

CCBC

Choices

2005

CCBC Choices 2005

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with

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Each year, the Friends of the CCBC, Inc., underwrites the production and printing costs of *CCBC Choices*. Their generous support makes the *Choices* publication possible and makes it available at no cost to teachers, school and public librarians, and interested others across Wisconsin. (For more information about the Friends of the CCBC, see Appendix IV.)

For the tenth year in a row, Friends member Tana Elias has created the index for *CCBC Choices*. Her extraordinary volunteer commitment has made *CCBC Choices* so much more useful to Wisconsin librarians and teachers by providing subject access to the titles we've chosen. This year, Tana volunteered to do the index even knowing that our final deadline coincided with the due date for her second child. So in addition to our immense gratitude to Tana, we also thank Meg Kavanagh, who trained with Tana to be able to step in at the final stages if needed.

This is also the tenth year that we have enjoyed Lois Ehlert's dynamic cover design for *CCBC Choices*. Over the years, we have adapted Lois's design concept as the CCBC's "logo," which we use on our business cards, letterhead, and, most recently, in our redesigned website.

For the second year in a row, Janet Piehl, a UW-Madison graduate student in the School of Library and Information Studies, has been the copy editor for *CCBC Choices*. We thank Janet for her willingness to take on this job again despite knowing of the quick turnaround time required for much of the copy and the challenges of smoothing out the inconsistencies inevitable among the work of four different writers.

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, Barry Hartup, Stanlie James, Ginny Moore Kruse, and Darlene St. Clair for contributing to our work in this way.

Thank you to all who attended CCBC monthly book discussions in 2004, and to those who participated in our annual mock award discussions in December 2004.

Members of the *CCBC-Net* community, a book discussion listserv sponsored by the CCBC, shared some of their favorite books of the year and the outcomes of their own regional or local award book discussions during December 2004, and January 2005. Their comments provided us with additional perspectives and insights. We appreciate all who participate in this lively virtual community.

Finally, *CCBC Choices* is a collaborative effort in many ways, and we continue to appreciate the support and insight offered by Ginny Moore Kruse, who retired as director of the CCBC in 2002. Through her professional commitments both in Wisconsin and nationally, Ginny continues to be an advocate for providing children with the best that literature has to offer, and she shared many suggestions for books to consider for this edition of *CCBC Choices*, as well as many helpful commentaries on literature throughout the year.

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.

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 CCBC offers an environment for discovery and learning, and, ultimately, for making up one's own mind about the new books published each year.

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.

The CCBC received thousands of newly published books throughout 2004. One or more of the librarians examined each of them. Hundreds were subsequently read. We held monthly discussions of new books, and several end-of-the-year mock award discussions that featured some of the books eligible for the 2005 American Library Association children's and young adult literature awards. We also discussed many books formally or informally with other librarians and educators in Wisconsin and elsewhere in the nation. Many books were also discussed on *CCBC-Net*, a national book discussion listserv moderated by the CCBC.

As the year drew to a close, we worked toward finalizing the list of books that comprises this edition of *CCBC Choices*. All of the reading and opportunities for discussion and reflection we'd had throughout the year was supplemented by additional reading and discussion with one another as we narrowed our scope to the books that we all agreed should be *Choices*. 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, interesting, well-written and engagingly presented, we don't always agree on an individual title's merits. 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 and determine where consensus lies.

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

We recommend each and every book in *CCBC Choices 2005*. At the same time, we know that not each and every book included is 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 meet the needs of children they are responsible for either professionally or personally, whether those needs are entertainment, information, affirmation, or acknowledgment of the complexities of being a child or teenager in today's world.

Organization of *CCBC Choices 2005*

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 231 books recommended in *CCBC Choices 2005* are divided into 16 thematic and genre categories. Each title has been placed in the category to which it seems most suited, with the majority of picture-book stories and fiction divided into broad age-range categories for these two genres: Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers and Preschoolers and Picture Books for School-Aged Children; Fiction for Children and Fiction for Young Adults. Several of the thematic categories do include picture book stories, most notably the Seasons and Celebrations section.

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 as well as in the two fiction categories. 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 Babies, 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. Given the wide range of individual variation among readers, we encourage you to look through both age categories for each genre.

The citation for each book in *CCBC Choices 2005* includes the prices and international standard book number (ISBN) for any edition we were able to find in print in late 2004. Most of the books are available in hardcover trade editions. Some are also or only available in library editions with reinforced binding. 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.

One book in *CCBC Choices 2005* has 2003 copyright date. To our knowledge, this book was not actually published until 2004 and therefore is included in this edition of *Choices*.

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. She studied with Professor Helen C. White.

The award is administered by the Cooperative Children's Book Center. 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); Peggy Kelbel (day care provider, Madison, Wisconsin); Susan Santner (children's librarian, Sun Prairie Public Library, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin), and Marlys Sloup (literacy consultant; retired teacher, Madison, Wisconsin).

[logo]

2005 Charlotte Zolotow Award

Winner: *Kitten's First Full Moon.* Written and illustrated by **Kevin Henkes.** (Greenwillow / Harper, 2004)

Honor Books: *Coming on Home Soon.* Written by **Jacqueline Woodson.**
Illustrated by E. B. Lewis. (Putnam, 2004)

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale. Written and illustrated
by **Mo Willems.** (Hyperion, 2004)

Polar Bear Night. Written by **Lauren Thompson.**
Illustrated by Stephen Savage. (Scholastic Press, 2004.)

Highly Commended:

Always and Forever. Written by Alan Durant. Illustrated by Debi Gliori.
(Harcourt, 2004)

Baby Danced the Polka. Written by Karen Beaumont. Illustrated by Jennifer Plecas.
(Dial, 2004)

The Biggest Soap. Illustrated by Carole Lexa Schaefer. Illustrated by Stacey
Dressen-McQueen. (Melanie Kroupa / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004)

Bittle. Written by Patricia MacLachlan and Emily MacLaughlan.
Illustrated by Dan Yaccarino. (Joanna Cotler Books / Harper Collins, 2004)

BooBoo. Written and illustrated by Olivier Dunrea.
(Houghton Mifflin, 2004)

Hot Day on Abbot Avenue. Written by Karen English.
Illustrated by Javaka Steptoe. (Clarion, 2004)

A Monkey Among Us. Written and illustrated by Dave Horowitz.
(HarperFestival / HarperCollins, 2004)

Superdog: The Heart of a Hero. Written by Caralyn Buehner.

Illustrated by Mark Buehner. (HarperCollins, 2004)

Whose Garden Is It? Written by Mary Ann Hoberman.
Illustrated by Jane Dyer. (Harcourt, 2004)

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PUBLISHING IN 2004

The most recent edition of *Children's Books in Print* (R.R. Bowker, 2005) states that there are 345,880 books from 15,190 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 2004.

The CCBC received approximately 2,800 new books for children and young adults in 2004. 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 231 books in *CCBC Choices 2005*, XX represent the first published works for the young of XX authors, XXX illustrators, and XX author/illustrator; XX were originally or simultaneously published outside the United States (X of these were translations); XX were published by five small, independently owned and operated publishers; and XX feature multicultural themes or topics. (The CCBC definition of "multicultural" refers to people of color.) Three of the books are from graphic novel publishers (as opposed to publishers of children's and young adult trade books). This is an area of publishing in which we are working to expand our own knowledge as librarians and teachers strive to become informed about an aspect of popular culture that engages many children and teens. To our knowledge, XXX of the books we recommend in *CCBC Choices 2005* have not appeared on any of the other nationally distributed lists of the year's best books as of late January 2005.

As we comment on some of what we observed about the publishing year in 2004 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.

More Matter, More Art: Picture-Book Publishing in 2004

It has become commonplace for every publishing year to offer at least a handful of picture books that are visually arresting at first sight. We appreciated the stunning realism of Bill Thomson's artwork for *Karate Hour* (Marshall Cavendish, 2004), while Frank and Devin Asch's *Mr. Maxwell's Hour* (Kids Can Press) is an affecting visual mood piece.

As always, however, we look for the true test to be how well the book functions overall. Does the dazzling art overpower the text or do the words and images form a balanced and cohesive whole?

Perhaps the best example from the 2004 publishing year of what a picture book can be is *Kitten's First Full Moon* by Kevin Henkes. The winner of the 2005 Caldecott Award for outstanding illustration in a picture book also won the Charlotte Zoltoow Award for most distinguished writing in a picture book. It achieves the perfect interplay between story and pictures. Interestingly, the artwork for this book as well as *Karate Hour* and *Mr. Maxwell's Hour* is a subtle variation on black-and-white.

Dave McKean's illustrations for *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish* perfectly complement Neil Gaiman's offbeat story about two kids on a comical quest to retrieve their father. In *Knuffle Bunny*, Mo Willems makes the most of his cartoon-like character images, set against black-and-white photographs of a Brooklyn neighborhood, to enhance the humor of a story in which a frustrated child and her well-meaning, clueless dad face a crisis of miscommunication.

We were also struck by a number of fine picture books in 2004 with historical settings, several drawn, at least loosely, from actual events. Deborah Hopkinson's *From Apples to Oregon* is a deliciously funny account of a family's westward wagon journey in the nineteenth century. Linda Sue Park turned to nineteenth century Korea for her picture book *The Fire Keeper's Son*, in which the bonfire signal system that was used in that country to communicate with the emperor's soldiers is the basis for a young boy's dilemma: light the fire to signal all is well, or ignore his duty for a chance to see the soldiers marching.

Karen Hesse researched a scrap of story from Warsaw during World War II in writing *The Cats in Krasinski Square*. Told in the affecting voice of a young Jewish girl who had escaped from the Warsaw ghetto, Hesse's story describes how the homeless cats (better fed than the girl) are used to help in an effort to smuggle food through the walls of the ghetto to those who are starving inside. World War II is also the backdrop for Louise Borden's *The Greatest Skating Race*, set in the Netherlands and featuring a boy who leads two children into Belgium by skating along the canals under the eyes of the German soldiers.

Several superb wordless books in 2004 offer imaginative stories through pictures alone. *The Red Book* by Barbara Lehman is about two children who literally meet through the pages of a book. A boy steps into the world of Elizabethan London and is pursued by William Shakespeare through the streets of that city in *The Boy, the Bear, the Baron, the Bard* by Gregory Rogers, which offers high adventure, comedy, and bittersweet farewells without a single word.

Despite the absence of text, wordless books are not without narratives. They offer children the opportunity to hone their visual literacy skills in order to make sense of what they see, whether that sense-making occurs in their own minds, verbally, or on paper. Wordless books have been around for generations. But today it is impossible to consider wordless books and highly visual picture books featuring comic-style panels of action without also considering them in the context of comic book and graphic-novel publishing. Librarians and teachers are becoming more and more aware of the importance and validity of comic books and graphic novels as a literary as well as popular art form. That awareness is now extending to the publishing industry, and trade book publishers are looking for books that offer the same kind of visual narrative experience or highly integrated words and pictures. Lisa Wheeler and Mark Siegel's rousing *Sea Dogs: An Epic Ocean Operetta* isn't the first example of a graphic novel from a trade publisher, but it's one of the most delightful. It joins a handful of other trade books that are true graphic novels—a list that we suspect will grow exponentially in coming years.

Expanding Horizons: Fiction Publishing in 2004

We saw a number of novels in 2004 that broke new ground or added to a small body of work addressing particular themes and topics. Among them are books exploring religious beliefs, a subject not typically at the forefront of the themes young adult authors choose to explore. Perhaps this is because religion is such a personal topic. Perhaps it is because the subject is a

threatening one to some, validating beliefs beyond their own personal comfort zone. Or perhaps youth culture is perceived to be so consumer based that many adults don't believe young people want to read about religion or spirituality. However, making a genuine spiritual journey is as natural and important to adolescents as their sexual and social explorations.

In *I Believe in...*, editor Pearl Gaskins asked young Muslims, Christians, and Jews to reflect on their spiritual lives. Their responses are offered in moments of clear and honest introspection as they talk about the joys and heartbreak of trying to live a life of faith in a pluralistic culture.

Without patronizing or dismissing the very complicated nature of spiritual development, several fiction writers have created characters who ask hard questions and keep on asking when they don't get the answers they need. In *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*, Benjamin Alire Sáenz's Sammy works hard to maintain his faith in Catholicism, as it brings him great comfort and strength, while at the same time making the hard choice to reject the leadership of a cruel and corrupt local priest. *Walking on Air* by Kelly Eaton presents a younger protagonist who must struggle to find her own faith amidst her father's religious fanaticism which could, at times, be considered abusive.

Using a fantasy world based loosely on Greek and Egyptian mythology, in *Oracle Betrayed* author Catherine Fisher presents a young woman who determines that much of what she has taken for granted as divine law is really no more than the manipulation of people's faith by secular leaders with political ambition, although she knows to say so out loud will surely bring her death. In *Godless* Pete Hautman writes about a teen so disenchanting with his family's church that he actually creates a new religion, albeit jokingly. But his ideas speak to the needs of some of his peers and the joke is lost completely on at least one of his followers.

We commend several authors whose novels published in 2004 offer sensitive portrayals of characters with disabilities. Martin, narrator of *Boy O' Boy* by Brian Doyle, is a 12-year-old with a developmentally disabled twin brother, Phil. Martin's relationship with his twin is realistically portrayed, including matter-of-fact descriptions of Phil's physical needs and the trauma of his frequent tantrums. Moose Flanagan's older sister Natalie appears to be autistic, although her condition is never named because the word was not yet used in the 1930s when *Al Capone Does My Shirts* takes place. Jennifer Choldenko's funny and moving story is notable for many reasons, one of which is the depth of her characterization of Natalie in a novel set on the island of Alcatraz at the time gangster Al Capone was in "residence." When Naomi and Owen's unpredictable mother reappears in their life after a seven year absence, she is uncomfortable with Owen's physical differences in Pam Muñoz Ryan's *Becoming Naomi León*. The mother's inability to appreciate Owen is her loss, as everyone else in Owen's life benefits from the little boy's vitality and unsinkable enthusiasm despite his being an FLK: funny looking kid.

Strong Sibling Relationships

This year, we noted many books centering on strong sibling relationships. Katie of *Kira-Kira*, the 2005 Newbery Medal winner by Cynthia Kadohata, idolizes her older sister Lynn. Lynn's care and sense of responsibility for her little sister helps prepare Katie for the realities of this Japanese American family's often difficult existence and opens her mind to the potential that life offers. In a similar way, Tommo looks up to his brother Charlie and models his own life after his older sibling's, even falling in love with the same girl, in Michael Morpurgo's haunting *World*

War I story *Private Peaceful*. When Charlie goes off to fight in France, Tommo follows him into battle.

Another pair of brothers works together to spend 229,370 British pounds within a 17-day timeframe in the hilarious and insightful *Millions* by Frank Cottrell Boyce. And despite the constant threat of giant rats on a rampage, Gregor is first and foremost big brother to his baby sister Boots, making her safety a priority as he battles fantastical enemies in a land deep beneath New York City in *Gregor and the Prophecy of Bane*, which continues the saga of two contemporary siblings navigating their way through unfamiliar territory, as imagined by author Suzanne Collins.

Binti's comfortable urban life in Malawi is shattered when her father dies of AIDS in *Heaven Shop* by Deborah Ellis. Binti struggles to be reunited with her brother and sister as they try to remain a family in a region devastated by the effects of the AIDS epidemic. Australian teen Francesca and her younger brother Luca help each other cope while their mother battles with severe depression in *Saving Francesca* by Melina Marchetta, which shows the siblings' loyalty to each other as a steadying force as they find their way through a difficult time.

Reflections of GLBT Experiences

We continue to see gay and lesbian literature for teens improve in both quantity and quality. One of the most interesting sibling relationships depicted in 2004 is in *Luna*, the first novel for young adults about transgender teen. Because Regan is so close to her older brother, Liam, she's the first to know that he leads a double life as a girl named Luna. Author Julianne Peters breaks new ground with a story about a teen struggling with her identity in a story told from her younger sister's point of view.

George Ella Lyon's *Sonny's House of Spies* is set in the deep South of the 1950s, when references to homosexuality were hushed if spoken at all. Sonny's life with his older sister, the crackling Loretta, and younger brother, Deaton, is turned upside down when their father leaves. As he grows older, Sonny learns the reason why: his father is gay. It is not easy news to accept, but Sonny's honest reaction is one of the remarkable things about a novel that gives each character room to grow and change.

Alex Sanchez's *So Hard to Tell You* deals with a middle school student in the process of coming out to himself and his friends. In *Orphea Proud* by Sharon Dennis Wyeth, 17-year-old Orphea works through her grief after her lover's death by throwing herself into her performance art, where she bares her soul and finds peace of mind. *The Bermudez Triangle* by Maureen Johnson (Razorbill / Penguin) centers on three girls who are best friends and what happens when two of them fall in love. David Levithan includes both gay and straight teens among the 20 characters given voice in *The Realm of Possibility* (Alfred A. Knopf).

We also were pleased to see several picture books published in 2004 about gay and lesbian families. There are so few books for younger children that affirm this experience, despite the ever growing number of families looking for such literature. This year Nancy Garden, well-known for her gay and lesbian-themed books for teenagers, published her first picture book. *Molly's Family* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux) features a child with two lesbian mothers and represents the first picture book on the topic to be published by a mainstream press. Small presses have been publishing books for and about children growing up in gay and lesbian families for decades. Ken Setterington's *Mom and Mum Are Getting Married!* is from Second Story Press, a small Canadian publisher. This timely picture book captures the excitement a

young girl feels as she helps her two moms prepare for their upcoming wedding. We applaud these publishers, both large and small, for publishing books that show family diversity.

Fresh Perspectives on the Past: Nonfiction Publishing in 2004

As we read books of information throughout 2004, we were pleased to see so many engaging and often innovative works for children and teenagers. Many of the books that we found especially notable in 2004 focused on aspects of U.S. history that have not been explored in books for youth before or were presented from new perspectives.

One of the most fascinating works we read was *The Race to Save the Lord God Bird*, Phillip Hoose's comprehensive look at the factors that contributed to the extinction of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Hoose blends environmental, social, and political history in a compelling narrative that traces the multiple factors that contributed to the demise of this grand species, and he shows how scientists and conservationists were in a race against time as events hurtled toward a tragic and seemingly inevitable conclusion. At the same time, he chronicles the many positive efforts that sprung from the growing awareness of the Ivory-bill's extinction, among them national conservation efforts like the Audubon Society.

We also greatly admired Diane McWhorter's personal and powerful overview of the Civil Rights movement in *A Dream of Freedom*. McWhorter was a child in Birmingham, Alabama, in the late 1950s and early 1960s. She was, she states now, on the wrong side of the Civil Rights movement, a white child of privilege who was echoing the (milder) sentiments of adults around her when she referenced the Black activists in her community as troublemakers. She drew in part on the extensive research done for an adult book that chronicled Birmingham's turbulent past (the Pulitzer Prize-Winning *Carry Me Home*) in presenting this dynamic history for older children and teens. In a book that starts with her very personal introduction, she concludes with an epilogue that positions young readers at the center of the history they are living today, writing: "History is going on around you right now. You can either make it or it will make you."

With bicentennial observances of Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery continuing, we were thrilled to see Rhoda Blumberg's *York's Adventures with Lewis and Clark*. Blumberg's extensive research culled what is known about York, the Black man, a slave of William Clark, who was part of the expedition. Too little is known about York's life before and after the journey, but diaries, letters, and other accounts kept along the way reveal the critical role he played as a member of the Corps. Not only did he bring many crucial skills to the expedition, but his skin color fascinated many of the Native tribes they met.

Peter Sís's *The Train of States* and Sheila Keenan's *O Say Can You See?* (Scholastic) both offer a compendium of facts about facets of U.S. history in fresh and alluring ways. Sís's visually engaging volume gathers information about each of the 50 states, each one presented as a wagon on a circus train. He was inspired by a visit to the Circus World Museum in Baraboo, Wisconsin. Keenan's narrative provides brief, lively descriptions of many national symbols and events, from the Liberty Bell and Pledge of Allegiance to the Declaration of Independence and Thanksgiving. Ann Boyajian's illustrations add additional energy and humor to a volume that is surprisingly (and pleasingly) progressive, if not wholly comprehensive.

Two intriguing volumes shed new light for young readers on events surrounding our emergence as a nation. In *George Washington, Spymaster*, Thomas B. Allen details the superior intelligence work that was a critical component of the colonies' victory over the British in the

Revolutionary War. Codes and couriers, spies and scoundrels abound. Rosalyn Schanzer compares the leaders on both sides of the Revolutionary War in *George vs. George: The American Revolution as Seen from Both Sides* (National Geographic). Her examination of George Washington and King George III of Britain is especially enlightening with regard to the British king, since he's rarely more than a tyrant in books for children.

These fine works of history, as well as several terrific biographies--including Russell Freedman's *The Voice That Challenged a Nation*, about singer Marian Anderson and her role as symbol and advocate in the struggle for equal rights, and Albert Marrin's *Old Hickory*, a fine portrait of less-than-likeable President Andrew Jackson--give children and teenagers opportunities to connect with the past in meaningful ways that will deepen their understanding of who we are as a nation today.

Bringing the World to Children: Translated Literature

We were happily surprised to find a comparatively large number of translated books published in the U.S. in 2004. They included six novels from France, three from Germany, one each from Belgium, Denmark, Israel, and Italy. Although 13 may not seem like an overwhelming number of novels when one considers the total number of books published, it is significant compared to other years in which we have been lucky to have seen half that number. The rise in copublishing agreements between publishers in the United States and Britain accounts, at least in part, for the increase in numbers. No matter what sort of business arrangements are made prior to publication, each one does represent an admirable level of commitment on the part of U.S. publishers.

Scholastic, particularly its imprint Arthur A. Levine Books, is to be especially commended for publishing substantial works of fiction that originated in other countries, including *In The Shadow of the Ark* by Anne Provoost, the story of an adolescent stowaway on Noah's ark that was originally published in Belgium; *My Guardian Angel* by Sylvia Weil, which deals with the persecution of the Jews in eleventh century France, and which was originally published in France; and *Aldabra, or the Tortoise Who Loved Shakespeare* by Silvana Gandolfi, a novel from Italy that is as wonderfully strange and mysterious as its title. These three novels are an example of the wide range of fiction that is available to children in other countries and now, thanks to Arthur A. Levine Books, to children in the United States as well.

Another novel that originated in France, *The Shadows of Ghadames* by JoNe Stolz, is set in nineteenth century Libya. Its protagonist is a young woman on the brink of adolescence, taking her first steps into the strong community of Muslim women who dwell on the rooftops several stories above the city of Ghadames. From Germany, *Daniel Half-Human and the Good Nazi* by David Chotjewitz is a distinctive Holocaust story about a teenage Nazi sympathizer growing up in an affluent family whose comfortable life is turned upside-down when he learns that his mother is Jewish. Both of these novels are outstanding contributions to young adult literature which offer unusual perspectives not often seen in books for American youth.

Welcome Visions and Voices: First Books

We are always pleased to discover that some of our favorite books of the year are the work of new authors to the world of children's and young adult literature. Meg Rosoff's provocative window into a world reeling from terrorist attacks in *How I Live Now* tells a gripping story of

survival built upon a scenario that's too easily imagined. Rosoff's development of her protagonist's character, as she experiences both devastation and unexpected love, is always true to 15-year-old Daisy's perspective, even as her experiences affect and change her.

Tiger is also traveling through a war zone in L.S. Mathews' debut novel, *Fish*. The author's fine use of metaphor and symbolism extends the theme of selflessness (but not less of self) and hope amidst seemingly hopeless conditions.

First time author Kashmira Sheth also works skillfully with metaphor in her story of a family emigrating from India to the United States, as told by 12-year-old Seema. We especially appreciate the way in which Seema is able to live successfully in both worlds rather than having to choose between her two cultures. The title character of Katherine Hannigan's *Ida B.* displays a bumpier adjustment to changes in her life as her mother's illness sends the home-schooled girl into a public school setting. *Ida B.* may be precocious, but she's still a child rebelling against what she can only see as her parents' betrayal.

Liz Chipman also portrays a family struggling in the face of adversity in her first novel, *From the Lighthouse*. When her mother suddenly leaves her family, Weezie and her brothers must deal with the emotional pain of her absence and the daily struggle of running a household without her. The believable relationship of the three siblings and their reliable father are at the core of this poignant story.

One of the most highly visible books over the summer of 2004 was *Chasing Vermeer*, by newcomer Blue Balliet, who pays homage to Ellen Raskin and E. L. Konigsburg in her novel of two bright kids caught up in mystery and intrigue who apply their considerable problem-solving skills to the matters at hand. Balliet isn't up to the standards of Raskin and Konigsburg yet, but there's still a lot to appreciate and enjoy in her debut book for children.

Other newcomers we especially appreciated include Janice N. Harrington, with her autobiographical picture book *Going North*; Frank Cottrell Boyce, with the hilarious and touching novel *Millions*; and several authors who made stunningly successful transitions from writing to adults to writing for children: Cynthia Kadohata, who won the 2005 Newbery Award for *Kira-Kira*; Diane McWhorter, with her illuminating look at the Civil Rights Movement in *A Dream of Freedom*; and Benjamin Alire Sáenz, with his powerful young adult novel *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*.

Books for Every Child: Multicultural Literature

There are varied definitions of "multicultural literature" used in the field of literature for children and young adults. 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.

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/books/pcstats.htm

We 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.

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 in 2004

Of the nearly 2,800 titles we received at the CCBC in 2004, we documented the following with regard to books by and about people of color:

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

It is important to remember that a vast number of distinct cultural experiences are implied by these four broad groupings. (And to remember that no single book can represent the diversity of experience within a culture or group.) Multicultural books in *CCBC Choices* are identified by specific cultural affiliation in the subject index.

Emerging from Invisibility

Given the overall numbers, it isn't surprising (but it's still disheartening) that some cultures are all but invisible in contemporary literature for children and young adults. Others are just beginning to emerge. Several novels were published this year about contemporary children from India or of Indian descent. We were delighted to see Madison author Kashmira Sheth contribute to this small but growing body of literature with her lyrical novel *Blue Jasmine*, about a girl who moves from India to Iowa. In *Naming Maya* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), Uma Krishnaswami's 12-year-old protagonist makes the opposite journey, when a U.S.-born girl accompanies her mother back to India after her grandfather's death. British author Narinder Dharmi writes about three lively, scheming sisters in *Bindi Babes* (Delacorte), a story that balances humor with emotional depth.

Little Cricket by Jackie Brown (Hyperion) is the second novel we know of to feature a Hmong protagonist. Brown's story is set in Minneapolis in the 1970s as young Kia becomes part of the first big wave of Hmong immigration to the United States.

Deborah Ellis, who has written three novels about about the plight of the Afghani people under the Taliban, turns her attention to the AIDS crisis in Africa with *The Heaven Shop*, a moving and eye-opening novel set in Malawi. The African AIDS crisis was also the subject of *Chanda's Secret* by Allan Stratton (Annick Press). Both of these novels came from Canadian publishers.

Voices Old and New

It's always exciting to see new authors and artists emerging in the field of children's and young adult literature. It's particularly heartening when we see new authors and artists of color given the opportunity to add their voices and their visions to literature for the young. Among the new authors and illustrators of color whose work we found especially intriguing in 2004 are Janice N. Harrington, whose beautifully written picture book *Going North* is based on her own childhood move from the deep South to Minnesota. Connie Ann Kirk, a writer of Iroquois descent, writes about the Mohawk steelworkers who have contributed to so much of the building of the great architecture in New York City in her child-centered picture book *Sky Dancers*. Debbie A. Taylor's lively picture book *Sweet Music in Harlem* was inspired by Art Kane's photograph *A Great Day in Harlem*, in which many of the finest jazz musicians of an era were photographed on a Harlem stoop. In Taylor's rich story, with splendid artwork by first-time illustrator Frank Morrison, a young aspiring jazz musician trying to track down his uncle's hat plays an unwitting role in bringing together another lively group for a photo.

In her first trade book for children, Sonia Manzano has written an engaging story about a vibrant community as seen through the eyes of a girl with a gift for bestowing the perfect nickname on everyone she knows. A small sticker on the cover of Manzano's book alerts us to the fact that she is Maria on *Sesame Street*. But it's a connection that is downplayed overall, and her book rises far above the usual offerings of most celebrities (to begin with, it doesn't rhyme) to stand solidly on its own merit.

Several authors made successful transitions from writing for adults to writing for children. Most notable among them was Cynthia Kadohata, whose first book for children, *Kira-Kira*, won the 2005 Newbery Award. Kadohata's moving story is about the relationship between two sisters and events in their family over a ten-year span of time. Firmly grounded in the point of view of a protagonist who ages from preschooler to teenager, Kadohata maintains a remarkably authentic viewpoint in which Katie's understanding of individuals and events in her life deepen over the course of the novel.

Poet and novelist Benjamin Alire Sáenz has written his first book for teenagers with *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*, a haunting, tragic story set against the backdrop of the 1960s, in which a Chicano teen sees opportunity blocked at every turn: by poverty, by violence, and by the threat of the Vietnam War.

We also greeted the work of many familiar authors and artists with enthusiasm. Leo and Diane Dillon's haunting new illustrations for Virginia Hamilton's powerful tale *The People Could Fly* underscores the impact of this dramatic and moving story first published in 1985 as part of collection of Black folktales under the same name and now offered as a stand-alone picture book. Walter Dean Myers's *Harlem: poems in many voices* is a stunning collection of

poetry that distills the hopes and dreams, triumphs and sorrows of the many everyday people who embody the history and spirit of Harlem. With *Behind You*, Jacqueline Woodson continues the story started in *If You Come Softly* (Putnam, 1998), offering a tender, painful, ultimately healing journey through grief. Woodson also penned a moving picture book published in 2004: *Coming on Home Soon*. In *Orpheus Proud*, Sharon Dennis Wyeth tackles both sexuality and race in a book written as a performance piece to showcase its title character Orpheus Proud's emergence as a young Black lesbian who knows that every person is so much more than the sum of what they can be called.

Joseph Bruchac, the most prolific Native author for children, offers a welcome picture-book biography of Jim Thorpe in *Jim Thorpe's Bright Path*, as well as a novel set in the 1950s about a young boy struggling to understand the dynamics of his family in *Hidden Roots*. Bruchac's novel ultimately reveals the shameful history of the Vermont Eugenics Project, which saw many people, including disabled and Indians, sterilized without consent.

Multicultural literature is essential for all children and young adults, so that they have the opportunity to see their own experiences reflected in books, and so that they have the opportunity to better understand the world in which they live. As librarians and teachers continue to purchase authentic, reliable, and diverse perspectives on multicultural experience, it not only helps to meet the needs of children and teenagers, it also sends the message to publishers that multicultural books are wanted, needed, and will sell.

Publishing is a business where the bottom line matters. Dedicated editors, not to mention the authors and artists themselves, can only do so much to ensure that books that meet the needs of children—of all children—to be entertained and informed and affirmed are published. The decisions that we make as librarians, teachers, and public consumers are powerful. They have an impact on what is published in the future, as well as whether the books available on the bookstore or warehouse shelf today will still be available in paperback, or in print at all, two or three years down the road. Never doubt that the decisions you make have an impact not only on the children and teenagers in your lives today but also on what will be available for future generations.

The Natural World

French, Vivian. *T. Rex*. Illustrated by Alison Bartlett. Candlewick Press, 2004. 29 pages (trade 0-7636-2184-6, \$15.99)

Questions abound when a little boy and his grandfather visit a museum exhibition devoted to the Tyrannosaurus Rex: What size was the egg? Was the nest in a tree? Did he hunt with his friends? Grandpa patiently answers every question but frequently has to respond with “We don’t really know. It was millions and millions of years ago.” In addition to the conversation between the child and his grandfather, additional information is provided in a brief captions that offer further explanation. Each strand of narrative is set off in a different kind of typography so that readers can easily distinguish which character is speaking. The story ends with the two looking for more answers in books, as Grandpa tells the boy: “Maybe one day we’ll really know... Maybe we’ll know what’s really true. The person to tell us might just be YOU.” Boldly colored, stylized illustrations show plenty of sharp-toothed T. Rexes to satisfy young dinosaur enthusiasts. Although the book is just 32 pages long, it includes a complete index for quick reference to information in the text. (Ages 2-5)

Goodall, Jane. *Rickie and Henri: A True Story*. Illustrated by Alan Marks. minedition / Penguin, 2004. 24 pages (trade 0-698-40002-X, \$15.99)

This story about an unusual animal friendship opens with a realistic and disturbing account of an adult female chimpanzee’s death by gunshot. The hunters who killed the chimp take her infant to a Brazzaville market in the Congo Republic, where the capture and sale of young chimpanzees is illegal but not uncommon. Rescued by a Congolese man, the infant, Rickie, receives shelter and veterinary care in his home. She also meets Henri, the family dog. At first the relationship between the two animals is tenuous, but during their human guardian’s extended absence, Rickie turns to Henri for companionship. Henri responds favorably and soon the two spend their days together, Rickie riding on Henri’s back. Eventually Rickie is taken to a chimpanzee sanctuary to live among her own species. Renowned conservationist Jane Goodall’s postscript describes the Tchimpounga Sanctuary in the Congo Republic where Rickie currently lives with more than 100 other chimpanzees. Although release into the wild is the preferred outcome for these orphans, adequate habitat not already in use by humans or other feral chimpanzees is unavailable. (Ages 5-9)

Hoose, Phillip. *The Race to Save the Lord God Bird*. Melanie Kroupa Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 196 pages (trade 0-374-36173-8, \$20.00)

This absorbing account of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker’s gradual disappearance reads like an adventure story, with its tightly woven combination of science and social history. Beginning with descriptions of the bird’s first recorded sightings in the early 1800’s, Hoose moves on to describe Alexander Wilson and John James Audubon’s roles as artists who hunted American birds and then used the carcasses as models for their art. The significance of bird collectors of the late 1800s and early 1900s follows, along with the devastating effects of the millinery industry’s Plume War. Beginning in the 1920s, Cornell professor Arthur A. Allen, joined later by student James Tanner, studied the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and fought to save it from extinction with groundbreaking research involving the first use of recorded birdcall. As lumber companies of the 1940s began logging huge tracts of the bird’s habitat in the Southern United States, it’s obvious to readers that the species final decimation was inevitable. One of the final chapters moves the story’s venue from the U.S. to Cuba, where ornithologist Giraldo Alayón studied the Cuban Ivory-bill, last seen in 1987. Hoose relates reports of recent Ivory bill sightings in the U.S., but none have been confirmed. Although the Ivory-billed Woodpecker has disappeared, an epilogue contains contemporary indicators of hope for other species, from the banning of DDT to the successful adaptation of Peregrine falcons nesting on urban skyscraper ledges. Lengthy endnotes include a bird protection

chronology and detailed source notes. Black-and-white photographs incorporated throughout the book emphasize the meager visual record that exists of a majestic bird. (Age 12 and older)

Jenkins, Steve. *Actual Size*. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-618-37594-5, \$16.00)

Steve Jenkins's visually arresting picture book offers children the opportunity to consider size and relationships with collage illustrations that show 18 creatures from the natural world in whole or in part. Only the head (*sans* ears) of the 13-foot brown bear is pictured across one page spread; another shows just the 4-inch tooth of a 21-foot great white shark. Clear the decks and get out the tape measures and paper. *Actual Size* also offers a lesson in the perils of bookmaking—the gutter between the pages (on at least some copies) swallows up to an inch of two of the pictured creatures whose measurements fit on the page spread. While it's unfortunate, it doesn't detract from the overall impact or potential of the dynamic book. (Ages 4-9)

Lindbergh, Reeve. *Our Nest*. Illustrated by Jill McElmurry. Candlewick Press, 2004. 24 pages (trade 0-7636-1286-3, \$15.99)

A poetic narrative expands the definition of "nest" to include the homes of many animals, from a cat's nest "in a pile of clothes" to "a watery nest for the trout." Casting an ever-widening net, the author describes a harbor as a nest of boats, the earth as a nest for the ocean, and finally, the universe and the "vastness of space, that mysterious place, / Is a nest for the sun and the stars." The focus zooms in again in the closing lines, ending with an adult putting a child to bed, "safe and warm, / in the nest of my arms, / When I wrap them around you with love." Each illustration echoes the sentiment of the verse, with the art enclosed in circles that gradually grow until the universe covers an entire double-page spread, and then tightening again to the last image of the child and caregiver at home. (Ages 4-7)

Montgomery, Sy. *The Tarantula Scientist*. Photographs by Nic Bishop. (Scientists in the Field) Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 80 pages (trade 0-618-14799-3, \$18.00)

Next time you marvel at the size of that hefty spider lurking in a corner of the basement, consider the Goliath birdeater tarantula. In this captivating volume, one especially vivid description states that "with outstretched legs, this spider could cover your whole face." Although many children and adults would be inclined to run in the opposite direction if confronted with a member of the largest spider species on earth, arachnologist Sam Marshall devotes his professional life to studying the Goliath and other tarantulas, both in their natural environment and in his lab at Hiram College. The book opens with one of Marshall's research trips to French Guiana, where readers share the pain, sweat, dirt, and occasional excitement of field work. Later on, back in Ohio, the scientist is shown working with the data he collected in South America, as well as mentoring undergraduate students conducting their own spider research. In addition to providing insight into a scientist's daily work, the text delivers a substantial amount of information about tarantulas and is enhanced by first-rate color photographs. Longer and denser than some of the earlier entries in this series, *The Tarantula Scientist* continues to hold to a standard of excellence. And, as we've come to expect, the portrayal of a contemporary scientist's enthusiasm and passion for his field of study remains a standout feature. (Ages 9-14)

Root, Phyllis. *If You Want to See a Caribou*. Illustrated by Jim Meyer. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-618-39314-5, \$16.00)

"If you want to see a caribou, / you must go to a place where the caribou live." The narrator of this quiet encounter with the natural world continues in the second person, giving advice on just what to do and where to go to see a caribou. Reading like a love poem to the northernmost regions of Lake Superior, this serene picture book provides keen sensory descriptions: "You stoop under branches / draped with old-man's-beard lichen" and "the ground [is] spongy with feather moss." Artist Jim Meyer's woodcuts are crisp and bold, colored in with a lush woodsy palate. A brief author's note explains how scarce the

caribou are becoming, as well as a bit about their history on the Canadian shores of Lake Superior. (Ages 4-8)

Schaefer, Lola M. *Arrowhawk*. Illustrated by Gabi Swiatkowska. Henry Holt, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-8050-6371-4, \$16.95)

“Out of nowhere, an arrow streaked through the air and pierced Hawk’s upper thigh and tail.” Stunning acrylic paintings and a dramatic text describe a red-tailed hawk’s injury by poacher arrow and his life over the next eight weeks, as he flies, preens, and hunts with the arrow still intact. Eventually captured and rehabilitated at a raptor center, the healthy bird is released successfully back into the wild. A concluding note details the true events that inspired this picture book and shows a photograph of the actual bird before capture, perched with the arrow visibly piercing his body. (Ages 5-9)

Scott, Elaine. *Poles Apart*. Viking, 2004. 64 pages (trade 0-670-05925-0, \$17.99)

Polar bears and penguins both like cold weather, cold salt water, and fish. But, as author Elaine Scott explains, they evolved to live in completely different places. Although the Arctic and Antarctica are similar to the novice eye, Scott notes that they are very different ecosystems. Short explanations of geology, including plate tectonics, astronomy, and the magnetic pull of the poles are accompanied by drawings, photos, and diagrams that will convince every reader penguins could never live at the North Pole. The history of exploration and the cultural geography of the Arctic and Antarctica make this a book for budding social scientists as well as naturalists. (Ages 11-15)

Showers, Paul. *A Drop of Blood*. Illustrated by Edward Miller. (Let’s-Read-and-Find-Out Science) HarperCollins, 2004. 25 pages (trade 0-06-009108-8, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-009109-6, \$16.89; pbk. 0-06-009110-X, \$4.99)

What better host for an informational book about blood than a vampire, black cape and fangs included? This knowledgeable vampire and his Igor-like sidekick provide a visual element of fun in a simple introduction to the composition of blood and its function. Definitions of plasma, red and white blood cells, platelets and fibrin, and blood’s role in oxygen and food distribution throughout the body, comprise the majority of the text. The final pages include a list of blood factoids, advice on habits for a healthy heart, and a short list of related reading. (Ages 6-9)

Skurzynski, Gloria. *Are We Alone? Scientists Search for Life in Space*. National Geographic, 2004. 92 pages (trade 0-7922-6567-X, \$18.95)

The search for extraterrestrial intelligence is compellingly presented in this informative and accessible volume. Beginning with a description of the first reports of UFO sightings (and with a list of credible natural explanations for the phenomenon), the author moves on to describe the relevant work of several contemporary scientists. Astronomers, evolutionary biologists, oceanographers, planetary geologists, and astrophysicists alike strive to understand life in extreme environments, from hostile habitats on earth to destinations in space about which little is known. Sidebars highlighting several of the featured scientists from around the world convey their dedication, endless curiosity, and impressive academic credentials as they work at the cutting edge of their field. Despite difficulties, from failed fieldwork to a lack of funding, these men and women are clearly driven to search for answers to provocative questions about life on earth and beyond. (Ages 9-14)

Seasons and Celebrations

Boelts, Maribeth. *The Firefighters’ Thanksgiving*. Illustrated by Terry Widener. Putnam, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-399-23600-7, \$15.99)

A Thanksgiving story for very young children is set in a firehouse, where the busy firefighters are attempting to prepare a holiday feast in the midst of their regular work. "They wash the trucks, hang hose to dry. Roll out crust for pumpkin pie." Repeated calls keep interrupting their efforts to cook the meal. Will they ever get to eat Thanksgiving dinner? Of course! A grateful community offers thanks in the form of turkey, stuffing, and pumpkin pie. The rhyming, lilting text creates an energetic, upbeat mood that carries the story, which is all about spirit rather than the factual details of being a firefighter. The bold illustrations have bright colors and clean lines. (Ages 2-4)

Brown, Margaret Wise. *Christmas in the Barn*. Illustrated by Diane Goode. HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages

(trade 0-06-052634-3, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-052635-1, \$16.89)

Margaret Wise Brown's story of the Nativity, in which two people "who have lost their way" take shelter in an ancient barn, is as lyrical as a gentle snowfall. Her brief, graceful text has all the expected elements: a star, two travelers, myriad animals, shepherds, wise men, and a newborn babe. They are woven into a tale that offers the comfort of familiarity ("What child is this who lays down his sweet head?"), the drama of details ("Where the oxen stomp and peer"), and the delight of simplicity. In this new edition of the 1952 book, Diane Goode offers a new visual interpretation with a snow tableau as the backdrop for the cozy red barn. (Ages 2-6)

Crossley-Holland, Kevin. *How Many Miles to Bethlehem?* Illustrated by Peter Malone. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2004. 24 pages (trade 0-439-67642-8, \$16.95)

"I am Mary. Tight as a drum. Round as the lady moon calling out to me." Kevin Crossley-Holland's vibrant retelling of the Nativity story begins with the voice of the pregnant Mary and ends with the voice of the "baby who will cradle the world." Each two-page spread moves the story forward from a new perspective: the innkeeper, the ox, the donkey, the brightest star, the Wise Men, the Angels, and others, including King Herod, who threatens the newborn baby whom others would call "king." Herod's threat is an unusual element in a picture-book presentation of the Nativity story, one that provides reference to the broader context in which the story of Jesus' life takes place. It's a single ominous note in a glorious celebration magnificently complemented by Peter Malone's radiant paintings. (Ages 5-10)

Edwards, Michelle. *Papa's Latkes*. Illustrated by Stacey Schuett. Candlewick Press, 2004 (trade 0-7636-0779-7, \$15.99)

Two girls face their first Chanukah since their mother's death in this sensitive picture-book story. Everything reminds Selma of Mama's absence, even though Papa is trying his best. Papa's fat, brown, lumpy latkes are so different from Mama's light and crisp latkes that Selma can't bring herself to eat them. But when Papa tells Selma and her little sister, Dora, that Mama would want them to celebrate Chanukah, Selma asks to light the menorah, marking the first night just the way Mama taught her. Michelle Edwards's poignant treatment of a grieving child doesn't try to minimize sadness. But it also offers hope in the love that remains in her family and the memories that will always sustain her. The illustrations, done in oil and acrylic gouache, enhance the warmth of the story with their cozy glow. (Ages 5-8)

Gerber, Carole. *Leaf Jumpers*. Illustrated by Leslie Evans. Charlesbridge, 2004. 32 pages (lib. 1-57091-497-4, \$15.95)

The changing color of autumn leaves is certainly one of the most flamboyant hallmarks of the new season. Linoleum-cut illustrations show two children and a dog playing among the falling leaves, as the poetic text describes the characteristics of eight types of trees. "Red maple's broad and pointed leaves / flame bright and vivid as a match. / The sugar maple's leaves are orange, / like pumpkins in a pumpkin patch." A concluding page outlines the scientific process behind leaf-color change, but it is the bold illustrations and lyrical words throughout the rest of this picture book that truly celebrate the season. (Ages 4-8)

Hopkins, Lee Bennett, selector. *Christmas Presents: Holiday Poetry*. Illustrated by Melanie Hall. (An I Can Read Book) HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-008054-X, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-008055-8, \$16.89)

Hopkins, Lee Bennett, selector. *Hanukkah Lights: Holiday Poetry*. Illustrated by Melanie Hall. (An I Can Read Book) HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-008051-5, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-008052-3, \$16.89)

Each of these collections features 12 easy-to-read, accessible poems that speak to the anticipation, excitement, and joy that mark each celebration in children's minds. Both volumes include poems that touch on the religious meaning of the holidays, as well as poems that focus on traditions such as spinning the dreidl and putting up a Christmas tree, or latkes for Hanukkah and tamales on Christmas Eve. Lee Bennett Hopkins is a master at choosing poetry for young readers. His sparkling choices in these two volumes are pleasingly illustrated by Melanie Hall, whose art shines with warmth. (Ages 4-8)

Kimmel, Eric A. *Wonders and Miracles: A Passover Companion*. Scholastic Press, 2004. 136 pages (trade 0-439-07175-5, \$18.95)

A handsome, beautifully crafted volume offers a multifaceted exploration of the Passover seder. The book is divided into sections corresponding to each part of the Passover meal. Eric A. Kimmel introduces the sections with an explanation of what is happening during that part of the Passover seder and the significance of each ritual. Stories, songs, poems, and recipes follow. Some stories, poems and songs are interpretations of biblical events, others are set at other times throughout Jewish history. Artwork from across centuries is reproduced throughout the book. While this is not a book children themselves are apt to pick up and read from cover to cover, many families will welcome this lovely collection that they can easily dip in and out of. An elegant ribbon marker makes it easy to keep one's place. Kimmel provides a general list of bibliographic resources. (Age 10 and older)

Little, Jean. *Pippin the Christmas Pig*. Illustrated by Werner Zimmermann. Scholastic Press, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-439-65062-3, \$16.95)

It's Christmas Eve, and the donkey, the cow, the sheep, and even the pigeon recall the important roles their ancestors played in a stable in Bethlehem at the first Christmas. But what about Pippin the pig? No one seems to remember any pigs being present at the holy baby's birth. Feeling worthless, Pippin heads out into a blizzard, determined never to return to the barn. On the road she sees a woman struggling through the storm, carrying her child. Leading them back to the barn, Pippin interrupts the self-important animals in the midst of their Christmas boasting, exclaiming, "I have a baby here who needs a place to sleep *right now*." When the other animals hesitate to help the strangers, Pippin snaps them into action, organizing milk, bedding, and lullabies. With Pippin's help, all the animals learn the importance of giving of themselves. (Ages 4-7)

Meister, Cari. *Luther's Halloween*. Illustrated by Valeria Petrone. Viking, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-670-03555-6, \$15.99)

Luther is a triceratops. "You can tell by the little horn on his nose," explains the young boy who is the narrator of this Halloween story with an entertaining and original premise. Not only is Luther a bit frightened of the little boy's monster costume (irony for the preschool set), but he's the only dinosaur out on the street for trick-or-treating. Luther does have a costume: he's dressed as pirate. But he *looks* like a pirate wearing a dinosaur costume, which means there's a surprise in store for the bully who is trying to steal the little kids' Halloween candy: "Rroooaarr!" Valeria Petrone's bright, child-friendly illustrations complement this funny, fresh Halloween tale perfect for preschoolers. (Ages 3-6)

O Holy Night: Christmas with the Boys Choir of Harlem. Illustrated by Faith Ringgold. Amistad / HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-000979-9, \$18.99; lib. 0-06-051819-7, \$19.89)

Faith Ringgold's richly hued paintings of the Nativity were created to accompany five well-known Christmas carols. Ringgold's shining art casts the scenes with radiant faces, most of them brown-skinned. In almost every picture, one or more figures reach with outstretched arms toward the holy child, suggesting both joyful reverence and embrace. In several it is the child reaching out toward humanity. The words for each of the five carols are boxed in gold on the page opposite each painting. A passage from the Luke 2:1-20 (King James Version of the Bible) opens the book, which ends with Ringgold's tableau of angels trumpeting over houses and hills toward the manger, accompanied by the message "Wishing you Heavenly Peace." An accompanying CD features The Boys Choir of Harlem performing each of the songs. (Ages 5 – adult)

Thomas, Dylan. *A Child's Christmas in Wales*. Illustrated by Chris Raschka. Candlewick Press, 2004. 48 pages (trade 0-7636-2161-7, \$17.99)

Dylan Thomas's rollicking, language-rich short story about Christmases in his childhood has been illustrated by artists for children before, most notably in a small, lovely gift edition featuring graceful woodcuts by Ellen Raskin (recently reissued by New Directions Publishing). Raskin's art referenced both the whimsy and the intimacy of memory suggested by the text. The ink, torn paper and gouache illustrations that Chris Raschka has created for this new edition is a perfect match for the measured frenzy of Thomas's words. Bold, lush colors are tempered by heavy black lines and white splashes of snow suggesting energy and movement. Occasional images offer more muted background colors and delicate lines, providing a respite for both eye and mind in the midst of a dazzling verbal and visual experience. (Ages 8 – adult)

Vidal, Beatriz. *Federico and the Magi's Gift: A Latin American Christmas Story*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2004. 36 pages (trade 0-375-82518-5, \$15.95)

An original story from an Argentinian author/illustrator celebrates a Christmas tradition common throughout Latin America. Four-year-old Federico eagerly awaits the arrival of *los Tres Reyes Magos* (the Three Wise Men), who leave gifts in the shoes of well-behaved children on January 6. He's still young enough to believe in their magic -- more than anything, he hopes they will leave him a toy horse -- and still young enough to worry that they will bypass him this year because he had been scolded for misbehaving. His worries make it hard for him to share in the excitement of his older brother and sister, who are busy gathering hay and water to put out for the Wise Men's camels. They also make it hard for him to fall asleep at night. Maybe if he could just talk to the Wise Men, he could explain. But sleep eventually comes, as do the Wise Men, bringing him the little horse of his dreams. Vidal's lush color paintings artfully blend fantasy and reality in a story set on a warm January night. (Ages 3-6)

Winter, Jeanette. *Calavera Abecedario: A Day of the Dead Alphabet Book*. Harcourt, 2004. 48 pages (trade 0-15-205110-4, \$16.00)

As the Day of the Dead approaches, Don Pedro and his children prepare by making the Calaveras, or, skeletons, that are an important symbol during this Mexican holiday. They use papier-mâché and bamboo to form the figures, and they decorate them with paint. Then everyone comes to celebrate! Jeanette Winter uses the artistic endeavors of Don Pedro's creative family to frame 26 pages of dancing Calaveras, one for each letter in the alphabet. Each is labeled with a corresponding Spanish word. In her note at the end, Winter explains the variations in the Spanish alphabet and provides translations for the Spanish words. Some of her choices are obvious, such as Angel for A and Unicornio for U, but others will require a little thinking based on the picture. Two Calaveras wearing crowns and dancing together are Rey and Reina,

and a young word detective might be able to guess that it means King and Queen. (Ages 4-10, older for Spanish learners)

Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature

Crews, Nina. *The Neighborhood Mother Goose*. Amistad / HarperCollins, 2004. 63 pages (trade 0-06-051573-2, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-051574-0, \$16.89)

Playful photographs and photo-collages featuring urban children and adults illustrate a selection of forty traditional Mother Goose rhymes in this lively volume. Nina Crews's photographs were taken in a big-city neighborhood and are bustling with energy as well as occasional moments of repose. They range from shots of children caught in the midst of active play to humorous posed images. There's the little girl with the forehead curl, who is caught in the act of being "horrid" as she cuts the hair off of a doll (there is a perfect, slight edge of worry to her expression, since she's been caught, but no remorse). And there's the little boy who's gone "to market" and is carrying home a live pig in his brown grocery bag. The warmth and humor of the dynamic contemporary photographs adds a new dimension and resonance to these age-old verses for young children. (Ages 2-6)

Demi. *The Hungry Coat: A Tale from Turkey*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-689-84680-0, \$19.95)

In an explanatory note, author/artist Demi explains that her main character, Nasrettin Hoca, was a thirteenth-century Turkish folk philosopher and humorist. Beloved during his lifetime, he remains so in Turkey and many other parts of the world today, seen as a symbol of "common sense, clear wisdom, and good-natured humor." In this story, Nasrettin arrives at a friend's banquet without having had time to change clothes after helping capture a stray goat. Ragged and smelly, he is ignored by his host and other guests. Slipping away to bathe and change, he returns and is treated as an honored guest. Clearly, he tells the group after putting offerings of food inside his coat and exclaiming, "Eat, coat, eat!" it was my fine coat and not me that you invited to the banquet. Like many Nasrettin Hoca stories, this one ends with a moral: "He who wears heaven in his heart is always well dressed." Demi's graceful illustrations are based on traditional Turkish paintings—full of intricate details, they also capture the good humor of her subject. (Ages 6-10)

Hamilton, Virginia. *The People Could Fly: The Picture Book*. Illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon. Alfred A. Knopf, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-375-82405-7, \$16.95; lib. 0-375-92405-1, \$18.99)

Long ago in Africa, it's said, the people knew how to fly, a skill that was forgotten when they were brought to the new world as slaves. Only one man remembered the magic incantation. When things got unbearable for the captives, he whispered the word into their ears so that they could rise up and escape. The title story from Virginia Hamilton's seminal collection of African American folktales, first published 20 years ago, appears here with the words unchanged for this picture book edition. Leo and Diane Dillon's luminous gold-toned illustrations beautifully express their dreams of liberation and freedom. The final picture shows a contemporary family sharing stories as the spirit of Virginia Hamilton looks down from above. An editor's note at beginning of the book shares a letter Hamilton wrote her about the story in 1984. (Ages 5-12)

Orgel, Doris, reteller. *The Bremen Town Musicians and Other Animal Tales from Grimm*. Illustrated by Bert Kitchen. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2004. 48 pages (trade 1-59643-010-9, \$18.95) Translating directly from the original German of the Brothers Grimm, Doris Orgel retells six animal tales with a crisp, conversational style. Two of the tales are fairly well-known ("The Bremen Town Musicians" and "The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids") but the other four are not frequently included in contemporary collections of Grimm's Fairy Tales: "The Hare and the

Hedgehog,” “King of the Birds,” “When the Birds and the Beasts Went to War,” and “The Fox and the Geese.” A short personal note from the author follows each story, most often explaining the choices she made in the retelling but sometimes offering a bit of insight into the tale itself. Like her retellings, these notes are also written in a conversational style. Although the animals speak to each other, Bert Kitchen’s exquisite realistic paintings are not in the least anthropomorphized; he shows them looking like real animals in the natural world. (Ages 4-8)

So, Meilo. *Gobble, Gobble, Slip, Slop: A Tale of a Very Greedy Cat*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2004. 28 pages (trade 0-375-82504-5, \$15.95; lib. 0-375-92504-X, \$17.99)

A cat invited to a parrot’s house for a meal not only eats all 500 cakes the parrot had baked, he eats the parrot, too. Then he gulps down an old woman who scolds him, a farmer and a donkey trying to pass him on the road, a sultan and his bride, soldiers and elephants—everything that crosses his path. “Gobble, gobble, slip, slop.” But two tiny crabs he swallows prove to be his undoing (“*snip, snip, snip*”) in Meilo So’s delightful retelling of an Indian folktale. The author/illustrator uses repetition to underscore the humor in a story illustrated with fanciful ink and watercolor on rice paper. (Ages 4-7)

Ward, Helen. *Unwitting Wisdom: An Anthology of Aesop’s Fables*. Chronicle, 2004. 64 pages (trade 0-8118-4450-1, \$18.95)

Striking illustrations and sophisticated design are the hallmarks of this lush anthology of twelve fables from Aesop. Whether it’s the overconfident hare bounding along in his race with the tortoise, or a disgruntled fox sidling away from a luscious cluster of grapes beyond his reach, the visual images on the over-sized pages are expertly crafted. The selection of fables range from Aesop’s most familiar (the tortoise and the hare) to some lesser known (the battle between mice and weasels). Each of the stories is told within a two-page spread, and the narrative’s varying font size and style lends itself to expressive reading aloud. An introduction relates how Helen Ward’s choice of fables featuring animals allows the universal human morals to be presented without additional labels of gender, age, race or class. (Age 6 and older)

Washington, Donna L. *A Pride of African Tales*. Illustrated by James Ransome. Amistad / HarperCollins, 2004. 70 pages (trade 0-06-024929-3, \$16.99; lib. 0-06-024932-3, \$17.89)

Donna L. Washington opens her vibrant collection of folktales with a marvelous commentary on the nature of storytelling. She discusses the difference between telling a story and writing it down and invites readers to make the book’s stories their own. The six lively tales she tells come from Ghana, Congo, the Republic of Congo, Nigeria, and Cameroon. Washington provides a brief introduction to each story to explain its function or role in the scheme of story genres (e.g., “*Pourquoi* tales are told to explain why the world is the way it is.”) as well as to set the scene. A map at the start of each tale shows where its country of origin lies on the continent of Africa. Story notes and a bibliography at the end of the book provide source information and additional context for each. James Ransome’s rich, dynamic watercolor illustrations and detail decorations add lovely visual impact to a terrific volume. (Ages 6-11)

Historical People, Places, and Events

Allen, Thomas B. *George Washington, Spymaster: How the Americans Outspied the British and Won the Revolutionary War*. Illustrated by Cheryl Harness. National Geographic, 2004. 184 pages (trade 0-7922-5126-1, \$16.95)

Secret codes. Secret agents. Double agents. Spies. Thomas B. Allen’s fascinating account of the intrigue, intelligence, and operatives on both sides of the Revolutionary War paints a clear, cogent portrait of the colonists’ superiority in the spy game. George Washington’s intelligence network was sophisticated, structured so that no individual, even Washington himself, knew too much. It was supplemented by colonists like Lydia Darragh, who provided unsolicited secrets to aid in the fight for independence.

Darragh transmitted what she overheard British officers saying by hiding scraps of paper, written in family code, inside cloth-covered buttons. She sewed the buttons onto the coat of her 14-year-old son, who passed them onto his older brother, a lieutenant in Washington's army. Showing how courage and deceit on both sides of the intelligence fight often had a direct impact on battlefield outcomes, *George Washington, Spymaster* reveals a critical component of the United States's victory over Britain. This wholly engaging volume is intimately sized to look like a secret codebook. (Ages 8-13)

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *The Flagmaker*. Illustrated by Claire A. Nivola. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-618-26757-3, \$16.00)

Thirteen-year-old Caroline Pickersgill was the daughter of a famous flagmaker in Baltimore during the colonial period. During the War of 1812, when the United States was still trying to prove its right to be an independent country, flags were an especially important symbol of unity and pride. It was during this period that Caroline helped her mother, Mary, sew a gigantic flag that would fly over Fort McHenry on the shores of Baltimore Harbor. It measured 30 by 42 feet and weighed 80 pounds. This flag would eventually inspire Francis Scott Key to write "The Star Spangled Banner," which became the national anthem in 1831. A well-researched and lively historical narrative is illustrated in soft watercolor images that depict the bustling new city and the busy harbor of Baltimore. The huge task of sewing such a large flag is clear through detailed drawings of women working by candlelight, with piles of fabric stretched out across the floor. Historically accurate details of furniture, dress, and city life further enhance the artwork in a fascinating book that ends with Flag Facts and a bibliography. (Ages 7-12)

Bausum, Ann. *With Courage and Cloth: Winning the Fight for a Woman's Right to Vote*. National Geographic, 2004. 111 pages (trade 0-7922-7647-7, \$21.95)

Beloit author Ann Bausum tells the story of American suffragists, with a spotlight on Alice Paul, leader of the National Woman's Party. Paul's lifelong devotion to the cause is placed within an outline of the 72-year battle for women's voting rights. Of particular interest is the conflict between different factions of the suffragist movement, specifically Paul's radical National Woman's Party and the more restrained National American Woman Suffrage Association. Both organizations shared the same ultimate goal, but the methods they used to get there were dissimilar. And although their styles clashed, often the actions of one group allowed the other freedom to work towards the identical end from a different angle. Vivid descriptions of violent mob responses to suffragists' pickets and marches give a sense of a true battle, one that required physical and moral bravery as well as strategic planning. Similarly, grim descriptions of the harsh treatment the activists faced in jail, including bodily abuse, neglect of injuries and illness, and brutal force-feedings of those on hunger strikes, underscore the women's dedication. By using direct quotes from letters, Senate committee hearings, and newspaper articles, the author conveys the diverse range of women who, despite some tactical differences, were united in their drive. To young women today, the right to vote is a given. In reading *With Courage and Cloth*, they'll hear the voices of those who fought and sacrificed for that right, not so long ago. (Ages 10-14)

Blumberg, Rhoda. *York's Adventures with Lewis and Clark: An African-American's Part in the Great Expedition*. HarperCollins, 2004. 88 pages (trade 0-06-009111-8, \$17.99; lib. 0-06-009112-6, \$18.89)

Most people know of the courageous expedition made by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark in 1803. A beautiful book full of well-documented photos and drawings focuses on a little-known member of the team, a man whose contributions all but ensured the expedition's success. York was a slave who had been "given" to Clark as a child to serve as his personal attendant. While there are many gaps in what is known about York's life, Rhoda Blumberg has culled all available sources to profile his critical role in the Corps of Discovery. Throughout the expedition, York's talents for hunting and trading and his strength, intelligence, and good nature made him indispensable. He was responsible for carrying all of his own belongings as well as those of Clark. York's loyalty to his master was well documented. One unexpected gift that York provided was the very thing that made him unequal to the other men in his team: the color of his skin. Native tribes were so interested in his skin and hair that the Corps was most definitely better

received than had they shown up as a band of white men. Unfortunately, upon returning to St. Louis after the expedition, York's contributions were suddenly ignored. He received no pay—certainly not the 320 acres of land enjoyed by other men—and he received no official commendation from the government until 2001, when President Clinton made him an honorary sergeant in the U.S. Army. Extensive endnotes and an index make this book adequate for research, but the story is so captivating that it can be enjoyed as a great read about a heroic American. (Ages 11-15)

Cooper, Michael L. *Dust to Eat: Drought and Depression in the 1930s*. Clarion, 2004. 81 pages (trade 0-618-15449-3, \$15.00)

In his introduction, Michael L. Cooper calls the 1930s “a turning point in American history.” He goes on within the body of this book to show how the economic crisis of the time and the environmental disaster called the Dust Bowl affected millions of Americans. The plight of so many homeless, unemployed, poverty-stricken people caused the federal government to play a new role in protecting U.S. citizens from misfortunes beyond their control. Often quoting from Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and using images from Dorothea Lange's powerful photographs, the author gives an immediate and clear voice to the people of a decade that redefined the responsibilities of government to the citizens of this country. (Ages 10-14)

Fradin, Judith Bloom and Dennis Brindell Fradin. *The Power of One: Daisy Bates and the Little Rock Nine*. Clarion, 2004. 178 pages (trade 0-618-31556-X, \$19.00)

When nine African American teenagers integrated Little Rock, Arkansas's Central High School in 1957, they were supported by many within their families and community. One of the key supporters and strategists behind them was a woman named Daisy Bates, a Little Rock black newspaper publisher and activist who was president of the state NAACP. Daisy met with the students regularly throughout their first year at Central High, working to keep them safe, sane, and calm in an environment of constant danger, hostility and degradation. Judith and Dennis Fradin's biography chronicles Daisy's early years in a childhood marked by tragedy and injustice, and her growth into an activist as an adult in a biography that also presents a stirring portrait of those turbulent times when children were on the front lines of the battle for civil rights. The Fradin's extensive research included interviews with many individuals, including two of the Little Rock Nine. (Ages 12-16)

Giblin, James Cross. *Secrets of the Sphinx*. Illustrated by Bagram Ibatoulline. Scholastic Press, 2004. 48 pages (trade 0-590-09847-0, \$17.95)

For thousands of years, people have flocked to the desert outside of what is now Cairo to see the three Great Pyramids and the noble Sphinx that lies in their shadow. James Cross Giblin looks at the history of the Sphinx—how and why scholars believe it was built and the fascination it has prompted from its earliest days--in a highly visual volume that blends his informative narrative with interpretive paintings by Bagram Ibatoulline. Giblin's text is divided into short (1-3 page) sections and includes information on relevant related topics such as the Rosetta Stone, which helped unlock the secrets of the Sphinx, and the legend of Atlantis, an alluring story promoted by spiritualist Edgar Caycee. Caycee also theorized that documents recounting the history of Atlantis were buried in chambers beneath the Sphinx's paws. His followers funded research expeditions to drill beneath the Sphinx, potentially compromising its structural integrity until the Egyptian government put a halt to their activities. This is one of a number of incidents Giblin chronicles regarding the damage the Sphinx has suffered throughout its history, some of it intentional, some of it caused by ignorance or, in the case of pollution, human progress. Giblin

does a superb job presenting scientific research, including questions still unanswered or debated, in an engaging, accessible volume. (Ages 8-14)

Marrin, Albert. *Old Hickory: Andrew Jackson and the American People*. Dutton, 2004. 262 pages (trade 0-525-47293-2, \$30.00)

Andrew Jackson was a complex and controversial president. To his many ardent fans, he was an exceptional military leader, a just lawyer, a forward-thinking pragmatist, and a true self-made American, proof that hard work can elevate a man beyond his birth. To his critics, he was hot-headed, vengeful, pugnacious, and responsible for some of the worst treatment of Native Americans and Black American slaves ever committed. In this thorough biography that draws on many primary sources and includes pictures and extensive end matter, Albert Marrin tells the story of the seventh president of the United States, during whose lifetime the young country experienced monumental change and growth. He begins by focusing on the Scotch-Irish background of Jackson's Tennessee family and uses Jackson's childhood as a way to frame many of his later decisions. Marrin presents a balanced analysis of such important events as the Louisiana Purchase, Jackson's leadership during the War of 1812—also known as America's Second War of Independence—and Jackson's unique economic policies. Jackson was the first president who found it necessary to call a cabinet meeting to discuss a sex scandal that threatened to destroy the Democratic Party. This book will appeal to history buffs and teenage iconoclasts alike. (Ages 13-17)

McCully, Emily Arnold. *Squirrel and John Muir*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 40 pages (trade 0-374-33697-0, \$16.00)

Naturalist John Muir is seen through the eyes of Floy, a ten-year-old girl who lived with her family in Yosemite Valley in 1868. The valley was just beginning to be a tourist attraction, and Floy's father, James Hutchings, made his money hosting visitors in his small hotel and guiding them through the natural wonders of the area. "As if the Fates had sent him," John Muir showed up looking for work and immediately began assisting Hutchings with improvements to the land. Floy, known by her family as "Squirrel" for her wild ways, was a daring and curious child and was quickly taken with Muir's confidence and courage in the rugged surroundings. He taught her many things, most notably to be a careful observer of nature. Together they explored every nook and cranny of the valley. Muir was convinced that glaciers had carved through the land millions of years ago, creating a truly unique and spectacular landscape. No one believed him at first, but eventually his theory was proven true. Emily Arnold McCully's bright watercolors pay tribute to the beauty of the setting, and her research is carefully documented in a bibliography at the end of the volume. (Ages 8-12)

McWhorter, Diane. *A Dream of Freedom: The Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1968*. Scholastic Press. 2004. 160 pages (trade 0-439-57678-4, \$19.95)

Diane McWhorter's examination of the Civil Rights movement from 1954 to 1968 places readers in the midst of this critical period in U.S. history. McWhorter provides an astonishingly clear discussion of this complicated time. Her introduction makes an indelible impression as she discusses her own life in Birmingham as a "child segregationist" during the 1950s and 1960s. It's not that McWhorter actively opposed civil rights as a child, she simply saw no reason why the Blacks in her community were so troublesome and disruptive (a reflection of the milder adult attitudes around her). It wasn't until she was an adult that she began to see what had been happening in a different way. That deeper understanding informs McWhorter's narrative as she presents key events in the Civil Rights movement year by year. She skillfully uses anecdotes and stories culled from research and interviews (cited generally in a list of key resources at the book's end, but not specifically sourced) to illustrate the tragedies of segregation, the

passionate desire for change, and the attitudes and actions of individuals on both sides of the cause. Chapter by chapter, in cogent, lively prose, she documents how events and actions fit into the larger picture of the Civil Rights movement. She reveals how the fight for civil rights involved individuals and groups with varying approaches to achieving social and political change and conveys how each played an important, often critical role. The incredible complexity of that time is revealed in a lucid portrait that is intellectually enriching and emotionally resonant, making “history” tangible, relevant, and alive. (Ages 10-18)

Morrison, Toni. *Remember: The Journey to School Integration*. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 78 pages (trade 0-618-39740-X, \$18.00)

In her introduction, Toni Morrison speaks directly to young readers: “This book is about you. Even though the main event in the story took place many years ago, what happened before it and after it is now part of all our lives. Because remembering is the mind’s first step toward understanding, this book is designed to take you on a journey through a time in American life when there was as much hate as there was love; as much anger as there was hope; as many heroes as cowards.” Morrison’s brief text, often just a phrase or sentence per page, imagines the thoughts of the people shown in the carefully selected photographs. This powerful combination of words and images unfolds the story of school integration and the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* to a new generation of American children. The closing pages provide a chronology of key events in civil rights and school integration and notes describing events pictured in each of the book’s photographs. (Age 7 and older)

O’Connor, Jane. *If the Walls Could Talk: Family Life at the White House*. Illustrated by Gary Hovland. A Paula Wiseman Book / Simon & Schuster, 2004. 40 pages (trade 0-689-86863-4, \$16.95)

Did you know that Warren Harding lost a set of White House china in a poker game? Or that Teddy Roosevelt’s children slid down the White House stairs on cookie trays? How about the time that William McKinley’s wife banned the color yellow from the White House? Take your pick of obscure White House facts, as there are plenty to choose from in this history of the presidential residence. From the time George Washington chose the building’s design and location (although he never lived there), through Jenna and Barbara Bush (the first White House twins), tidbits of information are presented chronologically through text and pictures. The caricature-style ink and watercolor illustrations feature the residents posed in memorable snapshots, like the Eisenhowers dining on trays while watching his-and-her television sets, and Woodrow Wilson directing the sheep grazing on the White House lawn to a missed spot. One final factoid: when Rutherford B. Hayes installed the first White House telephone, the phone number was, simply, one. (Ages 7-11)

Rappaport, Doreen. *Free at Last! Stories and Songs of Emancipation*. Illustrated by Shane W. Evans. Candlewick Press, 2004. 63 pages (trade 0-7636-1440-8, \$19.99)

A companion book to Rappaport’s earlier *No More! Stories and Songs of Slave Resistance* chronicles black experience in the United States from Emancipation in 1863 to 1954, when the Supreme Court ruled that segregation was illegal. Rappaport’s narrative is engages both mind and heart, blending an accessible factual narrative with stirring stories chronicling the experience of individual African Americans. There is Jane Kemper, a former slave who searches for her four children, stolen by her former master, and Harriet Postle, who clutches her baby son while refusing to reveal her husband’s whereabouts to the Klansmen who crash through her door. There are also brief stories about Ida B. Wells, Booker T. Washington, Jackie Robinson and others. African American songs and poems (such as Countee Cullen’s “The Incident”) add even greater emotional impact, as do Shane W. Evans’s oil illustrations in this notable volume. (Ages 10-14)

Rector, Anne Elizabeth. *Anne Elizabeth's Diary: A Young Artist's True Story*. With additional text by Kathleen Krull. Megan Tingley Books / Little, Brown, 2004. 64 pages (trade 0-316-07204-4, \$16.95) Anne Elizabeth Rector faithfully kept a diary for one year after receiving it as a gift for her twelfth birthday in 1912. An only child growing up in New York City, Anne Elizabeth recorded events in her daily life and illustrated her diary entries with lovely pen-and-ink miniatures. Anne Elizabeth's artistic talent is obvious, and she writes of her determination to pursue her art in the face of her mother's opposition. Despite being nearly 100 years old, the young writer's words and images are fresh and immediate as she tells of school, ice-skating, theater outings, and clashes of will with her mother. A fascinating author's note tells what happened after the diary's end: Anne Elizabeth Rector became an accomplished artist and entrepreneur. She made handmade furniture for movie stars and became wealthy from her real estate investments. Supplemental information about the culture and events of 1912 are scattered throughout the diary. (Ages 9-13)

Rumford, James. *Sequoyah: The Cherokee Man Who Gave His People Writing*. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-618-36947-3, \$16.00) James Rumford introduces Sequoyah, the Cherokee man who invented the syllabary that gave his people a written language, as a brave leader of his people," but not as you might think." Rumford explains Sequoyah's concern for the future of the Cherokee: "He did not want them to disappear in the white man's world. He did not want their Cherokee voices to fade away." Sequoyah's early efforts were lost when some Cherokee burned down his cabin, fearing the symbols he was developing were evil. When his six-year-old daughter, Ayoka, learned to read their language, views began to change. In 1824, the Cherokee Nation honored Sequoyah's efforts, the results of which live on: Rumford's restrained and elegant words are translated into Cherokee in this bilingual book. The author/artist used watercolor, pastel and pencil on paper adhered to wood to create illustrations that have the look and texture woodcuts. (Ages 6-9)

Shanower, Eric. *Sacrifice*. (Age of Bronze, vol. 2) Image Comics, 2004. 224 pages (trade 1-58240-360-0, \$29.95)

This massive graphic novel is the sequel to *A Thousand Ships*, which tells of events that lead up to the Trojan War. *Sacrifice* picks up where the prior volume left off, offering a richly told story of the Trojan War. Having done extensive research, Eric Shanower uses detailed pen and ink pictures and vibrant dialogue to tell the story in a wholly accessible way. The characters seem human, evoking empathy for their weaknesses rather than scorn, which seems to drive some retellings of the Greek myths when moral lessons are the author's primary concern. The romance and violence are both palpable and historically accurate, making this a telling for readers mature enough to put the range of sexual and social norms in historical context. Much of the story is told in dialogue, but there are several wordless spreads that are visually stunning. The scale of the war is visible in battalions and fields of corpses that appear in large frames that look like long-distance scenes, and in close-up shots, the passion between lovers feels almost too close. Shanower is a master storyteller who takes advantage of all the senses. The genealogy and guide to names at the end help keep a Greek mythology novice on track as more and more characters appear. (Ages 13-18)

Sís, Peter. *The Train of States*. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2004. 64 pages (trade 0-06-057838-6, \$17.99; lib. 0-06-057839-4, \$18.89)

A visit to Baraboo's Circus World Museum in Wisconsin inspired Peter Sís to present this compendium of information about the 50 states in the form of a circus train. Each state is featured as a circus wagon incorporating factual information—such as the state nickname and motto, notable characteristics, and famous historical figures—into its design. The circus wagons roll out in the order in which each territory entered statehood. An additional intriguing tidbit of information for each state is also provided. For

Wisconsin, SR highlighted the Great Circus Parade in downtown Milwaukee—an event that was no doubt still running strong at the time the book was created. (Ages 5-10)

Turner, Pamela S. *Hachiko: The True Story of a Loyal Dog*. Illustrated by Yan Nascimbene. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-618-14094-8, \$15.00)

The bronze statue “Loyal Dog Hachiko” in Shibuya Station in Tokyo is the inspiration for this story by Pamela S. Turner. The real Hachiko belonged to Dr. Ueno, a university professor in Tokyo. Late each day, the young dog waited at the train station for his master’s return. One day Dr. Ueno did not get off the train—he had died unexpectedly at work. For ten years, Hachiko continued to return to the station each day. His story was told in newspapers, and he became a favorite of all who saw him. Even before Hachiko died in 1935, a statue of him had been erected at the station. Today a replica of the original statue stands at the station—a favorite meeting spot in Tokyo. Turner has created a fictional narrator to tell Hachiko’s story and fill in several events between the death of the professor and the death of his companion. A young boy when he first meets the dog at the station, Kentaro is a teenager by the time Hachiko passes away. This spare, stirring first-person narrative draws its strength from Turner’s lack of embellishment, as well as her intuitive understanding of how a child—and later young adult—might respond to the sometimes sad, always extraordinary facts of the story. After Hachiko dies, Kentaro says, “I was seventeen, and too big to cry. But I went into the other room and did not come out for a long time.” Yan Nascimbene’s watercolor illustrations perfectly match the loveliness and restraint of the text. (Ages 5-9)

Warren, Andrea. *Escape from Saigon: How a Vietnam War Orphan Became an American Boy*. Melanie Kroupa Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 110 pages (trade 0-374-32224-4, \$17.00)

Born in 1966 to a Vietnamese mother and an American father, Long spent his early years living first in Saigon and then a rural Vietnamese village. His father left the family before Long turned two. After his mother’s suicide when Long was six, his grandmother cared for him. A year later, worried about her increasing inability to provide Long with food and shelter, his grandmother placed him in the Saigon Holt Center, an orphanage that specialized in finding children adoptive homes in the United States. On April 5, 1975, one day after the devastating crash of a C-5A cargo plane carrying 230 orphans and fifty adults out of Saigon, Long flew to America as part of Operation Babylift. He became the fourth and youngest son of the Steiner family of Ohio. Long’s story is placed within the larger picture of the fall of Saigon, the desperation of the Vietnamese families seeking American support, and the attempts of international aid workers to protect the children. The author, herself a parent of an adopted daughter evacuated from Saigon as an infant in 1975, writes about these events with compassion and respect. (Ages 10-14)

Biography and Autobiography

Brown, Don. *Odd Boy Out: Young Albert Einstein*. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-618-49298-4, \$16.00)

Don Brown’s picture-book biography of Albert Einstein frames the great thinker’s life and perspective as outside the box from his early childhood on. Young Albert is a late talker, but his words are “clever and sharp” once he begins to speak. By age four, this child who sometimes has a furious temper also shows single-minded fascination when he is engaged, like when he is allowed to explore the streets of Munich on his own. He doesn’t like sports, soldiers, or the things that interest other boys at his school. But the geometry book given to him by his tutor when he’s 12 captivates him like nothing has before, and he’s soon delving into higher mathematics. Brown’s superb narrative is written in the present tense and balances short, decisive sentences with brief but lyrical descriptions that embrace the wonder of Einstein’s fascination with the universe. The illustrations, primarily pen-and-ink, showcase the singularity of Einstein and his relationship to the world around him. (Ages 6-9)

Bruchac, Joseph. *Jim Thorpe's Bright Path*. Illustrated by S. D. Nelson. Lee & Low, 2004. 40 pages (trade 1-58430-166-X, \$17.95)

Joseph Bruchac's cogent text details key events in the childhood of one of the most talented athletes of the twentieth century. As a child in Oklahoma, Jim Thorpe loved being physically active and exploring the natural world with his father and twin brother, Charlie. From an early age, it was clear that he was a gifted athlete. When he and Charlie were sent away to Indian boarding school, Jim hated having to sit indoors all day so much that he once ran all the way back to his family's home, a distance of more than 20 miles. After both of his parents and his brother died, Jim stuck with school because he knew his father valued his getting an education. When a recruiter from the Carlisle Indian School noticed Jim's athletic ability, he talked him into transferring so he could be a member of their track team. There Jim excelled at track and at football, showing the promise of great things to come. A detailed author's note and timeline at the end of the book provide information about events in his adult life, including the controversy over his Olympic gold medals. S.D. Nelson's golden-hued, realistic illustrations provide a strong sense of time and place. (Ages 7-11)

Davies, Jacqueline. *The Boy Who Drew Birds: A Story of John James Audubon*. Illustrated by Melissa Sweet. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-618-24343-7, \$15.00)

When John James Audubon was 18 years old, he traveled alone from his home in France to America. His father hoped that he would learn about American business, and he also wanted to protect his son from military service in a Napoleonic war. "But what he liked to do best, from sunup to sundown, was watch birds." John James roamed the Pennsylvania countryside, sharpening his observational skills. His attic room housed his collection of pencil and crayon drawings of birds, which he would review and then burn each year on his birthday. The young artist hoped to someday make drawings he thought worthy of saving. John James Audubon was an astute naturalist, and migration theories he developed during these early years, although they were contrary to scientific opinion of the time, were later proven true. This picture-book biography focuses on Audubon's first year in America. A one-page note provides supplemental information about the rest of his career. Author's and artist's source notes and a bibliography of related adult books provide further background. The illustrations nicely complement Audubon's style of collection and observation, utilizing a range of media including watercolors and gouache, pen and ink, pencil and collage. (Ages 5-9)

Freedman, Russell. *The Voice That Challenged a Nation: Marian Anderson and the Struggle for Equal Rights*. Clarion, 2004. 114 pages (trade 0-618-15976-2, \$18.00)

Russell Freedman's elegant, eloquent portrait of singer Marian Anderson is not a comprehensive biography. Instead, it focuses on two key components of Anderson's life: her own struggle to become a singer and her role as a symbol in the struggle for African American civil rights. Freedman begins the narrative with an exhilarating description of Anderson's landmark concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1939, then moves back in time to explain how she came to be standing there. Her talent was recognized early on by family and a community that constantly showed its support. But as a young woman, Anderson was not even allowed to apply to a musical conservatory she hoped to attend because of her race. Once her professional performing career began, she had to travel and sing within the strict dictates of a Jim Crow society: train cars, waiting rooms, and audiences were segregated; hotels might not allow her to enter at all. Anderson never stopped striving to improve her art, and early on she knew failure as well as success. Later, she studied abroad to learn the subtleties of the European languages in which she often sang. It was in Europe that her fame took off (although she was already well known among many African Americans in the United States), but worldwide accolades were not enough for the Daughters of the American Revolution to allow her to sing in their Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. That rejection, on the basis of the DAR's policy against Black performers, led to Eleanor Roosevelt (and others) spearheading the call for the DAR to recant. Anderson was thrust into the limelight in a new way: as a symbol in the fight for equality. It was not a role Anderson was prepared to take on, but she grew to

embrace it with dignity and grace. Anderson's later life is covered briefly in the final chapters of an inspiring and informative volume that includes archival photos, detailed source notes, and a bibliography. (Ages 10-14)

Greenberg, Jan and Sandra Jordan. *Andy Warhol: Prince of Pop*. Delacorte Press, 2004. 193 pages (trade 0-385-73056-X, \$16.95; lib. 0-385-90079-1, \$18.99)

How did shy, sickly young Andy Warhol grow up to become Andy Warhol, one of the most brazen and influential figures on the art and popular culture scene in the 1960s and '70s? Another astute artist biography from Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan looks at Warhol's life and reveals more consistency than contradiction beneath the surface. Warhol certainly had an edgy, provocative approach to both art and life, with paintings that turned cultural figures—from soup cans to movie stars—into iconographic art, forays into experimental film, and his role as figurehead of the Factory, where the drug and counterculture thrived. Despite all this, it seems Warhol was never far removed from the insecure boy he once was. A master of turning life into art, Warhol thrived on observation as much (perhaps more) than attention and was always looking for ways to make art out of other people's lives instead of his own (although he clearly carefully crafted his own public persona, often for shock effect). Greenberg and Jordan's honest, straightforward treatment is a fascinating look at both the public and carefully guarded, unexpectedly tame and bittersweet private life of a major twentieth-century artist who was a cultural icon in his own right. (Ages 14-18)

Kerley, Barbara. *Walt Whitman: Words for America*. Illustrated by Brian Selznick. Scholastic Press, 2004. 48 pages (trade 0-439-35791-8, \$16.95)

Poet Walt Whitman was larger than life, and the surreal art in this picture-book biography perfectly depicts the intense range of emotions of the "voice of America" in the mid to late 1800s. Barbara Kerley quickly sums up the details of Whitman's young life, demonstrating his love affair with language and poetry, his fascination with the common people, and his passionate appreciation for the potential of America. She then focuses on the period of his life during which he made the most contributions to his country, both in words (his poetry) and in deed (his actions during the Civil War). Although Whitman was too old to fight, he was tireless in providing love and support to wounded soldiers through visits to battlefields and hospitals. The story of the Civil War as seen and experienced by Whitman is told through excerpts of his poetry, which, like the country itself, was large, unwieldy, and lawless. His style was wholly unique, ignoring traditional rules of rhyme and rhythm. The end matter turns this engaging read into an extraordinarily useful informational book, including more background historical information, a selection of more complete poems, and sources. (Ages 11-15)

Robinson, Sharon. *Promises to Keep: How Jackie Robinson Changed America*. Scholastic Press, 2004. 64 pages (trade 0-439-42592-1, \$16.95)

"On April 12, 1947, my father, Jack Roosevelt Robinson, stepped out of the Brooklyn Dodgers dugout, crossed first base, and assumed his position as first baseman . . . It was a defining moment for baseball—and for America." Sharon Robinson tells about her famous father in his many roles, which extended far beyond his extraordinary skill and success as a ballplayer, in this compelling biography. Jackie Robinson's commitment to social change is framed by a brief history of Blacks in the United States and an account of the work that continues in his name. An accessible text is supported by several timelines, candid photographs, and engaging portions of Robinson's letters to his family, written while traveling on the road throughout the baseball season. The ultimate portrait is of a man who lived true to his beliefs. As his daughter describes: "...one of the things I admired most about my father was how he stayed in the game until the end. He stood firm even when his opinion wasn't popular. Whether questioning an umpire or an American president, Dad used his celebrity to challenge an unjust system and support a movement organized to correct the wrongs." (Ages 9-14)

Contemporary People, Places, and Events

Sobol, Richard. *An Elephant in the Backyard*. Dutton, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-525-47288-6, \$17.99) Elephants are a common site in the village of Tha Klang, Thailand, where they roam freely. The best-known elephant in the village is Wan Pen, who lives with nine-year-old Jak and his younger sister, Muay. Wan Pen is famous for her name, which means "full moon." In the traditional naming ritual for elephants, an elephant is named for the item it first chooses to eat among the vast array of food provided. Wan Pen did not eat anything at her naming. Instead, she repeatedly stretched her trunk up high, as if trying to touch the moon shining overhead. When Wan Pen is not being trained for her future work giving rides to visitors, she spends time with Jak and Muay. She loves playing soccer with them, and she loves when they give her a bath. Richard Sobol's captivating photodocumentary weaves information about daily life for the people living in Tha Klang with information about the elephants, whose presence in Tha Klang is as ordinary to villagers there as the presence of dogs in a town here in the United States. (Ages 5-9)

Thimmesh, Catherine. *Madam President: The Extraordinary, True (and Evolving) Story of Women in Politics*. Illustrated by Douglas B. Jones. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 80 pages (trade 0-618-39666-7, \$17.00)

Entertainment and information successfully coexist in this book about women and politics. The bulk of its contents is framed within a dialogue between a contemporary girl and a gang of children and adults. When she announces her career ambition to be president of the United States, a boy scoffs, "'You ...?' 'a ... GIRL?'" Someone else says, "'Well, maybe you could marry a president ...'" And with that, the book launches into a series of short biographical sketches about women who have been politically active. The lineup begins with influential first ladies (Abigail Adams through Hillary Rodham Clinton), covers key suffragists, several U.S. congresswomen, a few female presidential appointees, and then vice presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro. Between each category of women, the book returns to the contemporary presidential hopeful as she considers her options. A friend suggests that she might improve her odds of holding office by moving to a foreign country, as America ranks fifty-second worldwide regarding women in government. The final set of biographies features some of those international women of power, including Margaret Thatcher and Benazir Bhutto. In a hopeful conclusion, the girl outlines the prerequisites for running for U.S. president: American citizenry, born in the States, and at least 35 years old. Last seen she is heading off to the White House, while the skeptic from the opening pages intones, "'After you, Madam President.'" Cartoonlike illustrations on every page convey an upbeat mood, while quotes from the featured women anchor the text in fact.

Winter, Jeanette. *September Roses*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-374-36736-1, \$14.00)

On September 11, 2001, two South African sisters who grow roses were on an airplane with 2,400 of their blooms, heading to a flower show in New York City. Their plane landed safely in New York, but they were stranded at the airport like thousands of others. A church group helped them find a place to stay, but they no longer had a use for their roses. Or did they? Jeanette Winter's moving picture book is small in size but brimming with feeling as she touches on the tragic events of that day and the generous act of two foreign visitors who used their artistry to reach out to a city full of hurting hearts. An author's note preceding the main text tells how Winter's own experiences that September led her to write the story, which is based on true events. An additional note at the brief volume's end adds details she learned after creating this spare and powerful work, which is illustrated in both full color and black-and-white to underscore the changing emotions that ripple from page to page. (Ages 6-10)

Issues in Today's World

McKee, David. *The Conquerors*. Handprint Books, 2004. 24 pages (trade 1-59354-078-7, \$16.95)
A timely parable tells the story of a powerful General of the biggest nation who invades and takes over all the smaller countries around him, until there is only one small country left--almost too small to be of consequence. When the General sends his soldiers there, the country offers no resistance. Instead, it welcomes the soldiers, who eventually become completely assimilated. The furious General calls his soldiers back and sends out fresh troops, but the same thing happens again. Each time, the soldiers bring back songs, food, and customs from the small country, until even the General himself is fully assimilated, albeit unknowingly. David McKee's vivid colored-pencil illustrations are composed of primary colors and simple shapes that give a childlike feel to the art. (Ages 3-7)

Radunsky, Vladimir. *What Does Peace Feel Like?* An Anne Schwartz Book / Atheneum, 2004. 16 pages (trade 0-689-86676-3, \$14.95)
The author of this cozy picture book asked a variety of children some questions about peace: What does it smell like? What does it look like? Their responses are fresh, poetic and surprising, giving the word "peace" meanings that correspond to the best that can be experienced by the five senses. Bold, textured paintings depict different children and all of their peaceful images: a freshly baked pizza, laughter and happiness and birthdays, someone stroking your back, an angel... . The child-poets are listed by name and age on each page and are all students at an international school in Rome. The last page lists the word "peace" in over one hundred different languages, from Abenaki to Zulu. (Ages 4-8)

Activities

Janeczko, Paul B. *Top Secret: A Handbook of Codes, Ciphers, and Secret Writing*. Illustrated by Jenna LaReau. Candlewick Press, 2004. 136 pages (trade 0-7636-0971-4, \$16.99)
Who can resist the prospect of communicating by secret code? Paul Janeczko provides a solid introduction to an impressive array of codes, easing into his subject with explanations of Pig Latin and Morse code. After covering familiar ground, the author moves on to more obscure ciphers, such as Rail Fence and Greek Skytale, to name just a few. Each code and cipher is first placed within its historical context; a clear description of its structure and mechanics follows. Those eager to use this new knowledge will appreciate the many examples of codes and ciphers included throughout the book, as well as the directions on how to solve them. For those who get stumped, answers are thoughtfully provided in an appendix. References to the use of codes and ciphers in literature will direct interested readers to stories by Arthur Conan Doyle and Edgar Allan Poe. Etgay ackingcray! (Age 9 and older)

Love, Ann and Jane Drake. *The Kids Book of the Night Sky*. Illustrated by Heather Collins. Kids Can Press, 2004. 144 pages (trade 1-55337-357-X, \$19.95; pbk. 1-55337-128-3, \$12.95)
This compendium of facts, folklore, and hands-on activities will delight young stargazers and provide them with a wealth of information about astronomy. Chapters on the moon, the stars, the planets, and the sky in each season all suggest something to make, from a planisphere to a star clock, and/or do, from a celestial scavenger hunt to a game of Night Sky "I Spy." Younger children will need help with some of the activities, but there is enough variety to offer something for children of many ages. The authors' fresh, lively narrative offers up plenty of science along with brief, breezy versions of traditional lore from peoples around the world. The clear, concise information is never confused by its juxtaposition with folklore or by the humorous contexts in which it is sometimes presented (such as the interview with an aging star). The two-color artwork in blue and black is often unremarkable, but it works well when it matters here—diagramming a project or showing specific information about aspects of the night sky. (Ages 7-12)

Understanding Oneself and Others

Brisson, Pat. *Mama Loves Me from Away*. Illustrated by Laurie Caple. Boyds Mills Press, 2004. 32 pages (trade 1-56397-966-7, \$15.95)

“My birthday is Mama’s birthday, too. ‘You’re the best present I ever had,’ she always told me. ‘Tell me again,’ I’d say.” One of the rituals that has marked a young girl’s warm, loving relationship with her mother are the stories Mama tells about her past. A sensitive picture book about a child whose mother is in prison focuses on the child’s sadness as their shared birthday approaches. Even though she can visit Mama, the girl knows it won’t be the same. Grammy warns her not to expect a present. “I knew there were no stores, but I couldn’t imagine a birthday without a present from Mama.” At the prison, however, there are two surprises: if she closes her eyes while her mother tells the story of her birth, “I could pretend it was just Mama and me.” And it turns out her mother *does* have a gift for her after all: she has written down one story for each night of the week, so that they can share them “across the miles.” Pat Brisson’s graceful, restrained text and Laurie Caple’s warm illustrations reflect the heartache of many children and parents who must love each other across the miles. (Ages 5-9)

Durant, Alan. *Always and Forever*. Illustrated by Debi Gliori. U.S. edition: Harcourt, 2004. 24 pages (trade 0-15-216636-X, \$16.00)

Otter, Mole, Fox and Hare live happily together, each responsible for some aspect of the work that families share. Then Fox becomes ill and dies. Otter, Mole and Hare are steeped in sadness. “Fox’s family missed him so much. They felt lost without him.” They grieve throughout the winter. In spring, when Squirrel comes to visit, she tries to comfort them without success, until she begins to remember the funny things she doesn’t miss about Fox—like his awful cooking and his disastrous attempts to fix things. Alan Durant acknowledges the importance of time, laughter, and above all, memories, in a picture book about death—and life, and love—for young children. (Ages 3-6)

Ellis, Deborah. *Three Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak*. A Groundwood Book / Douglas & McIntyre, 2004. 110 pages (trade 0-88899-554-7, \$16.95)

In her introduction to this affecting collection of interviews with Palestinian and Israeli children, Deborah Ellis writes: “The war in the Middle East has been going on for so long...that it often seems it will continue forever. But war, like almost everything else humans do, is a choice...The children in this book talk about how the choices other people have made have affected their lives. The history of the area and its people is a weight that has been placed, none too gently, on their shoulders.” Perhaps not surprisingly, the interviews that follow are more disheartening than heartening as they reveal what war and living under the threat of violence has done to many—at least many of these—children and young adults. Their ability to extend compassion and understanding to others has been compromised by the lack of compassion and understanding they feel in their own lives living under oppression (for some) and the constant threat of violence (for all). They are achingly childlike and familiar in the likes and dislikes that all children can speak to with passion: food, colors, brothers and sisters. But many also speak passionately about those they see as the enemy: tragically, it’s one another. Not every child is bitter, a few are dispassionate, and some hold onto idealism despite all they’ve seen and heard. Ellis ends with one such young adult, an 18-year-old Israeli peace activist whose idealism is tempered with pragmatism: “We will make our own peace, just as we have made our own war.” It’s a hopeful ending to a painful, honest examination of one part of the cost of the conflict in the Middle East. (Ages 12-18)

English, Karen. *Speak to Me (And I Will Listen Between the Lines)*. Illustrated by Amy June Bates. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-374-37156-3, \$16.00)

A third grade classroom is the setting for Karen English's collection of poems offering glimpses into the lives of some of the students. Some shine, and some struggle. There are disagreements and hurt feelings, proud moments, and poignant, sometimes heartbreaking looks at the truths they need to tell, whether or not they are real ("My real daddy's coming for me after school / To buy me whatever I want / To take me in his arms / Drive me all around / Show me off . . ."). Authentic and childlike, each poem does indeed invite readers to listen between the lines, to attempt to understand more fully the child behind the words that have been spoken. (Ages 6-9)

Gaskins, Pearl. *I Believe In ... Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Young People Speak About Their Faith*. Cricket Books, 2004. 205 pages (trade 0-8126-2713-X, \$18.95)

Pearl Gaskins uses the words "faith" and "religion" interchangeably in a book that presents excerpts from interviews with one hundred teenagers to demonstrate the wide range of beliefs and practices reflected in the spiritual lives of young adults in the United States. At a time when the material world and consumer culture seem to dominate public discourse, it is refreshing to read so many teens' "journeys of faith," as Gaskins calls them. Most interesting is the diversity within each of the three traditions presented. (Absent are any Buddhist or Hindu voices, although several teens do refer to having researched those traditions.) Many essays across all three religions feature discussion of the bullying and intolerance within a single faith. The difficulty of being a person of faith in a multicultural environment is underscored as well. Other subjects, including sexual morality, women's issues, and families of mixed faith, are among the topics that have these teens thinking deeply about their lives in relation to faith. A list of resources includes websites, books, and religious organizations in this welcome volume. (Ages 13-17)

Harris, Robie H. *Sweet Jasmine, Nice Jackson: What It's Like To Be 2 – And To Be Twins!* Illustrated by Michael Emberley. (Growing Up Stories) Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-689-83259-1, \$16.95)

The third volume in the "Growing Up Stories" series by Robie H. Harris and Michael Emberley focuses on the behavior and developmental milestones of two-year-olds. The multilayered text has an inviting story for younger children about twins Jasmine and Jackson and information for older children (and parents) about why two-year-olds behave the way they do. Information about twins is incorporated into both levels of the narrative. Brown-skinned Jasmine and Jackson are distinct individuals with differing skills, accomplishments, likes, and fears. Jasmine is the first to use the potty and crawl from her crib; Jackson is very proud when he dresses himself for the first time. Jasmine is worried about disappearing down the bathtub drain; Jackson fears getting sucked up the vacuum cleaner hose. The twins love imaginative play, mimicking adult behavior, and asking questions—it's all part of learning about themselves and the world around them. Harris and Emberley have created another winning book that speaks to children's fascination with other children—and themselves. (Ages 3-6)

Kyuchukov, Hristo. *My Name Was Hussein*. Illustrated by Allan Eitzen. Boyds Mills Press, 2004. 32 pages (trade 1-56397-964-0, \$15.95)

Hussein is a young Roma boy ("some call us Gypsies, but we are the Roma people"). He is Muslim and he loves his religion's special days, with their food and family traditions. And he loves his name, which means "handsome," and has been passed down in his family for generations. But everything changes when the soldiers arrive. The mosque is closed on Ramadan. His family is not allowed to shop or travel. Then the soldiers come with guns and dogs—right to Hussein's door. His family is taken to the mayor's office, where their identity cards are destroyed. They are told they must choose new, Christian names in order to get new identity cards. "Now I have a new identity card . . . It says my name is Harry. At school my teachers call me Harry. On the streets my parents call me Harry . . . what would you call me? My name was Hussein." Bulgarian author Hristo Kyuchukov based his story on events in Bulgaria during the 1980s. His young protagonist speaks in words that are spare and poignant, full of confusion and

sadness as only a child can know them. Muted illustrations echo the story's tone and show Muslim traditions specific to the Roma people. (Ages 6-9)

Moss, Peggy. *Say Something*. Illustrated by Lea Lyon. Tilbury House, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-88448-261-8, \$16.95)

A welcome picture book focuses on the difficult position in which many children find themselves as witnesses to mean or bullying behavior and also invites them to consider the role that silence plays. "There's a kid in my school who gets picked on all the time," begins the young, unnamed narrator. She describes several situations in which other kids in her school are being teased, bullied, or hurtfully ignored. Each time she separates herself from the instigators, pointing out that she doesn't do what they do. She feels sorry for the victims, but she never says a word or does a thing to try to change what is happening. Then comes a day when her friends aren't with her at lunchtime and she has to sit alone. A group of kids approaches and start telling her jokes; then the jokes become about her. Just as she's felt sorry for kids being teased, she can tell that other kids in the cafeteria feel sorry for her. But they don't say a word. Peggy Moss offers a hopeful ending rooted in one small, affirming action in a pointed book that invites children to talk about how hard it can be—yet how important it is—to take a stand, and how a simple act like saying "hello" can be the first step in making a difference. (Ages 5-10)

The Arts

Ajmera, Maya and John D. Ivanko. *To Be an Artist*. Foreword by Jacques d'Amboise. SHAKTI for Children / Charlesbridge, 2004. 32 pages (lib. 1-57091-503-2, \$15.95)

Photographs of children from all over the world engaged in a wide range of artistic endeavors work in conjunction with a multilayered text to explore many ways of being an artist. The large, boldface type on each page spread offers a broad statement about one way of being an artist ("To be an artist means making music—playing drums of all shapes and sizes . . . or blowing on horns and flutes . . ."). Text in a smaller font on each page expands on that type of art, offering more information on music, dancing, drawing, painting, theater, and more. The photographs serve to underscore the many variations for each type of artistry: drums look different from one nation to another, for example, as do traditional dances. But they also emphasize the joy that art in its many forms brings to children regardless of where they live, as well as the need to express human creativity shared by all cultures. While it would have been helpful to label the locales in each photograph by more than just country name (so as not to imply there is no variation within each nation), the lack of greater specificity is a small oversight. (Ages 4-8)

Bolden, Tonya. *Wake Up Our Souls: A Celebration of Black American Artists*. Harry N. Abrams, 2004. 128 pages (trade 0-8109-4527-4, \$24.95)

Tonya Bolden provides a dynamic introduction to a wide range of Black American artists in a volume that is visually dazzling and intellectually stimulating. Bolden has chosen artists to represent "a range of human experiences and mediums used." Each chapter explores a selection of artists as the narrative moves chronologically from the late eighteenth century to contemporary times. Rather than creating biographical profiles for each artist, Bolden has woven elements of their life story into her exploration of the art created during each period in the history of African American art that she outlines. She examines the lives of selected artists more fully in sidebars. She also provides thoughtful narratives about the works of art reproduced in the volume, encouraging readers to think about the connection between art and life. Among the works of art shown is a photograph of August Savage's marvelous sculpture *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, created for the 1939 World's Fair. The piece was destroyed after the fair along with the temporary building in which it had been housed because Savage did not have the resources to move and

store her monumental work. That story alone underscores the importance of this volume that introduces young adults to important voices and visions in African American art. (Ages 11-16)

Gelman, Rita Golden. *Doodler Doodling*. Illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2004.

20 pages (trade 0-688-16645-8, \$15.99)

When a girl begins doodling in school, the drawings lead her on a flight of fancy that careens almost out of control. Pictures and language both are essential in this book that relishes wordplay as well as visual humor and is ultimately about creativity and imagination. The girl's first drawing is of "Teachers teaching." Her mind then leaps to "Fliers flying." Things quickly escalate on the ladder of absurdity: "Fliers teacher. Teachers flying. Teachers teaching flying fliers. Fliers flying teachers....What?" Head in hands, the girl begins again, and an ever crazier, more complex, and more hilarious series of rearranged words and pen-and-ink doodles cascade across the pages. Paul O. Zelinsky and Rita Golden Gelman's boisterous collaboration is a breathless delight. (Ages 5-10)

Holiday, Billie and Arthur Herzog Jr. *God Bless the Child*. Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. Amistad / HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-028797-7, \$16.99; lib. 0-06-029487-6, \$17.89)

The lyrics to Billie Holiday's 1939 jazz song might at first glance seem an unlikely candidate for a picture book text. But in the capable hands of Jerry Pinkney, it all works beautifully. Pinkney has captured the spirit of the song with intricately detailed watercolor paintings depicting an African American family moving from the rural south to Chicago in the 1930s as part of the Great Migration. The central character is the family's youngest child who's "got his own" as a full participant in contributing to the family income with odd jobs, and ultimately by going to school and getting an education. A CD of the original recording of Billie Holiday and Her Orchestra performing the song is included, so that readers can have it in the background as they follow Pinkney's intricately detailed visual story with their eyes. (Ages 6-12)

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *Art Against the Odds: From Slave Quilts to Prison Paintings*. Crown, 2004. 48 pages (trade 0-375-82406-5, \$19.95; lib. 0-375-92406-X, \$21.99)

From 1899 to 1930, Adolf Wölfli spent most of each day creating intricately detailed pencil drawings of a fantasy world he had imagined as a child. Through art, he escaped the misery of his life in the Waldau Mental Asylum in Switzerland, to which he had been committed at age 31. His artwork is an example of one of the kinds of "outsider art" that Susan Goldman Rubin discusses. Rubin defines outsider art as visual art created by children and adults living under horrendous conditions. Some of the artists, like Wölfli, were patients in mental institutions. Others were captives in military prisons, internment and concentration camps, or modern-day prisons. A chapter is devoted to the art of slave quilts and includes information on several people who made quilts, different techniques, and coded messages, as well as contemporary people who are carrying on family quilting traditions. A final chapter focuses on child artists who make toys from the scraps they find in the trash and students in a Bronx high school who create collective works of art based on books they're reading in class. Illustrated with color photographs of some of the artwork cited, Rubin's book is a testament to the transforming power of art. (Ages 9-14)

Sayre, Henry. *Cave Paintings to Picasso: The Inside Scoop on 50 Art Masterpieces*. Chronicle, 2004. 93 pages (trade 0-8118-3767-X, \$22.95)

A brief examination of 50 works of art places each on a timeline of human creativity. Beginning with the small ivory carving *Woman from Brassempouy*, the earliest representation of a human face (c. 22,000 B.C.E.), each page spread discusses a different piece of art from around the world and across much of human history. The works gradually move closer to the present, ending with Ren Magritte's 1964 painting *The Son of Man*, a striking contrast to the Brassempouy carving in its depiction of the human face and form. The relevant section of the overall timeline appears on the border of each page spread. The

presentation of each work features a large, full-color photograph and a narrative that talks about each in relation to the cultural context in which it was created. The author's intent was not to be comprehensive. Rather, he set out to create "a book of discovery" and has more than achieved his goal. (Ages 8-14)

Slaymaker, Melissa Eskridge. *Bottle Houses: The Creative World of Grandma Prisbrey*. Illustrated by Julie Paschkis. Henry Holt, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-8050-7131-8, \$16.95)

At the age of 60, Tressa "Grandma" Prisbrey began building her bottle village. Over the course of the next ten years, Grandma Prisbrey constructed 22 sculptures and 13 one-room buildings out of bottles scavenged during daily visits to the dump. After stacking bottles to make walls, "all she had to buy was cement to hold them together." Her bottle projects included a chapel, a birdbath, a wishing well, and a rumpus room. Not limiting herself to glass, she also devised a house of shells and a pyramid of car headlights and lipstick cases. The illustrations' glowing jewel tones and charming visual details convey Grandma Prisbrey's appreciation of color and her obvious delight in whimsy. She even used pink, green, and blue vegetable dyes to transform her three kittens. The final two pages feature photographs of the late artist and scenes from her bottle village in California. (Ages 4-9)

Under the Spell of the Moon: Art for Children From the World's Great Illustrators. Edited by Patricia Aldana. Translated by Stan Dragland. Foreword by Katherine Paterson. A Groundwood Book / Douglas & McIntyre, 2004. 80 pages (trade 0-88899-559-8, \$25.00)

In Katherine Paterson's foreword to this lovely volume, she provides a brief history of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) and its founder, Jella Lepman, who hoped that "by nourishing children with the best of books from around the world, they would make friends with children who lived in very different cultures, but who also, like them, longed to grow up in a world of peace." In undertaking this compilation of illustrations from international artists, the proceeds of which will benefit IBBY, editor Patricia Aldana sought to compile work that "represents all the different circumstances of illustration from around the world." The result is a volume featuring 32 paintings from artists in many nations, only a handful of who are well known here in the United States (e.g., Trina Schart Hyman, Peter **SR** Rosemary Wells, Vera B. Williams). Many are IBBY Hans Christian Andersen Award winners or nominees from around the world. Others are virtual unknowns even in their own nation. The artists were invited to illustrate a text of their own choosing. Many of the texts originate in languages other than English, and this multilingual book offers each poem, verse, or story excerpt in its original language and an English translation. Wide ranging in style and subject, the artwork is sometimes soothing, sometimes striking, and always intriguing. (Age 5 and older)

Poetry

George, Kristine O'Connell. *Hummingbird Nest: A Journal of Poems*. Illustrated by Barry Moser. Harcourt, 2004. 48 pages (trade 0-15-202325-9, \$16.00)

A nesting hummingbird on her backyard patio inspired this collection of poems from Kristine O'Connell George. The hummingbird arrived in early February. Soon, there was a nest with two eggs, which hatched in early March. In the weeks that followed, the baby birds grew into fledglings. By April, they had flown the nest. George captures the unfolding drama in brief, lovely poems that chronicle the hummingbirds' activities, as well as the impact of their presence on observers both human and otherwise (the family dog and cat are among those affected by the temporary residents). Barry Moser's delicate watercolor sketches visually extend the idea of the book as a "nature journal," and each one is dated to establish the startlingly brief timeline in which events occurred. Within that whirlwind of activity, each poem is a moment of deliberate contemplation, witness to a miracle of nature. (Ages 6-11)

Grandits, John. *Technically, It's Not My Fault: Concrete Poems*. Clarion, 2004. 48 pages (trade 0-618-42833-X, \$15.00; pbk. 0-618-50361-7, \$5.95)

Concrete poems are as much about shape and space as they are about language. The words of each poem are arranged to suggest an image related to the poem's meaning: a ball bouncing for a basketball poem, a swirl of words heading down a toilet bowl for a poem about being sick. Each poem in this collection is one of 11-year-old Robert's thoughts on life. His odes to pizza and baseball are as appreciative and fun as his thank-you notes and fart poems are sarcastic and snotty. He loves to play with language and ideas but gets into his fair share of trouble in a book that will be irresistible to poetry fans and disdainers alike. John Grandits uses a variety of patterns and fonts, providing information on each typeface that will be of special interest for readers who have an interest in poetry or design. (Ages 8-14)

Greenfield, Eloise. *In the Land of Words: New and Selected Poems*. Illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist. Amistad / HarperCollins, 2004. 47 pages (trade 0-06-028993-7, \$16.99; lib. 0-06-028994-5, \$17.89) Eloise Greenfield's exceptional poetry pays tribute to the richness of words. Twenty-one poems, some reprinted from earlier books, others appearing for the first time, celebrate the power of poetic language. Part I focuses on poets and poems, including thoughts on new babies, music, friendship, and family. Part II, titled "In the Land," looks directly at words as they are used in stories, books, jokes, riddles, and poetry. In this picture book illustrated with sewn fabric collages, a renowned poet invites children join her in "... the land of words, / for I am at home there, / and never leave / for long." (Ages 6-11)

Grimes, Nikki. *What is Goodbye?* Illustrated by Raúl Colón. Hyperion, 2004. 60 pages (trade 0-7868-0778-4, \$15.99)

"One leaves / and many hearts / are broken. / There must be / a better arithmetic / somewhere." The epigraph to Nikki Grimes's tender story in poems about a grieving family encapsulates the heartache that spills out on the pages that follow. Jesse and Jerilyn are siblings, and their older brother, Jeron, has just died. In pairs of identically titled poems, Grimes chronicles the cycle of grief in their two skillfully distinguished voices. The poems in Jesse's voice use simplicity of language, familiar rhyme patterns, and short, metered lines to create what is almost a singsong effect, clearly conveying that he is a younger child. The poems in Jerilyn's voice are written in free verse, using imagery and metaphor to explore feelings that are more nuanced, establishing her as older. Each pair of poems is a dance of point and counterpoint: the two children do not always experience grief in the same way; at the same time, they are caught up in a cycle of grief that is part of their collective family experience. There is initial shock and sadness, anger and confusion, lingering pain, the slow, almost imperceptible start to healing, and, finally, relief: happiness and wholeness possible once again. Raul Colón's lovely spot illustrations extend the emotional resonance of this stirring volume. (Ages 9-14)

Hovey, Kate. *Voices of the Trojan War*. Illustrated by Leonid Gore. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2004. 117 pages (trade 0-689-85768-3, \$17.95)

Kate Hovey uses quotes from classic works about the Trojan War as epigraphs to individual poems in many voices that retell the story of Troy in an accessible, affecting, and engaging narrative. Hovey launches her verse with carefully selected passages from *The Aenid* by Virgil, *The Illiad* by Homer, *Agamemnon* by Aeschlyus, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and other works. Her own poems use a variety of formal structures, but they never get in the way of her easy-to-follow narrative line. She projects multiple perspectives on the battle and ultimate defeat of Troy, stressing the poignancy, irony and tragedy of the story. (Ages 13-18)

Hughes, Shirley. *Olly and Me*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-7636-2374-1, \$15.99)

Car rides that seem endless, Saturday shopping at the market, making pancakes with Dad – these and other activities are the subject of this collection of poems and very short stories. The daily lives of preschool-age Katie and her toddler brother, Olly, stay true to a child's perspective and voice. Katie describes Olly's impromptu participation in her dance class: "Once, when we were being spring flowers

coming out of the ground, Olly joined in and tried to dance too! Olly doesn't know how to dance properly yet. I didn't much like it when he joined in. But nobody else seemed to mind." Shirley Hughes' masterful gouache and oil pastel illustrations capture this appealing family during the routine moments of everyday life. (Ages 4-7)

Myers, Walter Dean. *Here in Harlem: poems in many voices*. Holiday House, 2004. 88 pages (trade 0-8234-1853-7, \$16.95)

Walter Dean Myers's vibrant collection of poems gives life and breath and words to Harlem experiences. Each poem—54 in all—is titled with the name, age, and occupation of its fictional speaker. There is "Mali Evans, 12, Student," who dreams, "I would like to be an ancient lady / Tree-tough and deep-rooted / In the rich soil of my dark / Foreverness." "Hosea Liburd, 25, Laborer" mourns the loss of his humanity: "When the doors close and the A train begins / Its rock/jerk journey downtown / I am diminished, made small / My manhood left, abandoned, on the station / platform . . . When the doors part and the A train sucks in / The nervous close/clutched horde / Their fear-wide eyes ablaze . . . I become the beast." "Macon R. Allen, 38, Deacon" proclaims, "I love a shouting church!" while "Jesse Craig, 38, Salesman" states, "I knew Langston . . . He knew rivers / And rent-due blues / And what it meant / To poet Black." Myers weaves historical figures and events in and out of poems that reveal how triumph and tragedy, comedy and drama, joy and sorrow play out in the moments of daily lives. Above all, he celebrates those lives as the heart and soul of all that Harlem has been and continues to be. (Ages 12-18)

Nelson, Marilyn. *Fortune's Bones: The Manumission Requiem*. Notes and annotations by Pamela Espeland. Front Street, 2004. 32 pages (trade 1-932425-12-8, \$16.95)

In 1798 a slave called Fortune died at the age of sixty. He had been owned by a doctor who preserved his skeleton, rather than burying him, and passed the skeleton on through four generations of doctors in his family. Years later, the bones ended up in a museum in Waterbury, Connecticut, where they were on public display for decades. By then, little was known about the skeleton, which had playfully been renamed Larry. Historical research was initiated in 1996 to learn more about the skeleton – who he had been and what his life was like. After learning Fortune's history, the museum commissioned poet Marilyn Nelson to write a requiem for him. As she did in her book, *Carver: A Life in Poems* (Front Street, 2001), Nelson has written poems from multiple viewpoints. There is Fortune's wife, Dinah, who had to dust his bones as part of her regular household duties; Dr. Porter, who prepared the skeleton for his own academic use; various people who encountered the skeleton over the generations; and Fortune himself: "You are not your body, / You are not your bones. / What's essential about you / is what can't be owned." Historical background notes, photographs and drawings accompany the text of this slender and thought-provoking volume. (Ages 12-18)

Nye, Naomi Shihab, selector. *Is This Forever, or What? Poems & Paintings from Texas*. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2004. 164 pages (trade 0-06-051178-8, \$19.99; lib. 0-06-051179-6, \$20.89)

"Texas is a deep breath. I feel so relieved every time my plane land in Texas again and I see that characteristic dusky live-oak green, unlike any other green I know," writes Naomi Shihab Nye in the introduction to her anthology that explores many colors, sights, sounds, and landscapes—both physical and emotional—of Texas and Texans. As in several previous books, Nye showcases both poetry and art in a beautifully produced and presented collection. It's a pleasure to hold (with slightly oversized Texan dimensions), to look at, to read. The contributors are current and former residents of Texas—all Texans in their heart regardless of where they live it seems. Not all of the poems are specifically about Texas, unless one counts their reflected state of mind: "When I mastered waiting / I loved being alone / inside the waiting / and the waiting / inside being alone" writes poet Jack Myers in "Something Important." Brief biographical

information on each contributor, and an index to the poems, poets, art and artists round out an exquisite volume. (Ages 12-18)

Prelutsky, Jack. *If Not for the Cat*. Illustrated by Ted Rand. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2004. 40 pages (trade 0-06-059677-5, \$16.99; lib. 0-06-059678-3, \$17.89)

In a rare departure from his well-loved humorous poetry, Jack Prelutsky presents a picture-book collection of haiku. Seventeen different animals speak in first-person poems giving clues to their identity. For example: "I have no hatchet / And yet I fell a forest. My teeth are tools" (Beaver). Each page spread offers just 17 simple syllables of information. Ted Rand's lush paintings provide beautiful images of the animals described. And just in case the animal's identity is still unclear, the answers are provided in the back of this beautiful volume. (Ages 4-10)

Roemer, Heidi B. *Come to My Party and Other Shape Poems*. Illustrated by Hideko Takahashi. Henry Holt, 2004. 48 pages (trade 0-8050-6620-9, \$17.95)

Beginning with a jump-rope jingle in the spring and ending with rainbow rhyme to say goodbye to winter, each of the 38 poems in this collection forms a shape and each is categorized according to the four seasons. We see an umbrella on a rainy spring day, two dandelions – one gone to seed -- in the summer, dancing leaves in the fall, and snowy steps in the winter. The poems themselves will appeal to young children, and even pre-readers will be able to "read" the words that form the pictures here. Hideko Takahashi's bold acrylic paintings illustrate without overpowering the shape poems themselves. (Ages 3-7)

Scieszka, Jon. *Science Verse*. Illustrated by Lane Smith. Viking, 2004. 40 pages (trade 0-670-91057-0, \$16.99)

Rules are made to be broken everywhere—with the exception of in science and in poetry. Both require constant revision, precision, and a community in which to share discoveries. This book throws tight control of both out the window and playfully re-presents scientific and poetic ideas for readers of all ages. It begins when a nameless protagonist starts hearing poetry in everything, especially science. He's been zapped by a curse of science verse! Hilarious drawings and collages accompany poetry that explores various scientific ideas and facts. Weighty, complex topics such as evolution, the food cycle, astronomy, and cellular biology are easy to appreciate, and the book as a whole is like a game: each verse is a parody of a different famous poem ("Casey at the Bat" becomes "Scientific Method at the Bat"). An index at the end feigns ignorance of the original works by such poets as Edgar Allen Poe, Joyce Kilmer, and Walt Whitman. First graders will delight in the reference to "eenie meenie mynie moe," and high school students will make their English teachers proud when they recognize the teasing allusions to works by Robert Frost and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. (Ages 6-17)

Shange, Ntozake. *ellington was not a street*. Illustrated by Kadir Nelson. Simon & Schuster, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-689-82884-5, \$15.95)

Ntozake Shange's 1983 poem "Mood Indigo," which she wrote as a tribute to many of the Black American men "who changed the world," is the text of a powerful picture book stunningly illustrated by Kadir Nelson. Shange's poem references "Mood Indigo" as the title of a song by Duke Ellington, who, along with musicians such as Dizzy Gillespie and Paul Robeson, move in and out of the home of the poem's narrator—a young woman looking back on her childhood. Other visitors include W.E.B. DuBois, Virgil "Honey Bear" Akins and President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. The poem speaks to the cultural and social history of African Americans as well as continuing struggles: "politics as necessary as collards," "sonny til was not a boy", "virgil akins was not the only fighter," "our windows were not cement or steel." Nelson's full-page portraits of the men conversing and interacting with one another, watched by the young girl, provide an elegant visual narrative. Each painting is beautifully composed and balanced, full of vibrant, dignified individuals. Brief biographical information about each individual

referenced in the text is provided on the final two pages in a book that is an enriching encounter with history, art, and poetry. (Ages 6-18)

Smith, Charles R., Jr. *Hoop Kings*. Candlewick Press, 2004. 37 pages (trade 0-7636-1423-8, \$14.99) Shaquille O'Neal is so enormous that the actual-size footprint accompanying his poem needs a fold-out page to accommodate it. Jason Williams's ball handling skills are so magical that the word "SEE" is repeated four times in big, bold letters just to make sure the reader catches his sleight of hand. Twelve other NBA stars are celebrated in jamming action poems accompanied by large photographs embellished with electric designs. Each poem celebrates the athletes' special basketball talents. The poems are identified by the numbers on the jerseys of the players instead of page numbers. End notes offer author Charles R. Smith Jr.'s prose commentary on the individual styles of his favorite superstars in a book that will delight young fans. (Ages 7-14)

Concept Books

Micklethwait, Lucy. *I Spy Shapes in Art*. U.S. edition: Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-073193-1, \$19.99)

Fourteen paintings from artists including Georgia O'Keeffe, Keith Haring, Paul Klee, Winslow Homer, and 11 others are the focal points for highlighting 14 different geometric shapes in Lucy Micklethwait's dynamic concept book. Each page spread features a single painting on the right, with the white page border providing a clean, eye-popping presentation of the work. On the left is the classic "I spy with my little eye" refrain, each time emphasizing a different shape to locate in the artwork. But the discovery doesn't have to end there. Children can be encouraged to consider the work as a whole, or they can continue to find other shapes, as each painting selected offers more than one familiar outline. Each painting is clearly labeled with its title and the painter's name, and additional notes in the back provide the painters' dates, as well as where each original work can be seen. (Ages 4-11)

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. *Lemons Are Not Red*. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2004. 24 pages (trade 1-59643-008-7, \$14.95)

Vibrant colors and striking contrasts characterize an engaging concept book that invites child participation. "Lemons are not red," reads the text on the opening page spread, which is washed in bright yellow brushstrokes. The visual focus of the page spread is the die-cut shape of a lemon on the right hand side. The color of the page beneath the die-cut is red, underscoring the text. Turn the die-cut page and the text reads, "Lemons are yellow, apples are red." The lemon now appears yellow on the left, and a round red apple is the focus on the right. Each pair of page spreads works in the same way, pairing two colors and two objects that suggest some sort of relationship (flamingo and elephant, carrot and eggplant, grass and sky, reindeer and snowman, moon and night). Laura Vaccaro Seeger's deceptively simple book is a masterful blend of idea, design and execution. (Ages 2-6)

Picture Books for Toddlers and Preschoolers

Beaumont, Karen. *Baby Danced the Polka*. Illustrated by Jennifer Plecas. Dial, 2004. 20 pages (trade 0-8037-2587-6, \$12.99)

Baby is supposed to be sleeping. But while Mama and Papa engage in a variety of chores, Baby dances the polka, the cha-cha, the boogie-woogie and more with various stuffed animals in this hilarious lift-the-flap book. Karen Beaumont's spirited rhyming text has a lilting, musical cadence that is irresistible.

Jennifer Plecas's illustrations, in ink, acrylics, watercolor, and gouache, are pleasing without being sweet--there's just enough edge to make Baby, Mama, and Papa intriguing. Each time Baby gets out of bed, the story builds to a moment of revelation that pays off with great satisfaction (with the conclusion of a predictable rhyme) and delight (the sight of Baby swinging with one stuffed animal after another) with the lift of a flap. (Birth-3 years)

Beaumont, Karen. *Duck, Duck, Goose! (A Coyote's On the Loose)*. Illustrated by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey. HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-050802-7, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-050804-3, \$16.89)

An indeterminate figure lurking in a pile of leaves and muck is assumed by the other animals to be a coyote on the prowl. As the frightened animals scatter, they warn their barnyard companions of the danger, and the fleeing group grows larger and larger. When additional animals are encountered, their names are inserted in the rhyming text. "Duck, duck, goose ... / a coyote's on the loose! / Goose, goose, pig ... / And he's really, really big!" The chase leads the animals through the barn and into the house, where they are cornered at last -- by a small white bunny looking for playmates. Bright colors, mounting suspense, and the familiar "duck, duck, goose" format combine in a playful read aloud for young audiences. (Ages 2-4)

Cooper, Elisha. *Magic Thinks Big*. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-058164-6, \$14.99; lib. 0-06-058165-4, \$15.89)

Magic's life is full of possibilities: "Should he go in? Or out? Or should he stay right where he is." A cat that appears as solid and immovable as a boulder, Magic spends a lot more time pondering activity than actually doing it. Although he seems perfectly content to nap in the doorway, his lively mind is full of the options open to him. If he chose to, he could not only catch a salmon, he could "share it with some friendly bears." Richly hued watercolor illustrations show Magic diving beneath the waves to capture his fish and riding regally to shore on the back of a helpful moose. He imagines picking blueberries on a nearby island with a trio of bears and then indulging in blueberry pie after their salmon dinner. In Magic's ideal scenario, after dinner the "bears could clean up." The fanciful tone of Magic's daydreams provides a delightful contrast to the reality of his laid-back lifestyle. As a final touch, a back cover photo of the original Magic shows the 18-pound inspiration who "likes blueberries and sitting by the lake." (Ages 3-6)

Doyle, Charlotte. *Supermarket!* Illustrated by Nadine Bernard Westcott. Candlewick Press, 2004. 20 pages (trade 0-7636-2218-4, \$8.99)

As families with young children are only too aware, a trip to the grocery store with your offspring in tow can feel like a Herculean task. In this cheerful picture book, a toddler creates chaos during a supermarket outing. The simple rhyming text reads like a shopping list ("Beets. Meats. Ham. / Peanut butter. Jam."), while the illustrations show a youngster tossing the beets to the floor and sampling the peanut butter and jam. From one aisle to the next, he gleefully wreaks havoc, all from his seat in the shopping cart. The beleaguered mother gamely completes her task and the pair escape from the store, leaving a monumental mess in their wake. Watercolor and ink illustrations feature an over-the-top scene of good-natured pandemonium which will amuse young children and with which their caretakers will -- wincingly -- identify. Sturdy pages make this a practical choice for the very age capable of acts of inadvertent destruction! (Ages 18 months-3 years)

Dunrea, Olivier. *BooBoo*. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-618-35654-1, \$9.95)

A square picture book perfectly sized for intimate sharing with babies and toddlers follows a small blue gosling who likes to eat. "Good food," is BooBoo's repeated response, whether she's tasting what belongs to the hens, the goat, or the mouse. Even a bubble is pleasing to BooBoo, until it makes her burp!

The charm of Olivier Dunrea's simple story is magnified by ink and watercolor illustrations. (Ages 6 months – 2 years)

Ehlert, Lois. *Pie in the Sky*. Harcourt, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-15-216584-3, \$16.00)

Lois Ehlert again invites young children to look closely at nature in a droll, observant picture book. "Dad says it's a pie tree," the young, unseen narrator explains about a tree in the yard of their new house. "I've never seen pies growing on trees. Wouldn't that be something?" And it is. Each two-page spread reveals changes in the tree and its environment as the seasons move from spring to summer and into early autumn. Visually many of the changes are bold and dramatic, as buds blossom into bright white flowers that gradually transform into round orbs of fruit. These change color over time, from green to orange to ripe red—they're cherries, of course! The primary story line chronicles the most obvious of those changes that the child observes. Smaller type reveals other things this keen-eyed narrator notices in each color-rich scene, from a robin's dark gray tail and a "gray rain sky" to "black spots and tips on butterfly wings." "But no pie," is the repeated refrain. The payoff at the end of the story is a sweet one—cherry-pie sweet—but the real reward in the book—and for the young narrator—is the time spent looking so closely and clearly at the world. Ehlert's magnificent collage compositions are created from a wide array of media. (Ages 3-8)

Fleischman, Paul. *Sidewalk Circus*. Illustrated by Kevin Hawkes. Candlewick Press, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-7636-1107-7, \$15.99)

As posters go up for the circus that's coming to town, a young girl waiting for a bus has a front row center seat for the performance that unfolds as her imagination turns a series of streetscapes into circus acts. A steelworker balancing on a beam becomes a tightrope walker, a woman flipping pancakes in a restaurant window becomes a juggler, a man precariously balanced on a ladder becomes a stilt walker, and so on. The only text in this almost wordless book is on signs, but the signs become part of the visual cues for what is going on. "Daring sword swallows" reads the electronic billboard in front of the theater as the girl glances up to the window of the dentist's office next door, where a patient—mouth wide open—is enduring the dentist's probe. The girl's changing expressions as she responds to the drama of what she "sees" are part of the fun, as are the shadows, which often appear as circus animals or acts in the clever illustrations of this volume that will invite repeated examination. (Ages 5-8)

France, Anthony. *From Me to You*. Illustrated by Tiphonie Beeke. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-7636-2255-9, \$15.99)

Grumpy Rat's mood changes completely when he finds an unsigned letter in his mailbox one day that reads: "This letter is from someone who really admires you. I think you are very special, and I just want you to know how lucky I feel to have such a true and dear friend as you." Rat is certain that the letter was written by his neighbor, Mouse, and he rushes over to Mouse's house to thank him. Mouse, however, has been busy repairing his roof, damaged by a storm, and hasn't had time to write. While Rat helps with the roof, he and Mouse ponder who the letter-writer might have been. It turns out that each friend Rat suspects has been dealing with a challenge of his or her own and welcomes Rat's help when he arrives. When Rat gets to Bat's house, he finds Bat in a serious blue funk. Rat's solution? A friendly letter, of course! Anthony France underscores many ways friends can help one another in a lively picture book that has a gentle air of mystery as the source of Rat's original letter is implied but never revealed. (Ages 3-7)

George, Lindsay Barrett. *Inside Mouse, Outside Mouse*. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-000466-5, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-000467-3, \$16.89)

"Inside my house there is a mouse...Outside my house, there is a mouse..." Creating a successful book with a dual storyline for very young children can be a challenge, but Lindsay Barrett George has done a masterful job in this highly appealing picture book. The reader describes two mice—one who lives outside, one who lives inside—and chronicles their parallel journey on the facing pages of each page

spread. ("The mouse ran down the wall...The mouse ran down the stump...") The two stories arrive at a single, satisfying conclusion when the two mice meet: "Hello!" George's rich visual images are detailed without being complicated and perfectly offset the simple, straightforward story(ies). (Ages 2-5)

Geras, Adèle. *Time for Ballet*. Illustrated by Shelagh McNicholas. U.S. edition: Dial, 2004. 24 pages (trade 0-8037-2978-2, \$16.99)

A bevy of preschool-aged little girls and one little boy are preparing for their big dance show. Young Tilly's ebullient description of their ballet class conveys her enthusiasm, which occasionally needs containing. "Sometimes my toes get a bit mixed up, but Miss Anne says I'll be all right if I just slow down a little." Throughout the week that follows, Tilly practices her role, pretending to be "a curled-up-to-sleepy cat, a stretchy cat, a pounce-on-a-mousey cat" in a pleasing story that will be especially appealing to children who share Tilly's love for dancing. Shelagh McNicholas' warm illustrations show a lively community of children and families. Astute observers will enjoy visual details such as the mom who is very pregnant when the book begins seen carrying a newborn baby on the way home from the successful recital at the end. (Ages 3-6)

Greenstein, Elaine. *One Little Lamb*. Viking, 2004. 24 pages (trade 0-670-03683-8, \$10.99)

Greenstein, Elaine. *One Little Seed*. Viking, 2004. 24 pages (trade 0-670-03633-1, \$10.99)

Each of these cozy little books is appealing to hold, look at, and listen to. *One Little Lamb* begins with a playful lamb whose wool is cut, combed, spun, dyed, and then knit into a pair of mittens that the young child narrator wears "when I visit the lambs." The simple, pleasing story comes full circle in 52 words. It takes only 36 words to come back to the beginning idea in *One Seed*, in which a seed is planted, tended, warmed by the sun, and watered by rain to eventually reveal a beautiful bloom—and another seed. The text in both books appears in large black letters on white—just a handful of words on each page. The opposing page of each two-page spread features an inviting, colorful painting, one element of which provides a small, graceful detail on the text in these intimate books perfectly sized for small hands.

Henkes, Kevin. *Kitten's First Full Moon*. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-058828-4, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-058829-2, \$16.89)

When Kitten sees her first full moon overhead, she's sure it's a bowl of milk in the sky. "And she wanted it." Her attempts to drink the milk all fail. Licking doesn't work (she only gets a firefly on her tongue), a leap from the porch yields a bumped nose and pinched tail, and although she runs and runs, the moon never seems to get any closer. "Poor Kitten!" When she climbs a tree to reach the elusive treat, she sees a second bowl of milk, even larger than the first. It is just the moon's reflection in the pond, and Kitten ends up wet and still hungry. She heads home in defeat to discover something waiting on her porch: a bowl of milk, of course. "Lucky Kitten!" Kitten's bold lines and shades of black, cream and grey are a departure from the familiar style of Madison author/illustrator Kevin Henkes's wildly popular mouse books such as *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* and *Wemberly Worried*. This gentle picture book feels transported from an earlier era. Reminiscent of the writing of Margaret Wise Brown, its deceptively simple language and masterful pacing transcend time. Lucky Reader! (Ages 2-5)

Hest, Amy. *Guess Who, Baby Duck!* Illustrated by Jill Barton. Candlewick Press, 2004. 24 pages (trade 0-7636-1981-7, \$14.99)

When Baby Duck is sick, Grampa comes with the photo album to cheer her up. "Who's THAT?" Baby Duck asks each time they look at a picture: a little duckling in a bassinet, a little duckling wrapped in a bath towel, a little duckling in a wagon; a little duckling eating birthday cake. Each time Grampa replies, "Why that's YOU," offering just the right medicine for an ailing duckling in Amy Hest's warm, sweet story featuring a ritual that will be familiar to many young children. (Ages 2-4)

Hoberman, Mary Ann. *Whose Garden Is It?* Illustrated by Jane Dyer. Gulliver Books / Harcourt, 2004. 36 pages (trade 0-15-202631-2, \$16.00)

The concept of “mine” is huge for young children. In *Whose Garden Is It?* Mary Ann Hoberman invites them to consider “mine” from many perspectives when a woman out for a walk with her grandchild is overjoyed by the beauty of a garden they pass and wonders out loud whose it is. First the gardener speaks up, saying it belongs to him. But then a rabbit adds his claim, followed by a bear, a bird, a worm, and many more creatures. The sun and the rain add their voices to the chorus of ownership, and a small seed is the last to assert its claim, whispering from beneath the ground. Each has a convincing (at least to itself) argument as to why the garden is theirs, and the woman walks away still wondering, “Whose garden is it?” Hoberman’s rhymed, lilting text is paired with Jane Dyer’s watercolor art, which could have been more restrained. Her bright, sweet images include clothing on all the animals and insects. Even the round-cheeked sun is wearing shades. But the book can be shared with or without the pictures and prompt intriguing discussion with small children. (Ages 2-4)

Horowitz, Dave. *A Monkey Among Us*. HarperFestival / HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-054335-3, \$14.99)

A delightfully silly picture book offers an experiment with language and rhyme. The opening page shows “a monkey among us.” Turn the page, and the same little monkey figure is now “a monkey among a fungus,” and he is pictured inside a field of mushrooms. Finally, the monkey is “humongous”! A combination of paper cuts, chalk, and other media are arranged in a collage to show the monkey and then a succession of other animals, arranged in positions to achieve the nonsense of these seemingly impossible rhymes. A hippopotamus, a giraffe, and a monster all appear in bold colors, doing whatever it takes to make the rhyme happen. (Ages 4-7)

Hutchins, Pat. *Don’t Get Lost!* Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-055996-9, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-055997-7, \$16.89)

A piglet, lamb, calf, and foal set out for a walk across the farm fields after their mothers warn them to not get lost and to be back in time for dinner. As they frolic through the fields, the quartet sees some of their favorite foods: ripe apples, sweet hay, and juicy turnips. When they head home for dinner, the group looks forward to sampling some of the temptations they’d noticed on the way out. But to their surprise, the apples, hay, and turnips are gone from the fields. How could it be? Despite their mothers’ warnings, they must have gotten lost! However, observant readers will realize that the crops have been harvested during the youngsters’ outing, as evidenced by the tractor, ladders, and hay bailers within the illustrations. Despite their fears, the young animals arrive back in the barnyard to discover waiting a dinner of the very apples, hay, and turnips seen during their walk. A bright palette and patterned animals with toylike construction create a visually appealing story for young children, who will relish their inside knowledge on the whereabouts of the missing food. (Ages 3-6)

Ichikawa, Satomi. *La La Rose*. Philomel, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-399-24029-2, \$15.99)

“I am La La Rose, the pink stuffed rabbit. I am the inseparable friend of Clementine.” Unfortunately for La La Rose, they aren’t as inseparable as she thought. On a trip to Luxembourg Gardens with Clementine, she has a joyous time on the playground and the carousel, but when the bells ring and Grandma rushes Clementine away, nobody notices that La La has fallen out of the little girl’s backpack. La La has a harrowing time--tossed by a group of boys, tumbling down steps, thrown like a Frisbee, almost drowning in the pond--before she is finally found by a *different* little girl, who realizes the perfect place for La La is the lost-and-found. There, an anxious-looking Clementine is happily reunited with her wayward friend in Satomi Ichikawa’s charming story set in Paris. (Ages 3-7)

James, Simon. *Baby Brains*. Candlewick Press, 2004. 24 pages (trade 0-7636-2507-8, \$15.99)

Before Baby Brains is born, his mother reads to him, plays him tapes of music and languages, and even turns up the TV when the news comes on. His parents are thrilled when he finally arrives but more than a

little shocked on their first day home from the hospital. In the morning they find him reading the newspaper. By afternoon he's fixing the car. "We certainly have a bright one here," says Mr. Brains, a master of understatement. Soon news gets out about their amazing, unusual baby. It's not long before Baby Brains (a practicing doctor at two weeks of age) has trained for a mission into space. But on his very first space walk, he looks around at the "vast starlit sky" with "the whole world in front of him," and he responds like any baby when the center of their universe has shifted: "I want my mommy!" Simon James's sparkling, tongue-in-cheek story is a delight. (Ages 4-8)

Jenkins, Emily. *Daffodil*. Illustrated by Tomek Bogacki. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 24 pages (trade 0-374-31676-7, \$16.00)

Daffodil, Iris, and Rose are identical sisters, and their mother loves to dress them up in fancy dresses that reflect their names. Daffodil hates her "fake-cheerful...pee-yellow" dress "very extremely hugely much." At parties, she watches her sisters twirl in their pretty purple (Iris) and pink (Rose) dresses while she sits sourly in a chair. People jokingly ask if her name is Forsythia, Goldenrod, Dandelion, or the Yellow Rose of Texas. When Daffodil revolts, she makes a surprising discovery about her sisters—they've been as unhappy with the color of their dresses as she has been with hers. Tomek Bogacki's quirky, naive illustrations are the perfect complement to Emily Jenkins's funny, over-the-top story about children's need for self-expression and to be themselves. (Ages 3-6)

Joose, Barbara. *Hot City*. Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie. Philomel, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-399-23640-6, \$16.99)

Mimi and her little brother Joe think it's too hot to do much of anything. They've spied on the "blah-blah ladies" (their mother and her visiting friends) and have eaten snow cones, but after that they're not just hot – they're hot and bored. They decide to head for the public library, where they'll not only enjoy the air-conditioning but also find books to entertain themselves. Mimi heads for the princess books and Joe for the dinosaurs, and together they escape into cool fantasy worlds. R. Gregory Christie uses hot pinks and bright yellows to illustrate the hot city streets, and soothing blues and greens for the cool library interiors of Barbara Joosse's story. (Ages 4-8)

Lee, Chinlun. *Good Dog, Paw!* Candlewick Press, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-7636-2178-1, \$15.99)

Paw is a lucky dog. Not only does his owner love him, she is also a caring veterinarian who begins and ends each day with a ten-point check-up of him. She also takes him to work with her each day. From his vantage point in the waiting room, Paw reports on the day's patients and offers his own diagnosis for each one by singing a short, soothing song. Although the songs appear in the narrative in standard English, the illustrations show the songs in Paw's native language of barking, howling, and growling. This clever story, told completely from the dog's point of view, is illustrated with colored pencil and watercolor paintings that capture the humor and energy of a typical day in an unusual dog's life. (Ages 3-7)

MacLachlan, Patricia and Emily MacLachlan. *Bittle*. Illustrated by Dan Yaccarino. Joanna Cotler Books / HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-000961-6, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-000962-4, \$16.89)

Nigel the cat and Julia the dog are absolutely content with their lives. Each according to their individual tastes, they pass the days scratching rugs, chewing bones, and sleeping. When signs suggest a change is in the offing – tiny clothes, fresh paint, new crib – the animals are concerned. And indeed, the arrival of the baby does call for adjustment. At first their interactions with Bittle (so called because "she's just a little bit of a thing") are mainly nocturnal. Bittle cries until Nigel curls up next to her in the crib. When Bittle's awake in the wee hours, the animals entertain her with a song. The threesome soon realizes they share many interests: Bittle and Nigel both like to chase butterflies. Bittle and Julia are both drawn to spending time in the bathroom: Bittle to unroll the toilet paper, Julia to drink from the toilet bowl.

Gradually their three lives become more and more intertwined. Bittle's first word, is in fact, a howl, "something that Nigel, Julia, and Bittle could all do together." (Ages 3-7)

McCarty, Peter. *T Is for Terrible*. Henry Holt, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-8050-7404-X, \$15.95)
Tyrannosaurus Rex – the dinosaur with the big, bad reputation – is shown having an introspective moment in this picture book for very young children. He ponders just why he is so terrible – is it his color? His size? He suggests he's no different than any other reptile that hatched from an egg. Pictured on most pages as a mild-looking creature with an endearing overbite, the T-Rex shows his true colors at the book's end: "If I could, I would be a vegetarian. But I am Tyrannosaurus Rex, and I do not eat trees." The wordless double-page spread that follows shows the beast towering over his smaller, fleeing prey. "I cannot help that I am so terrible." Young dinosaur lovers will relish the moment the T-Rex lives up to his billing. (Ages 2-5)

Nishimura, Kae. *Dinah! A Cat Adventure*. Clarion, 2004. 31 pages (trade 0-618-33612-5, \$14.00)
Dinah is a nondescript, tiny, yellow-striped kitten when she's first welcomed into her new home. In short order, each of the human family members institutes a clandestine dining routine for Dinah: Father shares his breakfast eggs, Mother doles out bowls of milk, and Boy allocates a portion of his daily after-school cookie. Before long, little Dinah has morphed into whopping, rotund Dinah. As the only animal in her indulgent household, she has no idea that her size has edged toward extreme until the day she unexpectedly tumbles out a window. Once outdoors, Dinah is mistakenly identified as a raccoon, a watermelon, and a tiger. All this confusion triggers an identity crisis for Dinah until she meets up with her anxious owners, out in search of their missing pet. Their warm welcome firmly cements her place in the world, as a beloved member of her own small family. This first book by a new author derives much of its charm from the gently humorous watercolor illustrations. Portly Dinah is a feline to behold. (Ages 3-6)

Ravishankar, Anushka. *Tiger on a Tree*. Illustrated by Pulak Biswas. U.S. edition: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 40 pages (trade 0-374-37555-0, \$15.00)
"Tiger, tiger, on the shore..." The tiger in Anushka Ravishankar's whimsical picture book means no harm. But after his wanderings lead to a run-in with an angry goat, the tiger takes refuge in a tree. There, he is cornered by a group of excitable men who are quickly confounded by what to do. "Send him to the zoo? Stick him up with glue? Paint him electric blue?" Their solution brings this comical story rich with word and sound play full circle and will leave many young listeners requesting repeated readings. Ravishankar is the author of more than ten books in India, and she clearly excels at nonsense verse. The book's superb design features dynamic text layout integrated into striking two-color prints in black and orange. Even with stylized printmaking techniques, illustrator Pulak Biswas has managed to create a cast of visually distinctive characters whose expressions (the tiger's included) are a wonderful complement to the text. (Ages 2-6)

Schaefer, Carole Lexa. *The Biggest Soap*. Illustrated by Stacey Dessen-McQueen. Melanie Kroupa Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-374-30690-7, \$16.00)
Kessy loves laundry day, when he gets to splash in the washing pool and listen to Mama's stories. So when Mama sends him to the store for soap, he worries about what he'll miss. He hurries to the market and begins his journey back with the biggest piece of soap they had. But his return trip is marked by one interruption after another as he meets a succession of friends and relatives, each with a problem that soap can resolve. By the time he gets back to Mama and proudly hands her the soap, his big piece has been reduced to a scrap. While Kessy's soap may be small, he has a big tale to tell in Carole Lexa Schaefer's delightful story set in the Truk Islands of Micronesia. Stacey Dessen-McQueen's illustrations, in oil, pastel and acrylic, are bright and lively, with a vibrant tropical palette. (Ages 4-7)

Schwartz, Amy. *A Glorious Day*. A Richard Jackson Book / Atheneum, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-689-84802-1, \$16.95)

Amy Schwartz's captivating picture book chronicles a day in the lives of ten young children in four separate families who all live in the same urban apartment building. There is only child Henry; his upstairs neighbors, Peter and Thomas; Baby Susannah and her two older brothers; and the triplets and their big brother, Will. Filled with child-centered details, the book captures the busy-ness of the lives of young children, giving weight to both the routine within each family and the rhythm of the larger community in which they live. There is comfort in the small moments that define a young child's day (for Henry, lunch is followed by a nap, followed by a trip to the park where he plays with his friends); and excitement in the unexpected (everyone pitches in to look for Princess, Henry's pet bird who escaped into the halls when the apartment door was open). The text's terrific pacing is complemented by the vignettelike illustrations, which effectively use white space to distinguish between the activities pictured within the diverse families shown on each page spread. (Ages 2-5)

Settingington, Ken. *Mom and Mum are Getting Married!* Illustrated by Alice Priestley. Second Story Press (720 Bathurst Street, Suite 301, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5S 2R4), 2004. 24 pages (trade 1-896764-84-3, \$14.95)

A refreshing picture book focuses on a little girl's excitement over her two moms' upcoming marriage and the role she hopes to play in the wedding. At first disappointed that Mom and Mum are having a simple ceremony at the family cottage with no role for a flower girl, the girl is consoled when her moms agree that she and her little brother, Jack, can be ring bearers. At the last minute her moms worry that Jack will lose his ring, and decide they should carry the rings themselves. But when Mum gets too nervous to remember where she put hers, the little girl enlists her uncle's help to calm her moms' nerves and fulfill her own desire. Canadian author Ken Settingington's warm story doesn't try to explain or justify why this is a family with two moms. The family simply is. It's a welcome reflection of reality for children who are growing up in lesbian or gay-parented families. Also welcome is the placement of the little girl's family within a loving extended family. (Ages 3-8)

Thompson, Lauren. *Polar Bear Night*. Illustrated by Stephen Savage. Scholastic Press, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-439-49524-5, \$15.95)

"The night is keen and cold. Snug inside her warm den, a polar bear cub wakes. Something in the moonlit stillness quietly beckons." The cub ventures out into the night, where she sees a walrus, seals, and whales, all sleeping. Inexplicably drawn on, the small bear waits and wonders, until a "star shower" like "snowflakes, falling, falling" illuminates the nighttime scene, waking the slumbering animals. Satisfied, the polar bear cub returns through the snow and ice to her sleeping mother and home. This quiet story is complemented by the arctic landscape's evening hues, in shades of blue, green, purple, and pink. Repetitive language and a reassuring tone promise that the little polar bear's nocturnal travels will end well in this ideal bedtime read-aloud. (Ages 2-5)

Weeks, Sarah. *If I Were a Lion*. Illustrated by Heather M. Solomon. Atheneum, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-689-84836-6, \$15.95)

When her mother sends her to the time-out chair for behaving "wild," a small girl with a big imagination spends her confinement cataloging what it really means to be wild. "If I were a lion, I'd growl and roar and knock the dishes on the floor. . . Wild has feathers. Wild has scales. Wild has whiskers, tusks and tails." Trait after trait, the girl builds a case in her mind for her own defense against her mother's misguided perception. "Mother doesn't realize that lions don't apologize. But when she does, then she will see, the opposite of wild is . . . me." Sarah Weeks uses rhyme, rhythm, and alliteration to pace her lively story. Heather Solomon's watercolor and gouache illustrations add a marvelous dimension to the antics of the text. Her realistic depictions of many animals engaged in their natural behavior within the child's house are delightful (raccoons are napping in the coatrack, crocodiles are snapping below, goats

are eating the curtains, a sheep nibbles on a plant). At the same time, the crayonlike scribbles on the walls give a clue as to the real source of at least some of the chaos within this home. (Ages 3-6)

Willems, Mo. *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*. Hyperion, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-7868-1870-0, \$15.99)

Little Trixie's trip to the Laundromat turns comi-tragic when her beloved stuffed animal, Knuffle Bunny, disappears. Trixie, whose verbal skills are still incomprehensible to adults, can't make her daddy understand that Knuffle Bunny is gone ("Aggle Flaggle Klabble!"). Finally, Trixie has no choice but to throw a tantrum ("She went boneless."). Mom finally figures out the problem, and Dad is the hero at the end of this hilarious picture book that isn't without deeper resonance. What child hasn't known the frustration of not being understood? Willems's lighthearted look at parent-toddler dynamics never makes light of a child's effort to communicate. The streamlined text is paired with marvelous art that shows Trixie, her parents, and the people in their neighborhood as highly expressive, cartoonlike characters set against sepia-toned black-and-white photographs of the urban setting in which they live. Astute observers will have noticed early on what happened to Knuffle Bunny. (Ages 2-6)

Winter, Jeanette. *Elsina's Clouds*. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-374-32118-3, \$16.00)

Following in the tradition of the Basotho women of South Africa, where this story is set, young Elsinä wants to paint the outside of her house. She is eager to make the designs in her head come alive. But Mama says Elsinä must wait until the rains arrive and wash away what Mama painted long ago. Mama's paintings were a prayer to the ancestors for rain. But no rains have come. "Mama's field has died. Papa's goats starve." With Mama expecting a baby, Papa builds a new room on their house. That's when Mama suggests the ancestors might listen to Elsinä instead, and the little girl finally gets her chance to paint. "I paint when the sun peeks over the mountain. I paint when the sun sits high in the blue. I paint until the colors turn to darkness." Her vision finally becomes reality, but just as waiting to paint required Elsinä's patience, so, too, does waiting for the rains. The downpours finally do come in Jeanette Winter's small, vibrant picture book about a young African girl's desire to express herself, and to take her place within a tradition. That tradition is repeated season after season as each time of rain is followed by another opportunity for Elsinä to paint again. (Ages 3-7)

Picture Books for School-Aged Children

Banks, Kate. *The Cat Who Walked Across France*. Illustrated by Georg Hallensleben. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-374-39968-9, \$16.00)

When the old woman dies, her cat is shipped north, away from the sea and the home he knew. But there is no one and nothing there for him. So the cat leaves, embarking on a journey that eventually takes him back to "the stone house by the edge of the sea." That phrase is the repeated refrain in this quiet, masterful picture book that follows the cat's pointed wanderings. He travels through the countryside, small towns, and cities full of dizzying traffic. Kate Banks's rich, evocative language and skillful pacing reflect the cat's bursts of activity and also his moments of quiet repose, when the smells and sounds and sea breezes that were once familiar come back to him in memory and propel him on again. Georg Hallensleben's textured, color-saturated paintings are a lovely extension of the narrative. He alters the size and placement of the solitary feline traveler from scene to scene to further suggest feelings such as loneliness, vulnerability, independence, or contentment. (Ages 5-8)

Borden, Louise. *The A+ Custodian*. Illustrated by Adam Gustavson. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2004. 38 pages (trade 0-689-84995-8, \$15.95)

John Carillo is the custodian at Dublin Elementary School. He does many things that keep the building

and classrooms running smoothly. “Mr. Carillo knew about wiring and pipes and windows and lights. He was the man who had to keep all the parts of the building working in tip-top condition . . . even the parts that were old and tired.” Mr. Carillo has dubbed third graders Gracie and Zach Sibberson the Early Birds. The two children arrive early each morning because their mom is a teacher at the school. They often help Mr. Carillo on his before-school cleaning rounds. It is while going from classroom to classroom, noticing the many nice words that teachers write on student work, that Gracie gets the idea for a very special surprise for Mr. Carillo—a way for the whole school to show him how much his hard work is appreciated. Full-page oil paintings by Adam Gustavson illustrate Louise Borden’s warm, richly detailed, immensely satisfying story. (Ages 5-8)

Borden, Louise. *The Greatest Skating Race: A World War II Story from the Netherlands*. Illustrated by Niki Daly. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2004. 44 pages (trade 0-689-84502-2, \$18.95)

A story set in 1941 takes place in the Netherlands, where young Piet dreams of being a great skater like his hero Pim Mulier of the historic Elfstedentocht race fame. Piet’s father is away fighting in World War II, but the very real dangers of that war are not just on far-off battlefields. Piet’s country is occupied by the Germans, and when a classmate’s father is arrested for owning a radio, Piet is asked to lead her and her younger brother to safety in a town in Belgium, 16 kilometers away. Piet, Johanna, and Joop must skate along the canals under the eyes of the Germans, acting as if they are just children at play. Johanna is a superb skater and Piet doesn’t worry about her keeping up, but it’s a struggle for young Joop. There are several tense moments made all the more difficult by the children’s growing exhaustion as they stride toward the journey’s conclusion in Louise Borden’s dramatic and satisfying story. Niki Daly’s fine period illustrations perfectly complement the text, and an author’s note provides additional information on the history of skating in the Netherlands and the real Elfstedentocht race that was fictional Piet’s inspiration on the longest skate of his young life. (Ages 7-10)

Bottner, Barbara and Gerald Kruglik. *Wallace’s Lists*. Illustrated by Olof Landström. Katherine Tegen Books / HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-000224-7, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-000225-5, \$16.89)

“Wallace, a mouse, could do almost anything. Anything, that is, as long as he had a list.” His lists define his comfort zone, and Wallace begins to realize how confining that zone is when he meets Albert, a new neighbor. Freespirite Albert is the antithesis of Wallace’s tightly controlled persona. When their paths cross, Wallace soon learns that taking risks can add zest to his life. Meanwhile, Albert also discovers that the path of adventure has its own bumps, and just when he’s feeling down, Wallace saves the day. Making friends is risky, but well worth the effort. Besides, it gives Wallace the chance to make a new list: “My Best Friend: 1. Albert.” Bow-tied and be-spectacled Wallace provides a visual counterpoint for Albert and his white undershirt in the visual interpretation of this rodent Odd Couple. Several of Wallace’s neatly printed lists offer an extra layer of fun, including such memorable categories as “Places with funny names” and “Accidents that happened to me.” (Ages 5-8)

Browne, Anthony. *Into the Forest*. Candlewick Press, 2004. 28 pages (trade 0-7636-2511-6, \$16.99)

A boy awakens one morning to find that his dad is gone. “I asked Mom when he was coming back, but she didn’t seem to know.” Anthony Browne’s spare, surreal story is about a child who fills in the blanks on missing (or misunderstood) information with anxious and ominous perceptions. The boy plasters his house with notes that say “Come home dad.” The next day his mother asks him to take a cake to his ailing grandmother. “I love Grandma. She always tells me such fantastic stories.” Astute readers and listeners will soon begin to realize those stories are no doubt the source for the boy’s fertile mind. Ignoring his mother’s direction to take the long way

around, the boy goes into the forest. When the boy enters the woods, Browne's images shift to stark black-and-white to reflect the boy's fear and trepidation (only the boy himself is still in color). In the woods he meets a series of children who seem obnoxious, mean, or unbearably sad. Each suggests a familiar folk tale character, including Goldilocks and Hansel and Gretel. When the boy finds a red coat, he puts it on, transforming himself into an image of Little Red Riding Hood just before his arrival at Grandma's. "I was terrified. I slowly crept in. There in Grandma's bed was . . ." Browne masterfully uses the drama of the turning page as he arrives at the climax of this singular story that does, indeed end happily (ever after is anybody's guess). (Ages 6-10)

Buehner, Caralyn. *Superdog: The Heart of a Hero*. Illustrated by Mark Buehner. HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-623620-7, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-623621-5, \$16.89)

Dexter decides to shed his underdog status by training to become a superhero. How hard could it be? The determined dachshund reads the appropriate comic books, watches hero movies, and exercises. All that effort pays off in the form of muscle, and with the arrival of a mail order hero suit (cloak included), Dex becomes ... SUPERDOG! And he's off, escorting puppies across busy streets, finding lost kittens, and organizing a neighborhood cleanup day. His exploits peak when he mounts a daring rescue of Clevis, his feline nemesis, as she dangles precariously from a tree branch. Of course, any of Dexter's appropriately dog-sized deeds would have been possible without a hero suit and a buff physique, but that's part of this earnest pup's charm. Humorous illustrations show the cowed pre-hero Dexter morphing into a confident super dog. The longer story text is supplemented on many pages by a brief narrative, boxed in a different font, that tells Dexter's tale as it might appear in one of his favorite comic strips ("The Mighty Dex pressed on, through wind and rain and storm and fatigue ..."). (Ages 5-9)

Child, Lauren. *I Am Too Absolutely Small for School*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-7636-2403-9, \$16.99)

Charlie's little sister, Lola, can think of a kazillion reasons why she doesn't need to go to school. She can count to ten, which is all she needs to be able to eat ten cookies. She doesn't need to learn to write, because she can always use the phone, and why bother reading when she already has so many good stories in her head? Despite her resistance, Lola has a fantastic first day at school and Charlie is proud of her. But Lola feigns indifference. She was never worried! It turns out her imaginary friend, Soren Lorensen, was the nervous one. Bright, cheerful artwork that uses a variety of media, including photographs, collage, cut paper and drawing, illustrate a picture book that humorously highlights real anxiety and realistic outcomes. (Ages 5-8)

Cronin, Doreen. *Duck for President*. Illustrated by Betsy Lewin. Simon & Schuster, 2004. 40 pages (trade 0-689-86377-2, \$15.95)

Doreen Cronin's plucky Duck throws his hat into the ring for the 2004 presidential race in her newest book about barnyard politics. Duck first appeared four years ago in the crowd-pleaser, *Click Clack Moo: Cows That Type*, as the "neutral party" who carried the ultimatum from the striking farm animals to Farmer Brown. By the book's end, Duck's political savvy had grown to such an extent that in the follow up, *Giggle Giggle Quack*, he was a full-fledged organizer, pegged as "trouble" by the dictatorial farmer. In his latest venture, Duck first decides to take on Farmer Brown and handily wins an election in which the barnyard animals vote to determine who should be in charge of the farm. Once he gets a taste for politics, he decides to run for governor, surprising everyone with his narrow victory over a human incumbent. But the governor's job turns out to be more work than Duck imagined, and since Duck's forte is campaigning, he decides to make a run for president of the United States. There are a lot of inside jokes that will be completely lost on children (Duck playing the saxophone on late-night television and his ever-changing campaign mottos, from "For a kinder, gentler farm" to "I'm a duck, not a politician"),

but the overall theme of a smaller, weaker character triumphing over the big and powerful always appeals to the younger set. (Ages 5-8)

English, Karen. *Hot Day on Abbott Avenue*. Illustrated by Javaka Steptoe. Clarion, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-395-98527-7, \$15.00)

“Hot days sure can make tempers short,” says Miss Johnson when Kishi and Renee refuse to talk to one another. Instead the two girls glare at each other from their respective porches. It’s a hot day on Abbott Avenue, and no matter what kind of distraction the adults concoct to make the girls forgive one another, it’s a “best-friend-breakup day” and a “never-speak-to-her-again-even-if-she-was-the last-person-on-earth day.” Extraordinarily intricate collages of paper cuts depict the people in motion in the neighborhood and create an urban rhythm through the movement of bodies. Finally it’s the sound of other girls jumping rope that lures Kishi and Renee back to their friendship, and when the ice cream man comes selling blue popsicles (the initial source of disagreement) Kishi shares hers with Renee. The last page shows the girls with blue lipped smiles, “feeling-good-about-being-best-friends day.” (Ages 5-9)

Gaiman, Neil. *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish*. Illustrated by Dave McKean. HarperCollins, 2004. 54 pages (trade 0-06-058701-6, \$16.99; lib. 0-06-058702-4, \$17.89)

It seemed like a good idea at the time. Coveting his friends’ goldfish, a boy looks for something to trade when he hits on the idea of swapping his dad, who is engrossed in his newspaper and therefore oblivious. Then his mother gets home, and boy is she mad. “I told you so” said his little sister. So the two siblings set off to retrieve dear old Dad, only to discover that dear old Dad has been traded for a guitar. So they’re off to the next place...and the next, undoing several swaps before they finally find Dad, whose final trade was for a rabbit named Galveston. Dad is in the rabbit’s big hutch, still reading his newspaper, and still oblivious. “He’s not a very good rabbit,” claims Galveston’s once and future owner. “He’s not meant to be,” replies the narrator. “He’s a very good daddy.” Neil Gaiman’s offbeat storyline is grounded by the matter-of-fact tone of its telling and enriched by the funny, believable interplay between the two siblings, who are at odds more often than not throughout their quest. David McKean’s singular artwork features both black-and-white and color images. The illustrations echo the quirky, wholly original nature of the story but also acknowledge its qualities that are almost folkloric in feel. (Ages 6-10)

Harrington, Janice N. *Going North*. Illustrated by Jerome Lagarrigue. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-374-32681-9, \$16.00)

In Janice Harrington’s debut picture book, a young African American girl describes her family’s move from the South to the North in their “banana bright” yellow car. Jessie doesn’t want to leave Big Mama and the rest of her family in Alabama, but she has no choice. She chronicles the journey—including tense minutes when her daddy drives “knuckle-tight” watching for a Negro gas station where they can safely fill their almost-empty gas tank. And she begins to wonder if there may be possibilities she hadn’t considered. “Maybe the North *will* be better.” By the time they arrive in Lincoln, Nebraska, Jessie has embraced a new outlook: “Daddy, Mama, / Brother, Baby Sister, and me, / all pioneers, all looking out, / hearing a heart-drum / be brave / be brave / Be brave. / We’re together. / Pioneers.” Harrington based her story—which reads like a narrative poem with its graceful use of language, imagery and rhythm—on her own childhood move in 1964. (Ages 6-9)

Hesse, Karen. *The Cats in Krasinsky Square*. Illustrated by Wendy Watson. Scholastic Press, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-439-43540-4, \$16.95)

There is much revealed both on the surface and between the lines of Karen Hesse’s spare and moving picture book set outside the walls of the Warsaw ghetto during World War II. The young child narrator

loves the cats who roam the city streets. They are a comforting reminder of what once was: “They slept on sofa cushions / and ate from crystal dishes.” Now the girl roams the streets with the cats. “I wear my Polish look, / I walk my Polish walk.” But the girl is Jewish. She escaped from the ghetto and is passing as a non-Jew. She can’t stop thinking about her friend Michal, who remains behind the wall, where people are starving. Food is scarce everywhere; one of the understated ironies is that the cats, living on mice, are better fed than the girl. The girl’s older sister is involved in a plan to sneak food through the cracks in the ghetto wall. The food will come by train, smuggled into Warsaw by brave people who are risking their lives. Then word comes that the Germans have discovered the plan and will meet the train with dogs to sniff out the smugglers. It is the small girl who comes up with the big plan that forms the dramatic climax of this remarkable story. The tale can work as an introduction to the Holocaust, but also allows for deeper reading—making the connections between the lines—for those who bring some prior knowledge of the tragedy of that time. An author’s note and an historical note provide brief information for readers needing to know more about the context and details of the story. Wendy Watson’s pencil, ink, and watercolor illustrations reflect the muted tone of the story. (Ages 7-10)

hooks, bell. *Skin Again*. Illustrated by Chris Raschka. Jump at the Sun / Hyperion, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-7868-0825-X, \$16.99)

“The skin I’m in is just a covering. It cannot tell my story.” Simple, profound, and provocative, bell hooks’s narrative is an invitation to children to let go of what they think they know about one another because of skin color. Instead, she challenges them to meet one another on ground that is real: “Be with me inside the me of me . . . You can find out all about me – coming close and letting go of who you might think I am.” Chris Raschka’s stimulating visual interpretation of hooks’s text includes an onion motif, image after image suggesting that there is much is going on inside each individual, exciting discoveries to be made. There is a celebratory look and feel to this joyful volume. (Ages 5-10)

Hopkinson, Deborah. *Apples to Oregon: Being the (Slightly) True Narrative of How a Brave Pioneer Father Brought Apples, Peaches, Pears, Plums, Grapes, and Cherries (and Children) Across the Plains*. Illustrated by Nancy Carpenter. An Anne Schwartz Book / Atheneum, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-689-84769-6, \$15.95)

“The most daring adventure in the history of fruit,” is how Delicious, the young narrator of this tall, tongue-in-cheek tale, describes the journey of her family and their fruit trees across the Great Plains to the western United States. Her daddy is plum crazy about his fruit trees, and their wagon is a traveling orchard, bearing apple, peach, pear, plum, grape and cherry trees ready for replanting in the Oregon soil. Daddy is a laughingstock to many on the western trail, but not to Delicious, her Momma and her little brothers and sisters. They all pitch in when the trees are in peril. High water, hailstorms, and heat are no match for this dedicated family. Puns and alliteration abound (“The peaches are plummeting!...The plums are plunging!” And “...Daddy’s dainties were safe.”) in Deborah Hopkinson’s hilarious, high-spirited story. Nancy Carpenter’s illustrations, done in folk-art style, perfectly reflect the narrative’s tall-tale tone while adding a number of humorous visual details. An author’s note explains that Hopkinson based her story—very loosely—on fact. The first apple trees were brought to Oregon by a pioneer named Henderson Luelling, who traveled from Iowa with his wife, Elizabeth, their eight children, and “seven hundred plants and young fruit trees.” (Ages 5-9)

Hopkinson, Deborah. *A Packet of Seeds*. Illustrated by Bethanne Andersen. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-009089-8, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-009090-1, \$16.89)

When Annie’s pioneer family leaves their home to move west, she observes that “all Papa could see was the new land before him. All Momma could feel was the sorrow of leaving everything behind.” Their isolated existence in the new homestead during the winter deepens Momma’s depression, until her daughter wonders if she’ll ever see her smile again. With spring comes a new baby sister, but Momma’s despair continues. It’s not until a neighbor comments that she

must miss her old life, that Annie is struck with an idea. With her father's help she begins work on a garden plot, and Momma remembers the packet of seeds her friends and sister gave her as a parting gift. Planting the seeds helps the lonely woman begin establishing her own roots in her family's new home. A final author's note discusses the isolation endured by pioneer women of the American west, the stark conditions under which they lived, and the importance creating a garden had for some. Bethanne Andersen's lovely gouache and oil paint illustrations capture the family's sense of seclusion and the homesick woman's despair. (Ages 5-9)

Kirk, Connie Ann. *Sky Dancers*. Illustrated by Christy Hale. Lee & Low, 2004. 32 pages (trade 1-58430-162-7, \$16.95)

While young John Cloud isn't yet ready to scale the big tree in his yard at home on the reservation, his heart soars at the opportunity to visit Papa at work. Papa, who has always loved to build, is a steelworker in New York City and can only return home on the weekends. John finds the city streets noisy and chaotic, but when he finally arrives at a huge construction site, he glimpses Papa, breathlessly high, helping to build an important new structure: the Empire State Building. Mohawk steelworkers helped build many buildings and bridges in New York City during the 1930s and 1940s, Iroquois author Connie Allen Kirk explains in her note that follows this fictional story. Kirk's child-centered narrative emphasizes the skill and tradition of steelworking (which often runs in families) from the perspective of a small boy who is proud of what his father does but loves most of all the times when they can be together. (Ages 5-8)

Lehman, Barbara. *The Red Book*. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-618-42858-5, \$12.95)

A playful and intriguing wordless book begins with a girl walking down a snowy street. A red book protruding from a snowbank catches her eye and she picks it up. At school, she opens it, and inside she sees (and we see) a map, an island, and a boy in progressively tighter close ups. The next page (of her book—of ours?) shows the boy up close, on a tropical looking island. He spies a red book protruding from the sand. He opens it to pages showing a snowy urban landscape. And a girl—at a desk—looking up in disbelief. Barbara Lehman's visual fantasy is a statement on the power of imagination, and the power of literature to transport one into another place and time. It's also a pure delight, with a satisfying and impossible journey, and an ending that suggests the magic will live on. Lehman's watercolor, gouache and ink illustrations are clean-lined, simple and perfect to tell the tale. (Ages 5-10)

Manzano, Sonia. *No Dogs Allowed!* Illustrated by Jon J Muth. Atheneum, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-689-83088-2, \$15.95)

Seven-year-old Iris has unique way of describing everyone in her life. She lives with Mami the Busy, Papi the Clever, Shorty the Fortune-teller (her sister), and El Exigente (her dog). Friends and neighbors include Marta the Smart; Carmen the Beautiful; Don Joe the Grocer; My Aunt Tuta the Happily Married and her Brand-new Husband, Juan; and the Wise Old People who look for any opportunity to continue the world's longest-lasting game of dominoes. Iris's description of a trip to the Enchanted Lake with her family, friends, and neighbors grows increasingly hilarious as the troubles they run into become a means for highlighting how each individual more than lives up to Iris's perceptive nickname in this ebullient picture book featuring an irrepressible Latina girl. (Ages 5-8)

McGhee, Alison. *Mrs. Watson Wants Your Teeth*. Illustrated by Harry Bliss. Harcourt, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-15-204931-2, \$16.00)

Losing baby teeth is a rite of passage for all first graders, so the protagonist of this clever story should be excited about her loose tooth on the first day of school. She's not. And it's all because a second grader has told her that her new teacher, Mrs. Watson, is a 300-year old alien who

needs human baby teeth in order to survive. Even though Harry Bliss's hilarious illustrations show Mrs. Watson a quite an ordinary young woman, the second-grade informant has pointed to all sorts of evidence that support her theory: there's her pearl necklace and earrings that look remarkably like teeth, and the mysterious "treat box" to avoid at all costs. And if you look closely, she says, you'll see that Mrs. Watson has a green tongue. In spite of the first-grader's best efforts to keep her mouth closed all day long, her tooth makes a dramatic exit in a toothsome story perfect for a first-grade read-aloud. (Ages 5-8)

Newman, Lesléa. *The Best Cat in the World*. Illustrated by Ronald Himler. Eerdmans, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-8028-5252-1, \$16.00)

When his cat, Charlie, dies of old age, Victor is grief stricken. He cries for days and rejects his mother's suggestion of a new pet. But when the veterinarian calls about a kitten needing a place to live, Victor tentatively agrees to bring her home. Although Shelley, the new kitten, is friendly and active, at first Victor can only see the ways in which she is different from Charlie. She naps in the living room instead of on Victor's bed, she doesn't wake him in the morning as Charlie always did, and she doesn't like to be touched while eating. Gradually, Victor is able to appreciate Shelley for her own characteristics, like the way she grabs at his shoelaces, chases her tail, and rolls over for a belly rub. Other books have been written about the death of a pet, but Lesléa Newman's text is notable for its sensitive and respectful portrayal of a child's intense loss and the gradual development of a relationship—rather than instant rapport—with a new animal. Ronald Himler's pencil and watercolor illustrations highlight Victor's emotional body language. (Ages 5-8)

Park, Linda Sue. *The Firekeeper's Son*. Illustrated by Julie Downing. Clarion, 2004. 37 pages (trade 0-618-13337-2, \$16.00)

Sang-hee's father plays a vital role in their Korean village near the sea. As firekeeper, he climbs to the top of the mountain each evening to light a large bonfire. When the flames are visible on the next mountain, the firekeeper there lights his bonfire. The chain of fires continues, all the way to the palace. When the king sees the fire on the mountain nearest the palace, he knows that the land is safe and that no enemies have been seen approaching by sea. "In your time, and my time, and your grandfather's time, the fire has always been lit. It is good to live in a time of peace," Sang-hee's father tells him. As long as the fires burn, the king will not send his soldiers to Sang-hee's village to defend the border. But when the fire is unlit one evening, and his father lies injured with a broken ankle and unable to climb the mountain, Sang-hee thinks how thrilling it would be if the soldiers came. He imagines showing them the beach and being taught how to sword-fight. Then, remembering his father's words about the value of peace, Sang-hee lets go of his fantasy and lights the signal fire himself. This engaging fictional story set in the early 1800s is based on the bonfire signal system used in Korea until the late nineteenth century. Sang-hee's understandable desire for excitement is balanced with a welcome portrayal of heroic behavior during peaceful times. Although some visual details in hair and clothing lack cultural accuracy, the atmospheric watercolor and pastel illustrations glow, highlighting the flames of the fire in the evening sky. (Ages 5-8)

Paterson, John and Katherine Paterson. *Blueberries for the Queen*. Illustrated by Susan Jeffers. HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-623942-7, \$17.99; lib. 0-06-623943-5, \$18.89)

When his brother Roger announces that a queen has moved in up the road, William knows he's joking – there aren't real queens in the U.S.A. But it's true! The year is 1942, and Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands and her family are spending the wartime summer in New England. William longs to meet the neighboring royalty. Struck with inspiration one morning, he sets out with a basket of freshly picked blueberries. Upon arriving at the queen's temporary home, he is assured by the woman who meets him at the door that his gift of berries is just what the Queen needs. To his surprise, the woman at the door is a princess, and the Queen herself is a "plump, white-haired lady in a regular old dress" who smiles "just as his own grandmother would have." A concluding historical note describes author John Paterson's

childhood experience of delivering blueberries personally to Queen Wilhelmina while she was renting a Massachusetts home with her daughter and granddaughters. The Patersons' charming story is enhanced by illustrations showing the products of William's active imagination as it is sparked into overdrive by the proximity of royalty. His visions of a fairy-tale queen in a crown and ermine robes, a turreted castle, and himself as a knight in armor riding a white steed are delightfully balanced by the reality of an ordinary-looking woman with the extraordinary title of Queen. (Ages 5-9)

Potter, Giselle. *Chloë's Birthday ... and Me*. An Anne Schwartz Book / Atheneum, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-689-86230-X, \$15.95)

Giselle struggles with jealousy as she and her parents prepare for her little sister Chloë's fifth birthday. Giselle's own birthday feels far away as she helps her mother buy Chloe special perfume and her father make a beautiful puppet. At the beach on the big day, Giselle buries the perfume bottle in the sand – won't Chloë have fun searching for her gift! Obviously, Giselle knows this isn't a wise idea, but she rationalizes that "there was only a teeny chance it would get lost." Of course, the perfume isn't where Giselle thinks it will be, and misery sets in as the whole family digs frantically. In an effort to distract her little sister from the lost gift, Giselle begins to play with Chloë, and it's then that the birthday girl feels something in the sand ... the missing perfume. Giselle Potter's tale of sibling envy is based on her own childhood experiences during a year spent in France, a period she first visited in *The Year I Didn't Go to School* (An Anne Schwartz Book / Atheneum, 2002). (Ages 6-9)

Prosek, James. *A Good Day's Fishing*. Simon & Schuster, 2004. 40 pages (trade 0-689-85327-0, \$15.95)

A child rummages through the contents of his tackle box, certain that what he needs for a good day's fishing is somewhere inside. Beautiful watercolor paintings show each lure and tool described in the simple text. Additional paintings depict the kind of fish each is designed to catch, making this a picture book and field guide in one. Some of the more curious things in his tackle box include an old peanut butter sandwich and an eel—neither is what he is looking for. Finally the boy finds just the thing for a good day's fishing: his hat. James Prosek is a noted fishing expert and has written extensively on the topic for adults. The glossary in the back explains in much more technical detail how each kind of lure and fly works to move and reflect light and how each is designed to attract certain types of fish in a variety of conditions. (Ages 5-12)

Raven, Margot Theis. *Circle Unbroken*. Illustrated by E. B. Lewis. Melanie Kroupa Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 40 pages (trade 0-374-31289-3, \$16.00)

A grandmother connects the past with the present for her granddaughter as she teaches her how to make a sweetgrass basket. In doing so, she is bestowing two gifts on the child: the skill of basket weaving and the story of her past, which stretches back many generations to Africa. The grandmother tells the girl of a young man in Africa who was taught to weave a basket, "Just as I am teaching you..." His basket pleased the elders of his village, "Just as I am pleased with you..." Margot Theis Raven's moving story briefly but powerfully traces the history of African Americans through the child's family history, chronicling kidnapers in Africa and slavery in the United States, the Civil War and new hope, changing times and new challenges. Through it all, there are two constants: the passing of the skilled tradition and the love of parents and elders for children—always affirmed, just as the grandmother affirms her grandchild in many ways. The unbroken circle that the basket represents embraces the past and present, weaving them into the future. An author's note provides additional information about sweetgrass or "Gullah" baskets from the coastal islands off of South Carolina, where the story is set. E.B. Lewis's full-page illustrations are stirring, resonant with emotion. (Ages 6-9)

Rogers, Gregory. *The Boy, the Bear, the Baron, the Bard*. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2004. 32 pages (trade 1-56943-009-5, \$16.95)

While attempting to retrieve his soccer ball, which broke through the window of an abandoned theater, a

small boy is transported back to the time of Shakespeare, bursting on stage in the midst of one of the Bard's plays. His miscue annoys the playwright, who pursues him across Elizabethan London. The boy frees a caged bear and a captive baron while fleeing from the Bard in this raucous and exhilarating wordless story. The illustrations are a mix of comic-style panels and full-page drawings, all full-color. This dazzling graphic novel adventure sees relationships develop and lives change within 32 breathless pages. (Ages 6-12)

Schwartz, Amy. *Things I Learned in Second Grade*. Katherine Tegen Books / HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages

(trade 0-06-050936-8, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-050937-6, \$16.89)

On the last day of second grade, a young boy looks back on the school year and recites a catalog of experiences that mark how things have changed from the school year's beginning to end. By year's end, he has new friends and he has grown apart from (and annoyed with) an old one. He's learned about Albert Einstein, and Beezus and Ramona. He's written a poem, drawn many pictures ("This is anger. This is happiness. This is William. This is Joseph."), read many books, built many towers, and written his name in cursive. And he is primed with new questions to which he can't wait to learn the answers, just as he can't wait to accomplish even more—once he gets to third grade. Amy Schwartz has a gift for conveying a child's view on the world. It shines in this sweet, unsentimental look at how much children can and do accomplish, inviting young readers and listeners to think about how much they, too, have changed and grown. (Ages 5-8)

Taylor, Debbie A. *Sweet Music in Harlem*. Illustrated by Frank Morrison. Lee & Low, 2004. 32 pages (trade 1-58430-165-1, \$16.95)

Uncle Click can't find his hat, and young CJ embarks on a search of his uncle's favorite neighborhood haunts trying to track it down in an upbeat picture book that was inspired by Art Kane's famous photograph *A Great Day in Harlem*. Uncle Click is a jazz man, and he needs his hat to wear for the photographer coming to take his picture. CJ, an aspiring and talented musician himself, goes from barbershop to diner to nightclub, but no one has seen the hat. Still, everyone loves talking about Uncle Click's music ("when he wails on his trumpet, the saltshakers bounce!"), and they're intrigued to hear a photographer is on his way. Soon a whole crowd has gathered on the steps of Uncle Click's brownstone to be part of the picture. Kane's memorable photo is reproduced as part of an author's note explaining how it brought together many of Harlem's finest jazz musicians with a handful of neighborhood children—an extraordinary event orchestrated by word of mouth. Author Debbie A. Taylor has placed a cast of vibrant African American characters in a wonderful original story that is suggestive of the past but does not try to replicate it. Frank Morrison's buoyant acrylic artwork matches the energy and flow of the story. (Ages 5-8)

Wheeler, Lisa. *Seadogs: An Epic Ocean Operetta*. Illustrated by Mark Siegel. A Richard Jackson Book / Atheneum, 2004. 40 pages (trade 0-689-85689-X, \$16.95)

Opera buffs, graphic novel aficionados, and would-be pirates—who'd have thought these disparate groups would meet in a children's book? They do—most successfully—in *Seadogs*. In true comic-book style, this unusual story is told on nearly wordless pages that require careful picture-reading and through brief cartoon-bubble dialogues. The words are actually rousing lyrics of full-length songs. The tale begins when a small brown puppy, clearly a first-time opera-goer, squirms in her seat as she waits for the curtain to rise. Shifting visual perspectives show the rest of the audience, the cast, and the orchestra pit, canines one and all. The opera opens with an introduction to the story's archetypal characters. The salty old "seadog" captain, a brave beagle first mate, and the cook-underdog dachshund set off on "one last sail" aboard the vessel *Beauty*. Their journey rockets from one adventure to the next: pirate attack, a

stowaway, a storm at sea, the requisite mutiny, a treasure map, and a dash of romance. This unusual book scores in both its design and commitment to fun. Young readers will revel in the light-hearted language (as when the dachshund laments his job as cook, “Doggone it! I am meant for more than sausage links and kibble.”). As the cast takes their curtain call, the puppy from the first page is literally standing on her seat to applaud. The story comes full circle as she, in a post-theater glow, imagines herself starring in all the roles. (Ages 7-12)

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Coming On Home Soon*. Illustrated by E. B. Lewis. Putnam, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-399-23748-8, \$16.99)

Ada Ruth stays with her grandmother while her mother heads up to Chicago to work. Although she feels at home with grandma, Ada Ruth misses her mother terribly. She keeps waiting for the letter from her that tells them she will be “coming on home soon.” As the days go by slowly, Ada Ruth begins to realize that her grandmother misses her mother as much as she does. Set during World War II, Jacqueline Woodson’s poetic text is filled with longing, while E. B. Lewis’s realistic watercolor paintings give a sense of the immense loneliness both Ada Ruth and her grandmother feel. (Ages 5-8)

Zarin, Cynthia. *Albert, the Dog Who Liked to Ride in Taxis*. Illustrated by Pierre Pratt. A Richard Jackson Book / Atheneum, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-689-84762-9, \$16.95)

A dedicated and responsible dog owner, Mrs. Crabtree walks whenever possible, always bringing Albert along for exercise. But Albert has his own preferred method of transportation: taxis. Nothing pleases him more than a rainy morning and knowing there is a good chance Mrs. Crabtree will opt for a cab to run her errands. One momentous day, Albert is overcome by the sight of an open taxi door. Slipping unseen into the vehicle, he experiences the luxury of a solo outing in his transport mode of choice. Once he’s tasted the freedom of traveling unencumbered, Albert contrives to spend the rest of the day darting in and out of yellow cabs, meeting a delightful cast of new acquaintances along the way. Appropriate for such a dog of the road, his day ends at the airport, where the concept of air travel opens the door to a whole new realm of destinations. The understated text is complemented by the humorous illustrations, especially those showing Albert looking like a dachshund with a uniquely piglike muzzle. Clever Albert is first and foremost “a dog of the world.” (Ages 5-8)

Books for Beginning and Newly Independent Readers

Cohen, Miriam. *Mimmy and Sophie All Around Town*. Illustrated by Thomas F. Yezerki. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 68 pages (trade 0-374-34989-4, \$16.00)

Sisters Mimmy and Sophie live with their parents in Brooklyn during the Depression. The six short chapters of this book focus on their sibling relationship and their interactions with friends in a way that manages to feel simultaneously specific to the setting and universal with regard to families. Whether they’re playing in the alley, on a jaunt to Coney Island, or in a contentious game of school, Mimmy and Sophie come on alive on the pages. Sometimes they annoy one another, but when the chips are down, these two sisters are one tightly bound unit. The frequent black-and-white illustrations and short story format invite newly independent readers to share in the ups and downs of Mimmy’s and Sophie’s days. (Ages 6-8)

Cushman, Doug. *Space Cat*. (An I Can Read Book) HarperCollins, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-06-008965-2, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-008966-0, \$16.99)

Loaded with energy and humor, this early reader combines a controlled vocabulary and simple sentence structure with an entertaining story. When his rocket’s fuel tank develops a leak, Space Cat turns to alien King Zorp for help. Zorp is having a few technical problems of his own, and hasn’t a drop of fuel to

spare. Fortunately, Space Cat's personal robot/butler, Earl, turns up at the crucial moment, providing an unexpected source of aid to Zorp. King Zorp bestows a reward of fuel, and Space Cat and Earl head back into the stratosphere in Cushman's far out tale. (Ages 5-7)

Look, Lenore. *Ruby Lu, Brave and True*. Illustrated by Anne Wilsdorf. An Anne Schwartz Book / Atheneum, 2004. 105 pages (trade 0-689-84907-9, \$15.95)

Ruby Lu is an eight-year-old Chinese American girl who lives life to the fullest. A hilarious book for newly independent readers reveals the best and worst of Ruby. She has a great imagination and loves to perform magic shows in her back yard. She is crazy about her new baby brother, Oscar; her grandparents; and the snacks they serve at Chinese School. She is not so crazy about Christina, the new girl in her class, other people's baby brothers, and learning all the new Chinese words and characters. By the end of this short novel, Ruby's growth is apparent in many ways, from her friendship with Christina to her obvious pride in newly mastered Chinese skills. Occasional black-and-white illustrations add to the lighthearted tone of a story that includes a screamingly funny scene in which Ruby decides to "borrow" her parents' car and drive herself to school. Ruby Lu is a girl to watch out for. (Ages 5-9)

Milgrim, David. *Swing Otto Swing!* (Ready-to-Read) Atheneum, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-689-85564-8, \$14.95)

The latest entry in David Milgrim's send-up of "Dick and Jane" features the robot Otto attempting to swing in the trees like his monkey friends Flip and Flop. Otto's trepidation is great, but his determination is mighty despite repeated failures. When success seems impossible, Otto uses a little ingenuity and elbow grease to get in the swing of things in his own way. Children will not find Milgrim's allusion to the past in the text funny in and of itself ("See Otto swing. Swing, Otto, swing."). But they will appreciate the humor and warmth of the story, in which the spare text is juxtaposed with digitally rendered pen-and-ink drawings. Milgrim conveys a range of emotions with just a few expressive lines in the art, making this beginning reader useful in an introduction to visual literacy as well. (Ages 4-7)

Fiction for Children

Balliett, Blue. *Chasing Vermeer*. Illustrated by Brett Helquist. Scholastic Press, 2004. 254 pages (trade 0-439-37294-1, \$16.95)

Mysterious letters delivered after dark, showers of frogs, and unexplained repetitions of the number 12 are just a few of the diverse elements present in this intricate mystery. Sixth graders Calder and Petra, classmates both hovering on the fringes of their school's social scene, are drawn together by a missing Vermeer painting. Petra is sensitive to words, while Calder operates comfortably within a world of symbols and patterns. Both children bring their unique skills and perspectives to the search for the lost painting, and together they make a formidable detective duo. As events escalate to a frenzy (often playfully stretching credibility), readers are invited to share in the sleuthing process. In addition to hints and clues within the story, images of pentominoes are camouflaged within the illustrations, offering a hidden message if correctly decoded. Ultimately, Petra and Calder's resolve pays off as they solve the mystery and raise some important questions about art, friendship, perception, and truth along the way. (Ages 9-12)

Boyce, Frank Cottrell. *Millions*. U.S. edition: HarperCollins, 2004. 247 pages (trade 0-06-073330-6, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-073331-4, \$18.27)

Frank Cottrell Boyce has written a funny and tender story of a ten-year-old boy who faces the unlikely and extraordinarily daunting task of having to spend 229,370 British pounds in 17 days – after that time Britain will convert to the Euro and the money will be worthless. Damian was quietly grieving his mother's recent death when the money fell – literally – from the sky. Fascinated with saints (he is sure

his mother will soon be among them), Damian doesn't have to try hard to believe that the money is a gift from God, but he's determined to spend it on good deeds. His older brother, Anthony, takes a much more pragmatic view of things; he wants to get their financial house in order, and real estate is on his mind. Boyce has crafted an intricate, twist-and-turn tale that is firmly rooted in possibility – there is a logical explanation for the money's sudden appearance – even as it takes readers on a remarkable journey that involves one leap of faith after another. Damian's conversations with various saints (from St. Joseph to St. Catherine, not to mention the Latter Day Saints who live down the road) are as casual—and in many ways more comfortable—than the discussions he has with his dad, who is trying so very hard to hold it all together in the wake of his wife's death. As the boys labor to spend the money (an uphill struggle for minors, they discover), they draw closer to understanding their personal loss as well as their family's strength for the future. A splendid combination of comedy and insight, *Millions* holds high appeal for a wide audience of readers. (Ages 9-14)

Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker. *The President's Daughter*. Delacorte Press, 2004. 166 pages (trade 0-385-73147-7, \$15.95; lib. 0-385-90179-9, \$17.99)

When her father, Theodore Roosevelt, becomes president after the assassination of William McKinley, ten-year-old Ethel Roosevelt's life changes dramatically. Previously schooled at home, Ethel is enrolled in the new National Cathedral School, where she boards during the week. At school she is homesick and finds it difficult to make new friends. She can't wait for Friday afternoon, when she returns to her new home, the White House, which can barely contain the energy of her warm, exuberant family. Delightful weekend antics, like the time Ethel spends a state dinner beneath the formal dining table at the White House on a dare, contrast with the formal atmosphere of the school, where Ethel dreads the whispers of her classmates. Those whispers escalate to sneers after her father hosts a black man, Booker T. Washington, for dinner, and Ethel wishes she had the same courage as her father to uphold her convictions and beliefs. But with the support of her loving family—from her even-tempered mother to her ebullient father to her bold, independent half-sister, Alice, whom she adores—Ethel gradually adjusts to being “the president's daughter” while remaining true to herself. Kimberly Brubaker Bradley's appealing narrative is convincingly and compellingly told from young Ethel's point of view. The author includes a wonderful note that details where fact ends and fiction begins in her narrative. (Ages 8-10)

Bruchac, Joseph. *Hidden Roots*. Scholastic Press, 2004. 136 pages (trade 0-439-35358-0, \$16.95)

So many things in 11-year-old Sonny's life are a mystery. Why can't he stand up to the kids at school who bully him? Why is his father filled with so much anger that at times he can't contain it, beating his mother black and blue? How does Uncle Louis manage to show up at the door whenever Sonny and his mother need him most? In Joseph Bruchac's quietly gripping story set in 1954, many of the answers are tied to a shameful and tragic episode in U.S. history: the Vermont Eugenics Project, a law that promoted “voluntary sterilization” but in truth forced sterilization on many individuals, often those who were poor, or sick, or—as Sonny discovers with his own family—Indian. Sonny doesn't know that his mother and father are Abenaki Indian until the day he comes home from school and asks Uncle Louis how the Holocaust could have happened. It is then that Uncle Louis decides Sonny is ready to hear the truth about their family history, including the fact that he is Sonny's grandfather. Uncle Louis made the difficult decision to give up his daughter, Sonny's mother, when she was a schoolgirl so that she could live with a loving family he knew in New York state. As devastating as the decision was for both of them, it would be a chance for her to escape the tragedy and identity that had already taken her own mother's life. But Uncle Louis always remained close, and has been quietly passing on their culture to Sonny without ever giving it a name. Despite the intensity of the subject matter, Bruchac's first-person narrative never feels too heavy. Sonny is an observant, sensitive, and ultimately resilient child who has strong adults supporting him—from his mother and grandfather

to a wonderful librarian at school. And difficult information is revealed to him in a manner appropriate to his age. While the domestic violence aspect of the narrative is wrapped up a little too easily (Bruchac himself acknowledges this possibility in his author's note but also provides a reason), it doesn't detract from the overall impact of this singular story. (Ages 11-14)

Chipman, Liz. *From the Lighthouse*. Dutton, 2004. 197 pages (trade 0-525-47312-2, \$16.99)

Weezie's father is a lighthouse keeper on a small Hudson River island in the late 1930s. She and her brothers love the lighthouse and all of the adventures and challenges that come with living in such a unique place. Unfortunately, Weezie's mother does not feel the same way. One day she leaves the family, seemingly out of the blue. At first it is difficult for everyone, and each sibling handles his or her grief differently. Roles in the family naturally shift, and it is Weezie who is stuck with much of what had been her mother's work, from cooking and cleaning to caring for her brothers, although her father insists the boys do their share as well, much to their initial anger and disgust. Weezie and the three boys slowly adjust, but throughout the novel they hold on to the hope that their mother will return. Their solidarity as a family becomes their salvation in a story that showcases wonderful and realistic sibling dynamics. Tragedy strikes just as they start to get used to the new rhythm of their lives, and in a heartwrenching scene they mourn the loss of yet another family member. Liz Chipman's descriptions of the landscape and the fascinating details of managing life on an island add to richness of this highly moving novel. (Ages 10-14)

Choldenko, Gennifer. *Al Capone Does My Shirts*. Putnam, 2004. 225 pages (trade 0-399-23861-1, \$15.99)

When Moose Flanagan moves to Alcatraz Island so his father can work as a prison guard, he's concerned about leaving his friends and his baseball team behind. He quickly discovers that living on the same piece of ground that harbors Machine Gun Kelly and Al Capone is a whole new ballgame. Along with the children of the other prison employees, Moose takes a boat to San Francisco each weekday to attend school. There the Island kids milk the mystique of their home for all it's worth, concocting an ingenious scheme that involves smuggling their classmates' dirty clothes into the prison laundry system – for a price. The humor of Moose's escapades is balanced with a more serious issue that his family deals with daily: his older sister Natalie has a condition that keeps her from functioning as a typical teenager. Unidentified in this story set in the 1930s, Natalie's condition would be diagnosed as autistic today. Desperate to find help for Natalie, Moose's mother insists that her 16-year-old daughter is only ten, an age when she's still eligible to attend special schools rather than being relegated to an institution. A concluding author's note describes life on Alcatraz during its tenure as a working penitentiary from 1934 to 1963, solidly grounding this piece of fiction within fact. In a similar vein, Gennifer Choldenko's sister served as inspiration for the character of Natalie, who is portrayed with respect and intimacy. The author's dedication reads, "To my sister, Gina Johnson, and to all of us who loved her – however imperfectly." (Ages 10-14)

Collins, Suzanne. *Gregor and the Prophecy of Bane*. Scholastic Press, 2004. 320 pages (trade 0-439-65075-5, \$16.95)

In this exciting sequel to *Gregor the Overlander*, eleven-year-old Gregor finds himself headed back to the Underland, a huge territory beneath the earth that is populated by all manner of giant animals who have adapted over the years to living in perpetual darkness. The first time, he went to rescue his father, and he vowed never to return after surviving and succeeding on his quest. But now he must rescue his sister Boots, who has been kidnapped as a way to lure him back to the Underland. The Underlanders believe he is the one who has been prophesied to kill The White Rat and prevent an Underland world war. Gregor is again thrust into the role of reluctant hero. Scenes featuring amped-up species such as bats and roaches range from fast to funny to deliciously frightening. Gregor also faces several moral choices. As

in the first volume of *The Underland Chronicles*, there is plenty of humor and plenty of intense action in this riveting, fast-paced novel. (Ages 9-14)

Creech, Sharon. *Heartbeat*. Joanna Cotler Books / HarperCollins, 2004. 180 pages (trade 0-06-054022-2, \$15.99; lib. 0-06-054023-0, \$16.89)

Twelve-year-old Annie loves to run. So does her best friend, Max. But while Annie runs for the sheer joy of it, Max is running to get somewhere. He sees a future track scholarship as a means of escaping their small town. Neither quite understands the other's point of view, and the fact that she and Max are suddenly at odds over running is just one more change for Annie at a time in her life when everything seems to be shifting. Her mom is pregnant and her grandfather is growing confused. Even something as simple as an apple can change in unexpected ways. For Annie, life is precious and confusing all at once. Annie loves to draw, and through art, she begins to understand that there is more than one way to look at everything, including the events in her life. These changing perspectives help her feel that the ground beneath her feet is solid once again. Sharon Creech's second novel in poems beats with the rhythm of many hearts and hopes and dreams. (Ages 10-14)

DeFilippis, Nunzio and Christina Weir. *Once in a Blue Moon: Volume 1*. Illustrated by Jennifer Quick. Oni Press (6336 SE Milwaukie Avenue, PMB 30, Portland, OR 97202), 2004. 154 pages (pbk. 1-929998-83X, \$11.95)

As a child, Aeslin Flinn loved *The Avalon Chronicles*, which her parents read to her at bedtime. But her mother refused to continue reading the story after her father disappeared. Now Aeslin is 14. When her best friend, Samantha, finds a book called *Once in a Blue Moon*, Aeslin realizes it's a sequel to the beloved tale of her childhood. But the world of Avalon has darkened since Aeslin was younger: characters she loved have been living in misery. This perfectly paced graphic novel follows Aeslin as she makes the stunning discovery that she can read herself into the world of Avalon. Even more shocking is the truth behind her father's disappearance. Now Aeslin has a chance to rescue her father, not to mention to dress in cool knightly clothes and to wield a sword or two. Aeslin moves in and out of the fantasy world of Avalon while trying to handle the challenges that most other 14-year-olds face in reality: an annoying mother who just doesn't get it and harbors too many secrets, a crush on the cutest boy in school, and a best friend whose best intentions often cause trouble. Both Aeslin and Samantha are at an important stage in figuring out who they are and what they can contribute to the world. But Aeslin's challenge is complicated by trying to determine to *which* world she has the most to contribute. Black-and-white drawings create remarkable contrasts between the two worlds and a careful reader will spot anachronisms: Aeslin's school uniform looks out of place in Avalon, for example, and medieval houses look silly in the middle of a busy contemporary street. This is the first volume of an exciting and promising new series. (Ages 10 - 15)

Doyle, Brian. *Boy O'Boy*. A Groundwood Book / Douglas & McIntyre, 2004. 161 pages (trade 0-88899-588-1, \$15.95; pbk. 0-88899-590-3, \$6.95)

Martin O'Boy (known as Boy O'Boy) lives in Ottawa in 1945. In an authentic and likeable first-person voice, Martin describes the gritty details of his neighborhood and family life, which are both painful and funny. The war has cast a dark shadow over his already dingy neighborhood, and Boy is the victim of humiliation and physical and mental abuse. He has a severely developmentally disabled twin brother who exhausts him, and parents who fight all the time. In spite of this, Boy is a mostly cheerful 12-year-old who is buoyed by movies, his cat, the image of strong soldiers, and his friends. He also sings with the local boys' choir. At first this is a great honor and provides him much-needed pocket money and a sense of community at a time in his life when little else is stable. But the organist, Mr. George, slowly changes from a kind, fatherly man to vicious sexual predator, molesting first Martin, and then Martin's best friend, Billy, in scenes that are uncomfortable but accessible to older children and teens. Both boys are ultimately able to help put an end to the abuse in a story that showcases Brian Doyle's extraordinary ability to balance high humor with realistic, riveting drama. (Ages 11-14)

Easton, Kelly. *Walking On Air*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2004. 233 pages (trade 0-689-84875-5, \$16.95)

June's father is an itinerant preacher of questionable ethics. Whenever and wherever he preaches, he asks for donations. He says they are for the poor, but he never mentions that the "poor" he is referring to happens to be their own family. Still, he firmly believes what he preaches about the Bible. June is a tightrope performer, and her father relies on her to help draw a crowd to his sermons. She is, he says, "blessed with the Holy Spirit." For 12-year-old June, the show is growing old. So, too, are her father's constant criticism and rigid expectations, as well as the endless travel. And while her father sees the Bible as a source with all the answers, June finds that the biblical stories he tells raise questions in her own mind. Set during the Depression, Kelly Easton's lyrical novel is a unique coming-of-age story about a girl's struggle to arrive at an understanding of God and faith that resonates in her own heart and mind. Easton's plot is complicated by a family secret that unfolds as June makes surprising discoveries about her parents' lives before she was born. Although that element of the story is resolved a bit too easily (and happily), the complication allows June to make another critical coming-of-age discovery: her parents are two imperfect individuals doing the best they can. Unfortunately, the best isn't always enough, at least where a child is concerned. (Ages 11-14)

Ellis, Deborah. *The Heaven Shop*. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2004. 186 pages (trade 1-55041-908-0, \$16.95)

Thirteen-year-old Binti has a comfortable life, living with her father and two older siblings in Blantyre, the largest city in Malawi. She receives a great deal of attention as the child star of a local radio program called *Gogo's Family*. Her father has his own business called the Heaven Shop, where he makes and sells coffins. Business is good for him, due to the large number of people in Blantyre who are dying from AIDS-related complications. When he himself contracts AIDS and dies, Binti and her sister are sent to live with an aunt and uncle who treat them like servants. Binti eventually escapes and goes to live with her grandmother, who lives in a rural area and who has taken in many AIDS orphans. Through Binti's eyes, Deborah Ellis shows the devastating effects AIDS has had in Africa in a forceful novel based on interviews and research she did in Malawi and Zambia. (Ages 10-14)

Farmer, Nancy. *The Sea of Trolls*. A Richard Jackson Book / Atheneum, 2004. 459 pages (trade 0-689-86744-1, \$17.95)

Vikings and Saxons and trolls...oh my! A story set in 793 A.D. begins in what is now Britain. Jack, a 12-year-old Saxon boy, has been apprenticed to the Bard, a man who came to his village from across the northern sea. Even though he is learning magic, Jack can't protect himself and his little sister, Lucy, when their village is invaded by berserkers from the northern lands. Bound for a life of slavery, Jack's salvation comes when he reveals himself (with slight embellishment) to be a bard and the berserker Olaf-One-Brow dreams of himself glorified in song. But when Jack's magic goes awry at the court of King Ivan the Boneless, he enrages Firth, the half-troll queen. To save Lucy, whom the queen is holding hostage, Jack must embark on a quest into the heart of the troll kingdom, where a drink from Mirim's Well will give him the magic he needs to undo his mistake. He is accompanied by Brave Heart, a steadfast crow; Olaf; and Thorgill, a girl wounded by her bitter past who seeks salvation in Valhalla. Nancy Farmer's riveting adventure is far more complex than a tale of good versus evil. Jack discovers that berserkers, and even trolls, have heart, intelligence, and wit. At the same time, he learns that relationships are anything but clear-cut in a world where the struggle for survival makes brutal enemies of those who might otherwise be friends. This epic novel offers plenty of humor along with the action. It draws on Norse mythology, the history of Britain and Scandinavia, and at least one surprisingly familiar source that readers will find enormously satisfying when revealed (and even more gratifying if they figure it out beforehand). (Ages 10-14)

Frost, Helen. *Spinning Through the Universe: A Novel in Poems from Room 214*. Frances Foster Books / Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 93 pages (trade 0-374-37159-8, \$16.00)

Helen Frost offers readers glimpses into the lives of the students and teacher who comprise a fictional fifth grade classroom. This novel in poems underscores how little we sometimes know about the people whose lives intersect our own each day and how much small acts and observations can matter. Part I of *Spinning Through the Universe* introduces the inhabitants of Room 214—the students, their teacher, the night custodian—, each voice speaking in a different poetic form. Each poem reveals something about the individual that, more often than not, no one else in the class knows about or sees, at least at first. The exception is Naomi, an exceptionally observant girl who notices more than anyone. Their lives are spinning independently, but occasionally they collide—in moments of tension, in acts both kind and unkind. Part II of the book is comprised of acrostics. Frost has taken a line from a poem in Part I for each character and made it the framework for the acrostic poem in that person's voice. The lines she has chosen are, again, revealing. And just as the idea of an acrostic suggests a connectedness, the individuals in Room 214 are becoming more and more of a community—a constellation—as the school year progresses. Frost provides extensive notes on the various forms of poetry she used. (Ages 10-13)

Gandolfi, Silvana. *Aldabra, or the Tortoise Who Loved Shakespeare*. Translated from the Italian by Lynne Sharon Schwartz. U.S. edition: Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2004. 151 pages (trade 0-439-49741-8, \$16.95)

A story set in contemporary Venice starts out as realistic fiction and slides seamlessly into delightful fantasy. Ten-year-old Elisa has a great relationship with her grandmother, Nonna Eia, with whom she shares a love for Shakespeare and art. She also has a great relationship with her mother. But for some unknown reason, Nonna and her mother do not speak. When Elisa begins to notice subtle changes in Nonna's habits and behavior, she isn't sure where to turn. It is not long before Elisa realizes that to thwart death, her grandmother is transforming herself into a tortoise. Specifically, she's becoming a tortoise indigenous to the remote island of Aldabra. When Elisa learns the reason for the stalemate between her mother and grandmother, she is convinced that she must protect her grandmother in any way she can in a fast-paced novel with a preposterous premise that works. Despite rising tides and a lurking predator or two, feisty Elisa uses her wits and every resource at her disposal—including, with some relief, her mother-- to help her grandmother reach her next destination in a wholly satisfying story. (Ages 9-14)

Hannigan, Katherine. *Ida B*. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2004. 246 pages (trade 0-06-073024-2 , \$15.99; lib. 0-06-073025-0, \$16.89)

Nine-year-old Ida B. Applewood adores her parents, and her best friends are the apple trees in her family's Wisconsin orchards. A good heart-to-heart with the trees usually leaves her feeling fine. But one day the trees warn that change is coming, and not long after, Ida B.'s mother is diagnosed with breast cancer. Homeschooled since kindergarten, Ida B. is dismayed when she's sent to public school because her mother is too sick to teach her. Then her parents must sell some of the orchard land—and her beloved trees--in order to pay medical bills. Katherine Hannigan's smart, sensitive, funny protagonist is wise beyond her years, but still very much a child—one who has been so well loved and cared for that she bears both the gift and burden of never having learned before that the universe is not constant. It's a shift she isn't prepared for. Unwilling to forgive her parents for what she sees as one betrayal after another, Ida B. closes her heart. She shuts everyone out, only to discover that causing pain in others is worse than anything she has endured. Ida B.'s loving parents (who exhibit realistic frustration and anger at Ida B.'s behavior) and her terrific fourth-grade teacher give her the time and space she needs to figure out where things went wrong and how to begin to make them right again. Hannigan's quiet story hums with lyrical descriptions of the natural world, and of human nature, too. (Ages 9-11)

Hazen, Lynn E. *Mermaid Mary Margaret*. Bloomsbury, 2004. 87 pages (trade 1-58234-869-3, \$14.95)
Ten-year-old Mary Margaret wants to be a mermaid. She's been fascinated by them ever since her

grandpa told her a mermaid story when she was small. So it seems perfect that she's on a Greek cruise with her grandma, except that she wasn't supposed to be going at all. The cruise was her grandpa and grandma's dream vacation—until he died. Now she is traveling in his place and together she and her grandma will spread his ashes at sea. Mary Margaret isn't sure what to feel. She knows her grandma is sad, and she's sad, too, at least some of the time. But she is also spirited, lively, imaginative, and observant. And with someone on board like the singer Miss Victoria—who seems as if she could really *be* a mermaid with her shimmery, scaly dresses—there are too many possibilities to feel sad all the time. Lynn E. Hazen's funny, tender story shines brightly, showing death and grieving as part of life, and it is firmly grounded in the perspective of a dynamic, sensitive child. (Ages 8-11)

Johnson, Angela. *Bird*. Dial, 2004. 133 pages (trade 0-8037-2847-6, \$15.99)

Bird has run away from home, hoping to find her stepfather, Cecil. She thinks, just maybe, she can convince him to come back. Now she's hiding out in a shed, spying on Cecil's relatives and hoping to make her heart and her family whole again. Ethan knows about the girl living in the shed, but he hasn't told anyone. Once sickly, Ethan has never had the chance to make friends. A heart transplant has turned his health around, but it can't erase years of loneliness. Ethan doesn't know Bird's connection to his Uncle C.L., but as he gets to know her, he finds himself feeling at home in his new heart for the first time. Jay finds himself wondering about Ethan. Does he like peanut butter? Jay's older brother Derek did, and now Derek's heart beats in Ethan's chest, while Jay's heart grows hard with the loss. But when Jay meets Bird, he discovers he can still know laughter. Chapters switch between the voices of these three children on the verge of adolescence whose lives intersect in remarkable ways, offering a unique look at each character from both the inside out and outside in. Angela Johnson deftly weaves a strong and delicate story about love, loss, and letting go. (Ages 10-13)

Kadohata, Cynthia. *Kira-Kira*. Atheneum, 2004. 244 pages (trade 0-689-85639-3, \$15.95)

"My sister Lynn taught me my first word: *Kira-kira* . . . glittering in Japanese." Cynthia Kadohata's first novel for children embodies the meaning of its title. It is a graceful, lyrical, unflinching and illuminating look at a Japanese American family living in challenging personal and social times. Set in the South in the 1950s and early 1960s, the novel is told from the point of view of Katie, who is almost five when the story begins. Katie relies on her older sister, Lynn, to help interpret the world for her. It was Lynn who taught Katie the word "kira-kira," before Katie could even speak. It is Lynn who explains that the kids at their mostly white school won't want to play with her. It is Lynn who dreams of seeing the ocean and going to college and who shares those dreams with Katie. Katie's funny, innocent voice and point of view are remarkable as they change to reflect her growth through childhood and into adolescence and her deepening understanding of individuals and events in her life over the ten-year span of the story. Things she could not possibly comprehend at five become clearer as she matures, unfolding in scenes that range from comic to poignant, painful to tragic. Only Katie's view of Lynn (and of her little brother—who adores her much like she adores Lynn) remains constant, even though Katie knows she can never live up to Lynn's perfection. After Lynn becomes gravely ill, Katie watches her parents toil beyond the point of exhaustion under the horrendous working conditions in the poultry industry as they grasp at any hope to make Lynn well. When Lynn dies, it seems as if they have all been cast into darkness. But Lynn's illness and death, and the diary she leaves behind for Katie, help Katie understand her sister in a new way. She discovers things that seemed so easy for Lynn were the result of her sister's hard work and her determination to see life itself as something shining. The word Lynn first taught Katie proves to be her most lasting gift: a profound way of being in the world. (Ages 10-14)

Konigsburg, E. L. *The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place*. Atheneum, 2004. 296 pages (trade 0-689-86636-4, \$16.95)

Harriet the Spy, Eloise, and Ramona, make room for Margaret Rose Kane in your elite rank of strong, unforgettable girls of fiction. Unwilling to bend to the dictatorial stance of the camp director and defiant against the mean-spirited bullying of her fellow campers, Margaret makes an early exit from summer camp. She's only too happy to spend the rest of the season living with her great-uncles. Alexander and Morris obviously adore and respect their niece, so their unusually guarded behavior makes it clear that they are hiding something significant from Margaret. Indeed, they are keeping a monumental secret, knowing that it will come as a serious blow. The unique clock towers the two men have built in their backyard have been declared unsafe by the city council and slated for destruction. Quirky works of art, these high towers layered with bottles, bits of glass, china fragments, and clock parts, painted in a rainbow of shades, are as beautiful and vital to Margaret as they are unconventional. Determined to save the towers, Margaret launches a campaign designed to raise community awareness of outsider art. Aided by a small group of collaborators, Margaret shines with her fierce individuality as she fights against conformist definitions of art and history. This remarkable multilayered novel mesmerizes with an exceptional combination of literary prowess and pure reading pleasure. (Ages 10-14)

Le Guin, Ursula K. *Gifts*. Harcourt, 2004. 274 pages (trade 0-15-205123-6, \$17.00)

In the Uplands, members of each family lineage share a gift. One family's gift is the ability to start a fire simply by pointing, another family can call animals to the hunt, and a third can move any object with a word and gesture. Orrec's family possesses one of the strongest gifts of all, the power of "undoing." With a look and a motion, Orrec's father can destroy a mouse or devastate a mountainside. When Orrec's gift surfaces at adolescence, he is terrified by his potential to destroy and his inability to control the gift's force. Rather than risk harming others in a moment of uncontrolled emotion, Orrec voluntarily accepts a permanent blindfold to prevent him from invoking his gift. At the same time, he and a friend begin to question their gifts and the way Upland families use their extraordinary abilities strategically as they vie for position and power. Ursula K. Le Guin's name is synonymous with outstanding fantasy writing, and this compelling story continues that tradition of excellence. The author moves beyond an engaging plot to raise questions about the ethics of power, family responsibility, and personal choice. (Ages 11-15)

Lowry, Lois. *Messenger*. Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 169 pages (trade 0-618-40441-4, \$16.00)

Twelve-year-old Matty has a special gift that makes him indispensable in Village, the utopian community to which he escaped when he was just six years old. He is the only one who can travel through Forest unharmed, so he frequently carries messages to other communities. It is unclear why Forest aggressively attacks other travelers, sometimes killing them in a strangle of foliage or punctures of thorns and barbs. It makes the goodness and safety of Village all the more pronounced to those who migrate there. Village is a community that assumes honesty, kindness, generosity, and hospitality, values Matty has had to work hard to assimilate. Now he is making a real contribution, thanks to the love of his foster father, Seer, an old blind man who also has special gifts, and the trust of Leader, who guides them all. But lately, some of the people in Village are changing, becoming selfish and putting their own interests ahead of the well-being of the community. There is even a growing movement to close the borders, even though Village has always been a refuge to any who entered. As he nears manhood, Matty makes some startling discoveries about his true gift and about how it might be used as Village starts to decline. In this companion novel to *The Giver* and *Gathering Blue*, all of Lois Lowry's speculations and questions about community, goodness, love, and human purpose are united in Matty's story. Characters from her previous novels reemerge in a story that stands on its own but that is also a stunning conclusion to the trilogy. (Ages 11-14)

McKay, Hilary. *Indigo's Star*. U.S. edition: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2004. 265 pages (trade 0-689-86563-5, \$15.95)

The unforgettable Casson family, previously encountered in *Saffy's Angel* (Margaret K. McElderry, 2002), makes a return appearance in a novel featuring 12-year-old Indigo. A serious bout of mononucleosis has kept Indigo out of school for an entire semester, and now he's quietly dreading his return. Bullies had made his life miserable, and Indigo knows he's in for more of the same. Unexpectedly, Tom, recently arrived from America, deflects some of the gang's attention onto himself, with his reckless behavior and questionable statements. Soon Tom and Indigo become unlikely friends, and each pushes the other to grow, while giving support and acceptance. Meanwhile, the rest of the Cassons continue to be extraordinary in their own unique ways. Caddy, the oldest, manages a host of inappropriate beaux, and 14-year-old Saffy tries to help Indigo by bullying the bullies. Unquenchable Rose, a mighty force at 8 years of age, works equally hard at not wearing her new glasses and enticing her increasingly distant father to return home. Life in the Casson household may be chaotic, but they continue to entertain and engage readers with their unpredictable antics and unconditional love. (Ages 10-14)

Matthews, L. S. *Fish*. Delacorte Press, 2004. 183 pages (trade 0-385-73180-9, \$14.95; lib. 0-385-90217-4, \$16.99)

Tiger lives in an unidentified country, where his western aid-worker parents help the local people cope with drought, devastating rainfall, poverty, famine, and warfare. When the escalating fighting nears their home, the family heads for the border on foot, led by a native guide. Their journey is complicated by a passenger; a fish Tiger found in a mud puddle after a recent storm. Tiger knows Fish will die when the water dries up, and he convinces his parents to let him cart it along in a cooking pot. As they struggle with harsh climate, dwindling food supplies, and a harrowing run-in with a trio of armed men, Fish's safety is never far from Tiger's thoughts. Although this contemporary tale succeeds at story level, the skillful use of symbolism and metaphor transforms it into a strong literary novel. Fish's continued existence is clearly linked to the well-being of Tiger and his family. Tiger's selfless behavior, which echoes that of his parents and the Guide, ultimately embodies a theme of hope for humanity. (Ages 10-13)

Naifeh, Ted. *Crumrin in the Twilight Kingdom: Volume 3*. Oni Press, 2004. 128 pages (pbk. 1-932664-01-7, \$11.95)

In the third of Ted Naifeh's graphic novel series about young witch Courtney Crumrin, Courtney is a new student at The Coven School and has trouble fitting in. Her classmates reject her, and her misery is exacerbated by her parents' complete disinterest in her. She lacks all social skills, and readers will at first delight in rather than pity her self-sabotaging, surly responses to all who speak to her. Courtney's knowledge of magic is superior to her classmates'. In spite of her tendency to revel in others' problems, she tries to warn a young boy named Joey about the risks of a spell another boy is putting on him. In classic Courtney style she asks him, "What do you think, kid? Nothing about this idea strikes you as a bit....wacked?" But no one pays any attention until the danger is all too obvious. Courtney must decide whether she wants to help Joey and the other students or seek revenge by denying all knowledge and watching them squirm. Moody black-and-white artwork creates an ominous atmosphere that echoes Courtney's own internal struggles as well as the danger she and her classmates face. Readers do not need to be familiar with the first two Courtney Crumrin books to find their place in this story. (Ages 9-14)

Oppel, Kenneth. *Airborn*. Eos / HarperCollins, 2004. 355 pages (trade 0-06-053180-0, \$16.99; lib. 0-06-053181-9, \$17.89)

There is something comforting about the familiar feel of this novel, yet its wholly original elements make it fresh and engaging. Canadian author Kenneth Oppel has created a conventional Victorian-era adventure story infused with fantastic elements that defy scientific laws. The characters are somewhat predictable: Matt, who discovers danger and intrigue at every turn; his female sidekick, Kate, whose

intelligence and natural curiosity belie her frilly appearance (their romance, of course, is inevitable); a wise old ship's captain; and pirates who pillage and kill. But these characters interact against a backdrop that defies any known time or place. The bulk of the novel takes place on an airship. Great technical details explain how the ship works and reveal Matt's passion for a career on board. There is a mystery that centers around a mystical species of animal called a Ghost Cat, a giant flying mammalian beast. If Kate can prove it exists, her grandfather's death might not have been in vain. The writing is flawless, and the quick cycles of tension and resolution are satisfying in a story that leaves itself wide open for what would be a welcome sequel. (Ages 11-14)

Patneau, David. *Thin Wood Walls*. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 231 pages (trade 0-618-34290-7, \$16.00) Eleven-year-old Joseph Hanada is playing basketball with his best friend on December 7, 1941, when his world begins to unravel as news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor shocks the United States. By the end of the day, Joe's dad, a leader in the Japanese American community in their Washington State city, has been arrested by the FBI. It will be three years before Joe sees him again. The occasional haiku that punctuate Joe's first-person narrative are believable as the work of a practiced child and reveal the essence of Joe's hurt, anger, and confusion as his family endures painful and shocking changes. Joe and his family are confronted with the suddenly suspicious, even hateful attitudes of many of their neighbors and the increasingly oppressive actions of the U.S. government, which eventually lead to their imprisonment along with thousands of others of Japanese descent. A marble player, Joseph thinks of President Roosevelt signing Executive Order #9066 and writes: "Hate whispers in his / Ear. Puries here, cat's eyes there." Eventually, Joe ends up at the Tule Lake Relocation Center in California with his mother, grandmother, and older brother, Mike. Joe's keen observations of his own feelings, as well as of people and places, reveal many aspects of life for Japanese Americans before and during World War II, from laws that prevented Isei from owning land before the war, to the ongoing struggle among Japanese Americans to join the war effort, to the differing viewpoints among Japanese Americans, who were by no means a homogenous group socially or politically. Words and ideas locked up Joseph and his family. But it is words and ideas that help Joseph maintain his sense of self and dignity throughout their ordeal. (Ages 10-13)

Philbrick, Rodman. *The Young Man and the Sea*. Blue Sky Press / Scholastic, 2004. 191 pages (trade 0-439-36829-4, \$16.95)

A mighty struggle between man (or, in this case, boy) and fish – sound familiar? With a nod to Hemingway, author Rodman Philbrick tells Skiff Beaman's story. Twelve-year-old Skiff's mother recently died, and his father has sunk into a debilitating depression, seldom stirring from the couch. Skiff can't get through to his dad, even when their fishing boat—and the source of the family income—sinks at the dock. Skiff tackles the problem himself and, with the help of an elderly neighbor, sets out to earn the cash needed for boat repairs. When a bully sabotages his money-making plans, the lure of a big catch and its quick payoff tempt Skiff to head out to sea solo. The hunt for a giant tuna and the resulting battle between boy and fish stretch credibility, but the scene's excitement and tension are undeniable. Especially poignant are the internal conversations Skiff holds with his mother, whose imagined voice helps him when he most needs support. Goaded from his grief by his son's dangerous journey, Skiff's father reassumes his role as a parent and the book ends on a hopeful note. (Ages 9-12)

Porter, Pamela. *Sky*. Illustrated by Mary Jane Gerber. A Groundwood Book / Douglas & McIntyre, 2004.

83 pages (trade 0-88899-563-6, \$15.95)

Georgia lives with her grandparents on the Blackfeet Reservation in northern Montana. The year is 1964, and heavy spring rains on top of snow push the dam near their home beyond its limits. Fleeing the swiftly rising water, Georgia and her family barely make it to safety. In the wake of the devastation, Georgia finds a foal who miraculously survived the flood, and it becomes the focus of Georgia's energy and a symbol of hope for the future. Pamela Porter's short, spirited novel is based on the life of her friend

Georgia Salois, a **M**.is, who survived that flood. Porter's narrative is compelling for the drama and appeal of the story itself, as well as for her honest portrayal of the poverty and racism that Georgia, her family, and other Native people in their town face on a daily basis. There is the school teacher who only acknowledges white children who get As, and there is the unforgivable treatment of the Indians in the midst of the crisis, when they were crowded into a room without beds or blankets at a local school and charged for any food they ate, while white people in the town had cots in the gymnasium and ate for free. These and other events unfold through Georgia's eyes, with the harsh realities of attitudes and events tempered by the love and support she receives at home and within her community. (Ages 8-11)

Rodman, Mary Ann. *Yankee Girl*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 219 pages (trade 0-374-38661-7, \$17.00)

As a child, author Mary Ann Rodman moved from Chicago to Jackson, Mississippi. Her father was an FBI agent. The year was 1964. Rodman's own experiences form the basis of this novel about an 11-year-old white northern girl thrust into the heart of southern unrest when her family moves to Mississippi just as school integration becomes a reality. Alice Ann Moxley is still trying to adjust to the southern culture, climate, and accents when Valerie Taylor becomes the first Black child to attend Alice Ann's new school. Although Alice Ann would like to be friends with Valerie, she's under intense social pressure not to be. At the same time, Valerie doesn't seem very interested in getting to know Alice Ann. Finally the two girls do make a few small strides toward friendship, but when Alice Ann sees a chance to be accepted by the most popular girls in her class, she finds it harder and harder to do what she knows is the right thing. When the popular girls begin to target Valerie with hateful tricks and cruel shunning, Alice silently goes along. Rodman's honest narrative places the very human Alice in the midst of a struggle that will resonate for any child who has ever condoned injustice with silence. Many details firmly grounded Rodman's story in the mid-1960s, from the Beatle-crazy girls to the increasingly insidious nature of the violence that permeates the thinking and actions of some of the people Alice Ann meets. While some of the secondary characters are not as well developed as others, this is a thoughtful look at difficult times. The story that is never too heavy, or heavy-handed, despite the challenging issues it explores. (Ages 10-13)

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Becoming Naomi León*. Scholastic Press, 2004. 246 pages (trade 0-439-26969-5, \$16.95)

Naomi León likes order and predictability: Wednesday night chicken bake, Thursday night pork chops, *Wheel of Fortune* at 6:30 each evening. Most important, there is solid and predictable love that grounds her life with Gram and her younger brother, Owen. In a compelling story of identity and belonging, 11-year-old Naomi's sense of order and security is threatened when the mother who abandoned her and Owen seven years before blows back into their lives. Skylá has no desire to reclaim Owen, who has struggled with physical problems much of his life. She only sees his imperfections, not his extraordinary resilience. But she wants Naomi to live with her, although her motives seem motivated more by money than love. Gram and neighbors Fabiola and Bernardo whisk Naomi and Owen to Oaxaca, Mexico, in the hopes of finding the children's father on *La Noche de la Rabanos*, Night of the Radishes, the annual carving competition in which he is said to compete. Each chapter of Naomi's story is titled for a different animal kingdom grouping: e.g., "a paddling of ducks," "an exaltation of starlings." On a story level, these titles reflect Naomi's own passion for organizing and her interest in animals, which she frequently carves. But they also reflect the central theme of belonging as it plays out in the critical question of to whom Naomi belongs. Is it the great-grandmother who has raised and loved her, the unreliable mother who has suddenly reappeared, or the father she can barely remember and whose gift for carving she shares? As Naomi's story unfolds, so, too, do many pictures of what a family can be: as tight-knit as Gram, Naomi

and Owen or as expansive as the friends and relatives of friends who embrace and support them on their journey. (Ages 9-13)

Schumacher, Julie. *Grass Angel*. Delacorte Press, 2004. 196 pages (trade 0-385-73073-X, \$15.95; lib. 0-385-90163-1, \$17.99)

Since Frances's father died, her mother has been at loose ends. All of Frances's plans for the summer come crashing down when her mother announces she's going on a spiritual retreat and will take Frances and her little brother, Everett, along. Frances is so angry that her mother arranges for her to stay with Aunt Blue instead. Now a stranger is renting Frances's house for the summer while Frances bunks with her oddball aunt. Frances misses Everett, a precious oddity in his own right, and the fact that she can still hang out with her best friend, Agnes, does little to settle her unease. How could her mother and Everett go without her? Now it is Frances who is at loose ends, rambling through a summer filled with resentment and longing for everyone who has left her behind. Julie Schumacher's first novel for children is an emotionally complex story about an 11-year-old girl learning that life brings changes and choices and consequences, and learning also that love can be a constant even if the ones we love are imperfect or changing themselves. "Maybe the things she loved most weren't meant to be permanent. Maybe the fact that they existed was enough." (Ages 10-13)

Sheth, Kashmira. *Blue Jasmine*. Hyperion, 2004. 186 pages (trade 0-7868-1855-7, \$15.99)

There are a lot of adjustments for 12-year-old Seema when she moves with her family from India to Iowa City. Her family must adjust to a new language, a new culture, new ways of doing everyday things like grocery shopping, and, most especially, the cold weather. The most difficult thing for Seema, however, is living halfway around the world from the extended family she left back in India, particularly her cousin Raju, who resents that she left him. But her new life in an American public school soon begins to crowd the corners of her mind, both academically and socially, as she begins to feel she is fitting in. Socially adept in both cultures, she is even able to deal with the classroom bully with aplomb. First-time novelist Kashmira Sheth shows remarkable talent for creating credible, well-rounded characters who are able to meet the challenge of living in two cultures without being forced to choose between them. This, coupled with her skillful use of metaphor, raises this novel high above the typical immigrant story for this age level. (Ages 11-14)

Siegelson, Kim L. *Trembling Earth*. Philomel, 2004. 152 pages (trade 0-399-24021-7, \$17.99)

Hamp lives in Florida's Okefenokee Swamp during the Civil War. The war has ravaged Pap, who lost a leg, who is frightened of thunder—who just isn't Pap anymore. When Hamp hears about Duff, a runaway slave, he takes Pap's gun and sets off to look for him. Hamp knows his family could use the bounty that's on Duff's head. Hamp does find Duff, but things don't go as Hamp had planned. In fact, it's Duff who finds him, and who is quickly in possession of Pap's gun. But Duff needs Hamp to lead him out of the swamp, and so an uneasy truce defines the distance between them. Kim L. Siegelson's fine novel is admirably restrained and nuanced. There is no sudden enlightenment about slavery on Hamp's part by the story's end, nor does a deep friendship develop between the boys, both of which would lack realism. Hamp and Duff are each driven by an immediate need for survival, and the opposing dreams that took them into the depths of the swamp. Hamp doesn't change his mind about slavery because of knowing Duff. His growth is revealed in his willingness to begin to change his mind about Duff (a complicated character in his own right) as an individual, and to make a decision that goes *against* what he has always believed about slavery despite being uncertain of the ground he is standing on. (Ages 10-14)

Steig, Jeanne. *Tales From Gizzard's Grill*. Illustrated by Sandy Turner. Joanna Cotler Books / HarperCollins, 2004. 72 pages (trade 0-06-000959-4, \$16.99; lib. 0-06-000960-8, \$17.89)

"It was on an April morning / 'Bout a quarter after nine / when the Sheriff spied a stranger man / A-sitting down to dine." Thus begins the first of three original tall tales in jaunty verse that tell of a no-nonsense woman sheriff who presides over the wild west town of Fiasco. Fiasco's wacky townspeople include the Lonesome Cowboy, a horse thief with a heart of gold, and old Myrna Poke, who can win duels by pointing her stinky feet at her adversary. The humor and exaggeration of the text is well-matched by the quirky three-color line drawings found on nearly every page. (Ages 6-11)

Stolz, Joëlle. *The Shadows of Ghadames*. Translated from the French by Catherine Temerson. U.S. edition: Delacorte Press, 2004. 119 pages (trade 0-385-73104-3, \$15.95; lib. 0-385-90131-3, \$17.99) Eleven-year-old Malika lives in Ghadames, Libya, at the end of the 19th century. As a Muslim girl just entering puberty, she understands that she will soon have to accept some limitations in her day to day life. She will no longer be able to run outside to greet her merchant father, for example, when he returns from one of his journeys. Instead, she must stay with the other women of her walled city who never travel further than the interconnected rooftops to which they are confined. But life among the women has its own pleasures, Malika begins to discover. She learns about some of the women's rituals from her mother and her father's second wife, Bilkisu, an independent free spirit who serves as a role-model for Malika. Bilkisu, in fact, lets Malika in on a secret: she is hiding a stranger, an injured man whom Bilkisu and Malika's mother are nursing back to health, and he has agreed to teach Malika to read. French author Joëlle Stolz pulls readers into a fascinating time and place in this superb novel peopled with memorable characters. (Ages 10-13)

Swope, Sam. *Jack and the Seven Deadly Giants*. Illustrated by Carl Cneut. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.

99 pages (trade 0-374-33670-9, \$16.00)

Giants and those who dare to confront them are a familiar theme in children's books, but author Sam Swope takes an innovative approach to the topic in this easy-to-read short novel. Young Jack tries to be good, but the whole village knows he's a bad boy. They say he's been trouble ever since he turned up on the miller's doorstep, a bawling infant left without a note of explanation. Things come to a head for Jack the day the preacher warns the congregation about the Seven Deadly Sins. Coincidentally, a traveler passing through town tells of seven deadly giants menacing the countryside. When the preacher blames Jack for the giants' presence, Jack decides he must save his village by leaving it. He soon encounters Sloth, the giant poet whose dreams of literary greatness are matched by his overwhelming laziness. Next to appear is the Terrible Glutton, then angry Mrs. Roth, greedy Avaritch, the rampaging Wild Tickler, and so on. This short book works equally well for readers who can make the connections between the seven giants and the deadly sins they embody and those who will simply enjoy Jack's deft handling of each giant's extreme behavior. A satisfying twist at the story's end brings Jack the happiness he so obviously deserves and wraps this clever tale up in a neat conclusion. (Ages 6-10)

Wein, Elizabeth E. *The Sunbird*. Viking, 2004. 184 pages (trade 0-670-03691-9, \$16.99)

A companion book to two previous novels requires no prior knowledge for new readers to be swept right into the action. Set in the historic kingdom of Aksum, located in what is now Ethiopia and Eritrea, it tells the story of the grandson of two very powerful families in the fifth century, one British (Arthurian) and one African. Telemakos (named for Telemachus) is ridiculed for being a half breed. His whiteness makes him ghoulish to people in his community in spite of his impressive Aksum lineage. But he has a special ability to track and spy without being unnoticed. The emperor has imposed a quarantine and trade

embargo in the kingdom to avoid further spread of the plague, but someone is defying his orders. The emperor asks Telemakos to try to identify and locate the traitor: risky work that will surely mean death if he is caught. Elizabeth E. Wein has deftly woven two genres in a hard-to-put-down story that has all the details of real time and place expected of historical fiction but adds tangential mention of Arthurian characters that gives it a medieval fantasy feel. She incorporates issues of class and race, loyalty to family and kingdom, and gender as Telemakos's harrowing mission unfolds. Some fairly explicitly violent scenes make this a better choice for more mature readers. Parallels with "The Odyssey" will appeal to fans of Greek mythology, but readers don't need to grasp the allusion in order to enjoy the novel in its own right. (Ages 13-17)

Fiction for Young Adults

Almond, David. *The Fire-Eaters*. U.S. edition: Delacorte Press, 2004. 224 pages (trade 0-385-73170-1, \$15.95)

A "small, wild-eyed, bare-chested man" covered with scars and faded tattoos, McNulty ekes out a living by performing grotesque stunts for spare change. He escapes from tightly wrapped chains, he shoves a skewer through his cheeks, he breathes fire. McNulty's grasp on reality fades in and out, but his barely controlled fear and agitation perfectly mirror the mounting tension among residents of a small town on the English coast. Like the rest of the world, they are waiting to see what will come of the rising hostilities between the United States and the Soviet Union as the Cuban Missile Crisis seems headed toward nuclear disaster. Bobby Burns, whose own life reflects the larger world turmoil of 1962, is drawn to McNulty from the first time he sees him. Starting a new school where he is automatically condemned for his family's working-class status is hard enough, but Bobby must also figure out how to maintain relationships with his childhood friends as their paths begin to diverge. Most alarmingly, his father seems seriously ill, and Bobby is terrified at this possible loss. Memorable characters and a close-up look at a critical event in recent world history from an unexpected perspective combine in this fine novel from a consistently outstanding contemporary writer. Author David Almond confronts big issues head-on in the winner of the 2003 Whitbread Children's Book of the Year Award. (Ages 12-15)

Caletti, Deb. *Honey, Baby, Sweetheart*. Simon & Schuster, 2004. 308 pages (trade 0-689-86765-4, \$15.95)

In a novel for young adults that views issues of love and loss through the lens of girl power, Ruby and her mother have a hard time getting over their respective Bad Choices. Sixteen-year-old Ruby knows that her boyfriend Travis's risk-taking behavior and psychological manipulation is bad news, but she can't seem to stop seeing him. And her mom, Ann, knows darn well that her exhusband is never going to come back, but she still primps and cleans and cooks for him when he returns to visit Ruby and her siblings. In order to help Ruby move beyond her obsession with Travis, Ann invites her to join the Casserole Queens, a book club for retirees that she coordinates as town librarian. At first, the group of old ladies (and one incorrigibly naughty old man) seems to have nothing to offer Ruby. But as the group discusses its current selection, a memoir that chronicles an anguishing love story, it becomes apparent the author's long lost love just might be one of the members. A crazily optimistic plan to reunite the lost lovers emerges, and Ruby and Ann get a glimpse of what real true love can be in Deb Caletti's funny, upbeat, satisfying read. (Ages 13-17)

Chotjewitz, David. *Daniel Half Human: And the Good Nazi*. Translated from the German by Doris Orgel. U.S. edition: A Richard Jackson Book / Atheneum, 2004. 298 pages (trade 0-689-85747-0, \$17.95)

Thirteen-year-old Daniel and his best friend Armin pledge their loyalty to each other while spending a night in jail after they're arrested for painting a swastika on the wall in a Communist section of Hamburg. The year is 1933, and both boys are excited about the prospect of joining

the Hitler Youth organization. They like the uniforms, the camaraderie, and, most of all, the feeling of belonging. It all changes for Daniel when he learns that his mother is Jewish and that he is only considered to be “half-human.” Initially ashamed about the discovery, Daniel rebels against his parents and is determined to keep his heritage a secret, even from Armin; however, this becomes more and more challenging for him to do as he witnesses the changes in Germany and in his own loyalties. Chotjewitz’s gripping story covers several years in Daniel’s life, midst the backdrop of one of the most harrowing chapters in human history. (Ages 14-18)

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Bucking the Sarge*. Wendy Lamb Books / Random House, 2004. 259 pages (trade 0-385-32307-7, \$15.95; lib. 0-385-90159-3, \$17.99)

Like many 15-year-olds, Luther Farrell of Flint, Michigan, can’t wait to grow up and get out on his own. He has long-term dreams of becoming the greatest living American Philosopher and short-term dreams of beating his nemesis, Shayna Patrick, in the science fair. He’s a typical teenager going through typical changes, but he’s living under the thumb of an anything-but-typical mother. Known as “the Sarge,” she’s a woman feared by everyone in Flint. At times Luther is just a regular kid, goofing around with his friend Sparky and negotiating his changing feelings for Shayna. At other times, he must navigate through adultlike situations as he works to run the Happy Neighbor Group Home for Men, one of his mother’s questionable business ventures. He does everything from changing bedpans to distributing medications to the elderly clients. At first, Luther complies with his mother’s money-saving schemes, such as when she makes him buy “new” clothing for the men at the Goodwill while pocketing the extra money from the government’s contribution. But Luther becomes increasingly uncomfortable with the Sarge’s unethical—if not illegal—business practices as he watches her henchman evict a classmate and his family from one of her properties. Through his friendship with one of the clients at Happy Neighbor, 80-year-old Chester X, Luther realizes that he has to do something to escape the future his mother has planned for him. Amidst the humor, the juxtaposition of Luther’s and Chester X’s lives as both face major transition is a fascinating theme of this noteworthy novel. They have nothing and everything in common. Their destinies become one as Luther discovers a way to escape the course handed to them by creating a new life for themselves. And the best part? He does so by following his mother’s own advice to “stay off the sucker path” and by bending the rules as he sees fit. (Ages 12-15)

deLint, Charles. *The Blue Girl*. Viking, 2004. 368 pages (trade 0-670-05924-2, \$17.99)

When Imogene moves to a new town, she decides to leave her tough gang-member image behind. She keeps the look, with her punk hair, tattoos, and thrift store attire, but follows the lead of her new friend Maxine by attending high school regularly and even studying for exams. The popular cheerleader clique and their football player cohort try to bully Imogene into conforming, but she defuses their small-minded tactics. Life is smooth sailing, until Pelly, Imogene’s imaginary childhood friend, appears as a living, decidedly inhuman, being. On top of that, the geeky boy who’s been following Imogene around school turns out to be a ghost. The ordinary world begins to slip further into an ominous fantasy mode, and it is up to Imogene and Maxine to discover a way to right the balance once again. More than just one-dimensional heroines, these two young women are well-developed characters -- real teenagers with strengths and weaknesses who just happen to be surfing the Net for tried-and-true strategies against the supernatural. A rousing Halloween climax involving blue paint, vervain poisoning, and soul-eating anamithim offers everything a fantasy reader could desire. (Ages 13-16)

Fisher, Catherine. *The Oracle Betrayed*. (The Oracle Prophecies) U.S. edition: Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2004. 341 pages (trade 0-06-057157-8, \$16.99; lib. 0-06-057158-6, \$17.89)

As the youngest, she’s the least of the Nine who serve the god, but Mirany appreciates the privileges of her position: light duties, good food, plenty of water. An astute observer of the political manipulations of those above her, Mirany doubts that her religion is anything more than a façade used by temple rulers and military leaders to further their own agendas. Her unspoken cynicism crumbles when the god speaks to

her, drawing her into a desperate struggle for control. Mirany discovers unlikely allies in a young scribe and a drunken musician, and the three work together to install a legitimate leader before their enemies bring their own candidate to power. This first book in a planned trilogy offers a richly imagined society, based on elements drawn from ancient Greek and Egyptian cultures. Taut pacing and plenty of action are well balanced with provocative questions about faith, belief, and moral responsibility. Although this volume succeeds as a stand-alone fantasy, its sudden ending will undoubtedly whet appetites for the rest of Mirany's story. (Age 13 and older)

Flake, Sharon G. *Who Am I Without Him? Short Stories About Girls and the Boys in Their Lives*. Jump at the Sun / Hyperion, 2004. 168 pages (trade 0-7868-0693-1, \$15.99)

Ten short stories told in the first-person voices of young African-American teenagers deal with the emotional ups and downs they encounter in their day-to-day dealings with the opposite sex. Readers get inside each narrator's head, witnessing all the heart poundings and heartaches, the bickering and bullying that goes on in these character's lives in their search for love and validation. Some stories are particularly gut-wrenching: for example, the young girl who completely gives up her identity to please the undeserving boy she has a crush on in "So I Ain't No Good Girl." But all are painfully realistic and true to the middle-school voice, something that distinguishes all of Sharon G. Flake's writing. (Ages 11-14)

Hautman, Pete. *Godless*. Simon & Schuster, 2004. 198 pages (trade 0-689-86278-4, \$15.95)

It all starts as a joke. As a cynical response to organized religion, 16-year-old Jason decides that the town water tower would be a worthy god, and he and his friends begin to "worship" it. Just for fun. But things begin to change when tough guy Henry Stagg joins their congregation, pushing his peers into some pretty risky behavior, such as climbing to the top of the water tower at night. Even more disturbing, Jason realizes his best friend, Shin, is taking their new-fangled religion much more seriously than the others. He's become a water-tower prophet of sorts, and he's writing his own bible to spread the word. Shinn has always been a strange kid, unusually obsessive, but the idea of worshipping the ten-legged god seems to have really taken hold of him, pushing him to the edge of sanity. As a result, Jason grapples with the issues of power and faith in a provocative novel that's hard to put down and even harder to forget. (Ages 14-18)

Lyon, George Ella. *Sonny's House of Spies*. A Richard Jackson Book / Atheneum, 2004. 298 pages (trade 0-689-85168-5, \$16.95)

"A man can't live in a house of spies," Sonny's daddy told him the very last time they spoke. Sonny was seven. His mother insisted to everyone who would listen that Daddy went away on a job. But he never came back. Now Sonny is 14. He's always been able to ignore the occasional rumor about why his daddy left ("What's a queer?" his little brother Deaton asks one day in a touching and hilarious scene that has Sonny trying his best to explain.). Then Sonny discovers that Daddy has been writing Uncle Marty, a family friend who has watched out for Sonny's family since Daddy went away. Now Sonny knows the truth, but it angers and sickens him. Not only did Daddy leave because he was in love with a man, but Marty was in touch with Daddy all along (he was, he confesses, in love with Sonny's father, although his love was unrequited). Sonny doesn't see that his own feelings for Nissa, the daughter of Mamby, their Black maid, are as a taboo as Daddy loving other men. But he's trying—trying to understand why nothing is simple in the South when it comes to race and trying to make peace with the way his Daddy is. George Ella Lyon's radical novel is set in the deep South in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Lively, memorable characters, from Sonny's older sister, Loretta, whose sarcasm and crackling wit bites with honesty, to Uncle Marty, who offers up donuts and divine biblical wisdom at his Circle of Life restaurant while harboring terrible pain. Each character illuminates conflict and heartbreak, resilience and courage.

In Lyon's remarkable story, everyone does the best that he or she can with what life has dealt and what they can summon from inside. (Ages 14-18)

Marchetta, Melina. *Saving Francesca*. U.S. edition: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004. 243 pages (trade 0-375-82982-2, \$15.95)

Francesca is one of only a few girls entering St. Sebastian's School for Boys in its first year of coeducation. The boys and their teachers learn very quickly that there is more to coeducation than the presence of a few girls as traditions are challenged and resources are shared. As Francesca tries to navigate the new social culture at school, defining and redefining herself through the friendships she makes and those she has left behind, she also has to deal with her formerly powerful and independent mother's depression, which has seemingly come on suddenly. Francesca's relationship with her little brother, who attends the same school, is wonderful, and their loyalty to one another trumps any difference in sex or age in conflicts at school and home. Francesca and her father are often at odds about the best way to handle her mother's illness, and their conflicts are tumultuous and realistic. In her new male-dominated environment, Francesca articulates what many teenage girls feel about their male peers: they are immature, obnoxious, socially clueless, and unhygienic. Her arch nemesis, Will, eventually becomes her crush in spite of all of his flaws, and her contempt for him throughout is so strong that the romance is truly shocking compared to many novels which seem to make the love interest inevitable in a story that deftly balances humor and deeply felt emotions. (Ages 13-17)

Mass, Wendy. *Leap Day*. Little, Brown, 2004. 212 pages (trade 0-316-53728-4, \$16.95)

Wendy Mass's novel balances lighthearted fun with a thoughtful examination of the many ways we only *think* we know and understand each other. Teenager Josie Taylor is turning four--her birthday is February 29. The events of Josie's leap-year birthday play out in chapters that alternate between Josie's first-person narrative and an omniscient author's narrative. The author/narrator offers perspectives on events directly and indirectly related to Josie from many individuals who interact with her throughout the day. One of the most intriguing things about those chapters are the brief glimpses of the future that are sometimes presented, underscoring the ways things that loom so large in the present can fade to insignificance, or how seemingly small acts can lead to a life-changing course. In addition, by giving insight into so many characters and offering multiple perspectives on the same series of events (which range from solemn--but never heavy--to hilarious), Mass offers a fascinating look at the way individuals so easily interpret the feelings and actions of others based on conclusions that are often incorrect and how misunderstandings and missed opportunities can result. Set primarily at Josie's high school, the novel creates an intimate portrait of Josie, an essentially happy teen who nonetheless has fears she hasn't told even her closest friends and insecurities she can't articulate, although others see them. Josie's friendships are solid, despite occasional misunderstandings, and the members of her family don't just love each other, they really like one another—more so, in fact, than any of them fully realize. That's one of the many refreshing aspects of this unusual, highly original novel set over the course of a single day. (Ages 12-16)

Moriarty, Jaclyn. *The Year of Secret Assignments*. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Press, 2004. 340 pages (trade 0-439-49881-3, \$16.95)

For an unlikely English class assignment designed to decrease hostilities, Cassie, Emily and Lydia are supposed to become pen pals with teens from a rival high school. E-mails, notes passed during class, letters, and diary entries reveal the characters of these girls and the power of their friendship, while setting the stage for new relationships with their pen pals. At first, the girls don't take the assignment very seriously, and each has a different intention for her letters. Inevitably, the supposed freaks and monsters at Brookfield High become more interesting than the girls could have imagined, at least for Emily and Lydia. But Cassie's pen pal writes scathing, hurtful letters that begin to undermine her already fragile psyche. The six teens become involved in pranks and subterfuge, of which they are guilty, and blamed for crimes, of which most are not guilty. The reader is privy to thoughts to which even best friends have no access in a book that balances lighthearted fun with a more serious exploration of personal struggles and

the value of friendship. One of the most impressive and satisfying qualities of Jaclyn Moriarty's narrative is the way she integrates formal language to demonstrate the intelligence of the characters into their informal speech and writing, the humor of which rings true (Ages 14-17)

Morpurgo, Michael. *Private Peaceful*. U.S. edition: Scholastic Press, 2004. 202 pages (trade 0-439-63648-5, \$16.95)

There have never been two brothers as close as Tommo and Charlie Peaceful. Growing up as tenant farmers on The Colonel's manor in early twentieth century England, their survival depended on their cooperation and willingness to work hard on behalf of their family, which includes Big Joe, an older brother with significant disabilities, and their widowed mother. Tommo loves and admires everything about Charlie, who protects Tommo at all costs from bullies, teachers, and anyone set to harm him. They even fall in love with the same girl. When Charlie goes off to fight in France during World War I, Tommo can't bear to be left behind and follows his brother into the army. Michael Morpurgo's haunting novel is told in alternating chapters, one in real time, as Tommo counts down the minutes on the battlefield, and one flashing back to their lives together at home before the war. The war scenes are horrifying and gruesome, and the conclusion of the real-time plot is almost unbearably painful. In precise, descriptive language, Morpurgo demonstrates that even if love can't conquer all, the power of memory and hope can survive. (Ages 14-18)

Napoli, Donna Jo. *Bound*. Atheneum, 2004. 192 pages (trade 0-689-86175-3, \$16.95)

Xing Xing lives with her mother and stepsister, and her relationship with both is complicated. She feels both love and pity for her stepsister, who is in great physical pain: Stepmother recently bound her feet, hoping her daughter will eventually make a match good enough to support them as a result. Xing Xing has yet to give up hoping her stepmother might love her, even as she resents her role as family caretaker and servant (although Stepmother also works hard). Xing Xing's only source of solace is the great white fish that swims in the pond near the cave where they live. When her stepsister's feet become infected and the girl grows ill, Stepmother sends Xing Xing in search of the itinerant doctor and his medicine. The fish follows Xing Xing on a journey that is harrowing at times. It is only after Xing Xing returns with a balm for her stepsister that she realizes the fish is her mother, who has returned from the dead to watch over her. But her joy in the revelation is short lived. In the desperation that came with her daughter's illness, Stepmother grew unbalanced. (Or perhaps the crisis made it more difficult for her to hide her true nature: the complexities of the characters leave room for multiple interpretations of many elements in the story.) Stepmother commits an act of utmost treachery and cruelty that devastates Xing Xing. It also frees her of any sense of duty, and when she sees an opportunity to act on her own behalf, she does so without hesitation. Variants of Chinese Cinderella stories formed the basis for Donna Jo Napoli's beautifully told, intricate tale that is set during the Ming Dynasty in fourteenth century China. (Ages 12-16)

Peck, Richard. *The Teacher's Funeral: A Comedy in Three Parts*. Dial, 2004. 190 pages (trade 0-8037-2736-4, \$16.99)

"If your teacher has to die, August isn't a bad time of year for it." An irresistible opening sentence draws readers into Russell Culver's memories of his 15th year in a small Indiana town in 1904. Because of the unexpected death of Miss Myrt Arbuckle, teacher at Hominy Ridge School, Russell's older sister, Tansy, is hired to take her place—to Russell's absolute astonishment and dread. Even more shocking is that Tansy turns out to be good, a revelation that unfolds for both Russell and readers over the course of this highly entertaining novel. Richard Peck's colorful supporting cast is comprised of characters in every sense of the word, from the

other students at the one-room school to assorted townsfolk and others. But he balances high humor with tender and surprising revelations throughout the story, including the observant, sensitive parenting of Russell's father, who knows the value of both restraint and well-timed intervention. Peck's lively, artful writing ("Two hundred straw hats bobbed in the sun, and not a bonnet among us.... You could scarcely draw a breath, and not every farmer had stopped by the trough on the way here.") superbly captures a sense of time and place in a story that may be particularly enjoyable for many older children and young teens as a read-aloud. (Ages 12-15)

Peters, Julie Anne. *Luna*. Megan Tingley Books / Little, Brown, 2004. 247 pages (trade 0-316-73369-5, \$16.95)

Luna is the name Liam has selected for himself, for the girl that he is, trapped inside a boy's body. Liam's struggle to learn more about himself and to make the decision to have gender alteration surgery is seen through the eyes of his sister Regan, who loves her brother but becomes weary of the drama and secrecy that surround him. Neither sibling is idealized, nor are the choices they make wholly admirable or wise. Liam becomes increasingly out of control as he takes more and more risks to live as a girl, and Regan becomes less sympathetic and more self-absorbed as she considers the implications of her brother's plans. As the siblings faced both ordinary and extraordinary teen challenges, their parents' emotional distance forces them to be conspirators and support one another. Nontransgender readers will appreciate Peters's decision to tell the story from Regan's perspective, as her alternating waves of discomfort and support for her brother are comforting and authentic. *Luna* is a sensitive, realistic look at a topic that is still very much misunderstood and too often silenced. Transgender readers will feel great relief to see one reflection of their reality in literature for teens. Ultimately, *Luna* is a story of acceptance and self-love and about being true to yourself regardless of the cost. (Ages 14-17)

Rosoff, Meg. *How I Live Now*. Wendy Lamb Books / Random House, 2004. 194 pages (trade 0-385-74677-6, \$16.95; lib. 0-385-90908-X, \$18.99)

Fifteen-year-old Daisy is sent to live with her cousins in England while her father and new stepmother move on with their lives in New York City. Almost immediately, Daisy's aunt leaves for business, and terrorists from an unknown country invade England. With no adults around, Daisy and her cousins, Osbert, Edmond, Isaac, and Piper, have only a vague notion of what is happening. They live in a rural area far removed from the initial points of attack in the cities, and events are not close enough to penetrate their sheltered and self-involved lives. Daisy and Edmond fall in love, and Meg Rosoff navigates the delicate subject of teenage cousins engaged in sex with amazing restraint, skillfully implying the intensity of their physical passion without ever words more explicit than "kiss" and "touch." When the war finally arrives at their door and separates Daisy and Edmond, Daisy's agony is searing, even as she struggles to keep herself and young Piper alive. They endure some horrific wartime episodes, including checkpoints, murders, massacres, and starvation. The hunger they experience is used both literally and as a metaphor for longing, and Daisy's physical and emotional hungers becomes enmeshed in this sophisticated, gripping novel. Because Daisy had been anorexic when she arrived in England, the irony of Daisy's hunger is powerful, and its role as a metaphor even more pronounced. Daisy's voice is fresh and clear. At first sarcastic and funny, when the novel opens she is as an almost wholly self-absorbed teen who cares most of all about herself, even without caring for herself. Rosoff's use of capital letters, hyperbole, and run-on sentences effectively convey her character and distinctive voice. As life itself becomes a struggle, Daisy begins to care for others in a way she has never cared for anyone, including herself. By the end of the war, she has become serious, almost numb. Her psychological transformation is palpable and tied directly to the action and events in the story. It is also reflected in the change in narrative style, which becomes much more restrained. A huge jump in time at the end of this harrowing, psychologically complex novel succeeds in explaining the ingenious title, which meekly explains "how I live now." (Ages 14-18)

Sáenz, Benjamin Alire. *Sammy & Juliana in Hollywood*. Cinco Puntos Press, 2004. 291 pages (trade 0-938317-81-4, \$16.95)

Sammy is a Chicano teen living in a barrio in New Mexico called Hollywood, the irony of which is never far from the surface of a novel about Sammy and his friends, and how they make the transition from boys to men during an exceptionally trying time in U.S. history. The story is set in 1969, and the Vietnam War always looms as a threat, while racism and the violence and poverty in his neighborhood define Sammy's daily life. When Juliana, the love of Sammy's life, is brutally killed by her father, the loss triggers painful memories of Sammy's mother's death years earlier. Both women have strong, positive influences on Sammy even after their deaths. He is also buoyed by a positive, caring father and sister and motivated by a genuine interest in doing the right thing according to his Catholic faith. His religious journey is authentic, full of questions that are never answered. Instead, the world sends him mixed and confusing messages about his potential and who his friends are. Sammy is smart—the other kids call him The Librarian—but he faces constant reminders that he is a spic, “an animal,” and destined to end up right where he is. While the graphic violence and strong language make this a book for older readers, none of the content is gratuitous. Rather, it is indicative of the anger and oppression Sammy and his friends feel. One by one Sammy's friends are taken from him, through death, the draft, and painful family decisions. There are several delightfully hateful adults, including a priest and a teacher who give Sammy plenty of opportunities to learn to rely on himself and his family. While the many deaths are depressing, the ultimate message is how hope and memory combine to free even the most tormented soul. Readers who speak Spanish will enjoy the juxtaposition of two languages throughout the novel. (Ages 15 - 18)

Sanchez, Alex. *So Hard to Say*. Simon & Schuster, 2004. 230 pages (trade 0-689-86564-3, \$14.95)

When 13-year-old Frederick moves from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, to California, his blond hair and blue eyes make him stand out in his new, predominantly Latino middle school. But soon enough, he fits right in, thanks largely to Xio and her clique of friends known as *Las Sexy Seis*. From the beginning, Xio is attracted to Frederick and his shy, quiet humor, but as it turns out, the attraction isn't mutual. Although Frederick soon considers Xio to be his best friend, he is just beginning to realize that he's much more attracted to boys than to girls. His gradual coming-out process – first to himself and then to his peers – is handled realistically and sensitively. Because the story is told in alternating chapters from the points of view of both Xio and Frederick, readers are able to see his coming out from both the inside and the outside, which adds a great deal of depth to the story. We also see the characters respond in different ways to the sorts of homophobic name-calling that is common in middle schools across the United States, as well as changes in their attitudes as they come to accept Frederick for who he is. (Ages 12-15)

Strasser, Todd. *Can't Get There From Here*. Simon & Schuster, 2004. 198 pages (trade 0-689-84169-8, \$15.95)

In a gritty and bleak novel, Todd Strasser offers a harsh look at the lives of homeless teens and the urban tribes they create to replace families from whom they have become estranged. Some teens are on the streets by choice, others were rejected by their families of birth, and each adopts a new name and identity to survive the very real dangers of living on the streets. Strasser's story for mature teens (it includes sexuality, and graphic violence and language) follows a teen called Maybe. One by one, her street brothers and sisters disappear or die deaths that could have been avoided: exposure to the elements, drugs, murder, AIDS-related illnesses. Each gruesome death is revealed in a cold, official police report at the beginning of a new chapter. Angel, 2Moro, Maggot, Rainbow: Maybe loses them all. Adults and do-gooders intermittently try to help the teens, but their ignorance about each kid's situation, their insistence on knowing what is best, and the reality of shelters and social workers makes their offers of safety sound hollow. One adult manages to get it right: a librarian at the public library offers Maybe help without trying to tell her what help she needs. By being available to her on her own terms, he is ultimately able to

provide the single glimmer of hope that might save Maybe, and that keeps an emotionally challenging book from being unbearably depressing. (Ages 15-17)

Westerfeld, Scott. *So Yesterday*. Razorbill, 2004. 225 pages (trade 1-59514-000-X, \$16.99)

Hunter and Jen are so cool that by the time other kids start noticing what they're doing and try to emulate it, Hunter and Jen are onto something else. Hunter has such a nose for the hip and trendy that he is actually paid by marketing companies for his opinion and predictions. His cell phone's camera feature is always on standby as he snaps up pictures of "cool" for research in a book that is itself genuinely cool—fresh, original, inventive. The plot involves an intense mystery that pins Hunter and Jen in a race against both a giant, nameless but oh-so-familiar sneaker company named for a Greek goddess and an unknown group of activists who are trying to undermine cool culture in the name of individuality. Teens saturated in pop culture will love being on the inside with Hunter as he communicates in a perfectly understandable style while intentionally avoiding references to brand names. The appealing cover has tiny images, each a snapshot taken ostensibly by Hunter's phone and explained more fully as the plot develops. In some over-the-top scenes, self-designated cool teen readers might feel uncomfortable at the fun Hunter pokes at trends and teen culture, and others might feel liberated by getting to know a character that is above and beyond mainstream high school norms. The amount of money that goes into creating and purchasing expensive consumer products that fulfill the perceived need for cool is staggering. Beneath the mystery, romance, and humor of this novel is biting social commentary. (Ages 13-17)

Woods, Brenda. *Emako Blue*. Putnam, 2004. 124 pages (trade 0-399-24006-3, \$15.99)

A novel told in the distinct voices of four teenagers opens with the funeral of title character Emako Blue. Each of the four teens relives how they came to know their high school classmate Emako and how her life and death have changed them. Monterey meets Emako in choir and they quickly become best friends, despite the differences that make sheltered Monterey's middle-class parents uncomfortable. Emako lives in south central Los Angeles; Monterey's father grew up there but seems to want to put it far behind him. Like Emako, Eddie lives in a family that has been victimized by poverty and crime. Emako understands his fears like no one else can. Smooth operator Jamal has always been popular with girls. Emako is the first one he's ever met whom he can't finesse; she challenges him to be real with her and with himself. Lonely Savannah can't stand Emako, who is talented and confident and shoots straight from the mouth when she doesn't like what she sees. When Emako is killed in a drive-by shooting (witnessed by Monterey), each of the four struggles with their feelings--of sadness, of loss, of grief, of guilt--in a novel that paints a vivid portrait of five contemporary teenagers and condemns the tragedies—within families and within society—that create struggles and heartache in lives that are deserving of joy. (Ages 14-17)

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Behind You*. Putnam, 2004. 118 pages (trade 0-399-23988-X, \$15.99)

In *If You Come Softly*, Jacqueline Woodson wrote about Jeremiah, who is Black, and Elly, who is white, and how they fell in love. At the wrenching ending of that novel, teenager Jeremiah, running home in high spirits from Elly's, is shot and killed in the park by a police officer looking for a Black man suspected of a crime. *Behind You* begins in the first moments after that agonizing event. In a beautiful and astonishing opening chapter, a soul looks down on the body of Jeremiah. It is Jeremiah's soul, disbelieving, trying to distance itself from what has happened: "Your soul thinks—somebody loved that boy once. Thinks—once that boy was me." In the story that follows, the people who loved Jeremiah the most—Elly, each of his parents, his closest friends--react to their loss in a story in which grief and longing feel woven into the very fibers of the pages. Yet this is not just a story of hurting but of healing as well. Gradually those who loved Jeremiah reawaken to feelings other than pain and numbness. His life connects them one to another as well, and in those connections some of them find courage. At the same time his loved ones are healing, Jeremiah is too, with the soul of his grandmother to help him let go of all he has

left behind. Woodson's extraordinary narrative is a lyrical and moving work from the first page--an epigraph by Raymond Carver that ends "And what did you want? *To call myself beloved, to feel myself beloved on the earth.*" – to the last page. (Ages 14-18)

Wyeth, Sharon Dennis. *Orpheus Proud*. Delacorte Press, 2004. 208 pages (trade 0-385-32497-9, \$15.95; lib. 0-385-90175-5, \$17.99)

This compelling novel is written as if it were a piece of performance art created by 17-year-old Orpheus, who performs it as a monologue in a Queens, New York, club. While Orpheus speaks, 14-year-old Ray paints on the backdrop behind her – art seen only by the audience. Life has not been easy for Orpheus. Both of her parents died when she was young, and her older brother, Rupert, who became her guardian, is strict, narrow minded, and abusive. There are two things that have been a constant for her, however: her love of poetry and her love for Lissa. How she found and lost Lissa and then found herself through her art is the story she tells the community of kindred spirits who manage and frequent the club and who have helped her find her voice. (Ages 14-17)

New Editions of Old Favorites

Coville, Bruce, reteller. *William Shakespeare's Hamlet*. Illustrated by Leonid Gore. Dial, 2004. 40 pages (trade 0-8037-2708-9, \$16.99)

Bruce Coville evokes the somber tones of the original play in his artful adaptation of *Hamlet* into story form. Coville liberally incorporates quotes from the original play into his fine narrative. The sharp-edged figures and often murky tones of Leonid Gore's acrylic and pastel illustrations are the perfect accompaniment to the text in this marvelous mood piece. (Ages 9-12)

Hodges, Margaret, reteller. *Merlin and the Making of the King*. Retold by Margaret Hodges from Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman. Holiday House, 2004. 39 pages (trade 0-8234-1647-X, \$16.95)

There are many adaptations of the various Arthurian legends, but until now, none has been able to make the tales accessible to the youngest readers without omitting critical characters. But Margaret Hodges manages to introduce all of the major Arthurian players in three short tales, "The Sword in the Stone," "Excalibur," and "The Lady of Shallott." Hodges's writing is lyrical but concise, and each page of sparse text is bordered with elaborate medieval style design work. Most pages also have a small picture detailing part of the action in the story. Overall, the size, layout and design make for a book that will appeal to even the most resistant reader. An author's note explains the provenance of the Arthurian Legends, and distinguishes this retelling from the more common version by Sir Thomas Malory. (Ages 7-12)

Howe, Deborah and James. *Bunnacula: A Rabbit-Tale of Mystery*. Illustrated by Alan Daniel. Atheneum, 2004.

92 pages (trade 0-689-86775-1, \$16.95)

In the 25 years since it was first published, *Bunnacula* has been a favorite of many children who have just begun to read novels on their own. Something is suspicious about the bunny the Monroe family brings home from the Dracula movie they've just seen. The coloring of the fur on his back is shaped like a cape and he seems to have small fangs protruding from his mouth. The bunny sleeps all day, too, and is awake all night. And how is it that all of the vegetables in the Monroe household are being drained of all their juice? Could they be housing a vampire rabbit? The humor of the story is greatly heightened by the fact that it is told from the point of view of the astute family dog, Harold, who along with the family cat, Chester, is always a step or

two ahead of the human family members. An author's note at the beginning tells us how the story came to be and what the response has been to it over the years. (Ages 7-10)

Kimmel, Eric A., reteller. *Don Quixote and the Windmills*. Adapted from *The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. Illustrated by Leonard Everett Fisher. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 32 pages (trade 0-374-31825-5, \$16.00)

It would be impossible to retell Cervantes' epic novel adequately in 32 pages, and author Eric A. Kimmel's choice to retell the scene for which Don Quixote is most famous is a brilliant compromise. In an end note, he refers to the battle with the windmills as "one of the most enduring images in world literature," and he makes it accessible here to young readers in a story that introduces Don Quixote, Sancho Panza, Rocinante, and Dulcinea. The contrast between reality and what Don Quixote sees is obvious in Leonard Everett Fisher's highly stylized drawing, which feature highly expressive eyes and unconventional angles. The illustrations combine with Kimmel's text to make this an exciting and fresh take on an adult classic. (Ages 5-12)

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 2005* 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, 2004. Many of the books in *CCBC Choices 2005* are currently available in hardcover only, and sales is a considerable factor in determining whether they will subsequently be available in paperback editions.

Obtaining CCBC Publications

CCBC Choices 2005

If you live in Wisconsin, send \$XXXX or a self-addressed, stamped manilla envelope with \$XXXX in postage to CCBC Choices, 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 USA. You may also inquire about the rates for ordering copies of *CCBC Choices 2005* in quantity.

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

Other CCBC Publications

Many CCBC bibliographies are available full-text on the CCBC's web site. Go to www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/ and click on "CCBC Publications" for a complete list of CCBC bibliographies and booklists and to access full-text items.

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) of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is a noncirculating examination, study and research children's and young adult literature library for adults. The purposes of the CCBC are: (1) to provide a collection of current, retrospective and historical books for children and young adults; (2) to provide Wisconsin librarians, teachers, students and others informational and educational services based on the collection; and (3) to support teaching, learning and research needs related to children's and young adult literature.

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

Collection

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

Services

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

translated books, outstanding and award-winning books, and various themes and topics in literature.

- **Free Public Lectures by Authors and Artists**, including the annual [Charlotte Zolotow Lecture](#), bring book creators in the field of children's and young adult literature to the UW-Madison campus several times throughout the year.

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

Governance

The University of Wisconsin - Madison School of Education is responsible for policies and funding of the Cooperative Children's Book Center. 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 CCBC Advisory Board represents CCBC users on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus and from libraries and schools throughout Wisconsin. Members of the 2004-2005 Advisory Board are:

Becki George (Chair), LMC Director
Rice Lake School District

Catherine Beyers, LMC Director
Southern Bluffs Elementary School, LaCrosse

Karen Cibula, Special Education Teacher
Danz Elementary School, Green Bay

Andreal Davis, Parent Involvement Coordinator
Lincoln Elementary School, Madison

Linda DeCramer, Children's Librarian
Ripon Public Library

Blanche Emerick, Director, Office of Education Outreach
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

Patricia Fry, Grade 7 Communication Arts/Reading Teacher
Templeton Middle School, Hamilton/Sussex

Beth Graue, Professor
Curriculum & Instruction, UW-Madison

Donald Holmen, Director
Four Lakes Distance Education Network

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

Aimee Jahns, K-5 Literacy Facilitator
Cedar Hills Elementary School, Oak Creek/Franklin

Jacque Karbon, Reading Education Consultant
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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

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

Diane Lee, Family Literacy Educator
Dane County Parent Council

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

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

Staff

In addition to Director Kathleen T. Horning, Librarians Merri V. Lindgren, Hollis Rudiger and Megan Schliesman, the CCBC staff when *CCBC Choices 2005* was being created included students who helped carry out the daily responsibilities of assisting individuals on campus, in schools and in libraries who are working in many ways to meet the interests of all young readers.

The student staff during 2004 and early 2005 included Carin Bringelson (2004), Ginger Cassidy (2004), Allison Eikenberry (2004), Tessa Michaelson, Amanda Moss, Janet Piehl, Lynn Schneider, Meg Taylor (2004), and Bridget Zinn.

Public Service Schedule

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

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

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

Appendix III The Compilers of *CCBC Choices 2005*

Kathleen T. Horning is the director of 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 a former president of the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBYY). She has chaired the Américas Award Committee, under the auspices of The Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP), University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; ALA/ALSC's 1997 Mildred Batchelder Award Committee; and ALA/ALSC's 1995 John Newbery Committee. She has served on ALA/ALSC's Notable Children's Books Committee and an earlier Newbery Award Committee. She also chaired USBYY'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, while previously employed at the CCBC, and since 2002. 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 has regularly appeared on WISC/TV, the Madison CBS affiliate, to talk about books for children and young adults on their morning news program.

Megan served on 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 was a member of the committee that created the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's *Planning Curriculum in English Language Arts* (DPI, 2001) and created the bibliography for DPI's *Teaching Character Education Using Children's Literature* (DPI, 2001). Megan 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 is a librarian at the Cooperative Children's Book Center. A former school librarian, she served as the Lower School Librarian at the National Cathedral School in Washington, D.C., from 1998 to 2003. Hollis is currently serving on the 2006 Best Books for Young Adults Committee of the American Library Association. 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 middle school technology. 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 2005*, 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 IV

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 2004-2005 Friends of the CCBC, Inc., Board of Directors are President Meg Kavanagh, Vice-President Emily Jones, Recording Secretary Anita Winston, Membership Secretary Julie Weis, Treasurer Jean Elvekrog, and Directors-at-Large Mike Hertting and Andrea O'Brien.

In addition to the board volunteers, Friends book sale coordinators are Tana Elias and Meg Kavanagh. Susan Herr-Hoyman manages the Friends member database. The *Friends Newsletter* is edited by Geri Ceci Cupery and Andrea O'Brien.

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.

Author/Title/Name Index

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

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