

# BEST BOOKS

## 2022





By Shelley M. Diaz, Andrew Eliopoulos, Kimberly Fakh, Amanda Mastrull, Florence Simmons, and Ashleigh Williams

Illustration by Guojing

**F**ROM THE BOOK ROOM ASSISTANTS who download publisher submissions to the reviewers who read and assess each title to the designers who make the lists look as beautiful online as they do on the page, so many people have a hand in making our Best Books list possible. Most important are the 22 educator committee members who read every book starred by *SLJ*, and then some, and meet multiple times in the space of two months to deliberate thoughtfully and present a list that can be both useful and inspirational, timely and timeless. Each discussion is led by one of our five indispensable reviews editors, who guide, shepherd, instigate, and encourage our reviewers to fashion the best Best list they can to meet the needs of our readers and the readers they serve.

But it doesn't stop there. We have copyeditors and proofers and image gatherers, making sure every ISBN is correct and every period is where it should be. Plus, our talented creative director assigns our iconic, star-filled Best Books cover to one of the illustrators highlighted and somehow, miraculously, comes up with a cover each year that is somehow more stunning than we could have imagined.

We hope that you find a lot to cherish in these 155 titles. Above all, we hope that every one of your readers will find among these pages that thing that rings true, sparks something inside, and shines a light in the darkness the way only a book can.

## PICTURE BOOKS

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Jonah Dragan, Kimberly Fakh, Louis Lauer, Rachel Mulligan, Rachel Zuffa



**BEHAR, Ruth.** *Tia Fortuna's New Home: A Jewish Cuban Journey.* illus. by Devon Holzwarth. Knopf. ISBN 9780593172414.

**K-Gr 3**—This powerful intergenerational story about heritage and hope is enhanced by stunning art; a must for all libraries, and remarkable in every way.



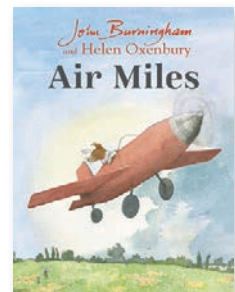
**BLACKALL, Sophie.** *Farmhouse.* Little, Brown. ISBN 9780316528948.

**PreS-Gr 2**—Blackall worked in mixed-media collage using items from a 19th-century farmhouse to recreate her vision of the true lives of its large family; it's a one-of-a-kind, exquisite glimpse of land

once held by Indigenous people, then by immigrants, and then toppled and very nearly returned to nature itself.

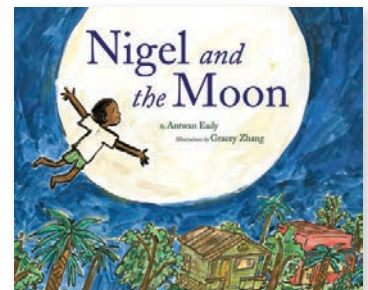
**BURNINGHAM, John & Bill Salaman.** *Air Miles.* illus. by Helen Oxenbury. Candlewick. ISBN 9781536223347.

**PreS-Gr 2**—Adults notice that the text never uses the word “death.” Very young children notice that Miles, an old dog, is about to lean into his very best adventure. Slightly older children grasp all of it. Heartbreaking and breathtaking, this is the very best book for the late Burningham to leave in his wake.



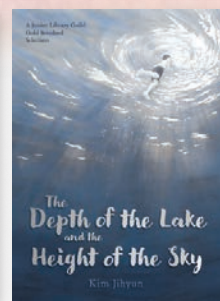
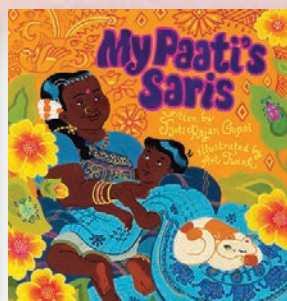
**EADY, Antwan.** *Nigel and the Moon.* illus. by Gracey Zhang. HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen. ISBN 9780063056282.

**PreS-Gr 3**—There is a high contrast in most children's lives between the jobs they see others performing and the aspirations they have for themselves. Eady infuses an entire person with this wistfulness: Nigel, whose nights are full of mighty dreams and whose days are more prosaic. Zhang's exceptional images and reassurances from parents cast away anxiety and ostracism.



**GOADE, Michaela.** *Berry Song.* Little, Brown. ISBN 9780316494175.

**PreS-Gr 2**—A botanical guide to bright berries, an intergenerational journey in a wintry setting, an invitation to explore Tlingit values, or simply a beautiful pic-



ture book—there are so many reasons to sing this berry song while uncovering the lyrical elements of the natural landscape.

**GOPAL, Jyoti Rajan.** *My Paati's Saris*. illus. by Art Twink. Penguin/Kokila. ISBN 9780593324608.

**K-Gr 3**—While a grandmother pulls sari after sari from an elaborate wardrobe, glorious fabrics unwind, one more gorgeous than the last; also unwinding is a boy's dreams of wrapping himself in the sari and allowing himself to express himself in whatever way he wishes. Text and art create a fever dream of color, pattern, and texture as the child's dream comes true.

**HARE, John.** *Field Trip to Volcano Island*. Holiday House/Margaret Ferguson. ISBN 9780823450428.

**K-Gr 4**—The latest of Hare's wordless tales follows a winning formula for a grand adventure that tucks in some SEL and aliens, too. The ingenious compositions demand repeat viewings; book-phobics turn into book-lovers with details that level the literacy playing field. Comedic timing? Perfect. Jokes? Guaranteed giggles. Universal, even interstellar, appeal.

**KIM, Erica.** *Kimchi, Kimchi Every Day*. Soaring Kite. ISBN 9781953859273.

**PreS-Gr 3**—The Korean snack, side dish, and condiment gets its own book as a young narrator explains in a crescendo of excitement why she loves it, needs

it, craves it; and Kim convinces readers in no time to join in. Suggestions on how to add kimchi to hamburgers and French fries further delight.

**KIM, Jihyun.** *The Depth of the Lake and the Height of the Sky*. Floris. ISBN 9781782507420.

**PreS-Gr 1**—In an era of screens and scrolling, this wordless picture book pays homage to the wonder beyond, in nature. It's a call to pause, slow down, and enjoy time. The author-illustrator uses writing ink to draw and paint, and each spread is a masterpiece, occasionally resembling photographs more than illustration. Leisurely and lovely—a break from regular programming.

**LAI, Thanhha.** *Hundred Years of Happiness*. illus. by Nguyễn Quang & Kim Liên. HarperCollins. ISBN 9780063026926.

**K-Gr 3**—At once a lifelong love story between husband and wife, a tribute to the sweetness of multigenerational connections, and a celebration of Vietnamese cultural traditions and cuisine, this title should find a home in every collection.

**MACLEOD, Mrs. & Mr. MacLeod.** *How to Eat a Book*. Union Square & Co. ISBN 9781454945444.

**K-Gr 3**—The MacLeods have a distinct view on reading, and they are not afraid to tear up some tropes to put it across. This delightful book will have children

staging their own versions of what it takes to know a book inside out, once cousins Sheila, Gerald, and Geraldine Grunion have shown them the way. Inventive fun.

**MANCILLAS, Mónica.** *Mariana and Her Familia*. illus. by Erika Meza. HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray. ISBN 9780062962461.

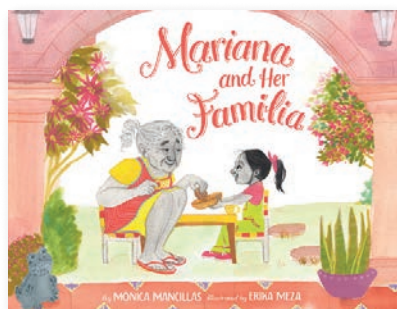
**K-Gr 2**—For every child who has ever had the jitters from facing family, a new environment, a new language, or all of those, Mancillas creates the most loving gathering ever. The challenges and strengths of families that are culturally and geographically distant are nothing compared to love. Meza's festive illustrations invite everyone in for a closer look.

**MARCERO, Deborah.** *Out of a Jar*. Putnam. ISBN 9780593326374.

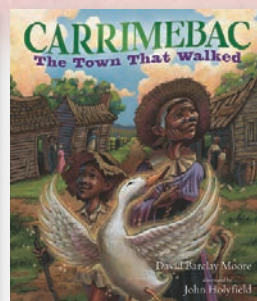
**PreS-Gr 2**—The sequel to *In a Jar* finds the hero with more emotional extremes than he knows what to do with, and his solution—to shove every one of them into jars—is creating an arsenal of small bombs. Marcero offers a new spin on exploring one's emotions, not locking them away, and promotes the importance of sharing them instead.

**MOORE, David Barclay.** *Carrimebac, the Town That Walked*. illus. by John Holyfield. Candlewick. ISBN 9781536213690.

**Gr 2-5**—Merging history and magic, this reads like a unique folktale. The KKK tries to intimidate them, but the residents won't







have it, and the town just—leaves. A text that resonates, and scenes that seem to rumble, this book is one for the ages.

**PUMPHREY, Jarrett & Jerome Pumphrey.** *Somewhere in the Bayou.* Norton. ISBN 9781324015932.

**K-Gr 2**—Four swamp creatures, beset with curiosity, consider the best route around an enormous tail—possibly attached to a mouth with large teeth—in front of them. Eccentric charm, a bold graphic style, and a side-splitting punch line, the Pumphreys know how to tickle a child's funny bone. A tale to reread and repeat.

**RAÚL THE THIRD.** *My Party, Mi Fiesta: A Coco Rocho Book.* illus. by Raúl the Third & Elaine Bay. HarperCollins/Versify. ISBN 9780358394723.

**Baby-Toddler**—When a board book busts out of its format and becomes a party, Raúl the Third's in town, reinventing the game. Coco Rocho welcomes readers and lets them know that this fiesta is as much for them as it is for him. Bilingual, funny, and 100 percent refreshing.

**SAVAGE, Stephen.** *Moonlight.* Holiday House/Neal Porter. ISBN 9780823450848.

**PreS-Gr 1**—"Something is on the move" are the potent opening words of this story, which begins with a bit of mystery; offering one red herring after another, Savage's linocuts render a moody nightscape

where almost anything can happen—most nights. Splendid and tranquil.

**SIRDESHPANDE, Rashmi.** *Dadaji's Paintbrush.* illus. by Ruchi Mhasane. Levine Querido. ISBN 9781646141722.

**K-Gr 3**—Subtle and poetic in its treatment of death, this book stands out for the depth of its wise messages and its gentle, evocative art. The story of a boy taking on his dadaji's artistry is subtle; no one has been replaced as much as a continuation has been achieved.



**SNYDER, Laurel.** *Endlessly Ever After: Pick YOUR Path to Countless Fairy Tale Endings!* illus. by Dan Santat. Chronicle. ISBN 9781452144825.

**PreS-Gr 3**—Fairy tales can be defined by the fact that children know how they end—but not with this book! Snyder directs one plot after another, leaving choices in the hands of adventurous readers. Santat runs amok with the

concept, gleefully providing humorous illustrations on every page.

**SORELL, Traci.** *Powwow Day.* illus. by Madelyn Goodnight. Charlesbridge. ISBN 9781580899482.

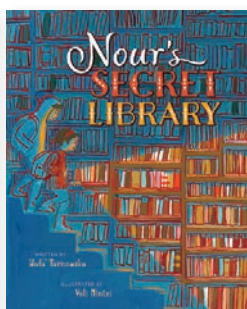
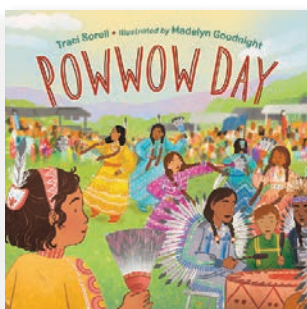
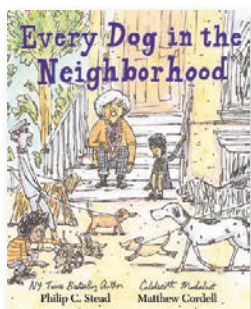
**PreS-Gr 3**—With a light touch, Sorrell lets readers know that her heroine has been through an illness and she is still weak. But in this tender and inspiring view of Indigenous traditions, there is healing and redemption for all. A deeply affecting story that will resonate.

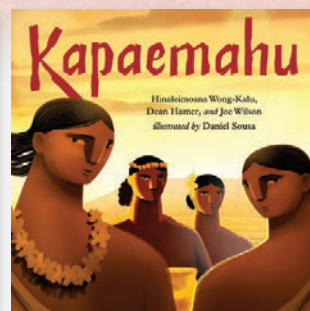
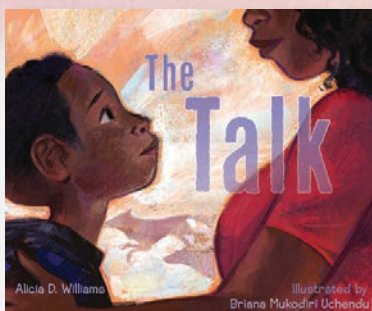
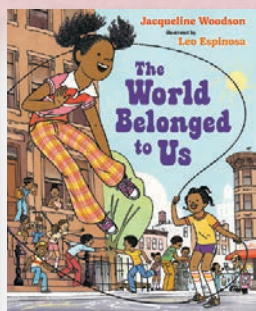
**STEAD, Philip C.** *Every Dog in the Neighborhood.* illus. by Matthew Cordell. Holiday House/Neal Porter. ISBN 9780823444274.

**K-Gr 3**—This winsome book features Louis and his grandmother; he wants to make the case for dog ownership and she has her eyes on an empty lot. Stead and Cordell, separate masters, are co-conspirators on a secret civics lesson on how to get stuff done. We almost filed it under nonfiction. A great addition to any shelf.

**TARNOWSKA, Wafa'.** *Nour's Secret Library.* illus. by Vali Mintzi. Barefoot. ISBN 9781646862917.

**Gr 1-4**—Damascus, once a city of blooming roses, cherries, and apricots, becomes destroyed by war in this beautiful and poignant coming-of-age book. Children taking shelter with their families find hope





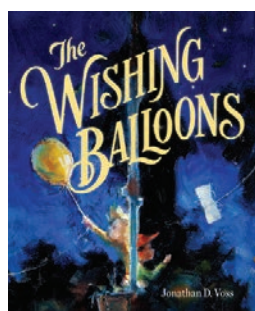
and resilience that shines through even the worst of situations.

**TOKUDA-HALL, Maggie.** *Love in the Library.* illus. by Yas Imamura. Candlewick. ISBN 9781536204308.

**Gr 1-4**—Love is a miracle that can grow in the most unlikely of places. Based on true events, this is a gentle story about finding love and a future during bleak internment in a Japanese camp; though the main characters are older, the draw of this book is for all ages.

**VOSS, Jonathan D.** *The Wishing Balloons.* Holt. ISBN 9781250317377.

**Gr 1-5**—For the SEL shelves, a lesson on communication, or a story on empathy, this book breaks new ground. Just as its painterly illustrative style demands that readers squint, pay attention, and peer at the pages to see better, Dot has to think anew about friendship when a boy, Albert, moves in next door. The book's rewards grow with rereadings.



**WILLIAMS, Alicia D.** *The Talk.* illus. by Briana Mukodiri Uchendu. S. & S./Athe-neum. ISBN 9781534495296.

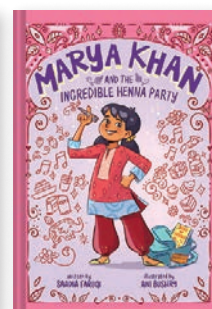
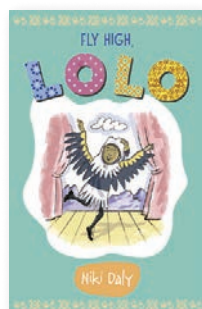
**K-Gr 2**—To keep a child safe, do parents have to end childhood innocence? Williams confronts this topic head on, exploring the pain of having the “talk” with young Black boys to help them navigate the existing evils of racism. Heartfelt and heartbreaking, a necessary book.

**WONG-KALU, Hinaleimoana & others.** *Kapaemahu.* illus. by Daniel Sousa. Penguin/Kokila. ISBN 9780593530061.

**Gr 2-5**—A Hawaiian legend about the four healing stones found on Waikiki Beach and their significance in Pacific Islander lore. Sousa’s paintings seem carved from light and granite, giving the story a beautiful heft and worth from its opening pages.

**WOODSON, Jacqueline.** *The World Belonged to Us.* illus. by Leo Espinosa. Penguin/Nancy Paulsen. ISBN 9780399545498.

**Gr 2-6**—A special book for sharing, parent and child, with a gorgeous depiction of summer in a Brooklyn neighborhood in the 1970s. Woodson and Espinosa remember everything and make it look like an amusement park, when it’s really “just” an urban cityscape from a simpler time.



## Chapter Books

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Emily Beasley, Monisha Blair, Kristin Brynsvold, Myiesha Speight, Ashleigh Williams

**DALY, Niki.** *Fly High, Lolo.* Catalyst. ISBN 9781946395658.

**Gr 1-3**—Lolo is back with four new adventures as she learns about facing disappointment, dealing with body image issues, finding out her mom’s new boyfriend isn’t as bad as she expected, and conservation and recycling. Filled with charming black-and-white illustrations, this beautiful addition to the slice-of-life series can stand alone.

**DEEN, Natasha.** *Spooky Sleuths: The Ghost Tree.* illus. by Lissy Marlin. Random. ISBN 9780593488881.

**Gr 2-5**—Fourth-grader Asim believes supernatural creatures are real—especially

when a goo-spewing, haunted tree forces him and his science-minded crew to use a mix of fact and folklore to save the town. This series starter rooted in Guyanese legend is by turns exciting and educational.

**DELAHAYE, Rachel.** *Little Owl Rescue.* illus. by Suzie Mason. Tiger Tales. ISBN 9781664340114.

**Gr 1-3**—Callie is enjoying a fair ride when she is magically transported to Texas farmland in order to rescue an owlet and protect it from danger as she tries to reunite it with its family. With its highlighting of the dangers of deforestation and the importance of habitat preservation, this chapter book is perfect for animal lovers.

**FARUQI, Saadia.** *Marya Khan and the Incredible Henna Party.* illus. by Ani Bushry. Amulet. ISBN 9781419761164.

**Gr 1-3**—All Marya Khan wants for her eighth birthday is a huge party to rival her





neighbor's, and she will lie to get it. Then she realizes that who she celebrates with means more than how extravagant the party is. This sweet early chapter book with South Asian representation teaches readers empathy and connection.

**LYONS, Kelly Starling.** *Miles Lewis: King of the Ice.* illus. by Wayne Spencer. Penguin Workshop. ISBN 9780593383506.

**Gr 2-5**—Miles and his class are set to go ice skating on a field trip to learn about physics. But Miles is distracted by things happening at home. Chapter book readers will love the mixture of science and sports, as well as the highlighting of Black history.

**SMALLMAN, Steve.** *Maggie Sparks and the Monster Baby.* illus. by Esther Hernando. Sweet Cherry. ISBN 9781782267768.

**Gr 1-3**—Maggie's world is upturned when her parents bring new baby Alfie home. Maggie and her family can perform magic, and antics abound when she uses spells to compete with her brother for her family's attention. A magical take on having a new baby sibling full of important lessons and beautiful illustrations.

toughest case yet is uncovering the identity of a cyberbully who's exposing classmates' most sensitive secrets, including hers. This modern take on *Harriet the Spy* tackles friendship, acceptance, and sexuality.

**CALLENDER, Kacen.** *Moonflower.* Scholastic. ISBN 9781338636598.

**Gr 4 Up**—So many hate Moonflower without knowing them. It is only when Moonflower journeys outside their body to the spirit world that they find peace. This is a nuanced blend of otherworldly fantasy with the realistic inner struggles of mental illness. Moonflower's sorrows and triumphs will have readers weeping and cheering along.



**CLAYTON, Dhonielle.** *The Marvellers.* illus. by Khadijah Khatib. Holt. ISBN 9781250174949.

**Gr 3-7**—Ella is the first Conjuror to attend the Arcanum Training Institute, and she can't wait to hone her magical skills. But she's stuck spending most of her energy dealing with the other students' (and teachers') prejudices against Conjurors. This is a stellar example of a fresh take on the magic school subgenre.

**DALTON, Ryan.** *This Last Adventure.* Carolrhoda. ISBN 9781541599284.

**Gr 5-8**—Archie and his grandfather have always had a close relationship, but when Grandpa is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, Archie seeks to help

## Middle Grade

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Emily Beasley, Monisha Blair, Kristin Brynsvold, Myiesha Speight, Ashleigh Williams

**BALCÁRCEL, Rebecca.** *Shine On, Luz Véliz!* Chronicle. ISBN 9781797209678.

**Gr 3-6**—When a serious injury sidelines soccer star Lucy, the sixth grader feels like she's floundering. Then, aided by her brilliant, elderly neighbor, she discovers coding. A touching story about family and self-discovery, this well-crafted tale will appeal to a broad range of readers.



**BIRD, James.** *The Second Chance of Benjamin Waterfalls.* Feiwel & Friends. ISBN 9781250811561.

**Gr 5 Up**—Benjamin Waterfalls is used to being in trouble, until his most recent shoplifting lands him a sentence in "boot

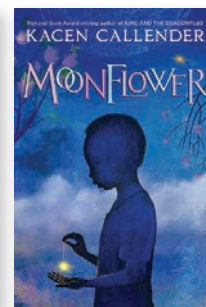
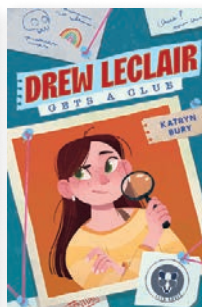
camp" with his Ojibwe family. Set in modern-day Grand Portage, MN, this tale of redemption and healing leans heavily on Ojibwe traditions and wisdom. A heartfelt story of second chances.

**BOOTH, Coe.** *Caprice.* Scholastic. ISBN 9780545933346.

**Gr 5 Up**—While Caprice wrestles with the idea of choosing between an elite boarding school and her neighborhood school in Newark for eighth grade, she is also haunted by painful memories that keep resurfacing. Booth's accessible novel uses a mix of verse poetry, flashbacks, and time-stamped present-day narrative to address abuse with unflinching honesty.

**BURY, Katryn.** *Drew Leclair Gets a Clue.* Clarion. ISBN 9780358639602.

**Gr 5 Up**—Drew is a seventh-grade wannabe criminal profiler who takes notes from her hero, profiler Lita Miyamoto, to solve cases at her middle school. Her





through invented fantasy stories based on the older man's past. The harsh realities of this devastating disease are dealt with gently and honestly in this mix of realistic fiction and fantasy.

**DAO, Julie C.** *Team Chu and the Battle of Blackwood Arena*. Farrar. ISBN 9780374388751.

**Gr 4-8**—When siblings Clip and Sadie Chu start seeing a strange boy in the epic virtual reality laser tag arena they frequent, they realize he's not a character; he's trapped in the game, and it's up to them to get him out. This rollicking sci-fi/adventure story combines heart-stopping action, virtual reality gaming, and sibling relationships in a way that feels effortless.

**DEE, Barbara.** *Haven Jacobs Saves the Planet*. S. & S./Aladdin. ISBN 9781534489837.

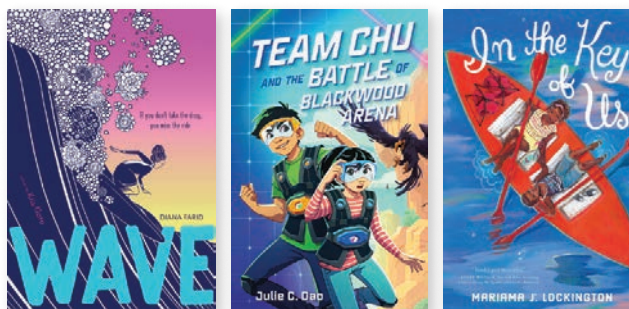
**Gr 3-8**—Twelve-year-old Haven Jacobs's anxiety about climate change turns into an opportunity for action when a science project shows the local impact of pollution. Dee gets at the heart of anxiety, friendships, and taking an active role in one's life in this resonant contemporary novel.

**ELLIS, Deborah.** *Step*. Groundwood. ISBN 9781773068152.

**Gr 3-7**—Ten unconnected protagonists have an 11th birthday. Each child faces an opportunity to see through the eyes of another and to take a step toward making the world a better place. These realistic short stories will take readers deeper into their own hearts and dreams.

**FARID, Diana.** *Wave*. illus. by Kris Goto. Cameron Kids. ISBN 9781951836580.

**Gr 5 Up**—Thirteen-year-old Ava is used to riding the waves, whether it's on her board or in her home facing her Persian mother's high expectations. When tragedy strikes, Ava must navigate her most heartbreaking



wave yet. This historical novel-in-verse will engulf readers in its poignant tale of young loss while painting a breathtaking portrait of life in 1980s California.

**KAGAWA, Julie.** *Shinji Takahashi and the Mark of the Coatl*. Disney-Hyperion. ISBN 9781368068192.

**Gr 3-7**—At a market, Shinji is thrust into the adventure of his life when he finds a figurine of a Coatl, a feathered serpent creature from Mesoamerican Lore, and strives to return the figurine to Mexico before its curse takes effect. This Indiana Jones meets Percy Jackson adventure touches on respecting and preserving cultures instead of taking from them.

**KELLY, Erin Entrada.** *Those Kids from Fawn Creek*. Greenwillow. ISBN 9780062970350.

**Gr 4-7**—Fawn Creek, LA, isn't the kind of place where much changes, so the local students are instantly intrigued when Orchid arrives. This story shakes up small-town story tropes by showing the realities of life in a small, poor town, and the limitations the characters face; Fawn Creek itself also feels alive, the setting as much a character as the children.

**LEVITHAN, David.** *Answers in the Pages*. Knopf. ISBN 9780593484685.

**Gr 5 Up**—When the parent of a fifth grader picks up his assigned reading and objects to one sentence, the students

find themselves in a philosophical quagmire as the book challenge makes its way to the school board. A timely book that should not only be in every library but also is a true joy to read.

**LOCKINGTON, Mariama J.** *In the Key of Us*. Farrar. ISBN 9780374314101.

**Gr 5-8**—Andi and Zora, two of the only Black kids at music camp in Northern Michigan, are frequently thrown together by students and staff who ignorantly assume that they will connect. They begin to develop a real friendship, and maybe more. This coming-of-age story navigates sensitive topics like body image, mental health, racism, and grief with a gentle hand.



**MAGOON, Kekla.** *Chester Keene Cracks the Code*. Random/Wendy Lamb. ISBN 9781524715991.

**Gr 3-7**—When a classmate approaches Chester Keene to work on a super secret mission, he is convinced it will bring him closer to his absent dad and help him fight back against a bully. In this fast-paced heist

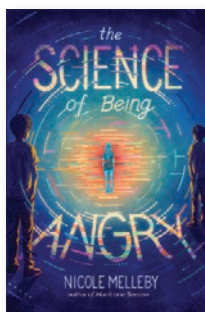


story, Magoon also expertly explores the complex relationships of a single-parent family and changing family dynamics.

**MALINENKO, Ally.** *This Appearing House.*

HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen. ISBN 9780063136571.

**Gr 5-9**—Jac has been in remission from cancer for almost five years, but as the anniversary approaches so do symptoms—and a mysterious house Jac has never seen before but feels inexplicably drawn to. This horror with fantasy elements explores the trauma caused by disease and grief, and its impact on those we love, as well as healing through facing one's experiences.



**MELLEBY, Nicole.** *The Science of Being Angry.*

Algonquin. ISBN 9781643750378.

**Gr 4-8**—Joey knows that her anger is a problem. A school genetics unit inspires her to track down the sperm donor her parents used in an attempt to understand who she is. This novel features an endearing protagonist navigating her

complex identity and defining “family” for herself.

**OKOGWU, Tolá.** *Onyeka and the Academy of the Sun.* S. & S./McElderry. ISBN 9781665912617.

**Gr 3-7**—Onyeka has always felt insecure about her hair, which she can never get under control. After her friend almost drowns, she discovers she is a Solari with psychokinetic powers connected to her hair. Onyeka travels to the Academy of the Sun where she learns to harness her powers in this adventure that's Black Panther meets X-Men.

**PAULSEN, Gary.** *Northwind.* Farrar. ISBN 9780374314200.

**Gr 4-8**—An orphan named Leif finds himself alone in a canoe fleeing northward along a rugged and untamed shoreline to escape a deadly plague, discovering a deep connection with the wilderness along the way. Readers will be swept away by the beauty of Paulsen's final gift, which is so much more than a survival story.

**ROE, Monica.** *Air.* Farrar. ISBN 9780374388652.

**Gr 4-7**—Seventh grader Emmie doesn't need help, as most people assume when they see her wheelchair. She needs them to realize she is capable of so much when systems aren't actively in her way. Set in contemporary South Carolina, this realistic novel deftly balances the sport of wheel-

chair motocross, disability rights, friendship, grief, poverty, and independence.

**SASS, A.J.** *Ellen Outside the Lines.* Little, Brown. ISBN 9780759556270.

**Gr 3-7**—Ellen Katz is an autistic, queer, Jewish 13-year-old who loves routine, but spending two weeks on a class trip in Barcelona helps her realize that it is okay to try new things and make new friends. A heartwarming story of identity, friendship, and first crushes.



**STAMPER, Phil.** *Small Town Pride.* HarperCollins. ISBN 9780063118782.

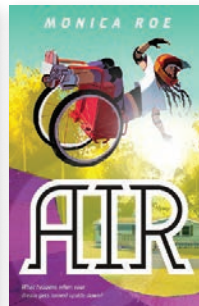
**Gr 5 Up**—Jake is the only openly gay kid in his tiny Ohio town. This doesn't bother him, until the Pride flag his father hung up outside his house stirs up controversy, inspiring Jake to plan Barton Springs's first Pride festival. Stamper's excellent novel about coming of age in a turbulent environment will engender important conversations around queerness and community.

**TUREAUD, Maria.** *The Last Hope in Hopetown.* Little, Brown. ISBN 9780316368452.

**Gr 3-7**—Sophie Daves loves her adopted mothers, both of whom are vampires, which brings an added level of scrutiny now that some vampires have gone rogue and are attacking humans. Equal parts horror and mystery, this contemporary tale is sure to delight readers who enjoy a spooky vibe with their whodunits.

**YEE, Lisa.** *Maizy Chen's Last Chance.* Random. ISBN 9781984830258.

**Gr 4 Up**—When 11-year-old Maizy's grandfather falls ill, she and her mother visit her grandparents for the first time. While helping to run their Chinese restaurant, Maizy learns about her family history with enduring roots in the town since the 1880s. This fast-paced, humorous, heartwarming tale will appeal to readers of all ages.





## YA

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

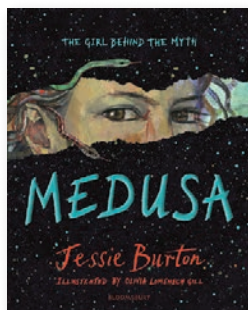
Ashley Leffel, Amanda Mastrull, Emmy Neal, Florence Simmons, Allie Stevens, Emily Walker

**AHMED, Samira.** *Hollow Fires*. Little, Brown. ISBN 9780316282642.

**Gr 9 Up**—Alternating between the perspectives of Safiya, who is investigating hate crimes at her prep school and in the local community, and Jawad, a missing Muslim public school student whose haunting voice tries to lead Safiya to his body, Ahmed's gripping title shines a light on Islamophobia in society and the white supremacist radicalization of teens online.

**ALBERT, Melissa.** *Our Crooked Hearts*. Flatiron. ISBN 9781250826367.

**Gr 9 Up**—Past and present are side by side as Ivy navigates the occult happenings that creep ever closer to home—and her mother's past. Subtle foreshadowing, ominous supernatural elements, and nuanced relationships propel this character-driven novel.



**BURTON, Jessie.** *Medusa*. illus. by Olivia Lomenech Gill. Bloomsbury. ISBN 9781547607594.

**Gr 9 Up**—On a deserted island, the Gorgon Medusa lives out her days until the

lost sailor, Perseus, arrives, rocking her very foundation. This lyrical revamp of a myth is filled with lush emotive earth-toned illustrations and a dynamic young woman tackling issues of power balances and gender inequality.



**CHIMA, Cinda Williams.** *Children of Ragnarok*. HarperCollins/Balzar + Bray. ISBN 9780063018686.

**Gr 7 Up**—Eiric and Reginn, a Viking and a foundling with magic, are both set on separate quests to find the island refuge for sorcerers in this Norse adventure. Infused with themes of justice, autonomy, and found family, Chima's series opener is a tapestry of satisfying plot twists and nuanced worldbuilding.

**CHOKSHI, Roshani, Evelyn Skye & Sandhya Menon.** *Three Kisses, One Midnight*.

Wednesday Bks. ISBN 9781250797230.

**Gr 7 Up**—On Halloween night in small-town Moon Ridge, three friends each have until midnight to find romance. Separate but interconnected stories show the teens meeting this goal in different ways. A diverse cast, a masquerade ball, and a touch of magic enhance this sweet story.

**FERGUSON, Jen.** *The Summer of Bitter and Sweet*. HarperCollins/Heartdrum. ISBN 9780063086166.

**Gr 10 Up**—Lou, who is Métis, plans to spend the summer with her family and friends while working at her family's

ice cream shack. However, a series of unexpected events, including that her mother's rapist—Lou's biological father—is now free, forces the teen to reckon with her identity and sexuality in Ferguson's searing and moving debut.

**HAMMONDS, Jas.** *We Deserve Monuments*.

Roaring Brook. ISBN 9781250816559.

**Gr 9 Up**—When Avery's family moves down South to take care of her terminally ill grandmother, secrets long buried are brought to light. This debut is a bitter-sweet look at navigating trauma through three generations of women that doesn't shy away from the complex relationships that tie them to their roots.

**HUR, June.** *The Red Palace*. Feiwel & Friends. ISBN 9781250800558.

**Gr 8 Up**—When Hyeon's role in palace intrigues jeopardizes her friends and mentors, she tries to unravel what happened the night she was the prince's alibi. Details and high stakes bring Korea's Joseon era to life with a fascinating mystery, highlighting an underrepresented historical moment for YA literature.

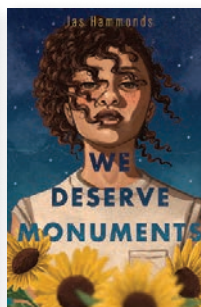
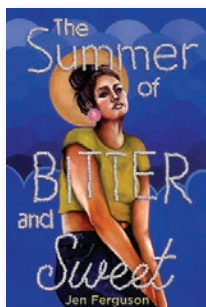
**JACKSON, Tiffany D.** *The Weight of Blood*.

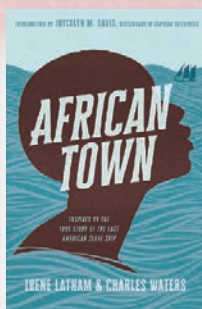
HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen. ISBN 9780063029149.

**Gr 9 Up**—Maddy Washington has been passing for white in her small town until a rainstorm reveals the truth, leading to a national spotlight on the racism that dominates her high school. When pushed to her limit and when racial tensions reach a boiling point, the teen uses supernatural abilities to exact justice on those who have done her wrong in this suspenseful novel.

**KAYLOR, Serena.** *Long Story Short*. Wednesday Bks. ISBN 9781250818416.

**Gr 9 Up**—Teen genius Beatrice agrees to a four-week theater camp to prove to her





parents that her smarts can translate to social intelligence. A strong neurodiverse character leads an equally diverse cast through theater shenanigans that center on growing relationships, taking risks, and a dash of enemies-to-lovers' romance.

**LA SALA, Ryan. *The Honeys*.** Scholastic/PUSH. ISBN 9781338745313.

**Gr 9 Up**—After the death of his twin, genderfluid Mars takes her place at exclusive, expensive Aspen summer camp, where strange and dangerous things linger under the idyllic, cloyingly nostalgic surface. This slow-build horror deftly explores grief, gender-role toxicity, and the strong grip of generational expectations.

**LATHAM, Irene & Charles Waters. *African Town*.** Putnam. ISBN 9780593322888.

**Gr 7 Up**—Told in 14 voices, this moving novel-in-verse chronicles the journey of the last slave ship, *Clotilda*, to arrive in America. From the voice of the ship, to those of the enslaved, a moment in history not frequently in the spotlight is given its time, complete with back matter that provides further background on the voyage and the state of African Town today.

**LEE, Kristen R. *Required Reading for the Disenfranchised Freshman*.** Crown. ISBN 9780593309155.

**Gr 9 Up**—Savannah accomplished her goal of getting into the illustrious Wooddale University but wasn't expecting

the racism and microaggressions that followed. She begins the difficult journey of overcoming adversity, becoming involved in activism, and ultimately deciding if "the best" university is really what is best for her in Lee's striking debut.

**LEN, Vanessa. *Only a Monster*.** HarperTeen. ISBN 9780063024649.

**Gr 9 Up**—Joan discovers her monstrous heritage and is determined to use her ability to steal time to save her family. This time-travel paranormal is a fun, adrenaline-infused adventure, entwined with deeper questions about morality and justice as readers follow Joan on her ascent into villainy.

**LOCKE, Katherine. *This Rebel Heart*.** Knopf. ISBN 9780593381243.

**Gr 9 Up**—In colorless 1956 Budapest, Csilla, a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust, is grappling with her father's role in setting up the brutal Communist secret police. When a university student begs for help finding his boyfriend and an angel of death saves Csilla, she must decide her role in the emerging Hungarian Revolution in Locke's fantastic, fabulist novel.

**MCCRINA, Amanda. *The Silent Unseen: A Novel of World War II*.** Farrar. ISBN 9780374313555.

**Gr 7 Up**—In 1944, Maria is desperate to find familial war survivors, but returning home means reconciling who's friend

or foe. Following multiple perspectives, this unique chapter of WWII life in Poland gives voice to a forgotten resistance squad and European civilians alike as they reckon with finding home during wartime.

**ONOSEA, Rimma. *How You Grow Wings*.** Algonquin. ISBN 9781643751917.

**Gr 9 Up**—Follow Cheta and Zam, two sisters in modern Nigeria, as small choices drastically divide and change the course of their lives. Told in dual perspectives, this narrative highlights societal colorism, classism, and how distanced sisters fight outside forces and resentment to find a way back to each other.

**PADILLA, Francesca. *What's Coming to Me*.** Soho Teen. ISBN 9781641293358.

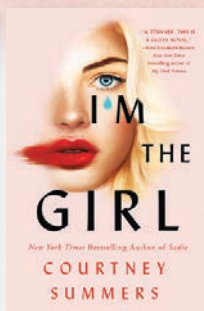
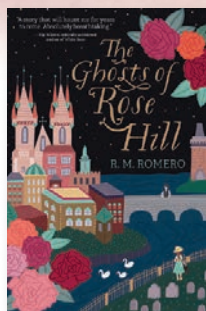
**Gr 10 Up**—Seventeen-year-old Minerva needs her job at the local ice cream stand, especially because her mother is in the hospital. After a traumatizing robbery that she thinks her predatory boss may have been involved in, the Dominican teen decides to fight back in this coming-of-age thriller that explores grief and class.

**REYNOLDS, Jason. *Ain't Burned All the Bright*.** illus. by Jason Griffin. Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy. ISBN 9781534439467.

**Gr 7 Up**—Ten sentences, three Breaths, and 300 pages of art about what it means to be Black in America. Reynolds's captivating poetry alongside Griffin's art have







created a viscerally intelligent piece of mixed media focusing on contemporary events and their consequences.

**ROMERO, R.M. *The Ghosts of Rose Hill*.**

Peachtree. ISBN 9781682633380.

**Gr 9 Up**—The discovery of a long-forgotten Jewish cemetery in Prague and a handsome ghost-boy with a troubling story set Ilana on a path to a deeper understanding of what it means to sacrifice for those we love. A poignant, meticulously crafted novel-in-verse that creates an immersive reading experience.

**SCELSA, Kate. *Improbable Magic for Cynical Witches*.** HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray. ISBN 9780062465030.

**Gr 8 Up**—Growing up in present-day Salem has not been particularly magical for Eleanor, but with the appearance of a strange new book about tarot and a cute witch named Pix, she may find the motivation to reckon with her past in favor of a happy future. A witty romance full of flying sparks that nevertheless tackles some heavy topics.

**SCHWARTZ, Dana. *Anatomy: A Love Story*.**

Wednesday Bks. ISBN 9781250774156.

**Gr 10 Up**—Granted a rare opportunity for entry into a surgical program, Hazel teams up with resurrection man Jack in what begins as a run-of-the-mill corpse collecting scheme that turns into something much more sinister. A Gothic romance set in 1817 Scotland wrapped in a horrifying and thrilling mystery, chock-full of grit and gore.

**SEPETYS, Ruta. *I Must Betray You*.** Philomel. ISBN 9781984836038.

**Gr 9 Up**—In 1989 Romania, Christian is forced to become an informer for the tyrannical Communist regime and betray everyone he loves. Rife with tension and historical details, Sepetys's novel shines

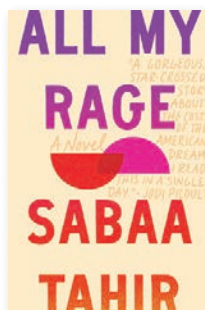
a light on another dark moment in history and forces readers to ask themselves what they would do.

**SHAW, Tucker. *When You Call My Name*.** Holt. ISBN 9781250624864.

**Gr 10 Up**—At the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in 1990, 17-year-old Adam experiences first love while Ben comes out to his mother and leaves for New York to begin a new life. In this heartrending novel, their worlds collide as they deal with the impact AIDS has on the gay community, finding a sense of belonging, and love.

**SUMMERS, Courtney. *I'm the Girl*.** Wednesday Bks. ISBN 9781250808363.

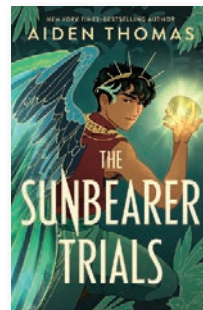
**Gr 10 Up**—When Georgia's dreams of working at exclusive Aspera intersect with investigating the death of her crush's little sister, she dives headfirst into a world of extravagance and secrecy that no one can survive unscathed. An unflinching look at the myriad dangers facing teenage girls that is at once jarring and deeply resonant, tender, and furious.



**TAHIR, Sabaa. *All My Rage*.** Razorbill. ISBN 9780593202340.

**Gr 9 Up**—After *The Fight* creates a rift, Salahudin and Noor carry on shouldering their respective families' burdens until a breaking point, when they must decide what the true value of their friendship is. This brutal, beautiful story is a testament

to the power of friendship and forgiveness in the face of fury and heartbreak.



**THOMAS, Aiden. *The Sunbearer Trials*.** Feiwel & Friends. ISBN 9781250822130.

**Gr 7 Up**—In this Mexican-inspired fantasy, 10 teen semidioses compete in the Sunbearer Trials: the winner brings light to the temples of Reino del Sol, while the loser is sacrificed to Sol to protect the people. This page-turning adventure and first in a duology centers trans and queer characters.

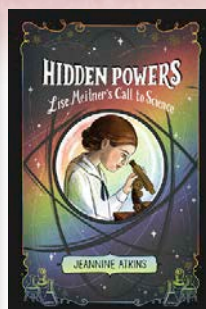
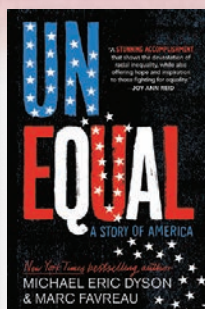
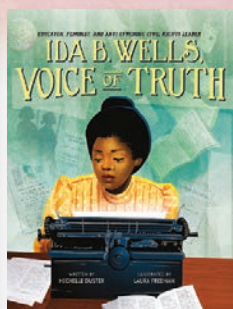
## Nonfiction

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Alicia Abdul, Karen Bilton, Lisa Buffi, Shelley M. Diaz, Kimberly Fakih, Vi Ha, Bob Hassett, Kelly Kingrey-Edwards, Amanda Mastrull, Paige Pagan, Ashleigh Williams

**ATKINS, Jeannine. *Hidden Powers: Lise Meitner's Call to Science*.** S. & S./Atheneum. ISBN 9781665902502.

**Gr 5 Up**—In this lyrical biographical novel in verse, Atkins shines a light on the struggles and accomplishments of physicist Lise Meitner, who was instrumental in the discovery of nuclear fission but was never fully credited for it. Compelling imagery and stirring verses excellently capture Meitner's contributions, which are hidden no more.



**BALOUCH, Kristen. *One Million Trees: A True Story*.** Holiday House/Margaret Ferguson. ISBN 9780823448609.

**Gr 3-6**—A charming account of a family who went to Canada to plant a million trees. This excellent resource about conservation and preserving nature has been ably rolled into a delightful reminiscence vividly retold.



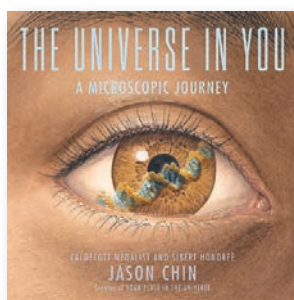
**BARTON, Chris. *Moving Forward: From Space-Age Rides to Civil Rights Sit-Ins with Airman Alton Yates*.** illus. by Steffi Walthall. S. & S./Beach Lane. ISBN 9781534473652.

**Gr 2-4**—For a glimpse of the world before the Civil Rights Movement, Yates's early life offers a window into the obstacles he faced to pursue his dreams. Barton's expertly composed description of events creates a thought-provoking document and biography of a genuine unsung hero.

**CALDWELL, Stella. *Pride: An Inspirational History of the LGBTQ+ Movement*.** Penguin Workshop. ISBN 9780593382943.

**Gr 6 Up**—An inspiring look at LGBTQIA+

history from ancient times to the present day. While not shying from somber truths, this title serves equally for research or browsing with bright colors and a vivid layout, an episodic design with multiple sidebars, and rich, informative illustrations.



**CHIN, Jason. *The Universe in You: A Microscopic Journey*.** Holiday House/Neal Porter. ISBN 9780823450701.

**K-Gr 4**—Chin travels from the level of what makes us human down to the building blocks of the universe and then pulls back out, to the outer spheres of the cosmos. In page after page of cascading spreads, science and poetry blend flawlessly to deliver information with grace and confidence.

**DUSTER, Michelle. *Ida B. Wells, Voice of Truth: Educator, Feminist, and Anti-Lynching Civil Rights Leader*.** illus. by Laura Freeman. Holt/Godwin. ISBN 9781250239464.

**Gr 3 Up**—There are many biographies of Ida B. Wells for children but none as personal and poignant as this one. A su-

perb picture book for all libraries, it can effectively be used with a broad range of students as a celebration of activism and Black history.

**DYSON, Michael Eric & Marc Favreau. *Unequal: A Story of America*.** Little, Brown. ISBN 9780759557017.

**Gr 7 Up**—This collaboration offers a look at how race has been woven into the fabric of our country through brief biographies of civil rights heroes. Spanning 1865 to 2021, this work profiles 20 Black Americans; teens can digest the substantial narrative profile by profile, but it's best read as a whole.

**FLEMING, Candace. *Murder Among Friends: How Leopold and Loeb Tried to Commit the Perfect Crime*.** Random/Anne Schwartz. ISBN 9780593177426.

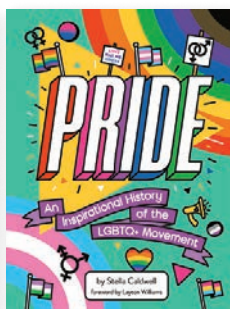
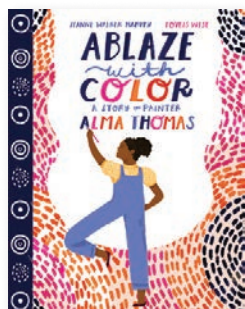
**Gr 8 Up**—True crime set in the 1920s featuring the eerie relationship between two 18-year-olds who committed murder. Fleming's command of history and suspense combine perfectly to capture this captivating crime and trial.

**GANERI, Anita. *Forest Fighter: The Story of Chico Mendes*.** illus. by Margaux Carpenter. Crocodile. ISBN 9781623718565.

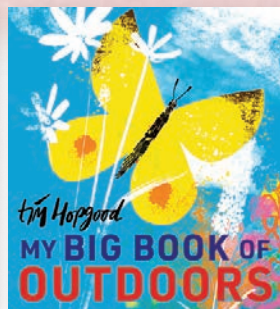
**Gr 2-6**—This stellar biography of a not-often-featured environmental activist is a necessary addition to all biography shelves. Ganeri crafts a mix of international affairs and environmental causes with lessons of social justice.

**HARVEY, Jeanne Walker. *Ablaze with Color: A Story of Painter Alma Thomas*.** illus. by Loveis Wise. HarperCollins. ISBN 9780063021891.

**PreS-Gr 4**—Harvey rectifies an enormous wrong with this spirited biography of Black painter Alma Thomas (1891–1978), who is not nearly as renowned as she ought to be. Wise complements





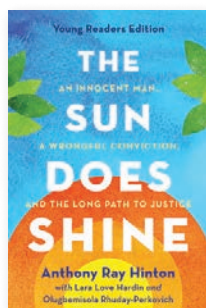


Thomas's own style with glorious illustrations that amplify the originals, while Harvey takes on segregation and puts it into terms children will understand.

**HIGGINBOTHAM, Anastasia.** *You Ruined It.*

Dottir. ISBN 9781948340304.

**Gr 4-8**—A heartbreaking but realistic account of a child's life soon after a sexual assault by a trusted family member. The story is seamlessly woven into a series of journal entries and scrapbook pages, and the author thoughtfully examines the complicated emotions children may feel after going through such trauma.



**HINTON, Anthony Ray with Lara Love Hardin & OluGBemisola Rhuday-Perkovich.** *The Sun Does Shine (Young Readers Edition): An Innocent Man, A Wrongful Conviction, and the Long Path to Justice.* Feiwel & Friends. ISBN 9781250817365.

**Gr 5 Up**—Hinton's story of incarceration for 30 years on Death Row as a wrongfully convicted Black man in 1985 highlights this miscarriage of justice. The powerful words of a man who came to be respected for his decency and resolve are a force for change and hope.

**HOPGOOD, Tim.** *My Big Book of Outdoors.* Candlewick Studio. ISBN 9781536215335.

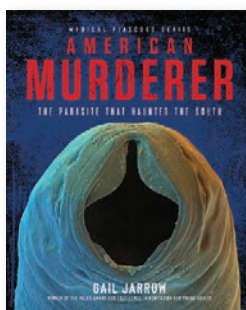
**Gr 3-6**—This beautifully illustrated title broken up by season discusses many things readers will see if they take a walk

outside. Filled with curriculum connections to poetry and life science, as well as year-round activities, this book has plenty to offer students and teachers.

**HOYT, Megan.** *The Greatest Song of All: How Isaac Stern United the World to Save Carnegie Hall.* illus. by Katie Hickey. HarperCollins/Quill Tree. ISBN

9780063045279.

**Gr 3-6**—With utter charm and imagination, Hoyt takes apart an event from history, the near-destruction of Carnegie Hall, and puts at the center the very esteemed Stern, who stopped it. Hickey's illustrations make a song of every page, and children will take away a lesson of civics, a love for music, and a full heart for a good cause.



**JARROW, Gail.** *American Murderer: The Parasite that Haunted the South.* Calkins Creek. ISBN 9781684378159.

**Gr 5-9**—In this continuation of the "Medical Fiascoes" series, hookworm is

the culprit, especially for Southerners. In a title that's equal parts science, education, and public health, Jarro nimbly grosses out readers with visuals and facts that keep the pages turning.

**JOHNSON, Dinah.** *H Is for Harlem.* illus. by April Harrison. Little, Brown/Christy Ottaviano. ISBN 9780316322379.

**Gr 2-5**—An extraordinary alphabet takes children on an unforgettable cultural stroll through the sights and sounds of one of the greatest neighborhoods in the world. Harrison's illustrations carve out the corners, hot spots, literary influences, and more, till the sizzle of Harlem's heritage bursts from every page.

**LATTA, Sara.** *I Could Not Do Otherwise: The Remarkable Life of Dr. Mary Edwards Walker.* Zest. ISBN 9781728413921.

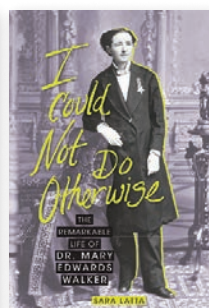
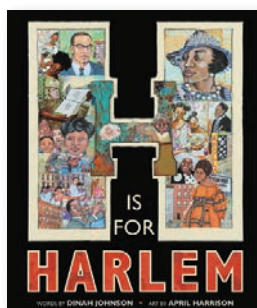
**Gr 9 Up**—With engrossing text and numerous historical images, Latta delivers a riveting biography of Mary Edwards Walker, a fiercely independent 19th-century woman who overcame significant adversity. Readers will be enthralled by this tenacious woman who never compromised her beliefs.

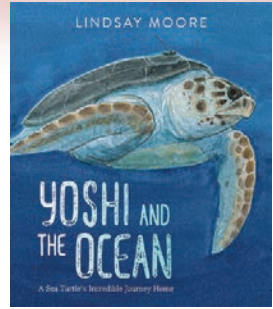
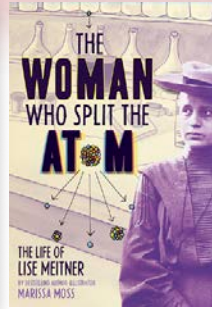
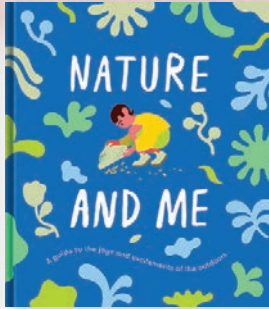
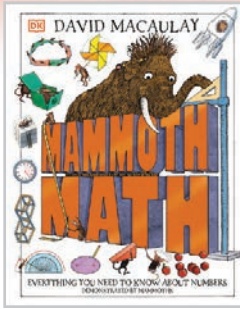
**MACAULAY, David.** *Mammoth Math: Everything You Need to Know About Numbers.* DK. ISBN 9780744056112.

**Gr 2-6**—It's madness, it's brilliant, it's funny—there is no better way to learn math than to give the job of teaching it to mammoths and shrews. This compendium of demonstrations makes math seem effortless or at least worth puzzling over, and everyone will have fun trying.

**MCCARTHY, Cory.** *Hope Is an Arrow: The Story of Lebanese-American Poet Kahlil Gibran.* illus. by Ekua Holmes. Candlewick. ISBN 9781536200324.

**K-Gr 4**—This poignant, brilliant biog-

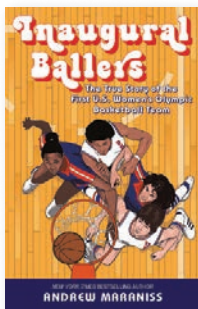




raphy about the boy who was born as Gibran Khalil Gibran and came to be known as one of the bestselling poets of all time creates a beautiful space for his name to live on. From his travels from Lebanon to the United States and his seeking of peace to his awakening as a writer, it's clear that hope is an arrow, but its path is not a straight line.

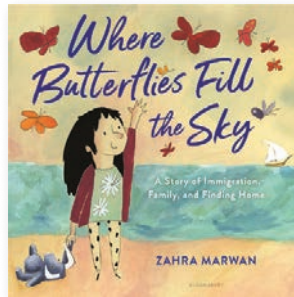
**MALONEY, Brenna. *Buzzkill: A Wild Wander Through the Weird and Threatened World of Bugs*.** illus. by Dave Mottram. Holt/ Godwin. ISBN 9781250801036.

**Gr 5-8**—Dropping fascinating fun facts on every page, Maloney is an intrepid and sometimes grossed-out investigator of the insect world. Her concise style and jokey delivery are perfect for middle graders, while her passion and deep commitment make for a vivid take on ecology.



**MARANISS, Andrew. *Inaugural Ballers: The True Story of the First U.S. Women's Olympic Basketball Team*.** Viking. ISBN 9780593351246.

**Gr 8 Up**—Maraniss places the 1976 groundbreaking first American women's Olympic basketball team firmly in historical and political context. The book is full of quotes from interviews and contains an abundance of black-and-white photographs. Even non-sports fans will enjoy this compelling history of an athletic competition and the women who made it great.



**MARWAN, Zahra. *Where Butterflies Fill the Sky: A Story of Immigration, Family, and Finding Home*.** Bloomsbury. ISBN 9781547606511.

**K-Gr 4**—In this moving debut, Marwan pares immigration to its elements—family, loss, and acceptance—conveying it in delicate but lively watercolor and line. Much of the profound appeal of this book comes from the art. Thin expressive lines define spaces of cool color, with touches of plum and black, against gentle washes floating free.

**MOORE, Lindsay. *Yoshi and the Ocean: A Sea Turtle's Incredible Journey Home*.** Greenwillow. ISBN 9780063060982.

**Gr 2-4**—Yoshi's amazing story, the collection of scientific information, and engaging illustrations will capture readers, encouraging inquiry and exploration through a sea turtle's eyes. What makes this title extraordinary is the back matter that substantiates the story; readers will be awed.

**MOSS, Marissa. *The Woman Who Split the Atom: The Life of Lise Meitner*.** Abrams. ISBN 9781419758539.

**Gr 4 Up**—Lise Meitner, a Jewish physicist working in Germany as Hitler rose to power, made some of the most celebrated discoveries in the 20th century, including nuclear fission, and yet never received the recognition she deserved. With captivating writing and interstitial comics-like illustrations, Moss's biogra-

phy of this groundbreaking woman is spectacular.

**Nature and Me: A Guide to the Joys and Excitements of the Outdoors.** illus. by Tyla Mason. The School of Life. ISBN 9781912891313.

**Gr 3-5**—This unique title is not just for nature lovers. The School of Life uses colorful illustrations, short passages, and everything outdoors to offer children guidance and encourage them to think positively about life.



**NELSON, Marilyn. *Augusta Savage: The Shape of a Sculptor's Life*.** Little, Brown/Christy Ottaviano. ISBN 9780316298025.

**Gr 6 Up**—A master poet breathes life and color into this portrait of influential sculptor Savage, who often worked with humble materials and brought out the beauty and depth of her subjects with her attention to detail and creative vision. Nelson does the same in poetry to give shape and dimension to Savage's remarkable life and work.

**PARTRIDGE, Elizabeth. *Seen and Unseen: What Dorothea Lange, Toyo Miyatake, and Ansel Adams's Photographs Reveal About the Japanese American Incarceration*.** illus. by Lauren Tamaki. Chronicle. ISBN 9781452165103.

**Gr 5-8**—Two prominent photographers and one prisoner, working with smuggled equipment, highlighted the injustice of incarceration and the remarkable resil-



ience of interned Japanese Americans during WWII. Tamaki intersperses striking illustrations with the text and photos for a visually arresting complement to the horrifying story.

**SARSOUR, Linda.** *We're in This Together: A Young Readers Edition of We Are Not Here to Be Bystanders.* S. & S./Salaam Reads. ISBN 978-1534439290.

**Gr 5-8**—The 2017 Women's March co-organizer stirringly narrates how a Palestinian Muslim American girl went from her father's Brooklyn bodega to speaking to 470,000 people at the National Mall in Washington, DC. Young people will be inspired to find their own voices and take steps toward advocating for the things they believe in.

**SCHREFFER, Eliot.** *Queer Ducks (and Other Animals): The Natural World of Animal Sexuality.* illus. by Jules Zuckerberg. HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen. ISBN 9780063069497.

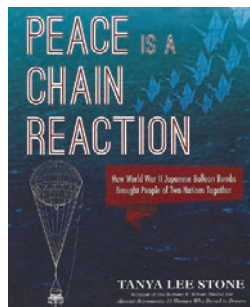
**Gr 7-10**—From bisexual bonobos to intersex deer to lesbian albatrosses, Schreffer skillfully outlines the wide variety of sexual diversity found in the animal kingdom and the functions of different animal sexual behaviors beyond basic reproduction. A captivating scientific work but, more importantly, a necessary and affirming message of love and acceptance.

**STAAR, Danna.** *The Lady and the Octopus: How Jeanne Villepreux-Power Invented Aquariums and Revolutionized Marine Biology.* Carolrhoda. ISBN 9781728415772.

**Gr 8 Up**—This biography of Jeanne Villepreux-Power features the compelling story of her life and work as a natural scientist in vivid and accessible language, and also includes a helpful time line and other back matter. Frequent illustrations and featured insets provide important context in this life story of a female scientific pioneer.

**STIEFEL, Chana.** *The Tower of Life: How Yaffa Eliach Rebuilt Her Town in Stories and Photographs.* illus. by Susan Gal. Scholastic. ISBN 9781338225891.

**Gr 3-5**—There are many picture books about the Holocaust, but this one stands out with Gal's beautiful watercolor pictures and the shattering true account of one woman's goal that her community never be forgotten.



**STONE, Tanya Lee.** *Peace Is a Chain Reaction: How World War II Japanese Balloon Bombs Brought People of Two Nations Together.* Candlewick. ISBN 9780763676865.

**Gr 5-8**—Stone masterly interweaves the stories of Japanese American teens living in U.S. concentration camps and Japanese adolescents who were secretly charged with manufacturing balloon bombs that were launched at the U.S. during WWII. With impeccable research and compelling firsthand accounts, this is an incredible story of a miraculous reconciliation.

**TAYLOR, Candacy.** *Overground Railroad: (The Young Adult Adaptation): The Green Book and the Roots of Black Travel in America.* Abrams. ISBN 9781419749490.

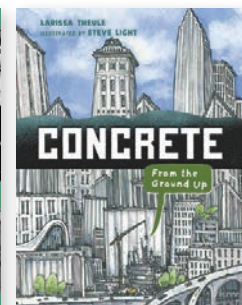
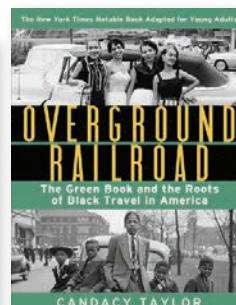
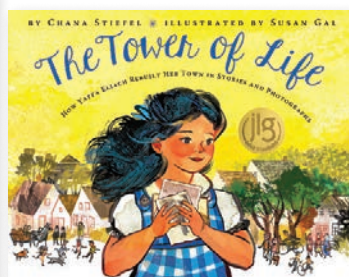
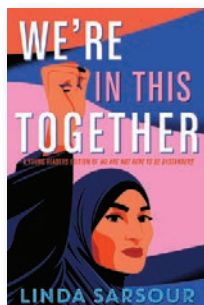
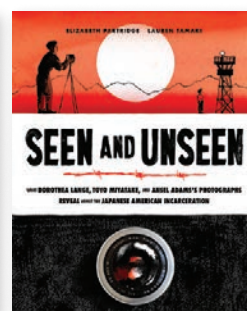
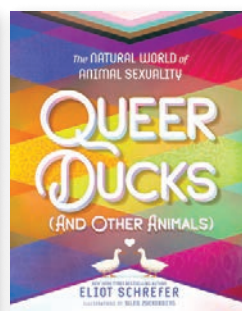
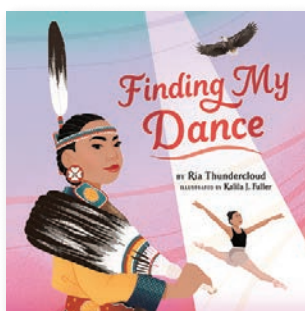
**Gr 7 Up**—Taylor traces the dark but fascinating story of postal worker Victor Hugo Green's travel guide for Black Americans published beginning in 1936. Like a well-designed museum exhibit, the book uses stark, perfectly chosen illustrations along with thorough, engaging text to create an immersive experience of an era of racist segregation.

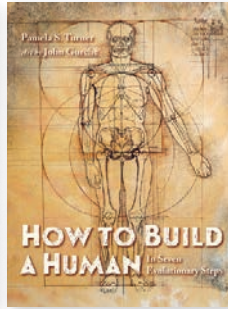
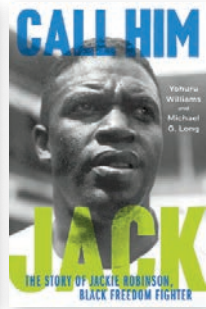
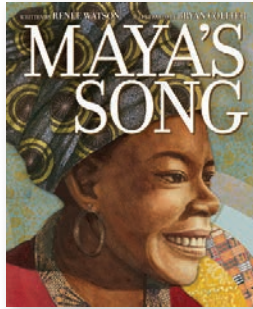
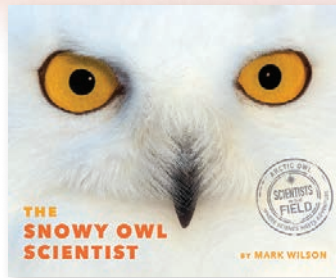
**THEULE, Larissa.** *Concrete: From the Ground Up.* illus. by Steve Light. Candlewick. ISBN 9781536212501.

**Gr 1-5**—Theule tells the story of concrete, from ancient times to its rediscovery in the 18th century, and in pared-down style introduces readers to advanced vocabulary, architectural monuments, professions, social history, and more, with clarity, directness, and humor. An utterly compelling read.

**THUNDERCLOUD, Ria.** *Finding My Dance.* illus. by Kalila J. Fuller. Penguin Workshop. ISBN 9780593093894.

**Gr 3-5**—"Beautiful Thunder Woman" chronicles her career, beginning with a jingle dress her mother made for her. With so little on this subject available outside of Indigenous communities, and even less written down, this is a compelling volume of a life and the importance





snowy owl researcher who travels to Alaska's north slope each June to survey nesting. Stunning photographs, accessible text, and impeccable back matter make this the quintessential title for research, browsing, and conservation inspiration.

**YUKSEL, M.O. *One Wish: Fatima al-Fihri and the World's Oldest University*.** illus. by Mariam Quraishi. HarperCollins. ISBN 9780063032910.

**Gr 2-5**—A gorgeous biography about Fatima al-Fihri, and the university she founded in Morocco. In simple but flowing prose, Yuksel brings al-Fihri's story from the ninth century to the present—and who could not love a book about a girl whose first spoken word was “read”? Add this biography to every collection.

**ZOBOI, Ibi. *Star Child: A Biographical Constellation of Octavia Estelle Butler*.** Dutton. ISBN 9780399187384.

**Gr 5 Up**—Zoboi's multimedia text gives new meaning to the concept of biography, infusing Butler's legacy of dreaming and discipline with the vibrancy it deserves through poetry, newspaper clippings, sketches, handwritten notes, and more. A stellar title worthy of its visionary subject.

of self-expression, as well as the protection of custom.

**TURNER, Pamela. *How to Build a Human: In Seven Evolutionary Steps*.** illus. by John Gurche. Charlesbridge. ISBN 9781623542504.

**Gr 5 Up**—A fascinating narrative on the history of our species from 66 million years ago to now. Turner has transformed a dense topic into an easy-to-understand and enjoyable journey for middle grade readers. Well-researched and engaging, this book belongs in every collection.

**WATSON, Renée. *Maya's Song*.** illus. by Bryan Collier. HarperCollins. ISBN 9780062871589.

**Gr 5-8**—This in-depth biography in poems, with unsurpassable watercolor and collage illustrations, is not exhaustive, but delivers an understanding of Angelou from her childhood experiences, excerpts of her writing, and adult accomplishments and friendships.

**WILLIAMS, Yohuru & Michael G. Long. *Call Him Jack: The Story of Jackie Robinson, Black Freedom Fighter*.** Farrar. ISBN 9780374389956.

**Gr 6 Up**—This outstanding biography chronicles the life of Robinson, focusing on his lifetime of activism in the face of racism. With crisp, absorbing text, this compelling work demonstrates that Robinson's contributions to civil rights were

more than simply breaking the MLB color barrier.

**WILSON, Mark. *Snowy Owl Scientist*.** HarperCollins/Clarion. ISBN 9780358329596.

**Gr 3-6**—The latest in the “Scientist in the Field” series follows Denver Holt, a

## Poetry

COMMITTEE MEMBER:  
Florence Simmons

**ACEVEDO, Elizabeth. *Inheritance: A Visual Poem*.** illus. by Andrea Pippins. HarperCollins/Quill Tree. ISBN 9780062931948.

**Gr 7 Up**—This bold spoken word journey through the history of Black oppression, as seen from the proverbial salon chair, is a powerful proclamation of resistance and resilience over cultural forces. A standout for its appeal to the young adult audience and the fusion of fury and realization it portrays.

**BRUCHAC, Joseph. *Voices of the People*.** illus. by various. Keycraft. ISBN 9781478875161.

**Gr 7 Up**—This collection of biographical poems explores the history of Native Americans from pre-colonization to modern times. Each poem is paired with a

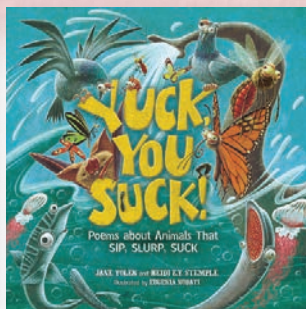


piece of art from a Native American artist. The visually stunning artwork combined with character sketches adeptly reveal the depth of Native American history.

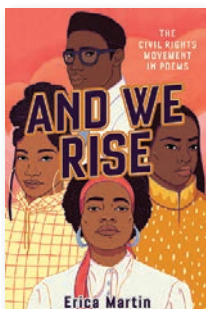
**KOOSER, Ted & Connie Wanek. *Marshmallow Clouds: Two Poets at Play Among Figures of Speech*.** illus. by Richard Jones. Candlewick. ISBN 9781536203035.

**Gr 4 Up**—Ordinary moments sparkle with imagery, beauty, and wit in this illustrated collaboration between former U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser and noted poet Connie Wanek. Each of the 27





verses has a full spread with fanciful illustrations matching the capricious tone of the work. It introduces poetry and literary devices enjoyably for all ages.



MARTIN, Erica. **And We Rise: The Civil Rights Movement in Poems.** Viking. ISBN 9780593352526.

Gr 7 Up—Short poems use negative space and concrete poetry elements to tell the history of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. The impact of the poems in this powerful, necessary book is strengthened by the layout of the text and drives home the struggle for equality.

OGLE, Rex. **Abuela, Don't Forget Me.** Norton. ISBN 9781324019954.

Gr 9 Up—Ogle's free verse memoir, a series of vignettes, reflects on parental abuse, poverty, bullying, bigotry, coming out, trauma, and the vital impact one person can have on a life. The magnitude of intergenerational relationships, deep connections, and acceptance shine in Ogle's foreword and poems, which are clearly love letters to his abuela.

YOLEN, Jane & Heidi E.Y. Stemple. **Yuck, You Suck!: Poems About Animals That Sip, Slurp, Suck.** illus. by Eugenia Nobati. Lerner/Millbrook. ISBN 9781728415666.

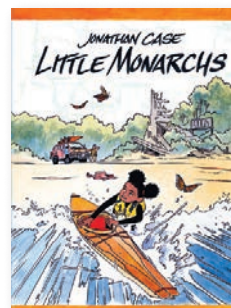
Gr 2-6—Exuberant, busy, and brightly colored full-page illustrations show a variety of creatures who "sip, slurp, suck," with poems printed directly, but unobtrusively, on the illustrations in a fun font. Most of the poems are bouncy rhymes, and endnotes explain why animals suck. A delightful book that amuses and educates.

microchips in its brain) is on a critical mission: save the moon from being devoured by intergalactic rats! A laugh-out-loud, page-turner of a tale that uses simple yet expressive art to effectively take its absurdity to unimaginable—and unforgettable—heights.



BOOTH, Molly Horton & Stephanie Kate Strohm. **Twelfth Grade Night.** illus. by Jamie Green. Disney-Hyperion. ISBN 9781368062398.

Gr 7 Up—No longer willing to conform at her former boarding school, Vi starts anew at Arden High—where love is afoot but not always in sync—while her twin brother stays behind, in this mischievous and ebullient romantic comedy based on Shakespeare's play of a similar title.



CASE, Jonathan. **Little Monarchs.** Holiday House/Margaret Ferguson. ISBN 9780823442607.

Gr 6 Up—In 2101, when most of humanity has been forced underground to avoid lethal sun exposure, Elvie accompanies scientist Flora on a daring journey to find Elvie's parents while working to develop a life-saving vaccine. Riveting action sequences, rich character development, and wholly believable worldbuilding combine for an unforgettable adventure.

CASTELLANOS, Alexis. **Isla to Island.** S. & S./Atheneum. ISBN 9781534469242.

Gr 5 Up—When Marisol's parents are

## Graphic Novels

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Shelley M. Diaz, Andrew Eliopoulos, Thomas Maluck, Alea Perez, Carla Riemer

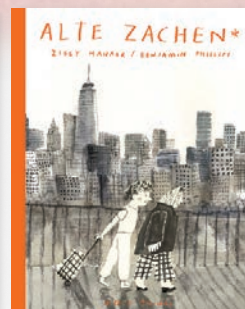
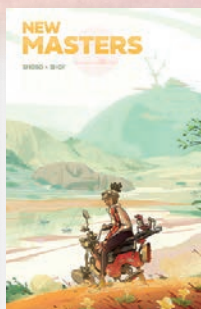


AXELROD, Jadzia. **Galaxy: The Prettiest Star.** illus. by Jess Taylor. DC Comics. ISBN 9781401298531.

Gr 9 Up—Having fled the aliens who attacked her home planet, Taelyr is forced to live disguised as a boy on Earth, until a new relationship changes everything. Vibrant, singular artwork elevates every emotion as superhero conventions help trace one character's journey to embrace her authentic self, centering exploration of gender identity and sexuality.

BARNETT, Mac. **The First Cat in Space Ate Pizza.** illus. by Shawn Harris. HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen. ISBN 9780063084087.

Gr 3-5—Project 47 (a cat enhanced with



forced to send her from colorful Cuba to dreary New York City, fearing for her safety under Castro's leadership, she and her hosts struggle to find her place in an unfamiliar world. This nearly wordless tale finds striking expression through use of color, symbols, and joyous momentum.

**COKER, Shobo.** *New Masters*. illus. by Shof Coker. Image. ISBN 9781534323384.

**Gr 9 Up**—Competing factions from Earth and Jupiter fight for power and resources in this action-packed Afrofuturistic tale. The worldbuilding is stellar; the language, settings, and art for this story are firmly rooted in the cultures of African nations, making it an innovative entry in the realm of science fiction.

**GONZALEZ, Christina Diaz.** *Invisible*. illus. by Gabriela Epstein. Scholastic/Graphix. ISBN 9781338194555.

**Gr 4-7**—A diverse group of Latinx students with different interests and varying levels of Spanish proficiency are forced to do a community service project and are also victims of stereotyping. With illustrations that pop and a complex but genius storytelling style, Gonzalez's *Breakfast Club*—inspired graphic novel shines with its portrayal of a found family.

**GUOJING.** *The Flamingo*. Random House Studio. ISBN 9780593127315.

**Gr 2 Up**—With few words, this stunningly illustrated chapter book graphic novel brings to life a story shared by a young girl and her Lao Lao—first during their visit together, and then when they are separated by a long distance. Sure to capture the imaginations and hearts of readers of all ages.

**HANAOR, Ziggy.** *Alte Zachen/Old Things*. illus. by Benjamin Phillips. Cicada. ISBN 9781800660229.

**Gr 6 Up**—When Benji and Bubbe Rosa

set out on a day of errands, Bubbe's old memories resurface, underscoring their generational divide. With spare text leaving ample space for watercolor-and-ink images, this poignant and ultimately hopeful graphic novel invites readers to reflect on the lives of others, in all their complexity.

**KOCH, Falynn.** *The National Parks: Preserving America's Wild Places*. First Second. ISBN 9781250265876.

**Gr 5-7**—Sasquatch and a bald eagle narrator take readers on a journey through the history of the U.S. National Parks system, including the time line of their creation, obstacles faced along the way, and the Indigenous peoples harmed in the process. A compelling true story packed with surprising facts and uncomfortable truths.

**LIU, Marjorie.** *Wingbearer*. illus. by Teny Issakhanian. HarperCollins/Quill Tree. ISBN 9780062741165.

**Gr 5-8**—Zuli, a caretaker of birds' souls, encounters unusual worlds and sometimes frightening creatures as she tries to discover why the birds are going missing. Gorgeous, dreamy illustrations bring this beautifully rendered fantastical tale of mystery, discovery, and danger to life.

**NAJEM, Muhammad & Nora Neus.** *Muhammad Najem, War Reporter*. illus. by Julie Robine. Little, Brown. ISBN 9780759556898.

**Gr 6-9**—Using only a cell phone to record and post firsthand accounts, one boy attempts to document the devastating effects of war in his home country of Syria. The power of graphic nonfiction is on full display here, with expressive art conveying a true story by turns harrowing and hopeful.

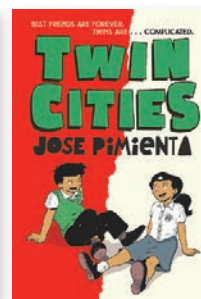
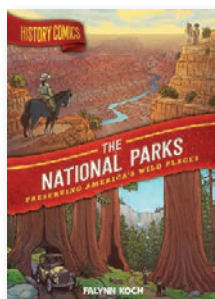


**ORTEGA, Claribel A.** *Frizzy*. illus. by Rose Bousamra. First Second. ISBN 9781250259622.

**Gr 4-8**—An Afro-Dominican tween pushes against her family's anti-Blackness and glorification of "good" hair. Internalized racism is discussed in a way that will resonate with those grappling with it for the first time. Bousamra's candy-colored palette makes this coming-of-age tale welcoming and joyful.

**PIMIENTA, Jose.** *Twin Cities*. Random House Graphic. ISBN 9780593180631.

**Gr 6 Up**—Growing up in Mexicali, Mexico, twins Luis Fernando and Luisa Teresa attend seventh grade on opposite







sides of the border and learn to navigate the trials of middle school—peer pressure, friendships, and identity-searching. A nuanced look at family dynamics and connecting with culture with realistic tween dialogue and bright, hand-drawn illustrations.

**SHAMMAS, Nadia & Sara Alfageeh.** *Squire*.

illus. by Sara Alfageeh. HarperCollins/Quill Tree. ISBN 9780062945853.

**Gr 7 Up**—Young Aiza joins the military to escape poverty, win heroic acclaim, and earn citizenship, only to see the ruling Empire’s propaganda for what it really is. This Middle Eastern-inspired fantasy story will hook readers through gorgeous artwork and unforgettable characters.



**SHARP, Sid.** *The Wolf Suit*. Annick. ISBN 9781773217208.

**Gr 2-5**—Terrified of wolves, a sheep with a hunger for blackberries and a talent for crafting devises a clever plan to dress up as his greatest fear, with surprising results. Spacious panels and atmospheric illustrations augment both the humor and the menace for chapter book readers.

**SHIGA, Jason.** *Leviathan*. Abrams/Amulet. ISBN 9781419757792.

**Gr 3-7**—This next-level pick-your-path adventure—part maze, part comic—involves winding through multiple choices and outcomes to conquer the Leviathan.

The gender-neutral protagonist, simple illustrations, sea-inspired palette, and ability to play over and over will attract and engage a variety of readers.

**SMITH, Tommie & Derrick Barnes.** *Victory. Stand! Raising My Fist for Justice*. illus. by Dawud Anyabwile. Norton. ISBN 9781324003908.

**Gr 8 Up**—Tommie Smith, who famously raised his fist at the 1968 Olympic games, led an interesting life leading up to and following that moment. The clashes between his personal ambitions and historic inequality make this graphic memoir by turns enlightening and inspirational.

**TABOR, Corey R.** *Sir Ladybug*. HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray. ISBN 9780063069060.

**Gr 1-4**—Desperate cries for help send a shy bug with a sword, Sir Ladybug, on a morning quest to save a caterpillar from a “monster” attack. Fresh, felicitous artwork is expertly paired with silly humor and friendship-building opportunities in this title for young readers.



**WALSH, Liam Francis.** *Red Scare*. Scholastic/Graphix. ISBN 9781338167092.

**Gr 4 Up**—A mysterious, glowing red object grants Peggy supernatural powers, but greater forces still threaten to close in on her. With a wealth of period de-

tails and genre elements, this sci-fi caper set in the 1950s finds immediacy in the fears of the time, while dealing espionage action that flies off the page.



**WILLIS, Maggie Edkins.** *Smaller Sister*. Roaring Brook. ISBN 9781250767417.

**Gr 4-7**—This stirring debut graphic novel explores the relationship between sisters Lucy and Olivia, who are only 20 months apart and inseparable—until Lucy begins struggling with body dysmorphia. With pitch-perfect prose and clear digital illustrations, this honest and thoughtful depiction of anorexia and sisterly bonds will resonate with tweens.

**WYATT, Jake.** *The Well*. illus. by Choo. First Second. ISBN 9781250816528.

**Gr 8 Up**—A young woman steals coins from a sacred well and must grant the wishes attached to the coins to appease the well’s spirit guardian. Themes of intergenerational legacies, danger, and a bit of romance are woven together deftly in this standout fantasy quest.

**SLJ**  
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