

Notable Children's Books 2009

Younger Readers

Becker, Bonny. *A Visitor for Bear*. Illus. by Kady MacDonald Denton. Candlewick. (9780763628079).

The simple backdrop of bear's forest home sets the stage for a visit from the **persistent** and irritating mouse who insists the two will become friends.

Bee, William. *Beware of the Frog*. Illus. by the author. Candlewick. (9780763639204).

Living alone in the forest, Old Mrs. Collywobbles needs protection from the Greedy Goblin, the Smelly Troll, and the Giant Hungry Ogre. Her pet frog jumps out of folklore to come to her rescue and give Mrs. Collywobbles more than she anticipated.

Campbell, Sarah C. *Wolfsnail: A Backyard Predator*. Photos by Sarah C. and Richard P. Campbell. Boyds Mills Press. (9781590785546).

Magnified photographs and informative text provide a nonfiction look at the carnivorous wolfsnail trapping and devouring its victim. This science book will amaze and attract readers. (2009 Geisel Honor Book)

Davis, Eleanor. *Stinky*. Illus. by the author. RAW Junior/TOON Books. (9780979923845).

Stinky, the swamp monster, is at first determined to rid his beloved "muddy, slimy, smelly swamp" of Nick, only to realize that this dreaded "kid" is not the appallingly clean intruder he supposes him to be. (2009 Geisel Honor Book)

Dorros, Arthur. *Papá and Me*. Illus. by Rudy Gutierrez. Rayo, an imprint of HarperCollins. (9780060581565).

Lively artwork tells the story of a father and son who spend a special day together in the city—singing, cooking, going to the park and the beach, riding the bus, and telling stories, culminated by a visit with Papá's parents. (2009 Belpré Illustrator Honor Book)

Fleming, Denise. *Buster Goes to Cowboy Camp*. Illus. by the author. Henry Holt. (9780805078923).

After a week at Cowboy Camp for Dogs, Buster's homesickness evaporates as he joyfully joins the controlled canine chaos of camp activities. Fleming's richly colored multimedia art details the camp's layout and the animals' constant motion.

Fraze, Marla. *A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever*. Illus. by the author. Harcourt. (9780152060206).

With lively, detailed, subtly retro cartoons, Fraze gently pokes fun at adult expectations and captures the unbounded joy of two friends experiencing a parent-free summer adventure. (2009 Caldecott Honor Book)

George, Jean Craighead. *Goose and Duck*. Illus. by Priscilla Lamont. HarperCollins/Laura Geringer. (9780061170768).

Goose imprints on the boy who finds his egg, Duck imprints on goose, and both follow the boy around until fall when they figure out who they are and join their fellows flying south.

Graham, Bob. *How to Heal a Broken Wing*. Illus. by the author. Candlewick. (9780763639037).

On a busy city street, young Will stops for an injured pigeon. Soft watercolor panels depict the family's care of the bird and its subsequent release into the sky over the city.

Grant, Judyann Ackerman. *Chicken Said, "Cluck!"* Illus. by Sue Truesdell. HarperCollins.(9780060287238).

Earl and Pearl shoo Chicken away as they work on their pumpkin patch, but as the story comes full circle, it's Chicken who does the shooing and saves the day. (2009 Geisel Honor Book)

Harris, Robie H. *Maybe a Bear Ate It!* Illus by Michael Emberley. Orchard Books, an imprint of Scholastic. (9780439929615).

When a favorite book goes missing, our frantic narrator conducts a frenzied search, imagining the worst. Cartoonish art illustrates the emotions of losing and finding a cherished object.

Henkes, Kevin. *Old Bear*. Illus. by the author. HarperCollins/Greenwillow. (9780061552052).

During his annual hibernation, Old Bear dreams of the seasons of his youth. Seasonal changes and Old Bear's sense of wonder are gently evoked in Henkes' ink and watercolor pictures.

Hills, Tad. *What's Up, Duck? A Book of Opposites*. Illus. by the author. Random House/Schwartz & Wade. (9780375847387).

Adapting Duck and Goose for the board book crowd, Hills whimsically presents concepts such as loud and quiet, far and near, and heavy and light in clear, child-appealing watercolors.

Hole, Stian. *Garmann's Summer*. Illus. by the author. Tr. by Don Bartlett. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers. (9780802853394)

Humorous and poetic text, combined with surreal and multi-layered artwork, creates a truly unique and complex look at the universality of fear and uncertainty in this tale of a six-year-old's last summer before starting school. (2009 Batchelder Honor Book)

Kohara, Kazuno. *Ghosts in the House!* Illus. by the author. Roaring Brook. (9781596434271).

Faced with a houseful of ghosts, a little girl and her cat come up with a creative solution for repurposing them. Orange and black linocuts, collaged with rice paper "ghosts," complete this appealing package for very young children.

McDonald, Megan. *The Hinky Pink*. Illus. by Brian Floca. Atheneum/Richard Jackson.(9780689875885).

Until the young seamstress Anabel finds the perfect bed for the Hobbledy-gob Hinky-Pink, she will get no sleep and the Princess's dress will never be ready in time for the ball.

Morales, Yuyi. *Just in Case: A Trickster Tale and Spanish Alphabet Book*. Illus. by the author. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter. (9781596433298).

Vibrant jewel-tone colors masterfully capture the story of Señor Calavera's quest to find the perfect birthday gift for Grandma Beetle. Part ghost story, part trickster tale, the book features motifs from Mexican culture that represent each letter of the Spanish alphabet. (2009 Belpré Illustrator Award Book and Author Honor Book)

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. *One Boy*. Illus. by the author. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter.(9781596432741).

Seeger's eye-catching picture book leads readers to discover words within words through a distinctive die-cut design and clean, bold illustrations. (2009 Geisel Honor Book)

Swanson, Susan Marie. *The House in the Night*. Illus. by Beth Krommes. Houghton Mifflin.(9780618862443).

This timeless bedtime verse offers reassurance to young children that there is always light in the darkness. Elegant line, with touches of golden watercolor, evoke the warmth and comfort of home, as well as the joys of exploring the wider world. (2009 Caldecott Medal Book)

Tafolla, Carmen. *What Can You Do with a Rebozo?* Illus. by Amy Cordova. Tricycle Press/Ten Speed Press. (9781582462202).

Rich, vibrant colors swirl and swoosh across full-page spreads, depicting the family home of an imaginative, young Mexican American girl who playfully invents modern-day uses for the traditional Mexican rebozo, or long scarf. (2009 Belpré Honor Book)

Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Before John Was a Jazz Giant: A Song of John Coltrane*. Illus. by Sean Qualls. Henry Holt. (9780805079944).

John Coltrane's childhood echoed with sounds. The formative experiences of the legendary musician and composer are portrayed in rhythmic language and stylized, mixed media illustrations in blues, browns and white. (2009 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Book)

Willems, Mo. *Are You Ready to Play Outside?* Illus. by the author. Hyperion, an imprint of Disney Book Group. (9781423113478).

Easily approachable text and expressive drawings tell the story of Piggie and Gerald who experience the ups and downs of a rainy day. (2009 Geisel Award Book)

Middle Readers

Appelt, Kathi. *The Underneath*. Illus. by David Small. Atheneum. (9781416950585).

Intertwining stories of an embittered man, a loyal hound, an abandoned cat and a vengeful lamia sing of love, loss, loneliness and hope. (2009 Newbery Honor Book)

Bishop, Nic. *Frogs*. Photos by the author. Scholastic Nonfiction, an imprint of Scholastic. (9780439877558).

Bishop presents salient facts about frogs through clear text, augmented with fascinating photographs of species around the world. Even the frog-phobic will be fascinated.

Broach, Elise. *Masterpiece*. Illus. by Kelly Murphy. Holt/Christy Ottaviano. (9780805082708).

An artistic beetle with a yen for adventure and a lonely 11-year-old boy team up to catch the thief who has stolen a priceless Albrecht Durer from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Brown, Don. *All Stations! Distress!: April 15, 1912, the Day the Titanic Sank*. Illus. by the author. Flash Point/Roaring Brook. (9781596432222)

Selecting just the right amount of essential information, Brown artfully captures the drama of what happened to the unsinkable Titanic on that fateful night.

Bryant, Jen. *A River of Words: The Story of William Carlos Williams*. Illus. by Melissa Sweet. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers. (9780802853028).

Sweet's mixed-media collage and primitive watercolors flow seamlessly with Bryant's prose to reveal the important bits and pieces of Williams' ordinary, yet extraordinary, life as a doctor and poet. (2009 Caldecott Honor Book)

Dowd, Siobhan. *The London Eye Mystery*. Random/David Fickling. (9780375849763).

In a race against time, twelve-year-old Ted, with his sister Kat, uses his special skills and perceptions to discover how their cousin Salim disappeared while riding the London Eye, the world's tallest observation wheel.

Elliott, Zetta. *Bird*. Illus. by Shadra Strickland. Lee & Low. (9781600602412).

A young boy, Mehkai, nicknamed Bird because he loves to draw birds, finds solace in his art work as his beloved grandfather dies and his admired older brother Marcus succumbs to drug addiction. (2009 Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Author Award)

Erdrich, Louise. *The Porcupine Year*. HarperCollins. (9780060297879).

In this third in the Birchbark House series set in 1852, Omakayas, a young Ojibwa girl now 12, and her family face serious challenges as they move westward from land the U.S. government has claimed.

Fern, Tracey E. *Buffalo Music*. Illus. by Lauren Castillo. Clarion. (9780618723416).

Pioneer Mary Ann Goodnight saves her beloved Texas buffalo from extinction by shipping those that escape slaughter to Yellowstone to become part of a new national herd. Spare scenes of primitive abstract art create a stunning visual landscape.

Gaiman, Neil. *The Graveyard Book*. Illus. by Dave McKean. HarperCollins. (9780060530921).

A child marked for death by an ancient league of assassins escapes into an abandoned graveyard, where he is reared and protected by its spirit denizens. A delicious mix of murder, fantasy, humor and human longing, Gaiman's tale is told in magical, haunting prose. (2009 Newbery Medal Book)

González, Lucía. *The Storyteller's Candle/La velita de los cuentos*. Illus. by Lulu Delacre. Children's Book Press. (9780892392223).

Text and sepia tone illustrations present the biographical story of Pura Belpré, the first Puerto Rican librarian hired by the New York Public Library, who introduces the public library to immigrants living in El Barrio and hosts the neighborhood's first Three Kings' Day fiesta. (2009 Belpré Author Honor Book and Illustrator Honor Book)

Greenberg, Jan and Sandra Jordan. *Christo and Jeanne-Claude: Through the Gates and Beyond*. Illus. with photographs. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter. (9781596430716)

Beginning with a description of the dramatic "Gates" project installed for two weeks in Central Park in 2005, readers are introduced to the extraordinary pair whose art, in its immense scope, has amazed and astounded the world.

Hale, Shannon and Dean Hale. *Rapunzel's Revenge*. Illus. by Nathan Hale. Bloomsbury.(9781599900704).

In a vibrantly illustrated graphic novel set in a make-believe frontier land, an untraditional Rapunzel escapes the tower, uses her long braids as weapons, and takes revenge on the wicked Mother Gothel.

Hopkinson, Deborah. *Abe Lincoln Crosses a Creek: A Tall, Thin Tale (Introducing His Forgotten Frontier Friend)*. Illus. by John Hendrix. Random House/Schwartz & Wade. (9780375837685).

Taking a boyhood story about Lincoln as inspiration, Hopkinson provides a lively, tongue-in-cheek telling with as many bends as Knob Creek. Hendrix's broad, cartoony illustrations visually suggest several possible outcomes to the boys' predicament.

Kerley, Barbara. *What To Do About Alice? How Alice Roosevelt Broke the Rules, Charmed the World, and Drove Her Father Teddy Crazy!* Illus. by Edwin Fotheringham. Scholastic. (9780439922319).

Growing up as the daughter of the President was not easy, but being the President and father of Alice Roosevelt was not easy either. Kerley's playful use of language and Fotheringham's rollicking illustrations converge to introduce energy and outrageousness. (2009 Sibert Honor Book)

Law, Ingrid. *Savvy*. Dial/Walden Media. (9780803733060).

This rich first-person narrative draws readers into a wild bus ride, winding through the countryside on a journey of self-discovery for Mibs Beaumont and her companions. (2009 Newbery Honor Book)

Lewin, Ted and Betsy. *Horse Song: The Naadam of Mongolia*. Illus. by the authors. Lee & Low Books. (9781584302773).

Alternating lavish watercolors and lively cartoon sketches, the artists document their travel to Mongolia, capturing the excitement and beauty of Naadam, the Summer Festival, where young boys and girls compete in horse racing.

McGill, Alice. *Way Up and Over Everything*. Illus. by Jude Daly. Houghton Mifflin. (9780618387960).

Stylized watercolors illustrate A storyteller's account of the five newly purchased Africans who escaped the horrors of slavery by flying away from the Georgia plantation where her great-grandmama's mama lived and worked.

Nicholls, Sally. *Ways to Live Forever*. Arthur A. Levine, an imprint of Scholastic. (9780545069489).

Using clever lists, insightful questions, thoughtful journal entries and drawings, eleven-year-old Sam shares his perspective on his leukemia and his upbeat attitude as he faces the end of his life.

Nivola, Claire A. *Planting the Trees of Kenya: The Story of Wangari Maathai*. Illus. by the author. Farrar/Frances Foster. (9780374399184).

Naïf, charming pictures, and well-chosen details illuminate the life and work of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Wangari Maathai, who responded to the impending desertification of her native Kenya by instigating the planting of 30 million trees.

Nobleman, Marc Tyler. *Boys of Steel: The Creators of Superman*. Illus. by Ross MacDonald. Knopf. (9780375838026).

Part picture book, part graphic novel, this is the fascinating story of how two high school friends created a superhero that endures to this day.

Parker, Robert Andrew. *Piano Starts Here: The Young Art Tatum*. Illus. by the author. Random House/Schwartz & Wade. (9780375839658).

Parker imagines renowned jazz pianist Tatum's early years, employing a first person narrative that takes readers from his Toledo youth to big city clubs and concert halls. Luminous watercolors compellingly extend the text. (2009 Schneider Family Book Award)

Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw. *When the Wolves Returned: Restoring Nature's Balance in Yellowstone*. Photographs by Dan Hartman and Cassie Hartman. Walker. (9780802796868).

Lively photographs, capturing images of wildlife, and an easy text make it clear to young readers the beneficial impact to the ecosystem when wolves were reintroduced.

Preller, James. *Six Innings: A Game in the Life*. Feiwel & Friends. (9780312367633).

The heart stopping action of a little league baseball game frames a personal introduction to the players, the strategies, and twelve-year-old Sam, sidelined by cancer.

Ray, Deborah Kogan. *Wanda Gág: The Girl Who Lived to Draw*. Illus. by the author. Viking/Penguin. (9780670062928).

This intimate portrait of the creator of *Millions of Cats* combines Gág's own words with more detailed text to describe a girl who never let go of her dream. Lush illustrations suggest Gág's style and versatility.

Rumford, James. *Silent Music: A Story of Baghdad*. Illus. by the author. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter. (9781596432765).

Ali, a young boy in contemporary Baghdad, loves calligraphy and practices his art to shut out the sights and sounds of war. Mixed media illustrations contrast rich color, lush texture, bold silhouettes, and flowing calligraphy.

Scieszka, Jon. *Knucklehead: Tall Tales & Mostly True Stories about Growing Up Scieszka*. Illus. by author. Viking/Penguin. (9780670011063).

A hilarious saga of growing up in a household with five brothers during the 1950's and 1960's by the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, illustrated with candid pictures from the period.

Schulman, Janet. *Pale Male: Citizen Hawk of New York City*. Illus. by Meilo So. Alfred A. Knopf. (9780375845581).

Lush watercolors and personable narrative bring to life the story of Pale Male, a male hawk who nests atop a swanky

Fifth Avenue

apartment building and sparks a battle for his habitat among residents and conservationists.

Shulevitz, Uri. *How I Learned Geography*. Illus. by the author. Farrar Straus Giroux.(9780374334994).

Recounting memories of his family's flight from the Warsaw Blitz and his years as a refugee during World War II, Shulevitz employs watercolor and ink to depict a boy liberated from his dreary existence through flights of fancy inspired by the map his father buys in the village market. (2009 Caldecott Honor Book)

Stone, Tanya Lee. *Elizabeth Leads the Way: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Right to Vote*. Illus. by Rebecca Gibbon. Henry Holt. (9780805079036).

This introductory biography outlines Elizabeth Cady Stanton's childhood realization of the secondary status of women and continues with her adult activism that lead to the right to vote for women. Folk art expands the text.

Thomas, Joyce Carol. *The Blacker the Berry*. Illus. by Floyd Cooper. HarperCollins/Amistad. (9780060253752).

A collection of twelve poems celebrating and affirming the variations in skin color and individuality of African American children, illustrated with richly colored paintings of children complementing the imagery of the free verse. (2009 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award and Author Honor Book)

Uehashi, Nahoko. *Moribito: Guardian of the Spirit*. Illus. by Yuko Shimizu. Tr. by Cathy Hirano. Arthur A. Levine, an imprint of Scholastic. (9780545005425).

Balsa, a female warrior, accepts the task of protecting a young prince from demons and his father's assassins. Prince Chagum is the Moribito, the guardian of the sacred spirit. Together they must find in each other the source of strength they need to prevail. (2009 Batchelder Award Book)

Older Readers

Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Chains*. Simon & Schuster. (9781416905851).

Sold as a slave to an influential New York Tory family, 13-year-old Isabel spies for the patriot side during the American Revolution in a desperate hope to gain freedom for herself and her 5-year-old sister.

Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. Scholastic. (9780439023481).

In a science-fiction cliffhanger, Katniss takes her younger sister's place as one of twenty-four youths who are turned over to the Capitol in a deadly annual reality game in which only one can survive.

Connor, Leslie. *Waiting for Normal*. HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen. (9780060890889).

Longing for the loving family life her younger half-sisters have with her former stepfather, resilient sixth-grader Addie copes with living in a trailer in Schenectady, New York with her neglectful mother. (2009 Schneider Family Book Award)

Deem, James M. *Bodies from the Ice: Melting Glaciers and the Recovery of the Past*. Illus. Houghton Mifflin. (9780618800452).

In this exploration of the archaeology of glacier science, Deem's visual presentation engages readers through period newspaper illustrations, paintings, maps and photographs of ice mummies and artifacts from four continents. (2009 Sibert Honor Book)

Engle, Margarita. *The Surrender Tree: Poems of Cuba's Struggle for Freedom*. Henry Holt. (9780805086744).

Hauntingly beautiful free verse prose breathes life into this finely crafted story that illuminates Cuba's fight for independence from Spain in the 1800's. (2009 Newbery Honor Book and Belpré Author Award Book)

Fleischman, Sid. *The Trouble Begins at 8: A Life of Mark Twain in the Wild, Wild West*. Illus. HarperCollins/Greenwillow. (9780061344329).

This rip-roaring biography of America's quintessential humorist is as outrageous as its subject. Twain's early life is conveyed through memorable quotes and period photographs. Fleischman disentangles facts from fiction, provides ample documentation, and a version of *The Jumping Frog*.

Fleming, Candace. *The Lincolns: A Scrapbook Look at Abraham and Mary*. Illus. Random House/Schwartz & Wade. (9780375836183).

Short articles, vignettes, excerpts from letters, historical photographs and documents form the scrapbook demonstrating the intertwined lives of the Civil War president and his devoted but unbalanced wife and giving equal attention to both parties.

Freedman, Russell. *Washington at Valley Forge*. Illus. Holiday House. (9780823420698)

Freedman's customary graceful prose, eye for the telling detail, and clear narrative arc describe the winter Washington's troops spent at Valley Forge.

Jiménez, Francisco. *Reaching Out*. Houghton Mifflin. (9780618038510).

In this poignantly written autobiography, Jimenez recounts his days as a young Mexican American student who is the first in his family to attend college. Against great odds, he is determined to complete his education. (2009 Belpré Author Honor Book)

Macaulay, David with Richard Walker. *The Way We Work: Getting to Know the Amazing Human Body*. Illus. by the author. Houghton Mifflin/Walter Lorraine. (9780618233786).

The amazing human body gets an equally amazing treatment for all its systems and functions. Thorough explanations, visual and verbal, offer an inside look of the body's marvels.

Michaelis, Antonia. *Tiger Moon*. Tr. by Anthea Bell. Amulet. (9780810994812).

A betrayed woman facing death, a most unlikely hero, and a sarcastic talking white tiger in colonial-era India come together in a magical story within a story. This masterfully crafted tale moves seamlessly from reality to fantasy as it reveals the profound power of story. (2009 Batchelder Honor Book)

Nelson, Kadir. *We Are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball*. Illus. by the author. Disney-Jump at the Sun, an imprint of Disney Book Group. (9780786808328).

This fascinating and well-documented history of Negro League Baseball is told in the voice of an "everyman" narrator. Dignified, riveting full-page illustrations capture the spirit of these larger-than-life men who loved the game, despite the prejudice they faced. (2009 Sibert Medal Book, Coretta Scott King Author Award, and CSK Illustrator Honor Book)

Nelson, Scott Reynolds with Marc Aronson. *Ain't Nothing But a Man: My Quest to Find the Real John Henry*. Illus. National Geographic. (9781426300004).

A historian explains how he connected bits of information acquired in a larger research project to identify the actual story and person behind the John Henry folksong.

O'Brien, Tony and Mike Sullivan. *Afghan Dreams: Young Voices of Afghanistan*. Photos by Tony O'Brien. Bloomsbury. (9781599902876).

Young people from various backgrounds around Kabul share their hopes and dreams in this amazing and heart-rending collection of full color photo portraits.

Pratchett, Terry. *Nation*. HarperCollins. (9780061433016).

After a tsunami, island native, Mau, and shipwreck survivor, Daphne, construct a nation that blends each other's customs, science, and faith in a multi-leveled novel of survival and politics. (2009 Printz Honor Book)

Reeve, Philip. *Here Lies Arthur*. Scholastic. (9780545093347).

Reeve places his Arthur in the Dark Ages of the sixth century where Myrddin embellishes his story by creating a modern spin on this ancient tale that combines wishes, lies, and dreams into the now familiar legend.

Smith, Hope Anita. *Keeping the Night Watch*. Illus. by E.B. Lewis. Henry Holt. (9780805072020).

While the rest of the family welcomes his father's return, thirteen-year-old C.J. cannot hide his hurt and anger over his father's abandonment. Smith's graceful poetry delves deeply into C.J.'s emotional life. (2009 Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book)

Woodson, Jacqueline. *After Tupac & D Foster*. G.P. Putnam's Sons/Penguin. (9780399246548)

Bonded by Tupac's music, three girls explore the lure of freedom and build a friendship that redefines their own identities. (2009 Newbery Honor Book)

All Ages

Arnosky, Jim. *Wild Tracks!: A Guide to Nature's Footprints*. Illus. by the author. Sterling. (9781402739859).

Life-sized footprints depicting more than 60 North American wild animals make this an enticing field guide for young explorers

Johnson, Stephen T. *A Is for Art: An Abstract Alphabet*. Illus. by the author. Simon & Schuster/Paula Wiseman. (9780689863011).

In this amazing tour de force, Johnson creates an original piece of abstract art for each letter of the alphabet. Playful touches include hidden letters, alliterative text, and details on the construction of each piece.

National Children's Book and Literacy Alliance. *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out*. Candlewick. (9780763620677).

One hundred and eight finest authors and illustrators for children tell both the historical and human stories of a beloved national landmark.

2009 Notable Children's Books Committee

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