

**Diverse vs. Inclusive Literature**  
**Booklist - NYLA Conference - 2017**

**FICTION**

**Young Readers**

Cornwally, Gaia. *Jabari Jumps*. Candlewick, 2017.

<https://www.gaiacornwall.com/>

Familiar story of a little boy wanting to jump off the high board at the pool, but very scared. Nice family story that incorporates an “every boy” and family as African American.

Fogliano, Julie. *When’s My Birthday*. Illustrated by Christian Robinson. Roaring Brook Press, 2017.

<https://us.macmillan.com/author/juliefogliano>

Lovely concept book of a young child repeating the question of “when’s my birthday.” All children are represented in many shades of color with Robinson’s stylized illustrations.

Gianferrari, Maria. *Hello Goodbye Dog*. Illustrated by Patrice Barton. Roaring Brook, 2017.  
[mariagianferrari.com](http://mariagianferrari.com)

A dog story with a twist. Zara’s pet hates goodbyes and finds ways to go to her school. What is unstated in the text and just touched on in the illustrating is that Zara is wheelchair bound, just a natural part of the story as told in the illustrations. And even better, when Zara solves the problem by sending Moose to therapy school it is NOT to make him her helper but rather a classroom reading helper.

Muth, Jon. *Mama Lion Wins the Race*. Scholastic, 2017

<http://jonjmuth.com/muth.html>

The story of a race turns into a story of courtesy, respect and friendship. It’s a winning combination.

Muth, Jon. *Zen Shorts* (and sequels). Scholastic, 2005

Muth incorporates three Buddhist tales into the story of three contemporary children that visit Stillwater, the Panda for relaxing fun. Good ideas, questions and discussions.

Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Freedom in Congo Square*. Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie. Little Bee Books, 2017.

<https://cbweatherford.com>

How slaves in the New Orleans area found a way to free themselves from the constraints of their masters and express themselves uniquely. Author’s note about historic background.

Zoboli, Giovanna and Mariachiara Di Giorgio. *Professional Crocodile*. Chronicle, 2017.

<http://www.topipittori.it/en/catalogo/professional-crocodile>

A wordless book that has an unusual character in a very usual situation, going to work with a twist at the end. Children will be pulled into the story by both the ordinariness of the story, taking a subway, walking through town and then surprised by the outcome.

## Middle Grade

Alexander, Kwame. *The Playbook: 52 Rules to Aim, Shoot and Score in This Game Called Life*. Illustrated by Thai Heave. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017.

[kwamealexander.com](http://kwamealexander.com)

Alexander points out with these ways to improve your “game” be it on the court or at home, that sports reflect the bigger issues of life.

Arnold, Elana K. *A Boy Called Bat*. Illustrate by Charles Santosos. Walden Pond Press, 2017.

<http://elanakarnold.com/>

Bat loves animals but often he is not loveable. He has many characteristics of being on the autism spectrum but that term is never used within the book. Instead we learn about his efforts for self-control, the mechanisms others use to deal with him in a positive way and his special talent, a love for, knowledge of and appreciation of animals. A very positive book about a boy with lots of talents.

Bolden, Tonya. *Crossing Ebenezer Creek*. Bloomsbury, 2017.

[www.tonyaboldenbooks.com](http://www.tonyaboldenbooks.com)

A fictional account of the experience of “freed” slaves following Sherman’s troops as they march across the south. Bolden creates memorable characters with hopes and dreams, many cruelly snuffed out.

Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker. *The War that Saved My Life*. 2016 and sequel, *The War I Finally Won*. Dial Books, 2017.

<https://kimberlybrubakerbradleycom.wordpress.com/>

A recent study posted in *Ed*, the journal of Harvard University’s School of Education pointed out that 77 % of books that boys check out are only about male characters. Here is a female protagonist that even boys can relate to. Ada, the main character is full of anger at the course of her life, mistrustful and, in the second book, very much in need to be of use and also not at all willing to be grateful. This strong female protagonist has lots to say about survival and learning empathy, important themes for everyone.

Bryan, Ashley. *Freedom Over Me: Eleven Slaves, Their Lives and Dreams Brought to Life by Ashley Bryan*. Atheneum Books for Young readers, 2016.

<https://ashleybryancenter.org>

Based on sale documents for 11 slaves, Bryan describes their enslaved lives and then the ones that they dream of, based on their talents and desires. The illustrations show a facial close up as an enslaved person, with their purchase price, and then the image of living their dreams.

Dinerstein, Eric. *What Elephants Know*. Disney Hyperion, 2016

2017. <https://islandpress.org/author/eric-dinerstein>

In the threatened jungle of the Borderlands between Nepal and India during the 1970s, an orphaned boy discovers his fate as a great elephant driver. Very different society than here in the U.S., but the hopes and dreams of the young people are just as important. Author is a scientist that has lived in the area and studied the animals for the World Wildlife Fund, RESOLVE, and the National Zoo, a part of the Smithsonian Museum.

Dumas, Firoozeh. *It Ain't so Awful, Falafel*. Clarion, 2016.

<http://firoozehdumas.com/>

Set in the late 1970s, Cindy, an Iranian immigrant, is like all kids, trying to fit into a new community, but her classmates see her as a representative of her country, an issue that many find when they are in the minority

Gidwitz, Adam. *The Inquisitor's Tale: Or, Three Magical Children and Their Holy Dog*.

Illustrated by Hatem Aly. Dutton, 2016.

<http://www.adamgidwitz.com/>

In a book similar to the Canterbury Tales, with magical realism as part of the story, three children travel across Europe during the time of the inquisition and see the prejudices that abound. A reminder that hatred and prejudice has a LONG history in the world.

Gratz, Alan. *Refugee*. Scholastic Press, 2017.

<https://www.alangratz.com>

A Jewish boy flees Nazi Germany for Cuba aboard the MS *St. Louis* in 1939. A Cuban girl escapes Cuba on a raft bound for America in 1994. A Syrian boy travels from Syria to Germany in the present day. Three different kids, all connected by one goal: ESCAPE and SAFETY.

Jamieson, Victoria. *All's Faire in Middle School*. Dial Books, 2017

[www.victoriajamieson.com](http://www.victoriajamieson.com)

By the author who brought you *Rollergirl*, this book deals with a family who make their living working in a Renaissance Faire reminding us that many families are not “mainstream” in their life style, income. The main character is about to go to public school for the first time, knowing her background is very different from her classmates

Khan Hena. *Amina's Voice*. Simon & Schuster, 2017.

<https://www.henakhan.com/>

Amina is too shy to try out for the school talent show. And she worries about how her best friend is changing, and if her brother is growing away from her family and if her uncle is going to be disappointed in her and her family for not being Pakistani enough. A reminder that even if you come from an unfamiliar country (Pakistan) practice an unfamiliar religion (Muslim) your hopes and dreams are very much like others.

Levy, Dana Alison. *The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher*. Delacorte Press, 2014.

<http://danaalisonlevy.com/>

Four boys, and two dads help readers to understand that there are lots of ways to define families. The boys, all adopted, have varying backgrounds, their 2 dads have dissimilar personalities, school presents all kinds of challenges as does a grumpy neighbor. (Sequels follow.)

Nye, Naomi Shihab. *The Turtles of Oman*. Greenwillow, 2014.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/naomi-shihab-nye>

A reminder that all children love the country of their birth. Asef does not want to move to Michigan where his parents will attend graduate school. His love of his grandfather and his daily life in this Arabian county is powerfully portrayed.

Oh, Ellen (editor). *Flying Lessons and Other Stories*. Penguin/Random House, 2017.

<http://www.ellenoh.com/index2.html>

A collection of short stories by diverse authors that reflect personal challenges and growth without emphasizing the “diverse” aspect of each character but rather the commonality. The first story by Matt de La Pena is about friendship and father/son relationships; the main character just happens to be Mexican.

Powell, Patrica Hruby. *Loving vs. Virginia: a Documentary Novel of the Landmark Civil Rights Case*. Illustrated by Shadra Strickland. Chronicle, 2017.

<http://talesforallages.com/>

In free verse that reads like conversations the author describes the love that grew between two friends and the marriage that was against the law in their home state of Virginia. Their simple desire to live near family caused the Supreme Court Case that changed the laws of the nation. Illustrations add an emotional impact and make this an everyman story vs using the photographs that a non-fiction book would use. This is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Supreme Court decision.

Reynolds, Jason. *Ghost*. Atheneum, 2016.

<http://www.jasonwritesbooks.com/>

Castle "Ghost" Crenshaw lives with his single mother; his father is serving time in prison after firing a gun at Ghost and his mom three years ago. Ghost can run but never for a track team. The coach gets him to join the team, but both coach and his mother need to see Ghost learn to curb his impulsive behavior. This is a realistic portrait of a boy who needs support from his community. *Patina* is the sequel that just came out.

Say, Allen. *Silent Days, Silent Dreams*. Scholastic/Arthur Levine, 2017.

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/authors/allen-say/>

With illustrations in the style of this self-taught artist (using soot, charcoal, found paper) and succinct text, we learn about the world of James Castle, born deaf in the last century and treated as a “dummy” by his family and community. Considered uneducable, he taught himself to draw and pictured both the world he wished to live in and the one in which he did. A powerful story and also inspirational in terms of what one can do in spite of circumstances

Shang, Wendy Wan-Long and Madelyn Rosenberg. *This is Just a Test*. Scholastic, 2017.

<http://wendyshang.com/>; <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/authors/madelyn-rosenberg/>

Two warring grandmothers, one Chinese, one Jewish, make David’s life miserable as they fight over his upbringing and cultural awareness. A look at the way families try to preserve their culture against the pressure to assimilate and conform to fit in.

Shang, Wendy. *The Great Wall of Lucy Wu*. Scholastic, 2010.

<http://wendyshang.com>

Lucy is coming into her own as she heads into 6<sup>th</sup> grade, a basketball star and about to get her own room (her sister is going off to college). But her life gets derailed when her parents invite a long lost great aunt from China to come and live with them. This is a story about family, traditions, self-awareness, empathy.

## Young Adult

Reynolds Jason and Brendan Keily. *All American Boys*. Atheneum, 2015

<http://www.jasonwritesbooks.com/>

Two teens—one black, one white—deal with the repercussions of a single violent act that leaves their school, their community, and, ultimately, the country bitterly divided by racial tension. A simple bag of chips is the catalyst for a terrible racial incident and this story shows how easily an incident can escalate when bigotry is involved. Powerful book to bring to class discussions.

Reynolds, Jason. *Long Way Down*. Atheneum, 2017.

Will, age 15, is ready to avenge his brother's death with a gun hidden in their shared room. On the ride down in the elevator, each floor brings a new passenger from his past, a past filled with death and revenge. Powerful novel-in-verse filled with seismic revelations.

Russo, Meredith. *If I was Your Girl*. Flatiron Books. 2016.

<http://www.pickmyya.com/single-post/2016/10/23/Beyond-The-Bio-Meredith-Russo>

Amanda is starting a new school with a secret. As she makes new friends, her secret gets scarier, especially when she meets Grant. The secret she is hiding is that she used to be called Andrew. How can she be who she was meant to be when she must hold the secret close? Not a one issue book, this is a classic coming-of-age, and very heartfelt as the author is also transgender.

Thomas, Angie. *The Hate U Give*. HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray, 2017.

<http://angiethomas.com/books>

“The book emphasizes the need to speak up about injustice. That’s a message that will resonate with all young people concerned with fairness, and Starr’s experience will speak to readers who know Starr’s life like their own and provide perspective for others.” *BCCB* \*review

Watson, Renee. *Piecing Me Together*. Bloomsbury, 2017.

[www.reneewatson.net/](http://www.reneewatson.net/)

Jade is glad to be going to a better school, but she isn't thrilled with all the opportunities given her that she doesn't feel are necessary. Teamed up with a mentor who also attended her school, she rails at everyone trying to lift her up. She has big dreams, and wants more than anyone knows. She must learn that her opportunities are very special and other girls are jealous of her. She realizes that there are limited resources for everyone, and she must share, grow and learn from all that comes her way. Author of *This Side of Home*, another novel of African American families set in Portland, OR.

Yoon, Nicola. *The Sun is Also a Star*. Delacorte Press, 2016.

<http://www.nicolayoon.com/#welcome-new>

One day in New York City is all it takes for Natasha and Daniel to fall in love. They keep meeting throughout the day and although it seems they don't have anything in common, it is that possibility of interconnectedness that keeps us intrigued. This is Natasha's last day in NYC because her family is about to be deported, while Daniel is a poet, yet trying to fulfill his parents dream of a college education heading into medicine. It is a story of immigrants, hope, and the promise that the United States offers.

## NONFICTION

### Young readers

Eggers, Dave. *Her Right Foot*. Illustrated by Sawn Harris. Chronicle Books, 2017.

<http://www.chroniclebooks.com/titles/her-right-foot.html>

Describing the Statue of Liberty, Eggers reminds us that she is walking, and we know this by the way her right foot is sculpted. Where is she walking? He writes: “In welcoming the poor, the tired, the struggling to breathe free, she is not content to wait. She must meet them in the sea.”

Levy, Debbie. *I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark*. Illustrated by Elizabeth Baddeley. Simon & Schuster, 2016.

<http://debbielevybooks.com/about>

An introduction to the life of this Supreme Court Justice who, from an early age, would not be “pigeon-holed”. Timely in terms of interest in the court and the emphasis on empowering women. We are reminded that she was an immigrant, and of the verbs applied to her: objected, resisted, dissented, disagreed, disapproved, and different.

Ransome, Lesa Cline. *Before She was Harriet*. Illustrated by James Ransome. Holiday House, 2017.

[lesaclineransome.com](http://lesaclineransome.com)

Beginning with Harriet as an old woman (described in images and words), the author "erases the wrinkles" and takes us back through her life in poetry that describes her work as a suffragist, a General, a spy, a nurse, an aunt, a conductor and always a woman of courage and integrity as both Ransomes describe through their thoughtful word choice (Lise's) and evocative and memorable illustrations (James').

Stanley, Diane. *Ada Lovelace, Poet of Science; The First Computer Programmer*. Illustrated by Jessie Hartland. Simon & Schuster, 2016.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diane\\_St Stanley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diane_St Stanley)

A hundred years before the dawn of the digital age, Ada Lovelace envisioned the computer-driven world we know today. And in demonstrating how the machine would be coded, she wrote the first computer program. She would go down in history as a footnote. Important women's history, important to note how women contributed in the sciences.

Weatherford, Carole Boston. *The Legendary Miss Lena Horne*. Illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon. Atheneum Books, 2017.

<https://cbweatherford.com>

The life of Lena Horne, the pioneering African American actress and civil rights activist, inspires readers to see how one must carry on to fight discrimination. “*You have to be taught to be second class; you're not born that way.*” Lena Horne quote from the book.

Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library*. Illustrated by Eric Velasquez. Candlewick, 2017.

Amid poets, authors, and artists of the Harlem Renaissance was an Afro–Puerto Rican law clerk. His life’s passion was to collect books, letters, music, and art from Africa and the to bring to light the achievements of people of African. When Schomburg’s collection became too big he turned to the New York Public Library. A century later, his groundbreaking collection, known as the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, is known to scholars all over the world.

### **Middle Grade and Up**

Aronson, Marc and Marina Budhos. *Eyes of the World; Robert Capa, Gerda Taro and the Invention of Modern Photojournalism*. Henry Holt, 2017.

[www.marcaronson.com](http://www.marcaronson.com)

[www.marinabudhos.com](http://www.marinabudhos.com).

Written by a husband and wife team, this is a look at a gifted couple who “grew” into their professional lives together yet maintained their own style and influence. This ambitious book covers the issues/battles of the Spanish Civil War and the roles of both subjects in photographing it and attempting to sway public opinion. Readers may be surprised at how they changed/challenged the rules of how photographs were presented. Lots to ponder and discuss.

Bausum, Ann. *The March Against Fear; The Last Great Walk of the Civil Rights Movement and the Emergence of Black Power*. National Geographic, 2017.

<http://www.annbausum.com/>

This march, begun by James Meredith in 1966 became a focal point for diverging viewpoints represented by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Stokely Carmichael. Bausum shows the conflicts within the civil rights movement and how this march which should have been considered one of the greatest events of the civil rights movement became overshadowed because of some of the splits (with the new term Black Power) and also because of the rising focus on a place called Vietnam.

Davis, Kenneth C. *In the Shadow of Liberty: The Hidden History of Slavery, Four President and Five Black Lives*. Henry Holt and Co., 2016.

<http://dontknowmuch.com/>

Through the powerful stories of five enslaved people who were “owned” by four of our early presidents, this book helps set the record straight about the role slavery played in the founding of America. From Billy Lee, valet to George Washington, to Alfred Jackson, faithful servant of Andrew Jackson, these narratives explore our country’s great tragedy—that a nation “conceived in liberty” was also born in shackles.

Marrin, Albert. *Uprooted: The Japanese American Experience During World War II*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2016.

<http://www.albertmarrin.com/>

This is a close look at the history of racism in America **and** Japan and carefully follows the treacherous path that led one of our nation’s most beloved presidents to make the decision to

imprison U.S. citizens for no other reason than race while, Japan struggles with racism and xenophobia, which led to the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *Brown v. Board of Education: A Fight for Simple Justice*. Holiday House, 2017

<http://susangoldmanrubin.com/>

While this famous Supreme Court decision is known by one case name, it was really a combination of cases involving several states and looking at the larger issue of racial inequality beyond just segregated schools. Background is given as well as what happened after the decision was handed down and the ways in which those in power worked to defeat it.

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *Maya Lin: Thinking with my Hands*. Chronicle, 2017

While Maya Lin is perhaps best known for her design of the Vietnam Memorial, she has done many landscape designs as well as buildings. Rubin traces the influences on her life and how she has uniquely approached every project.

Sheinkin, Steve. *Undefeated: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team*.

Roaring Book/MacMillan. 2017.

<http://stevesheinkin.com/>

This ambitious book takes on the subjects of the early history of football, the Carlisle Indian School and its goal of taking the Indian out of Native children and the life, successes and struggles of the legendary Jim Thorpe as well as Pop Warner.

Stelson, Carin. *Sachiko: A Nagasaki Bomb Survivor's Story*. Carolrhoda Books, 2016.

<http://www.carenstelson.com/>

The true story of six-year-old Sachiko Yasui's survival of the Nagasaki atomic bomb on August 9, 1945 and the heartbreaking and lifelong aftermath.

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