1999 Notable Children’s Books

1999 Notable Children's Books Committee: Susan Faust, Chair, Katherine Delmar Burke School (CA); Carolyn Brodie, Kent State University (OH); Teffeny Edmondson, Oakland Public Library-Montclair Branch (CA); Randall Enos, Ramapo Catskill Library System (NY); Maeve Visser Knoth (CA); Kathryn R. McClelland, Perrot Memorial Library (CT); Leslie M. Molnar, Cuyahoga County Public Library (OH); Caroline S. Parr, Central Rappahannock Regional Library (VA); Penny Peck, San Leandro Public Library (CA); Kathleen Staerkel, Indian Trails Public Library (IL); Wendy Woodfill, Hennepin County Library (MN).

Younger Readers

Alda, Arlene.
Alden Alda’s 1 2 3.
Tricycle Press. 1883672716.
A curvy kite string forms the number 2 in this artful counting book, which uses crisp color photographs to reveal number shapes all around.

Babbitt, Natalie.
Ouch! A Tale from Grimm.
Illustrated by Fred Marcellino.
HarperCollins/Michael di Capua. 0062050672.
Destiny kicks in as a simple young man outwits the devil and wins himself a princess in this sly and painterly reworking of a Grimm tale.

Banks, Kate.
And If the Moon Could Talk.
Illustrated by Georg Hallensleben.
Farrar Straus & Giroux/ Frances Foster. 0374302995.
Tranquil paintings and evocative prose capture scenes beneath the darkening sky--from a child's room at bedtime to the greater world beyond.

Feiffer, Jules.
I Lost My Bear.
Morrow Junior Books. 0688151477
Crackling cartoon art humorously expresses the anguish of a small girl with a big problem in this comic look at family life.

Fleming, Denise.
Mama Cat Has Three Kittens.
Henry Holt. 0805057455.
One kitten is decidedly out of step in a vibrantly playful picture book that is definitely in step with the feelings of sometimes contrary preschoolers.

Heap, Sue.
Cowboy Baby.
Candlewick Press. 0763604372.
On spacious, desert-hued pages, Sheriff Pa says it's time for, bed but his little "deputy-to-be" must first round up his "gang."

Hurd, Thacher.
Zoom City.
Dogs go driving and cars go crashing in this hip board book featuring nonstop action and day-glow collage art.

Krensky, Stephen.  
**How Santa Got His Job.**  
Illustrated by S.D. Schindler.  
Simon and Schuster. 0689806973  
This affectionate, tongue-in-cheek spoof uses jaunty, brush-and-ink art to chronicle one man's climb up an unusual career ladder.

Kvasnosky, Laura McGee.  
**Zelda and Ivy.**  
Candlewick Press. 0763604690.  
Three chapters, each short and sweet, follow the dynamic relationship between two fox sisters who are at once caring and competitive.

Rathmann, Peggy.  
**10 Minutes till Bedtime.**  
G.P.Putnam's Sons. 039923103X.  
Cyberspace and newspaper ads draw hordes of spirited hamster tourists to a chaotic bedtime countdown at one child’s house.

San Souci, Robert D.  
**Cendrillon: A Caribbean Cinderella.**  
Illustrated by Brian Pinkney.  
Simon & Schuster. 068980668X.  
A downtrodden girl is befriended by a kindly washerwoman who works happily-ever-after magic in this lush variant of the Cinderella story.

Shannon, David.  
**No, David!**  
Scholastic/The Blue Sky Press. 0590930028.  
This manic picture book records the desperate admonitions of a mom who cannot stop her son from playing with his food or picking his nose. A 1999 Caldecott Honor Book.

Shulevitz, Uri.  
**Snow.**  
Farrar Straus & Giroux. 0374370923.  
Perfectly balanced, this droll picture book captures the joy of a young boy and his dog as snow magically blankets their gray city. A 1999 Caldecott Honor Book.

Sís, Peter.  
**Fire Truck.**  
Greenwillow Books. 0688158781.  
Matt loves hook-and-ladder trucks so much that he becomes one in this simple story complete with a sturdy fold-out in fire-engine red.

Steig, William.  
**Pete's a Pizza.**  
Chef Dad whips up pizza a la Pete with a recipe of love guaranteed to chase away his son's rainy day blues.
Stuve-Bodeen, Stephanie.
**Elizabeti's Doll.**
Illustrated by Christy Hale.
Lee & Low Books. 1880000709.
A young Tanzanian girl imagines that an ordinary rock is her own special baby in a tender tale about maternal love.

Winter, Jeanette.
**My Name is Georgia.**
Harcourt Brace/Silver Whistle. 015201649X.
This diminutive homage effectively draws on the words and painting style of unconventional Georgia O'Keeffe to introduce her unique artistic vision.

**Middle Readers**

Carlson, Laurie.
**Boss of the Plains: The Hat that Won the West.**
Illustrated by Holly Meade.
DK Ink. 0789424797.
Western ingenuity gets a big plug in this lively illustrated history about how John Batterson Stetson designed his signature hat, first worn by cowboys and still popular today.

Deem, James M.
**Bodies From the Bog.**
Houghton Mifflin. 0395857848.
Grisly photos of leathery mummies fill this absorbing book about the archaeological information mysteriously yielded by the peat bogs of Northern Europe.

Enzensberger, Hans Magnus.
**The Number Devil: A Mathematical Adventure.**
Translated by Michael Henry Heim.
Henry Holt/Metropolitan. 0805057706.
A 12-year-old math-phobe is visited in his dreams by a strange fellow who devilishly reveals the pleasures of mathematical thinking.

Fleischman, Sid.
**Bandit's Moon.**
Greenwillow. 0688158307.
In this robust adventure set during the California Gold Rush, outlaw Joaquin Murieta rescues the orphaned Annyrose, who generously repays his kindness.

Gantos, Jack.
**Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key.**
Farrar Straus & Giroux. 0374336644.
Simultaneously poignant, funny, and horrifying, this staccato novel about a good kid with ADHD brilliantly replicates in style the feel of being "wired."

Gerstein, Mordicai.
**The Wild Boy.**
Farrar Straus & Giroux/ Frances Foster. 0374384312.
Gollub, Matthew.  
**Cool Melons--Turn to Frogs: The Life and Poems of Issa.**  
Illustrated by Kazuko G. Stone.  
Lee & Low Books. 1880000717.  
This slim and serene volume introduces an eighteenth-century Japanese poet with 33 of his more than 20,000 haiku presented in both English and Japanese.

Greenberg, Jan and Sandra Jordan.  
**Chuck Close, Up Close.**  
DK Ink. 078942486X.  
Personal and artistic challenges loom large for a contemporary American painter in this exciting biography, anchored by many well-chosen photographs and reproductions.

Martin, Jacqueline Briggs.  
**Snowflake Bentley.**  
Illustrated by Mary Azarian.  
Houghton Mifflin. 0395861624.  
Handsome woodcuts recall the impassioned life of a self-taught Vermont scientist who, early in this century, was the first to record snowflakes on film. The 1999 Caldecott Medal Book.

McCully, Emily Arnold.  
**Beautiful Warrior: The Legend of the Nun’s Kung Fu.**  
Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine. 0590374877.  
Martial arts help two young women empower themselves with inner strength in this sweeping, original tale set in seventeenth-century China.

Morgenstern, Susie Hoch.  
**Secret Letters from 0-10.**  
Translated by Gill Rosner. Viking. 0670880078.  
Young Ernest’s dull and regimented life is turned upside down by a romantic new classmate in this quirky novel translated from French. The 1999 Mildred L. Batchelder Honor Book.

Pinkney, Andrea Davis.  
**Duke Ellington: The Piano Prince and His Orchestra.**  
Illustrated by Brian Pinkney. Hyperion. 0786801786.  

Poole, Josephine.  
**Joan of Arc.**  
Illustrated by Angela Barrett.  
Alfred A. Knopf. 0679890416.  
This stirring story of the French saint emphasizes the miraculous with pale mystical paintings in the style of medieval tapestries.

Rowling, J.K.  
**Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone.**  
Illustrations by Mary Grandpre.  
Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine. 0590353403.  
Upon turning 11, an orphan boy is summoned to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in this rousing and richly rendered British fantasy about true identity and destiny.
Santiago, Chiori.
**Home to Medicine Mountain.**
Illustrated by Judith Lowry.
Children's Book Press. 0892391553.
In this poignant and powerful picture book, homesickness plagues two Maidu brothers forced to attend a government boarding school for Indians in 1930s California.

Schwartz, David M.
**G is for Googol: A Math Alphabet Book.**
Illustrated by Marissa Moss.
Tricycle Press. 1883672589.
From "abacus" to "zillion," math is clarified through humor in this highly original introduction to terms, thinkers, and concepts.

Stanley, Diane.
**Joan of Arc.**
Morrow Junior Books. 0688143296.
Detailed paintings reminiscent of illuminated manuscripts underscore the historical context of this complex story about the fifteenth-century peasant girl who saved France.

Thomas, Joyce Carol
**I Have Heard of a Land.**
Illustrated by Floyd Cooper.
HarperCollins/Joanna Cotler. 0060234776.
Based on family history and paired with dusty impressionistic art, this lyrical tribute to free black homesteaders in the Oklahoma Territory is full of hope.

**Older Readers**

Abelove, Joan.
**Go and Come Back.**
DK Ink. 0789424762.
An astute teenage girl growing up in an Amazon village tells about two visiting American anthropologists in this candid and comic novel about cultural differences and divergent points of view.

Armstrong, Jennifer.
**Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance.**
Crown. 0517800136.
The fate of his ship and its crew weighs heavily on a famed Antarctic expedition leader in this true survival story made even more gripping by archival photographs dating from 1914.

Bauer, Joan.
**Rules of the Road.**
G.P. Putnam Sons. 0399231404.
A 16-year-old girl and an aging shoe-store chain owner drive from Chicago to Dallas in a fresh and funny novel about recognizing quality in people and products.

Blackwood, Gary.
**The Shakespeare Stealer.**
Dutton. 0525458638.
Elizabethan England is first cruel and then kind to a clever orphan boy, nearly forced to make off with the Bard's new play.

Fletcher, Susan.  
**Shadow Spinner.**  
Atheneum/Jean Karl. 0689818521.  
A serving girl becomes intricately entangled with Shahrazad and her stories in order to spare young women from death in ancient Persia.

Freedman, Russell.  
**Martha Graham: A Dancer's Life.**  
Clarion. 0395746558.  
Using prose as graceful as Graham herself and illustrated with dynamic photographs, this biography captures the multi-faced life of the dancer.

Griffin, Adele.  
**The Other Shepards.**  
Hyperion. 0786804238.  
In this haunting novel permeated with sadness, two troubled sisters move beyond family tragedy with the help of a mysterious young artist.

Holt, Kimberly Willis.  
**My Louisiana Sky.**  
Henry Holt. 0805052518.  
With both parents mentally impaired, resilient Tiger Ann fitfully accepts family responsibilities in this big-hearted, coming-of-age novel set during the 1950's.

Lobel, Anita.  
**No Pretty Pictures: A Child of War.**  
Greenwillow. 0688159354.  
A beloved author-illustrator recounts her childhood experiences as a Polish Jew in hiding, in transit, and in concentration camps before finding refuge in Sweden.

McCaughrean, Geraldine.  
**The Pirate's Son.**  
Scholastic. 0590203444.  
Three teenage misfits discover eighteenth-century-style danger and adventure in this swashbuckling novel set on the high seas and in Madagascar and England.

McKee, Tim.  
**No More Strangers Now: Young Voices from a New South Africa.**  
Photographs by Anne Blackshaw.  
DK Ink. 0789425246.  
Twelve teenagers, representing many ethnic and economic groups, share their own powerful stories of life under apartheid and their hopes for the future.

Murphy, Jim.  
**Gone-a-Whaling: The Lure of the Sea and the Hunt for the Great Whale.**  
Clarion. 0395698472.  
Excerpts from letters and journals enliven and inform this serious, multifaceted history of a controversial industry.

Partridge, Elizabeth.
**Restless Spirit: The Life and Work of Dorothea Lange.**
Viking. 067087888X.
A famed photographer blended artistry and activism better than career and family, according to this intimate biography featuring more than 60 examples of Lange's stirring documentary-style work.

Peck, Richard.
**A Long Way from Chicago: A Novel in Stories.**
Dial. 0803722907.
An old man looks back on rollicking summers spent with his larger-than-life grandmother in this colorful, Depression-era novel made up of seven masterfully interwoven tales. The 1999 Newbery Honor Book.

Rabinovici, Schoschana.
**Thanks to My Mother.**
Translated by James Skofield.
Dial. 0803722354
This haunting memoir, originally written in Hebrew and translated first into German and then English, is as much about maternal love as the horrors of the Holocaust. The 1999 winner of the Mildred L. Batchelder Award.

Sachar, Louis.
**Holes.**
Farrar Straus & Giroux/Frances Foster. 0374332657.
Stanley Yelnats (his name is a palindrome) finds himself digging holes at a Texas detention camp for wayward boys in this stunningly circular novel about bad luck, justice, friendship, and fate. The 1999 Newbery Award Book.

Walter, Virginia.
**Making Up Megaboy.**
Illustrated by Katrina Roeckelein.
DK Ink/Richard Jackson. 0789424886.
This illustrated novel uses computer graphics and multiple perspectives to tell the story of a random murder committed by a 13-year-old boy in suburban Los Angeles.

Wolff, Virginia Euwer.
**Bat 6.**
Scholastic. 0590897993.
Twenty-one Oregon girls recall a fateful softball game in 1949 when bigotry left over from World War II throws them a curve ball.

**All Ages**

Browne, Anthony.
**Voices in the Park.**
DK Ink. 078942522X.
Touching on class issues, this surrealistic picture book convincingly presents dressed-up gorillas as people who see the same event in different ways.

Burleigh, Robert.
**Home Run.**
Illustrated by Mike Wimmer. Harcourt Brace. 0152009701.
Norman Rockwellstyle paintings and vintage-style baseball cards visually team up with a lyrical poem to honor an all-time great at bat.
Florian, Douglas.  
**Insectlopedia.**  
Harcourt Brace. 0152013067.  
An io moth and a daddy longlegs are among the bugs highlighted in this playful collection of 21 clever poems with companion paintings.

Guthrie, Woody.  
**This Land Is Your Land.**  
Illustrated by Kathy Jakobsen. Little, Brown. 0316392154.  
Folk-style paintings illustrate a folksong favorite to celebrate the richness of America's varied past and present. (Complete lyrics and musical notation are included.)

Igus, Toyomi.  
**I See the Rhythm.**  
Illustrated by Michele Wood.  
Children's Book Press. 0892391510.  
Powerful poems and paintings and a running timeline work together in this syncopated history of African American music, which introduces slave songs, jazz, soul, and rap.

Marcus, Leonard.  
**A Caldecott Celebration: Six Artists Share Their Paths to the Caldecott Medal.**  
Walker. 0802786588.  
To mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Caldecott Medal, this festive and informative survey focuses on how six children's illustrators created their award-winning books.

Sís, Peter.  
**Tibet: Through the Red Box.**  
Farrar Straus & Giroux/Frances Foster. 0374375526.  
His Czech father worked in Tibet in the 1950s, and Sis explores the personal and political implications of that experience, using "a fusion of truth, dreams, and memory." A 1999 Caldecott Honor Book.

Van Lann, Nancy.  
**With a Whoop and a Holler: A Bushel of Lore from Way Down South.**  
Illustrated by Scott Cook.  
Atheneum/Anne Schwartz. 068981061X.  
Kids will naturally gather 'round to hear this exuberant collection of stories, poems, sayings, and superstitions from the bayous, mountains, and lowlands of the American South.

Weitzman, Jacqueline Preiss.  
**You Can't Take a Balloon in the Metropolitan Museum.**  
Illustrated by Robin Preiss Glasser.  
Dial. 0803723016.  
A balloon chase through the streets of Manhattan and a tour of key museum treasures parallel each other and then collide in this wacky, wordless picture book.

Wick, Walter.  
**Walter Wick's Optical Tricks.**  
Scholastic/Cartwheel Books. 0590222279.  
Stylishly composed color photographs present 15 intriguing optical illusions to boggle mind and eye.