

CCBC

Choices

2010

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University of Wisconsin–Madison

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ISBN-10: 0-931641-20-9

ISBN-13: 978-0-931641-20-6

CCBC Choices 2010 was produced by University Communications,
University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Cover design: Lois Ehlert

This publication was created by librarians at the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Funding for the production and printing was provided by the Friends of the CCBC, Inc. For information, see the Appendices, or go to www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/.

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Acknowledgments

The Friends of the CCBC underwrites the publication of *CCBC Choices* each year, making *Choices* available free of charge to Wisconsin librarians, teachers, and others in the state. Thank you to the current Friends board of directors and Friends members in Wisconsin and beyond. (For more information about the Friends of the CCBC, and a Friends membership form, see Appendix IV.)

Friends member Tana Elias continues to create the index for *CCBC Choices* as a volunteer. She has done this since the 1995 edition. As always, we are indebted to her for her skill, which makes *Choices* so much more useful, and her generous good will.

Tessa Michaelson worked as a librarian at the CCBC from January, 2008 through June, 2009. Among her many contributions to the library, she read extensively throughout the first half of 2009, deliberated with us on many titles, and was writing annotations right up to her final day at the CCBC.

Darcie Conner Johnston, a student in the UW–Madison School of Library and Information Studies, was the copy editor for *CCBC Choices 2010*, making this the second year she has polished prose and perfected punctuation. We thank her for lending her keen eye to this endeavor.

Carling Febry joined the CCBC staff as a librarian in the final days of our work on *Choices* in January, 2010. We are already benefitting from her skills and her perspectives on literature and look forward to working with her as we create future editions of *CCBC Choices* and carry out other work.

Thank you to the individuals with specialized interests and expertise who evaluated one or more books at our request: Cathy Attig, Shawn Brommer, Barry Hartup, Laurie Holmquist, Anma Ingeana, Li Li Ji, Ginny Moore Kruse, Jia-Ling Lin, Catherine Reiland, and Julie Shears.

Participants in CCBC monthly book discussions in 2009 gave valuable feedback on a number of the books published throughout the year. Conversations on CCBC-Net, our online book discussion community, were also beneficial. Thanks go out to everyone who shared thoughts about books, whether in person or online.

Thanks to the staff in the Creative Services Office of University Communications. Nancy Brower manages all elements of the *Choices* production and brings her astute editorial eye to our work, Barry Roal Carlsen created the *Choices* page design, and Kent Hamele turns our word-processed document into a professional-looking layout.

We also thank our dedicated student staff during 2009 and early 2010: Gretchen Aiyangar (2010), Ashley Bieber, Amanda Bolland, Carling Febry (2009), Wendy Helliwig, Darcie Conner Johnston, Katy Morgan, Emily Townsend, Liz Tubman, Betsy Wermuth (2009), and Michelle Wylar.

Finally, we thank our families—partners and assorted children—who share our enthusiasm for great books. We couldn't put in the countless hours of reading at home without their understanding and support.

Kathleen T. Horning, Merri V. Lindgren, 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.

We 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 create *CCBC Choices* keeping that challenge in mind. Not every book in *CCBC Choices 2010* will be suitable for every child or teen. But we are confident that among the books we highlight are offerings that will interest, engage, entertain, and inspire everyone from babies through teens.

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.

Once we finish *CCBC Choices* each year we always find a handful of additional titles we wish we'd included. We often learn about one or more of these books when we see them on other annual best-of-the-year lists offering perspectives on excellence in publishing. Despite these inevitable oversights, we believe the list we have compiled is a rich one.

This edition of *CCBC Choices* features 235 books that give a sense of the depth, breadth, creativity, and insight to be found in publishing for children and teens today. We are thrilled to share our enthusiasm for them with you.

Interested in obtaining additional copies of *CCBC Choices 2010*?

Visit the CCBC's website at

www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/books/choices.asp

Organization of *CCBC Choices 2010*

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 late 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 thirteenth annual Charlotte Zolotow Award Committee were Kathleen T. Horning, chair (director, Cooperative Children's Book Center, Madison, Wisconsin); Carling Febry (librarian, Cooperative Children's Book Center, Madison, Wisconsin); Svetha Hetzler (head of youth services, Middleton Public Library, Middleton, Wisconsin); Tracy Moore (librarian, Madison Public Library, Madison, Wisconsin); and Jolen Neumann (Madison, Wisconsin).



2010 Charlotte Zolotow Award

Winner: *What Can You Do with a Paleta?*
Written by Carmen Tafolla.
Illustrated by Magaly Morales.
Tricycle Press, 2009

Honor Books: *Birds.*
Written by Kevin Henkes.
Illustrated by Laura Dronzek.
Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2009

Pouch!
Written and illustrated by David Ezra Stein.
Putnam, 2009

*Princess Hyacinth (The Surprising Tale of a Girl
Who Floated).*
Written by Florence Parry Heide.
Illustrated by Lane Smith.
Schwartz & Wade, 2009

Highly Commended:

Hello Baby! Written by Mem Fox.
Illustrated by Steve Jenkins. Beach Lane / Simon & Schuster, 2009

Ready for Anything! Written and illustrated by Keiko Kasza.
Putnam, 2009

Under the Snow. Written by Melissa Stewart.
Illustrated by Constance R. Bergum. Peachtree, 2009

Who Will I Be, Lord? Written by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson.
Illustrated by Sean Qualls. Random House, 2009

Thoughts on Publishing in 2009

Note: In the commentary that follows, publisher information is provided for books not included in the *CCBC Choices 2010* list.

Books published for children and teens have always been a reflection of the times in which they were published, as writers and illustrators are influenced by current events and concerns. This was no exception during the 2009 publishing year. We continued to see many books for children and teens that deal with environmental issues, for example, including *Don't Throw That Away! A Lift-the-Flap Book about Recycling and Reusing* (Little Green Books), which is itself made from recycled materials—and it's a lucky thing, too, since the liftable flaps are so flimsy that the book will inevitably end up in the recycling bin after just a few circulations.

In the United States, the increasingly polarized political arena has given rise to mean-spirited picture books published by partisan presses on both sides in recent years, with such uninspired titles as *Why Mommy Is a Democrat* (Jeremy Zilber, 2006) and *Help! Mom! There Are Liberals under My Bed* (Kids Ahead, 2005). This same atmosphere led mainstream publishing for the first time ever to publish picture book biographies about the three major presidential candidates in 2008.

No matter what one's political leanings, there's no denying that the election of Barack Obama was a historic event, and one that certainly had an impact on books published in 2009. The formula nonfiction biographies that are standard fare for new presidents were published in record time in 2009, including one *revised* edition of an Obama biography that came out the same week as the inauguration. In addition, we saw biographies of Michelle Obama, and even several picture books inspired by the Obama family's search for a perfect dog.

What was really different in 2009, however, was the number of more artistic, thoughtful, even poetic books that came out about Obama. Jonah Winter's *Barack* (Katherine Tegen / HarperCollins) looks at the life of our 44th president as a journey of discovery, seeking answers to questions about his identity and purpose in life. Deborah Hopkinson's companion volume, *Michelle* (Katherine Tegen / HarperCollins) does the same for the First Lady. Both are illustrated by A. G. Ford. Michelle Cook's *Our Children Can Soar: A Celebration of Rosa, Barack, and the Pioneers of Change* connects Obama's presidency to the accomplishments of those who came before him, and those who will come after.

The ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are ever-present in the lives of children and teens, and this is reflected in the fiction of 2009. Several novels featured protagonists with a close family member who was either serving or who had just served in the military. Among these are Rosanne Parry's *Heart of a Shepherd* (Random House), Joseph Bruchac's *Night Wings* (HarperCollins), Carl Hiassen's *Scat* (Knopf), and Jacqueline Woodson's *Peace, Locomotion*. Patricia McCormick's *Purple Heart* is about an active-duty soldier in Iraq, while Paul Griffin's *The Orange Houses* (Dial) features a main character who is a veteran of the war.

Fantastic Fiction

In previous editions of *CCBC Choices*, we've noted how the remarkable success of the *Harry Potter* series has inspired a new golden age of fiction for children and young adults, especially when it comes to thick, multi-volume fantasy series. Just as this trend was beginning to wane, it was given a boost, at least in young adult fiction, by the *Twilight* phenomenon, as wizards and witches gave way to vampires and werewolves. Even books that didn't feature paranormal protagonists were designed to look like *Twilight*, with romantic jacket art in black and red. *Twilight* even cast its long shadow on the ever-popular chick lit subgenre, with titles such as *Once Dead, Twice Shy* (HarperCollins) and *You've Got Blackmail* (Putnam), and the pervasive pink book jackets now being edged in black. While we're hearing from our colleagues in schools and libraries that the paranormal theme is on its way out, at least in the hearts of teen readers, we still have shelves burgeoning with *Twilight*-wannabes, as we wait for the Next Big Thing. (Word on the street: readers are back to wanting angst.)

These and other young adult books seem to be what publishers continue to emphasize in fiction publishing, and our shelves were bulging with new titles for teens this past year, including many paperback originals. Conversely, we are still waiting to see an increase in the number of good, solid middle-grade novels. The good news is the quality of the fiction that *is* being produced for this audience. The 2010 Newbery winner, *When You Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead, was an early stand-out in the fiction of 2009. And with its exceptional book design, Grace Lin's historical fantasy *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* was as much a pleasure to look at and hold as it was to read.

Two aspects of fiction publishing are especially worth noting this year. The first is a small increase in the number of books featuring strong, fully developed characteristics with disabilities, such as Francisco X. Stork's *Marcelo in the Real World* and Nora Raleigh Baskin's *Anything But Typical*. Both books have protagonists with autism, and they allow readers to see the world through their eyes.

The second welcome trend is an increase in the number of novels with gay, lesbian, or transgender characters. In the past two years this number has more than doubled, and with the increase comes a greater variety of type, from the biting social satire of Timothy Carter's *Evil?* to the romantic re-visioning of the Cinderella fairy tale in Malinda Lo's *Ash*. We were especially pleased to see *The Boy in the Dress*, David Walliams's comical, Roald Dahl-esque middle-grade novel about a prepubescent boy who may or may not be transgender, but who clearly likes to dress as a girl.

Noteworthy Nonfiction

After a few years where we saw a discouraging drop in the number of outstanding books of information, we were pleased to see a definite rebound in 2009, and many of the year's most outstanding books were nonfiction. The fortieth anniversary of the first moon landing inspired more than a dozen books on the topic, including Brian Floca's lyrically written and beautifully illustrated *Moonshot*. And while it was not about the moon landing itself, Tanya Lee Stone's *Almost Astronauts*, an

account of thirteen women striving to be astronauts in the early 1960s, provided a welcome feminist perspective on the space program during years when, it turns out, being anything other than male and white were insurmountable barriers to reaching the moon.

Many of the year's most remarkable books of information show exceptional writing and illustration, as well as an amazing amount of primary research. Chief among them is Kerry Madden's biography of Harper Lee, part of Viking's "Up Close" series. Although her subject is notoriously private, Madden manages to give young readers a great deal of insight into Lee's life, her work, and her influence, through the painstaking research she did on three trips to Lee's hometown of Monroeville, Alabama. The resulting biography is not only exemplary but is also an enormous contribution to the field. And it's hard to beat Deborah Heiligman's *Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith* for its deft blend of research and storytelling as the author draws on many primary-source documents in her skillful and entertaining portrait of two strong-willed individuals and their devoted relationship.

Growing Gaps

While nonfiction has increased in both number and quality this year, and aspects of fiction publishing continue to burgeon, the same cannot be said of picture books, where the numbers and overall quality continued to decline. That's not to say there weren't outstanding picture books—there always are. But with the embarrassment of riches we saw in the quality of fiction and nonfiction this past year, picture books paled by comparison. Nowhere was this more apparent than the dwindling number of picture-book folktales—once a mainstay in the field of children's literature—which seemed almost nonexistent in 2009.

We had also hoped also that the Association for Library Service to Children's Theodor Seuss Geisel Award—for books for beginning readers—would lead to more original publishing of books in the easy reading format. But the most remarkable thing about easy readers in 2009 was how few there actually were.

Multicultural Mandate

For years we have been documenting the number of books we receive annually at the CCBC by and about people of color. We do this 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 portray multicultural experiences, so that literature for children and young adults will collectively represent our diversity. And we do it because authentic multicultural literature is an essential part of every library and classroom.

We also to do it to underscore the importance of *buying* books about people of color. Today, mega-bookstores yield so much power that they can influence what the cover of a book will look like based on what they *think* will sell. No doubt this informed a reputable publishing company's decision in 2009 to show

a white girl on the cover of a book with an African American protagonist, as was originally done with Justine Larbalestier's aptly named *Liar*; before outrage among bloggers, critics, writers, and others helped change the publisher's thinking. The assumption that any multicultural book is less likely to sell is a dangerous one, and we need to affirm the value of multicultural books by proving that assumption wrong. Until we do, we will continue to see these dismal numbers stagnate—something else worthy of outrage.

We received approximately 3,000 books at the CCBC in 2009. Of those,

- 157 books had significant African or African American content
- 83 books were by Black book creators, either authors and/or illustrators
- 33 books featured American Indian themes, topics, or characters
- 12 were created by American Indian authors and/or illustrators
- 80 had significant Asian/Pacific or Asian/Pacific American content
- 67 books were created by authors and/or illustrators of Asian/Pacific heritage
- 61 books had significant Latino content
- 60 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 some individuals created two or more books.

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. Even so, we are pleased to see publishers taking risks and investing in first and second novels by authors of color such as Nick Burd (*The Vast Fields of Ordinary*, published by Dial), Tanita S. Davis (*Mare's War*), David Hernandez (*No More Us for You*), Malinda Lo (*Ash*), Kekla Magoon (*The Rock and the River*), Neesha Meminger (*Shine, Coconut Moon*, published by Margaret K. McElderry), Cindy Pon (*The Silver Phoenix*, published by Greenwillow / HarperCollins), and others.

As we begin our reading for 2010, we look forward to new books by these authors and many others, whether their names are new to us or familiar. We are eager to read them, discuss them, and share our enthusiasm for favorites with you—librarians, teachers, students, readers, writers, and others who enable us to say with confidence that books and reading are very much alive as we begin the second decade of the twenty-first century.

The *Choices*

The Natural World

Arnosky, Jim. *Crocodile Safari*. Scholastic Press, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-0-439-90356-1, \$22.99)

American crocodiles are larger but fewer in number than their cousins the alligators. While doing research in the Everglades—which involved canoeing, hiking, and snorkeling in crocodile country—Jim Arnosky and his wife Deanna set out to find out all they could about these shy, prehistoric-looking creatures while also tallying their count. Beginning with the history of these great beasts, who lived alongside dinosaurs and until recently were endangered animals in the United States, Arnosky also identifies the characteristics of crocodiles and how they differ from alligators. The majority of the book features safari journal entries noting the time, weather, and tide for each crocodile spotting. Lush illustrations capture the nature of the Everglades, and the beauty and ferocity of these ancient amphibians. A DVD included with the book features the author drawing and singing about crocodiles. (Ages 5–9)

Bang, Molly, and Penny Chisholm. *Living Sunlight: How Plants Bring the Earth to Life*. Illustrated by Molly Bang. Blue Sky Press / Scholastic, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-545-04422-6, \$16.99)

This highly accessible picture book introduces the concept of photosynthesis to young children with clear and poetic language. Gorgeous, glowing illustrations evoke a sense of wonder for how sunlight translates into energy for humans, plants, and life on earth. The text is written as a narration from the sun to a small child, explaining the effects of the sun's rays: "My light becomes the energy for all life on Earth. All living things—including YOU—pulse with my light and keep it circling round and round on Earth." Detailed notes on the scientific concepts introduced in the text conclude this luminous book. (Ages 4–8)

Bishop, Nic. *Butterflies and Moths*. Scholastic Nonfiction / Scholastic, 2009. 48 pages (trade 978-0-439-87757-2, \$17.99)

Famed photographer Nic Bishop focuses his lens on butterflies and moths in this informative and extraordinary look at nature's most beautiful insects. Larger than life photos accentuate the informative facts and surprising details described by the author. Throughout the segments on life cycles, habitats, threats and protection, and appearance, Bishop keenly delineates the similarities and differences between butterflies and moths. While butterflies tend to be the prettier and more loved creature, moths are also awarded with appreciation and amazement in this satisfying science title. (Ages 7–12)

Bardhan-Quallen, Sudipta. *Flying Eagle*. Illustrated by Deborah Kogan Ray. Charlesbridge, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-57091-671-7, \$15.95)

An intense drama unfolds at the end of the day on the Serengeti Plain. A tawny eagle father scouts for prey to feed his young chick back at the nest. As the sun begins to set, the daytime animals become inactive and invisible.

After several close calls, the father has yet to secure the needed food. In the blaze of the setting sun, nighttime creatures begin to emerge, and still the father hunts. From a bird's-eye view, the refuge at the Serengeti National Park is teeming with wildlife large and small. Hazy illustrations in watercolor and colored pencil depict the energy of the eagle's hunt and the diversity found in the park. Four-line rhyming stanzas capture the emotion and action of the hunt, which eventually concludes with success. (Ages 5–8)

Jackson, Donna M. *Extreme Scientists: Exploring Nature's Mysteries from Perilous Places. (Scientists in the Field)* Houghton Mifflin / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 78 pages (trade 978–0–618–77706–8, \$18.00)

If you think that being a scientist is a career for the meek, it's time to reconsider. Three contemporary scientists give insight into the potentially dangerous situations into which they regularly venture: Paul Flaherty, a hurricane tracker, studies active storms from the inside of a four-engine turboprop plane; Hazel Barton is a microbiologist who searches for extremophiles in caves, including the underwater variety; and Stephen Sillet examines organisms that live in the canopies of tall-crown trees. In addition to a description of their subjects of study, the scientists relate what first interested them in the field, and outline the type of work their professions entail. Each has had close calls on the job, and all describe how experience has taught them to stay safe. This highly visual volume offers many clear photographs illustrating the subjects at work and includes additional sources of information, a glossary, source notes, and index. (Ages 11–15)

Jenkins, Steve. *Down Down Down: A Journey to the Bottom of the Sea.* Houghton Mifflin / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978–0–618–96636–3, \$17.00)

In a beautiful, thoughtfully designed book, author/artist Steve Jenkins plunges readers miles below the ocean's surface to the depths of discovery. In the introduction, he explains that while water covers more than two thirds of the earth's surface, "more humans have walked on the moon than have visited the deepest spot in the sea." Each two-page spread defines and explores a specific zone on the ocean's scale of depth. A consistent vertical marker on the right-hand side orients readers to the distance from the surface (in feet and meters) and temperature for each zone. Realistic torn paper illustrations of marine life illuminate locations such as the sunlit zone, the twilight zone, and the dark zone. As each spread descends deeper and deeper, clear scientific language and witty, vivid descriptions narrate the downward journey. Additional information about the animals and helpful diagrams relating size and scale conclude this exceptional work. (Ages 7–11)

Jenkins, Steve. *Never Smile at a Monkey: And 17 Other Important Things to Remember.* Houghton Mifflin / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978–0–618–96620–2, \$16.00)

While some animals are well known for being dangerous, others are not so obviously threatening. Eighteen such creatures are identified and described, and readers are advised on what not to do if they encounter one of these potentially treacherous animals. One should "NEVER harass a

hippopotamus,” which might charge if it feels threatened. It’s a good idea to “NEVER clutch a cane toad,” which can squirt a blinding poison from its neck venom sacs, and “NEVER swim with a squid,” lest it wrap its tentacles around you and use its sharp beak to gouge flesh. Steve Jenkins’s trademark cut- and torn-paper collage illustrations provide striking visual images. Additional information about each animal and suggested further reading are included in the final pages. (Ages 5–9)

Schwartz, David M. and Yael Schy. *Where Else in the Wild? More Camouflaged Creatures Concealed ... and Revealed. Photographs by Dwight Kuhn.* Tricycle Press, 2009. 24 pages (trade 978–1–58246–283–7, \$16.99)

Readers are invited to find eleven creatures that use camouflage to avoid predators or as a means of catching prey, in photographs where they blend into their natural setting. A poem paired with each animal’s photo provides hints of its identity, while a lift of the photo page shows the same image, but with the hidden animal highlighted. The foldout page also offers additional photographs of the creature, information about its natural history, and how the use of camouflage aids its survival. The engaging poems are well-matched with the excellent photographs. Some of the hidden animals are almost impossible to find unaided, especially the orchid mantis, described in haiku as “elegance in white / poised upon an orchid bloom / praying as I prey.” (Ages 7–12)

Stewart, Melissa. *A Place for Birds.* Illustrated by Higgins Bond. Peachtree, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978–1–56145–474–7, \$16.95)

Birds face threats from a variety of different human activities. But people can make a difference in their survival, too. Eleven different kinds of birds are briefly profiled in this book that looks at ways humans both harm and help. Positive actions that people can take include building nesting boxes, turning down city lights during migration season, banning dangerous chemicals, protecting and preserving habitats, and even keeping cats indoors. Author Melissa Stewart concisely summarizes distinct threats followed by corresponding positive actions, ending each with the lyrical refrain “so birds can live and grow.” Detailed illustrations of each bird and a larger rendering of its natural setting are accompanied by boxed text on double-page spreads describing the species, its ecosystem, and the danger it faces. Endpapers show where each bird can be found in the United States. (Ages 6–9)

Stewart, Melissa. *Under the Snow.* Illustrated by Constance R. Bergum. Peachtree, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978–1–56145–493–1, \$16.95)

While humans engage in winter activities above the snow, all kinds of concealed animal activity takes place beneath. “Under the snow in a field ... dozens of ladybugs pack themselves into a gap in an old stone wall. Below them, a snake rests in a hole all its own.” Voles tunnel beneath the snow, while a mourning cloak butterfly shelters in a brush pile covered with snow. Below the snow frosting the pond, “bluegills circle slowly through the chilly water.” The winter lives of these animals and others are described in simple yet lyrical language, while panel watercolor illustrations give a view of activities below the snow and above. *Highly Commended, 2010 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4–8)

Turner, Pamela S. *The Frog Scientist. Photographs by Andy Comins. (Scientists in the Field)* Houghton Mifflin / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 58 pages (trade 978-0-618-71716-3, \$18.00)

Dr. Tyrone Hayes has loved frogs since childhood. Dr. Hayes's studies of the effects of atrazine, a common agricultural pesticide, on amphibians are presented in clear detail, with text, photos, and diagrams efficiently modeling the scientific method. Although the producer of atrazine initially employed Dr. Hayes to study the pesticide's effects, the company refused to let him publish his results. He repeated his experiments independently, with similar results, and has publicized the data in academic and public arenas. Pamela Turner deftly mixes scientific information with personal stories featuring Dr. Hayes (who has loved frogs since childhood), his family, and some of the students at the University of California at Berkeley mentored by this African American professor in a book that can engage readers from a broad range of perspectives—academic, scientific, political, cultural, and social. Andy Comins's excellent photographs are well captioned and liberally sprinkled throughout this appealingly designed volume. (Ages 10–15)

Wadsworth, Ginger. *Up, Up, and Away. Illustrated by Patricia J. Wynne.* Charlesbridge, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-58089-221-6, \$16.95)

Through the course of a year, the life cycle of garden spiders is described in an engaging and factual text. After a mother spider creates her egg sac in the fall, the spiderlings hatch the following spring and compete for scarce food sources. Threatened by a lizard, a bluebird, and one another (“a brother crunches a sister for lunch!”), the young spiders soon float away on their silken threads, like “eight-legged kites.” “Ballooning spiders fill the sky, sisters and brothers drifting this way and that, to hunt for new homes.” Arriving at a farm, a spider spins her web and spends spring and summer at her new locale, repeating the cycle anew. Colorful and precise illustrations track the arachnids from egg to adulthood, and a final page titled “The Spin on Garden Spiders” supplements the information of the main text. (Ages 5–9)

Wellington, Monica. *Riki's Birdhouse.* Dutton, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-525-42079-8, \$16.99)

Riki loves birds, and when he spots a pair of bluebirds in his yard, he wants them to stay. With cold weather arriving, Riki knows the birds will need shelter, so he decides to build a special bluebird house in his backyard. As the months and seasons go by, Riki continues to watch and care for the birds. In winter he prepares birdseed snacks, and in spring he offers nest-building materials. Riki's loving efforts are serenely illustrated with vibrant, uncomplicated gouache paintings accented with color-photo collage pieces. Each spread shows Riki hard at work caring for the birds while his pet dog and cat stay active in the background. This attractively designed, straightforward story is a wonderful introduction to bird-watching for young children. Birdhouse directions and bird food recipes are included. (Ages 4–7)

Seasons and Celebrations

Ehlert, Lois. *Boo to You!* Beach Lane, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-4169-8625-6, \$17.99)

Lois Ehlert used some of her favorite fall objects, from locust pods and ornamental gourds to various squashes, nuts, and fruits, as the basis for the art she created to tell the story of a group of mice planning a harvest party—no cats allowed! It's one meat-eating cat in particular that the mice have their eye on, and when it does indeed come creeping in to disrupt the nighttime festivities, the mice are ready with a very scary pumpkin—Boo to you! “Scat, scary cat. Have some broccoli!” Ehlert's story is a visual feast sure to inspire young artists, who can also take some cues from her “Pumpkin Talk” note inviting children to create their own jack-o-lantern. (Ages 3–7)

Heller, Esther Susan. *Menorah Under the Sea.* Kar-Ben Publishing, 2009. 29 pages (trade 978-0-8225-7386-9, \$17.95)

This distinctive Hanukkah story is a true account of marine biologist David Ginsburg's singular observance of the first night of Hanukkah in 2005. Ginsburg is a marine biologist studying sea urchins, and his work took him to Antarctica that year. Arriving in December, he made his first dive on the first night of Hanukkah. Descending to the sea floor, Ginsburg was thinking about family and friends celebrating Hanukkah back home. On the ocean floor, he had an inspired idea and began arranging sea urchins into the shape of a menorah. “‘Nobody move,’ he told the sea urchins as he took their picture. Except for the *shamash*, which kept sinking, they were very cooperative.” Color photographs of Ginsburg's trip, including the unusual and ephemeral menorah he created and the Hanukkah observance he shared with his fellow travelers that evening, accompany the narrative. (Ages 7–10)

Horáček, Petr. *Suzy Goose and the Christmas Star.* Candlewick Press, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-7636-4487-1, \$15.99)

When Suzy Goose and her farm animal friends gather around their Christmas tree, they notice at once that it's missing a star on top. Confident Suzy declares that she'll get a star, “just like that bright one in the sky.” Her first attempt involves swooshing down a hill and rocketing high into the air, “but it was not quite high enough.” Next she tries jumping from a fence and a pile of logs, with the same result. Never one to give up easily, Suzy decides to walk to the star and sets off through the blowing wind and falling snow, but she soon realizes that she's lost and alone on Christmas Eve. Soon the sounds of her friends (“Hee-haw! Moo, moo! Honk, honk! Oink, oink!”) call her back home, where Suzy discovers that the bright star in the sky is positioned perfectly above the tree. Intrepid Suzy and her friends are illustrated with bold mixed media, in scenes set against a deep night sky and the wash of fresh snow. (Ages 2–5)

Martin, David. *Christmas Tree*. Illustrated by Melissa Sweet. Candlewick Press, 2009. 22 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3030-0, \$5.99)

A deceptively simple board book sets up a pattern of alternating outside/inside scenes. “Tree” is the word on both pages of the opening spread that shows a pine tree outside a house with a window through which a bare Christmas tree can be seen. The next spread shows a brightly colored bird outdoors on the left (“Bird”) and a stylized bird ornament now hanging from a branch of the indoor tree (“Bird in the tree”). The pattern continues with a mouse, a squirrel, a rabbit, snow, ball, sled, and finally, of course, a star. The tree in the house now fully decorated, the final image parallels the story’s beginning, only now the house’s inhabitants stand outside on a sparkling night, admiring the equally sparkling tree through the window. David Martin’s wonderful concept is made charming and full with Melissa Sweet’s warm illustrations for this small-in-size board book. (Ages 1–3)

Martin, David. *Hanukkah Lights*. Illustrated by Melissa Sweet. Candlewick Press, 2009. 22 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3029-4, \$5.99)

“Hanukkah candles shining bright / One more candle every night.” With each turn of the page of this demurely sized board book, another night of Hanukkah is marked. There are latkes to eat one night, dreidels to spin another. Presents and Hanukkah gelt, special songs, shadow play, a story—all mark the nights of Hanukkah. David Martin’s simple text is enriched by Melissa Sweet’s inviting illustrations showing four young children celebrating each night on the right-hand page of each spread, and another candle shining brightly in the menorah on the left-hand page. (Ages 1–3)

Mobin-Uddin, Asma. *A Party in Ramadan*. Illustrated by Laura Jacobsen. Boyds Mills Press, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-59078-604-8, \$16.95)

After excitedly opening an invitation to a friend’s pony party, Leena is disappointed to find out that the event takes place during Ramadan. As a young Muslim, Leena won’t be fasting every day during the holy month, but she already planned to fast on the day of the party. Leena’s mother gives her the option of fasting on a different day, but Leena decides to fast AND go to the afternoon party. Leena initially enjoys herself there, but soon finds it hard to abstain from cake and lemonade, especially when she’s hungry and thirsty from playing outside. Questioning her choice, and wondering why God made fasting so hard, Leena falls asleep at the party. Later, Leena awakens at home, in time for the *iftar* (feast after the fast) dinner she had long awaited. Reflecting on the significance of Ramadan and her personal challenges, Leena feels proud of her choices in this readable and relevant book. (Ages 5–8)

Mora, Pat. *Book Fiesta! Celebrate Children’s Day / Book Day = Celebremos El día de los niños / El día de los libros*. Illustrated by Rafael López. HarperCollins, 2009 32 pages (trade 978-0-06-128877-7, \$17.99)

It’s hard not to share in the excitement of what author Pat Mora calls “bookjoy” in this celebration of children, books, and reading to mark “*El día de los niños/El día de los libros*” (Day of the Child/Day of the Book).

The jubilee begins: “Hooray! Today is our day. *El día de los niños!* Let’s have fun today reading our favorite books. Toon! Toon!” The narrator of *Book Fiesta!* notes that books come in many languages, and reading can take place in many places: in cars, on planes, on trains, even at the library! Children can share books with family and friends, with puppies and kittens and lizards—even the moon can listen. The power of books to transport readers on marvelous journeys is also undeniable: “We read riding on an elephant / or sailing with a whale.” Mora’s text, in both English and Spanish, is set against fanciful illustrations by Rafael López that underscore the delight of books and reading. (Ages 3–6)

Obed, Ellen Bryan. *Who Would Like a Christmas Tree?* Illustrated by Anne Hunter. Houghton Mifflin / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-547-04625-9, \$16.00)

“Who would like a Christmas tree in January? ‘We would like a Christmas tree in January,’ answer the black-capped chickadees.” That’s where they find their meals, in the form of moth eggs, spiders, and winged seeds. After a day of eating, the birds roost together in the tree branches. “Who would like a Christmas tree in February?” Field mice chew on the bark of the tree trunk, safe beneath the snow that covers their winter runways. Progressing throughout the year, readers meet a host of creatures, from balsam twig aphids in June to red foxes in October, who like Christmas trees for the food and shelter they offer. When December rolls around it’s the human children and their parents who like a Christmas tree to enjoy as part of their family holiday celebration. Watercolor and ink illustrations depict each month’s visitors to the Christmas tree plantation. A section titled “How the Christmas Tree Farmer Takes Care of Her Farm Around the Year” provides another layer of information. (Ages 4–8)

Sidman, Joyce. *Red Sings from Treetops: A Year in Colors.* Illustrated by Pamela Zagarenski. Houghton Mifflin / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-547-01494-4, \$16.00)

“In FALL...Brown, / fat and glossy, rises in honking flocks. / Brown rustles and whispers underfoot... Red splashes fall trees / seeps into every vein / of every five-fingered leaf... Yellow grows wheels / and lumbers / down the block, blinking: / *Warning—classrooms ahead.*” Joyce Sidman uses rich and vivid imagery as she describes colors in terms of sights and sounds and activities of the seasons. The result is a lyrical picture book that is a delight to read or hear, and a natural launching point to inspire descriptive writing. Sidman’s observations are playfully acute, with associations that will surprise and delight readers and listeners as the juxtapose familiarity and inventiveness. “In Summer, / White clinks in drinks. Yellow melts / everything it touches... / smells like butter, / tastes like salt.” Pamela Zagarenski’s whimsical illustrations accompany Sidman’s words. (Ages 4–8)

Thompson, Lauren. *The Christmas Magic.* Illustrated by Jon J. Muth. Scholastic Press, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-439-77497-0, \$16.99)

In a welcome change from the usual frenetic jollity of Santa stories, this old man lives alone in a simple house in a snowy landscape. At a certain time every year, “just when the nights are longest and the stars shine brightest, Santa feels a tingling in his whiskers. Then he knows that the Christmas magic will soon be here.” He gathers and grooms the reindeer, polishes the sleigh, and darns his wool socks. Last, he consults his book of all children’s names, and chooses one certain toy for each, for “he knows what each child at heart wants most.” The anticipated moment finally arrives, as the Christmas magic “has come at last, as it always has, and always will.” Santa’s sun-drenched, sparsely furnished home contrasts with the deep blue night sky into which his sleigh rises, while small visual details (Santa wears bunny slippers!) add a note of whimsy to the quiet tale. (Ages 3–6)

Tokunbo, Dimitrea. *The Sound of Kwanzaa.* Illustrated by Lisa Cohen. Scholastic Press, 2009. 24 pages (trade 978-0-545-01865-4, \$16.99)

“Come close, gather round. Listen to the sound of Kwanzaa.” The repeated refrain opens the simple narrative on each spread introducing one of the seven principles of Kwanzaa through example and definition: “Loving words and greeting family, we stand together for UMOJA. UMOJA means ‘unity’... Working hands and ancient stories, we learn our traditions for KUJICHAGULIA. KUJICHAGULIA means ‘self-determination.’” With each principle and turn of the page, a candle is lit—first black, then red and green. Bold, brightly colored illustrations by Lisa Cohen accompany the words of this welcome book that includes an author’s note about attending her first Kwanzaa celebration, a glossary, and a recipe. (Ages 4–8)

Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature

Aylesworth, Jim. *The Mitten.* Illustrated by Barbara McClintock. Scholastic Press, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-439-92544-0, \$16.99)

A little boy who loves to play outside is fortunate to have a loving grandmother who knits him a hat, a scarf, and mittens every winter. The day he loses a mitten, she tells him not to worry, “We’ll find it tomorrow.” While the boy sips hot chocolate indoors, a squirrel spots the mitten. “‘B-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r!’ said the squirrel. ‘My toes are cold as ice! This mitten looks so cozy, and warm toes would feel so nice!’” He climbs into the warm mitten and falls asleep. Next, a rabbit spies the mitten and would like a chance to warm his icy toes as well. The two are joined by a fox, and then a bear, but it’s a tiny mouse that pushes the mitten beyond its limits. Bits of yarn puzzle the boy and his grandmother when they find them the next day, but she sets out to knit another mitten, “because she loved him.” Satisfying repetition in the text and charming illustrations on clean white backgrounds combine to create a fresh rendition of a familiar tale. (Ages 2–5)

Emberley, Rebecca, and Ed Emberley. *Chicken Little. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-59643-464-6, \$16.95)*

Oversize images, bright, bold colors, and the wacky (yet always identifiable) singular eyeballs of Chicken Little and his cohort of gullible fowl make for dynamic art that is a perfect match for the cleverly crafted retelling of this well-known tale. An ever-growing flock of birds takes a headlong flight from a falling acorn into the faux haven of Foxy Loxy's open mouth in a manner that appears to burst through the boundaries of the page. From Chicken Little ("not the brightest chicken in the coop") to Henny Penny ("being witless herself") to Foxy Loxy (who generously offers the shelter of a "warm, dark cave"—his gaping maw), each of the cast furthers the story on its path to a sudden and explosive conclusion. A final foldout page offers a large-scale and visually dramatic take on the silly birds' reprieve. Creative and varied fonts in a range of sizes, styles, colors, and unusual placements add to the loony appeal. (Ages 2–7)

Palatini, Margie. *Lousy Rotten Stinkin' Grapes. Illustrated by Barry Moser. Simon & Schuster, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-689-80246-1, \$15.99)*

In a humorous twist on a classic tale from Aesop, an industrious Fox creates overly complicated plans to attain a bunch of grapes beyond his grasp. Visual jokes show Fox leafing through his notebook and moving from Plan Alpha to Bravo and beyond as he enlists first Bear, then Beaver, then Porcupine, and finally Possum in his machinations. The other creatures clearly see the weakness in Fox's logic, but he's uninterested in their feedback. Despite all evidence to the contrary, he's happy to remind the others, "After all, I am the fox. I am the one here who is sly, clever, and smart." The animals' mostly realistic bodies veer to the comic when human expressions of skepticism, eagerness, and determination appear on their faces. Grape-colored endpapers and type, along with varying font size and style, are creative design choices in an outstanding interpretation of this fable. (Ages 4–8)

Pinkney, Jerry. *The Lion & the Mouse. Little, Brown, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-316-01356-7, \$16.99)*

Jerry Pinkney's almost wordless rendition of Aesop's story about the lion who lets a mouse go (rather than eat it) and is later saved by the tiny creature is set on an African savanna. Sunlight-saturated spreads move between page views of the expansive landscape and its many inhabitants and close-ups of the principals: one very large lion and one very small mouse. The story unfolds in illustrations offering many captivating perspectives, from the mouse unwittingly scaling the hill of the lion's back early on, to the overhead view of the lion later walking beneath a trap, followed by a close-up of his paw stepping on the rope that will bind him. The only words are the occasional animal sounds incorporated into the art. Additional bookmaking, design, and illustration details, from the satisfying weight of the pages to the dainty tail of the mouse that breaks through the borders of some framed illustrations, add to the pleasure of this volume. An illustrator's note provides a brief summary of the story for those who want or need a refresher, along with Jerry Pinkney's inspiration for this interpretation. (Ages 4–10)

Sellier, Marie, Catherine Louis, and Wang Fei. *What the Rat Told Me: A Legend of the Chinese Zodiac.* Translated from the French. U.S. edition: North-South, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-0-7358-2220-7, \$16.95)

“I am going to tell you the story of the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac. This story is true, I am sure, because I heard it from the rat, who was there. Here is what the rat told me...” So begins an engaging retelling of how the rat outwitted the cat, and the rest of the animals, to win first position in the emperor’s calendar. Striking linoleum prints in red and black accentuate the tale. Blocks of Chinese calligraphy denote each character, and a chart from 1900–2020 identifies animal assignments for each year. This pleasing introduction to the Chinese zodiac invites re-enactment of the animal drama, as well as investigations in math and social studies. (Ages 4–8)

Historical People, Places, and Events

Bausum, Ann. *Denied, Detained, Deported: Stories from the Dark Side of American Immigration.* National Geographic, 2009. 111 pages (trade 978-1-4263-0332-6, \$21.95)

Emma Lazarus’s poem “New Colossus,” followed by a new poem by Naomi Shihab Nye examining some of Lazarus’s lines in light of our nation today, open this compelling look at ways the United States has sometimes rejected, ejected, and exploited individuals wanting to make a home here. Ann Bausum introduces readers to denial, detention, deportation, and exploitation of immigrants through stories of individual lives. Each one builds on those that come before in the narrative, and Bausum explains how each story is one example of a specific practice that has been repeated in various ways in our nation’s history. There are fewer photographs and visual documents than in many National Geographic books, but the design of those presented is striking (although a few photo captions are confusing). From laws passed to prevent Chinese immigrants from coming to America in the nineteenth century to the struggles faced by illegal immigrants doing essential work today, this eye-opening volume offers a critical perspective on policies and attitudes of our nation. (Age 12 and older)

Cook, Michelle. *Our Children Can Soar: A Celebration of Rosa, Barack, and the Pioneers of Change.* Foreword by Marian Wright Edelman. Illustrated by various artists. Bloomsbury, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-59990-418-4, \$16.99)

The work and achievements of ten African Americans are linked together, showing the powerful cumulative effect of the efforts of many over time, in this singular, inspiring volume. The book culminates with the election of Barack Obama to the presidency, and affirms that achievement as a stepping stone for children today and in future generations. “Our ancestors fought... so George could invent. George invented... so Jesse could sprint... Thurgood ruled... so Barack could run. Barack ran... so our children can

soar!” Michelle Cook’s spare text is complemented by double-page-spread portraits of the luminaries named in the narrative, each one created by a different African American artist. A brief paragraph about each individual appears at the book’s end, as does a biographical portrait of each illustrator next to a small picture of the person she or he has depicted. (Ages 6–10)

Deedy, Carmen Agra. *14 Cows for America*. In collaboration with Wilson Kimeli Naiyomah. Illustrated by Thomas Gonzalez. Peachtree, 2009. 36 pages (trade 978–1–56145–490–7, \$17.95)

Following the events of September 11, 2001, a young Maasai man named Kimeli who had been studying in New York returns home to Kenya deeply affected by what happened. He relates the devastation he witnessed to his entire village. “With growing disbelief, men, women, and children listen. Buildings so tall they can touch the sky? Fires so hot they can melt iron?... The story ends. More than three thousand souls are lost. A great silence falls over the Maasai.” The people of his tribe want to do something for the people of America, and one by one villagers step forward to offer a cow—“To the Maasai... the cow is life.” The power of this remarkable, moving story lies ultimately in its truth, and an endnote from Kimeli Naiyomah—the Maasai man in the story—relates the events told with spare beauty by Carmen Agra Deedy in fuller, first-person detail. He writes that the fourteen cows, which will never be slaughtered, remain “a symbol of hope from the Maasai to their brothers and sisters in America.” (Ages 8–13)

Fern, Tracey E. *Pippo the Fool*. Illustrated by Pau Estrada. Charlesbridge, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978–1–57091–655–7, \$15.95)

Filippo Brunelleschi saw the contest to design the dome for the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence as an opportunity. In the past, his outrageous ideas had earned him the nickname Pippo the Fool. If he won the contest, he would be taken seriously at last. Pippo’s plans for the dome were unlike anything seen before—they showed it set atop the cathedral without any visible means of support. Yet as crazy as the judges found it, they ultimately awarded him the job. There was a hitch, however: He must work with the renowned but arrogant sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti, whose own design had been rejected. Tracey E. Fern’s story about this fifteenth-century genius is full of medieval details and architectural insights. Both Fern and illustrator Pau Estrada provide informative endnotes that further illuminate Pippo’s architectural achievement and their approaches to interpreting these historical personalities and events. (Ages 8–12)

Floca, Brian. *Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11*. Atheneum, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978–1–4169–5046–2, \$17.99)

With graceful words and captivating illustrations, Brian Floca makes it clear that behind the seeming ease of those first steps across the moon’s surface was a lot of effort, not to mention an unprecedented sense of anticipation. As he provides information about the technical details and achievements of the *Apollo 11* mission, Floca always keeps his focus on the human story. During the step-by-step account of liftoff and stages of rocket separation, Floca

shows an astronaut's sideways glance at the zero moment of countdown, and he provides an intriguing glimpse at the challenges of eating, bathing, and going to the bathroom in space. Finely detailed illustrations and a lyrical narrative combine to overcome the book's few flaws, such as the gender-stereotyped family shown following the drama of the moon landing on television. (Ages 5–10)

Hoose, Phillip. *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*. Melanie Kroupa Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2009. 133 pages (trade 978-0-374-31322-7, \$19.95)

Nine months before Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, another Black Montgomery citizen had done the same. Claudette Colvin was only fifteen at the time she refused to follow Jim Crow practices any longer and was arrested. In the aftermath, Claudette often felt isolated and alone, even vilified by some within her own community. Fourteen months later, Rosa Parks had been arrested and the Black community united in boycotting public transportation, but it was in the courts that a victory was needed, and Claudette courageously became one of five plaintiffs in a class action suit. That suit, *Browder v. Gayle*, put an end to segregated transportation in Montgomery when a federal court ruled it unconstitutional. Claudette's passion and her dreams of making a difference will resonate with contemporary readers, as will her sense of hurt and injustice. Phillip Hoose's narrative, which was drawn in large part from interviews with Colvin and others as well as additional research, paints a fresh, insightful picture of those life-changing times in Montgomery, looking at them through the experiences of a teenager who faced challenges for being both young and Black. (Age 13 and older)

Kajikawa, Kimiko. *Tsunami!* Illustrated by Ed Young. Philomel, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-399-25006-4, \$16.99)

Ojiisan is watching from his home on the mountain as residents of his village celebrate the rice harvest when he feels a rumbling beneath his feet: it's an earthquake. Ojiisan watches 400 villagers far below rush toward the unusual sight of the sea rushing *away* from the land. They are unaware of what it means: tsunami! Frantic to warn them of the danger, Ojiisan sets his crops on fire, knowing that the villagers will rush up the mountain to help extinguish the blaze. And they do. Their village is devoured by the waves, but 400 lives are saved. Kimiko Kajikawa's story is based on a real man named Hamaguchi Goryou who saved his village when a tsunami hit Japan in 1896. In a spare, dramatic account, the tension builds slowly and then explodes like the fury of the wave. Ed Young's remarkable collage art is at once abstract—swaths of red-orange and pink for the flames, chaotic tears of white for the violent sea—and detailed, with facial expressions reflecting the confusion and terror, and authentic period clothing. (Ages 6–9)

Kaufman, Michael T. 1968. *Flash Point / Roaring Brook Press, 2009. 148 pages (trade 978-1-59643-428-8, \$22.95)*

In the late 1960s, Michael T. Kaufman worked for the *New York Times* on the evening shift, ensuring that articles and headlines were updated until the very last minute before the paper printed. At the beginning of his third year—1968—Kaufman did not realize how many, and how often, world-changing events would come through the wire. While the entire decade is remarkable for sweeping change, Kaufman identifies pivotal events in the twelve months of 1968 that encapsulate the radical issues and dramas shaping national and global perspectives. “There are some years that stand out more clearly than the rest, when in our memory it seems that the world spun faster and that important and unexpected things occurred almost on a daily basis. 1968 was that kind of year.” From early winter’s Tet Offensive to the Prague Spring, from the Kerner Commission to global student protests, from assassinations to elections, and from the Olympic Games to the Apollo 8 mission, it truly seemed that in a single year the world saw it all. Images of the front pages of the *New York Times* and numerous black-and-white photographs illuminate the text. A timeline, articles, source notes, and index complete this noteworthy work of nonfiction. (Age 12 and older)

Martin, Russell, and Lydia Nibley. *The Mysteries of Beethoven’s Hair. Charlesbridge, 2009. 120 pages (trade 978-1-57091-714-1, \$15.95)*

Unexpectedly fascinating, this skillful blend of biography, science, and history follows three narrative strands: a biography of composer Ludwig Beethoven; the story of two Americans in the mid-1990s purchasing a lock of hair supposedly from Beethoven at a Sotheby’s auction and the subsequent scientific research done on the hair; and what is known about the journey of the hair after it was clipped at the time of Beethoven’s death. It turns out the hair was passed down through generations of a Jewish family until it came into the hands of a Danish family assisting in the flight of Jews from Denmark during World War II. That historical drama is matched by the medical drama that unfolds as forensic scientists around the country examine the hair. Their research not only helped confirm that the hair did indeed belong to Beethoven, but also that the composer suffered from severe lead poisoning—a fact that could explain his many medical ailments, including deafness. The authors, who previously wrote an adult book on this topic, penned this account for a young adult audience and include a comprehensive discussion on the research they conducted and their decisions about how to craft the story. (Age 12 and older)

Murphy, Jim. *Truce: The Day the Soldiers Stopped Fighting. Scholastic Press, 2009. 116 pages (trade 978-0-545-13049-3, \$19.99)*

This fascinating look at World War I has the heartening 1914 Christmas truce bartered by individual soldiers on both sides along the front as its focal point, but author Jim Murphy spends considerable time laying the groundwork for that event. Murphy describes the politics and propaganda that led to the war, and how the soldiers and civilians on both sides and in many countries were victims of both. Murphy also discusses how the

First World War was a war of change, when military leaders discovered that nineteenth-century strategies and twentieth-century technologies were not compatible. Many firsthand accounts of soldiers on both sides are incorporated into a narrative that ultimately emphasizes the human story of this time and place in history. Photographs, a detailed timeline, source notes for each chapter, and suggestions for additional information round out this compelling work. (Age 12 and older)

O'Brien, Anne Sibley, and Perry Edmond O'Brien. *After Gandhi: One Hundred Years of Nonviolent Resistance.* Illustrated by Anne Sibley O'Brien. Charlesbridge, 2009. 181 pages (trade 978-1-58089-129-5, \$24.95)

This thoughtfully arranged examination of a century of nonviolent resistance is an essential tool for teaching and discovery. More than a timeline of noteworthy efforts, this volume weaves together people and places with ideas and impacts, creating a rich yet uncomplicated tapestry. Beginning with an account of Gandhi's early work in South Africa resisting the injustices imposed on Indian workers, the storyline crisscrosses continents to identify influential episodes throughout the decades. Thich Nhat Hanh and the Vietnam War, Charles Perkins and the Aboriginal Rights Movement, Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams and "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland, the Mothers of the Disappeared in Argentina, and Vaclav Havel and the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia are a few of the global examples in addition to four stories from the United States. Each chapter opens with an intimate impression of the scene of the conflict, followed by a profile of the passive response measures, and ending with a brief biography of the resistance leaders. Important quotations are set apart in red boxes, while black-and-white chalk images portray critical scenes and people. (Ages 10-15)

Partridge, Elizabeth. *Marching for Freedom: Walk Together, Children, and Don't You Grow Weary.* Viking, 2009. 72 pages (trade 978-0-670-01189-6, \$19.99)

In 1965, Selma, Alabama, became the focal point of the struggle to gain voting rights for African Americans. Elizabeth Partridge examines what took place there during the first few months of that landmark year in this enthralling volume that focuses on the experience of children and teens. Under the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders, citizens of Selma young and old walked out of churches, homes, and schools and took to the streets, the roads, and the highways. Partridge captures the injustice of the times and the inspiration and dedication of these fighters for human rights, integrating the stories of five young people into an account of history that culminates with the five-day march from Selma to Montgomery in March of that year. Less than five months later, the Voting Rights Act became law. Extensive research and interviews inform a narrative that has an irresistible sense of immediacy, while well-integrated black-and-white photographs further enhance the sense of being there. (Age 11 and older)

Robinson, Sharon. *Testing the Ice: A True Story about Jackie Robinson.* Illustrated by Kadir Nelson. Scholastic Press, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-0-545-05251-1, \$16.99)

Sharon Robinson's engaging, child-centered reminiscence recalls events after her family moved to Stamford, Connecticut, in 1955. She and her brothers were thrilled to make new friends, and throughout the summer, all of the kids swam in the lake on the property. "But no matter how much we begged, my dad would *never* come into the water." It was also a thrill to have their friends over to play, and everyone loved when her father, Jackie Robinson, would talk about breaking into major league baseball. After his retirement, Jackie was home more, but he *still* wouldn't swim in the lake. Then one cold winter day when the kids were eager to skate, he tested the ice for them, despite his inability to swim. "My dad is the bravest man alive." Sharon's sentiment has taken on a deeper significance for her as an adult. "Dad showed the same courage on the ice that day as he did when he broke the color barrier in baseball." Kadir Nelson's paintings enhance the emotional tenor of Robinson's storytelling, whether capturing the gravity of Jackie Robinson's discussion with Branch Rickey about integrating the major leagues, or the awe on the faces of the children listening to Jackie tell that story. (Ages 6-10)

Ruelle, Karen Gray, and Deborah Durland DeSaix. *The Grand Mosque of Paris: A Story of How Muslims Rescued Jews During the Holocaust.* Holiday House, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-0-8234-2159-6, \$17.95)

An intriguing look at one setting in which some of the dramas of World War II played out is not only a fascinating dimension of history but one that can broaden children's understanding of historical relations between Jews and Muslims. When the Germans occupied Paris during the war, some Jews in the city found refuge within the walls of the Grand Mosque of Paris. This enclave was the heart of the Muslim community in France. Under the leadership of Si Kaddour Benghabrit, rector of the mosque, members of the community, some of whom were part of the French Resistance, hid Jewish men, women, and children until they could get them safely out of the city. Some details of the narrative feel spare, but authors Karen Gray Ruelle and Deborah Durland DeSaix note there is difficulty in finding more than anecdotal evidence for the heroic work undertaken by the Muslims in Paris in their detailed author's note. This volume, illustrated with beautiful full-color art, will undoubtedly inspire some readers to seek out additional information. (Ages 9-12)

Sandler, Martin W. *The Dust Bowl Through the Lens: How Photography Revealed and Helped Remedy a National Disaster.* Walker, 2009. 96 pages (trade 978-0-8027-9547-2, \$19.99)

A highly visual and accessible look at the Dust Bowl recounts the way the drought and dust storms in the southern Great Plains during the Depression profoundly affected lives and, eventually, national policy. Martin Sandler looks at this time and place in U.S. history through photographs organized around specific events or aspects of the Dust Bowl tragedy and its aftermath.

Each two-page spread features a dramatic full-page photo and one or more smaller pictures accompanied by Sandler's narrative examining various aspects of the crisis. While some of the photographic captions could have been better, the pictures are effective with or without words. Indeed, Sandler explains, the pictures played a critical role in drawing attention to the Dust Bowl across the country and confirmed the power of photography as a "universal language." (Age 11 and older)

Stone, Tanya Lee. *Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream*. Candlewick Press, 2009. 133 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3611-1, \$24.99)

This riveting work of nonfiction chronicles the astonishing story of the Mercury 13—the group of women who should have been the first female astronauts. Never before has the whole history of this case been presented with such documentation and deliverance in a book for young people. Giving context to the women who were almost astronauts, the author writes, "It was 1961 when they took their shot at being astronauts. Back then, women weren't allowed to rent a car or take out a loan from a bank without a man's signature; they could not play on a professional sports team at all. They couldn't report the news on television or run in a city marathon or serve as police officers. They weren't allowed to fly jets, either." Despite these larger obstacles and many, many smaller hoops, a cadre of capable and determined women proved they had the "right stuff." While piloting records and stringent NASA test results showed their ideal candidacy for an astronaut training program, ultimately their efforts were thwarted. Only recently was the source of the trail of red tape tracked back to a hidden file in a presidential vault. Tanya Lee Stone's stirring work is enriched by numerous photographs and fascinating details from her extensive research. (Age 12 and older)

Thimmesh, Catherine. *Lucy Long Ago: Uncovering the Mystery of Where We Came From*. Houghton Mifflin / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 63 pages (trade 978-0-547-05199-4, \$18.00)

When the skeleton eventually dubbed Lucy was first found, scientists had many questions. Was it child or adult? Male or female? Known species or new? Bipedal or quadrupedal? Ancient or modern? Author Catherine Thimmesh shows how different types of scientists use evidence to answer those questions, while engaging color photos show the scientists at work in the lab and in the field. Other photos compare and contrast skeletal remains of different species of hominids, and wonderful drawings show what the flesh-and-blood hominids may have looked like. The final chapter follows the work of a paleo-artist who interpreted scientific evidence to create a life-size sculpture of what Lucy—now known to be an early hominid, *Australopithecus afarensis*—might have looked like. The photo of the sculpture, Lucy's wide eyes staring straight at the reader, is dramatic and haunting. Repeated references in the narrative to "early man" seem outdated in the twenty-first century and ironic in a book about Lucy, and all of the illustrations use a white male as the model of *Homo sapien*, but those don't detract from the overall strength of this fascinating volume. (Ages 11–15)

Walker, Sally M. *Written in Bone: Buried Lives of Jamestown and Colonial Maryland.* Carolrhoda, 2009. 144 pages (trade 978-0-8225-7135-3, \$22.95)

Old bones have a lot to say about the lives of the past and forensic anthropology takes center stage in this fascinating account of the scientific study of the human remains of two Colonial settlements. Well-written and thoroughly researched, this clear and understandable account is infused with excitement and a sense of discovery. It follows the work of Dr. Douglas Owsley from the Smithsonian who is studying seventeenth- and eighteenth-century skeletons from the Chesapeake area. Author Sally Walker describes the steps undertaken from the initial discovery of a grave through the interpretation of the skeleton and any items found with it—an unveiling that might yield information that includes age, gender, and physical condition of the individual as well as type of work, food eaten, and cause of death. From a tone that is always respectful of the subject to a winning design loaded with well-captioned visual images, this book appeals in a myriad of ways. Unfortunately, the index is both incomplete and inconsistent, but this is a minor drawback to an otherwise outstanding book of information. (Ages 10–15)

Biography and Autobiography

Dahl, Roald. *More about Boy: Roald Dahl's Tales from Childhood.* U.S. edition: Puffin / Penguin, 2009. 223 pages (pbk. 978-0-14-241498-9, \$15.99)

Evidence that Roald Dahl's childhood was ripe with material for his many books for young readers—books renowned for their edgy humor, monstrous adults, and intrepid children—can be found in this engaging autobiography. Dahl's happy home life among his several siblings is sharply contrasted with his experiences at boarding school, beginning at age nine. Details of a world filled with detached and sometimes vindictive adults is brought to vivid life, both in the narrative and in excerpts from Dahl's letters home. The letters exist because his mother saved every piece of written correspondence Dahl sent from childhood until her death. The final pages cover Dahl's early job experiences after leaving school, working for Shell Oil Company in England and East Africa before joining the Royal Air Force at age 22, in 1939. This volume adds new material to Dahl's autobiography *Boy* (U.S. edition: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1984). A generous number of photographs, reproductions of letters, notes, and postcards, illustrations, and sidebars create a scrapbook feel for an unforgettable memoir. (Ages 9–14)

Fleming, Candace. *The Great and Only Barnum: The Tremendous, Stupendous Life of Showman P. T. Barnum.* Illustrated by Ray Fenwick. Schwartz & Wade, 2009. 151 pages (trade 978-0-375-84197-2, \$18.99)

This biography of P. T. Barnum entertains and amazes, much like the man himself. Barnum knew that most people wouldn't mind being tricked by a clever hoax (or "humbugged") as long as they were also entertained. Candace Fleming follows him from his Connecticut boyhood to his death at age 81, portraying a shrewd, resilient businessman who was repeatedly able to rise from crisis and disaster. While Barnum was the master of turning any opportunity to profit, he was not as successful at establishing good relationships with his family, whom he often put second to his work life and personal pleasures. At the same time, he provided generously for hundreds of his "Human Curiosities," or as Barnum called them, "representatives of the wonderful," some of whom he counted as close friends. This inviting narrative is generously illustrated with photographs, posters, broadsides, and illustrations, and sprinkled throughout with sidebars providing additional insight into the culture, people, and events of P. T. Barnum's life. A thorough bibliography, lists of source notes and picture credits, and an index round out this engaging biography. (Ages 10–14)

Giblin, James Cross. *The Rise and Fall of Senator Joe McCarthy.* Clarion / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 304 pages (trade 978-0-618-61058-7, \$22.00)

James Cross Giblin's astute and insightful biography of the infamous Wisconsin senator looks at both the life of the man and the post-war climate in the late 1940s and early 1950s that helped fuel his rise to national power. Yet some of the most fascinating traits Giblin reveals about McCarthy precede his infamy. A highly motivated self-starter, McCarthy sought his first elected office when still in his twenties, and from early in his political career he found ways to exploit the truth and the media, using negative campaign tactics that are common today. He boldly altered his personal history to make himself appear a more patriotic and appealing candidate in his early runs for office. All these details, along with McCarthy's gambling, drinking, and ever-growing fanaticism that was as much or more about the desire for power than the desire to battle Communism make for fascinating reading. It's also a chilling look at how power and politics can be so easily exploited, one that invites discussion of important topics that have continued relevance today, including the role of journalism and the media in a democracy. (Age 14 and older)

Heiligman, Deborah. *Charles and Emma: The Darwins Leap of Faith.* Henry Holt, 2009. 268 pages (trade 978-0-8050-8721-5, \$18.95)

The relationship between Charles Darwin and his wife, Emma, is the focal point of a remarkable work of nonfiction that also chronicles Darwin's thinking about the theory of evolution and its eventual publication. That thinking was greatly advanced when the bachelor Darwin made his now famous journey on the *H.M.S. Beagle*. Returning from the trip, he began to contemplate marriage along with what he would eventually call natural

selection. He listed the “Pros” and “Cons” of matrimony and decided in the affirmative—but to whom? If turning to a family with whom he was already close seemed convenient, it didn’t lessen his anxiety as he began to court his cousin Emma Wedgewood (although she was at first oblivious to the courting). And when he began to fall in love, his worries deepened. Emma was a devout Christian. What would she think about his radical idea that God was not the master designer of Nature? Author Deborah Heiligman’s vivid history is full of humor, drama, passion, and keen details of time, place, and personality. For the Darwins, love and mutual respect were paramount, bridging the chasm between their beliefs, seeing them through personal tragedy, and sheltering them from the furor over the publication of Darwin’s first book. Heiligman’s primary focus is Darwin, but she masterfully reveals both Charles and Emma and shows the developing and then steadfast relationship between them in this accomplished work that incorporates numerous passages from her subjects’ many letters. (Age 14 and older)

Hopkinson, Deborah. *Home on the Range: John Lomax and His Cowboy Songs.* Illustrated by S. D. Schindler. Putnam, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-0-399-23996-0, \$16.99)

Deborah Hopkinson provides a lively account of John Lomax’s efforts to document and record American folk music and cowboy songs of the west. Lomax loved learning and loved music and singing, especially cowboy songs. “The songs went straight to John’s heart, and he made up his mind to write down each and every cowboy song he heard.” Lomax did just that, even turning it into a project for a college class, only to be dismissed by his professor: “There’s nothing of value in these songs of plain, ordinary folk.” Lomax believed differently, and the methods he developed began with respect for those plain, ordinary folk and the music they sang. “Home on the Range,” “Git Along Little Dogies,” and “Sweet Betsy from Pike” are among the works he helped preserve in his pioneering efforts. Additional information on Lomax and his work is provided in an author’s note following Hopkinson’s engaging narrative. (Ages 7–10)

Kohler, Dean Ellis, with Susan VanHecke. *Rock ‘n’ Roll Soldier: A Memoir.* Collins / HarperTeen / HarperCollins, 2009. 278 pages (trade 978-0-06-124255-7, \$16.99)

Dean Kohler’s band had just gotten a recording contract when he was drafted during the Vietnam War. Leaving the band and his dream behind, Kohler arrives in Vietnam assuming his career as a musician has been put on hold. But his commanding officer understands that the soldiers need a diversion from the stress and boredom that defines their lives. Knowing Kohler is a musician, he orders him to form a band. Kohler’s engaging, absorbing memoir of his tour of duty details the challenging logistics of doing just that in the middle of a war zone. Everything from obtaining instruments to finding a place to practice is a challenge, but when things start to click, Kohler and his band mates find themselves in high demand across the region where they are stationed. They provide an essential morale boost to their fellow soldiers, even as they continue to carry out their regular duties

between shows. Kohler's narrative is upbeat, but he doesn't avoid relating a few of the darker and more troubling aspects of life as a soldier in this compelling account that has plenty of resonance for young adults today. (Age 14 and older)

Macy, Sue. *Bylines: A Photobiography of Nellie Bly*. National Geographic, 2009. 64 pages (trade 978-1-4263-0513-9, \$19.95)

In her introduction to Sue Macy's biography of pioneering journalist Nellie Bly, Linda Ellerbee firmly positions Bly as a feminist and fighter for social justice. Macy's narrative engagingly affirms that analysis. Growing up in the mid-nineteenth century, Elizabeth Cochrane saw her mother struggle in an abusive second marriage. At twenty-one, Cochrane read an opinion column in a Pittsburgh newspaper against women working outside the home (because their role is to "be a helpmate to a man, not compete with him") and could not remain silent. Her response, which acknowledged that many women must support themselves, argued that women should be able to pursue any work they wish and receive pay equal to what men earn. It launched her career in journalism, under the pseudonym Nellie Bly. By age twenty-five, Bly had reported on female factory workers and their working conditions, gone undercover to chronicle deplorable conditions in a women's asylum, reported on government censorship and corruption in Mexico, and crossed the globe filing stories from around the world. Black-and-white photographs and other period illustrations round out this compelling biography. (Ages 11-15)

Madden, Kerry. *Up Close: Harper Lee*. Viking, 2009. 223 pages (trade 978-0-670-01095-0, \$16.99)

Thorough primary research through all known records of the famously private Harper Lee, known to friends and family as Nelle, underpins this fine biography. Author Kerry Madden traveled three times to Lee's hometown of Monroeville, Alabama, to gather information through interviews and documents. Although never given an interview by Lee herself, Madden was able to talk to many key people who knew her, including Truman Capote's country cousin, Big Boy, a childhood friend of Lee's. Madden focuses on three main areas in this account of Lee's life and the book that made her famous: her early life; the creation of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and its critical reception; and the Hollywood movie based on the book. She does not obsess about what isn't known about Lee, nor does she play the speculation game. As it turns out, focusing on what is known is enough for an extremely thorough and satisfying biography of a fascinating woman and her modern masterpiece. We even learn that the proper pronunciation of Nelle in Monroeville is "nail," one of many facts that will stay with readers long after the book is closed. (Age 13 and older)

McGinty, Alice B. *Darwin*. Illustrated by Mary Azarian. Houghton Mifflin / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 48 pages (trade 978-0-618-99531-8, \$18.00)

This picture book biography of Charles Darwin combines a narrative of his life with selections from his own writings and hand-tinted woodcut illustrations. Darwin's years are chronicled from boyhood to his death, with a focus on his adult scientific exploration and discovery. Throughout, notes from Darwin's autobiography and notebooks, as well as other writings, give a glimpse of his personal passions and doubts. From his childhood activities of collecting and chemistry experiments, to his lack of interest in conventional academic study, to his travels aboard the *Beagle*, Darwin emerges as a thoughtful and introspective individual. He is simultaneously unable to deny his belief in his innovative theories and concerned that others might respond negatively to them. An author's note includes a complete list of sources quoted. (Ages 8–12)

Medina, Tony. *I and I: Bob Marley*. Illustrated by Jesse Joshua Watson. Lee & Low, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-1-60060-257-3, \$19.95)

"I am the boy / From Nine Miles / The one sing / Like three little birds / From my mum mum belly / Come to bring / My message / Of Love Love / Love." Tony Medina captures the rhythms and cadences of Bob Marley's songs, and essential details of his life, in a series of poems that comprise a biographical portrait of the reggae artist. References to specific people and places in the narratives are illuminated by an explanatory note for each poem, providing additional information. Presented in picture book format, this volume features handsome illustrations by Jesse Joshua Watson that showcase Marley himself and the people and landscape of his homeland. (Ages 9–12)

Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux. *Bad News for Outlaws: The Remarkable Life of Bass Reeves, Deputy U.S. Marshal*. Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie. Carolrhoda, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-0-8225-6764-6, \$17.95)

Bass Reeves was big, tall, and strong, wore a bushy mustache, and rode a powerful horse. "But the biggest thing about Bass Reeves was his character. He had a dedication to duty few men could match. He didn't have a speck of fear in him. And he was as honest as the day is long." As a young enslaved man in the 1840s, Bass hit his owner. To avoid death, he ran away to Indian Territory, where he lived on the run until after the Civil War. Eventually Bass became a U.S. deputy marshal for the territory, where he gained a reputation for his sharpshooting and clever use of disguises. His capture rate was high, and he was both respected and hated by the people of the time. Criminals didn't want Bass tracking them down, and "some whites didn't like the notion of a black man with a badge." Striking oil illustrations capture both the dignity of the man and the drama of his job. A glossary, timeline, list of further reading, and additional information about Indian Territory and the judge under whom Bass Reeves worked are included in the final pages. (Ages 6–10)

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Sojourner Truth's Step-Step Stride*. Illustrated by Brian Pinkney. Disney / Jump at the Sun, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-0-7868-0767-3, \$16.99)

Colorful, forthright, energetic prose that matches the character of its subject distinguishes this picture book biography of Sojourner Truth. "She was big. She was black. She was so beautiful." The opening words set the tone for a lively narrative that describes Sojourner Truth's life as one defined by her physical and moral strength and her endless courage. "In search of freedom, Belle ran. She fled like tomorrow wasn't ever gonna come... Belle ran right up to hope's front door." Andrea Davis Pinkney's account culminates with Sojourner's riveting, righteous comments at a women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851, in which she countered claims of women as the weaker sex with a description of her own life, asking, "And ain't I a woman?" (Ages 5-9)

Rappaport, Doreen. *Eleanor, Quiet No More: The Life of Eleanor Roosevelt*. Illustrated by Gary Kelley. Disney / Hyperion, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-0-7868-5141-6, \$16.99)

Eleanor Roosevelt's life from childhood on is captured in a succinct text, with each page concluding with a relevant quote from the woman herself. Struggling through a difficult although financially privileged childhood, shy Eleanor's life brightened when she was sent to school in England, where she became more confident and social. Her lifelong commitment to social activism began with her return to the United States at eighteen. "Very early I knew there were men and women and children who suffered." As the wife of a politician during wartime, she organized military support efforts and petitioned the government for her causes, while raising five children and teaching school. Once she became First Lady, Eleanor traveled around the country to speak with those suffering during the Depression. After FDR's death, she was appointed to the United Nations, where she dealt with human rights issues on an even larger scale. Full-page illustrations in a muted palette capture Eleanor's individuality, portraying the high and low points of her long, influential life. Additional information includes a timeline and research sources, including suggested reading and websites. (Ages 8-12)

Shange, Ntozake. *Coretta Scott*. Illustrated by Kadir Nelson. Amistad / Katherine Tegen Books / HarperCollins, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-06-125364-5, \$17.99)

A spare, poetic text introduces the Civil Rights Movement through a few experiences in the life of Coretta Scott (King). The narrative opens with young Coretta walking through the dark five miles to a colored school. When a school bus full of white children passes by, Coretta and her siblings are covered in dust, "but / songs and birds of all colors / and rich soil / where slaves fought freedom / steadied them / in the face of danger." With a turn of the page Coretta has grown to a young woman certain "that the good Lord intended freedom / for the Negro." She meets and marries Martin Luther King Jr. and joins the organized struggle of African Americans across the south and across the country for Civil Rights, "singin', always singin'."

Artist Kadir Nelson's stirring pictures feature almost life-size faces rich with emotions, as well iconographic scenes of the Civil Rights Movement in a book that provides most of its biographical details in a one-page endnote. (Ages 6–9)

Sheldon, David. *Into the Deep: The Life of Naturalist and Explorer William Beebe*. Charlesbridge, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978–1–58089–341–1, \$16.95)

A passionate naturalist from childhood on, William Beebe was hired fresh from college as assistant curator of birds at the New York Zoological Park. While traveling to remote destinations on scientific expeditions in the early 1900s, the ecologist attempted “the often risky approach of observing animals in their natural habitat” rather than following the standard practice of collecting specimens to bring back to museums and zoos. Frustrated with unsuccessful attempts to raise deep sea creatures to the ocean surface for study, Will Beebe collaborated with engineer Otis Barton to design a deep-sea diving vessel. The Bathyhsphere enabled Will and Otis to observe previously unknown animals in their own habitat. This picture book biography captures the passion and dedication of Will Beebe's life work, highlighting how a childhood interest remained steadfast through adulthood, even as his growing knowledge and experience shifted the focus of his research and made him an early advocate for species preservation and conservation. The rich colors and lush settings of the illustrations transport readers to the naturalist's many work sites. A glossary, resource list, quotation page, and a section called “Diving Deeper into the Story” round out this accessible biography. (Ages 6–10)

Wargin, Kathy-Jo. *Alfred Nobel: The Man Behind the Peace Prize*. Illustrated by Zachary Pullen. Sleeping Bear Press, 32 pages (trade 978–1–58536–281–3, \$17.95)

Alfred Nobel had hoped to become a writer, but instead he became famous for his search to create a means of safely igniting nitroglycerin. The eventual result was dynamite. Alfred hoped his invention would promote peace, reasoning that “if people were afraid of the harm that explosions could cause, perhaps they would settle things peacefully first.” Instead, dynamite was used by many as a weapon, and despite his nonviolent intentions, Nobel was seen by others “as a man who earned his wealth by inventing ways to injure and kill.” After his death in 1896, it was discovered that he'd designated his fortune to create annual Nobel Prizes for accomplishments in physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature, and a special prize for peace. Oil paintings show Alfred Nobel in a slightly caricaturized style. The final two pages list all Nobel Peace Prize winners since the award's inception in 1901. (Ages 8–12)

Whitaker, Suzanne George. *The Daring Miss Quimby*. Illustrated by Catherine Stock. Holiday House, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978–0–8234–1996–8, \$16.95)

Harriet Quimby never shied away from a daring experience. In 1911 she became the first U.S. woman to receive a pilot's license and later gained international attention as the first woman to fly across the English Channel.

She also performed in air shows across the country. Shown in pencil and watercolor illustrations wearing her trademark purple flight suit, Harriet moves confidently through her world, whether at the controls of her small propeller plane or before a crowd of fans. But her time in the limelight was short-lived: Only one year after becoming a licensed pilot, Harriet lost control of her plane over the Boston Harbor, resulting in her death and that of a passenger. Her determination and spirit of adventure helped pave the way for other women to enjoy success as pilots, as chronicled in a “Women in Aviation Time Line” that tracks significant aviation milestones. An author’s note with additional information about Harriet Quimby’s life and a list of related websites and a bibliography are also included. (Ages 7–10)

Winter, Jonah. *You Never Heard of Sandy Koufax?!* Illustrated by André Carrilho. Schwartz & Wade, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-375-83738-8, \$17.99)

“You gotta be kidding! You never heard of *Sandy Koufax*?! He was only the greatest lefty who ever pitched in the game of baseball. Well, for six years he was, anyway.” If the mesmerizing lenticular cover doesn’t grab readers’ attention for this baseball biography, then the persuasive voice of the narrator will. Recounting Koufax’s unpredictable early years, his experiences as a Jewish player, and the evolution of his erratic pitch into a wildly successful one, the wise-talking storyteller energetically conveys the arc of Sandy Koufax’s brief baseball career. Highly stylized illustrations with a metallic sheen and attractive text boxes showing baseball statistics round out the winning features of this captivating story. (Ages 8–12)

Yaccarino, Dan. *The Fantastic Undersea Life of Jacques Cousteau.* Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-375-85573-3, \$16.99)

From his boyhood in France through his adult years of exploration and the eventual founding of the Cousteau Society, the life of Jacques Cousteau revolved around his love of the sea. “The ocean was the most incredible place he’d ever seen, and he wanted to share its beauty with the world.” In addition to his passion for water, “Jacques also loved to tinker and [built] all sorts of gadgets,” including the Aqua-Lung, revolutionizing extended underwater dives. When Cousteau returned to the Mediterranean after traveling the world’s oceans, he found it changed. Pollution was killing off plants and animals, inspiring him to a lifetime of educating society about the value of the earth’s oceans and the importance of controlling preventable contamination. Stylized illustrations and a tall, thin format, mimicking the man himself, invite children to discover this pioneer of the planet’s waters. (Ages 5–10)

Yoo, Paula. *Shining Star: The Anna May Wong Story.* Illustrated by Lin Wang. Lee & Low, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-60060-259-7, \$17.95)

In this picture book biography of early film star Anna May Wong, Paula Yoo focuses on the challenges of working as a Chinese American actress at a time when Asian characters were presented in a racist and stereotyped way in the movies. The censure Wong faced from Chinese and Chinese Americans

who felt her roles dishonored her race and culture, and her frustration and heartbreak when racism also denied her a coveted, dignified role, led Anna to rethink her career. After an eye-opening trip to China, she returned to Hollywood and accepted only roles that offered what was then a positive portrayal of Chinese people—in a career that spanned more than fifty films as well as television. Paintings by illustrator Lin Wang provide rich emotional accompaniment to Yoo's account of Anna May Wong's early career. In an author's note, Yoo explains that for decades after her death in 1961, Wong was viewed negatively by many who still saw her portrayal of Asians as stereotypical. Only recently has she begun to receive acknowledgment for the ongoing struggle she waged against discrimination. (Ages 7–10)

Contemporary People, Places, and Events

Brown, Craig. *Mule Train Mail.* Charlesbridge, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-58089-187-5, \$16.95)

Who knew that mail was still delivered by mule? Residents of Supai, a village on the Havasupai Indian Reservation at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, rely on mule train to bring them their letters and packages, along with groceries, clothing, and anything else they want or need. Vehicles can't make the difficult journey. Craig Brown's account of this fascinating aspect of contemporary life follows Anthony the Postman as he loads up and sets off on a journey down down to the village on the canyon floor. His narrative features engaging details and is set against illustrations reflecting the rugged terrain. A two-part author's note provides additional information on mail delivery by mule, and an account of Brown's own journey with mailman Anthony Paya to the canyon floor. (Ages 5–9)

Ellis, Deborah. *Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees.* Greenwood / House of Anansi Press, 2009. 128 pages (trade 978-0-88899-907-8, \$15.95)

The voices of Iraqi refugee children between the ages of ten and eighteen who have been displaced because of the war in Iraq speak from the pages of this compelling work. Some live in refugee camps in Jordan, others in cities in that country; a few are now in Canada. The children represent a range of religious and ethnic groups and backgrounds: Christian, Sunni, Shia; Kurdish; poor, middle class, wealthy. A few of them have been physically injured by war; all have experienced the trauma of loss, whether of a loved one or their home. Their voices are powerful and sometimes heart wrenching, whether describing their lives before displacement, expressing feelings of sadness, frustration, or anger, or sharing hopes for the future. Deborah Ellis's outstanding introduction gives context to the lives of her subjects with a brief overview of recent history in Iraq, including both the first Gulf War and

the current war. Missing from her introduction to the book or to the words of each child is any sense of what questions were asked during the interviews, an unfortunate oversight, but one that cannot diminish the power of these voices. A black-and-white photo of each child or teen accompanies his or her words. (Age 11 and older)

Mortenson, Greg, and David Oliver Relin. *Three Cups of Tea*. Adapted by Sarah Thomson. Dial, 2009. 209 pages (pbk. 978-0-14-241412-5, \$8.99)

Greg Mortenson had been a mountain climber in the early 1990s when he became lost on a descent from K2, only to find a new path in life as a result. He has spent the years since raising money and working with people in Pakistan and Afghanistan to build schools in their countries. Sarah Thomson's skillful adaptation of the adult book of the same name captures Mortenson's passion and drive, and also his appreciation for the cultures and the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan, from whom, he says, he has learned so much. An added dimension of this volume for children and teens is an interview with Mortenson's eleven-year-old daughter, Amira, who, with her younger brother, has taken her parents' work and ideals to heart. She spends time talking to other kids about the work and selling lemonade or collecting "pennies for peace" to raise money, but also speaks in a heartfelt way about how hard it is to have her dad away for long periods of time when he travels. Photographs—both color and black-and-white—a reader's guide, and a glossary round out this welcome volume. (Ages 9–13)

Winter, Jeanette. *Nasreen's Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan*. Beach Lane, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-1-4169-9437-4, \$16.99)

Based on a true story, Nasreen's tale opens with an author's note that details some of the changes in Afghanistan during the Taliban reign of 1996–2001, including the restriction on girls from attending school or university. Brave "citizens... defied the Taliban in many ways, including supporting the secret schools for girls" both during and after the Taliban's control of Afghanistan. In the story that follows, Nasreen lives alone with her grandmother after her father is seized by soldiers and her mother leaves to search for him. Nasreen does not speak after her parents' disappearance, and her grandmother decides to send her to a secret school for girls, hoping that she will "learn about the world... and speak again." Although her silence persists for a long time, eventually Nasreen begins to talk to another girl at the school and learns to read, write, and do math. "Windows opened for Nasreen in that little schoolroom... Nasreen no longer feels alone. The knowledge she holds inside will always be with her, like a good friend." Illustrations are framed and surrounded by white space, serving as windows into Nasreen's world. (Ages 6–10)

Issues in Today's World

Anonymous. *Quicksand: HIV/AIDS in Our Lives.* Candlewick Press, 2009. 103 pages (trade 978-0-7636-1589-5, \$16.99)

The anonymous author of this informative work begins by explaining she would prefer to be open about her identity but is keeping it veiled at the request of family members, including one who lived with HIV and eventually died of AIDS. This narrative moves back and forth between a straightforward question-and-answer format and the author's moving account of her brother-in-law's battle with the disease. The Q & A presents timely, relevant information about HIV/AIDS—the difference between them, how HIV is and is not transmitted, the emotional impact of a family member or a friend's diagnosis, the secrecy that can still exist around the disease, types of treatment, legal issues, and more. The personal story, in which the author includes her own response to events as they unfolded, spans more than ten years from the mid-1990s to 2006. In addition to personalizing her message of the importance of compassion, it also offers the opportunity to look at the recent history of HIV/AIDS from both a medical and a social perspective. Places to go for more information, a glossary, and a bibliography complete this volume written to engage older children and teens. (Ages 10–15)

Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: The Secrets Behind What You Eat.* Dial, 2009. 298 pages (trade 978-0-8037-3415-9, \$17.99)

This adaptation of Michael Pollan's thought-provoking adult book of the same name examines where our food comes from in the United States, and discusses decisions we make regarding what to purchase and consume in terms of health, economics, and social justice. In large part an indictment of industrial food production, Pollan's book invites readers to consider alternatives as he explores industrial organic farming, local sustainable farming, and hunting, gathering, and garden food. He documents his journey of discovery about each in a narrative peppered with numerous informational sidebars (although the black-and-white graphics lack dynamics). Pollan glosses over how class and economics impact decision-making, but his work is still an effective starting point for thinking about food. It includes tips for voting "with your fork" and numerous sources for more information. (Age 12 and older)

Understanding Oneself and Others

Harris, Robie H. *It's Perfectly Normal: A Book About Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health.* Third edition. Illustrated by Michael Emberley. Candlewick Press, 2009. 93 pages (trade 978-0-7636-4483-3, \$22.99)

This fifteenth-anniversary edition of Robie Harris and Michael Emberley's highly acclaimed book about sexual development and sexual health has been updated to incorporate recent scientific and medical information available on topics such as birth control, abortion, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Information about the HPV vaccine has also been added. What has stayed the same is the winning tone and format, including the cartoon bird and bee characters whose sidebar questions and comments enliven the direct explanations and accompany illustrations concerning human sexuality and sexual health that comprise the main narrative. The information is organized into six sections: What Is Sex?; Our Bodies; Puberty; Families and Babies; Decisions; and Staying Healthy. (Ages 9–12)

Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux. *Who Will I Be, Lord?* Illustrated by Sean Qualls. Random House, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-375-84342-6, \$16.99)

Thinking about what adults she knows do for a living, a young African American girl ponders her own future with the repeated refrain, "What will I be, Lord? What will I be?" Many types of work and many kinds of choices are treated with respect and dignity in Vaunda Micheaux Nelson's lively narrative. The girl's great-grandmother was white and worked as a housewife, her grandpa is a preacher, her grandma is a teacher, her uncle is a pool shark, her cousin is a jazzman and a dreamer (who flips burgers at Dizzy's Diner by day), her daddy is a car man, her mama is a mama. The girl talks about each individual with fondness, and the details she provides about the work they do and the lives they lead or have lead are engaging and child-centered, even as they also reflect information that she has learned from adults around her. Nelson's fine writing is paired with appealing and distinctive illustrations by Sean Qualls. *Highly Commended, 2010 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5–8)

The Arts

Bass, Hester. *The Secret World of Walter Anderson.* Illustrated by E. B. Lewis. Candlewick Press, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3583-1, \$17.99)

Author Hester Bass brings an obvious fascination with and appreciation for her subject to this elegant narrative about artist Walter Anderson. A prolific artist of the mid-twentieth century, Anderson created paintings, sculptures, and many other works. Bass focuses on time Anderson spent on Horn Island on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. He would spend days on his own, observing, writing, drawing, and painting. Captivating details, like when Anderson found bunches of bananas washed up on the shore for seven or eight miles, or the time he rode out a hurricane, punctuate a story set against E. B. Lewis's lovely watercolor illustrations. A lengthy biographical essay following the story includes photographs of some of Anderson's work. For Anderson, who struggled with mental illness, solitude in nature was essential to his emotional and psychological well-being. Sadly, parts of his artistic legacy were destroyed in Hurricane Katrina. (Ages 7-10)

Bond, Rebecca. *In the Belly of an Ox: The Unexpected Photographic Adventures of Richard and Cherry Kearton.* Houghton Mifflin / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-547-07675-1, \$16.00)

As young boys, Richard and Cherry Kearton explored the Yorkshire countryside where they lived. "Everywhere they looked, they saw something to solve. For two boys in the hills of Yorkshire, it was a time of magical discovery." Later they both lived in London, but took every opportunity to return to the countryside. When Cherry took a photograph of a thrush's nest, Richard had an ambitious idea. Could the brothers revisit their childhood experience and take photographs of every type of bird nest in Britain? They could, and they did. While still working at their regular jobs, the pair left London in the pre-dawn hours to find nests to photograph: under hedgerows, in wetlands, high in trees. Crouching beneath grass-colored blankets, or hiding inside a hay wagon, a fabricated tree trunk, or even a "hollow ox made from a real bullock hide stretched over a light wooden frame," Cherry took photos of birds in their natural settings. *British Birds' Nests* was published in 1895, as "the first nature book ever entirely illustrated with photographs." Watercolor and pen-and-ink illustrations of the brothers at their task accompany an exceptional text, and the book's final pages offer photographs from their book. (Ages 7-10)

Bryan, Ashley. *Ashley Bryan: Words to My Life's Song.* Photographs by Bill McGuinness. Atheneum, 2009. 58 pages (trade 978-1-4169-0541-7, \$18.99)

Illustrator and author Ashley Bryan's captivating look at his life and career feels intimate and immediate in a volume presented as if the reader were accompanying Bryan on a walk around the Maine Island where he lives.

Bryan begins by discussing his childhood and early interest in art (“I cannot remember a time when I have not been drawing and painting”), but he covers many other subjects, from his education as an artist, including both informal and formal training, to the importance of family and community, and the changing communities of which he has been a part throughout his life. And of course he talks about some of the many extraordinary books that have defined his singular career. Inviting readers into his studio, he also offers a glimpse at some of the remarkable work he’s done outside the book arts, from puppets and toys made from other people’s cast-offs to panels of sea glass illustrating scenes from the Bible. This warm, visually dynamic volume will no doubt inspire many to partake of Bryan’s hospitality over and over again. (Age 9 and older)

Gladstone, Valerie. *A Young Dancer: The Life of an Ailey Student.* Photographs by José Ivey. Christy Ottaviano Books / Henry Holt, 2009. 48 pages (trade 978-0-8050-8233-3, \$18.95)

This vibrant and energetic photographic essay showcases the life of seventh grader Iman Bright, a dancer at the prestigious Ailey School in New York City. Unlike other non-fiction titles about young dancers, Iman’s story revels in all aspects of her life, rather than focusing on a performance. Iman, a lithe and lovely African American preteen, shares the joy she experiences while dancing and how it’s “wonderful to have another way to express yourself besides words.” Iman tells about her challenging training at dance school, chats about her friends at regular school, and explains how her schedule also includes room for violin lessons and hanging out at the pool. Clear journalistic style photos chronicle Iman’s fluid and engaging diary of her life as a dancer. (Ages 9–12)

Lasky, Kathryn. *Georgia Rises: A Day in the Life of Georgia O’Keeffe.* Illustrated by Ora Eitan. Melanie Kroupa Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-374-32529-9, \$16.95)

Kathryn Lasky emphasizes artist Georgia O’Keeffe’s affinity for and awareness of color, shape, and form in a picture book that imagines a day in O’Keeffe’s later life. Georgia rises early and takes a walk near her desert home. “A bone gleaming white sits pretty as angel wings just ahead... The sky is finally lavender, so pale it’s almost transparent, like the eyelids of babies. The shapes are so simple—the wings of this bone reach up for the moon.” Illustrator Ora Eitan references but doesn’t try to mimic the style of O’Keeffe’s own work, emphasizing color, with the vivid whiteness of the artist’s hair always one of the focal points of each page in this quietly captivating volume. (Ages 6–9)

Marín, Guadalupe Rivera. *My Papa Diego and Me: Memories of My Father and His Art = Mi papa Diego y yo: Recuerdos de mi padre y su arte.* Illustrated by Diego Rivera. Children’s Book Press, 2009. 29 pages (trade 978-0-89239-228-5, \$17.95)

Daughter of artist Diego Rivera, Guadalupe Rivera Marín uses her father’s paintings as the springboard for providing glimpses of her childhood and information about her father’s life and the culture of Mexico. Thirteen of

Rivera's paintings are discussed by Rivera Marín in a warm, inviting bilingual (English/Spanish) narrative. About "Women Combing Their Hair," she writes, "In this picture, a mother is braiding her daughter's hair... Back then...it wasn't just uncommon to wear your hair long and loose. It was scandalous!" Writing about "Orange," in which she is the subject, she says, "When my father was painting this picture, he gave me an orange to help keep me still... He got really annoyed with me because I ate the orange before he finished the painting!" A handful of small photographs accompany the introduction and endnotes of this lively volume. (Ages 6–12)

Nelson, Marilyn. *Beautiful Ballerina. Photographs by Susan Kuklin. Scholastic Press, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-545-08920-3, \$17.99)*

"Beautiful ballerina, you are slender, straight-legged, high-arched, symmetrical, with strong this-little-piggie toes. You are poised, graceful, flexible, elegant. Your beauty invites *bravissimos*. Beautiful ballerina, you are the dance." Marilyn Nelson's seamless poetry celebrates many facets of African American dancers, from physical discipline and emotional strength to artistic interpretation and cultural heritage. Her vivid language is enhanced by Susan Kuklin's photographs of four female students of the Dance Theater of Harlem, spanning an age range from young childhood to older adolescence. Shown in a variety of poses, their bodies stand out boldly against solid-color backgrounds. (Ages 6–11)

Rodríguez, Rachel. *Building on Nature: The Life of Antoni Gaudí. Illustrated by Julie Paschkis. Henry Holt, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8050-8745-1, \$16.99)*

As a child in Spain in the mid-nineteenth century, Antoni Gaudí noticed the world—the jagged peaks of the mountains against the sky, the blue of the sea. "All around him is light, form, and the Great Book of Nature. He will read from it all his life." Rachel Rodríguez looks at the career of this unusual architect whose "daring creations" inspired everything from confusion to anger to astonished wonder in those who saw them. Rodríguez engagingly describes Gaudí's work and the responses to it in a picture book narrative set against Julie Paschkis's fanciful, appealing illustrations. Paschkis's style conveys a sense of Gaudí's imaginative approach and unusual structures. An author's note provides a more comprehensive overview of Gaudí's life and directs readers to numerous websites where photos of his work can be seen. (Ages 6–9)

Spires, Elizabeth. *I Heard God Talking to Me: William Edmondson and His Stone Carvings. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009. 56 pages (trade 978-0-374-33528-1, \$17.95)*

Born in 1874, William Edmondson grew up on the land where his parents had once been slaves. He had no formal schooling and did grueling work as a hired hand until he left to find work in Nashville. Edmondson began having religious visions when he was still a boy. At the age of 57, he heard God tell him to carve a tombstone—it was the beginning of his career as an artist. Within a few years, Edmondson's work was attracting

national and international acclaim. Poet Elizabeth Spires gives voice to this extraordinary, plainspoken man, and to some of his subjects in stone, in a series of poems that are paired with striking black-and-white photographs taken of Edmondson and his works. “I’se just doing the Lord’s work. / It ain’t got much style. / God don’t want much style, but He gives you wisdom / and speeds you along.” (“A Conversation”). A biographical essay about Edmondson and his art, along with a selected bibliography, complete this distinctive portrait of a singular artist. (Age 14 and older)

Sturm, James, Andrew Arnold, and Alexis Frederick-Frost. *Adventures in Cartooning*. First Second, 2009. 109 pages (pbk. 978-1-59643-369-4, \$12.95)

Readers interested in how words and pictures work together in cartooning to tell a story or convey information will find plenty to enlighten them here. The lesson is delivered in the context of a story about a knight in search of a missing princess. The plot is slight, but the silliness is delightful, from the metaphorically knock-kneed steed named Edward to the educational elf who explains to the knight how cartoons work as the adventure progresses. One unexpected twist and turn follows another in a volume that concludes with a simple drawing lesson. (Ages 7–10)

Winter, Jonah. *Gertrude Is Gertrude Is Gertrude Is Gertrude*. Illustrated by Calef Brown. Atheneum, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-1-4169-4088-3, \$16.99)

“Sometimes a bear barely sits in a chair. But but but but wait a minute. There’s no bear there, heavens no. There’s just Gertrude staring and her chair. And her chair is not even barely a chair, no no no no no it’s a throne.” A book as singular its subject (Gertrude Stein) features a text perfectly tuned to young children, full of energy, rhythm, and playful prose to delight. But this is also an eye-opening look at the world of arts and letters in which Gertrude Stein held court. A number of the Modernists of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s are featured in Jonah Winter’s spirited narrative (echoing the stream-of-consciousness style of Stein’s own writing, which included a book for children, *The World Is Round*) and Calef Brown’s well-suited, offbeat illustrations. In addition to Stein herself, there’s Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Ernest Hemingway, and Alice B. Toklas, among others. But there is also a poodle named Basket, a pink car named Auntie, and many other things in a book that may captivate toddlers and intrigue older children and teens. (Ages 4–16)

Poetry

Argueta, Jorge. *Sopa de frijoles: un poema para cocinar = Bean Soup: A Cooking Poem.* Illustrated by Rafael Yockteng. Groundwood / Libros Tigrillo / House of Anansi Press, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-88899-881-1, \$18.95)

A boy describes how to make bean soup in a poem that is mindful of the sensory experiences of cooking and the pleasure of sharing the results. Use beans that are “red, white, or black as night,” garlic that is “white as midday,” and an onion that is white or “yellow as the dawn.” Before cutting the onion, say, “Thank you for your lovely taste.” The beans are washed and soaked, the vegetables chopped, and all is put with water and salt into a pot that is “round as the moon / and as deep / as a little lake.” When the soup is finally done, it’s time to share the goodness with family. Jorge Argueta’s bilingual (Spanish/English) poem could be used as a recipe and how-to guide (the need for adult supervision is noted, perhaps unnecessarily), but the savory words are satisfying all on their own. Rafael Yockteng’s illustrations of the boy making the soup with his mother are in beautifully muted tones. (Ages 4–8)

Florian, Douglas. *Dinothesaurus: Prehistoric Poems and Paintings.* Atheneum, 2009. 43 pages (trade 978-1-4169-7978-4, \$17.99)

In his trademark playful, pun-laden style, Douglas Florian turns his attention to dinosaurs in a witty and satisfying volume of paired poems and paintings. A *Tyrannosaurus rex* plugged into an ipod and a back-scratching *Baryonyx* are among the imaginative mixed-media images Florian has rendered to accompany twenty poems full of delight. Florian’s brisk, rapid-fire rhymes offer a humorous look at the inhabitants of the dinosaur age from Triassic to Jurassic to Cretaceous. A “Glossarysaurus” provides factual information on the dinosaurs that are the basis for each poem/painting pair. (Ages 4–8)

Harley, Avis. *African Acrostics: A Word in Edgewise.* Photographs by Deborah Noyes. Candlewick Press, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3621-0, \$17.99)

Animal lovers, poetry appreciators, and puzzle fiends will all find something to love in this collection of poems about birds and animals of the African savanna. Most of Avis Harley’s clever descriptive poems are traditional acrostics, in which the first letter of each line spells out a word relating to the poem’s subject. But some are more devious: There are double acrostics, which feature words spelled from both the beginning and end letters in each line; multiple acrostics—one poem has five embedded vertical words; and other variations on the acrostic form. Accompanying each poem is a full-page photograph of the animal subject. Photographer Deborah Noyes took most of the photos in Namibia, and she includes a note about that experience. Brief additional notes about each of the animals, and a more lengthy explanation of the acrostic form, round out this unusual volume. (Ages 7–10)

Hopkins, Lee Bennett, selector. *Sky Magic*. Illustrated by Mariusz Stawarski. Dutton, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-525-47862-1, \$17.99)

Poems about the sun—rising, shining, setting—and about the moon and stars comprise this soothing picture book anthology. A thoughtful arrangement begins with sun poems and moves on to poems about the night sky, with Ashley Bryan's lovely "Song" seamlessly marking the transition: "Sing to the sun / It will listen / And warm your words ... Sing to the moon / It will listen / And soothe your cares..." Exquisite shades of gold, indigo, and violet distinguish the illustrations and make a striking visual backdrop for the words of this comforting and quietly inspired collection. (Ages 4–8)

Hughes, Langston. *My People*. Photographs by Charles R. Smith Jr. Ginee Seo Books / Atheneum, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-4169-3540-7, \$17.99)

"The night is beautiful. / So the faces of my people." The full-hearted affirmation of Langston Hughes's celebratory poem is given stirring visual accompaniment by Charles R. Smith Jr. in this volume featuring black-and-white photographs of Black faces young and old, dark and light, joyful and soulful. Smith captures his subjects from varying angles and distances, creating ever-changing interest in the design. The photographs, tinged with sepia, are striking against the black background of the pages—each face is like the sun, shining and warm. Spreads feature one to three people, sometimes as carefully juxtaposed portraits, sometimes as individuals interacting. Thumbnails of additional portraits grace some of the page borders, and larger images are featured on the endpapers of this singular volume. (Age 3 and older)

Hughes, Langston. *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*. Illustrated by E. B. Lewis. Jump at the Sun / Disney, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-7868-1867-9, \$16.99)

From realistic views of individuals working or relaxing near the water to metaphorical scenes suggesting ideas such as "My soul has grown deep like the rivers," each artfully composed two-page spread in this picture book powerfully links the words of Langston Hughes's poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" with images of the rivers and people of which he writes. In a note about the artwork he created, illustrator E. B. Lewis writes of how "water has played a powerful role in the lives of black people. It has been the boon and bane of our existence. We have been born out of water, baptized by water, carried by, and even killed by water." All of his illustrations picture the rivers referenced in Hughes's narrative with a distinctive character, color, and texture, serving as a vital backdrop to the human life shown in the foreground. Lewis's evocative art encourages thoughtful contemplation of Hughes's words but also serves as stirring visual composition in its own right. (Age 10 and older)

Janeczko, Paul B., selector. *A Foot in the Mouth: Poems to Speak, Sing, and Shout*. Illustrated by Chris Raschka. Candlewick Press, 2009. 61 pages (trade 978-0-7636-0663-3, \$17.99)

“Poetry is sound,” states the compiler of this collection by way of introducing readers to the anthology’s auditory qualities. From mood to metrics and from volume to voice, the thirty-seven poems presented in this album beg to be un-silenced from the page through vocal performance by individuals, families, and classrooms. Energetic illustrations by Chris Raschka accentuate the text with colorful watercolor, ink, and paper collage. Playful, somber, melodic, and crisp, the tonal range of the poems offers something for everyone. Familiar selections such as Edward Lear’s “The Owl and the Pussy-Cat” and “Double, double, toil and trouble” from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* complement less familiar, but sound, selections. (Age 9 and older)

Rosen, Michael J. *The Cuckoo’s Haiku and Other Birding Poems*. Illustrated by Stan Fellows. Candlewick Press, 2009. 64 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3049-2, \$17.99)

A beautiful volume arranged by season highlights a handful of birds that influence the auditory and visual landscape of the calendar year. Elegant watercolor illustrations of scenes and species pair perfectly with the verses, accompanied by side sketches and birding notes jotted in cursive. In “Spring” we witness the contrast of crows against the white blossoms of an apple tree: “blooming apple tree / round and white as one peeled fruit / crow-seeds at its core.” The conclusion offers “Notes for Birdwatchers and Haiku Lovers”—assorted details about the twenty-four birds featured, including their identifying songs and calls. (Ages 8–14)

Ruddell, Deborah. *A Whiff of Pine, a Hint of Skunk: A Forest of Poems*. Illustrated by Joan Rankin. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-4169-4211-5, \$16.99)

Whimsy abounds in a medley of poems about forest creatures and nature in the woods. Deborah Ruddell offers up a “Biography of a Beaver” (“Bucktoothed Cleaver / Tree Retriever... Waterproof Weaver...”), a “Proposal for a Squirrel Spa” (“someplace very la-di-dah, / with all the walnuts she can eat / and pedicures for all four feet”), and other smile-inducing rhymes. But she also pauses for moments of thoughtful reflection, as in “The Forest’s Royal Family”: “the deer inspect their royal grounds— / their breezy castles rising high, / their kingdom built of trees and sky.” The quirky quality of many of the illustrations is well-matched to the playful tone of the accompanying poems, while other images emphasize nature’s beauty. (Ages 4–8)

Shange, Ntozake. *We Troubled the Waters*. Illustrated by Rod Brown. Amistad / Collins / HarperCollins, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-06-133735-2, \$16.99)

Stirring poems and paintings comprise an emotional volume focused on African American experience in the south in the mid-twentieth century. There are a few famous people here—Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X—but it is the lives and dreams, challenges and indignities faced by subjects without names or familiar faces that are most affecting. A

“Cleaning Gal” can’t afford to rest or quit, so continues “scrubbin & scrubbin what aint mine.” Hungry “Garbage Boys” collect other people’s trash and “never understand / how folks throw way what’s still good to eat.” In “Crying Trees” poet Ntozake Shange asks, “how can our boys be some decorations in the forest / never to kiss good night again,” while artist Rod Brown’s accompanying painting shows young men hanging noosed and lifeless from trees. Shange and Brown confront a past that is disturbing but also inspiring in both the courage and strength of individuals known and nameless and in transcendent moments of the Civil Rights Movement. (Age 13 and older)

Smith, Hope Anita. *Mother Poems*. Christy Ottaviano Books / Henry Holt, 2009. 72 pages (trade 978-0-8050-8231-9, \$16.95)

“I have a superhero who lifts me out of / sorrow / and rocks me in her arms.” Hope Anita Smith explores love and loss in a moving collection of poems in the voice of an African American girl whose mother is the anchor in her young life. When her mother dies suddenly, the girl is adrift, at first overwhelmed by grief. Memories offer little comfort early on as she longs for what she no longer has. She is sad and angry and full of regret. She even senses a separateness from friends who are lucky enough to have mothers who drive them crazy. But memory is also a source of healing and solace in the end: “I build trees all the time now / Memory trees. / I start at the base, / my earliest memory, / and work my way up. / Hang moments with my mom in my mind.” Most of the thirty-one poems are accompanied by spare, expressive torn-paper illustrations. (Age 9 and older)

Soto, Gary. *Partly Cloudy: Poems of Love and Longing*. Harcourt / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 100 pages (trade 978-0-15-206301-6, \$16.00)

In two parts, titled “A Girl’s Tears, Her Songs” and “A Boy’s Body, His Words,” Gary Soto explores the intense and often fleeting experience of young love. His seventy-seven poems speak in a range of distinct teenage voices along the spectrum of love: longing from a distance (“Don’t You See”), total immersion in a shared romance (“Time”), and the sharp pain of its demise (“Eternal Love”). The elusive nature of love is explored in several of the poems, including “Rough Hands”: “Lotion is a slippery essence / Applied on a winter day / When an icy wind sings through the bare trees. / But I prefer my hands rough. / This way when I hold yours, / You won’t slip away.” (Age 13 and older)

Concept Books

Coffelt, Nancy. *Big, Bigger, Biggest!* Christy Ottaviano Books / Henry Holt, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8050-8089-6, \$16.95)

Brightly colored animals in acrylic illustrate this amusing book about comparisons, antonyms, synonyms, and adjectives. A smiling hippo with squinting eyes declares, "I'm big. I'm large. I'm huge. I'm jumbo," while a leaping orca's bigger size is proclaimed as gigantic, immense, and enormous. The biggest, of course, is a dinosaur whose mammoth, humongous, colossal size is inferred by how much of its body won't fit on the page. Size, speed, viscosity, hunger, and tiredness are the categories explored in this creative and engaging concept book, perfect for language instruction or parents seeking variation on pleas of "I'm hungry!" (Ages 3-6)

Franco, Betsy. *Zero Is the Leaves on the Tree.* Illustrated by Shino Arihara. Tricycle Press, 2009. 24 pages (trade 978-1-58246-249-3, \$15.99)

Betsy Franco offers poetic contemplation of the number zero and the idea it represents. "Zero is... the leaves on the bare, brown arms of the oak tree... the kites in the sky once the wind has stopped blowing... the sound of stars filling the night." Franco's text, supported by Shino Arihara's lovely illustrations, offers both concrete and abstract examples. It naturally lends itself to classroom activities, whether coming up with other ways to think about zero, exploring other numbers in the same way, or talking about the role and function of zero in mathematical terms. Who knew "nothing" could be so inspiring? (Ages 4-7)

Jocelyn, Marthe. *Same Same.* Illustrated by Tom Slaughter. Tundra, 2009. 24 pages (trade 978-0-88776-885-9, \$15.95)

A simple yet sophisticated look at things both similar and different is presented in this clever, attractive title. Like a chain of interconnected Venn diagrams, the concept on each spread directly links to the next page. An airplane, a bird, and a group of bees are examples of things that fly. Turning the page to striped things, the bees remain, but the others are replaced by a zebra and banded snake. Set theory is attractively portrayed with bold cutouts in basic red, green, yellow, blue, and black and white. Varying page layouts and clever groupings make this concept book a striking circular read. (Ages 2-5)

Markel, Michelle. *Tyrannosaurus Math.* Tricycle Press, 2009. Illustrated by Doug Cushman. 32 pages (trade 978-1-58246-282-0, \$15.99)

A young dinosaur's love of math is evident the moment he bursts from his shell. "My, what big claws I have!" he marveled, as he counted his fingers. "And what big toes I've got!" He counted those too. Then he added his fingers and toes together, making a number sentence. "4+6=10" "Go figure!" his mother cried, and she named him Tyrannosaurus Math." The tyrannosaurus counts his footprints by twos, and groups of other dinosaurs by fives. He

adds up how many dragonflies he and his siblings eat in a day and anything else he can. And when he's amazed by the nighttime sky ("There could be a billion stars up there"), his mom is quick to praise him ("Good use of estimation!"). Everything in life is inspiration for fun with numbers in Michelle Markel's funny and informative picture book cheerfully illustrated by Doug Cushman. (Ages 5–9)

McElligott, Matthew. *The Lion's Share: A Tale of Halving Cake and Eating It, Too*. Walker, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8027-9768-1, \$16.99)

When she receives her first invitation to dine with the king of the jungle, an ant is very nervous. At the feast, the lion is a gracious host, but the ant is shocked by the rudeness of other animals in attendance. The elephant takes one-half of the cake for dessert and passes it to the hippo. "What a pig," thought the hippo. "But if he's taking half, I'm taking half of what's left." One quarter of the cake is passed to the gorilla, and so on, until the ant is given the tiniest of pieces. It crumbles when she tries to slice it, leaving nothing for the lion. In dismay, she offers to bake the lion a cake. Not to be outdone, the beetle offers to bake two cakes, the frog offers to bake four, and so on, until the elephant finds himself promising to bake a staggering 256 cakes. This playful picture-book about halves and doubles will be twice the fun for readers inspired to do the calculations on their own. (Ages 5–9)

Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

Adler, Victoria. *All of Baby Nose to Toes*. Illustrated by Hiroe Nakata. Dial, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8037-3217-9, \$14.99)

Baby's eyes, nose, ears, tummy, and toes are all cause for celebration with catchy rhymes and bouncy rhythm. "Baby's got eyes, bright little eyes. Round as pies eyes. Just the right size eyes. Like an owl-wise eyes. Peek-a-peeka-boo. Who loves baby's eyes?" Turn the page to "Me! I do" and an illustration of Mom smooching her bright-eyed baby. Each of baby's other features is introduced in a similar manner, and family members (including Dad, siblings, and Grandpa) take turns doting on the little one. Cheerful watercolor and gouache illustrations follow this well-loved baby from breakfast to bedtime. (Ages birth–2)

Aliki. *Quiet in the Garden*. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2009. 24 pages (trade 978-0-06-155207-6, \$17.99)

A young, brown-skinned boy with bright and observant eyes heads outside to sit quietly in his backyard garden. "I am so quiet, I even hear the sounds around me—*chirp, squeak, crunch*. I can almost hear a butterfly flutter by. I sit still and listen." As hungry fauna move about the colorful flora, the boy watches as a vivid food web is cast about him. Parallel to the main text runs a

friendly repeated conversation between the animals he sees. To the butterfly sipping nectar, a worm asks, “Why did you do that?” “I was thirsty,” said the butterfly. “And it is so tasty and sweet.” A thoughtful introduction to the peaceful and amazing aspects of simple gardens for very young children, Alikı’s latest picture book concludes with directions for creating an outdoor garden. (Ages 3–6)

Back, Matthew J. *Panda & Polar Bear*. Dial, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8037-3359-6, \$16.99)

Bears from different hemispheres connect when a young polar bear slides down a tall, slippery cliff and ends up face-down in the mud. As a result, he looks remarkably like the young panda whom he meets. The two climb trees and play hide-and-seek, but when the polar bear dives into the water to catch a fishy snack (panda’s bamboo holds no appeal), his mud markings are washed away. Afraid that his new friend will reject him, the polar bear is relieved to find the panda fascinated by the idea of snow. But soon the polar bear is homesick. The panda comes up with a clever solution: They’ll construct a ladder of bamboo so the polar bear can climb up to his home. A final two-page spread explains the reason for the impossible habitat scenario: The two bears live in neighboring enclosures at the zoo, and the ladder will provide a means for their accepting friendship to continue. (Ages 2–5)

Banks, Kate. *That’s Papa’s Way*. Illustrated by Lauren Castillo. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-374-37445-7, \$16.95)

A day spent fishing on the lake underscores a few of the things a father and daughter do differently (he catches worms by hand, she uses a shovel) and the same (hugging one another at the end of the day), chronicling a relationship defined by ease and underscored by love. The occasional refrain “That’s Papa’s way” makes it clear this is not the first time the two have shared a day like this. The young narrator describes their day through a finely paced narrative full of understated yet observant details. “Papa holds the boat while I tumble in... I look down at the water. It’s rippling now like ribbon candy.” The illustrations, featuring an appealingly scruffy dad and bright-eyed girl, are a bit uneven, but they don’t detract from the charm of the quietly winning story. (Ages 3–7)

Bauer, Marion Dane. *The Longest Night*. Illustrated by Ted Lewin. Holiday House, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8234-2054-4, \$17.95)

“The snow lies deep. The night is long and long. The stars are ice, the moon is frost, and all the world is still.” A trio of animals vow to bring back the sun: Crow will wake the sun with its beak, moose will scoop the sun up with its antlers, and fox will sniff out the sun’s hiding place with its nose and use its teeth to toss it into the sky. To each the wind sighs, “Not you. Not you.” It’s the small and insignificant chickadee that wakes the sun with its song, causing “fingers of light [to] peel back the blanket of darkness. Fingers of light grasp the edge of the world, and slowly, slowly, the sun lifts himself into the sky.” Watercolor illustrations using only three shades (two blues and

one brown) adroitly capture the essence of the nighttime world of snow and dark. It is only with the sun's reappearance in the final pages that additional colors are added to the palette, as the light of day infuses the animals' world. (Ages 3–8)

Boutignon, Béatrice. *Not All Animals Are Blue: A Big Book of Little Differences.*

U.S. edition: Kane/Miller, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978–1–933605–96–8, \$15.95)

Bejeweled giraffes? Otters in swimsuits? A fox in a top hat? Readers and listeners are challenged to identify one of five specific animals in the whimsical illustrations on each spread, based on brief statements and questions provided in the text. “She’s a prima ballerina... What is the baby saying?... She’s very flexible... Who couldn’t decide which necklace to wear?” The close observation required to ferret out the answers will captivate many children, especially those who like a (little) challenge. Each text statement or question features a color-coded word that matches a featured color in the corresponding illustration—a subtle hint that doesn’t compromise the fun. (Ages 3–7)

Elliott, David. *Finn Throws a Fit! Illustrated by Timothy Basil Ering.* Candlewick Press, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978–0–7636–2356–2, \$16.99)

“Finn likes peaches. Usually.” An exuberant picture book takes a look at what happens on a day Finn decides peaches are not for him. In fact, nothing can make Finn happy today, and the resulting tantrum is like a force of nature—literally. “Thunder in the nursery! Lightning in the kitchen!” When Finn cries, the house floods. When Finn screams, there’s an avalanche. When Finn kicks—earthquake! It’s all Finn’s bemused parents can do to hold on in the midst of the havoc until Finn’s fury spends itself. And then, “Ahhhhhhh!... He’d like those peaches now. Please.” The perfectly realized metaphor in David Elliott’s picture book is at once funny and emotionally truthful. Timothy Basil Ering’s slightly offbeat illustrations (Finn is egg-shaped, but still all child) capture both the chaos and the comforting calm as the story and the tantrum wind down. (Ages 2–5)

Falwell, Cathryn. *Mystery Vine. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978–0–06–177198–9, \$16.99)*

As two young children help plant and tend vegetables over the spring and into summer, they are puzzled by the mystery vine creeping across the garden. What could it be? “Carrot tops were good for tickles; cucumbers for making pickles. We looked and looked for clue or sign to help us guess the Mystery Vine.” It isn’t until fall that they finally get an answer: pumpkins—lots of pumpkins! To bake into pies, to carve into jack-o-lanterns, and with seeds to roast and seeds to save and plant again. Cathryn Falwell’s pleasing story is illustrated with inviting collage art that punctuates the brown earth and green leaves of the garden with the children’s brightly hued clothing and colors of the harvest. The enthusiastic siblings have light brown skin and very green thumbs indeed. (Ages 3–6)

Fox, Mem. *Hello Baby!* Illustrated by Steve Jenkins. Beach Lane, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-4169-8513-6, \$16.99)

A small human hand on the first page hints at the answer to the question: "Hello, baby! Who are you?" Before the answer is finally provided, a host of animal possibilities parade through the pages. "Are you a monkey with clever toes? / Perhaps you're a porcupine, twitching its nose. / ... Are you a lion with dust on its paws? / Perhaps you're a hippo with yawning jaws." After a dozen species are suggested, the closing double-page spread returns to the human baby hand as it reaches out toward an adult-sized hand. Handsome paper collage art captures the menagerie of creatures, boldly presented on white backgrounds, while the deceptively simple text makes the most of a few well-chosen words. *Highly Commended, 2010 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 1-3)

Gal, Susan. *Night Lights*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. 24 pages (trade 978-0-375-85862-8, \$14.99)

Fifteen words and phrases that all include "light" are linked to form a story around the many sources of light found after dark. The story opens with a girl and her mother heading home in the evening on their bikes, headlights lit, beneath streetlights. The glow of their porch light shows a happy dog meeting them at the door. The backyard birthday celebration that follows includes the candlelight of a cake and firefly light. Lightning sends them indoors, where the bathroom light gives way to the reading light, and eventually, the bedroom night-light. The storm moves on, and moonlight shines on the sleeping girl. The book concludes with the one absence of the word "light": "good night." Illustrations created with charcoal on paper and digital collage fill in the gaps between the words, forming an inviting bedtime story for children who may be inspired to identify sources of light from their own nighttime rituals. (Ages 2-5)

Gorbachev, Valeri. *The Missing Chick*. Candlewick Press, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3676-0, \$15.99)

When one of Mother Hen's seven chicks goes missing, everyone gets in on the search. It starts with the neighbors (a duck, goat, pig, and sheep), but soon the police arrive (two hound dogs and a feline detective), then the firefighters (beavers) in their big red truck. A helicopter is brought in for air-to-ground surveillance, but the search results are always the same: "He's not here." The mounting hysteria would be alarming if not for the utter absurdity in Valeri Gorbachev's pleasing picture book featuring a winning cast of willing if ineffective searchers. "Where are you, little chick?" cries everyone in turn. As it turns out, not far away at all. (Ages 2-5)

Gravett, Emily. *The Odd Egg*. U.S. edition: Simon & Schuster, 2009. 24 pages (trade 978-1-4169-6872-6, \$15.99)

A group of eager, expectant bird mothers (owl, chicken, cockatoo, flamingo, and others) is joined by an eggless duck, but he quickly finds a large, speckled egg to care for. The other mothers are not impressed by his odd ovoid discovery. Their disparaging gossip is soon abated by the hatching of their precious offspring, while Duck waits... and waits... and waits for his

own baby to hatch. A straightforward narrative is the perfect complement for marvelous visual storytelling. The illustrations include a sequence of mini-reveals as a cascade of partial pages feature the arrival of a new avian offspring with each turn. Author/illustrator Emily Gravett also incorporates plenty of humor into her artwork (the newly hatched owl is spouting a lengthy mathematic equation), including a surprise ending that offers immense satisfaction for Duck, as well as readers and listeners. (Ages 3–7)

Grossman, Rena D. *Carry Me*. Star Bright Books, 2009. 16 pages (trade 978-1-59572-180-8, \$6.95)

The simple text of this board book describes many ways adults carry young children (“on your front...on your back...on your side...in a pack”), all strung together with the repeated, recognizable, and comforting refrain, “Carry me.” Accompanying the words are sixteen full-color photographs of adults carrying young children. The images show families of many origins from nine different nations around the world. These are identified on the final spread showing thumbnails of the photographs labeled with each country’s name. (Ages birth–2)

Henkes, Kevin. *Birds*. Illustrated by Laura Dronzek. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-06-136304-7, \$17.99)

Listening to a singing bird outside her window, a young girl remarks on what she knows, and doesn’t know, about birds. They come in all sizes and colors, but where do they shelter in a storm if they are away from their nests? Gorgeous acrylic paintings of brightly colored birds illustrate sensitive, and scientific, avian observations. Full of wonder, the girl may not be able to fly like a bird, but she can sing like one. With Henkes’s perfectly paced prose and Dronzek’s marvelous hues, *Birds* soars—it is an intimate and exhilarating look at a child’s backyard and beyond. *Honor Book, 2010 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–7)

Heo, Yumi. *Ten Days and Nine Nights*. Schwartz & Wade, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-375-84718-9, \$16.99)

Excitement over the pending arrival of a new sibling has a welcome twist in Yumi Heo’s child-centered story: The baby is being adopted. A little girl getting ready for her new sibling details the preparations in a simple countdown narrative (“I wash my old teddy bear. I have four days and three nights”). Brightly colored illustrations show the girl, her dad, and her grandparents as the girl describes the preparations. Occasional wordless spreads in a more subdued palette follow her mother, who is shown leaving on an airplane for Korea, completing the adoption paperwork, taking custody of the baby, and then flying back home with the newest member of their family. Repeated readings of a story that concludes with a happy union/reunion will surely be requested. Heo invites readers to imagine whatever possibility they wish regarding the little girl’s own background: She could be adopted herself, or she could be the biological child of her parents, whose heritage, like hers, appears Korean. What is clear is that they are a joyful family. (Ages 3–6)

Hest, Amy. *Little Chick*. Illustrated by Anita Jeram. Candlewick Press, 2009. 48 pages (trade 978-0-7636-2890-1, \$17.99)

In a comforting picture book that is subtly sweet but far from cloying, Little Chick sees three challenges in a new light with the help of Old-Auntie, a wise hen. A carrot that will not grow while Little Chick watches (alternating eagerness and boredom in illustrations that are a visual delight) frustrates her until Old-Auntie points out that “sometimes... a *small* carrot is just what you need.” When Little Chick’s leaf kite won’t fly, Old-Auntie notes that, “Sometimes a kite will fly... and sometimes it simply *won’t*.” Unable to catch a star, Little Chick is sad until Old-Auntie comments on how dull the sky would be without it. Old-Auntie’s quiet validation—she always notices something that Little Chick does well, whether it’s skipping, stretching, or gardening—is one essential aspect of this picture book, but even more important is her *there-ness*, a solid, reliable presence in Little Chick’s life. (Ages 2–5)

Kasza, Keiko. *Ready for Anything*. Putnam, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-399-25235-8, \$16.99)

Duck arrives at Raccoon’s house eager to go on the picnic they’ve planned, but Raccoon has changed his mind. They could be attacked by killer bees, fall into a river, be chased by a dragon! “AAAAAaaa!” Duck agrees that picnics are dangerous, until he starts thinking about all the nice things that could happen. There might be butterflies instead of bees; they could swim in the river; the dragon might want to play. “Trust me,” he tells Raccoon. “Nothing could go wrong on a little picnic.” That is, until Duck forgets the picnic basket. But Raccoon the worrier is ready for anything in Keiko Kasza’s warmly funny, finely paced picture book that never makes light of Raccoon’s anxieties. The fine friendship between Duck and Raccoon comes to full light in Kasza’s ebullient illustrations, which also extend the humor of her story. *Highly Commended, 2010 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–7)

Lazo Gilmore, Dorina K.. *Cora Cooks Pancit*. Illustrated by Kristi Valiant. Shen’s Books, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-885008-35-0, \$17.95)

Cora wishes she could be a real cook, like her big sisters and brothers, but she is “stuck with kid jobs like drawing pictures in the flour or licking spoons.” Opportunity arises the day Cora is home alone with her Mama, and the two set out to make *pancit*, just as her *Lolo*—her grandpa—did when he was a cook for Filipino farmworkers when he first came to California. As her Lolo used to do, Cora’s Mama tells stories about the Philippines as the two soak noodles, shred chicken, chop vegetables, cook, and stir. When her family sits down to *pancit* that evening, Cora wonders if she did everything right. She must have, because they like it! Best of all, Dad declares that it “tastes like your Lolo’s *pancit*,” as Cora and her contemporary Filipino American family sit contentedly around the dinner table. A glossary and “Lolo’s Pancit Recipe” round out the book. (Ages 3–7)

McClements, George. *Dinosaur Woods*. Beach Lane, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-1-4169-8626-3, \$16.99)

Seven animal friends (fox, bird, bear, deer, snake, and a pair of arguing rabbits) about to lose their forest home to a Plas-Tic Trees Factory plot to save their patch of woods. They decide to impersonate a dinosaur, and news crews and scientists are soon on the scene. A stumble ends the reptilian ruse with a crash to the ground that sends the animals tumbling out of the mechanical costume, but all isn't lost. "A Big-Mouth Jinx Fox! A Bronchial Woodpecker! A Himalayan Frost Bear! Crabby-Faced Punching Rabbits! A Left-Footed Klutz Deer! A Drop-Tail Adder!" It turns out the friends are all endangered species (and in the case of one of them, extinct!). A hilarious picture book with a delightful cast of characters features whimsical, mixed-media illustrations perfectly suited to the silliness of the story. There is plenty of humor for older children and even adults to enjoy, while young readers and listeners will relish the ongoing antics. (Ages 3-8)

Mora, Pat. *Gracias / Thanks*. Illustrated by John Parra. Translated by Adriana Domínguez. Lee & Low, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-60060-258-0, \$17.95)

A young boy's account of things for which he is thankful over the course of a single day is refreshingly child-centered in this bilingual (Spanish/English) picture book. The boy is thankful to the sun that wakes him "so I don't sleep for years and years and grow a long white beard." The ladybug that lands on his finger is a "little red flying surprise." When his little brother throws mashed peas at his sister, the boy laughs so hard he falls off his chair. He's thankful for all these moments and more in Pat Mora's engaging narrative, which can be enjoyed and easily extended in a family or classroom setting. John Parra's distinctive illustrations have a folk-art look and depict the child as biracial, with a white mother and Latino dad. (Ages 3-7)

Newbery, Linda. *Posy*. Illustrated by Catherine Rayner. U.S. edition: Atheneum, 2009. 24 pages (trade 978-1-4169-7112-2, \$16.99)

Linda Newbery's clever and satisfying portrait of a kitten is written in rhyming couplets. Posy is a "whiskers wiper, crayon swiper... sandwich checker, board-game wrecker!... leaf collector, sock inspector" and much more. Children who are familiar with felines will appreciate the playful, spot-on descriptions Newbery has crafted, while all children can think about the careful consideration that went into the words Newbery chose to such whimsical effect. Catherine Rayner's spirited illustrations are muted in tone (and lovely against the cream-colored pages) but still convey Posy's frisky charm and spirit. (Ages 3-7)

Newman, Lesléa. *Daddy, Papa, and Me*. Illustrated by Carol Thompson. Tricycle Press, 2009. 16 pages (trade 978-1-58246-262-2, \$7.99)

Newman, Lesléa. *Mommy, Mama, and Me*. Illustrated by Carol Thompson. Tricycle Press, 2009. 16 pages (trade 978-1-58246-263-9, \$7.99)

A pair of charming board books offer warm looks at the lives of two young toddlers. “Daddy helps me paint the sky. Papa helps me bake a pie.” “Mommy picks me up, up up. Mama pours juice in my cup.” The rhyming text in each book highlights everyday activities the children share with their parents, whether they are playing music at home (“strum, strum, strum!... drum, drum, drum!”) or are on a romp at the park (“go round and round... slide to the ground”). One of the two children lives with two moms, and the other lives with two dads. Both children can be seen as either a boy or a girl, and both live in homes full of love, attention, and fun! (Ages birth–3)

Patricelli, Leslie. *Higher! Higher!* Candlewick Press, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3241-0, \$15.99)

On a swing set in a grassy green park with puffy clouds and a bright blue sky overhead, a little girl has one request of her father: “Higher! Higher!” With a smile stretching wide across her freckled cheeks, the girl soars. With each push from her father, she repeats her appeal. Cheerful acrylic paintings show the changing scenery as the girl’s altitude increases. Swinging above the treetops, over skyscrapers and above the mountains, the girl sails into space. After giving a high-five to an alien, the girl reverses back to earth, swinging lower and lower until she’s resting back in her father’s embrace. This clever picture book will delight readers with its playful perspective on a playground ritual. (Ages 2–5)

Radunsky, Vladimir. *You?* Harcourt / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 24 pages (trade 978-0-15-205177-8, \$16.00)

Two storylines converge in a made-for-each-other moment when a lonely girl longing for a dog and a lonely dog longing for a home notice each other at last. But that’s the end of this charming story. Before that moment, a succession of spreads show the separate encounters of each character. Sitting in a park, the dog offers thoughts on a host of human passersby who maybe? perhaps? could be? the one for him. His hopes build but aren’t fulfilled. On the facing page of each spread, the girl, sitting on a nearby bench and separated from the dog’s view by shrubs, comments upon a parade of passing pooches, none of whom stop to answer her call for companionship. It is only when they see each other on the penultimate spread that what was meant to be becomes clear, and a turn of the page brings a joyful conclusion to this sparsely drawn story that is brimming with desire and fulfillment. (Ages 3–7)

Root, Phyllis. *Toot Toot Zoom!* Illustrated by Matthew Cordell. Candlewick Press, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3452-0, \$15.99)

We all know why the bear went over the mountain, but it’s unclear what Pierre, a beret-wearing fox, will see when he journeys up and over the

mountain in his red sport coupe. Lonely in his little house, he hopes to find a friend on the other side of the peak. Pierre zips through zigzag hairpin turns, beeping a “TOOT! TOOT!” warning before turning tight corners, but he screeches to a halt when he nearly hits a wandering goat. Inviting Goat to come along on his quest, the pair whiz along until a sheep crosses their path. This stop-and-go story is slightly predictable, but Pierre’s road trip is a fun read-aloud reminder that friends can be found wherever you look. (Ages 3–7)

Rosen, Michael. *Red Ted and the Lost Things.* Illustrated by Joel Stewart. Candlewick Press, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978–0–7636–4537–3, \$16.99)

Designed in graphic novel format, the familiar story of a misplaced toy seeking its home gains a fresh feel from clever dialogue and striking illustrations. When Red Ted is left behind on a train, he meets a long-lost stuffed dinosaur, and the two toys develop an escape plan from the station’s cavernous lost-and-found room. Wandering through the city streets, they encounter a white cat who offers to help Ted find his home, secretly motivated by the strong smell of cheese that lingers on the toy bear’s fur (his owner is a cheese lover). The trio perseveres through a sudden downpour and a hostile encounter with a dog. The cat’s olfactory powers lead them to Ted’s house, where his delighted young owner offers the newcomers a home as well. Repetition and humor culminate in a highly satisfying resolution, and the mixed media illustrations provide visual focus on the colorful traveling trio and their owner set against sepia-toned backgrounds. (Ages 3–8)

Rosenthal, Amy Krouse. *Duck! Rabbit!* Illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld. Chronicle, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978–0–8118–6865–5, \$16.99)

A simple outline of an animal’s head initiates a dialogue between two unseen observers. One declares that the animal is a duck, while the other insists that it’s a rabbit. “See, there’s his bill,” says the voice on the left. “What are you talking about? Those are ears, silly,” replies the voice on the right. What readers can see as the conversation continues is how the observations are accurate depending on the perspective—the animal’s head could be either a duck or a rabbit. A humorous story and visual brainteaser, *Duck! Rabbit!* offers a fresh look at opposing viewpoints. (Ages 3–8)

Rosenthal, Amy Krouse. *Spoon.* Illustrated by Scott Magoon. Disney / Hyperion, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978–1–4231–0685–2, \$15.99)

Spoon has interesting relatives. There’s elegant Aunt Silver, whom he visits on Sundays, and his well-known great-grandmother, who “fell in love with a dish and ran off to a distant land.” But lately Spoon has been feeling his life is boring compared to that of other eating utensils. Take Knife—not only is he able to cut, but he can also spread. Fork gets to travel to outdoor grills. And everyone thinks Chopsticks are special. Just as Spoon is lamenting his limitations, his friends are cataloging his perks: Spoon is allowed to be silly, but everyone is serious when they’re using Knife; Spoon is able to measure, but not Fork; the Chopsticks are required to work in tandem, whereas Spoon can go solo. Spoon’s mother reminds him of other ways he’s special, too. He

can dive into a bowl of ice cream, for example, and relax in a hot beverage. Reassured, Spoon drifts off to a night of sweet dreams. Quirky illustrations include an image of the youngster “spooning” with his parents in a flatware caddy during a restless night. (Ages 3–8)

Scanlon, Liz Garton. *All the World*. Illustrated by Marla Frazee. Beach Lane, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978–1–4169–8580–8, \$17.99)

“Rock, stone, pebble, sand / Body, shoulder, arm, hand / A moat to dig, a shell to keep / All the world is wide and deep.” Liz Garton Scanlon marries small details to big ideas in the lyrical cadence of connections that comprise her picture book narrative. With great economy of language, Scanlon vividly catalogs a series of objects and activities familiar to young children and then graces each with an eloquent and comforting observation that embraces the wider world. Artist Marla Frazee transforms the poetic text into story with illustrations showing individuals in a small town over the course of a single day. Opening with pictures showing two children collecting rocks at the beach, the next few pages follow the pair and their parents as they play on the shore before driving off toward the nearby town. This family and others in their richly diverse community are shown going from beach, to market, to park, to cafe, to home, with paths that intersect, diverge, and come together again along the way. Frazee’s skilled technique conveys personalities and relationships in a manner that invites young readers to study the pages, following easily identifiable faces and family groups from place to place. This exemplary union of words and pictures begs for repeated readings and leisurely time spent inspecting the inclusive illustrations. (Ages 2–6)

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. *Dog and Bear: Three to Get Ready*. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978–1–59643–396–0

Free-spirited Dog and anxious Bear’s distinctive personalities make them the perfect foils for each other’s strengths and weaknesses. When Bear has a bucket stuck on his head, Dog is quick to come up with an ingenious removal plan—and ends up with the bucket firmly planted on his own head. Bear worries about Dog’s exuberant bed-jumping and carefully covers the surrounding floor with soft objects just in time to cushion an especially wild leap. Finally, Bear’s efforts to clean up Dog’s mess with a bit of organization result in a missing sock monkey, although it eventually turns up in the “S” box, for “soft” and “super special.” In this third volume featuring the charming duo in three very short stories, Dog and Bear continue to demonstrate reasons for their enduring friendship. Bold black outlines and saturated colors highlight the pair of toys simply set on an uncluttered white backdrop. (Ages 3–6)

Stein, David Ezra. *Pouch*. Putnam, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978–0–399–25051–4, \$15.99)

Young Joey is eager to venture outside his mama kangaroo’s pouch for the first time. Two hops bring him to something unfamiliar, and Joey asks, “Who are you?” The yellow-and-black striped insect replies, “Bee.” Joey cries, “Pouch!” as he leaps back to the safety of Mama. Reassured, he’s soon ready to take three hops, when he’s confronted by a rabbit. “Pouch!” cries

Joey, again returning to Mama. Each progressive outing takes him one hop further from Mama, and each time Joey is able to seek the comfort of the pouch when he meets a new creature. The pattern continues until his five-hop trip brings him face to face with someone else who also yells “Pouch!”—another kangaroo. Repetition and perfect pacing make this story of safety and exploration well-suited to toddlers, who are making their own inaugural ventures beyond the familiar faces of home. Warm colors and rounded shapes reinforce a sense of security, as Joey makes his initial move toward independence. *Honor Book, 2010 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 2–4)

Taback, Simms. *City Animals*. Blue Apple Books, 2009. 12 pages (trade 978–1–934706–52–7, \$12.99)

Six animals commonly found in cities are slowly revealed through a series of hints. The first page reveals one-quarter of the entire picture and asks, “Who am I?” while the facing page provides clue #1 (“I gather acorns”). By lifting the clue page up, another section of the picture is exposed, along with clue #2 (“I have a big furry tail”). Again, the clue page is folded back, unveiling the full picture and stating the identity of the creature (“I’m a SQUIRREL”). The familiar animals (squirrel, dog, horse, cat, pigeon, and mouse) and the simple clues are perfectly geared to a toddler audience, as are the boldly colored illustrations and card-stock paper. (Ages 1–3)

Tafolla, Carmen. *What Can You Do With a Paleta?* Illustrated by Magaly Morales. Tricycle Press, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978–1–58246–221–9, \$14.99)

“Where the big velvet roses bloom / red and pink and fuschia, / where the accordion plays sassy and sweet... THAT’s my *barrio*.” A young Latina girl goes on to describe the tinkly arrival of the *paleta* wagon in her neighborhood. The ice-cold popsicle comes in a rainbow of colors and flavors that makes for tough decisions (“Strawberry? Or coconut?”) and many opportunities. With a *paleta* you “paint your tongue purple and green” or cool off on a hot day. A *paleta* can be an offering of friendship or a teasing way to win a baseball game. Carmen Tafolla’s delectable story appeals to the senses with its rich imagery and crisp language. Sun-warmed, richly colored illustrations by Magaly Morales further bring the little girl’s vibrant Latino community to life. *Winner, 2010 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–6)

Teevee, Ningeokuluk. *Alego*. Greenwood / House of Anansi Press, 2009. 24 pages (trade 978–0–88899–943–6, \$17.95)

Alego excitedly accompanies her grandmother—Anaanatsiaq—to the shore at low tide to go clam digging for the first time. Her grandmother’s patient explanation of what to look for and how to dig is soon lost on Alego: Everything she uncovers is a treasure! But Anaanatsiaq doesn’t mind—she has gathered enough clams for them to enjoy a tasty feast at home with Ataatsiaq (Grandfather). “Mamaqtuq!” Delicious! This bilingual (Inuktitut/English) story is warmly told with child-centered details, and distinctively illustrated by its author, noted Inuit artist Ningeokuluk Teevee. (Ages 3–6)

Wild, Margaret. *Piglet and Granny*. Illustrated by Stephen Michael King. Abrams, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8109-4063-5, \$15.95)

Piglet and her Granny always have a grand time together. “Although Granny was soft and squishy, she was as lively as a family of leaping frogs.” As she waits for Granny to arrive for a visit, Piglet fills the time by balancing on top a rock wall, chasing butterflies, and somersaulting down a hill—all skills she’s learned from Granny, as she tells the passing animals who comment on her activities. When Granny does arrive, she has an excellent excuse for being tardy: She was constructing a “slippery, slithery mudslide” for the two of them to enjoy. Humorous watercolor and ink illustrations capture the special relationship between an adult and the child to whom she gives the gifts of attention and time. (Ages 2–5)

Picture Books for School-Age Children

Alter, Anna. *Abigail Spells*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-375-85617-4, \$16.99)

Best friends George and Abigail have always found ways to enjoy being together. George plays the maracas while Abigail dances the cha-cha, and Abigail poses while George paints her portrait. So when Abigail sees a chance to indulge her ultimate passion—spelling—George is right there to help her study for the City Fair Spelling Bee. Confident Abigail can’t wait for her chance to shine and has never considered the possibility that she could be stumped. But she’s eliminated from the spelling bee in one humiliating turn on her first word (“elephant”). Crushed by defeat, Abigail mopes until George reminds her of her strengths. Abigail in turn acknowledges the importance of George’s friendship. Abigail is a bird and George is a bear, but their supportive relationship and example of how enthusiasm doesn’t always equal success reflect common childhood experiences of the human variety. (Ages 5–9)

Chocolate, Debbi. *El Barrio*. Illustrated by David Diaz. Christy Ottaviano Books / Henry Holt, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8050-7457-4, \$16.95)

Debbi Chocolate shines the light on both an urban Latino neighborhood and a *quinceañera*, the fifteenth-birthday celebration that is a significant rite of passage for girls in many Latino cultures. Describing both is a boy eager to share the energy and spirit of his community and the joy of his family at the time of his big sister’s celebration. “*El barrio* is a heartbeat. / Shhh, listen! / It’s the sound of blaring trumpets, / *tejano* and *salsa* music / tickling my feet! / The *mariachis* play at all the *quinceañeras* / in my neighborhood.” Chocolate’s inviting narrative is paired with mixed media illustrations by David Diaz featuring a host of happy faces and scenes from the boy’s family and community, and artfully framed by photographic borders. (Ages 4–7)

Cossi, Olga. *Pemba Sherpa*. Illustrated by Gary Bernard. Odyssey, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-9768655-8-2, \$15.95)

An elderly Sherpa man recalls the time in his childhood when he learned to stop scoffing at his little sister's dream of becoming a mountain porter and guide. Pemba and his younger sister, Yang Ki, live in Khumjung, a Sherpa village in Nepal. Each morning he must make a three-hour, round-trip journey to fetch wood for the school stove. One day his little sister follows him, insistent that she, too, can haul wood, learn English, and become a mountain guide. In trying to outdistance her, Pemba is caught in a landslide. To his mixed relief, dismay, and initial embarrassment, Yang Ki is able to pull him to safety; she gathers his wood and carries it back to the village while he limps along behind. Additional information distinguishing this as fiction would have been welcome (the story does not seem to be based on the childhood of Pemba Dona Sherpa, the first Nepali woman to summit Mt. Everest from the north, although it is dedicated to her memory), but this absence doesn't detract from the quiet drama here. (Ages 5-8)

Crum, Shutta. *Thunder-Boomer!* Illustrated by Carol Thompson. Clarion / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-618-61865-1, \$16.00)

Mixed media illustrations and lyrical storytelling capture the high drama of a midsummer thunderstorm. From the first soft breeze that flits through the day's oppressive heat, through the storm's full fury of wind, rain, hail, thunder, and lightning, the changing weather demands the attention of a farm family. Yanking damp clothing off the line turns into a mad sprint for the house, until Dad dashes out again to retrieve a wayward chicken. Emotions run high as excited kids, a grouchy chicken, and a farmer worried about hail damage all have their moment in the spotlight. When the storm finally abates, the family goes "outside to a world that's wet and deeply green. The puddles in the yard are full of floating hail and leaves. Our metal roofs are dimpled—just a bit. And the corn is leaning—but not ruined." The hen's unusual irritability is explained when she's discovered sheltering a very small and very wet kitten under her wing. (Ages 4-8)

Davies, Jacqueline. *Tricking the Tallyman*. Illustrated by S. D. Schindler. Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-375-83909-2, \$17.99)

"When Phineas Bump rode into the town of Tunbridge, he was heartsick, saddle-sore, and down on his luck." The year is 1790, and Phineas is a tallyman working for the U.S. government's first national census, counting every individual in the country. But the folks in Tunbridge don't want to be counted, as they know it will mean taxes and conscription, so they trick Phineas into recording a population of one. When the tricksters discover that the count will determine the number of men allowed to represent them in government, they ask for a recount. This time they try to inflate the number of residents with farm animals wearing bonnets and cloaks. Finally, when they understand that the census will determine taxes, conscription, AND representation in national government, Phineas Bump (who it turns out is not easily fooled) gets an accurate figure and Tunbridge is included in the

census “fair and true.” A fascinating author’s note gives further details about the census of 1790, including the way in which people were not counted equally at that time, with each slave recorded as three-fifths of a free person and Native Americans not counted at all. (Ages 6–10)

Demas, Corinne. *Always in Trouble*. Illustrated by Noah Z. Jones. Scholastic Press, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978–0–545–02453–2, \$16.99)

Emma’s dog Toby is incorrigible. Each day of the week brings a new indiscretion: Monday he gets into the garbage, Tuesday he runs into the road, Wednesday he eats a loaf of freshly baked bread, and so on. By Sunday, he’s worn out and resting, but on Monday it starts all over again. Emma’s parents have had enough. Toby is enrolled in obedience school, where he turns out to be the star pupil. But the following week he’s back to his old tricks, and special training with the teacher is required. Toby returns from his lessons with “a strange twinkle in his eye.” A new week brings many surprises from Toby: “On Monday, he took out the garbage. On Tuesday, he baked some bread...” Corinne Demas’s fresh, funny story is matched by Noah Z. Jones’s blithe illustrations that have a cartoonlike simplicity perfectly suited to the whimsical spirit of the text. (Ages 4–8)

Fleischman, Paul. *The Dunderheads*. Illustrated by David Roberts. Candlewick Press, 2009. 54 pages (trade 978–0–7636–2498–9, \$16.99)

Paul Fleischman meets Roald Dahl in a wickedly funny story featuring a deliciously evil, Dahl-esque teacher and the group of misfit students who join forces against her. Miss Breakbone gives herself a gold star whenever she makes a student cry. But when she confiscates Junkyard’s most recent treasure it proves to be her undoing. Everyone in the class has something to contribute as the students plan and carry out a mission to infiltrate Miss Breakbone’s house to retrieve Junkyard’s stolen belongings. The students’ nicknames reflect their special talents: There’s Clips, who transforms paper clips into lengthy chains; Pencil, who can draw anything she sees from memory; Spider, a prodigious climber; Spitball (no explanation needed); Wheels; and others. All are essential to the mission’s success. The casually conversational tone of the storytelling (“That was her first mistake: the insult. Mistake Number 2: no eye for talent.”) is understated, while the outrageous plot is absurdity amplified. David Roberts’s illustrations, replete with diagrams and mathematical equations that are all part of the planning process, are a perfect match for Fleischman’s fun. (Age 8 and older)

Fleming, Candace. *Imogene’s Last Stand*. Illustrated by Nancy Carpenter. Schwartz & Wade, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978–0–375–83607–7, \$16.99)

Imogene is the ultimate history buff, who “finger-painted an accurate map of the Oregon Trail” as a preschooler. Her passion drives her to spruce up the town’s neglected Historical Society house and offer tours, but the townspeople aren’t interested. In fact, the announcement that the house will be torn down in order to build a shoelace factory creates little concern. In despair, Imogene wanders through the old building one last time and discovers a parchment note thanking the homeowner for hospitality, signed

by “Your humble and obedient servant, G. Washington.” Her determination revitalized, Imogene locks herself into wooden stocks on the house’s front steps, keeping the bulldozers at bay and garnering attention all the way to the White House. Imogene’s strong stance and proactive behavior is kept from becoming too earnest by a convenient (and unlikely) denouement and her liberal use of famous quotes from U.S. history, from John Paul Jones to Martin Luther King Jr. (Ages 6–10)

Goodrich, Carter. *The Hermit Crab*. Simon & Schuster, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-4169-3892-7, \$16.99)

A strange contraption descending from above comes to rest in the midst of an undersea neighborhood. Only the bluefish recognizes it for what it is: a trap! Duly warned, no one ventures inside, but poor, flat Flounder is trapped underneath. Meanwhile, the solitude-loving hermit crab is off on his own when he spots the most beautiful shell he’s ever seen and climbs inside. Only his new shell is visible when he spots the strange contraption and gives it a shake, unknowingly freeing Flounder. “Our HERO,” cries the lobster, and a celebration ensues. The hermit crab’s new shell happens to be the top half of a superhero action figure, making for delightful visual humor in Carter Goodrich’s silly story. The droll tenor of the narrative is also marvelous, with clever dialogue and over-the-top drama among the assorted sea creatures. (Ages 5–8)

Hegamin, Tonya Cherie. *Most Loved in All the World*. Illustrated by Cozbi A. Cabrera. Houghton Mifflin / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-618-41903-6, \$17.00)

A stirring picture book punctuated by the sharp pain of slavery is grounded by the sense of immense love between an African American mother and child. The young narrator describes the hardship of their lives: “Tonight when Mama come home / she have whip marks ’cross her back...” But each evening her mother is working on a quilt: “Mama smiles and whisper in my ear: ‘A log cabin means a place is safe. / This star is brightest in the sky; it’s for you to follow.’” Although the girl doesn’t know it, her mother is preparing her for a flight to freedom without her. Tonya Cherie Hegamin follows her powerful story with an author’s note about the Underground Railroad that includes discussion of why a mother might willingly send her child away, and also disputed historical viewpoints about the use of quilts. Hegamin states that her desire was to use the symbols of quilting “as a device to share information about slavery” rather than to document the use of quilts as fact. Cozbi Cabrera provides a beautiful visual accompaniment to the story with paintings and quilt tableaus. (Ages 6–9)

Heide, Florence Parry. *Princess Hyacinth (the Surprising Tale of a Girl Who Floated)*. Illustrated by Lane Smith. Schwartz & Wade, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-0-375-84501-7, \$17.99)

Princess Hyacinth has an unusual problem: She floats. “Unless she was attached to something, or weighted down, she just floated—up, up, up.” Golden weights sewn into her dresses and pebbles added to the tops of her

socks help keep her grounded, but she is destined to sit alone and watch other children play beneath her window. When Hyacinth disregards the royal rules and sets off for the park, a balloon vendor gives her an idea. Soon, she is floating up with the balloons, and when the vendor accidentally lets go of the string attached to her ankle, fear is the last thing on her mind. “She did handsprings and headstands, flip-flops and fandangos. It was the most fun she had ever had in her whole life.” Humorous and slightly edgy illustrations augment the witty text full of wordplay, while the use of font size, color, and placement on (and sometimes partly off) the page round out the lighter-than-air theme. *Honor Book, 2010 Charlotte Zolotow Award (Ages 5–9)*

Johnston, Tony. *My Abuelita*. Illustrated by Yuyi Morales. Photographed by Tim O’Meara. Harcourt / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978–0–15–216330–3, \$16.00)

A vibrant picture book describes a boy’s morning with his abuelita, with whom he lives. “After she stretches, my abuelita takes a shower.” Abuelita is round like a *calabaza* (pumpkin), with a face “crinkled as a dried *chile*” and hair the color of salt. There are many allusions to Abuelita’s work, which remains a mystery until the final page, as they get ready for the day. Eating “starry eggs” for breakfast, his abuelita yodels to loosen up her voice. On the way out the door, she “booms out words, loud and clear. She always says the words should be round as dimes and as wild as blossoms blooming.” Tony Johnston’s narrative is full of fresh turns of phrase and vivid, surprising descriptions as she details this warm, playful, loving relationship. Yuyi Morales’s distinctive, richly hued illustrations are photographs of the three-dimensional tableaux she created that incorporate Mexican crafts and cultural details. (Ages 4–7)

Lowry, Lois. *Crow Call*. Illustrated by Bagram Ibatoulline. Scholastic Press, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978–0–545–03035–9, \$16.99)

Set just after World War II, a young girl’s first hunting trip with her father is also a chance for the two of them to start to know each other again. “I sit shyly in the front seat of the car next to the stranger who is my father... *Daddy. Daddy. Daddy*. Saying it feels new... The war has lasted so long. He has been gone so long.” A stop at a diner for breakfast—two pieces of cherry pie—creates a private joke between them when the waitress mistakes her for a boy in her huge flannel shirt, braids tucked into the collar. But she’s nervous about hunting. Her father has put her in charge of the crow call, yet she doesn’t want him to kill the birds. And he doesn’t. Instead, the two spend a morning enjoying nature—including the frenzy of circling crows responding to her call—and one another’s company. Lois Lowry’s autobiographical tale includes a wonderful black-and-white picture of herself as a child, wearing the oversize flannel shirt she describes in the story. The muted, late-autumn palette of Bagram Ibatoulline’s illustrations conveys a sense of the past in a richly told story that will resonate for many contemporary children. (Ages 5–9)

Lyon, George Ella. *You and Me and Home Sweet Home*. Illustrated by Stephanie Anderson. A Richard Jackson Book / Atheneum, 2009. 40 pages (trade 978-0-689-87589-2, \$17.99)

An African American girl chronicles two transformations over the course of this lyrical story that begins with the girl and her mother on the verge of homelessness. The first transformation is physical: Volunteers—including the girl and her mom—converge on “a little plot of grass” and begin digging, pouring, sawing, hammering, building. The lead builders are all women, and over the course of a week, they construct a home. The second transformation is much more profound as the girl’s and her mother’s uncertainty about their future is replaced by excitement in a story that concludes with the dedication of their new “home sweet home.” George Ella Lyon’s participation in a Women’s Build project in Kentucky inspired this picture book warmly illustrated by Stephanie Anderson. Lyon includes just enough in her narrative to make clear that there was a lot happening prior to the project’s start—such as sponsorship by the church the girl and her mother attend—to make the new home possible. (Ages 4–8)

Mahy, Margaret. *Bubble Trouble*. Illustrated by Polly Dunbar. U.S. edition: Clarion, 2009. 37 pages (trade 978-0-547-07421-4, \$16.00)

“Little Mabel blew a bubble, and it caused a lot of trouble... Such a lot of bubble trouble in a bibble-bobble way. For it broke away from Mabel as it bobbed across the table, where it bobbed over Baby, and it wafted him away.” This rollicking story first appeared in the United States in *Bubble Trouble and Other Poems and Stories* (Margaret K. McElderry, 1992). Now it’s a stand-alone picture book guaranteed to twist tongues and delight readers and listeners as it follows the fate of Baby. Floating freely, the bubble-bundled boy is joined by a growing formation of family members and friends who give chase. The pace of Margaret Mahy’s exuberant narrative is exhilarating: Rhyme builds on rhyme with playful twists and turns of language, while alliterative action abounds. Mahy spares no silliness in a story deftly illustrated in this edition by Polly Dunbar. (Ages 4–8)

Monroe, Chris. *Monkey with a Tool Belt and the Noisy Problem*. Carolrhoda, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8225-9247-1, \$16.95)

The ever-resourceful Chico Bon Bon responds to a noisy “AROOGA BOOM CLANG CLANG” that awakens him in the middle of the night by jumping out of bed and reaching for his tools. An intricate two-page spread shows Chico’s investigation from top to bottom and room to room of his imaginative tree-house abode. What IS that noise? Eventually he discovers a surprisingly large guest—Clark the elephant—in a shockingly tight space, where his kicks and struggles send thunderous reverberations throughout the dwelling. The tools and talents of the one and only Chico Bon Bon emancipate Clark, and the new friends sit down for lunch. Impressed by Chico’s tool belt, Clark wants one of his own—in size XXXXL. Playful panels, intricate illustrations, and creative use of text make this second installment of Chico Bon Bon an exciting tool for reading. (Ages 4–8)

Myers, Walter Dean. *Looking Like Me*. Illustrated by Christopher Myers. Egmont, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-60684-001-6, \$18.99)

Looking in the mirror, an African American boy sees himself—Jeremy. “That’s who I am.” Many aspects of who Jeremy is reveal themselves in this rhyming, rhythmic first-person rap: little brother, son, writer, city child, artist, dancer, runner, dreamer. “I look like a crowd.” The people in Jeremy’s life help define him in ways that lift his spirit and sense of self. Walter Dean Myers’s energetic narrative is illustrated with vibrant collage images by Christopher Myers. The author (“boy, son, brother, reader, friend, poet,” and much more) and illustrator (“dancer, painter, sculptor, collagist”) define themselves and invite readers and listeners to do the same by thinking about the many dimensions of who they are. (Ages 5–9)

Ransom, Jeanie Franz. *What Really Happened to Humpty? (From the Files of a Hard-Boiled Detective)*. Illustrated by Stephen Axelsen. Charlesbridge, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-58089-109-7, \$15.95)

It was an “awful, scrambled-up day” when Humpty, newly appointed captain of the Neighborhood Watch program, fell off the Wall. Fortunately for him, while Miss Muffet called 911 on her cell, his brother Joe, a trenchcoat-wearing, hard-boiled detective, begins investigating. Although Mother Goose (also known as the Chief of Police) says there’s no case to crack, she gives Joe until 5:00 p.m. to prove differently before she officially declares the fall an accident. Spider reports a strong puff of wind that may have knocked Humpty from his perch, the blonde in the Bears’ house heard howling dogs around the time of the incident, and it all confirms Chicken Little’s theory that the sky is falling. Joe adds up the pieces, along with some muffin evidence, uncovering a conspiracy theory implicating—you guessed it—the Big Bad Wolf. Clever word play stars in this entertaining noir scramble of familiar tales. (Ages 5–10)

Reynolds, Aaron. *Superhero School*. Illustrated by Andy Rash. Bloomsbury, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-59990-166-4, \$16.99)

Leonard can’t wait to start Superhero School. “He was fired up to leap tall buildings in a single bound... He was revved up and raring to go to stop speeding runaway trains.” But on the very first day his teacher, the Blue Tornado, is all about the times table. “I’m sure I’ll be too busy destroying alien death rays to ever worry about multiplication,” Leonard tells him. “Mr. Tornado just chuckled. This was very troubling.” Soon there is division to learn, and fractions, too. Math is seriously subduing Leonard’s excitement for Superhero School. But when ice zombies strike and kidnap all of the teachers, Leonard and his classmates discover that math skills are just as important as superhero powers when it comes to saving the day in Aaron Reynolds’s playful, witty picture book. Andy Rash gets into the spirit of the storytelling with his boisterous cartoon-style illustrations. (Ages 6–10)

Schwartz, Joanne. *Our Corner Grocery Store*. Illustrated by Laura Beingessner. Tundra, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-88776-868-2, \$19.95)

Young Anna Maria chronicles her day keeping shop with her Italian grandparents in their small grocery store by describing her chores, the shoppers, and the neighborhood rituals that make for a vibrant sense of community. A narrative featuring vivid descriptions of the store and the diverse people who work and shop there is paired with inviting illustrations full of child-friendly details sure to have some readers and listeners poring over the images. Anna Maria's relationships with her grandma and grandpa (Nonno and Nonna) and the larger contemporary community are full of warmth and grounded with a sense of familiarity and belonging. (Ages 4-7)

Snicket, Lemony. *The Composer Is Dead*. Music by Nathaniel Stookey. Illustrations by Carson Ellis. HarperCollins, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-06-123627-3, \$17.99)

With characteristic cleverness and sly wit, author Lemony Snicket examines the instruments in the orchestra in an informative and investigative way. This musical murder mystery offers a symphony of satire and pitch-perfect humor. From the opening page, readers learn that the Composer is dead. "He was not humming. He was not moving, or even breathing." A pen and watercolor illustration shows a fancy-dressed, white-curly wig-wearing man face-down in a stack of scores while flies buzz overhead. Wry and outrageous observations abound as a finger-pointing Inspector interrogates the instruments about the Composer's murder. Questioning the Cellos and Basses, he surmises their anger over playing boring compositions. " 'On the contrary,' the Cellos and Basses said. 'We don't feel the need to show off like certain stringed instruments we could mention.' " Amusing personifications provide a façade for an introductory lesson on who's who (and whodunit) in the orchestra. An accompanying CD features Lemony Snicket narrating the tale with full musical accompaniment. (Ages 8-15)

Warhola, James. *Uncle Andy's Cats*. Putnam, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-399-25180-1, \$16.99)

James Warhola offers up another delightful story based on childhood visits to his uncle, Andy Warhol. The humor is in the details as Warhola recounts the ever-growing population of cats—all but one named Sam—at Uncle Andy's house. His wryly understated narrative ("Uncle Andy said that the Sams liked us best when we were sleeping, and I think Uncle Andy did too") and charmingly funny illustrations (e.g., towering stacks of Campbell's soup boxes with cats peeking out of many) capture the chaos as the Sams multiply. Finally, Uncle Andy comes up with a plan to make the Sams famous. The result: Everyone wants a Sam. The cats are snatched up by admirers and order is finally restored at Uncle Andy's. (Ages 5-8)

Williams, Karen Lynn, and Khadra Mohammed. *My Name is Sangoel*. Illustrated by Catherine Stock. Eerdmans, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8028-5307-3, \$17.00)

When Sangoel leaves the Sudanese refugee camp with his Mama and little sister, the Wise One tells him, “you will always be a Dinka. You will be Sangoel. Even in America.” The family adjusts to their new life in an apartment with a telephone and TV, but the Americans who meet Sangoel all have trouble with his name. His schoolteacher, soccer coach, and the other kids struggle to pronounce “Sangoel” correctly, and he worries that he has lost his name. It’s the logo on his new soccer jersey that inspires Sangoel to use his markers on a plain white shirt. After writing the words “My name is,” he draws a sun and a soccer goal: sun-goal. His classmates are motivated to create pictograms for their names, and Sangoel’s teacher commends him for his good idea—and his good name. “It is the name of my father and my grandfather and his father before him... My name is Sangoel. Even in America.” An author’s note provides a short explanation about refugee life, both before and after relocation, and discusses how a name can connect people to their heritage. (Ages 5–10)

Willems, Mo. *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*. Hyperion / Disney, 2009. 32 pages (trade 978-1-4231-1437-6, \$16.99)

In defiance of his species name, Wilbur the naked mole rat likes to wear clothes. Undaunted by the teasing and taunting of his fellow naked mole rats, Wilbur enjoys the creativity offered by clothing. As he explains, he can be “fancy, or funny, or cool, or I can just be an astronaut.” When a sarcastic rat suggests he open a clothing store, he does just that, and when rats declare again that “NAKED MOLE RATS DON’T WEAR CLOTHES!” Wilbur asks, “Why not?” Unable to convince Wilbur of the error of his ways, the others head to the Grand-Pah for an authoritative condemnation. To their great surprise, after thoughtful consideration the wise old Grand-Pah acknowledges that clothes may not be for everyone, but he wishes he “had tried getting dressed earlier.” (He also compliments Wilbur on his socks.) In celebration of individual choice, Wilbur’s campaign to bring clothing to the mole rats formerly known as naked brims with humorous asides in both story and art. (Ages 4–7)

Books for Beginning Readers

Silverman, Erica. *Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa: Horse in the House*. Illustrated by Betsy Lewin. Harcourt / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 44 pages (trade 978-0-15-205390-1, \$15.00)

Cowgirl Kate is surprised to find her horse Cocoa in her bedroom early one morning. Taking advantage of the adults’ absence, Cocoa has set out to explore new territory, certain that the house will be an improvement over his boring barn. Swirling water in the toilet, fake fruit in a bowl, and the lack of

a horse-sized stall are disappointments, but the contents of the refrigerator make Cocoa sure that he's found the ideal living quarters. Fortunately, Kate knows how to change his mind. She lists many of the barn's qualities: Sunlight filters in through the cracks in the walls, it smells of saddle leather and fresh hay, it sounds of horses "snorting and stomping, nickering and neighing," but best of all, Kate loves that Cocoa is there. The newest segment in this popular easy-reading series is presented in five short chapters with full-page illustrations. (Ages 4–8)

Willems, Mo. *Watch Me Throw the Ball! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)* Hyperion, 2009. 57 pages (trade 978-142311348-5, \$8.99)

Elephant and Piggie return in another beginning reader showcasing the relationship—sometimes at odds—between this pair. Dialogue bubbles convey the entire brief text, while simple, expressive line drawings work in tandem with the words to tell a story that magnifies emotions and humor. In this case, that story has to do with throwing a ball, a skill Elephant has been practicing. But who needs practice? Piggie is sure he has succeeded on his first try. ("Who rocks?! The pig rocks!!") And Piggie has—if fun is the ultimate goal. (Ages 4–7)

Books for Newly Independent Readers

Carris, Joan. *Wild Times at the Bed & Biscuit*. Illustrated by Noah Z. Jones. Candlewick Press, 2009. 124 pages (trade 978-0-7636-3705-7, \$15.99)

Grampa Bender has offered the Bed & Biscuit Animal Boardinghouse to temporarily house animals from a wildlife shelter undergoing construction. A veterinarian, Grampa is able to provide medical care for an injured Canadian goose, a muskrat with an infected foot, and a pair of orphaned fox kits. His pets, Ernest the mini-pig, Gabby the mynah bird, and Milly the cat, are ready to lend a hand whenever Grampa needs their help. Meanwhile, the youngest member of the household, Sir Walter the Scottie, ponders the lure of life in the wild. Amusing dialogue among the animal contingent and a near catastrophe (Sir Walter goes missing!) provide entertainment and suspense, while the proximity of tame animals to wild ones offers insight into the differences in their behaviors and habits. Many black-and-white pencil and watercolor illustrations complement the text, and an author's note gives additional information about the wildlife featured in the story. (Ages 7–10)

Grimes, Nikki. *Make Way for Dyamonde Daniel*. Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie. Putnam, 2009. 74 pages (trade 978-0-399-25175-7, \$10.99)

Grimes, Nikki. *Rich (A Dyamonde Daniel Book)*. Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie. Putnam, 2009. 95 pages (trade 978-0-399-25176-4, \$10.99)

Third grader Dyamonde Daniel is always smart, usually confident, and sometimes sad since her parents divorced. She doesn't miss her parents fighting, but she does miss other things since moving, including her old best friend. *Make Way for Dyamonde Daniel* introduces this dynamic girl who likes math but can't stand the new boy at her school. Free is always grumpy, but when Dyamonde takes her teacher's advice and asks him why, she discovers she's not the only one dealing with unsettling changes in her life. In *Rich*, Dyamonde and Free, now the best of friends, get to know Damaris, a quiet girl in their class who doesn't want anyone to know she and her family live in a shelter. Nikki Grimes's energetic, upbeat new series features an African American protagonist who knows that even when someone faces big challenges, friendship and small acts of kindness make a difference. Number-loving Dyamonde, and Free and Damaris, who like words and poetry, are a delight. (Ages 6-9)

Schertle, Alice. *Look Out, Jeremy Bean!* Illustrated by David Slonim. Chronicle, 2009. 58 pages (trade 978-0-8118-5609-6, \$14.99)

It seems that everyone Jeremy Bean knows collects something, and when his teacher invites the kids in his class to bring in their collections to share, Jeremy is stumped—what can he show? Astute readers may realize even before Jeremy does that he's a natural collector of stories in the satisfying conclusion to the first of three appealing, episodic stories in this chapter book for independent readers. "Jeremy Bean's Collection" and "Jeremy Bean's Dust Bunny" (in which his imagination runs wild and the rabbit beneath his bed looms ever larger in his mind) are both new Jeremy Bean stories while "Jeremy Bean's St. Patrick's Day" was originally published in 1987. The St. Patrick's Day offering, in which Jeremy's entire school is celebrating the day, feels somewhat dated, but overall the storytelling is fresh and funny in a book featuring occasional black-and-white illustrations. (Ages 6-8)

Thompson, Kate. *Highway Robbery*. Illustrated by Jonny Duddle and Robert Dress. U.S. edition: Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2009. 118 pages (trade 978-0-06-173034-4, \$15.99)

A young, homeless beggar boy in eighteenth-century England tells the tale of an extraordinary course of events. The down-on-his-luck lad is cold and hungry on the day a rider on a magnificent steed comes barreling toward him on the street. The man dismounts, hands the boy the reins, and offers him a golden guinea upon his return if the boy will watch the horse for awhile. The beautiful black mare draws attention, especially from a group of soldiers who are on the trail of Dick Turpin. Stories of the famous robber have made him the boy's hero. Now, it seems, the horse the boy is holding may be Turpin's Black Bess, and the soldiers expect the boy's cooperation as they lie

in wait for the owner's return. Kate Thompson's vividly told story has humor, tension, and a surprising twist as it comes to a close. Occasional black-and-white illustrations reflect the story's lighthearted spirit. (Ages 7–10)

Fiction for Children

Baskin, Nora Raleigh. *Anything But Typical*. Simon & Schuster, 2009. 195 pages (trade 978-1-4169-6378-3, \$15.99)

Writing is both theme and canvas in this novel from the perspective of Jason Blake, a twelve-year-old boy with autism. Jason is fascinated by the craft of writing and has made an online friend on a site called Storyboard. Rebecca is a fan of the stories he posts, and they regularly chat on the site. When it turns out that both of them will be attending a Storyboard convention (something Jason's well-meaning but missed-the-mark parents have given him as a gift), Jason dreads the possibility of meeting her face to face: Rebecca doesn't know he has autism, but the behaviors that mark him as different will be obvious if she meets him in person. In a book that emphasizes Jason's ability, Nora Raleigh Baskin vividly depicts his way of being in the world—including how peers and others perceive him, as well as the sense of calm and grounding he feels when pursuing his passion. Baskin also creates an intriguing and often playful interplay between what Jason says about the art and craft of writing and how this plays out in the narrative he is telling about his own life. This satisfying and eye-opening novel reveals one possible way a child with autism might think and express himself. (Ages 10–13)

Choldenko, Gennifer. *Al Capone Shines My Shoes*. Dial, 2009. 274 pages (trade 978-0-8037-3460-9, \$17.99)

Picking up where *Al Capone Does My Shirts* (Putnam, 2004) left off, the story of Moose Flanagan's life on Alcatraz Island in 1935 continues to center on changing relationships, family connections, and the intriguing idea of interacting with a notorious criminal. Thanks to a special favor by Capone himself, Moose's sister Natalie is now attending a school in San Francisco where her condition (unidentified at the time of the novel's setting, but likely diagnosed as autism today) is understood and accepted. When an unsettling note arrives in the laundry that says, "Your turn," Moose must struggle with the ethical issue of owing a favor to a criminal and draw complex conclusions about loyalty and honor. Meanwhile, other cons who have been given the privilege of working outside the prison in the warden's home and around the island seem trustworthy initially, but their true motivations are made clear in a nail-biting climactic scene. As in the first book, Moose struggles to navigate his way among the community of island kids, as relationships evolve and grow through interactions that are realistic and often humorous. (Ages 10–13)

Cockcroft, Jason. *Counter Clockwise*. Katherine Tegen Books / HarperCollins, 2009. 202 pages (trade 978-0-06-125554-0, \$15.99)

Since his mother was hit by a bus and killed a year ago, Nathan has been living with his father, Henry, who hasn't recovered from the death of Nathan's mom: Although divorced, the two were close. Nathan and his dad are living in an apartment building slated for destruction, and life seems gray and unremarkable. Then Nathan spots the Beefeater—a guard from the Tower of London—walking the hallway outside his physics review class. The man speaks in riddles, but he knows Nathan's name. Shortly after, Henry disappears from their thirteenth-floor apartment bathroom, leaving a dad-sized hole in the exterior wall. There's no trace of him on the ground, and as Nathan struggles to make sense of what has happened the Beefeater appears again. Thrown into a time loop, Nathan finds himself reliving the day of his dad's disappearance over and over, and with the help of the Beefeater begins piecing together a puzzle that centers on his mother's accident and his father's unwillingness to let her go. Jason Cockcroft's debut novel is a clever combination of time travel and mystery. (Ages 10–13)

Coy, John. *Top of the Order*. Feiwel and Friends, 2009. 182 pages (trade 978-0-312-37329-0, \$16.99)

When a girl joins Jackson's fifth-grade baseball team, the boys have mixed responses. Sydney is the sister of Jackson's best friend, Gig. And Gig is furious that Sydney—who excels at everything—is moving in on the one thing he feels he does well: baseball. Jackson wants to support Gig, but Sydney is talented, too, and the team needs her, although most of the players are unwilling to welcome her. This unexpected tension during baseball season is compounded by other looming changes in the lives of Jackson and his friends, including humorous rumors and poignant fears about the pending terror of middle school. John Coy's novel is first and foremost a sports story with plenty of baseball action to savor, but it also offers insight into pressures big and small in the lives of its characters. Coy avoids an easy resolution to the drama of whether this group will come together as a team, although the sexism Sydney faces among some of the opposing teams' players and coaches does help spur reflection on the part of her teammates. (Ages 9–11)

Creech, Sharon. *The Unfinished Angel*. Joanna Cotler Books / HarperCollins, 2009. 164 pages (trade 978-0-06-143096-1, \$15.99)

"Me, I am an angel. I am supposed to be having all the words in all the languages, but I am not. Many are missing. I am also not having a special assignment. I think I did not get all the training." The uncertain angel living in the tower of Casa Rosa, a Swiss villa, is a bit put out when Mr. Pomodoro and his daughter, Zola, arrive from America. Zola, it turns out, can see the angel, and Zola is full of ideas of what angels are like and what angels are supposed to do. So when Zola discovers that some orphans are living in an old barn nearby, she assumes the angel can make sure the children are taken care of. After the first attempt to help the children backfires, the angel ends up hiding them—with Zola's help—in Casa Rosa. Meanwhile, the children's thievery—they were stealing to survive—has heightened tensions between

neighbors in the small village where Casa Rosa is located, and the angel, who finds people *very* confusing, is at wits' end trying to work things out. Sharon Creech's charming story has tender notions and a happy ending sure to satisfy, along with a singular, sweetly funny character ("I am all downside up") who offers many astute observations. (Ages 8–11)

Dowell, Frances O'Roark. *The Kind of Friends We Used to Be*. Atheneum, 2009. 234 pages (trade 978–1–4169–5031–8, \$16.99)

Kate and Marylin were inseparable before their friendship fell apart the first year of middle school. Now they are working to make things right again. But they're so *different*. Kate adores her new combat boots as much as the electric guitar she's determined to learn to play. Marylin is starting seventh grade near the top of the social order as a cheerleader, albeit far from the leader of the pack. Marylin feels embarrassed for Kate at times, even as she dreads navigating the minefield of personalities and power plays that Kate somehow seems to ignore. For both girls, the surprising new friendships they develop with others help them find solid footing, both in their understanding of themselves and in their relationship with each other. Frances O'Roark Dowell continues the story she began in *The Secret Language of Girls* (Atheneum, 2004) with a novel that stands on its own as it moves fluidly between the lives and emotions of its characters, capturing anxieties of adolescence with depth, honesty, and tenderness. (Ages 10–13)

Forrester, Sandra. *Leo and the Lesser Lion*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. 298 pages (trade 978–0–375–85616–7, \$16.99)

Twelve-year-old Bayliss and her big brother Leo were a team. He was the beloved instigator of countless pranks and schemes, she was his devoted follower. Now an accident has killed Leo and left Bayliss heartbroken. Struggling with a painful, slow recovery from a broken back, Bayliss grieves in a household where emotional pain is private. Set during the Depression, Sandra Forrester's rewarding novel chronicles Bayliss's physical recovery and her attempt to make sense of the tragedy that has changed the shape of her world. The gradual realization that she and Leo might have shut out their goody-two-shoes sister Kathleen with their closeness and conspiracies is one of many revelations. The story is full of surprises, including the many-faceted responses of the people around Bayliss when she announces her decision to pursue sainthood. (Perhaps it's why she survived, she reasons, although she asks the nuns for information about "the ones who started out bad.") The outcome is somewhat predictable when Bayliss's family takes in two orphaned sisters, but the girls' presence illuminates many things for Bayliss in a story populated with distinctive, believable, human characters, not the least of which is the strong-willed, spirited girl at its core. (Ages 10–13)

Gaiman, Neil. *Odd and the Frost Giants*. Illustrated by Brett Helquist. Harper / HarperCollins, 2009. 117 pages (trade 978–0–06–167173–9, \$14.99)

The Norwegian villagers don't know what to make of Odd, the unlucky boy who keeps on smiling despite his father's death and the accident that left him with a crippled leg. When a delayed spring causes everyone's tempers to flare, Odd heads out to his father's woodcutting hut, rather than bear the

brunt of the community's bad humor. Following an unusual fox the next day, Odd is led to a bear whose paw is stuck in the hollow of a pine tree. Watched by an eagle flying overhead, Odd frees the bear. The three creatures then reveal that they are not animals but Norse deities. The bear is Thor, Lord of the Thunders; the eagle is Lord Odin, greatest of the gods; and the fox is Loki, trickster and blood brother to the gods. Duped by a Frost Giant, they've been cast into animal form and exiled. It's up to young Odd to outwit the Frost Giant and restore the three to their true bodies and home. Odd approaches the Frost Giant with equanimity, convincing the creature to return to his own home, and in turn is granted a meaningful reward by the Goddess Freya, who proves to be both funny and wise. Neil Gaiman weaves characters from Norse mythology into a humorous, quietly satisfying tale. (Ages 8–11)

Hof, Marjolijn. *Against the Odds*. Translated from the Dutch by Johanna H. Prins and Johanna W. Prins. U.S. edition: Groundwood / House of Anansi Press, 2009. 124 pages (trade 978-0-88899-935-1, \$17.95)

Kiki's father is a doctor who travels to countries in crisis, providing medical aid to people in need. Soon after he leaves on his most recent trip, Kiki's mother, in response to Kiki's worry, explains that the "odds" of something bad happening to Kiki's dad are small. Kiki begins fixating on the idea of odds: The odds may be small something will happen to her dad, but the odds of something happening to both her dad and her pet are even smaller. Kiki doesn't much like the family dog, so she would happily sacrifice Mona for her dad's safety—but what are the odds Mona will die? Everything escalates in Kiki's mind—and in reality when her dad does, indeed, disappear. Kiki's anxiety leads her to act out in ways that are once extraordinary and achingly believable in a story that acknowledges the dark thoughts of childhood with honesty. Author Marjolijn Hof maintains great tension and quiet drama before a resolution that offers relief and hope but is not unbelievably bright. (Ages 9–12)

Holm, Jennifer L. *Babymouse: Dragonslayer*. Illustrated by Matthew Holm. (Babymouse #11) Random House, 2009. 91 pages (pbk. 978-0-375-85712-6, \$5.99)

When beleaguered Babymouse received an F minus on a math quiz, her teacher is willing to forgive the grade IF she will join the Fighting Fractions, the school's math Olympics team. "Look on the bright side, Babymouse—you may be missing lunch, but at least you get to do math!" Babymouse is definitely the weak link in the Fighting Fractions chain, at least when it comes to math skills, but as the big competition against the rival Owlgorithms approaches, she conjures a vivid fantasy in which she and her fellow teammates—the "Fellowship of the Slide Rule"—embark on a quest. The competition itself plays out in Babymouse's mind as a jousting tournament in a winning graphic novel full of references to well-known books and movies and an abundance of math puns. And of course, there is the inimitable Babymouse, in all her black, white, and pink graphic-novel glory, who emerges triumphant when imagination turns out to be just what she needed to understand math. (Ages 7–10)

Krosoczka, Jarrett J. *Lunch Lady and the Author Visit Vendetta*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. 96 pages (pbk. 978-0-375-86094-2, \$5.99)

Krosoczka, Jarrett J. *Lunch Lady and the Cyborg Substitute*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. 96 pages (pbk. 978-0-375-84683-0, \$5.99)

Krosoczka, Jarrett J. *Lunch Lady and the League of Librarians*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. 96 pages (pbk. 978-0-375-84684-7, \$5.99)

Friends Dee, Hector, and Terrence have discovered something extraordinary about the seemingly mild-mannered lunch lady at their school: She's a crime fighter on the side. When she isn't dishing up gravy she's dishing out justice. In *Lunch Lady and the Cyborg Substitute*, the lunch lady discovers the science teacher's fiendish plot to win the Teacher of the Year award. In *Lunch Lady and the League of Librarians*, the school and public librarians are on a quest for world domination ("Step 1: Destroy all video games"). But not if the lunch lady and the three kids have their way. And in *Lunch Lady and the Author Visit Vendetta*, a visiting author, still bitter about being picked last for every sport as a child, gets revenge by kidnapping gym teachers. Luckily the Lunch Lady is on his trail. Betty, the lunch room aide, is the gadget queen, with inventions like the spatu-copter and taco-vision night goggles to help the lunch lady win the day. Jarrett Krosoczka's new graphic novel series, rendered in black, white, and yellow, inspires laughter in everything from its wild premise to clever details that extend the pleasure in countless ways. (Ages 7-10)

LaFleur, Suzanne. *Love, Aubrey*. Wendy Lamb Books / Random House, 2009. 262 pages (trade 978-0-385-73774-6, \$15.99)

When eleven-year-old Aubrey's mother abandons her, it's another trauma in a year that has brought too many. The facts of the past unfold in bits and pieces in Suzanne LaFleur's profoundly moving portrait of a child's grief and first steps toward healing. Aubrey's dad and sister were killed in a car accident. Her mother's disappearance is a direct result of the guilt (she was driving) and grief she hasn't been able to move beyond. Now living with her grandmother, Aubrey's own sadness and guilt (why did she live when her little sister did not?) come in waves that are unexpected and powerful when they hit. With the safety and security provided by Gran and extended family, Aubrey gradually starts to trust the people around her, from Bridget, the girl who lives next door, to the counselor at her new school. The book's title refers to Aubrey's closing lines in the letters she writes throughout the novel to those she's lost—and in one case finds again. There's no quick and easy happy ending to LaFleur's novel, but its gradual movement from despair to hope is achieved with great sensitivity and realism. (Ages 9-13)

Landy, Derek. *Skulduggery Pleasant: The Faceless Ones*. U.S. edition: Harper / HarperCollins, 2009. 422 pages (trade 978-0-06-124091-1, \$16.99)

Before she became Valkyrie Cain, teenager Stephanie Edgely thought her life in Dublin was mundane. Now the protégé and partner of skeleton detective Skulduggery Pleasant is poised to help save the world. Life is no longer boring, but it *is* downright dangerous at times. As she continues to

learn elemental magic, Valkyrie is helping Skulduggery investigate the serial murder of Teleporters, whose talents are suddenly garnering a lot of attention from forces that are anything but kind. Meanwhile, teenager Stephanie Edgely is going about life in the everyday world. When Valkyrie's mirror double experiences Stephanie's first kiss, Valkyrie finds her feelings about compromising her life in one world to wield magic in another becoming more complex. Derek Landy's third book in this entertaining series has the excitement and humor readers have come to expect (the banter between Valkyrie and Skulduggery is a particular delight) while continuing to develop its intriguing storyline, which ends in this volume with a shocking development. (Ages 10–13)

Lin, Grace. *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon.* Little, Brown, 2009. 278 pages (trade 978–0–316–11427–1, \$16.99)

Life is hard in Minli's Village of Fruitless Mountain, where she lives with Ba and Ma, her father and mother. Despite their hardships, Minli finds joy in the magical stories Ba tells at dinner each evening. When Minli spends her family's last two coins to buy a goldfish, the fantasy of her father's stories merges with the bleak reality of their daily life. Unable to feed the fish, Minli releases it in the river, and in payment the fish tells her how to get to Never-Ending Mountain. There, Minli knows, she can ask a question of the Old Man of the Moon. Determined to find out how to change the fortune of her town, she sets off. Grace Lin deftly inserts a series of tales inspired by traditional Chinese folktales into the larger tapestry of Minli's extraordinary journey that is full of adventure and trials. Gorgeous book design augments this fast-paced fantasy, including occasional full-page color illustrations, chapter heading decorations, and a typeface treatment that visually distinguishes the folktale segments from the overarching story of Minli's quest. (Ages 8–11)

McDonough, Yona Zeldis. *The Doll Shop Downstairs.* Illustrated by Heather Maione. Viking, 2009. 118 pages (trade 978–0–670–01091–2, \$14.99)

Nine-year-old Anna's parents run a doll repair shop on the first floor of the building in which they live. Along with her older sister, Sophie, and her younger sister, Trudie, Anna loves going down to the shop to play. Each girl has her favorite among a trio of dolls whose owners have not been back to claim them. When the United States enters World War I, Anna's parents can no longer get the parts they need from Germany to fix china dolls, and the shop closes. While Anna's parents worry about making ends meet, Anna and her sisters come up with a plan—why can't their parents make their own dolls to sell out of cloth? Yona Zeldis McDonough's short novel was inspired in part by Bertha Alexander, a.k.a. doll maker Madame Alexander. Her warm story about a young Jewish girl and her family captures the imaginative and creative life of children and concludes with a supremely satisfying ending. (Ages 7–9)

Michael, Jan. *City Boy*. U.S. edition: Clarion / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 188 pages (trade 978-0-547-22310-0, \$16.00)

After Sam's mother dies of AIDS, Sam's grief is compounded by culture shock when he goes to live with his aunt's family in the small Malawi village where his mother grew up. He and his mother had lived in the city, where he attended private school and lacked nothing, from the latest computer game to fancy running shoes. Those shoes, and the few books he brought with him, become a symbol of his difficulty adapting to village life. Sam's cousins and the other boy who lives with his aunt are fascinated by Sam's things. Sam does not want to share, but in his aunt's spare home sharing is a way of life. His aunt is loving, firm, and clear on her expectations for Sam as his painful struggle to fit in is complicated by his sense of loss and sadness. Sam's changing living situation and the details surrounding it, from the AIDS crisis to the contrast between urban and rural living, are made accessible and understandable for readers in this affecting story. (Ages 10–13)

Naidoo, Beverley. *Burn My Heart*. U.S. edition: Amistad / HarperCollins, 2009. 209 pages (trade 978-0-06-143297-2, \$15.99)

Against the backdrop of unrest that becomes increasingly violent, two children—one Black, one white—find they can no longer ignore the divide of race and privilege. Mugo, who is Kikuyu, and Mathew, whose ancestry is British, have grown up together in the Kenyan highlands. Mugo's father works for Mathew's, but that has never stopped the children from being friends. As colonial rule comes under increasing challenge by black Africans and the Mau Mau rebellion heats up, however, things change. Mugo's father is wrongly accused of starting a fire, and the entire family is imprisoned. Meanwhile, Mathew, who accidentally started the fire with his friend Lance—a boy whose rabid racism clearly began as a parroting of his father—remains silent. By the time Mathew speaks up, too much has been lost in Beverley Naidoo's searing novel set in Kenya in the early 1950s. Naidoo makes tense and complex times accessible and personal through the lives of her vivid characters in this story that moves back and forth between the two boys' perspectives. (Ages 10–14)

Paterson, Katherine. *The Day of the Pelican*. Clarion / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 145 pages (trade 978-0-547-18188-2, \$16.00)

When Meli Lleshi's teenage brother is arrested and beaten without cause by the Serbian-run government in Kosovo, Meli's parents decide to move out of the city and back to the family farm. But the Serbs continue their relentless campaign against the Albanian Kosovars, and soon the farm is no longer safe. The Lleshis flee their burning homestead—one family among thousands without safe haven. Katherine Paterson chronicles the rising Serbian government crackdown and ethnic cleansing of Albanian Kosovars through the experiences of the close-knit, extended Lleshi family in this novel rivetingly grounded in Meli's perspective. The swift way her life changes, the struggles her family endures, and especially their fierce attempts to stick together are memorably revealed in a narrative pierced by small, affecting details and emotionally weighted moments. Meli and her immediate family

eventual journey from a refugee camp to the United States. It marks a hopeful new beginning, but the events of 9/11 condemn them again in some people's eyes because of their religion. A more definitive timeframe for this story set in the late 1990s, and a bit more introductory information, would have been helpful, but a lengthy author's note fills in some gaps essential to understanding the political context of this affecting and important story. (Ages 10–14)

Patron, Susan. *Lucky Breaks*. Illustrated by Matt Phelan. Ginee Seo Books / Atheneum, 2009. 181 pages (trade 978–1–4169–3998–6, \$16.99)

Lucky Trimble is about to turn eleven. “Not the thud of ten, but flouncy e-lev-en, with its sophisticated three syllables...eleven is much more intrepid than only ten.” When Lucky meets Paloma, a girl her age who finds everything about Lucky's town of Hard Pan (pop. 43) fascinating, or funny in a good way, Lucky is sure she's found a new friend—maybe even a new best friend—despite Paloma's living hundreds of miles away. Paloma's name is even the same as a woman of legend who was said to have wandered into Hard Pan a hundred years before, and Lucky knows things like that matter. Revisiting the vivid characters and community of Hard Pan first introduced in *The Higher Power of Lucky* (Atheneum, 2006), Susan Patron again looks at the life of a girl who is openhearted but not always kind, adventurous but not always careful, keenly observant but not always thoughtful. Lucky's fallibility makes her so very real as she stumbles on the path to turning eleven and finds that a new friend can help her appreciate an old one. Susan Patron's superbly written novel is full of surprising, acute descriptions of what Lucky thinks and feels—just one of the many treasures it holds. (Ages 8–10)

Pellegrino, Marge. *Journey of Dreams*. Frances Lincoln, 2009. 250 pages (trade 978–1–84780–061–9, \$15.95)

Thirteen-year-old Tomasa's K'iche' Indian family live in the highlands of Guatemala, where the government campaign against indigenous peoples is intensifying—and terrifying. After Tomasa's older brother narrowly escapes conscription, he and her mother—who has publicly criticized the government and growers for toxic spraying in nearby fields—must disappear for their own safety. Shortly after, the village is firebombed. It happens on the very morning Tomasa, her little brother and baby sister, and her father have bid a painful farewell to her grandmother so they, too, can escape. That head start saves their lives in a tense story that follows the journey of Tomasa's family out of the mountains and north to Mexico. Set in 1984, Marge Pellegrino's novel gives a sense of those harrowing times in a story grounded in Tomasa's perspective—full of fear for their lives, longing for her mother and brother, and relief when she and her family find refuge with the Sanctuary Movement. Vivid details, such as clean clothes and the chance to play—pleasures that are lost and tentatively reclaimed—bring this story of refugees running for their lives into full relief. (Ages 10–13)

Riordan, Rick. *The Last Olympian*. (Percy Jackson and the Olympians, Book 5) Hyperion, 2009. 400 pages (trade 978-1-4231-0147-5, \$17.99)

Rick Riordan brings what he describes as the “first Camp Half-Blood series” to a spellbinding and satisfying close in a story that has Percy Jackson and his friends on the front lines of defending the country and world from the Titan Kronos and his army. As environmental devastation from raging storms (which are really a monster called Typhon) spreads slowly from west to east across the United States, Percy and Annabeth delve into painful parts of the past. The journey that brought Annabeth, Thalia, and the now traitorous Luke to Camp Half-Blood years before holds essential clues to how to defeat Kronos. Meanwhile, as the gods argue about the best course of action against Titan forces, it’s up to Percy to lead the demigods of Camp Half-Blood—friends and enemies alike—and their supporters as they take the final stand when the Battle of Manhattan begins. Riordan recaptures the spirited storytelling of *The Lightning Thief* (Hyperion, 2005) in this novel that adds layers of complexity to the story while retaining the sense of adventure and winning humor that distinguishes the series. (Ages 9–13)

Roberts, Ken. *Thumb and the Bad Guys*. Illustrated by Leanne Franson. Groundwood / House of Anansi Press, 2009. 128 pages (trade 978-0-88899-916-0, \$17.95)

With a population of 143, the remote fishing village of New Auckland, British Columbia, doesn’t seem like the best place to find bad guys. But after the weekly movie in the school gym, Thumb has bad guys on the brain. Why *couldn’t* there be one in New Auckland? Although his best friend Susan is a voice of frustrating reason, she’s still up for some excitement, and the two plan a stakeout. They’re thrilled, and more than a little nervous, when they discover one of their neighbors—in a town where everyone is neighbors—acting mysteriously. Ken Roberts’s third Thumb story is an easy mystery that offers up a cast of quirky, appealing characters, not the least of which is the new teacher in town. She’s not only a bit of a mystery herself, but gives an assignment that leads to real excitement when Thumb and Susan uncover a fascinating piece of the past. (Ages 7–10)

Spires, Ashley. *Binky the Space Cat*. Kids Can Press, 2009. 64 pages (trade 978-1-55453-309-1, \$16.95)

What’s not to love about Binky? The pointy-eared puss has become Space Cat Certified and can now proceed with preparations to blast off. As he follows the top secret, step-by-step instructions provided by F.U.R.S.T. (Felines of the Universe Ready for Space Travel) for building a rocket ship, Binky recalls how he was just a kitten when he discovered that aliens were everywhere, evidenced by a scientific comparison between bugs and aliens in which he concluded they are one and the same. While Binky envisions encounters with alien beings on other-worldly planets, the truth is that “outer space” is really anything outside the walls of Binky’s very earthbound house, where

he lives with his people, who are oblivious to the alien dangers or Binky's big plans. Cat humor aside—and there is plenty of it here—Ashley Spire's feline fantasy is a graphic novel full of charm, most of it in the form of Binky himself. (Ages 7–10)

Springer, Nancy. *The Case of the Cryptic Crinoline: An Enola Holmes Mystery*. Philomel, 2009. 160 pages (trade 978–0–399–24781–1, \$14.99)

In her fifth Enola Holmes outing, Nancy Springer's engaging detective finds herself investigating a mystery close to home when her landlady is kidnapped. Enola's perceptive pursuit of clues leads her down a trail to the past as she learns that Mrs. Tupper crossed paths with Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War and that the disappearance is linked to that encounter. The famous nurse may now be an elderly recluse, but she is still sharp and still commands attention and respect. She is, Enola discovers, a kindred spirit. Not only may she have information that will help her find Mrs. Tupper; she also could be an ally in Enola's quest for independence as she continues to evade her older brothers, Sherlock and Mycroft, and their intentions to send her to finishing school to be educated as a proper lady. Victorian London again springs to life in the pages of another satisfying entry in this series. (Ages 9–11)

Stead, Rebecca. *When You Reach Me*. Wendy Lamb Books / Random House, 2009. 208 pages (trade 978–0–385–73742–5, \$15.99)

Rebecca Stead's original and deftly accomplished work explores the significance of moments and the meaning of time. During the 1978–79 school year, Miranda navigates life between the apartment where she lives and her sixth-grade universe. An observant twelve-year-old, aware of the daily dangers in New York City, Miranda pays attention to the potential for things amiss: She avoids the crazy Laughing Man on the corner, carefully conceals her key and money, and creates backup plans. However, she's caught off-guard the day her best friend, Sal, is punched by a stranger on their walk home from school. Miranda puzzles over the incident on many levels, but is most perplexed by Sal's sudden emotional distance. Life goes on, and Miranda develops new friends, gets a part-time job, and even finds a surprising new person who appreciates her favorite book, *A Wrinkle in Time*, as much as she. Although the novel focuses on the mundane details of Miranda's everyday life, it does so with a keen element of anticipation. Then Miranda receives a mysterious note, meant for her or not, explaining, "I am coming to save your friend's life, and my own. First, you must write me a letter." At first she is frightened, but eventually, with astute perceptiveness, she deciphers its intent. After completing the novel, readers will want to go back to the beginning and start over to further marvel at its intricate crafting. (Ages 10–13)

Walliams, David. *The Boy in the Dress*. Illustrated by Quentin Blake. U.S. edition: Razorbill, 2009. 240 pages (trade 978–1–595–14299–3, \$15.99)

Twelve-year-old Dennis is fascinated by fashion. When he lets his appreciation for *Vogue* magazine slip out to Lisa, an older girl and aspiring fashion designer

at his school, she invites him over to see her designs. It doesn't take too much urging from Lisa for Dennis to try on her most recent creation. "He felt so happy that he wanted to dance." The two hatch a hilarious plan for Dennis to attend school as Denise, Lisa's French friend. Everything goes well until Lisa's French class, when they realize that French is a language neither Dennis nor Denise can speak. The ruse revealed, Dennis is ridiculed by fellow students and expelled by the humorless headmaster. At home, his puzzled and angry father confiscates the only picture Dennis has of his mother, who left two years before. But more than one surprising turnabout is in store. Dennis's genuine pleasure in cross-dressing is sensitively portrayed in a story that is over-the-top and tender, and full of quirky, entertaining characters and absurdly enjoyable scenarios, including a climactic soccer game in which Dennis and his teammates storm the field in drag. Illustrations by Quentin Blake capture the blithe spirit of David Walliams's refreshing debut. (Ages 9–13)

Westerfeld, Scott. *Leviathan*. Illustrated by Keith Thompson. Simon Pulse, 2009. 440 pages (trade 978-1-4169-7173-3, \$19.99)

The genesis of World War I is given a creative twist in this alternative history that pits the Germans and the Austro-Hungarians with their iron war machines, or Clankers, against Britain's Darwinists and their fabricated animal weapons. Aleksander Ferdinand is the lone surviving member of the Austro-Hungarian royal family following his parents' assassination, and with a few loyal supporters he's on the run from his German-influenced countrymen who would like to remove him from the ruling picture. At the same time, Deryn Sharp is masquerading as a boy so she can achieve her dream of working in the British Air Service. She's serving aboard the massive airbeast Leviathan, a hydrogen-breathing whale merged with "a hundred other species...tangled into its design, countless creatures fitting together like the gears of a stopwatch." When the Leviathan crash-lands near Aleksander's hideout, the two groups of political enemies become allies to mount an escape from the German forces. Aleksander and Deryn's tale ends on a high note, but there are still secrets to be revealed and battles to be fought in a forthcoming volume. (Ages 10–14)

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Peace, Locomotion*. Putnam, 2009. 134 pages (trade 978-0-399-24655-5, \$15.99)

In *Locomotion* (Putnam, 2003), Jacqueline Woodson introduced Lonnie C. Motion, a.k.a. Locomotion, a talented African American boy whose poetry helped him express his hurt and grief after the death of his parents in a fire. Now Locomotion wants to document his life for his younger sister, Lili, who is living in a different foster home. In letters to Lili, Locomotion reveals that his wonderful foster mother, Miss Edna, and her son, Rodney, are steadfast in every way. But when Miss Edna's oldest son, Jenkins, returns from the war without a leg, his sense of grief and loss echoes Locomotion's own pain every time he thinks about his parents. For Locomotion, the challenge is to hold on to the memories of what he once had but let go of the guilt at moving on. One of the hardest things to accept is that he would never have met

Miss Edna or Rodney or Jenkins or his best friend, Clyde, were it not for his parents' deaths. Accepting that truth, and embracing a new idea of family, doesn't come easily, but it comes. Deeply observant, *Locomotion* looks at Jenkins and the war and everything around him and thinks about peace—in the world, and in his own life, and in his heart. (Ages 10–13)

Fiction for Young Adults

Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Wintergirls*. Viking, 2009. 288 pages (trade 978-0-670-01110-0, \$17.99)

Lia, age eighteen, is dying to become a Wintergirl. She and her childhood friend Cassie made a pact to transform their bodies into brittle, icicle-thin figures. In their minds, their ability to starve themselves to perfection would be the envy of all. But now Lia is alone—Cassie's struggle with bulimia killed her, and Lia did not respond to Cassie's phone calls on the last night she was alive. Haunted by Cassie's death, Lia's anorexia spirals her into a deeper and darker hollow. Surrounding Lia are fractured relationships with her parents, stepmother, and half sister. With raw pain and emotion, Laurie Halse Anderson renders a fierce and unrelenting portrait of a young woman's struggle with a life-threatening eating disorder. Lia's relationship with her body and with her family are conveyed with intensity and realism, told through Lia's blunt, first-person, stream-of-consciousness narrative and emphasized with innovative text formatting. (Age 13 and older)

Bachorz, Pam. *Candor*. Egmont, 2009. 256 pages (trade 978-1-606-84012-2, 16.99)

Once-troubled teens become model citizens in Candor. "Respectful space in every place!" is a guiding principle that every young couple embraces. Everyone conforms, and teenager Oscar Banks, the mayor's son, knows why: Music plays everywhere in Candor, and his father embeds subliminal messages in the songs. Not long after his father established Candor, Oscar figured out how to counteract the messages with personal recordings of his own. For him, conformity is all an act. Occasionally—and for a hefty fee—Oscar helps other kids, newcomers who still have a sense of self, escape the town and a future of mindless belonging. But a new girl in Candor poses a dilemma for Oscar. Nia is a free-spirited artist with an edginess Oscar admires. If he tells her the truth about Candor, he knows she'll want to leave. Can he manipulate the messages she hears so that she seems to fit in even as the things that make her unique and appealing to him remain? Pam Bachorz's provocative novel examines how both Oscar and his father are caught up in a web of power and control, one in which fear, anxiety, and even good intentions can lead to selfish, frightening ends. Bachorz's inspiration for Candor was the planned community of Celebration, Florida. (Age 13 and older)

Bantle, Lee. *David Inside Out*. Christy Ottaviano Books / Henry Holt, 2009. 184 pages (trade 978-0-8050-8122-0, \$16.99)

Although his friend Eddie has decided to tell everyone he's gay, David hasn't reached a similar place of acceptance about his own sexuality. Afraid and uncertain, he crafts a to-do list that includes hanging out more with "real" men (bonus points if Eddie's dad takes him fishing) and falling in love with a girl. His longtime friend Kick would be happy to take on the girlfriend role, but David finds he can't respond to her overtures in a heartfelt way, despite having sex during a weekend together. In contrast, David's hidden feelings for Sean, his track teammate, are complicated and irrepressible. And when Sean responds to David's hints, the two find they are strongly attracted to each other. This open and honest account of a teenage boy's coming out is marked by realistic adolescent romance and physicality. David and Sean's relationship doesn't outlast the semester, but by its end David has a better understanding of himself and a greater appreciation for the lasting friends in his life. (Age 15 and older)

Caletti, Deb. *The Secret Life of Prince Charming*. Simon & Schuster, 2009. 336 pages (trade 978-1-4169-5940-3, \$16.99)

When teenage Quinn discovers that her unreliable father has stolen something from each of the (many) women with whom he's had a failed relationship, she decides to return the items her dad took from each woman. That means doing some research, telling some lies, and taking some emotional risks. Contacting an older half-sister she barely remembers, Quinn convinces her to be part of the crazy and touching plan, and Quinn's younger sister insists on coming along on what turns out to be a memorable, moving, and often hilarious road trip. Quinn's intent is to return the objects her dad took and get some answers about the person he was and is along the way. What she discovers is a larger truth about love in many forms, from the ever-strengthening bond she's developing with her sisters, to her mother's increasingly frantic worry, to the sweetness she discovers with a boy named Jake. Reflective vignettes in the voices of a number of different women—Quinn's grandmother, her mother, other women in her dad's life—offer adult perspectives on love and relationships that are often jaded yet still full of truth. But in the end, love with all its imperfections is the lasting lesson. (Age 13 and older)

Cart, Michael, editor. *How Beautiful the Ordinary: Twelve Stories of Identity*. HarperTeen / HarperCollins, 2009. 350 pages (trade 978-0-06-115498-0, \$16.99)

Twelve short stories—ten in prose, two in graphic novel form—explore gay, lesbian, and transgender experience. David Levithan's beautiful, breathtaking opening piece features contemporary teens unafraid of being themselves who are watched—and watched over—by the caring spirits of those who lived and loved in much more frightening times. But the singular collection is especially notable for its transgender content. Jacqueline Woodson offers an arresting, affirming portrait of a young transgender child, while Jennifer Finney Boylan describes the day a teen takes the first courageous

step into the outside world as his—her—true self. Not every offering is a literary standout, but all offer realistically hopeful looks at GLBTQ life in a collection that features protagonists ranging from child to adult, and stories that are often intensely emotional and sometimes explicitly sexual. (Age 15 and older)

Carter, Timothy. *Evil? Flux*, 2009. 264 pages (pbk. 978-0-7387-1539-1, \$9.95)

Stuart is an out gay teen living in a conservative family and town in Ontario. And no one has a problem with that. Stuart's church and the entire town are focused on the Sin of Onan (masturbation), something Stuart regularly commits (on page 1, for instance). When Stuart is outed as someone who masturbates, he is shunned and ridiculed at school. A brick is thrown through his window at home. His mom kicks him out of the house. Author Timothy Carter slyly sheds light on homophobia by casting it slant in this novel with more than one sharp edge. The source of the madness is a fallen angel who's used his power to cloud the reason of almost everyone in town (Stuart's wonderful priest is one of the few exceptions). Fon Pyre, a demon Stuart has been summoning for several years, explains that in other places, fallen angels have spread different kinds of hate—against gays, for example, or Blacks. Fon Pyre is snide at his best, murderous at his worst, but when Stuart realizes the fallen angel plans to unleash an even greater fury, he finds himself in an uneasy alliance with Fon Pyre. He needs the demon's power to save humanity. The strange yet endearing loyalty that develops between them is just one of the many terrific dimensions of this insightfully funny story. (Age 14 and older)

Cashore, Kristin. *Fire*. Dial, 2009. 480 pages (trade 978-0-8037-3461-6, \$17.99)

Teenage Fire's beauty is mesmerizing, but the cruelty of her monster father, whose powers enabled him to manipulate and murder with ease, has shadowed her life. Being a monster is what makes Fire so irresistible, and also so hated. Now the royal family has asked that she use the powers that she loathes—for fear of what she might become—to help the kingdom. The Dells is under the leadership of a young king striving to stabilize the land with the support (and often leadership) of his siblings. Being invited into the royal family's circle of trust is both tantalizing and frightening for Fire, especially since Prince Brigant, head of the army, seems to have nothing but contempt for her. Fans of Kristin Cashore's *Graceling* (Harcourt, 2008) will relish this companion story, which is set in an earlier time and a neighboring kingdom. Many readers new to this author's work will seek out that first book after reading *Fire*, which again features an original premise, a strong female protagonist, stellar storytelling, and a satisfying love story that unfolds amidst action and political intrigue. (Age 13 and older)

Cochrane, Mick. *The Girl Who Threw Butterflies*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. 177 pages (trade 978-0-375-85682-2, \$15.99)

Molly and her father both loved baseball, and that shared passion is one of the many things she misses since his recent death. A barrier has arisen between Molly and her mother, so she doesn't tell her mom when she decides to try out for the school team—baseball, that is, not softball. Molly's strong knuckleball, honed during hours of backyard practice with her dad, gets her a spot on the team as the only girl. Many of the players are resentful, but the coaches recognize her value, and an unexpected friendship develops with one teammate. This blend of a sports story (with plenty of game time play-by-play) and a tale of moving on from loss offers a satisfying balance of both components as it follows Molly through a difficult season of adjustment. (Ages 12–15)

Collins, Suzanne. *Catching Fire*. (The Second Book of The Hunger Games) Scholastic Press, 2009. 400 pages (trade 978-0-439-02349-8, \$17.99)

The second book of Suzanne Collins's stunning and tense "Hunger Games" trilogy continues the story of teenage Katniss, who is becoming a symbol of resistance to many in Panem (formerly the United States) since refusing to play by the rules in the government-sponsored, fight-to-the-death Hunger Games competition the year before. Katniss knows it's only a matter of time before the government punishes her for refusing to kill or be killed. Her defiance is a dangerous quality for any citizen to possess, let alone one who has become a national hero. But Katniss, who made it out of the Hunger Games arena with her life and her conscience, is still shocked when she learns what's now in store: She and her co-victor, Peeta, must compete again, this time against all of the champions from prior years. Once again, alliances among the players are critical to survival, but whom can Katniss trust? She doesn't care about her own life, but Peeta's goodness—and his potential as a leader for the resistance—are things for which she's willing to fight—and die. Collins's complex, action-packed, emotionally rich story is breathtaking, with a cliffhanger ending that will have readers clamoring for book three. (Age 12 and older)

Combes, Élisabeth. *Broken Memory: A Novel of Rwanda*. Translated from the French by Shelley Tanaka. U.S. edition: Groundwood / House of Anansi Press, 2009. 139 pages (trade 978-0-88899-892-7, \$17.95)

Almost ten years have passed since the Rwandan genocide, and teenage Emma has blocked out most of what happened when her mother was killed by the Hutus. She was five then, and an older Hutu woman risked her life to shelter the Tutsi girl. Their loving and supportive relationship has helped Emma survive from day to day, but she hasn't come to terms with the terrible violence of the past. Set in 2004, when the *gacaca* courts were beginning in Rwanda, Élisabeth Combes's novel addresses its grave subject matter with sensitivity. Ndoli, a boy who lives in Emma's village, is another traumatized survivor who encourages her to get help from a therapist, a survivor who helps Emma face the past so that she can embrace the future. While there are a few questions about characters' ages and the passage of time

in this spare, eloquent story, it speaks to a difficult and painful past and the hope that comes with the hard work of healing. An author's note provides background information on the Rawandan genocide and the *gacaca* courts. (Age 13 and older)

Davis, Tanita S. *Mare's War*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. 341 pages (trade 978-0-375-85714-0, \$16.99)

On a cross-country road trip with their standoffish grandmother, Mare, resentful teens Octavia and Tali (both would rather be home for the summer) gain insight into Mare's life as she tells them about serving in the Women's Army Corp (WAC) during World War II. Mare's reminiscences, told in first-person, present-tense chapters headed "Then," form the heart of Tanita S. Davis's novel, which paints a vivid picture of the past. Mare's challenging home life and small Alabama town, the friendships she develops in the WACs, her training and assignments in the army, and the racism she and other Black soldiers face at home and overseas feel immediate and real. The experience in the WACs gradually changes Mare into a more confident young woman with eyes and mind open wide. The present-day chapters, headed "Now," chronicle how both the cross-country journey and their grandmother's stories affect the two sisters, who are often at odds. But surprising camaraderie—with one another and with Mare—develops over the course of the journey. (Ages 12–15)

Frost, Helen. *Crossing Stones*. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009. 184 pages (trade 978-0-374-316532, \$16.99)

The tragedy of war, women's lack of a political voice, and the oppression of censorship are all explored in an intricately crafted novel set when the United States is entering World War I and the fight for women's suffrage is escalating. The story unfolds through three alternating voices: Outspoken Muriel is just finishing high school and finds it hard to silence her political opinions; Emma, Muriel's best friend, is less radical in her thinking but feels the war's impact more directly at first when her brother heads overseas to fight; Ollie, Muriel's brother, is too young to enlist but eventually lies about his age to join the war effort. Letters from overseas arrive home blackened by the censor's pen. Meanwhile, Muriel and Ollie's Aunt Vera is picketing the White House to demand the vote for women. She is jailed and goes on a hunger strike, but the truth about these events, too, is veiled by government misinformation and censorship. Helen Frost covers a lot of territory with great depth in this exceptional work full of richly developed, complex characters. Each one is struggling with personal choices that are complicated by the times in which they live. The poems in Muriel's voice have the appearance of a flowing river, while those in Emma's and Ollie's voices are the "crossing stones": interconnected "cupped-hand" sonnets. Frost includes notes on the form she developed to tell this deeply rewarding story. (Age 13 and older)

Going, K. L. *King of the Screwups*. Harcourt / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. 310 pages (trade 978-0-15-206258-3, \$17.00)

After Liam Geller's controlling, distant, high-achieving father kicks him out of the house for screwing up once too often, Liam ends up living with "aunt" Pete, his gay uncle who lives in a trailer park in Upstate New York. Liam's culture shock after life with his dad and mom, a former supermodel, is nothing compared to his sense of loss and longing—for support from his mother and approval from his father. Determined to prove that he strives for more than good looks and popularity, Liam tries to become one of the *un*popular kids at his new school. But when he manages to turn even AV club into something cool, Liam knows he's failed at being an outcast. Liam's attempts at unpopularity are hilarious, but the underlying current of his story is achingly painful as K. L. Going explores the life of a teenage boy torn apart by his father's rejection. A cast of fully realized, appealing secondary characters who support and challenge Liam to be and value himself, and to pursue his interest in modeling in fashion, enrich Going's masterful, entertaining novel. (Age 14 and older)

Hautman, Pete. *How to Steal a Car*. Scholastic Press, 2009. 176 pages (trade 978-0-545-11318-2, \$16.99)

Kelleigh Monahan stole her first car—a Nissan Altima—on a whim. A week after picking up a stranger's car keys dropped in a mall parking lot, she happens to recognize the owner and his car in the driveway of a home not far from her own. Late that night she returns to the house and simply starts the car and drives away. The adrenaline rush of the experience might have been a one-time thrill, but as time passes, Kelleigh steals again. Life is complicated: Friendships are changing, her parents' marriage is in trouble, and her attorney father is defending a serial rapist. Stealing cars for her own satisfaction, and later in an alliance with a boy who is part of an established car theft operation, becomes one area of her life over which Kelleigh exerts total control. This unpredictable novel defies expectations as Kelleigh steps outside her role as suburban teen and repeatedly breaks the law, but is neither caught nor punished. Hautman raises questions of morality and ethics while avoiding any hint of didacticism, leaving the final analysis of Kelleigh's choices to the reader. (Age 13 and older)

Hernandez, David. *No More Us For You*. HarperTeen / HarperCollins, 2009. 281 pages (trade 978-0-06-117333-2, \$16.99)

Carlos is a high school senior who has a job as a guard at an art museum to earn extra money. Isabel is a high school senior who has been obsessed with death since her boyfriend was killed in a car accident a year ago. In alternating chapters, David Hernandez offers the compelling and distinctive voices of two teens whose lives come slowly together. Isabel has not been able to move beyond her grief or her fear since her boyfriend's death. Carlos discovers that his girlfriend is cheating and feels betrayal and anger. The two meet through a mutual friend, one of many fine secondary characters experiencing their own real-world dramas (from a pregnant girlfriend to drugs to another deadly accident) that spill over into Carlos's and Isabel's

lives. Hernandez writes with a poet's grace as he offers up the world of these urban teens—and a sometimes amusing look at the seemingly quirky world of contemporary art—through the eyes of two sensitive, observant characters who often feel helpless but gradually find solace and hope in each other's company. (Age 14 and older)

Hurwin, Davida Wills. *Freaks and Revelations*. Little, Brown, 2009. 234 pages (trade 978-0-316-04996-2, \$16.99)

Alternating chapters beginning in 1973 chronicle the lives and journeys of two individuals whose radically divergent paths eventually meet. At ten, Doug is a victim of anger in his family. As a teenager he finds relief in expressing his own rage through violence. Jason is thirteen when he comes out to his family. His hyper-religious mother throws him out of the house, and he's soon living on the streets, eventually hustling to survive. In 1980, Doug's racist, neo-Nazi gang attacks a group of gay street kids in Los Angeles, and Jason becomes the focal point of their violence. Davida Wills Hurwin chronicles each boy's journey—paths of pain and hurt that leave one boy looking for safe harbor and love, and the other striking out in fury—to that terrible meeting in this chilling novel that also explores redemption by documenting the aftermath over the next twenty-five years. Her book is based on the real lives of Timothy Zaal and Matthew Boger, who met doing work at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles as adults and realized they had crossed paths years before when Zaal viciously beat Boger on the streets. Hurwin doesn't shy away from explicitly describing the reality of either boy's life in this compelling novel with a conclusion that would be hard to believe were it not based on fact. (Age 14 and older)

Larbalestier, Justine. *Liar*. U.S. edition: Bloomsbury, 2009. 376 pages (trade 978-1-59990-305-7, \$16.99)

Seventeen-year-old Micah has always felt her identity is ambiguous: She is mixed race (Black/white), she is girl who can pass for a boy, she is a scholarship student in a wealthy private school, she is a city girl who spends summers running free in the country. She even has a secret boyfriend, Zach—they never acknowledge one another during the school day. Justine Larbalestier's structurally and psychologically complex story is told through vignettes "Before" and "After" Zach's mysterious death in which Micah reveals more about their relationship and about her personal and family history. But Micah also makes it clear that she is a liar, so everything she says is suspect. As Micah's narrative progresses, she exposes more and more of her lies but also—perhaps—more of her truth. Micah's becomes a story of the fantastic when she explains the "family illness" she inherited. But is Micah really what she claims to be, or is the family illness really insanity? Micah is appealing and sympathetic, and the desire to believe her is strong even as her story constantly changes in this astonishing novel in which the ground is forever shifting beneath readers' feet. As the implications of Micah's lying become increasingly disturbing, the richness of Larbalestier's craft is more fully revealed in a story that demands discussion once the final page has been turned. (Age 14 and older)

Lo, Malinda. *Ash*. Little, Brown, 2009. 264 pages (trade 978-0-316-04009-9, \$16.99)

A fresh, inventive twist on the Cinderella tale plays with gender roles and romantic pairings. After her mother dies, Ash's father remarries only to die himself, leaving Ash with a stepmother who forces her into a life of servitude. Ash first glimpses the fairies while sitting by her mother's grave. They are dangerous—to seek them out can mean surrendering to their power and giving up human existence. But their world is also appealing, especially after Ash meets Sidhean, a male fairy who is both protective and alarmingly alluring. Ash longs for Sidhean to take her away from her miserable life, but the real romance in the story turns out to be with neither Sidhean nor the prince who is looking for a wife. From the moment Ash meets Kaisa, the King's Huntress, she is attracted, although at first she doesn't fully comprehend her own desire. As life with her stepmother becomes more restrictive, Ash must call on Sidhean's magic to spend time with Kaisa, but Sidhean's own longing for Ash forces her to strike a bargain that could take her away from Kaisa forever. Malinda Lo's debut novel features a vividly drawn setting, complex characters, and a plot in which the emotional tension and intrigue build, making for incredibly rich and satisfying storytelling. (Age 13 and older)

Magoon, Kekla. *The Rock and the River*. Aladdin, 2009. 290 pages (trade 978-1-4169-7582-3, \$15.99)

In 1968, thirteen-year-old Sam's dad is a Chicago Civil Rights activist who believes in nonviolence and has high expectations for his sons. When Sam's brother, Stick, gets involved with the Black Panthers and their call for change "by any means necessary," it creates incredible tension in their family. His father's anger fills their house, and Sam is hurt by the growing distance between himself and Stick. Sam also knows Stick hates violence, so he is puzzled by his brother's choice to join the Panthers. But he's soon attending the Black Panther discussions, drawn in by his interest in a girl from school and also his brother's encouragement to learn more this group that serves breakfast to kids in their community every morning. Sam discovers the Panthers, his brother, and his dad share a common dream for equality and justice, even if their methods don't always agree. Some of the details aren't quite true to 1968, but Kekla Magoon's debut novel does a remarkable job presenting the conflict and commonalities between the peaceful nonviolence movement and the Black Panthers, capturing the racial tensions and other complexities of that time through the experiences of Sam and his family. (Ages 11-14)

Marsden, John. *Hamlet: A Novel*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2009. 229 pages (trade 978-0-7636-4451-2, \$16.99)

John Marsden offers up Hamlet in prose in a novel that brings the psychology of Shakespeare's story into clear relief for young adults. Marsden provides vivid insight into the play's characters, especially teenagers Hamlet, Ophelia, and Horatio. Hamlet, already burdened by conflicting feelings about his father, begins to crack under the pressure to achieve as the ghost demands he seek revenge for murder most foul. Ophelia suffers under her

father's paradoxical disregard and overprotectiveness, while her longing for the young prince intensifies. And Horatio's loyalty and strong feelings for his best friend are complicated by his class status and the ever-growing chaos around him. Marsden illuminates anger and madness with striking clarity in a novel that also features powerfully sensual moments as the burgeoning sexuality of its teenage characters becomes another force they must deal with. (Age 14 and older)

McCormick, Patricia. *Purple Heart*. Balzer & Bray / HarperCollins, 2009. 208 pages (trade 978-0-06-173090-0, \$16.99)

When Private Matt Duffy wakes up in a Green Zone hospital, an image emerges from his cloudy memory of a little Iraqi boy floating through the air. As he recovers from his brain injury, Matt worries that he may have caused the boy's death. The pain this brings is joined by fear—the penalty for killing an Iraqi civilian can be harsh. But Matt soon realizes that military officers seem eager to put this incident behind them. Matt recovers and rejoins his unit, all the while trying to piece together the truth about what happened. Patricia McCormick manages to acknowledge many truths in this novel, some of them conflicting. While not glorifying the army, she gives dignity to many individuals in it and weight to the varied beliefs of soldiers, which sometimes change over time. She offers a sympathetic portrayal of the Iraqi people, but acknowledges that among them are many who resent the presence of the U.S. military, including insurgents who put lives on all sides in jeopardy. While recognizing the difficult positions of everyone in Iraq at this time, McCormick stays focused on Matt's experiences and feelings. The authentic tone of her narrative is achieved in part by reflecting a variety of attitudes, including some—racism, sexism, homophobia, and Anti-Iraqi sentiments, among them—that are uncomfortable to read. (Age 14 and older)

McKissack, Fredrick, Jr. *Shooting Star*. Atheneum, 2009. 273 pages (trade 978-1-4169-4745-5, \$16.99)

Jomo Rodgers is a capable football player, but nothing like his best friend Jayson, a sophomore who's already being courted by college recruiters. Coach thinks he needs to bring a more committed attitude to his play, but Jomo is sure it's his size—5'8" and 150 pounds—that's keeping him from getting the recognition he deserves. An off-season training program should help him bulk up, but results are slow, and Jomo is unable to resist the temptation of steroids. His seller swears that it's safe, and there's no denying the satisfaction of the rapid increase in size and ability that Jomo experiences. But along with those payoffs come problems, and soon Jomo is experiencing the downside of "juicing." This realistic portrayal of a well-intentioned teen's downward spiral through the physical, emotional, and social side effects of illegal steroid use stands out for its well-developed characters and its unflinching focus on a prominent issue in contemporary athletics. (Age 13 and older)

Ness, Patrick. *The Ask and the Answer.* (Chaos Walking: Book Two) U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2009. 519 pages (trade 978-0-7636-4490-1, \$18.99)

Book Two of Patrick Ness's "Chaos Walking" trilogy picks up shortly after the white-knuckle events of Book One come to a close. Fugitives Todd and Viola are now separated, each held prisoner in New Prentisstown—formerly Haven—the place that was to have been their salvation. Mayor Prentiss, their pursuer, arrived first and now controls the town. Savage one moment, he's all sincerity the next, explaining that his goal is simply to secure a brighter future for everyone and asking Todd to help make it happen. Viola is being held in a house of healing, a community of women run by Mistress Coyle, leader of the only active resistance to the mayor's oppressive rule. Todd and Viola soon find themselves on opposing sides of what is certain to become a war. Ness explores manipulation, power, and control in a novel that finds Todd and Viola challenged by misinformation, propaganda, and different spins on the facts. The two adults who lead each side justify horrifying violence in the name of greater good, but it's that violence that gives Todd and Viola pause, making it hard for them to know what to believe as they struggle to find common ground once again. Ness's provocative and hard-to-put-down novel is set in a dystopic world populated by intensely memorable characters. (Age 12 and older)

Peck, Dale. *Sprout.* Bloomsbury, 2009. 277 pages (trade 978-1-59990-160-2, \$16.99)

"I have a secret. And everyone knows it." Everyone in the small Kansas town Sprout and his dad moved to after leaving Long Island knows Sprout's dad is an alcoholic. And it's obvious that Sprout misses his mom since she died. But Sprout's sexuality has been the subject of rumor for awhile. And while Sprout can ignore the rumors, he can't ignore the desire to finally speak his own truth. He's decided the state essay contest for promising writers—he's been hand-picked by his demanding, margarita-loving English teacher Ms. Miller to represent the school—is the time and place to come out. In the meantime, his secret relationship with Ian Abernathy—which has been going on since seventh grade—begins to pale when Sprout meets Ty. Abused by his father, Ty can't risk coming out, creating more secrets as his and Sprout's relationship progresses from friendship to love. Dale Peck's narrative is a work of finesse, telling a tender story in a style that is laugh-out-loud funny at times. Sprout's wry, memorable voice reveals a teen who is astute and self-deprecating, smart and unsettled, and ultimately unforgettable. (Age 13 and older)

Slayton, Fran Cannon. *When the Whistle Blows.* Philomel, 2009. 162 pages (trade 978-0-399-25189-4, \$16.99)

A story set on All Hallow's Eve over seven years from 1943 to 1949 portrays a child, a family, and a small West Virginia railroad town all facing inevitable change. Jimmy is just a boy in 1943, full of Halloween high jinks as he and his friends plot pranks near the graveyard. He dreams of growing up and working as a mechanic at the rail depot like his father. Jimmy's dad is a somewhat challenging, taciturn personality who expresses his love in

ways that become more and more understandable to Jimmy as he becomes a teenager, just as the personalities and occasional prejudices of some of the town's other adults—who, it turns out, are not too old for some high jinks of their own—become clearer over time. Jimmy's dad knows that the days of steam trains are ending and keeps telling Jimmy to set his sights on a different future. Jimmy can't imagine such profound readjustment of his dreams, until he has no choice. Author Fran Cannon Slayton's slice-of-life novel has plenty of humor but also a compelling portrayal of a boy's coming of age, all set against the vivid drawn backdrop of a small town in the 1940s. (Ages 11–15)

Smith, Sherri L. *Flygirl*. Putnam, 2008. 275 pages (trade 978-0-399-24709-5, \$16.99)

Teenager Ida Mae Jones was taught to fly by her daddy on his crop duster. Now she has everything but an actual license, since the flight test examiner refused to pass her because she is a woman. When she hears about the Women's Airforce Service Pilot (WASP) program, Ida Mae is determined to join, going so far as to change the name and dates on her daddy's old pilot's license. But that deception is nothing compared to her next one: The WASPs don't take Black women, but Ida Mae's skin is so light she can pass as white. It's a decision that will impact both her new friendships with other women trainees after she's accepted into the program, and her relationships with the family and friends she leaves behind. Sherri L. Smith's novel is a fascinating look at the WASP program during World War II, capturing the spirit and passion of talented women who were hungry for opportunities to take to the air and show what they could do. Smith weaves Ida Mae's story into the fabric of that history, creating a compelling—and at times heartbreaking—look at both the sexism and racism of those times. (Age 12 and older)

Stork, Francisco X. *Marcelo in the Real World*. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic, 2009. 312 pages (trade 978-0-545-05474-4, \$17.99)

Seventeen-year-old Marcelo Sandoval is looking forward to a summer tending the ponies in his private school's stables. But Marcelo's dad wants him to spend the summer working at his law firm, and to attend public school in the fall. For autistic Marcelo, the idea of moving beyond the safety and security of familiarity and routine is scary, but he and his dad work out a compromise: Marcelo will work at the law firm and then decide for himself where he'll go to school in the fall. "Marcelo is afraid," he tells his mother. "I know," she tells him. "That's the point." Francisco X. Stork's debut novel is an astonishing look inside the mind of a teen with autism. Marcelo is a blend of acute awareness and naïveté, stating truths with frankness even as he struggles to understand the motivations behind much of what he sees. As he navigates new relationships and routines, Marcelo discovers that good and bad, right and wrong, can get muddied and complicated. Nothing illustrates this more than when he discovers his father's firm is defending a company that was negligent, leading to the serious injury of a young girl. Marcelo's growth is marked by his ability to move more assuredly through a world that

is complicated for everyone, all the while remaining true to the voice inside himself. (Age 14 and older)

Sturman, Jennifer. *And Then Everything Unraveled*. Point, 2009. 244 pages (trade 978-0-545-08722-3, \$16.99)

Delia's mother, a passionate environmental activist and successful Silicon Valley entrepreneur, is on an Antarctic research trip when her boat disappears. Teenage Delia is placed in the care of her mother's sisters in New York City. According to her mother's will, Delia will live with free-spirited Charlie, while stern Patience, a stick-in-the-mud lawyer, has decision-making power. But Delia is sure her mother is still alive, and when Charlie gently suggests she's in denial, Delia decides to investigate things on her own. With the help of brilliantly tech-savvy Natalie, a friend she makes at her new school, and the support of Quinn, a boy who might become more than just a friend, Delia uncovers enough evidence to convince a private detective that something strange is going on and maybe, just maybe, her mother is alive. But can he be trusted? Jennifer Sturman's enthralling mystery has plenty of froth and fun with a fast-paced plot and a number of teasingly stereotypical characters, from nerdy Natalie to a pair of frost prep twins to the insincere, obviously sinister second-in-command at the company Delia's mother started. There's also an appealing protagonist at the heart of Sturman's novel, and an ending that promises more of the story to come. (Age 12 and older)

Tan, Shaun. *Tales from Outer Suburbia*. U.S. edition: Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic, 2009. 92 pages (trade 978-0-545-05587-1, \$19.99)

Author/illustrator Shaun Tan takes readers on a journey off the map in a collection of tales that disrupt the stereotype of the bland, predictable suburbs. Tan injects a profound sense of displacement into the recognizable landscape in fifteen unusual stories in which a sense of wonder abounds. All the tales are illustrated, although some are told mostly through prose while others are graphic novel style. In each, the reader is grounded by a sense of the familiar, and yet that familiarity is immediately set off kilter, whether by an otherworldly foreign exchange student who leaves a tender gift behind or revelation of a secret sanctuary hidden in every suburban home. Imagine scraps of all the poems written but never shared forming a huge ball of paper that floats into the air, "levitating by the sheer force of so much unspoken emotion." Touching on themes of isolation, community, environment, and imagination, and above all imbued with hope, Tan's stories leave ample room for readers to think, discuss, and draw their own conclusions about their meaning. Tan adapts his visual style to suit each story. Some entries are as short as a single page, and many make terrific launching points for additional imagining and storytelling, whether written, drawn, or orally told. (Age 13 and older)

Thompson, Kate. *Creature of the Night*. U.S. edition: Roaring Brook Press, 2009. 250 pages (trade 978-1-59643-511-7, \$17.95)

Bobby's family lives on the economic and emotional edge. Desperate not to be evicted from the country cottage where they've just moved, Bobby's

mother agrees that fourteen-year-old Bobby will work for their landlord to pay him back for the car Bobby stole. The car belonged to the former tenant of the cottage—who disappeared without a trace. Bobby is alternately pleased by the praise and sense of satisfaction that comes with doing a good job for the landlord, and resentful of the amount of work he demands. Meanwhile, Bobby discovers his little brother having secret conversations in the middle of the night with someone—or something. His sense of unease deepens when he finds items belonging to the missing tenant that suggest foul play, further fueling rumors that the cottage has been a site of mystery and tragedy for years. Some (but not all) readers looking for the scary story suggested by the title and cover of *Creature of the Night* may be disappointed. But Kate Thompson's novel incorporates Irish lore into a tremendously rich story of a teen on a path of self-destruction who is lucky enough to find people who see his promise and are willing to give him more than one chance to make new choices. (Age 12 and older)

Uehashi, Nahoko. *Moribito II: Guardian of the Darkness*. Translated by Cathy Hirano. U.S. edition: Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic, 2009. 272 pages (trade 978-0-545-10295-7, \$17.99)

Warrior Balsa is returning to the kingdom of her birth for the first time since her guardian Jiguro fled with her when she was a child. Jiguro gave up everything to save Balsa after her father was murdered. But Balsa discovers that Jiguro's reputation and memory have been dishonored by lies that can be traced directly to the current king, a prince at the time of her father's death. As she tries to ferret out the motive for the lies, Balsa learns that the time for a once-in-a-generation ceremony that keeps the spirit and physical world forces in balance is approaching, and understanding brings frightening implications. Nahoko Uehashi again explores how disregard for old ways, ancient knowledge, and indigenous peoples, as well greed and lust for power, can threaten the very existence of a culture in this thoughtful, action-packed follow-up to *Moribito: Guardian of the Spirit* (U.S. edition: Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic, 2008). Balsa is a singular, satisfying hero whose exploits offer adventure as well as commentary on human nature and society. Although the richly developed setting for these fantasy stories has a medieval Japanese feel, readers will find much that is applicable to our world today. (Age 12 and older)

Waldorf, Heather. *Leftovers*. Orca, 2009. 208 pages (pbk. 978-1-55143-937-2, \$12.95)

Sarah hates having her picture taken, although she's never told anyone why: For years, her dad took sexually exploitative photographs of her. Her dad is dead now, and all Sarah wants to do is destroy the pictures once she finds them. That's hard to do from a distance, however, and she's spending the summer at Camp Dog Gone Fun. Working at the camp for homeless and abused dogs is the community service sentence she earned when her mom's boyfriend tried to take her picture with his new camera and she flipped out and stole a car. Trying to keep the past contained means not letting anyone see into her heart, but a dog named Judy and a boy named Sully make that a challenge, especially after Sarah's mother discovers the photos and the past

is no longer Sarah's private torment. Heather Waldorf tackles this difficult topic with a narrative pitch-perfect in tone. Sarah's voice is compelling for both its humor and its pain. A fine cast of supporting characters rounds out a compelling story that marks the hopeful start of Sarah's healing. (Age 13 and older)

Weber, Lori. *If You Live Like Me.* Lobster Press, 2009. 331 pages (pbk. 978-1-897550-12-0, \$14.95)

As their plane descends over the craggy coastline of Newfoundland, Cheryl's response to her parents' rising excitement is sullen. After moving from place to place for her father's research on dying cultures, Cheryl has no intention of putting roots down in St. John's, the fishing community where they will live. Secretly determined to put her bags on a bus or boat as soon as she can find the means to get back to their home base in Montreal, Cheryl's plans are waylaid when she meets Jim. The sweet, nerdy teen tours her around town with his enormous dog, Boss, and she reluctantly learns to appreciate her new surroundings through Jim's eyes, even as she continues to battle with her parents over their enthusiasm and motives for moving there. Like rough waves pounding on the stubborn shore, Cheryl's resolute and prickly mood wears on her parents, and herself. With Jim, Cheryl's softer side is exposed, and romance develops. Watching Jim and his family deal with the stress caused by the declining fishing economy, Cheryl begins to revise her understanding of commitment and connection. The interplay between exterior and interior, as well as inclusion and exclusion, are deftly described by Lori Weber in this memorable novel about people and place. (Age 13 and older)

Yang, Gene Luen. *The Eternal Smile: Three Stories.* Illustrated by Derek Kirk Kim. First Second, 2009. 170 pages (pbk. 978-1-59643-156-0, \$16.95)

Three short graphic novel stories speak to the power of the imagination as the means of escape, exploitation, and transformation. In "Duncan's Kingdom," a brave young knight-in-training is on the verge of marrying a beautiful princess when a bottle of "Snappy Cola" appears. It's the first crack in the powerful fantasy life of an unconscious teenage boy escaping from guilty feelings and his real-world existence. In "Gran'pa Greenbax and the Eternal Smile," a greedy frog tries using the appearance of a smile in the sky as the means to more wealth when he establishes a church to worship it, only to discover he was nothing more than a pawn in someone else's profitable fantasy world. In "Urgent Request," a meek, downtrodden office worker is passed over for promotion and ends up seeking solace in her e-mail exchanges with a Nigerian prince in need of money. Although he turns out to be a nerdy college student on the make, she imagines herself loved and valued in the fantasy she spins from their correspondence and later summons those feelings to demand she be treated fairly. The three stories are rendered in three distinctive visual styles. Each one stands on its own, but collectively they offer intriguing perspectives of fantasy, reality, and what can happen in the space between. (Age 13 and older)

Zarr, Sara. *Once Was Lost*. Little, Brown, 2009. 217 pages (trade 978-0-316-03604-7, \$16.99)

When a DUI sends her mother into rehab at the New Beginnings Recovery Center, Sam feels her absence like an acute pain. Even while helping her mother hide her increasing drinking, Sam had felt connected to her in a way that's missing with her father. A charismatic and popular preacher in their small town, her dad willingly helps everyone in the congregation with their problems but is unable to talk openly with Sam about their own family. Meanwhile, Sam is questioning her religious beliefs and feels like an outsider in her church youth group. When a young teen from the congregation vanishes, Sam is worried for her; at the same time she feels both eager and wary regarding the new romantic overtones in her friendship with the missing girl's brother. Sara Zarr captures small-town social culture with credibility, while developing characters of all ages that are realistically sympathetic and flawed. In less skilled hands, the storyline about the girl's disappearance could have easily fallen into melodrama, but Zarr keeps it grounded and believable. (Age 13 and older)

Appendices

Appendix I

Checklist of Books in CCBC Choices 2010

This quick-reference listing of all of the books recommended in this edition of *CCBC Choices* is alphabetical by primary 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 16–19
 Seasons and Celebrations (Seasons): pages 20–23
 Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature (Folklore): pages 23–25
 Historical People, Places, and Events (History): pages 25–32
 Biography and Autobiography (Biography): pages 32–40
 Contemporary People, Places, and Events (Contemporary): pages 40–41
 Issues in Today's World (Issues): page 42
 Understanding Oneself and Others (Understanding): page 43
 The Arts (Arts): pages 44–47
 Poetry (Poetry): pages 48–51
 Concept Books (Concept): pages 52–53
 Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers (PB Preschoolers):
 pages 53–64
 Picture Books for School-Age Children (PB School-Age): pages 64–72
 Books for Beginning Readers (Beginning): pages 72–73
 Books for Newly Independent Readers (Independent): pages 73–75
 Fiction for Children (Fiction Children): pages 75–86
 Fiction for Young Adults (Fiction YA): pages 86–100

- Adler, Victoria. *All of Baby Nose to Toes* (PB Preschoolers)
- Aliko. *Quiet in the Garden* (PB Preschoolers)
- Alter, Anna. *Abigail Spells* (PB School-Age)
- Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Wintergirls* (Fiction YA)
- Anonymous. *Quicksand: HIV/AIDS in Our Lives* (Issues)
- Argueta, Jorge. *Sopa de frijoles* (Poetry)
- Arnosky, Jim. *Crocodile Safari* (Natural World)
- Aylesworth, Jim. *The Mitten* (Folklore)
- Bachorz, Pam. *Candor* (Fiction YA)
- Baek, Matthew J. *Panda & Polar Bear* (PB Preschoolers)
- Bang, Molly. *Living Sunlight* (Natural World)
- Banks, Kate. *That's Papa's Way* (PB Preschoolers)
- Bantle, Lee. *David Inside Out* (Fiction YA)

- Bardhan-Quallen, Sudipta. *Flying Eagle* (Natural World)
- Baskin, Nora Raleigh. *Anything But Typical* (Fiction Children)
- Bass, Hester. *The Secret World of Walter Anderson* (Arts)
- Bauer, Marion Dane. *The Longest Night* (PB Preschoolers)
- Bausum, Ann. *Denied, Detained, Deported* (History)
- Bishop, Nic. *Butterflies and Moths* (Natural World)
- Bond, Rebecca. *In the Belly of an Ox* (Arts)
- Boutignon, Béatrice. *Not All Animals Are Blue* (PB Preschoolers)
- Brown, Craig. *Mule Train Mail* (Contemporary)
- Bryan, Ashley. *Ashley Bryan* (Arts)
- Caletti, Deb. *The Secret Life of Prince Charming* (Fiction YA)
- Carris, Joan. *Wild Times at the Bed & Biscuit* (Independent)
- Cart, Michael, editor. *How Beautiful the Ordinary* (Fiction YA)
- Carter, Timothy. *Evil?* (Fiction YA)
- Cashore, Kristin. *Fire*. Dial, 2009 (Fiction YA)
- Chocolate, Debbi. *El Barrio* (PB School-Age)
- Choldenko, Gennifer. *Al Capone Shines My Shoes* (Fiction Children)
- Cochrane, Mick. *The Girl Who Threw Butterflies* (Fiction YA)
- Cockcroft, Jason. *Counter Clockwise* (Fiction Children)
- Coffelt, Nancy. *Big, Bigger, Biggest!* (Concept)
- Collins, Suzanne. *Catching Fire* (Fiction YA)
- Combres, Élisabeth. *Broken Memory* (Fiction YA)
- Cook, Michelle. *Our Children Can Soar* (History)
- Cossi, Olga. *Pemba Sherpa* (PB School-Age)
- Coy, John. *Top of the Order* (Fiction Children)
- Creech, Sharon. *The Unfinished Angel* (Fiction Children)
- Crum, Shutta. *Thunder-Boomer!* (PB School-Age)
- Dahl, Roald. *More about Boy* (Biography)
- Davies, Jacqueline. *Tricking the Tallyman* (PB School-Age)
- Davis, Tanita S. *Mare's War* (Fiction YA)
- Deedy, Carmen Agra. *14 Cows for America* (History)
- Demas, Corinne. *Always in Trouble* (PB School-Age)
- Dowell, Frances O'Roark. *The Kind of Friends We Used to Be* (Fiction Children)
- Ehlert, Lois. *Boo to You!* (Seasons)
- Elliott, David. *Finn Throws a Fit!* (PB Preschoolers)
- Ellis, Deborah. *Children of War* (Contemporary)
- Emberley, Rebecca. *Chicken Little* (Folklore)
- Falwell, Cathryn. *Mystery Vine* (PB Preschoolers)

- Fern, Tracey E. *Pippo the Fool* (History)
- Fleischman, Paul. *The Dunderheads* (PB School-Age)
- Fleming, Candace. *Imogene's Last Stand* (PB School-Age)
- Fleming, Candace. *The Great and Only Barnum* (Biography)
- Floca, Brian. *Moonshot* (History)
- Florian, Douglas. *Dinothesaurus* (Poetry)
- Forrester, Sandra. *Leo and the Lesser Lion* (Fiction Children)
- Fox, Mem. *Hello Baby!* (PB Preschoolers)
- Franco, Betsy. *Zero is the Leaves on the Tree* (Concept)
- Frost, Helen. *Crossing Stones* (Fiction YA)
- Gaiman, Neil. *Odd and the Frost Giants* (Fiction Children)
- Gal, Susan. *Night Lights* (PB Preschoolers)
- Giblin, James Cross. *The Rise and Fall of Senator Joe McCarthy* (Biography)
- Gladstone, Valerie. *A Young Dancer* (Arts)
- Going, K. L. *King of the Screwups* (Fiction YA)
- Goodrich, Carter. *The Hermit Crab* (PB School-Age)
- Gorbachev, Valeri. *The Missing Chick* (PB Preschoolers)
- Gravett, Emily. *The Odd Egg* (PB Preschoolers)
- Grimes, Nikki. *Make Way for Dyanonde Daniel* (Independent)
- Grimes, Nikki. *Rich* (Independent)
- Grossman, Rena D. *Carry Me* (PB Preschoolers)
- Harley, Avis. *African Acrostics* (Poetry)
- Harris, Robie H. *It's Perfectly Normal* (Understanding)
- Hautman, Pete. *How to Steal a Car* (Fiction YA)
- Hegamin, Tonya Cherie. *Most Loved in All the World* (PB School-Age)
- Heide, Florence Parry. *Princess Hyacinth* (PB School-Age)
- Heiligman, Deborah. *Charles and Emma* (Biography)
- Heller, Esther Susan. *Menorah Under the Sea* (Seasons)
- Henkes, Kevin. *Birds* (PB Preschoolers)
- Heo, Yumi. *Ten Days and Nine Nights* (PB Preschoolers)
- Hernandez, David. *No More Us For You* (Fiction YA)
- Hest, Amy. *Little Chick* (PB Preschoolers)
- Hof, Marjolijn. *Against the Odds* (Fiction Children)
- Holm, Jennifer L. *Babymouse* (Fiction Children)
- Hoose, Phillip. *Claudette Colvin* (History)
- Hopkins, Lee Bennett, selector. *Sky Magic* (Poetry)
- Hopkinson, Deborah. *Home on the Range* (Biography)
- Horáček, Petr. *Suzu Goose and the Christmas Star* (Seasons)

- Hughes, Langston. *My People* (Poetry)
- Hughes, Langston. *The Negro Speaks of Rivers* (Poetry)
- Hurwin, Davida Wills. *Freaks and Revelations* (Fiction YA)
- Jackson, Donna M. *Extreme Scientists* (Natural World)
- Janeczko, Paul B., selector. *A Foot in the Mouth* (Poetry)
- Jenkins, Steve. *Down Down Down* (Natural World)
- Jenkins, Steve. *Never Smile at a Monkey* (Natural World)
- Jocelyn, Marthe. *Same Same* (Concept)
- Johnston, Tony. *My Abuelita* (PB School-Age)
- Kajikawa, Kimiko. *Tsunami!* (History)
- Kasza, Keiko. *Ready for Anything* (PB Preschoolers)
- Kaufman, Michael T. *1968* (History)
- Kohler, Dean Ellis. *Rock 'n' Roll Soldier* (Biography)
- Krosoczka, Jarrett J. *Lunch Lady and the Author Visit Vendetta* (Fiction Children)
- Krosoczka, Jarrett J. *Lunch Lady and the Cyborg Substitute* (Fiction Children)
- Krosoczka, Jarrett J. *Lunch Lady and the League of Librarians* (Fiction Children)
- LaFleur, Suzanne. *Love, Aubrey* (Fiction Children)
- Landy, Derek. *Skulduggery Pleasant* (Fiction Children)
- Larbalestier, Justine. *Liar* (Fiction YA)
- Lasky, Kathryn. *Georgia Rises* (Arts)
- Lazo Gilmore, Dorina K.. *Cora Cooks Pancit* (PB Preschoolers)
- Lin, Grace. *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* (Fiction Children)
- Lo, Malinda. *Ash* (Fiction YA)
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Appendix II

About the CCBC

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

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

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

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

Appendix III

About the Compilers

Kathleen T. Horning is the director of the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. For nine years she was also a children's librarian at Madison Public Library. She is the author of *From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books* (revised edition: HarperCollins, 2010). With Ginny Moore Kruse, she coauthored *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1980–1990*, and with Ginny Moore Kruse and Megan Schliesman, *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1991–1996*. Kathleen is a past-president of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) of the American Library Association (ALA), and a past president of the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY). She has chaired the Americas Award Committee, under the auspices of the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP), University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee; ALA/ALSC's 1997 Mildred Batchelder Award Committee; and ALA/ALSC's 1995 John Newbery Committee; and three Charlotte Zolotow Award Committees (administered by the CCBC), including the 2010 committee. She also chaired USBBY's Hans Christian Andersen Award Committee, which selected U.S. nominees for the international award in 1992. She has served as a member of many book award and evaluation committees, including the ALA Rainbow List, the NCTE Lee Bennett Hopkins Awards, the ALA/EMIERT Coretta Scott King Award, ALA Notable Children's Books, and the 1990 Newbery Committee. She received the Scholastic Library Publishing Award from the American Library Association in 2009 for her outstanding leadership in the field of librarianship and children's and young adult literature. Kathleen frequently lectures to librarians on issues in evaluating literature for children and young adults, and she 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 was the editor of *The Multicolored Mirror: Cultural Substance in Literature for Children and Young Adults* (Highsmith, 1991), and a former columnist for the *Wisconsin State Journal*, writing about children's books. Merri was a member of the ALA/ALSC 2010 Caldecott Award Committee. She also served on ALA's first Odyssey Award Committee (2008), a joint award of ALSC and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). She served on the 2001 Charlotte Zolotow Award committee and chaired the 2002, 2006, 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.

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 incoming chair of the Wisconsin Educational Media and Technology Association (WEMTA) Intellectual Freedom Special Interest Group, and a past member of the Wisconsin Library Association Intellectual Freedom Roundtable board. She is also a former member of the South Central Library System Board of Trustees in Wisconsin. She has a B.A. degree in English from UW–Whitewater and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Tessa Michaelson was a librarian at the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison from January, 2008 through June, 2009. She is currently a librarian at the Ruby M. Sisson Memorial Library, Pagosa Springs, Colorado. Tessa was the producer of the weekly CCBC podcasts and produced a virtual tour of the CCBC for the library's website. She also created or co-created several thematic bibliographies available on the CCBC website. Tessa served as a member of the 2009 Charlotte Zolotow Award Committee, and currently serves on ALA/ALSC's Public Awareness Committee and the ALA/ALSC 2011 Batchelder 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.

Tana Elias, who created the index for *CCBC Choices 2010*, 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 IV

The Friends of the CCBC

Interested in receiving *CCBC Choices* each year when it's published? Join the Friends of the CCBC!

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

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

Members of the 2009–2010 Friends of the CCBC, Inc., Board of Directors are President Shawn Brommer, Vice-President Kim Dahl, Recording Secretary Laura Holt, Membership Secretary Linda Schmitt, Treasurer Amanda Struckmeyer, and Directors-at-Large Carin Bringelson and Stacey Burkhart. In addition to the board volunteers, the Friends book sale coordinator is Angie Sparks. The Friends Newsletter is edited by Janet Piehl, with design and layout by Michael Kress-Russick.

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

Join the Friends of the CCBC!

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

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Indexes

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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.

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This subject index provides access to the titles in *CCBC Choices* as well as to information about the CCBC and publishing in 2009 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, "Africans and African Americans" includes a cross-reference to "Kenyans" and other culturally specific sub-groups.

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ISBN-10: 0-931641-20-9
ISBN-13: 978-0-931641-20-6