

# 2020 | The White Ravens

A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature



Internationale Jugendbibliothek

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Stiftung  
**Internationale Jugendbibliothek**

# IMPRESSUM

## The White Ravens 2020

A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature

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Copyright © 2020 by Emma AdBåge

Catalogue cover: Copyright © 2019 by Stiftung Internationale Jugendbibliothek | Emma AdBåge's book »Gropen« (The pit) (Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 2018) was selected for »The White Ravens 2019«.

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# PREFACE

With great pleasure, we present to you the 2020 edition of our annual catalogue »The White Ravens«.

This year, the cover features two children sitting comfortably on a sofa. In the warm glow of a lamp, they pass the time reading. A curious raven is peering attentively into their book. This picture was created by Swedish illustrator Emma AdBåge, whose book »Gropen« was selected for the »White Ravens 2019« and she is on the list again with her new book.

The scene depicted by Emma AdBåge shows an interior space. The world remains outside and can only be seen through the window. Perhaps this is a symbol for this year, in which a virus has almost brought normal life to a standstill, at least temporarily, and countless people all over the world have been forced into isolation within their four walls.

Activities in the International Youth Library have also been severely restricted in recent months. Much of what was previously taken for granted and shapes our work was suddenly no longer possible or only to a certain extent. For a time, many international contacts, which are so important to us, were interrupted. We heard from several publishers about the enormous problems and challenges they were, and still are, facing due to the restrictions during the pandemic.

Therefore, we are all the more delighted and grateful that, despite the adversities, publishers, institutions, and organisations, as well as authors and illustrators, have found ways to continue supporting the International Youth Library with donation and review copies of their new publications.

Thanks to their support, we are able to present the 2020 edition of the »White Ravens« catalogue, the most important annual publication of the International Youth Library. It aims to promote quality in children's book publishing and has become an increasingly useful tool for anyone interested in looking beyond national borders. This year, the »White Ravens« contain a selection of 200 notable children's and young adult books from 56 countries published in 36 languages.

As usual, we publish the »White Ravens« prior to the Frankfurt Book Fair. However, since this fair, which is of such importance internationally, is forced to take place mostly in virtual space this year, we decided to produce a digital-only version this time instead of a printed edition. You can download our 2020 catalogue as a PDF file from our website [www.ijb.de](http://www.ijb.de).

In addition to being featured in the catalogue, the reviews, bibliographical data, and book covers are also available in the »White Ravens« database on [whiteravens.ijb.de/list](http://whiteravens.ijb.de/list).



For decades now, all recommended books have been put on display in hard copy at the International Youth Library's booth at the Bologna Children's Book Fair. This tradition allows booth visitors to peruse the books at leisure, leafing through their pages and exploring them. We sincerely hope that we will have this opportunity again in 2021.

Selecting the books for the »White Ravens« list is one of the tasks of our language and children's book specialists. They set aside new publications that catch their attention and strike them as noteworthy and that they want to recommend to an international audience. Books are chosen for the list based on the universal relevance of the themes they address, their literary and pictorial qualities, or their innovative approaches or design.

Our library staff have long relied on various means to acquire a well-grounded overview of the topics, trends, and people involved in current international children's and young adult literature: They read new publications in the original languages, visit important international book fairs, scout and gather information, maintain contact with publishing houses, institutions, organisations, and other experts. In addition, they also engage in conversation with the research fellows at the International Youth Library, foreign scholars who have a profound knowledge of the literature of their home countries.

The library's in-house staff members in Munich cover many literary regions, and freelance readers and advisors are charged with monitoring and tending to further languages and countries. The »White Ravens« catalogue thus presents a unique selection of 200 books that cover a highly diverse range of voices. Its international nature results from the efforts of approximately twenty children's and young adult book experts, who are tasked with sifting through the thousands of books received annually by the International Youth Library.

Once again, a sincere thank you first and foremost to the countless publishers who have been supporting the work of the International Youth Library for decades through their book donations. I also extend my gratitude to all those who have contributed to this catalogue both abroad and here in Munich.

I hope the »White Ravens« fall into the hands of many curious readers, and that these readers make many new discoveries. May the selected books, along with their creators, receive the international attention they deserve. We hope that our work contributes to this goal.

Dr. Christiane Raabe  
Director of the International Youth Library  
September 2020

1



Maḥīdlī, Nabīha (Mheidly, Nabiha) (text)  
Zahr-ad-Dīn, Ḥassān (Zahreddine, Hassan) (illus.)  
**Hikaya tarwiha al-ḥüyūt**  
(Hikaya tarwiha al-khyut)  
(A story told by threads)  
Bairūt (Beirut): Dār al-Ḥadā'iq (Al-Hadaek),  
2018. – [26] p.  
ISBN 978-614-439-155-6

Thread | String | Storytelling | Picture book

A wide variety of threads interweave their stories in this book: One comes from a silkworm and was worked into a silk scarf. Another describes its marvellous spider web. A cotton thread is tucked into a farmer's coat, while a linen thread belongs to a string that's wound about a letter. A "thread of light" describes what it's like to be a thin beam between light and dark, sunrise and sunset. After all have taken turns to tell their stories, the "thread of thought" says: "I have assembled all of you here. Now I will ask a writer to sew a beautiful story out of you that will travel from generation to generation". Nabiha Mheidly's original, poetic story about threads and the art of telling a story by interweaving narratives is a masterpiece both in terms of its form as well as its language. Hassan Zahreddine created enchanting and very aesthetic illustrations to accompany the text, using different printing techniques (etching, drypoint, and aquatint). They nicely reveal the delicate, filigreed structures of the inconspicuous protagonists. (Age: 8+) [AH]

2



Ḥilmī, Mu'min (Helmy, Moemen) (text)  
Dūbīl, Mātiyās (Döbele, Matze) (illus.)  
**Hāla**  
(Aura)  
ad-Dār al-Baiḍā' (Casablanca): Yanbu' al-Kitāb  
(Yanbow al-Kitab), 2019. – [26] p.  
ISBN 978-9920-771-10-8

Emotion | Soul | Colour | Synaesthesia |  
Picture book

A girl named Hala (Aura) possesses the gift of seeing and recognizing other people's inner psychological states and radiations in a very special way. She has the unusual ability to perceive their moods and feelings as a rainbow palette of different colours. They surround people's bodies like halos. Every colour has a different meaning and reflects the state of the person affected. So Hala knows whether someone is happy or sad, cheerful, angry or downtrodden. Hala herself tells the story, which reaches its climax as she notices a sudden alarm-red colour surrounding her classmate Faris just as a strange man is leading him away from the school. Thinking on her feet, Hala prevents the boy's kidnapping. The perceptive story, written in beautiful language, is accompanied by restrained black-and-white pictures in which only the colourful halos of individual people shine forth intensely. (Age: 7+) [AH]



3

'Aṭā' allāh, Nağlā' (Atallah, Najla') (text)

**Sirr As'ad**

(Sir Asad)

(Asad's secret)

Rāmallāh (Ramallah): M'assasat Tāmir lit-ta'lim al-muğtama'i (Tamer Institute for Community Education), 2018. – 128 p.  
ISBN 978-9950-27-000-8

Family | Coming of age

Asad is working in a printer's shop over summer vacation to help his family out financially. The seventeen-year-old lives with his mother, two sisters and four brothers in a camp in Gaza City, while his father sits in prison for reasons unknown to Asad. His difficult life circumstances force the young man to take on a lot of responsibility and grow up early. Still, he has many questions and doubts, faces inner conflict, and must find his own way, because he feels he differs in many ways from most boys his age. Thankfully, an older shopkeeper, Ms. Um Fauzi, is there to offer answers to his questions, and there's also a girl named Houria, who supplies him with interesting books. Using a literary language that feels true to the protagonist, the novel describes Asad's experiences, dreams, and plans for his future. Author Najla Atallah (b. 1987), who hails from Gaza, sensitively and genuinely captures the young man's life as well as the hard reality of the largest Palestinian city. (Age: 14+) [AH]



4

Ḥūršid, Ġikar (Khourchid, Jekar) (text)

Bikdulū, Ġazāla (Bigdelou, Ghazaleh) (illus.)

**al- Ḥimār wa-l-bulbul**

(Al-himar wa al-bulbul)

(The donkey and the nightingale)

Dubai: Dār al-Ālam al-'Arabī (Dar Al-Aalam Al-Arabi), 2019. – 31 p.  
ISBN 978-994-838157-0

Singing | Flying | Cunning | Revenge | Fable | Picture book

This story follows the form of classic animal fables. It begins by portraying the fox as a wily fellow, as is often the case – only, it doesn't last in this case. The fox's victim is a donkey who'd love to sing like a nightingale but only manages to bray, disrupting the fox's nap in the process. When the donkey asks about how to learn to sing like the nightingale, the fox responds: "The nightingale sings so beautifully because it can fly, so to sing like that you must also learn to fly". Following his flying attempt, the donkey unsurprisingly ends up in the hospital with broken bones, where the learned Dr. Ibex explains how he can get his revenge. In the end, the fox founders in virtue of his own vanity and arrogance, plummeting from the sky like Icarus in the Greek myth. Jekar Khourchid tells the story in a lively, humorous and fast-paced way. The text lends itself well to being read aloud and is accompanied by Ghazaleh Bigdelou's double-page colour illustrations, which caricature the animals in comical ways. (Age: 6+) [AH]

ARABIC

Palestine  
United Arab Emirates



5

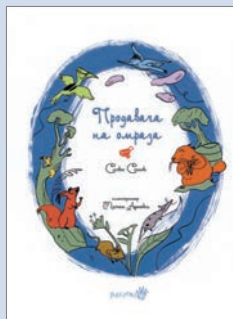


Nikolova, Radostina (text)  
 Eftimova, Hristina (Eftimova, Khristina) (illus.)  
**Šantaviija do šija**  
 (Shantavia do shia)  
 (Totally haywire)  
 [Sofija]: Izdatelstvo Marmot, [2019]. – 160 p.  
 ISBN 978-619-7241-10-5

Rural life | Neighbourhood | Eccentricity |  
 Differentness | Acceptance

This children's book definitely secures Radostina Nikolova (b. 1986) a firm spot in contemporary Bulgarian children's literature. Her children's book series »Adventures of the Moths« was already much loved. Nikolova outdoes herself, though, with this funny story about the twins Lina and Niko and their oddball neighbour. She uses a typical children's literary scenario, pours in a lot of situational comedy and punchy dialogue, and kicks things into high-gear for a fast-paced story: When bossy Lina and nerdy Niko move into a boring village, their strange neighbour Stefania is soon the most interesting object of study. She dresses oddly, lives withdrawn, and there is something amiss with her pets. She may be a sorceress who jinxes humans. After a short time, Lina particularly cultivates a superb enmity toward Stefania, enjoys playing tricks on her and takes her for crazy. But the siblings soon find out what lies behind Stefania's bizarre behaviour. (Age: 8+) [KW]

6



Stoev, Slavi (text)  
 Arkova, Mateja (Arkova, Mateya) (illus.)  
**Prodavača na omraza**  
 (Prodavacha na omraza)  
 (The seller of hatred)  
 [Sofija]: Robertino, 2019. – 52 p.  
 ISBN 978-619-246-003-7

Intrigue | Hatred | Dispute | Gullibility |  
 Manipulation | Community

A hedgehog enters the forest with a cart of »useful« wares: intrigue, hatred, strife. A squirrel asks for them out of curiosity and allows the hedgehog to foment conflict between himself and his friends, the mice: They wanted to steal the squirrel's provisions, the seller claims. The hedgehog eventually pits all the forest's inhabitants against one another, getting something out of each of them for his false information. When the animals realize their mistake in the spring, the hedgehog has already moved on to the next forest. The tale closes with an open end. This is a wonderfully poetic, allegorical story by Slavi Stoev, who as a psychologist knows such emotional triggers and introduces them here in an illuminating way. His tone stays clear and funny, just as Mateya Arkova's illustrations are light but defined. Published by the young publisher Robertino, the book delivers a strong message to not gullibly fall for hateful comments and discordant messages and to arm oneself against all »sellers of hatred«. (Age: 7+) [KW]



7

Chen, Danyan (text)

Echo\_Anjing (illus.)

### **Wo de ma ma shi jing ling**

(A spirit who I call Mom)

Fuzhou: Fu jian shao nian er tong chu ban she (Fujian Juvenile and Children's Publishing House), 2019. – 170 p.

ISBN 978-7-5395-6835-5

Spirit | Mother | Growing up | Fantasy fiction

This is the updated version of a pioneering book of contemporary Chinese children's fantasy writing that was first published in 1998 and has been reprinted repeatedly since then. The story is set in Shanghai. When teenage protagonist Chen Miaomiao accidentally discovers that her mother is a spirit who can fly and who drinks frog blood to survive in the human world, it takes time for her to accept the truth. The day will also come when her mother must return to her own world. The book has an unusual flavour in its integrating of the tradition of Chinese folklore and that of Western fantasies. Chen Danyan, who began publishing in the early 1980s, is best known for her children's books as well as her historical fiction and non-fiction about life in urban Shanghai. Her most representative children's books include the »Nü zhong xue sheng san bu qu« trilogy (The middle-school girls) and »Zai nan de li wu« (The gift of disaster). She is the winner of the Chinese National Award for Outstanding Children's Literature and other children's literature awards. (Age: 9+) [FW, ZX]



8

Huang, Xiaoheng (text)

Guituzi (Liu, Jing) (illus.)

### **Da chuan**

(Big boat)

Beijing: Zhong xin chu ban she (CITIC Press Group), 2019. – [38] p.

(Series: Tong xin kan zhong guo yuan chuang hui ben) ISBN 978-7-5217-1046-5

Rural life | Modernity | Fishing | Boat | Identity | Self-image | Picture book

A big fishing boat built with the purpose of improving living conditions for the people in a small fishing village witnesses the transformation of the village from a remote and poor place to a modern travel resort. Abandoned as useless, the boat nonetheless protects its people from the onset of a catastrophic typhoon and is later converted into the resort's children's funfair. Narrated partly through the boat's perspective, this picture book is about the changes of life in many parts of China and also presents an anthropomorphic story of a silent boat searching for its self-identity. The combination of acrylic and watercolour conveys a unique effect of vibrant brightness, and is reminiscent of the gravity, tenacity, and pleasure of life itself. Huang Xiaoheng is a young children's book writer. Guituzi is the illustrator of »Xue ren« (Snowman) and »Ma tou qin de gu shi« (The story of the horsehead fiddle). »Da chuan« received the Golden Prize of the 2019 Golden Pinwheel Young Illustrators Competition at the Shanghai International Children's Book Fair. (Age: 4+) [FW, ZX]

9



Li, Donghua (text)

Kong que (i.e. Zhao Min) (illus.)

**Yan huo**

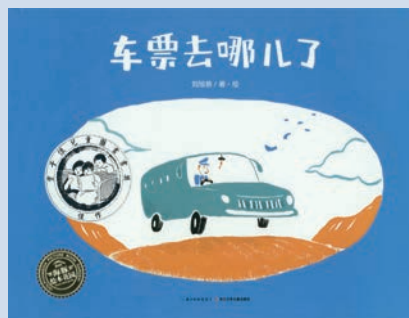
(Firework)

Wuhan: Chang jiang wen yi chu ban she  
(Changjiang Literature and Art Press), 2019. – 197 p.  
(Series: Li Dong hua zhi cheng zhang xi lie)  
ISBN 978-7-5354-9991-2

Adolescence | Leukaemia | School |  
Peer group | Rivalry

Everything is going well for Aimi, the top performing and most popular student. However, the arrival of Hana, that pretty and perfect girl, spoils all of this. Everything changes for Aimi when Hana is around, and she needs to deal with a strange feeling of jealousy deeply buried within her. It eventually turns out that this perfect girl has severe leukaemia. Her life is like the brief moment when a firework bursts into a beautiful sparkling display. The narrative is delicate and accurate in depicting an adolescent's mind and heart. Readers are led through a seemingly common plot of peer rivalry to gain a special glimpse into the tragic side of human life. Li Donghua is a children's literature writer representative of her generation. Her best-known books include »Zhu ben ben de xing fu shi guang« (The happy days of Folly Piggy) and »Shao nian de rong yao« (A boy's honour). Among others, her works have won the Chinese National Award for Outstanding Children's Literature. (Age: 10+) [FW, ZX]

10



Liu, Xugong (text/illus.)

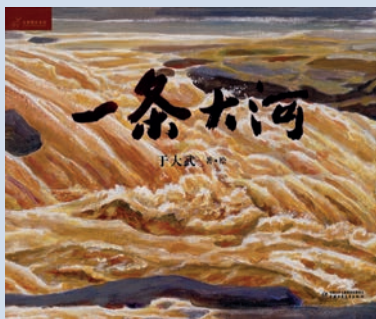
**Che piao qu na er le**

(Where are the tickets?)

Wuhan: Chang jiang shao nian er tong chu ban she (Changjiang Children's Publishing Group), 2020. – [30] p.  
(Series: Hai tun hui ben hua yuan; 585)  
ISBN 978-7-5721-0101-4

Bus | Ticket | Journey | Imagination |  
Picture book

Just as the bus is about to start and the driver asks the passengers to show their tickets, a wind comes up and blows away all the tickets. Everyone on board has to join the driver on his quest to get the tickets back. The wild ride over hill and dale, past volcano islands, around a racetrack and through snow mountains turns into a journey through the whole world, full of surprising visual details inspired by both Eastern and Western cultures. When the tickets are discovered in the place where the sun sets, the journey ends with another surprise, taking the whole story's splendid imaginativeness even further. Liu Xugong (b. 1973) is a children's book writer and illustrator from Taiwan. His picture books include »Dao wu gui guo qu« (Go to Tortoise Country) and »Hao xiang chi liu lian« (I really want to eat a durian) for which he won the Taiwan Hsin-Yi Children's Literature Award. The Taiwanese edition of »Che piao qu na er le« won the Prize of Excellence of the 6<sup>th</sup> Feng Zikai Children's Picture Book Award in 2019. (Age: 3+) [FW, ZX]



11

Yu, Dawu (text/illus.)

### **Yi tiao da he**

(The river)

Beijing: Zhong guo shao nian er tong chu ban she (China Children's Press & Publication Group), 2019. – 43 p. + [10] p.

(Series: Jiu shen lu hui ben guan)

ISBN 978-7-5148-5551-7

Yellow River | China | Geography | Culture | Picture book | Non-fiction

This picture book is a geographical and cultural introduction to the Yellow River (Huang He), referred to by the Chinese as »Mother River« from its source on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau to its mouth at the Yellow Sea on the other side of the country. It is told through the river's perspective and voice, giving the narrative a certain childlike liveliness and playfulness. The illustrations are creative combinations of oil painting techniques and the wide-scope perspectives of traditional Chinese painting, displaying the grandness of the river as well as the people living alongside it. Yu Dawu is known for his illustrations for »Xi you ji« (Journey to the West) and »Nezha nao hai« (Nezha's triumph against Dragon King), which won the 1989 Asia-Pacific Children's Books Illustration Prize of the Asian Cultural Centre for UNESCO. His works have been featured in exhibitions around the world. »Yi tiao da he«, created in the artist's seventies, turned out to be one of the highlights in the emerging trend of non-fiction writing for young children in China. (Age: 4+) [FW, ZX]



12

Huwei (i.e. Francis Wong Hooe Wai) (text/illus.)

### **Xiao xiong de xin yi**

(The little bear's new clothes)

Singapore: Ling zi chuan mei si ren you xian gong si (Lingzi Media), 2019. – 28 p.

(Series: Shi cheng wang shi hui ben xi lie; 7)

ISBN 978-981-47-9177-9

Singapore | Chinatown | History 1960s | Craft | Trade | Childhood memories | Picture book

After »Grandpa's little room« and »Go Trishaw go«, this is the third volume of a picture book series set in Singapore's old Chinatown. While the earlier volumes featured the lives of the author's family in the 1940s and the architecture still existent in the 1960s, »Xiao xiong de xin yi« (Little Bear's new clothes) reflects Huwei's own childhood memories. A boy wants to find someone to sew new clothes for his Teddy bear, but this turns out to be difficult. On his tour through the old shophouses, people of various industries send him elsewhere - a tailor, a calligrapher, a baker, a market woman, a manure collector - until he finds a toy manufacturer who can sew the required items. Retired architect, heritage preservation expert, and writer Huwei, who published his first picture book at the age of 60, records Singapore's Chinese cultural heritage in delicate watercolours, not only out of nostalgia, but also with the intention of preserving knowledge about vanishing crafts and educating the younger generation. (Age: 6+) [LO]

13



Zhang, Youyu (Chang, Yeou-yu) (text)  
Lin, Yixian (Lin, Shain) (illus.)

### **Jiang hu, hai you ren ma?**

*(Is there still anybody in these rivers and lakes?)*

Taipei: Yuan liu chu ban shi ye gu fen you xian gong si (Yuan-Liou Publishing), 2019. – 285 p.  
(Series: Lǚ du yu = Read it!)  
ISBN 978-957-32-8586-1

Martial arts | Friendship | Adventure | Coming of age | Fantasy fiction | Wuxia novel

Wuxia novels about »martial heroes« are a distinct genre of Chinese fiction, set in a fantastical version of ancient China. The associated term »jianghu« (»rivers and lakes«) refers to a community of martial artists or outlaws who live by their own code of chivalry. This is the first martial arts novel of Chang Yeou-Yu, who has authored more than forty highly acclaimed children's novels, and illustrator Lin Shain. It won the 2020 Taipei International Book Fair Award. Niutou village, a seemingly peaceful place, hides a mystery about a disappeared martial artist community. One day, a group of menacing martial arts masters show up and cause a stir in the village. Is there still anybody left in the local »rivers and lakes« community to face them? Will it be one of the two thirteen-year-old friends, one of whom is fond of repairing shoes, while the other is aspiring to become a martial arts master? How fast do they have to grow up now? Will their dreams of heroism affect their friendship? Where will their personal »jianghu« be? (Age: 10+) [LO]

14



Zhou, Yifen (Chou, Yih-Fen) (text)

Zhang, Chao (Wu mao) (illus.)

### **Xue ying nai nai de gu shi**

*(The story of Grandma Snow Flower)*

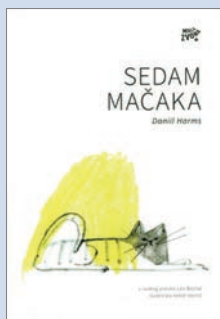
Zhu bei shi: He ying wen hua shi ye you xian gong si (Heryin Books), 2019. – [39] p.  
(Series: Wo men de gu shi xi lie)  
ISBN 978-986-96460-1-7

Taiwan | China | History 1949-2007 | War | Mother | Daughter | Separation | Picture book

Chou Yih-fen, founder and editor-in-chief of Heryin Books, dedicates her newest picture book »to an era, and all those whose destinies were shaped by it«. One of those is Grandma Xueying, whose short-term memory is shaky but who still remembers that time as if it were a painting. Instead of becoming the manager of her mom's teahouse in Suzhou, she goes to Taiwan in 1949 to train as a nurse. When the People's Republic of China is proclaimed in the same year, Taiwan and China are warring states and there is no chance to return. She then graduates from college, gets married, has children ... and writes all those letters to her mother, which cannot be sent off. In 1987, when martial law is lifted in Taiwan, she is able to return to her hometown, only to learn that her mother has long since passed away. Zhang Chao (pen name: Wu mao), professor at Shandong Academy of Arts and multi-awarded illustrator, contrasts the deeply moving story through his own visual narrative, with a mixture of traditional Chinese imagery and Western techniques. (Age: 6+) [LO]



15



Charms, Daniil (Kharmy, Daniil) (text)  
 Vernić, Vendi (illus.)  
 Beslać, Leo (transl.)  
**Sedam mačaka**  
 (Seven cats)  
 Zagreb: Mala Zvona, 2019. – 83 p.  
 ISBN 978-953-8313-00-4

Poetry | Short story | Nonsense literature |  
 Anthology

2019 was THE year for illustrator Vendi Vernić (b. 1991). The work of this student of renowned illustrator Svjetlan Junaković and graduate of the Zagreb Academy of Fine Arts was featured at the illustration exhibition of the children's book fair in Bologna in 2017. In 2018, she won an award for artists under the age of 35 at that fair. In 2019, she went right on to publish five books in three countries. Her illustrations for »Sedam mačaka« won the renowned Grigor Vitez Award that same year. Vernić's passion for Russian literature surfaces here in her nimble and multi-layered illustrations of stories, poems, and vignettes by Daniil Kharmy, which she illustrates using a mixed-media technique. Her submissions to the competitions in Bologna were illustrations to texts by Gogol and Dostoevsky. This book shows Vernić's talent for dealing with absurd, phantasmagorical and nonsense-influenced material, by extrapolating it visually and bringing to light its quirkiness. (Age: 5+) [KW]

16



Tihi-Stepanić, Jasminka (text)  
**Ljeto na jezeru Čiču**  
 (Summer at Čiče Lake)  
 Zagreb: Ljevak, 2018. – 191 p.  
 (Series: SMS biblioteka)  
 ISBN 978-953-355-187-6

Coming of age | Parental absence | Siblings |  
 First love

Fourteen-year-old Lucija is annoyed because the summer is not at all as she'd hoped. Her mother has to work far away, her father toils at BMW in Munich, and so her parents leave Lucija in the half-finished family home, along with her annoying brother and overbearing grandmother. The best place to relax is the nearby lake, where she makes new contacts, including a nice boy. Gradually, Lucija revises her relationships: she no longer dreams of joining her father in Germany, she views her best friend in a new light, and she grows closer to her little brother and her grandmother, who is caring for her own mother with dementia. When Lucija's brother tragically drowns in the lake and her parents both return home, the summer at Čiče Lake becomes a defining turning point in Lucija's life. The recipient of several awards, Jasminka Tihi-Stepanić's (b. 1958) novel is a coherent coming-of-age story with an acute sense for the real lives of children and adolescents. (Age: 12+) [KW]



17

Kotátko, Petr (text)

Kotátková, Eva (illus.)

**Anička, mluvící potok a další chovanci ústavu paní Majerové**

(Anna, the talking brook, and other residents of Ms. Majerová's sanctuary)

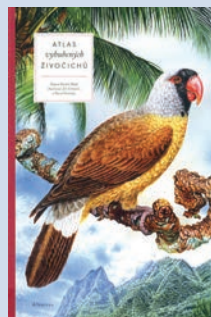
Praha: Meander, 2019. – 161 p.

(Series: Modrý slon; 142. svazek)

ISBN 978-80-7558-068-9

[Home](#) | [Past](#) | [Fantasy world](#) | [Time](#)

Wondrous, mysterious, spooky things happen in the old house where Anička the talking baby and her parents live. The house has a past that the baby can effortlessly enter, traverse, and explore. Anička meets poem-writing squirrels and a talking brook there, and becomes a resident of Ms. Majerová's sanctuary, which offers refuge to animals, children, and other beings. Together they dive deeper into the story of the sanctuary and learn of the dramatic events surrounding a girl named Lenka. Unconventional, linguistically and conceptually daring, rich with nonsense and dimensional play across time and space, author and philosopher Petr Kotátko (b. 1955) reveals the endless narrative power of stories. Eva Kotátková's (b. 1982) delicate illustrations seem out of time and space in the best sense, lending wonderful expression to the otherworldly yet utterly real-seeming events in the book. (Age: 8+) [KW]



18

Malý, Radek (text)

Grbavčic, Jiří / Dvorský, Pavel (illus.)

**Atlas vyhynulých živočichů**

(Atlas of vanished animals)

Praha: Albatros, 2019. – 87 p.

ISBN 978-80-00-05360-8

[Animal extinction](#) | [Environmental awareness](#) | [Atlas](#) | [Non-fiction](#)

»And they all lived happily ever after«. The fairy-tale adage applies to none of the 41 creatures introduced in this atlas. Mammoth, dodo, and Neanderthal man: all extinct. They only live on in the descriptions of Radek Malý and the colourful, whole-page illustrations by Jiří Grbavčic and Pavel Dvorský. The detailed, gorgeous depictions and descriptions of species and their fates can only serve as a reminder and as a warning of how much life has already disappeared from the Earth. The atlas also shows that the disappearances continue. Page by page it nears the present day and ultimately introduces creatures that still existed a few years ago, like the Zanzibar leopard (until 1996), the Pyrenean ibex (until 2000) or the Chinese river dolphin (until 2007). In the end, we are left with a bitter question: Which creature will next be added to this beautiful, sad atlas? (Age: 9+) [KW]

19



Rezková, Milada (text)  
Šrámek, Jan / Vlková, Veronika (illus.)  
**To je metro, čéče!**  
(It's the metro, man!)  
Praha: Paseka, 2019. – 165 p.  
ISBN 978-80-7432-944-9

Prague | Underground train | Public transport |  
Non-fiction

Being underground is always exciting. The same goes for the underground train. There is much to learn about Prague's metro system in this non-fiction children's book. It is furnished with great illustrations that imitate the aesthetic and design of various Prague metro stations and were created using a mix of computer graphics and watercolour drawings. Not only that, readers are also introduced step by step to all the secrets of the underground by friendly Karel Jr. and his easy-going grandpa Karel. Karel Sr. worked for the Prague metro for ages and knows its corridors, buttons, and mechanisms like no one else. He has good connections, too – since everyone in the public transport system knows him, they let him and Karel Jr. access normally closed-off areas of the metro cosmos. This unusual metro book by Milada Rezková (b. 1979), Veronika Vlková (b. 1985), and Jan Šrámek (b. 1983) embraces the form of a children's non-fiction book in which facts are combined with story-telling elements. (Age: 8+) [KW]

20



Stará, Ester (text)  
Urbánková, Marie (illus.)  
**Jedééém!**  
(Let's go-o-o-o!)  
Praha: Pop-Pap, 2018. – [26] p. + 1 poster  
+ 2 cut-out sheets  
ISBN 978-80-906625-9-9

Vehicle | Pop-up book | Picture book

This picture book was a wonderful surprise in the Czech Republic and a great hit for the publisher Pop-Pap, whose elaborately produced books appear in limited print editions. In »Jedééém!« every double page is dedicated to a different transport vehicle. Whether car, rocket, submarine, or bicycle – Marie Urbánková (b. 1995) translates every ride into fresh, unfussy papercut illustrations, showing it in action. That said, the book's real show-stoppers are the many flaps that conceal further little details. Alongside the pictures, crisp couplets invite readers to peer under the flaps to discover, for instance, what animal is being lit up by the bicycle light, what snack the truck driver is eating en route, or which airplane passengers have found their seats. The snappy verses are from Ester Stará (b. 1969), who consistently pursues enthralling book projects and is as much at home with a picture book as with a book of children's prose or verse. (Age: 2+) [KW]

21



Bjørg, Annette (text)  
Wichmann, Kamilla (illus.)

### **Sommervenner**

(*Summer friends*)

[København]: Carlsen, 2019. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-87-119-0407-7

Child | Old age | Loneliness | Communication |  
Picture book

A man is sitting on a bench. »From the side, he resembles a question mark, the way he slouches, bent over his knees.« What a sad sight! Nevertheless, the little girl asks his name; and from then on, she turns up every day to talk to him. True, the man is rather taciturn; but when the girl isn't dissuaded, his resistance slowly melts away. Readers learn that he feels quite lonely, because his children do not visit him and his wife has died. The girl keeps talking to him, and sometimes she even challenges him a bit. Eventually, the man asks the girl for her name, too. From that moment on, they are »Sommervenner«, summer friends. Kamilla Wichmann's pictures have a kind of Art Nouveau feel to them. The muted colours that she uses also mirror the cautious and mindful way in which the two protagonists approach each other. (Age: 4+) [IG]

22



Kvist, Hanne (text)  
Brøgger, Lilian (illus.)

### **Pigen der hed Djamesbond**

(*The girl called Djamesbond*)

[København]: Gyldendal, 2019. – 48 p.

ISBN 978-87-02-15777-2

Imagination | Imaginary friend | Loneliness |  
Courage | Friendship

Lasse has a friend who has courage aplenty. She parachutes, rides kangaroos, climbs steep walls, and wrestles down her enemies by kissing them until they run out of breath and faint. What a great girl, this Djamesbond! It doesn't matter that only Lasse can see her, does it? Yet one day, Djamesbond shows up in real life, because she is fed up with being merely an imaginary friend. Hanne Kvist and Lilian Brøgger are among the crème de la crème of Danish children's book creators. In »Pigen der hed Djamesbond«, they once again exhibit their great skills. They present loneliness and queasy feelings, as well as courage and imagination. Hanne Kvist weaves dialogue, interior monologue, and thoughts into a text in which a lot happens between the lines, while Lilian Brøgger lets Lasse watch wide-eyed as Djamesbond, a whirlwind with a yellow petticoat, bright red shoes, and impulsive facial expressions, leaps across the pages with pizzazz. (Age: 6+) [IG]



23

Nielsen, Carsten René (text)

Marcussen, Mette (illus.)

### **Drømmecykler og fodboldhunde.**

#### **Digte for børn**

(*Dream bikes and soccer dogs. Poems for children*)

[Vordingborg]: Vild Maskine, [2019]. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-87-934-0491-5

Poetry | Nonsense literature

Carsten René Nielsen and Mette Marcussen have released a poetic gem, published by the new Danish publishing house Vild Maskine: It features poems illustrated with delicacy and filigree that all tell little stories – lyrical, off-beat, and melancholic narrative poems, rich in language. There are poems about adults who are as boring as shopping carts, about a cowboy who loves the ocean, or about the eponymous dogs who secretly meet at dusk to play soccer. Readers hear about horses who wear too much lipstick, or witches who snore »like a swarm of bees buzzing in and out of an elephant's trunk«. The unconventional visual language and the astonishing ideas make »Drømmecykler og fodboldhunde« a book that inspires readers to marvel, spin out the tales, and create their own poems; a book they will want to pick up again and again. This is children's poetry at its best! (Age: 4+) [IG]



24

Vedsø, Mette (text)

### **Når hjertet er en elpisker**

(*When the heart is an electric blender*)

[København]: Høst & Søn, 2019. – 151 p.

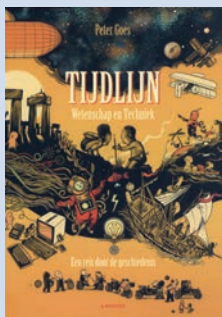
ISBN 978-87-638-6357-5

Anxiety disorder | Pressure to perform |  
Self-confidence | Community

During English class, Pi suddenly collapses. Everything goes black; dizziness; boom. At the hospital, she is diagnosed with anxiety disorder. Her parents, well-off workaholics for whom high performance and success are everything, only want the best for their daughter. They arrange therapy after therapy, so that she can cope with »the crisis« as quickly as possible, go back to school, and function well. Yet that doesn't work. Pi takes the time she needs and makes friends with three extraordinary people in her apartment block: Gillian Brown, an elderly lady, plus Bianca and her daughter, Vicky, all three of them street-wise, warm-hearted, and imperfect. Pi gets to know different ways of living and realizes that she is perfectly okay the way she is; and at some point, so do her parents. Pi, who tells her own story, is curious, clever, and a good observer. She is definitely no sociophobe, but rather open-minded and helpful. The four inhabitants of the house quickly become very close, and Pi benefits more from this closeness than from any school lesson. (Age: 12+) [IG]



25



Goes, Peter (text/illus.)

**Tijdslijn. Wetenschap & techniek***(Timeline. Science & technology)*

Tielt: Lannoo, [2019]. – [80] p.

ISBN 978-94-014-6068-2

Science | Technology | History | Non-fiction

This book starts in the Stone Age and chronologically describes how people and nature live together by means of advancements in science and technology. Readers are taken on a visual journey through time, full of interesting facts about, for instance, the process of metalworking, the development of the first colour film, and the appearance of YouTube – from ancient times to today, from fire to virtual reality, even casting a glance into the future. Readers also learn about the first scientific discoveries and meet renowned scientists such as Andreas Vesalius, Ivan Pavlov, or Marie Curie. The text is understandable for everyone and avoids the difficult technical terms used in textbooks. The detailed illustrations magnificently complement the text. Peter Goes studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent. In this explorational book for all ages, he uses an animated and very fun illustration style. »Tijdslijn« offers a breath-taking trip through history. (Age: 10+) [TD]

26



Loman, Sam (text/illus.)

**Jij bent bijzonder***(You are special)*

Hasselt: Clavis, [2019]. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-90-448-3577-9

Cat | Colour | Identity | Diversity | Self-esteem | Picture book

Kiki is a cat with white fur. When she looks in the mirror, she finds herself extremely boring. She wants to have beautiful colours, just like so many other animals. Then Kiki has an idea: She uses pencils, ink, and paint to make herself colourful. Still the other animals don't think she is beautiful or special, which makes Kiki very angry. Then she falls into some paint cans that make all of her fur purple, just like Goof, a cat who walks by at that moment. Together they paint each other various colours. Kiki's mother is very proud of her – but she was proud of Kiki before she coloured her fur, too. This simple story offers many repetitive elements that young children really like and that fit the structure of the story very well. Every time a colour is used by the cats, it is associated with a specific animal, such as green with a frog or red with a ladybug. The humorous picture book ends with a little moral: appreciate yourself just the way you are. (Age: 4+) [TD]

27



Mortier, Tine (text )

Verster, Alain (illus.)

**De koudste winter***(The coldest winter)*

Wielsbeke: De Eenhoorn, [2019]. – 66 p.

ISBN 978-94-6291-437-7

Winter | Loneliness | Bullying | Old age

A ten-year-old boy and an old man live together in a house. The boy is very lonely and is often bullied by other children. The coming winter proves to be severe and snow-filled, and the boy becomes increasingly isolated from the world outside the house, both literally and metaphorically. The colours disappear from his life more and more, as do the birds he used to feed every day. One day he collects wood for the stove and sees a little robin. This signals the start of the return of colour, sun, and spring. This beautiful, touching story of a lonely child has many symbolic elements. The relationship between the boy and the old man, who is forgetful and often seems far away during their talks, is special, depicted in a caring, poetic way with intriguing, well-chosen metaphors. The brilliant, atmospheric illustrations, sometimes from a bird's eye view, stand out for their use of a palette that perfectly fits the story. (Age: 9+) [TD]

28



Dielemans, Linda (text)

Loo, Sanne te (illus.)

**Brons. over glimmende schatten in mistige moerassen***(Bronze. About gleaming treasures in misty swamps)*

Amsterdam: Fontaine, [2019]. – 184 p.

ISBN 978-90-5956-894-5

Bronze age | Non-fiction

Bronze was revolutionary in the history of humankind. This alloy of copper and tin was the first metal from which tools were made with no other purpose than to inflict wounds or kill. Since these weapons were used in many wars, there was a big market for bronze. In the beginning, the bronze trade also brought great wealth. The information in this book is based on archaeological findings in the Netherlands. Linda Dielemans succeeds in making an impersonal and seemingly dry subject such as bronze the object of a lively and gripping read. The combination of information and enthusiasm represents the best that the world of non-fiction has to offer. In an intriguing way, the book combines true facts and evocatively illustrated fictional stories, told from the perspective of the bronze itself. Linda Dielemans has written three works of fiction so far, all of which are set in the Stone Age. The writer and illustrator have added something essential to what we can see in a museum display case: a story. (Age: 10+) [TD]

DUTCH

Belgium  
Netherlands

29



Dijkstra, Lida (text)

Fila, Djenné (illus.)

**Het beest met de kracht van tien paarden***(The beast with the strength of ten horses)*

Amsterdam: Luitingh-Sijthoff, [2019]. – 165 p.

ISBN 978-90-245-8734-6

Ancient Greece | Mythology | Theseus |  
Ariadne | Fantasy fiction

Lida Dijkstra goes straight to the exciting part in her retelling of the story of Theseus and Ariadne: Fourteen young people sent from Athens to be sacrificed are lowered into a dark tunnel. Gradually, it becomes clear how they came to be there, as frescos and other messages on the walls of the labyrinth reveal the story leading up to this point. They tell of the architect Daedalus and his overconfident son Icarus, of how Daedalus murders a rival inventor out of jealousy and has to flee from Athens to Crete, and of how Daedalus and Icarus escape with wings made by the inventor himself. The framing story is cleverly constructed, slowly revealing one detail at a time. It is depicted in such a realistic way that – in spite of gods and monsters – one feels it actually could have happened. Dijkstra succeeds brilliantly at integrating the mythical stories into the exciting main plot. The newcomer Djenné Fila skilfully evokes a classical Greek atmosphere with her powerful illustrations. (Age: 12+) [TD]

30



Kuyper, Sjoerd (text)

**Bizar***(Bizarre)*

[Hoorn (NH)]: Hoogland &amp; Van Klaveren,

[2019]. – 315 p.

ISBN 978-90-8967-288-9

Reading | Diary | Summer holiday | Love |  
Adventure

Sallie Mo, thirteen years old and always reading, starts keeping a diary. The first observation she writes down is: »There is absolutely no structure in the world«. Writing the diary is a new experience for her, begun on the advice of a psychiatrist named Bloem, whom she is seeing after the death of her beloved and wise grandfather. Writing is not easy for Sallie. She has to struggle with many kinds of questions, wondering who is in charge in a diary, the »real-life« person or the writer? With amusing irony, Sjoerd Kuyper presents a realistic teen who, aware that the truth is fluid, constantly misdirects the reader. The driving forces of the plot are Sallie Mo's planned romantic conquest of her secret friend Dylan, whom she meets every summer holiday, and the story of a bunker where an armed banker's daughter is hiding from her rich father. »Bizar« is a beautiful, wide-ranging and unique book, a new highlight in the oeuvre of Sjoerd Kuyper, who was awarded the highly prestigious Theo Thijssen Prize for his body of work in 2012. (Age: 10+) [TD]

31



Remmerts de Vries, Daan (text/illus.)

### **Vos is een boef**

(*Fox is a bad guy*)

Haarlem: Gottmer, 2019. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-90-257-7061-7

Endangered animals | Prejudice | Stereotype |  
Fox | Picture book

When a dodo rings Fox's doorbell to collect money for endangered animals, it is a bit of a strange moment. But Fox's mischievous look at the bird's face, combined with the dodo's confession that the money is for himself, makes the situation doubly funny. The fox invites the dodo to come in and rest for a moment. Later that day, his friends Badger and Raccoon come to visit him, and he serves them a big, round roasted chicken. Is this the dodo? Or is that a conclusion based solely on suspicion and prejudice? This marvellous picture book explores the traditional character of the fox in an ironic, ambiguous way. The irony of this funny, exciting, and original story about friendship, trust, and prejudice resides mainly in the interaction between the text and the illustrations, consisting mainly of expressive lines and bright watercolours. Daan Remmerts de Vries has created more than forty books for all kinds of readers and has received many awards. (Age: 5+) [TD]

32



Vendel, Edward van de (text )

Linden, Martijn van der (illus.)

### **Wat je moet doen als je over een nijlpaard struikelt. Gedichten waar je wat aan hebt**

(*What to do if you stumble on a hippopotamus.*

*Poems that benefit you*)

Amsterdam: Querido, 2019. – 68 p.

ISBN 978-90-451-2226-7

Poetry

This book of original poems could be called a »self-help poetry collection for children«. Even in the most unexpected yet possible situations a child could get into, there is always a solution. For example, »What to do if your train is delayed« or »What to do if someone has died and you didn't know that person very well«. The title-poem concerns tripping over a hippo – its advice is to say sorry and then gobble up so many sweets that the next hippos you encounter have to get out of your way. The texts are as varied in style and tone as the illustrations, and both are full of humour and irony. The parlando-style poetry bursts with linguistic fun. Edward van de Vendel plays with words in a light-hearted, sparkling way. The author takes children seriously, making it clear that they themselves have to take steps to conquer problems. The author and illustrator previously teamed up in the book »Stem op de okapi« (Vote for the okapi), which received the renowned Woutertje Pieterse Award. (Age: 8+) [TD]

33



Westera, Bette (text)

Weve, Sylvia (illus.)

Liefing, Steef (design)

**Dit is geen Cobra***(This is not a cobra)*

Amsterdam: Samsara, [2019]. – [48] p.

ISBN 978-94-92995-09-4

Painting | Visual arts | Cobra movement |  
Non-fiction

Marie paints a purple canary bird. That is not normal, at least according to some people. Canaries are yellow with little pink beaks. They have legs, not wheels. And you're colouring outside the lines again, Marie! The story takes an unexpected turn when the girl finds herself in secret painting lessons – she never has to colour inside the lines, her animals take on any colour she likes, and her playful drawings are free to sparkle and shine. This book is a beautiful introduction to the work and thoughts of the Cobra avant-garde art movement (1948-1951). Sylvia Weve's mixed-media illustrations display the same brightness and spontaneity as those of the Cobra painters. The humorous story is told with text and illustrations at the top of the pages, while the bottom of the pages feature text boxes with factual information. Steef Liefing paid much attention to the book's design, which is also inspired by the Cobra movement. Bette Westera and Sylvia Weve have published several books together, which all received the most important Dutch children's literature awards. (Age: 8+) [TD]

34



Caddy, Meg (text)

**Devil's ballast**

Melbourne, Victoria: The Text Publishing Company, [2019]. – 312 p.

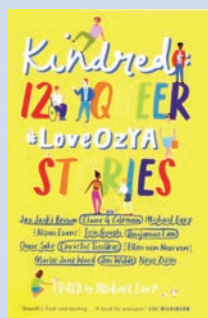
ISBN 978-1-925773-46-0

Bonny, Anne | Caribbean | Domestic violence |  
Pirate | 18<sup>th</sup> century | Gender role | Love

»Devil's Ballast« is a fast-paced historical novel based on the true story of one of the most famous female pirates: Anne Bonny. Born in Ireland around 1700, the girl reportedly ran away from her abusive husband at the age of eighteen to join notorious pirate captain John Rackham on his ship. In Meg Caddy's second offering for teen readers, Anne comes across as a feisty and headstrong figure who refuses to fulfil the expected role of a woman in 18<sup>th</sup> century society. Although she is fully aware that a pirate life is defined by violence, competition, and danger – and doubly so for a woman disguised as cabin boy – she welcomes freedom and adventure as well as the love she receives from Captain »Calico Jack«. In a riveting narrative, which reimagines a short part of Anne's life from two different points of view, her own and that of pirate hunter Captain Barnett hot on her heels, the author skilfully interweaves known facts, myths, and fiction to paint the picture of a strong, many-faceted woman who bravely stands her ground. (Age: 14+) [CS]



35



Earp, Michael (ed.)  
 Various authors (text)  
**Kindred. 12 Queer #LoveOzYA Stories**  
 Newtown, NSW: Walker Books Australia,  
 2019. – 295 p.  
 ISBN 978-1-760651-03-9

LGBTQIA+ | Connection | Family | Love |  
 Short story | Anthology

In his introduction, editor Michael Earp remarks that his »conviction that LGBTQIA+ youth deserve the opportunity to see themselves reflected in the literature they read...« motivated him to commission this short story anthology. Aptly named »Kindred«, this exciting compilation gathers the works of twelve authors – renowned and award-winning writers as well as interesting new discoveries – from across the spectrum of gender, sexuality, identity, and cultural background. The stories range from a haunting historical tale and a fast-paced quirky eco-activist story, to witty gritty sewer-rat tale, and a story about unrequited love. Readers will find funny and thoughtful texts, stories that feature young people of colour, First Nations teens, and disabled youth – all created on the topic of »connection«. A truly fascinating glimpse of LGBTQIA+ life in all its many variations. The appendix includes information on all the authors and suggestions for interesting websites. (Age: 14+) [CS]

36



Jones, Jannali (text)  
**My father's shadow**  
 Broome, Western Australia: Magabala Books,  
 2019. – xi p. + 217 p.  
 ISBN 978-1-925936-70-4

Mother | Daughter | Crime | Post-traumatic  
 stress disorder | Secret | Imagination |  
 Truth

This suspenseful, fast-paced YA thriller is the debut novel of Jannali Jones, a Krowathunkoolong woman of the Gunai nation, and the winner of the 2015 black&write! Indigenous Writing Fellowship. The gripping story starts with a bang, when Kaya and her mother Marnie flee their Sydney house in the middle of the night, terrified that whoever has killed the teen's father will come after them, too. As the novel unfolds, Kaya and Marnie, an Aboriginal romance novel writer, are hiding in their summer home in the Blue Mountains, with as little contact with the outside world as possible. Due to PTSD, the seventeen-year old girl can only unearth snippets of her memories, but it dawns on her that some things just don't add up. Kaya feels increasingly uneasy and sceptical, as there is obviously more to her mother's new/old boyfriend than meets the eye. Readers are taken for a breathless ride in this novel about trauma, secrets, memories, storytelling, and the search for truth. (Age: 14+) [CS]

37



Metzenthen, David (text)  
Murphy, Mairead (illus.)

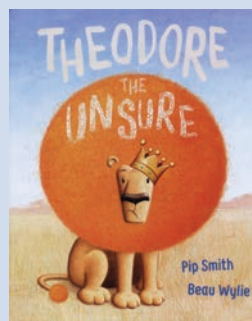
### **One runaway rabbit**

Sydney, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2019. – [30] p.  
ISBN 978-1-76052-355-8

Suburb | Rabbit | Curiosity | Night | Fox | Trick |  
Escape | Picture book

This suspenseful picture book is a collaboration between award-winning author David Metzenthen and designer-cum-illustrator Mairead Murphy. With a sparse, matter-of-fact text of a total of eight three-word sentences, Metzenthen creates a simple but thrilling story that even the youngest readers or listeners will be able to follow and enjoy. It features »one curious rabbit« who »one dark night« hops out of her safe garden and is chased by »one hungry fox«. Murphy expands on the short phrases in her pictures, adding a myriad of details to the story while still keeping her illustrations of suburbia clear and uncluttered. Combining hand-drawn and digital techniques, she gives her characters unique personalities, plays with pace and perspectives – from close-ups to bird-eye view – and weaves in a surreal tongue-in-cheek surprise on two wordless double-spreads that has quick-witted rabbit Lulu outsmart the sly predator. Without a doubt, all this makes for: One fantastic read! (Age: 2+) [CS]

38



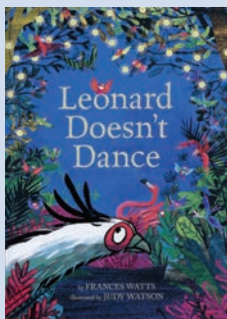
Smith, Pip (text)  
Wylie, Beau (illus.)

### **Theodore the unsure**

Gosford, N.S.W.: Scholastic Press, 2019. – [32] p.  
ISBN 978-1-76066-186-1

King | Problem solving | Indecision |  
Public welfare | Picture book

Theodore is the newly crowned ruler of not just his grassland home but the entire animal kingdom; and although his proud parents are convinced that he has »a natural gift for ruling«, the young lion himself is not so sure. After all, he's never been sure about anything, not even simple matters such as which colour of socks to wear or what to have for breakfast. Yet now, in the worst summer heat, he faces a truly tough problem: Should he have his uncontrollably fast growing mane cut or does he need to keep it? Well, how about a vote? Pip Smith's witty and wry text with its funny surprise ending serves as the perfect springboard for Beau Wylie's comical illustrations in soft »savannah« hues. He captures the crazy and contemplative mood of the story, plays with size, angle, and perspective, and adds countless hilarious details – Theo in curlers is a sight to behold. This light-hearted, seemingly nonsensical story will have readers in stitches, but may also spark interesting discussions. (Age: 4+) [CS]



39

Watts, Frances (text)

Watson, Judy (illus.)

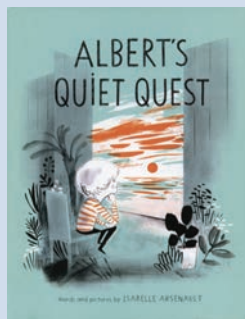
### **Leonard doesn't dance**

Sydney, N.S.W.: ABC Books, 2019. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-0-7333-3304-0

Bird | Diversity | Dancing | Self-confidence |  
Picture book

A »big beaky bird ball«? Sounds like fun, thinks Leonard. Well, it would be, if he knew how to dance. So, Monday morning: first lesson with the magpies. Oops. The warble-warble-waltz is not his thing; and neither is the ducks' do-si-do on Tuesday – more of a do-si-don't for Leonard; or the crows craw-craw-can-can on Wednesday, which he simply can't-can't. The clumsy, long-legged bird hangs his head, hides in shame, and vows to stay home. Yet his friends won't go without him – so... In a mixed-media technique that involved »printmaking, painting, drawing, collaging, and digitising«, Judy Watson has created vibrant pictures that explode with jungle plants, birds from around the world, colour, and humour. The feathery fellows' spot-on facial expressions and expressive postures provide such fitting and imaginative interpretations of Frances Watts's entertaining text, which is brimming with puns and alliterations, that adult readers will enjoy this story about self-confidence, loyalty, and finding your own style just as much as their small listeners. (Age: 3+) [CS]



40

Arsenault, Isabelle (text/illus.)

### **Albert's quiet quest**

[Toronto]: Tundra / Penguin Random House, [2019]. – [42] p.

(Series: A Mile End Kids story)

ISBN 978-1-101-91762-6

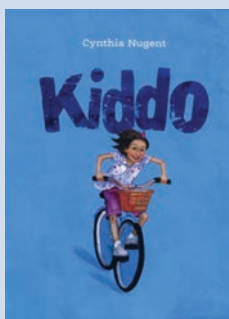
Reading | Introvert | City | Imagination |  
Picture book

It can be tough to grow up in the city. Impossible to find a quiet corner to read! Luckily for Albert, there's the back alley where someone threw out a wonderful beach scenery painting that invites the little boy to dream. But it doesn't take long before the neighbourhood children barge in with their shovels and skateboards, badminton rackets, and stereo. Add to that a crying baby and a screaming cat, and poor Albert's had enough: »Quiet!« he shouts in a big black speech bubble. The unexpected happens. All kids disappear only to re-emerge with a book in hand and quietly join Albert at the »beach«. This picture book is part of a series that celebrates the power of the imagination, which allows children to transcend the dreariness of urban surroundings and to create their own worlds, together with their friends. Award-winning French-Canadian artist Isabelle Arsenault uses minimal text and comic-style frames to pace the story, giving Albert and his reading friends lots of room to dream. (Age: 4+) [NvM]

ENGLISH

Australia  
Canada

41



Nugent, Cynthia (text/illus.)

### **Kiddo**

Vancouver [et al.]: Tradewind Books, [2019]. – 251 p.  
ISBN 978-189658066-1

Family | Summer holiday | History 1960s |  
Competition | Misfortune

The Warbles are a great family – warm-hearted, witty, and wonderfully weird. Ten-year-old Kiddo – full name: Katherine Wisteria Warble – is a committed puzzle-solver, coupon-collector, and competition-enterer, and she has set her heart on becoming the next Junior Journalist for their small town news-paper, The Town Crier. Yet in order to qualify for this particular competition, she will need to spend every minute of her summer holidays scoring points at various community activities. So off she goes with aplomb: helping an elderly woman with errands, walking a dog (and losing it in the process), weeding a garden (and ripping out a precious rare rose in the process, oops), and even stealing antique car parts back from the original thief. Kiddo is not going to let a few setbacks douse her enthusiasm. Author-illustrator Cynthia Nugent's laugh-out-loud children's novel is packed with quirky characters, hilarious plot twists, and a dab of nostalgia for the 1960s. (Age: 8+) [CS]

42



Smith, Heather (text)

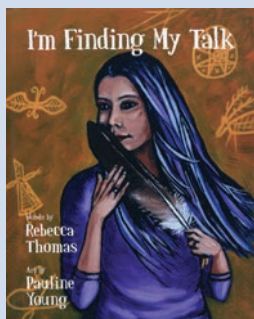
Wada, Rachel (illus.)

### **The phone booth in Mr. Hirota's garden**

[Victoria, British Columbia]: Orca Book  
Publishers, [2019]. – [32] p.  
ISBN 978-1-4598-2103-3

Japan History 2011 | Tsunami | Community |  
Coping with grief | Picture book

This moving picture book is centred on the grief and healing of a small Japanese boy. After losing his beloved father in the terrible 2011 earthquake and tsunami in the coastal town of Otochi, where ten percent of the inhabitants died in this natural disaster, Makio is left devastated and furious with the ocean. When his neighbour and closest friend, Mr Hirota, builds a white phone booth in his garden and places an old black telephone in it, people start arriving from near and far to »talk« to their dead friends and relatives. Inspired by a true story, this book shows how an unusual, creative idea can help people confront their grief and learn to cope with it. Illustrator Rachel Wada used a combination of black ink, pencils, and watercolours, and combined them digitally to create mesmerizing pictures. Partly reminiscent of traditional Japanese art, they capture all the nuances of the intense lyrical text, from quiet and happy to terrifying and, eventually, soothing and hopeful, and have earned her the 2020 Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Canadian Picture Book Award. (Age: 4+) [CS]



43

Thomas, Rebecca (text)  
Young, Pauline (illus.)

### **I'm finding my talk**

Halifax, Nova Scotia: Nimbus Publishing, [2019].  
– [32] p. – ISBN 978-1-77108-811-4  
(Simultaneously published: I lost my talk.  
ISBN 978-1-77108-810-7)

Canada | Mi'kmaq <people> | Indigenous  
people | Cultural heritage | Residential School |  
Poetry | Picture book

»I Lost My Talk« is a famous poem by acclaimed Mi'kmaq poet Rita Joe (1937-2007) about the loss of her language and cultural heritage during her time at a residential school. Over the years, it has been an invaluable inspiration for many indigenous writers and artists in Canada. Halifax-based publisher Nimbus Publishing have achieved something special, when they decided to both re-publish Rita Joe's poem and commission award-winning young Mi'kmaq poet Rebecca Thomas to write a companion poem, which is entitled »I'm Finding My Talk«. The texts in these two simultaneously published picture books are accompanied by powerful acrylic illustrations in rich colours created by Mi'kmaq artist Pauline Young. The three creators' »voices« combined make readers witness the cruelties indigenous Canadians were subjected to in the past, while at the same time providing a heartfelt and powerful plea for the way that new generations can reclaim their families' culture. (Age: 5+) [CS]



44

Various authors (text)  
Various artists (illus.)  
Elliott, Alicia (foreword)

### **This place. 150 years retold**

Winnipeg, Manitoba: HighWater Press, [2019]. –  
vi p. + 287 p.  
ISBN 978-1-55379-758-6

Canada | History | Historiography | Indigenous  
people | Revisionism | Anthology |  
Graphic novel

July 1, 1867 – that is the founding date of Canada, as children learn it in school across the country. The Canadian history taught in schools and public discourse, is one told from the perspective of the settlers. They had the power to make history and to tell it. This graphic novel anthology sets out to retell this history from the perspective of those most often left out in the official narrative: First Nation, Métis, and Inuit writers and artists join their creative energies to give faces to the people and peoples erased and to lend voices to those silenced. Doing so, they open up new perspectives on 150 years of Canadian history and claim a more inclusive, restorative vision of the country's past. Using very different visual styles, the artists bring into dialogue traditional imagery and graphic novel techniques in new and exciting ways. Highwater Press is a 100% indigenous-owned publishing house with the mission of providing authentic narratives by the original inhabitants of the country now called Canada. (Age: 15+) [NvM]



45



Al Serkal, Maryam (text)  
Luciani, Rebeca (illus.)

### **Mira's curly hair**

London: Lantana Publishing, 2019. – [26] p.  
ISBN 978-1-911373-61-2

Mother | Daughter | Hair | Beauty standard |  
Self-acceptance | Picture book

Non-white people across the world are familiar with hair-related bullying and discrimination. What a joy that recent years have seen an increase in stories celebrating curly black hair, like this offering by Lantana Publishing, a small publisher committed to diverse and inclusive books. Mira really hates her hair. All these tangly curls! Why can't it be »straight and smooth, just like her Mama's«? Yet nothing works: not standing on her head, not pulling it down, not even flattening it with old books. One rainy day, however, Mira watches in awe: Could Mama's hair be curly, too. Inspired by her own family's experience, Emirati writer Maryam al Serkal has penned an uplifting story about a little girl and her mother who both learn to embrace their naturally wild and wavy hair. Argentinian-born illustrator Rebeca Luciani uses bold, bright colours, close-ups and full shots, and a myriad of patterns to create lively pictures. The city of Dubai and the lush landscape serve as a perfect backdrop for a heart-warming tale about love, self-acceptance, and misguided beauty standards. (Age: 3+) [CS]

46



Arbuthnott, Gill (text)  
Nielsen, Christopher (illus.)

### **Balloon to the moon**

London: BPP Big Picture Press, 2019. – 77 p.  
ISBN 978-1-78741-354-2

Aviation | Spaceship | Moon landing |  
History 1969-2019

Since 2019 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first moon landing, it's only natural that there has been an upsurge in books about aviation, astronauts, and space travel. Readers can revel in fictional picture books, such as Ken Wilson-Max's »Astro Girl« or »Look Up!« by Nathan Bryan and Dapo Adeola, moon poems, e.g. in »This Rock, That Rock« by Dom Conlon and Viviane Schwarz, and a wealth of non-fiction titles, such as »Balloon to the Moon«. Arranged in a »Countdown« of ten chapters – plus three called »Lift Off«, »Lunar Orbit«, and »Re-Entry«, Gill Arbuthnott's text covers the history of human air and space travel, starting with the invention of the first hot air balloon in 1783. The book offers meticulously researched facts, introduces important people, and chronicles key developments. It sports an engagingly varied layout and a design in colourful retro-style illustrations – including even an »Apollo 13« comic strip – that will keep inquisitive young would-be astronauts enthralled. (Age: 8+) [CS]

47



Balen, Katya (text)  
Carlin, Laura (illus.)

### **The space we're in**

London: Bloomsbury Children's Books,  
[2019]. – 291 p.  
ISBN 978-1-5266-0194-0

Autism | Siblings | Jealousy | Mother |  
Death | Coping with grief

Ten-year-old Frank loves football and numbers and sharing secret morse-code messages with his mum. He also loves his little brother, although it sometimes feels as if he lived in a different universe. Five-year-old Max is autistic. He only ever wears the same grey T-Shirt with yellow stripes, he can't bear bright colours or loud noise, and if something disturbs him, he will melt down completely. When the boys' mother dies unexpectedly, the family's world shatters. In an honest interior-monologue-like narration, Frank's conflicting emotions – his love, anger, guilt, frustration, and grief – pour onto the pages. Form and content form a special bond in this book: The chapter headings, written in code, signify Frank's fascination with numbers, the font and layout of words and letters often change to mirror the boy's feelings, and the sketchy black-and-white drawings express key moments in the story. Katya Balen offers readers an enthralling debut novel about family love, courage, empathy, and not giving up. (Age: 10+) [CS]

48



Bexington, Carys (text)  
Hindley, Kate (illus.)

### **The night before Christmas in Wonderland**

London: Macmillan Children's Books, 2019. – [38] p.  
ISBN 978-1-5098-7988-5

Christmas | Moore, Clement Clarke / 'Twas the  
night before Christmas | Carroll, Lewis / Alice's  
Adventures in Wonderland | Adaptation |  
Intertextuality | Picture book

What do St. Nicholas and the furious Queen of Hearts have in common? Well, not much, unless you take two revered children's classic books and mash them together. In debut author Carys Bexington's hilarious remix, St. Nick and his reindeer take a detour to Wonderland to ensure the poor Princess of Hearts doesn't have to celebrate Christmas without a single present. However, the welcome they receive is a shocking one: »Off with your head!« the now grown-up, Christmas-hating Queen bellows. Will St. Nick be able to bring peace and goodwill to Wonderland? The entertaining story is delivered in rollicking verses modelled on the original 1823 poem »A Visit from St. Nicholas«, with a few trademark Lewis Carroll words thrown in for good measure. Kate Hindley clearly had a feast combining Nick's reindeer sleigh, technology-savvy elves, art-deco style interior design, and Wonderland favourites such as the Cheshire Cat and the Bandersnatch. A rhythmical and visual delight about Christmas, kindness, and craziness for all ages. (Age: 4+) [CS]

49



Bilan, Jasbinder (text)

**Asha & the Spirit Bird**

Frome, Somerset: Chicken House, 2019. – 276 p.  
ISBN 978-1-911490-19-7

Farm | Poverty | Journey | Spirit animal

Asha's family owns a small farm in a tiny village close to the Himalayas, and although they struggle to make ends meet, Asha wouldn't want to live anywhere else. Yet after months without a word or money from her beloved father, who works in a distant city, they are about to get evicted by a ruthless money-lender. Together, eleven-year-old Asha and her best friend Jeeval sneak off on a dangerous trek across the highest mountains to find her Dad and bring him home. A lamagaia, the spirit bird of her late grandmother, guides and protects Asha and Jeeva as they brave hunger, illness, wolf attacks, criminals, and other perils during their exhausting adventure. Debut author Jasbinder Bilan, who was born on a farm in the foothills of the Himalayas herself, skilfully weaves cultural and religious elements and magic realism together. The thrilling story, which is the winner of the Costa Children's Book Award 2019, features a strong heroine who outdoes herself to rescue her family. (Age: 10+) [CS]

50



Dahl, Sophie (text)

O'Hara, Lauren (illus.)

**Madame Badobedah**

London: Walker Books and Subsidiaries, 2019. – 54 p.  
ISBN 978-1-4063-8440-6

Hotel | Mystery | Prejudice | Storytelling | Friendship

Author Sophie Dahl confessed in an interview that she always considered hotels places of magic and mystery. Thus it is only natural that she chose just such a »curious« place for her first children's book. The Mermaid Hotel is young Mabel's home, a cosy bed & breakfast hotel by the seaside. When one day, a cranky old lady with bright red hair, two dogs, two cats, a tortoise, and twenty-three bags moves into Room 32, Mabel is immediately suspicious. This rude, feather-clad Madame Badobedah – as she names her – MUST be »an ancient supervillain on the run from the police.« So Mabel goes into spy-mode – and discovers that the lady has the heart of a adventurer; a proof that first impressions can be deceiving. This story is comical, quiet, a little sad, and imaginative all at once. The watercolour illustrations provide amusing snapshots ranging from ominous or nostalgic memories to imaginative adventure; and Lauren O'Hara's depiction of curious, headstrong Mabel and stiff, grumpy Madame Badobedah is simply spot on. (Age: 5+) [CS]

51



Durant, Alan (text)  
Blankenaar, Dale (illus.)

### **Quill soup**

London: Tiny Owl Publishing, 2019. – [34] p.  
(Series: One story, many voices)  
ISBN 978-1-910328-40-8

Stranger | Poverty | Hunger | Hostility |  
Cunning | Generosity | Fairy Tale | Picture book

Independent publisher Tiny Owl have set their sight on publishing beautiful, original children's books from around the world. »Quill Soup« is a retelling of a folk tale known as »Stone Soup« in many countries. For his version, prolific author and poet Alan Durant chose a South African setting and decided to use animals instead of human characters for universality's sake. After travelling for days without food, Noko the porcupine arrives at a village, but the locals are suspicious of this stranger. Yet when he brings a huge pot of water to the boil and starts making »quill soup«, Monkey, Aardvark, Meerkat, and the others forget their hostility. South African artist Dale Blankenaar's stunning pictures are influenced by various African art traditions and multi-layered. The brightly coloured scenery with stylised animals in the foreground shows the story as it unfolds, while a more subtle, grey-toned layer in the background symbolises Noko's home country. Both are brimming with details that will reveal new gems at every re-reading. (Age: 4+) [CS]

52



Wheatle, Alex (text)

### **Home girl. The miseducation of Naomi Brisset**

London: Atom, an imprint of Little, Brown Book Group, 2019. – 282 p.  
(Series: Crongton)  
ISBN 978-0-349-00325-2

Foster home | Anger | Black family | Racism |  
Belonging | Love

»Liddle Bit«, award-winning author Alex Wheatle's first YA book, was published in 2015. In his latest addition to the highly praised Crongton series, the focus is less on drugs and gang wars. Instead, readers get to learn more about fourteen-year old Naomi, who has been in the care system for a while. Being shuffled from one foster family to the next, Naomi pretends to be big, bad, and unbreakable; she is quick to judge people, retort at or fib to her social worker Louise; yet on the inside, the vulnerable girl is desperately searching for a place to belong. The white teen's first chance of a real home seems to come when she is placed with black foster parents Toni and Collette and their two kids. The skilfully crafted story is uncomfortable and in-your-face but also has its tender and thoughtful moments. Written in an authentic voice, with spiky dialogue and a wealth of evocative expressions, the gritty novel touches on issues of alcoholism, violence, racism, and empathy and will have readers cheer for Naomi. (Age: 14+) [CS]



53

Jha, Richa (text)  
Sánchez Gómez, Eva (illus.)

### **The middle**

Greater Noida (India): Pickle Yolk Books,  
2019. – [33] p.  
ISBN 978-81-941029-2-2

Reading | Question | Coping with fear |  
Imagination | Writing | Picture Book

Azma is an avid reader. She eats and breathes books. They make her mind wander and leave her with hundreds of unanswered questions, questions that scare her, especially after nightfall, when »those creatures of the night« roam around the darkness. Richa Jha, committed author and publisher, has crafted a quiet, thought-provoking story about a young girl, hungry for knowledge, who struggles with a growing uneasiness. Spanish artist Eva Sánchez Gómez, who has illustrated more than thirty books so far, takes the short, philosophical text and transforms it into dream-like, partly sinister pencil illustrations. Azma's everyday world, rendered in black and white, gets increasingly swamped with large areas of yellow that signify the fascinating world of imagination and its scary creatures that come crowding into the girl's bedroom. Can her own creativity help Azma face her fears? An atmo-spheric read about exploring the world with the help of stories and about the liberating power of writing. (Age: 6+) [CS]



54

Shashi, Kanak (text/illus.)

### **Guthli has wings**

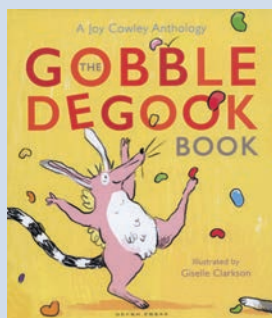
Chennai: Tulika, 2019. – [24] p.  
ISBN 978-93-86667-94-6

Transgender | Family | Acceptance |  
Picture book

As author-illustrator Kanak Shashi mentions in an interview, she wrote the story »Guthli Has Wings« way back in 2010 after working with children in Dehli on a project that involved the questioning of gender roles. Originally conceived in Hindi as a short story called »Guthali Toh Pari Hai«, the text was then translated into English and published in an anthology of boys' stories in 2015. It features a bubbly young child, who loves riding her bicycle, climbing trees, and drawing fairies. Her family adores Guthli, but when she tries to wear her sister's frilly dress and insists that she is a girl, not a boy as her mother, father, and siblings claim, they all get upset and angry with her. Guthli feels desperate and becomes quiet and withdrawn. For this 2019 picture book version, Kanak Shashi has created bright, edgy painted paper collage pictures that mirror the changing mood of the story. The energetic illustrations show the family's journey from initial shock and anger to love and acceptance of their child's gender identity. (Age: 5+) [CS]



55



Cowley, Joy (text)  
Clarkson, Giselle (illus.)  
**The gobbledegook book.**  
**A Joy Cowley anthology**  
Wellington: Gecko Press, 2019. – 85 p.  
ISBN 978-1-776572-58-8

Poetry | Short story | Anthology

Joy Cowley is one of the best-known New Zealand authors and almost certainly the most prolific. Since starting her career as a writer in the 1960s, she has created everything from picture books, poetry, and early readers, to novels for children, teenagers, and adults – more than 600 titles in total. This »bumper book for the whole family« is a compilation of twenty poems, rhymes, and short stories. Readers can enjoy both Cowley classics, such as »Nicketty Nacketty Noo Noo Noo«, and lesser-known works, all of which are witty, whacky, and wonderful. They are ample proof of the author's unique voice and her mastery of rhyme and rhythm. Giselle Clarkson's effervescent illustrations highlight the most exciting moments in the various texts. With their scribbly lines and blotchy planes of colour, they exude a fresh, sketch-like vibe and make each character dance across the pages. This enchanting volume, which lends itself to reading aloud, will delight multiple generations of readers. (Age: 4+) [CS]

56

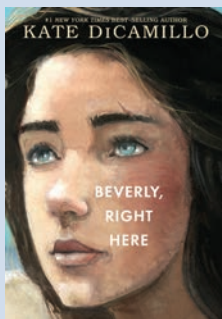


Marsh, Selina Tusitala (text/illus.)  
**Mophead. How your difference makes a difference**  
Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2019. – [88] p.  
ISBN 978-1-86940-898-5

Biracial family | Hair | Racism | Bullying |  
Self-confidence | Poetry | Autobiography

Selina Tusitala Marsh is an extraordinary woman. University professor, Commonwealth Poet (2016), and the first Pacific Islander Poet Laureate in New Zealand (2017-2019), the energetic woman has performed her poems all over the world and in front of VIPs such as Barack Obama and Queen Elizabeth II. As a child however, she was constantly bullied because of her »wild Afakasi hair«. In order to escape her classmates' racist teasing, she tied back her hair trying to be the same as them. Yet then, acclaimed poet Sam Hunt paid her school a visit. With hair (almost) as wild as her own and a performance to match it, he inspired her to celebrate her difference and awakened her love for poetry. In vibrant scribbly illustrations in black, white, and red and a short text interspersed with lots of humorous dialogue in speech bubbles, Marsh recalls important moments from her childhood to the present. Her insightful graphic memoir is a rallying cry for individuality, Pasifika, and poetry, and a powerful plea against racism. (Age: 8+) [CS]

57



DiCamillo, Kate (text)

**Beverly, right here**

Somerville, Massachusetts: Candlewick Press,  
2019. – 241 p.

ISBN 978-0-7636-9464-7

Runaway | Loneliness | Summer job | Courage |  
Trust | Friendship | History 1970s

»Beverly, Right Here« is the final book in award-winning Kate DiCamillo's quasi-trilogy about the »Three Rancheros«, friends Raymie, Louisiana, and Beverly. Set in 1979, four years after the events of the first book, this middle-grade novel follows fourteen-year-old Beverly as, one day, she just ups and leaves her old life – trying to get away from the death of her beloved dog Buddy and from her self-centred mother Rhonda. Without any money or plan, she manages to secure a job at Mr. C's seaside lunch restaurant (although she hates fish), and is taken in by kind, bingo-crazy elderly lady Iola, who lives in a pink trailer. Although Beverly acts tough and convinces herself that she doesn't want anyone to care for or about her, she can't help making new friends. Written in a deceptively simple style with staccato-like sentences and witty dialogue, this quiet book about friendship, trust, and courage is peopled with a bunch of well-rounded, eccentric characters who draw readers in right from the start. (Age: 12+) [CS]

58



Lai, Remy (text/illus.)

**Pie in the sky**

New York: Henry Holt & Company, 2019. – 380 p.  
ISBN 978-1-250-31410-9

Australia | Asian family | Immigration |  
Communication | Coping with grief | Baking

In Remy Lai's debut illustrated novel, eleven-year-old Yanghao moves to Australia and feels like he has landed on Mars. Months later, still struggling with English and finding it impossible to make friends, he sees himself as the Martian, an emotion Lai captures perfectly through her comic illustrations. On top of it all, he has to look after his annoying brother, Jingwen, while his mother works. But then Yanghao discovers a purpose. He will bake all the cakes he made with his father, who once dreamed of opening a bakery before he unexpectedly passed away. Yanghao thinks if he re-created them all, everything will be better, including his feelings of guilt around his father's death. But Yanghao and Jingwen must keep their baking a secret – they're forbidden to use the oven while their mother is away. Lai's storytelling seamlessly blends text and illustration to create an engaging tale that successfully uses humour to present difficult topics and evokes empathy in a way that is perfect for middle grade readers. (Ages 9+) [MB]

59



Lawson, JonArno (text)  
Kazemi, Nahid (illus.)

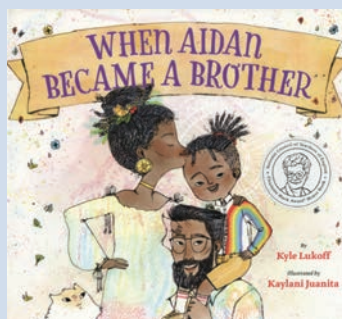
### **Over the rooftops, under the moon**

New York: Enchanted Lion Books, 2019. – [49] p.  
ISBN 978-1-59270-262-6

Identity | Loneliness | Joy of living | Belonging |  
Picture book

For this picture book, award-winning Canadian poet JoArno Lawson has created a profound, meditative poem about loneliness, community, and the meaning of life, reminiscent of Shaun Tan's »The Red tree«. Addressing readers directly, the sparse text has a quiet, contemplative tone: »You can be far away inside, / and far away outside. / With others, but still on your own / when suddenly / you feel something / that gets you moving.« Montreal-based Nahid Kazemi, a renowned artist and graphic designer from Iran, has taken this philosophical text and added her own visual interpretation of it. Her stunning mixed-media pictures follow a huge white bird on its quest through a changing world, looking for a place to belong after being separated from its flock. The imaginative double-spreads, some of which are completely without text, are a whirl of shapes and dreamy colours. Readers of all ages will be inspired to imagine new interpretations of text and pictures with every re-reading. (Age: 6+) [CS]

60



Lukoff, Kyle (text)  
Juanita, Kaylani (illus.)

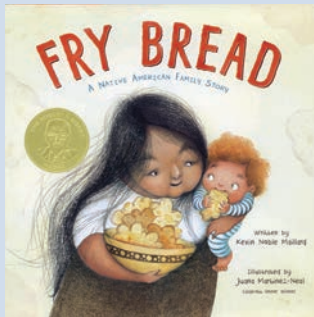
### **When Aidan became a brother**

New York : Lee & Low Books Inc., [2019]. – [32] p.  
ISBN 978-1-62014-837-2

Transgender | Prejudice | Siblings |  
Picture book

Aidan, a biracial transgender boy, is excited to be a big brother soon – but also a tad anxious. He feels that his most important role is to make sure this new family member doesn't feel misunderstood and trapped in the wrong clothes and bedroom, as he initially did before his parents fixed the »mistakes«. Kyle Lukoff's sensitive text, which encourages readers to discard stereotypes and gender expectations, has Aidan narrate his journey from birth, when everyone thought he was a girl, to coming out to his parents, and celebrating his true identity as a boy. Kaylani Juanita chose a colour palette that matches the, as she calls it, »light, airy, and gentle« writing style and tone of the story. Her vibrant ink-and-watercolour illustrations feature lots of details and fun patterns. They radiate warmth, joy, and love, and portray Aidan as a confident, spunky, and considerate child. This groundbreaking #OwnVoices book is the winner of the Stonewall Book Award for LGBTQIA+ literature. (Age: 4+) [CS]

61



Maillard, Kevin Noble (text)  
Martinez-Neal, Juana (illus.)

**Fry bread. A Native American family story**

New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2019. – [42] p.  
ISBN 978-1-62672-746-5

[Native Americans](#) | [Tradition](#) | [Food](#) | [History](#) |  
[Picture book](#)

As its name suggest, »fry bread« is a type of food; yet as debut children's book author Kevin Nobel Maillard – a member of the Seminole Nation, Mekusukey band – makes clear, there is so much more to it. Fry bread is shape, sound, colour, flavour, time, art, history, place, and nation... simply put: it is everything. Invented about 150 years ago as a necessity of survival, it has become a symbol of Indigenous resilience and endurance in America; a »new« tradition, which basically all Native Americans share – even if there can never be agreement on the one-and-only »true« fry bread recipe. The lively free verse celebrating this festive food and family life is accompanied by award-winning Peruvian artist Juana Martinez-Neal's mixed media illustrations in warm tones. They depict a diverse modern-day Native American family with members of different skin and hair colours. The extensive eight-page appendix provides a wealth of background information and links for further reading on Native American history, culture, and life. (Age: 4+) [CS]

62



Quintero, Isabel (text)  
Peña, Zeke (illus.)

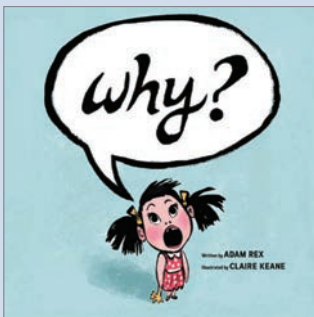
**My papi has a motorcycle**

New York: Kokila, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, [2019]. – [36] p.  
ISBN 978-0-525-55341-0

(Spanish parallel ed.: *Mi papi tiene una moto*.  
Transl. by Andrea Montejo. Kokila, 2019)

[Mexican community](#) | [Father](#) | [Daughter](#) |  
[Motorcycle ride](#) | [Picture book](#)

When Papi comes home in the evening after work, Daisy races out of the house with their two helmets. He lifts her on his motorbike and – vrrrooom – off they go. They roar off into the orangey-purple glow of the setting sun and zigzag through their town, past the tortilleria, the raspado shop (now sadly out of business), her abuelitos' cosy house, and to the building site where her carpenter father's colleagues are still hammering away. Inspired by Isabel Quintero's cherished memories of her own childhood rides with her father through her home town of Corona (California), this story makes a vibrant Mexican-American neighbourhood come alive – with a hint of nostalgia. With great skill, Zeke Peña's comicbook-style illustrations in muted tones convey the speed and joy of the ride, while also portraying an array of cultural details of an immigrant town undergoing many changes. This book is a celebration of family, the love between a father and his daughter, and Latinx culture. And of the excitement of motorbike rides, too, of course. (Age: 4+) [CS]



63

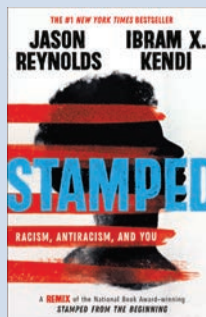
Rex, Adam (text)  
Keane, Claire (illus.)

### **Why?**

San Francisco, California: Chronicle Books LLC,  
[2019]. – [54] p.  
ISBN 978-1-4521-6863-0

Villain | Interrogation | Picture book

»Why?« Parents know, and dread, this question; especially when it is repeated again and again and again – as in this book. Yet who would have thought that this simple three-letter word, uttered by an inquisitive little girl in a red polka-dotted dress, would have the power to convert super-villain Doctor X-Ray, who is out to take over the world, into a peaceful, boot-knitting, yarn-selling fellow. Adam Rex's nonsensical comedy plays out as a kind of therapy-session between the bold child and the mean rocket-boot-wearing adult, as they are roaming through a (mostly deserted) shopping mall. Claire Keane's vibrant digital illustrations, sporting speech bubbles with bold black outlines, have a sketchy, dynamic quality. With great skill, she presents the protagonists' facial expressions and body language – as well as the villain's various childhood flashbacks – having readers feel the mood changes and subtle shifts in intonation. A hilarious read for curious youngsters and stressed-out parents alike. (Age: 4+) [CS]



64

Reynolds, Jason (text)  
Kendi, Ibram X. (original text/introd.)

### **Stamped. Racism, antiracism, and you**

New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company,  
2020. – 320 p.  
ISBN 978-0-316-45369-1

Racism | Antiracism | Race relations | History |  
Non-fiction

Jason Reynolds's remix of Ibram X. Kendi's National Book Award winner, »Stamped from the Beginning«, is a compelling and convincing story for young people. In a conversational tone, Reynolds offers detailed examples to show why and how racism exists as a way of systemically depriving black people of civil liberties and rights. Historical details of dates, events, and names give credence to the premises of the book: that black people face systemic racism across the spectrum of how laws are written, implemented, and imposed, and are also denied equal opportunities. The notion of being simply »not racist« is debunked by the repercussions of complicity in an unjust society. This timely book calls for antiracists, who know that there is nothing inherently wrong with black people, to take action to identify, work against, and dismantle systemic racism. Although rooted in the details of US history, the implications are universal and are reverberating around the world. (Age: 12+) [JY]



65



Rodkey, Geoff (text)

**We're not from here**

New York: Crown Books for Young Readers,  
[2019]. – 249 p.  
ISBN 978-1-5247-7304-5

Humans | Alien | Immigration | Prejudice |  
Violence | Science fiction

Geoff Rodkey is known for his comical books, such as the bestselling »The Tapper Twins« series. As can be gleamed from the quirky cover illustration featuring a young human being flanked by two giant blue-ish mosquito-like figures, his latest offering for middle grade readers belongs to the genre of science fiction. However, although »We're Not From Here« is set in space, the story references present-day problems such as immigration, refugees, and racism – and it does so in a clever, funny, and gripping way. The story follows a group of humans who are seeking refuge on the planet Choom. Yet even though Choom's government officials initially issued a friendly invitation, by the time the group arrives after their twenty-year-journey, the planet's inhabitants, especially the mosquito-like Zhui, have turned hostile. It is up to Lan and Ila and their parents to persuade the three co-existing species on Choom that human »aliens« are actually a friendly, peace-loving species. Will slapstick comedy and pop music do the trick? (Age: 10+) [CS]

66



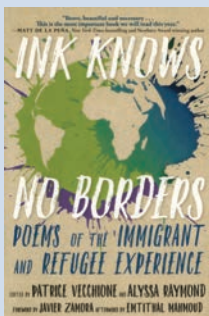
Ruby, Laura (text)

**Thirteen doorways, wolves behind them all**

New York, NY: Balzer + Bray, an imprint of  
HarperCollins Publishers, [2019]. – 365 p.  
ISBN 978-0-06-231764-3

Orphanage | Siblings | Everyday life | Ghost |  
History 1941-1946

As war ravages Europe, the United States has not yet entered the fray but still suffers from years of the Great Depression. Worlds away from the fighting, a ghost who died as a teenager watches children growing up at Our Lady of Perpetual Sorrow, a Chicago orphanage run by nuns. She is particularly captured by Frankie, a fourteen-year-old half-orphan whose father is alive but cannot care for her or her sister Toni while supporting his new family. As Frankie navigates the daily struggles of life at the orphanage and eventually uncovers her past, the ghost, as first-person narrator, delivers a perspective that feels both omniscient and deeply personal. She too is adjusting to her own reality and a history she is still trying to piece together. Author Laura Ruby was inspired by her late mother-in-law's teenage years to write this atmospheric character study. She uses superb imagery to balance historical fiction, the fascinating lives of often forgotten people, and a truly unique ghost story. (Ages 14+) [MB]



67

Vecchione, Patrice / Raymond, Alyssa (eds.)  
Zamora, J. (foreword) / Mahmoud, E. (afterword)  
**Ink knows no borders. Poems of the immigrant and refugee experience**  
New York [et al.]: Seven Stories Press, [2019]. – xviii p. + 183 p.  
(A Triangle Square Books for young readers)  
ISBN 978-1-60980-907-2

Migration | Refugee | Home | Identity | Racism | Poetry | Anthology

Published by the independent publishing house Seven Stories Press, this impressive YA anthology gathers the poems of 64 eminent contemporary poets who all share the experience of being first- or second-generation immigrants to the US. Their families and ancestors hail from countries near and far, such as Haiti, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, Vietnam, Syria, the Philippines, and many more. In their heart-wrenching texts, they talk about a kaleidoscope of topics and emotions, from homesickness, fear, guilt, and belonging, to the loss of their culture, racism, hostility, language difficulties, and the search for their identity. The poems, which were originally published between 1984 and 2018, offer readers compelling insights into these poets' lives and souls and prove that indeed »Ink Knows No Borders«. The collection is bookended by an insightful foreword and afterword and contains short biographical information for all the poets included. (Age: 14+) [CS]



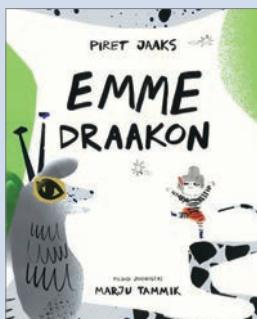
68

Williams, Alicia (text)  
**Genesis begins again**  
New York: Atheneum, [2019]. – 364 p.  
(A Caitlyn Dlouhy Book)  
ISBN 978-1-4814-6580-9

African-American family | Racism | Skin colour | Beauty standard | Bullying | Self-acceptance

Genesis has had enough. Another eviction because her gambling alcoholic of a father hasn't managed to pay the rent; and right on the day when her school »friends« had agreed to come home with her.... How embarrassing. She really hates him. But more than her Dad, she hates herself, her wide nose, her nappy hair, and especially her dark skin that no milk bath or lemon rub can lighten. With bullies at school and constant criticism from her father and grandmother, it takes new friends, a supportive music teacher, and a talent show for Genesis to finally start accepting herself. Alicia D. Williams's complex debut novel sheds light on the harsh effects of colourism in the past and present. It drives an otherwise bubbly and headstrong girl to self-hate and self-harm in an attempt to meet popular beauty standards – and to feel loved by her (equally dark-skinned) father. This harsh realistic story, a riveting read lightened by some humour and hope, will stay with readers long after they have finished the book. (Age: 10+) [CS]

69



Jaaks, Piret (text)  
Tammik, Marju (illus.)

### **Emme draakon**

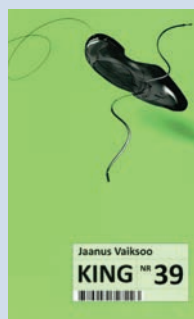
(Mommy's dragon)

[Saue]: Päike ja pilv, 2019. – [34] p.  
ISBN 978-9949-7376-3-5

Mother | Daughter | Rage | Exhaustion |  
Picture book

There's a dragon living in Mommy – this much the young first-person narrator knows for sure. Her puerile thought processes and explanatory schemes help her determine how, when, and why the dragon breaks out of her mother, snarling and grumbling. Usually it appears when the little girl is around, but there's no lawful regularity. Not even Mommy knows what the dragon looks like or how to keep it at bay, which troubles the girl. Thankfully, though, Mommy knows the dragon will go away again and leave them both in peace. In an unpretentious way and from the child's perspective, Piret Jaaks (b. 1980) tells a tale of parental strain and shows how sometimes a dragon just needs to break out of mothers and fathers, even though they don't want it to. The bright, collage-like illustrations by Marju Tammik (b. 1972) counter balance the subject matter with great levity and show a wonderful mother-daughter relationship that is as turbulent as it is loving. (Age: 3+) [KW]

70



Vaiksoo, Jaanus (text)  
Kaev, Katrin (illus.)

### **King Nr: 39**

(Shoe #39)

[Tallinn]: Ärkel, 2019. – 183 p.  
ISBN 978-9949-7272-2-3

Family | Friendship | Shoe store | Secret

Multiple-award-winning and highly praised, »Shoe #39« was a giant success for author Jaanus Vaiksoo and his small publishing house Ärkel. The book's secret to success lies in its mixture of a light, yet multi-layered text full of inexplicable elements and a protagonist to sympathize, share the thrill, and grow with. Paul is a likeable, somewhat insecure fifth grader with parents who have too much to do. He finds two important anchors outside his family in Arthur and especially Arthur's cool daughter, Minna. Paul and Minna want to discover the secret behind a gentleman who, each and every day, buys the same pair of shoes in size 39. Paul first notices him in a shoe store he hides in to escape two mean classmates. There's obviously something special about the store, so Paul also becomes a patron there. The shoes he tries on take him on imaginary journeys and let him follow his dreams. The key role, however, is played by the shoe vendor Jekaterina. (Age: 11+) [KW]



71

Vallik, Aidi (text)  
Lumimari (illus.)  
**Seebu maailm**

(Soapy's world)

[Tartu]: Lugu-Loo, 2019. – 46 p.

ISBN 978-9949-9498-7-8

Parents | Divorce | Daughter | Depression |  
Melancholy | Escapism | Picture book

To write believably about a child's depression, anxiety, and melancholy in a children's book is no easy undertaking. In a marvellous and touching way, children's book author and lyricist Aidi Vallik (b. 1971) and illustrator Lumimari (b. 1976) succeed in doing just that in »Seebu maailm«. In a poetic interplay of text and full-page illustrations, they tell the story of a parental divorce and the consequences for daughter Seebu (Soapy). She owes her nickname to her great passion, soap bubbles. After her father leaves the family and Seebu experiences how the pain of separation eats into both her mother and herself, soap bubbles become a place of refuge and a shimmer of hope: When Seebu lets the delicate formations into the world, she forgets all the dumb heartache and effortlessly flies among the bubbles through life. Eventually, she even succeeds in enveloping all that she loves into a great protective soap bubble. (Age: 7+) [KW]



72

Papa, May Tobias (text/transl.)

Various artists (illus.)

Flores, Liza / Nazareno, Isa (research)

**Karapat dapat. Bata, alamin ang iyong mga karapatan! = Dignity. Child, know your rights!**

Quezon City: CANVAS; Ang INK, 2018. – 58 p. + [2] p.

ISBN 978-971-9689-07-2

Text Filipino and English

Children's rights | Picture book | Activities book |  
Bilingual book

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which served as the inspiration for this book, was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989. In spite of being ratified by the Philippines a year later, the publishers see it as necessary to take a stand and educate Filipino children about their rights »at a time where the very value of human rights is questioned«. All the convention's 54 articles are re-written in child-friendly language. Selected passages directly address young readers and are beautifully illustrated by the country's best book illustrators. Readers find extra pages interleaved that can be coloured in or used as game boards. This book is the fruit of the collaboration between CANVAS, a non-profit organization that promotes children's literacy and runs the »One Million Books for One Million Filipino Children« campaign to donate books to disadvantaged communities, and 21 members of Ang INK, the Philippines' children's book illustrators organization. (Age: 6+) [LO]

ESTONIAN  
FILIPINO

Estonia  
Philippines

73



Maijala, Marika (text/illus.)

**Ruusun matka**

(Ruusu's journey)

Helsinki: Etana Editions, [2018]. – [52] p.

ISBN 978-952-7105-30-6

Dog | Captivity | Running away | Freedom |  
Picture book

Wax crayons are the favourite drawing tools of many children, but illustrators rarely use them. Why is that? As Marika Maijala shows in her picture book »Ruusun Matka«, they work really well. Even with this »simple« medium, she draws accurately; and at the same time, the wax crayons lend the illustrations an expressive vitality. This way, the choice of the tools and technique reflects the story's theme of running. The book is about Ruusu (Rosie), a greyhound, who one day has enough of her monotonous existence at the dog track and simply runs away. She passes the finish line and runs further and further and further, through the city, across streets, and through the park. Finally, she is free! And what's more: she finds new friends, too. This proves: Leaving familiar paths always pays off. (Age: 5+) [IG]

74



Laffitte, Valentine (text/illus.)

**Aux quatre coins du monde**

(At the four corners of the world)

Bruxelles: Versant Sud, [2020]. – 36 p.

(Series: Les pétaches)

ISBN 978-2-930938-11-0

Ecology | Climate change | Animals |  
Environmental awareness | Picture book

In this picture book about climate change, four representatives of endangered animal species describe changes in their habitats and food access, as well as the destruction of the ecosystems they share with other plants and animals: the polar bear, whose habitat is melting under his paws; the bee, who must fly far distances in search of pollen; the sea turtle, whose environment is being polluted and overheated; and the orang-utan, whose existence is threatened by the destruction of tropical rain forests. This sensitively designed book shows the growing endangerment of the species diversity in various regions of the world and in our own backyard. It makes human-caused climate change tangible for very young children without resorting to »catastrophism«, and carefully invites ecological rethinking. French illustrator Valentine Laffitte, who lives in Brussels, presents impressive, colourful collages made from artfully cut and torn paper. (Age: 4+) [SW]





75

Robberecht, Thierry (text)

### **La cache. Roman**

(*The hiding place. A novel*)

Namur: Mijade, [2019]. – 76 p.

(Series: Zone J – Le feuilleton des Incos)

ISBN 978-2-87423-108-7

Escape | Migration | Refugee | Xenophobia |  
Solidarity

They've arrived! Refugees from Syria come to a French small town. Lodging and provisions must be arranged for the many newcomers as soon as possible. Fourteen-year-old Elsa wants to be an active help, too – against the will of her mistrusting father, but supported by her grandfather who remembers his own experience of escape during German occupation in the Second World War. Elsa secretly houses the Syrian refugee family Saade in an empty caravan. When the family is threatened in their lodging by right-wing extremists, it's Elsa's father who comes to their aid, to everyone's surprise. In examining universal experiences of escape and displacement, this trenchant short novel by Belgian author Thierry Robberecht reveals tensions and learning processes surrounding the support of refugees. The incisive text functions as a preliminary, low-threshold way into the topic of migration, while also discretely drawing attention to various contradictions among the »helpers«. (Age: 12+) [SW]



76

Dubé, Pierrette (text)

Malo, Audrey (illus.)

### **Les fables extravagantes de Conrad le corbeau**

(*The extraordinary tales of Conrad, the raven*)

Montréal, Québec: Les 400 coups, [2019]. – [80] p.

(Series: Grimace)

ISBN 978-2-89540-829-1

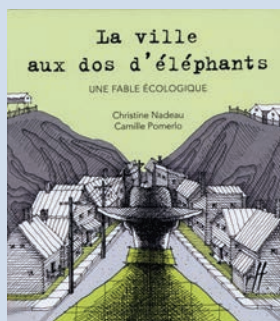
Animals | Fable | Persiflage

Ten eccentric but lovable anti-heroes are on the quest for happiness. Among them are Albert, a good-natured dromedary whose paradoxical business ventures never seem to succeed, and a gentle boa constrictor named Bob who, of all things, falls in love while playing winter sports. The protagonists of these marvellously absurd animal fables flout the rules, ignore conventions (even of their own species), and leave their comfort zones – sometimes only for a single decisive, or risky, or wonderful moment. Pierrette Dubé subtly satirizes the genre of the animal fable, cleverly employing her well-honed talent for absurd entanglements, wordplays, and paradoxical humour. The »morals« at the end of the stories thus also take highly bizarre turns to avoid being pinned to any pedagogical intention, except to entertain! Illustrator Audrey Malo brings the marvellously surreal stories to life with her distinctive comics-influenced, cheeky line. (Age: 7+) [SW]

FRENCH

Belgium  
Canada

77



Nadeau, Christine (text)  
Pomerlo, Camille (illus.)

### **La ville aux dos d'éléphants**

(*The city with the elephant back*)

Montréal, QC: Éditions de l'Isatis, [2019]. – 56 p.

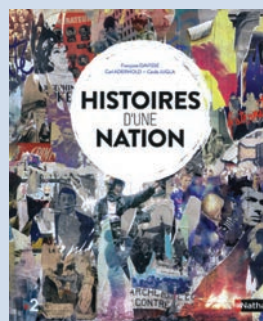
(Series: Griff; 5)

ISBN 978-2-924769-78-2

Mining | Health hazard | Ecopolitics |  
Environmental protection | Picture book

How can a one-time mining stronghold completely redefine itself? In this picture book, Christine Nadeau allegorizes the varied history of Thetford Mines in southern Quebec – her hometown – whose wealth originally came from asbestos extraction. But after a decades-long battle, the miners forced an economic change of course and the end of asbestos mining, which is extremely health-damaging. After the mines were closed, the bizarre crater landscape (called »elephant back« by locals) was landscaped, and the city warmed to sport and tourism. Now this idyllic place faces a new threat from mining companies seeking to mine magnesium in its asbestos-contaminated dumps. The book's five-page appendix of documentary material on the topic of asbestos, as well as Camille Pomerlo's retro illustrations, help this volume in the »Griff« series to successfully sensitize young readers to ecological issues. (Age: 10+) [SW]

78



Aderhold, Carl / Davisse, Françoise /

Jugla, Cécile (text)

Dubray, Anne-Hélène (illus.)

### **Histoires d'une nation**

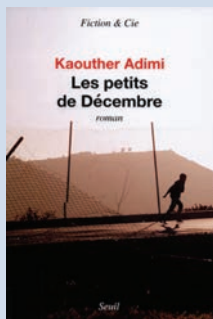
(*Stories of a nation*)

Paris: Nathan, [2019]. – 127 p.

ISBN 978-2-09-259122-2

France | Immigration | National identity |  
History 1914-2010 | Non-fiction

Every fourth French national has at least one grandparent with migration experience, lending them access to an important cultural and emotional heritage. But many of these family stories attesting to the inventiveness and willpower of immigrants have yet to be narrated or documented. This non-fiction book by journalists Carl Aderhold and Françoise Davisse summarizes interviews from their documentary film »Histoires d'une nation«. They believe that the people featured in these biographies are relevant role models in the controversial debate over France as a land country of immigrants. 45 French men and women with familial roots in Poland, China, Mali, the Antilles and elsewhere portray what contributions their families (in their own generation or those past) have made across more than a century to build the France of today. These are courageous people, who took control of their lives, seeking to bring to fruition the Republic's unfulfilled promises of freedom, equality, and solidarity. (Age: 9+) [SW]



79

Adimi, Kaouther (text)

### **Les petits de Décembre. Roman**

(The December kids. A novel)

Paris: Éditions du Seuil, [2019]. – 247 p.

(Series: Fiction & Cie)

ISBN 978-2-02-143080-6

Algeria | History 1950-2016 | Violence |  
Resistance | Uprising

Mahdi, Jaml, and Inès enthusiastically play soccer on a wasteland – like many children before them in this inconspicuous soldier neighbourhood in the West of Algiers. In 2016, their dirty football pitch becomes the starting point of a bitter conflict with two military generals who wish to build their villas there. Against the wills of their families, who have nearly all found ways to adjust to the military regime, the three friends join other teens to occupy the land. Who will prevail? A press release about a real incident inspired this novel. Young Algerian author Kaouther Adimi mixes tragicomic fairy-tale elements with literary collage to create a parable with few flaws that celebrates the courage of the Algerian youth who forced the resignation of the state president in 2019. Adimi sheds light upon the complex experiences of violence and the resistance traditions of her home country, showing how these shape the life of young people and women to this day. (Age: 16+) [SW]



80

Babin, Alice (text)

Various artists (illus.)

### **Histoires du soir pour filles rebelles.**

#### **100 femmes françaises extraordinaires**

(Good night stories for rebel girls.

100 extraordinary French women)

Paris: Les Arènes, 2020. – 215 p.

ISBN 979-10-375-0112-7

France | Woman | Role model | Biography

Girls need access to authentic female role models. This is why Italian author duo Favilli/Cavallo launched the biography series »Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls« by means of crowdfunding in the USA. Parts 1 and 2 of this book project were spectacular global successes. For part 3, the editors gave international collaborating publishing houses free hand to generate their own »national« selections. Independent publisher Les Arènes published part 3 in French as an original volume of its own design. It is a real eye-catcher, illustrated by 27 known female book illustrators and artists. In short portraits, journalist Alice Babin introduces 100 women from across 10 centuries, who overcame all manner of adversity in France to realize their career dreams, life goals, and social demands. Babin ventures to put together a decidedly socio-critical selection. The book could do more to meet diversity criteria, though. (Age: 10+) [SW]

81



Bagieu, Pénélope (adapt./illus.)

Dahl, Roald (original text)

### **Sacrées sorcières**

(*Wretched witches*)

[Paris]: Gallimard, 2020. – 299 p.

(Series: Bande dessinée)

ISBN 978-2-07-512693-9

Dahl, Roald / The Witches | Adaptation | Witch | Hatred | Bewitchment | Resistance | Comic

Cult author Pénélope Bagieu has scored a coup: She's transformed the children's book classic »The Witches« into a thrilling comic, and, with appreciation for the smallest of details, has created an updated version of Roald Dahl's wicked fairy tale. Bagieu proved her mastery of satire with works like »Culottés«, which won the significant Eisner Award in 2019 and featured biographies of 30 nonconformist women. With a mix of respect and bravado, she offers a fresh interpretation of Dahl's witch-centred novel, placing new content-related and pictorial accents. The protagonist in Bagieu's adaptation is not a white child, but rather a boy who looks (before his bewitchment) like he might be from Latin America. Bagieu's rendition casts a more critical eye at the witch-stereotype, while at the same time relishing the theatrical potential of this fairy-tale character. Her grotesque witches (with a certain soupçon of drag queen) offer a humorous counter-balance to the power of the fearsome top witch, who is at her demonic best. (Age: 8+) [SW]

82



Cournut, Bérangère (text)

Mary, Donatien (illus.)

### **Le roi de la lune**

(*The moon king*)

Strasbourg: Les éditions 2024, 2019. – 47 p.

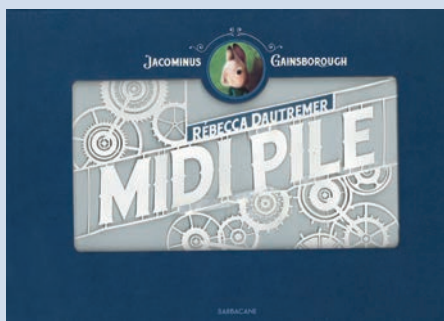
(Series: 4048)

ISBN 978-2-901000-10-5

Night | Moon | Trip | Tyrant | Toy | Theft | Picture book

Who's making a racket in little Anathilde's bedroom at night? A strange little man, whose enormous head is pockmarked by craters. It's the moon king. He invites, actually rather commands, Anathilde to travel to his planet with him. Once they arrive, the bizarre monarch shows his true tyrant colours. How did he come to possess the wonderful toy collection he hides away in the subterranean arcades of his palace? Disillusioned, Anathilde realizes that this slightly megalomaniacal collector is less interested in her company than in her help hunting for more very rare toy trophies. This picture book, which received a Special Mention at the Bologna Ragazzi Award 2020, appeared with Strasbourg publisher 2024. Bérangère Cournut's text is about stealing, sharing, and the loneliness of avarice. Most captivating of all are the illustrations by artist Donatien Mary, whose elaborate retro style recall turn-of-the-19<sup>th</sup>-century lithographs. (Age: 7+) [SW]

83



Dautremer, Rébecca (text/illus.)

### **Midi pile. Jacominus Gainsborough**

(*Twelve o'clock sharp. Jacominus Gainsborough*)

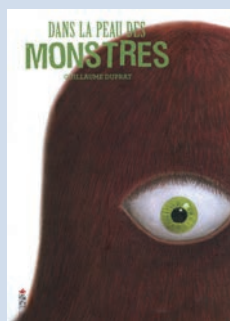
Paris: Sarbacane, [2019]. – [212] p.

ISBN 978-2-37731-218-4

Journey | Waiting | Farewell | Time | Harbour |  
Silhouette | Paper engineering

His ship will leave the harbour at twelve o'clock sharp. A rabbit named Jacominus Gainsborough, who is head over ears in love, waits on the pier for his lady love from early morning on. Full of doubt, anticipation, impatience, and with a touch of envy, he endures the three hours up to departure time. In his thoughts he accompanies his girlfriend, the rabbit-lady Douce, on her capricious detours to the harbour. Will she be punctual, even though she lets herself be taken in on the way by so many surprises and encounters that she almost forgets her rendez-vous with him? The cleverly designed book by Rébecca Dautremer is a filigreed, multi-award-winning marvel. Superimposed pages with cutouts create a playful optical and colour show, which interacts with the changing plotlines and masterfully conveys the illusion of spatial depth. This is a perfect book about waiting and its very different experiences of time, as well as about enjoying what's yet to come. (Age: 6+) [SW]

84



Duprat, Guillaume (text/illus.)

### **Dans la peau des monstres**

(*In the skin of monsters*)

Paris: Saltimbanque éditions, [2019]. – 28 p.

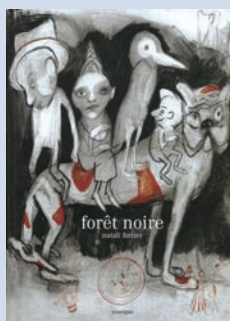
ISBN 978-2-37801-169-7

Monster | Emotion | Myth | Legend | Adaptation |  
Picture book

Three-headed Cerberus from the underworld in Greek mythology, the sea dragon of Enoshima from the ancient Japanese legend, the one-eyed giant Polyphem from the »Odyssey«, the demon king Ravana from the Hindu epic »Ramayana«, and future extra-terrestrials from the planet Mars: Are they really »monsters«? Can they have feelings or even experience love? How do they react to the animosity and cunning of unpredictable humans and gods? What are their versions of the fright stories that one tells about them? Is it certain that they are the only »monsters« in those stories? In twelve stories from different centuries and continents, illustrator Guillaume Duprat undertakes a perspectival adjustment in the well-known narrative of the »wicked monster«. In expressive pictures, equipped with cleverly integrated flaps, he questions the logic of these well-known sagas. In this way, the book offers a playful entry into the world of myth and into classics of the cinema or world literature. (Age: 8+) [SW]



85



Fortier, Natali (text/illus.)

**Forêt noire**

(Dark forest)

[Arles]: Rouergue, [2019]. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-2-8126-1877-2

Fear | Dream | Metamorphosis | Encounter |  
Picture book

A murky forest with a thousand eyes harbours fascinating, fear-inducing, and strange forms. But this place of fright transforms itself, rhyme by rhyme and page by page, under the magical influence of a children's poem on the topic of encounters. This unconventional picture book centres on the topics of »fear« and »dream«. How does one cope productively with fear and how does one playfully find the lighter side of life? How can one make use of the power of dreams, without being at their mercy? Franco-Canadian illustrator and author Natali Fortier does not shy away from unsettling pictures, but rather uses their power. She expects readers to engage with the secrets and puzzles she presents but does not resolve. For this she draws on her unmistakable style: the interaction of compact, somewhat static pastel chalk paintings and the stroke of a sketch done with sanguine chalk pencil. »Forêt noire« is a splendid invitation to begin one's own dream diary. (Age: 7+) [SW]

86



Mattei-Cazalis, Izumi (text/illus.)

**Quand le kiwi perdit ses ailes**

(When the kiwi lost its wings)

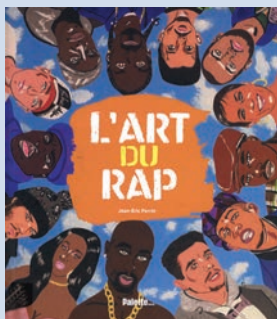
[Mireval]: A2mimo, [2019]. – [32] p.

(Series: Légendes maories)

ISBN 978-2-9558959-5-5

New Zealand | Fairy tale | Origin myth | Bird |  
Solidarity | Environmental awareness |  
Picture book

Save the forest! The forest god Tāne Mahuta wants to save his children, the trees, from insect infestation. He thus asks the birds, whose habitat is also threatened by the insect plague, for help. But the selfish birds offer flimsy excuses and turn away out of cowardice and comfort. Only the kiwi, the most unremarkable of all the birds, shows he is generous and ready to give up what he is fond of in the name of the common good: his ability to fly, feel the sun, and experience beautiful life in the tree tops. This well-known origin myth of the Maori conveys fundamental values for current times of crisis: How does one genuinely live in solidarity, and why is it easier to renounce something when keeping the »big picture« in view? Young Franco-Japanese illustrator Izumi Mattei-Cazalis cleverly combines collage and stencil techniques. A little supplement introduces the aviary world of New Zealand. (Age: 5+) [SW]



87

Perrin, Jean-Éric (text)

### **L'art du rap**

(The art of rap)

[Paris]: Palette, [2019]. – 76 p.

ISBN 978-2-35832-277-5

Music | History 1970-2020 | Rap | City |  
Youth culture | Non-fiction

This non-fiction book by music expert Jean-Éric Perrin on the history of rap fills an empty spot in French young adult literature. Perrin shows how rap, that rhythmic-provocative speech song, is part of multi-faceted global urban culture and has long since left behind defamation as »ghetto sound« lacking musical or poetic depth. In light of the commercialization of the once-rebellious genre, he explores which interpreters in which countries still express the socially critical core of this music. U.S. rappers are a bit too present in text and image in this book, but Perrin does show how, delimited by North American dominance, independent scenes have developed in France, Africa, and Latin America, for instance. He critically engages the chequered careers of some stars and also speaks about controversial topics of the musical genre: gangster rap, sexism and the materialistic lifestyle of its stars. (Age: 14+) [SW]



88

Régis Jr., Guy (text)

### **Les cinq fois où j'ai vu mon père**

(The five times I saw my father)

Paris: Gallimard, 2020. – 193 p.

(Series: Haute enfance)

ISBN 978-2-07-286215-1

Haiti | Loss of father | Exile | Memory

How does one remember a father who one only saw five times as a child and who ultimately went into exile and never returned? In a text whose every line is thought through and clear, Haitian author Guy Régis Jr. proceeds on a painful inner journey into his childhood during the dictatorship of Jean-François Duvalier. Precious moments of joy mix with frustration, longing, fear, and torturous uncertainty. Régis's memories skirt the character of his enigmatic, contradictory father, who unexpectedly surfaced but a few times and disappeared again, and his no less mysterious mother, who raised him by herself. The parents' inability to answer their son's pressing questions relating to origin, family, and home land contrast with the narrator's linguistic brilliance, who precisely recalls the lonely child he once was and who now stands by the boy's side to shed some light on the mysteries. (Age: 16+) [SW]

89



Ressouni-Demigneux, Karim (text)  
**Et Léonard de Vinci réinvente la peinture**  
*(And Leonardo da Vinci re-invents painting)*  
 Paris: Rue du Monde, 2019. – 59 p.  
 ISBN 978-2-35504-590-5

Italy | Art history | Renaissance |  
 Leonardo da Vinci | Discovery | Non-fiction

Art historian and Renaissance specialist Karim Ressouni-Demigneux pursues the question of who Leonardo da Vinci was and why his work still fascinates today. In this elaborately designed, large-format non-fiction book, he explores 80 works that reveal the many extraordinary talents of the mysterious genius, his aptitude for »lateral thinking«, his observational acumen, and his inventiveness. It becomes especially clear that in his artistic work, Leonardo considered »seeing« and »understanding« as equal. His artistic and scientific goal to represent nature in a comprehensive way is explained using striking examples from his drawing and painting oeuvre. These include, for instance, his astonishingly timeless studies on anatomy, physiognomy, and mechanics, as well as his flying objects, whose exactness and visionary power remain impressive even today. This book offers an unusually well-written balance of short biography and art historical sketch for an all-ages audience. (Age: 10+) [SW]

90



Strady, Sophie (text)  
 Cornille, Didier (illus./concept)  
**Bienvenue dans ma maison d'édition.**  
**Avec 10 petits livres**  
*(Welcome to my publishing house. With ten little books)*  
 [Paris]: Hélium, [2019]. – [6] p.  
 ISBN 978-2-330-12448-9

Book | Publisher | Book trade | Pop-up book |  
 Non-fiction

On the occasion of its ten-year anniversary, Paris publisher Hélium has orchestrated the production of a very original book: A pop-up book in the form of a cardboard envelope – a tongue-in-cheek call-back to the distant past when book projects came to the publisher's by conventional mail. Opening the envelope reveals a publishing house on the inside. If one looks closer, one learns about the fascinating careers that are needed for publishing work. Tucked into slots are ten separate little books. Some contain secrets of book manufacturing, of typography, or of the work of authors, illustrators and editors. Others offer practical inspiration for writing or producing a book oneself. Author-duo Didier Cornille and Sophie Strady celebrate the medium of the book as a creative collaborative effort. The presentation pays attention to the »quota« of men and women. Unfortunately, too little attention is paid to other diversity aspects. (Age: 6+) [SW]

91



Gerbeaux, Thomas (text)

Kerleroux, Pauline (illus.)

**L'incroyable histoire du homard  
qui sauva sa carapace**

*(The incredible story of the lobster  
who saved his carapace)*

Geneva: La Joie de lire, [2020]. – 132 p.

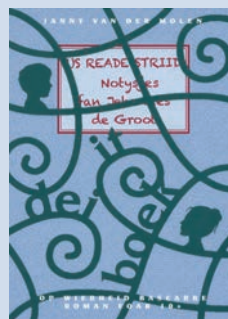
(Series: Hibouk)

ISBN 978-2-88908-501-9

Freedom | Empathy | Love of animals

On a little island in southern Brittany, nine-year-old Jeanne accidentally injures a lobster who runs in front of her while she's playing. The lobster in question is in fact a talking lobster who escaped from a restaurant's boiler and thus avoided the worst fate of all – ending up as »lobster in salted butter«. Jeanne offers solidarity: She hides and cares for the injured animal, and pluckily supports the lobster's plan to free his pals, the crustaceans still trapped in the kitchen's water basin. But does she know what she's in for? The path of the bolters back to the sea is riddled with obstacles. This humorous, wordplay-filled novel from native Breton author Thomas Gerbeaux is also about the curious love that certain humans show toward animals – their empathy extends only to some animal species, while excluding others. The bright collages of Breton illustrator Pauline Kerleroux lithely lean into the rhythm of the text. (Age: 8+) [SW]

92



Molen, Janny van der (text)

**It deiboek**

*(The diary)*

Ljouwert: Afûk, 2019. – 192 p.

ISBN 978-94-93159-06-8

Text Frisian and Dutch

Friesland | History 19<sup>th</sup> century | Socialism |  
Bilingual book

Niels moves to the province of Friesland because his mother becomes mayor of the Boazeradiel district. He misses his friends and his old town. When he finds an old painting, Niels finds out about a young girl named Geertje Kleefstra, who lived in the village of Reduzum at the end of the nineteenth century. Geertje's father was an enthusiastic follower of Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, a socialist and republican, and his companion Pieter Jelles Troelstra. The diary of Jehannes de Groot, an eccentric man who lived in the village, plays an important role in the discovery of the meaning of the old painting. This book tells a fictional story about struggle, courage, and genuine friendship and is based on historical facts about a time of poverty, hunger, and social diversity. In a clever way, historical information is interwoven with modern-day life. It is impressive how Frisian and Dutch mingle in this bilingual book. (Age: 10+) [TD]

FRENCH  
FRISIAN

Switzerland  
Netherlands

93



Hochleitner, Verena (text/illus.)

**Die 3 Räuberinnen***(The 3 robbers)*Innsbruck [et al.]: Tyrolia-Verlag, 2019. – 128 p.  
ISBN 978-3-7022-3802-5

Robber | Game

As a popular German folk song says: »In the forest, there are robbers...« It's oh so true: real robbers with real robber names. Well, wait a second! While Bruno and Maja have found their robber names in the blink of an eye – Bronski and Wanda – the third member of their group can't think of anything that fits. Thus for now, he keeps his own name, Kasper. These three robbers now roam the staircase, intending to loot, rob, and steal. Yet even if their plan is to be truly mean and nasty, in reality they are a kind-hearted lot. Therefore, their raids do not cause any havoc, but rather result in a lot of joy and happiness. Verena Hochleitner skilfully translates children's fantasies into text and images, in a slightly subversive, wild, and impetuous way. Such fun for the readers! The next instalment is already underway: »The 3 Robbers« turn into »The 3 Knights«. Surely enough, they fight against shame and disgrace and for fame and glory. (Age: 6+) [IG]

94



Orlovský, Sarah Michaela (text)

Roher, Michael (illus.)

**Filomena Grau. Von Zaubertricks,  
Mutproben und Fellbündeln***(Filomena Grau. About magic tricks,  
dares, and bundles of fur)*Wien: Picus Verlag, [2019]. – 131 p.  
ISBN 978-3-7117-4010-6

City | Rural life | Loneliness | Friendship | Dog

Filomena is furious, absolutely furious! Her parents have dragged her from the city to the countryside, to a farm called Himmelhof, where they are planning to live together with a bunch of other weirdos. Such hogwash! Filomena thinks they're all stupid; including Merlin, of course, because he is always cheerful and, in no time, best buddies with the village school children, ugh yuck! Yet, with time comes clarity; and not only that: A »mountain of fur« comes around the corner, too, whom Filomena names »Zottelbär« (shaggy bear). The dog is her confidant and her secret, until Merlin gets wind of him. However, suddenly this doesn't matter anymore, because actually, Merlin is quite okay... Some things simply take time. This is the topic that Sarah Michaela Orlovský and Michael Roher have their heroine Filomena talk about in her diary – straight from the shoulder, with an eye for all things stupid, as well as all things beautiful. (Age: 8+) [IG]



95



Auer, Judith (text/illus.)

**Ein Stück Käse***(A piece of cheese)*Mannheim: Kunstanstifter Verlag, 2020. – [32] p.  
ISBN 978-3-942795-91-3

Cunning | Compliment | Fable | Picture book

Fables never go out of fashion. It is true that they often have a somewhat dowdy charm, because their (main) purpose is conveying »the moral of the story«, the essence of the fable, so to speak. Nevertheless, it all depends on how it is done; and Judith Auer does it really well! In »Ein Stück Käse«, she employs the technique of colour pencil hatching to give Aesop's fable about Raven and Fox a fresh look, using clear colours and displaying a great sense of composition and facial expression. The flame-red fox charms the raven so skilfully that the bird forgets to keep its beak shut and starts singing. Naturally, the piece of cheese, which the cunning predator is after, falls straight into Fox's snout – duh... Neither Fox nor Raven come across as particularly good fellows, but that's yet another »moral of the story«: In ambiguity you shall find glory! (Age: 4+) [IG]

96



Baldy, Juliane (text)

**Paul. Roman***(Paul. A novel)*Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt,  
[2020]. – 188 p.  
ISBN 978-3-627-00272-5

First love | Summer | Loss | Coming of age

»During the next few hours, she isn't online for even a second. Thoughts are racing round my head again. Sissy. Damn it. Slumber party. Sad side-show. Total humiliation.« The »she« is Ida. Paul fell head over heels in love with her on the last day before the summer holidays, the holidays that Ida is spending in Sicily. Now, the two of them are texting back and forth, and as soon as Ida is offline for a while, Paul's thoughts start spiralling: Have I made an idiot of myself? Does she really like me? Paul and Ida, that's intense – although, or probably because, their communication is only possible via written language and a few shaky webcam pictures. Reading this novel, you can feel your heart beating like Paul's, you cheer and suffer with him, and you long for a happy ending for him. Juliane Baldy delivers this tragi-comic coming-of-age story with a crisp and casual tone, with tender gruffness and true passion for words (savour those one-word-sentences!), making this debut novel a one-of-a-kind read. Full score! (Age: 14+) [IG]

97



Baltscheit, Martin (text)  
Büchner, Sabine (illus.)  
**Lang lebe König Frosch!**

(Long live King Frog!)  
Hamburg: Dressler Verlag, [2020]. – 104 p.  
ISBN 978-3-7915-0149-9

Cunning | Lying | Naivety | Venality | Fable

Martin Baltscheit's reputation as a specialist for modern fables precedes him. With his new book, »Lang lebe König Frosch!«, he easily proves it true. Wild Boar and Fox are longingly waiting for a little mayfly. Then Frog turns up instead; and although the two friends see through the amphibian's mayfly disguise, they do fall for his »The-evil-stork-turned-me-from-prince-into-frog« story shortly afterwards. They willingly let him order them around. Eventually, Frog starts hallucinating about their shared past and appeals to their unwavering loyalty. Well... A blatant satire about fake news and loudmouths on the one hand, and a mordant mockery of the willing belief in false, bodeful promises on the other, this book is brimming with unmistakable references to current affairs. Nevertheless, even readers who don't decipher these subtexts will benefit from and enjoy this braggadocious tall-tale. Because thanks to both linguistic and visual wit, the book provides plenty of delight along with the moral instruction typical of fables. (Age: 8+) [IG]

98



Duda, Christian (text)

**Milchgesicht**

(Milksoop)

Weinheim [et al.]: Beltz & Gelberg, [2019]. – 155 p.  
ISBN 978-3-407-75543-8

Rural life | Family | Disability | Outsider | Growing up

This is a disturbing book. Archaic. Raw. Cut to the bone. It is set in an environment defined by hard work, fixed roles, and rigid rituals. Someone like Sepp doesn't fit in; because Sepp is different. He suffers from a disease with a name that his parents, poor farmers, can't even pronounce. Since they aren't able (nor willing) to take care of Sepp, they hand him over to an unmarried, childless aunt. Aunt and nephew form a strange kind of symbiosis and mutual dependence. The village looks askance at them. Nobody thinks Sepp can achieve anything. He does attend school, but the teacher doesn't pay any attention to him. What a big surprise when he suddenly knows how to read and do sums. How did he learn that? Christian Duda, who has distinguished himself as an uncomfortable voice in German youth literature with novels like »Gar nichts von allem« (None of the above), once again proves that his books don't fit into the usual categories. »Milchgesicht« is an impressive novel. (Age: 14+) [IG]



99

Güntner, Verena (text)

**Power. Roman**

(Power. A novel)

Köln: DuMont, [2020]. – 249 p.

ISBN 978-3-8321-8369-1

Dog | Search | Forest | Civilisation | Alienation | Nature

Kerze (Candle) is searching for Power. The neighbour's dog has disappeared and twelve-year-old Kerze wants to find it, she promised. And she always keeps her promises. More and more children from the village help her search. They move into the forest with Kerze, who is a natural leader. Soon they run around on all fours, sniff at each other, and live in a pack. The adults are helpless, fearful, angry, desperate. Even if they direct their anger at individual people whom they can blame for the situation, they can't change anything. Verena Güntner's novel is a modern and disturbing parable about a world that is coming apart at the seams. The children's »animalisation« is nothing more than visible proof of the humans' alienation from themselves, their fellow human beings, and their environment. The children, as bearers of hope for the next generation, find a solution by exiting civilisation and returning to nature – even if this solution is neither free of conflict, nor permanent. (Age: 14+) [IG]



100

Jäger, Sarah (text)

**Nach vorn, nach Süden**

(Forward, to the south)

Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 2020. – 223 p.

ISBN 978-3-499-00239-7

Coming of age | Outsider | Travel | Belonging | Self-esteem | Road novel

Duckbutt. That's the narrator's not very flattering nickname. She works at the local supermarket and hangs out in the backyard with the other temps. Minus one person: Jo. He disappeared. Marie, his (maybe ex-) girlfriend, is dying to know what's going on. Thus Marie, Can, Vika, and her little daughter, Fine, and the narrator slope off in a rickety old car. The only reason the narrator is part of the crew is that the car is hers, but in a way also because Jo gave her the nickname. In the July heat, they ride through villages without money, without a plan. Inevitably, they get to know each other better, share secrets, get on each other's nerves, and make the odd, unexpected encounter. Telling coming-of-age stories »on the road« is a classic. Sarah Jäger's debut novel stands out for its narrator, who, although she seems rational to the point of being uptight, has an eye for acute observation and sharp wit that surfaces more and more. (Age: 14+) [IG]

101



K., Ulf (text/illus.)

**Der Meckerpapa***(Grouch-Daddy)*

München: Tulipan, 2020. – [40] p.

ISBN 978-3-86429-460-0

Father | Son | Role expectations | Scolding |  
Frustration | Wishful thinking | Picture book

»I'm sure he was remaindered.« That sounds mean. Yet, the little boy just cannot believe that his mother actually chose his father, who grouches and grumbles all the time about mere trivialities. How much better it would be to have a cowboy or a pirate for a dad. They're so cool and relaxed! On the other hand: Cowboys never wash – whereas Daddy smells really nice; and a pirate would destroy every football with his grappling hook hand. So maybe Grouch-Daddy is not so bad after all? The clever dramatic structure of the story contrasts the putative super-daddies with the everyday dad's unexpected advantages, creating numerous aha-moments. In an interview, Ulf K. ›confessed‹ that »Der Meckerpapa« indeed has some autobiographical traits, as his two sons tend to hold a mirror up to him at times. That's exactly why the book combines the child's perspective with a lot of adult self-irony, which makes it a read for everyone. (Age: 4+) [IG]

102



Khider, Abbas (text)

**Palast der Miserablen. Roman***(Palace of the Miserable. A novel)*

München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2020. – 318 p.

ISBN 978-3-446-26565-3

Iraq | War | Torture | Childhood | Memory |  
Poverty | Reading | History 1990s

»Palast der Miserablen« begins in a cell in an Iraqi torture prison. Shams squats there, more dead than alive, yet with a touch of hope, and remembers: Born in the south, he moves to Baghdad with his family as a schoolchild and ends up in the »Tin District«. Hard work, creativity, and stoicism help him steer through daily life, which is shaped by dictatorship, arbitrariness, war, economic embargo, and mismanagement. Shams discovers reading and becomes part of a group that discusses forbidden literature and politics in the »Palace of the Miserable«. One day, despite all his caution, Shams is arrested. In this linguistically rich novel – which interweaves the present at the prison with memories – bounce-backability and desperation are side by side. While the descriptions of Shams's childhood and youth are laconic and humorous in spite of all the horror, the scenes in the prison cell will shake readers to their core, precisely because they lack any kind of sensationalism. What happens is bad enough. (Age: 14+) [IG]



Konstantinov, Vitali (text/illus.)

### **Es steht geschrieben.**

#### **Von der Keilschrift zum Emoji**

*(It is written. From cuneiform script to emojis)*

Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 2019. – [71] p.

ISBN 978-3-8369-5943-8

[Language](#) | [Script](#) | [History](#) | [Non-fiction](#)

Readers will surely wonder how long Vitali Konstantinov must have worked on this book. And rightly so, because »Es steht geschrieben« is packed full with expert information about languages, characters, and sign systems, while at the same time using them to tell the story of writing through them: Rather than regurgitating facts in a tedious encyclopaedia style, this book presents them in the style of a graphic novel. The book thus becomes an aesthetic and typographic pleasure with great potential for astonishment and amazement. Readers can puzzle, smile, and leaf through the pages again and again. Vitali Konstantinov uses coloured pencils for the pictures, mainly black and red. Despite the inevitable reduction to the essentials, he presents the different writing systems with precision, even adding the odd anecdotal joke and a pinch of irony. Among other things, this book highlights the often ambivalent role of rulers, missionaries, and other literates: Since those who can read and write, have the sovereignty of interpretation. (Age: 10+) [IG]



Kreller, Susan (text)

### **Elektrische Fische**

*(Electric fish)*

Hamburg: Carlsen, [2019]. – 191 p.

ISBN 978-3-551-58404-5

[Home](#) | [Language](#) | [Homesickness](#) |  
[New beginning](#) | [Foreignness](#) | [Belonging](#)

Reported: All of a sudden Dara, Aoife, and Emma find themselves in Velgow, their mother's hometown in north-eastern Germany. Hold on, weren't they in Dublin a moment ago? Yet, because their mother decided they couldn't stay there because they're broke, Velgow it is. Everything there is mysterious (who is Ernst Thälmann?) or wrong (tea bags have strings!). The fact that the grandparents aren't willing to remember how to pronounce »Aoife«, and that the so-called Baltic »Sea« is little more than a bad joke, makes everything worse. Emma wants to go home, to Dublin. In »Elektrische Fische«, Susan Kreller tells a gentle and poetic story of homesickness and wanderlust, and of a speechlessness due not only to missing words – after all, language is existence. Gradually, Emma works her way towards new words, new meanings, new codes; and when she meets Levin, two searching souls find each other. (Age: 14+) [IG]

105



Kuhl, Anke (text/illus.)

**Manno! Alles genau so in echt passiert***(Aw, come on! It all happened just like that)*

Leipzig: Klett Kinderbuch, 2020. – 128 p.

ISBN 978-3-95470-218-3

Siblings | Family | Grandparents | Childhood

Anke Kuhl's artistic style is just as unmistakable as her fondness for anecdotal writing and for the comical, yet distressing moments of life. In her autobiographical comic book »Manno!« she lets her readers share childhood memories that »all happened just like that«: Anke and her sister Eva fight over favourite underpants, hit each other with toilet brushes, and turn to »Openom« (Grandma and Grandpa) for love and security, when their parents are at each other's throats. The TV shows mentioned and the rooms' decor and furniture lend the book such an old-style West Germany feel that the kids of the 1970s and 80s (i.e. today's parents) will feel like in a time machine. Yet at the same time, the goings-on between plush sofa and the TV shows of legendary hosts, such as the Dutch entertainer Rudi Carrell, are universal: After all, sibling rivalry and sibling love are ever-present. »Manno!« truly is a book for everyone! (Age: 10+) [IG]

106



Neuendorf, Sarah (text/illus.)

**Die Welt, die dir gefällt. Ein Mitmachbuch***(The world that you like. An interactive book)*

München: arsEdition, [2019]. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-3-8458-3068-1

Creativity | Imagination | Storytelling |  
Picture book

»Where would you most like to be right now? How would you travel there? Who would you like to meet there?« That's the text of the first three double pages of the picture book »Die Welt, die dir gefällt«. You can see the continents, then a variety of means of transport, from unicycles to hot-air balloons and propeller planes, and finally you can choose whether you would like to meet a tightrope walker, a pirate girl, or a queen. However, there is still more to come. You can collect many more »ingredients« for your own special world: pets, favourite food, and clothes. The world that you like can be reinvented every day, because everything can be combined with everything else. Readers will surely think of a thousand other people and things to be part of their world(s). This is a picture book with excellent illustrations – playful without being over the top – and with a high interactive potential for encores. (Age: 3+) [IG]



107



Schützsack, Lara (text)

Kehn, Regina (illus.)

**Tilda, ich und der geklaute Dracula***(Tilda, I, and the stolen Dracula)*

Frankfurt am Main: FISCHER Sauerländer,

2019. – 253 p.

ISBN 978-3-7373-5650-3

Berlin | Friendship | Family | Dog | Search

»This story begins where most adventures begin. Right on your doorstep«. Yep, that's true, even if it doesn't look like it at first: It's summertime, it's hot, and the whole city is drowsy... NOTHING is happening. Tilda and Oda are bored, at least until Jorinde trips over them and crashes to the ground while looking for her missing dog Dracula. Ta-da! An adventure! So, sure as eggs is eggs, Tilda and Oda must find Dracula! The author Lara Schützsack has a knack for creating autonomous, self-confident girl characters and a metropolitan atmosphere like no other writer. Even in her novel »Sonne, Moon und Sterne« (Sun, Moon and Stars), also published in 2019, the slightly shabby, dusty summertime-Berlin provides the perfect setting. In »Tilda, ich und der geklaute Dracula«, the girls roam through the noisy quarter called »Mitte« as well as through cosy allotment gardens. Will they find Dracula? In the end, everything turns out to be different from what they expected – now that's truly adventurous! (Age: 10+) [IG]

108



Straßer, Susanne (text/illus.)

**Fuchs fährt Auto***(Fox drives a car)*

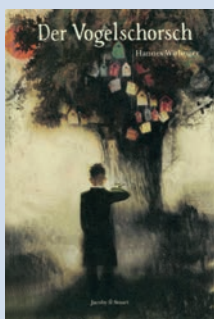
Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, [2020]. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-3-7795-0630-0

Car | Fox | Animals | Passenger | Picture book | Board book

Foxes are generally considered sly and wise creatures. In Susanne Straßer's new board book, however, Fox is a little scatterbrained; he doesn't seem to notice that more and more animals are joining him. The wild ride in his red car keeps Fox totally absorbed, over rough and smooth, up hill and down dale, and through puddles – »Splish, splash, splush, such great splashing!« – racing around bends in the forest. He has no clue whatsoever that Mouse, Mole, Bird, and others jump onto his bushy tail. Only when a child joins them and they all tumble to the ground, does the fox cotton on. Unfortunately, they can't get going again, as they are far too heavy. So the kid simply hops onto a skateboard and starts pushing the whole party! Thanks to its onomatopoeic text, which lends itself to reading-aloud, and the principle of repetition and variation, »Fuchs fährt Auto« is a picture book that will surely delight little listeners. (Age: 2+) [IG]

109



Wirlinger, Hannes (text)

Möltgen, Ulrike (illus.)

**Der Vogelschorsch. Ein Roman**

(Vogelschorsch. A novel)

Berlin: Jacoby &amp; Stuart, [2019]. – 301 p.

ISBN 978-3-96428-031-2

Outsider | Friendship | Jealousy | Mystery |  
Death

»Vogelschorsch (Bird-George) was as different as can be.« The 17-year-old boy with his long old coat and his peculiar hairstyle seems to be from a different era. Even when there is a slight smile on his lips, he is always surrounded by an aura of melancholy and enigma. To animals, he feels close, whereas with people, it is difficult. Lena tells the story of Vogelschorsch with a keen sense for human interaction. She is fascinated by his sensitivity and his otherness. The special relationship that develops between the two teens confuses Lena's friends. In »Vogelschorsch«, Hannes Wirlinger has created a unique gem of a character – a truly unconventional figure, the likes of which are rare in German-language youth literature. Clearly reminiscent of characters by renowned 19<sup>th</sup>-century German writer Georg Büchner, Vogelschorsch is a nonconformist who doesn't intend to provoke, but cannot help himself. Ulrike Möltgen's pictures, too, express how Vogelschorsch's desperate attempts to cope with loss make him lose himself. (Age: 12+) [IG]

110



Schwalbe, Linda (text/illus.)

**Ida und die Welt hinterm Kaiserzipf.****Das Leben der Weltreisenden Ida Pfeiffer**

(Ida and the world beyond Mount Kaiserzipf.

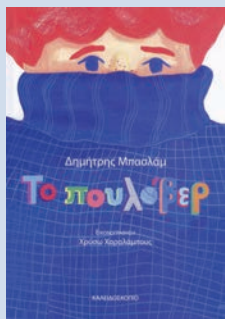
The life of world traveller Ida Pfeiffer)

Zürich: NordSüd, 2020. – [66] p.

ISBN 978-3-314-10519-7

Pfeiffer, Ida | Pioneer | Expedition |  
Gender role | History 19<sup>th</sup> century | Biography

Curiosity + an urge to explore + courage = Ida Pfeiffer. In 1842, at the age of 44 and without any financial means, she sets off on her first trip around the world – as the first woman ever – thus fulfilling a lifelong dream, but one that was considered »unsuitable« for someone of her gender. As a small child, Vienna-born Ida was a tomboy and loved to explore nature. Yet then her father died, and her mother forced her to lead a life within the confines of her times and society: knitting, marriage, children. However, after the death of her husband, Ida breaks out. She sails around the world, goes ashore on foreign islands, collects plants, observes animals, and befriends the people who live there. Linda Schwalbe uses brilliant colours to paint Ida Pfeiffer's story, the motto of which seems to be »It is never too late«. The illustrations zoom in on different details and vary the perspective, using broad planes of colour and pastose brush strokes. Many pictures have a quality of sensual cheerfulness and show Ida's impetuous thirst for adventure. (Age: 6+) [IG]



111

Mpaslam, Dēmētrēs (Baslam, Dimitris) (text)  
Charalampus, Chrysō (Charalambous, Chryso) (illus.)

### **To pulober**

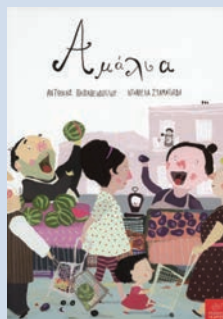
(The pullover)

Athēna: Kaleidoskopio (Kaleidoscope Publ.),  
2019. – 48 p.

ISBN 978-960-471-194-9

Introversion | Isolation | Communication |  
Trust | Clothing | Picture book

A boy loves his thick, warm pullover so much that he believes to always need it, even when the sun is shining, or when it impedes him while playing. Like an armour, it protects him and at the same time isolates him from others – until one day the boy makes a friend. She discovers a loose wool thread on the pullover, and he lets her gradually unravel it and knit new things with it, which they offer as gifts to other people. In the end, the boy feels utterly liberated. He only holds on to a cuddly wool blanket in case he's ever cold. Dimitris Baslam's allegorical story accurately describes how the walls around the introverted child are transformed into building blocks that produce connection to and trust in other people. Emerging Cyprian illustrator Chryso Charalambous creates optimistic pictures in saturated, bright colours to accompany the text. »To pulober« was on the picture book shortlist of the magazine »O anagnostis« in 2020. (Age: 5+) [TA]



112

Papatheodulu, Antōnēs (Papatheodoulou, Antonis) (text)  
Stamatiadē, Ntaniela (Stamatiadi, Daniela) (illus.)

### **Amália**

Athēna: Ikaros, 2019. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-960-572-302-6

Market | Song | Joy of living | Self-assertion |  
Rodrigues, Amália | Picture book

In her red dress, little Amália forges through the lively crowds of a market. She carefully holds a lemon in her hand, which she soon begins to advertise in song. People marvel, the fruit is soon sold, and it doesn't take long until the astonished traders are also enthusiastic and start to sing out their wares, too, in an endearing cacophony. Echoing the life of Portuguese singer Amália Rodrigues, who as a girl did in fact sell fruit using song, Antonis Papatheodoulou describes a child who asserts herself in creative and inspiring fashion. The story is staged by Daniela Stamatiadi's illustrations, which open with a lemon tree and end with a pear, which Amália bought from her earnings and appreciatively devours. The pictures reveal three parallel plots, linked by Amália who ambles through all of them with glee. »Amália« received the 2020 Picture Book Award of the magazine »O anagnostis«. (Age: 3+) [TA]

113



Pappa, Rodula (Pappa, Rodoula) (text)  
Markopoulos, Kōstas (Markopoulos, Kostas) (illus.)  
**Pōs phtiachnetai ena paidiko biblio kai oi synepeies gia to periballon**  
(How a children's book is made and its environmental consequences)  
Athēna: Nephelē (Nefeli), 2019. – 28 p.  
(Series: Tsalapeteinos) – ISBN 978-960-504-269-1

Book | Production | Environmental protection |  
Picture book | Non-fiction

All the way from the tree to the reader, this beautifully designed non-fiction book leads through all the stations of both the creative and the industrial process of producing a book. A special focus is placed on their environmental effects. The book addresses readers of varying age groups by means of two textual levels: the concise main text provides younger children with basic facts, while longer, more complex texts in the margins are aimed at more proficient readers. The afterword offers further information, aimed at sensitizing readers to a more environmentally friendly behaviour. As all Nefeli books, the book was printed with eco-friendly ink on Forest Stewardship Council-certified, acid-free, 100% recycled paper. Kostas Markopoulos translates the compact explanations into technically exact and imaginatively interpreted pictures. The book has received, among others, the non-fiction award from IBBY Greece and the Greek graphic and illustration award EBΓΕ. (Age: 4+) [TA]

114



Photiadēs, Philippos (Photiadis, Philippos)  
(text/illus.)  
**Μπάμπα, μπορούμε να πάρουμε σκύλο αντί για μυρμήγκι;**  
(Papa, can we have a dog instead of an ant?)  
Athēna: Martēs (Martis), 2019. – 32 p.  
ISBN 978-618-84312-0-1

Pet | Ant | Dog | Love of animals |  
Responsibility | Father | Son | Picture book

Ilias wants a dog for Christmas. His father thinks that this would be too great a responsibility. That is why Ilias gets a microscope and... an ant to go along with it. Despite his initial disappointment, the boy cares lovingly for the tiny animal, which he calls Miltos. A marmalade glass becomes his home, a parkour made of cardboard boxes keeps him fit. Ilias is proud, since Miltos can even walk on the ceiling – a dog can't do that! Besides, he has nine lives like a cat – whether squashed, burned or trampled on, Miltos magically survives every normally fatal accident. After Ilias returns Miltos to his ant family after they storm the kitchen one day, he finally does get a dog. With so much experience as a pet guardian, he's earned it! With a delightful dose of black humour, Philippos Photiadis describes in text and image the challenges of handling responsibility and loss. With his unmistakable cardboard landscapes, the architect and artist creates a wonderful play space for his lovably ludicrous, and comic-like characters. (IBBY Greece Award 2020, shortlist)(Age: 6+) [TA]



115

Tsilinikos, Dēmētrēs (Tsilinikos, Dimitris) (text)  
Mpoulompasēs, Petros (Bouloubasis, Petros) (illus.)

### **Ē Zoē me to mpampa**

(Zoe and Papa)

Thessalonikē: Epomenos Stathmos, 2019. – 32 p.  
ISBN 978-960-8259-35-5

Single father | Daughter | Mother | Death |  
Vital energy | Picture book

What might happen if a father were suddenly on his own? He might get super powers! This happened to Zoe's Papa, who has to take care of her all by himself since Mama is not there anymore. Zoe is amazed by all of his talents in their newly shared everyday life and supports him when she can. For example, she eats a second portion of the amazing meal he cooked and lends him a hand, no, lends him two hands – to clap for him as he cleans up her room. His greatest super power, however, lies in conveying his love and care without showing his stress to Zoe – which is therefore revealed only to the reader's eyes, with great humour in the parallel visual narrative in Petros Bouloubasis's pictures. Zoe can always be at ease and depend on Papa, even when he's juggling the household. Dimitris Tsilinikos tells this creative, life-affirming story from the perspective of the little girl – »Zoe« in Greek means »life«. It is about Zoe and her father's relationship and how they handle the enormous changes that the loss of her mother brings. (Age: 4+) [TA]



116

Ragnhildur Hólmgeirsdóttir (text)

### **Villueyjar**

(Island of errors)

Reykjavík: Björt, 2019. – 349 p.  
ISBN 978-9935-499-51-6

Island | Secret | Family

There is only one house in Útsálar: the schoolhouse. Arilda has always lived there. Ever since she can remember, the schoolhouse has been her home. The girl has never wondered why the house stands completely isolated on an otherwise deserted island, as this isn't particularly unusual on the islands. One day, however, while walking across the island, she gets lost in the fog. Not only does Arilda feel frightened, she also realizes that something is wrong in Útsálar and with the school. It gradually dawns on her that she cannot trust anyone; she will have to search for the answers herself. Doing so, she both finds out about the gruesome happenings in Útsálar, and uncovers her own family's secrets. Ragnhildur Hólmgeirsdóttir's texts are full of suspense and drive. Thus it didn't come as a surprise that she was nominated for the Nordic Council's Children's and Youth Book Prize in 2016 as a promising new voice in Icelandic children's and youth literature with her very first novel »Koparborgin« (The copper city). (Age: 12+) [IG]

GREEK  
ICELANDIC

Greece  
Iceland

117



Zepf, Máire (text)

**Nóinín**

(Daisy)

An Spidéal, Conamara: Cló Iar-Chonnacht,  
2019. – 277 p.

ISBN 978-1-907494-94-9

Online grooming | Love | Trust | Murder |  
Coping with grief | Verse novel

Renowned author Máire Zepf's previous books were »mostly for the tiniest little people« featuring dragons, witches, and other fun stuff. Her latest offering, however, is a whole different matter. »Nóinín« is a gritty and disturbing verse novel for teenagers about online grooming, i.e. sexual abuse or harassment via Internet. The book's first part is narrated by Nóinín, a shy teen girl, who has met seventeen-year-old Oisín (or so she believes) online and is utterly in love. So much so, that she neglects her best friend Eimear and secretly sneaks out to finally meet her dream boy in person. Then the story shifts to Eimear's narration. Nóinín has disappeared and Eimear, who feels guilty for not protecting her friend but also enraged at the criminal, vows to help the police solve Nóinín's murder. This is a powerful modern tale that was praised for its »rich imagery, poetic language and intertextual references to fairy tales and Irish myth« and earned Máire Zepf the KPMG Children's Books Ireland award 2020. And rightly so! (Age: 14+) [CS]

118



Borando, Silvia (text/illus.)

**Zebra dalla sarta**

(Zebra at the seamstress)

Reggio Emilia: Minibombo, [2019]. – [48] p.

ISBN 978-88-98177-52-3

Fashion | Clothing | Zebra | Picture book

A zebra wants a new outfit, and its seamstress has some ideas for changing up the trademark black-and-white-striped look that everyone associates with the animal. Amidst rolls of variously patterned fabric, sewing needles, scissors, and measuring tape, the zebra becomes the inventive seamstress's mannequin for a day. The mirror shows the zebra in pretty, lace-trimmed clothes, eccentrically floral, geometric patchwork, and polka dot creations. Which outfit to choose? A disconcerting feather dress, a more modest sailor suit, an elegantly chequered robe, or a crocheted »one-of-a-kind« piece? »Zebra dalla sarta« is an ironic, funny picture book that will amuse young readers. The story, expertly staged using a minimalist aesthetic, invites readers to continue the animal fashion show with new and unexpected clothing pieces. (Age: 3+) [SO]





119

Clima, Gabriele (text)

### **Black Boys**

Milano: Giangiacomo Feltrinelli editore,

2020. – 175 p.

(Series: Up Feltrinelli)

ISBN 978-88-07-91059-3

Accident | Mother | Son | Loss of father |  
Revenge | Gang | Right-wing extremism | Racism

Gabriele Clima's impressive novel presents a story full of violence, rage, and lust for revenge. It is about the fragility of adolescence and the abyss one can fall into, but also about ways to grab hold and find one's way back. Alex, the sixteen-year-old protagonist, is suffering gravely after the sudden death of his father. His life's mission is now to hunt down the perpetrator, a »black guy«, who supposedly caused the deadly accident. To get closer to his goal, he becomes a member of the Black Boys, a neo-fascist group, whose actions stoke hatred and racism. Alex joins their »revenge campaigns«, committing extreme violence, until an even more dramatic incident forces him to confront reality. With effort, he becomes aware of the insanity of his behaviour and succeeds in escaping the dangerous chaos that pulled him into the abyss. (Age: 14+) [SO]



120

Colaneri, Giovanni (text/illus.)

### **Che cos'è una sindrome**

(What is a syndrome)

Crema: Uovonero, 2019. – [56] p.

(Series: I geodi; 27)

ISBN 978-88-96918-80-7

Syndrome | Disability | Picture book |  
Non-fiction

This picture book, originally produced as a final project for the Higher Institute for Artistic Industries (ISIA) in Urbino, was picked up by the publisher Uovonero, established a decade ago with a special focus on topics like diversity and disability. Giovanni Colaneri is an illustrator of rare sensitivity. He challenges the concept of »syndrome«, bearing down on stereotypes and hasty judgments by creating a picture book that invites readers to take the time to look and observe carefully, to discover the many obscured details in its sometimes jam-packed, wimmelbook-like pages. His characters enter into dialogue with readers and elicit empathy. A short text explains the concept of a syndrome. The two-page pictures are each titled with just one word, inspiring reflection on the life circumstances of anyone suffering from a syndrome and the realization that they, too, are affected by the other people's behaviour. (Age: 6+) [SO]

121



Garlando, Luigi (text)

**Vai all'inferno, Dante!**

(Go to hell, Dante!)

Milano: Rizzoli, 2020. – 500 p.

ISBN 978-88-17-14498-8

Bullying | Gaming | Coming of age |  
Dante Alighieri / Divina Commedia

Luigi Garlando is a seasoned author, who writes suspenseful stories of ethical and social interest to teens. His newest book is an homage to the Italian »prince of poets«, Dante Alighieri. It connects the life of Vasco, a young contemporary Florentine man who is a bully and a passionate gamer, with Dante's verses. The novel unfolds across 500 pages of diverse narrative levels and passages in verse. It is at once gripping and thought-provoking. The protagonist, full of rage and repressed pain, seeks to be a supreme gamer. Along the way, he meets his match in the form of Dante. Dante's story – his passion, vitality, and relation to writing – permeate the novel and lead Vasco to Dante's masterpiece »Divine Comedy«, which helps him make marvellous discoveries and realize a way to exit the »selva oscura« (the dark forest). (Age: 13+) [SO]

122



Gotti, Grazia (text)

Palumbo, Giuseppe (illus.)

**Federico Fellini. Rimini – Roma**

Cervinara (AV): Edizioni Primavera, [2020]. – 75 p.

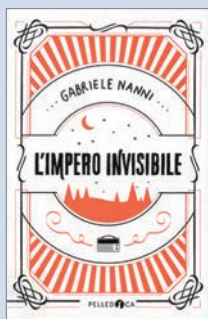
(Series: 7<sup>th</sup> Art)

ISBN 978-88-85592-22-3

Fellini, Federico | Italy | History 1920-1993 |  
Filmmaking | Actor | Biography

Rimini, a small town in the Italian region of Romagna, stands at the centre of this story, which takes readers on a trip with Federico Fellini (1920-1993), interweaving dream and reality. Federico the child, born a few steps from the Grand Hotel, loves the sea, the adventure stories of the famous author Emilio Salgari, and the world of comics. Fellini the teenager draws portraits and sets out for the »Eternal City«. There he becomes Fellini the director, and Rome the film metropolis becomes his central axis, where he is joined by his beloved actress Giulietta Masina, the characters of his many films, the great actors, female figures, and the dreamlike atmosphere. This book, which impressively captures Federico Fellini's life and the story of Italy in text and image, was published to mark the director's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday to commemorate a true Great whose fame reaches far beyond Italy's borders. This is the first volume in the new series »7<sup>th</sup> Art«, which is dedicated to cinema. (Age: 9+) [SO]

123



Nanni, Gabriele (text)

**L'Impero Invisibile***(The Invisible Realm)*

Milano: PelleDoca, 2019. – 207 p.

(Series: NeroInchiostro)

ISBN 978-88-3279-016-0

USA | History 1960s | Kidnapping | Racism |  
Ku Klux Klan | Friendship | Basketball

The novel's protagonists are four fourteen-year-old friends from Indiana (USA), who are science-fiction and horror enthusiasts. When they skip school one day to go to a horror film festival in a neighbouring town, they end up embroiled in a strange kidnapping that catapults them into a dark and unfamiliar world. They follow clues offered by the victim's shoe, which contains a hidden transmitter, and find themselves confronted by racism, injustice, and the unsettling shadow cast by the Ku Klux Klan. The story takes place in the United States in the 1960s and explores the difficult relationship between Whites and African-Americans, which continues to be fraught with conflict. Gabriele Nanni's novel is about power and unlawfulness, friendship and the demand for truth. Throughout the novel runs the radio coverage of a historic basketball game in which, for the first time, a team of Black players won the national championship. (Age: 12+) [SO]

124



Rodari, Gianni (text)

Fior, Manuele (illus.)

**Pianoforte Bill e il mistero dei spaventapasseri***(Piano Bill and the secret of the scarecrows)*

San Dorligo della Valle (Trieste): Emme Edizioni, [2020]. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-88-6714-995-7

Wild West | Cowboy | Piano | Picture book

This picture book is an excellent example of perfect unison of text and image. The text was written by Gianni Rodari for an anthology that first appeared in 1973 with the title »Novelle fatte a macchina« (machine-made novellas). The marvellous illustrations are by Manuele Fior, one of the most interesting picture book artists of recent years. Drawing on the iconographic tradition of the great Westerns, Fior animates the story with melancholic and alienated characters. Rodari portrays the Wild West masterfully, introducing readers to a cowboy with a piano, horses, a devious sheriff, musical scores, scarecrows, and a charming girl with a portable radio. The brilliant text is intentionally wacky and forgoes heroes. The book was published on the occasion of Gianni Rodari's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Up to now, he is the only Italian author to have been awarded the renowned Hans Christian Andersen Award (1970). (Age: 5+) [SO]

ITALIAN

Italy

125



Stassi, Fabio (text)  
Truttero, Veronica (illus.)  
**La gamba di legno di mio zio**  
(My uncle's wooden leg)  
Roma: Sinnos, [2019]. – [35] p.  
ISBN 978-88-7609-427-9

Immigration | Return | Uncle | Nephew |  
Adventure | Imagination | Picture book

This picture book is an homage to classic adventure literature and to immigrants, who have always travelled great distances. The text is based on a true story. The illustrations introduce fantastical elements into the realistic story-world. After having spent many years in America, an uncle unexpectedly returns – with a wooden leg. The boy-protagonist, who likes to read and is passionate about stories, now comes face to face with a family member who always got a mention at Christmas dinners. But Uncle Amerigo is not as his nephew imagined him. He looks very different than in the photos hanging on the walls, which immortalize him in his youth. Now he is much more like Captain Ahab and calls to mind gigantic, dangerous whales and sea monsters, journeys to the ends of the Earth, and extraordinary encounters. (Age: 5+) [SO]

126



Arai, Maki (text/illus.)  
**Ichigo**  
(Strawberry)  
Tōkyō: Shōgakukan, 2020. – 32 p.  
ISBN 978-4-097-25052-4

Nature | Botany | Strawberry | Non-fiction |  
Picture book

Maki Arai (b. 1965) was the 2017 winner of a Golden Apple Award at the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava for »Tanpopo« (Dandelions). Her careful and precise illustrations of plants in watercolour brim with life and sheer beauty. Her latest picture book, »Ichigo«, is also breath-taking, awakening readers' sense of wonder for nature. The result of close observation and diligent work, Arai's illustrations capture the plants from their fuzzy leaves to the juicy flesh of their fruits. The depiction of tiny seeds spread in neat rows across two pages toward the end of the book is astonishing, with life emanating from each seed. Young children will be amazed to learn about the plants' different life cycles, which are less familiar than the fruits they bear. Birds and insects depicted around the plants offer insight into the ecosystem. With its unusually sophisticated design, this book will undoubtedly spark children's interest in biological science. (Age: 7+) [RN]

127



Furuuchi, Kazue (text)

**Kane o narasu kodomotachi***(The children who ring the bell)*

Tōkyō: Komine Shoten, 2020. – 331 p.

ISBN 978-4-338-28722-7

Japan | History 1947-1973 | War | Drama

After World War II, many Japanese children were left without parents and slept in train stations. »Kane o narasu kodomotachi« is a novel inspired by a radio drama about those orphans, broadcast in Japan from 1947 to 1950 with major success. The book offers a lively account of the children and adults who passionately performed the drama despite the severe restrictions imposed by the Allied Powers. In those turbulent post-war times, people changed their values drastically; in the book, the children view the adults who did not resist the war or even supported it as hypocrites. The children, inspired by democracy, try to live up to their beliefs and stand their ground against adults. Characters such as Shōta, who sells American soldiers' cigarette butts to make a living after his father died in an air raid, and the drama instructor, who struggles with survivor's guilt because her actress sister was killed by the atomic bomb, are depicted with particular depth. Through them, the novel shows how art gives people the power to overcome their pain and to draw hope for a new tomorrow. (Age: 13+) [RN]

128



Hamano, Kyōko (text)

**Kono kawa no mukō ni kimi ga iru***(You are across this river)*

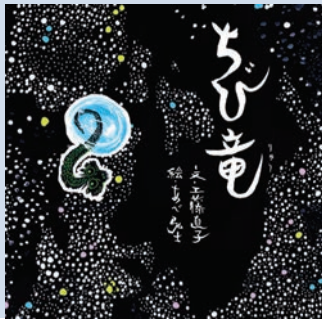
Tōkyō: Rironsha, 2018. – 221 p.

ISBN 978-4-652-20289-0

Japan | History 2011 | Tsunami | Fukushima | Nuclear accident | School | Club activities | Brass band | Friendship

»Kono kawa no mukō ni kimi ga iru« begins and ends with a river scene. The river reminds the protagonist Rino of her hometown by the sea and her brother who died in the March 11, 2011 earthquake-caused tsunami. Three years earlier, soon after the disaster, she moved to a suburb of Tokyo and was greeted with a classmate's superficial sympathy. On her way to her new high school, crossing the river, she makes up her mind to never reveal that she is a tsunami victim. Though she is still suffering from the trauma, her suppressed feelings are gradually unlocked and soothed: A friendship develops between Rino and other brass band club members like Ryō, a boy who had to evacuate from Fukushima because his family's land was contaminated after the nuclear power plant accident. Rino often goes to the river and thinks of Ryō, who lives across the river. This novel carefully depicts the different feelings experienced by people who have lost their local community as well as the complex relationships that develop between the survivors. (Age: 13+) [RN]

129



Kudō, Naoko (text)

Abe, Hiroshi (illus.)

**Chibi ryū***(The little dragon)*

Tōkyō: Dōshinsha, 2019. – 39 p.

ISBN 978-4-494-01246-6

Dragon | Animals | Development | Training |  
Picture book

Hiroshi Abe (b. 1948) is acclaimed for his lively and humorous animal illustrations, which are based on his experiences as a zookeeper for 25 years. He has broken new ground with his picture book »Chibi ryū«, which is, quite unexpectedly, about an imaginary creature. Naoko Kudō (b. 1935), one of Japan's leading children's poets, provides the rhythmical and graceful language, which is as impressive as Abe's astonishingly dynamic illustrations, particularly on the last fold-out spread. Using a limited colour palette, Abe breathes life into all animals and plants, from the tiniest to the grandest. The dragon, which was born in the water among mosquito larvae, learns how to fly from a dragonfly and how to appreciate life in the water from a Crucian carp. As he grows, he flies above the clouds, breathes fire, creates winds, clouds and rain, and finally becomes a force in the universe. This picture book, celebrating the joy of living on the Earth, aims to inspire children, all of whom have unbounded potential. (Age: 5+) [RN]

130



Nashiya, Arie (text)

**Kimi no sonzai o ishiki suru***(Conscious of your presence)*

Tōkyō: Popura sha (Poplar-sha), 2019. – 333 p.

(Series: teens' best selections; 51)

ISBN 978-4-591-16356-6

Diversity | Acceptance | Dyslexia | Gender |  
Adoption | Multiple chemical sensitivity |  
Bulimia

In »Kimi no sonzai o ishiki suru«, each character suffers from some distress, including a possibly dyslexic girl, her adopted brother, and her friend who feels uncomfortable with gender-conforming social norms. One of her classmates eats compulsively due to tremendous pressure from her family, and another is not proud of her family having roots in a foreign country. The adolescents' problems seem to be invisible to most people at school, and they feel a great deal of pressure to conform. Though some students speak out about their plight, like the one who cannot go to school because of multiple chemical sensitivity, their complaints are mostly ignored in the name of majority benefit. One teacher holds a competition for how many books students can read, never considering the reasonable accommodations that a dysgraphic student desperately asks for. Based on the belief that all people have the right to be respected for their personality and individuality, this novel encourages young people to appreciate who they are and who others are. (Age: 13+) [RN]



131



Shindō, Etsuko (text)

Satake, Miho (illus.)

**Aribaba no neko ga kīte iru***(Ali Baba's cat is listening)*

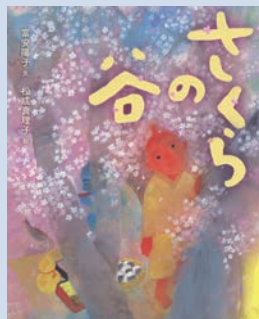
Tōkyō: Popura sha (Poplar-sha), 2020. – 219 p.

ISBN 978-4-591-16582-9

Folkcraft | Immigrant | Refugee | Cat

Shaifu is a Persian cat who, like the rest of his family, hears what commercial goods have to say and mediates between them and customers in the market. He stays for a while in a folkcraft shop in Japan where the goods tell him their life stories every night. The unglazed ceramic animals were made by a schoolteacher in the Amazon rainforest. The tassel, which a nomad girl made to decorate her camel at her wedding, regrets that it couldn't perform its task because of the war. The glass produced in Afghanistan saw that girls were forbidden to go to school when the Taliban dominated; it then was conveyed overseas, and the local makers showed the beauty of their craft internationally. The long and life-threatening journey of the fragile glasses reminds one of refugees' arduous journeys. The book's theme – recognizing vulnerable existences around us and respecting their cultures – is fleshed out with human characters like Shaifu's owner, who fled his country years ago, and immigrant children who come to the shop. The captivating illustrations of exotic goods will definitely spark young readers' imaginations. (Age: 11+) [RN]

132



Tomiyasu, Yōko (text)

Matsunari, Mariko (illus.)

**Sakura no tani***(The valley of cherry blossoms)*

Tōkyō: Kaiseisha, 2020. – 32 p.

ISBN 978-4-03-333000-6

Death | Coping with grief | Ogre | Spring |  
Picture book

Yōko Tomiyasu (b. 1959), a 2020 Hans Christian Andersen Award nominee, is known for writing magical stories with characters rooted in Japanese folklore. Her most recent picture book tells the story of a man who finds a mysterious valley nestled in the desolate mountains. It is early spring, yet the valley is full of cherry blossoms. The man sees ogres having a picnic there. The cheerful and friendly ogres treat him to a boxed lunch, which is surprisingly similar to the one his mother used to make in his childhood. While playing hide-and-seek with the ogres, the man realizes that they are his deceased family members. The story is based on a dream the author had one night just after her father had passed away. This truly original folktale-like story depicts finding solace after the death of loved ones, while carefully avoiding over-sentimentality. The language is beautifully nuanced, and the ogre's song and the man's rhyme resonate playfully. The pale-toned illustrations capture the subtleness of the protagonist's feelings in the magical yet somehow believable setting. (Age: 5+) [RN]

133



Tsuruta, Yōko (text/illus.)

**Yasai no onitaiji. Otogi zōshi shuten dōji yori**

(Six brave vegetables. Based on the old Japanese tale »Shuten dōji«)

Tōkyō: Fukuinkan Shoten, 2020. – 31 p.

(Series: Kodomo no tomo ehon)

ISBN 978-4-8340-8547-1

Japan | History 15<sup>th</sup> century | Shuten dōji /  
Adaptation | Vegetable | Ogre | Expedition |  
Picture book

»Shuten dōji«, the tale of a quest to subjugate an ogre, is said to have been created prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and since then adapted for picture scrolls and Kabuki dramas. Here we have a picture book adaptation using traditional techniques known from picture scrolls, like the composition method of showing successive events against a single background. Zooming in and out, another common technique in picture scrolls, creates a dynamic change of viewpoints perfectly suited to the wide format. The story follows six vegetables, who combine their individual strengths to free a princess and several ladies from the tuberous root of the konjac ogre. During the long journey, the pumpkin god, disguised as an old man, gives them magic sake that saps the ogre's energy and makes him helpless. The main characters are all vegetables specific to the Kyoto region and speak the soft and nuanced Kyoto dialect. Its simple yet appealing plot and warmly-portrayed characters make this book a truly entertaining read. (Age: 5+) [RN]

134



Cheon, Hyo Jeong (text)

**Sambaegi iyagi ilgom madang**

(Children's plays. Seven rounds of Sambaek's story)

Paju: Munhak dongne (Munhakdongne Publishing), 2020. – 82 p.

(Series: Eorini huigok; 06)

ISBN 978-89-546-7093-7

Experimental theatre | Madanggeuk <theatre> |  
Play | Playbook | Fairy tale | Adventure

This playbook is adapted from »Seven Days of Funeral for Sambaek«, the 14th Munhak Dongne Children's Literature Award-winning book. The story is about an unnamed child, referred to as Sambaek (»Three Hundred«), who has been chased by the »Death Messenger« for 300 years. While the original book has features of a traditional fairy tale, this book is a script for Madanggeuk, a traditional Korean drama genre, which is performed in an open area. In a Madanggeuk performance, there is no separation between the actors' stage and the audience's seats. Performers and spectators constantly communicate in the open space and complete the show together, building an exciting rhythm together. This successfully adapted book thus provides an opportunity for children to deeply engage with literature by becoming characters in the story, and, through the process of making a play together, to develop understanding, communicative, and cooperative skills. (Age: 7+) [YC, MC, SP]

135



I, An (Lee, An) (text)  
Jeong, Jin Ho (illus.)

### **Ori dolmengi ori**

(Duck Pebble Duck)

Paju: Munhak dongne (Munhakdongne Publ.),  
2020. – 126 p.

(Series: Munhak dongne dongsijip; 77)

ISBN 978-89-546-7071-5

Sound | Rhythm | Poetry

Since his debut in 1999, Lee An has steadily expanded the world of Korean children's literature with his poems about the sounds of various beings. In his fourth book, he explores the origin of the genre of children's poetry, and he begins by reminding readers why we read poetry. Avoiding flamboyant language, the poet devotes himself to carving and polishing words carefully, so that the very phrase he wants us to perceive takes root in our minds and finally blooms as a »yellow button flower« that heals »a heart that has been damaged«. All beings become potential seeds of change, as the poet watches them with affectionate eyes over a period of time in successive poems: A pebble placed between two ducks wakes up and flies to the sky. A raindrop from last summer turns into a beautiful pendant. A winding road leads to long-awaited fruits. This »joy that comes slowly« is also a reason for reading poetry. Equally enjoyable are the playful illustrations by Jeong Jin Ho, winner of the 2015 and 2018 Bologna Ragazzi Awards. (Age: 8+) [YC, MC, SP]

136



Kim, Hee-kyung (Gim, Hui Gyeong) (text/illus.)

### **Na neun yo,**

(Who am I?)

Seoul: Yeoyudang (Yeoyoudang Publ.), 2019. – [33] p.

(Series: Nalgaedallin geurimchaekbang; 32)

ISBN 978-89-92351-79-9

Animals | Self-awareness | Self-image |  
Identity | Diversity | Picture book

»Who am I?«, everyone will ask at least once in their lifetime, as we often feel we do not know enough about ourselves. We are happy and satisfied one day, discouraged the next, at times courageous, at other times timid. In her second picture book, Kim Hee-Kyung answers the profound question »Who am I?« in a very accessible way. An invisible child narrator compares themselves to animals: Deer scare easily, sloths are only comfortable at home, flying fishes are nervous about every attempt to fly. So, who am I? Young readers are made aware that there are several aspects of »myself« that together create »me«. Understanding this, they can be at peace with themselves. Although I am unique, there are numerous unique »I«s, and only mutual understanding will help to recognize diversity and to achieve a peaceful co-existence. Join the child in their discovery of themselves through these simple, beautiful texts and bright, translucent watercolour illustrations. (Age: 3+) [YC, MC, SP]

137



Kim, Sang-Keun (Gim, Sang Geun) (text/illus.)

### **Byeol naksi**

(Star fishing)

Paju: Sagyejeol (Sakyejul), 2019. – [51] p.  
ISBN 979-11-6094-460-0

Night | Insomnia | Star | Constellation |  
Friendship | Bedtime story | Picture book

One night, a sleepless child turns to the moon in search of a playmate and is pulled up by a fishing line. The fisherman turns out to be the equally sleepless moon rabbit. Now, the two of them cast their fishing rods into the sky. A crab, a fox, and two polar bears take the bait. While the new-found friends share thoughts about their insomnia, their fishing lines start shaking. Something huge has bitten! It is a cluster of stars that draws them out into space. What a playground! What fun to create one's own constellation in the night sky: Ursa Major, Ursa Minor, Vulpecula, Cancer ... and a new one for the rabbit. Playing makes one so tired! Even the rabbit can sleep now, back on the moon and sheltered by its very own constellation. Kim Sang-Keun describes his creative process as similar to making animated films. No wonder that this book shows cinematic qualities, brought to life through countless shades of blue, dialogue, and comic book features without any need for an overarching narration. (Age: 4+) [YC, MC, SP]

138



Kim, Sung-Mi (Gim, Seong Mi) (text/illus.)

### **Insa**

(Greetings)

Seoul: Chaek ingneun gom (Bear Books Publ.), 2020. – [38] p.  
(Series: Geurimchaegi cham joa; 64)  
ISBN 979-11-5836-165-5

Neighbour | Greeting | Communication |  
Misunderstanding | Picture book

The Fox family moves next door to Mr. Wolf. Mr. Wolf and the Fox kid soon cross paths, but don't say hello, pretending not to see each other, as they both are in a bad mood. They decide to say hello next time, but then keep missing out on the opportunity to do so. One day, the fox boy makes up his mind to finally greet the neighbour. However, the very moment he bows politely, Mr. Lion pops out in front of him. The adults don't notice the kid, who thinks he is being purposely ignored. A few days later, when Mr. Wolf cheerfully offers some freshly bought bread to the offended boy, he passes by without even looking at him. Now Mr. Wolf in turn gets upset about such rudeness ... The more they misunderstand one another, the more uncomfortable they feel. Will they finally greet each other? Who will do so, first? This humorous story about a tense situation, failed communication, and bad timing, is told using cartoon-like black-and-white line drawings set in stark contrast with flashes of bright pink and baby blue. (Age: 3+) [YC, MC, SP]

139



Bugavičute-Pēce, Rasa (text)  
Veldre, Zane (illus.)  
**Puika, kurš redzēja tumsā**  
(*The boy who could see in the dark*)  
Rīga: Latvijas Mediji, [2019]. – 173 p.  
ISBN 978-9934-15-692-2

Parents | Son | Blindness | Family

Rasa Bugavičute-Pēce (b. 1988) is known for her plays as well as film and TV scripts. Here she ventures once more into children's and youth literature, yet stays true to her signature style. This story about a boy named Jacob, who sees and explores the world for his blind parents, has appeared in book form with inspiring illustrations by Zane Veldre (b. 1986) and was performed as a play at the Latvian National Theatre – both great successes. For his parents, Jacob is the key to life. Honestly and unflinchingly, but also with wit and humour, he narrates how their everyday life is organized, reporting on its burdens and challenges, as well as its comic moments. Jacob also reveals his wishes: Sometimes he'd love to just be a normal crazy teenager. Interesting perspectival changes are woven into the novel, as when Jacob's mother reflects on wanting to be a mother as a non-sighted person and on raising a child that she is at the same time dependent on (Age: 10+) [KW]

140



Jundze, Arno (text)  
Martinova, Kristīne (illus.)  
**Šušnirks un pazemes bubuļi**  
(*Sniffsnuuff and the Underground Frights*)  
Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC, 2019. – 137 p.  
ISBN 978-9934-0-7920-7

Child care | Eccentricity | Adventure

Šušnirks is classy creature. In his case, however, this brings out a good deal of stuck-up foibles, an »I'm better than you« posture and rampant ego-centrism. When Šušnirks – no one knows what kind of creature he is – is given a child to watch, his well-ordered, aristocratic existence is derailed. The child's parents are missing, and since Šušnirks finds the situation unbearable, he heads out with the child in search of the parents. Their journey is adventure-filled and fairy-tale-like, full of trials and strange encounters with fantastical creatures. Literary Jack-of-all-trades Arno Jundze (b. 1965) has something in store for both big and little readers. Aside from adventures and humour, the text boasts a lot of irony and many intertextual references. A children's book that takes great delight in the absurd, in nonsense, in splendidly exaggerated characters, and in situational comedy! (Age: 8+) [KW]

141



Muižniece, Sanita (adapt.)  
Brasliņa, Elīna (illus.)  
**Runājošie suņi – pēc Edmunda Jansona animācijas filmas »Jēkabs, Mimmi un runājošie suņi« motīviem** (*Talking Dogs – Based on motifs from the animated feature film »Jacob, Mimmi, and the Talking Dogs« by E. Jansons*) [Rīga]: Liels un mazs, [2019]. – [66] p.  
ISBN 978-9934-574-23-8

Rīga | City district | Rescue | Dog | Comic

This comic has all the ingredients required for a super children's book: clever, independent kids, talking animals, adults who haven't a clue, and a suspenseful plot with unexpected twists and turns, where everything turns out alright in the end. On top of this, the »Talking Dogs« are wonderfully fleshed out. Elīna Brasliņa (b. 1988) creates a feisty, modern children's world full of surprising details, with Jacob and his smart cousin Mimmi as our heroes. Together with a gang of stray dogs, they set out to save a city district that has quaint wooden huts and great spots for playing and hiding. Devious construction magnate Manny Pie intends to create a chic glass landscape of high-rises there. He has also kidnapped Snowy, a female member of the dog pack. Someone has to fix all this! »Talking Dogs« is based on an animated film and was a great success in Latvia – and rightly so. This fabulous comic received the Golden Apple Award for Best Children's Book in 2019. (Age: 6+) [KW]

142



Zarambaitė, Ignė (text)  
**Juodavandeniai**  
(*Black water*)  
Vilnius: Nieko rimto, 2020. – 142 p.  
ISBN 978-609-441-616-3

Identity | Coming to terms with the past | Bullying | Family

Ignė Zarambaitė (b. 1988), known in Lithuania as a children's book author, presents her very gripping first novel for adolescent readers. »Juodavandeniai« centres on sixteen-year-old Anika, who goes unrecognized when she returns to her childhood village, where she experienced marginalization, bullying, and familial problems. The fact that no one recognizes her due to her changed external appearance fuels Anika's coming to terms with the past and her own identity. The titular »Black water« hints at the dark atmosphere that pervades the novel, which aside from being a coming-of-age story, is also a mysterious thriller about human chasms: Like black water, human beings are always changing, and their deeper essence is obscured by the shimmering surface. But this is not the final take-away. A supposedly fun night in a flooded, abandoned farmstead turns into a very concrete nightmare for Anika and her »friends«. (Age: 14+) [KW]



143



Zylė, Kotryna (text/illus.)

**Sukeistas. Mistinis romanas***(Swapped. A mystical novel)*

Vilnius: Aukso Žuvis, 2019. – 231 p.

ISBN 978-609-8120-39-4

Humanity | Killing | Ethics | Love | Mythology

In 2019, few young adult books were discussed as much in Lithuania as »Sukeistas«. The novel about budding art students Gabija and Gedas in the capital city of Vilnius provocatively considers questions surrounding human nature and killing, ethics and love. After a mysterious accident, Gabija hovers between the here-and-now and a mythical spirit world. The only person who can save her is Gedas, who reveals himself to be a son of fairies brought up by humans. The fairies apparently are responsible for the accident, and fate calls on Gedas to kill his fairy family in an extreme way. In her first young adult book, Kotryna Zylė stays true to her fondness for Lithuanian mythology and presents the malevolent, demonic side of that world, which she interweaves with contemporary human reality. Visually, Zylė also points to the ambiguity of the world and the double identity of the protagonists: While Gedas's passages are printed in red type on white background, set in verse style, and embellished with illustrations, Gabija's sections appear in common prose and black font. (Age: 14+) [KW]

144



Crvenkovska, Biljana (ed.)

Nikolovska, Katerina (illus.)

**Bajki od Makedonija za cela godina***(Macedonian fairy tales for the whole year)*

Skopje: Ars Lamina, 2019. – 241 p.

ISBN 978-608-259-376-0

Fairy tale | Anthology

An illustration competition was held in Macedonia over five years ago to support its national illustration scene. Competitors were asked to produce pictures for a Macedonian fable or fairy tale. The winner, Katerina Nikolovska, received the opportunity to illustrate a series of fables and fairy tales that were then published as single editions. The project was so successful that this volume of 52 Macedonian folktales was published in 2019 – with a fairy tale for every week. For the anthology, selected fairy tales of well-known fairy-tale collectors Marko Cepenkov (1829-1920), Stjepan Verković (1821-1893), and Tanas Vražinovski (b. 1941) were adapted and textually as well as pictorially updated. Katerina Nikolovska's illustrations invite princesses, dragons, and knights into the here and now and make clear that fairy tales are in no way »old news.« (Age: 5+) [KW]

LITHUANIAN  
MACEDONIANLithuania  
North Macedonia

145



Trương, Mỹ Dung (text) / Nguyễn, Thị Ngọc Bích (illus.)  
Wint Tun, Sandra (Sandara: Win. Htun); Linn, Hsu (Hsu. Lin); Linn, Tin Mar (Tin Ma Lin) (transl.)  
**Ajoun de' hma** (*At dawn*)  
Yangon: Myanmar Book Centre, 2019. – 20 p.  
(Series: Sa hpa' kja. sou. = Let's read)  
ISBN 978-99971-54-17-0  
(Orig. publ. as »Sóm mai« in Vietnamese by Room to Read Vietnam, Hanoi, 2017)

Rural life | Morning | Waking up | Picture book

Originally published in Vietnamese by Room to Read, an NGO focusing on literacy in low-income communities, this book was adapted into Burmese by the Myanmar Book Aid and Preservation Foundation, an organization seeking to improve quality and access to education and information services in the country. Such collaborations are vital because there is only a very limited number of locally produced children's books on the market right now. This picture book is architect and illustrator's Nguyễn's second joint project with social scientist Trương. Delicate water colours frame simple, poetic sentences describing the scenery of an early morning in the countryside. The wind is the first to awake, next are the leaves, the caterpillars and birds on the tree shading the farmhouse. The pruning shears in Father's hands set to work, while in the kitchen the dishes come to life with a loud bang. Finally, everyone can have breakfast to start a good day. (Age: 5+) [LO]

146



Arvola, Ingeborg (text)  
Brech, Nora (illus.)  
**Buffy By er talentfull. En selvbiografie**  
(*Buffy By is talented. An autobiography*)  
Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2019. – 254 p.  
ISBN 978-82-02-60957-3

Poverty | Solidarity | Team spirit | Skiing

Buffy, her mother, and her brother live in Oslo. Money is tight, so they often eat crispbread, but somehow they make do. When a free slalom class is offered, Buffy can hardly believe her luck: She simply HAS to join. She buys a pair of second-hand skis, grabs some forgotten winter clothes from the school's lost items box, and off she goes. Soon it becomes evident: Buffy By is talented. Her trainer is eager to take her on the school's ski trip, and there's nothing the girl would like better; but such a trip costs money. Buffy is at a loss, even though she usually sports a steadfast happy-go-lucky mentality and manages to achieve a lot with very little. In this novel, Ingeborg Arvola creates something of a utopian society: Despite the fact that Buffy's family is poor, there is no bullying or envy. Instead, Buffy shows how important it is to believe in yourself and your dreams – even without a wallet full of money. (Age: 10+) [IG]



147

Brochmann, Nina / Støkken Dahl, Ellen (text)  
Winsnes, Magnhild (illus.)  
**Jenteboka. Ellen og Ninas guide til puberteten**  
(*The girls' book. Ellen and Nina's guide to puberty*)  
Oslo: Aschehoug, [2019]. – 262 p.  
ISBN 978-82-03-26525-9

Girl | Puberty | Sexuality | Body | Non-fiction

Who doesn't remember puberty: the fights with parents and friends; the rapid mood swings from ecstatic joy to deep despair; not to mention all the physical changes: Millions of things happen, and everything shifts. In this non-fiction book, two medical doctors, Nina Brochmann and Ellen Støkken Dahl, explain what happens inside a girl's body and head in a competent, accessible, and unagitated way. They give tips, without donning any smart-alecky doctors' hats (only very rarely, and then they announce it in advance). »Jenteboka« offers true empowerment for girls, not least thanks to the great illustrations by Magnhild Winsnes. They are modern, without affectation, and show what's important. An index at the end provides suggestions about where to get additional information, advice, and help. A similar book for boys wouldn't be a bad idea... (Age: 10+) [IG]



148

Naqvi, Aon Raza (ed.)  
**Third culture kids. Åvokse opp mellom kulturer**  
(*Third culture kids. Growing up between cultures*)  
Oslo: Gyldendal, 2019. – 198 p.  
ISBN 978-82-05-52086-8

Norway | Multicultural society | Non-fiction

»Third Culture Kids«, children raised in a culture other than their parents', features 29 young women and men, many of whom are established figures in Norway's media, politics, or cultural life. Using many private photos, they openly share their personal stories: where they grew up; what is important to them; what life was like at home and at school; what was good and what was really, really bad; and what kinds of challenges, concrete problems, and hostilities there were and still are – with their families, with their neighbours, with teachers, on the streets, and online. Most have asked themselves where they belong, but also whether this question of »origin« is so important at all, whether it needs to be answered, and whether it can always be answered in the same way. The contributions in this volume show in an impressive way that most third culture kids are tired of being categorised and shoved into drawers, and of being reduced to outward appearances. They want to be seen as individual people instead of being perceived only as part of a group. (Age: 12+) [IG]

149



Ombustvedt, Åse (text)  
Skinkeape (illus.)

**Når er jeg gammel nok til å skyte faren min? Dikt for ungdom**

(When will I be old enough to shoot my father?  
Poems for teenagers)

Bergen: Ena / Vigmostad & Bjørke, 2019. – 82 p.  
ISBN 978-82-419-5021-6

Father | Violence | Fear | Poetry

The title of this book speaks of anger and despair, the black-and-white pictures are awkward, almost raw, because the poems present a family in which the father terrorizes everyone. They talk about psychological abuse through words and physical violence through deeds. They talk about an unpredictable man who makes his child feel small in order to make himself feel powerful, and about a boy who has no friends because he is always angry and unapproachable. They talk about powerlessness and anger, and they don't mince words. They also talk about a girl who sees that something is wrong but unfortunately isn't able to help much. Thanks to the dense lyrical language, every word and every verse hammers its way into the minds of the readers. For the author, writing seems to be both a therapy and an act of self-empowerment. Nevertheless, the question remains whether this attempt to free herself by writing can actually succeed. (Age: 14+) [IG]

150



Farruḥ-zād, Furūq (Farrokhzad, Forough) (text)  
Ḥaddādī, Hudā (Haddadi, Hoda) (illus.)

**Dasthāyam rā dar bāqčah mī-kāram**

(Dasthayam ra dar baghche mikaram)

(I'll sow my hands in the garden)

Tih-rān: Mirmāh (Mirmah), [2019] (= 1398 h.sh.).

– [40] p.

ISBN 978-600-333-376-5

Woman | Poetry

Forough Farrokhzad was a controversial modernist poet writing from a woman's point of view. She died in a car accident when she was just 29, but after more than 50 years she is still influential and popular among younger generations. »Dasthayam ra dar baghche mikaram« anthologizes and illustrates those parts of her poetry that are more intelligible and linguistically less intricate and thus well-suited for a young adult readership. This is a first step in making her poetry known to a new generation of adolescent readers. The excerpts speak to elements of simple living, nature, and feminism. The beautiful illustrations by renowned artist Hoda Haddadi, give a youthful feel to this book. Haddadi brings an ecofeminist sensibility to her illustrations, which is a perfect fit for capturing the philosophy behind Forough Farrokhzad's poems. Haddadi has received accolades at many festivals and exhibitions, including the Grand Prix of the Golden Pencil of Belgrade Award 2007 and a 2010 Bologna Raggazi Award in the »New Horizons« category. (Age: 12+) [RM]



Fūlādward, Marġān (Fouladvand, Mardjan) (text)  
Barrangī, Muḥammad (Barrangi, Mohammad) (illus.)  
**Sīmurg. Bargiriftah az Manṭiq-al-tair-i 'Aṭṭār-i Naišābūrī** (Simorgh. Bargerefte az Mantiq al-tair Attare Neishabouri) (Simorgh. *A story from Mantiq al-tair Attare Neishabouri*)  
Tihṛān: Madrasah, [2019] (= 1398 h.sh.). – 104 p.  
ISBN 978-964-082024-7

Bird | Truth | Wisdom | Self-empowerment |  
Myth | Parable

Simorgh, a bird in Iranian mythology and literature, plays a significant role in some Persian classics, such as »Shahnameh« (Book of Kings) by Ferdowsi and the story of »Mantiq-ut-Ṭayr« (The Conference of the Birds) by Fariduddin Attar. In Attar's parable-like poem, the birds of the world gather to decide who is to be their sovereign. The hoopoe, wisest of them all, suggests that they should find the legendary Simorgh. At the end of the long journey, only thirty birds remain. They realize that they themselves are the ruler they seek. Mardjan Fouladvand has adapted Attar's poem into suitable and understandable prose for young adults. What makes this book a magnificent work are Mohammad Barrangi's pictures. The young and talented London-based Iranian illustrator uses his feet and toes to paint instead of his disabled hand. That's why his pictures have their own unique look. In his artwork he combines elements of Persian calligraphy, Eastern stories and imagery, and classical Western painting. (Age: 12+) [RM]



Hānīān, Ġamšīd (Khanian, Djamshid) (text)  
**Guftu-gūy-i ġādūgar-i buzurg bā malakah-i ġazārah-i Ranghā**  
(Gofto-gouye jadougare bozorg ba malakeye jazirehre-ie Rang-ha)  
(The grand wizard and the queen of Colour Island)  
Tihṛān: Ufuq (Ofoq), [2019] (= 1397 h.sh.). – 178 p.  
(Series: Rumān-i Nawġawān; 215)  
ISBN 978-600-353-435-3

Mother | Child | Loss | Death | Coping with grief

Rahi's mother informs him one day that he must go and work for their neighbour, the artist Ms. Parsa, to sit for his portrait. In return, Ms. Parsa will buy him his dream bicycle. The atmosphere of her house feels odd to him. Step by step, Rahi figures out that there once was a boy living in this house, whose room is still intact, including his clothes. Gradually, the readers put the pieces of the puzzle together and find out that Ms. Parsa's son, Amir Taha, drowned in the sea and that the resemblance between Amir Taha and Rahi is uncanny. Rahi is the only link Ms. Parsa has to her son and to her sanity. At the end of the story Rahi's warm heart and spirited character saves Ms. Parsa from making a terrible decision. This book, similar to other works by the author, has a peculiar narrative structure. The characters and narratives go back and forth in time, and readers have to reconstruct the order of events. Iranian novelist and playwright Djamshid Khanian has gained national and international acclaim for his books. (Age: 14+) [RM]

153



Muḥammadi, Nargīs (Mohammadi, Nardjes)  
(text/illus.)

**Či fikr-i ḥūbī!**

(Che fekre khoubi!)

(What a brilliant idea)

Tihrān: Tūtī (Tuti Books), [2019]

(= 1398 h.sh.). – [32] p.

ISBN 978-622-6630-10-8

Beauty | Difference | Diversity | Self-image |  
Self-esteem | Picture book

Turnip is unhappy with his »big« ears. He decides to wear a mask over his head to hide them. Everyone is amazed by his »brilliant idea« and decides to do the same. They're all hiding something they dislike about themselves, yet now no one is distinguishable from anyone else. This outcome makes Turnip wonder: Was this really a good idea? He is not sure anymore. His ears might be ugly and big, but he has cute hair and nice cheeks. Why should he cover them up? »Che fekre khoubi« (What a brilliant idea!) is a story about self-esteem, self-image, and self-acceptance. It helps children to understand that no matter what they look like, difference is beautiful, and beauty is different. Highly talented illustrator Nardjes Mohammadi has received many prizes and honours, including the Golden Apple Award at the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava. This book was also acknowledged at the COW Design Biennial in Ukraine and the Little Hakka Picture Book Competition in Shenzhen, China. (Age: 6+) [RM]

154



Królak, Agata (text/illus.)

**Myśli Teo**

(Teo is reflecting)

Warszawa: Hokus-Pokus, 2019. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-83-60402-73-3

Thinking | Philosophy | Picture book

Teo thinks. Teo reflects. Teo reflects on his thinking. About his thoughts. Where they live. What they do when he is not thinking of them. Whether he will think bigger thoughts when he grows up. And how Mom obviously can read his thoughts when she bakes him the pancakes he's secretly craving. This picture book by Agata Królak (b. 1987) splendidly invites readers to philosophize about thinking. The minimalist, expressive illustrations deliver meaning with few details and recall children's drawings in their teetering naiveté. Rising above the details, from one landscape-oriented double-page to the next, the illustrator creates associative points of connection and pictorial linkages, which gradually coalesce into Teo's web of thoughts. Agata Królak knows exactly how to tease out inner complexity, as she has also shown in other work, such as the board book »What bears are like« with its depiction of feelings and moods. (Age: 3+) [KW]



155



Oziewicz, Tina (text)  
Kaczmarek, Rita (illus.)

### **Awaria elektrowni**

(Power outage)

Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Dwie Siostry, 2019. – [40] p.  
ISBN 978-83-8150-037-1

Power plant | Power outage | Darkness |  
Nature | Nocturnal animals | Picture book

Power outage. The house and yard are steeped in darkness. In their wonderful picture book, Tina Oziewicz (b. 1971) and Rita Kaczmarek (b. 1991) show what the absence of artificial light at night means for humans, but even more so for animals – how they experience darkness and why sensing darkness is something special. All scenes in the book are bathed in a saturated dark blue and sequentially show various animals observing the night. With low-angle shots, readers look up at the sky as various denizens on the property might view it, including fox, crab, frog, moth, toad, woodcock, badger, owl, hedgehog, and humans. The authors explore tranquil thoughts about the beautiful dark, but also explain how such animals leave their hiding places and find protection and freedom under the cover of night. Thus, without saying it directly, this picture book makes a plea for more power outages and for granting nature more room and air. (Age: 4+) [KW]

156



Ryrych, Katarzyna (text)  
Rusinek, Joanna (illus.)

### **Mała wojna**

(Little war)

Łódź: Wydawnictwo Literatura, 2019. – 79 p.  
(Series: Wojny dorosłych – Historie dzieci)  
ISBN 978-83-7672-655-7

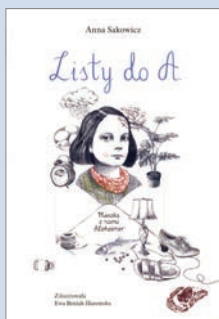
World War II (1939-1945) | Lviv | Hiding place |  
Humanity | Rescue

Set during World War II, this story follows Janek, the first-person narrator, and his sister Lilka, who live with their mother and grandmother in the city of Lwów (Ukraine's Lviv today), which has been Soviet-occupied since 1939. When the children hear strange (human) sounds coming from behind the bookshelf at the home of their music teacher Pan Stefan, and they notice more and more oddities, they assume they are in for an adventure. Their grandmother tells them that Pan Stefan is protecting some children by allowing them to hide at his place. She survived World War I and deportation to Siberia and calmly and earnestly explains why war is not a game of hide-and-seek. In »Mała wojna«, Katarzyna Ryrych, an important voice in Polish children's literature, laconically describes the hardships that define everyday life for families during wartime. The gripping story is part of the series »Adult wars – Children's stories«, which is well worth reading. Since 2010, the series has issued books that venture to broach the terrible realities of life during wartime. (Age: 8+) [KW]

POLISH

Poland

157



Sakowicz, Anna (text)  
Beniak-Haremska, Ewa (illus.)  
**Listy do A. Mieszka z nami Alzheimer**  
(Letters to A. Alzheimer lives with us)  
Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Poradnia K,  
2019. – 139 p.  
(Series: Latawiec)  
ISBN 978-83-66005-60-0

Grandmother | Granddaughter |  
Alzheimer's Disease

A little girl named Anielka writes letters to the invisible Mr. A. He has gotten to her Grandma and plays tricks on her. Anielka understands that Mr. A. is never going away again. What's more, he's not only dominating her grandmother's life. Increasingly, he's involving the whole family and pushing them to the brink of what's emotionally bearable. In her children's book, Anna Sakowicz (b. 1972) adopts the little girl's perspective to describe the onset of Alzheimer's disease and what it does to the afflicted person's family members. The content is based on the author's personal experiences. Though Anielka's thoughts are those of a child, she expresses them in discerning language that is also directed at adult readers. Anielka's letters to Mr. A. are accompanied by many little coloured pencil drawings by Ewa Beniak-Haremska. (Age: 10+) [KW]

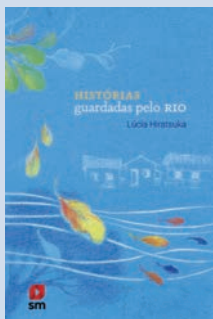
158



Gorski, Michel (text)  
Vilela, Fernando (illus.)  
**Além da chuva**  
(Beyond the rain)  
São Paulo: FTD, 2020. – 47 p.  
ISBN 978-85-96-02757-1

Metropolis | Water | Rain | Ecology |  
Environmental protection | Picture book

In the year 2035, Carlos returns to São Paulo. The giant metropolis has completely changed. When he was a child, twenty-five years earlier, he ran through grey urban canyons and hardly saw any green anywhere. Now, the city is covered in vegetation. Facades are green, high-rise roofs serve as fields, pastures, and gardens. Carlos remembers the summer rain floods that used to put the city under water every year, and how he, his friends, and his family tackled the problem back then. He describes how they broke up the pavement in the car park area and planted a garden there, how they developed rooftop gardens and ingenious rain collection devices and invented multi-purpose basins, subterranean reservoirs, »aquarium busses«, and »car door rain collectors«. This imaginatively illustrated picture book, which includes a few pages with information about young environmental activists, conveys in an original way how an ecological problem can be surmounted with can-do spirit and ingenuity, transforming a utopia into a reality. (Age: 7+) [JW]



159

Hiratsuka, Lúcia (text/illus.)

### **Histórias guardadas pelo rio**

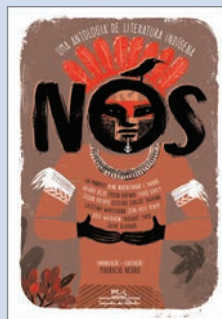
*(Stories kept by the river)*

São Paulo: Edições SM, 2018. – 63 p.

ISBN 978-85-418-2040-0

River | Fisher | Story | Storytelling

Lúcia Hiratsuka bases her subtle, unobtrusive children's book on a lovely image she created to capture the art of inventing and telling stories. In a town by a river, fishers pull stories out of the water and sell or give them away to other people. Pedro wants to learn about the secrets of story-fishing, but no one can really explain it to him. Is it a talent, an art, or a craft? How does one do it? Does one perhaps only need the right fishing rod or basket for it? Like those hunting their fortune in fairy tales, Pedro makes his way to a village to find a Mr. Guido who supposedly can help him further. He doesn't find the old fisherman, but he does find other people; in the end, he also finds himself. Hiratsuka's story flows as peacefully as its titular river. The boundaries between the real and the fabular blur in an unforced, natural-seeming way. Colourful vignettes illustrate the poetic text. (Age: 8+) [JW]



160

Negro, Mauricio (ed./illus.)

Various authors (text)

### **Nós. Uma antologia de literatura indígena**

*(Us. An anthology of indigenous literature)*

São Paulo: Companhia das Letrinhas, 2019. – 126 p.

ISBN 978-85-7406-864-0

Brazil | Indigenous people | Myth | Fairy tale | Anthology

At the time when European colonizers reached the region of today's Brazil, more than 1000 languages were being spoken there. Today, only a quarter of these languages are still alive. These, too, are at risk of dying out, because the ancestral lands of the often small ethnic groups that speak them are threatened. Many members of such groups have migrated to the cities, where it is hard to preserve their own language and culture. One can't value what one doesn't know, so books like »Nós« offer valuable aid in foregrounding and valuing such peoples and their heritage. Mauricio Negro, the volume's editor and illustrator, brings together newly-told origin myths by ten indigenous authors, which reveal a small, fascinating segment of Brazil's rich indigenous narrative tradition. Each of the beautifully illustrated stories is followed by information about the respective ethnic group, a biographical note about the author, as well as a very useful glossary. This carefully edited volume is a genuine treasure. (Age: 12+) [JW]

161



Parreiras, Nina (text)

Neves, André (illus.)

**Donana e Titonho. Um conto**

(*Donana and Titonho. A story*)

São Paulo: Paulinas, 2018. – [40] p.

(Series: Espaço Aberto)

ISBN 978-85-356-4395-4

Poverty | Social disparity | Garbage |  
Garbage collector | Dignity | Picture book

»Collecting and picking up. Keeping and keeping quiet.« These two brief sentences concisely describe Donana and Titonho's existence. The couple, who keep their heads above water by collecting and re-using garbage, are spending their whole life together. Their work carries a stigma of shame, poverty, and misery that one can scarcely escape and that is passed on from generation to generation. Dona and Titonho, their children and children's children represent those who are ignored and live at the margins of society, yet whose dignity can still not be taken away. Nina Parreiras tells this story in dense, lyrical prose. Short, partly fragmentary sentences, or single words align themselves in sequence. Read aloud, they carry a rhythmic flow like a chant. André Neves's illustrations include photo cut-outs to accompany the powerful text. The pictures express the characters' melancholy in a striking way. (Age: 8+) [JW]

162



Sisto, Celso (text)

Elma (illus.)

**Blimundo o maior boi do mundo.**

**Conto tradicional de Cabo Verde**

(*Blimundo, the largest bull in the world.*

*A traditional tale from Cabo Verde*)

Rio de Janeiro: Rocco Pequenos Leitores,  
2018. – 39 p.

ISBN 978-85-62500-91-6

Cabo Verde | Folk tale | Tyranny | Bull | Freedom

The cruel king Morgado – dictator, oppressor, and slaveholder – decides to have the giant bull Blimundo captured and killed. The bull's strength, unyieldingness, and unconditional love of freedom are unbearable to the king and a thorn in his side, because they mirror his own tyranny. Blimundo, under a spell and blindly in love with Morgado's youngest daughter, cannot be conquered by weapons, but only through the cunning of a child named Arcádio. However, his death also spells the end of Morgado's reign. The violent, gruesome end is thus in no way a happy one, the future remains uncertain, and Arcádio, along with readers, remains disconcerted. The old fairy tale from Cape Verde is full of symbolism and refers back to experiences from the history of the African island state, including slavery and colonial rule. Celso Sisto tells the story in a rhythmic, partly rhymed language. It is difficult to evade the power of the text and Elma's pictures, which are glowing in bright red. (Age: 7+) [JW]

163



Pessoa, Ana (text)  
Estrela, Joana (illus.)  
**Aqui é um bom lugar**

(*This is a good place*)

Carcavelos: Planeta Tangerina, 2019. – [222] p.

(Series: Dois passos e um salto)

ISBN 978-989-8145-93-2

Coming of age | Diary

Ana Pessoa has a special talent for describing the experiences, thoughts, wishes, fears and challenges of the years sandwiched between not-being-a-kid-anymore and not-yet-being-an-adult in an authentic, linguistically resonant way, staying in tune with her characters and readers. The same applies to her new book, which received the Maria Rosa Colaço Award in 2018 and was created in close collaboration with artist Joana Estrela. What drew the author and illustrator together, according to their own testimony, was their shared love of notebooks. So »Aqui é um bom lugar« is a kind of comprehensive notebook, in which seventeen-year-old protagonist Teresa Tristeza collects what she experiences, feels, and thinks in entries that are never more than two pages in length – written by hand, scribbled, pasted in, enhanced by drawings, sketches, sometimes also photographic snippets. Everything finds a spot here and is worth holding onto. Together, the fragments form a heterogeneous, living collage, which both in content and form captures the young woman's sense of life. (Age: 15+) [JW]

164



Viana, Gonçalo (text/illus.)

**Troca-Tintas**

(*Colour switcher*)

Lisboa: Orfeu Negro, 2019. – [38] p.

(Series: Orfeu mini)

ISBN 978-989-8868-67-1

Colour | Imagination | Storytelling |  
Picture book

»There once were two friends, an orange-coloured dog, a yellow kite and a... white tree?« Wait a minute! Something's off. One had best return the book or start it over again: »There once were...« But even the second attempt at starting the story will flounder. Now a cloud is – wait for it! – green. The illustrator is no doubt inept... unless a colour switcher is perhaps involved? This is probably the case since things don't get any better – in the end, a purple dog and a lime-green sun enter the scene. Gonçalo Viana lights a firework of bright colours and expressive forms, odd characters and looniness in this picture book. »Troca-Tintas« taps into the pure joy and fun involved when we play with the imagination and language and delight in spontaneous story invention. A book entirely without meaning that explores the art of thinking and colouring the world just as it pops into one's head. (Age: 4+) [JW]



165

Ponomarëv, Nikolaj (Ponomaryov, Nikolai) (text)  
**Točka bifurkacii**  
 (Tochka bifurkacii)  
 (Bifurcation point)  
 Moskva: KompasGid, 2019. – 341 p.  
 ISBN 978-5-00083-581-4

First love | Communication

When one falls in love for the first time, life divides into a before and an after. Timofei reaches this fork when he meets Marina, who is deaf. Every morning, she sits in the same bus to school as he does. They experience the tender first bonds, flustered misunderstandings, and scary yet beautiful carousel of insecure being in love.... a whole school year long. This could be a teen love story like many others, but seldom is the moment so astutely dissected and embedded in a story as Nikolai Ponomaryov (b. 1976) does here. With trenchant descriptions and a nice sound, he describes, from Timofei's point of view, all that happens the first time one earnestly falls in love: Wrestling for chances to express this new feeling, marvelling at the things it makes one do, and not knowing how to interact with each other or their own self. Narrated in retrospective, Timofei realizes years later that his »bifurcation point« occurred sometime that year. (Age: 12+) [KW]



166

Romanovskaja, Larisa (Romanovskaya, Larisa) (text)  
**Siblingi**  
 (Siblings)  
 Moskva: Samokat, 2019. – 317 p.  
 (Series: Vstrečnoe dviženie [Vstrechnoe dvizhenie])  
 ISBN 978-5-91759-889-5

Experiment | Time travel | Course of life |  
 Change | Science fiction

It's a classic sci-fi idea – retroactively step into others' lives and change them. Larisa Romanovskaya's novel »Siblingi« develops this idea into an enthralling read, lending the story a lovely anachronistic streak, since apart from the highly technical process of stepping into and out of the timelines, the protagonists make do without any artefacts of the digital age. The »Siblingi« are a group of children and youths who, due to the perilous nature of their future lives, are extracted from those life trajectories and made part of an experiment. The »Institute of Time« isolates them extra-terrestrially and sends them, operative-like, to a specific point in time to prevent something worse from happening, such as a house fire. They are always sent to handle relatively small matters that never directly touch their own lives. So, what happens when one meddles with one's own life course? What happens to one's own future self? And why only operate on small matters: Why not eradicate Hitler? (Age: 12+) [KW]



167



Mladenović, Dragana (text)  
Kuzmanović, Boris (illus.)

### **Dar-mar**

(Topsy-turvy)

Beograd: Kreativni Centar, 2019. – 99 p.

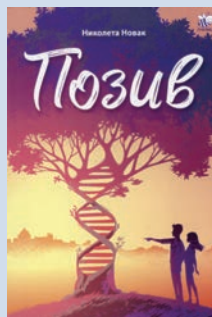
(Series: Različak)

ISBN 978-86-529-0353-5

Poetry | Wordplay | Pun | Riddle | Reading |  
Picture book

This wildly colourful, multi-award-winning book is about flip-flopping and criss-crossing: Dragana Mladenović (b. 1977) and Boris Kuzmanović (b. 1980) creatively run riot, intentionally sowing confusion and funny aha-moments in both text and illustration along the way. Ungainly figures with outsized eyes romp about with disproportioned creatures in vibrantly coloured sceneries framed by jewelled borders. They epitomize the short poems and texts, which – according to the book's preface – interlopers have strewn with little mistakes and unrhymed phrases that readers are supposed to find and laugh about. Instead of going to the supermarket, it's off to the superparquet. The grocery list has a litre of bread and a kilo of milk on it, while the weekend finds a book grazing rurally instead of a cow. Displacements of sound and meaning, word reversals and twists, and playful fun with reading habits make »Dar-Mar« a marvellous book to read slowly and makes looking twice very worthwhile. (Age: 9+) [KW]

168



Novak, Nikoleta (text)

### **Poziv**

(The call)

Čačak: Pčelica Izdavaštvo DOO, 2019. – 155 p.

ISBN 978-86-6089-881-6

Adoption | Biological mother | Search for identity

Nikoleta Novak is a well-known children's book author in Serbia. »Poziv«, her first novel for young adults, is about Stefan and his life story – which is really one long search for identity. While that in itself is not atypical of a coming-of-age novel, Stefan was also adopted and moved from Serbia to Canada as a child; so in this respect, too, he is searching for himself and his roots. To find his biological mother, he returns to Serbia. With the help of his friend Ema, who he knew from childhood and starts to become romantically involved with, he begins his search laden with blame, mistrust, and uncertainty. Told from multiple points of view, the dramatic past surrounding Stefan's adoption gradually comes to light. »Poziv« develops into an absorbing page-turner that feels like a thriller with an optimistic ending. The novel was named Young Adult Book of the Year in 2019 at the Belgrade book fair. (Age: 14+) [KW]

169



Hvorecký, Michal (text)  
Štefanovičová, Klára (illus.)

### Čierna oslava

(Black celebration)

[Bratislava]: ej.publishing, 2019. – 37 p.

(Series: Nežný komiks; 1)

ISBN 978-80-972977-6-3

Czechoslovakia | History 1989 | Protest |  
Student protest | Coming of age | Comic

In November 1989, students of all ages take to the streets to protest in defence of education, democracy, freedom, and against the socialist system. Jana is among them, mostly because of her crush, a rebellious young man with a passion for the band Depeche Mode. Jana joins the protesting youth on the streets, yet she remains an obedient child to her family of elite party officials. During the demonstration she realizes, though, that it's time to show her true colours. »Čierna oslava« is the first part of a comic series that engages with the »Velvet Revolution« in the former Czechoslovakia. It is a call to young people today to step up for rights and freedom, and reminds us that it is worth fighting for democracy. At the same time, this is the exceedingly successful debut of Klára Štefanovičová (b. 1995), student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava. (Age: 12+) [KW]

170



Bauer, Jana (text)  
Zajac, Malgosia (illus.)

### Kako prestrašiti pošast

(How one scares a monster)

Ljubljana: KUD Sodobnost International,

2020. – [34] p.

(Series: Gugalnica. Zbirka najboljših slikanic)

ISBN 978-961-7047-62-2

Monster | Cunning | Picture book

Filip Rabbit has a problem: A monster has made itself at home under his bed. How fortunate that his friend Otto is a monster expert. It quickly becomes clear that there are different kinds of monsters, which can be scared off using different means. Otto makes loud noises to ward off brutish monsters, takes raspberry syrup to scare away tooth monsters, and tries to defend himself against hair tuft monsters by threatening to wash them. When nothing proves effective, the boys reach for one last, cunning trick and catch the beast. Quirky characters, spooky creatures, a surprising end – this picture book offers the perfect mix for a story that can be read and looked at again and again. Exceedingly successful Slovenian children's book author Jana Bauer proves once more how well she can make short, concise texts sparkle and pop. Polish illustrator Malgosia Zajac has a keen eye for mischievous pictorial details and aptly catches the atmosphere of the different situations. (Age: 4+) [KW]

171



Semenič, Simona (text)  
Komadina, Tanja (illus.)  
**Skrivno društvo KRVZ**

(KRVZ Secret Society)

Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2020. – 309 p.

(Series: Modra ptica)

ISBN 978-961-01-5931-5

Adventure | Secret | City | Map | Dragon |  
Metafiction

This children's book features a secret society of resourceful kids, a mysterious city map of Ljubljana, dragons, a rare dragon plant, quirky scientists, dodgy characters, teacher parents, a cheeky authorial voice, and a good deal of wordplay and stylistic elegance. In her children's literary debut, illustrated by Tanja Komadina (b. 1976), Slovenian playwright Simona Semenič (b. 1975) spins a wild adventure yarn around how the children discover the secret of the map, the dragon plant, and the dragon itself. What's more, she regularly jumps right in, engages with her readers, and points out that the story is nothing but a literary construction: In entertaining ways, she points out how the story is structured or how she left out certain plot elements only to describe them later. Thanks also to the spirited dialogues, written in the type of secret codes kids invent, »Skrivno društvo KRVZ«, which won the Modra Ptica Award, testifies to a great joy in story-invention. (Age: 9+) [KW]

172



Sokolov, Cvetka (text)

Bartolj, Marta (illus.)

**Bo res vse v redu?**

(Will everything be alright?)

Dob pri Domžalah: Miš, 2019. – 127 p.

(Series: Zbirka Prva z(o)renja)

ISBN 978-961-272-376-7

Homosexuality | Father | Son |  
Intergenerational relation | Family conflict |  
Mountain climbing | Adventure

Bor is hiking in the mountains with Grandma. Usually the boy enjoys this, since his Grandma knows a lot about the mountains and about climbing. But this time Bor is downcast because he overheard a fight his grandmother and mother were having about him, his father and his father's life partner. Bor just really wants everything to be okay between Grandma and Papa again, just as he wants their hike through the mountains to end well, as they've become lost. This book once again reveals Cvetka Sokolov's (b. 1963) feeling for familial relationships. As in other works, she dons a child's perspective and reveals the errors that adults make, as with Bor's grandmother, for instance, and her attitude toward her son's homosexuality. Since it's no big deal for Bor that his father lives with another man, for him (and for readers) what matters is the exciting hike at hand, along with the question of why adults get into fights and judge his father's life model. (Age: 10+) [KW]

173



Frankel, Yael (text/illus.)

### **El ascensor**

(The lift)

Buenos Aires: Limonero, 2019. – [38] p.

ISBN 978-987-47079-7-0

[Elevator](#) | [Neighbourhood](#) | [Communication](#) | [Picture book](#)

This story is set in a space that's easy to oversee at a glance: inside a lift that doesn't arrive on the ground floor, no matter how often the button gets pressed. Instead, it shuttles between top and (near) bottom, collecting several residents of a house along the way: Doña Paula, Señor Miguel, and Cora with her little twins. Going up and down starts taking a little long, so to pass the time Doña Paula shares her home-made cake, and Señor Miguel tells the story of a bear who supposedly never »cares either way« about things. Time flies by. Meanwhile, the frame story and the second-level story-within-a-story flow into each other in the black-and-white pictures that feature a few red accents. In the end, everyone agrees that they »don't care either way« whether or not the lift gets repaired. »El ascensor«, highly original both in its visuals and its text, comes in a narrow portrait format as befitting a long lift shaft. It captivates readers through its humour and a sense for the little, unexpected surprises of everyday life. (Age: 5+) [JW]

174



Martínez Arroyo, Carola (text)

### **Nunca jamás**

(Never again)

Buenos Aires: Norma, 2019. – 236 p.

(Series: Zona libre)

ISBN 978-958-545-828-4

[Mother](#) | [Death](#) | [Coping with grief](#)

»Nothing bad has happened to me for thirteen years. Now my mother has died«. This is how the story of thirteen-year-old Fiorella begins on the first page of the book. »She has died«: This is the final certainty, even though Fiorella's little sister, Maggie, hopes their mother will »undie«. The narrator shares feelings such as incredulity, paralysis, rage, and grief with readers, as well as her attempt to newly find her way in life and to gradually fill the void, though it can never completely disappear. As in her debut novel »Matilde« (2016), in »Nunca jamás« Carola Martínez Arroyo uses an authentic language to develop the plot as well as the emotions and thoughts of her female protagonist in an absolutely believable way. Averse feelings – for instance, when Fiorella desires to live her own life yet also remain responsible for her sister – aren't played down or trivialized, which is of great merit. (Age: 11+) [JW]



175

Schuff, Nicolás (text)  
Reboursin, Javier (illus.)

### **Mis tíos gigantes**

(*My giant uncles*)

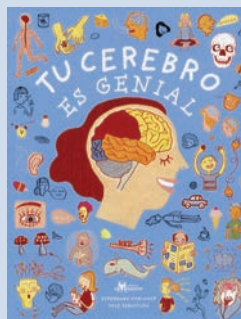
Buenos Aires: Santillana, 2019. – 57 p.

(Series: Loqueleo. Narrativa)

ISBN 978-950-46-5839-9

Family | Uncle | Tolerance

Not everyone could claim to have such uncles! Severino and Saturnino are twins, 99 years old, three meters tall – and terribly annoying. They are clumsy, rude, loud, love to stick their noses into other people's affairs or to find fault with them. Despite all this, they are family, and one must get along with them somehow. Easier said than done when, for example, they climb a tree and the police have to get them back down, or when they phone the first-person-narrator at the crack of dawn to ask whether he's finally rewritten his story or whether he could tell them a new one. There are plenty of fussy and uninspired books for beginning readers. This little volume, however, barely 60 pages long, with generous layout and illustrations, is a gem. With keenly crafted language and humorous dialogue, Nicolás Schuff tells an original, fast-paced story about two not very lovable characters that provides a lot of reading pleasure. (Age: 8+) [JW]



176

Habinger, Esperanza (text)  
Sebastián, Sole (illus.)

### **Tu cerebro es genial**

(*Your brain is ingenious*)

Santiago, Chile: Editorial Amanuta, 2019. – 59 p.

(Series: Colección Abre los ojos)

ISBN 978-956-364-104-2

Brain | Non-fiction

The human brain is ingenious in a double sense: it is both excellently designed and capable of astonishing achievements. From first page to last, this astonishing book devotes itself to this very special mass housed within our skulls. It talks about the parts of the brain, their functions, and how they communicate with and control other body parts. It talks about coordination and balance, memory and language, sensory perception, emotions, empathy, and the possibility of training the brain. The text and the numerous vignette-like illustrations explain all this in a clearly structured and straightforward way. The book conveys a great deal of intriguing knowledge without overloading the pages or overwhelming readers. There are unique invitations in each chapter to perform simple self-guided experiments. In testing one's senses, equilibrium, or power of recall, for instance, one can become aware of what goes on in our »control centre« and what abilities and achievements it's responsible for. (Age: 9+) [JW]

177



Quinteros, Ángeles (text)  
Vargas, Ángeles (illus.)  
**¡Fiesta! Cómo se celebra en América**  
(Festive! How one celebrates in the Americas)  
[Santiago ]: Escrito con Tiza, [2019]. – 57 p.  
(Series: Colección Binoocular)  
ISBN 978-956-6049-00-5

America | Celebration | Tradition | Folklore |  
Non-fiction

»¡Fiesta!« takes readers on a varied journey to visit celebrations in fifteen countries from Chile to Canada. Local or unique national festivities are mainly featured, for instance Tapati Rapa Nui in honour of ancestors on the Easter Islands, the Mama Negra parade in the Ecuadorian town of Latacunga, or the harvest feast Mal Día para Señor Harding (Bad Day for Mr. Harding) on Barbados. These are living traditions, which, as characteristic of the Americas, have blended elements from indigenous cultures of the continents with the cultures of European and African immigrants, and so also reflect the ethnic and religious roots of these societies. The informative texts and expressive, intensely vibrant illustrations in the primary shades of blue, yellow and red offer a wonderful entry point to learn about the rich traditions of the Americas. Some further information about the fifteen featured countries and a glossary complete the attractive non-fiction book. (Age: 8+) [JW]

178



Siemens, Sandra (text)  
**Cocodrilo con flor rosa**  
(Crocodile with pink flower)  
Bogotá: Norma, 2019. – 127 p.  
(Series: Zona libre. Jóvenes adultos)  
ISBN 978-958-00-1235-1  
(Parallel ed.: Buenos Aires: Norma, 2019)

Sexual abuse | Coping with trauma | Memory

For a long time, a traumatic experience lay buried deep inside seventeen-year-old Teresa. At the age of eight, she was sexually abused by a family friend. Only now, years later, memories begin to stir in her. What was long concealed and suppressed is now brought into the open and articulated. But to recognize and heal mental and emotional injuries is a painful process that is fragmentary and erratic. In her impressive novel, Argentinian author Sandra Siemens uses a fitting literary form to represent Teresa's memory work and trauma processing. When she speaks of the present, the protagonist uses the first-person voice, and when she speaks of her childhood, she switches to the more distanced third-person voice. The temporal planes alternate in the short chapters, which are sometimes only a page long and gradually snap together like puzzle pieces. But not everything is explained and explicitly portrayed. As a result, speechlessness and repression remain present to the end. (Age: 14+) [JW]



179



Bassi, Sandro (illus.)

**La Nacionalien***(The Nationalien)*

[México]: Alboroto Ediciones, 2019. – [49] p.

ISBN 978-607-98231-3-9

Metropolis | Suburban train | Communication |  
Isolation <Sociology> | Dystopia | Wordless  
book | Picture book

This is a book about life underground in a multi-lingual megalopolis. The crush is not only visible, but downright palpable. Meanwhile, a tense, threatening silence makes the air rustle. Not headless, but somehow faceless aliens populate the city, swarm on train platforms, crowd each other on packed underground trains while ceaselessly staring at their smartphones, as if fused with them. A telephone even dangles from a pram like an umbilical cord. The frames keep getting narrower, pulling observers closer and closer to the characters and sucking them into the denseness, mad rush, wordlessness, and lostness of this restless, highly technologized world. In his extravagant, energy-loaded black-and-white drawings, Sandro Bassi tells no linear story, portraying a state of being instead. »La Nacionalien« holds a dystopian mirror up to people living today and needs no words to do so. (Age: 8+) [JW]

180



Riva Palacio Obón, Martha (text)

Sekkur, Sólín (illus.)

**Kitsunebi, fuego de Zorro***(Kitsunebi, fox fire)*

México, D.F.: Ediciones Castillo, 2019. – 75 p.

(Series: Castillo de la lectura)

ISBN 978-607-540-465-3

Japan | Myth | Saga | Fairy tale | Short story |  
Magic

Fascinated and inspired by Japan's history and culture, its myths and sagas, Mexican author Martha Riva Palacio Obón has written seven short stories that offer new angles on material, motifs, and characters from folk tales of the island nation. The texts are polished gems written in a poetic, nuanced language and are inspired by Japanese haibun, a literary form that connects prose and verse. The stories tell of samurais, noble ladies and monks, of foxes and cats, palaces, caves, enchanted forests, and mysterious temples. They float between reality, dream, and magic. Nothing is explained, no mysteries solved, and a veil is draped over all and is not lifted. The artfully composed texts are nebulous and secret-filled, a feeling echoed in the partly silhouetted illustrations of Sólín Sekkur, which offer a night-blue glimpse of the worlds of the in-between and of the spirits. (Age: 12+) [JW]

181



Romero, Ana (text)  
Gallo, Valeria (illus.)

### **Nosotras – Nosotros**

(We – We)

Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2019. – [44] p.

(Series: Colección Los Especiales de A la orilla del viento) – ISBN 978-607-16-5908-8

[Gender role](#) | [Gender equality](#) | [Stereotype](#) | [Emancipation](#) | [Freedom](#)

»Nosotras – Nosotros«, whose title contains the female and male Spanish pronoun for »We«, is about two sides of the same coin. What does it mean to be a woman, or a man? The answer is: to be human and to not face pressure to conform to gender stereotypes and role expectations. The book is divided into two parts and can be read either from the front or from the back. The part on being female considers things sometimes still denied to girls and women: education, free choice of profession, social participation and visibility. Men, on the other hand, have always had these opportunities available to them, and – this is what the second part focuses on – are usually pressured into playing the role of the »strong« man, who is not allowed to show emotions like love, grief or weakness. Trenchant and assertive in both word and image, this thought-provoking book reveals the unnecessary restrictions of traditional gender ascriptions. Both book parts meet in the middle across a double-page that shows free people living without such constraints. (Age: 8+) [JW]

182



Brusa, Mariasole (text) / Sevilla, Marta (illus.)  
Zanabria, Raúl / Amavisca, Luis (transl.)

### **Cosas de bruja**

(Witchy things)

[Madrid]: NubeOcho, 2019. – [33] p.

(Series: Egalité)

ISBN 978-84-17673-59-8

(Ital. parallel ed.: Turchina la Strega. Matilda Ed., 2019)

[Role expectations](#) | [Self-image](#) | [Stereotype](#) | [Freedom](#) | [Individuality](#) | [Witch](#) | [Picture book](#)

The witch bristles with rage. Dying her hair has gone totally awry. Blood-red, ash-grey or snot-green colour would have worked – but fairy-blue?! To prove she's still a real witch, she aims to kidnap a child, it doesn't matter who, the main thing is to do it right away. But the child's naive, disarming reaction immediately breaks her stride. She musters all she has, but it's hopeless. Why is she doing this? Why is she mean? She has no convincing answer. The child's questions and doubts thus have a similar effect on her as they do in Andersen's fairy tale: She is suddenly naked, not literally, but figuratively. Her self-image, along with her taken-for-granted role expectations, attributions and supposedly inherent characteristics burst like bubbles. This comes as a shock to the witch at first, but in the end it's liberating. This wonderful picture book is very witty, funny, spirited and trenchant in the dialogues. The wild, cheerful double-page pictures aptly capture the story's comedy. (Age: 4+) [JW]

183



Garland, Inés (text)  
Mutuberria, Maite (illus.)

### **Lilo**

[Zaragoza]: Edelvives, 2019. – 212 p.  
(Series: Ala delta. Serie verde; 114)  
ISBN 978-84-140-2356-3

[Coping with grief](#) | [Envy](#) | [Cyberbullying](#) | [Dog](#)

If humans had as sensitive a nose as Lilo, eleven-year-old Emi's short-legged sheepdog, they would have noticed long ago that something is not quite right with her. Sometimes Lilo can detect the aroma of yeast and old lemon in the air, which means that Emi is sad and scared. There's also a mysterious girl, Kai, whose texts to Emi's phone cause her to cry and get out of sorts. Lilo the excellent sniffer is the emotionally sensitive first-person narrator of this story. Looking at the world from his somewhat other perspective as an animal, readers learn how he, his dog friends and the shadowy cat Berenice find the source of Kai's envy towards Emi. Given his motivation to make the humans around him happy, Lilo brings the two girls together. Perceptively and humorously, Argentinian author Inés Garland tells a story about handling rage and grief, in which the world of animals and that of human beings permeate one another in an unusual way. (Age: 9+) [JW]

184



Gómez Cerdá, Alfredo (text)

### **Ninfa rota**

(Broken nymph)  
Madrid: Anaya, 2019. – 189 p.  
ISBN 978-84-698-4808-1

[Love](#) | [Dependence](#) | [Compulsive control](#) |  
[Submission](#) | [Gender role](#)

What is remarkable about this novel is that it can elicit the same reactions from readers as from Nerea, the closest friend of the protagonist, Marina: incomprehension, outrage, anger and the urgent wish to bring Marina to her senses. Marina retrospectively describes her love for her schoolmate Eugenio, which triggered turmoil for her, ended in disaster and still continues to pulsate. It is a story about machismo, the compulsive desire to control another person, and possessiveness, about love-blindness, debase-ment, submission, and self-abandonment. Marina's confessional story alternates across various temporal planes. Her report builds in nightmare sequences and dialogue scenes, in which the emotionally charged atmosphere becomes especially apparent and palpable. Even though the matter seems obvious – Eugenio is the encroaching wrong-doer, Marina the manipulated victim – Marina's feelings continue to vacillate. The novel ends surprisingly openly, which will cause many readers to continue to ponder the nightmarish story a good while into the future. (Age: 14+) [JW]

185



Nogués, Alex (text)

Asiain Lora, Miren (illus.)

**Un millón de ostras en lo alto de la montaña***(A million oysters up on the mountain)*

Barcelona: Editorial Flamboyant, 2019. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-84-17749-35-4

Geology | History of Earth | Fossil | Non-fiction |  
Picture book

One can discover so much by opening one's eyes and carefully observing the world! Oysters up on a mountain, for instance. Hard to believe, but yes, these are the fossilized remains of oysters that lived in a tropical sea 85 million years ago. This magnificent book takes readers on a tour of the Earth's history and reveals how exciting geology can be. It uncovers the secrets hidden in stones, rocks, mountains, and under the earth, and shows how the various geological eras are layered on top of each other like the lines and notes of an ancient song. The narrative texts and pictures of »Un millón de ostras ...« vividly introduce the complex topic and give young readers an idea of the unfathomably large time spans of Earth's history, primeval animals, the movement of the tectonic plates, the beginnings of geology, and the fascinating nature of rocks, which are anything but mute. To start out on their own geological journey, readers just need a magnifying glass, a notebook, something to write with, and... a hammer. (Age: 9+) [JW]

186



Nogués, Alex (text)

Enríquez, Bea (illus.)

**La playa de los inútiles***(The beach of the useless)*

Barcelona: Akiara books, 2019. – 86 p.

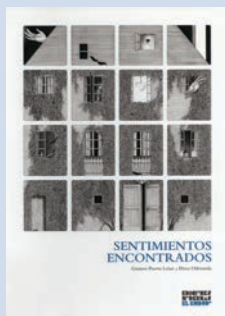
(Series: Akinarra; 1)

ISBN 978-84-17440-32-9

Family | Familial conflict | Moving house |  
Friendship | Self-discovery | Meaning of life

Sofía has a surprising answer to her teacher's question concerning what she'd like to be one day: »useless«. Useless – according to her father, this is what people are who supposedly give nothing of value to society. He himself is a driven workaholic, her mother is unhappy, and Sofía is still angry at her parents because they moved to a little coastal city »at the end of the world« with her. Together with her new friends, Sofía gets to know »useless« people – musicians, painters, a collector of unremarkable objects at the beach – and in the end opens her father's eyes to what really matters in life. The story, told from the perspective of the eleven-year-old protagonist, captures the girl's thrown-out-of-joint world in a precise and sensitive way and with subtle humour: the feeling of being the new kid, the tensions between her parents, the conflict with her father and the question about the goal and meaning of life. The nimble, colourful illustrations and vignettes round out the small book. (Age: 10+) [JW]

187



Puerta Leisse, Gustavo (text)  
Odriozola, Elena (illus.)  
**Sentimientos encontrados**  
(*Found feelings*)  
[Madrid]: Ediciones Modernas El Embudo,  
2019. – [42] p.  
(Series: Colección Me lo pienso)  
ISBN 978-84-120418-0-4

Emotion | Picture book | Non-fiction

The introduction of this extraordinary book contains a piece of advice that one absolutely should follow: »You can read this book how and whenever you'd like.« It's true – the way to do justice to this book, which spans 16 double-pages, is by engaging with the 256 meticulously pencil-drawn vignettes and the thoughtful, explicating texts in a playful and autonomous way. The pictures offer views into the rooms of a multi-story house, showing people in their everyday lives and various emotional states. The texts beneath explain and investigate an emotion on every page – such as longing, joy, envy, or shame. It is left up to readers to make connections between the text and pictures. Additionally, the text and pictures of this spiral-bound mix-and-match book can be leafed through separately from each other, which creates countless opportunities to explore the facets of the world of human emotion. An exceptional, thought-provoking book for leafing-through, searching, discovering, questioning and understanding. (Age: 8+) [JW]

188



Watanabe, Issa (illus.)  
**Migrantes**  
(*Migrants*)  
Barcelona [et al.]: Libros del Zorro Rojo,  
2019. – [36] p.  
ISBN 978-84-949901-5-1

Refugee | Migration | Death | Wordless book |  
Picture book

A caravan of highly diverse animals, loaded down with bundles, suitcases and cookware, traverses a dark forest. Almost shyly, Death joins the train and is a constant companion from then on. The animals eventually cross a deep, blue-black sea and not all of them reach the other side. Those who make it continue their journey, until they unexpectedly hit upon a wonderful pomegranate tree. A deep and heavy silence lingers over the pages of this wordless book. The contrast between the bright colours of the refugee train and the gloom of the world that surrounds it produces a simultaneously captivating and painful intensity. Issa Watanabe captures the full range of the characters' emotions in her detailed pictures with soft, flowing strokes: fear and hope, pain and grief, despair and solicitude. There are currently many children's books that focus on displaced people and migration; its simplicity, intensity and touching beauty makes »Migrantes« a stand out. (Age: 6+) [JW]

189



Soderguit, Alfredo (text/illus.)

### **Los carpinchos**

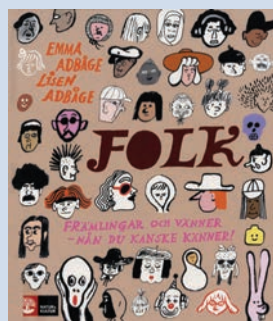
(The capybaras)

Caracas [et al.]: Ediciones Ekaré, 2020. – [40] p.  
ISBN 978-84-120600-8-9

Foreignness | Rejection | Difference | Solidarity |  
Freedom | Picture book

Life in the chicken yard is running its usual course until, out of the blue, the perplexed feather folk find themselves standing across from a bunch of capybaras. They are different, don't know the rules, and are »wild«, one hen says and gets her chicks to safety. But the newcomers are themselves looking for protection from the hunters who are after them. Now, as so often happens, strangers become friends as each gets to know the other and learns to appreciate their different qualities. In the end, the chickens and the capybaras journey off together to try their luck elsewhere, far from the humans, who are surely their greatest threat. This book offers a wonderful interplay between its short, laconic text and simple black-and-white illustrations, which feature a few red and brown accents. The pictures stand out in their keen and subtle comicality. The animals' facial expressions and other little details bring the real depth of this sympathetic, wise, and surely not at all simple animal story to light. (Age: 4+) [JW]

190



AdBåge, Emma (text/illus.)

Adbåge, Lisen (text/illus.)

### **Folk. Främlingar och vänner – nå du kanske känner!**

(People. Strangers and friends – someone you might know)

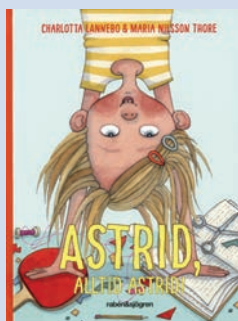
Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2019. – [60] p.  
ISBN 978-91-27-15621-0

Poetry

Twin sisters Emma and Lisen Adbåge are among the new stars in the Swedish illustrators' sky, which doesn't come as a surprise, as they are truly multi-talented. Their collaboration »Folk. Främlingar och vänner – nå du kanske känner!« shows the great creativity and variation of their texts and pictures. The eponymous poem, the third one in the book, is accompanied by illustrations like those on the book cover: many different heads in all shapes and colours, including a Lego-figure head and a visual reference to Edvard Munch's famous painting »Skrik« (»The Scream«). So much to look at! The tone of the poems ranges from funny, bizarre, and absurd to thoughtful and melancholic. Yet this is not the only reason why no page resembles the next; in addition to a varied page layout and different picture-text arrangements, the illustrations are created in every medium imaginable, from wild felt-tip pen scribbling to mixed watercolour techniques and wax crayon. (Age: 4+) [IG]



191



Lannebo, Charlotta (text)  
Nilsson Thore, Maria (illus.)

### **Astrid, alltid Astrid!**

(*Astrid, always Astrid!*)

Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 2019. – 163 p. + [4] p.  
ISBN 978-91-29-71731-0

Family | Siblings | Self-assertion |  
Self-confidence

»I have several wonderful names: Astrid Eva Mary Kovacs. This sounds truly great. And it fits perfectly, because I think I'm a great person.« This great person is eight years old and the youngest of four siblings. It never gets boring in this family, especially as Astrid has to share a room with her sister Blanka, which doesn't always go smoothly because Astrid needs »thinking time« every now and then. In any case, she knows exactly what she likes and dislikes – such as potatoes from the school canteen! Yuck! Still, because her parents don't write her an Astrid-does-not-have-to-eat-potatoes-apology, she has no choice but to mash and smear the potatoes under the table... The children's novel »Astrid, alltid Astrid« is a lively and warm-hearted account of the turbulent everyday life of an amazing, self-confident girl, who makes you want to read more about her. Luckily enough, there are more volumes in the works! (Age: 8+) [IG]

192



Lindenbaum, Pija (text/illus.)

### **Vi måste till jobbet**

(*We have to go to work*)

[Stockholm]: Lilla Piratförlaget, [2019]. – [36] p.  
ISBN 978-91-7813-097-9

Everyday life | Work | Imagination | Game |  
Picture book

Learning by example: The fact that children imitate their parents is nothing new. The latest picture book by Pija Lindenbaum shows how well this works: Musse, Elin, and the first-person narrator are playing in their bedroom. On the first double page, they put the »baby«, in this case a small, pink toy piglet, to bed, because they really have to get going. With the turn of the page, the illustrations enter into the imaginary world of the children and show them leave the apartment, lock the door, and drive to work. The three of them are doctors: They stand at the operating table and wield scissors and syringes. Blood is dripping. After work, it is time for grocery shopping, and then they board the train to go camping in the countryside. Pija Lindenbaum is a master of depicting the imaginary worlds of children – as is evident in »Vi måste till jobbet«. When the children take the train, readers don't see them rocking back and forth on chairs, but sitting in a train compartment. Neither do they see the teddy bear who gets patched up, but a »real« boy. (Age: 4+) [IG]

193



Lindström, Eva (text/illus.)

# **Mycket att göra hela tiden**

(A lot to do all the time)

Stockholm: Alfabeta, [2019]. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-91-501-2065-3

Girl | Dog | Everyday life | Picture book

Eva Lindström tends to create wide spaces in strong colours, in which the characters often seem small and occasionally a little lost, but at the same time, they often seem very free. She generally uses words sparingly, just like in her new picture book: Here, a single verb in the infinitive form per double page tells the story. In a large, blue room, which almost looks like an ocean, a girl gets out of bed. On the next page, she wakes her three big, blue, floppy-eared dogs. Then, all four of them walk into the forest, jump around, ponder, argue, the dogs run away, the girl is sad, she searches, and finally she finds them. This basic dramatic structure corresponds to the basic verb form. It lends the narrative a simplicity that mirrors the way a child learns to speak. At the same time, the use of the infinitive creates a sense of universality because the verbs are not grammatically connected to the particular character in the story. (Age: 4+) [IG]

194



Oskarsson, Marie / Raghunath, Jeeva (text)

Andersson, Kenneth (illus.)

# **Masken**

(The worm)

[Bromma]: Opal, 2019. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-91-7226-163-1

Earthworm | Death | Funeral | Mourning | Picture book

Ulf Nilsson and Eva Eriksson's book »Alla döda små djur« (2006; All the dead little animals), in which, one boring day, three children found a funeral home, is a modern classic. Could it have inspired the trio of Marie Oskarsson, Jeeva Raghunath, and Kenneth Andersson to write their picture book »Masken«? In this story, three children, plus Rabbit and Teddy, find a dead earthworm. It has to be laid to rest, of course. They place it on a leaf, march around in a funeral procession, dig a grave, and sing sad songs. Tears are also shed, especially by the rabbit, who cries so much that he finds himself standing in a puddle. Then they waltz off wondering if the earthworm has already turned into a skeleton. However, on the last page, a big surprise awaits the readers: They'll see a worm digging its way through the soil, clearly alive and with a huge smile on its face. (Age: 3+) [IG]

195



Stridsberg, Sara (text)  
Lundberg, Sara (illus.)

### **Dyksommar**

(Diving summer)

Stockholm: Bokförlaget Mirando, [2019]. – [42] p.  
ISBN 978-91-983303-9-7

Father | Suicide attempt | Psychiatric clinic |  
Daughter | Imagination

»One day, the person who used to be my daddy is simply gone. It was as if someone had cut him out of reality.« Zoe's father is in a psychiatric hospital. He tried to kill himself. That fact alone is hard to understand for his daughter, but when he also refuses to see her, she feels completely lost. Despite this, Zoe goes to the hospital every day. She becomes friends with Sabina, another patient. Zoe and Sabina do swim training together in the garden, on the green grass, and occasionally Sabina disappears into her own world. Nevertheless – or maybe because of that – she carries Zoe through this difficult time. In »Dyksommar«, Sara Stridsberg and Sara Lundberg – both of whom have received many awards – use precise language and vivid images to tell a story that Sara Stridsberg has experienced herself. Thus they comfort not only others but also themselves. (Age: 6+) [IG]

196



Timgren, Katja (text)

### **Allt jag vet om kärlek**

(All I know about love)

[Stockholm]: Gilla Böcker / Lilla Piratförlaget, [2020]. – 181 p.  
ISBN 978-91-7813-115-0

Love | Homosexuality | Depression

There are many teen novels about love – about the love between boys and girls, as well as between two boys or two girls. In this coming-of-age novel, Katja Timgren tells a story about two boys who become a couple: Axel and Petter. Axel is one of the »average« guys, he works hard at school, knows what he wants to study, and hardly ever parties. Petter, with his great political commitment, his artistic streak, and his large circle of friends, is the opposite; yet he also has a dark side; he is on the brink of an abyss, from which Axel cannot save him. What makes »Allt jag vet om kärlek« special is that Katja Timgren creates a language that is empathetic but not kitschy, plain but not cold. She gets very close to the two protagonists, writes about how love strikes them like lightning, about fear and hope, about happiness, and about the longing and sadness that make it almost impossible to breathe. (Age: 12+) [IG]

SWEDISH

Sweden

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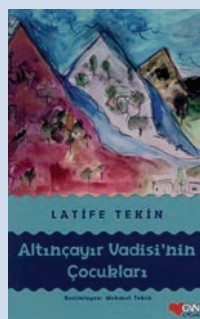


Berber, Nacide (text)  
 Üçbaşaran, Deniz (illus.)  
**Halet Çambel. Geçmişle bugünü buluşturan kadın**  
*(Halet Çambel. The woman who bridges past and present)*  
 İstanbul: Final Kültür Sanat Yayınları, 2020. – 61 p.  
 ISBN 978-605-374-964-6

Çambel, Halet | Biography | History 1916-2014 | Archaeology | Sport | Fencing

This illustrated biography portrays Halet Çambel (1916-2014), an industrious woman born in Berlin, Germany, with ancestors from Turkey. She was not only an Olympic fencer, she was also an archaeologist, a scientist, and a renowned scholar. In the post-Ottoman era, Çambel declared herself an advocate of the newly formed Turkish Republic and aspired to contribute to the country's advancement of society. She established the first on-site archaeological exhibition in Turkey. Together with other scholars, she unearthed and deciphered the long-anticipated bilingual tablet of Hittite hieroglyphs and the Phoenician alphabet, a true gift to world culture. Çambel also helped the local populations around her excavation sites, assisted with new methods for archaeology, and volunteered as a teacher in understaffed schools. This gripping biography introduces Halet Çambel's impressive life story to young readers. Award-winning illustrator Deniz Üçbaşaran supplies pastel illustrations, which enrich the text and evoke a nostalgic atmosphere. (Age: 9+) [IVA]

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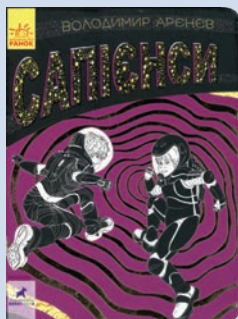


Tekin, Latife (text)  
 Tekin, Mehmet (illus.)  
**Altınçayır Vadisi'nin Çocukları**  
*(The children of the Goldenmeadow Valley)*  
 İstanbul: Can Çocuk, 2020. – 92 p.  
 ISBN 978-975-07-4204-0

Ecology | Mining | Gold | Nature | Mythology

The story is set in the Altınçayır Valley, which translates as »Goldenmeadow«, situated on the coast of Turkey. The villagers, especially the children, are identified by their varied traits and interests. Even the rich flora acts as if animated, at times communicating with the villagers. The story is layered with vibrantly depicted herbal knowledge and mythological resonances. But there is also gold, a lure that the mining industry cannot resist, disregarding the villagers' objections to quarrying. Renowned author Latife Tekin masterfully uses magical realism, synthesizing elements of fairy tales, postmodern tropes, and time-travel. Readers glimpse the devastation of gold mining as it destroys the countryside. The ending of the story is ambiguous, inviting readers to ponder whether it was a real story or a fictional tale. The miniature illustrations by Mehmet Tekin at the start of each chapter advance the story with visuals. (Age: 11+) [IVA]

199



Arjenjev, Volodymyr (Arenev, Volodymyr) (text)  
Kvitka, Lina (illus.)

### **Sapijensy**

(Sapijensy)

(Sapiens)

Charkiv: Vydavnytvo Ranok, 2019. – 219 p.  
ISBN 978-617-09-5776-4

Student | Future | Space travel | Humans |  
Science fiction

Who's human, who's an avatar, who's an alien? How does one fly a spaceship? What is it like to have parents who are researchers and work on Mars or in secret laboratories? Mishko Neborak and his new, mysterious friend with a metal heart Sashko Nenarok live in the year 2178. They are learning to navigate the »Shooting Sperling« at school and to complete operations in space. All the while, they keep encountering questions about how the world began and what makes a human a human. Spaceship commanders who turn out to be threatening avatars, incredibly old knowledge that is stored in a library, and clever kids – Volodymyr Arenev's (b. 1978) sci-fi children's novel offers not only splendid adventures and gripping existential questions. It is also full of allusions to great science fiction material. »Sapijensy« was named Children's Book of the Year in 2019 by BBC Ukraine. (Age: 10+) [KW]

200



Malyk, Halyna (text)  
Olijko, Hrasja (Oliyko, Hrasya) (illus.)

### **Pirats'kyj maršrut**

(Piratsky marshrut)

(The pirate tour)

L'viv: Vydavnytvo Staroho Leva, 2019. – [24] p.  
ISBN 978-617-679-715-9

Game | Pirate | Sea travel | Geography |  
Picture book

Halyna Malyk has been one of the best-known children's and young adult book authors in Ukraine for many years. She returns to rhymed-text form in this »Pirate tour«, offering easy-going verses about a group of child pirates planning a great voyage around the globe. Throughout she weaves in many real places along the Dnieper and Danube rivers, the Atlantic coast and the Strait of Gibraltar, making the route traceable in a real Atlas. The mini-pirates sometimes quarrel over plans for the journey and, most likely, will make their naval passage through living rooms, kitchens and gardens – which underscores the splendid playfulness and childlike carefreeness of the story. The illustrations by Hrasya Oliyko (b. 1988) provide great fun and the right momentum for the wild tour. »Piratsky marshrut« is the third collaboration between the two artists. Hopefully many more will ensue. (Age: 3+) [KW]

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## Recommended reading age level

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**2+ years:** 20, 37, 108

**3+ years:** 10, 39, 45, 69, 106,  
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194, 200

**4+ years:** 8, 11, 21, 23, 26, 38,  
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**5+ years:** 15, 31, 43, 50, 54,  
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**6+ years:** 4, 12, 14, 22, 53, 59,  
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**7+ years:** 2, 6, 71, 76, 82, 85,  
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**8+ years:** 1, 5, 17, 19, 32, 33,  
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**9+ years:** 7, 18, 27, 58, 78,  
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**10+ years:** 9, 13, 25, 28, 30,  
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**11+ years:** 70, 131, 174, 198

**12+ years:** 16, 24, 29, 57, 64,  
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**13+ years:** 121, 127, 128, 130

**14+ years:** 3, 34, 35, 36, 52,  
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**15+ years:** 44, 163

**16+ years:** 79, 88



