1997 Notable Children’s Books

Younger readers


Buehner, Caralyn. **Fanny’s Dream.** Illus. by Mark Buehner. Dial. 0-803-71497-1. A sturdy farm girl has Cinderella dreams in this homespun tale humorously exaggerated by oil and acrylic paintings.

Byars, Betsy. **My Brother, Ant.** Illus. by Marc Simont. Viking. 0-670-86664-4. The topsy-turvy logic of a young boy comes through in four easy-to-read chapters highlighted with gentle watercolors.

Dyer, Jane. **Animal Crackers: A Delectable Collection of Pictures, Poems, and Lullabies for the Very Young.** Illus. Little Brown. 0-316-19766-1. Soft watercolors provide an added dimension to this eclectic compilation of delightful, delicious rhymes and verses about numbers, seasons, foods, and pastimes.

Fleming, Denise. **Where Once There Was a Wood.** Illus. Henry Holt. 0-805-03761-6. Simple rhymes and vibrantly textured art combine to show how the environment can change as new houses replace wild areas.

Henkes, Kevin. **Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse.** Illus. Greenwillow. 0-688-12898-X. When over-eager Lilly flaunts her new purse in class, devastating results are exuberantly depicted in this seamless blend of art and text.


Lester, Julius. **Sam and the Tigers.** Illus. by Jerry Pinkney. Dial. 0-803-72028-9. Sassy Sam outwits five conceited tigers in this grandly embellished tale humorously retold in "southern black storytelling voice." Witty pencil and watercolor art completes the package.

McMillan, Bruce. **Jelly Beans for Sale.** Illus. Scholastic. 0-590-86584-6. Children count out coins to pay for jelly beans at a country stand in this carefully designed, candy-bright photo concept book.


Pilkey, Dav. **The Paperboy.** Illus. Orchard. 0-531-08856-1. As morning dawns and shadows linger, a young boy and his dog complete their rounds delivering newspapers. A 1997 Caldecott Book.


**Middle readers**


Brewster, Hugh. **Anastasia’s Album.** Hyperion/Madison Press. 0-786-80292-8. Intimate family photographs, keepsakes, and letters illuminate the life and death of Anastasia Romanov, the youngest daughter of the last Russian tsar.

Bunting, Eve. **Train to Somewhere.** Illus. by Ronald Himler. Clarion. 0-395-71325-0. Traveling westward with thirteen other orphans, Marianne hopes to find a family to care for her. Soft watercolor paintings reflect her understandable anxiety.

Conrad, Pam. **The Rooster’s Gift.** Illus. by Eric Beddows. HarperCollins/Laura Geringer. 0-060-23604-3. Playful text and folksy art team up to tell this humorous barnyard tale about a proud rooster who believes he has the gift of calling up the sun.

Cooney, Barbara. **Eleanor.** Illus. Viking. 0-670-86159-6. Eleanor Roosevelt's unhappy childhood is sympathetically chronicled in a biography completed by softly-hued paintings that evoke her solemn mood and unfolding promise.

DeFelice, Cynthia. **The Apprenticeship of Lucas Whitaker.** Farrar. 0-374-34669-0. A touching novel about a 12-year-old Connecticut farm boy who becomes a doctor's apprentice after his family dies of consumption in 1849.

Jackson, Donna M. **The Bone Detectives: How Forensic Anthropologists Solve Crimes and Uncover Mysteries of the Dead.** Photos by Charlie Fellenbaum. Little Brown. 0-316-82935-8. An intriguing look at how forensic anthropologists uncover clues to solve crimes and determine the identities of people whose only remains are bits of skeleton.

Kehret, Peg. **Small Steps: The Year I Got Polio.** Whitman. 0-807-57457-0. A heartening autobiography that chronicles the sudden illness and excruciating recovery of a young girl stricken with polio.

Martin, Rafe. **Mysterious Tales of Japan.** Illus. by Tatsuro Kiuchi. Putnam. 0-399-22677-X.
Buddhist and Shinto traditions permeate this elegantly haunting collection of ten traditional Japanese tales, each accompanied by a classic haiku and an eerie color painting.

Forty-one grandly ominous paintings, first exhibited in 1940, give backbone to this gripping picture biography of the heroic Haitian freedom fighter who led his country to its independence in 1804.

Onyefulu, Ifeoma. **Ogbo: Sharing Life in an African Village.** Harcourt/Gulliver. 0-152-00498-X.
A young Nigerian girl explains the responsibilities of village members generated by their ogbos (or age groups). Exceptionally clear photos and textile design motifs add an extra dimension.

Paterson, Katherine. **JIP: His Story.** Dutton/Lodestar. 0- 525-67543-4.
Raised on a poor farm during the mid-1800s, a kind-hearted orphan cares for the local "lunatic" as he comes to terms with his own identity.

Perl, Lila, and Marion Blumenthal Lazen. **Four Perfect Pebbles: A Holocaust Story.** Greenwillow. 0-688-14294-X.
A poignant World War II memoir chronicles the Blumenthal family’s courageous struggle to survive refugee, transit and prison camps in the face of Nazi persecution.

Pinkney, Andrea D. **Bill Pickett: Rodeo-Ridin’ Cowboy.** Illus. by Brian Pinkney. Harcourt/Gulliver. 0-152-00100-X.
Robust scratchboard art sets the tone for this biography of a famed African-American cowboy.

A seven-year-old girl attends her first "package party" and unexpectedly discovers the rewards of generosity. Vibrant gouache paintings show life in New York’s Lower East Side in the Thirties.

An eight-year-old slave dreams of freedom in this fictionalized biography intensified by emotion-packed watercolor and pencil illustrations depicting plantation life in the 1820s.

Sis, Peter. **Starry Messenger: A Book Depicting the Life of a Famous Scientist, Mathematician, Astronomer, Philosopher, Physicist, Galileo Galilei.** Illus. Farrar/Frances Foster. 0-374-37191-1.
The courage and honesty of a famous scientist is revealed through intricate ink drawings, maps, timelines and samples of Galileo’s own writings in this inventive biography. A 1997 Caldecott Honor Book.

A stately presentation of Leonardo’s extraordinarily productive life featuring watercolor and pencil art done in Renaissance style.

The true story of Lee Nailling and the early work of the Children’s Aid Society in relocating orphans is told in poignant alternating chapters.
Stunning cut paper illustrations set a dramatic stage for this disquieting traditional tale about a supernatural clay being created to protect the Jews in 16th century Prague. The 1997 Caldecott Medal Winner.

Curiosity about death leads three boys into a surprising friendship with an old man. The 1997 Batchelder Award Winner.

**Older readers**

Aiken, Joan. **Cold Shoulder Road.** Delacorte. 0-385-32182-1. 
Is Twite supports her cousin Arun on his quest to locate his missing mother in this tongue-in-cheek melodrama heavily populated with villains.

Bawden, Nina. **Granny the Pag.** Clarion. 0-395-77604-X. 
Twelve-year-old Catriona comes to appreciate the loving care of an eccentric grandmother after self-involved parents decide to reclaim her in this lively coming-of-age novel.

Farmer, Nancy. **A Girl Named Disaster.** Orchard/Richard Jackson. 0-531-08889-8. 
In order to escape a forced betrothal, eleven-year-old Nhamo flees through the isolated terrain of Mozambique and Zimbabwe supported only by her own intelligence and mystical beliefs. A 1997 Newbery Honor Book.

Fleischman, Sid. **The Abracadabra Kid: A Writer's Life.** Greenwillow. 0-688-14859-X. 
A rollicking autobiographical journey follows Fleischman from budding magician to award winning author.

A moving biography of the Oglala Sioux leader who passionately resisted incursions into his people's lands. Incredible pictographs by a tribal historian heighten the drama.

Konigsburg, E. L. **The View from Saturday.** Atheneum. 0-689-80993-6. 
While preparing for the Academic Bowl, four students and their teacher learn as much from each other as they do from their books. The 1997 Newbery Medal Winner.

An eye-opening history about the struggle of American women to compete fully in sports.

A changeling, half-folk and half-human, struggles with her identity and place in the medieval village of Torskaal. A 1997 Newbery Honor Book.

In this intricate fantasy, Sabriel leaves her sheltered boarding school and enters the Old Kingdom to rescue her necromancer father whose spirit is trapped by death.
Eleven-year-old Lyra and her daemon, Pantalaimon, journey to the far north to rescue kidnapped children in this complex, provocative tale.

Interweaving Steinbeck's career with his life and times, Reef captures the quintessential 20th-century American writer.

As Annie prepares for high school graduation, she is haunted by memories of her sister's murder two years earlier.

The lives and times of America's First Ladies are explored in this anthology based on the Smithsonian's First Ladies collection.

A compelling account of a young woman who stood up for workers' rights in the Michigan mining strike of 1913.

Fantastically set in an Ancient Greece that might have been, the thief Gen almost loses more than his life when he endeavors to find the mythic Hamiathes's Gift. A 1997 Newbery Honor Book.

White, Ruth. *Belle Prater's Boy*. Farrar. 0-374-30668-0.
When Woodrow's mother Belle mysteriously disappears, he moves in with his grandparents and forms a close relationship with his cousin Gypsy. A 1997 Newbery Honor Book.

**All ages**

An exuberant collection of poems and watercolor illustrations celebrates a day at church as seen through the eyes of a young African-American girl.

African-American folktales about "feathered folks" are retold in a humorous voice and further enlivened by Barry Moser's lively watercolor illustrations.

*Maples in the Mist: Children's Poems from the Tang Dynasty*. Tr. by Minfong Ho. Illus. by Jean and Mou-sien Tseng. Lothrop. 0-688-12044-X.
Sixteen traditional children's poems from the Tang Dynasty appear in both English and Chinese in this slim anthology featuring ethereal jewel-toned watercolors.

A young girl mourning the death of her dog finds comfort and courage on her grandparents' farm in this small picture book delicately set in 18th-century America.


Sierra, Judy. **Nursery Tales Around the World.** Illus. by Stefano Vitale. Clarion. 0-395-67894-3. Folk art paintings on wood panels highlight this collection of familiar and new tales from many cultures.


Zalben, Jane Breskin. **Beni’s Family Cookbook for the Jewish Holidays.** Illus. Henry Holt. 0-805-03735-7. A little bear and his family cycle through the Jewish year in this quietly festive cookbook featuring fifty traditional recipes, each neatly presented with cozy watercolors and informative notes.