

CCBC

Choices

2013

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Kathleen T. Horning

Merri V. Lindgren

Megan Schliesman

Cooperative Children's Book Center

School of Education

University of Wisconsin–Madison

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Kathleen T. Horning, Merri V. Lindgren, and Megan Schliesman

Introduction

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

The CCBC receives review copies of about 3,600 new books for children and young adults annually, which includes most of the trade books published in English by corporate publishers in the United States. By creating *CCBC Choices* we hope to draw attention to some of the outstanding books published for children and young adults from among the thousands we receive. While we know that no book is for every reader, we believe that among the 249 titles we have chosen, there is something for every child and teen.

Reading everything that comes into the library would be impossible for our staff of three, especially as most of the reading we do is after the work day ends. But every book is examined by a librarian, and many of them are read by one or more of us. Throughout the year we maintain a log where we note the titles we think are worthy of consideration for our next best-of-the-year list. While we sometimes find ourselves in mutual agreement about a book, at other times we disagree—sometimes a little, sometimes a lot. Discussion of our observations, both those things we admire and those that concern us, inevitably leads to a better understanding of the work in question. Ultimately, the books we agree on are the books that make it into *CCBC Choices*.

While we don't have a formal rubric of criteria required for including a book in *Choices*, there are a number of factors we consider. Literary and artistic quality top our list, but we also pay close attention to accuracy, authenticity, and credibility. If we have questions we're unable to answer, we look for informed opinions from expert content reviewers, especially with regard to the depiction of race, culture, and other dimensions of experience.

Sometimes we're challenged by books that are undeniably excellent on one or two of these dimensions, and then fall short on another. That's when we look to further discussion and experience to determine how those strengths and shortcomings balance, and to which side the scale will tip. We may also consider a book because it offers unique or unusual content, especially when we know there is a need and interest in books on that topic based on our discussions with teachers, librarians, and others who work directly with children and teens. We also factor in what we know about children and teens as readers.

Finally, we know that the best, most effective recommendations we make are always for the books that excite us the most. And year after year, talented and creative authors and illustrators, and their committed editors and publishers, provide children and teens—and us—with books that engage, entertain, enlighten—and, indeed, excite.

Organization of *CCBC Choices 2013*

The organization of the books in *CCBC Choices* into thematic and format categories has been developed over the years to help teachers, school and public librarians, and others who work with children and teens 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 youth want and need, and in part to reflect the books we have chosen in a particular year.

Books in this edition of *CCBC Choices* have been placed into one of the following thematic categories when appropriate:

- Science, Technology, and the Natural World
- Seasons and Celebrations
- Historical People, Places, and Events
- Contemporary People, Places, and Events
- Understanding Oneself and Others
- The Arts

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

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

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

The subject index can be used to find books about specific topics and in specific genres and formats (“Graphic Novels,” “Historical Fiction,” “Fantasy,” etc.).

Age Recommendations

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

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

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

Publication Information

The books in *CCBC Choices 2013* have a 2012 publication date. The citation for each book includes the current price and thirteen-digit international standard book number (ISBN) for the edition in the CCBC collection in 2012. Most of the books are available in hardcover trade editions. Some are also or only available in library editions with reinforced bindings. A few are only, or also, available in paperback. Many are also available as e-books.

The Charlotte Zolotow Award

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

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

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

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

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

Members of the 2013 Zolotow Award committee were: Merri Lindgren, chair (Librarian, Cooperative Children's Book Center, Madison, Wisconsin); Amy Alt (Early Childhood Specialist, 4-C, Community Coordinated Child Care, Madison, Wisconsin); Lynn Montague (Youth Services Librarian, Sun Prairie Public Library, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin); Duy Nguyen (Teacher, Franklin Elementary School, Madison, Wisconsin); and Kristine Wildner (Librarian, Holy Apostles School, New Berlin, Wisconsin).



2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award

- Winner:** ***Each Kindness***
 Written by Jacqueline Woodson.
 Illustrated by E. B. Lewis.
 Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin, 2012
- Honor Books:** ***Flabbersmashed about You***
 Written by Rachel Vail.
 Illustrated by Yumi Heo.
 Feiwel and Friends, 2012
- Me and Momma and Big John***
 Written by Mara Rockliff.
 Illustrated by William Low.
 Candlewick Press, 2012
- Sleep Like a Tiger***
 Written by Mary Logue.
 Illustrated by Pamela Zagarenski.
 Houghton Mifflin, 2012
- Highly Commended Titles:**
- Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic*** written by Ginnie Lo.
 Illustrated by Beth Lo. Lee & Low Books, 2012
- Helen's Big World: The Life of Helen Keller*** written by Doreen Rappaport.
 Illustrated by Matt Tavares. Disney / Hyperion, 2012
- Monet Paints a Day*** written by Julie Danneberg.
 Illustrated by Caitlin Heimerl. Charlesbridge, 2012
- No Go Sleep!*** written by Kate Feiffer.
 Illustrated by Jules Feiffer. A Paula Wiseman Book / Simon & Schuster, 2012
- Oh, No!*** written by Candace Fleming.
 Illustrated by Eric Rohmann. Schwartz & Wade Books, 2012
- Spike, the Mixed-up Monster*** written by Susan Hood.
 Illustrated by Melissa Sweet. A Paula Wiseman Book / Simon & Schuster, 2012
- Tea Cakes for Tosh*** written by Kelly Starling Lyons.
 Illustrated by E. B. Lewis. Putnam, 2012
- Underground*** written and illustrated by Denise Fleming.
 Beach Lane, 2012
- We March*** written and illustrated by Shane W. Evans.
 A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2012

A Few Observations on Publishing in 2012

First it was vampires. Then there were werewolves. This led to zombies, cyborgs, and fallen angels. In the end it was mermaids, rising from the waters to take the last gasp in a publishing craze we are all hoping is really dying out—that of the paranormal romance. It overlapped for a few years with a preponderance of books set in an unhappy, post-apocalyptic / post-pandemic / dystopic future, although it is apparently possible, if not obligatory, to find love among the ruins. New settings, new characters, same old romance.

Contemporary realism, once a mainstay in young adult literature, has been making a welcome return, and among the recurring themes that stood out in 2012 was the impact of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on young adults. Several novels were written from the points of view of teens with a family member who had served in one of these conflicts; in a few cases, teen characters were the soldiers themselves; and Deborah Ellis's *My Name Is Parvana* continues to illuminate the life of now teenage Parvana, who lives in Afghanistan and was first introduced at age eleven in *The Breadwinner* (Groundwood, 2001).

Young activists also took center stage in a number of novels, including *The Difference Between You and Me*, a book that also represents another welcome direction in publishing: young adult novels featuring LGBTQ characters. We were especially happy to see so many outstanding novels with lesbian main characters, noticeably underrepresented the past couple of years. Among them, A. S. King's *Ask the Passengers* stands out for its timely and sensitive portrayal of a questioning teen girl.

We've also noticed more young adult novels that feature adult protagonists, from the WWII-era pilot and spy in *Code Name Verity* to the seventy-five-year-old writer in *Dying to Know You* to the mostly adult voices driven by desire and longing in *The Brides of Rollrock Island*. Even though these characters have moved well beyond adolescence, their stories will be of interest to today's teen readers.

Younger readers of fiction also have plenty to be excited about. Last year we noted that middle grade novels seemed to be gaining ground, and we were gratified to see this continue into 2012. Not only did many established authors, such as Sharon Creech, Christopher Paul Curtis, and Grace Lin, publish books last year, but we were pleased to see there was still room—and publishing support—for dozens of debut novelists, including R. J. Palacio and Wisconsin's own W. H. Beck.

We continued to see fewer picture books published in 2012 than we did ten or even five years ago, but if the quantity has declined, we certainly—and happily—can't say the same for the quality. As we approach the 75th anniversary year of the Caldecott Medal, it's heartening to see that picture books are still going strong and still providing rich aesthetic experiences for young children. We were especially happy to note the number of original board books now being created for babies and toddlers.

One area of decline in picture books we were relieved to note was offerings by celebrity authors. There's still an occasional volume, but not nearly the numbers

we were receiving a few years ago. A different kind of celebrity publishing seems to have taken its place, however, as more and more well-known adult authors make forays into children's publishing, with an emphasis on novels, and varied success.

In the area of nonfiction, what stood out most to us was the fine array of science books for middle-school students. Houghton Mifflin's "Scientists in the Field" series has set the bar high for engaging readers with the work of real-life scientists. We are happy to recommend several great new books, including two from that series, which draw readers into the world of scientific investigation and research.

Authors of outstanding nonfiction also lead by example when they document their sources and provide insight, by way of an author's note, into their research and the choices and decisions they had to make as they turned that research into the work in readers' hands. We have been paying closer and closer attention to these dimensions of nonfiction works and are pleased to see so many authors and publishers taking the time (and space) to share this information.

The CCBC and Multicultural Literature: Over Twenty-Five Years and Counting

The CCBC receives most of the new trade books published each year by large trade publishers in the United States, and many by a number of smaller publishers. As we have done for the past twenty-eight years, we continue to document the number of children's books we receive annually by and about people of color. The news in terms of sheer numbers continues to be discouraging: the total number of books about people of color—regardless of quality, regardless of accuracy or authenticity—was less than eight percent of the total number of titles we received.

Think about that. Think about it terms of what you know about the changing demographics of our nation. Think about it in terms of the children and teens with whom you interact each and every day. They all deserve more.

We received approximately 3,600 books at the CCBC in 2012. Of those,

- **119** books had significant African or African American content
- **68** books were by Black authors and/or illustrators
- **22** books had American Indian themes, topics, or characters
- **6** books were by American Indian authors and/or illustrators
- **76** books had significant Asian/Pacific or Asian/Pacific American content
- **83** books were by authors and/or illustrators of Asian/Pacific heritage
- **54** books had significant Latino content
- **59** books were by Latino authors and/or illustrators

These numbers include everything that came into the library with a 2012 publication date, from formulaic series non-fiction books to stand-alone trade titles to paperback originals. Additionally, the number of books by authors and illustrators of color does not represent the number of book creators of color—many individuals wrote or illustrated more than one book.

But there has been good news, too, across those years: Among the multicultural books that *do* get published, there are always standouts; quite a few

of them, in fact. New and established authors and illustrators of color are creating works that are exciting, engaging, and even innovative. Vaunda Micheaux Nelson's *No Crystal Stair* is an example of all three. This documentary novel is based on the life of the author's great uncle, Harlem bookseller Lewis Michaux. More than sixty years ago he opened his bookstore with the firm belief that books can change lives, and Nelson shows how he created an oasis for readers and writers and activists, and a place for anyone—young or old—to find themselves through literature.

This year—2013—is the CCBC's fiftieth anniversary. From the library's earliest days, when it was located on the fourth floor of the Wisconsin State Capitol, to today, it has been a place that is grounded in that same idea that Mr. Michaux believed: books *do* have the power to change lives. We hope that you will find some life-changing books for the young readers you know among those listed here.

The *Choices*

Science, Technology, and the Natural World

Arnosky, Jim. *Creep and Flutter: The Secret World of Insects and Spiders.* Sterling, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-1-4027-7766-0, \$14.95)

“We once lived in a woodland that was infested by gypsy moths ... They covered our roof, our walkway, and our road. Passing cars would actually skid and slide on gooey mashed caterpillars.” Jim Arnosky’s conversational tone, and his obvious fascination with insects and spiders, draws readers into this informative work in which each page spread provides a one-page narrative of intriguing facts about a different group of insects or spiders, along with a full-color painting of a creature belonging to that group. Black-and-white field notebook sketches embellish each page of text, some of which fold out so that the verso becomes part of a multi-page, full-color display featuring additional examples of that type of creature. Arnosky concludes with an author’s note on heading out into the wild, and a bibliography for further reading. (Ages 7–12)

Bang, Molly, and Penny Chisholm. *Ocean Sunlight: How Tiny Plants Feed the Seas.* Illustrated by Molly Bang. The Blue Sky Press / Scholastic Inc., 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-0-545-27322-0, \$18.99)

“I am your sun, your golden star. All ocean life depends on me ...” As they did in *Living Sunlight: How Plants Bring the Earth to Life* (Blue Sky Press / Scholastic, 2009), Molly Bang and Penny Chisholm collaborate on another lyrical and informative picture book, this time about the importance of sunlight to the chain of life beneath the sea. Phytoplankton—the microscopic plants that form “the great invisible pasture of the sea”—and other ocean plant life rely on the light of the sun and nutrients to survive. But even in the darkest part of the ocean, far from its reach, the sun still plays an important role. “My light helps drive enormous currents. They thrust the deep sea waters, rich with nutrients and carbon dioxide, up” so the phytoplankton can reproduce. Thumbnails of Molly Bang’s gorgeous stylized illustrations accompany end notes that provide more information on the science of the sea. (Ages 7–11)

Burns, Loree Griffin. *Citizen Scientists: Be a Part of Scientific Discovery from Your Own Backyard.* Photographs by Ellen Harasimowicz. Henry Holt, 2012. 80 pages (pbk. 978-0-8050-9517-3, \$12.99)

Author Loree Griffin Burns’s enthusiasm is infectious as she describes four different projects involving citizen scientists, with an emphasis on how children can be participants in ongoing scientific research projects through work in their own communities—sometimes even literally in their own backyards. The four projects profiled are butterfly tagging in fall, bird counting in winter, frog-call monitoring in spring, and ladybug counting in summer. Each project is featured in three parts: a photo essay describing field work and the associated research project, a profile of one or more kids involved in the “citizen scientist” work, and a “When You Go” section offering practical tips for kids interested

in heading out into the field. End matter includes additional resources (books and websites) for each project, a glossary, and index. (Ages 6–10)

DeCristofano, Carolyn Cinami. *A Black Hole Is Not a Hole.* Illustrated by Michael Carroll. Charlesbridge, 2012. 74 pages (trade 978–1–57091–783–7, \$18.95)

An accessible, engaging explanation and exploration of what we know about black holes uses an inviting, friendly tone and dynamic illustrations to convey a wealth of scientific information. Author Carolyn Cinami DeCristofano's often playful comparisons and descriptions will help readers wrap their minds around this infinite concept. For example, imagine a stretchy blanket onto which you toss a peanut holding all the elephants in the world inside. "The blanket stretches and stretches, pulling out of shape. It forms ... a steep well that's really a lot like ... a hole!" Michael Carroll's dramatic illustrations of space are always carefully labeled as an artist's interpretations to distinguish them from photographs, which are also used in this engaging work that concludes with a glossary, an author's note on her research, and resources in print and on the Web. (Ages 9–13)

Deem, James M. *Faces from the Past: Forgotten People of North America.* Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 154 pages (trade 978–0–547-37024–8, \$18.99)

When archaeologists uncover human skeletal remains, we can't really know what the individual looked like until an artist, working with forensic anthropologists, reconstructs the face. James Deem focuses on nine sites in North America, dating from 9400 BP (before the present) to 1881, showing how teams of scientists work together to reconstruct details of each individual's life. He includes a range of people, from a prehistoric man to hitherto forgotten people who died in a nineteenth-century almshouse, sharing what scientists can learn about the lives of these individuals from studying their remains. Once the historical context has been set for each one, we see the artist at work, reconstructing each face. A multitude of crisp color photographs, maps, and diagrams illustrate the well-documented text. (Age 9 and older)

Fleming, Denise. *underGROUND.* Beach Lane Books / Simon & Schuster, 2012. 32 pages (978–1–4424-5882–6, \$17.99)

A classic Denise Fleming picture book, from the beautifully composed illustrations to a spare text that is never boring or predictable, looks at underground life in the natural world. Brown is understandably the predominant color in Fleming's pulp-painting illustrations, but she deftly incorporates touches of vivid color to punctuate the underground scenes, or offers partial glimpses of the more vibrant aboveground world. The rhyming text is just a handful of words per page, describing what can be seen—and found—in the "squirm-ways and worm-ways" underground. A "Creature Identification" page spread at the back reiterates images from the illustrations, providing brief information about the creatures shown in this terrific choice for reading aloud or sharing one-on-one, not to mention for children to pore over on their own. *Highly Commended, 2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–7)

Frost, Helen. *Step Gently Out. Photographs by Rick Lieder. Candlewick Press, 2012. 24 pages (trade 978-0-7636-5601-0, \$15.99)*

Poet Helen Frost encourages children to “step gently out” and look with care at the natural world. If they do, they may be rewarded with sights of small creatures otherwise easily overlooked. “A spider spins a silken thread and steps across the air. A praying mantis looks at you—do you know she’s there?” The lyrical narrative is set against photographs by Rick Lieder that offer an up-close look at each of the bugs and other elements of nature Frost describes, with the depth of field required to take the shots meaning the backgrounds soften and blur. The visual effect is lovely, and echoes the idea of truly focusing closely on the small things in front of you. The final page spread includes a visual index, reiterating the images of the insects, and providing a short paragraph of information about each creature. (Ages 3–7)

Frydenborg, Kay. *Wild Horse Scientists. (Scientists in the Field) Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 80 pages (trade 978-0-547-51831-2, \$18.99)*

For nearly three decades, Dr. Jay Kirkpatrick has spearheaded a project to keep the wild horse population on Assateague Island off the coast of Maryland at a healthy number that the environment can support. This has been done through effective use of birth control delivered by dart gun. But he and his research partner’s first attempt in the 1980s was a dismal failure—they not only didn’t prevent pregnancies, they increased the fertility rate among the horses. It wasn’t until they tried a new vaccine, PZP, developed by a third scientist, that they began to achieve success, although it’s taken years of monitoring to be certain of the project’s long-term efficacy. The trial and error, collaboration, and patience required in scientific work as seen through Dr. Kirkpatrick’s research is one fascinating dimension of this volume, but so, too, is the broader information it provides about horses. Everything from breeds and color patterns to their evolutionary and migratory history to their relationship with humans makes for intriguing reading. Brief information is also provided about ongoing efforts to address population issues among wild horses in the West in this welcome new addition to the Scientists in the Field series. (Ages 10–15)

Hearst, Michael. *Unusual Creatures: A Mostly Accurate Account of Some of Earth’s Strangest Animals. Illustrated by Arjen Noordeman, Christie Wright, and Jelmer Noordeman. Chronicle Books, 2012. 109 pages (trade 978-1-4521-0467-6, \$16.99)*

In his introduction, the author defines “unusual creature” as an “animal that looks, sounds, smells, or acts in a way that makes you stop and say, ‘Whoa, dude! What’s up with that?’” This collection of fifty animals, presented in alphabetical order, seems likely to provoke just that response in most readers. From the axolotl (which regenerates body parts) through the yeti crab (whose hair-covered legs inspired the hirsute name), each animal is presented with a box of strictly factual information, supplemented by entertaining tidbits—more facts, a quiz, or a news-related story—and a large colored ink illustration. The book’s opening pages outline biological classification, while an end note addresses issues of animal extinction and human impact on the environment.

A personal tone and humorous style enhance the accessibility of this fascinating volume. (Ages 7–12)

Hoose, Phillip. *Moonbird: A Year on the Wind with the Great Survivor B95*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2012. 148 pages (trade 978-0-374-30468-3, \$21.99)

In a fascinating look at a shorebird called the rufa red knot, Phillip Hoose focuses on one extraordinary survivor, a bird known as B95. First banded as an adult in 1995, he was still being tracked on the 2010-2011 migratory journey from Patagonia to the Arctic and back—a trek that involves thousands of miles of uninterrupted flying. But the overall population of rufa red knots has been decreasing drastically. Scientists speculate reduced feeding opportunities on their migratory route are the reason. Hoose—who participated in some of the tracking and banding during the 2009-2010 rufa migration as part of his research—reveals many discoveries made in recent years about these birds' amazing capacity to physically adapt for the journey. He also details the routes they take, and the places they return to each year that are essential to their survival. His account describes his work with researchers in the field (many of who feel a strong emotional attachment to B95), and follows B95 into the sky. Profiles of individuals from scientists to commercial fisherman to bird enthusiasts to environmental activists, all who play roles in the red knots' survival, are included. In his source notes, Hoose makes clear that he has imagined the sections of narrative in which he describes B95's migratory flight, and carefully documents his sources for information and quotes. Color photographs, maps, and other visual matter enhance this arresting and inspiring volume. (Age 11 and older)

Jenkins, Steve. *The Beetle Book*. Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-547-68084-2, \$16.99)

The beauty and incredible diversity found among beetles is astonishing as seen in this creeping compendium. Author/illustrator Steve Jenkins offers an array of striking beetle portraits arranged on page spreads that group beetles by a common trait, from the ability of to use “clever disguises” to discourage predators (e.g., ant beetle, golden spider beetle) to the aggressive “battling beetle” tendencies of others when they compete for a mate (e.g., stag beetle, rhinoceros beetle). Almost every two-page spread includes a life-size silhouette of all beetles pictured; those that don't make clear in the description of each beetle the scale at which it is shown. Jenkins's striking torn-and-cut-paper collage illustrations are amazingly detailed and accompanied by a brief description that focuses on a few intriguing facts about each beetle, or a trait that is shared by it and many other beetles. A final list gives the Latin/scientific name for each beetle included in the book. (Ages 7–12)

Lewin, Ted, and Betsy Lewin. *Puffling Patrol*. Lee & Low, 2012. 48 pages (trade 978-1-60060-424-9, \$19.95)

Ted and Betsy Lewin describe their 2008 trip to Heimaey Island, off the coast of Iceland, which has one of the largest puffin colonies in the world. Each August, when the young puffins, called pufflings, leave their burrows, some

fly the wrong way and end up in town instead of out at sea, where they need to be to survive. They can't take off again, so the Puffling Patrol, community members who go out in search of stranded birds, rescues them. The birds are kept safe for the night and then given a medical check the next day. Those that are big enough are released into the sea. One night the Lewins accompany two children and their father on a search, which concludes with the puffling they find being released. This engaging, true account makes clear that even though the two children find the young birds cute and lovable, they also understand they are wild. End matter for this informational picture book that incorporates illustrations by both Ted and Betsy Lewin includes facts about Atlantic puffins, more about volcanic Heimaey Island (which last erupted in 1973), information about the puffin population (which is declining), and a glossary. (Ages 4–9)

Murphy, Jim, and Alison Blank. *Invincible Microbe: Tuberculosis and the Never-Ending Search for a Cure.* Clarion, 2012. 149 pages (trade 978-0-618-53574-3, \$18.99)

Tuberculosis is examined through both the lens of science and that of social history. The disease, whose origins have recently been traced back three million years to microorganisms in the soil and water of Africa, is tracked from ancient times to medieval years through the sanatorium cures of the 1800 and 1900s. A final chapter summarizes the recent emergence of multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis and efforts to halt further progression of the disease. Changes in our understanding of tuberculosis over time and evolving approaches to treatment range from the barbaric to the cutting-edge, and provide insight into social history, such as how race and class impacted access to treatment in the first half of the twentieth century. The text is supplemented with numerous black-and-white photos and other visual material, and the end matter includes detailed source notes and a bibliography. (Ages 11–15)

Nivola, Claire A. *Life in the Ocean: The Story of Oceanographer Sylvia Earle.* Frances Foster Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-374-38068-7, \$17.99)

Lovely writing and finely detailed illustrations distinguish this picture book biography of oceanographer Sylvia Earle, whose fascination with nature and fearlessness defined her from childhood. As an adult, "Sylvia never stopped trying to dive deeper and see more." That included living underwater for two weeks in 1970, an experience that left her "changed forever," and diving deeper than anyone had before when she walked 1,250 feet below the surface among the coral reefs of Hawaii. "Every spoonful of water in the deep ocean, Sylvia says, is brimming with extraordinary forms of life." An author's note provides more information about Sylvia Earle, including her work developing better ways to explore the deep sea, and about threats to the health of the earth's oceans. (Ages 6–9)

Rusch, Elizabeth. *The Mighty Mars Rovers: The Incredible Adventures of Spirit and Opportunity.* (Scientists in the Field) Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 79 pages (trade 978-0-547-47881-4, \$18.99)

Geologist Steve Squyres knew that it wasn't possible to go to Mars himself, so he did the next best thing: He helped create two robotic geologists that could make the journey and report back. Doing so took funding from NASA and an entire team of scientists. "It was so complicated," he noted, "that not a single one of us fully understood what was going on." After a six-month journey, the two rovers, Spirit and Opportunity (named by a nine-year-old girl), landed on different parts of the red planet and began their explorations, with scientists back on earth directing their moves and troubleshooting when things went wrong. Color photographs transmitted from Mars stand side by side with photographs of the scientists back home, who are watching, worrying, wondering, and celebrating throughout the rovers' amazing explorations. The story itself is inherently dramatic, and the science is skillfully woven into the account. Readers will feel the same sense of discovery that Squyres and his team felt as the two Mars rovers opened up a whole new world to them. (Ages 9-14)

Walker, Sally M., and Douglas W. Owsley. *Their Skeletons Speak: Kennewick Man and the Paleoamerican World.* Carolrhoda Books, 2012. 135 pages (trade 978-0-7613-7457-2, \$22.95)

Discovery of the Kennewick Man skeleton in Washington State in 1996 sets the stage for a fascinating discussion of Paleoamerican skeletons and what they may tell us about early human presence on this continent nine thousand-plus years ago. Research on Kennewick Man was suspended for a period when American Indian tribes petitioned to have the remains returned under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act—a bill that strives to acknowledge hundreds of years of Native grave desecration. But researchers (including coauthor Douglas W. Owsley) filed a counter claim, believing the skeleton was not Native American. Science continues to develop new and better ways of studying ancient remains, and this is seen across several separate studies of Kennewick Man since 1999, with the most recent evidence showing Kennewick Man is related most closely to the Japanese Ainu and the Polynesian Moriori. Research on Paleoamerican remains underscores how many dimensions of science, from anthropology and biology and forensics to cultural studies, are needed to try to make sense of the bones and the lives of these ancient people. There is a tenderness and respect for these remains and the lives they represent that permeates the lengthy and compelling narrative illustrated with periodic photographs and illustrations. (Age 12 and older)

Zoehfeld, Kathleen Weidner. *Secrets of the Garden: Food Chains and the Food Web in Our Backyard.* Illustrated by Priscilla Lamont. Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-517-70990-0, \$16.99)

A young girl describes her family's efforts planting, tending, and eventually harvesting their garden in this informational picture book that pairs a fictional story line, which itself provides plenty of facts about growing things, with a factual narrative developed as an ongoing commentary from chickens Maisy and Daisy. In addition to the poultry's patter (dialogue shown with the use

of speech bubbles), information is provided in charts, diagrams, and other dimensions of the illustrations in a book that discusses how plants store energy, and their role in the larger food chain and food web. The facts go down easily, and the garden comes up beautifully, in a story that culminates with a bountiful autumn harvest. (Ages 4–8)

Seasons and Celebrations

Fogliano, Julie. *and then it's spring.* Illustrated by Erin E. Stead. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-59643-624-4, \$16.99)

A sublime picture book captures the long, anticipation-filled wait for spring and the moment it culminates in sudden realization that spring has finally arrived. Julie Fogliano's spare, fresh, lyrical writing is paired with Erin E. Stead's delicate, whimsy-filled illustrations depicting a young gardener planting seeds and then waiting ... and hoping. Days turn into weeks: "and the brown, / still brown, / has a greenish hum / that you can only hear / if you put your ear to the ground / and close your eyes." Despite this careful observation, the boy still misses the moment when spring sneaks in and transforms the landscape: "and you walk outside / to check on all that brown, / but the brown isn't around / and now you have green, / all around / you have / green." Humorous details enliven illustrations that show a brown, muddy landscape that is ultimately transformed to vibrant green. (Ages 3–7)

French, Jackie. *Christmas Wombat.* Illustrated by Bruce Whatley. U.S. edition: Clarion, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-547-86872-1, \$16.99)

There's only one thing the wombat narrating this spare, funny story loves more than a nap: carrots. After winning a stand-off with "strange creatures" (reindeer) for a plate of them, the wombat unwittingly hitches a ride on the back of Santa's sleigh. "I smell carrots!" It turns out every stop includes a bounty of carrots that the strange creatures prove adept at finding, and the wombat proves adept at eating. Jackie French's amusing premise gets a boost from Bruce Whatley's illustrations, which feature abundant nonverbal communication (who knew beleaguered reindeer could say so much with their eyes?) and understated humor. (Ages 3–7)

Goldstone, Bruce. *Awesome Autumn.* Henry Holt, 2012. 48 pages (trade 978-0-8050-9210-3, \$16.99)

How does autumn taste? What is autumn shaped like? Why do leaves change color? How does frost form? These and other questions are answered in this colorful compendium of information about autumn combining facts and creative thinking. Color photographs of scenery, including trees changing color and evergreens (which are "ever green"); food; and other objects and activities associated with autumn illustrate an informative, accessible narrative. Changes taking place in the natural world, including migration, and in the human

world, including Halloween and Thanksgiving, not to mention soccer games and leaf-pile jumping, are all included as dimensions of autumn are explained and/or visually explored. Dynamic page spreads add to the volume's appeal. (Ages 4–7)

Obed, Ellen Bryan. *Twelve Kinds of Ice*. Illustrated by Barbara McClintock. Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 64 pages (trade 978-0-618-89129-0, \$16.99)

First ice, second ice, and third ice formed in the pails in the sheep barn: A thin skin that broke easily into shards, then a round window, and finally an impenetrable block. Then there was field ice, marking the first opportunity to don skates and glide along stream ice. There was also black ice and garden ice, and Bryan Gardens, the rink they built in the yard. Eventually, there is last ice, followed only by dream ice. Ellen Bryan Obed recalls the warmth of childhood winters full of families and friends, skating and nature's gifts in this lyrical catalog of twelve kinds of ice that will resonate with any child today who loves the coldest season. Barbara McClintock's delicate, detailed black-and-white illustrations in pen and ink are a perfect accompaniment to Obed's writing, evoking the same sense of nostalgia and lively appreciation for having fun. (Ages 5–10)

Wardlaw, Lee. *Red, White, and Boom!* Illustrated by Huy Voun Lee. Henry Holt, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8050-9065-9, \$16.99)

The Fourth of July is observed with a parade ("Flags unfurl / Batons twirl"), a trip to the beach ("Castle moats / Seaweed boats"), and sparklers and fireworks in the park ("Star-flakes spill / Heart-Thump thrill") in these multicultural celebrations that look like twenty-first-century America, even as participants are engaged in timeless activities. Lee Wardlaw's playful rhyming text will bring smiles, cleverly describing familiar activities, while Huoy Von Lee's collage illustrations make the summer fun look irresistible. (Ages 2–5)

Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature

Lowry, Amy. *Fox Tails: Four Fables from Aesop*. Holiday House, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8234-2400-9, \$16.95)

Motivated by hunger and an empty refrigerator, a fox sets out to gather some grapes he remembers seeing in the lane. When they prove to be above his reach, the fox declares that the grapes must be sour and walks off. His hunger is abated after encountering a crow with a piece of cheese in her beak. The fox flatters her into cawing and dropping the cheese, which he quickly gobbles up. "The Fox and the Grapes" and "The Fox and the Crow" are the first two of four familiar Aesop fables linked into a single picture book story. "The Fox and the Goat" and the "The Fox and the Stork" round out the quartet, which benefits from

humorous elements in both the text and the understated gouache and pencil illustrations. (Ages 3–7)

Ward, Helen. *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse*. U.S. edition: **Templar Books / Candlewick Press, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978–0–7636–6098–7, \$16.99)**

The Aesop fable about a contented mouse from the country who second-guesses his happiness after his bragging cousin waxes about the wonders of city living is given gorgeous visual treatment in this retelling. Helen Ward's exquisite watercolor illustrations make for lovely-to-look-at page spreads, whether detailing the beauty and abundance of the natural world or the magical chaos of the city when the country mouse decides to see what he's been missing ("He discovered lights in the dark and automatic ups and downs"). Ward offers a range of intriguing perspectives that aren't quite at mouse's-eye view but seem inspired by her subject's small size in the bigness of the world. Elegant page design adds to the pleasure of this volume. (Ages 4–8)

Historical People, Places, and Events

Asim, Jabari. *Fifty Cents and a Dream: Young Booker T. Washington*. Illustrated by **Bryan Collier**. Little, Brown, 2012. **40 pages (trade 978–0–316–08657–8, \$16.99)**

Booker T. Washington's hunger and determination to learn are the focus of this picture book account that follows him from his youngest days as a slave, carrying schoolbooks for his master's daughter and overhearing her lessons, to his journey hundreds of miles, mostly on foot, to Georgia's Hampton Institute, where he was determined to continue the education he'd pieced together growing up. Along the way—through childhood, and upon his arrival at Hampton—Booker's dream is supported by family members and neighbors, and his own hard work, whether he was studying, or working to earn the money he needed to get to and stay in school. Additional facts about Booker and his journey are part of the end matter that also includes an insightful author's note with more information about Booker T. Washington and decisions Jabari Asim made in writing this story. (Ages 5–9)

Bausum, Ann. *Marching to the Mountaintop: How Poverty, Labor Fights, and Civil Rights Set the Stage for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Final Hours*. Foreword by **Reverend James Lawson**. National Geographic, 2012. **104 pages (trade 978–1–4263–0939–7, \$19.95)**

Author Ann Bausum deftly and compellingly explores two connected stories in this exemplary work of research and writing that starts with the strike of Memphis garbage workers in 1968. The workers, all African American men, worked six-day weeks with one fifteen-minute break a day for lunch. They labored each day until their routes were completed, with no compensation for overtime, and were paid so poorly their families lived in poverty. It was the death of two sanitation workers crushed in the back of a garbage truck

that finally spurred the strike. Racism stalemated resolution: Memphis mayor Henry Loeb refused to negotiate. Martin Luther King Jr., came to Memphis because the cause of the striking workers resonated with his shifting focus from African American civil rights to poverty. Without ever losing sight of the strike, Bausum emphasizes King's efforts to ignite a "poor people's campaign," and how the Memphis garbage strike became a part of that vision. He was assassinated during his second visit to Memphis to support and rally the workers, and Bausum movingly details his final hours and minutes, and also the aftermath, when the federal government sent in a negotiator and the strike was resolved. Ample back matter includes a timeline of events in Memphis, summaries of King's various campaigns for civil rights, research notes, a resource guide, and bibliography. There is an abundance of photographs and other visual matter, some of it intentionally echoing photo spreads and design elements of the period. (Age 12 and older)

Berger, Lee R. and Marc Aronson. *The Skull in the Rock: How a Scientist, a Boy, and Google Earth Opened a New Window on Human Origins.* National Geographic, 2012. 64 pages (trade 978-1-4263-1010-2, \$18.95)

The discovery of the first bone of what would eventually be called *Australopithecus sediba*, a previously unknown branch of human ancestry, was made by the nine-year-old son of anthropologist Lee Berger at the Cradle of Humankind in South Africa in 2008. This account opens with that momentous discovery, which has demanded that scientists reevaluate what they thought they understood about human origins. It then backtracks, describing Berger's journey to becoming a scientist, which began with his passion for nature and science in childhood. Berger's continued work has led to the discovery and study of more *Australopithecus sediba* bones. Meticulous research in the field and in the lab is one part of the process, but so, too, is creative thinking as he and others theorize about the lives the bones represent. Numerous color photographs accompany a text that captures Berger's enthusiasm, and concludes by acknowledging how much more there is to learn. Indeed, future discoveries may contradict current conclusions. Suggestions for further reading and a glossary are provided along with a website where readers can track new developments in the study of *Australopithecus sediba*. (Age 9 and older)

Corey, Shana. *Here Come the Girl Scouts! The Amazing All-true Story of Juliette "Daisy" Gordon Low and Her Great Adventure.* Illustrated by Hadley Hooper. Scholastic Press, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-0-545-34278-0, \$17.99)

"Daisy was a girl with gumption." She grew up into a woman who pursued every interest she had with passion, and lived life with a sense of joy. She also grew up into the woman who would found the Girl Scouts. Shana Corey's vivacious picture book look at Juliette Gordon "Daisy" Low and the early years of the Girl Scouts is paired with spirited illustrations by Hadley Hooper incorporating quotes from the first Girl Scout handbook. More information about Daisy and the Girl Scouts is provided in an essay at story's end that discusses some of the essential ideas that shaped Daisy's thinking and the Girl

Scouts, from the progressive era and conservation to diversity. Detailed source information is also included. (Ages 6–9)

Evans, Shane W. *We March. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–1–59643–539–1, \$16.99)*

A child describes his family's participation in the 1963 March on Washington. They get up in the morning, gather at church, make signs, board a bus, and join people from all over to march. "We are hot and tired, but we are filled with hope." Short, declarative, present-tense sentences (only ten in all) convey a sense of immediacy, while the spare, stylized illustrations show the warmth, determination, and spirit of a mostly African American crowd. In an affecting juxtaposition, the two final page spreads show first the young boy atop his father's shoulders, one hand reaching out, and then a mirror image of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., with his hand reaching out as if toward the boy, the ring of his "Free at last" call filling the space between. A note at book's end mentions more about the March on Washington, other notable Civil Rights–era marches, and the author/illustrator's belief in the power of people coming together. *Highly Commended, 2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5–9)

Fern, Tracey. *Barnum's Bones: How Barnum Brown Discovered the Most Famous Dinosaur in the World. Illustrated by Boris Kulikov. Margaret Ferguson Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–0–374–30516–1, \$17.99)*

"Something exciting happened in Carbondale, Kansas, on February 12, 1873. The Brown family had a baby boy. It was even more exciting than the circus, and the Browns adored the circus!" In fact, they loved the circus so much they named their new baby Barnum, for P. T. Barnum. But this Barnum grew up to find fame in a different field—fossils and bones. Barnum Brown loved them from the time he could toddle, when he would follow the plow and pick up "ancient corals and clams and snails and scallops." Barnum developed a reputation from early adulthood as someone who had a knack for finding bones, and Professor Henry Osborn of the American Museum of Natural History (called "My Dear Professor" by Barnum) hired him. Barnum was a snappy dresser, even on field work, but he was also a great bone hunter, pouring over books and maps in addition to digging in the field. His greatest discovery was T. Rex—a new species!—but he also helped the museum amass the largest collection of dinosaur bones in the world. Tracey Fern's spirited storytelling brings fascinating Barnum Brown alive on the page, and Boris Kulikov's illustrations add another dimension of delight. An author's note tells more about Barnum Brown and is followed by a bibliography. (Ages 5–9)

Freedman, Russell. *Abraham Lincoln & Frederick Douglass: The Story Behind an American Friendship. Clarion, 2012. 119 pages (trade 978–0–547–38562–4, \$18.99)*

The relationship between Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass was not only important to each of them but also to American history. Early alternating chapters in this narrative provide a brief biography of Lincoln and Douglass. Despite the obvious difference of one being born a slave and the other free,

they had much in common, from childhoods of hard work and few materials possessions to a passion for learning. They were aware of each other before they ever met, and while mutual admiration and friendship was not instantaneous it developed with time. Freedman clearly lays out Lincoln's personal thinking on slavery, which was not always apparent in his actions as he sought to preserve the Union, as well as Douglass's criticism of and eventual appreciation for Lincoln as both man and president. A selected bibliography and detailed source notes are included. (Age 12 and older)

Kalman, Maira. *Looking at Lincoln*. Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-0-399-24039-3, \$17.99)

A whimsical picture-book look at the life of Abraham Lincoln is fresh and surprising, offering up facts about the most famous president in an offbeat story in which the narrator, a girl who is reading about Lincoln at the library, also conjectures about some of the things that aren't known. "On the day he was elected, I bet Mary made his favorite vanilla cake." There's a loose chronological order to the somewhat stream-of-consciousness narrative, as in, "One day he was kicked in the head by a mule. He slept for two days. Then he woke up and grew up and decided to be a lawyer. (He did like to argue.)" Short paragraphs comprise the notes at the end, which expand on details mentioned in the text (e.g., "Mary Todd first baked a vanilla-almond cake for Abraham Lincoln when they were courting"). A bibliography of sources is also provided. Maira Kalman's artwork is as colorful as her narrative in this love letter of sorts to Abraham Lincoln that remains grounded in the voice of a curious child. (Ages 7–10)

Kerley, Barbara. *Those Rebels, John & Tom*. Illustrated by Edwin Fotheringham. Scholastic Press, 2012. 48 pages (trade 978-0-545-22268-6, \$17.99)

John Adams loved to argue. Thomas Jefferson hated it. John Adams was a lawyer who liked to farm. Thomas Jefferson was a lawyer who liked to design and build. Still, "they both cared deeply about the American colonies, and neither of them cared much for George." That would be King George, the "tyrant" (they both agreed on that, too) who ruled the colonies. Author Barbara Kerley and illustrator Edwin Fotheringham have again collaborated to create a spirited and informative picture book history—in this case, about two men who found common ground on which to form a new nation. Among other things, it was bold John who persuaded shy Tom to put his pen to work creating what would become the Declaration of Independence. In an author's note, Kerley describes the two men's later falling-out over how the new country's government should be structured and how they eventually "made peace with their differences." Source notes for all quotations are included in this whimsical yet illuminating account. (Ages 6–9)

Levinson, Cynthia. *We've Got a Job: The 1963 Birmingham Children's March*. Peachtree, 2012. 176 pages (trade 978-1-56145-627-7, \$19.95)

Cynthia Levinson illuminates the pivotal role that older children and teens played in Birmingham Civil Rights protests in early May 1963. When adults were reluctant to march and fill the jails, youth took up the call. Their willingness

to do so inspired adults who had been hesitant to protest for a number of reasons, from fear of physical repercussions to the possibility of losing their jobs to disagreement among leaders in the Black community regarding the right course of action. When the youth marched, the violent response of police and fire departments under Bull Connor ignited the broader public and the media. Levinson's account returns repeatedly to the experience of four African American youth who participated in the marches, three of them teenagers, and one, Audrey Hendrickson, only nine years old, and the youngest to be arrested. Their backgrounds and stories provide insight into class differences within the Black community, while the larger narrative also speaks to differences in how Black and white youth experienced this tumultuous time. A final chapter provides an account of the lives of all four since that time. Detailed source notes and a bibliography conclude this inspiring volume. (Age 12 and older)

Liu, Na, and Andrés Vera Martínez. *Little White Duck: A Childhood in China*. Graphic Universe, 2012. 108 pages (lib. 978-0-7613-6587-7, \$29.27)

Early on in this memoir of Na Liu's childhood in China in the 1970s, she wakes up for school but learns there won't be school for her that day: Her grandpa has died. In fact, no one is going to school, because the grandpa her parents mean is Chairman Mao. Her parents' grief is genuine, and the scene immediately differentiates this work from others published for youth about the Cultural Revolution, because both of Liu's parents benefitted from some of the changes that brought such devastation to others. Liu's mother had polio as a child and turned to Mao's Army for treatment. Her father earned a government scholarship for farmers. Despite these benefits, her father's family still suffers greatly from poverty in their rural village, something revealed in another vivid series of scenes when Liu and her father visit them. She feels an incredible disconnect and dissonance and sadness by the visit's end. Liu grew up in a time of change and transition: Her mother was already pregnant with her little sister when the Chinese government enacted the one-child policy, so her family escaped that fate, and she knew her own life was easier than her parents' had ever been. This account, in which Liu's narrative is paired with her husband Andres Vera Martinez's superb illustrations, is made up of a series of vignettes recounting memories from a relatively brief period of Liu's life. But everything from the subdued palette to the restrained emotional tenor of the storytelling is affecting. (Age 12 and older)

Losure, Mary. *The Fairy Ring or Elsie and Frances Fool the World*. Candlewick Press, 2012. 184 pages (trade 978-0-7636-5670-6, \$16.99)

Near the end of World War I, teenage Elsie Wright, a talented artist, drew pictures of fairies, cut them out and, with her nine-year-old cousin Frances Griffiths, photographed them in the glen near their home. They told their families the fairies were real—a shared secret without malicious intent. But after the war, Elsie's mother told a member of the Theosophist Society—believers in fairy lore—about the amazing pictures of fairies. Word quickly spread, and one of the photos was published to great sensation. Even fairy believer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote Elsie. Author Mary Losure's story is sized like an intimate

novel and has a warm, inviting tone, but it's also a well-documented and well-researched true story. She describes the girls' actions without judgment while leaving readers plenty of room for speculation on each one's motivation for maintaining the lie for decades (they didn't reveal the truth until the BBC tracked them down in the 1980s). Elsie's creativity fostered a vibrant spirit. Frances was quieter but also steadfast in her belief that although the fairies they photographed weren't real, there were, indeed, fairies in the glen—because she saw them numerous times. A beautifully designed little book features reproductions of several of the fairy photos. (Ages 9–12)

McNamara, Margaret. *George Washington's Birthday: A Mostly True Tale*. Illustrated by Barry Blitt. Schwartz & Wade, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-375-84499-7, \$17.99)

A picture book history exploring fact versus fiction is a cleverly entertaining lesson in not believing everything you read. Margaret McNamara's playful, imagined day-in-the-life on George Washington's seventh birthday offers up a series of contrasting facts and myths, including the famous—and fictional—chopping down of the cherry tree incident. For every myth or inaccuracy intentionally referenced in the main narrative, McNamara provides a "fact" box pointing out the truth, including clarification on Washington's adult life. So when young Washington's father tells him to powder his wig, the boxed fact explains that Washington never wore a wig as either child or adult. But he did powder his hair. As for Washington crossing the Delaware? After young George crosses an icy creek he declares that he never wants to do anything like that again. In the fact box, readers learn that General Washington's crossing of the Delaware was not a single trip, but comprised of multiple crossings as he went back and forth as the Revolutionary Army prepared for what became a key battle in the war. Barry Blitt's illustrations are a blend of period detail and whimsy perfectly matched to McNamara's story. (Ages 6–10)

Potter, Alicia. *Mrs. Harkness and the Panda*. Illustrated by Melissa Sweet. Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-0-375-84448-5, \$16.99)

Shortly after marrying in 1934, Ruth Harkness's husband left on an expedition to China to find a panda, a species so rare and in such a remote area that no one in the Western world had ever seen one. Ruth wanted to go along but she was told it was no place for a woman, especially one with no survival skills or knowledge of the wilderness. But after her husband died on the expedition, Ruth decided to complete his mission, despite discouragement on many fronts. She traveled deep into China (with the help of a guide, a cook, and a crew of sixteen men to carry her baggage), where she found and captured a baby panda she named Su Lin. Returning to San Francisco with the panda, Ruth made front-page news and was lauded as a "woman explorer." Alicia Potter recounts the fascinating story of how pandas were introduced to the West thanks to one woman's determination in a picture-book history richly illustrated by Melissa Sweet with a blend of full-page illustrations and scrapbook-style detail art. An essential author's note discusses the ethics of Mrs Harkness's actions in light of changing attitudes about conservation and zoos since that time. (Ages 5–9)

Pringle, Laurence. *Ice! The Amazing History of the Ice Business.* Calkins Creek / Boyds Mills Press, 2012. 74 pages (trade 978-1-59078-801-1, \$17.95)

Ice as a hot commodity? In the days before electric refrigeration, it was exactly that. Laurence Pringle examines the fascinating history of the ice industry, looking at everything from technology that developed and changed across the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (ice elevator anyone?), to labor issues (at least one young woman broke the ice ceiling in the male-dominated field), to economics (from ice as an export to the fact that not every family could afford an ice box). Pringle's narrative focuses primarily on New England and the East Coast. Rockland Lake, a small, primarily spring-fed lake in New York, was an ice company's dream—it included a navigable overland route to the Hudson River. From there, the ice could be shipped to New York City, where the coming of the iceman on a hot summer's day was an event in many neighborhoods. An intriguing range of dynamic visual material accompanies Pringle's narrative, from advertisements to ice-delivery placards to diagrams of ice tools to photographs of the ice industry in its heyday. Bibliography, source notes, and additional resources round out this cool volume. (Age 10-14)

Rappaport, Doreen. *Beyond Courage: The Untold Story of Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust.* Candlewick Press, 2012. 228 pages (978-0-7636-2976-2, \$22.99)

A comprehensive, compelling look at Jewish resistance on many fronts during the Holocaust affirms the numerous ways Jews fought back: ghetto uprisings, partisan fighting, underground work, and escapes or attempts to escape from camps, but also the simple, courageous act of continuing to find ways to actively observe their faith, or stealing food, or refusing to brutalize others. Doreen Rappaport's affecting work incorporates the stories of many individuals into an account that illuminates the darkness of the Holocaust with the light of courage and faith and compassion, and the fuel of anger. While many books about the Holocaust for young readers focus on stories of individuals in hiding or who helped Jews—both of which are included here—the accounts of armed and active resistance are unusual and refreshing. Among them is the Bielski settlement, a vibrant community of armed Jews that formed deep in the woods of Eastern Europe. Numerous photographs are included in this work that ends with a timeline and detailed source notes. (Age 12 and older)

Sheinkin, Steve. *Bomb: The Race to Build—and Steal—the World's Most Dangerous Weapon.* Flash Point / Roaring Brook Press, 2012. 266 pages (trade 978-1-59643-487-5, \$19.99)

Three related story lines starting in World War II are given fine treatment in an account that chronicles the formation of and work on the Manhattan Project, the Allies' efforts to sabotage Germany's atomic bomb development, and the Soviet's attempts to discover and steal details of U.S. plans for the atomic bomb. Each element is fascinating, from the secrecy and wide array of personalities on the Manhattan Project, to the heroics of Norwegian partisans whose sabotage of Germany's heavy-water production and shipment disrupted German efforts to develop a bomb, to the intrigue of the Soviet spying. It's the stuff of Hollywood

movies, but real. Author Steve Sheinkin reveals the complexities of politics, of personalities, and of logistics in a work that follows the timeline through to the dropping of the first atomic bomb on Japan, and the growing feeling of dismay and dread that followed. At Los Alamos, celebrations turned sober as the reality of what had been unleashed sunk in. An epilogue includes Manhattan Project leader Robert Oppenheimer's frustrated efforts after the war to end the arms race by requesting the U.S. government halt weapons development. Sheinkin offers a comprehensive list of sources detailing the immense amount of research he conducted. It's unfortunate that his notes on quotation sources fail to document page numbers, and that he doesn't acknowledge that the use of the term KGB is anachronistic for the time period, but it's an incredibly arresting nonfiction thriller nonetheless. (Age 13 and older)

Skrypuch, Marsha Forchuk. *Last Airlift: A Vietnamese Orphan's Rescue from War.* U.S. edition: Pajama Press, 2012. 99 pages (trade 978-0-9869495-4-8, \$17.95)

The last Canadian airlift to leave Saigon during the Vietnam War was on April 11, 1975. The plane carried 57 babies and children, along with rescue workers. Son Thi Anh Tuyet was one of the orphans on board. About nine years old at the time, she was experienced helping care for younger children and babies—something she did all the time at the orphanage where she'd lived. So perhaps it was no surprise that when she first met the Morris family in Toronto a few weeks later, she assumed the couple with three young children had picked her to be their helper, not their daughter. But they had chosen her to be their child, and in the coming weeks and months, as Tuyet adjusts to life in the West, she also begins to understand what it means to be part of a family, and loved unconditionally. Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch never strays from Tuyet's child-centered perspective in recounting her experiences. In an author's note, Skrypuch describes interviewing Tuyet (obviously now an adult), who found that she remembered more and more of the past as she talked. Dialogue takes this narrative out of the category of pure nonfiction, but Tuyet's story, with its occasional black-and-white photographs, is no less affecting because of it. (Ages 9–14)

Vernick, Audrey. *Brothers at Bat: The True Story of an Amazing All-Brother Baseball Team.* Illustrated by Steven Salerno. Clarion, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-0-547-8557-0, \$16.99)

There were twelve—that's right, twelve!—brothers in the Acerra family, living in a small New Jersey town in the 1920s and 30s. "They had four sisters, too ... And a white dog ... named Pitch!" The dog's name was no accident: The Acerra brothers loved to play baseball. In the late 1930s, the nine oldest brothers formed their own semi-professional baseball team. They took a break from playing during World War II, but resumed in 1946, even as they married and started their own families. The Acerras played their last game in 1952, and in 1997 they were honored at the Baseball Hall of Fame. On the way back from that ceremony, the family's bus broke down, and three generations of Acerras—men and women, boys and girls—waited out the repair by doing what they loved: playing baseball. An engaging true story is given lively treatment by

Audrey Vernick, with appealing period illustrations by Steve Salerno. Vernick talks about interviewing two of the surviving Acerra brothers in her author's note. (Ages 5–8)

Biography and Autobiography

Abirached, Zeina. *A Game for Swallows: To Die, to Leave, to Return.* Translated from the French by Edward Gauvin. U.S. edition: Graphic Universe, 2012. 188 pages (trade 978-0-7613-8568-4, \$24.95)

Zeina Abirached was born in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1981, in the midst of the civil war that divided that city. This graphic novel memoir focuses on a single evening in her childhood—a night when her parents had gone to visit her grandmother who lived a short, dangerous distance away. The journey required a “perilous choreography” because of possible snipers and shelling. Her parents leave during a quiet period but bombardments start while they are out. Zeina and her little brother are home alone in an apartment that has been reduced to the one safe space where they spend their time—the foyer. One by one neighbors—who often join them when bullets and shells start flying—come down, at first seeking companionship but then taking responsibility to care for and comfort the children, who are worried about their parents. Each adult in turn offers reassurance or distraction, and one by one their stories are revealed, adding complexity to this tapestry depicting life in a war zone. Eventually, Zeina's parents return, but the apartment is hit by a mortar that night. No one is hurt, but the family must leave. There is such a strong sense of friendship and community running through everything that comes before that the sense of upheaval, disruption, and loss is profound, but there is hope, too, in the knowing that Zeina will grow up to become a teller of truths and stories. Abirached's dynamic black-and-white illustrations are both stark and beautiful, much like her story. (Age 12 and older)

Borden, Louise. *His Name Was Raoul Wallenberg: Courage, Rescue, and Mystery During World War II.* Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 135 pages (trade 978-0-618-50755-9, \$18.99)

A biography of the Swedish diplomat who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews during World War II makes Raoul Wallenberg's life immediate, dramatic, and accessible in a scrapbook-style presentation accompanied by short sections of narrative text that look like verse and read like urgent sound bites. “We are surrounded by a tragedy of immeasurable proportions,” Wallenberg wrote his mother as he labored with others in Hungary to save as many Jews as he could. He not only set up a vast department for issuing *schutzpasse* that placed the bearers under the protection of the Swedish government, but also lobbied the Hungarian government, and later the Germans, sometimes putting himself physically between German soldiers and the Jews they were rounding up to deport. Author Louise Borden interviewed surviving Wallenberg family members and friends as part of her thorough research into this account that

follows Wallenberg from childhood until his disappearance in the days after Hungary was liberated by the Soviets. She also chronicles attempts to determine what happened to him after the Soviets took him into custody, ultimately noting, “The fate of Raoul Wallenberg is still unknown.” With its inviting narrative style and visually captivating presentation, this compelling work will appeal to both avid and reluctant readers. (Age 11 and older)

Christensen, Bonnie. *I, Galileo*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-375-86753-8, \$17.99)

Condemned by the Church to solitude and by nature to darkness (he'd gone blind), Galileo reflects on a life filled with extraordinary vision and the discovery of truth in Bonnie Christensen's artful picture book biography that imagines the scientist and astronomer's first-person voice. “I was the first child, center of my parents' universe. Life revolved around me.” Galileo describes his childhood education, his teaching, and above all his dedication to learning and discovery. Motion fascinated him. So, too, did the moon, the sun, and the planets. He was a meticulous observer and recorder, using the telescope he'd perfected to determine the earth revolves around the sun. After seven years of silence he finally published his observations. Heresy! said the Church. He was sentenced to live out his days a prisoner in his own home. End matter includes a brief summary of some of Galileo's key experiments, inventions, and discoveries, as well as a chronology and source material for this narrative set against Christensen's warm, eye-catching oil and gouache paintings. (Ages 6-10)

Ferris, Jeri Chase. *Noah Webster and His Words*. Illustrated by Vincent X. Kirsch. Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-547-39055-0, \$16.99)

A playful, informative look at the life of fascinating Noah Webster, originator of *Webster's Dictionary*, notes that by age twelve Noah was skilled at farming, like the long line of Websters that came before him. “But Noah did not want to be in that long line. He did not want to be a farmer at all.” Noah wanted to be a scholar (“noun: one who goes to school; a person who knows a lot.”). Jeri Chase Ferris's delightful account goes on to tell of Webster's early days as a school teacher during the American Revolution, when he wrote a speller that distinguished American spelling from English. He began work on his dictionary—his major accomplishment—in 1807, after he'd studied twenty different languages (to provide word derivations). Nearly twenty years later, he finally finished (and took a nap). Ferris's light touch is perfectly matched by Vincent X. Kirsch's appealing illustrations in this picture book biography that includes additional information about Webster in an end note, along with a timeline and sources. (Ages 6-9)

Fradin, Judith Bloom, and Dennis Brindell Fradin. *Zora! The Life of Zora Neale Hurston*. Clarion / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. 180 pages (trade 978-0-547-00695-6, \$17.99)

A noted collector of tall tales, Zora Neale Hurston also knew how to tell one about her own life, whether it was to skim years off her age or offer an explanation for why she, a highly regarded author, was working as a maid in

Miami in 1950. In this intriguing account, Zora's own tall tales about her life become part of the telling, and part of the way readers gain an understanding of this intelligent, ambitious, creative woman who lived in a world that threw one challenge after another her way, because she was a woman, and because she was Black. (Having a larger-than-life personality could be a challenge, too, though it powered her through difficult times.) Zora's determination and talent helped her face everything from a turbulent childhood after the death of her mother to repeated delays in pursuing her dreams, and they continued to drive her even as she fell into obscurity in the 1940s and 1950s. A final chapter chronicles the rise of Zora's legacy. Two of the folktales Zora collected (work that came naturally to her once she dropped her academic persona and was welcomed among southern Blacks as one of them), along with lists of sources, round out this insightful, engaging volume. (Age 11 and older)

Golio, Gary. *Spirit Seeker: John Coltrane's Musical Journey.* Illustrated by Rudy Gutierrez. Clarion / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-0-547-23994-1, \$17.99)

An amazingly well-done picture book biography covers John Coltrane's entire life, weaving in both his drug addiction and his search for meaning through religion—two very complicated aspects of his adult life—in a nonjudgmental, accessible way. Author Gary Golio's writing is not only successful at explaining its complex subject, but it sings, whether he's writing about Coltrane's relationship with music or his conscious decision to turn away from drugs, a struggle at which he succeeded with support. Rudy Gutierrez's striking illustrations blend photorealistic faces and abstracted bodies that distort into swirling shapes that can be interpreted as music, a drug-addled mind, religious fervor—or all three. The sophisticated art is a great choice for the complexity of Coltrane and the audience for this picture book for older readers. (Ages 9–14)

Hartland, Jessie. *Bon Appétit! The Delicious Life of Julia Child.* Schwartz & Wade, 2012. 48 pages (trade 978-0-375-86944-0, \$17.99)

"She bubbled over with effervescence, spoke as if she had marbles in her mouth, and gleefully hammed it up in front of the camera." She was also a cookbook author and television pioneer who changed the way Americans thought about cooking and food. Jessie Hartland's picture book account of the life of Julia Child is as dynamic as her subject. Every page spread is packed with information and brimming with humor. The busy page design looks daunting but reads easily as fascinating details of Child's life unfold in a series of borderless panel illustrations and an accompanying narrative full of facts and funny asides. Among the many things revealed is that, during high school, Julia's "French class is a disaster. (She will make up for this later.)" The hand-lettered text blends printing and cursive writing, and the gouache illustrations capture a definite joie de vivre. (Ages 6–10)

Hopkinson, Deborah. *A Boy Called Dickens.* Illustrated by John Hendrix. Schwartz & Wade, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-375-86732-3, \$17.99)

"This is old London, on a winter morning long ago. Come along, now. We are here to search for a boy called Dickens." This second-person plural voice

invites young readers into 1820s London and the life of twelve-year-old Charles Dickens. Detailed illustrations give a sense of dirt and deprivation, while the text describes Charles's work in Warren's blacking factory. There he entertains his coworker with storytelling during their ten-hour workdays, before returning to his tiny attic room where he continues telling stories by writing on his slate. On Sundays Charles visits his family in the Marshalsea Prison, where his father is incarcerated for unpaid debt to the baker. Charles is eventually let go from his laborious job at the factory, when his father, released from debtors' prison, quarrels with the owner. At last able to return to school in Camden town, Charles Dickens never forgot these early experiences that influenced so much of his later writing. (Ages 6–10)

Lang, Heather. *Queen of the Track: Alice Coachman, Olympic High-Jump Champion.* Illustrated by Floyd Cooper. Boyd's Mills Press, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-59078-850-9, \$16.95)

A picture book biography about track star Alice Coachman starts with her childhood in Albany, Georgia, and ends with her on the medal podium at the 1948 Summer Olympics in London, the only American woman to win track-and-field gold. In between, Alice faced many challenges, from a father who didn't think it was ladylike to spend so much time running and jumping to homesickness when she went away to high school to the racism that was part of the reality of growing up Black. But Alice persevered. Her gold medal performance in the high jump was the end of a duel with another athlete that held the crowd mesmerized, and when Alice won, she'd set a new Olympic record. More about Alice Coachman and the 1948 London Olympics follow the informative and lively narrative about Alice's life. (Ages 6–9)

Malaspina, Ann. *Touch the Sky: Alice Coachman, Olympic High Jumper.* Illustrated by Eric Velasquez. Albert Whitman, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8075-8035-6, \$16.99)

Alice Coachman's teacher "saw something special in that never-sit-still girl" and took Alice to her first track meet. Alice was captivated. She and her friends made a high bar out of sticks and a rag, and Alice started jumping. She eventually jumped all the way to Tuskegee Institute High School, where she sewed and mopped to pay her fees. Then she jumped onto the U.S. Olympic team. At the 1948 Olympics in London, she jumped her way to gold. A lively, informative picture book biography acknowledges the barriers that this spirited African American girl faced as a child and young woman, from criticism at home early on for her unladylike ways to the racism that was a reality in the wider world. Throughout, Alice's energy and determination remained undaunted. End matter includes black-and-white photos of Alice and an author's note describing how Alice was hailed as a hero by Blacks and whites alike when she returned to the United States and her home town of Albany, Georgia. (Ages 5–8)

Montgomery, Sy. *Temple Grandin: How the Girl Who Loved Cows Embraced Autism and Changed the World.* Foreword by Temple Grandin. Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 148 pages (trade 978-0-547-44315-7, \$17.99)

As a child in the 1950s, Temple Grandin was fortunate to have a mother who was a fierce advocate at a time when even the term “autism” was unknown. But Temple faced difficulties, from a father who wanted to institutionalize her to social challenges, especially during her early teen years. She later attended a unique boarding school, although even there the school psychologist didn’t understand the “squeeze machine” she designed that gave her a sense of calm and peace. Grandin has gone on to a career as a scientist and engineer, and she attributes her success to her autism: The way her brain functions is why she’s succeeded in her work, which has revolutionized the food industry when it comes to the humane treatment of animals raised and slaughtered for food. She has strong empathy with animals, especially cows, so that she understands when they are fearful, and she is such a visual thinker that she has been able to conceptualize effective solutions to eliminate that fear. Sy Montgomery strikes just the right balance between telling Grandin’s personal story and describing her fascinating work in this compelling, accessible, and inspiring account in which Temple herself is a vibrant presence. (Age 10 and older)

Nelson, S. D. *Buffalo Bird Girl: A Hidatsa Story.* Abrams, 2012. 47 pages (trade 978-1-4197-0355-3, \$19.95)

“My name is Buffalo Bird Woman, Waheenee, and my people are known as the Hidatsa. When I was young, they called me Buffalo Bird Girl—after the little brown bird that lives on the prairies of the Great Plains.” In a beautifully realized work, S.D. Nelson pairs a narrative written in the first-person voice of Buffalo Bird Woman looking back on her childhood with illustrations and documentary photographs—including one of Buffalo Bird Woman—showing dimensions of nineteenth-century Hidatsa life. The mix of illustrations and photographs works wonderfully. Nelson’s striking paintings reflect scenes described in the narrative, which are punctuated with occasional black-and-white photos showing these elements in real life. In an author’s note Nelson describes personal memories that echo some of the traditions described by Buffalo Bird Woman. He goes on to tell more about Buffalo Bird Woman, including the published works about her life on which she collaborated and from which he drew in writing his narrative. He also discusses the Hidatsa people, past and present. A timeline, notes, and a bibliography are also provided. (Ages 9–13)

Rappaport, Doreen. *Helen’s Big World: The Life of Helen Keller.* Illustrated by Matt Tavares. Disney / Hyperion, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-0-7868-0890-8, \$17.99)

An accomplished picture book biography about Helen Keller captures her vibrant spirit. The book begins with Helen’s infancy—before the illness that thrust her into a world of darkness and silence—and ends with her death at age eighty-seven, after years of being a beacon and voice for social justice on many fronts. “I love my country. But my love for America is not blind. Perhaps I am more conscious of her faults because I love her so deeply.” Doreen Rappaport

incorporates quotes like this from Helen Keller into her fine narrative, which balances important details about Helen's life with a sense of her keen mind and endless passion—for life and learning and making a difference. It's unfortunate that the Braille that appears on the cover is inaccurate (the spacing is wrong and the bumps are too flat), but this can't detract from the many strengths of what's inside. Ample end matter includes notes from both the author and illustrator, as well as a timeline of important dates, research sources, and a list of books for further reading. *Highly Commended, 2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 6–9)

Schmidt, Gary D. *Martín de Porres: The Rose in the Desert*. Illustrated by David Diaz. Clarion / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-547-61218-8, \$16.99)

Born in Lima, Peru, in 1579 to a slave woman from Africa and a Spanish conqueror, Martín de Porres faced poverty and prejudice for much of his early life. Even after his father claimed him and he was apprenticed to a healer, he was scorned as a mongrel. He wanted to join a monastery but was accepted only as a laborer until his skill and compassion forced people to see beyond their prejudice. Stories spread about his healing abilities and his kind heart. He was in demand among Spanish royals, but they waited while he tended to the Indians and poor in the barrios. Gary D. Schmidt's lyrical description of the life of the man who would become the first Black saint in the Americas is set against David Diaz's lush mixed-media illustrations that capture moments of great tenderness and compassion that define this account of de Porres's life. (Ages 5–8)

Tate, Don. *It Jes' Happened: When Bill Traylor Started to Draw*. Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie. Lee & Low, 2012. 24 pages (trade 978-1-60060-260-3, \$17.95)

A self-trained artist who didn't start drawing until he was eighty-five and living on the streets of Montgomery, Alabama, Bill Traylor was born into slavery in 1854 and spent his life after Emancipation working as a sharecropper. He moved to Montgomery at age eighty-one in 1935 and started drawing on scraps of cardboard in 1939, encouraged by a young artist named Charles Shannon who helped provide him with supplies. In the words of author Don Tate, Traylor's life unfolds as a series of vivid events that Traylor would eventually transform into art. "Bill saved up memories of these times deep inside himself," Tate writes in a repeated refrain. R. Gregory Christie's naïve-style artwork is a perfect match for the subject of this outsider artist, and he introduces a second naive style to depict the pictures drawn by Traylor. Lyrical, literary, and wonderfully illustrated, this is a welcome introduction to an artist who, the afterword explains, is now considered one of the "most important self-taught American folk artists of the twentieth century." (Ages 7–11)

Wadsworth, Ginger. *First Girl Scout: The Life of Juliette Gordon Low.* Clarion / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. 210 pages (trade 978-0-547-24394-8, \$17.99)

Growing up in the years after the Civil War, Juliette Gordon Low loved playing in the woods with her many cousins. It was one of many idyllic elements in the privileged childhood of the girl known as “Daisy.” After her marriage, Daisy dabbled in art while leading the life of a hostess and socialite. From her mid-twenties on, she was deaf in one ear, while her other had limited hearing that worsened with time, but Daisy wouldn’t let it affect how she lived her life. Still, it wasn’t until she was middle-aged, her marriage ended, that Daisy found purpose and passion, determined to start a scouting organization for girls in the United States. Ginger Wadsworth’s account of this fascinating woman and the formation of the Girl Scouts details the incredible ambition Daisy wielded on behalf of girls and young women as she sought to create an organization that would help them develop skills and self-reliance, become physically fit, and make lasting connections. Daisy’s personality was an irresistible blend of grace and force, and her efforts have touched—and in some cases changed—the lives of generations of girls and women. Numerous black-and-white photographs—of people, places, and artifacts significant in Daisy’s life and the early years of the Girl Scouts—are featured throughout this beautifully designed, thoroughly researched, and well-documented volume. (Ages 9–13)

Warren, Sarah. *Dolores Huerta: A Hero to Migrant Workers.* Illustrated by Robert Casilla. Marshall Cavendish, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-7614-6107-4, \$17.99)

Dolores Huerta played many roles in her efforts to help organize underpaid farm workers. As a teacher, she saw that her students were often too hungry or sick to learn. When she investigated why, she learned about their families’ employment hardships, which in turn motivated her to campaign for better working conditions and pay. A brief text highlights Huerta’s efforts and determination over many years, as she organized strikes, generated publicity, confronted farm bosses, and pursued her beliefs in the face of criticism. A timeline and list of additional print and electronic resources round out a welcome biography of this Mexican American activist. (Ages 5–9)

Weaver, Lila Quintero. *Darkroom: A Memoir in Black and White.* The University of Alabama Press, 2012. 254 pages (pbk. 978-0-8173-5714-6, \$24.95)

Lila Quintero Weaver spent much of her childhood in Marion, Alabama. It was the 1960s, when the huge dividing line between black and white was being tensely challenged. Her family were Argentine immigrants, her mother of European descent, her father part Native Indian. Her father was a passionate photographer standing on the edge of history. He knew the significance of what was happening around them and was determined to record what he saw on film. Young Lila knew her family didn’t fit on either side of that racial line, but it took time for her to comprehend the hugeness of what was happening.

Understanding came through experiences both poignant (“My first black classmate was Rosetta. She looked terrified”) and deeply unsettling (“... he got exactly what he deserved”—a comment she overheard as two white teachers discussed the death of African American Jimmie Lee Jackson, shot by a state trooper while trying to find a safe place for his mother and grandfather after a peaceful protest was disrupted by whites and turned violent). Weaver’s adult understanding informs this look back, but in a way that is enlightening rather than intrusive as the significance of events from her childhood and young adulthood come into focus. (Age 13 and older)

Wise, Bill. *Silent Star: The Story of Deaf Major Leaguer William Hoy.* Illustrated by Adam Gustavson. Lee & Low, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-60060-411-9, \$18.95)

Deaf after a bout of meningitis at age three, William Hoy attended the Ohio School for the Deaf and then became a shoemaker after graduation from high school. His childhood obsession with playing baseball became an occasional backyard game behind his shoemaker shop, until the day the coach of an amateur team happened to see him play. At first put off by William’s attempts to communicate in sign language, the coach returned to offer him a spot on the team in writing. William went on to play for a minor league team in Oshkosh, before moving up to the Washington Nationals. Defying the commonly held belief that he couldn’t make it in baseball as a deaf player, William created methods to get around the sport’s traditional reliance on the spoken word. His use of visual cues from his third-base coach is believed by some historians to have led to the creation of hand signals by umpires. When he retired after an extended and successful career as the first deaf player in the major leagues, William Hoy became an Ohio dairy farmer who never lost his devotion to the game. (Ages 7–10)

Contemporary People, Places, and Events

Carnesi, Mônica. *Little Dog Lost: The True Story of a Brave Dog Named Baltic.* Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin Group, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-399-25666-0, \$15.99)

A small dog stranded on a sheet of ice in the Vistula River in Poland—beyond the reach of people on shore—eventually ends up in the open Baltic Sea. He’s spotted by the crew of a research ship, but the dog falls off the ice floe into the water when he tries to jump into the net they lower. “Oh no! Where is Dog?” In this breathless picture book, author/illustrator Mônica Carnesi dramatizes the dog’s plight with only a few sentences of text per page and superb pen-and-ink and watercolor illustrations that underscore the dog’s vulnerability in the cold winter landscape of ice and frigid water. The ship launches a small boat to try to reach the dog, who has clawed his way back onto ice. The relief when the dog is

finally plucked from that ice is immense—not just for the dog and his rescuers, but for readers and listeners, too. A marvelous author’s note fills in details of this extraordinary tale based on real events that unfolded over two days during one of Poland’s “coldest winter spells” in January 2010. The sailor who was his rescuer christened the dog Baltic (there is a photo of the two of them), and the rescue ship has now become his home. “When at sea, he enjoys sitting on the bridge, watching the water and seagulls.” (Ages 5–10)

Ellis, Deborah. *Kids of Kabul: Living Bravely Through a Never-Ending War.* Groundwood Books, 2012. 143 pages (trade 978–1–55498–181–6, \$15.95)

The lives of children and teens in Kabul, Afghanistan, are illuminated in eye-opening ways through personal stories that expand understanding of things readers may have heard about in news stories of life under the Taliban and in the war. The voices of the youth in this book are honest, real, and memorable, and so very child- or teen-like. The result is numerous moments of striking poignancy. Deborah Ellis provides an impassioned introduction to the book as a whole and to the individuals who speak in these pages. Her perspective is overtly political—she offers her opinions openly and transparently—while providing information about some of the issues, events, or activities the young speakers reference in the individual profiles. While it’s unfortunate that Ellis does not provide readers with any information about the questions that she asked her interview subjects, that oversight can’t detract from the book’s strength, which is providing insight into the lives of these young people. (Age 11 and older)

Greitens, Eric. *The Warrior’s Heart: Becoming a Man of Compassion and Courage.* Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 264 pages (trade 978–0–547-86852–3, \$16.99)

In the first part of this engrossing account, Eric Greitens describes the experiences that led to his decision to become a Navy Seal. During college, he taught English in China and was questioned by police who wanted names of students who asked about American rights and civil liberties. Then he worked with Croatian refugees in Bosnia, volunteered at a shelter for street children in Bolivia, and with Rwandan refugees in Zaire. In each place, he learned from people who had endured so much and found ways to go on. These experiences influenced the way he felt about the world, and he decided it was no longer enough to help after some tragedy or brutality; he wanted to prevent them from taking place. After time as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, he joined the military. The second part of the book details his rigorous training to become a Navy Seal—including Greitens’s constant reflection on the reasons behind some of the exercises that push him and his fellow recruits to their physical and psychological limits. After serving in Iraq, Greitens established a non-profit that provides fellowships to wounded veterans to do service work in their communities. Greitens narrative is fascinating and highly engaging, with “Choose Your Own Adventure”-style openings to each chapter, but his constant reflection is also thought-provoking. (Age 12 and older)

Heppermann, Christine. *City Chickens.* Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 52 pages (trade 978-0-547-51830-5, \$16.99)

Author Christine Heppermann didn't set out to become the enamored owner of pet poultry—a polish bantam hen named Kandinsky with an absurd puffball of feathers on her head, and a long-feathered rooster named Yeti, who does, indeed, look like a miniature snow monster. But after researching and writing this account of a Minneapolis couple who have turned their city home into a haven for homeless birds, she is one. Heppermann's engaging photo documentary tells how Chicken Run Rescue owners Mary Britton Clouse and her husband Bert turned their love of animals into incredible rescue and advocacy work. Through the stories of individual birds that have come to the shelter, she also underscores the challenges faced by chickens (and roosters), who are not widely considered companion animals. Most of their fates end happily, thanks to Chicken Run Rescue. But the birds' individual personalities also shine. Heppermann describes her own journey to happy chicken adopter and shares tips about chickens as pets in an author's note with additional photos. (Ages 8–13)

Kamkwamba, William, and Bryan Mealer. *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind.* Illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon. Dial, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8037-3511-8, \$16.99)

In 2001, a drought hit the country of Malawi in sub-Saharan African. “Without water, the sun rose angry each morning and scorched the fields, turning the maize into dust. Without food, Malawi began to starve.” William Kamkwamba was fourteen at the time, living in the village of Wimbe. Fascinated by machines, William was inspired by a diagram of a windmill in a library book to scavenge parts from the junkyard: “a broken bicycle, rusted bottle caps, and plastic pipe, even a small generator that powered a headlight on a bike.” He made them into a windmill, mounted it on a tower, and turned on a light with the wind. William and coauthor Bryan Mealer recount his efforts in this rich, expressive telling that concludes, “Light could not fill empty bellies, but another windmill could soak the dry ground, creating food where once there was none ...” An essay at story's end provides additional information on how William built another windmill in 2007 that he used to power a pump that watered his family's garden year-round. Elizabeth Zunon's oil paint and cut-paper illustrations are a distinctive and appealing accompaniment to an inspiring account. (Ages 5–9)

Muntean, Michaela. *Stay: The True Story of Ten Dogs.* Photographs by K.C. Bailey and Stephen Kazmierski. Scholastic Press, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-0-545-23497-9, \$16.99)

Luciano Anastasini didn't want to leave the circus after a serious fall ended his career as a trapeze artist. So he developed a new act using dogs—strays and surrenders from the pound, with behavior issues that made it unlikely others would adopt them. Penny ran around in wild circles, and often into walls and furniture. Tyke had an attitude problem—he never did what he was told, and he'd bitten someone. Cocoa loved to dig ... and dig ... and dig. Luciano worked hard to understand the dogs, cleverly turning what others had seen as

misbehaviors into building blocks for the act by meeting each animal on its own terms. Once Luciano taught cross-eyed Penny to understand which objects she saw were the real thing, she was jumping through hoops; Cocoa—full of abundant energy—literally ran circles around the ring; and Tyke, that master of defiance, was getting laughs for his refusal to follow the rules—he did things backwards. Luciano’s love and respect for animals is fierce and heartening as revealed in this inspired photo documentary about how he and his ten “Pound Puppies” came together and became big top stars. Eye-catching color photos accompany the lively narrative. (Ages 5–10)

Roth, Susan L., and Karen Leggett Abouraya. *Hands Around the Library: Protecting Egypt’s Treasured Books*. Dial, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–0–8037-3747–1, \$16.99)

“Once upon a time, not a long time ago, many people in Egypt were sad and sometimes angry because they were not free to speak or vote as they wished, or gather in groups. They knew about freedom, but only from books, or the Internet, or whispering inside these safe walls of our Alexandria Library.” A true story straight out of the Arab Spring describes the growing movement for democracy in Egypt early in 2011, and one particular event, on January 25, 2011. Some protests in Cairo had turned violent, and when a large crowd marched on the Alexandria Library, library director Ismail Serageldin spoke from the steps, saying only the will of the people could keep the library safe. And it did. One by one, individuals among the group of marchers broke from the crowd and joined Serageldin on the steps, eventually forming a human chain around the library. A moving story that makes a powerful statement for freedom, and for libraries as a place of free expression, is illustrated with beautiful collages and ends with a photo montage showing some of what happened that day. End matter provides more on the Alexandria Library—both ancient and modern—and on the January 25, 2011, Revolution. (Ages 7–12)

Scott, Elaine. *Buried Alive: How 33 Miners Survived 69 Days Deep Under the Chilean Desert*. Clarion, 2012. 80 pages (trade 978–0–547-70778–5, \$17.99)

A book about survival and hope, creativity and ingenuity, describes the August 2010 mine collapse in Chile that trapped thirty-three miners deep beneath the ground, and the sixty-nine-day effort to rescue them. Elaine Scott moves back and forth between events below ground, where the miners worked out systems for physical and emotional survival, with what was happening above. The rescue effort involved everyone from experts in digging and drilling to NASA scientists, who were consulted on everything from ways to keep the miners physically and psychologically healthy to the design of the rescue suit they wore in the Phoenix tube that eventually brought them to the surface. Meanwhile, in Camp Hope, the makeshift community of miners’ families, a school was established for children, a clown helped keep spirits up, a baby was born. Fascinating in every dimension, this account balances the drama and tension of the human story with the intriguing technical details. Scott discusses her research and sources in an author’s note. (Age 11 and older)

St. John, Warren. *Outcasts United: The Story of a Refugee Soccer Team That Changed a Town.* Delacorte Press, 2012. 226 pages (trade 978-0-385-74194-1, \$16.99)

Clarkston, Georgia, has had an influx of refugees since the late 1980s. Luma Mufleh, a Jordanian woman who came to the United States for college and decided to remain, was living in nearby Atlanta when she drove through Clarkston and caught sight of boys playing pick-up soccer. She soon had organized a team, the Fugees, which grew into several teams for different age groups. Luma had experience coaching but no background in teaching or social work. But she quickly realized these kids from war-torn countries like Afghanistan, Kosovo, Somalia, and Liberia needed more help than soccer alone could provide. She set up tutoring sessions and required her players to go if they wanted to stay on the team—and they did want to stay on the team. She bought food for families when food stamps ran out. She attended parent/teacher conferences. She also had to battle city leaders as she looked for a safe place for her teams to practice. Demanding of the kids both on and off the field, Luma's innate sense of what to do, and how to adjust when things weren't working, is remarkable. Journalist Warren St. John tells this inspiring story in an adaptation of his adult book of the same name (Spiegel & Grau, 2009). An afterword details what has happened since the 2006 soccer season, when this account ends, including the fact that Luma's program has now expanded to include a school. (Age 11 and older)

Understanding Oneself and Others

Ali-Karamali, Sumbul. *Growing Up Muslim: Understanding the Beliefs and Practices of Islam.* Delacorte Press, 2012. 213 pages (trade 978-0-385-74095-1, \$16.99)

Sumbul Ali-Karamali, an Indian American Muslim who grew up in California, offers an engaging, highly readable narrative peppered with personal experience and humor but also packed full of information about Islam. Part I focuses on beliefs and practices: food, prayer, clothing, fasting, holidays. She ties these to everyday concerns of kids and teens ("Can I go to the school dance?"), making it relatable for non-Muslim readers. Ali-Karamali's tone is friendly, and she emphasizes that Muslims, just like Christians, Jews, and followers of other religions, make many different personal choices about how to live their lives and follow their faith, using decisions that she and members of her family have made as examples. Part I also introduces readers to the five tenets of Islam, foundations of the faith. Part II discusses the history of Islam, looking at the origins of the faith and how it spread. Part III provides an overview of where Muslims live today. Lively and informative, the book concludes with a lengthy bibliography of books, articles, and additional sources for learning more. (Age 11 and older)

De Smet, Marian. *I Have Two Homes.* Illustrated by Nynke Talsma. Translated from the Dutch. U.S. edition: Clavis, 2012. 24 pages (trade 978-1-60537-102-3, \$15.95)

Nina lives in two homes. Dad is in one house. Mom is in another. “It used to be different. I used to just have one home with Mom and Dad both in it. Cat had her basket under the stairs and my hamster’s cage was by the window.” Mom and Dad were happy. But then they weren’t and the house became too small, so now there are two homes. Nina can tell that Mom is distracted, and Dad is sad. And when she’s with one parent, she’s thinking about the other. But they work to reassure her that while some things have changed, the most important thing has not: “Mom and Dad aren’t happy with each other anymore. But I know they are very happy with me.” A range of genuine emotions are revealed with terrific honesty and appealing, child-centered details in a welcome, comforting picture book. (Ages 3–7)

The Arts

Burleigh, Robert. *George Bellows: Painter with a Punch!* Abrams, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-1-4197-0166-5, \$18.95)

George Bellows moved to New York City as a young man early in the twentieth century hoping to study and become a great artist. The inspiration for the canvases that would distinguish his career ended up being the city itself. But Bellows wasn’t interested in painting majestic skyscrapers. He sought out crowded neighborhoods that weren’t polished and pretty but teeming with life and energy; packed bars where two men boxed ferociously in a makeshift ring; workers on a hazy morning at a construction site. Bellows became known for painting realistic scenes of the tough, gritty side of life in the city. In his canvases, the play of dark and light is visually striking and filled with meaning. Robert’s Burleigh’s image-infused narrative about Bellows’s life and career has the same kind of urgency as the artist’s paintings in this handsome volume that features numerous full-page images of Bellows’s striking work. Ample end matter includes source notes and a list of museums where Bellows’s paintings can be found. (Age 10 and older)

Close, Chuck. *Chuck Close: Face Book.* Abrams, 2012. 55 pages (trade 978-1-4197-0163-4, \$18.95)

A dynamic-in-every-way introduction to the life and work of artist Chuck Close features Close responding to questions asked by children, beginning with “How did you get to be such a great artist?” Close talks about being severely learning disabled as a child, at a time when little was known about learning disabilities. But he could draw, and art became his salvation. Known best for his huge, wall-sized portraits, including many self-portraits, Close gives readers insight into his choice of subjects, his painting technique, and the impact of what he calls the “Event”—the collapse of a blood vessel in his spine that has left him paralyzed from the chest down since 1988. A wonderful balance of

text and photographs, the book's centerpiece is a dazzling display of fourteen of Close's self-portraits using different media. Twelve of them have been divided into triptychs, so that readers can flip back and forth, combining perfectly matched sections into a portrait comprised of three different paintings. An engaging visual timeline, source material for more information, and a glossary of artists' terms complete this wholly unique work. (Age 8 and older)

Danneberg, Julie. *Monet Paints a Day*. Illustrated by Caitlin Heimerl. Charlesbridge, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-58089-240-7, \$15.95)

"Quickly I ruffle my paintbrush against the canvas as jade waters ruffle against the shore's edge ..." A lyrical narrative describes a single, memorable day in the life of artist Claude Monet. After a gaggle of children help him get his supplies and canvases to the beach, the artist works to capture the waves and stone arch at Manneporte along the Normandy coast. So intensely is he focused on trying to catch the light and movement that he doesn't notice the tide coming in until it sweeps him into a tumble of waves. Julie Danneberg's exquisite writing in Monet's imagined voice captures the artist's exacting passion. Small inserts of boxed text provide occasional facts about how the artist worked in a fascinating account—based on an actual incident—set against Caitlin Heimerl's light-filled watercolor illustrations. More information on Monet, Impressionism, and technical aspects of his painting is provided at story's end. *Highly Commended, 2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5-8)

Francis, Lee DeCora. *Kunu's Basket: A Story from Indian Island*. Illustrated by Susan Drucker. Tilbury House, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-88448-330-4, \$16.95)

Kunu, a Penobscot Indian boy, is frustrated by his first attempts to make a basket. He rejects his dad's offer of help, then his grandfather asks if Kunu can help him, and together they pound strips of ash until they're thin and start weaving a basket bottom. As they work, Kunu's grandfather points out his own first basket—sitting in the corner of the room—noting it took him seven tries to get the base right when he made it. This inspires Kunu to try working on his own basket one more time. Kunu's sense of frustration, and later pride and accomplishment, are wonderfully realized in Lee DeCora Francis's story about a contemporary Native family, as is the sense of continuity across generations. Susan Drucker's somewhat static illustrations are enlivened by the intriguing details she incorporates, including insets showing a variety of baskets. (Ages 5-9)

Greenwood, Mark. *Drummer Boy of John John*. Illustrated by Frané Lessac. Lee & Low, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-60060-652-6, \$18.95)

As Carnival approaches in the village of John John on the island of Trinidad, the Roti King has promised free rotis for the best band. Almost everyone is practicing, determined to win the little folded pancakes filled with chicken and herbs and spices. There are chac-chac players with their gourds ("shoush-shap shukka-shap"). The bamboo band pounds big sticks ("click clack rappa-tap"). There's even a bottle-and-spoon orchestra ("jingle jangle clink clank clunk"). Young Winston doesn't have a band, and can't imagine Carnival

without roti. When he throws away a mango pit in the junkyard, it bounces off a milk can (“pong”), a biscuit tin (“ping”), and rusty paint bucket (“pang”), giving Winston an idea. Gathering all the metal containers he can find, he hammers the metal until clear notes sound when he hits them. His friends gather, and the junkyard band is formed. Mark Greenwood’s story, vibrantly illustrated by Frané Lessac, is loosely based on the childhood of Winston “Spree” Simon, who was an early pioneer in the development of the steel drum. Information about Simon, who died in 1976, is included in a lengthy author’s note following this lively narrative. (Ages 6–9)

Novesky, Amy. *Georgia in Hawaii: When Georgia O’Keeffe Painted What She Pleas*. Illustrated by Yuyi Morales. Harcourt / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–0–15–205420–5, \$16.99)

Lyrical writing distinguishes the narrative of a picture book about Georgia O’Keeffe’s 1939 trip to Hawaii, made at the invitation of the Hawaiian Pineapple Company. O’Keeffe had been commissioned to do two paintings to “promote the delights of pineapple juice” (Really!). But once she arrives, Georgia resents the company telling her she can’t go into the fields to see the plants up close, and she refuses to let the company dictate what she will paint. “Georgia painted waterfalls and green pleated mountains, lava hardened into fantastic shapes, and delicate, feathered fishhooks that she collected like seashells.” She also enjoys meeting local field workers, ranchers, and artists, and seeing the many kinds of beauty on the islands. But she still doesn’t want to paint a pineapple. In the end, however, Georgia feels the trip to Hawaii has given her so much and she gives in to the company’s request—on her own terms. Her final painting is titled “Pineapple Bud.” Yuyi Morales’s sumptuous illustrations are a perfect accompaniment to the story. (Ages 6–10)

Parker, Marjorie Blain. *Colorful Dreamer: The Story of Artist Henri Matisse*. Illustrated by Holly Berry. Dial, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–0–8037-3758–7, \$16.99)

Henri Matisse grew up in a French industrial town “choked with factories, clanking looms, and smoking chimneys.” But Henri found color, in flowers and fabric, and in his dreams. Dreaming, in fact, was something he was good at. To the great worry of his parents, it seemed to be the only thing he was good at. “He dreamed of a colorful and exciting life . . . He dreamed of being noticed.” The thought of becoming a shopkeeper like his parents “tied Henri’s stomach in knots.” Instead, he grew up and studied law, which wasn’t much better. It was while he was in the hospital, recovering from broken dreams, perhaps, that he started painting and found his passion. It took a long time to make a living at it, but he wouldn’t give up, “and little by little, people noticed.” An artfully written, engaging picture book about Henri Matisse has a thoughtfully crafted narrative and playful illustrations that wonderfully reflect the emotional tenor of stages of Henri’s life and work. (Ages 5–9)

Reynolds, Peter H. *Sky Color*. Candlewick Press, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-7636-2345-6, \$14.00)

An artist through and through, Marisol is initially stymied when she volunteers to paint the sky in the library mural her class is creating only to discover there's no blue paint. But a bus ride home at sunset inspires a vivid, multi-sky-colored dream, and waiting for the bus in the rain the next morning affirms her realization that the sky isn't always blue. She transforms observation into action, creating "sky color" from a whole mix of different paints to complete the mural. Peter H. Reynolds's predominantly black-and-white, pen-and-ink illustrations incorporate explosions of color showing brown-skinned Marisol's inspiration (the sunset-colored sky), her dream-world, and the mural she and her classmates create. (Ages 4-7)

Schubert, Leda. *Monsieur Marceau*. Illustrated by Gérard DuBois. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-1-59643-529-2, \$17.99)

The famous mime Marcel Marceau made millions laugh and cry without ever saying a single word, but when he wasn't on stage he loved to talk. Born in Strasbourg, France, he grew up loving movies, especially Charlie Chaplin movies, but there was no time for the cinema during World War II. He joined the French Resistance and led Jewish children over the mountains to safety in Switzerland. He also changed his name from Mangel to Marceau, hiding his Jewish identity. "The people who came back from the camps were never able to talk about it ... Perhaps that, unconsciously, contributed towards my choice of silence," he said. As for his art, "He chases butterflies without a net. He walks against the wind, but there is no wind. He can be a tree or a flower, a fish or a human being." The illustrations deftly showcase Marceau's work as a mime and depict scenes from his childhood and young adulthood in a terrific introduction to Marceau that is followed by an afterword with more about this singular artist, including his advice to young mimes. Source notes and further reading are also provided. (Ages 5-9)

Winter, Jonah. *Just Behave, Pablo Picasso!* Illustrated by Kevin Hawkes. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic Inc., 2012. 48 pages (trade 978-0-545-13291-6, \$18.99)

Pablo Picasso—superhero? There is that sense in Jonah Winter's merry look at the innovative artist who never settled for doing the same thing over and over: "To copy yourself is pathetic!" Classically trained and highly skilled, Pablo moved from one mood and phase to another in his work. He did repeat himself, but only for a while before he became bored and moved on to pursue a new idea or inspiration. And when he debuted his most radical idea yet—Cubism—the howls of protest were astounding: "Just behave, Pablo Picasso!" Winter's account takes artistic liberty but the truth is in the big idea: Picasso was a visionary, but following that vision took courage. Winter's narrative demands readers' attention with its urgency, but it's playful, too, as are Kevin Hawkes's bold illustrations, with occasional dynamic speech bubbles incorporated into the art. (Ages 6-10)

Poetry

Coombs, Kate. *Water Sings Blue: Ocean Poems.* Illustrated by Meilo So. Chronicle, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8118-7284-3, \$16.99)

“Push away from the stillness of the nut-brown land, from the road that leads to the shore For the water sings blue and the sky does too” A marvelous collection of poems about the watery landscape of the sea and things found in and around it combine to build a sense of wonder, and even a little whimsy. Kate Coombs’s poems are often playful in concept (a sea urchin falling in love with a fork, a Hermit crab realtor cataloging his listings: various types of shells). But she also offers fresh, arresting descriptions of ocean wonders (a shark “slides through the water / like a rumor / like a sneer . . . the color of fear”). Meilo So’s watercolor paintings provide the perfect visual backdrop, soft-edged and dreamy with their watery blues and greens and sandwashed browns, but with occasional bold splashes of color that enliven the seascape, whether it’s bright cities of coral splashed with pinks and yellows and greens on one page, or the blooms of red-orange jellyfish on another. (Ages 4–9)

Florian, Douglas. *Poem Runs: Baseball Poems and Paintings.* Harcourt / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-547-68838-1, \$16.99)

From warm-ups to the season’s end, this collection of fifteen poems explores the subject of baseball from multiple perspectives. Players are represented, from pitcher (“I’m the curve-ball creator”) to hitter (“Our slugger can zing / Each pitch you may hurl. / And one other thing: / Our slugger’s a girl”), and even the baseball itself has a voice (“Stitch it. / Pitch it. / Drive it. / Ditch it. / Pound it. / Ground it. / Bounce it. / Bound it. / . . . Been there. / Did it”). Whether they play baseball or enjoy the role of spectator, readers can revel in this sports celebration, and perhaps be inspired to create their own ode to the game. (Ages 7–11)

Grady, Cynthia. *I Lay My Stitches Down: Poems of American Slavery.* Illustrated by Michele Wood. Eerdmans, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8028-5386-8, \$17.00)

An eloquently written and illustrated volume features poems crafted out of the tradition of quilting and the tragedy of slavery. Each poem, named for a quilt block, is comprised of ten lines of ten syllables each to mimic a (quilt) block-like structure. Poet Cynthia Grady incorporates a biblical/spiritual reference, a musical reference, and a sewing/fiber arts reference into each poem, to reflect the three layers of a quilt. Her words and imagery seam the poems with threads of pain and hope. Michele Wood’s stunning illustrations incorporate the specific quilt block motif of each poem while giving beautiful face and form to its subject. Each page spread features the poem and a brief paragraph about its content on one side, and a stirring, full-page painting on the other. An informative introduction, as well as a rich author’s note and illustrator’s note are included, along with references. (Age 9 and older)

Heard, Georgia. *The Arrow Finds Its Mark: A Book of Found Poems.* Illustrated by Antoine Guilloppé. Roaring Brook Press, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-1-59643-665-7, \$16.99)

In her introduction to this volume of found poems, editor Georgia Heard writes, “Poetry is everywhere—if we only look at the world with our poet’s eyes.” Her challenge to poets: create poems from existing text found in any source other than poetry. The result: poems from moments and sources that permeate everyday life. Poems were found in posts on Facebook or Twitter and the promises on a box of detergent; coaxed from the signs in a hardware store; and composed from the titles of paintings by Van Gogh. The poet’s job was to discover, and to shape and to frame the found words, often with a title that gives weight and meaning and context, as in “Pep Talk,” a poem found by Janet Wong on a box of OxiClean detergent: “Keep cool. / See a brighter solution. / Maintain freshness. / Boost your power!” These found poems invite young readers to consider the words they see and hear with a mind open to poetic possibilities. (Ages 8–11)

Shange, Ntozake. *Freedom’s a-Callin Me.* Illustrated by Rod Brown. Amistad / Collins / HarperCollins, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-06-133741-3, \$16.99)

“knowin your way round the cotton field / is somethin’ these women know ... but now it’s not the cotton on the ground / got their attention / this is the time to follow the north star ...” Similar to *We Troubled the Waters* (Amistad, 2009), these volume pairs poems and paintings to illuminate a dimension of African American experience, in this case, individuals who escaped slavery (or in some cases, tried and failed). The poems, which follow a cohesive emotional arc, are sophisticated, and the paintings are haunting. Together they give a strong sense of the terror, danger, and resolve of those who dared to run. (Age 13 and older)

Concept Books

Bingham, Kelly. *ZIs for Moose.* Illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-06-079984-7, \$16.99)

Moose can’t wait to take his turn in this alphabet book, first attempting to butt in on the letter D. Zebra, who is refereeing the alphabet showcase, orders him off the page. But there Moose is again, stumbling into Elephant on the E page, and completely covering the text on the page that says “H is for Hat” (the text must be inferred by the visual clue—what you can see of the hat behind gangly, round-eyed Moose, who is all eagerness). Finally, it’s time for the letter M and Moose’s big moment: “M is for Mouse.” “What? Wait! No! That was supposed to be me!” Moose’s ensuing tantrum obliterates the offerings for some letters altogether. Finally the tantrum dissolves into sniffles, and then full-fledged tears, until Zebra saves the day: “Z is for Zebra’s friend, Moose.” A clever, outrageously funny alphabet book features a narrative by Kelly Bingham that includes many dialogue bubbles conveying Moose and Zebra’s

ongoing exchange as well as comments from others who are witness to the ever-increasing spectacle. And Paul O. Zelinsky's illustrations are a masterful riot, incorporating humor into small details as well as big moments. (Ages 3–7)

Holub, Joan. *Zero the Hero*. Illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld. Henry Holt, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8050-9384-1, \$16.99)

Zero has dreams of being a hero and is looking for a chance to prove himself. But none of the other numbers want anything to do with him—he's nothing after all. Add or subtract by zero and it's as if he's not even there. Then the numbers discover that if they multiply themselves by zero, they disappear. "Fearing extinction, the others ran from him. Who could blame them?" Zero slinks off in shame, his dreams of being a hero dashed. Then the counting numbers are conquered by Roman numerals. Luckily, Zero hears their cries for help. All it takes is a brief demonstration of the power of zero as multiplier for the Roman numerals to run away in fear. "You were ONEderful!" "High 5!" "3 cheers!" "4 he's a jolly good fellow!" Joan Holub's text and Tom Lichtenheld's illustrations pair seamlessly in a hilarious picture book with countless puns and abundant mathematical humor. (Ages 7–10)

Jenkins, Emily. *Lemonade in Winter: A Book about Two Kids Counting Money*. Illustrated by G. Brian Karas. Schwartz & Wade, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-0-375-85883-3, \$16.99)

When Pauline and her little brother John-John decide it's a great day to have a lemonade stand, nothing's going to stand in their way, especially not a puny blizzard. They pool their money for supplies and head to the corner store, then make the drinks and wait for customers. Whenever there's a slow spell (and there's a lot of them), the two come up with a way to attract business—advertisements, decorations, a sale, and of course a jingle, which Pauline sings over and over. And customers come: neighbor Harvey and his dogs, Ms. Gordon and her two small children, Aidan and Heather arm in arm, five manicurists in "puffy coats" who work across the street. There are some money basics in the narrative ("Each time you get four quarters that's a dollar") and in the afterword titled "Pauline Explains Money to John-John" ("Dimes are the cutest"), but it's the charm of Emily Jenkins story set in an urban community that makes it priceless. G. Brian Karas's illustrations capture both the cold temperatures and warm hearts found on a frigid day. (Ages 4–8)

Khan, Hena. *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book of Colors*. Illustrated by Mehrdokht Amini. Chronicle, 2012. 24 pages (trade 978-0-8118-7905-7, \$17.99)

"Red is the rug Dad kneels on to pray, facing toward Mecca, five times a day." A welcome color concept book features objects familiar to Muslims and is written in the voice of a young girl describing aspects of her daily life. Her mom wears a blue hijab (head scarf). The girl uses black ink to write "Allah" in Arabic. The mosque they attend has a gold dome. The cover of the Quran she reads with her grandma is green. While most of the items are unique to Islam, the family relationships that ground this child in her life and faith are universal. The decorative elements incorporated into the illustrations are beautiful, from

backgrounds to clothing to architecture, not to mention the stunning end papers. (Ages 3–7)

Long, Ethan. *Up, Tall and High!* Putnam, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-399-25611-0, \$15.99)

Conversations between three birds are delivered with brevity, precision, and humor in speech bubbles. In the first chapter the avian threesome debates who is the tallest, with the shortest bird's tail plumage illustrating the satisfying punch line of "I may not be tall ... but I am not small!" Chapters two and three explore the concepts of who can go high, and up vs. down. A comical art style and lift-the-flap page reveals add to the fresh and interactive feel of this very easy beginning reader. (Ages 5–7)

Puck. *1 2 3 Beach: A Cool Counting Book.* Duo Press, 2012. 20 pages (trade 978-0-9838121-1-1, \$7.95)

Items commonly seen at the beach are ready to be counted in this vibrant board book featuring bold graphic images. The first page spread shows the number "1" accompanied by a blue and red beach umbrella on gold sand. "2" is a gold and white beach ball and a red and white volleyball. "4" is two pairs of flip-flops. Every turn of the page brings a new dynamic image: 8 blue sea stars, 9 white sailboats, 10 red crabs. A final "Let's Talk!" spread reiterates the numbers and images, offering a conversation starter for each. ("Beach umbrellas are very colorful. What color is this umbrella? What is your favorite color?") (Ages 2–4)

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. *Green.* A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-59643-397-7, \$16.99)

Laura Vaccaro Seeger begins with the concrete ("forest green ... sea green ... pea green"), each phrase the subject of a gorgeous, lush painting spanning a page spread. Playful moments include images of "wacky green" (a green-striped zebra), "slow green" (a tiny die-cut caterpillar on a brilliant orange flower) and "never green" (a Stop sign). Green is more than color, it is mood and feeling; it is hope and a promise, one that comes to pass as winter becomes summer ("forever green"). Of course, summer doesn't last forever, and green won't either, without our mindful attention to the earth. Seeger doesn't spell that out, however. She'll leave it for children to realize on their own as they explore this homage to the color green and the beauty of the earth. The cleverly placed die cuts on every page work masterfully in both directions, revealing another dimension of fascination for young children. (Ages 2–7)

Teckentrup, Britta. *Animal 1 2 3.* Handprint Books, 2012. 16 pages (trade 978-1-4521-0993-0, \$12.99)

Teckentrup, Britta. *Animal Spots and Stripes.* Handprint Books, 2012. 16 pages (trade 978-1-4521-0994-7, \$12.99)

A pair of simple, pleasing concept books feature beautiful, digitally rendered illustrations on heavy, foldout pages. In *Animal 1 2 3*, the foldouts are each number in turn from one to nine, with ten being the final reveal. Each page spread features a different animal and emphasizes two consecutive numbers. So

“2 marching elephants” features two elephants trunk to tail and a large number “2” that folds out to reveal a third elephant holding onto the second, and the phrase “3 marching elephants.” The next page begins with “3 tall giraffes,” with the number “3” unfolding to reveal a fourth giraffe and “4 tall giraffes,” and so on. In *Animal Spots and Stripes*, there is one trait emphasized at first glance on each page with the foldout revealing an example of the other trait. So “striped tigers” are paired with “spotted leopard,” “spotted fish” with “striped worm,” and so on. The uncluttered illustrations are a perfect balance of realism and whimsy. (Ages 2–4)

Wolff, Ashley. *Baby Bear Sees Blue*. Beach Lane / Simon & Schuster, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-4424-1306-1, \$16.99)

“Who is warming me, Mama?” asks Baby Bear. “That is the sun,” his Mama says. “Baby Bear sees yellow.” Ashley Wolff’s tale of a bear cub’s first foray out of the den and into the wider world is a seamless integration of story and color concept book. Each of Baby Bear’s questions is followed by an explanation from his mother—the oak tree is waving, the trout is splashing, the strawberries are what smells good—and then a turn-of-the-page reveal that showcases a single color: “Baby Bear sees green” (oak leaves), or brown (trout), or red (strawberries), and so on. A wholly satisfying conclusion comes with the arrival of a storm, and the inevitability of a rainbow. Wolff has illustrated her comforting, pleasing story with bold, beautiful, hand-colored linoleum block prints. (Ages 2–5)

Yang, Belle. *A Nest in Springtime: A Bilingual Book of Numbers*. Candlewick Press, 2012. 22 pages (trade 978-0-7636-5279-1, \$6.99)

Yang, Belle. *Summertime Rainbow: A Bilingual Book of Colors*. Candlewick Press, 2012. 22 pages (trade 978-0-7636-5280-7, \$6.99)

A pair of charming, bilingual (English/Mandarin Chinese) board books explore two seasons, as well as counting and colors. In *A Nest in Springtime*, a pair of ducks build a nest. “How many eggs?” The narrative counts all the way up to eight. The eggs hatch and seven ducklings go swimming. “Seven?” A turn of the page reveals the eighth duckling just emerging from its shell. “Adding Mama and Papa makes nine and ten.” In *Summertime Rainbow*, a family of rabbits finds green grass, yellow honeysuckle, a red peony, and a purple flower that turns out to be a butterfly. And that “spray of blossoms in the sky”? A rainbow! Yang’s conversational narrative is set against appealing illustrations that feature a predominance of softly curved shapes (the round-bottomed bunnies are particularly winsome) and colors that are bold but not too bright. A pronunciation guide for the Mandarin Chinese is included at the back of each book. (Ages 1–3)

Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

Banks, Kate. *The Bear in the Book*. Illustrated by Georg Hallensleben. Frances Foster Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-374-30591-8, \$16.99)

When a little boy's mother sits down to read to him, he chooses his favorite book. "The book was about a big black bear who went to sleep for the winter. 'Do bears really sleep all winter long?' asked the boy. 'Yes,' his mother said. 'They hibernate.' The boy turned the page." Kate Banks's meta story about the experience of reading a picture book is a thoughtful, intriguing offering full of quiet drama. "Snowflakes began to fall across the pages of the book. The snow sat snugly in the boughs of the trees. The boy could almost feel it. 'Snow is cold,' he said." Banks's beautifully composed narrative, with its vivid language and wonderful pacing, captures the comforting, enriching experience of sharing a story. Georg Hallensleben's warm, deeply hued illustrations depict the story of the boy and the story of the bear, and how the two can become seamless in the mind of a child. (Ages 3-6)

Carlin, Patricia. *Alfie Is Not Afraid*. Disney / Hyperion, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-4231-4537-0, \$16.99)

Fortunately for the boy preparing for a backyard campout, he's accompanied by his dog Alfie, who isn't afraid of anything. As the duo gathers supplies, pitches the tent, and crawls into a sleeping bag while night falls, the boy lists the many things that Alfie isn't afraid of: army ants, grizzly bears, falling asteroids, even alien invasions. Upon hearing each additional potential threat, little Alfie visibly becomes increasingly terrified, until finally he flees into the house, soon to be joined by his owner who realizes he's lost his brave companion. This humorous contradiction of text and illustrations effectively encloses Alfie's vividly imagined disasters in bubbles, while the rest of the illustration shows readers what's actually happening. (Ages 2-5)

Cordell, Matthew. *Another Brother*. Feiwel and Friends, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-312-64324-9, \$16.99)

Davy begins life as an only sheep, and enjoys his parents' undivided attention "for four glorious years"—until Petey is born. And then comes Mike, Stu, Mickey, Carl, Pip, Ralph, Tate, Lenny, Gil, Ned, and Bob. All of the younger brothers imitate Davy's every move, driving him crazy. If Davy chooses Toot Loops for breakfast, so do his brothers. If he walks around like a monkey, all twelve brothers walk like monkeys, too. His parents assure Davy it's just a phase, and sure enough, the day arrives when not a single sib follows Davy's lead on what to have for breakfast, or on anything else. The splendor of solitude quickly fades, and Davy finds that he's lonely without their constant companionship. But the next morning, when Davy yawns, it's followed by a yawn from the next room. When Davy sings "a tender ballad" in the bathroom, he hears

another voice singing the same song. Gertie has arrived, and she “copied Davy’s every move.” Humorous illustrations are a perfect accompaniment to the text, showing a family of individually distinct sheep and offering clever visual details of the entire crew’s activities. (Ages 3–6)

DaCosta, Barbara. *Nighttime Ninja*. Illustrated by Ed Young. Little, Brown, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–0–316-20384–5, \$16.99)

“Hand over hand, the ninja climbed and clambered . . . The house was silent. Everyone was asleep.” A ninja has embarked on a dangerous nighttime mission and the sense of anticipation builds across the pages of this picture book as he arrives at his destination and sets about his mysterious task. Then his world of darkness is suddenly transformed as lights flash on. “‘What are you doing?’ thundered his mother.” And a little boy clad in ninja garb is caught, red-handed, eating ice cream after bedtime. An imaginative idea for a picture book is bolstered by some wonderful moments in Barbara DaCosta’s narrative and by the tactile qualities of Ed Young’s beautifully composed illustrations. (Ages 3–6)

Feeney, Tatyana. *Small Bunny’s Blue Blanket*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–0–375-87087–3, \$16.99)

A picture book about a child’s attachment to a blanket is hardly a new idea. But Tatyana Feeney gives it fresh treatment here. Mommy thinks Blue Blanket is dirty. Small Bunny knows Blue Blanket is perfect. But he can’t stop her from putting Blue Blanket in the washing machine. Mommy assures him it will only take a minute. “It actually took 107. And Small Bunny watched Blue Blanket for every single one.” Feeney’s spare, sweetly droll narrative is matched with childlike illustrations full of wit and charm (including the page documenting those 107 minutes—the changing positions of Small Bunny’s ears speak volumes). “Good as new!” says Mommy. (“He did not like new.”) But it doesn’t take too long before Small Bunny has Blue Blanket perfect once again. (Ages 2–5)

Feiffer, Kate. *No Go Sleep!* Illustrated by Jules Feiffer. A Paula Wiseman Book / Simon & Schuster, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–1–4424-1683–3, \$16.99)

“One night when the stars were out and the moon was bright, a baby said, ‘No go sleep!’” First the baby’s parents try to convince the baby that it’s time for bed, then the sun, moon, and stars take a turn. A car driving by weighs in (“Beep, beep, sleep, sleep”), then birds, frogs, bunnies, and other creatures of the natural world. The front door (“I’m closed until morning”), the goldfish, even the shoes and the baby’s toys know it’s time to say goodnight. Still the baby says, “NO!” But all that resistance proves exhausting in the end in this fresh, unsentimental picture book. With lovely writing full of unexpected moments, Kate Feiffer’s wonderful words are paired with Jules Feiffer’s balanced, beautifully composed illustrations that echo both the humor and comfort conveyed by the narrative. *Highly Commended, 2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 1–4)

Fleming, Candace. *Oh, No!* Illustrated by Eric Rohmann. Schwartz & Wade, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-375-84271-9, \$17.99)

A perfect storytime read-aloud starts with Frog falling into a “deep, deep hole.” (“Ribbit-oops! Ribbit-oops!”) In turn, Mouse, Loris, Sun Bear, and Monkey try to help, but each ends up sharing Frog’s plight. “Oh, no!” Now the hole is full of trapped animals. And who’s that slinking along the branch of the tree above? It’s Tiger, licking his teeth. “Oh, no!” But there’s one animal still to be heard from in Candace Fleming’s rollicking picture book narrative perfectly matched with Eric Rohmann’s superb, stylized relief prints with their bold black outlines and expressive animal faces. The story builds great anticipation, with visual foreshadowing (a peek of Tiger’s paw or tail as he climbs the tree) heightening the suspense. The playful use of repetition will have young listeners joining in from the first time they hear the story. Oh, yes! *Highly Commended, 2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 2–5)

Goodrich, Carter. *Zorro Gets an Outfit*. Simon & Schuster, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-1-4424-3535-3, \$15.99)

The little dog Zorro, first introduced along with his canine companion Mister Bud in *Say Hello to Zorro!* (Simon & Schuster, 2011), is given a cloak, complete with a mask-like hood, by his human owner. At first he’s humiliated, and indeed, other dogs and a cat find it hilarious. Even Mister Bud’s efforts to cheer Zorro fail. But then Zorro has an encounter with a new dog at the park. Dart not only does amazing stunts with a frisbee but also wears a dashing outfit of his own, giving Zorro a new perspective on the possibilities of his attire in Carter Goodrich’s entertaining picture book. (Ages 3–7)

Graham, Bob. *A Bus Called Heaven*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-0-7636-5893-9, \$16.99)

A bus breaks down and is abandoned on Stella’s street. The bus’s destination sign says “Heaven,” although Stella, a pale, quiet girl, takes her thumb from her mouth and notes, “Mommy, that old bus is as sad as a whale on a beach.” Neighbors push the bus off the street into Stella’s yard and everyone pitches in to help clean it up. It soon becomes a neighborhood gathering spot, sporting a portable soccer table, goldfish, comics. Snails leave silver trails as they crawl up the bus’s side. A pair of birds builds a nest in the engine. People gather to play games and share stories. And Stella? She plays table soccer. A lot. So on the day a tow truck arrives to haul the bus to the junkyard (the bus obstructs the sidewalk, and that is “against regulations”), she challenges the junkyard boss to a game: winner take all. Bob Graham’s idea of heaven is community in this unabashedly uplifting look at a multicultural, multigenerational neighborhood. Graham’s lyrical storytelling inhabits every word of the narrative and every line and brush stroke of the delightfully detailed illustrations. (Ages 3–7)

Hood, Susan. *Spike, the Mixed-Up Monster*. Illustrated by Melissa Sweet. A Paula Wiseman Book / Simon & Schuster, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-4424-0601-8, \$16.99)

“Spike was a monster. Or so he thought.” He has a “slithery tail, spiky crown, stumpy teeth.” Still, Spike is completely unsuccessful at scaring anyone. In fact,

the other animals, *el pato*, *el armadillo*, and *el campañol*, think Spike, who's "no bigger than a lily pad," is adorable. But they take off in fear the day a real monster—a Gila Monster!—shows up at the lake. Spike stands his ground, shaking his spikes, baring his teeth, and swooshing his tail. The Gila Monster isn't scared. In fact, he thinks Spike is smiling at him! Spike's disappointment turns to pleasure when he discovers he can help the Gila Monster, who's trying to find his way to his cousin's fiesta. Spanish words are incorporated throughout a narrative distinguished by terrific pacing and word choice and featuring animals indigenous to Mexico. A two-page photo essay at story's end provides more information about "Spike and His Amigos." (Spike, it turns out, is an axolotl, a type of salamander.) Playful illustrations by Melissa Sweet are a wonderful backdrop for Susan Hood's sprightly story. *Highly Commended*, 2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award (Ages 3–7)

Logue, Mary. *Sleep Like a Tiger.* Illustrated by Pamela Zagarenski. Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-547-64102-7, \$16.99)

"Does everything in the world go to sleep?" asks a little girl who doesn't feel sleepy even though it's bedtime. "Yes," reply her parents. Their dog is asleep. Their cat is asleep. Bats sleep in daytime. Whales sleep while swimming in circles. Snails "curl up like cinnamon rolls inside their shell." Bears are "mighty sleepers." And tigers, adds the little girl, sleep to stay strong. In Mary Logue's exquisitely crafted bedtime story, all the creatures mentioned in the girl's exchange with her parents in the first half of the book are used to describe her settling into sleep as the text unwinds. Eventually, she "snuggled deep as a bear, the deep-sleeping bear, and like the strong tiger, fell fast ... asleep." The narrative is set against whimsical mixed-media illustrations that show soothing and sleep-filled scenes but are also full of surprises. *Honor Book*, 2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award (Ages 2–5)

Low, William. *Machines Go to Work in the City.* Henry Holt, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8050-9050-5, \$16.99)

"VROOOOM! Here comes the garbage truck, making its run! When the truck makes its last pickup, are the garbage collectors done for the day? No, they must go to the landfill to empty the trash." William Low takes a fresh approach to the popular preschool topic of vehicles in this question-and-answer narrative with clever, foldout pages that extend each big-city scene and reveal the answer to the question posed in the text. Low's realistic, detailed digital paintings are full of energy and excitement, not to mention trucks, cars, trains, and many types of specialized equipment. The narrative moves from morning to evening, with the final scene showing a plane taking off over Manhattan as the sun sets. The illustrations not only showcase many kinds of vehicles but also picture diverse men and women working in many kinds of skilled labor. A two-page spread at book's end provides a vehicle roundup, with technical information about each. (Ages 3–6)

Mack, Baby, *Where Are You?* Translated from the Dutch. U.S. edition: Clavis, 2012. 12 pages (trade 978-1-60537-131-3, \$10.95)

Mack, Mommy, *Where Are You?* Translated from the Dutch. U.S. edition: Clavis, 2012. 12 pages (trade 978-1-60537-130-6, \$10.95)

In a pair of interactive board books, adult animals and their offspring search for one another, inviting the reader's help in the process. In *Baby, Where Are You?* a photograph of the parent animal accompanies a written query for its offspring, starting with "Baby polar bear, where are you?" Four flaps on the facing page show simple and appealing illustrations of possible babies; a lift of each flap reveals a photo of that young animal, identifies it, and answers the question (for example, "I am not a baby polar bear, I am a zebra" or "Here I am, Mommy! I am baby polar bear!"). The companion volume, *Mommy, Where Are You?* poses the question from the youngster's perspective. Each book offers seven question-and-answer sturdy double-page spreads. (Ages 1-4)

Mack, Jeff. *Good News Bad News*. Chronicle, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-4521-0110-1, \$16.99)

A great picture book for beginning readers relies on two simple, repeated phrases and illustrations to tell the story of two animal friends, a rabbit and a mouse, and their picnic (mis)adventure. "Good news!" The rabbit holds up a picnic basket. Careful readers may or may not notice the foreshadowing in the illustration: The sky above rabbit's head is blue, but there's an ominous wall of gray clouds approaching behind mouse. This sets the stage for "Bad news" as a turn of the page reveals mouse in the rain. "Good news" is that rabbit has an umbrella. "Bad news" is that the wind catches it, blowing umbrella and mouse toward a tree. And so it goes, with rabbit ever the optimist, and mouse ever the pessimist—or just unlucky—as the day delivers not just rain, but a worm in his apple, a bear in a cave, and, the final straw, a friend who is always looking up. It takes a little tantrum, and rabbit's hurt feelings, for mouse to finally see the bright side of life in Jeff Mack's engaging, funny story. (Ages 3-6)

Mahy, Margaret. *The Man from the Land of Fandango*. Illustrated by Polly Dunbar. U.S. edition: Clarion, 2012. 24 pages (trade 978-0-547-81988-4, \$16.99)

"The man from the land of Fandango / Is coming to pay you a call. / With his tricolor jacket and polka-dot tie / And his calico trousers as blue as the sky / And his hat with a tassel and all." Nonsense is a medium author Margaret Mahy is master of. This offering sparkles with a seemingly effortless stream of rollicking wordplay. The rhythm and rhyme make for an energetic outing describing amazing things that will happen when the man from the land of Fandango arrives on the scene. "And he only appears every five hundred years— So you'd better be home when he calls!" Polly Dunbar's illustrations do a good job of reflecting the silliness and whimsy. (Ages 3-6)

McDonnell, Patrick. *The Monsters' Monster*. Little, Brown, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-316-04547-6, \$16.99)

Grouch, Grump, and Gloom 'n' Doom possess all the characteristics an ambitious monster could hope for: They live in a dark castle, they get mad about nothing, and their favorite words are all "No." They regularly argue over who among them is the best monster until the day they settle the question by collaboratively creating the "biggest, baddest monster EVER!" The Frankenstein-esque creature is undeniably large, and he certainly look scary—but when he hugs the little monsters to his chest and thanks them for his life, they realize their efforts have backfired. In fact, their new monster has nothing but kind thoughts and positive actions in his repertoire (which includes buying warm jelly doughnuts for all to share). Playful language and illustrations that manage to be both monstrous and endearing work together in this engaging story about deceptive appearances and new beginnings. (Ages 3–7)

Na, Il Sung. *Hide & Seek*. U.S. edition: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-375-87078-1, \$15.99)

While Elephant hides his eyes and counts to ten, Flamingo, Giraffe, Rhino, Tortoise, and Gorilla are among the animals that look for a strategic spot to hide. Elephant quickly finds his friends when he begins to search—all except Chameleon. But observant readers may have already spotted Chameleon hiding on each of the previous pages. Na's distinctive illustration style, which combines "handmade painterly textures with digitally generated layers" compiled in Adobe Photoshop, is perfectly suited to Chameleon's masterful camouflage skills. (Ages 2–5)

Ormerod, Jan. *Maudie and Bear*. Illustrated by Freya Blackwood. U.S. edition: Putnam, 2012. 48 pages (trade 978-0-399-25709-4, \$16.99)

Maudie can be both exasperating and delightful—in short, a typical preschool-age child. Bear is the epitome of patience and constancy—the perfect caregiver. In the five often funny, always comforting vignettes that comprise this picture book (*The Bike Ride*, *Home Sweet Home*, *The Snack*, *Making Up*, *Telling Stories*), Maudie's ideas and imaginative play form the foundation of their interactions. Maudie's capricious, bossy behavior is wonderfully childlike, while Bear's gentle, soothing nature provides an abundant sense of security. Jan Ormerod's superb text is paired with marvelous, soft-toned illustrations by Freya Blackwood. The art's old-fashioned sensibility and appealing details add to the warmth and humor while extending the storytelling: Brown-toned panel inserts on some pages show backstory, and small clues suggest how Bear himself is an extension of Maudie's imaginings. (Ages 3–6)

Phinn, Gervase. *Who Am I?* Illustrated by Tony Ross. U.S. edition: Andersen Press, 2012. 24 pages (trade 978-0-7613-8996-5, \$16.95)

A playful twist on the classic story *Are You My Mother?* (Random House, 1967) has a newly hatched lizard approaching one creature after another in search of the answer to the questions "Who am I?" and "Where do I come from?" In turn a giraffe, an elephant, a cheetah, a rhinoceros, and a chimpanzee offer no enlightenment, though each does have quite a bit to say about himself. Then

the lizard encounters a creature “with great yellow eyes and a wide smiling mouth”—a crocodile—who is happy to answer the lizard’s questions if he comes a little closer and climbs onto the crocodile’s nose. Uh-oh. But the little lizard is saved just in time by the appearance of . . . a big lizard—his mother! Tony Ross’s illustrations add to the humor of Gervase Phinn’s entertaining story as they show the little lizard is, in fact, a chameleon whose appearance has morphed to match each of the animals he encounters. The chameleon is not identified as a chameleon by name until the penultimate page spread, with a final turn of the page punctuating the reveal with more visual humor. (Ages 3–6)

Rosenthal, Eileen. *I’ll Save You Bobo!* Illustrated by Marc Rosenthal. Atheneum, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–1–4424–0378–9, \$14.99)

Eileen and Marc Rosenthal have followed up on the charming *I Must Have Bobo!* (Atheneum, 2011), about a cat named Earl fixated on a little boy’s stuffed monkey, with this captivating portrayal of a child’s imaginative play. Earl the cat still loves Bobo the monkey, and as the boy draws and narrates a jungle adventure in which Bobo (and snakes) feature prominently, Earl’s relentless pursuit mirrors the danger the little boy imagines his stuffed animal faces in the made-up story. The interplay between the two stories—a jungle cat stalks crayon Bobo while Earl the cat stalks the real one—is marvelous. So, too, is Earl’s growing frustration, and eventual triumph. Authentic childlike—and catlike!—behaviors are featured in this stand-alone sequel. (Ages 3–7)

Schaefer, Lola M. *One Special Day: A Story for Big Brothers and Sisters.* Illustrated by Jessica Meserve. Disney / Hyperion, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978–1–4231–3760–3, \$16.99)

A series of phrases describing Spencer, a boy full of energy and noise, are told with a mix of words and illustrations. He was “loud as an [elephant] . . . wild as a [tiger] . . . free as a [bird].” But one day Spencer is none of these things. Instead he “was quiet and waiting. And then he was gentle,” because that is the day Spencer becomes a big brother. Unlike most rebus stories, in which the pictures are incorporated into the sentences, here they are a playful part of the illustrations. Each page depicting Spencer’s lively behavior features the descriptive animal as an integral part of the scene. The end papers extend the story, with those at the front showing Spencer alone and active and those at the back showing him playing with his now-growing younger sibling. (Ages 3–6)

Slier, Debby. *Cradle Me.* Star Bright Books, 2012. 10 pages (trade 978–1–59572–274–4, \$6.95)

Babies love looking at babies, and this welcome board book on cradle board-shaped pages features photographs of ten beautiful babies from ten different American Indian tribes, each one engaged in a typical cradle-board related activity (peeking, touching, crying, yawning, etc.). Each baby’s tribal affiliation is identified on a final page spread that explains: “Generations of Native American mothers have carried their babies in cradle boards and they are still used by many tribes today. Each cradle board is personalized and they vary from tribe to tribe.” (Ages birth–3)

Sutton, Sally. *Demolition*. Illustrated by Brian Lovelock. Candlewick Press, 2012. 24 pages (trade 978-0-7636-5830-4, \$15.99)

It's not construction but deconstruction—as well as recycling—that takes center stage in this rollicking read-aloud about the demolition of a building. “Swing the ball. Swing the ball. Thump and smash and whack. Bring the top floors tumbling down. Bang! Clang! Crack!” Seven different demolition machines are featured as workers go through the process of tearing the building down and processing the metal, concrete, and wood for other uses. As for the space that's left behind? A playground is built. “Hip ... hip ... hooray!” A multiracial cast of men and women are shown carrying out the work in this loud and lively picture book that concludes with a page providing additional information about the machines featured in the illustrations. (Ages 2–5)

Symes, Sally. *Whose Toes Are Those?* Illustrated by Nick Sharratt. Candlewick Press, 2012. 10 pages (trade 978-0-7636-6274-5, \$7.99)

The first page of this board book poses the questions, “Whose tail? Whose toes? Whose twitchy nose?” paired with an illustration of an animal whose long, white tail and pointy, whiskered nose are all that show on either side of a chunk of Swiss cheese. A turn of the cheese, which is also a partial page flap, reveals the whole creature and the word identifying it: “Mouse.” Subsequent pages use similar questions and visual clues before unveiling the mystery creatures: Dog, Hippo, and Bear. The last trio of questions asks “Whose toes? Whose nose? Whose fingers are those?” A lift of the toy box flap shows Baby. A creative design and simple, brightly colored illustrations make this a standout choice for interactive sharing with toddlers. (Ages 1–4)

Vail, Rachel. *Piggy Bunny*. Illustrated by Jeremy Tankard. Feiwel & Friends, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-312-64988-3, \$14.99)

Liam wants to be the Easter Bunny when he grows up. “You're a piglet,” his big sister tells him. “Deal with it.” Liam deals with it by practicing to be the Easter Bunny: hopping, eating salad (ugh), delivering eggs. He faces ridicule. His parents practice positive reinforcement: “You are a terrific piglet ... You are perfect ... just exactly the way you are.” Liam still wants to be the Easter Bunny, and his grandma agrees. They all lack imagination, she tells Liam, encouraging him to put on his Easter Bunny suit: “Then they'll see.” It turns out Liam doesn't have an Easter Bunny suit, but Grandma and Grandpa know just what to do. Rachel Vail's hilarious picture book, with pitch-perfect illustrations by Jeremy Tankard, is priceless and profound, a funny, moving affirmation of identity, understanding, and believing. (Ages 3–8)

van Genechten, Guido. *Daddies and Their Babies*. Translated from the Dutch. U.S edition: Clavis, 2012. 18 pages (trade 978-1-60537-110-8, \$9.95)

van Genechten, Guido. *Mommies and Their Babies*. Translated from the Dutch. U.S edition: Clavis, 2012. 18 pages (trade 978-1-60537-109-2, \$9.95)

Two simple board books show animal parents and their offspring, using the correct name for the young: “snake mommy with her baby snakelet,”

“crocodile daddy with his baby hatchling,” and so on. But it’s the warmth of the relationships captured in the striking black-and-white illustrations that really is the point. The illustrations’ bold shapes and shading create great visual interest for very young children, while the round eyes of the creatures in each pair gaze upon one another with affection and delight. (Ages birth – 2)

Willems, Mo. *The Duckling Gets a Cookie!?* Hyperion / Disney, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-4231-5128-9, \$15.99)

“Hey! How did you get that cookie!” The pigeon is back, this time lamenting his lack of a cookie. The duckling has a cookie—it even has nuts!—and it turns out getting it was as simple as asking. “Politely,” the duckling points out more than once. “I ask for things ALL THE TIME!” the pigeon responds, launching into an impassioned catalog of the many things for which he has asked but not received. Mo Willems once again makes it all look so easy, evoking intense emotions—and great humor—with dialog and skillful strokes of his artist’s pen in another hilarious outing for the pigeon. In the end, the pigeon is satisfied at last. So, too, is the duckling, which gives the pigeon the cookie with nuts and asks for another one—without them. (Ages 3–8)

Yee, Wong Herbert. *Summer Days and Nights*. Christy Ottaviano Books / Henry Holt, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8050-9078-9, \$14.99)

“Summer days, so warm and bright, / Paint my room in morning light.” A small Asian girl describes her activities over the course of a single summer day in a quietly engaging narrative that sees her butterfly-chasing in the morning followed by a dip in the wading pool, then on an afternoon picnic with her parents. Nighttime finds the hot, restless child looking out the window and then heading out for a discovery-rich walk in the moonlight with her dad. “Across the field, on past the gate ... My eyelids droop, it’s getting late.” Wong Herbert Yee’s story is perfectly sized for the hands of toddlers and preschoolers, with a gentle ambience that is both playful and reassuring. The illustrations have a softness and warmth that add to the comforting feel, as does this realistic family, which includes a pregnant mom and a dad clad in chinos, undershirt, and fedora. (Ages 2–5)

Picture Books for School-Age Children

Barnett, Mac. *Extra Yarn*. Illustrated by Jon Klassen. Balzer + Bray / HarperCollins, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-0-06-195338-5, \$16.99)

An original tale begins with a little girl named Annabelle finding a box of magic yarn that never runs out. She knits sweaters for everyone she knows, and then she knits “sweaters for things that didn’t even wear sweaters.” Soon everything in her once dismal town, from bare winter trees to houses and cars, wears a nubby coat of color. Word spreads and it isn’t long before an archduke arrives,

wanting to buy the box of yarn. Annabelle politely declines. So the archduke steals it. But when he gets back home and opens the box, it's empty. "You will never be happy again!" he curses, thinking of Annabelle as he throws the box out his castle window. But it's a magic box, and it knows exactly to whom it belongs. Mac Barnett's whimsical, wonderfully paced story spins its own kind of magic, leaving plenty of room for children to decide on an explanation. Barnett's folkloric outing is paired with masterfully understated illustrations by Jon Klassen—even the colors of the yarn are muted, although still a striking contrast to the shades of gray that defined Annabelle's town before the box's arrival. (Ages 4–8)

Best, Cari. *Ava and the Real Lucille*. Illustrated by Madeline Valentine. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-374-39903-0, \$16.99)

Sisters Ava and Arlie pool their writing talents to create an entry for the "Write a Poem, Win a Pet" contest at the local pet store. Ava is confident the prize will be the dog she's longed for, which she'll name Lucille. Realist Arlie suggests that they're equally likely to win "a monkey or a llama or a teen-weeny ant." Their entry is the winner, and first prize turns out to be ... a bird. Arlie and Mama welcome the new pet, but Ava is disappointed and irritated. Despite herself, she eventually warms to Lucille's winning ways, and is the first to become concerned when Lucille falls ill. A visit to the vet is not within the family's budget, but a call to the pet shop owner yields a treatment tip. To Ava's relief, Lucille makes a full recovery. Small details within the text and illustrations help establish the distinct personalities of the characters in this fresh and unpredictable story. (Ages 4–8)

Boelts, Maribeth. *Happy Like Soccer*. Illustrated by Lauren Castillo. Candlewick Press, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-7636-4616-5, \$15.99)

Sierra loves soccer and is thrilled to be on a team. But her aunt with whom she lives can never come to the games. Not only does she work at a restaurant on Saturdays, but the games are played at a suburban field far from the city apartment where they live. Everyone on the team but Sierra has someone to cheer for them. Yet when the coach asks if there's anything she needs, Sierra says no. Finally, Sierra's aunt is able to shift her work schedule to see Sierra's last game of the season. The two travel by bus through the city, "then walk the rest of the way to the fields." But when they arrive, it starts to rain and the game is cancelled. Sierra knows her aunt can't ask off work again, so that night, without her aunt knowing, she sneaks out of the room they share, working up the courage to call her coach and ask if the rescheduled game can possibly be played on a Monday, in the empty lot near her apartment. The coach makes no promises, but is able to make it work in this picture book that offers a matter-of-fact look at class and economic issues in the context of an emotionally genuine story with a welcome but not unbelievable happy ending. (Ages 5–8)

Bunting, Eve. *Ballywhinney Girl*. Illustrated by Emily Arnold McCully. Clarion / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-547-55843-1, \$16.99)

Young Maeve and her Grandpa are out cutting peat when he finds a child's body. The Ballywhinney police arrive, but soon send to Dublin for an archaeology team. It turns out to be the mummified body of a bog child—perhaps 1,000 years old. Maeve wonders what the Ballywhinney Girl's life might have been like even as she follows the stories on the news, and then visits the museum in Dublin where the mummy is on display. The sight makes Maeve sad. For her those bones belonged to a real girl who lived and died, and putting her on display in a cold glass case seems a far less comforting resting place than the peat bog where she was found. Maeve wonders aloud if the girl is glad to be released from the bog. Her dad answers that she's "dead and gone. The dead don't know or care." Empathetic Maeve cares, and she imagines the girl from long ago walking through the bog. Pen and ink and watercolor illustrations visually differentiate contemporary scenes from the misty pages of an imagined past. An informative afterword describes the bogs of Ireland and the mummified bodies that have been found there. (Ages 7–10)

Buzzeo, Toni. *One Cool Friend*. Illustrated by David Small. Dial, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-8037-3413-5, \$16.99)

It seems like tuxedo-wearing Elliot could not be more different from his rumple-suited father. When his father suggests a trip to the aquarium, all Elliot can think is "Kids, masses of noisy kids," but, always polite, he responds, "Of course. Thanks for inviting me." Once there, Elliot heads straight for the Magellan penguins—they wear tuxedos too. When Elliot later asks, "May I have a penguin?" his father hands him \$20 for a souvenir. Elliot instead smuggles out a real penguin that he names Magellan. Elliot's father—absorbed in his research on the Great Barrier Reef—is seemingly oblivious to Elliot's antics with this new member of their household. He doesn't even notice Magellan hanging out in the freezer when he opens it for a late-night snack (he isn't wearing his glasses at the time). But when the moment of truth arrives on the final page of this picture book, it offers a hilarious new perspective on every exchange between father and son that has come before. Toni Buzzeo's carefully crafted narrative establishes the whimsical conceit, which is merrily extended in David Small's superb illustrations that offer clever, inventive visual clues to the story that exists beneath the surface for most of this lively ride. (Ages 6–9)

Campbell, K. G. *Lester's Dreadful Sweaters*. Kids Can Press, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-55453-770-9, \$16.95)

Uptight Lester is plagued by a visiting aunt who knits nonstop. Her sweaters are hideous, each one a new humiliation for Lester, who ends up facilitating a tragic end for all of them. "I have curiously bad luck with sweaters," he says to Aunt Clara. "Luckily," she replies, "I'm a curiously speedy knitter." The day after this exchange he awakens to a mountain of "cruel colors, appalling polka dots, frightening stripes, startling tassels and things with six fingers." It looks like Lester is doomed to days of sartorial embarrassment, until a band of clowns at a birthday party he's attending saves the day—they LOVE Aunt Clara's sweaters,

and give her a job working for them. K. G. Campbell's quirky tale is whimsical in every way, from the language play in the writing to the muted illustrations that, upon closer look, are as offbeat as the sweaters Lester endures. (Ages 4–8)

Carbone, Elisa. *Heroes of the Surf: A Rescue Story Based on True Events*. Illustrated by Nancy Carpenter. Viking, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–0–670-06312–3, \$16.99)

In May of 1882, the steamship *Pliny*, en route from Brazil to New York, crashed on the breakers off the coast of New Jersey. That chilling event, and the dramatic rescue that ensued, is the subject of this thrilling picture book account told from the perspective of a boy on board the ship. Anthony and his best friend Pedro quickly go from adventuring pirates in their imaginations to frightened passengers in real life. The storm continues to rage as the lifeboats are launched and splinter against the rocks. A loud BOOM is mistaken by the boys for real pirates, but it's not marauders, it's a rescue! A rescue line carrying a breeches buoy (a life preserver with a pair of pants sewn in) has been shot from shore, and one by one the passengers climb in and are hauled to safety. Elisa Carbone's breathtaking narrative is paired with energizing illustrations by Nancy Carpenter that capture the sense of adventure, the terrifying chaos, and, eventually, the sweet relief as families are reunited. Carbone provides additional information about this shipwreck and the role of the Life-Saving Service in this and other rescues. (Ages 5–9)

Cole, Henry. *Unspoken: A Story from the Underground Railroad*. Scholastic Press, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978–0–545-39997–5, \$16.99)

Black pencil illustrations on buff-colored pages detail a wordless story set during the Civil War. A quilt with the North Star pattern hung on a rail fence comprises the opening page spread, which is followed by a scene showing Confederate soldiers riding across a field bordering the fence. A young white girl on the farm is doing chores. Inside the barn she sees a single eye peering out from a shock of corn. Later, she sets a biscuit from the dinner table on the barn floor; other offerings follow. Two men in search of a runaway slave leave with the extra horse they brought along still rider-less. That night, the girl returns once more to the barn and finds a gift: a cornstalk doll, wearing a dress made from the napkin in which she'd delivered food. In an author's note Cole writes about growing up in Loudoun County, Virginia, on the edge of the Confederacy, where the Civil War was family history still regularly talked about. He also notes that escaped slaves sought out safe houses in the area. This imagined story is rooted in history if not in specific facts and offers much for children to discover and discuss, not the least of which is the meaning of the title, so appropriate to a story in which silence abounds and in which actions rather than words speak volumes. (Ages 7–11)

DiPucchio, Kelly. *Crafty Chloe*. Illustrated by Heather Ross. Atheneum, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–1–4424-2123–3, \$16.99)

Chloe is good at making things, from flowers out of coffee filters to clothes for her dog, Bert. But she's planning on buying her friend Emma a Flower Girl doll for her birthday, only a girl named London buys one for Emma first. Chloe

feigns indifference: "I'm going to make her something special that you can't even buy in a store." But London's horrified response to this idea sends Chloe into a crisis of confidence. She conjures a case of "chicken pops," hoping to miss the party, but her mom reminds her what a good friend Emma is ... and that there will be a pony. So Chloe gets to work. Kelly DiPucchio's hilarious homage to the value of creativity (and the satisfaction of being proved right) is paired with illustrations by Heather Ross that perfectly match the spirit of the narrative, with Chloe's dog Bert providing masterful wordless commentary with each and every expression. (Ages 4–8)

Gilmore, Rachna. *The Flute*. Illustrated by Pulak Biswas. U.S. edition: Tradewind Books, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–1–896580–57–9, \$16.95)

Chandra is a much-loved child named for the moon. In a year when the monsoon rains flood her village, her parents are carried away in the waters. Her aunt and uncle take her in, but the love and warmth are gone from her life. Her only comfort is her mother's wooden flute but her aunt and uncle tire of hearing it and toss it into the river. Not long after, Chandra is tending the cows and hears the flute. "It sang of hope and plenty." Food appears, and for the first time since her parents' death Chandra isn't hungry. When her aunt and uncle find out she's not sharing the magic food, she is cast out in the midst of another flood. But the flute sounds again, leading her into the arms of a loving couple who lost their son the year before and ask her to be their daughter. Rachna Gilmore's original tale includes love, tragedy, cruelty, and a beautifully happy ending. The broad strokes of plot and character match the folkloric feel of this satisfying story. (Ages 4–8)

Glaser, Linda. *Hannah's Way*. Illustrated by Adam Gustavson. Kar-Ben, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–0–7613-5137–5, \$17.95)

Hannah's is the only Jewish family in a small Minnesota prairie town early in the twentieth century. She hasn't lived there long, and as the time for a Saturday class picnic draws near she wants badly to go, but her Orthodox faith forbids her riding in a car on Saturdays. Embarrassed to explain the truth to anyone, Hannah gets permission from her parents to walk the two miles to the picnic but only if she can find someone to walk with her. Hannah finally confides in her teacher, who explains to the class that Hannah needs a companion. The response is more than Hannah hoped for when everyone volunteers. An author's note tells how a historical basis for Hannah's story of friendship and support was found in an exhibit about Jewish women in the Upper Midwest at the Minnesota History Center. (Ages 5–9)

Harvey, Matthea. *Cecil the Pet Glacier*. Illustrated by Giselle Potter. Schwartz & Wade, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–0–375-86773–6, \$17.99)

Ruby Small is a normal little girl with two "not-normal-at-all" parents. Her father is a topiary gardener and calls Ruby "Hedgeling." Her mother is a tiara designer (well, someone has to do it), always wearing one of her own creations. On a family vacation to Norway, Ruby (in charge of the passports) asks if she can get a pet when they return. But on the trip, she meets up with an insistent little glacier that follows her everywhere. The glacier is not quite the pet she

had been hoping for, but there's no way to get rid of it. Her parents love ice-pet Cecil (named by Sven, the Norwegian tour guide). And after they return home (Cecil rides in a red cooler), Cecil proves his loyalty and worth by protecting one of the three Jennifers, Ruby's identical dolls, during a storm. Giselle Potter's quirky illustration style is a perfect match for Matthea Harvey's totally odd, offbeat, amusing story in which Ruby comes to appreciate the unusual. "If you wanted to make a tiara for Cecil," she tells her mother, "I don't think he'd mind." (Ages 5–8)

Hennessy, B.G. *The Scary Places Map Book: Seven Terrifying Tours*. Illustrated by Erwin Madrid. Candlewick Press, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-7636-4541-0, \$15.99)

Learning how to use a map is an appealing prospect when the activity is combined with scary themes. Seven double-page spreads offer a detailed picture of a creepy place (including a wicked woods, a ghostly sea voyage, and a "Trip through Transylvania," complete with Igor driving a Bloodmobile) mapped on a grid. A bulleted list of entertaining instructions leads the reader through the map and identifies a hidden item to search for. Engaging visual details and clever word play pull readers into this activity book that will have them using map keys, finding grid locales, and estimating distances. "More Thrills and Chills!" at the book's end offers additional questions, activities, and hidden items, encouraging repeat readings. (Ages 7–11)

Hood, Susan. *The Tooth Mouse*. Illustrated by Janice Nadeau. Kids Can Press, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-55453-565-1, \$16.95)

A delightful original story is rooted in the French tradition of the Tooth Mouse, who gives French children money in exchange for their baby teeth when they fall out. When the Tooth Mouse announces she is ready to retire, she holds a contest to choose her successor. Sophie is the youngest of the mice competing, trying to show she is brave, honest, and wise. And she proves herself the most worthy, particularly when it comes to the last of three tasks: Come up with a plan for what to do with all the collected baby teeth. Susan Hood's fresh tale is sprinkled with French words and phrases and sparkles with charm, as do Janice Nadeau's delicate pencil and watercolor illustrations. The back end papers include a list of "tooth traditions" in various countries. (Ages 4–8)

Jeffers, Oliver. *This Moose Belongs to Me*. Philomel, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-399-16103-2, \$16.99)

An original take on the classic unusual pet story features a boy named Wilfred and a moose that he names Marcel. Much of the humor in Oliver Jeffers's picture book is conveyed through the contradiction between words and pictures. In truth, the moose is somewhat oblivious to Wilfred, though Wilfred is skilled at coming up with rules for being a good pet that showcase Marcel's natural abilities ("Rule 11: providing shelter from the rain"), and his unwavering fondness for apples. But there's a complication when Marcel and Wilfred encounter a woman who claims she owns the moose. His name, according to her, is Rodrigo. The surprises come right up to the very last page

in a story featuring singular artwork that places whimsical renderings of the characters on top of oil-painted landscapes. (Ages 4–8)

Kittinger, Jo S. *The House on Dirty-Third Street*. Illustrated by Thomas Gonzalez. Peachtree, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–1–56145–619–2, \$16.95)

“Mom said starting over would be an adventure, so I imagined a tropical island with palm trees and buried treasure. Not this.” The house her mom has bought is on a block in such bad shape that the child narrator of this story calls it “Dirty-Third Street” instead of Thirty-Third Street. And their place is the worst, not only run down, but full of trash and old furniture. Still, it’s all they can afford. The job of cleaning and fixing it up is huge, and the neighbors initially seem more guarded than friendly. After a Saturday of hard, heavy work that seems to get them nowhere, the girl’s mom is dejected. The next day, when they visit a nearby church, the girl shares their story with the Sunday School class. Within hours, people begin arriving to help them work in Jo S. Kittinger’s authentic, feel-good story that features a strong, realistic mother-daughter duo at its core. (Ages 6–9)

Klassen, Jon. *This Is Not My Hat*. Candlewick Press, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–0–7636-5599–0, \$15.99)

Jon Klassen’s follow-up to *I Want My Hat Back* (Candlewick Press, 2011) offers more humorous haberdashery, this time set underwater. A small fish is full of irrational optimism, sure his secret—he’s stolen a small hat from a very large fish and is wearing it proudly as he makes his way toward some reeds where he can hide—is safe. The humor comes entirely through the contradiction between what the small fish is saying and what can be seen in the art—the large fish in single-minded pursuit, being aided and abetted by a terrified crab who caves at a single look and points in the direction the small fish went. The vast difference between the action in Klassen’s understated illustrations and the smug tone of the droll narrative is priceless, as is the opportunity to talk about inference. (Ages 5–9)

K’naan. *When I Get Older: The Story Behind “Wavin’ Flag”*. Illustrated by Rudy Gutierrez. Tundra Books, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–1–77049–302–5, \$17.95)

The inspiration for songwriter/poet/singer K’Naan’s hit “Wavin’ Flag” starts with his grandfather, and continues with his experience as a Somali refugee. “Until I was thirteen years old, I lived in Mogadishu, a city that was like a sparkling jewel.” K’Naan’s grandfather was a well-known Somali poet. When war broke out, he wrote a short poem for frightened K’Naan: “When I get older, I will be stronger. / They’ll call me freedom, just like a waving flag.” “Poems will be your courage,” said his grandfather when K’Naan’s mother finally got papers so the family could leave their country. His grandfather stayed behind. In Canada, K’Nann wore sandals in the snow, “but by the time the snow melted, my English was better.” Music was something that helped him connect with other kids, both refugees and Canadians. “Singing made me feel as if anything were possible.” The story’s honest, engaging first-person voice is authentic and childlike. The art is a wonderful combination of realism

and abstraction, as poignant faces sit atop bodies and against backdrops full of energy and movement. End matter provides additional information about Somalia and K'Naan, as well as the complete original lyrics to his song. (Ages 7–10)

Lo, Ginnie. *Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic*. Illustrated by Beth Lo. Lee & Low, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-60060-442-3, \$18.95)

A Sunday drive in the country near Auntie Yang's northern Illinois home leads to the discovery of soybeans. Soybeans!—mao dou—one of the most important foods in China, but grown for pigs and cows in America. Auntie Yang asks the farmer if she can pick some, and soon she's boiling the pods in salted water. "Soybeans are the greatest discovery in America!" the young narrator exclaims after popping beans from the pod into her mouth. That meal is the start of a family tradition that grows from year to year and soon includes members of the Chicago Chinese community, who travel to the Illinois countryside to get a taste of home. Eventually, the narrator—now a young woman—meets her aunts and uncles from China, who make the trip for the picnic and, more important, to visit her mother and aunt, who have been longing to see them for decades. Sisters Ginnie and Beth Lo weave a warm, lively story of family, food, culture, and community out of their own memories. A spirited text is paired with singular illustrations combining a distinctive visual style and unusual canvases: ceramic plates. The not-to-miss author's and illustrator's note is a brief photo essay about Auntie Yang and the soybean picnic tradition, which lasted for forty years. *Highly Commended, 2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 7–10)

Lyons, Kelly Starling. *Tea Cakes for Tosh*. Illustrated by E. B. Lewis. Putnam, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-399-25213-6, \$16.99)

With her tea cakes, Tosh's grandma Honey shares stories that always begin with the words, "Long ago, before you and I were born ... our people were enslaved." Honey tells how Tosh's "great-great-great-grandma Ida" baked tea cakes, too, and hid a few in her pockets to give her own children, slaves like her, a taste and "a promise of days to come." When Honey begins to have problems with her memory—forgetting where she parked, a familiar phone number, and even how to make tea cakes—Tosh is able to give back the memories (including the tea cake recipe) she'd shared with him. The loving relationship between Tosh and his aging grandma provides both a reassuring snapshot of a family dealing with a common concern of aging, as well as an enduring family history traveling through the generations. Warm watercolor illustrations effectively employ some sepia-toned pages to convey a sense of a time long past, while full-color spreads transport the reader back to the present. *Highly Commended, 2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4–8)

Maclear, Kyo. *Virginia Wolf*. Illustrated by Isabelle Arsenault. Kids Can Press, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-55453-649-8, \$16.95)

When Virginia wakes up feeling wolfish, "The whole house sank. Up became down. Bright became dim. Glad became gloom." Her younger sister Vanessa tries to cheer Virginia up with no success, until she starts decorating the walls with a painting of an imaginary place called "Bloomsberry." The literary

allusions in Kyo Maclear's picture book will go over the heads of young readers and listeners, for whom the names Virginia and Vanessa Woolf and Bloomsbury will be complete unknowns. But the book's success is in capturing how one person's grumpiness can have a profound impact on the mood in a house. The truth is in the child-centered details of both the narrative and Isabelle Aresnault's marvelous illustrations, which show Virginia transformed into a wolf in silhouette. By story's end, those pointy, wolfish ears are revealed as the big bow she wears on her head. Art, creativity, imagination, and a sister's love save the day. (Ages 5–8)

Myers, Christopher. *H.O.R.S.E.: A Game of Basketball and Imagination*. Egmont, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978–1–60684–218–8, \$18.99)

Two African American teens seemingly engaged in a friendly game of H.O.R.S.E. on the basketball court are actually engaged in a dazzling contest of imagination and one-upmanship as each comes up with increasingly outrageous ideas for shots. The first suggests he'll "shoot a perfect layup, with my left ... foot" from atop a 437-story building, after calculating the wind speed and direction. The other counters with his "Magellan" shot—one jump around the world. "As I approach the court, somewhere over New Jersey, I'll raise back, open my mouth, dunk the ball through the basket there, with my tongue!" The first teen's response: a shot involving a cloud, the moon, and the rings of Saturn. It's all fun and games in Christopher Myers's dynamic story, which has wit in both the wordplay and the art. The two characters' speech is delineated by different colors of text, making the back-and-forth exchange easy to follow. (Ages 5–10)

O'Brien, Anne Sibley. *A Path of Stars*. Charlesbridge, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978–1–57091–735–6, \$15.95)

Dara is a Cambodian American girl living with her parents, little brother, and grandmother, Lok Yeay. Lok Yeay often tells stories about life in Cambodia years ago, before she fled with her brother and Dara's mother, who was then a baby, during the war. They eventually settled in Maine. But Dara's great uncle later returned to Cambodia, and Lok Yeay has not seen him in many years. When word comes that he has died, Lok Yeay grows very sad and won't leave her room. Worried Dara looks for a way to help her grandmother, first praying with her at the family shrine, and then weaving the beautiful details that she's heard about Cambodia over the years into a story about the trip they will all someday take. "We will find the house by the river and our family living there ... All around us, the air will smell of flowers." Notes at the end of this fairly lengthy and skillful picture book narrative provide more information on Cambodian refugees in a story firmly grounded in the present while referencing what happened in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge in the late 1970s in an age-appropriate way. (Ages 7–10)

Ravishankar, Anushka. *The Rumor*. Illustrated by Kanyika Kini. U.S. edition: Tundra Books, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-77049-280-6, \$17.95)

Pandurang “was so grumpy that no one in the village had even seen him smile. He was so dour that people said that milk turned into curd when he looked at it.” One day he coughs and spits a feather out of his mouth. “Don’t tell anyone,” he says to his wife. “Of course!” she replies, and promptly shares it with her neighbor, but in her telling the feather has turned into a bird. The neighbor tells someone else, and the bird has turned into a flock. And so it goes. The story spreads, the rumor grows, until the grumpiest man in town awakens from his nap to find a crowd outside his door, and when he yawns, they’re all disappointed: Where is the forest full of beasts and birds—tigers and monkeys and wolves and bears and parrots and mynahs and peacocks and more? Anushka Ravishankar’s playful variation on the game of telephone has an abundance of humor and marvelous cadence for reading aloud. Kanyika Kini’s lush and colorful illustrations capture a vibrant Indian village. (Ages 5–8)

Reich, Susanna. *Minette’s Feast: The Delicious Story of Julia Child and Her Cat*. Illustrated by Amy Bates. Abrams, 2012. 40 pages (trade 978-1-4197-0177-1, \$16.95)

Minette Mimosa McWilliams Child belonged to Julia and Paul Child when they lived in Paris. “Julia and Paul were charmed by Minette’s delicate whiskers, her superior nose, her quick little paws.” Minette is offered nibbles of this and that, and sometimes deigns to eat them, but she much prefers mice. Then Julia takes cooking lessons, and the smells in the kitchen while Minette sits at Julia’s feet, or chases a brussels sprout on a string, are heavenly. Susanna Reich’s delightful story, based loosely on the real cat that belonged to the Childs, remains child-centered (or is that cat-centered?) even as it captures the emergence of Julia’s passion. Reich’s narrative is full of delightful details and playful language, a perfect match for the playful subject. Minette can be found in every one of Amy Bates’s charming pencil and watercolor illustrations, even when humans are the focal point. An afterword provides more information on Julia Child, including a photo of her with the real Minette, and notes provide sources for all of the story’s dialogue, none of which is made up (unlike Minette’s passion for mice which, Reich acknowledges in her author’s note, was never documented by Julia). (Ages 4–8)

Rockliff, Mara. *Me and Momma and Big John*. Illustrated by William Low. Candlewick Press, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-7636-4359-1, \$16.99)

A young African American boy describes his mother’s job as a stonemason, helping in the construction of “Big John”—the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York City. “A cathedral is a big, grand, fancy church, and Big John is the grandest of them all. Momma tells us you could put our whole apartment building in the middle, and it wouldn’t even touch the high round ceiling.” He begins to think of his mother as an artist, so is disappointed when he’s finally able to visit her job site and see the stone she’s finished. It doesn’t seem very special. But his perspective changes once he’s inside the Cathedral: He understands her single stone is part of something bigger; like the individual

voices of the choir that is singing, each one supporting the others, her stone will support other stones and become part of the great building. “I think about the hands that worked on every stone until it was exactly right, knowing that it had to last a long, long time.” An afterword gives more information about the history of the unfinished cathedral, begun in 1892. Work was slowed by both World Wars, but continued with an innovative apprentice program that began in 1982. Funds ran out for that program in 2007 and construction has halted again. Mara Rockliff’s stirring picture book text is set against soaring illustrations by William Low. *Honor Book, 2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5–8)

Rockliff, Mara. *My Heart Will Not Sit Down*. Illustrated by Ann Tanksley. Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-375-84569-7, \$17.99)

After Kedi’s teacher shares his worries about people in New York City—his home—starving because they have no money for food, the young Bulu girl asks the adults in her village if they can help. But her community has so little it seems there is nothing they can do. Or is there? The next day, the villagers turn up at Kedi’s school with a small but significant offering of coins, explaining that “Our hearts would not sit down until we helped.” Mara Rockliff’s fictional story set during the Great Depression is based on an actual event detailed in her author’s note: In 1931 the mayor of New York City received \$3.77 from Cameroon to feed the hungry. Rockliff’s note explains more about the Great Depression, and how she conjectured people in Cameroon may have heard about it from a teacher at one of the schools run by American missionaries. She also provides cultural details of a story she set among the Bulu ethnic group in the south of Cameroon, and concludes with examples of other instances when people in places around the world have sought to help strangers in need. Ann Tanksley’s illustrations provide a vibrant, arresting backdrop for Rockliff’s lyrical storytelling. (Ages 4–8)

Rogers, Gregory. *The Hero of Little Street*. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-59643-729-6, \$17.99)

A high-spirited adventure starts in present-day London, where a small boy kicks the rogue soccer ball that hit him on the head and is chased by the gang of kids to whom the ball belongs. Taking refuge in the National Gallery, the boy ends up among the Dutch masters, where the small dog from Van Eyck’s *The Arnolfini Marriage* slips off the canvas and joins him in a romp through the halls. The two climb into the frame of Vermeer’s *A Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* to return a sheet of music they found on the Gallery floor, then head out her door to explore the picturesque streets of seventeenth-century Delft. A detour down a dark alley—is that ever a good idea?—leads to a heart-stopping encounter with a butcher who is furious when boy and dog unlock the cage of impounded pooches that appeared to be the makings for his sausages. A wild and comical chase ends with justice prevailing in both past and present in Gregory Rogers’s witty, wordless tale. Varied perspectives enhance the detailed and masterful visual storytelling achieved through panels and full-page spreads. (Ages 6–10)

Smith, Lane. *Abe Lincoln's Dream*. Roaring Brook Press, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-59643-608-4, \$16.99)

FDR's dog Falla wouldn't enter the Lincoln Bedroom at the White House. Neither would LBJ's dog Yuki, or Ronald Reagan's Rex. But Quincy, a young African American girl who wanders from a present-day White House tour, is drawn into the room by the sight of a tall man "dressed in black from hat to boot" with a "long face that made her feel sorry for him." She's nonplussed by Lincoln's ghost, who promptly walks through a wall. He tells her silly jokes and asks questions about what happened to the Union after 1865. "And equality for all?" Lincoln asks. "It's getting better all the time," Quincy responds. The night before he died, Lincoln dreamed he was on a ship, "sailing rapidly for some shore I know not where." After her encounter with Lincoln, which concludes with him glimpsing the American flag on the moon, Quincy dreams of "a tall man in black, on a boat moving rapidly toward the rising sun. He was smiling." Lane Smith's fanciful picture book includes many playful references, just the right dose of silly humor, and a young protagonist who stands comfortably on equal footing with the ghost of president Lincoln. (Ages 6-9)

Vail, Rachel. *Flabbersmashed about You*. Illustrated by Yumi Heo. Feiwel and Friends, 2012. 32 pages. (trade 978-0-312-61345-7, \$16.99)

Katie and Jennifer are best friends and have been so forever—until the day Jennifer plays with Roy at recess and chooses him as her "walk-in-from-recess buddy." Devastated by what she sees as abandonment, Katie's "whole self felt like a bruise." Angry with Jennifer, Katie puts her strong emotions into words when she yells, "I am Flabbersmashed about you!" But when Arabella takes her hand to walk in from recess, Katie realizes that Jennifer's is not the only hand that fits into hers, and a potential friendship is launched. A firm grounding in realistic childlike perspective and behavior pairs well with the dynamic illustrations. Font of varying sizes, colors, and placement on the page helps readers follow Katie on her emotional roller-coaster ride. *Honor Book, 2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4-8)

Walters, Eric. *The Matatu*. Illustrated by Eva Campbell. Orca, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-1-55469-301-6, \$19.95)

A charming picture book set in Kenya blends a contemporary story with a traditional, humorous Kamba tale. Kioko is riding on a matatu for the first time and notices a dog chasing the bus after he and his grandfather board and it pulls away. Later, he sees goats running away from the matatu, while sheep pay no attention at all as it passes by. Kioko's observations prompt his grandfather's comical account of a dog, a goat, and a sheep who were riding on a matatu. The dog overpaid his fare. The goat sneaked off without paying anything. And the sheep paid with exact change. As a result, dogs still chase matatus hoping to get their change. Goats run away from them to avoid paying the fare they owe. And sheep ignore the bus, having nothing to gain or lose. The warm relationship between Kioko and his grandfather is wonderfully realized through dialogue and small moments in Eric Walters's lively story that also has the grandfather engaging other passengers as he tells the amusing tale. Eva Campbell's colorful

illustrations distinguish between the contemporary and folkloric characters in the story. (Ages 5–8)

Willems, Mo. *Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs*. Balzer + Bray, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-06-210418-2, \$17.99)

This spoof brings Goldilocks (who looks suspiciously like Trixie of *Knuffle Bunny* fame) into the home of three dinosaurs: Papa Dinosaur, Mama Dinosaur, and “some other Dinosaur who happened to be visiting from Norway.” One day they made their beds, set up their chairs, and “cooked three bowls of delicious chocolate pudding at varying temperatures.” Then they left, “and were definitely not hiding in the woods waiting for an unsuspecting kid to come by.” When a “poorly supervised little girl named Goldilocks came traipsing along,” she smelled the pudding and promptly ate all three bowls, ending up “stuffed like one of those delicious chocolate-filled-little-girl-bonbons.” The humor in Mo Willems’s hilarious fractured fairy tale is all in the execution—the silly asides, the funny details in art and narrative, and the obvious machinations of the dinosaurs in their unsuccessful attempt to get an easy, little-girl-shaped meal. (Ages 6–10)

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Each Kindness*. Illustrated by E.B. Lewis. Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-399-24652-4, \$16.99)

When the new girl Maya first comes to school, “Her coat was open and the clothes beneath it looked old and ragged.” Chloe ignores Maya’s smile that first day and every day afterward. And at recess, Chloe and her best friends, Kendra and Sophie, reject Maya’s attempts to play with them or impress them. Kendra calls Maya “Never New,” because “everything she has come from a secondhand store.” Maya isn’t at school the day their teacher brings a bowl of water and a stone to class. She drops in the stone and tells the students that kindness is like the ripples of water: “Each little thing we do goes out, like a ripple, into the world.” Chloe thinks about Maya, and is determined to smile back the next time she sees her. But day after day Maya doesn’t come back, and then the teacher announces Maya has moved away. Jacqueline Woodson’s moving story is anything but predictable as a young African American girl is left feeling regret for kindnesses undone, but also is surely changed. The writing pulses with feeling in Woodson’s quietly powerful narrative set against E. B. Lewis’s light-filled illustrations. *Winner, 2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5–9)

Zullo, Germano. *Little Bird*. Illustrated by Albertine. Translated by Claudia Zoe Bedrick. U.S. edition: Enchanted Lion Books, 2012. 64 pages (trade 978-1-59270-118-6, \$16.95)

A bold red truck, a bright blue sky, and a golden landscape set the stage for this visually dynamic, whimsical, not-quite-wordless book in which the truck stops at the edge of a cliff. A man gets out of the cab, opens the back, and—surprise! A bird flies out. An unmatched flock of spectacular colors follows. And then they’re gone ... almost. Inside the inky blackness of the truck a pair of eyes glow. One small, black, flightless bird remains. Man and bird exchange a few looks, then share a sandwich. Flight lessons follow, as the man flaps and

leaps, and the bird mimics until ... success! But the story doesn't end there. Truthfully, the few words in this picture book are superfluous. It's Albertine's illustrations that tell a tale that is wholly unexpected, and full of warmth and delight. Young readers will have no problem making their own meanings from this magical offering. (Ages 4–8)

Books for Beginning Readers

Henkes, Kevin. *Penny and Her Doll*. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-06-208199-5, \$12.99)

Henkes, Kevin. *Penny and Her Song*. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2012. 32 pages (trade 978-0-06-208195-7, \$12.99)

Kevin Henkes's debut titles for beginning readers are two easy chapter books featuring a mouse named Penny. *Penny and Her Doll* begins with Penny in the garden with Mama admiring the roses when a package arrives in the mail from Gram. Penny immediately falls in love with the doll inside, but agonizes over the course of the day about finding the right name for her. The answer turns out to be growing in the garden where Penny was when the doll arrived. In *Penny and Her Song*, Penny comes home from school with a song she's made up in her head, but has to wait until dinner is over to sing it so she doesn't wake the babies or disrupt the meal. When she finally shares her song, a grand time is had by everyone in the house. Both books feature terrific storytelling, including wonderful dialogue and charming illustrations. And both books are brimming with warmth. (Ages 4–7)

Macaulay, David, with Sheila Keenan. *Castle: How It Works*. Square Fish / David Macaulay Studio / Macmillan, 2012. 31 pages (trade 978-1-59643-744-9, \$15.99)

"The castle stands high on a rocky hill. It has tall towers, thick stone walls, doors of wood and iron, and a wide moat. There is NO welcome mat!" An exciting offering for advanced beginning readers is an adaptation of David Macaulay's earlier work *Castle* (Houghton Mifflin, 1977) into a whole new form. The writing and layout keep the needs of beginning readers clearly in mind, including short lines of text, simple sentence structure, and ample spacing. But the interests of kids who prefer nonfiction to fiction are also at the forefront. And like the best nonfiction writing, this is wholly engaging, in this case incorporating plenty of information into the second-person narrative ("You are deep within the castle. Welcome to the inner ward"), and some wonderful moments of humor, too. Macaulay's artwork details both the architectural and human dimensions of a narrative that concludes with a glossary and index. (Ages 4–7)

Books for Newly Independent Readers

Atinuke. *The No. 1 Car Spotter and the Firebird*. Illustrated by Warwick Johnson Cadwell. U.S. edition: Kane Miller, 2012. 93 pages (pbk. 978-1-61067-052-4, \$5.99)

Another fresh, funny chapter book for newly independent readers from author Atinuke returns to the African village of Oluwalase Babatunde Benson, a.k.a. the No. 1 Car Spotter. His nickname comes from his ability to identify any make and model of car, often by the sound of the engine alone. But it's his skill as a thinker and problem solver that really make this boy stand out. He may not be very good with a slingshot like his sister and other children in the village, but that doesn't mean he can't protect the family's goats with a little ingenuity—and hot chili pepper soup. (What would be the point of everyone being good at the same thing? his grandfather consoles when No. 1 proves yet again he can't shoot a stone.) And when Mama Coca-Cola's new concrete-block house almost becomes her ruin, No. 1 comes up with the perfect solution, one that saves the small business she was too tired to maintain after trying to keep a house with corners clean by day and sweltering under its hot tin roof at night. Atinuke creates warm, distinctive characters and a strong sense of community, as well as plot and setting, with a minimum of words and an abundance of humor. The story is set in an unnamed but specific African country. (Ages 6–9)

Branford, Anna. *Violet Mackerel's Brilliant Plot*. Illustrated by Elanna Allen. U.S. edition: Atheneum, 2012. 102 pages (trade 978-1-4424-3585-8, \$14.99)

Violet Mackerel has her heart set on a blue china bird that the man who doesn't smile has for sale. He sells them at the same market where her Mama sells the woolly things she knits. Violet starts making a list of ways she might get the bird, and her ideas range from the simple (ask for it for her birthday) to the outrageously complex (go on a game show and win first place; trade the prize for the blue china bird). Violet lives with her Mama, her sister Nicola, a teenager, and her brother Dylan, an almost-teenager. All Nicola wants is a haircut from someone named Mojo. All Dylan wants is a camera. And all Violet wants is that blue china bird. Just when it seems Violet's a bit too precocious, she does something spectacularly childlike that reins the story in from the edge of sweetness (one particularly awesome crying fit comes to mind) in Anna Branford's charming book for newly independent readers. (Ages 6–8)

Cheng, Andrea. *The Year of the Book*. Illustrated by Abigail Halpin. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. 146 pages (trade 978-0-547-68463-5, \$15.99)

Fourth-grader Anna Wang finds solace and pleasure in stories, especially now that her former best friend, Laura, has abandoned her. Anna is happy talking to the crossing guard in the morning, and she's usually content turning to a

book for companionship throughout the school day. At home, her mother thinks Anna can be selfish when she chooses a book over helping others. Still, Anna usually enjoys spending time with her Chinese American family and other adults. But when Laura wants to start doing things together again Anna is reluctant—she'd much rather read. Then Laura's mom asks if Laura can spend the weekend. It turns out Laura's parents are separated and there are complications—her mom has had to get a restraining order against her dad. Author Andrea Cheng deftly handles that dimension of this appealing novel in a way that is age-appropriate for both characters and readers. Wonderful relationships—even when they are sometimes a little prickly—unfold and develop as Anna realizes that, sometimes, the right choice is saying no to a book, and yes to a friend. References to the many specific books that Anna reads over the course of the year will be an added pleasure for readers like Anna who can't get enough of stories. (Ages 7–9)

Hartnett, Sonya. *Sadie and Ratz*. Illustrated by Ann James. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2012. 59 pages (trade 978–0–7636–5315–6, \$14.99)

Hannah has named her hands Sadie and Ratz and given them their own personalities. It turns out they aren't very nice, often terrorizing Hannah's four-year-old brother, Baby Boy. Baby Boy gets his revenge when he starts blaming Sadie and Ratz for every misdeed he commits, resulting in Hannah's immense frustration. "A horrible thought came into my head. Maybe Sadie and Ratz would have to change. Maybe the only way to stop Baby Boy blaming them for everything was to tame them and make them nice." Instead, Hannah sends Sadie and Ratz on vacation. When irrefutable evidence shows Sadie and Ratz are innocent of the latest offense (a broken clock), Baby Boy holds up his hands to reveal the true culprits: Colin and Scraps! With refreshing honesty, Sonya Hartnett acknowledges the deep and not always delightful feelings between siblings, as well as the wilds of children's imaginations, in an edgy, funny novel for newly independent readers. Ann James's black-and-white illustrations dramatically reflect the story's emotional tenor, which gradually brightens as Baby Boy equalizes the relationship. (Ages 6–8)

McKay, Hilary. *Lulu and the Duck in the Park*. Illustrated by Priscilla Lamont. U.S. edition: Albert Whitman, 2012. 104 pages (trade 978–0–8075–4808–0, \$13.99)

Animal-lover Lulu knows her animal-averse teacher Mrs. Holiday is serious about trading their guinea pig for stick insects if anyone brings another creature to class. It was a rule invoked after Lulu's dog followed her to school, and it left Class Three "silent with shock. No more cheerful interruptions of squeaks in quiet lessons ... No more useful sausage shaped guinea-pig poops to flick around the classroom." Now Lulu faces a dilemma: She rescued a duck egg on a field trip to the park. Can she keep the egg a secret from Mrs. Holiday until the end of the school day? With the help of her cousin and best friend Mellie, it seems she can ... until the egg starts to hatch. No one does funny like Hilary McKay, here turning her attention to newly independent readers in an easy chapter book full of rich language and abundant humor rooted in both

situation and characters. The boundless enthusiasm of brown-skinned Lulu, and the strained patience of Mrs. Holiday, are a particular delight. (Ages 4–8)

Fiction for Children

Aguirre, Jorge. *Giants Beware!* Illustrated by Rafael Rosado. First Second, 2012. 202 pages (pbk. 978–1–59643–582–7, \$14.99)

Bold Claudette wants to slay the legendary, baby-feet-eating giant that threatens her town. Sure, the Marquis built a fortress to protect them (at taxpayer expense, Claudette notes), but what kind of a solution is that? She convinces her best friend Marie, an aspiring princess, and her timid little brother Gaston, an aspiring chef, to join her on a quest to kill the giant. The Marquis rallies a group of men in town to form a search party to go after them, but the children prove far more adept in their quest to reach Giant's Peak than the men prove in saving them. Once there, the children discover the story as they heard it isn't quite true: It turns out the giant is just a baby who likes to tickle feet, not eat them. Rafael Rosaldo's spirited, full-color graphic novel is full of humor and action, as well as doses of social satire and a welcome dismissal of traditional gender roles. (Ages 7–10)

Applegate, Katherine. *The One and Only Ivan*. Illustrated by Patricia Castelao. Harper / HarperCollins, 2012. 305 pages (trade 978–0–06–199225–4, \$16.99)

Ivan the gorilla has lived in a cage at the Exit 8 Big Top Mall for twenty-eight years. His friends and companions are an elderly ailing elephant named Stella and a scrappy stray dog named Bob. Both Ivan and Stella are expected to perform mindless tricks three times a day to bring paying customers to the ramshackle circus run by Ivan's owner, Mack. Stella grudgingly does the usual elephant tricks and Ivan paints abstract pictures, which are sold in the gift shop. Although Ivan, Stella, and Bob can all talk to and understand one another, they can't communicate with their human caretakers. In fact, they understand little of human behavior. Humans are worse than chimps, according to Ivan. When business slows down, Mack adds a baby elephant named Ruby to his circus. She quickly endears herself to the other animals with her innocence and vulnerability. Ivan promises dying Stella he'll do whatever he can to find Ruby a better home—but how? The answer lies with his pictures, and in the empathy, kindness, and keen observations of the circus custodian's young daughter. A novel defined by distinctive characters and propelled by Ivan's memorable voice is fast-paced, funny, and wise—filled with feeling but never overly sentimental. A great choice for a read-aloud, this book also offers short sentences with lots of white space, adding appeal for reluctant readers. (Ages 8–11)

Bauer, Marion Dane. *Little Dog, Lost*. Illustrated by Jennifer A. Bell. Atheneum, 2012. 197 pages (trade 978-1-4424-3423-3, \$14.99)

The little dog Buddy had a boy once. They “were perfectly matched and perfectly happy together.” Then the boy’s family had to move to an apartment in the city, and Buddy couldn’t come. She gets a new home in a new town with a woman who means well but doesn’t know how to love a dog. When Buddy digs a hole in her yard and climbs under the fence, she doesn’t intend to run away, she just can’t find her way back. In that same town is a boy named Mark, who has always wanted a dog. Mark’s mother, the town’s mayor, has always said no. Also in that town is Charles Larue, a man who is very shy and very lonely in the mansion he inherited from a woman he took care of for years. All the kids avoid the mansion because, well, Charles Larue lives there, and he never talks to anyone. “No one knows a single true thing about him,” so everyone (but the mayor, who doesn’t gossip) makes things up. There’s never any doubt that Marion Dane Bauer’s tale of a little lost dog and a dog-loving boy and a kindhearted man, all of whom need one another without even knowing it, is going to end happily. But the journey to that happy ending is pure delight, from its cast of primary and supporting characters (including a cat named Fido) to the surprising but perfect insights into characters and town alike, to the narrative’s rhythm and language in this novel in verse perfect for reading aloud. (Ages 7–10)

Beck, W. H. *Malcolm at Midnight*. Illustrated by Brian Lies. Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 265 pages (trade 978-0-547-68100-9, \$16.99)

Malcolm the rat is the new pet of the Room 11 fifth-grade class, although he’s so small everyone thinks he’s a mouse. On his first night, Malcolm discovers the Midnight Academy, a group of classroom pets that work to keep the school safe. Shortly after Malcolm becomes a pledge, Aggy the Iguana—head of the Academy—goes missing. Eager to prove himself and worried about Aggy, Malcolm sets out to find her. His efforts are complicated by the fact that another Academy member, Honey Bunny (HB), thinks Malcolm IS a rat, and therefore untrustworthy (and probably in collusion with Snip, the bitter stray cat on the fourth floor). Meanwhile, back in Room 11, one of the nutters (children), a lonely girl named Amelia, takes a special interest in Malcolm, who returns to his cage each day, noticing, among other things, that he can read. And then there is Mr. Binney, Room 11’s teacher; Ms. Brumble, the school custodian; and the mystery of a missing ring. Everything’s connected in Wisconsin author W. H. Beck’s debut novel, an irresistible animal fantasy featuring a fresh storytelling voice (complete with engaging footnotes), plenty of tension and drama, and lots of warmth. Wonderfully drawn relationships, including Amelia’s burgeoning friendship with class troublemaker Jovahn, also unfold in this satisfying mystery/adventure. (Ages 7–10)

Boyce, Frank Cottrell. *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Flies Again*. Illustrated by Joe Berger. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2012. 213 pages (trade 978-0-7636-5957-8, \$15.99)

The Tooting family—Jem, Lucy, Little Harry, and their parents—are taking a trip in their recently refurbished camper van. The junkyard engine Dad

installed in the van once belonged to an extraordinary flying car, something they discover in the nick of time when the van is heading over the white cliffs of Dover with Little Harry alone inside. The fact that their van can fly is just the first of many surprises in store for the Tootings and for readers in this funny stand-alone story that riffs on Ian Fleming's original *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (and includes at least one playful reference to James Bond). There are villains—a midget posing as a spoiled child, and his beautiful nanny—who invite the unsuspecting Tootings to stay with them in order to steal the van. The van, meanwhile, has ideas of its own about where it should go: the engine is on a mission to acquire the rest of the car's original parts. From France to Egypt to a remote tropical island, the Tootings are on the move, gradually realizing their van has a plan. The over-the-top secondary characters and plot are balanced by the appealing biracial (Black/white) family at the center of this delightfully playful story. (Ages 7–10)

Coy, John. *Take Your Best Shot. (4 for 4 Series) Feiwel and Friends, 2012. 180 pages (pbk. 978-1-250-00032-3, \$6.99)*

In this final volume of the 4 for 4 series, friends Jackson, Gig, Diego, and Isaac are navigating their way through sixth grade and basketball season. Jackson has a lot on his mind: working up the nerve to ask Ruby to the school dance, worrying about Isaac leaving their basketball squad to play on the more competitive traveling team and Diego not being able to play at all when games conflict with his work commitment, stress over his mother's upcoming marriage, and concern about Gig's dad who has been injured in Afghanistan. When these credible challenges of growing up threaten to fracture the boys' strong friendship, they figure out ways to support one another when they need it most. As in the earlier books in this series, plenty of sports action balances the interpersonal plot lines. (Ages 9–12)

Creech, Sharon. *The Great Unexpected. Joanna Cotler Books / HarperCollins, 2012. 226 pages (trade 978-0-06-189232-5, \$16.99)*

Naomi and her friend Lizzie are both orphans, living with separate families in a small American town called Blackbird Tree. Lizzie dreams of being adopted by her foster parents, while Naomi has no doubt she is loved by Nula and Joe, the couple who've cared for her since she was a small child. The arrival of an unusual boy named Finn—he appears in a tree which he promptly falls out of—creates a bit of tension between the two girls, but they carry on their friendship and their volunteer work with the “poor, unfortunate elderly,” a host of colorful characters in town. Meanwhile, in Ireland, two old women are making plans that are gradually revealed to be connected to the lives of some of the residents of Blackbird Tree. Moving back and forth between events in Blackbird Tree and in Ireland, author Sharon Creech tightens the threads that weave the two stories into one modern fairy tale with a wholly satisfying, happily-ever-after ending. There is wonderful, quirky humor in Creech's storytelling, and also abundant heart, with the mysterious boy Finn, who spans both parts of the tale, adding a welcome edge to the sweetness of the story. (Ages 8–10)

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *The Mighty Miss Malone*. Wendy Lamb Books / Random House, 2012. 307 pages (trade 978-0-385-73491-2, \$15.99)

Deza Malone played a minor role in *Bud Not Buddy* (Delacorte Press, 1999) as the girl Bud met in a Hooverville, but she's front and center here in the story of an African American family struggling to stay together at the height of the Depression. Deza is a bright eleven-year-old aspiring writer who often uses big words and flowery language to try to impress her teacher, who advises Deza to keep her language and ego grounded. Deza's older brother Jimmie is big on personality and troublemaking, not to mention singing talent, but, at fifteen, he's very small for his age. It's a worry for Jimmie and their parents, but there's no money for a doctor, just as there's no money for a dentist for Deza's sore teeth. They are barely getting by in their rented house in Gary, Indiana, when their father is in a tragic boating accident. The sole survivor, he is wracked by guilt and leaves home to find work in Flint. But no word comes from him. When the family is evicted, Deza, her mother and brother first get help from some of Jimmie's questionable acquaintances before hopping a train to Flint. They end up in a Hooverville, unable to find the children's father, other relatives, or a place to live. Deza's story is both funny and poignant. There are colorful characters, memorable scenes, and moments of true compassion in a novel that balances some surprisingly sad events with an upbeat ending, although one that doesn't wrap up every loose end. (Ages 9–12)

Erdrich, Louise. *Chickadee*. Harper / HarperCollins, 2012. 196 pages (trade 978-0-06-057790-2, \$16.99)

Chickadee is the eight-year-old son of Omakayas, the now-grown Objibwe who was a seven-year-old girl in Louise Erdrich's novel *The Birchbark House* (HarperCollins, 1999). Chickadee and his twin, Makoons, live with their family away from white settlements and the danger they bring of disease, following the rhythm of the natural world like their mother did as a child. But when Chickadee and Makoons anger a bitter, older Native man with a practical joke, the man's visiting adult sons kidnap Chickadee, planning to make him their servant. These two, Batiste and Babiche, are both mildly menacing and a source of comic relief (they aren't very bright) as they carry Chickadee away from the woods and the family he's known all his life, to the northern Plains. While Chickadee looks for ways to escape his buffoonish but still-threatening captors, his extended family is following his trail, anxious, worried, and determined to get their beloved boy back. Chickadee finally gets away, then endures an encounter with well-meaning but misguided missionaries, struggles with aching hunger, and finds relief with the help of a chickadee before finally stumbling upon a band of Métis traders that includes his Uncle Quill, who married a Métis woman. Meanwhile, his family is growing more and more worried, not only about Chickadee, but about Makoons, who is pining for his brother and becomes ill. Erdrich's writing is pitch-perfect throughout a story that is full of charm, humor, and edge-of-your-seat moments while revealing difficult and important truths. (Ages 8–11)

Gibbs, Stuart. *Spy School*. Simon & Schuster, 2012. 290 pages (trade 978-1-4424-2182-0, \$15.99)

Ben Ripley is astounded when he's whisked off to the secret CIA-run spy school outside Washington, D.C. The boarding school for kids from sixth through twelfth grades trains America's future spies. But there's a mole in the school, leaking secrets to enemy governments, and Ben discovers he's been hand-picked to attend not because he's great spy material, but to set a trap. The CIA has created a false profile indicating Ben is a brilliant cryptologist, making him a target for would-be assassins. Trying to avoid being kidnapped or killed, Ben finds his only ally—and in fact the one person who seems able to outsmart both enemy spies and school and CIA officials—is über-student Erika, daughter of the dashing and famous American spy Alexander Hale. Stuart Gibbs's over-the-top story has elements of Percy Jackson, Harry Potter, and the movie *Spy Kids*, but the result is an original blend full of action, adventure, and abundant humor. (Ages 9–12)

Harris, R. P. *Tua and the Elephant*. Illustrated by Taceun Yoo. Chronicle Books, 2012. 202 pages (trade 978-0-8118-7781-7, \$16.99)

Tua is at the market when she stumbles upon a young elephant being cruelly treated by the petty thieves who won the pachyderm in a poker game. Once the men fall asleep, smart, capable Tua frees the elephant and leads her through the bustling Thai city of Chiang Mai. They end up at the house of Tua's Auntie Orchid, a flamboyant actress who barely bats an eye at the beast's arrival, not even after the elephant, whom Tua names Pohn-Pohn, opens the refrigerator in search of food. But it's clear Auntie Orchid's house isn't a good elephant refuge, especially when the two thieves show up at the door. A narrow but successful escape has Tua leading the elephant through the city and into the countryside, where she hopes to reach an elephant sanctuary, with the slightly bumbling, slightly menacing thieves hot on her trail. Great descriptive writing combines with lots of action in R. P. Harris's fresh, whimsical tale full of humor and warmth, not the least of which is the tenderness between Tua and Pohn-Pohn. Beautiful book design—including two-color illustrations in purple and gold—add to the pleasure of this lively story that would make a great read-aloud. (Ages 7–10)

Hayles, Marsha. *Breathing Room*. Christy Ottaviano Books / Henry Holt, 2012. 244 pages (trade 978-0-8050-8961-5, \$17.99)

In May 1940, thirteen-year-old Evvy enters Loon Lake Sanatorium in Minnesota for treatment of tuberculosis. Away from home and family, her life revolves around treatments and the other girls in her ward. Some of the staff are insensitive and even cruel. And by today's standards, some of the "cures" to which she is subjected are bizarre. But there are also people and acts of kindness that make a real difference to a sick child far from home, from a particularly compassionate nurse to some of her ward mates, other girls also facing fear and loneliness, whether they show it or not. Marsha Hayles's characterizations of the various girls—their personalities, their insecurities, and their interactions—are especially notable in this fine work of historical fiction. Letters from home also buoy Evvy, and help transform her difficult relationship with her mother

when she finally returns home at story's end. At the start of almost every chapter is a documentary photograph, advertisement, poster, or other element showing some dimension of the time period and TB treatment. All are documented in the end matter, which also includes a lengthy author's note about Hayles's interest in the topic and setting. (Ages 9–13)

Hiaasen, Carl. *Chomp*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 290 pages (trade 978-0-375-86842-9, \$16.99)

Wahoo's father, a professional wild animal wrangler in Florida, hasn't been able to work much since a dead iguana fell on his head (it froze in a tree during a cold snap). But when the reality TV show Expedition Survival wants to film segments using some of their wild animals, Wahoo and his dad say yes. They need money and the potential paycheck is too good to turn down. It turns out the show's star, intrepid explorer Derek Badger, is more Hollywood hack than hero. An incompetent loser with delusions of grandeur, Derek's stupidity is a real danger (and really funny) when they head with him and the crew into the Everglades to assist with on-location filming. But the real threat to their well-being ends up coming from someone else. Tuna, one of Wahoo's classmates, is on the run from her physically abusive father and takes refuge with Wahoo and his dad on location. But Tuna's angry dad has every intention of getting his daughter back, even if it means tracking her through Florida swamps. True to form, author Carl Hiaasen offers up a novel in which much of the action and quite a few of the characters are over-the-top. Hiaasen deftly incorporates moments of high humor into a story that manages to comment on both serious situations (abuse) and the absurdity (reality TV) of our world. (Ages 10–13)

L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time: The Graphic Novel*. Adapted by Hope Larson. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2012. 392 pages (trade 978-0-374-38615-3, \$19.99)

Fifty years after the original publication of *A Wrinkle in Time*, Madeleine L'Engle's timeless story of Meg Murry's search for her missing father amid time and space is released for a new audience of readers in graphic novel format. This straightforward retelling hits all the high points of the original, while capturing fantastical elements such as Mrs Whatsit, Mrs Who, Mrs Which, and Aunt Beast, as well as the soulless rigidity of Camazotz, in Hope Larson's clean, well-imagined art. Once again, with Calvin O'Keefe's help, Meg Murry calls on her courage and love to save her father and Charles Wallace—as well as all of humanity—and reunite her family. (Ages 9–13)

Lin, Grace. *Dumpling Days*. Little, Brown, 2012. 261 pages (trade 978-0-316-12590-1, \$15.99)

Pacy and her family are spending a month over the summer in Taiwan. Pacy is excited to see her grandparents and other relatives, and eager to eat as many different kinds of dumplings as she can. But she's also wary: her mother has signed Pacy and her sisters up for art classes with other Taiwanese American children. Pacy has been called a "Twinkie" in the past by Chinese American kids who think she's too "white." During weeks spent in bustling Taipei with their mother's relatives, and in a country village with their father's, Pacy and

her sisters are immersed in family, food, and culture. The unfamiliarity of everything from language to public bathrooms makes Pacy appreciate how hard it must have been for her parents when they came to the United States. But in the art class, Pacy is frustrated. The kids don't tease her, but the girl sitting next to her is determined to be the best in the class—a position Pacy is used to holding when it comes to art. Grace Lin's latest novel about Pacy, first introduced in *The Year of the Dog* (Little, Brown, 2006), followed by *The Year of the Rat* (Little, Brown, 2008), is another sparkling, lively offering, but not without depth as Pacy learns to fully embrace being Taiwanese and American. (Ages 7–10)

Lin, Grace. *Starry River of the Sky*. Little, Brown, 2012. 288 pages (trade 978-0-316-12595-6, \$17.99)

Runaway Rendi reluctantly takes a job as chore boy at the inn in the struggling Village of Clear Sky. His plan was to get farther away from home, but he was caught stowing away in a wine merchant's wagon. Rendi hopes he'll get another chance to stow away, but the only guest who comes to the inn is Madame Chang, who doesn't leave. She does tell wonderful stories, about a gentle man who grows cruel with power, and his grieving wife who eventually transforms into the moon. Rendi finds this interesting because the moon is missing from the sky each night, and at first he seems to be the only one who's noticed. He also thinks he's the only one who can hear the weeping that permeates the air once darkness falls. Then he realizes Madame Chang hears it too. As she did in *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* (Little, Brown, 2009), Grace Lin once again fashions an intriguing plot that weaves in versions of traditional Chinese tales. In this case, the tales reflect new dimensions of the characters that populate the world in which the story is set. When Rendi, too, starts telling stories, he reveals the past he left behind—a past that catches up to him when travelers finally do arrive at the inn. Beautiful bookmaking, with decorated chapter headings and lovely, occasional full-page, full-color illustrations complete this distinctive offering that affirms the power of forgiveness and the value of love and family. (Ages 8–12)

Lorenzi, Natalie Dias. *Flying the Dragon*. Charlesbridge, 2012. 233 pages (trade 978-1-58089-434-0, \$16.95)

Cousins Hiroshi and Skye are thrown together against their will after Hiroshi's family moves from Japan to the Virginia community where Skye and her family live. Hiroshi is struggling with English; Skye is struggling to master a Japanese class her parents insist she take—she must place into the Advanced Class or miss playing on a high-level soccer team in the summer. So working out an arrangement where they help one another seems logical. But there is more than a divide of language and culture between them, there is jealousy: Hiroshi resents having to share Grandfather, who moved with them from Japan, with Skye. For her part, Skye resents Hiroshi not only because she has to help him navigate fifth grade, but because she almost never gets time alone with the grandfather she has just met. But their grandfather's failing health, and his wish that the two work together to compete in the annual kite-flying competition in Washington, D.C., forces them into a partnership that provides them with both satisfaction

and solace in author Natalie Dias Lorenzi's satisfying, emotionally authentic novel that alternates between Skye's and Hiroshi's voices. (Ages 9–12)

Morpurgo, Michael. *Shadow*. U.S. edition: Feiwel and Friends, 2012. 180 pages (trade 978–0–312-60659–6, \$16.99)

Aman and his mother are Afghan refugees in England illegally. Now, six years after arriving, they've been arrested and are being held in the Yarl's Wood detention center, awaiting deportation back to a country where they will not be safe. Aman's best friend from school is Matt, and Matt's grandpa, a retired journalist, reluctantly visits Aman at his grandson's request. Much of Michael Morpurgo's novel—and its strongest dimension—is Aman's story of what happened in Afghanistan as he and his family are persecuted by the Taliban. Although dogs as pets are counter to Aman's culture, the boy feels a connection to a stray, injured dog he finds while they are living in a cave. That dog, trained to sniff out IEDs, has been separated from British soldiers, and when Aman and his mother decide to flee, the dog is both their protector and, at times, guide. When they end up meeting the unit to which the dog belongs, the soldiers do what they can for Aman and his mother, but eventually the two are on their own again. The ending of this tale that underscores the plight of Afghan refugees may stray a little too much toward wish fulfillment, but readers will appreciate the message that speaking out against injustice can make a difference, while myriad details ground the rest of the telling in realism. (Ages 9–12)

Murphy, Sally. *Toppling*. Illustrated by Rhian Nest James. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2012. 121 pages (trade 978–0–7636-5921–9, \$15.99)

John is part of a group of tightly knit fifth-grade boys. After one of them, his best friend Dom, is diagnosed with cancer, John worries that his friend will die. Dom has surgery to remove a kidney, and then undergoes chemotherapy. John misses Dom, and feels guilty when he finds himself forgetting him long enough to laugh with his other friends. But visiting Dom at the hospital is awkward, especially at first. Meanwhile, Ky, another schoolmate who isn't part of their group and is a bit of a bully, reveals through his work on an independent project that he has been hurt by cancer, too. Sally Murphy's sensitive, accessible novel in verse stays firmly grounded in John's fifth-grade perspective, and seamlessly integrates John's unique interest—setting up huge numbers of dominoes in a pattern and then toppling them. (“I do not want to see Dom topple.”) Although Dom's future health is uncertain, the book ends on a note of hope and an act of solidarity among Dom's friends—old and new. (Ages 7–10)

Palacio, R.J. *Wonder*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 315 pages (trade 978–0–375-86902–0, \$15.99)

Even though he'd like to think of himself as an ordinary kid, Auggie Pullman knows he isn't. He has severe facial anomalies; almost anyone seeing him for the first time visibly reacts. Auggie is starting fifth grade at Beecher Prep, a huge change and challenge after being homeschooled all his life. He makes friends with Jack and things seem to be going okay until the day he overhears Jack talking about him. Auggie is crushed by what Jack says. It's a devastating,

unsettling moment followed by a shift in point of view: Readers are suddenly thrust into life from the perspective of Auggie's teenage sister, Via. Later Jack, struggling to find the courage and the strength to be a good friend, and Summer, a girl comfortable with being Auggie's friend and waiting for Auggie to fully trust her, become the voices carrying the story. Via's boyfriend, and her estranged best friend, also become tellers of this tale, which eventually comes full circle back to Auggie. The multiple points of view are tremendously effective, giving remarkable depth and range to Auggie's story over the course of his fifth-grade year while developing characters whose own stories are intriguing. Auggie emerges as a boy with faults and flaws like anyone, and if there's a bit of an after-school-special quality to the book's ending, with Auggie winning over the hearts and minds of so many, it is also an ending pitch-perfect for readers who will benefit from having the values of tolerance and courage and friendship clearly delineated in R. J. Palacio's surprising and affecting debut novel. (Ages 10–13)

Pennypacker, Sara. *Summer of the Gypsy Moths*. Balzer + Bray / HarperCollins, 2012. 275 pages (trade 978-0-06-196420-6, \$15.99)

Eleven-year-old Stella and twelve-year-old Angel are living in foster care with Stella's great aunt Louise on Cape Cod. When Louise dies suddenly, the girls—who've been at odds with one another since they met—decide not to tell anyone. Each feels she has too much to lose if the authorities find out. Stella has a dream that her unreliable mother will show up, inherit Louise's house, and they can live there. Angel is waiting for her aunt to find work in the United States so she can live with her. The two bury Louise in the garden and convince others she is still alive. They take on Louise's job of caring for the summer cottages next door, with Stella drawing on the beloved collection of "Hints from Heloise" that once belonged to her grandmother to troubleshoot problems while Angel struggles with the simplest tasks. But their situation is far from sustainable. There are days of hunger because they can't easily get to the store, and the stress of maintaining the lie is always present. Still, a friendship blossoms between the two. Perhaps more surprising, each girl forges a relationship with Louise in death that she never managed while the woman was alive. The tension in Sara Pennypacker's story is eased by moments of warmth, humor, and insight as Stella and Angel learn to truly trust one another—and face inevitable truths—in an exquisitely written novel that is as surprising as it is rewarding. (Ages 8–11)

Schlitz, Laura Amy. *Splendors and Glooms*. Candlewick Press, 2012. 384 pages (trade 978-0-7636-5380-4, \$17.99)

A meaty, intricately plotted gothic novel about two orphans, Lizzie Rose and Parsefall, who are apprenticed to a gifted puppeteer named Grisini. Grisini is also an evil magician, and after the trio gives a private performance at the birthday party of a lonely rich girl named Clara Wintermute, Clara disappears. Not long after, Lizzie Rose and Parsefall discover Grisini has a new puppet and recognize it as the missing girl. Meanwhile, in northern England, a dying witch is in agony due to a powerful stone in her possession—her only relief will come if a child steals the stone. The witch has chosen the apprentices of her long-time adversary Grisini as the most likely thieves. Laura Amy Schlitz's

ominous tale unfolds from multiple points of view—the three children, the magician, and the witch—so that only readers see all the pieces of the puzzle, but finding out just how all those pieces fit together will keep them turning pages. Schlitz builds tension as her characters—especially the three children who've been dealt such different fates and who each own a different kind of sadness—face the challenge of temptations and the dangers of deceit. A story that starts out deliciously sinister draws to a perfect—and perfectly happy—conclusion. (Ages 8–11)

Stead, Rebecca. *Liar & Spy*. Wendy Lamb Books / Random House, 2012. 180 pages (trade 978-0-385-73743-2, \$15.99)

Georges, age twelve, has just moved into a new apartment building in New York City. His father has lost his job and his mother is working double shifts at the hospital to try to make up some of the family income. On one of their first days in the new building, Georges's dad notices a sign posted in the basement for a meeting of a Spy Club, so Georges shows up to see what it's about. The only two members of the club, he learns, are a boy his age, Safer, and his little sister Candy, both of whom are homeschooled. Safer begins training Georges to be a spy, and they set their sights on one mysterious resident in the building, a man whom Safer calls Mr. X. Before long, Safer is asking Georges to do things that make him uncomfortable, such as going into Mr X's apartment when he's not at home. But it turns out that many things aren't what they seem in Rebecca Stead's novel, which ultimately reveals the ways two kids deal with their very different, very real fears by constructing alternate versions of the truth through the stories they share. Does this make Georges an unreliable narrator? Is Safer an unreliable friend? There's plenty for readers to discuss, including a subplot involving bullies with a feel-good resolution that seems unlikely but welcome, just like dimensions of the stories Georges and Safer shared. (Ages 9–12)

Walsh, Pat. *The Crowfield Demon*. U.S. edition: Chicken House / Scholastic Inc., 2012. 360 pages (trade 978-0-545-31769-6, \$16.99)

Picking up two years after the events of *The Crowfield Curse* (Chicken House / Scholastic, 2010), orphaned teen Will continues to live with a small group of monks in a monastery. His life in England in the mid-1300s is grim, with plenty of hard work, bad food, and a cantankerous prior, but Will is content with the company of kind Brother Snail, Shadlok the fay, and especially the hobgoblin, Brother Walter. The monks' abbey is disintegrating, and a stone mason declares that there's more behind the damage than normal wear and tear. A demon is systematically demolishing the structure, and his success is linked to an artifact that Will discovers buried beneath the tile floor. Destroying the artifact would impede the demon's efforts, but that's only possible with magical assistance, which the prior refuses to condone. After a cataclysmic night forces the prior to relent, Will, Brother Snail, and Shadlok join forces to defeat the demon, only to discover that they also must face another foe with an evil agenda. Medieval magic and superstition juxtaposed with Christianity create a fascinating conflict, while the imaginative plot unveiled in the first book continues to unfold. (Ages 9–13)

Fiction for Young Adults

Andrews, Jesse. *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*. Amulet / Abrams, 2012. 295 pages (trade 978-1-4197-0176-4, \$16.95)

Greg Gaines has perfected a system for flying beneath the radar at high school. Now, at the start of his senior year, he's accepted by every clique and sub-clique without having to join any of them. Greg uses self-deprecating humor to cover up his own insecurities, and his only real friend—although he thinks of him more as a coworker—is Earl, an African American boy with whom he bonded in kindergarten over a mutual love of violent video games. This evolved into a mutual love of mostly obscure, arty violent movies, which has turned into a mutual obsession with filmmaking. For years the two of them have been making their own (really bad) backyard versions of films (e.g., *Apocalypse Later*). Then Greg's mom asks him to call Rachel, a classmate he also knows from Hebrew school who's been diagnosed with leukemia. He can't think of a way to get out of it and reluctantly gets in touch and starts visiting her. His ability to blend in at school is shattered when he's inevitably labeled as the boyfriend of the dying girl, although he isn't Rachel's boyfriend and resists feeling anything beyond a sense of obligation until Earl challenges him to be real. A laugh-out-loud, probing novel that looks honestly at life and death is told in a variety of formats, including dialogue, movie scripts, headlines, lists, and prose. (Age 13 and older)

Bacigalupi, Paolo. *The Drowned Cities*. Little, Brown, 2012. 437 pages (trade 978-0-316-05624-3, \$17.99)

A future world battered by climate change, war, and deprivation introduced in *Ship Breaker* (Little, Brown, 2010) continues to emerge as the story moves from the Gulf coast to the area in and around Washington, D.C., now a partially submerged city. Warlords and their troops of boy soldiers battle for dominance with non-stop guerilla hostilities. Mahlia, a "war maggot," recently lost a hand to soldiers, but her friend Mouse saved her from losing more. Now Mouse is in danger—he's been forcibly inducted into a squad of soldier boys—and Mahlia is determined to rescue him. With the assistance of Tool, an enigmatic bioengineered being with whom she forges an unlikely alliance, Mahlia is able to track Mouse—but not before he's been indoctrinated into the soldier boy ranks. Soon all three are ensnared in the rising chaos as two powerful factions fight for supremacy in a setting haunted by U.S. historical artifacts. Chapters alternate between Mahlia's, Mouse's, and Tool's perspectives, and the contrast of the three creates tension and works to efficiently develop the narrative. The characters struggle to balance loyalty and patriotism with the immediacy of self-preservation in a novel that offers equal parts action and introspection. (Age 13 and older)

Bray, Libba. *The Diviners*. Little, Brown, 2012. 578 pages (trade 978-0-316-12611-3, \$19.99)

An elaborate, satisfying supernatural mystery with more than a little of the macabre opens as a recently released dark spirit begins terrorizing 1926 New York City, roaming from the Bowery to the haunts of the wealthy to the streets of Harlem with murder on its mind. Seventeen-year-old Evie O'Neill has come to New York from Ohio, sent to stay with her uncle, curator at the Museum of American Folklore, Superstition and the Occult. Evie has a secret—when she holds an object, she learns things about the person it belonged to. When her uncle is consulted by the police after a gruesome murder, Evie goes along. She touches the shoe buckle of the young dead woman and gets flashes of what happened to her. Meanwhile, in Harlem, Memphis Campbell is worried about his younger brother, Isaiah, who is having visions in his dreams. Memphis himself was once a healer, but his gift failed him when he needed it most and he refuses to try again. Evie and Memphis and other distinctive young adult characters—from Ziegfeld Girl Theta Knight to con man Sam Lloyd—all have supernatural abilities that will be needed as evil descends on the city. In most cases, they've never told anyone what they can do, but as their lives intersect, it becomes apparent fate is showing its hand. By story's end, one mystery is solved, but others are barely beginning to surface, setting the stage for subsequent volumes of this inspired new series set against a richly developed historical backdrop. (Age 13 and older)

Buckell, Tobias S., and Joe Monti, editors. *Diverse Energies*. Tu Books, 2012. 314 pages (trade 978-1-60060-887-2, \$19.95)

A stimulating collection of science fiction stories has the welcome and successful intent of celebrating the “diverse energies” of writers today and the futures they imagine, although a number of those are decidedly bleak. Many of the contributors are writers of color and most of the stories feature characters that are racially and ethnically diverse. It is our world today, projected on a future in which divisions of economics and the possibilities and pitfalls of technology are even more profound. Daniel H. Wilson describes the first days of a robot revolt in the unsettlingly entertaining “Freshee’s Frogurt.” In K. Tempest Bradford’s “Uncertainty Principle,” reality constantly shapeshifts for Iliana, whose past keeps changing because the time/space continuum is being manipulated. Two teenage boys, young lovers, seek a place to call their own in Rahul Kanakia’s bleak Los Angeles of “Next Door.” Paolo Bacigalupi’s “A Pocket Full of Dharma” imagines current political tensions and technology spinning into a future where a homeless boy in the slums of a Chinese city finds himself in possession of the mind and soul of the young Dali Llama, which has been downloaded to a data cube. And Ursula LeGuin’s “Solitude,” about a girl raised among a species on another planet who can’t adjust to human ways of relating, is incredibly original while still reflecting the feel of old-school science fiction. These and other contributions to this mind-expanding work will satisfy science fiction enthusiasts and newcomers to the genre. (Age 12 and older)

Carson, Rae. *The Crown of Embers*. Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins, 2012. 410 pages (trade 978-0-06-202651-4, \$17.99)

Elisa is now ensconced as queen of Joy d'Arena in this sequel to *The Girl of Fire and Thorns* (Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2011), but she's finding it difficult to rule with authority. Poverty among her subjects to possible betrayal within the palace to threats from beyond the borders make her uncertain of the best course of action. With the weight of being a ruler settled heavily on her shoulders there are few people whom she trusts. Hector, head of the Royal Guard, is at the top of a short list, but unspoken tension between them, fueled by mutual attraction neither can nor will admit, complicates their relationship. A sham engagement designed to secure more support for Elisa's position also serves as the impetus for travel across the kingdom, ostensibly to visit the region and meet the subjects where her betrothed is from. In truth Elisa is on a secret mission to attempt to harness the power of her Godstone, in hopes it will help defeat the Invierni who still threaten the kingdom. A would-be assassin adds to the dangers of the journey as Rae Carson continues the satisfying story of a smart, strong-willed young woman caught in the midst of political intrigue, and creating quite a bit of her own. The once confident Elisa is faltering early on, unsure of herself as queen, making the re-emergence of her strength and certainty—in terms of both ruling and romance—a satisfying conclusion to this volume, and one that will have readers clamoring for the next. (Age 12 and older)

Cashore, Kristin. *Bitterblue*. Dial, 2012. 563 pages (trade 978-0-8037-3473-9, \$19.99)

The completion of the story cycle begun with *Graceling* (Harcourt, 2008) and continued with *Fire* (Dial, 2009) focuses on Bitterblue, daughter of Graceling's evil King Leck. Teenage Bitterblue, now ruler of Monsea, witnessed her father's cruelty in the castle but knows she must learn about his reign of terror beyond its walls if she is to become a just ruler. Sneaking out in disguise at night, she meets Teddy and Saf, two young men involved in the underground truth-telling movement intent on bringing the abuse, kidnapping, and murder rampant under Leck into the open. But truth-tellers like Teddy and Saf are turning up dead or accused of crimes. Who could be trying to stop them? Bitterblue's search for answers is complicated by her advisors, who are haunted by the past, and her own half-memories. It's also complicated by falling in love with Saf—a Graceling who doesn't know Bitterblue's true identity until he's falsely accused of murder. When she reveals it to save him, he feels betrayed. Kristin Cashore's rich, complex fantasy brings her trilogy to a satisfying close with characters from all three works coming together. In the process, she creates a haunting, unsettling portrait of manipulation and cruelty as Bitterblue learns about the past, and a hopeful look at how truth and love are sources of strength that set the stage for healing as she faces the future. (Age 14 and older)

Chambers, Aidan. *Dying to Know You*. Amulet, 2012. 275 pages (trade 978-1-4197-0165-8, \$16.95)

Although this story is told from the point of view of a seventy-five-year-old writer, it's all about seventeen-year old Karl, who is in love with Fiorella. Karl

has sought out the assistance of a local writer of young adult novels because he needs help: Fiorella has asked him to give her written responses to several questions so she can determine whether he is worthy of her love. Karl, a dyslexic, feels incapable, and the writer is willing to help him but he has to get to know him first—something that's hard to do because Karl is inarticulate and not exactly forthcoming. Gradually, through their growing friendship, and frequent fishing trips, he learns that Karl is still grieving the death of his father years earlier and that he's uncertain about his future. He's happily working as a plumber's assistant, but he has a secret urge to create sculptures. Karl's character is revealed slowly and mostly through dialogue, through the probing, often amusing, philosophical exchanges between him and the writer. Ultimately, the story explores the role of art in a world that doesn't understand it or care about it, and both Karl and the author grow as a result of their friendship. (Age 14 and older)

Coats, J. Anderson. *The Wicked and the Just*. Harcourt / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. 344 pages (trade 978-0-547-68837-4, \$16.99)

Cecily is the only child of an Englishman who has been granted a burghage in Caernarvon, a walled settlement in Wales, at the end of the thirteenth century. Cecily detests Caernarvon, finding the people backwards and sometimes downright threatening. She longs to return to her life of leisure in northern England. Gwenhyfar, a maid in Cecily's household, seethes with quiet rage at the English invaders. In contrast to Cecily's whining, her voice is clipped and terse as she reveals the destitute conditions under which she lives and the oppression and fear that define life for her and the other Welsh. Moving back and forth between these distinct first-person voices, author J. Anderson Coats develops two credible characters who, by circumstances, are enemies. Neither understands the other's perspective, and their encounters, riveting and tension-filled, further illuminate the terrible imbalance of power between them. That power shifts after Welsh raiders storm Caernarvon and slay many of the English—an attack that is shocking yet no less brutal than what the Welsh have already endured. Coats's vivid novel is authentically harsh, although Cecily offers moments of rueful comic relief in her inability to see the reality around her until she has no choice. The two protagonists are admirably complex and equally affecting by story's end. A historical note provides additional information about the place and the political tensions in the story, both of which were real. (Age 13 and older)

Crowley, Cath. *Graffiti Moon*. U.S. edition: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 259 pages (trade 978-0-375-86953-2, \$16.99)

Out with friends to celebrate the end of high school, Lucy is obsessed with finding the graffiti artist known as Shadow, whose work she loves. Lucy, also an artist and headed for community college, believes she and Shadow will have an instant connection if they meet. Instead, she ends up stuck with high school dropout Ed for the night. He's killing time with his friends Leo and Dillon until it's late enough to break into the high school to steal computers. Ed's friends claim Ed knows Shadow. In truth, Ed IS Shadow. He dropped out of school to help his mom pay bills, and because reading is such a struggle for him. For two

years he worked at a paint store, mentored by Bert, the elderly owner. But Bert's recent death has left Ed without a job and without hope. As he gets to know Lucy, Ed wants to tell her the truth about his identity, but anonymity is what's given him the courage to be honest in his art. In alternating chapters from Lucy's and Ed's perspectives, Australian author Cath Crowley takes a lyrical, gritty, often funny look at teens on the verge of adulthood, and the ways art, creativity, and connection can provide solace, meaning, and hope. The planned robbery becomes a source of both tension and comic relief in this novel full of clever yet believable dialogue among characters it's a pleasure to spend time with. (Age 13 and older)

Danforth, Emily M. *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*. Balzer + Bray / HarperCollins, 2012. 470 pages (trade 978-0-06-202056-7, \$17.99)

After Cam's parents are killed in a car accident in the summer of 1989—a summer when Cam also discovered she likes kissing her best friend, Irene—Cam's Aunt Ruth moves to Miles City, Montana, to take care of her. During high school, Cam fantasizes about beautiful Coley Taylor. Cam and Coley become friends, and eventually more. They keep their relationship a secret until they are caught by Coley's brother. Aunt Ruth sends Cam to spend the 1992–93 school year at God's Promise, a “Christian School and Center for Healing.” She's one of twenty kids in a program for “adolescents yearning to break free from the bonds of sexual sin and confusion by welcoming Jesus Christ into their lives.” Cam has no such yearning, and finds a couple of kindred spirits to help her endure. She also witnesses how some kids at God's Promise struggle to reconcile who they are with what they are being told. Emily Danforth's novel in three parts stands out for its look at the life of a gay teen who has no doubt about her sexuality and no worries that it's wrong even as she is challenged to think otherwise. It also stands out for offering rich, nuanced characters that go far beyond stereotypes—something particularly unusual and refreshing when it comes to the portrayal of conservative Christians. Danforth's ability to explore and convey feeling through action and imagery is wonderful in a book that nonetheless would have benefitted from editing to make it shorter. But even though Cam's journey is long, it's satisfying. (Age 14 and older)

Doyle, Roddy. *A Greyhound of a Girl*. U.S. edition: Amulet / Abrams, 2012. 201 pages (trade 978-1-4197-0168-9, \$16.95)

Twelve-year-old Mary and her mother are both dealing with the impending death of Mary's Granny when Mary encounters an unusual woman on the street near her home. She soon discovers that woman is the ghost of her great-grandmother, Tansey, who wants to get a message to her daughter, Mary's Granny, to ease her passage out of life. All four generations of women and girls—Mary, her mother Scarlett, her Granny Elmer, and Tansey—are the subject of Roddy Doyle's unusual and immensely comforting ghost story. The narrative moves back and forth among their lives, with an emphasis on each one's childhood experiences and mother/daughter bonds. Each is a lively, funny, distinctive character, with the shared moments of humor when they are together full of warmth and delight. Doyle's story, with its wonderful dialogue, culminates in a road trip as the quartet heads out of Dublin into the Irish

countryside in the middle of the night, toward the homestead they haven't seen in years. They are a ghost, a dying woman, a middle-aged woman, and a girl. They are mothers and daughters. They are family. And in the end, that is what Mary and her mother have when Granny dies—knowledge of family, and the love that binds them all. (Age 11 and older)

Ellis, Deborah. *My Name Is Parvana*. Groundwood / House of Anansi Press, 2012. 201 pages (trade 978-1-55498-297-4, \$16.95)

First introduced in *The Breadwinner* (2001), followed by *Parvana's Journey* (2002) and *Mud City* (2003), all published by Groundwood, Parvana is now a prisoner of the U.S. military in Afghanistan, suspected of terrorism. She is frustrating her captors by refusing to answer any questions. In fact she refuses to speak at all. A mixture of present-day narration and flashback, Deborah Ellis's tense, emotionally charged novel moves back and forth between Parvana's experience as a prisoner, subjected to lengthy periods of standing and sleep deprivation in ongoing efforts to get her to talk, and how she came to be arrested. Parvana's strong-willed mother, with whom the teen is often at odds, has established a school for girls. A reluctant student, Parvana becomes a willing teacher when the opportunity presents itself. The school is the first chance at an education for most girls who attend, and for some it's also a haven from abuse. Then the Taliban begins threatening families who send their daughters, and soon the school itself is in jeopardy—they could lose funding from international supporters if too many students drop out. In the chaos following Taliban violence against the school, Parvana is arrested by the U.S. military. She is innocent but her refusal to speak is the greatest power she believes she has. This vivid, at times heart-wrenching look at what the people of Afghanistan—especially women and girls—face, and also how much they can accomplish, is grounded in Parvana's personal story. Ellis skillfully walks a fine line in showing the complexities of U.S. military personnel, who are seen here as individuals driven by frustration, and sometimes fear, but not uncaring. (Age 12 and older)

Erlings, Fridrik. *Fish in the Sky*. Translated from the Icelandic by the author. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2012. 275 pages (trade 978-0-7636-5888-5, \$16.99)

Josh Stephenson has just turned thirteen, and in the weeks following his birthday he begins experiencing physical changes that alarm him, as well as increasing moments of frustration and anger toward his overworked single mother, and deepening sadness at the fact that his father has so little interest in his life. If all this weren't enough, Josh's seventeen-year-old cousin Trudy comes to stay, awakening his anger, but something else as well. In a novel that moves seamlessly between riotously funny and achingly poignant, Icelandic writer Fridrik Erlings offers one of the most honest portrayals of a young teen boy's sexual awakening and emotional turmoil recently seen in adolescent literature. Erling's writing is astonishing for its freshness, full of unexpectedly perfect descriptions of relationships, physical desire, and emotional confusion. There is very real agony for Josh, but also—and ultimately—incredible clarity and transcendence as he moves through and beyond the tumult, and finds support and solace from unexpected sources. Terrific characterizations and wonderfully

developed relationships also distinguish this laugh- and cry-out-loud novel that is European in sensibility, with its unblinking exploration of everything from sexual desire to religion, but universal in potential appeal. (Age 12 and older)

Flake, Sharon G. *Pinned*. Scholastic Press, 2012. 227 pages (trade 978-0-545-05718-9, \$17.99)

Autumn is the only girl on her school wrestling team. She trains and works hard as an athlete but doesn't put in nearly the same effort academically. Her difficulty reading impacts her ability to succeed in almost every class. Her parents insist that Autumn improve her grades or quit wrestling. They're trying to be supportive by helping her, but reading is something with which they, too, struggle. Adonis manages the wrestling team and is a high academic achiever. Born without legs, he uses a wheelchair and has been raised by a mother who has always affirmed his abilities. But he's still reeling from a bullying incident the prior year: All the intelligence in the world can't save you when you're drowning. Autumn has a crush on Adonis. Adonis can't stop thinking about Autumn. He knows you have to be smart to be a good wrestler, so why does she do so poorly in school? Sharon Flake's novel stands out for its strong characterizations, not only of her two protagonists but also of secondary characters. Uptight and rigid, Adonis starts to appreciate Autumn's big heart only after his judgmental behavior forces her to take a step back and consider her own self-worth. A story told in the two African American teens' alternating points of view deals with struggles and fears—of failing, of letting people in—that will resonate with many readers. (Age 12 and older)

George, Madeleine. *The Difference Between You and Me*. Viking, 2012. 256 pages (trade 978-0-670-01128-5, \$16.99)

Raised by ex-hippie parents, sixteen-year-old Jesse considers herself a political activist and anonymously posts manifestos all over her high school. But Jesse is involved with a closeted junior named Emily who is the antithesis of everything Jesse claims she stands for. Jesse is out, but Emily doesn't want anyone to know she's a lesbian, so most of their time together is comprised of heavy make-out sessions in a little-used bathroom. Jesse is so head-over-heels that she doesn't question anything Emily does, including trying to get corporate sponsorship for the prom. Then Jesse meets Esther, a true political activist whose friendship opens Jesse's eyes to authentic grassroots activism born of genuine conviction. Madeleine George's novel moves back and forth among the three young women's stories, although Jesse's is the predominant narrative. George explores teens' perspectives on social issues and activism, looking at how these are influenced by personal experience, as well as by friendship, romance, and peers. Esther's passion for her causes is genuine, but so, too, is her desire to escape an unhappy home. Emily's understanding of political issues is naïve—at times comically—but her inability to come out is very real and poignant. And Jesse comes to realize she deserves to be loved openly, an understanding that grows from the discovery that standing up for what you believe starts with standing up for yourself. (Age 12 and older)

Green, John. *The Fault in Our Stars*. Dutton, 2012. 318 pages (trade 978-0-525-47881-2, \$17.99)

Diagnosed with stage IV thyroid cancer when she was thirteen, Hazel rallied against the odds, although she's still terminally ill. Hazel meets Gus, who had a leg amputated due to osteosarcoma but is currently cancer-free, at a support group for teens with cancer. They share a smart, sassy, darkly humorous outlook on the group itself, and life with cancer. Hazel's favorite book is a novel about Anna, a teen with cancer. She appreciates it for its honesty but obsesses over the way it ends, mid-sentence. The author, who lives in the Netherlands, has never responded to her letters asking what happened to Anna and the other characters, and so Gus uses his request from a foundation granting wishes for kids with cancer to take Hazel to Amsterdam to meet him. That meeting is a dismal disappointment. But while there, Hazel and Gus's relationship advances from friendship to love, and Gus reveals that his cancer has returned. Hazel and Gus are two exceptionally articulate teens, but if author John Green's adolescent characters aren't wholly realistic, their struggles are authentic, from Hazel's fears about how her parents will deal with her eventual death to Gus's unromanticized decline, which ends with him dying. Hazel and Gus's dialogue is witty and entertaining—it's enjoyable spending time with them—but also revealing of the issues they and their families are grappling with. The parents of both teens are well-developed secondary characters, while a visit to the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam offers a richly resonant connection to another teen falling in love and fighting to survive. (Age 12 and older)

Griffin, Molly Beth. *Silhouette of a Sparrow*. Milkweed Editions, 2012. 189 pages (trade 978-1-57131-701-8, \$16.95)

Sixteen-year-old Garnet Richardson is staying with relatives in the Minnesota resort town of Excelsior in the summer of 1926. Both her aunt and slightly younger cousin are far too proper for Garnet, who longs to visit the dance hall and explore the amusement park; she settles for a job working in a hat shop. Bird-lover Garnet immediately thinks of a scarletanager when she meets lively Isabella, a dance-hall girl who comes into the shop. The two girls feel an immediate connection that deepens as they spend time together. Talking to Isabella, and kissing her, feel absolutely right to Garnet, even though she knows the end of summer will bring a return to Minneapolis and a proposal from Teddy, the boy she's been dating but doesn't love. Garnet's developing relationship with Isabella, who knows the costs of independence but also understands its rewards, helps her resolve to apply to college to study birds. Then everything unravels, first when she hears from her mother at home, and then in Excelsior when Garnet and Isabella's relationship is discovered. Molly Beth Griffin's quiet, compelling, beautifully written novel features lyrical descriptions, numerous bird metaphors, and a young woman poised to take flight. (Age 13 and older)

Heiligman, Deborah. *Intentions*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 263 pages (trade 978-0-375-86861-0, \$16.99)

Fifteen-year-old Rachel overhears her rabbi—a man for whom she has respect and appreciation—having sex in the synagogue with a woman he's counseling.

Rachel is devastated, and her sudden cynicism is compounded by the fact that her parents' marriage seems to be foundering. Struggling with feelings of anger and isolation—her best friend has grown more and more distant—she finds herself thinking about the Jewish principle of “intent” and its relationship to behavior. The irony is that Rachel makes several stunningly bad decisions of her own and then tries to avoid the consequences, even as she continues to judge others. She's even torn between two boys who seem to represent the good (Jake) and the bad (Adam), although she discovers they, like everything else, can't be so easily labeled. Rachel is vividly believable, from her language, which often spirals into profanity, to her questionable decision-making, to her inconsistent ability to see beyond herself. But she is also generally well-intentioned, and her poor decision-making exists side by side with thoughtful and courageous acts. Deborah Heiligman's novel has plenty of drama but it's also funny—surprisingly so at times—and this, too, as Rachel discovers, is part of what life can deliver. (Age 14 and older)

Herbstein, Manu. *Brave Music of a Distant Drum*. U.S. edition: Red Deer Press, 2012. 175 pages (pbk). 978-0-88995-470-0, \$12.95)

Ama was captured and bound into slavery as a young woman. Here she recounts her life to her adult son, Zacharias, who was raised from the age of ten in the family of his white owners. After being sold as a slave, Ama became the mistress of the aging Dutch governor of a plantation in the Caribbean. For a while her life was one of relative ease—something for which she later felt shame. But that one period was respite in a life marked by brutality and her own fierce determination to survive. Zacharias, a devout Christian, barely remembers life with his mother, so he is initially put off by her pagan practices and grim account of her past. At times her story is almost too painful to hear, and Zacharias is resistant to believing bad things about the white family who raised him, and who have promised his eventual freedom. But Ama insists he listen, knowing his future is dependent on understanding the past. This intense, painful narrative, adapted from the author's adult book, *Ama: A Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (EReads, 2000), may be of particular interest for upper-level high school classrooms. (Age 16 and older)

Hicks, Faith Erin. *Friends with Boys*. First Second, 2012. 224 pages (pbk). 978-1-59643-556-8, \$15.99)

The youngest of four siblings, Maggie is starting ninth grade at public school after years of being homeschooled. Maggie has three older brothers, a father, and a mother who has recently left their home. After years of social interactions centered on her family, Maggie gradually figures out how to function at school, and makes friends with Lucy and her brother Alistair. Alistair is a former popular boy, who has made a break with his cool volleyball team clique, despite the social backlash that creates. Maggie's life without a mother is coming around—except for the unhappy ghost who is haunting her, seeming to plead for her help. This graphic novel which looks at all kinds of relationships—between siblings, between friends, between not-so-friendly school peers, and between parents and children—offers the ghost as a metaphor for Maggie's inability to control everything in her life. She can make her own friends, but she can't figure

out what the ghost needs, just like she can't know exactly why her mom left, or fix things to bring her home again. (Age 13 and older)

Jarzab, Anna. *The Opposite of Hallelujah.* Delacorte Press, 2012. 452 pages (trade 978-0-385-73836-1, \$16.99)

After joining a convent eight years earlier, Caro's older sister Hannah has renounced her vows and returned home. To sixteen-year-old Caro, Hannah feels like a stranger, and she resents her sister's intrusion into her comfortable life as an only child. Caro lies to her friends and new boyfriend to cover up Hannah's return, rather than have to explain her presence. It's not easy to have Hannah around. She's withdrawn and clearly depressed—in fact, she's severely anorexic, and her parents struggle with how to help their adult daughter. Caro finds support in the unlikely friendship of a priest who isn't put off by her anti-religious opinions and who shares her love of science. A tragic accident during Hannah's childhood, which her parents have been tiptoeing around for years and which still haunts Hannah, slowly comes to light. Caro, at first relentlessly rude to her sister, gradually develops empathy for Hannah's physical and emotional state, and pushes her parents to face the reality of their daughter's condition. Just the right amount of humor brightens this story of sisters reunited and a realistic family struggling to find the right path through a difficult time. (Age 14 and older)

Johnson, Angela. *A Certain October.* Simon & Schuster, 2012. 158 pages (trade 978-0-689-86505-3, \$16.99)

High school junior Scotty lives with her dad, stepmom, and seven-year-old autistic brother Keone. One afternoon she's on the train with Keone and talking to Kris, a boy she's held a grudge against since he put gum in her hair when they were much younger. But this day the grudge doesn't matter: she and Kris are flirting. Then there is the screeching of train brakes and the slow motion of an accident unfolding. "I see Keone flying through the air and I think for a minute he must feel like Superman." Keone ends up in a coma. Kris is killed. And Scotty is left burdened—by worry over Keone and grief and guilt over Kris, who should have gotten off the stop before but didn't, because of her. Angela Johnson's story, set over a single month, unfolds in a narrative that moves back and forth between the before and after of that event, between days when everything seemed so carefree for Scotty, and days when it seems nothing will be easy again. Small details and exchanges reveal the weight and meaning of relationships that sustain her, from her stepmother's fierce love to the comforting presence of friends with whom she can move seamlessly between laughter and tears. Johnson's storytelling is both restrained and compelling. She doesn't hold readers in suspense or build to some contrived cathartic release; instead, Scotty's journey is one that mirrors the way deep sadness in real life comes and goes, and gradually begins to ease. (Age 12 and older)

Johnson, J. J. *The Theory of Everything.* Peachtree, 2012. 334 pages (trade 978-1-56145-623-9, \$16.95)

Sarah has not been able to turn off what she calls "the snark box" in the months since her best friend Jamie died. Sarah was the only one present during the

freak accident that killed Jamie, and her grief and guilt come out in the form of sarcasm and cutting attacks as she pushes people away. It's affected Sarah's relationships with everyone, from her almost-too-perfect boyfriend to Jamie's twin brother to her own brother and parents. She's also started to fail classes, and that's when her parents fight back, threatening to take away things that she's relying on, like getting her license, until she tries to pull it together. When Mr. Rowan offers Sarah a job helping cut and sell Christmas trees, she takes it against her mother's wishes, but Sarah senses it's just what she needs. Although her parents are truly trying, it turns out Mr. Rowan understands Sarah in a way that few people can, because he, too, has experienced the unthinkable. J. J. Johnson focuses on the very real feelings of Sarah and the people around her in a novel that deftly balances depth and humor. Johnson's story is also distinguished by incredibly vivid moments and intense revelations that are never sensationalized. (Age 12 and older)

Kim, Derek Kirk. *Vanishing Point*. (Tune: Book 1) First Second, 2012. 155 pages (pbk. 978-1-59643-516-2, \$16.99)

Andy Go is a dropout. He exits school after his third year in the Illustration Department at the College of Visual Arts in San Francisco, sure that his career is about to take off and further education is unnecessary. Andy gets a rude awakening: No one wants to hire him. His Korean American parents are dismayed by his failure to finish school or stay employed, and his father finally issues an ultimatum: Get a job, any job, or don't come home. His last-gasp job interview comes after responding to a vague ad for a position at a zoo. He assumes it's for an animal caretaker, but he couldn't be more wrong. It turns out he's up for the position of human exhibit at an alien zoo, and the father-daughter extraterrestrials conducting the interview are desperate. In fact, they keep sweetening the benefit pot (Medical coverage! Retirement package! Three weeks paid vacation!) until the offer is too good to pass up—at least that's what Andy's mother says. Derek Kirk Kim's hilarious graphic novel ends with Andy traveling by spaceship to start his new job in a story to be continued, and featuring a subplot about Andy's sweet, somewhat lust-filled crush on a fellow art school student. (Age 16 and older)

King, A. S. *Ask the Passengers*. Little, Brown, 2012. 292 pages (trade 978-0-316-19468-6, \$17.99)

Astrid Jones hates the small-mindedness of her community: the constant gossip, the concern about status, the hypocrisy. And she hates what it's done to her family since moving there when she was ten: Her younger sister, Ellis, seems to thrive on conformity. Their mother has become rigid, controlling, and shallow. And their unhappy dad spends more time stoned than not. Astrid's best friend is one half of a super-couple with a secret: Kristina and her boyfriend Justin both are gay. But Astrid has a secret too: She's falling in love with Dee Roberts, a girl from a neighboring town with whom she works. Astrid isn't ashamed, just uncertain about her sexuality, and resentful of pressure to define herself with a label. In her AP Humanities class, Astrid argues against Zeno's paradox: the idea that motion does not exist. It's a resonant subplot in a story in which motion and stasis—both literal and symbolic—are huge. Astrid is also fascinated with

Socrates, whom she starts using as a sounding board in her life (she gives him the nickname Frank). And then there is Astrid's habit of sending out her love to the passengers in planes flying overhead. It's a way to feel connected to the larger world. Individual passengers receive her love—feel it in the moment, this unexpected brightness. It matters as they grapple with issues in their lives that echo Astrid's own questions about loving others and loving herself. A. S. King's fearless, beautiful novel is populated by characters who are messy and human, full of poignant imperfections. King has penned a work of realism that is magical in the telling. (Age 13 and older)

Knowles, Jo. *See You at Harry's*. Candlewick Press, 2012. 310 pages (trade 978-0-7636-5407-8, \$16.99)

Twelve-year-old Fern is the third of four children. Her older sister, Sarah, is taking a year off between high school and college to work at the family's restaurant. Her older brother, Holden, is just starting high school and coming out to his family. Her younger brother Charlie, age three, is exceedingly cute and spoiled rotten. Fern's parents run a second-generation family restaurant, Harry's, something of an institution in town. Her work-consumed father is always trying to increase business while her mother balances the restaurant with holding things together at home. As Fern starts middle school, Holden makes her promise to sit up front on the bus. She does, only to discover he's trying to shield her from the terrible bullying he endures in the back. Readers get to know individual characters and the dynamics of this family—loving, rancorous, harried; in short, typical—before everything's disrupted. Tragedy strikes—unexpected and devastating—and in the aftermath, Fern is both grief-stricken and numb. She's also filled with guilt, blaming herself for what happened. Her mother retreats into depression; her father and older sister step up, trying to parent and provide support while dealing with their own pain and guilt; and Holden absents himself as much as possible from the family. Author Jo Knowles beautifully reveals the weight of grief and the distance back to solid ground that can bear it in this affecting novel that skillfully integrates a teen coming out into a larger story about things that matter most. (Ages 11–14)

Kokie, E. M. *Personal Effects*. Candlewick Press, 2012. 341 pages (trade 978-0-7636-5527-3, \$16.99)

The already tense atmosphere in Matt Foster's house only tightened after his older brother, T. J., was killed in Iraq. Matt moves through the world like a clenched fist, ready to explode. His dad often does explode, with words, and sometimes physically. He also refuses to talk about T. J. or let Matt see any of T. J.'s things. Then T. J.'s footlockers arrive, and immediately disappear behind the closed door of T. J.'s old room. Matt secretly begins looking for his brother among the items inside. T. J. had made a real effort to connect with Matt on his last visit, and the brother Matt glimpsed then is echoed in some of what he finds. But there's a surprise, too—a huge one. Correspondence and photos hint at T. J. having been in love with Celia, a fellow soldier, and the two of them having a child together. Celia's letters are postmarked from Madison, Wisconsin, and Matt heads off on an illicit road trip—Pennsylvania to Madison—in hopes of meeting her and discovering more about T. J. What

he finds when he arrives is wholly unexpected, and at first unsettling. But T. J. is there after all, in the memories of people who loved him deeply and understand how much Matt, too, loves and misses the older brother he was just starting to know as a man. E. M. Kokie's intense and deeply moving debut novel is set in 2007 and rooted in wonderfully developed characters and the relationships among them. (Age 14 and older)

LaFevers, Robin. *Grave Mercy*. Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 549 pages (trade 978-0-547-62834-9, \$16.99)

After being rescued from her abusive new husband as a young teenager, Ismae learns she is Death's daughter and sent to live with others who share her lineage at the convent of St. Mortain. She is trained as an assassin and taught that the work she does in the service of Death is noble. But is she really just a political pawn? That question begins to torment Ismae when she's sent to carry out her latest mission, at Brittany's high court. She's there under the ruse of being betrothed to Duval, brother to the young duchess. When the mark of Mortain appears on Duval, identifying him as her next target, Ismae is torn between duty and treachery: She is falling in love with Duval and believes she can trust him, which means she can't trust everything she's learned. Ismae is determined to serve Death her own way by story's end in a novel full of intrigue, romance, and duplicity, and destined to be continued. Ismae is one of several female characters who showcase many kinds of strength, some of them unexpected. (Age 14 and older)

Lake, Nick. *In Darkness*. Bloomsbury, 2012. 341 pages (trade 978-1-59990-743-7, \$17.99)

The heartbreaking poverty and violence in Site Solèy, Haiti, are brought into the light for readers here in this singular, compelling novel that moves back and forth between the lives of Shorty, a teen in contemporary Haiti, and Toussaint L'Ouverture, leader of the eighteenth-century revolution that freed Haiti from France. As Shorty, trapped in building rubble after the devastating earthquake, struggles to stay alive, he reflects on his childhood and young adulthood. His father was murdered by one of two warring gang factions tied to opposing political leaders and drugs. His twin sister disappeared that day, kidnapped, Shorty thinks, by the gang. A part of his heart had been missing ever since and he dreamed of someday rescuing her, gradually getting drawn into gang life himself. As Shorty grows weaker in the rubble, he dreams about L'Ouverture, and the historical portions of the narrative shift to the rebel slave leader's point of view. Author Nick Lake works with both fact and imagination as he conjures a mystical connection between the two characters while grounding each of their stories in the realities of their times. Lake reinforces the connection between Shorty and L'Ouverture with similar scenes in each time period described in identical or nearly identical language. The historical fight for freedom underscores the tragedy of contemporary life in Site Solèy, where poverty is another form of slavery and violent drug lords are also saviors, providing food and medicine when others—including international relief agencies—can't, or won't. (Age 14 and older)

Lanagan, Margo. *The Brides of Rollrock Island*. U.S. edition: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 305 pages (trade 978-0-375-86919-8, \$17.99)

As a child, Misskaella is an awkward outsider in the village of Potshead on Rollrock Island. She discovers she has the magic to draw the human life force from the seals that congregate on the shore. The beautiful selkie women that emerge from the sealskins are irresistible to human men, and calling them out becomes adult Misskaella's revenge for years of being shunned and ignored. The men on the island begin abandoning their wives for these breathtaking, sensual beings who are innocent of any wrongdoing—they know nothing of human ways or morals. Readers experience the weariness and bitterness and longing of Misskaella; then the absolute betrayal of an island woman whose husband and adult son take these new lovers; then the absolute desire of one of the young men—unfettered by any sense of wrongdoing because the attraction is all-consuming. Then there is the longing of the seal women, who are now raising their sons as humans on the island. They love their husbands and children, and are loved by them in return, but find it harder and harder to be separate from their sealskins and the ocean and the daughters they had to return to the sea as newborns so they wouldn't die. Finally, there are the sons of the seal mothers, and one in particular who realizes he has to help his mother, and all the others, return to the sea because they are suffering. With each shift in point of view, author Margo Lanagan explores another dimension of desire and pain and love and longing. Her exquisitely told, mesmerizing story engages all the senses while seamlessly weaving together the fey and human worlds. (Age 14 and older)

Leavitt, Martine. *My Book of Life by Angel*. Margaret Ferguson Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2012. 246 pages (trade 978-0-374-35123-6, \$17.99)

Sixteen-year-old Angel is living with manipulative Call, who offered attention, physical affection, and a bottomless supply of crack after her mother's death. Now Angel is turning tricks for Call on a Vancouver street corner. Then Call shows up with eleven-year-old Melli, and Angel knows she can't stand by and watch him destroy her life. Determined to save Melli if not herself, she stops using crack, suffering mightily from withdrawal, and bargains with Call to earn the money of two girls each night, as long as he won't force Melli to start working. Martine Leavitt's fearless journey into Angel's dark world is written as a novel in verse in Angel's quietly haunting voice. Chapter headings are taken from *Paradise Lost*, a book that one of Angel's customers has her read and discuss with him. The story is powerful, the writing affecting and compelling, and Leavitt's afterword, about a serial killer who targeted women and girls on the streets of Vancouver during the 1980s and 1990s while police failed to vigilantly pursue the crimes, is heartbreaking and enraging. (In the novel, Angel's friend Serena has recently disappeared and rumors and fear abound.) But there is also, before that end, Angel's triumph as she outsmarts Call, gets Melli to safety, and takes the first steps toward reclaiming her life. (Age 15 and older)

Long, Mark, and Jim Demonakos. *The Silence of Our Friends*. Illustrated by Nate Powell. U.S. edition: First Second / Roaring Brook Press, 2012. 198 pages (pbk. 978-1-59643-618-3, \$16.99)

A graphic novel based on a period in the childhood of coauthor Mark Long tells of the friendship between a white TV news reporter (based on Long's father) and a Black professor at Texas State University during the student demonstrations in Houston in 1967. A white police officer was shot and killed during a demonstration, and five Black students have been charged with his murder. The reporter witnessed the shooting and knows the students are innocent—the officer was accidentally shot by another policeman. But he's being pressured by his boss at the TV station to remain silent. In a city fiercely divided along racial lines, portions of the story unfold through the eyes of the two men's children, all of whom are affected by the unease and unrest. The authors acknowledge doing a “balancing act” between fact and fiction in telling the story—many events, including the murder charge and trial—are true and detailed more fully in Mark Long's note. But the timeline has been adjusted and it would have been helpful to have this clearly delineated. Still, the emotional impact of this tense telling, appropriately illustrated in black-and-white, is powerful. (Age 12 and older)

Lowry, Lois. *Son*. Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 393 pages (trade 978-0-547-88720-3, \$17.99)

The fourth and final entry in the cycle of stories that began with *The Giver* opens in the same time and place as that novel but focuses on a girl named Claire—birthmother to baby Gabe. She is reassigned to the fishery after giving birth to the “Product,” but in an oversight is not given the drugs that everyone takes from adolescence on to stop them from feeling attachment. Claire loves this child she cannot claim, and when she learns Jonas has taken her baby and escaped, she finds a way out on a supply boat. Part 2 is set in the community where Claire washes ashore after the boat is caught in a storm. She remembers almost nothing of her past. Claire's memory comes back in a rush when she assists the healer Alys at a birth. Determined to continue the journey to find her son, but the community is locked in by the sea on one side and dangerous cliffs on the other. The only person who ever tried leaving was a young man named Einar, who came back crippled. But Einar agrees to help Claire, overseeing rigorous physical and mental training to prepare her for the climb up the cliff and what she will face at the top: the Trademaster. Part 3 finds Claire living in the village of *The Messenger*. Gabe is a teenager there, building a boat because he wants to leave and find out about his past. Claire hasn't told Gabe who she is because she traded her youth to find him: She's an old woman, now near death. Jonas doesn't know who Claire is either, but he does sense that Gabe possesses a special ability, and when the Trademaster appears outside town, he knows Gabe is the one destined to confront him if everything they have worked so hard to build—a community of trust and respect—is to be saved. Lois Lowry affirms the power of love and of peaceful resistance as she brings her quartet to a satisfying and inspiring close. (Ages 11–15)

Lyon, George Ella. *Holding On to Zoe*. Margaret Ferguson Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2012. 166 pages (trade 978-0-374-33264-8, \$17.99)

There is something not quite right about teenage mother Jules from the beginning of George Ella Lyon's novel. It's not just that her life—working in a factory while trying to raise her baby—is such a challenge, it's also that she thinks of her baby daughter, Zoe, as “the answer to everything.” Jules feels so needy, and somewhat nebulous, in a way that is unsettling. A few chapters in, Lyon blows the plot wide open with a revelation that transforms this from a tale of teen pregnancy and parenting to one about the emotional and psychological trauma of abuse. Jules is delusional, and her journey through psychosis is both compelling and deeply disturbing as she struggles to come to terms with her past and, with help, realizes that there are people in the real world who love and care about her. (Age 13 and older)

Magoon, Kekla. *37 Things I Love (In No Particular Order)*. Henry Holt, 2012. 224 pages (trade 978-0-8050-9465-7, \$16.99)

Ellis's father was badly injured two years ago in a fall on a construction site, and he's been in a coma ever since. Ellis's mom had promised that they would never withdraw life support unless she and Ellis agreed the time had come. Now, as Ellis is finishing her sophomore year of high school, she learns that, for her mom, the time has come. Ellis vehemently opposes the idea—she visits her Dad at the ALF (assisted living facility) daily and tells him everything going on in her life, something she's unable to do with anyone else. Her best friend Abby is much too wrapped up in the drama of her own life, most of which revolves around enticing a cute senior to invite her to the graduation dance, to notice Ellis's emotional turmoil. When Abby turns meanly on Ellis at a drunken party, Ellis happens into a conversation with Cara. Cara, Abby, and Ellis were once a trio of friends, but Cara fell by the wayside and Ellis doesn't know why, although both Cara and Abby do. The conversation leads to a rekindling of Ellis and Cara's friendship, and, for Cara at least, the hope of something more in Kekla Magoon's lyrical, nuanced story about family, friendship, and love that explores the pain, confusion, and joy so often a part of all three. Magoon quietly reveals how Ellis's eyes open to Abby's true character, to the possibility of romance with Cara, and to a future that does not include her dad. (Age 12 and older)

Magoon, Kekla. *Fire in the Streets*. Aladdin / Simon & Schuster, 2012. 321 pages (trade 978-1-4424-2230-8, \$15.99)

Fourteen-year-old Maxie spends a lot of time at the Black Panther office. She's eager to become a full-fledged Panther like her older brother, Raheem. The Panthers have purpose and passion and she wants to be part of making a difference. Instead, she's given menial tasks, from stuffing and sealing envelopes to babysitting. At home, Maxie's family life is unraveling—her mother, marginally reliable at the best of times, has lost her job and is bringing home men to try to plug the economic hole in their lives. Raheem is trying to help make ends meet, but can't do enough for the family to avoid an eviction notice. Meanwhile, an attack on the Panther office by police intensifies Maxie's desire to become a real Panther and carry a gun—she was the only one not able to

fire back in the chaos. Then it becomes clear someone in the office is passing information to the police, and Maxie decides she'll prove her worth by figuring out who it is. Kekla Magoon's sequel to *The Rock and the River* (Aladdin, 2009) stands on its own, illuminating the discrimination and poverty that motivate Maxie, and the divide between the African American community in 1968 Chicago and white society, even whites such as war protestors who stand against the status quo. Magoon's writing keeps getting better as she skillfully offers insight into this time and place through characters who represent a variety of perspectives and experiences. (Age 12 and older)

Manzano, Sonia. *The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano*. Scholastic Press, 2012. 205 pages (trade 978-0-545-32505-9, \$17.99)

Fourteen-year-old Evelyn Serrano gets caught between her meek, mild-mannered mother and her fiery, activist grandmother when a group calling itself the Young Lords begins advocating for social change in Spanish Harlem in 1969. The neighborhood is neglected by the city—even garbage pickup is irregular—and many residents struggle to make ends meet. Evelyn's abuela arrives from Puerto Rico just as the Young Lords are gearing up for action. Abuela has been a political activist most of her adult life. Evelyn is at first a bit embarrassed and then inspired by her grandmother's brassiness and her courage. She sees little to admire in her own mother, who spends her days and nights working in her stepfather's store, cooking, cleaning, and nursing her dream of someday owning a house in the Bronx. Vivid descriptions of the time and place, wonderful character development, and realistic family tensions ground this vibrant story about a fictional family caught up in actual events: The Young Lords were real, and they really did occupy a church in the neighborhood, demanding space to provide social services for neighborhood residents. Evelyn and her grandmother become part of that occupation. To Evelyn's surprise, so too does her mother—at first to make sure Evelyn is safe, but eventually she becomes—in her own quiet way—part of the push for change. Evelyn discovers that her mother's strength is not relentless activism but emotional constancy—one of the few things she discovers Abuela is incapable of providing. (Age 12 and older)

Marchetta, Melina. *Froi of the Exiles*. (The Lumatere Chronicles, Book Two) U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2012. 593 pages (trade 978-0-7636-4759-9, \$18.99)

Froi, who knows nothing about his origins, has lived in Lumatere since being given refuge there by Queen Isaboe. When Charyn rebels arrive and convince Froi to assassinate the cruel Charyn king—the man behind so much of the horror from which Lumatere is still recovering—Froi travels to Charyn posing as potential consort for the king's daughter, Quintana. It turns out Froi isn't the only one in the palace intent on killing the king. Gargarin, Froi's crippled guide, is also out for murder. In the chaos following the successful assassination, Froi discovers truths about his past no less unsettling than the realization that he is falling in love with Quintana. Her mind has fractured into multiple personalities after years of abuse and emotional neglect, but it is also sharp and fierce, piercing Froi with tenderness. Meanwhile, back in Lumatere, Lucien

of the Monts is dealing with Charyn refugees in his valley and with Phaedra, the Charyn wife he rejected, who is determined to comfort her people. In this sequel to *Finnikin of the Rock* (U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2010), Melina Marchetta has penned another rich, labyrinthine tale featuring characters of exceptional complexity, including a number of strong, fascinating women. The realities of war and the ways of the power-hungry are revealed and condemned in a novel that offers affirmation of the dignity that all people deserve in both life and death. (Age 13 and older)

Marsden, Carolyn. *My Own Revolution*. Candlewick Press, 2012. 174 pages (trade 978-0-7636-5395-8, \$16.99)

Patrik and his friends are nervously purchasing a Beatles record on the black market in the opening chapter of a novel examining oppression under the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s through the eyes of a teenage boy. The record is more than just good music to the teens, it's also symbolic of freedom. Patrik's parents have refused to join the Communist Party. They've also avoided making a decision about trying to leave the country. Then Danika, Patrik's closest friend, announces that her father is joining the Party. Danika—the girl who helped Patrik deface the statue of Vladimir Lenin outside their school. Danika—the girl he's recently realized he likes as more than a friend. The news is more than personal heartbreak for Patrik. Danika's father joined for the perks—little things that will make their spare lives easier—but even without fierce Party loyalty it's a threat: Danika and her parents are too close to their lives for comfort, there's too much they might tell. This becomes painfully clear after Patrik's act of defiance during a May Day parade leaves the family no choice: They must try to flee. Carolyn Marsden reveals the fear that is part of every day for Patrik and his family while underscoring its impact on touchstones of teenage experience, from falling in love to wanting to rebel, in this tense story. (Age 12 and older)

Master, Irfan. *A Beautiful Lie*. U.S. edition: Albert Whitman, 2012. 301 pages (trade 978-0-8075-0597-7, \$16.99)

In northern India in 1947, thirteen-year-old Bilal's father, a man who believes that a united and free India is not only possible but essential, is dying of cancer. When the decision for Partition is finalized, Bilal decides to hide the truth from his father, thinking it will break the man's heart. That means keeping news and visitors out of the house. His three best friends—Saleem, whose family is Muslim like Bilal's, Chota, and Manjeet, whose family is Sikh—all willingly help him out. As Bilal and his friends work to keep visitors away, the unraveling of trust within their larger community becomes apparent as former friends and neighbors become further and further divided along religious lines and violence escalates. Bilal's older brother—rarely around and caught up in separatist fervor—shows up occasionally to encourage Bilal to take their father to the new Pakistan before Partition. But Bilal refuses. Author Irfan Master's story is told with immediacy and insight into how Partition ripped India apart in a way that was far more profound than geography in a story that is deeply felt and moving. (Age 11 and older)

McCormick, Patricia. *Never Fall Down.* Balzer + Bray / HarperCollins, 2012. 216 pages (trade 978-0-06-173093-1, \$17.99)

Human rights activist Arn Chorn-Pond was eleven when the Khmer Rouge took over in Cambodia. In a labor camp, the Khmer taught Arn to play music—"patriotic" songs they wanted people to know (traditional music was outlawed). He and other boys are forced to play to cover up the sounds of brutal killings, and sometimes must help bury the bodies. Arn finds solace where he can—a friend, a protective mentor—and others use him for their own comfort. He eventually joins with the Khmer to fight against the Vietnamese, who they've been taught to fear. He ends up in a Thai refugee camp. There, and later as an adopted teen in America, these experiences haunt Arn—a dark secret he's afraid to reveal. This fictionalized account of Arn Chorn-Pond's life ends with the symbolic start of his career as a human rights activist, describing the first time he talked about what happened to him in Cambodia and let his emotions be part of the telling. An afterword discusses what happened to Arn's family and others he knew, and Arn's work as a traditional musician and as a human rights activist who believes in the power of forgiveness. The spare, haunting first-person story is written to capture what author Patricia McCormick describes as Arn's own "distinct and beautiful voice." (Age 14 and older)

Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux. *No Crystal Stair.* Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie. Carolrhoda LAB, 2012. 188 pages (trade 978-0-7613-6169-5, \$17.95)

Lewis Michaux's National Memorial African Bookstore in Harlem was a cultural, political, social, and literary epicenter for African Americans from the 1930s to the early 1970s. A fascinating narrative told in multiple voices and illustrated with photographs, newspaper articles and advertising, and even excerpts from the files kept on Michaux by the FBI, chronicles Michaux's early life and young adulthood and the establishment of this extraordinary place where icons and everyday people found ideas, enrichment, conversation, community, and affirmation. Micheaux believed that books change lives and author Vaunda Micheaux Nelson pays tribute to her great uncle's vision with this artful, illuminating blend of fact and fiction in which lives—most real, a few imagined—are, indeed, changed profoundly, not just by books, but by the presence of this place where African Americans could gather and discuss literature, ideas, and politics; give voice to both their frustration and their dreams. While Lewis Michaux, a Black Nationalist, believed in books and political action, his older brother, Lightfoot, a minister, believed in prayer and the power of God, and the two very different paths the brothers walked make for a fascinating contrast in this singular work. (Age 12 and older)

Newman, Lesléa. *October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard.* Candlewick Press, 2012. 111 pages (trade 978-0-7636-5807-6, \$15.99)

Author Lesléa Newman was scheduled to be the keynote speaker for the University of Wyoming's Gay Awareness Week on the Laramie campus in October, 1998. Five days before events began, on October 6, university student Matthew Shepard was brutally beaten, targeted because he was gay. He died on October 12. Newman, who arrived in Laramie already aware of

the attack, never forgot the anguish surrounding it and Shepard's death. In this beautiful, heartbreaking work, she explores that pain, and the tragedy that fueled it, through poems that examine what happened from multiple and often surprising perspectives. The fence to which Shepard was bound by his attackers is a recurring voice. The stars in the sky are helpless and dismayed as they look down on Matthew Shepard, who wasn't found for eighteen hours. Police officers, members of the campus and wider communities—including those who are gay and feel the beat of fear in their hearts—are among those who speak through Newman's exquisite, imagined monologues in a range of poetic forms. Many of the poems feature epigraphs—actual quotes from people on the periphery and at the center of the story. All of these are cited in thorough source notes in this work that begins and ends with Newman's personal account of that time. Notes on the poetic forms are also provided in a book that moves through and beyond despair, offering moments of comfort and hope, especially in how what happened to Matthew Shepard led to reflection and change in some hearts and minds. (Age 13 and older)

Nix, Garth. *A Confusion of Princes*. Harper / HarperCollins, 2012. 337 pages (trade 978-0-06-009694-6, \$17.99)

"One of the ten million Princes who rule the Empire" that spans much of the universe, Khemi enjoys the power and privilege accorded his Imperial status. At seventeen, he leaves the sheltered existence he's known for years, and with his Master of Assassins' assistance, he enters the adult world. It's not quite the glamorous adventure he imagined, as Khemi finds himself vying with the other Princes to find a field of work and build a loyal retinue of priests who relay knowledge from the Imperial Mind—all while trying to avoid assassination by his peers. When Khemi is singled out for extra priests and a highly experienced Master Assassin, he believes he's achieving his destiny as the next Prince to ascend to the Imperial Mind. In fact, Khemi's path leads to the discovery that being a Prince is really being a pawn. When an apprenticeship takes him to a human world, Khemi discovers his humanity—and the difficult choices that come with it—when he falls in love with Raine. Khemi's humorous narration blends seamlessly with the political intrigue, action, and futuristic technology in this novel about coming of age, science fiction style. (Ages 13 and older)

Pratchett, Terry. *Dodger*. Harper, 2012. 360 pages (trade 978-0-06-200949-4, \$17.99)

When seventeen-year-old Dodger rescues a young woman from two assailants on a dark and dirty London street, he sets in motion events that monumentally change his life. Dodger knows the streets and everyone who lives on them, and he's used that knowledge to his advantage as a tosher, combing the underground sewer system for stray coins and lost valuables. Now, with the help of writer Charlie Dickens, Dodger works that same social system to investigate the attack on Simplicity and to protect the mysterious young woman from further harm. Along the way he encounters other Victorian notables, real and imagined, including Sir Robert Peel, philanthropist Angela Burdett-Coutts, and infamous barber Sweeney Todd. Deft plotting, vivid scene-setting, and fully developed characters (especially that of his housemate and mentor, Solomon) all help

propel the irrepressible Dodger along his path to fulfillment and happiness.
(Age 13 and older)

Pyle, Kevin C. *Take What You Can Carry*. Henry Holt, 2012. 174 pages (pbk. 978-0-8050-8286-9, \$12.99)

Two story lines separated by thirty-five years converge in a graphic novel that begins with a wordless, sepia-toned story of a teenage boy in a Japanese American internment camp during World War II. A few pages later, the story shifts to 1978. Clean-lined blue-and-white panels with words show a teenage boy and a friend nervously awaiting pickup at the police station after being caught stealing from a small grocery store. As punishment for the crime, Kyle begins working for the store's owner, Mr. Himitsu, a Japanese American man. Kevin C. Pyle moves back and forth between the story of Mr. Himitsu's adolescence in the internment camp, where he is lucky enough to have a mentor who helps him find a creative outlet for his frustration and anger, and Kyle, mired in anger over suburban boredom and frustration at home. He had fallen in with a group of boys whose troublemaking escalated along with Kyle's desire to impress them—a spiral that is palpably real—but is affected by the reality of his friend, who faces real danger from an abusive father, and the time he spends with Mr. Himitsu, who has intentionally reached out in an echo of his own youth. Pyle explores the impact of choices and meaningful connections in a spare and affecting work. (Age 12 and older)

Rupp, Rebecca. *After Eli*. Candlewick Press, 2012. 245 pages (trade 978-0-7636-5810-6, \$15.99)

Danny's much older brother Eli died in the Iraq War when Danny was younger. Now fourteen, Danny feels invisible at home, where his mom is shut down and his dad's full of anger, but his "Book of the Dead"—a collection of stories from across centuries about how various people died—is the only outward sign that he's still affected by what happened. Isabelle is a girl from New York City spending the summer in Danny's small town with her family. Danny is entranced by her free spirit and alarmed by her younger siblings, twins Journey and Jasper (nine-year-old nihilists and totally entertaining). If a summer spent falling in love with an unattainable girl proves to be a maturing experience, an even greater one is a summer spent getting to know Walter, the ultimate nerdy outsider at Danny's school. Ridiculed by other kids, Walter is smart and kind, and weird in a way that Danny comes to admire. Isabelle, Danny, and Walter discuss and do things Danny would never do with his other, more popular, friends. Danny is also working on an organic farm run by his brother's best friend. His dad doesn't approve, but Danny loves it. Rebecca Rupp's story of friendship—fleeting, real, and learning to tell the difference—and a family still shell-shocked from grief is full of moments big and small that strike a perfect chord. Her narrative is insightful, moving, and funny, and through it all, Danny's memories create a wonderful portrait of Eli, the irreverent brother who adored him. (Ages 11–14)

Sáenz, Benjamin Alire. *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. Simon & Schuster, 2012. 359 pages (trade 978-1-4424-0892-0, \$16.99)

Fifteen-year-old Ari is a loner. So he's surprised when he becomes friends with smart, open-hearted Dante. They spend most of their free time together during the summer of 1987 in El Paso where they live. In the fall, Dante heads off to Chicago where his father is doing a visiting professorship. It's in a letter to Ari that Dante reveals he's gay, and Ari takes it in stride for the most part, even letting Dante kiss him once on a visit home. Reunited during the summer of 1988, the two hang out when they aren't working. Meanwhile, Ari finds himself growing more and more angry at the silence in his family surrounding his older brother, Bernardo, who's been in prison since Ari was four. Ari's learned to swallow all his questions, so powerful is the unspoken message that the topic is forbidden. Then Dante is beaten up after a group of boys catch him kissing another boy. Enraged, Ari tracks one of the boys down and breaks his nose—all of the frustration and anger he feels coming out in the powerful punch. It's a wake-up call for Ari's parents, who make an effort to talk—about Bernardo and why he went to prison, and about Ari himself, encouraging him to stop hiding the truth about his feelings for Dante. That scene may be the only false note in a novel distinguished by gorgeous writing and extraordinary characterizations as it illuminates the friendship between the two teens—one who discovers he's gay, one who knows it—from working-class and upper-middle-class Mexican American families. (Age 14 and older)

Stiefvater, Maggie. *The Raven Boys*. Scholastic Press, 2012. 409 pages (trade 978-0-545-42492-9, \$18.99)

Teenage Blue doesn't have psychic powers but amplifies the signal for her mother and other psychics who live with them. All of them have foretold that if she kisses her true love, he will die. Blue avoids boys until she meets Adam, a student at Aglionby, the elite prep school in her hometown of Henrietta, Virginia. Adam isn't like other Aglionby boys—he's local, and he's poor. Attracted to Adam, Blue is also drawn into his circle of friends and the quest of their leader, a boy named Gansey, to locate the ley line in Henrietta that might lead him to the tomb of a Welsh king. Blue has heard of Gansey: It was the name of a boy whose spirit she saw in her one psychic encounter, on St. Mark's Eve—a vision that means he's fated to die in the coming year. Against the backdrop of this tense, richly developed supernatural mystery, Maggie Stiefvater weaves a riveting and often poignant story of friendships and families, love and betrayal, money and identity, exploring the themes through the lives of refreshingly complex characters. The elements that draw the four boys together—and also threaten to divide them—become more and more apparent as Gansey's search continues, his passion for the quest matched only by his desire and determination to keep his friends close and safe. And Blue's own struggle—to assert her independence at home, to deal with her fate—is amplified as she becomes part of their tight-knit group. With several surprising revelations, Stiefvater's immensely satisfying story will leave readers eager for the sequel. (Age 13 and older)

Voorhoeve, Anne C. *My Family for the War*. Translated from the German by Tammi Reichel. U.S. edition: Dial, 2012. 402 pages (trade 978-0-8037-3360-2, \$17.99)

Raised Protestant, ten-year-old Ziskla is a hereditary Jew living in Germany in 1938. With Nazi persecution intensifying, her family is able get her on a Kindertransport to Britain. Ziskla can't believe her mother has sent her away, and feels guilty that her best friend, Bekka, did not get chosen to go as well. In London, she moves in with the Shepards, an Orthodox Jewish family. Parents Amanda and Matthew and teenage Gary are wonderful to Ziskla, now Frances, but this proves a challenge, too: She feels conflicted about religion as she learns more about Judaism, and guilty about loving Amanda, who is so warm, unlike her own mother. The tension of feeling torn between two families—one of whose fate is unknown for much of the story—is beautifully developed in Anne C. Voorhoeve's arresting novel that spans the years of the war. The story is grounded in characters and relationships, but also in details of time, place, and feeling. Sometimes funny, often deeply moving, one memorable scene after another describes Frances's life as a refugee on the home front in Britain as she wrestles with questions of family, religion, and identity, and the capacity of humans to be so cruel, and also love so deeply. (Age 13 and older)

Wein, Elizabeth. *Code Name Verity*. Hyperion, 2012. 343 pages (trade 978-1-4231-5219-4, \$16.99)

A young woman captured by the Gestapo in France as a British spy is given a temporary reprieve from torture by agreeing to write down everything she can about the British war effort. But the story she tells seems one of personal friendship rather than political intrigue. It's a tale of two young women—Maddie and Julie. One working class, one upper class. One a pilot for the war effort, one something far more mysterious. "It's like being in love, discovering your best friend," Julie writes. It was Maddie who flew the plane from which Julie parachuted behind enemy lines before it crashed in Elizabeth Wein's engrossing work of historical fiction. And it is Maddie who takes up the story in Part 2. Saved by the Resistance, she's in hiding while awaiting a rescue flight when she discovers the fate of her best friend Julie, now a Gestapo prisoner. Wein's richly satisfying novel builds tension with every turn of the page. More and more about her incredibly distinctive and well-drawn characters is revealed as the narrative unfolds through writing so skillful and clues so subtle that Julie's role as a reliable narrator in Part 1 is never in doubt, until it becomes clear she has never abandoned her mission. This story full of complexities, codes, and deceptions of many kinds nonetheless speaks powerfully and truthfully about many things, including friendship, courage, and many kinds of resistance. (Age 13 and older)

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Beneath a Meth Moon*. Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin, 2012. 182 pages (trade 978-0-399-25250-1, \$16.99)

In layers of flashback, fifteen-year-old Laurel reveals events that led to her fall into meth addiction and her eventual emergence into a hopeful place of new beginnings. When she was twelve, Laurel's mother and grandmother died after Hurricane Katrina hit Pass Christian, Mississippi. This devastating loss is

brought into greater relief throughout the rest of the novel as the more recent story unfolds. Laurel, her father, and young brother eventually settle in the small town of Galilee. Basketball team co-captain T-Boom introduces her to meth, and Laurel soon becomes consumed by it, devastating her father. Laurel runs away and is living on the streets of another small town when she meets Moses, an African American foster kid whose mother died from meth. Moses earns money by painting murals of meth victims—his commissions from bereaved family members serve as cautionary public service announcements on buildings around the town. Moses doesn't look through Laurel like others, and that ends up being the difference between life and death for Laurel, and the start of real healing. Author Jacqueline Woodson treats this hard and timely topic with raw honesty as well as her trademark grace. Laurel's voice is like a whisper, but one that you want to lean in closer to hear so you don't miss anything she has to say. (Age 12 and older)

Zevin, Gabrielle. *Because It Is My Blood*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2012. 350 pages (trade 978-0-374-38074-8, \$17.99)

Anya Balanchine is out of juvenile detention and wants to get her life back to normal and finish out her senior year of high school. But there's no escaping her heritage as the future leader of the Balanchine chocolate mafia, much as she wishes she could. Assassination attempts, family secrets and scandals, conspiracies and corruption all make it impossible for Anya to stay in New York, so she escapes to Mexico to learn about cacao production among longtime family allies. When she finally returns to the city, it's with a new understanding of the process and a new resolve to change the way the Balanchines do business. Set in the latter part of the twenty-first century, Gabrielle Zevin's saga, which began with *All These Things I've Done* (Farrar Straus Giroux, 2011), casts Anya as a smart, sympathetic anti-hero. Confined by the illegalization of chocolate that transformed a once respectable family business into an international crime syndicate, she now seeks new alliances in the hope of turning things around. All of which seriously complicates Anya's romance with Win, son of the New York City district attorney. Zevin skillfully manages the action and the intensity of feeling in a unique and compelling story populated by fascinating characters, and that promises to be continued. (Age 12 and older)

Appendices

Appendix I

Checklist of Books in *CCBC Choices 2013*

This quick-reference listing of all of the books recommended in this edition of *CCBC Choices* is alphabetical by main title, followed by the author (just the first author is listed if there are more than one). The *Choices* category in which each book is located is also provided. Full citation information for the books, including publisher and ISBN, is listed with the full entry in the *Choices* categories. Browse the categories (see page locations, below) or use the author/title index to locate the exact page on which the full entry is located.

- Science, Technology, and the Natural World (Natural World): pages **14–20**
- Seasons and Celebrations (Seasons): pages **20–21**
- Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature (Folklore): pages **21–22**
- Historical People, Places, and Events (History): pages **22–30**
- Biography and Autobiography (Biography): pages **30–37**
- Contemporary People, Places, and Events (Contemporary): pages **37–41**
- Understanding Oneself and Others (Understanding): pages **41–42**
- The Arts (Arts): pages **42–45**
- Poetry (Poetry): pages **46–47**
- Concept Books (Concept): pages **47–50**
- Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers (PB Preschoolers):
pages **51–59**
- Picture Books for School-Age Children (PB School-Age): pages **59–72**
- Books for Beginning Readers (Beginning): page **72**
- Books for Newly Independent Readers (Independent): pages **73–74**
- Fiction for Children (Fiction Children): pages **75–84**
- Fiction for Young Adults (Fiction YA): pages **85–108**

- 1 2 3 Beach*. Puck. (Concept)
- 37 Things I Love (In No Particular Order)*. Magoon, Kekla. (Fiction YA)
- Abe Lincoln's Dream*. Smith, Lane. (PB School-Age)
- Abraham Lincoln & Frederick Douglass*. Freedman, Russell. (History)
- After Eli*. Rupp, Rebecca. (Fiction YA)
- Alfie Is Not Afraid*. Carlin, Patricia. (PB Preschoolers)
- and then it's spring*. Fogliano, Julie. (Seasons)
- Animal 1 2 3*. Teckentrup, Britta. (Concept)
- Animal Spots and Stripes*. Teckentrup, Britta. (Concept)
- Another Brother*. Cordell, Matthew. (PB Preschoolers)
- Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. Sáenz, Benjamin Alire. (Fiction YA)
- Arrow Finds Its Mark*. Heard, Georgia. (Poetry)
- Ask the Passengers*. King, A. S. (Fiction YA)
- Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic*. Lo, Ginnie. (PB School-Age)
- Ava and the Real Lucille*. Best, Cari. (PB School-Age)

- Awesome Autumn*. Goldstone, Bruce. (Seasons)
- Baby Bear Sees Blue*. Wolff, Ashley. (Concept)
- Baby, Where Are You?* Mack. (PB Preschoolers)
- Ballywhinney Girl*. Bunting, Eve. (PB School-Age)
- Barnum's Bones*. Fern, Tracey. (History)
- Bear in the Book*. Banks, Kate. (PB Preschoolers)
- Beautiful Lie*. Master, Irfan. (Fiction YA)
- Because It Is My Blood*. Zevin, Gabrielle. (Fiction YA)
- Beetle Book*. Jenkins, Steve. (Natural World)
- Beneath a Meth Moon*. Woodson, Jacqueline. (Fiction YA)
- Beyond Courage*. Rappaport, Doreen. (History)
- Bitterblue*. Cashore, Kristin. (Fiction YA)
- Black Hole Is Not a Hole*. DeCristofano, Carolyn Cinami. (Natural World)
- Bomb*. Sheinkin, Steve. (History)
- Bon Appétit!* Hartland, Jessie. (Biography)
- Boy Called Dickens*. Hopkinson, Deborah. (Biography)
- Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*. Kamkwamba, William. (Contemporary).
- Brave Music of a Distant Drum*. Herbstein, Manu. (Fiction YA)
- Breathing Room*. Hayles, Marsha. (Fiction Children)
- Brides of Rollrock Island*. Lanagan, Margo. (Fiction YA)
- Brothers at Bat*. Vernick, Audrey. (History)
- Buffalo Bird Girl*. Nelson, S. D. (Biography)
- Buried Alive*. Scott, Elaine. (Contemporary)
- Bus Called Heaven*. Graham, Bob. (PB Preschoolers)
- Castle*. Macaulay, David. (Beginning)
- Cecil the Pet Glacier*. Harvey, Matthea. (PB School-Age)
- Certain October*. Johnson, Angela. (Fiction YA)
- Chickadee*. Erdrich, Louise. (Fiction Children)
- Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Flies Again*. Boyce, Frank Cottrell. (Fiction Children)
- Chomp*. Hiaasen, Carl. (Fiction Children)
- Christmas Wombat*. French, Jackie. (Seasons)
- Chuck Close*. Close, Chuck. (Arts)
- Citizen Scientists*. Burns, Loree Griffin. (Natural World)
- City Chickens*. Heppermann, Christine. (Contemporary)
- Code Name Verity*. Wein, Elizabeth. (Fiction YA)
- Colorful Dreamer*. Parker, Marjorie Blain. (Arts)
- Confusion of Princes*. Nix, Garth. (Fiction YA)
- Cradle Me*. Slier, Debby. (PB Preschoolers)
- Crafty Chloe*. DiPucchio, Kelly. (PB School-Age)
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Appendix II

About the CCBC

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

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

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

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

Appendix III

About the Compilers

Kathleen T. Horning is the director of the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. For nine years she was also a children's librarian at Madison Public Library. She is the author of *From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books* (revised edition: HarperCollins, 2010). With Ginny Moore Kruse, she coauthored *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1980-1990*, and with Ginny Moore Kruse and Megan Schliesman, *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1991-1996*. Kathleen is a past-president of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) of the American Library Association (ALA), and a past president of the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY). She has chaired the Américas Award Committee, under the auspices of the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP), University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee; ALA/ALSC's 1997 Mildred Batchelder Award Committee; ALA/ALSC's 1995 John Newbery Committee; and three Charlotte Zolotow Award Committees (administered by the CCBC), including the 2010 committee. She also chaired USBBY's Hans Christian Andersen Award Committee, which selected U.S. nominees for the international award in 1992. She has served as a member of many other book award and evaluation committees, including the ALA Rainbow List, the NCTE Lee Bennett Hopkins Awards, the ALA/EMIERT Coretta Scott King Award, ALA Notable Children's Books, and the 1990 Newbery Committee. She received the Scholastic Library Publishing Award from the American Library Association in 2009 for her outstanding leadership in the field of librarianship and children's and young adult literature. Kathleen frequently lectures to librarians on issues in evaluating literature for children and young adults, and she delivered the 2010 May Hill Arbutnot Honor Lecture for ALA/ALSC. She has a B.A. in Linguistics and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies, both from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Merri V. Lindgren is a librarian at the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Merri was the editor of *The Multicolored Mirror: Cultural Substance in Literature for Children and Young Adults* (Highsmith, 1991), and a former columnist for the *Wisconsin State Journal*, writing about children's books. She served on the ALA/ALSC Quicklists Consulting Committee during 2010–12. Merri was a member of the ALA/ALSC 2010 Caldecott Award Committee. She also served on ALA's first Odyssey Award Committee (2008), a joint award of ALSC and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). She served on the 2001 Charlotte Zolotow Award committee and chaired the 2002, 2006, 2007, 2012, and 2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award committees. Merri has worked as a youth services librarian at the Helen M. Plum Memorial Library in Lombard, Illinois, and as an instructor of Adolescent and Young Adult Literature at Edgewood College. She is a former trustee of the Baraboo (Wisconsin) Public Library. Merri graduated from UW–

Madison with a B.A. Degree in Psychology and has a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Megan Schliesman is a librarian at the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She has been a coauthor of *CCBC Choices* since the 1994 edition. With Kathleen Horning and Ginny Moore Kruse, Megan also coauthored *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1991-1996*. She has been a columnist for *Library Sparks* magazine since fall of 2006. Megan currently serves on the ALA/ALSC Board of Directors and the ALA/ALSC Intellectual Freedom Committee. She was chair of the ALA/ALSC 2011 Laura Ingalls Wilder Committee, and a member of the ALA/ALSC 2005 Newbery Award Committee. She also served on the 1998, 1999 and 2002 Charlotte Zolotow Award committees, and chaired the 2003, 2008 and 2009 Zolotow Award committees. Megan manages the CCBC Intellectual Freedom Information Services and “What IF ... Questions and Answers on Intellectual Freedom” forum. She has written articles on intellectual freedom for several library and education journals. She is past chair of the Wisconsin Educational Media and Technology Association (WEMTA) Intellectual Freedom Special Interest Group, and a past member of the Wisconsin Library Association Intellectual Freedom Roundtable board. She is also a former member of the South Central Library System Board of Trustees in Wisconsin. She has a B.A. degree in English from UW–Whitewater and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Appendix IV

The Friends of the CCBC

Interested in receiving *CCBC Choices* each year when it's published?

Join the Friends of the CCBC!

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

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

Members of the 2012-2013 Friends of the CCBC, Inc., Board of Directors are President Jean Funcke, Vice-President Betsy Bermant, Recording Secretary Jamey Stanosz, Membership Secretary Tracy Moore, Treasurer Jacqueline Houtman, and Directors-at-Large Catherine Baer and Michelle Wyler. In addition to the board volunteers, the Friends book sale coordinator is Angie Sparks. The Friends Newsletter is edited by Janet Piehl, Jean Elvekrog, and Michael Kress-Russick.

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

Join the Friends of the CCBC!

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- \$50 Supporting
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- \$150 Award (6–10 individuals)
- \$500 Distinguished (11–15 individuals)
- \$1,000+ Corporate

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

Mail to: **Friends of the CCBC, P.O. Box 5189, Madison, WI 53705**

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Please do NOT add me to the Friends listserv.

Indexes

Author/Illustrator/Title Index

The author/illustrator/title index includes all of the titles and book creators in this edition of *CCBC Choices*, including authors, illustrators, translators, and editors or compilers listed on the title page of *Choices* books. Book titles and book creators cited in the annotations, introduction, and end matter (with the exception of Appendix I) are also included. Book titles appear in CAPITAL LETTERS. Page numbers in **bold print** refer to the page on which an annotation appears.

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