IT’S HARD TO IMAGINE FINER GIFTS THAN BOOKS—they offer enjoyment, knowledge, and artistic stimulation. They’re also gifts that go on giving without requiring any upkeep or cleanup, they’re a cinch to wrap, and they’re easily sent through the mail! All of these titles have been reviewed in the Bulletin, so they’ve been recommended by professionals. All were in print in the U.S. at the time of this guide’s compilation, so they should be either in stock or quickly available through a special order from bookstores both brick-and-mortar and virtual.

You know your recipient better than we do, of course, so you’re the best judge of a title’s suitability and promise for an individual reader. We’ve included a broad range of styles, genres, subjects, and challenge levels (roughly divided by audience age), so whether you’re looking for a cheerful picture book, an absorbing nonfiction title, or a pulse-pounding novel, there will be something here for the young person on your gift-book list.

While titles are sorted into four categories according to their most likely use—picture books for reading aloud to youngsters, books for primary-grades readers, books for middle-grades readers, and young adult titles—neither books nor readers are so easily categorizable, so we’ve included age/grade-range designations to help you get an idea of just who in that category is a title’s likeliest audience. And since many books reach across category borders but could only be included once, you’ll want to check the next category younger for titles whose audience stretches up into the higher age range.

—Deborah Stevenson, Editor
Kate Quealy-Gainer, Assistant Editor
Adderson, Caroline  *Norman, Speak!* illus. by Qin Leng. Groundwood, 2014. $17.95 5-8 yrs
A shelter dog doesn't seem to be able to learn commands, until a family learns that he is actually quite conversant, just in Chinese; retro ink and digital illustrations and ample white space reinforce the joyful, easy going vibe of the book.

Andrews, Troy  *Trombone Shorty* illus. by Bryan Collier. Abrams, 2015. $17.95 4-8 yrs
It's rare to get such a buoyant, detailed recollection of what led a brilliant musician to the field, but the author's voice is clearly present in this storytelling memoir.

Antony, Steve  *Please, Mr. Panda*; written and illus. by Steve Antony. Scholastic, 2015. $16.99 4-6 yrs
Mr. Panda just wants animals to show some manners before he'll share; listeners who have their own strong sense of justice will appreciate this logic while also reveling in the black and white animals that set off the explosion of colors of the pastries.

Appelt, K rh
Blended families and new courtships can be tough for kids, and this accessible, amusing book, splashed with desert colors and landscapes, is a gentle introduction to the concept.

Applegate, Katherine  *Ivan: The Remarkable True Story of the Shopping Mall Gorilla*; illus. by G. Brian Karas and with photographs. Clarion, 2014. $17.99 6-9 yrs
The true story is pretty tragic, but Applegate keeps it accessible but still truthful in this powerful nonfiction account of Ivan, a gorilla raised in a mall until finally being moved to Zoo Atlanta.

Irreverent drawings and hilarious minimal text highlight how obsessive focus with the unattainable (in this case, a monster really really wants to play with bunnies) can shift in an instant once it is gotten.

Baldacchino, Christine  *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*; illus. by Isabelle Malenfant. Groundwood, 2014. $16.95 6-9 yrs
Morris loves the tangerine dress in the dress-up center of his classroom, and he won't be told otherwise in this effective and dreamily illustrated story that reinforces tolerance and inclusivity without ever becoming didactic.

Homey illustrations enhance this irresistible story of a kid who can't wait for the slowly falling snow to accumulate and turns all his chores into snowy imaginings.

Bigs, Brian  *Stop! Go!: A Book of Opposites*; written and illus. by Brian Biggs. Balzer + Bray, 2013. $7.99 1-3 yrs; *123 Beep Beep Beep!: A Counting Book*; written and illus. by Brian Biggs. Balzer + Bray, 2013. $7.99 1-3 yrs
Biggs' detailed, brightly colored illustrations feature vehicles that can be compared and contrasted or counted; adults and older siblings won't mind the infinite rereads these clever books will undoubtedly inspire.

Rich acrylic paintings are paired with a gripping story of the African Cup of Nations, a soccer competition that galvanized a nation around supporting an integrated soccer team in South Africa.

Bingham, Kelly  *Circle, Square, Moose*; illus. by Paul O. Zelinsky. Greenwillow, 2014. $17.99 3-7 yrs
Anarchic fun disrupts what was meant to be an instructional tale about shapes; kids will revel in Moose's freneticism and joyful reinterpretation of life's rules.

Black, Michael Ian  *Naked!*; illus. by Debbie Ridpath Ohi. Simon, 2014. $17.99; e-book $12.99 4-7 yrs
What's more fun than running around post-bath naked? This effervescent, carefully illustrated (all full frontals are cleverly obscured) book takes a look at a boy's joyful quest to keep the clothes off for as long as possible.

Blackall, Sophie  *The Baby Tree*; written and illus. by Sophie Blackall. Paulsen/Penguin, 2014. $17.99 5-8 yrs
The always tricky question of where babies come from is handled with grace in this thoughtful, gently humorous book about a boy who learns he will be a big brother, but isn't quite sure how that is going to happen.

Boiger, Alexandra  *Max and Marla*; written and illus. by Alexandra Boiger. Purnam, 2015. $17.99 3-6 yrs
Soft tones of whites and blue accentuate the chilly but cozy fun Max and his pal Marla the owl have as they attempt to recreate winter Olympic sports.
This Book Just Ate My Dog; written and illus. by Richard Byrne. Holt, 2014. $16.99 4-7 yrs
The gutter of where the books pages meet the spine has never gotten much attention, but viewers will likely give it a cautious glance from now on after seeing it gobble up multiple items in this outlandish text.

Hug Machine; written and illus. by Scott Campbell. Atheneum, 2014. $16.99 4-7 yrs
This sweet, impossibly warm picture book about a boy who is so good at what he does that he is known as a hug machine will be the perfect tool for an adult reader who wants to encourage snuggling time with their own little one.

The New Small Person; written and illus. by Lauren Child. Candlewick, 2015. $17.99 5-7 yrs
Once you've gotten used to being an only child, the addition of a new one can be quite the adjustment; Child's collage style and effortlessly diverse cast shine in this look at how, even with being forced to share, a new sibling can be a good thing.

Gravity; written and illus. by Jason Chin. Porter/Roaring Brook, 2014. $16.99 4-7 yrs
This exceptional picture book explores the concept of gravity, and what would happen if it suddenly stopped working; dramatic illustrations offer high-impact spreads worth lingering over, giving enough time for some science to sink in as well.

Putting the Monkeys to Bed; illus. by Kack E. Davis. Putnam, 2015. $16.99 3-6 yrs
Audiences might not necessarily feel sleepy after this raucous tale but they'll certainly commiserate with the narrator, who's just not quite ready to go to bed; playful, exaggerated illustrations amp up the humor.

Sleeping Cinderella and Other Princess Mix-Ups; illus. by Brigitte Barrager. Orchard/Scholastic, 2015. $17.99 5-7 yrs
Everyone's bored with their princess roles, so swaps galore happen, creating humorous chaos that is featured in both the retro illustrations and cheeky verse.

Rhymoceros; written and illus. by Janik Coat. Abrams Appleseed, 2015. $15.95 2-5 yrs
In this rhyming concept book, stalwart rhino poses while the world changes around him, introducing readers to blurry, wired, bumpy, and other terms that they may have heard but can't quite define.

This elegantly illustrated, straightforward concept book explores size and perspective, impeccably showing young listeners how one's understanding of small and large can completely shift based on context.

Elizabeth, Queen of the Seas; illus. by Brian Floca. Schwartz & Wade, 2014. $17.99; e-book $10.99 5-7 yrs
A wayward elephant seal who makes herself at home in the city, stylish and flowing illustrations that highlight oasis in the urban cityscape in which Elizabeth plants herself, and a happy ending all make this fact-based tale a compelling read.

Smick!; illus. by Juana Medina. Viking, 2015. $16.99 2-4 yrs
Who knew how much could be accomplished with a few swooping lines (hello, dog!) and a couple dozen words? This irrepressible picture book celebrates the kinetic nature of dogs.

Last Stop on Market Street; illus. by Christian Robinson. Putnam, 2015. $16.99 4-8 yrs
This uplifting, gorgeous book gently presents volunteerism and community involvement as concepts to listeners who might not have done much of it yet; realistically drawn cityscapes round out the text.

Sunday Shopping; illus. by Shadra Strickland. Lee & Low, 2015. $17.95 5-8 yrs
The coziness of snuggling up with a beloved guardian for a playful weekly routine is undeniable, and the bright, cheerful illustrations reinforce the joy of this fantasy shopping trip.

Mr. Postmouse's Rounds; written and illus. by Marianne Dubuc; tr. from the French by Yvette Ghione. Kids Can, 2015. $17.95 4-6 yrs
Fans of Richard Scarry's work will happily pore over the small details of the cutaways that reveal the goings-on in each house that Mr. Postmouse visits.

Catch That Cookie!; illus. by David Small. Dial, 2014 $17.99 5-8 yrs
The title says it all: a cookie is on the run, and dubious Marshall (who quite sensibly does not believe in mobile baked goods) is roped into helping to track it down.

Wolfie the Bunny; illus. by Zachariah O'Hora. Little, 2015. $17.00 4-7 yrs
Sometimes, it takes someone else threatening what is yours to make you appreciate it fully, as in this whimsical take on a bunny who doesn't embrace her adopted wolf brother until a bear eyes him as lunch.
EDWARDS, GARETH *Never Ask a Dinosaur to Dinner*; illus. by Guy Parker-Rice. Scholastic, 2015. $17.99 3-5 yrs
Well, obviously, but this creatively colored, humorous picture book details the seemingly endless reasons why large, obstreperous animals are almost always poor choices for dinner guests, living blankets, etc.

This modern retelling offers rhyming couplets that detail a zippy Latina girl, our Little Red, who is taking soup to her grandmother; finely textured, vividly colored illustrations complement the text.

ESCOFFIER, MICHAEL. *Take Away the A: An Alphabeast of a Book*; illus. by Kris Di Giacomo. Enchanted Lion, 2014. $17.95 6-9 yrs
Teachers and parents will love the language arts curricular possibilities of this book that plays with the subtraction of key letters from words; the sly comedy will keep kids just as interested.

A baby gorilla whose mama can’t care for him, expressive and direct text that evokes an emotional connection, and textured illustrations of captive gorillas all combine for a powerful look at the search for a caregiver for a baby gorilla in need.

FREEDMAN, DEBORAH. *By Mouse & Frog*; written and illus. by Deborah Freedman. Viking, 2015. $16.99 5-8 yrs
Mouse wants to tell a quiet story, Frog has huge ideas…can peace be reached between these two in this bouncy, warm picture book?

GALL, CHRIS. *Dog vs. Cat*; written and illus. by Chris Gall. Little, 2014. $17.00; e-book $9.99 5-7 yrs
A duelimg cat and dog ultimately bond over their uncertainty about the new pet in the house, a baby.

GANDHI, ARUN. *Grandfather Gandhi*; by Arun Gandhi and Bethany Hegedus; illus. by Evan Turk. Atheneum, 2014. $17.99 6-9 yrs
The stunning artwork in this picture book memoir extends the simple, elegant story in skillful ways; the resulting look at a grandson’s memories of his famous relative is haunting and memorable.

GAY, MARIE-LOUISE. *Any Questions?*; written and illus. by Marie-Louise Gay. Groundwood/House of Anansi, 2014. $19.95 6-8 yrs
Gay impressively takes something with which she has much experience, the author visit to schools, and draws on it to create a tutorial on the creation process from inspiration to final product in this clever book, complemented with mixed media illustrations.

You truly can’t go wrong with underwear to amuse and delight youngsters, and when it’s one seriously enormous pair, so much the better in this outrageous counting book.

GOODRICH, CARTER. *Mister Bud Wears the Cone*; written and illus. by Carter Goodrich. Simon, 2014. $16.99; e-book $10.99 5-8 yrs
Poor Mister Bud has a hot spot that necessitates one of those dreaded dog cones; dramatically comedic illustrations keep things light and emphasize the temporary nature of this indignity.

GOLLO, GARY. *Bird & Diz*; illus. by Ed Young. Candlewick, 2015. $19.99 5-8 yrs
Parker and Gillespie have each had their own picture books, but this musical, freewheeling approach captures their energy as a remarkable duo.

GRAHAM, BOB. *How the Sun Got to Coco’s House*; written and illus. by Bob Graham. Candlewick, 2015. $17.99 3-6 yrs
Readers can follow the journey of the sun as it moves across the earth and touches spaces both grand and small; Graham’s cozy watercolor illustrations are worth poring over.

HATKE, BEN. *Julia’s House for Lost Creatures*; written and illus. by Ben Hatke. First Second, 2014. $17.99 5-8 yrs
A home on top of a giant tortoise inhabited by a kind girl and a motley crew of magical creatures who need residence will captivate readers who appreciate visual and textual fantasy.

HYMAN, ZACHARY. *The Bambino and Me*; illus. by Zachary Pullen. Tundra, 2014. $17.99 6-9 yrs
A bonus audio version, a ballpark giveaway style treat fans will recognize, just adds to the fun of this humorous, eventful look at one boy’s birthday trip to a 1927 Yankee game.

A girl who is adopted from Ethiopia continues to connect with her homeland through the universality of water (which is much scarcer where she comes from); startling illustrative shifts emphasize the differences between her two homes.

IMAI, AYANO. *Puss & Boots*; ad. and illus. by Ayano Imai; tr. from the Japanese by Sayako Uchida; ad. by Kate Westerlund. Minedition, 2014. $17.99 5-8 yrs
A streamlined plot and eye-catching, detailed illustrations make Puss and his shoe-driven adventures accessible to a fairly young audience.

ISOL. *The Menino*; written and illus. by Isol; tr. from the Portuguese by Elisa Amado. Groundwood, 2015. $19.95 5-8 yrs
Older siblings in particular will appreciate the dry wit of this non-fiction picture book that depicts all the ways new babies disrupt families in both bothersome and wondrous ways.

**Jiang, Ji-Li** *Red Kite, Blue Kite*; illus. by Greg Ruth. Disney/Hyperion, 2013. $17.99 6-9 yrs
Earnest, carefully detailed illustrations pair with a moving story about the Chinese Cultural Revolution, and how a father and son share love from afar using kites as symbols.

**Judge, Lita** *Born in the Wild: Baby Mammals and Their Parents*; written and illus. by Lita Judge. Roaring Brook, 2014. $18.99 5-8 yrs
You can’t go wrong with babies and their adults, and the illustrations stay firmly on the side of endearing and scruffily touchable rather than saccharine.

**Karas, G. Brian** *As an Oak Tree Grows*; written and illus. by G. Brian Karas. Paulsen/Penguin, 2014. $16.99 5-8 yrs
This extravagantly beautiful picture book shows the life of a tree, from an acorn in 1775 to a lightning strike in 2000.

Katz’s usual multicultural cast of adorable, round-headed, expressive tykes this time illustrates emotions and states of being (tired, hungry, etc) with absolute charm.

**Kennedy, Anne Vittur** *Ragweed’s Farm Dog Handbook*; written and illus. by Anne Vittur Kennedy. Candlewick, 2015. $15.99 5-8 yrs
Viewers don’t have to be of the canine family to appreciate the belly busting humor of this delightful tale of a dog who gets an A for effort… and a treat.

**Kimmel, Eric A.** *Simon and the Bear: A Hanukkah Tale*; illus. by Matthew Trueman. Disney Hyperion, 2014. $16.99 6-8 yrs
A boy experiences a Hanukkah miracle of his own when a polar bear saves him after the ship on which is traveling to America sinks in this picture book filled with shadowy blues and icy whites.

**Knudsen, Michelle** *Marilyn’s Monster*; illus. by Matt Phelan. Candlewick, 2015. $15.99 5-7 yrs
Monsters aside, this is one of the sweetest (but not overly so), cleverest, kindest books about belonging and the benefits of a best friend; expressive illustrations reinforce the text.

**Leathers, Philippa** *How to Catch a Mouse*; written and illus. by Philippa Leathers. Candlewick, 2015. $15.99 3-6 yrs
Proof that mousing is not, perhaps, as instinctive as kittens seem to think, this winking picture book features a very clever mouse (disguises galore) and a confident, if not so astute, kitten.

**Light, Steve** *Boats Go*; written and illus. by Steve Light. Chronicle, 2015. $9.99 1-4 yrs
Even the very young are often drawn to things that go, and this celebration of eight boats is a visual and sound effect feast; older children will quickly remember and be able to predict the text.

**London, Jonathan** *Hippos Are Huge!*; illus. by Matthew Trueman. Candlewick, 2015. $16.99 4-8 yrs
Yup, and they’re pretty incredible animals, from their poo-throwing abilities to their crocodile-battling strengths; exclamatory text and effective compositions cover everything from the peaceful to the extreme.

A visually stunning book is the natural way to show Wu Daozi, a Tang Dynasty painter who, in a legend, is said to have painted in such a remarkably realistic way that he eventually walked into his own masterpiece.

**Lozano, Jose** *Little Chanclas*; written and illus. by Jose Lozano; Spanish text by Luis Humberto Crosthwaite. Cinco Puntos, 2015. $16.95; e-book $7.95 5-8 yrs
This ebullient bilingual picture book highlights the obsessive attachment to a single clothing item that many kids have, and what happens when that item has finally, truly, had it.

**McCarty, Peter** *First Snow*; written and illus. by Peter McCarty. Balzer + Bray/HarperCollins, 2015. $16.99 4-6 yrs
Colored inks and watercolors in washed out hues work perfectly to create this wintry world where a dog who is visiting canine cousins slowly learns to embrace winter.

**McCully, Emily Arnold** *Queen of the Diamond: The Lizzie Murphy Story*; written and illus. by Emily Arnold McCully. Fegerson/Farrar, 2015. $17.99 5-8 yrs
Young baseball fans aren’t likely to know many (if any) female players by name, but they’ll sure remember Lizzie after this electrifying short biography.

**Miyares, Daniel** *Pardon Me!*; written and illus. by Daniel Miyares. Simon, 2014. $16.99; e-book $12.99 4-7 yrs
A grumpy parrot learns a harsh lesson about what happens when you ignore sound advice in this luminously illustrated, wryly humorous book with a surprise ending.
Although he may only be a luchador in his own mind, Niño is still a force to be reckoned with in this exuberant, warm picture book that celebrates lucha libre with gusto.

Murphy, Mary *Say Hello Like This!*; written and illus. by Mary Murphy. Walker, 2014. $12.99 2-5 yrs
This engaging concept book explores all the ways animals might say hello; listeners will cheerfully imitate and come up with their own to add to the mix.

Eight diverse animal babies are explored in all their baby glory in this (surprisingly informative) simple book that presents a swath of ways animals can grow up.

Ohora, Zachariah *No Fits, Nilson!*; written and illus. by Zachariah Ohora. Dial, 2013. $16.99; e-book $10.99 4-6 yrs
Big, possibly imaginary monster Nilson can’t keep it together, try as he might to be patient, his best friend Amelia has to help him calm down again and again, until, in a perhaps foretold but still perfectly reversed moment, he is able to assist her in keeping her temper.

Qitsualik-Tinsley, Rachel *The Raven and the Loon*; ad. by Rachel and Sean Qitsualik-Tinsley; illus. by Kim Smith. Inhabit, 2014. $16.95 4-9 yrs
This appealing Inuit pourquoi tale offers a breezy look (further emphasized through the icy cool illustrations) at why Raven and Loon no longer share the same snow-white coats.

What’s funnier than passing gas? Not much, even to the youngest set, who will find the smiley protagonist’s proclamations about where and when he “toots” to be a reassuring and joyful reminder that everyone does it.

Watching paint dry and avoiding clamation points might be enough for the parents in this astonishingly funny portrayal of a family, but their kids need more, perhaps a bit of color, wit, and even melodrama, all of which edge into the illustrations.

Silly wordplay and a winking irreverence for authority mark this book about a little bird who decides she has a lot more to say than just her usual peeping.

Shy kids will particularly appreciate this non-pushy but gently encouraging book about a quirky but much needed special home for shy cats (who end up having more spunk than they thought).

Prap, Lila *Dinosaurs*; written and illus. by Lila Prap; tr. from the Slovenian. NorthSouth, 2015. $8.95
Dinosaur fans especially will appreciate the humor of the literary device here, which has chickens being schooled by a knowledgable red hen about their common ancestry with the extinct animals.

Ruth, Greg *Coming Home*; written and illus. by Greg Ruth. Feiwel, 2014. $16.99 4-7 yrs
Get ready to sniffle as this spare look at one child’s eager anticipation of a military homecoming grabs your heart; listeners will simply revel in the unadulterated joy even if they don’t understand the worry beneath.

Older readers may spot some prevaricating going on from the first page, while young listeners might miss the joke entirely; either way, this animated tale of a delicious sandwich stolen not by the dog narrator (honest!) but instead by a rogue bear is a treat.

Rhythm is present in the chanting patterns, the bouncy illustrations, and in the vibe of the book itself as a girl wanders through the city she loves, finding reasons to snap, tap, and clap as she goes.

Sheth, Kashmiri *Sona and the Wedding Game*; illus. by Yoshiko Jaeggi. Peachtree, 2015. $16.95 5-8 yrs
This breezy look at weddings and Indian cultural traditions effortlessly informs while staying firmly on the side of girly fun.

A lyrical, personal look at Passover from the perspective of a young girl
who was enslaved under the Pharaoh and ultimately finds freedom; thoughtful use of repetition and rhyming couplets make this an accessible story for the young.

This potty training book isn’t for the faint of heart, with its wild encouragements to don a cape, fight fires, fill a riverbed, and other adventurous activities that will surely catch a toddler boy’s attention, even while it might lead to quite a bit of…mess.

The increasingly familiar shared custody situation is addressed in this ultimately joyful book about a boy who is adapting, with the help of his adorably illustrated dog, to having two homes.

A hilarious and touching story about a mama squirrel and her fierce, sassy determination to protect her young ones, whether from dogs, kites, or grizzly bears, is enlivened further with exaggerated illustrations that emphasize how her will doesn’t match her size.

Stewart, Melissa *Feathers: Not Just for Flying*; illus. by Sarah S. Brannen. Charlesbridge, 2014. $7.95 4-7 yrs
Even very young children will appreciate this lush, informative book about the myriad uses for feathers, and they’ll linger over the stunning individual portraits of each highlighted bird.

Symes, Sally *Funny Face, Sunny Face*; illus. by Rosalind Beardshaw. Nosy Crow/Candlewick, 2015. $14.99 1-3 yrs
Sunny mixed-media illustrations, multicultural kids and animals, and simple text (essentially a list of daily activities) are all elements that add up to irresistibility for young kids. Adorbs.

A trio of chicks romp through the farm trailing chaos behind them in this joyful rhyming board book.

Underwood, Deborah *Here Comes Santa Cat*; illus. by Claudia Rueda. Dial, 2014. $16.99 5-7 yrs
In this seasonal picture book, Cat wants to be Santa so he can cash in by giving himself a gift, but he quickly learns that giving can actually feel just as good as getting. No, really.

Wahl, Phoebe *Sonya’s Chickens*; written and illus. by Phoebe Wahl. Tundra, 2015. $17.99 4-7 yrs
Budding naturalists will appreciate this warm but honest portrait of ecosystems that rely on predator/prey relationships.

Weulsersee, Odile, ad. *Nasreddine*; tr. from the French by Kathleen Merz; illus. by Rebecca Dautremer. Eerdmans, 2013. $17.00 6-9 yrs
This Middle Eastern story uses rich, earth-tone illustrations and an amiable protagonist to emphasize how, even when people always seem to find something to criticize, you can still be happy with your lot.

A collection of original verses and traditional nursery rhymes is paired with warm, sweet pencil and watercolor art; a multiracial cast of babies and caretakers furthers the appeal.
The light, amusing text will entertain readers, even while the plentiful illustrations and large font will reassure even the youngest set that they can tackle this book about thieves, monkeys, and zoo hijinks.

**ANDERSEN, HANS CHRISTIAN** *The Snow Queen*; tr. from the Danish by Anthea Bell; illus. by Yana Sedova. Minedition, 2014. $19.99 Gr. 2-5
This luxurious, dreamy book combines all seven of the original stories that make up the Snow Queen saga. Frozen aficionados in particular should take note.

**ASTON, DIANNA HUTTS** *A Nest is Noisy*; illus. by Sylvia Long. Chronicle, 2015. $16.99 Gr. 2-4
All sorts of things live in nests, and this intricately illustrated short nonfiction entry covers everything from reptiles to fish to the expected birds.

**BAIRDOS, MAGALI** *100 Bears*; written and illus. by Magali Bardos; tr. from the French by Flying Eye Books. Flying Eye, 2014. $19.95 Gr. 1-3
Retro graphic illustrations in vivid colors and a whole bunch of things to count marry happily in this gorgeous, silly book about bears and their party-having, hunter-evading adventures.

**BARNETT, MAC** *The Skunk*; illus. by Patrick McDonnell. Roaring Brook, 2015. $17.99 Gr. 2-4
Mid-century style illustrations and a formal writing style are the perfect choices for this unusual tale of a man and skunk, and some evolving questions about just who is following whom.

**BROWN, DON** *He Has Shot the President!: April 14, 1865: The Day John Wilkes Booth Killed President Lincoln*; written and illus. by Don Brown. Roaring Brook, 2014. $17.99; e-book $9.99 Gr. 3-6
This newest title in the Actual Times run uses the best elements of the series in the copious illustrations, fluid storytelling, and a fairly short length to tell the story of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

**CHRISTOPHER, NEIL** *Ava and the Little Folk*; written by Christopher Neil and Alan Neal; illus. by Jonathan Wright. Inhabit, 2013. $13.95 7-10 yrs
This cozy, poignant tale of an orphaned boy who finally finds a true home with magical little people after he is shunned by his Inuit village is memorable both for the well-told story and for the striking watercolors that pair with it.

**CINOTTO, LAURIE** *Itty Bitty Kitty Committee*; illus. by Edward Miller; illus. with photographs by Laurie Cinotto. Roaring Brook, 2014. $12.99 Gr. 3-6
Any cat fan will swoon over the exquisitely adorable kitten photographs, the clear and encouraging information about cat care, and the perfectly age-appropriate kitty projects that make up this gem of a feline book.

Atmospheric text and dramatic illustrations combine to tell the story of a secret slave school, and one girl’s quest to improve her life in any way she can.

**COATS, LUCY** *Beast Keeper*; illus. by Brett Bean. Grosset & Dunlap, 2015. $5.99 Gr. 2-4
This light-hearted, goofy look at what happens when a normal Greek kid suddenly learns that his dad is a god and he’s been summoned to tame the beasts of Mount Olympus is sure to appeal to mythology fans.

**COLOSSAL, ERIC** *Rutabaga: The Adventure Chef*; written and illus. by Eric Colossal. Amulet/Abrams, 2015. $16.95; paperback $9.95 Gr. 3-5
Junior cooks and graphic novel fans will both be clamoring for this title, a hilarious look at one intrepid chef who arms himself with a pot and sets off to have adventures. Real recipes at the end compensate for the ones intricately drawn throughout that all feature fake ingredients.

Fans of Captain Underpants will likely be pleased to see that sort of humor and zippy pace can be captured just as well on the princess/fairy tale front.

**COVERLY, DAVE** *Night of the Living Worm: A Speed Bump and Sling Shot Misadventure*; written and illus. by Dave Coverly. Ottaviano/Holt, 2015. $13.99 Gr. 2-3
The antics of Speed Bump, a sleepy bird who will do anything to beat his older brother to get the proverbial worm, will make kids giggle and remind siblings that they can still like each other without being like each other.

**CRUSCHIFORM** *Full Speed Ahead!: How Fast Things Go*; written and illus. by Cruschiform. Abrams, 2014. $18.95 Gr. 2-5
Who doesn’t like things that go fast? Deco illustrations and well-fleshed out end matter give depth to extremely spare text.

**DAUVILLIER, LOC** *Hidden: A Child’s Story of the Holocaust*; illus. by Marc Lizano; color by Greg Salsedo; tr. from the French by Alexis Siegel. First Second/Roaring Brook, 2014. $16.99 Gr. 3-6
Both the layout of this graphic novel and the careful presentation of a grandmother’s recounting of the Holocaust to her beloved granddaughter are clear and simple enough to be accessible to young

Clever, witty facts and stories about deadly animals (from beetles to lions and everything in between) pair effortlessly with deceptively simple illustrations to create perfect bait for young independent readers.

This seamless blend of fact and fiction tells the story of young Pedru’s encounter with a lion in the African grasslands; short chapters, plentiful spot art, and an informative author’s note makes this a top choice for big cat fans and budding animal rights activists.

DiCamillo returns to familiar territory for fans of the porcine Mercy Watson in this ridiculous, hilarious, slightly older look at Deckawoo Drive and the hijinks that always seem to occur there.

It’s pretty clear that if any animal was going to be sneaky enough to take over the world, it just might be weasels, as Dolan illustrates in this snarky, detailed look at their world domination headquarters.

This is solid, thoughtful material from an author who splendidly captures the not always flawless logic of kids, and the trouble they can get themselves into while trying to stay out of trouble.

Flood, Nancy Bo  *Cowboy Up!: Ride the Navajo Rodeo*; illus. with photographs by Jan Sonnenmair. Boyds Mills, 2013. $17.95 Gr. 3-5
Vivid photographs and an accessible writing style make for a fascinating glimpse into the Navajo Rodeo and the kids who are among the avid participants.

Fradin, Judith Bloom  *The Price of Freedom: How One Town Stood Up to Slavery*; by Judith Bloom Fradin and Dennis Brindell Fradin; illus. by Eric Velasquez. Walker, 2013. $17.99 Gr. 3-6
This nonfiction account of the brave decision of regular citizens in Ohio in the mid 1800s to help one escaped slave highlights the ways in which ordinary can become exceptional.

All of the creepiest, most haunting details of Hansel and Gretel are stunningly presented in this impeccably presented graphic novel/picture book hybrid.

Glass, Andrew  *Flying Cars: The True Story*. Clarion, 2015. illus. with photographs. $17.99 Gr.4-8
Detailed photographs, informative text, and the appealing premise of “why not?” will draw in aspiring inventors and engineers.

This starter of a new series is a great mix of dumb humor, clever asides, and a strong narrative voice in Anastasia as she adjusts to living with her menacing but seemingly harmless great aunts.

Gravel, Elise  *The Fly; The Worm*; written and illus. by Elise Gravel. Tundra, 2014. $10.99 Gr. 2-3
This series offers one key fact per page, lots of lively sidebars featuring underappreciated animals, and cartoonish illustrations, and fantastic subject matter that will appeal to kids who prefer their early readers to be nonfiction, and sometimes on the amusingly gross side.

Green, Rod  *Giant Vehicles*; illus. by Stephen Biesty. Templar, 2014. $15.99 Gr. 3-6
For any kid who thinks they are too old for a toy-book format, this is immediate proof that the lift-the-flap style can work well beyond early childhood; impressive facts and sophisticated artistry invite awe and multiple readings.

Grimes, Nikki  *Chasing Freedom: The Life Journeys of Harriet Tubman and Susan B. Anthony Inspired by Historical Facts*; illus. by Michele Wood. Orchard/Scholastic, 2015. $18.99 Gr. 3-6
This deft historical fiction novel draws from facts that are seamlessly woven into a rich, entertaining, sometimes painful look at two memorable women.

Six-year-old Dory has quite the imagination, and it is one her older siblings are willing to exploit when she won’t leave them alone; kids on either side of this sibling balance will find a familiar voice herein.

Hale, Shannon  *The Princess in Black*; by Shannon and Dean Hale and illus. by LeUyen Pham. Candlewick, 2014. $14.99 Gr. 2-4
Whether they prefer pink sparkles or superhero capes, readers,
especially newly independent ones, will get a kick out of PIB’s exploits
as she manages both tea parties and a monster invasion.

This early reader offers an irresistible storyline and an engaging plot to keep those young fantasy fans rapt all the way through.

**HEOS, BRIdget I** *Fly: The Buzz about Flies and How Awesome They Are*; illus. by Jennifer Plecas. Holt, 2015. $17.99 Gr. 2-4
Everything you ever wanted to know (and, quite frankly, did NOT want to know) about fly growth, habits, and gross-out behavior is present in this accessibly charming guide.

This fantastic collection of eight stories about recess gathers together some of the most impressive of writers for young readers, and adds in the graphic novel format and trim size to make it a heady concoction of greatness for young readers.

Stunning mixed-media art accompanies 36 poems, each a thoughtful pondering on the beauties of the seasons; varied use of composition and perspective add to the overall impact.

The title almost does all the work: any animal lover or Jenkins fan will find the cut and torn paper illustrations and elegant, clear text to be the perfect way to learn a little bit about a whole lot of animals.

**JENkINS, STEVe** *Creature Features: 25 Animals Explain Why They Look the Way They Do*; written by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page; illus. by Steve Jenkins. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. $17.99 Gr. 2-4
A question and answer format is a brilliant way to present snippets of information about unusual animal features. Jenkins’ familiar cut-papered illustrations work well to highlight the oddities in question.

**JOHNSOn, REBeCCA L** *When Lunch Fights Back: Wickedly Clever Animal Defenses*; illus. with photographs. Millbrook, 2014. $29.27 Gr. 3-5
Crisp color photographs and a clean (albeit “blood-spattered”) layout make this combination of scientific investigation and gross out fun utterly appealing to fans of Shark Week and the like.

This wordless picture book perfectly captures the dizzying, glorious, terrifying experience of arriving in America as an immigrant, full of hope but lacking the language and cultural skills to immediately adjust.

Beginning readers will delight in the fact that caveman speech is perfect for their budding skills. Add in some stinky humor, bad decision making, and amusing illustrations and you’ve got literary gold.

**MACAuLAY, dAVId** *Eye: How It Works*; written and illus. by David Macaulay with Sheila Keenan. David Macaulay Studio, 2013. $17.99; paperback $ 5.99 Gr. 1-4
Sophisticated vocabulary and concepts about eyes are presented with short sentences, clear diagrams, and repeated explanations so that early readers will leave informed and brimming with intriguing facts.

**MACLACHLAN, PATRICIA** *Fly Away*. McElderry, 2014. $15.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 2-4
A deceptively simple story illustrates the power of family and the majesty of music (both small, shared songs and larger talent), all while remaining accessible to early readers.

Helpful illustrations, short sentences, and simple vocabulary ensure that even beginning readers will be able to negotiate this warm story about a too-small boy who finally finds his place with the big kids.

Fans of Frog and Toad and *The Wind in the Willows* will enjoy this gentle, cozy animal fantasy that follows Firefly and Cricket as they find acceptance among new friends.

This lyrical picture book wisely takes a very tight focus on a single key event in Gandhi’s life, paving the way for civil rights discussions and more intricate biographies, while also remaining entirely accessible to young readers.
This story about a girl who takes on way more than she can handle with an impromptu pet-sitting business is handled with grace and aplomb, guaranteeing reader sympathy for the protagonist; frequent illustrations break up the text effectively.

If only Annika could convince her friends that math was fun, she'd have so much to share with them; even mathphobic readers will find the cheerfully illustrated, enthusiastic story engaging and they may leave willing to try the sudoku puzzles Annika adores.

A thoughtful glimpse into Japanese internment camps through the lens of the baseball that was played to raise the spirits of those imprisoned is made even more vivid through the elegant illustrations that hint at both dignity and desperation.

It is both entirely imaginable and outlandish to even consider that a young boy, already seeking ways to act out, could end up with a smuggled penguin chick after a class trip. The authenticity of voice and congenial illustrations sprinkled throughout add to an well-written story.

Anyone who’s ever been baffled by cat behavior will love this book, as it offers a heap of clear, engagingly written, and adorably photographed behavior tips to help understand felines better.

ORCHARD, ERIC Maddy Kettle: The Adventure of the Thimblewitch; written and illus. by Eric Orchard. Top Shelf, 2014. $14.95. Gr. 2-4
This is a perfect graphic novel for the young fans of the format, as the solid, firm text keeps the rather ominous illustrations in check, and the promise of a sequel gives them something to anticipate.

A photosessay format, newsy narrative style, and a straightforward format makes this an ideal choice for young dog fans eager to learn more about what pooches can do.

‘Tribbles for the non-Star Trek set, but with the added twist of being highly prone to bursting into flame; snuggle-ific magical creatures and a snarky narrator will guarantee returns for the promised sequel.

Well, there’s no disguising what this book is about, but there are plenty of kids who will be elated to see it right there on the cover; spirited black and white drawings add further humor.

RFFECTI, JOE Inventions That Could Have Changed the World…but Didn’t; illus. by Anthony Owlsley. Imagine/Charlesbridge, 2015. $14.95. Gr. 3-6
The descriptive title sets the stage but doesn’t do the cleverness of this book justice, as readers will be captivated by the numerous entries of awesome ideas that wound up being utter flops.

Parents beware: you will be hearing lots of collective nouns, but at least they are fun, and the artwork is imaginative enough to invite repeat solo readings once you reach your limit of hearing what groups of wolves, hawks, moles, etc. are called.

ROY, KATHERINE Neighborhood Sharks: Hunting with the Great Whites of California’s Farallon Islands; written and illus. by Katherine Roy. Macaulay/Roaring Brook, 2014. $17.99. Gr. 3-6
Detailed illustrations that don’t skimp on the hunting part of shark life pair with conversational text about shark migrations in this action packed gripper.

An earnest, dull book a kid receives as a gift is made SO much better as the recipient edits the heck out of it, adding rockets, mayhem, and ninjas right onto the physical pages.

SIMPSON, DANA Unicorn on a Roll: Another Phoebe and Her Unicorn Adventure; written and illus. by Dana Simpson. Andrews McMeel, 2015. $9.99. Gr. 3-5
Phoebe and Marigold (an egocentric unicorn) have returned for another
round of best friendship, witty takes on the world, and some minor school problems. Calvin and Hobbes fans take note!

**Spiegelman, Nadja** *Lost in NYC: A Subway Adventure*; by Nadja Spiegelman and Sergio Garcia Sanchez; illus. by Sergio Garcia Sanchez. TOON Graphics, 2015. $16.95 Gr. 3-6

Urban readers will be right at home with this zippy look at two kids negotiating the subway on a field trip; those outside big cities will find much to pore over, particularly in the perfectly age appropriate endnotes.

**Stills, Caroline** *Mice Mischief: Math Facts in Action*; illus. by Judith Rossell. Holiday House, 2014. $16.95 3-6 yrs

This simple math book is so intricately detailed and beautifully illustrated that the very straightforward equations may seem less important, but viewers will pore through this charmer often enough to catch the addition guidelines.

**Sturm, James** *Sleepless Knight*; written and illus. by James Sturm, Andrew Arnold, and Alexis Frederick-Frost. First Second, 2015. $14.99 Gr. 2-4

This dialogue-only story combines with cartoonish, accessible pictures to create a witty comic book style read that invites drawing experimentation once the knight finds his missing teddy.

**Tavares, Matt** *Growing Up Pedro*; written and illus. by Matt Tavares. Candlewick, 2015. $16.99 Gr. 2-5

New Hall of Fame inductee Pedro Martinez gets his own picture book treatment in this high-energy, photorealistic narrative that goes from boyhood dreamer to adult star.

**Tonatiuh, Duncan** *Funny Bones: Posada and His Day of the Dead Calaveras*; written and illus. by Duncan Tonatiuh and with photographs. Abrams, 2015. $18.95 Gr. 2-5

The playful skeletons associated with the Day of the Dead are fleshed out in this compelling look at Jose Guadalupe Posada, the nineteenth-century artist who made famous the comic cast of skeletons from the holiday’s tradition.

**Voake, Steve** *Hooey Higgins and the Tremendous Trousers*; illus. by Emma Dodson. Candlewick, 2014. $14.99 Gr. 2-4

Fans of goofy humor will delight in this mix of exaggerated illustrations, amusing character development, and exploding pants (think cola and Mentos), a plot that can only result in delight.

**Wardlaw, Lee** *Won Ton and Chopstick: A Cat and Dog Story Told in Haiku*; illus. by Eugene Yelchin. Holt, 2015. $17.99 Gr. 2-4

Graphite-lined gouache art echoes the spareness of the verse while also adding humorous touches to the twelve sections that describe one cat’s gradual acceptance of a new puppy.


A joyful, exuberant celebration of Mexico’s Day of the Dead also highlights the comfort of family; splashy, bright illustrations and clear notes alert unfamiliar readers to the non-scary nature of these particular skeletons.

**Willis, Jeanne** *Supercat vs. the Fry Thief*; illus. by Jim Field. HarperCollins, 2015. $5.99 Gr. 2-4

This is good stuff: a french fry tinged with moldy sock is eaten by a cat who transforms into a guitar-playing superhero. Add in the skillful writing, loopy abandon of all logic, and funny as heck illustrations, and this is quite the find.


Even readers who imagined themselves indifferent to baseball will be absolutely captivated by this rousing story of Willie “Say Hey” Mays, one of the sport’s greatest all-around players.
Three young teens decide to make the world read their late teacher’s favorite book, starting with the fifty-mile radius around their town; smart characterization and compelling subplots enhance the story further.

The fall from a charmed life, in this case triggered by political upheaval in Chile, changes a young, sheltered girl forever in this dazzlingly beautiful novel with equally stunning artwork interspersed.

ALBEE, SARAH. *Bugged: How Insects Changed History;* illus. by Robert Leighton. Walker, 2014. $17.99; paperback $12.95 Gr. 4-8
A witty, informative, newsworthy book about insects and all the ways, big and small, that they have impacted and altered human history.

ALBEE, SARAH. *Whyd They Wear That?;* illus. with photographs. National Geographic, 2015. $20.00 Gr. 5-9
Any Project Runway buffs or fashion fans will relish this brisk, amusing look at the history of fashion through the missteps and historical moments that changed clothing forever.

When you are raised by a mad scientist, it’s perhaps not too unexpected that you may find yourself to be a rather unusual fourteen-year-old, particularly when you also possess superhero powers of persuasion; adventure comfortably mingles with musings on the complexity of heroism in this sharp novel.

In this adapted version of Yankees PR Director Appel’s adult history, younger readers will find a trimmed down and peppy insider look at a team that is about as famous, and infamous, as they come.

Nineteenth-century rural England provides the perfect spooky setting for this brilliant ghost story of a tree that may provide all you might wish for, but at an extraordinary cost.

BACHMANN, STEFAN. *Cabinet of Curiosities: 36 Tales Brief & Sinister;* written by Stefan Bachmann, Katherine Catmull, Claire Legrand, and Emma Trevayne; illus. by Alexander Jansson. Greenwillow, 2014. $16.99; e-book $6.99 Gr. 4-8
This spine-tingling collection of creatively organized stories offers a wide range of topics with something to amuse, and mostly terrify, any reader.

BARNHILL, KELLY. *The Witch’s Boy*. Algonquin, 2014. $16.95 Gr. 5-7
What happens when a sibling dies and you not only feel guilty but you also feel that most believe the wrong child died? This otherworldly novel examines desperation and loneliness with a gently optimistic view.

This fast paced, twist filled middle-grades novel will keep readers on their toes, both with the sometimes challenging vocabulary but also with a (maybe) spy mystery.

BERTOZZI, NICK. *Shackleton: Antarctic Odyssey;* written and illus. by Nick Bertozzi. First Second, 2014. $16.99 Gr. 6-10
This graphic novel chronicle of Shackleton’s expedition makes excellent use of the format, using both gripping text and dramatic illustrations to convey the steely determination of a group of men facing extreme odds.

Penderwick fans will already be pining for this book, but even kids who don’t know the series will be able to dive in with this gentle, comforting look at families and all their complexities.

BIRMINGHAM, MARIA. *Tastes Like Music: 17 Quirks of the Brain and Body;* illus. by Monika Melnychuk. OwlKids, 2014. $17.95, paperback $11.95 Gr. 4-8
There is a lot packed into this trim volume about the weird things our brains and bodies do; edgy spot art widens appeal to older readers as well.

This deliciously odd novel about a group of preadolescent friends, a creepy doll that is haunted, and a sad mystery that ties them together is a perfect concoction for young horror buffs.

BRACKEN, BETH. *Wish;* by Beth Bracken and Kay Fraser; illus. by Odessa Sawyer. Capstone, 2013. $12.95; e-book $9.99 Gr. 6-9
Stunning photorealistic illustrations pair with spare, melancholy-tinged text in this novel about how one should always be careful what one wishes for, especially if you find yourself in a magical forest.
Burns, Loree Griffin *Beetle Busters: A Rogue Insect and the People Who Track It*; illus. with photographs by Ellen Harasimowicz. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. $18.99 Gr. 4-7
Middle grades nonfiction fans will be pleased to see such an intriguing, effectively developed book squarely in their age bracket, and budding entomologists will go nuts for the topic.

Camper, Cathy *Lowriders in Space*; illus. by Raul the Third. Chronicle, 2014. $22.99 Gr. 5-9
The catchy but amiable story about friends trying to make the perfect lowrider becomes memorable gold when paired with unbelievably intricate colored pen drawings.

Clark, Henry *What We Found in the Sofa and How It Saved the World*; illus. by Jeremy Holmes. Little, 2013. Paperback $7.00; e-book $6.99 Gr. 5-8
Readers pair up with a gang tasked with saving the world, if they can stop bickering long enough to figure out what to do with the couch/sentient computer system that suddenly appears on a quiet road.

Columbus, Chris *House of Secrets*; by Chris Columbus and Ned Vizzini; illus. by Greg Call. Balzer+Bray, 2013. $17.99; paperback $7.99; e-book $7.99 Gr. 5-8
A lightning pace, authentic family dynamics, and a movie-ready fantasy plot about a family who get way more than they bargained for when they bought a suspiciously cheap house make this an easy sell for adventure film lovers.

Apple’s poetry and snappy, witty dialogue round out this story of a teen and the family she dreams of as a contrast to the family she has.

This spare, memorable story of a serious drought in Africa and a girl, boy, and dog who each must survive it as best they can will stay with readers long after the resolution.

Crump, Marty *The Mystery of Darwin’s Frogs*; illus. by Steve Jenkins and Edel Rodriguez and with photographs. Boyds Mills, 2013. $16.95 Gr. 4-6
Clear photographs, scientific renderings, and a detailed text enhanced with end matter combine to make an irresistible volume for any budding naturalist.

De Lint, Charles *Seven Wild Sisters: A Modern Fairy Tale*; illus. by Charles Vess. Little, 2014. $18.00; e-book $9.99 Gr. 4-6
Lush illustrations and a traditional fairy tale format combine in this novel-length story about seven sisters and how they stop an otherworldly fairy feud.

There is so much rhythm and joy in this fast paced, artistic picture book that the lesson about early discrimination will go down gently, and the fervent joy of music is what will remain.

Historical fiction in a graphic novel format examines the darkest undersides of Japanese relocation camps, and one teen’s loss of innocence because of his time there.

This sensitive look at a kid pushed beyond his usual fragile sense of self-control by bullying and the loss of a parent is exceptionally readable, memorable, and accessible, even with the often painful content.

Freedman, Russell *Because They Marched: The People’s Campaign for Voting Rights That Changed America*; illus. with photographs. Holiday House, 2014. $20.00 Gr. 5-9
Testimony, photographs, and skillful narration all come together to create a haunting and deeply engaging non-fiction account of the civil rights movement in Alabama, 1965.

Santa skeptics will find a kindred spirit in twelve-year-old Bobbie, who’s decided that the legend of Old St. Nick is a farce—until she’s kidnapped by elves and ends up in the North Pole in this campy, hilarious, illustrated novel.

Classic detective tropes are filtered through the mind of a kid genius, who takes over his father’s detective files when his dad falls into a coma.

A realistic look at the life of the kid of a firefighter who knows her parent goes off to danger each time, particularly made poignant by
the fact that this is the only parent the protagonist has left; lyrical and gripping writing moves the story from fear to hope.


Albie just hasn’t found the right fit yet for his quirky, not by the books understanding of school, life, and friendship in this intelligent, sharp portrait of an outsider’s inner perspective.

**Grau, Sheila** *Dr. Critchlore’s School for Minions;* illus. by Joe Sutphin. Amulet/Abrams, 2015. $14.95 Gr. 4-6

Even minions need proper training, and this rich cast of characters highlights all the different creatures, classes, and conflicts that come into play when you’re training henchmen and sidekicks.

**Green, Tim** *First Team.* Harper/HarperCollins, 2014. $16.99 Gr. 4-6

When you mix football and undercover government dealings, and then add in a coma and identity change, you get something that sports buffs and spy fans will both appreciate.

**Grove, S.E.** *The Glass Sentence.* Viking, 2014. $17.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 5-8

Cartography is proven to be cool in this emotionally engaging, artsy novel about a world where time and location have all been shifted around, and one small group must battle against a brilliantly developed villain to save the day.


Journal entries, photographs, and the intrinsic adventure of the story itself combine to make an unforgettable account of the first air race around the world.

**Hannigan, Kate** *The Detective’s Assistant.* Little, 2015. $17.00, e-book $9.99 Gr. 4-6

The first female detective, Kate Warne, gets a fictionalized nod in this intriguing, historically sound look at a teen who wants to prove her worth to her detective aunt.

**Harrold, A.E.** *The Imaginary;* illus. by Emily Gravett. Bloomsbury, 2015. $16.99; e-book $11.99 Gr. 4-6

The magnificent illustrations in this middle-grades novel about imaginary friends and what happens to them when they are outgrown are ideal for slowing the reader, opening spaces to contemplate the melancholy that hovers at the surface of this elegant novel.

**Hartnett, Sonja** *The Children of the King.* Candlewick, 2014. $16.99; e-book $9.99 Gr. 7-10

This richly layered, sophisticated story about a group of English children and how they cope with war from their safe country home is a plot that appears to be familiar, though there is always more to uncover.

**Hasak-Lowy, Todd** *33 Minutes;* illus. by Bethany Barton. Aladdin, 2013. $16.99; paperback $6.99; e-book $6.99 Gr. 4-7

In 33 minutes, Morgan is going to kick Sam’s butt. It’s a terrific starting premise, and the rest of the book, unfolding in flashbacks and one of the boy’s account of the countdown, is equally superb.

**Hautala, Beth** *Waiting for Unicorns.* Philomel, 2015. $16.99 Gr. 4-6

This is a searing, exquisitely beautiful look at grief set in an icy, frigid location that reflects the expanse of emptiness inside a girl whose mother has recently died.

**Hellisen, Cat** *Beastkeeper.* Holt, 2015. $16.99 Gr. 6-9

Family curses, beasts, and a girl caught in the middle of a long-standing feud all converge in this startling, elegant fairy/folktale that glances off “Beauty and the Beast” but mostly takes a path all its own.

**Hendrix, John** *Shooting at the Stars: The Christmas Truce of 1914;* written and illus. by John Hendrix. Abrams, 2014. $18.95 Gr. 3-5

Kids will likely not know this remarkable story yet, a day when all fighting stopped during WWII, and this book presents the incident with enough historical context to make sense while also carefully honing in on the temporary truce.

**Ibbotson, Eva** *The Abominables;* illus. by Fiona Robinson. Amulet, 2014. $16.95; paperback $8.95; e-book $8.95 Gr. 3-5

This subtle gem of a novel seems to be about yetis and humans and the places they converge but manages to work in issues of human rights and advocacy within the adventurous plot.


The zippy, high energy graphic novel captures all of the excitement, danger, and kinetic frenzy of roller derby through the perspective of a newbie whose determination outstrips her talent.

**Jarrow, Gail** *Fatal Fever: Tracking Down Typhoid Mary;* illus. with photographs. Calkins Creek, 2015. $16.95 Gr. 5-9

It’s impossible to not have heard of Typhoid Mary, but readers are unlikely to know the full story of the woman who elucidated how deadly a carrier could be; this stunning story tells the tale.

A spooky novel about the unlikeliest of heroes, a trio of kids each told they are not good enough, and the genuinely creepy monster they must face in order to save the day.


A funny, smart novel about a seventh-grader who faces a list of everyday challenges with a perspective that is part swagger, part negativity, and part understanding, even at a fairly young age, that he is still lucky.

**Johnson, Rebecca L.** *Chernobyl's Wild Kingdom: Life in the Dead Zone;* illus. with photographs. Twenty-First Century, 2014. $34.60 Gr. 6-10

Even if readers haven't heard of Chernobyl, this book will quickly get them up to date and then set them loose contemplating nuclear fallout, human-generated disasters, and what can survive or revive in presumed dead zones.

**Johnson, Varian** *The Great Greene Heist.* Levine/Scholastic, 2014. $16.99 Gr. 5-9

A breezy, lightning-paced novel about a brilliant middle school kid who can't stop searching for the next big heist.


Luck is relative, and this book elucidates this point elegantly through a thoughtful exploration of a family of agricultural workers, and how they face both good and bad luck.

**Keplinger, Kody** *The Swift Boys & Me.* Scholastic, 2014. $16.99; e-book $10.49 Gr. 4-6

A warm, complex tale of one girl's summer and all the ways her life changes during it, from friendship to family turmoil, and back to amiable summer ambling by the end.


This rollicking take on crime-fighting animals (in this case, the humble platypus) has plenty of snark, a lightning pace, and, best of all, the clear promise of a sequel to thrill readers.

**Krull, Kathleen** *Lives of the Scientists: Experiments, Explosions (and What the Neighbors Thought);* illus. by Kathryn Hewitt. Harcourt, 2013. $20.99 Gr. 4-8

The newest in the *Lives of…* series delivers beautifully, as this jam-packed volume of facts, secrets, and human elements will not only inform but enthral readers from start to finish.

**Latham, Irene.** *Dear Wandering Wildebeest and Other Poems From the Water Hole;* illus. by Anna Wadham. Millbrook, 2014. $17.95 Gr. 3-6

Fifteen poems capture the denizens of the African watering hole, with mixed media art further enhancing the immersive experience of the evocative poetry.

**La Valley, Josanne** *The Vine Basket.* Clarion, 2013. $16.99; e-book $8.99 Gr. 5-8

The ability to make beautiful woven baskets may hold all of the opportunities of which Mehrigul, a fourteen-year-old Chinese girl, has long dreamed in this emotional, spare story of hope.


Writers to be, take note! In blog entries expanded and compiled, Levine offers excellent advice from the practical to the philosophical on how to move from vague aspiration to being a writer.

**Lieb, Josh** *Ratscalibur;* illus. by Tom Lintern. Razorbill, 2015. $16.99 Gr. 4-6

As if learning the streets of New York isn't hard enough, this poor seventh-grader gets turned into a rat and must now undergo a life-altering quest to get himself re-humanized.

**Lowery, Lynda Blackmon** *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March;* as told to Elspeth Leacock and Susan Buckley; illus. by PJ Loughran and with photographs. Dial, 2015. $19.99 Gr. 4-9

Any questions kids ask someone who grew up in this era will likely be addressed in this personal narrative, accented with photographs well-chosen for the audience.


The author will surely grab attention, and this folkloric, startling novel about a girl and an ice dragon deserves the attention.

**Martin, Ann M.** *Rain Reign.* Feiwel, 2014. $16.99 Gr. 4-7

Rose is a kid that readers would like to get know, even with her need to have everyone follow the rules and her obsessive love for homonyms; offer this in particular to kids who know peers on the spectrum.

**Mateo, Jose Manuel** *Migrant;* illus. by Javier Martinez Pedro; tr. from the Spanish by Emmy Smith Ready. Abrams, 2014. $17.95 Gr. 5-8

A nameless narrator describes the experience of an undocumented...
migration in this title; the unusual Aztec-inspired ink illustration on
an accordion-fold codex makes the physical object of the book itself as
intriguing as the content.

Gr. 6-9
Readers who like their mysteries a bit offbeat will appreciate this tale
of two small Australian towns, one now underwater and the other
populated with folks who would rather forget it, and the kids who try
to determine why.

MC COOL A, MariKa Baba Yaga’s Assistant; illus. by Candlewick, 2015.
$16.99 Gr. 5-8
Folk tale brushes up against modern life when a teen decides to choose
magic over reality in this brilliantly designed graphic novel.

MONTGOMERY, SY The Octopus Scientist; Exploring the Mind of a
Mollusk; illus. with photographs by Keith Ellenbogen. Houghton
Mifflin, 2015. $18.99 Gr. 5-8
Older kids will likely already know a few cool facts about the astonishing octopus, but this nonfiction title goes well beyond the
well-known stuff, detailing not only more about the mollusk but also
presenting a startlingly high-intensity account of research on them.

MORRISON, MEgAN Grounded: The Adventures of Rapunzel. Levine/
Scholastic, 2015. $17.99; e-book $17.99 Gr. 5-8
In this version, Rapunzel doesn’t think she needs to be rescued, until
her carefully constructed life begins to fall apart once she exits the
tower.

MULDER, MiCHELLe Pedal It!: How Bicycles Are Changing the World;
illus. with photographs. Orca, 2013. $19.95 Gr. 4-6
This passionate account of bicycles and how they are, indeed, changing
the world will have new riders and die-hard fans waxing poetic about
their own reasons they love their two-wheelers.

Gr. 4-7
Gripping free verse offers insight into the mind of a Japanese-
American girl who is moved from her Seattle home to a relocation
center during WWII.

OTTAVIANI, JiM Primates: The Fearless Science of Jane Goodall, Dian
Fossey, and Birute Galdikas; illus. by Maris Wicks. First Second/
This graphic novel on women of primatology is an excellent, thoughtful
work to introduce three essential female scientists and the ways in
which they changed our understanding of animals permanently.

paperback $6.99; e-book $6.99 Gr. 5-8
An unusual setting (a Makah village, post-WWII), a compelling
protagonist who is struggling to balance her recent orphan status
while also trying to save her tribe from a sketchy art dealer seeking
tribal masks, and informative notes make this book a stellar entry for
thoughtful readers.

PASTIS, STEPHAN Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made; written and
4-6
Timmy has an unswerving dedication to avoiding the truth, which
makes his “historical record” a hilarious account, even while sensitive
readers may note that his bluster sometimes protects him from
loneliness and rejection.

$16.95; e-book $16.95 Gr. 6-10
A warm, carefully developed novel about two young teens who
discover that they are bonded by more than their individual but
similar losses: they are actually half-brothers.

PHELAN, MATT Bluffton: My Summers with Buster Keaton; written and
illus. by Matt Phelan. Candlewick, 2013. $22.99 Gr. 5-8
A mix of wordless scenes, vivid illustrations, and effectively integrated
text combine in this intriguing graphic novel to describe a three-year
period in Buster Keaton’s early life.

POWELL, PATRiCIA Hruby Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine
e-book $12.99 Gr. 2-5
This jazzy, lively biography of Josephine Baker embodies the
determination, beauty, and free spirit of the woman herself.

PRATCHETT, TERRY Dragons at Crumbling Castle and Other Tales;
illus. by Mark Beech. Clarion, 2015. $16.99 Gr. 4-6
Given the fact that these fourteen stories were all written by a teen-
aaged Pratchett, the genius, eye for the absurd, and pithiness present is
even more remarkable.
Gr. 4-6
This compelling story of an Inuit hunter who stumbles upon a Viking invasion, and whose life is changed forever when he decides to help, is a warm stew of fiction, nonfiction, and legend.

ROTH, Judith Serendipity and Me. Viking, 2013. $16.99; paperback $5.99; e-book $13.99 Gr. 5-8
This thoughtful free-verse novel is tinged with melancholy as a girl campaigns to keep a kitten that landed on her doorstep, desperate to find something to help herself and her dad cope with a recent loss.

RUBIN, Susan Goldman Freedom Summer: The 1964 Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi; illus. with photographs. Holiday House, 2014. $18.95 Gr. 6-10
This searing account of the summer of 1964 and civil rights struggles in Mississippi is told with impeccable storytelling ability, first-person accounts and photographs, and extensive, compelling end matter.

RUNDELL, Katherine The Wolf Wilder. Simon, 2015. $16.99 Gr. 5-8
A wise and witty narrator guides readers through this folkloric tale that follows one headstrong girl and her wolves as she tries to find her missing mother during Russia’s 1917 February Revolution.

RUSCH, Elizabeth Eruption!: Volcanoes and the Science of Saving Lives; illus. with photographs by Tom Uhlman et al. Houghton, 2013. $18.99 Gr. 5-9
Striking photographs, thoughtful exploration of the people who live near volcanoes, and gripping science stories make this outing an exceptional entry in the field of natural disaster books.

RYAN, Pam Munoz Echo; illus. by Dinara Mirtalipova. Scholastic, 2015. $19.99; e-book $19.99 Gr. 6-9
A harmonica is the central thread that ties together multiple stories set in different locations and historical eras; the idea that music transcends boundaries is effectively presented here.

SELZNICK, Brian The Marvels; written and illus. by Brian Selznick. Scholastic, 2015. $32.99
A family legacy unfolds in this melancholy but warm novel that combines text with Selznick’s characteristically stunning hatched pencil illustrations.

A smart, layered mystery takes place in a multicultural suburban region, and two preteen girls will be changed for the better because of it.

SHEIKH, Steve Lincoln’s Grave Robbers. Scholastic, 2013. $16.99; e-book $6.99 Gr. 6-10
Told with gusto, this lively true crime story takes readers through a 1876 plot to steal the remains of Lincoln in a tale that is so thrilling and funny, kids won’t even recognize the history lesson.

SIS, Peter The Pilot and the Little Prince: The Life of Antoine de Saint-Exupery; written and illus. by Peter Sís. Foster/Farrar, 2014. $18.99; e-book $9.99 Gr. 4-8
Sís is perhaps the ideal person to tackle such a project, as his dreamy, otherworldly, artistic style pervades both the illustrations and the story format, resulting in a rich, stunning glimpse into the life of the man who created an iconic book.

SLOAN, Holly Goldberg Counting by 7s. Dial, 2013. $16.99; paperback $8.99; e-book $8.99 Gr. 5-8
This is a sensitive and memorable look at a quirky girl who has always been unconditionally accepted by her parents, and who must adjust to how to live without them after their unexpected deaths.

SKYE, Obert Witherwood Reform School; illus. by Keith Thompson. Ottaviano/Holt, 2015. $16.99 Gr. 4-6
Lemony Snicket fans will appreciate this bleakly humorous cautionary tale about the fate of rascal kids who push their long-suffering parents too far.

SMITH, Ronald L. Hoodoo. Clarion, 2015. $16.99 Gr. 5-8
The straightforward plot and creepy atmosphere give both an accessibility and a chill to this story that follows twelve-year-old Hoodoo’s battle with a demon in 1930s Alabama.

This startling verse novel about international adoption, and the ways in which illicit or informal channels can keep home as a transient, temporary element long after the heart has settled, will haunt readers long after the final page.

This free-verse examination of the trickiness of being a tween elegantly captures the drama and humor of a girl who declares herself Emily Dickinson after a series of exasperating events makes her tired of being herself.

Stead carefully weaves three narratives together to create a thoughtful, compassionate look at the changing friendships, new identities, and
shifting relationships that all must be navigated in middle school.


Readers who have graduated from Ben Hatke’s Zita the Spacegirl series will find this a delightful step up that focuses on a kid who tackles space, aliens, and her own insecurities.

**Tolstikova, Dasha** *A Year Without Mom*; written and illus. by Dasha Tolstikova. Groundwood, 2015. $19.95; e-book $16.95 Gr. 5-8

This beautifully illustrated novel blends events large and small during a pivotal year in twelve-year-old Dasha’s life as she stays with her grandparents in Moscow in 1991.

**Tripp, Ben** *The Accidental Highwayman*; written and illus. by Ben Tripp. Tor, 2014. $17.99, e-book $9.99 Gr. 6-9

Gaiman and *The Princess Bride* fans will find much to delight in with this story of spell-casting, sword fighting, and adventure.

**Vawter, Vince** *Paperboy*. Delacorte, 2013. $16.99 Gr. 4-7

A quiet, impeccably told novel about a boy whose stutter has kept him isolated until a friend needs him to take over a paper route, and the weekly collections that will require conversations.

**Vernon, Ursula** *Castle Hangnail*. Dial, 2015. $16.99 Gr. 4-6

Castle Hangnail needs a new master or mistress to wrangle its minions and twelve-year-old Molly may be just the one for the job in this humorous outing reminiscent of Eve Ibbotson.

**Volponi, Paul** *Game Seven*. Viking, 2015. $17.99 Gr. 6-9

Volponi is a genius with sports stories that have intense heart, and this story about a baseball star in the making who leaves his Cuban homeland for the chance of better things is his newest strong outing.


Calkins Creek, 2014. $16.95 Gr. 5-9

Babe was a true athletic force, and this gripping biography is up to the task of identifying her incredible talents while not shying away from her less admirable traits.


Twenty-two poems in first person voice trace the life of civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer in this accessible biography; mixed media collages effectively convey the historical setting.

**Wiersbitzky, Shannon** *What Flowers Remember*. Namelos, 2014. $18.95; e-book $9.95 Gr. 5-7

When a girl loses a key older figure in her life, she struggles through mourning and toward a new understanding of him; tender, thoughtful passages will resonate with readers who have experienced loss.

**Williams, Marcia** *Lizzy Bennet’s Diary: 1811-1812*; written and illus. by Marcia Williams. Candlewick, 2014. $16.99 Gr. 4-6

A bit of Austen for the young set in this diary written by a young Elizabeth Bennet from *Pride and Prejudice*; wry humor and a scrapbook-type format with ephemera from her life pasted in add to the historical fun.


This final volume in a realistic fiction trilogy that perfectly captures the messy joy of family will be warmly welcomed by fans, and will be a brilliant and irresistible introduction for newbies.

**Wilson, N.D.** *Boys of Blur*. Random House, 2014. $16.99 Gr. 5-8

Using Beowulf as inspiration, this tale examines two cousins in a Florida swamp town and the dramatic odds against them in this sharp thriller.


To use Hilo’s favorite word, this is an “outstanding” story of a boy from another realm who crashes to earth and proceeds to run around in silver underwear and eventually save the day.
ABIRACHED, Zeina I Remember Beirut; tr. from the French by Edward Gauvin; written and illus. by Zeina Abirached. Graphic Universe, 2014. $9.95 Gr. 10 up
This vignette-style, gripping graphic novel offers a rare first-person glimpse into the impact growing up in a war-torn area can have on the development of children, and the memories they carry with them into adulthood.

Anyone who has wondered if it is truly possible to fall in love with someone online will appreciate this exploration examples of the give and take vulnerability that is required to trust a face you've never seen.

ANDREAE, Maria E. The Secret Side of Empty. Running Press, 2014. $16.95; e-book $16.95 Gr. 7-10
Teens who have looked at their own future and been demoralized by what they see as their options will find reflection and comfort in this painful but ultimately uplifting novel about an undocumented girl and the ways in which her limited choices expand.

This rare insider look into a teen who was able to have gender reassignment surgery is honest and raw, while also being very much like any teen's memoir would be in the occasional angst and hyperbole used to express strong emotions.

This collection of short stories, filled with pathos and honesty, highlights all of those secrets that shape us but that we hope will never be revealed.

BARKIN, Martha The Game of Love and Death. Levine/Scholastic, 2015. $17.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 7-12
While the race relations, both historical and contemporary, may spark the most discussion and reflection from this novel, the core of a young man's own coming of age and struggle toward enlightenment is a powerful feature as well.

BROCKENBOUGH, Martha The Game of Love and Death. Levine/Scholastic, 2015. $17.99; e-book $17.99 Gr. 8-10
This sweeping, epic tale of Love and Death (both philosophical and literal, as they are personified) examines risk, loss, and what connection is worth through one romance, on which high stakes have been placed.

This irresistible reconceptualization of the star-crossed lovers offers a strong setting, lush language, and a complex, well-developed cast centered around the key two protagonists.

CARR, Emily Through the Woods; written and illus. by Emily Carroll. McElderry, 2014. $21.99; e-book $10.92 Gr. 7-10
Five graphic horror stories explore the underside of fairy tales and folklore, taking familiar tropes and characters to truly grim places.

**Christopher, Neil,** *The Country of Wolves,* illus. by Ramón Pérez. Inhabit Media Inc., 2013. $24.95 Gr. 8-12

This eerie and chilling graphic novel, centering on two brothers’ journey into an arctic wasteland, will entrance fans of both horror and folklore and serves as an intriguing example of oldest stories translated into newest media.


A welcome first volume of a new series for Colfer, this time warp take on a futuristic witness protection program (transporting folks out of the current time) is action filled with well-drawn villains and two fascinating settings.

**Coyle, Katie**, *Vivian Apple at the End of the World.* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015. $17.99 Gr. 8-12

Vivian, our intrepid narrator, is sharp, sardonic, funny as heck, and also pretty clueless about what she’s going to do now that it appears her parents (and a select small number of others) have been Raptured.


There is a surprising amount of raucous humor and exuberance in this book that is ostensibly about a teen dying, but Francis is determined to grab life fully before it is gone.

**De Fombelle, Timothée**, *Vango: Between Sky and Earth;* tr. from the French by Sarah Ardizzone. Candlewick, 2014. $17.99 Gr. 8-12

This multi-layered mystery with a historical fiction bent will grab any readers interested in either unpacking a complex story or learning more about 1934 European and Russian history.


Life is rich and complex, and Emma is beginning to realize after being blinded in an accident and finding the ways in which she is changed and the same, and knowing how much awaits her still.

**Duyvis, Corinne**, *Otherbound.* Amulet/Abrams, 2014. $17.95; e-book $9.99 Gr. 7-12

A diverse cast of characters, nuanced explorations of power and privilege, and a sharp adventure plot paired with a mystery…it’s a heady mix for this intelligent novel to offer.

**Easton, T.S.**, *Boys Don't Knit.* Feiwel, 2015. $16.99 Gr. 9-12

Boys DO knit if they have to for community service, and then discover they love it. This quirky British book gently pushes at all sorts of assumptions with wry humor.


Not only is this non-fiction title impeccably researched and brimming with first-person narratives and photographs, but it is also so compellingly written that even teens who insist they aren't drawn to nonfiction for their aesthetic reading will be drawn in instantly.

**Flowers, Arthur**, *I See the Promised Land: A Life of Martin Luther King Jr.;* illus. by Manu Chitrakar. Groundwood, 2013. $16.95 Gr. 9-up

This graphic novel collaboration offers a fresh and poetic look at a historical figure in a way that will engage and challenge teen readers.


Fans of Sherman Alexie and the Beatles have an immediate in with this coming of age novel about a 1970s teen who must balance his life on the reservation with his (often equally tough) life at “smart-kid” school.

**Gardner, Scot**, *The Dead I Know.* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015. $17.99 Gr. 9-12

Powerful storytelling, perfectly toned writing, and memorable characters make this story of a teen who starts work in a funeral home transcendentally memorable.

**Griffin, Bethany**, *The Fall.* Greenwillow, 2014. $17.99 Gr. 9-12

This slim, powerful volume follows Calvin’s senior year in a rough,
urban neighborhood and the painful lesson he learns: that earnest boys with good intentions may not always win the day.

**Griffin, Paul.** *Adrift.* Scholastic, 2015. $17.99; e-book $17.99 Gr. 7-10 Survival story fans will find exactly what they want in this story of five teens who are stranded on a boat in the middle of the ocean; death, madness, and romance ensue.

**Goldsmith, Connie.** *Bombs Over Bikini: The World’s First Nuclear Disaster;* illus. with photographs. Twenty-First Century, 2014. $34.60 Gr. 7-12 This is a treasure trove of information that builds a complete picture of what happened on the Marshall Islands; the author combines photographs, interviews, historical context, and environmental analysis to create this powerful text.

**Hale, Kathleen.** *No One Else Can Have You.* HarperTeen, 2014. $17.99; e-book $9.99 Gr. 10 up This novel manages to be awkward and smooth at once as it explores one teen’s cool, academic approach to life begins to crumble as her core high-achieving goals get waylaid by bizarre health issues that suddenly impact her exclusive school.

**Hale, Maggie.** *The Conspiracy of Us.* Putnam, 2015. $17.99 Gr. 9-12 Readers seeking heart-pounding action, adventure, and romance will be grabbed early on as a girl is forced onto a private plane, opening up a world of opulence, assassins, and mystery.

**Hardinge, Frances.** *Cuckoo Song.* Amulet/Abrams, 2015. $17.95 Gr. 7-10 Hardinge is a masterful writer, and in her hands the shift from horror tale to an impactful family tale of regret, forgiveness, and loss is seamlessly handled.

**Healy, Nick, ed.** *Love & Profanity: A Collection of True, Tortured, Wild, Hilarious, Concise, and Intense Tales of Teenage Life;* ed. by Nick Healy, with Kristen Mohn, Nate LeBoutillier and Lindsey O’Brien. Switch, 2015. $16.99 Gr. 9-12 You really can’t get more descriptive than this title, but it’s also important to note that this impressive collection contains 43 entries by some of the biggest names in YA and children’s fiction.


**Hoose, Phillip.** *The Boys Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Pedersen and the Churchill Club.* Farrar, 2015. $19.99 Gr. 7-10 Movie ready, edge-of-your-seat narration describes how teens managed to strike back against Hitler, even if their country of Denmark was officially reluctant to do so.

**Hosie, Donna.** *The Devil’s Intern.* Holiday House, 2014. $16.95 Gr. 9-12 At least if you’re going to be in Hell, you should be surrounded with some great friends, and Mitchell is reasonably content even before a time travel possibility suggests he might be able to change his fate.

**Howe, Katherine.** *Conversion.* Putnam, 2014. $18.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 9-12 One teen’s cool, academic approach to life begins to crumble as her core high-achieving goals get waylaid by bizarre health issues that suddenly impact her exclusive school.

**Hubbard, Jenny.** *And We Stay.* Delacorte, 2014. $16.99 Gr. 9-12 Drawing inspiration from Emily Dickinson, this novel features a girl who is seeking redemption, escape, and closure through her own poetry; smooth and effective movement from dark to light keeps the heavy topics manageable.

**Johnston, E.K.** *The Story of Owen: Dragon Slayer of Trondheim.* Carolrhoda Lab, 2014. $17.95; e-book $9.99 Gr. 8-10 In true bardic tradition, a rich quest is told by a girl with a way for words about her friend, a dragon slayer in this alternate earth where (all-too-prevalent) carbon emissions attract the giant beasts.


**Kephart, Beth.** *Going Over.* Chronicle, 2014. $17.99; e-book $13.99 Gr. 8-12 Love becomes epic as it is physically divided by the Berlin Wall in this painful, compelling novel set in 1980s Germany.

**Knisley, Lucy.** *Relish: My Life in the Kitchen;* written and illus. by Lucy Knisley. First Second/Roaring Brook, 2013. $17.99; e-book $9.99 Gr. 7-10 This luscious graphic novel memoir follows twelve stories about Lucy’s life growing up in and around food culture; full-color, finely drawn step-by-step recipes are a nice bonus for foodies.

**Kuklin, Susan.** *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out;* written and with photographs by Susan Kuklin. Candlewick, 2014. $22.99; e-book $22.99 Gr. 9-12 The remarkable variety in the cultural, social, and sexual identities of the six teens highlighted is impressive, but more key for readers will be their honest, nuanced, and engaging personal stories.

**Kwame, Alexander.** *The Crossover.* HMH, 2014. $16.99; e-book $16.99 Gr. 6-9 Poems with a pulsing, athletic beat mix with quieter, more introspective verses in this startlingly beautiful and tragic verse novel about teen twin boys,
their stubborn father, and basketball.

**LaMarche, Una** *Like No Other.* Razorbill, 2014. $17.99; e-book $10.99
Gr. 7-10
An unlikely romance between two teens from very different backgrounds becomes the impetus both need to break from cultural and social limitations that have become oppressive in this unusual love story with a female Hasidic narrator.

**Larбалестир, Justine** *Razorbhurt.* Soho Teen, 2015. $17.99 Gr. 9-12
This sharp-edged, sometimes gory, always enthralling look at the 1930s Australian underworld is sexy, frightening, and haunting, particularly in the hands of the talented Larбалестир.

Paperback $14.99 Gr. 7-10
Effective use of contrasting black-and-white and color illustrations (the latter is reserved for superheroes) works well in this graphic novel primarily about a superhero fan who mysteriously and suddenly turns into one herself.

**Lauer, Brett Fletcher,** ed. *Please Excuse This Poem: 100 New Poets for the Next Generation;* ed. by Brett Fletcher Lauer and Lynn Melnick. Viking, 2015. $16.99 Gr. 9-12
You can’t get much more diverse than this collection, which crosses multiple boundaries to bring together 100 poems (plus engaging contributor bios) from teen poets.

Gr. 9 up
This elegant, thoughtful, well-rounded look at a multicultural group of young men on the GLBTQ spectrum will likely resonate with readers long after they read it.

**Lynch, Chris** *Hit Count.* Algonquin, 2015. $17.95 Gr. 8-12
Fans and players of football will be equal parts horrified and fascinated by this gritty account of one player’s three years of high school football (he is forced out by his own injuries by senior year).

**King, A. S.** *Glory O’Brien’s History of the Future.* Little, 2014. $18.00; e-book $9.99 Gr. 8-12
King’s use of magical realism makes this coming-of-age story of a teen girl attempting to reconcile her past with her present both unique and fascinating.

Teens open for an adventure will find plenty in this Scottish steampunk battle quest that offers faeries, revenge plots, and a steamy romance.

Fantasy combines with realism in this elegantly told tale of a decades old rivalry between two families and the forbidden relationship that develops between Lace and Cluck as they defy their families’ traditions.

**Moore, Peter** *V Is for Villain.* Hyperion, 2014. $17.99; e-book $17.99 Gr. 8-10
This fantastic novel about good guys, bad guys, and all the places they intersect pits one boy against his own brother as both pursue their powers for what they believe to be the greater good.

Labels suck, especially when you don’t fit neatly into any of them, and seventeen-year-old Etta is discovering this over and over again as she struggles with just about every area of her (splendidly, painfully described) life.

**Myers, Walter Dean** *Darius and Twig.* Amistad, 2013. $17.99; paperback $9.99; e-book $9.99 Gr. 8 up
Two best friends must each decide how much of their dreams to compromise in order to succeed, and how they can use the best of their Harlem neighborhood and let go of the grittier parts.

**Napoli, Donna Jo** *Dark Shimmer.* Lamb/Random House, 2015. $16.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 9-12
A sumptuous and dark retelling of Snow White, this will appeal to fans of Cokal’s *Kingdom of Little Wounds.***

**Nelson, Blake** *The Prince of Venice Beach.* Little, 2014. $18.00; e-book $9.99 Gr. 7-10
A dreamy, surf-influenced detective story features a memorable protagonist, Cali, and his slow move toward adulthood and responsibility, even while he resists true acquiescence to normalcy.

This slender verse novel covers a large span of the author’s early life, and a dramatic, scaring range of struggles she and her family endure during the civil rights movement.

A clever send up of YA sci-fi and fantasy tropes, this story celebrates the heroism of everyday kids who manage both compassion and humor in difficult situations.
Nix, Garth *Clariel*. Harper/HarperCollins, 2014. $18.99 Gr. 8-10
Nix fans will be thrilled for this prequel to his popular fantasy trilogy that features the not always likeable but perpetually fascinating Clariel.

Padian, Maria *Out of Nowhere*. Knopf, 2013. $16.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 8-12
Complex national issues around immigration in America are grounded in a strong, engaging plot centered on sports, high school, and the quest to fit in.

The quiet, folksy novel examines family dynamics but also the deep south, and the ways in which setting can shape a person as much as the people around them.

This collection of holiday meet-cutes and relationship stories will appeal to those readers who get out the holiday decorations the day after Halloween, and it may even convert a Scrooge or two.

Prince, Liz *Tomboy*: written and illus. by Liz Prince. Zest, 2014. $15.99 Gr. 7-12
This graphic memoir centering on gender identity has a pleasing accessibility in its comic book like styling, and it will likely strike a chord with those readers who chafe under gender norms.

Quintero, Isabel *Gabi: A Girl in Pieces*. Cinco Puntos, 2014. $17.95; paperback $11.95; e-book $11.95 Gr. 9-12
Gabi is a memorable character, and her Spanglish-inflected thoughts on everything from the mundane to the lyrically profound are worth hearing; readers will spot themselves or their own musings somewhere in all of her observations.

Rosen, Michael J. *Place Hacking: Venturing Off Limits*; illus. with photographs. Twenty-First Century, 2015 $24.99 Gr. 8-10
This brief but lively introduction to urban trespass might inspire all sorts of illicit behavior, but it will also grab older teens instantly and keep them interested until the last page, and that’s probably worth a bit of place hacking.

Romance obsessed Eva Roth discovers that love come in many forms in this moving and poignant novel that follows a mother and daughter in the wake of the death of Eva’s father.

Rosen, Subi *Playing with Matches*. ECW, 2014. $10.95 Gr. 7-10
Matchmaking in observant Jewish communities will likely not be a familiar concept to those outside of the faith, but this book deftly presents enough background while focusing closely on the bumbling but sweetly earnest Raina, who just wants to fix her mess of a life.

A sumptuous Greco-Roman setting and a steamy romance mark this stylish novel about the ways one must sometimes sacrifice personal needs for the greater cultural good.

Shabazz, Ilyasah *X*; by Ilyasah Shabazz with Kekla Magoon. Candlewick, 2015. $16.99 Gr. 8-12
This bold look at the adolescent life of Malcolm X is a mix of fiction and nonfiction, as his daughter wrote this by blending family memory and speculation to create this compelling biographical novel.

While the core of this novel is a murder mystery, the nuanced, detailed exploration of grief and regret of a surviving teen, the good friend of the victim, is as compelling and memorable as the death itself.

With gripping first-hand accounts and a commanding narrative voice, this nonfiction piece recounts a historical injustice that remains unresolved: the supposed mutiny of fifty African-American seamen after a horrific tragedy.

Smith, Matt *Barbarian Lord*; written and illus. by Matt Smith. Clarion, 2014. $17.99; e-book $17.99 Gr. 6-9
A little bit of Nordic and Viking lore, a whole lot of battle scenes, and humorous nods to fantasy tropes all combine in this graphic novel about Barbarian Lord and his epic quest to clear his maligned name.

Stella, Leslie *Permanent Record*. Amazon Children’s, 2013. $17.99; paperback $9.99 Gr. 7-10
The raw, first person narration of Badi, an Iranian-American, makes this story of bullying and the hurt (and sometimes rage) it can inspire even more gripping and painful.

This impeccable graphic novel offers poignancy, mystery, adventure, superheroes, shapeshifting, and stunning illustrations, not to mention one of the most troubled and memorable protagonists around.

This unusual novel blends a dystopian backdrop, an innate musical talent coming to bear, and a pseudo-historical analysis of the ways in which physical deformities were (are) cause for isolation and discrimination in society.

Suma, Nova Ren *The Walls Around Us*. Algonquin, 2015. $17.95 Gr. 9-12
This juicy, crafty mystery suggests the supernatural, the humanly evil, and the simply misguided all at once as two alternating narrations describe how cellmates got into a detention center.

**Sundquist, Josh** *We Should Hang Out Sometime.* Little, 2015. $18.00; e-book $9.99
Sundquist organizes this memoir about his romantic life by researching his failed relationships, complete with hypotheses, graphs, and interviews, to determine exactly how to get over his social awkwardness and insecurities.

**Tamaki, Mariko** *This One Summer;* illus. by Jillian Tamaki. First Second, 2014. $21.99; e-book $9.99 Gr. 7-10
A poignant graphic novel highlights the painful, joyful, sometimes frightening moments between childhood and adolescence, and one girl's summer on the cusp.

Lyrical, fearless writing marks this exploration into a Choctaw boarding school from the late 1800s, and the brutal community life in the surrounding region.

**Toten, Teresa** *The Unlikely Hero of Room 13 B.* Delacorte, 2015. $17.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 8-10
Fourteen-year-old Adam really is the hero of this moving look at mental illness, as he chooses compassion over bitterness for both for himself and others in the face of struggles and suffering.

Pop culture references inspire this collection of fourteen horror stories that abound with dark humor, cleverness, and of course, thrills and chills.

**Venkatraman, Padma** *A Time To Dance.* Paulsen/Penguin, 2014. $17.99; e-book $9.99 Gr. 7 up
A free verse exploration about loss and what still remains features an unusual cultural perspective, that of a teen who dreams of excelling at traditional Indian dance until she loses her leg in an accident.

**Waltman, Kevin** *Next.* Cinco Puntos, 2013. $11.95; e-book $11.95 Gr. 6-9
A near perfect basketball book that is generous with in-depth basketball descriptions while not short-changing readers on character development, sharp plot, and a memorable protagonist.

**Watson, Renee** *This Side of Home.* Bloomsbury, 2015. $17.99 Gr. 7-10
Friends Nikki, Maya, and Essence must sort out how race plays out privately and publicly in this powerful picture of the complications of the contemporary African American experience, especially when it rubs up against the hipster white middle class.

This taut, sophisticated thriller about a toxic friendship will find an audience with teens who appreciate labyrinthine plots and ambiguous endings.

**West, Carly Anne** *The Bargaining.* Simon Pulse, 2015. Gr. 8-12
While readers raised on the gore and “gotcha” scares of *The Ring, The Grudge,* etc. will find plenty to thrill to here, they’ll be equally haunted by the story’s reflection of the depths and limits of parental love.

Budding writers will find much inspiration in this lyrical, layered memoir that traces Woodson’s life and family from before she was born onward.

**Wynne-Jones, Tim** *The Emperor of Any Place.* Candlewick, 2015. $17.99 Gr. 7-10
A web of secrets and suspicions that spans three generations is untangled in this haunting portrait of a young man coming to terms with his father’s death and his grandfather’s emotional distance.

This tour de force graphic novel takes a little-known Asian character from 1940s comic books and gives him a brilliantly told modern story.
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