

the kinship project

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September 11, 2011

The Kinship Project could not have happened without the freehearted kindness and support of the publishers represented in the exhibit. The Butler Center gratefully acknowledges those institutions for their special assistance with the Kinship Project and for their regular publication of extraordinary literature for young people.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 left the world reeling. It is hard to imagine that anyone was left unmoved. Outpourings of support and service from across the globe, staggering in their generosity, brought people together in a collective response to a common tragedy. We were connected in our shared loss, and found solace in our shared responsibility to help.

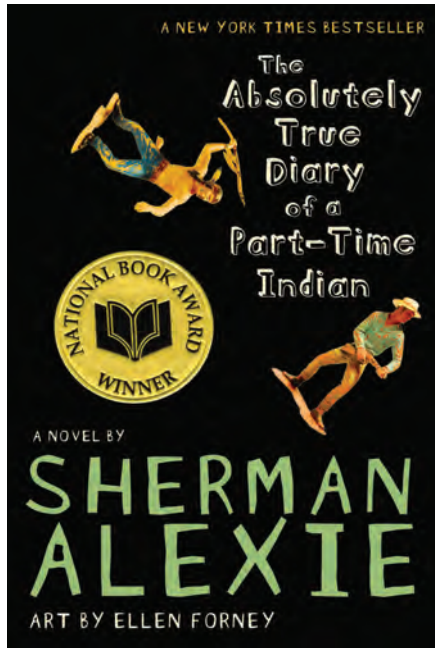
But the terror was great, its sting profound, and we were hurting. Some of us turned our patriotism on one another, holding so tightly to our own ideas of freedom and liberty that we became blinded to the equality and unity on which those ideas were founded. We retreated to prescriptive definitions of what it means to be an American and questioned those who did not conform.

While the flag is a symbol of our strength, with its stars and stripes and rockets' red glare, so is the Statue of Liberty, with her inexorable message of welcome. Every day, across the country, indeed around the world, our better selves prevail. We see one another as people first, beneath our identities, and recognize our common humanity. We act beyond our own self-interest and stand for the needs and rights of everyone. We unite.

The Kinship Project celebrates this sense of universal connection. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of those terrible attacks, the Butler Center has assembled a collection of books for young people each of which has something to say about how and why we come and belong together. We have chosen books from the past ten years that represent a broad range of variations on the singular theme of kinship. Some are intimate, others sprawling. Some are direct, others meandering. Though their expressions are distinct and unique, together they reflect the very nature of our own plurality; there is strength in the interweaving of disparate threads.

As you examine the books and consider their messages, we hope you contemplate those stories that resonate with you. How and where do you see reflections of kinship?

- Thom Barthelmess, Butler Center Curator

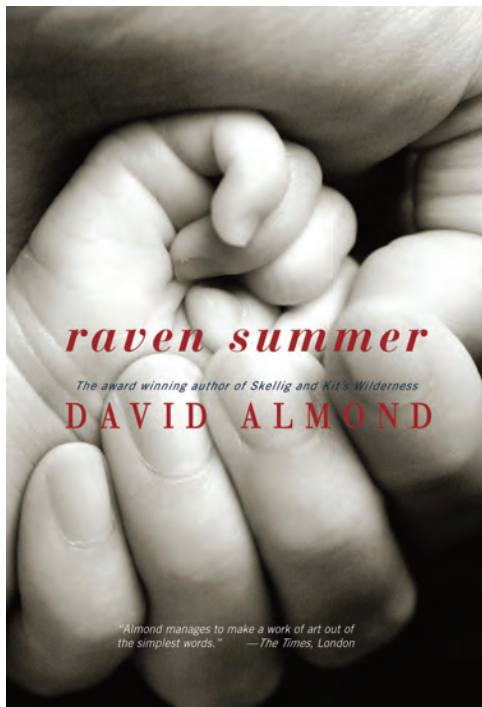


The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

Arnold “Junior” Spirit is a fish out of water on the Spokane Indian Reservation, outcast for his nerdy interest in school and literally oversized brain, but finds connection no easier after a transfer to the rich white high school in Rearden. Alexie’s transportive novel, at turns gut busting and heartbreaking, is a remarkable portrait of resilience and courage, illuminated by Arnold’s own wry, insightful cartoons. Fitting in is the least of Junior’s worries, and is nothing compared to the profound difficulties of reservation life and death. But in his heroic coming of age we understand a sense of belonging as the first step towards a sense of community, and appreciate just how our ability to face what life brings depends upon the mutual support such community affords.

Alexie, Sherman.
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian.
Little, Brown, 2007.

Cover reprinted by permission of Little, Brown Books for Young Readers,
a division of Hachette Book Group.

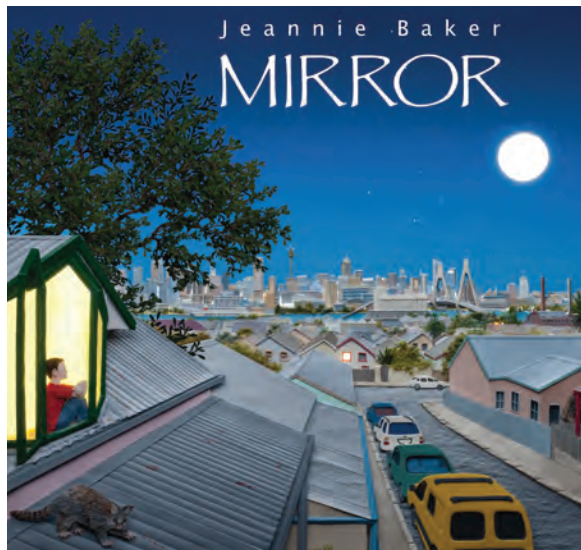


Raven Summer

Liam lives a life steeped in violence. Some of that violence is implicit, imagined for the baby girl he finds abandoned in a field near his Northern England home. Some of it is resonant, heard in the engines of the planes overhead on their way to Iraq. Some of it is reflected, felt in the horrific stories he hears from Oliver, a Liberian refugee and foster child living with the family who takes in the foundling. And some of it is overt, in the torture and torment perpetrated by Natrass, Liam's erstwhile comrade and contemporary nemesis. Liam struggles with his own competing impulses, both tender and savage, as he tries to make sense of the pervasive brutality he witnesses. Almond's raw narrative and almost mystical tone expose the rougher corners of the human condition and beg some important questions about our own baleful tendencies and the degree to which we are united in the dark, as well as the light.

Almond, David.
Raven Summer.
Delacorte, 2009.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Delacorte.

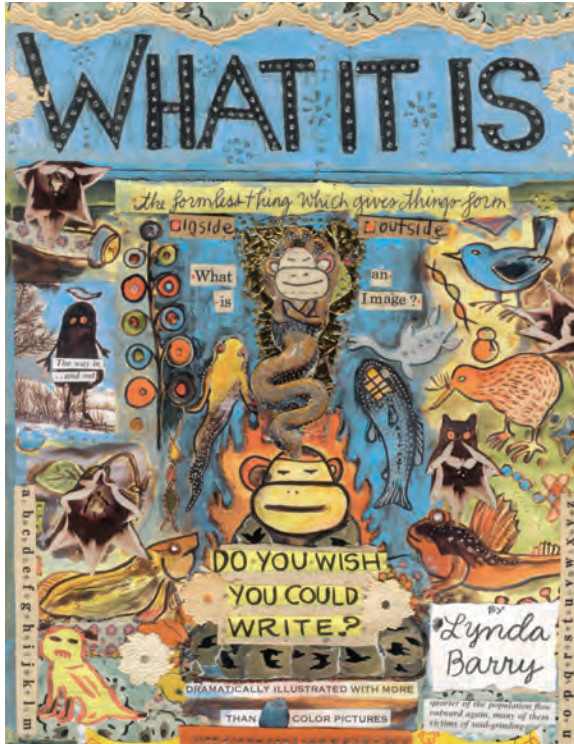


Mirror

Mirror speaks to common experience in the story it tells and the format engaged in the telling. The mostly wordless story unfolds in parallel pictorial narratives, which themselves unfold in parallel books, bound at the outer edges of the front and back cover. Two boys make their way to a market with their fathers, one in a city in Australia, the other in a village in Morocco. The journeys begin in tight unison, and even as the particularities of their experiences diverge, the boys are linked in their curiosity and wonder. And therein lies the deepest power of the story; it is not the physical attributes of our experiences that we find common ground, but in our willingness to be open to them.

Baker, Jeannie.
Mirror.
Candlewick, 2010.

MIRROR. Copyright © 2010 by Jeannie Baker. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Candlewick Press, Somerville, MA on behalf of Walker Books, London.



What It Is

What It Is is a visionary tour de force, an existential exploration of the connective meaning that comes from self-expression. From the uninhibited openness of a child's drawing to the self-conscious paralysis of professionally-induced writer's block, Barry mines the chutes and ladders of the creative process. Her considerations are deeply personal, reflected in the visceral candor of her memories and the quirky, ebullient melancholy of her trademark visual style. And yet, almost paradoxically, by exposing her personal creative demons and summoning the will to face them, Barry makes a powerful case for the universal importance of sharing our stories. We are inspired to look ourselves in the heart, and make some space for others to do the same.

Barry, Lynda.
What It Is.
Drawn and Quarterly, 2008.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Drawn and Quarterly.

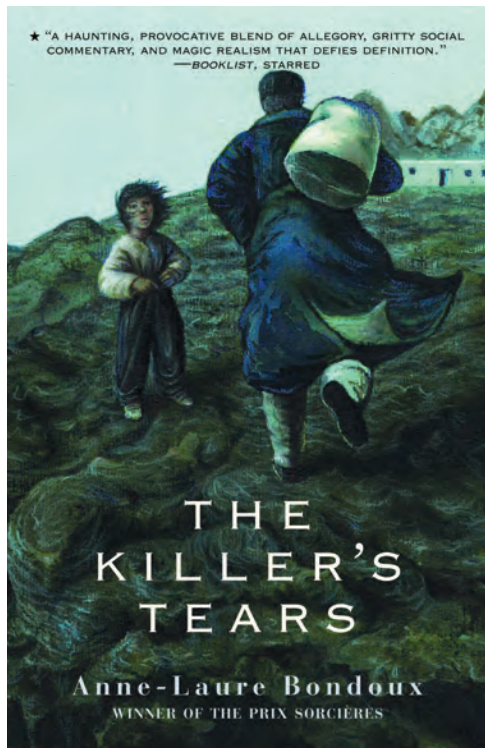


I Am J

As the title suggests, *I Am J* is a young man's search for and declaration of his identity. Born Jennifer, J has always felt at odds with his body, but the advent of adolescence has complicated his feelings exponentially. Confused, misunderstood and disavowed, J runs away and enrolls in a high school for transgender teens, looking forward to the age of majority and the freedom to physically correct his gender. In the vivid portrayal of J's search for self we recognize the role of inner peace as a foundation for peace among people.

Beam, Cris.
I Am J.
Little, Brown, 2011.

Cover reprinted by permission of Little, Brown Books for Young Readers,
a division of Hachette Book Group.



The Killer's Tears

At the hardscrabble corner of civilization, on a desolate Chilean farm, Paolo is orphaned before his own eyes when a bandit named Angel arrives, murders his parents, and moves into the young boy's home and life. Soon another man happens upon them, and the three settle into an isolated codependence characterized by sympathy and jealousy and abject devotion. The moralities of the bigger world eventually catch up and do their worst, blind to the beauty the trio has sown and tended together. But in the heartbreak that comes from the inescapable dissolution of this makeshift family we recognize the ability of love to grow in the harshest environments and power of reconciliation to bind even the most unlikely.

Bondoux, Anne-Laure.
The Killer's Tears.
Translated from the French by Y. Maudet.
Delacorte, 2007.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Delacorte.

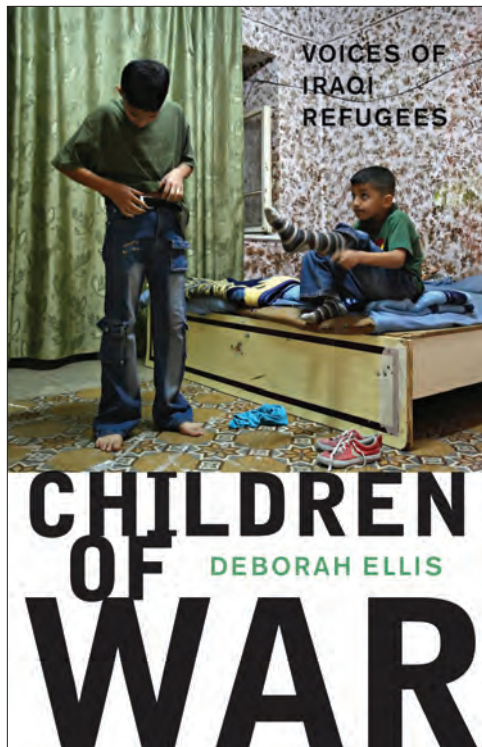


The Black Book of Colors

In this curious and inventive examination of the visual world, Menena and Faria explore color by extracting it. The feelings evoked by different colors and the images of those expressions appear embossed across glossy black pages with parallel narratives in text and Braille. From the downy yellow of a chick's feathers to the sunny blue of a kite-riddled sky, we experience colors through sensual description as might a visually impaired child. By reducing color to its emotional essence, author and illustrator give us a glimpse into a world many of us cannot experience firsthand, and offer with it the understanding that for all of our differences, our fundamental experiences are in many ways the same.

Cottin, Menena.
The Black Book of Colors.
Illustrated by Rosana Faria.
Translated from the Spanish by Elisa Amado.
Groundwood Books, 2008.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Groundwood Books.

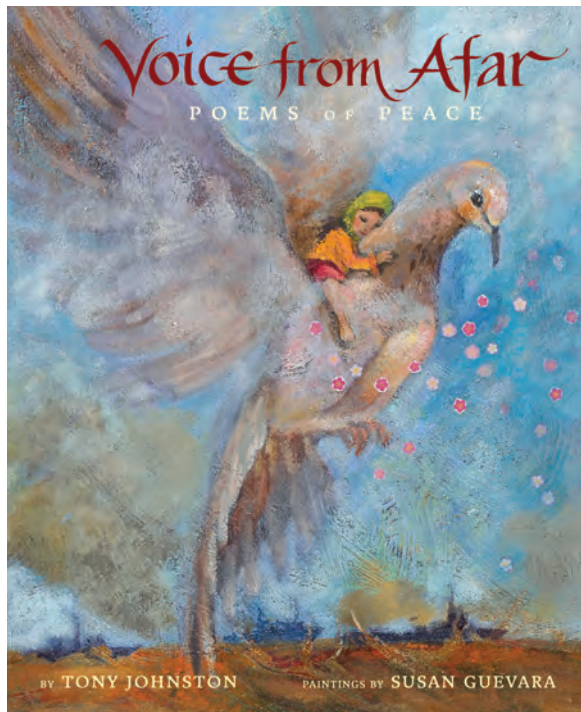


Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees

In the time since the United States and its allies invaded Iraq in 2003, some two million Iraqi citizens, caught in the civil and ethnic unrest that followed, have fled their country. Ellis interviews children and teens, many in Jordan and a few in Canada, some named and others anonymous, about their experiences during the war and their subsequent lives as refugees. Though their stories are personal and distinct, their collection exposes a few common themes. We see that these young people share an ability to understand and appreciate the subtleties and complexities of the world they inhabit in a way that adults actively resist. And, on top of these understandings they build and sustain an inextinguishable hope.

Ellis, Deborah.
Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees.
Groundwood Books, 2009.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Groundwood Books.

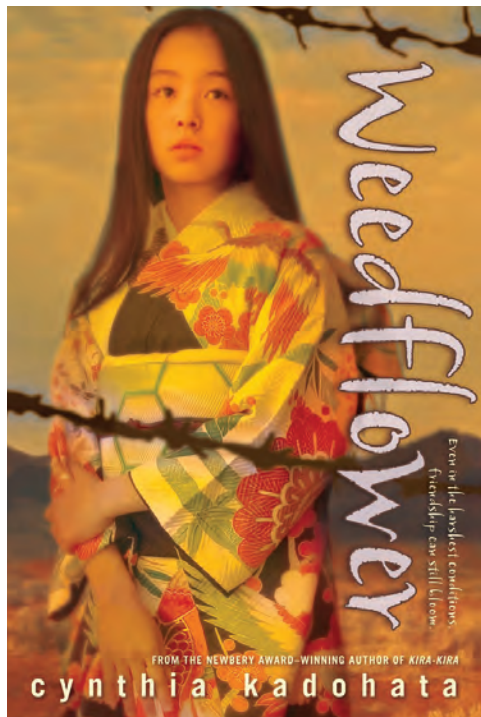


Voice from Afar: Poems of Peace

In 26 poems of varied tone and form, set in regions of conflict around the globe, Johnston paints an impressionistic portrait of peace. Some poems define peace by depicting the violence around it, negative space between exploded buses, broken children and homes in rubble. Others consider peace itself, finding it in a whispered prayer or resilient blossom. Johnston's lyrical, evocative verse is matched by Guevara's affecting paintings, saturated with emotion, embodying the pink promise of hope and the gray intransigence of despair. In chromatic expressions of discord and harmony, poet and painter together offer a holistic picture of the strife that breaks peace apart, and the human responsibility to build it back again.

Johnston, Tony.
Voice from Afar: Poems of Peace.
Illustrated by Susan Guevara.
Holiday House, 2008.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Holiday House.



Weedflower

Sumiko has found a modicum of happiness working on her relatives' Southern California flower farm, the fragrant blossoms she tends providing some solace in the face of racism. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, a series of upheavals results in her Japanese family forcibly moved to an internment camp in Arizona. There Sumiko meets Frank, a Mohave boy on the opposite side of the fence with his own bitterness about the presence of the camp on Mohave land, and the relative comfort of camp compared to life on the reservation. Kadohata weaves comprehensive research into a tender, poetic, deeply affecting narrative, exploring the virulent xenophobia that takes root in the upturned soil of war, and the power of the human ability to see beyond our individual perspectives.

Kadohata, Cynthia.
Weedflower.
Atheneum, 2006.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Atheneum.
Text © 2006 by Cynthia Kadohata.
Cover by Kamil Vojnar.

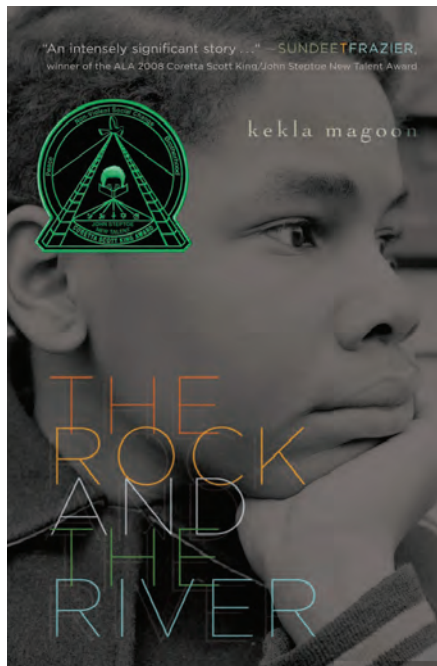


Today and Today

One of Japan's most renowned and prolific poets, Issa composed more than 20,000 haiku at and around the turn of the nineteenth century. G. Brian Karas has assembled a lovely few and crafted from them an intimate exploration of death and remembrance. Spread across four seasons, Karas' mixed media collages follow the presence of an elderly man in his final days with his young family, and the absence left behind when he goes. In a magical reversal of literary roles, here the pictures tell the story, while the poems serve as atmospheric embellishments, evoking a tone of quiet contemplation. In this sweet, unassuming story we feel the universal reverberations of grief and hope, and understand the seasons of life as both personal loss and interpersonal communion.

Kobayashi, Issa.
Today and Today.
Illustrated by G. Brian Karas. Scholastic, 2007.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Scholastic.



The Rock and the River

It is 1968, and Chicago, with the rest of the country, is embroiled in the turmoil of the civil rights movement. Sam's father, a friend and disciple of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., leads his community in non-violent protest. Sam's older brother, his rage turning to militancy, abandons their father's calls for peace and joins the Black Panthers. Sam struggles with his own perspectives and allegiances, but when the violence touches his own family, those struggles reach a breaking point. With tight plotting and keen, poetic language Magoon asks some important questions about the degree to which our kinships are a matter of choice, and how those choices reverberate within and without our communities.

Magoon, Kekla.
The Rock and the River.
Aladdin, 2009.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Aladdin.
Text © 2009 by Kekla Magoon.

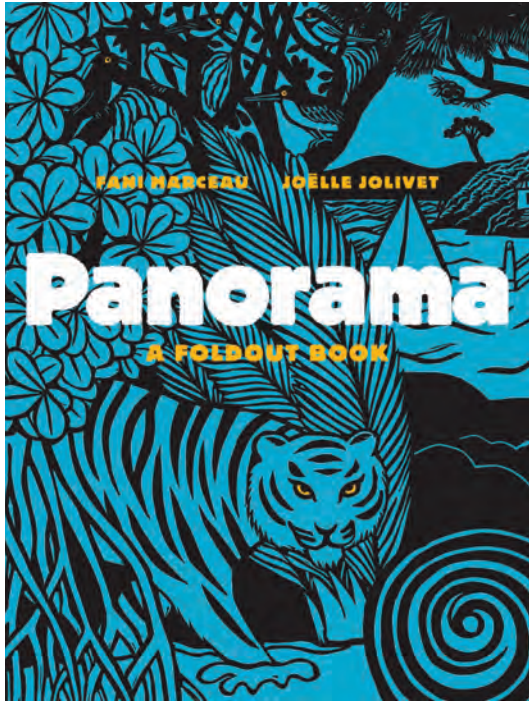


Every Soul a Star

Ally has grown up on her family's campground, and is furiously excited about the upcoming solar eclipse and the thousands of people converging there to witness it. Bree, attending with her physicist parents, resents being forced to trade her friends and popularity for mosquitoes and nature. Jack's science teacher, moonlighting as a guide, is shepherding a tour bus of pilgrims, and has Jack in tow as a kind of penance. Each of the 13-year-olds is transformed by the experience, touched by the cosmic magnificence and inspired by its effect on others. The gradual bond that forms between the three distinct, vivid characters is both surprising and convincing, and speaks to the small ways our own self discovery lays a path to connect with others.

Mass, Wendy.
Every Soul a Star.
Little, Brown, 2008.

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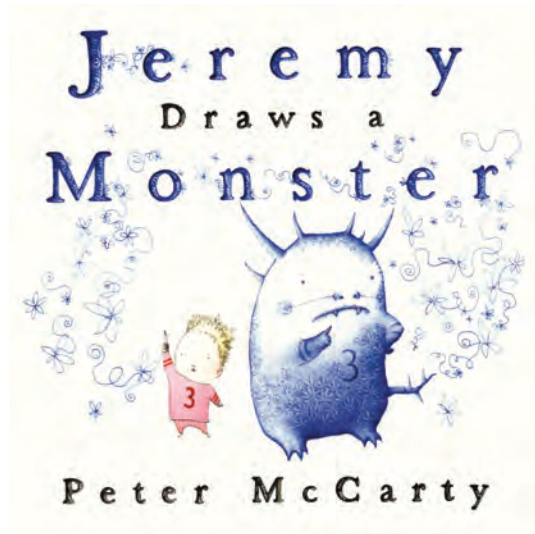


Panorama: A Foldout Book

In *Panorama*, content and format come together to make a holistic statement about the circular connections that bind together all of the earth. Page after page of large scale graphic black-and-white woodcuts illustrate regions around the globe, from Antarctica to Iceland, each accompanied by a brief phrase of explication. Individually, the geographical portraits are enticing snapshots of the places they depict, reflecting the planet's incredible variety. Taken collectively we see their interconnectedness and appreciate the planet's delicate, magnificent ecological symbiosis. The book's ingenious format reinforces this interdependence. The pages themselves are linked end to end and a release of the binding unveils an accordion foldout with nightscapes of each locale printed on the reverse. This physical manifestation of the planet's unity speaks to our spirit, and so we both know and feel our integral place as one of many, special and unique and vital.

Marceau, Fani.
Panorama: A Foldout Book.
Illustrated by Joëlle Jolivet.
Originally published in French.
Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2009.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Abrams Books for Young Readers.

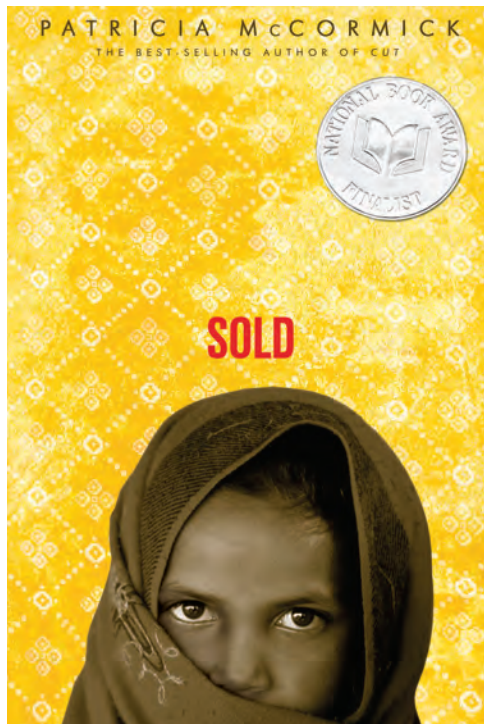


Jeremy Draws a Monster

Jeremy is afraid, hanging back as he watches children play outside his building. So he takes his “fancy pen” and draws a monster, the incarnation of his apprehension. His monster is exacting and impolite, and demands that Jeremy draw him all manner of accoutrements. Jeremy complies, eventually drawing up a bus headed “Out of Town” and a one way ticket. The monster is off, along with (some of) Jeremy’s anxiety, and when next the neighborhood invites him to play, Jeremy is ready. McCarty’s deceptively sophisticated picture book reminds us that togetherness is a two-way courtyard.

McCarty, Peter.
Jeremy Draws a Monster.
Henry Holt, 2009.

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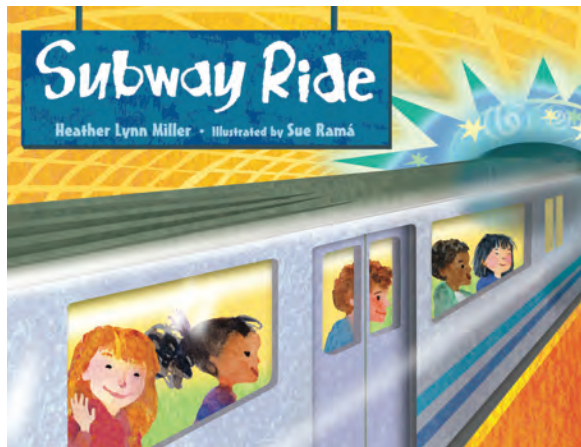


Sold

When monsoons destroy her Himalayan village and leave her family with nothing, thirteen-year-old Lakshmi is sent from the mountains of Nepal to the slums of Calcutta. Told she will be working as a maid in a wealthy woman's home, Lakshmi is, in fact, sold into prostitution. Through Lakshmi's unflinching narrative, a clear-eyed, first-person, present tense hybrid prose verse, we experience the unspeakable abuse she endures, and feel her gradual, conflicted resilience, as she awaits the return of one tender customer, experiences disappointment at not being chosen by another, and admits relief when someone else receives the chili laden stick. During the day Lakshmi clings to the bright spots at Happiness House: the reading lessons from the David Beckham boy, the pink people on TV, and, most of all, the fierce camaraderie with the other girls. Indeed, there is a sheer beauty in the fragile allegiances that blossom in the starkest circumstances, and the deepest human inclinations to reach out and to connect.

McCormick, Patricia.
Sold.
Hyperion, 2006.

Text copyright © 2006 by Patricia McCormick.
Cover reprinted courtesy of Hyperion.

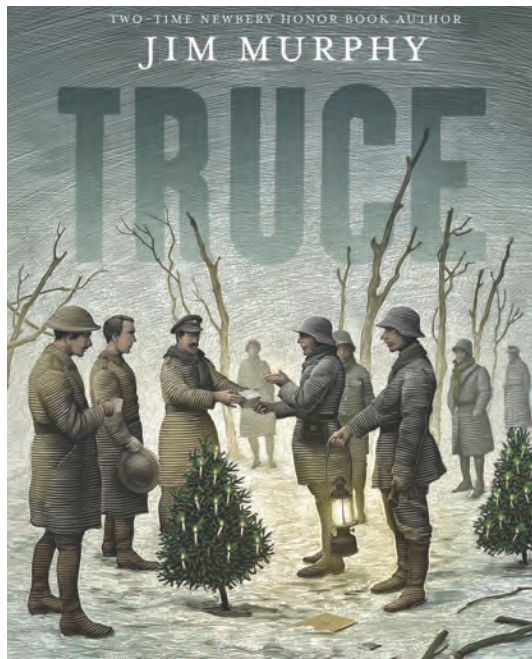


Subway Ride

Five children embark on a transcontinental fantasy, paying their fare and boarding the subway for a ride that will take them through metropolitan rail systems around the world. Recalling the thrum of the trains' wheels, rhythmic verse follows the children through ten urban undergrounds – Atlanta, Cairo, Chicago, London, Mexico City, Moscow, New York City, Stockholm, Tokyo, and Washington, D.C. – bouncing them on their happy way. Colorful, painterly digital collages of watercolor paintings evoke each of the cities visited, with subtle cultural nods to the life happening above ground, and link them all together as a singular path for a multicultural journey.

Miller, Heather Lynn.
Subway Ride.
Illustrated by Sue Ramá.
Charlesbridge, 2009.

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85 Main Street, Watertown, MA 02472. (617) 926-0329
www.charlesbridge.com



Truce: The Day the Soldiers Stopped Fighting

Murphy recounts the true story of the impromptu outbreak of peace at Christmas, 1914, on the front lines of the First World War. Sick, tired and disillusioned, troops on both sides of the trenches put down their weapons to tend to casualties, bury the fallen, and even exchange gifts. In clear, careful prose Murphy outlines the bitter price of war, the role of the government in managing conflict, and the power of the common individual to put empathy before anger and amity above discord.

Murphy, Jim.
Truce: The Day the Soldiers Stopped Fighting.
Scholastic, 2009.

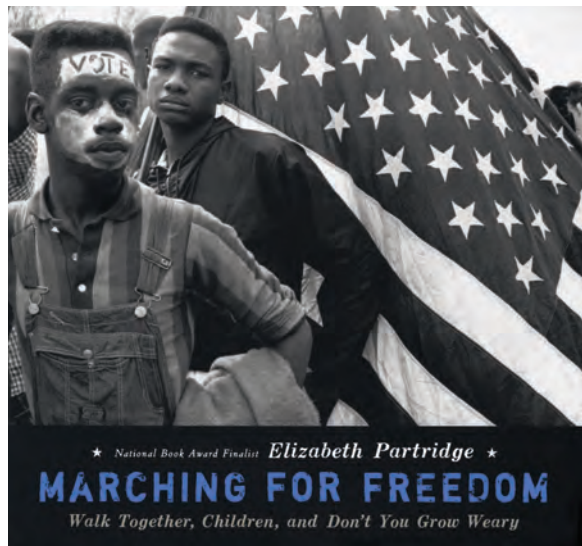
Cover reprinted courtesy of Scholastic.

19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East

In 61 poems, some new and some reprinted, Nye explores the Middle Eastern experience in all of its cultural complexity. The first poem, dated September 11 2001, captures an encounter with a man, overjoyed on his release from prison, hours after the towers fell. With this tension Nye frames the collection as reflections on peace in troubled and conflicted lands. Rather than responding to the pain and grief the attacks brought on, the poems paint intimate still lifes of small moments across the region, some quiet, some violent, rich with everyday detail. In the variety of the poetic forms and the lives they record Nye threads a tender unity; death is grief, however perpetrated, and food is comfort, however shared.

Nye, Naomi Shihab.
19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East.
Greenwillow Books, 2002.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Greenwillow Books.

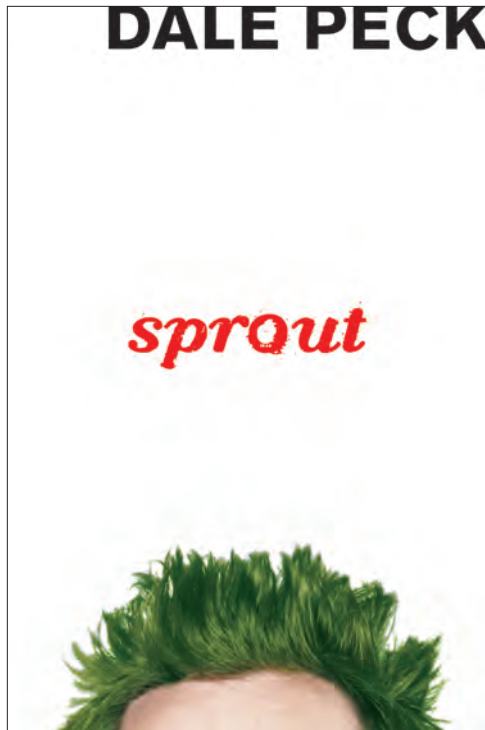


Marching for Freedom: Walk Together, Children, and Don't You Grow Weary

This incisive, compelling tribute to young people's contributions to the Civil Rights movement synthesizes gripping interviews, dramatic photographs, painstaking research and the author's own enthusiastic commitment, all presented in clear, engaging prose. Partridge focuses on the 1965 voters' rights marches from Selma to Montgomery, capturing the scope of the greater strife in individual stories and pictures of young people, not old enough to vote themselves, who stood and marched for freedom. We witness the insidious obstruction and unthinkable violence perpetrated upon black citizens exercising their right to vote and the remarkable fortitude that characterized the response. The courage and determination in these young people's eyes is arresting. And in these faces, and the stories behind them, we see the power of all people to build strength together and fight in concert for a better world.

Partridge, Elizabeth.
*Marching for Freedom: Walk Together, Children,
and Don't You Grow Weary.*
Viking Children's Books, 2009.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Viking Children's Books.

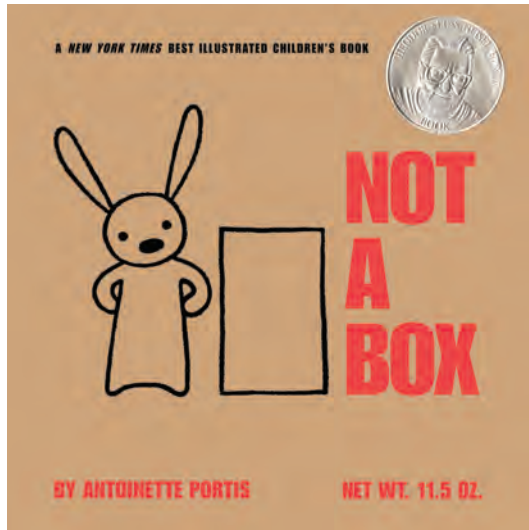


Sprout

Sprout Bradford, green-haired, irreverent, loquacious and gay, lives a weirdly eccentric (redundancy recognized) life in a trailer festooned by his admittedly alcoholic father with a foot-deep covering of mixed vines. Now Mrs. Miller has selected him as Buhler High's unlikeliest representative in the Kansas State essay contest, and the Long Island transplant needs to decide just how much (more) he wants to stand out. Sprout's entertaining narrative, randomly peppered with footnotes, stage directions, writing samples, and like that, alternately unbosoms his dalliances, friendships, and true love in their irrepressible, unruly complexity. For all of his quirks, indeed, perhaps, because of them, Sprout stands as an idiosyncratic everyman. His troubles, however decorated, are immediate and fresh. In feeling the common sting of betrayal and the regular ache of heartbreak we recognize the universalities of vulnerability and strength.

Peck, Dale.
Sprout.
Bloomsbury USA, 2009.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Bloomsbury USA.



Not a Box

The magic here begins on the front cover with an apparently argumentative rabbit standing, arms akimbo, beside an empty box. The cover itself is bound in the brown paper of corrugated cardboard, but this, the title proclaims, is not a box. Inside, our imaginative, recalcitrant hero insists that the “not a box” is all manner of exciting objects – a race car, a mountain peak, a robot – and will not hear otherwise. Portis establishes parallel realms of the fanciful and the concrete with clever use of color and design, using black lines for real things and red lines for pretend. She reinforces this dichotomy in the text, framing the narrative as one side of a tête-à-tête and casting the reader as the other. Thus, the book engages us as fantastical collaborator and astute investigator at the same time. In that position we experience the universal appeal of make-believe and the universal satisfaction of figuring out the truth.

Portis, Antoinette.
Not a Box.
HarperCollins, 2006.

Cover reprinted courtesy of HarperCollins.

Persepolis

Marjane Satrapi's graphic memoir chronicles the hardship and cultural complexity of the Iran-Iraq war. The author was ten years old at the time of the Islamic Revolution of 1979, and she begins her tale there, venturing well into the following decade to trace the conflict and its impact on her, her family, her country and her world. Satrapi recounts deeply personal experiences as she questions her faith and endures friends and relatives imprisoned, tortured and killed. As she matures she comes to better understand the tangled, intransigent history of the region and appreciate the ripples of the turbulence beyond her own suffering. That growth is echoed in the sophisticated comic format, with its square, black-and-white, deceptively primitive artwork illuminating a knowing, insightful narrative. Moments of humor and understanding humanize the account, making it an informative and reverberant examination of the strife in the Persian Gulf and its cost for everyone involved.

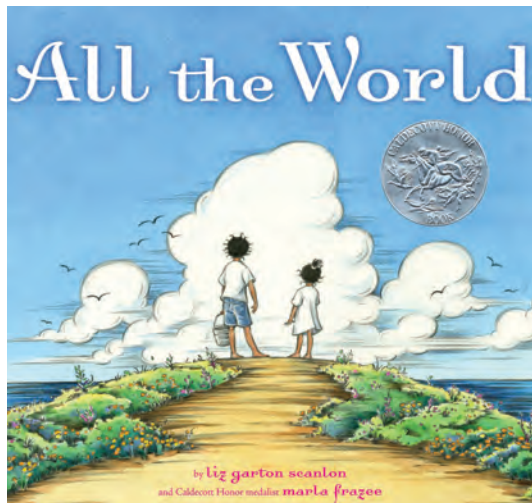
Satrapi, Marjane.

Persepolis.

Translated from the French by Blake Ferris and Mattias Ripa.

Pantheon Books, 2004.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Pantheon Books.



All the World

This microcosmic elegy to the human condition focuses on the intertwined experiences of a small coastal community. Scanlon's soft, rhythmic verse captures the fullness of a day, complete with sunshine and rain, while Frazee's warm, expansive paint and pencil illustrations set a tone of comfort and welcome. Individual episodes are full of meaningful detail; the two-page spread, with text that tells us "All the world is old and new," shows us just that, with a sapling in a wagon in the shade of a grand tree, a grandfather playing with a puppy, and three young children hanging from ancient branches. Together, in sequence, the images add a narrative arc to the poem they illustrate. We follow a path, stopping along the way to meet members of a community of shared experience. The repeated use of circles, from the lot before the farmers' market to the tables and chairs at the café, reinforces the roundness of the world, and the inclusiveness of its embrace.

Scanlon, Liz Garton.
All the World.
Illustrated by Marla Frazee.
Beach Lane Books, 2009.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Beach Lane Books.
Text © 2009 by Elizabeth Garton Scanlon.
Illustrations © 2009 by Marla Frazee.



Press Here

Ready? A painterly yellow dot sits centered on a white page with handwritten instructions. “PRESS HERE AND TURN THE PAGE.” Subsequent page turns reveal more dots, more colors, and more complicated instructions. We shake the book, we clap, we turn the book on its side. As we perform our literary instructions the dots line up and spill forth and grow and merge in surprising, irresistible ways. The book’s particular genius comes from its distinctly handcrafted appearance. We might expect slick and polish for a riff on the manipulatable bells and whistles of apps and ebooks. Instead, with artisanal human craft, Tullet reminds us that reading a book is a personal endeavor, and an engagement that we all share.

Tullet, Hervé.

Press Here.

Translated from the French by Christopher Franceschelli.
Chronicle Books, 2011.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Chronicle Books.



Underwood, Deborah.
The Quiet Book.
Illustrated by Renata Liwska.
Houghton Mifflin, 2010.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Houghton Mifflin.

The Quiet Book

On its surface *The Quiet Book* is a charming catalog of the myriad colors of quiet. A group of young animals share an ordinary day, peppered with moments of quiet. The individual varieties of that quiet, some happy and some sad, some communal and some solitary, are unique and illuminating. Of course the quiet at the top of a roller coaster is entirely different from the quiet that comes with a fresh lollipop. Liwska's soft, rounded animals, with their endearing aspects and sketchy fuzz, infuse the outing with a warm sweetness, tempered by the cool hush of the muted palette. But the pictures' chief contribution is the narrative through line that ties the various forms of quiet together. Look closely. Behind the text, all of the animals' individual experiences are linked. And in that simple expression author and illustrator make a profound statement about the connections forged of fellowship.

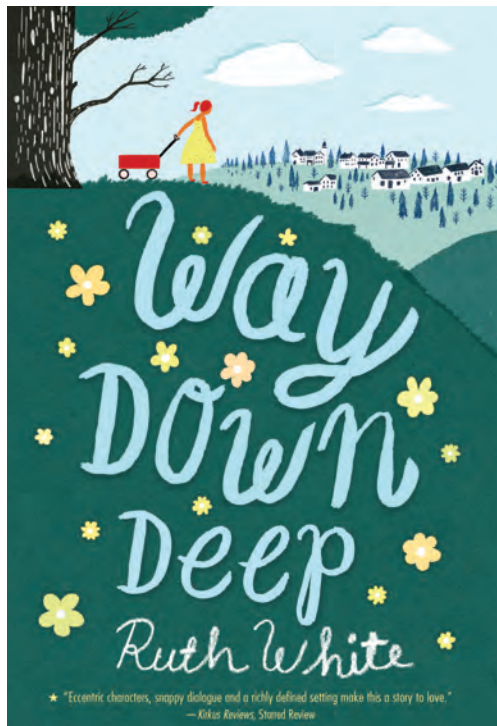


Moon Over Manifest

Layered narratives paint a complex, vivid picture of a small mining town in Kansas and explore the ways a community feels and responds to the woes and wonders of its individual members. In 1936, Abilene Tucker's father deposits her in Manifest, his own hometown, for the summer. With friends Ruthanne and Lettie, Abilene sets out to solve the mystery of "The Rattler," a suspected spy, and harbors a secret hope to learn something about her mysterious father as well. In the process the three uncover a box of letters, pictures and newspaper clippings from eighteen years earlier, and convince Miss Sadie, the local fortune teller, to tell them stories of the town as it was when Abilene's father was growing up. This aural and historical archive, mixed with Abilene's own sparkling first person narrative, details the turmoils of immigration and depression and poverty and war, played out on the small scale of a small town. In her search for personal truths Abilene discovers the depth of the community that has welcomed her, and comes to recognize the sacrifices they have made to come and stay together.

Vanderpool, Clare.
Moon Over Manifest.
Delacorte, 2010.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Delacorte.

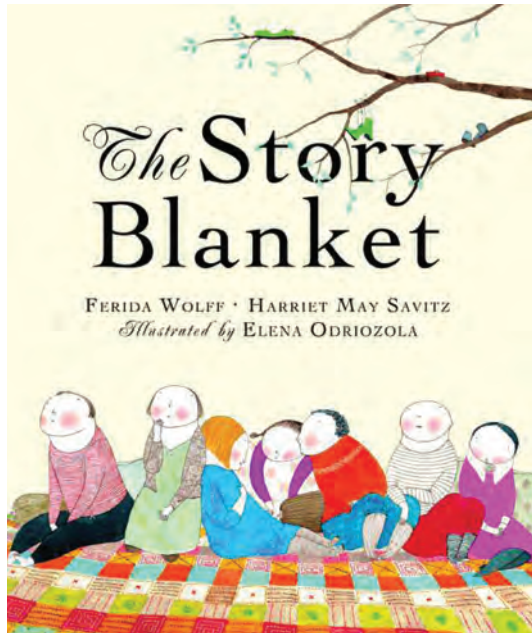


Way Down Deep

Abandoned baby Ruby June appeared in Way Down Deep, West Virginia on a summer day in 1944. Ten years hence a few more strangers materialize, complicating the comfort Ruby June has found at Miss Arbutus Ward's boarding house and the relationships she has forged with the town's idiosyncratic residents. Mysteries unravel, truths emerge, and Ruby June discovers a little about her past and a lot about her present. With snappy dialogue, jump-off-the-page characterizations and a sweet, almost magical tone, this novel abounds with appeal. But perhaps the most winning of its charms is its affectionate portrait of the diverse members of a small community taking in a foundling and developing fierce loyalty to one another in the process.

White, Ruth.
Way Down Deep.
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.

Jacket design by Robbin Gourley from WAY DOWN DEEP by Ruth White.
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The Story Blanket

Day after day children gather on Babba Zarrah's love-worn blanket to listen to her stories. But Babba Zarrah's blanket is shrinking. In response to needs she witnesses around the village – a chilly postman could use a scarf, the schoolmaster new mittens – she is unraveling the blanket and knitting anonymous gifts. The villagers are puzzled, but when the blanket is spent, they identify Babba Zarrah as their mysterious benefactor. In turn each unravels a little wool from his own blanket and deposits it on Babba Zarrah's doorstep, giving her enough to craft the story blanket anew. The warmth of the tale, reflected in the villagers' rosy cheeks and jewel-toned regalia, reminds us that generosity and humility are the yarn that knits together community.

Wolff, Ferida and Harriet May Savitz.
The Story Blanket.
Illustrated by Elena Odriozola.
Peachtree Publishers, 2008.

Cover reprinted courtesy of Peachtree Publishers.

The Butler Children's Literature Center at Dominican University
commits itself to imagination and wonder, encouraging and
supporting adults in libraries, classrooms, childcare centers and
homes to engage young people with good books.



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