Picturebooks

Following her cat through a mysterious door, the young girl in this wordless picturebook sees other children having their own adventures before coming face-to-face with someone very like herself.

We have seen the story of what happens to former slaves as they run for freedom, but what happens to those left behind? A young girl shares the week her brother goes on the run.

A picturebook that explores the lifecycle of crocodiles for the youngest among us. Backmatter includes a short paragraph with more info about crocs and two websites, as well as an index. (NF)

Little Star helps her mother make a very large mooncake but can't resist nibbling at it every night. An author's note on the back flap connects the story to the Asian holiday known as the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival.

Bloom, Boom!, written and photographed by April Pulley Sayre. Beach Lane Books, 2019.
An extended poem celebrating the growing cycle and emergence of spring flowers. Backmatter includes more about featured plants and recommended websites. (NF)

Blue, as a sky, a berry, a puppy, oceans, butterflies, and loyalty. This conceptual poem-like exploration of the color also shares the companionship between a boy and his first dog.

When young Jadav looks around his Indian village after the seasonal rains and see the treeless lands around him, he vows to create change. Thirty years later he has created a sanctuary and earned the name, “The Forest Man of India.” Backmatter includes a brief note about Payeng, as well as directions for planting a seedling. (NF, Biography)
Camp Tiger, written by Susan Choi and illustrated by John Rocco. G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 2019. A routine family camping trip becomes magical when a cold tiger wanders into their camp and asks for a warm place to sleep. After that, he’s one of the family – until the trip comes to an end and he disappears.

*Carmela Full of Wishes*, written by Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson. G.P. Putnam & Sons, 2018. It’s her birthday and she’s finally able to tag along with her older brother – who isn’t sure he wants her with him. As they traverse the town, Carmela imagines all kinds of wishes for the dandelion she’s found, but when it is damaged, her brother finds a way to recapture all the hope of having wishes come true.

*(The) Day You Begin*, written by Jacqueline Woodson and illustrated by Rafael López. Penguin Random House, 2018. Anyone can find differences and build walls, but this book explores what happens the day you begin to open yourself and share your stories. We are more alike than different!


*Found*, written by Jeff Newman and illustrated by Larry Day. Simon & Schuster Books for Young People, 2018. A young girl loses her beloved dog but rescues another one – only to discover that he belongs to someone else. On the way home from returning him, she sees something in a pet store window …

*Game Changers: The Story of Venus and Serena Williams*, written by Lesa Cline-Ransome and illustrated by James E. Ransome. Simon & Schuster books for Young Readers, 2018. The youngest sisters from a family of five girls, Venus and Serena were a year apart in age and everything Venus did, Serena was determined to do, too, including learn tennis, compete on the international stage and eventually even beat her older sister! Backmatter includes an author’s afterword, source notes and a selected bibliography. (NF, Biography)

*Going Down Home with Daddy*, written by Kelly Starling Lyons and illustrated by Daniel Minter. Peachtree Press, 2019. Family reunion day is a bit of a worry for Lil Alan until he figures out the gift he will bring.

*Good Boy*, written and illustrated by Sergio Ruzzier. Atheneum, 2019. A boy and his dog – or maybe a dog and his boy – spend the day together.
A wordless story of how a young urban boy's trip to an art museum leads to an adventure with new (imaginary) inspirational friends and creative self-expression.

Barnett creates a different kind of biography about Margaret Wise Brown, her triumphs, her biting dog, her initial failure to get books into public libraries, and the way she died, asking the question, what is important to know about someone? (NF, Biography)

The author shares the real-life story of how he found a kitten while he was the night watchman for a construction site, and how that kitten became his family’s new pet.

In 1911 at the Pendleton Oregon Round-up, Black cowboy George Fletcher won the day although he never got the prize. Biography includes author’s notes about other contestants, her research, and includes a selected bibliography. (NF, Biography)

My Papi has a Motorcycle, written by Isabel Quintero and illustrated by Zeke Peña. Kokila, 2019.
Daisy and her papi love to zoom and cruise around their home in California, and their trip takes them past the changing neighborhoods while highlighting the love between father and daughter. Spanish words are incorporated into the text as well as present in the illustrations and word bubbles.

This poem tracks the progress of a fetus as it develops into a new baby, and how the family experiences the pregnancy. Backmatter includes brief notes about fetal development, a few animal gestation facts, and a bit about unusual circumstances like twins, premature babies, and miscarriages. (NF, Poetry)

A concept book featuring five multicolored elephants going up/down, in/out, and even round and round.

An extended poem celebrates the start and rise of hip-hop and the names that made it big. An author’s and illustrator's notes follow the poem, as well as short glossary and a “who's who” list of performers. (NF, Poetry)
A picturebook exploration of the beginning of our universe and the fact that we’re all made of stardust from that first big bang.

A celebration of African Americans, athletes to immigrants, who made their mark despite enormous odds. Backmatter includes an afterword by the author as well as brief notes on the historical figures referenced in the poem. (Poetry)

A bi-lingual and colorful trip through the Mercado, where Little Lobo makes many deliveries and brings home as much as he sells! Each page spread features Spanish vocabulary along with the story, and there is a glossary at the end.

* **We are Grateful, Otsaliheliga**, written by Traci Sorell and illustrated by Frané Lessac. Charlesbridge, 2018.
Cherokee people express gratefulness for blessing and struggles all year round in this bi-lingual book featuring insights into Cherokee culture as well as vocabulary words. Backmatter includes a few definitions, a glossary, an author’s note and Cherokee syllabary.

Even though James Otis and his mom are grieving the loss of his dad, and they have nothing themselves, they find a way to give from their heart to a family a little worse off than them.

When Aidan was born everyone thought he was a girl and it took some time for his family to understand the problem. Now, Aidan is about to become an older brother and he wants to find a way to welcome them as the person they want to be. What if he gets it wrong?

Family in children’s lives demonstrate different kinds of strength and when strong feelings come along, that child can draw on those gifts to find their own strength. The extended poem is followed by a note to parents and caregivers from an APA psychologist. There are also short bios for the author and illustrator.
Grades 3-6, Ages 8-11

All the Greys on Greene Street, by Laura Tucker. Viking, 2019.
Ollie’s life is suddenly upset when her father leaves, her mother retreats to her bed, her
dad’s business partner knows something he won’t share, and no one is willing to tell Ollie
what’s going on. There’s a mystery to be solved and all Ollie really wants is to get back to
normal. Backmatter includes an author’s note and related resources about depression.

Beastly Puzzles: A Brain-Boggling Animal Guessing Game, written by Rachel Poliquin
A fun way of looking at familiar animals, using other objects to describe them. Can you
guess what these objects can make when put together? (NF)

Transitioning from home school to public school is tough for 5th grader Emma, as is living
with the possibility that the pet rabbit she has might belong to someone else.

Crossing on Time: Steam Engines, Fast Ships, and a Journey to the New World, by David
Macaulay intertwines his family’s immigration to the United States with the development of
the steam engines that resulted in the ship that brought them to new shores. Backmatter
includes an afterword, timeline, selected readings, and photos of the author. (NF)

Twins Elodee and Naomi and their parents want to leave a tragic past behind them and
start fresh in a place where everything is always okay. They discover that you can’t have
the good without the bad, the joy without the pain.

Langston and his dad move from Alabama to Chicago after his mother’s death, but Chicago
doesn’t feel like home until he discovers the poetry written by his namesake, Langston
Hughes, and discovers the wonder of the Hall Branch Library. An author’s note situates the

Clea’s inattention, time management problems and irritability are getting the better of her
and a doctor’s diagnosis of ADHD only makes this worse – at first. There is an author’s note
about ADHD and resources.

Thanks to bully Chet, Virgil and his pet guinea pig find themselves trapped at the bottom of
an old well. Help comes from unexpected people, including a deaf girl, a young fortune
teller and her sister sidekick.
Knights vs. Dinosaurs, written and illustrated by Matt Phelan. Greenwillow Books, 2018. A bout of boasting causes Merlin to transport some of the Round Table knights back to dino
days, and hilarious battles ensue – or are attempted anyway. A note from Merlin,
transcribed by his owl, of course, provides more (factual) information about the dinosaurs.

Louisiana Elefante’s life is about to change dramatically when her granny starts a midnight
journey and then abandons her in Richford Georgia. As Louisiana comes to terms with that
loss and an even bigger one, she discovers life may have actually changed for the better.

Memphis, Martin, and the Mountaintop: The Sanitation Strike of 1968, written by Alice
Short chapters illuminate the Memphis Sanitation Strike led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,
and its aftermath. Backmatter includes a timeline, a suggested museum, and sources used.
(NF)

Twelve-year-old Sunny has just survived a heart transplant and is now ready to start her
new life. Little does she realize just how big that heart needs to be and how much it holds.

Saving Winslow, written by Sharon Creech with illustrations by Vincent Moustache.
When his dad brings home a baby donkey, Louie names him Winslow and decides it’s his
mission to save him.

Caleb Franklin and his younger brother, Bobby Gene, spend an extraordinary summer with
their new, older neighbor, Styx Malone, a foster boy from the city. (CIP)

Sweeping up the Heart, by Kevin Henkes. Greenwillow, 2019.
Amelia wanted to go to Florida for her 7th grade spring break, but instead finds herself –
and a new friend – in the clay studio. Her widowed dad is also sort of stuck but together
they may be able to find a way back to each other.

(The) True History of Lyndie B. Hawkins, written by Gail Shepherd. Penguin Random
House, 2019.
When twelve-year-old Lyndie and her parents must move to her grandparents’ home in
small-town Tennessee in 1985, having to keep all family problems private only adds to
their problems. (CIP)

Two Brothers, Four Hands: The Artists Alberto and Diego Giacometti, written by Jan
This is a picturebook biography for older readers, of the two Swiss sculptors, siblings
Alberto and Diego Giacometti. Backmatter includes questions for discussion, a timeline of
their lives and work, and a bibliography. (Biography, NF)
**Grades 6-8, Ages 11-13**

Two young Indian girls leave home to escape an abusive father and scrabble together friends and a sort of life on the streets of a city in India.

Min’s brother has been accused of deserting his post, but Min knows there must be more to it. Her adventures across space, through gambling dens, mercenary battles and a planet with ghosts lead her to the answer.

Seventh grade is starting out tough for Shayla; trouble with friends, weird boys with crushes, and an awakening to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Six “different” kids in sixth grade are offered the opportunity to talk to each other, without adults, and the conversations that emerge create a safe harbor for them all.

Thirteen-year-old Ebo leaves his home and makes a dangerous journey to join his sister in Europe, losing his older brother in the process. This is based on real refugee experiences. Backmatter includes a short comic from refugee Helen, as well as an authors and illustrator statement, sketches from the illustrator, and brief bios on the authors and illustrator. (GN)

Lucy is coping with the death of her scientist mother when a freak accident claims the life of her best friend. Learning to let go and move on takes time, community, and sharks.

Ten chapters explore different types of mummies from all over the world, how they were discovered and unearthed, and what they have taught us about ancient times. There is a foreword as well as an afterword that briefly explores different cultures thoughts about exhuming the bodies, a short glossary, selected bibliography and an index. (NF)

Jordan wanted to go to art school when he started 7th grade, but his parents enrolled him in a prestigious program in the upscale part of town where he’s one of a few students of color. Will he be able to navigate the racism and assumptions at home and at school? (GN)

Max thought his family trip to Europe was just that, but he’s enrolled in a Belgian school, and has to repeat 6th grade even though he’s thirteen! Then, one night he discovers that there is someone hiding in the basement who is worse off than he is, and Max resolves to make a difference in Ahmed’s life.
The final assignment in Charlie’s middle school music class is to come up with a song that captures her life at that moment. Mr. K, the music teacher, walks his class through music genres but it is a song sung by Maria Callas that connects with Charlie’s heart, her crush, her need to help a bullied fellow student, and her life right then. (GN)

When the situation in her hometown in Syria becomes dangerous, Jude and her pregnant mother leave her brother and father to move to America. As Jude struggles to navigate a new home, she worries about the family left behind. Backmatter includes a glossary of Arabic words and an author’s note explaining the origins of the story. (Novel in Verse)

It’s a hectic morning as usual in the New York Jones household, where Carter’s mom and three siblings are trying to get ready for the day, when a knock on the door brings a butler into their lives. He isn’t their deployed dad, who has chosen to desert his family, but he is definitely someone worth paying attention to.

After surviving an especially harsh experience in American internment camps during World War II, twelve-year-old Hanako and her family opt to go to her grandparents’ farm outside of Hiroshima, Japan. An author’s note about the history in the book is included.

Sal’s first days at Culeco Academy aren’t promising except for meeting Gabi, the 7th grade student council president, who becomes his sidekick and partner in magic as they use Sal’s ability to reach across dimensions to help make everyone’s lives more interesting.

A father holds his sleeping son as they wait to board a boat, hopefully heading toward a safer life in a different land, and he offers up this poetic prayer for a better future ahead. A brief author’s note connects the story to the anniversary of a three-year-old Syrian refugee’s death by drowning. Based on a video published by The Guardian on August 31, 2017, online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKBNEEY-c3s. (Poetry)

The author discusses how a 1938 radio show convinced Americans that they were being invaded by Martians, and connects it to today’s debates about the role of media and fake news. Backmatter includes illustrations, primary source photos, timeline, bibliography and source notes. (NF)
Fionn and sister Tara are sent to spend the summer with their grandad on the Irish island of Arranmore. The island holds great magic and the connection between Fionn and all that is there is no accident.

Nan Sparrow’s protector has always been the Sweep, but when he fails to return for her one morning, she discovers he has left something in his place, a golem, to protect her and keep her warm.

In 1956 Clinton High School was country-wide news when twelve young Black teens helped integrate the school. Backmatter includes more about the author, Clinton (at the time), a scrapbook, selected bibliography, and timeline of desegregation and civil rights important dates. (NF)

We Rise, We Resist, We Raise our Voices, edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson. Crown Books for Young Readers, 2018.
Thirty children’s authors and illustrators offer words of hope for the next generation, as they see the hate and discrimination around them. Backmatter includes brief bios of the contributors and an index. (NF)

Teen/YA

American Road Trip, by Patrick Flores-Scott. Henry Holt, 2018.
T’s summer plans take a sudden turn when his sister organizes a surprise road trip for them and older brother Manny, just back from Afghanistan and dealing with PTSD. Backmatter includes a page on PTSD resources and a page on the US Department of Veterans Affairs and the Veteran’s Health Administration.

And the Ocean was Our Sky, written by Patrick Ness and illustrated by Rovina Cai. HarperTeen, 2018.
Third Apprentice Bathsheba narrates the story of her captain’s pursuit of the mythical whale-killer known as Toby Wick.

Segregation was forced on Black students in 1950s Indianapolis, Indiana, and out of that decision to oppress came a basketball dynasty made up of African American athletes coached by Ray Crowe. In a “basketball” state, they were their own civil rights fighters. An author’s note explains the genesis of the book, and backmatter includes brief bios of noteworthy former players and coaches, source notes and an index. (NF)
Seventeen African American authors share their fictional short stories about being Black and growing up in America, being themselves, being Black enough.

Blanca and Roja, aka Snow White and Rose Red, know the family history that one of them is fated to be chosen by swans to become a swan herself, leaving the other behind. Both are determined to save the other, but it will take two heroes in addition to the twins to break the curse.

Familiar characters from His Fair Assassin trilogy return for more political intrigue in the 15th century. Genevieve and Sybella, both Death's daughters, trained at the convent of Saint Mortain (Death), find themselves in perilous situations as Brittany tries to maintain its independence from France.

This twist on the Beauty and Beast motif features Crown Prince Rhen and his 21st century kidnap victim, Harper, who must learn to love each other if they are to break the curse on Rhen’s family and save his kingdom at the same time.

Five cousins, descendants of potato farmers, come together for the first time at Easter and realize they’re living their best lives underground. The dead cousin helps them all see what’s going on. Yes, it’s that weird.

Five generations explore the complicated history and relationships of a Liberian/American family living in their birth and adopted countries, never feeling quite at home in either. Back matter includes an author’s note as well as selected resources, a Liberian timeline, and a discussion guide.

Californians have been dealing with water shortages for years, but when the water is turned off, Alyssa’s neighborhood becomes just one of the many battle zones.

This graphic novel offers parallel stories of patriotism. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer was beginning his study of theology, Hitler was beginning his quest to lead Germany and eventually the world. Bonhoeffer’s strong Christian beliefs led him to resist in any way he could, eventually being killed outside a concentration camp two weeks before the Allies arrived. Backmatter includes an author’s note, comments on authenticity and artistic license, as well as a selected bibliography, and an index. (GN, NF, Biography)
Born out of the 2017 California wildfires as a webcomic, Fies recounts his personal story of
he and his wife being caught in the conflagration and losing everything. Backmatter
includes other information about resources and the events of that time. (NF, GN)

Séverin, whose house was cast out of the Order of Babel, has been asked by them to find
certain artifacts whose power is limitless. Little do they know that there are others on the
trail and if Séverin doesn’t get their first, it will be the end of civilization as they know it.

Followed by Grandpa Ed in his RV and backed by her brother and friends, Annabelle,
eighteen, runs from Seattle to Washington, D.C., becoming a reluctant activist as people
connect her journey to her recent trauma. (CIP)

Hey, Kiddo: How I Lost My Mother, Found My Father, and Dealt with Family Addiction,
Renown author and illustrator Krosoczka shares his difficult upbringing: living with
grandparents while his mother battled heroin addiction, never knowing his father until his
late teens, and using his art to connect with a brother and sister he didn’t know he had.
(GN, NF, Autobiography)

The one bright spot in Lena’s life, after her parents’ death and her stay in the mental
hospital, is her weekly visit to Uncle Erich the writer. One day he disappears and Lena’s life
becomes a mission to outwit the East German government and find him. A foreword and
afterword situate the story and indicate which parts were based on real events and places.

Sixteen-year-old Biz sees her father every day, though he died when she was seven. When
he suddenly disappears, she tumbles into a disaster-land of grief and depression from
which she must find her way back. (CIP)

This is a graphic novel adaptation of the famous Homer epic, told in everyday language.
Backmatter includes an author’s note, page notes, a map of the armies at Troy, and a
bibliography. (GN)

Seventeen-year-old Layla Amin and her family, along with hundreds of other Muslim
American citizens, have been forced into an internment camp. As the world looks on, Layla
and an increasing number of allies on both sides of the fence try to close the camp down.
There is an author’s note connecting the story to historical and recent government actions.
Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me, written by Mariko Tamaki and illustrated by Rosemary Valero-O’Connell. First Second, 2019.
Freddy loves the super-cool Laura Dean but focusing on their on-again/off-again relationship keeps her from seeing how much her true best friend needs her. (GN)

Twenty-four women’s portraits are surrounded by key words about their lives and contributions. At the back of the book the author offers birth, death, and key moments for each accomplished woman. (NF)

Jordan and Max find themselves in charge of the Coq au Vinny, Jordan’s deceased dad’s food truck, and the immediate goal is to try to raise money for the mortgage. But there’s also coping with parental flaws, learning to heal, and maybe falling in love.

Mia meets Grace while in boarding school, but Grace leaves to return to her endangered home. Five years later, Mia is part of a space restoration crew, but she’s never forgotten Grace and now she’s able to go after her. (GN)

Bri is looking for a way to break into the hip hop scene, just like her deceased father, who had an underground following. Her voice is strong and unflinching, and it gets her in trouble, but she’s determined to make it good.

The autobiography of fencing bronze medalist Muhammad, the first woman to wear a hijab while competing for the US in the Olympics. Backmatter includes an epilogue, a glossary of fencing terms, and a Q&A session with the athlete. (NF, Biography)

“Beware of the woods and the dark, dank deep. He’ll follow you home, and he won’t let you sleep.” Generations of Sawkill Rock Island families have lost girls to kidnapping and they’re never found. When new girl Marion’s sister is the latest victim, it falls to two Sawkill girls, Zoey and Val, to reveal the truth.

Paris Secord, aka DJ ParSec, is found dead and when the police trail goes cold, it is left to childhood friend Kya and superfan Fuse to uncover the truth of her death.

Six stories explore the future and consequences of genetic modifications. Each story is a little more advanced in time, and the binding thread is a preacher named Mr. Tadd. An very brief author’s note gives insight into why she wrote the book.
Noah and best friend Walt (aka Swing) are set for their high school junior year, in which they will find their cool and Noah will finally snag long-time crush Samantha. What really happens involves baseball, jazz, and the dark side of patriotism in a small town.

A graphic novel tells the story of Syrian refugees, those who make it and the many who don’t. Backmatter includes additional information on the refugee camps visited by the author, there is also a postscript, source notes, a bibliography, and a poem and painting by Iraqi refugees. (NF, GN)

A retelling, in poetry, of Joan of Arc’s life, from the perspective of Joan, an angel, and quotes from her two trials, the one condemning her and the other absolving her 24 years after her death. Backmatter includes an author’s note on the history and the verse forms used, and there is also a foreword introduction that sets the stage and offers French pronunciations. (Poetry)

Two American girls, one of Japanese descent and the other of German descent, whose families are imprisoned in the Crystal City Internment Camp, come together for a brief friendship before one betrays the other. But was it betrayal or rescue?

Seventeen-year-olds Revna, the daughter of a traitor, and Linné, the daughter of a general, must use forbidden magic to fly planes in wartime despite their deep dislike of each other. (Publisher)

In a society where women are trained to become perfect wives, Primeras and Segundas, Danielle and Carmen are married to the son of a high-ranking advisor to the President. Carmen comes from the upper class, but Danielle would be ruined if the truth came out about her humble beginnings. When she is contacted by a revolutionary group intent on overthrowing her new father-in-law’s regime, she must decide if working with them is worth risking her future.

Emoni Santiago, a single teen mom, lives with her abuela, calls her dad in Puerto Rico when abuela makes her, attends high school, cooks like a pro, and just might be in love.