

Maine Regional Library System  
31st Annual Reading Round-Up of Children's and Young Adult Literature  
April 29, 2021

MAINE EXAMINATION COLLECTION OF CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT BOOKS

**Cream of the Crop**

Total books: 97

**KEY**

<b>L</b>	<b>Library binding</b>	<b>[GN]</b>	<b>Graphic Novel</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Reinforced trade binding</b>	<b>[M]</b>	<b>Maine Author, Illustrator, Setting</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Trade binding</b>		

**PICTURE BOOK FICTION [total books in this category: [25]**

Abreu, Nicole and Shar Abreu. *Over in the Woodland: A Mythological Counting Journey*. Familius. 978-1641702416, T \$16.99 (PreK-grade 1). The familiar "Over in the Meadow" rhyme has been filled with fantastic beasts gorgeously rendered by Susanna Covelli in lush and vibrant colors. Littles will delight in seeing all of their favorite mythological creatures like mermaids, fairies, and centaurs as they count from one to ten.

Atkinson, Cale. *Monsters 101*. Doubleday Books for Young Readers. 978-0593122808, T \$17.99 (PreK-grade 2). Want to become a monster expert? This is the book for you! Professors Batula McFang, Blobbins, and Howlsworth lead readers through this field-guide of monster basics including monster types, a monster's daily life, and what monsters fear (humans are at the top of the list). Formatted in the style of a nonfiction book, it includes text features such as a table of contents, fact boxes, and headings. There is also a Monstronomy diploma for the new monster scientist at the end. Entertaining and funny, this clever story helps little ones to get over their fear of monsters.

Blackhall, Sophie. *If You Come To Earth*. Chronicle Books. 978-1452137797, T \$18.99 (Grades K-4). A young child writes a letter to the universe for anyone wishing to visit Earth, including the things you should know: how to get here, what the earth looks like, what kind of people you will find, where and how they live, to name a few. Supported by double-page spreads, the illustrations are warm, inclusive, detailed, and engage the reader. Each page leads to a discussion of what makes our planet special, what makes us the same and also different. Readers will pore over the pictures and the author's note elaborates on the inspiration for creating the book.

Chabon, Michael. *Awesome Man: The Mystery Intruder*. Quill Tree Books. 978-0062875099, T \$18.99 (PreK-grade 2). Awesome Man is the coolest superhero around. No one can compete with his amazing crimefight skills, his super fixit power, and his heroic helpfulness to the people of Awesomeville. But when Awesome Man hears rumors of a new superhero coming to town, he starts to worry that he might become old news. Jake Parker's colorful retro comicstrip-style illustrations brilliantly bring Awesome Man to life. Though this is the second in a series, it works perfectly as a standalone for young children who are having mixed feelings about a new sibling joining their family.

Charles, Tami. *All Because you Matter*. Orchard Books. 978-1338574852, T \$17.99 (Grades K-5). A Beautiful and poetic love letter to black and brown children, wrapping them in an lyrical embrace of encouragement and love, reminding them that they matter, affirming their importance in the world, and encouraging them to use their voices and take up space. Bryan Collier's creative watercolor illustrations bring a wonderfully textured collage of color that magnifies the beauty and importance of Charles's message. In light of the Black Lives Matters movement, this is an important book to share with all communities. Includes both an author's and illustrator's note.

Cline-Ransome, Lesa. *The Overground Railroad*. Holiday House. 978-0823438730, T \$18.99 (Grades 1-4). The duo of Cline-Ransome and her husband James Ransome offer another phenomenal picture book (*Before She Was Harriet*) about the system used by many Black people to travel from the South to the North during the Great Migration. In the book, a family makes their way North to the promise of opportunities that were not possible in the South. Ransome's illustrations are rich with patterns and texture. This book can be read to elementary-aged children or to older students in a study of 20th-century US History. An author's note offers additional historical context.

Cole, Henry. *One Little Bag: An Amazing Journey*. Scholastic Press. 978-1338359978, T \$18.99 (Grades K-3). This beautifully illustrated wordless picture book follows the journey of a small brown paper bag. It all starts with a tree in the forest. The reader watches as the tree is cut down and sent through the manufacturing process, turned into a brown bag and put into the hands of a small boy. The boy continues to use and reuse the bag for many different purposes as he grows older and eventually gives it to his own son, who uses it for a very special purpose drawing the circle to a close. Cole's beautifully detailed black ink drawings with the contrast of the single

brown object, help keep the reader's eyes focused on the paper bag's journey. This story helps to bring awareness and appreciation for the paper we use daily. A perfect addition to a conservation / recycling storytime or program. Includes an author's note.

Cotter, Sasha. ***Cannonball***. Sourcebooks Jabberwocky. 978-1728217567, T \$17.99 (PreK-grade 3). As one boy attempts the perfect cannonball into the pool, he receives a lot of advice from his family. Set in the Maori community and featuring joyful illustrations by Josh Morgan, this picture book is a fun read aloud and a fantastic example of overcoming your fear and finding your own way of doing something. Pair with *Jabari Jumps* by Gaia Cornwall.

Ferry, Beth. ***Swashby by the Sea***. HMH Books for Young Readers. 978-0544707375, T \$17.99 (Grades K-2). Sometimes you find friends in the most unexpected places. Captain Swashby loves the sea and his quiet peaceful life by the sea. Unfortunately, a little girl and her grandmother move into the house next door and they are anything but quiet. Swashby decides to leave notes in the sand warning his new neighbors to leave him alone. However, Swashby's old friend, the sea, changes his negative messages to sweet inviting messages. As the waves splash up onto the beach NO TRESPASSING turns into SING. The clever and comical play with words throughout the story encourages participation from young readers. Adorable and funny, this is a perfect addition to a summer, beach, or pirate-themed storytime.

Fliess, Sue. ***Flash and Gleam: Light in Our World***. Millbrook. 978-1541557703, T \$19.99 (PreK-grade 3). Four children of different cultures introduce the reader to the many forms of light experienced each day. Sparse, rhyming text supported by illustrations rich in color look at the way light is in our life every day, from sunlight and moonlight, lightning and rainbows, to celebrations of birthdays and holidays. Back pages give scientific facts, explanations of the various holidays celebrated in the world, and fun facts. STEAM at its finest for its merging of science and art.

Gomez-Redondo, Susana. ***The Day Saida Arrived***. Blue Dot Kids Press. 978-1733121255, T \$17.95 (Grades K-3). Saida, newly arrived from Morocco, doesn't speak. A classmate feels that Saida has lost her words and so begins to help her find them. In the process, a friendship begins. Sharing words in their native languages, they build a bridge to understanding. The lush illustrations by Sonja Wimmer accompany the lyrical text. This is an immigration story that helps the reader better understand what immigration is all about. Use in units on immigration, feelings, and friendship.

Kendi, Ibram X. ***Antiracist Baby***. Kokila. 978-0593110416, T \$8.99 (Birth-PreK). This board book provides an introduction for our youngest readers with the vocabulary and concepts to begin the important conversation of race and antiracism. Right from the beginning, Kendi emphasizes that "babies are taught to be racist or antiracist - there is no neutrality." He then outlines nine strategies in creating equity, including opening your eyes to all skin colors, talking about race, and celebrating differences. Though this book was created for our youngest readers, it is an incredibly powerful and inclusive learning experience for all ages.

Khalil, Aya. ***The Arabic Quilt: An Immigration Story***. Tilbury House. 978-0884487548, T \$17.95 (Grades K-3). Kanzi's family has moved from Egyptian to America and she is being teased in her new school about her culture. Luckily for her she has a wise teacher, who, with the help of the quilt Kanzi's grandmother made for her, teaches the class that being bilingual helps broaden thinking and connects us. A story of acceptance that can expand the understanding of who belongs here. Pair this with Lizzy Rockwell's *The All-Together Quilt*.

Kraegel, Kenneth. ***This Is a Book of Shapes***. Candlewick. 978-1536207019, T \$8.99 (Birth-PreK). This board book starts off as a simple concept book, but shifts into the very best kind of silliness when an emu pushing a pancake-filled wagon appears instead of the expected shape. Playing with expectations, Kraegel's bright wood-grained shapes are interspersed with vibrant drawings of other things like a jet-pack-wearing rhino and sea turtles giggling at jokes. This one will make for a rollicking story time.

Kramer, Jackie Azúe. ***The Boy and the Gorilla***. Candlewick Press. 978-0763698324, T \$16.99 (PreK-grade 3). A boy has lost his mother and is carrying around huge sorrow inside, as big as, say, a gorilla. But this is no ordinary gorilla. It is wise and patient and gentle and present. The boy asks the gorilla questions, things he might not be ready to ask another person, and the gorilla answers honestly. When the boy is ready, he approaches his dad and the page where the gorilla encircles the boy and the father is one of the best things this reviewer has seen in a picture book; illustrator Cindy Derby nails it. This book is profound but with a feather-touch.

Krampien, Celia. ***Sunny***. Roaring Brook Press. 978-1250316608, T \$17.99 (PreK-grade 2). A debut picture book that captures the joy of a walk to school on a rainy day and the power of imagination. Sunny lives up to her name as she shines on the black & white pages in her yellow raincoat and umbrella. A fantastic read aloud. Pair with *Float* by Daniel Miyares or *Poor Doreen* by Sally Lloyd-Jones.

Lê, Minh. ***Lift***. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers. 978-1368036924, T \$17.99 (Grades K-2). It is Iris's special job to push the elevator button for her family everyday and she loves her job. When her younger brother beats her to the button one day, Iris is shocked,

devastated and furious. Iris finds an old elevator button in the garbage and she hangs it on her bedroom wall; now she has an elevator button that only she can control. But when the elevator button mysteriously starts working, Iris finds herself going on new and exciting adventures. With echoes of Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, Iris must decide if she is going to keep her exciting discovery to herself or find someone with whom to share her adventures. The unique format of this book brings both picture book and graphic novel together to create an amazing twist on sibling jealousy and imagination.

Mann, Jennifer. *The Camping Trip*. Candlewick Press. 978-1536207361, R \$17.99 (PreK-grade 3). Ernestine is invited to go camping with her aunt and cousin. Though she has never been camping, she is sure she will love it. But will all the preparations and new experiences make a camping lover of Ernestine or will it be too overwhelming? Both the text and pencil illustrations convey the emotions of a first time camper's experiences. Good read for spring and summer campers and in units on camping and nature.

Oswald, Pete. *Hike*. Candlewick Press. 978-1536201574, R \$17.99 (Grades K-3). A father and his child wake early and prepare for a day of hiking the nearby mountains. Illustrations done in panels of subtle nature tones of browns, blues, and greens invite the reader to hike along with the duo. The child stops along the way to record the day: taking photos and making notes. No words are needed to know that this father and child are taking in all that nature has to offer. This is a book that celebrates the outdoors, the bonds between a child and parent and the last page reveals that this is more than just a hike.

Schmidt, Gary. & Stickney, Elizabeth. *Almost Time*. Clarion. 978-0544785816, T \$17.99 (Grades K-3). Ethan finds waiting for the seasons to change and sugaring time to begin very hard. Mother Nature will not be hurried and he *needs* syrup for Sunday breakfast. A patient father and the promise of maple syrup make the wait worthwhile. Schmidt's gentle tale paired with G. Brian Karas's signature illustrations gives the reader insight into how maple syrup is made, why it cannot be rushed, and how delicious it is.

Scillian, Devin. *Memoirs of a Tortoise*. Sleeping Bear Press. 978-1534166806, T \$16.99 (Grades K-5). Told through the eyes of Oliver, an 80-year old tortoise, who lives with 'his pet' Ike, an 80-year old human. Oliver describes the ebb and flow of his daily life with Ike until one day things unexpectedly change and Oliver must deal with the loss of his pet. This sweet and surprising story of loss sends a powerful message to young readers that it is okay to feel sad when you lose someone. A beautiful and moving story with a hopeful ending to help caregivers give young children support after a loss.

Smith, Kim. *Boxitects*. Clarion. 978-1328477200, T \$17.99 (PreK-3). Meg is a boxitect; she loves making all sorts of creations out of boxes and she is good at it. She is the only "boxitect" at Maker School until Simone joins and the competition begins. They are paired together for the Maker Match but will they be able to work together on a project or will egos get in the way? This book encourages creativity, imagination, and collaboration. STEAM at its core.

Soontornvat, Christina. *The Blunders: A Counting Catastrophe!* Candlewick Press. 978-1536201093, T \$16.99 (PreK-grade 2). After a disastrous morning of blunders, mother sends the ten Blunder children outside to play so that she can clean up. She instructs them to keep track of each other and to be home by sunset. As the sun is starting to go down and the children are ready to head home, they decide to count to make sure that they are all there. Each child tries counting in a different way (forward, backward, by two, etc.) but each child comes up with only nine. Who is the missing child and what will they tell their mother? A clever and funny addition to any counting book collection.

Wahl, Phoebe. *The Blue House*. Knopf. 978-1984893369, T \$17.99 (Grades K-3). Leo and his dad have lived in the blue house forever. It is old, drafty, leaky, and in need of repair, but it is theirs, until it isn't any more. It is to be torn down and there is nothing Leo and his dad can do about it. This takes the reader through the stages of grief: denial, anger, depression, and acceptance. In their new house they find that the memories of everything they hold dear can again make a house a home. Use this to begin a discussion on loss and how to deal with things you cannot change. Pair this with *Yard Sale* by Bunting, *In a Jar* by Marcero, *My Favorite Memories* by Sarihi, and *Before I Leave* by Bagley.

Zosienka. *Moon Keeper*. Harper. 978-0062959522, T \$17.99 (PreK-grade 3). Emile, a member of the night creatures, has been honored with the job of moonkeeper. This requires him to look after the moon each night. Emile not only takes his job very seriously but begins to enjoy the moon's company. As the nights go by- the moon begins to change and Emile feels he has failed at his job. With the help of a small green bird- Emile learns the "secrets of the moon" and that change is part of life. Sparse text that accompanies soft, quiet illustrations make this gentle story about nature and friendship a must.

## PICTURE BOOK NONFICTION [total books in this category: 13]

Atkins, Marcie Flinchum. *Wait, Rest, Pause: Dormancy in Nature*. Millbrook. 978-1541561922, T \$27.99 (PreK-grade 3). Young readers have all experienced a “time out”, a rest period, a pause. Author Atkins explains this as dormancy and illustrates that all plant and animal life experiences some form of rest, and then when the time is right, life moves on. The text is simple and is paired with exceptional photos that support pausing, be it for a few hours or months and always there is the refrain;” you would pause.” This is a STEAM offering that should not be missed.

Burns, Loree Griffin. *You’re Invited to a Moth Ball: A Nighttime Insect Celebration*. 978-1580896863, R \$16.99 (Grades K-6). What is a moth ball? It is a party that invites young scientists to study the moths we can only see at night. Full color photographs accompany easy to follow, yet detailed instructions on how to attract and observe moths in one’s backyard. It includes how to attract moths( brown sugar mixed with rotten bananas) a list of materials needed to set up a backyard observatory ( a sheet hung over a clothesline) along with information on moths and how they differ from butterflies. This is STEAM at its best!

Chin, Jason. *Your Place in the Universe*. Neal Porter Books. 978-0823446230, T \$18.99 (Grades 3-5). In this amazing exploration, Chin explains the overwhelming idea of the massive size of the universe by using relatable concepts easily understood by the average 8-year-old who is “about five times as tall as this book, but only half as tall as an ostrich.” Through both words and cleverly labeled illustrations, Chin builds his comparison of the height of the ostrich to a giraffe, to trees, to buildings, to Mount Everest, to the edge of space and beyond to help readers get a better understanding of our place in the universe.

Duffield, Katy S. *Crossings: Extraordinary Structures For Extraordinary Animals*. Beach Lane Books. 978-1534465794, T \$18.99 (Grades K-6). People use tunnels, highways and bridges each day to get from one place to another. But all too often, these structures interfere with animal habitats, causing interruptions in animal migration. Scientists and engineers are now working to solve this problem by building structures that allow animals to go over, under, and through The author examines 12 animal examples that allow safe passage with simple, straightforward text and large, vivid, detailed full spread illustrations. This is STEAM solving problems and saving animals. Pair this with *Faraway Fox* by Jolene Thompson and *Wild Bridges and Buildings* by Etta Kaner which explains how architects are building structures inspired by Nature.

Fulton, Kristen. *Flight For Freedom: The Wetzel Family’s Daring Escape From East Germany*. Chronicle Books. 978-1452149608, T \$17.99 (Grades 2-6). The story of two families, the Wetzels and the Strelzyks, who are trapped in East Berlin at the time of the Berlin Wall. Together the two families engineer a hot air balloon and escape over the wall. Torben Kuhlmann’s illustrations convey the darkness and suspense of the moment. The author notes on the construction of the balloon and the political climate of Germany at the time of the escape are fantastic and help anchor this exciting historical picture book. Pair this with Jennifer Nielsen’s novel *A Night Divided*.

Hubbard, Rita Lorraine, illustrated by Oge Mora. *The Oldest Student: How Mary Walker Learned to Read*. Schwartz & Wade. 978-1524768287, T \$17.99 (Grades K-5). This is one of those books that stuns the reader, and listener, over and over. Mary Walker had a long, full life. She supported her family as they were educated and then finally decided it was time to learn to read. At 116 years old! Mora’s collage illustrations are fantastic and the story is the best kind of nonfiction, too amazing to be made up.

Messner, Kate. *The Next President: The Unexpected Beginnings and Unwritten Future of America’s Presidents*. Chronicle Books. 978-1452174884, T \$18.99 (Grades 4-6). “Quick: Name the President of the United States. No matter when you read this book, there’s only one right answer to that question.” There may be only one president at a time, but what about the future presidents? Messner gives a fascinating and informative perspective on presidents before they took the office. The book ends with an inspiring reminder that there are at least 10 future presidents already alive today, and they could be anywhere, doing anything. Backmatter includes the presidential requirements, suggestions for further reading, and a bibliography. An excellent read aloud for older readers studying civics or U.S. History.

Pimentel, Annette Bay, illustrated by Nabi H. Ali. *All The Way to the Top: How One Girl’s Fight for Americans with Disabilities Changed Everything*. Sourcebooks. 978-1492688976, T \$17.99 (PreK-grade 5). Jennifer Keelan has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair. When she learns that the Americans with Disabilities Act is being voted on by Congress, she asks her mom to bring her to Washington and then leaves her wheelchair at the bottom of the steps and climbs “all the way to the top”. It is a moving sight and young readers will cheer for this strong girl. An excellent book to supplement disability rights curriculum and the history of the ADA or to talk about youth activism.

Redding, Anna Crowley. *Chowder Rules!: The True Story of an Epic Food Fight*. Islandport Press. 978-1944762827, T [M] \$17.95 (Grades 3-6). A ‘taste’ of Maine history, this is the hysterically funny true story behind the great chowder cookoff of 1939. It started with Maine lawmaker Cleveland Sleeper, a New England clam chowder enthusiast. Outraged to learn that New York City chefs added tomatoes into their clam chowder, he proposed a bill to make it a crime to put tomatoes in clam chowder. This began a nationwide debate

over the proper ingredients of clam chowder that ended, not with the passage of the bill, but in a highly publicized chowder cook-off instead. Backmatter includes the winning recipe. Illustrator Vita Lane cleverly illustrated the front end papers with the ingredients of New England clam chowder, while the back end papers are illustrated with the ingredients of Manhattan clam chowder.

Ritchie, Scot. ***Follow Your Breath!: A First Book of Mindfulness***. Kids Can Press. 978-1525303364, R \$16.99 (Grades K-3). A move to a new house and school makes a young boy anxious and stressed. His friends want to help. One of their moms offers to teach them about mindfulness: “being aware of what is happening right now.” This is a much needed book that offers the reader strategies and activities for handling whatever stresses they encounter in their daily lives through a story that they can relate to.

Salyer, Hannah. ***Packs: Strength in Numbers***. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-1328577887, T \$17.99 (Grades K-3). Author Salyer introduces the reader to pods, packs, mobs, herds and huddles of animals and how each individual has its place but together they hunt better, travel safer, speak louder, and work better. Illustrations that are large, expressive and colorful along with easy to understand vocabulary remind the reader that togetherness and teamwork benefit each species including the human kind. Use this with units on science and ecology. Pair it with Brian Wildsmith’s *Animal Gallery*.

Stelson, Karen. ***A Bowl Full of Peace: A True Story***. Carolrhoda. 978-1541521483, T \$17.99 (Grades K-6). This is the story of a family heirloom; a bowl passed from mother to daughter and used at family dinners. The bowl belonged to the family of Sachiko Yasui whose family lived less than a mile from ground zero. Nothing was left of the home and not all the family survived but the bowl was found intact. It is a story of survival and of memories past, told in a calm direct tone with a message of hope. Photos of Sachiko and the bowl can be found in the back matter of the book. Use this in discussions of Japan’s role in WWII and its continued efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

Williams, Rachel. ***Slow Down: 50 Mindful Moments in Nature***. Magic Cat Publishing. 978-1419748387, T \$24.99 (PreK-grade 6). This volume urges the reader to “slow-down” and take a look at what nature is doing all around them. This collection of 50 moments in nature (cycles of the moon, a rainbow, thunderstorms, a bee pollinating a flower) points out common everyday happenings to be aware of and then encourages the reader to go out and observe them and find other moments to add to the collection. This collection focuses on the simple and ordinary that we might miss in our haste and is not just for the young.

#### **CHAPTER BOOK NONFICTION [total books in this category: 18]**

Dorion, Christiane. ***Darwin’s Rival: Alfred Russell Wallace and the Search for Evolution***. Candlewick Studio. 978-1536209327, T \$24.99 (Grades 3 up). This large format book is simply gorgeous and packed with interesting information. Everyone attributes the discovery of evolution and natural selection to Charles Darwin, but another scientist/explorer named Alfred Russel Wallace arrived at the same conclusions at about the same time from his own observations. This book chronicles Wallace’s travels and collections and shows how he arrived at the conclusion of evolution. The text is informative and well written. The illustrations really set this book apart, however. There are large illustrations on every page, and many use few and muted colors. Give this book to science, nature, and animal lovers, and they will not be disappointed.

Feder, Tyler. ***Dancing at the Pity Party: A Dead Mom Graphic Memoir***. Dial Books. 978-0525553021, [GN] \$18.99 (Grades 8 up). Tyler Feder shares her story of her mother’s first oncology appointment to facing reality as a motherless daughter in this frank and refreshingly funny graphic memoir.

Fleming, Candace. ***The Rise and Fall of Charles Lindbergh***. Schwartz & Wade Books. 978-0525646549, T \$18.99 (Grades 9 up). Digging deep into Charles Lindbergh’s past, the author uncovers his true character. Lindbergh was known as America’s hero after he flew across the Atlantic, but after the kidnapping and murder of his first born child, Lindbergh’s fame as an American hero rapidly faded to the point of being hated and despised by his fellow Americans. Fleming talks about his early childhood, his inventing of the first artificial hear, environmentalism and how he was depicted as a Nazi sympathizer, blaming the American Jewish peoples into leading American into WWII.

Jameison, Victoria. ***When Stars are Scattered***. Dial Books for Young Readers. 978-0525553915, [GN] \$20.99 (Grades 4 up). Omar and his nonverbal brother Hassan grow up in Dadaab, a refugee camp in Kenya, having fled war-torn Somalia after their father was killed. They spend their days looking for their mother, helping their neighbor/foster mother Fatuma, doing chores, and playing as best they can (they play soccer with balls made of plastic bags). When Omar is given an opportunity to attend school, he must decide if he should leave his brother during the day. Make sure you have a box of tissues handy — Omar and Hassan’s story and the stories of their friends and neighbors is heart-breaking and sadly all true. Omar tells the story with the help of talented graphic novelist Jamieson.

Kendi, Ibram X. & Jason Reynolds. ***Stamped: Racism, AntiRacism, and You***. Little, Brown and Company. 978-0316453692, T \$14.99 (Grades 7 up). A history of racist and antiracist ideas in America, from their roots in Europe until today, adapted from the National Book Award winner *Stamped from the Beginning*.

Kim, Hyun Sook. **Banned Book Club.** Iron Circus Comics. 978-1945820427, [GN] \$15.00 (Grades 7 up). In *Banned Book Club*, Hyun Sook shares a dramatic true story of political division, fear-mongering, anti-intellectualism, the death of democratic institutions, and the relentless rebellion of reading.

Kyi, Tanya Lloyd, illustrated by Drew Shannon. ***This Is Your Brain on Stereotypes: How Science Is Tackling Unconscious Bias.*** Kids Can Press. 978-1525300165, T \$16.99 (Grades 5-9). A digestible, thoughtful probe into why we believe what we believe and how our brains work to sort and categorize things. Kyi provides words and explanations for so many of the thought processes and psychological reactions surrounding bias and stereotyping. The book is accessible for readers in grade 5 all the way up to adults.

Latham, Irene, and Charles Water, illustrated by Mehrokh Amini. ***Dictionary for a Better World: Poems, Quotes, and Anecdotes from A to Z.*** Carolrhoda Books. 978-1541557758, T \$19.99 (Grades 3-6). This book is a dream for a poetry unit or for art teachers who might want to model an alphabet-book project. Latham & Water's collaboration is stunning - each letter of the alphabet features a word that makes the world a better place and each entry is written in a different poetic form. Amini's collage art is bright, reminiscent of Melissa Sweet's style. In addition to the word and the poem, the authors offer personal reflections and a "try it" suggestion to inspire real-world action. A stunning work.

Latta, Sara. ***Body 2.0: The Engineering Revolution of Medicine.*** Twenty-First Century Books (Tm). 978-1541528131, T \$37.32 (Grades 8 up). *Body 2.0* gives a glimpse into the future of medical technology. Even though biomedical engineering has been around for quite awhile (prosthetic toes made by ancient Egyptians, no joke!), the advancements that have been made are monumental. Great for research on biomedical technologies.

Meltzer, Brad & J. Mensch. ***The First Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill George Washington.*** Roaring Brook Press. 978-1250244838, T \$17.99 (Grades 9 up). *The First Conspiracy* regales an little known account of a conspiracy plot to assassinate George Washington during the Revolutionary War, while Washington was the leader of the Continental Army. George Washington was able to decipher this plot against him that was created by the then Governor of colonial New York, William Tyron. This is the first known documented use of American counterespionage.

Mirk, Sarah. ***You Do You: Figuring Out Your Body, Dating, and Sexuality.*** Twenty-First Century Books (Tm). 978-1541540220, T \$37.32 (Grades 8 up). *You Do You* covers the basics such as reproductive organs, puberty, hygiene, etc. What is great about this book is it's point blank honesty especially when covering consent, social media, sexting and abortion. It is well organized, easy to follow with diagrams and graphs with sidebar information available to the readers. Could be used just for information, but also in conjunction with health classes as a side reference.

Moore, Kate. ***Radium Girls: Young Readers Edition: The Scary but True Story of the Poison that Made People Glow.*** Sourcebooks. 978-1728209470, T \$17.99 (Grades 7 up). Moore brings to life all of the women affected by the duplicitous radium companies who might have had an inkling that radium was dangerous and yet did nothing to protect their young, female workers in their quest for increased profits. Some of the descriptions of the ailments and illnesses are tough to read, so if a reader is sensitive to gore, these sections can be skimmed. But the writing and the story are gripping; this is narrative nonfiction at its best.

Nye, Naomi Shahib. ***Cast Away: Poems For Our Time.*** Greenwillow Books. 978-0062907697, T \$14.99 (Grades 5 up). Young People's Poet Laureate, Naomi Shihab Nye has created a set of poems about the unwanted and discarded products of our world today. Each poem reflects on a discarded item, whether it is an old sock found lying around, a piece of trash and even a pine cone that was found on a daily walk. Everything has a story, even trash and discarded items, but they also send a warning about how and why we as a society regard trash in general.

Ottaviani, Jim. ***Astronauts: Women on the Final Frontier.*** First Second. 978-1626728771, [GN] \$19.99 (Grades 4 up). A fascinating graphic novel depicting the story of the first women astronauts, from cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova to Sally Ride to Mary Cleave. This is not only an interesting and informative look at the world of space flight and scientific experiments in space, it is also the history of women's equality. The text is funny at times and the illustrations by Maris Wicks are beautiful.

Rocco, John. ***How We Got to the Moon: The People, Technology, and the Daring Feats of Science Behind Humanity's Greatest Adventure.*** Crown Books. 978-0525647416, T. \$29.99. (Grades 6-up). Rocco gives the reader the most comprehensive book on how we made it to the moon. Starting with the Russian launch of Sputnik to Neil Armstrong's moon landing, the reader hears the stories of some 400,000 people from engineers to seamstresses, who worked together to get the space program up and going with its goal of putting a man on the moon. Illustrations of pencil, watercolor, and digital painting support detailed text. This is the complete package!

Rusch, Elizabeth. ***You Call This Democracy?: How to Fix Our Government and Deliver Power to the People.*** HMH Books for Young Readers. 978-0358387428, T \$19.99 (Grades 6 up). An accessible examination of America's government. Rusch tackles this topic in a measured yet impassioned voice and makes clear that while we do enjoy many important freedoms in the United States, our democracy is broken and we have the power to change it. Twelve chapters cover issues such as gerrymandering, money in politics, voter

disenfranchisement, and more. Graphics help to break up the text and provide strong visualization of heavy information. Each chapter ends by telling teens what they can do to take action, allowing this book to not just teach, but to inspire our young citizens to get involved and make real change. Sections for further reading and source information are included.

Shulevitz, Uri. ***Chance: Escape From the Holocaust: Memories of a Refugee Childhood***. Farrar Straus Giroux. 978-0374313715, T \$19.99 (Grades 4-8). There are many memoirs about surviving the Holocaust in Western Europe, but Shulevitz and his family escape their native Poland and go East, to Russia. For the next eight years, young Shulevitz and his family struggle to stay alive after being sent to a settlement work camp where cold and hunger are constant companions. This narrative gives the reader another view of the Holocaust, how Jewish families struggled to survive on the Russian front. Pair this with Anita Lobel's memoir *No Pretty Pictures*.

Stevenson, Noelle. ***The Fire Never Goes Out: A Memoir in Pictures***. HarperTenn. 978-0062278274, [GN] \$17.99 (Grades 10 up). *The Fire Never Goes Out* chronicles eight years of the author's young adult life in the form of sketches and text. As the years progress, so does the author's self-portraits and experiences. She discovers herself through good times and bad, professional successes and defining her independence, many times in letters that she has written to herself. This book is a National Book Award Finalist.

#### **CHAPTER BOOK FICTION [total books in this category: 40]**

Almond, David. ***War Is Over***. Candlewick Press. 978-1536209860, T \$16.99 (grades 3-6). John's father is fighting in WWII and his mother works in a munitions factory. As John struggles to remember his father's face and to make sense of the work that his mother does in the imposing factory, he is also grappling with the idea put forth by his teacher that John must fight the children of Germany like the soldiers fighting in the war. When John encounters a young German boy, he imagines a world in which he could be friends with this "enemy". In this slim book with gorgeous black & white illustrations by David Litchfield, Almond allows children to think deeply about the effect of war on children. A wonderful read aloud and conversation starter.

Billet, Julia. ***Catherine's War***. HarperAlley. 978-0062915597, T [GN] \$12.99 (grades 3 up). This beautifully illustrated middle grade graphic novel personalizes the experiences of World War II. The lead character of Rachel (who must change her name to Catherine Colin in order to stay unnoticed by the Nazis) is based upon the author's mother. The paired text and artwork allows for a glimpse into the unfathomable fear, disruption, and sadness experienced by Rachel and her community in France during the war. Claire Fauvel's illustrations are wrought with emotion, and she fills the pages with courage, strength, fear, sadness, and hope. End pages include photographs taken at the Sèvres Children's Home, an author's note, and answers to questions the author received from readers.

Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker. ***Fighting Words***. Dial Books. 978-1984815682, T \$17.99 (Grades 6 up). A powerful, necessary book on an extremely difficult topic. As the book jacket states, "the book explodes the stigma around child sexual abuse" and Bradley, a truly masterful writer, does it with compassion and grace. Della has always been protected by her older sister Suki, but when Suki cracks under the pressure of being the wolf protector, Della's world crashes. This book will not be for every middle grade reader, but for those who can handle it, they will be rewarded with a real, raw story of sisterhood and the cathartic and powerful journey of a girl finding her voice.

Bushnell, Candace. ***Rules for Being a Girl***. Balzer + Bray. 978-0062803379, T \$17.99 (Grades 9 up). This book is incredibly difficult to read, but so important for awareness, particularly in the #metoo era. Marin is a high school senior who goes through an incredibly difficult time. Her teacher ends up kissing her, and when she denies him, he takes it out on her schoolwork and her college application. When she reports it, no one believes her, including her best friend. She finds herself friendless, boyfriendless, and in trouble at school. The authors leave Marin in the best situation she can be while keeping it very authentic. The authors worked well together, with a steady voice throughout.

Cline-Ransome, Lesa. ***Leaving Lymon***. Holiday House. 978-0823444427. \$17.99. (Gr 4-6). Lymon is a ten year old boy of rural Mississippi who has had it hard. He is a poor student, has been abandoned by his mother, has a father in prison, and has lost his grandad, his only champion. He and his grandmother travel north, where family reluctantly take them in. When his grandmother is hospitalized, his mother shows up and brings him to a strange household with new rules and a man who is physically and mentally abusive. Lymon's sole hope is that his father will seek him out when he is released. The reader waits with bated breath as Lymon navigates the challenges he is confronted with. This is an emotional book, but the reader roots for Lymon even when no one else does. A companion novel to *Finding Langston*, but can stand on its own.

Costner, Arianne. ***My Life as a Potato***. Random House Books for Young Readers. 978-0593118665, T \$16.99 (Grades 4-6). Ben has just moved to Idaho. In California he was kind of a loner, but in Idaho not only has he already made two great friends but he is also starting to get noticed by the popular kids in school. When an unfortunate hot dog throwing incident accidentally sidelines the school mascot, Spud, Ben is forced to step up and take over the role. There are two problems with this, first Ben believes that he is cursed by potatoes and second, being Spud is about the most uncool thing ever! Ben is determined to keep his new school mascot status a secret but things quickly spiral out of control and he is forced to figure out what really matters. Hilariously funny middle grade novel, perfect for fans of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and *Mr. Lemoncello's Library*.

Culley, Betty. *Three Things I Know are True*. HarperTeen. 978-0062908022, T \$18.99 (Grades 9 up). This is a beautiful YA novel-in-verse about loss and hope set in a former mill town on the Kennebec River in rural Maine. Soon to be 16-year-old Liv tells the story of caring for her brain-damaged brother Jonah after a shooting accident at his best friend's house across the street. Liv's mother is suing Clay's father, a gun advocate who always says "What good is a gun if it isn't loaded?" (pp. 266-267). Liv has trouble focusing in school and spends most of her time helping the home nurses care for Jonah and trying to connect with Jonah's best friend and his mother.

Derting, Kimberly. *Cece Loves Science: Push and Pull*. Greenwillow. 978-0062946096, T. \$16.99. (Grades K-3). This "I Can Read" selection introduces new readers to Cece, a girl who loves science, and the properties of "push and pull". In simple sentences and an engaging story, independent readers hone their skills and are introduced to basic science concepts. STEAM for beginners.

Finlay, Adrienne. *Cut Off*. HMH Books for Young Readers. 978-0358006457, T \$17.99 (Grades 7 up). Teens compete to survive in the wilderness for one million dollars on a new virtual reality show. When something goes horribly wrong and the contestants realize no one is coming to save them, they must question their very reality--and how much of the game is really for show.

Giles, Lamar. *Not So Pure and Simple*. HarperTeen. 978-0062349198, T \$15.99 (Grades 8 up). Giles takes the classic boy-gets-girl trope and tackles toxic masculinity and societal expectations to create an original love story that is fresh and honest. At times it reads like a much-needed, how-to-manual for teen boys. Girls will shake their heads in recognition and laugh at the humor, but there will not be any revelations for them. Boys will be able to laugh along with Del and possibly even at themselves as Giles tackles serious coming-of-age themes.

Hest, Amy. *The Summer We Found the Baby*. Candlewick Press. 978-0763660079, R. \$16.99. (Grades 4- 6). The setting is summer at Belle Beach, Long Island during WWII. The reader meets sisters Julie and Martha who, having found an abandoned baby on the library steps, are heading down the beach with Bruno Ben-Ellis following. How this all came to be is told in the voices of each character. Author Hest writes a family story that is heartwarming and full of emotion.

Jackson, Holly. *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*. Delacorte Press. 978-1984896369, T \$14.99 (Grades 9 up). Five years ago, Andie Bell disappeared and her boyfriend, Sal Singh was the suspect. But before charges could be brought against Sal, he unexpectedly committed suicide. Five years later, Pippa has decided to do her Senior Capstone Project on this unsolved mystery to prove Sal's innocence. Intriguing, captivating and dangerous moments will lead the reader to fear for Pippa's own safety in this gripping murder mystery.

Kim, Jessica. *Stand Up, Yumi Chung*. Kokila. 978-0525554974, T \$16.99 (Grades 4-7). Yumi loves stand-up comedy, but it is not the career path that her Korean parents would like for her to choose. She is expected to attend a tutoring class in an effort to secure a scholarship to her expensive private school, and she does, but she also stumbles into a comedy camp for kids (taught by her favorite YouTube comedians) and due to an error of mistaken identity, Yumi gets a chance to see if she has what it takes to stand on a stage and make people laugh. The book weaves in many of the microaggressions dealt with by Asians and offers an anti-hero in the not-always-likable, but very sincere, Yumi.

Kraus, Daniel. *Bent Heavens*. Henry Holt & Company. 978-1250151678, T \$17.99 (Grades 9 up). Local high school English teacher and Drama advisor, Mr. Fleming, begins to act erratically, claiming to have been abducted by aliens, just before he disappears. After his disappearance, his daughter, Liv, is embarrassed and confused. She tries to rebrand herself as a popular athlete, but these changes are superficial and do not resolve Liv's anger and sorrow. Her friendship with her childhood friend, Doug, is both her savior and her undoing. They still check the alien traps her father left in the backyard every Sunday. When an alien is caught in one of the traps, Liv must confront the fact that her father might not have been crazy. The story turns haunting when, in their fear and distress, Doug and Liv torture the alien. Both teens become increasingly angry when torture does not produce any answers.

LaMotte, Lily, illustrated by Ann Xu. *Measuring Up*. HarperAlly. 978-0062973863, T [GN] \$12.99 (Grades 3-7). Cici has left her beloved grandmother, A-ma, behind in Taiwan, and is feeling sad and disconnected. When a multi-week cooking contest offers a cash prize, Cici hopes to turn her love of and skill at cooking into the money to bring her grandmother to the U.S. for a visit. A heartwarming story that offers a character who is unsure of herself, but who finds her feet and earns her well-deserved hug from A-ma. LaMotte deftly weaves many of the microaggressions felt by Asians into regular school day interactions. The illustrations are vibrant and complement the story well.

Lee, Lyla. *I'll Be The One*. Katherine Tegen Books. 978-0062936921, T \$17.99 (Grades 7 up). In a fresh, first person voice of an aspiring K-pop singer and dancer, Korean-American Skye Haneul rocks the auditions for the latest K-pop competition in Los Angeles. From an early age in ballet class up to these auditions, she has had a grueling, abusive, daily reminder from her mother that "fat girls can't dance" and other body shaming behaviors. Skye's passion and talent for K-pop fuels her confidence and enables her to shake off the various microaggressions and speak up when they come from the judges of the competition. Along the way, Skye snags the eye of the fetching young Korean celebrity Henry Cho and their new relationship goes viral.

LeZotte, Ann Clare. *Show Me a Sign*. Scholastic Press. 978-1338255812, T \$18.99 (Grades 4-6). It's 1805 and Mary Lambert, a deaf 11-year-old girl, lives with her family in the community of Chilmark on Martha's Vineyard. Because many people in the community are also deaf, everyone in the community can communicate in sign language, and Mary has never felt alone or different. Then a young, deceitful scientist arrives determined to learn about the island's unusually high deaf population by any means necessary. Mary is accidentally caught up in his study and gets forcibly taken away from her island home. She finds herself in a hostile, friendless environment unable to communicate with those around her. Mary adapts quickly and is determined to find a way to save herself and get back home. A fascinating historical middle-grade novel inspired by the true history of a deaf community that lived on Martha's Vineyard, *Show me a Sign* is also the winner of the 2021 Schneider Family Book Award for Middle Grades.

Light, Alex. *The Upside of Falling*. HarperTeen. 978-0062918052, T \$14.99 (Grades 9 up). Becca is disillusioned with love, her parents divorce didn't help her cause. So she delves into romance novels and their happy endings, because in real life, love never ends well. Until one day, when she finds herself in a "fake relationship" with her high school's golden boy, Brett. What leads from here, is a fake relationship that realizes that love does end well and that friendships return and blossom when love is real and sincere.

Maclachlan, Patricia. *Wondrous Rex*. Katherine Tegen. 978-0062940988, T \$15.99 (Grades 2-6). "A writer of books needs an assistant, a coach, a helper, for inspiration and some magic." A writer who can't find the words and a girl who doesn't think she has the words both find help when a magician's dog answers their ad. A gentle story to instill a love of words and inspire the reader to find the words to their own story. Another magical tale from an author who knows how to use both words and magic to create a story.

Maldonado, Torrey. *What Lane?*. Nancy Paulsen Books. 978-9780525518433, T \$16.99 (Grades 6 up). A book to introduce Black Lives Matter to middle-grade readers. Stephen, who is bi-racial, enjoys hanging out with his best friend Dan, who is white. Stephen starts to notice how people treat them differently; they treat Stephen with suspicion even when Stephen and Dan are doing the exact same thing. Stephen wears a bracelet that says "What Lane?" and tries to figure out which lane he will take through life. This is a brief chapter book that would be great for a read-aloud and discussion.

Marks, Janae. *From the Desk of Zoe Washington*. Katherine Tegan Books. 978-0062875853, T \$16.99 (Grades 4-6). Zoe Washington is a happy, confident twelve-year-old who knows just what she wants in life: to win the Food Networks Kids Bake Challenge and for her former best friend, Trevor, to apologize so that they can have a fun-filled summer together. When she receives a letter from Marcus, the father that she has never met, the father that is in jail for a terrible crime, Zoe's world is turned upside down. What harm could it do to write Marcus back and get to know him a little bit. When Marcus tells Zoe that he is innocent and has an alibi, Zoe doesn't know what to think but is determined to find the truth. A moving and timely middle grade novel about baking, family, and the quest for the truth.

McGinnis, Mindy. *Be Not Far From Me*. Katherine Tegen Books. 978-0062561626, T \$16.99 (Grades 10 up). A survival story that ranges from adventure to near horror. What is different is that the surviving protagonist is a teenage girl who has the ability and spunk to survive. The big question is who is responsible for her current situation of being injured, lost, and alone in the woods?

McGovern, Cammie. *Just Breathe*. HarperTeen. 978-0062463357, T \$16.99 (Grades 10 up). The author has given us two somewhat fragile characters who are in personal painful struggles, one physically and one emotionally. During his senior year David's CF landed him in the hospital where Jamie (a sophomore) is a volunteer. Their relationship deepens to true friendship during personal exchanges and emails. Physical and mental challenges direct the story line even as strong emotional ties become obvious. The text is crafted beautifully offering a complex romantic coming of age story complete with parental conflict. Readers may wonder about the cover illustration but will soon learn how a simple craft activity can center a person and provide healing benefits.

Messner, Kate. *Chirp*. Bloomsbury Children's Books. 978-1547602810, T \$16.99 (Grades 5-8). This book is so much more layered than the cover suggests. The reader might expect a joyful romp, but there is such depth to this story featuring friendship, entrepreneurship, trust, #metoo, finding your voice, and entomophagy. Mia's family moves to Vermont to be close to her grandmother who has had a stroke. Mia's mother would like Gram to retire, but Gram has started a cricket farm and has no plan to retire. When someone starts sabotaging the crickets, Mia has to help Gram. On top of this mystery is the secret that Mia is carrying around about her former gymnastics coach. Messner is a master of weaving issues into stories about family and friendship and readers will enjoy this satisfying read.

Moreil, Roxanne and Cyril Pedrosa. *The Golden Age: Book 1*. First Second. 978-1250237947, [GN] \$26.99 (Grades 7 up). Princess Tilda, is on the run, as rightful heir to the throne. Her remaining allies are doing their best to keep her safe and alive, but are only one step ahead of the Princess's usurper — her younger brother. Translated from French, this is the first in a duology in this fantasy graphic series. Illustrations are bold and complement the text as the story moves on. Ends on a cliffhanger, leaving the reader unsure and curious to what happens next.

Nix, Garth. *The Left-Handed Booksellers of London*. Katherine Tegen Books. 978-006268325X, T \$19.99 (Grades 9 up). Searching for the father she has never met in an alternate-world 1983 London, Susan is drawn into an extended family of magical, left-handed, fighting booksellers who police intruders from the mythical Old World of England.

Noel, Kaela. *Coo*. Greenwillow. 978-0062955975, T \$16.99 (Grades 4-6). Ten years ago, a baby was abandoned in an alley and unbelievably, a flock of pigeons rescued her and took her to their dovecote on the roof to be raised as one of their own. Called Coo by her flock, she knows no other life, but realizes she is not like her family. When her dearest friend is gravely hurt by a hawk, only Coo can save him, but it means leaving the flock and everything she knows to seek help from a woman who has cared for injured birds in the past. Coo doesn't fully realize that in seeking help, she may forever change her own life. This is a story that explores themes of friendship, family, love, the importance of being yourself, and belonging. Fans of Kate DiCamillo, Katherine Applegate, and Barbara O'Connor will enjoy this debut novel.

Ortega, Claribel A. *Ghost Squad*. Scholastic Press. 978-1338280142, T \$17.99 (Grades 4-6). Like many other girls her age, Lucely Luna has a close knit family. They sit around the breakfast table every morning laughing, bickering, and enjoying each other's company. Unlike many other girls her age, the majority of Lucely's family are ghosts. For as long as Lucely can remember she has been able to see and communicate with her firefly spirits, Lucely's name for her ghostly ancestors. Now her firefly spirits are in trouble and Lucely and her best friend Syd set out to save them. But when they accidentally cast a spell that awakens the vengeful spirits in their town, they find that they have a much bigger problem on their hands. This next-gen ghostbusters tale is funny, charming, and action-packed with just a sprinkle of spooky mixed-in.

Quindlen, Kelly. *Late to the Party*. Roaring Books Press. 978-1250209139, T \$15.99 (Grades 8 up). Preferring to hang out with her best friends rather than pursue relationships, a gay teen finds her perspectives changed by an unexpected secret relationship with a beautiful senior who may or may not also like girls. A novel for those late bloomers out there.

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Mañanaland*. Scholastic Press. 978-1338157864, T \$18.99 (Grades 4-7). Max Córdoba dreams of being a fútbol star and playing on the national team like his Buelo, but when the matter of a missing birth certificate threatens his dream, his Papa sets out to the big city to see if he can find the important document. Max ends up caught up in the family legacy of moving "Hidden Ones" to safety and learns that his own mother, who left when he was a toddler, was once fleeing a dangerous life. She made the decision to leave Max in the hands of his father and grandfather and went off to seek Mañanaland in the hope of securing the promise of a better, safer tomorrow for all of them. The growth and awareness that Max experiences is beautiful in Ryan's capable hands. The adoration felt between the males in the Córdoba family and the loving way that they protect and then support Max is fantastic.

Salazar, Aida. *The Land of the Cranes*. Scholastic Press. 978-1338343809, T \$17.99 (Grades 4-7). Betita was born in the US, but her parents are undocumented. When her father is deported, Betita and her pregnant mother are left alone. In an attempt to see her father, the two are also detained and forced to live in a family detention camp outside L.A. Betita finds strength in her poetry and art and the style of the book, written in verse, mimics the poetry created throughout the story. A simultaneously heartwarming and gut-wrenching book that is beautifully written and that effortlessly tackles the difficult subject of family separation through deportation, detention, and immigrations. An important and timely book that should be added to most collections.

Schimdt, Gary. *A Long Road on a Short Day*. Clarion. 978-0544888364, T \$18.99 (Grades 2-6). On a short day in winter, Samuel and his father begin a long journey that hopefully will end with a milk cow for his mother. Readers follow the two as they enter into a series of trades that will bring them success, and home before the snowstorm hits. This slight book written in simple text and supported by colorful illustrations is full of warmth and kindness on a cold winter's day and conveys the simple wants and needs of Samuel and the people he meets.

Smith, Jennifer E. *Field Notes on Love*. Delacorte Press. 978-0399559442, T \$16.99 (Grades 9 up). Two teens are thrown together on a cross-country train trip that will teach them about love, each other, and the futures they can build for themselves in this meet-cute romance.

Stamper, Vesper. *A Cloud of Outrageous Blue*. Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers. 978-152470041X, T \$19.99 (Grades 6 up). Edyth grew up in a small, quiet village but when she loses everything seemingly overnight, she's sent to live in a priory. Once there, she begins work and falls in love with old books in the scriptorium. When a boy from her past appears on a work crew, her future seems complicated. As the Plague sets in, her future is in even more turmoil. She knows she wants to be with him, but she feels drawn to her work and stuck there at the same time.

Stead, Rebecca. *The List of Things That Will Not Change*. Wendy Lamb books. 978-1101938096, T \$16.99 (Grades 4-6) After her parents divorce and her dad reveals that he is gay, ten year old Bea has to deal with a lot of change, which she does by keeping a notebook reminding her of all the things that will not change: her parents love for her, she is still part of a family but in a different way, there will be a home for her at each of her parents houses. When her dad announces he and his partner Jesse (who also has a daughter

who lives with her mother) are to marry, Bea is thrilled to have a sister. However, as the wedding approaches, Bea begins to realize that families both established and new bring questions, surprises, sadness, joy, and change. Bea has to come to terms with what stays the same and what has to change.

Takaoka, Shannon. *Everything I Thought I Knew*. Candlewick Press. 978-1536207764, T \$15.99 (Grades 9 up). Attending summer school months after a heart transplant derails her college ambitions, Chloe pursues a sudden passion for surfing alongside an attractive instructor, before experiencing vivid nightmares about unfamiliar people and places.

Timberlake, Amy. *Skunk and Badger*. Algonquin Young Readers. 978-1643750057, T \$18.99 (Grades 3-6). We all know that badgers are rather grouchy, solitary creatures and this one is no exception. He is living as a guest in his aunt's home and though she has written of another houseguest that will be coming, Badger has not read any of her letters. When Skunk appears at his door stating that he is to be his new house mate, Badger is none too happy. Thus begins the journey of how two very different personalities must learn to get along. Supported by the signature ink drawings of Jon Klassen, this is the classic "odd couple" story. Found in this first volume are the themes of sharing, tolerance, friendship, and understanding offered in a fun, laugh-out-loud story.

Williams, Lily. *Go With the Flow*. First Second. 978-1250143174, T [GN] \$14.99 (Grades 5 up). When new student Sasha has the blood from her period soak through her white pants at school, three friends come to her rescue. As they enter the girls' bathroom, they come to find that the menstrual product dispenser is empty (again). This event spurs the four high school friends to become advocates for equality and access to female health products. The main characters are inclusive and diverse, representing different skin colors, sexual orientations, body types, and personalities, and allow just about any reader to see a glimpse of themselves in at least one of the characters. The monochromatic red illustrations are eye catching and engaging. Author's note and informative pages about menstruation and activism are provided at the end of the book. *Go with the Flow* is an empowering book that aims to destigmatize menstruation. Highly recommended for all, regardless of one's identified gender.

Wolk, Lauren. *Echo Mountain*. Dutton Books for Young Readers. 978-0525555568, T [M] \$17.99 (Grades 5-9). Due to economic hardship as a result of the Great Depression, Ellie and her family are forced to move out of town and into a cabin in the woods of Echo Mountain. When her father has a catastrophic accident that puts him in a coma, Ellie is determined to help him wake up. She meets "the hag" who lives up the mountain, she learns natural medicine, she makes friends with a local boy, and she experiences the types of revelations and lessons that only nature can reveal. Wolk's exquisite prose coupled with her endearing characters put this on par with the very best historical fiction/nature novels.

Zenter, Jeff. *Rayne & Delilah's Midnite Matinee*. Crown. 978-1524720232, T \$17.99 (Grades 9 up). Told in two voices, Josie and Delia struggle with growing up and growing apart as they face tough decisions about their post-high school futures and the fate of their weekly cable television show.

Zoboi, Ibi and Yusef Salaam. *Punching the Air*. Balzer + Bray. 978-0062996487, T \$17.99 (Grades 8 up). *Punching the Air*, written by *American Street* author Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam, one of the Exonerated Five, belongs in all libraries serving young adults. The novel-in-verse is inspired by Salaam's experience of being wrongly convicted and unjustly incarcerated. Like Walter Dean Myers's *Monster*, *Punching the Air* covers both the court experience and time incarcerated of a black boy assumed to be guilty because of the color of his skin. The main character, Amal, is a student at a diverse art school where students seem to appreciate differences but he is still considered "disruptive" by his teachers, one of whom even testifies against him at his trial.

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

**Elizabeth Andersen**, School Librarian, Westbrook High School

**Sarah Cropley** - Portland Public Library, Portland

**Patti Francis** - School Librarian, Freeport Elementary Schools

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

**Jan Hamilton** -- retired Youth Services Librarian

**Jill O'Connor** - Youth Services Librarian, Merrill Memorial Library

**Kristin Taylor** -Media Specialist, Biddeford High School

## 2021 National Award Winners

Award books listed here may or may not be included in the “Cream of the Crop” list.

**American Indian Youth Literature Award** - Announced in even years and established to identify and honor the very best writing and illustrations by and about American Indians. No awards this year as it is an odd-numbered year

**Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature** - award promotes Asian/Pacific American culture and heritage and is awarded based on literary and artistic merit.

Picture Book Winner: *Paper Son: The Inspiring Story of Tyrus Wong, Immigrant and Artist*, Julie Leung, illustrated by Chris Sasaki

Picture Book Honor Book: *Danbi Leads the School Parade*, written and illustrated by Anna Kim

Children’s Literature: *When You Trap a Tiger*, Tae Keller

Children’s Honor Book: *Prairie Lotus*, Linda Sue Park

Young Adult Literature: *This Light Between Us*, Andrew Fukuda

Young Adult Honor Book: *Displacement*, Kiku Hughes

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

Winner: *We Are Water Protectors*, illustrated by Michaela Goade, written by Carole Lindstrom

Honors: *A Place Inside of Me: A Poem to Heal the Heart*, illustrated by Noa Denmon, written by Zetta Elliott;

*The Cat Man of Aleppo*, illustrated by Yuko Shimizu, written by Irene Latham & Karim Shamsi-Basha

*Me & Mama*, illustrated and written by Cozbi A. Cabrera

*Outside In*, illustrated by Cindy Derby, written by Deborah Underwood

**Charlotte Zolotow Award** – Awarded to the best picture book text published in the United States. Typically an annual award, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the current term is expanded to two years and a 2021-2022 award will be given.

**Children’s Literature Legacy Award** - honors an author or illustrator whose books, published in the United States, have made, over a period of years, a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children through books that demonstrate integrity and respect for all children’s lives and experiences.

Mildred D. Taylor, whose award-winning works include *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, the 1977 Newbery Medal winner and a Coretta Scott King (CSK) Author honor; *The Land*, the 2002 CSK Author Award winner; *The Road to Memphis*, the 1991 CSK Author Award winner; *All the Days Past, All the Days to Come*; and *The Gold Cadillac* among other titles.

**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: *Before the Ever After*, Jacqueline Woodson

Honors: *All the Days Past, All the Days to Come*, Mildred D. Taylor

*King and the Dragonflies*, Kacen Callender

*Lifting as We Climb: Black Women’s Battle for the Ballot Box*, Evette Dionne

### CSK Illustrator Award

Winner: *R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Aretha Franklin, the Queen of Soul*, illustrated by Frank Morrison, written by Carole Boston Weatherford

Honors: *Magnificent Homespun Brown: A Celebration*, illustrated by Kaylani Juanita, written by Samara Cole Doyon

*Exquisite: The Poetry and Life of Gwendolyn Brooks*, illustrated by Cozbi A. Cabrera, written by Suzanne Slade

*Me & Mama*, illustrated and written by Cozbi A. Cabrera

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

*Legendborn*, Tracy Deonns

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

Dorothy L. Guthrie is an award-winning retired librarian, district administrator, author and school board member. A respected children’s literature advocate, Guthrie promotes and affirms the rich perspectives of African Americans. Her work, *Integrating African American Literature in the Library and Classroom*, inspires educators with African American literature. Guthrie founded the first African American museum in her home, Gaston County, North Carolina.

**Excellence in Early Learning Digital Media Award** – Awarded to a digital media producer that has created distinguished digital media for an early learning audience.

Winner: *The Imagine Neighborhood*, produced by Committee for Children

Honor Recipients: *Sesame Street Family Play: Caring for Each Other*, produced by Sesame Workshop

**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.  
Winner: Rodman Philbrick

**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: Samara Cole Doyon (author) & Kaylani Juanita (illustrator): *Magnificent Homespun Brown: A Celebration*

Honor: Anna Crowley Redding (author) & Vita Lane (illustrator): *Chowder Rules! The True Story of an Epic Food Fight*

**J/YA**

Winner: Abdi Nor Iftin: *Call Me American (Adapted for Young Adults): The Extraordinary True Story of a Young Somali Immigrant*

Honor: Lauren Wolk: *Echo Mountain*

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

Kekla Magoon. Her books include young adult novels *Light It Up, X: A Novel*, co-written by Ilyasah Shabazz, *How It Went Down*, *The Rock and the River*, *Fire in the Streets*, and middle grade novel *The Season of Styx Malone*, which was on the 2019 Maine Student Book Award nominee list.

**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: *Telephone Tales*, originally published in Italian as *Favole al telefono*, written by Gianni Rodari, illustrated by Valerio Vidali, translated by Antony Shugaar

Honors: *Catherine's War*, written by Julia Billet, illustrated by Claire Fauvel and translated from French by Ivanka Hahnenberger

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

Winner: *When You Trap A Tiger*, Tae Keller

Honors: *All Thirteen*, Christina Soontornvat

*BOX: Henry Brown Mails Himself to Freedom*, Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Michele Wood

*Fighting Words* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

*We Dream of Space*, Erin Entrada Kelly

*A Wish in the Dark*, Christina Soontornvat

**Odyssey Award** - for best audiobook produced for children and/or young adults, available in English in the United States.

Winner: *Kent State*, Deborah Wiles, narrated by Christopher Gebauer, Lauren Ezzo, Christina Delaine, Johnny Heller, Roger Wayne, Korey Jackson, and David de Vries

Honors: *Clap When You Land*, Elizabeth Acevedo, narrated by Elizabeth Acevedo and Melania-Luisa Marte

*Fighting Words*, Kimberly Brubaker Bradley, narrated by Bahni Turpin

*Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You*, Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi, narrated by Jason Reynolds with an introduction by Ibram X. Kendi

*When Stars Are Scattered*, Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed, narrated by Faysal Ahmed, Barkhad Abdi, and a full cast

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

Winner: *Everything Sad Is Untrue (a true story)*, Daniel Nayeri

Honors: *Apple (Skin to the Core)*, Eric Gansworth

*Dragon Hoops*, Gene Luen Yang, color by Lark Pien

*Every Body Looking*, Candice Iloh

*We Are Not Free*, Traci Chee

**Pura Belpré** – 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.

**Children's Author Award**

Winner: *Efrén Divided*, Ernesto Cisneros

Honors: *The Total Eclipse of Nestor Lopez*, Adrianna Cuevas

*Lupe Wong Won't Dance*, Donna Barba Higuera

**Young Adult Author Award**

Winner: *Furia*, Yamile Saied Méndez

Honors: *Never Look Back*, Lilliam Rivera

*We Are Not from Here*, Jenny Torres Sanchez

### **Illustrator Award**

Winner: *¡Vamos! Let's Go Eat*, illustrated and written by Raúl Gonzalez

Honors: *Sharuko: El Arqueólogo Peruano/Peruvian Archaeologist Julio C. Tello*, illustrated by Elisa Chavarri, written by Monica Brown

**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: *Honeybee: The Busy Life of Apis Mellifera*, Candace Fleming, illustrated by Eric Rohmann

Honors: *How We Got to the Moon: The People, Technology, and Daring Feats of Science Behind Humanity's Greatest Adventure*, written and illustrated by John Rocco

*Exquisite: The Poetry and Life of Gwendolyn Brooks*, written by Suzanne Slade, illustrated by Cozbi A. Cabrera

*All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team*, Christina Soontornvat

**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 Winner (birth-age 10): *I Talk Like a River*, written by Jordan Scott, illustrated by Sydney Smith

Children's Honor Book: *All the Way to the Top: How One Girl's Fight for Americans with Disabilities Changed Everything*, written by Annette Bay Pimentel, illustrated by Nabi H. Ali

*Itzhak: A Boy who Loved the Violin*, written by Tracy Newman, illustrated by Abigail Halpin

Middle (age 11-13): *Show Me a Sign*, Ann Clare LeZotte

Middle Honor Book: *Get a Grip, Vivvy Cohen!*, Sarah Kapit

*When Stars Are Scattered*, written by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed, illustrated by Victoria Jamieson

Teen (age 13-18): *This Is My Brain in Love*, I.W. Gregorio

**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: *We Are Little Feminists: Families*, Archa Shrivastav

Honors: *Beetle & The Hollowbones*, illustrated and written by Aliza Layne|

*Darius the Great Deserves Better*, Adib Khorram

*Felix Ever After*, Kacen Callender

*You Should See Me in a Crown*, Leah Johnson

**The Sydney Taylor Book Award** - Given annually to outstanding books for children and teens that authentically portray the Jewish experience.

Picture Book Winner: *Welcoming Elijah: A Passover Tale with a Tail*, written by Lesléa Newman, illustrated by Susan Gal

Picture Book Honors: *I Am the Tree of Life: My Jewish Yoga Book*, written by Mychal Copeland, illustrated by André Ceolin

*Miriam at the River*, written by Jane Yolen, illustrated by Khoa Le

Middle Grade Winner: *Turtle Boy*, M. Evan Wolkenstein

Middle Grade Honors: *No Vacancy*, Tziporah Cohen

*Anya and the Nightingale*, Sofiya Pasternack

*The Blackbird Girls*, Anne Blankman

Young Adult Winner: *Dancing at the Pity Party*, written and illustrated by Tyler Feder

Young Adult Honors: *They Went Left*, Monica Hesse

**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: *See the Cat: Three Stories About a Dog*, written by David LaRochelle, illustrated by Mike Wohnoutka

Honors: *The Bear in My Family*, Maya Tatsukawa

*Ty's Travels: Zip, Zoom!*, written by Kelly Starling Lyons, illustrated by Nina Mata

*What About Worms!?*, Ryan T. Higgins

*Where's Baby?*, Anne Hunter

**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.

*If These Wings Could Fly*, Kyrie McCauley

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

Winner: *The Rise and Fall of Charles Lindbergh*, Candace Fleming

Finalists: *All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team*, Christina Soontornvat

*The Cat I Never Named: A True Story of Love, War, and Survival*, Amra Sabic-El-Rayess with Laura L. Sullivan

*How We Got to the Moon: The People, Technology, and Daring Feats of Science Behind Humanity's Greatest Adventure*, John Rocco

*You Call This Democracy?: How to Fix Our Democracy and Deliver Power to the People*, Elizabeth Rusch