

2014

2014 List of Cream of the Crop for Children's and Young Adult Literature

Southern Maine Library District Book Review Group.

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Maine Regional Library System
25th Annual Reading Round Up of Children's and Young Adult Literature
Augusta Civic Center
April 10, 2014

Cream of the Crop
Total books: 117

KEY

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

PICTURE BOOK NON-FICTION (total books in this category: 21)

Brown, Don. *Henry and the Cannons*. Roaring Brook Press. 978-1-59643-266-6, R \$16.99 (Grade 1-4). An illustrated account of Henry Knox's journey from Boston to Ft. Ticonderoga and back, bringing 59 cannons to help drive the British Army out of the city. The text and illustrations give the reader a good understanding of the type of person Henry Knox was and the huge scale of his accomplishment.

Bunting, Eve. *The Cart that Carried Martin*. Charlesbridge. 978-1-58089-387-9, R \$16.95 (Grade K-5). A simple wooden cart and two ordinary mules proudly carry a beloved leader, Martin Luther King, on his historic funeral march. Soft, subtle illustrations capture the mood of the day. The author's last line provides the best summarization. "This is the humble cart that, not so long ago, carried greatness."

Butterworth, Chris. *See What a Seal Can Do*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6574-6, R \$14.99 (Grade K-3). This non-fiction picture book explores a day in the life of a gray seal. Gray seals are true seals that live in the North Atlantic Ocean. It is beautifully illustrated and uses a conversational tone that provides much information. The end papers show eighteen different types of true seals.

Cate, Annette Le Blanc. *Look Up!: Bird Watching in Your Own Backyard*. Candlewick Press, 978-0-7636-4561-8, R \$15.99 (Grade 3-6). This engaging book is written in a conversational style, directly addressing the reader. It encourages children to observe, draw and be a part of the natural world no matter where they live. The text and illustrations (which are filled with cartoon talk bubbles) contain a massive amount of information about birds and their habitats and make bird watching seem anything but stodgy. Back matter includes a complete bibliography, index, and even some tips on drawing birds. (Robert F. Sibert Honor)

Collins, Suzanne. *Year of the Jungle: Memories from the Home Front*. Scholastic Press. 978-0-545-42516-2, T \$17.99 (Grade K-3). In this memoir, Collins tells the story of her father's year-long deployment to Vietnam from the viewpoint of her then - six year old self. The author perfectly captures the confusion, worry, sadness and fear that she felt as birthdays and holidays marked the passing year. The illustrations may initially appear deceptively cartoon-like but they capture the emotions of both "Suzy" and her family. Librarians will find *Year of the Jungle* an important book for children who have a parent who is or was deployed. (Charlotte Zolotow Honor)

Coy, John. *Hoop Genius: How a Desperate Teacher and a Rowdy Gym Class Invented Basketball*. Carolrhoda Books. 978-0-7613-6617-1, R \$16.95 (Grade 2-5). This lively and informative picture book will appeal to a wide audience. The story takes place in 1891 at a school in Springfield, Massachusetts. The large and colorful illustrations enhance the narrative. The author's note provides interesting background information about the teacher John Naismith. A brief bibliography is included as is a facsimile of the original 1891 basketball rules.

Flowers, Pam. *Ordinary Dogs, Extraordinary Friendships*. Alaska Northwest Books, 978-0-88240-916-0, P \$12.99 (Grade 3-6). This book contains 11 short stories about musher Pam Flowers's adventures with her sled dogs in the unforgiving Alaskan wilderness. A keen observer of animal behavior, Flowers recounts lessons of patience, trust, perseverance and acceptance of loss that she has learned from her dogs. In writing that is uncomplicated and sincere, she conveys her great love and respect for her canine companions. A must read for dog lovers.

Goldstone, Bruce. *That's a Possibility! A Book About What Might Happen*. Henry Holt and Company. 978-0-8050-8998-1, R \$16.99 (Grade 1-5). Starting with the word "possibility," the author moves from simple terms to more intricate ideas building on the reader's success in mastering one concept to the next. Questions and visually attractive examples invite reader participation from start to finish. An entertaining introduction to probability and statistics.

Guiberson, Brenda Z. *Frog Song*. Henry Holt and Company. 978-0-8050-9254-7, R \$17.99 (Grade 2-4). Eleven varieties of frogs from around the world are described in this exquisitely illustrated book with double page spreads. Each entry provides the habitat, interesting facts, and the unique sound each frog makes. Additional information at the end of the book includes the geographic range, size, and more facts. There is a note concerning conservation titled “Frogs in Trouble” preceding an extensive bibliography and online resources. This well written text together with illustrations by Gennady Spirin make this an excellent choice for reading aloud.

Huber, Raymond. *Flight of the Honeybee*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6760-3, R \$16.99 (Grade 2-4). Honeybees have many jobs within their families. This book explains the scout’s role. It describes a day in the life of one of nature’s most important creatures. Well written and beautifully illustrated, it makes the complexity of bee behavior easily understood. The author includes ways that readers can help bees. This book is highly recommended for sharing with a group and for research.

Jenkins, Steve. *The Animal Book, A Collection of the Fastest, Fiercest, Toughest, Cleverest, Shyest and Most Surprising Animals on Earth*. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children. 978-0-547-55799-1, T \$21.99 (Grade K-5). The author/illustrator’s distinctive artwork is put to good use in new ways of presenting concepts of extinction, adaptation, survival of the fittest, extremes and more. Information on over 300 animals plus a look into the author’s non-fiction writing and creative process. This is a book to get lost in.

Markel, Michelle. *Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Makers’ Strike of 1909*. Balzar + Bray. 978-0-06-180442-7, T [M] \$17.99 (Grade K-3). Clara Lemlich, the “Brave Girl” of the title, fought for unions and better treatment of garment workers in the early part of the 20th century. Clara was an exceptionally determined young woman who managed to educate herself even while she worked long days in a sweatshop. The unfairness and brutality that Clara experienced compelled her to organize other young women to join their male counterparts in a long and ultimately successful strike for better working conditions in the garment industry, a struggle that is certainly still relevant. Melissa Sweet’s painting and collage illustrations are marvelous – of particular interest is the “Table of Wages” that appears on the back cover. (Lupine Picture Book Honor)

Pinborough, Jan. *Miss Moore Thought Otherwise*. Houghton Mifflin. 978-0-547-47105-1, T [M] \$16.99 (Grade 1-4). It will come as a surprise to many children that until about 1900, only adults were permitted in public libraries. Anne Carroll Moore thought otherwise. Born in Limerick, Maine, she was an inveterate reader who craved books and education. Miss Moore moved to Brooklyn to attend library school and was later hired to supervise the children’s sections of all 36 of the New York public library branches. She set about training librarians and creating welcoming spaces with appropriate collections for young patrons. The colorful, folk art style illustrations give the reader a real sense of the determined Miss Moore.

Rusch, Elizabeth. *Volcano Rising*. Charlesbridge. 978-1-58089-408-1, R \$17.95 (Grade K-5). The dynamic life of volcanos is explored here with the focus on two kinds of eruptions, destructive and creative, and examples from around the world. Two levels of text and colorful mixed media illustrations broaden the appeal. Good read-aloud non-fiction for a deeper understanding of volcanic activity.

Scientists in the Field Series. What the over 30 titles in this series have in common is that the various authors take you with them on an adventure of discovery. The books are consistently engaging, relevant and exciting with equal focus on the research topic and the scientists embarking on these adventures with a purpose. Listed below are two *Scientist in the Field* titles chosen for this year’s “Cream” list.

Montgomery, Sy. *The Tapir Scientist, Saving South America’s Largest Mammal*. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children. 978-0-547-81548-0, T \$18.99 (Grade 4-7). The author and photographer join a team of biologists for two weeks in Brazil’s Pantanal Wetland to track, tranquilize, examine and outfit with radio collars Lowland Tapirs.

Turner, Pamela S. *The Dolphins of Shark Bay*. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children. 978-0-547-71638-1, T \$18.99 (Grade 5-9). Get to know the many individuals and family groups in Janet Mann’s over 25-year research project of the bottlenose dolphins on the west coast of Australia.

Smith, Charles R. Jr. *Brick by Brick*. Amistad. 978-0-6-192082-0, R \$17.99 (Grade 2-5). The original White House was built by slaves as well as paid tradesmen. The slaves were rented out and the owners kept the earnings. When skilled workers were brought in they taught specialized trades such as cabinet making and carpentry to some of the slaves who were able to keep their wages and buy their freedom. This beautifully illustrated book with its rhythmic text would be an excellent read aloud for Black History Month. It would also be useful for discussions concerning slavery in America and background information about the White House. An author’s note is included.

Springer, Lauren. *When Stravinsky Met Nijinsky: Two Artists, Their Ballet, and One Extraordinary Riot*. Harcourt Children’s Books. 978-0-547-90725-3, T \$16.99 (Grade 1-3). Stravinsky and Nijinsky were established artists who collaborated to mix things up in Paris in 1913 with a new kind of ballet that referenced Russian folk music and dance. *The Rite of Spring* was so controversial that it nearly provoked a riot in the audience. In her vivid, scintillating illustrations, Stringer draws upon other visual artists of the time including Matisse and Picasso.

Suneby, Elizabeth. *Razia's Ray of Hope: One Girl's Dream of an Education*. Kids Can Press. 978-1-55453-816-4, R \$18.95 (Grade 2-5). When a new school for girls is being built nearby, Razia, a young Afghan girl, enlists the help of her grandfather. She needs the permission of her father and brothers to attend the school. With the support of her grandfather, mother, and the woman who runs the school, Razia's dream comes true. The story was inspired by the lives of real girls living in Afghanistan. At the end of the book is information about a woman who started schools for girls in Afghanistan, a list of Dari words used in the book, and a variety of classroom activities to supplement the book.

Tavares, Matt. *Becoming Babe Ruth*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-5646-1, R (M) \$16.99 (Grade 2-5). This well researched picture book biography introduces young readers to the formative years of Babe Ruth and gives them a glimpse into the sports fan's experience before television. The big, bold illustrations beautifully convey Ruth's oversized personality and the love of baseball that defined him.

Vanderwater, Amy Ludwig. *Forest Has a Song*. Clarion Books. 978-0-618-84349-7, R \$16.99 (Grade K-3). These lovely poems for every season are beautifully illustrated in watercolors. There are poems about chickadees, fiddleheads, lady slippers, deer, maples, snowflakes and many more familiar topics related to a woodland forest. This would be a welcome addition to any poetry collection.

PICTURE BOOK FICTION (total books in this category: 23)

Ashman, Linda. *Rain!* Houghton Mifflin Books for Children. 978-0-547-73395-1, R \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 2). An old man and a young boy experience a rainy day in very different ways. The man sees nothing good about the rain while the child dressed in frog rain gear enjoys everything he encounters. The two meet and the boy's joyous mood is contagious. This simple story offers a look at perspective and how one's attitude affects others. Colorful and expressive illustrations complement the story.

Baillie, Allan. *DragonQuest*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6617-0, R \$16.99 (Grade K-3). The reader, in the form of a young boy, is invited by a gray haired knight to join in a perilous quest to slay the last dragon. Deadly snakes, goblins, a double-headed troll and more are encountered on the way to the top of Glass Mountain. Though the wizened knight never finds his prey, the final two wordless pages satisfy the imagination. Perhaps dragons are still with us.

Bean, Jonathan. *Big Snow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 978-0-374-30696-0, R \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 2).

David anxiously awaits an impending snowstorm. His mother tries to keep him busy with various activities (cookie baking, cleaning), but then finally convinces him to take a nap. He dreams of a monstrous storm – the drifts invade his living room. Upon waking, David and his family venture out into the storm to “check on the big snow.” Bean's illustrations perfectly capture the anticipation and excitement of the first snowstorm of the season.

Bean, Jonathan. *Building Our House*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux Books for Young Readers. 978-0-374-38023-6, R \$17.99 (Grade K-3). Chronicles the hard work of a family of four as they transform a plot of raw land into a homestead. Well drillers, backhoes, hand tools and a community of friends are just some of the elements shown that contribute to building a home from scratch. Colorful, detailed illustrations expand the story beyond the text. (Charlotte Zolotow Honor)

Blechman, Nicholas. *Night Light*. Orchard Books. 978-0-545-46263-1, T \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 1). Much more than a simple counting book about vehicles, this title is also a guessing game. Each turn of the page features a clue, and an increasing number of strategically placed holes. As the reader again turns the page, the lights are illuminated and the holes reveal a different aspect of the featured vehicle. This sturdy little book will be read again and again.

Cooper, Elisha. *Train*. Orchard Books. 978-0-545-38495-7, T \$17.99 (PreK-Grade 2). There is something for everyone in this East to West Coast train trip. The text conveys the sounds, sights and smells of five different kinds of trains, while the panoramic illustrations celebrate the places they take us. A concise glossary will expand the enjoyment for true train fans.

Cunnane, Kelly. *Deep in the Sahara*. Schwartz and Wade Books. 978-0-375-87034-7, T [M] \$19.99 (Grade K-3). The central character of this story is Lalla, a young Muslim girl who lives in the desert country of Mauritania. She longs to wear a malafa – the flowing garment that her mother and the older girls wear. Lalla learns the meaning of the malafa – in her culture it stands for beauty, mystery, tradition, and faith. The bright illustrations, an author's note and glossary help the young reader to better understand a style of dress that may be misinterpreted in the west.

Evert, Lori. *The Christmas Wish*. Random House Children's Books. 978-0-449-81681-3, T \$17.99 (PreK-Grade 3). Anja's wish is to become one of Santa's helpers. With the assistance of a menagerie of Arctic animals, she realizes her dream. This charming Nordic tale together with the gorgeous, digitally altered photographs create a Christmas story with a peaceable kingdom feel.

Fergus, Maureen. *The Day My Mom Came to Kindergarten*. Kids Can Press. 978-1-55453-698-6, T \$16.95 (PreK-Grade 1). A young girl invites her mother to kindergarten and discovers that her mother disrupts everything because she doesn't know the rules. The girl is patient and shows her the ropes. This is a helpful and amusing way for children to learn about rules in school. The full page illustrations work well for sharing with a group.

Fleishman, Paul. *The Matchbox Diary*. Candlewick Press. 9778-0-7636-4601-1, R \$16.99 (Grade 2-5). A young girl's great-grandfather shares the story of his life coming from Italy as a child to America. Being poor and unable to read or write he collects small objects in matchboxes as a diary to remember where he came from and his experiences through his early life. This beautifully illustrated story of immigration, family life, and hard work is moving and unique.

Fleming, Candace. *Papa's Mechanical Fish*. Margaret Ferguson Books. 978-0-374-39908-5, R \$16.99 (Grade 1-3). This story is loosely based on the eccentric inventor, Lodner Phillips, who built a submarine in 1851 and took his wife and children beneath the waves of Lake Michigan. The author's note provides the facts that inspired this story. Sources are also listed.

Hest, Amy. *When Charley Met Grampa*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-8314-9, R \$15.99 (PreK-Grade 1). Henry writes a letter inviting his Grampa to come for a visit to meet Charley, his new puppy. Grampa writes back to say he has never been friends with a dog before, but will do his best. He arrives by train on a snowy day and is met by Henry and Charley at the station. Charley retrieves Grampa's windblown cap on the way home and wins him over. This delightful story with its charming illustrations is a sequel to *Charleys' First Night*.

Huget, Jennifer Larue. *The Beginner's Guide to Running Away From Home*. Schwartz and Wade Books. 978-0-375-86739-2, T \$17.99 (Grade K-3). A young boy, the middle child in the family, feeling under-appreciated and unfairly treated, decides to run away from home. He advises the reader on matters such as writing a note, where to stay, and what to bring. The book comes alive with Chris Sickels's amazingly detailed, 3-D constructions. Especially memorable are the long suffering boy's faithful rabbit, his snarky older brother, and fussy baby sister.

Jennewein, Lenore. *Chick-O-Saurus Rex*. Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers. 978-1-4424-5186-5, T \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 2). Little Chick wants to play in the farm tree house but the donkey, pig, and lamb – bullies all – will not let him because he is neither strong nor mighty. While trying to discover a courageous ancestor, Little Chick follows Grandpa Rooster's lead and digs up a Tyrannosaurus Rex skeleton. Emboldened, he saves the others from a menacing wolf. An author's note discusses the connection between chickens and dinosaurs.

Matheson, Christie. *Tap the Magic Tree*. Greenwillow Books. 978-0-06-227445-8, T \$15.99 (PreK-Grade 2). The reader/listener is invited to interact with the apple tree by tapping it, touching it, giving it a jiggle, etc. This imaginative book with its simple illustrations shows the tree through the four seasons. Using only a few words, this delightful book begs to be shared.

Milgrim, David. *Some Monsters are Different*. Henry Holt and Company. 978-0-8050-9519-7, R \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 2). This collection of not too sweet, but not at all scary monsters illustrates and encourages the acceptance of differences. A bold, colorful salute to individuality that would be good as a story hour conversation starter.

Miller, Zietlow Pat. *Sophie's Squash*. Schwartz & Wade Books. 978-0-307-97896-7, R \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 2). This very original story is about a young girl, Sophie, who loves a squash and names it Bernice. They go to the library together, practice somersaults, and visit other squash at the farmers' market. Over time the squash begins to get soft and with some helpful advice Sophie finds a way to handle the situation. Winter is long for Sophie, but when spring arrives she recognizes a small green sprout. The illustrations are charming and the ending is clever. (Charlotte Zolotow Honor)

Moore, Eva. *Lucky Ducklings*. Orchard Books. 978-0-439-44861-1, T \$16.99 (Grade K-3). Based on a true story, this is a *Make Way for Ducklings* for the modern age. Mother duck and her five babies leave their quiet pond and make their way across a park and into town. As they cross a road, one by one the ducklings are swallowed by a storm drain grate. The local Montauk firemen save the day and the ducks. The lovely illustrations perfectly fit this hopeful, thoughtful tale of animals adapting to an urban environment.

Moser, Lisa. *Squirrel's Fun Day*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-5726-0, R \$14.99 (Grade K-2). This beginner reader features Squirrel, with boundless energy, faster in his actions than his thoughts. Squirrel's persistence and his friends' patience result in a fun day and an enjoyable read. Short chapters and ample repetition will be helpful to new readers.

Sayre, April Pulley. *Eat Like a Bear*. Henry Holt and Company. 978-0-8050-9039-0, T \$16.99 (Grade K-3). Although this title is cataloged as easy fiction, it contains much information about the habits of the grizzly bear. Sayre's well researched text follows one grizzly bear from April, just as it emerges from hibernation, through the seasons into the next winter. The wide array of food that this animal relies upon makes evident the interconnectedness of the natural world. Steve Jenkins's excellent torn paper illustrations plus additional back matter about grizzlies make this one a first purchase as it will appeal to both animal lovers and report writers.

Staake, Bob. *Bluebird*. Schwartz and Wade Books. 978-0-375-87037-8, T \$17.99 (Grade K-3). The stylized, contemporary illustrations in this wordless book convey the story of an unhappy, friendless boy on the first day of a new school year. At the end of the day, a bluebird follows him home through the streets of New York City and we see his mood gradually lighten as the little bird becomes his friend. This subtle book addresses a variety of issues: friendship, bullying, and death. *Bluebird* is a complex story that will spark discussion and elicit questions. It would make an excellent introduction to graphic novels for younger readers.

Willems, Mo. *That is Not a Good Idea!* Balzer + Bray. 978-0-06-220309-0, T \$17.99 (Grade K-3). A dapper fox, cunning goose and six wise goslings make up the cast in this fractured fairy tale drawn in silent movie style. Tension builds to a twisted surprise ending. On re-reading, every detail in the text and illustrations supports the new conclusion.

Zuppari, Sam. *The Nowhere Box*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6367-4, R \$15.99 (PreK-Grade 3). George has two little brothers who are driving him crazy. They want to play but he just wants to be left alone. When a new washing machine is delivered, George sees his chance – the giant box becomes a time machine taking him everywhere and Nowhere. As it turns out, Nowhere is a bit lonely and George is happily reunited with his siblings. Every kid who has ever made a cardboard box into a race car or a space capsule will identify with this story of family, imagination, and escape.

NON-FICTION (books in this category: 11)

Adler, David. *Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad*. Holiday House. 978-0-8234-2365-1, R \$18.95 (Grade 4-8). Adler's biography provides accessible, readable, full descriptions of Harriet (Araminta "Minty" Ross) Tubman's life based on historical events before and during the Civil War. While Tubman made frequent trips to Canada with escaping slaves, Adler touches on the possible exaggeration by past biographers about these trips. The Civil War information provided will inspire readers to delve in further. Useful for reports, research or pleasure reading. Contains table of contents, primary sources in photos, quotes etc. Full timeline of her life interposed on a historical timeline.

Brown, Don. *The Great American Dust Bowl*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-547-81550-3, T [GN] \$18.99 (Grade 4-8). Brown's compassionate narrative on the 1930's natural disastrous dust storms is a hit. The muted earth tones of the graphic format and page turner quality of writing give the storms a life of their own. The perspective of the people and how they coped with a calamity of this magnitude give an urgency to this story and the importance of knowing this time in US history.

Doeden, Matt. *A Marked Man: The Assassination of Malcolm X*. Twenty-First Century Books. 978-7613-5484-0, T \$33.27 (Grade 7-9). What made Malcolm X a target for assassination? The black and white photographs with splashes of red and a diagram of the scene of the crime add to the dramatic appeal of this biography. Malcolm X's controversial journey to leadership is skillfully placed in the context of the Civil Rights Movement and race history starting with slave rebellions in the 1700's through the election of Barack Obama. An index, glossary, timeline (1925-2012), brief biographical sketches, source notes, selected bibliography and numerous book and website resources appended.

Ehrlich, Amy (adpt.) and Daniel Nevins (illus.). *With a Mighty Hand: The Story of the Torah*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-76364395-9, T \$29.99. (Grade 5-12). In this stunning adaptation of the Torah, Ehrlich weaves the stories that form the fabric of Judeo-Christian thought into an eminently readable narrative. Accompanied by Nevins's breathtaking paintings, *With a Mighty Hand* sits comfortably on the shelf with Low & Stewart and D'Aulaire and their treatments of Greek, Roman, and Egyptian mythology to give young readers a beautiful introduction to a seminal work of Western Civilization.

Greenberg, Jan and Sandra Jordan. *The Mad Potter: George E. Ohr, Eccentric Genius*. Neal Porter Book. 978-1-59643-8101, T \$17.99 (Grade 4-8). Greenberg and Jordan's narrative biography of the eccentric potter George Ohr is a treasure. It wasn't until after his death that Ohr's sculptures were finally admired by the art world. He is quoted saying, "When I'm gone my work will be prized, honored and cherished." Ohr was a self-promoter ahead of his time who insisted his unique pots were artistic sculptures and not factory made. The black and white photographs of his shop highlight his early advertising signs, "Unequaled, unrivaled, undisputed, greatest potter on earth!" Greenberg and Jordan include how-to's on throwing pottery and evaluating art for young art historians along with the bibliography, source notes and picture credits. (Robert F. Sibert Honor)

McClafferty, Carla Killough. *Fourth Down and Inches: Concussions and Football's Make-or-Break Moments*. Carolrhoda Books. 978-1-4677-1067-1, T \$20.95 (Grade 4-12). McClafferty's historical look back at the changing face of American football rules lays the groundwork for a critical analysis of the current injury crisis for football players. McClafferty's book is expertly researched, informative, and is complemented by excellent photographs, personal accounts of the players and cutting edge research by The Brain Bank Neurologists.

Morpurgo, Clare and Michael. *Where My Wellies Take Me*. Templar. 978-0-7636-6629-3, R \$29.99 (Grade 6-12). A wonderful story of a young girl walking the English countryside and some of the adventures she encounters along her journey. She loves staying with her Aunt Peggy. On this day she must return for the May Day festivities but soon loses track of time as she walks around the island. Page after page offers you a delightful mix of sketches, paintings, poems, hand written stories and fold out pages and maps.

Perkins, Mitali (ed.) *Open Mic: Riffs on Life Between Cultures in Ten Voices*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-76365866-3, T \$15.99 (Grade 7-12). Ten voices, in poetry and prose, describe how it is to be a bi-cultural teenager in the 21st century. Although the notion of a "dominant" culture appears to be fading, these young people face prejudice and insecurity in their daily lives. How they deal with the reality of bi-cultural life makes this a must-read for every teen.

Rusch, Elizabeth. *Eruption: Volcanoes and the Science of Saving Lives*. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children. 978-0-547-50350-9, T \$18.99 (Grade 6-12). In *Eruption*, award winning author Rusch teams up with photographer Uhlman to deliver a fast paced adventure highlighting the work of real life heroes: the volcanologists. They travel to the most famous volcanoes in the world and race to predict the next eruption, educate the population in the wake of the volcano and prevent tragedy. Rusch's effective narrative style includes first-hand accounts from the survivors. The breathtaking aerial mountain photographs are powerfully juxtaposed with scenes of the destruction in the aftermath of a volcanic eruption. Volcanic vocabulary, chapter notes, selected bibliography and index appended.

Sidman, Joyce. *What the Heart Knows*, Houghton Mifflin. 978-0-544-10616-1, T \$16.99 (Grade 7-12). A wonderful rich book of poems, offering chants and charms for courage; spells and invocations; laments and remembrances; and praise, songs and blessings. Contains delightful color paintings to charm the reader, making this a book to own and give as a gift.

Stone, Tanya Lee. *Courage Has No Color: The True Story of the Triple Nickles. America's First Black Paratroopers*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-5117-6, T \$24.99 (Grade 6-12). This informative book on African Americans who became the first black paratroopers of WWII takes you from the edge of the plane as a paratrooper is ready to jump, to the young soldiers living with segregation. Great personalization with pictures, past and present, take you from the 1940's up to 2012. Walter Morris at age 90 said, "We succeeded where we were not expected to succeed." The book includes 103 photographs, a list of the original test platoon of the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, a time line from 1940 to 1953, and an impressive bibliography of further resources; a great addition to a Black American History collection.

FICTION (books in this category: 62)

Alexander, William. *Ghoulis Song*. Margaret K. McElderry Books. 978-14424-2729-7, T \$16.99 (Grade 3-6). The author of *Goblin Secrets* again transports us to the magical city of Zombay – populated with goblins, ghouls, and witch-workers. Kaile is a girl who understands music, the rhythm and pitch, but also the magic. When a goblin gives her a bewitched flute made of bone, it insists on a tune – that tune separates Kaile from her shadow. In Zombay, if you have no shadow, you are considered dead. This sets Kaile on a journey to reunite with her shadow. Well drawn characters, a plot that moves right along and an atmospheric setting make this an excellent read aloud for middle graders.

Anderson, John David. *Sidekicked*. Walden Pond Press. 978-0-06-213314-4, T \$16.99 (Grade 5-8). Drew Bean is one of the secret sidekicks, with specialized super powers, being trained in the basement of the middle school in this witty and comical super hero fantasy. Unfortunately, he lacks self-confidence and is the only sidekick that seems to be unable to count on his "super" to come through when he is in danger. When some of the team's secret identities are blown, it takes Drew and his sidekick friends to solve the mystery and bring the criminals to justice. Fans of super heroes, mysteries and kids with special talents will "swoop" in for this one.

Angus, Sam. *Soldier Dog*. Feiwel and Friends. 978-1-250-01864-9, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-9). Angus takes readers on a heartwarming historical journey. It is WWI and a family miscommunication about an unspeakable event drives thirteen-year-old Stanley to lie about his age and enlist. The hardworking dogs of the British Messenger Dog Service fill Stanley with warmth and hope and give him a purpose in these turbulent times.

Avasthi, Swati. *Chasing Shadows*. Alfred A. Knopf. 978-0-375-86342-4, T \$17.99 (Grade 8-12). Avasthi tells a vivid, edge-of-your-seat, heart-wrenching story with an explosive blend of text and graphic art. The chapters alternate between Holly and Savitri, once strong, agile risk takers active in the sport of freerunning on their city rooftops and now grieving the loss of their friend after a car shooting. Their freerunning skills are put to the test as they try to catch the shooter while at the same time keep their sanity and stay firmly rooted in their day to day lives.

Balliett, Blue. *Hold Fast*. Scholastic Press. 978-0-545-29988-6, T \$17.99 (Grade 4-8). Eleven year old Early Pearl is part of a stable, loving family, until her librarian father goes mysteriously missing. The family's tiny Chicago apartment is broken into and with barely enough money for rent and no money for repairs, Early, her mother and her little brother flee to a homeless shelter. Early is a bright, confident girl who bears the burden of keeping the family's spirits up while trying to solve the mystery of her father's disappearance. Middle grade readers will be intrigued by Early's detective work as she compiles clues but will also see how quickly life can change for a once happy family. The homeless shelter, the police department, and the city of Chicago are portrayed realistically. A great mystery story in an unusual setting.

Barrow, Randi. *Finding Zasha*. Scholastic Press. 978-0-545-45218-2, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-9). This prequel to *Saving Zasha* is a moving story of the strength and perseverance of 12-year-old Ivan in a time of war. It is the summer of 1941 and the Germans have invaded Leningrad with the intent to starve the Russians into surrender or death. Ivan is separated from his family and forced to work for the Nazis playing music and training two German Shepherds, Zasha and Thor. Barrow once again has given us a personal glimpse into a particularly gruesome part of WWII while making this history accessible to a middle-grade audience.

Bick, Ilsa J. *The Sin-eater's Confession*. Carolrhoda Books. 978-0-7613-5687-5, T \$17.95 (Grade 10-12). Ben's life begins to spin out of control when suggestive photographs of him are published. College bound and hounded by his ambitious mother, Ben had nevertheless been a happy, helpful person. Jimmy, his neighbor, is tortured by his father's inability to love him as he loved his older brother, an all-boy football hero killed in a car accident. After Jimmy publishes his photographs of Ben, the narrow-minded town assumes that they are homosexual lovers. Jimmy's father is a deep-dyed evangelical under the sway of a sinister Christian cult and he reacts violently to the gossip. When Jimmy is attacked and killed, Ben is consumed by guilt for failing to intervene.

Blackwood, Sage. *Jinx*. Harper Collins. 978-0-06-212990-9, R \$16.99 (Grade 4-8). "In the Urwald you grow up fast or not at all." Jinx is abandoned in the forest and saved by a wizard that Jinx believes is evil. The forest world of Urwald is full of trolls, werewolves, and witches. Jinx learns some magic from the wizard and improves his ability to listen and understand what the trees are saying. Jinx has many choices to make as he discovers more about the wizard, his new home, and new friends. This fantasy with its well-developed characters is suspenseful and filled with action.

Britt, Fanny and Isabelle Arsenault. *Jane, the Fox and Me*. Groundwood Books. 978-1-55498-360-5, T [GN] \$19.95 (Grade 4-8). Helene is a bright, funny girl bullied by her former friends. School is a misery and threatens to become worse as the whole class is sent to a nature camp at the end of the year. At camp, Helene is cruelly teased and banished to the "outcast tent." Here she meets lively Geraldine who befriends her and helps her to regain her sense of self. Several themes run through the book: body image, peer pressure, the vagaries of friendship, and the development of self-assuredness. Many readers will recognize themselves in this beautifully rendered graphic novel.

Castellucci, Cecil. *Odd Duck*. First Second. 978-1-59643-557-5, R [GN] \$15.99 (Grade 2-5). Two unusual ducks become neighbors and then friends. A misunderstanding and hurt feelings lead to each duck's soul searching and acknowledging their own quirks. This graphic novel shows readers that a little oddness can enrich everyone's lives.

Clark, Kristin Elizabeth. *FreakBoy*. Farrar Straus Giroux. 978-0-374-32472-8, T \$18.99 (Grade 10-12). Written in spot-on prose, Clark develops the characters of Brendan, Vanessa & Angel in this exploration of transgender issues. Brendan and his girlfriend are both on the wrestling team. Their relationship begins to become stressed as Brendan becomes more aware and begins acting on his inner need of being female. After meeting Angel, a confident transgender person who helps him navigate some of these feelings, he can start taking steps that will help him be more honest. Important for all teens to understand the struggles that transgender teens they may know are having.

Driza, Debra. *MILA 2.0*. Katherine Tegen Books. 978-0-0620-9036-2, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-10). Mila thinks that she is a normal teenager who has just lost her beloved father. She soon discovers that she is not Mila, but MILA 2.0, an android. Mila's "mother" is a scientist who co-created MILA and has stolen her away from the lab. Mila has the ability to feel human emotions and has "memories" of her past. Now, Mila and her mother are on the run from two competing forces: her sinister co-creator Col. Holland, and the murky organization, Vita Obscura. Following a harrowing series of competitions with the MILA 3.0, this excellent, cinematic thriller ends with a cliffhanger, so more MILA to come.

Dubosarsky, Ursula. *The Golden Day*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-76366399-5, T \$15.99 (Grade 7-12). Set in Australia during the Vietnam War, Dubosarsky's beautifully written novel tells the story of 11 school girls and the mysterious disappearance of their teacher while on a class trip. Even before the trip, their teacher warns the girls to tell no one about it. Accompanying them on the trip is an enigmatic poet whose relationship to the teacher is also a mystery. Bracketed by a death by hanging in the beginning, and a death by drowning in the end, the girls' experiences evoke the mood of the Australian film, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975).

Edinger, Monica. *Africa is My Home: A Child of the Amistad*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-5038, R \$17.99 (Grade 3-5). Magulu, a girl born in Mendeland in West Africa, was sold into slavery and bound for America aboard the Amistad when the kidnapped Africans overcame their captors. The Africans were taken to trial in New Haven, Connecticut, and the case was argued before the Supreme Court by John Quincy Adams. Educated in the United States, Magulu finally returned to her beloved homeland and became a teacher. This beautifully illustrated and well researched work of historical fiction tells the story of the slave trade from a child's point of view.

Federle, Tim. *Better Nate than Ever*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. 978-1-4424-4689-2, T \$16.99 (Grade 6-8). Nate is a 13 year-old whose passion is to make it on Broadway. With the help of his best friend, Libby, he steals away to New York to audition for *ET* with no "special talents" except his hilariously witty personality. Bus schedules, homelessness, stage mothers, family alcoholic patterns, bullying, emerging sexuality and self-confidence are all explored in this funny, over-the-top story that passionate thespians will enjoy. Federle provides an honest and endearing way for middle school students to understand those who may be exploring sexual preference. (Stonewall Honor Book)

Fusco, Kimberly Newton. *Beholding Bee*. Borzoi Books. 978-0-375-86836-8, R \$16.99 (Grade 4-7). Eleven year old Bee, orphaned at age four, has a diamond shaped birthmark on her face and a job chopping onions in the hot dog stand of the traveling carnival where her parents worked. When her only protector is sent away, Bee sets off with a found dog and a runt pig to find the permanent home she knows is out there for her. It is the mysterious lady in the orange flappy hat, a shadowy presence in Bee's life, who leads her to that home and the knowledge that she comes from a long line of strong women. Equal parts historical fiction and magical realism, this coming of age story has a satisfying open-ended conclusion that will spark the reader's imagination.

Gaiman, Neil. *Fortunately, the Milk*. Harper Collins Children's Books. 978-0-06-222407-1, R \$14.99 (Grade 3-6). When there is no more milk, Dad steps out to buy more and the kids wait a bit longer than usual for him to return. What follows is 100 pages of his adventures with aliens, time machines, wumpires and milk. This outrageous tale will have young readers wondering just what moms and dads do after they go out the door in the morning. A perfect choice for read-aloud or listening to the audiobook narrated by the author.

Gerwitz, Adina Rische. *Zebra Forest*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6041-3, R \$15.99 (Grade 3-5). This is a complex book about bright, perceptive children with active inner lives. Eleven year old Annie lives with her younger brother Rew and her Gran. Her mother left when she was three and as far as she knows, her father is dead – murdered by “an angry man.” Gran does her best but is a bit unstable so Annie often acts as the adult in the family. A day after summer vacation begins, there is a prison break and one of the prisoners holds Annie, Rew and Gran hostage. As the summer progresses the truth about Annie and Rew's parents is revealed. This debut novel will pull middle grade readers in with its compelling plot and intriguing characters.

Hasak-Lowy, Todd. *33 Minutes...Until Morgan Sturtz Kicks My Butt*. Aladdin. 978-1-4424-4500-0, T \$15.99 (Grade 5-8). Through the minute by minute passage of time readers understand the tension, fear and underlying issues that influenced Sam's seemingly best friend Morgan to threaten to “kick his butt” at recess. Each chapter represents seconds leading up to the event by describing first person flashback in Sam's comic voice. The 33 minutes eventually become irrelevant when a fire is set in the chemistry lab. In a tension filled, slightly humorous voice of Sam, readers will be pulled into the realistic layers of bullying, manipulation and genuine confusion of changing friendships that can occur in middle school.

Hicks, Betty. *The Worm Whisperer*. Roaring Brook Press. 978-1-59643-490-5, R \$16.99 (Grade 4-6). Ellis is a lonely fifth grader who loves animals, loves learning new words, and spends a lot of time helping his family. His father needs back surgery. His mother works two jobs and does all she can to raise the \$1000 deductible needed for the surgery. The town is having the annual Woolly Worm Race with \$1000 as first prize. Ellis thinks he can talk to the caterpillar he has found and train it to win the race. This heartwarming and humorous story would make a wonderful read aloud. The delightful black and white illustrations add to the story.

Hill, Kirkpatrick. *Bo at Ballard Creek*. Henry Holt and Company. 978-0-850-9351-3, R \$15.99 (Grade 4-6). Bo was a baby when she was headed for an orphanage in Alaska. She ends up with two tough miners who came to the Klondike Rush in 1897. They get a lot of help raising Bo from the other miners, goodtime girls, the Eskimos, and others living nearby. Bo is a much loved and adventurous girl. This work of historical fiction transports readers to the rough and tumble life of a turn of the century Alaskan gold rush town.

Hobbs, Valerie. *Wolf*. Frances Foster Books. 978-0-374-31575-7, R \$15.99 (Grade 3-7). This stand-alone sequel to “Sheep” is told from alternating perspectives. First, a lonely adolescent Wolf following his instincts to find food, territory and a mate. Second, an aging Border collie, Jack, whose loyalty to family and dedication to his job require constant vigilance. Action, suspense and moral dilemma make for an intelligent, fast paced story. Great for animal lovers and reluctant readers.

Hopkinson, Deborah. *The Great Trouble: a Mystery of London, the Blue Death, and a Boy Called Eel*. Knopf Books for Young Readers. 978-0-37584818-6, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-8). Set in London in 1854 during the Cholera epidemic, *The Great Trouble* blends scientific history and historical figures with Eel, an engaging protagonist, and his group of friends. The historical figure who discovered the cause of Cholera, Dr. John Snow, engages his young assistant, Eel, in the pursuit of the source of the so-called Blue Death—a sort of *House* for tweens. Hopkinson includes brief biographies of important figures of the period as well as pathfinders for further reading.

Joffo, Joseph. *A Bag of Marbles*. Graphic Universe. 978-1-4677-0700-8, T [GN] \$29.00 (Grade 6-12). The true story of two brothers, Maurice and Joseph in 1941 occupied Paris. To ensure their survival their parents send them to be with their older brothers. Hiding the real facts of their identities they embark on a perilous journey of violence and hatred. Encountering strangers who help them along the way, they survive to reach their brothers in the Free Zone. The graphics and colors visually enhance the suffering and tireless journey the boys undertook to survive. A map, glossary and notes are included.

Kerrin, Jessica Scott. *The Spotted Dog Last Seen*. Groundwood Books. 978-1-55498-387-2, R \$14.95 (Grade 4-6). Derek was sick at home the day each sixth grader was assigned a community service project so he ends up with Cemetery Duty. This mystery has a bit of everything in it including loss, recurring nightmares, friendship, humor, secret codes, information about gravestones, cemeteries and more. Told in the first person, this realistic story will have a wide appeal.

Kittscher, Kristen. *The Wig in the Window*. Harper. 978-0-06-211050-3, T \$16.99 (Grade 5-8). Sophie and Grace are seventh grade, self-designated spies whose midnight spying gets them in real trouble and uncovers a possible criminal activity. It's a mystery that slowly bubbles to the surface. Fans of Sammy Keyes will enjoy this solid mystery.

Kizer, Amber. *A Matter of Days*. Delacorte Press. 978-0-38573973-3, T \$16.99 (Grade 7-12). Following a pandemic that kills 90% of the world's population, Nadia and her brother, who have been inoculated against the virus, must journey from their home in Seattle to find their uncle and grandfather in West Virginia. Nadia is not a super-hero, but a genuine teenager who is now solely responsible for her own and her brother's survival. In the glut of post-apocalyptic novels for teens, Kizer's novel stands out for its realistic characters and their relationship to each other, making it far more character-driven than the usual of this genre.

Koertge, Ron. *Coaltown Jesus*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6228-8, T \$16.99 (Grade 8-12). This is the story of a single mother who owns a nursing home and lives above it with her sons. Walker's older brother dies and his mother cannot stop crying, so Walker asks for help and Jesus appears. Only Walker (and some babies and dogs) can see him. Jesus has a sense of humor and seems like just a regular guy. Walker tries to come to terms with his brother Noah's death as he also tries to help his mom. By helping her he also works out his own grief. Written in poetry form, it is a quick read on an important topic.

Kontis, Alethea. *Hero*. Harcourt. 978-0-544-05677-0, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). This title is a companion to *Enchanted* that stands alone. Multiple fairy tales intertwine in a witty and comical story that holds suspense, adventure, magic and good ole fairytale "happily ever after" romance. Each of the multiple characters represents a thread of a fairy tale such as *Vasalisa*, *Snow White*, *Rose Red*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *the Pirate Queen*. Follow Saturday Woodcutter as she "breaks the world," is kidnapped by a witch and held in a mountain cavern above a sleeping dragon. There is gender bending, mythical ties, romance and misplaced honor. Fans of fairy tales will love this one.

La Valley, Josanne. *The Vine Basket*. Clarion. 978-0-5478-4801-3, T \$16.99 (Grade 5-7). Mehrighul is a young girl living with her family in the Chinese-controlled province of East Turkestan. The Uyghurs have been subjugated by the Chinese and forced to abandon their language in favor of Mandarin. Young girls who are not attending school are picked up by the "Cadre" and forced to work in Chinese factories. As dispiriting and unjust as the political situation is, Mehrighul faces more emotionally painful treatment at the hands of her father—a drunk who gambles away the money that she makes at the market. Despite these circumstances, Mehrighul creates beautiful baskets that ultimately prove to be her family's salvation.

Larson, Kirby. *Duke*. Scholastic Press. 978-0-545-41637-5, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-7). It is WWII and 5th grader Hobie knows all too well the toll that the war can take on a family. His father is away fighting and his last words were for Hobie to do his part on behalf of the war and this means that his beloved dog Duke also has to enlist. A touching story of the sacrifices faced during wartime told by Larson, a masterful historical fiction storyteller.

Levithan, David. *Two Boys Kissing*. Knopf Books for Young Readers. 978-0-30793190-0, T \$16.99 (Grade 10-12). Levithan's narrative voice is a Greek chorus of men who died of AIDS. While observing and commenting on the lives of five gay teens, the chorus tells of a different time, when intolerance was rampant and the AIDS epidemic decimated their numbers, with no end in sight. A beautifully written must-read for young adults, whether gay or straight. (Stonewall Honor Book)

McNeal, Tom. *Far Far Away*. Borzoi Book/Alfred A. Knopf. 978-0-375-84972-5, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). Although a little quirky at first, readers who keep with the story will be richly rewarded with a dark, creepy, satisfying "modern" ghost/fairy tale that has a witty edge. The story is narrated by the ghost of Jacob Grimm who has to find his unfinished business. He is only heard by the main character, Jeremy Johnson Johnson, who has his own quirks and must deal with the cruel ways of the townsfolk. Jeremy is forced to change his routine and becomes influenced by Ginger which inevitably reveals some macabre secrets in the town. Give to Neil Gaiman fans.

Medina, Meg. *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-5859-5, R \$16.99 (Grade 10-12). From the moment Piddy Sanchez walked into her new school, she was put on alert that Yaqui D. was going to kick her ass. In this coming of age novel, set in a Latino neighborhood in New York, Medina weaves a story of genuine tension, fear and realistic violence. When Yaqui's gang attacks Piddy outside her home and posts it on YouTube, the story becomes extremely real. Piddy's life outside of school holds its own difficulties, joys and secrets that keep this story a rich, heart-wrenching read, not just a problem novel. Contains violence, a sexual encounter and support from a surprise friend. (Pura Belpre Award)

Metzger, Lois. *A Trick of the Light*. Balzer + Bray. 978-0-06213308-3, T \$17.99 (Grade 10-12). Mike Welles has everything going for him. A good student and athlete, his self-image crumbles when his home life falls apart. He begins to hear a voice in his head that tells him he must exercise more and stop eating: that he must become anorexic. It is the voice in Mike's head that narrates this story of Mike's struggle, and, though Mike grows stronger, at the novel's end it is clear that the voice is still there, wrestling for control.

Meyer, Marissa. *Scarlet*. Feiwel and Friends. 978-0-312-64296-9, T \$17.99 (Grade 6-12). Meyer steps up the excitement in this second book in *The Lunar Chronicles*. Scarlet is a fantastical sci-fi retelling of *Little Red Riding Hood* including a grandmother, a street fighter named Wolf, along with spies, engineers, gangs and fugitives. The tension mounts with chases, fights, spaceships, steamy romantic scenes and the unraveling pieces of the past that make this a thrilling sequel.

Moriarty, Jaclyn. *A Corner of White*. Arthur A. Levine Books. 978-0-54539736-0, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). For those who love Jasper Fforde and Terry Pratchett, *A Corner of White* is for you. The book is set in London, where Madeleine lives, and the Kingdom of Cello, where Elliot lives. The residents of Cello are dominated by a fear of colors, which can be deadly. Madeleine's life with her mother is also unconventional. The two protagonists eventually come to communicate with each other, with life-changing results. Literate and witty.

Nielsen, Jennifer. *The Runaway King*. Scholastic Press. 978-0-28415-8, T \$17.99 (Grade 4-9). Nielsen keeps middle-school fantasy readers entertained, in this page turner, second book in *The Ascendance Trilogy*. Young King Jaron is put to the test with an assassination attempt on his life. The castle isn't a safe place when Jaron doesn't know yet who will pledge their allegiance to the king and who will surprise. Nielsen takes great care to reveal how much Jaron has grown in character in his path to the throne. His alter ego, Sage, on the other hand, is the same young daredevil readers fell in love with in *The False Prince*. The two personas together create an amazing main character that readers will closely follow throughout the trilogy.

Padian, Maria. *Out of Nowhere*. Alfred A. Knopf. 978-0-375-86580-0, T [M] \$16.99 (Grade 10-12). Tom Bouchard, rising senior in Maine, finds himself doing community service and becoming changed in the process when both the soccer team and the children at the local community center become the focal point of a racial protest. Padian does an amazing job of creating realistic characterizations of high-school students and the conflicts that arise when immigrants from Somalia and Sudan must learn the "American Way" in a small Maine community. Recommended to teachers for social studies, sociology and government curriculums. (Lupine Juvenile/YA Award)

Phelan, Matt. *Bluffton*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-5079-7, R [GN] \$22.99 (Grade 4-8). A fictional character, Henry, befriends the young Buster Keaton during the early 1900s when the Keaton family and other vaudevillians summered in Muskegon, Michigan on the shores of Lake Michigan. The boys bond over baseball, fishing, and swimming. Henry wants to learn Buster's tricks and skills while Buster just wants to be an ordinary kid. The watercolor illustrations in this historical fiction graphic novel beautifully detail the time period, characters, and setting. The author's note adds more information about Buster Keaton's career and encourages readers to view Buster Keaton's silent films.

Pileggi, Leah. *Prisoner 88*. Charlesbridge. 978-1-5808-9560-6, T \$16.95 (Grade 5-7). Jake Oliver Evans is just ten years old when he is sent to prison for manslaughter in the Idaho Territory in 1885. He may or may not be guilty of killing the man who threatened his father—Jake himself doesn't remember—but a first-time lawyer plea-bargained Jake to five years with hardened criminals. This is not the whole of *Prisoner 88* or of Jake's life, which becomes one of making the best of a life with no happy endings, but moments of happiness and growth. *Prisoner 88* is based on a true story, and Pileggi includes primary source material in her author's note.

Pincus, Greg. *The 14 Fibs of Gregory K*. Arthur A. Levine Books. 978-0-439-91299-0, R \$17.99 (Grade 4-6). Gregory is the outlier in his family of math super achievers. He loves writing and his lifelong best friend Kelly, who shares that talent. Sixth grade is a tough year for Gregory. He is often on the brink of disaster, but with the help of a good teacher and pie he is able to find a solution to most of his problems, regarding both math and life.

Salerni, Dianne K. *The Caged Graves*. Clarion. 978-0-54786853-0, T \$16.99 (Grade 9-12). In 1867, Verity Boone returns to her birthplace in Pennsylvania from Worcester, Mass., where she has lived for the past 15 of her 17 years. She is to meet her betrothed, with whom she has corresponded but has never seen. What she finds are the mysteriously caged graves of her mother and aunt and a town full of gossip and secrets involving rumored Revolutionary War treasure and witchcraft. This is a great mix of historical fiction, mystery, and suspense based on actual people, places, and events.

Schneider, Robyn. *The Beginning of Everything*. Katherine Tegen Books. 978-0-06-221713-4, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). This touching piece of realistic fiction by debut author Schneider explores how you are changed after experiencing a tragedy. After his car accident, Ezra has no idea that there is another life to look forward to provided he is ready to let go of the past. Schneider writes with witty, rich dialog and her characters are chosen carefully for their important roles to play in this new chapter in Ezra's life. With secrets slowly revealed and plot twists, Schneider leaves high-school readers breathless at the bittersweet ending.

Sedgwick, Marcus. *Midwinter Blood*. Roaring Brook Press. 978-1-59643-800-2, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). Sedgwick eloquently intertwines tale after tale of the folklore belonging to the mysterious Blessed Island or Midwinterblood as it was once known. There are seven parts in all, starting in the future of 2073 and going back through prehistory, and in each story we see the many incarnations of Eric and Merle and the strength of their love. This is a mesmerizing tale that begs a high school audience to ask what sacrifices would you make for love. (Michael L. Printz Award)

Sharafeddine, Fatima. *The Servant*, Greenwood Books. 978-1-55498-307-0, T \$14.95 (Grade 7-12). From a village in the Lebanese mountains, Faten is sent to work for a wealthy Beirut family to help support her large family during the Lebanese Civil War. No longer able to finish school, she shares her best friend's book so she can still take exams for college. The boy next door also helps her. A great book offering a contrasting view for American and Lebanese young adults.

Shurtliff, Liesl. *Rump: The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin*. Alfred A. Knopf. 978-0-307-97793-9, R \$16.99 (Grade 4-6). This imaginative story explains how Rump, a young boy, gets his full name of Rumpelstiltskin. Just like the familiar fairy tale, magic and gold are key to the plot. The story moves quickly with humor and interesting twists and turns. This action filled quest is told in the first person as Rump searches for his name. Readers will be on the edge of their seats in this delightful fantasy and come to understand the importance of a name.

Stone, Phoebe. *Romeo Blue*. Arthur A. Levine Books. 978-0-545-44360-9, T [M] \$16.99 (Grade 4-9). In this sequel to the popular *Romeo and Juliet Code*, author Stone builds the suspense with WWII looming ever closer to the Maine coast. While everyone they love is taking part in the war efforts, Flissy and Derek turn to each other for the answers to their many questions. Is there a German spy in their midst? Who is the notorious Gray Moth? Who is Derek's father? Will Fissy's parents be rescued? The history, suspense and love story will win hearts.

Tharp, Tim. *Mojo*. Knopf Books for Young Readers. 978-0-37586445-2, T \$16.99 (Grade 10-12). Dylan is a likable teen-age wimp committed to gaining "mojo" in the unlikely metropolis of Oklahoma City. The death of a working-class schoolmate and the disappearance of an upper-class, up-town girl give him the opportunity he craves to show his manhood by investigating the girl's disappearance and the classmate's death. This intricately plotted, hard-boiled detective story explores issues of class, ethnicity, ethics, and the true meaning of "manhood." The final plot twist is a genuine bombshell.

Thompson, Holly. *The Language Inside*, Delacorte Press. 978-0-385-73979-5, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). Raised in Japan, Emma Karas must move near Lowell, MA, to stay with her grandmother while her mother gets treatment for breast cancer. Emma volunteers at a long term care center, and over time befriends another volunteer and patients, then must decide to stay or return to Japan. Eloquently written in verse format. A list of poetry and recommended resources included.

Vanden Heede, Sylvia. *Wolf and Dog*. Gecko Press. 978-1-877579-47-9, T \$16.95 (Grade 2-4). Buttoned up Dog wears red pants, sleeps on a neat, cozy bed and refers to his owner as "my boss." His cousin, the wild Wolf is disheveled, dirty, and full of fleas. The two have an uneasy friendship – at first full of tricks but the relationship develops as they tease each other with rhymes and riddles. Beginning readers will enjoy this droll and quirky little book. Its sophisticated humor is enriched by Marjie Tolman's charming illustrations.

Vanderpool, Clare. *Navigating Early*. Delacorte Press. 978-0-385-74209-2, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-6). This exquisitely told historical fiction story is a parable of grief and at the same time a story of friendship. Sixth grader Jack is grieving alone after his mother's death. His father is in the military and is distant at best and sends Jack away to a boarding school. Early is an odd boy who Jack meets but doesn't trust until the time comes when Early is the only one that might understand what Jack is going through. Vanderpool cleverly intertwines an Appalachian adventure with a realistic story of trust and friendship. (Michael L. Printz Honor)

Vawter, Vince. *Paperboy*, Delacorte Press. 978-0-3857-4243, R \$16.99 (Grade 7-9). In Memphis in 1959, eleven year old Victor takes over his friend's paper route during the month of July. Victor's severe stutter creates challenges. A great coming of age story as Victor discovers the strengths of his housekeeper Mam and his own strengths and wisdom. Includes the author's notes about his own life with stuttering. (Newbery Honor)

Wallace, Sandra Neil. *Muckers*. Alfred A. Knopf. 978-0-375-86754-5, T \$16.99 (Grade 10-12). In this coming-of-age novel set in the 1950's in Jerome AZ, Red O'Sullivan is saddled with the responsibility of leading the last football team that will ever exist for their high school to the state championship. Amid the tensions of a dying mining town, the racial tensions between Mexican Americans and "Anglos," the polio epidemic and the communist threat, Wallace brings a fresh voice to YA historical fiction that sports enthusiasts and those who cheer for the underdog will enjoy. Wallace provides an author note that explains how this novel is based on true circumstances.

Watkins, Steve. *Juvie*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-5509-9, T \$17.99 (Grade 10-12). Seventeen-year-old Sadie was in the wrong place at the wrong time and the consequence is serving a six month sentence in a juvenile detention center. Her story is one that readers will sympathize with. What kind of a teenager gives up 6-months of her life for a crime that she didn't commit?

West, Kasie. *Pivot Point*, HarperTeen. 978-0-062-11737-3, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-9). Addie lives in a secret compound with others that have paranormal abilities. When her parents divorce, she must decide to stay with her mother or leave with her father to the outside world. Using her ability to see into the future she must choose her path. The alternating chapters between her "seeing" the two worlds, a romance and a mystery leave the reader anticipating the sequel.

White, Kiersten. *Mind Games*. HarperTeen. 978-0-06-213531-5, T \$17.99 (Grade 8-12). In this fast paced paranormal thriller, author White skillfully tells the story of two sisters caught up in a dangerous spy scheme. Annie sees visions of the future while Fia, with her killer instincts, is a trained assassin. Told in alternating chapters going back and forth in time, this tale is a puzzle that clever readers will devour in anticipation of the sequel.

Whitman, Sylvia. *The Milk of Birds*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. 978-1-4424-4682-3, T \$16.99 (Grade 10-12). Paired as pen pals through the Save the Girls project, K.C. learns to deal with her own difficulties with school in Richmond VA while Nawra, a 14 year old in an IDP camp in Sudan pulls herself and the women near her through life and death struggles. The depth of characters comes through the letters and alternating chapters that deal with each girl's life. Readers will learn about refugee camps in Darfur, female circumcision, wartime rapes and the differences of customs between America and Darfur.

Winter, Cat. *In the Shadow of Blackbirds*. Amulet Books. 978-1-4197-0530-4, T \$16.95 (Grade 10-12). It's 1918 and sixteen-year-old Mary Shelley has just watched her father being taken to jail for helping war deserters. The Spanish Flu epidemic is at its height in San Diego, Spiritualism is all the rage and Mary is contacted by the spirit of the boy she loved who went off to war. This is both an eerie ghost story and a historically based mystery with well-drawn characters that will keep readers on edge until the murder mystery is solved and the raging ghosts are hushed. Readers will get a sense of the tension and paranoia that pervaded Americans' thinking during WWI and the hopelessness people felt during the flu epidemic.

Wissinger, Tamers Will. *Gone Fishing, A novel in verse*. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children. 978-0-547-82011-8, R \$15.99 (Grade 2-5). A much anticipated father/son fishing trip turns into a father/son/daughter day, much to the chagrin of son, Sam. The highs and lows of the day are all presented in various forms of poems. Back matter includes a poet's tackle box that gives tips on techniques for writing poetry and describes the different poetic forms. An excellent read-aloud fish story that features a covert poetry lesson.

Yang, Gene Luen. *Boxers & Saints*. First Second. 978-1-59643-689-3, T [GN] \$18.99/\$15.99 (Grade 9-12). In this graphic novel boxed set, Yang sheds color and light on China's Boxer Rebellion through the eyes of Bao and Four-Girl, two young adults on opposite sides. The earth tone illustrations juxtaposed with colorful superhero like gods in *Boxers* and golden illuminations in *Saints* illustrate the struggle and fighting happening at the time and the inspiration felt by both Bao and Four-Girl to persevere. An exceptional work of historical fiction in a graphic format intended for a high school audience.

Zettel, Sarah. *Palace of Spies*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-544-07411-8, T \$16.99 (Grade 7-12). It's 1716 and Peggy, a 16 year old orphan who was recently kicked out of her uncle's home after being labeled as damaged goods is taken in by Mr. Tinderflint. Mr. T and company change Peggy's identify and ensconce her as a lady-in-waiting in the court of King George I as a spy. Mysteries abound as well as layers of intrigue. Corsets, wit, questionable romance and mystery will entice both historical and mystery fans.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE CREAM OF THE CROP COMMITTEE

Sheila Dube, Children's Librarian, Springvale Public Library

Danielle Grady, Senior Library Assistant/Youth Services, Baxter Memorial Library, Gorham

Lauren Isele, Youth Services Assistant, Scarborough Public Library

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Patty Temple, Children's Services, Long Island Community Library

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2014 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: Flocu, Brian. *Locomotive**

Honors: Becker, Aaron. *Journey*
Idle, Molly. *Flora and the Flamingo*
Wiesner, David. *Mr. Wuffles*

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

Winner: Snicket, Lemony. *The Dark*

Honors: Bean, Jonathan. *Building Our House*
Brown, Tameka Fryer. *My Cold Plum Lemon Pie Bluesy Mood*
Collins, Suzanne. *The Year of the Jungle*
Miller, Pat Zietlow. *Sophie’s Squash*
Woodson, Jacqueline. *This is the Rope: A Story from the Great Migration*

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: Williams-Garcia, Rita. *P.S. Be Eleven*

Honors: Grimes, Nikki. *Words with Wings*
Lewis, John and Andrew Aydin. *March: Book One*
Myers, Walter Dean. *Darius and Twig*

CSK Illustrator Award

Winner: Collier, Bryan. (Daniel Beatty) *Knock Knock: My Dad’s Dream for Me*

Honor: Nelson, Kadir. *Nelson Mandela*

Coretta Scott King/ Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement

Patricia and Frederick McKissack

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.*

Katherine Paterson (2013)

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: Ridley, Kimberly. *The Secret Pool*. Illustrated by Rebekah Raye

Honor: Markel, Michelle. *Brave Girl*. Illustrated by Melissa Sweet

J/YA

Winner: Padian, Maria. *Out of Nowhere*

Honor: Blakemore, Meg. *The Water Castle*

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

Markus Zusak. *The Book Thief, Fighting Ruben Wolfe, Getting the Girl, and I Am the Messenger*

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: Matti, Truus. *Mister Orange*. Translated by Laura Watkinson, Published by Enchanted Lion Books

Honors: Moundlic, Charlotte. *The Bathing Costume or the Worst Vacation of My Life*. Translated by Claudia Zoe Bedrick, Published by Enchanted Lion Books

Lunde, Stein Erik. *My Father’s Arms are a Boat*. Translated by Kari Dickson, Published by Enchanted Lion Books

Sax, Aline. *The War Within These Walls*. Translated by Laura Watkinson. Published by Eerdman’s Books

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

Winner: DiCamillo, Kate. *Flora and Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures*

Honors: Black, Holly. *Doll Bones*

Henkes, Kevin. *The Year of Billy Miller*

Timberlake, Amy. *One Came Home*.
Vawter, Vince. *Paperboy*

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

Winner: Sedgewick, Marcus. *Midwinter Blood*
Honors: Cokal, Susan. *Kingdom of Little Wounds*
Gardner, Sally. *Maggot Moon*
Rowell, Rainbow. *Eleanor & Park*
Vanderpool, Clare. *Navigating Early*

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, Meg. *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass*.
Honors: de la Pena, Matt. *The Living*
Engle, Margarita. *The Lightning Dreamer: Cuba's Greatest Abolitionist*
Tonatiuh, Duncan. *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale**

Illustrator Award

Winner: Morales, Yuyi. *Nino Wrestles the World*
Honors: Dominguez, Angela. *Maria had a Little Llama*
Lopez, Rafael. (Monica Brown). *Tito Puente, Mambo King*
Tonatiuh, Duncan. *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale**

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: Roth, Susan L. and Cindy Trumbore. *Parrots Over Puerto Rico*.
Honors: Bryant, Jen. *A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin**
Cate, Annette LeBlanc. *Look Up!: Bird Watching in Your Own Backyard*
Floca, Brian. *Locomotive**
Greenberg, Jan and Sandra Jordan. *The Mad Potter: George E. Ohr, Eccentric Genius*

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. *A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin**
Middle (age 11 -13): Haskell, Merrie. *Handbook for Dragon Slayers*
Teen (age 13 -18): Wein, Elizabeth. *Rose Under Fire*

Stonewall Book Award – Given annually to English language children's and young adult books of exceptional merit relating to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans-gendered experience.

Winners: Cronn-Mills, Kirstin. *Beautiful Music for Ugly Children*
Charlton-Trujillo, E. *Fat Angie*
Honors: Federle, Tim. *Better Nate than Ever*
Levithan, David. *Two Boys Kissing*
Settingington, Ken. *Branded by the Pink Triangle*

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: Pizzoli, Greg. *The Watermelon Seed*
Honors: Henkes, Kevin. *Penny and Her Marble*
Sullivan, Mary. *Ball*
Willems, Mo. *A Big Guy Took My Ball!*

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.

Kuehn, Stephanie. *Charm & Strange*

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

Bascomb, Neal. *The Nazi Hunters: How a Team of Spies and Survivors Captured the World's Most Notorious Nazi*