

# A World of

The 2008 Outstanding International Books list has extended its reach

BY CAROLYN ANGUS

**T**his year's third annual United States Board on Books for Young People's Outstanding International Books list covers more ground than its predecessors. That's because for the first time, foreign titles coming from publishers with U.S. distributors, as well as those acquired by U.S. publishers, were eligible for consideration.

Our committee ended up reading 380 books published in 2007 in an effort to narrow down the best of children's literature from other nations—books that introduce American readers to outstanding artists and writers from other countries, help them see the world from other points of view, and provide a perspective or topic that was otherwise missing from children's literature in the United States.

Although books that originally appeared in English still represent the majority of the 40 books on the 2008 USBBY Outstanding International Books list, this year's compilation also includes titles from France, Iceland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Korea. Our committee is pleased to present this year's selections with the hope that these books will send young people on pleasant reading journeys around the world.

AMADO, Elisa. *Tricycle*. illus. by Alfonso Ruano. Groundwood. Tr \$17.95. ISBN 978-0-88899-614-5. Canada.

K-Gr 2—When she spies her young neighbors stealing her tricycle, Margarita faces the disparities in Guatemalan society and must choose between disclosing what she has witnessed and protecting her friends' family. Vibrant illustrations accompany the spare text and give readers a sense of the vast socioeconomic differences among the characters.

BAE, Hyun-Joo. *New Clothes for New Year's Day*. illus. by author. Kane/Miller. Tr \$15.95. ISBN 978-1-933605-29-6. Korea.

K-Gr 2—A young Korean girl excitedly dresses in new traditional clothes in preparation for Lunar New Year celebrations. The use of fabric designs as backgrounds adds to the cultural authenticity of the stunning illustrations. Author's notes provide information on traditional Korean dress and the celebration of Lunar New Year.

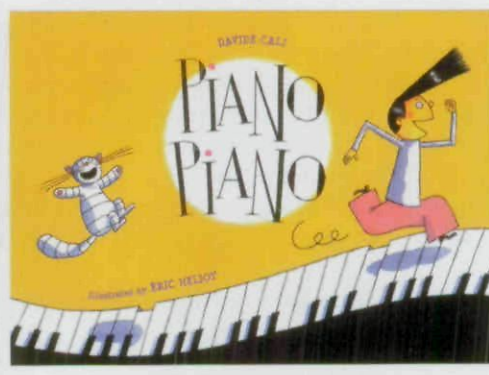
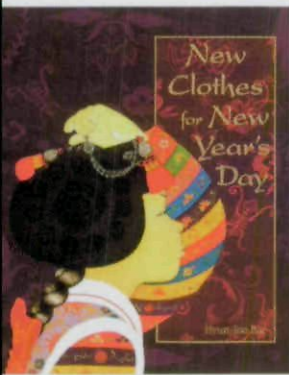
BATESON, Catherine. *Being Bee*. Holiday House. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-0-8234-2104-6. Australia.

Gr 3-5—Bee thinks living with her widowed father and two guinea pigs is just fine, but when Dad's girlfriend, Jazzi, moves in, life gets complicated in this humorous but realistic story.

Bee is suddenly full of contradictory feelings and questions about love, friendship, and Harley, Jazzi's secret, mentally ill brother.

BEAKE, Lesley. *Home Now*. illus. by Karin Littlewood. Charlesbridge. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-1-58089-162-2; pap. \$6.95. ISBN 978-1-58089-163-9. U.K.

K-Gr 2—Sieta is an orphaned child living in a township in South Africa. Her kinship with an orphaned baby elephant helps the girl realize



# Stories



that her new home with her aunt is, indeed, "home now." An author's note provides background about the story and lists sources of information on the AIDS crisis.

**BROOKS, Martha.** *Mistik Lake.* Farrar/Melanie Kroupa Bks. Tr \$16. ISBN 978-0-374-34985-1. Canada.

**Gr 9 Up**—After her mother abandons her family to move to Iceland, 17-year-old Odella discovers a web of family secrets that threatens to engulf her as she begins to explore the meaning of love in this complex and multifaceted story.

**CALI, Davide.** *Piano, Piano.* tr. from French by Randi Rivers. illus. by Éric Heliot. Charlesbridge. PLB \$15.95. ISBN 978-1-58089-191-2. France.

**K-Gr 2**—Although he hates the piano, Marcelino dutifully practices his scales until Grandfather intervenes, revealing that the boy's mom also disliked the piano as a child. Heliot's expressive, energetic artwork adds a humorous touch to this generational conflict that emphasizes the importance of following one's own musical dreams.

**CLARKE, Judith.** *One Whole and Perfect Day.* Front St. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-1-932425-95-6. Australia.

**Gr 9 Up**—Sensible Lily wishes for change in her life. Most of all, as Pop's 80th birthday party approaches, she fervently hopes that her family will spend one perfect day together. Told seamlessly from multiple points of view, this down-to-earth novel ex-

plores the inner worlds of various members of Lily's eccentric family.

**DALY, Niki.** *Pretty Salma: A Little Red Riding Hood Story from Africa.* illus. by author. Clarion. RTE \$16. ISBN 978-0-618-72345-4. U.K.

**K-Gr 2**—In this story set in Ghana, young Salma fails to heed her grandmother's warning about talking to strangers on a trip to market in the city. The brightly colored illustrations add to the distinctive West African feel of this version of a familiar tale.

**DEBON, Nicolas.** *The Strongest Man in the World: Louis Cyr.* illus. by author. Greenwood. Tr \$17.95. ISBN 978-0-88899-731-9. Canada.

**Gr 3-5**—This picture-book biography uses graphic sequences to convey the story of "the

strongest man in the world." Told as a fictionalized discussion between Cyr and his daughter, the narrative works well in tandem with the images in a well-paced presentation.

**DIAKITÉ, Baba Wagué.** *Mee-An and the Magic Serpent: A Folktale from Mali.* illus. by author. Greenwood. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-0-88899-719-7. Canada.

**Gr 3-5**—In this richly illustrated folktale from Mali, beautiful and vain Mee-An searches for the perfect man to be her husband. Serpent disguises himself as a perfect man and marries Mee-An, planning to devour her and her sister, Assa. His trickery is discovered and the sisters are saved by a black heron.

**DICKINSON, Peter.** *Angel Isle.* illus. by Ian Andrew. Random/Wendy Lamb Bks. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 978-0-385-74690-8. U.K.

**Gr 9 Up**—In this delightfully complex sequel to *The Ropemaker* (Delacorte, 2001), Maja, Saranja, and Ribek travel across the Empire and into a seven-dimensional universe to find the Ropemaker, whose ancient magic is desperately needed to save the world from powerful and corrupt magicians.

## USBBY Outstanding International Books List Committee

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ELLIS, Deborah. *Sacred Leaf*. (The Cocalero Novels). Groundwood. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-0-88899-751-7. Canada.

Gr 6-8—In this sequel to *I Am a Taxi* (Groundwood, 2006), 12-year-old Diego is living with a poor family of cocalero farmers. When the local army destroys their crop, he joins farmers across the country in protests that blockade Bolivia's major highways. The fast-paced narrative provides a perspective of Latin Americans that is little known to U.S. youth.



ERLINGS, Friðrik. *Benjamin Dove*. NorthSouth. pap. \$7.95. ISBN 978-0-7358-2149-1. Iceland.

Gr 6-8—Multiple stories of tragedy and redemption are told in this saga of three Icelandic boyhood friends who, together with a newcomer from Scottish royal ancestry, form the modern Order of the Red Dragon, a knight-hood committed to fighting against injustice.

FUNKE, Cornelia. *Igraine the Brave*. tr. from German by Anthea Bell. illus. by author. Scholastic/The Chicken House. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-439-90379-0. Germany.

Gr 3-5—Igraine, the daughter of magicians, has no interest in magic; she wants to be a knight. When Pimpernel Castle is besieged by Osmund the Greedy, an evil neighbor who wants to steal their Singing Books of Magic, it is up to Igraine to set things right.

GRAVETT, Emily. *Meerkat Mail*. illus. by author. S & S. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 978-1-4169-3473-8. U.K.

K-Gr 2—Tired of the dry, hot Kalahari Desert, Sunny Meerkat sets out to find a new home by visiting various mongoose relatives, seemingly oblivious of the jackal tracking him. The clever use of postcards allows readers to follow Sunny's journey, while also providing a few lines about the animals and their habitats.

HAYES, Rosemary. *Mixing It*. Frances Lincoln. pap. \$7.95. ISBN 978-1-84507-495-1. U.K.

Gr 6-8—Teenagers Fatimah and Steve are thrown together as the result of a deadly explosion orchestrated by Muslim terrorists. In the tragedy's aftermath, Fatimah is photographed rescuing Steve and endures repercussions in her Muslim community, while Steve struggles with his father's religious prejudices.

HERRICK, Steven. *The Wolf*. Front St. Tr \$17.95. ISBN 978-1-932425-75-8. Australia. Gr 9 Up—Lucy and Jake are neighbors, but

their lives are worlds apart. They convey their hopes and desires in alternating voices in this novel in verse that transports readers across the Australian outback as the teens travel together: Lucy to escape her abusive home and Jake to find a legendary wolf.

HOFFMAN, Mary. *The Falconer's Knot: A Story of Friars, Flirtation and Foul Play*. Bloomsbury. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-1-59990-056-8. U.K.

Gr 9 Up—Nobleman Silvano is accused of murder and given sanctuary in a friary. Lacking a dowry, beautiful Chiara is placed in a nearby convent by her brother. In this engaging medieval murder mystery, the two young people meet and learn a great deal about life and love.

KWON, Yoon-duck. *My Cat Copies Me*. illus. by author. Kane/Miller. Tr \$15.95. ISBN 978-1-933605-26-5. Korea.

K-Gr 2—A girl and her pet play together throughout the rooms of a distinctively Korean home. At first the girl initiates the games, but then she decides to take her cues from the cat and learns to see her world in a new way, conquering her fears in the process.

LACOMBE, Benjamin. *Cherry and Olive*. tr. from French. illus. by author. Walker. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-0-8027-9707-0. France.

K-Gr 2—Shy, plump, and lonely, Cherry longs for a friend. She finds one first in Olive, the shy, plump, and wrinkly dog she cares for at her father's animal shelter, and then in Olive's owner, Angelo, a popular classmate. Intriguingly stylized illustrations deftly show the special relationship between Cherry and Olive.

LOFTHOUSE, Liz. *Ziba Came on a Boat*. illus. by Robert Ingpen. Kane/Miller. Tr \$15.95. ISBN 978-1-933605-52-4. Australia.

Gr 3-5—While making a difficult journey across a seemingly endless sea on a small boat crowded with other refugees, young Ziba remembers the life she has left behind and dreams of a new land in which she will be welcomed and can live without fear. Exquisite paintings accompany the lyrical text.

MALLEY, Gemma. *The Declaration*. Bloomsbury. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-1-59990-119-0. U.K.

Gr 9 Up—In 2140, people can live forever as long as they do not procreate. If a child is born, it is considered a surplus, destined to spend life repaying its burden upon society. Fourteen-year-old Surplus Anna is content fulfilling this obligation until the day Peter arrives and challenges everything she knows.

MARILLIER, Juliet. *Wildwood Dancing*. Knopf. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-375-83364-9. Australia.

Gr 9 Up—Five sisters, an enchanted frog, dancing, forbidden love, magic, another kingdom, and the country of Transylvania all combine for an adventure of unparalleled suspense and fantasy. A rare tale with many diverse elements to savor.

MARSDEN, John. *While I Live* (The Ellie Chronicles). Scholastic. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-439-78318-7. Australia.

Gr 9 Up—The war between Australia and New Zealand is over. Ellie, one of many child-soldiers from Marsden's "Tomorrow" series (Houghton), is trying to resume a normal life, when a border raid and ambush leave her parents and neighbor dead. Struggling to survive, the teen must fight old enemies and new ones.

PEET, Mal. *Tamar*. Candlewick. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 978-0-7636-3488-9. U.K.

Gr 9 Up—Undercover operatives Tamar and Dart provide support for the Dutch resistance movement and fall passionately in love with the same woman. Half a century later, fifteen-year-old Tamar inherits a box of her grandfather's mementos, leading her to uncover long-held family secrets.

PRESSLER, Mirjam. *Let Sleeping Dogs Lie*. tr. from German by Erik J. Macki. Front St. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-1-932425-84-0. Germany.

Gr 9 Up—When Johanna learns that her family's wealth is the result of her grandfather's "purchase" of a department store from Jews fleeing Nazi Germany, she confronts her father and deals with her own guilt about this injustice. Pressler sensitively and honestly explores the many facets of a moral dilemma.



REEVE, Philip. *A Darkling Plain*. (The Hungry City Chronicles). HarperCollins/Eos. Tr \$18.99. ISBN 978-0-06-089055-1; PLB

\$19.89. ISBN 987-0-06-089056-8. U.K.

Gr 6-8—Reeve's highly imaginative science-fiction adventure series set in a postapocalyptic future comes to a satisfying conclusion with the creation of New London from the ruins of the once mighty traction city and the promise of peace between the Traction Cities and the airborne armies of the Green Storm of the stationary Anti-Tractionist cities.

RIVERA, Raquel. *Arctic Adventures: Tales from the Lives of Inuit Artists*. illus. by Jirina Marton. Groundwood. Tr \$18.95. ISBN 978-0-88899-714-2. Canada.

Gr 3-5—This beautifully illustrated book includes stories from the lives of four modern artists from the Canadian Arctic. Each tale is followed by a profile of the artist, a portrait, and a reproduction of his or her work. This handsome collection offers authentic voices from a culture that is both traditional and modern.

ROWLING, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. illus. by Mary Grand-Pré. Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine Bks. Tr \$34.99. ISBN 978-0-545-01022-1. U.K.

Gr 6-8—Harry, aided by his loyal friends, his superior magical skills, and his deep personal integrity, sacrifices himself to defeat the Dark Lord. Loose ends are tied up and outstanding questions are answered in this superbly wrought conclusion to the series. British elements add appeal to this international phenomenon.

SELLIER, Marie. *Legend of the Chinese Dragon*. tr. from French by Sibylle Kazeroid. illus. by Catherine Louis. calligraphy and chop marks by Wang Fei. NorthSouth. Tr \$15.95. ISBN 978-0-7358-2152-1. France.

Gr 3-5—The legend of the creation of the Chinese dragon is depicted as a way for warring tribes of the past to unite under one benevolent spirit. Stunning artwork of lino-block prints accompanies the bilingual text presented in Chinese calligraphy and English.

STEFFENSMEIER, Alexander. *Millie Waits for the Mail*. tr. from German. illus. by author. Walker. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-0-8027-9662-2; RTE \$17.85. ISBN 978-0-8027-9663-9. Germany.

K-Gr 2—Millie the cow stands patiently each morning as she is milked by a female farmer. Her real joy comes, however, when the mailman delivers the mail and she is

able to scare him. A delightful romp in Millie's colorful world will keep readers laughing at her charm and diligence.

STEWART, Paul & Chris Riddell. *Hugo Pepper*. (Far-Flung Adventures). illus. by Chris Riddell. Random/David Fickling Bks. Tr \$14.99. ISBN 978-0-385-75092-9; PLB \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-385-75093-6. U.K.

Gr 3-5—Raised by reindeer herders, 10-year-old Hugo Pepper knows nothing of his birth parents until he stumbles across their flying sleigh. Turning its dial to *Home*, he embarks on a journey to find his true identity. Along the way, he encounters numerous colorful characters including snow giants and his mermaid godmothers.

TAN, Shaun. *The Arrival*. illus. by author. Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine Bks. Tr \$19.99. ISBN 978-0-439-89529-3. Australia.

Gr 6-8—In this wordless graphic novel, a young man leaves his family and immigrates to a fantastic new world where he finds lodging, work, and friends, while learning the language and customs of his new home. Exquisite sepia artwork and intriguing book design invite repeated viewings of this haunting story.

THOMPSON, Kate. *The New Policeman*. HarperCollins/Greenwillow. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-06-117427-8; PLB \$17.89. ISBN 978-0-06-117428-5. U.K.

Gr 6-8—J.J. and all of Ireland are suffering from a lack of time. J.J.'s mother's request of "time" for her birthday sets J.J. off on a quest that will lead to music, love, family, and ultimately the time he desperately wants. This strongly lyrical story captures readers in its web of magic and music.

TOKSVIG, Sandi. *Hitler's Canary*. Roaring Brook/A Deborah Brodie Bk. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-1-59643-247-5. U.K.

Gr 6-8—Based on events in the lives of the author's family in Nazi-occupied Copenhagen and told in the voice of the younger son in a theater family, this at times humorous story underscores the creative means of combating oppression that ordinary persons find themselves capable of in extraordinary circumstances.

TURNBULL, Ann. *Forged in the Fire*. Candlewick. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-7636-3144-4. U.K.

Gr 9 Up—In this sequel to *No Shame, No Fear* (Candlewick, 2004), Susanna and

Will have been separated for three years while he has gone to London to earn a living. Now, just months away from their wedding, Will is thrown into jail because of his Quaker beliefs. Susanna travels to find him, but the London Fire of 1666 and misunderstandings threaten their relationship.

VAN DER HEIDE, Iris. *A Strange Day*. tr. from Dutch. illus. by Marijke ten Cate. Boyds Mills/Lemniscaat. Tr \$15.95. ISBN 978-1-932425-94-9. The Netherlands.

K-Gr 2—In parallel stories, Jack, disappointed after not receiving an expected letter, walks distractedly through his village unaware that he is doing several good deeds. Meanwhile, a postman frantically tries to catch a letter blown away by the wind. The illustrations tell multiple visual stories while also capturing the Netherlands countryside.

WAHL, Mats. *The Invisible*. tr. from Swedish by Katarina E. Tucker. Farrar. Tr \$16. ISBN 978-0-374-33609-7. Sweden.

Gr 9 Up—As a comatose teen watches the investigation of his disappearance, he gradually learns what has happened to him and is finally able to grieve the loss of his relationship with his newly pregnant girlfriend. Immigration, neo-Nazism, and bullying are issues that come to the fore in this procedural tale.

WILSON, Jacqueline. *Candyfloss*. illus. by Nick Sharratt. Roaring Brook/A Deborah Brodie Bk. Tr \$14.95. ISBN 978-1-59643-241-3. U.K.

Gr 5-8—When her mother, stepfather, and baby brother move to Australia, Floss insists on staying behind in England with her father. She begins to question her decision when her popular best friend rejects her. Girls everywhere, but particularly those who struggle with relationships with their own family and friends, will embrace Floss's story. Comic-book-style illustrations and a glossary of engaging Britishisms add to the fun.

WYNNE-JONES, Tim. *Rex Zero and the End of the World*. Farrar/Melanie Kroupa Bks. Tr \$16. ISBN 978-0-374-33467-3. Canada.

Gr 6-8—It is 1962 and Rex, who is almost 11, has recently moved to Ottawa from Vancouver. Amidst anxiety about nuclear war, he and his new friends solve the mystery of the panther that ostensibly stalks their park. Wynne-Jones folds humor, history, British terminology, French dialogue, and wisdom into Rex's engaging story.

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