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# 2017 List of Cream of the Crop for Children's and Young Adult Literature

Maine Regional Library System Book Review Group

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**Maine Regional Library System**  
**28th Annual Reading Round-Up of Children's and Young Adult Literature**  
**Augusta Civic Center**  
**April 27, 2017**

**MAINE EXAMINATION COLLECTION OF CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT BOOKS**

**Cream of the Crop**

**Total books: 101**

**KEY**

**L**     **Library binding**                             **[GN]**   **Graphic Novel**  
**R**     **Reinforced trade binding**                **[M]**   **Maine Author, Illustrator, Setting**  
**T**     **Trade binding**

**PICTURE BOOK FICTION [total books in this category: 29]**

Ashman, Linda. *All We Know*. HarperCollins. 978-0-06-168958-1, T \$17.99 (PreK-Grade 3). In simple, quiet lyrical text, and large, soft Jane Dyer illustrations, that follow the seasons of the year, a mother explains how the love for her child grew - as a sprout grows to a seed, a star shines, the sun rises. This is a lullaby, a love letter for our youngest readers.

Bagley, Jessica. *Before I Leave*. Roaring Brook Press. 978-1-626-72040-4, T \$17.99 (PreK-Grade 2). Zelda, a hedgehog, is moving away from her best friend Aaron, an aardvark, so they decide to have one last day playing all of the things that they love to do together. Bagley (*Boats for Papa*), once again, takes on the subject of loss, this time of a friend as she moves away, and brings it to a level that young readers can understand. She captures the sadness and fear of change while highlighting the power of friendship to transcend distance.

Breen, Steve. *Woodpecker Wants a Waffle*. HarperCollins. 978-0-062-34257-7, T \$17.99 (PreK-Grade 3). Benny the woodpecker is woken up by the smell of waffles from the newly opened Moe's Diner. He doesn't know what a waffle is, but when he sees one through the window, he knows he just has to have one. After many antics trying to sneak into the diner and many opinions from his forest friends, Benny finally comes up with a plan that's sure to succeed. A fun read! Great for a storytime about creative thinking and persistence.

Chabbert, Ingrid; illustrated by Giuridi. *The Day I Became a Bird*. Kids Can Press. 978-1-177138-621-0, T \$16.99 (Grade K-3). Take simple, clear pencil drawn illustrations by Guridi and add Chabbert's poetic text and you have the essence of childhood love. A boy loves a girl, the girl loves birds, thus if the boy becomes a bird, the girl will love him. This is not your ordinary story but it is easy to understand and will satisfy the reader.

Child, Lauren. *Absolutely ONE Thing: Featuring Charlie and Lola*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-763-68728-1, T \$17.99 (Grade K-2). Charlie and Lola are off to the store with their mom. They are quite excited because they can buy one thing each. Thus starts the math lesson. With much humor and fun the reader will learn about division, addition equations, counting, telling time, and subtraction. The illustrations are done with many fonts, bright colors and collage creating a festive mood in the story. A great book to add to your collection of math learning books.

Davies, Benji. *Grandad's Island*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-763-69005-2, T \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 3). A picture book that lovingly and gently handles loss. Syd visits Grandad's house anytime he likes. One day, he finds Grandad in the attic, a place Syd has never been. Grandad reveals a secret door and together the two of them enter it and find themselves on a ship and then an island. The island is vibrant and beautiful and filled with amazing creatures, all beautifully drawn by Davies. Syd wants to stay forever, but he has to go back. Grandad, however, does decide to stay. The next day, Syd goes to Grandad's house to find that he is gone and with him the secret door. Syd is sad, but feels better knowing that Grandad is in a happy place. A great book for young readers dealing with the loss of a loved one.

DiPucchio, Kelly; illustrated by Greg Pizzoli. *Dragon Was Terrible*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 978-0-374-30049-4, T \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 2). The dragon in the book is really terrible. He is steal-candy-from-a-baby-unicorn terrible (who does that?). The king of the land offers a reward for getting dragon to behave. But no one can tame this terrible guy until one clever boy creates a story that captures dragon's attention. This picture book celebrates the power of stories and the ability of a competent storyteller to calm even the rowdiest of characters. A fantastic read-aloud.

Eaton, Jason. Illustrated by John Rocco. *How To Track a Truck*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-763-68065-7, T \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 2). Reminiscent of Chris Van Dusen's wildly popular books, with careful attention to detail in the illustrations and a fun, off-beat,

and creative storyline. Early school-aged children will appreciate the humorous mixture of anthropomorphic vehicular characters and the whimsical, imaginative narrative.

Edwards, Michelle. *A Hat for Mrs. Goldman: A Story About Knitting and Love*. Schwartz & Wade. 978-0-553-49710-6, R \$17.99 (Grade K-3). Mrs. Goldman has known Sophia since she was a baby. She has knitted hats and mittens for her, her family and friends, even the dog! But who will knit for Mrs Goldman? A story told with a quiet voice and Brian Karas's signature illustrations. There is even instructions for the reader to make a hat.

Freudig, Laura; illustrated by Kevin M. Barry. *Halfway Wild*. Islandport Press. 978-1-934-03148-3, T [M] \$17.95 (PreK-Grade 3). Any family with children will relate to this picture book featuring a family who take on different animal characteristics to suit their moods/actions. Feeling sluggish? A family of turtles. Playing hide-and-seek until the stars come out? A family of fireflies. The pairings of words and pictures is spot-on and Barry's illustrations are clever and whimsical. Children will want to hear this again and again and the last page offers one of the most satisfying messages and images; your readers/listeners will sigh with the rightness of it.

Godwin, Laura. *Owl Sees Owl*. Schwartz & Wade. 978-0-553-49782-3, T \$17.99 (PreK-Grade 3). What does a small owl do in a moonlit night? Sleep is out of the question, so an adventure is in order. What makes this story so unique is that is is told in reverse poetry. Words used in one order, then when reversed, become another way of telling the story. Partner this text with Dunlavey's large, watercolor, pencil and ink illustrations and you have the perfect combination of art and imagination.

Green, John Patrick. *Hippopotamister*. First Second. 978-1-62672-200-2, [GN] \$17.99 (Grade 1-3). Hippo and Red Panda are good friends. They live in a zoo that is run-down and under-attended, so the two decide to leave and get jobs elsewhere. Readers follow them through a series of hilarious attempts at finding productive work. Eventually, Hippo is tired of the world and returns to the zoo where he realizes that they can put all of their newly-acquired skills to great use fixing up the zoo! Fantastic illustrations paired with humorous animals make this graphic novel a winner for elementary readers.

Haughton, Chris. *Goodnight Everyone*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-9097-3, R \$15.99 (PreK-Grade 3). A bedtime story for our youngest readers. Night is coming and the forest creatures are sleepy, except for a small bear. How long will he fight the inevitable? Stunning, vibrant, fluorescent colors of reds, blues, and purples introduce the characters on pages of various sizes. Text is simple and direct. This is a story to be paired with *Bunnies are Not in Their Beds* by Russo, *Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late* by Willems, and *I'm Not Sleepy* by Chapman.

Hirst, Daisy. *The Girl With the Parrot on Her Head*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-7829-6, R \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 2). Isabel and Simon were friends. She had a parrot on her head and he was good with newts. One day Simon moved away - never to return. Now Isabel is alone. How does one cope with the loss of a friend, how does one go on? Hirst suggests that being alone is not the end of the world and that you can grieve the loss. And one day, Isabel does find a new friend and a new normal, as children do. Hirst's text is simple and direct, and her illustrations are quirky and childlike, yet they convey Isabel's feelings about her situation. This is a story about change, imagination, problem solving, and hope.

Krans, Kim. *ABC Dream*. Random House. 978-0-553-53929-5, T \$16.99 (PreK-K). Letters of the alphabet depicting creatures and natural wonders make this wordless concept book a work of art and imagination. Illustrated in watercolor and pen, this is a book for both children and adults to enjoy. A list of the items for each letter can be found on the last two pages. This selection will not stay on the shelf. An equally beautiful counting book is available by the author.

Light, Steve. *Swap!* Candlewick Press. 978-0-763-67990-3, R \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 3). An appealing tale about bartering to obtain the items needed to fix up a broken-down sailing vessel. The idea to swap comes to the child character in the story who wants to help the captain, "his sad friend". The charming and intricate pen-and-ink illustrations have punches of brilliant color and deftly show the process of trading items to people who need them to get something that the sea captain and his pint-sized friend need. The story offers an opportunity to talk about how all things used to be handmade as the pictures show oars being carved from trees, anchors being hammered by a blacksmith, and sails being sewn by hand. It is a perfect read aloud with limited text on white-space and a repetitive mantra of "SWAP!", making it a fun read for early readers as well. It will surely appeal to early elementary teachers and all of the pirate-lovers out there!

Litchfield, David. *The Bear and the Piano*. Clarion Books. 978-0-544-67454-7, T \$16.99 (PreK-Grade3). Bear finds a piano in the woods and he learns to play. The other animals delight in hearing him play. One day, enticed by the promise of more playing, for more people, Bear leaves the woods and heads off to the big city to make a name for himself. And through all of the shows and adoration, he is missing something. Apprehensively, he returns home to the woods wondering if anyone will remember or welcome him. They do both. His piano has been kept for him and when he meets his old friend and plays, the animals, once again, gather around. A gorgeously drawn story that captures the power of following one's dreams, and the loveliness of coming home. A satisfying read-aloud.

Lloyd, Megan Wagner; illustrated by Abigail Halpin. *Finding Wild*. Alfred A. Knopf. 978-1-101-93281-0, T (Grade 1-5). Two children walking through different landscapes experience all of the things that wild can be. With the use of many poetic devices: personification, onomatopoeia, imagery, and similes, this book is not only a beautiful read-aloud as you ask your audience to use their senses, but also a fantastic classroom tool for studying poetry.

Messier, Mireille; illustrated by Pierre Pratt. *The Branch*. Kids Can Press. 978-1-771-38564-0, T \$16.95 (PreK-Grade 3). A sweet story of a little girl and her favorite tree and the branch she considered her castle. When a terrible ice storm brings her branch crashing to the ground, the little girl is distraught. Her elderly neighbor notices that she is upset and together they work to bring out the branch's potential by making a lovely swing and a great end to the story of the tree. The writing is wonderfully descriptive with excellent themes of friendship, nature, and creative thinking.

Moore, Suzi. *Whoops!* Templar Books. 978-0-7636-8180-7, R \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 3). Lots to see in this funny, quirky story of three - cat, dog and mouse, who don't have their correct voices. Will a journey to a little old lady's house in the woods correct this condition? Each full-page spread of a different color, a rhyming, repeating text, and geometric illustrations will keep readers engaged in this story. Reminiscent of Jules Feiffer's *Bark George!*

Moser, Lisa; illustrated by Gwen Millward. *Stories From the Bug Garden*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6534-0, R \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 3). A long-forgotten garden lays silent and unoccupied until one by one they come: bee, ladybug, horsefly, and others. Their story and the story of the garden is told until the garden becomes home. Millward's illustrations of watercolor, pen, and ink add to the whimsical nature of the text. This selection is special in that it puts insects, gardens, and storytelling together.

Murguia, Bethanie Deeney. *Princess! Fairy! Ballerina!* Arthur A. Levine Books. 978-0-545-73240-6, T \$17.99 (PreK-Grade 2). Three friends get together for a play date and each wants to play the game closest to her interest, which as the title states is princess, fairy, and ballerina. When no one can agree, it looks like the story will end in disaster as the three sulk. Then a frog jumps by and reminds the girls that there is something else they love to do, stomp in puddles. An unexpected twist on a conventional idea makes this picture book a winner for reading aloud and great for use as an example of friendship and compromising. The illustrations are delightful with a pleasing palette and the right touch of whimsy.

Murrow, Ethan and Vita Murrow. *The Whale*. Templar Books. 978-0-7636-7965-1, R \$17.99 (PreK-Grade 6.) No words are needed in this tale of the search for a mythical great spotted whale. Large black and white illustrations invite the reader into the search by two young strangers to prove the myth true. This story of ingenuity, perseverance and teamwork is STEAM at its best.

Perkins, Lynn Rae. *Frank and Lucky Get Schooled*. Greenwillow. 978-0-06-237345-8, T \$17.99 (Grade K-3). Frank got a dog and a true friend. Lucky got a home and a true friend. Together they learn about each other, go to school to learn more and then - they learn about everything else. Frank and Lucky introduce the reader to the fun of science, math, history, geography, and art, what each is and how they apply to everyday life. This is a great way to introduce the fun of learning about any subject

Rex, Adam; illustrated by Christian Robinson. *School's First Day of School*. Roaring Book Press. 978-1-596-43964-1, R \$17.99 (PreK-Grade 3). Readers will find much with which to identify and study in the pages of this book. Young readers will relate to the nervousness of a first day with unknown things. Librarians, teachers, and parents will love using the book to explore those feelings with their students or children. Rex nails the jitters of a first day and the shaky excitement that there will be a second day. He also captures the sadness of rejection when children express their dislike for School, and the need for quiet time after a hectic day of children using its floors/lockers/water fountains, etc. Robinson's illustrations, one to a double-page spread, are excellent. All types of children are drawn here and the pictures match the story perfectly. Even the font is appealing in this well-crafted picture book.

Ringgold, Faith. *We Came to America*. Alfred A. Knopf. 978-0-517-70947-4, T \$17.99 (PreK-Grade 3). A timely addition to every library, Ringgold tells the story of all those who have come to America and why. Some came in chains deprived of their name; some came to escape social injustice; and some for a better life. In short, poetic text, with large colorful illustrations, Ringgold portrays the diversity that has made The United States great. Pair this with *Who Belongs Here* by Margy Burns Knight, *I'm New Here* by Anne Sibley O'Brien and *Their Great Gift* by John Coy.

Sidman, Joyce; illustrated by Beth Krommes. *Before Morning*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-547-97917-5, T \$17.99 (PreK-Grade 2). Scratchboard art is the highlight in this picture book invocation of a child who wishes that a snowstorm will ground her mother, an airline pilot. The final page has a message from Sidman about wishes and invocations and offers thought-provoking questions for further discussion. This would be a lovely book to share with preschool and elementary-aged children to talk about wishes and words, and to explore the details to be found in the illustrations.

Teckentrup, Britta. *Tree*. Doubleday Books. 978-1-101-93242-1, T \$14.99 (Grade K-3). A cleverly designed peek-through picture book that will engage young readers from the start. The story begins in the winter with a sweet owl peeking through a cutout in the tree trunk. An assortment of animals appear and disappear on each page as the seasons change. The same tree appears on every

page but is never the same due to the variations of animals, colors and seasonal foliage. Children will have many enjoyable hours exploring the pages and finding the various animals, insects and other changes on each page. This book will be a great teaching tool for the seasons.

Thompson, Jolene; illustrated by Justin K. Thompson. ***Faraway Fox***. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-544-70711-5, T \$17.99 (Grade K-3). More and more wildlife is being caught in areas where humans are living and with no way of returning to their home territory. Here, a young fox wonders where his family is. He remembers the stream where he and his sister caught frogs and how good his father was at hunting. The text tells of his remembering but the illustrations show a playground, a construction site, and a parking lot. With simple text and double-page spreads, this book explores the problem of human encroachment into animal territory. Happily there is a solution. As seen in the story, humans are building underpasses, overpasses, viaducts, and tunnels, allowing animals an escape route back to their home territory. With an author's note at the end of the story, the Thompsons are educating young readers about being good stewards to the animals with whom they share the earth.

#### **PICTURE BOOK NONFICTION [total books in this category: 17]**

Baker, Jeannie. ***Circle***. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-7966-8, R \$17.99 (Grade K-3, adult, professional). The godwit, a small bird known to fly further than the distance from earth to the moon in its lifetime, is the featured subject in this picture book. While a boy recovering from an illness wishes for flight, the reader experiences the yearly flight of this remarkable bird. Baker allows the reader to accompany the bird on its ancient journey through both text and lush, subtle collage illustration. Science and art combine to make this a must for any library. Pair this with Phillip Hoose's *Moonbird*.

Bornhoff, Emily. ***Where Did They Go: A Spotting Book***. Big Picture Press. 978-0-7636-8920-9, R \$14.99 (Grade K-3). This is the book for those who love to seek and find. The reader is challenged to find various endangered animals from all areas of the world. Hints are given in a rhyming text and the animals are hidden on pages of various hues that depict their habitat. Not only is this book fun, it is informative, and brings attention to animals that are quickly disappearing in real time.

Coy, John. ***Their Great Gift***. Carolrhoda. 978-1-4677-805-4, R \$19.99 (Grade K-6). Through the photographs of Wing Young Huie, the reader is introduced to the face of immigration. Coy's text is simple yet powerful, supporting what the photos show: people leaving everything they know and love to find a better life. Once here, they work hard at menial jobs, open their own businesses with the goal of becoming part of the American dream. They are often misunderstood and not recognized for how much they sacrifice. Readers are asked the question, "What will we do with their great gift?" Pair this with Faith Ringgold's *We Came to America* and Anne Sibley O'Brien's *I'm New Here*. With immigration being in the forefront of the news, this book is timely in its message.

Grove, Tim. ***Milestones of Flight: From Hot Air Balloons to Space Ship One***. Abrams. 978-1-4197-2003-1, T \$ 21.95 (Grade 4-9). This is the perfect introduction into the history of flight. From the first hot air balloon ride, carrying a sheep, a duck, and a rooster, to Space Ship One, designed to carry 3 people into suborbital space flight, the reader experiences flight through understandable text, pictures, photos, and diagrams. This collection also contains a glossary, timeline, bibliography, and websites. STEAM at its best! Art and imagination, and the science, technology, engineering and math to make it all happen.

Guiberson, Brenda Z. ***The Deadliest Creature in the World***. Henry Holt. 978-1-62779-198-4, T \$17.99 (Grade K-6). Fourteen of the world's deadliest creatures vie for the title "World's Deadliest Creature." The author introduces each contender and explains why each is one of the choices. Information is delivered in first-person, easy-to-understand text and Gennady Spirin's exquisite, large, life-like illustrations jump right off the page. A combination of science and art make this a STEAM choice for sure. Pair this with this author/illustrator's collaboration, *The Most Amazing Creature in the Sea*.

Hatkoff, Craig, Juliana Hatkoff, Isabella Hatkoff. ***Cecil's Pride: The True Story of a Lion King***. Scholastic Press. 978-1-338-03445-5, T (Grade K-6). The story of Cecil the lion, a real lion living in Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park, made headlines with his tragic death. The authors of *Owen and Mzee* wanted to celebrate Cecil's life by sharing his beginnings, his struggles to become a pride leader, and especially how he and a rival came together to rule, deciding they were stronger together than apart. Brent Stapelkamp, a lion researcher who has been studying Cecil and his pride since 2008, provided the photos that allow the reader a close-up look at the life of this remarkable lion. This will fit in a unit about big cats, and a unit about working together to a common end.

Jenkins, Martin. ***Fabulous Frogs***. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-8100-5, R \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 3). Martin Jenkins introduces our younger readers to the world of frogs! With an introduction about basic frog information, Jenkins then focuses on several types of frogs, largest, smallest, and a host of the just plain strange! Simple text is informative and supported by Tim Hopgood's illustrations that seem to "hop off the page!" The book also offers websites and an index. For our young herpetologists, this is a must and will fit nicely into the STEAM curriculum.

London, Jonathan. *Otters Love to Play*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6913-3, R \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 3). The storyline follows a family of otters as they emerge from their den and shows the reader what they experience day-to-day. With information about these fun-loving creatures found throughout the story, the reader is both entertained and informed. Meilo So's signature watercolors support the text and let the non-reader "read" the story. A combination not to be missed.

Miller, Pat. *The Hole Story of the Doughnut*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-544-31961-5, R [M] (Grade K-6). Doughnuts are a part of our everyday life. But have you ever considered their origin? Author Miller engages the reader with the origin of the delicious cake with the hole. We can thank Mainer Hanson Gregory for the creation of the doughnut, how it was first made, and how it got its famous hole. Large cartoon-like illustrations complement the text. Imagination -- the mother of invention.

Montgomery, Sy. *Great White Shark Scientist*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-544-35298-8, T \$18.99 (Grade 3-9). Sy Montgomery has chased cheetahs, swum with piranhas, and tracked snow leopards. Now she takes the reader with her as she and photographer Kenneth Ellenbogen follow the elusive great white shark. She doesn't have to travel far - great whites are now summering on Cape Cod! This allows scientists to study, track, identify and film a species that was once nearly extinct. This Scientist in the Field choice does not disappoint. Pair it with Mary Cerullo's *Shark Expedition*.

Park, Linda Sue; illustrated by Jennifer Black Reinhardt. *Yaks Yak: Animal Word Pairs*. Clarion Books. 978-0-544-39101-7, T \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 3). Young animal lovers will become word lovers with this delightfully illustrated picture book on homographs. Each of the eighteen animals whose names have a different meaning cover a two-page spread. "Yaks yak", "Bugs bug bugs", "Steers steer". The second word's meaning is written as an equation, "to steer=to guide", and is subtly part of the illustrated details. Reinhardt's watercolor and ink illustrations bring a whimsical sophistication to the simple text with action, movement and layers of humor. Word lovers=lovers of this book.

Rosenstock, Barbara; illustrated by Gérard DuBois. *Dorothea's Eyes*. Calkins Creek. 978-1-629-79208-8, T \$16.95 (Grade K-3). A lovely and well-illustrated picture book about the life of Dorothea Lang who became well known for her expressive and thought-provoking photos of people. As a young child, she contracted polio and, because of her resulting limp, other kids made fun of her. This just made Dorothea pretend she was invisible, yet she saw everything, with her eyes and her heart. She saw the desperation in the eyes of the destitute and she told their stories through her photographs.

Sweet, Melissa. *Some Writer!* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-544-31959-2, T [M] \$18.99 (All ages). In this wonderfully illustrated, well-researched book about E.B. White, the reader is taken on a lovely journey through the life and times of Elwyn Brooks White. We learn about the family trips to Maine every summer, see pages from the journal that he wrote in every night. The illustrations are fantastic and tell the story as much as the words do. What could be better than to see Mr. White's hand-drawn pages for Charlotte's Web or Stuart Little? This is a book for all ages, young and old! (J/YA Lupine Award)

Tavares, Matt. *Crossing Niagara*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-763-66823,-5 T [M] \$17.99 (Grade K-3). In this beautifully illustrated picture book biography of circus acrobat the Great Blondin. Tavares once again creates magic with his illustrations and story. The beautiful watercolor and pencil illustrations bring to life the great antics that Blondin performed as he took a death-defying walk across the Niagara river on a tightrope. This book will have readers on the edge of their seats!

VanDerwater, Amy; illustrated by Dylan Metrano. *Everyday Birds*. Orchard Books. 978-0-54569980-8, T \$16.99 (PreK). For our youngest readers, an introduction to many of the birds they see and hear every day. VanDerwater describes each bird with one identifying fact and Metrano's cut colored paper is layered to give the reader a beautiful and realistic look at each bird. Each page holds the illustration of the bird, its name in bold and a singular fact, making the book simple and direct for beginning readers and those who "read" the pictures. Additional information can be found in the back of the book along with websites to visit. An excellent STEAM book: the science of nature explained through art. Pair this with Kevin Henkes's *Birds*, and Jane Yolen's *You Nest Here With Me*.

Wadsworth, Ginger. *Poop Detectives: Working Dogs in the Field*. Charlesbridge. 978-1-58089-650-4, R \$17.95 (Grade 4-8). This book highlights the extensive training and hard work done by dedicated conservationists who use dogs and their heightened sense of smell to research and ultimately help protect many wild animal species. The dogs and their handlers are pioneers in the field of "poop or scat detecting" and "can help gather important information about animals including their diet, health, gender, and even age without putting the animal or the researcher at risk." The book is well-researched with large, colorful photographs, and plenty of resource information at the back of the book. A fantastic addition to a non-fiction collection for dog lovers, environmentalists, and those wanting to learn more about the work of scientists.

Winter, Jonah; illustrated by Terry Widener. *My Name is James Madison Hemings*. Schwartz & Wade. 978-0-385-38342-4, T \$17.99 (Grade K-4). A wonderful and informative biography told in first-person narrative about the life of James Madison Hemings, son and slave of Thomas Jefferson and slave Sally Hemings. Through the beautiful illustrations and well thought out and articulate manner the story is laid out with just enough information for a young child to understand what it was like to be a slave and yet also the son of the man who wrote the Declaration of Independence. James explains how hard it is to watch Jefferson

express affection for his grandchildren, yet nothing towards his own children. This book is a great addition to any library, and a great place to start a discussion.

#### **CHAPTER BOOK NONFICTION [total books in this category: 7]**

Atkinson, Rick. *Battle of the Bulge*. Henry Holt & Co. 978-1-627-79113-7, L \$19.99 (Grade 9-12). World War II's Battle of the Bulge is conveyed in detail within Atkinson's latest volume for young readers. The planning and implementation of Hitler's final stand in the Ardennes is told through primary source excerpts, captioned photographs, detailed maps, and an extensive appendix. The level of detail within the work make this a rich title ideal for report writing or history buffs.

Bascomb, Neal. *Sabotage: The Mission to Destroy Hitler's Atomic Bomb*. Levine/Scholastic Press. 978-0-545-73243-7, T \$17.99 (Grade 7 and up). A well-researched and thrilling account of the Norwegian effort to stop Nazi Germany's development of an atomic bomb. Bascomb describes the technical process of using heavy water to create an atomic bomb, the strategies used to disrupt its creation, and the geographic factors that played such an important role in the saboteur's efforts with compelling intensity. The failures, struggles, and eventual success of the saboteurs is at the center of the plot and will keep readers engaged until the end. Bibliography, photo credits, and an index are provided at the end of the book. An excellent nonfiction read that can supplement WWII teaching for ages 12 and up.

Goldsmith, Connie. *The Ebola Epidemic: The Fight, The Future*. Twenty-First Century Books/Lerner. 978-1-4677-9244-8, L \$35.99 (Grade 7-12). This gripping, informative non-fiction volume provides a solid epidemiological overview of the Ebola virus. It begins with the history from the first known cases in 1976 in what was then Zaire to its most recent 2014-15 outbreaks in Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. Next is a brief look at the work underway to develop more reliable testing and preventative medicine for this incredibly destructive disease. There are interviews with healthcare workers, researchers, and survivors. Photos, maps, and charts complement the text, which is well-sourced and engaging. Notes, glossary, index, bibliography, and suggested resource lists are provided. This is excellent narrative nonfiction as well as solid reading for teens interested in medical and biological sciences.

Heos, Bridget. *Blood, Bullets, Bones: the Story of Forensic Science from Sherlock Holmes to DNA*. Balzar + Bray. 978-0-0623-8762-2, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). Forensic science has been around for centuries, evolving as time goes by. This book details the evolving field of forensic science and its history. The many cases discussed in this book are set against a timeframe to show the growth and change of this science. There are copious photographs and sketches that enhance the enjoyment and understanding of the subject matter. There is a table of contents, index, bibliography, glossary and other back matter that make for easy navigation through the book as well as making the subject matter thoroughly researched, credible and fascinating. This is for crime-show enthusiasts, budding criminalists, and a teaching tool in forensic science classes. Fascinating.

Marrin, Albert. *Uprooted: The Japanese American Experience During World War II*. Alfred A. Knopf/Random House. 978-0-553-50936-6, T \$17.99 (Grade 7 and up). This thorough and broadly focused examination of the detention and internment by the United States of over 100,000 Japanese immigrants and their second-generation Japanese American children during World War II is both searing and informative. Marrin unflinchingly examines military conquests, governmental policies, war atrocities, and propaganda across various cultures, including those of Japan, while still making it clear that the camps were a crime committed by the U.S. government against those imprisoned within them, the majority of whom were U.S. citizens. Woven throughout this historical presentation are the personal narratives of survivors of the camps and their relatives. Backmatter includes source notes, a list of suggested reading, and an index. (Robert F. Sibert Honor)

Tougias, Michael. *A Storm Too Soon: a Remarkable True Survival Story in 80-Foot Seas*. Christy Ottaviano Books. 978-1-6277-9281-3, R, \$17.99 (Grade 4-12). This is a story of teamwork and perseverance. Three sailors on a trip from Florida to France end up in a damaged life raft facing 80 foot waves. Even the Coast Guard rescue team sent in to save them encounters life-threatening challenges. The events are told from the perspectives of both the sailors and the rescuers. They are harrowing and suspenseful. The descriptions of what takes place are vivid and detailed. This well-written narrative nonfiction book will grab readers from beginning to end. Included are maps, photographs, an epilogue, and copious notes. This is a gripping survival story that is an adaptation of the adult book, *A Storm Too Soon: A True Story of Disaster, Survival, and an Incredible Rescue*.

Woelfle, Gretchen. *Answering the Cry for Freedom: Stories of African Americans and the American Revolution*. Calkins Creek. 978-1-6297-9306-1, T, \$18.95 (Grades 4-9). Woelfle has written an approachable and detailed narrative that is easy to follow on the lives of thirteen little-known African Americans that were inspired by the colonies fighting for freedom from England; so much that they, too, worked to gain the same freedoms from their captors in the New World. Silhouettes provided by R. Gregory Christie complement the text and enhance the lives of the people discussed. A well-researched book with ample backmatter make this a good choice for classroom use.

## CHAPTER BOOK FICTION [total books in this category: 48]

Abbott, E.F. *Mary Jemison: Native American Captive*. Feiwel and Friends. 978-1-250-06838-5, T \$15.99 (Grade 4-6).

The true story of Mary Jemison who at the age of 15 was captured by a band of French and Shawnee warriors. This suspenseful account will have readers eagerly following Mary's journey with the Indians. Readers will empathize with Mary's struggles of being torn between two worlds. Throughout the book there are numerous maps, B&W illustrations, and photographs that add a greater depth to the story. Readers should be sure to check out the back pages that include an epilogue, author's note, and very helpful glossary.

Alexander, Kwame. *Booked*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-544-57098-6, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-9). Nick Hall is your typical teen. His loves: soccer, video games, and a girl named April. His struggles: boredom in class, some bullying, a dad who is an etymologist (one who studies words), and the separation of his parents. Told in free verse, this is the journey of Nick as he navigates life and the challenges it throws at him. Readers of Alexander's *The Crossover* should enjoy this book as well as fans of sports fiction.

Alexander, Sarah. *The Art of Not Breathing*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-5446-3388-9, T \$17.99 (Grade 10-12). Set on the Scottish coast, Elsie's family situation is in chaos. Her twin brother drowned, her older brother is anorexic, and her parents' marriage is dysfunctional at best. Elsie meets a boy who helps her forget her anguish. Tay introduces Elsie to the world of freediving (diving without oxygen). Elsie embraces the sport. Unfortunately, she also embraces a life of partying with Tay and a new group of friends, sex, stealing, and the possibility of suicide. Anything to forget her grief over the death of her twin brother. But slowly Elsie begins to work through her own grief and demons as well as the mystery of her twin brother's drowning death. This is a raw and honest look at how death of a sibling effects the entire family. Mystery, suspense, romance and hope for recovery make for a riveting read.

Anderson, John David. *Ms. Bixby's Last Day*. Walden Pond Press. 978-0-06-233817-4, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-8). Every child deserves to be seen, and sometimes that rare teacher comes along and looks past the noise of adolescence and sees a child for who he is. This is the story of three boys desperate to be seen, but it's more than that, too. It's a quest and it's redemption, and it is powerful and beautiful. Told in alternating chapters of the three protagonists, Topher, Steve, and Brand, three sixth-grade boys who learn that their teacher Ms. Bixby is ill. When Ms. Bixby leaves school before her scheduled last day, the boys hatch a plan to give her the perfect last day. The story is engaging and heartfelt. Anderson hits all of the right notes here, just enough intrigue, great action, depth of situations, and characters with wonderful voices. Middle grade readers and adults, especially those who work with children in any capacity, will cheer for the earnest boys and the teacher who really sees them.

Boyne, John. *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain*. Henry Holt. 978-1-627-79030-7, T \$16.99 (Grade 7-12). Set in Paris in 1936, seven year old Pierrot Fischer of Parisian and German heritage is orphaned. He is sent to live with his aunt who is a housekeeper for Hitler's Austrian mountain home. Though the household is fearful of Hitler, Pierrot, now named the German Pieter, idolizes him and quickly becomes a pet. Though he was once bullied at school, Pierrot turns into a bully himself after he falls for the pageantry and propaganda of the Nazis. Eventually, he orchestrates a horrifying betrayal. The transformation of Pierrot is from naive boy to anti-hero does not give the audience much to root for, but the emotional ending and epilogue offer redemption. Prior knowledge of WWII and key historical figures are important to understanding the themes of power, corruption, and lost innocence in this chilling title.

Budhos, Marina. *Watched*. Wendy Lamb/Penguin Random House. 978-0-5535-3418-4. T, \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). Told in first-person narrative, Naeem is eighteen years old and lives in Queens with his family, all immigrants from Bangladesh. Naeem's neighborhood is one where you are always watched, by parents, gossipy neighbors, cameras, the authorities, and your own people. Naeem struggles with feeling as if he will never quite measure up to be the son his father wants. These feelings push him to act up at school and in his neighborhood and to find solace in a peer name Ibrahim, who he knows is not really to be trusted, but whose friendship buoys him up and provides distraction from his failing grades and unhappy relationship with his father. Naeem gets in trouble with the police courtesy of Ibrahim. The police offer Naeem an out if he engages in surveillance in his predominantly Muslim community for the authorities. This novel is both suspenseful and thought-provoking. Naeem is a sympathetic, but flawed narrator and his internal monologues are multi-layered as he tries to make difficult decisions. An intelligent and engaging thriller that recognizes that there are no easy answers.

Buxbaum, Julie. *Tell Me Three Things*. Delacorte Press. 978-0-553-53564-8, T \$17.99 (Grade 7 and up). Jessie's mother died of cancer, her father has remarried, and she's been uprooted her junior year in high school from Chicago to live with her new, very rich stepmother and same-age stepbrother in Los Angeles. Totally alone in a strange new environment at a well-to-do private school, Jessie deals with the "mean" girls, and develops new friends and love interests with the help of an anonymous e-mail pal who claims to attend the same school. The authentic depiction of grief and how Jessie and other characters respond to loss devoid of cliché will keep readers engaged.

Cameron, Sharon. *The Forgetting*. Scholastic Press. 978-0-545-94521-9. T \$18.99 (Grade 8 and up). “What isn’t written, isn’t remembered. Even your crimes”. Imagine if you lived somewhere where every twelve years there was one day where there was complete lawlessness and bloodshed, and there was complete loss of memory for all for that one day. Enter Nadia, who is the one person who remembers. She remembers her first Forgetting and is trying to prevent the next one from happening. Nadia uses her memories to uncover truths behind the lawlessness and bloodshed and to hopefully save her city. Things get even more complicated when Nadia meets Gray and a romance begins. But will Gray forget Nadia as the chaos of the Forgetting approaches? Nadia must act fast to convince her community of the truths behind the Forgetting before all is lost. Similar to Lois Lowry’s *The Giver* with the theme of lost memories and the consequences when they are regained. An excellent addition to a dystopian/science fiction collection.

Castle, Jennifer. *What Happens Now*. Harper Teen. 978-0062250476, L \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). Ari is dealing with many issues. She is battling depression and she is cutting herself, not to mention that her best friend is moving away and her mother has emotionally checked out. So now Ari has even more responsibility at home. But summer has arrived and Ari is hopeful. She meets Camden and his friends. Soon she begins to enjoy herself with this new group of friends and a budding romance with Camden. But Camden has his own issues and demons to deal with. Ari must decide whether to deal with her own issues, loyalties and obligations or to continue on with Camden and the bad influence of he and his friends. Ari must put herself first for her own mental health and happiness. This is a life-affirming story of recovery, female empowerment, and trusting yourself.

Cavallaro, Brittany. *A Study in Charlotte*. Katherine Tegen Books/HarperCollins. 978-0-062-39890-1, T \$17.99 (Grade 9-12). Charlotte is the great-great-great-granddaughter of Sherlock Holmes - and she has inherited his knack for solving crimes and mysteries. She has been sent to a United States boarding school to get a handle on her drug addiction where she meets none other than Jamie Watson, the great-great-great-grandson of James Watson. The two teenagers find themselves thrust into a murder mystery with themselves as the lead suspects. Charlotte is a smart, intelligent, and prickly teenager, while Jamie is her opposite. Together, they form a great team that will have Sherlock fans enthralled. A great mystery to add to young adult library collections.

Culbertson, Kim. *The Possibility of Now*. Point/Scholastic Press. 978-0-5457-3146-1. T, \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). Mara is the perfect student. She is driven and ultra-organized. She is also on track to be valedictorian at her perfect private school. And she is destined for a perfect college. But then Mara has a meltdown during a calculus exam. She tears up her test and everyone else’s around her. Unfortunately another student videos her freak out and puts it on YouTube, so Mara leaves the pressures of life in San Diego and moves in with her ski bum father in Lake Tahoe. Her life and things in general are much more relaxed. Mara learns to have friends and to have fun. She stops trying so hard to control her future. This is a great read for over pressured kids and their parents. Fun and enlightening.

Eager, Lindsay. *Hour of the Bees*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-7922-4, T \$16.99 (Grade 6-9). Carol and her family are helping her grandpa Serge move from his ranch into a retirement home. In the midst of this transition Serge begins to tell Carol about a magical black tree that was once on the ranch. He tells her that the bees that only she can see are a sign that this tree might return to the ranch. Various family issues come to light during Serge’s move to the retirement home, but at the core of this story is the relationship that develops between Carol and her grandpa as he retells the wonderful stories about the tree, and the way the stories of life on the ranch with the magical tree and the present day intermingle makes for a lovely, heartwarming read.

Fitzgerald, Sarah Moore. *The Apple Tart of Hope*. Holiday House. 978-0-823-43561-6, T \$16.95 (Grade 5-9). Irish teenager Oscar is gone. Is he dead? Did he kill himself? Or is he just missing? Friends, family, and townsfolk are asking themselves these questions. When his bike is found abandoned at the end of the pier, people think that Oscar killed himself. He was a positive and kind boy, but he suffered relentless bullying and humiliation. Told in alternating chapters from his perspective and from Meg’s (his best friend and first love), who is determined to find out what happened. A lot is packed into this slim volume: mystery, budding romance, friendship, resilience, the everlasting effects of bullying, and the overarching message of holding on to hope.

Friend, Natasha. *Where You’ll Find Me*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 978-0-374-30230-6, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-9). Thirteen-year-old Anna is dealing with a great many things. Her mom attempted suicide, so Anna has to go live with her dad, who has married a twenty-year-old and has a new baby. To top it off, Anna’s best friend has dumped her for the popular crowd. Anna has no one to confide in and doesn’t make friends easily. She finally befriends a group of kids who are considered school outcasts, and she begins to find herself and sort through her life situations and make a sort of peace with them. Told with humor and truth, we see Anna’s frustrations and embarrassments as she navigates through her life. And we see the importance of the need for all of us to have someone to confide in, to share our feelings and to express ourselves.

Garrett, Ginger; illustrated by Dinara Mirtalipova. *The Last Monster*. Delacorte Press. 978-0-553-53524-2. T \$ 16.99 (Grade 4-9). We all have monsters that have to be dealt with in our lives. Sophia certainly has her share. The ordeal of losing a leg to cancer has left her battling demons at home and school. But when real mythical monsters begin seeking her out, her life becomes even more complicated. The voice of a teen dealing with the monster of cancer is real and, at times heartbreaking, but is somehow softened

by the mystery of why these monsters of myth and legend are coming to her. The theme of finding oneself is dealt with in an imaginative way and the end message that loving outsiders has a price is not often explored in middle grade literature.

Gephart, Donna. *Lily & Dunkin*. Delacorte Press. 978-0-553-53674-4, T \$16.99 (Grade 6 and up). Lily was born Timothy, but inside she is as much a girl as any other biological girl. Dunkin was born Norbert and has bipolar disorder. He dislikes his medicine believing that it gets in the way of the “real” him. The two are drawn to one another as friends, but due to the social environment in their school, a friendship is difficult. Told in alternating sections, this book is an honest and raw look at the difficulties faced by both young people struggling to find a place in the world that does not take kindly to people who don’t fit neatly into one box. Gephart captures the emotions, challenges, and heartache of living a “different” adolescence. The ending will bring a tear to the eye and have you cheering for these two kids who dig deep and find the courage to be themselves. An important read.

Girard, M-E. *Girl Mans Up*. HarperCollins. 978-0-062-40417-6, T \$17.99 (Grade 10-12). As she begins eleventh grade, Pen faces hard decisions about her longstanding best friend, Colby, who has become increasingly disrespectful and cruel toward the many girls he plays and uses for various things. Pen also must contend with ongoing verbal abuse from her Portuguese-speaking parents, who blame her appearance and genderqueer presentation for the bullying that she's encountered throughout her childhood, often with her brother Johnny as her only protector. When Blake, the latest girl Colby sets in his sights, turns out to be interested in Pen instead, it forces a series of raw and ugly confrontations with Colby, which are further exacerbated by Pen's befriending of Olivia, who Colby hooked up with over the summer and who is now facing an unwanted pregnancy. Pen is a vividly drawn, relentlessly honest character whose struggles will be deeply felt by readers. The portrayal of the brutal social dynamics at play between her friends and her conflicted loyalties is spot on as is the sweetly real first love she develops with Blake. Heart-wrenching, inspiring and filled with gritty, authentic dialogue, this character-driven novel shines due to its endearing, realistically flawed and brave protagonist.

Glasgow, Kathleen. *Girl in Pieces*. Delacorte. 978-1-101-93471-5, T \$18.99 (Grade 10-12/professional). Seventeen-year-old Charlie is a girl in pieces. She has lost more than many of us do in a lifetime. Her best friend is dead, her mother has given up on her and kicked her out of the house, and she is sexually assaulted, so Charlie cuts herself to forget. One day her self-harming goes too far and lands her in a mental health program. Here, Charlie meets women dealing with similar issues and a kind and helpful therapist. But progress is cut short when her insurance runs out. Charlie moves to Arizona and, still struggling with her demons, falls for an alcoholic drug addict. When a fellow former patient comes to stay with Charlie her life takes yet another abrupt path. This is an honest, raw, but ultimately hopeful story of a girl in pieces trying to pick up her life. A tough read, but necessary.

Hennessey, M.G. *The Other Boy*. HarperCollins. 978-0-062-42766-3, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-9). A humorous and heart-wrenching novel about twelve-year-old Shane and his life as a boy, though he is biologically female. Interspersed throughout are appealing panels of a graphic novel Shane has been writing and illustrating. Shane leaves in fear that his best friend Josh will find out about him being transgender. Shane is also dealing with a possible romantic interest in the new girl, Madeline. Shane’s mom is kind and supportive. His father is less so, but is working on it. Just as things are going well for Shane, a school bully discovers his secret and broadcasts it all over the school. Shane’s earnest first-person narrative rings true and believable to the characters and the dynamics of life in middle school.

Hicks, Faith Erin. *The Nameless City*. First Second. 978-1-626-72157-9, T [GN] \$21.99 (Grade 4 and up). Beautiful illustrations, attention to detail, clearly delineated characters, and an engaging plot make this a must-purchase for any graphic novel collection. The story is set in the Nameless City, so-called because of how often it is conquered, and with every new conquest comes a new name. Kaidu is a young man who is one of the current victor's people, the Dao. He has been brought to the city to train as a soldier so that the Dao can continue to hold the city from one of the many surrounding peoples who would seek to conquer it next. When he loses his way in the city, Kai meets a young native woman named Rat. The two strike up a friendship, a highly unusual thing since conquerors and natives do not intermingle. Wonderful scenes of Kai and Rat navigating the rooftops of the city ensue and finally, political intrigue brings the action to a suspenseful conclusion. There is a neat resolution at the end, but with an opening for a continuation and a promise of a sequel coming April 2017.

Holmes, Kathryn. *How it Feels to Fly*. Harper Teen. 978-0-0623-8734-9, T \$17.99 (Grade 7 and up). Samantha (Sam) has been groomed to be a ballet dancer for as long as she can remember, but she is struggling with her changing body - more curves and more weight. She endures taunting from her peers and an overbearing mother who is never quite pleased with her. When she starts experiencing debilitating anxiety attacks she lands in a treatment camp for teens dealing with anxiety issues. Here Sam meets other teens and a very helpful psychologist. Told in Sam’s first-person narrative, this is a realistic, inspiring, and hopeful story about a girl dealing with myriad mental health issues, including anxiety, anorexia, and cutting. It is also about overcoming obstacles and becoming who you were meant to be.

Hopkinson, Deborah. *A Bandit’s Tale*. Alfred A. Knopf. 978-0-385-75499-6, T \$16.99 (Grade 5-9). Set in late-1800s New York City, eleven-year-old Rocco Zaccaro arrives in the big city where he is forced to work for a padrone who brought him from Italy.

Rocco's parents were promised \$20 a year for four years as long as Rocco continues to work for the padrone. The story is told from Rocco's point of view in a style called a picaresque novel. The author beautifully blends fiction and real events making this story engaging and full of adventure.

Kelly, Erin Entrada. *The Land of Forgotten Girls*. Greenwillow Books. 978-0-06-223864-1, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-7). Twelve-year-old Soledad (Sol) and her younger sister Ming live with their mentally abusive step-mother Vea in Louisiana after immigrating to America from the Philippines. Sol's strong voice reveals her struggles to make a safe space between the harshness of their real-life existence and the in-between of fairy tales and stories for herself and her sister. The in-between is the place where the strength of these stories allows them to exist and grow stronger and deal with the death of their mother and sister and the abandonment of their father, who has fled back to the Philippines. Racial issues and poverty are touched upon through Sol's thoughts on skin color and matter-of-fact descriptions of neighbors but are not the focal point of the story. With some help from unlikely places, a diverse cast of characters, and the courage of Sol, readers will be drawn into this engaging, heart-wrenching story.

Kirby, Matthew. *A Taste for Monsters*. Scholastic Press. 978-0-5458-1784-4, T \$18.99 (Grade 7-12). This is paranormal/historical fiction at its best. The story is set in 1888 London during the horrific reign of Jack the Ripper. Evelyn is a disfigured match girl who hides from the world as a maid in a hospital. She tends to John Merrick, the Elephant Man. Evelyn and Merrick both experience the pain of loss and loneliness, making them divining rods for the ghosts of Ripper's victims. Historical facts about the plight of the match girls who worked with disfiguring phosphorous, the precarious survival of the working class, and the last year of John Merrick's life are intertwined in this dark, spine-chilling read.

Larson, Hope; illustrated by Rebecca Mock. *Compass South*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 978-0-374-30043-2, [GN] \$17.99 (Grade 4-9). Set in 1860, the book introduces Alex and Cleo Dodge, twin orphan schemers. In their adventures, the twins meet Silas and Edwin Clement, another set of red-headed, orphaned twins looking for a home and eager to cash in on the same scheme as the Dodge twins. With a lot of edge-of-your-seat action, the reader is caught up in the story of both sets of twins as they make their way westward. Mock's realistic, detailed illustrations work wonderfully with the story though the reader will have to work to keep track of which set of twins we are following as they are drawn similarly (somewhat purposefully, as they both fit a particular description); everything becomes quite clear in the end. Warning to the younger reader, there is a touch of romance in the book (a fairly innocent kiss) and some sinister characters. The book wraps up nicely but there are obviously more stories for both the Dodge and Clement twins. Lovers of adventure stories and GNs will eat up this fast-paced, beautifully-drawn tale.

Lawrence, Ian. *The Skeleton Tree*. Delacorte Press. 978-0-3857-3378-6, T \$16.99 (Grade 6 and up). This compelling survival story is well-written and fast-paced. Twelve-year-old Chris and a mysterious older teenager, Frank, are sailing the Alaskan coast with Chris's Uncle Jack when a storm hits. Chris and Frank are the only survivors and are stranded. Chris cannot understand why his Uncle Jack brought Frank on this trip as Frank is not easy to get along with, making cooperative survival difficult for the both of them. Characters are well-developed and the story is believable. This title would work well for a classroom novel due to its appeal as a mystery and adventure story.

MacLachlan, Patricia. *The Poet's Dog*. HarperCollins. 978-0-062-2926209, T \$14.99 (Grade 3-5). A short book that packs a lot of punch. Told in first-person narration from Teddy, the dog who rescues two children who are stranded in a fierce snowstorm. The dog is dealing with the loss of his owner, Sylvan, you later learn from an illness, and is sad and lonely, so the children are a welcome respite from his grief. Similar in length to a beginning reader, this novel has sophisticated vocabulary and, with the subject of loss and grief and poetry, would make for a wonderful one-on-one read or a classroom read aloud followed by discussion. The book alternates between the present and Teddy's life with Sylvan, with italics alerting readers to the shifts in time. A lovely, quiet book that ends on a hopeful note and will linger with you after the last page.

Matthews, Owen. *The Fixes*. Harper Teen. 978-0-0623-3689-7, T \$17.99 (Grade 10-12). Many teens will relate to the themes in this story: not meeting parental expectations, not reaching your potential according to your parents, tarnishing the good family name. The main character Eric or E as he is known, has done all that and more. Eric meets Jordan, Paige and Haley, and they show him a way to cut loose and rebel against society and their parents. The pranks and dares slowly escalate and become more dangerous and harmful to others and everyone but Jordan begins to have reservations about what they are doing. The tension builds. Wealthy, unsupervised teenagers run rampant in this wild tension-filled ride. Give to readers of E. Lockhart's *We Were Liars*.

McGee, Katharine. *The Thousandth Floor*. HarperCollins. 978-0-0624-1859-3, T \$18.99 (Grade 10-12). This fast-paced novel opens with a girl falling from the thousandth floor of a building. Then it flashes back to the five teens whose actions and words precipitated the tragic opening. This is a dystopian world where wealth and class mean everything. In fact, to live on the thousandth floor is the epitome of success and every floor you drop down represents the drop in your socioeconomic status. Each of the character's lives intertwine in this well-written novel full of scandalous secrets, values of family and friendship and love. An amped-up, dystopian *Gossip Girl*.

Medina, Meg. *Burn Baby Burn*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-7467-0, T \$17.00 (Grade 10-12). It's the summer of 1977 in Queens, NY. Serial killer Son of Sam is terrorizing the city. Cuban-American Nora is about to turn eighteen. She is smart, resourceful, and has a job at a neighborhood deli. Nora shares a cramped apartment with her mother and brother, who is showing increasingly violent behavior, much of which is directed at Nora. Their mother makes excuses for him which frustrates Nora, and she is torn between responsibilities to her family and the desire to leave Queens and make a life for herself. The heat and tension of the city are palpable in this smart, multi-layered coming of age story that explores issues of class and ethnicity with a bit of romance on top.

Miranda, Megan. *The Safest Lies*. Crown/Penguin Random House. 978-0-5535-3751-2, T \$17.99 (Grade 10-12). Living with an agoraphobic, overprotective mother, Kelsey has spent her life in a house with an extreme security system, including a panic room. This ultra-protected life is shattered when Kelsey is in a horrific accident and her name is splashed on the news. Ryan, the kind firefighter who saves Kelsey, becomes her love interest, but Ryan has secrets of his own. Kelsey comes home to find her mother has vanished, possibly kidnapped and she soon realizes that her mother was not the target. She begins to learn the truth about herself and her family. Readers will love the suspense and the dramatic action scenes mixed in with some romance. This is a first-class thriller.

Mittlefehldt, Rafi. *It Looks Like This*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-8719-9. T, \$16.99 (Grade 10-12). This novel takes us on a painful journey through discovery, parental disapproval, tragedy, and finally, on to hope. Mike has a small group of friends, a strict religious family, and an avid interest in classmate Sean. Mike has no dating experience, but accepts that he is attracted to boys. When he and Sean are partnered on a project, it appears that Sean shares his interest. They have a passionate, brief, and secret (per Sean's request) relationship. When a school bully discovers their secret and outs both boys to the entire school, their worlds fall apart. Mike's family sends him to a camp to re-program him to straight. Mike feels a great deal of guilt and desolation for hiding his secret, but when the dust settles he is stronger and more certain of himself and his sexuality. This book shows the uglier side of coming out and trying to hold onto who you are in a world with different beliefs.

Moldavsky, Goldy. *Kill the Boy Band*. Point. 978-0-5458-6747-0, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). In this darkly humorous book is the tale of four teenage girls wrapped up in the world of Fandom. The object of their obsession is the boy band The Ruperts, a product of British reality T.V. The girls are, at times, unaware of all the trouble they've gotten themselves into, including a kidnapping of one of the band members and the consequences of that. What transpires is the reality of obsessions gone too far, self-doubt, revenge, and atonement in an odd but most interesting and fun story.

Monir, Alexandra. *The Girl in the Picture*. Delacorte Press. 978-0-3857-4390-7, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). This novel will appeal to most readers. It is an excellent murder mystery with supernatural elements, and it is a romance mixed with political intrigue and action. Chase, a U.S. Congressman's son, is found murdered on the campus of his prestigious prep school. To complicate things, Chase had just broken up with his girlfriend Lana, a Congresswoman's daughter. Enter Nicole, the girl in the picture, the one Chase was dating when he died. Suspicion points to Nicole, who has no family political ties. There are well-crafted plot twists here and multiple perspectives that will keep readers hooked until the end.

Moranville, Shelle Byans. *27 Magic Words*. 978-0-8234-3657-6, T \$16.95 (Grade 4-8). This realistic fiction book is not actually about magic. Instead, the magic lies in the memories and coping abilities that the titular 27 words have for the main character Kobi. The words were left for her by her mother, a writer. When her parents are presumed dead after an accident at sea, Kobi experiences an upheaval in her life. She ends up in public school in Iowa, and in an effort to make friends, she tells lies. Eventually those lies catch up to her and, in order to grieve properly and move on with life, Kobi must come to terms with her lies. This book tackles many issues: grief, including adults dealing with their own sadness, Kobi's older sister's OCD, and Alzheimer disease, and it does it through well-written characters, in a realistic manner, and with kindness. The book would be a wonderful choice for book groups for 5th through 8th grade readers, and possibly mature 4th graders, to start a discussion on loss and grief.

Penney, Mary. *Eleven and Holding*. HarperCollins. 978-0-06-240547-0, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-6). Though Macy lives in Constant, Colorado, nothing in her life is constant. Her grandmother's death, the sale of the family cafe, and her dad, a vet who is absent from home yet promised to be there for her twelfth birthday, will test the coping skills of this eleven year old. The reader journeys with Macy as she tries to hold on to her life with all of the changes, and to do it before she turns twelve.

Pennypacker, Sara; illustrated by Jon Klassen. *Pax*. Balzer + Bray. 978-0-06-237701-2, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-9). In alternating chapters, Pennypacker tells the story of a boy and his fox as they try to find one another again after being forced to separate, pulling the reader through the emotions and hardships endured by each. Beautifully written, this book explores themes of friendship, loyalty, grief, war, and the environment while Klassen's black & white illustrations capture the emotional impact of the text. A powerful and touching story that is a great discussion starter for elementary and middle school readers.

Pung, Alice. *Lucy and Linh*. Borzoi Book/Alfred A. Knopf/Random House. 978-0-399-55048-5, T \$17.99 (Grade 10-12). Lucy is a Chinese immigrant who escaped to Australia from Vietnam when she was younger. In writing letters to her closest companion

Linh, Lucy explains the pressures and new experiences that she must navigate as she becomes the newest ethnic scholarship winner to the prestigious girl's school Laurinda. At home, Lucy supports her non-English-speaking seamstress mother by watching her baby brother and at school, she slowly becomes pulled into the unhealthy, three member, mean-girl clique called The Cabinet. Pung brings each girl's character deftly into focus through Lucy's sarcastic and honest observations. Lucy's self-awareness of her new judgements on her suburban family unit are harsh and at the same time, they challenge the token position her school mates want her to fulfill. Throughout the school year, the layers of Lucy and her relationship to Linh are revealed and the family life that seems lacking by Laurinda standards becomes the positive force that allows Lucy to be tested, survive, and look to the future in appreciation.

Redwine, C.J. *The Shadow Queen*. Balzer + Bray. 978-0-062-36024-3, T \$17.99 (Grade 7 and up). From the author of the Defiance series, Redwine has written another excellent dark fantasy based on a loose retelling of Snow White. Princess Lorelei has long been thought dead, especially when everyone in the King's Court watched her father's castle crumble on top of her and her brother. As long as she doesn't use her magic, they will be safe, but something has happened and Lorelei, along with her friends from Eldr, must regain what is rightfully hers and avenge her family. This first in the series is action-packed and well-developed with complex characters and plot, even though it sounds familiar. Perfect for fans of fantasy and the fantasy retellings

Sepahban, Lois. *Paper Wishes*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 978-0-374-30216-0, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-6). Manami is a young Japanese girl living in the state of Washington in the United States in the 1940s. When war breaks out with Japan, she and her family are forced to relocate to one of the internment camps set up by the government for Japanese citizens. Most Japanese families were forced to leave their homes, as well as leave beloved pets behind, and this devastates Manami. She is desperate to find a way to have her dog join her at the camp so she writes notes and releases them into the wind hoping he will see them and know to come find her. This is a sad but honest portrayal of how Japanese Americans were betrayed by their own government during WWII.

Stokes, Paula. *Girl Against the Universe*. Harper Teen. 978-0-0623-7996-2, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). Maguire and Jordy meet in a psychiatrist's office, each there for different reasons. Maguire is convinced she is bad luck and a danger to people; she stays out of the public eye, has no friends, and will only ride in a car with her mother. Jordy is a tennis star; his life is consumed by tennis; he lives only for tennis. Maguire wants to rejoin the world, and Jordy is seeking a more balanced life. With therapy and through their personal connection, they help make each other stronger and they end up falling in love. This fast-paced story with just the right amount of detail will keep the reader hooked to the very last page. Back matter includes information on mental illness and where to get help.

Stork, Francisco X. *The Memory of Light*. Arthur A. Levine Books. 978-0-545-47432-0, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). Recovery is at the heart of this book. Vicky wakes up in the mental illness ward of a hospital after a botched suicide attempt. She soon meets a group of teens there who are all dealing with some form of mental illness/trauma. In moving towards recovery and in group therapy, we learn about the individual personalities and situations of the patients. A strong support system of friendship, empathy, love, and hope is formed between Vicky, her fellow patients, and the kind and helpful doctors. Vicky eventually recovers enough to be sent home, but without that support system from the hospital, she must dig down deep to find her strength, courage, and bravery. But does she know that she has any of that left? Recovery, hope and inspiration.

Tamaki, Mariko. *Saving Montgomery Sole*. Roaring Brook Press. 978-1-626-72271-2, T \$17.99 (Grade 7 and up). Sixteen-year-old Montgomery "Monty" Sole lives with her sister and two moms in a small California town that she finds generally uninspiring. Monty's internal monologues about her often homophobic, image-focused peers are dotted with genuinely funny observations that balance the expertly depicted rage she feels at those whose cruelty threatens her family and friends. When a hate-spouting evangelist reverend moves to their town and crosses begin appearing on lockers at school, Monty's sense of alienation grows to overwhelming proportions as Tamaki slowly parses out the backstory of the pain caused by her grandparents, who've continually rejected her family. Detailed characters with strong relationships that allow them to challenge one another's perceptions make this a tale that will inspire empathy in readers even as they grapple with many of the issues that arise.

Turner, Pamela S. *Samurai Rising: The Epic Life of Minamoto Yoshitsune*. Charlesbridge. 978-1-58089-584-2, T \$16.95 (Grade 7 and up). This biographical work takes a narrative style to reveal more about the life of Minamoto Yoshitsune, a 12<sup>th</sup> century samurai who rose from obscurity in a brutal clash with the Taira clan. Yoshitsune's fame came from his fearless and often brutal tactics in battle, his personal ferocity, and sense of honor. The narrative style of this book aids in understanding Yoshitsune's place within this volatile time in history, and it unflinchingly describes the often brutal results of these violent clashes without sensationalizing the battles or getting drawn into anything beyond historical fact. This focused style helps to show the larger picture and reasons behind the development and rise of the samurai within the culture. The inclusion of timelines and maps helps ground this work even further. A fascinating read for anyone interested in how the samurai became such an iconic piece of Japanese culture and legend. Backmatter includes timelines, a glossary, chapter notes, bibliography, and an index.

Voskul, Hannah. *Horus and the Curse of the Everlasting Regret*. Alfred A. Knopf. 978-1-101-93333-6, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-6). A girl desperate for money to care for her ailing father; a boy desperate for money to escape his bullying stepbrothers for the summer; a child mummy desperate to break up the boredom caused by an endless curse; a kidnapped girl desperate to be found; a bat desperate for a nap; this perfectly-paced middle grade novel packs a lot into 200 pages. Set in 1934, post-Depression-era America, the book begins with a foot race and the action doesn't let up until the satisfying conclusion. With its message celebrating the power of kindness, the necessity of friendship to survive, and a talented bat friend, the book will be enjoyed by those readers ready for mild suspense and those lovers of mystery and action stories.

Weeks, Sarah. *Save Me a Seat*. Scholastic Press. 978-0-545-84660-8, T \$16.99 (Grade 4- 6). Ravi and Joseph couldn't be more different. Joe has lived in the same town all his life while Ravi has just moved from India. But, they may have more in common than they think - a bully. In alternating voices, over the course of a week, the reader will see how our own perceptions of people are not always correct. This read opens discussions on how we deal with immigrants, with bullies, and with those people we believe are different from us.

Williamson, Lisa. *The Art of Being Normal*. Margaret Ferguson Books. 978-0-374-30237-5, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). This is a book about two transgender teens at different stages in their transitions. David was born a male, but has always felt like a girl. He keeps his secret from everyone but his two best friends. Leo was born a female but is currently living as a boy and taking hormones. Leo has just transferred to David's school. Leo and David are drawn to each other without really knowing why. David helps Leo come to terms with his past. Leo helps David to move forward with his new life as Kate. This book is about more than just the transgender experience; it is also about being a teenager dealing with the feeling of not fitting in, about family issues, and about the struggle to find human connection. An important read.

Yoon, Nicola. *The Sun is Also a Star*. Delacorte Press. 978-0-553-49668-0, T \$18.99 (Grade 10-12). A finely nuanced look at how quick decisions by various people in New York City intertwine. At the heart of this are Natasha and Daniel, who fall in love with each other instantly. The problem is that Natasha and her family are being deported back to Jamaica in twelve hours. And Daniel, who is a first generation Korean-American, will be left to pick up the pieces of his highly structured and demanding life. They spend what time they have left together. Told in alternating chapters with secondary characters interspersed as they intersect with Natasha and Daniel's story, this is a layered romance showing the effects of family expectations, cultural traditions, and racism. A bittersweet love story with a hopeful ending. (Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Author Award and Michael L. Printz Honor)

#### **SPECIAL THANKS TO THE CREAM OF THE CROP COMMITTEE**

**Will Brown**, Head of Youth Services, Falmouth Memorial Library

**Kathy George**, Children's Services Librarian, Gray Public Library

**Melissa Madigan**, Youth Services Librarian, Merrill Memorial Library

**Cidney Mayes**, Library Information Integrator, Memorial Middle School, South Portland

**Jill O'Connor**, School Librarian, North Yarmouth Academy

**Deidre Walsh**, Head of Youth Services, Goodall Memorial Library, Sanford

## 2017 National Award Winners

Award books listed here may or may not be included in the “Cream of the Crop” list  
\* indicates a title that may appear in more than one category

**Caldecott Medal** – Awarded to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children.

Winner: Steptoe, Javaka. *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat*\*

Honors: Brosgol, Vera. *Leave Me Alone!*

Christie, R. Gregory. *Freedom in Congo Square*\*

Ellis, Carson. *Du Iz Tak?*

Wenzel, Brendan. *They All Saw a Cat*

**Charlotte Zolotow Award** – Awarded to the best picture book text published in the United States.

Winner: Weatherford, Carole Boston, *Freedom in Congo Square*\*

Honors: Alexie, Sherman. *Thunder Boy Jr.*

Fleming, Candace. *Giant Squid*\*

Jarvis. *Alan's Big, Scary Teeth*

**Coretta Scott King Award** – Recognizes outstanding books for young adults and children by African American authors and illustrators that reflect the African American experience.

**CSK Author Award**

Winner: Lewis, John and Andrew Aydin. *March: Book Three*

Honors: Bryan, Ashley. *Freedom Over Me: Eleven Slaves, Their Lives and Dreams Brought to Life*\*

Reynolds, Jason. *As Brave As You*

**CSK Illustrator Award**

Winner: Steptoe, Javaka. *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat*\*

Honor: Bryan, Ashley. *Freedom Over Me: Eleven Slaves, Their Lives and Dreams Brought to Life*\*

Christie, R. Gregory. *Freedom in Congo Square*\*

Pinkney, Jerry. *In Plain Sight*

**Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Author Award:**

Yoon, Nicola. *The Sun is Also a Star*\*

**Coretta Scott King/ Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement**

Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop

**Katahdin Award** – A lifetime achievement award given by the Youth Services Section of the Maine Library Association to recognize an outstanding body of work of children's literature in Maine by one author or illustrator. The award may be given annually but may not necessarily be given each year.

Melissa Sweet

**Laura Ingalls Wilder Award** – Honors an author or illustrator whose books, published in the United States, have made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children. Awarded every other year.

Nikki Grimes, whose award-winning works include *Bronx Masquerade*, which won the Coretta Scott King Author Award in 2003, and *Words with Wings*, the recipient of a Coretta Scott King Author Honor in 2014.

**Lupine Award** – Presented annually by the Youth Services Section of the Maine Library Association, to recognize an outstanding contribution to children's literature in Maine.

**Picture Book**

Winner: Bryan, Ashley. *Freedom Over Me: Eleven Slaves, Their Lives and Dreams Brought to Life*\*

Honor: Higgins, Ryan T. *Hotel Bruce*

**J/YA**

Winner: Sweet, Melissa. *Some Writer!*

Honor: Padian, Maria. *Wrecked*

**Margaret A. Edwards Award** – Recognizes an author and his/her body of work for outstanding contribution to young adult literature.

Sarah Dessen, whose books include: *Dreamland*, *Keeping the Moon*, *Just Listen*, *The Truth about Forever*, *Along for the Ride*, *What Happened to Goodbye?* and *This Lullaby*.

**Mildred L. Batchelder Award** – Awarded to an American publisher for a children's book considered to be the most outstanding of those books originally published in a foreign language in a foreign country and subsequently translated into English and published in the United States.

Winner: Ringtved, Glenn. *Cry Heart, But Never Break*. Illustrated by Charlotte Pardi. Originally published in Danish in 2001 as *Graed Blot Hjerte*. Translated by Robert Moulthrop

Honors: Gomi, Taro. *Over the Ocean*. Translated from the Japanese by Taylor Norman  
Sanabria, José. *As Time Went By*. Translated from the Spanish by Audrey Hall  
Svingen, Arne. *The Ballad of a Broken Nose*. Translated from the Norwegian by Kari Dickson

**Newbery Medal** – The most distinguished contribution to American literature for children.

Winner: Barnhill, Kelly. *The Girl Who Drank the Moon*

Honors: Bryan, Ashley. *Freedom Over Me: Eleven Slaves, Their Lives and Dreams Brought to Life\**  
Gidwitz, Adam. *The Inquisitor's Tale: Or, The Three Magical Children and Their Holy Dog*  
Wolk, Lauren. *Wolf Hollow*

**Printz (Michael L.) Award** – Awarded for a book that exemplifies literary excellence in young adult literature.

Winner: Lewis, John, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell. *March: Book Three\**

Honors: Berry, Julie. *The Passion of Dolssa*  
O'Neill, Louise. *Asking For It*  
Shusterman, Neal. *Scythe*  
Yoon, Nicola. *The Sun is Also a Star\**

**Pura Belpre** – Presented to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth.

**Author Award**

Winner: Medina, Juana. *Juana & Lucas*

Honor: Diaz, Alexandra. *The Only Road*

**Illustrator Award**

Winner: Gonzalez, Raúl. *Lowriders to the Center of the Earth*

Honors: Tonatiuh, Duncan. *Esquivell!: Space-Age Sound Artist*  
Tonatiuh, Duncan. *The Princess and the Warrior: A Tale of Two Volcanoes*

**Robert F. Sibert Medal** – Honors the most distinguished informational book published in English in the preceding year for its significant contribution to children's literature.

Winner: Lewis, John and Andrew Aydin. *March: Book Three*. Illustrated by Nate Powell\*

Honors: Fleming, Candace. *Giant Squid*. Illustrated by Eric Rohmann\*  
Freedman, Russell. *We Will Not Be Silent: The White Rose Student Resistance Movement that Defied Adolf Hitler*  
Marrin, Albert. *Uprooted: The Japanese American Experience During World War II*  
Stelson, Caren. *Sachiko: A Nagasaki Bomb Survivor's Story*

**Schneider Family Book Award** – Honors an author or illustrator for a book that embodies an artistic expression of the disability experience for child and adolescent audiences.

Children's (birth - age 10): Bryant, Jen. *Six Dots: A Story of Young Louis Braille*. Illustrated by Boris Kulikov

Middle (age 11 -13): Reynolds, Jason. *As Brave As You\**

Teen (age 13 -18): Lord, Emery. *When We Collided*

**Stonewall Book Award - Mike Morgan & Larry Romans Children's & Young Adult Literature Award** – Given annually to English language children's and young adult books of exceptional merit relating to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender experience.

Winners: Riordan, Rick. *Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard: The Hammer of Thor*  
Russo, Meredith. *If I Was Your Girl*

Honors: McLemore, Anna-Marie. *When the Moon Was Ours*  
Downham, Jenny. *Unbecoming*  
Stevenson, Robin. *Pride: Celebrating Diversity & Community*

**Theodor Seuss Geisel Award** – Honors the author of the most distinguished contribution to the body of American children’s literature known as ‘beginning reader books’ published in the United States during the preceding year.

Winner: Keller, Laurie. *We Are Growing: A Mo Willems’ Elephant & Piggie Like Reading! Book*

Honors: LaReau, Kara. *The Infamous Ratsos*. Illustrated by Matt Myers  
Milgrim, David. *Go Otto Go!*  
Pizzoli, Greg. *Good Night Owl*  
Twohy, Mike. *Oops, Pounce, Quick, Run! An Alphabet Caper*

**William C. Morris Award** – Honors a debut book published by a first-time author writing for teens and celebrating impressive new voices in young adult literature.

Zentner, Jeff. *The Serpent King*

**YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults** – Honors the best nonfiction book published for YA ages 12-18.

Lewis, John, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell. *March: Book Three\**