Outstanding Books Reviewed in This Issue

The Girl Who Drank the Moon by Kelly Barnhill

If I’m Found by Terri Blackstock

Jesus' Terrible Financial Advice: Flipping the Tables on Peace, Prosperity, and the Pursuit of Happiness by John Thornton

Plus: Selected 2017 Award Books for Children and Teens
Dear CLJ Readers:

Fall is such an exciting time! There is the start of the school year, with its promise of new opportunities and new beginnings—themes which, I believe, especially resonate with the Christian soul. And then there is the anticipation of the holiday season, from harvest festivals to Thanksgiving to the ultimate celebration of Christmas and New Year’s.

Along the way, our books keep us company. They provide inspiration, instruction, and shelter from busyness. For me, emerging from a challenging season, they have been a most definite solace. A friend once said to me: “Books are forever.” I couldn’t agree more. We will always love our books—be they in traditional bindings or electronic format.

That is why we at CLJ feel it is such a privilege to bring you our reviews and special features. We hope not only to help you find your next great read or the perfect book for your young reader, but to bring to your attention those titles that will help your family grow in faith.

If you feel that CLJ has been a blessing to you, or have any suggestions as to how we can better serve you, I would love to hear from you.

In Christ,
Angela Walsh
Publisher and Editor
editor@christianlibraryj.org.
The purpose of the Christian Library Journal is to provide reviews from a Christian point of view, of both Christian and secular titles for the Christian reader. Materials reviewed may reflect a broad range of Christian doctrinal positions and do not necessarily reflect the views of Christian Library Journal.

Cover image taken from The Girl Who Drank the Moon by Kelly Barnhill. Copyright © 2016 by Kelly Barnhill. Used by permission of Algonquin Young Readers.
Review Rating System

*5 Outstanding — a book which impacts someone's life or thinking

5 Excellent — well written, among the best

4 Very good — definitely worth reading

3 Good — may be a good source for relaxation or to meet needs for information

2 Fair — poor writing or editing; read only if very interested

1 Poor — not much going for this title.

Recommended with caution (may be used with any of the above ratings) — Note reservations within the review.
Not recommended (may be used with any of the above ratings) — Note problems within the review.

Value of the book:

With fiction, the rating includes the quality of plot development/pacing, characterization, sense of time and place, mood, and atmosphere, dialogue, depth of perception, sensitivity of writing, use of humor. Be aware that some books are character driven, so character development is extremely important. Others are plot driven, so character development isn’t as critical; plot is.

With nonfiction, the rating includes quality of the information, accuracy, up to date, stimulates further inquiry, adds to the understanding of the topic, illustrations which are informative and appropriate.

With picture books, first be aware that these are written today for various age groups, so don't assume little children. The rating includes those above for fiction and nonfiction, and also emphasizes the illustrations.

**Commonly used abbreviations in CLJ reviews**

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This CLJ issue features reviews of a selection of books that won major awards for books for children and teens in 2017. Some of these awards focus on works that portray a specific type of experience. Others focus on works of literature or illustration that are outstanding or distinguished in a particular genre.

Literary merit aside, some of these books include violence, vulgar language, sexual situations, and potentially offensive (or at least uncomfortable) topics. While only you can judge what is appropriate reading for you or your reader(s), we urge you to consider that these books may be a window into the hurts and needs of our fallen world, and that they could be read prayerfully in a manner that leads to understanding and compassion for those that need the Gospel and the ministry of Christ’s church.

Following are descriptions of the honors and medals won by the books featured in this special section:

The **Pura Belpré Award** “is presented annually to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth” (ALSC Pura Belpré Award home page, [http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/belpremedal](http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/belpremedal)).

The **Caldecott Medal** “was named in honor of nineteenth-century English illustrator Randolph Caldecott. It is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children” (ALSC Caldecott Medal home page, [http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/caldecottmedal/caldecottmedal](http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/caldecottmedal/caldecottmedal)).

The **Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal** “is awarded annually to the author(s) and illustrator(s) of the most distinguished informational book published in the United States in English during the preceding year. The award is named in honor of Robert F. Sibert, the long-time President of Bound to Stay Bound Books, Inc. of Jacksonville, Illinois. ALSC administers the award” (ALSC Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal home page, [http://](http://))
The **Newbery Medal** “was named for eighteenth-century British bookseller John Newbery. It is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children” (ALSC Newbery Medal home page, http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/newberymedal).

The **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” (ALSC (Theodor Seuss) Geisel Award home page, http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/geiselaward).

The **Batchelder Award** “is given to the most outstanding children’s book originally published in a language other than English in a country other than the United States, and subsequently translated into English for publication in the United States” (ALSC (Mildred L.) Batchelder Award home page, http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/batchelderaward).

The **Coretta Scott King Book Awards** “are given annually to outstanding African American authors and illustrators of books for children and young adults that demonstrate an appreciation of African American culture and universal human values. The award commemorates the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and honors his wife, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, for her courage and determination to continue the work for peace and world brotherhood” (ALA The Coretta Scott King Book Awards home page, http://www.ala.org/emiert/cskbookawards).

The **Schneider Family Book Awards** “honor an author or illustrator for a book that embodies an artistic expression of the disability experience for child and adolescent audiences. The book "must portray some aspect of living with a disability, whether the disability is physical, mental, or emotional.” (ALSC Schneider Family Book Award home page, http://www.ala.org/awardsgrants/awards/apply).
The **YALSA Book Awards** include several awards administered by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). YALSA honors the best teen literature each year with its six literary awards, including the **Alex Awards**, sponsored by the Margaret A. Edwards Trust, which honor adult books with special appeal to teens. (ALSC YALSA Book Awards home page, [http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklistsawards/bookawards](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklistsawards/bookawards)).

*Valorie Cooper, CLJ Special Features Writer*
PRIMARY FICTION

Leave me alone / Vera Brosgol.


1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 29 cm. PS-Grade 2 E Rating: 4

A little old woman just wants to be left alone so she can finish her winter knitting, but living in a small house with lots of children makes being alone almost impossible. So, the little old woman packs her bag and heads for the forest, thinking she will find the peace and quiet she needs to finish her knitting. Unfortunately, the bear family living in the forest makes being alone impossible. Once again, she packs up her bag, this time heading for the mountains, certain she will finally be alone way up there. However, the mountain goats force her to pack up once more and climb all the way to the moon. Will the little old lady ever find herself alone in time to finish her knitting before winter arrives?

Selected as a Caldecott Honor Book for 2017, Leave Me Alone! by Vera Brosgol is full of charm, humor, and absurdity that will delight its young audience. Its rich watercolor illustrations provide warmth and visual appeal to the story and are the primary mode of infusing humor into each situation in which the little old lady finds herself. The illustrations have an eastern European flair, which is further reinforced by the ever-present samovar the little old lady uses to make her tea, providing a potential cultural side note to expound upon.

The repetitive phrase “Leave Me Alone!” always appears in a speech bubble in large font making it easily identifiable for pre-readers who will enjoy recognizing and reading this phrase aloud together with a parent or their fellow classmates. Overall, this book is a visual gem worth adding to any personal or classroom collection.

Justina McBride, CLJ

Award(s): Caldecott Honor Book

Du Iz Tak? / Carson Ellis.


48 unnumbered p. : col. ill. ; 31 cm. K-Grade 3 E Rating: 5

Two flies “discover” a seedling sprout in Du Iz Tak?. The next time they and a friend see the young plant, it has grown, prompting them to ask a nearby friend for a ladder. They climb the leaves to sun themselves. Continued growth of the plant prompts them to build a plant fort, but while they work, they fail to notice danger creeping closer to them and potential disaster looming from above.

Du Iz Tak? showcases the writing and illustrations of Carson Ellis. Ellis determines what incites emotion in her bugs—from wonder to fear to determination to resignation—and writes from that perspective. Even though written in the language of bugs, Ellis’s application of grammar rules and her lovely illustrations enable the reader to easily understand the story. The drama unfolds quickly. Few words are necessary and few are used, but the created language is very enjoyable to read, and the fun lies in the discovery.

Kristina Wolcott, CLJ

Award(s): Caldecott Honor Book
**Over the ocean** / Taro Gomi.
1 vol. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 25 cm. PS-Grade 1 E Rating: 5

A child gazes across the ocean and wonders what is on the other side in Taro Gomi’s *Over the Ocean*.

More ships? Big farms? Cities, small houses, and stars? Gomi’s bright illustrations show the reader all that the child can imagine: far-away people and animals, a fair with fun rides, a country made of ice, and perhaps even another boy or girl gazing back from the opposite shore.

A single boat moving across the water in the distance connects the vibrant scenes, which are rendered with clever detail and a richly-hued palette. The author/illustrator places the reader behind the child on the beach, as if sharing in his or her gentle contemplation.

This picture book was originally published in Japan in 1979 and, upon translation into English and release in the United States, received the 2017 Mildred L. Batchelder Award. With succinct text and a relatable theme, *Over the Ocean* is a soothing and thoroughly enjoyable read-aloud that speaks to the power of imagination and wonder.

*Nina Ditmar, CLJ*

**Award(s):** Batchelder Honor Book

**In plain sight** / Richard Jackson ; illustrations by Jerry Pinkney.
1 v. (unpaged): col. ill. ; 30 cm. K-Grade 3 E Rating: 5

Little Sophie finds missing items for her grandpa in the book, *In Plain Sight*. Sophie’s grandpa lives with Sophie and her parents. Every day when Sophie comes home from school, she helps grandpa find something that he “lost” during the day. Every so often he even has a treat for her, but the best treat of all is time spent with a man she loves.

Richard Jackson writes a sweet story, and Jerry Pinkney’s lovely illustrations made *In Plain Sight* a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Book. With a few simple words, and a few detailed paintings, Jackson and Pinkney illustrate the love between the members of this family. Grandpa has a twinkle in his eye as he “loses” items each day, and part of the fun of reading this book is looking for the missing item that is hidden in the illustrations.

*Kristina Wolcott, CLJ*

**Award(s):** Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor book

**We are growing!** / by [Mo Willems and] Laurie Keller. (Elephant & Piggie like reading!)
64 p. ; 25 cm. PS-Grade 2 E Rating: 4

Something exciting is happening! The grass is starting to grow and as a result, each blade of grass is discovering his or her unique characteristics. One blade is the tallest, while another is the curliest, and another still the silliest. Everyone finds they are the something-est–everyone, that is, except Walt. No one can seem to find anything special about Walt, especially Walt himself. It will take the minor catastrophe of a buzzing lawn mower for Walt to finally figure out what makes him special.

With simple sentences, patterned dialogue, and re-
petitive phrasing that will entice emergent readers, *We Are Growing* by Laurie Keller has rightfully earned its standing as the 2017 medal winner of the Geisel Award. The colorful speech bubbles and varying bolded font make reading a visual delight. The humorous illustrations add characterization, plot detail, and tone to the simple text. This book is a great tool for introducing superlative words and teaching dialogue, both of which could inspire some fun classroom activities. The underlying theme that everyone is special for their own unique characteristics and abilities adds depth to an otherwise silly, lighthearted read. Overall, this is an entertaining book that young readers will enjoy hearing or reading many times over.

*Justina McBride, CLJ*

**Award(s):** Geisel Award

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**The infamous Ratsos / Kara LaReau; illustrated by Matt Myers.**


55 p.: ill.; 21 cm.  K-Grade 3  
E  Rating: 5

**The infamous Ratsos are not afraid / Kara LaReau; illustrated by Matt Myers.**


95 p.: ill.; 21 cm.  K-Grade 3  
E  Rating: 5

Louie and Ralphie Ratsos continue to emulate their dad in *The Infamous Ratsos are not Afraid*. And Big Lou is not afraid of anything. So when Louie and Ralphie decide to start their very own carnival next to the local “Haunted House” inhabited by a “ghost,” they must be very brave. They enlist friends to help in their endeavor and work hard to clean up the empty lot. Unfortunately, they run into a few problems. At school, Ralphie gets teased for kissing “Stinky Stanko,” a girl in his class. At the carnival a bell flies off a game they created and through the window of the haunted house. Louie knows if he wants to get the bell back, he’ll have to face the ghost. Will they really be able to face their fears?

Kara LaReau’s animal characters are sweet and relatable in these entertaining stories. The plot moves quickly, the language is simple, and the great dialogue keep the story moving. Plentiful illustrations by Matt Myers add even more interest to these tales. Many wonderful lessons seamlessly weave their way through both books—no preaching needed. The importance of helping others and of admitting when you’ve done wrong are just two of those lessons. Big Lou offers wise advice in both books. “Life is tough enough,” says Big Lou. “We might as well make it easier for one another, whenever we can.” (*The Infamous Ratsos*, pg. 55) Also: “I just tell myself it’s OK to be afraid…and I try to be brave…I’m the boss of me, not my fears.” (*The Infamous Ratsos are not Afraid*, pp. 36-37)

*Kristina Wolcott, CLJ*

**Award(s) for The Infamous Ratsos:** Geisel Honor Book
Good night Owl / Greg Pizzoli.
LCCN 2015011769 ISBN 9781484712757,  
hardcover, $16.99.  
1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 26 cm.  
PS-Grade 2  
E  Rating: 4  

A noise in the house is keeping Owl up and he just can't find the source, in Greg Pizzoli's Good Night Owl, a 2017 Theodor Seuss Geisel Honor Book.  

It's not someone at the door, the wind, a creaky cupboard, or anything under the floorboards. The humor and drama in each scene escalate as Owl tears his little house apart, but the tiny squeak persists.  

The source of the sound is obvious to the reader, which adds to the comedy. Preschoolers will enjoy the increasingly outrageous storyline, which has Owl using some extreme methods to get some peace and quiet. Author/illustrator Greg Pizzoli's muted colors evoke the feeling of nighttime in a cozy home. His wide-eyed Owl, snuggled under a patchwork quilt, is adorable.  

Good Night Owl is a sweet picture book that will entertain children and amuse anyone who has ever been forced out of bed by a noise in the night.  

Nina Ditmar, CLJ  
Award(s): Geisel Honor Book

Cry, heart, but never break / Glenn Ringtved ; illustrations by Charlotte Pardi ; translated from the Danish by Robert Moulthrop.  
LCCN 2015044306 ISBN 9781592701872,  
hardcover, $16.95.  
1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 31 cm.  
K-Grade 3  
E  Rating: 4  

Cry, Heart, But Never Break, by award-winning author Glenn Ringtved, uses Death as a character to explain why dying is both inevitable and good. Four children, living with their aging grandmother, must face this reality when Death arrives at their door. One child asks Death why their grandmother must die, and Death responds with a story about two sets of twins, Sorrow and Grief, and Joy and Delight.  

Through Death's narrative, Ringtved suggests that joy and delight cannot fully be appreciated outside of the context of their counterparts, sorrow and grief. He then parallels this with life and death, suggesting that life is not truly itself, and cannot be fully appreciated, without death. The character, Death, speaks the title phrase, “Cry, Heart, but never break,” to the children. This phrase captures the essence of Ringtved's message: that mourning is good and right, but that death is not entirely or essentially bad.  

Charlotte Pardi’s detailed and vivid illustrations help set the tone for Ringtved’s narrative, adding to the reading experience with colors and tones that reflect the mood being depicted. For example, the scenes with Joy and Delight are bright and playful, while scenes regarding Death, Grief, or Sorrow, are gray and subdued.  

Though it is often true that good things can be more fully appreciated in the context of their negative counterparts, the author presents a secular view of death and a pragmatic approach to teaching the young about this difficult subject. He suggests that death itself is a part of what makes life meaningful and good.  

Elisabeth A. Orr, CLJ  
Award(s): Mildred L. Batchelder Award
**As time went by / Josâe Sanabria.**
ISBN 9780735842489, hardcover, $18.95.
1 vol. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 23 x 29 cm.  K-Grade 3
Fic  Rating: 4

*As Time Went By* tells a three-part story of a ship and a community as they both flourish, deteriorate, and rebuild.

Originally published in Switzerland as *Wie die Zeit vergeht* and translated into English by Audrey Hall, the tale shows how both the ship and a village go through periods of prosperity and decline, ultimately coming together for the good of both. Though parts one and two end on somber notes, part three is filled with hope and optimism.

The reading level is fairly simple and the story provides the opportunity to share with young children how difficulties can sometimes be overcome with cooperation and fortitude. *As Time Went By* also imparts the significance of caring for each other and for what we have.

Though somewhat dark and flat, the watercolor illustrations by Colombian artist José Sanabria have a compelling energy that complements the tone of the book.

*As Time Went By* is a 2017 Batchelder Honor Book and ALA Notable Book that delivers an important message and inspires thoughtful reflection.

Nina Ditmar, *CLJ*

**Award(s):** Batchelder Honor Book

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**Oops, pounce, quick, run! / Mike Twohy.**
1 vol. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 24 x 25 cm.  PS-Grade 1
E  Rating: 5

A dog’s ball bounces into a mouse’s hole and chaos ensues in Mike Twohy’s Theodore Seuss Geisel Honor Book, *Oops, Pounce, Quick, Run!*

A *New Yorker* cartoonist, Twohy manages to introduce characters, a setting, a plot, and a satisfying conclusion using just 30 words to accompany his delightful artwork. From A to Z, the busy story unfolds, one word (occasionally two) to a page. The large-font alphabetical text will appeal to preschoolers, who are also highly likely to enjoy the fast pace and the overall silliness.

Twohy’s felt-tip and India ink illustrations are vivid against their plain white background and are rich with feeling, action, and humor. *Oops, Pounce, Quick, Run!* is pure fun, with a heartwarming resolution and all the right qualities for a child’s picture book.

Nina Ditmar, *CLJ*

**Award(s):** Geisel Honor Book

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**They all saw a cat / Brendan Wenzel.**
1 vol. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 24 x 29 cm.  PS-Grade 3
E  Rating: *5

A child and assorted animals show their individual perspectives in *They All Saw a Cat*, a Caldecott Honor Book written and illustrated by Brendan Wenzel.

As a brown and tan cat wanders “through the world” it is viewed by a young boy and 11 different animals, each seeing the cat in a distinct way. For example, the boy sees a pet, the fox sees prey, the fish (through its bowl) sees a blurry pair of eyes, the
mouse sees a giant monster, and the flea sees a mass of cat hair.

With simple rhyming and use of repetitive phrasing, *They All Saw a Cat* entertains with a lively, playful tone. Author/illustrator Brendan Wenzel delivers a wonderful amalgam of color, drama, and humor with each turn of the page. His drawings are a creative mix of paints, pastels, pencils, and digital art that yield a bounty of scenes from pastoral to bold. Even the inside cover pages are imaginatively conceived. *They All Saw a Cat* shows that we all see the world through different eyes. At the conclusion of the book, the cat sees its own reflection in the water—a reminder that we also see ourselves from a unique point-of-view.

*Nina Ditmar, CLJ
Award(s): Caldecott Honor Book

**PRIMARY NONFICTION**

*The princess and the warrior* / by Duncan Tonatiuh.

LCCN 2015051082 ISBN 9781419721304, hardcover, $16.95.
26 p. : col. ill. ; 24 x 29cm PK-Grade 3
E Rating: 4

Children will love the lore that author and illustrator Duncan Tonatiuh shares in his Pura Belpré award-winning book, *The Princess and the Warrior: The Tale of Two Volcanoes*. The origin story of Popocatépetl and Iztaccíhuatl, two volcanoes that overlook Mexico City, is a tragic love story.

This story begins with the Aztec princess Iztla and a common warrior, Popoca. While the princess has many suitors, Popoca is the only man who understands her love for the common people. The two are supposed to be married after Popoca defeats the neighboring kingdom’s ruler. In a cruel twist of events, Iztla is tricked into believing her lover is dead and drinking a sleeping potion to ease her pain. When Popoca returns, he cannot wake his princess. Children in Mexico are still told this story today to explain why only one of these volcanoes erupts: Popocatépetl is still trying to wake his dormant lover, Iztaccíhuatl.

Tonatiuh enhances the interest of his story by using some Nahuatl words. This language would have been the language originally spoken by the Aztec people and has influenced much Spanish today. Children can visit the glossary in the back of the book for translations and pronunciation help, or they can find context clues in the illustrations to discover the meanings for themselves. The unique and colorful illustrations were inspired by those on Mixtec codices, giving this story the feel of an authentic legend.

*Rebecca Schriner, CLJ
Award(s): Pura Belpré (Illustrator) Honor Book

*Freedom in Congo Square* / by Carole Boston Weatherford ; illustrated by R. Gregory Christie.

Freedom in Congo Square is both a Caldecott Honor Book and a Coretta Scott King Honor Book, each of these awards being very well-deserved for the unique artwork and the telling of the story of an enslaved people in New Orleans.

This is a little-known account of slaves in Louisiana whose weeks were spent toiling relentlessly yet counting down the days until Sunday when they could spend a half day in Congo Square holding a market, visiting with friends, and singing and dancing—in other words, experiencing a brief respite from their difficult lives.

Authors Carol Boston Weatherford and R. Gregory Christie have done a superb job of putting readers right in the middle of slave life and allowing them to experience, in a small way, what these New Orleans slaves’ lives were like.

The Forward and the author’s note both provide much interesting background information, and a glossary gives understanding to the vernacular and difficult words. But the artwork and the poetic form of writing are what will long stay with the reader, both child and adult.

Freedom in Congo Square is highly recommended for school and public libraries.

Ceil Carey, CLJ

Award(s): Caldecott Honor Book; Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor book

Giant squid / Candace Fleming, Eric Rohmann, [illustrator].


1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 30 cm. Grades 1-5

A 2017 Robert F. Sibert Honor Book, Giant Squid is a picture book that will be enjoyed by readers of many ages. The text, although not rhyming, is written in a poetic manner and is both entertaining and informative. The illustrations of this elusive creature, mostly dark and mysterious, take readers right into the deep. No one had actually seen a live giant squid until 2012 so the information from this wonderful book is the latest and most up to date.

As with all good picture books covering a non-fiction subjects, Giant Squid includes a page of very informative facts along with a bibliography, sites on the internet for research, and a short list of other books about the giant squid.

Candace Fleming’s Giant Squid is highly recommended for school and public libraries.

Ceil Carey, CLJ

Award(s): Sibert Honor Book


1 vol. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 28 cm. Grades 2-6

Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat by Javoka Steptoe is a picture book introduction to the life and work of the noted modern artist.

The child of Puerto Rican and Haitian parents, Basquiat grows up in New York with early dreams of becoming a famous artist. He is inspired by the
world around him and sees art in everyday objects and scenes. His drawings “are sloppy, ugly, and sometimes weird, but somehow still BEAUTIFUL.” Basquiat’s work is influenced by his surroundings as well as his mother’s mental illness.

Javoka Steptoe illustrates Radiant Child using techniques that honor the late artist’s work. His paintings on found wood feature bright and bold colors and vibrant scenes of Basquiat’s life.

Endnotes include more details about Basquiat, including his drug addiction and death at age 27. Steptoe also includes a description of motifs and symbolism found in Basquiat’s work and information about the artwork the author/illustrator created for this book.

Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat has won numerous recognitions including the Caldecott Medal and the Coretta Scott Key Award. Whether or not readers admire or understand Basquiat’s artistry, the book offers an informative look at the well-known 1980s figure.

Nina Ditmar, CLJ

Award(s): Caldecott Medal for the most distinguished American picture book for children; Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award Winner

Esquivel! : space age sound artist / Susan Wood ; illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh.

LCCN 2015026827 ISBN 9781580896733, hardcover, $17.95.
1 vol. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 27 x 27 cm. Grades 2-6 B Rating: 5

Esquivel! Space-Age Sound Artist by Susan Wood introduces Juan Garcia Esquivel, a self-taught musician from Mexico whose innovative use of sound revolutionized “lounge music” in the 1950s and 60s.

From a young age Juan developed a style of incorporating unique sounds, tempos, and dynamics into his performances. When he came to America in the 1950s, he was exposed to new and unusual instruments, along with the advancing technology of stereo recording. Juan’s long career in the United States included writing music for television and movies.

Author Susan Wood captures Esquivel’s creativity and focus, early influences, and determination in a way that will engross young readers. By putting words to sounds—such as the “bowm-bowm” of a kettle drum—she portrays the excitement and novelty of the musician’s work. Wood provides colorful details about Esquivel’s childhood, personality, and the originality that would earn him the “!” after his name.

Varied fonts suggest the wide array of sounds that Esquivel captured in his music. Artist Duncan Tonatiuh flavors the book with varied scenes from Esquivel’s life and culture, from the busy streets of Mexico City to a recording studio in New York City to the Stardust Hotel in Las Vegas. Tonatiuh uses a bold and colorful uni-dimensional style of perspective that complements the creative freedom of Esquivel himself.

Notes by the author and illustrator provide further compelling material about Juan Garcia Esquivel and about the artwork in the book. A list of resources and a full-page black and white photograph of Esquivel are excellent additions.

Esquivel! Space-Age Sound Artist is a Pura Belpre Illustrator Honor Book, ALA Notable Children’s Book, and Junior Library Guild Selection. It is available in both English and Spanish and would enhance any book collection, classroom discussion, or family reading time.

Nina Ditmar, CLJ
INTERMEDIATE FICTION

Freedom over me: eleven slaves, their lives and dreams brought to life / by Ashley Bryan.

1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 29 cm. Grades 3-6
Fic Rating: 4

Ashley Bryan wrote and illustrated this award-winning picture book about eleven slaves, based on a real document of sale.

In Freedom Over Me, Bryan gives life to the slaves listed in the bill of sale for the Fairchild’s estate by giving them an age and work assignment. After the passing of Mr. Cado Fairchild, Mrs. Mary Fairchilds hires an appraiser prior to selling the estate and its properties (including the slaves) and moving back to England. The book starts off with a group illustration of the eleven slaves, with their ages and estimated value, followed by the poems for each slave. The slaves are introduced by their roles on the estate, then later by their lives in Africa. The book ends with a print appraisal of the Fairchild estate of the ten slaves. (Bryan added an eleventh fictional slave to his collection to round out the ages.)

He writes free verse to create two poems each, one about their life and one about their dreams. Inspired by the actual 1828 will of Mr. Fairchild, Bryan creates poetry with illustrations to interpret each person’s life and dreams. The illustrations for each slave’s life are muted, while the ones for their dreams are colorful. According to the author’s note, the title of the book comes from a spiritual, “Oh Freedom,” which plays a role in the civil rights movement.

Freedom Over Me is a 2017 Newbery Honor Book, 2017 Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book, and 2017 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Book. Bryan’s book is a tribute to the “strength of their human spirit and power of hope” (front cover flap), as well as a recognition that the slaves were individuals who had a dream.

Recommended for school and public libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ
Award(s): Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book; Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor book; Newbery Honor Book

Lowriders to the center of the earth / by Cathy Camper; illustrated by Raul the Third.

127 p. : col. ill. ; 25 cm. Grades 4-9
Fic Rating: 4

It seemed like an ordinary day at the car garage until the earthquake hit and the cat disappeared. Searching frantically, Lupe Impala and her partners, El Chavo Flapjack and Elirio Malaria, follow a trail of paw prints that lead into a giant corn maze where the trickster Coyote informs them that their pet, Genie, is being held prisoner in the underworld. Can they trust Coyote?

Determined to rescue Genie at all costs, the fearless trio power up their earth/space vehicle and plunge
full-speed into a volcano and down through the earth’s rocky layers until they reach the center. If they find their cat, returning home in their hi-tech car will be a cinch. They just have to wrestle and defeat the god of the underworld who holds Genie prisoner. No, not the Greek god Hades—the giant Aztec god, Mictlantecuhtli!

*Lowriders to the Center of the Earth*, second in Cathy Camper’s *Lowriders* series, has a suspense-filled rescue plot that engages readers with humorous word plays and puns while teaching earth science. The Spanish vocabulary spread throughout the story (defined in a glossary) and the depiction of diverse protagonists give voice to other cultures and validate characters that Hispanic children can relate to. Raul the Third’s graphic illustrations of skulls, skeletons, bones, and gods introduce Aztec world views.

This is a highly entertaining read, with Lupe Impala like a Latina version of Miss Frizz (of the *Magic School Bus* series, by Joanna Cole and illustrated by Bruce Degen), teaching important concepts and creatively overcoming obstacles.

From a Christian perspective, *Lowriders to the Center of the Earth* could engender discussion of the God of the Bible and His care for all creation, in contrast to the capricious and antagonistic natures of other deities. The story invites readers to explore ideas of love and sacrifice, and challenges them to reflect on how much they would be willing to risk for someone they love.

*Veronica Jorge, CLJ*

**Award(s):** Pura Belpre (Illustrator) Award

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*Juana and Lucas* introduces a vivacious little girl, Juana, who loves her life. She loves drawing. She loves her hometown, Bogatá, Columbia. She loves and admires her mother. She loves her grandparents, her friend Juli, and her Tia Cris. She especially loves Lucas, her dog. But a challenge has entered her happy world. She is expected to learn English. She has to pronounce “th” and figure out how to tell the difference between read and read, and so many other elements of the English language, and she simply doesn’t understand how English relates to her Spanish-speaking world. She asks various friends and family members who unsuccessfully attempt to help her understand how speaking and understanding English would be helpful. The best motivation to learn English comes when poor grades could possibly prevent Juana from taking a trip to Spaceland in the United States. Will she be able to cram all those words and sounds in the space between her pigtails, or is it too late to raise her grades?

In this chapter book, Juana Medina’s writing paints the picture of a fun-loving, interesting young girl, and Medina’s cartoonish illustrations also bring little Juana to life. Written in first person, *Juana and Lucas* reads like a conversation with a third grader. Juana’s character grows throughout the book as she expands her knowledge. Her loving family surrounds her with support and encouragement. Familiar Spanish words are lightly sprinkled throughout, giving English readers a small taste of what Juana experiences while learning a different language. Occasionally different size fonts and even unusual word direction are employed to illustrate the size of Juana’s thoughts or her feelings. The mostly cheerful Juana brightens any room she walks in—even the reader’s living room. Even though learning English presents a challenge, once she has, she wonders, “...if there will
be enough *espacio* between my pigtails for French and Chinese and Italian and Farsi and Portuguese and all the other languages. Maybe it’s time to...ask Lucas what he thinks about that.” (p. 89)

Kristina Wolcott, CLJ  
**Award(s):** Pura Belpre (Author) Award

### Wolf Hollow: a novel / Lauren Wolk.

291 p.; 22 cm.  Grades 5-8  
Fic  Rating: 5

Eleven-year-old Annabelle is keeping a secret: Betty Glengarry, the new girl at school, is a bully. Annabelle endures Betty’s abusive words and actions for fear that Betty will harm Annabelle’s younger brothers. However, when Annabelle’s youngest brother becomes the recipient of Betty’s harmful schemes, Annabelle breaks her silence, telling her parents the truth. When Betty is confronted about her actions, she denies everything and, instead, makes alarming accusations about Toby, the strange drifter who wanders the surrounding hills and woods.

Living under the suspicions and bitterness of the past and current world war, Toby is the perfect target for Betty’s meanness. No one knows much about the quiet man, other than he fought against the Germans in France in World War I. Some think he is crazy, someone to fear, but Annabelle has only ever known kindness from him. Can Annabelle prove Toby’s innocence?

A 2017 Newbery Honor Book, *Wolf Hollow* by Lauren Wolk is a gripping coming-of-age story about a girl who finds her voice in her Pennsylvania home town and uses it to stand up for justice and kindness. The plot speaks to the power of words that can do both harm and good and how prejudices and superstitions can blind others from seeing the truth before them. The tone of this book is somber, full of raw honesty that will evoke a gamut of emotions, particularly outrage, anger, and sorrow; however, Annabelle’s compassionate heart, determination to stand for truth, and her special relationship with Toby will inspire hope, courage, and love. Some endings are not always beautiful or happy—sometimes they are harsh and painful, but still they have the power to shape a life forever, just as words do. Such is the way that Annabelle’s story ends; it is an ending that challenges its readers to be a voice for truth and justice, to be the fruit rather than the frost.

There are some traumatic events portrayed in this book, including a young girl losing her eye, a boy being cut by a metal wire, as well as two deaths.

Justina McBride, CLJ  
**Award(s):** Newbery Honor Book

### YOUNG ADULT FICTION

#### The girl who drank the moon / Kelly Barnhill.

388 p.; 22 cm.  Grades 6-8  
Fic  Rating: 5

The Forest is cursed—that’s what the citizens of the Protectorate think. Once a year, the parents of the youngest baby in the village are asked to give up their child to keep the city safe. And they always have, until the “madwoman.” As the first to fight the tradition, she is locked away in the Tower.
The Elders leave the madwoman’s daughter in the Forest. Just like with every child before, forest witch Xan saves the baby and begins traveling across the Forest to give the child a new home. But the madwoman’s child is different from the others. Distracted by the girl’s unusual beauty, Xan accidentally feeds the child moonlight, enmagicking her.

Though in Xan’s care, Luna doesn’t understand how her magic affects the world. She even turns a swamp monster into a rabbit! Xan, at a loss for how to control the Luna’s magic, decides to lock the new magic away until Luna’s 13th birthday. But there are greater dangers lurking in the Forest than an enmagicked girl. With Xan’s forgotten past and an unforeseeable future, could she have made a huge mistake?

Dive into a world of magic and madness with the 2017 Newbery Medal-winning book, *The Girl Who Drank the Moon*. The novel tangles multiple third-person perspectives together—Xan’s, Luna’s, the madwoman’s, and more—to show that things are not always as they seem. The smooth transitions between the perspectives are impressive, leaving no gaps in the story and leaving readers on edge about what will happen next.

While this novel uses some dark themes, such as kidnapping, madness, and death, Kelly Barnhill does a wonderful job showing the seriousness in a child-friendly manner. For example, the madwoman is locked alone in the Tower, but she can create paper birds that can fly and inflict injury. Bizarre descriptions, sing-song narration, and playful repetition make this a fun, can’t-put-down read for middle schoolers to young adults.

*Rebecca Schriner, CLJ*

**Award(s):** Newbery Medal

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**The only road / Alexandra Diaz.**


308, 3 unnumbered p. : ill. ; 22 cm. Grades 5-9 Rating: 4

When you’re a kid, the most you should have to stress over is doing your homework, and the biggest fear should be a zit in the middle of your forehead just before your birthday party. Not so for 12-year-old Jaime and his 15-year-old cousin Angela.

The Alpha Gang has targeted them to become new members—an order, not a choice. The death of Jaime’s cousin and Angela’s brother Miguel remains engraved in their memories, fresh and tangible proof of what will happen to them too if they refuse to join.

Alexandra Diaz’s realistic and tense drama takes us into the heart of Guatemala and the depths of despair as one close-knit family makes the gut-wrenching decision to send the two children away—in order to save their lives.

The money for the “fees” to travel to El Norte, sewn into the waistband of Jaime’s pants, weighs heavily upon him, along with the realization that his family has plunged deeper into debt for his sake. Now their future—and his—depends upon his making it to the United States. Jaime and his cousin dodge rogue border guards and endure hunger, thirst, fear, prejudice and hostility as they travel illegally from Guatemala into Mexico and then, hopefully, into the United States.

In an age of peoples displaced due to wars and catastrophes, and controversy over immigration issues, this title serves as a reminder of the reasons why many leave their countries for the dream and promise of America. *The Only Road*, a Pura Belpre Honor Book, reminds the reader that sometimes flight is the only option, and that love, at times, demands great
SPECIAL FEATURE

SELECTED 2017
AWARD BOOKS
FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

sacrifices.

Veronica Jorge, CLJ

Award(s): Pura Belpre (Author) Honor Book

The queen of blood / Sarah Beth Durst. (The queens of Renthia; 1)
353 p. : map ; 24 cm. Grades 9-12
Fic Rating: 5

Spirits have two desires: to build and to destroy. In a land where these elemental spirits hold the world in balance, the queen is the only human able to completely control their desires and bloodlust. She can’t show any weakness—especially if an ancient spirit seeks to exploit her—but even a strong queen has her limits.

Only one house stands after a village massacre. A girl with an affinity for spirits protects her family long enough for Champion Ven to arrive. Ven tells Daleina that if her affinity for the spirits had been stronger, she could have saved her whole village. As a former bodyguard, he knows the queen wouldn’t let a forest village be destroyed were it within her power to prevent the loss. If she’s losing power, he must send as many affinity-prone girls to the Academy as he can.

Years pass and Daleina is still guilt-ridden over the deaths of the villagers. Hoping to protect other villages like hers, she enters the Academy, a training school for girls with the potential to control spirits. Her classmates surpass her in every physical challenge, but no one else has seen the horrors the spirits can cause. If she can’t stop a spirit, could there be another way to control them?

Daleina’s character may at first seem like another traumatized YA protagonist, but readers attach to her when they see her path to saving others develop into a fight for survival. Her character changes drastically as the story unfolds. Readers will feel Daleina’s hope and heartache as she embraces her childhood dream and her adult nightmare: becoming queen.

It is no surprise that this novel won the ALA’s 2017 Alex Award. Sarah Beth Durst’s beautiful, poetic narration slows down the pace of the novel but leaves readers in awe and clinging to every detail. While there are some uses of profane language, extramarital sex (not described in detail), and moderately violent scenes (dismembered bodies, blood, violent fights leading to death, etc.), The Queen of Blood features one of the most intricately woven fantasy plots. Every element of this story fits perfectly into this epic, giving no unnecessary rabbit trails or backstory.

Rebecca Schriner, CLJ

Award(s): Alex Award

The inquisitor’s tale, or, the three magical children and their holy dog / Adam Gidwitz ; illuminated by Hatem Aly.
363 p.: ill.; 24 cm. Grades 4-8
Fic Rating: 4

The Inquisitor’s Tale centers around three children: Jeanne, William, and Jacob. These adventurers have been joined by circumstances and forged together by resolve. Along with a dog named Gwenforte, they are on a mission to stop the King of France. The time is the 13th century, and superstition and suspicion are rife. During their adventure, the children find that...
purported enemies are friends and some posing as friends are truly enemies. There are intrigue, excitement, danger, a good story, and a few twists and turns along the way. The children also find that not exactly fitting in may not be the worst thing in the world—and that being different is what helps you stand out and make a difference.

Adam Gidwitz has written a tale with several likable characters. His research into the 13th century aids in placing this fictional story into its presumed historical context. There is a section in the back that shows the source of his inspiration for some of the characters in the story. The illustrations by Hatem Aly aid the reader in visualizing what is occurring in the story. The story teaches while remaining a story. This is both its great achievement and also its danger.

The book touches upon the issue of Christian-Jewish relations in the medieval period. This can be seen in the attempt in the book by the authorities to burn copies of the Jewish Talmud. It can also be observed in some of the statements by characters and the author about whom God will save. The reader will likely be thinking through their response to issues that occur in the story much as the characters do. Overall, this book was enjoyable and recommended for those who like adventure with a solid dash of history.

*Michael Wilhelm, CLJ*

**Award(s):** Newbery Honor Book

**Arena / Holly Jennings.**


325 p.; 24 cm. Grades 9-12

Fic Rating: 4 (Not Recommended)

Among virtual reality athletes, Kali Ling is the best. She glorifies in killing other gamers and putting on a bloody show for her fans. But as soon as Kali unplugs and returns to the real world, she feels out of her element. The celebrity life barely tides her over—provocative photoshoots, screaming fans, drugs, and extramarital sex—until she can return to the game.

Her handler dubs her first female captain in RAGE tournament history and life couldn’t get better...until she wakes up next to her overdosed lover/teammate.

The VR organization hides his cause of death, and Kali is traumatized by how cruel reality can be. Their new teammate seems to be nothing more than a pretty face, but Kali knows he’s hiding something.

With the pre-season ending and the fight for the RAGE championship beginning, Kali must reunite her team before she goes from the top of the gamer world to the bottom. But when you die hundreds of times like Kali, the bigger battle may be remembering which world is the real one.

Holly Jennings’s *Arena* paints a picture of the famous lifestyle that leads readers to understand why many celebrities turn to substance abuse and scandal to survive. Kali begins as a selfish, unlikeable character but develops into a dynamic teen who fights to overcome her addiction to the VR world by committing to a greater cause. Her teammates, though unchanging, are solid supports for Kali’s development, and the ominous pressure from her fans and the RAGE sponsors provide enough resistance for the change to seem challenging.

While this book cannot be recommended because of vivid violence, descriptive sex scenes, extreme substance abuse, and overuse of obscenities, the story arch for this Alex Award-winning novel is phenomenal. Through beautifully descriptive language, the book shares the dangers of virtual reality and great reasons behind why we should place our identity in more than the opinions of others and our jobs. Readers will feel compelled to hunt for overlooked atroci-
ties and seek ways to correct them.

*Rebecca Schriner, CLJ*

**Award(s):** Alex Award

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**When we collided / Emery Lord.**

344 p.; 22 cm. Grades 9-12
Fic

(Review to follow in next issue)

**Award(s):** Schneider Family Book Award - Teen (Ages 13-18)

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**As brave as you / Jason Reynolds.**

410 p.; 22 cm. Grades 5-8
Fic Rating: 5

Jason Reynolds has written a thoughtful and engaging story that incorporates not only humorous moments, but also addresses real issues, such as broken relationships, visual impairment, mental illness, long-term grief, fear, guilt, courage, forgiveness, and the value of hard work.

*As Brave As You* features 11-year-old African American Genie Harris, who tends to be a worrywart. He greatly admires his 13-year-old brother, Ernie, who always appears confident and not scared of anything. The two boys go to their paternal grandparents’ house in rural Virginia for a month in the summer so that their parents can spend some time by themselves to work on their marriage. Country life is a new experience for the two Brooklynite boys. There is no internet access or cell phone reception, singing crickets and frogs fill the night with music, and Grandma has assigned them chores, like scooping dog waste and picking peas.

Genie is full of curiosity about everything and loves to ask questions of family members, along with writing down amusing and intriguing questions in his notebook. He likes to use Google for research. How will he do that with no internet? When Genie finds out his grandfather is blind, he is both shocked and amazed. Genie has many questions for his grandfather—for instance, how he can do things like cook, pour tea without spilling a drop, or wear matching clothes. Most importantly, he wonders why his grandfather owns a gun.

As the summer days go by, Genie’s escapades, misadventures, and intergenerational family bonding time contributes to his learning some valuable life lessons that have a profound impact on him. He learns about the importance of admitting mistakes, the negative effects of animosity, and the power of forgiveness. He also sees firsthand how pressuring people to make decisions against their better judgement can lead to serious unintended consequences. By the end of the story, Genie has come to understand what it really means to be brave.

*Dianne Woodman, CLJ*

**Award(s):** Schneider Family Book Award - Middle School (Ages 11-13); Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book
The ballad of a broken nose / Arne Svingen; translated by Kari Dickson.

214 p.; 22 cm. Grades 6-8
Fic  Rating: 4
Bart loves boxing and has a ton of friends—at least, that’s what he tells his mother. As a Norwegian middle schooler, Bart has become a compulsive liar to cope with his rough life. When his mother stumbles home from the pub each night, Bart tucks her in and reminds her that they will have a better life soon—not that he believes that. His father left before he was born, his public housing apartment is dirty, and he lets others get bullied so he won’t get hurt.
Bart has a secret: he loves singing opera music. When his cute classmate Ada finds out, she can’t keep her mouth shut. She volunteers Bart as the special closing act in the school talent show. Horrified, Bart doesn’t know how to lie himself out of this one. Stage fright may not be the only thing hindering his big break. When Bart’s mom ends up in the hospital because of her addiction, Bart must decide what is most important: making a new life for himself or pursuing his mother’s dream of a better one.
Arne Svingen excels at exposing a range of socio-economic diversity in this Batchelder Honor Book. Bart can’t afford to eat multiple meals a day, yet Ada lives without basic worries. When they cross into each other’s worlds, the awkward tension tells just how different two friends can live. Despite their differences, Ada chooses to believe in Bart and encourage him to follow his dream in his time of need.
As a first-person narrative with a journal-like style, The Ballad of a Broken Nose is sprinkled with humor and harsh revelations of childhood. Some material in this book may not be appropriate for all middle school audiences. Because Bart is a middle schooler and so close to his own story, some details are washed over (such as his mother’s drunkenness, skipping school, and swear words) and new perspectives are homed in on (such as his drug-using neighbor’s kindness). This book gives two great lessons: never judge a person based on his background and pursue your dreams despite adversity.
Rebecca Schriner, CLJ
Award(s): Batchelder Honor Book

YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION

This land is our land : the history of American immigration / Linda Barrett Osborne.

LCCN 2015017877  ISBN 9781419716607, hardcover, $24.95.
124 p. ; ill. (some col.) ; 27 cm. Grades 7-10
304.8 Rating: 5
This Land Is Our Land will help readers gain a thorough understanding of the history of immigration in the United States. The information is presented chronologically beginning with the European colonization of the Americas and continuing through contemporary times. The book covers the origin of anti-immigrant behavior, the changing immigration policies of the United States government throughout history, and the reasons immigrants came to America. Also included are the accomplishments of immigrants who successfully integrated into American society, along with the challenges immigrants faced upon their arrival.
The deeply researched and thought-provoking sub-
ject matter is enhanced not only by the numerous illustrations that are accompanied by short, explanatory captions, but also by the excerpts from immigrants and a variety of other notable sources. There is an excellent amount of supporting material in the back matter, including an appendix that explains the difference between visas and green cards and a detailed timeline of immigration history. Under the Notes section are sources for all of the excerpts, and the Selected Bibliography lists books for students who are interested in learning more about the history of immigration. Credits for the sources of the illustrations are listed, and this is followed by an index.

Linda Barrett Osborne has written an insightful and eye-opening book that sheds light on why immigration is a controversial issue. Osborne addresses opposing viewpoints on the immigration policy in the United States and provides explanations for questions, such as these: Should immigrants be welcomed into our country? Should they be recognized as viable members of our society? Osborne also goes into detail as to why the United States has a diversified population, the political issues surrounding the diversity, and why there are conflicting attitudes in this country towards immigrants. The book is extremely well-organized and user-friendly for students. It is an excellent edition to a school library and a valuable resource for students to use in a research paper or project.

*Dianne Woodman, CLJ*

**Award(s):** YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Finalist

**March : book one** / John Lewis ; [co-written by] Andrew Aydin ; [art by] Nate Powell. (March; 1)

121 p. : black-and-white ill. ; 25 cm. Grades 9-12
328.7 Rating: 4

March : book two / written by John Lewis & Andrew Aydin ; art by Nate Powell. (March; 2)

187 p. : chiefly ill. ; 25 cm. Grades 9-12
328.73 Rating: 4

March : book three / John Lewis ; [co-written by] Andrew Aydin ; [art by] Nate Powell. (March; 3)

121 p. : black-and-white ill. ; 25 cm. Grades 9-12
328.73 Rating: 4

Congressman John Lewis and his co-authors present a graphic novel series about a critical time in our nation’s history: the civil rights movement.

*March* is an autobiographical account of John Lewis’ life, starting with his life as a sharecropper’s son and continuing until the Civil Rights Amendment is signed. The story reflects the ups and downs of the civil rights movement and its major figures. Readers will encounter Rosa Parks, Presidents Johnson, Bobby Kennedy, and others.

Book One starts with his life as a youth in Alabama, his life-changing meeting with Martin Luther King, Jr., the start of the student rights movement, and their efforts to bring about change through nonviolent sit-ins and the opposition they faced.
Book Two continues with the Freedom Riders in the deep south. Their courage in the face of beatings, imprisonment, and more draws the attention of powerful allies, among them Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. Twenty-three-year-old John Lewis is thrust into the national limelight as the leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

Book Three concludes as Lewis leads his fellow activists to face intimidation, violence, and death, as they bring civil injustice to the forefront. They use nonviolence to launch a series of campaigns to register millions of black voters in time for the presidential election.

The information presented is told in comic strip format, drawing the reader into the drama preceding and surrounding the 1963 March on Washington. Each volume is drawn in black and white, to emphasize the lines between white and black in the society at the time.

_March_ received critical acclaim from several sources: the Coretta Scott King Honor Book 2017, ALA Notable Book, YALSA’s Top 10 Great Graphic Novels for Teens, and several more. Young adults and adults alike should read this. Written as a memoir by one who was involved with the civil rights movement for more than 50 years, it presents history in a digestible form and fills in the gaps found in textbooks.

Recommended for school and public libraries, for teen and adult readers.

_Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ_

**Award(s) for March : Book One:** Coretta Scott King Author Award; Sibert Medal; YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults

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_Uprooted : the Japanese American experience during World War II / Albert Marrin._


246 p. : ill., maps ; 24 cm. Grades 7 and up 940.53 Rating: *5

Mastery of the subject matter and thorough research make _Uprooted: The Japanese American Experience During World War II_ a must-read for everyone.

Albert Marrin skillfully balances facts, first-hand narratives, news clips, photos, and illustrations to present a comprehensive and insightful account of the uprooting and internment of Americans of Japanese descent after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. His writing is clear and concise as he explores the foundations, historical events and racial attitudes of both America and Japan that culminated in war between the two nations. In addition, Marrin details the role that the news media played in stirring panic that encouraged animosity toward the Japanese-Americans.

The author also references similar experiences of other groups throughout history—for example, the forced removal of Native Americans, the Chinese Exclusion Laws of the 1880s, and the racism against African-Americans that led to the Civil Rights Movement. Lovers of history, moreover, will recall the English Only Movements that have surfaced at various times in the United States in order to protect and secure the country from foreigners, as well as the expulsion of Mexican-Americans in 1929-1936, who were blamed for taking American jobs.

_Uprooted_ challenges readers to grapple with thought-provoking questions. How do we ensure the liberty of each citizen during wartime? Should race and religion exist as factors when determining a nation’s security? Should the media be held to a higher standard of accountability in its news coverage? These questions are all the more relevant today as the na-
Albert Marrin reminds the reader of the importance of studying history. It not only informs us about the past, but also helps us decide about the future. We can learn from our collective knowledge and experience.

Veronica Jorge, CLJ
Award(s): Sibert Honor Book

**Hillary Rodham Clinton: A woman living history / Karen Blumenthal.**
433 p. : ill. ; 22 cm.  Grades 10-12  
B  Rating: 4

Karen Blumenthal’s *Hillary Rodham Clinton: A Woman Living History* is in many ways a book about firsts. Clinton was the first student commencement speaker at Wellesley College. She was the first woman to become a full partner at Rose Law Firm. She was the first female U.S. Senator from the state of New York. She was the first woman to be a presidential candidate in every primary held in each state. She was the first former First Lady to seek the presidency. In her life, Clinton has blazed her own path in pursuing the things that are important to her. She has also made some shifts—she began her political activism as a Goldwater girl, but by the time she started coming into the limelight, she had become a staunch Democratic operative.

Blumenthal also attempts to show the side of Clinton that perhaps is not seen so much by the public. This includes her surprise when she discovers that some women do not like or feel insulted by her, and also the information that she carries a Bible with her everywhere she goes. For someone who is wondering where to start to learn about Mrs. Clinton, this book is a great place to start. It is comprehensive without getting bogged down in minutiae. It offers a portrait that shows the complexity of its subject and is at the same time fair. This book would be a welcome addition to a public library.

Michael Wilhelm, CLJ
Award(s): YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Finalist

**In the shadow of liberty: the hidden history of slavery, four presidents, and five black lives / Kenneth C. Davis.**
xvii, 286 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.  Grades 5-8  
B  Rating: 5

This very interesting, eye-opening book written for young people is certainly of great interest to adults as well. The lives of five black enslaved people are highlighted along with much of the history of slavery and the involvement of four of our US presidents, including their own history with slaves and their opinions and actions concerning slavery.

Billy Lee, Ona Judge, Isaac Granger, Paul Jennings, and Alfred Jackson all have a story to tell—stories that have been mostly missed in history books although their owners all hold their own place in our country’s past. Their stories allow readers to understand those whose enslavement helped to build our country but were not conceived in chains rather than liberty.
The book is filled with photos and includes timelines between each long chapter. It is highly recommended for school and public libraries.

Ceil Carey, CLJ

Award(s): YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Finalist

In the country we love: my family divided / Diane Guerrero with Michelle Burford.

257 p.; ill.; 25 cm.  Adult (YA)

In the Country We Love is a compelling and heartfelt memoir of the plight of undocumented immigrants in the United States. Diane Guerrero has first-hand knowledge of the challenges immigrants face when they come to America to begin a new life and of the devastating effects of deportation. She was born in the United States to undocumented Columbian parents. With courage, humor, sincerity, and a moderate amount of profanity, she shares the story of her life from childhood to adolescence to young adulthood, and the ways in which her attitude toward life have been shaped by her experiences from her growing up years.

Guerrero’s parents not only worked for low wages in menial jobs to make ends meet, but they were also persistent in their quest to become American citizens, only to have crippling blows dealt to their efforts. Guerrero’s childhood was overshadowed by the constant worry that her parents could be taken away at any moment. Guerrero’s fears came true at the age of 14 when her parents were arrested and shortly thereafter deported back to Columbia. She moved in with family friends so she could continue attending Boston Arts Academy, a performing arts high school.

Fearful of rejection as a performing artist, Guerrero chose to follow an academic path in college. During this time, her life spun out of control. She dealt with major financial debt, emotional fallout from her parents’ deportation, depression, self-cutting, and excessive drinking. After seriously contemplating suicide, she started seeing a therapist, who Guerrero believes was sent by God to help her overcome her fears and doubts. Subsequently, she enrolled in acting classes, and through perseverance became a recurring actress in two popular television shows.

The black-and-white photographs and quotes from novelists, poets, singers, and other notable individuals add to the powerful message Guerrero recounts about the toxic stress and its long-lasting impact on children of undocumented parents. The book concludes with an overview of immigration policy issues, the importance of immigration reform, and a list of resources for Americans who are interested in advocating for change in the current immigration system.

Dianne Woodman, CLJ

Award(s): Alex Award

Die young with me: a memoir / Rob Rufus.

382 p.; 22 cm.  Adult (YA)

Die Young with Me is a candid and heart-wrenching memoir of a teenager whose life is changed dramatically when he is diagnosed with cancer.
Rob Rufus lives with his family in Huntington, West Virginia. He feels like an outcast in the rural town and has no real goals in life. However, his attitude changes when he and his twin brother, Nat, are introduced to punk rock. The two 13-year-old boys are so enthralled with the music they acquire instruments and turn the basement of their house into a practice space, so they can form a punk rock band. It takes a few years for their dream to turn into reality, but once they succeed the band starts playing local gigs with Rob as the drummer.

Just as the band is on the verge of getting a big break that could give them national recognition, Rob sees his world turned upside down. He is 17 and diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer.

The course of treatment requires both chemotherapy and surgery. Rob candidly shares not only the horrific physical side effects he experiences due to the treatments, but also the roller coaster ride of emotions he goes through. He vacillates between feeling angry, terrified, frustrated, panicked, downhearted, anxious, and lonely. At the same time, he steadfastly refuses to give up hope that he can beat the disease. He also describes how family members and friends deal with their own stress when someone close to them is being ravaged by a life-threatening disease.

The key element behind Rob’s surviving the nightmare of a debilitating disease is the inner strength he draws upon that comes from his music and the determination to get strong enough to play the drums again. The support of family and friends, prayer, and items Rob considers good luck that pertain to punk rock and Christianity are also important in helping him in his challenging fight to survive against overwhelming odds. The book includes cigarette and marijuana smoking, drinking, a bit of sexual innuendo, a trip to a strip club, and an excessive amount of profanity.

Dianne Woodman, CLJ
Award(s): Alex Award

Sachiko: a Nagasaki bomb survivor’s story / Caren Stelson.

144 p.: ill. (some col.), col. maps, genealogical table; 27 cm. Grades 5-12
B Rating: 5

Sachiko shares a Nagasaki bomb survivor’s story of the devastation that changed her family’s lives in 1945, chronicled through extensive interviews with author Caren Stelson.

Sachiko was six when a U.S. military plane dropped a second atomic bomb on Japan just prior to the end of the Second World War in the Pacific. Thousands of adults and children died that horrific day, including several of Sachiko’s siblings. More people, including Sachiko’s extended family, died in the days, weeks, and years that followed. As she matured, she wrote of the influence Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi had on her growing conviction to embrace non-violence and teach others to do the same. As a result, Sachiko decided to publicly share her story of the bombing and radiation sickness in the hope that it never happens again to anyone. Extensive bibliographical references and an index aid additional study.

The author inserts in-depth historical summaries of events and facts in special sections between episodes of Sachiko’s story. The carefully researched historical information add a wider and deeper context for the intimate details of Sachiko’s personal experiences, allowing knowledge and empathy to grow in readers. Tight writing, strong verbs, and
original metaphors join with compelling themes and facts—all these transform this shocking and tragic story, a Robert F. Sibert Honor book, into a compelling revelation. Sachiko rises above painful ashes and waves a bright banner of hope that future tragedies can be avoided if difficult truths are known.

Connie Brown, CLJ

Award(s): Sibert Honor Book

Samurai rising: the epic life of Minamoto Yoshitsune / Pamela S. Turner; illustrated by Gareth Hinds.

LCCN 2014049179 ISBN 9781580895842, hardcover, $16.95.

xiii, 236 p. : ill., maps ; 24 cm. Grades 5-8

B Rating: 4

Much of the life of Minamoto Yoshitsune sounds like an epic movie. He spends much of his early life attempting to avoid the enemies of his family. He studies to become a Buddhist monk until he returns to take part in the struggle for control of Japan. He shows himself to be a brilliant military leader and one whom men willingly choose to follow. However, his elder half-brother is jealous of Yoshitsune and finally they begin a struggle for supremacy. Those who look for adventure and excitement in the books they read will find much to admire in Samurai Rising. There are also elements of the samurai culture and its Buddhist background that are illustrated and explained. Those who appreciate the look and feel of a graphic novel will also enjoy the artwork of Gareth Hinds that graces the book.

Though some of the book’s design elements (similar to a graphic novel or even a comic book) seem directed toward a younger audience, its thematic material suggests that a more mature audience might be more appropriate. There are descriptions of major battles, sexual content including a child born out of wedlock, and a description of the samurai practice of seppuku (a form of ritual suicide). However, other themes of the book make it worth reading: courage, loyalty, sacrifice, and bravery. This book would be a welcome addition in public libraries.

Michael Wilhelm, CLJ

Award(s): YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Finalist
INTERMEDIATE FICTION

Currents / Jane Petrlik Smolik.
LCCN 2014010491 ISBN 9781580896481,
hardcover, $16.95.
326 p. : ill., maps ; 22 cm.  Grades 4-6
Fic Rating: 4

On a planation in Virginia, 11-year-old Bones Brewster has spent her life a slave, serving a harsh mistress, longing for freedom. When a series of circumstances occurs that leads to hope and heartache, she discovers something that no one can take away from her, while an old bottle set adrift a river may bring its own form of freedom.

An ocean away, Lady Bess Kent longs for adventure, to explore the world as her father does far away from her manipulative step-mother. When she discovers a bottle that has washed up on her English shores, its mysterious contents provide an adventure all their own, as well as help in a time of need.

In Boston, Massachusetts, Mary Margaret Casey irons shoelaces for eight pennies a week and, in her free time, fills a journal with stories about life and the people around her. Though she would love to be a writer, few options are open to a poor Irish girl, especially when any spare funds are needed to help her sick sister. When a shiny bottle catches her eye, Mary finds a valuable treasure inside.

In Currents, author Jane Petrlik Smolik presents a historically rich tale of three young girls living miles and an ocean apart, but whose lives and stories are intertwined and impacted by one bottle set adrift in the James River. The stories flow seamlessly from one to the other, with little reoccurring details (such as Merry’s Museum Magazine and inspiring quotes from the philosopher Marcus Aurelius) that tie them further together and add historical authenticity. Black-and-white illustrations and brief descriptions signal the story shifts, and an epilogue at the end brings closure for both the characters and readers. Messages of courage, friendship, compassion, sacrifice, and forgiveness drift across the pages. Hard topics such as slavery and prejudices are presented with an age-appropriate honesty that stirs both outrage and empathy. A note of caution: there is a somewhat graphic description of a slave being beaten in the first story.

Justina McBride, CLJ
YOUNG ADULT FICTION

**Orphan's Song / Gillian Bronte Adams.** *(The songkeeper chronicles; 1)*

290 p.; 22 cm. Grades 6-8
Fic Rating: 4

Twelve-year-old Birdie is haunted by the five notes of a beautiful song that continually come to her ears alone. She has never dared to sing the melody aloud or tell her secret to Madame, the tyrant she works for who already believes Birdie is nothing but a crazy, unwanted orphan. When she finally has the courage to sing the song to Amos, the peddler who has always shown her kindness, he warns her never to sing the melody again for it is dangerous and unnatural. Only moments after the final note fades from her lips, Birdie finds herself on the run from evil men.

As she tries to learn the truth about the song from Amos and those that aid her along the way, everyone seems to avoid giving her clear answers, whether out of protection or fear for what she is. Whom can she trust? Are the notes of such a beautiful melody truly to be feared and kept silent? Or is it, and she, the sole hope against a powerful enemy about to rage war on her land?

*Orphan's Song* by Gillian Bronte Adams is a fast-paced, action-packed fantasy with page-turning suspense that will draw readers from the start. Complete with mythical creatures, talking animals, and a powerful sword, the plot holds true to its genre, while spinning its own unique twists and turns, presenting a fresh storyline and well-developed characters. The story is told from the alternating omniscient third-person point of view of Birdie, Amos, and Ky. Birdie is a timid orphan that has been beaten down her whole life but finally discovers the courage to give voice to the song that has always been inside. Amos is a fiery, loveable hero with a haunted past, while Ky is a brave, young thief with warring convictions and loyalty. A fight to silence truth and the few brave souls who dare to take a stand paint an age-old battle between good and evil. Overall, this first book is a great start to the series and is sure to prompt one to pick up its sequel.

*Justina McBride, CLJ*

**Defiance: a post-apocalyptic YA tale of survival / L.R. Burkard.** *(The Pulse Effex series; 3)*

372 p.; 23 cm. Grade 10 and up
Fic Rating: 4

With *Defiance*, L. R. Burkard concludes her story of three teen girls (Andrea Patterson, Lexie Martin, and Sarah Weaver) living in a post-apocalyptic United States. The story is told through their viewpoint, as they experience life after an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) disaster.

Over the course of the three books, the girls grow from spoiled, self-centered girls to mature young women, capable of holding their own in a world very different from what they knew. They learn to value simpler things, to work as a team, to see value in life as it now exists. In the face of foreign soldiers, nuclear strikes, and guerrilla armies, the
girls learn to adjust to life beyond survival. They make the best decisions they can, given the circumstances, relying on God to get them through the darkest of times. Can they face these times with defiance and carve out a new life for themselves?

Burkard excels at telling an engaging story; the first-person point of view helps to create real characters the reader can relate to, even if the reader doesn’t agree with their choices. Unlike the earlier books in the series, in Defiance other characters’ points of view are added to the girls’ voices in the narrative. Andrea and Lexis have teen romances, but their relationships are chaste. Adults will find it a clean read (no drugs, alcohol, or sex) with no graphic violence, and it may cause them to think about how they would face such a disaster.

Recommended for public and school libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ

Earlier Series Titles Reviewed by CLJ: Pulse (Jul/Aug/Sep 2016), and Resilience (Jan/Feb/Mar 2017).

The lost girl of Astor Street / Stephanie Morrill.

349 p.; 22 cm. Grade 8 and up
Fic Rating: 5

Stephanie Morrill, author of the Ellie Sweet series, pens her first young adult mystery, set during the Jazz Age, a time of citywide corruption due to the gangsters and of changes in women’s rights.

In The Lost Girl of Astor Street, motherless, 18-year-old Piper Sail is convinced the police aren’t looking in the right place after the disappearance of her best friend, Lydia, and begins her own investigation into Lydia’s disappearance. Friends since childhood, both girls grew up in Chicago’s affluent neighborhoods under the expectations of what that means for their lives.

Daughter of a well-known mobster attorney, Piper takes her search for the truth into some unsavory neighborhoods. But a handsome Italian policeman—Detective Mariano Cassano—is determined to keep her safe and find the answers to Lydia’s disappearance. As she discovers more about her father’s profession and connections in the city, Piper questions the detective’s family’s relationship with her father. Is she willing to risk her life to dig deeply enough to uncover the truth? Where do Mariano’s loyalties lie? Is his interest in her genuine?

Morrill delivers a gutsy, intelligent heroine, a twisting mystery plot, and descriptive historical details (the Roaring Twenties!). The faith element is light and the relationships are clean. The Lost Girl of Astor Street engages the reader from the beginning, keeping one’s attention until the very end. Piper embodies the changing freedoms and restrictions that young women were facing in the Roaring 20s. With its descriptive narratives and well-developed characters, this title will have readers clamoring for more mysteries starring this intrepid amateur sleuth.

Recommended for public and school libraries for high school, young adults—and even adults who enjoy a historical mystery.

Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ
**Downside up / Richard Scrimger.**  
256 p.; 20 cm. Grades 4-7  
Fic Rating: 3

Losing a loved one is never easy. Talking about it can be even harder. But finding a special place that makes the world right again can heal a hole in the heart.

Fred, a sixth grader, used to be happy and energetic, but now he’s often so sad that he doesn’t want to eat or get out of bed. All of that changes when, one day, he climbs down a sewer drain to retrieve a ball and finds himself in an upside down world, where everything feels right. He meets himself: the Fred whose family life is intact, and who has suffered no loss or heartache. When danger threatens his other self, it is Fred who rises to the challenge and helps to save the family and keep them together.

In *Downside Up*, Richard Scrimger creates an adventure into another realm that mirrors the experiences of children dealing with loss. The plot, filled with joy and wholeness, as well as danger and dragons, visualizes the emotional turmoil taking place within Fred. The story can encourage readers to verbalize their own pain, and help them to realize that they are not alone and that it’s okay to feel bad sometimes.

More importantly, *Downside Up* empowers the young to comprehend that they have the strength and resources within themselves to overcome and rise above all obstacles, sorrows, and tragedies.

Richard Scrimger’s book is an excellent stepping-stone for care-givers and children alike to discuss what happens when loved ones leave this earth.

Veronica Jorge, *CLJ*

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**Another me : a novel / Eva Wiseman.**  
233 p.; 20 cm. Grades 10-12  
Fic Rating: 4

When his merchant father is severely beaten by some of the hateful citizens of Strasbourg, 17-year-old Natan takes over his father’s work and, as a result, meets Elena, the most beautiful girl he has ever seen. Unfortunately, the two come from opposite worlds—with her being a Christian and him a Jew, they might as well be oceans apart. With the severe restrictions placed on the Jewish community and the Black Death spreading blame and suspicion, Natan and Elena must keep their blossoming love a secret.

One night on his way home from meeting Elena, Natan stumbles upon a group of men trying to poison the city’s well with the intent to cast blame on the Jews of the city. With this discovery, the fate of his people and loved ones now rests in Natan’s hands. Before he can act, Natan’s plans to save his people are struck a fatal blow—or so it seems. However, in a twist of fate or by Hashem’s will, Natan finds the help he needs in the most unexpected way.

Amidst the historical setting of the Middle
Ages, Another Me by Eva Wiseman brings to life the factual events of the devastating bubonic plague and the Jewish persecution in Strasbourg through a fictional story of young love and sacrifice, with a central plot shrouded in Jewish mysticism. The story is told from the alternating first-person perspectives of Natan and Elena. This gives readers a more complete understanding of the events that occur and insight into the thoughts and emotions of both main characters, creating empathy for each one’s inner conflicts.

The unique plot is full of suspense and mystery, driven by an underlying need to discover Natan and Elena’s ultimate fate. The mood of the story is somber and bleak, befitting its time and place, the grim circumstances of death and persecution, and the foreboding sense of heartache to come. Through the pain and suffering of loss, however, a story of self-less love shines through the darkness, providing a victory all its own.

*Justina McBride, CLJ*

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**YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION**

* A teen's guide to the 5 love languages : how to understand yourself and improve all your relationships / written by Gary Chapman, with Paige Haley Drygas.

131 p.; 22 cm. Grade 7 and up
155.5 Rating: 5

Gary Chapman, author of *The Five Love Languages*, is joined by Paige Haley Drygas in this book aimed at teenagers and their relationships.

Chapman builds on the concepts he first wrote about in the first book: (1) service, (2) words, (3) gifts, (4) touch, and (5) time. The premise of *A Teen’s Guide to 5 Love Languages* is that if someone is speaking our primary heart language, we feel loved. Everyone wants to be loved but how we want to be loved is different. By learning about one’s primary language, it is easier to learn another’s language. We tend to show our love through our primary language, but that might not be the way others experience love.

The authors apply these languages to a teen’s relationships: friends, dating, and family. By understanding one’s primary language, a teen can strengthen their friendships, decrease conflict, socialize comfortably, connect more deeply with others, and lessen relationship drama, especially when dealing with anger and forgiveness.
A Teen’s Guide is a short but practical book—less than 200 pages. It has a number of illustrations, quizzes, reflection questions, main points set in a different font and type size (making them easy to find), and everyday examples to demonstrate different dialects of these languages. For example, words have the following dialects: appreciation, encouragement, praise, and kindness. For the language of words: it’s not what you say, but how you say it.

Recommended for teens and young adults, school libraries, and public libraries. Sixteen young adults and teens wrote reviews praising this book—although it is aimed at a teen audience, adults and parents could benefit from reading it.

Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ

Billy Graham: America’s pastor / Janet & Geoff Benge. (Heroes of history)

205 p.; 21 cm. Grades 5-8
B Rating: 5

Part of the Heroes of History series, this biography for young people about evangelist Billy Graham is excellent. Beginning with his childhood as a 12-year-old still known to family and friends as Billy Frank, the authors take the readers through Billy's life at home, in church and school, and then as a famous preacher of the Gospel. He was a small-town North Carolina boy who travelled the world and made friends with almost every famous person of the 20th century. He preached the message of salvation to over 200 million people in 185 countries, never agreeing to preach to a segregated crowd—a stance which had much to do with changes in civil rights in the United States as well as other countries of the world, such as South Africa.

The book also tells of Billy's marriage to Ruth Bell, a missionary daughter who grew up in China, and their ensuing large family. At Ruth’s funeral in 2007, Billy assumed it would not be long before he joined his beloved wife in heaven. But at the writing of this review, Billy Graham is alive at 98 years of age.

The life story of Billy Graham, America’s foremost evangelist and also named as a National Treasure, is interesting but so much more than that. How God can use a person dedicated to Him is inspiring and encouraging to readers.

Ceil Carey, CLJ
**ADULT FICTION**

*Land of silence / Tessa Afshar.*
390 p.; 22 cm. Adult Fic Rating: 5

In *Land of Silence*, Tessa Afshar tells the biblical story of the woman with a long-standing issue of blood. Elianna is plagued by guilt all her life because of her young brother’s death while in her care and her life seems to unravel one thread at a time, becoming one exemplified by loss. She loses the affection of her beloved father who finds her at fault for Joseph’s demise, followed by the loss the family business. Finally, she loses Ethan, the only man she has ever loved. And with thirteen years of uncleanness, friends and family are few, leaving her a lonely woman. Readers familiar with her scriptural encounter with Jesus will know of her miraculous healing, but author Afshar fleshes out the story in a beautiful way, giving life and personality to Elianna and her family. The heroine becomes a believer in Christ in a gradual way, beautifully illustrating how one may come to saving faith. And reminiscent of the story of Job, many of her former losses are restored to her. This is a wonderful, inspiring story, highly recommended!

*Ceil Carey, CLJ*

*If I'm found / Terri Blackstock. (If I run; 2)*

259 p.; 22 cm. Adult Fic Rating: 5

*If I'm Found* is the second installment in Terri Blackstock’s *If I Run* series. It is recommended that one first read *If I Run*, as the second title continues the story begun in the first.

Casey Cox is a dangerous fugitive. That’s what everyone in the media and the Shreveport Police Department think, anyway. Despite rescuing a kidnapped girl in Shady Grove, Casey is still on the run from Detectives Keegan and Rollins, who want her for the murder of Brent Pace, one of Casey’s closest friends. In order to find evidence to prove her innocence, Casey has taken on a new identity and is following leads. Soon, she finds herself in a motel room in Dallas, Texas where she finds a Bible with a suicide note tucked inside. Hunting down the Bible’s owner, Casey learns of the man’s fate and ends up establishing a life in Dallas under the name Miranda Henley. When Casey finds herself in the middle of trying to solve the mystery of a little girl’s abuse, Casey again puts herself in danger of being discovered. Is it possible for her to stay hidden in Dallas long enough to find evidence that proves her innocence?

Dylan Roberts has known the Pace family since he was child. After Brent’s murder, Mr. and Mrs. Pace hire Dylan to find Casey. Dylan could have caught Casey in Shady Grove after she saved the kidnapped girl, but he purposefully let her go--because he believes she’s innocent. Dylan has to balance his loyalty to the Paces, his belief that Casey did not murder Brent, and his suspicion of Keegan and Rollins, whom he believes to be dirty cops. Dylan has God to rely on, and he fears that Casey will collapse because she’s trying to survive on her own.

Will Dylan be able to help Casey? Will Casey ever trust Dylan enough to let him in on her life on the run? *If I'm Found* is a riveting continuation of the
plot of *If I Run*. In this installment, the characters are developed further, and the plot deepens to reveal the breadth of the scheme detective Keegan and Rollins have drawn Casey into. *If I’m Found* will leave readers impatiently awaiting the next installment in the series. Will Casey finally prove her innocence?

Dani Seilhamer, CLJ

**Earlier Series Titles Reviewed by CLJ: If I Run** (Jul/Aug/Sep 2016).

Anna's healing / Vannetta Chapman. *(Plain and simple miracles; 1)*


343 p.; 22 cm. Adult

Fic Rating: 5

Joshua's mission / Vannetta Chapman. *(Plain and simple miracles; 2)*


337 p.; 22 cm. Adult

Fic Rating: 5

Sarah's orphans / Vannetta Chapman. *(Plain and simple miracles; 3)*


363 p.; 22 cm. Adult

Fic Rating: 5

The three books in this series could all be stand-alone reads. There is overlap as far as mention of some of the characters but basically the stories are individual.

In *Anna’s Healing*, a tornado rips through Cody’s Creek, Oklahoma and changes Anna Schwartz’s life forever. She is left partially paralyzed in a wheelchair, but it seems that just as she has accepted her situation, Anna is inexplicably and totally healed. Just as she had questions when she was confined to her chair, Anna is now asking why? how? how long will it last? And the notoriety and attention she and her community are receiving are so unwanted, so counter to the teachings of her people, the Amish. Whether one believes in miraculous healings or not, Anna’s healing will cause the reader to consider their beliefs and reflect on this miracle. Was it truly from God or as some wonder, was Anna ever actually paralyzed?

*Joshua’s Mission* is also a story of miracles—but the spiritual ones of forgiveness and healing of relationships and God’s will being revealed. The setting is unusual for Amish fiction: an English town on the Gulf of Texas after a horrific hurricane. Joshua Kline, along with several other Amish young people, go to offer aid to the distressed residents. He takes with him his brother Alton, a young man who does not need another brush with the law. Perhaps assisting those whose lives have been torn apart will change his heart and help him to grow up. Of course, Joshua doesn’t realize how his own heart will be changed, too.

And finally, in *Sarah’s Orphans*, Sarah Yoder is left in charge of her family after her father’s death and her mother’s desertion of her and her siblings. How could she just leave them? They all wonder this but really have little time to ponder as life continues and chores abound. Sarah is exhausted yet when she almost runs over a young Hispanic boy with her buggy, she finds herself in the position of taking into her care two young homeless children. Is this God’s will for her? And what of their new neighbor who seems like a part of the family already? Where does he fit in Sarah’s
heart and her calling?

Three separate stories set among the Amish. Three separate arenas with needs and desires. And in each God works in amazing ways.

Ceil Carey, CLJ

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**Chasing secrets / Lynette Eason. (Elite guardians; 4)**

333 p. ; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 5

Award-winning author Lynette Eason concludes her romantic suspense series about an agency of female bodyguards.

In *Chasing Secrets*, Elite Guardian Haley Callaghan is a survivor of the streets. She channels that into her competence as a bodyguard. All of a sudden, Haley’s life is in danger when a cold case takes her from South Carolina to Ireland. What happens when the bodyguard needs a bodyguard?

Detective Steven Rothwell accompanies her as they chase down the secrets of her past. Steven is intrigued by Haley, but who has time for romance when lives are on the line? Who is preventing her from uncovering the truth with those attempts on their lives? Will they unravel the family secrets before it is too late?

As always, Eason is an excellent storyteller, weaving plot twists along with her development of complex characters. Violence in the story is appropriate but not too graphic. The book grabs the reader’s attention from the very beginning. The clean romance develops at a realistic pace, and faith elements are present but not overpowering. The theme of forgiveness and letting go of bitterness is central to this book. The plot twists will keep the reader guessing until the very end.

Some characters from previous books make an appearance, continuing their storyline. The Elite Guardian series titles are unique in that each cover features a woman carrying a gun. Fans will look forward to her next series with eager anticipation!

Eason’s newest series will interest fans of DiAnn Mills, Dee Henderson, Dani Pettrey, and Irene Hannon. Recommended for adult collections in public libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

**Earlier Series Titles Reviewed by CLJ:** *Always Watching* (Mar/Apr/May/Jun 2016); *Without Warning* (Jul/Aug/Sep 2016), and *Moving Target* (Apr/May/Jun 2017).

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**The devoted : a novel / Suzanne Woods Fisher. (The Bishop’s family; 3)**

Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2016.
330 p. ; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 5

Upon return to Stoney Ridge In this third book of The Bishop’s Family series, Ruthie Stoltzfus, a young Amish woman on the cusp of leaving the Plain way of life, and Patrick Kelly, an Englisher on his own journey, are on a collision course to crash into each other. Ruthie has done all she can to pave the way for her departure but cannot make that final decision to go. Patrick, on the other hand, wants to live Plain and is attempting to learn all he can in a very short time span, especially relishing the time he can spend with
Ruthie who is tutoring him. But there is another element afoot—Ruthie’s ex-boyfriend Luke Schrock who seems to attract trouble at every turn. He wants Ruthie back and is not going to let some Englischer fly-by-night step in and steal his girl.

As this is part of The Bishop’s Family series, the reader will be pleased to again meet up with familiar characters from the first two books, including the Bishop himself, a wonderful, godly man.

The stories of each of these three main characters are woven together beautifully. The reader wonders how the author can bring each of these plot lines to completion in a satisfying way and every time, Fisher accomplishes just this.

Ceil Carey, CLJ

Earlier Series Titles Reviewed by CLJ: The Imposter and The Quieting (Apr/May/Jun 2017).

Then there was you / Kara Isaac.

Place of publication not identified: Bellbird Press, 2017.
335 p.; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4

Kara Isaac returns with another contemporary romance, this one about an American and an Australian.

In Then There Was You, Paige McAllister wants to make a big change in her life. She flies to Australia, leaving behind a dead-end job in Chicago, a deadbeat boyfriend, and a music career she gave up after she was severely injured and her brother died. Struggling with the pain of her past (including her experience in a legalistic megachurch), Paige becomes the logistics planner for an Australian megachurch—the type of church she despises. But the job is only for six months, and will look good on her resume.

Josh Tyler is a member of the church’s world-renowned worship band. Neither of them makes a good first impression to the other. Josh, her boss’s son, is determined not to let this American get under his skin. She manages to disrupt his orderly life, and sparks fly! Having experienced heartache and loss, both close themselves off from being vulnerable with others. When they are thrown together to organize the band’s next tour, will they move beyond their preconceived notions and painful past to take a risk with one another?

Isaac pens another novel with endearing but flawed characters. Readers will empathize with Paige and Josh as they push each other’s buttons. The faith element is present but not overbearing. Then There Was You gives the reader a peek inside the inner workings of a megachurch. Isaac’s novels are lighthearted romances that will have the reader chuckling over the interactions of the main characters, as well as experiencing a range of emotions.

Recommended for adult collections in public libraries and school libraries; it is a clean read for adults.

Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

Annabel Lee : a Coffey & Hill novel / Mike Nappa. (Coffey & Hill; 1)

Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2016.
363 p.; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4

Eleven-year-old Annabel is being kept safe in a
bunker, filled with canned foods and protected by a guard dog with the ability to be most vicious but also be a friend to the girl. Uncle Truck (or Leonard Trucson as he is known to others) put her there for safekeeping with the admonition: don’t open the door for anyone unless they have the secret phrase, not even me. And readers don’t have any idea why. Trudi Coffey and Samuel Hill, divorced detective partners, are searching for Annabel, as are Mute, a trained mercenary, and a host of other players, including the elusive Dr. Smith. Are these friends or foes?

The book’s narrative alternates between Anna and the dog in their forced incarceration and those that are looking for them. It is only at the conclusion of the book that the reader discovers the nefarious reason some are searching for the girl.

Annabel Lee is not a cozy mystery. The book contains a large amount of violence, though not simply for the sake of violence. The story is rather convoluted to begin with until the reader gets the rhythm of it. Most questions are left unanswered until the very end. While there are a few references to Christianity, it is predominantly a tale of mystery, subterfuge and love for a young girl who must be protected from the evil intents on her life at all costs.

Ceil Carey, CLJ

This series is delightful and Where Hope Prevails, the third book, is no exception. The characters are easy to connect with and very likable. Even Mr. Robert Harris Hughes, a type of villain in this story, will have one’s sympathy. This title basically stands alone, but being the third in a series, there are a few things the reader will not fully appreciate without having read the first two books.

When Beth Thatcher returns to her fall teaching job in her well-loved village of Coal Valley, she finds her life changed drastically. Not only does she have a new place to live and many topical changes in the town have occurred due to prosperity, but she finds there is now a second teacher who will share her responsibilities. And when she discovers that Mr. Robert Harris Hughes (yes, he always goes by all three names!) is not a believer, her hackles are raised and she is on the defensive.

Dealing with these changes and her upcoming wedding to Jarrick, Beth is struggling to keep her faith resting in the Lord and His all-knowing control. Her dear friend Molly encourages her, and when faced with a difficult decision, Beth is strong and decisive.

Highly recommended for fiction readers, particularly historical fiction.

Ceil Carey, CLJ

**Over Maya dead body / Sandra Orchard.**  
*Serena Jones mysteries; 3*  
348 p.; 22 cm. Adult  
Fic Rating: 5

Sandra Orchard returns with a final installment in her Serena Jones mystery series, and this is the book her fans have been waiting for!

In *Over Maya Dead Body*, FBI Special Agent Serena Jones is on Martha’s Vineyard to celebrate the engagement of a family friend. Almost immediately she is embroiled in a murder investigation involving smuggling antiquities. In the meantime, her two beaus—Nate Butler and Tanner Calhoun—arrive to support her, keep an eye on her, and win her heart. Whom will she end up with? Will she uncover more of the truth before someone else is harmed? Orchard keeps the reader guessing on both the romance and murder/smuggling fronts.

Orchard uses a light touch in depicting the FBI, and does an excellent job in her character development. Serena is not looking for romance even though she has not one, but two, eligible bachelors: Nate (her building superintendent who is a kindred spirit) and Tanner (her mentor and former FBI partner). This is a mystery romance with plenty of twists—a delightful twist was asking her readers (after the second book) to vote on which suitor would win Serena’s heart!

Overall, the series has a very light romance and humor on the side. The faith element is light, but the series is a good, clean one with red herrings and suspects to delight any mystery lover.

Recommended for school and public libraries, for older teen and adult readers.

*Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com*

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**Earlier Series Titles Reviewed by CLJ:** *A Fool and His Monet* and *Another Day, Another Dali* (Oct/Nov/Dec 2016).

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**The second half : a novel / Lauraine Snelling.**  
350 p.; 21 cm. Adult  
Fic Rating: 5

Life so often changes in just a moment. It could be a phone call informing of a love one’s death or that dreaded summons to the boss’s office or a bad report from the doctor. These startling changes happen to all.

The Sorensons are approaching retirement, hopefully the best years of their life. Then the call comes. Their son Steig is being deployed immediately as a special forces officer in the Army to destinations unknown. Since his wife walked out on him, Steig has had sole custody of their two children. Whom can he call on for help but his parents? Now those grandchildren they had looked forward to spending time with occasionally have become their total responsibility. They would be parenting again, this time grandchildren!

This is the story of their adventure as Ken and Mona care for their grandchildren in their son’s absence—the fears, the joys, what the Lord teaches them as they take on this charge. Although seniors may have a special interest in this subject, *The Second Half* will be enjoyable reading for any adult. Lauraine Snelling writes a wonderful tale with something for all!

*Ceil Carey, CLJ*
A matter of trust / Susan May Warren. (Montana rescue; 3)
Adult
Fic Rating: 5

Susan May Warren returns with another adrenalin-packed adventure/contemporary romance in her Montana Rescue series, featuring rescue professionals living in a close-knit community.

In *A Matter of Trust*, Gage Watson, former snowboarder champion and now a member of the PEAK Rescue team, finds himself struggling to face both his past and his future. Senator Ella Blair, former attorney whose firm handled Gabe’s negligence lawsuit after the death of a snowboarder fan that eventually cost Gabe his sponsorships, follows his brother to Montana. Ella begs his help in rescuing her brother from one of Glacier National Park’s most dangerous peaks. Gage is reluctant to search for her brother when he goes missing because Gage believes Ella betrayed him and destroyed his life. When Ella insists on joining him in the search, Gabe vows to keep her safe, even when the weather turns against them. As they work together to find her reckless brother and his friend, old feelings resurface and emotions run high. What will happen when Ella’s secret is revealed? Will the fragile trust Gage and Ella are rebuilding be strong enough?

Warren excels at creating flawed characters the reader cares about, as well as building a suspenseful adventure. Characters from earlier stories make reappearances, and their stories continue to move along. Warren draws vivid word pictures in her stories, with a faith element that is present but not preachy. Readers will be engaged from the first page until the last.


Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

Earlier Series Titles Reviewed by CLJ: *Wild Montana Skies* (Oct/Nov/Dec 2016), and *Rescue Me* (January/February/March 2017)

A name unknown / Roseanna M. White. (Shadows over England; 1)
432 p. ; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 5

Multi-talented author Roseanna White kicks off a new series set in pre-World War I (Edwardian) England, when loyalties to one’s roots were questioned as tensions between Germany and England increased.

In *A Name Unknown*, orphaned Rosemary Gresham grew up on the streets of London, doing whatever was necessary to survive with other orphans, who became her family. Her skills as a pickpocket and her ability to blend into high society get her recruited for a specific job: discover the true allegiance of Peter Holstein. Pete is the author of adventure novels written under a pen name, and debates changing his official name as others become more suspicious of his loyalties. Is he loyal to Britain or Germany—after all, he has a German last name and has the ear of the king? To prove his loyalty and his family’s innocence, he needs to find a family document for proof, but where in his vastly disorganized library can he find it?

Rosemary shows up unannounced, pretending to be
a librarian and offering to organize his family’s library as well as trace his family history to prove his family’s loyalties. Will she find the evidence she needs to complete her mission? Who is trying to undermine Peter’s relationship with the king? Will Peter find the document in time?

White excels at both character and plot development. Her book is rich in plot twists and historical detail, as well as romance and adventure. The relationships are wholesome, making them “clean reads” for adults and older teens. The next book in the series, A Song Unheard, will be available in 2018.

Highly recommended to public libraries and school libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

**ADULT NONFICTION**

**Jesus’ terrible financial advice: flipping the tables on peace, prosperity, and the pursuit of happiness / John Thornton.**

174 p.; 18 cm. Adult
241.68 Rating: 4

John Thornton, an accountant and college professor, shares a unique perspective on biblical principles of financial stewardship. Thornton and his wife gave up over eighty percent of their income in order to pursue new goals in their lives. They not only did not go bankrupt, but also had two children, went on vacations, and doubled their net worth. Thornton’s initial reason for writing this book was to share the accounting tools combined with a small number of biblical principles that led to their success. However, after an extensive search in the Bible for verses about money, not only did he find over 1,300 passages, but he also discovered counterintuitive teachings on how God wants Christians to view money. He was completely flabbergasted with his unexpected findings. This book is a result of his changing his beliefs regarding God and money, and he shares his views with candor and humor.

Jesus’ Terrible Financial Advice is a thought-provoking book that addresses both practical and hard-to-answer questions about money, such as: Because God and money are competing masters, how can you serve only one? Does Jesus want you to be rich or poor? Is wealth a blessing or a curse? How does wisdom relate to wealth? Is it wrong to save? Why does God want you to give? Can you give too much or give irresponsibly? How do you maximize your eternal net worth? Thornton quotes passages from the Bible, references specific verses, and shares personal stories from his own life. This book will challenge readers to think about their own views toward financial stewardship.

Dianne Woodman, *CLJ*

**Culture: living as citizens of heaven on earth / A.W. Tozer.**

166 p.; 21 cm. Adult (YA)
248.4 Rating: 4

Culture: Living as Citizens of Heaven on Earth is a compilation of excerpts from the writings of self-taught theologian, pastor, and teacher, A. W.
ADULTS’ BOOKS

Tozer. Each chapter addresses some aspect of the role of the church or the individual believer in the world. Throughout this collection, Tozer addresses ways in which the church has distorted truth or lost sight of the importance of Scripture in the context of Christianity in a secular society. Though Tozer lived and wrote over 50 years ago, his insights are relevant and applicable to Christians today.

As evidenced in this collection, Tozer consistently points his readers back to Christ and the constant need to pursue a life of seeking after God and truth. Since this book contains a collection of excerpts rather than one comprehensive writing, some ideas could be more fully developed. However, Tozer is clear and concise stylistically and presents his ideas with a simplicity that lends itself to an ease of understanding.

Elisabeth A. Orr, CLJ

ADVANCED INTEREST

The encyclopedia of Christianity in the United States / edited by George Thomas Kurian and Mark A. Lamport ; foreword by Martin E. Marty.

LCCN 2016033670 ISBN 9781442244313, hardcover, $495.
5 vol.; 29 cm. Adult
277.3 Rating: 4

Reviewing a multi-volume reference work such as the Encyclopedia of Christianity in the United States means examining the introduction(s), the contributor and editor lists, and select articles. Here they are, in turn:

Introductions

The two primary editors, George Thomas Kurian and Mark A. Lamport, have extensive experience in editing such works and show every evidence that they performed their task with professionalism and according to the methods standard for such volumes. They assembled a highly educated crew of editors and contributors.

Their overall introduction to this five-volume encyclopedia gives guidance to its structure and insights into its purpose. Importantly, they write that the contributors were purposefully selected from across the Christian theological spectrum and yet that “this Encyclopedia aims to present Christianity in the United States from a neutral perspective.” (xxviii) As children of particular Christian traditions themselves, however, Kurian and Lamport admit to necessarily using “emic” and “etic” anthropological perspectives—in other words, they are not neutral but are still trying to be. The reference is scholarly but is written by professors with genuine personal connections to the Christian faith.

(The editors also relate that a full 1800 of the 2825 entries are biographies.)

Contributors and Editors

Credentials are given for each contributor, and their qualifications are far from lacking. Few “big names” are listed—exceptions include David Dockery, John Fea, Nathan Finn, Michael A.G. Haykin, H. Wayne House, Timothy Larsen, David Naugle, Ron Sider, A.J. Swoboda, and Kenneth Taylor. Of course, Martin Marty wrote the foreword. The list of contributors has a notable but not overwhelming evangelical flavor.

Among the editorial advisory board are some prominent names as well, including Ken Minkema and Doug Sweeney, both noted as experts in the
work of Jonathan Edwards. Garth Rosell, Kate Bowler, Christopher Evans, and Justo González also appear.

A Sampling of Articles

Sampling articles throughout the volumes led this reviewer to one conclusion: aside from special introductory articles that were intended to be lengthy, the entries are admirably short, as are the bibliographies. “Word of Life,” for example, listed relevant dates and names and provided little in the way of interpretation. “Ladd, George Eldon” did give some interpretation, explaining briefly some of the major contributions Ladd made to 20th century theology. (1306) Michael A. G. Haykin’s article on “Packer, J.I.” is similarly not dry: it uses the “neutral” language of an encyclopedia entry, but anyone who knows the theological back stories will hear Haykin’s “emic” perspective underneath the surface. (1733) An entry on “Parochial Schools” offers—again, with admirable brevity—key history, some interpretation, current statistics, and even a section on “future challenges.” (1744)

A few oddities—topics left out, topics included—will occur in any such large-scale work, but this reviewer thought it odd that Christians for Biblical Equality had an entry (528) while its counterpart the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood did not. The Acts 29 church planting network was included (17), but there was no entry for Bob Jones University, whose story lasts a good deal longer and weaves in and out of American presidential politics and even Supreme Court Decisions.

Mark L. Ward, Jr., CLJ
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