

CCBC

Choices

2015

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### 2015

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# Acknowledgments

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*Kathleen T. Horning, Merri V. Lindgren, Megan Schliesman,  
and Emily McKnight Townsend*

# Introduction

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*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 received review copies of about 3,500 new books for children and young adults in 2014, which includes most of the trade books published in English by corporate publishers in the United States. While we couldn't possibly read everything, we have read extensively, looking for books that get us excited about the ways they can engage and inform children and teens. We are confident that among the 259 books we've chosen, you will find numerous titles to meet the needs and interests of the children and teens in your professional or personal lives.

We are often asked how we choose books for *CCBC Choices*. We don't have a formal rubric or checklist of criteria, but 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 try to get informed opinions from expert content reviewers, especially with regard to the depiction of race, culture, and other dimensions of experience we may not be personally qualified to evaluate.

Sometimes we're challenged by books that we greatly appreciate for one or more reasons but that also raise questions in our minds. We depend upon further discussion, thinking, research, and sometimes other opinions to determine how those strengths and shortcomings balance, and to determine whether the book ends up a *Choice*.

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.

Ultimately, our goal is to create a broad, deep list of books we can stand behind with enthusiasm, can speak about with passion, and are truly excited about sharing. We are able to do this year after year because we never cease to be inspired by the creativity of so many of the authors and artists writing and illustrating books for children and teens.

## Organization of *CCBC Choices 2015*

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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
- Issues in Today's World
- Understanding Oneself and Others
- The Arts

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

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

Picture books about people who actually lived have usually been placed in the Historical People, Places, and Events section or the Biography and Autobiography section, unless the narrative is purely fictionalized. 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

All of the books in *CCBC Choices 2015* have a 2014 publication date (the copyright date on a few is 2013 but they were not released until 2014). 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 2014. 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

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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 2015 Zolotow Award committee were: Megan Schliesman, chair (Librarian, Cooperative Children's Book Center, Madison, Wisconsin); Barb Huntington (Library Consultant, Retired, Madison, Wisconsin); Kristine Klopp (Librarian, Boulder, Colorado); Karen Lenoach (Literacy Resource Teacher, Crestwood Elementary School, Madison, Wisconsin), and Ruth Sias (Children's Librarian, Madison Public Library, Madison, Wisconsin).



## 2015 Charlotte Zolotow Award

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### Winner:

#### ***Sparky!***

Written by Jenny Ofill  
 Illustrated by Chris Appelhans  
 Schwartz & Wade / Random House, 2014

### Honor Books:

#### ***Beautiful Moon: A Child's Prayer***

Written by Tonya Bolden.  
 Illustrated by Eric Velasquez. Abrams, 2014

#### ***Chengdu Could Not, Would Not Fall Asleep***

Written and illustrated by Barney Saltzberg.  
 Disney / Hyperion, 2014

#### ***Ivan: The Remarkable True Story of the Shopping Mall Gorilla***

Written by Katherine Applegate.  
 Illustrated by G. Brian Karas. Clarion, 2014

#### ***Tap Tap Boom Boom***

Written by Elizabeth Bluemle.  
 Illustrated by G. Brian Karas. Candlewick Press, 2014

#### ***Water Rolls, Water Rises = El agua rueda, el agua sube***

Written by Pat Mora.  
 Translated into Spanish by Adriana Dominguez and Pat Mora.  
 Illustrated by Meilo So. Children's Book Press /  
 Lee & Low, 2014

### Highly Commended Titles:

***Beneath the Sun*** written by Melissa Stewart. Illustrated by Constance R. Bergum.  
 Peachtree, 2014

***Edgar's Second Word*** written by Audrey Vernick. Illustrated by Priscilla Burriss.  
 Clarion, 2014

***Go To Sleep, Little Farm*** written by Mary Lyn Ray. Illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal.  
 Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014

***Hooray for Hat!*** written and illustrated by Brian Won.  
 Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014

***The Hula Hoopin' Queen*** written by Thelma Lynne Godin. Illustrated by Vanessa Brantley-Newton. Lee & Low, 2014

***If You Were a Dog*** written by Jamie A. Swenson. Illustrated by Chris Raschka.  
 Farrar Straus Giroux, 2014

***One Big Pair of Underwear*** written by Laura Gehl. Illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld.  
 Beach Lane, 2014

***Water Can Be ...*** written by Laura Purdie Salas. Illustrated by Violeta Dabija.  
 Millbrook Press, 2014

***What Forest Knows*** written by George Ella Lyon. Illustrated by August Hall.  
 A Richard Jackson Book / Atheneum, 2014

## A Few Observations on Publishing in 2014

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It was a year of changes at the CCBC. After forty-three years in our small, triangular space on the fourth floor of Helen C. White Hall, we said goodbye, and moved across campus to a larger space on the fourth floor of the Teacher Education Building. And after almost twenty years, we said goodbye to our listserv, CCBC-Net, a once-vibrant online discussion of children's and young adult literature, which had fallen dormant in the past few years as people found other ways to communicate via social media. The CCBC librarians will continue to host a discussion about trends and topics in books for children and teens, but we'll now be doing it on our blog, CCBlogC, and we hope you'll join us there.

One thing that hasn't changed is our enthusiasm for the great new books that arrive daily at the CCBC, no matter what the address. As we receive boxes and boxes of newly published books each year, we are able to make observations about them. There are a lot of picture books about ninjas these days, for example, and fewer young adult books about vampires. There just aren't many science books and fewer longer trade nonfiction in general in spite of the emphasis in the schools on STEAM and Common Core.

The reading the CCBC librarians do every day (most of it after work, rather than at work) leads to deeper observations. We were pleasantly surprised to read some overtly feminist young adult novels this year, such as *Glory O'Brien's History of the Future* by the ever-provocative A. S. King and *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*, a stunning debut by Isabel Quintero. After years of paranormal romance practically defining young adult literature, this heralds a welcome change. We like our teen girl protagonists with heads on their shoulders, both on the cover and inside the book itself.

Many young adult books seemed to be inspired by the headlines, even though most would have been works in progress long before 2014. *How It Went Down* by Kekla Magoon offers a variety of points of view and insights into the shooting death of an African American teen walking home from a convenience store. G. Neri's *Knockout Games* deals with a group of teens who randomly victimize strangers and capture the attacks on film. In nonfiction, *Patient Zero* by Marilee Peters traces the history of epidemiology, a subject that is very timely in the wake of the most recent outbreak of the Ebola epidemic. Paul Fleischman's *Eyes Wide Open* takes on the headlines directly by presenting young readers with the tools for critical thinking that will help them assess information about environmental issues.

We noted a number of young adult memoirs written by young adults themselves, including *Rethinking Normal* by Katie Rain Hill (Simon & Schuster), *Laughing at My Nightmare* by Shane Burcaw (Roaring Brook Press), and *Taking Flight* by Michaela DePrince (Knopf). While each one offers rare insight into the lives of extraordinary adolescents, there is something to be said for the sort of perspective that comes with age; these memoirs would have been more successful had the teens waited a few years before looking back on their lives. On the other hand, two adolescent memoirs stood out as exceptional: *Some Assembly Required*

by transgender teen Arin Andrews with Joshua Lyon, and *I Am Malala* by the young Nobel Prize winner, Malala Yousafzai, collaborating with author for young adults Patricia McCormick. Both were selected for *CCBC Choices 2015*.

We also recommend a book written by thirteen-year-old Jazz Jennings in collaboration with Jessica Herthel. *I Am Jazz* is the first trade picture book from the perspective of a very young transgender child who has always known who she is. This is a subject we are thrilled to be seeing in books for youth. We can happily recommend the first middle-grade novel with a trans protagonist, *Gracefully Grayson* by Ami Polonski, as well as the superb nonfiction book by Susan Kuklin, *Beyond Magenta*, which documents the lives of six older teens who identify as trans.

The best news of 2014 from our perspective is that middle-grade fiction is back in a big way. We were happy to see great novels for young readers from established writers such as Coe Booth (*Kinda Like Brothers*), Christopher Paul Curtis (*The Madman of Piney Woods*), Sonya Hartnett (*Children of the King*), Jennifer L. Holm (*The Fourteenth Goldfish*), Cynthia Kadohata (*Half a World Away*), Ann M. Martin (*Rain Reign*), and Naomi Shihab Nye (*The Turtle of Oman*), among others. But we were just as happy to find fine novels by newcomers, including Skila Brown (*Caminar*), Crystal Chan (*Bird*), Robin Herrera (*Hope Is a Ferris Wheel*), and Mariko Nagai (*Dust of Eden*).

We would be remiss if we did not mention the contributions of two small presses, Enchanted Lion and Gecko. Both of them are committed to publishing translated books for children, enabling readers in this country to delight in books such as Benny Lindenlauf's *Nine Open Arms*, translated from the Dutch, and Rose Lagercrantz's *My Heart Is Laughing*, translated from the Swedish.

We also heartily recommend Cece Bell's story of her own childhood, *El Deaf*, a memoir written as a graphic novel for middle-grade readers. Bell writes candidly — and humorously — about what it was like to grow up deaf, as well as the challenges of finding a true friend.

As in years past, we continue to see wonderfully creative and beautifully produced picture books. We were struck by the number of books that represent the perfect melding of text and pictures, including this year's Charlotte Zolotow Award winner, *Sparky!*, written by Jenny Offill and illustrated by Chris Appelhans. Although we honored the book for its outstanding writing, the remarkable restraint the author used in her story, with not a word wasted, allowed space for the illustrator to add his own droll details. Other examples of this sort of perfect harmony that we recommend include *Sam and Dave Dig a Hole* by Mac Barnett and Jon Klassen, *Edda: A Little Valkyrie's First Day of School*, a first book by Adam Auerbach, and *Shh! We Have a Plan* by Chris Houghton.

## Counting on Multicultural Literature: 2014 Edition

In February 2014 the CCBC's statistics for multicultural literature were quoted in a pair of editorials written by Walter Dean Myers and Christopher Myers, leading to dozens of inquiries from the press, academic researchers, teachers, and others concerned about the lack of diversity in books for children and teens, as reflected in the statistics for 2013.

The 2014 numbers reveal mixed news: more books by and about Blacks and Asian Pacifics (with “more” being a relative term); the numbers for American Indians and Latinos largely the same. This is far from alright.

We received approximately 3,500 books at the CCBC in 2014. Here’s the breakdown of books by and about people of color among those we received:

- **179** books had significant African or African American content  
**69** of these were by Black authors and/or illustrators
- **36** books had American Indian themes, topics, or characters  
**15** of these were by American Indian authors and/or illustrators
- **112** books had significant Asian/Pacific or Asian/Pacific American content  
**48** of these were by authors and/or illustrators of Asian/Pacific heritage
- **66** books had significant Latino content  
**36** of these were by Latino authors and/or illustrators

In addition, many book creators of color are writing and/or illustrating books about people or subjects that don’t have anything to do with their own specific cultural or ethnic background. Among the 3,500 books we received in 2014, we counted **15** books by Black authors and illustrators; **2** books by American Indian authors and illustrators; **80** books by authors and illustrators of Asian/Pacific heritage; and **23** books by Latino authors and illustrators that did not reflect the cultural origins of those creators.

The CCBC’s statistics are only quantitative, and don’t reveal anything about the quality of the books we counted. But we were thrilled with the number of outstanding longer works of fiction and nonfiction by African American authors, including Jacqueline Woodson’s poetic memoir, *Brown Girl Dreaming*, an exceptionally fine book by any standards. *Crossover* by Kwame Alexander is an extraordinary sports novel in verse written from two points of view. And Varian Johnson’s *The Great Greene Heist* is a comedic novel with a dizzying array of schemes and plot twists. This trio alone demonstrates the range of literary forms and subject matter we welcome in multicultural literature. We hope to see this sort of diversity extended to picture books and nonfiction in the years to come.

But we were pleased to see so many multicultural books by authors of color making their debuts, including Teresa E. Harris (*The Perfect Place*), Crystal Chan (*Bird*), Kathryn Russell-Brown (*Little Melba and Her Big Trombone*), and Isabel Quintero (*Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*), to name just a few.

This year marked the launch of the We Need Diverse Books campaign, a grassroots organization of authors and illustrators concerned about the dismal state of diversity in children’s books. The attention they have brought to this issue has been phenomenal, and we hope that we will be able to see the results of their efforts by the latter part of this decade. Our statistics reveal that the number of diverse books have been on a plateau for far too long, and something has to change if children’s books are going to remain relevant in the twenty-first century. Yes, We Need Diverse Books, but Diverse Books also Need Us — to buy them, to read them, and to share them with all children, who deserve to see a reflection of the real world in which we live.

# The *Choices*

## Science, Technology, and the Natural World

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**Burns, Loree Griffin.** *Handle with Care: An Unusual Butterfly Journey.* Photographs by Ellen Harasimowicz. Millbrook Press, 2014. 33 pages (978-0-7613-9342-9, \$26.60)

An explanation of the four stages of a butterfly's life (egg, larva, pupa, adult), detailed in text and photographs, is paired with an introduction to a Costa Rican farm that cultivates pupae to sell to museums around the world. The description of the farming operations includes fascinating details about the challenges of raising butterflies. Staff must follow precision-timing protocol necessary to ship pupae before they hatch into butterflies, as well as work constantly to keep all the inhabitants fed (several hundred very hungry caterpillars can eat through an entire greenhouse of leaves in a day or two). Well-chosen and spectacular images dominate the pages of this photo documentary that offers closing supplemental material including a glossary and further reading list. (Ages 7-10)

**Campbell, Sarah C.** *Mysterious Patterns: Finding Fractals in Nature.* Photographs by Sarah C. Campbell and Richard P. Campbell. Boyds Mills Press / Highlights, 2014. 30 pages (978-1-62091-627-8, \$16.95)

What does the shape of a tall tree have in common with the jagged reach of lightning? What do they both share with a stout stalk of broccoli or the umbrella-like head of Queen Anne's lace? They are all fractals: shapes made up of smaller parts that look like the whole. It wasn't until 1975 that mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot noticed this pattern in nature and named these natural shapes "fractals." Ferns and mountain ranges, the paths of rivers and the veins and arteries in our lungs are all other examples of fractals shown in this work pairing Sarah Campbell's lively and easy-to-follow narrative with striking photographs. An afterword tells more about Benoit Mandelbrot and discusses ways fractals have been used in human creations, both real (e.g., cell phone antennas) and imagined ("Harry Potter's invisibility cloak would have been made of fractals"). (Ages 6-10)

**Chin, Jason.** *Gravity.* A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-59643-717-3, \$16.99)

In an engaging introduction to gravity, a day at the beach unexpectedly turns into a surprising science lesson. In the first few pages, a young cape-clad boy plays with his spaceman and rocket ship on the rocky beach until he discovers a book on gravity. The boy is drawn into the book and soon his toys and other earthly objects are illustrating gravitational principles. The toy spaceman, rocket ship, pail, and shovel, along with a nearby pitcher of lemonade, spin above the earth. Jason Chin explains that without gravity the moon and the sun, just like the toys, would drift away from the earth. "Gravity keeps the earth near the sun, the moon near the earth," and gravity also keeps objects

on the earth. Punctuated text — a few short words per page — provides an accessible definition of gravity and its effects. The accompanying illustrations complement and reinforce the text while the story offers humor and a narrative structure in this simplified, but not diminished, explanation of a complex concept. (Ages 4–8)

**Davies, Nicola.** *Tiny Creatures: The World of Microbes.* Illustrated by Emily Sutton. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–7636-7315–4, \$15.99)

Tiny creatures in vast numbers, microbes are far too small to see with the naked eye and exist in quantities hard to fathom. But Nicola Davies gives young readers and listeners a starting point for understanding their small size (millions could fit on the antenna of an ant), huge numbers (a single drop of water can hold twenty million — the number of people in New York State), their omnipresence (on sea, on land, in the air; at the back of your fridge; inside your stomach and on your skin); their variety (as different in size as ants and whales; most helpful, some harmful); and their power (turning food into compost; milk into yogurt; rocks into soil). Davies's finely crafted, informative text is paired with Emily Sutton's marvelous illustrations that further demonstrate and illuminate these tiny creatures that transform our world. "All over the earth, all the time, tiny microbes are eating and eating, and splitting and splitting, changing one thing into another." (Ages 6–9)

**Gray, Rita.** *Have You Heard the Nesting Bird?* Illustrated by Kenard Pak. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–544-10580–5, \$16.99)

While playing in the countryside, a boy and girl observe several species of birds. Each bird is identified with a single line about a trait they have or action they take, followed by their call. "Mourning doves take their morning stroll. / Coah, cooo, cooo, coooo. / Woodpecker calls from a tree with a hole. / Cuk-cuk-cuk-cuk-cuk. / Starling sings from a metal pole. / Whistle-ee-wee-tree." A chorus interrupts every few pages, asking about the songless nesting robin. "But have you heard the nesting bird? / Not a single tweet or trill. / This nesting bird is so still!" Impressionistic illustrations in muted natural tones portray the birds' appearances and capture their movements accurately and attractively. The final two pages of Q-and-A titled "A Word with the Bird" offer an engaging way to share scientific information about the actions of nesting robins. (Ages 3–7)

**Hurley, Jorey.** *Nest.* A Paula Wiseman Book / Simon & Schuster, 2014. 32 pages (978–1–4424-8971–4, \$16.99)

A single word per double-page spread takes very young children through a year in the life cycle of a robin, from "nest" to "hatch" to "explore," eventually ending with another "nest." The simple narrative is an accompaniment to the uncluttered, striking, stylized illustrations, each of which is an artful work of graphic design. The art strongly and realistically conveys the beauty of the changing seasons and the drama within and beyond the natural world, as when the robins sit in a tree just out of the reach of an eager and interested cat, or the appearance of a purple kite on a taut string flying above their treetop



resting place. An author's note provides additional information about robins. (Ages 2–5)

**Mora, Pat.** *Water Rolls, Water Rises = El agua rueda, el agua sube.* Illustrated by Meilo So. Translated by Adriana Domínguez and Pat Mora. Children's Book Press / Lee & Low, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-89239-325-1, \$18.95)

"Water rolls / onto the shore / under the sun, under the moon. / Water rises / into soft fog, / weaves down the street, strokes an old cat." Water not only rolls and rises, it slithers, snakes, streams, slides, hums, plunges, skids, slips, and much, much more in this language-rich offering. From the high plumes of clouds to the slow flow of a river, the pulse of a storm to the slumber of a reservoir, the bright sound of a bubbling spring to the heavy wash of the sea, Pat Mora offers up lyrical descriptions of water in many settings. Each three-line verse in this bilingual (English/Spanish) tribute to water is set against an expansive watercolor painting by Meilo So inspired by a specific geographic place on earth that is noted at volume's end. *Honor Book, 2015 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5–8)

**O'Connell, Caitlin.** *A Baby Elephant in the Wild.* Photographs by Caitlin O'Connell and Timothy Rodwell. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 40 pages (978-0-544-14944-1, \$16.99)

Researcher Caitlin O'Connell provides information about elephants in the wild through her chronicle of the early days of young elephant Liza, born in Namibia. O'Connell and Timothy Rodwell's arresting color photographs of Liza are paired with an engaging, accessible narrative offering up plenty of facts about elephants like baby Liza and the extended family that cares for her, as well as the dangers they face in the twenty-first century, as land and resources grow more scarce. A two-page "Did you know?" section at volume's end provides a few additional facts about elephants. (Ages 7–10)

**Stewart, Melissa.** *Beneath the Sun.* Illustrated by Constance R. Bergum. Peachtree, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-56145-733-5, \$16.95)

How do animals survive in the burning sun on the hottest days of the year? A brief tour through a variety of ecosystems offers a glimpse of how several creatures native to each deal with the heat. In a field, a woodchuck goes to a den below ground, an earthworm curls up tightly in its underground tunnel, a spittlebug creates a "foamy home," while a black swallowtail caterpillar "keeps chomping and chewing all day long." A desert, a wetland, and a seashore (including things happening beneath the water) are the other places where the featured creatures live. A finely crafted informational narrative is set against realistic illustrations of the natural world. *Highly Commended, 2015 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5–8)

**Swinburne, Stephen R.** *Sea Turtle Scientist. (Scientists in the Field)* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 65 pages (978-0-547-36755-2, \$18.99)

Dr. Kimberly Stewart lives and works on the island of St. Kitts in the Caribbean to study and protect leatherback sea turtles. The leatherback is a "critically

endangered species” — its population has dropped over 80 percent in roughly the last one hundred years. Threats worldwide come from habitat loss, fishing, and marine debris. On St. Kitts, Stewart’s research monitoring and protecting sea turtle nests has included establishing the St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network. Her work includes a sea turtle camp for local children and educating others in the community about the importance of sea turtles to the larger ocean ecosystem. She’s also involved in efforts to help the local community develop economic opportunities beyond those related to turtle harvesting. One local man, a former turtle fisherman, has become one of her most important partners because of the influence of “the turtle lady.” Information about the leatherbacks is integrated into sidebars and stand-alone chapters in a volume that stands out for both its engaging narrative and fine design, which includes ample color photographs. (Ages 9–13)

## Seasons and Celebrations

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**Hopkins, Lee Bennett, selector. *Manger*. Illustrated by Helen Cann. Eerdmans, 2014. 33 pages (978–0–8028–5419–3, \$16.00)**

An earthy host of creatures heralds the arrival of a special baby born in a manger in this beautifully realized volume. Rooster and sheep, cat and mouse, wren, owl, spider and others all bear witness to the baby and the joy. Even fish weigh in (“Despite / the world’s / sudden glee / we cannot leave / our home — the sea . . .”). Lee Bennett Hopkins’s picture book anthology features the work of fourteen poets who each offer the perspective of a different animal. Helen Cann’s lovely illustrations — each painting carefully composed and yet part of a larger whole — are the perfect complement to the words of this seasonal treasure. (Ages 3–10)

**Johnston, Tony. *Winter Is Coming*. Illustrated by Jim LaMarche. A Paula Wiseman Book / Simon & Schuster, 2014. 32 pages (978–1–4424–7251–8, \$17.99)**

September through November, a girl chronicles the changing of the season from fall to winter in the woods surrounding her home. She observes a variety of creatures across a series of days and weeks foraging for food: fox, lynx, bear, skunk, rabbits, deer, chipmunks. Birds — woodpeckers, Canada Geese, wild turkeys (“muttering *food food food*”) — are part of the landscape, too. “Winter is coming” is the repeated refrain. As autumn fades, the sky grows as gray as the geese. Eventually, “Winter is here.” A quiet text is rich with details and experiences that, while not common to every child, can be appreciated by many. The illustrations depict the girl with sketchbook in hand, and the lushness of these paintings with their seasonal hues are charmingly contrasted by childlike sketches of a young artist on the closing endpapers. (Ages 4–8)

**Kimmel, Eric A. *Simon and the Bear: A Hanukkah Tale*. Illustrated by Matthew Trueman. Disney / Hyperion, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-4231-4355-0, \$16.99)**

Stranded on an iceberg after the boat on which he is traveling to America sinks, Simon unpacks the menorah in his knapsack. It's the first night of Hanukkah and he knows he will need a miracle, just like the Maccabees long ago, if he is to survive. And the miracles come, one by one. At first frightened when a polar bear joins him on the iceberg, Simon ends up owing his life to the bear, who shares warmth for seven nights and fish for seven days before Simon is finally rescued. Eric Kimmel's original, satisfying tale is richly spun, and warmly illustrated by Matthew Trueman. Miracles "can happen to anyone, anywhere, even in the darkest of times," Simon concludes. "You just have to believe." (Ages 4-8)

**Lyon, George Ella. *What Forest Knows*. Illustrated by August Hall. A Richard Jackson Book / Atheneum, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-4424-6775-0, \$17.99)**

An inspired journey through the seasons in a wood offers a growing litany of what Forest knows, from "snow / icy branches / frozen waterfall" in winter to "buds ... / waking / opening up" in spring. Forest knows "growing, / going forth ... / fruit" in summer, and "gathering in, letting go" in fall. Then Forest knows snow again, and change, in everything and everyone. A picture book full of rich, evocative words moves seamlessly between ideas and concrete details of many things that might be found in the wood across the seasons. Astute observers will appreciate the dual meaning applied to "Forest" through the illustrations. The word can not only be taken as the woods personified, it can also be interpreted as the name of the brown dog seen on every page spread, exploring the woods throughout the year. *Highly Commended, 2015 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4-8)

**Naberhaus, Sarvinder. *Boom Boom*. Illustrated by Margaret Chodos-Irvine. Beach Lane, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-4424-3412-7, \$17.99)**

From the "boom boom" of a thunderstorm to the "bloom bloom" of flowers, the "buzz buzz" of bees to the "crinkle crunch" of leaves and "swirl swirl" of snow, a sense of whimsy and delight traverses the seasons in this picture book. The couplets describing sights and sounds of each season are set against colorful illustrations showing young children engaged with the natural world. Most of the word choices are satisfying for their onomatopoeia, but one surprising pair near the story's end is a perfect counterpoint: "Silent silent" as the snow falls. (Ages 2-5)

**Rocco, John. *Blizzard*. Disney / Hyperion, 2014. 40 pages (978-1-42317865-1, \$17.99)**

A two-day blizzard left four feet of snow on the ground of author/illustrator John Rocco's hometown when he was a child. He recounts that time in a picture book in which the storm is just the prelude to adventure. On Monday and Tuesday it snowed. On Wednesday, "Dad shoveled the driveway so he could get the car out when the snowplows came." But the plows didn't come. By Friday,

the cupboards were getting bare. Young John researched, gathered supplies, and practiced for the journey he embarked upon the next day. With tennis rackets strapped to his feet for snowshoes, he set off for the store, pulling a sled behind him. A double-page spread with fold-outs on either side creates a four-page map of his route, noting his diversions (e.g., building a snowman, making a snow angel, joining in on a snowball fight). He stopped by neighbors and took their orders for groceries, too, and with the sun setting eventually returned home, tired and triumphant. Rocco's marvelous mixed-media art captures the sense of a winter storm and its aftermath in pictures ranging from panels and spot illustrations to the four-page display, all of it perfectly paired with the finely paced narrative. A brief author's note tells a few additional details of his experiences as a ten-year-old boy in the Blizzard of 1978. (Ages 4–8)

**Rockliff, Mara. *Chik Chak Shabbat*. Illustrated by Kyrsten Brooker. Candlewick Press, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-7636-5528-0, \$15.99)**

Every Friday, Goldie Simcha, a young city dweller, begins a pot of her grandmother's cholent to celebrate Shabbat. As this traditional Sabbath-day dish simmers all night and through Saturday, the delicious smells of the stew waft throughout Goldie's apartment building. Every Saturday evening, her neighbors — Mr. Moon, the Santiagos, the Omars, and Miss Bellagoli — join Goldie to share the dish and fellowship. Though her neighbors have differing views on what makes Goldie's cholent so delicious, Goldie knows it's the memory of the special time together with her family on the Sabbath that makes the cholent so delicious to her. When Goldie is sick one Friday and cannot make the cholent, all of her neighbors contribute traditional dishes from their native countries that echo the ingredients in Goldie's cholent. In the end, all of the ingredients of the cholent are present at the table. Colorful and expressive art warmly portrays the diverse ethnicities of this community in this picture book that shows Jewish tradition in contemporary life. (Ages 3–7)

## Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature

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**Aylesworth, Jim, reteller. *My Grandfather's Coat*. Illustrated by Barbara McClintock. Scholastic Press, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-439-92545-7, \$17.99)**

The latest rendition of the Yiddish folk song "I Had a Little Overcoat" is given charming treatment by Jim Aylesworth and Barbara McClintock. At its heart, this is a love story spanning generations as a man falls in love, makes a wedding coat, and then transforms that coat time and time again as his family grows and changes. He has a daughter, the narrator's mother. Remnants of the wedding coat, already turned into a jacket, and later a vest, become a tie for her wedding day. That tie wears out over years in which the narrator is born, grows up, and marries. Now she has a child, to whom she is telling this story, and the tie has been turned

into a toy for that little boy. Both the narrative, with its judicious use of rhyme and alliteration and marvelous repetition and pacing, and the illustrations, which add layers of wonderful detail and warmth, are irresistible. (Ages 4–8)

**Byrd, Robert, reteller. *Brave Chicken Little*. Viking, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-670-78616-9, \$17.99)**

This retelling of Chicken Little's run-in with a wayward acorn starts out in a familiar manner: Chicken Little assumes the acorn signifies a falling sky, and runs off to tell the king. He soon gathers a crew of equally alarmist friends who join him when they hear his tale of doom. The group has grown to ten by the time they encounter Foxy Loxy. The scoundrel easily convinces them to follow him on a path that leads straight to his home, where Mrs. Foxy Loxy and seven toothy kits are waiting for lunch, sharp utensils at the ready. Conniving Foxy Loxy locks Chicken Little and his followers into the cellar while he waits for the stew water to come to a boil. The tale departs from its traditional course and Chicken Little shows his mettle, devising a plan of escape. Meticulously detailed images show the cast dressed in brilliantly colored eighteenth-century finery, traveling on their ill-advised mission through a lush bucolic countryside. (Ages 4–7)

**Elya, Susan Middleton. *Little Roja Riding Hood*. Illustrated by Susan Guevara. Putnam, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-399-24767-5, \$16.99)**

Richly flavored with Spanish words and Latino cultural details, this retelling of "Little Red Riding Hood" is also full of spirit and good humor. Young Roja is suspicious of the wolf that questions her in the woods on the way to her *abuelá's*, but doesn't notice him stealing off with her red *capa* and hood when she stops to pick *flores* for her ailing grandmother. The wolf, meanwhile, arrives at Grandma's in disguise, but Grandma (working on her laptop while in bed) only pretends to be fooled. Susan Middleton Elya's retelling is a masterful — and delightful — rhyming narrative. Susan Guevara's watercolor, ink, and gouache illustrations are the perfect accompaniment, providing not only visual context for Spanish words and greater cultural context for this version of the story, but also full of funny details, including a cast of characters from other traditional folktales, most notable the three blind mice who accompany Roja on her journey. (Ages 4–8)

**Nakamura, Raymond. *Peach Girl*. Illustrated by Rebecca Bender. Pajama Press, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-927485-58-3, \$19.95)**

A blithe retelling of a traditional Japanese tale features a small girl named Momoko, who bursts from inside the giant peach a couple finds by their door and announces she's come to make the world a better place. Her new parents warn of a nearby ogre who eats small children. On her way to confront him she meets a monkey, a dog, and a pheasant, who all add to the ogre's legend — he's bigger than a tree, with teeth like knives and eyes that shoot flames, AND he eats small children. But they accompany her, buoyed by Momoko's courage and the promise of peach dumplings. Playful details in both the narrative and the illustrations propel a delightful story in which the ogre himself proves to be lonely, and friendly, and a lover of peach dumplings, too. "Peachy." (Ages 4–8)

## Historical People, Places, and Events

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**Applegate, Katherine. *Ivan: The Remarkable True Story of the Shopping Mall Gorilla*. Illustrated by G. Brian Karas. Clarion, 2014. 40 pages (978-0-544-25230-1, \$17.99)**

“In leafy calm, in gentle arms, a gorilla’s life begins.” The baby gorilla learned as he played in the tropical forest of central Africa. He learned, too, by watching and listening to his mother and his father and other gorillas. But he didn’t learn about humans until he was captured by poachers and shipped in a crate with another baby gorilla to the United States. “A man who owned a shopping mall had ordered and paid for them, like a couple of pizzas, like a pair of shoes.” They were given names in a contest: Burma and Ivan. Then Burma died and Ivan was alone. He learned how to do things humans do — hold babies, sleep in a bed — but not the things that gorillas do. Eventually, he was moved to a cage at the mall, with a TV, some art supplies, and a tire. After many years, people began to get angry on Ivan’s behalf. After twenty-seven years in a cage, he was finally moved, to Zoo Atlanta, a safe haven where he was released into the open air again. “In leafy calm, in gentle arms, a gorilla’s life begins again.” Katherine Applegate tells the story of the gorilla that inspired her Newbery Award-winning *The One and Only Ivan* (HarperCollins, 2012) in this lyrical and moving picture book tenderly illustrated by G. Brian Karas. A two-page photo essay at story’s end tells more about Ivan. *Honor Book, 2015 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 5–9)

**Bausum, Ann. *Stubby the War Dog: The True Story of World War I’s Bravest Dog*. National Geographic, 2014. 72 pages (978-1-4263-1486-5, \$17.99)**

As he was training for duty overseas in 1917, Pvt. J. Robert Conroy bonded with a stray dog at the training camp. Conroy named the dog Stubby due to his stub of a tail, and smuggled him on board his ship when he headed for France. Stubby was so smart and so personable that he quickly became the unofficial mascot for Conroy’s division. On the battlefield, Stubby proved his worth by locating fallen soldiers and staying with them until help arrived, and warning the unit of poison gas. He earned a medal for bravery when he captured a German soldier. After the war, Stubby’s reputation and fame continued to grow. Author Ann Bausum did extensive primary research through documents, photos, and mementos at the Smithsonian, which has taxidermy Stubby in its collection, and one of the intriguing aspects of her narrative is occasional comments on the challenges of separating fact from fiction, since even stories written when Stubby was alive were prone to hyperbole. She also interviewed Conroy’s grandson, who shared memories of his grandfather and his stories about Stubby. Numerous photographs of Stubby, Conroy, and other memorabilia are an integral part of a volume that includes a timeline, extensive bibliography, and wonderful research notes. (Ages 9–14)

**Brimner, Larry Dane. *Strike! The Farm Workers' Fight for Their Rights. Calkins Creek / Highlights*, 2014. 172 pages (978-1-59078-997-1, \$16.95)**

A substantial work of nonfiction chronicles the efforts of farm workers to unionize and fight for better pay and working conditions in the 1960s and 1970s. The narrative emphasizes the efforts of César Chávez and Dolores Huerta, and the formation of the United Farm Workers of America. But author Larry Dane Brimner also discusses Larry Itliong and the organizing efforts of Filipino farm workers, whose decision to walk off the job in the Delano grape fields in 1965 was a huge impetus for the activism that followed. He also discusses the ongoing tension that existed between Filipino and Chicano worker organizations, though they eventually merged. Chávez is portrayed as a flawed but passionate activist in this detailed look at the politics within the activist organizations, and the political and social realities they were battling. Ample black-and-white photographs enrich this detailed history that resonates in myriad ways today, from issues of food and worker safety and fair pay to working conditions and the roles of immigrants in our work force. End matter includes a timeline, suggestions for further reading, and detailed source notes in this thoroughly researched history that drew in part on the author's interviews and other primary source materials. (Age 13 and older)

**Davis, Kathryn Gibbs. *Mr. Ferris and His Wheel*. Illustrated by Gilbert Ford. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 40 pages (978-0-547-95922-1, \$17.99)**

Mechanical engineer George Ferris's idea for showcasing American ingenuity at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair was originally rejected when the fair's chief engineer thought Ferris's design for a giant wheel was "so flimsy it would collapse." But Ferris and his partner were confident in the plans, and confident in the strong but lightweight properties of a new metal — steel. By the time Fair organizers decided to move forward with the idea it became a race against time to get the wheel up and operational by the Fair's opening. There were more than 100,000 parts to be assembled. The original wheel, called the Monster Wheel by its inventor, was a far cry from today's fairground ride: Two steam engines powered it, and each car was the size of a living room, with forty velvet seats. But it was a huge hit from the day the Fair opened. This engaging picture book account of the high-rise engineering marvel that has become — in much more modest form — a staple of fairs and carnivals will fascinate young builders and dreamers. (Ages 5-9)

**Faulconer, Maria. *A Mom for Umande*. Illustrated by Susan Kathleen Hartung. Dial, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-8037-3762-4, \$16.99)**

In 2006, a baby gorilla was born at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs and given the name Umande. Umande's mother didn't know how to care for him, so for eight months he was hand-raised by zookeepers, who even crawled on all fours while carrying him around. But the keepers knew that what Umande really needed was another gorilla to nurture him. At eight months, he was taken to the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, where he and an adult gorilla named Lulu were immediately drawn to each other. Lulu eagerly became his surrogate mother. During the day she would carry him, play with him, even

show him off to the keepers. And at night, she would cuddle with him before they fell asleep. Together. An author's note gives additional information about the two gorillas featured in this warm, engaging, pleasingly illustrated story. (Ages 4–8)

**Farrell, Mary Cronk. *Pure Grit: How American World War II Nurses Survived Battle and Prison Camp in the Pacific*. Foreword by Diane Carlson Evans. Abrams, 2014. 160 pages (978–1–4197-1028–5, \$24.95)**

The Army and Navy nurses stationed in the Pacific before the bombing of Pearl Harbor were serious about their work. However, at bases in Manila and elsewhere, the work was routine, with plenty of opportunities for recreation as well. No one was talking about war. And then war came. A compelling account chronicles what happened to those nurses as the Japanese advanced and eventually defeated U.S. and Filipino forces. They were thrown into war; dealing with an onslaught of wounded and dying soldiers; setting up hospitals in jungles; working under conditions that were physically dangerous and emotionally overwhelming. Then they became prisoners. At first boredom was one of the greatest threats; eventually it was starvation. All the while, they continued to try to do their best as nurses and as members of the U.S. military. A thoroughly researched and documented narrative focuses on both individual stories (all of the nurses are listed by name at volume's end) and the overall fate of these first groups of women on the front lines in the U.S. military. (Age 12 and older)

**Fern, Tracey. *Dare the Wind*. Illustrated by Emily Arnold McCully. Margaret Ferguson Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–374-31699–0, \$17.99)**

Ellen Prentiss learned to sail on her father's schooner as a child. "He taught Ellen how to hoist a sail and splice a rope. He taught her how to tack against the wind and turn the wheel." And he taught her to use a sextant, something many sailors never learned, let alone children, and a girl at that. When Ellen grew up she married a fellow lover of the sea. And when her husband, Perkins Creesy, became captain of a ship called the Flying Cloud, Ellen was his navigator. As they raced to set a new world record for a trip from New York to San Francisco, Ellen pushed the ship on a swift course. The mast broke, they got caught in the windless doldrums, only to emerge into a storm in the dangerous waters of Cape Horn. Ellen had to move beyond self-doubt and trust her knowledge, her training, and her understanding of how to read the sea. In the end, the ship set a new record of eighty-nine days for the journey. Tracey Fern's lively, informative account of this mid-nineteenth-century woman's singular accomplishment is paired with Emily Arnold McCully's fine illustrations. An author's note provides additional information on Ellen and shipping in that era. (Ages 7–10)

**Finkelstein, Norman H. *Schools of Hope: How Julius Rosenwald Helped Change African American Education*. Calkins Creek / Highlights, 2014. 80 pages (978–1–59078–841–7, \$16.95)**

Between 1913 and 1932, Sears, Roebuck president Julius Rosenwald helped finance the building of 5,357 schools for African American children in the south. An informative work featuring numerous black-and-white photographs



chronicles how Rosenwald launched this effort, a relatively small idea at first, at the request of Booker T. Washington, and how the vision grew. From the outset, Rosenwald asked that communities fundraise part of the cost of the schools so that everyone would feel a sense of pride and ownership. Stories of the difference the schools made in the lives of individuals and African American communities are part of this well-documented work that also illuminates approaches to philanthropy. (Ages 11–14)

**Fleming, Candace.** *The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion & the Fall of Imperial Russia.* Schwartz & Wade, 2014. 292 pages (978-0-375-86782-8, \$18.99)

Candace Fleming's primary focus in this ambitious and compelling work is the story of the Romanov family's rule of Russia at the start of the twentieth century, including their fall from power and eventual murder. But she provides essential counterpoint and context by weaving in voices of peasants and workers in Russia at the time, stories that describe the widespread poverty, horrifying anti-Semitism, and rising political tensions both within and beyond the vast nation's borders. The Romanovs were a family of absolute wealth and privilege. Tsar Nicholas was a devoted family man and not without compassion, but it was selective and limited. He was ill-prepared, misguided, and uninformed in his role as Tsar, and didn't want to know the details of the lives of the country's citizens. Alexandra, his wife, was intelligent and powerful but also desperate to ease the suffering of her son, Alexei, a hemophiliac. As World War I escalated, Nicholas abdicated almost all responsibility to Alexandra, the Communists seized control, the Bolsheviks took command under Lenin, and the family became prisoners and were eventually executed. Full of intrigue, Fleming's narrative is also written with intricate and often moving detail. The children of Nicholas and Alexandra — Alexei and his sisters, including Anastasia — become familiar, even if they aren't always likable. This is part of what makes the book so remarkable: It is full of the complexity of human behavior. Actions may often be easy to label right or wrong, but individuals are contradictory and infuriating and poignant. Sections of black-and-white photographs further illuminate the lives of both rich and poor. (Age 14 and older)

**Freedman, Russell.** *Because They Marched: The People's Campaign for Voting Rights That Changed America.* Holiday House, 2014. 83 pages (978-0-8234-2921-9, \$20.00)

The Voting Rights Act signed into law in August, 1965, was the result in part of direct action taken on the roads of Alabama earlier that year. Russell Freedman's account summarizes the years of previous voting rights efforts before focusing on the intensifying standoffs in Alabama between activists and law enforcement. The first attempt to march from Selma to Montgomery for voting rights took place on March 7, a day that became known as "Bloody Sunday" when demonstrators were gassed and beaten. The Turnaround Tuesday march two days later was carefully planned to make the point that marchers would not defy a court order but also would not back down: Martin Luther King Jr. led 1,500 people over the Edmund Pettus bridge, where they all kneeled in prayer before returning to Selma. By the time the march launched a third time, on March

21, there was national and international attention focused on Selma and, five days later, Montgomery, with the triumphant arrival of 25,000. Freedman's account includes individual stories of courage, commitment, and loss, while his essential epilogue notes the recent Supreme Court decision striking down a key provision of the Voting Rights Act, stating that "the meaning of American democracy remains a topic of debate and struggle." (Age 13 and older)

**Gandhi, Arun and Bethany Hegedus. *Grandfather Gandhi*. Illustrated by Evan Turk. Atheneum, 2014. 40 pages (978-1-4424-2365-7, \$17.99)**

Young Arun is happy to visit his grandfather in the Indian village of Sevagram, but is frustrated at having to share him with 350 faithful followers: His grandfather is the Mahatma, Gandhi. And then there is the Gandhi name to live up to, which feels like a burden to a child who can barely sit still and has trouble controlling his temper. After he is shoved during a soccer game, Arun comes close to throwing a rock at another boy. He seeks out his grandfather, ashamed but also in need of solace. As they sit together at a spindle, his grandfather explains that everyone feels anger, but it is what you do with the feeling that matters: anger can be used to strike like lightning and cause destruction, or to illuminate, turning darkness into light. It's a choice, and from that day on Arun not only understands this, but knows the choice he will always strive to make. The child-centered viewpoint never falters in this intimate look at a man who inspired and taught so many about peace within, and in the world. Evan Turk's striking mixed-media illustrations are full of emotion and appear nearly three-dimensional at times. (Ages 5-9)

**Jarrow, Gail. *Red Madness: How a Medical Mystery Changed What We Eat*. Calkins Creek / Highlights, 2014. 192 pages (978-1-59078-732-8, \$16.95)**

A compelling account of a real-world medical mystery in the early twentieth century chronicles efforts to determine the cause of pellagra, a debilitating and often deadly disease marked by a red, scaly rash, digestive problems, and mental deterioration, as well as eventual death. Most prevalent in the United States among the poor in the South, it went from relative obscurity to a major public health crisis. Moldy corn and germs were two commonly blamed culprits when Joseph Goldberger was assigned to investigate the cause. Goldberger, a meticulous observer and researcher, eventually theorized pellagra was the result of a dietary deficiency. Again and again he conducted experiments and found evidence supporting his theory — and refuting others — but there was incredible resistance among politicians, doctors, and others in the south, because Goldberger's theory projected an aura of poverty. Goldberger turned to self-experimentation as he and other researchers set out to prove once and for all that pellagra could not be transmitted from person to person. A fascinating — and at times queasy — read about a disease that has changed the way we eat: The deficiency (nicotinic acid) is why so many packaged foods today are enriched with niacin and B vitamins. A few unfortunate design decisions aside (occasional pages of white on red are difficult to read), this is an intriguing look at the intersection of science and social science. Black-and-white photographs illustrate the volume. (Age 12 and older)

**Kimmel, Elizabeth Cody. *A Taste of Freedom: Gandhi and the Great Salt March*. Illustrated by Giuliano Ferri. Walker / Bloomsbury, 2014. 40 pages (978-0-8027-9467-3, \$17.99)**

Gandhi's Salt March in 1930 was a peaceful act of defiance in which he led thousands of his followers more than 240 miles to the beach to make salt, so that they could take back "what Mother India gave us." Law required that Indians purchase salt from the British who ruled their land. It was an inspired and inspiring protest that helped Indians unite in their quest for freedom from British rule. In this fictionalized account, an old man recalls participating in the Salt March as a boy after Gandhi and his followers pass through his village. "It is as real to me as if it happened this morning. Reaching into that muddy sand. Taking a pebble of salt, and touching it to my tongue. No one ever forgets their first taste of freedom." A compelling narrative voice is set against soft, lushly colored illustrations. An afterword provides additional information and context for the story. (Ages 6-10)

**Krasner, Barbara. *Goldie Takes a Stand! Golda Meir's First Crusade*. Illustrated by Kelsey Garrity-Riley. Kar-Ben, 2014. 32 pages. (978-1-4677-1200-2, \$17.95)**

Young Golda Meir was quick to take charge at the first meeting of the American Young Sisters Society: I "naturally appointed myself president." When the group falls short in its initial effort to raise money for new textbooks for immigrant school children in Milwaukee, she boldly approaches a local theater owner. "I need to borrow the hall for a public event." Her fundraising plan is a rally, at which she will appeal to the audience for donations. Her nerve almost fails her, but she steps out onto the stage and speaks. "The way I see it ... it's the community's responsibility to help Milwaukee kids who can't afford school books. I ask each of you to look into your hearts and wallets and give what you can." It's a rousing success. This spirited, engaging, warmly illustrated look at a single event from the childhood of Israel's first female prime minister is fictionalized but, notes the author, the events are true. (Ages 5-8)

**Mitchell, Don. *The Freedom Summer Murders*. Scholastic Press, 2014. 250 pages (978-0-545-47725-3, \$18.99)**

This account of the murder of Civil Rights activists James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Mickey Schwerner in Mississippi in June, 1964 starts by delving into the lives of the three men to understand the roots of their social justice activism and how they came to be working together on Civil Rights in Mississippi at the start of Freedom Summer in 1964. Chaney grew up in the area. Schwerner was from New York. Though both were young, they were veterans of civil rights work in Mississippi. Goodman was on his first trip there, having signed on to be a Freedom Summer volunteer. The narrative then looks closely at the investigation into their disappearance, complicated by the complicity and silence of local law enforcement and white community leaders involved in or tied to the Ku Klux Klan, and then at the trials — the first one in 1967, the second one in 2005. The ugliness of racism comes through loud and clear in the investigation and initial trial, but forty-one years after the murders, when the second trial took place, there is hope inherent in the

markedly changed attitudes. Don Mitchell conducted a number of interviews in addition to drawing on ample additional source material to pen this arresting account full of the tension of the times. (Age 14 and older)

**Murphy, Claire Rudolf.** *My Country, 'Tis of Thee: How One Song Reveals the History of Civil Rights.* Illustrated by Bryan Collier. Henry Holt, 2014. 45 pages (978-0-8050-8226-5, \$17.99)

A fascinating look at the history of the song “America” (“My Country ’Tis of Thee”) begins with its roots in England in the 1740s, as “God Save the King.” It was adapted for use in the American colonies as they sought independence, with new words written for the new cause. From those times on, the song has been a part of various struggles for equality and justice. Verses were penned in the fight against slavery and for the right of women and Native Americans to vote. Marian Anderson sang “America” at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939 after being denied the opportunity to sing at Constitution Hall because she was Black. Martin Luther King, Jr. referenced the song in his speech at the March on Washington in 1963. And when Barack Obama was elected president, Aretha Franklin sang it at his first inauguration in 2009. “Now it’s your turn. Write a new verse for a cause you believe in. Help freedom ring.” Ample notes and source material conclude this inspired volume. (Ages 8–12)

**Peters, Marilee.** *Patient Zero: Solving the Mysteries of Deadly Epidemics.* Annick Press, 2014. 166 pages (pbk 978-1-55451-670-4, \$14.95)

“Who’s our Patient Zero?” Today this is one of many questions scientists ask when looking at a disease outbreak. This captivating look at the development of the field of epidemiology, which blends hard science and social science, looks at seven significant outbreaks of disease over the past 350 years. Starting with the Black Death in London in 1665, readers see how the approach to investigating diseases has developed over time. Each account, which include the Soho Cholera outbreak (1854), Yellow Fever in Cuba (1900), Typhoid in New York City (1906), Spanish Influenza (1918–19), Ebola in Zaire (1976), and AIDS (1980), reads like a mystery as those on the front lines looked for clues to understanding what was happening, where it started, and how it spread, often developing better practices that applied to both the specific illness and the broader field of epidemiology. (The current Ebola outbreak had not yet happened when this book was written; but the discussion of Ebola notes that a re-occurrence is an ongoing concern.) A paperback volume with an engaging design includes numerous visual elements and informative sidebars, as well as a glossary, chapter-by-chapter sources, suggestions for finding out more, and an index. (Age 11 and older)

**Prins, Marcel and Peter Henk Steenhuis.** *Hidden Like Anne Frank: Fourteen True Stories of Survival.* Translated from the Dutch by Laura Watkinson. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic, 2014. 211 pages (978-0-545-54362-0, \$16.99)

Each of these profiles of Dutch Jewish children and young adults who survived World War II in hiding are compelling and distinct, but across the narrative there is also a sense of continuity. This is in part a factor of geography — in a country

as small as The Netherlands, the children in hiding were often aided by the same people and traversing the same locales in their escapes. In most cases, they were also children whose families had been given an initial exemption by the Germans — often middle-class families with skills considered useful. Some of the children were hidden in situations where they felt loved and cared for and formed lasting bonds with the people who took them in; people they came to think of as family. Some were treated awfully, or had to move around often. Some whose parents survived never regained a sense of belonging or connection to their families when they were reunited. Regardless of their experiences in hiding, it's clear all of them had to deal with the lasting impact. A final chapter includes photographs of each of the individuals profiled as older adults. (Age 12 and older)

**Rubin, Susan Goldman.** *Freedom Summer: The 1964 Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi.* Holiday House, 2014. 120 pages (978–0–8234–2920–2, \$18.95)

A gripping look at Freedom Summer in Mississippi in 1964 has early chapters offering a tense, almost moment-by-moment chronicle of the final hours of civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Mickey Schwerner's lives — and their murders. The three young men disappeared the first week of Freedom Summer, while most young volunteers were still being trained in Ohio. Their disappearance exemplified the brutal racism under which African Americans lived in Mississippi. Author Susan Goldman Rubin describes the Freedom Summer voter registration drive, including efforts to sign up people under the alternate Mississippi Democratic Freedom Party, as well as classes and activities taking place at the Freedom Schools, giving a sense of events from the perspective of both Black residents of the communities and Freedom Summer volunteers. All the while, the FBI's search for the three missing men went on. The eventual discovery of their bodies, and the impact as word spread among Freedom Summer communities, is one of many affecting dimensions of Rubin's account, which also emphasizes that Freedom Summer was an effort designed by African American activists and propelled by African Americans working in collaboration with volunteers, Black and white, from within and beyond the state's borders. Rubin drew on a multitude of primary source materials and interviews to create this volume that includes occasional black-and-white photos, and wonderful sketches rendered that summer by Freedom Summer participant and artist Tracy Sugarman. (Age 13 and older)

**Sheinkin, Steve.** *The Port Chicago 50: Disaster, Mutiny, and the Fight for Civil Rights.* Roaring Brook Press, 2014. 200 pages (978–1–59643–796–8, \$19.99)

In the segregated military during World War II, Black sailors were responsible for loading munitions at Port Chicago on the San Francisco Bay. They were given no training in how to handle the dangerous cargo, and often felt pressure to increase their speed. On July 17, 1944, a tremendous explosion resulted in the deaths of 320 sailors on the dock and in the ships being loaded. In the aftermath, surviving Black sailors were soon ordered back to loading munitions. A group of them refused, saying they would obey any order but that one, admitting they were afraid. Court-martialed and found guilty of mutiny,

they were sentenced to 15 years hard labor in prison. Steve Sheinkin offers a mesmerizing account of individuals and events surrounding the trial of the men who became known as the “Port Chicago 50,” revealing the impact of racism and segregation within the military at that time. Thurgood Marshall, then with the NAACP, sat in on the trial and appealed the guilty verdict, but the appeal failed: To reverse the decision would be to admit the original trial was unjust. Political and public pressure resulted in the men’s release after fifteen months, but the mutiny convictions were never overturned. Sheinkin’s compelling narrative, written from a social justice perspective, draws on the full transcripts of interviews done with members of the Port Chicago 50 in the 1970s as well as on the trial transcript. These accounts and other research sources are thoroughly documented in an offering that is sure to evoke strong emotional responses among young adult readers. (Age 13 and older)

**Snyder, Elaine. *Anna & Solomon*. Illustrated by Harry Bliss. Margaret Ferguson Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-374-30362-4, \$17.99)**

A charming true story about how the author’s grandparents came to the United States from Russia. Anna and Solomon married in 1897. When the Czar’s soldier’s march on the Jewish quarter of their town, Anna makes a plan: Solomon will go to America, find work, and earn enough money to send for her. She will work in the market at home while she waits. All goes well, and finally the day comes when Solomon is eagerly watching for Anna among the new arrivals in New York, only to discover she’s sent her younger brother in her place. The second time Solomon is waiting, Anna has sent her older brother. Then her mother arrives instead of Anna. Finally, the day comes when it is really, truly Anna. Elaine Snyder shares more about Anna and Solomon, including several photographs, in an author’s note in which she states their story has become family legend. Harry Bliss’s cartoonlike illustrations reflect the bright optimism, spirit of generosity, and occasional moments of whimsy of the story. (Ages 5–8)

**Tonatiuh, Duncan. *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family’s Fight for Desegregation*. Abrams, 2014. 40 pages (978-1-4197-1054-4, \$18.95)**

In 1944, Sylvia Mendez’s Mexican American family had recently moved. She and her siblings were not allowed to go to the public school nearest their farm and were instead told they had to attend the Mexican school, which was farther away and had fewer resources. Sylvia’s father found other families willing to join him in suing the school district, whose only explanation had been, “That is how it is done.” During the trial, Sylvia and her family sat through infuriating testimony in which school district officials blatantly claimed that Mexican children were inferior to white children — in their personal habits, their social abilities, and their intelligence. Author/illustrator Duncan Tonatiuh quotes from the trial as part of this narrative that is grounded in both facts and the emotional experience of young Sylvia. The ample end matter includes a lengthy author’s note with additional information and photographs of Sylvia then and now. A glossary, bibliography, and index round out this distinctively illustrated

picture book account of the events surrounding the court case that desegregated California schools seven years before *Brown v. Board of Education*. (Ages 6–10)

**Weatherford, Carole Boston.** *Sugar Hill: Harlem's Historic Neighborhood.* Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie. Albert Whitman, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-8075-7650-2, \$16.99)

“Sugar Hill, Sugar Hill where life is sweet and the ‘A’ Train stops for the black elite. Where apartments are the height of style and watchful eyes train every child.” An homage to the Sugar Hill district of Harlem in the 1920s and 1930s references many of the artistic and cultural icons who lived and worked and played in the vibrant area. “Where Duke and Count plunk out new tunes and Zora spins stories by the moon ... Where Aaron Douglas births black art and a young Faith Ringgold gets her start ... Where DuBois outlines social tracts and Thurgood Marshall plots legal attacks.” An irresistible Who’s Who folded into a lively rhyming narrative that affirms African American cultural history and richness is set against dynamic illustrations full of color and energy and their own visual references, such as the allusion to Ringgold’s *Tar Beach* on the page mentioning her. A detailed author’s note provides more information about Sugar Hill and brief biographical statements about each individual referenced in the text. (Ages 7–11)

## Biography and Autobiography

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**Abirached, Zeina.** *I Remember Beirut.* Graphic Universe, 2014. 96 pages (978-1-4677-3822-4, \$29.27)

In her graphic novel memoir *A Game for Swallows* (U.S. edition: Graphic Universe, 2012), Zeina Abirached built a story around a single night of her childhood growing up in Lebanon during the Civil War in the 1980s. Here, she offers a broader sense of what life was like for her and her family during that time of unrest, covering a span of years. Less story than a series of vignettes, this account details individual, disparate memories of that time, and yet a sense of story emerges: about the resilience of children and families and people enduring incredible hardship; and about how the unthinkable becomes normalized, especially for children who have no other experience. The memories she shares are of both small details and big moments of her childhood, many of which are widely relatable, and often quite funny. “I remember the year I had to get braces. That same year I found out I was nearsighted ... and I thought it would be a good idea to get my hair cut. Not exactly cause for celebration.” The “I remember” phrase is used over and over, offering the events of her life during this time with measured matter-of-factness regardless of whether what follows is humorous or hair-raising — there was a war on, after all. But there are occasional blank pages suggesting there is more she isn’t — perhaps cannot — say, while the closing pages show adult Zeina haunted by nightmares of her childhood. Abirached’s drawing style is striking with its stylized, dramatic white-on-black art and expressive faces. (Age 14 and older)

**Andrews, Arin with Joshua Lyon. *Some Assembly Required: The Not-So-Secret Life of a Transgender Teen*. Simon & Schuster, 2014. 248 pages (978-1-4814-1675-7, \$17.99)**

Transgender teen Arin Andrews tells the story of his emerging understanding as a young teen that his female body did not reflect who he knew himself to be. Growing up in Oklahoma, Arin found support at a local community center for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender teens. At home, his mom, although struggling with Arin's revelation, remained his strong supporter and worked to broaden her own knowledge and understanding of transgender issues. Arin's voice is open, honest, engaging and refreshingly undramatic. He talks about everything from the beauty pageants he entered (and sometimes won) when he was younger to his growing disconnect with his body as he reached puberty and developed breasts, to relationships and romance. In addition to a list of books, movies, and online resources, the additional material includes an outstanding "How To Talk to Your New Transgender Friend (A Very Brief Guide)." (Age 12 and older)

**Bell, Cece. *El Deafo*. Colored by David Lasky. Amulet / Abrams, 2014. 233 pages (pbk 978-1-4197-1217-3, \$10.95)**

Cece Bell contracted meningitis at age four and lost her hearing. Once she started school she wore a Phonic Ear, a device that amplified her teachers' voices through a microphone the teachers wore on a cord around the neck. Cece could not only hear what her teachers said in the classroom but also in the teachers' lounge and — gasp! — the bathroom. Feeling like she had a superpower, she secretly began to think of herself as a superhero she called "El Deafo" (turning a pejorative term on its ear, so to speak). The experience of not being able to hear (as when her Phonic Ear is sent off for repair after the gym teacher breaks it, or when the lights are turned off at a sleepover and she can't lipread anymore) is strikingly depicted in the graphic novel format, whether the text is gradually fading, or dialogue bubbles are filled with sounds of gibberish. But the novel's main focus is Cece's deep desire to have a best friend as she goes through elementary school. She tries to assert herself when bossy Laura claims her; endures passive-aggressive Ginny; and finally finds a kindred spirit in neighbor Martha. Cece's friendship struggles are sometimes complicated by her hearing loss but also have a universal dimension that most children will recognize. Bell's memoir is set against the vividly realized backdrop of 1970s culture (from the TV shows to food and fashion), and told with great humor and honesty. The characters are all drawn as rabbits, giving the book a quirky charm. (Ages 8-12)

**Bryant, Jen. *The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus*. Illustrated by Melissa Sweet. Eerdmans, 2014. 40 pages (978-0-8028-5385-1, \$17.50)**

Peter Roget, the man who penned the first and most famous of all thesauruses, grew up a shy, intellectually precocious child who loved ideas, and words, and lists. "The lists helped him remember his lessons. They also gave him something to do when Mother peppered him with questions. 'Mama, I'm *fine*.' Although to be honest, Peter thought *fine* wasn't quite the right word." Later he was influenced by a scientist named Linnaeus. Still later, he found himself considering how wonderful it would be to be able to choose from among a list



of words to find just the right one to express what he was thinking and feeling. So he started working on what would eventually become his thesaurus (Greek for “treasure house”). He was also a doctor, and a husband, and a father. And still shy. But he was eager to share his love of words and ideas with the world. Jen Bryant’s lively picture book account of Roget is full of right words, carefully chosen and delightfully combined. Melissa Sweet’s mixed-media collage art has myriad intricacies and engaging details to pour over, including elements from Roget’s notebooks and words from the first edition of his thesaurus. She also illustrates scenes of Roget’s life drawn from Bryant’s narrative with a combination of wit and sensitivity. (Ages 6–10)

**Houtman, Jacqueline, Walter Naegle, and Michael G. Long. *Bayard Rustin: The Invisible Activist*. FGC / Quaker Press, 2014. 154 pages (978–1–937768–58–4, \$16.00)**

Behind the scenes is where Bayard Rustin could most often be found during the Civil Rights Movement, but the work he was doing was critical to some of the biggest events of that time, including the 1963 March on Washington. This eye-opening biography of Rustin for teens begins with his early life and influences, which included the Quaker religion in which he was raised. These formed the foundation of his understanding of and passionate commitment to non-violence. This, combined with his brilliance as an organizer — which leaders of the Civil Rights Movement from A. Philip Randolph to Martin Luther King Jr. and others came to rely on — made him invaluable. Rustin was openly gay. While he certainly faced discrimination he also had quiet, and occasionally not-so-quiet, support, and this is one of the most fascinating aspects of a modestly produced volume (there is no index) that is rich in content. (Age 12 and older)

**McCully, Emily Arnold. *Ida M. Tarbell: The Woman Who Challenged Big Business — and Won!* Clarion, 2014. 279 pages (978–0–547-29092–8, \$18.99)**

Ida M. Tarbell was one of the first investigative journalists. Her work as a reporter for *McClure’s Magazine* and her interest in taking on the unsavory business practices of John D. Rockefeller and Standard Oil changed journalism and business practices both. This fiercely intelligent woman who was working in a field largely dominated by men didn’t consider being female a barrier, and perhaps that is why she did not embrace or support, as logic seems to dictate she would, the suffrage movement and its fight for women’s right to vote. For Tarbell, there was no contradiction although it’s a puzzle that author Emily Arnold McCully openly considers, and readers will, too. As McCully states in her author’s note, “Ida can still be admired, but she also has to be explained. That’s what I set out to do in this book.” The lengthy biography will have limits to its appeal but offers insight into both Tarbell herself and the times in which we live today. (Age 14 and older)

**Meltzer, Brad.** *I Am Albert Einstein.* Illustrated by Christopher Eliopoulos. (Ordinary People Change the World) Dial, 2014. 40 pages (978-0-8037-4084-6, \$12.99)

“Ever been called weird? Or different? That’s what they thought I was. On the day I was born, my mom was actually scared since she’d never seen a baby with such a giant head.” A short, graphic biography of Albert Einstein combines a fictionalized first-person narrative and tongue-in-cheek humor with plenty of information about its subject. One of the playful conceits is Einstein’s appearance — he’s shown with his full bushy mustache and eyebrows, and big head of hair, from the time he is a baby. (A running joke: “My hair is awesome!”) But he’s also portrayed as a deep thinker, one who was often misunderstood but persisted in pursuing ideas even when he was criticized. “I will never stop being curious. And I hope you won’t either. The more questions you ask, the more answers you’ll find. And the more beauty you’ll uncover in the universe.” Speech bubble dialogue is used in scenes illustrating events in Einstein’s life. A handful of photographs and a timeline conclude this unusual and refreshing approach to biography for young readers. (Ages 7–10)

**Neri, G.** *Hello, I’m Johnny Cash.* Illustrated by A. G. Ford. Candlewick Press, 2014. 40 pages (978-0-7636-6245-5, \$16.99)

“Before he became / Johnny Cash, he was simply called / J. R. — / a name that stood for / nothing, / and nothing / was all he had / coming into this world.” But the boy who was on the road with his family at age three as they searched for something better — or just something, who had only the radio for company while the rest of his family worked the fields, who adored gospel music and his older brother, who found solace in a guitar and singing when that brother died, discovered he had so much more. “A gift,” his Momma called it. He followed his dream of singing into adulthood and onto stage after stage. It took him far, and also kept him true: “His songs gave a voice / the voiceless / capturing so many people’s / heartaches, struggles, and triumphs, / it seemed like he spoke for America / just as American spoke to him.” Sixteen poems to tell the story of Johnny Cash in this moving and informative tribute. G. Neri’s style of telling — in both voice and structure — is perfect for his subject, while the book’s size and design suggest an old record album with notes offering more about Johnny Cash and the times in which he lived. A discography and bibliography round out a volume realistically illustrated by A. G. Ford. (Ages 9–14)

**Paterson, Katherine.** *Stories of My Life.* Dial, 2014. 299 pages (978-0-8037-4043-3, \$17.99)

Teen readers who are fans of Katherine Paterson, as well as adults who admire her work, will especially appreciate this memoir in which the beloved author shares stories of her own life, stories about others who inspired her, and stories about real-life events that inspired some of her novels. The child of missionaries, Paterson grew up in China, Virginia, and North Carolina before and during World War II. She later went to Japan as a missionary herself before returning to the United States to go to college. She then fell in love, and settled into life as a mother and writer. Her compassionate world view and sense of humor both shine through in a narrative that also offers many deeply moving

moments, including a chapter chronicling the final months in the life of her beloved husband (and occasional co-author), John Paterson. Intermittent black-and-white photographs illustrate a volume that is a pleasure to read. (Age 12 and older)

**Powell, Patricia Hruby. *Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker*. Illustrated by Christian Robinson. Chronicle, 2014. 104 pages (978-1-4521-0314-3, \$17.99)**

Josephine Baker sought to live a life outside the color line, in a world where her superb talent and spirited, superior heart could triumph. She got her break in segregated Vaudeville and made it to the big time, but criticism grounded in the color of her skin was common. It wasn't until she left the United States for Paris and other international cities that she found acceptance and freedom, although she still faced racist jeers at times. But she persevered, and lived her ideal, raising a "rainbow tribe" of international children. It was never easy, breaking down barriers, and she and her children struggled financially after her career had peaked. Her home country took the longest to accept her, but Josephine would eventually triumph in America, too. "At sixty-seven, she booked a performance at Carnegie Hall ... the Carnegie crowd cheered till the tears came — theirs and hers." Patricia Hruby Powell's dynamic, informative, and tender look at the life of Josephine Baker is paired with Christian Robinson's expressive acrylic illustrations, which are full of both energy and poignancy. Notes from both the author and the artist provide more background on Josephine and their research and inspiration. Further reading and quotation sources are provided. (Ages 8-13)

**Prince, Liz. *Tomboy: A Graphic Memoir*. Zest, 2014. 255 pages (pbk 978-1-936976-55-3, \$15.99)**

This cartoonlike black-and-white graphic novel is funny, sharp, and poignant as Liz Prince recalls growing up with complete disregard for both stereotypical and traditional girl-like things, from the color pink and My Little Pony to wearing girls' clothes. She had no doubt she was a girl but felt a deep disconnect between what she knew herself to be and her peers' — and society's — perceptions of how she should appear and behave. She was the only girl in Little League, and the "only girl-who-wanted-to-be-a-boy" in Girl Scouts (she endured humiliation at camp when it was discovered the boys' clothes she always wore included underwear). A succession of individual friends seemed to understand her but she often found this understanding didn't extend as far as she thought. Puberty brought the agony of both her developing body and crushes on boys. (When isn't a crush agony?) In high school, however, she finally found a community among quirky, creative kids following their individual passions. She also discovered feminist zines, which opened her eyes to the realization that she'd been letting society dictate what she thought a girl could and should be rather than embracing girlhood on her own terms and defining it for herself. (Age 13 and older)

**Woodson, Jacqueline. *Brown Girl Dreaming*. Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin, 2014. 336 pages (978-0-399-25251-8, \$16.99)**

“And somehow, one day, it’s just there / speckled black-and white, the paper / inside smelling like something I could fall right into, / live there — inside those clean white pages.” Jacqueline Woodson’s childhood unfolds in poems that beautifully reveal details of her early life and her slow but gradually certain understanding that words and stories and writing were essential to her. Her older sister was shining smart. One of her brothers could sing wonderfully. She would come to realize words were her smart, her singing, her special thing. Woodson writes about growing up in Greenville, South Carolina, and then Brooklyn, New York, living with family members who were full of love and expectation, from her grandparents to her mother to her siblings, aunts and uncles. She sometimes felt she stood out — a northerner in the south; a southerner in the north; a Jehovah’s Witness knocking on doors. Experiences that shaped her came from within and beyond her family: “*Don’t wait for your school to teach you*, my uncle says, *I about the revolution. It’s happening in the streets.*” And later, “This moment, this *here*, this *right* now, is my teacher / saying / *You’re a writer*, as she holds the poem I am just beginning.” Ten poems titled “How to Listen” reveal another essential element of her story because she is also that: a listener, a recorder, an observer, writing something down even when she doesn’t understand it and trusting that “The knowing will come.” An album of black-and-white photographs and an author’s note round out this exquisite, quietly inspiring volume. (Age 10 and older)

**Yousafzai, Malala with Patricia McCormick. *I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World, Young Readers Edition*. Little, Brown, 2014. 230 pages (978-0-316-32793-0, \$17.00)**

The young reader’s edition of Malala Yousafzai’s memoir is more focused on her own life and work than the adult volume, which talks more about her father, who ran the school Malala attended in her home in Pakistan’s SWAT Valley. Malala’s voice is both wise and authentically young as she describes her childhood in a family where girls and education both were valued; and where her two younger brothers sometimes annoyed her as siblings do. Her growing passion for speaking out in support of girls’ education was in part a direct response to the growing threat presented by conservative voices in Pakistan, including the Taliban, and both her parents were sources of inspiration — her father for his passion and commitment, her mother for her courage. Malala had been speaking out for five years before she was shot by the Taliban at age fifteen. She talks about the immediate aftermath of the shooting and what happened in the weeks and months that followed as her story became a source of both outrage and inspiration. She and her family now live in Birmingham, England, where she was taken for care following the shooting, because it is unsafe for them to return home. (This volume was published before Malala was named co-winner of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize.) (Age 12 and older)

## Contemporary People, Places, and Events

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**Brisson, Pat.** *Before We Eat: From Farm to Table.* Illustrated by Mary Azarian. Tilbury House, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-88448-352-6, \$16.95)

Appreciation for the food we eat is extended to all those involved in bringing it to the table in a picture book that serves as a tuneless hymn of gratitude. Starting with those who “plowed the ground and planted seeds” the rhyming narrative touches on food that is grown, raised, fished, and harvested, acknowledging the many kinds of workers who produce the food we eat. “Thank the ones who packed the crates, sorted boxes, checked the weights.” Even the grocery store workers get a shout-out. The woodcut illustrations show a somewhat diverse range of workers engaged in community-based food production, and the penultimate page shows a moment of thanks at a peaceful meal. (Ages 3–7)

**Martin, Jacqueline Briggs.** *Alice Waters and the Trip to Delicious.* Illustrated by Hayelin Choi. Afterword by Alice Waters. Readers to Eaters, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-9836615-6-6, \$18.95)

Alice Waters has always been friends with food. As a three-year-old, she won first prize in a costume contest outfitted with produce (including a crown of asparagus). During her college days, when she studied food during a trip to France and, later, cooked sumptuous meals for friends in America, food was central to Alice’s life. She worked to locate fresh local ingredients to serve in her restaurant, Chez Panisse, where she wanted “every meal to be a symphony of flavor.” It was while walking to work that Alice noticed a neighborhood school without a cafeteria kitchen where students relied on packaged food. She was inspired to start a school garden so students could grow, cook, and eat their own fresh produce, and the Edible Schoolyard was launched. An author’s note states that there are now many Edible Schoolyard gardens across America and in almost thirty other countries. A warm garden palette and liberal inclusion of circular images welcome readers into Alice’s story, while pages with an extra visual storyline following the outside edge of the double-page spread add both charm and content to the experience. (Ages 5–10)

**Montalván, Luis Carlos with Bret Witter.** *Tuesday Tucks Me In: The Loyal Bond Between a Soldier and His Service Dog.* Photographs by Dan Dion. Roaring Brooks Press, 2014. 39 pages (978-1-59643-891-0, \$16.99)

Luis Carlos Montalván is a disabled veteran who relies on his service dog, Tuesday, for help with daily tasks as well as emotional support. A photo-documentary from Tuesday’s perspective describes their relationship and some of their typical (visiting a veterans’ hospital) and not-so-typical (a trip to an amusement park) outings. In particular, the narrative does a remarkable job describing Luis’s PTSD in straightforward, accessible prose. “He gets nervous when people are around . . . or there are sudden movements . . . or loud sounds. So each morning, we sit together outside our apartment building, waiting,

until his breathing and heartbeat tell me he's calm. Then I walk beside him, always on his right side, so Luis knows that I am there." Wonderful color photographs capture the loving and essential relationship between Luis and Tuesday. (Ages 7–10)

**Mora, Pat and Libby Martinez. *I Pledge Allegiance*. Illustrated by Patrice Barton. Alfred A. Knopf, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–307-93181–8, \$16.99)**

Libby's great aunt, Lobo, is about to become a United States citizen. As Libby and her class learn the Pledge of Allegiance in school it's the perfect chance for her to practice so she knows it in time for her aunt's citizenship ceremony at the end of the week. At home in the evening, Libby and Lobo practice together, and Lobo talks about why she wants to become a citizen: "I am proud to be from Mexico and to speak Spanish and English ... But a long time ago, when I was a young girl, my father wanted a safer place for us to grow up, and we came to the United States. The American flag — red, white, and blue — wrapped itself around me to protect me." Sisters Pat Mora and Libby Martinez based this story on their aunt, but it's a tale that will resonate with many children and families. (Ages 5–9)

**Winter, Jeanette. *Malala, a Brave Girl from Pakistan / Iqbal, a Brave Boy from Pakistan*. Beach Lane, 2014. 40 pages (978–1–4814-2294–9, \$17.99)**

Iqbal Masih was a four-year-old boy in Pakistan in the 1980s when he went to work in a carpet factory, held in bondage because of a twelve-dollar loan his parents couldn't repay. When he got older and realized he was being forced to work illegally, he began fighting, gaining his freedom and then speaking out on behalf of other children until he was shot and killed, at age twelve. Malala Yousafzai was a fifteen-year-old girl in Pakistan in 2012 when she was shot by the Taliban for advocating for education for girls. She survived, and has become even more outspoken. Jeanette Winter's spare and moving account of these two inspiring young people a generation apart tells each story separately, starting from either end of the book (which must be flipped over and around halfway through). But the two meet in the middle with a wordless page spread showing both of them. Malala is holding onto the string of a kite, and Iqbal looks to have just let go of one. (Ages 7–10)

**Yoo, Paula. *Twenty-two Cents: Muhammad Yunus and the Village Bank*. Illustrated by Jamel Akib. Lee & Low, 2014. 40 pages (978–1–60060–658–8, \$18.95)**

Muhammad Yunus grew up in Chittagong, India (now Bangladesh), seeing his mother give food to poor people, one of the many ways he learned about compassion and activism. He eventually became an economist, and when he returned home in 1971 after studying and teaching abroad, he began interviewing poor people to get a better understanding of poverty and how to fight it. He met women like Sufiya who worked hard making and selling crafts, but was unable to get out of debt after borrowing money for supplies at high interest rates from a local moneylender. Realizing small, low-interest loans would enable these women to get ahead, Muhammad was frustrated when no bank would agree to loan to people living in poverty. So Muhammad started

Grameen, or “village,” Bank in 1977 to help transform the lives of people in poverty. Muhammad and Grameen Bank won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. An afterword tells more about microfinance and Grameen Banks, which can be found around the world, including here in the United States. (Ages 7–10)

## Issues in Today’s World

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**Bang, Molly and Penny Chisholm.** *Buried Sunlight: How Fossil Fuels Have Changed the Earth.* Illustrated by Molly Bang. Blue Sky Press / Scholastic, 2014. 40 pages (978–0–545-57785–4, \$18.99)

Molly Bang and Penny Chisholm again collaborate to shine a light on how the sun fuels life on Earth, this time focusing on how millions of years ago, sunlight was trapped in living plants that eventually died and decayed. Buried deep underground, today these plants are fossil fuels. The informative, accessible narrative, set against beautiful full-page illustrations, describes the creation of fossil fuels and how they are burned as coal and oil and natural gas, as well as the environmental impact since humans began burning fossil fuels at a rate that cannot maintain the carbon balance of earth. Packed with science, it’s a book that also poses important questions: “Will you humans keep burning more and more fossil fuels every year and risk the changes this will bring? Or will you work together to use my ancient sunlight more slowly, find other sources of energy....The choice is yours.” Extensive, conversational notes provide more information on the relationship between fossil fuels and climate change. (Ages 8–11)

**Fleischman, Paul.** *Eyes Wide Open: Going Behind the Environmental Headlines.* Candlewick Press, 2014. 203 pages (978–0–7636-7102–0, \$17.99)

An informative and engaging book about the complexity and interconnectedness of environmental issues is also a phenomenal primer on critical thinking, human psychology, and how to become informed about and invested in the future of our planet. What happens when we don’t like what we’re hearing or reading about environmental issues? What happens when we are presented with factual information that challenges what we believe or think we know? How do we respond as individuals, and collectively? The book is divided into sections titled Noticing, Perception, Defense Mechanisms (e.g., denial, projection, regression), Systems (e.g., democracy, capitalism), Attitudes, and Eyes Abroad and Ahead. Using real-world examples, Paul Fleischman challenges readers to think about where information they are looking at or hearing comes from (follow the money) and who has a vested interest in it (follow the money), and to learn what to consider in evaluating what they are seeing, hearing, or reading. He acknowledges that it can be hard to be optimistic about our environmental future, but becoming informed and engaged is a critical first step to rising to the challenge and collectively fighting for change. (Age 13 and older)

## Understanding Oneself and Others

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**Bolden, Tonya.** *Beautiful Moon: A Child's Prayer.* Illustrated by Eric Velasquez. Abrams, 2014. 24 pages (978-1-4197-0792-6, \$16.95)

A little boy who forgot to say his prayers climbs out of bed and observes the beautiful moon before bowing his head. "Blocks away, a woman, bundled up, a park bench her bed, gazes at the beautiful moon, willing herself warm. The little boy prays for people with no homes." The little boy also prays for wars to end while a man on a speeding train doesn't notice the moon as he thinks about his daughter, a soldier overseas. As a man in a hospital gazes out the window, the boy prays for sick people. A family looks at empty cupboards by the light of the moon while the boy prays for food for all. The boy prays for the people he knows, too, and even for his turtle, Mikey. Tonya Bolden's quiet, lyrical picture book is about compassion rather than a specific religion, and seamlessly moves back and forth between what is comforting and familiar and struggles in the larger world (with which some children are certainly familiar). Eric Velasquez's deeply hued, realistic illustrations are full of feeling, and show a diverse cast of characters, with a young, brown-skinned boy at the heart of the story. *Honor Book, 2015 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3-7)

**Herthel, Jessica and Jazz Jennings.** *I Am Jazz.* Illustrated by Shelagh McNicholas. Dial, 2014. 24 pages (978-0-8037-4107-2, \$17.99)

"For as long as I can remember, my favorite color has been pink. (My second-favorite color is silver and my third-favorite color is green.)" Narrator Jazz's list of favorites goes on to include dancing and back flips and drawing and, especially, mermaids. She likes wearing high heels and gowns or jumping on the trampoline with her best friends Casey and Samantha. But, she notes, she's not quite like them. "I have a girl brain but a boy body. This is called transgender. I was born this way!" Elementary-age Jazz's matter-of-fact account of growing up transgender is upbeat overall, but reflects back on her frustration when she was younger, before her parents understood she was a girl, and how, even at the start of the current school year, the teachers treated her like a boy, while some kids still tease her. "Then I remember that the kids who get to know me usually want to be my friend." A brief afterword tells more about coauthor Jazz Jennings, now thirteen, and the Transkids Purple Rainbow Foundation for children born with Gender Dysphoria. (Ages 3-9)

**Kantorovitz, Sylvie.** *The Very Tiny Baby.* Charlesbridge, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-58089-445-6, \$14.95)

When Jacob's new sibling is born prematurely, it's scary seeing his mom, dad, and grandma all so worried. With his parents at the hospital so much, Jacob also feels ignored. "Even when Mommy and Daddy are home they are not paying attention either. They are all thinking about the baby." At one powerful moment he says, "I wish the baby would die." His Grandma is great at reassuring him, and also providing him with simple and honest information. ("Is the baby going to die? Grandma doesn't know." "Grandma says I will not get sick, too.")



Time passes, the baby gets stronger, and Jacob goes to the hospital, where he has to wash his hands and put on a special gown before seeing the baby. Eventually, the baby is strong enough to come home. “Hello, tiny baby.” The honesty of Jacob’s voice and feelings stand out in this informative story illustrated to look like Jacob’s own drawings of events as they unfold. (Ages 3–6)

**Kuklin, Susan. *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out*. Candlewick Press, 2014. 182 pages (978–0–7636-5611–9, \$22.99)**

Six transgender teens share their journeys to coming out into the open as their true selves in this gathering of voices in which each offers insight into being transgender as part of their broader identities, and in the context of their families, their communities, and a society not always ready to accept, let alone embrace, the truth about this aspect of who they are. The profile of Christina includes a discussion with her mother, who initially struggled but now celebrates her daughter’s strength and courage. Cameron is full of idealism and looks for ways to challenge perceptions of gender every day. Mariah says, “Transition? Everyone goes through one kind of transition or another ... Except mine is maybe a little more extreme.” Nat has battled severe depression but is hopeful about his future. Jessy notes, “I’m embracing my in-between-ness. I’m embracing this whole mix that I have inside myself ... So forget the category. Just talk to me. Get to know me.” In the profile of Luke, who lives in Madison, Wisconsin, Kuklin shows the important role community and adult mentorship can play as he talks about his work in a local LGBTQ theater company and its impact on his self-understanding. Most of the profiles include wonderful photographs taken by Kuklin of the teens. A glossary, extensive resources, and an interview with the clinical director of a program providing outreach to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender teens rounds out this groundbreaking, essential work. (Age 12 and older)

## The Arts

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**Bryan, Ashley. *Ashley Bryan’s Puppets: Making Something from Everything*. Photographs by Ken Hannon. Photographs edited by Rich Entel. Atheneum, 2014. 70 pages (978–1–4424-8728–4, \$19.99)**

The boundless creativity of artist Ashley Bryan extends to puppets he constructs from found objects. “These treasures, Washed in from the sea, Are cast-off challenges to me. I cannot rest till I create. A life that we may celebrate.” And here are more than twenty-five lives created from bone and wood and pieces of glass, fabric scraps and beads, shells and other baubles and bits. The puppets have distinct personalities, with stories and voices articulated in poems that speak to their history and purpose and the things from which they are made. Bryan references *The Book of African Names* as a place to turn to give names to puppets readers might make themselves. Readers are also invited to write poems for three puppets pictured that are voiceless in this volume, and to find the three puppets that “snuck into the book” without being included in the photographs

showing the puppets in groups. Poet Nikki Giovanni offers a tribute to Bryan in an afterword, and also a poem for the puppet Wambui (“Singer of Songs”) that he created for her. (Age 7 and older)

**Burleigh, Robert. *Edward Hopper Paints His World*. Illustrated by Wendell Minor. Christy Ottaviano Books / Henry Holt, 2014. 40 pages (978-0-8050-8752-9, \$17.99)**

Edward Hopper persevered in his desire to be an artist despite little success and few resources early on. He wanted to paint, and so he did paint. He fell in love with the light of Paris, but American scenes are what he wanted to capture, as he saw them. He painted old houses, lighthouses, and pictures of the sea. He painted small towns, and also the city, with the recurring theme of loneliness one way to think about the images that he captured on canvas, whether that loneliness was represented by a solitary house in the country, or by late-night diners in their solitary contemplation as in his best-known painting, *Nighthawks*. Robert Burleigh writes with enthusiasm, appreciation, and insight about Hopper, while Wendell Minor’s paintings are superbly suited to Hopper as subject. (Ages 7–10)

**Cline-Ransome, Lesa. *Benny Goodman & Teddy Wilson: Taking the Stage as the First Black-and-White Jazz Band in History*. Illustrated by James E. Ransome. Holiday House, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-8234-2362-0, \$16.95)**

Benny Goodman and Teddy Wilson grew up far apart but both were serious about music and, by the late 1930s, both had embarked on musical careers. On his clarinet Benny played music that was “All sweet / All dance / All white / All the way to New York.” On his piano, Teddy played music that was “All hot / All rhythm / All black / All the way to New York.” The on-stage segregation in jazz music didn’t extend backstage, and from the time Benny and Teddy first met they loved playing together. With drummer Gene Krupa, they formed the Benny Goodman Trio. Early on a white piano player took Teddy’s place when the trio performed live. But within a year, Teddy was on stage, too. Soon Lionel Hampton on vibraphone joined the group to form the fully integrated on-stage-and-off Benny Goodman quartet. A spirited, lively narrative is set against vibrant illustrations in a volume concluding with more on Benny and Teddy, a timeline, and brief notes about other jazz musicians mentioned in the narrative. (Ages 6–9)

**Copeland, Misty. *Firebird: Ballerina Misty Copeland Shows a Young Girl How to Dance Like the Firebird*. Illustrated by Christopher Myers. Putnam, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-399-16615-0, \$17.99)**

“The space between you and me is longer than forever” says a young girl watching an accomplished ballerina. “I could never hope to leap the space between.” The ballerina disagrees, noting that she, too, was once “a dreaming shooting star of a girl / with work and worlds ahead.” The young dancer’s discouragement is transformed by words that don’t disregard the sweat and failure that come before success but also affirm that with practice the girl’s dream can come true. Someday she may be the one that young dancers look to with wonder, and dreams of their own. The stirring narrative is followed by

an encouraging personal note to the reader from ballerina Misty Copeland. Christopher Myers's colorful, energetic paintings showing the two African American dancers incorporate many visual references to the Firebird role that Copeland has danced, from the feathers of its wings in the stage curtains and the sky to the fiery colors that pulse from many pages. (Ages 5–10)

**Ehlert, Lois. *The Scraps Book: Notes from a Colorful Life*. Beach Lane, 2014. 60 pages (978–1–4424–3571–1, \$17.99)**

Lois Ehlert's creative journey began in early childhood and continues today. Here, she offers an open, inviting look at some of her own work as an artist creating books for children. Page spreads dazzle with Ehlert's colorful collage art, including images from some of her best-known books along with a brief, friendly narrative about where the idea came from and how it developed. There is a scrapbook feel to the assorted illustrations, personal photographs, and notes in an offering that is a collage both visually, and in the content that combines insight into her personal journey as an artist with information about how her art and her books take shape. Inspiration can come from anywhere. Chaos can lead to beautiful creations. This treasure trove feels like a love letter to the beauty all around us, and to young artists, who are encouraged to "find your own spot to work and begin." (Ages 4–9)

**MacLachlan, Patricia. *The Iridescence of Birds: A Book About Henri Matisse*. Illustrated by Hadley Hooper. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2014. 40 pages (978–1–59643–948–1, \$17.99)**

"If you were a boy named Henri Matisse who lived / in a dreary town in northern France where the skies were gray...." Influences on young Henri Matisse are cataloged in a lyrical narrative that builds anticipation as it describes objects and experiences visually enriching his world before concluding, "Would it be a surprise that you became / A fine painter who painted / Light / and / Movement / And the iridescence of birds?" Matisse's mother pointedly brought color into his life with bright rugs and plates that she painted (he was allowed to mix the colors) and fruit and flowers that she brought home and let him arrange. She also taught him that the changing colors of the pigeons he raised was called iridescence. "I got my sense of color from my mother," Matisse is quoted as saying, in the author's note. Illustrations that are on the one hand unMatisse-like, with muted undertones, are surprisingly effective at conveying the importance of color and form in his life in this quietly striking picture book. (Ages 5–9)

**Morales, Yuyi. *Viva Frida*. Photographs by Tim O'Meara. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2014. 40 pages (978–1–59643–603–9, \$17.99)**

Yuyi Morales's playful, lush, elegant, heartfelt picture book about artist Frida Kahlo concludes with an author's note titled "My Frida Kahlo," which begins: "When I think of Frida Kahlo, I think of *orgullo*, pride. Growing up in Mexico, I wanted to know more about this woman with her mustache and unibrow. Who was this artist who had unapologetically filled her paintings with old and new symbols of Mexican culture in order to tell her own story?" The note itself is an informative and loquacious conclusion to a work that is linguistically

spare, visually complex and delightful, and emotionally rich and stirring. Morales's illustrations combine photographs of three-dimensional tableaux she created featuring handcrafted puppets representing factual elements of Kahlo's life, including the child-friendly details of Kahlo's pet deer and monkey, and paintings that reference Kahlo's own work and represent elements of Kahlo's vivid creative life as expressed through her art. The bilingual text is a series of simple statements in Kahlo's voice, which concludes, "I love / and create / and so / I live!" (Ages 4–9)

**Raschka, Chris.** *The Cosmobiography of Sun Ra: The Sound of Joy Is Enlightening.* Candlewick Press, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–7636-5806–9, \$15.99)

A joyful and inspired introduction to jazz pianist, composer, and conductor Sun Ra (Herman "Sonny" Blount), who "always said he came from Saturn." Author/illustrator Chris Raschka works with that conceit in a volume that celebrates Sun Ra's brilliant creativity that sometimes seemed otherworldly. "Being from another planet, Sun Ra was naturally interested in everything earthy ... most of all, music! It was the thing about the earth that was most like the stars." Sun Ra navigates a childhood and young adulthood among humans who sorted themselves by color ("Sun Ra was sorted into the black variety"). A conscientious objector during World War II, he eventually settled in Chicago, attracting other musicians, experimenting with an electronic keyboard, and forming the Arkestra, a vibrant ensemble that moved to New York, and then Philadelphia, before traveling the world. Dressed in colorful robes they made themselves, the musicians followed Sun Ra's lead, playing music that "might be crisp and tight one moment, then wild and free the next." Illustrations that vibrate with movement and color capture that sense of freedom. A list of selected recordings and a brief note offering additional information about Sun Ra conclude this work. (Ages 6–10)

**Reef, Catherine.** *Frida & Diego: Art, Love, Life.* Clarion, 2014. 168 pages (978–0–547-82184–9, \$18.99)

Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera were both brilliant artists. Frida's art revealed a complex and richly imagined inner world. Diego's art was about the world around him, whether he was depicting the lives and dignity of peasants in Mexico or the strength and ingenuity of workers in America. An insightful work examines the separate and intricately twined lives of these two individuals whose paths first converged when Frida was still a teenager. When she was in her twenties, they met again, falling in love and getting married. Their relationship was one full of pain as well as love. Diego was unfaithful to Frida; Frida was unfaithful to Diego. They eventually divorced. Later they remarried. Through it all they continued to admire and support one another as artists while navigating personal dramas and challenges. Diego had a tense relationship with Communists in Mexico, and artistic and political ideals he didn't want to compromise. Through it all, he painted. Frida endured great physical and emotional pain. A bus accident broke her body when she was a young woman and required multiple surgeries throughout her life. Through it all, she painted. And for both of them, the force of their feelings for one another seemed to have

a lasting hold, for better and for worse. A beautifully produced volume includes black-and-white photographs and full-color reproductions of selected paintings by each artist. (Age 13 and older)

**Richards, Keith with Barnaby Harris and Bill Shapiro.** *Gus & Me: The Story of My Granddad and My First Guitar.* Illustrated by Theodora Richards. Megan Tingley Books / Little, Brown, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-316-32065-8, \$18.00)

Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards offers a loving tribute to the grandfather who handed him his first guitar. But Gus gave him far more than the entry into a life of music. “There was nothing like visiting Gus. The closer to his house I’d get, the bigger my smile would grow. By the time I landed on his doorstep, I was all teeth.” The two of them walked all over the city of London, a sense of adventure defining their time together. “With Gus, you’d have no idea where you’d end up.” And when young Keith was finally big enough, Gus handed him the guitar that sat on top of his piano. “He sat with me, taught me how to hold it, strum it, and pluck a little.” A warm, delightful narrative rich with appealing details chronicles a wonderful grandfather-grandson bond and the emergence of a serious musician. A brief photo essay about Keith Richards concludes a picture book featuring playful black line drawings and color washes. (Ages 6–9)

**Robertson, Sebastian.** *Rock & Roll Highway: The Robbie Robertson Story.* Illustrated by Adam Gustavson. Christy Ottaviano Books / Henry Holt, 2014. 40 pages (978-0-8050-9473-2, \$17.99)

Robbie Robertson’s rise to fame as a founding member of The Band, and writer of some of the iconic songs of the late 1960s and early 1970s, is chronicled by his son Sebastian in a lengthy and engaging picture book biography. From the time he was a young child visiting his Mohawk relatives on the Six Nations Reservation in Canada, Robertson was immersed in “rhythm, melodies, and storytelling.” And from the time he got his first guitar, he spent hours practicing. “On the reservation, eleven-year-old Robbie had surpassed the adults as the best guitarist.” He formed his first band at thirteen, and at sixteen was traveling as a professional musician. He continued to practice, refine, and develop his playing style, coming up with a unique sound that drew the attention of Bob Dylan, and helped pave the way for folk music going electric. The narrative combines a sweeping picture of Robertson’s influence and accomplishments with small moments and details that marked defining moments in his career and, sometimes, in rock & roll. The volume is further enriched by a timeline with photographs and Sebastian’s terrific Q-and-A interview with his father. (Ages 9–13)

**Rosenstock, Barb.** *The Noisy Paint Box: The Colors and Sounds of Kandinsky’s Abstract Art.* Illustrated by Mary Grandpré. Alfred A. Knopf, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-307-97848-6, \$17.99)

In young Vasya’s world everything is staid and proper, until the day he opens the paint box his aunt gives him. “The swirling colors trilled like an orchestra tuning up for a magical symphony.” Vasya paints what he hears — the clinking of a bright lemon sun, the low vibrations of navy blue cello strings. But no

one in his family hears what he hears or understands what he's painted. They do, however, think lessons would be a good idea. "So Vasya went to art class and learned to draw houses and flowers — just like everyone else." Vasya grew up and became a lawyer, but a trip to the opera reawakened his urge to paint the colors of sound. "Art should make you feel ... like music," he said. Playful, lyrical language propels this picture book account of Vasily Kandinsky, who started the abstract art movement. An author's note tells more about Kandinsky and abstract art and includes photographs of four of his paintings. The acrylic and collage illustrations wonderfully express the rigidity of Kandinsky's outer life and the colorful wilds of his imagination. (Ages 5–8)

**Russell-Brown, Katheryn. *Little Melba and Her Big Trombone*. Illustrated by Frank Morrison. Lee & Low, 2014. 32 pages (978–1–60060–898–8, \$18.95)**

"From as far back as her memory would go, Melba loved the sounds of music. Blues, jazz, and gospel rhythms danced in her head." An energetic, entertaining picture book introduces self-taught jazz trombonist and composer Melba Liston. In childhood, "notes stirred and rhythms bubbled all through Melba's home." As an adult, Melba "composed and arranged music, spinning rhythms, harmonies, and melodies into gorgeous songs. And when Melba played the trombone, her bold notes and one-of-a-kind sound mesmerized the crowd." Exceptional and unafraid to be herself, Melba more than held her own among other greats of jazz whose names are better known. A two-page afterword further informs this inspired picture book that touches on the sexism and racism Melba faced while showcasing her extraordinary talent. A variety of intriguing perspectives distinguish Frank Morrison's movement-filled illustrations that accompany Katheryn Russell-Brown's spirited narrative. (Ages 6–10)

**Winter, Jeanette. *Mr. Cornell's Dream Boxes*. Beach Lane, 2014. 40 pages (978–1–4424–9900–3, \$17.99)**

An eye-opening introduction for children to the work of artist Joseph Cornell, who created enchanting shadow boxes, begins, "If you had lived on Utopia Parkway not so long ago ..." It goes on to describe what a child walking by Mr. Cornell's house might have seen, even as she or he went unseen: "Mr. Cornell wouldn't have noticed you looking in. He saw mostly dreams and memories, and he filled his boxes with them." Jeanette Winter deftly incorporates factual elements of Cornell's life, as well as things he pondered and imagined that inspired his art, into a quietly captivating narrative. Despite the text's brevity, Winter also weaves in small, child-friendly details, like Cornell's love for sweets, and his delight in sharing his dream boxes with children. Her stylized art emphasizes small scenes and individual elements suggestive of the shadow boxes. An author's note with black-and-white photographs further grounds the narrative in details of Cornell's life and his desire to share his work, especially with children. (Ages 5–9)

## Poetry

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**Frank, John.** *Lend a Hand: Poems about Giving.* Illustrated by London Ladd. Lee & Low, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-60060-970-1, \$17.95)

An engaging, purposeful collection of thirteen poems, each in the voice of a child who is doing something helpful. The range of subjects shows how small kindnesses matter and can happen in many ways: jamming with an elderly neighbor who shares a love of music; sharing lunch with a friend who has none; teaching an awkward classmate how to swing a bat; loading groceries in the car of a mom with small children; giving up a bus seat to someone who needs it more; tutoring a younger child; writing a letter to a soldier overseas; helping stitch a quilt for someone in need. The quilting poem concludes, “A warm spread / should have maximum size ... / but the spread of warmth / should have no bounds.” The illustrations show diverse kids and adults, and a note from the illustrator recounts discovering connections between the models he photographed and some of the poems’ subjects. (Ages 6–9)

**Janeczko, Paul B.** *Firefly July: A Year of Very Short Poems.* Illustrated by Melissa Sweet. Candlewick Press, 2014. 47 pages (978-0-7636-4842-8, \$16.99)

A smile-inducing collection of poems offers a range of perspectives on the seasons and an introduction to an array of poets both contemporary and classic. Charlotte Zolotow’s “Little Orange Cat,” Ralph Fletcher’s “Water Lily,” and Carl Sandburg’s “Window” are among subjects for Spring. Summer includes “Subway Rush Hour” by Langston Hughes and Joyce Sidman’s “Happy Meeting” in which “Rain meets dust: / soft, cinnamon kisses. / Quick, noisy courtship, / then marriage: mud.” Fall and Winter speak in the voices of William Carlos Williams, Eve Merriam, Robert Frost, Ted Kooser, and others. The brevity of the individual poems makes each one feel like a perfect little package, to be opened, sighed over, shared. Melissa Sweet’s lovely illustrations offer concrete yet whimsical images that shift stylistically, providing an appealing accompaniment to the poems while maintaining a sense of unity across the pages. (Ages 4–9)

**Koyczan, Shane.** *To This Day: For the Bullied and Beautiful.* Annick Press, 2014. 70 pages (978-1-55451-639-1, \$19.95)

There is nothing subtle about “To This Day,” a powerful spoken-word poem in which Shane Koyczan gives a passionate account of the impact of bullying, beginning with his own experiences in childhood before bringing other stories into the light. He focuses not just on the child who is relentlessly bullied and teased, but on what happens to that child when he or she grows up believing they are worthless. Ultimately, Koyczan affirms the strength of survivors: “Because how can you hold your ground / if everyone around you wants to bury you beneath it / you have to believe that they were wrong / they have to be wrong / why else would we still be here?” This book, which can be a conversation starter in classrooms, is also, for all readers and listeners, testament

to the profound power of language not only to hurt, but also to help heal. In an unusual reversal, this is a work in which the book came after the movie — or rather, the video, which went viral on YouTube after it was first released in February 2013. Thirty artists from around the world contributed to this work, each one of them illustrating a section of the poem. More about the poem's origins, and efforts to combat bullying, are included. (Age 10 and older)

**Sidman, Joyce.** *Winter Bees & Other Poems of the Cold.* Illustrated by Rick Allen. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 29 pages (978-0-547-90650-8, \$17.99)

Tundra swan, snake, snowflake. Bees in their hive, a vole under snow, the fly-high raven and the earth-bound wolf. The lives of these and other creatures in winter are the subject of poems by Joyce Sidman that crackle with cold and sing with warmth. “We scaled a million blooms / to reap the summer’s glow. / Now, in the merciless cold, / we share each morsel of heat, / each honeycombed crumb ... / Deep in the winter hive, / we burn like a golden sun” (from “Winter Bees”). Sidman’s evocative, lyrical poems are paired with brief scientific information about each of her subjects that further illuminates the poems and their imagery. Gorgeous, stylized lino-block and digitally rendered art by Rick Allen is an elegant backdrop to a lovely, finely crafted collection. (Ages 6–10)

## Concept Books

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**Bertier, Anne.** *Wednesday.* Translated from the French by Claudia Z. Bedrick. U.S. edition: Enchanted Lion, 2014. 40 pages (978-1-59270-152-0, \$17.95)

Little Round, a small orange circle, and Little Square, a larger blue square, love to play together every Wednesday. Their favorite game is a creative building game. One Little says a word, and then both Littles take the shape of that object. “Butterfly,” “flower,” “mushroom” calls out Little Square. Both Littles break into pieces and move around to make a butterfly, flower, or mushroom. Little Square is very versatile. He can take the shape of many more objects than Little Round. Little Square becomes a fence, a tree, a house, and more. Little Round begins to feel left out; she can’t make these shapes with her round body. These two friends soon find a solution. They can both say the words and create the objects by working together. A sweet and lively story about the power of play, imagination, creation, and cooperation. (Ages 2–6)

**Cole, Henry.** *Big Bug.* Little Simon, 2014. 24 pages (978-1-4424-9897-6, \$14.99)

Size is a matter of relativity in this deceptively simple, striking picture book. The opening page spread features a “Big bug” — a ladybug shown so large it doesn’t quite fit on the two pages. With a turn of the page, we see the ladybug is now small in relation to the “Big leaf” on which it sits. Every turn of the page continues to zoom farther out as the handsome paintings show the thing that was large is now small in comparison to a newly introduced



object: a flower, a dog, a cow, a farm and then “Big...Big sky” (with the farm as part of the landscape). Then the comparisons reverse course, with every new object introduced “Little” in comparison to what came before, but “Big” in comparison to what comes next. Each turn of the page moves in closer and closer on details of the farm (barn, house, window, dog) in this wonderful exercise in comparison and perspective that’s terrifically executed. (Ages 3–7)

**Fleming, Denise. *Go, Shapes, Go!* Beach Lane, 2014. 40 pages (978–1–4424–8240–1, \$17.99)**

A small toy mouse on wheels commandingly directs a variety of shapes — squares, circles, ovals, arcs, and rectangles — in different sizes — big, small, thin, tiny — to slide, roll, flip, and fly into the form of a monkey. When the mouse suddenly crashes into the monkey, the shapes reform into a bounding cat. Mouse quickly tames the shapes back into the safer monkey mode. Denise Fleming’s trademark painted-paper collage, uncomplicated text, and comfortable pace make this book an engaging introduction to shapes, sizes, and movement for younger children, as well as to the concepts of parts and wholes, as separate shapes create concrete objects. (Ages 2–6)

**Franceschelli, Christopher. *Countablock*. Illustrated by Peskimo. Abrams Appleseed, 2014. 90 pages (978–1–4197–1374–3, \$16.95)**

A big, bold board book (ninety pages!) too heavy for very small children to hold on their own is big on substance too, playfully reinforcing the concept of counting the numbers that come between multiples of ten. The opening pages highlight counting from one to ten (“two snowmen become two puddles ... six balls of yarn become six sweaters ...”). “What comes after ten?” A single spread counts from 11 to 19 and then “twenty caterpillars become ... twenty butterflies!” The same pattern repeats all the way up to 100, with a page spread between each multiple of ten labeling the nine numbers that come between. The clever design features cut-outs of the multiples of ten, with items to be counted on the pages in between relating to the prior illustration (e.g., butterflies 21 through 29 before “thirty baskets of cucumbers ... become thirty jars of pickles!” and so on). (Ages 3–6)

**Gehl, Laura. *One Big Pair of Underwear*. Illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld. Beach Lane, 2014. 32 pages (978–1–4424–5336–4, \$17.99)**

There’s almost always an odd one out in this humorous counting book that begins with one pair of underwear (yes, a big pair) and two bears “who hate to share.” “ONE bear cries, “That isn’t fair!” when the other one wins the tug-of-war. Then it’s THREE yaks but only TWO “small sacks of salty snacks.” THREE scooters and FOUR seals, and so on. In every case, someone is left without the coveted item, until... TEN “tall twisty playground slides. TWENTY pigs all want a ride.” Chaos? No! The pigs come up with a way for all of them to have fun, and soon all the other animals are following their example — bears sharing underwear, yaks and seals sharing scooters and snacks. “The friends all share and swap and trade then line up in a long parade.” The silliness can’t be contained in a picture book that pairs Laura Gehl’s rollicking,

rhyiming, tongue-twisting narrative with Lichtenheld's hilarious illustrations. *Highly Commended, 2015 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–6)

**Kang, Anna. *You Are (Not) Small*. Illustrated by Christopher Weyant. Two Lions, 2014. 32 pages (978–1–4778–4772–5, \$16.99)**

A larger furry creature exclaims to a smaller furry creature: "You are small." The smallish furry creature retorts: "I am not small. You are big." The argument builds between these furry bearlike creatures, who are similar in appearance except for size and color (one is blueish and the other orangish). The creatures call in their identical friends for comparison. Soon, a whole swarm of larger furry, orange, bearlike creatures and smaller furry, blue, bearlike creatures are clamoring about size difference. When a towering furry creature steps into the picture and is quickly followed by a number of parachuting tiny furry creatures, the argument seems to be resolved. Or, has it just become more complicated? Who is small and who is big? That depends on whom you ask. With simple, sparse text and bold, clean illustrations, this amusing book about size comparison also offers a clever introduction to perspective-taking. (Ages 2–6)

## Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

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**Baldacchino, Christine. *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*. Illustrated by Isabelle Malenfant. Groundwood / House of Anansi Press, 2014. 32 pages (978–1–55498–347–6, \$16.95)**

"Morris Micklewhite has a mother named Moira and a cat named Moo." He likes Sundays because Sundays mean pancakes. And he likes Mondays because Mondays mean school, where the list of likable things is a long one, but at the top is the tangerine dress in the dress-up center. "He likes the noise the dress makes — swish, swish, swish when he walks and crinkle, crinkle, crinkle when he sits down." He pretends not to notice when other kids make fun of him for wearing the dress or nail polish, but he can hear what they say, and every day it's something mean. By Friday, Morris doesn't want to go to school. He stays home, where he feels safe and loved and free to imagine a boy in a tangerine dress riding a blue elephant. On Monday, he's ready for school again. "When he had the chance, he put on the dress that reminded him of tigers and the sun and his mother's hair." Lively, lyrical writing further distinguishes a picture book already notable for featuring a child who conforms to his own understanding of who he is rather than what those around him expect him to be based on gender. And in the end, Morris's classmates don't see a boy in a dress, they see a boy with an imagination that can take them all far. (Ages 3–8)

**Barton, Byron. *My Bus*. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-06-228736-6, \$16.99)**

What could be more appealing to toddlers than a book about a bus driver and his canine and feline passengers? A book in which those cats and dogs are driven to a boat (“They sail away”), a train (“They ride away”), and a plane (“They fly away”). Finally there is only one dog left. “My dog,” says the bus driver. “Bow wow.” Classic Byron Barton, the illustrations feature bright colors, rounded shapes, and flat perspective, as well as priceless expressions on the faces of the cats and dogs. Barton’s winning book offers the opportunity to count on every page spread (anywhere from one to five), not to mention bark and meow with wild abandon. (Ages 1–3)

**Bee, William. *Digger Dog*. Illustrated by Cecilia Johansson. U.S. edition: Noisy Crow, 2014. 20 pages (978-0-7636-6162-5, \$14.99)**

After Digger Dog sniffs out a must-have bone, he begins to dig. He soon finds that “the ground is too hard and the bone is too deep” for his shovel. As his friends, a rabbit and a mouse, set up the orange cones of the construction site and don their hard hats, Digger Dog finds a better tool, a yellow backhoe, “so he can dig deeper and quicker.” But this “little digger” doesn’t do the trick, so Digger Dog finds a “bigger digger.” After successive tries, Digger Dog acquires the biggest digger ever, so big that it requires a fold-out page to be viewed. Finally, Digger Dog and his friends reach what they believe is the biggest bone ever. But it proves to be only the fingertip of a very large, long-buried dinosaur, requiring another fold-out to fit. Bright yellows and reds with polka-dotted dirt and cheerful, persistent animals offer great visual appeal while the comfortable, repeated text format makes this an excellent choice for a read-aloud or read-along. (Ages 3–7)

**Black, Michael Ian. *Naked!* Illustrated by Debbie Ridpath Ohi. Simon & Schuster, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-4424-6738-5, \$17.99)**

In a scenario that will be familiar to many families, a small child runs naked through his house after a bath, and he couldn’t be happier. “I should dress like this all the time.” His imagination runs wild with the possibilities — naked at school, naked on the playground, naked doing the hokey pokey. “Pants? Who needs pants? Or shirts or shoes or capes. Wait....Capes???” It turns out there are some things even more appealing than nudity. The humor in Michael Ian Black’s story is extended by Debbie Ridpath Ohi’s blithe illustrations that further capture the controlled chaos of family life and the irrepressible spirit of a child with a gleam in the eye. (Ages 3–6)

**Blackall, Sophie. *The Baby Tree*. Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-399-25718-6, \$17.99)**

A young boy wonders where his family will get the new baby he’s been told will be coming. His neighbor Olive tells him a seed will grow into a baby tree; his teacher says the baby will come from the hospital; Grandpa says a stork will bring the baby; the mailman thinks it has something to do with eggs. Back at home in the evening, he asks his parents, who tell him about the seed from his dad and the egg from his mom, and the baby that will grow inside her

until it's ready to be born, "sometimes at home, but usually at the hospital." And the little boy realizes almost everyone he talked to was right about part of the answer. "But Grandpa ... I'm going to have to tell Grandpa where babies really come from." A charming story featuring soft-toned, witty illustrations engagingly answers the age-old question "Where do babies come from?" and is followed by a single page of additional factual information. (Ages 3–6)

**Blair, Karen. *Baby Animal Farm*. Candlewick Press, 2014. 14 pages (978-0-7636-7069-6, \$6.99)**

A group of five racially diverse toddlers visit a baby animal farm in this board book sure to invite noisy participation from the toddlers with whom it is shared. On each page, the toddlers in the story interact with baby farm animals, their actions coupled with a matching sound. Throughout the farm visit, one of the children is looking for his missing teddy bear, which is obligingly returned by a playful puppy by story's end. All of it is conveyed in a minimal, rhythmic text ("Follow the ducklings. 'Quack, quack, quack.' Chase the chicks. 'Cheep, cheep, cheep' ") and tidy illustrations in cheery watercolors. (Ages 1–3)

**Bloom, Suzanne. *Alone Together*. Boyds Mills Press / Highlights, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-62091-736-7, \$16.95)**

Suzanne Bloom's charming trio of Duck, Fox, and (polar) Bear are back, and this time Bear is after a little alone time. "Me, too. I'm going to be alone with Bear," says Fox, who proceeds to talk, twirl and otherwise disrupt Bear's attempt to get a little peace and quiet. Eventually, adorable Fox falls asleep in Bear's arms, leaving Duck feeling lonely. "Are you done being alone, Bear?" The gentle humor and warmth of the playful story will delight toddlers and preschoolers, as will the simple, uncluttered elegance of the inviting illustrations featuring the three expressive characters set against a backdrop of deep blue sky and white snow. (Ages 2–5)

**Bluemle, Elizabeth. *Tap Tap Boom Boom*. Illustrated by G. Brian Karas. Candlewick Press, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-7636-5696-6, \$16.99)**

"Sky grumbles. Rain tumbles. Big weather — you'd better ... get under umbrella! BOOM BOOM." A rainstorm in the big city on a summer day means the appearance of umbrellas, a mad dash for the subway, and a spontaneous, generous-spirited gathering belowground. "The storm above makes friends of strangers. We laugh under cover at thunder and danger." The visual storytelling accompanying the narrative enables readers and listeners to follow a number of individuals as the storm breaks, booms, and eventually moves away. A delight to read aloud, there is ample opportunity for enthusiastic participation with the repetitive onomatopoeia, while the finely crafted rhyming phrases create a satisfying narrative arc. "We wave good-bye. 'So long! Keep dry!'" *Honor Book, 2015 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–7)

**Boyd, Lizi. *Flashlight*. Chronicle, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-4521-1894-9, \$16.99)**

A backyard nighttime adventure is illuminated by the beam of a single flashlight in a clever, captivating wordless picture book. The illustrations are mostly gray

line drawings on black. The things captured in the beam of the child's light are in full, muted color, and these are almost always nocturnal creatures: mice, bats, owl, skunks, porcupine, fox, fish, and others. Each time the child moves the light, something else is revealed. Die cuts offer peek-throughs that draw attention to other things to notice in the still-dark. A full moon illuminates birch trees, and a luna moth can be followed, without illumination, across the pages of a story that ends with a surprising twist that will bring another smile. (Ages 3–6)

**Burningham, John. *Picnic*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-7636-6945-4, \$16.99)**

Boy and Girl are joined on a picnic by Sheep, Pig, and Duck, only to have the outing interrupted by a series of small mishaps. Bull chases them and they scatter and hide in the woods. Then Duck loses his scarf, the wind blows Sheep's hat away, and Pig's ball rolls out of sight. Each time, young readers and listeners are given the opportunity to directly engage with the story in response to a question posed in the text. "Can you find Boy, Girl, Pig, Sheep, and Duck?" is the query on the two-page spread in which they all are hiding behind separate trees. "Who is sleeping in which bed?" comes near the story's end, after Boy and Girl invite their friends to sleep over. Finally comes the question that adults may appreciate most of all: "Can we find your bed?" John Burningham's satisfying picture book, the perfect segue to bedtime, has illustrations that feel free-spirited and childlike. (Ages 2–4)

**Byrne, Richard. *This Book Just Ate My Dog!* Henry Holt, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-62779-071-0, \$16.99)**

A meta picture book begins with Bella taking her dog for a stroll "across the page." But when the dog reaches the gutter of the page spread — oh oh — he disappears. So does Bella's friend Ben, followed by a rescue vehicle, a police car, a fire truck, and — oh no! — Bella herself. Then "Burp!" Out comes a note, written by Bella, instructing readers to turn the book on its side and shake. Out they all come, *almost* none the worse for wear. The exception is Bella's dog, whose back half is now upside down. The clever conceit is carried right through to the endpapers at story's end, which are also upside down in this humorous offering. (Ages 3–6).

**Camcam, Princesse. *Fox's Garden*. Translated from the French. U.S. edition: Enchanted Lion, 2014. 24 pages (978-1-59270-167-4, \$14.95)**

A luminous wordless story begins with a fox wandering into a village on a cold, silvery winter night. Chased off by adults, the fox takes shelter in a greenhouse, giving birth to four kits. A child who saw the fox go inside brings it a basket of food. Later, the fox and her kits slip through the sleeping child's bedroom window with gifts of their own. Enchanting cut paper and painted illustrations convey the magic of the winter world and the power of kindness in this book that will elicit sleepy sighs of pleasure. Although no words are needed, the simple, eloquent epigraph states, "On the fresh snow, / as in my heart, footprints, traces." Yes. (Ages 2–6)

**Carnesi, Mônica. *Sleepover with Beatrice & Bear*. Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-399-25667-7, \$15.99)**

Beatrice, a bunny, becomes friends with Bear in spring. They are inseparable through summer and fall. Then Beatrice learns that Bear is off to hibernate. Thrilled at the prospect of a sleepover, she packs up her blanket, toothbrush, and other essentials to join him. Sleep does not come easily to Beatrice and she must face the truth: Rabbits do not hibernate. She decides instead to record the wonders of winter for Bear. Beatrice draws, paints, and photographs her winter escapades — building a snow bear and bunny, swishing out snow-bunny angels, and skating on an icy pond. When Bear wakes up in the spring Beatrice presents him with “The Great Scrapbook of Winter Delights and Adventures” and they share the splendor of winter together. Delightful watercolor illustrations cleverly capture Beatrice’s enthusiasm for winter and for Bear in this sweet, humorous story of friendship and sharing. (Ages 3–6)

**Davies, Benji. *The Storm Whale*. U.S. edition: Henry Holt, 2014. 24 pages (978-0-8050-9967-6, \$16.99)**

Noi, who lives with his father by the sea, spends most of his days by himself while his dad works on his fishing boat. It’s a lonely life, until the morning after a storm when Noi sees a small whale stranded on the beach. Wanting to help, he carts it home on his small wagon. Once it is safely deposited in the bathtub, Noi enjoys the whale’s company as he tells it stories and plays water-themed music on the record player. At first his dad doesn’t notice the new addition to the household, but eventually he discovers Noi delivering a fishy meal to his friend and says they must “take the whale back to the sea, where it belonged.” As difficult as it is to say good-bye, the encounter with the whale alerts Noi’s dad to his son’s solitary days and the following pages show the two spending time together while Noi hopes that “one day, soon . . . he would see his friend again.” This warm, quiet story has an understated playfulness in both the words and the illustrations. (Ages 3–7)

**Fox, Mem. *Baby Bedtime*. Illustrated by Emma Quay. U.S. edition: Beach Lane, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-4814-2097-6, \$17.99)**

Soft outlines, rounded figures, and a warm pastel palette set the soothing visual stage for a bedtime book starring parent and child elephants. The parent runs through a litany of possible ways to pass the nighttime hours (“I could rock you in my arms. I could gaze at you all night. I could whisper lots of stories till the darkness turns to light”) while the illustrations show the baby being carried upstairs, read to, and put into its small bed, because eventually “there comes a time for sleeping, and our sleepy time is now.” Sure to stand up to repeat readings, this lullaby for the very young resonates with reassurance and love. (Ages birth–3 years)

**Goodrich, Carter. *Mister Bud Wears the Cone*. Simon & Schuster, 2014. 40 pages (978-1-4424-8088-9, \$16.99)**

In the third book starring this endearing canine odd couple, Mister Bud is sentenced to a day of wearing a pet Elizabethan collar after a night of chewing and licking at a spot on his back. At first jealous of the attention Mister Bud

receives for his infirmity, Zorro quickly loses interest in trying to help remove the cone and instead exploits his housemate's limitations with nonstop teasing and mischief. When Mister Bud accidentally breaks a lamp, Zorro is beside himself with excited anticipation of the scolding that will ensue. To his dismay, their owner instead sympathizes with the beleaguered dog and — to add insult to injury — gives Mister Bud a special treat. Always generous, cone-free Mister Bud shares his biscuit, and normalcy resumes, at least momentarily. That night, Zorro is the one awake with an itch. The distinctive personalities of these canine buddies are expressed vividly through text and illustrations, from Mister Bud's gentle kindness to hyper Zorro's short attention span. (Ages 3–7)

**Gorbachev, Valeri. *Cats Are Cats. Holiday House, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–8234-3052–9, \$16.95)***

When Miss Bell gets an orange, tiger-striped kitten, she names him Tiger. She feeds him. She plays with him. They watch TV together. And Tiger “grew and grew and grew.” It turns out Tiger is a tiger, making it a tight squeeze when they're sitting together on the couch or when he jumps up on the dresser. He roars very loudly, and he makes quite a mess. “But he was still very cute, and Miss Bell still loved her Tiger.” The visual humor (Miss Bell is occasionally annoyed but overall unfazed by Tiger's tiger-ness, unlike everyone they encounter) is a delight in a picture book that carries the humor merrily along through the final pages, when Miss Bell and Tiger visit the pet store and purchase some fish for Tiger to watch. “One of the fish grew and grew and grew.” Yes, that is a shark in Miss Bell's bathtub. “But she was still very cute.” (Ages 3–7)

**Haughton, Chris. *Shh! We Have a Plan. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2014. 40 pages (978–0–7636-7293–5, \$15.99)***

Four wide-eyed hunters are trying to catch a bird in a net. Make that three hunters; the fourth — and smallest — member of their party just wants to be friendly (“Hello, birdie.”). The group's comical, not-so-stealthy pursuit of the bird features one failed attempt after another, with a pattern emerging as the youngest one greets the bird, the others shush their small companion (“We have a plan”), and then counting to three before they pounce ... on nothing, as the bird has already flown away. The spare, droll narrative is paired with marvelous visual storytelling. The stylized illustrations are in shades of deep blue with black and white, against which the brightly colored red bird stands out. Young readers and listeners will recite along and laugh out loud, with the delight heightened by two big surprises as the story draws to a close. (Ages 3–7)

**Hoffman, Sarah and Ian Hoffman. *Jacob's New Dress. Illustrated by Chris Case. Albert Whitman, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–8075-6373–1, \$16.99)***

When Jacob puts on a dress in the dress-up corner at school, his classmate Christopher tells him he's not supposed to wear a dress because he's a boy. At home, Jacob likes putting on the witch's dress from his Halloween costume, but when he asks to wear it to school his mom says no. When he asks if they can buy a dress he can wear to school she hesitates. So Jacob comes up with his own solution, turning a big bath towel into a “dress-thing,” but Christopher pulls it off him. That afternoon, Jacob asks his mom if she'll help him make

a real dress. “Mom didn’t answer. The longer she didn’t answer, the less Jacob could breathe.” But Jacob’s mom and dad both come through, and the dress Jacob wears to school feels like armor when Christopher teases him. “Soft, cottony, magic armor.” In their authors’ note, Sarah and Ian Hoffman explain this picture book about a gender nonconforming child is based on their own son. In the story, Jacob’s awareness of and anxiety about both his parents’ initial uncertainty is particularly powerful and poignant. (Ages 3–8)

**Horáček, Petr. *The Mouse Who Ate the Moon*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2014. 24 pages (978-0-7636-7059-7, \$15.99)**

Little Mouse is so struck by the beauty of the moon that she wishes she could have a piece of it to keep. The next morning, her wish has come true when she wakes up and finds a yellow crescent outside her hole. It smells so good! It turns out to be tasty, too. She eats half of her piece of the moon before sadly realizing the moon won’t be round anymore. Luckily, her friends Mole and Rabbit reassure her that she didn’t really eat the moon. Deep-hued illustrations with occasional die-cuts are the backdrop for a gently humorous story that never makes fun of Little Mouse while giving young listeners the satisfaction of understanding Little Mouse’s mistake early on: Her piece of the moon is clearly a banana, although that’s never stated. (Ages 2–5)

**Howatt, Sandra J. *Sleepyheads*. Illustrated by Joyce Wan. Beach Lane, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-4424-2266-7, \$16.99)**

In the woods, barn, and house, animals are snuggling into their cozy homes for bedtime. A pig burrows in the hay. A squirrel nestles into a hole in a tree. A cat curls up on a comfy armchair. These are some of the sleepyheads that the narrator asks the reader to find. Page by page, a different animal or bird is revealed to be falling asleep in its habitat; the sleepyheads are found “in trees, in holes, in caves” and “in weeds, in reeds, on waves.” In the house, though, one bed is empty and one sleepyhead is missing. This last sleepyhead is soon found “asleep in Mama’s arms.” Rhythmic, rhyming verses are matched by simple yet detailed illustrations of nighttime in this calm and comforting book. (Ages 2–5)

**Idle, Molly. *Flora and the Penguin*. Chronicle, 2014. 36 pages (978-1-4521-2891-7, \$16.99)**

Dressed in blue and yellow, Flora looks not unlike the penguin that soon joins her as she skates across the ice in this appealing wordless picture book. The two make a perfect pair. But the penguin’s foray back into the water to capture a fish, which it presents to Flora with a flourish, leads to a little friction. Molly Idle’s soft palette should not be mistaken for sweetness; there’s a humorous edge to Flora and her companion, in the lines of their bodies — whether in harmony or opposition — and the looks on their faces. The clever design incorporates occasional flaps that reveal shifts in the action and emotions of the characters in this follow-up to *Flora and the Flamingo* (Chronicle, 2013). (Ages 3–7)



**Krensky, Stephen. *I Am So Brave!* Illustrated by Sara Gillingham. Abrams Appleseed, 2014. 10 pages (978-1-4197-0937-1, \$6.95)**

In this slim board book, a young brown-skinned boy tells of overcoming his fears. Each fear is resolved in a way that allows the boy to feel safe, content, and brave. The boy's obvious pride at overcoming his fears is reflected in the straightforward text and bright graphic-design-style illustrations in primary colors with brown, black, and white. Many of the boy's fears are common childhood worries — barking dogs, loud traffic noises, bedtime darkness, being separated from Mom and Dad — that all parents and children will easily recognize. The boy's solutions to his fears offer positive, encouraging responses to the anxiety that many children may feel in new or uncomfortable situations. (Ages 1-3)

**Landström, Lena. *Pom and Pim*. Illustrated by Olof Landström. Translated from the Swedish by Julia Marshall. U.S. edition: Gecko Press, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-877579-66-0, \$16.95)**

Pom (a small child) and Pim (a small stuffed toy) have a day of good luck and bad. The sun is shining and the weather is warm. But Pom trips and falls. Then Pom finds money and buys ice cream, only to get a tummy ache after eating it. Pom finds a balloon. Unfortunately it pops. But luck is about perspective, too. After Pom gets the idea to make Pim a raincoat out of the popped balloon, it is good luck, indeed, when it finally starts to rain. A simple, quirky picture book is spare in style but full of charm. (Ages 3-5)

**Mader, C. Roger. *Tiptop Cat*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-544-14799-7, \$17.99)**

Arresting and varied perspectives in the full-page and panel illustrations enhance the drama in a picture book about a high-rise dwelling cat who loves traversing his rooftop domain, until the day he goes after a bird and falls “down ... down ... down ... down!” The cat, rotating through the fall, is lucky to land on an awning, and from there into the arms of a man on the ground. But after that, the cat prefers hidden places to wide-open, high-rise spaces, too scared to go back outside. A crow on the balcony is what finally lures him back out, and up, “until he found himself ... on top of the world again.” Appealing in its own right, the story also speaks to any child who's ever struggled with fear. (Ages 3-7)

**McPhail, David. *Peter Loves Penguin*. Abrams Appleseed, 2014. 20 pages (978-1-4197-1337-8, \$8.95)**

“Peter loves Penguin. Penguin loves Peter.” Boy and Penguin get dressed, go outside, have a snowball fight, build a snowman, get cold and hungry, and come back in to share cocoa, toast, and jam. There's a charming simplicity to David McPhail's board book, written in short, declarative sentences and illustrated with great warmth. Small children will not question the probability of any of it. “Peter loves Penguin. Penguin loves Peter.” That is all. (Ages 1-3)

**O'Connor, George.** *If I Had a Raptor.* Candlewick Press, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-7636-6012-3, \$15.99)

From the moment a little girl imagines plucking a pet from a box full of “free raptors” she is in love with the idea of the “teensy and tiny and funny and fluffy” creature. Cheerful and earnest, she knows just how she’ll take care of her new pet, whose mannerisms bear more than a little resemblance to a house cat. The little girl knows her raptor will love to sit on her lap and lay in the sun, and she knows as her pet grows she will need to teach her right from wrong, especially concerning shredding the furniture and hunting baby birds. But, she’s certain that having a raptor would be the “best thing ever.” O’Connor conveys the humorously striking similarities between cats and raptors through colorful, expressive illustrations of a pleasant blue raptor with feline habits and characteristics — full body stretches, closed-eye head butting, and early morning kneading — as well as the joys and trials of pet ownership as seen through the eyes of his pig-tailed and jumper-wearing heroine. (Ages 3–7)

**Raschka, Chris.** *Crabby Crab.* Abrams Appleseed, 2014. 16 pages (978-1-4197-1056-8, \$6.95)

A grumpy crab is unhappy with his crustacean appendages. He’d happily give up his “two powerful claws” for “fingers instead.” Although the narrator compliments his “eight beautiful legs,” Crabby Crab finds them “ridiculous.” And, try as he might to “walk straight ahead,” Crabby Crab “only walks sideways.” Though Crabby Crab can’t change his outside, the narrator affirms that Crabby Crab doesn’t need to change anything about himself. He is loved — grumpiness included — just as he is. A single colorful and surprisingly expressive crab accompanies the text on opposing pages. This toddler-sized book can be read as a fun, humorous story about a grumpy crab, or as a simple introduction to accepting oneself and one’s differences. (Ages 1–3)

**Rashin.** *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly.* NorthSouth, 2014. 24 pages (978-0-7358-4183-3, \$17.95)

The familiar children’s song is set against illustrations that wholly embrace its absurdity. Illustrator Rashin’s art is appealing for its rich, vibrant colors; the quirky, pop-eyed style of the characters; and the added dimensions of humor it provides. This includes the ever-changing drama of what is happening inside the old woman’s stomach (a merry chase initially, eventually a very tight fit), and the cat’s ongoing commentary (“Try this!” it suggests to the old lady, holding up a bottle of antacid tablets. Alas, she swallows a bird instead, with the cat soon to follow. “Eat the dog!” the cat cries). Silliness may not catch a fly, or save the old lady from her inevitable fate, but it sure is fun. (Ages 3–6)

**Ray, Mary Lyn.** *Go to Sleep, Little Farm.* Illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 40 pages (978-0-544-15014-0, \$16.99)

Across the countryside animals are going to sleep while a girl in her bedroom imitates their actions. She hides under her bed like the mice burrowing underground and piles her toys on her bed mimicking the way that a beaver builds a dam. As the little girl grows sleepier and crawls under the covers, the

bedtime observations grow more dreamlike. The everyday is paired with the poetic as “somewhere a story goes to sleep in a book” and “somewhere a pocket sleeps in a skirt.” The muted blue and pink images too become more dreamlike as the little girl swims with a fish, rides a sheep, and curls up with a deer in a chorus of good-night wishes. Finally, with a story from Dad and a hug from Mom, the little girl glides off to sleep “just as dreams flicker near.” Lyrical language and faintly retro art complement each other in this hushed and restful read. *Highly Commended, 2015 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 2–5)

**Rowland, Phyllis. *It Is Night*. Illustrated by Laura Dronzek. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–06–225024–7, \$16.99)**

Originally published in 1953 with illustrations by the author, an almost stream-of-conscious bedtime book is given a cozy, comforting new look with the warm, rich hues and soft, soothing, curved lines of Laura Dronzek’s art. The narrative ponders where a variety of animals and objects might sleep at night. “Where should a sleek seal rest his head? On the quiet beach of a faraway island, or safe in an island cave.” A dog in a doghouse “can keep his eye on the stars and see that they don’t bump into the moon.” Rooster and rabbit, elephant and mouse, not to mention a train and dolls “big and small” are all considered. But do any of them sleep in the places imagined? “No! They sleep in the bed of one small child . . . ALL OF THEM.” It’s a familiar ritual of childhood made fresh. (Ages 2–5)

**Rudge, Leila. *A Perfect Place for Ted*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2014. 24 pages (978–0–7636–6781–8, \$16.99)**

Ted, “a smart dog with his own sweater,” just wants to find a place where he belongs — hopefully, a new home away from the pet store. Ted tries to stand out at the circus or make a lasting impression at the pet show, but nobody ever notices Ted. The burglar inches from a barking Ted doesn’t even flinch. Not until Dot, a special girl looking for a furry pet, notices Ted does he find a friend and a possible home. But, when Ted enters the cat-filled house, illustrated by a two-page spread that humorously captures the cats’ surprise, readers might wonder if this home is the perfect place for Ted after all. Once Dot picks up her knitting needles, the “smart dog with his own sweater” is a *purr-fect* fit with the newly sweater-clad felines. Muted yet colorful illustrations add charm and whimsy to this tale of the search to find a friend and a family. (Ages 3–7)

**Sakai, Komako. *Hannah’s Night*. Translated from the Japanese by Cathy Hirano. U.S. edition: Gecko Press, 2014. 32 pages. (978–1–877579–54–7, \$17.95)**

Hannah wakes up and is surprised to discover everyone else in her house is still sleeping. It’s the middle of the night, and with only the cat for company, the toddler goes to the bathroom, eats cherries without asking (“nobody told her off”), then borrows her sister’s doll and music box and notebook and pencils and takes them back to her bed. An unusual picture book acknowledges the interior world of a small child through the actions she takes when there is no one around to inhibit her. She is daring, adventurous, playful, delighted, curious and, eventually, sleepy as the sky begins to brighten. Quietly alluring,

the measured text is paired with illustrations that beautifully capture Hannah's world at night, which is dark, mysterious, and also comforting. (Ages 2–5)

**Saltzberg, Barney. *Chengdu Could Not, Would Not Fall Asleep*. Disney / Hyperion, 2014. 32 pages (978–1–42316721–1, \$16.99)**

While everyone else in the bamboo grove slumbers, a panda named Chengdu is tossing, twitching, scrunching, rolling, even hanging upside down, but no matter what he does he can't fall asleep. His eye-popping, wide-awake visage is one of the charms of a picture book in which the black and white panda is once shown as nothing but big open eyes. He finally climbs up high in a tree and finds a perfect spot to slumber. Too bad for his brother Yuan it's right on top of him. A witty and wonderfully paced pairing of text and illustrations will definitely charm young readers and listeners, with occasional fold-out and varied trim-size pages adding to the fun. *Honor Book, 2015 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 2–5)

**Schwartz, Amy. *100 Things That Make Me Happy*. Abrams Appleseed, 2014. 40 pages (978–1–4197-0518–2, \$16.95)**

A plotless, charming picture book catalogs 100 things sure to bring a smile to the face of small children. Two or three rhyming couplets (“bucket trucks / yellow ducks / grocery carts / frosted hearts / grandma's lap / a gingersnap”) cascade across each page spread, each one in a different color and font design and each one accompanied by a corresponding spot illustration. The single couplet across a spread near the book's center (“city lights / starry nights”) slows things down for a moment of reflection before the pace picks up again, rolling merrily along right to the final pairing (“peekaboo / time with you!”). A diverse cast of child and adult characters is shown in the appealing, brightly colored art. (Ages 2–5)

**Shannon, George. *Hands Say Love*. Illustrated by Taeun Yoo. Little, Brown, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–316-08479–6, \$17.00)**

Many ways that “I love you” is conveyed through deeds rather than words are detailed in a rhyming narrative paired with tender illustrations showing a family of two adults and three small children. The comfort and warmth of this picture book is in both the observant text and in the art that extends the narrative with familiar scenes of daily family life. Gentle hands wake a child up in the morning. Busy hands of adults and children hold and help and create and play throughout the day (“Hands that hold a bite to share. Hands that bring the silverware”). Gentle hands again tuck a child in at night. “Hands that do all they can do are also saying ‘I love you.’” (Ages 2–5)

**Shields, Carol Diggory. *Baby's Got the Blues*. Illustrated by Lauren Tobia. Candlewick Press, 2014. 24 pages (978–0–7636-3260–1, \$16.99)**

A baby's life can be pretty tough. This baby would love to join his sister and the other big kids in their active games, but he's just learning to walk. He bemoans

his limited diet, which is due to his lack of teeth. As the baby goes through his day, from waking up with a wet diaper to naptime in his crib, he shares his woes over everything he cannot do and cannot control. Each complaint is followed by a matching classic blues-style response. From his crib he sings, “I’m a baby, / Paying my baby dues / B-A-B-Y, baby, / Got those locked-up baby blues.” Fortunately, he lives in a home with an attentive mother and a loving sister and his blues are quickly diminished with hugs and kisses. A diverse cast of characters and charming illustrations of everyday activities add to the appeal of this book. (Ages 3–7)

**Sohn, Tania. *Socks!* Kane Miller, 2014. 24 pages (978–1–61067–244–3, \$9.99)**

A little girl’s love for socks of all types — “yellow socks so I can play [soccer] ... daddy socks,” Christmas stockings, socks that she turns into puppets, others she pretends are an elephant’s trunk — culminates with a pair of extra special socks that arrive in the mail: “Beoseon! Traditional Korean socks, from Grandma.” The simple text is set against clean-lined, appealing illustrations showing a small girl of Korean heritage, and a playful black-and-white kitten that is almost as enamored of all the different socks as she is! (Ages 2–4)

**Sutton, Sally. *Construction*. Illustrated by Brian Lovelock. Candlewick Press, 2014. 24 pages (978–0–7636-7325–3, \$15.99)**

The infectious rhythm of this rhyming picture book is matched by the wide appeal of its theme as an array of equipment and tools and workers are featured in the construction of a new building. “Build the frame. Build the frame. Hammer all day long. Make the stairs and floors and walls. Bing! Bang! Bong!” From the first pilings going into the ground to the framing, roofing, pipes, and paint, the project is described in broad but wonderfully appealing strokes. It all culminates with the opening of a new library: “Choose your books. Choose your books. Borrow all you need. The library’s here for everyone. Ready... Steady...Read!” (Ages 2–5)

**Swenson, Jamie A. *If You Were a Dog*. Illustrated by Chris Raschka. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2014. 40 pages (978–0–374-33530–4, \$17.99)**

“If you were a dog, would you be a speedy-quick, lickedy-sloppidy, scavenge-the-garbage, Frisbee-catching, hot-dog-stealing, pillow-hogging, best-friend-ever sort of dog? Would you howl at the moon? Some dogs do.” A playful picture book full of fresh turns of phrase asks similar questions about being a cat, fish, bird, bug, frog, and even a dinosaur in author Jamie Swenson’s merry offering that is sure to invite role-playing (be prepared for moon-howling and dinosaur stomping in story time). Chris Raschka’s whimsical illustrations are a perfect match for Swenson’s imaginative outing that concludes with the very best thing of all to be: a kid! *Highly Commended, 2015 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 3–6)

**Underwood, Deborah. *Bad Bye, Good Bye*. Illustrated by Jonathan Bean. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-547-92852-4, \$16.99)**

Simple text and expressive watercolor illustrations convey a broad range of emotions of a small boy as he experiences his family's cross-country move. On the rainy moving day, the boy grumbles "Bad truck / Bad guy." Loaded in the car and driving away from friends, he wails "Bad wave / Bad bye." Illustrations showing cloverleaf exits, water towers, windmills, and diners are accompanied by simple descriptive text such as "Stuffed car / Hot seat / Gray clouds / Gold wheat." These capture the weariness of traveling through cities and countryside. With a combination of eagerness and trepidation, the boy eventually explores his "New house / New hall / New room / New wall." The hopefulness brightens at story's end with the boy's "good bye" wave to a new friend. (Ages 3-7)

**Won, Brian. *Hooray for Hat!* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-544-15903-7, \$16.99)**

Waking up in a bad mood, Elephant stomps down the stairs when the doorbell rings. He calls through the door, "Go away! I'm grumpy!" But there's a present waiting outside and he can't stay grumpy when he discovers what's inside. "Hooray for hat!" Eager to show Zebra his fancy new headwear, Elephant finds his friend in a familiar state: "Go away! I'm grumpy!" Elephant takes the top hat off of the multi-hat, tiered creation he'd been given and offers it to Zebra. "Hooray for Hat!" Grumpy Turtle and grumpy Owl are likewise gifted and their moods transformed. Lion, however, is not so easily cheered. He's concerned about their friend Giraffe, who isn't feeling well. With all the hats from the original creation now shared among the friends, there's only one answer. When Giraffe is given the original stacked-hat creation, the real gift is obvious. "Hooray for friends!" A deceptively simple narrative makes terrific use of repetition to build anticipation and invite participation in a picture book that also has great visual appeal and humor. *Highly Commended, 2015 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 2-5)

**Yamada, Kazuaki. *My Red Balloon*. U.S. edition: Minedition, 2014. 48 pages (978-988-8240-72-2, \$18.99)**

A simple text accessible to beginning readers accompanies a playfully illustrated picture book in which a little girl's balloon flies away. The girl is on a bus, and she's sure each new passenger — a bear, a rabbit, a penguin, an elephant, and a giraffe — will be able to help find it. Each one does offer help, but the balloon floats higher and farther away. The pleasure is in the pursuit as the bus follows, but just when they've finally caught up — pop! There is lovely consolation, however, in the form of a fat, round, red, beautiful setting sun. Kazuaki Yamada's uncluttered illustrations are full of interesting perspectives and small things to notice. (Ages 3-6)

**Zimmerman, Andrea and David Clemesha. *Dig!* Illustrated by Marc Rosenthal. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 28 pages (978-0-544-17388-0, \$7.99)**

Mr. Rally and his dog, Lightning, both like digging in the dirt. And when Mr. Rally goes to work in his yellow backhoe, Lightning comes along. Today they have five jobs: hauling rocks for the bridge on the ridge, digging a drain for

the rain, moving a load on the road, digging a hole for the pool at the school, and leveling the ground for the brand-new zoo. There is a mix of rhymed and unrhymed text in this appealingly busy board book that briefly details the work on each job, always ending with the same refrain: “Dig up rock and dig up clay! Dig up dirt and dig all day!” This is followed by a question: “Is the digging done? No!” Rhyming, construction equipment, and the invitation to join right in — what’s not to love? The inviting illustrations offer plenty of detail without the small board pages feeling cluttered. (Ages 1–4)

## Picture Books for School-Age Children

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**Auerbach, Adam.** *Edda: A Little Valkyrie’s First Day of School.* Christy Ottaviano Books / Henry Holt, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–8050-9703–0, \$16.99)

Life in Asgard is lonely for Edda, the youngest of the Valkyries. Luckily, her papa knows the perfect place where she can make friends, taking her to school on Earth. But the first day of school can be scary, even for a brave little Valkyrie. It proves to be disappointing, too: There are rules to follow, the only creature is guinea pig Rex, no one wants to trade at lunch, and she has to write. Writing is hard. Wishing she were back home, Edda writes a story about a monster on Asgard. It’s a huge hit. All of her classmates clamor to know more about where she comes from. So when her papa picks her up at the end of the day, he arranges a playdate for one of her new friends. The sight of Edda in her Viking garb among average kids on Earth, who simply take her appearance in stride, or Edda and her classmate flying off with her huge Viking papa on his horse, are among the many priceless visual moments in Adam Auerbach’s debut picture book that looks at a common rite of passage with fresh wit and emotional honesty. (Ages 4–7)

**Barnett, Mac.** *Sam & Dave Dig a Hole.* Illustrated by Jon Klassen. Candlewick Press, 2014. 40 pages (978–0–7636-6229–5, \$16.99)

Sam and Dave are on a mission: They plan to keep digging until they “find something spectacular.” When digging straight down doesn’t yield results, they turn to the right. Then they split up. They come back together and start digging down again. They take a rest. And all along, their dog — and readers and listeners — understand what they don’t: they keep missing one spectacular thing after another. The straightforward narrative is the foil for the marvelous visual storytelling in a hilarious picture book in which Sam and Dave manage to miss gemstone after gemstone, each one bigger and more spectacular than the one before. The last one is so big the page can’t show it all. When they stop to rest again, dirty and done in by their effort, they are mere inches above a bone. While Sam and Dave sleep the dog starts digging and suddenly all of them are falling ... falling ... falling ... only to land right back where they began

... or do they? Brilliantly conceptualized and illustrated, this is truly a book for all ages. (Age 4 and older)

**Beebe, Katy. *Brother Hugo and the Bear*. Illustrated by S. D. Schindler. Erdmans, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-8028-5407-0, \$17.00)**

Brother Hugo is a medieval monk with an overdue library book he can't return: It was eaten by a bear. The Abbot sends him to another monastery to borrow their edition of St. Augustine, and gives him the charge of copying it. It's a laborious process writing the manuscript out by hand, illuminating the letters, and, finally, sewing the pages together. But his fellow monks help him prepare everything he needs: sheepskin, goose quill pen, the ingredients for different colored inks. Finally the task is complete, and he must return the original to the monks at Grand Chartreuse. But who's that lumbering along behind him? Katy Beebe provides an engaging and fascinating look into the world of medieval manuscripts in a story delightfully imagined and told. S. D. Schindler's wonderfully detailed pen-and-ink illustrations are a perfect fit. Terrific notes illuminate the author's inspiration and research for the story, and the illustrator's twenty-first-century process that in many ways, he observes, is not unlike what Brother Hugo might have done hundreds of years before. (Ages 5-9)

**Bildner, Phil. *The Soccer Fence: A Story of Friendship, Hope and Apartheid in South Africa*. Illustrated by Jesse Joshua Watson. Putnam, 2014. 40 pages (978-0-399-24790-3, \$16.99)**

In the days before the end of Apartheid, a young Black South African boy who loves soccer plays in his dusty township, but can only watch the game played by white boys in the neighborhood where his mother works. Then Nelson Mandela is freed — progress! But it proves to be slow from the young boy's perspective — he's still ignored by the white boys playing soccer. Mandela is elected president a few years later. The white boys still ignore the boy. Then South Africa hosts the 1996 African Cup of Nations soccer tournament, and both the Black boy and one of the white boys he's seen playing soccer end up at the final. "Standing on my seat, I spotted the blond boy standing on his seat in the next section. He saw me and raised his fist. I raised my fist back." In the joyful celebration that follows South Africa's victory, the two boys lead a parade through their section of the stands. An author's note provides more information on the symbolic importance of the South African victory, which united Black and white South Africans as they cheered for their national team. A story built around this symbolism remains centered on a child's longing to play. (Ages 7-10)

**Bloom, C. P. *The Monkey Goes Bananas*. Illustrated by Peter Raymundo. Abrams, 2014. 40 pages (978-1-4197-0885-5, \$14.95)**

A funny, not-quite-wordless book follows the efforts of a monkey trying to get from the beach he's on to the small island offshore where a banana tree grows. The only problem? There's a shark in the water between them. The perfect pairing of spare text that labels various elements of the story and comical full-page and panel illustrations make for a droll and engaging picture book with



plenty of opportunity to predict what might happen next. One page spread says simply, “The stilts” and shows the monkey triumphant, high above the water on a pair of them. The next wordless spread shows him still on the stilts but suddenly up to his chest in the sea, and clearly worried. Yet another turn of the page reveals “The hole” and shows the undersea view of the monkey on the stilts and the deep hole he’s walked into, while the shark grins menacingly. The repeated phrase “The monkey” gets funnier and funnier as his attempts to problem-solve get ever more absurd in his efforts to outwit “The shark” and reach “The bananas.” (Ages 4–8)

**Brooks, Martha. *Winter Moon Song*. Illustrated by Leticia Ruifernández. Groundwood / House of Anansi Press, 2014. 32 pages (978–1–55498–320–9, \$18.95)**

A small rabbit is thinking about the Winter Moon Song the rabbits all sing “to lighten the darkest month of the year with a trail of magic.” They perform it in a grand indoor space. “The gleaming windows shut out the night. Candles flickered everywhere... The age-old song began.” Out in the cold air after the performance, the little rabbit starts singing the song again as he thinks it should be sung, “under the winter moon.” Others join in. “And when the song was over and everyone gazed up at the rabbit-in-the-moon, they all felt that they were not separate or lonely but part of one great rabbit family.” Martha Brooks’s lovely writing takes its time, offering lyrical, concrete descriptions. It also creates space for readers and listeners to think, just as the young rabbit does, about the purpose and meaning of traditions, which can be living, changing things. Gorgeous watercolor and ink illustrations serve as the backdrop to an original story that draws from the tradition of Moon Rabbit creation tales, including the one a Lakota elder told to the author that inspired this variation. (Ages 5–9)

**Browne, Anthony. *What If ...?* U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–7636–7419–9, \$16.99)**

Joe has lost the invitation to the party at Tom’s house, so he and his mom only know the street, not Tom’s address. Joe, who is anxious about attending, walks with his mom down the block, worrying. What if he doesn’t know everyone? What if there are a lot of people? What if he doesn’t like the food? Can she pick him up early? For each concern, his mom has a reassuring response. Meanwhile, they look into the houses, hoping to find where Tom lives. From the outside, each house looks relatively unassuming at first glance, but the scenes inside are increasingly surreal, at least from Joe’s perspective. A blend of muted cartoonlike panels of Joe and his mom walking and talking, and full-page, color-saturated paintings of the houses’ exteriors and interiors further distinguishes between what is real and what Joe imagines, all of which echo his anxiety. There is so much to discover in the details of this picture book and the more readers look the more they will take delight in this masterful and ultimately emotionally reassuring work. (Ages 5–9)

**Bunting, Eve. *Washday*. Illustrated by Brad Sneed. Holiday House, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-8234-2868-7, \$16.95)**

Lizzie and her doll, Amelia Cordelia, were supposed to be home having a doll tea party with her friend Lucy, but Lizzie's mom is about to have a baby so Lizzie is spending the day with Grandma instead. "Are you ready for work, Lizzie girl?" She and Grandma are doing the wash: hoisting the copper boiler full of steaming water, sorting the clothes, scrubbing them on the washboard with lye soap, rinsing and running them through the ringer, and then hanging them up to dry. But Lizzie can't stop thinking longingly about the snickerdoodles she and Ma made for the tea party that's no longer happening ... or is it? Delightful, child-friendly details ground a warm story featuring wonderful, authentic interactions between Lizzie and her Grandma while offering a fascinating look at doing laundry long ago. (Ages 5-8)

**Croza, Laurel. *From There to Here*. Illustrated by Matt James. Greenwood / House of Anansi Press, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-55498-365-0, \$18.95)**

In a stellar follow-up to the quiet picture book *I Know Here* (Groundwood, 2010), the same young narrator describes the many ways the "there" of her former home in rural Saskatchewan is different from the "here" of her new life in Toronto. At first she is wistful, and it's clear which place she prefers. "There. A tarp of twinkle, twinkle little stars hung high above our trailers. And on some nights, a special show when aurora borealis shimmered in the sky, swirling and twirling, dancing just for us. Here. No stars, no northern lights. The street lamps in a straight row — standing at attention — glaring down the dark." When she finally describes a knock at the door "here" her tone begins to change. It's "Anne, who lives kitty-corner to me." Both girls are eight, almost nine. There it was "Only me, my age, on my road." "Here" is now two girls, friends, riding their bikes in the city. "The Toronto air rushes to greet me, tugging up the corners of my mouth. Anne is smiling, too." (Ages 5-9)

**Daly, Cathleen. *Emily's Blue Period*. Illustrated by Lisa Brown. A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press, 2014. 55 pages (978-1-59643-469-1, \$17.99)**

For young Emily, who is learning about Pablo Picasso in school, the painter's work is a perfect metaphor for what is happening in her life. His mixed-up, abstract paintings echo her life outside of school, because her dad has moved out. As for Picasso's Blue Period? Emily's in a blue period, too. Picasso's work in collage inspires a breakthrough, however, as Emily begins bringing the disparate parts of her life in two homes together in an art project that symbolizes her new, expansive understanding of what "home" can be. Cathleen Daly's picture book is so much more than clever, although it's certainly that. It's emotionally rich and resonant, capturing with humor, warmth and honesty a family navigating a difficult transition. Lisa Brown's illustrations perfectly echo the shifting emotional landscapes of the story. (Ages 4-8)

**Dempsey, Kristy. *A Dance Like Starlight: One Ballerina's Dream*. Illustrated by Floyd Cooper. Philomel, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-399-25284-6, \$16.99)**

A young Black girl growing up in Harlem in the 1950s has dreams of being a ballet dancer. Her mother has cleaned and sewn costumes at a ballet school since before she was born. When the ballet master sees the girl dancing backstage he arranges for her to join classes in the back of the room. "With every bend, I hope. With every plié, every turn, every grand jeté, I hope ... Could a colored girl like me ever become a prima ballerina?" She gets an answer, and inspiration, when her mother spends half of the money she's saved to take the girl to the Metropolitan Opera House to see Janet Collins, America's first Black prima ballerina. Kristy Dempsey's inspiring story is lyrically told, and set against Floyd Cooper's richly toned illustrations. (Ages 4-8)

**Dempsey, Sheena. *Bruno and Titch: The Tale of a Boy and His Guinea Pig*. Candlewick Press, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-7636-7316-1, \$16.99)**

The development of a human-pet relationship is narrated from a guinea pig's perspective after Bruno brings Titch home from the pet store. Day One demands tolerance from Titch, as Bruno tries to feed him a boy-centric meal, followed by alarming forms of play, like trampoline jumping ("Bouncing-Very-High Game") and toy-train riding ("Going-Very-Fast Game"). But soon Bruno proves to be an observant and thoughtful pet owner, although Titch worries when he stops playing to focus on sketching plans and working with hammer and nails. Is Bruno bored with him? Will he take him back to the store? Instead, Bruno reveals a "guinea-pig palace," complete with a fruit-salad bar, a perfectly sized makeshift Jacuzzi, and a hammock located conveniently in a celery garden. Lighthearted pen and watercolor illustrations capture the full range of Titch's guinea pig emotions, including his contentment with having finally found his own ideal "Big Person." (Ages 4-8)

**DiPuccio, Kelly. *Gaston*. Illustrated by Christian Robinson. Atheneum, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-4424-5102-5, \$17.99)**

Mrs. Poodle is the proud parent of Fi-Fi, Foo-Foo, Ooh-La-La, and Gaston. The first three are spitting images of their mother. And Gaston — well, he clearly comes from different stock. Fi-Fi, Foo-Foo, Ooh-La-La are poofy and puffy and the size of teacups, while Gaston is solid and stocky and as big as a teapot. But if being dainty and delicate and neat like their mother doesn't come as easily to Gaston, he always "worked the hardest, practiced the longest, and smiled the biggest." Then the family meets Rocky, Ricky, and Bruno, three stocky, solid bulldog pups, and their poofy, puffy sister, Antoinette. "It seems there's been a terrible mistake," says Mrs. Bulldog. And so the two puppies trade places. The problem is, "Antoinette did not like anything proper or precious or pink." And Gaston didn't like anything "brutish or brawny or brown." Kelly DiPuccio's delightful romp gets even better as the pups return to their original families, and eventually have pups of their own who are encouraged to be whatever they want to be. It's a tongue-in-cheek look at nature versus nurture, but also an affirmation of being true to oneself. (Ages 4-8)

**Dolan, Elys. *Weasels*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2014. 24 pages (978-0-7636-7100-6, \$17.99)**

A host of weasels tending to a vast Machine are counting down to the moment of their coup, and World Domination, when they suddenly lose electricity and are plunged into darkness. An observant reader will notice that the coffee-delivering weasel has tripped over a power cord, but several pages of weasel problem-solving commence before that discovery. Power-mad weasels are a funny concept, but it's the art in this busy picture book that elevates its execution to a laugh-out-loud level. Individual weasels are identifiable and their stories followed throughout, from the white-rabbit-stroking leader (à la Bond villain SPECTRE Number 1) to the busy worker toting a massive drill ("I'm entirely confident that this huge drill will fix everything") to the rule-obsessed Health and Safety Weasel ("No one can violate Health and Safety"). Most of the main text is limited to a phrase or sentence per page, but plentiful dialogue bubbles and visual jokes (like the pair using their work computer to play "World of Woodcraft") add layers of complexity for sophisticated picture book readers to discover. (Ages 5–10)

**Dorros, Arthur. *Abuelo*. Illustrated by Raúl Colón. Harper / HarperCollins, 2014. 32 pages (978-06-168627-6, \$17.99)**

When he was younger, a Latino boy and his *abuelo* explored the countryside together on horseback. From his grandfather, the boy learned how to guide horses, camp under the stars, and face down a mountain lion. He also learned how to laugh at himself, enjoy the power of nature, and face adversity. When the boy and his parents move away to the city, leaving his *abuelo* and the countryside behind, the boy uses his grandfather's insights to adjust to his new life, including standing up to a bully and laughing at the worry of being lost. Arthur Dorros's expressive prose is in English with Spanish words and phrases interspersed. Raúl Colón's mixed-media art captures the beauty of the wide plains and the thrum of the city as well as the close relationship between the boy and his *abuelo*. (Ages 3–7)

**Duboc, Marianne. *The Lion and the Bird*. Translated from the French by Claudia Z. Bedrick. U.S. edition: Enchanted Lion, 2014. 70 pages (978-1-59270-151-3, \$17.95)**

A picture book of great tenderness begins with a lion raking his yard. When a bird from a flock flying high overhead is injured, the lion bandages the bird's wing, but the flock moves on — autumn is clearly waning. So the lion and the bird spend a snug winter together, warm in his cozy home, sometimes venturing out for some cold-weather fun, the bird tucked into his mane. "It snows and snows. But winter doesn't feel all that cold with a friend." Spring brings warm weather, and the return of the other birds. It's time for the lion and the bird to part. Time passes, lion carries on his solitary life, then it's autumn again and he wonders about his friend. There is an absence, an ache, and, finally, sweet joy. Marianne Duboc's picture book is told largely through beautifully composed, muted illustrations that make use of both full-page spreads and spot illustrations surrounded by white space, with brief lines of lovely narrative

punctuating the images every so often. There is a film-like quality to the visual storytelling in this rich, emotionally resonant tale. (Ages 4–8)

**Esbaum, Jill. *I Am Cow, Hear Me Moo!* Illustrated by Gus Gordon. Dial, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–8037-3524–8, \$16.99)**

Nadine is a fearless cow. She boasts to her friends that she's not afraid of anything — not lightning, not loud noises, not a rat. And especially not the woods! To prove it, she suggests to her friends Annette and Starla that they all go on an outing (she's sure they'll say no). Two minutes later, facing the dark woods, Nadine starts to regret her brash words. With a page turn, three hours have passed and Nadine, Annette, and Starla are all high in the branches of a pine tree examining a bird nest. Nadine has conquered her trepidation and she revels in all the woods have to offer. The scents! The tastes! And her declaration of bravery has been validated — until it starts to get dark. Nadine eventually returns to the barnyard unscathed and with an (undeserved) new title: Brave Nadine. Watercolor, pencil, crayon, and collage illustrations are especially effective when they show plump Nadine fleeing the woods' terrors in wide-eyed panic. The clever rhyming text pokes gentle fun at Nadine's inflated sense of self and her ability to spin perceptions to her advantage. (Ages 3–7)

**Fraze, Marla. *The Farmer and the Clown*. Beach Lane, 2014. 32 pages (978–1–4424-9744–3, \$17.99)**

A brightly colored circus train enters the sepia landscape of an elderly farmer's solitary world, setting in action a captivating string of events. When the farmer witnesses a small clown rocketing off the train, he sets off to investigate. The clown is in fact, a child. Marla Frazee's wordless story chronicles the tender connection between the two as they come to know each other beneath the façade of clown makeup and clichéd expectations. The farmer cares for the child, introducing him to farm life and lifting his spirits with silliness and a shared picnic while they await the return of the train. Their paths diverge when the child is joyfully reunited with his family, but their strong connection is symbolized with an exchange of hats. The juxtaposition of the stark neutral-toned farmer with the colorful clown child creates visual drama in a perfectly paced tale told primarily through facial expressions and body language, masterfully executed in a deceptively simple style. (Ages 4–7)

**Gay, Marie-Louise. *Any Questions?* Groundwood / House of Anansi Press, 2014. 50 pages (978–1–55498–382–7, \$19.95)**

"When I meet children in schools or libraries, I see that nothing has changed. Children are as curious as ever. They ask me questions all the time...lots and lots of questions!" Marie-Louise Gay creates an author/illustrator visit through the pages of a picture book in this ambitious and informative endeavor that succeeds in part because of the conversational tone of the primary narrative. "If you stare long enough at a blank piece of paper, anything can happen. For example, a blank white page could become a ... snowstorm." This is complemented by her interactions with a fictional class of children who are shown responding to what she's saying. Some illustrations show the kids, including speech bubble dialogue, while others are the drawings she is

creating to engage them. Soon she's incorporating their ideas into hers, and a collaborative story emerges. Many of the typical questions she gets at school visits are included in a delightful afterword. (Ages 5–9)

**Godin, Thelma Lynne.** *The Hula-Hoopin' Queen*. Illustrated by Vanessa Brantley-Newton. Lee & Low, 2014. 40 pages (978-1-60060-846-9, \$18.95)

Kameeka is determined to defeat Jamara Johnson and become the Hula Hoopin' Queen of 139<sup>th</sup> Street. Kameeka's so preoccupied with thoughts of victory that she makes a mistake setting the oven temperature for the cake her mama's making for Miz Adeline's birthday and it falls flat. Hoop in hand she heads out to buy more sugar for another cake but gets sidetracked when she runs into Jamara. By the time Kameeka remembers the sugar it's too late to make another cake before the party. And Miz Adeline loves chocolate cake. But to Kameeka's surprise it turns out she also loves something else — hula hooping! An appealing debut picture book set in a predominantly African American neighborhood is grounded in lively details and has a wonderful sense of family and community along with terrific dialogue and turns of phrase. ("Mama stands still as water in a puddle. She gives me her look.") *Highly Commended, 2015 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4–8)

**Gonzalez, Maya Christina.** *Call Me Tree = Llárame árbol*. Translated by Dana Goldberg. Children's Book Press / Lee & Low, 2014. 24 pages (978-0-89239-294-0, \$17.95)

"I begin / Within / The deep / dark / earth." A child imagines himself a tree, beginning as a seed that pushes through the earth, reaching and rising to discover other trees all around. Maya Christina Gonzalez pays tribute to both trees and children, affirming the beauty of each in a picture book that pairs a bilingual (English/Spanish) text with lush, colorful illustrations that convey something magical in their literal depiction of children embodying trees. Together, the text and illustrations work as both an imaginative flight of fancy and as a stirring, strong statement about the importance of nature and value of all children: "All trees have roots / All trees belong." (Ages 4–8)

**Hawkes, Kevin.** *Remy and Lulu*. Illustrated by Kevin Hawkes, with miniatures by Hannah E. Harrison. Alfred A. Knopf, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-449-81085-9, \$17.99)

When a small stray dog named Lulu is taken in by an itinerant painter named Remy, unexpected things happen. Remy, whose vision is poor, explains that he paints "the essence of a person, not their likeness ... Lulu noticed that few people were willing to pay for 'essence.'" So she starts painting, too. At each sitting, while Remy produces a large, abstract, often unflattering rendering of his human subject, Lulu paints a perfect miniature portrait of the person's pet, embellished to capture the character of its owner. Her paintings are a huge hit, and Remy and Lulu are suddenly in demand. But Remy's vision is so bad that he is unaware of what Lulu is doing and assumes the lavish praise is all for him, until one of their clients, a famous optometrist, presents him with a pair of glasses. Will this be the end of a beautiful friendship? Kevin Hawkes's delightful

conceit ultimately affirms the unique vision and sensibility of each of these two artists, not to mention the strength of their friendship. (Ages 5–9)

**Javaherbin, Mina. *Soccer Star*. Illustrated by Renato Alarcão. Candlewick Press, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–7636–6056–7, \$16.99)**

Paolo and his friends love playing soccer when they aren't working. Carlos shines shoes. Jose dives for the tourists. Givo helps with the carnival floats. Pedro harvests coconuts. And Paolo works for Señor da Silva, their coach, on his fishing boat. His little sister, Maria, would like to play soccer too, and she's good! Paolo's been teaching her soccer moves, just like she's been teaching him math, since she goes to school. But the boys have a rule: Girls can't play on their team. When Jose hurts his wrist during a big match on the beach, the team puts it to a vote, and Maria gets her chance to shine. "I am Paulo Marcelo Feliciano, the captain of this team. No storm, fall, or useless old rule can keep us from a win. Our fans will one day call us the stars. We will light every home in Brazil." In the context of a lively story offering a glimpse of life for children in Brazil who must work to help their families, Mina Javaherbin underscores how playing and dreaming are universal. (Ages 6–9)

**Khan, Rukhsana. *King for a Day*. Illustrated by Christiane Krömer. Lee & Low, 2014. 32 pages (978–1–60060–659–5, \$17.95)**

From his rooftop perch, Malik is perfectly positioned to participate in the kite-flying battles that are part of Basant, the celebration of spring. This year, he has great confidence in the small kite he's made and given the name Falcon. The boy next door, a bully whom Malik never names, has a huge kite Malik calls Goliath. It's one of the first ones Malik and Falcon cut down, but far from the last as he battles dozens of colorful kites in the sky. By day's end, Malik is basking in victory and surrounded by a bounty of kites. So when the bully steals the kite of a small girl on the street far below, Malik tosses his first conquest down to her: Goliath. A wonderfully told story set in Lahore, Pakistan, is set against dynamic mixed-media collage illustrations and followed by an informative author's note telling more about Basant and the kite battles. The illustrations show that Malik and his family are Muslim; and that Malik uses a wheelchair. (Ages 5–8)

**Lloyd-Jones, Sally. *Poor Doreen: A Fishy Tale*. Illustrated by Alexandra Boiger. Schwartz & Wade, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–375–86918–1, \$17.99)**

Doreen is an Ample Roundy Fish heading upstream to visit "her second cousin twice removed who's just had 157 babies" when she spots a dragonfly in the water. "A lovely snack for my journey!" she thinks, swallowing it. Flying into the air as a fisherman lands his catch, she cries "Yippee! ... I'm going on an outing!" Blind optimism enables Doreen to put a positive spin on this and other seemingly harrowing events that follow, including being snatched into the beak of a Great Blue Heron. She mistakenly identifies him as an Egret, which is precisely what leads to her release when he opens his mouth to correct her (one has to wonder if she isn't as naïve as she seems). There's a terrifically funny disconnect in this over-the-top offering between Doreen's unflagging positivity and the ongoing commentary that reflects a far grimmer perspective

“Oh, poor Doreen. No. It’s a HOOK. And it’s not a treat. It’s a TRAP ... This may be the most awful day of your life.”). But guess who’s enjoying a reunion with her cousin by story’s end? Illustrations showing Doreen in headscarf with matching red umbrella are the perfect fit for a good-natured story marked by lyricism and absurdity. (Ages 5–9)

**Luxbacher, Irene. *Mr. Frank. Greenwood / House of Anansi Press, 2014. 32 pages (978–1–55498–435–0, \$16.95)***

Mr. Frank “had been measuring, cutting, stitching, sewing, mending and pressing clothes for many years.” One day, Mr. Frank receives an order for a special outfit. He knows it will have to be better than anything he’s ever made before. More finely fitted than uniforms he made during wartime sixty years ago; more playful than the dresses he made more than forty years ago; more comfortable than the jeans he once patched; and more special than the tutus he made more recently. A warm, playful picture book takes a brief tour across the decades of fashion before revealing Mr. Frank’s most important client ever: his grandchild. It turns out superhero capes and other costumes aren’t just the stuff from which dreams are made, they’re also an expression of love. The striking mixed media illustrations incorporate photographs and other detail elements. (Ages 4–7)

**Mackintosh, David. *Lucky. U.S. edition: Abrams, 2014. 32 pages (978–1–4197-0809–1, \$17.95)***

Their mom’s promise of a surprise at dinner has two young brothers’ imaginations working overtime. Maybe it’s a swimming pool! (Oh, wait. They live in a high-rise apartment building.) Maybe it’s an elevator! (But mom says stairs are good for them.) The possibilities grow ever-more-wonderful — and improbable — until they’ve convinced themselves it must be a two-week trip to Hawaii. They tell all their friends. They give their teachers the heads-up that they’ll be gone. And then they get home, where the waiting surprise turns out to be ... pizza! It’s a huge disappointment to the narrator/older brother, until younger brother Leo gleefully points out that it’s not just any pizza, but Hawaiian pizza! “Then he calls our banana splits Hawaiian ice cream. Sometimes, Leo makes my whole family laugh. Including me. And I don’t even like pineapple.” The energy and spontaneity of David Mackintosh’s narrative and illustrations capture a sense of wild possibility. (Ages 4–8)

**Mann, Jennifer K. *Two Speckled Eggs. Candlewick Press, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–7636-6168–7, \$14.99)***

Ginger can’t wait to invite all the girls from her class to her birthday party — except weird Lyla Browning. Quiet Lyla smells like old leaves and made the unpopular decision to bring a tarantula for Show-and-Tell. But Ginger’s mother says she has to invite everyone. Nothing at the party goes the way Ginger had imagined and it’s spiraling toward disaster, with Ginger in tears, until she and Lyla share an unexpected laugh over a visiting ladybug. And when Ginger opens her presents, among the predictable toys she finds Lyla’s handmade bird’s nest holding two chocolate malted milk eggs. After the others head home, the two girls share the eggs and some imaginary play to launch their friendship.



Everything rings true in this honest portrayal of familiar scenarios, from party meltdown to a child who is different from her peers. Pencil, gouache, and digital collage illustrations express the emotions of Ginger's big day with whimsy and heart. (Ages 4–8)

**Morris, Richard T. *This Is a Moose*. Illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld. Little, Brown, 2014. 40 pages (978–0–316-21360–8, \$18.00)**

Silliness abounds as a frustrated, unseen film director wrangles with a cast of creatures who seem intent on contradicting everything scripted about the subject of his movie. “This is the mighty moose,” the film’s voiceover begins. Yes, yes it is. But the moose being filmed wants to be an astronaut. His grandmother plays lacrosse. And then there’s the giraffe with dreams of being a doctor and couldn’t care less that he doesn’t belong in the north woods. Once the moose launches himself into space the director has a meltdown. “This is a film about moose! Moose drinking from lakes. Moose eating leaves. Moose doing moose things.” He calls for animals willing to behave as nature intended, like ... him? “Oh,” he says as a turn of the page reveals without further comment who — or rather what — he is. Ducks have dreams too, it seems. (Ages 5–8)

**Murguia, Bethanie Deeney. *I Feel Five!* Candlewick Press, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–7636-6291–2, \$14.99)**

Fritz Newton is turning five, and he’s sure five will feel different than four. But it doesn’t. Despite new sneakers, birthday pancakes, and being the birthday king at school, he still “can’t whistle, snap his fingers ... or do the monkey bars two at a time.” A perfectly paced picture book reveals that change can be subtle, and Fritz discovers that what he feels inside is where the difference matters most. Blithe pen-and-ink and watercolor illustrations accompany the fine narrative. (Ages 4–6)

**Myers, Anna. *Tumbleweed Baby*. Illustrated by Charles Vess. Abrams, 2014. 32 pages (978–1–4197-1232–6, \$16.95)**

The Upagainstitt family is Mama and Papa and five children: three boys (bigish, medium, and smallest) and two girls (not-so-big and littlest-of-all). Then the children find a baby in a tumbleweed. Everyone is enamored of her except the littlest-of-all girl. “She’s a wild-all-over baby ... put her back.” And truly, this baby is a handful. She hates baths but loves to eat with abandon. She’d rather jump on the furniture than lie quietly in bed. She’s almost too much for them, but everyone loves her except littlest-of-all girl. “Name her Sauerkraut,” she suggests. Anna Myers’s tale about a warm, loving family and a youngest sibling unhappy about being displaced isn’t an unfamiliar plotline, but her story is fresh, original, and full of delight. (Ages 4–8)

**Offill, Jenny. *Sparky!* Illustrated by Chris Appelhans. Schwartz & Wade, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–375-87023–1, \$16.99)**

A clever twist on the “I Want a Pet” story starts with a girl’s heavy lobbying for an animal companion, followed by a compromise from her mother: “You can have any pet you want as long as it doesn’t need to be walked or bathed or fed.” A little research in the school library comes up with a match. “My sloth

arrived by Express Mail.” The girl optimistically names him Sparky. “It was two days before I saw him awake.” In an effort to prove to an overachieving friend that Sparky is amazing, the girl holds a Trained Sloth Extravaganza. It is, unsurprisingly, a disappointment. Regardless, the girl still appreciates Sparky: “I reached over and tagged him on the claw. ‘You’re it, Sparky,’ I said. And for a long, long time, he was.” An outrageous premise is given superb, quiet, understated treatment in Jenny Offill’s delightful picture book, from the minimalist language and superb packing to the muted tone of the illustrations. *Winner, 2014 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4–8)

**Rashin. *Two Parrots*. Translated from the Persian. NorthSouth, 2014. 32 pages (978-0-7358-4171-0, \$17.95)**

A story from thirteenth-century Persian poet Rumi is given visually distinctive treatment in this telling from an Iranian author/illustrator. A merchant is given a parrot as a gift and puts him in a cage. The parrot is miserable, but the merchant loves him too much to let him go. It is only when his beloved bird pretends to be dead — a trick he learns from his parrot friends — that the devastated merchant opens the cage. The parrot flies away, explaining to the merchant that he cannot be happy as a caged bird. The merchant understands, and offers the parrot his garden. “A few days later the parrot came back to the merchant’s garden with his good friend. And the merchant was happy to have the company of two beautiful parrots occasionally.” Rashin’s illustrations have saturated reds and greens and yellows balanced by more modest golds and tans. Repeated motifs and elements of visual humor lend a folkloric feel to this richly embellished story. (Ages 5–8)

**Rockliff, Mara. *The Grudge Keeper*. Illustrated by Eliza Wheeler. Peachtree, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-56145-729-8, \$16.95)**

In the town of Bonnyripple, no one keeps a grudge except Cornelius, the man whose job it is to do just that. “Ruffled feathers, petty snits, minor tiffs and major huffs, insults, umbrage, squabbles, dust-ups, and imbroglios — the Grudge Keeper received them all, large and small, tucking each one carefully away in his ramshackle cottage.” But when a fierce wind blows, all the slips of papers bearing grudges get mixed up. Worse than that, they pile up, burying Cornelius beneath them. The townspeople are again at odds with one another with all those grudges set loose, but soon grudges old and new are forgotten in the effort to free Cornelius. Mara Rockliff’s fresh and spirited original tale is a wonderfully paced, language-rich narrative. Eliza Wheeler’s watercolor and ink illustrations reflect the folkloric feel of the story, offering an old-fashioned European sensibility to the characters’ dress and the setting while showing a cast of characters that is racially diverse. The playful lines and charming details of Wheeler’s art perfectly echo Rockliff’s sense of whimsy. (Ages 5–9)

**Ruth, Greg. *Coming Home*. Feiwel and Friends / Macmillan, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-250-05547-7, \$16.99)**

An almost wordless picture book captures anticipation, drama, and joy as it follows a boy at the airport waiting for the arrival of an airplane carrying troops coming home. “Waiting” is the only word on the opening spread, in which the

red-shirted boy stands at the front of a group of people eagerly watching for the plane. Then the plane lands and he and the others spill onto the tarmac. “Go!” The boy witnesses a series of reunions — a female soldier with her dog, a young couple (“Sheesh!” is his comment on their kiss), a father and daughter. “Where is...?” he wonders as he searches through the crowd. A variety of perspectives, including a wonderful overhead view, allows readers to focus on the boy while visually following other stories. Finally, he spots the person he’s come to see. Only the soldier’s boots and duffle bag are shown before a turn of the page reveals the boy’s joyous face: “Mom!” In an author’s note Greg Ruth writes, “No soldier goes to war alone ... I felt getting this right was the most important way to honor those fortunate enough to come home to the loving arms of those whom they have left behind.” (Ages 4–9)

**Salas, Laura Purdie. *Water Can Be ...* Illustrated by Violeta Dabija. Millbrook Press, 2014. 32 pages (978–1–4677-0591–2, \$17.95)**

An imaginative picture book describes water in tangible terms that are intriguingly varied with each season. The rhyming narrative begins in spring, when water can be a “tadpole hatcher” (pond) or “picture catcher” (puddle with reflection). In summer water can be a “drink cooler” (ice) or “rainbow jeweler” (rain). Autumn turns water into a “salmon highway” and “eagle flyway” (both a river). And in winter, water can be “storm creator” (snow) and “decorator” (ice on windows). The rhyming couplets provide many creative ways of looking at water in each season, while the illustrations ground the ideas with concrete images. *Highly Commended, 2015 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4–7)

**Shea, Bob. *Buddy and the Bunnies In: Don’t Play With Your Food!* Disney / Hyperion, 2014. 32 pages (978–1–42316807–2, \$16.99)**

Buddy the monster is on a rampage and fluffy little bunnies are not going to stop him from behaving monstrously and eating them. Or are they? The humor in Bob Shea’s picture book arises first from the absurdity of its premise, and extends both verbally and visually as the bunnies (who keep getting larger in number) prove their unwitting enemy is really their friend. Buddy is either too full (of the cupcakes the bunnies baked) or too moved (“They look so cute when they’re napping.”) or too charmed (they started a “stripey-stripe” club in his honor) to argue, especially when the bunnies keep suggesting so many fun things to do. Most of all, he’s too easily distracted, until the bunnies point out that all the fun they’ve been having together means he can’t eat them. Everyone knows: “Don’t play with your food!” (Ages 4–8)

**Sierra, Judy. *E-I-E-I-O: How Old MacDonald Got His Farm*. Illustrated by Matthew Myers. Candlewick Press, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–7636-6043–7, \$16.99)**

At the beginning of this story, told in the familiar pattern of the song, Old MacDonald isn’t a farmer; he’s just tired of mowing grass. He gets a goat, then a chicken when the goat proves a failure. “Not the average bird was she, but the smartest hen in history.” The chicken soon oversees a transformation. Food scraps tossed into the yard combined with poop from the horse Old MacDonald purchases, along with the effort of worms, create rich composted

soil. Soon skeptical neighbors who'd been holding protest signs ("This Stinks," "Grass Smells Better") join in on the creation of a huge garden. Well, all but one of them ("This Is Still Weird"). But even he is ready to concede as he enjoys some of the garden bounty by story's end. Illustrations playfully extend the humor in this entertaining offering. (Ages 4–8)

**Spire, Ashley. *The Most Magnificent Thing Kids Can Press*, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-55453-704-4, \$16.95)**

A girl has a vision of the most magnificent thing and sets to work making her idea a reality. "The girl saws and glues and adjusts ... She twists and tweaks and fastens." But her creation is all wrong. So she starts over. And over. And over. Nothing she makes is as magnificent as the vision she had in her head. Frustration ensues. Then a tiny little tantrum ("She SMASHES pieces into shapes. She JAMS parts together. She PUMMELS the little bits in ... Her hands feel too BIG to work and her brain is too full of all the not-right things.") She and her assistant (a pug-like dog) go for a walk, and there are all her cast-off creations. As she looks closer, she begins to notice something right about each one of them. The neighbors think so, too, repurposing her cast-offs while she combines the best of every one of them into a most magnificent thing indeed. Ashley Spire's deftly uses humor in both narrative and art to explore the very real frustration — and elation — that comes with creativity, and sometimes just with being a kid. (Ages 4–8)

**Tan, Shaun. *Rules of Summer*. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic, 2014. 48 pages (978-0-545-63912-5, \$18.99)**

Shuan Tan's imagination always harbors a rich and arresting world of possibilities. Here the wild and the extraordinary is found in paintings accompanying a simple, straightforward narrative in which a young boy states the things he learned last summer. "Never leave a red sock on the clothesline." The accompanying illustration shows the boy and his brother huddled against a stark fence in an uninviting urban landscape. The single red sock on the clothesline, small and unassuming in the foreground, has attracted (one assumes) the giant, menacing, red rabbit-like creature that lurks on the other side of the fence. "Never argue with an umpire." Especially, one gathers, when the umpire is your big brother, never mind the mechanical creature that is your opponent. There is both tension and whimsy in the relationship between what is stated and what is shown. A brief, wordless series of page spreads in the middle, preceded by "Never wait for an apology" and followed by "Always bring bolt cutters" underscores the slightly ominous yet playful feel of the entire volume. Is it all meant to be real? Surreal? Symbolic? The beauty is that it's up to each individual reader of the words and images to decide. (Ages 9–14)

**Uegaki, Chieri. *Hana Hashimoto, Sixth Violin*. Illustrated by Qin Leng. Kids Can Press, 2014. 32 pages (978-1-894786-33-1, \$16.95)**

Hana's decision to enter the school talent show is met with derision by her older brothers. "It's a *talent* show, Hana." "You'll be a disaster." It's true she's only had three violin lessons. But on their summer visit to Japan, their grandfather, Ojiichan, played for them every day. Hana's favorite was the song about a crow

calling for her chicks. “Whenever Ojjiichan played it, Hana would feel a shiver of happy-sadness shiver through her.” She also loved the way he could make his violin sound like crickets or raindrops. She practices every day for the show, and when the time comes to step onto the stage, the sixth violin performance of the night, she’s nervous but determined. She begins with three “raw, squawky notes” to mimic the caw of a crow, followed by a “the sound of my neighbor’s cat at night” as she drags the bow across the strings in a “yowl of protest.” Hana also makes the sound of buzzing bees, squeaking mice, and croaking frogs before taking a bow. Not everyone can be a prodigy, but in a warm, refreshing, beautifully told and illustrated story, loving what you do is enough of a reason to share it. (Ages 4–8)

**Vernick, Audrey. *Edgar’s Second Word*. Illustrated by Priscilla Burris. Clarion, 2014. 31 pages (978–0–547–68462–8, \$16.99)**

Hazel waited a long time for her baby brother to arrive. In the meantime, she read to her bunny, Rodrigo. When Edgar finally comes, Hazel discovers he “wasn’t much different from Rodrigo. Or a pillow. Or a watermelon.” Hazel’s mother records first in Edgar’s baby book while Hazel waits for the “first that mattered. Edgar’s first word.” When Edgar finally speaks, it’s not the joyful occasion Hazel hoped for: Edgar’s first word is “No!” and he wields it with passion, conviction, and abandon. But at bedtime one night, she snuggles him onto her lap. He settles with a “tired-baby gravity” and listens to her read a story. When Hazel is done, Edgar says his second word: “Again.” And his third. “Again, ’azel?” Fresh descriptive language and fine pacing distinguish a picture book offering a humorous yet honest look at some of the highs and lows of being an older sibling. *Highly Commended, 2015 Charlotte Zolotow Award* (Ages 4–7)

**Walker, Anna. *Peggy: A Brave Chicken on a Big Adventure*. Clarion, 2014. 32 pages (978–0–544–25900–3, \$16.99)**

Mornings for Peggy the chicken in her suburban backyard always start with breakfast, bird watching (pigeons), and a little jumping on the trampoline. But one blustery day, the wind picks her up mid-bounce. “Peggy landed with a soft thud. She was far from home.” Peggy is a take-things-as-they-come kind of chicken, so she sets off to explore this bustling new environment. The visual humor in Anna Walker’s picture book about a chicken in the city is priceless, whether it’s Peggy times eight displayed on every screen in the window of an electronics store while her human doppelganger (a young man with a red Mohawk haircut) passes by, or her numerous encounters with other sights and sounds (e.g., escalators, movie theater, high-fashion shoes, bargain-bin shopping). The straightforward narrative is the perfect counterpoint to the charm of the visual storytelling, which incorporates both full-page art and an array of smaller snapshot illustrations showing the black bundle of feathers that is Peggy on her adventure. Homesick by day’s end, Peggy eventually finds her way back to the suburbs, but her world has been expanded. (Ages 4–9)

## Books for Beginning Readers

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**Lin, Grace.** *Ling & Ting: Twice As Silly.* Little, Brown, 2014. 43 pages (978-0-316-18402-1, \$16.00)

Almost identical in appearance, twins Ling and Ting have far from identical personalities as fans of this series that began with *Ling & Ting: Not Exactly the Same* (Little, Brown, 2010) know. But both girls excel at being silly, as the stories in this third offering about the Chinese American sisters show. Wordplay is at the root of the humor in some chapters, as when Ting gives up on her idea for a cupcake garden and decides to plant jelly beans instead (because beans are seeds). When Ling announces she can swing higher than a tree, even one that is taller than a building, taller than a mountain, and higher than the clouds, Ting is skeptical until Ling points out that “Trees can’t swing.” The six chapters conclude with Ling and Ting making up a story that is “very, very silly,” and that also brings the volume full circle as they imagine a cupcake tree. (Ages 4–7)

**Willems, Mo.** *My New Friend Is So Fun! (An Elephant & Piggie Book)* Hyperion / Disney, 2014. 57 pages (978-1-4231-7958-0, \$8.99)

Elephant and Snake’s initial happiness at their best friends’ playtime suddenly turns to concern when they worry that Piggie and Bat may be having “too much fun”! What if the two have so much fun together that they don’t need their best friends Elephant and Snake anymore? Anxiety turns to panic and they rush off to stop the fun, but of course they learn that new friendships and old friendships can exist simultaneously. Once again Elephant and Piggie deliver satisfying plot twists and reliable humor within a limited vocabulary and sentence structure accessible to new readers. (Ages 4–7)

## Books for Newly Independent Readers

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**Lagercrantz, Rose.** *My Heart Is Laughing.* Illustrated by Eva Eriksson. Translated from the Swedish by Julia Marshall. U.S. edition: Gecko Press, 2014. 119 pages (978-1-877579-52-3, \$16.95)

Dani thinks of herself as someone “who’s always happy.” But she isn’t this particular day, because she misses her best friend, Ella, who moved away, and two girls in her class, Vicky and Mickey, are being horrible to her. When Dani angrily throws food at them after they pinch her during lunch, it lands on her teacher by mistake. The teacher doesn’t know about the pinching and thinks Dani was misbehaving. Dani ends up running home in tears. Her dad is at first upset with Dani, but when he finds out what happened he drives her back to school, tells the teacher what was going on, and justice is served as Vicky and Mickey must apologize — a deeply satisfying moment for Dani and readers

alike. A few elements of this child-centered book translated from the Swedish feel foreign, but the feelings are universal and spot on. Despite the kids who are picking on Dani, there is a brightness and lightness to the storytelling, with the girls' mean behavior treated as a unique incident — it happens, it's dealt with, and Dani is ready to move on. (Ages 7–9)

**MacLachlan, Patricia. *Fly Away*. Margaret K. McElderry Books / Simon & Schuster, 2014. 108 pages (978-1-4424-6008-9, \$15.99)**

Lucy and her family — Mama, Boots (her dad), little sister Gracie, toddler brother Teddy, and the chickens — are traveling to her great aunt Frankie's in North Dakota to help out because the Red River is rising near Frankie's home. Lucy's father wanted to be a poet until he started farming and decided he could never write a poem as beautiful as a cow. Mama loves the music of Langhorne Slim. (Lucy thinks Mama would love to be Langhorne Slim.) Gracie draws, and Teddy, just starting to talk, can sing pitch-perfect. As for Lucy? She wants to be a poet, and someday soon she's going to write her father a poem as beautiful as a cow. Patricia MacLachlan's story for newly independent readers may have a slightly too perfect family (although Mama has a welcome undercurrent of uncertainty) but the depth of feeling among its characters — from independent Frankie's slight annoyance when they arrive to the terror when Teddy temporarily disappears — are genuine in this lovely portrait of a young writer just beginning to find her own voice. (Ages 7–9)

**McKay, Hilary. *Lulu and the Hedgehog in the Rain*. Illustrated by Priscilla Lamont. U.S. edition: Albert Whitman, 2014. 104 pages (978-0-8075-4812-7, \$13.99)**

**McKay, Hilary. *Lulu and the Rabbit Next Door*. Illustrated by Priscilla Lamont. U.S. edition: Albert Whitman, 2014. 91 pages (978-0-8075-4816-5, \$13.99)**

Animal-loving Lulu is back in two delightful offerings. In *Lulu and the Hedgehog in the Rain*, when a hedgehog tumbles down the gutter and lands near Lulu during a torrential rainstorm, she automatically picks it up to bring inside for safe-keeping. Per her usual routine, Lulu researches the animal's habits and habitat, and soon builds a small protected shelter for it in her yard. With the help of her cousin, Mellie, she then engages the entire neighborhood in creating a safe environment for the creature to roam. The addition of a wild animal to Lulu's menagerie, and her insistence that it be treated as such, is a welcome plotline. In *Lulu and the Rabbit Next Door*, Lulu and Mellie are horrified by their classmate Arthur's adequate but emotionally indifferent care of his pet rabbit, George, and come up with a plan to prove to Arthur just how interesting George is. Humor and childlike sensibility pervade this reliable series that began with *Lulu and the Duck in the Park* (U.S. edition: Albert Whitman, 2012), starring brown-skinned Lulu and her unflagging interest in animal encounters. (Ages 4–8)

## Fiction for Children

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**Alexander, Kwame. *The Crossover*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 237 pages (978-0-544-10771-7, \$16.99)**

Josh Bell is a talented middle school basketball player, as is his twin brother Jordan. They learned from their dad, Chuck “Da Man,” who played in the Euroleague before retiring from the game. When Jordan gets a girlfriend, Josh resents that his twin no longer does as much with him, and he takes his frustration out on the court during a game one day, almost breaking Jordan’s nose. It creates a huge rift between the boys and gets Josh banned from playing. The tension between the brothers is wonderfully portrayed within the greater dynamic of their African American family. Meanwhile, their mom, principal of the boys’ middle school, is also worried about their doctor-averse dad’s health. This element of the plot builds to a moment readers can see coming when their dad has a heart attack, yet it’s shocking when he dies. Kwame Alexander’s narrative has two styles — straightforward prose poems and vibrant, rap-like poems in which Josh describes the basketball action. Josh also likes language and occasional poems have Josh exploring the meaning of specific words that connect to what’s happening in his life. Josh’s voice is vivid, funny, and moving in this fast-paced and poignant story. (Ages 10–13)

**Booth, Coe. *Kinda Like Brothers*. Scholastic Press, 2014. 248 pages (978-0-545-22496-3, \$17.99)**

Eleven-year-old Jarrett and twelve-year-old Kevon are thrown together when Jarrett’s mom becomes a temporary foster parent to Kevon and his two-year-old sister. Kevon is cool in a way Jarrett isn’t, inviting easy admiration from other kids. In Jarrett’s mind, that makes Kevon a potential threat socially, not to mention someone with whom he has to share his room. Meanwhile Kevon resents the implication that he can’t care for his sister — a responsibility he’s used to — and worries about his mentally ill dad. He has no time for Jarrett’s jealousy. Author Coe Booth’s characters are likable, genuine, and flawed in all the ways that make us human, with adults and kids alike in her story well-rounded and wonderfully real. The two boys have good hearts but their treatment of each other ranges from bright moments of generosity to indifference to cruelty. The larger African American community — from Jarrett’s mom and her boyfriend to teachers at school and adults at the community center — strives to make a difference in the lives of these boys and other children, preparing them for a world that is not always fair or just. But for Jarrett and Kevon to make peace with one another they must let go of anger and hurt, and acknowledge the bond that has developed between them in spite — or because — of everything. (Ages 9–13)

**Brown, Jennifer. *Life on Mars*. Bloomsbury, 2014. 231 pages (978-1-61963-252-3, \$16.99)**

Arcturus “Arty” Betelgeuse Chambers has been fascinated with the stars and planets, especially Mars, for as long as he can remember. For years he’s been engaged in an experiment to try to signal for signs of life on the red planet. Then



his dad loses his job at an observatory and his parents announce they're moving, to light-polluted Las Vegas. Along with sisters Vega (boyfriend-obsessed) and Cassi (opeia) (cheerleading-obsessed), Arty is shell-shocked. In the coming weeks as the family prepares to move, Arty forges a relationship with their reclusive, curmudgeonly next-door neighbor, Cash. At first unfriendly and distant, Cash turns out to be a retired astronaut, one who never went into space. Cash's lingering bitterness over this fact fades as he begins to help Arty refine and improve his ongoing experiment signaling the stars. While their relationship follows a predictable arc it is emotionally rich, and, like everything else in Jennifer Brown's story, explored with a deft blend of humor, warmth, and pathos. When Arty discovers Cash is ill, the pending death of his old new friend becomes the flash point for grief about everything: moving away, leaving best friends Tripp and Priya, even his dad settling for a job that doesn't relate to his passion. Brown's story is as entertaining as it is emotionally satisfying. (Ages 9–13)

**Brown, Skila. *Caminar*. Candlewick Press, 2014. 193 pages**

**(978-0-7636-6516-6, \$15.99)**

"She did not / sit down, did not / take more than two steps. Just / pointed her finger right to me, / "You / will / run." A novel written in verse and set in 1981 during the Guatemalan civil war juxtaposes the beauty of the Guatemalan landscape and goodness of many of the country's people with the brutality of war. Carlos obeys his mother when she tells him to run into the forest and hide when their village is attacked, promising to find him. But she never comes. On his own, Carlos heads up the mountain toward his grandmother's village and meets four rebel soldiers who are lost in the forest Carlos knows so well. They tell Carlos that government soldiers attacked his village and massacred all the people. Devastated, Carlos begins to walk (*caminar*) with the rebels, to help them find their way. He's also determined to warn the people in the village where his grandmother lives about the soldiers. Once they arrive, he must make a choice: join the rebels, or stay in his grandmother's village. There is strong sense of Carlos and his people as a minority Native culture within Guatemala in a beautifully written book that deals with violent realities in a way that feels honest yet appropriate for young readers. (Ages 9–13)

**Chan, Crystal. *Bird*. Atheneum, 2014. 295 pages (978-1-4424-5089-9, \$16.99)**

Twelve-year-old Jewel is a mixed-race (Black Jamaican/Mexican American/white) girl living in Iowa with her parents and Grandpa. Jewel's older brother John, known as Bird, died on the day she was born. He tried to fly off the nearby cliff and her Grandpa, who gave the little boy his nickname, hasn't spoken since. Jewel, smart, sad, and lonely, finds great comfort near the cliff, although her parents don't know she goes there. Her loneliness eases when she meets John, who wants to be an astronaut and knows about the stars. A Black child adopted into a white family, he's staying with his nearby uncle. Jewel's Grandpa doesn't need to speak to make it clear he thinks John is a duppy, a dangerous spirit like the one Jewel's dad believes lured Bird off the cliff. Her mother, on the other hand, brightens around John — Jewel rarely has seen

her so happy. Then they find out John is really named Eugene. Jewel wants to believe it's just a coincidence he was using her brother's name. But it was an ill-conceived joke, one that he has grown to regret, and one that lays bare the pain and anger in Jewel's family surrounding her brother's death. Themes of grief, loss, family, friendship, religion, and spirituality, all are deftly woven into a poetic, insightful, deeply moving novel. (Ages 10–13)

**Cheng, Andrea. *The Year of the Fortune Cookie*. Illustrated by Patrice Barton. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 155 pages (978-0-544-10519-5, \$15.99)**

Sixth-grader Anna Wang is accompanying her fifth-grade teacher to China because Ms. Sylvester and her husband are adopting baby Jing and have invited Anna along on the trip. In China, where her mom grew up, Anna is hopeful of seeing the orphanage where her baby sister Kaylee once lived. She's even brought presents she and her friends made for the children there. In the meantime, as the Sylvesters are getting to know Jing, Anna is becoming friends with Fan, a young woman working at the hotel restaurant. Immersed in Chinese language and culture, Anna realizes that while she feels very Chinese in America, she feels very American in China, and reflecting on who she is and what it means to be both is at the heart of a novel full of small yet meaningful moments as Anna thinks about identity and assumptions, as well as family and friendship. There is always a sense of complexity beneath the surface of Andrea Cheng's characters, and Anna, who was first introduced in *The Year of the Book* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012) continues to grow. (Ages 8–10)

**Cotter, Charis. *The Swallow: A Ghost Story*. Tundra, 2014. 318 pages (978-1-77049-591-3, \$19.99)**

Polly often feels lost in the chaos of her big family. But she's fiery and feisty and doesn't have trouble speaking her mind. Quiet only child Rose feels invisible. Her parents think about work even when they're home in the house to which they recently moved, which once belonged to Rose's grandmother. Polly, who loves ghost stories, wonders if Rose, who can see ghosts, might not be a ghost herself: Rose is pale and wild-looking. Rose's attempts to convince Polly she's a real girl recovering from meningitis are temporarily set back when they discover a grave stone with Rose's name. The girl, the same age as Rose, died years before. Rose realizes this Winifred Rose must be her aunt, and soon encounters the ghost of Winifred at home. Winifred is not only an unhappy ghost, she's a dangerous one and seems intent on hurting Polly in particular. The two girls are determined to figure out what happened to Winifred and form a deepening friendship as they dig into the past, each finding the companionship and validation they need, each understanding themselves and their families better for knowing one another. Charis Cotter's satisfyingly scary ghost story, set in 1963 Toronto, is also, and at its most essential, a moving tale of friendship that ends with a revelation. (Ages 9–12)

**Curtis, Christopher Paul. *The Madman of Piney Woods*. Scholastic Press, 2014. 384 pages (978-0-545-15664-6, \$16.99)**

In 1901, thirteen-year-old African Canadian Benji, an aspiring newspaper reporter, lives with his parents and younger twin siblings in the Black Canadian town of Buxton. Thirteen-year-old Irish Canadian Red, an aspiring scientist, lives in nearby Chatham with his father and immigrant grandmother. Benji gets work in Chatham as an apprentice at a Black-owned newspaper, where the demanding, good-humored woman owner shapes his talent as a writer (Benji is prone to high drama and alliteration). Meanwhile, patience-tested Red is gaining insight into his unlikable, bitter grandmother, who was scarred by her horrible experiences in the Irish famine and as a new immigrant. Red thinks it should make her particularly sensitive to racism; instead, she is hateful and bigoted. The boys are drawn together by their good hearts, humor, intelligence, and fascination with differences in how they think about the world. The man the people of Buxton call the Madman in the Woods is Cooter Bixby, an old friend of Benji's parents traumatized by his experiences in the Civil War. Both boys have encounters that change their perceptions of this singular, initially frightening figure. Benji realizes the Madman is a kindred spirit — completely at home in nature. Red grows certain the man, though eccentric, is good-hearted. In a stand-alone, companion novel to *Elijah of Buxton* (Scholastic Press, 2007), Benji and Red's friendship, organic and wonderful, represents hope even as it comes into full relief during a tragedy mired in wrong ways of thinking in a novel of high humor and exquisite grace. (Ages 9–13)

**De Goldi, Kate. *The ACB with Honora Lee*. Illustrated by Gregory O'Brien. Tundra, 2014. 124 pages (978-1-77049-722-1, \$17.99)**

Nine-year-old Perry, a special-needs learner at school and clearly a trial to the patience of her parents at home, has a designated activity every afternoon: piano lessons, music and movement, clarinet lessons, tutoring. Perry's grandmother, Honora Lee, has dementia and lives at Santa Lucia, a nearby care facility. She generally doesn't recognize Perry, or even Perry's dad. But when Perry's Tuesday music and movement class is cancelled, she decides to visit her grandmother every week and, as part of a project for school, to create an ABC book about Santa Lucia. Despite Perry's struggles elsewhere, there is something just right about her interactions at Santa Lucia. She is able to engage with her grandmother and other residents without disappointment or judgment. She's also observant, and notices small details of the lives of people who live there, some of which become part of her book. The staff appreciate Perry — they all share the same gift of accepting each one of the inhabitants of Santa Lucia for who they are now. A funny and poignant novel featuring gorgeous spot illustrations never strives to make a point; rather, it allows the story of Perry and Santa Lucia to unfold for readers to experience and think about. (Ages 8–11)

**Ellis, Deborah. *The Cat at the Wall*. Groundwood / House of Anansi Press, 2014. 144 pages (978-1-55498-491-6, \$16.95)**

Set against Israeli-Palestinian tensions in the city of Bethlehem, Deborah Ellis skillfully connects the personal struggle to be a good person and do the right thing with the larger political conflict in an unusual, nuanced, and intriguing

story. A stray cat that was once an American girl from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, named Clare follows two Israeli soldiers into a Palestinian house where they've been told to spy on the neighborhood. The house looks like it was suddenly abandoned, but the cat senses a child is present, and eventually directs them to the hiding place of a mute, asthmatic Palestinian boy. As a girl, Clare was often cruel, caught in that spiral in which one unkind act leads to another, in which anything is easier than saying "I'm sorry" and admitting the hurt in her heart. Clare's sixth grade teacher gave Clare the opportunity to reveal the best parts of herself, but Clare resisted mightily, and then an accident ended her life as a girl. Meanwhile, as Palestinian neighbors realize the Israeli soldiers are inside the house, the situation escalates and Clare the cat, still tinged with disdain, finds she cannot ignore the truths she knows about the people involved, and the chance to make a difference at one moment, in one place. Ellis exposes the tragedy of conflicts large and small while revealing moments of compassion and decency in the hearts of characters facing chaos within themselves, and all around them. (Ages 10–13)

**Federle, Tim. *Five, Six, Seven, Nate!* Simon & Schuster, 2014. 293 pages (978-1-4424-4693-9, \$16.99)**

In *Better Nate Than Ever* (Simon & Schuster, 2013), aspiring performer and middle schooler Nate had dreams of making it on Broadway. Now he's been cast as the understudy to the understudy of the role of E.T. in the Broadway show of *E.T.: The Musical*. Nate is also a member of the show's chorus. But while he can sing, he can't dance, which singles him out from most of the other kids in the cast, many of whom are tender-aged veterans of the stage. Nate's just a talented kid from Pennsylvania, totally unpretentious, and now worried that he might not have what it takes. Nate offers a great, grounded, often funny perspective on show business as he tries to navigate the highs and lows of theater life, from the disastrous decisions of the first-time director who came from the world of video games, to the wonderful mentoring he receives from veteran actor Asela ("my first midget"). Meanwhile, although lead actor Jordan Sinclair is from Nate's hometown, he seems stuck up and distant, but like so much else in the world of theater, it proves to be an illusion. Tim Federle's blithe, breezy novel is a pleasure from opening curtain to closing credits in a story that also touches on Nate's emerging awareness of his sexual identity and that includes a sweet first kiss with that not-so-stuck-up-after-all hometown boy. (Ages 8–11)

**Flake, Sharon G. *Unstoppable Octobia May.* Scholastic Press, 2014. 276 pages (978-0-545-60960-9, \$16.99)**

Octobia May has lived with her independent, unmarried aunt for two years. Once sickly and overprotected, Octobia has thrived at Aunt Shuma's boarding house, where's she's had the freedom to be herself. She is doted on by the boarders, most of whom are older African Americans, but even Aunt Shuma agrees it might be time to reign in Octobia's overactive imagination when her niece starts spying on Mr. Davenport. Octobia, a lover of mystery stories, is convinced the younger man is a vampire, because he only goes out at night (she eats garlic for protection). The truth, surprisingly, turns out to be something more sinister. Octobia, precocious and irrepressible, uncovers a real mystery

and then must convince adults — and even her best friend — to believe her. Octobia is a character in the spirit of the young detectives of the mid-twentieth-century literature, when this story is set. And like the mysteries Octobia herself loves to read, the plot of this novel stretches credibility at times, ending with an improbable escape from gun-wielding danger. But it also skillfully weaves in social history, especially about racism but also gender and economics before, during, and after World War II, all of which inform the mystery itself, and the lives of the characters. Mr. Davenport, it turns out, is a complicated scoundrel. And Octobia is his worthy foil. (Ages 9–13)

**Frederick, Heather Vogel. *Absolutely Truly*. Simon & Schuster, 2014. 355 pages (978–1–4424–2972–7, \$16.99)**

Truly Lovejoy is “smack dab in the middle” of her family of five kids. At 5’11”, however, she towers over just about everyone both at home and in the seventh grade at her new school in her dad’s hometown of Pumpkin Falls, New Hampshire. The town is as quaint as its name — there’s even a winter cotillion for all seventh graders. They’ve moved because her dad, a military veteran, lost a hand in Afghanistan. While his physical recovery has been progressing, he’s having a harder time emotionally. With Truly’s Aunt True, he’s taking over his parents’ bookstore while Truly’s grandparents head off to the Peace Corps and her mom goes back to school. When Truly finds a twenty-year-old letter hinting at unresolved romance inside a signed first edition of *Charlotte’s Web* in the bookstore, she’s soon collaborating with the new friends she’s making in the hopes of figuring out who the recipient and sender are and tracking them down. Then the copy of *Charlotte’s Web* — valuable enough to get the bookstore out of debt — disappears, too. A true “cozy” for kids, this mystery has a few edges, but just the right amount of weight and authenticity to the family story and interactions to add emotional depth. Pumpkin Falls is refreshing and believably diverse, with its share of quirky yet credible small-town characters. (Ages 9–13)

**Freeman, Martha. *The Orphan and the Mouse*. Illustrated by David McPhail. Holiday House, 2014. 220 pages (978–0–8234–3167–0, \$16.95)**

Caro lives at the Cherry Hill Orphanage, where she is a quiet role model for other kids, and a favorite of orphanage director Mrs. George. Mary Mouse, living behind the orphanage walls, is her community’s art thief (the art being postage stamps). On one of her forays into Mrs. George’s office to steal stamps, Mary is almost caught by the cat until Caro intervenes, and a bond develops between mouse and girl. It soon becomes clear to Mary Mouse that Mrs. George is running an illegal adoption ring. Caro is beginning to grow suspicious, too, but finds it hard to believe Mrs. George would do something wrong. Her best friend, Jimmy, thinks otherwise. When the new baby Caro had been helping care for suddenly disappears, Mary and rogue mouse Andrew try to help gather evidence while Caro and Jimmy do the same. An animal fantasy full of humor and heroics also has a slight edge that makes it more suited to an older audience than the cover might suggest, at least as a read-aloud. And while Martha Freeman’s characters can be labeled “good” and “bad,” they are drawn with refreshing complexity. (Ages 8–10)

**Gibbs, Stuart. *Space Case*. Simon & Schuster, 2014. 337 pages  
(978-1-4424-9486-2, \$16.99)**

In 2040, twelve-year-old Dash is one of twenty-two residents of Moon Base Alpha, the first moon colony. Most of them are scientists or technicians, like Dash's parents, although NASA is relying on space tourism to help pay the bills. Hence the obnoxious Norwegian family of four, unable to comprehend that wealth can't buy what there isn't room to bring along. When the mission's revered medical doctor dies on a solo, unplanned, early morning moonwalk not long after Dash overheard him excitedly talking about a new discovery, the base commander is among those unwilling to believe Dash's suspicion of murder. Then a supply rocket arrives with security officer Zan Perfonic. She secretly asks Dash to investigate, and he enlists the help of new arrival Kira. While the mystery fuels the plot, it's almost secondary to the fun of exploring Stuart Gibbs's imagined future: Sure, Dash and his fellow residents may be pioneers, and Kira helps Dash remember the thrill in that, but there's no glamor in life on the moon, even though NASA's PR department would have everyone on earth think otherwise. There is great gender equity, however, and the equality of men and women, as well as the multiracial reality of life in 2040 (the Norwegians are unusual for being white) are among the things it's wonderful to see taken as typical twenty-five years from now. (Ages 8–12)

**Graff, Lisa. *Absolutely Almost*. Philomel, 2014. 288 pages  
(978-0-399-16405-7, \$16.99)**

Albie knows the reason he was asked to leave his former, private school has to do with the fact that learning is a struggle for him. At home, Albie can sense the tension over his academic abilities, although his mom tells him every night that he's caring and thoughtful and good. His busy parents (his dad long ago forgot about the model plane they were building together) have hired Calista to be his nanny after school. At ten, Albie thinks he's too old for a nanny, but he can't help liking Calista. She's a free-spirited and creative young graduate student who puts a *Johnny Tremain* book cover over Albie's *Captain Underpants* so both he and his mom will be happy; and who takes him to the zoo on a day when he can't face going to school, because things that had seemed to be alright suddenly go so wrong. Albie's voice is remarkable for its innocence and honesty in Lisa Graff's poignant and funny novel about a boy who may struggle to understand math and irony (as revealed in his encounters with less-than-kind classmates), but whose heart is always true. Finding the courage to speak that truth is one of Albie's challenges, but when he does, it makes him stronger and surer of himself in a world that will always be full of complexities and uncertainties. A couple of terrific teachers stand out among the fine secondary characters in this novel that also has wonderful moments of quiet humor, and explores bullying as one of its many themes. (Ages 9–12)

**Harris, Teresa E. *The Perfect Place*. Clarion, 2014. 263 pages  
(978-0-547-25519-4, \$16.99)**

Treasure's Dad left two months ago to find "the perfect place" for their family to move. Treasure's mom, unable to pay the rent, drops off Treasure and her younger sister, Tiffany, with stern Great Aunt Grace, whom they've never met,

and leaves to track their dad down. Treasure is used to moving — her dad is never happy in one place long — but that doesn't mean she likes it. And Great Aunt Grace, or GAG, as Treasure starts calling her, is far from warm and loving. She has a sharp tongue. She can't cook. She smokes, and Treasure has asthma. And she expects the girls to do chores and help out at her store. Treasure also finds an enemy in the minister's stuck-up daughter, and has no interest in making a friend of Terrance, another new kid in Aunt Grace's small town whom Aunt Graces pushes on her. Gradually, however, Treasure realizes that Grace may be as prickly as a pin cushion, but she loves them. And Aunt Grace is reliable, something Treasure's dad, no matter how much he also loves them, has never been able to be. It turns out Treasure is in the perfect place. The storytelling is fresh and lively — there are great descriptions and turns of phrase, and wonderful characterizations — in this fine debut novel about a contemporary African American girl and community. (Ages 9–12)

**Hartnett, Sonya.** *The Children of the King*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2014. 266 pages (978–0–7636–6735–1, \$16.99)

During World War II, twelve-year-old Cecily, her mother, and older brother Jeremy are at their family estate in the north of England, where they take in May Bright, a ten-year-old London evacuee. Although younger, quiet May is more mature and independent than Cecily, who is impulsive and bossy but also self-aware and good-hearted. Their tentative friendship is sealed by a shared secret: In the ruins of a castle on the estate, they meet two brothers, formally dressed in ruffled clothes, who claim they can't go back to London because of the danger. Meanwhile, fourteen-year-old Jeremy is seething with anger. War news is grim and he wants to be back in London with their father, doing something that matters. With these tensions in the air their Uncle Peregrine begins telling a story connected to the history of the ruins, about a duke and a king and two boy princes and the terrible, warping danger of power. Uncle Peregrine is spinning the tale of Richard III and the disappearance and supposed murder of his nephews, legitimate heirs to the kingdom. It is only as the story comes to a close that Cecily and May both realize who — and what — the two boys at Snow Castle must be. Sonya Hartnett manages to pen a story both cozy and comforting even as it reveals difficult truths about conflict and power and their impact on children. Loss, leaving home, and growing up and into a deeper understanding of the world, including the difference one can, and sometimes cannot, make, are all explored in a novel of complex, nuanced characters, both the living and dead. (Ages 9–13)

**Herrera, Robin.** *Hope Is a Ferris Wheel*. Amulet / Abrams, 2014. 261 pages (978–1–4197–1039–1, \$16.95)

Ten-year-old Star is starting a new school in northern California after moving with her mom and teenage sister, Winter, from Oregon. Star starts a Trailer Park Club hoping to make friends, but only a girl named Genny willingly joins. Then Star discovers the poetry of Emily Dickinson and the club gets a new name and focus, and two more members: Eddie, intensely interested in poetry, and his best friend Langston, who prefers drawing bras. Then Winter, at odds with their mom over school, tells Star she wants to visit their long-

estranged father back in Oregon. Star has a vague memory of him and imagines all the things she might tell him about herself if she had the chance. After she and Winter make the trip, Star returns home worried about her sister, who has revealed she is pregnant, and furious at their mom, who never told her that she and Winter have different fathers, or anything about her own dad. Robin Herrera's impressive debut novel has a smart, thoughtful, stubborn girl delving deep into her heart, and trying to understand the hearts and minds of those around her. Star is socially naïve yet deeply perceptive, qualities revealed with both sensitivity and humor. The sentences Star writes for her spelling word assignments, and her ongoing refusal to turn them in, are among the wonderful ways Herrera reveals dimensions of Star's character and life. Star's family is living on the economic edge, a reality that is seamlessly woven into a story about the ways we hurt, and the ways we hope. (Ages 9–12)

**Holm, Jennifer L. *The Fourteenth Goldfish*. Random House, 2014. 195 pages (978–0–375–87064–4, \$16.99)**

Eleven-year-old Ellie's scientist grandfather has discovered a jellyfish with anti-aging properties. Ellie learns this the day her mom comes home with a young teenage boy who seems vaguely familiar. It's her grandfather, Melvin. Ellie has never been particularly close to her grandfather, who's always been critical of her theater-teacher mom, but now the two of them are peers. Melvin doesn't change a thing about himself to attend middle school, still dressing like a seventy-something-year-old man except for his long hair ("If you'd been bald for years, would you cut it?"). Unable to get back into his lab because no one recognizes him, he enlists Ellie and their new friend, Raj, to try to help him get to his research. Meanwhile, he's opening Ellie's eyes and mind to the fascinating world of science — of things we cannot see that are happening all around us, of things that are waiting to be discovered, and of problems waiting to be solved. She's captivated, but as Ellie delves deeper into the world of science, into the life-changing and sometimes shattering work of scientists like Jonas Salk and his polio vaccine and J. Robert Oppenheimer and the Manhattan Project, she realizes there is more than just the wonder of discovery and the challenge of problem-solving. There are also questions about ethics and moral responsibility, some of them hitting close to home. Jennifer Holm's story is funny and engaging and effortlessly thought-provoking. (Ages 9–12)

**Johnson, Varian. *The Great Greene Heist*. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic, 2014. 226 pages (978–0–545–52552–7, \$16.99)**

When Jackson Greene learns classmate Keith Sinclair is trying to steal the election for eighth-grade class president — with the help of the principal no less! — he steps up. It might not be the noblest of intentions that convinces him to get involved, but it's not wholly selfish, either. Jackson's friend Gaby de la Cruz is Keith's opponent. Although they had a falling out, Gaby is still someone Jackson likes — a lot — while her twin brother, Charlie, is his best friend. And then there's the fact that outsmarting Keith and the principal means running a con, something Jackson happens to like doing, and is very, very good at. But he can't do it alone, so he and Charlie put together a team, each member with the specific skills necessary to complete their part of a plan that involves



technology, psychology, and a series of carefully crafted interactions. Varian Johnson's entertaining tale has all the machinations of the best con games, but is set against the backdrop of a contemporary middle school. Johnson's intentionally diverse cast of characters feels natural rather than heavy-handed in a story of humor and hijinks featuring a winning African American protagonist who, it turns out, is carrying on family tradition. (Ages 9–13)

**Kadohata, Cynthia. *Half a World Away*. Atheneum, 2014. 225 pages (978-1-4424-1275-0, \$16.99)**

Jaden was adopted four years ago. Now twelve years old, he's been in and out of therapy for his serious behavioral issues and doesn't feel any attachment to Penni and Steve, his "adoptive so-called parents." Assuming they are adopting a baby because they're dissatisfied with him, he arrives with Penni and Steve in Kazakhstan to discover the baby they thought they were adopting has already been placed with another family. Given a day to decide if they want a different child, Penni and Steve agonize before agreeing to take Ramazan. Meanwhile, Jaden meets Dimash. The preschooler can't talk and has physical challenges, but latches on to Jaden joyfully. Dimash touches something deep and unexpected in Jaden, who is used to feeling anger or nothing. Fascinated with electricity, he has felt no current connecting him to anyone, until Dimash. The logistics of this novel are a little too neat when Penni and Steve decide to adopt both children, but its emotional landscape is achingly true, from the tension that Jaden's behavior causes in his family to his distant, disdainful regard for his parents and others. By story's end Jaden finds himself wanting to console Ramazan when he cries. It's a far cry from loving the baby, but it's a start, and even Jaden knows it. (Ages 9–13)

**Levy, Dana Alison. *The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher*. Delacorte, 2014. 260 pages (978-0-385-37652-5, \$15.99)**

The multiracial Fletcher family is comprised of four boys — twelve-year-old Sam, ten-year-olds Jax and Eli (who are not twins), and six-year-old Frog — along with their adoptive Dads, whom they call Dad and Papa. Set over the course of a single school year, a warm, funny story in the tradition of classics like *The Saturdays* features wonderful family dynamics that will ring true to readers regardless of what their own family structure looks like. Over the course of the novel, each of the boys faces a dilemma. Sam, who has been single-minded about soccer, is taken by surprise at how much he enjoys acting in the school play and feels torn about where to put his energy. Jax chooses their crabby next-door neighbor as the focus of a year-long Veteran's Project for school, but then finds it impossible to engage the unfriendly man. Eli hates the special school for gifted academic kids that he begged to attend, but now feels he has to stick with it. And Frog has a new friend, Ladybug, that the rest of the family assumes is imaginary, like the cheetah that lived under his bed. Their good-humored yet often exasperated parents and a variety of friends and neighbors all add to the fun of a story that is fresh, lively, and comforting. (Ages 7–10)

**Lindelauf, Benny.** *Nine Open Arms*. Translated from the Dutch by John Nieuwenhuizen. U.S. edition: *Enchanted Lion*, 2014. 256 pages (978-1-59270-146-9, \$16.95)

Fing has moved with her family into a house called Nine Open Arms. Located at the end of a lonely road outside a village near the Dutch border with Germany, it's the most recent in a series of places they've lived since her mother's death. Fing and her sisters, spitfire Muhlke and timid Jess, spend time together while their four older brothers help their dreamer of a father with his latest, well-intentioned moneymaking plan. The girls trek to the village to attend school, and ponder their home's oddities, including an extraordinary carved bed with a headboard that looks like a tombstone in one of the cellars, a front door knee-height off the ground, and prodigious leaking with the first heavy rain. Later they discover Oompah, a mute, homeless tailor, has set up house in the hedgerow. It turns out the children's maternal grandmother Oma Mei, who oversees the family's life with stern affection, knows the history of Nine Open Arms but is reluctant to reveal it. When she finally tells the story of Charley Bottletop and Nienveve, the Traveler girl who captured his heart, a tale of pain and love and prejudice and pride, it seems like it was fated that Fing's family come to Nine Open Arms, to release the house from the past, and to plant themselves firmly in ground where they can grow. In a story told with humor and great affection, Fing discovers that Nine Open Arms, like her family, is marked by displacement and determination, loss and, above all, love and hope. (Ages 10-13)

**Martin, Ann. M.** *Rain Reign*. Feiwel & Friends, 2014. 226 pages (978-0-312-64300-3, \$16.99)

"This is how you tell a story: First you introduce the main character. I'm writing this story about me, so I am the main character." Rose loves homonyms, prime numbers, and order. It's important to her that everyone follow the rules. She lives with her dad, Wesley, whose name is not a homonym, and her dog, Rain, whose name is. When Rain disappears during a hurricane, Rose channels her worry into a methodical search with the help of her Uncle Weldon. But in finding Rain she learns that her beloved dog, which her dad brought home for her almost a year before, belongs to someone else. There is so much that is wonderful in this novel, starting with the narrative voice. Rose has Asperger's and Ann M. Martin firmly and beautifully grounds this story in Rose's point of view. The ways she engages with people is not always easy for others, including her dad, but Rose is always consistent and there is a clear logic to how she behaves. Her dad, meanwhile, is unstable, sometimes drinking too much, sometimes leaving Rose alone for much too long, sometimes losing control of his anger. Overwhelmed by his own past and the current reality, he falls far short of his intent to do well by Rose. Luckily, Weldon not only loves his niece but truly enjoys her, and as the story develops, Rose begins to make connections with a classmate at school, cultivating a friendship for the first time. A novel rich in every way — language, characterization, character development, plotting — is full of tension and small moments of humor, and packs a powerful emotional punch. (Ages 8-12)

**Nagai, Mariko. *Dust of Eden*. Albert Whitman, 2014. 121 pages (978-0-8075-1739-0, \$16.99)**

“We held our breath for three / years ... We lived behind a barbed wire / fence under a stark blue sky that could break / your heart (as it did break my grandfather’s).” Mina Tagawa and her family are among the thousands of Japanese and Japanese Americans on the west coast of the United States held prisoner by the U.S. government during World War II. Mina’s father is arrested shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, but within a matter of months all west-coast Japanese are targeted. Moving poems in Mina’s voice mine small details of huge events to describe the anguish, the disbelief, the anger, and sadness within and beyond her family. There is also great tension when her father is reunited with them and disagrees fiercely with her older brother, Nick, about whether he should join the U.S. army. Her grandfather, who grows roses in the camp, where it seems roses should not be able to grow, tells her, “You are Masako, / but you are also Mina. / I can’t offer / you an answer, / but your job is / to learn to live / with these two / broken pieces / and to make them one.” (Ages 10–13)

**Nye, Naomi Shihab. *The Turtle of Oman*. Illustrated by Betsy Peterschmidt. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2014. 299 pages (978-0-06-201972-1, \$16.99)**

Aref is about to move from Muscat in Oman to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where his parents will attend graduate school. Aref is unhappy about going, and worried about everything he’s leaving behind: his friends; his cat, Mish-Mish; his house; and especially his grandfather, Sidi. He’s also worried about making new friends in a new place so far from everything he knows and loves. Although his mother is busy packing she takes time to reassure him while his dad, who’s already left, sends encouraging word about the apartment he’s found. But it’s the time Aref spends with Sidi during his final week before leaving that is at the heart of this story. It’s a week of small moments and special outings — camping in the desert, sleeping out on the roof, going on a boat ride, hoping to see the turtles on the beach. Aref is making new memories, weaving the bond he has to Sidi and to Muscat ever tighter, even as Sidi is clearly also helping Aref get ready to say good-bye. Lyrical, observant, tender, funny, Naomi Shihab Nye conveys the wonder of childhood, of love, and of the world in which we live. (Ages 7–10)

**Parenteau, Shirley. *Ship of Dolls*. Candlewick Press, 2014. 258 pages (978-0-7636-7003-0, \$16.99)**

In 1926 Portland, Oregon, eleven-year-old Lexie has been living with her grandparents since her free-spirited mother, a singer, sent her there after getting a new boyfriend. Lexie misses her mom, especially as her grandparents aren’t nearly as warm and demonstrative, not to mention fun. Lexie’s class has raised money to send a doll to Japan as part of a Friendship Doll Exchange. If she writes the winning letter in a contest, she’ll be able to accompany the doll to San Francisco, where her mom is currently living and where the ship taking the dolls to Japan will set sail. But Lexie’s nemesis, Louise, is just as determined to go, and willing to do anything to win. An emotionally satisfying work

of historical fiction has predictable elements but also wonderful nuances to many of the characters. This is especially true of Lexie and her grandparents, who, she finally understands, love her with constancy, something her mother, despite genuinely loving her, is unable or unwilling to provide. An author's note provides more information on the U.S.-Japanese Friendship Doll Exchange. (Ages 7–10)

**Perkins, Lynne Rae. *Nuts to You. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2014. 259 pages (978-0-06-009275-7, \$16.99)***

When gray squirrel Jed is snatched by a hawk, he manages to slip from its clutches but ends up far from home (at least in squirrel terms). Jed's friends TsTs and Chai go looking for him, following the buzzpaths (electric lines) toward where TsTs saw Jed fall. Jed, meanwhile, has landed among a group of red squirrels. He finds it hard at first to understand their accents but kindness needs no translation. The three friends are reunited just before humans with tree chewers (chainsaws) come through clearing away trees from the wires. Not that the squirrels understand this. They only see destruction and realize their own families and friends are in jeopardy. Tchotchke, a singular red squirrel, joins the race back to the gray squirrel community. To convince the gray squirrels to flee before the tree chewers arrive, the friends devise a grand game called "Move." Squirrels, it turns out, are very competitive. ("How are we choosing teams? ... Counting off, rhyming, or tails in?") Lynne Rae Perkins's adventure story is both comic and heroic, with a wonderful squirrel's-eye view of aspects of our own world, and imaginative insight into everyday squirrel behavior that is funny and logical both. Clever language and occasional footnotes and black-and-white drawings add to the delight. (Ages 6–9)

**Polonsky, Ami. *Gracefully Grayson. Disney Hyperion, 2014. 243 pages (978-142318527-7, \$16.99)***

Sixth grader Grayson hides his desire to wear dresses and skirts and other girls' clothes from everyone but is finding it harder and harder. Grayson has no friends until new student Amelia arrives at their progressive private school. But their wonderful weekend forays to Chicago area thrift stores come to an end after Grayson tries on a skirt; Amelia isn't amused. Then Grayson auditions for *The Myth of Persephone* at the urging of the wonderful Humanities teacher. Intending to read for the role of Zeus, at the last minute he decides to try out for Persephone. When Grayson gets the part, his aunt is furious, believing the teacher crossed a line (he did call their family first). Grayson's parents died in a car accident when he was four, but the discovery of letters written by his mom are a revelation: As a preschooler, Grayson insisted he was a girl, and Grayson's parents were trying their best to be supportive of Grayson's expression of identity. Grayson begins wearing a pink heart shirt underneath a sweatshirt, and hanging out at play practice with the girls, who love to braid Grayson's hair, all the while coming closer to speaking the truth once more: I am a girl. Threats from two older boys, and the ongoing anger of Grayson's aunt — phobia cloaked in the guise of concern for Grayson — are challenges, but Grayson's uncle is trying to do the right thing, while the teacher and the kids in the play

take Grayson's identity in stride in a sensitive, emotionally compelling debut novel from Amy Polonsky. (Ages 10–13)

**Rosengren, Gayle. *What the Moon Said*. Putnam, 2014. 217 pages (978-0-399-16352-4, \$16.99)**

After Esther's father loses his job in Chicago during the Depression, the family manages to buy a small farm in Wisconsin. Her immigrant parents include her warm German father and her more emotionally distant, Russian-born mother. In fact, Esther's mother is so distant that Esther sometimes wonders if her mother loves her, especially because she seems much more affectionate with Esther's siblings. As the family adjusts to rural life, Esther makes a good friend in Bethany, and loves her new teacher at the small school. But superstitious Ma soon forbids Esther from spending time with Bethany because of her new friend's mole, which Esther's mother believes is a devil's mark. Soon Esther can't help but blame a lot of the family hardship on her mother, especially as the Depression continues to bear down and makes their future on the farm she's come to love uncertain. There's an old-fashioned sensibility to this story that goes beyond its setting and time period. The storytelling itself, with several dramatic plot elements leading to revelations, has the feel of a piece from an earlier time. But if there is a sense of predictability, it comes with comfort and great satisfaction, even as Esther's story ends happily but not in the perfect way she might have wished. (Ages 7–10)

**St. Antoine, Sara. *Three Bird Summer*. Candlewick Press, 2014. 246 pages (978-0-7636-6564-7, \$16.99)**

Twelve-year-old Adam is spending the first summer since his parents' divorce at his grandma's cabin in northern Minnesota. That means it's just him, his mom, and Grandma, not his dad and the many cousins who used to join them. Adam's grandma is having memory issues, causing a great deal of tension between her and Adam's mom, who is worried about her mother living alone. Adam doesn't mind the quieter vacation — he often felt overwhelmed by his cousins in the past — and so is at first a bit resentful of Alice, the new girl at the cabin nearby. But she turns out to love the outdoors and science and doesn't seem obsessed with cute clothes and popularity, a pleasant surprise for Adam, who isn't high on the social food chain. In this quiet, understated novel, Adam and Alice develop a friendship with a hint of romance while trying to unravel the mystery of the notes Adam's grandma keeps leaving around the cabin. They seem to be intended for someone in her past, but not his grandfather, who died before Adam was born. A treasure hunt following decades-old clues marks both change and continuity in a novel that beautifully captures the feel of a stretched-out summer in the woods, and a boy's growing confidence in being himself. (Ages 9–12)

**Watson, Jude. *Loot: How To Steal a Fortune*. Scholastic Press, 2014. 266 pages (978-0-545-46802-2, \$16.99)**

Twelve-year-old March is the son of international jewel thief Alfie McQuin. When Alfie falls from a rooftop during a heist, he lives long enough to give March a cryptic message and the moonstone he was stealing. March knows

how to make a quick getaway and he knows how to run a good con. But nothing prepares him for the discovery that he has a twin sister, Jules, until he encounters her while following his father's mysterious clues. March and Jules try to figure out whether they can trust each other while joining forces with two other kids, Darius and Izzy. The foursome decides to complete the job Alfie was working on: Recover all seven moonstones that were part of a heist he was involved in years before — the heist that led to their family unraveling. Alfie believed the stones were cursed with a deadly prophecy that he was trying to outsmart to save his children — a prophecy that suggests March and Jules's lives are in danger as their thirteenth birthday approaches. Meanwhile the stones' original owner, Carlotta Grimstone, offers the kids \$7 million for the gems' return. The bad guys are drawn with broad strokes and the four kids are skilled beyond belief in Jude Watson's novel, but it's all in good fun. The quick-paced, highly entertaining heist story also offers surprising depth in the midst of all the action as it movingly reflects on grief, loss, and what makes a family. These small, meaningful moments are wonderfully woven into the larger adventure penned by Watson, a pen name of author Judy Blundell. (Ages 9–12)

**Woods, Brenda. *The Blossoming Universe of Violet Diamond*. Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin, 2014. 222 pages (978-0-399-25714-8, \$16.99)**

Biracial Violet is one of the few African Americans in her suburban Washington community, where she lives with her Mom and older sister, Daisy (who has a different father), both of them white. Violet's dad was killed in a car accident before she was born, and while Violet appreciates her warm and loving family she also knows she looks to some people like she doesn't belong. Violet's paternal grandmother has not been part of her life, and Violet overhears a conversation that reveals why: not only was her grandmother furious that Violet's Dad married a white woman, but Violet's mom was driving in the car accident that killed him. Still, Violet convinces her Mom to take her to meet her grandmother. While the initial encounter does not go well, Bibi (Swahili for grandmother) follows up, inviting Violet to visit her in Los Angeles. There, Violet is welcomed into a large extended family that seems to have been waiting to meet her, while she and Bibi become close, and she learns about her father as a boy. It would be perfect if she weren't also homesick. Although the crisis that brings everyone together feels inevitable, the emotions run true throughout a novel in which Violet, while mature beyond her years in some ways, is refreshingly childlike in others. (Ages 9–13)

**Yelchin, Eugene. *Arcady's Goal*. Henry Holt, 2014. 234 pages (978-0-8050-9844-0, \$15.99)**

Young Arcady is living in an orphanage in the Soviet Union in 1950, and soccer is his answer for everything. When Ivan Ivanyvich adopts him, Arcady assumes the man must be a soccer coach. In truth, Ivan is simply a sad, lonely widower trying to fulfill a promise by adopting a child. He is patient, loving, and occasionally annoyed, but Arcady is so convinced he's a coach that Ivan finally plays along. He forms a team, he tries to coach Arcady and the other boys, and he fails. Then comes word that the Red Army soccer team is holding tryouts, and Arcady is determined to attend. Eugene Yelchin's novel is about a

boy and a man who are learning to become a family. The disconnect between Ivan's understanding of this and Arcady's absolute blindness to it is both funny and tender. Arcady first calls the Ivan "Coach," and, when he proves to be no coach, Ivan Ivanyich. When Arcady, who is also learning that it's safe to feel, and that love can be unconditional, finally calls him "Dad" it feels like something far sweeter than victory. Occasional black-and-white illustrations by the author offer additional moments of poignancy in a story set against the backdrop of Stalinism, with the fear under which so many lived occasionally bubbling up to the surface. (Ages 8–10)

## Fiction for Young Adults

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**Castellucci, Cecil. *Tin Star*. Roaring Brook Press, 2014. 233 pages (978–1–59643–775–3, \$16.99)**

Teenager Tula Bane, beaten and left for dead aboard a space station in a remote part of the galaxy, is now living in the station underguts, bartering to survive. Heckle and Tournour, members of two different insect-like species, have both been kind to Tula, but she's still incredibly lonely as the only human on board. Then the Imperium takes control of the station and Tula hears rumors that it's putting political pressure on isolationist Earth to join it. It's an effort apparently orchestrated by Brother Blue, the man who tried to kill her. The arrival of three more human teens on the station who may or may not be loyal to the Imperium gives Tula the opportunity she's been looking for to plan revenge against Brother Blue, if she can get them to reveal information she needs. At the same time, they ease her loneliness as she delights in human contact and conversation, and even begins to fall in love. Cecil Castellucci's satisfying work of science fiction has a complex political backstory, but it's the wonderful characterizations and relationships that shine. Castellucci is adept at imagining how a wide variety of species whose cultural norms and habits differ relate to one another on a personal level, including how lack of cultural knowledge leads to misunderstanding. Tula's survival has been dependent upon her ability to understand and communicate in a variety of ways. But as successful as she's been, she's failed to realize the most important thing: She has never been as alone as she thought. A novel that feels complete on its own leaves the door wide open for a sequel. (Age 12 and older)

**Combs, Sarah. *Breakfast Served Anytime*. Candlewick Press, 2014. 261 pages (978–0–7636–6791–7, \$16.99)**

Attending a summer academic program for talented and gifted Kentucky high school students, part of the state's effort to retain its best and brightest, Gloria isn't sure she's interested in the Kentucky college scholarship that all successful attendees will earn. She and her best friend have always planned to move to New York City after high school. But the program opens her eyes to greater complexities and possibilities that exist close to home, including within her. Gloria is quick to judge others, whether it's her wealthy roommate, Jessica,

or Mason, the annoying, “look at me” boy in her literature class. She soon discovers that for all her frothy trappings, Jessica is genuine in her affection and loyalty, and Mason’s outrageous behavior is a way to deflect attention from things he’d rather not talk about. Every new friend she makes, from dazzling, smart beauty queen Sonya (whose boyfriend in their basketball-obsessed state is a phenom who understands the system but will use it as his ticket out of poverty); to brilliant, quiet, quirky Calvin; to artsy, edgy Chloe, is a small revelation both for who they are and what they teach her. Sarah Combs’s debut novel stands out in showing how teens transitioning to adulthood start to better understand their shortcomings and their strengths. Gloria is funny and genuine and self-reflective. She and the other characters are smart in believable ways in a novel that touches on a range of issues — coal mining and mountaintop removal, economic privilege, lack of privilege, racism, the value of literature in our lives — in ways that are both nuanced and believable. (Age 13 and older)

**de Fombelle, Timothée.** *Vango: Between Earth and Sky*. Translated from the French by Sarah Ardizzone. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2014. 421 pages (978-0-7636-7196-9, \$17.99)

An intricate and intriguing story — part adventure, part mystery, part political intrigue — takes place across the map of Europe between the two world wars and revolves around a young man named Vango Romano. The story alternates between Vango on the run — he’s wanted by Rome police for the death of Father Jean, his beloved mentor — and other characters, and moves between the present and the past. Vango grew up on a small Italian island after he and his nurse washed ashore when Vango was three. His nurse always claimed to have no memory of where they came from. As Vango grew, the monks of Arkadah, a secret island monastery, became his second home. Ethel is a young Scottish woman who met Vango years before, when she was twelve and he was fourteen, on a Zeppelin trip around the world. A young Russian girl wonders about the escaped Bird her father sometimes speaks of, who has eluded capture for years. Her father, it turns out, is Joseph Stalin. And then there is the small, multinational group of World War I veterans who have vowed to do anything necessary to prevent another war. Everything and everyone ultimately revolves around Vango, who realizes he needs to know who he was before he ever landed on that island in order to make sense of what is happening now. Beautifully translated from the French, this breathless work offers clues to Vango’s origins, but leaves many answers for the coming sequel. (Age 13 and older)

**Dellaira, Ava.** *Love Letters to the Dead*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2014. 327 pages (978-0-374-34667-6, \$17.99)

When an English assignment at her new school requires Laurel to write a letter to a dead person, it’s a prompt that speaks deeply to her. She chooses Kurt Cobain, because her older sister, May, was a fan. Then she continues to write to a series of dead people, mostly celebrities. She reflects on their lives and deaths as a means to consider her own life, and May’s. The way May died was traumatic, and left Laurel guilt-ridden. But as Laurel delves deeper into the past she gradually begins to come to term with May’s life as well as her death, and what happened to Laurel herself as a result of choices May made. The letters



also reveal Laurel's developing friendships with Hannah and Natalie, and her relationship with Sky, all teens dealing with difficult things in their lives. There's no shortage of pain in Ava Dellaira's debut novel, but there's also no shortage of hope, in the connection and support the teens find in one another, and in the catharsis that comes with confronting hard truths. The writing is also beautiful, and Laurel's emerging interest in poetry reflects the power of words that is as much a theme of this story as all the hardship. (Age 14 and older)

**Ellis, Deborah. *Moon at Nine*. Pajama Press, 2014. 223 pages (978-1-927485-57-6, \$19.95)**

In the late 1980s, Farrin is an Iranian teenage girl whose privileged family is still hoping the Shah's son in exile will overthrow the Ayatollah Khomeini. But Farrin cares nothing about politics. She hates her mother's monthly teas with other wealthy women who secretly support the old regime. In fact, there's little Farrin likes about her spoiled, strident mother. She's much closer to her hard-working father. Then Farrin falls in love with her friend Sadira. The two girls know they can't be open with their affection, but a fellow student catches them in a kiss, and their families ban them from seeing each other. Making plans to secretly run away, they are instead arrested as deviants by government soldiers during a raid. Farrin is sentenced to death, with Sadira's fate unknown to her. Released at the last minute, Farrin discovers her father has promised her to her family's servant as his wife in exchange for him getting her out of the country. To her it's a betrayal, one made worse by the realization that she was probably lied to about Sadira's fate. Facing life as a different kind of prisoner, Farrin makes a second escape to an unknown future, but one of her own making. This gripping story is set against the backdrop of the fear and oppression in Iran under the Ayatollah. An author's note gives more context, explaining that the story is based on the life of an Iranian woman now living in the west, whom Ellis met. (Age 14 and older)

**Engle, Margarita. *Silver People: Voices from the Panama Canal*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 260 pages (978-0-544-10941-4, \$17.99)**

Margarita Engle follows four individuals involved in the building of the Panama Canal in the early twentieth century. Mateo is a fourteen-year-old Cubano whose dangerous work digging the canal helps him escape a cruel father. Henry is a Black Jamaican wanting to earn money for his family. His job is blasting through rock. Augusto is a Puerto Rican mapmaker who can't ignore issues of race and class that mean he is treated better than laborers like Mateo and Henry, but worse than the white engineers who oversee the project. Anita is a local Panamanian girl, adopted daughter of the village healer, who knows all the flora and fauna in jeopardy because of the canal. These "silver people" (dark-skinned workers paid in silver rather than gold) are living and laboring under Colonialism, and their voices illuminate the impact of its arrogance. Engle also, strikingly, gives voice to elements of nature — trees, birds, insects, and the ever-present screaming monkeys — whose world is being brutally destroyed as work on the canal progresses, offering another critical perspective on "progress" in a stirring work in verse that invites thought and discussion. (Age 12 and older)

**Erlings, Fridrik. *Boy on the Edge*. U.S. edition: Candlewick Press, 2014. 219 pages (978-0-7636-6680-4, \$16.99)**

Teenage Henry was bullied and abused for his clubfoot and for his perceived slowness. He bottled much of his rising anger until the day he exploded, hurting his mother and ending up in foster care at The Home of Lesser Brethren. The Home is run by a compassionate woman named Emily and her stern husband, Reverend Oswald. Henry doesn't like Reverend Oswald's religious teachings, or his method of correcting the boys' bad behavior by making them rebuild the Cairn of Christ in the yard overnight or locking them in the Boiler Room to pray "for as long as it takes" to punish the devil out of them. Yet Henry is happier than he's ever been, because of Emily's kindness, and because he loves caring for the farm animals. When young Ollie arrives, Henry grows jealous of Emily's attachment to the little boy, and is annoyed and embarrassed by Ollie's obsession with poetry, language, and books. It is adult Ollie who is telling this story about Henry, who became, along with Emily, the heart and the hope of his childhood. A prologue reveals that Henry has died, and adult Ollie is regretting all the times he never went back home, where Henry never stopped waiting for him. At times tense, Fredrick Erlings's novel reveals these and other characters, including other teens, to be a marvel of complexities as more and more about them is revealed through their actions and interactions. Henry himself, who we learn was never able to live independently, is perhaps the most insightful and observant of them all. (Age 14 and older)

**Farizan, Sara. *Tell Me Again How a Crush Should Feel*. Algonquin, 2014. 296 pages (978-1-61620-284-2, \$16.95)**

Leila is an Iranian American high school student at an upscale private school who's afraid to come out. Then she gets a crush on new student Saskia. Glamorous and beautiful and unafraid of expressing her feelings, Saskia leaves Leila feeling floaty even before they finally kiss. Leila's over the moon and everyone at school knows it. She comes crashing down, hard, after Saskia blithely confirms that she slept with Leila's friend Greg after kissing Leila, but there's still a disconnect between what Leila's head knows and what her heart and body feel. One of the intriguing aspects of Sara Farizan's novel is that Saskia's emotional game-playing is evident to readers long before it is to Leila. As things with Saskia intensify and then fall apart, and Saskia becomes not just manipulative but emotionally abusive, Leila finds herself confiding in her old friend Lisa, from whom she's grown apart in recent years. Lisa, in turn, eventually confides in Leila: She likes her, and has for years. As this far more healthy relationship begins to develop, Leila finally comes out at home, where she finds an unexpected ally in — and a new perspective on — her perfect older sister while her parents, although clearly struggling with the news, make clear they love her. Leila's relationship with Lisa is striking in contrast to what she had with Saskia for the respect and tenderness between them in a novel that deftly and deeply explores many kinds of relationships and has a finely developed cast of secondary characters. (Age 13 and older)

**Green, Sally. *Half Bad*. (The Half Bad Trilogy, book 1) Viking, 2014. 394 pages (978-0-670-01678-5, \$18.99)**

Nathan's mother was a white witch. His father Markus is the most notorious black witch alive. Nathan has always believed he was conceived when his father murdered his mother's husband and attacked her. Much of Nathan's childhood is told through flashback in this first book of a new trilogy that begins with Nathan captive in a cage, prisoner of the White Witch Council. At the center of Sally Green's riveting, emotionally complex tale is a boy who is so very kind. The contrast between Nathan's goodness and the abuse of power among the ruling white witches underscores the irony of Nathan's anguish as he worries that he can't avoid being evil because of Markus, and of a society that assumes white witches are good and black witches are bad. In truth, Green deftly shows how most characters are negotiating the space between the two. When Nathan escapes, the tension doesn't abate as he is on the run and must decide whom to trust. Not his hateful half-sister Jessica he knows, but what about his childhood friend Annelise, daughter of a Council member, with whom he is falling in love? Or Celia, his captor when he was caged? Then there is the danger for people he cares about, especially tender Arran, his half-brother and fiercest protector in childhood. Wonderfully drawn secondary characters make for a richly realized story. (Age 13 and older)

**Howe, Katherine. *Conversion*. Putnam, 2014. 402 pages (978-0-399-16777-5, \$18.99)**

In Danvers, Massachusetts, high school senior Colleen attends a private Catholic girls' school where she and many of her friends are stressed out waiting to hear from colleges. Then a number of her classmates begin falling ill with an array of seemingly unrelated symptoms. One loses her hair. Another is paralyzed. Her friend Anjali begins coughing up metal. Some parents are up in arms. The media goes into a frenzy. A famous environmental activist shows up determined to prove toxic waste beneath the school's playing field is at fault. Meanwhile, Colleen — who remains symptom-free and whose parents are archly skeptical and grounded — has been given a 62.5 on a history quiz. Her only hope of maintaining her GPA and staying in the running for valedictorian is an extra credit assignment on *The Crucible*. The primary narrative of this compelling novel stays focused on the contemporary story set in 2012. But periodic interceding chapters, set in Salem Village (situated where Danvers is today) in 1706, feature Ann Putnam, one of the accusers during the Salem Witch Trials, telling her minister the story of deception and hysteria in which she got caught up more than a decade earlier. Howe smartly establishes Colleen as a likable and level-headed main character, which makes it all the more shocking when Colleen herself begins having intense headaches and blackouts. An intriguing novel is followed by an informative author's note discussing the mysterious illnesses among girls in LeRoy, New York, in 2012 — events that inspired this novel — and about conversion disorder, a type of stress response in which the physical symptoms are very real. (Age 14 and older)

**Howell, Simmone. *Girl Defective*. U.S. edition: Atheneum, 2014. 301 pages (978-1-4424-9760-3, \$17.99)**

Teenage Sky lives with her dad and younger brother, Gully, near the used record store that is her dad's passion but barely keeps the family afloat financially. Sky's dad, while loving, is in a constant state of stress he relieves by drinking. Sky is often responsible for Gully, who is smart but socially shunned for his challenging, sometimes unusual behavior. Gully thinks of himself as a detective and is determined to find the white jeep seen the night several businesses — including the record store — were the victims of vandalism. Meanwhile, Sky is obsessed with teenager Mia Casey, who drowned in the river a year ago. It wasn't necessarily a suspicious death, but Sky can't stop wondering about what happened to Mia, especially after Mia's older brother, Luke, starts working at the record store. Mia, she begins to realize, moved in the same crowds as her older friend Nancy, who lives life even more on the edge than Sky realizes. Nancy — Sky's only friend — has helped Sky feel more mature and better about herself, but the surprise of Sky's feelings for Luke, reciprocated, and her new, unexpected connection with a girl from school help lessen the pain of Nancy's increasing unreliability. As the mysteries intertwine and unravel, Simmone Howell shows the ways life can be funny and warm and tense and tragic. Her superbly realized characters, including Sky's terrific family — so flawed and yet loving and trying — live in a neighborhood with rough edges and a mix of hearts and intentions. Howell's descriptions are at times astonishing for their freshness. (Age 14 and older)

**Johnson, Alaya Dawn. *Love Is the Drug*. Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic, 2014 335 pages (978-0-545-41781-5, \$17.99)**

Teenager Emily Bird feels pressure to be perfect — a credit to her family and all African Americans. But inside, she's far more Bird than Emily, longing to fly away from rigid expectations that have nothing to do with her desires. Bird meets private government security contractor Roosevelt David at a party in Washington, D.C. — her boyfriend Paul is angling for an internship with the man's company. She wakes up in the hospital eight days later. Bird has hazy memories of leaving the party. The most vivid one is of Coffee, a known drug dealer and son of a Brazilian diplomat, chasing the car as Paul drove her away. Coffee, whom she's always found intriguing. Did he drug her? She doesn't believe it despite what Roosevelt and Paul suggest. Bird senses something far more sinister in her lost memories, and begins to realize Roosevelt is afraid of something she might know but doesn't remember, and that it's related to her scientist parents' work and the flu pandemic spreading across the globe and nation. As the death toll begins to mount in D.C., and as Bird tries to piece together what's going on, she feels the menace of Roosevelt everywhere she turns. Staying with her Uncle Nicky — underachiever in her mother's eyes, free man in Bird's — because her parents can't return to the city, and not sure whom to trust, she puts her faith in new friend Marella, and in Coffee, with whom she is falling in love. Alaya Dawn Johnson's compelling thriller is marked by thickly woven storytelling that features complex plotting, rich language, and a cast of multidimensional characters. (Age 14 and older)

**Johnston, E. K. *The Story of Owen: The Dragon Slayer of Trondeim.* Carolrhoda Lab, 2014. 305 pages (978-1-4677-1066-4, \$17.95)**

In this alternate to the world as we know it, most things are the same with one huge exception: carbon-craving, mammal-eating dragons have always existed, along with a long, proud tradition of dragon slaying. Every town once had its own dragon slayer, but the Industrial Revolution saw dragon slayers lured away from small towns to defend big cities like Detroit (it didn't work — Detroit and most of Michigan were laid to waste). Recently retired, world-famous dragon slayer Lottie Thorskard wants to renew the tradition of community-based dragon slaying, so she's moved to a small town in southern Ontario to train her nephew, Owen, and to recruit Owen's classmate, Siobhan McQuaid, as Owen's bard — another tradition that's languished. Observant, musically talented Siobhan is the narrator of this lively, richly imagined story chronicling Owen and Siobhan's emergence into their new roles, which coincides with a new rash of dragon attacks that leads them to suspect previously undiscovered hatching grounds may be closer than anyone realized. Fast-paced (locating the hatching grounds turns into a race against time), funny (driver's ed. includes dragon evasion, since the beasts are attracted to most cars), and thoughtful (What is lost when traditions are abandoned in the name of "progress"? What is gained when traditions are challenged?), E. K. Johnston's sure hand succeeds in all dimensions of world-building, from the cleverly reimagined events in world history to the complexity and appeal of her characters. (Age 12 and older)

**King, A. S. *Glory O'Brien's History of the Future.* Little, Brown, 2014. 306 pages (978-0-316-22272-3, \$18.00)**

Glory O'Brien is directionless as high school graduation approaches. She's most comfortable looking at the world through a camera lens, and she views her own life with a certain dispassion, the way she views the people she photographs. But everything changes after she and her best friend, Ellie, drink the remains of a petrified bat. Glory can now see the history and the future of everyone she looks at. And the future Glory sees is unsettling: visions of a second U.S. Civil War that erupts around a charismatic, misogynistic leader who strips women of their civil rights. Glory begins penning her own "history of the future," documenting what she understands will happen even as she remains firmly grounded in the present. This includes her on-again/off-again tolerance for commune-dwelling, home-schooled Ellie's self-centered neediness, and her attempts to disrupt the silence that has always existed between her and her loving but still-grieving dad around her mom's suicide when Glory was four. Glory delves into the past, too, finally accessing her mother's darkroom, where photographs and journals reveal her mother's own struggle with her place and perceptions of women in the world. A. S. King's singular work is fearless, smart, and sophisticated, a multi-layered yet highly accessible novel. King boldly explores cultural and societal misogyny, embracing feminism while also affirming the importance of creativity, connection, and the way we sometimes need to be shaken up to see our lives and all that is possible more clearly. (Age 14 and older)

**LaFevers, Robin. *Mortal Heart. (His Fair Assassin, Book III)* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 441 pages (978-0-547-62840-0, \$17.99)**

The final volume of the “His Fair Assassin” trilogy continues to interweave the lives of three handmaidens of death amidst the political intrigue and changing religious traditions of ancient Brittany. Annith is the most accomplished novitiate at the convent of St. Mortain, who serve Death. When the Abbess informs Annith she’s to become the next Seer for the Daughters of Mortain, a position that requires isolation in the convent rather than missions abroad, Annith is devastated. Angry that she will never be able to use her assassin skills to serve Mortain like Ismae and Sibella, and frustrated with the Abbess’s secrecy and duplicity, Annith decides to follow the Abbess to the court of Brittany to confront her. Waylaid by the Hellequin, the riders who hunt down lost souls as a way to earn passage to the afterlife, Annith feels a strong connection to their leader, Balthazaar. But she isn’t sure whether the Hellequin are hunting her for leaving the convent or actually protecting her from the Abbess and her corruption. Escaping, she reaches the court, where the duchess faces the political machinations of France in a final showdown to retain an independent Brittany. With a satisfying but not cliché conclusion that winds up the trilogy, Annith’s story offers an examination of religious, secular, and cultural identities and explores the blurred line between mortal, god, and myth. Delivering a compelling blend of religion, history, fantasy, political intrigue, and action-adventure, author Robin LaFevers keeps various threads and themes running consistently through the three novels. (Age 14 and older)

**LaMarche, Una. *Like No Other. Razorbill / Penguin, 2014. 347 pages (978-1-59514-674-8, \$17.99)***

It’s a violation of Devorah’s religion for her to be alone with a boy, let alone one who isn’t Hasidic. So when she finds herself trapped in an elevator during a hurricane with Jaxon, a West Indian American boy, she’s mortified, and then she isn’t as Jaxon tries to put her at ease. Alternating chapters from their two points of view describe the events of their meeting and its aftermath as they begin a friendship Devorah must keep secret, especially as their feelings deepen. But Jaxon gets more and more frustrated about how hard it is just to arrange to talk on the phone, never mind see each other. He can’t grasp how serious the situation is for Devorah; he only knows he’s falling in love with her, and does several lovely but naïve things that put them both in jeopardy. One of the strengths of Una LaMarche’s novel is how the two perspectives underscore the distance between Devorah and Jaxon even as they find so much comfort and common ground when they are together. It’s a novel richly drawn with compelling details of faith and family, of religious zealotry, of racism, and of the sweetness of falling in love. Devorah’s relationship with Jaxon isn’t the only thing that has her questioning what she wants for the future as she watches her older sister follow the expected path. She finds hope in the story of a girl who left the Hasidic community without her family abandoning her, but Devorah is fearful she won’t be as lucky if that’s the choice she makes. (Age 14 and older)

**Link, Kelly, and Gavin J. Grant, editors. *Monstrous Affections: An Anthology of Beastly Tales*. Candlewick Press, 2014. 467 pages (978-0-7636-6473-2, \$22.99)**

There is a supernatural element to all fifteen of the short stories in this collection that explores the idea of what's monstrous — various beasts and ghosts and other-worldly powers abound — but at their most fascinating the works traverse the space between the physical manifestations of monstrosity and what's monstrous in terms of thinking and behaving and believing — elements of our being human. Even the weight of grieving can be monstrous. From the reinvention of traditional monsters to fresh, creative world-building, the collection showcases finely crafted storytelling in a range of moods and styles, including M. T. Anderson's "Quick Hill," somber, tense, and tender; and Alice Sola Kim's sharply funny and poignant "Mothers Lock Up Your Daughters Because They Are Terrifying." The contributors come from literary worlds of both young adult literature and fantasy and science fiction. (Age 13 and older)

**Magoon, Kekla. *How It Went Down*. Henry Holt, 2014. 326 pages (978-0-8050-9869-3, \$17.99)**

The murder of African American teenager Tariq Johnson and its aftermath is experienced through the voices of witnesses, family members, and his best friend, Tyrell. Two facts are clear: A white man got out of his car and shot Tariq. The police have let that man go free. The rest is conflicting perceptions: Had Tariq just robbed a neighborhood store? (The store owner says no, but his voice is lost in the rush to assume the worst.) Did Tariq have a gun or a Snickers bar in his hand? (Even the two teens from the neighborhood standing close to him disagree.) Meanwhile, as the story hits the news, much of the attention from the media focuses not on the murder but on questions about whether Tariq was a member of the Kings, a neighborhood gang. Tariq and his best friends from childhood all swore they'd never join. Two already have; Junior is even in prison. Tyrell thought Tariq and he were staying strong; now he's not so sure. But he is sure that Tariq's death will make it much harder for him to not be drawn or forced into that life. Meanwhile Jennica, who did CPR on Tariq, and whose boyfriend Noodle is in the gang, is desperate to escape her current life. Kekla Magoon's fearless, tragic, poignant novel examines racism, poverty, violence, and how mightily all of these can trap youth by limiting their options — real and perceived. Not every question is answered outright, but Magoon provides evidence for readers to decide for themselves while adding her voice to the urgent call to acknowledge and address racism and violence. (Age 14 and older)

**Nelson, Marilyn. *How I Discovered Poetry*. Illustrated by Hadley Hooper. Dial, 2014. 103 pages (978-0-8037-3304-6, \$17.99)**

"Mama's rented a colonial house / a block from the ocean, in a village / where we're the First Negroes of everything." Poet Marilyn Nelson combines her own memories with "research and imagination" in this collection of unrhymed sonnets based on her experiences growing up in the 1950s. The daughter of a military-officer father and schoolteacher mother, Nelson moved often: Texas, Kansas, New Jersey, Maine, England, California, Oklahoma. There was the tension of the Cold War — bomb drills and Sputnik. There was Amos 'n'

Andy and The Lone Ranger and his sidekick, Tonto, images unquestioned by a young child. And there was the burgeoning mid-twentieth-century Civil Rights Movement, with talk of segregation and integration swirling around her, and to which she attached greater and greater meaning as she matured. Almost all of her peers were white; sometimes that mattered, sometimes it didn't, but having a Black friend was like coming home for a girl who understood home as comfort more than place. Her poems paint a vivid picture of family and the times, and capture a girl's growing awareness of identity — being Black, being female — and the power of words. The stirring, stinging title poem is a masterful account of the ways that power can transport (“It was like soul-kissing, the way the words / filled my mouth ... / Mrs. Purdy and I wandered lonely as clouds borne / by a breeze off Mount Parnassus ...”) and crush (“... I stood and opened my mouth to banjo-playing / darkies, pickaninnies, disses and dats. When I finished / my classmates stared at the floor”). An author's note provides readers with intriguing glimpses into her approach to telling this story, while occasional spot illustrations and photographs grace the pages. (Age 12 and older)

**Neri, G. *Knockout Games*. Carolrhoda Lab, 2014. 293 pages (978-1-4677-3269-7, \$17.95)**

When Erica moves with her mom to St. Louis after her parents split, she ends up one of the few white students at Truman High School. Her growing interest in filmmaking leads to her first friend, who introduces her to members of the TKO Club. The group of middle schoolers “mentored” by older teen Calvin are encouraged to play the knockout game: choose a random person and try to knock them out with a single punch. Calvin asks Erica to start filming their attacks. When members of the neighborhood rally against the attacks, accusing them of being Black-on-white hate crimes, Calvin calls the protestors racist. Erica isn't sure what to think but does know she's attracted to Calvin and can hardly believe it when he reciprocates. He is sweet and tender and patient with her, and reassuring when she expresses discomfort at him filming them having sex. Then a knockout goes horribly wrong and everything unravels. G. Neri fearlessly traverses uncomfortable territory in a book featuring characters and situations full of complexities and contradictions. It's part of what Erica struggles with: How do you know what's right and true? But at a certain point, she understands, you have to own your behavior, and make up your own mind. Neri hones in on the effects of violence and abuse on an individual (Calvin) and a community in this unsettling, gripping work of fiction inspired in part by real events. (Age 14 and older)

**Perkins, Stephanie, editor. *My True Love Gave to Me: Twelve Holiday Stories*. St. Martin's Griffin, 2014. 321 pages (978-1-250-05930-7, \$18.99)**

Twelve short stories set during the winter holiday season offer up romance in a variety of settings, from a small-town college to a big-city apartment building, a barren little California town to somewhere in Oklahoma four hours from the nearest airport. Whatever the setting, the characters shine, whether it's a famous singer grasping the chance to be someone unknown; a teen intent on escaping what she thinks of as her nothing life in a nothing town; a besotted boy willing to sneak into a house on Christmas Eve dressed as Santa to deliver



a some magic to his boyfriend's little sister; or a young woman drawing on ancient power to escape a cruel and loveless man. Romance is one common thread to follow through these stories, but most celebrate the love of family and friendship, too, and sometimes this is as moving as the meeting of two hearts. (Age 13 and older)

**Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *The Red Pencil*. Illustrated by Shane W. Evans. Little, Brown, 2014. 308 pages (978-0-316-24780-1, \$17.00)**

A novel-in-verse divided into two parts begins on “Our Farm, South Darfur, Africa, March 2003 — September 2004.” Amira is a smart, observant twelve-year-old who loves to express herself through art, often drawing in the sand. She has a younger sister, Leila, and loving parents who disagree about whether Amira should learn to read — her father thinks she should, her mother does not. The rich, warm details of Amira's daily life unfold, and then her village is attacked by the Janjaweed — the government-supported militia. It is terrifying, and it is devastating: Her father and many others are killed. In Part 2, “Kalma, April 2004 — June 2004,” Amira, her mother and her little sister travel with her father's best friend, Old Anwar, and her sister's best friend, the now-orphaned Gamal, to the Kalma refugee camp. Amira cannot speak, mute after all she has been through. But when an aid worker gives her a red pencil she starts to draw. Her healing has begun. Old Anwar begins secretly teaching her to read, and Amira dreams of leaving the camp and going to Nyala, where there is a school for girls, but it will mean leaving the rest of her family behind. In a lengthy author's note Andrea Davis Pinkney tells more about the Darfur conflict, and the research and interviews that informed and inspired this moving story. (Age 12 and older)

**Preus, Margi. *West of the Moon*. Abrams, 2014. 213 pages (978-1-4197-0896-1, \$16.95)**

A vivid, shining, artfully told story is set in nineteenth-century Norway, where thirteen-year-old, orphaned Astri is sold to a goat farmer by her aunt. Astri must cook and clean and care for the animals, all the while dodging the farmer's harsh and eventually groping hand. The night the farmer locks her in the storehouse she discovers a mute girl inside spinning at a wheel. Spinning Girl's identity is a mystery that Astri interprets through the lens of the many stories her mother used to tell her. The folktales have helped make her life bearable as she looks for the opportunity to escape. A breathless, terrifying effort to flee when the farmer is trying to haul her off to the village to marry him is complicated when Astri realizes she cannot leave Spinning Girl behind. Astri is a girl of great strength, wit, and compassion, all of which she draws on as she devises new plans on the run. Heading toward the coast, Astri is challenged to rewrite her understanding of her own past as she discovers new information that reveals the identity of the mysterious Spinning Girl who accompanies her. An extraordinary novel about hope and courage, dreams and the power of story pays tribute to the pain and promise of the immigrant story — what was brought along and what was left behind — as it effortlessly traverses an invisible line between historical fiction and fantasy. (Age 12 and older)

**Quintero, Isabel. *Gabi: A Girl in Pieces*. Cinco Puntos Press, 2014. 284 pages (pbk. 978-1-935955-95-5, \$11.95)**

In a narrative told primarily through diary entries, high school senior Gabi moves between revelations, like her best friend Cindy's pregnancy, her preoccupation with both weight and boys, observations about her Mexican American family and community, and the mundane (just how hot is the food at Pepe's House of Wings?). Gabi's voice is funny, foul-mouthed, and, early on, unfocused: she's just as likely as not to be trivial. This makes the transformation over the course of the school year all the more powerful. Gabi's constantly reminded that girls are labeled "good" or "bad" based on sexual behavior — rumored or real — and that she's too heavy to be considered beautiful. But as she responds to things happening to her and around her, including the revelation that Cindy was raped, she begins to reject pervasive ideas in her family, culture, and society that devalue and demonize girls and women. In the writing she does for a poetry class, Gabi explores her father's addiction and other family issues, as well as body image, with linguistic precision initially lacking in her diary entries. In poems and in her diary, she eventually emerges as a passionate, articulate advocate for herself and others, tackling sexism and sexual violence and the connection between them with keen and sometimes raging honesty. Gabi never loses a funny edge — in fact, the humor becomes sharper as she does — but her voice is also unapologetically fierce. Family and friendships all inform Gabi's understanding of and response to what it means to be a young woman and young Latina in this bold, welcome work. (Age 14 and older)

**Reynolds, Jason. *When I Was the Greatest*. Atheneum, 2014. 231 pages (978-1-4424-5947-2, \$17.99)**

With complex, genuine, and sympathetic characters, a strong sense of place, and spot-on writing, this understated book offers a beautiful and powerful account of the value of friendship, family, and community. Family is all-important to sixteen-year-old Ali. He respects his mother, misses his father, and adores his little sister, Jazz. His long-time neighbors and community members include Malloy, the Vietnam vet who has trained Ali as a boxer since he was six years old, and Ms. Brenda, the upstairs neighbor always available to keep an eye on Ali and Jazz. Ali's best friends are Noodles and Needles, his next-door neighbors. Noodles, a closet artist and comic book geek, is a tough guy unable to back up his talk with action. Needles is a sweet, clever kid with Tourette's syndrome. Although Noodles constantly criticizes Needles for his behavior, the community easily accepts and adjusts to Needles's idiosyncrasies. When the three boys sneak into the hottest party in their Bed-Stuy neighborhood, Needles's tics lead to a violent fight with an older, rougher crowd. Noodles doesn't defend his brother and it's up to Ali to step in. In the aftermath, the emotional damage caused by Noodles's abandonment of Needles is far more difficult to heal than Ali's and Needles's physical injuries. Author Jason Reynolds weaves the relationships among Ali, his friends, and neighbors into a portrait of a supportive, strong community. With a mix of quiet, descriptive moments and potent passages, the novel artfully addresses difficult concepts such as the failings of education and power of negative stereotypes. (Age 13 and older)

**Smith, Andrew.** *100 Sideways Miles.* Simon & Schuster, 2014. 277 pages (978-1-4424-4495-9, \$17.99)

When high school senior Finn Easton was seven, a dead horse fell off of an overpass into the canyon where he and his mom were walking. She was killed when it landed on them. He was left with epileptic seizures and a distinctive scar from back surgery to repair his broken vertebrae. Finn's dad is the author of a science fiction book with a cult-like following in which a boy named Finn with a distinctive scar is an alien trying to pass as human. Now sixteen, Finn feels like his dad stole his life. Finn's best friend Cade Hernandez is charismatic, sex-obsessed, and crass. Cade is a terrific friend to Finn. But Finn doesn't even tell Cade how unhappy and overwhelmed he sometimes is — about the novel, his seizures (which he also sees as a gift), the overprotectiveness of his dad and stepmom. When Julia Bishop, wry, insightful, and another survivor of trauma, comes to their small California desert town, she is the first person Finn is honest with about everything. He falls in love and is devastated when she eventually returns home. Andrew Smith's story is tender and outrageous and improbable and, somehow, both true and funny every step of the way. Richly woven into the landscape and history of one specific area of Southern California canyon country, and with details of Finn's father's novel, *The Lazarus Door*, slowly revealed, it culminates in a road trip in which Finn, who measures time by distance, is given the extraordinary opportunity to be someone else. In the process, he gains a sense of perspective on, and possibility for, his own life. (Age 14 and older)

**Smith, Andrew.** *Grasshopper Jungle.* Dutton, 2014. 388 pages (978-0-525-42603-5, \$18.99)

Sixteen-year-old Austin Szerba, living in the small town of Ealing, Iowa, has a problem: He's in love with two different people. One of them is his girlfriend, Shann Collins. The other is his best friend, Robby Brees. He hasn't told anyone about his feelings for Robby, but he thinks about having sex with Robby, as well as with Shann. A lot. Early on, Andrew Smith's novel is notable for its deft and sensitive handling of these deeply held feelings in the voice of an irreverent and funny adolescent narrator. And then come the Unstoppable Soldiers. They're an invading army of giant grasshopper-like creatures that emerge from humans who've been infected with a virus developed decades before in a now-defunct research laboratory outside Ealing. Austin describes the series of events that unleash the virus and what happens afterward in a narrative that seamlessly weaves the end of the world as we know it into the story of his simultaneous love for two people that the world as we know it will not allow. It's a sophisticated, stellar blend of science fiction, social commentary, and adolescent angst. It's also a B-movie horror tale that makes fun of B movies, and an adolescent fantasy with characters that are surprisingly multidimensional and nuanced. Austin's account invites readers to question society and individuals, humanity and history, and even — or especially — the reliability and perspective of the narrator telling the story. Smith's novel is smart, entertaining, and challenging in all the best ways. (Age 14 and older)

**Stiefvater, Maggie. *Blue Lily, Lily Blue*. (The Raven Cycle, Book III) Scholastic Press, 2014. 391 pages (978-0-545-42496-7, \$18.99)**

A highly successful third offering in Maggie Stiefvater's "Raven Cycle" series centers broadly on the ongoing quest by the Raven Boys and Blue to find the burial site of the mythical Welsh king Glendower. Here the story focuses more closely on Blue than on Raven Boys Gansey, Rowan, and Adam. Blue's mother, Maura, has disappeared underground to magical Cabeswater to search for Blue's mysterious and long-missing father. Blue and the Raven Boys, with help from housemates and friends, face both psychic and physical challenges in their ongoing quest, which now has new urgency because of Maura's disappearance. A variety of new characters, including the incredibly self-centered and sinister Greenmantle and his wife, Piper; Glendower's 600-year-old daughter, Gwenllian; and Appalachian native Jesse Dittley, add additional tension to the plot and comic relief to the large and fascinating cast. As the main characters become more confident, well-balanced, and ultimately inter-connected, readers will welcome the changes, especially as poor-boy Adam finally is able to see Gansey's desire to help him as friendship rather than charity, and Blue gains previously unrealized psychic abilities. Stiefvater expertly interweaves the multiple narratives together, allowing for closure in this book while leaving plenty of unanswered questions for an finale. (Age 13 and older)

**Stroud, Jonathan. *The Whispering Skull*. (Lockwood & Co., Book Two) Disney / Hyperion, 2014. 435 pages (978-14231-6492-0, \$17.99)**

Charismatic leader Anthony Lockwood, graceless researcher George Cubbins, and talented teammate and narrator Lucy Carlyle return as the rogue team of psychic detection agents in this second addition to the "Lockwood & Co." series. This time the trio are racing to recover a dangerous psychic relic called a "boneglass," known to cause madness and even death in anyone who gazes into it. A number of unsavory characters in London — including a cruel black-market dealer, a violent scavenger, or relic man, and a mysterious collector — will do almost anything to attain the glass and Lucy and Lockwood soon find themselves in life-threatening situations. Additionally, Lockwood & Co.'s nemesis, the upscale Fittes Company Team, with whom Scotland Yard requires they work to solve the case, is dogging their steps. Oh, and the skull in the jar that George stole from Fittes Company is holding droll and duplicitous conversations with Lucy, which threaten to undermine the case as well as her relationships with George and Lockwood. New characters, including the unkempt and uncensored Flo Bones, enrich and expand Stroud's alternate London, while a satisfyingly macabre scene with ghost rats and a breathtaking, death-defying escape from an undercover case gone wrong raise tensions and quicken the pace. Character growth in Lucy, George, and Lockwood individually and as a team adds to the depth as well as the enjoyment of the series. While the case of the "boneglass" is solved, other mysteries abound and the story ends in a cliffhanger of a more personal sort. (Ages 11-15)

**Tamaki, Mariko. *This One Summer*. Illustrated by Jillian Tamaki. First Second, 2014. 317 pages (pbk 978-1-59643-774-6, \$17.99)**

Early adolescence is a fluid and challenging period of awakening and discovery and in-between-ness in this graphic novel that beautifully and keenly captures that time. In this summer of tension and change, Rose and her parents are at the cottage they have gone to for years. Rose is between child and teenager, more mature in some ways than her younger friend, Windy, even as Windy's innocence helps ground them both. At the store where the girls go to get videos on languid days, Rose is drawn to the local teenage clerk. She picks out horror movies to impress him, and is intrigued by the drama surrounding the boy and his girlfriend who, she learns, is pregnant. Windy is still sure enough of herself to see and state things in a refreshingly straightforward, uncomplicated way, and calls Rose out for her sexism in blaming the pregnant girl. Meanwhile, Rose's mother is battling depression and something else Rose doesn't understand. Rose's parents are tense and often fighting, and Rose thinks her mother can and should just choose not to be sad. Everything feels profoundly connected in this story that illuminates that time of adolescence when young teens are just starting to open their eyes to the world in new ways; when their interests outpace their experience or their understanding; and when their ability to understand can mature at an astonishing rate. (Age 11 and older)

**Theule, Larissa. *Fat & Bones and Other Stories*. Illustrated by Adam S. Doyle. Carolrhoda, 2014. 103 pages (978-1-4677-0825-8, \$16.95)**

Unapologetically unsettling, a collection of interconnected, darkly funny short stories is not for the faint-hearted, but for those who like their reading to include the sinister and the macabre, it's perfect. Fat is an aging, angry fairy who lives in a tree on a farm. He hates Bones, the adult son of the farmer. If Fat has few redeeming qualities, Bones has absolutely none, and the animosity between them rises to new levels the day the farmer dies. Fat's plan to curse Bones backfires on the farmer's wife, who ends up boneless on the kitchen floor before fairy and farmer's son go at one another in a fury. And that's just the opening story of this fresh, original offering that illuminates those parts of us all that are less than noble. At the same time, there are occasional, surprising moments of generosity across the stories featuring the people, flora, fauna, and fantastic living on the farm. Those moments are made all the brighter for standing out in stark contrast to the rest. The overall effect of this unusual and memorable work isn't bleak, however, it's sharp and invigorating. (Age 11 and older)

**Tingle, Tim. *House of Purple Cedar*. Cinco Puntos, 2013. 336 pages (pbk. 978-1-935955-24-5, \$16.95)**

In 1967, Rose is an old woman looking back on her childhood in Skullyville, Oklahoma, in 1897, in a novel that moves back and forth between Rose, her family and Choctaw community, and residents of the nearby town of Spiro. Among them is the marshal, a man who is despised by Choctaw and whites alike. His cruelty is often random, as when he strikes Amafo, Rose's grandfather, at the train station one day. Amafo turns the other cheek, and in doing so finds allies among some of the whites in Spiro while leading his community away from confrontation. Tim Tingle writes beautifully and deeply about love

and forgiveness as antidotes to violence and hatred in a novel that also doesn't ignore hard realities. Sometimes bringing the truth into the light isn't enough; sometimes you have to fight back with violence. This is illuminated not only through what happens to Rose and her community but also through the lives of several women in Spiro, one of them the marshall's wife, who has endured his beatings for years. The power of family, of community and connection, and of love and compassion to transcend divides — among individuals, across cultures, between the living and the dead — is profound and hopeful in a story that is, above all, about the human heart. The tense plot unfolds through characters drawn with astonishing depth and subtlety, their actions and interactions richly revealing. Solace for Rose's community is also found in both Christianity and in spiritual experiences imbedded in their culture, the two seamlessly reconciled in their lives. (Age 14 and older)

**Venkatraman, Padma. *A Time to Dance*. Nancy Paulsen Books / Penguin, 2014. 307 pages (978-0-399-25710-0, \$17.99)**

Veda has loved to dance for as long as she can remember. She does so in spite of her mother, who wants her to be an engineer. But the day she wins a Bharatanatyam dance competition is also the day her life changes. On the bus ride home there's an accident and Veda awakens in the hospital with her right leg amputated below the knee. As she begins the slow process of relearning how to walk, she dreams of dancing again. When her old teacher rejects her, she finds a new teacher, one who believes in dancing as a way to honor Shiva — as a means of emotional expression and showing the love of the god. It is, Veda understands, part of what drew her to dance as a young child, and something that she's lost as she began enjoying attention for her talent. In a class with the youngest children she begins to relearn the basic moves under a young man named Govinda, who also feels a connection to the spiritual elements of dance that Veda longs to rediscover. And like Veda in the past, he also faces pressure from his family to do something other than what he loves. A novel in verse about a contemporary Indian teen is swiftly paced and emotionally compelling. (Age 12 and older)

**Whaley, John Corey. *Noggin*. Atheneum, 2014. 340 pages (978-1-4424-5872-7, \$17.99)**

About to die of leukemia, sixteen-year-old Travis elects to undergo a radical procedure: his head is removed and cryogenically preserved. Fast forward five years to Travis waking to learn he is the second person in history to achieve a successful head-to-body transplant. While the premise requires readers to suspend disbelief in a major way, the story succeeds as realism because of its focus on Travis's perspective. To him, it feels as if he woke up after a single night's sleep, but in actuality his former peers have moved into adulthood without him. Travis is unable to accept the news that his serious girlfriend Care is engaged to be married, and is determined to win her back. And what is he to make of his best friend Kyle, who had come out to Travis shortly before his death but who now seems unequivocally heterosexual? Even Travis's supportive and loving parents' relationship has undergone a monumental transition during his absence. In many ways, adjusting to the reality of life in a new body

is the easier of the challenges Travis faces. Accepting the changes in those he loves and finding his place in this new terrain requires a strong will to adapt that Travis only achieves with the support of everyone in his life, including new friend Hatton, and fellow head/body transplant, Lawrence. This original and thought-provoking premise stars an engaging teenager with a credible and humorous voice. (Age 13 and older)

**Wiles, Deborah. *Revolution. (The Sixties Trilogy, Book 2)* Scholastic Press, 2014. 495 pages (978-0-545-10607-8, \$19.99)**

Set in Greenwood, Mississippi, during Freedom Summer in 1964, Deborah Wiles follows two kids whose lives are changed by the historic events unfolding in their town. Twelve-year-old Sunny, who is white, has never quite gotten over her mother's abandonment. She likes her stepbrother and stepsister, but isn't interested in bonding with her stepmother. When the Freedom Summer volunteers arrive, she emotionally attaches herself to one of the young white women, imagining for a while it might even be her mother, although that's clearly impossible. African American Ray's family is hosting one of the volunteers. His mother insists they take this stand despite his father's protests and the very real danger. Ray is initially underwhelmed by the freedom workers and their efforts in conjunction with the Mississippi Democratic Freedom Party to register voters and establish a Freedom School. But he's also tired of not doing anything about the racism he faces every day and gradually gets drawn into their activism. Sunny, meanwhile, realizes Ray is the boy she bumped into at the pool during an illicit middle-of-the-night swim. She has never given much thought to what life is like for Blacks in her community, but paying attention to Ray begins to personalize her understanding of what is going on her town beyond the dramas large and small in her own family. Wiles integrates actual news accounts, documentary photographs, freedom songs, and other source material providing historical context into a story that explores the courage required to fight for dignity and justice on both the personal and political fronts. (Ages 11–14)

**Wolitzer, Meg. *Belzhar*. Dutton, 2014. 266 pages (978-0-525-42305-8, \$17.99)**

Jam Gallahue is still devastated a year after the death of her boyfriend. At a loss for how to help her, Jam's parents send her to The Wooden Barn, a therapeutic boarding school in Vermont for "emotionally fragile, highly intelligent" teens. Here, Jam receives one of five highly coveted spots in an exclusive class, Special Topics in English. The class focuses on the works of one author each semester — Sylvia Plath for Jam and her classmates — and requires that students write in a special journal. Jam soon discovers that writing in the journal transports her to the time and place just before the terrible events that caused her depression and isolation. This surreal experience is shared by all of her classmates — each returning to that moment before their lives changed, a time when they felt content and safe. The class members begin to meet secretly to discuss their journaling experiences, which they clandestinely call "Belzhar" after Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*. As the end of the semester looms, and with it the end to the journaling, each must confront his or her trauma and find a way to heal.

Superior writing carries the narrative and allows for easy suspension of disbelief in a book that is sure to resonate strongly with many teens. (Age 13 and older)

**Yang, Gene Luen. *The Shadow Hero*. Illustrated by Sonny Liew. Lettering by Janice Chiang. First Second, 2014. 158 pages (pbk. 978-1-59643-697-8, \$17.99)**

The origins of the 1940s comic book hero Green Turtle are imagined in the story of Hank, a young Chinese American man whose mother is desperate he become a superhero, even exposing him to toxic chemicals and other possible mutation-causing agents. This is one of the many moments of high humor in a graphic novel also packed with action, moments of pathos, and social commentary. It's his humble father's murder that finally gives Hank a superpower: It turns out one of the four spirits of China — a tortoise — possessed Hank's father and moves on to Hank when the father dies. The tortoise becomes Hank's mentor, although he's as acerbic and droll as he is wise. Hank discovers gangster Ten Grand is at the bottom of his father's death, but Ten Grand's daughter, Red Center, complicates his plans for revenge. There is so much to appreciate about this work, from the humor and action to the seamless way racism, sexism and stereotypes are laid bare. As impressive as the story itself is the extensive note about the original Green Turtle comic, developed by a cartoonist named Chu Hing for publisher Rural Home during World War II. Gene Luen Yang and Sonny Liew look at the facts and rumors and discuss their own theory on how Hing fought back against his publisher's refusal to allow him to openly depict Green Turtle as Chinese American. The entire original comic is then reproduced, racism and all, they note, as they encourage readers to make up their own minds about Hing's intentions in this absolutely entertaining work that openly invites critical thinking. (Age 14 and older)

**Zhang, Amy. *Falling into Place*. Greenwillow / HarperCollins, 2014. 296 pages (978-0-06-229504-0, \$17.99)**

Popular Liz Emerson was trying to commit suicide when she ran her car off the road. But she's survived, at least for now. With Liz in the ICU, flashback chapters from the perspective of her best friends, Julia and Kennie, her mom, Monica, and Liam, a boy who loved Liz without ever telling her, reveal what led Liz to the point of such despair. Liz, it turns out, was good to her friends, but not very nice to others. In fact, she could be quite cruel, and Liam was one of the victims of her cruelty. But the journey back in time also reveals that Liz wasn't always this way. After her dad died in an accident for which she blames herself, Liz moved away from the kind person she once was. Self-hatred fueled her downward spiral, compounding itself because she also hated the person she'd become. The tension in Amy Zhang's debut novel is revealed not only through the constant reminder of Liz's devastating act (chapters are titled in relation to the event, e.g., "Five Years Before Liz Emerson Crashed Her Car," "Fifty-Five Minutes Before Liz Emerson Crashed Her Car") but also in Liz's despicable behavior and genuine despair. Her survival, it is clear, depends on much more than her body healing. The novel concludes with hotline numbers for anyone needing help if they or a friend are considering suicide. (Age 14 and older)





# Appendices

# Appendix I

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## Checklist of Books in *CCBC Choices 2015*

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 14–17

Seasons and Celebrations (Seasons): pages 17–19

Folklore, Mythology, and Traditional Literature (Folklore): pages 19–20

Historical People, Places, and Events (History): pages 21–30

Biography and Autobiography (Biography): pages 30–35

Contemporary People, Places, and Events (Contemporary): pages 36–38

Issues in Today's World (Issues): page 38

Understanding Oneself and Others (Understanding): pages 39–40

The Arts (Arts): pages 40–45

Poetry (Poetry): pages 46–47

Concept Books (Concept): pages 47–49

Picture Books for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers (PB Preschoolers):  
pages 49–62

Picture Books for School-Age Children (PB School-Age): pages 62–76

Books for Beginning Readers (Beginning): page 77

Books for Newly Independent Readers (Independent): pages 77–78

Fiction for Children (Fiction Children): pages 79–84

Fiction for Young Adults (Fiction YA): pages 94–111

- 100 Sideways Miles*. Smith, Andrew. (Fiction YA)
- 100 Things That Make Me Happy*. Schwartz, Amy. (PB Preschoolers)
- Absolutely Almost*. Graff, Lisa. (Fiction Children)
- Absolutely Truly*. Frederick, Heather Vogel. (Fiction Children)
- Abuelo*. Dorros, Arthur. (PB School-Age)
- ACB with Honora Lee*. De Goldi, Kate. (Fiction Children)
- Alice Waters and the Trip to Delicious*. Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. (Contemporary)
- Alone Together*. Bloom, Suzanne. (PB Preschoolers)
- Anna & Solomon*. Snyder, Elaine. (History)
- Any Questions?* Gay, Marie-Louise. (PB School-Age)
- Arcady's Goal*. Yelchin, Eugene. (Fiction Children)
- Ashley Bryan's Puppets*. Bryan, Ashley. (Arts)
- Baby Animal Farm*. Blair, Karen. (PB Preschoolers)
- Baby Bedtime*. Fox, Mem. (PB Preschoolers)
- Baby Elephant in the Wild*. O'Connell, Caitlin. (Natural World)

- Baby Tree*. Blackall, Sophie. (PB Preschoolers)
- Baby's Got the Blues*. Shields, Carol Diggory. (PB Preschoolers)
- Bad Bye, Good Bye*. Underwood, Deborah. (PB Preschoolers)
- Bayard Rustin*. Houtman, Jacqueline. (Biography)
- Beautiful Moon*. Bolden, Tonya. (Understanding)
- Because They Marched*. Freedman, Russell. (History)
- Before We Eat*. Brisson, Pat. (Contemporary)
- Belzhar*. Wolitzer, Meg. (Fiction YA)
- Beneath the Sun*. Stewart, Melissa. (Natural World)
- Benny Goodman & Teddy Wilson*. Cline-Ransome, Lesa. (Arts)
- Beyond Magenta*. Kuklin, Susan. (Understanding)
- Big Bug*. Cole, Henry. (Concept)
- Bird*. Chan, Crystal. (Fiction Children)
- Blizzard*. Rocco, John. (Seasons)
- Blossoming Universe of Violet Diamond*. Woods, Brenda. (Fiction Children)
- Blue Lily, Lily Blue*. Stiefvater, Maggie. (Fiction YA)
- Boom Boom*. Naberhaus, Sarvinder. (Seasons)
- Boy on the Edge*. Erlings, Fridrik. (Fiction YA)
- Brave Chicken Little*. Byrd, Robert. (Folklore)
- Breakfast Served Anytime*. Combs, Sarah. (Fiction YA)
- Brother Hugo and the Bear*. Beebe, Katy. (PB School-Age)
- Brown Girl Dreaming*. Woodson, Jacqueline. (Biography)
- Bruno and Titch*. Dempsey, Sheena. (PB School-Age)
- Buddy and the Bunnies In Don't Play with Your Food*. Shea, Bob.  
(PB School-Age)
- Buried Sunlight*. Bang, Molly. (Issues)
- Call Me Tree = Llámame árbol*. Gonzalez, Maya Christina. (PB School-Age)
- Caminar*. Brown, Skila. (Fiction Children)
- Cat at the Wall*. Ellis, Deborah. (Fiction Children)
- Cats Are Cats*. Gorbachev, Valeri. (PB Preschoolers)
- Chengdu Could Not, Would Not Fall Asleep*. Saltzberg, Barney. (PB Preschoolers)
- Chik Chak Shabbat*. Rockliff, Mara. (Seasons)
- Children of the King*. Hartnett, Sonya. (Fiction Children)
- Coming Home*. Ruth, Greg. (PB School-Age)
- Construction*. Sutton, Sally. (PB Preschoolers)
- Conversion*. Howe, Katherine. (Fiction YA)
- Cosmobiography of Sun Ra*. Raschka, Chris. (Arts)
- Countablock*. Franceschelli, Christopher. (Concept)
- Crabby Crab*. Raschka, Chris. (PB Preschoolers)
- Crossover*. Alexander, Kwame. (Fiction Children)
- Dance Like Starlight*. Dempsey, Kristy. (PB School-Age)
- Dare the Wind*. Fern, Tracey. (History)
- Dig!* Zimmerman, Andrea. (PB Preschoolers)
- Digger Dog*. Bee, William. (PB Preschoolers)
- Dust of Eden*. Nagai, Mariko. (Fiction Children)
- Edda*. Auerbach, Adam. (PB School-Age)
- Edgar's Second Word*. Vernick, Audrey. (PB School-Age)
- Edward Hopper Paints His World*. Burleigh, Robert. (Arts)

- E-I-E-I-O*. Sierra, Judy. (PB School-Age)
- El Deafo*. Bell, Cece. (Biography)
- Emily's Blue Period*. Daly, Cathleen. (PB School-Age)
- Eyes Wide Open*. Fleischman, Paul. (Issues)
- Falling into Place*. Zhang, Amy. (Fiction YA)
- Family Romanov*. Fleming, Candace. (History)
- Farmer and the Clown*. Frazee, Marla. (PB School-Age)
- Fat & Bones and Other Stories*. Theule, Larissa. (Fiction YA)
- Firebird*. Copeland, Misty. (Arts)
- Firefly July*. Janeczko, Paul B. (Poetry)
- Five, Six, Seven, Nate!* Federle, Tim. (Fiction Children)
- Flashlight*. Boyd, Lizi. (PB Preschoolers)
- Flora and the Penguin*. Idle, Molly. (PB Preschoolers)
- Fly Away*. MacLachlan, Patricia. (Independent)
- Fourteenth Goldfish*. Holm, Jennifer L. (Fiction Children)
- Fox's Garden*. Camcam, Princesse. (PB Preschoolers)
- Freedom Summer Murders*. Mitchell, Don. (History)
- Freedom Summer*. Rubin, Susan Goldman. (History)
- Frida & Diego*. Reef, Catherine. (Arts)
- From There to Here*. Croza, Laurel. (PB School-Age)
- Gabi*. Quintero, Isabel. (Fiction YA)
- Gaston*. DiPucchio, Kelly. (PB School-Age)
- Girl Defective*. Howell, Simone. (Fiction YA)
- Glory O'Brien's History of the Future*. King, A. S. (Fiction YA)
- Go to Sleep, Little Farm*. Ray, Mary Lyn. (PB Preschoolers)
- Go, Shapes, Go!* Fleming, Denise. (Concept)
- Goldie Takes a Stand!* Krasner, Barbara. (History)
- Gracefully Grayson*. Polonsky, Ami. (Fiction Children)
- Grandfather Gandhi*. Gandhi, Arun. (History)
- Grasshopper Jungle*. Smith, Andrew. (Fiction YA)
- Gravity*. Chin, Jason. (Natural World)
- Great Greene Heist*. Johnson, Varian. (Fiction Children)
- Grudge Keeper*. Rockliff, Mara. (PB School-Age)
- Gus & Me*. Richards, Keith. (Arts)
- Half a World Away*. Kadohata, Cynthia. (Fiction Children)
- Half Bad*. Green, Sally. (Fiction YA)
- Hana Hashimoto, Sixth Violin*. Uegaki, Chieri. (PB School-Age)
- Handle with Care*. Burns, Loree Griffin. (Natural World)
- Hands Say Love*. Shannon, George. (PB Preschoolers)
- Hannah's Night*. Sakai, Komako. (PB Preschoolers)
- Have You Heard the Nesting Bird?* Gray, Rita. (Natural World)
- Hello, I'm Johnny Cash*. Neri, G. (Biography)
- Hidden Like Anne Frank*. Prins, Marcel. (History)
- Hooray for Hat!* Won, Brian. (PB Preschoolers)
- Hope Is a Ferris Wheel*. Herrera, Robin. (Fiction Children)
- House of Purple Cedar*. Tingle, Tim. (Fiction YA)
- How I Discovered Poetry*. Nelson, Marilyn. (Fiction YA)
- How It Went Down*. Magoon, Kekla. (Fiction YA)

- Hula-Hoopin' Queen*. Godin, Thelma Lynne. (PB School-Age)
- I Am Albert Einstein*. Meltzer, Brad. (Biography)
- I am Cow, Hear Me Moo!* Esbaum, Jill. (PB School-Age)
- I Am Jazz*. Herthel, Jessica. (Understanding)
- I Am Malala*. Yousafzai, Malala. (Biography)
- I Am So Brave!* Krensky, Stephen. (PB Preschoolers)
- I Feel Five!* Murguia, Bethanie Deeney. (PB School-Age)
- I Pledge Allegiance*. Mora, Pat. (Contemporary)
- I Remember Beirut*. Abirached, Zeina. (Biography)
- Ida M. Tarbell*. McCully, Emily Arnold. (Biography)
- If I Had a Raptor*. O'Connor, George. (PB Preschoolers)
- If You Were a Dog*. Swenson, Jamie A. (PB Preschoolers)
- Iridesence of Birds*. MacLachlan, Patricia. (Arts)
- It Is Night*. Rowland, Phyllis. (PB Preschoolers)
- Ivan*. Applegate, Katherine. (History)
- Jacob's New Dress*. Hoffman, Sarah. (PB Preschoolers)
- Josephine*. Powell, Patricia Hruby. (Biography)
- Kinda Like Brothers*. Booth, Coe. (Fiction Children)
- King for a Day*. Khan, Rukhsana. (PB School-Age)
- Knockout Games*. Neri, G. (Fiction YA)
- Lend a Hand*. Frank, John. (Poetry)
- Life on Mars*. Brown, Jennifer. (Fiction Children)
- Like No Other*. LaMarche, Una. (Fiction YA)
- Ling & Ting Twice As Silly*. Lin, Grace. (Beginning)
- Lion and the Bird*. Duboc, Marianne. (PB School-Age)
- Little Melba and Her Big Trombone*. Russell-Brown, Katheryn. (Arts)
- Little Roja Riding Hood*. Elya, Susan Middleton. (Folklore)
- Loot*. Watson, Jude. (Fiction Children)
- Love Is the Drug*. Johnson, Alaya Dawn. (Fiction YA)
- Love Letters to the Dead*. Dellaira, Ava. (Fiction YA)
- Lucky*. Mackintosh, David. (PB School-Age)
- Lulu and the Hedgehog in the Rain*. McKay, Hilary. (Independent)
- Lulu and the Rabbit Next Door*. McKay, Hilary. (Independent)
- Madman of Piney Woods*. Curtis, Christopher Paul. (Fiction Children)
- Malala, a Brave Girl from Pakistan / Iqbal, a Brave Boy from Pakistan*. Winter, Jeanette. (Contemporary)
- Manger*. Hopkins, Lee Bennett. (Seasons)
- Misadventures of the Family Fletcher*. Levy, Dana Alison. (Fiction Children)
- Mister Bud Wears the Cone*. Goodrich, Carter. (PB Preschoolers)
- Mom for Umade*. Faulconer, Maria. (History)
- Monkey Goes Bananas*. Bloom, C. P. (PB School-Age)
- Monstrous Affections*. Link, Kelly. (Fiction YA)
- Moon at Nine*. Ellis, Deborah. (Fiction YA)
- Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*. Baldacchino, Christine. (PB Preschoolers)
- Mortal Heart*. LaFevers, Robin. (Fiction YA)
- Most Magnificent Thing*. Spires, Ashley. (PB School-Age)
- Mouse Who Ate the Moon*. Horáček, Petr. (PB Preschoolers)

- Mr. Cornell's Dream Boxes*. Winter, Jeanette. (Arts)
- Mr. Ferris and His Wheel*. Davis, Kathryn Gibbs. (History)
- Mr. Frank*. Luxbacher, Irene. (PB School-Age)
- My Bus*. Barton, Byron. (PB Preschoolers)
- My Country, 'Tis of Thee*. Murphy, Claire Rudolf. (History)
- My Grandfather's Coat*. Aylesworth, Jim. (Folklore)
- My Heart Is Laughing*. Lagercrantz, Rose. (Independent)
- My New Friend Is So Fun!* Willems, Mo. (Beginning)
- My Red Balloon*. Yamada, Kazuaki. (PB Preschoolers)
- My True Love Gave to Me*. Perkins, Stephanie, editor. (Fiction YA)
- Mysterious Patterns*. Campbell, Sarah C. (Natural World)
- Naked!* Black, Michael Ian. (PB Preschoolers)
- Nest*. Hurley, Jorey. (Natural World)
- Nine Open Arms*. Lindelauf, Benny. (Fiction Children)
- Noggin*. Whaley, John Corey. (Fiction YA)
- Noisy Paint Box*. Rosenstock, Barb. (Arts)
- Nuts to You*. Perkins, Lynne Rae. (Fiction Children)
- One Big Pair of Underwear*. Gehl, Laura. (Concept)
- Orphan and the Mouse*. Freeman, Martha. (Fiction Children)
- Patient Zero*. Peters, Marilee. (History)
- Peach Girl*. Nakamura, Raymond. (Folklore)
- Peggy*. Walker, Anna. (PB School-Age)
- Perfect Place for Ted*. Rudge, Leila. (PB Preschoolers)
- Perfect Place*. Harris, Teresa E. (Fiction Children)
- Peter Loves Penguin*. McPhail, David. (PB Preschoolers)
- Picnic*. Burningham, John. (PB Preschoolers)
- Pom and Pim*. Landström, Lena. (PB Preschoolers)
- Poor Doreen*. Lloyd-Jones, Sally. (PB School-Age)
- Port Chicago 50*. Sheinkin, Steve. (History)
- Pure Grit*. Farrell, Mary Cronk. (History)
- Rain Reign*. Martin, Ann. M. (Fiction Children)
- Red Madness*. Jarow, Gail. (History)
- Red Pencil*. Pinkney, Andrea Davis. (Fiction YA)
- Remy and Lulu*. Hawkes, Kevin. (PB School-Age)
- Revolution*. Wiles, Deborah. (Fiction YA)
- Right Word*. Bryant, Jen. (Biography)
- Rock & Roll Highway*. Robertson, Sebastian. (Arts)
- Rules of Summer*. Tan, Shaun. (PB School-Age)
- Sam & Dave Dig a Hole*. Barnett, Mac. (PB School-Age)
- Schools of Hope*. Finkelstein, Norman H. (History)
- Scraps Book*. Ehlert, Lois. (Arts)
- Sea Turtle Scientist*. Swinburne, Stephen R. (Natural World)
- Separate Is Never Equal*. Tonatiuh, Duncan. (History)
- Shadow Hero*. Yang, Gene Luen. (Fiction YA)
- Shh! We Have a Plan*. Haughton, Chris. (PB Preschoolers)
- Ship of Dolls*. Parenteau, Shirley. (Fiction Children)
- Silver People*. Engle, Margarita. (Fiction YA)
- Simon and the Bear*. Kimmel, Eric A. (Seasons)

- Sleepover with Beatrice & Bear*. Carnesi, Mónica. (PB Preschoolers)
- Sleepyheads*. Howatt, Sandra J. (PB Preschoolers)
- Soccer Fence*. Bildner, Phil. (PB School-Age)
- Soccer Star*. Javaherbin, Mina. (PB School-Age)
- Socks!* Sohn, Tania. (PB Preschoolers)
- Some Assembly Required*. Andrews, Arin. (Biography)
- Space Case*. Gibbs, Stuart. (Fiction Children)
- Sparky!* O'fill, Jenny. (PB School-Age)
- Stories of My Life*. Paterson, Katherine. (Biography)
- Storm Whale*. Davies, Benji. (PB Preschoolers)
- Story of Owen*. Johnston, E. K. (Fiction YA)
- Strike!* Brimmer, Larry Dane. (History)
- Stubby the War Dog*. Bausum, Ann. (History)
- Sugar Hill*. Weatherford, Carole Boston. (History)
- Swallow*. Cotter, Charis. (Fiction Children)
- Tap Tap Boom Boom*. Bluemle, Elizabeth. (PB Preschoolers)
- Taste of Freedom*. Kimmel, Elizabeth Cody. (History)
- Tell Me Again How a Crush Should Feel*. Farizan, Sara. (Fiction YA)
- There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*. Rashin. (PB Preschoolers)
- This Book Just Ate My Dog!* Byrne, Richard. (PB Preschoolers)
- This Is a Moose*. Morris, Richard T. (PB School-Age)
- This One Summer*. Tamaki, Mariko. (Fiction YA)
- Three Bird Summer*. St. Antoine, Sara. (Fiction Children)
- Time to Dance*. Venkatraman, Padma. (Fiction YA)
- Tin Star*. Castellucci, Cecil. (Fiction YA)
- Tiny Creatures*. Davies, Nicola. (Natural World)
- Tiptop Cat*. Mader, C. Roger. (PB Preschoolers)
- To This Day*. Koyczan, Shane. (Poetry)
- Tomboy*. Prince, Liz. (Biography)
- Tuesday Tucks Me In*. Montalván, Luis Carlos. (Contemporary)
- Tumbleweed Baby*. Myers, Anna. (PB School-Age)
- Turtle of Oman*. Nye, Naomi Shihab. (Fiction Children)
- Twenty-two Cents*. Yoo, Paula. (Contemporary)
- Two Parrots*. Rashin. (PB School-Age)
- Two Speckled Eggs*. Mann, Jennifer K. (PB School-Age)
- Unstoppable Octobia May*. Flake, Sharon G. (Fiction Children)
- Vango..* de Fombelle, Timothée. (Fiction YA)
- Very Tiny Baby*. Kantorovitz, Sylvie. (Understanding)
- Viva Frida*. Morales, Yuyi. (Arts)
- Washday*. Bunting, Eve. (PB School-Age)
- Water Can Be...* Salas, Laura Purdie. (PB School-Age)
- Water Rolls, Water Rises = El agua rueda, el agua sube*. Mora, Pat. (Natural World)
- Weasels*. Dolan, Elys. (PB School-Age)
- Wednesday*. Bertier, Anne. (Concept)
- West of the Moon*. Preus, Margi. (Fiction YA)
- What Forest Knows*. Lyon, George Ella. (Seasons)
- What If...?* Browne, Anthony. (PB School-Age)



- What the Moon Said*. Rosengren, Gayle. (Fiction Children)
- When I Was the Greatest*. Reynolds, Jason. (Fiction YA)
- Whispering Skull*. Stroud, Jonathan. (Fiction YA)
- Winter Bees & Other Poems of the Cold*. Sidman, Joyce. (Poetry)
- Winter Is Coming*. Johnston, Tony. (Seasons)
- Winter Moon Song*. Brooks, Martha. (PB School-Age)
- Year of the Fortune Cookie*. Cheng, Andrea. (Fiction Children)
- You Are (Not) Small*. Kang, Anna. (Concept)

## Appendix II

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### 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.ccbc.education.wisc.edu/](http://www.ccbc.education.wisc.edu/)

## Appendix III

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### 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 is currently serving on the Ezra Jack Keats Award Committee. She has chaired the Americas Award Committee, under the auspices of the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP), University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee; ALA/ALSC's 1997 Mildred Batchelder Award Committee; ALA/ALSC's 1995 John Newbery Committee; and three Charlotte Zolotow Award Committees (administered by the CCBC). 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. Most recently, she was a member of ALA/ALSC's 2015 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award Committee and the 2015 Ezra Jack Keats Award Committee. Kathleen is the recipient of the ALA/ALSC 2015 Distinguished Service Award. 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 Arbuthnot Honor Lecture for ALA/ALSC. She has a B.A. in Linguistics and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies, both from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

**Merri V. Lindgren** is a librarian at the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Merri was the editor of *The Multicolored Mirror: Cultural Substance in Literature for Children and Young Adults* (Highsmith, 1991), and a former columnist for the *Wisconsin State Journal*, writing about children's books. She served on the ALA/ALSC 2015 Notable Children's Recordings Committee. She also served on the ALA/ALSC Quicklists Consulting Committee (2010 to 2012), and was a member of the ALA/ALSC 2010 Caldecott Award Committee, and ALA's first Odyssey Award Committee (2008), a joint award of ALSC and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). She has chaired or served on six Charlotte Zolotow Award committees (administered by the CCBC). 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 1993 edition. She has been a columnist for *Library Sparks* magazine since fall of 2006. With Kathleen Horning and Ginny Moore Kruse, she also coauthored *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1991-1996*. Megan currently serves on the ALA/ALSC Board of Directors and is a past member of 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 has chaired or served on eight Charlotte Zolotow Award committees (administered by the CCBC). Megan manages the CCBC Intellectual Freedom Information Services and “What IF ... Questions and Answers on Intellectual Freedom” forum and was the recipient of the 2014 WEMTA/WLA Intellectual Freedom Award. 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.

**Emily McKnight Townsend** is a librarian at the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. While a student in the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Emily worked at the CCBC as a reference assistant and as the Intellectual Freedom Information Services Coordinator. She also served on the Read On Wisconsin Advisory Committee in 2010. Prior to coming to the CCBC, Emily worked in the Ruth Enlow Libraries of Western Maryland as the project manager for Grantsville Grows, a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant, where she developed and implemented early literacy library programming in rural libraries. She holds a B.A. degree in Religious Studies from the University of Virginia, a M.A. degree in Communication Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

## Appendix IV

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### 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 2014-2015 Friends of the CCBC, Inc., Board of Directors are President Maegan Heindel, Vice-President Kelsey Johnson-Kaiser, Recording Secretary Sarah Wendorf, Membership Secretary Jamey Stanosz, Treasurer Amanda Youngs, and Directors-at-Large Catherine Baer and Mary Morgan.

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

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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 creators of books selected for 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 introduction, annotations, 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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This subject index provides access to the titles in *CCBC Choices 2015* as well as to information about the CCBC and publishing in 2014 mentioned in the introduction and end matter. While the index is not comprehensive, themes and subjects were chosen with story time, classroom use, and reader's advisory in mind. Additionally, in keeping with the CCBC's interest in providing access to multicultural literature, the index also includes the ethnic backgrounds of the persons, fictional and real, portrayed in this year's *CCBC Choices* selections. Subject entries are as specific as possible, and include cross-references to related subjects. For example, "Latinos" includes a cross-reference to "Mexicans and Mexican Americans" and other culturally specific sub-groups. The page number listed points to where you can find the citation and annotation for the book.

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