* (Fiction Children)
- McKissack, Patricia C. *The Home-Run King* (Independent Readers)
- McKissack, Patricia C. *Stitchin' and Pullin* (Poetry)
- McLimans, David. *Gone Fishing* (Natural World)
- Monroe, Chris. *Monkey with a Tool Belt* (PB School-Age)
- Morales, Yuyi. *Just in Case* (Concept)
- Murdock, Catherine Gilbert. *Princess Ben* (Fiction YA)
- Muth, Jon J. *Zen Ties* (PB School-Age)

- Myers, Walter Dean. *Game* (Fiction YA)
- Myers, Walter Dean. *Sunrise Over Fallujah* (Fiction YA)
- Na, An. *The Fold* (Fiction YA)
- Nelson, Kadir. *We Are the Ship* (History)
- Nelson, Marilyn. *The Freedom Business* (Poetry)
- Nelson, Scott Reynolds, with Marc Aronson. *Ain't Nothing But a Man* (History)
- Ness, Patrick. *The Knife of Never Letting Go* (Fiction YA)
- Nichols, Travis. *Punk Rock Etiquette* (Arts)
- Nielsen, Susin. *Word Nerd* (Fiction Children)
- Nivola, Claire A. *Planting the Trees of Kenya* (Contemporary)
- Nye, Naomi Shihab. *Honeybee* (Poetry)
- O'Brien, Tony. *Afghan Dreams* (Contemporary)
- O'Connor, Barbara. *Greetings from Nowhere* (Fiction Children)
- O'Neill, Catharine. *Annie and Simon* (Beginning Readers)
- Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out* (History)
- Parker, Robert Andrew. *Piano Starts Here* (Arts)
- Patricelli, Leslie. *Baby Happy Baby Sad* (PB Preschoolers)
- Patricelli, Leslie. *No No Yes Yes* (PB Preschoolers)
- Pearson, Mary E. *The Adoration of Jenna Fox* (Fiction YA)
- Perkins, Lynne Rae. *The Cardboard Piano* (PB School-Age)
- Pfeffer, Susan Beth. *The Dead & the Gone* (Fiction YA)
- Porcellino, John. *Thoreau at Walden* (History)
- Preller, James. *Six Innings: A Game in the Life* (Fiction Children)
- Preus, Margi. *The Peace Bell* (PB School-Age)
- Purcell, Ann. *Maple Syrup Season* (Seasons)
- Rappaport, Doreen. *Lady Liberty* (History)
- Ravishankar, Anushka. *Elephants Never Forget!* (PB Preschoolers)
- Ray, Deborah Kogan. *Wanda Gág* (Biography)
- Ray, Jane. *The Apple-Pip Princess* (PB School-Age)
- Ray, Mary Lyn. *Christmas Farm* (Seasons)
- Reinhardt, Dana. *How to Build a House* (Fiction YA)
- Riordan, Rick. *The Battle of the Labyrinth* (Fiction Children)
- Rodman, Mary Ann. *Jimmy's Stars* (Fiction Children)
- Rosen, Michael J. *Our Farm* (Contemporary)
- Rumford, James. *Silent Music* (PB School-Age)
- Russell, P. Craig, adaptor and illustrator. *Coraline* (Fiction Children)
- Salariya, David. *All About Me!* (PB Preschoolers)
- Sandler, Martin W. *Lincoln Through the Lens* (History)
- Savadier, Elivia. *Will Sheila Share?* (PB Preschoolers)
- Schmidt, Gary D. *Trouble* (Fiction YA)
- Schulman, Janet. *Pale Male* (Natural World)
- Scieszka, Jon. *Knucklehead* (Biography)
- Scott, Elizabeth. *Living Dead Girl* (Fiction YA)
- Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. *Dog and Bear* (PB Preschoolers)
- Sheth, Kashmira. *Monsoon Afternoon* (PB School-Age)
- Shulevitz, Uri. *How I Learned Geography* (PB School-Age)
- Silverman, Erica. *Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa* (Beginning Readers)
- Skrypuch, Marsha Forchuk. *Daughter of War* (Fiction YA)

- Smith, Charles R. Jr. *Dance with Me* (PB Preschoolers)
- Smith, Hope Anita. *Keeping the Night Watch* (Poetry)
- Smith, Lane. *Madam President* (PB School-Age)
- Snyder, Betsy. *Haiku Baby* (PB Preschoolers)
- Soo, Kean. *Jellaby* (Fiction Children)
- Spanyol, Jessica. *Bob and His No. 1 Van* (PB Preschoolers)
- Spanyol, Jessica. *Clemence and His Noisy Little Fire Engine* (PB Preschoolers)
- Spanyol, Jessica. *Giorgio and His Star Crane Train* (PB Preschoolers)
- Spanyol, Jessica. *Keith and His Super-Stunt Rally Racer* (PB Preschoolers)
- Speck, Katie. *Maybelle Goes to Tea* (Beginning Readers)
- Springer, Nancy. *The Case of the Bizarre Bouquets* (Fiction Children)
- Springer, Nancy. *The Case of the Peculiar Pink Fan* (Fiction Children)
- Stern, Sam, and Susan Stern. *Real Food, Real Fast* (Contemporary)
- Stratton, Allan. *Chanda's Wars* (Fiction YA)
- Sutton, Sally. *Roadwork* (PB Preschoolers)
- Swanson, Susan Marie. *The House in the Night* (PB Preschoolers)
- Tafari, Nancy. *Blue Goose* (Concept)
- Tamaki, Mariko. *Skim* (Fiction YA)
- Taylor, Sean. *The Great Snake: Stories from the Amazon* (Folklore)
- Thomas, Joyce Carol. *The Blacker the Berry* (Poetry)
- Thompson, Kate. *The Last of the High Kings* (Fiction YA)
- Turner, Pamela S. *A Life in the Wild* (Biography)
- Turner, Pamela S. *Life on Earth - and Beyond* (Natural World)
- Up All Night* (Fiction YA)
- Venkatraman, Padma. *Climbing the Stairs* (Fiction YA)
- Voake, Charlotte. *Tweddle-Dee-Dee* (Arts)
- We Are All Born Free* (Issues)
- Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Before John Was a Jazz Giant* (Arts)
- Werlin, Nancy. *Impossible* (Fiction YA)
- White, Ruth. *Little Audrey* (Fiction Children)
- Whitehead, Kathy. *Art from Her Heart* (Arts)
- Willems, Mo. *I Will Surprise My Friend!* (Beginning Readers)
- Willems, Mo. *I Love My New Toy!* (Beginning Readers)
- Willems, Mo. *The Pigeon Wants a Puppy!* (PB Preschoolers)
- Wiley, Margaret. *The 3 Bears and Goldilocks* (Folklore)
- Wilson, Martin. *What They Always Tell Us* (Fiction YA)
- Winter, Jeanette. *Wangari's Trees of Peace* (Contemporary)
- Wittlinger, Ellen. *Love & Lies: Marisol's Story* (Fiction YA)
- Wolf, Sallie. *Truck Stuck* (PB Preschoolers)
- Woodson, Jacqueline. *After Tupac & D Foster* (Fiction Children)
- Yamamura, Anji. *Hannah Duck* (PB Preschoolers)
- Yep, Laurence. *The Dragon's Child* (Fiction Children)
- Yoo, Paula. *Good Enough* (Fiction YA)
- Zarr, Sara. *Sweethearts* (Fiction YA)
- Zepeda, Gwendolyn. *Growing Up with Tamales = Los tamales de Ana*
(PB School-Age)
- Zimmer, Tracie Vaughn. *42 Miles* (Fiction Children)

Appendix II

The Cooperative Children's Book Center

Vision Statement

All children and young adults deserve excellent literature that reflects their own experience and encourages them to imagine experiences beyond their own, that satisfies their innate curiosity, and that invites them to dream. We believe such literature fosters a fundamental understanding of themselves and one another, stimulates their creativity, and, most importantly, enriches their lives.

At the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC), a library of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, we are committed to identifying excellent literature for children and adolescents and bringing this literature to the attention of those adults who have an academic, professional, or career interest in connecting young readers with books. The identity of the Cooperative Children's Book Center is grounded in literature for children and young adults. This is reflected in its collections, its role as a book examination center and research library, and its staff expertise in book arts, book evaluation, multicultural literature, alternative press publishing, and intellectual freedom. Within each of these areas, the CCBC is acknowledged as a leader and a catalyst for change. We are committed to fulfilling these roles by advocating and actively modeling a philosophy that embraces diversity, promotes understanding, and respects the rights of the individual child.

The concepts of access and inclusiveness are vital to the discussion and evaluation of literature for children and young adults. These elements are also central to any discussion of the CCBC itself with regard to its collections and information services. Therefore, the CCBC seeks to expand both the means by which CCBC information is made available and the types of information to which users have access. We will be at the forefront in:

- collecting a wide range of contemporary and historical literature for children and young adults, including literature published by alternative presses and that created by current and former Wisconsin residents;
- encouraging awareness and discussion of issues essential to literature for children and young adults;
- advocating the First Amendment rights of children and young adults by: (1) providing Wisconsin teachers and librarians with in-depth information on literature whenever a minor's access to books is questioned, and (2) preparing Wisconsin teachers and librarians to respond to challenges to intellectual freedom;
- providing educational support for students in higher education and individuals with an interest in literature for children and young adults;

- shaping electronic means of access to and dissemination of information about literature for children and young adults within the School of Education, across the university, throughout the state of Wisconsin, and beyond; and
- networking nationally and internationally with colleagues in related fields to create coalitions that recognize the importance of high quality materials for all children and young adults.

The CCBC is a unique and vital gathering place for books, ideas, and expertise. The CCBC vision for the future is the continued promotion of excellence in literature for children and young adults by whatever resources are available, unwavering commitment to the First Amendment rights of children and young adults, and the establishment of a national and international network to connect all who share the belief that excellent literature can insure a brighter future for the world's children.

Adopted by the External Advisory Board, September 1994

Reaffirmed September 1999

Intellectual Freedom Information Services Mission Statement

The Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) will provide free, extended information services at the time of any attempt to limit access to a book available for use by a minor in a Wisconsin classroom or library. If additional assistance is requested by a Wisconsin teacher, school library media specialist, public librarian, or school or library administrator, the CCBC professional staff will connect or refer the individual to others in the state who can provide additional types of information.

The CCBC will serve as a first point of contact for professionals responsible for selecting materials to which minors in Wisconsin have access when there are attempts to limit their access to non-print materials, or to non-book print materials.

The CCBC will develop and maintain relationships with other organizations that share the library's commitment to upholding the First Amendment rights of all Wisconsin citizens, including minors.

According to professional ethics exercised in all libraries, all CCBC Intellectual Freedom Information Service interactions are confidential.

Affirmed by the CCBC Advisory Board

September 20, 2002

Purpose

The Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) is a unique examination, study and research library of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. The CCBC's noncirculating collections include current, retrospective, and historical books published for children and young adults.

The CCBC supports teaching, learning, and research related to children's and young adult literature and provides informational and educational services based on its collections to students and faculty on the UW–Madison campus and

librarians, teachers, child care providers, researchers, and other adults throughout the state of Wisconsin.

A vital gathering place for books, ideas, and expertise, the CCBC is committed to identifying excellent literature for children and adolescents and bringing this literature to the attention of those adults who have an academic, professional, or career interest in connecting young readers with books.

The CCBC is funded by the UW–Madison School of Education and by an annual contract from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction/Division for Libraries, Technology, and Community Learning. The CCBC was established in 1963.

Collection

The library collection contains review copies of newly published juvenile trade books, recommended children's and young adult trade books, historical children's books, contemporary and historical reference materials related to children's and young adult literature, children's and young adult books by Wisconsin authors and illustrators, and alternative press books for children.

Services

- CCBC collections are available for use by any adult with an interest in children's and young adult literature.
- References service is available in person during the library's public services hours, either by phone (608–263–3720) or via e-mail at ccbcinfo@education.wisc.edu. Reference service is provided by CCBC librarians and student reference assistants.
- On-site tours and/or lectures can be arranged for university classes, Wisconsin library and school book selection groups, early childhood educators, and other adults with a professional interest in children's and young adult literature. The CCBC welcomes groups from outside Wisconsin as well.
- Presentations on outstanding new books and other topics related to children's and young adult literature are provided for Wisconsin librarians and teachers in Madison and around the state.
- Book Discussions apply literary standards and book evaluation techniques to new books and are open to any interested adult.
- Continuing education opportunities occur throughout the year, and may include hands-on workshops, or distance education.
- CCBC-Net is a unique listserv providing opportunities for focused discussion of contemporary children's and young adult literature, including multicultural literature, translated books, outstanding and award-winning books, and various themes and topics in literature.
- Free Public Lectures by authors and artists, including the annual Charlotte Zolotow Lecture, bring book creators in the field of children's and young adult literature to the UW–Madison campus several times throughout the year.

For more information about any of these services, visit the CCBC web site at www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/ or contact the CCBC at 608–263–3720.

Governance

The University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Education is responsible for policies and funding of the Cooperative Children's Book Center. Adam Gamoran is the interim dean of the School of Education.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Division for Libraries, Technology, and Community Learning, provides contract support for the CCBC services to Wisconsin libraries and schools. Richard Grobschmidt, Assistant Superintendent of the Division, administers the DPI contract.

The CCBC Advisory Board represents CCBC users on the University of Wisconsin–Madison campus and from libraries and schools throughout Wisconsin. Members of the 2008–2009 Advisory Board are:

Leah Langby (Chair), Library Development & Youth Services Coordinator
Indianhead Federated Library System

Emilie Amundson, Consultant, English/Language Arts
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Nancy Anderson, Consultant, School Library Media
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Connie Chandler, Cross-Categorical Teacher
Platteville High School

Lisa Chatman, District Library Media Specialist
Milwaukee Public Schools

Linda Diaz, Fourth Grade Bilingual Teacher
Janes Elementary School, Racine

Stacy Fisher, Library Media Specialist
Waunakee High School, Waunakee

Suzanne Fondrie, Assistant Professor
Curriculum & Instruction, UW–Oshkosh

Shelley Collins-Fuerbringer, Youth Services Manager
L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library, Eau Claire

Marian Gaboriault, District Media Coordinator/High School English Teacher
School District of Crandon

Loren Glasbrenner, Reading/English/Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator
Patrick Marsh Middle School, Sun Prairie

Mark Goldstein, Library Media Specialist
Green Bay Area School District

Dawnene Hassett, Assistant Professor
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
School of Education, UW–Madison

Susan Hoffman, Reading Specialist
DeForest Area School District

Barbara Huntington, Consultant, Youth Services/Special Needs
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Jacque Karbon, Consultant, Reading Education
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Kaye Ketterer, Scholarship Counselor
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Wisconsin

Madge Klais, Assistant Professor
School of Library and Information Studies, UW–Madison

Anna Lewis, Assistant Director
Media, Educational Resources and Technology Library
School of Education, UW–Madison

Lisa Lind, Library Media Specialist
Pepin Area Schools

Marni Pingel, Third Grade Teacher
Franklin Elementary School, Oshkosh

Kerry Pinkner, Youth Services Coordinator
Pauline Haass Public Library, Sussex

Tasha Saecker, Director
Elisha D. Smith Public Library, Menasha

Patty Schultz, Library Media Specialist
Madison Metropolitan School District

Sherri Sinniger, Children's Librarian
LaCrosse Public Library

Susan Tupper, K–12 Library Media Specialist
Rosholt School District

Kris Adams Wendt, Librarian (Retired)
Rhinelander

Ellen Wildes, First Grade Teacher
Tomorrow River Schools

Brian R. Wilhorn, Grade 4 Teacher
Immanuel Lutheran School, Wisconsin Rapids

Staff

In addition to the CCBC librarians, the CCBC staff when *CCBC Choices 2008* was being created included students who helped carry out the daily responsibilities of assisting individuals on campus, in schools, and in libraries who are working in many ways to meet the interests of all young readers.

The student staff during 2008 and early 2009 included Ashley Bieber (2009), Amanda Bolland, Chelsea Couillard, Carling Febry, Jean Funcke (2008), Wendy Hellwig, Darcie Johnston, Fumiko Osada (2008), Jamey Stanosz (2008), Liz Tubman, Frances Veit (2008), Betsy Wermuth, and Michelle Wyler.

Public Service Schedule

The CCBC is open for public service 54 hours weekly during the university's Fall and Spring semesters: Monday–Thursday 9 a.m.–7 p.m., Friday 9 a.m.–4 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday 12:30–4 p.m.

During the university Summer Session (mid–June to early August), the CCBC is open weekly Monday–Friday 9 a.m.–4 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 12:30–4 p.m. During Intersession and University breaks, the CCBC is open Monday–Friday 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Phone 608–263–3720 to confirm the public service hours and to inquire about the availability of a professional librarian/children's literature specialist at a specified time. Extended public service hours can be arranged to accommodate campus course schedules as well as out-of-town users' arrivals and departures. Requests for extended service must be made more than two weeks in advance and will be accommodated if at all possible according to staff availability.

Appendix III

Obtaining CCBC Publications

CCBC Choices

If you would like an additional copy of *CCBC Choices 2009* and live in Wisconsin, send \$2.75 (made payable to the CCBC) or a self-addressed, stamped manilla envelope with \$2.75 in postage to CCBC Choices, 4290 Helen C. White Hall, 600 N. Park St., Madison, WI 53706–1403 USA. (Wisconsin libraries may request one or more copies be delivered at no cost through the statewide library delivery system.)

If you live outside of Wisconsin, send \$10.00 to the Friends of the CCBC, Inc., P.O. Box 5189, Madison, WI 53705 USA. You may also inquire about the rates for ordering copies of *CCBC Choices 2009* in quantity.

Regardless of where they live, current members of the Friends of the CCBC, Inc., receive a copy of this edition of *CCBC Choices* as one benefit of annual Friends of the CCBC, Inc., membership. To request a membership form, write to the Friends of the CCBC, Inc., at the address noted in the previous paragraph.

Limited quantities of some past editions of *CCBC Choices* are also available. Email ccbcinfo@education.wisc.edu, or call 608–262–9503 to inquire.

Other CCBC Publications

CCBC librarians have created many recommended booklists that focus on a specific subject, genre, or purpose. Current lists are available full-text on the CCBC's web site. Go to www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/ and click on "CCBC Publications" for a complete listing of available CCBC bibliographies and booklists.

Appendix IV

The Compilers of CCBC Choices 2009

Kathleen T. Horning is the director of the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. For nine years she was also a children's librarian at Madison Public Library. She is the author of *From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books* (HarperCollins, 1997). With Ginny Moore Kruse, she coauthored *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1980–1990*, and with Ginny Moore Kruse and Megan Schliesman, *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1991–1996*. Kathleen is a past-president of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) of the American Library Association (ALA), and a past president of the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY). She has chaired the Américas Award Committee, under the auspices of the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP), University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee; ALA/ALSC's 1997 Mildred Batchelder Award Committee; and ALA/ALSC's 1995 John Newbery Committee. She has served on ALA/SRRT's Rainbow List, ALA/ALSC's Notable Children's Books Committee and an earlier Newbery Award Committee. She also chaired USBBY's Hans Christian Andersen Award Committee, which selected U.S. nominees for the international award in 1992. She served on the NCTE Lee Bennett Hopkins Award Committee and the ALA/SRRT Coretta Scott King Award Committee, and chaired ALA/ALSC's first Committee on Social Issues in Relationship to Materials and Services for Children. Kathleen frequently lectures to librarians on issues in evaluating literature for children and young adults, and she will deliver the 2010 May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture for ALA/ALSC. She has a B.A. in Linguistics and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies, both from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Merri V. Lindgren is a librarian at the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Merri is a regular contributor to the *Wisconsin State Journal*, writing a monthly column about books for children and young adults. She was the editor of *The Multicolored Mirror: Cultural Substance in Literature for Children and Young Adults* (Highsmith, 1991). Merri is a member of the ALA/ALSC 2010 Caldecott Award Committee. She also served on ALA's first Odyssey Award Committee (2008), a joint award of ALSC and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). She served on the 2001 Charlotte Zolotow Award committee and chaired the 2002, 2006, and 2007 Charlotte Zolotow Award committees. Merri has worked as a youth services librarian at the Helen M. Plum Memorial Library in Lombard, Illinois, and as an instructor of Adolescent and Young Adult Literature at Edgewood College. She is a former trustee of the Baraboo (Wisconsin) Public Library. Merri graduated from UW–Madison with a B.A. Degree in Psychology and has a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Tessa Michaelson is a librarian at the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Tessa is the producer of the weekly CCBC podcasts. Tessa is chair of the 2010 Charlotte Zolotow Award Committee, and served as a member of the 2009 Zolotow Award Committee. Tessa is also serving on ALA/ALSC's Public Awareness Committee. Prior to coming to the CCBC, Tessa worked as a school librarian and technology teacher at Wingra School, a K–8 independent progressive school in Madison, Wisconsin. In the past, Tessa was a member of the CCBC Advisory Board and served as membership secretary for the Friends of the CCBC board. She also served on the planning committee for the 2006 Wisconsin Educational Media Association annual conference as publications chair. While a student at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, Tessa worked at the CCBC as a reference assistant and as the Intellectual Freedom Information Services Coordinator. Tessa has a B.S. degree in Elementary Education and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies, both from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Megan Schliesman is a librarian at the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. With Kathleen Horning and Ginny Moore Kruse, Megan coauthored *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1991–1996*. She is currently a columnist for *Library Sparks* magazine. Megan is chair of the ALA/ALSC 2011 Laura Ingalls Wilder Committee. She was a member of the ALA/ALSC 2005 Newbery Award Committee. She has also served on the 1998, 1999 and 2002 Charlotte Zolotow Award committees, and chaired the 2003, 2008 and 2009 Zolotow Award committees. She was a member of the committee that created the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's *Planning Curriculum in English Language Arts* (DPI, 2001) and created the bibliography for DPI's *Teaching Character Education Using Children's Literature* (DPI, 2001). Megan manages the CCBC Intellectual Freedom Information Services and "What IF . . . Questions and Answers on Intellectual Freedom" forum and has written articles on intellectual freedom for several library and education journals. She is currently chairing the 2009 ALSC Preconference Planning Committee, which is focusing on intellectual freedom. She is a past member of the Wisconsin Library Association Intellectual Freedom Roundtable board, and a former member of the South Central Library System Board of Trustees in Wisconsin. She has a B.A. degree in English from UW–Whitewater and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Tana Elias, who created the index for *CCBC Choices 2009*, is a librarian and the Web Resources Coordinator at Madison Public Library, and a freelance indexer. Tana previously created the index for *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, Volume Two: 1991–1996*, and for the annual editions of *CCBC Choices* since 1995. While a student reference assistant at the CCBC, Tana compiled *Children's Books by Wisconsin Authors and Illustrators* and *Children's Books about Wisconsin: An Identification Record of Titles Published in 1992* (CCBC, 1993). Tana was a member of the 2000 Charlotte Zolotow Award Committee and chaired the 2001 Charlotte Zolotow Award Committee. She was the editor of the Friends of the CCBC newsletter from 1996–2000, and has reviewed books for *School Library Journal*. Tana has a B.A. in History from Hamline University and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Appendix V

The Friends of the CCBC, Inc.

This membership organization sponsors programs to develop public appreciation for children's and young adult literature and supports special projects at the CCBC. Members of the 2008–2009 Friends of the CCBC, Inc., Board of Directors are President Andrea Schmitz, Vice-President Shawn Brommer, Recording Secretary Laura Holt, Membership Secretary Linda Schmitt, Treasurer Steve Powers, and Directors-at-Large Carin Bringelson and Kim Dahl.

In addition to the board volunteers, the Friends book sale coordinator is Angie Sparks. The Friends Newsletter is edited by Janet Piehl, with design done by Michael Kress-Russick.

Friends members receive invitations to events open only to the membership. Members receive a quarterly newsletter with children's and young adult literature information as well as advance announcements about CCBC publications and services.

The Friends provide volunteer assistance at the CCBC and hospitality for CCBC Advisory Board meetings and other special events. Friends provide other volunteer services on behalf of the CCBC, such as promotion and distribution of selected CCBC and Friends' publications and special editions of original notecards. The Friends provide funding for public lectures on the UW–Madison campus.

Annual membership benefits include a copy of *CCBC Choices* and announcements of CCBC news and events through the Friends listserv. Membership is open to all.

The membership year runs from January through December. Dues paid after October 1st each year apply to membership for the next year. Membership dues are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Individual membership categories are: Student—\$9; Personal—\$20; Sustaining—\$30; Supporting—\$50; and Patron—\$100. Group membership categories are: Honor (2–5 individuals)—\$75; Award (6–10 individuals)—\$150; and Distinguished (11–15 individuals)—\$250. (A printable membership form is available at <http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/friends/membershipform.asp>)

To join the Friends, send a check payable in U.S. funds to Friends of the CCBC, Inc., to: Treasurer, Friends of the CCBC, Inc., Box 5189, Madison, WI 53705, USA.

Indexes

THE INDEXES ARE NOT LINKED

Author/Title/Name Index

The author/title/name index includes all of the titles and book creators in this edition of *CCBC Choices*. It also includes names of individuals and additional book titles cited in the annotations, introduction and end matter.

Book titles appear in CAPITAL LETTERS.

Page numbers **in bold print** refer to the page on which an annotation appears.

10,000 DRESSES, 12
 1001 CRANES, 16, **86**
 3 BEARS AND GOLDBLOCKS, **27**
 42 MILES, **94**
 50 SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO
 SAVE THE EARTH, **40**

A

A IS FOR ART, **44**
 Aaron, Hank, **30**
 Abbott, Tony, **94**
 Abrahams, Peter, **78**
 ABSOLUTE BRIGHTNESS, 12
 Adoff, Jamie, 16
 ADORATION OF JENNA FOX, 11, **111**
 AFGHAN DREAMS, **39**
 AFTER TUPAC & D FOSTER, 12, **93**
 Ahlberg, Allan, **65**
 AIN'T NOTHING BUT A MAN, 14, **30**
 Alalou, Ali, 9, 13
 Alalou, Elizabeth, 9, 13, **65**
 Albert, Michael, **44**
 ALICE'S BIRTHDAY PIG, 77
 ALL ABOUT ME!, **61**
 Alley, R. W., **26**
 Alley, Zoë B., **26**
 Almond, David, **95**
 Alsenas, Linas, 12, **28**
 ALVIN HO, **88**
 Amato, Mary, 9, **66**
 Amnesty International, **41**
 Anderson, Laurie Halse, 11
 Anderson, M. T., 11, **95**
 Andruetto, María Teresa, 47
 ANNIE AND SIMON, 75
 Appelt, Kathi, 11, **78**
 APPLE-PIP PRINCESS, **72**
 Armstrong, Neil, 66
 Arnold, Tedd, **74**
 Aronson, Marc, **30**
 Arrasmith, Patrick, **81**
 ART FROM HER HEART, **46**
 ARTIST'S AMERICA, **44**

AS IF BEING TWELVE AND THREE
 QUARTERS ISN'T BAD ENOUGH!,
 15
 Aston, Dianna Hutts, **66**
 ASTONISHING LIFE OF OCTAVIAN
 NOTHING, TRAITOR TO THE
 NATION, VOLUME II, 11, **95**
 ATTACK OF THE FIEND, **81**
 Averbeck, Jim, 9, **51**
 Avi, **79**
 Ayto, Russell, 9, **67**

B

BABY HAPPY BABY SAD, **60**
 BABY! BABY!, 13, **53**
 Back, Matthew J., **52**
 Balliett, Blue, **79**
 BARACK OBAMA, 15
 Bardhan-Quallen, Sudipta, **32**
 Bartholdi, Auguste, 32
 Bartlett, Don, **69**
 Bartoletti, Susan Campbell, **96**
 BATTLE OF THE LABYRINTH, **90**
 BE GENTLE WITH THE DOG, DEAR!,
 52
 Becker, Bonny, **52**
 BEFORE JOHN WAS A JAZZ GIANT,
 14, **46**
 BELINDA'S OBSESSION, 12
 Benjamin, Floella, **42**
 Berne, Jennifer, **33**
 Berry, Holly, 9, **25**
 BIG BAD BUNNY, **53**
 BIG BROWN BAT, **20**
 BIG CHICKENS FLY THE COOP, 13
 Billingsley, Franny, **53**
 BIRCHBARK HOUSE, 83
 BIRD, 16, **67**
 BIRD LAKE MOON, **86**
 BLACK RABBIT SUMMER, **97**
 BLACKER THE BERRY, **49**
 Blackwell, Elizabeth, 55
 BLUE GOOSE, **51**

Blundell, Judy, **96**
 BOB AND HIS NO. 1 VAN, **62**
 BODIES FROM THE ICE, **21**
 Boeke, Wanda, **105**
 BOG CHILD, **101**
 Booth, Coe, **11**
 BOY WHO DARED, **96**
 Brady, Mathew, **31**
 Brannen, Sarah, **12**
 BREAKING THROUGH, **105**
 Brighton, Catherine, **33**
 BRINGING IN THE NEW YEAR, **24**
 Broach, Elise, **80**
 Brooks, Kevin, **97**
 Brothers, Megan, **12**
Brown vs. Board of Education, **35**
 Bruchac, Joseph, **11, 16, 97**
 Bryant, Jen, **9, 34**
 Bunce, Elizabeth C., **10**
 BUSTER GOES TO COWBOY CAMP, **55**
 BUTTER MAN, **9, 13, 65**

C

Cabrera, Cozbi A., **48**
 CALDER GAME, **79**
 Caletti, Deb, **98**
 Campbell, Nicola I., **16, 66**
 Campbell, Richard P., **20**
 Campbell, Sarah C., **20**
 CARDBOARD PIANO, **71**
 Carter, Anne Laurel, **11, 98**
 CASE OF THE BIZARRE BOUQUETS,
92
 CASE OF THE PECULIAR PINK FAN, **92**
 Cashore, Kristin, **10, 99**
 Cecil, Randy, **53**
 Ceelen, Vicky, **13, 53**
 Chaconas, Dori, **75**
 CHAINS, **11**
 Chamberlain, Margaret, **42**
 CHANDA'S SECRETS, **114**
 CHANDA'S WARS, **11, 13, 113**
 CHICKEN FEATHERS, **77**
 CHICKEN OF THE FAMILY, **9, 13, 66**
 CHILDREN'S BOOKS BY WISCONSIN
 AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS
 AND CHILDREN'S BOOKS ABOUT
 WISCONSIN, **134**
 Chotjewitz, David, **99**
 CHRISTMAS FARM, **26**
 CHRISTO AND JEANNE-CLAUDE, **44**
 Chrustowski, Rick, **20**
 CIRCUIT, **105**
 Clayton, Elaine, **94**
 CLEMENCE AND HIS NOISY LITTLE
 FIRE ENGINE, **62**
 CLEVER DUCK, **13**

CLIMBING THE STAIRS, **13, 115**
 Clinton, Catherine, **34**
 Collins, Suzanne, **10, 100**
 COMIC BOOK CENTURY, **29**
 Connor, Leslie, **80**
 Cooper, Floyd, **49**
 CORALINE, **91**
 CORK & FUZZ, **75**
 Cotten, Cynthia, **54**
 COUPLE OF BOYS HAVE THE BEST
 WEEK EVER, **68**
 COW THAT LAID AN EGG, **9, 13, 67**
 COWGIRL KATE AND COCOA: RAIN
 OR SHINE, **75**
 Cowley, Joy, **77**
 CRAZY DIAMOND, **14, 99**
 Creech, Sharon, **81**
 Crosby, Jeff, **20**
 CROSSOVER, **12**
 Crowe, Chris, **34**
 Cumbie, Patricia, **100**
 Cumpiano, Ina, **16, 50**
 Curie, Marie, **55**
 CURSE DARK AS GOLD, **10**
 Cutbill, Andy, **9, 67**
 CYCLER, **12**
 Cyrus, Kurt, **54**

D

Daly, Jude, **26**
 DANCE WITH ME, **9, 13, 62**
 Dancy, Deborah, **48**
 DAUGHTER OF WAR, **113**
 Davies, Andy Robert, **64**
 DAY WITH DAD, **14, 42**
 DEAD & GONE, **111**
 DEATH OF JAYSON PORTER, **16**
 DEBBIE HARRY SINGS IN FRENCH, **12**
 Deem, James M., **21**
 Delacre, Lulu, **28**
 Delaney, Joseph, **81**
 Delano, Marfé Ferguson, **35**
 Denton, Kady McDonald, **52**
 DIAMOND WILLOW, **83**
 DISREPUTABLE HISTORY OF FRANKIE
 LANDAU-BANKS, **108**
 Doctorow, Cory, **11, 101**
 DOG AND BEAR, **61**
 Dole, Mayra Lazara, **16, 101**
 DON'T WORRY BEAR, **9, 55**
 Dowd, Siobhan, **82, 101**
 Dowell, Frances O'Roark, **82**
 DOWN TO THE BONE, **12, 16, 101**
 DRAGON'S CHILD, **93**
 DRUM CALLS SOFTLY, **16**
 DUCK, **13, 53**
 DUCK & GOOSE 1 2 3, **50**

Durand, Delphine, 9, **66**
 Durbin, William, **102**
 Dürer, Albrecht, 80
 Dyssegaard, Elisabeth Kallick, **59**

E

ELEPHANTS NEVER FORGET!, **60**
 ELEVEN, **84**
 Elias, Tana, 134
 Elliot, David, 77
 Elliott, Zetta, 16, **67**
 Ellis, Deborah, 14, **102**
 EMPERORS OF THE ICE, **103**
 Engle, Margarita, 47
 ENTRANCES AND EXITS, 12
 Erdrich, Louise, 16, **83**
 Eriksson, Eva, 42
 Ernst, Lisa Campbell, **54**
 Esbaum, Jill, 67
 Essakalli, Julie Klear, 9, **65**
 Evans, Shane W., 46
 EVERY SOUL A STAR, **88**
 Ewart, Marcus, 12

F

FALLEN ANGELS, 109
 Farr, Richard, **103**
 50 SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO
 SAVE THE EARTH, **40**
 FINDING HOME, 22
 Fine, Anne, 11
 FIRST DAUGHTER, 15
 Fisher, Valerie, **85**
 Fleischman, Sid, **35**
 Fleming, Candace, 15, **36**
 Fleming, Denise, **55**
 FLY HIGH, FLY GUY!, 74
 FOLD, 16, **110**
 Foley, Greg, 9, **55**
 FOOTPRINTS IN THE SNOW, **59**
 Foreman, Jack, 42
 Foreman, Michael, 42
 Forest-Flier, Nancy, **103**
 FOREVER ROSE, **88**
 FORTUNES OF INDIGO SKYE, **98**
 42 MILES, **94**
 Fosberry, Jennifer, **55**
 Foster, Rube, 30
 FRANNY'S FRIENDS, **58**
 Frazee, Marla, **68**
 FREEDOM BUSINESS, 14, **48**
 FROM COVER TO COVER, 133
 Frost, Helen, **21,83**

G

Gaiman, Neil, **83, 91**
 GAME, **109**
 GAME OF SILENCE, 16, 83
 GARMANN'S SUMMER, 14, **69**
 GAY AMERICA, 12, 14, **28**
 George, Jean Craighead, 75
 Gephart, Donna, 15
 Gerdner, Linda, **68**
 Gettysburg Address, 44
 Geus, Mireille, **103**
 GHOSTS IN THE HOUSE!, 24
 Gifaldi, David, **84**
 Giff, Patricia Reilly, **84**
 Gifford, Peggy, **85**
 Gillum, Sandy, 21
 GIORGIO AND HIS STAR CRANE
 TRAIN, **63**
 Giovanni, Nikki, 15
 GIRL WHO SAW LIONS, 13
 Goldman, Steven, 11, **104**
 Goldstone, Bruce, **50**
 GONE FISHING, 23
 González, Lucía, **28**
 GOOD ENOUGH, 11, **117**
 GOOSE AND DUCK, 75
 Gorbachev, Valeri, **56**
 Gordon, David, 67
 Gore, Leonid, 21
 GRACELING, 10, **99**
 Graham, Bob, 9, **56,57**
 GRANDFATHER'S STORY CLOTH,
 16, **68**
 GRAPES OF WRATH, 104
 Gravett, Emily, **56**
 GRAVEYARD BOOK, **83**
 Gray, Nigel, 57
 GREAT ESTIMATIONS, 50
 GREAT SNAKE, 14, 27
 GREATER ESTIMATIONS, **50**
 Green, John, 11
 Greenberg, Jan, **44,47**
 GREETINGS FROM NOWHERE, **89**
 Grimes, Nikki, 15
 GROWING UP WITH TAMALES, 9,
 16, 74
 GUARDIAN, **107**

H

HAIKU BABY, 13, **62**
 Hale, Dean, **85**
 Hale, Nathan, **85**
 Hale, Shannon, **85**
 HANNAH DUCK, 13, **64**
 HAPPY BABY SAD BABY, 13
 HARD LOVE, 117

HATE THAT CAT, **81**
 Hazen, Lynn E., **104**
 HE FORGOT TO SAY GOODBYE, **16**
 Hegamin, Tonya Cheri, **16**, **104**
 HELEN'S EYES, **35**
 Helquist, Brett, **79**
 HEN HEARS GOSSIP, **9**, **13**, **60**
 Henkes, Kevin, **9**, **57**, **86**
 HERO TYPE, **11**
 Hills, Tad, **50**
 Himmelman, John, **57**
 Hirahara, Naomi, **16**, **86**
 HITLER YOUTH, **96**
 Hole, Stian, **69**
 Holmberg, Bo R., **42**
 Holmes, Sherlock, **92**
 HOME-RUN KING, **77**
 HONEYBEE, **14**, **49**
 Horáček, Petr, **58**
 Horning, Kathleen T., **133**
 Horse, Harry, **58**
 HOT, SOUR, SALTY, SWEET, **16**
 HOUSE IN THE NIGHT, **63**
 HOW I LEARNED GEOGRAPHY, **9**,
 13, **73**
 HOW MAMA BROUGHT THE SPRING,
 9, **13**, **25**
 HOW THEY MET, AND OTHER
 STORIES, **12**, **107**
 HOW TO BUILD A HOUSE, **112**
 HOW TO DITCH YOUR FAIRY, **106**
 HOW TO HEAL A BROKEN WING,
 9, **56**
 HUNGER GAMES, **10**, **100**

I

I LOVE MY NEW TOY!, **76**
 I WILL SURPRISE MY FRIEND!, **76**
 IMPOSSIBLE, **10**, **116**
 IN A BLUE ROOM, **9**, **51**
 IN DEFIANCE OF HITLER, **29**
 Ingman, Bruce, **65**
 INTO THE DARK, **78**

J

Jackson, Alison, **69**
 Jackson, Ellen, **22**
 Jackson, Shelley Ann, **20**
 Jaeggi, Yoshiko, **73**
 James, Gordon C., **77**
 Javna, Jesse, **40**
 Javna, John, **40**
 Javna, Sophie, **40**
 JELLABY, **10**, **91**
 Jenkins, Emily, **70**, **87**
 Jenkins, Steve, **22**

Jiménez, Francisco, **16**, **105**
 JIMMY'S STARS, **90**
 Johnson, D. B., **31**
 Johnson, Stephen T., **44**
 Jones, Noah Z., **9**, **62**
 Jongman, Mariken, **105**
 Jordan, Sandra, **44**
 JUST A MINUTE, **51**
 JUST IN CASE, **51**

K

Kadohata, Cynthia, **16**
 Karas, G. Brian, **53**
 KATIE LOVES THE KITTENS, **57**
 KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE KID, **33**
 KEEPING THE NIGHT WATCH, **49**
 KEITH AND HIS SUPER-STUNT RALLY
 RACER, **63**
 Keller, Laurie, **70**
 KENDRA, **11**
 Kennemore, Tim, **77**
 Kerley, Barbara, **14**
 Kim, Joung Un, **9**, **60**
 Kimmel, Eric A., **70**
 KNIFE OF NEVER LETTING GO, **10**,
 110
 KNUCKLEHEAD, **37**
 Kohara, Kazuno, **24**
 Konigsberg, Bill, **12**, **106**
 Könnecke, Ole, **41**
 Kostecki-Shaw, Jenny Sue, **43**
 Krensky, Stephen, **29**
 Krommes, Beth, **63**
 Kruusval, Catarina, **58**
 Kuklin, Susan, **15**, **41**
 Kunert, Günter, **47**

L

Laboulaye, Édouard De, **32**
 LADY LIBERTY, **32**
 LaFave, Kim, **66**
 Lamont, Priscilla, **75**
 Landström, Olof, **59**
 Langford, Sarah, **68**
 Larbalastier, Justine, **106**
 LAST OF THE HIGH KINGS, **114**
 Law, Ingrid, **10**
 Lee, Suzy, **16**, **59**
 Lester, Julius, **107**
 Levithan, David, **12**, **107**
 Lewin, Betsy, **75**
 Lewis, E. B., **49**
 Li, Moying, **16**, **36**
Library Sparks, **134**
 LIFE AS WE KNOW IT, **111**
 LIFE IN THE WILD, **38**

LIFE IS FINE, 16
 LIFE ON EARTH, **24**
 Lin, Grace, **24**
 LINCOLN AND DOUGLASS, 15
 LINCOLN THROUGH THE LENS, **32**
 LINCOLNS, 15, **36**
 Lindgren, Barbro, **59**
 Lindo, Elvira, **87**
 LISTENING FOR CRICKETS, **84**
 LITTLE AUDREY, **92**
 LITTLE BROTHER, 11, **101**
 LITTLE LIONS, BULL BAITERS &
 HUNTING HOUNDS, **20**
 LITTLE RABBIT'S NEW BABY, **58**
 LITTLEST SLED DOG, 16
 Litwin, Mike, **55**
 LIVING DEAD GIRL, 11, **113**
 Lobel, Arnold, 62
 Lockhart, E., **108**
 LONDON EYE MYSTERY, **82**
 LOOK OUT, SUZY GOOSE, 13, **58**
 Look, Lenore, **88**
 LOON SUMMER, **21**
 Loughridge, Stuart, **68**
 LOUISE, THE ADVENTURES OF A
 CHICKEN, 13
 LOVE & LIES, 12, 16, **117**
 Lovelock, Brian, **63**
 Ludwig, Trudy, **43**
 LUNCH WITH LENIN AND OTHER
 STORIES, 14, **102**
 Lyga, Barry, 11

M

M+O 4EVR, 12, 16, **104**
 MADAM PRESIDENT, **73**
 MANFISH, **33**
 MANOLITO FOUR-EYES, 14, **87**
 Manushkin, Fran, 9, 13, **25**
 MAPLE SYRUP SEASON, **25**
 MARCH TOWARD THE THUNDER,
 11, 16, **97**
 Markle, Sandra, **22,23**
 Marks, Alan, **22**
 Mass, Wendy, **88**
 MASTERPIECE, **80**
 Matsuoaka, Mei, **59**
 MAYBELLE GOES TO TEA, **76**
 MAYBELLE IN THE SOUP, **76**
 Mazer, Norma Fox, 11
 McCain, Megan, 15
 McCarthy, Meghan, 14, **29**
 McClafferty, Carla Killough, **29**
 McCue, Lisa, **75**
 McCullough, David, **31**

McDonald, Megan, 9, **60**
 McGill, Alice, 14, **26**
 McKay, Hilary, **88**
 McKean, Dave, **83,95**
 McKissack, Patricia C., **48, 77**
 McLaughlin, Lauren, 12
 McLimans, David, **23**
 MEXICAN WHITEBOY, 16
 Michaelson, Tessa, 134
 Milway, Katie Smith, 13
 MISSING GIRL, 11
 MONARCH AND MILKWEED, **21**
 MONKEY AND ME, **56**
 MONKEY WITH A TOOL BELT, **71**
 Monroe, Chris, **71**
 MONSOON AFTERNOON, 16, **73**
 MOON OVER STAR, **66**
 Morales, Yuyi, **51**
 Moriarty, Joanne, **87**
 MORIBITO, 14
 MOXY MAXWELL DOES NOT LOVE
 STUART LITTLE, 85
 MOXY MAXWELL DOES NOT LOVE
 WRITING THANK-YOU NOTES, **85**
 MR. RABBIT AND THE LOVELY
 PRESENT, 8
 MULTICOLORED MIRROR, 133
 MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE FOR
 CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS,
 1980–1990, 133
 MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE FOR
 CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS,
 1991–1996, 133, 134
 Munch, Edvard, 47
 Murdock, Catherine Gilbert, 12, **108**
 Murphy, Kelly, **80**
 Muth, Jon J, **71**
 MY DAD, JOHN MCCAIN, 15
 MY DOG, MY CAT, MY MAMA, AND
 ME!, 13, **57**
 MY MOST EXCELLENT YEAR, 12
 MY NAME IS NOT ISABELLA, **55**
 MY TRAVELIN' EYE, **43**
 MY TWO GRANNIES, 16, **42**
 Myers, Walter Dean, 11, **109**
 MYSTERIOUS UNIVERSE, **22**

N

Na, An, 16, **110**
 Nelson, Kadir, **30**
 Nelson, Marilyn, 14, **48**
 Nelson, Scott Reynolds, **30**
 Ness, Patrick, 10, **110**
 NEW POLICEMAN, 115
 Nichols, Travis, **45**

Nielsen, Susin, **89**
 Nivola, Claire A., 14, **38**
 NIWECHIHAW, 16
 NO CHOIRBOY, 15, **41**
 NO NO YES YES, 13, **60**
 Nye, Naomi Shihab, 14, **49**

O

O'Brien, Tony, **39**
 O'Connor, Barbara, **89**
 O'Neill, Catharine, **75**
 Oakley, Annie, 55
 OFF TO WAR, 14
 OINK, OINK BENNY, **59**
 OLD BEAR, 9, **57**
 ONE HEN, 13
 1001 CRANES, 16, **86**
 Orgel, Doris, **99**
 OUR FARM, **39**
 OUR WHITE HOUSE, **31**
 OUT OF THE POCKET, 12, **106**
 OUTSIDE BEAUTY, 16

P

Page, Robin, **22**
 PALE MALE, **23**
 PAPER TOWNS, 11
 Parker, Robert Andrew, 14, **45**
 Parks, Rosa, 55
 Patricelli, Leslie, 13, **60**
 PEACE BELL, 13, **72**
 Pearson, Mary E., 11, **111**
 Pedersen, Janet, **69**
 Peña, Matt de la, 16
 PENCIL, **65**
 Penny, Patricia G., 12
 Perkins, Lynne Rae, **71**
 Perkins, Mitali, 15
 Pfeffer, Susan Beth, **111**
 Pham, LeUyen, **88**
 PHILLIS'S BIG TEST, **34**
 PIANO STARTS HERE, 14, **45**
 Pieper, Christiane, **60**
 PIGEON WANTS A PUPPY!, **64**
 PIGGY, 14, **103**
 Pinkney, Jerry, **66**
 PLANNING CURRICULUM IN
 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, 134
 PLANTING THE TREES OF KENYA,
 14, **38**
 Pledge of Allegiance, 44
 Poitras, Jim, 16
 Porcellino, John, **31**
 PORCUPINE YEAR, 16, **83**
 POSTCARD, **94**
 Pratt, Pierre, **70**

Preller, James, **90**
 Preus, Margi, 13, **72**
 Prevost, Mikela, **43**
 PRINCESS BEN, 12, **108**
 PUNK ROCK ETIQUETTE, **45**
 Purmell, Ann, **25**
 Puybaret, Éric, **33**

Q

Qualls, Sean, **34, 46**
 QUINITO, DAY AND NIGHT, 16, **50**

R

RAIN PLAY, 16, **54**
 Ramírez, José, **50**
 Rappaport, Doreen, **32**
 RAPUNZEL'S REVENGE, **85**
 Ravishankar, Anushka, **60**
 Ray, Deborah Kogan, **37**
 Ray, Jane, 41, **72**
 Ray, Mary Lyn, **26**
 REACHING OUT, 16, **105**
 REAL FOOD, REAL FAST, **39**
 Reinhardt, Dana, **112**
 Ride, Sally, 55
 Riordan, Rick, **90**
 RITS, 14, **105**
 RIVER OF WORDS, 9, **34**
 ROAD OF BONES, 11
 ROADWORK, **63**
 Rodman, Mary Ann, **90**
 Rosen, Michael J., **39**
 ROUND LIKE A BALL!, 13, **54**
 Rud, Jeff, 12
 Ruditis, Paul, 12
 Rumford, James, 9, 13, **72**
 Russell, P. Craig, **91**

S

Sáenz, Benjamin Alire, 16
 Salariya, David, **61**
 Sandin, Joan, **58**
 Sandler, Martin W., **32**
 SANTA DUCK, 13
 Savadier, Elivia, **61**
 SAVAGE, **95**
 SAVVY, 10
 SAY HELLO, **42**
 Schliesman, Megan, 134
 Schmidt, Gary D., **112**
School Library Journal, 134
 Schulman, Janet, **23**
 Scieszka, Jon, **37**
 Scott, Elizabeth, 11, **113**
 Scott, Robert F., 103

SCRAMBLED STATES OF AMERICA

TALENT SHOW, **70**SEABISCUIT THE WONDER HORSE,
14, **29**Seeger, Laura Vaccaro, **61**SEER OF SHADOWS, **79**SHEPHERD'S GRANDDAUGHTER, 11,
13, **98**Sheth, Kashmira, **73**

SHI-SHI-ETKO, 66

SHIFTY, **104**SHIN-CHI'S CANOE, 16, **66**SHOOTING THE MOON, **82**Shulevitz, Uri, 9, 13, **73**SIDE BY SIDE, **47**SILENT MUSIC, 9, 13, **72**Silverman, Erica, **75**SISTERS & BROTHERS, **22**SIX INNINGS, **90**SKIM, 12, **114**Skrypuch, Marsha Forchuk, **113**SKUNKDOG, **70**Small, David, **78**Smith, Charles R. Jr., 9, **62**Smith, Hope Anita, **49**Smith, Lane, **73**

Smith, Sherri L., 16

SNEAKY, SPINNING BABY SPIDERS, **23**SNOW FALLING IN SPRING, 16, **36**Snyder, Betsy, 13, **62**So, Meilo, **23**Solomon, Heather M., **27**Soo, Kean, 10, **91**Spanyol, Jessica, **62, 63**Speck, Katie, **76**Spoor, Mike, **77**Springer, Nancy, **92**

STEEL DRIVIN' MAN, 30

Steptoe, Javaka, **54**Stern, Sam, **39**Stern, Susan, **39**STITCHIN' AND PULLIN', **48**STORMY'S HAT, **70**STORYTELLER'S CANDLE, **28**Stratton, Allan, 11, **113**Strickland, Shadra, 16, **67**

SUICIDE NOTES, 12

Sullivan, Mike, **39**SUNRISE OVER FALLUJAH, 11, **109**SURRENDER TREE, **47**Sutton, Sally, **63**Swanson, Susan Marie, **63**Sweet, Melissa, 9, **34**SWEETHEARTS, **118**

Sykes, Lawrence F., 47

TTADPOLE REX, **54**Tafari, Nancy, **51**Tagyos, Paul Rátz de, **76**Takahashi, Hideko, **72**Tamaki, Jillian, **114**Tamaki, Mariko, **114**TAMALES DE ANA (Growing Up with
Tamales), 9

Tatum, Art, 14

Tavares, Matt, **32**Taylor, Sean, 14, **27**TEACHING CHARACTER EDUCATION
USING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE,
134THEA'S TREE, **69**THERE'S A WOLF AT THE DOOR, **26**Thomas, Joyce Carol, **49**Thompson, Kate, **114**3 BEARS AND GOLDBLOCKS, **27**THOREAU AT WALDEN, **31**Thoreau, Henry David, **31**

10,000 DRESSES, 12

TO THE BIG TOP, **67**TOY DANCE PARTY, **87**

TOYS GO OUT, 87

TROUBLE, **112**

TROUBLE BEGINS AT 8, 35

TROUBLE TALK, **43**TRUCK STUCK, **64**Turner, Pamela S., **24, 38**TURTLE'S PENGUIN DAY, **56**Tusa, Tricia, 9, **51**TWEEDLE-DEE-DEE, **46**TWO PARTIES, ONE TUX, AND A VERY
SHORT FILM ABOUT THE GRAPES
OF WRATH, 11, **104****U**U'Ren, Andrea, **70**

UNCLE BOBBY'S WEDDING, 12

UNDERNEATH, 11, **78**

United Nations, 41

UP ALL NIGHT, **115**UP CLOSE: JANE GOODALL, **32**UP CLOSE: THURGOOD MARSHALL,
34Urberuaga, Emilio, **87****V**Venkatraman, Padma, **115**Ventura, Gabriela Baeza, 9, **74**Vilela, Fernando, **27**VISITOR FOR BEAR, **52**Voake, Charlotte, **46**

W

- WAITING FOR NORMAL, **80**
 WALDEN, 31
 WANDA GÁG, **37**
 WANGARI'S TREES OF PEACE, 14, **40**
 Ward, April, 9, **74**
 Warhol, Andy, 44
 WAVE, 16, **59**
 WAY A DOOR CLOSES, 49
 WAY UP AND OVER EVERYTHING,
 14, **26**
 WE ARE ALL BORN FREE, 14, **41**
 WE ARE THE SHIP, **30**
 Weatherford, Carole Boston, 14, **46**
 Weber, Jill, **25**
 Werlin, Nancy, 10, **116**
 WHAT I SAW AND HOW I LIED, **96**
 WHAT THEY ALWAYS TELL US, **116**
 WHAT TO DO ABOUT ALICE?, 14
 WHAT'S UP, DUCK?, 13, **50**
 WHERE PEOPLE LIKE US LIVE, **100**
 White, Ruth, **92**
 Whitehead, Kathy, **46**
 Whittenberg, Allison, 16
 WILL SHEILA SHARE?, **61**
 Willems, Mo, **64, 76**
 Willey, Margaret, **27**
 WILLIAM'S DOLL, 8
 Wilson, Martin, **116**
 WINTER WAR, **102**
 Winter, Jeanette, 14, **40**
 Wittlinger, Ellen, **117**
Wisconsin State Journal, 133
 Wolf, Sallie, **64**
 WOLFSNAIL, **20**
 Woodson, Jacqueline, **93**
 WORD NERD, **89**
 WRATH OF THE BLOODEYE, **81**

Y

- Yamamura, Anji, **64**
 Yep, Kathleen S., **93**
 Yep, Laurence, **93**
 Yohannes, Ghirmai, 47
 Yoo, Paula, 11, 16, **117**

Z

- Zarr, Sara, **118**
 Zelinsky, Paul O., **87**
 ZEN SHORTS, 74
 ZEN TIES, 71
 Zepeda, Gwendolyn, 9, 16, **74**
 Zimmer, Tracie Vaughn, **94**

Subject Index

This subject index provides access to the titles in *CCBC Choices* as well as to information about the CCBC and publishing in 2008 mentioned in the introduction and end matter. While the index is not comprehensive, themes and subjects were chosen with story time, classroom use, and reader's advisory in mind. In keeping with the CCBC's interest in providing access to multicultural literature, the index also includes the ethnic backgrounds of the persons, fictional and real, portrayed in this year's *CCBC Choices* selections. Subject entries are as specific as possible and include cross references to point the reader to other subjects of interest. For example, "Native Americans" includes a cross-reference to "Abenaki Indians" and other culturally specific subgroups.

A

Abenaki Indians

March Toward the Thunder, 97

Abuse. *See also* **Sexual Abuse**

Listening for Crickets, 84
Sweethearts, 117

Activism

50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth, 40
Gay America, 28

Addiction. *See also* **Alcohol Abuse; Drugs**

Bird, 67

Afghanis

Afghan Dreams, 39

African American Themes

Blacker the Berry, 49
Stitchin' and Pullin', 48
Way Up and Over Everything, 26

Africans and African Americans. *See also*

Kenyans; Moroccans; Trinidadians

After Tupac & D Foster, 93
Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Volume II, 95
Ain't Nothing But a Man, 30
Art from Her Heart, 46
Before John Was a Jazz Giant, 46
Bird, 67
Blacker the Berry, 49
Chanda's Wars, 113
Freedom Business, 48
Game, 109
Guardian, 107
Home-Run King, 77
Keeping the Night Watch, 49
M+O 4evr, 104
Moon Over Star, 66
Phillis's Big Test, 34
Piano Starts Here, 45
Rain Play, 54

Stitchin' and Pullin', 48

Sunrise over Fallujah, 109

Up Close: Thurgood Marshall, 34

Way Up and Over Everything, 26

We Are the Ship, 30

Alcohol Abuse

Little Audrey, 92

Alphabet Books

A Is for Art, 44
Just in Case, 51

Alzheimer's Disease

Grandfather's Story Cloth, 68

Amazon River

Great Snake, 27

Amblyopia

My Travelin' Eye, 43

American Indians. *See also* **Abenaki Indians; Athabascan Indians; Ojibwe Indians**

Shin-chi's Canoe, 66

Angel Island

Dragon's Child, 93

Animals. *See also* **Bats; Birds; Cats; Dogs;**

Horses; Koalas; Pets; Primates;

The Natural World section

Life in the Wild, 38
Sisters & Brothers, 22

Antarctic

Emperors of the Ice, 103

Anthropology

Bodies from the Ice, 21

Arabic Language

Silent Music, 72

Armenians

Daughter of War, 113

Art and Artists. *See also* **The Arts section**

Calder Game, 79
How I Learned Geography, 73
Masterpiece, 80
Side by Side, 47

- Silent Music, 72
- Wanda Gág, 37
- Asian/Pacifics and Asian/Pacific Americans.** *See also* **Cambodian Americans; Chinese and Chinese Americans; Hmong; Indians; Japanese and Japanese Americans**
- All About Me!, 61
- Be Gentle with the Dog, Dear!, 52
- Asperger's Syndrome**
 - London Eye Mystery, 82
- Asthma**
 - Listening for Crickets
- Astrobiology**
 - Life on Earth—And Beyond, 44
- Astronauts**
 - Moon Over Star, 66
- Astronomy**
 - Mysterious Universe, 22
- Athabaskan Indians**
 - Diamond Willow, 83
- Autism.** *See also* **Asperger's Syndrome**
- Piggy, 103
- Autobiographies.** *See also* **Biography and Autobiography section**
- How I Learned Geography, 73
- Reaching Out, 105

B

- Babies**
 - Baby! Baby!, 53
 - Chicken Feathers, 77
 - Little Rabbit's New Baby, 58
 - My Dog, My Cat, My Mama, and Me!, 57
- Baseball**
 - Home-Run King, 77
 - Six Innings, 90
 - We Are the Ship, 30
- Basketball**
 - Game, 109
- Bats**
 - Big Brown Bat, 20
- Bedtime**
 - House in the Night, 63
 - In a Blue Room, 51
- Belpré, Pura**
 - Storyteller's Candle, 28
- Bilingual Books (English/Hmong)**
 - Grandfather's Story Cloth, 68
- Bilingual Books (English/Spanish)** *See also* **Spanish language**
 - Growing Up with Tamales, 74
 - Quinito, Day and Night, 50
 - Storyteller's Candle, 28

Biographies. *See also* **Biography and Autobiography section**

- Art from Her Heart, 46
- Before John Was a Jazz Giant, 46
- Christo and Jeanne-Claude, 44
- In Defiance of Hitler, 29
- Lincoln through the Lens, 32
- Piano Starts Here, 45
- Seabiscuit the Wonder Horse, 29

Biologists

- Planting the Trees of Kenya, 38
- Wangari's Trees of Peace, 40

Biotechnology

- Adoration of Jenna Fox, 111

Biracial Families. *See* **Multiracial Families**

Biracial Friendship. *See* **Multiracial Friendship**

Birds. *See* **Hawks; Loons**

Blindness

- Helen's Eyes, 35
- Piano Starts Here, 45

Board Books

- All About Me!, 61
- Baby Happy Baby Sad, 60
- Baby! Baby!, 53
- No No Yes Yes, 60

Brothers. *See also* **Siblings; Sisters; Families**

- Home-Run King, 77
- Knucklehead, 37
- What They Always Tell Us, 116

Bullying

- Piggy, 103
- Savage, 95

Butterflies

- Monarch and Milkweed, 21

C

Calder, Alexander

- The Calder Game, 79

Cambodian Americans

- Trouble, 112

Cancer

- Six Innings, 90

Capital Punishment

- No Choirboy, 41

Cars and Trucks

- Bob and His No. 1 Van, 62
- Clemence and His Noisy Little Fire Engine, 62
- Giorgio and His Star Crane Train, 63
- Keith and His Super-Stunt Rally Racer, 63
- Roadwork, 63
- Truck Stuck, 63

Castellanos, Rosario Castellanos

- Surrender Tree, 47

Cats

- Katie Loves the Kittens, 57
- Hate That Cat, 81
- Underneath, 78

CCBC Choices

- age recommendations in, 7
- choosing books for, 5
- obtaining, 132
- organization of, 6
- publication information in, 7

Charlotte Zolotow Award, 8–9**Cherry-Garrard, Apsley George Benet**

- Emperors of the Ice, 103

Chinese and Chinese Americans

- Alvin Ho, 88
- Bringing in the New Year, 24
- Dragon's Child, 93
- Snow Falling in Spring, 36

Christmas

- Christmas Farm, 26
- Growing Up with Tamales, 74

Christo (Artist)

- Christo and Jeanne-Claude, 44

Circuses

- Postcard, 94
- To the Big Top, 67

Civil Liberties

- Little Brother, 101

Civil Rights

- Gay America, 28
- Up Close: Thurgood Marshall, 34

Civil War. *See* U. S. Civil War**Clemens, Samuel**

- Trouble Begins at 8, 35

Colors

- Blue Goose, 51

Coltrane, John

- Before John Was a Jazz Giant, 46

Comic Books. *See also* Graphic Novels

- Comic Book Century, 29

Conservation. *See also* Environmental**Issues**

- 50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth, 40
- Life in the Wild, 38
- Planting the Trees of Kenya, 38
- Wangari's Trees of Peace, 40

Cooking

- How Mama Brought the Spring, 25
- Real Food, Real Fast, 39

Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC)

- Advisory Board, 129–130
- collection, 128
- Friends of, 135
- governance of, 129
- hours, 131
- Intellectual Freedom Information Services, 127

- purpose, 127–128
- staff, 130
- vision statement, 126–127
- web site, 128

Counting Books. *See also* Estimation

- Duck & Goose 1 2 3, 50
- Gone Fishing, 23

Cousteau, Jacques

- Manfish, 33

Criminal Justice System

- No Choirboy, 41

Cubans and Cuban Americans

- Down to the Bone, 101
- Love & Lies, 117
- Surrender Tree, 47

Cultural Revolution, Chinese

- Snow Falling in Spring, 36

D**Deafness**

- Hate That Cat, 81

Death

- Crazy Diamond, 99
- Jimmy's Stars, 90
- M+O 4evr, 104
- Porcupine Year, 83
- Shepherd's Granddaughter, 98
- Trouble, 112

Depression (Emotional)

- Little Audrey, 92
- Skim, 114
- What They Always Tell Us, 116

Depression (Economic). *See* Great Depression**Disabilities. *See* Autism; Asperger's Syndrome; Blindness; Deafness****Disabilities, Learning**

- Eleven, 84
- Listening for Crickets, 84

Discrimination. *See also* Homophobia; Racism; Sexism

- After Tupac & D Foster, 93
- Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks, 108
- Down to the Bone, 101
- Gay America, 28
- Out of the Pocket, 106

Divorce

- 1001 Cranes, 86
- 42 Miles, 94
- Bird Lake Moon, 86
- Day with Dad, 42

Dogs

- Diamond Willow, 83
- Little Lions, Bull Baiters & Hunting Hounds, 20

Skunkdog, 70
Underneath, 78

Drugs

Lunch with Lenin and Other Stories, 102

E

Ecology

Loon Summer, 21

Education. *See also Teachers*

Climbing the Stairs, 115
Helen's Eyes, 35
Listening for Crickets
Reaching Out, 105
Snow Falling in Spring, 36

Emergency Rescue Committee

In Defiance of Hitler, 29

Emigration. *See also Immigrants*

Crazy Diamond, 99

Emotions. *See also Fear*

Baby Happy Baby Sad, 60
Katie Loves the Kittens, 57
Savage, 95
Trouble Talk, 43

Environmental Issues. *See also*

Conservation

Bodies from the Ice, 21
Round Like a Ball!, 54

Estimation

Greater Estimations, 50

Ethics

Adoration of Jenna Fox, 111

Explorers

Emperors of the Ice, 103
Manfish, 33

F

Fairy Tales. *See also Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature*

section

Apple-Pip Princess, 72
Rapunzel's Revenge, 85
Thea's Tree, 69

Families. *See also Brothers; Fathers;*

Grandfathers; Grandmothers;

Grandparents; Mothers; Multiracial

Families; Siblings; Sisters; Stepfamilies;

Uncles

1001 Cranes, 86
42 Miles, 94
After Tupac & D Foster, 93
Alice's Birthday Pig, 77
Alvin Ho, 88
Bird Lake Moon, 86
Bringing in the New Year, 24
Butter Man, 65
Chicken Feathers, 77

Day with Dad, 42
Diamond Willow, 83
Elephants Never Forget!, 60
Eleven, 84
Fold, 110
Forever Rose, 88
Grandfather's Story Cloth, 68
Growing Up with Tamales, 74
Hate That Cat, 81
Home-Run King, 77
How Mama Brought the Spring, 25
Into the Dark, 78
Keeping the Night Watch, 49
Knucklehead, 37
Listening for Crickets
Little Audrey, 92
London Eye Mystery, 82
Manolito Four-Eyes, 87
Moon Over Star, 66
Moxy Maxwell Does Not Love Writing
Thank-you Notes, 85
My Two Grannies, 42
Our Farm, 39
Porcupine Year, 83
Postcard, 94
Quinto, Day and Night, 50
Reaching Out, 105
Rits, 105
Shepherd's Granddaughter, 98
Shifty, 104
Shooting the Moon, 82
Snow Falling in Spring, 36
Waiting for Normal, 80
Will Sheila Share?, 61

Fantasy

Attack of the Fiend, 81
Battle of the Labyrinth, 90
Coraline, 91
Graceling, 99
How to Ditch Your Fairy, 106
Impossible, 116
Jellaby, 91
Knife of Never Letting Go, 110
Last of the High Kings, 114
Masterpiece, 80
Princess Ben, 108
Rapunzel's Revenge, 85
Wrath of the Bloodeye, 81

Fantasy literature, publishing trends, 10

Farming. *See also Harvesting*

Our Farm, 39

Fathers. *See also Families; Mothers;*

Stepfamilies

Butter Man, 65
Day with Dad, 42
Dragon's Child, 93
Keeping the Night Watch, 49

Fear. *See also* **Emotions**

- Alvin Ho, 88
- Buster Goes to Cowboy Camp, 55
- Garmann's Summer, 69
- Hannah Duck, 64
- Living Dead Girl, 113
- Rits, 105

Filippenko, Alex

- Mysterious Universe, 22

Filmmaking

- Keep Your Eye on the Kid, 33
- Manfish, 33
- Rits, 105
- Two Parties, One Tux, and a Very Short Film about the Grapes of Wrath, 104

Folk Art

- Art from Her Heart, 46

Football

- Out of the Pocket, 106

Foster Care

- After Tupac & D Foster, 93
- Shifty, 104

Friendship. *See also* **Multiracial Friendship**

- After Tupac & D Foster, 93
- Alvin Ho, 88
- Bird Lake Moon, 86
- Black Rabbit Summer, 97
- Cardboard Piano, 71
- Chicken Feathers, 77
- Cork & Fuzz, 75
- Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever, 68
- Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa: Rain or Shine, 75
- Dog and Bear: Two's Company, 61
- Eleven, 84
- Game, 109
- How to Build a House, 112
- I Love My New Toy!, 76
- I Will Surprise My Friend!, 76
- Love & Lies, 117
- M+O 4evr, 104
- Manolito Four-Eyes, 87
- March Toward the Thunder, 97
- Masterpiece, 80
- Rapunzel's Revenge, 85
- Rits, 105
- Say Hello, 42
- Sweethearts, 117
- The Calder Game, 79
- To the Big Top, 67
- Toy Dance Party, 87
- Trouble Talk, 43
- Two Parties, One Tux, and a Very Short Film about the Grapes of Wrath, 104
- Visitor for Bear, 52
- What They Always Tell Us, 116
- Where People Like Us Live, 100

Word Nerd, 89

Zen Ties, 71

Fry, Varian

- In Defiance of Hitler, 29

G**Gays.** *See also* **GLBTQ; Lesbians**

- After Tupac & D Foster, 93
- How They Met, and Other Stories, 107
- Out of the Pocket, 106
- Two Parties, One Tux, and a Very Short Film about the Grapes of Wrath, 104
- What They Always Tell Us, 116

Gee's Bend

- Stitchin' and Pullin', 48

Ghost Stories

- Graveyard Book, 83
- Great Snake, 27
- Seer of Shadows, 79

Glaciers

- Bodies from the Ice, 21

GLBTQ. *See also* **Gays; Lesbians**

- Gay America, 28

GLBTQ literature, publishing trends,
12–13**Goodall, Jane**

- Up Close: Jane Goodall, 32

Grandfathers. *See also* **Grandmothers;****Grandparents**

- Bird, 67
- Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever, 68
- Eleven, 84
- Grandfather's Story Cloth, 68
- Into the Dark, 78
- Manolito Four-Eyes, 87
- Monsoon Afternoon, 73
- Moon Over Star, 66
- Shepherd's Granddaughter, 98

Grandmothers. *See also* **Grandfathers;****Grandparents**

- My Two Grannies, 42
- Stitchin' and Pullin', 48

Grandparents. *See also* **Grandfathers;****Grandmothers**

- 1001 Cranes, 86
- Bird Lake Moon, 86

Graphic Novels. *See also* **Comic Books**

- Coraline, 91
- Jellaby, 91
- Punk Rock Etiquette, 45
- Rapunzel's Revenge, 85
- Skim, 114
- Thoreau at Walden, 31

Great Depression

- Seabiscuit the Wonder Horse, 29
- Storyteller's Candle, 28

Grief

- Bird Lake Moon, 86
- How to Build a House, 112
- Savage, 95
- Trouble, 112

H**Halloween**

- Ghosts in the House, 24

Harvesting. *See also Farming*

- Maple Syrup Season, 25

Hawks

- Pale Male, 23

Henry, John

- Ain't Nothing But a Man, 30

Historical Fiction

- Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Volume II, 95
- Bog Child, 101
- Boy Who Dared, 96
- Case of the Bizarre Bouquets, 92
- Case of the Peculiar Pink Fan, 92
- Climbing the Stairs, 115
- Daughter of War, 113
- Dragon's Child, 93
- Emperors of the Ice, 103
- Guardian, 107
- Home-Run King, 77
- Jimmy's Stars, 90
- Lady Liberty, 32
- Little Audrey, 92
- March Toward the Thunder, 97
- Moon Over Star, 66
- Peace Bell, 72
- Phillis's Big Test, 34
- Porcupine Year, 83
- Seer of Shadows, 79
- Shin-chi's Canoe, 66
- Shooting the Moon, 82
- Stormy's Hat, 70
- Storyteller's Candle, 28
- Surrender Tree, 47
- What I Saw and How I Lied, 96
- Winter War, 102

Hmong Peoples

- Grandfather's Story Cloth, 68

Holidays. *See Chinese New Year;***Christmas; Halloween****Homelessness**

- Crazy Diamond, 99

Homophobia

- Down to the Bone, 101

Gay America, 28

Out of the Pocket, 106

Two Parties, One Tux, and a Very Short

Film about the Grapes of Wrath, 104

What They Always Tell Us, 116

Horses

- Seabiscuit the Wonder Horse, 29

Hübener, Helmuth

- Boy Who Dared, 96

Human Rights

- Chanda's Wars, 113
- No Choirboy, 41
- We Are All Born Free, 41

Humor

- Alvin Ho, 88
- Big Bad Bunny, 53
- Chicken Feathers, 77
- Chicken of the Family, 66
- Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever, 68
- Cow That Laid an Egg, 67
- Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks, 108
- Fly High, Fly Guy!, 74
- Fold, 110
- Footprints in the Snow, 59
- Forever Rose, 88
- Good Enough, 117
- Goose and Duck, 75
- Graveyard Book, 83
- Hen Hears Gossip, 60
- How to Ditch Your Fairy, 106
- I Love My New Toy!, 76
- I Will Surprise My Friend!, 76
- Keep Your Eye on the Kid, 33
- Knucklehead, 37
- Little Rabbit's New Baby, 58
- Madam President, 73
- Manolito Four-Eyes, 87
- Monkey with a Tool Belt, 71
- Moxy Maxwell Does Not Love Writing Thank-you Notes, 85
- Oink, Oink Benny, 59
- Pencil, 65
- Pigeon Wants a Puppy!, 64
- Princess Ben, 108
- Punk Rock Etiquette, 45
- Rapunzel's Revenge, 85
- Scrambled States of America Talent Show, 70
- Seabiscuit the Wonder Horse, 29
- Skunkdog, 70
- Stormy's Hat, 70
- Tadpole Rex, 54
- There's a Wolf at the Door, 26
- Toy Dance Party, 87
- Trouble Begins at 8, 35

Two Parties, One Tux, and a Very Short
Film about the Grapes of Wrath, 104
Visitor for Bear, 52
Word Nerd, 89

Hunter, Clementine

Art from Her Heart, 46

I

Illness. *See* **Alzheimer's Disease; Cancer;
Depression (Emotional); Mental
Illness**

Imagination

Big Bad Bunny, 53
Franny's Friends, 58
Garmann's Summer, 69
Growing Up with Tamales, 74
House in the Night, 63
How I Learned Geography, 73
Monkey and Me, 56
My Name Is Not Isabelle, 55
Pencil, 65
Rain Play, 54
Savage, 95
Turtle's Penguin Day, 56

Immigrants. *See also* **Emigration**

Dragon's Child, 93
Reaching Out, 105
Storyteller's Candle, 28
Trouble, 112

Indian Boarding School

Shin-chi's Canoe, 66

**Indians and Indian Americans (Asian/
Pacific)**

Climbing the Stairs, 115
Monsoon Afternoon, 73

**International literature, publishing trends,
13–14**

Iraq War

Silent Music, 72
Sunrise over Fallujah, 109

Iraqis

Silent Music, 72

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Shepherd's Granddaughter, 98

J

Japanese and Japanese Americans

1001 Cranes, 86
Peace Bell, 72
Skim, 114

Jazz Music

Before John Was a Jazz Giant, 46
Piano Starts Here, 45

Jeanne-Claude (Artist)

Christo and Jeanne-Claude, 44

Jews and Jewish Americans

In Defiance of Hitler, 29
Shepherd's Granddaughter, 98
What I Saw and How I Lied, 96

Journeys

42 Miles, 94
Chanda's Wars, 113
Diamond Willow, 83
Dragon's Child, 93
Emperors of the Ice, 103
Great Snake, 27
Porcupine Year, 83
Trouble, 112
Underneath, 78

K

Keaton, Buster

Keep Your Eye on the Kid, 33

Keller, Helen

Helen's Eyes, 35

Kenyans

Planting the Trees of Kenya, 38
Wangari's Trees of Peace, 40

Kidnapping

Living Dead Girl, 113

Koalas

Finding Home, 22

Korean Americans

Fold, 110
Good Enough, 117

L

Laos. *See* **Hmong Peoples**

Latino Themes

Great Snake, 27
Just in Case, 51

Latinos. *See also* **Cubans and Cuban
Americans; Mexican Americans;
Puerto Rican Americans**

Growing Up with Tamales, 74
Quinito, Day and Night, 50

Lesbians. *See also* **Gays; GLBTQ**

Down to the Bone, 101
Love & Lies, 117
M+O 4evr, 104
Skim, 114

Libraries

Storyteller's Candle, 28

Lincoln, Abraham

Lincoln through the Lens, 32
Lincolns, 36

Loons

Loon Summer, 21

Loss

Bird, 67
Bird Lake Moon, 86

Chanda's Wars, 113
 Daughter of War, 113
 Eleven, 84
 Jimmy's Stars, 90
 Savage, 95

Lynching

Guardian, 107

M

Maathai, Wangari

Planting the Trees of Kenya, 38
 Wangari's Trees of Peace, 40

McKay, Chris

Life on Earth—And Beyond, 24

Mental Illness

Rits, 105
 Waiting for Normal, 80

Mexican Americans

Reaching Out, 105

Middle East. *See* Afghanistan; Iraqis; Palestinians

Monarch Butterflies

Monarch and Milkweed, 21

Moroccans

Butter Man, 65

Mothers. *See also* Fathers; Families; Stepfamilies

My Name Is Not Isabella, 55
 Waiting for Normal, 89
 Word Nerd, 89

Multicultural literature, publishing trends, 14–16

Multiracial Families.

Be Gentle with the Dog, Dear!, 52
 My Two Grannies, 42
 Will Sheila Share?, 61

Multiracial Friendship. *See also* Friendship

Cardboard Piano, 71
 Guardian, 107
 How to Build a House, 112
 M+O 4evr, 104

Music and Musicians

Before John Was a Jazz Giant, 46
 Cardboard Piano, 71
 Crazy Diamond, 99
 Last of the High Kings, 114
 Piano Starts Here, 45
 Punk Rock Etiquette, 45

Mysteries

Black Rabbit Summer, 97
 Calder Game, 79
 Case of the Bizarre Bouquets, 92
 Case of the Peculiar Pink Fan, 92
 Eleven, 84
 Into the Dark, 78
 London Eye Mystery, 82

Postcard, 94

What I Saw and How I Lied, 96

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

Battle of the Labyrinth, 90

N

Nature. *See also* The Natural World section

Life in the Wild, 38
 Thoreau at Walden, 31

Neglect

Waiting for Normal, 80

Negro Leagues

Home-Run King, 77
 We Are the Ship, 30

New Year, Chinese

Bringing in the New Year, 24

Nonfiction literature, publishing trends, 14–15

Nonviolence

Climbing the Stairs, 115

O

Oceans

Gone Fishing, 23
 Manfish, 33
 Wave, 59

Ojibwe Indians

Porcupine Year, 83

Opposites

Quinito, Day and Night, 50
 What's Up, Duck?, 50

Oppression. *See also* Slavery

Hunger Games, 100
 Knife of Never Letting Go, 110
 Little Brother, 101
 Shepherd's Granddaughter, 98
 Snow Falling in Spring, 36

P

Palestinians

Shepherd's Granddaughter, 98

Pets. *See also* Cats; Dogs

Be Gentle with the Dog, Dear!, 52
 Hate That Cat, 81
 Little Lions, Bull Baiters & Hunting Hounds, 20
 Pigeon Wants a Puppy!, 64

Photography

Lincoln through the Lens, 32
 Seer of Shadows, 79
 Shooting the Moon, 82

Picture Books, publishing trends, 13

Poetry and Poets. *See also* **Writers and****Writing; Poetry section**

- 42 Miles, 94
- Adoration of Jenna Fox, 111
- Diamond Willow, 83
- Haiku Baby, 62
- Hate That Cat, 81
- Phillis's Big Test, 34
- Rain Play, 54
- River of Words, 34

Poverty

- Afghan Dreams, 39
- Chanda's Wars, 113
- How I Learned Geography, 73
- Listening for Crickets, 84
- Little Audrey, 92
- Lunch with Lenin, 102
- Shifty, 104
- Waiting for Normal, 80

Presidents. *See also* **White House**

- Lincoln through the Lens, 32
- Lincolns, 36

Primates

- Up Close: Jane Goodall, 32

Prison

- No Choirboy, 41

Publishing

- books published in 2008, 5
- multicultural books, 15–17
- thoughts on, 10–17

Puerto Rican Americans

- Dead & the Gone, 111
- Down to the Bone, 101
- Love & Lies, 117
- Storyteller's Candle, 28

Punk Rock Music

- Punk Rock Etiquette, 45

Q**Quilts**

- Stitchin' and Pullin', 48

R**Racism.** *See also* **Discrimination; Sexism;****Slavery**

- Fold, 110
- Guardian, 107
- Phillis's Big Test, 34
- Porcupine Year, 83
- Reaching Out, 105
- Shin-chi's Canoe, 66
- Trouble, 112
- Up Close: Thurgood Marshall, 34
- We Are the Ship, 30

Refugees

- Crazy Diamond, 99
- How I Learned Geography, 73

Revolutionary War

- Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing,
- Traitor to the Nation, Volume II,
- 95

Romantic Relationships

- Bog Child, 101
- Climbing the Stairs, 115
- Daughter of War, 113
- Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks, 108
- Down to the Bone, 101
- Good Enough, 117
- Graceling, 99
- How They Met, and Other Stories, 107
- How to Build a House, 112
- Impossible, 116
- Princess Ben, 108
- What They Always Tell Us, 116

S**Scary Stories**

- Attack of the Fiend, 81
- Coraline, 91
- Graveyard Book, 83
- Seer of Shadows, 79
- Wrath of the Bloodeye, 81

Schaller, George

- Life in the Wild, 38

Science. *See also* **The Natural World section; Scientists****Science Fiction**

- Adoration of Jenna Fox, 111
- Dead & the Gone, 111
- Hunger Games, 100
- Knife of Never Letting Go, 110

Science Fiction literature, publishing trends, 10–11**Scientists**

- Life in the Wild, 38
- Life on Earth—And Beyond, 24
- Loon Summer, 21
- Mysterious Universe, 22
- Up Close: Jane Goodall, 32

Scieszka, Jon

- Knucklehead, 37

Seasons. *See also* **Seasons and Celebrations section**

- Old Bear, 57
- Porcupine Year, 83

Sexism

- Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks, 108
- Phillis's Big Test, 34

Sexual Abuse

- Living Dead Girl, 113
- Where People Like Us Live, 100

Short Stories

- How They Met, and Other Stories, 107
- Lunch with Lenin and Other Stories, 102
- Up All Night, 115

Siblings. *See also* **Brothers; Families; Sisters**

- Alice's Birthday Pig, 77
- Annie and Simon, 75
- Chanda's Wars, 113
- Dead & the Gone, 111
- Forever Rose, 88
- Jimmy's Stars, 90
- Listening for Crickets, 84
- Little Rabbit's New Baby, 58
- London Eye Mystery, 82
- Porcupine Year, 83
- Shin-chi's Canoe, 66
- Shooting the Moon, 82
- Sisters & Brothers, 22

Sisters. *See also* **Brothers; Families; Siblings**

- Chicken of the Family, 66
- Little Audrey, 92

Slavery

- Ain't Nothing But a Man, 30
- Art from Her Heart, 46
- Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Volume II, 95
- Chanda's Wars, 113
- Freedom Business, 48
- Phillis's Big Test, 34
- Surrender Tree, 47
- Way Up and Over Everything, 26

Smith, Venture

- Freedom Business, 48

Snails

- Wolfsnail, 20

Songs and Singing. *See also* **Music and Musicians**

- Tweedle-Dee-Dee, 46

South America

- Great Snake, 27

Spanish Language. *See also* **Bilingual Books (English/Spanish)**

- Growing Up with Tamales, 74
- Just in Case, 51
- Quinto, Day and Night, 50
- Storyteller's Candle, 28

Spiders

- Sneaky, Spinning Spiders, 23

Sports. *See* **Baseball; Basketball; Football****Statue of Liberty**

- Lady Liberty, 32

Stepfamilies

- How to Build a House, 112

Moxy Maxwell Does Not Love Writing

- Thank-you Notes, 85
- Waiting for Normal, 80

Suicide

- Skim, 114

Sullivan, Annie

- Helen's Eyes, 35

Survival. *See also* **Slavery; Poverty; War**

- Chanda's Wars, 113
- Daughter of War, 113
- Dead & the Gone, 111
- Diamond Willow, 83
- Emperors of the Ice, 103
- Hunger Games, 100
- In Defiance of Hitler, 29
- Knife of Never Letting Go, 110
- Living Dead Girl, 113
- Shin-chi's Canoe, 66
- Snow Falling in Spring, 36
- Surrender Tree, 47

T**Tatum, Art**

- Piano Starts Here, 45

Teachers. *See also* **Education**

- Hate That Cat, 81
- Helen's Eyes, 35
- Snow Falling in Spring, 36
- Zen Ties, 71

Teasing

- Trouble Talk, 43

Terrorism

- Bog Child, 101
- Little Brother, 101

Thoreau, Henry David

- Thoreau at Walden, 31

Trickster Tales

- Great Snake, 27

Trinidadians

- My Two Grannies, 42

Trucks. *See* **Cars and Trucks****Twain, Mark**

- Trouble Begins at 8, 35

U**U. S. Civil War**

- March Toward the Thunder, 97

Uncles

- Rits, 105

United States Supreme Court

- Up Close: Thurgood Marshall, 34

V**Vietnam War**

- Shooting the Moon, 82

Violence. *See also Abuse; Sexual Abuse;***Slavery; War**

- Bog Child, 101
- Climbing the Stairs, 115
- Guardian, 107
- Living Dead Girl, 113
- No Choirboy, 41
- Savage, 95
- Shepherd's Granddaughter, 98
- Sweethearts, 117
- Underneath, 78

Visual Disabilities. *See also Blindness*

- My Travelin' Eye, 43

W**War.** *See also Iraq War; Israeli-Palestinian Conflict; Revolutionary War; U.S.***Civil War; Vietnam War; Winter War;****World War II**

- Afghan Dreams, 39
- Chanda's Wars, 113
- Surrender Tree, 47

White House

- Our White House, 31

Williams, William Carlos

- River of Words, 34

Winter War

- Winter War, 102

Women and Girls

- Case of the Bizarre Bouquets, 92
- Case of the Peculiar Pink Fan, 92
- Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks, 108
- My Name Is Not Isabella, 55
- Planting the Trees of Kenya, 38
- Shepherd's Granddaughter, 98
- Wangari's Trees of Peace, 40

Wordless Books

- Baby! Baby!, 53
- Wave, 59

World War II

- Boy Who Dared, 96
- Climbing the Stairs, 115
- In Defiance of Hitler, 29
- Jimmy's Stars, 90
- Peace Bell, 72
- What I Saw and How I Lied, 96

Writing and Writers. *See also Poetry and***Poets**

- Knucklehead, 37
- Trouble Begins at 8, 35
- Wanda Gág, 37

Y**Young Adult literature, publishing trends,**

11–12

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