Notable Books for a Global Society - 2017 List of winners
Children’s Literature and Reading Special Interest Group (CL/R SIG) of the International Reading Association

www.clrsig.org

Each year the NBGS Committee chooses 25 winners. These books for all levels (preK-12) reflect diversity in the broadest sense, celebrating a wide variety of voices and topics. Please look for a comprehensive article about these books (published in 2016) plus useful teaching tips in the Spring 2017 issue of The Dragon Lode, free to CL/R SIG members. Join today at clrsig.org, where you can also find NBGS winners.

**BALCONY ON THE MOON**
By Ibtisam Barakat
Farrar, Straus and Giroux/ Macmillan. 240 pp
Young Adult. Memoir.

This memoir traces the life of Barakat under Israeli occupation from 1972-1981. It chronicles the inspirations that created her love for education and writing, her father’s illness and her mother’s decision to further her own education were two. Barakat strongly articulates the tensions of occupation as an ever-present backdrop.

**TALKING LEAVES**
By Joseph Bruchac
GR 4 and Up. Historical Fiction.

Joseph Bruchac tells the story of Sequoya, the creator of the Cherokee syllabary, through the eyes of Sequoya’s son, Jesse. Bruchac weaves details of Cherokee customs, stories, and life while showing how the Cherokee language came to be written, a valuable perspective on Cherokee history and the life of Sequoya.

**FREEDOM OVER ME**
By Ashley Bryan
Atheneum. 56 pp.
GR 4 and Up. Historical Fiction.

Based on a plantation estate auction in 1828, Bryan breathes life into eleven slaves from that record. He recreates their work assignments and imagines their dreams in a narrative poetic format. The book has two portraits for each slave: one embedded with documents in collage-style and the other in their dreams.

**MISSING NIMAMA**
By Melanie Florence. Illus. by François Thisdale
Clockwise Press. 32 pp.

This picture book is based on the stories of the missing indigenous women of Canada and the U.S. Told in alternating voices, the absent mother follows her daughter as she grows, enters school, and becomes a mother herself. Florence’s lyrical, free-verse text and Thisdale’s images portray the emotional journey of children coping.

**THE BONE SPARROW**
By Zana Fraillon
Disney Hyperion. 240 pp.
GR 5 and Up. Contemporary Realistic Fiction.

Nine-year-old Subhi is a member of the Muslim Rohingya people of Burma, was born in a refugee camp in Australia, and has never seen his homeland. The description of the appalling food and living quarters, the enclosed spaces, and the forever-watchful guards create a stark reality of life for Subhi and his family.

**WATCHED: SOMEONE IS ALWAYS WATCHING**
By Marina Budhos
Young Adult. Contemporary Realistic Fiction.

This fast-moving young-adult novel is based on the life of a Bangladeshi Muslim teen named Naeeem in present day USA. Naeeem is unfairly caught shoplifting and then coerced to work with the police to become the eyes and ears for the authorities against his own people.
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**VIETNAM: A HISTORY OF THE WAR**  
By Russell Freedman. 
GR 5 and Up. Nonfiction.  

This history of Vietnam, recounts a people's resourcefulness, courage, and intelligence to defeat conquering powers dating back one thousand years. It chronicles the alliance between the United States and Vietnam during World War II in an effort to defeat Japan and, told from multiple perspectives, the complex events of thirty years of war in the 20th century in the torn, ancient country.

**GARVEY'S CHOICE**  
By Nikki Grimes  
WordSong. 120 pp.  
GR 3-6. Contemporary Realistic Fiction/Verse.  

Award-winning poet Nikki Grimes tells the story of Garvey, a preteen who loves reading, telling jokes, science, and music. Unfortunately, his father worries that Garvey is not interested in sports, and it causes much angst. With time, Garvey is able to connect with his father through his gift.

**ADA'S VIOLIN: THE STORY OF THE RECYCLED ORCHESTRA OF PARAGUAY**  
By Susan Hood. Illus. by Sally Wern Comport  

Instruments made from trash? Favio Chavez changed the lives of children living near the landfill in Paraguay by offering music lessons. With the help of Senor Gomez, garbage was transformed into cellos, flutes, guitars, and violins. This recycled orchestra shares their music and gift of hope with people all over the world.

**THE TREE IN THE COURTYARD**  
By Jeff Gottesfeld. Illus. by Peter McCarty  
Knopf Books for Young Readers. 40 pp.  

This evocative and beautiful picture book tells Anne Frank’s story from the point of view of a Horse Chestnut tree in the courtyard outside the apartment where her family hid. Historical pieces are woven throughout this unique prospective of Anne Frank’s life, showing that through tragic death comes life and powerful memories.

**LOOK UP!**  
By Jung Jin-Ho  
Holiday House. 32 pp.  

Jin-Ho’s unique uses of perspective and color allow readers to search for meaning as they think through each carefully orchestrated page of this book. With very few words, this picture book conveys feelings and emotions about why every person deserves someone to stop and take notice. Look up!

**EVERY FALLING STAR**  
By Sungju Lee  
GR 8 and Up. Memoir.  

Starting with a brief history of Korea, the book reminds audiences that Korea was once a nation without disjunction. A North Korean defector, named Sungju Lee, recalls his survival amidst status changes from a Pyongyang-living privileged citizen in North Korea to a teen beggar (kotjebi) and more.

find Teaching suggestions, web resources, & related materials in the spring 2017 issue of the dragon lode  
www.clrsig.org
I DISSENT: RUTH BADER GINSBURG MAKES HER MARK
By Debbie Levy. Illus. by Elizabeth Baddeley.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg dissented from the limitations placed on girls in school and work, deciding to go to college. In spite of the limitations on women she became a lawyer, professor of law, and judge, fighting for what was fair and just for people who had been silenced, before she was nominated, as the first Jewish woman, to the Supreme Court.

JUANA & LUCAS
By Juana Medina

Juana lives in Bogotá, Columbia, and this story begins with the pronunciation of Juana’s name, “WHO-AH-NAH.” She shares important things to know about Bogotá and somewhat analytical opinions about her friends, school, family, and a trip. Spanish words included throughout the text accent Juana’s childhood in Bogotá.

TOWERS FALLING
By Jewell Parker Rhodes

The night before Deja went to a new school in Brooklyn, she couldn’t sleep. She kept wondering why her family was unexpectedly poor and living in the projects. In class, Deja learns about two towers falling, and feels confused. This new information gives Deja insights into her family’s situation.

THIS LAND IS OUR LAND: A HISTORY OF AMERICA
By Linda Barrett Osborne.

Teeming with sources such as anecdotal accounts, photographs, government policy, records, and popular responses to immigration, Barrett explores multiple perspectives about people coming to America during the past three centuries. Immigrants have varying experiences, some achieving the American dream while others face discrimination and exclusion.

A POEM FOR PETER: THE STORY OF EZRA JACK KEATS AND THE CREATION OF THE SNOWY DAY
By Andrea Davis Pinkney. Illus. by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher.
Viking Books for Young Readers. 60 pp. GR 2 and Up. Biography.

Peter’s playful adventures on a snowy day have delighted children for decades. Now readers can learn how Peter came to be. Through poetic verse, the life of Ezra Jack Keats is shared along with his creation of the first book for children featuring an African American child as a character.

A LONG PITCH HOME
By Natalie Dias Lorenzi
Charlesbridge. 256 pp. GR 4-7. Contemporary Realistic Fiction.

Bilal is a 10-year-old whose family has just fled from Pakistan to the home of their extended family in Virginia. Life in America is very different—baseball instead of cricket, ESL classes instead of the best student in class, and life without his father who is still clearing his name.

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**FREEDOM IN CONGO SQUARE**


Weatherford creates a wonderful poetic account of a little known meeting place for slaves in New Orleans. Slave owners allowed slaves a day of rest on Sunday. They congregated in Congo Square to dance, sing, and participate in an open market. Congo Square offered a small taste of freedom.

**THE SOUND OF ALL THINGS**


Your parents are deaf but you can hear. In this picture book a hearing son describes to his father through sign language all the noise and music that surround them as they enjoy the sights of the amusement park, Coney Island. When the son needs more words he discovers a wealth of language at their library.

**SACHIKO: A NAGASAKI BOMB SURVIVOR’S STORY**


Sachiko, a child of Nagasaki, recounts the day the atomic bomb was dropped. Her perspective on telling a story of survival in a destroyed city, rebuilding a life, and facing the tragedy of her family members dying of radiation sickness, is set against the backdrop of the history of World War II and the rebuilding of Japan.

**ESQUIVEL! SPACE-AGE SOUND ARTIST**


Bloop-Bleep-Bleep-Bloop! Juan Garcia Esquivel tinkered with sound as soon as he could dismantle his family’s player piano. His fascination led to exciting combinations of instruments in unusual tempos with the singing of flamboyant sounds. Juan’s unique style transported listeners to outer space while pushing the boundaries for the future of music.

**SALT TO THE SEA**


This is the mostly unknown story of one of the worst naval tragedies in history, the sinking of the Gustloff. The stories of three young adults escaping war torn Europe help readers understand the complexities and terrors of World War II.

**STILL, THE STONES CALL**


Inspired by the stone artwork of Syrian artist Badr, Ruurs writes a story of a refugee family fleeing from their peaceful village, carrying all they can on their person. The family walks to Europe to be free and is received well in their new land. The artwork is stunning, and speaks a strong second language within this text.

**STEPPING STONES: A REFUGEE FAMILY’S JOURNEY**


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