

Presenting the 2018 USBBY Outstanding International Books List



Wanderers & Wonderers

BY MARTHA WALKE

BEGINNING IN 2006, THE UNITED STATES BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUTH (USBY) HAS PUBLISHED ITS NOW ANNUAL Outstanding International Booklist (OIB). This list of books that were first published/released in other countries has, over the years, grown in importance and significance. This year the 2018 OIB committee selected 38 titles originally published in countries as far away as India or as near as Canada. These books reflect cultural, ethnic, and geographical differences and similarities for all youthful readers, from preschoolers to older young adults.

In these tumultuous times when immigrants and ‘dreamers,’ bombings and rescues, heroes and activists are frequently in the headlines, it is even more imperative that children can see themselves reflected

Image from *Along the River*, text and illustrations ©2017 by Vanina Starkoff.
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or mirrored in books regardless of skin color or religious beliefs, whether they live in cities or towns, industrialized or agricultural states, in countries at war or at peace. On this list readers can move from humor and play to suffering and bravery. In some books, the illustrations tell more than the words; in others, fantasies reflect unknown cultures but familiar societal fears and desires and beliefs. Readers can see themselves as wanderers and wonderers, as brave and scared, as on the spectrum and off the wall. Diverse geographical settings invite readers to explore and to imagine landscapes that may be new to them. They can learn that they are not alone, that their wishes and desires are the same as those of others across the world, and that there are more similarities than differences among all people no matter where they live, how they look, and what they believe.

These books offer readers an entry into cultures both familiar and strange. As they travel from Antarctica to Brazil to Nunavut, from Australia to India to England, they will meet characters both familiar and strange, explore in landscapes real and invented, deal with problems, fears, and hopes they can empathize with. Their ability to assimilate and find the universal truths will be enlightened as they explore through story and are carried through time by authors and illustrators reflecting, mirroring, and opening their cultures through imagination.

PreK-2

ATINUKE. *You're Amazing, Anna Hibiscus!* illus.

by Lauren Tobia. Kane Miller. (UK)
Back in her home in Amazing Africa, Anna Hibiscus faces serious issues including the death of her grandfather and her own participation in bullying at school. This final set of episodes in a much-loved chapter book series is enhanced with engaging, playful illustrations.

BUITRAGO, Jairo. *Walk With Me.* tr. by Elisa Amado. illus. by Rafael Yockteng. Groundwood. (Mexico)

A young girl fantasizes about a father-figure lion protector escorting her home from school through a risky neighborhood and helping her family survive into an uncertain future. Subtle clues in the pencil and digital illustrations, starting and ending with the endpapers, give readers hints as to

the time period and issues surrounding the missing father.

CHRISTOPHER, Danny. *Putuquq & Kublu.* illus. by Astrid Arijanto. Inhabit Media. (Iqaluit) (Canada)

First Nations brother and sister Putuquq and Kublu enjoy playing pranks on each other in their Arviq Bay community. When they encounter an ancient inuksuk marker, their grandfather explains its importance to the ancient Tuniit people and to their own generation of Inuit in this early reader graphic novel.

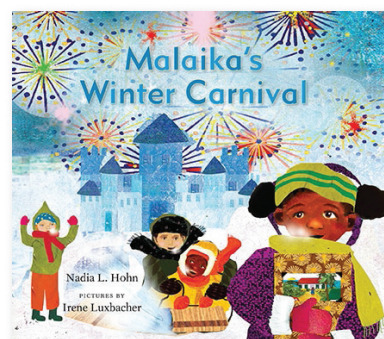
FULLERTON, Alma. *When the Rain Comes.* illus. by Kim La Fave. Pajama Pr. (Canada/set in Sri Lanka)

When a monsoon separates young Malini from her family and the ox-cart man, she leads the ox and cart, containing seedlings, to shelter, ensuring her Sri Lankan village

can survive another season. Fullerton's verse provides captivating access to this precarious situation, while LaFave's highly emotive illustrations deliver gripping tension and tone.

GAN, Dayong. *Little Rabbit's Questions.* tr. by Helen Wang. illus. by author. Candied Plums. (China)

Little Rabbit is full of questions. Mama Rabbit's answers, while hinting at the adventures he will someday have, make him feel safe and loved. The soft colors of the illustrations in traditional Chinese brush painting convey Little Rabbit's feelings of joy and contentment with life.

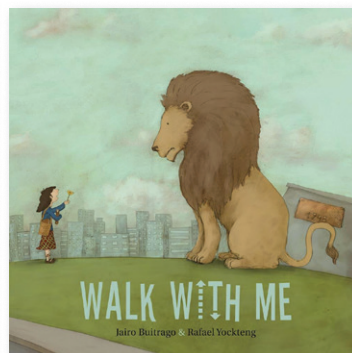
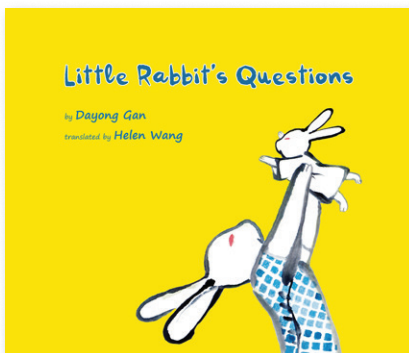


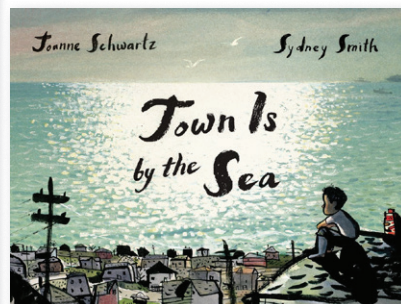
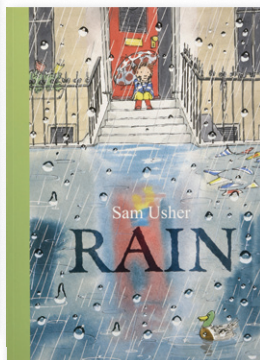
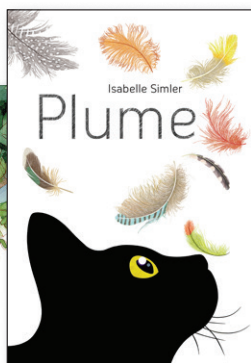
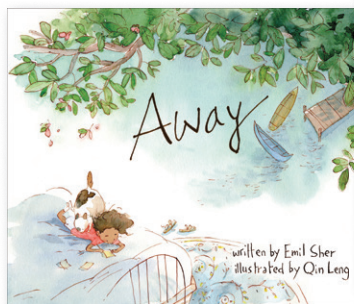
HOHN, Nadia L. *Malaika's Winter Carnival.* illus. by Irene Luxbacher. Groundwood. (Canada)

Malaika, born and raised in the Caribbean, moves to Canada after her mother marries a French Canadian. A new sister, cold and snow, and a new language are challenges Malaika eventually accepts. Riotous color and texture add movement to the mixed media art.

HONG, Nari. *Days With Dad.* illus. by author. Enchanted Lion. (South Korea)

Heartwarming illustrations bring to life childhood memories with the author's father in South Korea. He used a wheelchair and, while there were many things like playing soccer and riding a bike they could not





do together, they could sing, draw pictures, and cook delicious meals together.

JOCELYN, Marthe. *Sam Sorts* (One Hundred Favorite Things). illus. by author. Tundra. (Canada)

Sam organizes his mementos and toys into categories based on shapes, textures, colors, rhymes, and sounds. Illustrated with hand-cut paper creations, this is an unusual concept book that will have young readers thinking about the possibilities in sorting their own favorite objects.

KRAULIS, Julie. *A Pattern for Pepper*. illus. by author. Tundra. (Canada)

Pepper's need for a new dress takes her to Mr. Taylor who opens up the world, and history, of fabrics as they search for the perfect pattern for her dress. Texture, color, and movement abound in the oil and graphite illustrations.

MIYAKOSHI, Akiko. *The Way Home in the Night*. illus. by author. Kids Can Pr. (Japan)

An anthropomorphic bunny muses over the sights, smells, and sounds that it encounters while being carried home through quiet city streets in its mother's arms. The pensive text is complimented by gentle pencil, charcoal, and acrylic gouache illustrations on textured paper.

PARKER, Danny. *Molly & Mae*. illus. by Freya Blackwood. HMH. (Australia)

From the moment Molly and Mae meet at the train station, a friendship filled with adventure is formed. Soft, watercolor illustrations convey the passage of time on the train and play-filled scenes from multiple points of view capture the realistic ups and downs of the fledgling relationship.

SCHWARTZ, Joanne. *Town Is by the Sea*. illus. by Sydney Smith. Groundwood. (Canada)

A miner's son describes the daily events of

his life in a mid-20th century Canadian seaside town. At the same time, his father and fellow miners suffer an undersea mine collapse. Bold ink, watercolor, and gouache illustrations seamlessly shift between full page spreads, vertical/horizontal divisions and comic panels.

SHER, Emil. *Away*. illus. by Qin Leng. Groundwood. (Canada)

Post-it note communication between a busy single mother and her child communicate the child's fears of going away to summer camp for the first time. Words and illustrations interact with each other to make meaning with subtle aspects of diversity included within the illustrations.

SIMLER, Isabelle. *Plume*. illus. by author. Eedmans. (France)

A black cat found lurking near each beautiful bird in the story seems quite threatening. Surprisingly, the cat is interested only in the birds' colorful feathers, drawn so realistically that readers feel as though they can be plucked right off the page.

STARKOFF, Vanina. *Along the River*. tr. by Jane Springer. illus. by author. Groundwood. (Brazil)

With a spare text and vibrant folk-art illustrations, a pictorial journey along a heavily traveled river encourages readers to find their own way. Layers of text and illustration will compel readers to return to the book for the detail and movement within the pictures on each page.

USHER, Sam. *Rain*. illus. by author. Candlewick/Tempplar Bks. (UK)

Exquisite illustrations celebrate imagination, art, relationships, and the journeys that books can provide. A tactile cover, teasingly paced text, warm interiors, and spreads of

reflective and fantastical exteriors make readers empathize with a boy who yearns to go exploring in the rain.

Grades 3-5

BATE, Helen. *Peter in Peril: Courage and Hope in World War Two*. illus. by author. Otter-Barry Books. (UK/set in Hungary)

As Budapest crumbles around him, and Nazis search, seize, and deport friends and family, Peter and a cousin are moved to several hideouts in this biographical graphic novel. Juxtaposing the mundane aspects of life in hiding with the horror of why they have to hide gives this book its impact.

CAO, Wenxuan. *Bronze and Sunflower*. tr. by Helen Wang. illus. by Meilo So. Candlewick. (China)

Bronze, a mute boy, begs his struggling family to take orphaned Sunflower into their home. The two become inseparable. Set during the Cultural Revolution and written by the 2016 Hans Christian Andersen Award winner, this story realistically depicts a family and village in rural China where the natural world sets the pace of daily life.

CAO, Wenxuan. *Feather*. tr. by Chloe Garcia Roberts. illus. by Roger Mello. Elsewhere Editions. (China)

A feather travels far and wide, seeking birds of every size, shape, and color, to ask the simple question, "Am I yours?" A strikingly horizontal layout combined with extravagant depictions of birds, in form and color, are balanced by moments of visual calm, allowing for the poetic text to take center stage.

FLINT, Shamini. *Ten: A Soccer Story*. Clarion. (Singapore/set in Malaysia)

In 1986 Malaysia, 11-year-old Maya dreams of being a soccer star. This dream carries

her through the turmoil of being a minority, navigating social challenges at school, and her parents' divorce as she pulls together a team at her girls' school despite soccer being a "boys' sport."

FRIER, Raphaëlle. *Malala: Activist for Girls' Education*. tr. by Julie Cormier. illus. by Aurélie Fronty. Charlesbridge. (France/set in Pakistan)

This biography captures, through text and emotive illustrations, the story of the youngest Nobel Peace Prize recipient. Born in Pakistan, Malala went from being an innocent school child to surviving an assassination attempt. Her continued global activism for the right to an education has inspired thousands around the world. Extensive back matter.

GOLDSTYN, Jacques. *Bertolt*. tr. by Claudia Zoe Bedrick. illus. by author. Enchanted Lion. (Canada)

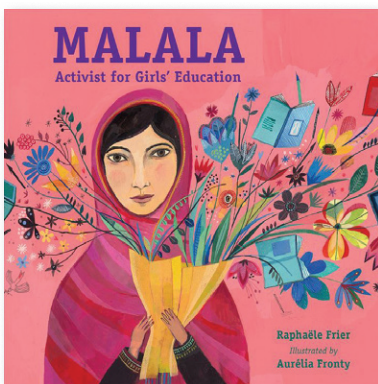
In this well-crafted story about a loner, the young protagonist finds the perfect friend in Bertolt, an old oak tree among whose branches he observes community happenings and wildlife. A near-fatal demise brings a colorful surprise ending. Illustrations of black ink lines with colored pencil add movement and vitality.

HARBIDGE, Paul. *When the Moon Comes*. illus. by Matt James. Tundra. (Canada)

On an icy moonlit night, Canadian farm children take skates and sticks to a frozen-over beaver wash in the woods to play glorious games in a recollection filled with evocative images and illustrated with acrylic paint and India ink to add to the magic and mystery.

IWASA, Migumi. *Yours Sincerely, Giraffe*. tr. by Cathy Hirano. illus. by Jun Takabatake. Gecko. (Japan)

A bored giraffe wants to know what is beyond the horizon. He sends a letter via



pelican and a whole new world of friends opens up. The letters between the characters result in an absurdly funny get-together portrayed in humorous line drawings.

KULLING, Monica. *Mary Anning's Curiosity*. illus. by Melissa Castrillon. Groundwood. (Canada/set in the UK)

In 19th-century England, amateur paleontologist Mary Anning spends her days searching the seashore for fossils to sell to support her family. Her perseverance and determination lead to a major discovery and to her recognition as a scientist in this historical fiction chapter book.

LEACH, Sara. *Slug Days*. illus. by Rebecca Bender. Pajama Pr. (Canada)

We all have them, but for Lauren, who has Autism Spectrum Disorder, slug days are particularly onerous. Navigating school and home, classmates, teachers, and her parents, Lauren eventually has her butterfly days. Soft pencil illustrations enhance this honest, upbeat and needed portrayal of a child on the spectrum.

MELLO, Roger. *You Can't Be Too Careful!* tr. by Daniel Hahn. illus. by author. Elsewhere Editions. (Brazil)

The story of why the gardener guarding the

white rose is not wearing his shoes is unwound in a series of surreal explanations and collage and colored pencil images and then rewound to change the outcome and create a logical paradox in a story that honors children's imagination.

VALCKX, Catharina. *Bruno: Some of the More Interesting Days in My Life So Far*. tr. by Antony Shugaar. illus. by Nicolas Hubesch. Gecko. (France)

Bruno, a pint-sized cat, recounts the goings-on of his life as he mingles with a motley crew of friends and foils in a bustling city packed with apartments, canals, and street vendors. In six brief chapters, Bruno's adventures are presented in a straightforward, conversational tone and expressed through playful, observant artwork.

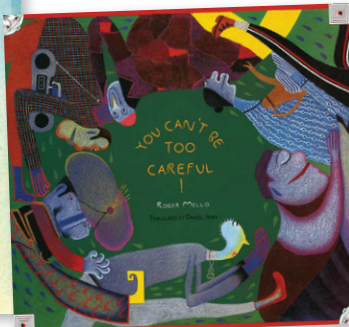
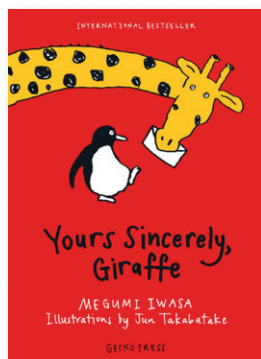
Grades 6-8

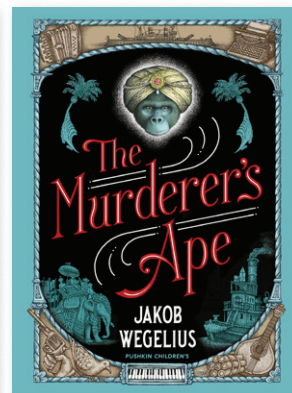
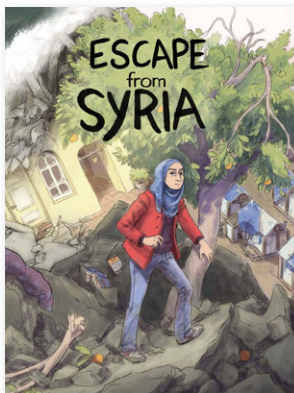
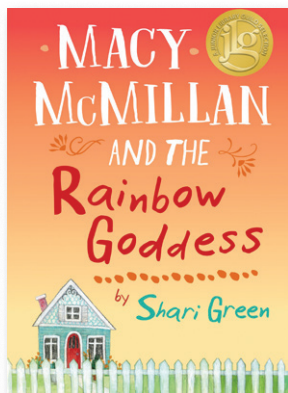
BRITT, Fanny. *Louis Undercover*. tr. by Christelle Morelli & Susan Ouriou. illus. by Isabelle Arsenault. Groundwood. (Canada)

Bridging the end of one school year to the first day of the next year, readers follow the introverted, teenaged Louis as he navigates his first love, parents' separation, and father's alcoholism. This oversize comic album provides ample space for spectacular pencil and ink illustrations that pop with meaningful bursts of yellow and blue.

GREEN, Shari. *Macy McMillan and the Rainbow Goddess*. Pajama Pr. (Canada)

Striking inter-generational dynamics and multi-dimensional characters dominate this deft novel in verse. Facing difficult changes, 12-year-old Macy seeks solace in the company of her firecracker of an elderly neighbor, Iris, so named for the Messenger of the Gods. Though Iris cannot sign for Macy, and Macy can not vocalize, they communicate through story, a lust for life, and cookies.





HARDINGE, Frances. *A Face Like Glass*. Abrams/Amulet. (UK)

In claustrophobic Caverna, the residents have carefully curated facial expressions and the wealthy ones expensive tastes, but amnesiac foundling Neverfell shows all her emotions clearly and precipitates a revolution. A fabulously written and suspenseful story about wealth and poverty from a master fantasist.

KULLAB, Samya. *Escape From Syria*. illus. by Jackie Roche. Colors by Mike Freiheit. Firefly. (Canada/set in Lebanon)

When civil war breaks out in Syria, 13-year-old Amina's family loses their home and escapes only to experience danger and deprivations in a Lebanese refugee camp. In this riveting graphic novel, the family's plight is set in the context of the political and legal restrictions faced by all refugees seeking an end to their stateless existence.

WEGELIUS, Jakob. *The Murderer's Ape*. tr. by Peter Graves. illus. by author. Delacorte. (Sweden)

Sally Jones, a highly intelligent gorilla trying to solve the mystery around her best friend's imprisonment, is relentless in uncovering clues around the world. Her ability to read, to understand emotions, and her strong work ethic are key to solving this page-turning mystery.

Grades 9-12

CROWLEY, Cath. *Words in Deep Blue*. Knopf. (Australia)

A nonlinear and multi-perspective structure sets the foundation for a solid teenage romance with a strong focus on the grieving process as Rachel returns to her hometown, and first love, after the drown-

ing death of her brother. Articulate depictions of adults and teens ring authentic and relatable. Bibliophiles will appreciate and enjoy the many literary references.

HARDINGE, Frances. *A Skinful of Shadows*. Abrams/Amulet. (UK)

In the middle of civil war in 17th-century England, newly orphaned Makepeace returns to her father's Royalist family. Sharing with her father the ability to entertain ghosts in her head, but fearing the powers of the elder Fellmottes, Makepeace, with her Bear and other ghosts, escapes to make her own destiny.

KWAYMULLINA, Ambelin. *The Foretelling of Georgie Spider*. Candlewick. (Australia)

Georgie Spider has foretold the end of the world. Only Ashala Wolf, whose own death has been foreseen, can stop it. Can Georgie make the difficult choices that will affect consequence and change her foretell-

ing? A riveting and resonant conclusion to the Tribe Series

MAYHEW, Julie. *The Big Lie*. Candlewick. (UK) Jessika Keller is a good girl, an excellent skater, a proud member of the League of German Girls (BDM), and good citizen of Nazi Britain until her love for her best friend pushes her to understand the truth of her world. The unreliable narrator makes this alternate history particularly effective.

SMITH, Heather. *The Agony of Bun O'Keefe*. Penguin Teen Canada. (Canada)

Raised in squalor, Bun O'Keefe endures deprivation and depravity in 1980's Newfoundland. A decade defined by the confluence of alternative expressions of self, those expressions came at a high social, and often life threatening, cost. Building a safety net around Bun, other maligned young adults form a family unit in order to ensure survival.

The 2018 Outstanding International Book Committee: Martha M. Walke (Chair), South Strafford, VT; Kate Alseth, Omaha, NE; Mary Beth Dunhouse, Boston, MA; Bindy Fleischman, Newton, MA; Patrick Gall, Evanston, IL; Kathy Isaacs, Chesapeake, MD; Ruth McKoy Lowery, Columbus, OH; Barbara Scotto, Boston, MA; Stan Steiner, Jackson, WY.

The Outstanding International Books (OIB) list debuted in 2006. Each year, books are selected by a committee appointed from the membership of USBBY, the United States section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY). More than 450 books published or released in the United States in 2017 were considered to create the 2018 list, representing exceptional literature from around the world. The list promotes the best of international children's literature, introduces young people to outstanding authors and illustrators from other countries, and helps children and young people in the United States to see the world from diverse perspectives. The list promotes literature that is accessible to children and young people in the United States, addresses topics that may be missing from U.S. children's and young adult literature, and encourages titles that exhibit distinct cultural flavor. For additional information and to access all OIB lists, visit www.usbby.org.