

Notable Books for a Global Society 2020 List of Winners

Print and share!

Children's Literature and Reading Special Interest Group (CL/R SIG) of
the International Literacy Association (ILA) at www.clrsig.org

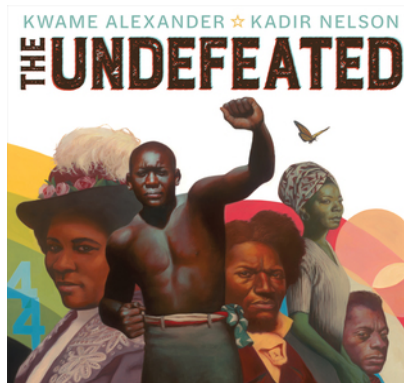
Each year the NBGS Committee selects 25 books as winners. These books, for all levels (preK-12), reflect diversity in the broadest sense, celebrating a variety of voices and topics. Please look for a comprehensive article about these books plus useful teaching tips in the Spring 2020 issue of *The Dragon Lode*, free to CL/R SIG members. Join today at clrsig.org. You can find lists of NBGS winners from previous years on that web site.



With the Fire on High

by Elizabeth Acevedo
Harper Collins/Harper Teen
400 pp. GR 7-10 and Up
Contemporary Fiction

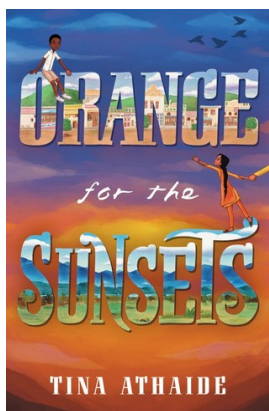
Afro-Latinx teen-mother, Emoni Santiago, works hard to take care of her daughter, her abuela, and her high school studies. She recharges her soul by creating delicious dishes that combine rich flavors from her cultures. Although she considers it impractical, she can't resist her dream of becoming a chef when she graduates.



The Undeclared

By Kwame Alexander
Illus. Kadir Nelson
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
40 pp. GR 2-5 and Up
Poetry

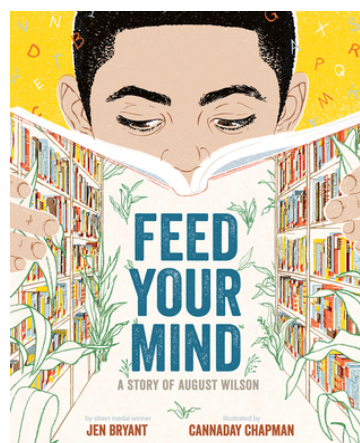
In this beautifully illustrated poetic tribute, famous quotes depict Black Americans who, with persistence overcome obstacles to take their place in a society not willing to accept them. With courage, they rose to the top despite the adversity of slavery, racial injustice, Civil Rights, and challenges leading to Black Lives Matter.



Orange for the Sunsets

By Tina Athaide
Harper Collins/
Katherine Tegen Books
328 pp. GR 4-8 and Up
Historical Fiction

Asha and Yesofu, best friends who have grown up together, face challenges to their shared experiences after Uganda's President Idi Amin's orders all Indians leave the country within ninety days. The people of Entebbe see only differences as Asha, an Indian, grows increasingly fearful and Yesofu, an African is pressured to join Amin's forces.



Feed Your Mind

By Jen Bryant
Illus. Cannaday Chapman
Abrams Books
48 pp. GR 2-5 and Up
Biography

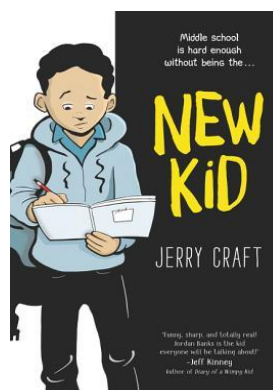
Raised by his mother, who read to him every night, Frederick August Kittel, Jr. had a solid grounding in literature. After enduring racial prejudice from students as well as teachers, he drops out of school but finds new life at the Carnegie Public Library and writes. Later, his plays are performed on Broadway and he wins the Pulitzer Prize.



Martin & Anne

By Nancy Churnin
Illus. Yevgenia Nayberg
Creston Books
32 pp. GR 3-5 and Up
Biography

Although surrounded by hatred and violence growing up on opposite sides of the globe, Martin and Anne shared common dreams for a kinder world. This beautifully illustrated book highlights the parallel lives of these two souls whose words continue to inspire us today.



New Kid

By Jerry Craft
Harper Collins/Harper
249 pp. GR 3 -5 and Up
Graphic Novel

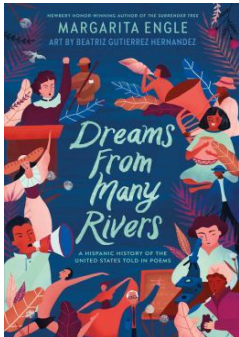
Shrimp lo mein, pepper steak, General Tso's chicken, Jordan Banks' decisions about food pale to overwhelming challenges in being a new kid in middle school. Can he make new friends while keeping old ones? Should he try to fit in as one of the few kids of color? Jordan has to answer these questions (and others) in this coming of age novel.



Planting Stories: The Life of Librarian and Storyteller Pura Belpré

By Anika Aldamuy
Illus. Paola Escobar
Harper Collins/Harper
40 pp. GR 1-5 and Up Biography

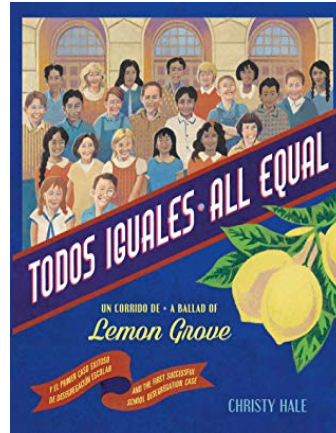
When Pura Belpré became the first Puerto Rican librarian in the New York Public Library, she found no stories of her homeland or in her mother tongue. As she became a beloved storyteller and story writer she planted her bilingual tales “in the hearts and minds of children new to [New York City] who wish to remember *la lengua y los colores* of home.”



Dreams From Many Rivers

By Margarita Engle
Illus. Beatriz Gutierrez Hernandez
Henry Holt/Godwin Books
199 pp. GR 5-7 and Up
Poetry

Hispanic history of the United States starts in Puerto Rico, not Jamestown. Engle's detailed poetry, with Hernandez's ethnically sympathetic illustrations, recounts the history not in textbooks. Voices of Indigenous Taino people and Hispanic and Latino historical figures (designated by a surname) bring the Indigenous and Hispanic culture to life.



Todos Iguales: Un Corrido de Lemon Grove/All Equal: A Ballad of Lemon Grove

By Christy Hale
Lee & Low Books/
Children's Book Press
40 pp. GR 2-5 and Up
Nonfiction

In 1930 a California families in Mexican-American community sent their children to school along with Anglo-American students and they all learned side by side, peacefully, but the school board segregated them. Beautifully illustrated, this book recounts the story of the fight for equal education that Roberto Álvarez and his community undertook.



The Downstairs Girl

By Stacey Lee
Penguin Random House/
G. P. Putnam's Sons
374 pp. GR 6-9 and Up
Historical Fiction

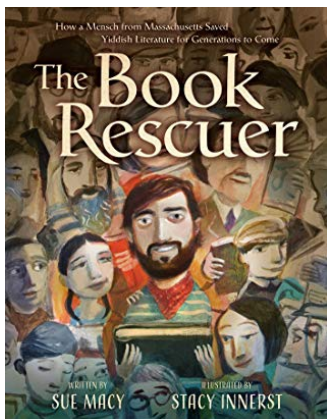
In Atlanta in 1890, at the end of Reconstruction, Chinese-American Jo Kuan serves as personal maid to wealthy Caroline Paine by day. By night she writes a newspaper advice column in the underground abode where she lives with her guardian under the paper's offices. She faces growing racism in the city as she keeps her writing secret.



Paper Son: The Inspiring Story of Tyrus Wong, Immigrant and Artist

By Julie Leung Illus. Chris Sasaki
Penguin Random House/
Schwartz & Wade
40 pp. GR 2-5 and Up
Biography

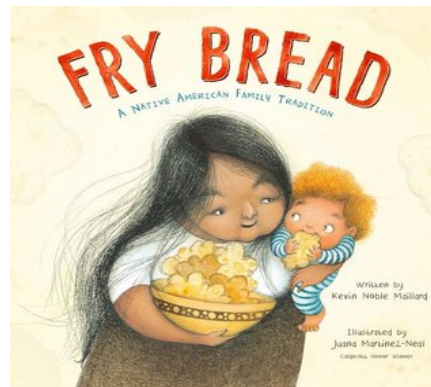
In 1919 Tyrus Wong, boarded the SS China with his father, papers in his hand he must memorize to prove his status as a learned man. Once a citizen of the US, Tyrus work tirelessly to create art that reflected both his homeland, and “Golden Mountain,” demonstrating a life of determination and talent that inspires artists.



The Book Rescuer

By Sue Macy
Illus. Stacy Innerst
Chronicle Books
48 pp. GR 2-5 and Up
Biography

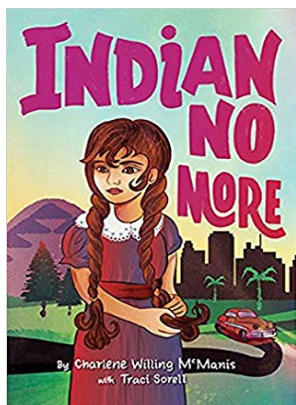
This biography recounts Aaron Lansky's story of passion for literature and interest in the Yiddish language that inspired him to save the worlds Yiddish literature. More than preserving books he aimed to preserve the history and language of Jewish culture.



Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story

By Kevin Noble Maillard
Illus. Juana Martinez-Neal
Roaring Brook Press.
48 pp. GR PreK-4 and Up
Picturebook

A grandmother cooks fry bread with young family members in this exquisite picturebook. The story explains the meaning of the post-colonial food shared by North American Indian cultures with illustrations that highlight the diversity of Indigenous people across America. The Author's Note includes cultural and historical information.



Indian No More

By Charlene Willing McManis
Lee & Low Books/Tu Books
224 pp. GR 4-6 and Up
Historical Fiction

In the 1950s Regina Petit and her family, Umpqua Indians who have lived in Washington for generations, move to Los Angeles as part of the Federal Indian Relocation Program resulting from a law stating tribes of Native people no longer exist and must leave their reservations. The family faces racism and challenges in maintaining their heritage as Regina struggles to define her identity.



Lubna and Pebble

By Wendy Meddour
Illus. Daniel Egenès
Penguin Random House/Penguin/
Dial Books
32 pp. GR K-4 and Up
Picturebook

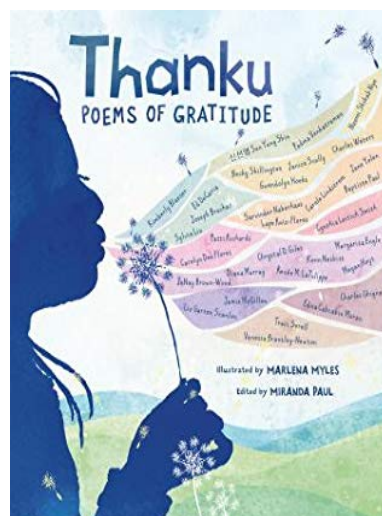
Lubna finds a pebble on the beach before arriving at the World of Tents. She draws a happy face on it and it becomes her friend, listening to her stories of war and smiling when she feels scared. When Amir arrives Lubna makes a difficult choice to offer him comfort.



Under the Broken Sky

By Mariko Nagai
Macmillan/Henry Holt
293 pp. GR 6-8 and Up
Historical Fiction

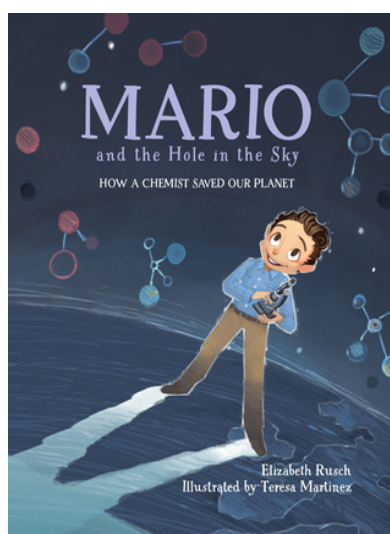
Written in free verse, this novel depicts experiences of two Japanese orphans, left in Manchuria, near the border of the Soviet Union, during World War II. With Japan losing the war and their father recruited into the Japanese army, twelve-year-old Natsu and her little sister flee their home to seek refuge.



Thanku: Poems of Gratitude

By Miranda Paul (Ed.)
Illus. Marlena Miles
Lerner/Milbrook Press
40 pp. GR 1-5 and Up
Poetry

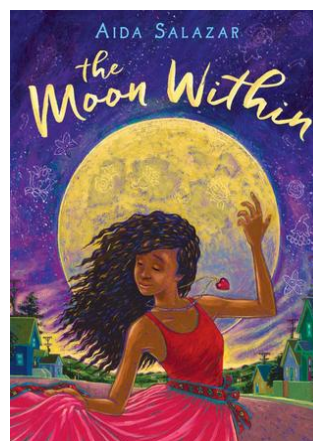
Exquisitely illustrated, this anthology of 32 poems by 32 authors explores the concept of gratitude and expressing gratitude. Back matter includes descriptions of literary devices and poetic form used by each poet. Students will revel in these poems, read and reread them, and be encouraged to write their own poems, for meaningful discussions.



Mario and the Hole in the Sky

By Elizabeth Rusch.
Illus. Teresa Martinez
Charlesbridge
40 pp. GR 1-4 and Up
Biography

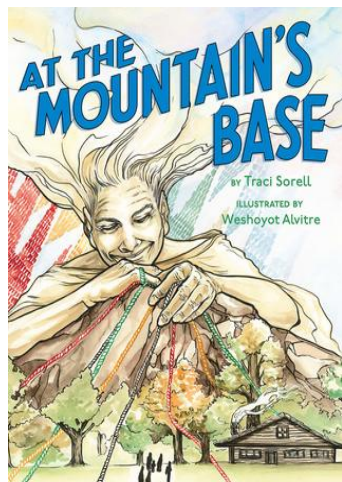
As a boy in Mexico City, Mario was fascinated with chemistry. This biography depicts the work that Mario did as a result of this love of chemistry. In the US Dr. Mario Molina and his fellow chemist Sherwood Rowland worked courageously to head off the depletion of the ozone layer. Dr. Molina's inspiring story gives readers hope in the fight against global warming.



The Moon Within

By Aida Salazar
Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine Books
240 pp. GR 4-7 and Up
Contemporary Fiction

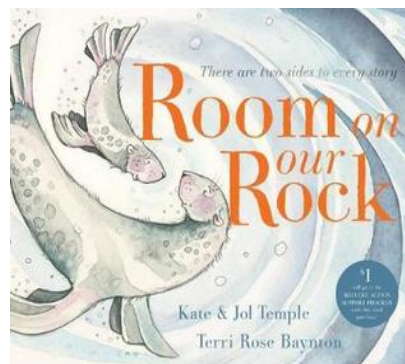
In Salazar's debut verse novel, eleven-year old Celi Rivera explores her coming-of-age struggles, wondering about her developing body, her first crush, and what her best friend's being gender fluid means for her. Her mortification at her mother's desire to celebrate her first period with a traditional Mexico "moon ceremony" is a constant worry.



At the Mountain's Base

By Traci Sorrell
Illus. Weshoyot Alvitre
Penguin Random House/Kokila
32 pp. GR 2-5 and Up
Picturebook

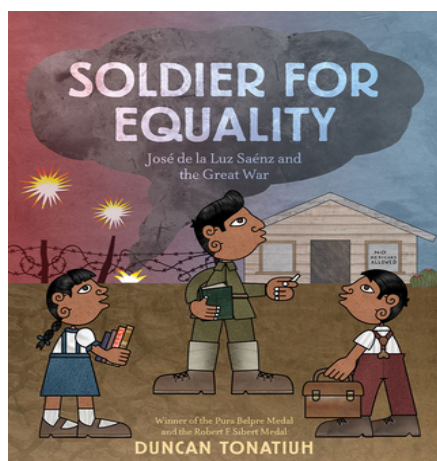
An American Indian woman serving as pilot in the Women's Air Force Service Pilots of World War II occupy thoughts of women in her family who miss her and pray for her safe return. Threads weaving through the bright illustrations show their connections. The author's note describes one of many Indian women who served in the war.



Room on Our Rock

by Kate and Jol Temple
Illus. Terri Rose Baynton
Kane Miller
32 pp. GR PreK-3 and Up
Picturebook

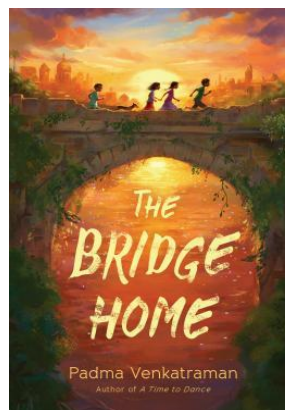
This heartwarming story about sharing what we have and showing compassion for others has two perspectives. When read from front to back, the seals don't share their rock. But when reading the book from back to front, the seals welcome others to their rock. Students and teachers have asked readers to, "Read it again!"



Soldier for Equality: José de la Luz Sáenz and the Great War

By Duncan Tonatiuh
Abrams
GR 2-8 and Up
Biography

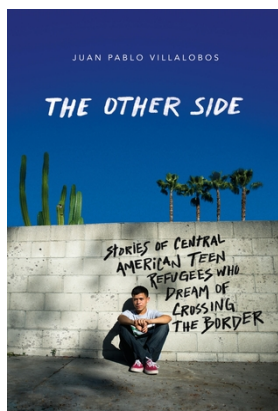
Tonatiuh chronicles the contributions of this teacher and community literacy advocate. Having experienced prejudice and discrimination in Texas and while serving as US Army Intelligence Officer in Europe in World War I, upon his return to Texas and with other veterans after the war, Luz Sáenz created the League of United Latin American Citizens to fight prejudice.



The Bridge Home

By Padma Venkatraman
Penguin Random House/
Nancy Paulsen Books
208 pp. GR 5-7 and Up
Contemporary Fiction.

After seeing her mother continually abused by her father, Viji becomes the object of her father's drunken anger, one night. Before light the next morning, Viji packs her few belongings, and she and her sister join the thousands of India's homeless children, living in Chennai. Their story of survival is both shocking and uplifting.



The Other Side: Stories of Central American Teen Refugees Who Dream of Crossing the Border

By Juan Pablo Villalobos .
MacMillan/Farrar Straus Giroux.
160 pp. GR 6-9 and Up
Nonfiction.

These first-person narratives of children aged 10-17, the result of Villalobos's interviews in Los Angeles and New York, detail harrowing and breathtaking accounts of hope the children experienced in their journeys from life-threatening conditions to safety and new lives in the United States, with glossary and resources in the back matter.



Other Words for Home

by Jasmine Warga
Harper Collins/Balzer & Bray
272 pp. GR 5-8 and Up
Contemporary Fiction

This free-verse novel shares the journey of Jude, a Syrian Muslim girl who, with her mother, flees Syria for the United States, leaving family members behind. In Cincinnati, with a new the label of "Middle Eastern," Jude struggles to find her place in a different culture and language.