

DIVERSITY IN YOUTH LITERATURE TOOLKIT

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PART A: COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

This Toolkit provides a mini-database of multicultural literature for children and youth resources for five diverse groups: (1) Latinx/Caribbean-American, (2) African-American, (3) Asian/Pacific-American and Middle Eastern, (4) Native American/Indian American/First Nations, and (5) Other Diverse Groups including LGBTQIA+, Disability Experiences, and Religious Diversity. Under Part B: Resources, for each diverse group I have included a case study on a particular book, a list of helpful resources (artists, awards, organizations, experts, websites, publishers, and recommended books), and a top 5 recent books list that any library or book store would benefit from adding to their collections. Finally, Part C: Application demonstrates one way I can promote multicultural literature for children and youth in my community. My example is an Action Letter requesting a local bookstore increase its African-American collection to better represent its local population.

I am committed to advocating for diversity in our schools and libraries because all children deserve to see themselves reflected in the literature they read (Naidoo, 2014). From a psychological perspective, diverse literature helps children establish an internalized sense of self that influences the way they learn and reinforces their self-esteem (Naidoo, 2014). Further, by providing access to books by and about diverse populations, children can discover commonalities amongst themselves despite existing surface differences (Horning, 2010). Children can learn empathy through diverse literature in a way they cannot if everything they read features characters that are just like them. Finally, cultural literacy is developed through learning about others' cultures and how they interact (Naidoo, 2014). This allows for children to see a larger world than what exists in their households, and opens them up to new experiences where they can see how they fit in. All children deserve an equitable shot to discern their place in the universe, and libraries and schools can be the catalysts that equip them, in part by sharing multicultural children's literature.

PART B: RESOURCES

Latinx/Caribbean-American Literature for Youth

Case Study: A Text Evaluation of *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo

1. Quality. This book's literary merit begins with its poetical structure which pulls the reader into the main character's life and feelings. Xiomara is a 15-year-old Dominican American girl growing up in New York's Harlem neighborhood. Her twin brother, Xavier, goes to a high school for gifted kids, but she attends the neighborhood school. Her best friend, Caridad, goes to a Catholic school. Xiomara does not feel like she has much in common with them, and often feels alone especially because her parents are so different from her. She pours her feelings into poems in a journal her brother got her, but also becomes intrigued by a Spoken Word Poetry Club starting up at her school. She cannot attend the Club because it occurs at the same time as her weekly Confirmation class, but eventually things line up and she goes. Her world changes and she thinks, "I can't remember the last time people were silent while I spoke, actually listening."

Xiomara felt her importance in the world because she was discovering and doing what she loved. This is universal; it feels rare these days to describe your true self and have people actually listening. This desire to be known extends beyond teenage life into adulthood and it further uplifts this book to be a great work of art.

2. Language/Speech. The language is not free of derogatory terms. However, this does not detract from the book. As a high schooler, Xiomara rarely curses but when she does it adds to the story and is consistent with her character. Free from stereotypical accents or pronunciations, Spanish language is used throughout the novel. Occasionally, no definitions or translations are given, but context helps decipher what the character means. One example is when Mami tells Xiomara that she is “la niña de la casa;” Mami means that since she is the daughter her duty is to the housework. Most of the time, however, Xiomara eventually emphasizes in English the Spanish phrase she has been using. For example, in her poem, *The First Words*, she states “Pero, tú no eres fácil is a phrase I’ve heard my whole life.” She continues to use this phrase as she describes her mother’s pregnancy and her birth, and concludes with its translation – “You sure ain’t an easy one.”
3. Characters’ Development. Xiomara’s complexities are evident. Her name means “One who is ready for war” and she definitely feels ready for a fight at any moment. For her twin, who avoids conflict; for her curves, which are frequently commented upon by men; and for her family, which is gossiped about because her father used to be wild and her mother nearly a nun. Alternatively, she tries to disappear by sitting in the cafeteria with those girls who do not want to be bothered by classmates or when she tries to shrink down to the size of an ant when facing her mother’s wrath over her kissing a boy on the train. Xiomara feels unheard, but when she starts opening up through her poetry she finds her voice and others listen. This leads to her feeling loved, by Aman when he shows up at a time when she needs it the most, by her Papi when he reaches out to dance with her at the end because “Dancing is a good way to tell someone you love them,” and by her Mami who cannot say the words but she can reach her arms out and hug her tightly. Diversity within diversity exists in Xavier, her brother’s character. A people pleaser, he has skipped a grade in school, volunteers with bible camp and as an altar boy, and generally causes little drama at home, especially when compared to his sister. However, he loves a boy from his school, and knows his parents would not allow this kind of relationship for their son so he keeps it from them. Other diverse characters in the book include Mami and Papi, Caridad, Aman, Ms. Galiano, and Father Sean. Not all are Dominican; some are from other Caribbean islands. This diversity paints a lush picture of Xiomara’s life and generates understanding for other characters’ motivations.
4. Cultural Background. The story takes place in the present day in Harlem. Xiomara states that her school is an “old school structure[] from the Great Depression days, or something” and she mentions riding the subway and walking around parks and the city. Both her parents work, yet her Mami spends her free time praying at her home altar or Mass and her Papi watching television. Being first generation Americans, Xiomara and the other characters are aware that they are limited by their parents’ beliefs. Her friend, Aman, exemplifies this when he sadly confides that he always wanted to be an ice skater and had to practice without his pops knowing. Xiomara’s deep thought, “And I think

about all the things we could be if we were never told our bodies were not built for them” really drives this point home.

5. Lifestyle. The Batista family’s food and religion are realistically described. As Dominicans, the author describes them as frequently eating beans, but also that Xiomara loves apples. This small emphasis shows that although traditional food is eaten, other foods are enjoyed, too. It gives a more rounded depiction of a family growing up in Harlem with ties to their island life. Catholicism is woven throughout the book beginning with Xiomara stating that her name is the only one in the family that is not biblical. She attends weekly mass and confirmation, but questions God and her place within the Catholic church. Xiomara does not see herself in the women of the Bible nor does she align with the Bible’s male heroes. She feels alone – “...no one will ever take care of me but me.” In her world, her Mami’s devoutness attempts to crush her spirit (evidenced when forced to kneel on rice and ask forgiveness) and separates her from her family (when her mother burns her poetry book and she literally runs off for the night). Religion is complicated, but the author does a good job of showing different levels of spirituality that is not caricatured.
6. Celebration. After much conflict, at the end of the book Xiomara participates in the Citywide Slam Competition and her body that once felt so lonely and solitary is surrounded by a whole crew of people who are on her team – her teacher, Twin, parents, Aman, Caridad, Father Sean, poetry club, and English class – they are all present and cheering for her. She “perform[s] like [she] deserves to be there.” She belongs just as she is in the moment, stands on stage, says her poem, and finds “power in the word.” This echoes back to what her teacher told her earlier, that “...words give people permission to be their fullest self,” and allows us readers to celebrate with her as part of her team, too.

Other Things to Consider:

1. Author’s Background or Sources. Elizabeth Acevedo is a daughter of Dominican immigrants. She identifies as Afro-Latina. She was raised in New York, where this book took place. A teacher encouraged her poetry and she competed in her first poetry slam at the age of 14. She is a National Poetry Slam Champion. All these things lend her credibility as an insider for both how Dominican Americans live and thrive as well as how poets create their work.
2. Critics/Reviews. This book won the 2018 National Book Award for Young People’s Literature. It is a New York Times bestseller and won the 2018 *Boston Globe*-Horn Book Award, the Walter Dean Myers Award for Outstanding Children’s Literature in the teen category, and the Michael L. Printz Award. On the back cover of the book, Ibi Zoboi, a Haitian-American writer, states that Acevedo “skillfully sculpts powerful, self-contained poems into a masterpiece of a story, and has amplified the voices of girls en el barrio who are equal parts goddess, saint, warrior, and hero.” Although Ms. Zoboi is not Dominican, as a fellow island writer of color she uplifts the book.
3. Overall Quality. By using a poetry-driven narrative, the book moves the reader through a portion of a year in the life of a Dominican teen. As most teens feel, the highs are soaring and the lows are the depths of despair, and the reader experiences all of it with

Xiomara. The cover features a portrait of Xiomara with her words streaming across her face and hair: “warrior,” “the world would not sing her triumphs,” “misunderstood daughter,” and “wonder.” These words are all part of Xiomara’s story, and a great start to know what is to come even before opening the cover to read.

List of Resources

- Artists (Authors/Illustrators)
 - Elizabeth Acevedo
 - Alma Flor Ada
 - Julia Alvarez
 - Jorge Argueta
 - Isabel Campoy
 - Joe Cepeda
 - Angela Cervantes
 - Veronica Chambers
 - Sandra Cisneros
 - Judit Ortiz Cofer
 - Raul Colón
 - Carmen Agra Deedy
 - Lulu Delacre
 - David Díaz
 - Angela Dominguez
 - Margarita Engle
 - Xavier Garza
 - Christina Díaz González
 - Lucía M. González
 - Carmen T. Bernier-Grand
 - Susan Guevara
 - Francisco Jiménez
 - René Colato Laínez
 - Rafael López
 - Meg Medina
 - Marisa Montes
 - Pat Mora
 - Yuyi Morales
 - Juana Martinez Neal
 - Sara Palacios
 - John Parra
 - Celia C. Pérez
 - Pam Muñoz Ryan
 - Benjamín Alire Sáenz
 - Gary Soto
 - Francisco X. Stork

- Carmen Tafolla
- Duncan Tonatiuh
- Eric Velazquez
- Awards
 - Américas Award – <http://www.claspprograms.org/americanaward>
 - The Pura Belpré Award – <http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/belpremedal>
 - Tomás Rivera Award – <http://www.education.txstate.edu/ci/riverabookaward/>
- Organizations
 - The Molina Foundation – Nonprofit focused on reducing disparities in access to education and health (<http://molinafoundation.org>)
 - REFORMA – The National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking (www.reforma.org)
- Experts
 - Elizabeth Martinez
- Websites
 - Anasesem – News, ideas, arts & letters from the world of Caribbean children’s publishing – <http://www.anasesem.com/>
 - Colorín colorado! – <https://www.colorincolorado.org>
 - Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) – <https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu>
 - Día – Children’s Day/Book Day on April 30th emphasizing importance of literacy for children from all backgrounds – <http://dia.ala.org>
 - Latinxs in Kids Lit – Exploring the world of Latinx YA, MG, and Children’s Literature – <https://latin sinkidlit.com>
 - Mamiverse Books – <https://mamiverse.com/category/mamiverse-books/>
 - Vamos a Leer – <https://teachinglatinamericathroughliterature.wordpress.com>
 - We Need Diverse Books – <https://diversebooks.org>
- Publishers
 - Arte Público Press – <https://artepublicopress.com>
 - Cinco-Puntos Press – <https://www.cincopuntos.com>
 - Database of Latino Book Presses in the U.S. – <https://www.latinobookreview.com/database-of-latino-book-presses-in-the-us.html>
 - Four Book Publishers Who Bet on Latino Writers – <https://culturacolectiva.com/books/book-publishers-who-bet-on-latinos-writers>
 - Lee & Low Books – <https://www.leeandlow.com>
- Recommended Books
 - *Across the Bay* by Carlos Aponte (2019)
 - *Alma and How She Got Her Name* by Juana Martinez Neal (2018)
 - *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Sáenz (2012)
 - *Book Fiesta* by Pat Mora, illustrated by Rafael López (2009)
 - *Dear Haiti, Love Alaine* by Maika Moulite and Maritza Moulite (2019)

- *Dominicana* by Angie Cruz (2019)
- *The Dreamer* by Pam Muñoz Ryan and Peter Sis (2010)
- *Dreamers* by Yuyi Morales (2018)
- *Enchanted Air* by Margarita Engle (2015)
- *Esparanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan (2001)
- *Funny Bones: Posada and His Day of the Dead Calaveras* by Duncan Tonatiuh (2015)
- *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (1984)
- *Islandborn* by Junot Díaz (2018)
- *Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You* by Sonya Sotomayor, illustrated by Rafael López (2019)
- *Lety Out Loud* by Angela Cervantes (2019)
- *Lucky Broken Girl* by Ruth Behar (2017)
- *Martina the Beautiful Cockroach* by Carmen Agra Deedy, illustrated Michael Allen Austin (2007)
- *Merci Suárez Changes Gears* by Meg Medina (2018)
- *My Name is Celia: The Life of Celia Cruz* by Monica Brown (2014)
- *My Papi has a Motorcycle* by Isabel Quintero, illustrated by Zeke Peña (2019)
- *The Other Half of Happy* by Rebecca Balcárcel (2019)
- *Parrot in the Oven* by Victor Martinez (1997)
- *Planting Stories: The Life of Librarian and Storyteller Pura Belpré* by Anika Aldamuy Denise, illustrated by Paola Escobar (2019)
- *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo (2018)
- *The Princesa and the Pea* by Susan Middleton Elya, illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal (2017)
- *Return to Sender* by Julia Alvarez (2009)
- *The Rooster Who Would Not Be Quiet* by Carmen Agra Deedy, illustrated by Eugene Yelchin (2017)
- *Sal & Gabi Break the Universe* by Carlos Hernandez (2019)
- *Soaring Earth: A Companion Memoir to Enchanted Air* by Margarita Engle (2019)
- *The Surrender Tree* by Margarita Engle (2008)
- *Under the Mesquite* by Guadalupe Garcia McCall (2011)
- *Under the Royal Palms* by Alma Flor Ada (1999)
- *¡VAMOS! Let's Go to the Market* by Raúl the Third (2019)
- *With the Fire on High* by Elizabeth Acevedo (2019)

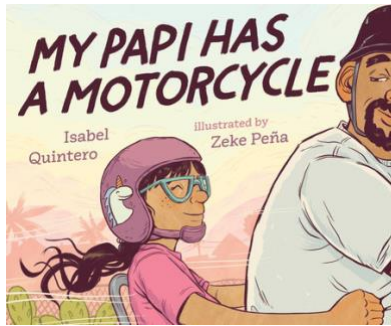
Top 5 Recent Latino/Caribbean-American Books List

***My Papi has a Motorcycle* by Isabel Quintero and illustrated by Zeke Peña**

Publisher: Kolika, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC (2019)

ISBN: 978-0525553410

Interest Level: Grades K-3



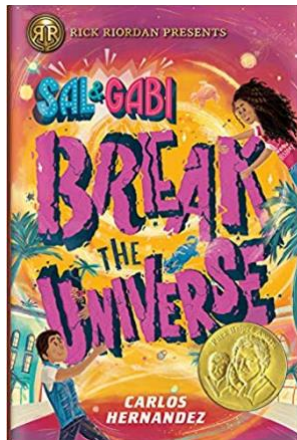
The back of this book states, “Home is a feeling you take with you,” and this theme travels with Daisy and her Papi as they zoom around their California town. So much of the town is changing from citrus groves to houses with local businesses shuttering, but Daisy sees, hears, and feels beauty all around her. The text’s images are breathed to life in the illustrations, hand-painted with watercolor. An almost graphic-novel quality is successfully created using comic word bubbles, often in Spanish, which adds an additional layer to the Mexican culture permeating the book. The author’s note in the back of the book gives weight to this story; her childhood memories of Corona, California provided its inspiration of love, history, and change, all found within its pages. This book was given a Pura Belpré Illustration Honor Award, was named a *New York Times* Best Children’s Book of 2019, and is on several book lists for 2019.

***Sal & Gabi Break the Universe* by Carlos Hernandez**

Publisher: Disney-Hyperion, an imprint of Disney Book Group (2019)

ISBN: 978-1368022828

Interest Level: Grades 4-7



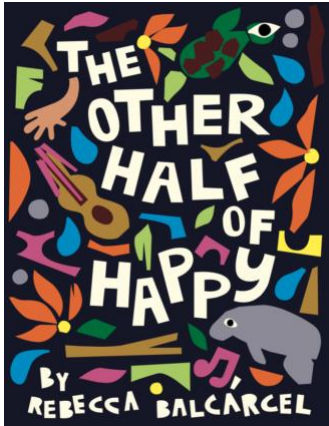
This book just won the Pura Belpré Author Award, and features intelligent, diverse characters who not only are dealing with middle school but also the multiverse and ramifications for messing with it. Cuban Spanish is used throughout, and it is steeped in Cuban culture. The author uses his heritage and weaves it into a science fiction-fantasy novel that draws kids in with its humor and substance.

***The Other Half of Happy* by Rebecca Balcárcel**

Publisher: Chronicle Books (2019)

ISBN-13: 978-1452169989

Interest Level: Grades 5-9



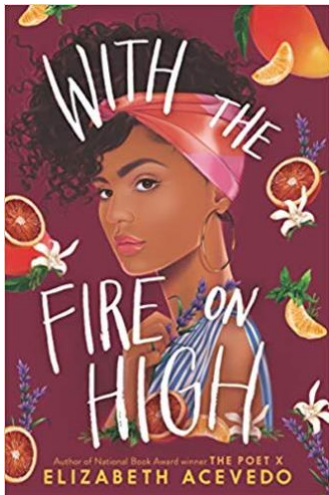
This book features a half Guatemalan, half American character, Quijana, as she discerns what it means to be both parts while she navigates middle school. She feels like everything is rolling toward her like a bowling ball through her tilted house, and cannot figure out which parts of her will stick and which ones are fleeting. This pretty typical tween problem is amplified by her Guatemalan cousins moving to town and an upcoming trip to visit relatives in Guatemala, which causes her father to emphasize his Guatemalan culture over all things in her life even though she does not even speak Spanish. It is easy to understand from the beautiful text that the author had similar issues growing up half Guatemalan in the United States. This book recently was named a Pura Belpré Author Honor Book and was named Booklist's "Top Ten First Novels of 2019."

***With the Fire on High* by Elizabeth Acevedo**

Publisher: HarperTeen (2019)

ISBN: 978-0062662835

Interest Level: Grades 8-12



Elizabeth Acevedo uses food, a dominant part of Latinx culture, to drive this story. The main character (Emoni Santiago) is Afro-Latinx and demonstrates her culture through her culinary skills at school while balancing her life. Multiple generations of her family are described with

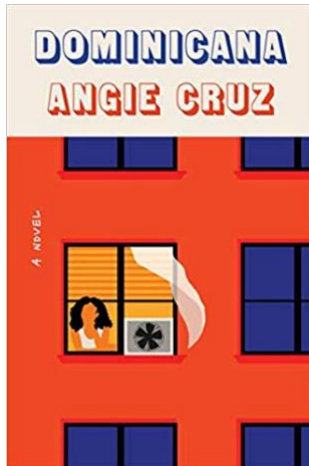
depth, and the reader really feels like they are part of Emoni's world because it is so richly crafted by the author, a National Book Award and Printz winner.

***Dominicana* by Angie Cruz**

Publisher: Flatiron Books (2019)

ISBN: 978-1250205933

Interest Level: Written for Adults, but Teens Interested, too



This book won the 2019 Alex Award for one of the best adult books that appeal to teen audiences. Featuring a 15-year-old Dominican main character, Ana, and her journey to and life in American in the 1960s, this coming of age story is a joy for young adults to read even though it was written for adults. Several Hispanic authors as well as book lists recommend it, from Sandra Cisneros to Justin Torres to Kirkus Reviews to the *New York Times*. The author is a New York-born Dominicana, who frequently traveled between the two places growing up; this lends authenticity to the book and enriches the story.

African-American Literature for Youth

Case Study: A Text Evaluation of *The Book Itch: Freedom, Truth, and Harlem's Greatest Bookstore* by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson and illustrated by R. Gregory Christie

1. Quality. This book's literary merit is two-fold. First, it tells the story of a historic bookstore in Harlem, the man responsible for its existence, and the people who frequented it. It introduces Mr. Michaux as a man who made books a centerpiece of the community where neighbors come "to talk and to listen" as well as read. This includes having people like Malcolm X speak to the definition of freedom and justice while being Black. It also advocates for the power of words and knowledge, especially for Black people. For example, when Mr. Michaux went to take out a loan to open the bookstore, the banker refused saying "Black people don't read." This stereotype is challenged by Mr. Michaux throughout the book, and Black people frequented the book store all the time.
2. Language/Speech. No derogatory terms are used, and it is free from stereotypes. Black colloquial language is used throughout, however, in the form of signs and sayings

created by Mr. Michaux to advertise his books. “Don’t get took! Read a book!” and “If you don’t know and you ain’t got no dough, then you can’t go, and that’s for sho.” are two examples of his poetical wisdom that really drive the storyline that Black people can learn their history through reading.

3. Characters’ Development. The narrator, Lewis Michaux, Jr., develops somewhat over the course of the book despite his main role as serving as the agent propelling us through the narrative of describing his father’s store. As seen through Jr.’s lens, the reader learns of Malcom X’s death, observes his father’s despairing reaction, and cries too. His dad reassures him that Malcolm X’s “words will never leave us” and that fighting for freedom requires dying sometimes. Jr. does not know when he will have the freedom itch where his beliefs will drive him to make something happen, but he’s keeping awake and reading, asking questions, listening to speakers, and discussing the truth with his father. He is able to do all these things because of his father’s bookstore. There is diversity in diversity because other Black characters exist including Michaux, Sr., Mohammed Ali, and Malcolm X, but only Michaux, Sr. is developed with completeness. He was the driving force behind the bookstore despite not having a school-based education. He calls his bookstore, “The House of Common Sense and the Home of Proper Propaganda,” and this naming shows his personality and advocacy as much as any other example could – it’s creative, passionate, and truthful.
4. Cultural Background. This story’s setting occurs in Harlem in the 1960s, and is accurately depicted due to the author’s research of the National Memorial African Bookstore. She learned about Lewis Michaux, Jr. via primary source interview transcripts as well as audio recordings and transcripts with Michaux, Sr. and articles, books family archives, and interviews with people who visited the store or knew Michaux, Sr. This research led to a thorough description of the bookstore and neighborhood. A biography about Lewis Henri Michaux and author’s note with bibliography in the back matter help the reader learn about this.
5. Lifestyle. Clothing and living conditions are accurately portrayed in a realistic manner. Illustrations demonstrate this more completely than the text, but the text describes Michaux, Sr. walking up and down the streets of Harlem selling books out of a pushcart, and the reader can imagine this scene. When the bookstore is described as a place where people “come to talk and listen” and not just read, and then that sentence is followed up by a description of the platform outside where speakers give rallies a more fully realization of the scene is depicted.
6. Celebration. Black culture is celebrated throughout the book. Conversations between father and son involve discussion on truth and freedom, and how books can be the catalyst to assist in this. Michaux, Sr. states, “Not every book is true...but the more you read, the easier it is to figure out for yourself what is true.” The themes of freedom and truth as driving forces Black people have to regularly address and assess permeate the book in a respectful manner. For example, Michaux, Jr. notes a large police presence at a Malcolm X rally and his father remarks, “Anytime more than three black people congregate, the police get nervous.” This reality is something Blacks are consciously aware of so its inclusion is an unfortunately necessary counteraction to Black cultural celebration.

Other Things to Consider:

1. Authors/Illustrators Background/Sources. As stated above, the author did her due diligence and researched the bookstore and its owner before writing this book. Her interest stemmed from the fact that he was her great-uncle and she had access to family archives about him. This familial relation makes her an ultimate insider to this culture. The illustrator has won several Coretta Scott King Honors and is also a Black culture insider hailing from Plainfield, New Jersey.
2. Critics/Reviews. The back cover has quotes from two African Americans. The first, Nikki Giovanni, is a poet whose quote describes the bookstore and its owner as being wonderful and a national monument. The second, Ashley Bryan, is an author and illustrator who grew up in Harlem; his quote describes the joy kids feel when they are transported to another world through books and compares it to the bookstore. These quotes offer up an introduction to the book the reader is about to discover. The book won the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award Honor Book in 2016.
3. Overall Quality. The book's design is appealing starting with the phrases included on the inside covers that are directly taken from Michaux, Sr.'s sayings. They draw the reader into the world of this magnificent Harlem bookstore, and keep them there throughout the book. The publishing quality is high; the book is easy to read and the pictures elevate the text.

List of Resources

- Artists (Authors and Illustrators)
 - Kwame Alexander
 - Ashley Bryan
 - Bryan Collier
 - R. Gregory Christie
 - Christopher Paul Curtis
 - Leo and Diane Dillon
 - Sharon Draper
 - Nikki Giovanni
 - Eloise Greenfield
 - Nikki Grimes
 - Virginia Hamilton
 - Julius Lester
 - E. B. Lewis
 - Kekla Magoon
 - Patricia and Fredrick McKissack
 - Christopher Myers
 - Walter Dean Myers
 - Andrea Pinkney
 - Jerry Pinkney

- Jason Reynolds
- Javaka Steptoe
- John Steptoe
- Mildred D. Taylor
- Rita Williams-Garcia
- Jacqueline Woodson
- Awards
 - Coretta Scott King Book Award – <http://www.ala.org/rt/emiert/ckbookawards>
 - Coretta Scott King-Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement – <http://www.ala.org/rt/emiert/virginia-hamilton-award-lifetime-achievement>
 - John Steptoe Award for New Talent – <http://www.ala.org/rt/emiert/ckbookawards/johnsteptoe>
 - Langston Hughes Medal – <https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/lhf>
- Organizations
 - Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) – <https://www.bcala.org/>
 - Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT) of the American Library Association (ALA): <http://www.ala.org/rt/emiert>
- Experts
 - Dr. Pauletta Bracy, Professor of Library Science and Director of the Office of University Accreditation at North Carolina Central University (NCCU) – <https://nccuslis.org/faculty/bracy/>
 - Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop, Professor Emerita at The Ohio State University – <https://ehe.osu.edu/news/listing/rudine-sims-bishop-diverse-childrens-books/>
 - Deborah D. Taylor, Coordinator of School and Student Services, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore
 - Dr. Ebony E. Thomas, Associate Professor at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education – <https://www.gse.upenn.edu/academics/faculty-directory/thomas>
- Websites
 - Africa Access Review – <http://africaaccessreview.org>
 - The African American Children’s Books Project – <http://theafricanamericanchildrensbookproject.org>
 - African American Literature Book Club – <https://aalbc.com>
 - The Black Book Review Young Readers – <https://www.qbrbookreview.com/book-reviews.aspx?c=484>
 - The Brown Bookshelf – <https://thebrownbookshelf.com>
 - Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) – <https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu>
 - The Dark Fantastic – <http://thedarkfantastic.blogspot.com>
 - Edith Campbell’s Blog: Crazy Quilt Edi – <https://crazyquiltedi.blog>
 - We Need Diverse Books – <https://diversebooks.org>
- Publishers
 - 16 Top African American Publishing Companies – <https://writingtipsoasis.com/top-african-american-book-publishing-companies/>

- Amistad – <http://amistad.hc.com>
- Just Us Books – <https://justusbooks.com>
- Lee & Low Books – <https://www.leeandlow.com>
- Versify – <https://www.hmhbooks.com/imprints/versify>
- **Recommended Books**
 - *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely (2017)
 - *All the Days Past, All the Days to Come* by Mildred D. Taylor (2020)
 - *Beloved* by Toni Morrison (1987)
 - *Blended* by Sharon Draper (2018)
 - *Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis (1999)
 - *Another* by Christian Robinson (2019)
 - *Black is a Rainbow Color* by Angela Joy, illustrated by Ekua Holmes (2020)
 - *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson (2014)
 - *Children of Blood and Bone* by Tomi Adeyemi (2018)
 - *Clean Getaway* by Nic Stone (2020)
 - *The Day You Begin* by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Rafael Lopez (2018)
 - *Hair Love* by Matthew A. Cherry, illustrated by Vashti Harrison (2019)
 - *Harlem* by Walter Dean Myers, illustrated by Christopher Myers (1997)
 - *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas (2017)
 - *Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race* by Margot Lee Shetterly (2018)
 - *I Am Loved* by Nikki Giovanni, illustrated by Ashley Bryan (2018)
 - *Just Mercy: Adapted for Young Adults* by Bryan Stevenson (2018)
 - *Lift as You Climb: The Story of Ella Baker* by Patricia Hruby Powell, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie (2020)
 - *Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds (2019)
 - *March (Books One (2013), Two (2015), and Three (2016))* by John Lewis
 - *M.C. Higgins, the Great* by Virginia Hamilton (1974)
 - *Mommy's Khimar* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, illustrated by Ebony Glenn (2018)
 - *Monster: A Graphic Novel* by Walter Dean Myers and Guy A. Sims, illustrated by Dawud Anyabwile (2015)
 - *New Kid* by Jerry Craft (2019)
 - *One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia (2010)
 - *The Revolution of Birdie Randolph* by Brandy Colbert (2019)
 - *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor (1977)
 - *Saturday* by Oge Mora (2019)
 - *Saving Savannah* by Tonya Bolden (2020)
 - *The Season of Styx Malone* by Kekla Magoon (2019)
 - *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Keats (1962)
 - *Slay* by Brittany Morris (2019)
 - *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds & Ibram X. Kendi (2020)
 - *Sulwe* by Lupita Nyong'o, illustrated by Vashti Harrison (2019)

- *Thank You, Omu!* By Oge Mora (2018)
- *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston (1937)
- *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky* by Kwame Mbalia (2019)
- *The Undeclared* by Kwame Alexander, illustrated by Kadir Nelson (2019)
- *We are Not Yet Equal* by Carol Anderson and Tonya Bolden (2019)
- *What is Given from the Heart* by Patricia C. McKissack, illustrated by April Harrison (2019)
- *When Aidan Became a Brother* by Kyle Lukoff, illustrated by Kaylani Juanita (2019)
- *Woke: A Young Poet's Call to Justice* by Mahogany L. Browne with Elizabeth Acevedo and Olivia Gatwood, illustrated by Theodore Taylor III (2020)

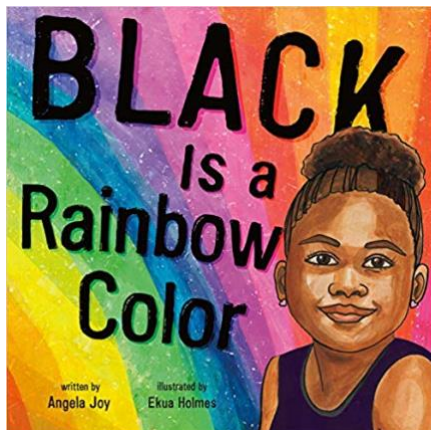
Top 5 Recent African-American Books List

***Black is a Rainbow Color* by Angela Joy; illustrations by Ekua Holmes**

Publisher: Roaring Book Press (2020)

ISBN: 978-1626726314

Interest Level: Preschool-3rd Grade



I found this while searching generally for new books to read for Black History Month and found this gem. Published in January, this book is a celebration of the Black experience, both in the past as well as the hope to come. Although other colors exist in terms of its illustrations, the color Black is the most vibrant one in this book in its text and imagery. For example, the debut author evokes Maya Angelou when she states, “Black are the birds in cages that sing,” and this is just one way being Black is spoken of with joy and reverence. The illustrator, Ekua Holmes, is a Caldecott Honoree and Coretta Scott King Award Winner and her images add depth to the text and give it life.

***Saturday* by Oge Mora**

Publisher: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (2019)

ISBN: 978-0316431279

Interest Level: Preschool-3rd Grade



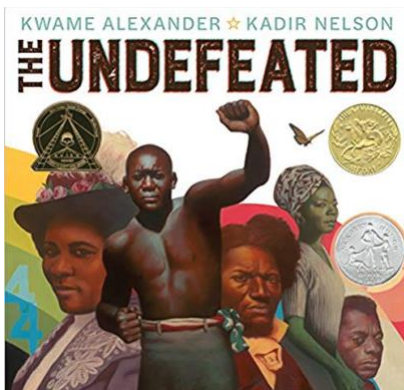
Saturdays are special for Ava and her mother because they spend all day together; it is the only day of the week they have because her mother works every other day. Their routine includes trips to the salon, library, and the park, but this particular Saturday is extra special – they have tickets to a puppet show! Nothing goes right on this usually splendid day, however, but each time their plans go unexpectedly they take a pause and breathe and then move on. This book's specialness stems from the bond the mother and daughter share doing their usual activities; all children can identify with wanting time spent with a parent to be the best and the disappointment when things do not go well. Black children especially feel represented because they can see themselves in Ava and their parents in her mother. The author/illustrator won multiple awards for her previous book, and continues her lovely work here using paint, markers, paper, and book clippings.

***The Undeclared* by Kwame Alexander, illustrated by Kadir Nelson**

Publisher: Versify, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2019)

ISBN: 978-1328780966

Interest Level: 1st-4th Grade



This love letter poem to Black America with references to African-Americans who have previously impacted the United States and the hope of those to come uplifts and inspires all who read it that Black Lives Matter, as Americans and humans. Unforgettable, undeniable, unflappable, unafraid, unspeakable, unlimited, undiscovered, unbelievable, unbending, underdogs, uncertain, unspoken, and undefeated – these words and more emphasize the Black experience and encourage discussion for all kids. The index of historical figures and events featured in the book aids readers and parents to continue the conversation. This book has won multiple awards – the 2020 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Book Award, a 2020 Newbery Honor

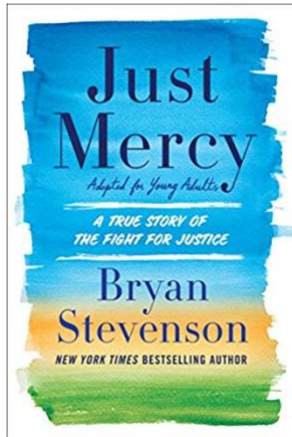
for outstanding contribution to children's literature, and the 2020 Randolph Caldecott Medal as "the most distinguished American picture book for children." It is also a *New York Times* bestseller, on the National Book Award Longlist, and is a Kirkus Prize Finalist.

***Just Mercy (Adapted for Young Adults)* by Bryan Stevenson**

Publisher: Delacorte Press (2018)

ISBN: 978-0525580034

Interest Level: 6th Grade and Up



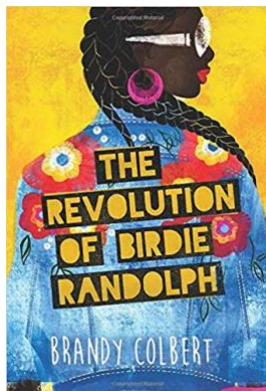
Adapted for young adults from his *New York Times* bestseller, this book tells the story of attorney Bryan Stevenson's advocacy for the wrongfully imprisoned, the poor, and people whose lives are governed by discrimination and marginalization, including teenagers subject to lengthy sentences without parole. A quote from the book serves as its main theme that all people can learn from and adapt their lives as hope bringers: "I believe it's necessary to recognize that we all need mercy, we all need justice, and—perhaps—we all need some measure of unmerited grace." This book has made several book lists including a *Kirkus Reviews* Best Book of the Year, a *Booklist* Editors' Choice, and a New York Public Library Best Book of the Year.

***The Revolution of Birdie Randolph* by Brandy Colbert**

Publisher: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (2019)

ISBN: 978-0316448567

Interest Level: 7th Grade and Up



Many teenagers will relate to the pressure of perfection Birdie Randolph experiences daily with succeeding in school and listening to her parents. Then a couple of characters (a boy and an estranged aunt) enter her life which creates change and dredge up a family secret. This book lovingly showcases African-American family life, and the author is a Stonewall Award Winner. Praise for this book includes a Chicago Public Library Best Teen Fiction of 2019 Pick, and ALA Best Fiction for Young Adults Pick, and an ALA Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers Pick.

Asian/Pacific-American and Middle Eastern Literature for Youth

Case Study: A Text Evaluation of *The Turtle of Oman* by Naomi Shihab Nye

1. Quality. At first glance, this story seems basic, but it goes so much deeper into far-reaching thoughts I imagine all people have in times of transition, particularly the book's overall theme of "What makes a place your own? What makes a home a home" (p. 116)? Aref keeps returning to these questions as he prepares to move from Oman to Ann Arbor, Michigan for 3 years, and does not want to go. It is his last week at home, but he goes on adventures with his grandfather, Sidi, to help him adjust to his move while his mom cleans and packs. One of Aref's deep insights begins with thinking "Sometimes moving backwards [i]s important" (p. 76). He wishes on one day of the week time could move backwards and he could eat dinner first thing and breakfast last. The world would feel different. Even though this can't happen, Aref walks backwards sometimes to get that feeling. He sees English as backwards since it moves from left to right and Arabic is written right to left. This demonstrates his routine way of thinking is being thrown off by this move to another country, and as readers we are right there with him. This book's literary merit stems from its human universality in hating change, but then adds another level by using a character of Middle Eastern descent to move the reader through the process.
2. Language/Speech. The language is free from derogatory terms. When Arabic is used, it is written in italics and is typically followed by the word in English. Two examples include the name of a boat the fisherman takes Aref and Sidi out on is named "*Mabsoot*—happy" (p. 140) and "*Marhaba*, Ummi Salwa! Hello!" (p. 78).
3. Characters' Development. Aref starts angry, sad, and anxious about moving from Muscat. For example, he expounds on his newfound respect for the word "no" instead of "la" because "la" feels too much like singing and he no longer wants to sing (p. 90). Although these are predictable emotions, Aref works through them in a creative way. He hands out rocks to his best friends so they will keep part of him in Oman. But it is when he goes camping that he unknowingly begins his transformation into accepting that he is moving: "It was strange to arrive anywhere new. You felt awkward for about ten minutes, then felt yourself sinking into the new scene, becoming part of it very quickly" (p. 152). This is cemented when Sidi later tells him why his house is so happy – "Because you're in it...What makes a house smile is—people" (p. 230). Sidi tells Aref to make his new house happy by remembering where he comes from and being open to talking and laughing with new people. Finally, hearing Sidi say how much he would miss Aref gave his feelings about the move value because to him, Sidi kept life positive as

much as possible but this showed even he felt sad sometimes (p. 272). Sidi provides diversity within diversity as an older character within the same group as Aref. He feels things differently than Aref due to his life experiences and helps counsel Aref about why this move will be good. At one point, Aref recalls that Sidi does not wear a watch because “time felt heavy on his wrist” and thinks people rush too much and miss the best parts (p. 67). This sums up Sidi’s perspective – life is too short to rush through it.

4. Cultural Background. The story takes place in present day Muscat, Oman. Many references are made to its geographic location, presumably for the middle years readers who may not know much about this country. At the beginning, Aref explains that Oman is one of two sultanates left in the world, and he does so with pride for his country. Toward the end, Sidi and Aref talk about the foreign adventures they will take upon Aref’s return: camping on turtle beach, visiting Sana’a to see ancient buildings, driving to Saudi Arabia or Dubai, and sailing across the sea to India. This helps the reader understand Oman’s location a bit better. In terms of being authentically grounded in the present culture, from the first chapter the reader learns that people wear “scarves, hats and turbans” in the airport (p. 2) and that people predominantly speak Arabic.
5. Lifestyle. In touch with nature and the landscape of Oman, Aref loves to make lists of things he learns because “Discovering Something New Every Day was an Al-Amri family motto” (p. 7). Aref makes a list describing the smaller turtles of Michigan because turtles are his favorite animal. At the beach, he lists possible birds he might see along with another list of possible trash left by humans. His lists realistically describe his living conditions and what he thinks is important. Sidi has taught him to see all different points of view – what is to come, what it looks like now, and what it looks like once passed – and his lists demonstrate meaning in his life.
6. Celebration of Culture. Using the turtles as an example, Sidi says “going away and coming back” is a “popular activity” (p. 297). This allows Aref to accept leaving. Throughout the book, Aref has moments where he knows he will fondly remember Oman before moving to Michigan. One occurs in the desert where he takes a lap while Sidi watches him and they wave to each other (p. 170). The reader can feel that this simple gesture at this time is full of hope and love. This is reinforced a few pages later where Sidi tells Aref “You will be like my falcon...You will fly away and come back” (p. 182). Like Sidi says, the moment is beautiful and celebrates their love for each other.

Other things to consider:

1. Author’s Background/Sources. The author is Palestinian-American, but spent some time living and teaching Muscat so she knows the area well (Sutton, 2014). She wanted to write a novel where kids would see that home would always pull them back, but before that happens is the anxiety of leaving and being gone (Sutton, 2014). She wanted to write a quiet novel that made space for slowness that is childhood (Sutton, 2014). Her background in poetry allowed for this to feel really authentic, and for parts of the book the reader seamlessly drifts along with Aref’s thoughts.
2. Critics/Reviews. The front of the book has a map that shows how Aref will be traveling from Oman to Detroit, and the distance that will cover. This helps the reader see how far apart the two places are and why it is difficult for Aref to move. Kirkus Reviews states

the book is “A warm and humorous peek at the profound and mundane details of moving from one country to another—a perfect pick for kids on the move.” This exemplifies why kids will enjoy and should read this book; in a world that feels rushed we should all look for the quiet moments, like ones found within here.

3. Overall Quality. The book’s cover draws the reader in with its inked turtle on a pebbly beach headed into the turquoise sea. Its peaceful feeling translates well as an extension of the book’s text. Turtles surround the page numbers on the bottom of each page, which reinforces the fact that turtles are omnipresent in the book since they always can find their way home, like Aref will someday.

List of Resources

- Artists (Authors and Illustrators)
 - Justina Chen (Taiwan)
 - Yangsook Choi (South Korea)
 - Erin Entrada Kelly (Philippines)
 - Hena Khan (Pakistan)
 - Uma Krishnaswami (India)
 - Thanh Hà Lại (Vietnam)
 - Minh Lê (Vietnam)
 - Grace Lin (Taiwan)
 - Naomi Shihab Nye (Palestine)
 - Linda Sue Park (Korea)
 - Bao Phi (Vietnam)
 - Aisha Saeed (Pakistan)
 - Dan Santat (Thailand)
 - Kelly Yang (China)
 - Laurence Yep (China)
- Awards
 - Arab-American Book Awards – <http://arabamericanmuseum.org/bookaward>
 - Asian/Pacific American Book Award for Literature – <http://www.apalaweb.org/awards/literature-awards/>
 - CALA Best Book Award – http://www.cala-web.org/bestbook_award
 - Kundiman Poetry Prize – <http://www.kundiman.org/prize>
 - Middle East Book Awards – <http://www.meoc.us/book-awards.html>
- Organizations
 - Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA) – <http://www.apalaweb.org>
 - Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL) – <https://jewishlibraries.org/index.php>
 - Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA) – <http://www.cala-web.org>
 - Kundiman – Nurturing writers and readers of Asian American Literature (<http://kundiman.org>)
 - Middle East Librarians Association (MELA) – <https://www.mela.us>

- Experts
 - Dr. Noreen Naseem Rodriguez (Asian-American literature expert)
- Websites
 - Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies (CMENAS) at the University of Michigan – <https://ii.umich.edu/cmenas/outreach/resources.html>
 - Chicago Public Library's Asian American and Pacific Islander Books for Teens – <https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/list/share/298483337/882383588>
 - Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) – <https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu>
 - Social Justice Books: Asian Americans – <https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/asian-americans/>
 - Talk Story – <http://talkstorytogether.org/asian-pacific-american-book-list>
 - We Need Diverse Books – <https://diversebooks.org>
- Publishers
 - Bharat Babies – <https://bharatbabies.com>
 - KitaabWorld – <https://kitaabworld.com>
 - Lee & Low – <https://www.leeandlow.com>
 - Salaam Reads – <http://salaamreads.com>
 - Yali Books – <https://yalibooks.com>
- Recommended Books
 - *Amal Unbound* by Aisha Saeed (2018)
 - *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang (2006)
 - *Amina's Voice* by Hena Khan (2017)
 - *Balcony on the Moon: Coming of Age in Palestine* by Ibtisam Barakat (2016)
 - *The Beast Player* by Nahoko Uehashi (2019)
 - *Book Uncle and Me* by Uma Krishnaswami (2016)
 - *Darius the Great is Not Okay* by Adib Khorram (2018)
 - *A Different Pond* by Bao Phi, illustrated by Thi Bui (2017)
 - *Dragon Pearl* by Yoon Ha Lee (2019)
 - *Drawn Together* by Minh Lê (2018)
 - *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang (2018)
 - *Going Home, Coming Home* by Truong Tran, illustrated by Ann Phong (2012)
 - *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say (2013)
 - *Hello, Universe* by Erin Entrada Kelly (2017)
 - *Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai (2011)
 - *The Map of Salt and Stars* by Zeyn Joukhadar (2018)
 - *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi (2001)
 - *Nothing but the Truth (and a Few White Lies)* by Justina Chen (2006)
 - *Other Words for Home* by Jasmine Warga (2019)
 - *Saints and Misfits* by S. K. Ali (2017)
 - *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park (2001)
 - *The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family* by Ibtihaj Muhammad, illustrated by S.K. Hatem Aly (2019)
 - *They Called Us Enemy* by George Takei, Justin Eisinger, Steven Scott, illustrated by Harmony Becker (2019)

- *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* by Jenny Han (2014)
- *The Turtle of Oman* by Naomi Shihab Nye (2009)
- *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* by Grace Lin (2009)
- *The Year of the Dog* by Grace Lin (2005)

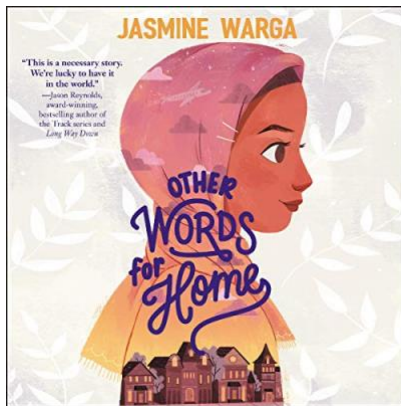
Top 5 Recent Middle Eastern Books List

***Other Words for Home* by Jasmine Warga (2019)**

Publisher: Balzer + Bray

ISBN: 978-0062747808

Interest Level: 3rd-7th Grade



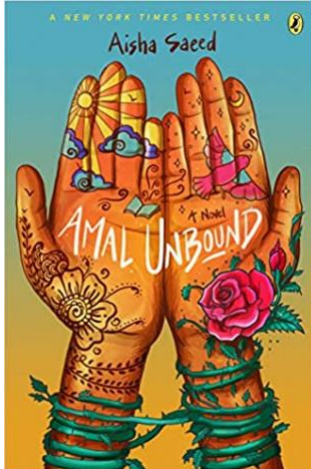
A 2020 Newbery Honor Book, its use of verse creates a gentle flow through Jude's feelings as she navigates adjusting to life in the United States after leaving Syria with her mother. Her father and brother stay behind, and she feels like she is torn between two places at the same time. Although the author is not Syrian, she is Jordanian-American and her family in Jordan inspired her to think about the differences between Jordanians in America and those who reside in their homeland. This Q&A with the author reinforces why the book should be included in libraries - <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/80127-q-a-with-jasmine-warga.html>.

***Amal Unbound* by Aisha Saeed (2018)**

Publisher: Nancy Paulsen Books

ISBN: 978-0399544682

Interest Level: 5th-6th Grade



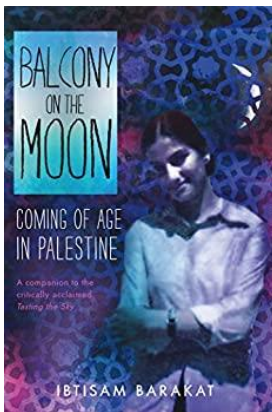
Set in Pakistan, twelve-year-old Amal must be brave after an incident that forces her to work as an indentured servant. A *New York Times* bestseller, on several 2018 book lists including Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly, A Mighty Girl, and a 2019 ALSC Notable Children's Book, this book deals with a girl's fight to become educated despite the odds being stacked against her. The author is Pakistani-American, which gives authority to her writing about life in Pakistan.

***Balcony on the Moon: Coming of Age in Palestine* by Ibtisam Barakat (2016)**

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR)

ISBN: 978-0374302511

Interest Level: 10th Grade and Up



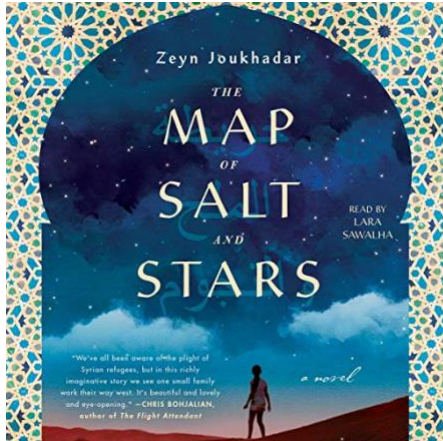
A nonfiction memoir, this companion to *Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood* (2007) focuses on the author's adolescence honestly during the 1970s in Palestine. Universal themes are discussed such as the fight to become oneself as well as family life and struggles. This book is a Junior Library Guild Selection, a Palestine Book Award Shortlist Selection, a VOYA Nonfiction Honor Selection, a Skipping Stones Honor Selection, an Arab-American National Museum Honor Book, and a 2017 Arab American Book Award Honorable Mention, among others.

***The Map of Salt and Stars* by Zeyn Joukhadar (2018)**

Publisher: Atria Books

ISBN: 978-1501169038

Interest Level: Teenagers



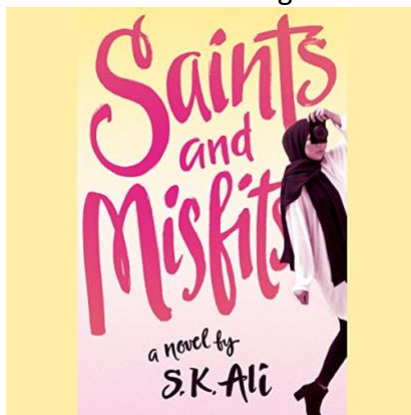
This book of fiction addresses the Syrian crisis in a novel way: the main character, Nour, returns to Syria from a life in the United States in 2011 just before war breaks out. She then has to flee with her family and journeys across the Middle East and Northern Africa. Her story is paralleled by Rawiya, a sixteen-year-old who disguises herself as a boy to see the world 800 years earlier. Since the book's publication, the author has come out as transgender so I have changed his name to his preferred name above; he is Syrian-American. The book is a 2018 Middle East Book Award Winner in Youth Literature.

***Saints and Misfits* by S. K. Ali (2017)**

Publisher: Salaam Reads/Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

ISBN: 978-1481499248

Interest Level: Teenagers



I wanted to find a book about present day Muslim teenagers that did not involve fleeing from a war-torn country, and this book immediately drew me in with its cover and description of three types of people that made me want to know more. This does not mean that it does not have intense themes; it does – an Arab-American girl suffers from a sexual assault by a friend. However, it demonstrates that excellent fiction can be written about Middle Eastern people that does not involve the typical topics we think about when we hear the phrase “Middle East.” The book is a 2018 William C. Morris Award Finalist, a *Kirkus* Top 10 Contemporary Teen Novel of 2017, and a 2017 Honorable Mention for Middle East Book Award, Youth Literature Category. The author was born in India, but has spent most of her life in Canada. Although she does not hail from the Middle East, she is Muslim and can truthfully write about that frame,

and the fact that she has received awards for her book from legitimate sources, like the Middle East Book Award, adds credence to her writing.

Native-American/Indian American/First Nations Literature for Youth

Case Study: A Text Evaluation of *The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich

1. Quality. From the prologue at the beginning of the story, the reader can tell that this will be a special book. Is it foreshadowing what is to come? Did it already occur? The reader is unsure because of present-day knowledge on what happened to so many Native American people. Answers occur later in the story, and more is revealed. But this mystery is only a small fraction of the greater story; it lures the reader into its pages but the reader stays because of the rich family life portrayed in the book. Its literary merit is found as the reader moves throughout a year in the life of the Anishinabe as seen through the eyes of Omakayas, who sees her 8th winter during the course of the story.
2. Language/Speech. Ojibwa is scattered throughout the book, sometimes with the words in English used in context, sometimes not. The glossary provided in the back matter helps to understand both the definitions of the words used as well as their pronunciation. As I read, I found it helpful to say the words out loud using the pronunciation guide to really boost my appreciation for the language. For example, on greeting Old Tallow, Omakayas states, “Ahneen, my auntie....Mino aya sana” (p. 23). This greeting wishes Old Tallow good health. Another example occurs in the four sections of the book: they have the word for the season first in Ojibwa and then in English in parenthesis – like Dagwaging (Fall).
3. Characters’ Development. Omakayas (Little Frog) is seven at the start of the story, and the reader follows her during this year of her life. In her household live her grandmother, her father (a fur trader), her mother (quick to laugh), and her siblings – a pretty older sister, a pesky younger brother, and a baby brother not-named yet and referred to as Neewo. Neewo and Omakayas had a special relationship and she took great joy caring for him and loving him, even as he breathed his last. Omakayas sickened in a different way, following her brother’s death, and she questioned the world for taking her baby brother while she was left behind (p. 159). His death’s profound impact led to Omakayas learning about her family in a different way, and it allowed her to find her missing piece. Although the story is told from Omakayas’ point of view and the book provides diversity within diversity through its richness in describing members of Omakayas’ family as well as the community as a whole, my favorite character is Old Tallow because her strength of self reverberates throughout the book whenever it is needed. She lives alone, “afraid of nothing,” with excellent hunting skills (p. 20). It appears to take much to earn her respect, but Omakayas and her mother and grandmother are in her circle of trust. She drove away her three husbands, and thrived because of it. Winter on the island was marked by Old Tallow donning her “remarkable coat,” a patchwork made up of furs, blankets, and whatever she could find and sew, and the reader can picture her as a study in female fierceness (p. 114).

4. Cultural Background. During winter, Omakayas' family lived in a cabin in the village of La Point, on an island named Moningwanaykaning (Island of the Golden-Breasted Woodpecker) in Lake Superior. Their home moves near the water whether the weather warms. This book occurs during the time when white traders were beginning to enter Minnesota in great numbers, causing the Anishinabe adults to discuss whether they should move west (p. 123). One adult, Albert, "dreamed that's where they want us to go, anyway....That will please them" (p. 79). Dreams are honored by the Anishinabe and they have a ritual for them. The first time a person is ready for a special vision, the child's mother puts charcoal on their face, and the child fasts until a vision occurs. Other ways dreams matter to the Anishinabe include the way babies in the community are named: only selected individuals have the power to name, and those names occur in dreams. In the back matter, both the author's note on the Ojibwa language plus the glossary and pronunciation guide on Ojibwa terms assist the reader's understanding of the story.
5. Lifestyle. Clothing, foods, and living conditions are portrayed realistically. The birchbark house as well as their winter cabin are thoroughly described in a way that the reader feels like they are present with the family. A special touch occurs when the author describes how Omakayas' parents' "makazins always had a special way of turning toward each other" where her Mama's protected her Deydey's "watching over and soothing away the many dangers of his footsteps" (p. 49). This short description allows the reader to understand how the family honors each other in small ways, even unintentionally. Omakayas' daily activities change based on the season. She becomes so good at tanning hide that her father gifts her a tool. The whole community comes together to harvest rice, and everyone has a specific job to do. Anishinabe life requires everyone do their part, and the book's seasonal structure lends itself to describing these activities as part of the story.
6. Celebration of Culture. Cultural respect is evident, particularly in the Anishinabe's reverence for nature. Generally, the family honors trees when they strip bark to create their summer home and before they take syrup. Omakayas' affinity with animals is described in both her repeated encounters with two bear cubs as well as her adoption of a crow (Andeg). As one knows, when there are cubs, the mama is close behind, and their mama confronted Omakayas when she saw her playing with the cubs. The author writes that Omakayas walked away without a scratch because she explained her actions and treated the bears with respect. Omakayas reflects on the experience and became "convinced that something had happened between them" (p. 34). Her grandmother had told her that bears had human qualities and must be addressed as if they were people. Since she did that, and sat with her thoughts afterwards, a closeness to nature occurred (she heard a spirit). All of this is intentionally discovered as Omakayas learns about herself. The celebration is most prevalent in its three stories told from older generations to younger, where familial and cultural touchstones are passed down in the form of lore or as teaching moments. My favorite story is *Fishing the Dark Side of the Lake*, which serves as a love story or ghost story depending on the listener. Despite its spookiness, I found it peaceful, closing the circle of life in a new-to-me way.

Other things to consider:

1. Author/Illustrator's Background/Sources. The author/illustrator is a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwa and lives in Minnesota, where the story takes place. The smallpox outbreak of 1847 served as the basis for the one in this book.
2. Critics/Reviews. The book was a 1999 National Book Award Finalist for Young People's Literature. It also is a Jane Addams Children's Honor Book.
3. Overall Quality. The book's cover is simple, showing a young girl with a crow on her shoulder and her birchbark house in the background. Throughout the book are fantastic black and white illustrations by the author that make the text come alive in a whole new way, adding further detail to the story.

List of Resources

- Artists (Authors and Illustrators)
 - Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene)* – controversy: <https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2018/02/an-open-letter-about-sherman-alexie.html>
 - Shonto Begay (Navajo)
 - Joseph Bruchac (Abenaki)
 - Louise Erdrich (Turtle Mountain Chippewa)
 - Joy Harjo (Mvskoke)
 - Michael Lacapa (Apache, Hopi)
 - George Littlechild (Plains Cree)
 - Dawn Quigley (Turtle Mountain Ojibwe)
 - Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna)
 - Cynthia Leitich Smith (Muscogee Creek)
 - Tim Tingle (Chocktaw)
 - Traci Sorell (Cherokee)
- Awards
 - American Indian Youth Literature Awards – <https://ailanet.org/activities/american-indian-youth-literature-award/>
- Organizations
 - American Indian Library Association (AILA) – <http://ailanet.org/>
- Experts
 - Dawn Quigley
 - Dr. Debbie Reese
- Websites
 - American Indians in Children's Literature – <https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com>
 - Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) – <https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu>
 - A Critical Bibliography on North American Indians, for K-12 – <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED432424>
 - National Congress of American Indians – <http://www.ncai.org>

- National Museum of the American Indian – <https://americanindian.si.edu>
- Native Reader – <http://nativereadermn.blogspot.com>
- Talk Story – <http://talkstorytogether.org/american-indian-alaskan-native-book-list>
- Teacher and Librarian Resources for Native American Children’s and Young Adult Books – https://cynthialeitichsmith.com/lit-resources/read/diversity/native-am/teaching/native_resources/
- We Need Diverse Books – <https://diversebooks.org>
- Publishers
 - Groundwood Books – <https://groundwoodbooks.com>
 - HighWater Press – <http://www.portageandmainpress.com/product-category/indigenous-literature/>
 - Lee & Low – <https://www.leeandlow.com>
 - The RoadRunner Press – <http://www.theroadrunnerpress.com>
 - Strong Nations – <https://www.strongnations.com>
- Recommended Books
 - *The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie (2007)* - see in authors for controversy link
 - *Apple in the Middle* by Dawn Quigley (2018)
 - *At the Mountain's Base* by Traci Sorell, Weshoyot Kokila Alvitre (illust.) (2019)
 - *The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich (2002)
 - *Birdsong* by Julie Flett (2019)
 - *Bowwow Powwow* by Brenda Child, Jonathan Thunder (illust.), and Gordon Jourdain (trans.) (2018)
 - *Code Talker: A Novel about the Navajo Marines of World War Two* by Joseph Bruchac (2005)
 - *Fall in Line, Holden!* by Daniel W. Vandever (2017)
 - *The First Strawberries* by Joseph Bruchac, Anna Vojtech (illust.) (1998)
 - *Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story* by Kevin Noble Maillard, Juana Martinez-Neal (illust.) (2019)
 - *The Good Luck Cat* by Joy Harjo, Paul Lee (illust.) (2000)
 - *Hearts Unbroken* by Cynthia Leitich Smith (2018)
 - *How I Became a Ghost* by Tim Tingle (2013)
 - *I Can Make This Promise* by Christine Day (2019)
 - *If I Ever Get Out of Here* by Eric Gansworth (2013)
 - *Indian No More* by Charlene Willing McManis (2019)
 - *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States, For Young People* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, adapted by Dr. Jean Mendoza, and Dr. Debbie Reese (2019)
 - *The Jingle Dancer* by Cynthia Smith Leitich (2000)
 - *Less Than Half, More Than Whole* by Michael Lacapa, Kathleen Lacapa (illust.) (1994)
 - *A Man Called Raven* by Richard Van Camp, George Littlechild (illust.) (1997)
 - *The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline (2017)

- *Mary and the Trail of Tears: A Cherokee Removal Survival Story (Girls Survive)* by Andrea L. Rogers, Matt Forsyth (illust.) (2020)
- *Mission to Space* by John Herrington (2016)
- *My Heart Fills with Happiness* by Monique Gray Smith (2016)
- *Navajo: Visions and Voices Across the Mesa* by Shonto Begay (1995)
- *Nibi is Water* by Joanne Robertson (2020)
- *#NotYourPrincess: Voices of Native American Women* by Lisa Chareyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale (2017)
- *Robocalypse* by Daniel H. Wilson (2011)
- *The Round House* by Louise Erdrich (2012)
- *Standing Strong* by Gary Robinson (2019)
- *The Star People: A Lakota Story* by S.D. Nelson (2003)
- *Stolen Words* by Melanie Florence, Gabrielle Grimard (illust.) (2017)
- *Tallchief: America's Prima Ballerina* by Maria Tallchief with Rosemary Wells, Gary Kelley (illust.) (2020)
- *This Land Is My Land* by George Littlechild (1993)
- *We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga* by Traci Sorell, Frane Lessac (illust.) (2018)
- *We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom, Michaela Goade (illust.) (2020)
- *Where the Dead Sit Talking* by Brandon Hobson (2018)

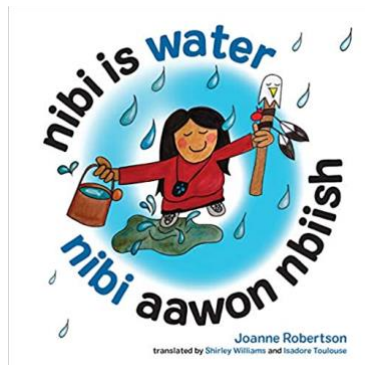
Top 5 Recent Native-American/Indian American/First Nations Books List

***Nibi is Water* by Joanne Robertson (AnishinaabeKwe)**

Publisher: Second Story Press; Bilingual Edition (April 14, 2020)

ISBN: 978-17726031329

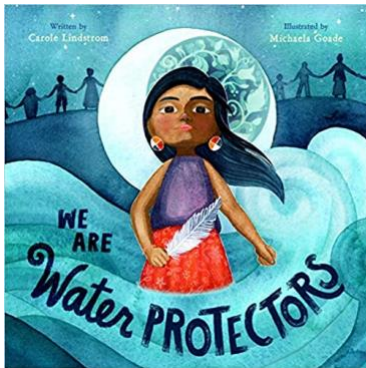
Interest Level: Preschool-Kindergarten



This board book for the youngest readers provides an introduction to water protection in both English and Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe) from the Anishinaabemowin perspective. It teaches kids how to thank, love, respect, and honor water in their lives. The author is a water protector who helps water walkers and started an environmental project known as *The Empty Glass for Water Campaign*.

***We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom (Anishinabe/Métis and member of Turtle Mountain Clan), illustrated by Michaela Goade (Raven moiety and Kiks.ádi Clan)**

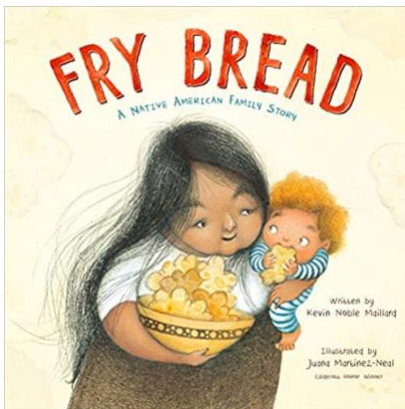
Publisher: Roaring Book Press (March 17, 2020)
ISBN: 978-1250203557
Interest Level: Preschool to 1st Grade



Kirkus Reviews states in its starred review, “In this tribute to Native resilience, Indigenous author-and-illustrator team Lindstrom and Goade invite readers to stand up for environmental justice. An inspiring call to action for all who care about our interconnected planet.” This book serves as an extension of the *Nibi is Water* board book and gives greater depth to the meaning behind being a water protector. The watercolor illustrations uplift the book’s poetry urging protection of the Earth’s water.

***Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story* by Kevin Noble Maillard (Seminole Nation, Mekuskey Band), illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal (Peruvian)**

Publisher: Roaring Book Press (2019)
ISBN: 978-1626727464
Interest Level: Preschool to 1st Grade



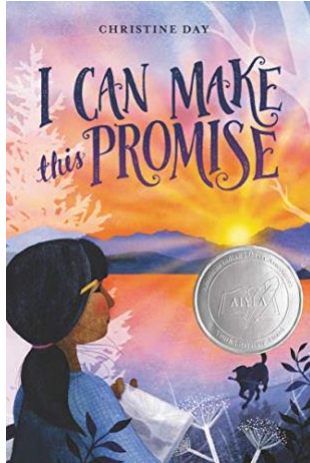
Winner of the 2020 Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal and a 2020 American Indian Youth Literature Picture Book Honor Winner, this book shows that Indian Americans do not all look the same given the great diversity amongst the tribes and nations. Using fry bread, an Indian American food staple, it demonstrates that Indian Americans are still here in the United States and thriving. Notes in the back of the book give greater insight into fry bread, including helpful references and footnotes. A caveat in the current publication, however: the endpapers include state recognized groups (paid membership) that are not tribes or nations. Indian American writers like Dr. Debbie Reese are currently advocating for the removal of this language from the book.

***I Can Make This Promise* by Christine Day (Upper Skagit)**

Publisher: Quill Tree Books (2019)

ISBN: 978-0062871992

Interest Level: 3rd to 7th Grade



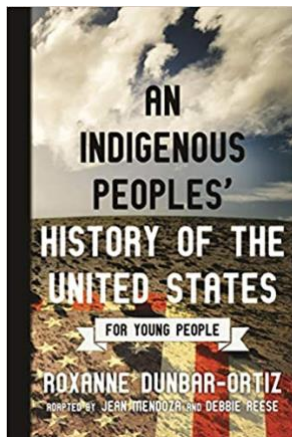
This debut novel, inspired by the author's family history, is an uncovering of identity for Edith, the daughter of a Native American who was adopted by a white couple. Publisher's Weekly starred review states, "Beyond the mystery, important themes resonate throughout, including cultural identity and what makes a friendship worth keeping. Day's affecting novel also considers historical truths about how Native Americans have been treated throughout U.S. history, particularly underlining family separations." This book is an American Indian Youth Literature Award Honor Book, a Charlotte Huck Award Honor Book, and was named a best book of the year from *Kirkus*, *School Library Journal*, NPR, and the Chicago Public Library.

***An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States, For Young People* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (White), adapted by Dr. Jean Mendoza (White) and Dr. Debbie Reese (Nambé Pueblo)**

Publisher: Beacon Press (2019)

ISBN: 978-0807049396

Interest Level: 7th to 9th Grades



Despite having two White authors attached to it, this book should be included in libraries for youth because it challenges the pervasively inaccurate way of thinking about Indian Americans

in a manner that middle and high schoolers can understand. Dunbar-Ortiz has actively spent the past 40 years working in the international indigenous movement and is committed to social justice issues. Dr. Mendoza's educational background is focused on representing indigenous people in youth literature. Dr. Reese founded the American Indians in Children's Literature (AIICL) and is tribally enrolled at Nambé Owingeh. It is a 2020 American Indian Youth Literature Young Adult Honor Book, a 2020 Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People, and is on several 2019 Best-Of Lists including *Kirkus Reviews'* Best YA Nonfiction, *School Library Journal's* Best Nonfiction, New York Public Library's Best Books for Teens, and Chicago Public Library's Best Informational Books for Older Readers.

Other Diverse Groups (LGBTQIA+ Spectrum, Disability Experiences, and Religious Diversity) for Youth Literature

Case Study: A Text Evaluation of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Sáenz

1. Quality. This book's quality shines in each page. The basic theme involves self-discovery – "when will I know who I am?" (p. 148) – but it does so through a lens of a not yet out Mexican-American teenager. In fact, Aristotle does not even know he might be gay; he feels like something is wrong with him. The reader travels along with Ari as he learns about himself and how he loves, in an authentic non-cheesy way.

An emphasis on two storytelling techniques aid in crafting this masterful book. First, Ari uses a journal to describe things he feels uncomfortable sharing with others. One of his more haunting journal lists includes Ari's notice of his family's erasure of his brother, Bernardo. He remembers loving his brother before he went to prison, but no one talks about him anymore. Everyone else "gets a story" and pictures hung up in the house, but not Bernardo (p. 96).

His desire to know his brother as well as his father (who is tight-lipped), drive some of Ari's dreams. These dreams allow the author to enter a different level of Ari's being to craft his story in a more holistic way, and it succeeds. As readers we learn of Ari's love for Dante in a dream where he runs over his friend while driving because he was too busy paying attention to a girl. As armchair psychologists, we know that his subconscious is telling him that Dante should be his full attention because that's where his heart lies, but Ari is not willing to confront this part of himself at that time. Maybe one of the reasons Ari is not ready to be himself is that his brother and father's lack of communication with him have driven Ari to silence that spills out in his dreams. Ari thinks this rationale is possible, too, because "the reason we have dreams is that we're thinking about things we don't know we're thinking about" (p. 178).

2. Language/Speech. There is some derogatory Spanish language in the text, but since this review covers the diverse LGBTQIA+ aspects of the book it will not be discussed here. Although the fight where Dante is beat up for kissing Daniel happens offstage, readers

can feel the hate speech behind it as they learn how it happened. No actual derogatory language is needed. Ari's revelation that "a part of [Dante] would never be the same [because] they cracked more than his ribs" (p. 324) sums up everything the reader needs to know about the harmful outcome of this kind of hate.

3. Characters' Development. Aristotle (Ari) begins the book as a bored and miserable 15-year-old. He struggles with his sense of self and hopes life is more than a series of phases. When he meets Dante at a pool they become fast friends, despite their personality differences. Dante (the other main character who demonstrates diversity within diversity in this LGBTQIA+ book) is open about who he is – he fully admits to adoring his parents, talks constantly about his feelings and thoughts, seeks out knowledge underlying the universe, and eventually confesses his love for Ari, multiple times over. Ari keeps things closed off – "that's what I did with everything. Kept it inside" (p. 126). He is inscrutable because on the inside he feels like a fraud of a boy but does not understand why (p. 28). The reader can see the change beginning within Ari as he looks into the universe through a telescope and its beauty becomes overwhelming: "it made me aware that there was something inside of me that mattered." (p. 42). His relationship (first friendship, then love) with Dante causes him to feel worthwhile. He still struggles with the details of it because he will not face his love, but once his knowing begins it is a beautiful thing to read and imagine. He sees his father within him for the first time as a careful man – "To be careful with people and with words was a rare and beautiful thing" (p. 324). He discovers his true self at a family meeting, admits his love for Dante, and refuses to run anymore. It is completely lovely how he accepts himself as "weird. But in a good way" (p. 355) at the end of the book.
4. Cultural Background. The story takes place in El Paso, Texas, which is located just across the Mexican border. The location feels authentic in part because of the Mexican population that is discussed, and also because the main characters are part of that population. The book does not describe tourist sites; it really feels like El Paso is a grounded place where the characters live their lives. We learn about the nearby desert, the fast food restaurant where Ari works, Ari's high school, the community pool – all of these places feel like similar places in hometowns everywhere and I believe that is the point. These characters live in every town just like we do. At one point, Ari's parents go out to a wedding dance, which is specifically described as a Mexican event (p. 204) so the reader can understand there is a geographic difference between every town and El Paso, but overall the area does not appear to be distinctive.
5. Lifestyle. The LGBTQIA+ lifestyle is not frequently discussed among the characters other than Ari and Dante. It is brought up at key times, however, in terms of Dante stressing over coming out to his parents and how the book handles Ari's Aunt Ophelia. Realistically, Dante has trouble coming out to his parents despite their unending love for him. In fact, he doesn't tell them due to fearing their disappointment; Ari tells Dante's father (Sam) after Dante is beat up for kissing another boy. Sam is heartbroken that his son could not tell him, but he continues to love his Dante. Further, the way Aunt Ophelia's lifestyle is brought up in conversation feels real and not oversimplified. Ari finds out at her funeral that only his immediate family has shown up due to her being a lesbian. The rest of the family disapproves, but his parents loved her no matter what.

This is a common reaction when a family member comes out, and is handled in the book in a direct manner.

6. Celebration of Culture. This book honors LGBTQIA+ culture because of the respect it exudes with Ari's discoveries toward loving himself, his parents, and Dante. Ari's parents understand before he did that he loves Dante. They sit with him through his uncertainty. They force him to address why he feels lonely and instead directs his energies into running and weights. His parents tell him they love him because of his love for Dante, and they sit with him as Ari cries through their acceptance. This acceptance is a celebration, and Ari's words make perfect sense: "Maybe everyone loves differently. Maybe that's all that matters" (p. 247).

Other Things to Consider:

1. Author's Background/Sources. Sáenz came out later in life at the age of 54, and wrote this book in part for those who have to discover that they are gay (versus those who easily know without discernment) (NPR Staff, 2013). He is an insider to the LGBTQIA+ group as well as a Mexican-American.
2. Critics/Reviews. This book deservedly won all the awards after it was published: Lambda Literary Award, Stonewall Award Book, Pura Belpré Author Award, Michael L. Printz Honor Book, and Amelia Elizabeth Walden Award finalist. Publishers Weekly's starred review calls it "A tender, honest exploration of identity and sexuality, and a passionate reminder that love—whether romantic or familial—should be open, free, and without shame."
3. Overall Quality. The cover draws the reader in as it evokes the desert as viewed from Ari's truck, the locale for several key scenes within the book. Along the border, images appearing as secrets of the universe are on display – what do they all mean? Will this book help the reader discover the universe? The answer is yes. The intentional sections allow the reader to understand the passage of time as well as separate parts of Ari's life from other portions. It aids in the reader's ability to follow the narrative.

List of Resources

- Artists (Authors and Illustrators)
 - LGBTQIA+ Spectrum
 - Leah Albertalli
 - Eric Bell
 - Kacen Callender
 - Tim Federle
 - I.W. Gregorio
 - David Levithan
 - Tehler Kay Mejia
 - Lesléa Newman
 - Gayle E. Pitman
 - Benjamin Alire Sáenz
 - Rob Sanders

- Robin Talley
- Disability Experiences
 - Elana K. Arnold
 - Steve Asbell
 - Ruth Behar
 - Cece Bell
 - Cynthia Lord
 - R.J. Palacio
 - Francisco X. Stork
- Religious Diversity
 - Jewish
 - Jonathan Auxier
 - Barry Deutsch
 - Brenda A. Ferber
 - Adam Gidwitz
 - Esther Hautzig
 - Sue Macy
 - Lesléa Newman
 - Patricia Polacco
 - David Wisniewski
 - Markus Zusak
 - Muslim
 - S. K. Ali
 - Hatem Aly
 - Fawzia Gilani-Williams
 - Mark Gonzales
 - Hena Khan
 - Sabina Khan
 - Ibtihaj Muhammad
- Awards
 - LGBTQIA+ Spectrum
 - Lambda Literary Awards – <https://www.lambdaliterary.org/awards/current-finalists/>
 - Rainbow Book Lists – <https://glbtrt.ala.org/rainbowbooks/archives/1331>
 - Disability Experiences
 - Dolly Gray Children’s Literature Award – <https://www.dollygrayaward.com>
 - Religious Diversity
 - Jewish
 - Schneider Family Book Award – <http://www.ala.org/awardsgrants/schneider-family-book-award>

- Sydney Taylor Book Award –
https://jewishlibraries.org/content.php?page=Sydney_Taylor_Book_Award
- Muslim
 - Arab American Book Award –
<http://www.arabamericanmuseum.org/bookaward>
- Organizations
 - LGBTQIA+ Spectrum
 - GLBT Round Table of ALA – <http://www.ala.org/rt/glbtrt>
 - Disability Experiences
 - Council for Exceptional Children Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities – <http://www.daddcec.com>
 - International Board on Books for Young People (iBBY) –
<https://www.ibby.org/awards-activities/activities/ibby-collection-of-books-for-young-people-with-disabilities>
 - Religious Diversity
 - Jewish
 - Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL) –
<https://jewishlibraries.org/index.php>
 - Muslim
 - Kitaab World – <https://kitaabworld.com>
- Experts
 - LGBTQIA+ Spectrum
 - Liz Deskins, school librarian and co-author of LGBTQIA+ Books for Children and Teens: Providing a Window for All
 - Dr. Christina Door, teacher and co-author of LGBTQIA+ Books for Children and Teens: Providing a Window for All
 - Disability Experiences
 - Corinne Duyvis, Senior Editor and Co-Founder of Disability in Kid Lit
 - Kody Keplinger, Co-Founder of Disability in Kid Lit
 - Dr. Mary Anne Prater, Dean of Brigham Young University's David O. McKay School of Education
 - Religious Diversity
 - Jewish
 - Heidi Rabinowitz, Florida children's librarian and past president of AJL
 - Muslim
 - Gauri Manglik, Founder of KitaabWorld.com and co-author of Muslims in Story: Expanding Multicultural Understanding through Children's and Young Adult Literature (2019)
 - Sadaf Siddique, Co-Founder of KitaabWorld.com and co-author of Muslims in Story: Expanding Multicultural Understanding through Children's and Young Adult Literature (2019)

- Websites
 - LGBTQIA+ Spectrum
 - The Gay History of America's Classic Children's Books – <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/07/t-magazine/gay-children-book-authors.html>
 - Gay in YA – <http://www.yapride.org>
 - I'm Here. I'm Queer. What the Hell Do I Read? – <http://www.leewind.org>
 - LGBTQ Reads – <https://lgbtqreads.com>
 - Queer Books for Teens – <http://queerbooksforteens.com>
 - Rebekah Bruesehoff – <https://www.rebekahbruesehoff.com>
 - Disability Experiences
 - Disability in Kid Lit – <http://disabilityinkidlit.com>
 - The IRIS Center's List of Children's Books: Portrayals of People with Disabilities – <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/books/>
 - Religious Diversity
 - Teen Librarian Toolbox, Faith and Spirituality in YA Lit Division – <http://www.teenlibrariantoolbox.com/2015/02/fsyalit-discussion-indexhub/>
 - The Daily Dahlia, Minority Religions Chat, Take 2 – <https://dailydahlia.wordpress.com/2015/05/18/minority-religions-chat-redux/>
 - Jewish
 - Association of Jewish Libraries – <https://jewishlibraries.org/index.php>
 - Jewish Book Council – <https://www.jewishbookcouncil.org>
 - PJ Library – <https://pjlibrary.org/home>
 - Muslim
 - Hijabi Librarians – <https://hijabilibrarians.wordpress.com>
 - Islam in the Classroom – <https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=islam-in-the-classroom>
 - Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) – <https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu>
 - We Need Diverse Books – <https://diversebooks.org>
- Publishers
 - Lee & Low Books – <https://www.leeandlow.com>
 - LGBTQIA+ Spectrum
 - Flamingo Rampant – <http://flamingorampant.com>
 - Interlude Press – <https://interludepress.com>
 - Disability Experiences
 - Jessica Kingsley Publishers – <https://www.jkp.com/usa/>
 - Magination Press – <https://www.apa.org/pubs/magination/>
 - Woodbine House – <https://www.woodbinehouse.com>
 - Religious Diversity
 - Jewish

- Judaica Press – <https://www.judaicapress.com>
 - Kar-Ben Publishing – <https://www.karben.com/catalog>
 - Yotzeret Publishing – <https://yotzeretpublishing.com>
 - Muslim
 - Salaam Reads – <https://salaamreads.com>
 - Shade 7 Publishing – <https://shade7publishing.com>
- Recommended Books
 - LGBTQIA+ Spectrum
 - *Alan Cole is Not a Coward* by Eric Bell (2017)
 - *All the Things We Do in the Dark* by Sandra Mitchell (2019)
 - *Am I Blue?: Coming Out from the Silence* by Marion Dane Bauer (ed.) (1994)
 - *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Sáenz (2012)
 - *The Best at It* by Maulik Pancholy (2019)
 - *Better Nate Than Ever* by Tim Federle (2013)
 - *Branded by the Pink Triangle* by Ken Setterington (2013)
 - *Donovan's Big Day* by Lesléa Newman, Mike Dutton (illust.) (2011)
 - *Hazel's Theory of Evolution* by Lisa Jenn Bigelow (2019)
 - *Julián is a Mermaid* by Jessica Love (2018)
 - *Frog and Toad are Friends* by Arnold Lobel (1970)
 - *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel (2006)
 - *Hazel's Theory of Evolution* by Lisa Jenn Bigelow (2019)
 - *Ho'onani: Hula Warrior* by Heather Gale, Mika Song (illust.) (2019)
 - *How (Not) to Ask a Boy to Prom* by S.J. Goslee (2019)
 - *Hurricane Child* by Kacen Callender (2018)
 - *I Am Jazz* by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings, Shelag McNicholas (illust.) (2015)
 - *I Wish You All the Best* by Mason Deaver (2019)
 - *If I Was Your Girl* by Meredith Russo (2016)
 - *It Feels Good to Be Yourself: A Book about Gender Identity* by Theresa Thorn, Noah Grigni (illust.) (2019)
 - *Ivy Aberdeen's Letters to the World* by Ashley Herring Blake (2018)
 - *Jack not Jackie* by Erica Silverman, Holly Hatam (illust.) (2018)
 - *Leah on the Offbeat* by Leah Albertalli (2019)
 - *Lies We Tell Ourselves* by Robin Talley (2014)
 - *Like a Love Story* by Abdi Nazemian (2019)
 - *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* by Emily M. Danforth (2012)
 - *My Footprints* by Bao Phi, Basia Tran (illust.) (2019)
 - *No Ashes in the Fire: Coming of Age Black & Free in America* by Kacen Callender (2019)
 - *None of the Above* by I.W. Gregorio (2015)
 - *Pet* by Akwaeke Emezi (2019)

- *Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag* by Rob Sanders (2018)
- *Prince and Knight* by Daniel Haack, Stevie Lewis (illustr.) (2018)
- *Simon vs. the Homo-Sapiens Agenda* by Becky Albertalli (2015)
- *Sparkle Boy* by Lesléa Newman, Maria Mola (illustr.) (2017)
- *Queer: A Graphic History* by Dr. Meg-John Barker, Julia Scheele (illustr.) (2016)
- *This Day in June* by Gale E. Pitman, Kristyna Litten (illustr.) (2014)
- *Two Boys Kissing* by David Levithan (2013)
- *We Set the Dark on Fire* by Tehler Kay Mejia (2019)
- *When Aidan Became a Brother* by Kyle Lukoff, Kaylani Juanita (illustr.) (2019)
- *Zenobia July* by Lisa Bunker (2019)
- *Ziggy, Stardust, and Me* by James Brandon (2019)
- Disability Experiences
 - *Andy and His Yellow Frisbee* by Mary Thompson (1996)
 - *A Boy Called Bat* by Elana K. Arnold, Charles Santoso (illustr.) (2017)
 - *The Boys in the Back Row* by Mike Jung (2020)
 - *The Book of Boy* by Catherine Gilbert Murdock (2018)
 - *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon (2003)
 - *Cursed* by Karol Ruth Silverstein (2019)
 - *Dan and Diesel* by Charlotte Hudson, Lindsey Gardiner (illustr.) (1999)
 - *Each Tiny Spark* by Pablo Cartaya (2019)
 - *El Deafo* by Cece Bell (2014)
 - *The Endless Steppe: Growing Up in Siberia* by Esther Hautzig (1968)
 - *Everything, Everything* by Nicola Yoon (2015)
 - *Feathers* by Jacqueline Woodson (2008)
 - *Fighting for Dontae* by Mike Castan (2012)
 - *Flap Your Hands* by Steve Asbell (2021)
 - *A Friend for Henry* by Jenn Bailey, Mika Song (illustr.) (2019)
 - *The Girl Who Thought in Pictures: The Story of Dr. Temple Grandin* by Julia Finley Mosca, Daniel Rieley (illustr.) (2017)
 - *Just Ask: Be Different, Be Brave, Be You!* by Sonia Sotomayor, Rafael López (illustr.) (2019)
 - *Lucky Broken Girl* by Ruth Behar (2017)
 - *Marcelo in the Real World* by Francisco X. Stork (2009)
 - *Not Otherwise Specified* by Hannah Moskowitz (2015)
 - *On the Edge of Gone* by Corinne Duyvis (2016)
 - *The Remember Balloons* by Jessie Oliveros, Dana Wulfekotte (illustr.) (2018)
 - *Roll With It* by Jamie Sumner (2019)
 - *Rules* by Cynthia Lord (2007)
 - *Scarlet Ibis* by Gill Lewis, Susan Meyer (illustr.) (2018)
 - *The Silence Between Us* by Alison Gervais (2019)

- *Silent Days, Silent Dreams* by Allen Say (2017)
- *Song for a Whale* by Lynne Kelly (2019)
- *This is Not a Test* by Courtney Summers (2012)
- *The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle* (2018)
- *Two Girls Staring at the Ceiling* by Lucy Frank (2014)
- *Unbecoming* by Jenny Downham (2015)
- *The War That Saved My Life* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley (2015)
- *When Reason Breaks* by Cindy L. Rodriguez (2015)
- *When We Collided* by Emery Lord (2016)
- *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio (2012)
- *Wonderstruck: A Novel in Words and Pictures* by Brian Selznick (2011)
- Religious Diversity
 - Jewish
 - *The Book Rescuer: How a Mensch from Massachusetts Saved Yiddish Literature for Generations to Come* by Sue Macy, Stacy Innerst (illust.) (2019)
 - *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak (2005)
 - *The Castle on Hester Street* by Linda Heller, Boris Kulikov (illust.) (1982)
 - *Confessions of a Closet Catholic* by Sarah Darer Littman (2005)
 - *Gathering Sparks* by Howard Schwartz, Kristina Swarner (illust.) (1979)
 - *Golem* by David Wisniewski (1996)
 - *Hereville: How Mirka Got Her Sword* by Barry Deutsch (2010)
 - *Hidden: A Child's Story of the Holocaust* by Loic Dauvillier, Marc Lizano (illust.) (2014)
 - *I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark* by Debbie Levy, Elizabeth Baddeley (illust.) (2016)
 - *The Inquisitor's Tale: Or, The Three Magical Children and Their Holy Dog* by Adam Gidwitz, Hatem Aly (illust.) (2016)
 - *Julia's Kitchen* by Brenda A. Ferber (2006)
 - *The Keeping Quilt* by Patricia Polacco (1988)
 - *Ketzel, the Cat Who Composed* by Lesléa Newman (2015)
 - *Someday We Will Fly* by Rachel DeWoskin (2019)
 - *Sweep: The Story of a Girl and Her Monster* by Jonathan Auxier (2018)
 - *White Bird: A Wonder Story* by R.J. Palacio (2019)
 - Muslim
 - *All-American Muslim Girl* by Nadine Jolie Courtney (2019)
 - *Amina's Voice* by Hena Khan (2017)
 - *Big Red Lollipop* by Rukhsana Khan (2010)
 - *Internment* by Samira Ahmed (2019)
 - *The Love and Lies of Rukhsana Ali* by Sabina Khan (2019)

- *Love from A to Z* by S.K. Ali (2019)
- *Malala Yousafzai: Warrior with Words* by Karen Leggett Abouraya (2014)
- *Mommy Sayang* by Rosana Sullivan (2019)
- *The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family* by Ibtihaj Muhammad with S.K. Ali, Hatem Aly (illustr.) (2019)
- *Sadiq and the Green Thumbs* by Siman Nurrall, Anjan Sarkar (illustr.) (2019)
- *Under My Hijab* by Hena Khan, Aaliya Jaleel (illustr.) (2019)
- *Yaffa and Fatima, Shalom, Salaam* by Fawzia Gilani-Williams, Chiara Fedele (illustr.) (2017)
- *Yasmin the Superhero* by Saadia Faruqi, Hatem Ali (illustr.) (2019)
- *Yo Soy Muslim* by Mark Gonzales, Mehrdokht Amini (illustr.) (2017)

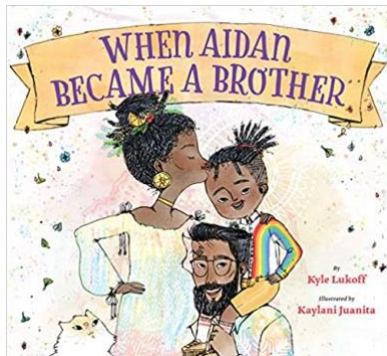
Top 5 Recent LGBTQIA+ Books List

***When Aidan Became a Brother* by Kyle Lukoff, Kaylani Juanita (illustr.)**

Publisher: Lee & Low Books (2019)

ISBN: 978-1620148372

Interest Level: PreK-Gr. 3



Achieving starred review status from *Kirkus Reviews*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Booklist*, and *School Library Journal*, as well as the Stonewall Book Award, this book follows a transgendered boy through his coming out and becoming a big brother in a lovely, authentic way. An #OwnVoices novel since the author himself is a transgender man, this book sets the standard for transgender books for children due to its affirming sensitivity toward the subject matter. *Booklist's* starred review states, "A trans man himself, Lukoff writes with authority and a loving spirit. Juanita's cheerful digital illustrations are a nicely harmonious match with the text, expanding it in meaningful ways. Together, the text and pictures create a heartfelt celebration of love that will be an ideal selection for trans children and for any who are expecting a new sibling."

***The Best at It* by Maulik Pancholy**

Publisher: Balzer + Bray (2019)

ISBN: 978-0062866419

Interest Level: Gr. 3-7



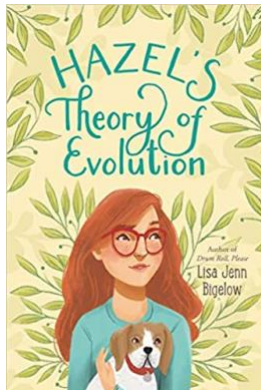
A Stonewall Honor Book, this story about a gay, Indian American boy beginning 7th grade and becoming himself. His grandfather gives him advice before starting middle school, “Find one thing you’re really good at and become the BEST at it.” The author is openly gay and Indian American, which makes him an insider to this book. *Kirkus Reviews* (starred review) states, “The protagonist’s devastatingly honest voice pulls readers deeply into a fast-paced journey...heartbreakingly authentic.”

***Hazel's Theory of Evolution* by Lisa Jenn Bigelow**

Publisher: HarperCollins (2019)

ISBN: 978-0062791177

Interest Level: Gr. 3-7



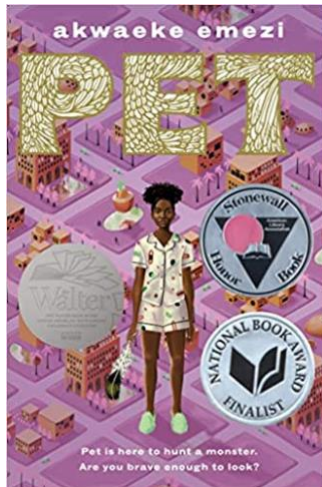
The intersectional diversity of characters in this book enhance its heartfelt narrative. Hazel is beginning life at a new school for 8th grade and wants to blend in with everyone else, but that isn’t really how middle school works. ALA Booklist’s starred review states, “This vivid first-person narrative revolves around the well-drawn main character. Bigelow portrays many characters with empathy and skill. A heartfelt novel of family, friends, and change.” This book is a Lambda Literary Award Finalist-LGBTQ Children’s/Young Adult and made the Rainbow Books Top Ten List for Middle Grade Fiction.

***Pet* by Akwaeke Emezi**

Publisher: Make Me a World (2019)

ISBN: 978-0525647072

Interest Level: Gr. 7-12



Exploring themes of identity and justice in a utopian society, this book asks the question “Are you brave enough to look?” for the monsters that are no longer supposed to exist (righteous angels have eliminated them). The main character, Jam, is a Black, transgender female and her best friend, Redemption, has 3 parents (one uses they/them pronouns). A National Book Award Finalist, Stonewall Book Award Winner, Lambda Literary Award Finalist-LGBTQ Children’s/Young Adult, *New York Times* Best Book of the Year, NPR Favorite Book of the Year, and *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year, this author’s first foray into youth literature “questions a society silenced by denial” according to the *Observer*.

***All the Things We Do in the Dark* by Saundra Mitchell**

Publisher: HarperTeen (2019)

ISBN: 978-0062852595

Interest Level: Ages 14+.



According to *Kirkus Reviews*, this book “explores the sexual awakening of adolescent identities—this time against the backdrop of childhood sexual assault.” This book represents those who keep silent – the victims that need to be heard and believed – and is told through the lens of Ava, a teen girl who is discovering her sexuality and interest in other girls. This book is a 2020 Lambda Literary Award Finalist-LGBTQ Children’s/Young Adult.

PART C: APPLICATION

Action Letter Promoting Multicultural Literature (Specifically African-American Youth Literature)

March 23, 2020

Tombolo Books
2153 1st Ave S
Saint Petersburg, FL 33712

Re: Promoting African-American Literature for Children and Youth

Dear Ms. Walentine and Ms. Anderson,

As a Library and Information Science graduate student, as well as a frequent customer of your delightful bookstore, I have noted your intentional selection of books throughout. You balance popular fiction with important literature and nonfiction readers desire, particularly in your children and youth selections. As part of my coursework, I have compiled a list of 50 important and current children and youth titles highlighting African-American authors and experiences. Of the 50 selected, your on-site store has 22 immediately available for purchase, and the others can be special ordered at a shopper's request. This 44% selection rate is commendable, and I am excited to see so many of these necessary titles. However, I believe you can do better for St. Petersburg's readers by adding more to your shelves.

According to the Census' QuickFacts website, St. Petersburg had an estimated population of 265,098 in 2018 with 22.6% of the population identifying solely as Black or African-American. Unfortunately, children's and youth literature has not caught up to representative numbers in terms of publishing. It is the duty of librarians and booksellers like you to intentionally select books, especially for people under age 18, that represent this segment of the population.

If a culture is underrepresented in the literature, it sends a message to children that their identity does not matter. They do not see themselves reflected in the stories they read, and greatly feel that disconnect. This is not okay, but luckily booksellers like you are able to create real change by providing a more diverse, in-store selection of African-American books. Other children benefit from reading books unlike their own experiences, and can learn empathy in a way they cannot if everything they read features characters similar to them. It can allow children to discern where they see themselves in our diversifying country, and open them up to new ideas.

Tombolo Books strives to provide a curated selection of the best new titles around the world. The openness of your space invites people in to browse, and allows kids to sample the treasures in their own cozy nook. You intend to have non-mainstream voices, new reads, and old favorites all for sale and you are well on your way – just take it a step farther by choosing

more books by and about African-Americans for children and youth. I have enclosed my list of 50 essential titles for you to peruse and add to your shelves (highlighted books are ones you already stock). Books were selected by looking at lists of award winners, new books by established authors and illustrators in the field, and up and coming authors with distinctive voices. I believe they fit what you are seeking to accomplish with your wonderful shop – the feeling that everyone can find themselves in a book and know they are welcome.

Sincerely,

Leslie Walbolt

Book List – 50 Essential Books Promoting African American Literature for Children and Youth

Preschool

- *The Snowy Day* (1962) by Ezra Keats (Gr. PK)

Elementary

- *Another* (2019) by Christian Robinson (Gr. PK-3)
- *Black is a Rainbow Color* (2020) by Angela Joy, illustrated by Ekua Holmes (Gr. PK-3)
- *Hair Love* (2019) by Matthew A. Cherry, illustrated by Vashti Harrison (Gr. PK-3)
- *Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race* (2018) by Margot Lee Shetterly (Gr. PK-3)
- *I Am Loved* (2018) by Nikki Giovanni, illustrated by Ashley Bryan (Gr. PK-3)
- *I Believe I Can* (2020) by Grace Byers, illustrated by Keturah A. Bobo (Gr. PK-3)
- *Lift as You Climb: The Story of Ella Baker* (6/9/2020) by Patricia Hruby Powell, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie (Gr. PK-3)
- *Mommy's Khimar* (2018) by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, illustrated by Ebony Glenn (Gr. PK-3)
- *Saturday* (2019) by Oge Mora (Gr. PK-3)
- *Sulwe* (2019) by Lupita Nyong'o, illustrated by Vashti Harrison (Gr. PK-3)
- *What is Given from the Heart* (2019) by Patricia C. McKissack, illustrated by April Harrison (Gr. PK-3)
- *When Aidan Became a Brother* (2019) by Kyle Lukoff, illustrated by Kaylani Juanita (Gr. PK-3)
- *The Day You Begin* (2018) by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Rafael Lopez (Gr. K-3)
- *The Undefeated* (2019) by Kwame Alexander, illustrated by Kadir Nelson (Gr. 1-4)

Middle School

- *Clayton Byrd Goes Underground* (2017) by Rita Williams-Garcia, illustrated by Frank Morrison (Gr. 3-7)
- *Blended* (2018) by Sharon Draper (Gr. 3-7)

- *Clean Getaway* (2020) by Nic Stone (Gr. 3-7)
- *M.C. Higgins, the Great* (1974) by Virginia Hamilton (Gr. 3-7)
- *New Kid* (2019) by Jerry Craft (Gr. 3-7)
- *The Season of Styx Malone* (2019) by Kekla Magoon (Gr. 3-7)
- *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky* (2019) by Kwame Mbalia (Gr. 3-7)
- *Woke: A Young Poet's Call to Justice* (2020) by Mahogany L. Browne with Elizabeth Acevedo and Olivia Gatwood, illustrated by Theodore Taylor III (Gr. 3-7)
- *For Black Girls Like Me* (2019) by Mariama J. Lockington (Gr. 4-7)
- *Genesis Begins Again* (2019) by Alicia D. Williams (Gr. 4-8)
- *Brown Girl Dreaming* (2014) by Jacqueline Woodson (Gr. 5-6)
- *Bud, Not Buddy* (1999) by Christopher Paul Curtis (Gr. 5-6)

High School

- *Harlem* (1997) by Walter Dean Myers, illustrated by Christopher Myers (Gr. 6-12)
- *Just Mercy: Adapted for Young Adults* (2018) by Bryan Stevenson (Gr. 6+)
- *Long Way Down* (2019) by Jason Reynolds (Gr. 7-9)
- *The Revolution of Birdie Randolph* (2019) by Brandy Colbert (Gr. 7+)
- *We are Not Yet Equal* (2019) by Carol Anderson and Tonya Bolden (Gr. 7-12)
- *The Hate U Give* (2017) by Angie Thomas (Gr. 8+)
- *On the Come Up* (2019) by Angie Thomas (Gr. 8+)

Young Adult

- *All American Boys* (2017) by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely
- *All the Days Past, All the Days to Come* (2020) by Mildred D. Taylor
- *Beloved* (1987) by Toni Morrison
- *Black Girl Unlimited: The Remarkable Story of a Teenage Wizard* (2020) by Echo Brown
- *Children of Blood and Bone* (2018) and *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* (2019) by Tomi Adeyemi
- *March (Books One (2013), Two (2015), and Three (2016))* by John Lewis
- *Monster: A Graphic Novel* (2015) by Walter Dean Myers and Guy A. Sims, illustrated by Dawud Anyabwile
- *Pride* (2019) by Ibi Zoboi
- *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (1976) by Mildred D. Taylor
- *Saving Savannah* (2020) by Tonya Bolden
- *Slay* (2019) by Brittany Morris
- *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* (2020) by Jason Reynolds & Ibram X. Kendi
- *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) by Zora Neale Hurston

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