

WINTER 2022

35 recommended titles
for reading & gifting

IRW Booklist

Est. 2014



IRW publishes an annual summer & winter Booklist with our recommendations for the best new picture books, middle grade reads, graphic novels, and YA books, as well as our selection of Mock Newbery picks from our student book club. The Winter 2022 Booklist is our 20th publication!

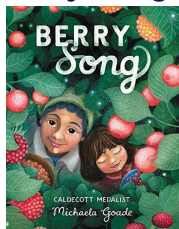
This year, you can use IRW's affiliate link on [BOOKSHOP.ORG](https://www.bookshop.org) to purchase any of the books on the Booklist, and 10% of your purchase will support our programming! [BOOKSHOP.ORG](https://www.bookshop.org) is an online bookseller that supports independent bookstores and nonprofits.

HAPPY READING!

PICTURE BOOKS

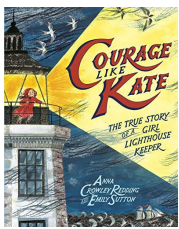
Picture books are for everyone! Want some tips for creating the very best storytime? Visit IRW's free resources over on [BENDABLE.COM](https://www.bendable.com).

Berry Song by Michaela Goade



A Tlingit girl and her grandmother sing a berry song as they forage and harvest berries on an island. Grandma tells her, "We take care of the land, as the land takes care of us." Rich imagery and plenty of sensory words evoke feelings of wonder and gratitude in this story about reciprocity. Michaela Goade's rich, magical illustrations bring the forest to life as the seasons (and so the berries) change. Be sure to sing aloud the berry names during story time, practice saying *Gunalcheesh* (pronounced *gu-nall-chaish*) and use the back matter in this book to learn about the author's culture that inspired this story.

**Courage Like Kate* by Anna Crowley Redding



As a young girl, Kate loves to help her father with his lighthouse keeper duties. When he is too old to tend the lighthouse alone, Kate decides she's the girl for the job. She faces the rickety walkway to the lighthouse tower, and the nasty wind and seaspray that nearly knock her over. She climbs winding stairs to the large lamps that need oil and diligent tending. Kate is brave, and the steady glow of the lighthouse's lamp saves many lives. This richly illustrated book tells the inspiring story of a real woman, Kathleen Moore, who became the official lighthouse keeper on Fayerweather Island in 1871.

The Coquíes Still Sing by Karina Nicole Gonzalez



This is a beautiful picture book about a family's resilience in the face of a natural disaster — hurricane Maria, in Puerto Rico. Beautifully illustrated, it skillfully evokes a child's feelings of love of family, community, and environment, their loss and their rebirth. Empathy for others

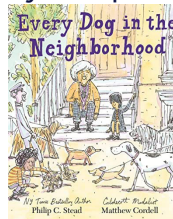
and hope for the future are the central messages of the book. The *coquíes* are frogs whose continued singing is a metaphor for the undying strength of the people. The story is supported by factual information about the island, the enduring impacts of hurricane Maria which hit in 2017, climate change, and how to be involved with organizations that can aid Puerto Rico's recovery.

***A Day in the Life of a Caveman, a Queen, and Everything in Between* by Mike Barfield & Jess Bradley



This book is well-disguised as a comic book, with hand-written-style letters, dialogue bubbles, and colorful drawings, but it is actually a clever history book. Every parent loves educational entertainment, and this book qualifies. Moving chronologically and jumping all around the world, the book uses the "Day in the life of..." format not just for people like gladiators, female emperors and ancient olympians, but for objects as well, like a dead sheep, a wheel, or the letter "V." Interesting facts and humor are intertwined, and maps and a glossary are helpful aspects of the book. If you know a youngster who'd like to know who invented toilet paper, what life was like for a robot maker in Turkey in the 13th century, or a cat in ancient Egypt, or how a wooden board felt when Leonardo da Vinci painted on it, this book will answer those and many more questions.

Every Dog in the Neighborhood by Philip C. Stead, illustrated by Matthew Cordell



When a little boy named Louis discovers city hall doesn't keep records of the dogs in his neighborhood, his grandma convinces him to gather the information himself. Thus begins an adventure around the neighborhood where Louis will meet big dogs, small dogs, good dogs, bad dogs, and even dogs that are helpers for humans. Meanwhile we discover that Grandma has been working on a surprise for Louis, and a special project for all the local dogs. This sweet book touches on the love between humans and their pets, and the importance of taking matters into your own hands to get things done.

What is the Whole Book Approach?

The Whole Book Approach asks children to look at books in their whole art form, including examining the endpapers, the jacket, the cover. By asking open-ended questions about the book and its visuals, we can create an interactive, rich learning experience.

* New books from IRW Alumni Authors & Illustrators

** Our picks for Whole Book Approach

*** *Farmhouse* by Sophie Blackall



In one long, beautiful sentence, Sophie Blackall tells us the (true!) story of a family with twelve children who once lived in a farmhouse, and what became of that house when the very last child grew old and moved away. Intricate details (tiny handprints on the walls, a framed photo of the real family hanging in the hall, the

family's white cat) are crafted from a collage of materials that Blackall herself salvaged from the real home. This tearjerker story about the timelessness of our stories—big and small—is sure to be an enduring favorite.

** *Hot Dog* by Doug Salati



Summer is busy, noisy, and sweltering in the city—what's a hot dog to do?! This dog's owner knows just the remedy for feeling overwhelmed: a trip to the beach, to run in the sand and chase the waves in the cool ocean air. This book is almost-wordless, with charming, evocative illustrations.

Anyone who has ever met a dachshund will recognize the characteristic side-eye! *Hot Dog* focuses on the power of being understood and cared for—like a great big sigh of relief, or your best-ever beach day.

Marcel's Masterpiece by Jeff Mack



Who decides what can be art? Could a *toilet* be art?! This intriguing picture book uses Marcel Duchamp's 1917 exhibit of a toilet at the Grand Central Palace in New York City to explain the art movement Dadaism using a lot of toilet humor (very appropriate!). There are many puns and jokes that kids will appreciate.

A pick for budding artists, it might be a real eye-opener, facilitate some interesting family discussions, and enhance future art museum visits. You might risk getting a piece of fruit duct-taped to your wall, though!

** *Night Lunch*

by Eric Fan, illustrated by Dena Seiferling



In the hazy pre-dawn hours, a mysterious cook makes meals for a host of animal guests. Sniffing noses, growling bellies, and wafting smells fill the streets as animals flock to Night Owl's lunch cart. When poor, street-sweeping Mouse approaches, will he be treated with kindness, or will he become a night lunch himself?! This dreamy, ethereal

story, inspired by Victorian lunch wagons and dark city streets, is ultimately one of kindness and generosity. (Check out those endpapers!)

Old Friends

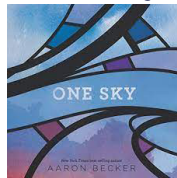
by Margaret Aitken, illustrated by Lenny Wen



Desperately missing her granny, Marjorie decides to go undercover as an old lady at the local Senior Citizens Friends Group. After all, where else could she make friends who love baking, knitting, and gardening as much as she does? Soon Marjorie is having a blast enjoying her hobbies with her new friends! Keeping up her disguise is tricky though, and what will happen if Marjorie's true age is revealed? This

adorable picture book explores important themes such as loss, intergenerational friendship, and the importance of just being yourself.

** *One Sky* by Aaron Becker

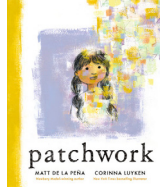


Mesmerizingly beautiful, Aaron Becker takes readers on a journey of light throughout the day. The story is lyrical and enjoyable to read for parents and children alike. The use of colors, black lines, and stained glass type die-cuts with jewel-toned panes is quite effective in mimicking the progress and changes in light as the day wears on.

The text and illustrations invite readers to talk about what they see not only within the pages of the book, but also in the world around them. Be sure to add this one to your rotation!

Patchwork

by Matt De La Pena, illustrated by Corinna Luyken



In this beautifully illustrated picture book, Matt De La Pena & Corinna Luyken uncover the true colors that live inside each and every child. While society often places people into boxes—especially when it comes to gender at birth (pink, blue)—Patchwork uncovers these societal biases in acknowledging that we are all really a patchwork of colors,

full of unique and intricate talents. Not one person is alike, but we all bring something special to share with the world. And that special talent is like “a symphony” of color. The illustrations are powerful and unique and relate to the overall theme. The end captures the essence of the book's message: that like a patchwork, “we are beautiful.”

** *Playtime for Restless Rascals*

by Nikki Grimes, illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon



Nikki Grimes and Elizabeth Zunon hone in on the wonderful world of play in this exciting picture book filled with letters that curve throughout the pages and words that jump out in fun, bright colors. The story begins with a child waking up for a new day and the mother declaring “it's time for

work,” and the work is, play. As the story continues, we follow the child through the wonderful world of play, from season to season, in the home, playing independently, and with mom and dad. This book emphasizes the importance of play in an exciting way that many readers will have fun experiencing.

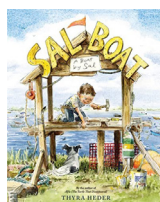
Poopsie Gets Lost by Hannah E. Harrison



In *Poopsie Gets Lost*, we follow pampered kitty Poopsie as the narrator leads her on a wild adventure outside. Poopsie gets more than she bargained for, however, when she has to survive wild animals and jungle terrain! It turns out she has a tough and clever side, but is that enough to get her

home safely? Children and adults alike will enjoy the playful banter between Poopsie and the narrator in this fun adventure story.

** *Sal Boat: A Boat By Sal* by Thyra Heder



Sal wants a boat of his very own, and is determined to build one himself. He scours the town for spare materials from family and neighbors, who are eager to help. There's a little confusion about the direction of the boat's design, and whether it will be successful (or seaworthy) but just when Sal is ready to give up, the community rallies to make his dream come true! Charming watercolor illustrations overlaid with sketched in notes and pencil marks give us a glimpse into Sal's creative vision. *Sal Boat* is a love letter to small seaside towns and trusting the process.

Sometimes I Grumblesquinch

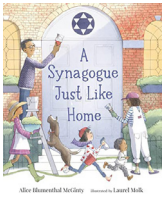
by Rachel Vail, illustrated by Hyewon Yum



Katie is a pleasure—everyone thinks so! She's a good sport when it comes to playing soccer with friends, or not getting her favorite ice cream cone. But when it comes to her annoying little brother, Katie can't seem to *grumblesquinch* her feelings of frustration down inside. Soon, Katie's feelings are exploding in a BIG way. But Katie's Mom knows the importance of talking about how you feel and what you need, even if it means you can't *always* be a pleasure. A wonderful book about big feelings and how to talk about them, especially for older children adjusting to new younger siblings.

A Synagogue Just Like Home

by Alice Blumenthal McGinty, illustrated by Laurel Molk



Rabbi Ruben is troubled by the state of the synagogue: the windows are drafty, the floors are creaky, and the faucet drips! Determined to make the synagogue a home in time for Shabbat, he gets to work fixing things up. The well-intentioned Rabbi soon discovers that in order to get the work done (and make sure the Shabbat candles don't blow out again) he'll need some help. After all, a home is about helping, sharing, and caring. Warm, detailed illustrations give this book a sweet, cozy feeling, and a glossary of terms in the back will educate any readers who have yet to visit a synagogue.

*Telling Stories Wrong

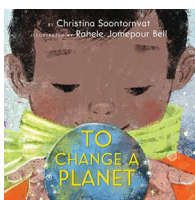
Written by Gianni Rodari, illustrated by Beatrice Alemagna



Translated from the Italian by Antony Shugaar. Granddaughter wants to hear her grandfather tell her the story of *Little Red Riding Hood*, but Grandpa can't quite seem to get it right. Little Green Riding Hood? Take a what to whose house?! Little Red Riding Hood never met a giraffe! Playful speech bubbles, creative use of the gutter, and grandfather's slip-ups will have little readers giggling. An ode to storytimes together, mischievous storytellers, and the exacting listeners who know how a story *should* be told!

To Change a Planet

by Christina Soontornvat, illustrated by Rahele Jomepour Bell



This picture book tackles a big issue—climate change—and explains our impact on the planet in a way that's easy to understand. This book champions the big impact that even one small person can have, especially when we join together. Colorful, detailed illustrations reflect the beauty of our world and of collective action. An empowering, hopeful story.

*A Very Mercy Christmas

by Kate DiCamillo, illustrated by Chris Van Dusen

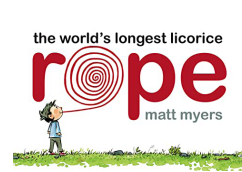


Stella Endicott was filled with joy—she thought something magical could happen! Stella decided to go Christmas caroling and invite others to join her, but the residents of Deckawoo Drive were too busy and uninterested. It seemed that only the neighborhood animals would keep her company while caroling. Despite her disappointment,

Stella begins to sing anyway, and is joined by some unconventional voices! Soon, the neighborhood is filled with music, gazing up at the starry night. Fans of *Mercy Watson* will love this holiday offering!

*The World's Longest Licorice Rope

by Matt Myers

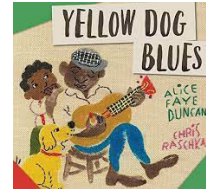


One boy's search to find the end of the world's longest licorice rope will take him through a series of silly adventures where he's routinely helped out by a friend...for a price! Readers will giggle their way through pages, following the licorice rope, to find a sweet message about friendship at its end.

**Yellow Dog Blues

by Alice Faye Duncan, illustrated by Chris Raschka

One morning, Bo Willie finds his doghouse empty and the gate wide open! He



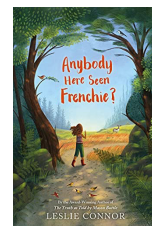
embarks on a winding journey through the Mississippi Delta to find his missing dog, bumping into landmarks from musical history along the way. *Where, where did that Yellow Dog go?* Woven through with soulful, swinging lyrics, multimedia textile art makes up Bo Willie's quest to find his lost yellow dog. Be sure to check out the endmatter with its embroidered typography details!

MIDDLE GRADE BOOKS

Anybody Here Seen Frenchie?

by Leslie Connor

Aurora and her best friend make a great pair: Aurora is chatty and forever blurt-



ing things out, and Frenchie, who is autistic, is nonverbal. They've always been in the same classroom together—until this year. One morning, Frenchie doesn't show up for class. Where's Frenchie?! Aurora may be the only person who can find him. *Anybody Here Seen Frenchie?* is a big-hearted mystery story about friendship. This book is set in the woods of Hancock County, ME, and local readers will recognize many landmarks on the book's map!

The Last Mapmaker

by Christina Soontornvat

This high-seas adventure follows a young woman as she grapples with her past

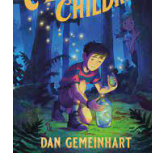


and her dreams in a Thai-inspired fantasy kingdom. Twelve year-old Sai is an assistant to the kingdom's mapmaker, and when her family's secrets threaten to come to light, she jumps at the opportunity to head off on an adventure charting the southern seas. Much-praised Christina Soontornvat has given us another beautiful, complex coming of age story.

The Midnight Children

by Dan Gemeinhart

Lonely, bullied, and friendless, Ravani is awake at his window to see a mysterious band of seven children enter the



abandoned house next door. As he wonders where the adults are and why they do not turn on any lights, he secretly hopes one of them may become his friend. Virginia turns out to be just the friend he needs and he, in turn, is equally needed by her. Ravani does all he can to help the children after learning their secret and being allowed into their "family," even when the stakes are high, and danger is lurking. This book—of friendship, courage, community and what makes a family—is a must read!

Northwind by Gary Paulsen



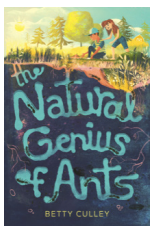
When a deadly plague reaches the small fishing camp where he lives, an orphan named Leif is forced to take to the water in a cedar canoe. Leif's journey will take him deep into the wilderness, through natural dangers and wonders. Readers who love the outdoors and survival stories (like Paulsen's *Hatchet!*) or mythology and folklore will love this final masterpiece from the late, great Gary Paulsen.

The Ogress and the Orphans by Kelly Barnhill



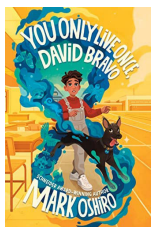
When a library burns down, it sets off a chain of events in this fantasy: an orphan, Cass, runs away only to be rescued by an ogress. When a terrible misunderstanding happens, local townspeople begin to turn against the ogress, and Cass will have to work to help her rescuer and heal her community. Readers will be reassured of a happy ending, all while grappling with big, real-world problems around understanding and acceptance.

The Natural Genius of Ants by Betty Culley



Harvard, his little brother Roger, and their dad decide to spend some time in Kettle Hole, Maine, to give Harvard's dad some time to heal after a traumatic experience. They all get deeply involved in building and observing an ant farm—a project that teaches more life lessons than they ever could have predicted. Harvard befriends Neveah Knowles, a girl who has her own healing to do, having recently lost her mother. This is a great read for anyone who loves getting clues for how to live from the natural world that they're a part of.

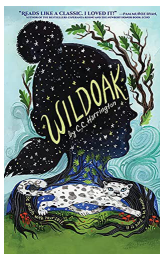
You Only Live Once, David Bravo by Mark Oshiro



Is there a moment in your life that you wish you could redo? David Bravo, a new middle grade student who is uncertain of his place in life, gets the chance to change what he did in the past in this genre-bending middle grade book. The time-travel element gives the book another dimension that will give it appeal to sci-fi fans. The characters are complex—David is adopted and part of his journey involves

honest conversations with his adopted parents, his classmates, and his friends about where he comes from, the role that your heritage and family tree play in your identity, and what it means to choose your own identity. The book is dedicated to adopted kids, but many readers will enjoy David's story.

Wildoak by C.C. Harrington, illustrated by Diana Sudyka



This timeless and wonderful book about a girl who stutters, a lost snow leopard, and an old growth forest, shows us the interconnectedness of all things. When Maggie is sent to the country to spend time with her grandfather, she hopes it will help cure her stuttering and keep her father from sending her to an institution. While getting to know her eccentric grandfather, she also comes to know and understand the trees in the forest nearby and the wild

creature that has been released there. With the forest under attack by development and her new friend being hunted by the villagers, Maggie must be strong and speak up for the things she loves—and for herself too.

YOUNG ADULT BOOKS

**Ain't Burned All the Bright Yet by Jason Reynolds and Jason Griffin



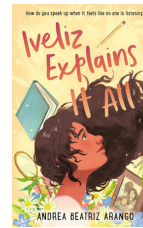
This book is a brilliant mash-up of art and text, created by two real-life best friends, that tells the story of a black boy and his family living through 2020—the early months of Covid-19 and the wave of civil rights protests that followed. This book uses the theme of oxygen to explore these experiences in our not-so-distant history. A gripping, emotional-but-hopeful story that sometimes hits too-close to home, *Ain't Burned All the Bright Yet* is a must for older middle grade and high school students.

All My Rage by Sabaa Tahir

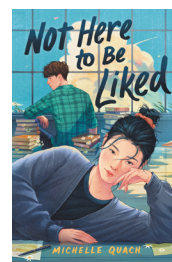


Noor and Salahudin are seniors that don't have the privilege of facing only one problem at a time. First off, they are best friends, who almost had a thing there for a minute before Salahudin was a jerk, so now there is unsettling tension between them. After that, Salahudin loses his mother and is left with an unhelpful father, and Noor's guardian uncle treats her very poorly (to say the least). Add adult-level financial problems, employment woes, vicious racism toward their Pakistani heritage, drug and alcohol addiction and how they ruin their family lives, and who even has time to think about what they're supposed to do once they graduate from high school?

Iveliz Explains It All! by Andrea Beatriz Arango, illustrated by Alyssa Bermudez



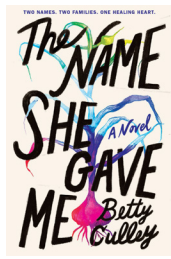
It's not easy being a 12-year-old seventh grader! Iveliz Margarita Snow Medina had such high hopes for the new school year. But what can you do when people won't pronounce your name correctly (It's Ee-veh-lease!!) or make fun of your wild hair? Iveliz' outbursts of anger at school get her into a lot of trouble. Her Mami, now a single parent, tries her best to be of help, although she has difficulty expressing her emotions, and Mimi, her grandmother, has Alzheimer's Disease. In therapy sessions, Iveliz works on writing in her journal, breathing, or counting back from 10 to "unfreeze" her brain during periods of stress. In time, Iveliz begins to find her voice through her journaling and poetry writings, as well as through her interactions with others. How important it is to speak up! Ask for help! Ask for love! She learns that people who really love you will stay by your side.



Not Here to Be Liked by Michelle Quach

Willoughby High School junior Eliza Quan is the perfect candidate for *The Bugle's* next editor-in-chief. She has all of the qualifications to lead the student newspaper and is running undefeated—until popular jock Len DiMartile tosses his hat into the race. After a viral essay turns Eliza into a feminist icon, she and Len are forced to work together on a project while she schemes to take down the patriarchy. As Eliza's plans evolve, so does an unwitting crush. Does her new love interest contradict everything she stands for, and will the editor-in-chief position go to the most deserving candidate? This humorous and engaging story touches on topics such as feminism, friendship, teenage romance, and identity. Some mature language and situations, recommended for high school readers.

The Name She Gave Me by Betty Culley



Sixteen year-old adoptee Rynn is searching for clues to her past. Living on a garlic farm in Maine with her soft-spoken father and her unpredictable mother, she contents herself with babysitting and friends, but wonders about her birth family. Forced to wait until she is 28 to receive any records related to her birth, Rynn uses one of the few clues she has,—her birth name, Scheherazade—to find answers. Rynn's journey to love and acceptance is complex and nuanced. Culley's lived history with foster care and adoption deepens this expertly woven narrative.

Thank you to our Volunteer Readers!

Kelsey Buckley, Jean Evans, Lisa Herrington, Jenna Jandreau, Taylor Mace, Chrissy Marie, Barbara McLeod, Abby Morrow, Melissa Haas, Lauren White

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