



**(Some of) Kris Springer's Favorite Books & Resources
for School-Aged Children**

K-1st grade level favorite books:

Arnold, Tedd

Hi! Fly Guy.

A boy goes out searching for a smart animal to take to The Amazing Pet Show and bumps into a fly that is intelligent enough to say the child's name, Buzz. Although his parents and the judges feel at first that a fly is only a pest, not a pet, the insect puts on a performance that astounds them all and wins an award. Fly Guy's adventures continue in *Super Fly Guy*, *Shoo Fly Guy*, and *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Fly Guy*.

Arnosky, Jim. *Armadillo's Orange*.

This prolific author and illustrator has once again produced a small treasure. A young armadillo digs his burrow in an orange grove, pleased that its entrance will be clearly marked by a big, bright fruit that has fallen to the ground. He goes out on grub-hunting forays every day, either ignoring his various animal neighbors, or shuffling impatiently when they impede his progress. When a gust of wind moves his orange, he wanders lost and alone until he realizes that it is the neighbors he has been ignoring who can lead him home again. The story is told in simple, clear prose that belies the larger message about what constitutes a constant in a world of continual flux.

Agee, Jon. *Terrific*.

With pithy humor and a knack for comic timing, Agee has created a character who will endear himself to readers despite his curmudgeonly exterior and posturing. Eugene Mudge lives in Dismal, ND, and has a little problem with negativity. When he wins a free trip to Bermuda, his response is "Terrific, I'll probably get a really nasty sunburn." Nothing seems to go right for him and no matter how horrible the experience—a wrecked cruise ship, a deserted island, a talking parrot, and almost dying of

thirst-his response is always a snide, "Terrific." Eugene's a grumpy old man, but sometimes, grumpy old men can surprise you. Sometimes, they even surprise themselves. Bang-Campbell, Monika. *Little Rat Makes Music*.

Little Rat loves playing the violin, but hates to practice. Her hard work with Kitty culminates in their recital duet. Other books about Little Rat include *Little Rat Rides* and *Little Rat Sets Sail*.

Barrett, Judith. *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*.

Life is delicious in the town of Chewandswallow where it rains soup and juice, snows mashed potatoes, and blows storms of hamburgers--until the weather takes a turn for the worse. Also try *Pickles to Pittsburgh* by Barrett or *The Giant Jam Sandwich* by Lord.

Browne, Anthony. *Little Beauty*.

Once there was a very special gorilla who had almost everything he needed. There was only one thing he didn't have: a friend. With no other gorillas at the zoo, the keepers try something new. Will the gigantic ape strike a bond with another sort of creature, one as tiny and innocent as a kitten? Sparked by the story of a real gorilla who learned to sign, LITTLE BEAUTY is a celebration of a most surprising friendship.

Chinn, Karen. *Sam and the Lucky Money*.

Sam must decide how to spend his "lucky money" from Chinese New Year. As he wavers between his choices, one seems just right. This thoughtful tale of generosity shows the colorful locals and the festival dragon.

Cooper, Helen. *Pumpkin Soup*.

Cooper serves up a well-rounded tale told with storyteller's cadences. Pudgy housemates Squirrel, Cat, and Duck team up for activities including quilt making and music concerts, until Duck wants to be Head Cook and stir the soup. The trio spats and Duck waddles off in a huff. As the remaining pair search pumpkin patch and dark forest for their pal, they rethink their position. Coziness returns when they find Duck back home and learn to share at least cooking roles. Readers will linger over each page, savoring the delicious illustrations. The grand finale, of course, is a recipe for pumpkin soup.

Cowley, Joy. *Red-Eyed Tree Frog*.

Stunning color photographs and a gripping interactive text bring you right up close to a red-eyed tree frog in a rain forest in Central America. The big pictures are arranged to tell an exciting narrative, and a few simple words draw you in and build the suspense. As evening comes, the frog wakes up hungry. What will it eat?

Cronin, Doreen. *Diary of a Fly*.

Fans of *Diary of a Spider* (2005) and *Diary of a Worm* (2003) will be thrilled with this latest mix of whimsy and scientific fact. Fly, a sassy insect with a red bow on her purple head, writes in her diary about her first-day-of-school worries (will everyone else eat regurgitated food?), the challenges of fly-school classes, a visit to her aunt who is stuck on the wrong side of a screen door, and playdates with her pals Worm and Spider.

Curtis, Jamie Lee. *Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born*.

In a refrain that begins every sentence, the young female narrator asks her adoptive parents to "tell me again" the story of her birth and introduction into the family she is now a part of. This entertaining, idiosyncratic ramble begins with a phone call in the middle of the night that brings her parents to the hospital where they pick her up.

Demi. *One Grain of Rice: A Mathematical Folktale*.

A resourceful village girl outsmarts a greedy raja, turning a reward of one grain of rice into a feast for a hungry nation. Delicate paintings emblazoned with touches of gold give this Indian folktale an exotic air.

dePaola, Tomie. *Fin M'Coul: The Giant of Knockmany Hill*.

This Irish folktale tells of a giant who, with his wife's help, outwits his arch rival, Cucullin.

Dorros, Arthur. *Abuela (Grandmother)*.

In this tasty trip, Rosalba is "always going places" with her grandmother--abuela. During one of their bird-feeding outings to the park, Rosalba wonders aloud, "What if I could fly?" Thus begins an excursion through the girl's imagination as she soars high above the tall buildings and buses of Manhattan, over the docks and around the Statue of Liberty with Abuela in tow. Each stop of the glorious journey evokes a vivid memory for Rosalba's

grandmother and reveals a new glimpse of the woman's colorful ethnic origins. Dorros's text seamlessly weaves Spanish words and phrases into the English narrative, retaining a dramatic quality rarely found in bilingual picture books.

Dowson, Nick.

Tigress.

The zoology is as exciting as the story in this action-packed picture book about a mother tiger who nurtures her two young cubs in the forest and prepares them to take off on their own. Drama increases as she teaches the cubs to hunt, and then must let them go. Brother and sister separate, and the young tigress will one day follow in her mother's path. The combination of fierce predator and gentle parent makes for thrilling science.

Tracks of a Panda.

This introduction to the species that follows a panda baby and its mother as the two find food, change location, and avoid danger is beautifully illustrated in the Chinese style with brush and ink paintings. 2008 Notable Children's Book.

Elffers, Joost and Saxton Freymann.

How Are You Peeling? Foods with Moods.

The "natural personalities" of produce are enhanced with black-eyed pea eyes and the occasional carved mouth--then photographed in vivid colors. One page reveals a wistful-looking poblano pepper being comforted by a cheerful red tomato, while another shows the amused, confused, frustrated, and surprised expressions of a green pepper, red pepper, orange, and apple. Adults and children alike will marvel at the range of expressions these fruits and vegetables possess.

Also try these titles by Elffers and Freymann:

Dog Food.

Food for Thought.

One Lonely Sea Horse.

Farris, Christine King. *My Brother Martin: A Sister Remembers Growing Up with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

K-Gr. 3. In this picture-book biography, Martin Lunter King's older sister adds a personal stamp to King's childhood experiences that other books have lacked. When Martin asks his mother why the white boys across the street have been forbidden to play with the King children, she

explains about prejudice, prompting Martin to say, "Mother Dear, one day I'm going to turn the world upside down."

Feiffer, Jules. *Bark, George*.

George's mother wants George the puppy to bark. When he meows instead, she scolds him: "No, George. Cats go meow. Dogs go arf." But George can't seem to get it right-- first quacking, then oinking, and finally mooing, as his mother becomes increasingly distraught. Eventually, it's off to the vet, who literally gets to the bottom of things when he pulls an amazing assortment of beasts out of unsuspecting George's open mouth. What happens next is a wonderful surprise.

Fine, Anne.

The Jamie and Angus Stories.

These childlike adventures relay how Angus' white coat becomes a gray tangle when Granny puts him in the washer; how Uncle Edward teaches Angus to jump; how Angus gets a red balloon at the baby-sitter's wedding; and how Jamie grows out of his stroller. The tales are simple and appealing, and Angus, depicted in black-and-white drawings, is delightful. When read aloud, the stories will invite children to share their own experiences. The characters return in *Jamie and Angus Together*.

Frazer, Marla. *Roller Coaster*.

Frazer takes readers for a trip on the "the Rocket," a roller coaster that looks like the letter "S" run amok. Everyone, child and adult alike, is waiting to ride the roller coaster. Finally it's time to get into the cars; 12 lucky folks take their seats (a few people have already fallen out of line). Then, seatbelts fastened, off they go, with the picture-book audience brought up close to enjoy the ride. Around and around and up and down, the cars zip and fly across a series of double-page spreads.

Gerstein, Mordicai. *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*.

In 1974, when the World Trade Center was being completed, a young French tightrope walker could not resist the challenge and spent over an hour walking, dancing, resting, and doing tricks a quarter of a mile above pedestrians on the streets below. Fascinating ink work and oil paintings provide a real sense of perspective and daring to the story. A picture book for older readers. Winner of the 2004 Caldecott Medal.

Gravett, Emily. *Wolves*.

The story couldn't be simpler: a rabbit borrows a book about wolves from the Public Burrowing Library. Lost in the pages of his good book as he strolls home, the rabbit fails to recognize that he has encountered the real thing--an honest-to-goodness, knife-and-fork-wielding, big bad you-know-what. But not to worry. This is a postmodern picture book that has fun with narrative convention; there's an alternate ending, accompanied by playful interjections from the author-illustrator.

And also try Gravett's book, *The Odd Egg* (2009).

Hatkoff, Isabella. *Owen & Mzee: The True Story of a Remarkable Friendship*.

When Owen, a baby hippo, loses his mother in the 2004 tsunami, he bonds with Mzee, a giant tortoise.

Heller, Ruth. *Chickens Aren't the Only Ones*.

Full-color illustrations and rhyming text show young readers that snakes, lizards, turtles, insects, and amphibians also lay eggs.

Hopkinson, Deborah and Nancy Carpenter. *Apples to Oregon: Being the Slightly True Narrative of How a Brave Pioneer Father Brought Apples, Peaches, Pears, Plums, Grapes, and Cherries (and Children) Across the Plains*.

When Papa decides to move from Iowa to Oregon his biggest concern is not his family but his apples--and his peaches, plums, grapes, cherries, and pears! He constructs a dirt-filled wagon to transport his fruit saplings, while his family travels in a smaller cart. Along the way, they encounter the requisite Oregon Trail hardships, but luckily daughter Delicious is clever enough to help her family (and Papa's precious darlings) arrive safely at their new home. Based loosely on the life of Henderson Luelling, who founded Oregon's first nursery in 1847.

James, Simon. *Baby Brains*.

Mr and Mrs. Brains stimulate their unborn infant's intelligence by reading aloud, playing music, and turning up the volume for the news. Their plan succeeds so brilliantly that, only days after his birth, Baby Brains is reading the newspaper, fixing the car, and noting, "I'd like to go to school tomorrow." Within weeks he has completed medical school and is performing operations. From there to outer space is a small step for Baby Brains, but

after an experience during a space walk, he chooses the path more traveled.

Jenkins, Steve.

Actual Size.

In striking torn-and-cut paper collages, Jenkins depicts 18 animals and insects—or a part of their body—in actual size. The end matter offers full pictures of the creatures and more details about their habitats and habits. Jenkins has also written *Prehistoric Actual Size*, another impressive, fascinating book.

Kalman, Maira. *Fireboat: The Heroic Adventures of the John J. Harvey.*

In relating the heroic role of the John J. Harvey on September 11, 2001, Kalman intelligently conveys those unfathomable events in a way that a picture book audience can comprehend. She begins with the year 1931, which saw some of New York City's finest hours: "Amazing things were happening big and small./ The Empire State Building went up up up." She continues with the completion of the George Washington Bridge, then zeroes in on the launching of the John J. Harvey, "the largest, fastest and shiniest fireboat of them all."

Kloske, Geoffrey. *Once Upon a Time, The End: Asleep in 60 Seconds.*

A tired father takes only a few sentences to tell a number of classic tales in order to get the persistent listener to fall asleep.

Krull, Kathleen. *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez.*

The dramatic story of Chavez's 340-mile march to protest the working conditions of migrant farmworkers in California is the centerpiece of this well-told biography. Readers meet Chavez at his grandparents' home in Arizona where he lived happily amid a large extended family. His childhood was cut short when, due to financial difficulties, the family was forced to move to California to seek employment. After years of laboring in the fields, Chavez became increasingly disturbed by the inhuman living conditions imposed by the growers.

Krull, Kathleen. *Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World's Fastest Woman.*

The story of Wilma Rudolph, the prematurely born black child who, despite suffering from polio, became the first woman to win three Olympic gold medals.

Leaf, Munro. *The Story of Ferdinand*.

Ferdinand the bull would rather sit and smell the flowers than run, jump, and butt heads with all the other bulls. When he is picked for the bullfights in Madrid, he surprises the audience with his pacifist response.

Livingstone, Star. *Harley*.

Harley just can't seem to learn to be a pack animal, or to get along with the other llamas. When a shepherd comes to the ranch looking for a guard llama, she decides she likes the look of Harley, so she takes him back to her field. He learns to guard the sheep and comes to take his job very seriously.

Lum, Kate. *What! Cried Granny: An Almost Bedtime Story*.

It's Patrick's first sleepover at his Granny's house, and the woman is a little unprepared. As the sun begins to set, she instructs her grandson to get ready for bed. "But, Granny," the boy points out, "I don't HAVE a bed here." "WHAT?" cries Granny, and she runs out to chop down a tree, out of which she proceeds to make a bed. Patrick then points out the lack of a pillow, blanket, teddy bear...and finally, the fact that morning has arrived.

Lunde, Darrin. *Hello, Bumblebee Bat*.

Straightforward text pops out of a sparse background allowing this little mammal to describe its habitat and characteristics in an intriguing and accessible way. A 2008 Geisel Honor Book.

Macaulay, David. *Black and White*.

At first glance, this is a collection of four unrelated stories, each occupying a quarter of every two-page spread, and each a slight enough tale to seem barely worth a book--a boy on a train, parents in a funny mood, a convict's escape and a late commuter train. The magic of Black and White comes not from each story, however, but from the mysterious interactions between them that creates a fifth story. The reader is challenged to use text and pictures in unexpected ways.

McClintock, Barbara. *Adele and Simon*.

Set in an enchanting Paris in the early 20th century, Adele implores her little brother, Simon, not to lose

anything as they begin their walk home from school. She might as well have asked the sun not to rise in the East, for at each stop along the way Simon loses something: first a drawing he had made, then his books, then one of his gloves. And so it goes until the children finally arrive at home, where Mama discovers that Simon has lost everything!

McPhail, David. *Edward and the Pirates*.

Edward, a constant reader, puts himself into the action of every story he reads. When a band of pirates shows up and demands his book, Edward discovers that they can't read—and he decides to help them!

Mollel, Tololwa. *My Rows and Piles of Coins*.

This contemporary East African story tells of a proud and helpful boy who is determined to learn to ride and purchase a bicycle in order to ease his mother's task of taking goods to market.

Muth, Jon. *Zen Shorts*.

Muth's story of inquisitive siblings befriending a wise panda, is told through luminous watercolors interwoven with three lessons, set apart by starkly contrasting Asian-inspired brush paintings. The interplay of artistic styles elegantly conveys the gentle, timeless messages of self-knowledge and acceptance. *Zen Ties* is the latest by Muth.

Newman, Marjorie. *Mole and the Baby Bird*.

This sweet, simple story from Marjorie Newman somehow avoids cliché while teaching one of life's oldest lessons: if you love something, you really shouldn't hold it prisoner in a tiny, handmade wooden cage.

Okimoto, Jean Davies. *The White Swan Express: A Story About Adoption*.

Describing the process, anxiety, suspense, and delight of becoming a family, this book tells the story of four families who travel from North America to China to adopt daughters from an orphanage.

Old, Wendie. *To Fly: The Story of the Wright Brothers*.

The story of the Wright Brothers is portrayed in brief, accessible chapters, beginning with their childhood fascination with flight and love of problem solving to their stunning achievement.

Paye, Won-Ldy. *Head, Body, Legs: A Story from Liberia.*

This humorous story from Liberia's Dan people suggests that all must work together to succeed in life. A disembodied Head rolls along but can't get the cherries or mangoes he wants to eat until he discovers Arms. Arms attach to Head and they are nearly squashed by Body. As Head assembles various parts, each piece attaches itself in a strange way until finally, with the addition of Legs, Head can recompose to make a full person-and those mangoes are delicious.

Pennypacker, Sara.

Clementine.

The Talented Clementine.

Clementine's Letter.

As Clementine says, "Spectacularful ideas are always sproinging up in my brain." All the better for readers who like to laugh. Reminiscent of both Ramona and Junie B. Jones, Clementine is an ingenuous third-grader with a talent for trouble and a good heart. Her best friend is her neighbor Margaret, a fourth-grader who experiences both qualities firsthand. After all, plenty of kids may have had their hair chopped off by a helpful friend in an effort to get the glue out, but how many of those friends would think to improve matters by drawing hair back on the scalp, forehead, and neck with a Flaming Sunset permanent marker? Clementine's adventures continue in *The Talented Clementine.*

Pilkey, Dav. *Dog Breath: The Horrible Trouble with Hally Tosis.*

Corny jokes, plays on words, and garishly colored illustrations are Pilkey's stock-in-trade. This outrageous book continues the tradition. Hally is a fine, loving dog with horrible breath. Even skunks avoid her. When Mr. and Mrs. Tosis decide to give her away, their children try to cure the problem, but nothing works.

Portis, Antoinette.

Not a Box.

Not a Stick.

Wrapped in basic, grocery-bag-brown paper, this streamlined book visualizes a child's imagined games. "Why are you sitting in a box?" reads the opening page, opposite an image of a small rabbit, drawn in the simplest, unshaded lines, who appears next to a square. "It's not a box," reads the text, as the author reveals what the rabbit sees

instead of the box. Portis continues this theme in her latest, *Not a Stick*. A 2007 Theodor Seuss Geisel Honor Book.

Raschka, Chris. *Yo! Yes!*

In 34 words and expressive illustrations, Raschka shows the beginning of a beautiful friendship between two boys.

Rathmann, Peggy.

The Day the Babies Crawled Away.

A sweet tale (true or fantasy--you decide) about a boy who saves the day when the babies crawled away.

Officer Buckle and Gloria.

Officer Buckle's safety assemblies were boring until Gloria the police dog came and hammed it up behind Officer Buckle. But when Officer Buckle finds out that the applause is not for him...1996 Caldecott Medal Winner.

Reynolds, Peter. *The Dot.*

One of the best books out there for young perfectionists who think they just can't draw. Just make a dot and see where it takes you!

Rylant, Cynthia. *Henry and Mudge and the Great Grandpas.*

In four simple, joyful chapters, Henry and his sweet-natured dog experience a memorable visit with Great-grandpa Bill and his buddies at the "grandpa house." The 2006 Geisel Medal Book. The others in the Henry and Mudge series are also highly recommended.

Say, Allen.

Grandfather's Journey.

Say eloquently portrays a Japanese immigrant's travels to a new land. Exquisite watercolors portray vast landscapes along with intimate family portraits that communicate hope, dignity, sadness, and love. Say powerfully connects the personal and the universal to create a rare harmony of longing and belonging.

Kamishibai Man.

An elderly retired Japanese storyteller relives the days before television, when children would flock to hear his stories and sample his sweets. The art of kamishibai,

storytelling with illustrated cards, is the precursor to manga and anime.

Sayre, April Pulley. *Vulture View*.

Rhyming lyrical text and dramatic textured collage introduce a day in the life of turkey vultures. A 2008 Geisel Honor Book.

Schachner, Judith Byron. *The Grannyman*.

Blind, deaf, and extremely arthritic, Simon, an elderly Siamese cat, is ready to call it quits after a long and happy life. Despite his family's deep love his independent spirit becomes depressed as he needs more and more help in his daily life. Suspecting his decision to give up on life, his family plops a new kitten on his chest, and Simon puts his own worries on the back burner.

Schaefer, Lola and Heather Lynn Miller. *Look Behind!: Tales of Animal Ends*.

A new, somewhat low-brow yet fascinating book about behinds--great for reluctant readers or anyone.

Scieszka, Jon. *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*.

Alexander T. Wolf tells his side of the story from inside the pig penitentiary; he was just in the wrong place at the wrong time!

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. *Dog and Bear: Two Friends, Three Stories*.

A tail-wagging dachshund and a multicolored stuffed bear star in three tales about friendship. In the first, Dog wants to go outside, but Bear is perched atop a tall chair and can't get down. Dog is brave, while Bear is more shy. A very charming collection of stories. *Dog and Bear: Two's Company* is Seeger's newest Dog and Bear collection.

Shannon, David. *A Bad Case of Stripes*.

Camilla Cream worries too much about what everyone thinks about her and because she tries so hard to please everyone, she starts to break out in stripes, stars, and then anything anyone suggests.

Sierra, Judy. *Wild About Books*.

Librarian Molly McGrew accidentally drives her bookmobile into the zoo, and then the fun begins! The animals draw close to listen to a Dr. Seuss story, and soon

they begin stampeding "to learn all about this new something called reading."

Silverstein, Shel.

Falling Up.

A Light in the Attic.

Where the Sidewalk Ends.

For many years, kids and kids at heart have giggled at the jumbled, goofy nonsense poems of Shel Silverstein.

Silverstein's amusing, cartoonish line drawings are every bit as familiar and beloved to readers as his poems. Gone, but not forgotten, the creator of several irresistible poetry collections left an indelible mark on children's poetry. Recommended for all ages.

Stevens, Janet (adapter). *Tops and Bottoms.*

Lazy Bear and clever Hare make a deal to plant crops and split the profits—Bear can have the tops, and Hare will have the bottoms. But when it's time for harvest, Hare gets the carrots, radishes, and beets, and Bear just gets the tops. Dynamic illustrations and the sideways binding of the book make this a favorite trickster tale.

Stewart, Sarah. *The Gardener.*

A sweet story set during the Great Depression; a little girl moves from her family's farm to the city, where she stays with her gruff uncle and grows flowers on his rooftop.

Teague, Mark. *Dear Mrs. La Rue: Letters from Obedience School.*

Poor Ike the dog wants out of obedience school, so he writes his owner, Mrs. La Rue, about the "horrible" conditions. The illustrations tell the real story, and readers will catch on fast with lots of laughs.

Turner, Pamela S. *Hachiko: The True Story of a Loyal Dog.*

This small, square picture book pays tribute to one of the world's lesser-known animal heroes: Hachiko, a dog who kept vigil for nearly 10 years at a Tokyo train station, waiting for his deceased master to return from work.

Thomas, Jan. *The Doghouse.*

Rhyming Dust Bunnies.

What Will Fat Cat Sit On?

Thomas knows what makes kids laugh; all of her books are incredibly funny as well as set at a beginner reader level,

so that you can read them with your child or your child can try reading them to you.

Wells, Rosemary. *Yoko*.

Yoko is ready for a great first day of school, until lunchtime, when other children make fun of her sushi. Happily her teacher helps Yoko make a friend, and this is enough.

Wiesner, David. *Sector 7*.

A fantastical journey, this wordless picture book shows a young boy on a class trip to the Empire State Building who befriends a cloud and is taken inside a factory where clouds are made. A Caldecott Honor Book.

Willems, Mo. *There Is a Bird on your Head!*

Elephant Gerald learns that there is something worse than having a bird on your head - having two birds on your head! Trying to help her friend, the always-playful Piggie ends up with a problem of her own.

Wood, Audrey. *King Bidgood's in the Bathtub*.

Various members of the Court, all clothed in elaborate Elizabethan dress, try to dislodge the King from his bubbly tub. Instead they are drawn into it with him, until one of them figures out what to do. Children will pore over the illustrations. A Caldecott Honor Book.

Young, Ed. *Seven Blind Mice*.

A retelling of the fable of the blind men and the elephant--six of the seven mice touch only part of the elephant, deciding that they've seen something different each time, until the seventh runs across the entire elephant, and knows the truth. A Caldecott Honor Book.

Recommended series for K and 1st grade readers:

Amelia Bedelia

Arthur

Commander Toad

Frog and Toad

Henry & Mudge

Little Bear

Little Bill

Mercy Watson

Minnie and Moo

Nate the Great

2nd-3rd grade level favorite books:

Allard, Harry. *Miss Nelson Is Missing!*

The kids in Room 207 take advantage of their teacher's good nature until she disappears and they are faced with a vile substitute. "Rarely has the golden rule been so effectively interpreted for children."--
"Booklist."

Atwater, Richard. *Mr. Popper's Penguins.*

The unexpected delivery of a large crate containing an Antarctic penguin changes the life and fortunes of Mr. Popper, a house painter obsessed by dreams of the Polar regions.

Babbitt, Natalie. *Jack Plank Tells Tales.*

The author of the Newbery Honor Book "Tuck Everlasting" delivers an adventure about a young man who started out to be a pirate, but just didn't seem to have the knack for it and seeks a new career.

Bang, Molly. *Chattanooga Sludge.*

John Todd attempts to clean the toxic waters of Chattanooga Creek with a Living Machine. Shows how sewage can be used productively and a dirty river made clean.

Bishop, Nic. *Nic Bishop Spiders.*

More than a dozen types of spiders are presented through vibrant, dramatic up-close photos and compelling, knowledgeable text. A 2008 Sibert Honor Book.

Bjork, Christina. *Linnea in Monet's Garden.*

Linnea visited Claude Monet's garden in Paris and saw many of his actual paintings. Now she understands what it means for a painter to be called an Impressionist. This innovative art book for children contains full-color photos of many of Monet's famous paintings.

Blume, Judy. *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing.*

Superfudge.

Fudge-a-mania.

Double Fudge.

A terrifically funny series about Peter and Fudge, and Peter's struggles with being ignored because of his outrageous younger brother.

Brown, Marc. *Arthur* (series).

Sweet stories about Arthur the Aardvark, his sister D.W., and his friends at school.

Bridges, Ruby. *Through My Eyes.*

Ruby Bridges recounts the story of her involvement, as a six-year-old, in the integration of her school in New Orleans in 1960.

Cameron, Ann

Gloria Rising

Gloria's Way

Julian, Dream Doctor

Julian, Secret Agent

Julian's Glorious Summer

More Stories Huey Tells

More Stories Julian Tells

The Stories Huey Tells

The Stories Julian Tells

Perfect stories for 2nd and 3rd graders; Julian, his younger brother Huey, and friend Gloria are normal children who seem to find humor in everything. Julian can lead his young brother Huey into a pack of trouble in a flick of an eye. Relationships with their father are central in the six stand-alone stories in *The Stories Julian Tells*.

Clements, Andrew. *Frindle.*

When he decides to turn his fifth-grade teacher's love of the dictionary around on her, clever Nick Allen invents a new word and begins a chain of events that quickly move beyond his control.

Coerr, Eleanor B. *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes.*

This tale is based on the true story of Sadako Sasaki, who is hospitalized with the "atom bomb disease," leukemia. She races against time to fold

1,000 paper cranes, an act which according to legend, will make her well again.

Cohen, Barbara. *Molly's Pilgrim*.

Molly's assignment is to make a pilgrim doll for the class Thanksgiving display. Her mother helps, but doesn't understand the American term "pilgrim." Much to Molly's embarrassment, her mother dresses the doll as she dressed before leaving Russia to seek religious freedom.

Creech, Sharon. *Love That Dog*.

Told in free verse, this story tells of a boy who comes to enjoy poetry through a wise teacher's introduction. His reluctance becomes interest, then enjoyment, and finally a passion for reading and writing poetry. Through poetry he is finally able to communicate his feelings and thoughts.

Curtis, Gavin. *The Bat Boy and His Violin*.

Reginald would rather play his violin than baseball. His father is managing the worst team in the Negro Leagues and makes Reginald the bat boy. When his music in the dugout seems to have a positive effect on the team's performance, Reginald's father is very pleased with his son's musical talent.

Dahl, Roald. *The BFG*.

It was the BFG-the Big Friendly Giant-who kidnaps Sophie from her bed in the orphanage and takes her back to Giantland with him lest she tell everyone that she has seen a giant. There she meets nine other Giants, Fleshlumpeater, Bonecrusher, Gizzardgulper, Bloodbottler-a whole beastly crew-all much bigger than the BFG, and much, much meaner. Every night the BFG catches dreams in a long-handled net and blows the good ones into little children's minds as they sleep, while the other Giants are busy racing off to various parts of the world to eat "human beans." How the BFG and Sophie conspire to put an end to the loathsome activities of the other Giants is a marvelously original and funny story.

James and the Giant Peach.

This classic tale of fantasy and wonder appeals to readers of all ages. Everyone is rooting for James as the magic peach grows in his yard, enabling him to escape "the aunts."

DiCamillo, Kate. *Because of Winn-Dixie*.

When Opal and her father, the preacher, move to Florida, Opal goes into a Winn-Dixie supermarket and comes out with a dog. With the help of her new pal, Opal makes a variety of new, interesting friends. She spends the summer collecting stories about them and thinking about her absent mother. This is a funny and unforgettable coming-of-age novel.

Fleischman, Sid. *The Whipping Boy*.

Because disciplining the heir to the throne was forbidden, young Jemmy was taken from the streets and routinely punished in place of Prince Brat. When Prince Brat becomes bored, he decides to run away and take his whipping boy with him. Their identities are inadvertently exchanged, and the fun begins.

Friedman, Ina R. *How My Parents Learned to Eat*.

The child of an American sailor father and a Japanese mother explains why they sometimes use chopsticks and sometimes use a fork and knife to eat. Humor and a touch of insight into how people differ and how their daily habits are the same are found in this book.

Gannett, Ruth Stiles.

My Father's Dragon.

Elmer and the Dragon.

The Dragons of Blueiland.

My Father's Dragon has been a favorite of young readers since the 1940s and a Newbery honor book. The story begins when Elmer Elevator (the narrator's father as a boy) runs away with an old alley cat to rescue a flying baby dragon being exploited on a faraway island. With the help of two dozen pink lollipops, rubber bands, chewing gum, and a fine-toothed comb, Elmer disarms the fiercest of beasts on Wild Island. *Elmer and the Dragon* and *The Dragons of Blueiland* continue the story after the baby dragon is freed.

Gerstein, Mordecai. *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers.*

In 1974, when the World Trade Center was being completed, a young French tightrope walker could not resist the challenge and spent over an hour walking, dancing, resting, and doing tricks a quarter of a mile above pedestrians on the streets below. Fascinating ink work and oil paintings provide a real sense of perspective and daring to the story. A picture book for older readers. Winner of the 2004 Caldecott Medal.

Gutman, Dan. *Honus and Me.*

Twelve-year-old Joe, while cleaning out Miss Young's attic, finds the world's most valuable baseball card picturing Honus Wagner. Joe falls asleep wrestling with the thought of telling her about the card. Then he wakes up in the night to see Wagner in his bedroom, and they travel back in time to the 1909 World Series.

Hatkoff, Isabella. *Owen & Mzee: The True Story of a Remarkable Friendship.*

When Owen, a baby hippo, loses his mother in the 2004 tsunami, he bonds with Mzee, a giant tortoise.

Hillman, Ben. *How Big Is It?*

How Strong Is It?

How Tall Is It?

How Weird Is It?

Hillman is a genius. These books are packed full of info but are also hilarious and cool. Info about things that boys & girls (especially boys) care about, with great pictures. Adults love these books too.

Hoberman, Mary Ann. *The Seven Silly Eaters.*

The combination of food and farce makes for an affectionate rhyming picture book about a family of picky eaters who drive their mother frantic. As each baby is born, it makes its rigid nutritional tastes known through bellowing demands. The focus is on Mrs. Peters, nearly always pregnant, trying to play her cello, and increasingly overwhelmed by the appetites of her family. Then the kids surprise her, and themselves,

in a gloriously messy climax that allows everyone to eat and Mom to have a life.

Howard, Elizabeth Fitzgerald. *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys*.

Virgie yearns to read just like her brothers. But they have to walk seven miles each Monday morning and stay all week at the Quaker school. Virgie convinces her family that it is important that she also learn to read and write. As Virgie is made welcome by the teachers, her joy abounds, and she vows to read every book in the school.

Howe, James. *Bunnicula* (series).

When a little rabbit called Bunnicula enters the Monroe household, vegetables begin turning white, and Chester the cat is convinced that Bunnicula is a vampire rabbit who sucks the juices out of vegetables. This is the first in a series of rollicking stories about Harold, Chester, and Bunnicula. Other titles by this author include *Howliday Inn*, *The Celery Stalks at Midnight*, and *Return to Howliday Inn*.

Hughes, Ted. *The Iron Giant*.

First published in 1968, *The Iron Giant* is a modern fantasy about a massive giant who stalks the earth devouring metal, terrifying farmers and townspeople everywhere. Despite his insatiable hunger, the Iron Giant is quite gentle and good-natured, though the townspeople are too frightened of him to realize it. So they capture him and put him in a scrapyard, where he happily stuffs himself with stoves and bicycles. The people forget about the Iron Giant until a space-bat the size of Australia hovers over the earth, poised to destroy it. Earth needs a hero and only the Iron Giant is big enough and brave enough to do battle with the hideous creature from outer space.

Jenkins, Martin. *Ape*.

With compelling illustrations and a conservationist slant, this look at four rare great apes--and one very familiar one--is a book that readers are sure to go ape over.

Kloske, Geoffrey. *Once Upon a Time, The End: Asleep in 60 Seconds*.

A tired father takes only a few sentences to tell a number of classic tales in order to get the persistent listener to fall asleep.

Lasky, Kathryn. *She's Wearing a Dead Bird on her Head!*

This fictionalized account explores the birth of the Massachusetts Audubon Society at the end of the nineteenth century. Harriet Hemenway and Minna Hall, two proper Bostonians, were cofounders of the Massachusetts organization that had an impact on the bird-protection movement. The illustrations by David Catrow are hilarious (look for other books illustrated by him too!)

Le Guin, Ursula K. *Catwings* (series).

Roger, Thelma, James, and Harriet are four city kittens who are born with wings. Their loving mother, concerned for their safety in the urban environment, urges them to move to the country. This is the tale of their many adventures with winged and other creatures in the countryside. Sequels include *Catwings Return*, *Wonderful Alexander and the Catwings*, and *Jane on Her Own*.

Lehman, Barbara. *Rainstorm*.

It's a rainy day when a bored young boy finds a key that opens a trunk with a ladder in it. He climbs down and his amazing adventure begins.

The Red Book.

This book is about a book. A magical red book without any words. When you turn the pages you'll experience a new kind of adventure through the power of story. In illustrations of rare detail and surprise, The Red Book crosses oceans and continents to deliver one girl into a new world of possibility, where a friend she's never met is waiting. And as with the best of books, at the conclusion of the story, the journey is not over.

Louie, Ai-Ling. *Yeh Shen: A Cinderella Story from China*.

A young Chinese girl overcomes the wickedness of her stepsister and stepmother to become the bride of a prince. Readers will be able to compare and contrast this Cinderella story with those of other countries. Ed Young's illustrations add greatly to this retelling.

MacLachlan, Patricia. *Sarah, Plain and Tall*.

In the late 19th century a widowed midwestern farmer with two children--Anna and Caleb--advertises for a wife. When Sarah arrives she is homesick for Maine, especially for the ocean which she misses greatly. The children fear that she will not stay, and when she goes off to town alone, young Caleb--whose mother died during childbirth--is stricken with the fear that she has gone for good. But she returns with colored pencils to illustrate for them the beauty of Maine, and to explain that, though she misses her home, "the truth of it is I would miss you more." The tale gently explores themes of abandonment, loss and love. Sequels are *Caleb's Song* and *Skylark*.

Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. *Snowflake Bentley*.

This book takes children back to the days when farmers worked with ox and sled and cut the dark with lantern light. It introduces Wilson Bentley, a boy who loved snow more than anything in the world and is determined that one day his camera would capture the extraordinary and unique beauty of snowflakes. 1999 Caldecott Medal winner.

McCully, Emily Arnold. *Beautiful Warrior: The Legend of the Nun's Kung Fu*.

A tense drama about brave young women who find strength in themselves. McCully tells a kung fu story about two legendary women in seventeenth-century China. First, there is the child prodigy whose father refuses to allow her to become an idle lady with bound feet. Instead, she studies the five pillars of learning and the martial arts and becomes a Buddhist nun named Wu Mei, beautiful warrior. Then Wu Mei saves a desperate, scatterbrained young girl from a forced marriage to a hooligan bandit. The warrior nun teaches the girl to save herself with kung fu.

McKissack, Pat. *Goin' Someplace Special*.

In segregated 1950s Nashville, a young African American girl braves a series of indignities and obstacles to get to one of the few integrated places in town where "all are welcome" - the public library.

Mora, Pat. *Tomas and the Library Lady (Tomas y la senora de la biblioteca)*.

While helping his family work as migrant laborers far from home, Tomas discovers a new world in the books at the public library. This multicultural-theme story is based on the true story of Tomas Rivera, who later became a leader in education and the chancellor of University of California, Riverside.

Morgenstern, Susie. *A Book of Coupons*.

The kids of Marie Curie School are getting a new teacher. Disappointed at Monsieur Nol's appearance, each student then receives a book of very special coupons--and it becomes obvious that Monsieur Nol is a special kind of teacher.

Pennypacker, Sara. *Clementine*.

The Talented Clementine.

Clementine's Letter.

As Clementine says, "Spectacularful ideas are always sproinging up in my brain." All the better for readers who like to laugh. Reminiscent of both Ramona and Junie B. Jones, Clementine is an ingenuous third-grader with a talent for trouble and a good heart. Her best friend is her neighbor Margaret, a fourth-grader who experiences both qualities firsthand. After all, plenty of kids may have had their hair chopped off by a helpful friend in an effort to get the glue out, but how many of those friends would think to improve matters by drawing hair back on the scalp, forehead, and neck with a Flaming Sunset permanent marker? Clementine's adventures continue in *The Talented Clementine* and *Clementine's Letter*.

Polacco, Patricia. *Thank You, Mr. Falker*.

Fans of Polacco's work know well her talent for weaving her colorful family history throughout her picture books. Here Polacco shares her childhood triumph over dyslexia and discovery of reading in an

inspiring story. Young readers struggling with learning difficulties will identify with Trisha's situation and find reassurance in her success.

Say, Allen. *Kamishibai Man*.

An elderly retired Japanese storyteller relives the days before television, when children would flock to hear his stories and sample his sweets. The art of kamishibai, storytelling with illustrated cards, is the precursor to manga and anime.

Scieszka, Jon. *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*.

Grade-school irreverence abounds in this compendium of (extremely brief) fractured fairy tales, which might well be subtitled "All Things Gross and Giddy." With a relentless application of the sarcasm that tickled readers of *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, Scieszka and Smith skewer a host of juvenile favorites: Little Red Running Shorts beats the wolf to grandmother's house; the Really Ugly Duckling matures into a Really Ugly Duck; Cinderumpelstiltskin is "a girl who really blew it." Text and art work together for maximum comic impact--varying styles and sizes of type add to the illustrations' chaos, as when Chicken Licken discovers that the Table of Contents, and not the sky, is falling.

Silverstein, Shel. *Falling Up*.

A Light in the Attic.

Where the Sidewalk Ends.

For many years, kids and kids at heart have giggled at the jumbled, goofy nonsense poems of Shel Silverstein. Silverstein's amusing, cartoonish line drawings are every bit as familiar and beloved to readers as his poems. Gone, but not forgotten, the creator of several irresistible poetry collections left an indelible mark on children's poetry. Recommended for all ages.

St. George, Judith. Illus. by David Small. *So, You Want to Be President?*

In illustrations rendered in a harmonious mix of watercolor, ink, and pastel chalk, David Small employs

wiry and expansive lines with an echo of political cartooning investing this personable history of the presidency with imaginative detail, wry humor, and refreshing dignity. 2001 Caldecott Medal winner.

Taylor, Mildred D. *Mississippi Bridge*.

This novel relates a disturbing tale of racism, set in 1930s Mississippi, as seen through the eyes of a ten-year-old white boy. Language reflecting the times tells of the civil rights violations that occur as paying African American customers are forced from a bus in order to accommodate whites. One of these ousted African Americans tries to save the whites from a raging river as the bus runs off the bridge. Black-and-white pencil sketches convey the drama and high emotions.

Van Draanen, Wendelin. *Shredderman: Secret Identity* (series).

Bubba has been the bane of Nolan's existence for five long years. So when Mr. Green asks the class to become reporters, Nolan decides he'll write an exposé on Bubba. He doesn't want to sign his name to it so Nolan creates a secret identity for himself on the Internet. He launches Shredderman.com as a place where truth and justice prevail and bullies get what's coming to them. Will engage reluctant readers, especially boys.

Williams, Vera B. *Scooter*.

Elana Rose Rosen copes with divorce, moves to a new apartment in New York City, and becomes a member of a diverse community. This story's first-person narrative allows readers to experience "Lanny's" life right alongside her as she makes new friends and practices favorite scooter tricks. Childlike authenticity is added by hand-lettered acrostics that open each chapter, and the book includes recipes and basic, black-and-white illustrations.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Locomotion*.

Eleven-year-old Lonnie Collins Motion has had a rough life - both parents are dead, and he and his little sister are sent to different foster homes. Then

in school, he learns to express himself through poetry. In learning to communicate, he learns to cope with his present and even look forward to the future.

Show Way.

The making of "show ways", or quilts which once served as secret maps for freedom-seeking slaves, is a tradition passed from mother to daughter in the author's family.

Recommended series for 2nd and/or 3rd grade readers:

A to Z Mysteries
Captain Underpants
Hank Zipzer
Judy Moody
Junie B. Jones
Magic Tree House
The Secret of Droon
Shredderman
Stink

4th-6th grade level favorite books:

Avi. *Crispin: The Cross of Lead.*

This tale is set in fourteenth-century England. "Asta's son" is suddenly orphaned, and everything he owns is taken away. Accused of murder, he flees his village and finds protection from a juggler who mentors him. Asta's son learns his true name is Crispin, and he eventually learns the secret of his true identity. 2003 Newbery Medal winner.

Poppy.

When the deer mice that live in the Gray house want to move to a better location for food and shelter, they must secure permission from a powerful, controlling owl that rules Dimwood Forest. Brave Poppy and her friend Ragweed attempt to defy the owl and strike out on their own. An adventure of good versus evil ensues.

Babbitt, Natalie. *Tuck Everlasting.*

The Tuck family have become ageless by drinking from a magic spring. When ten-year-old Winnie Foster and a greedy

evil stranger discover their secret, the Tucks are determined to prevent a disaster.

Bang, Molly. *Chattanooga Sludge*.

John Todd attempts to clean the toxic waters of Chattanooga Creek with a Living Machine. Shows how sewage can be used productively and a dirty river made clean.

Billingsley, Franny. *The Folk Keeper*.

Orphan Corinna disguises herself as a boy to pose as a Folk Keeper, one who keeps the Evil Folk at bay, and discovers her heritage as a seal maiden when she is taken to live with a wealthy family in their manor by the sea.

Birdsall, Jeanne. *The Penderwicks: A Summer Tale of Four Sisters, Two Rabbits, and a Very Interesting Boy*.

Four sisters vacationing with their father in a summer cottage wreak havoc on the neighboring estate and rescue a boy in the process. A funny, old-fashioned novel with all the earmarks of a classic - endearingly quirky characters, fine dialogue, and a dog that gets into everything.

Birney, Betty. *The Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs*.

Eben McAllister searches his small town in Missouri to see if he can find anything comparable to the real Seven Wonders of the World. Middlebury, Indiana chose this as an all-community read.

Blume, Judy. *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* (series).

A terrifically funny series about Peter and Fudge, and Peter's struggles with being ignored because of his outrageous younger brother. Continues in *Superfudge*, *Fudge-a-mania*, and *Double Fudge*.

Bridges, Ruby. *Through My Eyes*.

Ruby Bridges recounts the story of her involvement, as a six-year-old, in the integration of her school in New Orleans in 1960.

Broach, Elise. *Shakespeare's Secret*.

Named after a character in a Shakespeare play, misfit sixth-grader Hero becomes interested in exploring this unusual connection because of a valuable diamond supposedly hidden in her new house, an intriguing neighbor, and the unexpected attention of the most popular boy in school.

Cleary, Beverly. *Dear Mr. Henshaw*.

A boy from a broken home begins corresponding with his favorite author. Through his letters to Mr. Henshaw--and later his journal entries--he grapples with his problems, finds comfort, and begins to recognize his own talent as a writer. Winner of the 1984 Newbery Medal.

Clements, Andrew. *No Talking*.

The noisy fifth grade boys of Laketon Elementary School challenge the equally loud fifth grade girls to a "no talking" contest.

Choldenko, Gennifer. *Al Capone Does My Shirts*.

A twelve-year-old boy named Moose moves to Alcatraz Island in 1935 when guards' families were housed there, and has to contend with his extraordinary new environment in addition to life with his autistic sister. A Newbery Honor Book.

Cooper, Susan. *King of Shadows*.

Cooper brilliantly weaves past and present together, using London's Globe Theatre as backdrop, to demonstrate the timelessness of Shakespeare's works and the theater at large. The first segment of the novel, set in the present, details Nathan Field's rehearsals for the part of Puck in an upcoming production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, to be mounted in the newly renovated Globe. He has been chosen, along with a group of other boys from America, to travel to England for the performance. When Nat is suddenly stricken with a serious illness, he awakens to find himself once again cast as Puck at the Globe Theatre, but the year is 1599.

Creech, Sharon. *Love That Dog*.

Told in free verse, this story tells of a boy who comes to enjoy poetry through a wise teacher's introduction. His reluctance becomes interest, then enjoyment, and finally a passion for reading and writing poetry. Through poetry he is finally able to communicate his feelings and thoughts.

Creech, Sharon. *The Wanderer*.

Like Creech's *Walk Two Moons* and *Chasing Redbird*, this intimate novel poetically connects journey with self-discovery. When 13-year-old Sophie learns that her three uncles and two male cousins plan to sail across the Atlantic to visit the uncles' father, Bompie, in England,

she begs to go along. Despite her mother's protests and the men's misgivings, Sophie joins the "motley" crew of the 45-foot *The Wanderer* and soon proves herself a worthy sailor. The novel unfolds through travel logs, predominantly penned by Sophie (with intermittent musings from her clownish cousin, Cody) that trace each leg of the eventful voyage. A 2001 Newbery Honor Book.

Curtis, Christopher Paul.

Bud, Not Buddy.

Ten-year-old Bud Caldwell runs away from a foster home and begins an unforgettable journey in search of his father. His only clues are old flyers left by his now-deceased mother that point to a legendary jazz bandleader. "This heartfelt novel resonates with both zest and tenderness as it entertains questions about racism, belonging, love, and hope," said Carolyn S. Brodie, chair of the Newbery Award Selection Committee. "Bud's fast-paced first-person account moves with the rhythms of jazz and celebrates life, family, and a child's indomitable spirit."

The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963.

From its hilarious opening chapters to its shattering conclusion, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* is a compelling novel that brings to life an African-American family. It draws together everyday events in such a way as to send the Watsons on a journey to Birmingham that will change them forever. In his first book, Curtis uses the devastating events in Birmingham to integrate the dichotomy of familial love and stability with the racial strife of the 1960s. A Newbery Honor Book.

D'Aulaire, Edgar P. and Ingri D'Aulaire.

D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths.

D'Aulaires' Norse Gods and Giants.

Beautiful illustrations and clear storytelling relate the tales of the Greek and Norse Gods in these collections. I spent several weeks one childhood summer poring over these books and then moving on to Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* and *Bulfinch's Mythology*.

DiCamillo, Kate.

The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread.

An enchanting account of a smaller-than-usual mouse in love with music, stories and a princess named Pea. This

tiny hero faints at loud noises but gathers the courage to fulfill his dreams. DiCamillo masterfully weaves drama, mystery and intrigue with high humor and fun into a cohesive, captivating and distinguished tale.

Because of Winn-Dixie.

When Opal and her father, the preacher, move to Florida, Opal goes into a Winn-Dixie supermarket and comes out with a dog. With the help of her new pal, Opal makes a variety of new, interesting friends. She spends the summer collecting stories about them and thinking about her absent mother. This is a funny and unforgettable coming-of-age novel.

DuPrau, Jeanne. *The City of Ember.*

Ember, a 241-year-old, ruined domed city surrounded by a dark unknown, was built to ensure that humans would continue to exist on Earth, and the instructions for getting out have been lost and forgotten. Twelve year-old Lina finds part of the missing instructions, and she and a friend work together to piece together the instructions, in order to save their people. The story continues in *The People of Sparks* and *The Prophet of Yonwood*.

Eager, Edward. *Half Magic.*

Faced with a dull summer in the city, Jane, Mark, Katharine, and Martha suddenly find themselves involved in a series of extraordinary adventures after Jane discovers an ordinary-looking coin that seems to grant wishes. Other similar fantasy novels by Eager include *Knight's Castle*, *Magic by the Lake*, and *The Time Garden*.

Erdrich, Louise. *The Birchbark House.*

Omakayas, or Little Frog, a seven-year-old Native American girl of the Ojibwa tribe, lives through the joys of summer and the perils of winter on an island in Lake Superior in 1847. Little Frog's story continues in *The Game of Silence*.

Farndon, John. *Do Not Open.*

Presents a collection of unusual facts, secrets, and unsolved mysteries from around the world, from Paris' hidden tunnels, to the mystery of the the Roswell crash site in New Mexico, and to secret documents contained in the Vatican library.

Fitzgerald, John D. *The Great Brain* (series).

The first of eight best-selling Great Brain titles introduces us to J. D., an eight-year-old boy living in Utah in 1896, and his older brother Tom, aka The Great Brain, a silver-tongued con artist with a genius for making a profit. Whether he's charging admission to see Papa's new water closet, the first in town; getting rid of the mean new schoolmaster; or teaching a boy with a peg leg that he is not useless, Tom's great brain turns every situation to his advantage. The Great Brain's exploits continue in *More Adventures of the Great Brain*, *Me and My Little Brain*, and *The Great Brain Reforms*.

Fleischman, Sid. *The Whipping Boy*.

Because disciplining the heir to the throne was forbidden, young Jemmy was taken from the streets and routinely punished in place of Prince Brat. When Prince Brat becomes bored, he decides to run away and take his whipping boy with him. Their identities are inadvertently exchanged, and the fun begins.

Fletcher, Susan. *Shadow Spinner*.

When Marjan, a thirteen-year-old crippled girl, joins the Sultan's harem in ancient Persia, she gathers for Shahrazad the stories which will save the queen's life. Based on *The Thousand and One Nights*.

Gantos, Jack.

Joey Pigza Swallows the Key.

The first book in the Joey Pigza series about a boy with ADHD who struggles to be normal. Hilarious and poignant.

Joey Pigza Loses Control.

Spending the summer with his estranged father, Joey longs for the two of them to be winners together, but their lives spiral out of control. As the old "wired" Joey returns, readers will long to see him regain his balance in an out-of-kilter world. A Newbery Honor Book.

Gardiner, John Reynolds. *Stone Fox*.

Little Willy's grandfather is sick, and it's up to Willy to save their farm from tax collectors. Their only hope is the prize money from the National Dogsled Race. But a lot of other people want to win the race, too, including Stone Fox, who has never lost a race in his life. Do Willy and his dog Searchlight stand a chance against the toughest

racers around? Can they win the race to save the farm-and Grandfather-before it's too late?

George, Jean Craighead.

Julie of the Wolves.

While running away from home and an unwanted marriage, a thirteen-year-old Eskimo girl becomes lost on the North Slope of Alaska and is befriended by a wolf pack. 1973 Newbery Medal winner. Julie's story continues in *Julie and Julie's Wolf Pack*.

My Side of the Mountain.

A young boy relates his adventures during the year he spends living alone in the Catskill Mountains including his struggle for survival, his dependence on nature, his animal friends, and his ultimate realization that he needs human companionship. Newbery Honor Book. Also look for *On the Far Side of the Mountain* and *Frightful's Mountain*.

Giff, Patricia Reilly. *Pictures of Hollis Woods.*

Hollis Woods, the 12-year-old title character, unfolds her story of foster care and a search for family in images from her sketchbook, which reveal both her memories and her artistic soul. A Newbery Honor Book.

Hale, Shannon. *Princess Academy.*

Miri and the other young women of her rocky highland village are forced to leave their close-knit community when the prince must choose a bride in "The Princess Academy." Like the miri flower, which sprouts from the cracks in the linder rock, Miri soon becomes the strong, resilient and courageous leader of the academy. The book is a fresh approach to the traditional princess story with unexpected plot twists and great emotional resonance. A Newbery Honor Book.

Hamilton, Virginia. *The People Could Fly.*

Retold Afro-American folktales of animals, fantasy, the supernatural, and desire for freedom, born of the sorrow of the slaves, but passed on in hope. Illustrated by Caldecott winners Leo and Diane Dillon. Amazing, uplifting stories appropriate for people of any background.

Hannigan, Katherine. *Ida B. ... and Her Plans to Maximize Fun, Avoid Disaster, and (Possibly) Save the World.*

In Wisconsin, fourth-grader Ida B spends happy hours being home-schooled and playing in her family's apple

orchard, until her mother begins treatment for breast cancer and her parents must sell part of the orchard and send her to public school. Ida B's voice is funny and strong, and she's a heroine to root for.

Hatkoff, Isabella. *Owen & Mzee: The True Story of a Remarkable Friendship*.

When Owen, a baby hippo, loses his mother in the 2004 tsunami, he bonds with Mzee, a giant tortoise.

Hiaasen, Carl. *Hoot*.

Hiaasen's wildly funny satire features the new kid, Roy, joining forces with tough Beatrice and the elusive Mullet Fingers to defeat a bully, thwart an avaricious corporation and save a colony of burrowing owls. A Newbery Honor Book. Also try *Flush* and *Scat* by Hiaasen.

Hicks, Betty. *Out of Order*.

One of my favorite books from my Newbery year (2005); the story of 2 families coming together through remarriage. Very funny and true-to-life; even includes a RPS Tournament (Rock Paper Scissors!)

Ibbotson, Eva. *The Star of Kazan*.

Abandoned as an infant, 12-year-old Annika lives in Vienna with the cook and housemaid who discovered her as well as their employers, a sibling trio of eccentric professors. Annika helps with the housework and grows up comfortably in the warm house on a beautiful square, surrounded by friends. Still, Annika dreams of reuniting with the unknown parents who abandoned her, and when an elegant, charismatic woman appears, birth certificate in hand, Annika embraces her as her long-lost mother and agrees to move to the family's remote northern castle. Ibbotson leads her characters through a delightful, breathless adventure that skillfully enfolds deliciously cruel villains, crumbling aristocratic families, stolen jewels, and a cast of lovable, intrepid professors and children determined to rescue Annika from danger. If you like *Heidi*, you'll like this tale.

Jacques, Brian. *Redwall*.

Matthias the mouse tries to recapture a magical sword to defend Redwall Abbey against the attack of an infamous rat. The book features lively characters and an intriguing plot. Other books by this author include *Lord Brocktree*, *Salamandastron*, and *The Legend of Luke*.

Juster, Norton. *The Phantom Tollbooth*.

Introduces young readers to Milo, a bored ten-year-old who comes home to find a large toy tollbooth sitting in his room. Milo drives through the toll booth's gates and begins a memorable journey. Joining forces with the watchdog Tock, he meets the Mathemagician, the not-so-wicked "which", and Faintly Macabre, who tells Milo of his "impossible" mission to return two princesses to the Kingdom of Wisdom.

Kadohata, Cynthia. *Kira-Kira*.

"Kira-kira" means "glittering" in Japanese, and Kadohata's tenderly nuanced novel glitters with plain and poignant words that describe the strong love within a Japanese American family from the point of view of younger sister Katie. Personal challenges and family tragedy are set against the oppressive social climate of the South during the 1950s and early 1960s. 2005 Newbery Medal Winner.

L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time*.

One stormy night a strange visitor comes to the Murry house and beckons Meg, her brother, Charles Wallace, and their friend Calvin O'Keefe on a dangerous and fantastic journey that will threaten their lives and our universe. Still one of the best science fiction/fantasy novels for children. I can still remember the excitement I felt reading this book in the 6th grade; I knew it was special, and it hasn't lost its power for me.

Levine, Gail Carson. *Ella Enchanted*.

Spunky, stubborn, and very clever, this new Cinderella spends a lifetime trying to outwit the curse of a fairy's unwelcome gift of obedience. In a kingdom populated with ogres, giants, princes, and fairies, Ella begins a fruitless quest to have the curse lifted, only to discover that she has that power within herself. A Newbery Honor Book.

Lord, Cynthia. *Rules*.

"A boy can take off his shirt to swim, but not his shorts." Twelve-year-old Catherine creates rules for her younger, autistic brother, David in an attempt to normalize his life and her own. But what is normal? Lord's heroine learns to use words to forge connections with David, her workaholic father, and a paraplegic friend. A Newbery Honor Book.

Lowry, Lois.

The Giver.

My favorite Newbery Medal Winner (1994); simple yet startling in its clarity and vision of life without risk or color and its portrayal of Jonas, a boy chosen to receive the memories of his culture and unravels the truth. Connected books are *Gathering Blue* and *Messenger*.

Number the Stars.

In 1943, during the German occupation of Denmark, ten-year-old Annemarie learns how to be brave and courageous when she helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis. 1990 Newbery Medal Winner.

MacLachlan, Patricia. *Baby.*

Twelve-year-old Larkin and her family find a baby sitting in a basket, abandoned at their door. A note says simply: "This is Sophie. She is almost a year old and she is good. . . . I will come back for her one day. I love her." Larkin and her mother, father, and grandmother care for the baby. They always know that Sophie will leave one day, but they can't stop themselves from loving her.

Martin, Ann M. *A Corner of the Universe.*

With the surprising arrival of a mentally disabled uncle, 12-year-old Hattie Owen's world is turned upside down. A Newbery Honor Book.

McKay, Hilary. *Saffy's Angel.*

A great read and a great audio book. Set in England, the Casson family live in a rundown, messy, disorganized house, but are completely dedicated to helping each other in their struggles. Both parents are artists, and all of the children are named after paint colors (Saffron, Cadmium, Indigo, and Permanent Rose). *Saffy's Angel* focuses on Saffron and her search for her angel, lost when her birth mother died. Sequels include *Indigo's Star*, *Permanent Rose*, and *Caddy Ever After*.

Mochizuki, Ken. *Baseball Saved Us.*

The traditional sports story of the outsider who gains social acceptance when he hits a home run gets a new dimension in this picture book about a Japanese American kid interned in a desert concentration camp during World War II. In a spare, first-person narrative, "Shorty" tells how he and his family are suddenly moved from their home

and set down behind barbed wire in a barracks in the desert. His father organizes the building of a baseball field, and, in sight of the armed watchtower guard, Shorty learns to play. After the war, when they return home, things are still bad: at school he has to eat lunch alone, and he still hears "Jap" insults--until he joins the team and whacks the ball right over the fence.

Napoli, Donna Jo. *The King of Mulberry Street*.

In 1892, Dom's mother puts him on a ship leaving Italy for America. Nine-year-old Dom is alone and has nothing of value except for a new pair of shoes. This tale of the turbulent world of homeless children in Manhattan's Five Points is based in part on the author's grandfather. An amazing story about immigrants and their struggles.

Neri, G. *Chess Rumble*.

Marcus, a troubled eleven-year-old battling his own anger, gains coping skills after learning to play chess with a neighborhood master. This novel in verse, written in street vernacular, is illustrated in striking black and grey acrylics.

Park, Linda Sue.

Project Mulberry.

While working on a project for an after-school club, Julia, a Korean American girl, and her friend Patrick learn not just about silkworms, but also about tolerance, prejudice, friendship, patience, and more. Between the chapters are short dialogues between the author and main character about the writing of the book.

A Single Shard.

"Tree-ear's determination and bravery in pursuing his dream of becoming a potter takes readers on a literary journey that demonstrates how courage, honor and perseverance can overcome great odds and bring great happiness. Park effectively conveys 12th century Korea in this masterful piece of historical fiction," said Kathleen Odean, chair of the (2002) Newbery Award Selection Committee.

Paulsen, Gary.

Hatchet.

After a plane crash, thirteen-year-old Brian spends fifty-four days in the Canadian wilderness, learning to survive with only the aid of a hatchet given him by his mother, and learning also to survive his parents' divorce. Other books in the series include *Brian's Winter*, *Brian's Return* and *Brian's Hunt* and also try *Guts: The True Stories Behind Hatchet and the Brian Books*.

My Life in Dog Years.

The author describes some of the dogs that have had special places in his life, including his first dog, Snowball, in the Phillipines; Dirk, who protected him from bullies; and Cookie, who saved his life. A hit with reluctant readers.

Polacco, Patricia. *Pink and Say.*

I can't read this book aloud; I always cry. This story of friendship between two soldiers for the Union, 1 a former slave and the other a farm boy, provides a reader with Civil War history and helps to develop empathy for others. Based on Polacco's family history.

Pratchett, Terry

The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents.

A talking cat, intelligent rats, and a strange boy cooperate in a Pied Piper scam until they try to con the wrong town and are confronted by a deadly evil rat king.

The Wee Free Men.

A young witch-to-be named Tiffany teams up with the Wee Free Men, a clan of six-inch-high blue men, to rescue her baby brother and ward off a sinister invasion from Fairyland. Tiffany's (and the Wee Free Men's) adventures continue in *A Hat Full of Sky* and *Wintersmith*.

Rawls, Wilson. *Where the Red Fern Grows.*

This classic about a 10-year-old boy growing up in the Ozark mountains with his inseparable pair of coonhounds will warm the hearts of young and old alike. My grandfather grew up in the Arkansas Ozarks and gave this to me when I was a girl, saying this was the best book ever written. He might be right.

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Esperanza Rising.*

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labor camps of Southern California, where they must adapt

to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression.

Sachar, Louis. *Holes*.

The heir to his family's curse of bad luck, Stanley is convicted of a crime he didn't commit. He serves his sentence at Camp Green Lake, a dry, flat wasteland where the warden assigns each inmate the task of digging one deep hole every day. Hole by hole, Stanley and his friend Zero dig their destiny. The 1999 Newbery Medal Winner. *Sideways Stories from Wayside School* and *Wayside School Gets a Little Stranger* are also popular with reluctant readers.

Selznick, Brian. *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*.

Suspenseful text and wordless double-page spreads tell the story of young Hugo, an orphan secretly living in the walls of a train station where he labors to complete a mysterious invention left by his father. The 2008 Caldecott Medal Book.

Silverstein, Shel

Falling Up.

A Light in the Attic.

Where the Sidewalk Ends.

For many years, kids and kids at heart have giggled at the jumbled, goofy nonsense poems of Shel Silverstein. Silverstein's amusing, cartoonish line drawings are every bit as familiar and beloved to readers as his poems. Gone, but not forgotten, the creator of several irresistible poetry collections left an indelible mark on children's poetry. Recommended for all ages.

Speare, Elizabeth George. *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*.

Set in the Connecticut Colony in 1687, 16 year-old Kit moves there from Barbados, unaware of how she'll have to change her behavior in the Puritan society. When she befriends an old woman called the Witch of Blackbird Pond, and sickness strikes her village, Kit finds herself accused of witchcraft. 1959 Newbery Medal Winner.

Spinelli, Jerry. *Maniac Magee*.

Maniac is an "on-his-own" kid searching for a place that he can call home. When he sees no difference between the people of the East Side and the West Side, others begin to realize that Jeffrey "Maniac" Magee is truly the "stuff" from which legends are made. 1991 Newbery Medal Winner.

Stewart, Trenton Lee. *The Mysterious Benedict Society*.

Four gifted orphans selected by their benefactor Mr. Benedict, set out on a dangerous mission to save the world from a scientist bent on world domination through mind control. A 2007 Notable Book for Children and the 2008 SJCP Mock Newbery Medal winner. Also try *The Mysterious Benedict Society and the Perilous Journey*.

Stroud, Jonathan. *The Amulet of Samarkand: The Bartimaeus Trilogy, Book One*.

Nathaniel, a magician's apprentice, summons up the djinni Bartimaeus and instructs him to steal the Amulet of Samarkand from the powerful magician Simon Lovelace. Funny and full of heart-pumping adventure. The story continues in *The Golem's Eye* and *Ptolemy's Gate*. Also a great audio book!

Tan, Shaun. *The Arrival*.

A man leaves his family, travels to a new world and slowly assimilates into its strange new culture. In this riveting graphic novel, sepia-toned illustrations wordlessly reveal the loneliness and isolation of the immigrant experience.

Tolan, Stephanie S. *Surviving the Applewhites*.

Tolan features pierced and spike-haired Jake, who has been expelled from every possible public school before his unwilling arrival at Wit's End, N.C. and the homeschool run by the chaotic and outrageous Applewhite family. A Newbery Honor Book.

Whelan, Gloria. *Listening for Lions*.

Left an orphan after the influenza epidemic in British East Africa in 1918, thirteen-year-old Rachel is tricked into assuming a deceased neighbor's identity to travel to England, where her only dream is to return to Africa and rebuild her parents' mission hospital.

Woodson, Jacqueline.

Locomotion.

Eleven-year-old Lonnie Collins Motion has had a rough life - both parents are dead, and he and his little sister are sent to different foster homes. Then in school, he learns to express himself through poetry. In learning to communicate, he learns to cope with his present and even look forward to the future.

Show Way.

The making of "show ways", or quilts which once served as secret maps for freedom-seeking slaves, is a tradition passed from mother to daughter in the author's family. A Newbery Honor Book.

Recommended Print Resources for Parents:

Barr, Catherine and John T. Gillespie. *Best Books for Children.*

Barstow, Barbara, Leslie Molnar and Judith Riggle. *Beyond Beginning Readers: Subject Access to Best Books for Beginning Readers.*

Blakemore, Caroline J. and Barbara Weston Ramirez. *Baby Read-Aloud Basics.* (not for school-aged children—but we want to start them out EARLY!)

Codell, Esmé Raji. *How to Get Your Child to Love Reading.*

Fox, Mem. *Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud to Our Children Will Change Their Lives Forever.*

Keane, Nancy J. *The Big Book of Children's Reading Lists.*

Nash, Jennie. *Raising a Reader: A Mother's Tale of Desperation and Delight.*

Odean, Kathleen. *Great Books for Boys.*

Odean, Kathleen. *Great Books for Girls.*

Pearl, Nancy. *Book Crush.*

Silvey, Anita. *Best Books for Children.*

Trelease, Jim. *The Read-Aloud Handbook.*

Websites

ALA Notable Books

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/childrensnotable/notablechibooks/index.cfm>

A new list of the most notable books for children is published on this site each year, around February.

The John Newbery Medal

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/newberymedal/newberymedal.cfm>

Awarded by the American Library Association (ALA) for the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children aged 0-14; awarded in late January for books published in the previous year.

Mid Continent Library Series & Sequels website

<http://www.mcpl.lib.mo.us/readers/series/juv/>

A great database that you can search for the next book in a favorite series—searchable by series name, author, title, and series subject.

National Education Association (NEA): Educators' Top 100 Books

<http://www.nea.org/grants/13154.htm>

National Education Association (NEA): Kids' Top 100 Books

<http://www.nea.org/grants/13110.htm>

The Randolph Caldecott Medal

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/caldecottmedal/caldecottmedal.cfm>

Awarded by the American Library Association (ALA) to the artist of the most distinguished American Picture Book for Children published in the United States in the preceding year.

Read-Aloud Books Too Good to Miss--AIME

<http://www.ilfonline.org/Programs/readaloud.htm>

Published every year by the Association for Indiana Media Educators (school librarians).

SJCPL: Kids' Place

<http://www.sjcpl.org/kids/>

Check out the St. Joseph County Public Library's website for booklists, programs and more. The TumbleBook Library is a great collection of free, animated books.

Theodor Seuss Geisel Award

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/geiselaward/index.cfm>

The Theodor Seuss Geisel Award is given annually to the author(s) and illustrator(s) of the most distinguished American book for beginning readers published in English in the United States during the preceding year. The award was inaugurated in 2006.

Young Hoosier Book Award

<http://www.ilfonline.org/Programs/yhba.htm>

Started in 1974 by the Association for Indiana Media Educators (AIME), Indiana school librarians help to choose the books on the short list. In the spring, students throughout Indiana vote for their favorites.

Blogs

The Planet Esme Plan: The Best New Children's Books from Esme's Shelf

<http://planetesme.blogspot.com>

Kids Lit: Books and More for Children and Teens

<http://kidslit.menashalibrary.org/>

The best all-around children's literature blog, done by the director of the Greenlake (WI) Public Library, Tasha Saecker.

Kids Book Blog Wilmette PL

<http://www.wilmettelibrary.info/kids/bookblog/kids/>

Children from Wilmette (IL) writing about their favorite books! Let's start a kids' book blog here in St. Joseph County Public Library! E-mail me @ k.springer@sjcpl.org!

Cynsations

<http://cynthialeitichsmith.blogspot.com/>

Information about children's literature, publishing, and more from children's author and teacher Cynthia Leitch Smith.

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4/24/09

