

A Multicultural Literary Magazine

# Skipping Stones

Vol. 29, no. 3  
July - Sept. 2017

Reviews of the 2017  
Multicultural & Nature Books

Asian Celebration Haiku • 2017 Book Awards • Celebrate America

# The 2017 Skipping Stones Honor Awards



Each year, the **Skipping Stones Honor Awards** recognize outstanding multicultural, international, and nature awareness books, and teaching resources. For this 25th year of the awards program, we recommend 25 books and four teaching resources. These books promote an understanding of cultures, cultivate cooperation, and encourage a deeper understanding of the world's diversity. Many of these books also encourage ecological richness, respect for multiple viewpoints, and closer relationships within human societies. The honored titles offer an exciting way to explore and understand diverse cultures, places, societies, and their histories.

We thank the many readers and reviewers who helped us select and review these great reading adventures and learning experiences for readers of all ages.

## Multicultural & International Books



**Animal Talk:** *Mexican Folk Art & Animal Sounds in English and Spanish* by Cynthia Weill; Illustr. Rubí Fuentes and Efraín Broa. Ages 2-5. Cinco Puntos Press.

Did you know that animals that live in the United States don't always speak the same language as animals from Mexico?

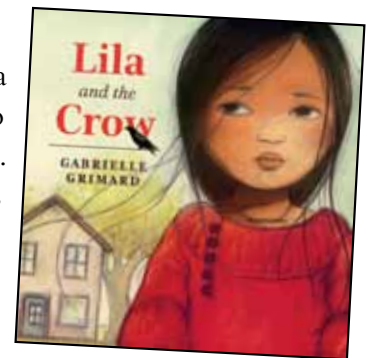
**Animal Talk** features 15 different animals and their sounds in Spanish as well as in English. The rooster, for example, says "cock-a-doodle-doo" but in Mexico, he says "ki-kiri-ki." And, the bees say, "Zum Zum" in Spanish, rather than the "Bzzz Bzzz" that we are so used to here in the United States.

Readers (toddlers and up) will have fun identifying the animals depicted in this board book. The bilingual text on each spread invites young readers to learn the basic concepts of Spanish while it welcomes all readers to an interactive and playful reading experience that would certainly include acting out animal sounds in both English and Spanish.

Vibrant, colorful, and imaginative figures of familiar animals crafted by two Mexican folk artists from the southern state of Oaxaca illustrate every page of **Animal Talk**, a Mexican Folk Art series book by this author.

—Arun N. Toké, editor.

**Lila and the Crow** by Gabrielle Grimard. Ages 5-8. Annick Press.



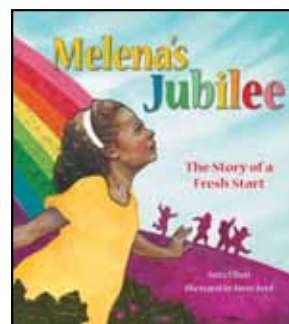
Lila has just moved to a new city and is excited to meet new friends at school. However, a boy in the class has started to mock her for dark hair, dark skin, and dark eyes.

Every day after that, Lila comes to class trying to hide her hair, skin, and eyes. She doesn't have any friends, and sadness takes her hostage. Every afternoon on her way back home, a crow begins to follow her, but Lila shoos it away.

It's the day before autumn festival at their school, when everyone will dress up in costumes. Lila wishes she could have an invisibility cloak so that she could disappear. However, on the way back home, Lila encounters the crow again and a magical event happens that would change her life forever.

Lila's story is about accepting one's unique beauty and accepting differences. It's a story that inspires everyone to think about diversity.

—Pia Pham, college student from Vietnam and our intern.



**Melena's Jubilee:** *The Story of a Fresh Start* by Zetta Elliott; Illustr. Aaron Boyd. Ages 4-10. Tilbury House, Publishers.

Melena is a young African American girl growing up with her loving family that includes her Gramma, mother, and older

brother, Miles. She is trying her best to be *good*.

This snap shot of an ordinary day in Melena's life brings home the concepts of being forgiven and learning to forgive. Read this carefully-crafted story to see how she carries herself throughout her day.

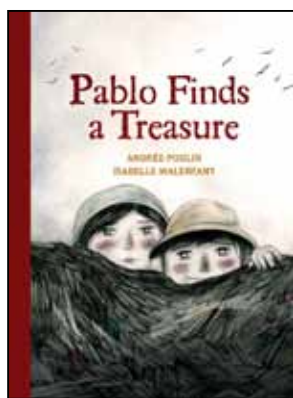
The night rain has washed up her sidewalk chalk art. But instead of complaining about it, she figures she could start over with new drawings. Rather than getting even with Miles, she decides it is best to let it go. For lunch, she asks her Gramma for a garden-fresh meal. At the icecream truck, she decides not to ask Gavin, a neighboring kid, for a repayment on the dollar she had loaned him. Instead, she suggests her four friends who are all there to pool their coins to buy a hot fudge sundae and split it five ways.

Melena has a song in her heart... about being forgiven, about free sunshine, about garden-fresh things, and about a fresh start, every day.

This heart-warming story gently drives home the traditional concept of jubilee. But we need not wait 50 years to do things that can improve ourselves and communities. It can begin today! Every day can be a new beginning!

—Arun N. Toké, editor.

**Pablo Finds a Treasure** by Andrée Poulin; Illustr. Isabelle Malenfant. Ages 6-9. Annick Press.

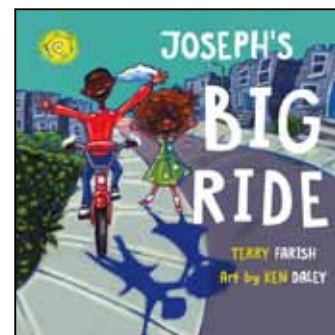


The story begins with Pablo and his older sister, Sofia, searching for valuables on Treasure Mountain. We can observe from the detailed, water-color illustrations done mostly in charcoal grays, black, browns with a few splashes of bright colors that the children live in a shantytown. The children are dirty, uncombed, and poorly dressed. The gasses which come off the garbage heap irritate Sofia's throat and make her cough. As if the children don't have enough trouble to contend with, groups of older boys bully and rob the younger children of their treasure whenever they catch them without any adults around. A treasure is anything that

can be sold to put food on the table. Although the story has a happy ending where Pablo is able to outsmart the bully and keep his treasure safe, the book is more valuable because it brings to light the plight of thousands of *basurero* children who live in extreme poverty and live off the garbage heaps of the wealthier city folks.

—Paulette Ansari, storyteller and grandmother, Oregon.

**Joseph's Big Ride** by Terry Farish. Illustr. Ken Daley. Ages 4-7. Annick Press.



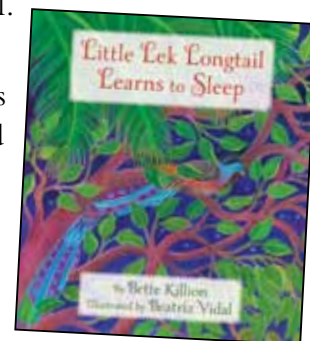
With cartoon art by Ken Daley, Terry Farish tells the tale of an African boy living in a refugee camp in the desert. He dreams of having a bicycle like one of those repaired by his big pal Daau, a master bicycle mechanic. Joseph hangs around helping his friend and learns a great deal about fixing broken bicycles.

Then his family gets accepted for a refugee relocation program and flies to a new home in America. Below his city apartment window, he sees a bike parked. On the first day of school he and his mother are almost run over by a smiling girl racing past on that gorgeous, red bicycle. At school, he and the girl get acquainted. He gives her his drawing of a lion, hoping for a ride. But no such luck.

When she crashes the bike, Joseph steps in with his talent for fixing things. She is amazed when the bike is perfect again. He is bursting with pride at what he's done. NOW at last, Joseph claims the ride he's so long dreamed about.

—Barbara Shaw, educator and world traveler, Oregon.

**Little Lek Longtail Learns to Sleep** by Bette Killion; Illustr. Beatriz Vidal. Ages 4 & up. Wisdom Tales.

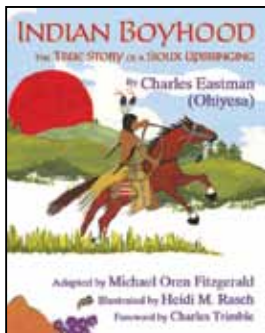


Colorful paintings give this short tale an aura of joy and delight. Based on a mix of legend and fact, the author tells a story that could bring comfort to any child who is frightened of the dark.

Little Lek is an Argus pheasant who hatches in the tropical forest of Southeast Asia. His brilliant and very long tail is magnificent, but he's more interested in discovering all about his home territory, watching other creatures, both gentle and fierce. The dangerous predators worry him so much he can't sleep at night. Crocodiles, tigers, and black panthers would love a pheasant lunch.

When a man and his son come to a crocodile-infested stream, the man tosses in firecrackers. The crocs flee in fear and the people cross safely. Lek sees that if you have a trick to fool them, you can be safe from hunters. To this day, all Argus pheasants spread their long tails over the branch where they sleep. If a hungry beast comes near, their tail is touched first, warning the pheasants in time, so they can easily escape the attack. Lek's fears are behind him now and he sleeps very well.

—Barbara Shaw, educator, Oregon.



**Indian Boyhood:** *The True Story of a Sioux Upbringing* by Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa). Adapted by Michael O. Fitzgerald. Illustr. Heidi Rasch. Ages 4-9. Wisdom Tales.

This colorfully illustrated book is based on a true tale of a Dakota Sioux boy growing up with his friends in the 1860s. Ohiyesa went to boarding school at 15, and took the English name of Charles Eastman. In 1902, as a literate, highly respected physician, he published a book about his early life, free and wild, learning the ancient ways of his prairie people. This book is based on those stories.

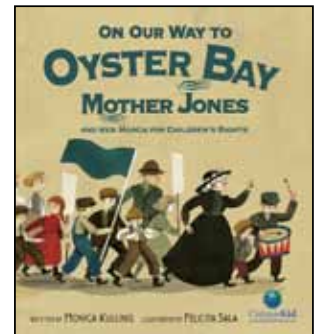
Added to the stories are sections about Ohiyesa's life and the history of his people and their interactions with the settlers who took their land and their customs away from them. He shares his memories of riding, hunting food, and fleeing to Canada. His mother died shortly after his birth, so he was raised by a wise, protective, and clever grandmother. Before he could walk or talk, he communicated with animals and birds who visited his cradle-board hung in a tree while the women gathered plants.

I wanted many more details, much more about

how his people lived, which I suspect would be part of the longer book. Tracking deer, studying bird behavior, hunting buffalo, sledding in winter, stories around the fire, ritual games with a group of pals, adopting wild pets with his pretty cousin, his training in the manly skills...I wished I'd been there too. And then the first American railroad belched its way into that world and everything changed.

—Barbara Shaw, educator, Oregon.

**On Our Way to Oyster Bay:** *Mother Jones and Her March for Children's Rights* by Monica Kulling; Illustr. Felicita Sala. Ages 6-9. Kids Can Press.



**On Our Way to Oyster Bay** is Monica Kulling's fictional account of

a slice of American History in 1903. Aiden and his friend both work twelve hours a day in a cotton mill in Pennsylvania. Aiden wants to go to school and learn to read, but his family needs the money he earns.

Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, an activist demanding an end to child labor, organized a march from Philadelphia to New York City, a distance of one hundred miles. When she visited their town, Mother Jones persuaded Aiden and Gussie's moms to allow them to join the march along with two hundred adults and dozens of children. In cities along the route, Mother Jones gave speeches at rallies, which were covered in local newspapers.

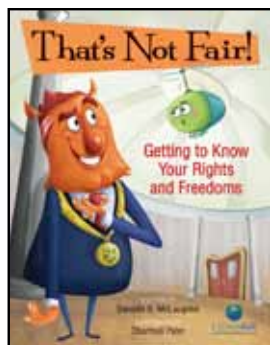
The march was long and difficult; many people dropped out along the way. After a little over two weeks the remaining marchers arrived in New York City. When the mayor would not allow either the parade through New York City streets or the speech at Madison Square Garden Mother Jones wanted, she held an informal rally in the streets, which drew one thousand people.

After treating the group to a day at Coney Island, Mother Jones led the group the remaining thirty-five miles to Oyster Bay on Long Island where President Theodore Roosevelt had his summer home. Though President Roosevelt refused to see them, Mother Jones

was satisfied. Her protest march had brought the issue of child labor to the awareness of the nation. Within a few years laws against child labor were passed in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York.

Information at the back of the book details child labor problems still existing in the world today, and lists websites for further information. This book brings to life the time in our country when child labor was the norm.

—Yvonne Young, retired elementary teacher, storyteller.



**That's Not Fair!** *Getting to Know Your Rights and Freedoms* by Danielle S. McLaughlin; Illustr. Dharmali Patel. Ages 7-11. Kids Can Press.

This collection of six stories about a diverse democratic city and its governing body encourages some important discussions that we need to have with children about freedoms and rights and accepting the differences of others.

In each chapter, a story begins with a new problem facing the city's citizens and councilors. Once identified, a vote is taken on a proposed law to solve the problem, but the real lessons arrive when the implementation of the laws bring unintended and unfair consequences.

For example, in the first chapter, Mayor Moe notices the chaos and untidiness in the council chambers. To solve this, he decides to make a law that forces councilors to wear a uniform without hats that would enforce good behavior. Unfortunately, he does not take into account of members like Councilor Cuddly and Councilor Twist, whose religions require them to cover their heads. Councilor Bug tells the mayor that the law isn't fair. The councilors then return inside city hall and figure out how to make the law fair.

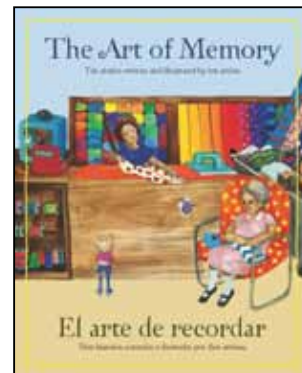
Each story ends with a reflection and questions for parents and their children to talk about together. These questions offer an opportunity to have healthy discussion and solidify the clarity on the message from each story. Alongside comical illustrations, each page is just

as entertaining as the topic at hand, with a variety of fur colors, body types, and broad range of expressions on the characters to look at. An interactive, kid-friendly book.

—Elizabeth Ponce-Del Valle, college student intern.

**The Art of Memory: Ten Stories Written and Illustrated by Ten Artists/El arte de recordar: Diez historias contadas e ilustradas por diez artistas.** Ages 6-10. Lectura Books.

Lectura Books publisher Katherine Del Monte asked ten different artists to recall and illustrate a childhood memory. The story of each memory is written in both English and Spanish. There is a wonderful variety of memories and artistic styles.



Included among them are stories of moving to a new city, imaginary friends, a special day with a parent, a trip with family, a playhouse built by a grandpa, etc. These stories reawaken memories in everyone who reads or hears them.

I recommend reading these stories aloud in a classroom. This will stimulate students to recall their own special childhood memories for telling, writing, and illustrating.

—Yvonne Young, retired elementary teacher, storyteller

**Save Me A Seat** by Sarah Weeks and Gita Varadarajan. Ages 8-12. Scholastic Press.

Ravi (rahVEE) Suryanarayanan's first day in Mrs. Beam's 5th grade class does not go well. Ravi is Indian originally from Bangalore, India. When his father comes to Hamilton, New Jersey his entire family moved with him.

English and math are two of Ravi's best subjects. Because of his accent when Ravi speaks the class laughs and Mrs. Beam has trouble understanding his words. Ravi is short for a fifth grader but he was a trophy winning cricket player at his last school.



Dillon Samreen, the class bully is a second generation Indian American. Ravi's grandmother doesn't have much respect for Indian people born in America because they take up too many foreign habits. Ravi is very intelligent but new to the dynamics of the classroom. He assumes because Dillon smiles and winks at him a couple of times that he wants to be Ravi's friend. Nothing could be further from the truth. Dillon does several really mean things to Ravi at the same time casting suspicion in Ravi's mind on another boy in the classroom. If you want to learn how Ravi finally realizes who his real friend is, and the most important lesson of all being that you never judge a person with your eyes only, then read this story.

Information on the Indian culture (about certain foods) is also included in the book. Ravi's family is vegetarian and his mother and grandmother usually wear sarees. There are several glossaries and recipes at the end of the book for a better understanding of Indian words and cultures.

—Paulette Ansari, storyteller and grandmother, Oregon.

**The Hero Two Doors Down:** *Based on the True Story of Friendship between a Boy and a Baseball Legend* by Sharon Robinson. Ages 8-12. Scholastic Press.



Nothing is more important to eight-year-old Stephen Satlow than the Brooklyn Dodgers. He loves discussing the sport pages over breakfast each morning with his father. He even tries to keep all the players' names straight in his head. Then his family and the entire neighborhood begin to hear rumors that the house two doors down has been rented

by one of the Brooklyn Dodgers players and his family. Steve begins to hope it's Jackie Robinson.

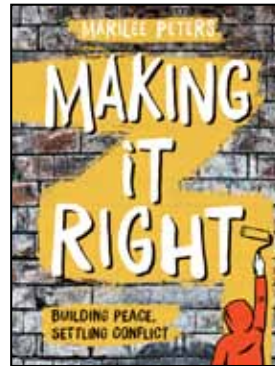
The events depicted happen in 1948. Some of the neighbors think only Jews should live in the neighborhood. But Steve and his family don't feel this way. It seems like a lifetime passes between learning that Jackie Robinson is moving practically next door and Stephen's actually meeting him face-to-face. The reader

is made to feel every anxious moment along with Stephen. For weeks Steve practices what he'd say when he meets Jackie for the first time. But when the time actually comes all he could do is nod his head, smile, and whisper, 'Thank-you.'

This is much more than a coming-of-age story or a Jackie Robinson story. The story, told by Jackie's daughter Sharon, is about how two very different families become very close friends and in doing so change an entire neighborhood.

—Paulette Ansari, storyteller and grandmother, Oregon.

**Making It Right:** *Building Peace, Settling Conflict* by Marilee Peters. Ages 12 and up. Annick Press.



The traditional criminal justice system can be quite a messy process, with many tax dollars going to maintain more and more prisoners. But what if there was a different and more efficient way to achieve justice? Marilee Peters explores the idea of restorative justice in her book, **Making it Right:**

*Building Peace, Settling Conflict*, through her use of fictional stories about communities that worked together to solve conflict in their area, as well as true stories of youth taking steps to build a better society.

Most importantly, the book addresses the fact that putting people in prison is not always the best solution to help them become better people. By using a restorative justice system, those who commit crimes will be given a chance to revive themselves and strengthen their communities. We read in the book about a Brazilian man who organized meetings in the poverty stricken areas of victims. These meetings included the victims, the offenders, the family members, and all types of people from the community. The goal was to settle their conflicts by talking things out and discussing each person's feelings about the situation at hand. Methods like this have a higher guarantee of a safer community compared to locking people up in prison.

The book's aesthetic is appealing to readers, with intricate doodles and bold, colorful fonts, so it's definitely not a boring read. It is a great guide to solving

conflicts for all ages, especially youth looking to be more actively involved in their communities.

—Aiyanna Baker, high school student intern, Oregon.

**Balcony on the Moon:** *Coming of Age in Palestine* by Ibtisam Barakat. Ages 12-18. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.



**Balcony on the Moon** is Ibtisam Barakat's sequel to her first memoir, **Tasting the Sky** (a 2008 *Skipping Stones* Honor Award winner). While her first memoir covered Barakat's childhood living in Palestine, **Balcony on the Moon** captures her teenage and adolescent years and the coming of age journey as a Palestinian living

under an Israeli control.

A feminist at birth, Barakat is determined to not let the traditional ways of her oppressed society get in the way of achieving success. With all the turmoil going on in her country, the positive spirit of Barakat helps conquer that. Each chapter of the book is based on the location of her family at the time. Not only does the memoir follow Barakat herself, but her family members and their determinations. For example, her father continues to work hard despite having narcolepsy, and her mother decides to attend and finish high school at the same time as her daughter. She is also desperate to be her own person. Internal and external conflict arises which keeps readers on their feet.

This memoir is truly inspiring, a great read for young adults, especially women who want to feel empowered and understand the strength it takes to be a successful woman in any society. Although **Balcony on the Moon** is about author's personal experiences, it also contains a good deal of historical context, so it is easy to understand what has been happening to her people, and to follow along.

—Aiyanna Baker, high school student intern, Oregon.

**Passenger on the Pearl:** *The True Story of Emily Edmonson's Flight from Slavery* by Winifred Conkling. Ages 12-15. Algonquin Young Readers.

Emily Edmonson's documented flight from slavery

in 1848 is a true story as exciting as fiction. The many fascinating historic sidebars offer the information a reader needs to sense the context for the action, and to really understand what was going on in our heroine's world at that time. Any teen or adult still unsure what slavery was really like in America will see the full extent of the human damage as she or he gets to know Emily and her family, and will have a truer understanding of that chapter of our history.



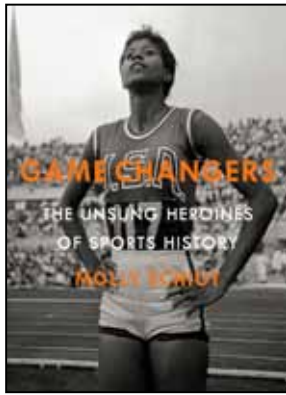
The attempt to gain freedom drives several of the Edmunson brothers to sign on to a small ship, to meet them at a wharf on the Potomac River, flowing past the nation's capital. They ask their teenage sisters, Emily and Mary, to come along. They all take this huge risk to be free, knowing punishment will be cruel if they don't make it. While they hide below deck, all seems to be going well for the terrified escapees. Then a big storm hits. The captains hide the ship in a tranquil cove but are discovered. Then the real action begins.

As the story unfolds, we visit the slave markets in New Orleans and in the north, see slaves imprisoned for running away, marched in chains, beaten sometimes to death for defiance, and ripped from their families to be sold to harsh masters. We also begin to appreciate the violent anger of those who feared losing their unpaid laborers who did all the hard work. And we see the vehemence of the abolitionists who believed slavery was a sin against the creator and the constitution, and how hard they worked to save Emily and Mary, and to change the system. It's a book brimming with emotion and hard facts with an ending that is relatively happy, even though we know slavery continued and that unfair treatment of African Americans has not yet ended.

—Barbara Shaw, grandmother and world traveler, Oregon.

**Game Changers:** *The Unsung Heroines of Sports History* by Molly Schiot. Ages 11+. Simon & Schuster.

With all the progress the United States has been making toward social equity, it's hard to imagine it was like to be a woman before title IX, the law that



made it possible for women to have equal opportunity in all educational programs. Prior to title IX, women were still accomplishing and succeeding, but without the recognition they deserved.

**Game Changers** by Ms. Schiot gives these women a chance to be applauded and

appreciated by covering these inspirational stories of women who started from the bottom to make a difference in themselves and the world. Today, we may worship women like Serena Williams and Simone Biles, but what about the women who came before them, and made it possible for future goal setters to succeed? *Game Changers* pays tribute to these women in each of its sections. Women mentioned include Cari Champion, Betty Robinson, and Abby Wambach.

If you're looking to feel empowered, this book is a must read. Flip the page and you will be drawn into a new story each time of a woman who has worked their entire life to make a difference. This book should give its readers a newfound sense of appreciation for the women of the past and present, and how they have shaped the sports industry for the better.

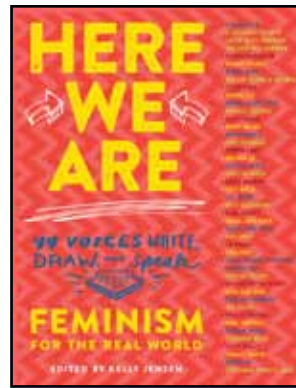
—Aiyanna Baker, high school student intern.

**Here We Are: Feminism for the Real World.** Edited by Kelly Jensen. Ages 14+. Algonquin Young Readers.

**Here We Are** is an excellent resource on feminism. Author and editor Kelly Jensen offers us this great collection of essays, lists, poems, songs, comics, and illustrations by real world people—a diverse group of authors, artists, activists, musicians, and public figures. We get to know in depth what feminism is and what it means to be a feminist. The contributors share diverse perspectives—not just generalized, dry statements, but personal

### Skipping Stones Multicultural Magazine

In addition to the annual book awards, each issue of *Skipping Stones* magazine also recommends about a dozen multicultural and nature awareness books for all ages.



experiences and testimonies.

Organized in seven chapters titled: Starting the Journey, Body and Mind, Gender, Sex, and Sexuality, Culture and Pop Culture, Relationships, Confidence and Ambition, and lastly, Go Your Own Way, this 220-page book is for both the

curious ones and for those who have taken solid steps on this life-long journey. It is a guidebook to help us understand that feminists come in all shapes, sizes, forms, and backgrounds. And what unites them all? Equality for all!

Feminism is about embracing differences and diversity; it is about listening as much as about critical thinking, understanding the humanity of each human being and about speaking up and committing to thoughtful actions to make changes in our world, both on the personal and societal levels.

The book covers just about everything: body positivity, romance, gender identity, intersectionality, friendships, and much more. The fact that these 44 contributors come from diverse backgrounds, including many racial and national origins, speaks to the truth of the matter—we can learn from each other, no matter who we are or what our race, religion, sex, gender, or sexual preferences are.

As we read this insightful collection, we expand our horizons and our perspectives. We realize that there are multiple ways to work on the issues that we face as a society. Our methods and approaches might differ, but the goal of equality and human rights for all will remain steadfast.

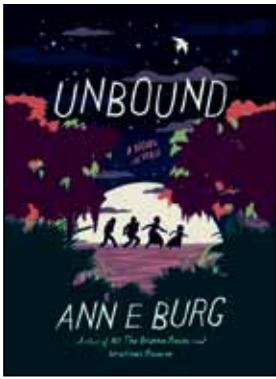
“Every step, the loud ones and the quiet ones, creates impact. My voice and your voice carry weight. We bring our own unique magic to the world, as long as we use those voices. Own that magic and sprinkle it with passion,” writes Kelly Jensen in her closing essay.

Having read this well-crafted book, a chapter or two at a time, I recommend it highly.

—Arun N. Toké, editor.



## Nature and Ecology Books



**Unbound: A Novel in Verse** by Ann E. Burg. Ages 11-15. Scholastic Press.

The day comes when Grace is called from the slave cabins to work in the Big House where the slave owner lives. Mama makes her promise to keep her eyes down and not look their masters in the eye. Uncle Jim warns her to keep her thoughts tucked in her mind where no one can hear, or they could bring a whole lot of pain and trouble. Grace doesn't want to be away from her family.

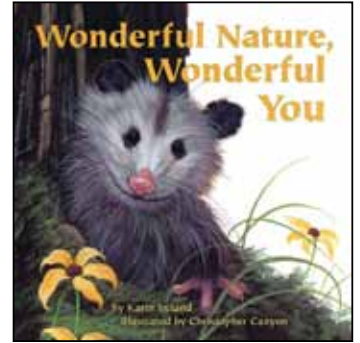
But the more Grace sees of how heartless her Master is, and how hatefully the Missus behaves, the bigger a small voice of righteousness in her mind grows. It wonders why white folks can own slaves, sell them in auctions, and separate families forever. That voice in her head grows until Grace can't keep it from escaping her mouth. A terrible chain of events proves Uncle Jim's advice true, and suddenly, Grace and her family must flee deep into the woods amongst deadly animals, slave patrollers, and the uncertainty of ever achieving freedom.

Ann E. Burg's poetic novel exposes a harsh chapter of American history through this remarkable story of runaways who sought safety in the wild swamp, resonating with the powerful message that every human being has the right to be free.

—Elizabeth Ponce-Del Valle, student intern.

**Wonderful Nature, Wonderful You** by Karin Ireland; Illustr. Christopher Canyon. Ages 5-9. Dawn Publications.

**Wonderful Nature, Wonderful You** juxtaposes information about nature and animals and beautiful, realistic nature pictures with short succinct offerings of advice for children ages 5 to 9.



Further information about each animal discussed is given in the back of the book along with activity suggestions for teachers and parents. And, as with other Dawn Publications, a website with additional resources is available.

The premise of this book is that both children and nature are wonderful just the way they are. Among the inspirational suggestions for life are looking for the good in changes, always doing one's best, asking for help when it is needed, and understanding that when something or someone dies, it continues to live in our hearts and memory.

Reading and discussing this book either at home or in a classroom will increase children's knowledge and appreciation of nature and enhance their self-esteem.

—Yvonne Young, retired elementary teacher, storyteller.

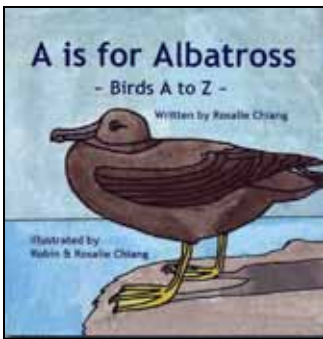
**A is for Albatross: Birds A to Z** by Rosalie Chiang; Illustr. Robin & Rosalie Chiang. Ages 4-9. Available on Amazon.com.

An alphabet book for bird fans, this book by ten-year-old Rosalie Chiang and her father Robin, is simply illustrated. Each bird is described with a clever four lines of verse by Miss Chiang. Then we read a paragraph about the unique behavior or habits of the species.

Some of these birds are common enough to appear in your nearby park, while to see the shy Xenops, you'd have to hike into a dense Central American jungle and search for it creeping around the branches of trees in search of tasty insects that hide in the bark. How did the writer ever find a bird for every letter? Q was easy. The California Quail looks like a tiny chicken with

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a tall topknot feather. Small flocks of quick running quail are commonly seen along the west coast of North America by anyone hiking in sunny places with lots of brush.

The book is filled with bits of truth about wonderful creatures, from the hummingbird that weighs less than a pencil, to the fast running ostrich taller than a man. The albatross lives 50 years, most of it riding the sea winds far from land. The roadrunner, famous in cartoons, really is a champion runner as fast as an Olympic sprinter as it chases down lizards in the desert. For kids and their grown ups, this is a fun read that introduces some fascinating fine feathered friends.

—Barbara Shaw, educator, Oregon.

**Tortuga Squad: Kids Saving Sea Turtles in Costa Rica** by Cathleen Burnham. Ages 7-12. Crickhollow Books.

In Costa Rica today it is illegal to kill a sea turtle because they are an endangered species. Poachers still kill animals mainly because the people are poor and have always eaten turtle meat. But with the encouragement of conservationists, and, of course, when the people see how hard their children work to save and protect the turtles, attitudes have changed on the island of Parismina, Costa Rica. The Tortuga Squad is a group of village children (one as young as six-years-old) who takes turns guarding the beach after sundown and just before sunrise. This is when the mama turtles come out of the sea to lay their eggs. Little Bianca watches as a poacher flips the mama turtle over on her back then quickly fills a plastic bag with turtle eggs and takes off. Bianca knows she must run and wake the other squad members before the man returns for the mama turtle. The mama turtle weighs hundreds of pounds and it will take all of them using sticks to flip her back over so she can escape back into the sea.

This book has beautiful photographic colors. The island is in different shades of lush greens, the beach is slate grey, and the children are dressed in bright reds, blues, and greens. The photographs show the villagers going about their everyday business, and there are pictures and information about other endangered animals



on the island. The final pictures show the children releasing the baby turtles on the beach protecting them from birds, dogs, and crabs as they make their way to the sea.

—Paulette Ansari, storyteller and grandmother, Oregon.

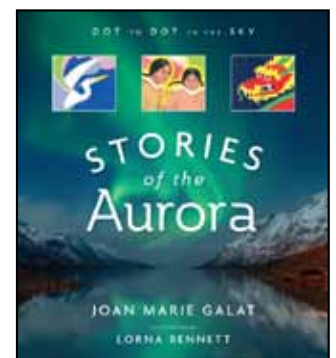
**Stories of the Aurora** by Joan Marie Galat; Illustr. Lorna Bennett. Ages 9-13. Whitecap Books.

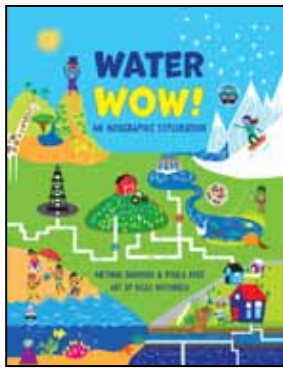
Both entertaining and educational, this book begins with a description of the mysterious and eerie lights that sometimes undulate across the night sky near the earth's magnetic poles. Though our ancestors all had mythic explanations for the aurora, science can help us understand how a magnetic storm on the sun blows off plasma particles that race outwards and, a few days later, interact with the magnetic field of our planet. When the particles collide with oxygen or other elements in the high atmosphere, the molecules release light.

In this book, beautiful illustrations accompany folklore about the aurora from many different cultures. Earlier civilizations believed that events in the sky were generated by the spirit world and had an immediate effect on human affairs. For some, ancestor spirits or the souls of dead soldiers were appearing, while for others the lovely glowing curtains marked the birth of a child. In ancient China, the awesome sky show predicted significant events.

The northern peoples all had stories to explain the lights. We learn that the Sammi, or Lapps, the Norse, or Vikings, and the many tribes of the Arctic and Canadian north—all had colorful stories, legends, and superstitions. We discover the longest and best tales from the Norse, the Greeks, and from the Algonquin, Micmac, and Inuit tribes of North America. The final chapter is on how and when you can look for auroras.

—Barbara Shaw, educator, Oregon.





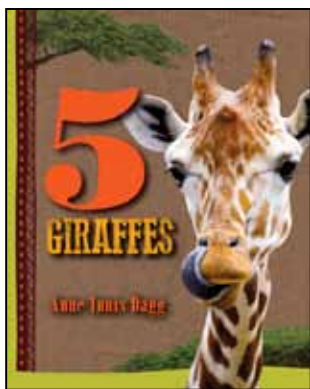
**Water Wow!** *An Infographic Exploration* by Antonia Banyard and Paula Ayer; Illustr. Belle Wuthrich. Ages 9-12. Annick Press.

This colorful infographic takes on the many surprising and interesting facts about water. Where did water come before it landed on Earth? Why is the water we drink the same water that was around when dinosaurs were alive? If water can't be created or destroyed, how can we run out of it? You can find out the answers to these and many other questions in this book, vibrantly designed to appeal to visual learners.

You can discover why water is so important to different religious faiths and about incredible lakes and rivers around the world, as well as the surprising connection between water access and education worldwide, climate change's impact, and more...including what we can do about it.

Each page of this book is filled with colorful illustrations and easy to understand diagrams which make it a fun introduction to the importance of water in our lives.

—Elizabeth Ponce-Del Valle, college student intern.



**5 Giraffes** by Anne Innis Dagg. Ages 9-12. Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

Any one who is interested in giraffes and wants to know what kind of efforts are being made to prevent their extinction, would greatly appreciate this book. Readers will learn about giraffes' eating habits and how they care for their young, as well as interesting facts about why their tongues are blackish blue, and why they have four stomachs. Readers will enjoy learning about the evolution of giraffes and the care that goes into keeping captive giraffes healthy. Above all, the book will teach you how to become a giraffe supporter and spread the word about giraffes to others. Author

Anne Innis Dagg has studied giraffes in Africa for many decades, and I hope you enjoy this book for animal lovers as much as I did.

—Nancy Glubka, mom and soon-to-be-grandmother.

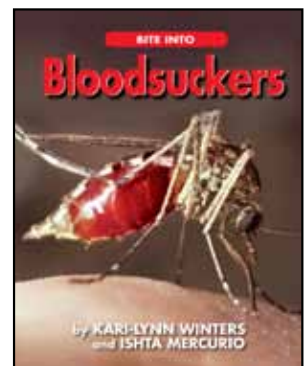
**Bite into Bloodsuckers** by Kari-Lynn Winters and Ishta Mercurio. Ages 7-12. Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

This is the sort of book that divides readers: either you love it or are disgusted simply because of its subject matter. For those who are fascinated by the natural world's real life vampires, it doesn't get much better than **Bite into Bloodsuckers**.

This book presents a broad overview of animals from around the world that live off blood, including infamous bloodsuckers like mosquitoes and ticks, as well as lesser known creatures like the Spanish madrilennial butterfly and the red-billed oxpecker. The text conveys scientific information in an easy-to-understand style, and each page has plenty close range photos of various creeping, crawling, flapping, and swimming animals that suck blood for a living.

The list goes on and on, including vampire finches, hood mocking birds, horseflies, deer flies, vampire moths, bed bugs, mites, lice, leeches, lampreys, torpedo snails, a small, transparent catfish in the Amazon River called a candiru, and more. Prehistoric fleas that lived on dinosaurs even get their own chapter. And as the book point out in the second chapter, this list of animals technically includes humans, since anyone who eats red meat consumes some blood as well.

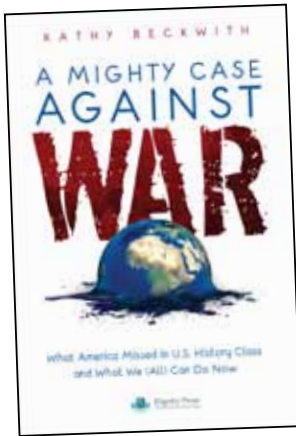
The latter chapters have a more general focus, including diseases transmitted by blood-sucking animals, scientific innovations that have been derived from studying these animals, and the important roles they have in ecosystems—even the much maligned mosquito.



This book's greatest strength is its unique subject matter and for the right reader, it can prove to be very engaging.

—Daemion Lee, Returned Peace Corps Volunteer & teacher.

## Teaching Resources



**A Mighty Case Against War:** *What America Missed in U.S. History Class and What We (All) Can Do Now* by Kathy Beckwith. For high school grades. Dignity Press.

With clear, thoughtful prose and careful research, this book delivers on exactly what its title promises: a systematic investigation into American wars and various nonviolent alternatives. It begins with an anecdote about a young American who was in India on a bicycle trip when he first heard about the post-9/11 military interventions in Afghanistan. “What is this, America?” people yelled at him in Urdu. This story sets us up for what the author wants to accomplish in the book: to see U.S. military actions with new eyes and a new perspective.

The second chapter is the heart of the book, what the author calls “a gallop” through America’s wars—at least fifteen not counting the “secret” wars. It is here that the author’s training as a mediator shows, for she carefully considers the views of both sides—going so far as to invoke a first-person perspective—before considering possible alternatives to war. Particularly interesting are her discussions of nonviolent alternatives to World War II and the American Revolution.

The book concludes with a series of chapters that address various justifications for war that are commonly employed. Again, with the skills of a professional mediator, the author lays out the views of those who advocate for war, before exposing the closed-mindedness, vested interests, and profits that are hidden within these arguments.

The author writes in an accessible way about these complex issues, making this book ideal for high school students interested in a view of U.S. history not presented in the textbooks, as well as any reader concerned about the role of the U.S. military in conflicts around the world.

—*Daemion Lee, Returned Peace Corps Volunteer & teacher.*

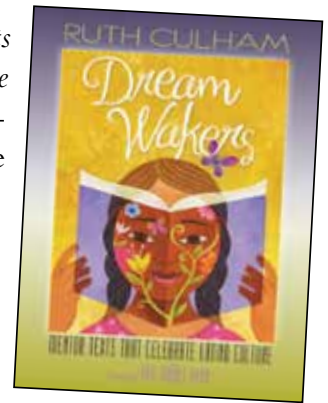
**Dream Wakers:** *Mentor Texts that Celebrate Latino Culture* by Ruth Culham. For teachers of grades 2-5. Stenhouse Publishers.

Educator Ruth Culham was an avid reader from a young age, she recalls in the opening pages of **Dream Wakers**. But all of her favorite books had white female protagonists who looked like her. Would she still have loved reading if she hadn’t been able to find those books?

With that thought in mind, Culham’s book sets out with a simple goal, to serve as a resource for teachers who want to find books for their classrooms that feature Latinos. Culham cites research that suggests exposure to diverse books—with characters that are black and brown and come from different countries and have different beliefs—is beneficial for students. Firstly, learners from various upbringings are more likely to find protagonists they can identify with, and second, students of all backgrounds will benefit from being exposed to new and different points of view.

The majority of the book consists of a collection of brief reviews on books that incorporate Latino culture and characters. Each review includes a summary, a few thoughts on why the book is important, and suggestions about how to incorporate the book into a lesson. Culham includes books from across the decades, from the 1984 classic, *The House on Mango Street* to newer books like 2015’s bilingual book: *My Tata’s Remedies/Los remedios de mi tata*, which also won a *Skipping Stones* Honor Award. Picture books form the majority of those featured, though some chapter books are included as well.

The books are ordered thematically, according to which writing skill they demonstrate particularly well. This is the idea behind the term “mentor” in the title, that the books themselves serve as mentors, because the best way to teach good writing is to read good writing. So, for example, books with a strong voice are grouped together in chapter four, so teachers who are trying to teach that skill might have collection of examples to



choose from. Other chapters are organized according to other writing skills, like ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions.

It is worth noting that Culham is white, not Latina, a fact that she mentions right from the beginning. It is true that a teacher or other educator is able to speak from a place of more authority about Latino culture—or any other culture—if they themselves are a member of that group. But as Culham points out, almost all of the teachers in the U.S. are white females—84 percent. For that reason, Culham’s book is useful in another way, because it shows a white female educator engaging and celebrating a culture that is not her own. Sometimes white educators might be hesitant to do this, to embrace the cause of diversity that is increasingly becoming more mainstream. But Culham was able to do this a way that is respectful and informative: she met Latinos, she learned all she could, and she showed how this collection of books can be meaningful to everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity.

—*Daemion Lee, Returned Peace Corps Volunteer & teacher.*

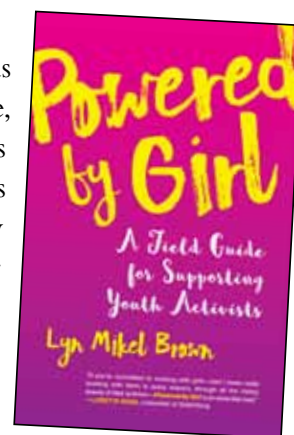
**Powered by Girl: A Field Guide for Supporting Youth Activists** by Lyn M. Brown. Grades 8–12. Beacon Press.

**Powered by Girl**, a 12-chapter resource book, explains how adult mentors can join forces with youth activists and form partnerships across generations to help girls make our world a better place. Author Lyn M. Brown interviewed many women and girl activists to write this deep book. While it is an exploration of how girls have embraced activism, it is primarily meant for adults who want to support girl activists in their work to make the society more equitable.

Ms. Brown has 25 plus years of experience in this field, and has cofounded three grassroots organizations. She argues that adults should encourage girls to create their own movements, on their own terms. She invites us to go beyond good intentions and build genuine, mutually trusting relationships with teenage change-seekers. This would naturally include engaging one another, sharing knowledge, and critiquing and challenging unfairness in the way the systems operate.

Activism is engaging in critical analysis of the systems we interact with and then to imagine how we can

transform them to serve all of us in much better ways. In essence, this means identifying injustices and developing plans to address the issues. In each and every chapter, the author drives her points home by giving practical examples of real-life, young activists, and for this reason, the resource book does not appear “dense.”



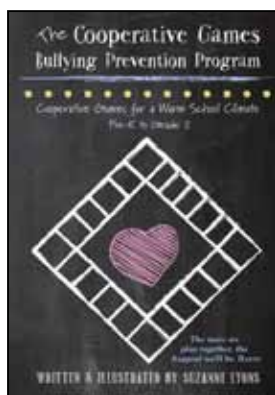
To begin with, the author explores what it means to dig deep into intergenerational activist work. She also addresses the media’s usual portrayal that only “exceptional girls” (special girls with looks, talents, and courage) can make a social change, and envisions the intergenerational activism as a way to bring about social equity. She reminds us that hostilities and injustices aimed especially at girls that are “different” (read: immigrants, from communities of color, differently-abled, LGBTQ, or low-income, etc.) require our strong support. The author also points out women’s usual tendency to shut down and turn off in the presence of girls’ anger and resistance.

The author invites us—adult mentors—to reflect on and examine our privileges and assumptions and to listen deeply to the youth activists we are mentoring.

This field guide is not so much a “how-to”, but “how-to-be”; how to be in genuine relationships with girl activists—how to hear them, learn from them, enable and support their ideas, join them in their activism.

**Powered by Girl** is for everyone—parents, mentors, and teachers—who work with girls. Even girls 14 and above who want to be activists can get a lot out of reading it. It offers an insight into how we can all work for a social change rooted in intergenerational and inclusive ways.

—*Arun N. Toké, editor*



**The Cooperative Games Bullying Prevention Program:** *Cooperative Games for a Warm School Climate Pre-K to Grade 2* by Suzanne Lyons. Child and Nature.

Perhaps everyone is familiar with the notorious game of dodgeball, and the way that the bigger students in class can

sometimes utilize the game as a teacher-sanctioned opportunity to torment smaller students.

**The Cooperative Games Bullying Prevention Program** is a resource for helping to make schools a more inclusive welcoming place for all students, regardless of ability level. It includes plenty of alternatives to dodgeball.

At the core of the book is the idea that cooperative games are better for children than competitive games. Closely related to this is the idea that using cooperative games in the classroom can help reduce bullying and improve school culture. These aren't just opinions either: Lyons carefully weaves in references to the extensive research that supports the basic concepts the book is based on. Lyons lists the ways that cooperative games can be beneficial, including everything from teaching social and emotional skills to nurturing intrinsic motivation.

The book is written in an easy-to-read conversational style, despite its at times technical subject matter, which is particularly impressive compared to the dry style that characterize many education texts. Lyons does a great job summarizing the research and makes it practical for working professionals. So it is a pretty easy read, even after a tough week of teaching. Chapter Five, entitled "What the World Needs Now is Cooperative Play," does a particularly good job of contextualizing this idea of cooperative play within the ongoing debates about education.

Chapter Three includes teaching tips and a list of cooperative games with instructions. They include Cooperative Musical Chairs, Freeze De-Freeze Tag, and Beanbag Freeze. Only seven games are described in this chapter, so if you want more options, Chapter 7 has

another 50 cooperative games to choose from.

I teach in a classroom with students on the autism spectrum, so I was particularly interested in trying out some of these games with my group. Competitive games tend not to work very well with them, but when they play cooperative games, it offers good social skills practice. Some of the students in my class are a bit older than second grade, so I had to pick and choose a little bit, but I was able to find some activities that worked with them.

For example, the game "Find Blue," described in Chapter 7, has become part of my usual bag of tricks. The way we usually do it is that we go in the gym and I tell them to find something that is blue, and they all run and touch what ever they can find. Then I tell them to find something purple or find a triangle or a square or something made out of wood or metal, and so on until they begin to lose interest. I usually use the game as a warm up before doing some other activity and it is a great way to get the body and the brain moving.

Lyons manages the website [cooperativegames.com](http://cooperativegames.com) and products from that website feature heavily in some chapters. However, it should be noted that all the games from [cooperativegames.com](http://cooperativegames.com) were part of a study conducted by the University of Reno, Nevada, with favorable results.

—Daemion Lee, *Returned Peace Corps Volunteer & teacher.*

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