

Best New Children's Books of 2016



NLA/NSLA Conference

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presented by Sally Snyder
Nebraska Library Commission



Picture Books

Alexie, Sherman ***THUNDER BOY JR.***

Illus. by Yuyi Morales unp. Little, Brown & Co. 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-316-01372-7

Thunder Boy does not like his name, his dad is called Big Thunder which makes him Little Thunder. That sounds like a burb or fart. He talks about all the other names he could have based on things he likes to do. He is surprised and thrilled when his father tells him his new name.

Austrian, J. J. ***WORM LOVES WORM***

Illus. by Mike Curato unp. Balzer + Bray 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-238633-5

Two worms are in love and decide to marry. The beetle and other insects have plenty of requirements they need to meet before it can be done: rings, a cake, a band... and which is the bride and which is the groom? They both are. It is unfortunate that there is no note at the back of the book explaining that many species of worms can be male or female, whichever is needed at the time.

Barton, Chris ***MIGHTY TRUCK***

Illus. by Troy Cummings unp. HarperCollins 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-234478-6

Clarence is an ordinary truck who is often dirty. One day the boss send him to the truck wash and lightning strikes while he is in there. He has become Mighty Truck, who saves the day three times before he lands in a dirt pile and looks like himself again.

Borando, Silvia ***NOW YOU SEE ME, NOW YOU DON'T***

Unp. Candlewick Press 2016 \$14.00 ISBN 978-0-7636-8782-3

A simple look at colors and concepts. The first two-page spread shows 11 brightly colored animals (from an elephant to a small bird) on a white background. The next two-page spread has a bright orange background and all you can see of the hen are her eyes and comb. The chameleon's eyes are all that show too, after the first page. Different colored backgrounds throughout the book hide different animals (except for the eyes), can the kids remember who is missing? The back endpapers have a black background and only eyes are showing there. Fun idea!

Charara, Hayan ***THE THREE LUCYS***

Illus. by Sara Kahn unp. Lee & Low 2016 \$18.95 ISBN 978-1-60060-998-5

A look at war from a child's viewpoint. This story takes place during The July War between Lebanon and Israel in 2006. A boy and his family travel to the city for the weekend, leaving his three cats at home, with food and water. It isn't until a month later they feel safe returning due to the war. One of the Lucys is gone and the boy grieves for her and hopes for a peaceful future. Includes an Author's Note.

Dolan, Elys ***THE MYSTERY OF THE HAUNTED FARM***

Unp. Nosy Crow (Candlewick Press) 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-8658-1

(A larger format book) The author of *Weasels* bring us another silly story, this time Farmer Greg hires Ghost-Hunters to solve the mystery of spooky noises, zombie ducks, and other scary things. The Three Pigs have trouble because they see and hear scary things but their "Phantom Finder 5000" continues to register zero. What is going on? A good Halloween title.

Hall, Michael ***FRANKENCRAYON***

Unp. Greenwillow Books (HarperCollins) 2016 \$ 17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-225211-1

The crayons are stunned to learn (on the front flap of the cover) that their book has been canceled. They do notice "someone" turning the pages so they are hopeful, then the pencil writes to the reader about why it was canceled. Clever and fun, the crayons have lovely costumes... but they forgot to tell the three crayons playing Frankencrayon that the book was canceled. Another sure hit from the author.

Hall, Michael ***WONDERFALL***

Unp. Greenwillow Books (HarperCollins) 2016 \$ 17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-238298-6

The tree the squirrels play in starts out with all green leaves but as the pages are turned the leaves change color. Told by the tree in brief free verse poems, this is a celebration of fall, and of combined words, like the title, each one using "fall" for the second part of the word. Five pages at the back of the book give more information about the animals the readers encounter (and the tree).

Harper, Charise Mericle ***A BIG SURPRISE FOR LITTLE CARD***

Illus. by Anna Raff unp. Candlewick Press 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7485-4

Little Card was trained to be a birthday card, but learns there was a mix-up and now he is to be delivered to a library – where he runs in the door and shouts "Happy Birthday!" Little Card soon learns his new duties and becomes the library card for a girl. Imagine his glee when he learns that while birthdays only happen once a year a library card can be used almost every day! Fun to see the perspective of the card.

Henkes, Kevin ***WHEN SPRING COMES***

Illus. by Laura Dronzek unp. Greenwillow Bks (HarperCollins) 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-233139-7

Henkes gives us the joy of arriving spring with alliteration and celebration, telling the reader “if you just wait” there will soon be flowers and green everywhere. A bunny nibbling in a garden, kittens playing outside, all part of the wonderful, changing spring.

Jackson, Richard ***IN PLAIN SIGHT***

Illus. by Jerry Pinkney unpub. Roaring Brook Press 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-62672-255-2

Every day Sophie and Grandpa play a game when she gets home from school. Grandpa will say he had something (the item changes) but now it is gone, and Sophie must find it for him. The reader can look for it too. A gentle, loving story.

Jarvis ***ALAN’S BIG, SCARY TEETH***

unpub. Candlewick Press 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-8120-3

Alan was a big, scary alligator who loved scaring the other animals with his big, scary teeth. He would snap his teeth, growl, and say, “Fear my razor-sharp teeth!” But one day Barry, a beaver, found a set of sharp, scary false teeth – and Alan’s secret was out. He wasn’t scary at all without his teeth, so he went into the jungle and cried. The next day the other animals had an idea of how they all could live together peacefully – and Alan could still be scary – telling scary stories!

Jenkins, Emily ***TIGER AND BADGER***

Illus. by Marie-Louise Gay unpub. Candlewick Press 2016 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6604-0

Tiger and Badger are best friends and love to play together. Sometimes, though, they have a disagreement – over the orange slices or who gets to sit in the chair – until they are both so mad they “yell and yell.” “Then Tiger does his funny face.” And soon all is well again. Conveys the ups and downs of friendship (as many books have done before) and as the listeners will recognize, with appealing characters and upbeat illustrations.

John, Jory ***QUIT CALLING ME A MONSTER!***

Illus. By Bob Shea unpub. Random House 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-385-38990-7

This creature does not like being called a monster! His name is Floyd Peterson. He doesn’t call you “a little meat snack” after all. A clever look at the monster side of things (he does finally admit he is a monster) but he does not plan to hurt you. Clever ending: What is in your closet? “Don’t worry, it’s just Floyd Peterson.” Perspective, and thinking about how others feel.

Klassen, Jon ***WE FOUND A HAT***

Unpub. Candlewick Press 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-5600-3

As it says on the front flap, “Two turtles have found a hat. The hat looks good on both of them. But there are two turtles. And there is only one hat.”

Kleber, Dori ***MORE-IGAMI***

Illus. by G. Brain Wilson unp. Candlewick Press 2016 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6819-8

Joey loves things that fold, like maps and his foldaway bed. One day Mrs. Takimoto, another student's mother, came to class and folded an origami crane. She told him he must practice and practice to become an origami master. He began to fold everything everywhere and didn't give up even though his efforts were wrinkly and uneven. Then his mother told him he had to stop. Next door Mr. Lopez found out why he was sad and offered to have Joey fold the napkins for the restaurant. He was a hit!

Kooser, Ted ***THE BELL IN THE BRIDGE***

Illus. by Barry Root unp. Candlewick Press 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6481-7

Charlie visits his grandparents on their farm each summer, but the two weeks there are pretty dull. He usually went to the nearby stream and poked in the mud, check out a turtle, or catch some tadpoles. He would also go to the bridge and drop rocks into the water. But one day he hit the metal bridge with a rock and it made a bonging sound. Then he heard the echo, then another bong. Was there another boy ringing another bridge? Finding connections to others, discovering what is in your surroundings, and entertaining oneself.

Kuipers, Alice ***VIOLET AND VICTOR WRITE THE MOST FABULOUS FAIRY TALE***

Illus. by Bethanie Deeney Murguia unp. Little Brown 2016 \$17.00 ISBN 978-0-316-21202-1

Violet is writing a fairy tale when her twin brother begins to interject facts (he is all about science, not fantasy and is currently into Australian animals). Violet was born in a hospital, not a castle. It takes a bit of time but they end up with a story that is acceptable to both -- flying away on a cockatoo since dragons are not real. Violet's contributions are on lavender paper while Victor's are on orange to help the reader distinguish the two.

Lies, Brian ***GATOR DAD***

Unp. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-544-53433-9

Gator Dad and his three youngsters pack a lot into a day. Up early for breakfast, take care of some errands, then off to the wild (the park). Dad is involved with and obviously loves his children. A wonderful day with dad, fun, and stories.

Light, Steve ***SWAP***

Unp. Candlewick Press 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7990-3

"How many swaps does it take to mend a broken ship?" The old broken down ship needs many repairs. The boy is positive they can get it done. Each two-page spread has a section that is full color while the rest is black-and-white. The color section is where the action is. Beginning with a loose button on the captain's shirt, the boy begins to swap to obtain all the things needed to repair the ship. Careful readers/listeners will realize they don't always swap everything they got for the last swap: "Two coils of rope for six oars. SWAP! Two oars for four flags. Swap!" Lots of details in the art as the boy and captain go through the town. Great introduction to bartering.

London, Jonathan ***OTTERS LOVE TO PLAY***

Illus. by Meilo So 31p. Candlewick Press 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6913-3

Beginning in spring with the mother river otter choosing an abandoned beaver den, we join the family when the pups are small newborns and through their first year. While half of it is a fictionalized account, in larger type, this still has plenty of good information in it, facts are included in a smaller size type. The watercolor illustrations convey the playfulness of the otters and their joy in wrestling, swimming, and sliding down a muddy slope. A winning combination for readers interested in North American animals.

McClintock, Barbara ***EMMA AND JULIA LOVE BALLET***

Unp. Scholastic Press 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-439-89401-2

In different illustrations on each two-page spread, Emma and Julia get up, prepare for the day, and look forward to the ballet performance that evening. The difference? Emma is a child learning ballet and attending the event with her parents and Julia is a ballerina performing that evening. But they both love ballet! Interesting approach to the two viewpoints, with a touching meeting between the two characters.

Moore, Suzi ***WHOOPS!***

Illus. by Russell Ayto unp. Templar Books (Candlewick Press) \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-8180-7

A cat, a dog, and a mouse cannot make any sounds. The owl tells them to “find the old lady in the tumbledown house” and she will help them. They go to her and it takes several tries – each of which creates progressively larger and louder thunder storms in the house – and leaves the animals with the wrong sounds. When they finally have the right sounds, something odd has happened to the lady. Repetitive language and actions will encourage the children listening to join in with the reader.

Murphy, Mary ***GOOD NIGHT LIKE THIS***

Unp. Candlewick Press 2016 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7970-5

A brief rhyme on each page tells various little animals to sleep tight, “Tickly and feathery, in any old weathery. Good night, ducks. Sleep tight...” “like this.” Each two-page spread has a half-page to flip over to continue the story. Animals from bears to fireflies are included. A sweet going-to-bed book.

Park, Linda Sue ***YAKS YAK: Animal Word Pairs***

Illus. by Jennifer Black Reinhardt unp. Clarion Books 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-544-39101-7

Humorous illustrations and clever language play highlight this look at 18 words that name animals as well as act as verbs. Mostly two-word text per page with an occasional three-word page such as, “Bugs bug bugs.” The steers steering bumper cars is one example of the humorous art. Somewhere on each page in smaller type is a brief definition of the verb: “to flounder = to be helpless.”

Perkins, Lynne Rae ***FRANK AND LUCKY GET SCHOOLED***

Unp. Greenwillow Books (HarperCollins) 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-237345-8

Frank and Lucky learn together whenever they can. “Lucky went to his school ten times. Frank went to his school thousands of times.” Lucky learns by exploring, and loves it when he can explore with Frank. This clever book defines science, math, biology, botany, geography all in the context of an exploring dog. And it is also a fun story about the two.

Rex, Adam ***SCHOOL’S FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL***

Illus. by Christian Robinson unp. Roaring Brook Press 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-59643-964-1

School is nervous. During the last summer the people dug up the big field and built the school. The first day of school, for him and all the children, begins and he does not know what to expect. He learns what the water fountain and the jungle gym are for. But then he hears some kids say school stinks and they hate it, and he feels bad. He is embarrassed when his fire alarms go off and everyone exits so he apologizes when they walk back inside. A good first-day-of-school book with the school itself being worried and nervous and finding out everything is fine.

Reynolds, Peter H. ***PLAYING FROM THE HEART***

Unp. Candlewick Press 2016 \$15.00 ISBN 978-0-7636-7892-0

One day Raj, a young boy, plunked on the keys of the family piano, enjoying the sounds. His father signs him up for lessons and he learns so much. But as he learns, he enjoys less, until one day he leaves the piano alone. When his father is old and ill, Raj returns home and plays again for his father, not a classical song but the one he made up, “playing from the heart.” This is a touching story perfect for the 2018 SRP music oriented theme with the slogan “Libraries Rock!”

Robbins, Dean ***TWO FRIENDS: Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass***

Illus. by Sean Qualls & Selina Alko unp. Scholastic 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-545-39996-8

A fictional look at the friendship of the two, on a day when they got together for tea. The January 1, 2016 *School Library Journal* said, "Readers will come away remembering a brief episode in history that demonstrates that cooperation can be found in unexpected places."

Rockwell, Anne ***LET’S GO TO THE HARDWARE STORE***

Illus. by Melissa Iwai unp. Henry Holt & Co. 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-8050-8738-3

A family moves to a different home that needs fixing. Dad and a young boy & girl go along with him to the hardware store. As they find the items their father needs, each is lined up on the opposite page with its name. Lots of items are in their cart, but when they bring it home Mom asks, “But where are the picture hangers?” she had asked for, and off they go again. A fun look at tools and their uses.

Velasquez, Eric ***LOOKING FOR BONGO***

Unp. Holiday House 2016 \$16.95 ISBN 978-0-8234-3565-4

A boy gets up in the morning and must look for Bongo, his stuffed toy. His abuela (who he calls Wela) tells him to remember where he puts him next time. He finds Bongo and that night cuddles him in bed. When the string he tied onto Bongo is pulled, he sits up and sees his sister is taking him. A

satisfying tale of cleverness and exoneration as the boy devises a method to solve the problem after Wela implied he was careless.

Wells, Rosemary ***TEN KISSES FOR SOPHIE***

unp. Viking (Penguin Random House) 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-670-01665-5

Sophie and her mother make chocolate kisses for her Aunt Prunella's birthday. That night Sophie begins to worry that there will not be enough for her to have one so she makes place cards for each of the guests, and there will be one for her! The next day Cousin Martha calls to say she is coming to the party, now what can Sophie do?

Beginning Readers

Bechtold, Lisa ***BUSTER THE VERY SHY DOG IN THE GREAT BONE GAME***

30p. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2003, 2016 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-544-66847-8

Buster is a puppy new to the house where Phoebe (the dog) lives. Phoebe explains to him that he needs to train his bones so they will stay when he leaves the room. He is sad that his bones are not smart enough to learn to stay. In the second story Buster makes friends with the huge dog next door, and then helps him train his huge bone, which disappears but they are both so happy when they see that Phoebe found it. Clever, silly, and fun, kids will love the dog's innocence.

Bell, Cece ***RABBIT & ROBOT AND RIBBIT***

42p. Candlewick Press 2016 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7935-4

The second book about Rabbit & Robot... Rabbit drops by Robot's house to surprise him, but Rabbit is surprised that Robot already has company, a frog who only says, "Ribbit." Rabbit gets a bit jealous and feels left out at first, since Robot can understand what Ribbit is saying but he cannot. Eventually, Robot goes "tilt!" and Rabbit and Ribbit must find a way to reboot him. Another good friendship book.

Keller, Laurie & Mo Willems ***WE ARE GROWING!***

53p. Hyperion 2016 \$9.99 ISBN 978-148472635-8

One of the first two titles in the new "Elephant & Piggie Like Reading!" series (the other is *The Cookie Fiasco* by Dan Santat & Mo). The beginning and end of the book feature Elephant & Piggie anticipating and then praising the story. Eight slightly different but overall quite similar plants discover they are growing, each in their own way. They discuss their differences and each determines his or her best feature: "I'm the curliest," "I'm the crunchiest." What the reader/listener sees that the plants don't – is the lawn mower – and they are shocked when it runs over them. The little bugs eating one of the blades of grass (that is what they are) comforts them by saying they will grow again. Self-identity, embracing their uniqueness, becoming individuals.

Virján, Emma J. ***WHAT THIS STORY NEEDS IS A HUSH AND A SHUSH***

Unp. HarperCollins 2016 \$9.99 ISBN 978-0-06-241528-8

The pig in a wig follows her routines to go to bed, but just as she closes her eyes the other animals come in the window, usually two at a time, crowd the bed and keep making noise (which the kids will help with, of course). She sends them back to the barn – but has a change of heart and joins them there. Told in rhyming text this is a fun going-to-bed book as well as a good beginning reader.

Virján, Emma J. ***WHAT THIS STORY NEEDS IS A MUNCH AND A CRUNCH***

Unp. HarperCollins 2016 \$9.99 ISBN 978-0-06-241529-5

In rhyming text the pig in a wig prepares a basket of goodies and goes outside to join a squirrel for a picnic. A rabbit the kids will see hiding behind the trees soon joins them. They enjoy plenty of food and fun, but then it starts to rain. They gather it all up and continue the picnic in the house.

Willems, Mo ***I REALLY LIKE SLOP!***

64p. Disney-Hyperion Books 2015 \$9.99 ISBN 978-1-4847-2262-6

(Elephant & Piggie Books) Piggie really does love slop and wants Gerald to try it, but one look at the green goop and he says no. Still, Piggie is his friend, so finally he gives in and gives the stinky mess a try. But, please, no dessert for him! The quality of the series continues with this latest title. Kids will love it!

Early Chapter Books

Angleberger, Tom ***INSPECTOR FLYTRAP***

Illus. by Cece Bell 99p. Amulet Books (ABRAMS) 2016 \$14.95 ISBN 978-1-4197-0948-7

Inspector Flytrap is a Venus flytrap, and he will only solve BIG DEAL mysteries. His assistant, Nina the Goat, pushes him on a skateboard to get him where he needs to be to solve mysteries. She is always eating, usually things she shouldn't. Each of these first two books in the series have four stories, that are somewhat related. Ongoing gags (keep an eye out for the sloth reading a newspaper) and silly crimes and behaviors will appeal to early chapter book readers. He does solve the cases, but not always to the customer's satisfaction. Each two-page spread has at least one illustration.

Angleberger, Tom ***THE PRESIDENT'S MANE IS MISSING***

Illus. by Cece Bell 99p. Amulet Books (ABRAMS) 2016 \$14.95 ISBN 978-1-4197-0955-5

(Inspector Flytrap, Bk 2) More of the same silliness, (the sloth is back, but he is doing something else).

DiCamillo, Kate ***WHERE ARE YOU GOING, BABY LINCOLN?***

Illus. by Chris Van Dusen 96p. Candlewick Press 2016 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7311-6

Mercy Watson's neighbor, Baby Lincoln has had enough! Her older sister, Eugenia, has bossed her long enough. Baby Lincoln is going by train on a necessary journey. Not sure where she is going or what she will do, Baby Lincoln ends up having a lovely trip and makes some new friends. And, back home again, everyone has hot buttered toast.

Hopper, Ada ***MARCH OF THE MINI BEASTS***

Illus. by Sam Ricks 125p. Little Simon (Simon & Schuster) 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4814-5729-3; \$5.99 (pbk) 978-1-4814-5728-6

(The D.A.T.A. Set, Bk 1) Gabriel Martinez, Laura Reyes, and Cesar Moreno, second-grade students known in school as the Data Set, are selling candy to raise funds for their science club when they knock on the door of Dr. Bunsen. He's a little unusual but he has a big science laboratory and is excited to share his latest invention with them. But the invention actually does more than what Dr. Bunsen expected, and all four of them must come up with a solution to the situation. Great that this series has three Hispanic main characters, with a focus on science and on problem-solving. Books 2-5 are out now.

Spires, Ashley ***FLUFFY STRIKES BACK***

72p. Kids Can Press 2016 \$15.95 ISBN 978-1-77138-127-7

Fluffy is the head of P.U.R.S.T. (Pets of the Universe Ready for Space Travel), and "takes his job very seriously." But now, their headquarters is under attack and Fluffy is determined to defeat the alien invaders. He and his band of operatives go after the villains, Fluffy will even risk getting wet. Humorous and clever, told in graphic novel format. (companion book to the now completed Binky series)

Urban, Linda ***WEEKENDS WITH MAX AND HIS DAD***

Illus. by Katie Kath 150p. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-544-59817-1

Max (3rd grade) will now spend weekends with his dad in an apartment, since his parents are divorcing. It is an adjustment, the first night there nothing seems right, but Max is willing to give it a try. After a few weekends Max begins to feel at home in the apartment, and becomes fond of the new friends in their lives. The relationship between Max and his father is positive and congenial. Little mention is made of the divorce and there are no bad comments about his mother. This is about Max and his dad.

Willems, Mo ***THE STORY OF DIVA AND FLEA***

Illus. by Tony DiTerlizzi 67p. Disney-Hyperion 2015 \$14.99 ISBN 978-1-4847-2284-8

Paris... Diva is a small dog who patrols the garden of her home. Flea is a cat who wanders wherever he chooses. Diva is frightened of everything, being so small, but is enthralled by Flea's stories of life around Paris, after he gets past running away from her. Then, one day, Flea entices Diva to step outside her fence and see a bit more of Paris. They become fast friends.

Nonfiction Picture Books

Barton, Chris ***WHOOSH!: Lonnie Johnson's Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions***

Illus. by Don Tate unp. Charlesbridge \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-58089-297-1

As a boy, Lonnie was fascinated by how things work. He collected whatever he could find to use in experiments. He built a robot with moving arms and body (using his sister's walkie-talkie) that won the 1968 science fair at the University of Alabama. As an adult he was one of the NASA scientists who worked on the probe *Galileo*, which went to Jupiter. He still experimented with things at home and that is how he ended up inventing the super-soaker. A wonderful brief biography of a dedicated scientist and tinkerer.

Beck, W. H. ***GLOW: Animals with Their Own Nightlights***

Unp. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-544-41666-6

A look at bioluminescence in nature. Fireflies, glowworms, and foxfire mushrooms on land and the rest of the creatures are in the ocean. Large type on the top of the page gives a shorter reading with limited details. There is also smaller type on each page containing more information. Amazing photos, though the deep sea ones use a flash and somewhat dim the glow. In the back, small outlines of each creature (or mushroom) shows which part of it actually glows.

Gray, Karlin ***NADIA: The Girl Who Couldn't Sit Still***

Illus. by Christine Davenier unp. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-544-31960-8

An upbeat picture book biography that tells the story of Nadia Comaneci. She loved to climb trees, swim, play soccer – she couldn't sit still so her mother signed her up for gymnastics. That is where Bela Karolyi and his wife first saw her and invited her to join their school. The author does include the fact that at her first National Junior Championships competition she came in 13th place (at age 9) falling off the beam three times. Otherwise the book shows only positive aspects of her life. An Afterword and Timeline are included.

Harris, Robie H. ***WHO WE ARE!: All About Being the Same and Being Different***

Illus. by Nadine Bernard Westcott unp. Candlewick Press 2016 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6903-4

Narrative nonfiction – this title takes place in an amusement park called Funland. The book talks about how there are billions of people on the earth, “but only one of you.” Through narration and illustrations the readers (or listeners) learn, along with the main characters (a brother and sister) that people have individual looks, like skin color, height, facial features, body shapes; even different haircuts. It ends with the acknowledgement that people are alike and different in many ways.

Jenkins, Martin ***FABULOUS FROGS***

Illus. by Tim Hopgood unp. Candlewick Press 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-8100-5

Basic information on a few (12) of the more than 5,000 frogs in the world. (with names and illustrations of 8 more at the back of the book.) Text is in two sizes, a larger size to read to younger listeners and a smaller size that adds a bit of information for more involved listeners. In the front the author gives a quick two-page outline of basic frog biology. A good introduction.

Miller, Pat ***THE HOLE STORY OF THE DOUGHNUT***

Illus. by Vincent X. Kirsch unp. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-544-31961-5

Hanson Crockett Gregory went to sea as a cabin boy in 1844 at the age of 13. The book talks of his hard work and heroism, then finally about the doughnuts. At 16 he was a cook's helper and every morning he made the usual fried cakes – tossing them into a cauldron of hot lard. The crew called them sinkers because the outside edge would cook nicely but the middle was still raw dough. One day “he took the round lid off a pepper can and cut” holes in the cakes. That made all the difference. The crew loved them and soon everyone was making them. The author also includes a couple of legends of how they were invented, noting how “sailors like their stories bold.” Whimsical illustrations carry the upbeat and fun story. Includes a photo of Captain Gregory, an Author's Note, Timeline and Bibliography at the back of the book.

VanDerwater, Amy Ludwig ***EVERY DAY BIRDS***

Illus. by Dylan Metrano unp. Scholastic 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-545-69980-8

A poem running through the book names a different bird for each page, focusing on ones young children may be familiar with:

“Hummingbirds drink flower nectar.

Goose flies in a V.

Bluebird sleeps at meadow's edge.

Gull stares at the sea.”

Good introduction to birds in the US with brief additional information on each one at the back of the book.

Fiction for Grades 2-5 (or so)

Allen, Crystal ***SPIRIT WEEK SHOWDOWN***

227p. Balzer + Bray (HarperCollins) 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-234233-1

(The Magnificent Mya Tibbs, Bk 1) Mya (9) loves cowgirls and her new best friend, Naomi. She promises to be her partner for the school's Spirit Week contest, but the name drawing goes sideways on her and she ends up with Mean Connie Tate as her partner. Now Naomi is calling her a liar and a promise-breaker, and soon others are too. It takes Mya a while to learn that Connie is a good friend and Naomi is all about herself. Friendship, and bullying.

Angleberger, Tom ***ROCKET AND GROOT STRANDED ON PLANET STRIP MALL!***

220p. Marvel Press (Disney Book Group) 2016 \$13.99 ISBN 978-1-4847-1452-2

Rocket and Groot have crash landed on a strange planet after fighting giant space piranhas. They have nothing except a tape dispenser named Veronica, but it looks like this planet is one huge mall, so they should be able to get food, water and other necessities. No so fast – there are some diabolical things going on here. Wacky, silly, with plenty of illustrations it is obvious Angleberger really enjoyed creating this book. Bound to be popular!

(No origami, but there is a 2-page spread on how to draw Rocket)

Baptiste, Tracey ***THE JUMBIES***

229p. Algonquin Books for Young Readers 2015 \$15.96 ISBN 978-1-61620-414-3

Corinne (11), who lives in Trinidad, is not afraid to go into the old woods, even though people say jumbies live there. But one day she captures the attention of a particular jumbie, and soon that jumbie is pretending to be a beautiful woman who has bewitched Corinne's father. When Corinne and her friends try to fight the jumbie, it turns into a battle that will take all of her courage to win. Spookiness and bravery abound. The author notes at the back of the book that she lived on Trinidad to age 15, read European fairy tales but could not find books with the jumbie tales she heard growing up.

Bauer, Joan ***SOAR***

296p. Viking (Penguin Random House) \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-451-47034-8

Jeremiah (12 or so) loves baseball with a passion, and knows a lot about it. When he and his adoptive father move to Hillcrest, Ohio, for a couple of months while his father trouble-shoots a company's computer system, Jeremiah is the new kid at school. Hillcrest had won the high school baseball championships for five years in a row. But now the team is dissolved due to steroids. Jeremiah cannot play, due to a heart transplant, but he is a champ at coaching and soon an unofficial middle school team is actively seeking opponents. Lots of heart, from the health standpoint, the coaching approach, and the love between Jer & his father.

Clary, Julian ***THE BOLDS***

Illus. by David Roberts 265p. Carolrhoda 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-5124-0440-1

A hyena couple find the clothing and passports of an English couple, the Bolds, who went for an unfortunate swim in a crocodile infested lake. They decide to dress like humans and live in England. Things go along quite well after they learn about money and jobs, but their unfriendly neighbor, Mr. McNumpy, is keeping a close eye on them. Frequent cartoon-like illustrations add to the fun. Quite silly, with some bathroom humor.

Cole, Henry ***BRAMBLEHEART***

256p. HarperCollins 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-224546-5

A community of animals live on The Hill. Their children attend school to learn a variety of crafts to see what their life's work will be: weaving, metal craft or others. Twig, a chipmunk, is not good at anything, but one day he finds an egg that hatches a dragon he names Char. Keeping Char secret is hard and the baby dragon's fire makes his metal craft assignments look wonderful. A bully's turnaround, a clever escape for Char, and an amazing discovery show Twig what his course should be. Frequent illustrations enhance the story.

Greenwald, Tommy ***PETE MILANO'S GUIDE TO BEING A MOVIE STAR***

Illus. by Rebecca Roher 249p. Roaring Brook Press 2016 \$13.99 ISBN 978-1-62672-167-8

The first book in the Charlie Joe Jackson series with Pete as the main character. Pete has stolen Eliza's pom poms and hides from her mother in a coffee shop when a lady in the shop asks him some unusual questions. It turns out she is a producer and has him try out for a major role in a new movie. It sounds

great but after getting the part Pete has to juggle everything, and soon his friends are mad because he doesn't have time for them. Sure to be popular, this gives an upbeat look at the movie industry, and shows there are down sides to everything.

Griffin, Adele ***OONA FINDS AN EGG***

Illus. by Mike Wu 135p. Scholastic Press 2016 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-545-73279-6

(The Oodlethunks series, Bk 1) The Oodlethunks live in a cave and are obviously early humans but that is never addressed. Oona has always wanted a pet but her younger brother, Bonk, is allergic to fur. When she finds a huge egg, she hopes it will hatch out a pet for her, but everyone else has a different idea: it will eat her, or the egg will never hatch, etc. Daily life has a lot of similarities to now, such as going to school and dealing with the bully next door; and some differences, such as worrying about being eaten by a T. Rex or a raptor. Plenty of brown, black, and white cartoonlike illustrations add to the story. Bk 2: *Stegonormous* came out on 9/13/16.

Gutman, Dan ***THE LINCOLN PROJECT***

224p. HarperCollins 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-237441-7

(Flashback Four, Bk 1)

Miss Z finds four children to take a trip to the past to try to photograph President Lincoln while he is giving the Gettysburg Address. First they must have authentic clothing and learn about the language used at that time in order not to raise suspicion. Real history and a few photos are included in the fictional story. It has a bit of a cliffhanger ending. Bk 2: *The Titanic Mission*, is out 4/4/17

Haddix, Margaret Peterson ***UNDER THEIR SKIN***

311p. Simon & Shuster 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4814-1758-7

Twins Nick and Eryn (12) are upset when their mom tells them she is getting remarried. They are more surprised when they learn her fiancée has two children but they will never meet them. This idea sends them out in the snow to find out why their mom said that. What they find out is even more shocking – their soon-to-be step-siblings are robots! ... is anyone else a robot? (Interesting take on philosophy and religion). Book 1 in a new series – ends with a cliff hanger!

Jennings, Garth ***THE DEADLY 7***

340p. Farrar Straus Giroux 2016 \$13.99 ISBN 978-1-250-05275-9

Set in England, Nelson (11) learns he must stay with his odd Uncle Pogo while his parents travel to Spain to try to find his missing sister. He loves his older half-sister, Celeste, and is unhappy he cannot help. Things turn to the supernatural and magical when, while helping his uncle, Nelson accidentally falls on a table in a secret room in St. Paul's Cathedral. It ends up taking out his seven deadly sins from his soul and they manifest as colorful monsters. It turns out, they can help him find his sister in the Amazon basin in Brazil. A humorous, wacky adventure ensues – with Nelson's steadfast 7 doing their best. Occasional pen and ink illustrations add to this adventurous tale.

Leonard, M. G. **BEETLE BOY**

270p. Chicken House (Scholastic) 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-85346-0

(The Beetle Trilogy, Bk 1) Darkus (13) is staying with his Uncle Max since his father disappeared. (His mother died when he was seven.) He meets two new friends at his new school, Bertold and Virginia. Home after the first day, he finds a huge rhinoceros beetle that appears to like him, and names him Baxter. Uncle Max and Darkus (with the secret help of Bertold, Virginia and Baxter) are working together to solve the mystery of his father's disappearance. And a couple of other smaller mysteries as well.

Lloyd, Natalie **THE KEY TO EXTRAORDINARY**

227p. Scholastic Press 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-55274-5

Emma (12) lives on the edge of a graveyard in the Appalachians of Tennessee with her brother and grandmother, Granny Blue. She is waiting to have her Destiny Dream, something all of her female family members experience. She gives tours of the graveyard, and respects the history and heritage of it and their café. The time may have come for Granny to sell the property she owns, including the café. Emma and her best friend Cody Belle are determined to find the alleged local treasure in order to save the property. Magic realism in both the cemetery and some local flowers add an air of mystery to this treasure hunt. Emma's connection to the area and its residents is touching and contagious.

Lorenzi, Natalie Dias **A LONG PITCH HOME**

245p. Charlesbridge 2016 \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-58089-713-6

When Bilal's family moves to America, his father must stay in Pakistan, supposedly only for a while. Bilal faces a new culture, language, and sport. He was one of the best on his cricket team back home but now he has to start over and learn to play baseball, a very different game. This book introduces culture shock, the effort needed to find a place in a new home, and his concern for his father – why did he have to stay and when will he finally be able to come to the U.S.?

Nannestad, Katrina **WHEN MISCHIEF CAME TO TOWN**

177p. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-544-53432-2

In 1911 Inge Maria Jensen travels from Copenhagen to a small island off of Denmark to live with her strict and tough grandmother, now that her mother has died. It seems a harsh beginning, but soon small thoughtful things begin to happen. Her new best friend, Klaus, has his own problems but helps Inge adjust to the new school. When Inge goes over the top at school, after trying so hard to be good, it turns out Grandmother loves a mischievous child. The island of Bornholm begins to lose its somber attitude (as least some townspeople do). Hopeful and loving.

Reynolds, Jason **AS BRAVE AS YOU**

410p. Atheneum (Simon & Schuster) 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4814-1590-3

Genie (11 – Gene) wants to be brave like his brother Ernie (13) but it isn't easy. Their parents take them to their grandparents place in Virginia, while they go to figure things out. Genie is startled that his grandfather is blind. He has some adjusting to do, and they are expected to help with chores. The

rural African-American community of his grandparents is also a new experience for Genie, different from the city. An exploration of ways people live with believable characters and the challenge of finding one's own way to live.

Robinson, Sharon ***THE HERO TWO DOORS DOWN***

191p. Scholastic 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-80451-6

A fictionalized telling of the friendship between Jackie Robinson and his eight-year-old neighbor, Steve Satlow. Jackie and his family moved into the neighborhood in 1948 and Steve's wish was to be able to see him when they arrived. It turned out to be more than he had hoped for, a friendship and a mentor in life. (A part of this story was first told in her picture book *Jackie's Gift*, pub. 10-14-10, which tells of the Christmas tree Jackie gave to the Satlow family, not knowing that they were Jewish.)

Schusterman, Michelle ***DEAD AIR***

240p. Grosset & Dunlap (Penguin Random House) 2015 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-448-47980-4

(The Kat Sinclair Files, Bk 1) Kat (14), whose mother has left for the 3rd time and not come back, learns her father has been hired as the newest host for the cheesy ghost-hunting TV show, *Passport to Paranormal* (or P2P). Kat goes with him and will be home-schooled along with the producer's nephew Oscar. Kat's grandmother was a champion screamer in several scary movies, so Kat is skeptical about the ghosts. But some strange things begin to happen when they join the show in Rotterdam. Kat's father is African-American and her mom is white...not much made of it in the book. (pgs. 9 & 149)

Shevah, Emma ***DARA PALMER'S MAJOR DRAMA***

277p. Sourcebooks 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4926-3138-5

Dara (adopted from Cambodia) is full of drama, as her family can well attest. She and her best friend are certain they know all there is to know about acting, mostly learned from their favorite TV show. They practice "faces" at lunch at school (sad, frightened, worried). But Dara is deeply hurt when she not only does not get the role of Maria in the school play "The Sound of Music," but gets no part at all. How can that be?! The teacher invites her to join the acting club to learn more about it, but Dara is resistant. Finally she gives it a try (even though her best friend won't) and begins to discover so much that she didn't know.

Shurtliff, Liesl ***RED: The True Story of Red Riding Hood***

239p. Alfred A. Knopf 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-385-75583-2; \$19.99 (PLB) ISBN 978-0-385-75584-9

The third fairy tale she has written that shows there is more to the story than what we have heard before. Red's grandmother is a witch and the magic flows in Red as well. But after a couple of disasters Red refuses to use it again. Now grandma is ill and Red goes on a quest to find a magical cure for her. Along the way she encounters a wolf, Goldy (Goldilocks) the Beast (Beauty and the Beast) and the Huntsman. Another well-done fairy tale revisit.

Nonfiction for Grades 2-5 (or so)

Delacre, Lulu ;*OLINGUITO, DE LA A A LA Z!:* *descubriendo el bosque nublado / OLINGUITO, FROM A TO Z!:* *Unveiling the Cloud Forest* Unp. Lee & Low 2016 \$18.95 ISBN 978-0-89239-5

This dual language title explores the jungle and the Andes of Ecuador. It introduces plants and animals of the area via the Spanish alphabet and using alliterative language for the Spanish. Spanish is the first language on each page and the English is translated well and therefore is not as alliterative. Short sentences on the bottom of each page leave plenty of room for the beautiful illustrations. Brief additional information on each plant and animal mentioned are included at the back of the book, again in Spanish and English.

Hooks, Gwendolyn *TINY STITCHES: The Life of Medical Pioneer Vivien Thomas*

Illus. by Colin Bootman unp. Lee & Low Books 2016 \$17.95 ISBN 978-1-62014-156-4

A picture book biography of Vivien Thomas, an African-American man who lost his savings for medical college in the Crash of 1929. He then was hired as a research assistant for Vanderbilt University. He learned to conduct experiments to aid Dr. Blalock in finding better operating procedures. While there he was asked to research ways to operate on what were called blue babies. He not only researched it, he developed new smaller equipment and realized that an earlier procedure developed by Dr. Blalock and himself could work for the babies. Initially only Dr. Blalock and Dr. Taussig were credited with the new technique, but eventually Vivien Thomas's role in it was recognized. More information is included at the back of the book.

Philip, Aaron & Tonya Bolden *THIS KID CAN FLY: It's About Ability (Not Disability)*

179p. Balzer + Bray (HarperCollins) 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-240354-4

Aaron Philip (pronounced AY-ron) was born in 2001 "in St. John's, the capital of Antigua and Barbuda." By late 2003 Aaron's mother took him to New York to better medical facilities to learn he has cerebral palsy. Here Aaron tells about his life so far, his ups and downs, his dreams and the people who have helped him and his family. The effort that went into getting him and his wheelchair up and down stairs in apartment buildings with no elevators, or getting on the subway to go to school conveys issues that people in wheelchairs meet with often. It is clear we have more to do to make places accessible. Upbeat and positive, contains some photos.

Raczka, Bob *WET CEMENT: A Mix of Concrete Poems*

43p. Roaring Brook Press 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-62672-236-1

A collection of 21 poems, clever and inspiring. Especially the last one (though less concrete than the rest):

poeTRY
poetry is about taking away the words you don't need
poetry is taking away words you don't need
poetry is words you need
poetry is words
try

Sweet, Melissa ***SOME WRITER!: The Story of E. B. White***
139p. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2016 \$18.99 ISBN 978-0-544-31959-2

A unique biography, a wonderful collage of E. B. White and his children's books.

New Titles in Popular Series

Picture Books

Becker, Aaron ***RETURN*** (3rd and final in the *Journey* series)
Unp. Candlewick Press 2016 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7730-5

This wordless picture book concludes the story which started with *Journey*. The girl uses one of the magic crayons to draw a door in her home and go back to the magical place from before when her father is too busy to spend time with her. He follows her after noticing the new, red door.

Dean, James & Kimberly ***PETE THE CAT AND THE MISSING CUPCAKES***
Unp. HarperCollins 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-230434-6

Pete the Cat bakes cupcakes for his party, but notices they are disappearing before any guests have arrived. Off he and his friends go to find the culprit.

O'Connor, Jane ***FANCY NANCY SATURDAY NIGHT SLEEPOVER***
Illus. by Robin Preiss Glasser unp. HarperCollins 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-226985-0

Mom and Dad are going to stay overnight at the resort, so Nancy and Jojo will stay over at Mrs. DeVine's. It is Jojo's first sleepover and Nancy is going to be sure everything is great. She makes a survival kit for Jojo and helps her pack her case. As it turns out, Jojo is fine but Nancy makes use of all the things in the survival kit. Fans will enjoy another adventure with Fancy Nancy.

Early Chapter Books

Cronin, Doreen ***INTO THE WILD: Yet Another Misadventure*** (The Chicken Squad, Bk 3)
Illus. by Stephen Gilpin 95p. Simon & Schuster 2016 \$12.99 ISBN 978-1-4814-5046-1

Dirt, Sugar, Poppy, & Sweetie have a new mystery: there is a new box with ramp in the backyard and they do not know what is in it (except that it is not chickens). They are equipped with spy kits ("an observation log, binoculars, marshmallows and a fake mustache") and go to work solving the mystery. How they use their spy kit contents will get readers chuckling. Humor and determination abound.

Hale, Shannon & Dean ***THE PRINCESS IN BLACK AND THE PERFECT PRINCESS PARTY*** (Bk 2)
Illus. by LeUyen Pham 90p. Candlewick Press 2015 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6511-1

It's hard for Princess Magnolia to enjoy her birthday party when monsters keep attacking the goats. Keeping secret her identity as The Princess in Black is extra tough with 12 princesses attending her party.

Hale, Shannon & Dean Hale ***THE PRINCESS IN BLACK AND THE HUNGRY BUNNY HORDE*** (Bk 3)
Illus. by LeUyen Pham 86p. Candlewick Press 2016 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6513-5

Princess Magnolia and her unicorn Frimplepants are on their way to have brunch with Princess Sneezewort when they are summoned to respond to an emergency. Duff the goat boy tells them (as the Princess in Black and her pony, Blacky) that monsters have escaped from Monster Land. But they are cute little bunnies and she doesn't see them as monsters until it is almost too late.

Fiction for Grades 2 – 5 or so:

Erdrich, Louise ***MAKOONS*** (The Birchbark House series, Bk 5)
156p. HarperCollins 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-057793-3

Continuing the story of an Ojibwe family, this title focuses on Makoons and his twin brother Chickadee, who are determined to succeed as buffalo hunters.

Jinks, Catherine ***THE LAST BOGLER*** (Bk 3 and final in series)
Illus. by Sarah Watts 319p. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-544-08696-8

Alfred Bunce, the bogler, Ned, his new apprentice and Jem, his experienced apprentice, are members of new committee determined to eliminate bogles. Things in London are changing, and it seems bogles are changing too. There is still danger from them – and from Jack Gammon, who wants Jem dead. Ned has a good knack for puzzling out new approaches to the bogles, and to other things as well. Well done, though the ending may seem a bit too contrived or convenient, readers will enjoy this final title in the series.

Selfors, Suzanne ***THE FAIRY SWARM*** (The Imaginary Veterinary, Book 6 & final)
Illus. by Dan Santat 226p. Little, Brown & Co. 2015 \$17.00 ISBN 978-0-316-28693-0

A swarm of sugar fairies has escaped the Imaginary World, running from Maximus Steele. They are plaguing the town due to their uncontrollable need for sugar. Ben and Pearl try to catch them, while Dr. Woo feels she must move from Buttonville and find another hiding place for the "worm hospital" for the safety of the creatures she is sworn to protect.

Watson, Tom ***STICK DOG TRIES TO TAKE THE DONUTS*** (Book 5)
209p. HarperCollins 2016 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-06-234320-8

It's fall and the kids are back in school so there are not many opportunities to find abandoned food in the park. Stick Dog and his friends come across a bucket truck (he will use it to get apples from the trees), and a box of donuts. They manage to grab one donut and know they want more! Karen (the dachshund) consumes the coffee and can't stay still.

Watson, Tom *STICK DOG SLURPS SPAGHETTI* (Book 6)
238p. HarperCollins 2016 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-06-234322-2

Stick Dog and his friends find some spaghetti and it is so delicious they must find more! A restaurant lures them inside.

Nonfiction for Grades 2 – 5 or so:

Rooney, Anne *YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO LIVE WITHOUT GRAVITY!*
Illus. by Mark Bergin 36p. Scholastic 2016 \$29.00 ISBN 978-0-531-21487-9

Includes the Big Bang, Sir Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, and that "there is uneven gravity over Earth's surface." (1st page). Again contains plenty of information in a humorous way. Timeline, index and glossary are included as well.



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