

2017 Show Me Award Nominees
Annotated by the Saturday Morning Book Group **
Winner is selected by children in grades 1-3

Andrews, T. (2015). *Trombone Shorty*. Ill. B. Collier. NY: Abrams Books. ISBN: 978-1-4197-1465-8, unpagged.

This beautifully illustrated autobiography from Troy “Trombone Shorty” Andrews and Bryan Collier is a must have for any New Orleans jazz enthusiast or anyone who loves the passion and emotion in Bryan Collier’s signature illustrations. A winner of the Coretta Scott King Award and a Caldecott Honor, we learn about Trombone Shorty’s young childhood, his interest in the trombone, and how he came to have that famous nickname. The reader can’t help but feel the spirit of New Orleans as they enjoy this book and Trombone Shorty’s memories. (MM)

Barton, B. 2015. *I’m trying to love spiders*. NY: Penguin. ISBN-13: 978-0670016938, 40 pgs.

The presentation of arachnids is engaging, with an energetic text and entertaining illustrations. Cartoon illustrations are appealingly, the font is a hand-written scrawl, and spiders are depicted as cuddly. Material on spiders is cleverly woven into the narrative, and fun facts about different spider varieties are incorporated into the endpapers. This book is a creative addition to animal collections. (SS)

Bildner, P. (2015). *Marvelous Cornelius: Katrina and the spirit of New Orleans*. Ill. J. Parra. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books. ISBN 978-1-4521-2578-7, unpagged.

This most inspiring book is about Cornelius, a street sweeper from New Orleans. He loves his job, entertaining all around him with singing and dancing as he collects the garbage. When the epic storm Katrina hits, he is overwhelmed, like the rest of the population, with the incredible mess left in the streets. But his spirit prevails and he begins again, as others watch. His bravery and dignity inspire others to pitch in for the massive clean-up efforts. The illustrations and rhythmic text capture the flavor of the area, with many local terms used and explained in the back of the book. This picture book makes an excellent contribution as the first book to explain to young children about the flood, or to accompany a text set with older students learning about this historical event and the geography and culture of New Orleans. Ages 6-12. (LA)

Bunting, E. (2015). *Yard sale*. Ill. L. Castillo. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press. ISBN: 978-0-7636-6542-5, 32 pgs.

Young Callie knows that her family needs to downsize to an apartment, but it’s hard to watch as almost all their belongings are sold in a yard sale. It’s particularly difficult to watch as her bike is sold. Afterwards, Callie’s best friend asks why her family has to move, and Callie explains, “It has something to do with money.” Later, in an unsuccessful attempt at humor, a woman asks Callie, “Are you for sale?” Through it all, Castillo and Bunting deal sensitively with a difficult topic. The ink and watercolor illustrations perfectly capture the emotions of the characters, and the message that a home is made of people, not possessions, is unmistakable. (NK)

Burleigh, R. (2015). *Trapped! A whale’s rescue*. Ill. W. Minor. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge. ISBN: 978-1-58089-558-3, 32 pgs.

Burleigh’s writing would receive accolades from Ralph Fletcher for making a nonfiction whale sound poetic: “She spans the cold blue with her powerful tail. Bang! Down in the depths, her call echoes.” And then there is suspense: “But wait—danger haunts these waters. Unseen nets,

left by crab fisherman, drift through the dark sea.” Minor uses gouache to capture the scale and power of the whale as she moves through the water thrashing with the entrapment as divers come to help her escape. The author includes a **Behind the Story** that explains this is a true story about a whale who gave thanks for her rescue: “Divers worked for nearly an hour, carefully cutting the ropes. They thought the whale would dart off the instant it was freed, but strangely, it slowly circled the rescuers, gently touching each one.” (GP)

Daywalt, D. (2015). *The day the crayons came home*. Il. O. Jeffers, NY: Philomel. ISBN-13: 978-0399172755, 48 pgs.

This book is a companion to *The Day the Crayons Quit* (Philomel, 2014). A stack of postcards written by a new batch of forgotten, lost, or left behind crayons arrives for Duncan. Maroon has been marooned, Tan (or Burnt Sienna) has seen better days and there is Orange and Yellow, Pea Green, and Neon Red. Jeffers's mixed-media illustrations of photographed postcards and childlike crayon drawings require close visual reading. This creative, colorful tale merits reading aloud. (SS)

De La Pena, M. (2015). *Last stop on Market Street*. Ill. C. Robinson. NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons. ISBN 978-0-399-25774-2, unpagged.

It's easy to see why this little gem was named the Newbery as well as a Caldecott Honor Book. Matt de la Pena's sparse but effective prose tells an important story with a strong message and Christian Robinson's acrylic and collage illustrations not only support but tell their own part of the story. CJ laments to his nana after church on this particular Sunday that they have to wait in the rain, don't have a car and have to ride the bus. She answers each of his questions throughout the ride in the city opening his eyes to the beauty and life that surrounds them. “Sometimes when you're surrounded by dirt, CJ, you're a better witness for what's beautiful.” The last stop on Market Street is the soup kitchen where CJ declares he's glad they've come, and with smiles, they serve food. (LW)

Ewert, M. (2015.) *Mummy cat*. Ill. L. Brown. NY: Clarion Books. ISBN 078-0-544-34082-4. Unpagged.

This is the sad story of a cat looking for his lost mistress in a tomb, told in hieroglyphs as well as much text. For any students interested in ancient Egyptian culture, this book explains the process of mummification and beliefs of preparing for an afterlife. Even though there are charming illustrations, it is not a sweet kitten story, nor a ghost story. The book is an excellent source of non-fiction information about the Egyptian culture and their beliefs. Ages 9-12. (LA)

Heder, T. (2015). *The bear report*. NY: Abrams. ISBN: 978-1-4197-0783-4, 32 pgs.

Sophie is bored with her homework assignment: “Since we are learning about the Arctic this week, please find three facts about polar bears that you would like to share with the class.” And so, she writes: “1) They are big. 2) They eat things. 3) They are mean.” Then Olafur, a polar bear appears in her living room. “We're not ALL mean.” To prove his point, he takes her to the Arctic to show her around. Asleep on the melting ice they drift to sea. Sophie calls a whale to save them. The author, also the illustrator, who has been to the Arctic, takes us through the imagination with watercolor and ink, to witness and experience (in the words of the Author's Note): “What I know from my experience, and what I hope to share with those who may think of the Arctic as a nothingness, is that not seeing these creatures does not mean that they are not there, or that they do not need the land.” (GP)

Higgins, R. (2015). *Mother Bruce*. NY: Hyperion. ISBN 978-4847-3088-1, unpagged.

Bruce was a grumpy bear who liked almost nothing except eggs. Not raw eggs, mind you, but eggs cooked fancy. One day he left some eggs he collected from Mrs. Goose on his stove to go collect firewood. When he returned, he was met with four newly hatched goslings who thought Bruce was their mama. He couldn't eat them or return them and just couldn't get them to leave him alone. He was stuck and tried to make the best of the situation until migration. Even then he couldn't get rid of his little feathered friends! A surprising solution awaits the reader in this humorous tale. The illustrations suit perfectly, and bear's expressions are priceless! (LW)

Knudsen, M. (2015). *Marilyn's monster*. Ill. M. Phelan. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press. ISBN-13: 978-0763660116, 40 pgs.

Knudsen's imaginative story and Phelan's pencil and watercolor drawings speak to the universal need for belonging. The story begins, "Some of the kids in Marilyn's class had monsters. It was the latest thing." Although these pet monsters each seek out the right child Marilyn's hasn't found her. At first she is patient but when she is the only child in her classroom without a monster she packs a lunch and sets out to find her monster. Each of Phelan's monsters is wonderfully weird and not the least bit scary. Other monster stories include: *Leonardo, the Terrible Monster* by Mo Willems and *Ed Emberley's Drawing Book of Weirdos* by Ed Emberley. What fun! (SS)

Krall, D. (2015.) *Sick Simon*. NY: Simon & Schuster. ISBN 978-1-4424-0007-0.

This is a sick book. Children will love it. Simon has a bad cold, and all the stuff coming out of his nose and mouth is described and illustrated in great comic detail. He spreads the cold to his teachers and classmates on Monday, much to the amusement of three germ characters, Virus, Protozoa and Bacteria. As the week goes on, the story makes a strong impression on how germs are spread and the importance of washing hands and covering your mouth when you cough. If there ever was an important way to get the proper hygiene message across to young children, this book is a hysterically funny way to do it. Ages 4-9. (LA)

Krumwiede, L. (2015). *Just Itzy*. Ill. G. Pizzoli. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press. ISBN: 978-0-7636-5811-3, 40 pgs.

Now that he is in spidergarten, Itzy no longer wants to be called "Itzy Bitzy," and he tries to show that he's a big spider by catching his own lunch. This feat proves to be difficult. He must learn to spin a web and keep his "eye on the fly." Children will recognize the characters and scenes from well-known spider songs and nursery rhymes that complicate his task--Miss Muffett, the old lady who swallowed a fly, and the treacherous waterspout--but Itzy perseveres and triumphs. Greg Pizzoli, winner of the Geisel Award for *Watermelon*, adds to the fun with bright illustrations made with Photoshop, pastel paints, pencil and ink. (NK)

Leslea, N. (2015). *Ketzel, the cat who composed*. Ill. A. Bates. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press. ISBN: 978-0-7636-555, 40 pgs.

Ketzel, the cat, became a friend (true story) to Moshe Cotel, musician and a composer. Moshe "listened outside himself by sitting very still... When he was done listening, Moshe turned all the wonderful sounds he heard into beautiful music." When he heard the sad sound of a little kitty in his neighborhood, he took "little Ketzel" home with him to make beautiful music together. Ketzel strolled down the keyboard of the piano and Mr. Cotel quickly wrote down the notes as he heard them. Using gouache, watercolor and pencil, the illustrator outlines the details

overshadowed and highlighted by moods that make you fall in love with this relationship, while imagining the music they create together. (GP)

Maxwell, C. 2015. *Fur, fins, and feathers: Abraham Dee Bartlett and the invention of the modern zoo*. Grand Rapids, MI: Erdmans Books for Young Readers. ISBN-13: 978-0802854322, 34 pgs.

This is a biography of the inventor of the modern zoo. As a boy, Bartlett visited and became fascinated with a menagerie of caged animals. He read about wild animals as an adult and took a job at the Museum of Natural History. Visitors to Bartlett's first modern zoo developed a deeper appreciation for the animal kingdom because of his love and care of the animals. Maxwell's illustrations are created in softly colored, expressive cut-paper collage; the animals are the focal point of many of the spreads. Back matter and endpapers featuring zoological interesting facts supplement the text. All readers and animal lovers will find this book valuable. The author's website (<http://cassandremaxwell.net/>) contains fascinating information about the author and her work and includes printable bookmarks of illustrations featured in the book. (SS)

Mann, J.K. (2015). *I will never get a star on Mrs. Benson's blackboard*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press. ISBN: 978-0-7636-6514-2, 40 pgs.

Mrs. Benson gives stars for correct spelling, neatness, and raising your hand and saying the right answer. Rosey, who has a messy desk and butterflies in her stomach, wonders if Mrs. Benson is the kind of teacher who dumps messy desks on the floor. Mann's stylized cartoons of ink, gouache, and digital collage clearly illustrate Rosey's vulnerability. Although Mann deals sensitively with children's worries about public praise and awards, I was disappointed with the ending: Rosey, who had just cleaned her desk after rendering it a mess as she worked on an art project, receives a star for her artwork and gives a star to Mrs. Benson. The book jacket touts this as a "cheerful and empowering book for an artistic child or for one whose talents lie in unconventional areas," but the problems with public awards remain. I am hoping the book will spark thoughtful reflection and conversation among teachers. (NK)

McCully, Emily Arnold. (2015). *Queen of the diamond: The Lizzie Murphy story*. NY: Farrar Straus Giroux. ISBN: 978-0-374-30007-4, 32 pgs.

Caldecott medalist (*Mirette on the High Wire*), McCully adds another profile of a strong, bright female to her wonderful collection of biographies of interesting people and animals. This is the story of how Elizabeth Murphy became the first woman to earn a living playing baseball on a men's team in 1918. The story ends then, but an author's note at the end of the book includes more information about Murphy's career and later life. McCully's detailed illustrations in pen and watercolor realistically portray the fashions and furnishings of the times and splendidly depict Lizzie's determination to overcome prevailing attitudes toward women and girls. Rich dialogue helps bring the story to life. (NK)

Mueller, C. (2015). *Dizzy Dean and the Gashouse Gang*. Ill. E. Koehler. St. Louis MO: Reedy Press. ISBN: 978-1-68106-002-6, unpagged.

Have you ever heard of the famous St. Louis Cardinal, Dizzy Dean? He and three teammates, Pepper, Paul, and Joe, torment every team they play and their manager, and come up with amazing feats to try on their travels in the 1930's. Whether Dizzy had the entire team looking for his lucky sock, or building a bonfire on the field, there was always exciting entertainment. Told from a radio sports announcer's voice, this author and illustrator team from St. Louis, teach all of us Cardinals fans another part of the story. (MM)

Muth, J. (2015.) *Zen socks*. NY: Scholastic Press. ISBN 978-0-545-16669-0.

The giant Panda bear Stillwater returns in this book to teach children the importance of patience. He uses an ancient Eastern folktale to illustrate that nothing comes easy and one must practice endlessly to master any art. He also teaches how one kind act impacts many, and how we all make a difference when we work together. The book is calm, both in words and flowing water color illustrations, and follows the same Zen-like aura found in the author's earlier Caldecott-nominated book, *Zen shorts* (Scholastic, 2015). Ages 5-9. (LA)

Newman, T. (2015). *Glamorous garbage* NY: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. ISBN: 978-1-4424-5998-4, unpagged.

Bobbi has a very common problem of many children; her room is so crowded with all her toys, collections and other junk that there is no place to play, and her best friend doesn't even want to come over. Her mom insists that she get rid of some of her stuff, and she readily agrees because she longs to redecorate her room anyway. Then she goes to the Swap Shed at the local dump and the trouble starts. She falls in love with other people's junk and starts bringing it home as well. To accommodate she begins to have yard sales and repurpose her own and others' junk. Her motto becomes "Reduce, Reuse, Redecorate" and of course there is a happy ending. Ages 6-8. (LA)

Parsley, E. (2015). *If you ever want to bring an alligator to school, don't!* NY: Scholastic. ISBN: 978-1-338-10109-6, unpagged.

This story had the first graders laughing out loud! Their favorite pages were all the times Magnolia's name ended up on the board, with checkmarks, AND underlines, and how many recess minutes she was going to miss! Of course, the alligator was the one getting her into trouble, which of course is why you shouldn't bring an alligator to school for show and tell. (MM)

Paul, M. (2015). *One plastic bag*. Ill. E. Zunon. Minneapolis: Millbrook Press, ISBN: 978-1-4677-6299-1, 32 pgs.

Isatou Ceesay and the recycling women of the Gambia took steps to clean up the trash that was piling up in their community from discarded plastic bags. It began when Isatou's goat ate from the waste and could not digest the plastic bags and died. Isatou started collecting the discarded bags and crocheting them to make purses. At first she was made fun of, but she was able to make enough money to buy a new goat and to upgrade her farm, other women joined in. The author, a volunteer teacher in Gambia, interviewed Isatou and has included notes/photographs and resources at the end of the book for deeper understanding and appreciation of the language and cultural aspects of the story. The illustrator who grew up in West Africa used her pretty papers and recycled plastic bags to add collage, depicting the aesthetic contrast of the waste and the beauty within Gambia. (GP)

Perkins, M. (2015). *Rodeo Red*. Ill. M. Idle. Atlanta, GA: Peachtree Publishers. ISBN 978-1-56145-816-5, unpagged.

This book is just "plain cute!" Written in "cowboy" language, it tells the story of a girl, Rodeo Red, who sees everything through her cowgirl's eyes. Her best friend is Rusty, her trusty hound dog, and all is right with the world until baby brother (Sideswiping Slim) shows up in Rodeo Red's territory. To quote Red, "The first time our eyes met, I knew Slim was trouble. He looked

as slippery as a snake's belly in a mudslide." And it seems the house sheriff (mom) was happy with Slim...and, in Red's mind, not so happy with her. You will enjoy this view of new baby in the house and adjustments the only cowgirl must make to survive the wild west☺ (MH)

Wahl, P. (2015). *Sonya's chickens*. Canada: Tundra Books. ISBN: 978-1-77049-789-4, unpagued.

Sonya loves her three chicks! She feeds them, cares for them, leads them around the yard, and keeps their coop clean. One morning, she wakes to find one of the hens has laid an egg! This is one to keep and Sonya is excited for a new chick. However, a hungry fox trying to feed its babies needs the hen. With poignant text and illustrations, the reader feels Sonya's first heartache in losing a pet. (MM)

Walker, S. M. (2015). *Winnie: The true story of the bear that inspired Winnie-the-Pooh*. Ill. J. Voss, NH: Henry Holt, ISBN-13: 978-0805097153, unpagued.

Harry Colebourne, a veterinarian training to be a soldier in WWII saw a cute black bear at a railway station. They had a connection immediately and Harry decided to care for the bear, whose mom had been shot. Twenty dollars later, the bear and Harry were on the train to basic training. Winnie (named after Winnipeg, Harry's home), turned out to be so gentle, she even accompanied the soldiers to England. While the soldiers were fighting, Harry had to put her in a zoo. At that zoo Milne's young son, Christopher Robin fell in love with her, causing his father to write the Winnie-the-Pooh stories. Soft old-fashioned water-colors tell this story. This biography could be paired with *Finding Winnie* (Mattick). (CJG)

** Members of the Saturday Morning Book Group include: Linda Aulgur, Barri Bumgarner, Fran Colley, Carol Gilles, Marty Hawkins, Janice Henson, Nancy Knipping, Missy Morrison, Anna Osborn, Gennie Pfannenstiel, Debra Peters, Becca Rackley, Pam Riggs, Caitlyn Rosbach, Sharon Schneeberger, and Linda Wycoff.