

Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors

Book List

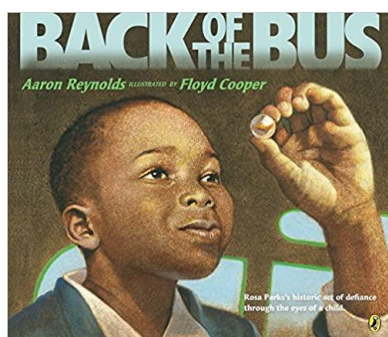
Livonia
PTSA Council

"Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created and recreated by the author. But if the light is right, the window becomes a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection, we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience."

- Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop

August 2021 Edition

This Month's Focus: In Memory of Floyd Cooper (January 8, 1956 - July 16, 2021)



Back of the Bus

By Aaron Reynolds, Illustrated by Floyd Cooper

Recommended Age: 6 to 8 years

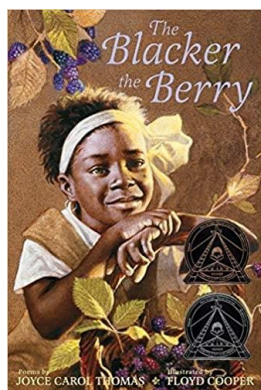
Picture Book

It's December 1, 1955.

A boy and his mother are riding the bus in Montgomery, Alabama like any other day—way in the back of the bus. The boy passes time by watching his marble roll up and down the aisle with the motion of the bus...

Until a big commotion breaks out from way up front.

With simple words and powerful illustrations, Aaron Reynolds and Coretta Scott King medalist Floyd Cooper recount the pivotal arrest of Rosa Parks at the dawn of the Civil Rights Movement.



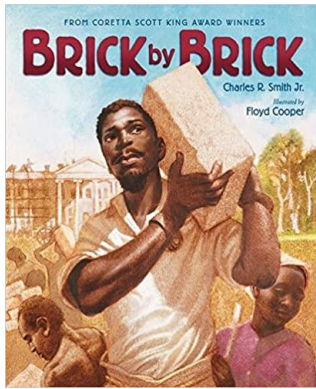
The Blacker the Berry

By Joyce Carol Thomas, Illustrated by Floyd Cooper

Recommended Age: 4 to 8 years

Picture Book

Black is dazzling and distinctive, like toasted wheat berry bread; snowberries in the fall; rich, red cranberries; and the bronzed last leaves of summer. In this lyrical and luminous poetry collection, Coretta Scott King honorees Joyce Carol Thomas and Floyd Cooper celebrate these many shades of Black beautifully.



Brick by Brick

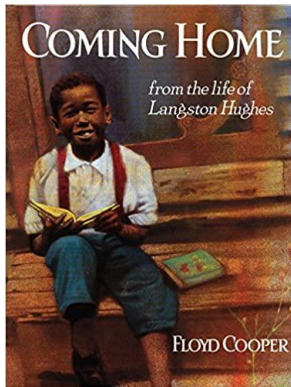
By Charles R. Smith Jr., Illustrated by Floyd Cooper

Recommended Age: 4 to 8 years

Picture Book

The home of the United States president was built by many hands, including those of slaves, who undertook this amazing achievement long before there were machines to do those same jobs.

Stirring and emotional, Floyd Cooper's stunning illustrations bring to life the faces of those who endured hard, brutal work when the profit of their labor was paid to the master, not the slave. The fact that many were able to purchase their freedom after earning money from learning a trade speaks to the strength of those individuals. They created this iconic emblem of America, brick by brick.



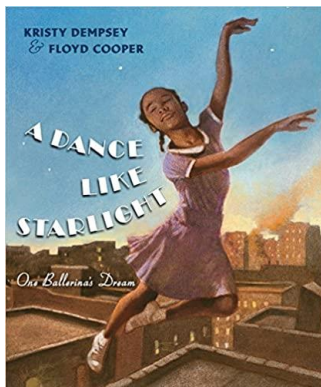
Coming Home: From the Life of Langston Hughes

Written & Illustrated by Floyd Cooper

Recommended Age: 4 to 8 years

Picture Book

Young Langston Hughes was a dreamer. He dreamed about heroes like Booker T. Washington, who was black just like him. When he heard the clackety-clack of train wheels, he dreamed about the places it had been. But most of all, he dreamed about having a happy home. And so, one day, he began turning those dreams into beautiful prose. As he did, he discovered where his home really was—in the words and rhythms of his poetry that reached people all over the world. The beloved Langston Hughes comes to life in a book for poets, dreamers, children, and adults—anyone who has ever thought of what home means to them.



A Dance Like Starlight: One Ballerina's Dream

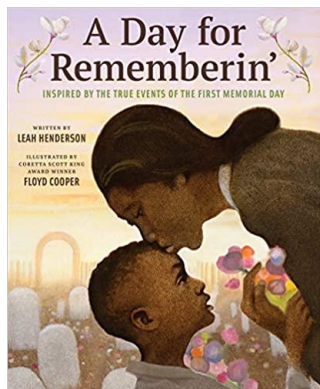
By Kristy Dempsey, Illustrated by Floyd Cooper

Recommended Age: 5 to 8 years

Picture Book

Little ballerinas have big dreams. Dreams of pirouettes and grande jetes, dreams of attending the best ballet schools and of dancing starring roles on stage. But in Harlem in the 1950s, dreams don't always come true—they take a lot of work and a lot of hope. And sometimes hope is hard to come by.

But the first African-American prima ballerina, Janet Collins, did make her dreams come true. And those dreams inspired ballerinas everywhere, showing them that the color of their skin couldn't stop them from becoming a star.



A Day for Rememberin': Inspired by the True Events of the First Memorial Day

By Leah Henderson, Illustrated by Floyd Cooper

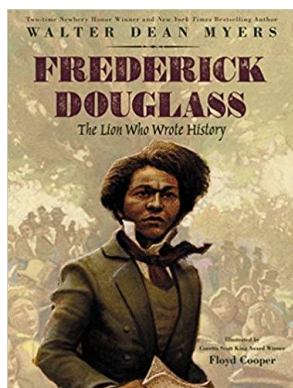
Recommended Age: 6 to 9 years

Picture Book

Today is a special day. Eli knows it's important if he's allowed to miss one second of school, his "hard-earned right."

Inspired by true events and told through the eyes of a young boy, this is the deeply moving story about what is regarded as the first Memorial Day on May 1, 1865. Eli dresses up in his best clothes, Mama gathers the mayflowers, Papa straightens his hat, and together they join the crowds filling the streets of Charleston, South Carolina, with bouquets, crosses, and wreaths. Abolitionists, missionaries, teachers, military officers, and a sea of faces Black, Brown, and White, they march as one and sing for all those who gave their lives fighting for freedom during the Civil War.

With poignant prose and celebratory, powerful illustrations, *A Day for Rememberin'* shines light on the little-known history of this important holiday and reminds us never to forget the people who put their lives on the line for their country.



Frederick Douglass: The Lion Who Wrote History

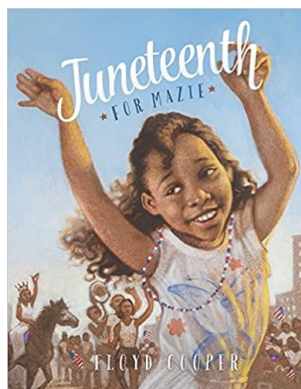
By Walter Dean Myers, Illustrated by Floyd Cooper

Recommended Age: 4 to 8 years

Picture Book

In this powerful picture book biography, New York Times bestselling author Walter Dean Myers and acclaimed artist Floyd Cooper take readers on an inspiring journey through the life of Frederick Douglass.

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in the South, taught himself to read, and grew up to become an icon. He was a leader of the abolitionist movement, a celebrated writer, an esteemed speaker, and a social reformer, proving that "once you learn to read, you will be forever free."



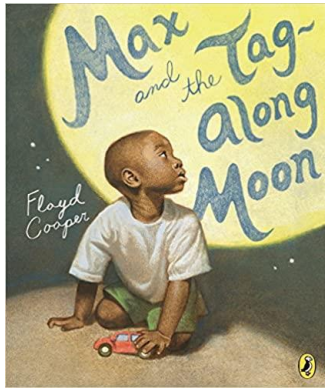
Juneteenth for Mazie

Written and Illustrated by Floyd Cooper

Recommended Age: 6 to 9 years

Picture Book

Mazie is ready to celebrate liberty. She is ready to celebrate freedom. She is ready to celebrate a great day in American history. The day her ancestors were no longer slaves. Mazie remembers the struggles and the triumph, as she gets ready to celebrate Juneteenth.



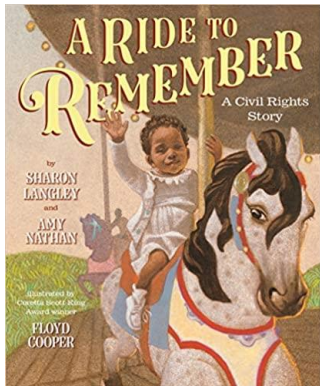
Max and the Tag-Along Moon

Written and Illustrated by Floyd Cooper

Recommended Age: 2 to 5 years

Picture Book

Max loves his grandpa. When they must say good-bye after a visit, Grandpa promises Max that the moon at Grandpa's house is the same moon that will follow him all the way home. On that swervy-curvy car ride back to his house, Max watches as the moon tags along. But when the sky darkens and the moon disappears behind clouds, he worries that it didn't follow him home after all. Where did the moon go—and what about Grandpa's promise?



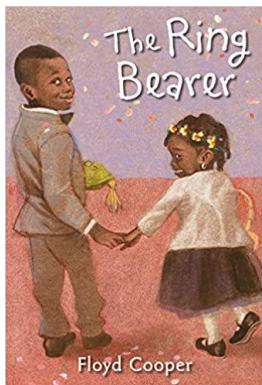
A Ride to Remember: A Civil Rights Story

By Sharon Langley & Amy Nathan, Illustrated by Floyd Cooper

Recommended Age: 6 to 9 years

Picture Book

A Ride to Remember tells how a community came together—both black and white—to make a change. When Sharon Langley was born in the early 1960s, many amusement parks were segregated, and African-American families were not allowed entry. This book reveals how in the summer of 1963, due to demonstrations and public protests, the Gwynn Oak Amusement Park in Maryland became desegregated and opened to all for the first time. Co-author Sharon Langley was the first African-American child to ride the carousel. This was on the same day of Martin Luther King Jr.'s March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Langley's ride to remember demonstrated the possibilities of King's dream. This book includes photos of Sharon on the carousel, authors' notes, a timeline, and a bibliography.



The Ring Bearer

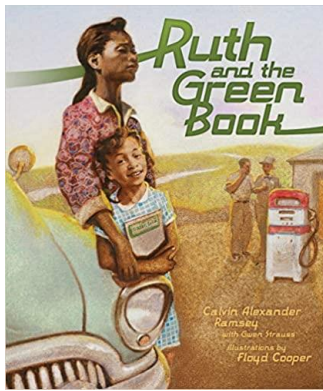
Written & Illustrated by Floyd Cooper

Recommended Age: 3 to 7 years

Picture Book

Jackson's mama is getting married, and he gets to be the ring bearer. But Jackson is worried . . . What if he trips? Or walks too slowly? Or drops the rings? And what about his new stepsister, Sophie? She's supposed to be the flower girl, but Jackson's not sure she's taking her job as seriously as she should.

In a celebration of blended families, this heartwarming story, stunningly illustrated by the award-winning Floyd Cooper, is a perfect gift for any child who's nervous to walk down the aisle at a wedding, and shows kids that they can handle life's big changes.



Ruth and the Green Book

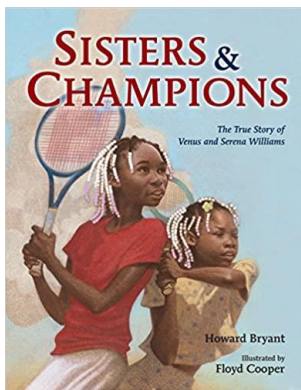
By Calvin Alexander Ramsey & Gwen Strauss, Illustrated by Floyd Cooper
Recommended Age: 7 to 11 years
Picture Book

The picture book inspiration for the Academy Award-winning film *The Green Book*

Ruth was so excited to take a trip in her family's new car! In the early 1950s, few African Americans could afford to buy cars, so this would be an adventure. But she soon found out that black travelers weren't treated very well in some towns. Many hotels and gas stations refused service to black people. Daddy was upset about something called Jim Crow laws . . .

Finally, a friendly attendant at a gas station showed Ruth's family *The Green Book*. It listed all of the places that would welcome black travelers. With this guidebook—and the kindness of strangers—Ruth could finally make a safe journey from Chicago to her grandma's house in Alabama.

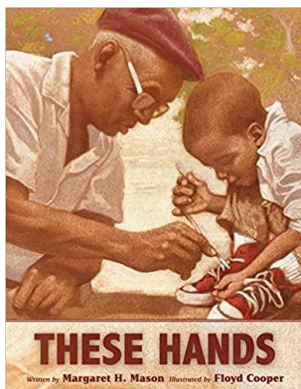
Ruth's story is fiction, but *The Green Book* and its role in helping a generation of African American travelers avoid some of the indignities of Jim Crow are historical fact.



Sisters and Champions: The True Story of Venus and Serena Williams

By Howard Bryant, Illustrated by Floyd Cooper
Recommended Age: 4 to 8 years
Picture Book

Everyone knows the names Venus & Serena Williams. They've become synonymous with championships, hard work, and with shaking up the tennis world. This inspirational true story, written by award-winning sports journalist, Howard Bryant, and brought to beautiful life by Coretta Scott Kind Award and Honor winner, Floyd Cooper, details the sisters' journey from a barely-there tennis court in Compton, CA, to Olympic gold medals and becoming the #1 ranked women in the sport of tennis. Here is a worthy ode to Venus and Serena Williams, the incredible sister duo who will go down in history as two of the greatest athletes of all time.

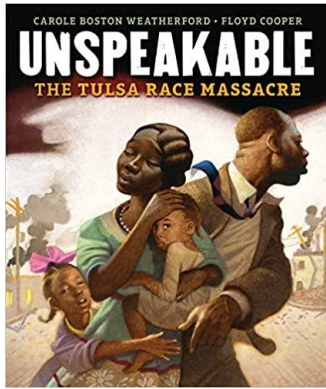


These Hands

By Margaret H. Mason, Illustrated by Floyd Cooper
Recommended Age: 4 to 7 years
Picture Book

Joseph's grandpa could do almost anything with his hands. He could play the piano, throw a curveball, and tie a triple bowline knot in three seconds flat. But in the 1950s and 60s, he could not bake bread at the Wonder Bread factory. Factory bosses said white people would not want to eat bread touched by the hands of the African Americans who worked there.

In this powerful intergenerational story, Joseph learns that people joined their hands together to fight discrimination so that one day, their hands—Joseph's hands—could do anything at all in this whole wide world.



Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre

By Carole Boston Weatherford, Illustrated by Floyd Cooper

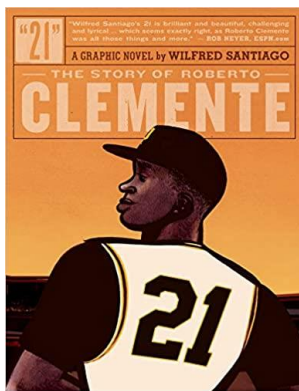
Recommended Age: 8 to 12 years

Picture Book

Celebrated author Carole Boston Weatherford and illustrator Floyd Cooper provide a powerful look at the Tulsa Race Massacre, one of the worst incidents of racial violence in our nation's history. The book traces the history of African Americans in Tulsa's Greenwood district and chronicles the devastation that occurred in 1921 when a white mob attacked the Black community.

News of what happened was largely suppressed, and no official investigation occurred for seventy-five years. This picture book sensitively introduces young readers to this tragedy and concludes with a call for a better future.

Other Books to Enjoy



21: The Story of Roberto Clemente

Written and Illustrated by Wilfred Santiago

Recommended Age: 16 years & up

Graphic Novel

Now available for the first time in paperback, Wilfred Santiago's instant classic 21: The Story of Roberto Clemente is a human drama of courage, faith, and dignity, inspired by the life of the acclaimed Pittsburgh Pirates baseball star who died too young. 21 chronicles Clemente's life from his early days growing up, through the highlights of his career, capturing the grit of his rise from an impoverished Puerto Rican childhood to the majesty of his performance on the field, and to his fundamental decency off of it. Santiago's inviting style combines realistic attention to detail and expressive cartooning to great effect.



Ahmed Aziz's Epic Year

By Nina Hamza

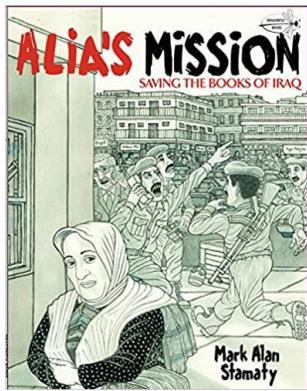
Recommended Age: 8 to 12 years

Middle Grade Novel

Ahmed Aziz is having an epic year—epically bad.

After his dad gets sick, the family moves from Hawaii to Minnesota for his dad's treatment. Even though his dad grew up there, Ahmed can't imagine a worse place to live. He's one of the only brown kids in his school. And as a proud slacker, Ahmed doesn't want to deal with expectations from his new teachers.

Ahmed surprises himself by actually reading the assigned books for his English class: Holes, Bridge to Terabithia, and From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler. Shockingly, he doesn't hate them. Ahmed also starts learning about his uncle, who died before Ahmed was born. Getting bits and pieces of his family's history might be the one upside of the move, as his dad's health hangs in the balance and the school bully refuses to leave him alone. Will Ahmed ever warm to Minnesota?



Alia's Mission: Saving the Books of Iraq

Written and Illustrated by Mark Alan Stamaty

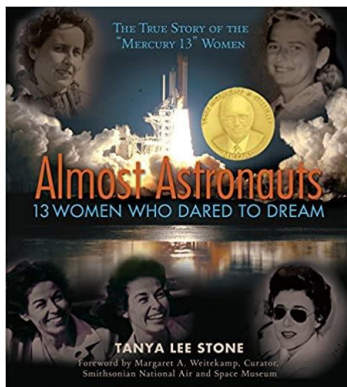
Recommended Age: 5 to 8 years

Graphic Novel

The inspiring story of an Iraqi librarian's courageous fight to save books from the Basra Central Library before it was destroyed in the war.

It is 2003 and Alia Muhammad Baker, the chief librarian of the Central Library in Basra, Iraq, has grown worried given the increased likelihood of war in her country. Determined to preserve the irreplaceable records of the culture and history of the land on which she lives from the destruction of the war, Alia undertakes a courageous and extremely dangerous task of spiriting away 30,000 books from the library to a safe place.

Told in dramatic graphic-novel panels by acclaimed cartoonist Mark Alan Stamaty, Alia's Mission celebrates the importance of books and the freedom to read, while examining the impact of war on a country and its people.



Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream

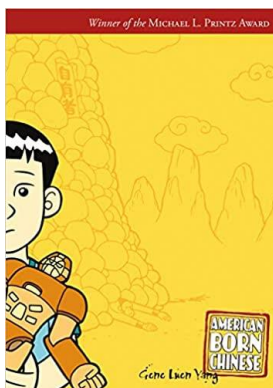
By Tanya Lee Stone

Recommended Age: 10 years & up

Middle Grade Non-Fiction

They had the right stuff. They defied the prejudices of the time. And they blazed a trail for generations of women to follow.

What does it take to be an astronaut? Excellence at flying, courage, intelligence, resistance to stress, top physical shape — any checklist would include these. But when America created NASA in 1958, there was another unspoken rule: you had to be a man. Here is the tale of thirteen women who proved that they were not only as tough as the toughest man but also brave enough to challenge the government. They were blocked by prejudice, jealousy, and the scrawled note of one of the most powerful men in Washington. But even though the Mercury 13 women did not make it into space, they did not lose, for their example empowered young women to take their place in the sky, piloting jets and commanding space capsules. ALMOST ASTRONAUTS is the story of thirteen true pioneers of the space age.



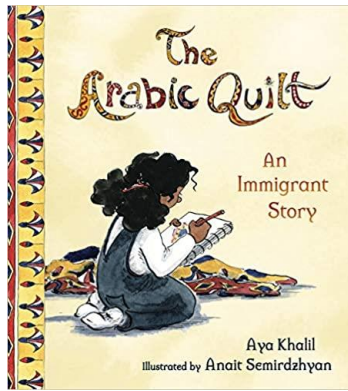
American Born Chinese

Written and Illustrated by Gene Luen Yang

Recommended Age: 12 years & up

Graphic Novel

A tour-de-force by New York Times bestselling graphic novelist Gene Yang, American Born Chinese tells the story of three apparently unrelated characters: Jin Wang, who moves to a new neighborhood with his family only to discover that he's the only Chinese-American student at his new school; the powerful Monkey King, subject of one of the oldest and greatest Chinese fables; and Chin-Kee, a personification of the ultimate negative Chinese stereotype, who is ruining his cousin Danny's life with his yearly visits. Their lives and stories come together with an unexpected twist in this action-packed modern fable. American Born Chinese is an amazing ride, all the way up to the astonishing climax.



The Arabic Quilt: An Immigrant Story

By Aya Khalil, Illustrated by Anait Semirdzhyan

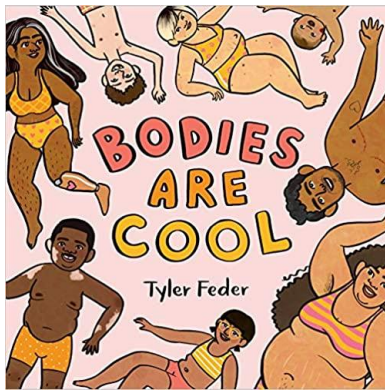
Recommended Age: 6 to 8 years

Picture Book

Kanzi's family has moved from Egypt to America, and on her first day in a new school, what she wants more than anything is to fit in. Maybe that's why she forgets to take the kofta sandwich her mother has made for her lunch, but that backfires when Mama shows up at school with the sandwich. Mama wears a hijab and calls her daughter Habibti (dear one). When she leaves, the teasing starts.

That night, Kanzi wraps herself in the beautiful Arabic quilt her teita (grandma) in Cairo gave her and writes a poem in Arabic about the quilt. Next day her teacher sees the poem and gets the entire class excited about creating a "quilt" (a paper collage) of student names in Arabic. In the end, Kanzi's most treasured reminder of her old home provides a pathway for acceptance in her new one.

This authentic story with beautiful illustrations includes a glossary of Arabic words and a presentation of Arabic letters with their phonetic English equivalents.



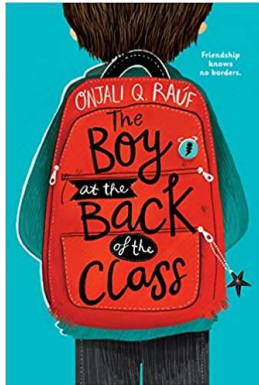
Bodies Are Cool

Written and Illustrated by Tyler Feder

Recommended Age: 3 to 5 years

Picture Book

From the acclaimed creator of *Dancing at the Pity Party* and *Roaring Softly*, this picture book is a pure celebration of all the different human bodies that exist in the world. Highlighting the various skin tones, body shapes, and hair types is just the beginning in this truly inclusive book. With its joyful illustrations and encouraging refrain, it will instill body acceptance and confidence in the youngest of readers. "My body, your body, every different kind of body! All of them are good bodies! BODIES ARE COOL!"



The Boy at the Back of the Class

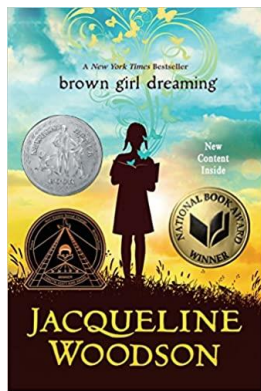
By Onjali Q. Raúf

Recommended Age: 8 to 12 years

Middle Grade Novel

There used to be an empty chair at the back of Mrs. Khan's classroom, but on the third Tuesday of the school year a new kid fills it: nine-year-old Ahmet, a Syrian refugee. The whole class is curious about this new boy—he doesn't seem to smile, and he doesn't talk much. But after learning that Ahmet fled a "Very Real War" and was separated from his family along the way, a determined group of his classmates band together to concoct the Greatest Idea in the World—a magnificent plan to reunite Ahmet with his loved ones.

Balancing humor and heart, this relatable story about the refugee crisis from the perspective of kids highlights the community-changing potential of standing as an ally and reminds readers that everyone deserves a place to call home.



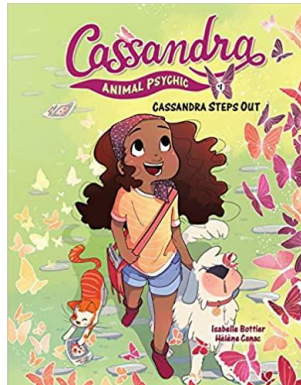
Brown Girl Dreaming

By Jacqueline Woodson

Recommended Age: 9 years & up

Memoir, Poetry

Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement. Touching and powerful, each poem is both accessible and emotionally charged, each line a glimpse into a child's soul as she searches for her place in the world. Woodson's eloquent poetry also reflects the joy of finding her voice through writing stories, despite the fact that she struggled with reading as a child. Her love of stories inspired her and stayed with her, creating the first sparks of the gifted writer she was to become.



Cassandra Steps Out (Book 1 of Cassandra: Animal Psychic)

By Isabelle Bottier, Illustrated by Hélène Canac

Recommended Age: 9 years & up

Graphic Novel

Cassandra has a gift. Animals can show her what they're thinking. And she's done keeping her talent a secret. In the first volume of the Cassandra: Animal Psychic series, Cassandra sets out to help pets and their people.

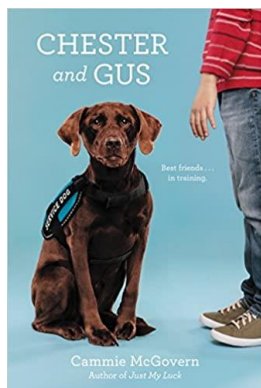
The trouble is, other parts of Cassandra's life are changing too. Her mom has a boyfriend she really likes, but his daughter can't stand Cassandra. And Cassandra's best friend is about to leave town. Not even her trusty dog Miss Dolly can make things feel okay. When Cassandra gets on the trail of a lost cat, will she be able to help its owners? Or will her first case be a flop?

Chester and Gus

By Cammie McGovern

Recommended Age: 8 to 12 years

Middle Grade Novel



Chester has always wanted to become a service dog. When he fails his certification test, though, it seems like that dream will never come true—until a family adopts him. They want him to be a companion for their ten-year-old son, Gus, who has autism. But Gus acts so differently than anyone Chester has ever met. He never wants to pet Chester, and sometimes he doesn't even want Chester in the room. Chester's not sure how to help Gus since this isn't exactly the job he trained for—but he's determined to figure it out. Because after all, Gus is now his person.

Each Kindness

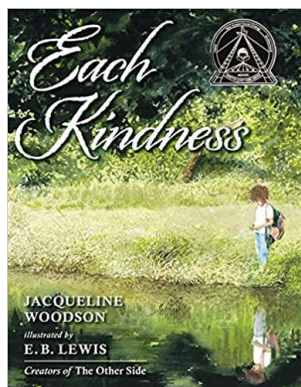
By Jacqueline Woodson, Illustrated by E. B. Lewis

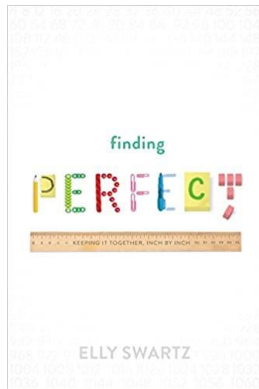
Recommended Age: 6 to 10 years

Picture Book

Each kindness makes the world a little better

Chloe and her friends won't play with the new girl, Maya. Every time Maya tries to join Chloe and her friends, they reject her. Eventually Maya stops coming to school. When Chloe's teacher gives a lesson about how even small acts of kindness can change the world, Chloe is stung by the lost opportunity for friendship, and thinks about how much better it could have been if she'd shown a little kindness toward Maya.





Finding Perfect

By Elly Swartz

Recommended Age: 8 to 12 years

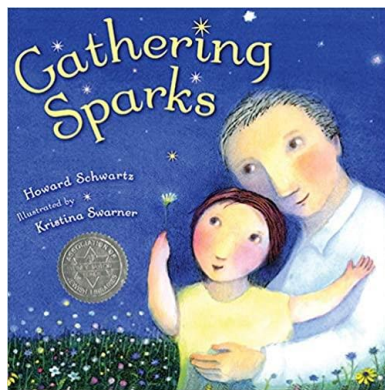
Middle Grade Novel

To twelve-year-old Molly Nathans, perfect is:

- The number four
- The tip of a newly sharpened No. 2 pencil
- A crisp white pad of paper
- Her neatly aligned glass animal figurines

What's not perfect is Molly's mother leaving the family to take a faraway job with the promise to return in one year. Molly knows that promises are sometimes broken, so she hatches a plan to bring her mother home: Win the Lakeville Middle School Poetry Slam Contest. The winner is honored at a fancy banquet with white tablecloths. Molly is sure her mother would never miss that. Right...?

But as time passes, writing and reciting slam poetry become harder. Actually, everything becomes harder as new habits appear, and counting, cleaning, and organizing are not enough to keep Molly's world from spinning out of control. In this fresh-voiced debut novel, one girl learns there is no such thing as perfect.



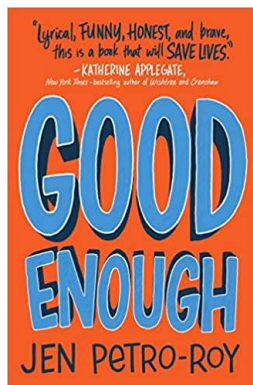
Gathering Sparks

By Howard Schwartz, Illustrated by Kristina Swarner

Recommended Age: 5 to 8 years

Picture Book

A grandfather lovingly teaches his grandchild a lesson about the centuries-old concept of tikkun olam. Gently told and gorgeously illustrated, this intergenerational picture book offers a soothing and universal message for our troubled times.



Good Enough

By Jen Petro-Roy

Recommended Age: 9 to 11 years

Middle Grade Novel

Before she had an eating disorder, twelve-year-old Riley was many things: an aspiring artist, a runner, a sister, and a friend.

But now, from inside the inpatient treatment center where she's receiving treatment for anorexia, it's easy to forget all of that. Especially since under the influence of her eating disorder, Riley alienated her friends, abandoned her art, turned running into something harmful, and destroyed her family's trust.

If Riley wants her life back, she has to recover. Part of her wants to get better. As she goes to therapy, makes friends in the hospital, and starts to draw again, things begin to look up.

But when her roommate starts to break the rules, triggering Riley's old behaviors and blackmailing her into silence, Riley realizes that recovery will be even harder than she thought. She starts to think that even if she does "recover," there's no way she'll stay recovered once she leaves the hospital and is faced with her dieting mom, the school bully, and her gymnastics-star sister.



Hello Goodbye Dog

By Maria Gianferrari, Illustrated by Patrice Barton

Recommended Age: 4 to 8 years

Picture Book

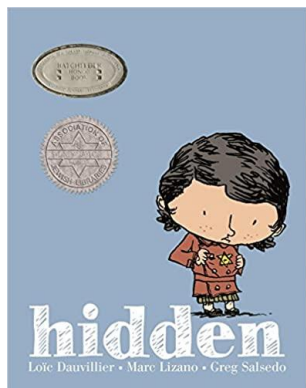
For Zara's dog, Moose, nothing is more important than being with her favorite girl. So when Zara has to go to school, WHOOSH, Moose escapes and rushes to her side.

Hello, Moose!

Unfortunately, dogs aren't allowed at school and Moose has to go back home.

Goodbye, Moose.

But Moose can't be held back for long. Through a series of escalating escapes, this loyal dog always finds her way back to Zara, and with a little bit of training and one great idea, the two friends find a way to be together all day long.



Hidden: A Child's Story of the Holocaust

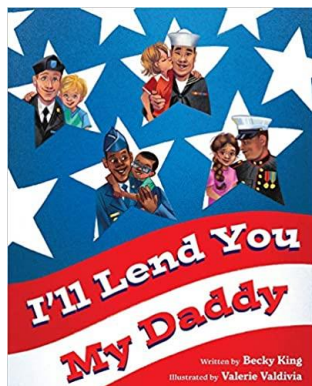
By Loic Dauvillier, Illustrated by Marc Lizano

Recommended Age: 6 to 10 years

Graphic Novel

In this gentle, poetic young graphic novel, Dounia, a grandmother, tells her granddaughter the story even her son has never heard: how, as a young Jewish girl in Paris, she was hidden away from the Nazis by a series of neighbors and friends who risked their lives to keep her alive when her parents had been taken to concentration camps.

Hidden ends on a tender note, with Dounia and her mother rediscovering each other as World War II ends . . . and a young girl in present-day France becoming closer to her grandmother, who can finally, after all those years, tell her story.



I'll Lend You My Daddy

By Becky King, Illustrated by Cynthea Liu

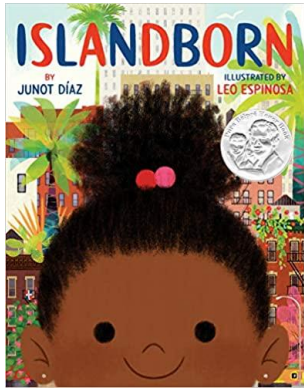
Recommended Age: 2 to 8 years

Picture Book

A heartwarming story of love, courage, and comfort during deployment for military families with the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines.

In I'll Lend You My Daddy, young boys and girls find ways to manage their feelings about deployment (from goodbyes, to the first night, to missed birthdays) as they eagerly await their fathers' return home. Through the support of family and friends, care packages, and calls, these children grow strong with the knowledge of what it means to serve, generating pride from within, that makes glorious reunions all the more sweet by book's end.

*I'll lend you my daddy.
He works for us all.
He keeps the world safe
And answers our call.*



Islandborn

By Junot Díaz, Illustrated by Leo Espinosa
Recommended Age: 2 to 8 years
Picture Book

Every kid in Lola's school was from somewhere else.
Hers was a school of faraway places.

So when Lola's teacher asks the students to draw a picture of where their families immigrated from, all the kids are excited. Except Lola. She can't remember The Island—she left when she was just a baby. But with the help of her family and friends, and their memories—joyous, fantastical, heartbreaking, and frightening—Lola's imagination takes her on an extraordinary journey back to The Island. As she draws closer to the heart of her family's story, Lola comes to understand the truth of her abuela's words: “Just because you don't remember a place doesn't mean it's not in you.”

Gloriously illustrated and lyrically written, *Islandborn* is a celebration of creativity, diversity, and our imagination's boundless ability to connect us—to our families, to our past and to ourselves.



Just Be Cool, Jenna Sakai

By Debbi Michiko Florence
Recommended Age: 8 to 12 years
Middle Grade Novel

"Heartbreak is for suckers."

When Jenna Sakai gets dumped over winter break, it confirms what she learned from her parents' messy divorce: Relationships are risky and only lead to disappointment. So even though she still has to see her ex-boyfriend Elliott at newspaper club, Jenna is going to be totally heartless this semester -- no boys, just books.

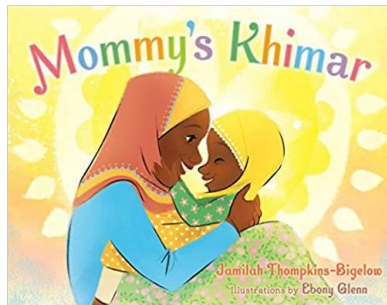
But keeping her cool isn't always easy. Jenna's chief competition for a big journalism scholarship is none other than Elliott. Her best friend Keiko always seems busy with her own boyfriend. And cute-but-incredibly-annoying Rin Watanabe keeps stealing her booth at the diner she's been hiding at every day after school. Rin is every bit as stubborn and detached as Jenna. And the more Jenna gets to know him, the more intriguing a mystery he seems. Soon Jenna is starting to realize that being a loner is kind of, well, lonely. And letting people in might just be a risk worth taking.



Mom and Dad Love Me the Same

By Melisa Torres, Illustrated by Daniel Ramos
Recommended Age: 7 to 9 years
Picture Book

William is a quiet 8-year-old boy with anxiety. When his parents tell him they are getting a divorce he is worried about how his life will change. Over the course of a year William experiences many differences and similarities. He explains his observations to the reader, helping kids understand divorce. After all, the most important thing remained the same. Mom and Dad love him.



Mommy's Khimar

By Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, Illustrated by Ebony Glenn

Recommended Age: 4 to 8 years

Picture Book

A khimar is a flowing scarf that my mommy wears.

Before she walks out the door each day, she wraps one around her head.

A young girl plays dress up with her mother's headscarves, feeling her mother's love with every one she tries on. Charming and vibrant illustrations showcase the beauty of the diverse and welcoming community in this portrait of a young Muslim American girl's life.



Nothing Ever Happens Here

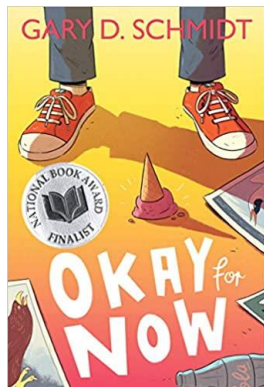
By Sarah Hagger-Holt

Recommended Age: 10 years & up

Middle Grade Novel

"I wonder what people would think if they could take the front off our house like a doll's house and watch us. All in the same house, but everyone separate. No one talking, but everyone thinking the same thing. Will we ever be a normal family again?"

Izzy's family is under the spotlight when her dad comes out as Danielle, a trans woman. Izzy is terrified her family will be torn apart. Will she lose her dad? Will her parents break up? And what will people at school say? Now all eyes are on Izzy. Can she face her fears, find her voice, and stand up for her family and what's right?



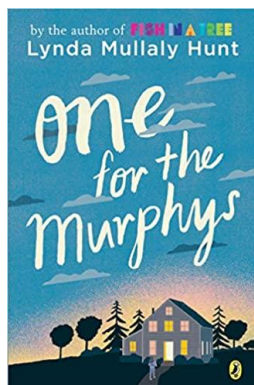
Okay for Now

By Gary D. Schmidt

Recommended Age: 10 to 12 years

Middle Grade Novel

At once heartbreaking and hopeful, this absorbing novel centers on Doug, 14, who has an abusive father, a bully for a brother, a bad reputation, and shameful secrets to keep. Teachers and police and his relatives think he's worthless, and he believes them, holding others at arm's length. Newly arrived in town, he starts out on the same path—antagonizing other kids, mouthing off to teachers, contemptuous of everything intimidating or unfamiliar. Who would have thought that the public library would turn out to be a refuge and an inspiration, that a snooty librarian might be a friend, or that snarky redheaded Lil would like him—really like him? With more than his share of pain, including the return of his oldest brother from the Vietnam War, shattered and angry, will Doug find anything better than "okay for now"?



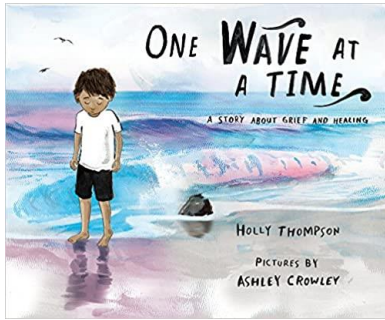
One for the Murphys

By Lynda Mullaly Hunt

Recommended Age: 10 to 12 years

Middle Grade Novel

Carley uses humor and street smarts to keep her emotional walls high and thick. But the day she becomes a foster child, and moves in with the Murphys, she's blindsided. This loving, bustling family shows Carley the stable family life she never thought existed, and she feels like an alien in their cookie-cutter-perfect household. Despite her resistance, the Murphys eventually show her what it feels like to belong--until her mother wants her back and Carley has to decide where and how to live. She's not really a Murphy, but the gifts they've given her have opened up a new future.



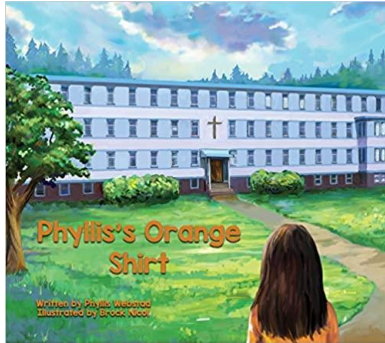
One Wave at a Time: A Story About Grief and Healing

By Holly Thompson, Illustrated by Ashley Crowley

Recommended Age: 5 to 7 years

Picture Book

After his father dies, Kai experiences all kinds of emotions: sadness, anger, fear, guilt. Sometimes they crash and mix together. Other times, there are no emotions at all—just flatness. As Kai and his family adjust to life without Dad, the waves still roll in. But with the help of friends and one another, they learn to cope—and, eventually, heal. A lyrical story about grieving for anyone encountering loss.



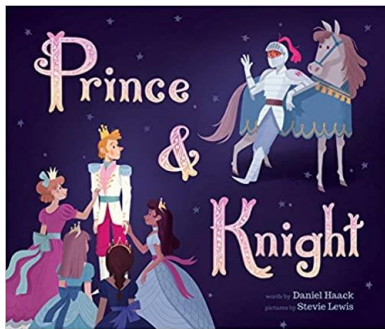
Phyllis's Orange Shirt

By Phyllis Webstad, Illustrated by Brock Nicol

Recommended Age: 3 to 5 years

Picture Book

When Phyllis Webstad (nee Jack) turned six, she went to residential school for the first time. On her first day at school, she wore a shiny orange shirt that her granny had bought for her, but when she got to the school, it was taken away from her and never returned. This is the true story of Phyllis and her orange shirt. It is also the story of Orange Shirt Day (an important day of remembrance for Indigenous people and all Canadians).



Prince & Knight

By Daniel Haack, Illustrated by Stevie Lewis

Recommended Age: 1 to 8 years

Picture Book

In this modern fairy tale, a noble prince and a brave knight come together to defeat a terrible monster and in the process find true love in a most unexpected place.

"Thank you," he told his parents.

"I appreciate that you tried,
but I'm looking for something special
in a partner by my side."

Once upon a time, in a kingdom far from here, there was a prince in line to take the throne, so his parents set out to find him a kind and worthy bride. The three of them traveled the land far and wide, but the prince didn't quite find what he was looking for in the princesses they met.

While they were away, a terrible dragon threatened their land, and all the soldiers fled. The prince rushed back to save his kingdom from the perilous beast and was met by a brave knight in a suit of brightly shining armor. Together they fought the dragon and discovered that special something the prince was looking for all along. This book is published in partnership with GLAAD to accelerate LGBTQ inclusivity and acceptance.



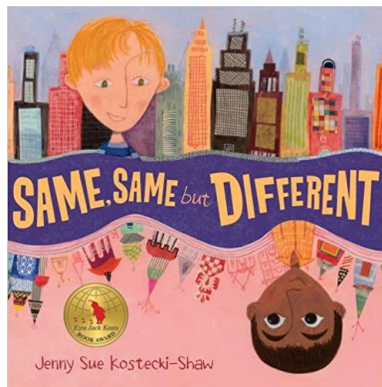
Right For Me

Written and Illustrated by Jamie Fidler
Recommended Age: 4 to 8 years
Picture Book

Kids. Perfect just the way they are.

Children communicate in various ways - no matter their neurotype. This book, using colorful illustrations and rhyming sentiments, comes together to gently remind ALL members of the family that we all do well when we can.

Sad, happy, peace, love, frustration... The colorful cast of characters in this book will show you what emotions they feel as well as the various ways they communicate their wants and needs.

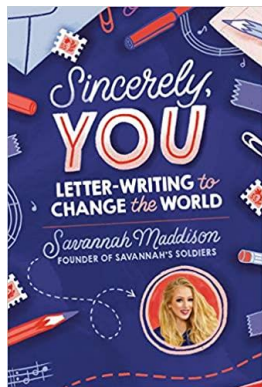


Same, Same but Different

Written and Illustrated by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw
Recommended Age: 4 to 7 years
Picture Book

Elliot lives in America, and Kailash lives in India. They are pen pals. By exchanging letters and pictures, they learn that they both love to climb trees, have pets, and go to school. Their worlds might look different, but they are actually similar. Same, same. But different!

Through an inviting point-of-view and colorful, vivid illustrations, this story shows how two boys living oceans apart can be the best of friends.



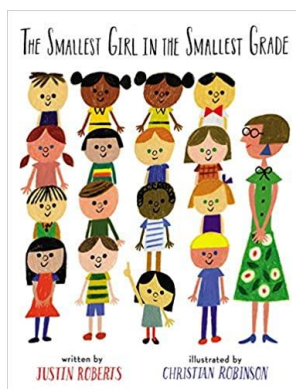
Sincerely, YOU: Letter-Writing to Change the World

By Savannah Maddison, founder of Savannah's Soldiers
Recommended Age: 8 to 12 years
Non-Fiction

A letter can brighten a day, change a life, even unite the world--and so can you!

Have you ever missed a friend who lives far away and wished you could bring them back home? Do you know someone who could use a smile and have just the right story to brighten their day? Maybe you have a great idea to make your school better for everyone but don't know how to share it. With a letter, you can connect with friends and feel heard. Your stories, art, music, and ideas can travel near and far to make a difference!

Packed with tips on how to conquer writer's block, find your own creativity, and connect with your friends, family, and community, this book will inspire you--and help you inspire the world around you!

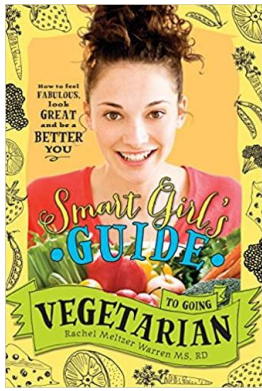


The Smallest Girl in the Smallest Grade

By Justin Roberts, Illustrated by Christian Robinson
Recommended Age: 3 to 5 years
Picture Book

Hardly anyone noticed young Sally McCabe. She was the smallest girl in the smallest grade.

But Sally notices everything—from the twenty-seven keys on the janitor's ring to the bullying happening on the playground. One day, Sally has had enough and decides to make herself heard. And when she takes a chance and stands up to the bullies, she finds that one small girl can make a big difference.



The Smart Girl's Guide to Going Vegetarian: A Non-Diet Guide to Healthy Eating that Promotes Body Positivity and Sustainability

By Rachel Meltzer Warren

Recommended Age: 12 years & up

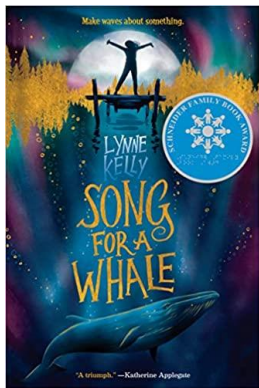
Non-Fiction

Treating your body right is a radical act of self-love

The Smart Girl's Guide to Going Vegetarian is an inclusive guide—written by a nutritionist—for young people looking to learn more about what they put in their bodies and how food can be used to practice self-care, mindfulness, sustainability, and body positivity.

These days we're immersed in diet culture—every other celebrity is vegan, influencers push skinny teas, and we all know at least one person who can wax poetic about the benefits of keto. But here's the thing: what you put in your body isn't about labels or a number on a scale, it's about feeling good and living well.

No labels. No fuss. Whether you're going vegan, vegetarian, fish-only, chicken-only, or plant-based (except for the occasional Crunchwrap Supreme from Taco Bell) this book is for you. Because mindful eating is for everyone: if you want to cut down on meat out of curiosity, to boost your energy, to care for the environment, or to better understand what you need to feel your best, here you'll find advice on how to eat well and treat yourself with compassion.



Song for a Whale

By Lynne Kelly

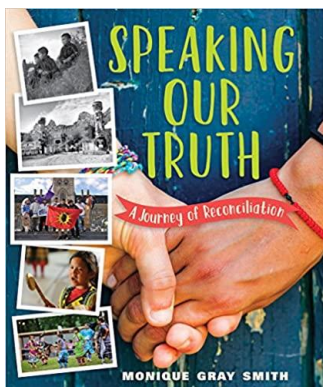
Recommended Age: 9 years & up

Middle Grade Novel

From fixing the class computer to repairing old radios, twelve-year-old Iris is a tech genius. But she's the only deaf person in her school, so people often treat her like she's not very smart. If you've ever felt like no one was listening to you, then you know how hard that can be.

When she learns about Blue 55, a real whale who is unable to speak to other whales, Iris understands how he must feel. Then she has an idea: she should invent a way to "sing" to him! But he's three thousand miles away. How will she play her song for him?

Full of heart and poignancy, this affecting story by sign language interpreter Lynne Kelly shows how a little determination can make big waves.



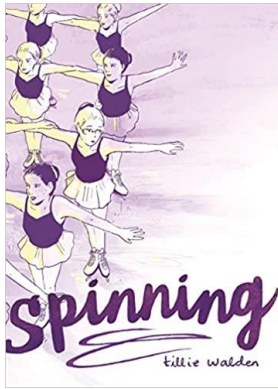
Speaking Our Truth: A Journey of Reconciliation

By Monique Gray Smith

Recommended Age: 9 to 12 years

Middle Grade Non-Fiction

Canada's relationship with its Indigenous people has suffered as a result of both the residential school system and the lack of understanding of the historical and current impact of those schools. Healing and repairing that relationship requires education, awareness and increased understanding of the legacy and the impacts still being felt by Survivors and their families. Guided by acclaimed Indigenous author Monique Gray Smith, readers will learn about the lives of Survivors and listen to allies who are putting the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into action.



Spinning

By Tillie Walden

Recommended Age: 14 to 18 years

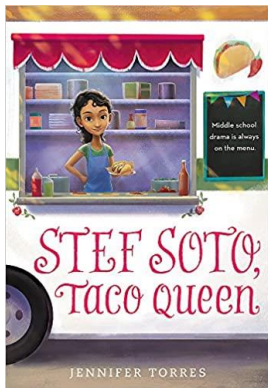
Graphic Novel

It was the same every morning. Wake up, grab the ice skates, and head to the rink while the world was still dark.

Weekends were spent in glitter and tights at competitions. Perform. Smile. And do it again.

She was good. She won. And she hated it.

For ten years, figure skating was Tillie Walden's life. She woke before dawn for morning lessons, went straight to group practice after school, and spent weekends competing at ice rinks across the state. Skating was a central piece of her identity, her safe haven from the stress of school, bullies, and family. But as she switched schools, got into art, and fell in love with her first girlfriend, she began to question how the close-minded world of figure skating fit in with the rest of her life, and whether all the work was worth it given the reality: that she, and her friends on the team, were nowhere close to Olympic hopefuls. The more Tillie thought about it, the more Tillie realized she'd outgrown her passion—and she finally needed to find her own voice.



Stef Soto, Taco Queen

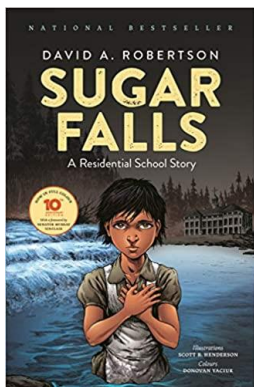
By Jennifer Torres

Recommended Age: 8 to 12 years

Middle Grade Novel

Estefania "Stef" Soto is itching to shake off the onion-and-cilantro embrace of Tia Perla, her family's taco truck. She wants nothing more than for Papi to get a normal job and for Tia Perla to be a distant memory. Then maybe everyone at school will stop seeing her as the Taco Queen.

But when her family's livelihood is threatened, and it looks like her wish will finally come true, Stef surprises everyone (including herself) by becoming the truck's unlikely champion. In this fun and heartfelt novel, Stef will discover what matters most and ultimately embrace an identity that even includes old Tia Perla.



Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story

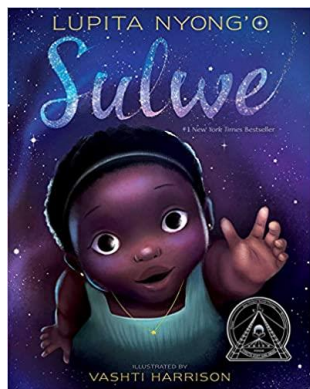
By David A. Robertson, Illustrated by Scott B. Henderson

Recommended Age: 15 to 18 years

Graphic Novel

Inspired by true events, this story of strength, family, and culture shares the awe-inspiring resilience of Elder Betty Ross.

Abandoned as a young child, Betsy is adopted into a loving family. A few short years later, at the age of 8, everything changes. Betsy is taken away to a residential school. There she is forced to endure abuse and indignity, but Betsy recalls the words her father spoke to her at Sugar Falls—words that give her the resilience, strength, and determination to survive.



Sulwe

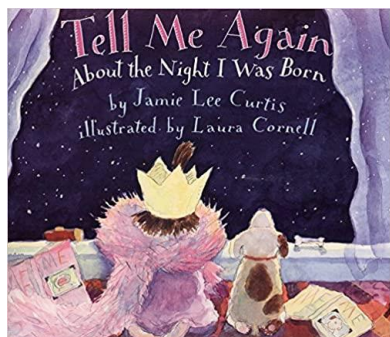
By Lupita Nyong'o, Illustrated by Vashti Harrison

Recommended Age: 3 to 8 years

Picture Book

Sulwe has skin the color of midnight. She is darker than everyone in her family. She is darker than anyone in her school. Sulwe just wants to be beautiful and bright, like her mother and sister. Then a magical journey in the night sky opens her eyes and changes everything.

In this stunning debut picture book, actress Lupita Nyong'o creates a whimsical and heartwarming story to inspire children to see their own unique beauty.



Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born

By Jamie Lee Curtis, Illustrated by Laura Cornell

Recommended Age: 1 to 6 years

Picture Book

Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born is a special celebration of the love and joy an adopted child creates for a family.

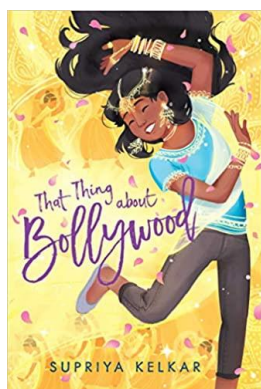
In asking her parents to tell her again about the night of her birth, a young girl relives a cherished tale she knows by heart. Focusing on the significance of family and love, this a unique and beautiful story about adoption and the importance of a loving family.

A beautiful adoption story, Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born also speaks to the universal childhood desire to know more about the excitement, awe, love, and sleeplessness that a new baby brings to a family.

Tell me again about the night I was born.

Tell me again how you would adopt me and be my parents.

Tell me again about the first time you held me in your arms.



That Thing about Bollywood

By Supriya Kelkar

Recommended Age: 8 to 12 years

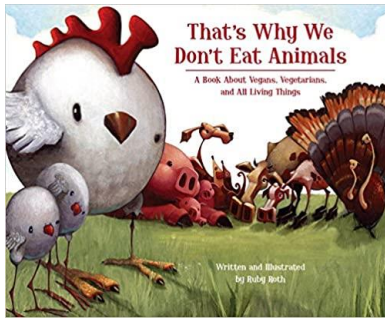
Middle Grade Novel

You know how in Bollywood when people are in love, they sing and dance from the mountaintops? Eleven-year-old Sonali wonders if they do the same when they're breaking up. The truth is, Sonali's parents don't get along, and it looks like they might be separating.

Sonali's little brother, Ronak, is not taking the news well, constantly crying. Sonali would never do that. It's embarrassing to let out so many feelings, to show the world how not okay you are. But then something strange happens, something magical, maybe. When Sonali gets upset during a field trip, she can't bury her feelings like usual—instead, she suddenly bursts into a Bollywood song-and-dance routine about why she's upset!

The next morning, much to her dismay, Sonali's reality has shifted. Things seem brighter, almost too bright. Her parents have had Bollywood makeovers. Her friends are also breaking out into song and dance. And somehow, everyone is acting as if this is totally normal.

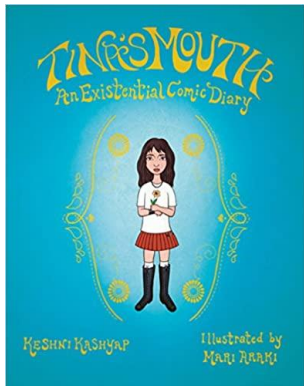
Sonali knows something has gone wrong, and she suspects it has something to do with her own mismanaged emotions. Can she figure it out before it's too late?



That's Why We Don't Eat Animals: A Book About Vegans, Vegetarians, and All Living Things

Written and Illustrated by Ruby Roth
Recommended Age: 2 to 8 years
Picture Book

That's Why We Don't Eat Animals uses colorful artwork and lively text to introduce vegetarianism and veganism to early readers (ages six to ten). Written and illustrated by Ruby Roth, the book features an endearing animal cast of pigs, turkeys, cows, quail, turtles, and dolphins. These creatures are shown in both their natural state—rooting around, bonding, nuzzling, cuddling, grooming one another, and charming each other with their family instincts and rituals—and in the terrible conditions of the factory farm. The book also describes the negative effects eating meat has on the environment. A separate section entitled “What Else Can We Do?” suggests ways children can learn more about the vegetarian and vegan lifestyles, such as: “Celebrate Thanksgiving with a vegan feast” or “Buy clothes, shoes, belts, and bags that are not made from leather or other animal skins or fur.” This compassionate, informative book offers both an entertaining read and a resource to inspire parents and children to talk about a timely, increasingly important subject.



Tina's Mouth: An Existential Comic Diary

By Keshni Kashyap, Illustrated by Mari Araki
Recommended Age: 14 to 17 years
Graphic Novel

Tina M., sophomore, is a wry observer of the cliques and mores of Yarborough Academy, and of the foibles of her Southern California intellectual Indian family. She's on a first-name basis with Jean-Paul Sartre, the result of an English honors class assignment to keep an “existential diary.”

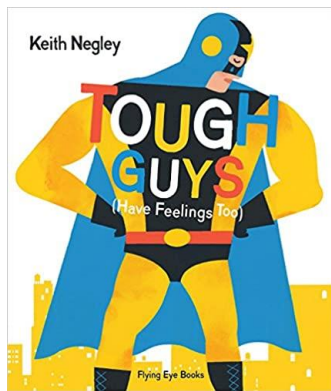
Keshni Kashyap's compulsively readable graphic novel packs in existential high school drama—from Tina getting dumped by her smart-girl ally to a kiss on the mouth (Tina's mouth, but not technically her first kiss) from a cute skateboarder, Neil Strummer. And it memorably answers the pressing question: Can an English honors assignment be one fifteen-year-old girl's path to enlightenment?



A Tinfoil Sky

By Cyndi Sand-Eveland
Recommended Age: 12 years & up
Middle Grade Novel

Mel and her mother, Cecily, know what it's like to live rough, whether it's on the streets or in the apartment of an abusive man. When Cecily announces that they've had enough and that they are going to go home to her mother's, Mel dreams of security, a comfortable bed, and a grandmother's love seem to be about to come true. But some mistakes cannot be easily forgiven or erased. Her grandmother is not what Mel expects, and though the local library offers sanctuary, a real home seems beyond her grasp. Mel's determination to rise above what fate has dealt is about to change that.



Tough Guys Have Feelings Too

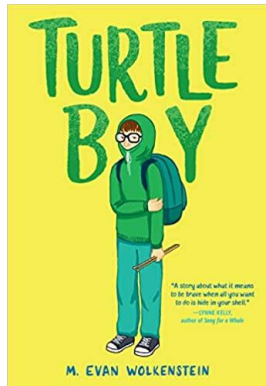
Written and Illustrated by Keith Negley

Recommended Age: 3 to 5 years

Picture Book

A boldly illustrated picture book read-aloud about how everyone gets sad—ninjas, wrestlers, knights, superheroes, everyone... even daddies have emotions!

Did you know wrestlers have feelings? And knights. Even superheroes and ninjas feel sad sometimes. In fact, everyone has feelings—especially dads who love their children!



Turtle Boy

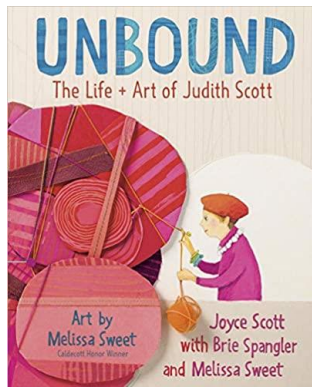
By M. Evan Wolkenstein

Recommended Age: 10 years & up

Middle Grade Novel

Seventh grade is not going well for Will Levine. Kids at school bully him because of his funny-looking chin. And for his bar mitzvah community service project, he's forced to go to the hospital to visit RJ, an older boy struggling with an incurable disease.

At first, the boys don't get along, but then RJ shares his bucket list with Will. Among the things he wants to do: ride a roller coaster; go to a school dance; swim in the ocean. To Will, happiness is hanging out in his room, alone, preferably with the turtles he collects. But as RJ's disease worsens, Will realizes he needs to tackle the bucket list on his new friend's behalf before it's too late. It seems like an impossible mission, way outside Will's comfort zone. But as he completes each task with RJ's guidance, Will learns that life is too short to live in a shell.



Unbound: The Life and Art of Judith Scott

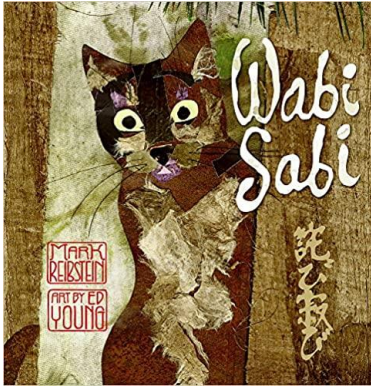
By Joyce Scott & Brie Spangler, Illustrated by Melissa Sweet

Recommended Age: 4 to 8 years

Picture Book Biography

Judith Scott was born with Down syndrome. She was deaf, and never learned to speak. She was also a talented artist. Judith was institutionalized until her sister Joyce reunited with her and enrolled her in an art class. Judith went on to become an artist of renown with her work displayed in museums and galleries around the world.

Unbound is inspiring and warm, showing us that we can soar beyond our perceived limitations and accomplish something extraordinary.



Wabi Sabi

By Mark Reibstein, Illustrated by Ed Young

Recommended Age: 4 to 8 years

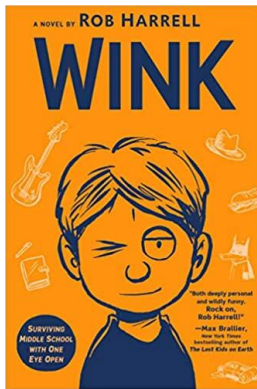
Picture Book

Wabi Sabi, a little cat in Kyoto, Japan, had never thought much about her name until friends visiting from another land asked her owner what it meant.

At last, the master says, "That's hard to explain." And That is all she says.

This unsatisfying answer sets Wabi Sabi on a journey to uncover the meaning of her name, and on the way discovers what wabi sabi is: a Japanese philosophy of seeing beauty in simplicity, the ordinary, and the imperfect.

Using spare text and haiku, Mark Reibstein weaves an extraordinary story about finding real beauty in unexpected places.



Wink

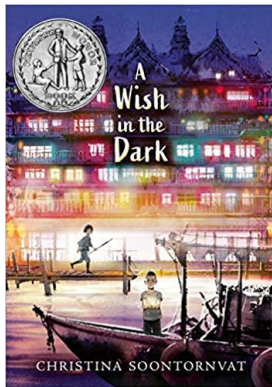
By Rob Harrell

Recommended Age: 9 to 12 years

Middle Grade Novel

Ross Maloy just wants to be a normal seventh grader. He doesn't want to lose his hair, or wear a weird hat, or deal with the disappearing friends who don't know what to say to "the cancer kid." But with his recent diagnosis of a rare eye cancer, blending in is off the table.

Based on Rob Harrell's real-life experience, and packed with comic panels and spot art, this incredibly personal and poignant novel is an unforgettable, heartbreaking, hilarious, and uplifting story of survival and finding the music, magic, and laughter in life's weirdness.



A Wish in the Dark

By Christina Soontornvat

Recommended Age: 8 to 12 years

Middle Grade Novel

All light in Chattana is created by one man — the Governor, who appeared after the Great Fire to bring peace and order to the city. For Pong, who was born in Namwon Prison, the magical lights represent freedom, and he dreams of the day he will be able to walk among them. But when Pong escapes from prison, he realizes that the world outside is no fairer than the one behind bars. The wealthy dine and dance under bright orb light, while the poor toil away in darkness. Worst of all, Pong's prison tattoo marks him as a fugitive who can never be truly free.

Nok, the prison warden's perfect daughter, is bent on tracking Pong down and restoring her family's good name. But as Nok hunts Pong through the alleys and canals of Chattana, she uncovers secrets that make her question the truths she has always held dear. Set in a Thai-inspired fantasy world, Christina Soontornvat's twist on Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* is a dazzling, fast-paced adventure that explores the difference between law and justice — and asks whether one child can shine a light in the dark.