



The Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California (ACL)

Distinguished Books 2011

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.

Books are designated as "distinguished" through a process of nomination, discussion, and voting by members of the Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California (ACL).

Grade designations in the annotations are approximate.

The Distinguished Books Committee for 2011 was chaired by:

Kathryn Shepler, Aurora School

Eric Barbus, San Francisco Public Library

bayviews.org

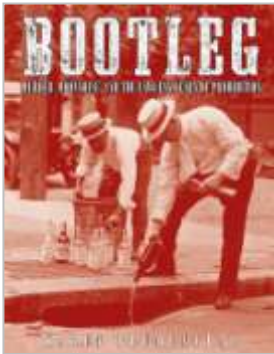
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Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Nonfiction



Blumentahl, Karen

Bootleg: Murder, Moonshine, and the Lawless Years of Prohibition

Roaring Brook, 2011 \$18.99 Grades 6-12

Blumenthal delivers a riveting account of Prohibition - its many colorful characters, and its unexpected outcomes. This is a well-documented and lively history useful for research or general reading.

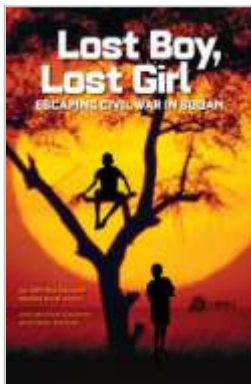
Chin, Jason

Coral Reefs

Illustrated by Jason Chin

Roaring Brook, 2011 \$16.99 Grades 2-4

Stunning illustrations depict a girl selecting a book on coral reefs from the library shelves, being transported to the Belize barrier reef, and returning to the library steps, where she shares the book with other children.



Dau, John Bul and Martha Arual Akech

Lost Boy, Lost Girl: Escaping Civil War in Sudan

National Geographic, 2010 \$15.95 Grades 5-10

Dau's book serves as a tribute to the tribal upbringing that sustained many during the Sudanese Civil War as they walked hundreds of miles, often without food and water, crossing and recrossing Sudan from Ethiopia to Kenya looking for refuge. The utter hopelessness and cruelty, but also courage, perseverance and occasional kindness that southern Sudanese refugees experience are related in straightforward prose.

Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Fleming, Candace

Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart

Schwartz & Wade, 2011

\$18.99

Grades 5-9

Fleming manages to create a fresh and even suspenseful biography of the well-known aviatrix by alternating chapters of usual biography format with chapters of ever-escalating tension recounting her final flight. Carefully chosen illustrations and intriguing sidebars provide a well-balanced portrait while the design makes it compulsively readable to young audiences.

Gann, Marjorie

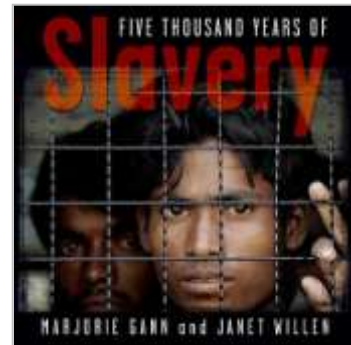
Five Thousand Years of Slavery

Tundra, 2011

\$27.95

Grades 5-8

A history of slaves covering ancient times, slaves from Africa to the New World, from Asia, and contemporary slavery (often children) in factories and farms, enhanced by photos, sidebars, maps, and other visuals.



Greenberg, Jan and Sandra Jordan

Ballet for Martha: Making "Appalachian Spring"

Illustrated by Brian Floca

Roaring Brook, 2010

\$17.99

Grades 1-5

Martha Graham did not allow her iconic dance performances to be filmed or photographed for most of her life, which makes Brian Floca's masterful capture of her performance of *Appalachian Spring* even more remarkable. Paired with simple, expertly chosen words by Greenberg and Jordan, the dance unfolds across two-page spreads, in rich watercolor and delicate pen.

Harris, Robie H.

Who Has What? All About Girls' Bodies and Boys' Bodies

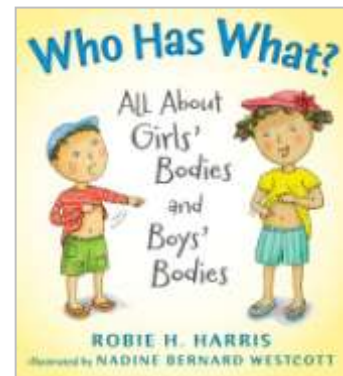
Illustrated by Nadine Bernard Westcott

Candlewick, 2011

\$15.99

Grades PreK-3

Using correct terminology and clear explanations, Harris explains the most obvious physical differences between males and females, providing an excellent starting place for young children with or without their parents. Westcott's lively cartoon style illustrations provide body maps and labels for the various private and public body parts.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Hoffman, Mary

The Great Big Book of Families

Illustrated by Ros Asquith

Dial, 2011

\$16.99

Grades PreK-2

In this title which honors family, Hoffman reinforces an inclusive message with references to homeless families, home schooling, unemployment, domestic partnerships and gay families. The result is a highly representative, well-executed tome reminding the reader that no two families are exactly the same and that diversity is something to be celebrated.

Jenkins, Martin

Can We Save the Tiger?

Illustrated by Vicky White

Candlewick, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 2-5

Jenkins explores factors threatening the survival of different animal species and what people can do to reverse these effects. With clear writing, an almost conversational tone, and large scale illustrations, this book engages children, capturing their attention from the very beginning.



Katz, Jon

Meet the Dogs of Bedlam Farm

Photographs by Jon Katz

Henry Holt, 2011

\$16.99

Grades K-2

A true story about Lenore, a loving black lab, as she teaches hard-working border collie Rose to play; calms border collie Izzy, who was abandoned and now feels safe; and brings home Frieda, a formerly wild Rottweiler German shepherd mix, whenever she runs off.

Krull, Kathleen

Kubla Khan: The Emperor of Everything

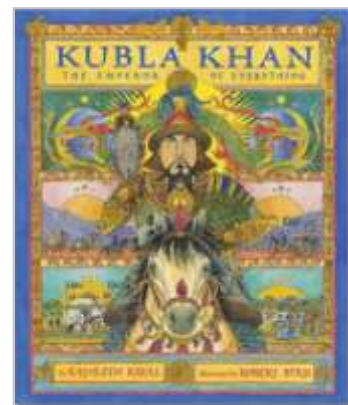
Illustrated by Robert Byrd

Viking, 2010

\$17.99

Grades 2-5

Kubla Khan was a complex man - a patron of the arts and sciences as well as a brutal conqueror of vast areas of Asia and Europe. Beautiful and detailed illustrations complement Krull's readable text.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Lyon, George Ella

Which Side Are You On?: The Story of a Song

Illustrated by Christopher Cardinale

Cinco Puntos, 2011

\$17.95

Grades 1-5

Told almost like a tall tale, this factual picture book describes how the labor union song "Which Side Are You On?" was written by a coal miner's wife named Florence Reece.

Macy, Sue

Basketball Belles: How Two Teams and One Scrappy Player Put Women's Hoops on the Map

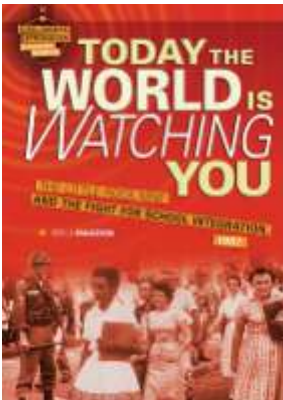
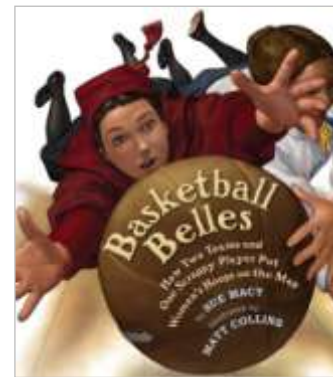
Illustrated by Matt Collins

Holiday House, 2011

\$16.95

Grades 3-6

The birth of women's hoops started in 1896 with a rough-and-tumble game between the University of California and Stanford in San Francisco, as described by one of the players in this rousing picture-book account of the game.



Magoon, Kekla

Today the World Is Watching You: The Little Rock Nine and the Fight for School Integration, 1957

Twenty-First Century, 2011

\$38.60

Grades 6-10

A thorough account of the harrowing experiences of the nine students who broke segregation's stranglehold by attending the previously all white Central High School in Little Rock. The text is interesting, compelling, and tightly written, and good photos, some rarely seen, are included.

Markle, Sandra

Family Pack

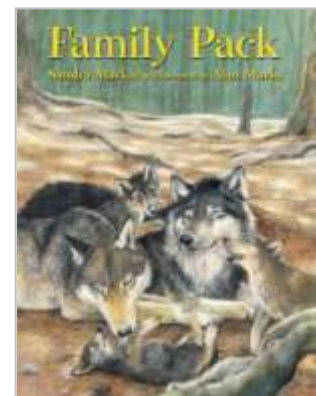
Illustrated by Alan Marks

Charlesbridge, 2011

\$15.95

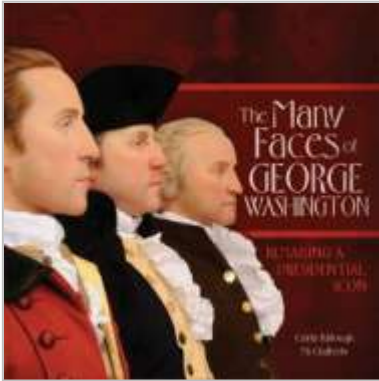
Grades PreK-3

A lone female wolf learns to live on her own after relocating from Canada to Yellowstone, finding a mate to form a new pack. Markle and Marks create the setting with poetic text and watercolor, pen, and pencil illustrations.



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2011 Distinguished Books



McClafferty, Carla Killough

The Many Faces of George Washington: Remaking a Presidential Icon

Carolrhoda, 2011

\$20.95

Grades 5-10

Using historical records, Jean-Antoine Houdon's remarkable sculpture, knowledge of anatomical aging, and digital technology, a team of historians, artisans, and engineers meticulously recreate three full-body sculptures of George Washington three different points in his life.

McPherson, Stephanie S.

Iceberg Right Ahead!: The Tragedy of the Titanic

Twenty-First Century, 2011

\$33.26

Grades 6-12

Color and black & white photos on every page and helpful sidebars make this a dynamic look at the sinking of the Titanic, but the narrative is equally strong; the personal stories added here and there involve the reader.



Nelson, Kadir

Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans

Illustrated by Kadir Nelson

Balzer + Bray, 2011

\$19.99

Grades 3-8

An unnamed female narrator recounts the history of African-Americans as if she were speaking to her grandchildren, in this emotional narrative nonfiction book containing full color paintings on every other page.

Pringle, Laurence

Billions of Years, Amazing Changes: The Story of Evolution

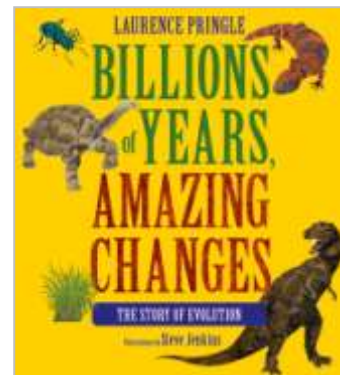
Illustrated by Steve Jenkins

Boyd's Mills, 2011

\$17.95

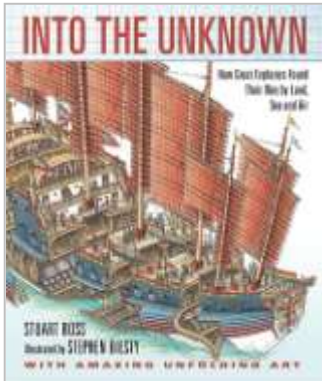
Grades 5-8

This well-organized, easy to understand title lays out a clear explanation of evolution and the science behind it. While there is a lot of text, the writing is easy to understand and is supplemented with a variety of illustrations, including photos, drawings, and paper collage art.



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Ross, Stewart

Into the Unknown: How Great Explorers Found Their Way by Land, Sea, and Air

Illustrated by Stephen Biesty

Candlewick, 2011

\$19.99

Grades 4-8

Detailed diagrams of tools, maps, equipment, and other apparatus pull readers into this survey of explorers. The larger, foldout pictures of such historic subjects as ships, river steamers, and space rockets will lure them into the text. Each chapter provides just enough information for the mildly curious, history buffs, would-be engineers, and aspiring explorers.

Sweet, Melissa

Balloons Over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade

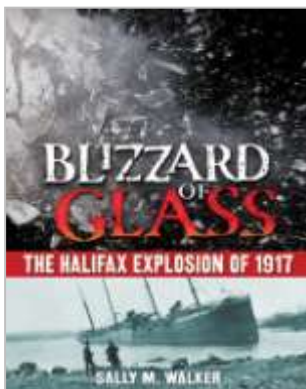
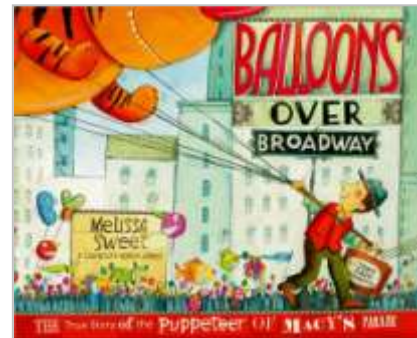
Illustrated by Melissa Sweet

Houghton Mifflin, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 1-4

A feast for the eyes, this buoyant biography celebrates the creativity of Tony Sarg, the puppeteer who developed and designed the very first balloons for Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade.



Walker, Sally M.

Blizzards of Glass: The Halifax Explosion of 1917

Henry Holt, 2011

\$18.99

Grades 5-12

Dramatic photos, a stirring narrative, and minute by minute factual account describe the explosion that wiped out a sizable portion of the Canadian city of Halifax in December 1917.

Warren, Andrea

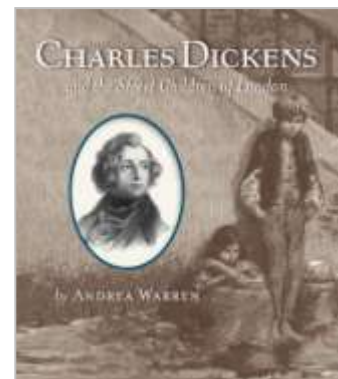
Charles Dickens and the Street Children of London

Houghton Mifflin, 2011

\$18.99

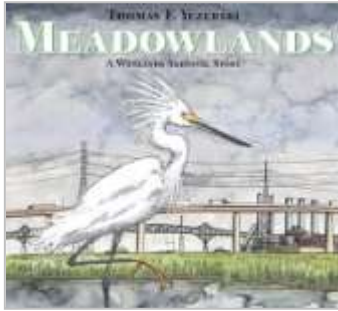
Grades 6-12

Warren describes the impact of Dickens' life and works on the social movements of his day. Details about workhouses, orphanages, and the first public schools are relevant to current humanitarian efforts in this inspiring book.



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2011 Distinguished Books



Yezerski, Thomas F.

Meadowlands: A Wetlands Survival Story

Illustrated by Thomas F. Yezerski

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011 \$17.99 Grades 3-5

The author's detailed watercolor and pen and ink illustrations show the decline and return of the precious New Jersey estuary while the book provides a lesson in reclaiming wetlands almost destroyed over four centuries.

Folklore

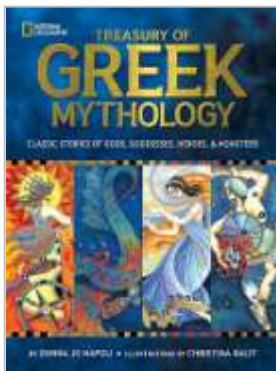
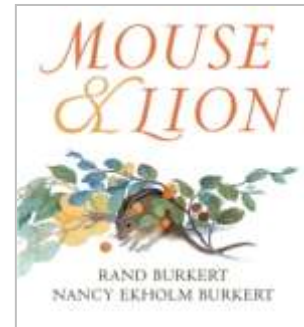
Burkert, Rand

Mouse & Lion

Illustrated by Nancy Ekholm Burkert

Michael di Capua, 2011 \$17.95 Grades 1-5

Aesop's classic fable is retold and freshly illustrated by the Burkerts, a talented mother and son team. Facial expressions and postures reveal attitudes and personalities, and ample use of white space accentuates action. Words and images dance together beautifully in a book perfect for reading aloud or alone.



Napoli, Donna Jo

Treasury of Greek Mythology: Classic Stories of Gods, Goddesses, Heroes, and Monsters

Illustrated by Christina Balit

National Geographic, 2011 \$24.95 Grades 4-10

From the primordial Gaia to the legendary but mortal Helen, this retelling of the Greek myths and "classic stories" is truly a treasury. The narrative is respectful yet cheeky and the stately, occasionally scary illustrations, accompanied by captions, match the lively retelling.

Poetry

Hauth, Katherine B.

What's for Dinner: Quirky, Squirmy Poems from the Animal World.

Illustrated by David Clark

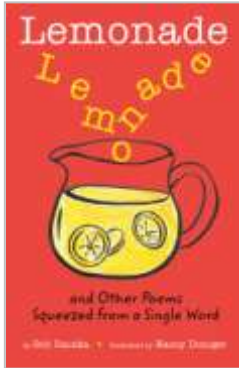
Charlesbridge, 2011 \$16.95 Grades 2-6

Rhyming free verse poems introduce global food chains with a healthy dose of disgusting humor. Watercolor and ink illustrations continue the playful tone. Additional features include table of contents, appendix and bibliography.



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Raczka, Bob.

Lemonade: And Other Poems Squeezed from a Single Word.

Illustrated by Nancy Doniger.

Roaring Brook, 2011

\$16.95

Grades 2-6

Anagrams, rebus and riddle are applied to form 22 poems using the letters from a single word with strikingly simple results. Playful illustrations in red and black ink take advantage of turning the page for a dynamic outcome.

Sidman, Joyce

Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature

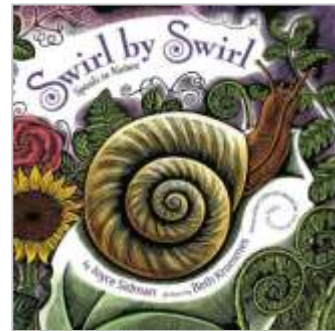
Illustrated by Beth Krommes

Houghton Mifflin, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 1-4

Accompanied by elegant scratchboard illustrations, a lyrical poem describes a variety of spirals as they appear and unfold, wind and explore, swirl and expand in natural settings.



Silverstein, Shel

Every Thing on It

Illustrated by Shel Silverstein

HarperCollins, 2011

\$19.99

Grades 2-7

Silverstein's signature ink drawings on white backgrounds and distinctive rhymes are back with a collection of over 140 poems that will have the same appeal as his best-sellers *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1974) and *Light in the Attic* (1981). Some of the poems are just two lines, others are three pages, but all will find fans.

Biography

Rubin, Susan Goldman

Music Was It: Young Leonard Bernstein

Charlesbridge, 2011

\$19.95

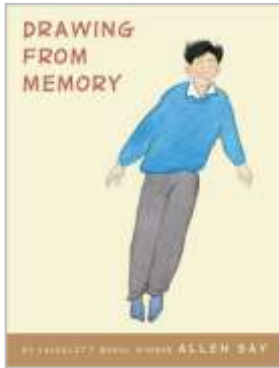
Grades 5-8

From early childhood through his college and early adulthood, this engaging biography chronicles the life of Leonard Bernstein up to his triumphant debut at age twenty-five, as conductor of the New York Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall.



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Say, Allen

Drawing From Memory

Illustrated by Allen Say

Scholastic, 2011

\$17.99

Grades 5-8

Allen Say recalls his Japanese boyhood, schooling, and art apprenticeship, but lets his exquisite pen and brush do most of the talking in this handsomely illustrated memoir and tribute to his “sensei” or master teacher.

Sheinkin, Steve

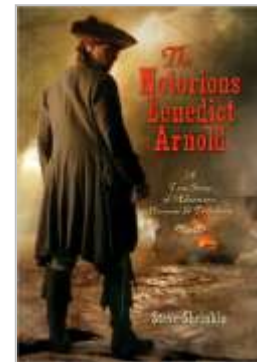
The Notorious Benedict Arnold: A True Story of Adventure, Heroism & Treachery

Roaring Brook, 2011

\$19.99

Grades 5-9

Sheinkin creates a well-researched non-fiction biography that reads like a gripping novel. Primary source materials are woven into a compulsively readable narrative filled with humor, history and human psychology.



Young, Ed

The House Baba Built : An Artist's Childhood in China

Text as told to Libby Koponen

Illustrated by Ed Young

Little Brown, 2011

\$17.99

Grades 3-8

In a moving, brilliantly illustrated memoir, artist Ed Young recalls his Shanghai childhood, introduces his extended family, and describes their life together in the house his father designed.

Graphic Novels

Broskol, Vera

Anya's Ghost

Illustrated by Vera Broskol

First Second, 2011

\$19.99

Grades 7-Adult

Anya has everything you don't need to succeed in high school, including a ghost named Emily who's hitched a ride in her school bag. The ghost story—satisfyingly creepy—really acts as arc and allegory for Anya's high school travails: getting caught smoking, having a crush on the wrong person, and tripping in gym class and exposing underwear.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Hatke, Ben

Zita the Spacegirl: Book One, Far From Home

Illustrated by Ben Hatke

First Second, 2011

\$17.99

Grade 3-7

Zita tries to rescue her friend on another planet, with the help of a robot, giant mouse, and other allies in a full color cartoon graphic novel reminiscent of "The Wizard of Oz."

Phelan, Matt

Around the World: Three Remarkable Journeys

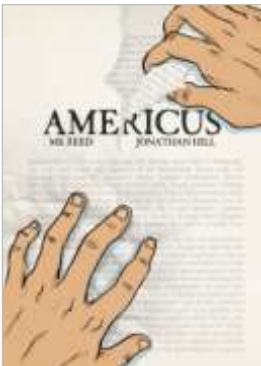
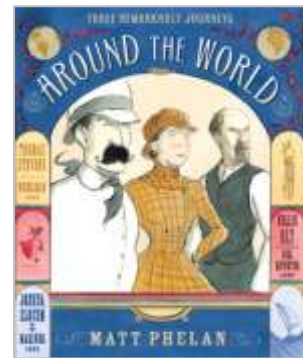
Illustrated by Matt Phelan

Candlewick, 2011

\$24.99

Grades 4-7

Award-winning graphic novelist Phelan (*Storm in the Barn*, 2009) chronicles the real-life journeys of three nineteenth century adventurers. Middle grade readers will be brought into the lives of these navigators by the visual appeal of Phelan's artwork, but they will be held by his masterful storytelling.



Reed, MK

Americus

Illustrated by Jonathan Hill

First Second, 2011

\$14.99

Grades 7-12

Neil Barton, a shy, lonely high school student, is crazy about a fantasy-novel series that may be banned from the public library. By joining forces to defend the book, Neil finds his voice in this satisfying graphic novel.

Santat, Dan

Sidekicks

Illustrated by Dan Santat

Scholastic, 2011

\$24.99

Grades 3-6

Aging Captain Amazing is searching for a new sidekick, and his charismatic pets desperately want the position. A perfect marriage of slapstick humor, thrilling action, and emotional heft makes this an utterly original superhero graphic novel.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books

Fiction



Auxier, Jonathan

Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes

Amulet, 2011

\$16.95

Grades 4-7

Peter Nimble, a young orphan, is the greatest thief in the world and when he steals a box containing three pairs of mysterious eyes, he is launched on an epic quest. A fantasy full of magic, adventure, companionship, and suspense.

Beam, Cris

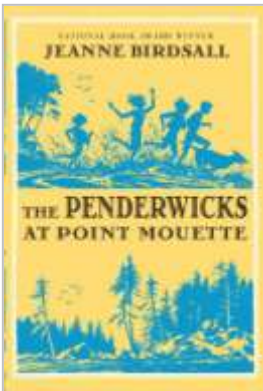
I Am J

Little, Brown, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 7-12

J, a transgendered Latino teen living in New York City, has always known that he is a boy despite his female genitalia and finally decides that he has to change his life to reflect his identity. *I Am J* could be accused of didacticism, but in the best possible way: it provides essential information for trans- and cisgendered readers alike.



Birdsall, Jeanne

The Penderwicks at Point Mouette

Knopf, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 3-6

Summer vacation in Maine without their father or sister Rosalind leaves Skye as OAP (oldest available Penderwick), a terrifying responsibility. She must defend Jane from heartbreak, prevent Batty exploding (!), and help friend Jeffrey accept his real father.

Brooks, Martha

Queen of Hearts

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011

\$17.99

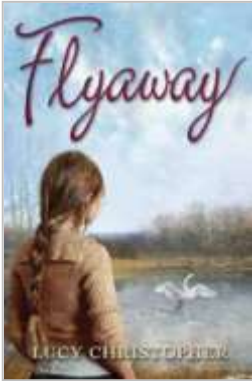
Grades 6-10

When 15-year old Marie-Claire and her younger brother and sister contract tuberculosis, they are sent to a nearby sanatorium to "chase the cure." Narrated in the present tense by Marie-Claire, the imagery is vivid and frightening, and Marie-Claire's guilt about causing her brother to fall ill is palpable.



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Christopher, Lucy
Flyaway

Scholastic, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 5-8

Thirteen-year-old Isla's feelings for her father, who has had a heart attack, and Harry, a young man in the hospital with bone cancer, merge with her determination to help a lone whooper swan on the hospital lake find a flock. All the relationships are carefully defined as previous events that have caused friction slowly emerge and define the present.

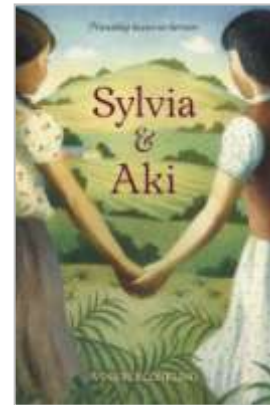
Conkling, Winifred
Sylvia and Aki

Tricycle, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 4-6

Alternating chapters introduce Japanese-American Aki, whose family is imprisoned in an internment camp, and Mexican-American Sylvia, who is not allowed to attend the local "white" school. Based on real people and true events in California.



Cooper, Illene
Angel in My Pocket

Feiwel & Friends, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 5-8

Brief ownership of an angel coin coincides with chance encounters that unlock these eighth-graders inner strengths and help them find true friendship in each other. A funny and moving narrative with well-developed characters.

Cottrell Boyce, Frank
The Unforgotten Coat

Illustrated by Carl Hunter and Clare Heney

Candlewick, 2011

\$15.99

Grades 4-7

Julie recalls the arrival of 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.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Deedy, Carmen Agra and Randall Wright

The Cheshire Cheese Cat: A Dickens of a Tale

Illustrated by Barry Moser

Peachtree, 2011

\$16.95

Grades 3-6

Skilley, an alley cat, is taken on as a mouser in *Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese* tavern, but instead of catching mice he makes friends with them. An intelligently written, humorous and charmingly literary animal fantasy.

Ellis, Deborah

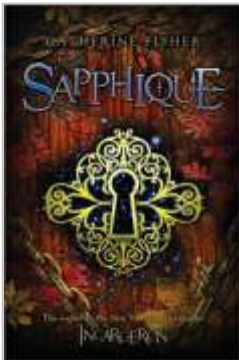
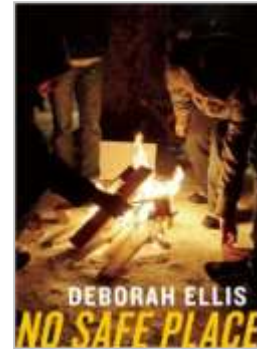
No Safe Place

Groundwood, 2010

\$16.95

Grades 6-10

Three refugee teens meet on a small boat, all trying to get from France to England to start new lives in a fact-based story that is told in flashbacks.



Fisher, Catherine

Sapphique

Dial, 2010

\$17.99

Grades 8-12

In this compelling sequel to *Incarceron* (2010), Finn and Claudia are “outside” the prison, although not at all free, and trying to declare Finn king so that they can save their world and rescue their friends Kiero and Attia trapped “inside” the prison. A bleak but appropriate denouement concludes the saga, leaving several large questions

Frost, Helen

Hidden

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 5-10

Wren was kidnapped at age eight, and at age fourteen she meets the kidnapper’s daughter Darra at summer camp – discover how they cope with this shared tragedy in this novel in verse told in alternating voices.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Gantos, Jack

Dead End in Norvelt

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011

\$15.99

Grades 5-8

The 2012 Newbery Medal and Scott O'Dell Historical Fiction Medal winner is a "semi-memoir, semi-fiction" novel that is filled with small town history, gothic humor, vivid characters and plenty of mysterious dead bodies and nose-bleeds. Set in the dying (literally) 1962 New Deal town of Norvelt, the episodic format keeps the action moving at a fast clip while the sardonic voice keeps the reader chuckling.

Gidwitz, Adam

A Tale Dark and Grimm

Dutton, 2010

\$16.99

Grades 4-8

Not your standard Hansel and Gretel retelling, the twin siblings wander their way through a series of "adventures" that are actually riffs on other Grimm's tales, always hoping to find a good home where they will be taken care of by a good parent. Gidwitz has taken numerous liberties with the Grimm canon, mixing and matching tales while adding his own slant.



Gleitzman, Morris

Then

Henry Holt, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 6-Adult

The sequel to *Once* (2005), this tale of two Polish orphans in Nazi times is told in child-like prose, at odds with the grim episodes of the narrative and the strangely sophisticated outlook of its 10-year-old narrator.

Hardinge, Frances

Fly Trap

HarperCollins, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 7-Adult

Mosca Mye, a 12-year old street urchin, finds herself kidnapped and brought to the town of Toll which becomes a different, much more violent and harrowing town by night. Hardinge's sequel to her widely acclaimed *Fly By Night* (2006) is dense with detail, giving the story a vivid sense of place and helping to make the physical setting an active participant.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Henkes, Kevin

Junonia

Greenwillow, 2011

\$15.99

Grades 3-5

Every February, Alice's family celebrates her birthday at the same Florida cottage, joining the same group of vacationers, and observing the same set of traditions. Alice's tenth birthday, however, brings unexpected changes.

Holm, Jennifer L.

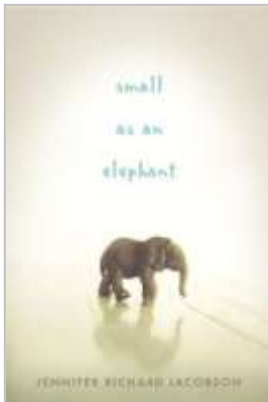
The Trouble with May Amelia

Atheneum, 2011

\$15.99

Grades 4-7

Using humorous episodic chapters told in first person, May Amelia experiences joy as well as tragedy in Washington state in 1900, in this memorable sequel to *Our Only May Amelia* (1999).



Jacobson, Jennifer Richard

Small As an Elephant

Candlewick, 2011

\$15.99

Grades 4-7

On a camping trip with his single mother in Acadia National Park, 11-year-old Jack Martel wakes up to find that she has abandoned him. Jacobson weaves both a riveting adventure story of Jack's survival as well as a heartbreaking drama of a child coping in a household where he never knows when his mother will enter one of her "spinning" times.

Lai, Thanhha

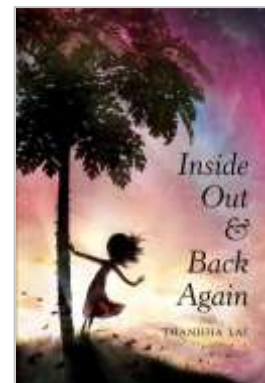
Inside Out & Back Again

HarperCollins, 2011

\$15.99

Grades 4-12

In the voice of a young girl -- based on the author's experience -- a series of free verse poems tell the story of 1975, when she and her family leave Vietnam and resettle in Alabama.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Lane, Andrew

Death Cloud: Sherlock Holmes, the Legend Begins

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011 \$16.99 Grades 7-12

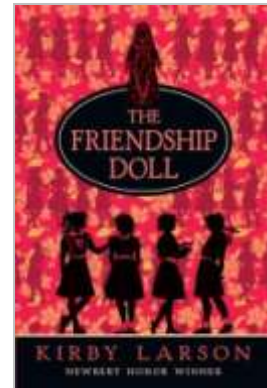
His father's regiment's reassignment to India and his mother's illness compel fourteen-year-old Sherlock Holmes to stay with relatives. Sherlock's later quirks, including tobacco in slippers, notes secured with a knife, and fascination with bees, start here.

Larson, Kirby

Friendship Doll

Delacorte, 2011 \$15.99 Grades 4-7

In 1927, Japanese school children sent 58 dolls to the United States as a gesture of goodwill. This touching story follows the travels of one of these friendship dolls and the four girls who bond with her. Each character's story lasts for one chapter, but Larson develops full characters, shedding light on how the Depression affected a range of children.



Magoon, Kekla

Camo Girl

Aladdin, 2011 \$15.99 Grades 5-7

Taunted as "Camo Face" because of her uneven skin tone, Ella has only one good friend until a new student takes a special interest in her. A compelling story that deftly weaves together themes of race, differences, disabilities, and bullying.

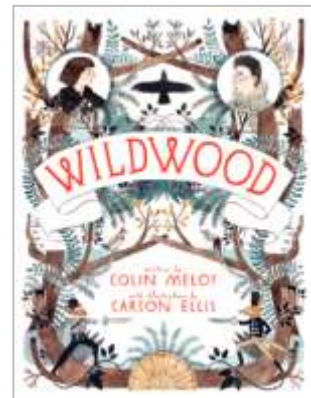
Meloy, Colin

Wildwood

Illustrated by Carson Ellis

Balzer + Bray, 2011 \$17.99 Grades 4-8

Twelve-year old Prue is babysitting her infant brother Mac when he is suddenly abducted by a "murder" of crows and whisked away to the Impassable Wilderness, a forbidden patch of the wild within the city limits of Portland, Oregon. Meloy creates a vivid fantasy world with beautifully crafted language and smart dialogue, and Ellis's delicate, detailed illustrations bring the animal inhabitants of this fantastical world to life.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Neri, G.

Ghetto Cowboy

Illustrated by Jesse Joshua Watson

Candlewick, 2011

\$15.99

Grades 5-8

In this original coming-of-age novel, 12-year-old Cole and his tight-knit community of African-American urban cowboys struggle to protect their neighborhood stables from closure. An excellent choice for reluctant readers.

Ness, Patrick

A Monster Calls

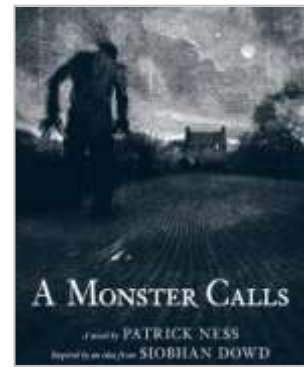
Illustrated by Jim Kay

Candlewick, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 6-10

As Conor watches his mother succumb to cancer, a monster comes calling who tells him three stories that change his perspective on life. A masterpiece of imagination and catharsis with wide appeal.



O'Connor, Barbara

The Fantastic Secret of Owen Jester

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010

\$15.99

Grades 3-6

A fantastic fable about a boy and his friends who find a small submarine in Carter, Georgia, which they use to search for an enormous bullfrog named Tooley.

Okorafor, Nnedi

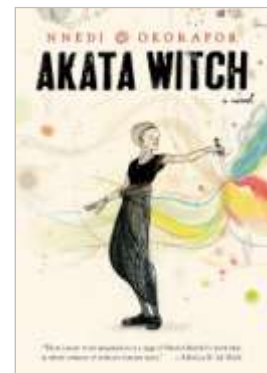
Akata Witch

Viking, 2011

\$17.99

Grades 5-Adult

Caught between Nigerian and American culture, albino Sunny discovers she is an Igbo witch and must save the world. A vividly realized fantasy of a feisty outsider heroine realized in a contemporary urban African setting.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Oliver, Lauren

Liesl & Po

Illustrated by Kei Acedera

HarperCollins, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 4-7

A tender-hearted ghost helps Liesl escape her evil stepmother so she can carry out her father's last wishes. Her box, however, contains the "Most Powerful Magic in the World," not her father's ashes, and villains are in hot pursuit.

Oppel, Kenneth

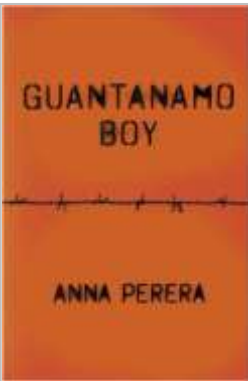
This Dark Endeavor

Simon & Schuster, 2011

\$17.99

Grades 6-10

The young Victor Frankenstein goes on three quests to find magical ingredients for the Elixir of Life. Oppel opens a chilling new series, vividly creating a creepily Gothic world with Victor as the somewhat unlikable but passionate lead.



Perera, Anna.

Guantanamo Boy

Albert Whitman, 2011

\$17.99

Grades 7-12

While looking for his father who has gone missing on a trip in Pakistan, Khalid finds himself being questioned by the CIA – first taken to Afghanistan, then to Guantanamo Bay, where he is tortured and denied any rights. The narrative is a page-turner beginning with a great setup showing how Khalid is just an average kid who is later thrust into extreme events.

Reeve, Philip

A Web of Air

Scholastic, 2011

\$17.99

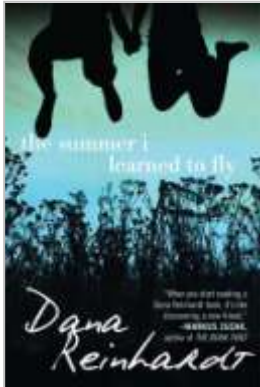
Grades 6-10

Fever Crumb uses electricity -- an ancient technology-- to light up the stage on a travelling barge theater. She also helps Arlo Thursday build an aircraft, but others will stop at nothing to either steal or destroy it. (Book 2 of the steampunk-genre "Fever Crumb" series.)



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Reinhardt, Dana.

The Summer I Learned to Fly

Wendy Lamb, 2011

\$15.99

Grades 6-8

Growing up in a small California coastal town, thirteen-year-old Robin's summer lacks excitement until she discovers the enigmatic Emmett Crane and finds herself drawn to him and his unusual quest in this richly evocative story.

Schmidt, Gary D.

Okay for Now

Clarion, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 5-8

After his abusive father is fired from his job, Doug Swieteck and his family move to a rural town where Doug wanders into the library and discovers an old John James Audubon book of bird drawings that inspires him to refine his own drawing skills. Doug's library and drawing excursions show the transportative and transformative power of art and knowledge, and, most importantly, how it can become a ticket of escape and a way to a better future.



Selznick, Brian

Wonderstruck

Illustrated by Brian Selznick

Scholastic, 2011

\$29.99

Grades 5-10

In seemingly unrelated stories, one told via illustrations and the other via text, two people experience profound loss and surprising love. Both main characters are deaf and have an affinity for Manhattan's American Museum of Natural History.

Senzai, N. H.

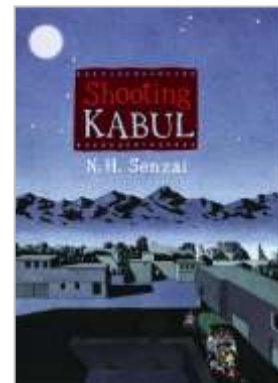
Shooting Kabul

Simon & Schuster, 2010

\$18.99

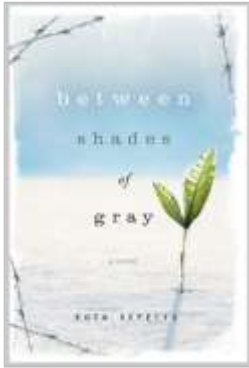
Grades 5-8

Set in Fremont, California, sixth-grader Fadi copes with discrimination after the September 11th terrorist attacks as well as guilt over leaving his six-year-old sister behind in Afghanistan in this memorable debut novel.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Sepetys, Ruta

Between Shades of Grey

Philomel, 2011

\$17.99

Grades 6-Adult

Lina, her brother, and their mother are taken from their home in Lithuania by the Soviet secret police in 1941 and sent to Siberia. The story is grim but makes for compelling reading with clear descriptive prose and natural dialogue.

Spratt, R. A.

The Adventures of Nanny Piggins

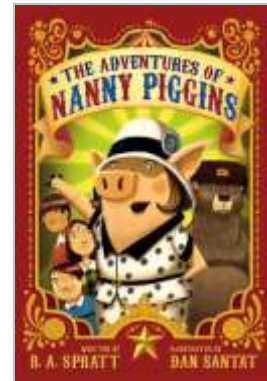
Illustrated by Dan Santat

Little, Brown, 2010

\$15.99

Grades 2-5

Cheapskate Mr. Green hires Nanny Piggins to look after his three children, even though she is a pig and one who prioritizes sugar, chocolate and fun. Each chapter is a self-contained chortle-filled escapade and would make a perfect readaloud.



Stiefvater, Maggie

Scorpio Races

Scholastic, 2011

\$17.99

Grades 8-Adult

On Thisby island, young lovers Sean and Puck compete in the races of carnivorous water horses who may devour or mutilate their riders. Only one may win the prize that will save their families and their futures.

Ursu, Anne

Breadcrumbs

Illustrated by Erin McGuire

HarperCollins, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 4-7

Warned about her overactive imagination, Hazel needs every bit of it to survive the enchanted forest and come to her best friend Jack's rescue in this spellbinding modern retelling of Andersen's "The Snow Queen."



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Valente, Catherynne M.

The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making

Illustrated by Ana Juan

Feiweil & Friends, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 6-10

September is whisked away from her mundane existence one evening by the Green Wind and deposited on the outskirts of Fairyland where she embarks upon an epic journey, meeting a host of odd characters in extraordinary situations. The densely-worded passages with rich vocabulary roll off the tongue and paint a vivid world in this episodic gem.

Vanderpool, Clare

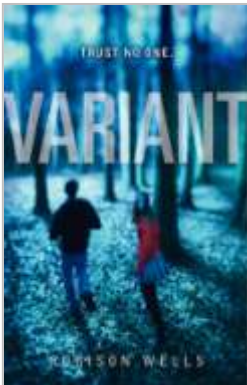
Moon Over Manifest

Delacorte, 2010

\$16.99

Grades 5-8

Vanderpool created the 2011 Newbery winner with layers upon layers of beautifully crafted plot and voice. The story of small town Abilene, Kansas in 1936 - worn down by the Depression, drought and a mystery - is interspersed with the story of Abilene in 1918 using letters from the front in WWI, old newspaper articles, gossip columns and product adverts. The stories are woven together with history, pathos and humor.



Wells, Robison

Variant

HarperTeen, 2011

\$17.99

Grades 6-Adult

Benson Fisher gets a scholarship to an apparently prestigious boarding school, but, on arrival, he realizes almost immediately that something is not right. A plot-driven page-turner with surprisingly well-rounded characters and some whoa-didn't-see-that-coming twists.

Wells, Rosemary

On the Blue Comet

Illustrated by Bagram Ibatouline

Candlewick, 2010

\$16.99

Grades 4-7

An 11-year-old boy takes a Lionel train ride into the future and the past that includes enough unexpected detours to keep the reader contentedly off-balance through the very last chapter. Ibatouline's glorious full-color illustrations in acrylic and gouache are reminiscent of Rockwell's *Saturday Evening Post* covers and add to the authenticity of the whole.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Williams, Michael

Now is the Time for Running

Little, Brown, 2011

\$17.99

Grades 9-12

Deo and his older, developmentally disabled brother (aptly named Innocent) find themselves living as refugees in Johannesburg, South Africa, where they must endure brutal xenophobia and the terrifying realities of life on the streets. Williams' spare language and tender portrayal of Deo and Innocent's brotherly relationship combine for a poignant experience.

Wood, Maryrose

The Incorrigible Children of Ashton Place: the Hidden Gallery

Illustrated by Jon Klassen

Balzer + Bray, 2011

\$15.99

Grades 4-6

In this second installment, Penelope Lumley, graduate of the Swanburne Academy for Poor Bright Females and now governess of the three Incorrigibles, prepares to embark on a trip to London to visit her head mistress. Unintentionally, when asking Lady Ashton for permission, she precipitates a trip to London for the Ashtons and all the household staff as well.



Wynne-Jones, Tim

Blink and Caution

Candlewick, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 9-12

A homeless teen boy and runaway girl must utilize their street smarts to unravel the mystery of a staged kidnapping with global implications. Friendship is forged in this fast-paced and hard-boiled thriller.

Yee, Lisa

Warp Speed

Arthur A. Levine, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 5-8

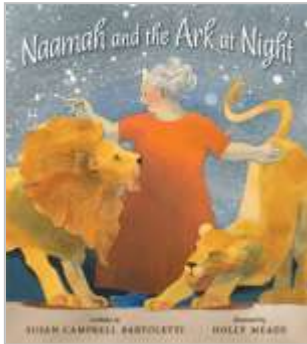
In this fourth novel of a set of companion novels that began with *Millicent Min, Girl Genius* (2003), we hear about eighth grade from the point of view of Marley Sandelski, member of the AV Club at Rancho Rosetta Middle School, a *Star Trek* geek and daily victim of verbal and physical abuse by his classmates. Marley's inevitable transformation comes about slowly and with excellent scaffolding, so that he earns our respect when he finally stands up for himself.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books

Picture Books



Bartoletti, Susan Campbell
Naamah and the Ark at Night

Illustrated by Holly Meade

Candlewick, 2011

\$16.99

Grades PreK-2

As the ark pitches and rolls through an evening storm, Noah's wife Naamah makes her rounds, soothing and singing to the anxious creatures in a melodious, comforting lullaby beautifully illustrated in collage and watercolor art.

Basher, Simon.

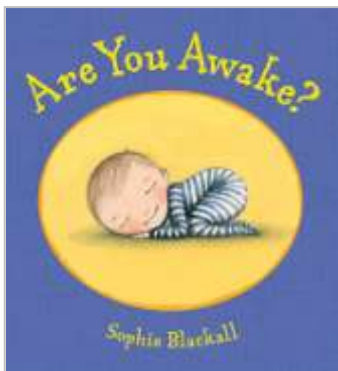
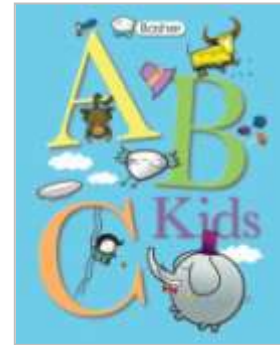
ABC Kids.

Kingfisher, 2011

\$16.95

Grades PreK-K

Simple sentences cavort among upper and lower case letters. Japanese anime and European graphic design styles combine with the alphabet on each page featuring the highlighted letter for clear, uncluttered, fun illustrations.



Blackall, Sophie

Are You Awake?

Illustrated by Sophie Blackall

Henry Holt, 2011

\$12.99

Grades Toddler-1

Blackall documents a circular conversation between a mother and her boy, portraying context only through the Chinese ink and watercolor illustrations that reinforce a cozy roundness. The shifting moods and playfulness are captured artfully in the balance between text and illustration, and the book changes on subsequent reads, though always, finally, someone falls asleep.

Cole, Brock

The Money We'll Save

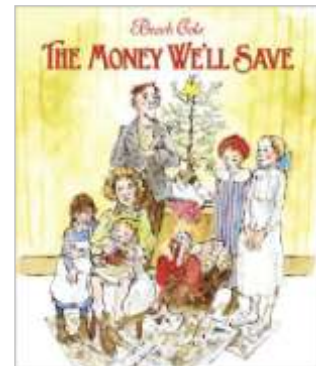
Illustrated by Brock Cole

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011

\$16.99

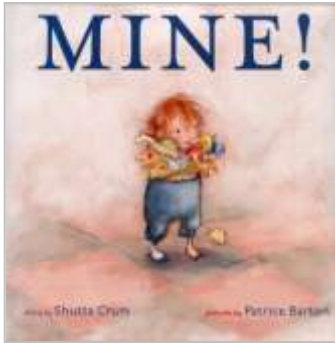
Grades PreK-5

Father buys a live turkey to fatten up for Christmas dinner in this hilarious original picture book told in the style of a folktale, and set in the late 1800's in a New York City tenement.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Crum, Shutta
Mine!

Illustrated by Patrice Barton

Knopf, 2011 \$16.99

Grades Baby/Toddler-2

This joyful almost wordless picture book explores sharing among a baby, a toddler, and a dog who delightedly romp through a pile of toys, many of which land in the dog's water dish.

Dunklee, Annika

My Name Is Elizabeth!

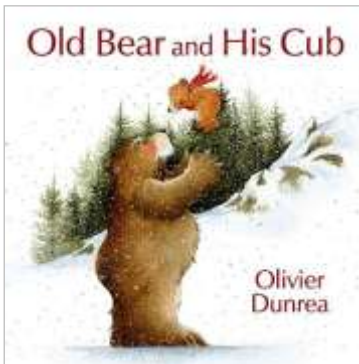
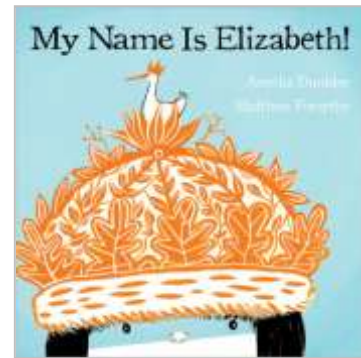
Illustrated by Matthew Forsythe

Kids Can, 2011

\$14.95

Grades PreK-3

Young Elizabeth has lots of reasons to like her name: it's nine letters long; her mouth does all kinds of neat things when she says it; there's a queen named for her. So why do others call her everything but Elizabeth? Executed with grace and humor, this addresses an issue that will be familiar to many kids and succeeds because it never takes itself too seriously.



Dunrea, Olivier

Old Bear and His Cub

Illustrated by Olivier Dunrea

Philomel, 2010

\$16.99

Grades PreK-2

Old Bear, a bit of a curmudgeon with a bushy beard and eyebrows, is constantly trying to wrangle his frisky Little Cub. Eventually, their roles reverse with the final spread showing the two bears tenderly snuggled up in bed encapsulating their love for each other, despite their battles.

Evans, Shane W.

Underground

Illustrated by Shane W. Evans

Roaring Brook, 2011

\$16.99

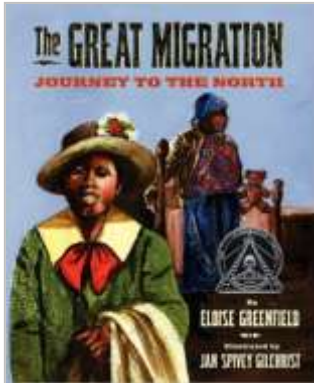
Grades PreK-3

Shane Evans achieves the nearly impossible—distilling a serious topic to a level understandable for preschoolers while not diluting the power of the material. The story of a group of slaves traveling the Underground Railroad is conveyed in one two-to-four word sentence per page in this picture book which perfectly satisfies a common, difficult-to-fill request: a Black History Month read-aloud for preschoolers.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Greenfield, Eloise
The Great Migration: Journey to the North

Illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist

Amistad, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 5-10

Greenfield eloquently captures the movement of African-Americans from the South to the North during the Great Migration. Her poetic voice clearly communicates to the reader the emotions and ache of having to leave one's home and land to find better opportunities and a better life, while Jan Spivey Gilchrist's mixed-media collages are reminiscent of faded photographs.

Haines, Mike

Wild Alphabet: an A to Zoo Pop-up Book

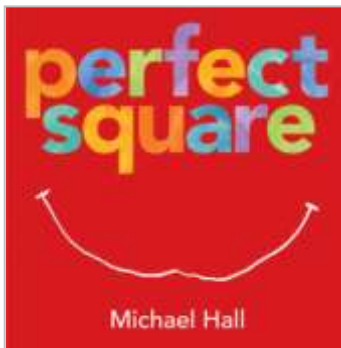
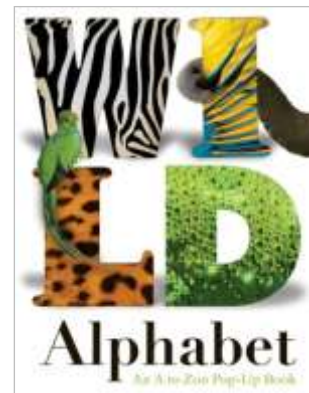
Illustrated by Julia Frohlich

Kingfisher, 2010

\$19.99

Grades PreK-3

Measuring only 5 X 7 inches square, this small book is packed with dynamic pop-up animals depicting the alphabet, accompanied by a color photo and first person sentence explaining characteristics of each animal.



Hall, Michael

Perfect Square

Illustrated by Michael Hall

Greenwillow, 2011

\$16.99

Grades Baby/Toddler-1

A winning concept book, wherein jewel-toned acrylics, simple text, and clean design impart the playful story of how a "perfectly happy" square is torn, shattered, and otherwise altered throughout one eventful week.

Henkes, Kevin

Little White Rabbit

Illustrated by Kevin Henkes

Greenwillow, 2011

\$16.99

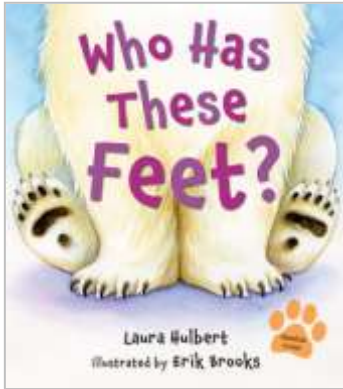
Grades Toddler-PreK

In a picture-book perfectly suited for very young children, "Little White Rabbit" is filled with wondering, but there is one thing he does not wonder about, and that's the most reassuring thought of all.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Hulbert, Laura

Who Has These Feet?

Illustrated by Erik Brooks

Henry Holt, 2011

\$16.99

Grades PreK-2

Illustrations of animal feet appear on two-page spreads with the question; "Who has these feet?" The entire animal is revealed on the next page. Fun for Storytime and worthwhile for early grade-schoolers.

Intriago, Patricia

Dot

Illustrated by Patricia Intriago

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011 \$14.99 Grades Toddler-1

This simple "opposites" concept book involving many different kinds of dots is exemplary in its ability to say a lot with very little. Intriago's background as a graphic/web designer is on full display as the book's restraint and simplicity make this title intuitive and user friendly.



Johnston, Tony

Levi Strauss Gets a Bright Idea or: A Fairly Fabricated Story of a Pair of Pants

Illustrated by Stacy Innerst

Harcourt, 2011

\$16.99

Grades 1-4

California gold miners wore out their pants and took to wearing barrels until Levi Strauss arrived and developed canvas pants, according to this tall tale. Lively language, vivid imagery, and unabashed exaggeration will keep readers in stitches.

Klassen, Jon

I Want My Hat Back

Illustrated by Jon Klassen

Candlewick, 2011

\$15.99

Grades K-3

Bear has lost his precious red hat and with exquisite pacing questions all the characters in the forest looking for it. The wry humor in the interplay of text and illustrations requires inference work by the reader producing the perfect example of a great picture book.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Lichtenheld, Tom and Ezra Fields-Meyer
E-mergency!

Illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld

Chronicle, 2011 \$16.99 Grades K-2

Hilarious and sophisticated, this alphabet for older readers demonstrates how difficult life would be if we couldn't use the letter "e" in the English language. From the front cover to the back, visual jokes and puns abound.

McDonnell, Patrick
Me...Jane

Illustrated by Patrick McDonnell

Little, Brown, 2011 \$15.99 Grades 1-3

Delicate watercolor illustrations and an equally spare narrative connect Jane Goodall's childhood activities, passions, and dreams to the fulfillment of those dreams as an adult primatologist in Africa.

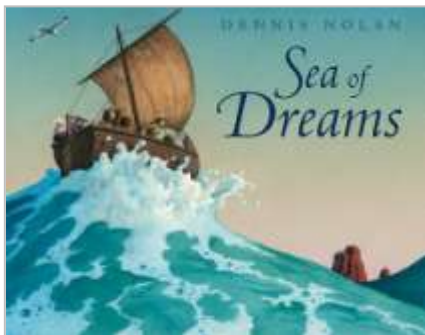


Nolan, Dennis
Sea of Dreams

Illustrated by Dennis Nolan

Roaring Brook, 2011 \$16.99 Grades PreK-2

Observed by a curious gull, a girl builds a majestic sand castle and leaves at dusk. As the tide rolls in, a light goes on in the sandcastle, and the wordless adventure begins.

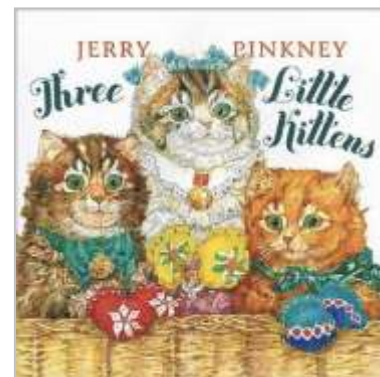


Pinkney, Jerry
Three Little Kittens

Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney

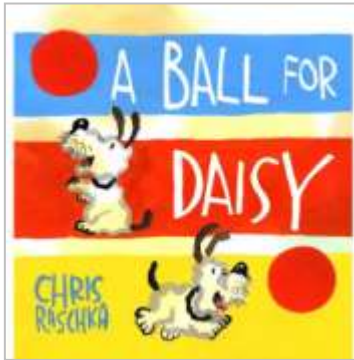
Dial, 2010 \$16.99 Grades PreK-2

Jerry Pinkney breathes new life into the traditional rhyme. Through words and illustration he creates a full-fledged adventure that will appeal to slightly older readers than the original rhyme.



Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California

2011 Distinguished Books



Raschka, Chris
A Ball for Daisy

Illustrated by Chris Raschka

Schwartz & Wade, 2011 \$16.99 Grades PreK-3

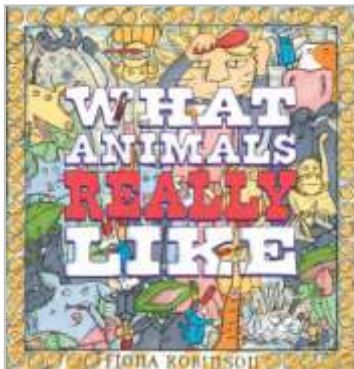
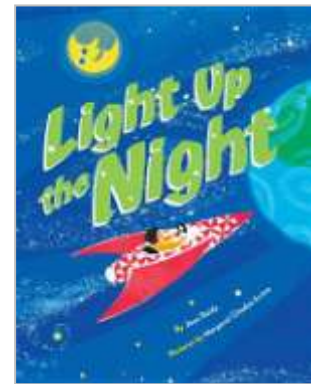
The ink, soft watercolor, and gouache illustrations in thick broad strokes show Daisy the dog's various expressions, from buoyant elation to utter disappointment, as she plays with the ball that goes everywhere with her. The charming story is easy to follow, and the reader learns a lesson about replacing someone else's broken toys. Winner of the 2012 Caldecott Award.

Reidy, Jean
Light Up the Night

Illustrated by Margaret Chodos-Irvine

Hyperion, 2011 \$16.99 Grades PreK-1

A young boy is tucked in at night by his mother, but the moment she turns off the light and shuts the door, the boy folds his blanket into a rocketship and is off to explore his universe. This cumulative tale boasts sing-song rhymes and pictures that are loaded with minute details which should make this a winning read-aloud or one-on-one share.



Robinson, Fiona
What Animals Really Like: A New Song Composed and Conducted by Mr. Herbert Timberteeth

Illustrated by Fiona Robinson

Abrams, 2011 \$15.95 Grades PreK-1

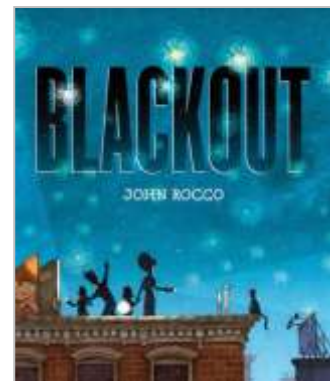
Dressed in formal attire, groups of animals listlessly sing about stereotypical preferences but then some animals rebel, proudly declaring what they actually like. A delightfully funny and subversive picture book that celebrates being oneself and questioning authority.

Rocco, John
Blackout

Illustrated by John Rocco

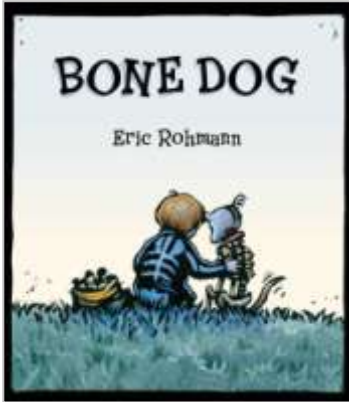
Hyperion, 2011 \$16.99 Grades K-3

Rocco celebrates the magic in ordinary moments, in a family being together during a city-wide blackout. The luminous depictions of the nighttime scenes give this tale an almost magical feel of a city and a family pausing in time.



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2011 Distinguished Books



Rohmann, Eric

Bone Dog

Illustrated by Eric Rohmann

Roaring Brook, 2011

\$16.99

Grades K-3

As she had promised, Gus' dog returns from the dead to help him on Halloween night, and the two of them outwit a pack of menacing skeletons in this rollicking, (slightly) scary story.

Shaskan, Stephen

A Dog Is a Dog

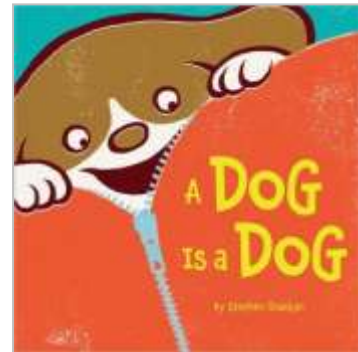
Illustrated by Stephen Shaskan

Chronicle, 2011

\$14.99

Grades PreK-2

Shaskan's debut combines visual, silly humor with text that makes for a wonderful read-aloud. As the verses repeat, one wacky animal after another emerges from the costume, producing giggles at each turn.



Smith, Lane

Grandpa Green

Illustrated by Lane Smith

Roaring Brook, 2011

\$16.99

Grades K-3

The story of a man's life is told by his great-grandson and by his topiary garden. Using simple text, and illustrations in exquisite shades and textures of green, this is a celebration of a life that is not extraordinary, but is, nonetheless, special.

Tullet, Hervé

Press Here

Translated by Christopher Franceschelli

Illustrated by Hervé Tullet

Chronicle, 2011

\$14.99

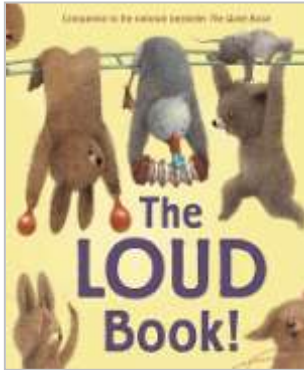
Grades PreK-Adult

Low-tech yet interactive, this imaginative picture book uses simple colored dots to intrigue and amuse people of all ages.



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Underwood, Deborah

The Loud Book

Illustrated by Renata Liwska

Houghton Mifflin, 2011

\$12.99

Grades PreK- 1

A companion to *The Quiet Book*, this imaginative survey of loud sounds features some joyful noises, a few funny ones, and several surprises.

Vamos, Samantha R.

The Cazuela That the Farm Maiden Stirred

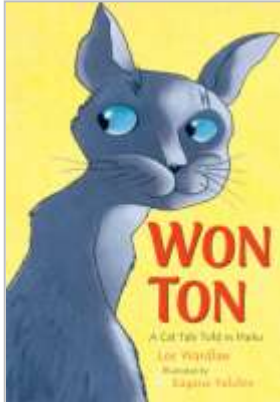
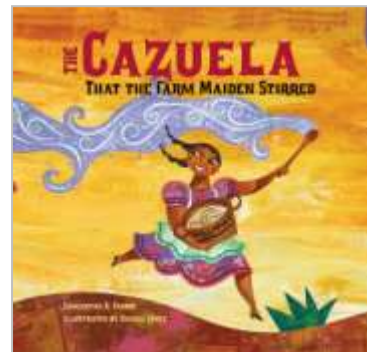
Illustrated by Rafael López

Charlesbridge, 2011

\$17.95

Grades PreK-3

Stir the traditional Mexican dish arroz con leche with the traditional "This is the House that Jack Built" nursery rhyme and the result is this exuberant, delicious read-aloud.



Wardlaw, Lee

Won Ton: A Cat Tale Told in Haiku

Illustrated by Eugene Yelchin

Henry Holt, 2011

\$16.99

Grades K-2

Wardlaw masterfully tells the story of shelter cat Won Ton in senryu (SEN-ree-yoo), a form of Japanese poetry developed from Haiku (source: title page verso), managing to capture the essence of cat behavior in the 5-7-5 syllable format.

Woodson, Jacqueline

Pecan Pie Baby

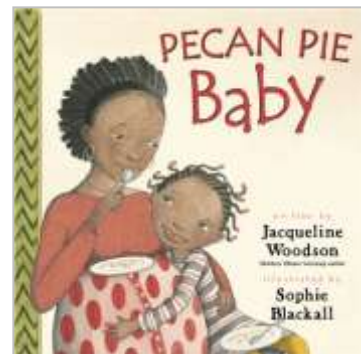
Illustrated by Sophie Blackall

Putnam, 2011

\$16.99

Grades PreK-2

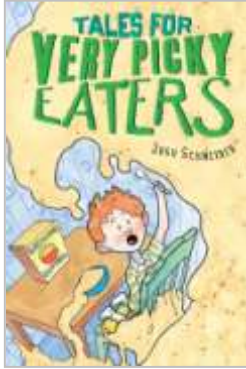
A new baby is on the way, and Gia isn't happy that her world is going to change. Appropriately, the story ends with mother and child enjoying each other's company rather than with a celebration of the baby's birth, a happy and reassuring acknowledgment for readers of Gia's valuable place in the family.



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Readers



Schneider, Josh

Tales for Very Picky Eaters

Illustrated by Josh Schneider

Clarion, 2011

\$14.99

Grades 1-2

In five brief episodic chapters, James is encouraged to eat healthy foods by his dad, who tells James short funny stories about other things he could eat like dirt or worms in this original easy reader with cartoon illustrations.

Willems, Mo

I Broke My Trunk!

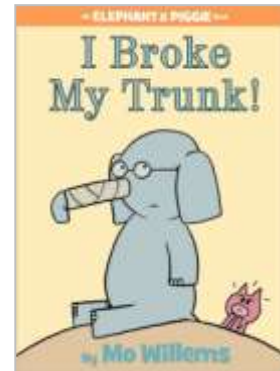
Illustrated by Mo Willems

Hyperion, 2011

\$8.99

Grades K-2

After Elephant tells Piggie the story of how he broke his trunk, Piggie has a similar accident in this humorous very easy to read entry in the popular series.



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