

Association of Children's Librarians  
of Northern California

**DISTINGUISHED  
BOOKS**



2006

Association of Children's Librarians  
of Northern California  
P. O. Box 12471  
Berkeley, CA 94712

## Notes

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of Northern California

### DISTINGUISHED BOOKS 2006



*Titles have been selected from those  
reviewed in BayViews for  
their outstanding literary merit,  
high quality of illustration and  
design, and contribution to a child's  
understanding of the world.*

**Distinguished Books reviewed by ACL**

General Non-fiction

Poetry

Biography

Fiction

Picture Books



**ACL DISTINGUISHED BOOKS**

2006

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## Notes

### General Non-Fiction



Aston, Dianna

*An Egg Is Quiet*

Illus. by Sylvia Long

Chronicle, 2006

\$16.95

Grades K-5

Lavish illustrations accompany lyrical text about all kinds of eggs in the world. Creatures that lay eggs are shown with stunning artwork that the reader will linger over.

Bausum, Ann

*Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement*

National Geographic, 2006

\$18.95

Grades 4-10

The era of the Freedom Rides, which brought an end to segregation in public transportation across the South, comes to life in the biographies of these two men from very different backgrounds.

Butterworth, Chris

*Seahorse: The Shyest Fish in the Sea*

Illus. by John Lawrence

Candlewick, 2006

\$16.99

Grades Pre-2

In its watery world, the seahorse feeds, eludes danger, mates, and the male expels hundreds of babies from his pouch. Stunning illustrations made from vinyl engravings, printed wood textures, and watercolor washes surround the printed page.

Fisher, Valorie

*How High Can a Dinosaur Count? And Other Math Mysteries*

Schwartz & Wade, 2006

\$16.95

Grades 1-4

Fisher presents 15 number puzzles that combine a brief vignette and questions with illustrations containing additional information and visual hints. The illustrations are photographed in such a way as to create quirky scenes with a three-dimensional feel.

Freedman, Russell

*The Adventures of Marco Polo*

Arthur A. Levine, 2006

\$17.99

Grades 3-6

Marco Polo's life and journeys make fascinating reading, especially in Freedman's adept hands. This sumptuously designed and illustrated volume includes an author's note, art note, art source list, and an index.

Freedman, Russell

*Children of the Great Depression*

Clarion, 2005

\$20.00

Grades 5-Adult

Using photographs, memoirs, diaries and firsthand accounts, Freedman writes with compassion and understanding about the fate of the children who suffered through the Great Depression.

Freedman, Russell

*Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycotts*

Holiday, 2006

\$18.95

Grades 5-8

Freedman brings to life the challenges and the heroes of the year-long Montgomery bus boycott and makes this material interesting and accessible to children.



Harris, Robie H.

*It's Not the Stork! A Book About Girls, Boys, Babies, Bodies, Families, and Friends*

Illus. by Michael Emberley

Candlewick, 2006

\$16.99

Grades 1-4

With wonderful illustrations and clear explanations, *It's Not the Stork* simply and beautifully presents gender, sex, relationships, families, and growing up.

Montgomery, Sy

*Quest for the Tree Kangaroo*

Photographs by Nic Bishop

Houghton Mifflin, 2006

\$18.00

Grades 5-8

With stunning color photographs and a lively, engaging text, readers will be instantly drawn into the search for the rare, beautiful tree kangaroo. Part of the Scientists in the Field series, this book also shows the New Guinea people working with the American scientists on this project and gives insight into their homeland.

Oppenheim, Joanne

*Dear Miss Breed: True Stories of the Japanese-American Incarceration During World War II and a Librarian Who Made a Difference*

Scholastic, 2006

\$22.99

Grades 5-12

Using letters to a San Diego children's librarian from her former patrons who were in relocation camps, Oppenheim describes this shameful episode in U.S. history. An abundance of b/w photos, reproductions of primary source material, and other book design elements gives this the appearance of a scrapbook.

## Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

P. O. Box 12471, Berkeley, CA 94712

[www.bayviews.org](http://www.bayviews.org)

ACL has been serving librarians, teachers, and booksellers in Northern California since the 1930s. Members meet monthly to review books for young people and discuss related issues. ACL's book review journal, *BayViews*, is published 11 times a year.

### Membership in ACL offers:

- subscription to *BayViews*, which prints reviews of more than 1,800 new books each year
- annual annotated *Distinguished Books* list
- opportunity to review and discuss current children's books
- special bibliographies
- notices of job opportunities
- opportunity to discuss current issues in library service to children
- discounted attendance at the annual Performers' Showcase
- discounted attendance at the annual Institute
- professional development and networking opportunities

Meetings are held from 9 a.m. to noon on the second Friday of each month at an area library, excluding the month of the annual Institute. Check the website for meeting locations. In the Spring, ACL sponsors an Institute about library service to children and topics of interest to librarians and teachers.

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Grade designations in the annotations are approximate.  
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The Distinguished Books Committee for 2006 was chaired by:  
Sharon Senser, Oakland Public Library  
denise schmidt, San Francisco Public Library

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ACL Distinguished Books, P. O. Box 12471, Berkeley, CA 94712

Robbins, Ken.

*Pumpkins*

Roaring Brook, 2006      \$16.95      Grades K-3

Full-page color photographs reveal the wonders of the pumpkin and the autumn celebration that surrounds it.

Schubert, Leda

*Ballet of the Elephants*

Illus. by Robert Andrew Parker

Roaring Brook, 2006      \$17.95      Grades 1-5

In this nonfiction picture book, the unusual story of how George Balanchine choreographed dancing elephants for the Ringling Brothers’ Circus is described in a concise, crisp text which is complemented by fluid watercolor and ink illustrations.

Thimmesch, Catherine

*Team Moon: How 400,000 People Landed Apollo 11 on the Moon*

Houghton, 2006      \$19.95      Grades 5-Adult

A mix of strong writing and abundant quotations tells the story of man’s first landing on the moon and the multitude of scientists, inventors, computer techs, seamstresses, and others who contributed to the event.

Wechsler, Doug

*Frog Heaven*

Photographs by Doug Weschsler

Boyd’s Mills, 2006      \$17.95      Grades 4-8

Discover the rich cycle of life in a vernal pond, which depends on the alternating periods of wet and dry. Through fine photographs and well-written text, children are introduced to the animal and plant forms that live in these unique habitats.

## Folklore

Henderson, Kathy

*Lugulbanda: The Boy Who Got Caught Up in a War*

Illus. by Jane Ray

Candlewick, 2006      \$16.99      Grades 5-12

From ancient Sumeria, this is the account of how Gilgamesh’s father, as a very young man, was caught up in a war. Just as exciting as this moving tale is the story of finding the cuneiform tablets and their translation into modern languages.





Nesbit, E.

*Jack and the Beanstalk*

Illus. by Matt Tavares

Candlewick, 2006

\$16.99

Grades K-3

Jack is a lazy daydreamer who trades the family cow for magic beans that grow into a giant beanstalk, and then Jack cleverly swindles a giant. Nesbit's classic retelling of an old favorite is beautifully complemented by Tavares's stunning, textured illustrations.

Tchana, Katrin Hyman

*Changing Woman and Her Sister: Stories of Goddesses from Around the World*

Illus. by Trina Schart Hyman

Holiday, 2006

\$18.95

Grades 5-Adult

Avoiding tales of better known Greek and Norse goddesses, the author explores the origins, attributes, and powers of 10 goddesses from a wide variety of cultures. These last illustrations by Trina Schart Hyman are an invigorating departure from her signature style.

## Poetry

Bulion, Leslie

*Hey There, Stink Bug!*

Illus. by Leslie Evans

Charlesbridge, 2006

\$12.95

Grades 4-8

Lively humor vibrates from poems about insects, each written in a different poetic form. Brief facts about the creature accompany the well-drawn illustrations. The back matter contains additional details on the poetic forms used and a glossary of science words.



Rex, Adam

*Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich*

Illus. by Adam Rex

Harcourt, 2006

\$16.00

Grades 2-8

A variety of famous literary monsters parades through this funny picture book, each accompanied by a poem.

## Biography

Fleischman, Sid

*Escape! The Story of the Great Houdini*

Greenwillow, 2006

\$18.99

Grades 4-8

This is a fascinating biography of the master escape artist, Harry Houdini. The text is artfully punctuated with photographs and period ephemera.

Winter, Jonah

*Dizzy*

Illus. by Sean Qualls

Arthur A. Levine, 2006

\$16.99

Grades K-5

A celebration of bebop, jazz, and Dizzy Gillespie begins when an unnamed boy in the South moves to New York City to pursue his love of music. The acrylic stylized caricatures work perfectly with the rhythmic text.

Woodson, Jacqueline

*Show Way*

Illus. by Hudson Talbot

Putnam, 2005

\$16.99

Grades Pre-4

The story of generations of African-American women in one family, from the time of slavery to the present, loving, growing babies, sewing quilts, and telling their stories and those of their mothers.



Shulevitz, Uri  
*So Sleepy Story*

Illus. by Uri Shulevitz  
Farrar, 2006

\$16.00      Grades Pre-1

A sleepy house awakens briefly to enjoy some midnight music then falls back asleep when the music drifts away. With rhythm and repetition, and fluid watercolor illustrations dominated by deep blue, this will lull listeners to sleep.

Sierra, Judy  
*Thelonius Monster's Sky High Pie*

Illus. by Edward Koren  
Knopf, 2006

\$16.95      Grades K-3

Thelonius Monster creates a gigantic fly pie for all of his friends and family to share in this monstrously funny rhyming picture book. Children will love the scraggly, hairy, big-nosed, ink-drawn monsters.

Smith, Lane  
*John, Paul, George, and Ben*

Illus. by Lane Smith  
Hyperion, 2006

\$16.99      Grades 2-5

The Founding Fathers, not the Beatles, are the subject of this riotously funny picture book. John Hancock, George Washington, Paul Revere, Thomas Jefferson, and Ben Franklin are each introduced with a silly fictional vignette and Lane's innovative cartoon and collage illustrations.

Weatherford, Carole Boston  
*Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom*

Illus. by Kadir Nelson  
Hyperion, 2006

\$15.99      Grades K-5

Harriet, a rebellious slave, hears the voice of God telling her that the time has come for her to be free. Bold, moody illustrations and rich, lyrical text make this a compelling read-aloud biography.

Wiesner, David.  
*Flotsam*

Illus. by David Wiesner  
Clarion, 2006

\$17.00      Grades K-5

A barnacle-encrusted camera reveals underwater wonders never seen and the children who have shared this secret experience.

## Fiction



Anderson, MT  
*The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing*

Candlewick, 2006      \$17.99

Grades 7-Adult

In pre-Revolutionary Massachusetts, Octavian is an African-American boy raised in strange circumstances by scientists. In diaries and letters, this first part of a unique two-part story posits questions of ethics and individuality before a dramatic and suspenseful historical backdrop.

Avi.  
*Crispin at the Edge of the World.*

Hyperion, 2006      \$16.99      Grades 4-8

Crispin and his mentor, Bear, struggle to escape those trying to kill them in this medieval adventure tale. Sequel to *Crispin, Cross of Lead*.

Balliet, Blue  
*The Wright 3*

Illus. by Bret Helquist  
Scholastic, 2006      \$16.99      Grades 5-8

This ghostly story involves 6th grade friends who become ensnared in mysterious goings-on while trying to save Frank Lloyd Wright's famous Robie House from demolition. Story elements touch on Pentominoes, Fibonacci numbers, and an easily solvable code.

Barrows, Annie  
*Ivy and Bean and the Ghost That Had to Go*

Illus. by Sophie Blackall  
Chronicle, 2006      \$14.95      Grades 2-4

In their second book, Ivy and Bean terrorize the 2nd grade with their rumor of an angry ghost in the girls' bathroom. Funny ink drawings perfectly complement the easy to read text.

Bloor, Edward  
*London Calling*

Knopf, 2006      \$16.95      Grades 6-9

An antique radio transports Martin Conway back to the 1940s and the London blitz, where he helps a boy he meets there and also solves a mystery from his own time.



Bruchac, Joseph

*Geronimo: A Novel*

Scholastic, 2006

\$16.99

Grades 7-Adult

In this chronicle that covers all facets of Geronimo's amazing life, Bruchac has produced a powerful, moving biographical novel of a great Native American chief and warrior.

Cohn, Rachel and David Levithan

*Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist*

Knopf, 2006

\$16.95

Grades 9-12

Levithan and Cohn have crafted a realistic NYC teen punk rock love story told in alternating points of view (written by each author).

Cooper, Susan

*Victory*

McElderry, 2006

\$16.95

Grades 5-8

Sam, impressed into service as a ship's boy on Lord Nelson's *Victory*, and Molly, an English girl transplanted to the U.S. are both struggling with dislocation and reach out to each other over the 200 years that separate them.

Copeland, Mark

*Bundle at Blackthorpe Heath*

Illus. by Mark Copeland

Houghton, 2006

\$15.00

Grades 4-7

Insects and humans interact in this humorous and suspenseful mystery set in an insect circus.

DiCamillo, Kate

*Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*

Illus. by Bagram Ibatoulline

Candlewick, 2006

\$18.99

Grades 2-8

A 3-foot tall china rabbit, who is dearly loved by his mistress, journeys through many new experiences as he makes his way to understanding what love and friendship really mean. Rich illustrations enhance the charming simple text.

Glatshetyn, Yankev

*Emil and Karl*

Roaring Brook, 2006

\$17.95

Grades 6-9

Two boys, parentless and frightened, try to survive in Hitler's Austria, finding both the brutal and the kind in their escape.



Gravett, Emily

*Wolves*

Illus. by Emily Gravett

Simon & Schuster, 2006

\$15.95

Grades Pre-3

A rabbit borrows a book about wolves from the library and fails to realize that the big bad wolf has made an appearance on his way home. Don't worry! No rabbits were eaten during the making of this book.

Grey, Mini

*The Adventures of the Dish and the Spoon*

Illus. by Mini Grey

Knopf, 2006

\$16.95

Grades K-3

In this nursery rhyme spoof, the Dish and Spoon run away to perform in vaudeville and get caught up in a bank robbery. The full-color illustrations use cinematic angles to complement the slyly humorous, clipped, poetic narrative.

Knudsen, Michelle

*Library Lion*

Illus. by Kevin Hawkes

Candlewick, 2006

\$15.99

Grades Pre-3

Lion comes to love the Library, and especially storytime, so much that he becomes a regular patron, helpful and beloved by all until he roars once too often. But he has a good reason: the librarian needs help!

Rueda, Claudia

*Let's Play in the Forest...While the Wolf Is Not Around*

Illus. by Claudia Rueda

Scholastic, 2006

\$16.99

Grades Pre-2

This English language version of the traditional Spanish play song "Juguemos en el bosque" will entice the storytime audience to sing along, and the music is included. The simple illustrations can easily be converted to felt figures.

Schories, Pat

*Jack and the Night Visitors*

Illus. by Pat Schories

Boyd's Mills, 2006

\$13.95

Grades Pre-K

Aliens visit an innocent child, but his natural instincts cause him to trap one in a glass jar. The spunky dog helps set them free. An attractive wordless picture book with detailed illustrations.



Vizzini, Ned

*It's Kind of a Funny Story*

Farrar, 2006                      \$17.00                      Grades 9-12

This is a shockingly hilarious and real portrayal of serious depression in a teenager told from the teen's point of view after he checks himself into the adult psych ward at a local Brooklyn hospital.

Zusak, Marcus

*The Book Thief*

Knopf, 2006                      \$16.95                      Grades 9-Adult

Stealing books for Liesel Meminger, a young foster child in Nazi Germany, is essential. Books form the bond with her father, her friend Rudy, and the Jewish man the Hubermanns hide in their basement.



## Picture Books

Bruel, Nick

*Bad Kitty*

Illus. by Nick Bruel  
Roaring Brook, 2005                      \$15.95                      Grades K-4

When a normally good kitty is offered an A-Z list of unpleasing vegetables to eat, she goes on an A-Z rampage of bad and hilarious far-fetched behavior.

Busse, Sarah Martin and Jacqueline Briggs Martin

*Banjo Granny*

Illus. by Barry Root  
Houghton, 2006                      \$16.00                      Grades Pre-K

Owen's Granny puts on her 1,000-mile shoes, picks up her banjo, and sets off to visit him when she learns that he is "wiggly, jiggly, all-around giggly, and tip over tumble for bluegrass music."

DePalma, Mary Newell

*A Grand Old Tree*

Illus. by Mary Newell DePalma  
Arthur A. Levine, 2005                      \$16.99                      Grades Pre-1

The life cycle of one tree is told and illustrated in simple prose and evocative artwork.

Faller, Regis

*The Adventures of Polo and Polo: The Runaway Book*

Illus. by Regis Faller  
Roaring Brook, 2006                      \$16.95                      Grades K-4

Polo, an adventurous dog, travels the world and beyond in these two colorful wordless graphic books.

Hautman, Pete

*Rash*

Simon & Schuster, 2006                      \$15.95                      Grades 8-Adult

In a society that has decided it would "rather be safe than be free," 16-year-old Bo's anger issues land him into a jail run by McDonald's. He survives through his running abilities and AI named Bork.

Himmelblau, Linda

*The Trouble Begins*

Delacorte, 2005                      \$14.95                      Grades 4-8

Du Nguyen's parents and siblings immigrated to California, leaving baby Du and his grandmother behind. Du's troubles begin when he is reunited with his family 10 years later. His reflections on refugee life are frank and unvarnished.

Holm, Jennifer

*Babymouse Series*

Illus. by Matthew Holm  
Random, 2005-2006                      \$5.95                      Grades 2-5

Babymouse is a sprightly elementary-age mouse who has a rich imagination. The b/w illustrations of these young-end graphic novels are sparingly dotted with pink accents until we see into her inner life when the color pink takes over.

Holub, Josef

*An Innocent Soldier*

Arthur A. Levine, 2005                      \$16.99                      Grades 6-12

A 16-year-old farmhand is tricked into joining Napoleon's "Grand Army" on the road to Russia in 1812. In calm but dramatic fashion, the author creates well-delineated characters and settings in this suspenseful piece of historical fiction.

Horowitz, Anthony

*Raven's Gate: Book One of the Gatekeepers*

Scholastic, 2005                      \$17.95                      Grades 4-12

A young orphan discovers his destiny is not a boring one when he is adopted and taken to Yorkshire where he quickly finds he is a prisoner. His special powers, not yet truly evident, are both the reason for his imprisonment and the means of escape.

Key, Watt

*Alabama Moon*

Farrar, 2006                      \$16.00                      Grades 5-12

Moon, who has lived in the woods ever since he can remember, must learn to trust the world after the death of his father, a Vietnam War vet who had moved his family there and left civilization behind.

Kuijier, Guus

*Book of Everything*

Scholastic, 2006

\$16.99

Grades 5-Adult

Kuijier has written a short but powerful novel that explores one family's coming together in the face of domestic violence. Full of instances of magical realism and set in the Netherlands in 1951, this is a complex but moving story.

Lat

*Kampung Boy*

Illus. by Lat

First Second, 2006

\$16.95

Grades 5-Adult

A biography in graphic novel format, *Kampung Boy* is raised in a small village in Indonesia. Village life is lovingly rendered in simple art and modest text.

Lester, Julius

*The Old African*

Illus. by Jerry Pinkney

Dial, 2005

\$19.99

Grades 5-12

Based on an old legend of slaves walking from Ebo Landing in Georgia back to Africa, *The Old African* is an imaginary tale full of truths about the power of belief and the need to be free.

Lisle, Janet Taylor

*Black Duck*

Philomel, 2006

\$15.99

Grades 6-10

Set in a New England coastal town during Prohibition, a young boy gets involved in rum-running operations. Based on actual historical events, this mystery, adventure and coming-of-age story is fast paced and provides opportunity for much discussion.

Look, Lenore

*Ruby Lu, Empress of Everything*

Illus. by Anne Wilsdorf

Atheneum, 2006

\$15.95

Grades 2-5

In this second story about Ruby Lu, life has become a lot more exciting for the delightful, impressible Chinese-American 3rd grader now that her cousin Flying Duck's family is living with her.

Lowry, Lois

*Gossamer*

Houghton, 2006

\$16.00

Grades 4-8

The power of dreams to heal and to destroy is explored as Littlest, the newest dream-giver, learns to gather memories and then touch the sleeper with the lightest of touches, a gossamer.

Lubar, David

*Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie*

Dutton, 2005

\$16.99

Grades 9-12

As Scott begins high school, he deals with his mother's pregnancy by writing a list of tips to his sibling-to-be with a self-deprecating sense of humor and wit. Scott faces challenges with a supportive, intact, yet imperfect family.

McKay, Hilary

*Caddy Ever After*

McElderry, 2006

\$15.95

Grades 5-8

For the lovable, unpredictable Casson family, love is in the air—Rose is making special valentines; Indigo has a mad idea for the Valentine's disco; Saffy's having trouble with a haunted balloon, and Caddy's found the "real thing!"

Meyer, L. A.

*Under the Jolly Roger: Being an Account of the Further Nautical*

*Adventures of Jacky Faber*

Harcourt, 2005

\$17.00

Grades 7-12

Shanghied by a press gang, Jacky (Mary Faber) finds herself aboard a privateer in this third book of her adventures. She outwits the crazy captain, takes command of the ship, and begins her career as a pirate!

Schlitz, Laura Amy

*A Drowned Maiden's Hair*

Candlewick, 2006

\$15.99

Grades 5-12

Maud, a young girl orphan, learns that appearances can be deceiving as she is adopted into a family of elderly sisters with secrets. Her yearning for true love saves her.

Sturtevant, Katherine

*A True and Faithful Narrative*

Farrar, 2006

\$17.00

Grades 7-Adult

Sixteen-year-old Meg helps out in her father's bookstore in mid-17th century England. When her friend and suitor, Edward, is taken captive by pirates, she works to raise his ransom while trying to sort out her conflicting emotions.

Yang, Gene Luen

*American Born Chinese*

First Second, 2006

\$25.00

Grades 6-Adult

Bay Area graphic novelist Yang successfully tackles complex issues of racism, self-acceptance, and the desperate desire to become someone else by interweaving three stories. The main focus is on Chinese-American boy Jin who has a crush on a Caucasian girl, augmented by the TV sitcom-style story of Jin's cousin Chin-Kee (a racist stereotype) with parallels to the mythical Monkey King.