

Notable Books 2009

Abe Lincoln Crosses a Creek, Hopkinson, Deborah, \$17.00, Schwartz/Wade , **CA Vistas Gr 1**

Lincoln himself would be hard-pressed to beat Hopkinson's considerable skill in recounting this incident from childhood, in which his friend saved him from drowning. Hopkinson's personal comments and Hendrix's illustrations provide a great story. "Best of all, Hopkinson addresses the unknowns: "For that's the thing about history--if you weren't there, you can't know for sure." *Horn Book*

African Acrostics: a Word in Edgeways, Harley, Avis, \$19.00, Candlewick, **CA Science Gr 6**

Acrostic poems highlight the animals of Africa. Some of the acrostics spell the name of the animals, and others expand the topic of the poem by varying the seriousness of the poems and the rhythm and rhyme. Backmatter includes more about acrostics as a poetic form and short paragraphs of information about each of the featured animals. Illustrated with full color photographs A good cross-

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Ashley Bryan: Words to My Life's Song, Bryan, Ashley, \$17.00, Atheneum, **Gr 3-6**

With vintage and contemporary photographs, original artwork and illustration, and lyrical evocations of Maine's landscape, this book explores Bryan's creative life. Readers will learn of his setbacks, tenaciousness, and artistic and philosophical prowess. The volume's scattered format doesn't do Bryan's books justice. However, the expansiveness and exuberance of the artist and his work carry the day.

Barnyard Slam, Regan, Dian Curtis, \$17.00, Holiday House, **Open Court: Country Life, Gr 3**

“‘Yo Mama Goose’ is hosting a poetry slam in the barn. The animals gather around a pallet stage and glowing lantern as they await their turns to perform. Charley Horse takes the stage with a free-verse poem lamenting his hay-based diet., ‘Hog, Duck, and Sheep recite their selections, and even Lamb chimes in with a parody of Dr. Seuss's ‘Sam I Am’ *Horn Book*

Bartleby Speaks!, Cruise, Robin, \$17.00, FSG **Gr PreK-2**

“Like most toddlers, Bartleby enjoys playing patty-cake, crawling, and jumping. But he doesn't say a

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aunt's protests in Washington D.C., while the more traditional Emma observes, "Making sure everyone is fed / and clothed and cared for—that also takes a kind of pluck." *SLJ*

The Curious Garden, Brown, Peter, \$16.00, Little Brown, **Gr 1-3**

"Liam, who lives in a slightly surreal "city without gardens or trees or greenery of any kind," turns an abandoned railway into a green paradise. When his garden overruns the city, it's cause for celebration, not complaint. The book's look-for-beauty-where-you-least-expect-it message is best delivered in a series of dramatic acrylic and gouache wordless double-page spreads featuring the fruits of Liam's labor." *Horn Book*

Darwin: With Glimpses into His Private Journal and Letters, McGinty, Alice B., \$14.00, Houghton Mifflin Gr 3-5

"In this revealing work, readers can consider Darwin from two points of view: his own and his biographer's. The primary narrative follows the voyage of the Beagle, and nearly every spread contains a parchment-like "letter" including edited portions of Darwin's own diary and letters. Azarian's watercolor-tinted woodcuts evoke the naive art of the period. A brief author's note and source notes are appended. Bib." *Horn Book*

Denied, Detained, Deported: Stories from the Dark Side of American Immigration, Bausum, Ann, \$22.00, National Geographic, **Gr 5-9**

"Profiling anarchist Emma Goldman (deported in 1919), a Jewish refugee (denied entry in 1939), and a Japanese-American family (detained in a WWII internment camp), Bausam examines the consequences of America's "harsh immigration decisions." Opening and closing chapters discuss the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and the ongoing debate over Mexican-U.S. immigration policy, respectively. An eye-pleasing book design incorporates many affecting period photographs. Reading list, timeline, websites. Bib., ind." *Horn Book*

Diego: Bigger than Life, Bernier-Grand, Carmen, \$18.00, Marshall Cavendish, **Gr 5-9**

"In free verse, Bernier-Grand (Frida: !Viva la Vida! / Long Live Life!, Cesar) chronicles the childhood of Mexican painter Diego Rivera, before highlighting the passions (art, women, politics) of his adult life. These vignettes are appropriately accompanied by Diaz's vibrantly colored mixed-media silhouettes and occasionally--and to great effect--Rivera's own paintings. An author's note and quotes by Rivera are appended. Timeline. Bib., glos." *Horn Book*

Dinothosaurus: Prehistoric Poems and Paintings, Florian, Douglas, \$16.00, Atheneum, **Open Court: 2 Fossils**

"Set in spreads of dreamy dinosaur art, these 20 playful paleontologic poems over, rn Bookvout

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Django: World's Greatest Jazz Guitarist*, Christensen, Bonnie, \$18.00, Roaring Brook Press, **Open Court: 6 Beyond the Notes

“The brilliant jazz guitarist's life from birth in a Roma camp to stardom on a floodlit Paris stage, is sketched in free verse and vibrant oils. The narrative finds its dramatic core in the fire that rages through Django's wagon, badly burning his hands. His long recuperation is depicted against grays that gradually brighten as he heals and adapts to playing without the use of two fingers on his left hand.”

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The Enemy, a Book About Peace, Cali, Davide, \$14.00, Schwartz & Wade **Gr 4-8**

An understated picture book for older readers. After watching an enemy for a very long time during an endless war, a soldier finally creeps out into the night to the other man's hole and is surprised by what he finds there. "Poignant, thought-provoking, and powerful in its frankness and simplicity, this short piece will prompt discussion on war and other means of resolving conflict." *SLJ*

Erika-San*, Say, Allen, \$15.00, Houghton Mifflin, **Gr 3-5

"An American girl dreams of living in Japan, a goal she achieves as an adult when she takes a teaching job there. Tokyo's too crowded; a remote island proves just the setting she's looking for. While this tale of a dream attained has dubious child appeal, Say's storytelling and illustrations of rural Japan are as absorbing as ever." *Horn Book*

Every Human has Rights, Robinson, Mary (Foreward), \$17.00, National Geographic, **Gr 5-8**

Combines photographs with poetry to offer an overview of the thirty rights granted to all people by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "Speaking to children with the notion that learning means understanding rather than memorizing, this book impresses on students that they should always be searching for the definition of freedom, and what human rights really mean to everyone." *Horn Book*

The Everything Machine, Novak, Matt, \$18.00, Roaring Brook Press **Gr K-3**

The people of Planet Quirk all have machines that do everything for them, including coloring their coloring books, but when the machines stop working, the people will have to learn to do for themselves. "The mix of comic panels, word bubbles and bird's-eye tableaux is terrific; Novak even provides a Quirkian history lesson via visual flashbacks in old timey sepia and blue. Dystopian allegory, lively storytelling, giggle-worthy pictures, boy appeal--yup: Everything's here." *Kirkus*

Extreme Scientists: Exploring Nature's Mysteries from Perilous Places, Jackson, Donna M., \$18.00, Houghton Mifflin, **Gr 6 CA Science**

Profiles three extreme scientists who risk their lives to conduct research in some of the world's most intense environments, describing the experiences of scientists studying hurricanes, cave microbes, and forest canopies." Each of the three sections concludes with an interview. The many excellent color photos portray these adventurers as scientists intently focused on their work, though sometimes in unusual or unusually beautiful surroundings." *Booklist*

The Fabulous Feud of Gilbert & Sullivan, Winter, Jonah, \$16.00, Arthur A. Levine

"Winter's jaunty text follows a time when Sullivan became tired of setting Gilbert's repetitious plots to music--a conflict resolved by composition of *The Mikado*. Egielski's vibrantly colored illustrations, with crisp black outlines and a deep Victorian palette, display a wealth of detail--especially effective when using cutaways to show the theater (onstage, backstage, audience, and even the street outside)." *Booklist* Younger students will connect to the story of friendship while older readers will begin to learn about these two talented musicians.

Faith, Hope, and Ivy June, Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds, \$16.00, Delacorte **Gr 5-8**

During a student exchange program, seventh-graders Ivy June and Catherine share their lives, homes, and communities, and find that although their lifestyles are total opposites they have a lot in common. Told through thoughtful, articulate journal entries interspersed with third-person chapters, this book will transport readers to Kentucky settings, and into two unexpectedly similar lives.

A Family Secret, Huevel, Eric, \$20.00, FSG, **Open Court: 4 Survival (sophisticated)**

While searching his Dutch grandmother's attic for yard sale items, Jeroen finds a scrapbook which leads Gran to tell of her experiences as a girl living in Amsterdam during the Holocaust, when her father was a Nazi sympathizer and Esther, her Jewish best friend, disappeared. A moving graphic novel with art in ink and watercolor, with very clear, highly detailed panels, eight or nine per page.

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Have You Ever Seen a Sneep?, Pym, Tasha, \$17.00, FSG, **Gr 3 Imagination**,

“In this deliciously silly rhyming read-aloud from Great Britain, a boy asks readers if they've ever had their picnics pinched by a Sneep or their peaceful reading time ruined by a deafening Snook. He is surprised each time the reader's answer seems to be no and decides if the readers' lives are truly so trouble-free, "I'm coming to live with you!" (Unbeknownst to him, the pesky creatures are right on his heels.)” *Kirkus*

Higher! Higher!, Patricelli, Leslie, \$15.00, Candlewick, **Open Court: PreK I Am Special**

“As an adult pushes a pigtailed girl in a striped sweater and socks on a swing, the child calls out: ‘Higher! Higher!’ The ride gradually takes her from a giraffe's-eye view, to a mountaintop, to an airplane, and finally high enough to trade high fives with a one-eyed, green alien who floats on her own swing among the stars. The pictures then regress to a vantage point that allows readers to review the stages of her upward climb all at once, then return to the playground for a hug and the final word: ‘Again!’ The repetitive text is ideal for new readers, and the cartoon paintings provide plenty of room for imagination. An excellent choice to share at storytime.” *SLJ*

Home on the Range: John A. Lomax and His Cowboy Songs, Hopkinson, Deborah, \$15.00, Putnam

Presents the amazing story of John A. Lomax, the first man to popularize great American folk songs. As a boy in Texas, he listened to the cowboys' songs and wrote each one down. Years later, he convinced cowboys and Gypsies to sing for him and soon he had hundreds of songs preserved for generations to come. “...ink and watercolor illustrations radiate warmth, charm, and humor, highlighting expressive features and striking individuality. The handsome artwork is full of energy and authenticity, and includes faithful and appealing renditions of animals and bucolic landscapes. Excerpts from some songs appear prominently.” *SLJ*

How do you Wokka-Wokka?*, Bluemle, Eilzabeth, \$16.00, Candlewick, **Open Court: PreK I Am Special

“In an infectious burst of movement, rhythm, and rhyme, a multiethnic cast of children in an urban neighborhood strut their stuff and celebrate their uniqueness. In answer to the call, ‘How do you wokka-wokka?’, the youngsters demonstrate their moves – a flamingo, a mariachi, a clock, a fish-all to the sound of giddy nonsense rhymes and exuberant dancing.” An outstanding read aloud.

**How Many Ways Can You Catch a Fly?*, Jenkins, Steve, \$14.00, Houghton Mifflin, 2008

“The authors answer the title question--and five more--on full but not crowded double-page spreads. Spreads feature six animals; each creature (and its method) is varied and vividly presented. Jenkins's detailed cut-paper art is clear; the amount of text is just right; and the page design keeps it all easy on the eyes. Four pages at the b

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I Want to Be Free, Slate, Joseph, \$16.00, Putnam, **CA Vistas Gr 5, Open Court: Gr 4 Risks and Consequences**

A fugitive slave, though still physically shackled, escapes bondage and helps guide a young orphan to freedom. Shadowy, dark watercolors portray their harrowing trek. An author's note explains that the text is based on a Buddhist story retold in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*. Illustrated with watercolor art.

The Imaginary Garden, Larsen, Andrew, \$15.00, Kids Can Press, **Open Court: 3 Imagination**

'Theo's Poppa no longer has a garden when he moves from his house to an apartment. Instead, grandfather and granddaughter paint one outside on a large canvas on his balcony. The lively pen, ink, and collage illustrations reflect the story's loving intergenerational relationship and show step-by-step how the two cultivate their imaginations.' *Horn Book*

It's a Secret, Burningham, John, \$16.00, Candlewick, **Gr PreK-1**

Marie-Elaine has always wondered where her cat Malcolm goes every night, so one evening she puts on her best party dress, makes herself small, and accompanies Malcolm on a grand adventure through the city.

Itty Bitty, Bell, Cede, \$14.00, Candlewick, **Gr PreK-1**

A story for anyone who has ever felt a little too...little. Itty Bitty, a very tiny dog, finds an enormous bone and decides to burrow into it. However, making a home is no small task, especially for someone so teeny. Bell's acrylic and ink illustrations are bright and dynamic, reinforcing Itty Bitty's optimism and can-do attitude.

January's Sparrow*, Polacco, Patricia, \$22.00, Philomel, **CA Vistas Gr 5, Open Court: 4 Risks and Consequences

"Fleshing out historical events with invented but credible details, Polacco retraces the 1840s flight of the Crosswhite family from slavery to freedom and the dramatic standoff between the residents (black and white both) of the Michigan town where they settled and a band of "paddy rollers" sent to fetch the fugitives back to Kentucky. The illustrations, which include scenes of a bloody whipping and a heavily scarred back, have an urgent, unsettled look that fully captures the sharply felt danger and terror of Sadie's experiences." *SLJ*

Julia Gillian and the Quest for Joy, McGhee, Alison, \$16.00, Scholastic, **Gr 3-5**

"Ten-year-old Julia Gillian's best friend is keeping secrets, their beloved lunch lady was replaced by a tyrant, and trumpet lessons prove difficult, making it hard for her to follow the music teacher's advice to "look for the joy." McGhee's affectionate, humorous portrayal of her protagonist's emotional state reveals a keen perception of elementary-school worries. Kozjan's pen-and-ink drawings animate the characters' high and low notes." *Horn Book*

King's Taster, The,

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The Lion and the Mouse, Pinkney, Brian, \$16.00, Little Brown, **Gr PreK-3**

A nearly wordless exploration of Aesop's fable of symbiotic mercy that is nothing short of masterful. A mouse, narrowly escaping an owl at dawn, skitters up what prove to be a male lion's tail and back. Lion releases Mouse in a moment of bemused gentility and--when subsequently ensnared in a poacher's rope trap--reaps the benefit thereof. "Pinkney's soft, multihued strokes make everything in the jungle seem alive, right down to the rocks, as he bleeds color to indicate movement, for instance, when the lion falls free from the net. His luxuriant use of close-ups humanizes his animal characters without idealizing them, and that's no mean feat. In a closing artist's note, Pinkney talks about his choice to forgo text." *Booklist*

**Listen to the Wind: The Story of Dr. Greg & Three Cups of Tea,*

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Malice, Wooding, Chris, \$15.00, Scholastic, Gr 5+

This story revolves around an über-underground fantasy-horror comic, *Malice*. Rumor has it that if you perform a certain ritual, you'll be sucked into the comic world by the malevolent Tall Jake. Of course, kids know all about this, and adults haven't a clue, so when Seth and Kady's friend goes missing and is then seen being killed by shadow beings in the pages of the comic, the two head off into the world of *Malice* to investigate. Graphic novel and prose.

Mama Says: a Book of Love for Mothers and Sons, Walker, Rob. D., \$16.00, Blue Sky Press, **Gr K-4**

An elegantly designed book pairs a series of poems with stunning illustrations to celebrate the bond between mothers and sons. Identical in structure, each beginning with "Mama says," the poems appear in English as well as another language. The illustrations, two per poem, are well-researched and lavish, showing mothers in traditional dress lovingly engaged with their sons. A visual notation connects each entry with a glossary of languages in the back.

Man Who Lived in a Hollow Tree, The, Shelby, Anne, \$16.00, Atheneum, ,

Carpenter Harlan Burch makes everything from cradles to coffins. In this folksy narrative, every time he cuts down a tree, he plants two more. One day he finds a giant hollow sycamore tree and moves right in. Tucked inside, he grows older and older, until suddenly his sap rises and he begins to grow young again. His bald head sprouts hair, he grows new teeth, and he takes up dancing, which leads to courtship, marriage, and lots of children. He keeps on living right up to the day he dies at the age of 142. Folksy acrylic on cardboard and linen illustrations accompany this understated tall tale.

Marching for Freedom*, Partridge, Elizabeth, \$20.00, Viking, **Open Court: 6 Taking a Stand

"Much has been written about the Civil Rights Movement, but what has not been documented as well is the role that children played in propelling the movement forward. This book does just that as the Selma, AL, voting rights protests are examined through the eyes of its youngest demonstrators, whose spirit, humor, and grit are clearly exhibited. Effective and meaningful archival photographs, quotes, poems, and songs are woven throughout the narrative, giving readers a real sense of the children's mindset and experiences." *SLJ*

Me and You, Cote, Genevieve, \$16.00, Kids Can Press, **Open Court: K Finding Friends**

This tale of two friends goes ear-to-ear and tail-to-tail between a rabbit and a pig. Standing side by side, each animal is painting a picture and turns to the other, saying: "I wish I were just like you. / My tail would be as curly as a lemon twist. / My tail would be as fluffy as cotton candy." Each spread depicts the silly trade-offs, with the speaker indicated by distinct shifts in typeface, until a mud cour01 TructubTJTT a

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Mr. and Mrs. Portly and Their Little Dog, Snack,

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they can't name. The creatures hold special objects lovingly in their hands. Eventually they ask the boy questions ("What means home?" "Love? What means love?") and console him by sharing their precious objects. In gratitude, the boy gives one a hug, one a snuggle, and holds the hand of the last. A unique offering that sneaks up on you with its sweetness.

OK Go, Berger, Carin, \$16.00, Greenwillow, **Open Court: 1 Things That Go**

"Double-page spreads feature the word go and illustrations of human- and birdlike creatures driving cars. Then a lone citizen yells "STOP!" and admonishes everyone to find another way ("Use your feet, Pete"; "Take a hike, Spike"). The mixed-media illustrations, though chaotic, have verve. Tips for going green conclude this offering." *Horn Book*

Once Upon a Twice, Doyen, Denise, \$16.00, Random House, **Gr K-3**

A cautionary tale, written in nonsense verse similar in style to Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky*, in which a brave mouse named Jam breaks the rules and goes on a moonlit adventure. "Ultimately a story of youthful arrogance-or as Doyen calls it, "furry overconfidence"-versus the elders' wise experience, this wonderful book is a marvelous read-aloud that children will want to hear again and again. It is too good to save for Halloween." *SLJ*

One Beetle To Many: The Extraordinary Adventures of Charles Darwin, Lasky, Kathryn, \$18.00, Candlewick, **Gr 3-6**

A straightforward biography of the renowned nineteenth-century biologist who transformed conventional Western thought with his theory of natural evolution. "Large and humorous mixed-media illustrations will draw children to this large-format biography. Using watercolor, graphite pencil, gouache, acrylic ink, colored pencil, and collage, Trueman captures Darwin's world and adventures. Cartoonlike people have prominent noses, expressive faces, and enormous hands. Throughout, the naturalist appears to be both curious and hapless, a description he might have given himself in his own modest journals." *SLJ*

Operation Yes, Holmes, Sara Lewis, \$17.00, Arthur E. Levine, ,

"A lively, often funny novel in which an enthusiastic teacher brings improv to restless sixth graders at a rundown school on a North Carolina Air Force base. Her recruits include Bo, son of the base commander, and Bo's troubled cousin Gari, who joins Bo's family under protest when her mom is redeployed to Iraq. Enduring substandard living conditions, frequent moves and abrupt deployments to far-off wars, these military families are mutually supportive, dedicated to service and proud of what they achieve under considerable stress. The kids warm to Miss Loupe, who teaches them to embrace life's possibilities through the arts, but after her brother is reported missing in Afghanistan, she loses her joyful resilience. As Bo and his friends plot a way to help, Gari must choose between joining them and pursuing a plan to bring her Mom home. Pitched to readers in both military and civilian families, this engaging story avoids larger questions of war and peace, focusing instead on how they affect the lives of American kids who deal with the consequences every day." *Booklist*

Otis, Long, Loren, \$18.00, Philomel, **Open Court: K Finding Friends**

Otis is a fun-loving tractor who roams the fields after a hard day's work and plays in the haystacks. In the barn one night, his engine provides a gentle purr that helps a frightened young calf fall into a peaceful sleep. The two become inseparable. That is, until the farmer decides to upgrade and brings home a brand-new, shiny yellow tractor and relegates Otis to the weeds behind the building. Having outlived his usefulness, Otis just sits there, impervious to the calf's call to play. But when his friend gets stuck in Mud Pond and no one-not even the fire department-can pull her out, the feisty tractor revs his engine and saves the day. His heroism and concern for a friend are themes that will appeal to young readers.

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two realize there is nothing to fear, have a good laugh, and hop off together. Warm and inviting, this buoyant tale is hopping good fun.

Princess Hyacinth: (The Surprising Tale of a Girl Who Floated), Heide, Florence Parry, \$17.00, Schwartz & Wade, **Gr K-2**

Princess Hyacinth is bored and unhappy sitting in her palace every day because, unless she is weighed down by specially-made clothes, she will float away, but her days are made brighter when kite-flying Boy stops to say hello. "When Hyacinth soars free in a vast pink sky, her figure is tiny and three balloons follow behind, creating a scene of breezy adventure that also feels delicate. Oil-paint backgrounds (shafts of light; antique-hued balloons; soft animal topiary) glow behind the pointy-nosed, active characters. Molly Leach's clever design shows the word "up" repeatedly rising, and one sentence levitates partially off the page--naturally." *Kirkus*

Read It! Don't Eat It!, Schoenherr, Ian, \$16.00, Greenwillow, **Open Court: PreK I Am Special**

A variety of friendly animals learn the do's and don'ts of caring for their beloved books. Spare rhyming text set on solid-color pages provides easily understood advice: "Don't overdue it, just renew it. / (Really, now, there's nothing to it)." Uncluttered ink and acrylic illustrations depict the critters in humorous poses.

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preaching in this page-turner (although a few science facts cleverly sneak in).” *Horn Book* This well-written and smoothly plotted story, with fully realized characters, will certainly appeal to mystery lovers.

The Search, Huevel, Eric, \$20.00, FSG, **Gr 5-8**

In this graphic novel, Esther remembers her own experience of the Holocaust as a Jewish girl living in Amsterdam, and recounts to her grandson how she escaped from the Nazis and survived by going into hiding in the countryside. Esther knows her parents were sent to a concentration camp and died there, and she embarks on a search to discover what happened to them. After tracking down an old friend who now lives in Israel, Esther finally learns the shocking story of how her parents met their fates at Auschwitz.

A Season of Gifts*, Peck, Richard, \$16.00, Dial, **Gr 5-8

A companion novel to: *A Long Way from Chicago* and *A Year Down Yonder*. Relates the surprising gifts bestowed on 12 year old Bob Barnhart and his family, who have recently moved to a small Illinois town in 1958, by their larger-than-life neighbor, Mrs. Dowdel. She is a source of entertainment, and some fear, for Bob and his sisters. She proves useful in outsmarting bullies. Her actions exude as much warmth and wisdom as they do hilarity.

The Secret World of Walter Anderson*, Bass, Hester, \$18.00, Candlewick, Fine Arts **Gr 2-6

“This sensitive portrait of Anderson-"the most famous American artist you've never heard of"-paints him as a solitary man who kept a private room hidden from his wife and children and often took his rowboat to the Mississippi Gulf Coast's isolated Horn Island to glean inspiration. Subdued watercolors evoke the artist's love of the natural world, as he paints the coastal setting, eats in the shade of his boat and meanders among wild hogs and raccoons. Following Anderson's death in 1965, his wife opens the room that he kept locked, discovering "the walls were covered with paintings of a Gulf Coast day." A powerful tribute to the lengths artists will go for their passions.” *Publisher's Weekly*

Signal*, DeFelice, Cynthia, \$17.00, FSG, **Gr 5-8

“Grief-stricken after his mother dies and struggling with his remote, workaholic dad, Owen, 12, spends the summer running with his beloved dog, Josie, in the woods of upstate New York. One day, he finds a torn, blood-stained T-shirt. It turns out that it belongs to Cam, who says she is an alien and asks Owen to help her make a signal so her loving parents can come from their planet to find her. Even as Owen helps her and considers joining her in space, readers will catch on that she is hiding from Ray, her real mother's abusive, drunken boyfriend. Tension builds as Ray becomes an increasing threat, but the heart of the story is the young people's friendship. They tease each other, laugh together, and also quarrel furiously. Owen's immediate first-person, present-tense narrative shows both his loneliness and bossy Cam's neediness.

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Thirteenth Child, Wrede, Patricia C., \$16.00, Scholastic, **Gr 5-8**

“Lan is the magical seventh son of a seventh son; sister Eff is a cursed thirteenth child. Their story plays out in an alternate Old West setting lacking Native Americans but occupied by fantasy monsters, a world generously spiced with political and magical mysteries, perils, and conflicts.

Wrede's characters mature in believable ways throughout the book's thirteen-year span.” *Horn Book*

Thumb and the Bad Guys, Roberts, Ken, \$18.00, Groundwood Bks, **Gr 3-5**

“Fed on a diet of bad detective movies, Thumb and his friend Susan decide to try some sleuthing of their own. If you think there are meager possibilities for such in an isolated Canadian coastal village (pop. 143), think again: not only is old Kirk McKenna acting fishy (and easy to track via his copious spitting), but a new teacher has come to town, wearing thick makeup and an obvious wig. With its blend of creepiness, mystery, and humor, this story will be eagerly welcomed by fans of Thumb and Susan, but it stands alone” *Horn Book*

Thunder Boomer!, Crum, Shutta, \$12.00, Clarion, **CA Science Gr 1**

“A girl lies underneath a tree as her brother dabbles his feet in the pond and Mom fans herself with her hat--but soon the atmosphere changes. This satisfying book captures all the drama of a summer storm even as it rewards readers with a small-scale, homey story. The mixed-media illustrations feature luscious color and details brought out in scratchy black ink.” *Horn Book*

Traction Man Meets Turbodog, Grey, Mini, \$17.00, Knopf, 2008, **Gr K-3**

“After ascending Mt. Compost Heap, Scrubbing Brush is tossed into the trash by a conniving villain. Our hero Traction Man (Traction Man Is Here!) is stuck instead with new sidekick Turbodog, whose outbursts don't lend themselves to stealth. Grey extends the first book's irreverent wit and affection

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Tumtum and Nutmeg, Bearn, Emily, \$16.00, Little Brown, **Gr 2-4**

“Three old-fashioned stories relate the adventures of a kindly mouse couple who "adopts" two human children, inside of whose rundown cottage nestles the rodents' own stately home. It's all very jolly, with lots of cozy-gentility shorthand (scones with jam, cucumber sandwiches, well-stocked picnic hampers), easy-to-hate Dahlian and Grahamean villains, and much derring-do amongst the estimable mice and their trouble-making friend General Marchmouse.” *Horn Book*

A Walk in New York, Rubbino, Salvatore, \$16.00, Candlewick, **Open Court: 1 Journeys**

A boy exploring with his father describes New York City's sites. The story, enriched by child-friendly bits of information, is enlivened by deftly sketched illustrations, with flat areas of added color in such classic city hues as police-uniform blue, glassy gray-green, brick, granite, and taxi yellow. Rounded out with endpaper maps and an index of sites, this is an inviting introduction to NYC.

Washington at Valley Forge, Freedman, Russell, \$24.00, Holiday House, **CA Vistas Gr 5**

“Freedman again illuminates a piece of American history: here, the Revolutionary War, using the winter of 1777-78 as a focal point. His customary graceful prose, eye for the telling detail, and clear narrative arc make this a pleasure to read. Freque

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Where the Mountain Meets the Moon, Lin, Grace, \$16.00, Little Brown, **Gr 3-6**