

Notable Books 2010

***13 Treasures*, Harrison, Michelle, \$16.00, Little Brown, IL Gr 5-8**

Packed off to her unwelcoming grandmother's house, 13-year-old Tanya faces an unpleasant summer, tormented by fairies only she can see and urged by Fabian, the groundskeeper's son, to explore the forbidden woods to solve the mystery of a child's disappearance. It takes a while for all the facets of this mystery to be displayed, but by the time Tanya realizes that the "ghost" she and Fabian saw in the woods is the same young woman Fabian's grandfather was suspected of murdering, the reader will be hooked. *Kirkus*

***A Pig Parade Is a Terrible Idea*, Black, Michael Ian, \$17.00, Simon & Schuster IL Gr PreK-3**

Explains precisely why, although it may sound like a good idea, gathering hundreds of pigs to march in a parade through one's hometown is inadvisable. "Hawkes' porkers are huge, hairy, beady-eyed snufflers who, contrary to the unseen narrator's belief, prove that not everyone looks good in a majorette uniform. Filling up the pages, the pigs break instruments, stumble into stampedes, and cry over country music. Horror will mix with hysterical laughter when kids (and adults) get ahold of this one!" *Booklist*

***The Adventures of Granny Clearwater & Little Critter*, Holt, Kimberly Willis, \$18.00, Christy Ottaviano Books, IL Gr 1-3**

Granny and her pajama-clad grandson's adventures begin in true tall-tale fashion when the two bounce out of a covered wagon and into a prickly pear cactus on the family's journey west. The wagon goes on without them, and Granny, with Little Critter at her side, draws on skills she's learned from her grandparents, parents and various aunts and uncles

***After Ever After*. Sonnenblick, Jordan, \$17.00, Scholastic IL Gr 5-8**

Jeffrey (*Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie*) has been cancer-free for over five years, but that doesn't mean life is perfect. Sonnenblick explores the emotional and physical aftermath of childhood cancer with a sensitive but light touch, offering thought-provoking details but keeping the action anchored in family dynamics, first-girlfriend drama, and best friend Tad's irascible, tell-it-like-it-is personality. *Horn Book*

***Agent Q, or the Smell of Danger!*, Anderson, M.T., \$17.00, Beach Lane Books IL GR 4-7**

Great Scott! Sentient Lobsters? Furniture imitating spies? This installment in the series finds crime-fighting teen friends Lily Gefelty, Katie Mulligan, and Jasper Dash, Boy Technonaut, in dire straits once again. They are eager to get home to New Jersey but they are facing dangers at every turn while trying to leave the fantastical state of Delaware, which is ruled by His Terrifying Majesty, the Awful and Adorable Autarch of Dagsboro... Quirky, unique, and never dull, this is one adventuresome fantasy readers won't soon forget, whether they're followers of the series or meeting the pals for the first time. *SLJ*

***All Star! Honus Wagner and the Most Famous Baseball Card Ever*, Yolen, Jane, \$18.00, Philomel Books IL 2-5**

After finishing sixth grade, Honus Wagner, a homely, bowlegged boy, worked in the mines near Pittsburgh but devoted all his free time to his greatest love, baseball. Yolen uses a colloquial writing style and quiet humor to describe Honus's ascent from a humble beginning to being one of the greatest baseball players ever. *Horn Book*

***All Stations! Distress! April 15, 1912: The Day the Titanic Sank*, Brown, Don, \$18.00, Roaring Brook, Open Court: Survival, IL Gr 3-5**

Brown recounts the complicated, compact last moments of the Titanic's only voyage. The glory of the book is in Brown's moody watercolors done with a brush dipped in stardust and frozen mist; they reach a terrifying crescendo as the ship upends before the final dive. The tale closes with some information about the survivors' later lives. *Bib. Horn Book*

***All the World*, Scanlon, Liz Garton, \$18.00, Beach Lane Books, PreK Open Court: Families Everywhere IL PreK-2**

The charming illustrations and lyrical rhyming couplets follow a multicultural family from a summer morning on the beach through a busy day and night... a farmer's market, a lakeside pavilion, a soaking rain, a warm meal in a cozy cafe, a gathering of musical kin, and a quiet night at home. A double-page moon- and starlit illustration shows an overview of all the featured locales highlighted in this small slice of the world. Perfection.

***All Things Bright and Beautiful*, Bryan, Ashley, \$17.00, Atheneum IL PreK-2**

The bright, swirling, colored-paper collage images focus on earth's creatures, in the sea, on land, and in the sky, as well as on the connections between them. The images come to a climax in a gorgeous, double-page spread of two young girls, one black, one white, celebrating who they are and what they see in the world: children, flowers, mountains, trees, stars, the moon, and the sun.

***April and Esme Tooth Fairies*, Graham, Bob, \$17.00, Candlewick IL PreK-2**

It's easy to miss the very beginning of this story, which starts before the title page. April, a seven-year-old fairy, gets a call on her cell phone. A boy has lost his tooth. Can April come pick it up, his grandma wonders? Well, no. April and sister Esme are too young for that. But when the grandma insists, they decide to give it a go.

***Baby Shower*, Zalben, Jane Breskin, \$17.00, Roaring Brook IL K-3**

Zoe wants a pet. More than anything. To get her mind off dogs on street corners and cats cuddled up in windows, Mama suggests that Zoe help with her aunt's baby shower. That night in bed, Zoe hears the gently falling rain and soon she's dreaming about a baby shower—of puppies, kittens, even piglets and ducklings. On the day of the baby shower, Aunt Ellie gets the drawing Zoe has made of her dream, but Zoe gets something too. Sitting in a rain puddle is a warm and wet puppy that she names Baby.

***Ballet for Martha: Making Appalachian Spring*, Greenbert, Jan, \$18.00, Flash Point IL 2-6**

If Martha Graham's choreography for "Appalachian Spring" was a "valentine" to the world, as critics wrote in 1944, then this book is a love letter in return. Simple, poetic prose tells the story of the creation of one of the world's most-loved ballets and compositions, and Floca's graceful watercolor illustrations take admirers through every part of its development. Written in the present tense, the narrative has a sense of drama that carries readers along as if the events were happening in real time. A stunning achievement. Archival photographs embellish the biographical notes at the end—a lovely touch. *SLJ*

***Bandit's Surprise*, Rostoker-Gruber, Karen, \$18.00, Marshall Cavendish IL PreK-2**

The defensive, domesticated tan-and-white cat is back in this sequel to *Bandit* (2008). He has a new roommate, a little gray kitten, and he is not happy. Mitzy drinks and eats from his bowls, uses his litter box, and, worse of all, plays with Fuzzy Mouse. He swipes at Mitzy's face and is scolded by his owner. In response, Bandit says, "I'm outta here" and leaps through an open window. Later, when he is stuck outside in the rain, Mitzy comes to the rescue and Bandit reluctantly shares some of his precious belongings with her. *SLJ*

***Beautiful Yetta: The Yiddish Chicken*, Pinkwater, Daniel, \$19.00, Feiwel & Friends IL K-2**

Beautiful blue-eyed chicken Yetta, being trucked to slaughter, escapes her fate and lands in Brooklyn. After saving a wild parrot, she's adopted by its Spanish-speaking green-feathered colony. Jill Pinkwater's hues squawk off the pages with riotous energy. In addition to straightforward lines of text, the narrative plays out with ballooned dialogue in English and Yiddish (later, English and Spanish), with phonetic pronunciations. *Horn Book*

***A Bedtime for Bear*, Becker, Bonny, \$17.00, Candlewick, Open Court: Being Afraid IL PreK-1**

Bear and Mouse return to prove that friends may not be perfect, but they're there when it matters most. Bear can't stand noise at bedtime, so he isn't pleased when Mouse turns up to spend the night. Mouse's humming, squeaking, and

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whispers of "Good night!" make Bear lose his patience, but when the house at last falls silent, Bear discovers that having everything just so is less important than having a friend when nighttime sounds turn scary. Denton's ink and watercolor illustrations ably express the dry humor of Becker's dialogue and personifications, which make this a bedtime standout. *Publisher's Weekly*

***Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491*, Mann, Charles C., \$24.00, Atheneum, 2009 IL 4-6**

Mann paints a superb picture of pre-Columbian America. In the process, he overturns the misconceived image of Natives as simple, widely scattered savages with minimal impact on their surroundings. Well-chosen, vividly colored graphics and photographs of mummies, pyramids, artifacts, and landscapes as well as the author's skillful storytelling will command the attention of even the most reluctant readers.

***Benno and the Night of Broken Glass*, Wiviott, Meg, \$16.00, Kar-Ben Pub., Open Court: Survival IL 3-5**

Through the eyes of an orange and white cat, readers are introduced to the harrowing event known as Kristallnacht. Benno spends his days observing the friendly, predictable rituals in his neighborhood. Then one night, he sees brown-shirted men breaking down doors, smashing shop windows, and setting fire to books and buildings. Jewish families disappear, and even though the people that remain resume their normal activities, nothing is ever quite the same again. *SLJ*

***Biblioburro: a True Story from Colombia*, Winter, Jeanette, \$17.00, Beach Lane Books, IL K-3**

Luis loves books; in fact his house is filled with them. So many books ought to be shared, which is what Luis does. With the help of two burros, Luis takes his stories to the rural villages of Colombia. Winter's acrylic paint with pen-and-ink illustrations are reliably wonderful. The book not only honors its real-life subject but is also a love letter to librarians. *Horn Book*

***Big Red Lollipop*, Dhan, Rukhsana, \$17.00, Viking, Culturally Responsive Literature, IL K-3**

When Rubina is invited to a birthday party, her sister Sana wants to go. Their Pakistani mother doesn't understand American party customs and insists that Sana tag along. When Sana receives an invitation of her own, the tables are turned: the girls' baby sister demands to go too. The expressive illustrations bring this simple sibling rivalry/immigrant story to life. At its heart this is an honest, even moving, commentary on sisterly relationships, and the final rapprochement is as sweet as the lollipop Sana offers Rubina. *Horn Book*

***Bink & Gollie*, DiCamillo, Kate, \$16.00, Candlewick Press, IL 1-3**

Two roller-skating best friends--one tiny, one tall--share three comical adventures involving outrageously bright socks, an impromptu trek to the Andes, and a most unlikely marvelous companion. This is a zany hybrid of picture book, graphic novel, and early reader that introduces an endearing new pair of odd-couple friends.

***Black Jack: The Ballad of Jack Johnson*, Smith, Jr., Charles R., \$17.00, National Geographic IL 2-5**

Jack Johnson was the first black fighter to win a heavyweight championship. The prospect of losing to a black man so worried reigning champion Jim Jeffries that, rather than fight Johnson, he retired; after Jeffries's successor lost to Johnson, public goading forced Jeffries out of retirement, whereupon Johnson defeated him, too. selection for library and classroom read-alouds as well. *SLJ*

***Blue Goose*, Tafuri, Nancy, \$16.00, Simon & Schuster IL PreK-1**

Farmer Gray's homestead is as colorless as his name--even the sky and grass are gray. So, while he's away for the day, Blue Goose, Red Hen, Yellow Chick and White Duck get some paint and undertake a barnyard makeover. The scenes have the bold, graphic punch of murals. Generously sized animals and pithy text extend a warm welcome to readers, and make this celebration of color ideal for sharing either one-on-one or with a group.

***Born Yesterday: The Diary of a Young Journalist*, Solheim, James, \$16.00, Philomel Books IL K-3**

"If I'd known I was going to be born in public, I'd at least have put on a tank top," begins this infant's diary. A funny twist on the typical new sibling story, this book is written from the baby's point of view as he tries to grow up and be like his big sister. He offers his ideas about the world around him in short monthly entries, until, at the end, he and his sister become best friends as he turns one year old—just what he always wanted! The book is a fresh and amusing slant on sibling adjustment and should capture the imagination of any big brother or sister. *SLJ*

***The Boss Baby*, Frazee, Marla. \$17.00, Beach Lane Books, IL K-3**

Boss Baby is here and he's just as capricious and demanding as any corporate CEO. From midnight meetings to made-to-order drinks, this little tyrant keeps his staff of two on the run until they finally pass out from exhaustion and fail to respond to his calls. He resorts to some out-of-the-box thinking and discovers two magic words that quickly bring Mom and Dad back to attention. 50's inspired pencil and watercolor illustrations set the tone,

***The Boy Who Climbed Into the Moon*, Almond, David, \$16.00, Candlewick, IL 2-4**

Paul takes the lift up to the twenty-ninth floor of his apartment building because he wants to touch the sky. This journey catapults him into an adventure during which he meets an odd cast of characters who teach him about risk-taking and exploring strange ideas. Paul's story, beautifully illustrated in full color, reveals a new dimension to Almond's particular brand of magic realism.

***Brand New Baby Blues*, Appelt, Kathi, \$17.00, Harper, PreK: I Am Special**

A new big sister sings the blues: "Once everything was peachy, / once everything was fine. / Now my brand-new baby brother / takes up all my mama's time." Appelt's rhymes are, occasionally, a reach, but older siblings will easily relate to the pensive narrator. Murphy's illustrations feature mood ringlike backdrops that change to sunnier hues as the girl warms up to her new sibling. *Horn Book*

***Bridget's Beret*, Lichtenheld, Tom, \$18.00, Holt, IL K-3**

Bridget loves to draw, but she needs her black artist's beret as her muse. One day as she is outdoors working, it flies off into the wind, and she believes that her inspiration has flown with it. Other hats don't help and she stops drawing. But when her little sister begs her to make a sign for a lemonade stand, Bridget agrees. Once she starts painting, she finds that the art was inside her all along; in fact, her new paintings are more sophisticated and draw on the works of recognizable artists. Pair with Peter Renold's *Dot* (Candlewick 2003) and *Ish* (Candlewick 2004). *SLJ*

***Brontorina*, Howe, James, \$16.00, Candlewick, IL PreK-2**

Young Clara and Jack tug at Madame to accept Brontorina Apatosaurus who appears at the door of Madame Lucille's Dance Academy for Boys and Girls. Madame admits Brontorina, and humorous scenes show little boys and girls doing arabesques, relevés, and jetés, while enormous Brontorina gracefully crashes into the ceiling. Madame realizes that "The problem is not that you are too big. The problem is that my studio is too small," and the academy gets relocated and renamed. A quiet fusion of pathos, comedy, and passion is echoed in the painterly, softly textured, muted oil illustrations. The final picture of the orange dinosaur perched like a bird atop a dancing triceratops, silhouetted against the setting sun, is priceless. *SLJ*

***Bunny Days*, Nyeu, Tao, \$17.00, Dial, IL PreK-1**

This is a trio of quirky mishap tales in this dynamic picture book. The stories—each starring a group of wee bunnies, a helpful bear, and various domestic machines—are quick and packed full of cute: Bear sends the muddy bunnies for a spin in the washing machine, then hangs them out to dry; Bear fixes Mrs. Goat's bunny-clogged vacuum cleaner; and Bear uses a sewing machine to reattach the bunnies' tails after a garden-pruning mix-up by Mr. Goat.

***The Call: The Magnificent Twelve*, Grant, Michael, \$17.00, Katherine Tegan Books, IL 5-8**

The first book in Grant's new series, *The Magnificent 12*, introduces unlikely hero Mack, who has "a serious case of mediumness" and a vast array of phobias. Enter Grimluk, a 3,000-year-old man who informs Mack that he is to be the first of the new Magnifica, a group of 12 kids who must join their talents and inherited-yet-unknown powers to fight the evil Pale Queen and her vicious daughter. Reluctant and frankly freaked out by this news, Mack and former bully, now guardian friend Stefan team up to evade deadly attentions from a seriously creepy set of insect-like monsters and demonic elves. The author keeps the story moving at a brisk pace with suspenseful action and laugh-out-loud humor.

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***Case of the Gypsy Good-bye*, Springer, Nancy, \$15.00, Philomel Books, IL 5-8**

The series that features Enola Holmes, the (much) younger sister of Sherlock, continues to be flat-out among the best mysteries being written for young people today. Not only are the mysteries sharp attention holders but the conclusions are well thought out, with i's dotted and t's crossed in true Holmesian fashion. But now it appears readers will have to say adieu to Enola in what looks to be the final book. Here Enola, about to turn 15, takes on two mysteries. She must discover the whereabouts of a lovely duchess who disappeared down the Baker Street Subway station. But, more importantly, Enola receives a curious message from her mother, who deserted her a year ago. *Booklist*

***Chalk*, Thomson, Bill, \$18.00, Marshall Cavendish, IL PreK-4, Open Court: Imagination**

This stunningly illustrated wordless picture book tells the story of three children who find a bag of magical chalk at the playground on a rainy day. Their drawings come to life, which seems great when a drawing of the sun stops the rain, but is scary when a dinosaur stalks them. A drawing of a rain cloud inside a play tube brings the rain back and dissolves the frightening creature. This is the perfect showcase for Thomson's extraordinary pictures. *Horn Book*

***Chester's Masterpiece*, Watt, Melanie, \$19.00, Kids Can Press, IL PreK-2**

In this meta-story, Chester the cat hides author Melanie Watt's supplies, so he can write his own tale. As Chester struggles with originality and encounters writer's block, Watt offers him--and the reader--pointers on how to construct a real story with a setting, characters, and plot. Attention-grabbing illustrations show Chester, red marker in hand, drawing kid-friendly sketches. *Horn Book*

***Chicken Little*, Emberley, Rebecca, \$17.00, Roaring Brook, IL PreK-2**

In this irreverent re-visioning, silly sound effects, comedic editorial comments, and riotous illustrations play up the bird-braininess of Chicken Little's ill-informed sky-is-falling crusade. Large, boldly colored birds with mesmerizingly multicolored eyes flap across spacious white pages, running for their lives. There's nothing subtle about this account of birds on the verge, which makes the book perfect for cheep storytime thrills. *Horn Book*

***Child of the Civil Rights Movement*, Shelton, Paula Young, \$18.00, Schwartz & Wade, Open Court: Taking a Stand**

The daughter of civil rights leader Andrew Young remembers her family's active role in the civil rights movement, beginning when she was four years old. In rhythmic free verse she tells how she and her family move from New York to Atlanta, Georgia, to join the struggle and how Dr. King and other leaders become a warm personal presence in her home, "close because we all struggled together." When her family is refused entry to a restaurant, she sits down and cries loudly, "my very first protest, my own little sit-in." *Booklist* CA History, Civil Rights Grade 2

***Clever Jack Takes the Cake*, Fleming, Candace, \$18.00, Schwartz & Wade, IL K-3**

Jack is thrilled when he receives an invitation to the princess' birthday party, but he's too poor to buy a present. Determined to make something instead, Jack trades his ax and quilt for flour and sugar, scrounges up more ingredients, and assembles a beautiful cake, topped with the "reddest, juiciest" strawberry in the land. Calamity strikes en route to the castle, though, and after run-ins with four-and-twenty blackbirds, a troll, a dark forest, and a dancing bear, Jack arrives at the party with only the magnificent strawberry, which a guard confiscates: the princess is allergic. After

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anxiously watching the bored birthday girl receive her presents (“Another tiara? How dull.”), Jack confesses that he has only an account of his day to offer. Luckily, the princess is delighted: “A story! And an adventure story at that! What a fine gift!” *Booklist*

***Cloud Tea Monkeys*, Peet, Mal, \$16.00, Candlewick, IL K-3**

Tashi's mother labors on a tea plantation in the shadow of the Himalayas. One day she is too ill to get out of bed. Tashi knows that without her day's wages, they won't have money for a doctor, but without medical care her mother won't get well enough to work. She is too small to fill in, but when she tells the monkeys she has befriended why she is sad, they bring her a basket filled with rare and valuable wild tea. When the Royal Tea Taster appears, he nearly swoons over the rare tea in Tashi's basket and pays her handsomely for the bounty. *Booklist*

***Come Fall*, Bauer, A.C.E, \$16.00, Random House, IL 4-7**

Salman is an orphan in his umpteenth foster home, who has an uncertain life with an abusive man. Lu, is a shy girl who is lonely since her best friend moved, and Bloss is one who sees things differently, puts people into two categories: those who avoid him and those who make fun of him. The teens are thrown together at Riverfalls Junior High, where bullies, mental health difficulties, sibling rivalry, social services, and school bureaucracies give them an opportunity to forge a strong bond. Chapters are told from different points of view in first person, including Puck, from *Midsummer Night's Dream*, who helps to unfold magical and realistic elements that work surprisingly well. The book turns out to be a pleasant account of making new friends and what it takes to be one, regardless of what others think. Students who enjoy realistic fiction with a touch of fantasy will enjoy this story. *Booklist*

***Cosmic*, Cottrell Boyce, Frank, \$17.00, Walden Pond Press, IL 4-7**

Twelve-year-old Liam, who looks like he is thirty and is tired of being treated like he is older than he actually is, decides he is going to pose as the adult chaperone on the first spaceship to take civilians into space, but when he ends up in outer space with a group of kids and no adult supervision, he must think fast to make things right. Readers will appreciate the sharp, realistic, and very funny dialogue as well as Liam's technique of solving real-world problems using his role-playing-game expertise, *Booklist*

***Country Road ABC: An Illustrated Journey Through America's Farmland*, Geisert, Arthur, \$17.00, Houghton Mifflin, Open Court: Country Life, IL PreK-3**

Geisert combines a fresh look at modern family farming in the Midwest with an unerring eye for detail. The continuous sixty-four-page panorama follows a road from the city into the country. As we travel, day is followed by night--and summer is followed by fall, and then winter. Geisert's fine intaglio line with delicate watercolor is ideally suited to both close-ups and wide vistas. *Horn Book*

***Crow Girl*, Lowry, Lois, \$17.00, Scholastic, Open Court: Country Life, IL 3-5, HSS Grade 1 (Now and Long Ago)**

In the quiet early morning, Liz and her father, a recently returned soldier from WW II, embark on a crow hunt. Throughout the process, they forge poignant new connections while becoming reacquainted. Based on Lowry's own experience, the story is conveyed with a sensitive, lyrical voice. Ibatouline uses touches of light in his realistic watercolor and acrylic paintings, bringing warmth to the barren November landscape. With many parents and other relatives currently in the military, this story could just as easily take place today, and numerous readers will identify with it, while others will simply enjoy the story. *SLJ*

***Crunch*, Connor, Leslie, \$17.00, Katherine Tegan Bks, IL 5-8**

When a severe fuel shortage strands their parents, the five Marriss children hold down the fort--and the family's bike business. With fewer cars on the highway, the now-growing shop is about to overrun the kids' abilities. Connor's narrative ambles pleasantly along; a feel-good denouement brings the community together, with neighbors willing to learn how to help themselves and others. *Horn Book*

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***Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave.* Hill, Laban Carrick, \$17.00, Little Brown, IL K-4**

The enslaved 19th-century potter Dave, who lived and worked near Edgefield, S.C., could transform 60 pounds of clay into a 40-gallon pot. Hill crafts a poetic tribute that's respectful and playful, much like the potter's own short verse, which was frequently incised onto the shoulders of his handsome stoneware jars. Collier's rich watercolor collages adopt many angles of perspective to reveal the potter's strength and artistry.

***The Death-Defying Pepper Roux.* McCaughrean, Geraldine, \$17.00, Harper, IL 5-8**

McCaughrean's yarn is a wildly improbable but thoroughly entertaining one. Pepper Roux's aunt has predicted that he will not live past his fourteenth birthday. When the dreaded day arrives and Pepper finds himself very much alive, he embarks on a madcap adventure in an effort to cheat death. A picaresque tale from one of the more remarkable novelists writing for children.

***Dinosaur Mountain.* Ray, Deborah Kogan, \$17.00, Frances Foster Books, IL 3-5, CA Science, Grade 4**

Earl Douglass, fossil-finder extraordinaire, embarked on a 1909 expedition to the Uinta Basin (Utah) to find "something big." What he found was BIG—a bone bed that ultimately became Dinosaur National Monument. The readable text is bracketed by large illustrations and smaller diagrams, charts, maps, and, most importantly, direct quotes from Douglass's field journals... this is a vibrant window into the burgeoning world of American paleontology a century ago. A rich find. *SLJ*

***Django, The.* Pinfold, Levi, \$17.00, Templar, IL 2-4**

A young Gypsy boy is minding his own business behind the caravan when he spots a curious creature, a Django...admiring his father's banjo. He tries to stop the Django from playing it, but the ensuing fracas only results in a smashed instrument. The Django—never seen by grown-ups—continues to plague the boy and get him into trouble at every turn as the Gypsies move about the countryside. Children will revel in the bouncy rhythms and nonsense words sprinkled throughout the fun-to-read-and-hear... in the end, the boy gets his own banjo, leaving children to wonder if they can rustle up their own Django. An inner imp has rarely been so sweetly and savvily rendered. *SLJ*

***Dog Loves Books.* Yates, Louise, \$17.00, Knopf, IL PreK-1**

A small white dog loves books so much that he decides to open his own bookstore. Unfortunately, no customers come, so he occupies his time by reading. He is engrossed in his imaginary adventures when his first real customer asks for a book. Of course, he knows exactly what to suggest. The simple story is accompanied by soft pastel pencil and watercolor drawings that give the book a whimsical, dreamy quality. *SLJ*

***Dogs.* Gravett, Emily, \$16.00, Simon & Schuster, IL PreK-2**

Full of humor, energy, and affection, Gravett's illustrations use various dog breeds to highlight the difference between large and small, tough and soft, hairy and bald, stripy and spotty, and so on. The rhyming text is disarmingly simple and perfectly paced, and a final page-turn yields a satisfying surprise: the narrator is revealed to be... a cat.

***Dollhouse Fairy.* The, Ray, Jane, \$17.00, Candlewick, IL PreK-2**

In this realistic story with a touch of magic, Rosy loves making special things for her dollhouse with her dad on Saturday mornings. One morning, he isn't there; he's gone to the hospital, and in his absence she finds a fairy with a hurt wing in the dollhouse. Rosy puts cream and bandages on Thistle's wing, plays with her in secret, and, as the fairy starts to mend, helps her practice flying. Although there are many pink details and flowers, this is a decidedly different and not-too-sweet fairy story. *SLJ*

***Don't Spill the Beans.* Schoenherr, Ian, \$17.00, Greenwillow, IL PreK**

A bear cub can't resist sharing a secret with friends ("Tip off Hippo. / Break it to Bat. / Leak it to Beaver, to Lemur, to Cat!") and, finally, with the reader: the animals brandish letters spelling out "Happy birthday to you!" The endearing

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illustrations in this birthday card of a book feature animals, big and small, dressed in preschooler attire. *Horn Book*

***Dragonbreath 2 Attack of the Ninja Frogs*, Vernon, Ursula, \$13.00, Dial, IL 2-4**

Young dragon Danny Dragonbreath's second adventure is a little convoluted (like his first). Danny loves ninja movies, and when real ninja frogs appear in pursuit of Suki the salamander, Danny and his pal Wendell (an iguana) come to the rescue. Vernon humorously intersperses main text with cartoon-panel illustrations in mostly black, white, and green as readers share Danny's daydreams and adventures. *Horn Book*

***The Dreamer*, Ryan, Pam Muñoz, \$18.00, Scholastic, IL 4-9**

Perfect is the union that resulted in this novel: the subject, Chilean poet Pablo Neruda (1904 -73); author Ryan who re-creates Neruda's spirit and sensibility; and the Czech-born illustrator Sís whose escape from oppression so hauntingly resembles Neruda's struggle for creative freedom. Sís's introspective, emotion-charged drawings spring naturally from this lyrical account of a difficult childhood. An author's note and several Neruda poems are appended. *Horn Book*

***Driven: a Photobiography of Henry Ford*, Mitchell, Don, \$19.00, National Geographic, IL 5-8**

Mitchell's brief, engaging text appraises its subject, placing him in the context of his times. Ford's contradictions make him even more fascinating; e.g., he hired disabled and minority workers but was fiercely anti-Semitic. Although this type of complexity begs for an extended treatment, Mitchell's succinct introduction successfully whets readers' appetites. The book's inviting design features an array of photographs, captions, and quotes. Reading list, timeline, websites. Ind.

***Dust Devil*, Isaacs, Anne, \$18.00, Schwartz & Wade, IL 2-5, Open Court: Going West, Tall Tales**

Angelica "Angel" Longrider, the "wildest wildcat in Tennessee," has moved to Montana, "a country so sizable even Angel could fit in." The West seems to suit the feisty heroine, but she has trouble finding a horse powerful enough to carry her until she wrestles a violent storm and Dust Devil emerges mythically out of the fray. Readers will chuckle over the absurdity of the giant mosquitoes ridden by nasty Bart and his gang and learn the origins of buttes, geysers, the Grand Canyon, and even the California gold rush. *SLJ*

***Enchanted Glass*, Jones, Diana Wynne, \$17.00, Greenwillow, IL 6-9**

A boy named Aidan, recently orphaned and fleeing stalkers, pleads for refuge at professor Andrew Hope's inherited estate. Aidan's presence--and the weredog and giant he befriends--draw the ire of the sinister and mysterious Mr. O. Brown. Jones's story is characteristically buoyant and witty; the magic is always brainteasingly clever and comically down-to-earth. An intelligent, refreshing hoot. *Horn Book*

***Epossumondas Plays Possum*, Salley, Coleen, \$13.00, Harcourt, Open Court: Storytelling, IL K-4**

Mama warns Epossumondas about a loup-garou in the swamp. But Epossumondas forgets, and soon he's meeting the swamp's fearsome denizens. Stevens captures the characters with humor and affection: Mama, comfortably garrulous as ever; the fecklessly crafty adventurer, pink-toed and diapered. The loup-garou never does show up, but there's a note to explain his legendary status. *Horn Book*

***The Extraordinary Mark Twain (According to Susy)*, Kerley, Barbara, \$18.00, Scholastic, IL 3-6**

Thirteen-year-old Susy Clemens's biography of her father informs this account covering both biographer and biographee. Kerley details Susy's process of writing about and observing her father, using primary sources and inserting seven small facsimiles of Susy's journal pages into the book. A delightful primer on researching and writing biographies, and a joy to peruse. Includes timeline. *Horn Book*

***Falling In*, Dowell, Frances O'Roarke, \$17.00, Atheneum, IL 3-6**

Isabelle Bean has no friends since her classmates consider her weird and even scary. She prefers thrift shops to the mall and dresses in whatever she feels like at the moment. One day, sitting in class concentrating on a strange buzzing sound, she is sent to the principal's office for not paying attention. She opens the door to a supply closet and is plunged into a fairy-tale-like world in an alternate universe. She encounters children traveling to the "camps" to avoid being eaten by

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the Witch of the Woods and meets Hen, and they set out on their own in the opposite direction. Arriving at a cozy cottage, the girls are welcomed by Grete, an elderly woman who uses plants to heal. Isabelle learns that Grete is her grandmother and that she may be the "witch" the people have been taught to fear. *SLJ*

***The Familiars*, Epstein, Adam Jay, \$17.00, Harper IL Gr 4-6**

Escaping from a bounty hunter, a streetwise cat becomes the familiar of a boy magician-in-training. Almost before Aldwyn gets to know his new surroundings, Jack, his sister, and a fellow student are kidnapped and it is up to him; Skylar, a magic-adept bluejay; and Gilbert, a clumsy, red-eyed tree frog, to rescue their "loyals." *SLJ*

***Forge*, Anderson, Laurie Halse, \$17.00, Atheneum, CA Vistas Gr 5 IL 5-8**

"Seeds of America" Sequel to: *Chains*. Includes bibliographical references. Curzon, having matured from boy to man over the course of the winter with the army at Valley Forge, worries that someone will learn he is a runaway slave passing for free, and tries to figure out the meaning of his friendship with Isabel. Anderson creates a vivid setting, believable characters both good and despicable and a clear portrayal of the moral ambiguity of the Revolutionary age. Not only can this sequel stand alone, for many readers it will be one of the best novels they have ever read. *Kirkus*

***Frankie Pickle and the Pine Run 3000*, Wright, Eric, \$11.00, Simon & Schuster, Easy Chapter Book IL 2-4**

Wright's arch and accessible mixed-format stories of Frankie continue to be a treat for early chapter-book readers. Here, Frankie, who always tries too hard and has an imagination that far outstrips his abilities, fails to make the next Possum Scout level when his knot tying goes awry. But he can earn those needed badge points if he places well in an upcoming kit-built-car race. Slightly retro cartoons—reminiscent of late 1950s "cool"—are interspersed with the text throughout as Frankie's latest adventure unfolds with enough twists on and off the racetrack to satisfy his reading peers. *Booklist*

***The Frog Scientist*, Turner, Pamela S., \$18.00, Houghton Mifflin, CA Science Gr 6 IL 5-8**

Readers are introduced to Dr. Tyrone Hayes, who studies the effects of pesticides on frog development. Hayes travels to a pond research site and back to his laboratory, explaining step by step the careful procedures his team follows. Sharp, vivid photographs alternate between portrayals of the scientists--at work and relaxing--and abundant images of the frogs they study. Websites. Bib., glos., ind. *Horn Book*

***The Hallelujah Flight*, Bildner, Phil, \$18.00, Putnam, Open Court: Courage IL K-3**

This story is based on the 1932 flight of James Banning and Thomas Allen, the first African Americans to fly across America. Bildner's tale touches on some of the highs and lows of the journey, including the kindness of people they meet along the way. Holyfield's richly hued and well-shaded acrylic paintings show Banning and Allen taking to the skies. *Horn Book*

***Hattie the Bad*, Devlin, Jane, \$17.00, Dial IL PreK-1**

When Hattie, who does "exciting bad things" that make her unpopular with her friends' parents, decides to switch gears, she discovers that being good has its own punishment. Her televised response to winning the "Best-Behaved Child" competition is pure kid-humor gold, and the illustrations, in which "good" Hattie's backdrop is prim pink and "bad" Hattie's is brash orange, are a stitch. *Horn Book*

***Henrietta Hornbuckle's Circus of Life*, deGuzman, Michael, \$17.00, FSG IL 4-6**

Twelve-year-old Henrietta loves being a clown like her five-foot-nine-inch mother and little-person father; she never wants to leave the circus, her extended family. Then a tragic turn of events forces her--and everyone else--to make new choices. Filled with intriguing details about traveling-circus life, this is a colorful look at an unconventional family, starring the plucky and appealing Henrietta. *Horn Book*

***Henry in Love*, McCarty, Peter, \$17.00, Balzer & Bray IL PreK-1**

Shy cat Henry has a crush on rabbit classmate Chloe and doesn't know what to do about it; a blueberry muffin ultimately helps. McCarty shows genuine respect for children's interpersonal relationships. Not a stroke of his pen is superfluous: delicate ink with modest watercolor shading sits on warm cream-colored pages. *Horn Book*

***Here Comes the Garbage Barge*, Winter, Jonah, \$18.00, Schwartz & Wade IL 1-3**

After a Long Island town puts its unwanted garbage on a barge, North Carolina is the first of several ports to refuse it. Told with asides to the reader and stuffed with comical accents and spiky dialogue ("What the hairy heck?"), this uproarious book, based on a true 1987 incident, features remarkable illustrations created from, appropriately enough, recycled materials. *Horn Book*

***Hip Hop Dog*, Raschka, Chris, \$17.00, Harper IL PreK-3**

With tight rhymes and endearing braggadocio, this hip-hop dog relates his hardscrabble upbringing. Radunsky's deliberately rough-around-the-edges illustrations show a shaggy-pelted pup, little red tongue sticking out, clad in white pants with backward baseball cap pulled low, his torso twisting and body angled in rhythm with his funky rhymes. The freestyle page design often features text spiraling around our hero. Begs to be read aloud, but--wow!--bows to no one.

Horn Book

***The Hive Detectives: Chronicle of a Honey Bee Catastrophe*, Burns, Loree Griffin, \$18.00, Houghton Mifflin IL 5-8**

In 2006-2007, a sudden drop in the number of honey-bee colonies alarmed scientists. Burns tells the story as a dramatic scientific mystery, carefully leading readers through the unfolding of the crisis and attempts to solve it. Profiles of beekeepers and details about bees and honey making, along with gloriously crisp photographs, are interspersed throughout the main text. Reading list, websites. Bib., glos., ind. *Horn Book*

***How to Survive Middle School*, Gephart, Donna, \$16.00, Delacorte IL 5-7**

David Greenberg has troubles: he is still missing his mother two years after she moved to another state; his longtime best friend, Elliott, has been behaving like a schmuck since hitting puberty; and even before the first day at Harmon (aka "Hormone") Middle School, he has become a feared bully's victim of choice. On the other hand, though his father is distant, his live-in grandmother is a reliable provider of food and support; his teenage sister Lindsey is always good for a quick hug; and he has really hit it off with new classmate Sophia—a smart, peppermint-scented, and refreshingly unselfconscious ex-homeschooler. Best of all (maybe), the Daily Show–style videos he has been posting on YouTube have gone viral, and suddenly he is a local celebrity. *Booklist*

***I Can Be Anything!*, Spinelli, Jerry, \$17.00, Little Brown, PreK Open Court: I am Special IL PreK-2**

A young boy can be anything: a "snowball smoother," a "baby-sis soother," a "cross-legged sitter," or a "make-believe critter" in this amusing rhyming book. Watercolor and acrylic illustrations celebrate the ordinary while imagining the unusual roles that a kid can play with a little bit of creativity, energy, and a sense of the ridiculous. It's an uplifting, imaginative vision of life's possibilities that suggests that there are no limits—not even the sky. *Horn Book*

***If Stones Could Speak: Unlocking the Secrets of Stonehenge*, Aronson, Marc, \$18.00, National Geographic, CA Vistas Gr 6 IL 4-9**

Archaeologist Mike Parker Pearson and his associates embarked on a series of digs that have challenged our understanding of Stonehenge (which Pearson believes to be a sacred burial site). Aronson's prose is both clear and succinct, and he invites readers to test this new theory for themselves. A map of the region, captioned photographs, and occasional sidebars complement the text. Reading list, timeline, websites. Glos., ind. *Horn Book*

***It's a Book*, Smith, Lane, \$16.00, Roaring Brook IL K-3**

Smith jump-starts the action on the title page where readers meet the characters—a mouse, a jackass, and a monkey. Slapstick humor ensues in an armchair face-off when Jackass, reared on a diet of Web 2.0 and gaming, cannot fathom what to do with a book and slings a barrage of annoying questions to Monkey, who is trying to read. Jackass determines what Monkey's object does not do: tweet, text, blog, scroll down, or require a password. Finally he rips it from Monkey—only to get completely caught up in the story. Kids will enjoy feeling superior to the donkey, and older ones will relish the naughty punch line. *Horn Book*

***Jasper Dash and the Flamepits of Delaware: A Pals in Peril Tale*, Anderson, M.T., \$17.00, Beach Lane Books IL 5-8**

Jasper, Katie, and Lily (Whales on Stilts, The Clue of the Linoleum Lederhosen) again save the world. A "competitive staring" contest begins the nonsense, setting off a chain of events in which the friends help monks retrieve stolen artifacts. Anderson stuffs every scene with exotic setting details; that the mystical locale is Delaware gives the story an added layer of absurdity. Along the way, there are lots of sly digs at rah-rah sports novels, gangster pulps, and even travel guidebooks. The author frequently "breaks page" to address readers directly with side comments, hints, and suggestions. Beneath all the absurdity, there is also a quiet message about loyalty and self-acceptance. *Horn Book*

***Journey Into the Deep : Discovering New Ocean Creatures*, Johnson, Rebecca L., \$26.00, Millbrook IL 5-8**

This strikingly illustrated book takes its readers on a series of research voyages exploring the ocean from its shallow edges to unfathomable depths during the recently completed ten-year International Census of Marine Life. Clearly organized text and pictures combine to introduce newly discovered marine creatures of all kinds: the Big Red jellyfish, with a bell the size of a door; mussels surrounding deep brine pools and feeding on methane-eating bacteria; zombie worms on a whale skeleton. *Booklist*

***Justin Case: School, Drool, and Other Daily Disasters*, Vail, Rachel, \$19.00, Feiwel & Friends IL 2-4**

Justin shares his third-grade year in an illustrated diary of drop-dead funny observations. He reveals his worries, even worrying "about what to worry about," but, predictably, third grade isn't the disaster Justin imagines. The diary format creates multiple starting and stopping places, the characters and situations cover familiar territory, and the narrative moves at a lively pace. *Horn Book*

***The Last Best Days of Summer*, Hobbs, Valerie, \$17.00, FSG IL 4-7**

Lucy, 12, and her best friend, Megan, plan to follow Seventeen magazine's tips on how to join the popular crowd when they start middle school at the end of the summer. Lucy has spent the last few months as a caregiver for Eddie, a classmate with special needs. During summer vacation, she is happy to leave Eddie and spend some time with her beloved Grams at the lake, but Grams, a hippie and gifted potter, requires supervision, too: she is becoming forgetful and even accidentally starts a fire. Eddie turns up at Grams after a long, difficult bus ride to bring Lucy a token of friendship...in the end, kindhearted Lucy refuses to reject Eddie in favor of the superficial, glamorous crowd. The story's finely tuned realism is refreshing, particularly in Lucy's yearning for social acceptance and in the fully drawn and wholly memorable characters. *Booklist*

***Let it Begin Here!*, Brown, Don, \$18.00, Roaring Brook, Open Court: Making a New Nation IL 2-4**

Brown creates an exciting, well-grounded narrative of the Battle of Lexington and Concord. His text moves swiftly among historical background, major actions, and quick profiles and anecdotes. Loosely drafted watercolors similarly shift between wide views of the opposing troops and images of individuals. This is a vivid account of a busy and important day. Bib. *Horn Book*

***Liberty or Death: The Surprising Story of Runaway Slaves Who Sided With the British During the American Revolution*, Blair, Margaret Whitman, \$19.00, National Geographic, CA Vistas Gr 5 IL 5-8**

Not much has been written for young readers about runaway slaves who sided with the British during the American Revolution, so this fine work is a welcome addition to the field. Blair tells the story of Lord Dunmore's Ethiopian Regiment. Though a slaveholder himself, Lord Dunmore offered freedom to slaves who fought for the British, though the offer only applied to slaves whose masters were in rebellion against the crown. Estimates vary, but at least 15,000 to 20,000 slaves answered Lord Dunmore's call. These black loyalists fought in a separate regiment from white soldiers, while the 5,000 who fled to the patriot side fought in integrated units, a fascinating indication of the complex meanings of freedom in this turbulent time. *SLJ*

***Lincoln Tells a Joke: How Laughter Saved the President and the Country*, Krull, Kathleen, \$17.00, Harcourt IL 2-4**

It's his sense of humor, rather than a single wisecrack, that Krull and Brewer explore through Lincoln's quips. Departing from Lincoln's levity is the inclusion of less amusing, but perhaps more instructive, information on his love of language, grammar, and elocution. Innerst displays his own sense of humor by creating near-caricatures that exaggerate Lincoln's long, lanky frame and numerous bad hair days. Bib. *Horn Book*

***Ling and Ting, Not Exactly the Same!*, Lin, Grace, \$15.00, Little Brown IL 1-2**

Sisters Ling and Ting may be twins, but that doesn't mean they're "exactly the same," no matter what everyone says upon first meeting them. Children will come to their own conclusions after reading the six short, interconnected stories that make up this pleasing book for beginning readers. *Booklist*

***Little Black Crow*, Raschka, Chris, \$17.00, Atheneum IL PreK-3**

As a young boy observes a bird fly through skies that alternate from stormy to sunny, cold to warm, he wonders, Little black crow, where do you go? This query is followed by more rhetorical statements that get right to the heart of children's own questions about family, friends, love, fear, mistakes, and, above all, self-worth. *Horn Book*

***Little Diva*, LaChanze, \$19.00, Feiwel & Friends IL PreK-K**

Nena is a "diva-in-training" who wants to act, sing, and dance just like her mother. To bolster their already close relationship, the two spend a day together, which includes time backstage at Mom's matinee performance. The audience for this cutesy book (written by a Broadway star) is questionable. Pinkney's loosely drawn illustrations with lots of white space are the book's highlight. *Horn Book*

***Little Red Hen and the Passover Matzah*, Kimmelman, Leslie, \$18.00, Holiday House IL K-3**

This Yiddish-inflected retelling of "The Little Red Hen" features a balabusta (good homemaker) who kvetches about her lazy no-goodnik friends who will not help her make matzah from wheat. When they show up at the Passover Seder, the hen scolds, "What chutzpah!" Ultimately, however, they repent and the hen forgives them because she is a mensch. All ends happily as they make up for their earlier bad behavior by doing the dishes. *Horn Book*

***LMNO Peas*, Baker, Keith, \$17.00, Beach Lane Books, Open Court: Let's Read IL PreK-1**

"We're acrobats, artists, and astronauts in space. / We're builders, bathers, and bikers in a race." In bouncy rhyming couplets, Baker goes through the alphabet and comes up with identities for peas. Visual and verbal jokes abound; this is a book for close examination rather than group sharing, rewarding attention with some clever ideas and many laughs. *Horn Book*

***Lost Boy, The story of the Man Who Created Peter Pan*, Yolen, Jane, \$18.00, Dutton IL 3-5**

Fittingly for the writer who would create "the boy who wouldn't grow up," this biography of J.M. Barrie is just as focused on his childhood as it is on his adult life. Before Barrie began his legendary play he first honed his writing, faced love and hardship, and met the five Llewelyn Davies boys, who changed his life forever. Excerpts from the Peter Pan tales and play draw parallels between Barrie's stories and his life experiences, while Yolen's narrative and Adams's paintings shine with the same sense of adventure that has given Barrie's creation such longevity. *Publisher's Weekly*

***Lousy Rotten Stinkin' Grapes*, Palatini, Margie, \$16.00, Simon & Schuster IL K-3**

In Palatini's humorous take on Aesop's "The Fox and the Grapes," Fox enlists Bear, Beaver, Porcupine, and Possum to help grab some out-of-reach fruit. Concocting an elaborate scheme, Fox ignores the other animals' simpler, sounder solutions ("I can give the tree a shake," said Bear"). Moser's considered watercolors humorously show realistic-looking creatures displaying human responses, from calculating to exasperated. Matched by a text that rolls off the tongue and is full of action and repetitive phrases, the book is a delight. *Horn Book*

***Mama Miti: Wangari Maathai and the Trees of Kenya*, Napoli, Donna Jo, \$17.00, Simon & Schuster
Culturally Responsive Literature IL 2-4**

This picture book celebrates Kenyan Nobel Peace Prizewinner Wangari Maathai who, by encouraging women to plant trees, also gave them a way to improve their lives. Napoli's text is spare but powerful (e.g., "Kenya was strong once more, strong and peaceful"), and Nelson's collage illustrations have the pleasing beauty of a well-made quilt. Back matter supplies information about Maathai's Green Belt Movement. Websites. Glos. *Horn Book*

***Mimi's Dada Catifesto*, Jackson, Shelley, \$17.00, Clarion IL 1-4**

Mimi is the right pet for him ("Do I look like the kind of man to coo Kitty, Kitty?") until she demonstrates her Dadaist artistry by balancing a fish on her head. Mixed-media illustrations are fittingly random and whimsical. Reading list, websites. Outstanding backmatter provides background on Dada. Completely spectacular. *Horn Book*

***Mirror Mirror: a Book of Reversible Verse*, Singer, Marilyn, \$17.00, Dutton IL 3-3**

Through a poetic invention Singer dubs the reverso, Singer meditates on twelve familiar folktales, and, via the magic of shifting line breaks and punctuation, their shadows. Each free-verse poem has two stanzas, set on facing columns, where the second is the first reversed. Similarly illustrations divided into two parts, Shrek-bright, face the cleverly constructed and insightful poems. *Horn Book*

***Miss Brooks Loves Book! (And I Don't)*, Bottner, Barbara, \$18.00, Knopf**

A first grader finds her school librarian's passion for books "vexing," to say the least. The free-spirited Miss Brooks communicates her love for books by dressing up in costumes ranging from a Wild Thing to Abe Lincoln, but while the rest of the class participates enthusiastically, the little girl remains unmoved. When her mother brings out a book about an ogre with warts - William Steig's *Shrek!* - she finally meets a book she can love. This celebration of books and the need for kids to find the right book will make a great story to read anytime. *Horn Book*

***Mitten, The*, Aylesworth, Jim, \$17.00, Scholastic IL K-3**

In this take on the Ukrainian folktale, Aylesworth's polished text shows its storytelling roots with perfect pacing, precisely chosen details, and participatory repetition. In McClintock's energetic pictures, the mitten is red, giving a splash of color to each illustration as the animals squeeze themselves in; the explosion of the mitten after the little mouse enters is spectacular. *Horn Book*

***Monkey See, Monkey Don't*, Lynch, Chris, \$17.00, Scholastic IL 4-6**

In this sequel to *Cyberia*, Zane's nemesis, Dr. Gristle, has created an army of mind-controlled macaques--and planted post-hypnotic suggestions in Zane. Zane's sudden unreliability as a narrator adds a new level of interest to an already offbeat take on the theme of crusading for the oppressed. Short, direct narration and dry dialogue keep the action zipping along and invite between-the-lines reading. *Horn Book*

***Monsters Eat Whiny Children*, Kaplan, Bruce Eric, \$16.00, Simon & Schuster IL K-3**

For those who like their picture books with a little edge and offbeat humor, this is a surefire hit. Henry and Eve are "going through a TERRIBLE phase"; they whine constantly and are eventually stolen by a monster and taken to his lair. To be fair, their kindly father did warn them. Luckily, the monster and his wife whine and argue even more than the children, and cannot agree on what to make: whiny-child salad, burgers, or vindaloo? On the advice of a deliciously cantankerous aunt, the monsters finally agree on simple whiny-child cucumber sandwiches on fluffy white bread. In the meantime, however, the clever children escape, having learned an important lesson about whining--mostly. The recipe for cucumber sandwiches, minus the whiny children, is included. *SLJ*

***Moon Bear*, Guiberson, Brenda, \$18.00, Holt, CA Science Gr 2 IL 1-3**

The endangered Moon Bear, or Asiatic black bear, is the subject of this call-and-response tale created in partnership with the Animals Asia Foundation. Readers follow one female bear as she wakes from hibernation, explores the seasons, and awakens the following spring with new cubs. The story focuses on simple actions such as eating raspberries and swatting insects, giving young readers an idea of how these elusive bears behave. *SLJ*

***Mr. Badger and Mrs. Fox #1 The Meeting*, Luciani, Brigitte, \$21.00, Graphic Universe IL K-3**

This beautifully painted and sweetly told tale—the first in the Mr. Badger and Mrs. Fox series—tells how two different families meet, overcome suspicion of each other, and work to combine resources. Mr. Badger has his paws full caring for a baby girl and her two older brothers, one of whom is a Peter Rabbit–like mischief maker. Mrs. Fox and her daughter happen into the badger burrow when their own is invaded by scary dogs. Rendered as a beginning graphic novel, the story and characters are presented with plenty of heart and soul: expressive anthropomorphic faces and postures and rich dialogue require and reward engagement. *Booklist*

***My Abuelita*, Johnston, Tony, \$16.00, Harcourt (Pura Belpre Honor) IL 1-3**

A boy describes his abuelita's daily routine as she prepares for work. The confusing but lyrical text, deftly incorporating some Spanish words, leads to the story's big reveal: Abuelita is a storyteller. Aptly, Johnston's wordplay provides opportunities for storytellers as a lively read-aloud. Morales's unique mixed-media illustrations (clay, wire, wood, acrylic, etc.) were photographed and computer manipulated. *Horn Book*

***My Garden*, Henkes, Kevin, \$18.00, Greenwillow, Open Court: Imagination IL PreK-2**

In a little girl's imaginary garden, the bunnies are chocolate, there for the eating; planting jellybeans yields a jellybean bush. Henkes goes beyond kids' love of sweets, perceptively conveying the strange appeal of ordinary objects: "Sometimes...good, unusual things would just pop up--buttons and umbrellas and rusty old keys." The black-outlined pastel-colored art is as playful as the text. *Horn Book*

***Mysterious Howling, The*, Wood, Maryrose, \$16.00, Balzer & Bray IL 5-8**

Miss Penelope Lumley is governess to three uncivilized (understandably, as they've been raised by wolves) children on a full-of-secrets country estate. Let the over-the-top characterizations, ludicrous situations, and tongue-in-cheek humor begin! This first installment is practically all setup, settling Penelope in and introducing various mysteries. Like Lemony Snicket, Wood has the gift of simultaneously sending up and inhabiting the story she's telling. *Horn Book*

***Nabeel's New Pants, an Eid Tale*, Gilani-Williams, Fawzia, \$18.00, Marshall Cavendish, Culturally Responsive IL K-2**

Family life is the heart of this upbeat picture book about the Muslim celebration of Eid, which takes place after the fast of Ramadan. Turkish shoemaker Nabeel buys Eid gifts for his family. The shopkeeper also persuades Nabeel to buy himself new pants, but the pants are too long. His wife, mother, and daughter are all too busy to shorten his pants, so he cuts a few inches off them himself. Later, the women in the house feel guilty, and each secretly trims the pants more, not realizing the trousers' increasingly shortened length. When Nabeel finally puts them on, they only reach his knees. Kids will laugh right along with the loving characters, who sew the missing pants pieces back together to give Nabeel perfectly fitting trousers in the end. *Booklist*

***Never Smile at a Monkey*, Jenkins, Steve, \$12.00, Houghton Mifflin IL 1-4**

Jenkins presents animals' not-always-obvious physical or behavioral defense mechanisms. Creatures include platypuses, hippopotamuses, and cane toads. Each page contains one of Jenkins's richly detailed cut-paper illustrations, an alliterative caution about the human behaviors that would cause the animal's defenses to activate, and a brief explanation of the unfortunate consequences of such actions. *Booklist*

***The Night Fairy*, Schlitz, Laura Amy, \$17.00, Candlewick IL 1-4**

Flory is a night fairy who is still becoming accustomed to her beautiful mothlike wings when a run-in with a bat drops her into a strange garden unable to fly. She is forced to learn to survive in the daylight and takes up residence in a birdhouse in a Giantess's garden. Flory, no taller than an acorn, struggles at first with squirrels, hummingbirds, spiders, and other creatures that do not look at the world the same way she does. She quickly learns that kindness, compassion, generosity, and bravery can help her to make much-needed friends. *Booklist*

***Night Lights*, Gal, Susan, \$15.00, Alfred A. Knopf IL PreK-1**

An assortment of evening lights is described in this beautifully illustrated picture book. A girl, her mother, and their dog spend a pleasant evening as they bicycle home from shopping, roast hot dogs over a grill on the porch, celebrate her birthday, run inside at the arrival of a summer storm, and get ready for bed. An appropriately dark palette complements the 15 types of illumination named in this nearly wordless story. *SLJ*

***Oh, Daddy!*, Shea, Bob, \$17.00, Balzer & Bray, PreK: Families Everywhere IL PreK-1**

In this humorous paean to fatherhood, a rounded, Raschka-esque hippo explains that he is so smart that he shows his dad how to do things. Shea goes through a series of scenarios in which the father gets his son to do what he wants by pretending he doesn't know how to do it correctly. When the youngster claims to be "busy getting dressed," the pictures show him watching TV in his underwear. The father proceeds to mix up his clothing and asks, "Is this how you get dressed?" prompting the child to respond, "Oh, Daddy! This is how you get dressed!" And so it goes, ending with the boy showing his father how to give big hugs. *SLJ*

***Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, Eliot, T. S., \$16.00, Harcourt IL 3+**

This lively and accessible edition of Eliot's classic homage to felines rounds up the familiar gang, with characters like the sprightly Jellicle Cats, who dance in chorus lines on moonlit rooftops, and the vicious Great Rumpuscat, whose fearsome jaws and eyes like "fireballs fearfully blazing" send rival dog gangs scattering. The distinctive personalities of each cat-brought to life by Scheffler's expressive cartoonlike paintings-and Eliot's lyrical, tongue-and-cheek wordplay, will appeal to a new generation of cat aficionados. *Publisher's Weekly*

***On the Blue Comet*, Wells, Rosemary, \$17.00, Candlewick IL 3+**

Eleven year old Oscar lives with his dad in Cairo, IL. They share a love for model trains, particularly exact replicas of existing trains. After the Crash of 1929, Oscar's dad loses his job and their house, including the model trains, and leaves for California to look for work. Oliver is left in the care of his dour Aunt Carmen. Pining for the trains and the connection to his father that they represent, he visits the Blue Comet in the basement of the First National Bank on Christmas Eve. Harold Applegate, a homeless man, explains the theory of time pockets, to Oscar. When armed robbers break into the bank, Harold tells Oscar to jump into the model train set, and the boy is catapulted into an adventure that carries him from coast to coast and across time from 1931 to 1941 as he searches for his dad. *SLJ*

***One Crazy Summer*, Williams-Garcia, Rita, \$16.00, Amistad IL 4-7**

Eleven-year-old Delphine and her two younger sisters spend the summer of 1968 in Oakland visiting the mother who deserted them and getting an unexpected education in revolution from the Black Panthers. Williams-Garcia writes vividly about that turbulent summer through the intelligent, funny, blunt voice of Delphine, who observes outsiders and her own family with shrewdness and a keen perception. *Horn Book*

***Other Half of my Heart*, The, Frazier, Sundee T., \$17.00, Delacorte 4-6**

The idea of being a twin has built-in appeal—a sibling who has almost identical experiences of the world can be an instant BFF. That ideal informs the lives of sisters Minni and Keira, but the differences between the biracial siblings may be vaster than they'd like to think, because Minni's coloring is white like their father's, while Keira's is black like their mother's. During the summer when the girls turn 11, awareness of how they're perceived is driven home when a storekeeper in their home state of Washington has a widely disparate reaction to the girls' browsing through fancy

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dresses. Later, when the girls visit their prickly maternal grandmother in North Carolina and compete in a beauty contest for African Americans, Minni feels she is the focus of skeptical attention. Not only does Frazier raise questions worth pondering but her ability to round out each character, looking past easy explanations for attitude, is impressive. She also leavens the whole with easy humor and builds suspense over the pageant itself. Will the talented and outgoing Keira win the prize? Will Minni be able to overcome her shyness and shine? A novel with a great deal of heart indeed, from the winner of the John Steptoe New Talent Award for Brendan Buckley's *Universe and Everything in It* (2007). *Booklist*

***Out of My Mind*, Draper, Sharon, \$17.00, Atheneum IL 4-6**

Narrator Melody is a fifth grader with cerebral palsy. She's brilliant, but few people realize just how brilliant until she receives "Elvira," her Medi-Talker computer. Draper paints the picture of a real girl—with tantrums and attitude, problems with mean girls and oafish adults. This is an eye-opening book with an unforgettable protagonist and a rich cast of fully realized, complicated characters. *Horn Book*

***Paris in the Spring With Picasso*, Yolleck, Joan, \$18.00, Schwartz & Wade IL 3-5**

Putting Gertrude Stein (to say nothing of Alice B. Toklas) in a picture book seems a dubious choice. But the fun of this artsy, artful offering is that it doesn't matter a whit who these ladies are, nor the rest of their friends, from Picasso to poet and painter Max Jacob—because this is more about mood and possibilities and Paris! than it is about a particular soiree... a romp around the city highlights an acrobat in a park, and Pablo Picasso painting barefoot in his room. As the sun sets over Notre Dame, the artists and writers make their way to Gertrude's, where conversation and food await. This is a joyous text that invites readers into the fun, and an impressionistic view of the action, with fluid lines and bright colors that will remind some of Matisse's work. Children will enjoy this peek into the adult world, and a note about the partygoers may lead them to learn more. *Booklist*

***Project Sea Horse*, Turner, Pamela S., \$18.00, Houghton Mifflin IL 4-8**

Project Seahorse follows the work of two dedicated scientists as they explore the life cycle of the tiger tail seahorse and forge partnerships with the people of Handumon in the Philippines to save its habitat. A full-page color map places the islands in their global context and shows the range of seahorses, animals that scientists know little about. The stunning full-color photographs amplify the descriptions of the creatures' life cycle as the male receives the eggs from the female and nurtures them to maturity in his brood pouch. *SLJ*

***Push Button*, Aliko, \$17.00, Greenwillow, PreK: I am Special IL PreK-K**

The high-powered preschooler in Aliko's buoyant book bustles through the bright, cheery illustrations: "Inside, outside, / Up or down, / He pushes any / Button around." Eventually, his trigger finger suffers a boo-boo. Waiting to heal, he flips through a picture book. The pro-reading message could have been preachy, but under Aliko's direction, everything's just a lot of whiz-bang fun. *Horn Book*

***The Quiet Book*, Underwood, Deborah, \$13.00, Houghton Mifflin, IL PreK-1**

Within a youngster's busy day there are "many kinds of quiet," from "trying not to hiccup quiet" to "sleeping sister quiet." Clever illustrations featuring different animal characters capture the essence of each hushed moment. Liwska colors her finely hatched pencil drawings with low-value, low-intensity hues, matching the theme of low aural volume with a muted but detailed visual quality that invites a close look. Soothing and layered. *Kirkus*

***Ratfink*, Jones, Marcia Thornton, \$17.00, Dutton IL 3-5**

Logan knows that "fifth-graders are mean," so he is determined not to let anyone at school find out about his forgetful, embarrassing grandpa, who has moved in with Logan's family. What if his classmates spot Grandpa singing nursery rhymes or wandering around naked? Then new student Emily "the Snot" Scott gets ahold of a mortifying picture that Grandpa took of Logan, and she threatens to send it to everyone at school—unless Logan finds out the secret his best friend, Malik, has been keeping. ... Told with rapid dialogue, this novel's gripping conflicts about loyalty, betrayal, and kindness are never simplistic, and the standoffs with family, friends, and enemies are realistic and dramatic... Hilarious and heartbreaking, this novel adds depth and complexity to the usual triumph-over-the-bullies story. *Booklist*

***Robot Zot!*, Scieszka, Jon, \$18.00, Simon & Schuster IL IL K-3**

Robot Zot faces such fearsome creatures as a blender, coffee maker, and toaster before rescuing his lady (a toy cell phone) from the jaws of "Earth's most fearsome Commander General" (a black Lab puppy). In this humorous mock-epic, the tension between the robot's clueless heroics and the domestic setting is made manifest in appealing acrylic illustrations, all down close at Zot's perspective. *Horn Book*

***Saving Sky*, Stanley, Diane, \$16.00, Harper, Open Court: Perseverance IL 5-8**

Stanley asks young readers to consider what courage might look like in an America under psychological and physical siege. Growing up off the grid on a New Mexico ranch, Sky is cocooned from the country's escalating fears over war and terrorist attacks. Then her friend Kareem is falsely arrested at the local Home Depot, setting off a chain of events that utterly upends Sky's sense of security: police arrest Kareem's parents, Kareem goes into hiding, and Sky is interrogated by the police about her role in Kareem's disappearance. As fears mount, the U.S. slips deeper into anarchy, and foreign-born American families pay the price as they are rounded up and interned. Sky and her family fight back the only way they can—by hiding and protecting Kareem on their vast, isolated ranch. *Booklist*

***Saving the Ghost of the Mountain: An Expedition Among Snow Leopards in Mongolia*, Montgomery, Sy, \$18.00 Houghton Mifflin, CA Science Gr 6 IL 4-8**

Montgomery and Bishop (Quest for the Tree Kangaroo) tag along with conservationist Tom McCarthy in search of the rare snow leopard in Mongolia. Montgomery describes not just the creatures and scientists who track them but also the land and Mongolian culture. Bishop's excellent photographs feature the region's arid, rocky landscapes, the people who live there, and the research team in action. *Horn Book*

***The Secret Cave: Discovering Lascaux*, McCully, Emily Arnold, \$17.00, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, CA Vistas Gr 6 IL 2-6**

Part Hardy Boys, part archeology, this mesmerizing look at the discovery of the prehistoric cave paintings of Lascaux invites today's readers to experience the wonder of the event. McCully has written and drawn a stunning fictionalized account based on historical records and interviews. The endpapers entice with the rendering of the maps of the caves, and soft, wide watercolor strokes capture the essence of the prehistoric art. *Kirkus*

***The Shadow Hunt*, Langrish, Katherine, \$17.00, Harper IL 5-8**

Wolf, on the run from the monastery where he was raised, rescues a strange child from the moors of Devil's Edge and takes her to a grand castle where he meets Nest, and he is starting to imagine a future there with her until dark forces begin conspiring against them. Supernatural fantasy fans will enjoy this tale that effectively explores magic, mystery, and the struggle between good and evil. *Booklist*

***Shark vs Train*, Barton, Chris, \$17.00, Little Brown IL PreK-2**

If a shark is pitted against a train, which would win? The answer depends on the contest: the train's belch is louder, but he's no match for the shark when jumping off the high dive. Barton's deadpan text--sparked with dialogue balloons that give the characters both personality and one-liners--is matched by Lichtenheld's spot-on visual humor. *Horn Book*

***Sir Charles Chaplin, the Funniest Man in the World*, Fleischman, Sid, \$19.00, Greenwillow IL 5+**

This volume examines the life of Charlie Chaplin, a sad boy who grew up to become the world's greatest comedian. Fleischman's humorous wordplay ("Noise and chaos were Keystone's proof that the studio was putting its best footage forward") makes the energetic narrative come alive. Brief, easily digestible chapters, an extensive time line, and plenty of photos make the book's well-researched content accessible and appealing. Add to that Fleischman's playful narrative tone and you have a book as entertaining as Sir Charlie himself. *SLJ*

***Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down*, Pinkney, Andrea Davis, \$17.00, Little Brown, Open Court: Taking a Stand IL 3-6**

A colorful narrative full of food references ("At first, they were treated like the hole in a doughnut") recounts the 1960 sit-in at the Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Watercolor and ink illustrations swirl with energy,

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capturing both the seriousness and exuberance of the student protesters. Sprinkled throughout are quotes from Martin Luther King Jr., formatted in extra-large typefaces. Reading list, timeline, websites. *Horn Book*

Skit-Scat Raggedy Cat Ella Fitzgerald, Orgill, Roxane, \$18.00, Candlewick, Open Court: Beyond the Notes IL 3-6

Describes how the poor, "raggedy cat" scat-sang her way into jazz history. Orgill begins with Fitzgerald as a child dancing to her mother's records and closes with the 21-year-old woman joining the Chick Webb Band in Harlem. The interim includes frank, but not frightening, descriptions of Fitzgerald's tenure in an abusive orphanage and of the impoverished days when she slept where she could and sang on the streets for money. Snatches of her famous songs are woven throughout the narrative. An unforgettable portrait of an artist whose faith in herself carried her when little else did. *SLJ*

Sleepover at Grandma's House, Joesse, Barbara, \$18.00, Philomel Books, PreK: Families Everywhere IL PreK-2

A little elephant makes her way to her grandmother's house for sleepover fun. The story is told in bouncy rhythmic lines that almost beg to be sung, with the refrain, "Oh. We love each other so" woven throughout. The child and her grandmother play silly games, tell one another stories, and take absolute delight in each other's antics. Their exuberantly shared enjoyment and love are perfectly reflected in the slightly muted full-color ink, watercolor, and acrylic illustrations. *SLJ*

Sleepy, oh so Sleepy, Fleming, Denise, \$18.00, Holt, PreK: I am Special IL PreK

Fleming's pulp papermaking technique, with its soft edges, warm colors, and highly textured look, gives this book just the right tone. The repetition of "sleepy, oh so sleepy" pairs well with the repeated question, "Where's my sleepy baby?" as various animals are introduced. From the familiar panda and penguin to the lesser-known anteater and orangutan, the many creatures are depicted in their natural environments. The final spread features a tiny human baby, which, for any child still awake after this soothing read, will be a pleasing sight. *Booklist*

Smile!, Hodgkinson, Leigh, \$17.00, Balzer & Bray IL K-2

Denied any more cookies before dinner, Sunny loses her smile--literally--and spends the book's length trying to find it. After Mom praises her for cleaning her room, her smile resurfaces. The illustrations featuring a big-eyed mopet set against collage-meets-cartoon-like backgrounds are attention-grabbing. *Horn Book*

Sneaky Sheep, Monroe, Chris, \$15.00, Carolrhoda Books IL PreK-2

Despite the dangers they encounter, the two not-very-bright sheep in this hilarious story continue to make "some bad decisions" and are always saved by loyal sheep dog Murphy. Both the text and artwork celebrate disobedience, and those looking for a cautionary tale should look elsewhere: the ending hints that some habits (especially bad ones) die hard. Luckily, the same isn't true of Rocky and Blossom. *Publisher's Weekly*

Snook Alone, Nelson, Marilyn, \$17.00, Candlewick, Open Court: Survival IL K-4

This story in free verse tells of a small rat terrier that lives on an island with the monk Abba Jacob. In charming acrylic and ink spot art that erupts into luscious colorful spreads, readers see these two friends go about their simple yet meaningful days. Abba Jacob prays, gardens, and tends to his hermitage while the pup shadows him. During a special trip where Abba Jacob is assigned to catalog plant and animal species on several small islands, a storm comes up that separates the two friends, leaving Snook on an unfamiliar island on his own. The dog takes in the curious world around him from crabs to sharks to sea turtles, but he never stops waiting for the monk's return. This book will capture the heart of anyone who has ever loved and been loved by a special pet. *SLJ*

Sophie Peterman Tells the Truth!, Weeks, Sarah, \$17.00, Beach Lane Books IL PreK-2

In no uncertain terms, a girl warns readers about the perils of a new sibling. Looking like an alien at first, and the object of unwarranted praise and attention, a baby is prone to all manner of gross behaviors. Sophie reveals that the situation doesn't get better as the infant grows into a toddler, stealing Halloween candy, swallowing lucky marbles, and exhibiting

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general uninhibited behavior. She softens, though, when the monster begins to focus affection on her but leaves readers with a warning not to reveal this softness to parents lest they repeat the experience. Older siblings will laugh at the younger child's antics and parents will chortle at Sophie's reactions and perspective in all her righteous truth telling. *SLJ*

***Spaceheadz*, Scieszka, Jon, \$15.00, Simon & Schuster IL 3-5**

Michael's first day in fifth grade is not going well. A new school is bad enough, but the teacher has partnered him with two extremely weird kids. Bob and Jennifer tell Michael that they are Spaceheadz from another planet and that they need his help to save the world. They explain that Earth is in danger of being turned off, depriving the interstellar civilizations of our tasty TV and radio waves. Comically twisted contemporary cultural references abound. The young aliens speak primarily in TV advertising slogans, which fit remarkably-and hilariously-into the dialogue. Real commercial products, from George Foreman grills to CharminT toilet tissue, are put to exotic extraterrestrial uses. The black-and-white cartoon illustrations are often integrated into the text layout, giving the book a graphic-novel feel. *SLJ*

***Spells*, Gravett, Emily, \$17.00, Simon & Schuster IL K-4**

As in *Wolves* (2005) and *Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears* (2007, both S & S), Gravett continues her playful focus on the book as physical object. Here a small green frog transforms an old book of spells into a pirate ship, its torn pages serving as sail, flag, telescope, and water. As he cavorts through ripped-up incantations, he finds a scrap that reads: "Spell to Become a Handsome Prince." On the ensuing spreads, the frog's attempts to line up the proper magic words and phrases are depicted with split pages leading to increasingly hilarious results. . . . While the frog's wish does come true, it is undone when he fails to read the fine print-a condition clarified only on the endpapers. *SLJ*

***Spork*, Maclear, Kyo, \$17.00, Kids Can Press IL PreK-2**

Children of mixed marriages are about to find an unlikely ally in their cutlery drawers. Spork stands out. With a spoon for a mum and a fork for a dad, Spork is simultaneously too round and too pointy to fit in. Time and again he's passed over at the dinner table. That is, until the day a "messy thing" joins the family and everyone sees that when it comes to managing its baby food only a true spork will do. A sublime little parable. *Kirkus*

***Stable*, Lewin, Ted, \$18.00, Roaring Brook, CA Vistas Gr 1 IL K-3**

This large-format picture book opens outside a Brooklyn stable in the late 1800s, when horses pulled carriages, trolleys, and fire engines as well as wagons carrying milk, ice, and produce through city streets. Fast-forward to today's Brooklyn, where the old Kensington stable still stands. Sepia-toned paintings depicting bygone days give way to the sun-dappled watercolors illustrating the modern stable at work, its horses used for trail rides, lessons, and pulling carriages. Suggest it for history or transportation units, horse-crazy readers, and families looking for a gentle introduction to nonfiction. *Booklist*

***Star in the Forest*, Resau, Laura, \$15.00, Delacorte IL 4-6**

When her illegal-immigrant father is deported back to Mexico, eleven-year-old Zitlally withdraws. She slowly builds trust with outcast Crystal and with a pathetic chained-up dog that she names Star. This novel's topic springs from situations that illegal immigrants face daily. Resau gives her protagonist a lyrical voice and outlook. A short folktale is added after the main story. Realistic fiction coupled with a good plot makes this a winner. An author's note is included. *Glos. Horn Book*

***Stick Man*, Donaldson, Julia, \$17.00, Arthur Levine IL K-3**

"Stick Man lives in the family tree / With his Stick Lady Love and their stick children three." After being mistaken for a plain old stick, Stick Man suffers many indignities--then finds himself in a fireplace on Christmas Eve. Donaldson's lively rhyme and Scheffler's comical illustrations (never has a stick looked more engaging) help temper worries about our hero's fate. *Horn Book*

***Summer Birds: The Butterflies of Maria Merian*, Engle, Margarita, \$18.00, Holt IL 1-4**

Challenging the superstition that "summer birds"--butterflies and moths--were evil creatures spawned from mud, thirteen-year-old Maria Merian observed their life cycles and painted them. The book shines a light on a little-known seventeenth-century entomologist and artist. Decorative illustrations, often set against a white backdrop, are meticulous and richly detailed. An author's note is included. *Horn Book*

***Sunday is for God*, McGowan, Michael, \$18.00, Schwartz & Wade IL 1-3**

A young boy describes how Sunday differs from other days of the week: he gets dressed up ("I guess that's what the Lord wants, but I wish He didn't"), listens to the pastor "preaching up a storm," and races home for a family dinner. The slice-of-life tale balances reverence and humor. Illustrations collage church and family scenes with scripture passages and hymns. *Horn Book*

***Switching On the Moon; A Very First Book of Bedtime Poems*, Yolen, Jane, \$21.00, Candlewick IL K-3**

Sixty well-chosen poems conjure up the perfect atmosphere for dreaming. Sometimes playful and sometimes thought-provoking, the poetry is divided into three categories to carry readers through the bedtime hours: "Going to Sleep," "Sweet Dreams," and "In the Night." Karas's cartoon illustrations, done in gouache, acrylic, and pencil, beautifully complement each poem while also creating an aura of nighttime magic that unifies the volume. *SLJ*

***Take Me With You*, Marsden, Carolyn, \$15.00, Candlewick, Culturally Responsive Literature IL 5-8**

Pina and Susanna, eleven, both live in a home for abandoned children outside of Naples. Biracial Susanna is sure that beautiful blond Pina will be adopted first. When Susanna's birth father appears unexpectedly, the girls' friendship is tested. Marsden's incisive prose spares no emotional moment; alternating points of view allow each girl's experience equal time in this moving story. *Glos. Horn Book*

***There's a Princess in the Palace*, Alley, Zoe B., \$19.00, Roaring Brook, Open Court: Sharing Stories IL 2+**

Within a graphic-novel format, the tales of Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, the Frog Prince and the Princess and the Pea develop familial and hilarious interconnections while retaining the stories' traditional structures. The humor is decidedly contemporary: Cinderella's fairy godmother sends her off with, "Have fun! Make good decisions!" and Princess Dawn (Cinderella's daughter, Sleeping Beauty) whines about being bored. A pair of mice who appear in each tale and in many frames kibitz vigorously, commenting, punning and making allusions that are funny even if readers do not entirely understand them. The colors are bright, the line vivacious and the typefaces dance and sing. The Dwarfs in Snow White each sport a different old-guy hat (or kerchief), the princes are all handsome and supportive and Joan the disgruntled fairy finds a new calling in real estate. *Smartly hysterical. Kirkus*

***There's Going to be a Baby*, Burningham, John, \$17.00, Candlewick, PreK -Families Everywhere IL PreK-1**

As the winter snows arrive, a mother tells her young son that a new baby is on the way. "When is the baby going to come?" he asks. His mom answers, "The baby will arrive when it's ready, in the fall, when the leaves are turning brown and falling." The remaining panels portray the conversations they have over the next several months as they anticipate the birth. The boy's emotions run from some initial anxiety to realizing that he will perhaps have a new playmate to wondering if a new baby is really necessary. The illustrations alternate between mother-and-son talks at the park, the bank, the zoo, etc., with the youngster's fanciful imaginings of the baby at work and play. *SLJ*

***Thomas and the Dragon Queen*, Crum, Shutta, \$16.00, Knopf IL 3-5**

In this medieval tale, pint-size Thomas, 12, finds that he has been elevated from squire to knight against all odds. To put it simply, he's too young, tiny, and inexperienced for such an important position. He can't even hold a proper sword. Yet the king has requested that he liberate the princess from the clutches of the feared dragon queen: all the big knights are off battling the enemy. Thomas sets off on old Bartholomew the donkey because he's too short for a horse. He learns that he must defeat a monster along the way, one that has sent many a good warrior to his grave. In a quest that is full of peril and adventure, Thomas must face everyone's worst nightmare: Does he have what it takes? *SLJ*

***Todd's TV*, Proimos, James, \$16.00, Katherine Tegan Bks IL K-2**

Readers are introduced to diminutive, cheerful Todd, his too-busy-for-quality-time parents, and his increasingly nurturing television set. "Todd loved his parents. But he had grown much closer to his TV." Only a few pages in, some adult readers will be shifting uncomfortably. The spread featuring Todd, his eyes unnaturally large and glazed over on one side, and the huge TV facing him on the other, won't ease their discomfort a whit. At this point, the author jumps into a hilariously exaggerated focal plot that manages to ease the tension and intensify the message. It all starts when neither parent is available to attend Todd's parent-teacher conference-and the TV volunteers. *SLJ*

***The Trucker*, Samuels, Barbara, \$17.00, FSG, Open Court: Things that Go IL PreK-1**

Leo's mom knows the extent of her son's fascination with trucks. He's driven them up and down her legs, lost one in her oatmeal, and used another to pour syrup on his pancakes. When they go outside to explore the neighborhood, he ignores everything but the trucks, and when she surprises him with a new cat, he exclaims, "This is not a fire truck!" The plump tabby will not be pushed away, though; she finds ways to interact with Leo and his trucks. With a cat like Lola in his life, the child eventually finds different uses for his toys and more time to spend with a new friend. This book is sure to be a hit at storytime. *SLJ*

***Turtle in Paradise*, Holm, Jennifer L., \$17.00, Random House IL 3-5**

It's 1935, and narrator Turtle is sent to live in Key West. With her stoic nature and quick wits, she's able to fit in with her boy cousins. Turtle's voice is tart and world-weary. Though her narrative is peppered with references from the time, as she compares herself to Little Orphan Annie and gladly avoids going to a Shirley Temple movie, modern-day readers will have no trouble relating, and the fast-moving plot will keep them interested to the end. Reading list, websites. *Horn Book*

***Ubiquitous: Celebrating Nature's Survivors*, Sidman, Joyce, \$17.00, Houghton Mifflin IL 1-6**

As Sidman points out, "99 percent of all species that have ever existed are now extinct." In her fourteen poems, the survivors range from bacteria to us, from ancient (mollusks) to newcomers (crows). The pieces vary in tone and form; facts are supplemented in prose. In the entrancing illustrations, Prange's bold linocuts are drenched in vivid watercolor. Timeline, websites. Glos. *Horn Book*

***Waiting Out the Storm*, Macken, Joann Early, \$16.00, Candlewick, PreK – Changes IL PreK-2**

Out on a hillside as a storm moves in, a young girl and her mother observe the raindrops falling, the thunder rumbling, and the lightning flashing. As they approach their house, the girl asks where the turtles, chipmunks, and birds go during a storm and her mother explains. Indoors, they settle down in a chair together to watch the rain fall. The text creates a natural-sounding rhythm and flow of dialogue, from childlike questions and fears to grown-up answers and reassurances. *Booklist*

***Wanted: The Perfect Pet*, Robertson, Fiona, \$17.00, Putnam, Open Court: Finding Friends IL K-2**

Henry advertises for a pet dog. Duck wants a friend, so he answers Henry's ad disguised as a dog. Duck isn't a very good dog, but when his identity is revealed, Henry makes a list of duck skills that point to his being the perfect pet after all. Minimally colored line drawings humorously enhance this warm tale of friendship. *Horn Book*

***We the Children*, Clements, Andrew, \$15.00, Atheneum IL 3-6**

Sixth-grader Ben is racing off to class when he finds the janitor, Mr. Keane, in severe pain. The man gives him a gold coin from 1783 that can be traced to the first man hired by the founder of Captain Duncan Oakes School. It reads, "First and always/My school belongs to the children./Defend it." A few hours later, he is dead. The town council has sold the school to a big company to build a theme park, and there's something very fishy about the deal. Ben studies the history of his school and he convinces his friend Jill to help him explore it. Meanwhile, Ben is adjusting to his parents' separation and living at home with his Mom and on the sailboat with his dad. Expressive, dynamic full-page and spot illustrations rendered in pen and ink, heighten the action. An exciting ending sequence features Ben participating in a sailboat race and becoming a reluctant hero. There are many questions to be answered in the next book. Good writing by an experienced author, likable characters, and a mystery to be solved make this a solid choice. *SLJ*

***Whaling Season: A Year in the Life of an Arctic Whale Scientist*, Lourie, Peter, \$18.00, Houghton Mifflin, CA
Science Gr 6 IL 4-8**

Lourie skillfully describes the delicate three-way relationship that exists among the Inupiat of Alaska, the bowhead whales, and the scientists who are there to collect data and study the animals. The Inupiat have hunted bowheads for thousands of years and their very existence depends upon the harvesting of the leviathans. The scientists are there to determine whether the whaling done by these communities is sustainable and not decimating the bowhead population. Crisp color photographs on every page provide a lush complement to the engaging, informative text. Young readers will come away with a stronger appreciation of the bowhead whales, the people who both hunt and respect them, and the scientists who straddle the traditional and modern worlds to gather important information. An excellent addition to any collection. *SLJ*

***Where the Streets Had a Name*, Abdel-Fattah, Randa, \$18.00, Scholastic IL 5-8**

Physically and emotionally scarred, Hayaat lives behind the Israeli-built Separation Wall in the West Bank City of Bethlehem. When her beloved grandmother falls ill, the 13-year-old decides to make her way to Jerusalem to fill an empty hummus jar with soil from the land of her grandmother's ancestral home. She is certain that this will mend her heart. Unfortunately, although Jerusalem is merely minutes away, curfews, checkpoints, and an identity card that doesn't allow her to cross the border mean that Hayaat and her soccer-loving, troublemaker friend Samy face a perilous journey. A cast of quirky characters adds both humor and realism to the story, making the devastating circumstances more palatable to young readers and keeping the story light in spite of a heavy topic and some dark realizations as the plot moves forward. *SLJ*

***Wishing for Tomorrow: The Sequel to A Little Princess*, McKay, Hilary, \$17.00, Margaret K. McElderry IL 4-7**

Sara Crewe and Becky have left Miss Minchin's academy for girls. Miss Minchin is shattered, Lavinia bored, Ermengarde and Lottie bereft--and bigger changes are afoot. Alice, Becky's assertive replacement, refuses to sleep in the attic; she's no doormat. The discovery that girls can attend Oxford prompts Lavinia to put her strong will to use; she vows to go herself, an opportunity she recognizes was denied to the young Miss Minchin. Struggling to fill Sara's shoes, caring for Lottie and feeding the rat Melchisedec, sturdy Ermengarde discovers her own strength. These characters, including Sara in a small but key role, are more nuanced than their originals, and McKay is never didactic. Her signature charm and light touch, echoed in Maland's illustrations, complement Burnett's renowned creation. The result is storytelling magic. *Kirkus*

***A Wizard from the Start, the Incredible Boyhood and Amazing Inventions of Thomas Edison*, Brown, Don, \$17.00, Houghton Mifflin IL 2-4**

Young Thomas Edison worked hard, mixed chemicals, cultivated curiosity, and read a lot of books. These are the seeds of the inventor's success as presented by Brown in this unfussy picture book biography, illustrated with softly glowing watercolors. Readers will appreciate Brown's depiction of an "incredible boyhood," which here means finding one's passions at a young age and pursuing them with gusto. *Bib*

***Wonder Horse: the True Story of the World's Smartest Horse*, McCully, Emily Arnold, \$18.00, Holt, Culturally Responsive Literature IL 2-4**

Bill "Doc" Key was born a slave and had a special way with animals even as a youngster. Following the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation, he worked as a veterinarian and preached the gospel of kindness to all creatures. Despite the racial climate in the Jim Crow South, he joined a medicine show and became wealthy selling a liniment that he invented for both animals and humans. With his newfound wealth, Doc bought a racehorse and bred her in hopes of producing a champion. When the foal was born, his twisted legs meant racing was not in the cards. But Jim Key was an unusual and smart horse, and his antics tickled his owner. Doc set about teaching him to pick out letters and colors, and to count and do arithmetic, and he mastered all of these tasks. ...watercolors make this title as beautiful as it is fun to read, and its humane message is an important one. Based on a true story. *SLJ*

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***Word After Word After Word*, McacLachlan, Patricia, \$15.00, Katherine Tegan Bks IL 2-5**

Ms. Mirabel, a visiting poet, works with a fourth-grade class over several weeks as they first discuss why people write poetry and then attempt to express themselves in verse... Narrator Lucy, whose mother is recovering from cancer treatments, often meets her friends to talk about their hopes, their fears, their families, and their charismatic poetry mentor. Children reading the book may long for such friends, who talk so openly about serious matters, support each other in direct and indirect ways, and find plenty to laugh about, too. As the story draws to a close, even the adults in their lives are drawn into the magical power of words. Showing great respect for both her readers and her craft, MacLachlan makes every word count in Lucy's smooth-flowing, economical narrative. Though a number of characters cry along the way, the story is anything but sad, and even poignant is too soppy an adjective for the swift, subtle depiction of characters' realizations, revelations, and connections. A memorable short chapter book. SLJ

***Yucky Worms*, French, Vivian, \$17.00, Candlewick, CA Science Gr 2 IL K-3**

A young boy accompanies his grandmother to her backyard garden where, while planting, she digs up a worm. When the boy tells her to "throw it away," the woman enlightens him about why worms are beneficial. She explains how to tell the head from the tail; how the worms move through the soil, helping to aerate it; how their "poop" or "cast" helps fertilize plants; what they eat; and what likes to eat them. She debunks myths about the creepy crawlies and instills in her grandson a better understanding and respect for the creatures and their importance for growing plants. SLJ

***Zen Ghost*, Muth, Jon J., \$18.00, Scholastic IL 1-6**

In the third of Muth's contemplative series, Stillwater the panda comes dressed as a ghost to join Addy, Michael, and Karl on Halloween. After trick or treating, they travel through the misty night to Stillwater's house. There, another panda (which one is Stillwater?) shares a ghost story, painted in black ink and based on a Zen koan, which questions the nature of identity. Haunting in multiple senses of the word, this tale should captivate thoughtful readers, as Muth's watercolors convey a world of infinite possibility and gentle enchantment. All ages. *Publisher's Weekly*