

CCBC

Choices

2004



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Each year, the Friends of the CCBC, Inc., underwrites the production and printing costs of *CCBC Choices*. The extraordinary support from this all-volunteer organization means that *Choices* is available at no cost to teachers, school and public librarians, and interested others across Wisconsin. We are grateful to their commitment to the work of the CCBC in this and many other ways. (For more information about the Friends of the CCBC, see Appendix VI.)

Friends member Tana Elias created the index for *CCBC Choices 2004*. This is the ninth year that Tana has created the *Choices* index as a volunteer. Despite the original intent nine years ago to have a limited subject index, Tana's work grows more comprehensive each year, and is always carried out with grace and efficiency. We thank her for her willingness to share her time and expertise to make *CCBC Choices* more useful to librarians and teachers.

It was also nine years ago that Friends member Lois Ehlerter created the cover design for *CCBC Choices*, giving the publication a fresh look that we continue to enjoy.

Janet Piehl, a UW-Madison graduate student in the School of Library and Information Studies, provided copy editing for this edition of *CCBC Choices*. She worked with careful attention to detail and with good humor, despite the quick turnaround time we required.

A number of individuals with specialized interests and expertise evaluated one or more books at our request, or volunteered their comments. We thank Anne Altshuler, Peggy Choy, Elizabeth Strasma Golestani, Simin Golestani, Sohrab Golestani, Joan H. Hall, Barry Hartup, Joseph Horning, Ginny Moore Kruse, John Kruse, and Sergio Rodas for contributing to our work in this way.

Thank you to all who participated in CCBC monthly book discussions in 2003, and to those who attended our annual mock award discussions in November and December, 2003. (For the results of these award discussions, see Appendix IV.)

Members of the *CCBC-Net* community, an electronic book discussion forum sponsored by the CCBC, shared some of their favorite books of the year, and the outcomes of regional or local award book discussions, during December, 2003, and January, 2004. Their comments provided us with additional perspectives and insights. We appreciate all who participate in this lively virtual community.

Ginny Moore Kruse, who retired as director of the CCBC in August, 2002, continues to be involved with children's and young adult literature in many ways. We are thankful to Ginny for her many suggestions of titles to consider for inclusion in this edition of *CCBC Choices*, and for the commentaries she shared. With each edition of *Choices*, we continue to strive to meet the standards she set throughout her years of leadership at the CCBC.

Kathleen T. Horning, Merri V. Lindgren, Hollis Rudiger, 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). As a book examination center and research library, the CCBC receives review copies of almost all of the trade books and many alternative press books published in English in the United States for children and young adults during the year. The library received literally thousands of newly published books throughout 2003. One or more of the professional staff examined each of them. Hundreds were subsequently read. We discussed many formally or informally with other librarians and educators in Wisconsin and elsewhere in the nation. Many were also discussed on *CCBC-Net*, the national electronic book discussion group moderated by the CCBC.

Our goal in creating *CCBC Choices* is to highlight outstanding titles published for children and young adults each year. We hope that *CCBC Choices* will help teachers, school and public librarians, daycare providers, and others who work with children and young adults locate high quality books that meet specific curricular and developmental needs, as well as the need of every child and young adult to have access to a wide array of literature that can inform, entertain, and inspire. We recommend each and every book in *CCBC Choices*. But each and every book is not necessarily for every child, every classroom, or every family. We are confident, however, that everyone using *CCBC Choices* will find a significant number of books that will delight, inform, or stimulate the innate curiosity of children and teenagers.

In choosing titles for *CCBC Choices*, we strive to call attention to a wide array of books. The process is a subjective one in many respects. As we look for books that are accurate, that are interesting, that are well-written and engagingly presented, we don't always agree on an individual title's merits (or lack thereof). It is one thing to determine accuracy in the case of an informational book, another when discussing the authenticity of events or emotions in a work of fiction. We talk about these differences. Some of these titles ultimately end up in *CCBC Choices*; others do not.

There are books we simply miss, even with the thousands that we examine and hundreds that we read throughout the year. Throughout the year, as we discover titles we wish we'd included, we look for other ways we can draw attention to them as we work with teachers and school and public librarians.

Book discussion is an important part of our evaluation process at the CCBC. In addition to the informal discussions we have with one another and colleagues, we hold monthly discussions open to any adult in order to look critically at some of the new books we have received at the CCBC. Using CCBC Book Discussion Guidelines (see Appendix III) we articulate our first critical responses to the books in question.

We also host annual award discussions, using the criteria for eligibility and excellence established by national book award committees. The award discussions provide an opportunity to look critically at some of the year's outstanding children's books. In late 2003, we held discussions of books eligible for the Caldecott Medal, the Coretta Scott King Award, the Newbery Award, and the Michael L. Printz Award. The results of those discussions can be found in Appendix IV.

### **Organization of *CCBC Choices 2004***

The organization of the books in *CCBC Choices* into thematic and genre 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.

The 216 books recommended in *CCBC Choices 2004* are divided into 17 thematic and genre categories. Each title has been placed in the category to which it seems most suited. Because many of the books could

easily have been placed in more than one section, a “see also” listing at the end of each category draws attention to other relevant titles in this edition of *Choices*. There is an author/title index and subject index at the end of *Choices*.

We provide suggested age ranges for each title we recommend. These are meant to be general guidelines based on appeal and age-appropriateness of the content. However, we know that individual children and teenagers may find books suggested for younger or older age ranges of interest, and adults may determine them appropriate. 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 (Picture Books for Toddlers and Preschoolers and Picture Books for School-Aged Children), as well as in the two fiction categories (Fiction for Children and Fiction for Young Adults). We struggle with this overlap every year, and every few years find ourselves reevaluating what to call these categories. For consistency, we have placed books in the Picture Books for Toddlers and Preschoolers category if the lower age recommendation is four or under, even though the upper age on many of these books goes to seven or eight. We have placed novels in the Fiction for Children category if the lower age recommendation is 11 or under, again acknowledging that the upper age recommendations often span into teenage years. We have tried to address the overlap using the “see also” references.

The citation for each book in *CCBC Choices 2004* includes the prices and international standard book number (ISBN) for any edition we were able to find in print in late 2003. 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. Whether or not hardcover-only titles eventually make it into paperback is influenced by a number of factors, including sales of the hardcover edition.

Several books in *CCBC Choices 2004* have a 2002 copyright date. To our knowledge, these books were not actually published until 2003, and therefore are included in this edition of *Choices*.

There are literally hundreds of thousands of books for children and young adults currently in print. In recent years, we’ve estimated approximately 5,000 new titles join those ranks annually. Their quality varies widely. For those who are committed to finding high-quality books for the children and young adults for whom they are professionally or personally responsible, the Cooperative Children’s Book Center offers an environment for discovery and learning, and, ultimately, for making up one’s own mind about the new books published each year.

In creating *CCBC Choices*, we have tried to identify outstanding titles of the publishing year in the hope that it will provide librarians, teachers, parents, and others with assistance in navigating the wide and exciting array of choices available to them.

## THE CHARLOTTE ZOLOTOW AWARD

The Charlotte Zolotow Award is given annually to the author of the best picture book text published in the United States in the preceding year. Established in 1997, the award is named to honor the work of Charlotte Zolotow, a distinguished children's literature editor for 38 years with Harper Junior Books and an author of more than 70 picture stories, including such classic works as *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present* (Harper, 1962) and *William's Doll* (Harper, 1972). Ms. Zolotow attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison on a writing scholarship from 1933 to 1936, where she studied with Professor Helen C. White.

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

Any picture book for young children (birth through age seven) 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 are not eligible. The committee works with a shortlist of titles selected by the CCBC professional staff. Committee members may suggest additional titles they think should be included on the shortlist; however, all titles are subject to the approval of the CCBC professional staff. Books written by Charlotte Zolotow are not eligible for the award.

In addition to choosing the award-winning title, the committee may select up to 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 sixth annual Charlotte Zolotow Award Committee were Kathleen T. Horning, chair (Director, Cooperative Children's Book Center, UW-Madison); Shawn Brommer (Youth Services and Outreach Coordinator, South Central Library System, Madison, Wisconsin); Eric James (Grade 1-2 Teacher, Country View Elementary School, Verona, Wisconsin); Michelle Reis Olsen (librarian, Randall Elementary School, Madison, Wisconsin); and Marlys Sloup (literacy consultant; retired teacher, Madison, Wisconsin).

*[logo]*

**2005 Charlotte Zolotow Award**

**Winner:**

**Honor Books:**

**Highly Commended:**

## **OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PUBLISHING IN 2003**

The most recent edition of *Children's Books in Print* (R.R. Bowker, 2003) states that there are books 250,150 from 13,100 U.S. publishers currently available for purchase in the United States. This includes new trade books, reprints, paperback editions of titles published earlier, large-print books, book-club editions, novelty books, series books from informational publishers, and more. There are well over three times as many books available now than a decade ago.

Only a small percentage of that vast number actually represents brand new titles for children and teens. We estimate about 5,000 such books were published in 2003.

The CCBC received approximately 3,00 new books for children and young adults in 2003. The majority of these were published by approximately 45 or so trade publishers (some of which are separate divisions of the same publishing house) and a dozen or so small, independent publishers. Some were titles from publishers specializing in informational books for the young, often developed specifically with curricular needs in mind.

Of the 216 books in *CCBC Choices 2004*, 16 represent the first published works for the young of 13 authors, two illustrators, and one author/illustrator; 19 were originally or simultaneously published outside the United States (5 of these were translations); 11 were published by five small, independently owned and operated publishers; and 63 feature multicultural themes or topics (the CCBC definition of "multicultural" refers to people of color). To our knowledge, 118 of the books we recommend in *CCBC Choices 2004* have not appeared on any of the other nationally distributed lists of the year's best books as of late January, 2004.

Most of the books in *CCBC Choices 2004* are published for an audience ranging in age from infancy to 14 years -- the upper age in the definition of "Children" used by the book awards committees of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) of the American Library Association (ALA). Some of the books in this edition of *CCBC Choices* are recommended for older ages as well.

As we comment on some of what we observed about the publishing year in 2003 on the following pages, please note that not every book we discuss has been selected as a *CCBC Choice*. Books that are not recommended in this edition of *CCBC Choices* are designated by the inclusion of publisher information after their titles

### **Vapid, Vacant, and Empty: Celebrity Publishing**

In recent years we've seen a great rise in the number of children's books written by celebrity authors, as publishers strive to appeal more and more to book-buying parents more likely to recognize names such as Katie Couric, Jerry Seinfeld, and Boomer Esiason than they are E. B. White, Margaret Wise Brown, or Kevin Henkes. Books by celebrities such as Henry Winkler, Lynne Cheney, and Alma (Mrs. Colin) Powell were issued in 2003, but the most highly visible of these highly visible authors was Madonna, who wrote and published two picture books this year. Both hit the *New York Times Best Seller List* and received an inordinate amount of attention, considering their insipid literary quality. Madonna plans to publish four additional

titles over the next few years. In an interview with the VH1 television network, she explained why she had decided to become a children's author: "Now I'm starting to read to my son, but I couldn't believe how vapid and vacant and empty all the stories were."

Children's librarians across the country have been scratching their heads, wondering what books Madonna could possibly have been reading to little Rocco – books by other celebrities, perhaps? Does she know about libraries and children's librarians?

## **Vivid, Vibrant, and Expressive: Picture Book Publishing in 2003**

We found that 2003 stands out as a year of particularly excellent books for the very young, despite Madonna's forays into the field. In fact, the Charlotte Zolotow Award committee cited a record number of honor books and highly commended titles this year, in addition to the winning book.

This year's Charlotte Zolotow Award winner, *What James Likes Best* by Amy Schwartz, is a playful story divided into four short chapters, each one ending with a chance for young children to interact directly with the book by answering a series of open-ended questions. We seem to see more and more call for interaction in books for children at all levels, the most obvious one of 2003 being Mo Willems's wonderfully weird *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*. Here a persistent pigeon literally begs readers, page after page, for an opportunity to drive a big city bus. His persuasive methods -- pleading, whining, bargaining, and even throwing a tantrum – will be very familiar to most young children, who will delight in telling him No! with each page turn.

A more subdued story that still invites participation is Lynne Rae Perkins's *Snow Music*. Here text and pictures are so much in tune that there are times the words actually become part of the images, representing tracks in snow made by birds, a squirrel, a dog, children, cars, and a snow plow. Everyday sights and sounds are also the basis of *The Baby Goes Beep* by first-time author Rebecca O'Connell. Bold graphics by Ken Wilson-Max show typical activities of a babbling baby from morning to bedtime, accompanied by O'Connell's perfectly paced text.

We continue to see picture books dealing artfully with the realities of varying family structures in which children live. *Two Old Potatoes and Me* by John Coy, for example, is a marvelously subtle story about a father and daughter who see each other only on weekends, illustrated with a combination of painting and collage by Carolyn Fisher. Javaka Steptoe's signature cut-paper collages illustrate *The Jones Family Express*, a lively story about an extended family and a young boy's desire to find the perfect gift for his favorite aunt.

A small alien finds herself stranded on planet Earth, far from her mother and father, in *Beegu* by Alexis Deacon. Beegu finds most inhabitants of Earth, from autumn leaves to telephone booths, inhospitable and unresponsive in this wry and touching story that originated in England. A small cat runs into much friendlier creatures in *The Calabash Cat and His Amazing Journey*.

Determined to find the end of the world, the cat meets one animal after another willing to help him, but the understanding offered by each one is based on its own experience. Only when the Calabash Cat meets an eagle, who flies him over the earth, does he begin to understand the immensity of the world. Throughout this engaging story, author/artist James Rumford uses a

horizontal color-coded line to trace the cat's journey. The lines come together at the story's end to show all the colors of the rainbow—and different ways of viewing the world.

## **Where Do We Draw the Line? Books That Expand Audience Boundaries**

The lines are not always quite so clear in the world of children's and young adult books these years. We've learned that picture books are not just for young children any more, and Neil Gaiman's *The Wolves in the Walls* is a case in point. This delectably eerie picture book tells the story of Lucy, a young girl who's convinced that the noises she hears behind the walls in her home at night are actually wolves. And, in fact, she's right. Once her family flees their home, the wolves take over, and although heroic Lucy does figure out a way to reclaim their home, the realization of childhood fears may prove to be a bit too strong for the typical picture book audience. Many older elementary and middle school students, however, will be thrilled with this haunting story.

The line also continues to blur between adult and young adult literature. Two particularly outstanding books with teen protagonists were published as adult books in the United States in 2003, and both deserve the attention of those who work with teens. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Doubleday) by Mark Haddon is exquisitely written from the point of view of a fifteen-year-old boy with Asperger's Syndrome, a mild form of autism. In Great Britain it was published simultaneously in an adult and a young adult edition. We wish the same had been done in the United States.

Marjane Satrapi's graphic-novel memoir, *Persepolis*, details her coming of age in Tehran, Iran, during the Islamic Revolution. Although we don't normally include adult books in CCBC Choices, we felt that the subject matter was so important and the graphic format so appealing and accessible, that we made an exception in this case.

## **Creative Approaches to Information: Engaging and Intriguing Nonfiction**

Nonfiction for children and young adults continues to be both innovative and informative. As with picture books, we noticed quite a few interactive books of information. Most distinctive among these was *The Great Art Scandal* by Anna Nilsen, which encourages children to look closely at 32 well-known paintings in order to find details that are hidden in original paintings created especially for this book. The storyline involves a mystery that readers are asked to help solve. Horizontally split pages ease comparisons among the masterworks and original paintings. For the younger set, Steve Jenkins and Robin Page's *What Do You Do with a Tail Like This?* engages children in a picture-clue game involving animals and their ears, eyes, noses, and tails.

The 100th anniversary of flight inspired several books about the Wright Brothers. David Craig's realistic illustrations for *First to Fly: How Orville and Wilbur Wright Invented the Airplane* provides a wide array of visual perspectives from which to view the Wright Brothers' early

flights. An unusual historical perspective on the same subject can be found in *The Wright Sister: Katharine Wright and Her Famous Brothers* by Richard Maurer. Based on the numerous letters she wrote to friends and family members about her brothers' work, Maurer gives us an intimate sense of the events leading up to and resulting from that famous first flight, as witnessed first-hand by their sister..

In the past few years, we have been amazed by the number and variety of excellent biographies, autobiographies, and memoirs for children and teens. Many authors and artists continue to use the picture book form to tell life stories. In 2003 we appreciated picture book biographies of Rachel Carson (*Rachel*), Cesar Chavez (*Harvesting Hope*), Leonardo DaVinci (*Leonardo*), Muhammad (*Muhammad*), Erik Satie (*The Strange Mr. Satie*), and Mark Twain (*American Boy*), to name a few. Christine King Farris adds to the ever-growing body of literature about Martin Luther King Jr. with her own childhood memories in *My Brother Martin*. We've come to expect great things from Peter Sís with his rich, multi-layered picture book biographies and he doesn't disappoint with *The Tree of Life: A Book Depicting the Life of Charles Darwin: Naturalist, Geologist & Thinker*.

*Hana's Suitcase* moves back and forth between the Holocaust during World War II and the present day as it tells about Hana Brady, a victim of Nazi Germany, and Fumiko Ishioka, a young Japanese woman in charge of a Holocaust education center in Tokyo in the late 1990s who uncovered Hana's story. Fumiko began with only a suitcase, loaned by Auschwitz for display at her small museum. The suitcase had a name: Hana Brady. Fumiko and the children with whom she worked wanted to know what became of Hana. With only a name and Hana's date of birth to work with, Fumiko searched relentlessly. She finally discovered that although Hana had died at Auschwitz, her brother was still alive, and an extraordinary connection was made.

We saw a marked decrease in the number of photo-essays dealing with contemporary people in 2003. Of those we did see, we can commend *Coming to America: A Muslim Family's Story* by Bernard Wolf, which documents the lives of the Mahmoud family who immigrated from Egypt to New York City. *Children of Native America Today* by Yvonne Wakim Dennis and Arlene Hirshfelder shows the lives of children from 25 different tribes in North America. And *Adelina's Whales* by Richard Sobol documents the life of a ten-year-old girl living in a small fishing village in Mexico. In general, photo-essays offer children unique insights into the lives of their counterparts around the world, and we certainly hope this isn't a dying art form.

## **What's Your Story? The Truth about Fiction**

Although there was a dearth of informational books about contemporary children and teens, 2003 was a terrific publishing year for contemporary realistic fiction, providing intimate and affecting portraits of children and teens whose stories—and the issues in their lives—ring true.

Among the significant works for young adult readers is Angela Johnson's spare yet emotionally saturated *The First Part Last*, in which the intensity of teenage father Bobby's love for his infant daughter is matched by the intensity of the responsibility involved in caring for her, which often

overwhelms him.

Troy lives in a constant state of heightened self-consciousness that has grown unbearable for the severely overweight teen. Curt's past, a childhood of abuse and neglect, is defeated by his powerful music, but his drug addiction may defeat him. First-time author K.L. Going creates a gritty yet life-affirming portrait of two teenage boys who save each other from going over the edge in *Fat Kid Rules the World*.

Helen Frost sketches portraits of seven teens facing circumstances that threaten to engulf them, from pregnancy to abuse to coming out, in *Keesha's House*, which raises the bar on the novel-in-poem form. Through use of two structured poetic forms, the sestina and the sonnet, Frost weaves a cohesive story of hope out of threads of uncertainty and despair.

These and other young adult novels, from Martha Brooks's *True Confessions of a Heartless Girl* to Sharon G. Flake's *Begging for Change*, offer insight into stories teens will recognize as true, whether or not they can personally relate to the circumstances.

We were pleased to see an increase in the number of honest works about the lives of gay and lesbian teens. Julie Anne Peters's *Keeping You a Secret* is first and foremost a teenage love story, and Peters captures the giddy feeling of falling in love wonderfully. But she also addresses the repercussions faced by many lesbian and gay youth when high school senior Holland Jaeger is kicked out of her house after coming out. Luckily, Holland finds the safety net of the larger lesbian and gay community.

Glen Huser's *Stitches* introduces a young teen who is targeted from early age as being different. Travis is barely beginning to consider his sexuality, but he's the target of serious bullying because he stands out with his interests in sewing and puppetry and other nontraditional male past-times. Huser's extraordinary narrative doesn't flinch from detailing the harsh abuse—both verbal and physical—that kids like Travis so often endure. With its rich characterizations, it ultimately offers an uplifting, hopeful, often humorous story because of the support that Travis receives from many sources.

Like *Keeping You a Secret*, David Levithan's hilarious debut novel *Boy Meets Boy* is also a love story, but Levithan's world is not quite in the realm of realistic fiction. Rather, it's an appealing and achievable fantasy world—a world where begin gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered teens are just teens, an ordinary part of life in their school and community; a world where the transgendered homecoming queen is also captain of the football team. By turning things on their side, Levithan offers an entertaining and insightful commentary on the way things are, and they way they might be. Teens defying gender expectations is at the heart of Andrew Matthews's *The Flip Side* (Delacorte, 2003), in which a teenage boy's discovery that he enjoys cross-dressing leads to a cascade of revelations among his classmates.

We welcome these books that give lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered teens visibility in fiction—something they can take to heart in real life.

Among the realistic novels for children and younger teens is Kevin Henkes's *Olive's Ocean*, in which 12-year-old Martha Boyle's summer on Cape Cod features the thrill of her first crush and

the humiliation of adolescent cruelty, all of which figures into Martha's deepening sense of self and her future dreams. Deborah Ellis's *Mud City*, set in the recent past, continues to examine the plight of Afghan refugees, as Ellis did in her two prior novels, *The Breadwinner* (Groundwood, 2001) and *Parvana's Journey* (Groundwood, 2002). And Jacqueline Woodson's *Locomotion*, another novel-in-poems, provides a moving character study of Lonnie, a young African American boy for whom writing has become a source of emotional survival, as well as something to nurture his future dreams.

It's not just contemporary fiction that offers the opportunity for children and teens to consider issues that resonate in real life. Historical fiction, and even fantasy, can provide thought-provoking insight into personal and social issues that resonate in today's world.

Among the outstanding historical fiction we read this year were two memorable Holocaust narratives. In Uri Orlev's *Run, Boy, Run*, a young Jewish boy spends much of the war masquerading as Christian as he makes his way from village to village trying to stay alive and one step ahead of the Germans. By the war's end, he has lost all memory of who he was before the war, as well as the family he once had. In Jerry Spinelli's *Milkweed*, a very young boy doesn't know his name or where he's come from when the story begins. The fact that he doesn't miss what he can't recall is just one of the ways the cruel, skewed events of the Holocaust have permanently scarred his understanding of the world.

Richard Peck's *The River Between Us* is set against the backdrop of the Civil War in southern Illinois and tackles wide-ranging issues, from racism to the morality of war. Jennifer Donnelly's debut novel, *A Northern Light*, is a masterpiece for young adults, examining the limits that class and gender imposed on a young woman coming of age in the early twentieth century. Donnelly's fictional narrative was inspired by a real-life tragedy, and despite its historical setting, the book explores with great depth and sensitivity issues that are surely relevant today.

## **Other Realms of Possibility: Fantasy Fiction**

Works of historical fiction are based at least in part on actual people, places, or events in the past, and their authors have the challenge of authentically recreating the period in which they are set. The task for fantasy writers is to create new worlds—or newly imagined realities for life here on earth. The publishing trend for fantasy novels for children and young adults was still riding high in 2003. Among the many fine titles we read were those that, like the best contemporary and historical fiction, offer essential truths about human struggles, or about society as a whole. But the pure entertainment value of fantasy literature cannot be denied, at least for those who are attracted to the genre, and often for those who forswear an attraction to it. The combination of a richly imagined setting, appealing characters, and a well-conceived and executed plot can be irresistible.

The eagerly anticipated fifth Harry Potter book arrived with the student wizard transitioning from child to adolescent. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* finds Harry Potter in a much more emotionally tumultuous state than prior books, complicating his relationships with others and giving this volume a less upbeat tone. At the same time, the engaging cast of characters

continues to grow and intrigue, and the plot still packs a punch, particularly in the final third of this hefty tome. Once again, we're in J.K. Rowling's thrall, awaiting volume six.

Author Tamora Pierce, creator of the ever-popular Lionness Quartet, revisits her fantasy realm 20 years after its 1983 premiere to spotlight the teenage daughter of her now middle-aged heroine knight. Aly is a substantial young woman in her own right, struggling to establish her identity in the shadow of her mother's fame in *Trickster's Choice*.

Another popular fantasy series gained a sequel this year, with Garth Nix bringing his story of a reluctantly heroic librarian to a close in *Abhorsen*. Although light on the character development that was so strong in *Lirael* (HarperCollins, 2001) and *Sabriel* (HarperCollins, 1996), *Abhorsen* sports a fast pace, engaging plot, and satisfying answers to questions left hanging in the previous books.

Diana Wynne Jones sets the standard for consistent quality in the fantasy genre, and with *The Merlin Conspiracy* she continues to fulfill expectations with a story featuring an elaborately structured multiverse hovering on the edge of magical chaos – unless an unlikely coalition of teens is able to avert disaster.

Finding a unique take on Arthurian legend is quite a feat, but Jane Yolen does just that in *The Sword of the Rightful King*. Rich with realistic portrayals of the expected players, the familiar story sports a well-devised twist that will keep readers guessing right up to the final revelation.

In addition to works by established authors, we welcomed notable new voices to the fantasy genre in 2003. Suzanne Collins's debut novel is a quest set in subterranean New York City. *Gregor the Overlander* features an everyday kid as its protagonist, a boy thrust into the role of hero and uncertain if he's up to the task. Collins's adventure is not only riveting, but it will make its readers view cockroaches in a new (and kinder) light. *City of Ember* is another underground fantasy, in which the prospect of eternal darkness sparks 12-year-olds Lina and Doon to embark on a dangerous mission to save their city. A successful blend of futuristic fantasy, adventure story, and intriguing mystery, author Jeanne duPrau's setting strikes an immediate chord with anyone who's ever cowered in the dark. She also invites readers to contemplate both the finer and darker sides of human nature.

Another first-time author, Philip Reeve, creates instant fascination with his vision of the future: cities in Europe have been rebuilt on huge caterpillar treads, allowing them to roam the earth in search of smaller and weaker towns to prey upon. *Mortal Engines* is dark, sometimes gruesome, and immensely imaginative in its concept of "municipal Darwinism."

Finally, *Inkheart*, German author Cornelia Funke's intricate page-turner, revolves around a 12-year-old girl and her father, who has the ability to "read" characters out of books and into real life. An enviable skill? Not when the characters are evil. But despite the dangers, Meggie can't resist experimenting. Does she share her father's extraordinary ability? Funke's second novel published here in the United States firmly establishes her as a gifted and popular author.

## Words from Afar: Translated Literature

Inkheart was one of a number of significant translated books published for children and young adults in the United States in 2003. We commend the efforts of U.S. publishers to acquire works originally published in other nations. Such books can build bridges--helping children and young adults in this country understand the larger world in which they live.

The effort that goes into publishing a translated book is tremendous. Often the editor does not speak the original language of the text, and so relies on summaries by one or more readers fluent in the language in order to determine whether or not to pursue the rights to a foreign title. The editor must find a qualified individual to translate the text, someone who understands the nuances of both the original language and English, and who can consider both the literal meaning and literary integrity of the original. It's a complex job, but one to which a number of editors are committed, with the support of their publishing houses.

Of the more than 3,200 books we received at the CCBC in 2003, we documented 67 translated titles that originated in 13 nations. Most of the translated books we see each year are picture books, but in 2003 there were many high quality translated novels as well.

We documented 15 works of fiction or nonfiction of substantial length, a number indicative of the amount of work involved in publishing such a book. In acknowledgment of that work, and of the importance of bringing these international voices to young readers here, ALSC/ALA's Mildred L. Batchelder Award acknowledges the publisher of the year's outstanding translated title (picture books are ineligible unless the text is of substantial length). The Batchelder Award is not always conferred; a committee may decide that no title merits the award in a given year.

One of the most unusual longer translated books published in 2003 was *The Man Who Went to the Far Side of the Moon* written by Bea Uusma Schyffert and translated by Emi Guner. First published in Sweden, this highly original work of nonfiction recounts the Apollo 11 mission from the point of view of astronaut Michael Collins, who kept the home fires burning in the space capsule while his colleagues Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first two men to walk on the moon.

First published in France, Daniel Pennac's *Eye of the Wolf* tells two life stories, one from the perspective of a refugee child and one from that of a wolf caged in a city zoo. Israeli author Uri Orlev based his new Holocaust novel, *Run, Boy, Run*, on a true story he heard from a survivor who, as a child, escaped from the Warsaw ghetto and spent the rest of the war on the run, sometimes helped by strangers and sometimes betrayed by them.

We saw translated books of substantial length from an unusually diverse group of nations this year: from Sweden, Pers Nilsson's *Heart's Delight* (Front Street); from Denmark, Bjarne Reuter's *The Ring of the Slave Prince* (Dutton); from France, Anna Gavalda's *95 Pounds of Hope* (Viking); from Germany, Mirjam Pressler's *Malka* (Philomel); from Italy, Francesco D'Adamo's *Iqbal* (Atheneum); and from Spain, Luis Sepulveda's *The Story of a Seagull and the Cat Who Taught Her to Fly* (Arthur A. Levine/Scholastic). We find this level of commitment to translation encouraging in these times of global strife.

## **Books for Every Child: Multicultural Literature**

Just as we affirm the importance of international voices in literature for children and teens, we cannot state strongly enough the importance of multicultural literature for children and teens. All children need a wide range of books that reflect their own lives, and also the world in which they live.

There are varied definitions of “multicultural literature” used in the field of literature for children and young adults. No single one is correct. At the CCBC, we use the term to mean books by and about people of color: Africans and African Americans, American Indians, Asians/Pacifics and Asian/Pacific Americans, and Latinos.

We know there is enormous diversity within any cultural group, and we know no single book can speak to the experience of an entire group. That is why it is so important to have a wide range of multicultural literature available in classrooms and libraries. There is a wide range of outstanding multicultural titles in print and available (though books will go out of print if they are not purchased). And even though the overall number of multicultural titles published each year is a small percentage of the overall total, there are always a significant number of exemplary books among them.

There are a number of resources available to teachers, librarians, and parents searching specifically for outstanding multicultural titles to share with children, from the Coretta Scott King, Américas, Pura Belpré, and other award lists; to specialized bibliographies published in professional journals or as professional resource books, such as the National Council of Teachers of English Kaleidoscope series (NCTE, various years); to the occasional, welcome focus on multicultural literature in publications aimed at parents and the general public, such as Black Books Galore's Guide to Great African American Children's Books and its companion volumes (John Wiley, various years). But we are also pleased to see that multicultural literature has generally become an integral part of the discussion of children's and young adult literature in resources such as children's literature textbooks for students studying to become teachers.

### **CCBC Statistics on Multicultural Literature**

In 1985, the CCBC began to document the number of books for children and young adults by and about African Americans each year. In 1994, we expanded the effort to include books by and about all people of color. A complete archive of the statistics we have compiled over the years is available on the CCBC website at: [www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/pcstats.htm](http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/pcstats.htm).

We have seen the numbers ebb and flow over the years, but have yet to see multicultural literature make up more than 10 percent of the total number of new books published. This percentage drops to less than 5 percent when it includes only titles written and/or illustrated by people of color. Furthermore, these statistics represent only quantity, not quality or authenticity, to which we pay close attention as we evaluate books at the CCBC, often seeking the outside opinions of colleagues and experts in the field.

Of the nearly 3,200 titles we received at the CCBC in 2003, we documented the following with regard to books by and about people of color:

- 171 books had significant African or African American content. 79 books were by Black book creators, either authors and/or illustrators (most, but not all, were among the 171 titles with African or African American content).
- 95 books featured American Indian themes, topics, or characters. Of these, only 11 were created by individuals identified as American Indian authors and/or artists.
- 78 books were about or significantly featured Asians/Pacifics or Asian/Pacific Americans. 43 were specifically by book creators of Asian/Pacific heritage (most, but not all, were among the 78 books with Asian/Pacific content).
- 63 were on Latino themes and topics. 41 were created by Latino authors and/or artists (most, but not all, were among the 63 books with Latino content).

Overall, we saw fewer books about people of color in 2003, but a higher proportion of those that were published were written and/or illustrated by people of color. The exception here is with American Indian literature, for which there were 30 more books about Native peoples than there were in 2002, but only five more by Native authors or illustrators. We saw the greatest decrease in the number of books by and about Latinos, in spite of the apparent growing awareness on the part of publishers of a Spanish-speaking Latino population in the United States.

To locate all of the books in this edition of CCBC Choices about people of color, we refer you to the subject index, which provides headings for each specific racial/cultural group as identified within the books we've selected, and a list of all books fitting that subject.

### ***Books by and about Africans and African Americans***

Author Angela Johnson won a MacArthur Fellowship in 2003, making her the third children's author ever to have won one of the "genius grants." She also won both the Printz Award and the Coretta Scott King author award for her singular novel, *The First Part Last*, a lyrical story about a teenage father who chooses to raise his infant daughter. Johnson also published a novel for younger readers this year, *A Cool Moonlight*, which deals with a lonely young girl who has a serious skin disease.

Jacqueline Woodson and Sharon G. Flake are both outstanding writers of contemporary realism and they both published novels this year with young protagonists facing life challenges.

Woodson's *Locomotion* deals with 11-year-old Lonnie, who writes poetry to express his anger and grief after the death of his parents in a tragic house fire. In *Begging for Change*, a sequel to *Money Hungry* (Hyperion, 2001), teenaged Raspberry Hill and her mother have gotten off the streets but are still struggling financially, and Raspberry is still obsessed with money—so much so that she steals from her best friend.

Writer Walter Dean Myers and his artist son, Christopher, once again collaborated on an original picture book for older readers. With poems mimicking the structure of eight-bar blues, *Blues Journey* is an exploration of the art form, illustrated with sophisticated blue-tinted illustrations. Hope Anita Smith's first published book, *The Way a Door Closes*, is a series of engaging poems about a 13-year-old boy dealing with his father leaving home.

*The Way a Door Closes* is illustrated by Shane W. Evans, a gifted young artist relatively new to the scene of children's books. Evans also illustrated *Fishing Day*, a picture book by Andrea Davis Pinkney about the complexities of race relations in the Jim Crow South. Folk artist Winfred Rembert also depicts what African American life was like in the South prior to the Civil Rights Movement in his moving autobiographical portrait, *Don't Hold Me Back*. This painful period in American history culminated in the murder of 15-year-old Emmett Till in 1955, an event widely regarded as the catalyst for the modern Black Civil Rights Movement. Chris Crowe's *Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case*, provides today's teens with an absorbing account of the trial and its impact on American society.

Two of the greats in African American children's literature, Virginia Hamilton and Ashley Bryan, retold traditional tales. Hamilton's posthumously published *Bruh Rabbit and Tar Baby Girl* is a retelling of *Tar Baby* completely different from the version she published in her classic work *The People Could Fly* (Knopf, 1985). Bryan retold and illustrated a Zambian folktale that celebrates blackness and inner beauty with *Beautiful Blackbird*.

### ***Books by and about American Indians***

Sixty-two of the 95 books in our count of books by and about American Indians were formula nonfiction series books, a proportion that has been fairly typical throughout the years. We value original nonfiction about contemporary Native children, such as Yvonne Wakim Dennis's and Arlene Hirshfelder's *Children of Native America Today*.

In the past, traditional stories have been the mainstay of American Indian literature for children, but we noticed a marked lack of Native folktales published this year. In his singular book *Our Stories Remember: American Indian History, Culture, and Values through Storytelling*, Joseph Bruchac ingeniously uses traditional stories from many nations to offer insights into the commonalities of Native cultures. Lakota author/artist S.D. Nelson offers an original story based on traditional Lakota beliefs in *The Star People*.

One of the most welcome books this year is the new edition of Ramona Maher's *Alice Yazzie's Year*. Originally published in 1977, it set the standard for authenticity and excellence in contemporary Native children's literature, and was sadly out of print for many years. This new edition includes dazzling full-color paintings by Navajo artist Shonto Begay. Like *Alice Yazzie*, Lawrence Loyie also lived in a loving and nurturing Native family and community. *As Long as the Rivers Flow*, an autobiographical account of his tenth summer, is especially poignant as the story ends with him being taken away to Indian Boarding School, a harsh reality for most Native children of his generation.

### ***Books by and about Asians/Pacifics and Asian/Pacific Americans***

One bright new voice on the publishing scene is Lisa Yee, whose novel *Millicent Min: Girl Genius* marks a delightful debut. Yee writes with sensitivity and humor about a 12-year-old genius who is an academic standout, and a social outcast. It's impossible to feel sorry for Millicent; she's unaware that her life is lacking real friendship. Yee's marvelous first-person narrative captures Millicent's astonishing intelligence as well as her incredible naïveté. Millicent emerges as funny, vulnerable, and highly appealing as she discovers there are things she doesn't know but is willing to learn for the sake of newfound friendship.

Another fresh new voice is John Son, whose first novel, *Finding My Hat* (Orchard Books / Scholastic Press, 2003), is part of Orchard's First Person Fiction series about immigrant experiences in the United States. Son's novel walks an edgy, humorous line as it chronicles a Korean American boy's experiences navigating the uncharted territory (in his family) of being a first-generation American.

Most books about the Hmong are produced by local or regional publishing ventures in areas of the United States where there is a significant Hmong population. But the history of the Hmong people of Southeast Asia became inextricably linked with our nation's during the Vietnam War. *Tangled Threads* by Pegi Dietz Shea is the first novel about the Hmong published for youth in the United States. This chronicle of a 12-year-old Hmong girl's difficult acclimation to American life touches on that wartime history as well as painting a vivid portrait of an immigrant child's transition to a new, ultimately hopeful life. *Tangled Threads* is a welcome addition to the handful of trade books about Hmong experience and culture that are available for youth.

Japan is the setting for Elizabeth Partridge's *Kogi's Mysterious Journey*, a Japanese folktale retold with an emphasis on Kogi's journey as an artist, which includes his incredible transformation into a fish as he searches for artistic perfection. The tale is graced with Aki Sogabe's amazing cut-paper illustrations. In *Stone Soup*, Jon J Muth has set the traditional European folktale in China, and recast the trickster as three Buddhist monks who help a village poisoned by suspicion and fear see the value of community, generosity, and kindness.

Japanese author/artist Kazuo Iwamura teamed with American author/artist Eric Carle to create a picture book modeling international friendship in *Where Are You Going? To See My Friend*. The Carle/Iwamura collaboration is one of a number of welcome books showing contemporary children of Asian/Pacific heritage. Others include Carole Lexa Schaefer and Pierr Morgan's *Someone Says*, and Mavis Jukes's *You're a Bear*, illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher with art that features a lively and imaginative young girl who just happens to be of Asian Pacific heritage, an adopted member of a white family.

### ***Books by and about Latinos***

The number of books by and about Latinos was disappointingly low in 2003. We appreciate publishers' efforts to produce more Spanish language materials to meet the needs of this fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population. But efforts must go beyond translating previously published picture books (the quality of which vary greatly) to creating more new works with significant cultural content, ideally making them available in both English and Spanish language

editions, or publishing them as bilingual volumes.

Of course, new works are being created, sometimes by veterans in the field of children's and young adult literature, and sometimes by dynamic newcomers. One of those exciting new arrivals to the children's literature scene is author/artist Yuyi Morales. Morales's lush paintings transform Kathleen Krull's fine picture book biography of Cesar Chavez, *Harvesting Hope*, into a stirring and powerful literary experience. Morales shows her playful side in *Just a Minute*, her original trickster tale grounded in Mexican American culture and featuring a sly grandmother who outwits the ever more petulant death with delay tactics and considerable charm.

First-time author Nancy Osa's debut novel, *Cuba 15*, is a coming-of-age tale featuring Violet Paz, a singular 15-year-old girl whose growing interest in Cuba creates tension in a family where Cuban traditions permeate life but where Cuban politics are a touchy subject among family members who fled the country two decades before. An aunt who sees things differently from the rest of her family helps Violet find the courage to start asking questions so she can ultimately make up her own mind. D.H. Figueredo's picture book *The Road to Santiago* is set in Cuba in 1958, just before Castro came to power. The child-centered story focuses on a young boy's fear that the disruption caused by the rebels who are attempting to overthrow the government will prevent him from making it to his abuela's house for Christmas Eve.

Alma Flor Ada has created a diverse body of books for young readers, from folk tales to fiction to her own autobiography for youth. In *¡Pio Peep!* she has teamed with F. Isabel Campoy to create a delightful collection of beloved Latin American nursery rhymes. The bilingual volume features English translations by poet Alice Schertle. Fine poems in and of themselves, they are true to the spirit of the original Spanish language verse that will be recognized by many Spanish-speaking families.

The new series "Get Ready for Gabí," written by Marisa Montes and illustrated by Joe Cepeda, provide independent readers with a spirited Puerto Rican American protagonist who is navigating her bicultural and bilingual world. Titles to-date include *Who's That Girl* and *A Crazy Mixed-Up Spanglish Day*, both published by Scholastic Press in 2003.

Groundwood Books, a small Canadian press, produced two intriguing volumes of Latino literature in 2003: *Little Book of Latin American Folktales* edited by Carmen Diana Dearden and translated by Susana Wild and Beatriz Zeller, and *Zipitio* by Jorge Argueta. Both offer young readers in the United States rich immersion into Latin American folk and cultural traditions.

The continued creation of a diverse body of excellent multicultural literature for youth benefits from the ongoing commitment of small publishers like Groundwood, as well as Lee & Low, Children's Book Press, Cinco Puntos, Just Us Books, and others who are devoted exclusively to publishing multicultural literature for children (and often to developing new authors and artists of color). The commitment of large trade book publishers who seek out diverse voices, sometimes developing imprints devoted to multicultural titles and/or themes, is also critical. We commend their work, even as we'd like to see more effort put into books that reflect the diversity of the world in which we live.



## The Natural World

**Arnold, Caroline. *Birds: Nature's Magnificent Flying Machines*. Illustrated by Patricia J. Wynne. Charlesbridge, 2003. 32 pages (trade 1-57091-516-4, \$16.95; pbk. 1-57091-572-5, \$6.95)**

Part field guide, part science book, Arnold's volume uses pictures and text to explain what makes birds' anatomy uniquely capable of flight. There illustrations include beautiful paintings of the birds, clear anatomical drawings, and detailed scientific diagrams. Specific technical aspects of flight are well explained, particularly the way different types of feathers enable takeoff, hovering, steering and landing. Over 30 different birds are labeled, and a brief glossary defines new terms. (Ages 7-11)

**Davies, Nicola. *Surprising Sharks*. Illustrated by James Croft. Candlewick Press, 2003. 29 pages (trade 0-7636-2185-4, \$15.99)**

Nicola Davies and James Croft have created a lively, raucous look at what is perhaps one of the most misunderstood creatures of the sea. Despite their bad reputations, Davies explains, most sharks are far from what one might expect. While it's true they are ferociously predatory (one of the common traits of all types of shark is their constant search for food), they rarely are looking for people to consume (about six people per year die of shark attacks). The breezy text, set in an unfussy font that echoes its lighthearted tone, packs in a great deal of information about sharks. Sidebars and captions provide intriguing tidbits about many different types of shark, from the tiny dwarf lantern (just bigger than a chocolate bar, with a belly that lights up) to the huge basking shark (over 29 feet long). Croft's bold and colorful acrylic and pastel images are funny as well as informative, perfectly matched to the tone of the narrative. (Ages 5-9)

**Jenkins, Steve and Robin Page. *What Do You Do with a Tail Like This?* Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-618-25628-8, \$15.00)**

"Animals use their noses, ears, tails, eyes, mouths and feet in very different ways." It is the reader's job to go through six two-page spreads to identify by eyes, ears, nose, etc., the type of animal shown. Turn the page and each animal is viewed in full, along with information on how those unique sensors are used. The usual suspects are included, including the jackrabbit with the big ears, and the monkey with the long tail, but less common animals such as the blue-footed booby and the archerfish make this book exceptionally informative. The final pages of the book serve as both index and glossary, listing the animals again by their unique sensors and providing even more information about the creatures. *Highly Commended, 2004 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3-6)

**Kelly, Irene. *It's a Hummingbird's Life*. Holiday House, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-8234-1658-5, \$16.95)**

A single penny fits snugly in the nest of the ruby-throated hummingbird. That's just one of the many facts about these tiny, amazing birds in Irene Kelly's artful and informative book. The text is incorporated into the overall design of every page, matching the flow of Kelly's delicate, colorful illustrations. She chronicles the life of a ruby-throated hummingbird from nesting time in spring through the summer, when the bird will drink from 3,000 flowers a day, into the fall, when it makes its extraordinary migratory journey from the northern United States to Mexico to

establish its winter home. (And hummingbirds don't hitch a ride on the back of Canada geese, as some people once believed, Kelly notes. But they do sometimes gain sustenance from feeders hung on gondolas by hot-air balloonists!) Kelly concludes with the preparations for the journey north again, before touching briefly on a few other of the 343 hummingbird species and providing a few tips for attracting hummingbirds at home. (Ages 5-9)

**Peters, Lisa Westberg. *Our Family Tree: An Evolution Story*. Illustrated by Lauren Stringer. Harcourt, 2003. 48 pages (trade 0-15-201772-0, \$17.00)**

"All of us are part of an old, old family. The roots of our family tree reach way back to the beginning of life on earth." Lisa Westberg Peters's poetic narrative begins with a description of "tiny round cells in the deep, dark sea" and follows the course of human evolution. An effective pattern of contrast and compare highlights differences and similarities of each stage in the evolutionary process and to the way humans are today: "On the outside, we still had scales... On the inside, we had lungs to breathe oxygen, like we do now." The poetic text is grounded in science, with more detailed scientific information provided in a two-page section that follows the main narrative. A timeline is also included. Lauren Stringer's deep-hued palette gives a lush feel to the artwork for this singular volume. (Ages 5-10)

**Pringle, Laurence. *Whales! Strange and Wonderful*. Illustrated by Meryl Henderson. Boyds Mills Press, 2003. 32 pages (lib. 1-56397-439-8, \$15.95)**

A basic introduction to cetaceans includes information about different species, their physical characteristics, behavior, habitat, and how they nurture their young. Realistic watercolor paintings, drawn to scale, provide an excellent supplement to the information provided by the concise narrative. The book concludes with a few pages about human interaction with whales over the past few centuries, making a case for the importance of whale conservation. (Ages 4-8)

**Quinlan, Susan E. *The Case of the Monkeys That Fell from the Trees and Other Mysteries in Tropical Nature*. Boyds Mills Press, 2003. 128 pages (lib. 0-399-23990-1, \$15.95)**

Biologist Laurence Gilbert was fascinated with Heliconius butterflies. These spectacular creatures lay their eggs on one species of passionvine leaves, and the resulting caterpillars often devour those leaves to the extent that the plant is seriously debilitated. As Gilbert studied the Heliconius and the passionvines, he observed that the female butterflies appeared to identify the plant by the shape of its leaves, sometimes mistakenly lighting on similarly structured plants. Gilbert went on to notice a surprisingly wide variation in passionvine leaves and wondered why a single species would develop different leaf shapes. He finally concluded that the passionvine was producing leaves similar to common plants which grew in the same area as a form of camouflage to discourage Heliconius butterflies from laying eggs, and so preempting caterpillar damage. This story is one of 11 intriguing tales of tropical forest mystery, each solved by the scientists who search for answers to provocative questions. The science mysteries are written in an appealing and easily readable style, while intermittent black-and-white illustrations add another element of interest to the text. (Ages 10-14)

**Simon, Seymour. *Hurricanes*. HarperCollins, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-688-16291-6, \$15.99; lib. 0-688-16292-4, \$16.89)**

With simple, clear language, Simon introduces young readers to hurricanes and other weather-related natural disasters. Full-page action photographs, both historic and contemporary, highlight the destruction hurricanes can cause. We see cars underwater and a collapsed Dunkin' Donuts, as well as charts and weather maps. The text explains how and why hurricanes form, how forecasters and weather professionals predict and describe tropical storms, and briefly discusses some famous hurricanes in history. Simon carefully balances the fascination factor with realistic information about the damage that hurricanes create, ending the book with hurricane safety tips that readers in some parts of the country may find particularly useful. (Ages 7-11)

**Swinburne, Stephen R. *The Woods Scientist*. Photographs by Susan C. Morse. (Scientists in the Field) Houghton Mifflin, 2002. 48 pages (trade 0-618-04602-X, \$16.00)**

Once again, Houghton Mifflin's "Scientists in the Field Series" scores high marks for an excellent "up-close-and-personal" approach to the career of a contemporary scientist. Susan Morse is a forester and habitat ecologist in northern Vermont whose love of forests and the animals who live in them was first encouraged by her grandfather. Continuing her family's tradition of studying the woods, she works to educate others about the forest environment. As founder of Keeping Track, a nonprofit conservation organization for adults and children, she strives to encourage community participation in wildlife habitat preservation. The majority of this highly visual nonfiction book focuses on the animal species Morse has studied, including bear, moose, and bobcats, and stresses the importance of preserving the habitat necessary to their continued survival. Numerous clear color photographs, taken by Morse, accompany the engaging and accessible text. (Ages 7-11)

**Tanaka, Shelley. *New Dinos: The Latest Finds! The Coolest Dinosaur Discoveries*. Illustrated by Alan Barnard. Atheneum, 2003. 48 pages (lib. 0-689-85183-9, \$16.95)**

The bones of previously unknown dinosaur species are being discovered at the rate of once every seven weeks, and scientists theorize that "only one percent of all the dinosaur species that ever lived have been found." New information is constantly added to this evolving field, sometimes augmenting existing data, sometimes proving old ideas to be false. Children with an insatiable appetite for dinosaur books will devour this highly visual book of information that focuses on recent dinosaur discoveries. Well-captioned illustrations, numerous sidebars, and changing font and type size make this a picture book that can be read from start to finish, or browsed. (Ages 7-11)

**Waldman, Neil. *The Snowflake: A Water Cycle Story*. Millbrook Press, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-7613-23473, \$14.95; lib. -0-7613-17162-7, \$23.90)**

A snowflake lands on the peak of a mountain in January. Over the course of the next 11 months, the snowflake changes both location and form. Blown into a mountain pond in February, it melts in March, a tiny droplet that sinks into an underground stream. By May it's drawn into the irrigation system on a farm. It evaporates in June, rains down onto the earth in July, and comes out a bathroom tap in September. By December, it's a snowflake once more. Each two-page spread in this detail-rich, lyrical book of information follows the snowflake's transformation over the course of a month. The brief text describing the snowflake's activity each month is accompanied by a sweeping, stylized painting. (Ages 4-8)

**See also:** *Adelina's Whales; After the Last Dog Died; As Long as the Rivers Flow; Autumnblings; Beatrix; John Muir and Stickeen; Man Who Went to the Far Side of the Moon; One Is a Snail; Salmon Forest; Snow Music*

### Seasons and Celebrations

**Atwell, Debby. *The Thanksgiving Door*. Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-618-24036-5, \$15.00)**

Debby Atwell's warm, original Thanksgiving story starts with a small disaster when Ann burns the Thanksgiving dinner she and Ed were going to share in their quiet home. Wanting to make the best of things, the older couple heads to the New World Café. They've unknowingly wandered into a family celebration: the immigrant family that runs the new restaurant is about to sit down to their first Thanksgiving meal. The younger family members are horrified at the intrusion ("Who left the front door open?"), but Grandmother, who just might know something about that door, sets them straight. "Family cooks turkey big as a doghouse, but we don't share? Bah!" Ann and Ed are swept up in a joyful, raucous celebration that blends old world traditions with new. Atwell's lively folk-art illustrations show a family of Eastern European immigrants generously welcoming Ann and Ed into their midst. (Ages 5-9)

**Figueredo, D. H. *The Road to Santiago*. Illustrated by Pablo Torrecilla. Lee & Low, 2003. 32 pages (trade 1-58430-059-0, \$16.95)**

D.H. Figueredo's picture book story is based on memories of his own Cuban childhood in the 1950s. Alfredito can't wait to get to his grandmother's house in Santiago for Noche Buena, the night before Christmas. There, his extended family and all the traditional holiday food await him. But this year, war has broken out. As the government and the rebels fight, transportation is disrupted. There will be no train to Santiago from Havana. Thanks to the kindness of strangers and a disgruntled but complying bus driver Alfredito and his parents do eventually make it to Santiago, but not before a few harrowing moments from Alfredito's point of view. They join the rest of the family who have gathered at Abuela's house to celebrate and give thanks. An author's note places the story in 1958, and explains that the rebels who were fighting the dictatorial government were led by an insurgent named Fidel Castro. But the story remains centered on young Alfredito's perspective, which is much more concerned with the possibility of missing out on his grandmother's *buñuelo*, a traditional honey-coated pastry, than who is fighting whom. Spanish artist Pablo Torrecilla's full-color paintings form the visual backdrop for the story. (Ages 6-8)

**Fine, Anne. *The True Story of Christmas*. Delacorte Press, 2003. 133 pages (trade 0-385-73130-2, \$15.95; lib. 0-385-90156-9, \$17.99)**

To his chagrin, Ralph Mountfield's entire extended family has descended on his house for the Christmas holiday. Nasty Great Granny rarely has anything nice to say. Vague great Aunt Ida is still sharp enough to have an excuse every time the possibility of having to lift a finger is raised. And Ralph's young cousins --terrorizing twins who wreak havoc and destruction, and an annoying moppet always eager to perform her latest song and dance routine—are the most

unwelcome visitors of all. Caught up in the mounting family tension—and sometimes adding to it with his attitude and antics—all is not calm and bright for Ralph. As personalities clash, family togetherness begins to fray in Anne Fine's hilarious holiday story. Roguishly over-the-top, the novel maintains a lighthearted warmth, acknowledging that this is simply the way families—even loving families--sometimes are. (Ages 9-11)

**Herman, John. *One Winter's Night*. Illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon. Philomel, 2003. 32 pages (lib. 0-399-23418-7, \$16.99)**

Martha, a pregnant Holstein cow, struggles through a nighttime blizzard searching for a protected site to give birth. "The snow hissed like sand across the frozen fields. It beat against Martha's sides. It blew in squalls out of the darkened air." A deserted and padlocked barn offers no refuge, and Martha plods onward until she reaches a small shed. Inside she finds warmth, hay, and two humans. Just like Martha, the human couple found shelter in the shed, and the young woman is also about to give birth. The familiar Nativity story and the addition of Martha's journey are related in a lyrical text and masterful art. On each double-page spread, the parallel Nativity story unfolds with Martha's tale is shown on the right-hand page in a luminous watercolor and pastel illustration, while the story of the human birth is depicted in a smaller sepia-toned vignette on the left-hand page. Fine writing and distinctive illustrations distinguish this new Christmas offering. (Ages 5-8)

**Perkins, Lynne Rae. *Snow Music*. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 36 pages (trade 0-06-623956-7, \$15.99)**

The opening pages of this striking picture book are painted in watercolor shades of blue and white. "Everyone whisper," the story begins, with the word "peth" repeated over and over on the page. Read this aloud to a group of children, and hear their obedient chorus mimic the sound of the quiet nighttime snowfall that follows before the story launches into typical events of a bright snow day. Roaming animals make tracks on its pristine surface, while two children search for a dog that escaped through a door left open a moment too long. Cars travel through the slush, and a plow scrapes the road while casting its load of sand and salt. Eventually the bright sun melts much of the new snow, and the runaway dog is found. Clouds gather as the day ends, and as night falls, so does more snow. "Everyone whisper: fep fep fep..." This deceptively simple story is brilliantly designed, utilizing a combination of visual cues, artfully arranged typeface, and a clever aural component (along with the sound of falling snow, a dog collar jingles, the snowplow scrapes loudly, and a car radio is faintly heard through tightly closed windows). The result? Total immersion in this artistic rendition of winter day. *Highly Commended, 2004 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4-8)

**Shea, Pegi Deitz and Cynthia Weill. *Ten Mice for Tet*. Illustrated by T^Ngọc Trang. Embroidery by Phạm Việt Anh. Chronicle, 2003. 28 pages (trade 0-8118-3496-4, \$15.95)**

Vivid colors and exquisite embroidery set the stage for a book that combines counting with an introduction to Tet, the Vietnamese New Year celebration. As the numbers ascend from one to ten, mouse characters demonstrate holiday traditions including party planning, feast preparation, gift-giving, and fireworks displays. The concise descriptions on each page ("1 mouse plans a party. / 2 mice go to market. / 3 mice paint and polish.") are well suited to sharing with young

children, while a four-page afterword provides a more detailed account of the holiday and its traditional activities and includes pronunciation help for the Vietnamese words. The jacket flap provides a fascinating explanation of the collaborative process between a children's book artist and an embroiderer to create the book's distinctive illustrations. (Ages 4-9)

**Spinner, Stephanie. *It's a Miracle! A Hanukkah Storybook*. Illustrated by Jill McElmurry. An Anne Schwartz Book / Atheneum, 2003. 40 pages (lib. 0-689-84493-X, \$16.95)**

Six-year-old Owen Block is proud to assume a new role during his family's celebration of Hanukkah: he is the O.C.L., or Official Candle Lighter. After he capably lights the menorah's candles each night, his grandmother tells him a story. One of the stories is about a little girl who yearns to be a cowboy, another stars a boy with natural comedic talents (including belching the Alphabet Song), and a third is about a dentist who trains his pet parrot to entertain nervous patients. Each of these stories, as well as four others, features a member of Owen's extended family. By sharing them with Owen, his grandmother reinforces the connections of family and history during the holiday celebration. The last night of Hanukkah finds the cast of characters introduced in the stories sitting together around the dinner table. Children will enjoy matching each adult with their earlier self, as depicted in grandmother's nightly stories. (Ages 4-8)

**See also:** *Autumblings; Busy, Busy Moose; Galoshes; Inspector Hopper's Mystery Year; It's a Hummingbird's Life; Julius's Candy Corn; Longjohns; Snowflake; Sweater; Swimsuit; Swing around the Sun; Wemberly's Ice Cream Star*

### **Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature**

**Ada, Alma Flor and F. Isabel Campoy, selectors.; *Pío Peep! Traditional Spanish Nursery Rhymes*. English adaptations by Alice Schertle. Illustrated by Viví Escrivá. HarperCollins, 2003. 64 pages (trade 0-688-16019-0, \$14.99; lib. 0-688-16020-4, \$16.89)**

Twenty-nine Spanish-language nursery rhymes that are familiar throughout the Americas are paired with English-language translations that delightfully capture the spirit of the original verse. Compilers Alma Flor Ada and F. Isabel Campoy combed numerous sources for material for this collection. When it came to making the final selections, they noted, "we chose those nursery rhymes and songs that we cherished in our own childhoods, and those the numerous children—Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, and Central American—with whom we have worked love the most." The sometimes playful, sometimes soothing Spanish nursery rhymes will be familiar to many Spanish-speaking parents and children. Alice Schertle's lively, finely crafted English translations introduce these cultural touchstones to a whole new audience and underscore universal aspects of childhood. Viví Escrivá's full-page watercolor art provides a pleasing accompaniment to each pairing, enriching the overall appeal of this inviting volume. (Ages birth – 6)

**Bryan, Ashley. *Beautiful Blackbird*. Atheneum, 2003. 36 pages (trade 0-689-84731-9, \$16.95)**

Of all of the birds in the forest, Blackbird was considered the most beautiful. All of the other birds envied his beautiful black feathers, despite their own bright colors. Even though Blackbird

assures them it's what they have on the inside that makes them beautiful, they eventually convince him to stir a "blackening brew." He uses this to paint specks and stripes and spots of black on their feathers. Ashley Bryan's rhythmic prose and stunning, vibrant cut-paper collages retell this Zambian folk tale that celebrates the beauty of all creatures both outside and in. (Ages 4-8).

**Diakit , Baba Wagu . *The Magic Gourd*. Scholastic Press, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-439-43960-4, \$16.95)**

Kindhearted Rabbit is foraging for his family when he rescues Chameleon from a tangle of thorns. Chameleon rewards him with a gourd bowl that fills itself with whatever the bearer requests--insects, carrots, even couscous! Rabbit shares the bounty with family and friends. When the king gets word of the gourd's power, he steals it and asks for bowl after bowl of gold. Chameleon comes to the rescue again, this time presenting Rabbit with a little rock that pummels anyone who doesn't know its name. The exasperated king is willing to give up the gourd, the gold, and all his food, too, to get the stone to stop hitting him in this humorous story about compassion, generosity, and kindness over greed. In addition to his trademark handpainted ceramic tiles, Mali native Baba Wagu  Diakit  has decorated ceramic plates, and bowls that represent the abundant gourd to illustrate this lively story. A small, confident chameleon, created as a clay sculpture, appears on some pages. In the artwork, lush colors are framed by black-and-white border art inspired by Malian mud cloth patterns. In the text, words and phrases in Bambara, the national language of Mali, add texture to the spirited storytelling. The book concludes with notes on elements of the art and the story's origins, a glossary, and information on related tales in other cultures. *Honor Book, CCBC Caldecott Award Discussion; Honor Book, CCBC Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award Discussion* (Ages 4-7)

**Hamilton, Virginia. *Bruh Rabbit and the Tar Baby Girl*. Illustrated by James E. Ransome. Blue Sky Press / Scholastic, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-590-47376-X, \$16.95)**

The late Virginia Hamilton excelled at many types of storytelling, including retelling traditional African American tales in dialects that reflect specific aspects of the African American oral tradition. This newly published Brer Rabbit story was written by Hamilton in the Gullah dialect of the South Carolina Sea Islands. In the story, crafty Bruh Rabbit has been eating Bruh Wolf's crops—it's much easier than planting and tending his own. Bruh Wolf's "scarey-crow" doesn't scare Bruh Rabbit, so Wolf makes a Tar Baby Girl—a rabbit image coated in tar--to catch that wily rabbit once and for all. As usual, Bruh Rabbit's comeuppance is shortlived in this richly written, comical story that reads well silently or aloud. Information about the significance of Brer Rabbit stories in African American history is provided along with a brief description of some of the Gullah terms that enliven the superbly told tale. James Ransome's lively paintings are in perfect step with the lighthearted spirit of the story. (Ages 6-9)

**Muth, Jon J. *Stone Soup*. Scholastic Press, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-439-33909-X, \$16.95)**

Jon J Muth blends a traditional European folktale with elements of Chinese folklore and the Buddhist story tradition in an inventive retelling of the "Stone Soup" story. The three monks Hok, Lok and Siew (deities from Chinese folklore) wander into a village where hard times have closed the doors of trust, so that even neighbors are suspicious of one another. Only one small, brave girl is willing to approach them. The monks describe their plan to make stone soup, and

the child willingly helps. Curiosity draws villagers out of their homes, and soon one person after another is bringing something to add to the pot—carrots and spices, pea pods and gingerroot, mung beans and taro root. The monks are not only helping the villagers make soup, they are helping them open their hearts to one another and build a sense of community. “With the gifts you have given, we will always have plenty. You have shown us that sharing makes us all richer.” In an author’s note, Muth notes that in the Buddhist tradition, tricksters seek to spread enlightenment rather than gain anything for themselves. His note also invites children to find symbols from Asian culture that he has incorporated into the illustrations of this inspiring tale. (Ages 5-8)

**Partridge, Elizabeth. *Kogi’s Mysterious Journey*. Illustrated by Aki Sogabe. Dutton, 2003. 40 pages (lib 0-525-47078-6, \$17.99)**

Elizabeth Partridge retells a Japanese folktale about an artist named Kogi whose efforts to perfect his images of fish take a magical turn when he becomes a fish. Understanding his subject from the inside out enables him to convey its essence in his art once he returns to human form. Partridge’s afterword on the history of the tale also explains that the idea of becoming what you are trying to create is part of the tradition of Japanese painting—to “capture the spirit of the subject, rather than just its physical form.” She also tells how she chose to emphasize Kogi’s journey as an artist in her version of the story, which she wrote specifically to have the chance to work with illustrator Aki Sogabe. Sogabe’s graceful cut-paper illustrations are exquisite and contribute to the grace of this lovely volume. (Ages 5-9)

**Paye, Won-Ldy and Margaret H. Lippert. *Mrs. Chicken and the Hungry Crocodile*. Illustrated by Julie Paschkis. Henry Holt, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-8050-7047-8, \$16.95)**

“What a pretty chicken I am!” says Mrs. Chicken as she’s bathing in a puddle one morning. The puddle is too small for her to see her wings, so she heads for the river to admire them. Mrs. Chicken doesn’t know that Crocodile is waiting just beneath the surface to snap her up--and snap her up she does. “Bok!” Crocodile drags the alarmed Mrs. Chicken back to her lair to eat her. But Mrs. Chicken knows how to keep her head in a crisis, and she enacts a drawn-out plan to convince Crocodile they are really sisters, eventually achieving a masterful escape. This delightful, humorous tale comes from the Dan people of Liberia and was told to co-author Won-Ldy Paye by his grandmother when he was growing up. Julie Paschkis’s wonderful stylized illustrations are set against bright white when Mrs. Chicken is in her own element on land and bold black when she’s in Crocodile’s deep dark lair. In each instance her choice gives the characters’ vibrant visual presence on the page. *Honor Book, 2004 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4-7)

**Root, Phyllis. *Big Momma Makes the World*. Illustrated by Helen Oxenbury. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2003. 40 pages (lib. 0-7636-1132-8, \$16.99)**

In this creation story, it is Big Momma who makes the world. Even with a small baby on her hip, Big Momma manages to summon light and dark and make the stars and the moon. She even tells the earth to “get over here.” While “Baby liked it all right just the way it was,” Big Momma needs some grass and some animals and people to keep her company. And when she sees what she has done, she declares, “That’s good. Real good.” With each new day, Big Momma adds more to the world, until it eventually looks a lot like the world we know. The watercolors that

accompany the text are bright and uplifting, and offer a version of Genesis that will find familiar but not predictable. (Ages 5-8)

**Silverman, Erica. *When the Chickens Went on Strike: A Rosh Hashanah Tale*. Illustrated by Matthew Trueman. Adapted from a story by Sholom Aleichem. Dutton, 2003. 32 pages (lib. 0-525-46862-5, \$15.99)**

“Customs come and customs go. I learned this from the chickens,” begins the retelling of this outrageous story. For certain, these chickens have a vested interest in ending one particular Jewish New Year custom: Kapores—or flinging a live chicken over one’s head to erase bad deeds. The young narrator is witness to the chicken uprising (“ ‘An end to Kapores!...No more Kapores!’ ”) and finds himself moved by their plight. When the angry villagers demand the chickens’ return (“ ‘You can use a turnip!’ said the rooster.”) the boy steps in to defend the chickens, despite the many bad deeds he had himself hoped to wipe out. Erica Silverman’s over-the-top, laugh-out-loud story is based on an original tale by the renowned Yiddish writer Shalom Aleichem, whose work helped preserve “a portrait of life as it once was in the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe.” Her rendition brims with witty dialogue, as well as wonderful alliteration. First-time picture book artist Matthew Trueman’s artwork conveys a quirky yet old-world feel, and his poultry is both handsome and hilarious. (Ages 5-8)

**See also:** *My Grandmother’s Stories*; *Sword of the Rightful King*; *Star People*; *Whale Rider*

### **Historical People, Places, and Events**

**Bredeson, Carmen. *After the Last Dog Died: The True-Life, Hair-Raising Adventure of Douglas Mawson and His 1911-1914 Antarctic Expedition*. National Geographic, 2003. 63 pages (trade 0-7922-6140-2, \$18.95)**

From 1911 to 1914, explorer Douglas Mawson led the first Antarctic expedition devoted exclusively to scientific exploration. This gripping photodocumentary details Mawson’s careful preparations for the undertaking, as well as how he and 17 others managed daily life at the base camp on the frozen landscape. It was on one of the many exploratory trips taken from that base camp that tragedy struck. Mawson’s party of three men and the dogs pulling their sledge fell victim to both the brutal environment and their own ignorance. Mawson was the only one to survive, barely making it back to the camp after two months, severely frostbitten and nearly starving. Carmen Bredeson never sensationalizes her subject, nor does she sentimentalize it. Her informative, evenhanded narrative has been carefully researched, drawing on Mawson’s own papers, as well as interviews with the descendants of this passionate, caring individual. Numerous black-and-white photographs, some presented against an icy silver background, illustrate the text that also incorporates significant information about the Antarctic continent. (Ages 9-14)

**Bruchac, Joseph. *Our Stories Remember: American Indian History, Culture, and Values through Storytelling*. Fulcrum (16100 Table Mountain Parkway, Golden, CO 80403), 2003. 192 pages (pbk. 1-55591-129-3, \$16.95)**

“I cannot stress enough that there is really no such thing as *the* American Indian or *the* Native American. Seeing all Indians as being alike is as foolish as not being able to see them at all,” writes Joseph Bruchac in his introduction to this invaluable resource for secondary students and teachers. Bruchac goes on to note that there are some commonalities among Native peoples in North America, and it those commonalities he explores in this volume that offers insight into Native history, Native ways of thinking and being, and Native life today. But it is in providing specific stories and experiences of diverse Native peoples that the author creates a sense of these commonalities, which range from their post-colonial history in America, including the Indian boarding school experience, to their shared views of the circularity of existence. Modeling the way that Native cultures use stories as a means to educate and entertain, Bruchac relates traditional tales from many American Indian cultures, historical accounts of events, and anecdotes shared by people he knows as he discusses everything from Native beliefs about family, nature, and spirituality, to experiences with the first Europeans, treaties, Indian boarding schools and much more. His narrative is always engaging and often thought-provoking. Bruchac never shies away from saying what needs to be said--what non-Native readers need to know in order to gain a better understanding of Native experience and perspectives. Every chapter ends with a short bibliography of suggested additional reading, volumes published for adults that offer additional understanding and insight into that particular aspect of Native history or contemporary life. (Age 16 and older)

**Chandra, Deborah and Madeleine Comora. *George Washington's Teeth*. Illustrated by Brock Cole. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. 40 pages (trade 0-374-32534-0, \$16.00)**

George Washington's tooth problems plagued him all of his adult life. During the French and Indian War, he was even afraid the British would make fun of his dental problems. Authors Deborah Chandra and Madeleine Comora make light of George's plight (“George crossed the icy Delaware / With nine teeth in his mouth. / In that cold and pitchy dark, / Two more teeth came out!”) in this lighthearted story. But their hilarious romp is followed by a marvelous, detailed timeline of Washington's life, full of dental details that make it clear this was no laughing matter: Not only was he often in great pain because of his many mouth problems, his health was compromised as well. As for those fabled wooden teeth, he never had them. But he did wear false teeth made of a number of no-less-intriguing materials, from hippopotamus and walrus ivory to the teeth of cows, elk, and humans. Brock Cole's lively, humorous illustrations are a perfect accompaniment to the lighthearted narrative, while archival materials, including stern-faced portraits of Washington (whose teeth made him an unlikely candidate for smiling) and photographs of Washington's last set of dentures, illustrate the timeline. *Highly Commended, 2004 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 7-11)

**Crowe, Chris. *Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case*. Phyllis Fogelman Books / Penguin, 2003. 128 pages (trade 0-8037-2804-2, \$ 18.99)**

In the summer of 1955, Emmett Till, a fourteen-year-old African American boy from Chicago was visiting relatives in Money, Mississippi, when he made an error in judgment that proved to be fatal. Not understanding the social conventions of the Jim Crow South and unable to resist showing off his big city ways for his country cousins, young Emmett whistled at the 23-year-old wife of a white store owner. Three days later, Emmett's mutilated body was pulled from the

Tallahatchie River. There was never any question that he had been murdered by the woman's husband and brother-in-law; what gripped the nation in 1955 was the sham trial that followed, which focused national attention on the injustice southern Blacks had lived for generations. Author Chris Crowe succinctly recounts the story, drawing on news accounts of the time and published interviews with many of the key players. He places this important story firmly in the context of the mid-twentieth century and the rise of the modern Black civil rights movement. (Age 12 and older)

**Gerstein, Mordicai. *The Man Who Walked between the Towers*. Roaring Brook Press, 2003. 40 pages (trade 0-7613-1791-0, \$17.95; lib. 0-7613-2868-8, \$24.90)**

In 1974, soon after the World Trade Center was completed, a street performer named Philippe Petit startled New Yorkers by walking, running, dancing, and even lying down on a tightrope he had managed to put up between the two towers from their roofs. Mordicai Gerstein tells this stunning true story with lyrical language and breathtaking illustrations. Shifting visual perspectives throughout the book give viewers a dizzying sense of both the height of the towers and the distance between them, while two fold-out pages dramatically extend this sense at the story's climax. The pen-and-ink lines perfectly convey a feeling of walking on air, while the oil paintings that comprise the backdrop create a sense of time and place, from the dark blue, green, and purple hues of the New York City skyline at night to the light grays, blues, and whites of the daytime sky. Every page is ingeniously composed to help tell this unusual story, and the ending is graceful both visually and verbally. *Winner, CCBC Caldecott Award Discussion* (Ages 5-10)

**Greenstein, Elaine. *Ice-Cream Cones for Sale!* Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2003. 36 pages (trade 0-439-32728-8, \$15.95)**

An ice-cream cone controversy began in 1904 during the World's Fair in St. Louis. Many take credit for figuring out how to serve ice cream without a dish. Who had the idea first? Was it Ernest Hamwi, a waffle maker from Syria who rolled waffles into cones for use by Arnold Fornachou, who had run out of dishes? Maybe it was Abe Doumar from New Jersey, who took home one of Ernest's waffle irons. Or was it David Avayou from Turkey, who had seen fancy paper cones during his visit to Paris on the way to the fair? They weren't the only ones who had figured out how to make what is now called a waffle cone. Italo Marchiony who didn't even go to the fair, also knew how. Using homemade wafer cones, Italo sold ice cream from his push cart in New York City. He could make ten such cones at the same time, and he patented that invention four months before the fair opened. Greenstein's brief account of how she solved this highly disputed historical mystery for the purposes of this story illustrated with monoprints overpainted with gouache. (Ages 6-10)

**Hopkinson, Deborah. *Shutting Out the Sky: Life in the Tenements of New York, 1880-1924*. Orchard, 2003. 134 pages (trade 0-439-37590-8, \$17.95)**

Leonard Covello left Italy and arrived at Ellis Island with his mother and younger brothers in 1896 when he was nine years old. Rahel Gollup came to New York City from Belarus in 1891 at the age of 12, accompanied by her aunt. Maurice Hindus also came from Belarus, arriving in New York by himself in 1906 when he was 13. Thirteen-year-old Pauline Newman left Lithuania in 1901, a year after 16-year old Marcus Ravage immigrated from Romania. All of these teens started out their new lives in America living in New York City's tenement, and each

one grew up to write about that part of their lives. Based on their first-person accounts, Deborah Hopkinson provides a picture of what life was like for impoverished turn-of-the-century immigrants in New York City. Numerous documentary photographs by Jacob Riis and others provide a visual counterpart for her engrossing account. (Ages 12-16)

**Koehler-Pentacoff, Elizabeth. *John Muir and Stickeen: An Alaskan Adventure*. Illustrated by Karl Swanson. Millbrook Press, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-7613-1997-2, \$14.95; lib. 0-7613-2769-X, \$23.90)**

This picture book recalls a dramatic journey in the Alaskan wilderness for naturalist John Muir (who spent part of his childhood and his young adulthood in Wisconsin) and a small dog named Stickeen. When John leaves camp early one morning, Stickeen, who belongs to a friend of Muir, eagerly accompanies him. By late in the day, they are far from camp, and a storm is starting to rage. Stickeen's paws are bleeding, and Muir wraps them. Deadly crevasses and chasms loom darkly in the swirling white. Muir jumps one chasm that's eight feet across, and Stickeen follows. Then another chasm appears—fifty feet wide—with only a narrow bridge of ice on which to cross. Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff's present-tense narrative is punctuated by short, explosive sentences that underscore the sense of excitement, danger, and drama in this thrilling story that does end happily. Karl Swanson's artwork captures a sense of the cold, wintry conditions both man and dog faced. An author's note explains that Muir himself wrote about this, his favorite adventure, in his book *Stickeen*. (Ages 5-9)

**Koscielniak, Bruce. *Johann Gutenberg and the Amazing Printing Press*. Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-618-26351-9, \$16.00)**

A straightforward, visually detailed account of the history of modern printing begins with a brief account of important early advances by the Chinese, and later the Koreans. Then author/artist Bruce Koscielniak focuses on Europe in the Middle Ages, where a learning revival led to a demand for books, and experiments with metal type in Italy, Holland, and Germany coincided with the work of monastic scribes ("We make haste—slowly," comments a monk in one illustration). Koscielniak's appealing presentation shows and tells how a book was made and bound before it launches into how Gutenberg's printing press revolutionized bookmaking and made the printed word more widely available and affordable (although books were certainly not available and affordable to everyone as the text proclaims). Ironically, Gutenberg's printing shop went out of business when he couldn't repay his debt, but hundreds more opened as his technology was replicated. Small detail illustrations, many with informational captions, and full-page scenes illustrate the text of this handsomely designed, informative volume. (Ages 8-11)

**Levine, Karen. *Hana's Suitcase: A True Story*. U.S. edition: Albert Whitman, 2003. 109 pages (trade 0-8075-3148-0; \$15.95)**

Fumiko Ishioka was director of the recently established Tokyo Holocaust Center in 1998. The small museum's aim was to teach Japanese children about the Nazi Holocaust. In response to Fumiko's request for items to exhibit, the Center had received a small box of objects from Auschwitz that included a child's suitcase. Scrawled on the suitcase was the name and birthdate of its owner: Hana Brady, born May 16, 1931, and the information that she was an orphan. The suitcase inspired the curiosity and compassion of Fumiko and the children to whom she showed it—they wanted to know more about this young girl. In alternating chapters, two stories unfold.

One is tender and ultimately tragic, as it chronicles Hana's early life with her parents and brother in Czechoslovakia and how she was eventually deported by the Nazi's, first to Theresienstadt and finally to Auschwitz. The other is intriguing and ultimately extraordinary, as it follows the efforts of Fumiko over the course of two years to learn more about Hana, starting only with a name. The stories converge in a startling moment of revelation and its emotional aftermath when Fumiko finally learns that Hana died at Auschwitz, but her older brother, George, survived the Holocaust and is still alive. The letter that Fumiko wrote him introducing herself and all that she had learned, as well as the letter he wrote in reply, marked the end of Fumiko's search. The following year George traveled to Tokyo, where he met Fumiko and the children in Small Wings, the peace group inspired by Fumiko—and Hana—to help teach other children in Japan about the Holocaust. Numerous childhood pictures of Hana Brady, as well as reproductions of some of the pictures she drew while in Theresienstadt, are included in this highly accessible and moving volume. (Ages 9-14)

**McKissack, Patricia C. and Fredrick McKissack. *Days of Jubilee: The End of Slavery in the United States*. Scholastic Press, 2003. 134 pages (trade 0-590-10764-X, \$18.95)**

Patricia and Fredrick McKissack examine the complex issue of slavery and emancipation in this thoroughly researched volume. The authors provide excellent clarification about the end of slavery in the United States—something that came about as the result of a series of actions and events over time rather than being the result of one grand proclamation. The authors' many sources included primary materials ranging from diaries and slave narratives to official government documents. Quotes and histories of ordinary people on both sides of the slavery issue, as well as those whose names are well known, cast history in human terms. Among its many strengths, the book allows for deeper understanding of Abraham Lincoln's actions and motivations, showing how these changed over time. Those who rightly insist that children and teens understand that Lincoln's first and foremost concern was maintaining the Union, rather than freeing the slaves will not be disappointed. At the same time, the McKissacks convey how and why Lincoln came to be viewed as "the Great Emancipator." There are occasional lapses in the editing that are unfortunate, but they cannot detract from the overall power of this fascinating book that is illustrated with reproductions of period photographs and paintings. (Age 12 and older)

**Macaulay, David. *Mosque*. Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 96 pages (0-618-24034-9, \$18.00)**

With the detailed drawings and an informative narrative typical of his other architectural volumes, Macaulay outlines the planning and building of a mosque and related buildings. Macaulay lays the groundwork for this activity with a brief history of the Muslim Empire during the sixteenth century. Then, blending architectural, cultural and religious information in a fictional narrative set in sixteenth-century Istanbul, he details the construction. In the storyline, wealthy Admiral Suha Mehmet Pasa has chosen architect Akif Agha to design and oversee the building of the complex series of structures. Macaulay's intricate drawings show everything from how individual bricks were made to the physics behind certain architectural features. He introduces and explains many architectural terms and concepts (a glossary at the end is a helpful addition). He also discusses Islamic art, and the role of both art and architecture in Islam is

clearly revealed as people prepare to worship in the holy place. Students of history, art, physics and engineering of all ages will devour this book (Ages 7-17)

**Murphy, Jim. *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793*. Clarion, 2003. 165 pages (trade 0-395-776-8-2, \$17.00)**

In 1793, Philadelphia experienced a devastating disease that as the yellow fever epidemic. Murphy's compelling narrative leads readers through a medical mystery, a social history of Philadelphia (at the time the capital of the new nation), and a tribute to those Philadelphians who did NOT flee to safer environs but stayed behind to care for the sick. As doctors looked for clues to understand the nature of the illness and the prognosis for its victims, they often disagreed on courses of treatment. Meanwhile, government leaders (those who remained in town) argued over how to respond to the crisis. Public health, it seems, was as much a political issue in our nation's early days as it is now, as those in power directly affected the pace at which the disease would be controlled. Wonderful reproductions of old maps and drawings of the key figures of the time, as well as of primary sources such as newspaper articles, obituaries, letters, and church records, add additional interest to this drama-filled volume.. The last chapter traces the research that has been done on yellow fever from the early 1800's to the present and reminds readers that while scientists have traced the disease to mosquitoes, and a vaccine was developed in 1937, there is still no cure, and there will surely be new medical and public health crises in the future. An extensive resource bibliography rounds out this fascinating account. (Ages 10-14)

**Ross, Val. *The Road to There: Mapmakers and Their Stories*. U.S. edition: Tundra Books, 2003. 146 pages (trade 0-88776621-8, \$19.95)**

Val Ross's lively, engaging narrative looks at the social, political, and personal intrigue surrounding the lives of mapmakers from ancient times to the present. Each chapter focuses on a different map or mapmaker. In inviting, conversational prose, the author details what is known about their lives, the beliefs that influenced their work, and the maps themselves. She explains how mapmakers often created maps that supported social, political, or religious beliefs of the times. While some drew their subject as they saw or imagined it, others drew it as they wanted it to be. From the extraordinary friendship between King Roger II of Sicily, a Christian, and his close Muslim friend and mapmaker, Al-Idrisi, to Phyllis Pearsall, who is responsible for the *London A-Z* street guide used by millions of people today, Ross's book is a treasure trove of fascinating maps and stories. (Ages 9-14)

**Schyffert, Bea Uusma. *The Man Who Went to the Far Side of the Moon: The Story of Apollo 11 Astronaut Michael Collins*. Translated from the Swedish by Emi Guner. U.S. edition: Chronicle, 2003. 77 pages (trade 0-8118-4007-7, \$14.95)**

While the world was watching Neil Armstrong step onto the surface of the moon, Michael Collins was orbiting high above it, speeding his way through space. Collins was the third crew member of the Apollo 11 mission, along with Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin. While the other two made the lunar landing, Collins's job was to man the spacecraft of the historic mission. He orbited the moon 14 times, spending 28 solitary hours in space. "On the backside of the moon...you can't see the surface. The moon is defined simply by the absence of stars. The laws of physics tell you that our fine spacecraft is in an orbit sixty miles above it and there's no way

you can hit anything. But the thought does occur...” This fascinating book documents many facets of the Apollo 11 mission, from how the astronauts were chosen and trained to what life was like in space to the return home, with Collins’s experiences the primary focal point. There’s at least as much to look at as there is to read in this unique, highly visual volume. Graphic elements range from spacecraft schematics to photographs (including images taken by Collins in space) to pages from the astronaut’s journal. (Ages 8-14)

**Steig, William. *When Everybody Wore a Hat*. Joanna Cotler Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-06-009700-0, \$17.99)**

“In 1916, when I was eight years old, there were almost no electric lights, cars or telephones—and definitely no TV.” With the opening sentence, the late William Steig plants the contemporary reader firmly into the community of his childhood. Growing up in the Bronx during World War I, Steig heard his parents talk (and quarrel) in four languages – German, Polish, Yiddish and English. His family moved often, got house calls from their doctor, but never went to his office or a hospital, and occasionally received “sad news” from the Old Country. Concise sentences reflect the items which took hold in an eight-year-old’s memory: “For a nickel you could get a lot: a hot dog sandwich from a stand. A pound of fruit. A movie. And two movies if you sat in the same seat.” Far from being bogged down in nostalgia, both text and illustrations have a decided edge and dry, understated humor (“Everyone wanted his picture on a horse....Cameras were very big then, and you had to stay very still. This was hard for the horse.”) A longtime, prolific contributor of cartoons and cover art to the *New Yorker* magazine, as well as a prominent creator of books for children, William Steig died last year the age of 95. His final picture book offers a glimpse of an earlier time, filtered through his observant and witty perspective. It was a time when “there was no such thing as a hatless human being. Cops had hats. Criminals had hats. Even monkeys.” (Ages 6-10)

**U’Ren, Andrea. *Mary Smith*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-374-34842-1, \$16.00)**

What *did* people do before alarm clocks were common? Andrea U’Ren’s picture book sheds some light on a question one wouldn’t necessarily think to ask but that has a fascinating answer. Mary Smith was the “knocker-up” in her town. Rising before dawn, she went from home to home awakening folks such as the baker, the train conductor, laundry maids, and even the mayor by shooting dried peas at their windows. “TINK!...TOC....PLIK PLOK!” Pea shooter in hand, Mary strides purposefully through the morning in U’ren’s entertaining and informative story that ends with an unexpectedly humorous twist. A black-and-white photograph of the real Mary Smith, taken in 1927, prefaces the text. U’Ren’s illustrations depict her subject wonderfully well from varying perspectives. The illustrations are slightly comic while capturing a sense of bustling town life in the early twentieth century. *Highly Commended, 2004 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4-8)

**See also:** *As Long as the Rivers Flow; Blues Journey; Boxes for Katje; Brundibar; Cuba 15; Dante’s Daughter; Escape from Botany Bay; Fishing Day; Gilbert & Sullivan Set Me Free; Grape Thief; Kogi’s Mysterious Journey; Li’l Dan; Mama Played Baseball; Milkweed; Mud City; New Dinos; Northern Light; Our Family Tree; Out of Bounds; Persepolis; Pictures for Miss Josie; Ravenmaster’s Secret; Road to Santiago; River Between Us; Rodzina; Run, Boy,*

*Run; Silent Boy; Star People; Tangled Threads; Uncle Andy's; When Catherine the Great and I Were Eight; Wolving Time; section on Biography and Autobiography*

### **Biography and Autobiography**

**Anderson, M.T. *Strange Mr. Satie*. Illustrated by Petra Mathers. Viking, 2003. 36 pages (trade 0-670-03637-4, \$16.99)**

French composer Erik Satie, born in 1866, was an eccentric most of his life. In this funny yet respectful picture book biography, M.T. Anderson conveys the genius and the quiriness of Satie's creative mind, and the oddity of his behavior. Satie was unbound by social norms. When he fell in love with a woman who was seeing another man, "he invited himself along on their dates." When a critic panned his composition *Parade*, the tantrum-prone Satie sent him an obnoxious and insulting postcard. Friends with Pablo Picasso and other artists and intellectuals, Satie made his breakthrough achievement with a ballet called *Cancelled*, a multimedia piece far ahead of its time that opened with a movie. He died not long after it debuted. Anderson's narrative has a spare feel, with short sentences that convey facts rather than emotion. It's highly effective in creating a slightly off-balance feel, just as Satie's interaction with the world was slightly off balance. Petra Mathers's illustrations echo that sense as well. The result is a singular book about a singular individual. An author's note provides additional information on Satie's life, including his influence on later composers. (Ages 7-11)

**Brown, Don. *American Boy: The Adventures of Mark Twain*. Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 32 pages (0-618-17997-6, \$16.00)**

"I could see no promise in him," said Sam Clemens's mother recalling the day he was born. Here, Don Brown reveals that Sam quickly showed spirit—if not promise—as he chronicles the lively boyhood of the man who would eventually take the name Mark Twain. Brown touches upon Sam's friendship with boys like Will Bowen and Tom Blankenship, who would eventually be transformed, at least in part, to Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. And Uncle Dan, a slave owned by Sam's uncle and who captivated Sam with his storytelling, became, at least in part, the runaway Jim. But all that was later, once Sam was a storyteller himself. Brown doesn't exploit these ideas—they come at the close of a narrative that lets incidents in the childhood of a much beloved (and sometimes controversial, Brown notes) storyteller unfold. As with all of his picture book biographies, Brown has created subtle watercolor-and-ink illustrations to accompany the text. (Ages 8-11)

**Busby, Peter. *First to Fly: How Wilbur & Orville Wright Invented the Airplane*. Illustrated by David Craig. Diagrams by Jack McMaster. Madison Press / Crown, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-375-81287-3, \$19.95; lib. 0-373-91287-8, \$21.99)**

This captivating, highly visual volume documents the Wright brother's lives, especially their accomplishments in the field of aviation. Orville and Wilbur Wright grew up in a household where they were encouraged to discover and learn, with a mother who taught them to tinker and fix. Their early fascination with flight revolved around a small, rubber-band-powered helicopter toy they called the "bat." As young men, they closely followed early efforts at human flight reported in the media, but they made their living building and repairing bicycles. That mechanical experience served them well once they decided to join the ranks of those determined

to fly. The engaging narrative is accompanied by numerous photographs, diagrams explaining the Wrights' theories and inventions, and original illustrations depicting their work both in the laboratory and on the field at Kitty Hawk and elsewhere. (Ages 7-11)

**Byrd, Robert. *Leonardo: Beautiful Dreamer*. Dutton, 2003. 48 pages (trade 0-525-47033-6, \$17.99)**

Most biographies of Leonardo daVinci celebrate his myriad successful inventions and influential art. In this gorgeous picture book biography, Byrd emphasizes daVinci's nature as a visionary and dreamer. Beautiful, detailed drawings are scattered in boxes alongside squares of text that tell the story of his life and of his achievements and failures. Byrd's drawings include versions of specific works by da Vinci that will be recognizable by many readers, as well as representations of the sights and sounds of his time. The visual details are extraordinary, if at times overwhelming. Even without text, they convey the story of a man with scientific acumen, artistic genius, and a wild sense of humor. Nowhere else will readers find a study of daVinci that includes everything from his pets (he had a porcupine and a lizard) to his intricate scientific fantasies, which would be realized hundreds of years later (the telescope and the airplane). An author's note describes the challenges in writing a biography of Leonardo, and a detailed timeline of his life. (Ages 10-14)

**Davis, Jill, editor. *Open Your Eyes: Extraordinary Experiences in Faraway Places*. Viking, 2003. 201 pages (trade 0-670-03616-1, \$16.99)**

Ten writers, many well known in the field of children's and young adult literature, recount experiences that expanded their understanding of themselves in relation to the world. Elizabeth Partridge recalls a childhood journey across the United States when she was ten that opened her eyes wide to racism in "Looking for America." In "Ahoy, Down There!" Graham Salisbury discovers a deeply rooted connection to America (and a keen case of homesickness) while standing on an Italian promenade listening to a swearing U.S. sailor. M.T. Anderson also discovers his American identity in a foreign land in "A Brief Guide to the Ghosts of Great Britain," a hilarious and somewhat chagrined portrait of his Anglophile younger self. The most provocative and moving piece is "Simunye" by Piper Dellums. Daughter of a U.S. senator, Dellums was a teenager in the 1970s when the first antiapartheid legislation was introduced by her father. Dellums, who is Black, was excited about the South African exchange student her family had decided to host. Eager to become friends with a Black South African, Dellums was furious when the girl turned out to be a white Afrikaaner. The agency that placed her was horrified—they, too, had thought the girl was Black. The young woman herself was in shock: her opinion of Blacks echoed the racist thinking of the South African government at that time. Dellums recounts how their initially difficult time together led to a rich friendship that changed both young women profoundly. Other contributors to this wide-ranging volume include Jill Davis, Jean Fritz, Kathleen Krull, Lois Lowry, Mary Mazer, Susie Morgenstern, and Katherine Paterson. (Age 12 and older)

**Demi. *Muhammad*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2003. 40 pages (trade 0-689-85264-9, \$19.95)**

Born in Mecca in 570 A.D., Muhammad (PBUH) lost both his parents at an early age and was raised by a grandfather and then by an uncle, who trained him as a businessman. Always thoughtful, honest, and sincere, he was often called upon by friends and neighbors to settle disputes. He was 40 years old when he received his first revelation from Allah, who called upon Muhammad to recite His words. These words were recorded as the Koran and became the foundation of the Islamic faith. Demi uses the intricate style of Persian miniatures with gold-leaf overlay to illustrate this respectful picture book biography of the man known throughout the Islamic world as The Prophet. (Ages 7-11)

**Ehrlich, Amy. *Rachel: The Story of Rachel Carson*. Illustrated by Wendell Minor. Harcourt, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-15-216227-5, \$16.00)**

Carefully chosen events in the life of scientist, writer, and groundbreaking environmentalist Rachel Carson comprise a book that is satisfying even as it invites children to learn more about this singular woman. From early childhood, Rachel was intrigued by nature, and her interest was nurtured and supported by her mother. She also loved writing, and she entered college in 1927 intent on becoming a writer. But that year she glimpsed a paramecium under a microscope in biology class. "In that simple, one-celled organism she saw the complexity of the universe." Amy Ehrlich's finely crafted prose invites readers into Carson's world with tantalizing descriptions of things Carson observed in nature. Ehrlich's gentle sensibility toward her subject gives a sense of Carson's quiet dignity without minimizing her fierce commitment to protecting the earth. Each two-page spread features a full-page watercolor image by Wendell Minor showing Carson engaged with the world she found so fascinating and so fragile. (Ages 5-9)

**Farris, Christine King. *My Brother Martin: A Sister Remembers Growing Up with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* Illustrated by Chris Soentpiet. Simon & Schuster, 2003. 40 pages (trade 0-689-84387-9, \$17.95)**

Christine King Farris, the older sister of Martin Luther King Jr., remembers what it was like to grow up with him in this sensitive account of their childhood. She writes about the pranks she pulled with her brother. M.L., as he was called by the family, and about his distaste for piano lessons, even though he was a talented musician, as well as about growing up in Atlanta, Georgia, under "unfair laws that said it was right to keep black people separate." She describes firsthand an incident in young M.L.'s childhood that is frequently recounted in children's biographies as a turning point in his life: two white friends told him they were no longer allowed to play together. When M.L. and his siblings asked their mother for an explanation, "[s]he answered simply, 'because they just don't understand that everyone is the same but someday, it will be better.' And my brother M.L. looked up into our mother's face and said the words I remember to this day. He said, 'Mother Dear, one day I'm going to turn this world upside down.'" Farris's intimate portrait of her brother not only offers a unique perspective, it also succeeds in introducing him to young readers in terms of what he accomplished in his life by using a single incident in his childhood to illustrate his life-long commitment to equity and racial harmony. (Ages 4-8)

**Fleming, Candace. *Ben Franklin's Almanac: Being a True Account of the Good Gentleman's Life*. An Anne Schwartz Book / Atheneum, 2003. 120 pages (trade 0-689-83549-3, \$19.95)**

Candace Fleming's fascinating portrait of a most intriguing figure in American history is inspired by Franklin's own *Poor Richard's Almanack*. Each two-page spread, designed to look

like an almanac entry, engages readers in a particular aspect of Franklin's life. Freed from a chronological arrangement, readers can choose to dabble at will, or read from cover to cover. Either way, Franklin emerges as a complex individual of conviction and foible, a man who cared deeply for liberty, had a brilliant mind for science, and flirted and fawned (at the very least) with pretty girls. Easy-to-follow, detailed notes at the end of the volume provide the source for every item of the book's illustrated matter, which ranges from reproductions of etchings, engraving, and woodcuts, to photographs of documents and objects, to paintings that interpret historical events. There is also an extensive bibliography and an index to round out this singular, captivating volume. (Age 10 and older)

**Greenberg, Jan. *Romare Bearden: Collage of Memories*. Harry F. Abrams, 2003. 52 pages (trade 0-8109-4589-4, \$17.95)**

This biography of the twentieth-century artist whose works drew on both his childhood in the South and his adult life in the vibrant neighborhoods of Harlem uses Bearden's own work to illustrate his life. As always, Jan Greenberg, a premier writer about art and artists for children and young adults, makes the connection between the artist's life and work. One particularly illuminating aspect of this volume is her description of how Bearden's involvement in the Civil Rights movement led to the creation of his first collages, the style for which he is best known. (Ages 8-14)

**Greenberg, Jan and Sandra Jordan. *Runaway Girl: The Artist Louise Bourgeois*. Harry N. Abrams, 2003. 80 pages (trade 0-8109-4237-2, \$19.95)**

Louise Bourgeois is a living artist whose complex sculptures and installations represent aspects of her life in ways that are often surprisingly direct or shockingly eye-opening. Bourgeois, who is over 90 and still creating, is inspired by people, events, and emotions in her past—transformed through the mind and hands of this brilliant artist into art that is edgy but not confessional. Authors Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan excel at making both art and artists' lives accessible, understandable, and exciting for older children and teens. And from its compelling title on, this volume lives up to their fine previous works. In their usual direct, uncomplicated manner, Greenberg and Jordan reveal their subject's life and work in a way that underscores the connection of one to the other. They interviewed Bourgeois as part of their research, enabling them to enrich their own and readers' understanding of her with personal observation. ("Even eighty years later, speaking about Sadie, Louise makes a wringing motion with her hands.") Bourgeois is an inspiration and mentor to many young artists. Through this book, she may inspire many others, artists or not, to live their lives with honesty and the courage to be themselves. (Age 13 and older)

**Hopkinson, Deborah. *Girl Wonder: A Baseball Story in Nine Innings*. Illustrated by Terry Widener. An Anne Schwartz Book / Atheneum, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-689-83300-8, \$16.95)**

"I must have been born to play baseball," says the young narrator of this story based on the life of Alta Weiss, a young woman who grew up early in the twentieth century and pitched ball for a semi-pro team in Ohio at the age of 17. In a friendly, folksy narrative, Alta's passion and enthusiasm for pitching and her love of the game from the time she was a small child shine. When she approaches the coach of the Vermilion Independents and asks for a chance to play, "the Independents' crusty old coach took one look at my long, blue skirt, [and] he spit hard on

the ground. ‘Go home, missy. You’re a girl—and this is baseball.’ ” But Alta doesn’t give up. Convincing the coach to give her a chance, she becomes a wild success—not only winning games, but drawing in crowds. It isn’t the only time in her life that Alta would break down barriers, as the narrator briefly describes going on to attend medical school, where she is the only girl in her class. There is a photograph of the real Alta Weiss on the back cover of this winning picture book. She is posed to release the ball, with a look of serious intent that makes it clear there is little that can stand in this young woman’s way. (Ages 5-9)

**Kraft, Betsy Harvey. *Theodore Roosevelt: Champion of the American Spirit*. Clarion, 2003. 180 pages (trade 0-618-14264-9, \$16.00)**

In Betsy Harvey Kraft's spirited biography, Theodore Roosevelt's life unfolds with all the excitement one might expect in a book about a man whose exploits are sometimes seen as almost larger than life: game hunter, cattle rancher, Rough Rider. But the more intriguing aspects of Roosevelt's history turn out to be his no less passionate pursuit of social justice, environmental protection, and progressive political reform. Kraft's portrait begins with a Roosevelt's childhood, which contrasts with the vigorous man who later emerged. Teedie, as Roosevelt was known as a boy, was a fragile child prone to illness. But he also had all the privileges of wealth, and so opportunities to travel, or to summer in the then-expansive rustic areas of Long Island, are part of what led to his love of nature, and his broad world views. His was also a family committed to social reform. He carried all of these ideals into his political career in adulthood. It is likely most children and teens today know Roosevelt, the 26th U.S. president, only from history books, if at all. This captivating biography will introduce them to the complex individual behind the title. While this portrait of Roosevelt gives a sense of both his public and private life, it is a vivid picture of the former that emerges most clearly. Black--and-white photographs that illustrate the volume. (Ages 10-15)

**Krull, Kathleen. *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez*. Illustrated by Yuyi Morales. Harcourt, 2003. 48 pages (trade 0-15-201437-3; \$17.00)**

Cesar Chavez was an American hero, a labor activist who worked tirelessly to improve working conditions for the migrant farm workers of California. In Krull's picture book biography, we first meet Chavez as a small boy, enjoying his life on his family's ranch in Arizona. It was not until he was ten years old that a drought destroyed the ranch and forced his family to move to California, where his life changed dramatically. He grew up alongside thousands of other Mexican and Mexican American laborers and experienced firsthand the discrimination and poor working conditions faced by migrant workers. In school he was forced to speak English only and eventually left school before finishing his education. As he grew older, he became more hopeful that he could fight for reform, and eventually organized The National Farm Workers Association. Through strikes, marches, and non-violent demonstrations, Chavez and NFWA were instrumental in improving both pay and working conditions for California's grape workers. In 1965, Chavez negotiated the first “contract for farm workers in American History.” Morales's lush artwork, done mostly with richly colored oil paintings, contributes to the depth of this story. Her stylized illustrations, show Chavez at several stages in his life, his image getting literally larger and more powerful on each page. The final page acknowledges that Chavez's work was just the beginning of many years of struggle for justice. Morales's accompany painting, showing Chavez looking up at a beautiful starry sky, will leave readers feeling hopeful. (Ages 5-9)

**Loyie, Larry with Constance Brissenden. *As Long as the Rivers Flow*. Illustrated by Heather D. Holmlund. A Groundwood Book / Douglas & McIntyre, 2003. 40 pages (trade 0-88899-473-7, \$16.95)**

Four chapters describe the summer of 1944, Lawrence Loyie's last summer with his Cree family in northern Alberta, Canada, before he and his sister and brothers were sent to a residential school for North American native children. The busy summer finds Lawrence caring for a baby owl and traveling to the family summer camp, where he and his cousins find time to pick berries and swim, along with their chores. In one tensely dramatic scene, Lawrence and his grandmother confront a huge and angry grizzly bear, which Grandma kills with a single shot from her small .22 rifle. In a poignant finale at the season's end, Lawrence and the other children are taken away by strangers in the back of an open truck to attend a distant boarding school. The brief epilogue describes how the author was one of thousands of First Nations children who were forcibly removed from their families and sent to residential schools, a practice which began around 1880 and continued for 100 years. Watercolor illustrations on almost every page accompany the main text, while black-and-white photographs in the epilogue show Lawrence and his siblings in group photos at their residential school. (Ages 8-12)

**Lyon, George Ella. *Mother to Tigers*. Illustrated by Peter Catalanotto. A Richard Jackson Book / Atheneum, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-689-84221-X, \$16.95)**

An abandoned lion cub named MacArthur was the first baby animal cared for by Helen Martini in her New York City apartment. After MacArthur came a litter of Bengal tigers, and eventually Ms. Martini started a nursery at the Bronx Zoo, where she helped raise young animals from 1944 until 1960. Initially working as a volunteer, she later became the first woman keeper at the Bronx Zoo. The watercolor, charcoal, and torn-paper illustrations realistically depict the young animals and their dedicated caretaker without resorting to sentimentality. Intriguing scenes like the one in which the Bengal tigers indulge in an unsupervised romp in a full bathtub will captivate young readers. (Ages 5-9)

**Maurer, Richard. *The Wright Sister: Katharine Wright and Her Famous Brothers*. Roaring Brook Press, 2003. 127 pages (trade 0-7613-1546-2; \$18.95)**

Author Richard Maurer first became interested in Katherine Wright, the sister of Orville and Wilbur, when he was working on a museum exhibit and came across one of her letters, dated August 20, 1902, that described her brothers' work on one of their flying machines. His substantive biography of her is based almost entirely on the goldmine of letters she left behind. As the only daughter in a family of five children, Katharine was groomed from an early age to run the household for her widowed father and bachelor brothers. Like her brothers, she had a quick and inquiring mind but, unlike them, she was greatly limited by the social conventions of their time. As someone close to the action, however, she was uniquely positioned to tell their story, but her words have gone largely unheard until now. Black-and-white photographs illustrate this absorbing, well-documented biography. (Ages 11-16)

**Niven, Penelope. *Carl Sandburg: Adventures of a Poet*. Illustrated by Marc Nadel. Harcourt, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-15-204686-0, \$17.00)**

Eleven poems or excerpts of prose by Carl Sandburg are paired with brief narratives examining particular aspects of the writer's many-storied life. Each two-page spread highlights a different facet of Sandburg's life and work. The narratives bear titles such as "Vagabond," referencing his days jumping freight trains to travel the country; "Soldier," marking his involvement in the Spanish American War; "Journalist," including his work in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and "Minstrel," chronicling his musical talent and his work recording and collecting folk songs. Other narratives comment on Sandburg's family life; his work as a storyteller, poet, and historian; and his prolific correspondence. Notes on the carefully researched watercolor-and-crosshatch artwork will encourage children to examine each illustration carefully in order to discover the details incorporated into each. (Ages 8-11)

**Rembert, Winfred with Charles Baker and Rosalie Barker. *Don't Hold Me Back: My Life and Art*. A Marcato Book / Cricket, 2003. 40 pages (trade 0-8126-2703-2, \$19.95)**

The title of this volume comes from a poem by Nikki Giovanni dedicated to Winfred Rembert that appears as a preface to the narrative vignettes and works of art created by Rembert that follow. Winfred Rembert is an African American artist whose journey to becoming an artist--and journey through life--is one of tragedy and triumph. Above all, it's a journey that shows how resilient the human spirit can be. Raised by a great-aunt who was a fieldworker in the South, Rembert grew up embraced in love but living in a society where he saw hatred against Black people everywhere. Arrested after stealing a car to escape the brutal white crowd at a demonstration in the 1950s, he was beaten by the police, and later paraded around town as an example to other Blacks. Transferred from one penitentiary to another, Rembert eventually ended up at Bainbridge, where he met a prisoner named TJ, a trustee, who got permission to show Winfred how to tool leather. It wasn't until the mid-1990s that Rembert began creating detailed paintings on leather—scenes that he would tool and then dye. He recreated the scenes from his childhood—from the backbreaking fieldwork, to the vibrant Black community where he lived and played, to the more threatening white world. He also recreated life on the chain gang other scenes from prison. His works are a testament to the best and the worst of Black experience in this country in the mid twentieth century, and they are now sought after by galleries and private collectors alike. Winfred recalls his experiences without bitterness in the narrative that accompanies these extraordinary autobiographical works of art. (Age 11 and older)

**Satrapi, Marjane. *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*. Pantheon, 2003. 160 pages (trade 0-375-42230-7, \$17.95)**

Marjane Satrapi chose a unique medium, the "graphic memoir," to tell the story of her childhood and early teen years living in Iran. Marjane was ten when the Shah was overthrown in 1979 at the start of the Islamic Revolution. Crisp black-and-white cartoon images and spare but powerful text combine to describe a childhood that is truly divided and threatened by the repression of the government. Satrapi contrasts her private life inside the home of her liberal parents and her public life in school and on the streets of Tehran. The veil she is required to wear as a result of the Islamic Revolution cannot mask the fact that she is smart, funny, and gutsy. But it also

cannot mask the fear she feels with the increasing oppression, especially as she learns of the new regime's arrest, torture, and sometimes murder of her family's friends and relatives, despite her parents' attempts to shelter her from this knowledge. (Like any curious child, Marjane eavesdrops, but sometimes regrets knowing what she overhears.) In the turn of a single page, Satrapi can conjure up fear and anger in one moment, and joy and laughter in another. The horrors of war and of the torture experienced by domestic "enemies" of the new regime are powerfully depicted, making Satrapi's droll humor, which shows up often, a surprising and priceless respite. (In the book's opening series of panels, she has drawn a picture of five identical little girls in veils. The figure on the left is cut off by the edge of the frame, so only a portion of her shows. Satrapi tells us it's her class picture, and *she* is the one on the left.) For her own safety, Satrapi is eventually sent by her parents to live in Europe, a decision that is clearly painful for all three of them. *Persepolis* was published for adults in the United States. We have included it in this edition of *CCBC Choices* because of its unique content, and because the format often lends itself to a crossover audience. But mature content, from violence to occasional nudity, makes it a work we recommend for older teens. (Ages 15 and older)

**SR, Peter. *The Tree of Life: A Book Depicting the Life of Charles Darwin: Naturalist, Geologist & Thinker*. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-374-45628-3, \$18.00)**

Peter Sis's picture book biography of Charles Darwin is as complex as Darwin's contributions to modern science. Beginning with the endpapers, not an inch of any page is left uncovered. Intricate drawings, text boxes, diagrams and maps are accompanied by several strands of text differentiated by font and size. In one narrative strand, readers read an account of Darwin's life from childhood on. In the second, additional detail about Darwin's private life is revealed. In the third, readers have access to Darwin's secret thoughts and hypotheses—ideas he knew were radical and risky to make public. Finally, there are excerpts from Darwin's journals. The first three threads are significant, because Darwin led a very secret intellectual life in a society that was not always eager to embrace scientific change, particularly not when those discoveries threatened the beliefs of the Christian Church. While the additional source documentation would have been helpful, this is nonetheless a significant work that illuminates Darwin's life and times for children and teens. (Ages 10-16)

**Winter, Jeanette. *Beatrix*. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. 62 pages (trade 0-374-30655-9, \$15.00)**

Beatrix Potter, the creator of many beloved stories for children, suffered a lonely childhood. Friendless because her mother discouraged friendships, Beatrix's companions were the creatures she found and tamed during summers in the country. The rabbit she named Peter, the little mouse called Hunca Munca, and Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle, her hedgehog, eased her loneliness. Her other source of solace was art, and she drew and wrote a world of brightness and magic that contrasted the grayness and sadness that permeated her life in London. "I bring my drawings from the country back to the city. They help me imagine I have escaped to the fairy woods...I have stories inside me that I must get out." As she did in *My Name Is Georgia* (Harcourt, 1998), her marvelous picture book biography of Georgia O'Keeffe, Jeanette Winter has created an intimate and intriguing portrait of a singular girl and woman ("*I live so much out of the world.*"). She

blends her own spare text, which conveys both fact and feeling to great effect, with her subject's own words (distinguished by italics in the narrative). Winter's color art shows the solemn but passionate and curious Beatrix and her affinity for the natural world. The illustrations have a tender charm but a commendable lack of sweetness. The narrative goes on to chronicle how Beatrix's childhood stories and drawings ultimately led to her creating stories for other children as an adult. This, in turn, led to her independence and eventual happiness. (Ages 6-9)

**See also:** *Adelina's Whales*; *After the Last Dog Died*; *Coming to America*; *George Washington's Teeth*; *Getting Away with Murder*; *Hana's Suitcase*; *Johann Gutenberg and His Amazing Printing Press*; *John Muir and Stickeen*; *Man Who Walked Between the Towers*; *Man Who Went to the Far Side of the Moon*; *Mary Smith*; *My Grandmother's Stories*; *Pictures for Miss Josie*; *Road to There*; *Uncle Andy's*; *When Everybody Wore a Hat*; *Woods Scientist*

### Contemporary People, Places, and Events

**Dennis, Yvonne Wakim and Arlene Hirschfelder. *Children of Native America Today*. Foreword by Buffy Sainte-Marie. Shakti for Children / Charlesbridge, 2003. 64 pages (lib. 1-57091-499-0; \$19.95)**

Color photographs accompany a brief text to introduce 25 North American Indian tribes, arranged here according to current geographical locations of tribal lands. The entry for each tribe covers one double-page spread and includes four or five color photographs of contemporary children, along with a few facts and details likely to be of interest to elementary-school-aged children. A map of the United States shows the exact locations for each of the 25 tribes cited, including the Ojibway and Oneida tribes in Wisconsin. (Ages 7-11)

**Kuklin, Susan. *All Aboard! A True Train Story*. Orchard, 2003. 32 pages (lib. 0-439-45583-9, \$16.95)**

Striking and superb full-color photographs show five of America's oldest steam engines on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad in the San Juan wilderness of the Colorado Rocky Mountains. "WHOO-WHOO...CHUGGA, CHUGGA...CLICKETY CLACK...CH-CH-CHOO..." Children will make these and other sounds suggested in the text as they turn pages to see photos of the mighty engines pulling train cars through mountain landscapes of breathtaking beauty. What a treat for children to enter into the dramatic movement of real trains! Two informational pages at the end provides answers to the questions about real trains, tracks, and whistles children will pose while they enjoy this book time after time. (Ages 2-4)

**Sobol, Richard. *Adelina's Whales*. Dutton, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-525-47110-3, \$17.99)**

Ten-year-old Adelina Mayoral lives in Laguna San Ignacio, a small fishing village in Mexico that is graced with the arrival of migrating gray whales each January. It is the only place in the world that the whales seek out human contact. Photojournalist Richard Sobol filters information about life in the village and about the whales through Adelina's experience. Readers learn that her fisherman grandfather was the first person to report friendly contact with the whales—it's a story Adelina never tires of hearing. And they find out about the whales in the context of what Adelina has learned by living next to their winter home and breeding ground. Sobol's child-centered perspective lends his narrative a bright, engaging tone. A foreword by environmentalist

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., provides background information on successful international efforts involving activists, politicians, entertainers, and others to protect the waters around Laguna San Ignacio from development that would have polluted the whale's winter home. (Ages 7-10)

**Wolf, Bernard. *Coming to America: A Muslim Family's Story*. Lee & Low, 2003. 48 pages (1-58430-086-8, \$17.95)**

Bernard Wolf's welcome photodocumentary introduces the Mahmoud family, who emigrated to Queens, New York, from Egypt. Their life in America is seen from the perspective of Rowan, the youngest daughter. Wolf relates the Mahmoud's experiences as Muslim immigrants and the ways they have blended their Muslim and Egyptian culture with American life. The power of the volume is in the way it shows the family engaged in both familiar American activities, such as Rowan in a computer lab at a public school or attending a birthday party, and activities related to their their Muslim religion and Egyptian heritage, from eating an Egyptian meal to praying at their Mosque. The book strikes a balance between the celebratory and the ordinary, highlighting the economic advancement and scholastic success of the family along with the everyday events of daily life, from shopping and cooking to going to work or school. Sometimes Rowan misses Egypt, but she has many friends from different cultures in her neighborhood to rely on for support. While the book does not go into great detail about Islam, but it does provide a snapshot of an Egyptian Muslim family in America, with lively photographs and a cheerful narrative. (Ages 8-12)

**See also:** *As Long as the Rivers Flow*; *Babu's Song*; *Don't Hold Me Back*; *Hana's Suitcase*; *Keeper of the Night*; *Mud City*; *Open Your Eyes*; *Out of Bounds*; *Persepolis*; *Runaway Girl*; *Tangled Threads*; *Woods Scientist*

### Understanding Oneself and Others

**Campbell, Bebe Moore. *Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry*. Illustrated by E.B. Lewis. Putnam, 2003. 32 pages (lib. 0-399-23972-3, \$16.99)**

Annie and her mother share an upbeat morning, with pancakes for breakfast and an exuberant mood in the air. But as she walks to school, Annie hopes that her mommy will "still [be] smiling when I come home. Sometimes my mommy doesn't smile at all." Annie's fears prove true, as an angry and yelling mother meets her after school. "Her morning smile has disappeared like the sun." Annie handles her mother's precarious mood swings with the support of her grandma, who reminds her that "your mother has problems, and she hasn't gotten the help she needs. Sometimes it's hard for grown-ups to ask for help. I hope that one day she will. But your mother loves you even when she's yelling. It's okay for you to be angry. I know you love her too." This rare portrayal of a child living with a parent with symptoms of mental illness focuses on validating feelings and offering coping strategies. The picture book format features full-page watercolor illustrations of brown-skinned Annie and her mother. (Ages 5-10)

**Harris, Robie. *Go! Go! Maria! What It's Like To Be 1*. Illustrated by Michael Emberley. (Growing Up Stories.) Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-689-83258-3, \$16.95)**

As with their companion volume in the "Growing Up Stories" series, *Hello Benny!* (Candlewick Press, 2002), Robie Harris and Michael Emberley have teamed to create an inviting and

informative book *for* young children *about* young children. In *Go! Go! Maria!* they turn their attention to one-year-olds. The narrative story follows Maria, a young Latina child who is just learning to walk and talk. Maria delights in mastering new skills, from turning on the TV to walking to learning words (in both English and Spanish). Over the course of the year, her abilities expand to include climbing the stairs and saying her name, as well as many other new skills. As Maria engages in typical one-year-old behavior, informational boxes feature additional text that can be used to explain *why* one-year-olds behave that way. The book will provide children with younger siblings a wonderful way to learn about their youngest family members. But all children will also delight in the opportunity to find out more about themselves when they were Maria's age. (Ages 3-6)

**See also:** *Birdland; Buddha Boy; Coming to America; Children of Native America Today; Cool Moonlight; Fat Kid Rules the World; Getting the Girl; Grandparents Song; Izzy's Place; Keeper of the Night; Millicent Min; Olive's Ocean; Silent Boy; Tangled Threads; Trudi & Pia; True Confessions of a Heartless Girl; Way a Door Closes; Where Are You Going; Yesterday I Had the Blues*

## The Arts

**Aliki. *Ah, Music!* HarperCollins, 2003. 47 pages (trade 0-06-028719-5, \$16.99; lib. 0-06-028727-6, \$17.89)**

Author/artist Aliki shares her love of music with children in a book that provides an enthusiastic overview of many facets of this art form. What *is* music? How is it written and performed? How does it differ from place to place? How has it changed over time? There is a wealth of general information, as well as quite a few specifics, packed into this engaging volume that can serve as a starting point for further discovery. The illustrations include factual interpretations of each aspect of music that is examined, while lighthearted, cartoonlike asides capture the joy that music can be and can bring. (Ages 5-9)

**Bearden, Romare. *Li'l Dan the Drummer Boy: A Civil War Story*. Foreword by Henry Louis Gates Jr. Simon & Schuster, 2003. 40 pages (trade 0-689-86237-7, \$18.95)**

Artist Romare Bearden is best known for his vibrant collages depicting Black life in America, especially in Harlem. This work showcases Bearden's series of paintings and original story about a slave boy named Li'l Dan who joins a regiment of Black Union soldiers during the Civil War. Li'l Dan becomes their mascot, entertaining the men with his nightly drumming. When he sees the troops marching into danger during a battle, Li'l Dan is able to recreate the sound of a cannon on his drum, frightening the enemy away. Needless to say, he becomes a hero, invited by General Sherman himself to join the Union's Drum Corps. Bearden's child-pleasing, hopeful story is energized by wonderful art that blends line and color into vivid scenes of action, or moments of quieter repose. African American scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr., a friend of the late Bearden, has written the foreword, in which he shares some memories of his friend, as well as the first time he viewed the panels and heard the story that now comprise this book. (Age 8 and older)

**Cox, Judy. *My Family Plays Music*. Illustrated by Elbrite Brown. Holiday House, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-8234-1591-0, \$16.95)**

All the members of a young African American girl's family are musicians. But each one plays a different instrument and a different kind of music. There is her country-and-western fiddle-playing mom, her classical cellist dad, her clarinet-playing sister who marches in a band, her aunt who plays vibes in a jazz combo, her cousin who plays bongos "at the Full Ear Café," and others. The girl likes playing with each member of her family, although her choice of instrument varies from triangle to tambourine, handbell to maracas, wind chimes to woodblock. "Daddy says I'm a percussionist," she explains. This celebration of music and of family ties concludes with a glossary that provides brief information about each type of music referenced in the text. (Ages 4-7)

**Kushner, Tony. *Brundibar*. Illustrated by Maurice Sendak. After the opera by Hans Krása and Adolf Hoffmeister. Michael Di Capua Books / Hyperion, 2003. 56 pages (trade 0-7868-0904-3, \$19.95)**

Two children need milk for their sick mother. "No money? No milk!" cries the cold-hearted milkman. Then they spy Brundibar. The odd little man has attracted a paying crowd with his hurdy-gurdy and his "awful awful" songs. Inspired, the children decide to sing for their supper—or rather, the money to buy their mother some milk. But Brundibar despises the competition. "Nasty little children, quiet. / Don't be loud, don't even try it / You'll find out what troubles are / If you bother Brundibar!" The children are the heart and soul of this story—the hope for the future. They are the ones who have the courage to lead a rally against the bullying Brundibar. "Oh thundery blunderly bothersome Brundibar! Shall you be pounced. And will you be trounced?" They triumph, but not without a haunting epilogue: "I'll be back." This picture book adaptation of a satirical Czech opera that was completed in 1938 makes numerous references to the Holocaust, highly appropriate given its history and intent. It was performed more than 50 times by children in the Nazi concentration camp Terezin. There is more than a passing resemblance between Brundibar and Hitler, both in image and action. Tony Kushner's frantic, frenzied narrative is matched by Maurice Sendak's unsettling artwork. Sendak's work is packed with symbols and images both obvious and subtle. The imagery is just part of what makes this such a highly discussible book for older children and teens. (Age 10 and older)

**Nilsen, Anna. *The Great Art Scandal*. U.S. edition: Kingfisher, 2003. 48 pages (trade 0-7534-5587-0, \$16.95)**

Gallery curator Molly Adams directly addresses young readers, asking them to assist her with some detective work. In order to help her solve the case, children will have to look carefully at 32 art masterpieces by artists such as Gauguin, Monet, Lichtenstein, and Warhol to try to find details from their work in 32 original paintings by 16 unknown artists who have incorporated several details from the masters in their own work. Horizontally split pages have positioned the masters on the bottom half of each page and the new paintings at the top, so that it makes it easy to compare and contrast each one while looking for specific details. The book as a whole is cleverly designed to encourage children to look carefully and critically at art and to have fun in the process. (Ages 8-13)

**Seeger, Pete. *One Grain of Sand: A Lullaby*. Illustrated by Linda Wingerter. Megan Tingley Books / Little, Brown, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-316-78140-1, \$15.95)**

A lullaby written by American folk icon Pete Seeger in 1957 and recorded by Seeger and many other artists over the years offers soothing cadences—even when spoken—that encourage little ones to sleep. But it also offers comfort for all old enough to make sense of its words, cradling children with the knowledge that they are small but so very significant. The songwriter’s message is beautifully extended with Linda Wingerter’s rich, graceful acrylic illustrations that set each verse of the song against backdrops featuring people and places around the world. A note from Seeger provides musical notation for those who prefer to sing rather than read the song, as well as information on its origins as a lullaby for his youngest daughter. (Age Birth – 3)

**Warhola, James. *Uncle Andy’s: A Faabbbulous Visit with Andy Warhol*. Putnam, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-399-23869-7, \$16.99)**

Author/artist James Warhola’s very famous uncle, Andy Warhol, was just plain Uncle Andy to young Jamie and his siblings. In a funny and observant narrative that never strays from a child’s point of view, Warhola describes one of the many visits he and his family made to visit Uncle Andy and their grandmother, Bubba, who shared a five-story apartment in New York City with 25 cats, “all named Sam.” Young Jamie’s family lived out in the country, where their dad was a junkman who shared his famous brother’s artistic spirit. On their visits to New York, “Dad always remembered to bring Uncle Andy something interesting from the junkyard.” Warhola’s spirited, deliciously detailed full-page illustrations depict the creative chaos that defined Uncle Andy’s home and his unique approach to art. “I thought Uncle Andy and Bubba sure ate a lot of soup!” Jamie says when he wakes in a room towering with soup boxes. “But that wasn’t it at all. They were art, and really important too, because Uncle Andy told us not to touch any of it.” At the heart of Warhola’s narrative, with its understated, droll humor and childlike enthusiasm for the unusual, is the story of a warm and loving family, and a young artist who was encouraged and inspired by his singular relative. (Ages 6-10)

**See also:** *Beatrix; Bird About To Sing; Birdland; Blues Journey; Buddha Boy; Butterflies for Kiri; Carl Sandburg; Dante’s Daughter; Don’t Hold Me Back; Fat Kid Rules the World; Getting the Girl; Kogi’s Mysterious Journey; Jones Family Express; Leonardo; Locomotion; Mystery; Olive’s Ocean; Open Your Eyes; Northern Light; Persepolis; Runaway Girl; Shape Game; Stitches; Strange Mr. Satie; Tangled Threads*

## Poetry

**Florian, Douglas. *Autumnblings*. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 48 pages (trade 0-06-009278-5, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-009279-3, \$16.89)**

It’s the end of baseball and the beginning of cool crisp nights, marked by the months Octobrrrrr, Novembrrrrr, and Decembrrrrr. Leaves fall, pumpkins grin, geese fly in a v-formation. It must be that season with two names: fall and autumn. Appropriately earth-toned watercolor and colored pencil illustrations are accompanied by 48 short poems that use Douglas Florian’s characteristic punning and concrete forms. A companion to *Winter Eyes* and *Summersaults*, *Autumnblings* leaves us looking forward to Florian’s spring poems. (Ages 4-8)

**Florian, Douglas. *Bow Wow Meow Meow: It's Rhyming Cats and Dogs*. Harcourt, 2003. 47 pages (trade 0-15-216395-6, \$17.00)**

In 19 pieces of clever whimsy, Florian captures the essence of a particular kind of dog or cat. From a whippet ("Few dogs can whippet in a race.") to a bloodhound ("My senses are scent-sational.") and from a pPrsian ("A pet-igree that's known as Persian") to a lion ("It has a most fur-ocious" roar.), he uses page space as well as observation to share what cannot be found in an encyclopedia. Two other brief, humorous musings contain Florian's reflections about having a pet cat or dog. The artwork accompanying each poem was prepared in watercolor on primed brown bags with collage. Florian's self-portrait on the book jacket suggests his personal feline tendencies. (Ages 4-11)

**Hopkins, Lee Bennett, selector. *A Pet for Me: Poems*. Illustrated by Jane Manning. (An I Can Read Book) HarperCollins, 2003. 48 pages (trade 0-06-029111-7, \$15.99; pbk. 0-06-443716-7, \$3.99)**

Thirteen poets are represented in Hopkins's seventh collection of short poems accessible to newly independent readers and also to young listeners. There's a poem about an ant farm, and one about a tarantula, an iguana is featured in another, and a pet snake can also be found within this 20-poem anthology. Manning's inviting artwork reproduced in full color adds to the lively anthology. (Ages 6-8)

**Kuskin, Karla. *Moon, Have You Met My Mother? The Collected Poems of Karla Kuskin*. Illustrated by Sergio Ruzzier. Laura Geringer Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 322 pages (trade 0-06-027173-6, \$16.99; lib. 0-06-027174-4, \$17.89)**

Karla Kuskin has been creating marvelous poetry for children since the late 1950s. Her verse can be silly, whimsical, or thoughtful, and she often integrates all three qualities into a single poem. Since so many of her books have gone out of print, this hefty volume of Kuskin's collected poems will be a welcome addition to library collections, particularly where there are no longer many Kuskin titles on the shelves. The poems have been arranged in broad thematic categories that take their names from individual lines of her poems. "Buggity, Buggity, Bug," "A Wizard Has a Lizard," "There Is a Me Inside of Me," "Pigeon Is a Pretty Word," and "Moon, Have You Met My Mother?" are just samplings of the sections and hint at the impish, teasing, and reflective tones the poems can take. Deceptively simple, Kuskin's poems often display a masterful use of phrasing, making them a delight to read aloud. (Ages 6-10)

**Myers, Walter Dean. *Blues Journey*. Illustrated by Christopher Myers. Holiday House, 2003. 48 pages (trade 0-8234-1613-5, \$18.95)**

Walter Dean Myers's picture book poem illustrates the connection between blues music, poetry, and the real-life events that inspire them. Each page includes a powerful collage-style drawing in dark, bluesy hues and four lines of poetry in the familiar call-and-response style found in the blues. The themes are typical of traditional blues music, including the horrors and joys experienced by African Americans in the United States. The glossary explains the symbolism of a handful of recurring images commonly used in countless songs. The book finishes with of

timeline of major events in the history of blues. *Winner, CCBC Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award Discussion* (Ages 9-14)

**Smith, Hope Anita. *The Way a Door Closes*. Illustrated by Shane W. Evans. Henry Holt, 2003. 52 pages (trade 0-8050-6477-X, \$18.95)**

Hope Anita Smith uses short poems to create snapshots of 13-year-old CJ and his family. Written in CJ's first-person voice, the poems resonate with the love and warmth as CJ describes life with his grandmomma, parents, and siblings. The African American teen's sense of himself and his family's history is strong and he is hopeful about the future. Then CJ's father loses his job and can't find another. The tension in CJ's once harmonious home reaches a breaking point when his father walks out the door--and doesn't return. "Trust me,/ I can tell a lot by the way a door closes." CJ's sadness is deep. His grandmomma, a voice of wisdom throughout the book, tells him, "There are lots of ways of leaving. / Your daddy / left /a while ago. / Now he's just gone." But CJ not only misses his dad, he feels that he must become the man of the house and try to take care of his family, although his mother tries to assure him otherwise. It's hard for CJ to feel optimistic about anything, let alone the idea that his father will come back, making the uplifting but not unrealistic ending of this poem cycle all the more satisfying when CJ's father does return. Shane Evan's fine illustrations accompany the poems and have a similar snapshot quality. (Ages 10-14)

**Stevenson, James. *Corn Chowder: Poems*. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 48 pages (trade 0-06-05059-6, \$15.99)**

Twenty-five *very* short poems (many are just a few lines long) offer James Stevenson's droll observations about everyday life, focusing our attention on subjects such as peanut butter, cell phones, city trees, children's backpacks, and a locksmith's shop window. Some of the poems will appeal more to adult sensibilities, but others will have a great deal of child appeal, such as those dealing with animals in the zoo, a runaway snack cart, and children playing in the park. Stevenson's wry pen-and-ink and watercolor illustrations add to the overall charm and humor. (Ages 6-11)

**See also:** *Bird About To Sing; Birdland; Carl Sandburg; Dante's Daughter; Honey, I Love; Keesha's House; Locomotion; Northern Light; Pio Peep!; Swing around the Sun*

### Concept Books

**Morales, Yuyi. *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book*. Chronicle, 2003. 28 pages (trade 0-8118-3758-0, \$15.95)**

When Grandma Beetle answers the knock at the door, she finds SeZor Galavera has come to take her with him. "What a skinny gentleman!" she thinks. Grandma's understatement is obvious-- SeZor Galavera is a skeleton. If his arrival seems faintly threatening, readers and listeners quickly realize that Grandma Beetle has no intention of going anywhere. She puts SeZor Galavera off with a litany of tasks she must complete—one house to sweep, two pots of tea to make, three pounds of corn to make into tortillas, and so on. As she completes each task, SeZor Galavera counts it off in both English and Spanish. Although he's a gentleman, SeZor Galavera's patience begins to grow thin about the time Grandma's filling seven piZatas. But by the time she gets to the number ten, the tables have turned completely on SeZor Galavera's intentions. How

can he possibly take Grandma with him after he's been a guest at her birthday party? Yuyi Morales's original trickster tale highlights numerous Mexican cultural traditions. The vibrant acrylic and mixed-media illustrations are a perfect accompaniment to the lively and humorous story. (Ages 4-7)

**Reiser, Lynn. *Ten Puppies*. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-06-008644-0, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-008645-9, \$16.89)**

How many ways can one group of puppies add up to ten? In Lynn Reiser's playful concept book, the ten puppies have varying characteristics that are counted ten different ways. Each two-page spread highlights the differences of one particular feature that separate the puppies into two groups (e.g., "Seven had floppy ears. Three had pointy ears."). A final page summarizes these differences as the simple mathematical equations they are ( $7+3=10$ ). Bold watercolors were used to create this unlikely but appealing litter. (Ages 3-6)

**Sayre, April Pulley and Jeff Sayre. *One Is a Snail, Ten Is a Crab: A Counting by Feet Book*. Illustrated by Randy Cecil. Candlewick Press, 2003. 36 pages (trade 0-7636-1406-8, \$15.99)**

This ingenious counting book is all about feet. Not the kind with inches. The kind with toes, or paws, or claws. "1 is a snail. 2 is a person. 3 is a person and a snail." That's how it goes. The four-footed dog plus a snail equals five. The eight-footed spider plus a snail equals nine. Ten? Why, ten is a crab! And that means 20 is two crabs. Forty is four crabs, or ten dogs or...you get the picture. And so will kids. No doubt they'll be eagerly creating their own pedimentary (yes, that's a made-up word) equations in no time. (Ages 4-8)

**Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. *The Hidden Alphabet*. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook, 2003. (trade 0-7613-1941-7, \$17.95)**

Laura Vaccaro Seeger's striking lift-the-flap alphabet book features an object framed in black on each page. The object corresponds to a letter of the alphabet:

arrowhead...balloons...mouse...olive...raindrop, etc. Lift the black frame and the letter of the alphabet is revealed, with the object an integral part of the letter's design. A few of the object choices are a bit esoteric for the typical audience of an alphabet book—"inkblot" for I, "quotation mark" for Q. But younger children will enjoy noticing how each letter is comprised of the object pictured, while children who consider themselves too old for alphabet books may find artistic inspiration and want to embark on a similar project of their own. Seeger's invitingly playful images make wonderful use of color, shape, and other design elements. (Age 4 and older)

### Board Books

**Allen, Kit. *Galoshes*. Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 22 pages (trade 0-618-22997-3, \$4.95)**

**Allen, Kit. *Longjohns*. Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 22 pages (trade 0-618-22996-5, \$4.95)**

**Allen, Kit. *Sweater*. Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 22 pages (trade 0-618-26370-5, \$4.95)**

**Allen, Kit. *Swimsuit*. Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 22 pages (trade 0-618-26371-3, \$4.95)**

Each of these simple, pleasing board books pictures the same little boy in a different season, getting ready for and engaging in outdoor play. *Galoshes* shows him preparing for a romp in

spring rain, *Swimsuit* for a summer day at the beach, *Sweater* for a fall day of pumpkins and leaves, and *Longjohns* for active winter play. There is only one word on each two-page spread, naming what the boy is putting on or doing (e.g., “mittens,” “boots,” “snow,” “sled,” “skate”) The pattern for all four books is the same, ending with the single word “sleep” and a picture of the worn out child still garbed in some vestige of the day’s activities. The boy himself is barely more than a stick figure, but author/artist Kit Allen has managed to create an engaging child character and four satisfying stories with her skilled use of sequencing in the narratives, and clean black lines and bold colors in the art. (Ages 1-3)

**Henkes, Kevin. *Julius’s Candy Corn*. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 22 pages (trade 0-06-053789-2, \$6.99)**

**Henkes, Kevin. *Wemberly’s Ice-Cream Star*. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 22 pages (trade 0-06-050405-6, \$6.99)**

These companion volumes to *Sheila Rae’s Peppermint Stick* (2001) and *Owen’s Marshmallow Chick* (2002), both published by Greenwillow, complete Henkes’s series of four board books that are tied to the seasons, each featuring one of his mouse characters. In *Wemberly’s Ice Cream Star*, the young mouse gets an ice cream treat on a hot summer day. But she’s worried the ice cream will drip on her new dress. She’s also concerned that her little bunny, Petal, doesn’t have a treat of her own. In addition to being a worrier, Wemberly proves herself a creative, go-with-the-flow kind of problem solver. In *Julius’s Candy Corn*, a clown-costumed Julius is highly admiring of the cupcakes waiting for his Halloween guests to arrive. When his mother tells him not to eat them, he happily settles for counting each piece of candy corn on top of the cakes—before then popping them into his mouth! Henkes’s simple, satisfying stories charmingly capture preschool-aged behavior. (Ages 2-5)

**Laden, Nina. *Grow Up! Chronicle*, 2003. 24 pages (trade 0-8118-3761-0, \$6.95)**

A die-cut circle on alternating pages provides the transition from the beginning of a toddler-based statement to its predictable conclusion. On the double-page spread reading “A kitten grows up to be a [...]” the accompanying illustration shows a curious kitten gazing at two orange fish in a bowl, with a die-cut circle framing the fishes’ bodies. The following page states the answer (“CAT!”), and the bodies of the fish have morphed into the eyes of an adult cat. Succeeding pages have a puppy growing up to be a dog, a chick becoming a chicken, a tadpole metamorphosing into a frog, a seedling developing into a tree, and finally, “Baby grows up to be [...] ME!” with a mirror on the last page to reflect the reader’s image. The rhyming text and age-appropriate theme combine with clever design in a board book that will be appreciated by its intended audience. (Ages 18 months-3 years)

### **Picture Books for Toddlers and Preschoolers**

**Alter, Anna. *Francine’s Day*. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 28 pages (trade 0-06-623936-2, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-623937-0, \$16.89)**

Francine feels out of sorts from the moment she wakes up and doesn't want to get out of bed. "But the teapot whistled, and the dishes were clinking in the kitchen." Francine doesn't want to get dressed, either. Or go to school, find her desk, or sing the "Good Morning" song. And so it goes. What child hasn't had a day like Francine's, when every step is a struggle, and he or she is propelled by demands beyond their control? Luckily, Francine's mother, and her teacher, Mr. Wendell, gently guide her through the difficult day. And sometimes there's nothing as important as time—and a well-timed hug—to make things better. Author/artist Anna Alter used pen and ink to illustrate this tender story in which all of the characters are foxes. (Ages 3-6)

**Appelt, Kathi. *Bubba and Beau Go Night-Night*. Illustrated by Arthur Howard. Harcourt, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-15-204593-7, \$16.00)**

Both Bubba (the baby) and Beau (the puppy) love to go bye-bye, so when Big Bubba packs them both up in the red pickup truck to go into town, they gladly accompany him on his errands to the Feed and Seed store, the post office, and Sam's fruit and vegetable stand. Finally they make one last stop at the Freezee Deluxe for raspberry-swirl ice cream cones (with extra napkins) before returning home to tuck in for the night. But neither Bubba nor Beau is ready for bed, and no amount of rocking or lullaby-singing will convince them otherwise. Only when Big Bubba packs them back into the pickup truck for another ride around town do they both drop off to sleep. Kathi Appelt's folksy narrative style adds a great deal of humor to a story that's illustrated with appealing cartoon-style watercolor paintings. (Ages 3-6)

**Banks, Kate. *Mama's Coming Home*. Illustrated by Tomek Bogacki. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. 24 pages (trade 0-374-34747-6, \$16.00)**

As two storylines merge into one, a family's frenzied end-of-day activities unfold. At home, a father prepares dinner, feeds the baby, and scolds the pets while the older children--two boys--set the table and pick up toys. All eagerly await Mama's return from work. Meanwhile, Mama is closing up shop and making her way home, walking to the subway, riding the train, getting caught in a rainstorm as she leaves the station. Each satisfying two-page spread follows events at home and Mama's trek through the city. Finally, "Kisses flying. No more crying. Mama's at the door." Kate Banks's brief, lively prose features occasional rhymes and one repeated phrase that serves as an emotional touchstone for the story: "Mama's coming home." Tomek Bogacki's distinctive illustrations have a pleasing, childlike quality, yet each composition is intriguingly complex. *Highly Commended, 2004 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3-6)

**Bock, Lee. *Oh, Crumps! ¡Ay, caramba!* Translated by Eida de la Vega. Illustrated by Morgan Midgett. Raven Tree (200 S. Washington St., Suite 306, Green Bay, WI 54301), 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-9720192-4-3, \$16.95)**

Wisconsin author (and school librarian) Lee Bock's debut picture book is a funny, mixed-up story about a tired farmer and his restless animal charges. Every time Farmer Felandro is about to doze off, there's trouble in the barn. The exhausted farmer pulls on his old, worn work boots and heads outside to set things right, which in turns sets something else wrong. Each time he returns to bed, he goes over the litany of things he has to do the next day: "milk the cows, repair the fence, mow the hay, and climb the silo." But as the night wears on, his list becomes more and more jumbled: "mow the cow, climb the fence, repair the hair, and milk the silo....repair the cow, climb the fence, milk the hay, and mow the silo," and so on. There's also fine use of

repetition in this text that balances patterning with the hilarious scrambled wordplay. The story has been translated into Spanish and is presented here in both languages. Morgan Midgett's folksy oil illustrations imagine what it might look like if poor Farmer Felandro were actually carrying out each of his seemingly impossible, mixed-up tasks. (Ages 4-8)

**Carle, Eric and Kazue Iwamura. *Where Are You Going? To See My Friend: A Story of Friendship in Two Languages*. U.S. edition: Orchard Books / Scholastic, 2003. 32 pages (lib. 0-439-41659-0, \$19.95)**

Collaboration between Carle, a book creator of international renown, and Iwamura, a prominent Japanese artist, has resulted in a bilingual tour de force about friendship. Children can read this book with Carle's illustrations from front to back in the English language way. They can then look at it from back to front in order to fully experience Iwamura's artwork and the Japanese-language book format. On a fold-out page in the middle, two adventures become one, and two storybook children and their animal friends enjoy the prospect! The Japanese characters are transliterated so those pronunciations can be enjoyed by all. (Ages 2-5)

**Chodos-Irvine, Margaret. *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed*. Harcourt, 2003. 32 pages (trade 015-216413-8, \$16.00)**

Many families will recognize the dynamic of this picture book featuring an assertive preschooler determined to express herself. Ella Sarah knows just what she wants to wear when she gets up one morning: her pink polka-dot pants, her dress with orange-and-green flowers, her purple-and-blue striped socks, her yellow shoes, and her red hat. But no one else approves of her choice, and each family member in turn suggests an alternative. The dress her mother suggests looks just like the one she herself is wearing. Her athletic father promotes clothes with a sportier theme. Her older sister offers the overalls she has outgrown. "No!" shouts Ella Sarah, whose determination mounts as her frustration grows. Ella Sarah prevails in this visually dazzling picture book featuring author/artist Margaret Chodos-Irvine's artwork created with a variety of printmaking techniques. (Ages 3-5)

**Coy, John. *Two Old Potatoes and Me*. Illustrated by Carolyn Fisher. Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-375-82180-5, \$15.95)**

"Last spring at my dad's house I found two old potatoes in the back of the cupboard," begins the child narrator of *Two Old Potatoes and Me* by John Coy. "They were so old, sprouts were growing from their eyes." And indeed, we see real three-dimensional sprouts growing from the abstracted brown shapes that represent the two rotten potatoes. Rather than throwing the potatoes out, the little girl and her father cut them into nine pieces and plant them in the sunniest spot in the garden. Throughout the summer, they watch the progress of their potato plants. We, too, can see them grow, as the artist, Carolyn Fisher, uses what appear to be real leaves on an airbrushed vine to illustrate the potato plants. Elsewhere, her artwork is flat and abstract, providing a clear contrast to the potato plants and other parts of the garden, such as the rocks and picket fence that are also illustrated with photo collage. The language is understated and poetic as it shows the warm and realistic relationship between father and daughter, skillfully using the garden as a symbol of growth, change, and nurturing. *Honor Book, 2004 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4-8)

**Cullen, Catherine Ann. *Thirsty Baby*. Illustrated by David McPhail. Little, Brown, 2003. 24 pages (trade 0-316-16357-0, \$14.95)**

The request for the bedtime drink of water is taken to extreme in this delightful nonsense tale. After finishing his bottle, the baby is still so thirsty that he asks for more, and then surprises his parents by drinking the bathwater, a pond, a river, and the entire ocean before finally quenching his thirst. David McPhail's realistic ink and watercolor illustrations heighten the wild absurdity of the cumulative story. (Ages 2-6)

**Deacon, Alexis. *Beegu*. U.S. edition: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-374-30667-2, \$16.00)**

Beegu is a baby alien who has somehow been left on her own on Earth. She tries to connect with other creatures – rabbits, puppies, autumn leaves, and even a phone booth that sounds suspiciously like her mother – but no one understands her. She is, however, welcomed by a group of young children on a school playground; that is, until a grown-up comes out and chases her away. Finally reunited with her parents, Beegu recounts her adventures on Earth (in an oddly readable series of alien pictographs), saying: “Earth creatures were mostly big and unfriendly, but there were some small ones who seemed hopeful.” Alexis Deacon's expressive watercolor paintings manage to convey the confusion and the loneliness of a little creature who looks like three-eyed, long-eared yellow rabbit. (Ages 3-6)

**Falconer, Ian. *Olivia... and the Missing Toy*. An Anne Schwartz Book / Atheneum, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-689-85291-6, \$16.95)**

Olivia returns again. The self-assured pig with irrepressible flair is still a trendsetter when it comes to fashion, insisting on a red soccer shirt even though her team color is green (“a really unattractive green”). While her mom sews, Olivia occupies herself playing with the unfortunate family cat and one of her toys. But by the time the shirt is done, the toy has disappeared. “That’s my best toy. I need it now!” cries Olivia, never shy about sharing her feelings with the world. The toy does turn up, and observant children might already suspect who took it before Olivia discovers the truth. Ian Falconer has again created a charming and funny story about an uncontrollable personality. As with the previous Olivia books, *Olivia* (2000) and *Olivia Saves the Circus* (2001), both published by Atheneum, *Olivia and the Missing Toy* is illustrated almost completely in black-and-white, with judicious use of red and, something new in this story, green. (Ages 4-8)

**Fleming, Denise. *Buster*. Henry Holt, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-8050-6279-3, \$15.95)**

Buster the dog has everything he could possibly want, from his own special bowls, to an in-and-out flap on the door, to walks in the park whenever he asks. Still, when the big brown box appears one day, Buster eagerly awaits its opening. Is it full of steaks? Or fancy cheese? Or sausages? Unfortunately, no. Inside is a small, white, fluffy kitten named Betty, who wastes no time making use of all of Buster's favorite things. Pushed beyond his limit, Buster makes his escape to the park only to discover he can't find his way home again. But what's that waving ball of fur high up in a faraway tree? Denise Fleming's witty and charming story features her trademark boldly colored, handmade-paper collage illustrations. Buster and Betty will endear themselves to young children, just as they do to one another. *Highly Commended, 2004 Charlotte Zolotow Award; Honor Book, CCBC Caldecott Award Discussion* (Ages 4-7)

**Heap, Sue. *Four Friends Together*. U.S. edition: Candlewick, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-7636-2111-0, \$12.99)**

Three cuddly animals are trying to settle in and get cozy for story time with Mary Clare, a little girl. But Mary Clare is asleep in Florentina the Bear's chair. When Mary Clare finally wakes up and is ready to read, Florentina can't find a good place to sit. Then Rachel the Rabbit and Seymour the Sheep can't see the pictures. And then Florentina gets lonely sitting by herself. It's one problem after another until the four friends snuggle up in Florentina's big flowery lap in this appealing picture book that models reading aloud, as well as the typical antsy behavior of small children. Bright illustrations and clear simple text make this perfect for a real story time. (Ages 2-4)

**Hughes, Shirley. *Annie Rose Is My Little Sister*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-7636-1959-0, \$15.99)**

Youngsters on both ends of the sibling ladder will relate to this child-friendly volume that explores the relationship between preschool-age Alfie and his toddler sister, Annie Rose. They are daily companions – looking at books, playing store, and enjoying a family outing to the seaside. Alfie recognizes the ways in which he and his sister approach these shared activities differently, according to their abilities and skills. Alfie, like many older siblings, finds Annie Rose's immaturity a nuisance sometimes, as when she prefers his toys to her own, but generally he is a nurturing brother, recognizing his important and enduring role in Annie Rose's life. After all, as he observes wisely, "she's my little sister, and I'm her big brother, and we'll go on being that forever ... even until we're grown up." As in earlier books starring Alfie and Annie Rose (*Alfie and the Birthday Surprise*, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1997; *Rhymes for Annie Rose*, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1995; *All About Alfie*, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1997), author/illustrator Shirley Hughes masterfully captures the essence of an ordinary family with young children by focusing on the realistic details of everyday life. Vivid watercolor illustrations show toys scattering the floor, sleepy children crying, and the rumpled hair of young and old alike. (Ages 3-6)

**Jukes, Mavis. *You're a Bear*. Illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher. Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-375-80267-3, \$16.95)**

A young girl spends an evening pretending to be a bear in this story with rich, lyrical language. The wonderful illustrations feature two visual narratives: the child's imaginative play, which she sustains as she interacts with her family, eats dinner, takes a bath, and gets ready for and goes to bed; and spot illustrations of a bear, whose behavior echoes the child's play. The story puts young listeners in the moment with the fictional child, using present-tense verbs to create a sense of immediacy. Shifting rhythms, rhyme, alliteration, and marvelous word choice create a playful and enchanting narrative. This book will have special resonance for some: the young girl's heritage is Asian, while her family is white. (Ages 3-6)

**Kasza, Keiko. *My Lucky Day*. Putnam, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-399-23874-3, \$15.99)**

A hungry fox can't believe his luck when a pig actually shows up on his doorstep. "Oh no!" screams the piglet, who's mistaken the fox's house for Rabbit's. "Oh yes!" the fox gleefully

replies, grabbing the pig and getting out the frying pan. But all is not what it seems in Keiko Kasza's crafty tale. The fox's dinner preparations grow more and more complex as the pig points out how dirty he is (resulting in a nice warm bath), how scrawny he is (a nice big meal to fatten him up), and how tough he is (a tenderizing massage). By the night's end, Fox is too exhausted to cook the pig, while the sly swine has had a treatment worthy of the finest spa. Kasza delivers a cunning ending that makes an already hilarious story even funnier. This delightful story will make a terrific read-aloud. (Ages 3-7)

**Keller, Holly. *What a Hat!* Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 24 pages (trade 0-06-051479-5, \$15.99)**

When young Newton comes to stay with his cousins, Wizzie and Henry, he refuses to take off his hat. "No hat," he says every time Henry tries to get him to remove it. Newton's obsession with wearing his hat annoys Henry to no end, but Wizzie thinks it's just fine. When a bully at the playground ruins the sandcastle that Wizzie and Newton built, Wizzie is inconsolable. Sensitive Newton tries everything he can think of to make her feel better, finally giving his hat to her. It turns out to be just what she needed. Holly Keller's picture story reflects the ways children find security in things that make perfect sense only to them, as well as their capacity for compassion. Her characters are rabbits, illustrated with watercolor in the flat, naïve style typical of many of her books. (Ages 3-6)

**McPhail, David. *Big Brown Bear's Up and Down Day.* Harcourt, 2003. 48 pages (trade 0-15-216407-3, \$16.00)**

A persistent rat wants one of Big Brown Bear's slippers—it's the perfect size for a rat bed. "You have two of them," Rat points out when Bear refuses to part with one. "I have two feet, too," Bear replies. Rat is full of crazy ideas for getting the slipper from Bear, but Bear can't be so easily fooled. Bear isn't unkind, just practical. So when an opportunity presents itself to give Rat what he wants most, Bear willingly complies. A story that might easily have erred on the side of sweetness maintains a perfect edge with Bear's occasional prickliness and Rat's questionable charm. (Ages 3-6)

**Murray, Marjorie Dennis. *Don't Wake Up the Bear!* Illustrated by Patricia Wittmann. Marshall Cavendish, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-7614-5107-2, \$14.95)**

A silver hare with cold ears is irresistibly tempted by the thought of snuggling up with a warm, sleeping bear. No sooner is the hare tucked in beside the bear than a badger with a cold nose decides to join her. " 'You may come in' whispered the hare. 'But don't wake up the bear!' " Before long the bear's den is filled to capacity: a fox with cold legs, a squirrel with cold toes, and finally, a mouse with a cold tail. Each newcomer is cautioned not to awaken their unwitting host. The group's peaceful snooze is interrupted when the mouse – who is nursing a cold of the viral variety -- is unable to stifle a terrific sneeze. Of course it wakes up the bear. The frightened interlopers scatter, and the rudely disturbed bear heads out to find a snack—bright red berries. A combination of repetitive text, mounting tension, and inevitable outcome is sure to appeal to preschoolers. Expect requests for repeated readings. (Ages 4-8)

**Nye, Naomi Shihab. *Baby Radar.* Illustrated by Nancy Carpenter. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-688-1594806, \$15.99)**

A lively picture book captures all the sights and sounds experienced by a toddler out for an autumn stroller ride. The energetic narrative is firmly grounded in the present moment, creating a marvelous stream-of-consciousness catalog of the young child's observations and feelings: "Giant trees / dropping leaves / in my lap / Spin them around / make them fly!...A tissue from shopping bag ... Mama shouts / Not yours! / It's mine / It's mine! Everything's mine!" Nye's vivid and engaging prose is illustrated by Nancy Carpenter's watercolor and pen-and-ink artwork. *Highly Commended, 2004 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 18 months – 4 years)

**O'Connell, Rebecca. *The Baby Goes Beep*. Illustrated by Ken Wilson-Max. A Deborah Brodie Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2003. 24 pages (trade 0-7613-1789-9, \$14.95)**

"The baby goes beep. The baby goes beep beep. The baby goes beep beep beep beep." The baby also goes boom, la, flip, yum, splashsplash, smooch and shh throughout the day in first-time author Rebecca O'Connell's clever picture book that skillfully blends repetition and onomatopoeia to create a lively and engaging read-aloud. The patterning lends itself to endless variations in the way words are emphasized as the text is read. This idea is echoed in Ken Wilson-Max's bright, bold illustrations, which show the baby engaged in multiple activities for each repeated word (e.g., beeping the horn on a toy steering wheel and beeping daddy's nose). While this picture book's primary audience is very young children, it's hard for anyone within listening distance to refrain from joining in, making it a perfect choice for families with children of varying ages. *Honor Book, 2004 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Age 6 months and older)

**Rohmann, Eric. *Pumpkinhead*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-375-82416-2, \$14.95)**

Eric Rohmann's edgy and adventurous story is about a boy with a pumpkin for a head. Otho is much loved by parents who see nothing strange about this fact. The problem arises when a bird plucks his head for nesting, and then accidentally drops it in the ocean. Poor Otho. He's swallowed by a fish, and later (having made a dramatic, cork-popping exit) caught by a fisherman—the oddest fish that man's ever seen. A bright orange orb in the midst of the slivery display at the fish market, Otto captures the attention one very happy shopper—his mother! "Oh my little Otho! We thought we'd lost you forever." Rohmann's color-relief prints illustrating this story are a delight—little Otho is charming and wholly childlike, from the anxious look on his face when he's lost, to the smile of joyful contentment when he's found at last. The restrained color scheme—black, white, silver, blue, and of course orange—makes for a striking visual display accompanying a sweetly offbeat story. (Ages 4-7)

**Rumford, James. *The Calabash Cat and His Amazing Journey*. Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 32 pages (lib. 0-618-22423-8, \$16.00)**

Author/artist James Rumford acquired a cat carved from a calabash gourd while in the Peace Corps in Chad. That gourd inspired this original story in which a curious cat is determined to find out where the world ends. Each animal he meets is certain of the answer, but each can only imagine the world to be what it knows. For the camel, the world ends where the desert ends. For the horse, the world ends where the grasslands end. It's not until an eagle invites the cat to ride upon his back that he discovers the truth of "a world without end." Rumford's ink-on-bristol board illustrations in this beautifully designed volume are patterned after the carved and wood-

burned calabash gourds of Chad. The black-lined figures on sepia-toned pages are connected by a single line that changes color as the cat's journey takes him across changing terrains, ending with a rainbow that brings all the colors together as the cat sees the sweeping expanse of the world from the back of the eagle. The page decorations also include the text translated into the Arabic dialect of Chad. *Honor Book, 2004 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4-8)

**Russo, Marisabina. *The Trouble with Baby*. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 28 pages (trade 0-06-008924-5, \$15.99)**

Sam and his big sister, Hannah, love to play together. But when Hannah gets a new doll for her birthday, everything changes. Suddenly Hannah insists that Baby be included in all of their usual games. Sometimes she even wants to play with Baby all by herself. Sam quickly grows tired of sharing his sister's attention—after all, Baby is just a doll! Marisabina Russo's engaging story of authentic sibling interaction captures how real imaginary play can be to young children, as well as how hurt feelings can play out in negative ways. Her happy ending, like the rest of the story, takes place without adult intervention, as the children's parents are background characters in the brother-sister drama that unfolds. Russo's trademark naïve art style, with boldly colored, two-dimensional figures in gouache, adds to the appeal of the story. (Ages 4-7)

**Schaefer, Carole Lexa. *Someone Says*. Illustrated by Pierr Morgan. Viking, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-670-03664-1, \$15.99)**

"In the morning, as always, we line up to go into school. Someone says, 'Let's leapfrog in.' And...spring-boink, spring-sproink. We do." A class of young children eagerly embraces one another's suggestions for what to do throughout their day at school. Whether building a house of blocks together ("click-clack, stick-stack") or eating their noodles like tigers ("Slip, sloop, slurp"), this exuberant and imaginative group is never short on ideas. Carole Lexa Schaefer's playful language propels this picture book, which features contemporary Asian children. Pierr Morgan's high-spirited illustrations are full of energy and movement. Her graceful line drawings convey both the literal actions of the children as well as what their soaring imaginations have conjured. (Ages 3-5)

**Schwartz, Amy. *What James Likes Best*. A Richard Jackson Book / Atheneum, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-689-84059-4, \$16.95)**

For toddlers and preschoolers, venturing out into the world affords the chance to see and do new things and revel in the familiar. Author/artist Amy Schwartz understands that everyday activities can be sources of immense satisfaction and delight. That's how it is for James, the little boy featured in these four brief stories. James takes a bus ride with his mommy and daddy to visit "the twins". He takes a taxi with his parents to visit his grandma and auntie. The family takes a rental car to the county fair, and he and mommy walk to his friend Angela's house for a play date. Each trip is described from a child-centered perspective. Young listeners will revel in each of James's experiences and observations, from the purple car his grandma gives him and his auntie's funny hair to the catalog of fare at the fair: corn on the cob, cotton candy, and pretzels. At the end of each brief story, the author asks, "And what do you think James liked best?" Schwartz's wonderful narrative extends an open invitation for young children to interact with the story whether picking what they think James most enjoyed, or naming their own favorite aspects

of the little boy's outings. The clean-lined, colorful art conveys terrific details about both James and his parents (a balding, spectacled dad perfectly willing to carry a pink-flowered bag and ride on the kiddie train, and a pageboy-cut mom who likes comfortable shoes and family gatherings). *Winner, 2004 Charlotte Zolotow Award (Ages 2-5)*

**Shannon, George. *Tippy-Toe Chick, Go!* Illustrated by Laura Dronzek. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-06-029823-5, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-029824-3, \$16.89)**

Hen and her chicks go to the garden every morning for their favorite treat, "sweet itty-bitty beans and potato bugs." But one morning, a dog is blocking their way. Pragmatic Hen says they'll have to skip the garden that day, but the three chicks protest: "We're hungry! You PROMISED! We DID our chores!" Each chick tries to get Dog to let them by. Dog frightens Big Chick and Middle Chick away. It's tiny Little Chick, a curious, free-spirited soul, who has the brains and nerve to get dog tied up in a tangle. George Shannon's delightfully told story is further enlivened by Laura Dronzek's wonderful acrylic illustrations that are funny and endearing, and display masterful use of space. *Honor Book, 2004 Charlotte Zolotow Award (Ages 2-5)*

**Willems, Mo. *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* Hyperion, 2003. 32 pages (trade, 0-7868-1988-X, \$12.99)**

Pssst. Hey, take a look at this guy. He's a pigeon. *You* wouldn't let him drive a bus, would you? Even if he begged you, and promised he'd be careful, and insisted your mom would let him drive? With just a few bold black strokes set on neutral pastel-colored backgrounds, artist Mo Willems manages to create an extremely earnest pigeon who uses all of his powers of persuasion to try to convince us he'd actually be able to drive the big bus parked on the title page. Young readers will enjoy doing just as the title and bus driver asked them to do by saying "No!" to the pigeon with each turn of the page. *Highly Commended, 2004 Charlotte Zolotow Award (Ages 2-6)*

**Wilson, Karma. *Bear Wants More.* Illustrated by Jane Chapman. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-689-84509-X, \$16.95)**

This companion volume to *Bear Snores On* (Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2002) features the same friendly bear and his animal friends in another rhyming, rollicking story. Winter is over and Bear wakes up hungry. No matter how much he eats, he can't satisfy his appetite. "And the bear wants more!" His friends have a surprise in store in Karma Wilson's merry picture book. Jane Chapman's acrylic artwork shows a forest of happy companions. (Ages 2-4)

**See also:** *All Aboard!; Beautiful Blackbird; Bow Wow Meow Meow; Go, Go, Maria!; Honey, I Love; It's a Miracle!; Magic Gourd; Mary Smith; Mrs. Chicken and the Hungry Crocodile; My Brother Martin; My Family Plays Music; One Grain of Sand; One Winter's Night; Snow Music; Ten Mice for Tet; What Do You Do with a Tail Like This?;* section on Board Books; section on Concept Books

## Picture Books for School-Aged Children

**Adler, David A. *Mama Played Baseball*. Illustrated by Chris O'Leary. Gulliver Books / Harcourt, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-18-202196-5, \$16.00)**

With her dad off fighting in the war, Amy's mom needs a job to help them get by. And she knows the job she wants. "Make me reach for it," she tells Amy as the girl throws her mother a baseball. Amy's mom is going to try out for the women's professional baseball league. In David Adler's fictional story set during World War II, Amy describes what happens when her mom goes to the tryouts, and later what it's like when she's watching her mom play at the games. (Amy stays with her grandparents when the team travels.) Both she and her mom take her mother's work seriously. " 'Baseball is my job,' she told me. 'And I want to be good at it.' It was my job to help her." Chris O'Leary does a terrific job establishing a 1940s setting with the illustrations that accompany this appealing story firmly grounded in young Amy's experience. An author's note provides some additional context for young readers on the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, which had teams in five Midwestern states, including Wisconsin. (Ages 5-8)

**Belton, Sandra. *Pictures for Miss Josie*. Illustrated by Benny Andrews. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 40 pages (trade 0-688-17480-9, \$16.99)**

"It was the beginning of the proud times when he saw her first. She was like a giant, standing there in front of the sun. Against the row of houses without yards in between. He wondered if she was the one who had pushed all the houses together." Miss Josie might not have moved the houses, but she certainly had the sense and strength to change the world as this boy knew it. This steady African American lady living in Washington, D.C., the woman with "the peppermint smell on her cheek," was always there for him as a child and a young man. But it took him until adulthood to realize how much she gave him, and how much he needed her, his lifelong mentor. Belton based her poignant story on a teacher in her personal life, and there's information about that teacher, Miss Josephine Carroll Smith, on one page at the very end. Andrews used collage and oil paints to prepare the distinctive, full-color artwork perfectly suited to Belton's lyrical text, and to the secondary story of the boy growing up to become an artist. (Ages 7-10)

**Best, Cari. *When Catherine the Great and I Were Eight!* Illustrated by Giselle Potter. Melanie Kroupa Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-374-39954-9, \$16.00)**

When Sara's grandmother, Catherine, was eight years old back in Russia, she liked to float in her bathing suit in the sea. Now Sara is eight and the weather is hot. Her neighbor Mary Caruso mentions the beach, and everyone in the apartment building loves the idea, cramming into Mr. Minsky's old car. Word games in the car and a breakdown fixed with a hairpin. A picnic by the side of the busy road and floating like a flower in the big blue sea. Sara's first-person narrative is in the present, but she speaks of things from which memories are surely made. Cari Best, who introduced Sara, Catherine, and their close-knit community of neighbors in *Three Cheers for Catherine the Great* (DK, 1999) delivers another story of friendship and family and fun. Giselle Potter lends her distinctive visual style to the story, and every page has details too good to miss. (Ages 5-8)

**Bond, Rebecca. *When Marcus Moore Moved In*. Megan Tingley Books / Little, Brown, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-316-10458-2, \$15.95)**

As excited as Marcus is on the day he moves into 44 MacDougal Street, there's no welcoming committee to greet him. Or is there? Who's skipping by on the sidewalk? Who's whizzing by on a bike? It's Katherine Brown, full of energy and enthusiasm and terrific ideas for fun. Rebecca Bond's gleeful picture book celebrates new friends and new possibilities. The author/artist's sprightly text balances judicious use of rhyme and alliteration with bursts of onomatopoeia. Her breezy acrylic illustrations use varied perspectives to capture the busyness of an urban neighborhood, the chaos of moving day, and the joy of a newfound friend. (Ages 5-8)

**Browne, Anthony. *The Shape Game*. U.S. edition: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. 28 pages (trade 0-374-36764-7, \$16.00)**

Inspired by his time spent as writer-and-illustrator-in-residence at the Tate Britain gallery in London, Anthony Browne offers children a lighthearted portal to art. This large picture book follows a museum visit by an elementary-school-age boy, his brother, and his parents. The family members' response to the museum experience initially ranges from transparent boredom (older brother) to eager anticipation (mother). Gradually, the family is united as they are drawn in by the wide-ranging art on display. Initially shown in shades of gray and white, each person's outfit becomes suffused with vibrant color as they surrender to the experience. Each page invites close inspection, as Browne transplants elements of this ordinary looking family (and other random elements) into the art they are viewing, making it surreal. One of the funniest spreads shows plump Dad simultaneously cast as all eight people in Peter Blake's work *The Meeting or Have a Nice Day, Mr. Hockney*, as he rollerblades, strolls, and travels shirtless through a park. On their way home, the energized family plays the "Shape Game" of the title, with one person drawing an abstract shape and another transforming it into something recognizable. The author/artist concludes, "in a way, I've been playing the shape game ever since." (Ages 5-9)

**Charlip, Remy. *Little Old Big Beard and Big Young Little Beard*. Illustrated by Remy Charlip and Tamara Rettenmund. 32 pages (0-7614-5142-0, \$16.95)**

Writing in the tradition of Margaret Wise Brown, Remy Charlip uses contrast and comparison to characterize two cowboys, one short old man with a long beard and one tall young man with a short beard. The dilemma here is that they've lost their cow, Grace, and the two set out on their horses to find her, setting up many opportunities for the writer to play with various combinations of the same few words. Cartoon-style watercolor illustrations convey the overall sense of playful nonsense in a book just tall enough to accommodate Big Young Little Beard's ten-gallon hat. (Ages 3-5)

**Cronin, Doreen. *Diary of a Worm*. Illustrated by Harry Bliss. Joanna Cotler Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 36 pages (trade 0-06-000150-X, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-000151-8, \$16.89)**

A funny and original picture book chronicles the everyday life of a young worm through diary entries. With his little red baseball cap and homework woes, aspects of the worm's life will be more than recognizable to many children. But some things are uniquely wormy. In April, when fishing season starts, "We all dug deeper." The day they make macaroni necklaces in art class, "I brought mine home and we ate it for dinner." Doreen Cronin's witty concept and text are

extended by Harry Bliss's terrific illustrations. How does a worm make a macaroni necklace? Why, by wriggling into a single piece of macaroni! The endpapers show a scrapbook compilation of the worm's family photos and mementos, including his most recent report card (an "A" in Tunnel, "Pass" in Compost). (Ages 5-9)

**Falwell, Cathryn. *Butterflies for Kiri*. Lee & Low, 2003. 32 pages (trade 1-58430-100-7, \$16.95)**

Kiri is thrilled to get a book on origami and a package of beautiful origami papers from her aunt as a birthday gift. But every time she tries to make an origami butterfly like the one her aunt put on top of her present, the paper rips. As the weeks pass, Kiri practices over and over with notebook paper so she won't waste the colorful and delicate origami sheets. She also paints, draws with chalk, and works with clay. When a watercolor picture inspired by a beautiful spring day is ruined after the paint runs and the paper begins to shred, Kiri's frustration and anger lead to a moment of inspiration and a new way to use the origami papers she loves. She also finds success at last in her attempts to fold an origami butterfly. As she did in *David's Drawings* (Lee & Low, 2001), Cathryn Falwell has created a realistic picture book about a child artist, this time focusing on determination, inspiration, and the surprising outcomes that can arise from frustration. Children will enjoy looking for ways the author/artist has incorporated butterflies into the brightly colored illustrations of Japanese American Kiri and her family. (Ages 5-8)

**Fleming, Candace. *Boxes for Katje*. Illustrated by Stacey Dressen-McQueen. Melanie Kroupa Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. 36 pages (trade 0-374-30922-1, \$16.00)**

Although World War II had ended, the winter of 1945 saw scores of Europeans desperately lacking the basic necessities of adequate food and clothing. Many American families and organizations responded to their need with care packages shipped across the Atlantic. This fictionalized account of an actual event embroiders on the story of a box sent by the author's mother to a Dutch family. One early spring day, Katje is thrilled by the unexpected arrival of a box from America containing a bar of soap, a pair of wool socks, and – the ultimate luxury – a bar of chocolate. Katje savors a piece of the chocolate, and generously shares the rest with her mother and the postman who delivered the package. She finds a letter enclosed, from Rosie Johnson of Mayfield, Indiana, who writes: "Dear Dutch Friend, I hope these gifts brighten your day." In her reply, Katje thanks Rosie for the gifts, especially the chocolate, and tells of how her mother and Postman Kleinhoonte enjoyed it too. A few months later, Postman Kleinhoonte delivers a larger box from Rosie and her mother, filled with four precious bags of sugar. Again, Katje shares her treasure, this time with next-door neighbor Mrs. deLand and her five thin children. Once more, Katje writes her thanks, and the appreciation of the deLand family. As autumn brings worries about approaching winter weather, Postman Kleinhoonte staggers to Rosie's door with a box on his back so large it won't fit on his bicycle. His shouts attract attention, and neighbors gather to receive a share of the food shipped by Rosie, her mother, and her mother's friends. During the hard winter, Rosie and her community send many boxes packed with food and clothing that is distributed by Katje to the townspeople in need. Finally, the snow melts, and on a warm spring day, Katje and her friends fill a box to send to America. When Rosie opens her package from Holland, the note reads: "We hope these tulip bulbs [...] will brighten Mayfield's days." This hopeful story of community effort and international

friendship with a focus firmly grounded in a child's perspective is complemented by appealing illustrations showing the events from Katje and Rosie's alternating vantage points. (Ages 6-9)

**Foreman, Michael. *Wonder Goal!* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. 32 pages. (trade 0-374-38500-9, \$16.00)**

It's a familiar sight to many young soccer players: a flat stretch of green grass stretches into the distance, broken up into multiple soccer fields, each occupied by two teams vying for a win. As the narrator of *Wonder Goal* runs onto the field with his teammates, he knows that they all share "the same impossible dream, of one day becoming world-class soccer stars." Indeed, he is on his way, as he launches a perfect shot toward the goal. As the ball flies toward the far corner of the net, time is suspended momentarily, and the soccer player thinks about his fantasy of scoring a "wonder goal" to win the World Cup and how his father shared the same dream in his boyhood. Then time speeds up again as the ball hits the back of the net, but the young dreamer is now an adult and a member of a team playing their first game of the World Cup Finals. The ball he kicked as a child becomes a shot on goal expertly fired by the adult athlete he imagined becoming -- another type of goal, gloriously achieved. Watercolor illustrations capture the energy of the sport, and excellent pacing and design combine with the text in a surprising yet satisfying shift in time and perspective. Although only a very few who dream of reaching the pinnacle of their favorite sport actually do, the multitudes who have visualized themselves in that spot will take vicarious pleasure in this young player's success. (Ages 8-12)

**Frame, Jeron Ashford. *Yesterday I Had the Blues*. Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie. Tricycle Press, 2003. 32 pages (trade 1-58246-084-1, \$14.95)**

"Yesterday I had the blues...those deep down in my shoes blues...the hold a pillow, wish it was tomorrow blues." Jeron Ashford Frame's expressive picture book features an African American boy's inventive descriptions of many moods. The extended metaphors are marvelous displays of creative language use in a book that is accessible and appealing to younger children and a wonderful example of descriptive writing for older students as well. There is plenty of warmth and humor in both the text and R. Gregory Christie's vibrant, color-saturated illustrations. They show a loving family in which some days are clearly better than others for its various members. Sometimes laughter resides in the interplay between text and art, as in the picture accompanying the text, "Mama says she got the reds. Look out!" in which the boy and his sister have been caught jumping on the bed. Everyday recognizable moments—and feelings—are the foundation of this terrific volume. *Highly Commended, 2004 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5-10)

**Fraee, Marla. *Roller Coaster*. Harcourt, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-15-204554-6, \$16.00)**

The classic summertime experience of riding a roller coaster, from waiting to board to staggering off at the end of the line, is captured in perfect detail in the pages of this exuberant picture book. Potential riders, all shown in distinctive detail, wait in an amusement park line for their turn on the roller coaster. Some are experienced riders, some have merely dabbled in the occasional ride, and "at least one of them has never ridden on a roller coaster before. Ever." That novice rider, a young girl, waits with visible trepidation. After passing the height requirement, she hesitates before boarding but responds to her father's smile and encouraging hand. By the end of the whirlwind ride, she's clearly a new devotee of the experience and heads back to the waiting line for another run. The simple text is wonderfully supplemented by the

detailed illustrations, which follow a crowd of easily identifiable riders from start to finish. An elderly couple whoops it up, a pair of adolescent lovebirds uses the occasion to snatch a kiss, and two strapping young men are brought to their shaky knees by the ride's ups and downs. (Ages 5-8)

**Gaiman, Neil. *The Wolves in the Walls*. Illustrated by Dave McKean. HarperCollins, 2003. 56 pages (trade 0-380-97827-X, \$16.99; lib. 0-06-053087-1, \$17.89)**

No one believes Lucy when she tells her family that the sounds she hears in the walls are wolves. They were hustling noises and bustling noises "They were crinkling noises and crackling noises. They were sneaking, creeping, crumpling noises." Besides, each member of her family says, "You know what they say...If the wolves come out of the walls, then it's all over." When Lucy turns out to be right, her family's life is turned upside down. Driven from their home, her parents and brother contemplate where they might go. But Lucy doesn't want to leave her home. For her, the only solution is to go back—to live in the very walls the wolves once occupied. In that cramped space, listening to the wolves wreak havoc as they smear her mother's homemade jam on the walls, play her father's second best tuba, and party like the animals they are, Lucy and her family are pushed beyond their limits. It is in that moment that they find the courage to reclaim their home. Neil Gaiman's inventive, original story is eerie, ominous and funny, alternately understated and over-the-top with its humor. Gaiman's wonderful language and finely paced storytelling are complemented by Dave McKean's haunting illustrations that heighten each mood with every turn of the page. (Ages 7-14)

**Geisert, Arthur. *Mystery*. Walter Lorraine / Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 32 pages (lib. 0-618-27293-3, \$16.00)**

When a young pig discovers that sections of paintings at her local museum have been replaced with poor copies, she joins the museum guards and her grandpa in trying to figure out the culprit. All clues point to the raccoon that lives in a nearby tree. But the little pig notices something strange as she examines the sketches she's made of each clue. Is it a setup? No questions are left unanswered in this neatly tied up story in which the aspiring young porcine police detective/artist lays out each of her drawings for full examination. Children may notice at least some of the discrepancies highlighted by the pig's careful observations. But even if they don't, they'll enjoy the absurdity of this enjoyable tale illustrated with Geisert's trademark anthropomorphized swine. (Ages 6-9)

**Hamanaka, Sheila. *Grandparents Song*. HarperCollins, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-688-17852-9, \$15.99)**

"Mother says she came / from the West, from the West / where the trees talk to heaven and the spotted owls nest / And her mother came / eyes of black, eyes of black / on an Appaloosa horse / with a broad, strong back." And so a young girl, with eyes "green like the sea" and long black hair, launches a lyrical narrative of her family tree, tracing back through her parents and grandparents. Within her two sets of grandparents, she describes a Native American, a European immigrant, a Mexican American, and an African American. This powerful picture book's depiction of a multiethnic family, perhaps a symbol of America itself, includes those indigenous to this country, those who came here voluntarily, and those who were brought against their will, as in the pages which read "Grandfather's people / had crossed the great sea / Their bodies were

chained / but their souls fought free.” Hamanaka’s folk-art-inspired illustrations are framed -- by materials including old wood, twigs, bas-relief, and beadwork -- in ways that visually contribute to the impact of the words. Ultimately a celebration of an American family, *Grandparents Song* recognizes diversity and union in a rich, multilayered tribute. (Age 7 and older)

**Hegi, Ursula. *Trudi & Pia*. Illustrated by Giselle Potter. An Anne Schwartz Book / Atheneum, 2003. 36 pages (trade 0-689-84683-5, \$16.95)**

Trudi is a dwarf, and she longs to meet someone who looks like she does, “someone who would look at her with joy—not curiosity.” In the meantime, she hangs from doorways and tree limbs, wishing her arms and legs will grow. Trudi meets Pia when the circus comes to town. Also a dwarf, Pia does a wild animal act that is awe inspiring, and no one in the mesmerized crowd seems to notice or care about her size. Pia’s complete comfort with who she is and how she looks is a revelation to Trudi. “To Pia, long arms were ugly, long legs unsteady. Tall people looked odd, too far from the ground.” In Ursula Hegi’s remarkably accessible adaptation of her complex adult novel *Stones from the River*, a girl begins to understand that her sense of isolation is rooted in what she thinks about herself rather than how she looks. There’s a trademark offbeat quality to all human figures in Giselle Potter’s art style. As a result, Trudi’s physical difference is suggested without being emphasized. What is conveyed clearly in both art and story is the warmth and love of this significant friendship. (Ages 6-9)

**Lester, Julius. *Shining*. Illustrated by John Clapp. Silver Whistle / Harcourt Brace, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-15-200773-3, \$17.00)**

Long ago in a mountain village far away, a baby girl was born who was “as black and silent as wonder.” Her parents called her Shining, and were worried when she didn’t talk as she grew older. Suspicious of her silence, when Shining was two, her parents took her to see the village wise woman, known as The One. They learned from her that silence was a natural thing for Shining. The other villagers are less accepting, however, and when Shining turns 12, they elect to exclude her from the coming-of-age ceremony. The wise woman returns to inform them that Shining is destined to be her heir, the next wise woman in the village. John Clapp’s striking charcoal and watercolor illustrations add a sense of eerie mystery to the story. (Ages 7-10)

**Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. *The Water Gift and the Pig of the Pig*. Illustrated by Linda S. Wingerter. Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-618-07436-8, \$15.00)**

Isabel’s grandfather is a water man. Captain of a schooner as a young man, he no longer travels the seas but entertains Isabel with sailing stories that form the foundation of much of this contemporary child’s imaginative play. Her grandfather is also a dowser. He can find water beneath the ground with only a forked stick and concentration. But after one of his water predictions results in a well with sour water, he loses confidence and grows more and more withdrawn as a result. Isabel and her pet pig—descended from the pig who accompanied her grandfather around Cape Horn many years ago—miss his company and his stories. Isabel has no luck coaxing her grandfather out of his sadness until she calls on him out of necessity. Her pig is lost, and their crotchety neighbor would just love to turn him into bacon if he finds him first. And so it is that her grandfather, with Isabel by his side, tries dowsing one more time—this time in search of the Pig of the Pig That Went Around Cape Horn. Jacqueline Briggs Martin is a master storyteller whose lively language and lyrical turns of phrase are matched by a wonderful sense of

timing embedded in each sentence and in the story as a whole. Linda S. Wingerter's lovely acrylic illustrations, like Martin's storytelling, are richly textured and capture the folk-inspired feel of the narrative. (Ages 5-8)

**Montenegro, Laura Nyman. *A Bird About to Sing*. Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-618-18865-7, \$15.00)**

Young Natalie is a self-proclaimed poet who is confident of her writing but can't imagine reading any of her poems out loud. When her poetry teacher, red-beret-clad Monica, invites Natalie to share her work at a reading, Natalie bravely makes an attempt. But she just can't do it. "I feel like a bird who's lost its voice, and like a bird I wish to fly far, far away to the top of the tallest tree." The young girl's devastation is palpable. But on the bus ride home, she is inspired. "Everything I see suggests a poem...I feel like a bird about to sing. 'Can I read my poem to you?' I whisper to Monica." Brown-skinned Natalie's triumph on the Number 27 is shared by fellow poets-in-transit, marking a joyous moment as a young writer finds the courage to share her voice. Laura Nyman Montenegro's engaging first-person narrative and inspired gouache illustrations are a celebration of the creative spirit. (Ages 5-8)

**Nelson, S.D. *The Star People: A Lakota Story*. Harry N. Abrams, 2003. 36 pages (trade 0-8109-4584-3, \$14.95)**

Sister Girl and Young Wolf are away from their village when a storm hits. Lightning starts a prairie fire, and in their frantic flight to safety, they lose their way. In S.D. Nelson's dramatic and enchanting original tale, the children are guided back to their village by the spirit of their grandmother, Elk Tooth Woman, who is now one of the Star People. Nelson's narrative is woven from the magical stories he heard in childhood about the Star People—the traditional Lakota term for the stars—as well as characters created from his own imagination. His informative author's note blends Lakota history and autobiography, enriching the context and meaning of both the story and his stirring, beautiful artwork that is inspired by Lakota ledger art and incorporates many of its traditional elements. (Ages 6-9)

**Pattison, Darcy. *The Journey of Oliver K. Woodman*. Illustrated by Joe Cepeda. Harcourt, 2003. 36 pages (trade 0-15-202329-1, \$16.00)**

When Californian Tameka invites her favorite uncle for a visit, he regretfully has to decline due to his busy carpentry schedule. However, he suggests that his friend Oliver come in his place. Uncle Ray is soon busy constructing a life-size wooden man, a bit like an oversize Pinocchio. Ray slips a letter into Oliver's backpack, addressed to "Dear Traveler." The letter, complete with the address of Oliver's destination, requests that the wooden man be given a ride and asks that the Traveler write a note to Uncle Ray informing him of Oliver's progress. And so the journey begins, with Oliver perched on a rock at roadside, holding a sign reading "California or Bust." The following series of letters tracks Oliver as he hitches rides zigzagging from his South Carolina departure point through Tennessee, Arkansas, New Mexico, Utah, and California, until he finally appears at Tameka's front door. Much of the fun in this engaging book is found in the diverse group of characters Oliver meets during his two-month cross country trip – the farmer and his Brahman bull, a moving-van trucker, and a trio of white-haired sisters from Kokomo, are all equally charmed by this singular hitchhiker. Children will enjoy tracking Oliver's travels on

the concluding U.S. map and will get great satisfaction out of the final leg of Oliver's trip – an airplane ride back to South Carolina as Tameka and her family head to Uncle Ray's for a visit. (Ages 5-10)

**Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Fishing Day*. Illustrated by Shane W. Evans. *Jump at the Sun* / Hyperion, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-7868-0766-0, \$15.99; lib. 0-7868-2614-2, \$16.49)**

A story set in the Jim Crow South features a young Black girl unwilling to let an invisible dividing line stand in the way of her desire to help someone in need. Reenie loves to fish with her mama, and they know the right bait to use to keep their lines busy. Pigeon, a poor white boy, and his brooding father who are fishing near them, aren't catching anything. Mama has made it clear to Reenie, and Pigeon's father to him, that they are not to speak to one another. It's the way things have always been, Reenie's mama tells her. But when Pigeon's sadness becomes impossible to ignore, Reenie reaches out, sharing her bait and advice. Andrea Davis Pinkney's story underscores how important—and big—a seemingly small act can be. In her author's note, she writes that even without Jim Crow laws, during her own childhood in New York, she felt as if she were on one side of an invisible fence, with white children on the other. Shane W. Evans's illustrations vary from full-page artwork to smaller boxed images set against the backdrop of a running river. (Ages 5-8)

**Provinsen, Alice. *A Day in the Life of Murphy*. Simon & Schuster, 2003. 36 pages (trade 0-689-84884-6, \$16.95)**

Murphy is a kinetic terrier whose acute sensibilities to all the smells and sounds and sights around give him a two-second attention span and an undeniable charm. This frenetic, stream-of-consciousness picture book is told from Murphy's perspective. Murphy doesn't even realize his name is simply Murphy, and not "Murphy-Stop-That," which is how he introduces himself and how he's always addressed by the humans in his life. Alice Provensen's romp follows Murphy through the course of a day that is rarely calm and sometimes harrowing (it includes a ride in the dreaded car for a visit to the vet). But it's always interesting and always entertaining. The illustrations of Murphy are part of the overall appeal, and they perfectly capture the energetic essence of the little dog. (Ages 5-8)

**Step toe, Javaka. *The Jones Family Express*. Lee & Low, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-58430-047-7, \$17.95)**

Every summer Steven's Aunt Carolyn sends him postcards from her travel destinations. This summer, Aunt Carolyn is making a special trip home, just in time for the annual block party, when Steven's extended family gathers at the house where he lives with his grandma. Wanting to welcome his favorite aunt with a meaningful gift, Steven uses paint and family photographs to convert a battered toy train into "The Jones Family Express." All the members of this African American ensemble enjoy the unique visual tribute to their realistically imperfect yet warmly loving family. Colorful mixed-media collage illustrations feature Steven's collection of Aunt Carolyn's postcards, sporting her lively and often humorous messages to her nephew. *Honor Book, CCBC Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award Discussion* (Ages 5-10)

**Stuve-Bodeen, Stephanie. *Babu's Song*. Illustrated by Aaron Boyd. Lee and Low, 2003. 32 pages (trade 1-58430-058-2, \$16.95)**

Bernardi would love to go to school, but he and his grandfather, Babu, don't have enough money to pay the fees. Bernardi would also love a soccer ball, but the one he has seen in the store costs more than the fees for school. One day Babu makes Bernardi a music box that plays the same tune the elderly man used to sing before he lost his voice to an illness. Bernardi loves hearing the song again, but in the marketplace where he sells the toys Babu makes, a persistent tourist pressures Bernardi into selling the box. He now has enough money to buy the soccer ball. He also has a broken heart, wishing he'd kept his grandfather's gift. Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen's story about a contemporary Tanzanian child regret Bernardi feels is something with which all children can identify. All children should be lucky enough to have a loving parental figure like Babu, who eases his grandson's misery and makes his dreams come true. First-time illustrator Aaron Boyd beautifully captures depths of feeling in his paintings, from Bernardi's tears of sadness to Babu's loving smile. (Ages 5-8)

**Suzuki, David and Sarah Ellis. *Salmon Forest*. Illustrated by Sheena Lott. Greystone Books / Douglas & McIntyre, 2003. 40 pages (trade 1-55054-937-5, \$15.95)**

As Kate and her dad talk a walk through the Pacific Northwest rain forest, he explains to her how all life in the forest is connected—each living thing dependent on another, or many others. The back-and-forth dialogue between Kate and her dad feels natural rather than forced. This prevents the narrative from straying to didacticism, despite its strong environmental message and the bounty of information about the life cycle of the salmon and other aspects of the forest ecosystem that's packed in. A subtle aspect of the story references Native fishing practices. Kate and her dad come upon friends spearfishing in the river, and stay to share some of the catch that they've prepared. The family is clearly Native, although this is never explicitly stated in the story. Sheena Lott's light-filled watercolors form an exquisite backdrop on every page. (Ages 5-9)

**See also:** *Ah, Music!*; *American Boy*; *Autumblings*; *Beatrix*; *Beautiful Blackbird*; *Big Momma Makes the World*; *Blues Journey*; *Bow Wow Meow Meow*; *Bruh Rabbit and the Tar-Baby Girl*; *Brundibar*; *Carl Sandburg*; *Girl Wonder*; *Corn Chowder*; *Go, Go, Maria!*; *Harvesting Hope*; *Honey, I Love*; *Ice-Cream Cones for Sale!*; *It's a Miracle!*; *John Muir and Stickeen*; *Kogi's Mysterious Journey*; *Leonardo*; *Li'l Dan*; *Magic Gourd*; *Man Who Walked Between the Towers*; *Mary Smith*; *Mother to Tigers*; *Mrs. Chicken and the Hungry Crocodile*; *My Brother Martin*; *My Family Plays Music*; *Muhammad*; *Our Family Tree*; *Rachel*; *Snow Music*; *Snowflake*; *Stone Soup*; *Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry*; *Strange Mr. Satie*; *Swing around the Sun*; *Ten Mice for Tet*; *Thanksgiving Door*; *Tree of Life*; *Uncle Andy's*; *What Do You Do with a Tail Like This?*; *When Everybody Wore a Hat*; *When the Chickens Went on Strike*; section on Concept Books

### **Books for Beginning and Newly Independent Readers**

**Ahlberg, Allan. *The Cat Who Got Carried Away*. Illustrated by Katharine McEwen. Candlewick, 2003. 80 pages (trade 0-7636-2073-4, \$15.99)**

Not only the cat, but a classroom rat, a police dog, assorted birds, rodents, goldfish, and a gang of penguins get carried away in this fast-paced mystery for newly independent readers. Unlikely and seemingly unrelated events collide during two momentous days in the life of the Gaskitt family. Animals are disappearing all over town, a strange man is rushing through the streets steering an old baby carriage, and Mrs. Gaskitt is confined to her bed, eating pineapple and fried egg sandwiches. Meanwhile, a fitness-crazed substitute teacher is running the Gaskitt twins into the ground, literally. Even their running, like every other element of this cunningly crafted tale, proves important in the end. Three “useful maps” and a couple of handy timetables, along with pointed questions and liberal hints, will help young readers solve the mystery by the final page. Happily, order is restored, and the Gaskitt family welcomes a new member. Humorous illustrations throughout expand the clever plot, and an innovative, ever-changing design will keep detectives glued to the page. (Ages 7-9, younger for reading aloud)

**Bechtold, Lisze. *Buster & Phoebe: The Great Bone Game*. Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 48 pages (trade 0-618-20862-3, \$15.00)**

Buster is a kindhearted innocent. The young dog just doesn’t understand that Phoebe, the older dog at Roger’s house, is stealing all his bones. Phoebe *says* Buster’s bones keep disappearing because they aren’t well trained. But even when she offers to help him train them (“Stay!”), they continue to vanish every time he leaves the room. As for Phoebe, she isn’t mean spirited, just insecure. Ever since Buster arrived, she feels compelled to collect as many bones as she can. Lisze Bechtold’s funny transitional reader, featuring her own watercolor and ink illustrations that delightfully depict the two dogs, is original and full of appeal. (Ages 4-7)

**Cushman, Doug. *Inspector Hopper’s Mystery Year*. (An I Can Read Book) HarperCollins, 2003. 64 pages (trade 0-06-008962-8, \$15.99)**

Inspector Hopper and his loyal sidekick, McBugg, are on the case year round. In fall, they solve the mystery of the haunted pumpkin (just a hungry mole). A nasty winter cold sends Inspector Hopper to the clinic, where he’s sucked into a search for an absent doctor (laid up in his bed with the same “bug”). A small beetle gets carried away like a kite on a windy spring day (to be retrieved by the detecting duo). And a cricket’s missing sheet music must be tracked down before a summer evening’s show (it was unwittingly used by a wasp to patch his nest). Clear, large typeface and illustrations on nearly every page create an appealing entrée to the mystery genre for young readers. (Ages 5-8)

**Little, Jean. *Emma’s Strange Pet*. Illustrated by Jennifer Plecas. (An I Can Read Book) HarperCollins, 2003. 64 pages (trade 0-06-028350-3, \$15.99)**

For her birthday, Emma wants a pet. Because she’s allergic to dogs and cats, she ends up choosing a small lizard called an anole. It’s a highly unsatisfactory choice as far as Emma’s little brother, Max, is concerned. But Max, who longs for a dog, is soon won over by the tiny creature who, he points out, is a lot like he is, because they were both adopted by Emma’s family. Jean Little’s third short, easy-to-read chapter book about Emma manages to feature a fairly substantial story told in relatively few words. Jennifer Plecas created the full-color illustrations, as she did for *Emma’s Magic Winter* (2000) and *Emma’s Yucky Brother* (2002), also published by HarperCollins. (Ages 4-7)

**Milgrim, David. *See Pip Point*. (Ready-to-Read) Atheneum, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-689-85116-2, \$14.95)**

The classic format of “Dick and Jane” readers is given a charmingly inventive plot in *See Pip Point*. The little mouse Pip longs for Otto the robot’s balloon. “See Otto share.” But it’s a big balloon for such a little mouse, and soon Pip is sailing off into the sky. “See Pip go up. See Pip go way up.” An encounter with Zee the bee and a fast-acting Otto save the day in this very easy and entertaining beginning reader. The digital pen-and-ink illustrations have clean, simple lines that effectively convey both personalities and emotions of the creature characters. (Ages 4-6)

**Van Laan, Nancy. *Busy Busy Moose*. Illustrated by Amy Rusch. Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 48 pages (trade 0-395-96091-6, \$15.00)**

Moose is the only animal not busily preparing for winter as this story opens. But Moose is busy in ways he doesn’t realize. When a flock of birds flying south lands on his antlers, he’s busy being a tree. In winter, when he carries the other animals across the river to visit Beaver before the water freezes, he’s busy being a ferryboat. In spring, Moose becomes a nesting spot for a bird. Only when summer comes does Moose have an actual plan to occupy his time, although it doesn’t turn out quite as he thought it would in Nancy Van Laan’s tender, sweetly funny advanced beginning reader about a lumbering creature with a gentle heart. Moose and his animal friends are illustrated by Amy Rusch in ink and colored pencil. They made their debut in *Moose Tales* (Houghton Mifflin, 1999). (Ages 4-6)

**See also:** *A Pet for Me*

### Fiction for Children

**Clarke, Judith. *Starry Nights*. U.S. edition: Front Street, 2003. 148 pages (trade 1-886910-82-0, \$15.95)**

Jess’s family has moved to a new house, and everything is strangely unsettled. Back when they lived on the sea at Avalon, everything seemed perfect. Now, after a recent breakdown, her mother rarely comes out of her room. Her sister, Vida, is unpredictable, full of strange ideas in which she insists Jess get involved, such as attending a séance in the village. And then there’s the fact that Jess seems to be seeing things—flashes of a figure, a young woman. Jess’s older brother, Clem, is having a hard time, too. He’s worried about his mother, and he longs to be near the sea again. But at least he’s made a friend he can talk to. Amy is always around when Clem needs someone, although some of her comments upset him for reasons he can’t explain. In a story that moves back and forth from Jess’s to Clem’s to Amy’s point of view, Judith Clarke slowly and skillfully reveals the deep disturbance beneath the surface of Jess’s family. She delivers a tremendous twist at the climax for readers who haven’t assembled the subtle clues, and a tremendous sense of satisfaction for those who stay one step ahead of the storyteller’s moment of revelation. This compelling novel is much more than a ghost story, offering a sensitive look at loss from perspectives both ordinary and unusual. (Ages 10-14)

**Collins, Suzanne. *Gregor the Overlander*. Scholastic Press, 2003. 310 pages (trade 0-439-43536-6, \$16.95)**

Ever since his father's abrupt and unexplained departure two years earlier, Gregor has maintained a personal rule. He doesn't allow himself to think about his father returning. Imagining a future that includes his father makes his present reality without him too painful to bear. Abiding by this self-imposed law, Gregor moves listlessly through an uneventful life with his grandmother, mother and siblings in New York City as this novel opens. Uneventful, that is, until the day his two-year-old sister Boots disappears headfirst down an air duct in the laundry room. Without a second thought Gregor dives after her, and with this Alice-like plunge, enters the Underland, a subterranean world where communities of humans, and oversize rats, bats, spiders, and cockroaches exist uneasily together. At first intent only on returning to the Overland, Gregor soon discovers that an ancient prophecy casts him as the central figure in a dangerous mission, one that may help him find his missing father. As war with the rats threatens the Underlanders' survival, Gregor and Boots, together with a contingent of humans, bats, cockroaches, spiders, and a renegade rat, set off on their preordained quest. The excitement of their exploits is nicely balanced with moments of down-to-earth humanity: Boots requires diaper changes, automatic loathing of cockroaches shouldn't be assumed, and a shaken can of root beer makes a convenient weapon. When Gregor does find his father, the man is physically unable to take charge, a scenario that requires Gregor to continue to think and act with responsibility. This well-conceived fantasy combines a traditional prophesy and quest structure with strikingly memorable characters, both human and otherwise. The concluding chapter sets the stage for a return to the Underland, a visit that we eagerly await! (Ages 9-14)

**Cushman, Karen. *Rodzina*. Clarion, 2003. 208 pages (trade 0-618-13351-8, \$16.00)**

Much has been written about the orphan trains which operated from 1850 to 1929, but few books offer such a memorable character as 12-year-old Rodzina, the prickly yet vulnerable Polish American heroine of this novel. Stunned and grieving from the recent deaths of her loving parents, Rodzina hides behind a façade of strength and size as she travels on an orphan train from Chicago to San Francisco. Although she's bigger and older than most of the other orphans aboard the train, Rodzina secretly shares their fears and hopes. And despite her intention to stay emotionally detached, she can't avoid connecting with the other members of this distinct community of children. As each consecutive train stop is reached, Rodzina becomes increasingly determined to avoid placement in homes where she is certain orphans are valued only as slave labor. Her cynical outlook is sometimes right on target, and only her quick thinking and tenacity prevent her from becoming trapped in some truly grim households, including one where she is expected to step into the role of wife and mother as soon as the gravely ill woman currently in that position expires. As the train winds its way westward with its dwindling population of homeless orphans, Rodzina is ever more intrigued by Lady Doctor, an orphan asylum chaperone. Repelled by the woman's chilly manner, Rodzina is also fascinated with her professional status. By the journey's end the two have forged a tentative but promising relationship, and Rodzina has found an unexpected home. (Ages 10-13)

**DiCamillo, Kate. *The Tale of Despereaux*. Illustrated by Timothy Basil Ering. Candlewick Press, 2003. 267 pages (trade 0-7636-1722-9, \$17.99)**

This funny, original story brings four different strands into a narrative whole, with well-developed fairytale characters. There's Despereaux, the heroic young mouse who would rather read books than gnaw them; Chiaroscuro, a rat living in a dark dungeon, who aspires to a life filled with light; Miggery Sow, a serving girl who longs to be a princess; and, of course, the princess herself, who looks and acts just like the princesses in Despereaux's beloved book of fairytales. The ways in which all these characters' lives intersect is the basis for a multilayered story that deftly draws on multiple literary traditions. The absurd idealism and romantic chivalry of Despereaux, for example, suggest that he may be a direct descendant of Don Quixote. DiCamillo's use of the intrusive narrator who directly addresses the reader harkens back to Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*. The story is at once sophisticated and wholly accessible to children, particularly as a read-aloud. Beautiful book design and numerous black-and-white line drawings add to the old-fashioned feel of the satisfying story. *Honor Book, CCBC Newbery Award Discussion* (Ages 7-11)

**DuPrau, Jeanne. *The City of Ember*. Random House, 2003. 270 pages (trade 0-375-82273-9, \$15.95)**

"In the city of Ember, the sky was always dark. The only light came from great flood lamps mounted on the buildings, and on the tops of poles in the middle of the larger squares." Twelve-year-old Lina Mayfleet doesn't want to believe the outcry of her classmate, Doon Harrow, who says that Ember is failing—running out of food, running out of lightbulbs, running out of everything. She wants to believe the mayor when he says that Ember continues to prosper just as the city's long-ago Builders had planned. But lately there have been more and more blackouts that cast Ember into impenetrable darkness at random times throughout the day, and the shelves in stores are growing barer and barer. Is there hope in the darkness beyond the city's limits? No one knows—no one has ever been able to penetrate its depths. This futuristic fantasy casts Lina and Doon as its heroes when the two become convinced an old, shredded, note Lina has found originated with the Builders and holds the key to the future for the people of Ember. Puzzling over the remnants of the message, they eventually piece it into a coherent whole that inspires them to risk everything they've ever known for the sake of their own and their fellow citizen's survival. Author Jeanne DuPrau's debut novel is part adventure, part mystery and part thoughtful exploration of human spirit and human nature. (Ages 10-14)

**Ellis, Deborah. *Mud City*. A Groundwood Book / Douglas & McIntyre, 2003. 164 pages (trade 0-88899-518-0, \$15.95)**

The final book in Deborah Ellis's *Breadwinner* trilogy is about young teenager Shauzia, whose best friend, Parvana, was featured in the two previous novels, *The Breadwinner* (2001) and *Parvana's Journey* (2002), both published by Groundwood. Shauzia is in a refugee camp in Pakistan, still dreaming of the lavender field in France that she and Parvana once talked about. Bristling at the restrictions in the camp, she longs to get out and does manage to get to the nearby city—the first stop on her journey to France, she is certain. Barely supporting herself during the day, sleeping on the streets at night, Shauzia gets a brief respite—and what seems like a chance at a brighter future—when she is taken in by a well-meaning Western family. But the family's good intentions go only so far, and when Shauzia innocently shares what they have with other refugees, she's out on the street again. Several situations in the novel seem somewhat contrived, but with purpose—the contrast of the materialism of the West with the meager existence of

Shauzia and other refugees is one example. As with the other books in this trilogy, *Mud City* sheds light on the deplorable and tragic situation of the Afghan people. (Ages 10-14)

**Ellis, Sarah. *The Several Lives of Orphan Jack*. Illustrated by Bruno St-Aubin. A Groundwood Book / Douglas & McIntyre, 2003. 84 pages (trade 0-88899-529-6, \$14.95)**

The power of words and ideas is at the heart of this upbeat novel following the travels and exploits of an irrepressible 12-year-old orphan. Jack makes his escape from the Opportunities School for Orphans and Foundlings with nothing but his wits and his words, his most treasured possession being a battered old dictionary missing all of the letters A and B. "...From C to Z it had given [him] some of his happiest moments....A sunrise was better when you knew the word sublime...Oatmeal for dinner was somehow not so sad when you knew the word mingy." On his own, Jack travels where fate takes him, and words and ideas become his means to a living when he stumbles upon the idea of selling whims at a village market in exchange for what he needs. Because imagination and pleasure are frowned upon by the powers that be in that particular village, Jack's wares (which eventually include "thoughts, concepts, plans, opinions, impressions, notions and fancies") are eye-opening delights to the populace. In *Jack*, Sarah Ellis has created a Dickensian hero without all the gloom. He's anything but downtrodden and hapless. Her blithe novel is a delight to read and begs to be read aloud, with its many words to be relished for how they sound, what they say and the stories they can tell. (Ages 8-11)

**Franklin, Kristine L. *Grape Thief*. Candlewick Press, 2003. 290 pages (trade 0-7636-1325-8, \$16.99)**

Poverty and promise are at the core of this novel set in the Pacific Northwest in 1925. Twelve-year-old Slava Petrovich knows how to cuss in every language he hears in Roslyn, Washington, where immigrants have settled from all over Europe. And while his "gift" has come in handy in the schoolyard, Slava hopes his talent for languages and learning will take him far. Slava loves school, and he can't envision a life working in the coal mines like most of the men—and many of the older boys--in his town. But Slava's older brothers must leave town because of their connection to the accidental death of a gang member involved in bootlegging. Without their financial support, Slava, his mother, and younger brother can barely get by. Slava's dreams of staying in school begin to fade, until the intervention of a priest with a gift for delivering charity hand-in-hand with dignity. Kristin Franklin based this novel in part on her own Croatian American family history. Her richly detailed writing creates a vivid portrait of an immigrant family where old country traditions are honored but also adapted to meet unexpected challenges and changes. (Ages 10-14)

**Funke, Cornelia. *Inkheart*. Translated from the German by Anthea Bell. U.S. edition: *The Chicken House* / Scholastic, 2003. 534 pages (trade 0-439-53164-0, \$19.95)**

Cornelia Funke's second novel published in the United States is a highly original fantasy story. Meggie is a reader and lover of books, a trait she inherited from her father, Mo. On a dark and stormy night, a mysterious stranger named Dustfinger shows up at their door. But he's no stranger to Mo, who is reluctant to tell Meggie who Dustfinger is. The truth turns out to be stranger than anything Meggie could ever have imagined. When Meggie was three years old, Mo was reading a novel called *Inkheart* aloud to Meggie's mother. Dustfinger was a character in that story. As Mo read, Dustfinger and others from the world of *Inkheart*--including the sinister,

power-hungry Capricorn--became flesh and blood in this world. At the same time, Meggie's mother disappeared into the world of the novel. These startling revelations unfold as Meggie and her father are on the run: Dustfinger's arrival means that Capricorn has finally tracked Mo down. There is one more character from *Inkheart*--a terrible, awful force--that Capricorn wants Mo to read into this world. Funke's richly imagined and vividly told story is a page turner, its unique plot peopled with intriguing characters. Dustfinger aches to return to the world of *Inkheart*, and will seemingly do whatever it takes to get Mo to read him back into the book, yet he is Meggie and Mo's uneasy ally. Meggie's Aunt Elinore, unwillingly dragged into the drama, lives only, at least at first, for her beloved books. And Meggie and Mo face temptations that complicate their thinking. For Mo, it is the possibility that he might be able to read Meggie's mother back from *Inkheart*, if he dares. Meggie is eager to find out if she might share her father's extraordinary ability, despite its potential dangers. Only the "bad guys," Capricorn's henchmen, are one-note characters, serving as part of the mood-setting backdrop for this complex story that will be relished by book-loving children and young adults. (Ages 9-14)

**Henkes, Kevin. *Olive's Ocean*. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 224 pages (trade 0-06-053543-1, \$15.99)**

Twelve-year-old Martha Boyle and her family are preparing to leave for their annual Cape Cod vacation to visit her grandmother, Godbee, when Olive Barstow's mother appears at the door. Olive was a classmate of Martha's who was recently killed by a car. In the journal entry that Olive's mother has come to share, Olive outlines her plan of becoming a writer and dreams of seeing the ocean. She also writes that Martha Boyle is the nicest girl in her class. It's all a jolt to Martha. Like everyone else, she didn't know Olive well, and can't recall ever being particularly kind to the misfit girl, with whom, she discovers too late, she had much in common. Martha, too, dreams of becoming a writer, although she hasn't shared her desire with anyone. And the ocean is her favorite place to be. The unsettled feeling she's left with is a portent of how the entire summer will unfold. On vacation, Martha is struck by the fact that her beloved grandmother is getting old. And Martha falls in love, but the tender sweetness of her first crush ends in cruel humiliation that leaves Martha reeling. The introspective Martha holds a lot inside. But vital and vibrant Godbee is sensitive to her granddaughter's turbulent feelings and gently encourages her to share what she can—and is willing--about her thoughts, her fears, and her dreams. Martha is also part of a lively and funny family whose relationships are loving and edgy, as parents and siblings so often are. Kevin Henkes's novel sparkles with strong characterization, fine dialogue, and lovely imagery that help propel a sensitive story about a summer of new awakening. (Ages 10-14)

**Jennings, Patrick. *The Wolving Time*. Scholastic Press, 2003. 197 pages (trade 0-439-39555-0, \$15.95)**

Patrick Jennings defies traditional expectations with a story that casts werewolves as the undeniable heroes of a very human—and horrifying--tale set in sixteenth-century France. Laszlo and his parents are shepherds. His parents are also werewolves. Laszlo knows that someday he, too, will be able to change into a wolf at will and run with the wild pack. But if the villagers—or worse, the priest, Père Raoul—find out, they will all be condemned and most likely killed. Then the priest's servant girl, the orphan Muno, sees his parents transform. Although Muno is trying to run away, she is caught and punished by Père Raoul. Laszlo fears she will tell their secret, but

Muno has seen too much cruelty committed by Père Raoul in the name of the Church to confuse Laszlo's gentle parents with evil. But how long will he and his family be safe? Jennings's mesmerizing story is based on the Catholic Church's rampant persecution of individuals considered heretics during the Inquisition. Hundreds of people during that time, he states in his author's note, were convicted and executed for being werewolves. Jennings's characterizations of Laszlo's parents are particularly fine for contrasting the inhumanity of the Church with the compassion, complexity, and humanity of the werewolves. (Ages 10-14)

**Johnson, Angela. *A Cool Moonlight*. Dial, 2003. 133 pages (lib 0-8037-2846-8, \$14.99)**

Born with xeroderma pigmentosum, a rare skin disease, eight-year-old Lila can die if she is exposed to sunlight. During the daytime, she's restricted to the house with all shades drawn. Her freedom comes with the setting sun. She loves to be outside in the darkness. She loves to race her cart through an almost deserted grocery store in the middle of the night, calling out to her dad in the next aisle. Sometimes her older sister, Monk, takes her into the city at night, and Lila hangs out with Monk and her friends in a coffee house. But Lila longs to feel the sun and to dance in its light. She has two friends—two nighttime friends—who are willing to help her try. Angela Johnson's memorable first-person narrative captures the complexities and maturity of a child who has had to acknowledge her own mortality, and then go on with living. Readers may realize that Lila's two friends, Alyssa and Elizabeth, are imaginary, inspired by her own desires and needs. As haunting as Lila's situation may seem, she is clearly a happy and deeply thoughtful child, supported by a family that has affirmed her in every way. Her desire to dance in the light is realized in an unexpected, extraordinary way at the conclusion of this novel that casts its own subdued but insistent light. The intimately sized book is enhanced by a lovely design that shows the moon's changing phases over the course of a month—the story's timeframe—on the opening page of each chapter. (Ages 9-12)

**Jones, Diana Wynne. *The Merlin Conspiracy*. U.S. edition: Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2003. 468 pages (trade 0-06-052318-2, \$16.99; pbk. 0-06-052320-4, \$7.99)**

Teenage Roddy, the daughter of Court wizards, and her friend Grundo travel with the King's Progress as the court members move constantly around the English realm on the Islands of Blest. Nick lives a typical contemporary existence with his father in another England—an alternative universe—until an unexpected encounter at a writer's conference sends Nick to yet another plane. These three worlds are just the tip of the iceberg in this complex fantasy novel of a multiverse facing potential disaster. Roddy's and Nick's alternating voices narrate the teenagers' efforts to expose a plot contrived by a false Merlin and the greedy Earthmistress. This evil duo's attempts to rupture the magic of Blest could ignite a chain of disastrous consequences spreading through the countless linked universes. Richly imagined characters and settings add strength to this classic tale of pending doom. Despite the elaborate framework, the adventure story is easily followed and studded with whimsical secondary characters (including an enchanting misplaced circus elephant) and frequent moments of droll humor. (Ages 11-15)

**Kornblatt, Marc. *Izzy's Place*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2003. 118 pages (trade 0-689-84639-8, \$16.95)**

Angry and scared that his parents fight all the time, ten-year-old Henry Stone is angrier still that his mom and dad have sent him to stay with his grandmother in Indiana for the summer. Henry

loves Grandma Martha, but he resents being treated like a little kid. And the recent death of Grandpa Jay leaves him feeling unsettled and sad in his grandmother's home. Marc Kornblatt's story about a child dealing with change and loss stands out for the thorniness of his main character. A kid who is generally well behaved and polite, Henry is petulant and prickly. In exchanges with his grandmother, he rudely—sometimes meanly—pushes her away with words. These authentic moments are uncomfortable but refreshingly genuine, important to understanding just how hard of a time Henry is having in coping with recent events in his family and his fears about what is to come. What Henry wants more than anything is reassurance that his parents aren't getting a divorce. What he has to settle for is the knowledge that life is bigger than sadness, and whatever decision they make, he is loved. (Ages 9-12)

**Lowry, Lois. *The Silent Boy*. Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 192 pages (trade 0-618-28231-9, \$15.00)**

Katy, who is now a grandmother, recalls her childhood in the early 1900s, when she dreamed of being a doctor like her father. As Katy's story unfolds, so does Jacob's. Jacob is mute, considered "touched" by most in their community (in today's terminology, he appears to be autistic). Katy notices his gentle way with living things, appreciating and understanding him in a way most others don't. Katy has clearly been influenced by her progressive, open-minded father, who treats everyone in their community, regardless of class or other differences, with respect. In Lowry's deft and moving narrative, Katy relates a series of events over several years in her childhood and early adolescence that involve not only Jacob, but his two older sisters, and that culminate in two tragedies: the death of a baby, and Jacob being institutionalized. Jacob's sister Peggy works as live-in help for Katy's family. His oldest sister, Nellie, works for the Bishops, a much wealthier family down the road. One of the astonishing things in this narrative is how Lowry stays so true to Katy's perspective and yet reveals a darker story beneath the surface of what Katy innocently observes. When Katy comes upon teenage Paul Bishop and Nellie together in the barn, for example, she thinks that they're playing. But more mature readers will understand something else is going on. Everything unfolds through Katy's eyes and Katy's level of understanding, making the story's disturbing climax, the aftermath of which sees Jacob institutionalized, all the more unsettling. Period photographs open each chapter, and enhance the sense of time and place established in the narrative of this fine novel. (Ages 11-15)

**Orlev, Uri. *Run, Boy, Run*. Translated from the Hebrew by Hillel Halkin. U.S. edition: Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 186 pages (trade 0-618-16465-0, \$15.00)**

Srulik escapes from the Warsaw ghetto in the back of a farmer's cart. It's not a planned escape, it just happens in a few frenzied moments when something changes and danger is suddenly imminent. Someone yells "Run!" or "Jump!" and the small boy responds. In much of Uri Orlev's exceptional novel about the Holocaust, this is how things go for Srulik—he is buffeted by circumstance. Sometimes it lands him in the hands of someone with compassion, like the Polish farmer who was driving the cart. Sometimes it delivers him into the hands of one who will hate him or fear him simply because he is a Jew. But as time goes on and Srulik grows older—older than any small boy should have to be—he begins to play an active role in his own survival, growing cunning out of circumstance and need. Srulik spends the duration of the war in a series of small Polish villages and the surrounding woods. Many of the people he meets know his

secret but willingly help him; others fool themselves into thinking what they want for the sake of the cheap labor he provides. But always, eventually, someone betrays him, and then he's on the run again. During one of his escapes, lying low in field while the Germans search nearby, he meets another Jew—it is, amazingly, his father. “Forget your name,” his father urgently tells him, giving Srulik the Christian name Jurek and instructing him to learn how to pray like a Christian. “But...never forget that you're a Jew.” Srulik—still so young —takes his father's words to heart. By the war's end, he's not only lost an arm to the Nazis, he's lost all memory of his Jewish name as well as the family he once had in another lifetime. Srulik doesn't want to remember, but eventually, painfully, he does. There's a sense of triumph at the conclusion of this harrowing novel in Orlev's epilogue, which tells how he came to hear the true story on which the book is based. It was originally published in Israel and has been translated into English from Hebrew. (Ages 10-14)

**Pennac, Daniel. *Eye of the Wolf*. Translated from the French by Sarah Adams. Illustrated by Max Grafe. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2003. 111 pages (lib. 0-7636-1896-9, \$15.99)**

A wolf torn away from the Yukon by hunters has been captive in a zoo for ten years when the boy first appears in front of his cage. The boy stares at the one-eyed wolf for hours, for days. The wolf, uncertain what to make of such tenacity, finally tries to meet the child's gaze, and is surprised when the boy closes one eye, placing them on equal terms. Their two eyes literally become the windows through which each observes the other's past. The boy learns that the wolf, raised in the wilderness of the far north, lost his freedom saving his sister, whose bravery and curiosity led her into the lair of the men who wanted to kill her for her pelt. The wolf learns that the boy, whose name is Africa, came from and traveled across that diverse continent. He witnessed war and environmental destruction, and his status as a child meant his fate was always determined by the others. Finally, the boy is adopted by loving adults, although they must flee their home when the land is stripped beyond recognition and drought sets in. Both boy and wolf now find themselves in “The Other World,” our western world. The wolf has paid a tremendous price for his loyalty; the boy has been sustained throughout his extraordinary, mythical journey by the loyalty of animals who loved him even as most adults were casting him away. In an act of compassion and solidarity, the boy embraces the wolf's pain as his own. In doing so, he teaches the wolf to trust, releasing him from the cage of his own bitterness in a mystical story that is firmly grounded in issues with which young readers can connect, such as friendship and trust, the ethics of wild animals in captivity, and the impact of environmental devastation. (Ages 10-14)

**Pierce, Tamora. *Trickster's Choice*. Random House, 2003. 432 pages (trade 0-375-81466-3, \$17.95; lib. 0-375-91466-8, \$19.99)**

With the 1983 publication of *Alanna: the First Adventure* (Atheneum), readers first met the memorable character Alanna, a strong heroine who poses as a boy in order to become a knight. Her story continued throughout the four volumes of “The Song of the Lioness Quartet” and gave Alanna a solid seat in the pantheon of commanding female protagonists, both within the fantasy genre and beyond. Twenty years later, Tamora Pierce delights Alanna's legions of fans and welcomes a new audience with this introduction of Aly, Alanna's 16-year-old daughter. In a deliciously satisfying case of “the shoe's on the other foot now,” Aly pursues her dreams of becoming a field agent spy despite her mother's objections. Often absent from home in her demanding job as King's Champion, Alanna is frustrated by Aly's choices and seeming lack of

direction. When they are together, mother and daughter often clash. As Aly says, “You try being the daughter of a legend. It’s a great deal like work.” Behaving like the adolescent she is, Aly plans an unauthorized solo sailing trip, rationalizing that her parents will be pleased to welcome her back upon her return. Of course, nothing goes as planned, as shortly after setting out on her journey, Aly is captured by pirates and transported to a distant island, where she is sold as a slave to a noble family. Plenty of opportunity for spying soon presents itself, and while Aly discovers that she has a natural gift for the work, she also learns some hard lessons about growing up and the consequences of her impetuous behavior. Along with political intrigue and action-packed battles, Aly’s adventure includes a manipulative trickster god who intervenes at moments of crisis and her budding romance with Nawat, a crow who can assume human form. Nawat’s attempts to woo Aly with offerings of choice grubs and other avian-minded courting strategies provide prime moments of comedy. Despite a dense opening section explaining the story’s setting, this fast-paced tale of adventure is readily accessible to newcomers to Pierce’s fantasy realm. (Ages 12-16)

**Reeve, Philip. *Mortal Engines*. (The Hungry City Chronicles) Eos / HarperCollins, 2003. 310 pages (trade 0-06-008207-0, \$16.99)**

Imagine a future in which the city of London has been rebuilt atop enormous caterpillar treads, “a moving mountain of metal that rose in seven tiers like the layers of a wedding cake, the lower levels wreathed in engine smoke, the villas of the rich gleaming white on the higher decks, and above it all the cross on top of St. Paul’s Cathedral glinting gold, two thousand feet above the ruined earth.” Following the enormously destructive Sixty Minute War, scarce resources have forced cities and towns in Europe to go mobile, ranging the land in search of smaller, weaker communities to prey upon in a practice known as Municipal Darwinism. A lowly third-class apprentice aboard London, Tom plunges – literally – into a tangle of conspiracy, murder, and greed when he falls straight through a waste chute in pursuit of a would-be assassin, Hester. Dumped like trash onto the wasted earth, Tom and Hester watch London trundle off into the distance, before launching into a whirlwind adventure. Traveling on foot, by airship and aboard a pirate suburb, always one step ahead of a relentless cyborg killer (shades of a Schwarzenegger-like Terminator), the two struggle to return to London. Always exciting and frequently grisly (almost all the main characters exit in violent death), *Mortal Engines* is undeniably distinctive and imaginative. Science fiction and fantasy readers will be happily absorbed into this Dickensian future, and pleased that the series title “The Hungry City Chronicles,” promises more of Reeve’s roving cities on the horizon. (Ages 10-14)

**Reiche, Dietlof. *I, Freddy*. Translated from the German by John Brownjohn. Illustrated by Joe Cepeda. (Golden Hamster Saga, Book One) U.S. edition: Scholastic Press, 2003. 201 pages (trade 0-439-28356-6, \$16.95)**

Freddy is not a run-of-the-mill golden hamster. Even as a youngster, crammed in a crowded pet store cage, he realized he was different. Rather than running mindlessly on the treadmill with his siblings, Freddy preferred an intellectual approach to life. He documents his adventures in this autobiographical saga. When confronted with a hamster-style crisis, he overcomes it with creative problem solving and a can-do attitude. Whether it’s attracting a potential owner, teaching himself to read, opening his cage door from the inside, or mastering a Mac computer, Freddy is up to the challenge. An attractive page design with frequent line drawings adds to the

appeal of this humorous fantasy, translated from the German. Freddy, rodent extraordinaire, is sure to charm young animal lovers. (Ages 8-11)

**Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2003. 870 pages (trade 0-439-35806-X, \$29.99)**

As with the four previous Harry Potter titles, J.K. Rowling takes readers on a satisfying, stimulating excursion into her richly imagined world in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. But much has changed in Book V. The usual over-the-top, comi-tragic scenes of Harry's life at the Dursley's that open the previous volumes are toned down here, replaced by more foreboding events. Harry's usual delight when reunited with his Hogwarts friends is far less pronounced. It's complicated by his self-righteous anger over a summer of isolation from the wizarding world at a time when Lord Voldemort has risen and much is at stake. That anger possesses Harry on and off throughout the novel. It is one of the ways Rowling is addressing the transition of her main character from courageous, open-hearted boy to a young man weighed down by all he has seen. Harry is also struggling, like many adolescents, to adjust to changes that he doesn't always understand in his relationships with friends and mentors. The truth is that teenagers aren't always easy to be around, and Harry embodies that truth, his overwrought emotions seemingly justified one minute, self-centered the next. But while *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* is certainly less lighthearted than the overall tone of its predecessors, it's not an altogether dark and ominous story. Hope--and Rowling's humor--still shine. The author is adept at sly wit, broad humor, and satire. Older readers may especially appreciate her sharp, sometimes chilling commentaries on government. Her inventive imagination has created surprising new material in a world that already seemed complete. (Remember those horseless carriages at Hogwarts?) She also has expanded the cast and range of characters. While some familiar faces, like Dumbledore and Hagrid, aren't seen as often as readers have come to expect, others, like Ginny Weasley and Neville Longbottom, are shown in a new or brighter light. Newcomers like the Ravenclaw student Luna Lovegood and the Auror Tonks enliven the mix that, as always, includes Harry's best friends, Ron and Hermione, each with a few surprises of their own. Rowling also continues to develop the intricacies of the ongoing plot of good versus evil, answering some of the looming questions from the past while raising others about what is to come. The overall fast-paced novel lags more than its predecessors at the start but picks up quickly, building to a riveting climactic battle followed by a prophecy revealed. The sense of urgency that marked the close of Book IV is absent here. Instead, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* leaves us wondering what now awaits the world of magic so many have come to know and love. What new surprises, challenges, and changes, will Books VI and VII hold? (Age 9 and older)

**Woodruff, Elvira. *The Ravenmaster's Secret*. Scholastic Press, 2003. 240 pages (trade 0-439-28133-4, \$15.95)**

In the year 1735, the anticipated arrival of three Scottish prisoners at the Tower of London presents 11-year-old Forrest Harper with the opportunity he's been looking for—proving to the bigger boys who torment him that he has courage by guarding a rebel. In truth, Forrest, son of the Tower's Ravenmaster, would much rather be with the birds, especially his beloved raven Tuck, or imagining himself sailing the open ocean. He has no stomach for things such as public

hangings, and he ended up befriending the last prisoner he helped guard. When the new prisoners arrive, Forrest finds himself assigned to an 11-year-old girl, daughter of one of the Jacobite prisoners. Guarding a girl is no way to prove his bravery, he knows. But as he listens to Maddy talk of the Scot's oppression under English rule, Forrest begins to doubt things he always believed to be true about the righteousness of the English crown. And when Maddy's life hangs in the balance, Forrest does what he believes is right, despite his fears of what will happen if he is caught. Elvira Woodruff's novel is compelling fiction set against the richly realized backdrop of life in and around the Tower of London in the first half of the eighteenth century. A map of the Tower and its environs, a glossary, and a narrative condensing facts about the Tower through time provide material for readers who want to know more about the story's setting. (Ages 9-12)

**Woodson, Jacqueline. *Locomotion*. Putnam, 2003. 128 pages (trade 0-399-23115-3, \$15.99)**

Eleven-year-old Lonnie C. Motion—Locomotion for short—is writing to save his life. At least that's what it feels like. Living in foster care since the death of his parents in a fire, Lonnie is directing his grief and his hurt into poetry, with the help of his teacher. Along the way, he's discovering he has both a talent and a need for writing. Separated from his younger sister, Lili, who has been placed in another home, and uncertain about what Miss Edna, his foster mother, thinks of him, poetry gives Lonnie focus for his undirected energy and form for his mixed-up emotions. It's also a way to record what he observes and experiences in daily life, as well as the bittersweet memories of life before the fire. Jacqueline Woodson uses both free verse and structured poetic forms as she creates a memorable character study of an African American boy breaking out of the past and into a future of his own making. Nothing is static—not Lonnie himself, not his relationships, and certainly not his life. *Honor Book, CCBC Coretta Scott King Author Award Discussion* (Ages 9-12)

**Yee, Lisa. *Millicent Min: Girl Genius*. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2003. 256 pages (trade 0439425190, \$16.95)**

The fact that Millicent Min has a resumé is the first clue that she isn't your typical 11-year-old. The fact that she's just completed her junior high of high school is another. And then there's the summer class she's signed up for just for fun: Classic and Contemporary Poetry at the local college. Millicent is a genius, and if she's a genius without any friends, well, that's just the price you have to pay for being so far ahead of your peers. But Millicent's mom thinks otherwise. She's signed Millicent up for volleyball over the summer in the hope that Millicent will connect with someone her own age. And Millicent does. Emily has no idea that Millicent is a genius, and when Millicent decides she'd like to keep it that way, she begins spinning a web of deception that is bound to come unraveled. Millicent's first-person voice is funny ("Oh. My. God. My life is over. My mother has signed me up for team sports."). But through the first-person narrative, Yee also masterfully conveys how Millicent is a girl so very smart, and yet so very clueless, not only about friendship but, much to Millicent's surprise, a number of other things as well. Millicent's Chinese American heritage is a subtle aspect of this sparkling novel. (Ages 10-14)

**Yolen, Jane. *Sword of the Rightful King: A Novel of King Arthur*. Harcourt, 2003. 349 pages (trade 0-15-202527-8, \$17.00)**

Merlin, often portrayed as a powerful magician cloaked in mystery, is refreshing in his role as political advisor and behind-the-scenes director of Arthur's inaugural years as king. Yes, Merlennus (as he's called here) is a magician, but that seems secondary to his job of early-medieval spin doctor, manipulating public perception of the royal scene. An important element of his plan is the sword in the stone – a device created by Merlennus and planted in a spot where it can be “discovered” by an unsuspecting shepherd. Merlennus's magic ensures that only Arthur will be able to draw the sword, and this show of destiny is designed to firm up support from wavering constituents. Enter Morgause, a potent witch bent on disrupting Merlennus's plans, unseating Arthur, and putting one of her own sons on the throne. And finally, Gawen joins the cast at Camelot. An inscrutable boy adopted by Merlennus as an assistant, Gawen is clearly equipped with his own secret agenda. Plenty of hints are dropped along the way, but Gawen's real identity will still come as a satisfying and believable surprise to many readers. Set within the comfortable framework of Arthurian legend, this readable version of a familiar story offers more than just an exciting plot. An exceptional cast of characters – especially Arthur, Merlennus, Kay, and Gawaine – come through the pages as realistic individuals with credible strengths and weaknesses, rather than as superhuman heroes. (Ages 11-15)

**See also:** *Borrower's*; *True Story of Christmas*; *Westing Game*

### **Fiction for Young Adults**

**Brooks, Martha. *True Confessions of a Heartless Girl*. U.S. edition: Melanie Kroupa Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. 192 pages (trade 0-374-37806-1, \$16.00)**

When 17-year-old Noreen Stall is stranded in the small prairie town of Pembina Lake, she has no idea the turns her life is about to take. The same is true for many others in the small community. Noreen's arrival seems to shake things loose. Pregnant and on the run from a boyfriend who, it turns out, was the best thing that had happened to her in a long time (his patience was almost saintly), Noreen wreaks havoc without even trying. In fact, the harder she tries to do good, the more trouble she seems to cause to the people in Pembina Lake who want to reach out a hand to her. In Martha Brook's moving tale, humor and pathos live side by side. The omniscient narrative voice puts readers inside the head of myriad characters, from a seven-year-old boy, to his worn out single mother who owns the town café, to a middle-aged man still suffering from guilt over an accident that happened when he was a teen, to an aging woman who has cared for so many her entire life and isn't sure she has anything left to give. But connection triumphs over isolation, bringing out the best in people, renewing something deep within them, in this hopeful story that acknowledges the humanness of mistakes and imperfections and the importance of simply trying. *Co-winner, CCBC Printz Award Discussion* (Ages 14-18)

**Donnelly, Jennifer. *A Northern Light: A Novel*. Harcourt, 2003. 400 pages (trade 0-15-216705-6, \$17.00)**

Mattie Gokey is a collector of words and a writer of stories. But she buried her dream of going to college and becoming a published writer beneath a promise to her dying mother that she would stay on their small farm in upstate New York to care for her siblings and father. That promise

weighs like a burden as Mattie graduates from high school in 1906 and earns a scholarship to a college in New York City. She feels guilty for thinking about leaving and angry that her father forbids her to go. When Mattie gets a summer job at one of the nearby resorts that caters to rich New York clientele, she has a chance encounter that refocuses her determination to set her own future course. Mattie meets Grace Brown only briefly, offering the obviously distressed young woman a glass of lemonade in the minutes before Grace joins her companion for a canoe trip on the lake. Before leaving, Grace thrusts a packet of letters in Mattie's hands, imploring her to burn them. But before Mattie can act on that request, Grace's body is found in the lake, a victim of drowning, or so it seems. As Mattie considers the unusual actions of both Grace and her male companion, she begins to suspect there is more to Grace's tragic death. Compelled to read Grace's letters, she finds the young woman's situation was untenable and the actions of her supposed fiancé deplorable. From Grace and for Grace, Mattie finds the courage to see her life in a new light and take the first steps toward following her dreams. Jennifer Donnelly has created a compelling and thought-provoking literary work, finely plotted and exquisitely written. Strong dialogue and well-drawn characters make the details of everyday life for Mattie and others in her community come alive. Through Mattie, Grace, and other characters, including Mattie's best friend, who is African American, and an extraordinary female teacher, Donnelly explores the limitations of class, race, and especially gender in that earlier era. An author's note provides readers with historical information about the real Grace Brown, a young woman who was found dead in Big Moose Lake, New York, in the summer of 1906. This extraordinary novel weaves that real-life tragedy with Mattie's fictional coming of age story. *Co-winner, CCBC Printz Award Discussion* (Ages 13-18)

**Flake, Sharon G. *Begging for Change. Jump at the Sun / Hyperion, 2003. 235 pages (trade 0-7868-0601-X, \$15.99; pbk. 0-7868-1405-5, \$5.99)***

Everything seems like such a struggle for teenager Raspberry Hill and her mother. They're no longer homeless, but every step forward, like having a decent apartment, has its downside—in this case, a threatening young neighbor who puts Raspberry's mother in the hospital. When Raspberry, who is always looking for ways to make money, sees a wad of bills in her friend Zora's purse, it just doesn't seem fair—why is everything so easy for Zora? She takes the money, and nothing is the same. Zora doesn't trust her and wants Raspberry to tell their friends and family what she's done. Meanwhile Raspberry's luck—never great—seems to spiral downward. When Zora accuses Raspberry of being just like Raspberry's father—a drug addict who steals some of Raspberry's hard-earned money, Raspberry aches at the thought it might be true. Sharon Flake's first-person narrative is alive with the words and feelings of a teen trying to make sense of herself and the people around her—good people trying their best to live a good life—in this novel that underscores how challenges both within and beyond one's own control, from personal choices to race and class prejudice, can make the struggle for a better life so hard. (Ages 12-15)

**Fleischman, Paul. *Breakout. A Marcato Book / Cricket Books, 2003. 124 pages (trade 0-8126-2696-6, \$15.95)***

Los Angeles gridlock sets the stage for Paul Fleischman's novel. Seventeen-year-old Del is giddy with the freedom that awaits her as she drives out of town after successfully faking her own drowning death. Her childhood played out in an unhappy series of foster homes, and she is

more than ready to break out of her past and begin a new life, complete with a new name, Elena. Her escape is soon stalled by a massive traffic jam. The rest of the book is devoted to Del's observations of her fellow drivers, alternating with flashes forward to her 25-year-old future self, a single mother and artist about to launch a one-woman performance. Laugh-out-loud humor meshes with insight as Del reacts to the scene around her and eventually becomes part of the tenuous sense of community forming among the stranded drivers. The more mature Elena has transformed that scene into her monologue. Although Del's sage perspective at times pushes the boundaries of adolescent credibility, the author's masterful handling of her story and the book's clever structure will be relished by sophisticated teen readers. (Ages 15-18)

**Frost, Helen. *Keesha's House*. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. 116 pages (trade 0-374-34064-1, \$16.00)**

Helen Frost's experiment with variations on two poetic forms, the sestina and the sonnet, elevates the recent novel-in-poems trend in young adult publishing to a new level. The plot line of Frost's narrative involves teens facing serious challenges. Stephie is pregnant. Jason, her boyfriend, struggles with knowing the right thing to do. Dontay has run away from his foster care placement. Harris has recently come out as gay, and his dad has kicked him out of the house. Carmen has been arrested for drunk driving. And Katie has an abusive stepfather. One by one, most of the teens find themselves drawn to the safe haven of Keesha's house. It's not an official shelter, or an authorized juvenile home, and that's part of its appeal. Keesha is a teen who already has many battles behind her. She's left her alcoholic father and moved in with Joe, a middle-aged man who knows what it's like to be young and scared and in need of a safe place to turn to. "I ain't up to the task / of tryin' to be their legal foster dad. / But I can give them space – and space is time." The first-person poems move in and out of each teen's story, but they overlap and interconnect as word about Keesha's house is passed. Remarkably, this issue-laden novel never feels driven by anything other than the authentic voices of its characters. The plot never feels too heavy or contrived, which is an extraordinary feat. Even more surprising is that these are not free-verse poems: most of the poems in the teens' voices are written as sestinas. The poems in the adult's voices—Joe, parents, teachers, and others trying to cast a net for these kids—are written as sonnets. In the final section of the novel, Frost wraps up the seven teens' stories with a crown of sonnets—"seven Italian sonnets in which the last line of one sonnet is the first line of the next." It's a perfect choice to underscore how lives that are connected weave a web of hope. The author's note providing information on each of the poetic forms will be useful for readers and classroom teachers alike. (Ages 12-16)

**Going, K.L. *Fat Kid Rules the World*. Putnam, 2003. 187 pages (trade 0-399-23990-1, \$17.99)**

At 296 pounds, Troy Billings is undeniably a fat kid, and an unhappy one. As this story begins, Troy is contemplating suicide as he stands at the edge of a subway platform, wondering if he should jump. This action, like everything he does whether insignificant or momentous, is shaded by Troy's belief that he is defined by his weight and consequently viewed as a joke. An exception to this rule is demonstrated by punk-rocker extraordinaire Curt MacCrae, a modern legend at Troy's high school for his skill on the guitar and his defiance of rules and expectations. Curt distracts Troy from his suicidal subway moment and offers him the position of drummer for a new band. Troy hasn't played the drums since a feeble attempt in junior high, but he grasps

Curt's invitation like a lifeline. The unlikely friendship which develops between the two is as complex as it is true. Along with his musical talent, Curt has monumental problems of his own, ranging from his dysfunctional family, to his current homeless state, to serious drug use. Troy discovers that he is much more than a self-defined "fat kid," and he is able to reciprocate Curt's friendship in a significant and thoughtful way, with far-reaching implications. Often uproariously funny, this novel for older teenagers is also gritty with strong language and situations. The author provides windows into both Troy and Curt's worlds, while commendably resisting the temptation to solve Troy's problems with a convenient weight loss. (Ages 15-18)

**Goodman, Alison. *Singing the Dogstar Blues*. Viking, 2002. 261 pages (lib. 0-670-03610-2, \$16.99)**

Science fiction meets mystery in an engrossing Australian novel set in the not-too-distant future. At seventeen, Joss is a confirmed rebel. Kicked out of no fewer than twelve schools, she's determined to make things work at the Centre for Neo-Historical Studies. Chosen as one of the elite few students to participate in a cutting-edge time travel program, Joss is driven to succeed as a time jumper, despite the school administrator's efforts to expel her from the program. To further complicate matters, she's been selected to partner Mavkel, the first alien student admitted to the time travel class. As if that's not enough to keep her occupied, is that an assassin she's just spotted lurking on the school grounds? Questions of alien rights and genetic engineering are timely and provocative, while generous amounts of humor and a sprinkling of harmonica blues keep things flowing smoothly. Despite the book's action-packed plot, Joss is a surprisingly introspective character. Her relationship with her distant mother undergoes an unexpected evolution, she learns unsettling truths about her origin, and she faces complex decisions which will affect not only her own future, but Mavkel's very existence. (Ages 13-16)

**Halliday, John. *Shooting Monarchs*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2003. 135 pages (trade 0-689-84668-0, \$15.95)**

John Halliday begins his novel by describing the early childhood of Macy, a boy named by his mother for the Thanksgiving Day Parade. Throughout his youth, Macy was an afterthought, neglected and mistreated. It's not surprising when he later spends time in a juvenile detention center, and then in jail. The pity his early childhood engenders quickly turns to fear and repugnance as Macy's pathological behavior turns to serial killings. Halliday then introduces Danny, whose behavior is as innocent as Macy's is sinister. A smart, kind, and gentle teen, Danny wants nothing more than to be able to tell Leah that he loves her, and to take pictures of her and of the butterflies he hikes up the ridge to see. He has a slight physical disability and is the brunt of much teasing at school. He is a devoted grandson, and a great friend to Leah's younger sister. In straightforward, detached prose, Halliday creates a fast paced story of destruction and redemption, where these two characters' destinies become entwined. The title suggests an ugly and inevitable end, which, through Halliday's masterful development of secondary characters, including a police officer whose early childhood was much like Macy's, but whose life took a much different course, manages to ring hopeful in this spare and chilling story. (Ages 13-15)

**Hausman, Gerald and Loretta. *Escape from Botany Bay: The True Story of Mary Bryant*. Orchard Books / Scholastic, 2003. 220 pages (trade 0-439-40327-8, \$16.95)**

This is a riveting fictionalized account of the true story of Mary Bryant, an 18<sup>th</sup> century English woman convicted of stealing a bonnet and sent to Botany Bay, the notorious penal colony in Australia. Her punishment was considered lenient because she wasn't put to death. Bryant was among the first group of prisoner's sent to colonize Botany Bay. The Hausman's chronicle her harrowing journey on board a ship where conditions were atrocious. She survived, in part, by becoming the lover of one of the sailors, who paid her in fruit and clothing. She became pregnant, and while the sailor did not take responsibility for the child, he did arrange for her to marry another prisoner. In Australia, Bryant quickly deduced that she and the other prisoners were being worked to death and devised a plan to escape. She led a small group on a torturous journey that killed Bryant's husband and their two children. Bryant herself survived, eventually returning to England, where she was eventually pardoned. The Hausman's do a remarkable job of conveying Bryant's fierce desire and determination to live her life with dignity and in freedom, while making clear the heavy price she paid every step of the way. (Ages 13-15)

**Hautman, Pete. *Sweetblood*. Simon & Schuster, 2003. 180 pages (trade 0-689-85048-4, \$16.95)**

Sweetblood is the name Lucy Szabo uses when she visits the Transylvania Room, an Internet chat room for self-described vampires. Lucy scoffs at some of the participants, sure that they are merely blood-sucking wannabes, but one named Draco sounds convincingly real. Lucy has a theory about the origin of vampirism; an insulin-dependent diabetic herself, she postulates that many of the classic characteristics of vampires were based on the symptoms of untreated diabetes during the Middle Ages. Lucy feels misunderstood by her parents, is routinely angry, and hides her loneliness behind a wisecracking Goth façade. She begins to disregard the constant monitoring her condition requires and ignores serious warning signs. Meanwhile, she meets the real Draco; he is the adult host at a gathering of Goth teens. Although the middle-aged man is clearly a social predator and not a "real" vampire, he handily manipulates Lucy by appealing to her obvious intelligence. After reaching a severe state of potential fatal ketoacidosis, Lucy begins to gain a new perspective on her diabetes, but retains enough of her prickly attitude to stay credible. The concept of vampirism as an ignorant interpretation of diabetes is an ingenious idea, providing a solid base for this highly original tale. (Ages 12-15)

**Heuston, Kimberley. *Dante's Daughter*. Front Street, 2003. 302 pages (trade 1-886910-97-9, \$16.95)**

This work of historical fiction creates an intricate tapestry from strands of fact. The fourteenth-century Italian poet Dante Alighieri is known to have had a daughter, but little is known about her. Kimberley Heuston has imagined a rich and complex life story for the girl, whose name here is Antonia. The novel begins when Antonia is five. She adores her father, but is already aware of a tension between him and her mother. Political turmoil—a running theme throughout the story—forces Antonia and her brothers to flee their home. It is the first of many journeys she will take. Her brilliant, passionate father is a sometimes fleeting, unpredictable figure in her life from that point on. He's unreliable, as her mother already knew, because his immersion in the political intrigue of the day holds more attraction for him than family life. Until she's a teenager, Antonia stays in the home of aunt and uncle. She feels safe and loved there. She also discovers her passion and talent for drawing and painting as she spends time in her painter uncle's studio. When Antonia's a teenager, Dante, battered by changing political winds, blows back into her

life, asking her to accompany him to Paris, where he plans to study. She ends up staying with a communal group of women in Paris, a community begun to give unmarried women and widows an alternative to the cloistered life of nuns. The women are artisans, and Antonia relishes the opportunity to use her talents, as well as the loving friendships she forms. Again politics intervene. When Dante decides to return to Italy, the still-teenage Antonia goes with him, grieving the recent death of her closest companions. As Antonia grows into adulthood, her losses mount, and so does her resolve to set the course of her own life, rather than be controlled by the choices of others and the expectations for women in the world in which she lives. Heuston's intricately detailed and fascinating story has intriguing and well-developed characters, an incredible sense of time and place, and a hero whose ultimate coming of age is a triumph for self-determination. (Ages 13-16)

**Holt, Kimberly Willis. *Keeper of the Night*. Henry Holt, 2003. 308 pages (trade 0-8050-6361-7, \$16.95)**

Isabel Moreno suddenly feels much older than her 13 years when she finds herself responsible for taking care of her siblings and her father following her mother's suicide. Her brother Frank is handling the loss by withdrawing from everyone around him and cutting himself, and her sister Olivia wets the bed. Her father rarely talks anymore and sleeps on the floor rather than in his bed, where the absence of his wife is too painful. Isabel and her family live on the island of Guam and Kimberly Willis Holt writes beautifully detailed descriptions of the landscape and of the cultural nuances of the Chamorro people, all part of the backdrop for the changes happening in Isabel's life. Isabel is keenly aware of her loss as she faces typical adolescent pressures at school, from trying out for a sports team to navigating social cliques, dealing with the affections of boys to making sense of her changing body, without her mother. Ultimately, she must learn that living well is as much a tribute to her mother as is trying to understand the woman's death. Despite its serious themes, this an altogether hopeful story of one girl's commitment to balancing the need to take care of others with her need to take care of herself. (Ages 13-16)

**Huser, Glen. *Stitches*. A Groundwood Book / Douglas & McIntyre, 2003. 198 pages (trade 0-88899-553-9, \$15.95; pbk. 0-88899-578-4, \$5.35)**

Travis is a kid who has been teased since he was in first grade. First, it was words like "girlie." As he grew older, it was "Sissy. Crybaby. Fruitfly. Fagface." As he enters junior high school, his interests in sewing, puppetry and theater are encouraged, first by an English teacher and then a home economics teacher, but these same interests are part of what mark by some students as a target for their continued bullying. Travis is sustained by his best friend, Chantelle, who helps him navigate the treacheries of school. Like Travis, Chantelle stands out as different. Most people don't see beyond her disfigured body, crippled since birth. But Chantelle is bright and lively: a kindred spirit to Travis. Travis also is supported at home. His mother is on the road a lot, so it is his aunt Kitaleen and her children who fill his life with love on a daily basis. Overweight Kitaleen is married to a bully herself and has to sustain her own share of verbal abuse. But her ability to embrace those around her and fill their lives with sustenance abounds, and her dignity is undeniable. Glen Huser's extraordinary book about a boy who is targeted from early childhood on because he doesn't fit the stereotype of what a "boy" should be is an unprecedented work. His funny, touching story is hard to put down, even as it treads down difficult pathways. As Travis moves through junior high school, what began as mostly verbal

bullying leads to acts of severe humiliation, and, eventually, brutality. This thought-provoking, important novel that features one great character after another never overtly addresses Travis's sexuality, because Travis himself is barely beginning to consider that aspect of his identity. Instead, it focuses on the many facets of Travis's personality that make him the individual he is. The book that doesn't shy away from the harsh reality of bullying and violence, but nonetheless it remains an uplifting story full of warmth, humor, and hope. (Ages 12-15)

**Ihimaera, Witi. *The Whale Rider*. Harcourt, 2003. 152 pages (trade 0-15-205017-5, \$17.00; pbk. 0-15-205016-7, \$8.00)**

When Kahu was born, she ended the male line of descent in her Maori tribe. Her great-grandfather, the current tribal leader, refused to acknowledge her as the future leader of her people. Now Kahu is eight, and she adores her great-grandfather despite his repeated efforts to all but ignore her. He won't take her on as a student when he begins teaching young boys the old, traditional ways. He is unwilling to return her affection. His wife, Kahu's great-grandmother, is furious, but she cannot get him to change his mind. Their people are suffering—environmental devastation has ruined their way of life—and the efforts of Kahu's grandfather to work with the government to help them are failing. Witi Ihimaera's multifaceted story is told from the point of view of Kahu's older cousin, a young man whose decision to leave his village and find work on the mainland forms a powerful part of this complex novel. Witness to and victim of the racism faced by Aboriginals, he returns home shortly before the whales appear off the shores of their village. The arrival of the whales has been a long-prophesized. They would mark the return of the whale rider, leader of their people from long-ago times. But these whales are in distress. After one dies on the beach, the meaning of their return seems to change to one of despair. Only young Kahu is calm. Only Kahu understands that *she* is the whale rider, and that she must guide the whales back to the safety of the sea. Blending legend with reality both gritty and beautiful, this novel was also made into a movie that was released in the United States just prior to the book's publication here. The opening chapter, which gives the legend of the whale rider, is told in a prose style that is almost stream-of-consciousness and may be difficult going for some teens. But it has information relevant to the compelling contemporary story that follows. (Ages 13-18)

**Johnson, Angela. *The First Part Last*. Simon & Schuster, 2003. 144 pages (trade 0-399-23990-1, \$15.95)**

Sixteen-year-old Bobby is overwhelmed by love for his infant daughter, Feather. He's also overwhelmed by the responsibility of caring for her. Bobby's daily life unfolds in a series of middle-of-the-night feedings and early morning struggles to get out of the house and to school on time. His exhaustion is palpable. His divorced, middle-class parents watch from the sidelines. His mother, with whom he lives, insists that Bobby take full responsibility for Feather, and she steels herself from stepping in every time she sees him falter. Bobby adores his child, but he also misses being a teenager without any worries, although the price for slipping into carefree ways is a high one. In chapters that move back and forth from the present to the past, Bobby, who is African American, reveals the jumbled pattern of his life, and also recalls his loving relationship with Feather's mother, Nia. The chapters in the past move slowly but surely forward—through the revelation that Nia is pregnant and the resulting shock to the final chapters that reveal why Bobby is now the sole parent of his child. Johnson's powerful prose is so firmly grounded in Bobby's voice that it's as if his soft, pained voice is speaking his story aloud. The title refers not

only to the structure of the narrative, but also to the fact that this is a prequel of sorts to Johnson's novel *Heaven* (Simon & Schuster, 1998), in which a slightly older Bobby and Feather are secondary characters. *Winner, CCBC Coretta Scott King Author Award Discussion* (Ages 13-18)

**Karr, Kathleen. *Gilbert & Sullivan Set Me Free*. Hyperion, 2003. 226 pages (trade 0-7868-1916-2, \$15.99)**

Libby was arrested for shoplifting. Ma McCreary is guilty of murdering her abusive husband. Gladys neglected the infants in her home for children of unwed mothers, until the babies' starved bodies were found buried in her backyard. Flo was a "chastity offender," and Molly Matches worked as an arsonist for hire. These women and others are inmates at the Sherborn Women's Prison in the early 1900s. In addition to their incarcerated status, many share a gift for music, as the new chaplain discovers when she casts them in an ambitious performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera *The Pirates of Penzance*. Based on actual events at Massachusetts' Sherborn Prison for Women in 1914, the book deftly incorporates issues of prison reform and women's rights into a snapshot of the time. Although Libby's dramatic story ends on an optimistic high note, the lives of the other inmates are realistic and unsentimental. The concluding author's note, detailing the history on which the novel was built, is especially compelling and clearly separates the facts from fiction. (Ages 12-15)

**Koja, Kathe. *Buddha Boy*. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. 117 pages (trade 0-374-30998-1, \$16.00)**

Justin finds himself drawn to the strange new kid, Jinsen, who seems to smile his way through all kinds of abuse from his high school peers. Initially thrown together for a class project, Justin starts to know "Buddha-Boy" as Jinsen is called, and is surprised at Jinsen's talent as an artist. He begins to see beyond Jinsen's strange, monklike habits and struggles to figure out how to be a friend to him without losing his own tenuous social position. They spend just enough time together for Justin to ask hard questions of himself as he watches the "kings of the school, strutting around like they were characters in a movie, the cool bad-good guys" try to destroy Jinsen both physically and emotionally by beating him up and destroying his artwork. Justin's father, a well-developed secondary character, is an artist. Divorced from Justin's mom, he is supportive, and far enough away to be useful to Justin as he sorts out his evolving respect for Jinsen and his confusion at how to handle the situation at school. When Jinsen reveals how he came to embrace nonviolence and Buddhism, it comes as a complete surprise to Justin (it turns out Jinsen was once a bully as bad as those who now torment him). Readers might find Jinsen's "conversion" a bit unlikely. But this is nonetheless a compelling and discussable exploration of sin, redemption, and doing the right thing from an unlikely literary source: a self-designated average kid. (Ages 12-14)

**Levithan, David. *Boy Meets Boy*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. 185 pages (trade 0-375-82400-6, \$15.95)**

Imagine a world where a kindergartner's report card reads, "Paul is definitely gay" as nonchalantly as it continues, "and has a good sense of self." This is Paul's world, where boys who like boys flirt with girls who like girls, where the quarterback of the football team is also the

homecoming queen, where boys have ex-boyfriends who have new girlfriends... And those are just incidental details that create the setting for a sweet high school love story that readers of all orientations will appreciate. The characters are loveable and quirky and the love story as innocent and true as any. Paul used to love Kyle, now he loves Noah who thought he kissed Tony. Joni used to date Ted but now she dates Chuck who drives Paul crazy. Tony is gay but his parents freaked out so Paul needs a decoy to be able to hang out with him. Tony's story serves as a counterpoint to the rest of the narrative and is, perhaps the one that will be most familiar to readers, as it reflects the difficult lives teens have navigating their sexuality in a world that is not so appreciative of difference. It serves as the grounding point for a novel in which author David Levithan constructs a remarkable and hopeful fantasy: a world where gay teens and straight teens are all just teens. By the third chapter of this novel, that world feels like something that seems quite possible. (Ages 12-15)

**Mack, Tracy. *Birdland*. Scholastic Press, 2003. 198 pages (trade 0-439-53590-5, \$16.95)**

Over winter break, Jed is working on a class assignment to record life in his East Village neighborhood on video. The idea is to blend the work of all the students to create a collage of New York City, the parts coming together to make a whole. As he and his best friend, Flyer, work on the project, Jed reveals the fragments of his family's life, torn apart in the wake of his older brother's death the previous summer. Zeke, a diabetic who died of insulin shock, seemed to live on the edge with regard to his health. Jed wants to know and understand his brother better, but all that's left are remnants of his life. Grief over Zeke's death, and unresolved feelings because of the tension that had existed between Zeke and their doctor father, fills Jed's home with sadness and silence rather than solace. So Jed looks for answers in the spaces that Zeke once occupied. He likes spending time in Zeke's room and walking the streets his jazz-loving brother once walked. Above all, he cherishes Zeke's notebook, filled with his brother's poems, which offer him insights into Zeke's thoughts about himself, his family, and the landscape of the neighborhood that Jed has been filming. Part of that landscape is Kiki, a homeless teen who Jed feels is connected to Zeke in some way. After Jed helps her find shelter from a fierce winter storm, Kiki tries to commit suicide, shocking Jed's family out of their insular pain. In reaching out to help Kiki, they finally start talking, and healing begins. Tracy Mack's debut novel is full of fresh, beautiful imagery and quietly captures the poignancy of a family numb from grief but on the verge of new awakenings. The wintry setting is perfectly suited to the mood and plot. In *Jed*, the story features a main character who is Jewish, something fairly unusual in contemporary fiction for children and teenagers. (Ages 12-15)

**Mahy, Margaret. *Alchemy*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2003. 207 pages (trade 0-689-85053-0, \$16.95)**

A recurring nightmare has plagued Roland since childhood. In the dream, he is chosen by Quando, a carnival magician, to participate in a vanishing box trick. Inside a menacingly coffin-life box, Young Roland disappears when the lid is closed, finding himself suspended in space, stars in the distance. When the lid is opened, Roland faces the magician's sly questions about what he experienced. A small interior voice warns him to be wary of the magician, and Roland denies that anything extraordinary has occurred. Flash forward, and Roland is 17, with the kind of existence that most teens would envy: he's popular, gets good grades, and has an attractive

girlfriend. But then his life takes a precipitous turn, as he discovers that the encounter with the magician was in fact an actual event, and that Quando has reappeared in town. Meanwhile, a teacher blackmails Roland into befriending Jess, a reclusive girl in his class who has spent her school years unnoticed by her peers, except to serve as the recipient of their teasing. Roland discovers that Jess is much more than she seems on the surface, and he finds himself reluctantly attracted to her intelligence and mysterious behavior. The two form a coalition against the sinister forces that threaten them, and a classic battle between good and evil ensues. Alchemy--the process of transforming one thing into another--is explored at many levels throughout this finely written literary suspense novel. Ultimately, Roland and Jess unleash their own unique power, fueled by strong emotions of love and hate. New Zealand author Margaret Mahy delivers yet another multilayered work for teens, which both demands from and delivers to its readers. (Ages 13-16)

**Nix, Garth. *Abhorsen. Eos* / HarperCollins, 2003. 358 pages (trade 0-06-027825-0, \$17.99; lib. 0-06-027826-9)**

A shocking assassination opens the eagerly awaited sequel to *Sabriel* (HarperCollins, 1996) and *Lirael* (HarperCollins, 2001) and sets a tone of fast-paced action that continues right through to the conclusion. Picking up where *Lirael* left off, the story focuses on Assistant Librarian Lirael and her cousin, Prince Sameth. Lirael has just discovered that she is the Abhorsen-in-Waiting, an important but dangerous role that involves maintaining the border between Life and Death through the use of Free Magic. Sam is concerned about the safety of his friend Nicholas, who has unknowingly become enmeshed in the doings of an evil necromancer. Rescuing Nicholas and saving humanity from the imminent disaster posed by a malevolent being known as the Destroyer requires the combined effort of Lirael and Sam. The focus on action and plot sets a whirlwind pace but prevents the compelling level of character introspection and development of the previous books. Still, questions raised earlier are satisfyingly answered, including the surprising identities of the Disreputable Dog and Mogget the cat. But enough new uncertainties arise to suggest that we haven't seen the end of Nix's elaborate fantasy world. (Ages 12-16)

**Naidoo, Beverley. *Out of Bounds: Seven Stories of Conflict and Hope*. U.S. edition: HarperCollins, 2003. 175 pages (trade 0-06-050799-3, \$16.99; lib. 0-06-050800-0, \$17.89)**

The author of several outstanding novels for children and teens chronicling the heavy price of apartheid and issues in its aftermath, Beverley Naidoo has now written a collection of seven powerful short stories spanning the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in South Africa. The first story is set in 1948, when Afrikaners took over the South African government and the racial classification hierarchy called apartheid became law. The final two stories, set in 1995 and 2000, look at the aftermath of the apartheid—the gains that have been made, and the challenges that remain. Naidoo's protagonists--black, white, colored, Indian--are children and teens who, regardless of their race, are each trying to make sense of the world in which they live. In every case, it is a world that demands they behave certain ways regardless of their uncertainty or their beliefs, or to face the consequences that being true to themselves might lead to. In the days of apartheid, those consequences for a Black South African, even a teenager, could mean imprisonment, or even death, as Khulu is all too aware in the story "The Typewriter." For a young white child, it might mean having her father taken away by the government, and living in

fear that her mother, too, might disappear, as is the case for Lily in the story “One Day, Lily, One Day.” Naidoo, who grew up in South Africa, was exiled in the 1960s after her involvement in anti-apartheid efforts. Each of her stories speaks with honesty and conviction of struggles that have been overcome, and ones that still remain. (Ages 12-18)

**Osa, Nancy. *Cuba 15*. Delacorte Press, 2003. 277 pages (trade 0-385-73021-7, \$15.95)**

Chicago teenager Violet Paz is interested in hanging out with her friends and following the Cubs. Her father is Cuban, her mother is Polish American, and while Violet can play a mean game of dominoes, her blond hair and green eyes link her visibly to the European American side of the family. When her Miami grandparents arrive for a visit shortly after her 15<sup>th</sup> birthday, her *abuela* is brimming with plans for Violet’s *quinceañero*, a traditional Latin American celebration marking a girl’s coming of age. At first horrified at the thought of wearing a pink dress and tiara, Violet learns more about the meaning behind the celebration. With the help of her friends and family in the months leading up to her party, she constructs an event that reflects her unique identity while honoring the customary ritual. While the *quinceañero* officially marks Violet’s maturation, her personal growth during her 15<sup>th</sup> year is highlighted by her emerging interest in her Cuban heritage, a quest challenged by her father’s reluctance to discuss anything to do with his birthplace. As Violet looks for answers, her father’s and grandparents’ vehement opposition to Castro’s Cuba is tempered by her Aunt Luz’s desire to see an end to the Cuban embargo. Ultimately, Violet must develop her own opinions. In a fresh and humorous voice, Violet winds her way through a pivotal adolescent year, full of realistic growth and change, including her rookie season on the school’s speech team and a budding romance. Violet’s vivid and warm family shine as solid characters in their own right throughout this stand-out debut novel by a first-time author. (Ages 12-15)

**Peck, Richard. *The River Between Us*. Dial, 2003. 164 pages (trade 0-8037-2735-6, \$16.99)**

Family secrets are gradually revealed, like peeling layers of wallpaper, in Richard Peck’s Civil War novel set in the small town of Grand Tower, Illinois, on the banks of the Mississippi River. When a New Orleans steamboat docks at the Grand Tower landing one night, two young women passengers disembark, and their arrival is a portent of the approaching war. Supposedly headed for St. Louis, Delphine and Calinda decide to stay for a while in this town divided in its support of the North and South. They board in the spare room at Tilly’s house at the edge of town, and soon both visitors and hosts discover they have much to learn about each other’s lives. Secrets abound from the start, from some obvious holes in Delphine’s cover story, to unanswered questions about dark-skinned Calinda – could she be a slave? Their lives entangle further when Tilly’s brother Noah falls in love with Delphine shortly before leaving for the battlefield. Tilly and Delphine travel to nurse Noah when he becomes ill, and the following section brings to life the horrific conditions of the tent hospitals at Cairo, Illinois. While in Cairo, one of Delphine’s many secrets is revealed when she is recognized as a *gens de couleur*, the daughter of a white man and his black mistress. And although Tilly, Delphine, and Noah return to Grand Tower together, their lives have been irrevocably changed. The Civil War story is wrapped within a framing narrative set in 1916, told by elderly Tilly to a teenage descendant who learns this family history along with the reader. Yet a final unexpected revelation is made at the close of

this mesmerizing historical novel that doesn't hesitate to confront big issues, such as race, politics, war, and moral attitudes. (Ages 13-16)

**Peters, Julie Anne. *Keeping You a Secret*. Megan Tingley Book / Little, Brown, 2003. 250 pages (trade 0-316-70275-7, \$16.95)**

In her senior year of high school, Holland Jaeger seems to have everything going for her: she's a straight-A student, she's president of the student council, and she's got a wonderful boyfriend. Then she meets CeCe Goddard and everything changes. Holland falls madly in love with CeCe. Suddenly Holland has to reevaluate everything she thinks she knows about herself, her friends, her family, and her future. This adolescent coming-out story doesn't paint a completely rosy picture: Holland is rejected by her family and kicked out of her home, while CeCe asks her to keep their love a secret, something that Holland is at first happy to do but later begins to find a burden as she becomes more comfortable with her own sexuality. But it does give a realistic portrait of the gay and lesbian community beyond high school, something that's frequently lacking in young adult novels with gay and lesbian themes. (Ages 14-16)

**Shea, Pegi Deitz. *Tangled Threads: A Hmong Girl's Story*. Clarion, 2003. 236 pages (trade 0-618-24748-3, \$15.00)**

Thirteen-year-old Mai has spent most of her entire life living with her grandmother in a Hmong refugee camp in Thailand. Life in the camp is hard, and she dreams of joining her uncle and cousins who immigrated to Providence, Rhode Island, five years earlier. When she and her grandmother finally get the chance to resettle in the United States, they find that life in America has its own challenges: there's a new language, a new way of life, and it's unbearably cold. Grandma has such a difficult time adjusting and is so terribly homesick that Mai feels obliged to take care of her as best she can. One of the ways she can do this is by helping stitch and then sell *pan dau* storycloths and other traditional Hmong embroidery, at which both Mai and her grandmother are skilled. Mai has her older cousins, Heather and Lisa, to teach her the customs of American teen life, but she soon begins to suspect that Heather's disrespect for her elders goes way beyond what's acceptable for American teens. Based on extensive research, Pegi Deitz Shea has written an absorbing coming-of-age story that deals realistically with the hardships faced by Hmong refugees both in Thailand and in the United States. (Ages 12-14)

**Spinelli, Jerry. *Milkweed*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. 208 pages (trade 0-375-81374-8, \$15.95)**

A stirring, first-person narrative set during the Holocaust reveals how a child's sense of the world is shaped—and skewed—by his experiences. The young narrator's first memory is of running, a loaf of bread clutched under his arm. He's running again as the story opens. "What is your name?" asks Uri, an older teen who snatches the boy from the clutches of angry pursuers. "Stopthief," the boy replies. He doesn't know how old he is. He has no memory of a family. Uri makes up a past for him: he is a young Gypsy boy named Misha Pilsudski, whose parents died when the Jackboots bombed their wagons. The boy can see every detail of Uri's story in his mind. He eagerly embraces it as truth, although without the sense of loss that would linger were the memory real. Indeed, the boy has no sense of despair or hope, nor of right and wrong. Life is only about doing what is required for survival. Jerry Spinelli's brilliant positioning of the narrator in relation to the action means the boy bears witness to the despair and inhumanity around him, as well as community and compassion, without ever understanding or labeling what he is seeing. Spinelli stays firmly grounded in the young boy's unique and affecting point of view, using vivid descriptions of what is happening that are all the more jarring by the

disconnect between the narrator's response and the response evoked in the reader. As an example, the boy admires the Germans with their big shiny jackboots, only changing his opinion when he is the personal victim of their cruelty, first on the streets of the city, and later in the Warsaw ghetto, where he has made friends with a young Jewish girl. In the novel's concluding chapters, there is a sudden, disconcerting shift in tone. "The world returned to normal, but for me there was no normal to return to," says the narrator, who has now grown to adulthood, and now deeply feels a sense of displacement and loss. But he is a survivor. In that there is hope. He also offers testament to individual lives that were lost, because now he is the bearer of memories. *Winner, CCBC Newbery Award Discussion (Ages 12-15)*

**Zusak, Markus. *Getting the Girl*. U.S. edition: Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2003. 261 pages (trade 0-439-38949-6, \$16.95)**

In *Fighting Ruben Wolfe* (U.S. edition: Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2001), teenager Cameron Wolfe knew he could never match the traits and deeds of his handsome, charming, rough-and-ready older brother Ruben. Now, although he's still Ruben's biggest fan, Cameron inwardly questions his brother's cavalier attitude toward the young women he dates, realizing his differences from Rube go beyond looks, personality and athletic prowess to the core of the person he is. Not only could he never be like Ruben when it comes to the way he views girls, he doesn't [want to](#) be like Ruben. Pondering this, Cameron begins a journey of self-discovery that is fueled by two tremendous events. First, he discovers the power of words through writing (each chapter ends with a journal entries that are raw and unpolished but with the voice of a writer gradually emerging). Then Octavia, Ruben's former girlfriend, expresses interest in Cameron. For Cameron, "getting the girl" is not just about possession and lust (although lust is certainly on his mind). It's about understanding who she is, making their emerging relationship refreshingly tender and deep. After a devastating conversation with his older brother Steve, and a series of tense encounters with Ruben, Cameron also learns to move beyond the pain that members of his fiercely loving and loyal family inflict on one another. He affirms the value of his own kind of strength and courage--to be himself, and to face the world with honesty. Markus Zusak moves with ease between scenes of astonishing depth to lighthearted banter between the brothers (which often harbors layers of meaning) to unabashed, sometimes outrageous humor. At the center of his heartening, funny story is a teen whose search for self--and self-respect—touches on a universal theme. Cameron Wolfe isn't flashy or smooth. He's as unpolished as adolescence itself. But he has found the place within from which he can shine. (Ages 13-16)

**See also:** *Borrowers*; *Westing Game*; section on Fiction for Children

### **New Editions of Old Favorites**

**Esbensen, Barbara Juster. *Swing around the Sun: Poems*. Illustrated by Cheng-Khee Chee, Janice Lee Porter, Mary GrandPré and Stephen Gammell. Carolrhoda, 2003. 48 pages (trade 0-87614-143-2, \$16.95)**

Originally published in 1965, *Swing around the Sun* was Barbara Juster Esbensen's first book and has been out of print for some years. It's wonderful to see this collection of Esbensen's fresh, lively poems reissued and newly illustrated. Esbensen, who died in 1996, was a highly regarded poet for children. These poems offer playful, captivating observations about nature and seasonal activities. "Yesterday, / it was not there, / This pointed flavor / in the air...But now there is / A different feel:/ The silver sky / has rims of steel," she writes of the pending first snowfall in "Prediction." "Threads of rain / bind earth to sky," she notes in "Storm." And in "The Return," she observes the first sign's of spring: "Bound with silence, / Chained with ice / Frozen, muffled, deep, / The world begins / To move again, / Stirring from its sleep." Esbensen does not romanticize nature. She simply describes what she sees with images that are accessible and alive. Divided into four seasonal sections, each illustrated in its own distinctive style by one of four contributing artists, this collection invites children to look upon the natural world with eyes and ears attuned to new ways of describing what they experience. (Ages 5-10)

**Geras, Adèle. *My Grandmother's Stories: A Collection of Jewish Folk Tales*. Illustrated by Anita Lobel. Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. 86 pages (trade 0-375-82285-2, \$19.95; lib. 0-375-92285-7, \$21.99)**

The newly illustrated edition of this marvelous collection of Jewish folktales originally published in 1990 features ten stories framed by author Adèle Geras's recollections of time spent at her grandmother's house in Jerusalem when she was a child. Young Adèle's fascination with the everyday objects and activities in her grandmother's home launches her elder into telling each one of the tales. Geras's narrative underscores the significance of both family and cultural stories. The importance of family history, neighborhood and community emerges along with the entertaining tales. There are quirky characters in the folktales, and they are matched by the delightful qualities of the real-life family and neighborhood characters that young Adèle meets or hears about. Anita Lobel's art for this edition ranges from spot illustrations to occasional full-page paintings. She conveys some of the rich details that so fascinated a young girl in grandmother's home, and in the stories that her grandmother told. (Ages 7-11)

**Greenfield, Eloise. *Honey, I Love*. Illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist. Amistad / HarperCollins, 2003. 32 pages (trade 0-06-009123-1, \$15.99)**

The poem "Honey, I Love" was published previously as part of a collection by Eloise Greenfield (*Honey, I Love and Other Poems*). Now it is the text of an engaging picture book featuring a lively young African American girl. "I love / I love a lot of things, / a whole lot of things / Like..." Greenfield has perfectly captured the voice of a confident and spirited girl as she describes just a few of the things she loves the most, from the sound of her southern cousin's voice to the joy of laughing. The affirming narrative concludes, "And honey, / I love ME, too." Jan Spivey Gilchrist full-page illustrations accompany a book delightful to read and to listen to. (Ages 3-7)

**Maher, Ramona. *Alice Yazzie's Year*. Illustrated by Shonto Begay. Tricycle Press, 2003. 40 pages (trade 1-58246-080-9, \$15.95)**

From January through December, 11-year-old Alice Yazzie expresses the beauty she sees all around her through poems, one for each month of the Navajo year. In March, she recounts an exciting trip from her home in Black Mountain, Arizona, to Disneyland but concludes: "The

worst thing was: nobody listened. / The nicest thing was coming back here.” Alice lives with her wise Grandfather Tsose, the oldest member of the local school board who “...sees change happening. / He says it must come. / He even voted for girls to play football / if they want to. And study computer drafting...” and who then told Alice in September that she didn’t *have* to do those things if she didn’t want to. It’s clear through Alice’s poems that she also lives in a nurturing community: in November, her school principal smiles a little after hearing the anti-Columbus song she sang in class (and sings again for the principal when she’s sent to his office). “Well, Columbus got lost, you know,” he said. / ‘Somebody had to find him, / so we did the job.’” Long and undeservedly out of print, this new edition is illustrated with full-color paintings by Navajo artist, Shonto Begay, and includes “Notes about Navajo Country and Ways of Life” by Carl N. Gorman of the Navajo Community College. (Ages 7-12)

**Norton, Mary. *The Borrowers*. Foreword by Leonard S. Marcus. Illustrations by Diana Stanley. Harcourt, 2003. 148 pages (trade 0-15-204928-2, \$19.95)**

Mary Norton’s story of little people living a hidden existence among regular-sized humans, surviving by “borrowing” their daily needs, captured the imagination and admiration of readers from the time it was first published in England in 1952. This 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary volume is enhanced by the original British illustrations of Diana Stanley, available for the first time in a U.S. edition. A foreword by children’s literature scholar Leonard Marcus, an introductory letter by the author written in 1966, and a printing of Mary Norton’s own cover art of Arrietty and Homily Clock combine in a handsome gift edition of a classic tale. (Ages 8-12)

**Raskin, Ellen. *The Westing Game*. Dutton, 2003. 182 pages (trade 0-525-47137-5, \$16.99)**

Turtle Wexler isn’t the kind of child who turns down a dare. A chance to earn two dollars a minute for venturing into the deserted Westing house appeals to her mercenary instincts (her quick calculation shows that a mere 25 minutes inside the house would cover a subscription to *The Wall Street Journal*). The corpse that Turtle discovers mid-dare marks her entry into *The Westing Game*, in which sixteen unlikely individuals vie for the opportunity to inherit the deceased man’s fortune. Winner of the 1979 Newbery Medal, Ellen Raskin’s timeless mystery is an intricate construction of clues, wordplay, dead ends, and last minute surprises. More than a clever puzzle, the interactions of the potential heirs offer insight into relationships, love, differences, and tolerance. This new edition includes a moving tribute to the author in an introduction by Ann Durrell, editor of *The Westing Game*. (Ages 9-12)

**See also:** *Moon, Have You Met My Mother*; section on Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature

## **Appendix I**

### **How to Obtain Books Listed in *CCBC Choices* and CCBC Publications**

#### **Obtaining the Books in *CCBC Choices***

Ask for the books in *CCBC Choices* at your public library, school library media center or bookstore. Be specific concerning the edition, noting the publisher, illustrator (if applicable) and ISBN (international standard book number) of the book you want to secure.

The citations in *CCBC Choices 2004* include book prices and ISBNs are for any hardcover trade, library, and/ or paperback editions that we were able to determine were available for each title as of late December, 2003. Many of the books in *CCBC Choices 2004* are currently available in hardcover only, and sales is a considerable factor in determining whether they will subsequently be available in paperback editions.

Addresses are provided for small publishers not affiliated with a wholesaler. A search of the internet may locate a web site with additional contact and ordering information for these publishers. CCBC experience with small/alternative publishers for more than 18 years underscores the observation that their books will no doubt be in print for a long time, maybe even longer than many of the books published by larger houses.

#### **Obtaining CCBC Publications**

##### ***CCBC Choices 2005***

If you live in Wisconsin, send \$2.25 or the equivalent in U.S. postage stamps to the Cooperative Children's Book Center, 4290 Helen C. White Hall, 600 N. Park St., Madison, WI 53706-1403 USA.

If you live outside of Wisconsin, send \$7.00 to the Friends of the CCBC, Inc., P.O. Box 5189, Madison, WI 53705-0288 USA. You may also inquire about the rates for ordering copies of *CCBC Choices 2002* in quantity, and about the availability of earlier editions of *CCBC Choices*. Please do not phone the CCBC to ask for this information.

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

##### ***Other CCBC Publications***

Many CCBC bibliographies are available full-text on the CCBC's web site. Go to [www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/public2.htm](http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/public2.htm) for a complete list of CCBC publications and to

access full-text items. All CCBC bibliographies with the exception of *Multiultural Literature for Children and Young Adults* are available free for postage and handling costs to Wisconsin residents.

If you are a Wisconsin resident and don't have Internet access, send a self-addressed, stamped business envelope to receive a current list of available CCBC publications. Address this request to: Cooperative Children's Book Center, 4290 Helen C. White Hall, 600 N. Park St., Madison, WI 53706-1403.

## **Appendix II**

### **The Cooperative Children's Book Center**

#### **Vision Statement**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Adopted by the External Advisory Board, September 1994  
Reaffirmed September 1999

### **Intellectual Freedom Information Services Mission Statement**

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

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

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

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

Affirmed by the CCBC Advisory Board

September 20, 2002

## **Purpose**

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

The CCBC supports teaching, learning and research related to children's and young adult literature and provides informational and educational services based on its collections to students and faculty on the UW-Madison campus and librarians, teachers, child care providers, researchers and other adults through the state of Wisconsin.

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

## **Collection**

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

The Dewey Decimal classification system is used to catalog all materials except the Alternative Press and Wisconsin Collections. Author, title, illustrator, translator and subject access is provided for children's and young adult books and reference materials. Any known national award or distinction or selection tool recommendation is noted on the endpaper in the front of each children's and young adult title in the collection.

Most of the CCBC's holdings are in the University of Wisconsin-Madison's electronic library on-line catalog, MADCAT. The CCBC collection is non-circulating.

## **Services**

Reference assistance from a professional librarian/children's literature specialist is available most weekdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Reference assistance from student assistants is available to anyone on a walk-in basis on evenings and weekends, and at other times when a librarian is unavailable during the week. University students and faculty and Wisconsin librarians and teachers wishing to speak with a professional librarian/children's literature specialist are advised to make advance arrangements. Specialized reference assistance and children's literature consultation is also available by mail and phone to the above constituents anywhere in the state.

Intellectual freedom information services are available to anyone serving minors in Wisconsin libraries and schools.

Tours and/or lectures are arranged as possible for university classes, library and school book selection groups, and public library system and school inservice groups coming to the CCBC.

Publications on selected children's and young adult literature topics are available along with selected award and distinction lists and annual CCBC Wisconsin-related literature publications.

Children's and young adult literature displays can be seen by walk-in library users. Monthly book discussions and annual award discussions apply literary standards and book evaluation techniques to new books and are open to any student, faculty member, librarian, teacher or other interested adult who reads some of the scheduled books beforehand, as are the annual awards discussions. Interested persons are welcome to contact the CCBC for a schedule or to indicate if information about a particular discussion is needed.

The CCBC's web site is at [www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/](http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/). Special features include a Book of the Week review by one of the CCBC librarians, links to recommended sites related to children's and young adult literature, and information about upcoming events at the CCBC.

*CCBC-Net* is an electronic forum of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison designed to encourage awareness and discussion of ideas and issues essential to literature for children and young adults. *CCBC-Net* is a community of individuals with an interest in children's and young adult literature extending across Wisconsin, the nation, North America and beyond.

*CCBC-Net* provides opportunities for guided discussions of contemporary children's and young adult literature, including multicultural literature, translated books, outstanding and award-winning books, and various themes and topics in literature. This unique listserv provides a forum for discussion of the book arts and book publishing for the young. Specific books to be discussed are announced in advance. To subscribe to *CCBC-Net*, inquire at the CCBC, visit the CCBC-s web site at [www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/listserv.htm](http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/listserv.htm), or send e-mail to [cdowling@ccbc.education.wisc.edu](mailto:cdowling@ccbc.education.wisc.edu).

Continuing education courses are taught throughout the year by the CCBC professional staff. As possible, the CCBC participates in statewide and regional conferences through the provision of book examination exhibits and/or leadership in scheduled sessions. The CCBC often cosponsors conferences and workshops provided by UW-Madison Extension Programs. An up-to-date listing of CCBC outreach and education offerings is available on the CCBC web site at [www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/thisseas.htm](http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/thisseas.htm)

## **Governance**

**The University of Wisconsin - Madison School of Education** is responsible for policies and funding of the Cooperative Children's Book Center. W. Charles Read is the dean of the School of Education.

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

The Cooperative Children's Book Center is a member of the Arts Institute at UW-Madison.

**The CCBC Advisory Board** represents CCBC users on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus and from libraries and schools throughout Wisconsin. Members of the 2003-2004 Advisory Board are:

Cindy Robertson (Chair), 4th Grade Teacher  
Dover Elementary School, Burlington Area School District

Catherine Beyers, LMC Director  
Southern Bluffs Elementary School, LaCrosse

Betsy Bradley, LMC Director  
Peshtigo Elementary Learning Center

Randall B. Colton, Grade 3 Teacher  
D.C. Everest Schools, Schofield

Linda DeCramer, Children's Librarian  
Ripon Public Library

Chris Dowling, Network Administrator  
School of Education, UW-Madison

Lynn Evarts, Library Media Specialist (9-12)  
Sauk Prairie High School

Gerhard Fischer, English/Language Arts Consultant  
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Becki George, LMC Director  
Rice Lake School District

Beth Graue, Professor  
Curriculum & Instruction, UW-Madison

Philip Hamilton, Professor  
Art Department, UW-Madison

Karen Herrera, Grade 7 English Teacher  
Madison Metropolitan School District

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

Tom Hurlburt, Children's Librarian/Associate Director  
Rhineland District Library

Terri Iverson, Director of Instructional Technology  
Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) #3, Fennimore

Jacque Karbon, Reading Education Consultant  
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Sue Kling, Children's Services Librarian  
New London Public Library

Ruhama Kordatzky, Youth Services Librarian  
Burlington Public Library

Susan Kuck, Library Media Specialist  
Urban Middle School, Sheboygan

Marge Loch-Wouters, Head of Children's Services  
Menasha's Public Library

Christy Mulligan, Children's Librarian  
Polk County Library Federation

Nancy Oldham, Youth Services Coordinator  
Black River Falls Public Library

Marguerite Parks, Associate Professor, Education Foundations  
UW-Oshkosh

Sue Pesheck, Children's Librarian  
River Falls Public Library

Patricia Curtis Pfitsch, Freelance Writer  
Gays Mills

Hélène Pohl , Library Media Director  
Iola -Scandinavia Schools

Louise Robbins, Director  
School of Library and Information Studies, UW-Madison

Cindy Robertson, Grade 4 Teacher  
Burlington Area School District

Darlene St. Clair, Librarian  
Indian Community School, Milwaukee

Spencer Warren, Library Media Specialist  
Prairie View Elementary School, Mukwonago School District

Kris Adams Wendt, Assistant Director/Children's Librarian  
Rhineland District Library

Cindy Whitney, 3rd Grade Teacher  
Eagle Elementary School, Eagle

## **The Staff**

In addition to Director Kathleen T. Horning, Librarians Merri V. Lindgren, Hollis Rudiger and Megan Schliesman, the CCBC staff when *CCBC Choices 200r* was being created included undergraduate and graduate students who helped carry out the daily responsibilities of assisting individuals on campus, in schools and in libraries who are working in many ways to meet the interests of all young readers.

The student staff during 2003 and early 2004 included Carin Bringelson, Nicole Busch (2003), Ginger Cassidy, Allison Eikenberry, Jason Ertz (200), Kim Foley (2003), Juliet Irvin (2003), Erin McCarty (2003), Tessa Michaelson, Sarah Patschke (2003), Janet Piehl, Kori Wex and Bridget Zinn.

## **Public Service Schedule**

The CCBC is open twelve months a year for public service to adults interested in contemporary or historical children's and young adult literature. The CCBC is open for public service 54 hours weekly during the Fall and Spring semesters: Monday-Thursday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m., Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday 12:30 – 4 p.m.

During Summer School, the CCBC is open weekly Monday-Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 12:30 – 4 p.m. During Intersession and University breaks, the CCBC is open Monday-Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Phone 608/263-3720 to confirm the public service hours and to

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

### **Appendix III Guidelines for Book Discussions**

Cooperative Children's Book Center

#### **Look at each book for what it is, rather than what it is not.**

- C Make positive comments first. Try to express what you liked about the book and why. (e.g. "The illustrations are a perfect match for the story because....")
- C After everyone has had the opportunity to say what they appreciated about the book, you may talk about difficulties you had with a particular aspect of the book. Try to express difficulties as questions, rather than declarative judgments on the book as a whole. (e.g. "Would Max's dinner really have still been warm?" rather than "That would never happen.")
- C Avoid recapping the story or booktalking the book. There is not time for a summary.
- C Refrain from relating personal anecdotes. The discussion must focus on the book at hand.
- C Try to compare the book with others on the discussion list, rather than other books by the same author or other books in your experience.

#### **All perspectives and vocabularies are correct. There is no "right" answer or single correct response.**

- C Listen openly to what is said, rather than who says it.
- C Respond to the comments of others, rather than merely waiting for an opportunity to share your comments.
- C Talk with each other, rather than to the discussion facilitator.
- C Comment to the group as a whole, rather than to someone seated near you.

These guidelines may be reproduced as long as credit is given to the CCBC librarians Kathleen T. Horning and Ginny Moore Kruse.

**Appendix IV**  
**Results of the 2003-2004 CCBC Award Discussions**

**CCBC Caldecott Award Discussion**

(Distinguished illustration by a U.S. citizen or resident)

**Winner:**        *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* illustrated and written by Mordicai Gerstein. Roaring Book Press / Millbrook Press, 2003

**Honor Books:** *Buster* illustrated and written by Denise Fleming. Henry Holt, 2003  
*The Magic Gourd* illustrated and written by Baba Wagu Diakité.  
Scholastic Press, 2003

**CCBC Coretta Scott King Author Award Discussion**

(Distinguished writing by an African American author)

**Winner:**        *The First Part Last* by Angela Johnson. Simon & Schuster, 2003

**Honor Book:** *Locomotion* by Jacqueline Woodson. Putnam, 2003

**CCBC Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award Discussion**

(Distinguished illustration by an African American artist)

**Winner:**        *Blues Journey* illustrated by Christopher Myers.  
Written by Walter Dean Myers. Holiday House, 2003

**Honor Books:** *The Jones Family Express* illustrated and written by Javaka Steptoe.  
Lee & Low, 2003  
*The Magic Gourd* illustrated and written by Baba Wagu Diakité.  
Scholastic Press, 2003

**CCBC Newbery Award Discussion**

(Distinguished writing for children by a U.S. citizen or resident)

**Winner:**        *Milkweed* by Jerry Spinelli. Alfred A. Knopf, 2003

**Honor Book:** *The Tale of Despereaux* written by Kate DiCamillo. Illustrated by Timothy Basil Ering. Candlewick Press, 2003

**CCBC Michael L. Printz Award Discussion**

(Literary excellence in young adult literature)

**Winners (Tie):** *A Northern Light: A Novel* by Jennifer Donnelly. Harcourt, 2003  
*True Confessions of a Heartless Girl* by Martha Brooks.

U.S. edition: Melanie Kroupa Books/Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003

**Honor Books:** *Buddha Boy* by Kathe Koja. Frances Foster Books /  
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003  
*Fat Kid Rules the World* by K.L. Going. Putnam, 2003

## **Appendix V** **The Compilers of *CCBC Choices 2004***

**Kathleen T. Horning** is a librarian and acting director at the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She coordinates the Charlotte Zolotow Award and Lecture for the CCBC. For nine years she was also a children's librarian at Madison Public Library. She is the author of *From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books* (HarperCollins, 1997). With Ginny Moore Kruse, she coauthored *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1980 - 1990*, and with Ginny Moore Kruse and Megan Schliesman, *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1991-1996*. She is currently a columnist for *Library Sparks* magazine. Kathleen is a former member of the ALA/ALSC Board of Directors, and currently is Past-President of the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY). She has chaired the Américas Award Committee, under the auspices of The Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP), University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; ALA/ALSC's 1997 Mildred Batchelder Award Committee; ALA/ALSC's 1995 John Newbery Committee; has served on ALA/ALSC's Notable Children's Books Committee and an earlier Newbery Award Committee. She also chaired USBBY's Hans Christian Andersen Award Committee, which selected U.S. nominees for the international award in 1992. She served on the NCTE Lee Bennett Hopkins Award Committee and the ALA/SRRT Coretta Scott King Award Committee and chaired ALA/ALSC's first Committee on Social Issues in Relationship to Materials and Services for Children. Kathleen frequently lectures to librarians on issues in evaluating literature for children and young adults. 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. She coauthored *CCBC Choices* during the years 1990 through 1993, and 2002, while previously employed at the CCBC. She is the editor of *The Multicolored Mirror: Cultural Substance in Literature for Children and Young Adults* (Highsmith, 1991). She also compiled and edited the *CCBC Resource List for Appearances by Wisconsin Book Creators* (2nd edition, 1990, and 3rd edition, 1993). She is a regular contributor to the *Wisconsin State Journal*, writing about books for children and young adults. 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 served on the 2001 Charlotte Zolotow Award Committee and chaired the 2002 Charlotte Zolotow Award Committee. 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 and administrator at the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. With Katy and Ginny Moore Kruse, Megan coauthored *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1991-1996*. She is currently a columnist for *Library Sparks* magazine, and contributes to the CCBC monthly column for the *Wisconsin State Journal*. She regularly appears on WISC/TV, the Madison CBS affiliate, to talk about books for children and young adults on their morning news program. Megan is a member of the 2005 Newbery Award Committee. She has also served on the 1998, 1999 and 2002 Charlotte Zolotow Award committees and chaired the 2003 Charlotte Zolotow Award committee. She served on 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 is a former member of 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.

**Hollis Rudiger** joined the Cooperative Children's Book Center staff in the summer of 2003. A former school librarian, she served as the Lower School Librarian at the National Cathedral School in Washington, D.C., from 1998 to 2003. She has also worked as a reference librarian at The University of Illinois, and in the Public Service department of the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College. She has taught high school Spanish and English, and is currently a middle school technology teacher at The Eagle School in Fitchburg, Wisconsin. She has a B.A. degree in American Literature and Spanish from Middlebury College and a Master of Science in Library Science from Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts.

**Tana Elias**, who created the index for *CCBC Choices 2004*, is a librarian 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 VI**

### **The Friends of the CCBC, Inc.**

This membership organization sponsors programs to develop public appreciation for children's and young adult literature and supports special projects at the CCBC. Members of the 2003-2004 Friends of the CCBC, Inc., Board of Directors are President Allen Cross, Vice-President Meg Kavanagh, Recording Secretary Maureen Conklin, Membership Secretary Julie Weis, Treasurer Jean Elvekrog, and Directors-at-Large Geri Ceci Cupery and Mike Hertting.

In addition to the board volunteers, inventory for the Friends book sale is handled by Nancy Beck. Friends book sale coordinators are Tana Elias and Meg Kavanagh. Susan Herr-Hoyman manages the Friends member database. The *Friends Newsletter* editor is Geri Ceci Cupery.

Friends members receive invitations to events open only to the membership and to other opportunities for adults who share an interest in children's and young adult literature to meet with each other formally and informally. Members receive a quarterly newsletter with children's and young adult literature information as well as advance announcements about CCBC publications and services.

The Friends provide volunteer assistance at the CCBC, and hospitality for CCBC Advisory Board meetings and other special events. Friends provide other volunteer services on behalf of the CCBC, such as promotion and distribution of selected CCBC and Friends' publications and special editions of original notecards. The Friends provide funding for public lectures on the UW-Madison campus. The committee that selects the annual Charlotte Zolotow Award is comprised of Friends members.

Annual membership benefits include a copy of *CCBC Choices* and a limited edition publication of the annual Charlotte Zolotow Lecture. Membership is open to all.

The membership year runs from January through December. Dues paid after October 1st each year apply to membership for the next year. Membership dues are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Individual membership categories are: Student--\$9; Personal--\$20; Sustaining--\$30; Supporting--\$50; and Patron--\$100. Group membership categories are: Honor (2-5 individuals)--\$75; Award (6-10 individuals)--\$150; and Distinguished (11-15 individuals)--\$250.

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