New Books for Young Readers 2012

Primary
Intermediate
Adolescent

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Edited by Rebecca Rapport, University of Minnesota
Reviews by:
Kristen Bergsagel, Beth Brendler, Erin Buhr, Becky Rapport, Aimee Rogers, and Pei-Ying Wu
Cover Design and Illustration by Karen Ritz

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New Books for Young Readers

Preschool reading level
2011 publication year
18 book(s) found.

999 Tadpoles by Ken Kimura, Yasunari Murakami (Illustrator).

Mother and father frog are very proud of their 999 baby tadpoles. Their pond is a little crowded with all the children and the wiggling, but it is home. However, when the tadpoles turn into baby frogs their comfortable pond can no longer contain this family. Therefore, father, mother and their 999 baby frogs set out to find a new home. Mother and father frog warn their children about the dangers they may encounter, like snakes. However, no one sees the hawk that swoops in from above and snatches father frog. Mother and her children are determined to save father, and they may even find a new home in the process. Originally published in Japan, readers around the world will be hopping with joy as they share the adventures of this frog family. Murakami’s simple, vivid illustrations express a great deal of emotion and humor in his subtle details.

Apple Pie ABC by Alison Murray.

An adorable black and white dog takes readers through the alphabet via an apple pie. He watches the making of the pie, the baking of the pie and he longs for a taste only to be dissuaded by a young girl. Readers of all ages will cheer the black and white dog’s attempts to taste the pie. Murray takes readers through the familiar rhythm of the ABCs but in a refreshing way. Her illustrations encompass a palette of primary colors and are textured, providing a worn and comfortable feeling for readers and apple pie lovers.

Blue Chameleon by Emily Gravett.

A lonely chameleon tries hard to imitate others by changing his color and shape, hoping to make new friends. Yet none of those he mimics wants to befriend him. Fortunately, he finally finds someone just like him, and the two colorful chameleons enjoy each other’s company ever after. This simple, interesting story conveys a message about the importance of self-perception and interpersonal relationships. Young readers are encouraged to relax, enjoy their friendships (especially stop copying others to get attention!) and to have faith that friendship will sprout effortlessly when they finally meet someone just like them. The colored pencil illustrations humorously present the lonely chameleon’s imitative impulse and eagerness. Ingeniously designed to foreshadow the story, the front and back endpapers show how lonely the chameleon was and how happy he becomes. Gravett has developed a unique and quirky style that is appreciated by all ages. While exploring the importance of friendship, her latest book teaches readers concepts of color and shape in her customary style. The text is sparse; Gravett’s humorous pencil drawings carry the weight of the emotional story.
**Chew, Chew, Gulp!** by Lauren Thompson, Jarrett J. Krosoczka (Illustrator).

Thompson explores the world of eating in this fun rhyming picture book. A wide variety of food related verbs and foods are combined, from scooping to curling and pudding to green beans. Krosoczka's bright, saturated paintings add to the rhythm and humor.

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**Dot** by Patricia Intriago.

The clever fun begins on the title page, where a cut out for the ‘o’ in dot reveals a rising sun. Turn the page and a large yellow dot on a brilliant blue background appears. Using simple yet striking graphic art and the occasional photo, dots stop and go, speed up, rise, become hungry and gloriously multiply. While the arresting art will attract young readers (and those who read to them!), it is the rhythmic text and surprising notions that will have them wanting to hear the book again and again.

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**Gossie/Gansi** by Olivier Dunrea, Carlos Calvo (Translator).

The English speaking world was introduced to Gossie and Gertie in 2002 when this delightful book was first published. It is thrilling to find it now available for Spanish speaking and bilingual children. This small board book version captures the bright ink and watercolor illustrations and simple story of Gossie and her red boots in the perfect size for any young child’s hands. The words on the page, in both English and Spanish, tell the story of Gossie who loves to wear her boots “every day” and wakes up one morning to find them missing.

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**Happy Hippo, Angry Duck: A Book of Moods** by Sandra Boynton.

Sandra Boynton has mastered silly. Her latest book fully utilizes her signature expressive, amusing animal characters through a lighthearted discussion of feelings. The book starts with the greeting, “Hello, Little Person! How ARE you today? Is your mood quite terrific or only okay?” Going beyond the simple feelings of happy and sad, Boynton encourages a discussion about emotions such as confused, frazzled, and contented to help young readers consider the wide range of feelings they experience. Full of complex words buried in bright illustrations and silly asides and ripe for language development, this is a delightful read from start to finish.

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**How To Get a Job By Me the Boss** by Sally Lloyd-Jones, Sue Heap (Illustrator).

It is possible that I so enjoyed this book because I was a bossy, list making older sister many years ago. Lloyd-Jones once again nails the narrative voice in her third book in her bestselling series as she now instructs her younger brother, friends, and stuffed animals on the art of job searching. This book is a delightful starting block for learning about the important life skill of job searching. The hero, or boss, of this story helpfully describes why one needs a job (“so you can have something to do and get money for your family”), some possible careers (“Balloon holder . . . Explorer . . . Super-Ballerina-Soccer-Mermaid-Fairy Princess . . . or a Hairdresser”), and the process for acquiring one (“write down EVERY SINGLE THING you’re good at on ONE PIECE OF PAPER that’s called your Resume”). Sue Heap’s illustrations serve to further enhance the silliness, and her use of handwritten lists is particularly effective. Although Lloyd-Jones and Heap have created an outrageously silly book, they also understand the importance of this topic to curious young children and have initiated a conversation about it in an approachable way.

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**I Love to Dance** by Anna Walker.
Ollie loves to dance. Brought to life by Australian author and illustrator Anna Walke, this delightful zebra and his dog, Fred, embrace a range of dancing. They wobble, twist, hop, twirl, and skip across the page. Perhaps my favorite part of the book is the way Walker incorporates simple household items, like towels, blankets, and boxes, into her illustrations. The story begs the readers to imitate Ollie’s fun in their own homes.

_I Love to Sing_ by Anna Walker.

Ollie loves to sing everywhere. This engaging and rhythmic book celebrates the joy of singing wherever you are. Australian author and illustrator Walker pairs her simple rhymes with soft ink and watercolor illustrations that mirror the simplicity of her message. Ollie finds joy through music wherever he is and invites the readers to do the same.

_I Love Vacations_ by Anna Walker.

Ollie strides onto the page with his arms full of flippers, floats, and sand toys. He is ready for vacation. Ollie and his dog, Fred, joyfully splash in water, eat ice cream, swim with turtles, and camp under the stars in Walker’s upbeat ode to vacations. This book falls into place amongst the other Ollie books, however I find the illustrations, while still soft and watery, have an additional boost of color. The bright reds of Ollie’s bucket, hat, and other vacation necessities especially highlight the excitement of this particular love. Another delightfully simple Ollie book.

_I Want My Hat Back_ by Jon Klassen.

In simple text, a seemingly low key, polite bear repeatedly approaches each new creature and asks, “Have you seen my hat?” The only long-winded denial comes from rabbit, who is obviously wearing a red hat, but bear doesn't notice and moves on after thanking him. He finally lays down across both pages, bemoaning his loss while children are in on the rabbit's ruse. When he realizes he has seen it, the background changes from white to hat red, and bear takes off past all the previous animals to confront the thief. They face off on opposite pages, rabbit somewhat protected by the gutter. Children will love the sly ending and the expressive characterization of these cartoon-styled animals.

_King Jack and the Dragon_ by Peter H. Bently, Helen Oxenbury (Illustrator).

This is a beautiful book for readers of all ages. Bently’s rhyming text tells of brave knights and dragon fights and illuminates the power of imagination in the young. Oxenbury’s well-known illustration style brings to life the creatures of imagination while also capturing the essence of childhood.

_My Name is Elizabeth_ by Annika Dunklee, Matthew Forsythe (Illustrator).

The main character of this charming picture book is proud of her name for several reasons, including how her mouth moves when she says her name and the fact that she shares a name with a queen. However, she hates when people call her by any abbreviation of her name and exclaims so to everyone. This story accurately portrays the pride we can and should have in our names and in ourselves. Forsythe’s four-color illustrations perfectly capture the spunk of the main character and beautifully accompany Dunklee’s text.

_No Two Alike_ by Keith Baker.

The book’s sparse, rhyming text is supported by exquisite illustrations. The story follows two red
birds through a winter wonderland. Each item they encounter is compared to another of its kind only
to be shown as similar but not exactly alike, resulting in a manifesto of our unique qualities. Baker’s
outline style illustrations are realistic but also have a whimsical overtone that will delight readers of
all ages.

**Princess Super Kitty** by Antoinette Portis.
Maggie, the main character of Portis’ newest book, is a young girl with a big imagination. She begins
the day pretending to be a kitty with ears and tail; she laps milk from a bowl with her tongue and
rubs against her mother’s legs. But being a kitty isn’t enough for Maggie, so she becomes Super
Kitty with a cape and superhero boots; she rescues baby brothers and opens jars. Once again
Maggie’s imagination cannot be contained within these two characters, so she becomes Princess
Super Kitty with jewels and a beautiful gown; she leads her subjects in a parade and takes tea.
Portis has created a humorous, realistic story about the power of imagination. Her outline style
illustrations are vivid and bold and add to Maggie’s personality and the overall humor of this lovely
tale.

**Red Sled** by Lita Judge.
Who can resist gliding down snow covered hills on a bright red sled? Not the young child who props
the sled next to a snug, glowing, snow-capped cabin. And not the animals in the forest who can’t
wait to join in on bear’s exuberant fun! With the only words in the text being sounds like the
scrunching snow under boots and paws and the joyous “Wheeeeee” as everyone careens
downhill, the story is told through lively pencil and watercolor illustrations that capture the pure
pleasure of sledding under a full moon.

**Worms for Lunch?** by Leonid Gore.
Using playful, bright die cut illustrations, this book interestingly answers young readers’ questions
and curiosity about the food chain. Beginning with “Who eats worms for lunch?” this book goes on to
introduce that a mouse eats cheese, a cat eats a mouse and drinks milk, a cow eats grass, etc.
Going through the entire food chain circle, the story finally comes to an end that it is a fish that
would have worms for lunch. Never fear! The worm wriggles humorously away, announcing that he’s
a book character and can’t be eaten. This humorous informational book would be an enlightening
and fun read aloud for preschoolers.

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**11 Experiments that Failed** by Jenny Offill, Nancy Carpenter (Illustrator).  

From the team who brought you *17 Things I'm Not Allowed to do Anymore*, this book follows the main character’s path of destruction as she poses questions about the world and designs experiments to answer them. The format follows a typical scientific write-up with a question, hypothesis, necessary materials, steps and results. Experiments range from subsisting on just ketchup and snow to making stinky cheese smell better. Offill seems to intimately know the minds of young children as she writes plausible questions and solutions for this age. Carpenter’s collage illustrations with quick pencil sketches and actual photographs add to the story in humorous ways.

**A Christmas Tree for Pyn** by Olivier Dunrea.  

This modern picture book harkens back to a time of old world charm and simplicity. Pyn desperately wants a Christmas tree but her “bear of a man” father only responds to her request with an “umphf.” Oother, Pyn’s father, truly loves his daughter, but being a bear of a man, he has trouble expressing this through his big shaggy beard and mustache. When Pyn’s determination to get a tree cannot be ignored, Oother helps her find the perfect tree, which allows him to express his love for her. While this is a beautiful and remarkable illustration of the relationship between fathers and daughters, it is so much more. Dunrea’s illustrations pull readers into the warm cottage and relationship shared by Pyn and her father. He has created a warm and fuzzy book without all of the drawbacks of warm and fuzzy books.

**A Giant Crush** by Gennifer Choldenko, Melissa Sweet (Illustrator).  

One's first crush can often feel overwhelming and life altering. However, this amazing experience can turn sour and embarrassing if one’s crush is discovered and revealed. Cooper is Jackson’s best friend and has finally put together the pieces and realized that Jackson has a HUGE crush on Cami. Instead of mocking Jackson for his crush, like many friends would, Cooper encourages Jackson to express his feelings to Cami, especially when Carter Corey starts putting the moves on Cami. Choldenko’s text is realistic and not too mushy, while also containing written gems such as, “Jackson’s cheeks flush red as a wrong-answer pencil.” Sweet’s illustrations feature rabbits and her characteristic drawing style. The combination of Choldenko’s text and Sweet’s illustrations make this a relatable story for anyone who has ever had a crush.

**A Giraffe Goes To Paris** by Holmes Tavener Holmes, John Harris, Mary Tavener Holmes, Jon Cannell (Illustrator).  

A giraffe in Paris is an intriguing concept, especially in 1826 when this story takes place. Told from the perspective of Atir, the giraffe’s caretaker from Egypt, this is the true story of how a giraffe named Belle journeyed to France. Jon Cannell’s illustrations have an elegant, delicate quality that reflect the giraffe on her historic journey. They start on a ship with a special hole for Belle’s long neck, and then they walk across France in a caravan from Marseille to Paris. The authors have
created an interesting read aloud with prompting questions to keep the audience engaged as they explore the various aspects of traveling with a giraffe across the country. For instance, have you ever considered what a giraffe might wear on their feet for walking a long distance? Or how to provide enough milk for a giraffe walking for eight weeks? This is a fascinating story which will encourage children to ponder what is possible.


This is a beautiful import from Taiwan that unfortunately tells a story that is far too common. Maomao is both excited and anxious about the upcoming New Year and all of its events, including the return of her father for a visit. Maomao’s father, like so many around the world, has to travel far away for work and only returns to visit once a year for the New Year. As Maomao is young, her memories of her father are cloudy which causes her to be a bit cautious at first. By the time her father leaves however, she has become so attached to him that it is difficult to let him go. This picture book, while providing a window into a reality for so many, does not dwell on the difficult but rather embraces all of the special moments the united family shares and is the epitome of a fine, culturally rich book.


Rosenthal lends her considerable creativity to telling the story of how the letters of the alphabet got in order. In a time when things were being created, such as fire and shadows, Al wanted to invent something as well. The king was looking for someone to put the 26 newly created letters in order. Al Pha made a bet with himself that he could invent the best organization of letters. Events in Al Pha’s life inspire his organization of the letters, for example, his need to use the bathroom inspires the placement of the letter “p.” Rosenthal integrates humor that will be appreciated by readers of all ages. Durand’s illustrations are also hilarious and add additional depth to the text.


This amusing, rhyming poem is about a spider, Barry B. Wary, who falls in love with a beautiful butterfly. In order to woo his butterfly’s love, Barry B. gives up eating bugs, slugs, and all other creepy crawly delights. Muir integrates a wide variety of spider and bug related humor that both kids and adults will appreciate. Gifford’s illustrations are detailed and amusing. This is the first book for both Muir and Gifford and I, for one, hope that it is not the last.


Betty Bunny has fallen head over fluffy tail in love…with chocolate cake! She loves it so much she exclaims that she wants to marry it. Once she has had chocolate cake, that is all that she wants to eat, but mother won’t allow her a piece of chocolate cake until she eats a healthy dinner. Betty Bunny must learn patience and appropriate cake storage, which is difficult for someone described as a “handful,” before she can indulge in chocolate cake again. Jorisch’s illustrations add to the hilariousness of Betty Bunny’s plight and her vibrant personality. Chocolate cake lovers, both young and old, will feel an immediate kinship with Betty Bunny and will most certainly sympathize with her situation.


The youngest child in a family of four wants someone to do something with, but his sister is on the phone, his mother is working on the computer and his dad is preparing dinner. However, when the lights go out in the city, the family comes together in the darkness and rediscovers each other and the beauty in their darkened city. Rocco’s illustrations, with his play with colors, capture the feel and
beauty of a darkened city.

**Bone Dog** by Eric Rohmann.

Flip the opaque page with a happy dog holding a large bone in his mouth and the title page shows the same dog as a skeleton with a wagging tail and smiling countenance. Under the light of a full moon that dominates the first double page spread, Ella the aging dog promises her boy Gus that "no matter what happens, I'll always be with you." On the scariest of Halloween nights, Ella, even though she’s long since dead, keeps her promise to Gus and saves him from hungry, clamoring skeletons. This is an uplifting love story, with just the right amount of scariness, that shows the bonds between a dog and her human can’t be broken, even in death. The illustrations, with their heavy black outlines and framing, highlight the mounting tension of both the surrounded boy and then the skeletons as they race across the page with the dogs tearing after them with the turn of the page.

**Bring on the Birds** by Susan Stockdale.
Peachtree. 2011. Unpaged. $15.95. Informational Science. Primary. 1561455601

Stockdale takes readers on a tour of some of the world’s birds and their habitats. The illustrations, which are bold, vivid, detailed and larger than life, provide readers with a realistic image of each featured bird. Stockdale pairs her gorgeous illustrations with short, rhyming text. Brief information about each bird is given at the end of the book.

**Estie the Mensch** by Jane Kohuth, Rosanne Litzinger (Illustrator).

Mensch is a Yiddish word that means both "be a person" and "be a good person." Author Kohuth uses these dual meanings to create a funny and touching picture book. Estie loves pretending to be animals from snakes to tigers to dogs and as a result is constantly hearing from the adults in her life to be a mensch. A visit to the zoo and a new friend, Petie, allow Estie to demonstrate that she is a mensch and that she understands both meanings.

**Grandpa Green** by Lane Smith.

An industrious young boy working in a very large garden tells the abbreviated, lyrical life story of his beloved great grandfather, beginning, "He was born a really long time ago, before computers or cell phones or television.” He tends to elaborate topiaries that show, among other vignettes, a bawling baby, complete with tears from a sprinkling hose; a boy covered in red berries, sick with chicken pox; and a cannon firing a cannon ball which the boy humorously ducks while retrieving a pair of wireless spectacles. While forgetful great grandfather is old enough to have fought in a world war rather than studying horticulture as he had hoped, the amazing garden shows that he was able to follow a dream now shared by his great grandson. Outline style pen and ink drawings of the boy and the garden are softened by varying shades of garden green. One double page spread of an ancient giant tree has the soft greens of spring on the far left, followed by summer’s darker verdant greens, the rusty browns of fall and finally, on the far right, mostly bare branches: "Now he’s pretty old...” The final leafy gatefold opens to reveal the entire garden and the elderly man’s biography.

**Hogg, Hogg & Hog** by Margie Palatini.

When very Big Pigs, literally and figuratively, discover that "Oink" has lost its oomph, they have to return to their humble farm roots to find the next latest, greatest thing to sweep the Big City. Poking fun at big business is a timely notion, even in a book for young children. Digitally created retro cartoon art in dominant pinks and fuscas shows the three pigs (yes, there are three!), with huge protruding bellies, oversized fancy clothes and constantly ringing rotary phones living the high life until they’re not, and then they are again. Their surprise new partner and hilarious new best idea will be particularly funny to children and adult readers alike.
How Dalia Put a Big Yellow Comforter Inside a Tiny Blue Box by Linda Heller, Stacey Dressen McQueen (Illustrator).

Tzedakah is a Judaic tradition that reminds everyone that it is right and just to help others. It is not uncommon for Jewish households to have Tzedakah boxes to which they add money to help those in need. Heller’s picture book follows the story of a sister and her younger brother as they learn about tzedakah. McQueen’s acrylic and oil pastel illustrations are vibrant and capture the warm feelings of this tradition.

I'm a Shark by Bob Shea.

Shark’s friends attempt to discover what he is scared of, but this totally awesome Shark is not afraid of anything. Or is he? This hilarious picture book demonstrates that even the bravest and toughest of us are sometimes scared...even if it is only a little something. Shea accompanies Shark’s story with his characteristic bright, cartoonish drawings. The story may particularly appeal to young boys who are trying to establish themselves as “tough” guys.

I'm Not by Pam Smallcomb, Robert Weinstock (Illustrator).

We are not fabulous at everything. Smallcomb and Weinstock address this simple fact through their characters in this silly book. The main character is overwhelmed by her amazing friend Evelyn and her abilities to understand fashion, paint, roller blading and more. She starts to become fixated on what she is not, until Evelyn points out her own wonderful qualities. Weinstock’s illustrations will make young readers laugh out loud with their exaggerated details, and Smallcomb will get children and adults talking about their own unique strengths and weaknesses. This book is a refreshing take on the topic of individuality.

If Rocks Could Sing: A Discovered Alphabet by Leslie McGuirk.

I have learned that it is a mistake to think that one has seen “everything” in children’s literature, because as soon as one does, a book like McGuirk’s “If Rocks Could Sing” comes along. It would be so easy to classify this book as just another alphabet book, but it is so much more. McGuirk spent a decade searching the shores of Florida beaches looking for rocks that resembled letters and items that represented each letter. When her collection was complete, she gathered it between the covers of this ABC book and invited readers to engage their imaginations as they stretch to see the objects and letters hidden in these rocks. But, perhaps more importantly, readers are quickly left in awe of Mother Nature and all of her hidden secrets. I think that this book will be difficult to resist for readers of all ages.

King Hugo's Huge Ego by Chris VanDusen.

Van Dusen’s humorous, rhyming text introduces us to King Hugo whose lack of height is matched by his lack of humility. At every opportunity King Hugo sings his own praises, even making his subjects gather daily to hear his “Speech of Adoration.” The King’s rude treatment of a sorceress results in a spell that causes the King’s head to grow each time he compliments himself, which, as you can imagine, results in his head reaching huge proportions. But like any good fairy tale, the King learns from his faults and vows to change them. The cartoon styled, vibrant illustrations add to this hilarious picture book.

Let the Whole Earth Sing Praise by Tomie de Paola.

Inspired by two pieces of Old Testament Scripture (the Canticle of the Three Young Men and Psalm 148) and the embroideries by the Otomi people of Puebla, Mexico, this book praises God with
simple, beautifully written verses and a visual feast of colorful illustrations that echoes the naïve design of Otomi folk art. Though clearly religious in theme, this book is even more like a song of praise that guides young readers to appreciate the beauty of Mother Nature and all God’s creations. Each stanza takes up a different subtheme of praise and works in tandem with the kaleidoscopic illustrations. This is a wonderful book to share with young children no matter what their religion.

Louise the Big Cheese and the Back-to-School Smarty-Pants by Elise Primavera, Diane Goode (Illustrator).

Louise is embarking on a new school year. In an effort not to be outdone by her older sister, she has decided to get straight A’s this year. On the eve of the new school year Louise dreams of her new teacher, Mrs. Pearl, and just knows that she is going to be the nicest and best teacher ever. However, Mrs. Pearl turns out not to be exactly what Louise had imagined. Mrs. Pearl is strict, demanding, and has high expectations; some might even call her mean. Louise does everything she can think of in order to earn an A, but Mrs. Pearl always responds with, “You can do better, Miss Cheese.” Louise imagines Mrs. Pearl getting snatched by aliens so that she will no longer stand in the way of Louise and her straight A’s. However, when Mrs. Pearl is gone for a few days, and a nice and kind substitute teacher takes over, Louise begins to appreciate Mrs. Pearl. This is a feel good teacher book that would make a perfect beginning of the school year read aloud ion. Goode’s vibrant line drawings exude Louise’s personality and will leave readers smiling.

Marshall Armstrong is New to Our School by David Mackintosh.

Being the new kid at school is never easy, and it is particularly difficult if you are different from everyone else. This fantastical picture book is told from the point of view of one of the students in Marshall Armstrong’s new class who can only see all of the differences in Marshall. In the narrator’s opinion differences are bad until Marshall’s birthday party. It is there that our narrator learns to embrace and appreciate differences. Mackintosh’s cartoonish, collage-like pictures are filled with quick dark lines and plenty of humor.

Me...Jane by Patrick McDonnell.

Famed cartoonist Patrick McDonnell joyfully explores the early life and dreams of Jane Goodall. Jane’s constant companion throughout her childhood was a stuffed chimpanzee named Jubilee. With Jubilee by her side, Jane explored the world around her and continued learning about her surroundings through books. She read about another Jane in the jungles of Africa in “Tarzan of the Apes” (hence the title) and dreamed of one day exploring these same places. In addition to McDonnell’s soft, colorful illustrations, there is a double-page spread of young Jane’s own drawings.

My Dog Thinks I’m a Genius by Harriet Ziefert, Barroux (Illustrator).

A young boy realizes early in his life that he is an artist and needs to paint and draw every day. Louie, his dog, is always by his side, sometimes giving feedback and sometimes helping. The young boy knows that Louie thinks he is a genius, but one day he also learns that Louie is a genius as well when Louie creates a masterpiece while he is at school. Barroux’s bright and expressive illustrations make this story unforgettable and give Louie his delightful personality. Readers won’t want to miss the endpages!

Neville by Norton Juster, G. Brian Karas (Illustrator).

Moving can be difficult for anyone, but particularly so for children. The thought of being the new kid at school and trying to make friends in the neighborhood can be daunting. The main character is no
different in his anxieties, however, he has a creative way of dealing with these issues, which results in all of the neighborhood kids helping him search for Neville. Readers of all ages will recognize the feelings expressed in this fun new picture book by the author of The Phantom Toolbooth.

**Pomelo Begins to Grow** by Ramona Badescu, Benjamin Chaud (Illustrator).
2011. Unpaged. $16.95. Fantasy. Primary. 1592701116
This enchanting picture book explores what it means to grow up through the eyes of a small, pink, garden elephant, Pomelo. One day Pomelo discovers that items in his environment seem to be getting smaller, but then he figures out that he is growing. This realization brings both excitement, as he thinks about all the new things he can do as he gets bigger, and anxiety, as he contemplates what it means to grow up. Pomelo is an endearing character who can provide comfort to readers dealing with issues of growing up. Chaud’s colorful, cartoonish and humorous illustrations add to Pomelo’s personality and will delight readers of all ages. Adults may enjoy the few postmodern elements scattered throughout the story.

**Scapegoat: The Story of a Goat Named Oat and a Chewed-Up Coat** by Dean Hale, Michael B. Slack (Illustrator).
Bloomsbury. 2011. Unpaged. $17.89. Fantasy. Primary. 1599904683
This rhyming, tongue twister of a story features the young Jimmy Choat and the family goat, Patsy Petunia Oat. As the Choat parents cannot speak goat, Jimmy can blame all of his misdeeds on Patsy P. Oat, the goat. After successfully avoiding punishment by blaming Patsy, he often gloats. However, Jimmy’s boat is sunk when the Choat’s neighbor, Mr. Sproat, who is fluent in goat, reveals who really is to blame. Patsy, the goat, is off the hook, but what did happen to Jimmy Choat’s coat? Slack’s illustrations are vivid and hilarious, perfect compliments to Hale’s text.

**Seven Fathers** by Ed Young (Illustrator), Ashley Ramsden (Reteller).
Through a brown landscape dominated by swirls of snow, a weary and very cold traveler finally comes upon a possible refuge. He reverentially inquires of each of seven elderly fathers if he may spend the night at their home, and each in turn tells him to ask his father. Because of his faithful persistence, he is richly rewarded in this splendid retelling of an old Norwegian tale. Young’s torn paper, rich fabric and fur collages and bold black line drawings give character to each individual father and show the warmth of their house against the frozen Norwegian landscape. “And what happened when he woke the next morning? Well, that is another story.” One we hope will be retold and elegantly illustrated soon!

**Stars** by Mary Lyn Rayner, Marla Frazee (Illustrator).
Beginning with sky blue endpapers covered with soft white clouds and ending with the deep black night sky sprinkled with stars, this story is the celebration of everything that’s wonderful about every kind of star, from those in the sky to the ones we make and keep in our pockets to the star shaped flowers that become strawberries or pumpkins. Frazee’s gentle illustrations of all kinds of children and their stars highlight the text and help stretch readers’ imaginations too. A lovely ode to stars and their beholders.

**Stuck** by Oliver Jeffers.
This hilarious postmodern picture book shows the lengths Floyd will go to get his kite out of a tree. He tries his shoe followed by a ladder followed by the kitchen sink and a curious whale who is in the wrong place at the wrong time. Jeffers’ simple crayon drawings and the handwritten text add charm and humor to the story.

**Tales for Very Picky Eaters**
You certainly don't have to be a picky eater to laugh out loud at this book where James's dad continually offers him a worse case scenario to get him to eat what he's sure he doesn't want to eat. When he finds broccoli disgusting, he's offered "the finest dirt available," or gum "chewed one thousand times by special children with very clean teeth." Disgusting! Four tales of other repulsive foods and hilarious possible substitutes follow. While James, his father and his dog are participating in a familiar, age-old family dinner table battle, the humor may go a long way to squelch similar battles at dinner tables across the land. Cartoon-styled art shows James and his range of responses as each new food is considered... and rejected!


Using the format of the tale "The House That Jack Built," this story tells how all the animals come to help when a farm girl starts cooking. The goat churns the cream; the cow provides the milk; and the donkey plucks the lime. Finally the arroz con leche (rice pudding) is done, and everyone says gracias (thank you) before enjoying their delicious reward! Echoing the cumulative text, the bright illustrations feature depictions of one more new character on each opening. The warm, Mexican influenced colors indicate the merry atmosphere of the story, especially when the animals are playing music while waiting for the rice pudding to be done. The recipe and a glossary of Spanish words draw non-Spanish speaking readers closer to the Mexican heritage that characterizes this bilingual nursery rhyme.


Money is a constant concern for the family, so when Pa finds a way to "save" money before Christmas, he jumps on the opportunity. He returns to the family's three-room flat in a New York City tenement with a turkey poult, which he plans to fatten up for Christmas dinner. The growing turkey becomes more and more of a nuisance to the family and the neighbors, but Pa finds a way to deal with each new obstacle until he is stumped the day before Christmas. Cole's illustrations and text perfectly reproduce the feelings and sights of a 19th-century tenement building, adding to the humor of the story while not taking away from its warmth and message.


Stuey Lewis is a second grader with the major problems faced by any second grader: an older brother who he both admires and hates; not reading as well as his best friend; dealing with the annoying girls in his class; and how exactly to make this Halloween's prank even better than last year's. Stuey is a lovable and realistic character, and readers will feel like they really get to know Stuey through the four short stories in this book. The illustrations by Evans provide both support for beginning readers as well as humor. This beginning chapter book will appeal to a range of readers, including advanced younger readers and blossoming second grade or older readers. I hope that this is not the last time we will hear from Stuey and Schoenberg.


Ruthie's grandmother is in the hospital with pneumonia where she is claiming she is "starving to death" because of the horrible hospital food. When Ruthie asks if there is anything she can do to help, her grandmother requests homemade borscht by 5:00 p.m. Ruthie rushes home and searches for her grandmother's secret recipe. When she can't find it, she creates her own recipe with the advice of three neighbors who each claim to make the best borscht. However, Ruthie's special recipe is just what her grandmother needed. Christensen's illustrations are the sour cream on top of the story.

"Little alien! Little alien! LET ME COME IN!" Sound more than vaguely familiar? That's because this story of three little aliens who are sent by their mother out into space in search of new homes is a spoofy, futuristic version of the three little pigs. The very scary 5-eyed robot who is trying to eat them is certainly no push over, but Nklwxcyz (an even odder name when compared to that of his siblings Bork and Gork) has built a very sturdy house with a chimney that proves to be the evil robot's undoing. There's plenty of fun to be had in studying the cartoon-styled illustrations of aliens at play in our solar system, which is also accurately depicted without Pluto (though not to scale) on the endpapers.

**This Plus That: Life's Little Equations** by Amy Krouse Rosenthal, Jennifer Corace (Illustrator).

Life is a little bit of this and a little bit of that. Rosenthal, in her unique way of seeing the world, explores some of the things that add up to make a life. Although it may seem difficult to summarize life with simple math equations, Rosenthal's equations do ring true and do seem to illustrate a life. Corace's bright and charming illustrations serve to demonstrate and elaborate on the elements of life explored through these equations. Rosenthal correctly posits that "anything + sprinkles = better," just as Rosenthal + Corace + unique take on life = a delightful new book with a refreshing outlook on life.

**Time for a Bath** by Robin Page, Steve Jenkins (Illustrator).

Beginning with the question "Do you like taking a bath?" seemingly posed by a tiger staring directly at the reader, this author and illustrator team immediately engage children in this informative look at how animals clean themselves. Accurate scientific information is presented in an entertaining format. After sharing that two very contented looking white-tailed deer lick each other clean on the final, double-page spread, readers are asked an intriguing question considering all they've learned: "How will you get clean when it's time for your next bath?" More information is appended about each of the animals, including vultures, rufous hummingbirds, web-footed geckos and even ants. Other books in the series that is sure to be a hit include *Time to Sleep* and *Time to Eat.*


Recounting the story of the Underground Railroad, a secret association established in the early 1800s, this book vividly reproduces the intense experiences of the enslaved people's pursuit of freedom. Intended for early elementary readers, the simple yet dramatic text has only a few words on each opening, creating a quick, tight story pace that echoes the nervous atmosphere of the characters' escape. The story begins at night and ends in the dawn upon the characters' arrival in a place of freedom and the birth of a baby. The time transition is shown in the shift from a dark to a bright palette in the illustrations. The author's note at the end provides background information on the history of slavery as well as the Underground Railroad.

**When a Dragon Moves In** by Jodi Moore, Howard McWilliam (Illustrator).
Flash Light. 2011. Unpaged. $16.95. Fantasy. Primary. 0979974674

The problem with building a perfect sandcastle is that a dragon will want to move in. The main character of this humorous picture book quickly discovers that there are advantages and disadvantages of having a dragon living in your sandcastle. For example, while your dragon can protect your sandcastle from the bullies, he may also kick sand at your sister and get you in trouble. McWilliam's humorous illustrations add another depth of meaning to Moore's text. Readers may wonder if the dragon in the sandcastle really existed or if it was just the creation of a little boy with a very big imagination.

**Where's Walrus?** by Stephen Savage.

This vivid, wordless picture book follows the escapades of Walrus after he escapes from the zoo.
zookeeper searches high and low for Walrus, but Walrus hides in his surroundings, which often results in hilarious images. Readers, both young and old, will enjoy finding Walrus in the background of these bright, retro illustrations.

Primary reading level
2011 publication year

41 book(s) found.
New Books for Young Readers

Primary/Intermediate reading level
2011 publication year

26 book(s) found.


The events and ramifications of September 11, 2001 are difficult to talk about and describe, particularly when speaking with young children. Don Brown tackles the information about this day in an understandable way. For the most part, Brown remains neutral in his presentation of the facts; however, at times there is a sense of editorializing. And while Brown does not shelter his readers from any of the information and details of that day’s events, he presents them in a way that is not sensational or overly graphic beyond, of course, the inherent horror in the details themselves. Brown’s muted and heavily lined illustrations while realistic are also somewhat abstract, providing a filter for younger readers while not hiding the truth. This would be a valuable nonfiction book to include in a collection because it conveys the facts but also gives opportunities to know some of the key players and their experiences on that memorable day.


In delightful illustrations and entrancing collages Sweet tells the story of Tony Sarg, the man behind the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade balloon puppets. Sweet tells of Sarg’s early life and his love of figuring out how things work. Sarg took his interest and ability with him when he moved to London and started making marionettes for children. His talent brought him to New York City where his marionettes performed on Broadway. Sarg attracted the attention of Macy’s department store, and he was employed to make a moving puppet parade for the store’s holiday windows. From there his ideas were applied to the beginning of the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade, which has now become an annual holiday tradition. In an effort to make the parade more accessible to all viewers, Sarg created the now famous parade balloons, which were based on his marionettes. Sweet tells the fascinating story of Sarg and his puppets with an ear for interesting words used in interesting ways and an eye for detail in her illustrations and collages.


Krull’s historical facts about hair will have you scratching your head, both from the thought of washing your hair only once a year to pondering why a French lady would want a bird cage in her hair. The history of the world from the origin of man to modern times is viewed through evolutions in the care of hair and its many styles. Krull provides additional information about hair in each time period in an appendix. Malone’s illustrations are humorous and contribute to readers’ understanding of the text and time periods.


At first frightened by the large, eerie cloud she sees approaching over the lake, a young girl runs for her mother who introduces her to the amazing wonder of monarch migration. Poetic text uses vivid
descriptions of the thousands of butterflies who become "an explosion/of golden-orange bits" to share valuable information about the creatures. Wu's atmospheric pastels showcase the scenic backdrop of the forest setting and the magical moment when mother, daughter and her dog are festooned with butterflies who alight on their hair and noses. The Author's Note gives more specific information about monarchs along with books and websites for those readers whose interest will be piqued by the story based on her own experiences growing up in Northern Ohio.

Cat Secrets by Jef Czekaj.
This postmodern picture book features three feisty cats who hold the bible to all cat secrets. Before revealing their cat secrets, they want to ensure that the only beings reading the book are cats. In order to determine that only cats are reading the book, readers must complete a series of cat activities such as meowing and stretching. Throughout this vetting process, a mouse is trying hard to get its hands on the book of cat secrets, and unfortunately it might just succeed during the last test put to readers. This is an extremely funny and interactive book that readers, whether cat or not, will enjoy. Czekaj's illustrations are saturated in color, attitude and catness.

Charlie and Kiwi: An Evolutionary Adventure by Eileen Campbell, FableVision (Illustrator), Peter H. Reynolds (Illustrator).
1442421126
This genre bending picture book uses the device of a time machine and a talking stuffed Kiwi bird to explain evolution, particularly the evolution of birds. The main character, Charlie, has chosen to do a report on the Kiwi bird of New Zealand, but he is struggling to explain how and why this strange bird came to be. Charlie travels back in time, picking up a passenger along the way, Charles Darwin, of course, and tracks the evolution of the Kiwi's unique attributes such as the inability to fly and its whiskers. Reynolds bright, saturated, cartoonish illustrations provide detailed factual information while also adding to the fun concept of the book.

Clara Lee and the Apple Pie Dream by Jenny Han, Juliana Kuo (Illustrator).
Korean-American. 0316070386
Clever third grader Clara Lee knows she's just as American as apple pie, even when her rival for Little Miss Apple Pie intimates that she won't win because of her Korean ancestry. Will the good luck her grandfather promises help her win the essay contest that will lead to a tiara and a place on the float next to Miss Apple Pie? Spunky Clara deals with her pesky younger sister, best friend Max's horrible request to be her boyfriend and other dilemmas with aplomb. It's her readers who really are the lucky ones who will be eagerly awaiting sequels to this entertaining book.

Coral Reefs by Jason Chin.
1596435631
On the title page, a young girl in a stately library reaches for the same book that readers are holding in their hands. As she is absorbed in reading about coral species, library tables begin to fill with dripping coral until the building is transformed into the sea, and the young girl is washed away on a wave, a frantic crab balanced on her book. As he combined fantasy and information in Redwoods, Chin explores and explains the complex ecosystem of coral reefs while entertaining readers with an exciting fantasy. The soaking wet girl (and a few coral specimens) emerges on the front steps of the library and eagerly shares her book with unsuspecting friends who will soon join her on another underwater adventure.

EllRay Jakes is NOT a Chicken! by Sally Warner, Jamie Harper (Illustrator).
Growing up is hard to do, and as EllRay is the smallest kid in his third grade class, he still has a lot of
EllRay is currently being bullied by the biggest kid in the class, Jared, but no one seems to notice, and EllRay doesn't want to be a tattle-tale. When EllRay's efforts to avoid Jared cause his teacher to call home about his behavior, he is more bound and determined than ever not to let the bullying get to him. EllRay is a relatable and extremely likable character. He seems like a real kid who deals with a very real situation in a realistic way. This story is a great read for boys, whether the bullied or the bully, and reluctant readers.


In a series of heartfelt poems, Jessica explores her complicated relationship with her often embarrassing, sometimes destructive, snopy, silly but loving and irreplaceable little sister. Campbell’s expressive outline-style illustrations heighten the tension, frustration, and ultimately the love that Jessica feels in situations that older siblings everywhere will recognize. The poet is definitely a big sister! A wonderful companion book to Richard Margolis’s *Secrets of a Small Brother*.  


Each brief story begins with a poetic assertion of what a friend does (comforts, helps, snuggles...) and then describes a most unusual animal friendship, accompanied by dramatic photos of the unlikely pairs. No one will be able to resist the touching stories of these endearing friends. No one will be able to ignore the subtle message that humans should also be able to overcome our differences and befriend each other.  


This is a hilarious take on “Goldilocks and the Three Bears.” As Goldie is running away from the three bears, she falls down the Hares’s hole and hurts her foot. The Hares are forced to take care of her as she cannot fit back up the hole with her swollen foot. Goldie’s demands are difficult to meet: for example, she wants pillows that are not too soft or too hard but just right. The Hares grow tired of their houseguest and try a variety of approaches to get her to leave. Children, especially those who are familiar with the traditional story, and adults alike will love identifying all of the literary references, including Alice’s white rabbit, and will laugh at the Hare’s efforts to expel Goldie.  


This historical fiction picturebook explores life in a one-room schoolhouse during the 1700s. The rhythmic and rhyming storyline spotlights two brothers, John Paul and Peter, and their learning, misbehavior and triumphs. Kay includes historically accurate examples of schooling during this time period, including hornbooks, writing with quills and ink, and stoking the fireplace for warmth. Kay’s author’s note gives readers additional information about her research, the book and the time period. Schindler’s illustrations provide readers with accurate and entertaining visuals of the time period.  


Hartland presents factual information in a uniquely repetitive format. This picture book illustrates the chronology of how a dinosaur’s remains got on display in the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. Hartland describes all the people and steps involved from the dinosaur hunter to the exhibit team at the museum. Each time a new person in the sequence is presented, Hartland reviews all the others. Hartland’s realistic yet cartoonish illustrations add to the transmittion of the information.  

*I Am the Book* Yayo (Illustrator), Lee Bennett Hopkins (Editor).
Including wonderful poems by thirteen renowned poets, this anthology praises the beauty and magic of words and the most touching and endearing moments of reading. Reading a wonderful book in bed on a quiet morning is enjoyable, and so is reading on a bus on the way home. Some enjoy reading at certain times of a day, whereas others love reading anywhere and any time. This collection will be a favorite of all who love to read. Echoing the poetic tropes in the text, the romantic illustrations visualize and enhance the pleasure of reading. This entertaining book could also spark less engaged young readers’ passions for books and poetry.


As Jenkins affirms, “So much can happen in a second.” He then catalogues many events in nature - bats make 200 high-pitched calls; a pygmy shrew's heart beats 14 times - that serve to make the passing of time, even as short as a second, real and more concrete for children. He does the same for a minute, an hour, a day, a week, a month and a year. Each double page spread is filled with interesting facts about what happens in a given amount of time. He also includes a history of the universe, the rise of earth's human population over time and the life spans of many plants and animals, along with an explanation of how time is kept. So much to keep active minds entertained. The use of his realistic torn paper collage illustrations adds a great deal of information to the time facts that are highlighted. The book’s strong design elements include a black bar with 60 gray slashes - a minute's worth - along each double page spread and boldly colored backgrounds that make his facts pop.


Marty McGuire is a spunky new female character in the world of children’s literature. Third grader Marty enjoys being a tomboy. She likes tromping through mud and finding frogs. Her best friend, Annie, used to enjoy doing these things with her but lately Annie has been hanging out with the prissy Veronica, leaving Marty to either be a tomboy on her own or to act like a proper young lady with Annie and Veronica. Then unbelievably Marty is cast as the princess in the class’ production of “The Frog Prince.” Marty can’t believe her bad luck and begs her teacher for a different role as she doesn’t want to have to dress up in a princess dress and act like a lady. However, her teacher encourages her to improvise, and as a result Marty realizes that she doesn’t have to play one role all of the time. Messner has created a new heroine who would be comfortable hanging out with Ramona, Judy or Clementine.


Although Trottier was inspired to write this lyrical picture book by a specific population of migrant workers, the story is told in such a way as to appeal to all readers, migrant or not. Anna and her family are Mennonites from Mexico who return to Canada, their place of origin, each year as migrant workers. Anna, the youngest in the family, shares what life is like for migrant workers in a series of vivid and accurate similes and metaphors. Arsenault’s mixed media illustrations, which include crayon and collage, are fantastical while also providing a realistic sense of Anna’s world. This picture book would make an excellent addition to any discussion on migrant workers and their rights.


Miss Dorothy knew from the time that she was a young girl that she wanted to be a librarian because she loved books and loved people. She dreamed of being the librarian in a fine brick library like the one in her hometown. She went to college and library school, and when she graduated she was ready to become the librarian at a fine brick library. However, life had different plans for Miss Dorothy. She fell in love and married a man who wanted to move to the Blue Ridge Mountains of
North Carolina. Although Miss Dorothy loved the land, there was no fine brick library. The neighbors did love reading though and wanted Miss Dorothy to be able to share books with everyone; a collection was started for a bookmobile. Miss Dorothy became the librarian of the bookmobile, which she drove around delivering books to young and old readers wherever she found them. This beautifully illustrated picture book is a celebration of the librarian who meant so much to the author and others she served, introducing the world to readers through books.

**Pablo Neruda: Poet of the People** by Monica Brown, Julie Paschkis (Illustrator).

While many children will not have heard of Pablo Neruda, let alone read any of his poems, they will enjoy reading his life story and perhaps become more careful observers of their own world. With a myriad of English and Spanish words swirling through her stunning illustrations, Paschkis shows readers what was always important to the Chilean boy Neftali who became known as Pablo Neruda, one of the world's great poets. When Brown talks of his love of the sea, words like 'silvery, shiver, further, farther, fathom, ancla and orilla' float by on waves of greens and blues. When the dangers of being a coal miner become Neruda's focus, grey words like 'nunca, nada, need and never' emerge from the underground darkness. An author's note gives more information about the poet, but children will learn all they need to know by reading the book's spare text and studying the glorious art.

**The Carpenter's Gift: A Christmas Tale About the Rockefeller Center Tree** by David Rubel, Jim LaMarche (Illustrator).

This picture book connects the origins of the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree and its current manifestations. The beautifully illustrated book tells of a family during the Depression and their donation of a Christmas tree to the workers constructing the Rockefeller building. The workers repay the favor by helping the family improve their housing situation. The picture book traces the life of the young boy impacted by the events in the story. The story also explains how the tree is ed each year and what happens to it at the end of each holiday season. LaMarche’s realistic soft pastel drawings convey a strong sense of time and place and add a magical quality to this beautiful story.

**The Crossing** by Donna Jo Napoli, Jim Madsen (Illustrator).

While the story of Lewis and Clark’s journey has been presented in many children’s books, no one has told the story of what happened in a first-person account from the point of view of Sacagawea’s baby Jean Baptiste. The lyrical text has poetic descriptions of the sights and animals encountered, often accompanied by the boldly printed sounds that would delight or frighten a baby in reality and in his dreams: the scream and hiss of cougars; the “Quek, quek!” of tree frogs. The stunning digital illustrations of sweeping vistas, a playful inquisitive baby and his mother, and men at work are speckled with the tiny cracks of old oil paintings. A wonderful introduction to one of America’s best known, true adventure stories.

**The Flying Canoe: A Christmas Story** Daniel San Souci (Illustrator), Justin San Souci (Illustrator), Eric A. Kimmel (Reteller).

Readers and listeners of all ages will enjoy this retelling of a well-known French-Canadian folktale. The story occurs on Christmas and features a band of fur traders, or voyageurs, who have been away from home for a long time. A stranger appears in their camp and offers the men the opportunity to return home in one night, however, no one can speak until he reaches his home. With some reluctance, all of the men are convinced to participate in the endeavor. The men load into their canoe, which takes to the sky, and each paddle stroke takes them 10 leagues. The men observe the landscape below and remember all of the events of their most recent trip. Frequent readers of folktales will recognize that the men will not be successful in their attempt to return home, but how the issue is resolved is creative and memorable. The illustrations by the father and son team capture the cold and the depth of the rugged landscape. The travelers are portrayed in an exaggerated way...
that serves to heighten this bigger than life story. While this would be a great addition to any collection of holiday stories or folktales, it will also make fantastic any day reading.

**The Little Red Pen** by Janet Stevens, Susan Stevens Crummel.

In an initial wink and nod to the traditional story of the Little Red Hen, these two sisters tell the adventure of a writing instrument faced with piles of papers to grade and in desperate need of help. "Who will help me save the world?" ultimately becomes her plaintive plea. Hilarious characters who do eventually help her include Stapler, with his aching back from being repeatedly pounded; Scissors, who asserts she doesn't want to be "blunt;" Highlighter who has a "bright idea;" Senorita Chincheta, a sassy pushpin; and poor Eraser, who forgets everything since his head is shrinking. Clever illustrations, snappy dialogue and an ingenious solution to the Red Pen’s problem make this the perfect book for teachers to share with students.

**The Man in the Moon** by William Joyce.

This first book in Joyce's new Guardians of Childhood series - 20 years in the making - that will include stories of Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy, the Sandman, and the Easter Bunny, begins "Many once upon a times ago..." Because of the valiant and clever thinking of the Man in the Moon, the initially scary story with its cataclysmic battle between loving light and loathsome dark ends reassuringly with "the night was never again as dark." Children are safe from all that can harm them in the dark night. The Man in the Moon is their guardian, fending off evil just as his parents did in their epic battle against Pitch, the king of nightmares.

**Waiting for the Magic** by Patricia MacLachlan, Amy June Bates (Illustrator).

Sometimes parents do things that are incomprehensible, like leaving their family. William’s dad has left the family once again, and William wants to know more than anything why his dad has left. He struggles to look out for his younger sister Elinor, even when he stills needs to be looked after as well. In a rebellious decision, as William’s father did not like dogs or cats, his mother decides to adopt a dog. However, the family cannot bear to leave any of the animals at the shelter so return home with four very unique dogs and a cat. The dogs immediately begin to look after and take care of the heartbroken family, and when peace and silence envelops the family, their magic reveals itself. MacLachlan has written a beautiful early chapter book about love, loss, fear and the magic of childhood and of listening.
New Books for Young Readers

*Intermediate* reading level
*2011* publication year

29 book(s) found.


"Look under there!" "Under where?" "Ha, ha, ha…I made you say underwear!" If this joke makes you laugh hysterically, then this is the book for you! Author Kyi and illustrator Kinnaird take readers through a tour of the history of the world through the history of underwear. Changes in people’s values resulted in changes in people’s under garments. Humankind started with bare buns and moved into many layers for numerous reasons (including avoiding taking baths) and into more modern approaches to underwear. The arrangement of the text into questions and answers allows for a chronological, cover-to-cover reading or a more sporadic dipping in and out type of reading. Kinnaird’s cartoonish illustrations add much humor to this otherwise serious topic.


Krull provides a detailed account of FDR’s early life and the experiences that led him to be one of the most beloved presidents of the United States. FDR lived a blessed life as the center of his parents’ world. He never lacked for anything, yet as President he fought for the poor and the working class. Krull highlights the events in FDR’s life that gave him such compassion for others. This is an informative, accessible and entertaining account of Franklin D. Roosevelt.


Franco’s poems and Wertz’s illustrations come together to capture the essence of dog-hood. Franco’s words describe dogs and dog behavior perfectly, while Wertz’s illustrations give life to the words and the subject by encapsulating what it means to be a dog. Readers don't have to be dog lovers in order to appreciate this fantastic collection of concrete poems.


Although Varon’s newest graphic novel is populated with talking foods, including vegetables, baked goods and fruit, it feels very familiar, and readers will not have a problem slipping comfortably into the world of Cupcake and his best friend, Eggplant. Cupcake owns a very successful bakery, but lately he feels like he is losing his baking edge. When Eggplant tells Cupcake of his plan to visit his Aunt Aubergine and her best friend, the world famous baker, Turkish Delight, Cupcake jumps at the chance to go along in order to meet his baking hero. Cupcake works long hours to make extra money to pay for the trip. However, when something unexpected happens, Cupcake must make a difficult decision about the trip and his friendship with Eggplant. In a fantastical but extremely relatable way, Varon explores how life can sometimes become routine and unfulfilling, reaffirming what is important is sometimes all it takes to reenergize yourself. Varon’s bright illustrations and funny characters make this graphic novel appealing and accessible to younger readers, but the messages of friendship and fulfillment will grab and retain the attention of older readers as well.
**Ben Franklin: His Wit and Wisdom from A-Z** by Alan Schroeder, John O'Brien (Illustrator).

This alphabetic tour through Franklin’s life provides readers with short, illustrated pieces of information about Franklin’s public and private life from his birth to his death. This book can be enjoyed from cover to cover, but readers can also delve into any page or letter. Each double page spread is adorned with several quotations from Franklin, which provide readers with additional insight into this historically significant figure. O’Brien’s cartoonish illustrations contribute to the book’s overall appeal.

**Billions of Years, Amazing Changes: The Story of Evolution** by Laurence Pringle, Steve Jenkins (Illustrator).

Using very clear language and many interesting examples, Pringle describes how and why evolution is the best theory for explaining how life on earth has changed over many millions of years and how it can be that we share some DNA with all forms of life, not just apes. He also shares the history of the theory, from Darwin’s early observations that led to his now famous account to current evolutionary studies of changes happening in medicine and other scientific fields. This very readable summary is enhanced by Jenkins’s tactile, cut-paper collage illustrations along with stunning, full-color photographs, maps and other visual aids. Pringle’s more detailed text is a perfect accompaniment to recent picture books about the subject, including Jenkins’s own *Life on Earth* and Lisa Westberg Peters’s *Our Family Tree*. A helpful glossary, index and sections with recommendations for those who wish to learn more about the subject are included.

**Bless This Mouse** by Lois Lowry, Eric Rohmann (Illustrator).

Ah, the irony! Church mice living in St. Bartholemew’s are in constant fear of the Great X, which turns out to be those times when an exterminator is called in to get rid of them all. As the time for the annual Blessing of the Animals (including many cats!) draws near, Hildegarde, the mouse leader, must figure out a way to keep everyone safe from all that threatens the hundreds of mice in her care. Rohmann’s detailed pencil drawings heighten the action and help define the mouse characters.

**Breaking Stalin’s Nose** by Eugene Yelchin.

In a naive voice reminiscent of the narrator in John Boyne’s *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, 10-year-old Sasha tells the story of his disintegrating world under the control of Stalin’s secret police, an organization he has always been so proud knowing that his father serves. Early in the story, he asserts that his “greatest dream has always been to join the Young Soviet Pioneers” so that he can eventually become “a real Communist like my dad.” His chilling education in the ways of the state leads to his true understanding of what has happened to his mother, father and to his future. By the end of the book, Sasha knows all too well the true evil of the regime ruling his country and can only wait for the change everyone secretly yearns will soon come. Yelchin’s black and white illustrations perfectly convey characters’ motivations and the drama of what is occurring in this young boy’s crumbling world.

**Can We Save the Tiger?** by Martin Jenkins, Vicky White (Illustrator).

While Jenkins makes a compelling case for why the tiger and many other endangered animals must be saved, it is White’s boldly realistic illustrations that will thrill readers of this well designed book. From the too-large-to-be contained tiger staring directly at the reader on the cover to the kakapo doing the same near the end of the book, these are creatures who will fascinate young readers. The book begins with the premise that the world is big, but not all that big, and that people have a huge impact on what happens to other living things. It ends with the horrifying notion that if we stop trying to change what we’ve set in motion, we could live in a world without polar bears, elephants, whooping cranes or ground iguanas. “And I think that would be a shame, don’t you?” After reading his book, it would be difficult to answer with anything other than a resounding, “Yes!”
City of Orphans  by Avi.  

Once again Avi has given us an historical novel filled with adventure. Set in New York City in 1893, this is the story of Maks and Willa. Orphaned and homeless Willa is a tough girl; Maks is from an immigrant family trying to survive brutal poverty. Avi shows us the life of a "newsie" at the turn of the century, when New York was filled with graft and corruption. The story becomes a mystery when Willa and Maks set out to exonerate his sister who has been sent to jail for a crime she didn't commit. Avi, a master at engaging all the reader's senses in historical settings, doesn't disappoint those who have enjoyed his previous books who will find this book hard to put down.

E-MERGENCY! by Ezra Fields-Meyer, Tom Lichtenheld. 

The witty fun begins and ends on the endpapers in this hilariously melodramatic alphabetic tale of the letter E who falls down the stairs and is so injured (though she doesn't cry because sometimes she's silent) that she can't be used in any words. O must fill in. Imagine the confusion! All the letters live together in one house: Z is always exhausted; D and C are sent to Washington to alert the U.S. government about the fact that E can't be used in words until she recovers; J is sent to walk across the street for help. The ensuing profusion of e-less words and silly situations make this a book that is sure to be a hit. Why is E taking so long to recover? There's a funny, postmodern twist! Maybe James Thurber's The Wonderful O should be next on the reading list.

For the Birds: The Life of Roger Tory Peterson  by Peggy Thomas, Laura Jacques (Illustrator). 

Peterson's epitaph reads: "Birds cannot speak for themselves. I must speak for them." And eloquently speak for them through his accurate descriptions and detailed art he did. His life - from his early years as a boy who spent much more time observing birds than playing with friends to adult fame as the author of A Field Guide to Birds - is one that will interest those children who have a love of science and living creatures. Jacques's highly realistic illustrations not only show the man at work, but his sketches, field notes and postcards home. Humorous endpapers give the "Topography of a Birder," highlighting Peterson's 'habitat, identifying markings, voice and range', just as he did for his beloved birds.

Gold! Gold From the American River!  by Don Brown. 

Brown's account of the California gold rush begins with a sketch of a downtrodden miner panning for gold who states "I live as I would hardly ask a dog to live." Marshall's find brought people from all over the world, hoping to make their fortunes, to the area around Sutter's Mill. How they got all the way to California and what happened to them once they arrived is an often disheartening story. Through his well researched text and informative illustrations, Brown captures the excitement of the lucky and despair of the many who struggled with nothing gained and so much lost.

Lemonade and Other Poems Squeezed from a Single Word by Bob Raczka, Nancy Doniger (Illustrator). 

Have you ever had students make as many words as they can from one longer word? Do you enjoy wordplay? Then this collection of playful poems derived from single words is for you! It's sure to be a hit with budding poets as well as with those who like to solve riddles. Just in case you can't figure out what a poem made only from the letters of words like "minivan" or "snowflakes" or "earthworms" is saying as it trickles down the page, all you need to do is turn the page to read the message in more straightforward form. This collection provides plenty of fun for everyone, yet some poems' messages will also give thoughtful readers pause.

Mal and Chad: The Biggest, Bestest Time Ever! by Stephen McCranie.
Fourth-grade genius Mal and his talking dog, Chad, are the main characters of this funny new graphic novel series by Stephen McCranie. Mal has created numerous successful and unsuccessful inventions, including a time machine, which they use to visit the time of dinosaurs. And even though when the duo is faced with charging dinosaurs they think straight and manage to escape, when faced, gasp, with the girl that he likes, Mal loses all control of his brain and mouth! In addition, Mal has not yet figured out an invention that protects him from the school bullies. This graphic novel, with its black and white illustrations, is a fun combination of fantasy, adventure, real life and daily issues.


Joyce’s newest endeavor is a 13 book series that will explore the origins of some of the Guardians of Childhood, including the Man in the Moon, Santa Claus and the tooth fairy. The series will be composed of seven novels and six picture books and will be accompanied by a motion picture. This first novel in the series explores the roots of Santa Claus. Readers won't believe who Santa Claus was before he was Santa Claus. This fantasy includes magic, wizards, the Man in the Moon, yetis, flying sleds, and, of course, reindeer. This adventure will appeal to both boys and girls and will no doubt leave readers wanting to read all of the books in the series.


Even though she was the first and only woman to survive going over Niagara Falls in a barrel, Annie Edson Taylor has not received her proper place in American history nor in the history and lore of the Falls. As a sixty-two-year-old retired charm school teacher and widow, Taylor’s financial situation was tenuous. She needed something that would bring her fame and financial security. Remembering her visit to Niagara Falls as a child, Taylor decided that she would attempt to become the first person to survive a trip over the Falls in a barrel. She had a barrel custom-built, and then searched for someone who could help her gain attention for her upcoming feat. Taylor survived the jarring trip, but her dreams of fame and financial gain were unfulfilled as many could not believe that she, a sixty-two-year-old grandmotherly woman, could have survived. Soon her barrel was receiving more attention than she was, and Taylor spent much of her last twenty years trying to secure the fame she thought her feat would gain her. Van Allsburg has resurrected Taylor’s amazing story and daring, finally providing her with the recognition she deserves. Van Allsburg’s remarkably detailed sepia drawings from varying perspectives highlight Taylor’s spunk and give the reader a dramatic, true sense of this brave woman and the peril she faced.


When she was eight years old, Gertrude Simmons, also known as Zitkala-Sa or Red Bird, and her mother made the decision that would radically change her life forever. Born on the Sioux reservation in South Dakota, Simmons left everything she knew in order to attend a boarding school in Indiana. From that day forward, Simmons would straddle two worlds: the Native American world and the White man’s world. She was made to feel much pain and shame during her years at the boarding school, however her love of music and her musical talent thrived, which ultimately opened many doors for her. Her music allowed her to advocate for her people and to become a bridge builder between the two worlds. At the end of her life, Simmons was well-known as a talented musician, an insightful author and a fierce activist. The authors use much of Simmon’s own writing to tell her story, with a few adaptations to make the material more accessible to modern, young readers.


In an adventurous, romantic tale that is reminiscent of the famous English UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS series, a mouse family, having faced many tragedies and now headed by Helena, the eldest
daughter, must leave behind their safe home to take a European voyage with their somewhat socially hapless human family, the Upstairs Cranstons, who are in search of a husband for their oldest daughter Olive. Rich characterization of mice and humans and delicious descriptions of harrowing escapes and hilarious, bumbling social encounters propel readers through the book.

**The Cheshire Cheese Cat: A Dickens of a Tale** by Carmen Agra Deedy, Randall Wright, Barry Moser (Illustrator).

The daring mouse Pip is faced with a terrible conundrum. How will he deal with two cats, one filled with amity, the other enmity, and ensure the raven Maldwyn’s return to Queen Victoria’s Tower while keeping the thousands of mice in the Inn safe? In the meantime, as is alluded to in the title, Charles Dickens, who frequents the inn and has observed the unusual relationship of Pip and the too amiable cat Skilley, is having a frustrating, sleepless-night time trying to think of the perfect beginning line to his tale of revolution. Moser’s droll portraits of the many animal and human characters, as richly portrayed as those in any Dickens’s novel, add a great deal of reality to this wonderful fantasy. Delicious descriptions - and not just of the delectable cheese that Skilley and the mice crave - and Dickensian word play abound, so much so that the authors include a glossary of words from “abject” to “wraithlike” that would no doubt please Mr. Dickens. They suggest a “trip to the dictionary, a pastime we find most enjoyable” for those unknown words not included. What word loving reader could resist such an enjoyable tale of survival and intrigue? Not one!

**The Elephant Scientist** by Caitlin O’Connell, Donna M. Jackson, Timothy Rodwell (Illustrator).

Readers will not only learn a great deal about elephants and their social world in this fascinating account but will also come to realize why the research being conducted by Caitlin O’Connell and her team is so vital to their survival in and around Namibia’s Etosha National Park and beyond. While their primary research concern is how elephants communicate, the practical application of what is discovered will keep the elephants from destroying local farmers’ crops, ensuring their protection by the people who live side by side with the pachyderms. As is true of the many other fine books in the Scientists in the Field series, readers also learn a great deal about what scientists actually do, even when not in the field, and how they’re able to use their sometimes seemingly disparate observations - in this case of insect and elephant use of vibrations for communication - to learn something new and often astonishing. The book is elaborately illustrated with illuminating photos taken by O’Connell and her husband Timothy Rodwell that give additional information about their work and heighten reader interest in an already compelling story.

**The Flint Heart** by John Paterson, Katherine Paterson, John Rocco (Illustrator).

Paterson’s newest work, in conjunction with her husband, is described as being “freely abridged” from a fantasy written by Eden Phillpott in 1910. According to a presentation by Paterson regarding the book, she and her husband loved the original fantasy so much that they wanted it republished. However, they could find no publisher willing to do so, and thus took it upon themselves to “freely abridge” the story for modern audiences. The tactic was a success as the new version is a fabulous tale about the possible failings of the human heart. The Flint heart is an ancient amulet that turns a man’s heart and personality sour as he becomes more and more power hungry. Charles’s father is one of the men affected by the Flint heart. Once Charles wrenches the Flint heart from his father, he is determined to prevent it from falling into the hands of another. Charles’s quest to destroy the Flint heart brings him into contact with fairies and others in their hidden world in this magical and unforgettable tale. The accompanying detailed, warm illustrations by Rocco add to the magic.

**The Luck of the Buttons** by Anne Ylvisaker.

The first thing Tug Buttons would want you to know about her family is that they aren’t usually lucky at all and never have been. But tomboy Tug changes all that through her astounding friendship with Aggie Millhouse, the prettiest and most popular girl in town, and her ability to see through Harvey Moore’s grand plans for a new town newspaper. The far-too-slick Harvey solicits money that most
The Manatee Scientists: Saving Vulnerable Species  by Peter Lourie.  
On the title page, a man's hand carefully reaches toward the top of a manatee's head bristling with whiskers, the perfect introduction to this examination of the endangered, gentle mammal. Lourie gives anecdotes and information about scientists studying the West Indian manatees of Florida, the Amazonian manatees and West African manatees, all threatened for similar and sometimes different reasons, depending on the cultural mores of the people in the region where the animals live. Because of their research, we know a great deal about these creatures and the habitats necessary to their long-term survival. Many photos show the scientists at work and the manatees, especially those in Florida's crystal clear waters, in fabulous close-ups. Another fascinating addition to the comprehensive "Scientists in the Field" series.
and Sarah Winnemucca, who left their mark on what was the vast, untamed land of the West so
dominated by men before the turn of the last century. How did they thrive against all odds? Their
stories will fascinate readers who will be happy to use the appended bibliography to learn more
about their exciting lives. A map of the territory and time line are also included.

Young Fredle by Cynthia Voigt, Louise Yates (Illustrator).

While Fredle is indeed a young mouse who's a bit too adventurous for his mother's taste, he is soon
captured in a fight for his life in the outside world that he has never known. His struggle to return
home, even though he was pushed out to "went" and left to die by his own family who go by a strict
set of rules, makes this a compelling survival story. Like the prodigal son, his is a long journey, filled
with peril but also of freedom and wonder. Yates's cartoon-styled, soft pencil illustrations of Fredle,
his friends and enemies add depth to the characterizations.

Intermediate reading level
2011 publication year

29 book(s) found.
New Books for Young Readers

Intermediate/Adolescent reading level

2011 publication year

18 book(s) found.


The lyrical writing of de la Pena paired with Nelson's award winning style of illustration provide readers with a vivid picture of one of the most important events in the career of African-American boxer Joe Louis. In the 1930s Louis was a symbol of hope for the nation's African-Americans as he won matches against colored and white boxers alike. However, in the late 1930s as Hitler gained more power throughout Europe, Louis became a beacon of hope for the entire nation as he faced off against a German boxer who had previously knocked him out. For that night the divisions between black and white were eliminated, and everyone simply became an American standing together with their hero who would battle against a symbol of the growing tyranny of Nazi Germany.


High school is challenging for everyone; however, it can be more difficult if you are a shy, kind of nerdy bookworm whose best friend was sent to military school right before the start of their freshman year of high school...meet Neil. Neil and his best friend, Danny, spend most of their time reading their favorite fantasy series, "The Adventures of Apathea Ravenchilde," and when they are not reading it, they are talking about it. However, when Danny’s ultra-religious mother discovers him reading one of the books in the series, she becomes determined to "save" all the children from the negative influence of Apathea, who is a witch, and her demon ways. Her means of "saving" Danny is to send him to military school; her means for "saving" the rest of the children in Americus is to get the book banned from the local and school libraries. Charlotte, the public library's teen librarian, will do everything in her power to prevent these books from being removed from the library. And although Neil is shy and more of an "on the sidelines" type of guy, she enlists him in her campaign to protect the books. Neil realizes that if he wants to save his favorite fantasy series, he is going to have to finally stand up and take action. Neil's story is accompanied by passages from "The Adventures of Apathea Ravenchilde" which parallel the events in Neil's life. This graphic novel tackles some difficult issues such as censorship and religion, but this is not an "issue" book. It is the story of a teenager who wants to fit in, who likes what he likes, and who is learning what is worth fighting for.


Elderly, bedridden Lizzie tells the story of how she, her mother and younger brother Karlie escape from the devastating bombing and burning of Dresden during WWII after meeting Karl, the son of the nurse who is caring for her. While the main story is Lizzie's, the nurse who encourages her also shares insights into her own life as Morpurgo switches back and forth in time and shifts first-person narrators. The terrible consequences of war are magnified by the killing of all of the larger predators at the zoo once the bombing has commenced and the children from a choir who are forced to march for days to find safety. We also learn how Lizzie came to live in Canada after she finds unexpected
love amidst the horror of war. The author’s note shares information about the historical truths upon which the fictional story is based.

**Dead End in Norvelt** by Jack Gantos.

While reading the novel, it is difficult to determine what is based on reality and what comes directly from the brilliant mind and life of Jack Gantos himself. The blurring of genres continues since the main character is named Jack Gantos, and the book reads like an autobiography of a remarkable childhood and the making of a great American author. The book jacket explicitly states that this is a novel but that “the entirely true and the wildly fictional” meet between the covers. Regardless of whether or not the story is more fiction than fact, it is a laugh-out-loud remembrance of growing-up in a small town populated by amazing characters and the memories and moments that continue to haunt us and influence our adult lives. The character of Jack Gantos spends much of the summer grounded for one infraction or another and is constantly trying to stop his latest nose bleed while also searching for ways to escape his grounding. An elderly neighbor, Miss Volker, often rescues Jack from solitary in his room by calling on him to help her with a wide variety of errands, including writing obituaries for the rapidly dying town elders to driving her car without a license. Whether real or fantasized, this novel is punctuated by unbelievable events and the dream-like quality of a memorable childhood summer in a small town during the mid 1900s.

**Flat Broke: The Theory, Practice and Destructive Properties of Greed** by Gary Paulsen.

In this companion book to *Liar, Liar*, 14-year-old entrepreneur Kevin is now trying to find new ways to make amends for all the lies he previously told and to make enough money to ask out the "most beautiful girl in the world." His new schemes involving gambling and his sister's make-up and hair styling abilities are initially successful but hilarious consequences soon ensue. The quick pace, funny dialogue and big ideas gone wrong will satisfy Gary Paulsen readers and keep them wanting more books about the misadventures of the very likable Kevin.

**Gifts from the Gods: Ancient Words & Wisdom from Greek and Roman Mythology** by Lise Lunge-Larsen, Gareth Hinds (Illustrator).

Do you ever wonder about the origins of words? If so, you'll really enjoy this entertaining exploration of words such as nemesis, hypnosis and janitor that are gifts from Greek and Roman mythology. In her Author's Note, Lunge-Larsen shares that she has chosen "words that have their origin in characters whose stories clearly illuminate why their names became words." Once a word is associated with an interesting, well told story, it is so much easier to remember! Before the myth, each word is defined and used in a quote from children's literature. The well designed book has a font reminiscent of ancient Roman writing. Outline-styled, classically influenced illustrations highlight the characters and action of each story while providing rich details of the setting.

**How They Croaked: The Awful Ends of the Awfully Famous** by Georgia Bragg, Kevin O'Malley (Illustrator).

This collection of short vignettes focuses on the lives of nineteen famous people, but more importantly, the book takes a special interest in their somewhat gruesome deaths. Bragg provides a description about each person's life and what made them famous, and then zeroes in on their last days and finally their deaths through carefully ed details and often humorous illustrations. The author explains what the doctors of the time believed to be wrong and how they treated the ailment as well as what modern science believes was the cause of death and how it would have been treated now. Some of the awfully famous people featured in the book include Albert Einstein, King Tut, George Washington and Ludwig Van Beethoven. Middle school boys will probably particularly love reading about the guts and gore that plagued (oh, those are talked about as well) these famous
people in life and in death.

**Island's End** by Padma Venkatraman.

Though a young girl, Uido is able to take spirit journeys and travel to the Otherworld where she receives messages and warnings from the ancient Spirits. Shortly after she is chosen and trained to be her people's new spiritual leader, her skills are put to the test when their thousands of years old way of life is threatened not only by the encroachment of the modern world across the water but by natural disaster as well. Can she be the one to bridge the huge divide that separates her people from those who travel to the island on a loud motor boat, seeking the tribe's trees and other resources? She alone can keep everyone safe, but not everyone is willing to follow her, especially her older, jealous brother who continually tries to thwart her. In the author's note, Venkatraman shares that she spent a brief time with a primitive tribe off the coast of India who still live the way their ancient ancestors did. Her gripping story with its powerful message, though about a fictional tribe, is based on her experiences and the subsequent research she did.

**Playground** by Curtis (50 Cent) Jackson III, Laura Moser, Lizzi Akana (Illustrator).

I will admit that I approach children’s and young adult books written by celebrities with a great deal of skepticism; sometimes my fears are confirmed and sometimes, like with this book, I am pleasantly surprised. The rapper 50 Cent, with the assistance of Laura Moser, has created a gritty, realistic and relatable story about a bully, bullying and the difficulties of adolescence. Thirteen-year-old Butterball tells his story through a series of flashbacks, sessions with his therapist and reports of current happenings. We begin the story knowing that Butterball is a bully who has recently assaulted a classmate with a sock full of batteries. As the story progresses, we learn about Butterball’s own experiences with bullying, his struggles with shuttling between his mom and dad, and eventually we learn why he did what he did. At no time are his actions applauded, but readers will see the cause and effect of Butterball’s life, motivations and actions. Seventy-five percent of the cover of the hardcover is taken up with 50 Cent’s name; however, in the case of this book, I don’t think that is a bad thing if it attracts fans and reluctant readers to this story. Butterball’s story is one worth telling, and the message is one that all adolescent readers should hear.


This collection of free verse and prose poems in Adoff's inimitable style is a celebration of the blues that is dedicated to his deceased wife, author Virginia Hamilton: "Always/Insistent/Behind That Glorious Voice/That Shining Face." These are poems about those yearning to be free from dogs howling on moonless nights and their guards; about a mother who teaches with her sighs; about long nights and broken hearts. They cover the sweep of African American history and life in this country; they tell of folks who lived in slave time and folks who live now. Christie’s dramatic paintings in the many variations of the color blue show singers and sufferers, mirroring Adoff’s poems. The blues live through both. Comparisons to Walter Dean Myers's Blues Journey are encouraged.

**Seriously, Norman!** by Chris Raschka.

Seriously? Not exactly! Norman Normann’s overwrought parents are very worried about his poor showing on his high school entrance test and decide that what he needs is an experienced tutor. Enter Balthazar Birdsong, whose unorthodox methods include studying the dictionary from A to Z (prepare to enrich your vocabulary!) and sky watching. Raschka's witty debut novel is filled with wordplay, mysteries to solve and wild experiences that will especially appeal to boys about Norman's age who won't let a few puns get in the way of their enjoyment of this offbeat coming of age story.
The Always War by Margaret Peterson Haddix.

Tessa can’t believe her eyes when Gideon, a boy only slightly older than her 15 years, refuses to accept an award for his recent heroism as a fighter pilot in the country’s 70-year-old war. In a world of poverty, gloom, and despair, an award should be celebrated, not refused! But when Tessa discovers Gideon’s true reason for refusing the award, she finds herself joining him on a journey that will cause her to question everything she knows about truth, war, and the place she calls home. Will she be brave enough to change the world? Young fans of Margaret Peterson Haddix will enjoy this page-turning dystopian adventure.

The Many Faces of George Washington: Remaking a Presidential Icon by Carla Killough McClafferty.
Carolrhoda Books. 2011. 120 pages. $20.95. Informational Social Studies. Intermediate/Adolescent. 0761356088

This is partially a biography of the life of George Washington and partially a behind-the-scenes peek into the science, technology and research involved in recreating history and creating realistic museum exhibits. McClafferty’s research indicates that no painting, drawing or sculpture of George Washington is the same. These differences can be somewhat accounted for in the style of the artist, the age and state of Washington, and the medium and impact of Washington’s persona on the artist. As much as these differences can be appreciated artistically, they make it difficult to determine and recreate Washington’s actual appearance. Even facing these challenges, Mount Vernon, in a new exhibit, decided to recreate a life-size Washington at three ages and stages of his life. McClafferty describes all of the steps and tools required to undertake this project; she punctuates this modern recreation story with information about Washington’s past. This book will no doubt appeal to both history, art and technology buffs.

The Unwanteds by Lisa McMann.

In Quill, the dystopian world created by McMann, 13-year-olds are determined to be wanted, necessary or unwanted. Those classified as unwanted are any that have shown any sign of creativity or artistic talent, including storytelling and singing. The children of Quill grow up attempting to hide any of their inclinations towards creativity as infractions are quickly reported to the authorities. The Unwanteds are sentenced to death. The Stone twins, Alex and Aaron, are torn asunder when Alex is classified as unwanted and Aaron as wanted. Alex will go to his death as Aaron goes to Wanted University. However, death does not await Alex, but rather the hidden world of Artime. Artime is a world populated by unwanteds where, in stark contrast to Quill, creativity is embraced and even enhanced. The unwanteds quickly begin practicing their talents and nurturing their creativity. Although Artime is a paradise, it is threatened by its possible discovery by Quill. As this inevitable clash grows nearer, Alex frantically tries a way to contact and save his twin; however, Alex will quickly learn that he and his twin may share nothing except for DNA.

Through No Fault of My Own: A Girl’s Diary of Life on Summit Avenue in the Jazz Age by Coco Irvine.

The Irvine family was a part of St. Paul’s social elite in the early 1900’s. Clotilde “Coco” Irvine was the third child in this wealthy family. Throughout the year of 1926, Coco kept a diary in which she recorded daily events, her thoughts and feelings, and news about “Him,” the boy she had a crush on. While detailing her life, Coco also provides glimpses into what life was like during this time in St. Paul and the country as a whole. Although many years separate today’s readers from Coco’s experiences, they will relate to her teenage concerns and laugh at her antics. Coco’s diary had previously been distributed to family and friends as Christmas gifts, but this is the first time that it is available to be enjoyed by all.

Titanic Sinks! by Barry Denenberg.
The year 2012 marks the 100th anniversary of the Titanic catastrophe, and there is certainly no shortage of books to mark the occasion. Deneberg takes a unique approach to telling the tragic story by combining both fact and fiction in a “magazine” format. In addition, he traces the life of the Titanic from its very beginning to its cold and sunken end. Deneberg only uses actual images and drawings to illustrate the doomed ship, providing readers with a feeling of being there. Finally, the oversized trim size allows for large reproductions of the images and for unique formatting. Intermediate students on up to adults will find this a compelling read that is both informative and interesting.

**Trapped: How the World Saved 33 Miners from 2,000 Feet Below the Chilean Desert** by Marc Aronson.

Even those readers who may not be familiar with the amazing story of the rescue of the Chilean miners last year will be fascinated by the details of how they survived so long so deep within the earth and how those above ground came up with a plan that finally allowed them to leave the small, hot and dark space where they were literally entombed. Aronson tells their dramatic story by first sharing interesting background information about geology, mining, life in the town of Copiapo and the surrounding desert and even mythological stories like that of the Greek god of the forge Hephaistos. He weaves this modern day survival story into the long, dangerous history of men who work in the mines. A wealth of additional research material is provided at the end of the book.

**Wonderstruck** by Brian Selznick.

In intricately patterned parallel stories of two children - Ben who lives in Gunflint Lake, MN in 1977 and Rose whose story begins 50 years earlier in Hoboken, NJ - Selznick has created another complicated novel that requires readers to carefully read both illustrations (Rose’s story) and text (Ben’s story) and pay attention to clues that connect their seemingly separate stories. They will be rewarded when the two stories finally become one in a most surprising and satisfying ending. Both main characters are striving to belong, living up to the quote that orphaned Ben’s mother hung on a bulletin board near her desk: “We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking up at the stars.” In its whirling dance between children, time and format, the novel is even more complex and heartwarming than *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*. At the end, readers will once again be ‘wonderstruck’ by Selznick’s inventiveness.
New Books for Young Readers

*Adolescent* reading level  
*2011* publication year  
25 book(s) found.

**Across the Universe** by Beth Revis.  

In our world where missions to Mars search for life and the likelihood of inhabitation for us, the premise of Revis’ book doesn’t seem very far-fetched. Amy is traumatically awakened from a cyrogenically frozen state on the ship Godspeed. When Amy was frozen along with her parents and hundreds of others, she believed that she would be awakened 300 years in the future on a new planet. However, things have gone terribly wrong, and the ship is still 50 years from the planet; Amy’s parents remain frozen; and Amy must learn to live in the suffocatingly controlled society on Godspeed. Her only comfort is her blooming friendship with Elder, the next in line to rule Godspeed, but even though he tries to understand Amy’s situation, his knowledge of Sol Earth is tainted and incomplete. In addition to these struggles Amy believes that there is a murderer in their midst. She wants to find and stop the murderer before any harm can come to her parents, but who can be trusted to help her?

**Anya’s War** by Andrea Alban.  

Based on the author’s family stories of life in Shanghai before and during WWII and Japanese occupation, Anya’s story begins in Odessa, a place her family must leave to avoid persecution under Stalin. Even in her boisterous, multi-generational home, she lives a relatively easy life compared to that of her family’s Chinese servants and the new Jewish immigrants arriving daily from Nazi Germany. She chafes against the constrictions imposed because she is female and is determined to become an independent woman like Amelia Earhart whose exploits she closely follows. What happens to Anya, her family and the abandoned Chinese female infant she saves offers a slice of life of people whose story isn’t often told.

**Ardency: A Chronicle of the Amistad Rebels** by Kevin Young.  

In a volume that took 20 years to complete, Young tells the story of the Amistad Rebellion in verse. He uses a variety of devices, including incorporating the letters written by the Amistad rebels to their supporters, including John Quincy Adams, and mimicking the style of the McGuffy Readers in the section on their incarceration in New Haven as a metaphor for the education in reading and writing that they received while waiting for trial. Young also includes a libretto sung by the leader of the rebels, Cingue (Sing-gbe), laid out as if it were a church missal, including Homily, Credo, Gloria, Penitence, Doxology, and so on, symbolizing the forced religious conversion of the rebels. The final section centers on the rebels’ return to Africa and the fate of the missionaries that accompanied them to Sierra Leone.

**Beauty Queens** by Libba Bray.  

Trying to summarize this novel is like trying to put high heels and lipstick on a herd of cats—extremely difficult to do but everyone looks fantastic when it is done! Basically, the plot centers around a plane full of teen beauty queens that crash lands on an island and their efforts to
survive, thrive and look fabulous while doing so. Of course, the story includes pirates, people eating snakes, a hidden government lair, a devious pageant organizer and an Elvis-loving dictator. While this might all sound implausible, Bray weaves together all of these factors and a healthy dose of social commentary into a unique, readable and relatable novel. Bray takes on issues of commercialism, government corruption, gender roles, sexuality, beauty and many more in a way that is enlightening and disturbing but not preachy. Several of the characters are not so loosely based upon real political and public figures.

**Between Shades of Gray**

This is an important book because it tells a WWII story we rarely hear: Stalin’s destruction of the Baltic States and the deportation and murder of the citizens of Latvia. It is based on the author’s family history and her interviews with survivors of the Siberian prison camps. Lina is a 15-year-old girl, a gifted artist. Her family is arrested and her father, a university professor, is sent to prison while she, her mother, and her 10-year-old brother are sent to Siberia. The conditions are unbearable and inhumane, yet the Latvian prisoners retain their sense of humanity and hope. We see the horrors of life in the camp juxtaposed with flashbacks to Lina’s life before the arrest. Lina uses her art to try to send secret messages to her father, so he can find them if he is ever released. Sepetys writes with grace, yet she helps the reader feel the fear and the brutality experienced by the characters. Her metaphors are lovely and the roundness of her characterization helps the reader see that humanity is filled with shades of gray.

**Chime** by Franny Billingsley.

A so very long ago, Old World magic oozes from the swamp that borders a village where witches are pursued and hung as they were in Salem long ago. And yet this story is set in the age of motor cars and the more modern urban life of London, not too distant from Swampsea and yet so very far away. Frightful foreshadowing begins on the first page, with self-hating Briony convinced that she is a witch, doomed to hang because she is responsible for all the ills that have befallen her family. There are secrets though, many secrets. The harrowing story culminates in her chilling battle with her evil stepmother and her own vindication with the help of Eldric, the golden boy-man who loves her and shows her that she can escape the dark and also feel love. The lyrical storytelling is deeply rooted in folklore from the area.

**Dreams of Significant Girls** by Cristina Garcia.

As they meet three summers in a row in the early 1970s at a Swiss boarding school, three very different young women slowly reveal themselves to each other, sharing their joys and struggles as they become women in this coming of age novel. We meet Vivien, Shirin and Ingrid in alternating chapters. Even though they come from wealthy families, their voices and experiences will ring true to other high school girls who will never go to a boarding school but will also face heartbreak, first love and parent issues. Their friendship is real and will last far beyond this time that they share away from home.

**Everfound** by Neal Shusterman.

Unfortunately “Everfound” is the final book in “The Skinjacker Trilogy” which began with “Everlost,” continued with “Everwild” and now concludes. Nick and Allie enter Everlost together when their parents’ cars collide, and the pair is prevented from getting to where they were going. In Everlost they discover the rules of this land populated by children who did not make it where they were going and are watched over by Mary Hightower and terrorized by the McGill. In “Everwild” Allie and Nick part ways as each tries to leave their own mark on the land of Everlost. Allie practices her new talent of skinjacking, and Nick becomes the Chocolate Ogre. Finally, in Everfound, new friends and foes are discovered as the future of Everlost and the living world hangs in the balance. Although Shusterman brings the trilogy to a satisfying and compelling conclusion, many, myself included, may be
disappointed that the story of Everlost is done for now.

**Evolution: The Story of Life on Earth** by Jay Hosler, Kevin Cannon (Illustrator), Zander Cannon (Illustrator).

Although this graphic novel uses the device of aliens learning about the beginnings of life on earth, this is strictly a nonfiction, extremely scientific and in-depth explanation and exploration of evolution. Hosler is a professor of biology and uses all of his knowledge to present evolution in the most understandable and interesting way possible. Cannon and Cannon add to the depth of understanding with their detailed, labeled black and white illustrations. Hosler presents evolution from the very beginning with bacteria and enzymes and continues to the present. This would be a fantastic resource for a high school biology class or for readers who are interested in science but who may need additional support for their understanding of these complicated topics.

**Feynman** by Jim Ottaviani, Leland Myrick (Illustrator).

Richard P. Feynman is one of the greatest minds of recent history and his unique personality contributed to his fame and popularity. Feynman is known for his Nobel Prize in physics, his role in creating the atomic bomb, and, more recently, for helping to identify the cause of the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster. Many may be unaware of Feynman's safe cracking abilities, his adventurous spirit and his musical talent. This full-color graphic novel explores Feynman's life from the beginning of his career to the end. Although some of the topics can be complicated, they are presented in an understandable way through Ottaviani's prose and Myrick's illustrations. This graphic novel will certainly appeal to those in scientific fields but will undoubtedly attract a wide audience of readers.

**Lewis & Clark** by Nick Bertozzi.

This graphic novel dramatically presents Lewis and Clark's expedition to find a water route to the Pacific. The relationship between the two friends and the trials faced by members of the expedition are highlighted in Bertozzi's black and white illustrations. Bertozzi did his research on the two men and the expedition, and as a result, the events he portrays are historically accurate. The graphic novel format and Bertozzi's accessible style will provide readers with an ideal introduction to this historic event and these historic figures. In addition to studying the book for its take on history, Bertozzi's illustrations can be examined for their stark accuracy and emotions.

**Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children** by Ransom Riggs.

This is quite a unique fantasy novel based on actual photographs the author has collected. After the violent death of his grandfather (viewed as paranoid and delusional by his family), 16-year-old Jacob found a letter written to his grandfather by Miss Alma Peregrine, Headmistress, along with some very unusual photographs. Jacob and his father go to a remote island off the coast of Wales to try to cope with their grief and to discover more about the place Grandfather Portman grew up. While there, Jacob discovers a large, abandoned house that had been destroyed by bombs during WWII. He also finds copies of the same photographs that his grandfather had. With that, he is transported back to September 3, 1940. He learns about Miss Peregrine, his grandfather, and the "peculiar" children who lived with him in that home. He also discovers that his grandfather was not paranoid or delusional. He was part of a group of people who were trying to save the world from monstrous creatures. Jacob also learns that he is one of the peculiar children. Riggs set the ending up in such a way that I would be very surprised if there weren't sequels to this story.

**Okay for Now**

Even though Doug Swietek of *Wednesday Wars* has moved to a new town, nothing has changed with his abusive father, his troubled brother and his beleaguered mother. He's labelled a thug because of his brother, yet he eventually begins to change how he sees himself and how others see
him because of the power of art, the library haven he returns to as often as possible, and the few people who believe in him. Each chapter begins with an Audobon plate, the plates in the large book in the glass case that he copies and learns from and that he soon must save. When Doug's older brother returns wounded and defeated from Viet Nam, it is imperative that Doug makes everything okay for now. No one will be able to resist rooting for Doug Swieteck, hoping that he can overcome his rotten home life and learn to believe in and love himself. And he does, and we do.

**Page by Paige** by Laura Lee Gulledge.
Adolescent. 0810997223

Paige has been uprooted from her home in Virginia and relocated to New York City with her parents. She struggles with finding her place in these new surroundings but also relishes the opportunity to recreate herself. What kind of new identity does she want to reveal? Paige, a budding artist, uses the pages of her sketchbook to work through these internal struggles. The pages of her sketchbook and her experiences in her new city combine to create this high quality, readable debut graphic novel.

Gulledge has the ability to take the internal and make it vividly external and relatable through her black and white drawings. Anyone who has struggled to figure out who they are or who they want to be will find Paige's experiences resonating with them.

**Paper Covers Rock** by Jenny Hubbard.

From the first chapter - "Call Me Is Male." - and after his apologies to Herman Melville, boarding school student Alex tells the story of what happened after his friend Thomas accidentally drowns after drinking too much vodka. Alex doesn't save him and so grapples with the aftermath of the tragedy. Others are involved, including Glenn, the school's golden boy, and so Alex is torn between guilt, his promise to remain silent about what really happened and his desire to tell Miss Dovecott, his English teacher mentor with whom he is infatuated, all that he knows. A gifted poet and writer, Alex eventually discovers truth and decides what he has to do through writing in his journal that he keeps hidden behind *Moby Dick*. Hubbard is a gifted, lyrical writer whose just-right allusions to Melville and some well known poems add a great deal to this 16-year-old's struggle to do what's right.

**Shelter: A Mickey Bolitar Novel** by Harlan Coben.

Popular adult author Harlan Coben has entered young adult fiction with a bang! His latest book will no doubt contribute to Coben's already significant fandom with new readers of all ages. Mickey Bolitar's once happy and complete life disappeared in a crush of metal with the car accident that killed his father and sent his mother reeling. Mickey is trying to establish himself in a new school while avoiding his uncle Myron, in whose house he is staying but whose advice he doesn't want. Mickey gradually begins to make friends and enemies at school and in the community. When his new girlfriend, Ashley, disappears, Mickey is determined to find her and receives help from his quirky new friends, Ema and Spoon. The suspense, subplots and action don't stop until the last page and leave readers both breathless and wanting more. Hopefully, this will be the start of a popular young adult series from Coben.

**Stay** by Deb Caletti.

*Stay* is the gripping story of Clara, an 18-year-old teenager, who spends the summer with her father in the small Northwest town of Bishop Rock in order to escape her obsessive ex-boyfriend. Told in alternating chapters of present and past, Clara's story captivatingly explores the darker, and sometimes scarier, sides of love. Bishop's Rock is the perfect place to hide away, and as Clara forges friendships with people from the small coastal town, she learns about family and strength. But Clara's father, a "smart-ass" detective writer, has secrets of his own, and Bishop's Rock seems to be a place bent on revealing hidden truths. When Christian, Clara's ex-boyfriend, tracks a cell phone number and discovers her hiding place, Clara is forced to see how far she will go to protect herself and the people she loves. This emotional and forceful book explores important themes of adolescent love with nuance and grace, and is a highly satisfying read that will stay with you long after the last
The Berlin Boxing Club by Rob Sharenow. 

Although 14-year-old Karl Stern has never considered himself to be Jewish and certainly doesn't look Jewish, the Nazi leadership disagrees. Karl's teen existence in Germany is fairly typical - going to school, avoiding bullies, fantasizing about the girl next door and working on his cartoons - until the Nazis begin to gain power. The bullies at school turn on him as a result of his Jewish label, and through Karl's objections, they prove his Jewishness in the most humiliating way possible. Karl's life continues to be negatively impacted by the rise of the Nazis as he is eventually kicked out of school, forced to follow curfew and watches as his father's business, an art gallery, fails as people refuse to shop at "Jewish" stores. An unexpected and life-changing light enters Karl's life in the form of the famous and beloved German boxer, Max Schmeling, who is a friend and a patron of Karl's father. On a whim, Max volunteers to give Karl boxing lessons. This incredible gift provides Karl with an outlet for his frustrations and aggression, a means of protecting his family and a much needed boost in his self esteem. Max Schmeling's match with the African-American boxer, Joe Louis, is featured in the book and parallels Karl's life and the increasing pressure on Max to concede to Nazi pressures. Karl will eventually have to use all that he has learned, inside and outside of the ring, to try to save himself and his family. The treatment of Jews during the Nazi-era is not a new topic in young adult literature, but Sharenow's approach is compelling and realistic. The thorough integration of sports throughout the narrative may appeal to young men; however, young women will not be put off by the boxing.

The Future of Us by Carolyn Mackler, Jay Asher.

It is 1996 and the internet is a new, and somewhat unbelievable, concept for most people instead of the constant companion it currently is. Emma is excited to use her new computer, a hand-me-down from her dad, to start exploring this new world. Josh, her next door neighbor and former best friend, brings her an America Online CD-ROM to get her started. When the program is downloaded and opened, Facebook appears. But Facebook doesn't exist yet and the information is from the lives of Emma and Josh 15 years in the future. As Emma and Josh learn more about their futures, it begins to affect the present. As their present lives shift, so do their future lives. Is it possible to design the perfect future for yourself? Is it worth it to sacrifice your present for your future? Emma and Josh are about to find out.

The Near Witch by Victoria Schwab.

Lexi grew up in the town of Near hearing stories from her father about witches, the life of the moor and other tales. Since the death of her father, she has tried to pass these fairy tales on to her sister; however, things are happening in Near that indicate that these stories may be true. A strange boy who fades in and out of view like smoke appears near the village, and the next night children begin disappearing from their beds. The village is convinced that the stranger is responsible, and the men set out to find him, recover the children and dispose of the stranger. Lexi, on the other hand, is drawn to the stranger. She believes that he is innocent; in fact, he helps her hunt for the children. Can Lexi find the children before it is too late while protecting her sister, working with witches and falling for the mysterious stranger? In this debut novel, Schwab does an excellent job of interweaving many popular themes, such as the supernatural, forbidden romance and mystery, with her own unique twists which results in a familiar yet refreshing story. Schwab's language is lyrical but does not detract from the plot. She also addresses important themes including valuing differences and displaying strong female characters. The mysteries that unravel in the novel are compelling and difficult to predict. In addition, Schwab sprinkles romance throughout the story but not in the sickly sweet way that has become so common in books for teen readers in this genre.

The Scorpio Races by Maggie Stiefvater.
This compelling novel has many elements that will keep teen fantasy lovers reading: A yearly deadly race of terrifying, carnivorous Celtic horses who live on both sea and land and will eat or drown riders without hesitation; Sean and Puck, two intriguing teen characters whose alternating stories become one; and their mutual respect that slowly leads to love. The thrilling story hooks readers with the first sentence in Sean's prologue: "It is the first day of November and so, today, someone will die." The rich atmosphere and harsh living conditions on their island, complex characters and long ago quality of the mythical horses make this a book that will not soon be forgotten.

What Happened to Goodbye by Sarah Dessen.

Dessen's signature voice brings us another realistically flawed character to love and relate to. Mclean has been running from her past and trying to figure out who she is now for the past several years. Her life had been pretty perfect until her mom fell in love with another man and her parents divorced. Mclean made the decision to live with her dad as she still couldn't grapple with what her mom did to the family. Her dad's job requires moving on a regular basis as he takes struggling restaurants and gets them back on their feet. Mclean doesn't mind the moving as she is able to try out a new name and personality in each new place. However, Lakeview feels different. Perhaps it is due to the fact that people know her real name before she has a chance to create a new persona. Or maybe it is her next door neighbor, Dave, and his insights into her life. Mclean feels like she can maybe be herself again, but she has forgotten exactly who that is. Dessen seems to know just the right combination of romance, drama and humor to include in her books to make them both realistic and compelling.

Where She Went by Gayle Forman.

In this sequel to If I Stay, through the two main characters, Adam and Mia, Forman explores the consequences of the promises and decisions made in the first book. Whereas the first story is told from Mia's point of view and recounts the weeks following the accident that took her family and her decision to stay, Where She Went is told from Adam's point of view and describes life after the accident as Adam and Mia attempt to reconstruct their lives without each other. Fate brings the former couple together for one night in New York. This moment in time allows them to remember the past and dream about the future, a future that they once believed would be shared. Will this chance meeting allow them to imagine a future together again? Although this is a sequel, it is strong enough to stand on its own.

Why We Broke Up by Daniel Handler, Maira Kalman (Illustrator).

From the title, we know that Min and Ed are no longer together. What we don't know is why these two seemingly cliched opposites did attract and why they have broken up. Min gathers all of her love tokens, each illustrated by Kalman as a still life against a stark background, into a box that she deposits at his front door with a "thunk." She also includes the whole story of their love and break up in a long letter to Ed. Much of what is recalled involves dialogue, replete with movie references, that rings so true and reveals the miscues that led to the end of their relationship. Of course, she signs the letter "Love, Min" with the word love crossed out.

Withering Tights by Louise Rennison.

British author Louise Rennison is well known for her hysterical series about the antics and misadventures of British teen Georgia Nicolson. Withering Tights is the first book in a new series featuring Georgia's cousin, Tallulah Casey. Craziness, the penchant for clumsiness and well-meaning actions that result in disaster must run in the family, because Tallulah shares all these traits with her cousin, Georgia. Tallulah is spending the summer at a performing arts school in the Yorkshire Dales in the hopes of fame and a first snog but also just for the opportunity to escape from the watchful eyes of her parents. While Tallulah's new friends all seem to have extraordinary talent, Tallulah flounders while trying to find the actor within and also to embrace her prominent knees. While readers of all ages will no doubt laugh at and along with Tallulah, they will also find a heroine who is
real, relatable and 100% herself.

Adolescent reading level
2011 publication year

25 book(s) found.