

2011 Notable Books by American Library Association

Younger

All the Water in the World. By George Ella Lyon, Illus. by Katherine Tillotson, Atheneum Books for Young Readers. From deserts to the kitchen sink, the water cycle is lyrically yet economically described in Lyon's poem emphasizing the importance of water conservation. Katherine Tillotson's digital paintings splash, surge and drip off the page.

A Ball for Daisy. By Chris Raschka, Illus. by the author, Schwartz & Wade Books, A wordless tale of an irrepressible little dog whose most prized possession is accidentally destroyed. A buoyant tale of loss, recovery, and friendship. (2012 Caldecott Medal Book)

Blackout. By John Rocco, Illus. by the author. Disney/Hyperion Books. A summer power outage draws an urban family up to their building's roof and then down to the street for an impromptu block party. (A 2012 Caldecott Honor Book)

Bring on the Birds. By Susan Stockdale, Illus. by the author. Peachtree. Rhyming couplets and clear, identifiable illustrations remind readers that birds vary in many ways, but all have feathers and are hatched from eggs. Colorful acrylics help provide just the right of information for preschool ornithologists.

The Cazuela that the Farm Maiden Stirred. By Samantha R. Vamos, Illus. by Rafael López. Charlesbridge. Nothing is better than a delicious bowl of arroz con leche unless, of course, a host of farm animals have a hand in the preparation! (A 2012 Belpré Illustrator Honor Book)

Chirchir Is Singing. By Kelly Cunnane, Illus. by Jude Daly. Schwartz & Wade Books. In this cumulative story set in Kenya, Chirchir sings as she tries to help with family chores. Acrylic folk art highlights the activities of daily life in this rural setting.

Do You Know Which Ones Will Grow?, By Susan A. Shea, Illus. by Tom Slaughter. Blue Apple Books. This book playfully challenges children's concepts of the growth capacity of living vs. non-living things in a fun and engaging way.

Dot. By Patricia Intriago, Illus. by the author. Farrar Straus Giroux. To a child's delight, bright dots and brief rhyming verses cleverly demonstrate antonyms and synonyms in this clever picture book.

Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site. By Sherri Duskey Rinker, Illus. by Tom Lichtenheld. Chronicle Books. Truck-loving toddlers will be willingly tucked into bed along with the vehicles in this superbly constructed goodnight poem.

Grandpa Green. By Lane Smith, Illus. by the author. Roaring Brook Press. Elaborate topiary sculptures give visual form to memories in a wildly fanciful garden tended by a child and his beloved great-grandfather. (A 2012 Caldecott Honor Book)

Harry and Hopper. By Margaret Wild, Illus. by Freya Blackwood. Feiwel & Friends. A poignant depiction of grief and acceptance at the loss of a beloved pet is relayed in this quietly moving story whose illustrations add emotional depth.

I Broke My Trunk. By Mo Willems. Illus. by the author. Hyperion Books for Children. Piggie is very concerned about his best friend, Gerald the Elephant, who has broken his trunk, and Gerald tells him a long, rambling story about how it happened. (A 2012 Geisel Honor Book)

I Want My Hat Back. By Jon Klassen, Illus. by the author. Candlewick Press. After losing his hat, Bear politely and patiently questions his fellow forest dwellers as to the whereabouts of his "red pointy hat." (A 2012 Geisel Honor Book)

King Jack and the Dragon. By Peter Bently, Illus. by Helen Oxenbury. Dial Books for Young Readers. Enhanced by whimsical illustrations, this story of the wonders and terrors created by a child's imagination, shows the power of playtime and the magic of make-believe.

Little Treasures: Endearments from Around the World. By Jacqueline K. Ogburn. Illus. by Chris Raschka. Houghton Mifflin. Raschka's pictures give distinct personalities to the subjects of these endearments and the book is a reminder of how much children are loved in every language and culture. Translations and pronunciation guides are included.

Little White Rabbit. By Kevin Henkes, Illus. by the author. Greenwillow Books. Little white rabbit explores the springtime world wondering what it would be like to be different - green, tall, solid, or able to fly - but when he comes home he knows who loves him.

Me...Jane. By Patrick McDonnell, Illus. by the author. Little, Brown. Watching birds and squirrels in her yard, a young girl discovers the joy and wonder of nature. A glimpse of the childhood of renowned primatologist Jane Goodall. (A 2012 Caldecott Honor Book)

Mouse & Lion. By Rand Burkert, Illus. by Nancy Ekholm Burkert. di Capua/Scholastic. Mouse is the center of this retelling of a familiar Aesop's fable. Elegant illustrations place the story solidly in the natural world of Africa.

Naamah and the Ark at Night. By Susan Campbell Bartoletti, Illus. by Holly Meade. Candlewick Press. As the waters rage, this lullaby reveals Noah's wife as a nurturer of diverse creatures aboard the ark. Watercolor and collage illustrations amplify the text, a form of lyrical Arabic poetry, called ghazal.

A New Year's Reunion: A Chinese Story. By Yu Li-Qiong, Illus. by Zhu Cheng-Liang, Candlewick Press. Vibrant illustrations highlight a young girl's joy when her father makes his annual visit for Chinese New Year in this tender story.

Over and Under the Snow. By Kate Messner, Illus. by Christopher Silas Neal. Chronicle Books. While skiing cross-country with her father, a girl envisions the "secret kingdom" under the snow, where small forest animals shelter in winter. Neal's bright, snowy landscapes contrast with his depictions of shadowed, subterranean nests.

Prudence Wants a Pet. By Cathleen Daly, Illus. by Stephen Michael King. Roaring Brook Press. In this quietly humorous picture book illustrated in soft colors, Prudence tries out a branch, a twig, a shoe, her little brother, a tire, and sea buddies until her parents finally give her a kitten as a pet.

See Me Run. By Paul Meisel, Illus. by the author. Holiday House. Dogs and more dogs are everywhere: running, sliding, jumping, splashing, and having fun. (A 2012 Geisel Honor Book)

Should I Share My Ice Cream? By Mo Willems, Illus. by the author. Hyperion Books for Children. A common human problem is posed and solved with Willems' minimal illustration and graceful humor.

Stars. By Mary Lyn Ray, Illus. by Marla Frazee. Beach Lane Books. A duet of spare, poetic observations and ethereal illustrations explore the realities and possibilities of many kinds of stars, embracing the immediacy of a child's experiences. A great read aloud.

Tales for Very Picky Eaters. By Josh Schneider, Illus. by the author, Clarion Books. Five chapters recount James' refusal to eat yet another disgusting, smelly, repulsive, lumpy, or slimy food. (2012 Geisel Medal Book)

Tell Me the Day Backwards. By Albert Lamb, Illus. by David McPhail, Candlewick Press. Mama bear and child reflect on the day, recounting its events in reverse order. Gentle and reassuring, this book wonderfully illustrates a sometimes difficult concept: the flow of time.

Ten Little Caterpillars. By Bill Martin, Jr., Illus. by Lois Ehlert. Beach Lane Books. Ten different caterpillars inch their ways across vibrantly-illustrated environs in this newly-illustrated, rhyming story. Supplemental facts widen the book's appeal and usefulness. Ehlert's watercolor collages are remarkably entomologically accurate.

These Hands. By Margaret H. Mason, Illus. by Floyd Cooper. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Both an affirmation of a nurturing relationship between grandfather and grandson and an explanation of one reason labor unions fought for workers' rights, the brief text and warm illustrations tell an uplifting American story.

Tia Isa Wants a Car. By Meg Medina, Illus. by Claudio Muñoz. Candlewick Press. Using a cheerful positive tone, Medina depicts a warm relationship between Tia Isa and her niece and shows the strength of community as a life-long dream is realized.

Where's Walrus? By Stephen Savage, Illus. by the author. Scholastic. Walrus escapes from the zoo and cleverly disguises himself around the city; the zookeeper and the children reading the book search for him on each bold, bright page of this wordless book.

Who Has What?: All About Girls' Bodies and Boys' Bodies. By Robie H. Harris, Illus. by Nadine Bernard Westcott. Candlewick Press. In a cheerful, easy tone, Harris explains who's got what body parts, their similarities of differences. Girls, boys and adults of many ethnicities – even animals – are included in the loose-lined illustrations depicting the “bare” facts.

Middle

America is Under Attack: September 11, 2001: The Day the Towers Fell. By Don Brown, Illus. by the author. Roaring Brook Press. A straightforward account of the September 11th tragedy, Brown's restrained watercolors and sensitive text focuses on small stories of those who were in the Towers and the people who responded to the disaster.

Balloons over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade. By Melissa Sweet, Illus. by the author. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children. This story of Tony Sarg, the artistic inventor who conceived the huge balloons that float through New York City each Thanksgiving, joyously celebrates his life's creative process. (2012 Sibert Medal Book)

Breaking Stalin's Nose. By Eugene Yelchin, Illus. by the author, Henry Holt. On the eve of his induction into the Young Pioneers, Sasha's world is overturned when his father is arrested by Stalin's guard. (A 2012 Newbery Honor Book)

The Cheshire Cheese Cat: A Dickens of a Tale. By Carmen Agra Deedy and Randall Wright, Illus. by Barry Moser. Peachtree Publishers. Alley-cat Skilley finds a perfect home, gets help from a friend to return an injured raven to the Tower of London and saves all the Cheshire Cheese Inn mice from the evil Pinch.

Diego Rivera: His World and Ours. By Duncan Tonatiuh, Illus. by the author, Abrams Books for Young Readers The accomplishments of Mexican painter, activist, and muralist Diego Rivera are highlighted in stylized illustrations. (2012 Belpré Illustrator Medal Book)

Dream Something Big: The Story of the Watts Towers. By Dianna Hutts Aston, Illus. by Susan L. Roth. Dial Books for Young Readers. The human desire to make a mark is celebrated in this fictionalized account of Simon Rodia's process in building the Watts Towers – a singular, eccentric, artistic creation now recognized as a National Landmark.

E-mergency! By Tom Lichtenheld, Illus. by Ezra Fields-Meyer. Chronicle Books. When the letter 'E' falls down the stairs and hurts her leg, the rest of the alphabet must do the best it can to limp along without its most-used letter. Puns aplenty pack every page.

Emma Dilemma: Big Sister Poems. By Kristine O'Connell George, Illus. by Nancy Carpenter. Clarion Books. Sisterhood is complicated: partly embarrassing, partly affectionate, partly competitive, partly supportive, partly confining, partly empowering. The many facets of the relationship are deftly described by George's poems and Carpenter's pen and ink drawings.

The Great Migration: Journey to the North. By Eloise Greenfield, Illus. by Jan Spivey Gilchrist. HarperCollins Children's Books/Amistad. Muted mixed media illustrations set the tone for somber yet hopeful free verse honoring the author's family as they journeyed north from the Jim Crow South. A haunting view of a pivotal moment in U.S. history. (A 2012 Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book)

Inside Out and Back Again. By Thanhha Lai. HarperCollins. Hà and her family flee war-torn Vietnam for the American South. In spare, vivid verse, she chronicles her struggle to find her place in a new world. (A 2012 Newbery Honor Book)

Junonia. By Kevin Henkes. Greenwillow Books. Alice knows just how her vacation on Sanibel Island should be: the same as the previous nine, except that this year she hopes to find a rare junonia shell. Alice's tenth birthday, however, brings unexpected changes.

Lemonade, and Other Poems Squeezed from a Single Word. By Bob Raczka, Illus. by Nancy Doniger. Roaring Brook Press. Think of a word, then compose a poem using only the letters in that word. Amusing challenges for poet and reader alike, these poem-puzzles are illustrated with similarly playful brush-paintings. Great fun for classroom or budding poets.

The Lily Pond. By Annika Thor. Trans. by Linda Schenck. Delacorte Press. This sequel to “A Faraway Island” continues the story of thirteen-year-old Stephanie Steiner, a Jewish refugee whose parents have sent her from Nazi-occupied Vienna to Sweden. (2012 Batchelder Honor Book)

The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families. By Susan L. Roth and Cindy Trumbore, Illus. by Susan L. Roth. Lee & Low Books. Through a “This is the House That Jack Built” formula, the story of an ecological and environmental triumph is told so that even very young children can understand the interrelationships between plants, animals and people.

Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match /Marisol McDonald no combina. By Monica Brown, Illus. by Sara Palacios. Children's Book Press, an imprint of Lee and Low Books. Bright, vivacious Marisol, a Peruvian-Scottish-American girl, loves peanut butter and jelly burritos and speaks both English and Spanish, but her teacher and classmates do not appreciate Marisol's mashing of cultures. (A 2012 Belpré Illustrator Honor Book)

Maximilian and the Mystery of the Guardian Angel: A Bilingual Lucha Libre Thriller. By Xavier Garza. Cinco Puntos Press. Eleven-year-old Max discovers that his favorite Lucha Libre wrestler is coming to town and might have a strange connection with his own family. (A 2012 Belpré Author Honor Book)

Migrant. By Maxine Trottier, Illus. by Isabelle Arsenault. Groundwood Books. This unique story about a group of migrant workers – Mennonites – is told through the eyes of young Anna, who reflects upon their peripatetic life and the hardships it creates.

Night Flight: Amelia Earhart Crosses the Atlantic. By Robert Burleigh, Illus. by Wendell Minor, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. Sit with Amelia Earhart in her red Vega as she flies across the Atlantic and startles a farmer in Northern Ireland by landing in his field.

No Ordinary Day. By Deborah Ellis. Groundwood Books. Valli, a resourceful homeless nine-year-old, learns she has leprosy. An encounter with a kind doctor gives her the chance to heal and find a home. Illuminates harsh realities in contemporary India.

Nursery Rhyme Comics: 50 Timeless Rhymes from 50 Celebrated Cartoonists. Ed. by Chris Duffy, Illus. by various artists. First Second. A lively compilation of 50 nursery rhymes interpreted and illustrated in diverse and distinctive styles by a different cartoonist or graphic artists. The introduction by Leonard Marcus puts it all in focus.

Soldier Bear. By Bibi Dumon Tak, Illus. by Philip Hopman. Trans. by Laura Watkinson. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers. Based on a true story and set during World War II, the novel follows the journey of refugee Polish soldiers and the mischievous young bear they acquire in the Iranian desert. (2012 Batchelder Award Book)

The Third Gift. By Linda Sue Park, Illus. by Bagram Ibatoulline. Clarion Books. Ibatoulline's sumptuous, highly finished gouaches invite the reader into a distant time and landscape where a young Arab boy and his father harvest myrrh for three mysterious strangers.

Thunder Birds: Nature's Flying Predators. By Jim Arnosky, Illus. by the author. Sterling. Arnosky describes and illustrates the qualities of magnificent raptors. Distinctive acrylic and chalk paintings depict birds gazing at readers from their natural environments. Four large fold out pages shows some birds in actual size.

Treasury of Greek Mythology: Classic Stories of Gods, Goddesses, Heroes & Monsters. By Donna Jo Napoli, Illus. by Christina Balit. National Geographic Society. From the chaos that spawned Gaia to the horrors of the Trojan War, this is the most comprehensive and lavishly illustrated compendium of Greek mythology since the D'Aulaires' offering. Timeline, cast of characters, map appended.

The Trouble with May Amelia. By Jennifer L. Holm. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. May Amelia is always in trouble but never more than when she translates an offer from a con man for her father. A companion to *My Only May Amelia*, it stands sturdily on its own.

Underground. By Shane Evans, Illus. by Shane Evans. Roaring Brook Press. Spare text describes a long dangerous night time journey on the Underground Railroad. The striking illustrations with their dark palette burst into light as the travelers reach freedom. (The 2012 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Medal Book)

The Unforgotten Coat. By Frank Cottrell Boyce, Illus. by Carl Hunter, and Clare Heney. Candlewick Press. Julie recalls her sixth year classmates Chingis and Nergui, two Mongolian brothers, their strange polaroid photographs, sketchy descriptions of Mongolia, and their very real fear of demons in this offbeat, haunting story.

The Watcher: Jane Goodall's Life with the Chimps. By Jeanette Winter, Illus. by Jeanette Winter. Schwartz & Wade Books. Winter presents inquisitive and independent Goodall from girlhood to the Gombe Stream and beyond in her search to understand chimpanzees. Stylized acrylics show scientist and animals in the abundant foliage of Africa.

Wonderstruck. By Brian Selznick, Illus. by the author. Scholastic. Two parallel stories set 50 years apart converge in this textual and visual story of adventurous Ben and Rose as it explores topics of deafness, silence, wolves, and museums. (A 2012 Schneider Family Award Book)

Won-Ton: A Cat Tale Told in Haiku. By Lee Wardlaw, Illus. by Eugene Yelchin. Henry Holt. From animal shelter cage to a loving home, Won Ton's experience is told from his point of view in senryu, a form of Japanese poetry similar to Haiku.

Young Fredle. By Cynthia Voigt, Illus. by Louise Yates. Alfred A. Knopf. Exiled from his home in the pantry, Fredle, a mouse with a sweet tooth and unusual curiosity, discovers the wonders and dangers of the outside world. He learns to question the rules and returns home a changed mouse.

Zita the Spacegirl. By Ben Hatke, Illus. by the author. First Second. When a little red button crashes to earth any self-respecting graphic novel character would push it. When Joseph is whisked through an inter-dimensional portal to an alien planet, Zita follows to rescue him.

Older

Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart. By Candace Fleming. Schwartz & Wade Books. In her clear, readable style, Fleming shows how Earhart captured the public imagination. Chapters of background information alternate with the chilling account of her final flight. Enhanced with maps, archival documents, news photos, and other contemporary sources.

Anya's Ghost. By Vera Brosgol. First Second. This graphic novel tells the story of Anya, a Russian immigrant, whose lack of self-esteem changes when her life is almost taken over by a determined ghost.

Between Shades of Gray. By Ruta Sepetys. Philomel Books. Stalin's deportation and imprisonment of Lithuanian families in Siberia is brought to vivid life in Sepetys' searing novel, narrated by Lina, a 15-year-old who writes, "They took me in my nightgown." (A YALSA Morris Award Finalist)

Billions of Years, Amazing Changes: The Story of Evolution. By Laurence Pringle, Illus. by Steve Jenkins. Boyds Mills Press. Pringle looks at the evidence from geology, biology, botany, and scientific reason to explain evolution. Readable text, pertinent illustrations matter of factly clarify concepts and the meaning of theory.

Black & White: The Confrontation between Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth and Eugene 'Bull' Connor. By Larry Dane Brimner. Calkins Creek. This powerful examination of a crucial dichotomy in the civil rights movement focuses on two polar opposites—one man committed to ending segregation, and one just as determined to see it maintained. (A 2012 Sibert Honor Book)

Blizzard of Glass: The Halifax Explosion of 1917. By Sally M. Walker. Henry Holt. Clear and compelling description and analysis of scientific evidence and historic events brings this little-known tragedy to life, a history made personal by its focus on five families, some who survived, some who perished.

Bluefish. By Pat Schmatz. Candlewick Press. The significance of reading is personified by two eighth graders, functionally illiterate Travis and feisty, starved-for-affection Velveeta, who come together in a tenuous, prickly relationship.

Bootleg: Murder, Moonshine, and the Lawless Years of Prohibition. By Karen Blumenthal. Roaring Brook Press. Lively prose and interesting anecdotes make the history of Prohibition accessible while the examination of unintended consequences make this chronicle relevant to today's political world. (A 2012 YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Finalist)

Dead End in Norvelt. By Jack Gantos. Farrar Straus Giroux. An achingly funny romp through a dying New Deal town. While mopping up epic nose bleeds, Jack narrates this screw-ball mystery in an endearing and believable voice. (2012 Newbery Medal Book)

Drawing from Memory. By Allen Say, Illus. by the author. Scholastic Press. Say, an esteemed children's book creator, engagingly relays his early training, including the influences of his family and his artistic sensei. (A 2012 Sibert Honor Book)

The Elephant Scientist. By Caitlin O'Connell and Donna M. Jackson, Illus. by Caitlin O'Connell and Timothy Rodwell. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children. Power-packed photos and prose transport

readers to the dusty world of African elephants and a woman who studies them. (A 2012 Sibert Honor Book)

The Fingertips of Duncan Dorfman. By Meg Wolitzer. Dutton Childrens Books. Three 12-year-olds from different parts of the country participate in the national Youth Scrabble Tournament in Florida. Their discoveries about themselves, their friends and families turn out to be more important than winning in this perceptive story.

Flyaway. By Lucy Christopher. Chicken House. While Isla's father is in the hospital, she befriends another patient, Harry. In this touching story, Isla tries to help Harry, her father and a swan, all of whom are struggling to survive.

Hidden. By Helen Frost. Farrar Straus Giroux. Six years have passed since Darra's father stole a car in which Wren was hiding. Now 14, Darra and Wren, once again cross paths. A suspenseful verse novel, told in two distinct voices.

The House Baba Built: An Artist's Childhood in China. By Ed Young and Libby Koponen, Illus. by Ed Young. Little, Brown. With multimedia scrapbook images that intrigue, astonish, and surprise, Ed Young recalls his childhood in war-torn Shanghai, introduces his extended family, and describes their life in the house his father designed.

How They Croaked: The Awful Ends of the Awfully Famous. By Georgia Bragg, Illus. by Kevin O'Malley. Walker & Co. A wildly humorous collective biography featuring horrifying medical treatments and deaths of nineteen famous men and women, this surprisingly heavily researched compendium is terrific book bait for reluctant readers.

Hurricane Dancers: The First Caribbean Pirate Shipwreck. By Margarita Engle. Henry Holt. This historical novel in verse is the story of Quebrado, son of a Taíno Indian mother and a Spanish father, who is kidnapped in 1510 from his island village (present-day Cuba) and enslaved on a pirate's ship. (A 2012 Belpré Author Honor Book)

Into the Unknown: How Great Explorers Found Their Way by Land, Sea, and Air. By Stuart Ross, Illus. by Stephen Biesty. Candlewick Press. How did those great explorers travel? What did they wear? Where did they pee? And what did they find on their journeys? Much is revealed in the text and unfolding cross-sections of this fascinating volume.

Jefferson's Sons: A Founding Father's Secret Children. By Kimberly Brubaker Bradley. Dial Books for Young Readers. Told from the point of view of three young slaves, two of them fathered by Thomas

Jefferson, this well-researched and moving novel provides insight into their lives as it raises important and difficult questions.

Lost & Found. By Shaun Tan, Illus. by the author. Arthur A. Levine Books. By turns mysterious, dreamlike, nightmarish, goofily endearing, and spookily surreal, these stories by Shaun Tan seemingly transport us to three very different worlds. Each page is a work of art.

A Monster Calls: A Novel. By Patrick Ness. Candlewick Press. Thirteen-year-old Conor deals with a monster who tells him three stories in exchange for facing his greatest fear.

Music Was It: Young Leonard Bernstein. By Susan Goldman Rubin. Charlesbridge. This exemplary, inspiring biography chronicles the life of Leonard Bernstein from early childhood to his triumphant debut at age twenty-five, as conductor of the New York Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall. Engaging social history with appeal beyond music students. (A 2012 YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Finalist)

Okay for Now. By Gary D. Schmidt. Clarion Books. Unable to read and abused by his father, 13-year-old Doug befriends spunky Lili and a sensitive librarian who shows him how to draw Audubon's birds. Both make a difference in his previously limited world.

Queen of Hearts. By Martha Brooks. Farrar Straus Giroux. In 1941 Manitoba, Marie-Claire tells the moving story of her coming-of-age as a 16-year-old in a tuberculosis sanitorium.

Raggin', Jazzin', Rockin': A History of American Musical Instrument Makers. By Susan VanHecke. Boyds Mills Press. Steinway on pianos, Zildjian on cymbals, Martin and Fender on guitars...we meet these people and their iconic instruments in this intriguing introduction. Generously illustrated with photographs of the instruments, musicians, and more.

The Scorpio Races. By Maggie Stiefvater. Scholastic Press. Deadly horses emerge from the sea and collide with island inhabitants in a bloody annual race for prize money and the fulfillment of dreams. Rich language portrays characters, action, and setting leading to an intoxicating climax. (A 2012 YALSA Printz Honor Book)

Sita's Ramayana. By Samhita Arni, Illus. by Moyna Chitrakar. Groundwood/House of Anansi. Using a graphic novel format, this powerful saga of Rama is told from his abducted and mistrusted wife Sita's point of view.

Space, Stars, and the Beginning of Time: What the Hubble Telescope Saw. By Elaine Scott. Clarion Books. An intriguing look at the creation and scientific revelations of the Hubble telescope. Complex science, clearly explained and beautifully illustrated with Hubble images

Stones for My Father. By Trilby Kent. Tundra Books. In evocative prose, Kent creates a compelling survival story of young Corlie Roux, a Boer girl in South Africa during the Anglo-Boer War at the turn of the last century.

Tall Story. By Candy Gourlay. David Fickling Books/Random House Children's Books. Andi's half brother is finally joining the family from the Philippines. Eight feet tall, it's obvious that Bernardo is going to have trouble fitting in. A poignant and humorous novel.

Terezin: Voices from the Holocaust. By Ruth Thomson. Candlewick Press. Secret diary entries, excerpts from memoirs, and inmate artwork illuminate the dark story of the Nazi's transit camp Terezin. Young readers will appreciate the oversized, magazine type layout.

Under the Mesquite. By Guadalupe Garcia McCall. Lee & Low Books. The story of fourteen-year-old Lupita, growing up in a bicultural community in Texas and dealing with her mother's terminal illness, is told in emotionally riveting free verse. (2012 Belpré Author Medal Book and a YALSA Morris Award Finalist)

Witches! The Absolutely True Tale of Disaster in Salem. By Rosalyn Schanzer, Illus. by the author. National Geographic Society. Readers will be stunned by the research and accusations in this pivotal drama of American history. This work of art presents an account of our past and asks questions of our future. (A 2012 Sibert Honor Book)

All Ages

Can We Save the Tiger?, By Martin Jenkins, Illus. by Vicky White. Candlewick Press. White's cover illustration of a regal tiger pulls readers into a balanced discussion of human interaction with nature and how we affect endangered species. Handsome pencil illustrations make readers care about creatures large and small.

Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans. By Kadir Nelson, Illus. by the author. Balzer + Bray. In just 100 pages, Nelson's narrator tells the story of American history through the eyes of African-Americans. Forty-six luminous oil paintings portray iconic and ordinary images and make the history accessible for younger students; older students will find it equally intriguing. (The 2012 Coretta Scott King Author Medal Book and Illustrator Honor Book)

If Rocks Could Sing: A Discovered Alphabet. By Leslie McGuirk, Illus. by the author. Tricycle Press. Children and teachers will be inspired by this quirky concept book that uses shaped rocks as letters and objects. An alphabet book like no other.

Never Forgotten. By Patricia McKissack, Illus. by Leo and Diane Dillon. Schwartz & Wade Books. A boy captured by slave traders in 18th Century Africa is brought to the Americas. This verse novel answers the question, "Were we missed?" asked by the descendants of slaves stolen from Africa. (A 2012 Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book)

Press Here. By Hervé Tullet, Illus. by the author. Trans. by Christopher Franceschelli. Handprint Books/Chronicle. A whimsical, interactive picture book that draws readers through its pages by having them tap, clap, and follow other simple but enticing instructions.

Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature. By Joyce Sidman, Illus. by Beth Krommes. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. A poem about spirals in nature invites close contemplation of the versatile, expansive shape beautifully portrayed from simple snail to coiled snake, or snuggling woodchuck to swimming nautilus in Krommes' scratchboard illustrations.

Young Adult

The Girl of Fire and Thorns. Carson, Rae. HarperCollins Publishers/Greenwillow Books. A fearful sixteen-year-old princess discovers her heroic destiny after being married off to the king of a neighboring country in turmoil and pursued by enemies seething with dark magic.

Leverage. Cohen, Joshua C. Penguin Group USA/Dutton Juvenile. High school sophomore Danny excels at gymnastics but is bullied, like the rest of the gymnasts, by members of the football team, until an emotionally and physically scarred new student joins the football team and forms an unlikely friendship with Danny.

Everybody Sees the Ants. King, A.S. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers. Overburdened by his parents' bickering and a bully's attacks, fifteen-year-old Lucky Linderman begins dreaming of being

with his grandfather, who went missing during the Vietnam War, but during a visit to Arizona, his aunt and uncle and their beautiful neighbor, Ginny, help him find a new perspective.

Under the Mesquite. Lee & Low Books, McCall, Guadalupe Garcia. As the oldest of eight siblings, Lupita is used to taking the lead--and staying busy behind the scenes to help keep everyone together. But when she discovers Mami has been diagnosed with cancer, Lupita is terrified by the possibility of losing her mother, the anchor of her close-knit Mexican American family. Suddenly Lupita must face a whole new set of challenges, with new roles to play, and no one is handing her the script.

Shine. Myracle, Lauren. Abrams/Amulet Books. When her best friend falls victim to a vicious hate crime, sixteen-year-old Cat sets out to discover the culprits in her small North Carolina town.

A Monster Calls. Ness, Patrick. Illus by Jim Kay. Candlewick Press. Thirteen-year-old Conor awakens one night to find a monster outside his bedroom window, but not the one from the recurring nightmare that began when his mother became ill--an ancient, wild creature that wants him to face truth and loss.

Between Shades of Gray. Sepetys, Ruta/Penguin Group/Philomel Books. In 1941, fifteen-year-old Lina, her mother, and brother are pulled from their Lithuanian home by Soviet guards and sent to Siberia, where her father is sentenced to death in a prison camp while she fights for her life, vowing to honor her family and the thousands like hers by burying her story in a jar on Lithuanian soil. Based on the author's family, includes a historical note.

The Scorpio Races. Stiefvater, Maggie. Scholastic Incorporated/Scholastic Press. Nineteen-year-old returning champion Sean Kendrick competes against Puck Connolly, the first girl ever to ride in the annual Scorpio Races, both trying to keep hold of their dangerous water horses long enough to make it to the finish line.

Daughter of Smoke and Bone. Taylor, Laini. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

Seventeen-year-old Karou, a lovely, enigmatic art student in a Prague boarding school, carries a sketchbook of hideous, frightening monsters--the chimaerae who form the only family she has ever known.

How to Save a Life. Zarr, Sara. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers. Told from their own viewpoints, seventeen-year-old Jill, in grief over the loss of her father, and Mandy, nearly nineteen, are thrown together when Jill's mother agrees to adopt Mandy's unborn child but nothing turns out as they had anticipated.