BIRTH TO AGE SEVEN

THE WALL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BOOK
Agee, Jon
Penguin Random House - Dial Books for Young Readers (Penguin)
978-0525555452
A knight discovers that his side of a seemingly impenetrable brick wall is not as safe as he once presumed. The ogre on the other side might not be that bad either.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GARDEN
Buitrago, Jairo & Rafael Yockteng
House of Anansi Press - Groundwood Books
978-1554989836
Natalie feels abandoned at her grandmother’s house until a talking owl, frog and mouse lead her on a moonlit journey. Digital scratchboard-effect illustrations evoke the mysteries of nocturnal life and the struggles in a young heart.

THE DAY WAR CAME
Davies, Nicola
Rebecca Cobb, Illustrator
Candlewick
978-1536201734
War came and took everything from the child narrator, and her new country doesn’t seem to have room for her. Still, the clear, child-friendly illustrations and poetic text offer a hopeful ending.

MARWAN'S JOURNEY
de Arias, Patricia
Laura Borras, Illustrator
minedition
978-9888341559
Marwan’s memories of the sights, sounds, and smells of his homeland accompany him as walks with other refugees across the desert to a new and unknown home. Full-page illustrations capture the beauty of Marwan's past, fearful present, and hopeful future.
ZOLA'S ELEPHANT
de Sève, Randall
Pamela Zagarenski, Illustrator
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - HMH Books for Young Readers
978-1328886293
The young narrator would like to get to know Zola, the new girl next door, but is sure she already has an elephant keeping her company. Warm, colorful, detailed illustrations depict the fun she imagines while contrasting, cool blue page spreads show what Zola is really doing alone.

GRAINS OF SAND
Delacroix, Sibylle
OwlKids
978-1771472050
When her vacation is over, a girl plants the remaining grains of sand in her shoes to create joyful memories. Spare text and black and white pencil sketches with splashes of blue and yellow celebrate the power of imagination.

A HOUSE THAT ONCE WAS
Fogliano, Julie
Lane Smith, Illustrator
Macmillan - Roaring Brook Press
978-1626723146
Two children investigating an abandoned, dilapidated house speculate about the former occupants who might have left behind the artifacts inside. The paint and collage illustrations are dreamy and nostalgic.

EVERY COLOR SOUP
Hurley, Jorey
Simon & Schuster - Paula Wiseman Books
978-1481469999
A simple, one word per opening, picture book introduces colors, numbers, vegetables and the joy of making soup. The bold, bright illustrations work well to share with a group or as a lap book.

THE FUNERAL
James, Matt
House of Anansi Press - Groundwood Books
978-1554989089
Great uncle Frank’s funeral at a country church on a beautiful spring day lets young Norma spend some time with a favorite cousin and contemplate some of life’s mysteries in a series of sweet and quietly humorous observations.
I WALK WITH VANESSA: A STORY ABOUT A SIMPLE ACT OF KINDNESS
Kerascoet
Penguin Random House - Schwartz & Wade Books (Random House)
978-1524769550
The morning after a student witnesses her classmate, Vanessa, being bullied she is joined by others who support Vanessa by walking her to school. Bright colors and single hues reveal the emotions of the characters in this wordless comic book style story.

NATSUMI!
Lendroth, Susan
Priscilla Burris, Illustrator
Penguin Random House - G.P. Putnam’s Sons Books for Young Readers (Penguin)
978-0399170904
Natsumi has a lively personality, high energy and enthusiasm. She likes to do things BIG (even if her adults tell her to do them smaller) and she finds the perfect way to do things in her own way during her town’s Japanese arts festival.

JULIAN IS A MERMAID
Love, Jessica
Candlewick
978-0763690458
Julian loves mermaids and finds a way with a special gift from his abuela to transform himself into his daydream. Brilliant mixed media illustrations, perfectly paired with minimal text, illuminate this tale of acceptance and imagination.

A MOST UNUSUAL DAY
Mallery, Sydra
E. B. Goodale, Illustrator
HarperCollins - Greenwillow Books
978-0062364302
Soft acrylic and watercolor art illustrates the story of preschooler Caroline's distracting day as she anticipates a surprise at the end of school--the arrival of a new baby, her sister.

DON'T TOUCH MY HAIR!
Miller, Sharee
Little, Brown & Company - Little, Brown Books for Young Readers
978-0316562584
Aria’s beautiful hair, “up or down, styled or wild” seems to be a temptation to others who want to touch it until Aria discovers the power of standing up for herself and setting personal boundaries.
INKY'S AMAZING ESCAPE: HOW A VERY SMART OCTOPUS FOUND HIS WAY HOME
Montgomery, Sy
Amy Schimler-Safford, Illustrator
Simon & Schuster - Paula Wiseman Books
978-1534401914
Inky's inquisitive nature takes him from his ocean home to: a lobster trap, the aquarium and then—amazingly—back to his saltwater den. Appealing illustrations and appended facts will delight and inform young readers. Based on a true story.

DREAMERS
Morales, Yuyi
Holiday House - Neal Porter Books
978-0823440559
In this richly poetic and visually lyrical work artist and author Morales tells the story of coming from Mexico to the United States with a baby in her arms, and of the role that the public library played in their lives.

THANK YOU, OMU
Mora, Oge
Little, Brown & Company - Little, Brown Books for Young Readers
978-0316431248
Omu looks forward to her dinner of thick red stew until its delicious scent brings repeated knocks to her door, with everyone hoping for a taste. Rhythmic language and warm, mixed-media collage illustrations mirror the generosity of Omu's spirit. Delectable!

WE ARE BROTHERS
Nadon, Yves
Claverie, Jean, Illustrator
Creative Editions
978-1568462929
A young boy, lovingly encouraged by his older brother, jumps from the top of a boulder into the swimming hole in this depiction of sibling affection and the power of imagination. The simple language and gentle palette eloquently express fear, suspense, triumph and joy.
BENJI, THE BAD DAY, AND ME
Pla, Sally J.
Ken Min, Illustrator
Lee & Low Books
978-1620143452
It’s been the worst day ever for Sammy, but his brother Benji, who has autism, wraps him in a blanket like a burrito and makes him feel better. Sammy realizes they will always be there for each other.

DUDE!
Reynolds, Aaron
Dan Santat, Illustrator
Macmillan - Roaring Brook Press
978-1626726031
A platypus and beaver—and eventually a shark—enjoy an action-packed surfing adventure narrated with a single word: “Dude!” A perfect choice for beginning readers who will also delight in the hilarious pictures.

FOX + CHICK: THE PARTY AND OTHER STORIES.
Ruzzier, Sergio
Chronicle
978-1452152882
A careful fox and a spontaneous chick could not possibly be more different, but they are still very good friends in this charming three-story anthology.

BEAR AND WOLF
Salmieri, Daniel
Encented Lion Books
978-1592702381
Bear and Wolf meet in a snowstorm, enjoy a companionable walk, and part ways until the following year. Dazzling nature scenes rendered in gouache and watercolor make this tale of friendship between two unlikely characters something special.

BLUE
Seeger, Laura Vaccaro
Macmillan - Roaring Brook Press
978-1626720664
The few words naming shades of blue in these lovely, warmly evocative paintings tell the story of a lifelong friendship between a child and a beloved dog.
BABY MONKEY, PRIVATE EYE
Selznick, Brian & David Serlin
Scholastic - Scholastic Press
978-1338180619
In this chapter book for new readers, Baby Monkey, an accomplished crime solver and gifted young detective, solves several mysteries before naptime with aplomb, though he does have some trouble putting on his pants.

MOMMY'S KHIMAR
Thompkins-Bigelow, Jamilah
Ebony Glenn, Illustrator
Simon & Schuster - Salaam Reads
978-1534400597
When a young American Muslim girl wears her Mommy's khimar, a brightly-colored flowing scarf, she imagines herself a shooting star, a bird, a queen, the sun, and she feels close to her mother even when they are apart.

TOESY TOES
Tsiang, Sarah
Orca Book Publishers
978-1459813427
Babies will be charmed by this sturdy board book with its colorful photographs of other babies delighting in their toes.

SEVEN TO TEN
HELLO LIGHTHOUSE
Blackall, Sophie
Little, Brown & Company - Little, Brown Books for Young Readers
978-0316362382
Vivid watercolor and ink illustrations provide a peek into the life of a lighthouse keeper and his family before the installation of electric lamps. Exquisite scenes of the lighthouse shining in all kinds of weather foster an appreciation for a lost era.

LET THE CHILDREN MARCH
Clark-Robinson, Monica
Frank Morrison, Illustrator
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - HMH Books for Young Readers
978-0544704527
This account of the Children's Crusade of 1963 is told from the point of view of a child who joins in the march in Birmingham after hearing Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr speak. Oil-on-canvas illustrations show a range of emotions of the protesters and their families—fear, sadness, and courage in the face of hate.
THE ELEPHANT
Desmond, Jenni
Jenni Desmond, Illustrator
Enchanted Lion Books
978-1592702640
A young boy falls asleep and dreams himself into the elephants' world, learning important facts. An exceptionally appealing introduction, beautifully illustrated and seamlessly interweaving facts about elephant habitats, anatomy, diet, and behavior.

THE FOX ON THE SWING
Daciute, Evelina
Ausra Kiudulaite, Illustrator
Thames & Hudson
978-0500651568
Paul’s family has moved from their old tree home and he misses his old park and his friend, a philosophical fox, who eventually turns up in the new neighborhood. This surreal tale from Lithuania about real issues features challenging dialog, delightful details, and vibrant mixed media.

ISLANDBORN
Diaz, Junot
Leo Espinosa, Illustrator
Penguin Random House - Dial Books for Young Readers (Penguin)
978-0735229860
Lola is upset that she can’t remember her first home for a school assignment, so her family and neighbors describe the colors, tastes, sounds, and spirit of the Island. Vibrant digital and mixed media illustrations offer manageable representations of more painful memories alongside a celebration of community and cultural heritage.

STELLA DIAZ HAS SOMETHING TO SAY
Dominguez, Angela
Macmillan - Roaring Brook Press
978-1626728585
This timely middle grade novel draws on the author’s own experiences, as third grade Stella struggles to find her place while navigating new and old friendships, two languages and understanding what her immigrant status means.
SHAKING THINGS UP: 14 YOUNG WOMEN WHO CHANGED THE WORLD
Hood, Susan
Various Illustrators
HarperCollins - HarperCollins Children's Books
978-0062699459
Short poetic biographies of famous and lesser-known inspirational women are accompanied by illustrations by children’s book artists.

RESCUE & JESSICA: A LIFE-CHANGING FRIENDSHIP
Kensky, Jessica and Patrick Downes
Scott Magoon, Illustrator
Candlewick
978-0763696047
This gentle look at people with acquired disabilities and the service dogs who help them tells the real-life story of the inspiring partnership between Rescue, a new service dog, and Jessica, a new amputee and the way forward they find together.

BOB
Mass, Wendy
Rebecca Stead, Author
Macmillan - Feiwel & Friends
978-1250166230
Ten-year-old Livy doesn’t remember the last time she visited her grandmother in Australia, but Bob has been eagerly awaiting her return for five years. With a mix of magic and friendship Livy helps the quirky little green creature dressed in a chicken suit find his way home.

THE BRILLIANT DEEP: REBUILDING THE WORLD’S CORAL REEFS
Messner, Kate
Matthew Forsythe, Illustrator
Chronicle
978-1452133508
Captivating underwater landscapes accompany the story of Ken Nedimyer’s passion for the ocean and his innovative work to restore the threatened Florida Keys coral reefs.
THIRTY MINUTES OVER OREGON: A JAPANESE PILOT'S WORLD WAR II STORY
Nobleman, Marc Tyler
Melissa Iwai, Illustrator
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - HMH Books for Young Readers
978-0544430761
Japanese pilot Nobuo Fujita dropped bombs over Oregon forests during WWII and returned twenty years later to offer his apologies. This remarkable true story of reconciliation is accompanied by beautiful, moving watercolor illustrations.

GIRL RUNNING : BOBBI GIBB AND THE BOSTON MARATHON
Pimentel, Annette Bay
Micha Archer, Illustrator
Penguin Random House - Nancy Paulsen Books (Penguin)
978-1101996683
This account of Bobbi Gibb’s quest to participate in the Boston Marathon even though she was denied entry just because she was a girl is accompanied by collage-style illustrations that mark milestones along the route.

LIGHTS! CAMERA! ALICE! THE THRILLING TRUE ADVENTURES OF THE FIRST WOMAN FILMMAKER
Rockliff, Mara
Simona Ciraolo, Illustrator
Chronicle
978-1452141343
Alice Guy-Blache was creating talkies in France while silent films were still the norm in America. This picture book biography captures her talent and drive, and her disappointment in seeing recognition pass her by. Back matter directs readers to websites where they can view some of her films.

OTIS AND WILL DISCOVER THE DEEP: THE RECORD-SETTING DIVE OF THE BATHYSHERE
Rosenstock, Barb
Katherine Roy, Illustrator
Little, Brown & Company - Little, Brown Books for Young Readers
978-0316393829
Two scientists in the 1930s team up to explore unknown parts of the ocean by creating a deep-diving tank. Detailed watercolors and a suspenseful text, with photographs and additional information in the back, make this a fascinating look at invention and exploration.
THE SECRET KINGDOM: NEK CHAND, A CHANGING INDIA AND A HIDDEN WORLD OF ART
Rosenstock, Barb
Claire A. Nivola, Illustrator
Candlewick
978-0763674755
After fleeing from his village during the Partition of India, Nek Chand Saini used discarded materials to create the Rock Garden of Chandigarh, his secret art landscape. Gentle watercolor and gouache illustrations lead up to a fold-out photograph spread showing the impressive scale of Nek Chand’s work.

THE CARDBOARD KINGDOM
Sell, Chad
Penguin Random House - Alfred A. Knopf (Random House)
978-1524719371
A group of diverse children battle mythical monsters, traverse magical quests, and let their imaginations run wild...all without leaving their neighborhood in this graphic novel told in interconnected chapters.

HIDDEN FIGURES: THE TRUE STORY OF FOUR BLACK WOMEN AND THE SPACE RACE
Shetterly, Margot Lee
Laura Freeman, Illustrator
HarperCollins - HarperCollins Children's Books
978-0062742469
In a time when racial segregation and sexism was the norm, four African-American mathematicians worked as human computers for NASA. Richly detailed illustrations accompany these brief biographies of each woman and the story of their contributions to the field.

PASS GO AND COLLECT $200: THE REAL STORY OF HOW MONOPOLY WAS INVENTED
Stone, Tanya Lee
Steven Salerno, Illustrator
Macmillan - Henry Holt Books for Young Readers
978-1627791687
Lizzie Magie laid the groundwork in 1903 for the board game "Monopoly" with her invention of a game showing the injustice of landlord-tenant relationships. This clever women’s history story is deftly told and appealingly illustrated, with back matter that includes trivia and "Monopoly Math."
TIGER VS. NIGHTMARE
Tetri, Emily
Macmillan - First Second
978-1626725355
Tiger and his friend Monster work together to battle a particularly scary nighttime visitor. The watercolor illustrations in graphic novel style are gentle—but a little spooky, too.

ROAD TRIP WITH MAX AND HIS MOM
Urban, Linda
Katie Kath, Illustrator
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - HMH Books for Young Readers
978-0544809123
Max and his mother take to the road for a family reunion in an amusement park in this novel about life lessons. Like the explorer Ernest Shackleton, Max takes the challenges in life, from a school report to his first roller coaster, in stride.

NEW SHOES
Varon, Sara
Macmillan - First Second
978-1596439207
Francis the Donkey meets unfamiliar creatures and rescues his friend Nigel when he journeys into the jungle of Guyana to find material to make shoes for his idol, calypso queen Miss Manatee in this charming graphic novel/picture book/early reader hybrid.

LIBBA : THE MAGNIFICENT MUSICAL LIFE OF ELIZABETH COTTEN
Veirs, Laura
Tatyana Fazlalizadeh, Illustrator
Chronicle
978-1452148571
Libba Cotten learned as a child to play her guitar “upside down and backwards.” She was a grandmother when a job as housekeeper with the musical Seeger family led to sharing her gift with the world. The soft, graphite artwork in this picture book biography feels historical and warm.

FROM THE HEART OF AFRICA
Walters, Eric
Various Illustrators
Penguin Random House Canada - Tundra Books
978-1770497191
Full-page illustrations by a variety of artists accompany this visually stunning collection of 15 proverbs from many different African countries, reflecting universal human experiences.
TEN TO FOURTEEN

THE ASSASSINATION OF BRANGWAIN SPURGE
Anderson, M.T.
Yelchin, Eugene, co-author and illustrator
Candlewick
978-0763698225
The secret transmissions of Elf ambassador Brangwain Spurge describe the horrors of the kingdom of goblins—but the illustrations tell a different story. A surprising tale of intrigue and a lesson in prejudice.

SMALL SPACES
Arden, Katherine
Penguin Random House - G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers (Penguin)
978-0525515029
A field trip to a farm in rural Vermont goes horribly wrong when the chilling tale from Ollie’s old book begins to unfold in real life. Ollie and two classmates flee to the woods, where sinister things await.

SWEEP
Auxier, Jonathan
Abrams - Abrams Books for Young Readers
978-1419731402
Grit, gumption, and memories of the loving Sweep who raised chimney climber Nan Sparrow help her survive. After a chimney fire, Nan finds a gift from the Sweep transformed, and a new friend by her side.

IVY ABERDEEN’S LETTER TO THE WORLD
Blake, Ashley Herring
Little, Brown & Company - Little, Brown Books for Young Readers
978-0316515467
Someone keeps putting pages from Ivy’s secret notebook, lost when a tornado destroyed her home, in her school locker—pages that reveal Ivy dreams of holding hands with a girl. Ivy questions multiple strands of her identity, and where she fits in her friend-group and in her family of five.

BE PREPARED
Bros gol, Vera
Macmillan - First Second
978-1626724457
Russian-American graphic novelist Bros gol tells her own humorous and poignant story about attending a Russian summer camp for the first time at age 10. Readers will relate to Vera’s experience of just wanting to "fit in."
FINDING LANGSTON
Cline-Ransome, Lesa
Holiday House
978-0823439607
11-year-old Langston is teased about his Southern ways and misses his dead mother and the rich family life left behind in Alabama when he and his father came north as part of the Great Migration. Langston finds refuge in the local library where he learns about his namesake and his mother's past.

ILLEGAL
Colfer, Eoin and Andrew Donkin
Giovanni Rigano, Illustrator
Sourcebooks Jabberwocky
978-11492662143
Ebo, a young Ghanaian refugee, overcomes despair and exploitation in a perilous journey to Italy. Alternating time lines effectively reveal his challenges traversing land and sea in this compelling graphic novel, about hope and determination.

THE TRUTH AS TOLD BY MASON BUTTLE
Connor, Leslie
HarperCollins - Katherine Tegen Books
978-0062491435
Large, sweaty, learning disabled Mason Buttle grieves for his best friend Benny. Mason and new friend Calvin, bullied by neighborhood boys, create an underground space for themselves, but when Calvin disappears Mason is under suspicion.

LOUISIANA'S WAY HOME
DiCamillo, Kate
Candlewick
978-0763694630
Everything turns upside down for Louisiana Elefante the night her grandmother abruptly moves them away from everything she knows and loves. This gently told story is filled with unforgettable characters, a search for identity, and resiliency and forgiveness amidst confusion.

THE NIGHT DIARY
Hiranandani, Veera
Penguin Random House - Dial Books for Young Readers (Penguin)
978-0735228511
Nisha, whose father is Hindu, chronicles her family’s displacement during the 1947 Partition of India through letters to her deceased Muslim mother. The resilience of the human spirit triumphs in this lyrical, emphatic novel.
ATTUCKS! OSCAR ROBERTSON AND THE BASKETBALL TEAM THAT AWAKENED A CITY
Hoose, Phillip
Macmillan - Farrar Straus & Giroux for Young Readers
978-0374306120
In 1955 the Crispus Attucks Tigers with the dazzling Oscar Robertson became the first all-black basketball team to win a state championship tournament when a group of impoverished teenagers overturned segregationist assumptions in Indianapolis and shattered the myth of black inferiority in sports.

THE MISCALCULATIONS OF LIGHTNING GIRL
McAnulty, Stacy
Penguin Random House - Random House Books for Young Readers (Random House)
978-1524767570
In this funny and tender story neuro-diverse Lucy, a 12-year-old gifted with exceptional math ability, navigates the “soft skills” of socializing while trying to keep her math skills a secret from her middle school peers.

THE FLIGHT OF SWANS
McGuire, Sarah
Lerner Publishing Group - Carolrhoda Books
978-1512440270
In this fairy tale retelling, Andaryn must persevere for six years of silence in order to save her six brothers, who were turned into swans by an evil queen.

NOWHERE BOY
Marsh, Katherine
Macmillan - Roaring Brook Press
978-1250307576
American Max and Ahmed, a Syrian refugee, both unhappy to be in Belgium, become unexpected friends in this timely novel that draws parallels to a WWII Belgian hero who died protecting Jewish children.

MERCI SUÁREZ CHANGES GEARS
Medina, Meg
Candlewick
978-0763690496
Merci loves her complicated family as she tries to find her place as a soccer player and as the token scholarship child in her privileged school.
INKLING
Oppel, Kenneth
Sydney Smith, Illustrator
Penguin Random House - Alfred A. Knopf (Random House)
978-1524772819
When Ethan befriends an ink blob that escapes from the pages of his dad’s sketchbook the whole family finds what they’ve been searching for—but magic can’t be kept secret. Illustrations bring this action-packed, laugh-out-loud novel about creativity, family, and grief to life.

MARTIN RISING: REQUIEM FOR A KING
Pinkney, Andrea Davis
Pinkney, Brian, Illustrator
Scholastic - Scholastic Press
978-0545702539
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s final months and a remembrance of his assassination and legacy are celebrated magnificently through Andrea Davis Pinkney’s poetry and Brian Pinkney’s powerful art. Photographs, a timeline, and reflections from both author and illustrator are included.

GHOST BOYS
Rhodes, Jewell Parker
Little, Brown & Company - Little, Brown Books for Young Readers
978-0316262286
Guided by the ghost of Emmett Till, 12-year-old Jerome lingers after his death to understand what happened when he was shot and killed by a police officer—and to comprehend the shooting’s devastating impact on his family, and the potential for the living to be catalysts for change.

THE GIRL WHO DREW BUTTERFLIES: HOW MARIA MERIAN’S ART CHANGED SCIENCE
Sidman, Joyce
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - HMH Books for Young Readers
978-0544717138
This meticulously researched and gorgeously crafted illustrated biography of 17th century entomologist and naturalist Maria Merian includes poetic captions from Maria’s original scientific illustrations. Included are a glossary, timeline, source notes, bibliography, and suggestions for further reading.
THE PRINCE AND THE DRESSMAKER
Wang, Jen
Macmillan - First Second
978-1626723634
Sebastian, a young French prince who leads a secret double life as a fashion icon named Lady Crystallia, meets talented dressmaker Frances. Vibrant expressive illustrations in this graphic novel draw the reader into the relationship between these two complex characters.

FRONT DESK
Yang, Kelly
Scholastic - Arthur A. Levine Books
978-1338157796
The Tang family become caretakers at a hotel owned by the tyrannical, racist Mr. Yao, and 10-year-old Mia Tang learns to stand up for her family and the diverse friends living in the margins of her new community.

FOURTEEN AND UP

THE GRAND ESCAPE
Bascomb, Neal
Scholastic - Arthur A. Levine Books
978-1338140347
A compelling non-fiction narrative filled with photos, illustrations, and maps details the ingenuity of captured Allied pilots to plan and execute the biggest prison break of the twentieth century from a German camp during World War I.

GIRL MADE OF STARS
Blake, Ashley Herring
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - HMH Books for Young Readers
978-1328778239
When Mara's twin brother is accused of rape, she must question all that she knows, loves, and trusts and face her own trauma from a past assault.

THE UNWANTED: STORIES OF THE SYRIAN REFUGEES
Brown, Don
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - HMH Books for Young Readers
978-1328810151
Bombed, jailed, tortured, and shot, Syrians fled their country. This meticulously sourced graphic nonfiction novel is based on personal accounts and depicts the refugees’ horrific journey and their steely determination to find a better life.
VOTES FOR WOMEN!: AMERICAN SUFFRAGISTS AND THE BATTLE FOR THE BALLOT
Conkling, Winifred
Workman - Algonquin Young Readers
978-1616207342
Suffragists’ letters, other writings, and photos are used to depict the decades-long struggle for the right to vote and the often-ignored racism that existed within the movement.

BRIGHTLY BURNING
Donne, Alexa
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - HMH Books for Young Readers
978-1328948939
In this science fiction retelling of Jane Eyre, seventeen-year-old Stella, both an engineer and a teacher, is hired to work on a privately owned spaceship where she encounters mysterious occurrences as well as unexpected romance.

PICTURE US IN THE LIGHT
Gilbert, Kelly Loy
Disney (Hyperion)
978-1484726020
Danny Cheng uncovers something that threatens to unravel everything his immigrant family has built. With well-developed characters and a subtle handling of tough issues, Gilbert’s poignant coming-of-age love story travels into the world of family secrets and why some are meant to be kept.

THE WAR OUTSIDE
Hesse, Monica
Little, Brown & Company - Little, Brown Books for Young Readers
978-0316316699
Margot and Haruko form a friendship under the most unlikely of circumstances: as German and Japanese enemies of the state held in the multi-ethnic Crystal City, Texas internment camp during WWII.

MONDAY’S NOT COMING
Jackson, Tiffany D.
HarperCollins - HarperTeen
978-0062422699
Sometimes Claudia feels like she is the only one who cares about her friend Monday Charles, especially when Monday's own mother is evasive about her daughter’s whereabouts. Will anyone help Claudia find Monday?
TRULY DEVIOUS
Johnson, Maureen
HarperCollins - Katherine Tegen Books
978-0062338051
Stevie Bell arrives at prestigious Ellingham Academy with plans to solve the decades-old case of the kidnapping of the founder's wife and daughter. But just as her investigation gets underway things turn deadly.

DARIUS THE GREAT IS NOT OKAY
Khorram, Adib
Penguin Random House - Dial Books for Young Readers (Penguin)
978-0525552963
Darius, an awkward tea-loving teen, struggles with life and depression when a family trip to Iran brings something unexpected. This touching novel delves into the stigma of depression, the complexities of family, and how a true friend can make life sublime.

DEAR RACHEL MADDOW
Kisner, Adrienne
Macmillan - Feiwel & Friends
978-1250146021
Brynn's life seems meaningless ever since her brother died and her girlfriend dumped her, but her emails to Rachel Maddow and one cruel injustice help her to keep going. In this epistolary novel told solely in emails, one small, yet loud, voice fights for the little guy in hopes to make a difference.

HEY, KIDDO
Krosoczka, Jarrett J.
Scholastic - Graphix
978-0545902489
With his mother in and out of rehab and his father's identity a mystery, Jarrett's headstrong grandparents raise him and nurture the love of art that ultimately saves him. Notable comics creator Jarrett J. Krosoczka's graphic memoir reflects on his family and complicated upbringing with raw frankness and impressive attention to historical detail.

I AM STILL ALIVE
Marshall, Kate Alice
Penguin Random House - Viking Children's Books (Penguin)
978-0425290989
In this unique and suspenseful survival story, Jess's past and present slowly come together as she fights for her life in the wilderness and prepares to take revenge against the men who caused her father's death.
BLOOD WATER PAINT
McCullough, Joy
Penguin Random House - Dutton Books for Young Readers
978-0735232112
Based on true events, this novel in verse offers a bold portrait of Artemesia Gentileschi, a young woman who challenged society's values and the role of women in 17th century Italy. Raped by her tutor, Artemesia convinces her father to pursue legal prosecution on her behalf, all the while hiding the secret of her artistic talent behind paintings signed with her father's initials.

WHAT I LEAVE BEHIND
McGhee, Alison
Simon & Schuster - Atheneum
978-1481476560
Will is trying to deal with both his father's suicide and the rape of a good friend. But he is also filled with the small joys of a day as he works at a dollar store, and befriends and gives back to the people he passes as he walks to his job.

AFTER THE SHOT DROPS
Ribay, Randy
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - HMH Books for Young Readers
978-1328702272
For Bunny, the chance to play basketball at a private school means more than a chance at the championship. It's a path to escape his low-income community and find a future filled with possibility. But Nasir sees Bunny's sudden departure as a betrayal of their lifelong friendship, and a choice that threatens to cost him and his family much more than a basketball title.

HOUSE OF DREAMS: THE LIFE OF L.M. MONTGOMERY
Rosenberg, Liz
Julie Morstad, Illustrator
Candlewick
978-0763660574
A comprehensive biographical look at Lucy Maud Montgomery’s growth as a writer, her failings, her struggle with depression and her love of Prince Edward Island offer a new understanding of the woman behind Anne of Green Gables.
WHAT THE NIGHT SINGS
Stamper, Vesper
Penguin Random House - Alfred A. Knopf (Random House)
978-1524700386
Gerta and her father, both talented musicians, are discovered and sent to Bergen-Belsen by the Nazis. The teenager is liberated at the end of the war, but the aftermath of what came next for the survivors is the true heart of this book. The author/artist's haunting, full-page illustrations complete the striking package.

CHASING KING'S KILLER: THE HUNT FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.'S ASSASSIN
Swanson, James L.
Scholastic - Scholastic Press
978-0545723336
Swanson explores the lives of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his assassin, James Earl Ray, and expertly builds tension, calling upon the reader to delve deeper into the story to understand the fullness of King's legacy and the motivations of King's killer.

CHECK, PLEASE
Ukazu, Ngozi
Macmillan - First Second
978-1250177957
Eric "Bitty" Bittle and his hockey team experience their first and second years at Samwell University in this engaging, cheekily illustrated graphic novel. Witty dialogue, a subtle gay romance, and lots of references to Bitty's baking examine bro culture and serve to demolish toxic masculinity.

AUDIOBOOKS

CHILDREN OF BLOOD AND BONE
Adeyemi, Tomi
Bahni Turpin, Narrator
Macmillan - Young Listeners
978-1427295514 (CD)
Zelie embarks on a journey to return magic to her people. The narration of this beautiful and exciting story brings the listener into the plot.
DREAD NATION
Ireland, Justina
Bahni Turpin, Narrator
HarperCollins - Balzer + Bray
978-0062822956 (CD)
The dead began to rise at Gettysburg and elsewhere—and black and Native Americans like young shambler-hunter Jane McKeene are forced into combat in this alternate history with zombies.

AMAL UNBOUND
Saeed, Aisha
Priya Ayyar, Narrator
Penguin Random House - Listening Library (Audio)
978-0525632115 (Digital Audio)
Amal's ordinary life in Pakistan is upended when she must pay down her family's debt to a ruthless landlord via indentured servitude.

HOPE IN THE HOLLER
Tyre, Lisa Lewis
Catherine Taber, Narrator
Penguin Random House - Books on Tape (Audio)
978-0525589747 (CD)
Wavie is sent to live with a greedy, mean aunt when her mother dies, but with the help of friends in Conley Holler she may find something for which to hope.
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.

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