

# OHIOana QUARTERLY

SUMMER 2021 | VOL. 64 NO. 3



Collecting, Preserving, and Celebrating Ohio Literature

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# OHIOana QUARTERLY

SUMMER 2021

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# From the Director

Dear Friends,



It's the "dog days" of summer! Thankfully, this summer has a much different feel than the last one.

Summer is a time for reading. If you're a lover of books (you probably wouldn't be looking at this if you weren't!), you know that Ohio has produced outstanding writers in every literary genre, from poetry and plays, to novels and short stories, to history and biography. The theme for this summer issue of the *Ohioana Quarterly* is a very special genre—books for children.

We start with a look at the first five years of Floyd's Pick, a special prize for an outstanding juvenile book given annually in memory of children's literary expert, advocate, and librarian, Floyd Dickman. You'll also meet the delightful writer and illustrator Aiko Ikegami, whose beautiful book, *Hello*, is this year's Floyd's Pick winner.

Floyd was passionate about spreading the love of books and reading to children, so I know he'd be an enthusiastic supporter of the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library. Spearheaded by Ohio First Lady Fran DeWine and working in partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, the goal of the OGIL is to send a book, free of charge, every month to every Ohio child, from birth to age five. You'll learn how in an article by Kathryn Powers.

For readers of all ages, you'll find a number of new books reviewed and listed that are perfect for summer reading. Don't forget to visit our website to check out the thirty titles that we announced in May as finalists for the 80th anniversary Ohioana Book Awards. We just announced the seven winners as this is going to press—you'll meet them in the fall issue of the *Quarterly*. Mark your calendars now for Thursday, October 14, when we'll present the awards—live once again!—at the Ohio Statehouse.

Until then, have a wonderful rest of the summer. We hope yours will be filled with good times and good books!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Weaver".

David Weaver  
Executive Director

## ON THE COVER

Ohioana celebrates children's literature with images of the winners of Floyd's Pick, centered around the award seal designed by Marsha McDevitt-Stredney of the State Library of Ohio that features artwork generously contributed by Loren Long from his book *Little Tree*, the first Floyd's Pick winner. *Quarterly* cover design by Kathryn Powers.



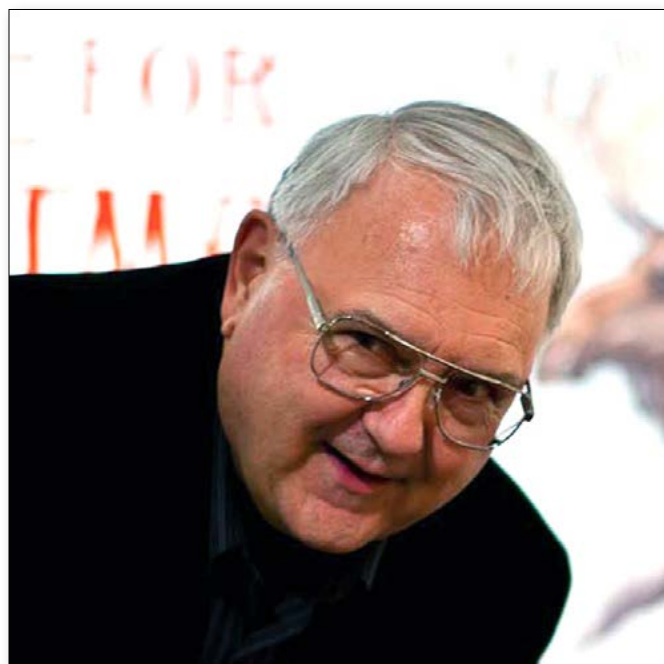
# Champion of Children's Books

by David Weaver

The phrase, “*When they made him, they broke the mold*” may be an old and familiar cliché. But when it came to the remarkable Floyd Dickman, it was absolutely true.

As a children’s literary expert, advocate, teacher, and librarian, Floyd made a tremendous impact—not just in Ohio, but nationally. Children’s literature was Floyd’s passion. Several times he served on the Caldecott and Newbery Medal committees. For many years, he was a judge for the Ohioana Book Award in Juvenile Literature. He was also one of the founding members of the Choose to Read Ohio (CTRO) Advisory Council, which every two years selects twenty titles that encourage Ohioans to “Read Together, Read Ohio, Read for Life.”

Floyd received many honors in his lifetime, including the 1990 Ohio Librarian of the Year from the Ohio Library Association and the 2007 Presidential Award from the Ohio Educational Library Media Association (OELMA).



Floyd Dickman (Photo credit: the Mazza Museum)

When Floyd died in 2015, the world of libraries and children’s literature lost one of their greatest friends. The Mazza Museum at the University of Findlay—where Floyd had established the Children’s Book Center in 2010, donating thousands of books—created the Floyd Dickman Outstanding Librarian Award. Presented annually at the Mazza Summer Conference, the award recognizes a children’s librarian who exhibits excellence in service and scholarship and demonstrates a commitment to diversity.

To further commemorate his legacy, the Choose to Read Ohio Advisory Council established the Floyd’s Pick Book Award in his name, honoring an Ohio writer or illustrator for producing the most outstanding book for children in the previous year. The award was announced in a proclamation by State Librarian of Ohio Beverly Cain in January 2016. The first book to receive Floyd’s Pick was *Little Tree*, written and illustrated by renowned children’s book creator, Loren Long.

When notified of his selection, Long responded, “Having my book, *Little Tree*, chosen to be the inaugural Floyd’s Pick is such an honor for me. I met Floyd very early, the fall season of my first picture book being published. I didn’t know much about the career I was embarking on and was certainly unsure of myself. In just a brief few words, Floyd gave me encouragement and confidence at that early time in my career and I’ve never forgotten what it meant to me.”

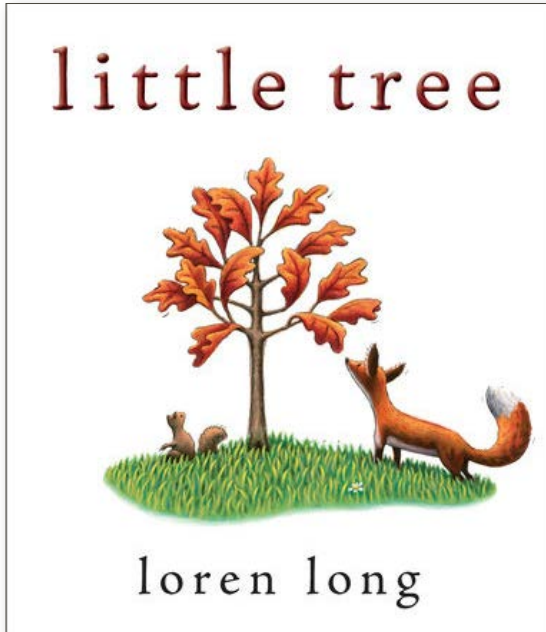
In 2019, the Floyd’s Pick award program expanded to include additional Floyd’s Pick Honor Books, growing the list of titles celebrated each year. The milestone also marked the debut of glass award pieces for Floyd’s Pick winners and certificates for honorees, featuring a new seal with artwork by Long.

Each and every title the program spotlights is exactly the kind of book Floyd himself would have loved and enthusiastically promoted. When it came to engaging and inspiring children to become lifelong readers, no one was a greater champion than Floyd Dickman.

## Floyd's Pick Award Winners

2016

*Little Tree* by Loren Long  
(Philomel Books/Penguin, 2015)



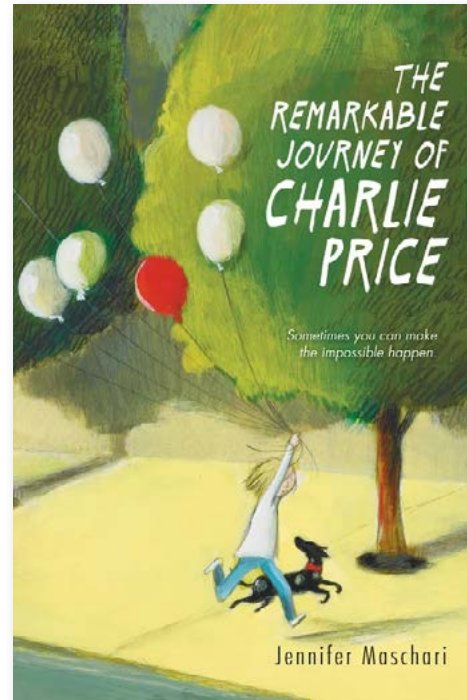
In the middle of a little forest, there lives a Little Tree who loves his life and the splendid leaves that keep him cool in the heat of long summer days. Life is perfect just the way it is. When autumn arrives, the other trees drop their leaves, facing the cold of winter head on. But not Little Tree—he hugs his leaves as tightly as he can.

Year after year Little Tree remains unchanged, despite words of encouragement from a squirrel, a fawn, and a fox, his leaves having long since turned brown and withered. As Little Tree sits in the shadow of the other trees, now grown sturdy and tall as though to touch the sun, he remembers when they were all the same size. And he knows he has an important decision to make.

From #1 *New York Times* bestselling author and illustrator Loren Long, this gorgeously-illustrated story challenges each of us to have the courage to let go and to reach for the sun.

2017

*The Remarkable Journey of Charlie Price*  
by Jennifer Maschari  
(Balzer+Bray/HarperCollins, 2016)



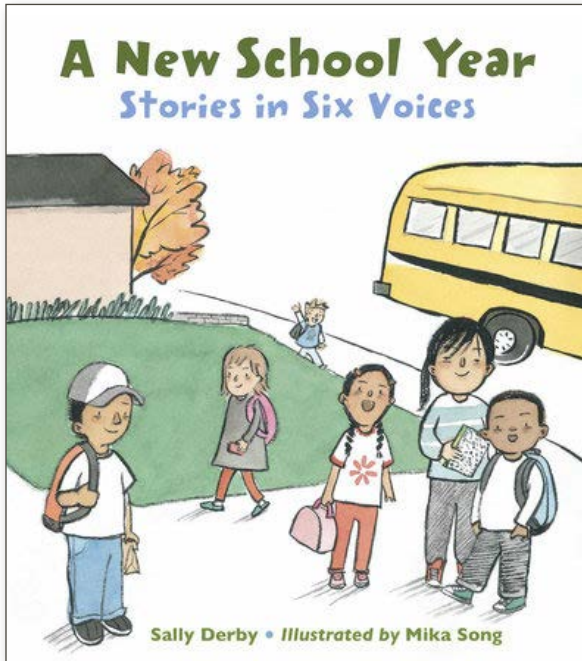
Ever since twelve-year-old Charlie Price's mom died, his world has been split into two parts. *Before* included stargazing, Mathletes, and scavenger hunts. *After* means a dad who's completely checked out, comically bad dinners, and a grief group that's not helpful. Then his sister, Imogen, starts missing school and making up lies about their mother. But everything changes when one day, he follows her down a secret passageway and finds himself in a parallel world where his Mom is alive again.

There's hot cocoa, Scrabble, and scavenger hunts again, and everything is perfect . . . at first. Whenever Charlie returns to the real world, things are different, and not in a good way. If Charlie doesn't uncover the truth, he could lose himself, the true memory of their mother, and Imogen . . . forever.

This "tangible allegory of grief through the eyes of a struggling twelve-year-old boy" has been cited by *Brightly.com* as a book about sadness and grief that will help support kids and foster conversation.

## 2018

*A New School Year: Stories in Six Voices* by Sally Derby, illustrated by Mika Song (Charlesbridge, 2017)

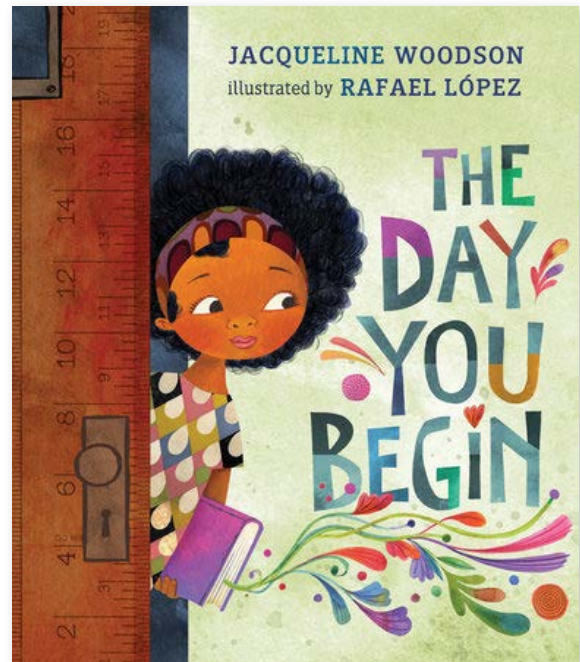


In a unique narrative, readers meet a diverse group of six children ranging in age from Kindergarten through fifth grade. With nerves, excitement, and all emotions in between, the reader follows the children through four sections illustrating their first day of a new school year: “The Night Before,” “In the Morning,” “At School,” and “After School.” Through twenty-four free verse poems (four per child), readers experience the world through six distinct perspectives, learning that there is more beneath the surface than meets the eye, but also common threads that unite everyone. Derby’s words pair beautifully with Song’s illustrations, creating a heartwarming world for readers to explore.

In spanning such a breadth of grades, viewpoints, and feelings, this evergreen title can be brought out year after year as children travel through their own school journeys.

## 2019

*The Day You Begin* by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Rafael López (Nancy Paulsen Books, 2018)



There are many reasons to feel different. Maybe it’s how you look or talk, or where you’re from; maybe it’s what you eat, or something just as random. It’s not easy to take those first steps into a place where nobody really knows you yet, but somehow you do it.

From National Book Award winner Jacqueline Woodson and two-time Pura Belpré Illustrator Award winner Rafael López, *The Day You Begin* is a poignant, yet heartening book about finding courage to connect, even when you feel scared and alone. Woodson’s lyrical text and López’s dazzling art reminds readers that we all feel like outsiders sometimes. But when we reach out and share our stories, wonderful relationships can blossom.

### Honor Titles:

*First Star: A Bear and Mole Story* by Will Hillenbrand (Holiday House, 2018)

*Bark Park* by Trudy Krisher, illustrated by Brooke Boynton-Hughes (Beach Lane, 2018)



## 2020

*Thank You, Omu!* by Oge Mora  
(Little, Brown, 2018)



Everyone in the neighborhood dreams of a taste of Omu's delicious stew! One by one, they follow their noses toward the scent. And one by one, Omu offers a portion of her meal. Soon the pot is empty. Has she been so generous that she has nothing left for herself?

Author-illustrator Oge Mora's debut book is an uplifting story of sharing and community. An author's note explains that "Omu" (pronounced AH-moo) means "queen" in the Igbo language of her parents, but growing up, she used it to mean "Grandma." This book was inspired by the strong female role models in Mora's life.

### Honor Titles:

*Clackety Track: Poems About Trains* by Skila Brown, illustrated by Jamey Christoph (Candlewick, 2019)

*Leila in Saffron* by Rukhsanna Guidroz, illustrated by Dinara Mirtalipova (Salaam Reads, 2019)

*Rabbit and the Motorbike* by Kate Hoefler, illustrated by Sarah Jacoby (Chronicle Books, 2019)

## 2021

*Home* by Aiko Ikegami  
(Creston Books, 2020)



"Some stories don't need words to make their meaning clear—and some friendships can transcend barriers."

*Hello* by artist and author Aiko Ikegami is a wordless picture book for children ages 4-8. When an alien lands on Earth, no one seems to notice except one young girl. Despite their language differences, their friendship blooms. Although the alien must return to its home in the end, it sends a message through the stars, showing that the power of friendship can span across the galaxies.

### Honor Titles:

*The Arabic Quilt: An Immigrant Story* by Aya Khalil, illustrated by Anait Semirdzhayan (Tilbury House, 2020)

*Go, Girls, Go!* by Frances Gilbert, illustrated by Allison Black (Beach Lane Books, 2019)

*The Oldest Student: How Mary Walker Learned to Read* by Rita Lorraine Hubbard, illustrated by Oge Mora (Schwartz & Wade, 2020)

# A Conversation with Aiko Ikegami: 2021 Floyd's Pick

by Desiree Thomas



Aiko Ikegami and the Library Mouse at the Ohioana Book Festival. (Photo credit: Mary Rathke)

*Aiko Ikegami was born in Tokyo, Japan, and loves animals, drawing, painting, and colors. She became the youngest student of Kimie Tanaka (1908-1987), a famous female oil painter in Japan. When she moved to the United States, she studied psychology at Arizona State University, then neuropharmacology at the University of Texas at Austin, finishing her education with a PhD in pharmacology. After working in the research field, Aiko decided to follow her heart and started painting and making children's picture books. She is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators and the Ohio Art League. Her children's book, Hello, is the Floyd's Pick winner for 2021.*

**Q** Your book, *Hello*, is the 2021 Floyd's Pick award winner. How did the concept for *Hello* come to you?

**A** Thank you very much. I am very honored and happy that *Hello* is the 2021 Floyd's Pick winner. It may sound strange, but the concept for *Hello* came to me when I was opening a capsule of vitamin C. One day, I was looking at the capsule and the geometric shape of the capsule somehow reminded me of a spaceship.

I sketched the spaceship with a shape of a pill capsule. That was the beginning of creating *Hello* and the story followed.

**Q** A lot of your books center around feeling different and finding friendship. Can you talk about your experience of finding community in a new country?

**A** In Japan we have a saying: "ichigo ichie." It means that being able to spend time with a person might be a once in a lifetime opportunity, thus we must treasure the moment together. I always keep the saying in my mind when I meet someone new. Though it was not always easy to make a new friend in a new country, with "ichigo ichie" in my mind, meeting someone new was always fun. I love learning about new people. I especially get excited when I meet like-minded people. I feel like I am welcomed. I feel like I've found a community I can belong to. It makes me smile.

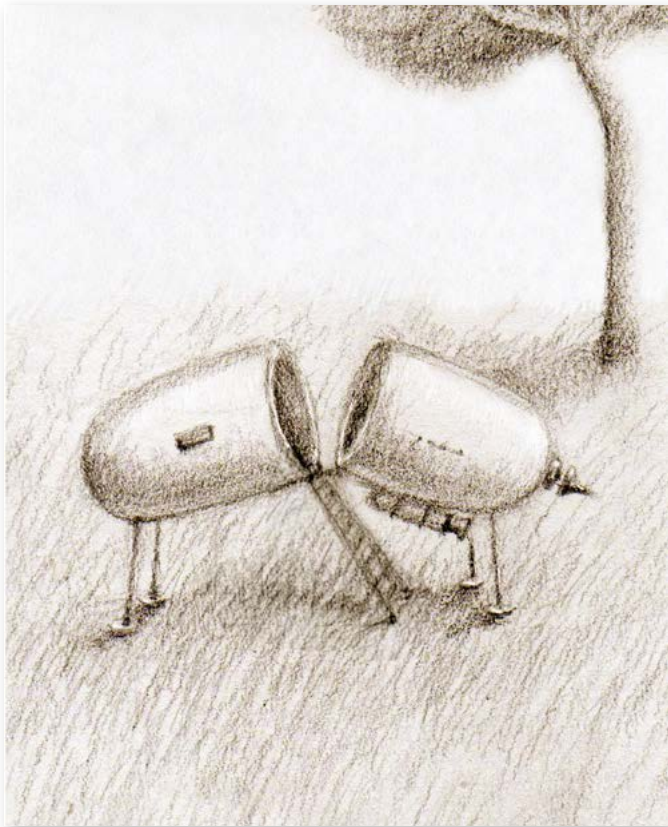
**Q** How has your background in childhood education influenced your work?

**A** My teacher used to say, "Do not underestimate the ability of a child to understand what beauty is." Her words stuck in my head. I believe it is influencing my work in a good way.

**Q** How did your apprenticeship with painter Kimie Tanaka affect the way you create art?

**A** Kimie's art takes you to another dimension. If you see her paintings, you feel like you are watching somebody's dream. They remind me of paintings by Mark Chagall. Kimie is famous for layers and layers of thick painting style. Even though I paint with watercolor, I do also go with many layers. I believe it is because of her teaching. I wish that someday I could create a dreamy painting that can take people to another dimension like hers.





Above: An early sketch of *Hello's* spaceship inspired by a vitamin capsule. Below: The alien and young girl becoming best friends in *Hello*. (Illustration credits: Aiko Ikegami)

**Q** Your artwork is full of soft shapes and whimsical characters. How do you communicate a story with few words?

**A** I try to convey feelings with colors. For example, when a scene is sad, I tend to use a Phthalo blue pigment. For a cheerful scene, I tend to use lighter pigment. Expression of emotions can also be communicated by a facial expression and body posture, so I can omit expressing it with predicate adjectives. I always hope I am successfully communicating my story with few words without confusing readers.

**Q** Has your study of neuropharmacology helped you in the creation process?

**A** Hmmm, that is a very good question. I sure hope it is helping me somehow since I have spent so many years studying neuropharmacology! One thing for sure is that my training being a neuropharmacologist helps me to create stories with a practical method. My creating

process is like doing many pieces of jigsaw puzzles. I also have to connect the dots together. If I don't have a practical method, the process gets too messy and I might not be able to finish the story.

**Q** How has living in Ohio and being an Ohio author impacted your work?

**A** I love living in Ohio! We Ohioans are lucky that we have so many wild animals around us and beautiful nature. Scenery is breathtakingly beautiful all around the year—it seems as if it is calling to be made into a story. I love wild animals. My favorite is, of course, cottontail rabbits.

**Q** What is your favorite part about creating books for children?

**A** As I mentioned before, my process of creating books is like doing a jigsaw puzzle and connecting the dots together. This is my favorite part besides painting and drawing.

**Q** Can you share anything with us about book projects you are currently working on?

**A** I am currently working on creating a picture book about a wall clock. It is a romantic story. I am aiming to finish making the picture book dummy by the end of this year and then submit it to publishers. I hope it lands with a publisher so I can share with readers the emotions I experience when creating books.

*Desiree (Desi) Thomas is a Teen Librarian with Worthington Libraries and a member of the Choose to Read Ohio (CTRO) Advisory Council.*



# Igniting the Spark: The Ohio Governor's Imagination Library

by Kathryn Powers

"I think I can. I think I can. I think I can . . ."

*The Little Engine That Could* by Watty Piper is a beloved tale that shares a timeless message: with optimism and hard work, anything is possible.

Ohio First Lady Fran DeWine took this message to heart when she embarked on her endeavor to put a new book in every Ohio child's hands each month, from birth to age five. This mighty goal led to the creation of the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library—a statewide program in partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Created by renowned entertainer and philanthropist Dolly Parton in 1995, the Imagination Library promotes early literacy by sending free books to children all over the world. The organization initially focused on children in Tennessee, but expanded to affiliation with other communities in 2000.

Mrs. DeWine was first introduced to the Imagination Library through her own grandchildren, back when the program was only available in a few Ohio counties. "I was visiting my daughter and grandchildren and got to see their Imagination Library books arrive in the mail," she recalls. She then visited the Greene County Public Library to find out how the program worked. "I thought, if we can do this in Greene County, we can do this in other places too. I want every child in Ohio to have access to these books and to have the advantages literacy brings."

In 2019, the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library officially launched. With help from the Ohio General

Assembly, corporations, foundations, individual donors, and a network of early childhood literacy partners, the program has spread to all eighty-eight counties in the state just two short years later.



Ohio First Lady Fran DeWine (Photo credit: Ohio Governor's Office)

"The Ohio Governor's Imagination Library is now available to every single Ohio child from birth to age five," Mrs. DeWine remarked at the 2021 Ohioana Book Festival. "All parents and caregivers have to do is sign up and a free book will be delivered home every single month."

Amy Canterbury, a teacher and mom of two boys, was thrilled when enrollment came to Franklin County. "Our family is always excited when a new book arrives from the Imagination Library," she said. "We love reading together and have discovered so many wonderful books through the program."

Children can be registered anytime until their fifth birthday and receive books specially selected for their age group. The Ohio Governor's Imagination Library also provides parents with information about early childhood literacy.

"There's a lot of science that supports the benefits of reading to kids at an early age," said Mrs. DeWine. "Brain science shows that a child's brain is already 80 percent developed by the time he or she turns three years old. Those first three years are so critical to their development."

At twelve books a year, a child enrolled at birth will receive sixty books by the time they reach kindergarten. The booklist is updated annually with a mix of classic



and contemporary titles, and a selection of bilingual English/Spanish titles and books with Hispanic content are included for each age group. The 2021 booklist even features titles by two Ohio children's books creators: *The Night is Yours*, written by Abdul-Razak Zachariah and illustrated by Ohioan Keturah A. Bobo, and *There's a Hole in the Log at the Bottom of the Lake*, written and illustrated by Loren Long.

"We know that getting books into the hands of young children and families will spark early learning and potentially have a lifelong impact on those kids," said Mrs. DeWine. "I want all kids to love reading."

Whether a child is newly born or making their way through preschool, the first book they each receive is *The Little Engine That Could*, starting them on track for a bright future where anything truly is possible.

To enroll a child in the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library program or make a donation, visit <https://ohioimaginationlibrary.org/>.



*Kathryn Powers is the Assistant Director of the Ohioana Library and the Regional Advisor of the Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators (SCBWI: Central & Southern Ohio).*



Top and bottom: Ohio First Lady Fran DeWine reading with children. (Photo credit: Ohio Governor's Office) Middle: Andrew Canterbury with *The Little Engine That Could*. (Photo credit: Amy Canterbury)



# Book Reviews

## NONFICTION

### Alexander, Brian. *The Hospital: Life, Death, and Dollars in a Small American Town*.

St. Martin's Press (New York, NY) 2021. HC \$28.99.

Have you ever wondered how hospitals and health insurance work? Read this!

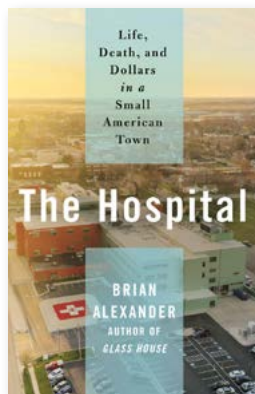
Brian Alexander, an Ohio native and the author of *Glass House*, has written another explosive exposé—this time on hospitals and the American health industry.

Within the pages of this engaging book, you'll travel to Bryan, Ohio, in Williams County, the most northwestern county in the state. The county borders Michigan and Indiana and is entirely rural. The biggest employer is Community Hospitals and Wellness Centers (CHWC), an independent non-profit hospital and associated clinics. It's the only hospital in the county.

In this book, you'll learn about the history of Bryan's independent hospital, the development and shifts in health insurance, changes in the economic fortunes of the residents of the county, and the hospital itself.

Alexander peels back the mysteries behind medical care, how hospitals operate and are funded, and how they survive financially. You'll learn how Medicare and Medicaid (and Obamacare) cover—and don't cover—its subscribers and hospitals, where the profits and losses are, and how much health insurance, medicine, and supplies have increased over the past several decades.

But there's more to the story within *The Hospital*. Alexander follows the lives of several residents of the county, documenting how their financial status changes with the closure of businesses, how they make ends meet (or don't), and how their health is altered by these



changes. Alexander writes about the effect of diabetes and obesity on the poor, the cost of insulin and healthy food, and the shifting middle class that has slid into the lower, poorer classes, as well as how that has influenced the physical and mental health of everyone.

Much like *Glass House*—Alexander's book about Anchor-Hocking and the economic changes in Lancaster, Ohio—*The Hospital* examines the decline of life in rural America and what that means for the health and welfare of our nation.

*The Hospital* ends in August 2020 as the nation deals with the ravages of COVID-19 on hospitals, health care, and jobs. When you finish the book, you know there's more to the story since COVID-19 and the efforts to outrun the disease have gone on to damage the life, livelihood, and welfare of many—if not all—of the residents in every town and city in the nation. *The Hospital* is, indeed, a snapshot of life, death, and dollars in a small American town.

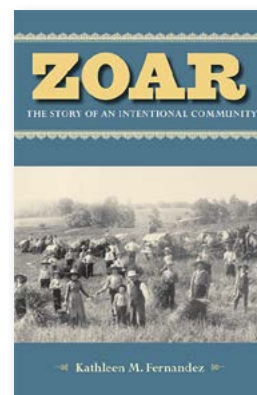
REVIEWED BY MIRIAM KAHN, MLS, COLUMBUS, OH

### Fernandez, Kathleen M. *Zoar: The Story of an Intentional Community*.

The Kent State University Press (Kent, OH) 2019. HC \$29.95.

*Zoar: The Story of an Intentional Community* is a fascinating, well-researched book. By its end, the reader is reluctant to leave Zoar in the same way that some of the Zoarites—also known as the Separatists—were reluctant to dissolve the community seventy-nine years after its founding in the Ohio wilderness.

Like other immigrants before them, the Society of Separatists fled their homeland—in this case Germany—to escape religious persecution. Many served years of jail time



when they refused to practice a religion they did not believe in. In 1817, they sailed to America where they were befriended by the Quakers. The Quakers loaned them much-needed money, which enabled the Separatists to buy 5,500 acres in Ohio, sight unseen. The land turned out to be a wonderful place on the Tuscarawas River in the east central part of the Buckeye State. Zoar was named after Lot's place of refuge in the Bible, and the American Zoarites intended their small community to become just that—a sanctuary.

During the voyage from England, Joseph Bimeler, a lame, charismatic man, took over the leadership of the Separatists and continued his guidance for the next three and a half decades. Not only was he a deeply spiritual man who led Sunday services, he was also talented in running the ever-expanding business of Zoar. He served the Separatists well in all areas of management of the extensive industry of the community.

It wasn't long after they arrived and began developing a home that they were forced to pause and rethink their way of life. Religiously, they were of a kind, united in their belief in God and in the Biblical admonitions of the Holy Scripture. But having 200+ people struggling to survive on American-style plots of land—where each family unit raised its own food and provided for themselves—was not effective, especially during the winter of 1818-1819. Desperate to stay alive, they met to consider taking up a communal way of life—which was *not* one of the original goals of the community. The main goal had been freedom of worship. But in order to survive, the Zoarites determined that it made the most sense to have every member of the Society working for the good of all, not for individual gain, and they voted to become communistic. All personal goods were given up, and all monies donated, so all could survive.

In 1822, the economically-strapped Zoarites made the decision for the community to become celibate. The decision was made mostly for economic reasons. They believed that women who were childbearing and raising children would not be able to work as well for the community. And with financial difficulties plaguing them early on, they felt the need to maximize labor.

Zoar was saved from the brink of collapse with the coming of the Ohio and Erie Canal, located within a mile of the community. Zoarites were hired by the canal

company to do the lucrative, backbreaking work digging out a seven-mile section of land. They also built one of the canal locks. The money earned from this labor made it possible for Zoar to pay off debts incurred in its founding, and to establish itself financially. The Zoarites were also able to construct larger homes, barns, and mills, and develop an iron industry.

The nearby canal greatly increased the value of the land. There were so many workers around the time of the canal construction that the Zoar community built and ran a tavern. However, there was frequent conflict between the needs of their customers and the strict rules of the Separatists not to drink, swear, or gamble. One Zoarite wrote, "They tempt our young people into bad habits. Habits like using tobacco, eating pork, swearing, singing secular songs, and above all, using money." Such actions were supposed to be avoided in the communal community.

Despite being non-English-speaking immigrants, the Zoarites developed extensive enterprises, producing for themselves and for export: agricultural (fruit orchards, nurseries, and dairy), ironware, boot-making, candle-making, a woolen mill, gardening, lumber, beer-brewing, maple-sugaring, soap-making, and tailoring. They were an industrious community. Everyone worked from before dawn, seven days a week—even the children. Each person was assigned work based on their skills and aptitude.

Even though Bimeler was part of a team of three elected trustees who guided the Zoarites and helped run matters, he oversaw everything and everyone in the community and kept meticulous records. When Bimeler died in 1853, the lack of a qualified successor caused the community to begin its slow decline into the 1890s. As the first generation of immigrants from Germany to Ohio died—and some of the second generation as well—the spirit of freedom from religious oppression was lost over the decades. The societal commitment to everyone laboring for the good of the community, not themselves, was challenged as outsiders with money to spend began flocking to Zoar on one-day excursions, a week's holiday, and even for the whole summer. The Zoarites were ambivalent about tourism, weighing profit against isolation.

The Civil War affected Zoar deeply as young men were drafted or enlisted and the community tore apart,

pacifism conflicting with patriotism. When the boys came home, they brought attitudes and awareness of a larger world than Zoar and continued the decline of the community as it once was. By then, Zoar had developed quite the reputation as a beautiful, clean, well-run retreat from the world. The Zoarites worked hard to accommodate the outsiders, and yet also allowed that sense of personal freedom to corrupt their focus on an isolated communal society. As the years passed, Zoar became more of a tourist destination than a tightly knit, industrious, religious community.

The Society of Separatists of Zoar voted to dissolve the community in 1898, unable to sustain the principals of the founders. A German newspaper editor placed the blame on two things: tourism and lack of religious fervor. After splitting assets, everything left was auctioned off on October 4, 1898. Fernandez's concluding chapter on the end of Zoar is heartbreaking.

In addition to the book's text, Fernandez provides a bibliography, index, and the Zoar constitution. A map of Zoar and its location in Ohio would have been a welcome addition to this book, as well as a map of the Zoar community itself. The author was blessed in her research to have access to several diaries, journals, and correspondence of Zoarites, which provided the vivid details to flesh out life in Zoar. Fernandez also acknowledges the lack of academic research on this unique community. Her previous book, *A Singular People: Images of Zoar*, was published in 2003.

GEORGE COWMEADOW BAUMAN WAS THE OWNER OF THE LATE ACORN BOOKSHOP IN COLUMBUS. HE NOW READS, WRITES, AND CHASES THE CATS AROUND THE HOUSE.

Ruffner, Howard. *Moments of Truth—A Photographer's Experience of Kent State 1970*.

The Kent State University Press (Kent, OH) 2019.  
HC \$34.95.

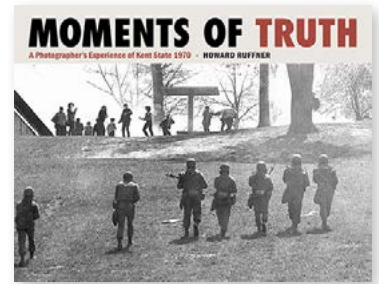
In *Moments of Truth—A Photographer's Experience of Kent State 1970*, Howard Ruffner presents an honest and respectful approach to describe a powerful historical and life-changing event: the 1970 shootings at Kent State. With Ruffner's explanations chronicling the events depicted in his photographs and a forward summary written by one of the wounded survivors,

*Moments of Truth* brings a true-life picture of an event that impacted many lives, as well as twentieth century history.

Prior to attending Kent State, Ruffner served in the Air Force, working for the American Forces Philippines Network with its radio and television stations that broadcast throughout the base and local community. This experience, along with his earlier work experience in his hometown of Lakewood, Ohio, introduced him to the wonders and power of photographs. As a GI Bill student at Kent State University, Ruffner began his university days six weeks prior to the Kent State shootings. When *Life* magazine called the school newspaper, the *Daily Kent Stater*, to request a student photographer to document the events, Ruffner was given the assignment. His position as photographer on the *Daily Kent Stater*, and his fascination with capturing the moment through photographs, made it possible for him to document the events that rocked Kent State—and the United States—on May 4, 1970.

*Moments of Truth* is organized by events leading up to May 4, beginning with spring 1969, when Ruffner first arrived on campus. Readers learn about the student population and the events held on campus to create student awareness of local and worldwide events. From May 1 to May 4, Ruffner shared photographs of the unrest situation and how the students' peaceful protests became misinterpreted and handled with unnecessary force by the state government. The photographs, many of which have not been published before, tell the story, and the commentary reinforces the confusion and misguided handling of the National Guard toward the students.

Through *Moments of Truth*, one gains a realistic perspective, as well as a behind the scenes understanding, of what really happened on May 4, 1970. The photographs are a primary source material that reveal the truth of the situation. For example, in the civil trials that resulted from the shootings, the guards talked about rocks being thrown at them. However, the photographs tell a different tale and do not show rocks at the guards' feet or rocks scattered where students





could gather them. These photographs bring to light how distorted the situation became, and how the students' defenses were ignored.

Being an eleven-year-old living in Columbus, Ohio, in May 1970, I remember the unrest and tragedy associated with the Kent State shootings. While it was a historical event, I was not given the opportunity to make a personal connection with it until I read this book. *Moments of Truth—A Photographer's Experience of Kent State 1970* is a historical, primary source document that provides insight as to why it is necessary for government and administration to listen to all perspectives and to pay attention to the needs of the people involved. This book should be on every educator's reading list to use in the classroom, especially with high school and older students.

REVIEWED BY CHARLOTTE L. STIVERSON, EDUCATOR & RETIRED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

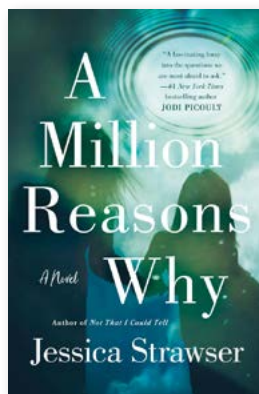
### FICTION

Strawser, Jessica. *A Million Reasons Why*. St. Martin's Press (New York, NY) 2021. HC \$27.99.

Caroline is in her mid-thirties, married to Walt, has three wonderful children, and a happy extended family. For Christmas, they all sent their DNA away for testing to look for ancestors. What a hoot! Until one day, Caroline receives an e-mail from Sela, saying that she's her half sister.

Sela is the daughter of Rebecca, a talented artist and Caroline's mother's best friend for a long while. Sela's kidneys are failing and she needs a donor for a transplant, but she's hard to match. When Sela took her DNA test, she had an ulterior motive: to find a donor, a distant familial match. Imagine her surprise when she finds a half sister.

The message is accidentally sent to Caroline's parents as well. From there the story unrolls, tumbling into your brain, twisting and turning with questions about motives and the buried past.



The book shifts perspectives between Caroline and Sela. Each shift sheds light on a few more secrets, a few more inner thoughts, and a couple of startling revelations.

Strawser's newest book is different from her previous titles in the thriller genre. This one isn't about a missing person—it's about finding family. It's also about the skeletons in a closet best kept closed. And what happens when the secrets finally tumble out.

But wait, there's more, a million reasons more. And if I tell you more, I'd ruin the surprises embedded in this tale. *A Million Reasons Why* examines what happens when people keep secrets, follow their instincts for good or bad, and, ultimately, love one another. Just read it, and remember that it could happen to you.

REVIEWED BY MIRIAM KAHN, MLS, COLUMBUS, OH

### POETRY

DeMott, Robert. *Up Late Reading Birds of America*.

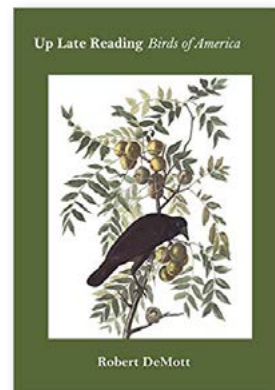
Sheila-Na-Gig Editions (Russell, KY) 2020. HC \$20.

This slim volume is a series of Prose Poems or "Proems." Robert DeMott crafts long paragraphs describing his interactions with nature, with birds and plants, and with the world around him.

Phrase upon phrase, subordinate clauses stacked upon one another, are the basic building blocks of the prose poems. They emulate very short stories crafted with elegance and illustrative terms, sometimes melodic, sometimes rhythmic, and oftentimes spare. Each themed piece begins with a quote that echoes the content or intent of the proem, drawing the reader into the text, challenging them to find purpose and focus. Yet, each piece calls to mind a season—a scene filled with birds, nature, and a sense of the world around the writer and reader.

Even as DeMott pares his words and pairs his phrases, the focus remains on nature.

REVIEWED BY MIRIAM KAHN, MLS, COLUMBUS, OH



# Book List

The following books were added to Ohioana's collection between April and June, 2021. Look for them at your local library or bookstore!

## NONFICTION

Badal, James Jessen. *The Collinwood Tragedy: The Story of the Worst School Fire in American History*. Kent State University Press (Kent, OH) 2020. PB \$24.95. March 4, 1908, seemed like an ordinary morning at Lakeview Elementary School in Collinwood, Ohio, when fifth grader Emma Neibert noticed wisps of smoke. Her discovery soon led to a panicked stampede inside the school—the chaos of nine teachers trying to control and then save pupils in overcrowded classrooms. Outside, Collinwood's inadequate volunteer fire department—joined by members of the Cleveland Fire Department—fought a losing battle with the rapidly spreading blaze. While some inside jumped from the building to safety, most were trapped. Ultimately, 172 children, two teachers, and one rescue worker were killed, and the Collinwood community was irrevocably changed. The fire's staggering death toll shocked the country and resulted in impassioned official inquiries about the fire's cause, the building's structure, and overall safety considerations. Regionally, and eventually nationwide, changes were implemented in school structures and construction materials. James Jessen Badal's extensive research reveals how the citizens of Collinwood were desperate to find someone to blame,

but also rose to the challenge of healing.

Erenrich, Susan J., ed. *The Cost of Freedom: Voicing a Movement After Kent State 1970*. Kent State University Press (Kent, OH) 2020. PB \$34.95. *The Cost of Freedom: Voicing a Movement After Kent State 1970* is a multi-genre collection describing the May 4, 1970, shootings at Kent State University, the aftermath, and the impact on wider calls for peace and justice. Fifty years after the National Guard killed four unarmed students, Susan J. Erenrich has gathered moving stories of violence, peace, and reflection, demonstrating the continued resonance of the events and the need for sustained discussion. This anthology includes poetry, personal narratives, photographs, songs, and testimonies—some written by eyewitnesses to the day of the shootings—as well as speeches from recent commemoration events and items related to the designation of the site on the National Register of Historic Places in 2016. Erenrich, who came to Kent State in 1975 as a college freshman, became a member of the May 4 Task Force, a student organization that continues to the present as an organizing group for marking the anniversary each year. Her involvement with the task force led her to make the many connections with writers, artists, and memory-keepers that have built this collection of primary source material.

Genshaft, Carole, ed. *Raggin' On: The Art of Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson's House and Journals*. Columbus Museum of Art/Ohio

University Press (Columbus/Athens, OH) 2020. HC \$39.95.

This book is an accompaniment to a landmark exhibition of MacArthur Fellow Aminah Robinson's work at the Columbus Museum of Art from 2020-2021. The exhibition revolved around her family and community, African American history, travel, and the stories her elders told her. When Aminah Robinson died in 2015 and entrusted her entire estate to the Columbus Museum of Art, it became clear that her art, her house and its furnishings, and her extensive writings would constitute a compelling major exhibition and book. This catalog invites readers to enter Robinson's house and engage with the art and journals the museum's staff members have documented during the last five years. Robinson embraced the concept of "raggin' on"—that her work will endure perpetually because each new person that encounters it will add new meaning. This exhibition's title reflects the hope that the perspectives of visitors and readers will ensure Robinson's work never ends. The book's cover image represents Robinson's Themba series, which consumed her for many years until the end of her life; it captures in dramatic fashion the complexity of both her own hopeful spirit and an inner rage that propelled her to write and make art.

Hernández, Daisy. *The Kissing Bug: A True Story of a Family, an Insect, and a Nation's Neglect of a Deadly Disease*. Tin House (New York, NY) 2021. HC \$27.95. Growing up in a New Jersey factory town in the 1980s, Daisy Hernández believed that her aunt had become

deathly ill from eating an apple. No one in her family, in either the United States or Colombia, spoke of infectious diseases. Even into her thirties, she only knew that her aunt had died of Chagas—a rare and devastating illness that affects the heart and digestive system. But as Hernández dug deeper, she discovered that Chagas—or the “kissing bug disease”—is more prevalent in the United States than the Zika virus. Crisscrossing the country, she interviewed patients, doctors, epidemiologists, and even veterinarians with the Department of Defense. She learned that in the United States, more than three hundred thousand people in the Latinx community have Chagas, and that outside of Latin America, this is the only country with the native insects that carry the Chagas parasite. Through unsparing, gripping, and humane portraits, Hernández chronicles a story vast in scope and urgent in its implications, exposing how poverty, racism, and public policies have conspired to keep this disease hidden.

Hershey, William. *Profiles in Achievement: The Gifts, Quirks, and Foibles of Ohio's Best Politicians (The Bliss Institute Series)*. The University of Akron Press (Akron, OH) 2021. PB \$24.95. This collection of profiles highlights the careers of Ohio political trailblazers and high achievers covering nearly a century—from Republican Ray Bliss' humble start as an errand boy in Akron's 1931 mayoral race to Democratic U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown and Republican Gov. Mike DeWine today.

Holliday, George H. Edited by Glenn V. Longacre. *On the Plains in '65: The 6th West Virginia Volunteer*

*Cavalry in the West*. Ohio University Press (Athens, OH) 2021. HC \$49.95.

This annotated edition of Holliday's recollections—known primarily among historians of the American West—re-contextualizes his memoir to include his boyhood in southern Ohio and the largely untold story of the hundreds of Buckeyes who crossed the Ohio River to serve their country in Virginia (later West Virginia) regiments, ultimately traveling across Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, and Wyoming to safeguard mail and stage routes along the celebrated Oregon Trail during a pivotal time in American history.

Iversen, Kristen, and David Lazar, eds. *Don't Look Now: Things We Wish We Hadn't Seen (21st Century Essays Series)*. Mad Creek Books (Columbus, OH) 2020. PB \$24.95.

Often what we remember most—and most vividly—are the moments that caught us unawares: the things we wish we hadn't seen and have never been able to shake. This group of prominent writers tries to come to grips with obsessive memory, the uncanny, and the bad dreams that accompany the moments in our lives when we wish we'd looked away, the places we wish we'd never been, and the scenes we wish we'd never stumbled upon. Featuring essays by Jericho Parms, XU XI, Jerald Walker, José Orduña, Kristen Iversen, Nicole Walker, Mary Cappello, Lina Ferreira, Colleen O'Connor, Sonya Huber, Paul Crenshaw, Alyce Miller, Patrick Madden, Amelia María de la Luz Montes, Yalie Kamara, Emily Heiden, Lee Martin, and David Lazar.

Kroeger, Robert. *Historic Barns of Ohio*. Arcadia Publishing (Mount Pleasant, SC) 2021. PB \$23.99.

From the glacier-flattened northwest to the Appalachian hills and valleys to the east and south, barns dot the Ohio landscape. Built with wooden nails and mortise-and-tenon joints and assembled with beams hand-hewn from nearby trees, some of these magnificent structures have witnessed three centuries. Many display the unique carpentry of masterful barn builders, including “mystery” wooden spikes and tongue-and-groove two-inch flooring. Sadly, a number of these barns, neglected for years, risk crumbling any day. Join artist and author Robert Kroeger on a trip to each of Ohio's eighty-eight counties to view some of the state's oldest and most historic barns before they're gone.

Oppenheimer, Geof. *Twentieth Century Hustlers*. Columbus Museum of Art (Columbus, OH) 2020. HC \$26.95.

*Geof Oppenheimer: Twentieth Century Hustlers* is an exhibition catalog published to accompany a 2020 video installation at the Columbus Museum of Art. The catalog includes photos of the exhibit along with essays by Tyler Cann, Anita Chari, and Richard Sennett.

Parker, Daniel. Edited by David Torbett. *The Autobiography of Daniel Parker, Frontier Universalist*. Ohio University Press (Athens, OH) 2020. HC \$36.95. In this remarkable memoir, Daniel Parker (1781–1861) recorded both the details of everyday life and the extraordinary historical events he witnessed west of the Appalachian Mountains between 1790 and 1840. Once a humble traveling salesman



for a line of newly invented clothes washing machines, he became an outspoken advocate for abolition and education. With his wife and son, he founded Clermont Academy, a racially integrated, coeducational secondary school—the first of its kind in Ohio. However, Parker’s real vocation was as a self-ordained, itinerant preacher of his own brand of universal salvation. Raised by Presbyterian parents, he experienced a dramatic conversion to the Halcyon Church, an alternative, millenarian religious movement led by the enigmatic prophet Abel Sarjent, in 1803. After parting ways with the Halcyonists, he continued his own biblical and theological studies, arriving at the universalist conclusions that he would eventually preach throughout the Ohio River Valley. David Torbett has transcribed Parker’s manuscript and publishes it here for the first time, together with an introduction, epilogue, bibliography, and extensive notes that enrich and contextualize this rare pioneer autobiography.

Peterson, Richard, and Stephen Peterson. ***The Turnpike Rivalry: The Pittsburgh Steelers and the Cleveland Browns***. Kent State University Press (Kent, OH) 2020. PB \$24.95.

Football historians regard the games between the Cleveland Browns and the Pittsburgh Steelers as the basis for one of the greatest rivalries in NFL history. Authors Richard Peterson and Stephen Peterson, in telling the engaging story of these teams who play only a two-hour drive along the turnpike from each other, explore the reasons behind this intense rivalry and the details of its ups and downs for each team and its fans. Despite the fierce rivalry,

these cities and their fans have much in common, most notably the working-class nature of the Steeler Nation and the Dawg Pound and their passion, over the decades, for their football teams. Many fans regularly make the 130-mile trip to watch the games. From the first game on October 7, 1950, where Cleveland defeated the Steelers 30-17, to the 2019-20 season’s infamous helmet incident with Mason Rudolph and Myles Garrett, the rivalry remains as intense as ever.

Ricca, Brad. ***Olive the Lionheart: Lost Love, Imperial Spies, and One Woman’s Journey into the Heart of Africa***. St. Martin’s Press (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$29.99.

In 1910, Olive MacLeod, a thirty-year-old, redheaded Scottish aristocrat, received word that her fiancé, the famous naturalist Boyd Alexander, was missing in Africa. So she went to find him. *Olive the Lionheart* is the thrilling true story of her astonishing journey. In jungles, swamps, cities, and deserts, Olive and her two companions, the Talbots, come face-to-face with cobras and crocodiles, wise native chiefs, a murderous leopard cult, a haunted forest, and even two adorable lion cubs that she adopts as her own. Making her way in a pair of ill-fitting boots, Olive awakens to the many forces around her, from shadowy colonial powers to an invisible Islamic warlord who may hold the key to Boyd’s disappearance. As these secrets begin to unravel, all of Olive’s assumptions prove wrong and she is forced to confront the darkest, most shocking secret of all: why she really came to Africa in the first place. Drawing on Olive’s own letters and

secret diaries, *Olive the Lionheart* is a love story that defies all boundaries, set against the backdrop of a beautiful, unconquerable Africa.

Tyner, James A., and Mindy Farmer. ***Cambodia and Kent State: In the Aftermath of Nixon’s Expansion of the Vietnam War***. Kent State University Press (Kent, OH) 2020. PB \$12.95.

President Nixon’s announcement on April 30, 1970, that U.S. troops were invading neutral Cambodia as part of the ongoing Vietnam War campaign, sparked a complicated series of events with tragic consequences on many fronts. In Cambodia, the invasion renewed calls for a government independent of western power and influence, eventually resulting in a civil war and the rise of the Khmer Rouge. Here at home, Nixon’s expansion of the war galvanized the long-standing anti-Vietnam War movement, including at Kent State University, leading to the tragic shooting and deaths of four students on May 4, 1970. This brief book concisely contextualizes these events, filling a gap in the popular memory of the 1970 shootings and the wider conceptions of the war in Southeast Asia. As we grapple with the legacy of the Kent State shootings, Tyner and Farmer assert we should also grapple with the larger context of the protests, of the decision to bomb and invade a neutral country, and the violence and genocide that followed.

Van Keuren, James. ***The School Poisoning Tragedy in Caledonia, Ohio***. The History Press (Charleston, SC) 2021. PB \$21.99. In the early 1960s, the River Valley Local School District built its middle school, its high school, and its athletic fields in the former Marion

Engineer Depot. During World War II, the depot had used the land for heavy equipment rehab, military artillery practice, materials storage, burial of construction debris, and burning of waste materials and fuels. In 1997, a River Valley High School nurse grew concerned about the high rate of leukemia and other cancers in graduates. An investigation was finally sparked when a stunning news report announced a 122 percent increase in death rates over thirty years in the Marion area. Was the land to blame? The question of what may have been known about the contaminants on the school grounds sent shock waves through the community that still linger today.

Weibel, Betty. *The Ohio Literary Trail: A Guide*. Arcadia Publishing (Charleston, SC) 2021. PB \$21.99. *The Ohio Literary Trail* celebrates the Buckeye State's role in shaping culture and literature worldwide. Along the trail, developed by the Ohioana Library Association, lie historic homes, museums, library collections, and historical markers honoring great authors, poets, and influencers of the literary landscape. Following the state's five geographic regions for convenient self-guided tours, curious explorers can walk in the footsteps of Harriet Beecher Stowe and poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. They can view renowned collections of comics, picture book art, and Nancy Drew-themed artifacts. Or they can tour the home and farm of Pulitzer Prize winner and conservationist Louis Bromfield. Compiled with care by Betty Weibel, one of the trail's creators, this guide offers something unique for the armchair traveler and the road warrior alike.

Whipple, Kit. *Cleveland's Colorful Characters*. Covenant Books (Murrells Inlet, SC) 2019. PB \$21.95. *Cleveland's Colorful Characters* is an easy to read, insightful book on some of Cleveland's most influential individuals. These individuals helped create the grand and unique city which at one time was one of the most respected cities in the world.

## FICTION

Berten, Jinny Powers. Illus. by Chad DeBoard. *By His Side: The Story of George Washington and William Lee*. Fountain Square Publishing (Cincinnati, OH) 2020. PB \$19.95. Set at Mount Vernon during the last three days of George Washington's life, this work of historical fiction explores Washington's changing views of slavery, with flashbacks to events that took place during the Revolutionary War and the part that his enslaved valet, William Lee, played in those events. Included in this work is the Last Will and Testament of George Washington, full of surprises for many and concerns for others.

Bethea, Jesse. *Fellow Travelers*. Bellwether (Columbus, OH) 2021. PB \$14.95. There are time travelers among us—friends and strangers who can jump from moment to moment with the power of their minds. After meeting an enigmatic outsider who guards an ancient secret, Bindra Dhar learns the art of time travel and is soon hunted by a legendary time criminal. Honing her skills, jumping through time and space as both predator and prey, she uncovers a conspiracy that could derail reality itself. Why her? Why now (if there is such a thing)?

Will she uphold the sacred oath of all time travelers . . . even if it kills her?

Cline, Ernest. *Ready Player Two*. Ballantine Books (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$28.99.

Days after winning OASIS founder James Halliday's contest, Wade Watts makes a discovery that changes everything. Hidden within Halliday's vaults, waiting for his heir to find, lies a technological advancement that will once again change the world and make the OASIS a thousand times more wondrous—and addictive—than even Wade dreamed possible. With it comes a new riddle, and a new quest—a last Easter egg from Halliday, hinting at a mysterious prize. And an unexpected, impossibly powerful, and dangerous new rival awaits, one who'll kill millions to get what he wants. Wade's life and the future of the OASIS are again at stake, but this time the fate of humanity also hangs in the balance. Lovingly nostalgic and wildly original as only Ernest Cline could conceive it, *Ready Player Two* takes us on another imaginative, fun, action-packed adventure through his beloved virtual universe, and jolts us thrillingly into the future once again.

Erickson, Alex. *Death By French Roast (A Bookstore Café Mystery)*. Kensington (New York, NY) 2020. PB \$8.99.

Krissy Hancock runs a bookstore-café in Pine Hills, Ohio, but she'll be setting up shop as a sleuth when she discovers a long-unsolved murder. While Krissy is helping a friend clean out her late mother's house, she learns that although the deceased died peacefully at an advanced age, her brother did not. In fact, Wade was killed more than

thirty years ago, and the case was never closed. What surprises Krissy even more is that she has a personal connection to the story—her friend Rita was seeing Wade at the time, scandalizing the town with the couple's large age difference. With an older Rita now part of Krissy's writing group—and another member with police experience—she starts digging up gossip, talking to the victim's local coffee klatsch, and trying to find real clues amid the old rumors. But things just seem to grow muddier as she fights to identify whodunit.

Flower, Amanda. *Lemon Drop Dead (An Amish Candy Shop Mystery)*. Kensington (New York, NY) 2021. PB \$8.99.

Although baby showers aren't an Amish tradition, Bailey King wants to celebrate Emily Keim's forthcoming bundle of joy. It's the least she can do for her hardworking assistant at Swissmen Sweets, especially with Emily being estranged from her siblings. Everyone in Harvest, Ohio, has gathered at the town gazebo—decked out in lemon-themed décor to add some of Emily's favorite flavor to the festivities—including Juliet Brook, Jethro the pig, and in a last-minute invite, Emily's sister, Esther Esh. But Esther isn't the only surprise guest. A mysterious Amish woman confronts Emily claiming to know about her secret shame—the child she had as a teenager who was given up for adoption. The stranger vanishes before Bailey could find out who she was and if she knew what happened to Emily's first baby. Later that evening, the woman reappears—dead in Esh Family Pretzels, with a threatening letter written by Esther found on her body. Emily knows

her sister is not a murderer and convinces Bailey to help clear her name and find the real killer.

Goodkin, Gwen. *A Place Remote: Stories*. West Virginia University Press (Morgantown, WV) 2020. PB \$18.99.

From farm to factory, alcoholism to war wounds, friendship to betrayal, the stories in *A Place Remote* take us intimately into the hearts of people from all walks of life in a rural Ohio town. Whether they stay in their town or leave for distant places, these characters come to realize that no one is immune to the fictions people tell others—and themselves—to survive. In each of these ten stories, Gwen Goodkin forces her characters to face the dramatic events of life head-on—some events happen in a moment, while others are the fallout of years or decades of turning away. A boy is confronted by the cost of the family farm, an optometrist careens toward an explosive mental disaster, a mourning teen protects his sister, lifelong friends have an emotional confrontation over an heirloom, and a high school student travels to Germany to find his voice and, finally, a moment of long-awaited redemption.

Lindsay, Julie Anne. *Pulp Friction (A Cider Shop Mystery)*. Kensington (New York, NY) 2020. PB \$8.99.

Thanks to Winnie's new cider shop, Smythe Orchards is out of the red and folks can get their fix of the produce and other delectable products they love all year round. The locals are even booking the shop for events, including a June wedding! Winnie couldn't be happier to see the barn filled to the rafters for the

big bash—until her doting ex, Hank, is caught in a heated argument with the groom. Winnie plans to scold Hank after the party, but spots him running off instead. And when the groom turns up dead, apparently hit by the honeymoon getaway car, Hank is the main suspect. Now Hank is on the lam, and it's up to Winnie to get to the core of the truth—before the real killer puts the squeeze on her.

McDaniel, Tiffany. *Betty*. Alfred A. Knopf (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$28.00.

"A girl comes of age against the knife." So begins the story of Betty Carpenter. Born in a bathtub in 1954 to a white mother and a Cherokee father, Betty is the sixth of eight siblings. The world they inhabit in the rural town of Breathed, Ohio, is one of poverty and violence—both from outside the family and, devastatingly, from within. The lush landscape, rich with birdsong, wild fruit, and blazing stars, becomes a kind of refuge for Betty, but when her family's darkest secrets are brought to light, she has no choice but to reckon with the brutal history hiding in the hills, as well as the heart-wrenching cruelties and incredible characters she encounters. Despite the hardships she faces, Betty is resilient. Her curiosity about the natural world, her fierce love for her sisters, and her father's brilliant stories are kindling for the fire of her own imagination, and in the face of all to which she bears witness, Betty discovers an escape: she begins to write. She recounts the horrors of her family's past and present with pen and paper and buries them deep in the dirt—moments that have stung her so deeply she could not share them, until now. Inspired by generations of her family, Tiffany



McDaniel sets out to free the past by delivering this story.

Quotah, Eman. *Bride of the Sea*. Tin House (New York, NY) 2021. PB \$16.95.

During a snowy Cleveland February, newlywed university students Muneer and Saeedah are expecting their first child, and he is harboring a secret: the word *divorce* is whispering in his ear. Soon, their marriage will end, and Muneer will return to Saudi Arabia, while Saeedah remains in Cleveland with their daughter, Hanadi. Consumed by a growing fear of losing her daughter, Saeedah disappears with the little girl, leaving Muneer to desperately search for his daughter for years. The repercussions of the abduction ripple outward, not only changing the lives of Hanadi and her parents, but also their interwoven family and friends—those who must choose sides and hide their own deeply guarded secrets. And when Hanadi comes of age, she finds herself at the center of this conflict, torn between the world she grew up in and a family across the ocean. How can she exist between parents, between countries?

Rall, Ted. Illus. by Pablo Callejo. *The Stringer*. NBM Publishing (New York, NY) 2021. HC \$24.99. Suffering from budget cuts, layoffs, and a growing suspicion that his search for the truth has become obsolete, veteran war correspondent Mark Scribner is about to throw in the towel on journalism when he discovers that his hard-earned knowledge can save his career and make him wealthy and famous. All he has to do is pivot to social media and, with a few cynical twists, abandon everything he cares about most.

Sreenivasan, Jyotsna. *These Americans*. Minerva Rising Press (Atlanta, GA) 2021. PB \$17. *These Americans*, winner of the Rosemary Daniell Fiction Prize, explores what it means to be an American, from the birth of a child to an immigrant couple to the death of a first-generation mother.

Walter, Laura Maylene. *Body of Stars*. Dutton (New York, NY) 2021. HC \$26.

From debut novelist Laura Maylene Walter, *Body of Stars* is a bold and dazzling exploration of fate and female agency in a world very similar to our own—except that the markings on women’s bodies reveal the future. Perfect for fans of Leni Zumas’ *Red Clocks* and Naomi Alderman’s *The Power*, *Body of Stars* is a unique and timely exploration of girlhood, womanhood, and toxic masculinity. A piercing indictment of rape culture, it is an inventive and urgent read about what happens when women are objectified and stripped of choice—and what happens when they fight back.

## POETRY

Andrews, Nin. *The Last Orgasm*. Etruscan Press (Wilkes-Barre, PA) 2021. PB \$19.

*The Last Orgasm* continues the journey of Nin Andrews’s first collection, *The Book of Orgasms*, which became a cult classic that has been translated into Turkish, performed in Prague, and has readers around the globe. In both books, the orgasm is an ethereal presence, puzzled by humanity in general and Nin in particular.

Bialosky, Jill. *Asylum: A Personal, Historical, Natural Inquiry in 103 Lyric Sections*. Alfred A. Knopf (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$27.

In *Asylum*, poet Jill Bialosky embarks on a Virgilian journey, building a narrative sequence from 103 elegant poems and prose sections that cohere in their intensity and their need to explore darkness and sustenance both. Taken together, these piercing pieces—about her nascent calling as a writer; her sister’s suicide and its still unfolding aftermath; the horror unleashed by World War II; the life cycle of the monarch butterfly; and the woods where she seeks asylum—form a moving story, powerfully braiding despair, survival, and hope. Bialosky considers the oppositions that govern us: our reason and unreason, our need to preserve and destruct. “What are words when they meet the action of what they attempt to modify?” she asks, exploring the possible salve of language in the face of pain and grief. What *Asylum* delivers is a form of hard-won grace and an awareness of the cost of extreme violence, inexplicable loss, and the miraculous cycles of life, in work that carries Bialosky’s art to a new level of urgency and achievement.

Bloemeke, Julie E. *Slide to Unlock*. Sibling Rivalry Press (Little Rock, AR) 2020. PB \$18.

In *Slide to Unlock*, Julie E. Bloemeke investigates how modern technology redirects our erotic and familial lives, including phones that open with the swipe of a finger and text messages that move the speaker toward startling self-discovery—the “bright trick of letters” that can ignite memory and desire. Each poem explores the sacred and

sacrilege within the large and small worlds we navigate—the chimeric ache of a Georgia thunderstorm, the “unseen union” in a Monet painting, a girlhood bedroom in Toledo, a letter secreted in a Paris bookshop—to reveal how digital language and communication, while designed to create intimacy, can leave us adrift. With a lush, hypnotic writing style at once precise and liquid, romantic and ruthless, Bloemeke presents a topography of all the possible ways to carry another person—to “build / the membrane / body ourselves / into each other”—to unlock the lost art of face-to-face connection, and to free ourselves to be “so so bad in how [we] want.”

Chatti, Leila. *Deluge*. Copper Canyon Press (Port Townsend, WA) 2020. PB \$17.

In her early twenties, Leila Chatti started bleeding and did not stop. Physicians referred to this bleeding as flooding. In the Qur'an, as in the Bible, the Flood was sent as punishment. The idea of disease as punishment drives this collection's themes of shame, illness, grief, and gender, transmuting religious narratives through the lens of a young Arab-American woman suffering a taboo female affliction. *Deluge* investigates the childhood roots of faith and desire alongside their present-day enactments. Chatti's remarkably direct voice makes use of innovative poetic form to gaze unflinchingly at what she was taught to keep hidden. This powerful piece of life-writing depicts Chatti's journey from diagnosis to surgery and remission in meticulous chronology that binds body to spirit and advocates for the salvation of both. Chatti blends personal narrative, religious imagery, and

medical terminology in a chronicle of illness, womanhood, and faith.

Davis, Teri Ellen Cross. *a more perfect Union*. Mad Creek Books (Columbus, OH) 2021. PB \$14.95. In the tender, sensual, and bracing poems of *a more perfect Union*, Teri Ellen Cross Davis reclaims the experience of living and mothering while Black in contemporary America, centering Black women's pleasure by wresting it away from the relentless commodification of the White gaze. Cross Davis deploys stunning emotional range to uplift the mundane, interrogate the status quo, and ultimately create her own goddesses. Parenting, lust, household chores—all are fair game for Cross Davis' gimlet eye. Whether honoring her grief for Prince's passing while examining his role in midwifing her sexual awakening or contemplating travel and the gamble of being Black across this wide world, these poems tirelessly seek a path out of the labyrinth to hope.

Gay, Ross. *Be Holding: A Poem*. University of Pittsburgh Press (Pittsburgh, PA) 2020. PB \$17. *Be Holding* is a love song to legendary basketball player Julius Erving—known as Dr. J—who dominated courts in the 1970s and 1980s as a small forward for the Philadelphia “76ers. But this book-length poem is more than just an ode to a magnificent athlete. Through a kind of lyric research, or lyric meditation, Ross Gay connects Dr. J's famously impossible move from the 1980 NBA Finals against the Los Angeles Lakers to pick-up basketball and the flying Igbo and the Middle Passage, to photography and surveillance and state violence, to music and personal histories of flight and familial

love. *Be Holding* wonders how the imagination, or how our looking, might make us, or bring us, closer to each other. How our looking might make us reach for each other. And might make us be reaching for each other. And how that reaching might be something like joy.

Majmudar, Amit. *What He Did in Solitary: Poems*. Alfred A. Knopf (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$27. With his dazzling ability to set words spinning, Amit Majmudar brings us poems that sharpen both wit and knives as he examines our “life in solitary.” Equally engaged with human history and the human heart, Majmudar transfigures identity from a locus of captivity to the open field of his liberation. In pieces that include a stunning central sequence, “Letters to Myself in My Next Incarnation,” the poet is both the Huck and Jim of his own adventures. He is unafraid to face human failings: from Oxycontin addiction to Gujarat rioting, he examines—often with dark comedy—the fragility of the soul, the unchartability of pain, and the reasons we sing and grieve and make war. All-American and multitudinously alone, dancing in his confinement, Majmudar is a poet of exuberance and transcendence: “What I love here, / Poems and women mostly, / I know you can't remember,” he tells his future self. “But they were worthy of my love.”

Sweeney, Dennis James. *In the Antarctic Circle*. Autumn House Press (Pittsburgh, PA) 2021. PB \$16.95.

This collection addresses issues of identity as two people find themselves living in an uncommon landscape. Through hybrid narrative prose poems, Hank and an unnamed

narrator try to navigate their relationship and understand their identities amid a landscape that offers them almost nothing. The continent at first seems empty, but something emerges in the vacuum of Antarctica. The narrator's gender skips and changes, and the characters' self-awareness grows into a sort of horror. Dennis James Sweeney's poems consider the fullness of emptiness, revealing attempts to love and grow when surrounded by a white and frigid landscape that seems to go on forever. The space of these poems is something beyond the Antarctic of scientific exploration, the icy outpost that has served for so long as a masculine proving ground for polar explorers. This is the Antarctica of domestic disharmony, of love amid loneliness, where two people encounter themselves in the changeless breadth at the end of the world. *In the Antarctic Circle* is the winner of the Autumn House Press 2020 Rising Writer Prize in Poetry.

Zamora, Felicia. *I Always Carry My Bones*. University of Iowa Press (Iowa City, IA) 2021. PB \$20. The poems in *I Always Carry My Bones* tackle the complex ideation of home—the place where horrid and beautiful intertwine and carve a being into existence—for marginalized and migrant peoples. Felicia Zamora explores how familial history echoes inside a person and the ghosts of lineage dwell in a body. Sometimes we haunt. Sometimes we are the haunted. Pierced by an estranged relationship to Mexican culture, the ethereal ache of an unknown father, the weight of racism and poverty in this country, the indentations of abuse, and a mind/physicality affected by doubt,

these poems root in the search for belonging—a belonging inside and outside the flesh. This powerful collection is a message of longing for a sanctuary of self, the dwelling of initial energy needed for the collective fight for human rights.

## MIDDLE GRADE & YOUNG ADULT

Creech, Sharon. *One Time*. HarperCollins/Cotler (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$16.99. Gina Filomena has been told she has an overactive imagination. With her bright clothing and artistic spirit, she's always felt different from the other kids in her class. That is, until she meets her new neighbor, a mysterious boy named Antonio with a wide, welcoming smile. Add in a creative new teacher, Miss Lightstone, and a world of possibilities opens up for Gina, Antonio, and their classmates. With the help of Antonio and Miss Lightstone, will Gina find the answers to the questions *Who am I?* and *Who do I want to be?*

Reynolds, Justin A. *Early Departures*. Katherine Tegen Books (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$18.99. What if you could bring your best friend back to life—but only for a short time? Jamal's best friend, Q, doesn't know that he died, and that he's about to die . . . again. He doesn't know that Jamal tried to save him. And that the reason they haven't been friends for two years is because Jamal blames Q for the accident that killed his parents. But what if Jamal could have a second chance? A new technology allows Q to be reanimated for a few weeks before

he dies . . . permanently. And Q's mom is not about to let anyone ruin this miracle by telling Q about his impending death. So how can Jamal fix everything if he can't tell Q the truth?

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Before the Ever After*. Nancy Paulsen Books (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$17.99. For as long as ZJ can remember, his dad has been everyone's hero. As a charming, talented pro football star, he's as beloved to the neighborhood kids he plays with as he is to his millions of adoring sports fans. But lately life at ZJ's house is anything but charming. His dad is having trouble remembering things and seems to be angry all the time. ZJ's mom explains it's because of all the head injuries his dad sustained during his career. ZJ can understand that—but it doesn't make the sting any less real when his own father forgets his name. As ZJ contemplates his new reality, he has to figure out how to hold on tight to family traditions and recollections of the glory days, all the while wondering what their past amounts to if his father can't remember it. And most importantly, can those happy feelings ever be reclaimed when they are all so busy aching for the past?

## JUVENILE

Brain, Erin Alon. *Fun for Anyone!* Dfmi Designs (Columbus, OH) 2020. HC \$18.99. Weston likes to have fun! He loves race cars, glitter, nail polish, and sharks. When he starts at a new school, he discovers that not everyone's idea of fun is the same.



Sometimes, people think that it's okay to try to force their likes and dislikes onto others. It hurts to be pushed around, but with the help of new friends and inclusion, his confidence returns. He realizes that everyone has different quirks, so he has to be resilient and stand up for what he believes in instead of bending to conform to someone else's ideals.

Bundy, Tamara. Illus. by Jill Howarth. ***Lullaby Prayer***. Thomas Nelson (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$16.99.

This bedtime book will calm your kids to sleep with a promise of God's peaceful presence all night long. As gentle scenes move through a sleepy farm in *Lullaby Prayer*, lyrical lines lull little listeners into rest. As the moon smiles, fireflies dance, and darkness unfolds her blanket to drape the landscape in cozy quiet, the sounds of a country evening become a bedtime ballad in this sweet, comforting prayer poem.

Hoefler, Kate. Illus. by Corinna Luyken. ***Nothing in Common***. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$17.99. Two neighbors both love to watch the old man and his dog from their windows, but they never wave to each other. After all, they have nothing in common. But everything changes when they are the only ones who notice that one day is different—there is the old man, but where is the dog? In this lyrical picture book, two strangers learn about the many ways the world connects us—even if the only thing we have in common is how much we care about someone else. Filled with whimsy and warmth, *Nothing in Common* is a tender friendship story that reminds us to always lead with compassion.

Mackall, Dandi Daley. Illus. by Cee Biscoe. ***A Child's First Bible: Psalms for Little Hearts***. Tyndale Kids (Carol Stream, IL) 2019. HC \$12.99.

This rhyming paraphrase of twenty-five of the best-loved Psalms is both playful and tender, perfect for soothing your child before they sleep or for encouraging them in morning devotions. Instill a lifelong love of the Psalms in your child as you teach them that God's Word was written for them.

Mackall, Dandi Daley. Illus. by Christian Cornia. ***There Are Lions in this Book!*** B&H Books (Nashville, TN) 2021. HC \$11.99.

In this clever take on the Daniel in the lions' den story, a narrator mouse continually warns the reader not to turn the page, lest they find what Daniel eventually found—terrifying, hungry lions! As this exciting and engaging story unfolds, children ages four to eight will learn what actually happened to Daniel in the Bible while being thoroughly entertained in the process.

Metcalf, Lindsay H., Keila V. Dawson, and Jeanette Bradley, eds. Illus. by Jeanette Bradley. ***No Voice Too Small: Fourteen Young Americans Making History***. Charlesbridge (Watertown, MA) 2020. HC \$18.99. Mari Copeny demanded clean water in Flint. Jazz Jennings insisted, as a transgirl, on playing soccer with the girls' team. From Viridiana Sanchez Santos' quinceañera demonstration against anti-immigrant policy to Zach Wahls' moving declaration that his two moms and he were a family like any other, the poems in *No Voice Too Small* celebrate the young people who know how to be the change they seek.

Springstubb, Tricia. Illus. by Elaheh Taherian. ***Khalil and Mr. Hagerty and the Backyard Treasures***. Candlewick (Somerville, MA) 2020. HC \$17.99.

Khalil lives in the upstairs apartment with his family, which is big and busy and noisy. Downstairs lives Mr. Hagerty, who is quiet. Khalil and Mr. Hagerty don't appear to have a lot in common, but hot summer days have a way of bringing people together. As Khalil looks for buried treasure in the yard, Mr. Hagerty tends to his garden. Both help each other navigate language—whether it be learning new words or remembering those seemingly forgotten. Before long, an unlikely friendship is born, full of treasure, thoughtfulness, and chocolate cake. Through well-cultivated details and vibrant cut-paper collage, author Tricia Springstubb and illustrator Elaheh Taherian nurture a heart-tugging tribute to the love of good neighbors and to the strength of intergenerational and intercultural bonds.

Umrigar, Thrity. Illus. by Khoa Le. ***Sugar in Milk***. Running Press (Philadelphia, PA) 2020. HC \$17.99. A young immigrant girl joins her aunt and uncle in a new country that is unfamiliar to her. She struggles with loneliness, with a fierce longing for the culture and familiarity of home, until one day, her aunt takes her on a walk. As the duo strolls through their city park, the girl's aunt begins to tell her an old myth, and a story within the story begins. A long time ago, a group of refugees arrived on a foreign shore. The local king met them, determined to refuse their request for refuge. But there was a language barrier, so the king filled a glass with milk and pointed

to it as a way of saying that the land was full and couldn't accommodate the strangers. Then, the leader of the refugees dissolved sugar in the glass of milk. His message was clear: Like sugar in milk, our presence in your country will sweeten your lives. The king embraced the refugee, welcoming him and his people. The folktale depicted in this book was a part of author Thrity Umrigar's Zoroastrian upbringing as a Parsi child in India, but resonates for children of all backgrounds, especially those coming to a new homeland.

Weyler, Katie, and Carrie Weyler. Illus. by Rachel Novel. ***Charlie Tractor and the Garden***. Charlie Tractor Books (Cincinnati, OH) 2020. HC \$18.99.

Charlie, like most young boys, loves adventure, playing outside with his dog, Pickles, visiting his grandparent's farm, riding on tractors, and spending time exploring the outdoors with the people he loves. When a squirrel-chasing adventure takes a turn, Charlie's dog winds up getting into the neighbor's vegetable garden and digs up some of the plants. Now, Charlie must take responsibility and learn how to clean up his dog's mess. What will Charlie do?

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