**ELEMENTARY**

**Title: *And Tango Makes Three*, Justin Richardson, Peter Parnell**

**Publisher: Simon & Schuster, 2005**

##### School Library Journal (July 1, 2005)

PreS-Gr 3-This tale based on a true story about a charming penguin family living in New York City's Central Park Zoo will capture the hearts of penguin lovers everywhere. Roy and Silo, two male penguins, are "a little bit different." They cuddle and share a nest like the other penguin couples, and when all the others start hatching eggs, they want to be parents, too. Determined and hopeful, they bring an egg-shaped rock back to their nest and proceed to start caring for it. They have little luck, until a watchful zookeeper decides they deserve a chance at having their own family and gives them an egg in need of nurturing. The dedicated and enthusiastic fathers do a great job of hatching their funny and adorable daughter, and the three can still be seen at the zoo today. Done in soft watercolors, the illustrations set the tone for this uplifting story, and readers will find it hard to resist the penguins' comical expressions. The well-designed pages perfectly marry words and pictures, allowing readers to savor each illustration. An author's note provides more information about Roy, Silo, Tango, and other chinstrap penguins. This joyful story about the meaning of family is a must for any library.

**Title:** *The Accidental Adventures of India McAllister*, Charlotte Agell.

**Publisher:** Henry Holt, 2010 **Grade Level: 3-5**

**Kirkus Review (June 1, 2010)**

Growing up in small-town Maine, fourth grader India McAllister plans to have real adventures someday, but, for the present, daily life provides some accidental ones. India and her best friend, Colby, navigate the treacherous waters of a fourth-grade friendship between a boy and a girl. Family issues include India's occasional longing to know more about her birth mother, back in China, and the way she misses her father. Now she can only spend weekends with her father and his new partner, Richard, a man she's finding it difficult to know. Pets-her large dog and Richard's new, talkative cockatiel-are also a part of her life. This gentle story is illustrated throughout with Agell's line drawings, which add to the humor. Enjoyable, engaging and emotionally resonant.

**Title:** *Christian, the Hugging Lion,* Justin Richardson, Peter Parnell **Grade Level: K-3**

**Publisher:** Simon & Schuster, 2010

##### School Library Journal (June 1, 2010)

When Ace and John find a lion cub for sale at a famous English department store, they buy him, take him back to their apartment, and name him Christian. This is a story where male partners are part of the story in a very natural setting. The young men take him for walks, play with him in a churchyard, and go on beach picnics with him. When Christian grows too large for their apartment, his owners fly him to Kenya where Mr. Adamson will teach him-as he has taught other lions-to live in the wild. They learn that Christian has cubs of his own and fly to Kenya to see him one more time. In a series of near-wordless illustrations that capture the joy of the real-life reunion video that appeared on the Internet in 2008, the friends meet again. They spend the night together "cozy and snug and, of course, hugging." An authors' note explains that all events are true, fills in more details, and mentions the now-famous video.

**Title:** *My Princess Boy*

**Publisher:** KD Talent LLC, 2010

My Princess Boy is a nonfiction picture book about acceptance. My Princess Boy tells the tale of 4-year-old boy who happily expresses his authentic self by happily dressing up in dresses, and enjoying traditional girl things such as jewelry and anything pink or sparkly. The book is from a mom's point of view, sharing both good and bad observations and experiences with friends and family, at school and in shopping stores. My Princess Boy opens a dialogue about embracing uniqueness, and teaches you and others how to accept young boys who might cross traditional gender line clothing expectations. The book ends with the understanding that 'my' Princess Boy is really 'our' Princess Boy, and as a community, we can accept and support youth for whoever they are and however they wish to look.

**Title:** *Donovan's Big Day*, Leslea Newman.

**Publisher:** Tricycle Press, 2011  **Grade Level: Primary**

**School Library Journal (April 1, 2011)**

When Donovan wakes up, he knows that he must dress quickly, eat carefully, and do everything just right because it is a very special day. Readers find out that he is the ring bearer at the wedding of his two mothers. When he plays his part without a hitch, he is rewarded with hugs and kisses from the happy brides. Child-friendly gouache illustrations capture Donovan's excited, self-conscious expressions as he moves carefully through his tasks. Dutton also includes details about the wedding that give the story a familiar, comfortable feeling. This book broaches a controversial issue in an appealingly nonthreatening way.

**Title:** *10,000 Dresses*

**Publisher:** Seven Stories Press, 2008

Every night, Bailey dreams about magical dresses: dresses made of crystals and rainbows, dresses made of flowers, dresses made of windows. . . . Unfortunately, when Bailey's awake, no one wants to hear about these beautiful dreams. Quite the contrary. "You're a BOY!" Mother and Father tell Bailey. "You shouldn't be thinking about dresses at all." Then Bailey meets Laurel, an older girl who is touched and inspired by Bailey's imagination and courage. In friendship, the two of them begin making dresses together. And Bailey's dreams come true! This gorgeous picture book—a modern fairy tale about becoming the person you feel you are inside—will delight people of all ages.

**Title:** *In Our Mother’s House,* Patricia Polacco.

**Publisher:** Philomel Books, 2009 **Grade Level: 1-4**

**Booklist (May 1, 2009 (Vol. 105, No. 17))**

The oldest of three adopted children recalls her childhood with mothers Marmee and Meema, as they raised their African American daughter, Asian American son, and Caucasian daughter in a lively, supportive neighborhood. Filled with recollections of family holidays, rituals, and special moments, each memory reveals loving insight. At a school mother-daughter tea, for instance, the mothers make their first ever appearance in dresses. The narrator recalls, “My heart still skips a beat when I think of the two of them trying so hard to please us.” Only a crabby neighbor keeps her children away from their family. The energetic illustrations in pencil and marker teem with family activities and neighborhood festivity. Quieter moments radiate the love the mothers feel for their children and for each other.

**Title:** *The Harvey Milk Story*, Kari Krakow

**Publisher:** Two Lives Publishing, 2002 **Grade Level: 2-4**

On a rainy day in January, on the steps of San Francisco's City Hall, Harvey Milk was sworn into office, the first openly gay elected city official in the United States of America. Harvey Milk had made history." In making history that day, Minnie Milk's intelligent, energetic and courageous son "showed the world that by not being afraid to be yourself, you can give others the courage to be proud of who they are." Harvey's legacy is everywhere today in the hundreds of openly gay elected officials in every level of government, including the United States Congress. Bright illustrations complete this picture book.

**Title:** *King & King*, Linda de Haan & Stern Nijland.

**Publisher:** Tricycle Press, p2002, c2000

**Horn Book starred (Fall, 2002) Grade Level: K-3**

In this mischievous twist on a familiar motif, a bachelor prince finds something lacking with each princess his mother draws to his attention until the last candidate brings along her cute brother. Silly but affectionate collage illustrations match the text for whimsical irreverence. Missing the political point, the young audience will probably come to the conclusion that this prince likes boys better than girls, which, of course, he does. (Sequel: *King & King & Family, Tricycle Press, 2004)*

**Title:** *Molly's Family,* Nancy Garden ; pictures by Sharon Wooding.

**Publisher:** Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2004 **Grade Level: K-1**

##### School Library Journal (May 1, 2004)

To get ready for kindergarten Open School Night, Molly draws a picture of her family to hang on the wall-herself, Mommy, Mama Lu, and their puppy. After seeing the picture, her classmates tell her, "No one has two mommies." That night, her parents explain, "we decided we had so much love that we wanted to share it with a baby." Thus, one of them is her birth mother; the other an adoptive parent. Still, Molly leaves her drawing home the next day. With further matter-of-fact reassurance by her teacher and the budding understanding that all families are different, Molly, and indeed the whole class, grows to accept her own family, and she proudly hangs her picture on the wall.

**Title:** *The Sissy Duckling,* Harvey Fierstein

**Publisher:** Simon & Schuster, 2002 **Grade: K-3**

Elmer is not like the other boy ducklings. While they like to build forts, he loves to bake cakes. While they like to play baseball, he wants to put on the halftime show. Elmer is a great big sissy. When his father is wounded by a hunter’s shot, Elmer proves that the biggest sissy can also be the greatest hero.

**Title:** *Uncle Bobby's Wedding*, Sarah S. Brannen.

**Publisher:** Putnam's, p2008, c2008 **Grade Level: K-2**

**Horn Book (Fall 2008)**

Chloe the guinea pig is distressed when her favorite uncle, Bobby, announces his engagement to boyfriend Jamie. What if Bobby doesn't want to spend time with her anymore? Eventually, after getting to know Jamie, Chloe is glad to participate in the wedding and welcome him into the family. Warmly affectionate watercolor and graphite illustrations accompany this genial story of same-sex marriage.

**MIDDLE GRADES**

**Title:** *The Boy in the Dress*, David Walliams, illustrated by Quentin Blake.

**Publisher:** Razorbill, 2008 **Grade Level: 4-7**

**Booklist (November 1, 2009 (Vol. 106, No. 5))**

Dennis is a bit surprised—but not terribly nonplussed—to discover that he enjoys wearing dresses. The 12-year-old does, however, realize this is not the kind of revelation he wants to share with his truck-driving dad, his older brother, or his mates on the school football team, where he is a star player. But these things have a way of getting out, and soon enough Dennis finds himself both exposed and expelled. Is this the end? Well, no, it’s not. This is a witty, high-spirited and, well, sensible story about cross-dressing and other real-life issues.

**Title:** *Girl, Nearly 16, Absolute Torture*, Sue Limb

**Publisher:** Delacorte, 2005 **Grade Level: 5-8**

Jess had the perfect summer planned: She and Fred, lounging in the park, gazing into one another’s eyes and engaging in witty repartee. It was going to be so romantic. And then her maddening mum stepped in: She suddenly announced a two-week "road trip" to Cornwall to visit Jess’s dad, something Jess might have enjoyed, actually, were it not for the monstrously bad timing. Not only will this force Jess and Fred apart for two whole weeks, it will also leave the darling and handsome Fred in the clutches of Jess’s blindingly beautiful best friend. And little does Jess know, a huge surprise awaits her when she visits her dad at his home for the first time in years.

**Title:** *So Hard to Say*, Alex Sanchez

**Publisher:** Simon Pulse, 2006 **Grade Level: 5-8**

When Frederick shows up at school, Xio is thrilled. The new boy is shy, cute, and definitely good boyfriend material. Before long, she pulls him into her lively circle of friends. Frederick knows he should be flattered by Xio’s attention. After all, she’s popular, pretty, and a lot of fun. So why can’t he stop thinking about Victor, the captain of the soccer team, instead?

**Title:** *Totally Joe*, James Howe (Starred Reviews)

**Publisher:** Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2005 **Grade Level: 6-8**

**Kirkus Review starred (October 1, 2005)**

One quarter of the "Gang of Five" from The Misfits (2001) tells his own story of coming out and overcoming bullies and prejudice through alphabetical entries in his "alphabiography." Joe Bunch works his way from October to March to fulfill his teacher Mr. Daly's assignment to write about his life from A to Z, including "life lessons" at the end of each entry. Though things do go Joe's way, the story is nothing but realistic. Howe has created a character that lives and breathes with all of the inconsistencies, fears and longings of your normal average seventh-grade homosexual. Joe still thinks "exchanging saliva" is excruciatingly gross, but he knows he wants to date boys. He thinks Colin is cute and fun to be with, but Joe just can't "tone down" on command. His family is not surprised when he finally lets them in on his secret with the gentle assistance of his artistic Aunt Pam and his (sometimes overly) helpful best friend Addie. (Fiction. 10-14)

**YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION**

**Title:** *The Full Spectrum : a New Generation of Writing About Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Other Identitie*s, Edited by David Levithan & Billy Merrell. (Starred Reviews)

**Publisher:** Knopf, 2006 **Grade Level: YA**

**Booklist starred (May 15, 2006 (Vol. 102, No. 18))**

The 40 contributions to this invaluable collection about personal identity have two things in common: all are nonfiction and all are by writers under the age of 23. Beyond that, diversity is the order of the day, and the result is a vivid demonstration of how extraordinarily broad the spectrum of sexual identity is among today's gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth. That said, some of the topics addressed in these essays and poems are familiar. What is new and encouraging, however, is that so many young people have felt free enough to share the truth about themselves in print and under their own names.

**Title:** *GLBTQ : the Survival Guide for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Teens*, Kelly Huegel.

**Publisher:** Free Spirit Pub., 2011 **Grade Level:** YA

**School Library Journal (July 1, 2011)**

This one of the best guides available for queer teens and their allies. In111 chapters, Huegel unflinchingly and clearly explains what young adults, parents, and educators want and need to know. There is also a good, expanded chapter on transgender issues and another about life after high school. The book is enhanced by interesting sidebar facts and "been there" quotes from young people. The book also includes an updated glossary and list of resources, comprised of both books and organizations. An excellent choice for libraries of all types.

**Title:** *Transparent: Love, Family, and Living the T with Transgender Teenagers*, Chris Beam

**Publisher:** Harcourt, 2008 **Grade Level: Adult**

When Cris Beam moved to Los Angeles, she thought she might volunteer just a few hours at a school for gay and transgender kids. Instead, she found herself drawn deeply into the pained and powerful group of transgirls she discovered. Transparent introduces four: Christina, Dominique, Foxxjazell, and Ariel. As they accept Cris into their world, she shows it to us-a dizzying mix of familiar teenage cliques and crushes and far less familiar challenges, such as how to morph your body on a few dollars a day. Funny, heartbreaking, defiant, and sometimes defeated, the girls form a singular community. But they struggle valiantly to resolve the gap between the way they feel inside and the way the world sees them-and who among us can't identify with that? Beam's astute reporting, sensitive writing, and passionate engagement with her characters place this book in the ranks of the very best narrative nonfiction. (From the Publisher)

**YOUNG ADULT NOVELS:**

**Title:** *Absolutely, Positively Not*, David LaRochelle

**Publisher:** Scholastic, 2009 **Grade Level: YA**

There is one thing Steven knows for sure: He’s absolutely, positively NOT gay. Steven’s a 16-year-old boy with two obsessions: sex and getting his driving license. The problem is, Steven’s not thinking girls when he’s thinking sex. Could he be – don’t say it -- gay? Steven sets out to get in touch with his inner he-man with Healthy Heterosexual Strategies such as "Start Hanging Out with the Guys," and "Begin Intensive Dating." But are Steven’s tactics going to straighten him out, or leave him all twisted up? Absolutely hilarious. Positively sidesplitting. But absolutely, positively NOT GAY! (From the Publisher)

**Title:** *The Arizona Kid*, Ron Koertege

**Publisher:** Candlewick, 2005 **Grade Level: YA**

A trip out west to work at a racetrack and a sojourn with a sophisticated gay uncle bring unexpected discoveries in this quick-witted coming-of-age novel. From the moment sixteen-year-old Billy steps off the train in Tucson, he knows this will be a summer unlike any he’s seen. For starters, he’s staying with his cool gay uncle, who has managed to get him a job at the racetrack caring for horses. Still, Billy doesn’t expect the horseracing world to be quite as rough and tumble as this toiling side by side with a macho survivalist and falling hard for the feisty, romance-shy "exercise girl" Cara Mae. With his trademark fast-paced dialogue filled with wit and compassion, Ron Koertge tells the tale of an insecure teen who discovers that gaining stature involves more than Stetsons and boots and that lessons on love and manhood come from the places you least expect. (From the Publisher)

**Title:** *Ash*, Malinda Lo

**Publishera:** Little Brown, 2009 **Grade Level: YA**

##### Kirkus Review starred (September 1, 2009)

An unexpected reimagining of the Cinderella tale, exquisite and pristine, unfolding deliberately. Aisling--Ash--knows the fairy stories and lore told her by her now-dead mother, but she does not know if she believes them. When her father dies and her stepmother and stepsisters move her away from the Wood to the City, she finds herself returning to her mother's grave, where she meets the fairy Sidhean. Ash barely notes her harsh treatment at the hands of her stepfamily, as she both longs for and fears her glimpses of Sidhean. He longs for her, too, in ways she is slow to understand. Ash also is slow to see Kaisa, the King's Huntress, as the source of her own desire. When she does, Ash turns to Sidhean to make it possible for her to spend time with Kaisa, despite the price Ash knows she will have to pay. Ash and Kaisa's dance at the King's Ball is a wild and gorgeous moment, no less so than the night Ash must spend in Sidhean's Wood. Beautiful language magically wrought; beautiful storytelling magically told.

**Title:** *Between Mom and Jo,* Julie Ann Peters

**Publisher:** Little Brown, 2008 **Grade Level: YA**

Nick has a three-legged dog named Lucky, some pet fish, and two moms who think he's the greatest kid ever. And he happens to think he has the greatest Moms ever, but everything changes when his birth mom and her wife, Jo, start to have marital problems. Suddenly, Nick is in the middle, and instead of having two Moms to turn to for advice, he has no one. Nick's emotional struggle to redefine his relationships with his parents will remind readers that a family's love can survive even the most difficult times. (From the Publisher)

**Title:** *Beauty Queens*, Libba Bray

**Publisher:** Scholastic, 2007 **Grade Level: 9 Up**

##### School Library Journal (July 1, 2011)

Whip-smart social commentary, surreal plot elements, and feminist themes come together in this bizarre and brilliant story about a group of beauty pageant contestants stranded on a remote island after a plane crash. Undaunted by disaster, the teens hone their survival skills as they practice dance routines and pageant interviews, while a ruthless corporation secretly plans to use them as pawns in an arms deal with an insane dictator. Beneath an entertaining veneer of witty dialogue and comic absurdity lies a thought-provoking exploration of society's expectations for how young women should look, feel, think, and act. Using multiple points of view to tell the story, Bray rises admirably to the challenge of developing a large cast of characters. Readers from all backgrounds will identify with the representation of various religions, ethnicities, and sexual orientations among the characters. Occasional strong language and a frank approach to sex may make this novel most appropriate for older teens.

**Title:** *Boyfriends with Girlfriends*, Alex Sanchez

**Publisher:** Simon & Schuster, 2012 **Grade Level: 9-12**

##### Booklist starred (March 1, 2011 (Vol. 107, No. 13)) After meeting online, Sergio and Lance make a date to get together in person, bringing along their respective best friends, Kimiko and Allie. The first meeting is sweetly awkward, and while the boys hit it off all right, there’s a problem. Sergio is bisexual, and Lance isn’t sure he can handle that or whether he even believes it is possible to be attracted to both boys and girls. Actually, there are two problems. Kimiko is a lesbian and crushes on Allie who, though she has a devoted boyfriend, is questioning and finds herself increasingly attracted to her new friend. How will these four engaging kids resolve the mixed messages their hearts are sending to their brains? This is an innovative, important book that explores, with empathy and sympathy, largely ignored aspects of teen sexual identity. While lip service is routinely given to these aspects in the acronym GLBTQ, there have been only a handful of novels that so plausibly and dramatically bring the nature of bisexuality and sexual questioning to life. Sanchez does both, and in the process establishes welcome possibilities for other authors to explore.

##### Title: *I am J*, Chris Beam

##### Publisher: Little Brown, 2011 Grade Level: YA

##### Horn Book (March/April, 2011) "When J was a really little kid, he had been surprised whenever anyone thought he was a girl; the world seemed confused and backward to him." Now, at seventeen, the painful collision between J's inner view of himself as a guy and the perception of everyone else has become unbearable. J's mother assumes he's a lesbian; his father doesn't know how to talk to him. In love with his best friend Melissa for years, J suffers through all her crushes. When he finally kisses her, Melissa is completely freaked out and J loses his sole comfort, propelling him to take bold steps toward claiming his identity. One of only a few YA titles available on the subject, the book is a gift to transgender teens and an affecting story of self-discovery for all readers.

**Title:** *The Last Exit to Normal,* Michael Harmon(FIC HAR)

**Publisher:** Knopf, 2008 **Grade Level: YA**

**Kirkus Review(January 1, 2008):** Spiky-haired skater Ben Campbell moves with his gay dads to rural Montana, where he finds animal carcasses, trucks, a cute farm girl and a troubled kid next door. Readers will love watching this hilarious teen grapple with his new digs, delinquent tendencies and irrepressible sarcasm. Quick, unfiltered dialogue generates great moments of witty banter, but also captures darker explosions of rage between father and son. Ben still resents his dad's decision to honor his sexuality and come out, even if it meant dismantling their family. Fortunately, this is not an evil stepfather story. Harmon constructs a much more interesting scenario, in which Ben actually likes his father's partner, Edward. Teen readers will realize that anger isn't usually rational and identify with Ben's lingering frustration. They will also realize that Ben is a benevolent guy - one who rescues a man from under a tractor and tries to save a boy from an abusive home. Predictably, Ben comes to like Montana, but this story takes funny twists and poignant turns through the backwoods.

**Title:** *Luna*, Julie Ann Peters

**Publisher:** Little Brown, 2005 **Grade Level: YA**

Regan’s brother Liam can’t stand the person he is during the day. Like the moon from whom Liam has chosen his female namesake, his true self, Luna, only reveals herself at night. In the secrecy of his basement bedroom Liam transforms himself into the beautiful girl he longs to be, with help from his sister’s clothes and makeup. Now, everything is about to change – Luna is preparing to emerge from her cocoon. But are Liam’s family and friends ready to welcome Luna into their lives? Compelling and provocative, this is an unforgettable novel about a transgender teen’s struggle for self-identity and acceptance. (From the Publisher)

**Title:** *Parrotfish*, Ellen Wittlinger

**Publisher:** Simon & Schuster, 2007 **Grade Level: Grade 9 Up**

##### Horn Book (July/August, 2007)

A transgendered teenage boy is determined to show his true self to the world. Unexpected allies include nerdy Sebastian, gorgeous Kita, and Grady's upset but protective mother, whose ability to be loving and supportive despite her confusion and unhappiness makes her the most complex member of the ensemble. The matter-of-fact plot, tinged with a teenager's sense of irony, enumerates the day-to-day challenges of being transgendered (which bathroom does one use when neither is safe?) Parrotfish can serve as an introduction to transgender issues for curious readers, but it also has enough empathy to satisfy those looking for themselves in the pages.

**Title:** *Pedro and Me: Friendship, Loss, and What I Learned,* Judd Winick

**Publisher:** Holt, 2009 **Grade Level: YA**

##### Library Journal web-only (June 8, 2009)

Pedro Zamora was a Cuban immigrant who became an AIDS educator after getting an HIV diagnosis (he died in 1994 in his early twenties). He became a public figure because of his health battle and appearance, along with cartoonist Winick, on MTV's The Real World San Francisco. Winick's memoir tells the story of their friendship and has become a memorial to a man who made the most of the life he had. This title has won a number of awards, including a YALSA top ten, and is great for teens up.

**Title:** *The Geography Club*, Brent Hartinger

**Publisher:** Harper Tempest, 2004 **Grade Level: YA**

Gay high school students form a small support group called the Geography Club. According to Publisher’s Weekly, "Overall, this novel does a fine job of presenting many of the complex realities of gay teen life, and also what it takes to be a `thoroughly decent' person." (From the Publisher)

**Title:** *Putting Makeup on the Fat Boy*, Bill Wright

**Publisher:** Simon & Schuster, 2012 **Grade Level: YA**

##### Booklist (September 1, 2011 (Vol. 108, No. 1)) Meet Carlos Duarte, teen makeup artist manqué. Though he is only a high-school student, Carlos has proven his ability as a makeup artist, and when he lands a part-time job at Macy’s cosmetics counter, he figures he is well on his way to fame and fortune as a makeup artist to the stars. After a real star comes to the store and is impressed with Carlos, things get interesting. Unfortunately, his boss, Valentino, is insanely jealous and that makes things difficult. There’s a whole lot going on in Wright’s novel, but it’s handled deftly and, for the most part, believably. Best of all, Carlos is not completely defined by his homosexuality. It is an important part of him, yes, but so are his ambition, his concern for his sister, and his capacity for friendship.

**Title:** *She Loves You, She Loves You Not*, Julie Ann Peters

**Publisher:** Little Brown, 2012 **Grade Level: 9-12**

##### School Library Journal (June 1, 2011)

When Alyssa's father discovers her in a compromising position with her girlfriend, the 17-year-old finds herself banished to the fabulous Colorado home of Carly, the mother she barely knows. Though Alyssa is disgusted with her father for being judgmental and homophobic, she makes some of the same morality judgments about her mother's exotic dancing and her other job as a supposed masseuse/personal trainer with clients who call at all hours. Asserting her independence, the teen lands a summer job, and slowly begins to build an extended family with the owner, with the customers; and especially with an attractive young waitress, all the while struggling to work out her relationships with her parents. Told mainly in a first-person narrative, the tale juggles themes of first love, coming out, friendship betrayal, homophobia, abandonment, grief, and forgiveness.

**Title:** *Shine*, Lauren Myracle

**Publisher:** Amulet, 2011 **Grade Level: 10 Up**

##### Kirkus Review (April 1, 2011)

When her gay best friend is brutally beaten in contemporary Black Creek, N.C., a withdrawn teen tracks his assailant. Different from other kids in their ignorant, poverty-stricken, backwoods community, 16-year-old Cat and 17-year-old Patrick have been "kindred spirits" since childhood. Growing up with a drunken father, a well-meaning aunt and an older brother she no longer trusts, Cat was "full of light and life" until one of her brother's "gay-bashing redneck" friends "messed" with her. For three years, Cat has blinded herself to everyone, including Patrick, convinced her "entire existence meant nothing." But when Patrick's beaten and left for dead at the convenience store where he works, a gasoline nozzle protruding from his mouth, an angry, guilt-ridden Cat knows she must open her eyes and "look straight into the ugliness and find out who hurt him." Motivated to solve the horrific hate crime, Cat eventually uncovers the truth in a cliffhanging climax in which she confronts fear, discovers that love is stronger than hate and truly "shines." Raw, realistic and compelling.

**Title:** *So Hard to Say*, Alex Sanchez.

**Publisher:** Simon Pulse, 2006 **Grade Level: YA**

When Frederick shows up at school, Xio is thrilled. The new boy is shy, cute, and definitely good boyfriend material. Before long, she pulls him into her lively circle of friends. Frederick knows he should be flattered by Xio’s attention. After all, she’s popular, pretty, and a lot of fun. So why can’t he stop thinking about Victor, the captain of the soccer team, instead? (From the Publisher)

**Title:** *Someday This Pain Will be Useful to You,* Peter Cameron

**Publisher:** Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2007 **Grade Level: 9-12**

##### Booklist starred (September 1, 2007 (Vol. 104, No. 1))

Though he’s been accepted by Brown University, 18-year-old James isn’t sure he wants to go to college. What he really wants is to buy a nice house in a small town somewhere in the Midwest—Indiana, perhaps. In the meantime, however, he has a dull, make-work job at his thrice-married mother’s Manhattan art gallery, where he finds himself attracted to her assistant, an older man named John. In a clumsy attempt to capture John’s attention, James winds up accused of sexual harassment! This is a beautifully conceived and written coming-of-age novel that is, at turns, funny, sad, tender, and sophisticated.

**Title:** *Stick*, Andrew Smith

**Publisher:** Feiwel & Friends, 2011 **Grade Level: 8 Up**

**School Library Journal (December 1, 2011)**

A tall, thin frame has earned 13-year-old Stark McClellan the nickname "Stick." He was born with a deformed ear, more like a hole in his head, and he is hyperaware of what he sees as a grotesque physical defect. His older brother, Bosten, defends him from bullies when he can, and the boys do their best to look out for each other when their abusive parents are on the rampage. When Bosten finds some small measure of love with a schoolmate (another boy), Stick keeps the secret without judging, but all too quickly the families find out. Bosten runs away and Stick follows to find him. Most of the story is bleak and harsh, and Stick tells his tale in language that is frank, dark, brutal, haunting, and mesmerizing.

**Title:** *Will Grayson, Will Grayson*, John Green

**Publisher:** Dutton, 2010 **Grade Level: YA**

##### Kirkus Review starred (March 15, 2010) Will Grayson loves indie rock, plays the eye-rolling angry stepchild to his extraordinarily giant, lovable, gay best friend Tiny Cooper and doesn't realize that he yearns for his other indie-rock-loving friend Jane until it's too late. will grayson (he never uses uppercase) hates most everything except sharing an XXL coffee with his best friend Maura each morning and covertly conversing with his Internet boyfriend every night. Their two discrete worlds collide in a Chicago porn store after dual botched evenings out. Love, honesty, friendship and trust all ensue, culminating in the world's gayest and most fabulous musical ever. In alternating chapters from Will and will, each character comes lovingly to life, especially Tiny Cooper, whose linebacker-sized, heart-on-his-sleeve personality could win over the grouchiest of grouches. Their story, along with the rest of the cast's, will have readers simultaneously laughing, crying and singing at the top of their lungs.

**Title:** *Wide Awake*, David Leviathin

**Publisher:** Knopf, 2008 **Grade Level: YA**

In the not-too-impossible-to-imagine future, a gay Jewish man has been elected president of the United States. The governor of one state decides that some election results in his state are invalid, awarding crucial votes to the other candidate, and his fellow party member. Thus is the inspiration for couple Jimmy and Duncan to lend their support to their candidate by deciding to take part in the rallies and protests. Along the way comes an exploration of their relationship, their politics, and their country, and sometimes, as they learn, it’s more about the journey than it is about reaching the destination. (From the Publisher)

##### RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS:

**Title:** *In Celebration of Harvey Milk: Educational Materials for Grades 4 through 12*

**Author**: Angela F. Luna

**Publisher:** AuthorHouse, 2010 **Grade Level: 4-12**

##### In Celebration of Harvey Milk offers educators materials to teach about Harvey Milk in a way that honors his memory and his important contributions to our society while providing support and instructional materials that cultivate compassion and understanding for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in our communities.