

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

BIRTH TO AGE FIVE

BATHE THE CAT

McGinty, Alice B.

David Roberts, illustrator

Chronicle Books

978-1452142708

A clever cat creates mischief and hilarious chaos for two Black dads and their children. Rhyming text and outrageous action lead readers on a silly, colorful ride as the family gets the house ready for Grandma.

BERRY SONG

Goade, Michaela

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers

978-0316494175

As a Tlingit girl and her grandmother forage for berries on an Alaskan island, their song of gratitude connects them to the Earth and to the ancestors.

BLANKET

Ohi, Ruth

Groundwood

978-1773066141

Sad Cat hides under her blue blanket to be alone. Dog waits with her until she is ready to talk, and the blanket becomes a mat they can share. Lovely and wordless.

CHIRP!

Murphy, Mary

Candlewick Press

978-1536217698

Stars fade from the sky and birds start to sing, and sunrise is captured in illustrations that grow from muted blues to vibrant yellows and oranges. Onomatopoeic bird sounds make this a fun read-aloud.

EVERY DOG IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Stead, Philip C.

Matthew Cordell, illustrator

Holiday House/Neal Porter Books

978-0823444274

A kind, determined grandmother teaches about community engagement by encouraging her grandson to count the dogs where they live. Colorful line drawings depict a bustling neighborhood and the singular personalities of its human and animal residents.

EST. 1996

CAPITOL
CHOICES

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

FARMHOUSE

Blackall, Sophie
Little, Brown and Company
978-0316528948

The rambling farmhouse that was home to a loving family of fourteen as children were born and grew and left home is imagined with charm and affection in this stunning book.

FIREFIGHTER FLO!

Zimmerman, Andrea
Dan Yaccarino, illustrator
Holiday House
978-0823451579

A brave Black female firefighter and her team are portrayed in short, rhyming text accompanied by simple, active illustrations in vibrant colors. To the rescue they go, lickety split! A perfect firefighter book for the very young.

GIB*BER*ISH

Vo, Young
Levine Querido
978-1646141104

Retro cartoonish, black-and-white drawings juxtaposed with colorful, realistic illustrations convey a young Asian immigrant's experience at a new school. For Dat, being surrounded by so much "gibberish" is isolating until a friendly girl finds a way to connect and communicate.

A GIFT FOR NANA

Smith, Lane
Random House Studio
978-0593430330

Rabbit loves his grandmother so much that he wants to give her something, and other creatures in the forest have suggestions. The nibbled carrot Rabbit ultimately offers leads to a deeply satisfying conclusion.

I LOVE YOU BECAUSE I LOVE YOU

Văn, Mượn Thị
Jessica Love, illustrator
Harper Kids/Katherine Tegan Books
978-0062894595

In this celebration of diversity and poetic tribute to love, an inclusive cast of characters demonstrates affection and togetherness in everyday moments. Warm, colorful illustrations enhance the rhythmic call and response.

EST. 1996

CAPITOL
CHOICES

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

I'LL GO AND COME BACK

LaRocca, Rajani

Sara Palacios, illustrator

Candlewick Press

978-1536207170

Jyoti feels lonely and uncomfortable at first when visiting her grandmother in India. But the warm, colorful scenes soon show them enjoying cooking, shopping, and games together. The roles are reversed when the child hosts in America. The titular phrase replaces the sadness of saying “goodbye.”

KNIGHT OWL

Denise, Christopher

Little, Brown

978-0316310628

Little Owl dreams of becoming a knight, applies to Knight School, and is admitted! He is brave and has heart and wit. Glowing illustrations and a clever story show that size isn't the only thing that matters.

LIKE

Barrows, Annie

Leo Espinosa, illustrator

Chronicle Books

978-1452163376

In this boldly illustrated book, humans are compared to tin cans, mushrooms, hyenas, and more. The lighthearted conclusion? Humans aren't exactly alike, but they are more alike than they are different.

LOVE, VIOLET

Sullivan Wild, Charlotte

Charlene Chua, illustrator

Farrar Strauss Giroux

978-0374313722

Valentine's Day presents an exciting opportunity, relatable worries, and a happy ending for a young queer girl experiencing the thrilling ups and downs of a first crush.

MAMA AND MOMMY AND ME IN THE MIDDLE

LaCour, Nina

Kaylani Juanita, illustrator

Candlewick Press

978-1536211511

Expressive text and detailed illustrations tell the heartfelt story of a diverse, queer, loving family managing a week full of activity while missing one parent who is away on a work trip.

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

MONSTERS IN THE FOG

Bahrampour, Ali

Abrams Books for Young Readers

978-1419752452

Hakim, a donkey, travels up a mountain to give his friend a present but sees monsters in the fog. Are they monsters? A clever story with a surprise ending shows how appearances can be deceiving. The lovely illustrations are reminiscent of William Steig.

ON BABA'S BACK

Dubuc, Marianne

Princeton Architectural Press

978-1616899127

Baby koala Koko does everything from atop Baba's back until, when he wants to follow a butterfly, he decides to explore alone. Whimsical illustrations and a board book format make this perfect to share with babies.

SEE YOU SOMEDAY SOON

Miller, Pat Zietlow

Suzy Lee, illustrator

Roaring Brook Press

978-1250221100

A child imagines seeing Grandma, who lives far away, "someday soon." Clever page cut-outs, drawings, and bold background colors humorously depict imaginative possibilities for connecting.

A SEED GROWS

Portis, Antoinette

Holiday House/Neal Porter Books

978-0823448920

The life cycle of a sunflower is beautifully and simply explained with gorgeous illustrations and clever, minimal text. Important back matter is provided.

THE THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF

Barnett, Mac

Jon Klassen, illustrator

Scholastic

978-1338673845

An often retold fairy tale has a new twist, spooky illustrations, fabulous descriptions of goat dishes, and a surprise ending: you will laugh yourself silly.

EST. 1996

CAPITOL
CHOICES

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

THIS IS A SCHOOL

Schu, John

Veronica Miller Jamison, illustrator

Candlewick Press

978-1536204582

A school is not an amalgam of bricks and mortar. It is a living and changing home to a vibrant community of learners, teachers, staff, caring, storytimes, playing, and much more. It's where you want to be!

THIS STORY IS NOT ABOUT A KITTEN

de Sève, Randall

Carson Ellis, illustrator

Random House Studio

978-0593374535

A scared, homeless kitten waits for help. The cumulative narrative encourages readers to spot her. Ultimately, the story isn't about the little cat, but about the people who work together to rescue her.

THE TIDE POOL WAITS

Fleming, Candace

Amy Hevron, illustrator

Holiday House/Neal Porter Books

978-0823449156

Poetic text, soft, colorful art, and extensive back matter introduce readers to the creatures who live in and around coastal tide pools.

THE YEAR WE LEARNED TO FLY

Woodson, Jacqueline

Rafael Lopez, illustrator

Nancy Paulsen/Penguin Random House

978-0399545535

A grandmother teaches her grandchildren the power of sharing history to rise above obstacles together. Dramatic hues and uplifting words give the story—and the reader—wings.

TWO DOGS

Falconer, Ian

MDC Books/HarperCollins

978-0062954473

The Dachshund brothers—one a worrier, one full of irrepressible excitement—are home alone and bored. As dignified as “little Roman emperors,” things change when the pair escapes to the garden...until the car returns. Falconer's depiction of doggy expressions and behavior is hilariously accurate.

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

AGES SIX TO NINE

AT THE SEA

Giuliani, Emma

Chronicle Books / Princeton Architectural Press

978-1648961267

This oversized, gorgeously illustrated lift-the-flap book follows Plum and her little brother, Robin, as they explore life on a coastal town: sailboats, lighthouses, marine life, and more.

BLUE: A HISTORY OF THE COLOR AS DEEP AS THE SEA AND AS WIDE AS THE SKY

Brew-Hammond, Nana Ekua

Daniel Minter, illustrator

Random House Children's Books / Knopf Books for Young Readers

978-1984894366

A vibrant, lushly illustrated nonfiction meditation on the color blue in art, history, and culture. Stunning illustrations and poetic prose.

CRESS WATERCRESS

Maguire, Gregory

David Litchfield, illustrator

Candlewick Press

978-1536211009

A young rabbit learns to live with the loss of her father and finds unexpected friends when her family moves to a run-down woodland apartment. Glowing illustrations add to the magic of this gentle animal fantasy, a read-aloud treat.

ENDLESSLY EVER AFTER: PICK YOUR PATH TO COUNTLESS FAIRYTALE ENDINGS!

Snyder, Laurel

Dan Santat, illustrator

Chronicle Books

978-1452144825

Classic fairytales are transformed into a wickedly funny, high-stakes adventure across 85 exuberantly illustrated pages in this choose-your-own-path picture book that puts readers in the driver's seat.

GIGI AND OJJI

Iwai, Melissa

HarperCollins

978-0063208063

Gigi and her Japanese grandfather, Ojiji, bond despite the barriers of language. This easy reader explores elements of culture and generation, while showing how love can connect people despite their differences.

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

GOOD EATING: THE SHORT LIFE OF KRILL

Lilley, Matt

Dab Tavis, illustrator

Tilbury House Publishers

978-0884488675

A quirky, informational look at one of the underappreciated parts of our ocean ecosystem: krill. The illustrations of various ocean animals balance accuracy with expressiveness and humor.

THE GREATEST SONG OF ALL: HOW ISAAC STERN UNITED THE WORLD TO SAVE CARNEGIE HALL

Hoyt, Megan

Katie Hickey, illustrator

HarperCollins / Quill Tree Books

978-0063045279

This engagingly illustrated account tells how violinist Isaac Stern led a worldwide campaign to save Carnegie Hall when it was threatened with destruction in favor of Lincoln Center in 1960. Excellent back matter, too.

A LIFE OF SERVICE: THE STORY OF SENATOR TAMMY DUCKWORTH

Soontornvat, Christina

Dow Phumiruk, illustrator

Candlewick Press

978-1536222050

Sen. Duckworth's fighting spirit comes to life in this well-researched picture book biography by two Thai-American creators showcasing her service to her country, her bravery in the face of death, and her commitment to fighting for veterans.

MINA

Forsythe, Matthew

Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

978-1481480413

Mouse Mina's eccentric father brings home a feline creature that is certainly not the "squirrel" he claims it to be. This quirky fantasy uses soft watercolor art and humor to depict a father/daughter role reversal.

ODDER

Applegate, Katherine

Charles Santoso, illustrator

Macmillan / Feiwel & Friends

978-1250147424

The life of Odder the otter, named for her daredevil antics, takes a dramatic turn after an encounter with a hungry great white shark. Lyrical free verse incorporates factual information into this story inspired by an actual otter rehabilitation program in Monterey Bay.

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

OH, SAL

Henkes, Kevin

HarperCollins / Greenwillow Books

978-0063244924

The Miller family's first Christmas with the new, unnamed baby is careening toward catastrophe for middle child Sal, who has lost her favorite pair of sparkly underpants. A funny, heartfelt early chapter book perfect for sibling readers and read-alouds.

PARADISE SANDS: A STORY OF ENCHANTMENT

Pinfold, Levi

Candlewick Studio

978-1536212822

A nonsense rhyme may hold a deeper truth for four siblings who enter an eerie palace with fantastical occupants. The otherworldliness of the story and illustrations go hand-in-hand in this spooky tale.

PINEAPPLE PRINCESS

Hahn, Sabina

Macmillan / Roaring Brook Press

978-1250798367

Watercolor vignettes accompany this spare and silly story of a strong-minded, “deeply misunderstood” girl—ahem, *princess*.

POLAR BEAR

Fleming, Candace

Eric Rohmann, illustrator

Neal Porter / Holiday House

980823449163

With cinematic storytelling and evocative oil paintings, this nonfiction book explores the life and habitat of this endangered species, following a mother and her cubs on a year-long journey to find food and ice in a landscape transformed by rising temperatures.

EST. 1996

POWOW DAY

Sorell, Traci

Madelyn Goodnight, illustrator

Charlesbridge

978-1580899482

River is sidelined by illness on the day of the community Powwow. The magnificent Grand Entry and the traditional grass and jingle dancers are portrayed in vibrant, vivid illustrations. As she watches, River begins to feel the beat of the drums and the healing power of the dance.

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

THE REAL DADA MOTHER GOOSE: A TREASURY OF COMPLETE NONSENSE

Scieszka, Jon

Julia Rothman, illustrator

Candlewick Press

978-0763694340

Mother Goose in all her glory gets the Dadaist treatment of "creating art with humor and absurdity," as nursery rhymes and the classic illustrations are turned upside down in mad libs, pop quizzes, and comic strips.

REINA RAMOS WORKS IT OUT

Otheguy, Emma

Andrés Landazábal, illustrator

HarperCollins

978-0063223110

Reina is eager to dress up as Frida Kahlo for the class wax museum project, but her best friend calls first dibs. Reina grapples with big emotions, until her Abuela suggests another famous Latina. Vibrant illustrations highlight the diversity of the classroom, and Spanish words are woven throughout.

SANDOR KATZ AND THE TINY WILD

Martin, Jacqueline Briggs

Julie Wilson, illustrator

Readers to Eaters

978-0998047713

An energetic text and lively illustrations introduce the pickle-loving New Yorker who moved to Tennessee after developing HIV, re-discovered a world of fermented foods, and enthusiastically shared his products and recipes. Includes a simple "kraut-chi" recipe.

SIR LADYBUG

Tabor, Corey R.

HarperCollins / Balzer + Bray

978-0063069060

This humorous graphic novel series opener introduces Sir Ladybug, an adventure (and video game) loving knight who, along with a group of garden-creature pals, saves a worm from becoming a bird's lunch. Smart and silly, this tale of bravery, creativity, and friendship is perfect for emerging readers.

SURVIVING THE WILD: RAINBOW AND THE KOALA

Lai, Remy

Macmillan/Henry Holt

978-1250785442

One of three excellent titles in a wildlife-focused graphic novel series for emerging readers, this story follows the heroism of a young koala fighting to survive a bushfire. Amidst the high suspense and gentle humor is accessible information about ecology, conservation, and climate change.

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

THE TREASURE BOX

Keane, Dave

Rahele Jomepour Bell, illustrator

G. P. Putnam's Sons

978-1984813183

Touching illustrations and text create a sensitive story about a young girl and her grandfather, who made the funniest faces.

WASHED ASHORE : MAKING ART FROM OCEAN PLASTIC

Crull, Kelly

Millbrook Press

978-1728430300

Impressive photos of fourteen giant marine animal sculptures made from beach trash as part of a project to raise awareness about plastic pollution are paired with information about the sea creature and a seek-and-find game using the plastic pieces forming the sculptures.

THE WHALE WHO SWAM THROUGH TIME: A 200 YEAR JOURNEY IN THE ARCTIC

Boersma, Alex and Nick Pyenson

Alex Boersma, illustrator

Roaring Brook Press

978-1250803023

This nonfiction title has the read-aloud quality of a picture book. Watercolor illustrations bring the arctic and ocean to life.

EST. 1996

CAPITOL CHOICES

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

AGES TEN TO FOURTEEN

AIN'T BURNED ALL THE BRIGHT 🎧

Reynolds, Jason

Jason Griffin, illustrator

Atheneum / Caitlyn Dlouhy Books

978-1534439467

In three heaving “breaths,” this powerful conversation between strung text poetry and bold mixed-media collage addresses current social events from a child’s perspective. Reynolds also offers a captivating audio rendition, but the art is not to be missed.

ALIAS ANNA: A TRUE STORY OF OUTWITTING THE NAZIS

Hood, Susan and Greg Dawson

HarperCollins

978-0063083899

Poetry weaves a moving account of resilience and bravery in this biography in verse.

AMERICAN MURDERER: THE PARASITE THAT HAUNTED THE SOUTH

Jarrow, Gail

Astra Publishing House / Calkins Creek

978-1684378159

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, people in the Southern United States were dying or severely anemic. Parasitologist Charles Stiles sets out to solve this medical mystery. Primary documents, magnified microscopic images, and extensive source notes make the content thoroughly engaging.

ANSWERS IN THE PAGES

Levithan, David

Knopf Books for Young Readers

978-0593484685

A book in fifth grade language arts ignites debate and division in a small Pennsylvania town. Interwoven narratives of two middle school boys falling in love and selections from the fictional adventure at the center of the controversy highlight the painful relevance of this story to today’s attempts to remove LGBTQIA+ books from library shelves across the country..

ANYBODY HERE SEEN FRENCHIE?

Connor, Leslie

HarperCollins / Katherine Tegen Books

978-0062999368

Aurora, a boisterous quirky eleven year old, is best friends with Frenchie, a silent, introspective autistic boy. She always knows his needs and wants and is never shy to speak up for him, and when Frenchie goes missing, Aurora never gives up on finding her friend.

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

ATTACK OF THE BLACK RECTANGLES

King, A.S.
Scholastic Press
978-1338680522

When he realizes that certain words in their copies of *The Devil's Arithmetic* have been blacked out, Mac rallies his friends to confront a tradition of censorship in their school, in this compassionate exploration of a timely topic.

AVIVA VS. THE DYBBUK

Lowe, Mari
Chronicle / Levine Querido
978-1646141258

A mischievous dybbuk causes havoc in Aviva's life, but she's the only one who can see it. Readers are immersed in contemporary Orthodox Jewish culture as they learn more about community tensions, family grief, and healing friendships.

CHOOSING BRAVE: HOW MAMIE TILL-MOBLEY AND EMMETT TILL SPARKED THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Joy, Angela
Janelle Washington, illustrator
Macmillan / Roaring Brook Press
978-1250220950

Mamie Till-Mobley became a leading voice in the struggle for Civil Rights after the horrifying tragedy that changed the course of her life. A powerful, heartbreaking account.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF FRUIT

Lukoff, Kyle
Penguin Young Readers / Dial Books for Young Readers
978-0593111185

Annabelle thinks sixth grade will be the same as every other year, but her friendship with new student Bailey, a non-binary tween, is transformative. The labels that she has always known—boy, girl, gay, straight—may not be as definitive as she'd thought.

EST. 1996

FRIZZY

Ortega, Claribel A
Rose Bousamra, illustrator
Macmillan / First Second
978-1250259639

Marlene loves books, her Tia Ruby, and her best friend, Camilia. What she hates is going to the salon every Sunday to straighten her curly "wrong" hair, in this gorgeous graphic novel with its look at oppressive beauty standards and internalized racism.

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

I MUST BETRAY YOU

Sepetys, Ruta

Penguin Young Readers / Philomel Books

978-1984836038

As Communist regimes crumble in 1989, Cristian Florescu is one of many Romanians struggling in isolation and under constant surveillance by dictator Nicholas Ceaușescu. Blackmailed into becoming an informant, Cristian works with other young people to spark a movement to free themselves. Maps and photographs in this meticulously researched thriller bring history to life.

JENNIFER CHAN IS NOT ALONE

Keller, Tae

Shannon Tyo, narrator

Listening Library

978-0593559994

Mallory understands that middle school is a series of unwritten rules by which new girl Jennifer Chan refuses to abide. When Jennifer goes missing, Mallory steals Jennifer's journals to figure out where she could have gone, then must confront her own role as a bully. Tyo and Kang's audio narration feels authentically middle school.

THE LAST MAPMAKER

Soontornvat, Christina

Candlewick Press

978-1536204957

In a world where ancestors determine social status, Sai is desperate to escape her past with her con man father and climb the ranks of society. She joins an expeditionary voyage to gain wealth and status but learns about treachery, greed, and betrayal. A vivid and suspenseful seafaring fantasy rooted in Thai culture.

LITTLE MONARCHS

Case, Jonathan

Holiday House / Margaret Ferguson Books

978-0823442607

Ten-year-old Elvie and biologist Flora may be the only ones who can prevent the extinction of people in a futuristic world. Facts about butterfly migration and survival skills alongside an environmental crisis figure in this vibrant graphic novel adventure.

LOTUS BLOOM AND THE AFRO REVOLUTION

Winston, Sherri

Latonya Williams, narrator

Bloomsbury

978-1547611812

Violin prodigy Lotus is the concertmaster at her new school and loves her Afro. When a parent uses Lotus' hairstyle as an excuse to get her expelled, she must decide whether to stay silent or stand up for her rights. Latonya Williams brings the unique voice of Lotus to life in the audiobook.

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

LOUISA JUNE AND THE NAZIS IN THE WAVES

Elliott, L.M.

HarperCollins / Katherine Tegen Books

978-0063056565

This moving story of a family's loss and a young girl's hope on the homefront, set on the Virginia coast during World War II, is perfect for fans of *The War That Saved My Life*.

LOYALTY

Avi

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt / Clarion Books

978-0358248071

When his father is killed by neighbors for proclaiming loyalty to the King and England, Noah begins spying for the British in pre-Revolutionary Boston. He gradually discovers the dishonesty and brutality on both sides through the eyes of co-worker Jolla, a free Black man.

MARSHMALLOW CLOUDS: TWO POETS AT PLAY AMONG FIGURES OF SPEECH

Kooser, Ted and Connie Wanek

Richard Jones, illustrator

Candlewick Press

978-1536203035

Figurative language and meditative illustrations invite readers to stretch their imagination and look at the natural world in new ways.

MY OWN LIGHTNING

Wolk, Lauren

Penguin Young Readers / Dutton Children's Books

978-0525555599

In this splendid sequel to *Wolf Hollow*, Annabelle still struggles with past events when she is struck by lightning and saved by a mysterious stranger. As she recovers, she becomes aware of the feelings of animals, especially mistreated dogs, and of the changes in once bully Andy.

EST. 1996

THE OGRESS AND THE ORPHANS

Barnhill, Kelly

Workman / Algonquin Young Readers

978-1643750743

When a kindly ogress gets blamed for all the things going wrong in Stone-in-the-Glen, it's up to a family of fifteen orphans to stand against the wicked and powerful and save the day in this brilliantly woven tale.

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

THE SECRET BATTLE OF EVAN PAO

Wan-Long Shang, Wendy

Scholastic Press

978-1338678857

When Evan Pao moves to the Civil War-obsessed town of Haddington, Virginia, he hopes to blend in, despite being the only Asian American kid. However, Evan's participation in treasured traditions is met with cruelty and threats. This thoughtful novel explores racism, masculinity, friendship, and reconciliation with complexity and care.

STAR CHILD: A BIOGRAPHICAL CONSTELLATION OF OCTAVIA ESTELLE BUTLER

Zoboi, Ibi

Penguin Young Readers / Dutton Children's Books

978-0399187384

A visually stunning middle grade collection of poems and prose, dotted with ephemera, shows how Butler's shy, solitary childhood influenced her trajectory as an author, and how her imagination fueled her award-winning writing.

SWIM TEAM

Christmas, Johnnie

HarperCollins / HarperAlley

978-0063056770

Bree is excited to start middle school until she finds that she got stuck in Swim 101 when she is terrified to swim. Luckily for Bree, her elderly neighbor agrees to be her coach and help her overcome her fear. A gorgeously illustrated contemporary story with a touch of historical fiction.

THOSE KIDS FROM FAWN CREEK

Kelly, Erin Entrada

HarperCollins / Greenwillow Books

978-0062970350

A charming but enigmatic newcomer shakes up a tiny seventh grade class in small town Louisiana, in this gentle, empathetic story about being one's true and best self.

WILDOAK

Harrington, C. C.

Scholastic Press

978-1338803860

A young girl with a debilitating stutter finds her "voice" as she tries to rescue a young snow leopard cub discarded in an English countryside.

EST. 1996

CAPITOL
CHOICES

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

WINDSWEPT

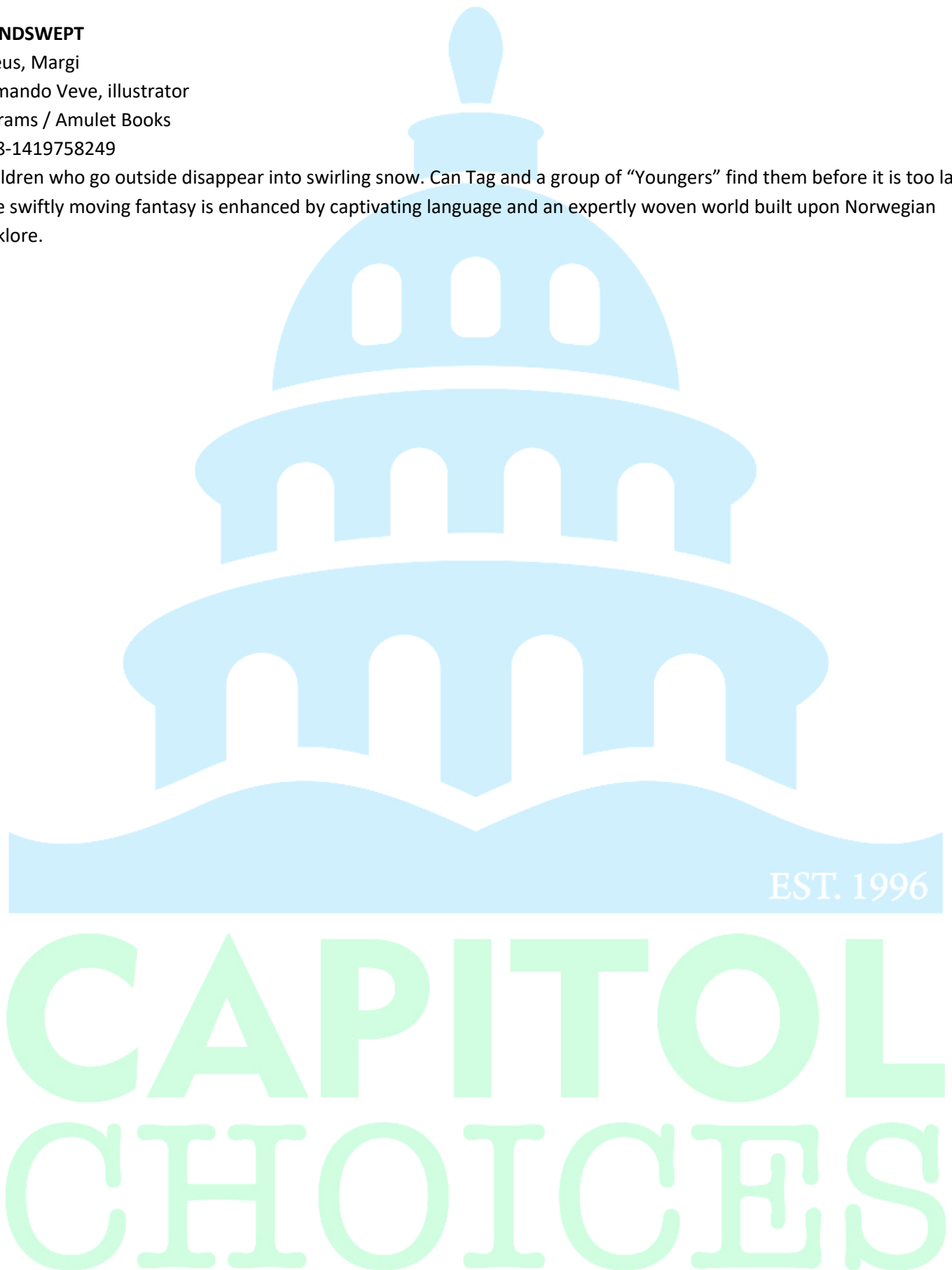
Preus, Margi

Armando Veve, illustrator

Abrams / Amulet Books

978-1419758249

Children who go outside disappear into swirling snow. Can Tag and a group of “Youngers” find them before it is too late? The swiftly moving fantasy is enhanced by captivating language and an expertly woven world built upon Norwegian folklore.



2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

AGES FIFTEEN AND UP

THE AGATHAS

Glasgow, Kathleen and Liz Lawson

Random House Children's Books / Delacorte Press

978-0593431115

Everyone has secrets. Two enemy girls team up to solve a classmate's death and cautiously become friends, in this homage to Dame Agatha Christie. Dual narration audiobook.

AN ARROW TO THE MOON

Pan, Emily X. R.

Natalie Naudus, narrator

Hachette Audio / Little, Brown Young Readers

978-1668609842

Luna Chang and Hunter Yee, first generation American teens born on the same day to Taiwanese immigrants, are the star-crossed protagonists in this mash-up of Chinese folklore and *Romeo and Juliet*. The narrators create a wonderful balance between the impulsive, troubled teen characters and the interchapters featuring the backstory of the warring adults.

BONE WEAVER

Polydoros, Aden

HarperCollins / Inkyard Press

978-1335915825

An immersive adventure with elements of Slavic folklore follows Toma on her quest to save her undead sister. Unlikely allies Venya, a commoner with magic ability, and the dethroned Tsar Mikhail join Toma and drag her into the middle of the Empire's civil war.

COLD: A NOVEL

Tamaki, Mariko

Macmillan / Roaring Brook Press

978-1626722736

Georgia didn't know Todd Mayer until after his body is found in a local park, and she can't stop thinking about him, but why? Todd is a ghost observing the investigation into his homicide and starts to realize he wasn't the only one with secrets.

DESTINATION UNKNOWN

Konigsberg, Bill

Scholastic Press

978-1338618051

In 1987 New York, two boys try to figure out if their budding relationship is friendship or something more. Konigsberg thoughtfully weaves young love, the AIDS epidemic, and social justice through this coming-of-age novel.

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

DIAMOND PARK

Diederich, Phillippe

Penguin Young Readers / Dutton Children's Books

978-0593354254

Flaco goes along with his pals to Diamond Park to pick up a 1959 Chevy Impala; he's only thinking of the joy rides ahead, and that his crush Susi has invited herself and is sitting by him. But all their plans turn upside down when a man is murdered, a dangerous man is on the run, and Susi is arrested.

THE GIRL WHO FELL BENEATH THE SEA

Oh, Axie

Macmillan / Feiwel & Friends

978-1250780867

In this story based on a Korean fairy tale, Mina offers herself as bride to the Sea God in place of her brother's lover, who was chosen to be the 100th and final bride. Mina finds the Sea God is not the all-powerful being she was expecting, and can't imagine a life as his bride when her fate is altered once more.

HOME FIELD ADVANTAGE

Adler, Dahlia

Macmillan / Wednesday Books

978-1250765840

High school cheerleader Amber finds Jack, the new QB for her school, very compelling. But Jack is a girl playing against expectations in her sport, and the pair's romance means facing misogyny and homophobia and making decisions about what matters most to them.

HOW TO EXCAVATE A HEART

Arlow, Jake Maia

HarperCollins / HarperTeen

978-0063078727

This queer, Jewish, winter romance features undergrads in DC and unstintingly explores abusive relationships and found families who allow space for healing.

EST. 1996

I KISSED SHARA WHEELER

McQuiston, Casey

Macmillan / Wednesday Books

978-1250244451

Chloe isn't the only one who has kissed Shara Wheeler, but she is the only one wondering why. And where did Shara Wheeler go after that kiss?

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

IMPROBABLE MAGIC FOR CYNICAL WITCHES

Scelsa, Kate

HarperCollins / Balzer + Bray

978-0062465030

Eleanor doesn't believe in magic and can't shake the memories of her past relationship. But when Pix comes into her Salem, Massachusetts souvenir shop one day in Halloween season, Eleanor gets another chance to believe in magic, love, and herself.

KINGS OF B'MORE

Thomas, R. Eric

Penguin Young Readers / Kokila

978-0593326183

Two queer Black teens decide to take a day for adventures together before a family move separates them. In the spirit of *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, they plan their day. Little goes smoothly, but their story is told with humor and empathy and accompanied by an engaging, delightful cast of characters.

MESSY ROOTS: A GRAPHIC MEMOIR OF A WUHANESE AMERICAN

Gao, Laura

HarperCollins / Balzer + Bray

978-0063067776

Laura, from Wuhan, China, faces xenophobic and racist attitudes made worse by the COVID pandemic, while navigating family expectations and coming out as queer.

THE MOST DAZZLING GIRL IN BERLIN

Wilson, Kip

HarperCollins / Versify

978-0358448907

18-year-old Hilde, struggling on the streets of 1932 Berlin after leaving the orphanage, is determined to land on her feet and finds work, comfort, and community in Cafe Lila, a queer club. As the shadow of the Nazi movement starts to darken the city, Hilde's talent brightens the lives of those in her chosen family.

EST. 1996

MURDER AMONG FRIENDS: HOW LEOPOLD AND LOEB TRIED TO COMMIT THE PERFECT CRIME

Fleming, Candace

Random House Children's Books / Anne Schwartz Books

978-0593177426

Two well-to-do young Chicago society men conceived of a depraved plan in the 1920s to kidnap and murder a child for the "adventure" of it. This account reads like a novel in its depiction of the dynamic between the two, their heinous plan and crime, and their capture, confession, and trial. Fast-paced and well-researched nonfiction.

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

NIGHT OF THE LIVING CAT VOLUME 1

Hawkman

Mecha-Roots, illustrator

Seven Seas

978-1638585817

A pandemic has hit the world: humans become cats just by touching them. Can humans resist the temptation to pet the fluffy, adorable cats and escape? Or will they succumb to their cuteness and forever be a feline?

QUEER DUCKS (AND OTHER ANIMALS): THE NATURAL WORLD OF ANIMAL SEXUALITY

Schrefer, Eliot

Jules Zuckerberg, illustrator

HarperCollins / Katherine Tegen Books

978-0063069497

This nonfiction work explores same-sex sexual relationships among animals, while questioning human biases regarding sex and gender.

SCOUT'S HONOR

Anderson, Lily

Macmillan / Henry Holt Books for Young Readers

978-1250246738

Wielding pastel-colored hatchets and sporting signature charm bracelets, the Ladybirds protect their communities from mulligrubs, monsters who feed on human emotions. Prudence Perry quit the Ladybirds three years ago after losing her best friend in a mulligrub attack, but when her former fellow Ladybirds ask her to train a group of new scouts, she must reconsider.

THE SILENCE THAT BINDS US

Ho, Joanna

HarperCollins / HarperTeen

978-0063059344

May and her family are trying to deal with the loss of her brother, Danny, to suicide, when a classmate's father makes racist remarks and blames her parents for the loss. May must decide whether to fight back through the use of words and peaceful assembly or listen to her parents who just want it all to go away.

THE SUMMER OF BITTER AND SWEET

Ferguson, Jen

HarperCollins / Heartdrum

978-0063086166

Lou, a Métis teen, is stuck working in her family's ice cream stand with her ex-boyfriend and her ex-best friend, but she starts to come to terms with her identity, her friendships, and her biological father's re-emergence in her life.

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

THIEVES

Byron, Lucie

Nobrow

978-1838741198

High school senior Ella has a crush on a mysterious classmate named Madeline. Their lives become intertwined when Ella wakes up one morning after a house party surrounded by possessions that are not her own.

VICTORY. STAND! RAISING MY FIST FOR JUSTICE

Smith, Tommie and Derrick Barnes

Dawud Anyabwile, illustrator

W.W. Norton & Company / Norton Young Readers

978-1324003908

Olympic athlete Smith discusses the iconic photograph where he raises a fist in a black glove from the 1968 Olympic winners' stand. Powerful black-and-white illustrations accompany Dr. Smith's account of the racial inequities and struggle for justice that comprise the back story of this compelling image.

WE DESERVE MONUMENTS

Hammonds, Jas

Macmillan / Roaring Brook Press

978-1250816559

Avery must leave her safe haven in Washington, D.C. for her grandmother's home in Georgia, a place with a history of generational trauma and overt racism. While her home life is hostile at best, the outside world provides her with friendship, romance, and a mystery.

WELCOME TO ST. HELL: MY TRANS TEEN MISADVENTURE

Hancox, Lewis

Scholastic Graphix

978-1338824438

Adolescence is hard enough, but if you are transgenering it can be Hell. With wit, honesty, and simple but emotional artwork, Lewis Hancox makes this graphic memoir, a message to his younger self, a journey readers can connect with.

WHITEOUT

Clayton, Dhonielle

Tiffany D. Jackson, Nic Stone, Angie Thomas, Ashley Woodfolk, Nicola Yoon, co-authors

HarperCollins / Quill Tree Books

978-0063088146

In the cohesive throughline for the stories in this companion collection to *Blackout* (2021), a snowstorm shuts down Atlanta. Teens navigate first love, family, and loyalty while trying to understand their own wavering identities. A full cast audiobook brings the myriad characters to life.

2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

WHO WE ARE

The first edition of Capitol Choices published in 1996, built on the work of the late Peggy Coughlan at the Children's Literature Center of the Library of Congress, who for many years edited an annual list entitled "Books for Children." The founding members of the Capitol Choices group who worked on these lists appreciated the opportunity to hone their critical skills during those years and wished to carry the work of that committee forward.

Since 1996, Capitol Choices has included librarians, teachers, booksellers, children's literature specialists, reviewers, and magazine editors who work in cities, suburbs, and rural areas in and around Washington, D.C. Most of us work directly with young people, and all of us share a passion for books and a commitment to pairing children with books.

CRITERIA

Our mission is to identify and select a yearly list of outstanding titles for children and teens. We consider books and audiobooks published in the current calendar year for readers from birth through the high school years. We look not only for those books and audiobooks that are obviously remarkable but also for those whose charm, art, information, or depth of feeling may enhance a young person's world. We especially look for books that may not find an audience without the benefit of special attention.

What does Capitol Choices mean by "the best"? "Best" of the year? "Best" by this author? "Best" of its type? Our discussions are often heated, always serious, filled with good humor and, in the end, the titles we choose meet all of these criteria. In addition to the qualities that mark good titles—clarity, accuracy, credibility, and that most elusive quality of all, distinguished writing, illustration or narration—we place special emphasis on titles which we believe appeal to and reflect the sensibilities of their intended audience.

JOIN US

We welcome you in person at our monthly meetings. Capitol Choices members are also available to present workshops on the best titles of the year, how to evaluate literature for young people, and other topics related to our passion for books and audiobooks for young readers. Please visit our website www.capitolchoices.org to schedule a workshop or find out more about joining our group.

MEMBERS

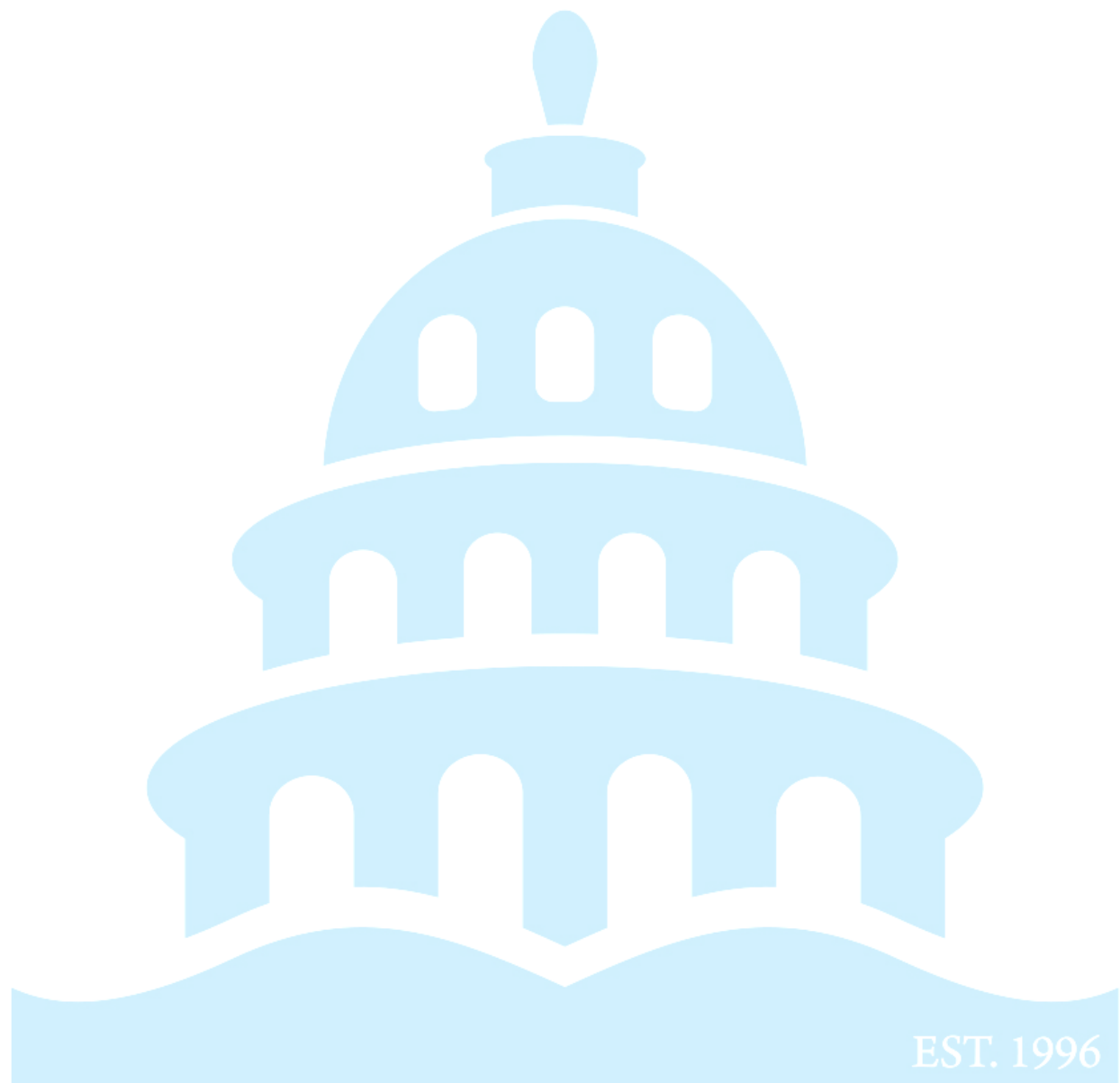
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2023 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens



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