

CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEWS

Focus on “lesser-known” award-winning books



Co-edited by Deanna Day and Mary Napoli
Contributions by Lesley Colabucci, Deanna Day, Xenia Hadjioannou,
Tadayuki Suzuki, Dywanna Smith, and Barbara Ward

INTRODUCTION

As educators, we remain committed to providing access to high-quality literature in the hands of our readers. With so many titles published on an annual basis, we often turn to respected voices in the field of children's literature to support our literacy instruction. In this column, we highlight “lesser-known” awards to remind educators that these are valuable books to share with students and to have in our classroom libraries.

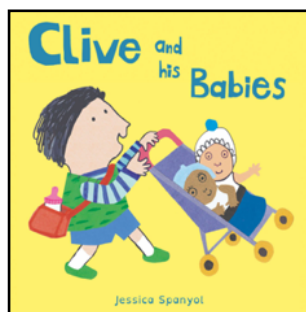
We were also inspired to create Book Bentos for a few titles to facilitate book talks and to think about these books differently. Book Bentos, similar to Jackdaws, contain items that are significant to each title and displayed in a “bento” fashion. These may be a wonderful addition to use in classrooms to spark creativity and authentic responses to literature.

The Amelia Bloomer Book List

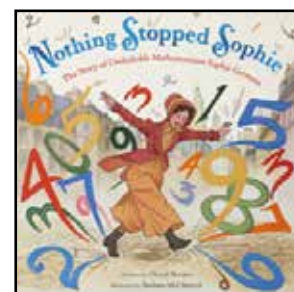
Reviewed by Lesley Colabucci

The Amelia Bloomer Award launched in 2002 and is administered by the Feminist Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association. The committee creates a list of books that feature “significant feminist content” and the top ten books are highlighted in an announcement in January. The question of what feminist content might include is quite open-ended, but some ideas include books that show an awareness of gender-based inequalities with action to change these inequalities and books that show an awareness of the intersections between sexism and other systems of oppression. Visit <http://www.ala.org/awardsgrants/amelia-bloomer-book-list> for more information.

Spanyol, Jessica. (2016).
Clive and his Babies.
Swindon, UK: Child's
Play International Un-
limited.



One interpretation of feminism acknowledges that both men and women can be liberated through the questioning of traditional gender roles. The Bloomer award notes that feminism should focus on “equality of people of all sexes and genders” and seeks books in which “traditional gender roles are challenged or defied.” This simple board book easily meets those standards for feminist content in a children's book. Clive, a young white boy, is shown playing with his dolls along with his friends – both male and female. The cast of characters is diverse, and no one questions that children of different genders can play together or that boys can play with dolls. *Clive and His Babies* is a celebration of the imagination, play, friendship, and the joys of caregiving. The book has a distinctively British feel and the cartoon-style illustrations are playful and appealing. Very young children will be able to navigate this book due to the simplicity of the text and clear illustrations. The book affirms boys who want to play with dolls, defying stereotypes and encouraging nurturing behaviors in all children.



Bardoe, Cheryl. (2018). *Nothing Stopped Sophie*. Ill. by Barbara McClintock. New York, NY: Little Brown and Company.

This picture book biography introduces readers to mathematician Sophie Germain. As a girl growing up in the 18th century France, Sophie was not free to study mathematics. Readers may be familiar with other women who defied expectations and broke barriers, but Sophie's story stands out because of her creative determination and accomplishments. Sophie's personality comes through as the author describes her passion for mathematics, her covert tactics for fair treat-

ment, and her persistence in her study of patterns of vibration. As a Bloomer award winner, *Sophie Never Stopped* stands out because of the honesty with which it presents sexism and highlights the work of an inspirational woman in a STEM field. McClintock's illustrations playfully add energy to the story and help convey details of the setting. The use of marker and collage elements (such as the swirling numbers on the endpapers) keep the book light-hearted and positive. The picture book includes ample back matter with more content as well as a bibliography and author's note.

Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature

Reviewed by Tadayuki Suzuki

Each year this award honors and recognizes individual literary works about the history, tradition, and/or heritage of Asian/Pacific Americans <http://www.apalaweb.org/awards/literature-awards/>. The following five categories are considered in choosing titles: (1) adult fiction, (2) adult nonfiction, (3) children's literature, (4) young adult literature, and (5) picture books at the annual American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting.

Lê, Minh. (2018). *Drawn together*. Illus. by Dan Santat. New York, NY: Disney · Hyperion.

Drawn Together is a dynamically and luminously illustrated picture book written by Minh Lê (2018) and is based on his own personal experience with his Vietnamese grandfather. After school, a young Asian American boy must stay with his grandfather while his mother is at work. The old man and the young boy have little in common. The grandfather speaks only Vietnamese, while the boy speaks only English. When they are hungry, the boy eats a hot dog, but his grandfather



eats ramen noodles. Since they are unable to communicate, each withdraws into his own world, leading to frustrating and awkward silence between them. The boy finally gives up trying to talk with his grandfather and instead takes a piece of paper and draws a picture of himself as a wizard. Suddenly, his grandfather surprises him by getting his calligraphy pens and papers. He starts to draw his own childhood heroes, revealing a world beyond words. For the first time, the boy feels close to his grandfather. Through their shared drawing, these two discover and explore their love for each other through their mutual love of art.



Phi, Bao. (2017). *A Different Pond*. Illus. by Thi Bui. Mankato, MN: Capstone Young Readers.

This poignant Caldecott Honor Book is based on poet Bao Phi's personal experience as an immigrant from Vietnam. When he was a child, his father often took him fishing at a pond near their home in Minnesota. The purpose of these excursions was not recreation, but rather to catch food to put on the family table. When Bao questioned why his father had to go out and catch fish for the family despite having a second job, his father told him that "everything in America costs a lot of money." Their life was obviously not easy. While they were fishing, Bao's father told him stories about another pond in Vietnam where he used to fish with his brother. Both brothers were soldiers in the Vietnam War, but Bao's uncle never returned home. After catching some fish, they returned home so Bao's father could get ready for work. It was Bao's responsibility to take care of his baby brother while his parents were both at work. This story illustrates the gap between the American Dream and the harsh reality that many immigrants encounter when they try to attain it.

Quan, Betty. (2018). *Grandmother's Visit*. Illus. by Carmen Mok. Toronto, Canada: Groundwood Books.

For Grace, Grandmother is a source of wisdom and knowledge, as well as her best friend. Grace cherishes the time that she spends with Grandmother, who teaches her how to measure water for rice while recounting stories of her early days in China. In her pocket, Grandmother always keeps salty and sweet pickled plums, and she shares these with Grace as she talks about her childhood memories. Every morning, Grandmother walks Grace to school and then meets her so they can walk home together. One day, however, Mother makes Father put a hook in Grandmother's bedroom for a house key, so that she could see it when she reached for her jacket. Grace notices



that Grandmother is becoming more forgetful, and she stops cooking rice. Father begins walking Grace to school and back, and he cooks them dinner now. Then one day, Grandmother's bedroom becomes empty, which makes Grace sad. That night, Mother turns on all of the outside lights so that Grandmother's spirit will find her way back to say a final goodbye to them. When Grace re-enters her grandmother's empty bedroom, she discovers a photo album. In one of the pictures, Grandmother is holding a baby girl on her lap. That baby is Grace. Through this story, Quan helps readers face losing a loved one and embrace precious memories forever.

Book Bento for *Grandmother's Visit* (Quan, 2018)



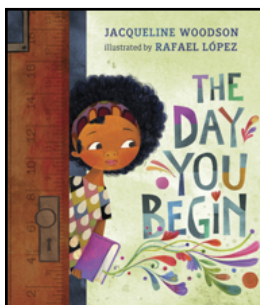
Incense, incense burner, and a candle recall loving memories between Grace and her grandmother. The house key is in the album like a bookmark in Grandmother's empty room. The rice cups and chopsticks remind Grace of the memories her grandmother shared with her when they cooked rice together.

Jane Addams Children's Book Award

Reviewed by Barbara Ward

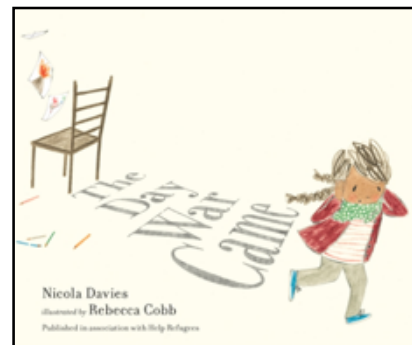
Since 1953, the Jane Addams Peace Association has honored annually children's books with literary and aesthetic excellence that encourage young readers to think about peace, social justice, global community, and equity for all people. The books on the 2019 list represent the sixty-seventh year the Jane Addams Children's Book Award list has been announced. The award-winning books are usually announced in April. Visit <http://www.janeaddamschildrensbookaward.org/> for more information.

Woodson, Jacqueline. (2018). *The Day You Begin*. Illus. Rafael Lopez. New York, NY: Penguin/Random House/Nancy Paulsen Books.



Chosen as the 2019 Books for Younger Children award winner, this picture book highlights situations that will be familiar to many youngsters--feelings of fear or anxiety because of some perceived differences or inadequacies. Perhaps they were teased because of their language or an unfamiliar or hard-to-pronounce

name or stared at because of the unfamiliar foods they eat for lunch or feel less worthy than their classmates because their summer vacation was spent at home rather than in exotic locales. The text suggests that by being open to new experiences, "the world opens itself up a little wider to make some space for you." By taking those first small steps, reaching out, and being brave enough to share parts of our identity, it is possible to find commonalities while also celebrating uniqueness. This picture book would be an excellent title to share on the first day of class to welcome all students, providing a gentle reminder of the cruelty that may come from ignorance or misunderstanding but also the counterpoint of hope that there will be those who will listen and get to know someone whose life experiences have been different from their own.



Davies, Nicola. (2018). *The Day War Came*. Illus. Rebecca Cobb. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press.

The day starts in a very ordinary fashion as a girl and her family share a meal and conversation. But while she is at school, War comes and destroys her home, leaving her alone and homeless. The minimalist text follows her after she arrives home to find nothing, "I can't say the words that tell you about the blackened hole that had been my home" and then must find a way to go on. Haunted by War, she leaves the area, scurrying from place to place, joining others who are walking and riding, trudging across unfamiliar lands and crossing bodies of water in boats, finally landing at a place that might provide sanctuary. All the time, she and her fellow travelers are seeking refuge and trying to keep War at bay. But even when she reaches a classroom, there is no room for her, not even an extra chair. Eventually, a young boy follows her to her hiding place, offering hope and bringing a chair so that she can attend class. Inspired by actual events during the European refugee crisis, this book shows how one simple act of kindness can make all the difference in the world and start someone on the road to healing. An afterword from the author provides additional context. The text is deliberately not specific about the story's setting. Stark pencil, colored pencil, and watercolor illustrations accompany simple but moving lines. For instance, the phrase "up a beach where shoes lay empty in the sand" (unpaged) is accompanied by a series of panels tracing her journey to safety, only to show the young girl covering her mouth in horror as she comes upon tiny

red shoes on the beach and realizes their significance. This picture book prompts empathy for those who have managed to survive violence and enormous losses only to face even more judgment and rejection as they seek sanctuary. This is an Honor Book in the Books for Younger Children category.

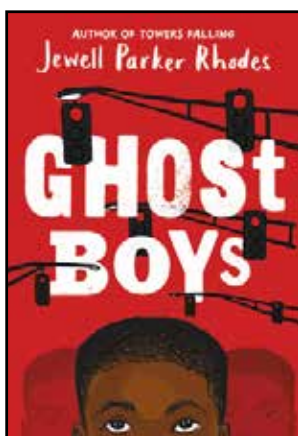
Love, Jessica. (2018). *Julian is a Mermaid*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick.



With lively and incredibly detailed illustrations, created in watercolor, gouache, and ink, this empowering picture book is brimming with messages of acceptance and embracing one's inner self. Even the initial end papers depict women of different shapes

and sizes with wrinkled skin as they swim in an indoor pool. In the water, Julian, accompanied by his abuela, imagines himself as a mermaid. This dream is heightened when he sees what he thinks are three mermaids on the subway ride home. Julian is simply mesmerized by their clothing, hair, and physical stances. These are proud, statuesque mermaids, bedecked with jewels and makeup. Once he and his abuela arrive home, Julian is still caught up in the magic of what he saw and creates his own mermaid costume from the curtains hanging in the window, from ferns, and his grandmother's makeup. When his abuela emerges from her bath and comes upon him in this regalia, her facial expression seems to hint at annoyance at first while Julian's posture goes from proud to almost ashamed. She leaves the room and then returns with a necklace to complete his ensemble and an invitation to venture forth to join the mermaid parade. This is an Honor Book in the Books for Younger Children category.

Rhodes, Jewell Parker. (2018). *Ghost Boys*. New York, NY: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

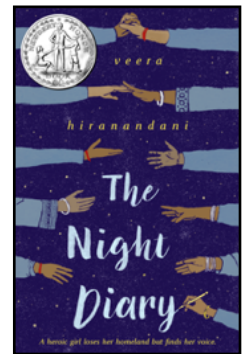


Selected as the Books for Older Children award winner, this carefully crafted story might have been ripped from today's headlines. The author juxtaposes the recent death of Jerome, a 12-year-old Chicago boy, with a murder that occurred more than 50 years before, that of 14-year-old Chicagoan Emmett Till in Money, Mississippi. Gently but unflinchingly, the story moves back and forth in time

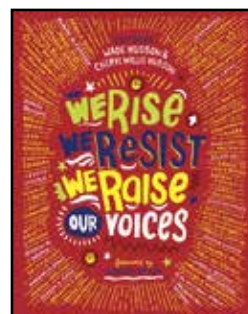
and place as Jerome regards his own body after being shot by a white police officer who felt threatened when he mistook Jerome's toy gun for the real thing. In his supernatural form, Jerome observes the reactions of his community and his family to what they consider to be an unjustified killing, coming to understand the fear that caused his death. He also visits Sarah, the daughter of the police officer who killed him, and meets the ghost of Emmett Till whose murder was also motivated by fear and a lack of understanding. Stories such as Jerome's and Emmett's may leave readers floundering for a solution to the widespread problem of violence and brutality, but this book encourages readers to become agents of change, working to make the world a fairer place for everyone.

Hiranandani, Veera. (2018). *The Night Diary*. New York, NY: Penguin Young Readers/Kokila.

The 1947 division of India into two countries changes the lives of many of its citizens since they are forced to leave their homes due to religious strife. Twelve-year-old Nisha finds solace and a place to express her innermost thoughts in a diary. She writes to her mother who died giving birth to her and her brother Amil. Her father is Hindu, and her mother was Muslim, and their marriage wasn't accepted by either side of the family.



Now, as the country is divided, and tensions escalate into violence, the family must move because they aren't safe living where they are. Because train travel is no longer safe, they must walk to their maternal uncle's house, where they face all sorts of dangers, including threats from other travelers, and extreme heat. After Amil has an accident with part of their water supplies, they almost die in the desert. Nisha's confusion at losing everything that has been familiar to her is palpable throughout her diary. Through her writing, Nisha finds her voice and provides readers with her personal insight into the political events that mean nothing will be the same for her family. There are scenes that will be seared into readers' memories as they ponder the actions taken in the name of religious dogma and intolerance. This is an Honor Book in the Books for Older Children category.



Hudson, Wade, & Hudson, Cheryl Willis (Eds.). (2018). *We Rise, We Resist, We Raise our Voices*. Toronto, ON: Penguin/Random House/Crown Books for Young Readers.

In this inspiring collection of poetry, essays, stories, and letters, 30 well-known children's and YA authors offer suggestions and

encouragement for how to rise past life's challenges, resist what seems to be wrong in the world, and speak out, often drawing from their own life experiences. If adults often feel powerless to change anything, how much more do those who cannot vote yet feel marginalized? Many of the entries are personal, often drawing from their creators' own life experiences. Along with original artwork or photographs to accompany the written offerings, this book encourages and urges the next generation to become activists. This book can easily be shared with a class, perhaps reading one selection at a time and considering what next steps students might want to take to fix what's wrong in their worlds. Taken individually or a whole, the selections will surely inspire and excite youngsters, steering them toward taking positive actions. This is an Honor Book in the Books for Older Children category. Educators may also download a poster and an activity kit with further information to spark student interest at: https://images.randomhouse.com/promo_image/9780525580423_5320.pdf

Mildred L. Batchelder Award and Honor Books

Reviewed by Xenia Hadjoannou

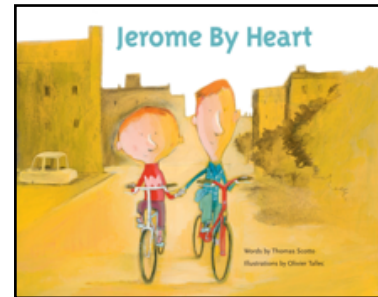
Each year the Mildred L Batchelder Award is presented to a publisher of the year's "most outstanding" children's book translated into English and published in the United States. For more information, visit: <http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/batchelderaward>

Daciūtė, Evelina. (2018). *The Fox on the Swing*. Illus. by Aušra Kiudulaitė, Trans. from Lithuanian by the Translation Bureau. New York: Thames & Hudson.



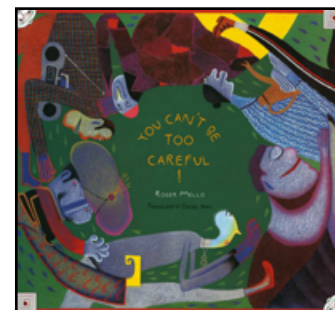
This 2019 Batchelder Award recipient, originally published in Lithuanian in 2016, tells the story of the friendship between a boy and a fox, with equal nods to affect and absurdity. The boy, Paul, lives with his parents in a tall tree, and often walks through the park to bring home three fresh rolls from the bakery. On these trips, Paul often encounters a fox in blue-striped boots and the two become friends who share stories and favorite treats, manage the ups and downs of moods and confusing conversations, and take turns on the swing, yelling out loud the things that make them happy. When Paul's family moves to a bigger city, he struggles, but things get brighter and decidedly more happily "Fox-orange" by the end. Throughout, Kiudulaitė's mixed-media and collage illustrations brace the unusual plot while adding a myriad of surreal touches; some obvious, like

the "Lost" poster for Fox's good mood, and oh-so-many others, like eyes on shelves and plants with personalities, hidden in the details. The written text and illustrations are delightfully quirky and complex, inviting repeated readings. Some readers may find the all-caps lettering, particularly in text-heavy pages, a bit uninviting.



Scotto, Thomas. (2018). *Jerome by Heart*. Illus. by Olivier Tallec, Trans. from French by Claudia Zoe Bedrick and Karin Snelson. Brooklyn, NY: Enchanted Lion Books.

The book begins with a contrast. On the cover, two boys ride their bikes, holding hands and looking straight at the reader with affable smiles. On the very first spread, a wider angle reveals a row of cars with angry occupants behind them. Raphael, the first-person narrator, ignores this negative context, saying instead, "He always holds my hand. It's true. Really tight." As the story continues, this book treats readers to a sensitive, child-centered exploration of the strong, unabashed love two children can share. Jerome and Raphael share snacks and stories, stick up for each other, laugh together until their stomachs hurt, while the expression of this relationship challenges social norms and makes others uncomfortable. Tallec's watercolor and line illustrations sensitively capture both the beauty and joy of togetherness and the gloomy tension of adult awkwardness, as well as Raphael's frustrated response. Scotto's poetic text is equally skillful, avoiding adult framings of the relationship between the two boys. This intention is underscored by a Jacques Prévert quote: "And the passers-by pointed their fingers at them. But the children who love each other aren't there for anyone else."



Mello, Roger. (2017). *You Can't be too Careful!* Trans. from Portuguese by Daniel Hahn. Brooklyn, NY: Elsewhere Editions.

Roger Mello, winner of the 2014 Hans Christian Andersen Illustrator Award, is the creator of this 2018 Batchelder Honor Book. Originally published in Brazil in Portuguese, this circular tale playfully foreshadows its genre through endpapers adorned with groupings of lithe stick figures enclosed in circles. The story begins with a gardener guarding a white rose, not moving from his post because of a cold he caught while looking for his shoes, which were hidden by the cat, which was given to him by his brother. As the yarn of connections unspools, readers are treated to a series of affecting, expressionist illustrations, rendered in colored pencils and torn paper. These are coupled with interconnected, sentence-long stories of a collection of eccentric characters ranging from a monochromatic, disillusioned goldsmith to a fumbling fake doctor, and culminating with the White Rose stealing a much-needed map compass. In a fun twist, the narrator asserts that White Rose could not possibly have been the thief since she is "safely in her pen." As the story respools, effectively undoing every previously narrated event, we end up with a familiar scene in a garden. Only this time the rose is not as closely guarded.

Book Bento for *You Can't be too Careful* (Mello, 2017)

Items represent the interconnected stories that unfold in this circular tale. The rose-adorned scarf represents this circular connectivity across characters and stories. The circle includes a tree and a white rose, an antique envelope with a love letter, and the pin cushion representing the story of the seamstress and her fiancé. The circus poster connects to the story of the performing monkey and the globe to the circus manager. The rose brooch represents the annoying cousin, the screwdriver depicts the sad goldsmith, and the jewelry of Agripino who lost his wealth on the way to Mauritania. Finally, the golden bird represents the shining bird who flew to fetch Agripino in the first half of the story but was kept safely in a cage in the reverse side of the story.



Children's Africana Book Awards (CABA)

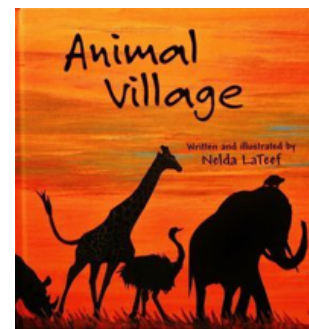
Reviewed by Dywanna E. Smith

The Children's Africana Book Award (CABA) is bestowed annually to authors and illustrators who create the best publication about Africa. Award Winners can be published in the United States or in Africa. CABA is committed to celebrating children's or young adult literature which assist in creating an understanding of Africa, its society and its issues. This award honors literary excellence in three categories (1) young children, (2) older readers and (3) young adult literature. Visit <http://africaaccessreview.org/childrens-africana-book-awards/> for more information.

The Dragon Lodge Volume 38, Number 1, pp 38-45, 2019.

Adeyemi, T. (2018). *Children of Blood and Bone*. Waterville, ME: Thorndike Press.

In the lands of Orisha, two tribes exist: the Maji, whose magic flows within their blood, and the nobles who possess wealth but covet and fear magic. Zélie, grew up watching Reapers summon souls; Tiders control the waves, and Burners make fire ignite and dance. Zélie reveled in her ancestor's magic until one fateful night the magic disappears. The nobles under the ruthless leadership of King Saran ordered the execution of all Maji including Zélie's mother, a powerful Reaper. Although Zélie is no longer a Maji, she is blessed with white hair signifying a Diviner. As she struggles to survive alongside her father and brother, Tzain, Zélie desperately seeks a way to help her family pay the large taxes. Her journey to sell a prized fish for money, reveals a startling truth: magic is not truly dead; Maji exists, but remains hidden. With her unlikely comrade, King Saran's daughter, Amari, Zélie journeys to restore magic to Orisha. To do so, she must learn ancient rituals, harness her powers, all while outrunning King Saran's guards who seek to end her quest and life.



LaTeef, N. (2018). *Animal Village*. Legon-Accra, Ghana: Sub-Saharan.

This vividly colored picture book depicts a peaceful West African animal village, ruled by the Chief Zamboha, the lion. The community lives in peaceful harmony until tragedy strikes: a drought which surpasses the dry season, places the village in peril. A wise king, Zamboha seeks the knowledge and ideas of his village to help end their water crisis. The brave tortoise, Timba, suggests that water might be found by digging. Zamboha is at first skeptical, but trusts Timba, and the villagers begin to dig and dig and dig. Timba encourages her friends by repeating the words, "everything is possible, by and by." As the days turn into weeks, Chief Zamboha watches as his villagers become angry and force Timba

to leave the village. Timba is disheartened by the treatment of her once-friends and quietly leaves the village vowing never to return. As she travels, she stops by a dry riverbed and listens to her heart which tells her to dig once more. Timba digs and digs and digs, this time finding water beneath the dry earth. Although she is hurt, Timba makes the brave decision to return to her village and shares the water. The village rewards Timba's bravery by making her their chief. The mixed medium collage, paint, and ink illustrations add depth and invite the reader into the story to learn from the wisdom of animals. This captivating tale reminds us of the power of determination and a compassionate heart.

**Tomás Rivera Mexican American
Children's Book Award**

Reviewed by Deanna Day

Texas State University College of Education created The Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award in 1995 to honor authors and illustrators who create literature that depicts the Mexican American experience. It is named in honor of Texas State University distinguished alumnus Dr. Tomás Rivera. For more information, visit <https://www.education.txstate.edu/ci/riverabookaward/>



Pérez, Celia C. (2017). *The First Rule of Punk*. New York: Penguin Random House.

María Luisa, or Malú, is not happy about moving to Chicago with her mom. One, she is going to miss her dad who owns a record shop and shares her passion for punk music. Two, she will be gone for two years—all of middle school. Three, she has a difficult time relating to her mom, who is Mexican American, and tries to get her to learn about their culture and act like a señorita. Malú prefers making zines, self-published homemade magazines about her life in a collage fashion. These zines are interspersed between many of the chapters sharing her thoughts and feelings. Malú forms a Mexican American punk rock band at school, which helps

her fit in and meet friends. This tween is a spunky heroine that girls will easily relate to. This is a “must have” novel for every intermediate and middle school classroom library.

Book Bento for *The First Rule of Punk* (Pérez, 2017)



A vinyl record, magazines, glue, scissors, black eyeliner, microphone, coconut, coffee cup, map of the United States and a sprig of cilantro



Bowles, David. (2018). *They Call Me Güero: A Border Kid's Poems*. El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press.

Pale skinned, red-headed, freckled face Güero is a Mexican teenager who writes poetry about lazy Sundays, late night mischief and learning history from his uncle. He is part of the “Bookworm Squad” because he hangs out with friends in the school library where they read and discuss books (p. 29). In this collection, readers will discover 49 poems that discuss what it is like to be a border kid with one foot in America and another in Mexico. He describes his feelings about being stopped by the border patrol at a checkpoint and hearing “Go back, wetbacks! Build that wall!” at a basketball game (p. 83). Music and storytelling have a special place in Güero's family. “Light as feathers” his mom places her fingers on his to help him learn the organ (p. 16). Each week he visits his great-grandmother's home to listen to records that transport them back to the past. Everyone in his family tells stories about screech owls, monster claws or trickster shamans. This beautiful verse novel is an unforgettable and timely story.



González, Xelena. (2017). *All Around Us*. Illus., Adriana M. García. El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press.

“Grandpa says circles are all around us. We just have to look for them,” begins this gorgeous picturebook where the elder is teaching his granddaughter about life, death and all of the milestones in between. A rainbow high in the sky is half a circle. Another circle is gardening and returning the compost to the Earth. Bicycle wheels, irises in our eyes and the sun shining in the sky—showcase circles are everywhere. Later, they both sit under a pecan tree and reminisce about the ancestors who are buried underneath. He explains that their bodies will return to the Earth, but that is only half of the circle. In fact, she is the other half because she brings new life to their family. Garcia created the vibrant illustrations using painting software with circles throughout that look like they have been etched into the paintings. Even the sentences are placed in a circular fashion on every page.

CONTRIBUTORS

Lesley Colabucci is an Associate Professor of Early, Middle, and Exceptional Education at Millersville University. She teaches classes in children’s literature at the graduate and undergraduate level. Her research interests include multicultural children’s literature and responses to literature.

Deanna Day teaches literacy and technology courses for Washington State University, Vancouver. Her research interests include children’s literature, reader response, and digital literacy.

Xenia Hadjoannou is an Associate Professor at the Harrisburg campus of Penn State University, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in literacy education. Her research includes work on language arts methods, classroom discourse, linguistic diversity in education, and children’s literature.

Mary Napoli is an Associate Professor at Penn State Harrisburg where she coordinates the M.Ed. in Literacy Education program and teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in children’s literature and literacy methods.

Dywanna E. Smith is a professor of literacy and middle level education at Claflin University; a Historical Black University located in Orangeburg, South Carolina. As a scholar-educator, Dywanna’s research focuses on two interrelated interests: 1) examining the intersections of race, literacies, and education and 2) equipping teachers with equity pedagogies to successfully teach linguistically and culturally diverse students. She has presented nationally and internationally on these subjects.

Tadayuki Suzuki is an associate professor in the literacy education program at SUNY Cortland in New York, where he teaches both undergraduate and graduate literacy courses. He is interested in the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy, teaching ESL, and multicultural education, especially the use of multicultural literature in literacy instruction. Barbara A. Ward is a passionate reader with a strong conviction that children’s literature enables readers to explore difficult topics. She is an Associate Clinical Professor at Washington State University in Pullman, Washington, where she coordinates the Elementary Education program and teaches children’s literature and literacy methods courses. She taught English in the public schools of New Orleans, Louisiana, for 25 years.