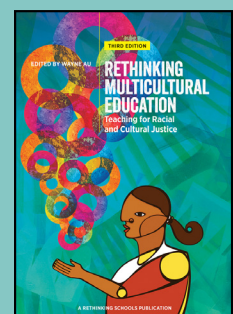
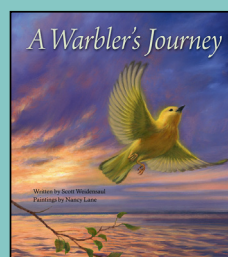
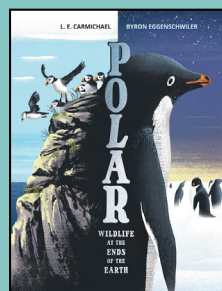
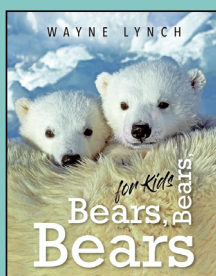
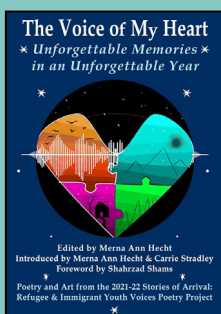
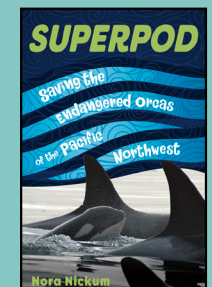
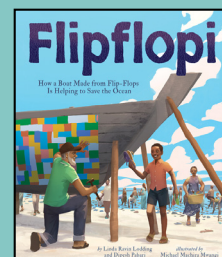
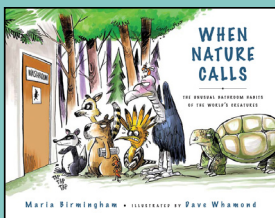
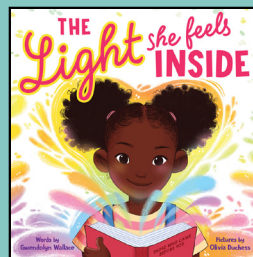
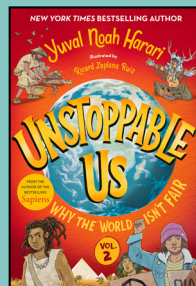
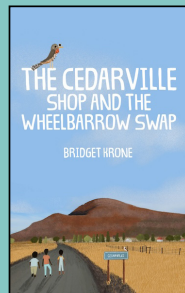
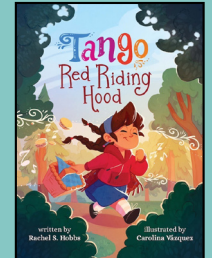
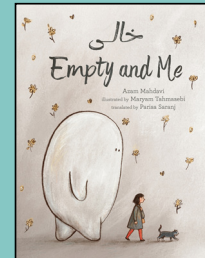
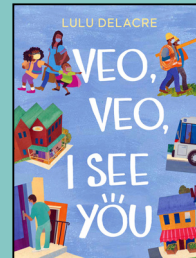
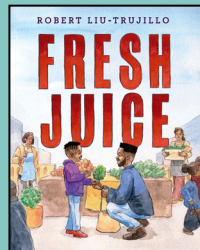
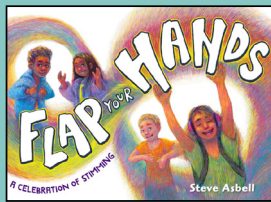
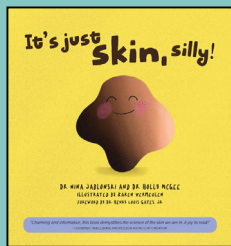
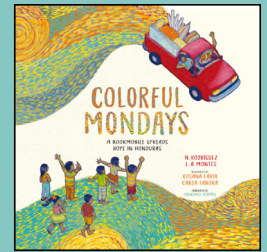
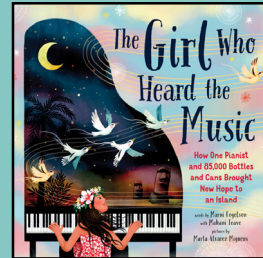
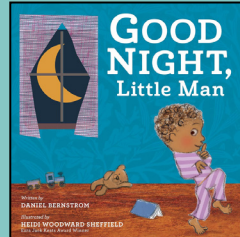
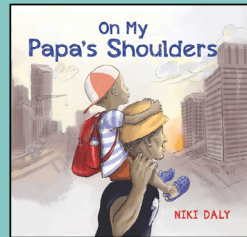
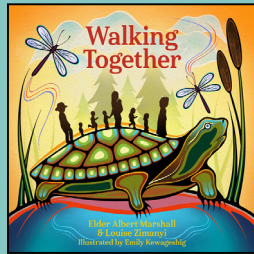


Skipping Stones

Reviews of 2024 Multicultural & Nature Award Books

Summer 2024



The 2024 Skipping Stones Honor Awards



We are pleased to honor the following 28 outstanding books—in three categories: Multicultural, Nature, *and* Teaching Resources—as our 2024 Award Winners. These picture books, chapter books, novels and nonfiction works promote an understanding of cultures, cultivate cooperation, and/or encourage a deeper awareness of nature, ecology, and diversity. They foster respect for multiple viewpoints and closer relationships within human societies. The honored titles offer various perspectives, help us understand our diverse cultures and their histories, and how we overcome challenging situations.

Hearty congratulations to the creators of these excellent books!

Multicultural and International Books

Goodnight, Little Man by Daniel Bernstrom; illustr. Heidi Woodward Sheffield. Ages 4-8. *HarperCollins Publishers*.

This is a large picture book, and all of the illustrations are just drop-dead gorgeous. Beautiful deep colors flow from one edge of the book to the opposite edge presenting a full-spread picture. A non-reading child can tell this story by the illustrations alone.

It is bedtime for a sweetheart little boy dressed in purple-striped pajamas. But as soon as his father has him all tucked in with lots of stuffed animals to keep him company, Little Man realizes that his favorite Sheep-sheep is not there. Little Man knows that he is not supposed to be out of bed. Period. He is shown tiptoeing across the floor, down the stairs, carefully searching every corner of each room for his Sheep-sheep. Each member of the family stops what they are doing to help him search. Even Papa helps him look until he gets frustrated and decides to get Little Man into bed with or without Sheep-sheep. Little Man tells Papa, "Sheep-sheep scared." Papa yells, "I DON'T CARE!" At which point Little Man throws a screaming fit. The noise brings everyone in the house to see what is wrong.

When Mama says Sheep-sheep is with her on the sofa, Papa apologizes to Little Man for not understanding his feelings. A well done "good night" read.

—Paulette Ansari, retired librarian & storyteller, Georgia.

On My Papa's Shoulders by Niki Daly. Ages 4-7. *Catalyst Press*.

How does an everyday routine become so special? This book shows us how one boy gets to walk to school with different members of his family. Each one of them does things just a little bit differently. Mama helps him hurry along a busy sidewalk, while Tata leads him through a park when there are rain puddles to splash in. They all make walking to school fun and special in their own ways.

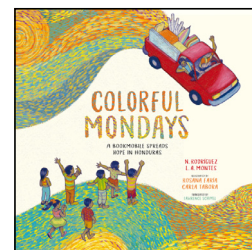
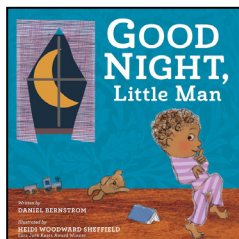
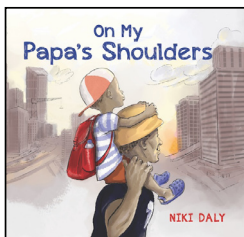
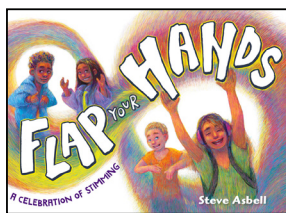
While the boy in the story loves all of his family, he loves walking to school with Papa the most. He gets to sit on Papa's shoulders and see the world in a whole new way!

The illustrations in this picture book have a gentle quality to them, with lightly sketched lines and many pastel colors that stand out against the gray city. The backgrounds give a slightly different feel to each of the different routes the boy walks with each family member. But like the boy and his family, the pictures still have an overall sense of connection. This is a sweet little story about simple everyday moments with family, but especially with Papa.

—Scooter Milne, editorial assistant, Oregon.

Walking Together by Elder Albert D. Marshall and Louise Zimanyi; illustr. Emily Kewageshig. Ages 4-7. *Annick Press*.

Brilliant indigenous art by Emily Kewageshig expresses to the young reader deep cultural beliefs of peace and partnership with the earth and the oneness of all living beings. The single repeating refrain, "When we walk together in a good way," conveys the lessons of sharing



the world with others, non-violence, and appreciation of all creation. The everlasting brilliance of life on this Earth will only be perceived and preserved through our commitment to the stewardship of the birthplace of everything. *Walking Together* has a unique verbal rhythm that matches the symmetry and flowing beauty of the artwork. Both these energies stir the heart and deepen one's breath causing an ache for the transient beauty of the Earth.

—Stephen Thoemmes, retired world traveler, Oregon.

Empty and Me: A Tale of Friendship and Loss (*A bilingual English/Persian book*) by Azam Mahdavi; illustr. Maryam Tahmasebi; Trans. Parisa Saranj. Ages 4–8. *Lee and Low*.

The story of a child's loss of a parent is delicately told in this bilingual Persian/English book. Empty comes to a young girl and inhabits the vacuum left by her mother's death. The artwork silently shows the effect on the father as they both share the presence of Empty. The vacant spaces in the father and daughter slowly fill with flowers and a rescued kitten. Father and daughter and kitten progress in their healing as a new family while Empty remains but does not dominate. Schoolmates now include the girl in play while recognizing Empty being in the background. Father and daughter enter the public sphere and the book gently reminds that Empty will be there too, but that is quite alright.

—Stephen Thoemmes, retired world traveler, Oregon.

Tango Red Riding Hood by Rachel S. Hobbs; illustr. Carolina Vázquez. Ages 4–8. *Gnome Road Publishing*.

Many people know the story of **Little Red Riding Hood**, but have you heard the tale of **Tango Red Riding Hood**? Join Moni as she dances through the forest to her *Abuela's* house to bring her a basket of *alfajores*. The trees provide a beat of their own as Moni skips and twirls her way down the path... until she meets *Lobo*! Will the music from his *bandoneón* be a dangerous distraction?

Children will like the joyful illustrations as they learn Spanish words sprinkled throughout the story (with a glossary at the end to help). Adults will probably laugh just as much as children will at the twist ending for this classic fairytale—I know I did! **Tango Red Riding Hood** blends together the perfect mix of culture, language, and music, while teaching us that misunderstandings aren't always so bad, as long as we keep learning. This book is sure to put a smile on anyone's face.

—Scooter Milne, editorial assistant, Oregon.

The Light She Feels Inside by Gwendolyn Wallace; illustr. Olivia Duchess. Ages 5–8. *Sourcebooks*.

This is a large & lovely picture book with many full-spread illustrations. The colors are deep and bright. Maya is a happy little girl most of the time. She enjoys being with her friends, music, dancing, school, reading and conversations with her parents. The glowing light around her is a bright yellow. But when she is upset, angry or scared, the light changes to red. She confides about her red glow to her favorite librarian. The librarian hands her a stack of books which will help her understand her light.

She reads about Ida B. Wells and her fight to help women vote. She reads about Nina Simone and her music, and Fannie Lou Hamer and her fight to help Black women vote in the South. She reads some of Gwendolyn Brooks' poetry and about Marsha P. Johnson's struggle to get care for gay and trans youth. She loves reading about June Jordan's ideas about how there can be room for all kinds of people to live in peace in one community. There is a full paragraph about each person in the back of the book. Reading these stories inspires Maya to speak with her parents about what they can do to improve the lives of other people. Her parents are delighted and share with Maya what their ancestors have accomplished in the past. They begin to look at their neighborhood and discuss ways to improve it.

—Paulette Ansari, retired librarian & storyteller, Georgia.

José Feeds The World by David Unger; illustr. Marta Álvarez Miguéns. Ages 4–8. *Duopress/Sourcebooks*.

This children's book that was a long time coming and its debut couldn't have been more appropriate. The often-told story of Chef Jose Andres is finally told in a way that doesn't involve a newscast.

This book challenges traditional gender-based interest and work by recalling that Jose's interest in cooking started at 5 years of age. It describes his stellar rise in the culinary world, which was just one step towards pursuing his passion. His first foray into community service starts in a Washington, DC soup kitchen. But he didn't really find his life's mission until he learned of the horrific 2010 Haitian Earthquake and its impact on the people. All thoughts of being a famous chef went out the window and his humanity manifested itself as he gathered friends and volunteers to go to Haiti to help. Upon returning to Washington he brainstormed World Central Kitchen into reality.

Chef Andres worked tirelessly overseas and domestically refining the process by using local ingredients and training the locals to continue the work as he went onto the next destination in need. World Central Kitchen is now just that. A global organization of people from many nations cooking and feeding all those in need. The book closes with the encouraging sentence to all readers: "And one day you, too, will find your calling and make the world a better place."

—Stephen Thoemmes, retired world traveler, Oregon.

The Girl Who Figured It Out by Minda Dentler; illustr. Stephanie Dehennin. Ages 4–8. *Sourcebooks*.

Minda was paralyzed after she contracted polio before she turned one year old. Her mom gave her up for adoption because she found it financially impossible to provide her a good life and good future. So Minda was adopted by the Dentler family in Washington state, who gave her a loving and supportive life.

Minda's father encouraged her to achieve her goals—whatever she set her mind to. She learned to walk using leg braces. But she felt left out, both because of her disability and her skin color.

This is Minda's true story. She wrote it not only for

her daughter but also for all of us—with different abilities and disabilities. She wants us to know that we too can achieve our goals, no matter how impossible they seem to be. Even if that means you want to compete in the Ironman Triathlon in Hawaii. Minda, with her hard work and years of training and practice, became the first female athlete in wheelchair to successfully complete the ultimate test of physical endurance—112 miles of bicycling, 2.4 miles of swimming and a 26.2-mile marathon. As an ordinary person who has completed a marathon, I salute Minda for her inspiring achievement in spite of her physical challenges, and her adoptive dad for offering her so much encouragement. In this beautifully illustrated picture book, we see her mom and dad were with her cheering her all the way! They believed her as much as she believed in herself!

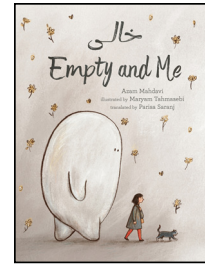
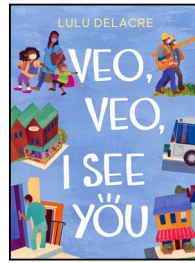
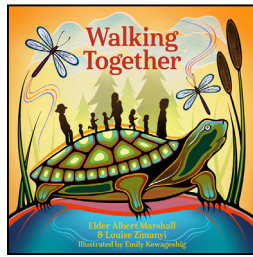
—Arun N. Toké, editor.

The Girl Who Heard the Music by Mahani Teave, Marni Fogelson. Illustr. Marta Álvarez Miguéns. Ages 4–8. *Sourcebooks*.

The Girl who Heard the Music recounts the inspiring story of Mahani Teave, a Pacific Islander from Rapa Nui, who is struggling to live out her passion for music because of the limited musical resources of her community. But when her talent for the piano is discovered, Mahani is taken on an adventure, bringing her island music to audiences across the globe. As she returns to her roots on the island, Mahani realizes that even as tourism has brought her access to the piano, it has also posed an incredible environmental concern through the waste created.

How can Mahani combine her desire to protect the island's environment with her passion for bringing music into the lives of the island's younger generation? What about a music school built entirely from cans and bottles disposed of near the island?

This true story inspires creative problem solving in the face of overwhelming challenges. What I particularly enjoyed about this book was the way it indirectly explored the beauty and pain of tourism in remote areas of the world; how tourism can bring exposure to new ideas, and yet can also cause cultural or environmental destruction to the nation's people. Through



vivid images, simple language, and engaging storytelling, this book provides the perfect introduction to Rapa Nui Island's history, the power of music, and creative environmental protection, all in one place!

—Anna Dillon, high school senior, Eugene, Oregon.

It's Just Skin, Silly! by Dr. Nina Jablonski and Dr. Holly Y. McGee; illustr. Karen Vermeulen. Ages 5-9. *PowersSquared*.

It's Just Skin, Silly! is a picture book filled with amusing, colorful illustrations. Skin is talking to us and making very good sense. Skin is presented as a person, friendly, shape-changing, shade-changing blob with big eyes and a smiling mouth. Young children will love this. At times the body speaks, the face, the hands, and the feet take turns explaining what skin does. Most importantly, where would we be without skin?

That's a great question, and the answer given is, "Without skin you would just be a puddle on the floor." In a funny, light-hearted way, racism is covered: "Color doesn't make a person nice, mean, fast, strong, smart, or scary."

The illustrations are simple, funny, and powerful at the same time. You can't help but be drawn into each page. One illustration shows faces of different human shades and the reader is invited to match his/her skin color with one of those.

The next section goes into how skin colors evolved. In Africa, it is very often hot; the sun is very intense. Therefore the first people had very dark skin. Skin color is an adaptation to sunlight. The bold-faced words, like melanin, folate, and ultraviolet rays are defined at the bottom of pages. Young children may not understand everything this section has to offer but they will understand it's just skin!

—Paulette Ansari, retired librarian & storyteller, Georgia.

Epi Dermis, also called *Skin*, narrates the delightful and illuminating picture book **It's Just Skin, Silly!** This

book should be read aloud and discussed in every pre-school and elementary school in our country, and be available in every school and public library.

Students will learn what their skin does for their bodies while identifying their own and their friends' skin tones, and will understand and absorb the fact that everyone is alike under their skin. The reasons humans developed various shades of skin color is explained in both words and beautiful humorous illustrations.

The second section of the book, **It's Just Science, Silly!** presents the same information in a more traditional format for older students and teachers that is very informative and useful.

Authors Dr. Nina Jablonski and Dr. Holly Y. McGee, together with illustrator Karen Vermeulen, have created a wonderful educational tool. I highly recommend this long-needed addition to children's literature.

—Yvonne Young, retired teacher, storyteller, Oregon.

Colorful Mondays: A Bookmobile Spreads Hope in Honduras by Nelson Rodríguez & Leonardo Agustine Montes; illustr. Rosana Faría & Carla Tabora. Trans. Lawrence Schimel. Ages 5-9. *Eerdmans Books for Young Readers*.

This is a simple story that makes plain the adversity and poverty experienced by young people in countries like Honduras. Yet the striking and colorful artwork reflects the lighting of the inner colors of children's hearts brought about by the visiting mobile library. They participate in reading stories and presenting puppet plays to help erase the dark effects of having no shoes or of feeling hungry. Their love of learning helps them overcome the darkness of the harsh realities of life and even stir the hearts of the adults. This true story has a deeply genuine core for it brings back powerful memories of my travels in Madagascar. This book will help students appreciate and be grateful for what they have in this over-fed and overstimulated society.



—Stephen Thoemmes, retired world traveler, Oregon.

Veó, Veó, I See You (Spanish/English) by Lulu Delacre. Ages 5–9. *Atheneum Books for Young Readers*.

Do you remember how bad it was when Covid-19 spread like a wildfire in the nation during the spring and summer of 2020? How so many restaurants and other public spaces were closed down by the orders of governors and/or public health agencies? It was a panic! And remember the millions of essential workers—mostly people of color—who kept the necessary things working? Who were they? What services did they render to the society?

Veó, Veó, I See You is a bilingual, Spanish/English children's picture book on the Essential Workers who kept the wheels running and the society functioning... the postal workers, trash collectors, nurses, pharmacists, the cooks (like Marisol's mami, the best cook at Rosita's Café), and many others. "What makes them so important?" "*Cuando trabajan tenemos Luz, agua, comida...*" says Mami. Young Marisol shows us how she appreciated and acknowledged their hard work during the pandemic.

Adult helpers can share with young readers of this beautifully illustrated book what impact the Covid lock down had on the ordinary people and the essential workers with the help of the *Author's Note* included at the end of this book.

—Arun N. Toké, editor.

Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming by Steve Asbell. Ages 5–10. *Lee and Low Books*.

I was happy to see this lively colorful book in celebration of stimming. The book shows how four neurodivergent kids face stressful moments using repetitive, self-stimulating behaviors.

The book explains that stimming is not just natural and healthy but even necessary for autistics; part of self-

expression and culture. The book's illustrations show various stimming responses to feeling overwhelmed, as body movements, words, sounds that lead to calm.

I have little direct knowledge about autism, but my interest in learning was piqued after I watched two shows that increased my awareness, even though I know that mainstream media can get some things incorrect. The two series were *Astrid* (French) and *Extraordinary Attorney Woo* (South Korean). These series led me to love this book and to participate in a local event about hiring neurodivergent people.

—Charlotte Behm, educator, Oregon.

Unstoppable Us: Why the World Isn't Fair, Vol. 2 by Yuval Noah Harari. Ages 10 & up. *Bright Matter Books*.

Ten thousand years ago, we had a healthy hunter/gatherer society that lived in harmony with nature, that required only a few hours of work each day. How did we evolve to cultures with scarcity, conflict, and control of nature that demand many hours of daily labor to survive?

This book for teens and older readers explains the progression in a light, often conversational way with good illustrations. The logic presented is simple, so much so that it allows all the pieces to come together in ways that the reader says, "Of course!"

The writing doesn't skip over the realities of what we have sacrificed to get here now, especially for those people, plants, and animals not on the top of hierarchies we produced. The book teaches us about how rules, rituals and stories told for generations keep the power structure intact, as they keep those who don't benefit engaged and motivate them to vote against their best interests.

The author states that his book would be banned in some places in the United States now because it includes stories of people who are considered "impure" by some politicians and religions. I think back to my

college Western Civilization classes—very limited boring sagas of conquering white men and rulers—history that some people want us teach to everyone. **Unstoppable Us** is a much better curriculum—it's engaging and interesting and really promotes critical thinking.

—Charlotte Behm, educator, Oregon.

The Cedarville Shop and the Wheelbarrow Swap by Bridget Krone. Ages 10–14. *Catalyst Press*.

This heartfelt story is set in a village in South Africa. Boi (Boipelo Seku) has dreams like any other twelve-year-old boy. He knows about radios, cell phones, TVs, cars, and would love to have them. But when all there is to eat is cold maize porridge and sour milk, and a good time is catching and roasting field mice, well, one's expectations will remain low. He dreams of having a real bed and his own room.

The entire village consists of row after row of small two-room houses—some with twelve people living in those two rooms. Boi is thankful that his home consists of his grandmother who is nearly blind, his father who is away at work for very long hours, and himself. His mother had died giving birth to him, so he never knew her. But still he misses her.

Boi does everything with his best friend, Potso. So, when Boi reads an article in an old magazine about a man that turned a red paper clip into a real house by always trading up (trading for something of greater value) he gets excited and decides to try it. He and Potso walk to the river, gather mud, and Boi makes a tiny cow for his first trade. When the cow is ready Potso designs a colorful poster on a large sheet of paper to advertise the trade. With Mrs. Viljoen's (the shop keeper) permission the boys place the poster on the outside wall of the shop where customers are sure to see it.

After receiving lots of ridicule from a gang of teenage boys and small children Boi makes his first trade with Mrs. Viljoen. She trades a two-liter coke for the tiny clay cow. She was likely just trying to cheer him up because hours had passed, and no one had offered him a trade. One trade after another was made until Boi's story makes the local paper. Boi makes some poor

trades and things don't always go smoothly. The situation becomes really difficult when Potso stops speaking to him. But you will want to find out how with that one tiny clay cow, Boi improved the lives of every person in his village. One good idea put into action can change everything. This is an enjoyable chapter book!

—Paulette Ansari, retired librarian & storyteller, Georgia.

When A Brown Girl Flees, a novel by Aamna Qureshi. Ages 14–19. *Tu Books/Lee and Low Books*.

Zahra, a Muslim teen about to graduate from high school, is being pressured into an arranged marriage only twelve days after her graduation. She is confused, depressed, and ashamed. There is no one for her to confide in. Her family is wealthy, and they live in California. All through high school, her mother had kept strict watch on her activities.

As she drives home from school, Zahra realizes that she has only about five minutes before her mother calls to check on her and how far she is from home. In a mental daze, Zahra parks at the train station, turns her ringing phone off, and drops it on the seat. She places her keys in the sunglass holder, gets out, and heads for the ticket window.

Zahra endures a long train ride, then she flies to New York. She ends up on the Long Island, where she's invited by a young woman of her age into her Masjid and her Muslim community. But she feels she must tell her new friends Haya and Sadaf that her parents had died in a car accident and that she is there to find a job before attending college in the fall. The truth was just too painful to share.

For a few months her life settles down, and she is almost happy until she starts thinking about her brother, her father, and other family members who don't know what had happened to her.

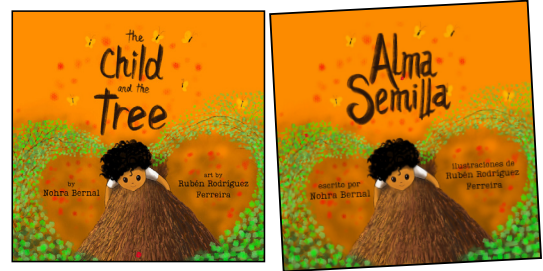
While out shopping one day, she runs into the sister of the man she was supposed to have married. She must have spoken to her brother, because shortly afterwards he confronts her while she is walking with Haya and Sadaf. She admits to them that she had run away from home, and her parents were not really dead. Seeing the hurt in her friends' eyes, she runs away again. She runs

to her apartment, locks herself inside, and refuses to answer the phone, or the knocking on the door. For a few days all she does is cry and feel sorry for herself. Finally, she allows Haya inside, and she tells her the whole terrible truth; what she did and why her mother hated her so. Will Zahra have the courage to return home and face her mother?

This is a touching story, very well told. You can feel this young woman's depression and fears.

—Paulette Ansari, retired librarian & storyteller, Georgia.

Nature and Ecology Books



The Child and the Tree: A Tale for Better Times by Nohra Bernal; art: Rubén Rodríguez Ferreira. Ages 3-8. (**Alma Semilla**, in Spanish is also available). *Arreboles*.

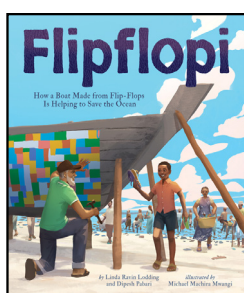
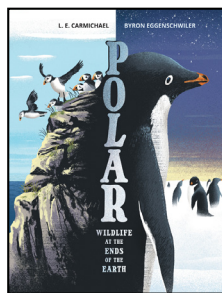
The small child is a member of a poor family scraping out a living in an arid, sandy land. She must find her own amusement each day while the adults work. She is shown in the same simple white dress throughout the entire story.

The little girl encounters what appears to be a very young tree not much bigger than herself. The child and the tree whisper to each other, and the tree tells her that he is very old. The child visits the tree each day and plays under his shade with her doll and a handful of small rocks. They have good conversations. Sometimes she falls asleep while the tree watches over her. One day she finds a branch of the tree broken and she ties it back to the main branch. The tree thanks her for her care.

Another time, the tree tells her to hurry home as a storm was coming. For several days the wind blows sand everywhere. The girl worries about the tree. After the storm subsides, she runs back to the tree and discovers that the wind has blown away all of the sand and exposed his very old-looking trunk. The tree continues to grow, and now the child can sit in his branches. The tree blooms and produces seeds that are good to eat. The tree asks the girl to plant some of the seeds and she does. And after a long wait, tiny plants poke out of the sand.

Finally, the child comes to wish the tree a good-bye when her family is ready to move on. The tree gifts her lots of seeds to take with her on their journey—to be eaten, and to be planted—for a new beginning.

This is very beautiful picture book with profound illus-



trations. Most of the colors are deep shades of orange and greens with many full page spreads.

—Paulette Ansari, retired librarian & storyteller, Georgia.

The Child and the Tree by Nohra Bernal is a book that immediately touches your heart. Beautiful artwork by Ruben Rodriguez draws you into the child's world. The child and the tree communicate with one another and establish a relationship. The tree gives the child joy, and she in turn mends the tree's broken branch and helps it to grow. When the tree matures and develops seeds, she plants them to create a grove of trees.

This inspiring story challenges us to do what we can to nurture our world. Reading and/or hearing this book read aloud will empower children to understand that they too can make a difference.

—Yvonne Young, retired teacher, storyteller, Oregon.

Merry and Hark: A Christmas Story by April Genevieve Tucholke; illustr. Rebecca Santo. Ages 4-8. *Algonquin Young Readers.*

A story of a small owl, Merry, is written with excellent prose and illustrations. Merry is happy living in a forest in her favorite tree, Hark, who is strong, proud, and gentle. Hark keeps Merry warm and safe on cold winter days as she lets Merry nestle into a hole in her trunk.

But then, horrible sounds come as Hark is cut down and carried to a city. Merry is hauled to a place where there are strange lights and sounds, and despite two nights of going out to hunt, Merry catches nothing. This is a sad part of the book that stands out when I'm reading it.

Merry is rescued by a person whose apartment windows allow Merry to watch Hark being decorated for winter holidays, and Merry says Hark is beautiful. Merry is taken back to the forest where she is wel-

comed home by the trees, sky, and other owls who think of her as a legend because of her adventure. Merry knows she is small but brave.

—Charlotte Behm, educator, Oregon.

Fresh Juice by Robert Liu-Trujillo. Ages 4-8. *Lee and Low Books.*

A global community of caring and loving relationships between people from diverse cultures and countries makes our life enriching and wholesome.

Art's dad needs to recover from a bad cold so he can play with his son. Art knew from school that fresh ginger root was good to fight infections, so he suggests that they make fresh juice with ginger. But they are out of the needed items. As they go downtown to the farmer's market to buy fresh ginger, they learn that many other healthy ingredients like fresh apples, collard greens, cayenne pepper, oranges, etc. also help us in fighting a cold.

Join Art and his dad on their shopping trip to the Saturday farmer's market. It is lovely to see that no matter where we come from and what cultures we belong to, we all love a good, healthy life! This picture book takes us beyond the common stereotypes. All its main characters in the story are black and people of color.

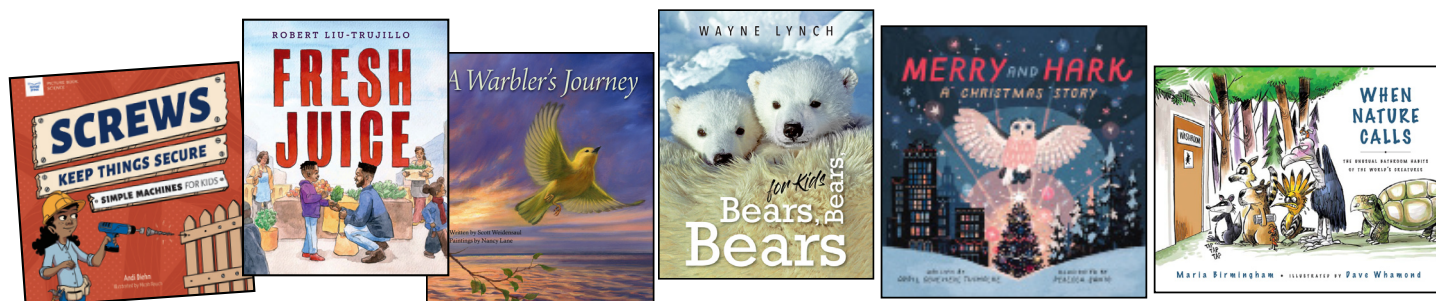
A very tastefully-made picture book that promotes sustainability.

—Arun N. Toké, editor.

A Warbler's Journey by Scott Weidensaul; illustr. Nancy Lane. Grades K-5. *The Gryphon Press.*

A lovely book—text and paintings—about the miraculous migration of birds. We follow a yellow warbler from the Highlands of Nicaragua, across the Gulf of Mexico, and ending along the Great Slave Lake in the Northern Territories of Canada where she will mate and raise her babies.

The book shows the warbler living or feeding alongside appreciative humans in three environments and three cultures—a coffee plantation, a glorious backyard garden, and a protected lake. At the end of the book, the author describes easy ways for everyone to help migratory birds.



I liked the statement made by the publisher, *The Gryphon Press*, that says, “A voice for the voiceless. These books are dedicated to those who foster compassion toward all animals and who practice ecological stewardship.”

—Charlotte Behm, educator, Oregon.

Screws Keep Things Secure: *Simple Machines for Kids* by Andi Diehn; illustr. Micah Rauch. Ages 5–8. *Nomad Press*.

I loved this book for its introduction to machines, and in particular, screws. It’s appropriate for young readers or anyone who wants to get a fun visual look at the basics of screws. As a mechanical engineer and a person who has taught about screws in mechanical drafting classes, I felt that this book is fabulous in how well it describes the uses, parts, and different types of screws.

Screws is written and illustrated for a novice builder or observer of everyday threaded objects in one’s home. With a clever and hard-working girl of color leading us, we learn applications of screws, parts of screws, and the history of both large and small screws. The book is all delightful and light and appropriate for anyone, and it even has directions to use a straw to build a screw that will transport water *up* a slope!

—Charlotte Behm, educator, Oregon.

Flipflop: *How A Boat Made from Flip-flops Is Helping to Save the Ocean* by Linda R. Lodding and Dipesh Pabari; illustr. Michael M. Mwangi. Ages 5–8. *Beaming Books*.

Flipflop takes the young readers on a journey alongside one brave, young boy who helps combat devastating plastic litter surrounding his town in Kenya. The story explores the power of collaboration as Juma and his father, a shipbuilder, inspire their community to help them in an unheard-of project—to collect ten tons of plastic waste from the coastline and create a fishing boat from the melted waste. The project brings together enthusiastic people of many backgrounds in

order to combat the problem universal to all Kenyans.

The picture book not only provides an example of out-of-the-box environmental action, it also integrates the reader with potential ways to help fight plastic waste themselves. After persuading the reader of the devastation of plastic waste and the power of environmental action against the omnipresent plastic trash, the book also lists specific ways that readers of any age could combat waste in their own lives. Impressive images of Kenya’s beautiful landscape accompany each page of this multicultural book as it inspires young readers to engage their own communities against plastic pollution.

—Anna Dillon, high school senior, Eugene, Oregon.

When Nature Calls: *The Unusual Bathroom Habits of the World’s Creatures*, by Maria Birmingham; illustr. Dave Whamond. Ages 6–10. *Red Deer Press*.

Did you know that some animals use their poop as a weapon? That some eat it, and some never poop at all? *When Nature Calls* explores these pooping habits and more, through fun images and lighthearted language grounded in solid science. With amusing, cartoon-like images accompanying each featured animal, this book is sure to catch the attention of any young reader. What I particularly enjoy about this book is that it teaches important biological science about animal species in such an engaging way, drawing the reader in with funny images and keeping their attention with lighthearted science. The book explores how this often overlooked part of animal biology is not only vital to ecosystems, but to animal health, giving the reader a sense of the value of animal life in all its complexities. With its engaging language and images, this nature book provides a way for young readers to learn about the creatures around them to inspire curiosity about our fellow species of planet earth.

—Anna Dillon, high school senior, Eugene, Oregon.

Bears, Bears, Bears by Wayne Lynch. Ages 10 and up. *Fitzhenry & Whiteside*.

Historically, bears have been a frequent theme in folklore, fables, and myths. From the ferocious grizzly to the cuddly baby panda they have often been maligned, but also adored.

In **Bears, Bears, and Bears** one can set aside previous concepts and view eight species of bears from a more objective and scientific perspective. The writer, Wayne Lynch, has an impressive background with over 40 years of bear research on the four continents that they inhabit.

All eight species are described: how to identify them, their habits, their habitats, and their status in our ever changing environments. The writer's fascinating personal anecdotes mix with information gathered from visual observations as well as radio transmitters that are attached to the bear after they have been tranquilized and tracked by scientists. These studies have provided detailed information about what they eat, their mating habits, how they get through the winter, their social habits with other bears, and their interaction with human cultures, both ancient and modern. Much of the results of this data are found in this interesting and highly recommended book.

—Paul Dix, world traveler, author & photographer, Oregon.

Polar: Wildlife at the Ends of the Earth by L. E. Carmichael; illustr. Byron Eggenschwiler. Ages 7-11. *Kids Can Press*.

The differences and the similarities of the two polar regions provide an engaging subject for **Polar: Wildlife at the Ends of the Earth**. At the beginning of the book the authors articulate very well a major difference in the two environments: "In the far north, the Arctic is an ocean surrounded by land. In the far south, Antarctica is a land surrounded by ocean." In common, however, is the extreme cold in both regions and they are the only two places on earth where daylight and darkness lasts up to six months.

The book concentrates on wildlife adaptations. It jumps from penguins in the Antarctica to puffins in the Arctic, from the ptarmigans in the Arctic to the lan-

ternsharks in Antarctica and continues with many more examples, describing the miraculous ways they have evolved in order to survive the harsh weather, the predators, the constant search for food, and the imperative to procreate. Each of the featured species is illustrated with accurate and detailed drawings.

Climate change cannot be ignored when writing about the polar regions because temperatures there are warming five times faster than in the rest of the world. The melting of the pack ice and the glaciers will raise the oceans and affect the climate around the world. The melting of the permafrost will further impact the climate and dramatically damage the Arctic ecosystem.

I hope young and old will read this informative book.

—Paul Dix, world traveler, author & photographer, Oregon.

Superpod: Saving the Endangered Orcas of the Pacific Northwest by Nora Nickum. Ages 8-12. *Chicago Review Press*.

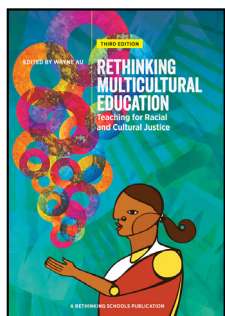
Superpod is a fun, informative look at that orca whales in Northern Washington state, called the Southern Residents. They are presented as a tight-knit family—playful, smart, and caring.

The book states, "These are the orcas I want you to meet if you haven't already." That's what really attracted me to the book and kept my interest. I felt like I was getting to know some individual whales and of course in the process, learn about orcas in general.

The well-written narrative describes legal efforts to protect the whales. There's also dogs that hunt orca poop for the researchers to analyze to find out more about the local whales as well as transient orcas. The book explains efforts of local tribes to increase the salmon on which the orcas feed. The author is a senior ocean policy manager at the Seattle Aquarium whose love for, and knowledge of, orcas comes across in every page.

—Charlotte Behm, educator, Oregon.

Teaching Resources



Rethinking Multicultural Education: *Teaching for Racial and Cultural Justice* by Wayne Au, Editor. For K-12 educators. *Rethinking Schools*.

Rethinking Multicultural Education: *Teaching for Racial and Cultural Justice*, is a collection of

essays written by educators about the challenges and rewards of multicultural education. As the editor Wayne Au notes in the introduction to the third edition, the world has changed significantly since the first edition of this book came out in 2009. Back then, the No Child Left Behind Act was still in effect, Obama was still president, and the Common Core State Standards Initiative was still in its infancy. Since then, Black Lives Matters protests, the Trump administration and fights over public health in public schools during COVID have come and gone. The language people use has changed too, white supremacy is discussed and labeled more openly, and the conversation about pronouns has become national. Somehow, the word “multicultural” feels both old fashioned and radical at the same time. **Rethinking Multicultural Education** has been updated for the third edition, including new essays on white supremacy and environmental justice, and a new section, Intersectional Identities, reflects the new ways people talk about intersectionality.

The essays range widely, some with detailed accounts of teaching a particular lesson to a class, while others touch on the theme of education more broadly. Perspectives include a professor of color teaching largely white student-teachers, a description of a lesson teaching fifth graders to identify a “dominant narrative,” and an essay about black history and LGBTQ people. Other essays cover the intersection of culture and language, including Ebonics, Inupiaq language in the Arctic Circle in Alaska, and Uchinaaguchi, a language from the island of Okinawa in Japan. Black Lives Matter has its own section, including essays on the intersection of choreography and justice, and the Black Panther Party,

Section Four, Anti-Racist Teaching Across the Curriculum, is the longest section and includes essays

that make the case that multicultural education isn’t a special class, but that it can and should be incorporated into all subjects. Writers take various approaches, including teaching science through the underlying biology of skin color, or teaching math through the mathematics of neighborhood displacement and gentrification.

Overall, this third edition includes much of what made the first two editions powerful while at the same time being carefully updated to reflect the changing times and current discussions. It is a useful resource for all educators.

—Daemion Lee, special education teacher & ex-editor.

The Voice of My Heart: *Unforgettable Memories in an Unforgettable Year. Poetry & Art from the 2021-22 Stories of Arrival: Refugee and Immigrant Youth Voices Poetry Project.* Edited by Merna Ann Hecht. For grades 8 and up, and multilingual learners’ teachers. *Chin Music Press*.

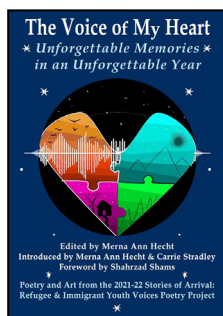
“...My thoughts were heavy, my head lay heavy on the windows / of the bus taking me further away, / I closed my eyes and felt like I was falling, losing myself / in a shattering haunted mirror with nothing I could do...”

—Tieda Tsegay Araya.

There is nothing quite like the raw pain of leaving one’s country, the place where every child’s heart is molded. A heart is torn between where it is now, pulsating in an immigrant’s chest, and where it once was. A heart caught in the intersection between love for one’s home and pain in seeing it destroyed by war, climate, illness, and famine.

The laments of a motherland left behind, the pain of destruction by climate, war, and greed, the isolation of living in an unfamiliar land, and the drive to make the world a little bit better, all merge into the beautiful, vivid verses of poetry recorded in a volume aptly called “The Voice of My Heart.” This volume is one of many that the **Stories of Arrival Project** has produced since 2009.

Where does the voice of your heart lead you? For youth like Tieda, it leads to Eritrea. For Sharmila, it leads to Burma, to the family she left behind. For Mohamed, it leads to Gambia, to the nostalgic peanut



and rice porridge he used to eat. For Shahab, it leads to Afghanistan, where he prays that peace will come. For Tri, it leads Vietnam, to a brother endangered in war.

For many, the voice of their hearts leads to a passion to fight climate change, poverty, and injustice. Thirty-seven talented immigrant student poets from around the world share their diverse stories, passions, and poetry in this incredible collection of poetry written during the 2021-22 school year, displaying the potential inherent in America's young immigrants. The unimaginable pain that these poets have experienced flows into their vulnerable writing, and makes it impossible not to open your heart to their struggles and joys.

This volume is perfect for anyone who relates to the immigrant experience or anyone who wants to expand their knowledge about the experiences of immigrants. It raises awareness, through a personal lens, about the tragic world events that too often are reduced to faceless numbers in our news feed.

—Anna Dillon, high school senior, Eugene, Oregon.

The 2025 Book Awards program will be announced in October this year. Please check our website, www.skippingstones.org, to download the entry forms in October.

Our Awards issue, Vol. 36, no. 2 (available September 1, 2024) will feature the 2024 Youth

Honor Awards, the Annual Book Awards, 2024 Asian Celebration

Haiku Contest, and the

Celebrate America Creative Writing Contest for fifth graders. You may order a copy of the issue for \$9 (includes postage).

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