



the 2008  
**Cybils**

the children's & young adult bloggers' literary awards

## Short List Titles

### Easy Readers

#### **Houndsley and Catina and the Quiet Time**

written by James Howe

Candlewick Press

*Houndsley and Catina in the Quiet Time* tells of best friends that find themselves snowed in on the day of the big concert they've been preparing for over the last month. Catina is frantic with anxiety about the shopping and prepping they won't be able to do, but Houndsley is happy to sit and watch the snow fall. Howe's language is tender and poetic in spite of the limited vocabulary and concrete imagery that beginning readers require. This is an accessible story that draws adults and children alike into its cozy, musical world.

--andi, a wrung sponge

#### **I Love My New Toy**

written by Mo Willems

Hyperion

In this entry in the continuing series of *Elephant and Piggie*, Piggie is enraptured with her new toy, even though she doesn't know what it does. But when Elephant accidentally breaks it, Piggie and Elephant go through a range of emotions as Piggie gets angry, Elephant gets sad, and they both realize with relief that the toy is not broken; it's a "break-and-snap toy". The different colors and sizes of the text help new readers interpret the emotions, as do the simple but expressive illustrations. Young readers will sympathize with this trial of the characters' friendship.

--Sonja, Bookwink

#### **I Will Surprise My Friend!**

written by Mo Willems

Hyperion

*I Will Surprise My Friend* is a great story wrapped in an easy reader book jacket. Mo Willems' simple color

scheme allow kids to quickly pick out the humor in this story of Gerald and Piggy. With plenty of white space, vocabulary repetition, and varied type sizes to add emotion, new readers can easily jump in and enthusiastically tell the story.

--Terry, Scrub-a-Dub-Tub

#### **Maybelle Goes to Tea**

written by Katie Speck

Henry Holt

Bedecked in a pink bow and a string of pearls, Maybelle is one proper cockroach. Proper cockroach? Hey, why not? With her list of rules ("If you're spied, better hide"), she does everything possible to avoid an Extermination Event at the home of the equally proper Peabodys. But on the day of the Ladies' Tea, decorum flies out the window, and one adventure after another ensues. Newly independent readers, and children listening to a read-aloud, will get a kick out of Katie Speck's original and amusing story, which she tells in thirteen short chapters. Paul Rátz de Tagyos's whimsical illustrations, of the unlikely heroine and her insect friends, add to the insouciant fun.

--Susan, Chicken Spaghetti

#### **Mercy Watson Thinks Like a Pig**

written by Kate DiCamillo

Candlewick Press

The Porcine Wonder, Mercy Watson, returns for her fifth adventure in this easy reader chapter book. This book has it all: a pretend tea-party gone awry, an ambitious animal control officer, and Eugenia Lincoln--the greatest comic foil since Margaret Dumont. Best of all, there's more of Chris Van Dusen's cheerily demented illustrations and Kate DiCamillo's deceptively clever text, in which the words "hot buttered toast" are code for all that we love about life.

--Kara, Not Just For Kids

--Anastasia Suen (<http://6traits.wordpress.com/>), *Easy Reader Organizer*

## **Fantasy and Science Fiction**

### **Teen/Young Adult**

#### **Airman**

*written by Eoin Colfer*

*Hyperion*

Conor Broekhart love of flying started when he was born in a falling hot air balloon at the 1878 Paris World Fair. Conor dreams of inventing the world's first airplane, a dream that is interrupted when he is accused and jailed for a crime he didn't commit. But Conor's not about to let the person truly responsible get away with it. A rousing adventure story with a sensible hero, with a dash of Jules Verne and *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Eoin Colfer's *Airman* will satisfy readers young and old alike.

--A. Feller

#### **Curse Dark as Gold**

*written by Elizabeth C. Bunce*

*Scholastic*

Charlotte Miller is struggling to keep Stirwaters Mill--the livelihood for everyone in the town of Shearing--running after her father's death. But one spate of bad luck after another fouls all her plans and labors, until she must face the terrible possibility of failure. And that's when the mysterious Jack Spinner shows up, with the power to spin straw into gold and the ability to rescue Charlotte and Shearing from despair. But at what cost? When Charlotte learns the true price of Jack Spinner's aid, she will have to fight to protect her town, her home and her family. Elizabeth C. Bunce spins a dark gorgeous retelling of Rumpelstiltskin that takes the bones of an old fairy tale and gives them fresh new life against the backdrop of the Industrial Revolution. A flawed heroine, a genuinely creepy ghost story and a stunningly beautiful use of language are woven together in the fabric of this book, and will make *A Curse Dark as Gold* linger in your mind long after you've turned the last page.

--Nettle

#### **Explosionist**

*written by Jenny Davidson*

*HarperCollins*

An "alternate-history supernatural mystery" set in 1938 Scotland, the world of *The Explosionist* hinges on a crucial incident in history: suppose Napoleon had won at Waterloo. Jenny Davidson has created a fascinating tale set in the Europe that grew out of that victory. Young Sophie and her Danish friend Mikael

try to unravel a murder mystery, and while they're at it, figure out who's behind the terrorist bombings in Edinburgh, which have very high political stakes, not just for Scotland but the world. All this with the help of the dead and the sort-of dead, through the respected science of supernatural divination, while the country ramps up for war. A great, fun read, with a sparkle of romance and much to discuss.

--Laini Taylor-Di Bartolo

#### **Graceling**

*written by Kristin Cashore*

*Harcourt*

Katsa is a Graceling--a person who has been blessed with a Grace. However, Katsa isn't a normal Graceling. Her Grace gives her the power to kill a man with her bare hands, a power she's possessed since she was eight years old. Rather than giving her a life of ease, her Grace means Katsa is forced to use her powers for a scheming king. When Katsa meets Po, another Graceling, she doesn't realize just how much of an influence Po is about to have on her life. Katsa is a strong heroine, overcomes her personal struggles with how her powers are used to become as comfortable with herself as she is with her Grace. With a brisk plot, plenty of adventure, and a little romance, readers will be rushing to finish *Graceling*.

--A. Feller

#### **Hunger Games, The**

*written by Suzanne Collins*

*Scholastic*

In Suzanne Collins' futuristic and controlled society, Katniss Everdeen passes her days working hard for her family's survival. When her younger sister is chosen to participate in the annual Hunger Games, a fight to the death on live television with 23 other teens, Katniss wastes no time in taking her place, even though she knows it mean near certain death. *The Hunger Games* is a novel full of peril, adventure and action, and a dash of romance, making it highly appealing to teens, but also possesses a very serious side that is as thought-provoking as it is entertaining.

--The Compulsive Reader

#### **Wake**

*written by Lisa McMann*

*Simon & Schuster*

Since Janie was eight she has been forcibly pulled into others' dreams. Now at seventeen, she is tired of being bombarded by her classmates' anxiety dreams and their sex dreams as they doze in study hall. She hides her ability carefully until she finds herself attracted to

former bad boy Cabel whose dark nightmares hint at a scarred past and a mystery she must unravel. The book is told in quick snippets marked with a time and date making the plot race forward in spurts. Romance and suspense combine to create a satisfyingly fast-paced read.

--*Amanda Blau, Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs*

### **Elementary/Middle Grade:**

#### **Cabinet of Wonders**

*written by Marie Rutkoski*

*Macmillan*

Petra Kronos lives in a small Czech village with her father, an artisan who can move metal with his mind and work with invisible tools. When her father is commissioned by the prince to build a marvelous clock, he goes off to Prague--and comes back blinded. The prince has stolen his eyes. Even worse, the prince now has control of a clock that has the power to control the weather. Petra sets off to Prague, determined to steal back her father's eyes. She has help--from her tin pet spider Astrophil, and from Neel, a Roma boy with fingers that extend into invisible ghosts that can pick locks. But it will still be a treacherous journey--and at stake is the fate of all of Europe. Packed with character, humor and adventure, *Cabinet of Wonders* is a novel lush with detail and beauty, a full literary meal that will leave readers hungry for the next book in the Kronos Chronicles.

--*Nettle*

#### **Graveyard Book**

*written by Neil Gaiman*

*HarperCollins*

Bod is not your usual boy. He lives in a graveyard. Having been raised by the graveyard's ghosts, Bod has learned a few, shall we say, tricks of the trade, like walking through walls and fading so that no one sees him. *The Graveyard Book* is pure delight from start to finish. To me, the thing that was most indicative of Gaiman's mastery was the fact that this story is unabashedly scary. The world isn't always sunshine and playgrounds and Gaiman isn't afraid to give kids a darker reality. This book is full of humor, loveable characters, and a top-notch ending for our brave, orphaned hero.

--*Em of Em's Bookshelf*

#### **Lamplighter**

*written by D. M. Cornish*

*Penguin USA*

The second book in the Monster Blood Tattoo series continues the adventure of young foundling,

Rossamund Bookchild, as he joins the Lamplighters, a branch of the Emperor's service sworn to keeping the lamps lit on all the far-flung, monster-hunted roads of the land. The stunning imaginative achievement of D.M. Cornish's world-creation is, to my mind, unparalleled. He has dreamed the monsters and monster-hunters of the Half-Continent into being fully fleshed. Rossamund is a character to love and follow, and the dark secrets and conspiracies that unfold in this story make a 600-page book a lightning read. I can't wait to read it again.

--*Laini Taylor-Di Bartolo*

#### **Magic Thief**

*written by Sarah Prineas*

*HarperCollins*

This fast-paced, fun, and engrossing story tells of a young thief who has survived on the strange streets of Wellmet alone, thanks to his quick hands and quick wits. But when Conn picks the pocket of the wizard Nevery, and pulls out the stone that is the locus of Nevery's magic, his life changes. As the wizard's new apprentice, Conn has only thirty days to find his own locus magicalus, or lose his new status. Much worse is the fact that someone, or something, is sucking the magic out of Wellmet, and Conn has to use every bit of his quickness, and every bit of his new found magic, to defeat the Magic Thief. A great adventure, with great characters!

--*Charlotte Taylor*

#### **Savvy**

*written by Ingrid Law*

*Penguin USA*

Mibs Beaumont is anxiously awaiting her 13th birthday because, in her family, 13th birthdays bring about big changes. The Beaumonts always get their savvies--their supernatural powers--on their 13th birthdays. But this year, Mibs' dad is in the hospital and it looks like her savvy isn't coming. Ingrid Law has written a tale that is sure to appeal to kids of all ages. I loved the idea that all kids have their own savvy, even if it isn't as splashy as the ability to move mountains.

--*Em of Em's Bookshelf*

--*Tasha Saecker (<http://kidslit.menashalibrary.org/>),  
Fantasy & Science Fiction Organizer*

#### **Graphic Novels**

##### **Teen/Young Adult:**

#### **Emiko Superstar**

*written by Mariko Tamaki*

*illustrated by Steve Ralston*  
*Minx*

Teenaged Emiko's summer goes from babysitting and ice cream shop jobs to nights spent with underground art "freaks" and fabulous creativity. But is this world she loves built entirely on a lie? Slightly gritty but warm, this will inspire anyone who has ever not quite fit in.

### **Kin: Good Neighbors, book 1**

*written by Holly Black*  
*illustrated by Ted Naifeh*  
*GRAPHIX*

When Rue discovers she's half-faerie, she is confronted with a choice: in the coming war between the faerie world and humanity, where should her allegiance lie? This atmospheric murder mystery/gothic fantasy is only the beginning of Rue's story.

### **Life Sucks**

*written by Jessica Abel*  
*and Gabe Soria*  
*illustrated by Warren Pleese*  
*First Second Books*

This funny, believable, and ultimately, pretty sweet graphic novel swipes at popular notions of romantic vamp culture, mashing the myth into the mundane with hilarious results.

### **Skim**

*written and illustrated by Mariko Tamaki*  
*and Jillian Tamaki*  
*Groundwood Books*

Atmospheric and intimate at the same time, this debut graphic novel about an angsty teen avoids the usual clichés through sheer sympathy and grace and the beautiful art lends it an unusual delicacy.

### **Three Shadows**

*written and illustrated by Cyril Pedrosa*  
*First Second Books*

When death stalks a child, the boy's father does whatever he can to fight this tragic fate. A mesmerizing and ultimately heart wrenching look at how human beings deal with loss.

### **Elementary/Middle Grade:**

#### **Chiggers**

*written and illustrated by Hope Larson*  
*Aladdin*

The mysteries and discoveries of adolescence are given a fresh-air, summer camp setting in this

skillfully-drawn, sweetly-written graphic novel that always rings true.

### **Into the Volcano**

*written and illustrated by Don Wood*  
*Blue Sky Press*

Two brothers' trip to Hawaii takes them into the heart of a real volcano hiding treasure and family secrets in the caves beneath its flows! The visual fireworks in this exciting mystery do not distract from its intense emotional core.

### **Jellaby, vol. 1**

*written and illustrated by Kean Soo*  
*Hyperion*

When Portia discovers a gentle giant something in her backyard, she becomes determined to help it find its home. Gorgeously produced, with some subtle hints of a deeper mystery to come in the sequel.

### **Rapunzel's Revenge**

*written by Shannon Hale and Dean Hale*  
*illustrated by Nathan Hale*  
*Bloomsbury USA*

In this twist on the old tale, Rapunzel frees herself from the witch's prison, using her legendary hair, and sets off with her new pal Jack (of beanstalk fame) to save their town from the witch. A lively Wild West adventure with a hint of romance, and the most butt-kicking heroine this side of Alanna!

### **The Savage**

*written by David Almond*  
*illustrated by Dave McKean*  
*Candlewick Press*

A grieving boy's story of a savage living in the woods comes true in this eerie tale of horror for lads who "put on a real tough front... but like most of us, [are] just dead soft inside."

### **There's a Wolf at the Door: five classic tales**

*written by Zoe Alley*  
*illustrated by R.W. Alley*  
*Roaring Brook*

The big bad wolf tangles up five classic yarns while chasing down some dinner, but his clever victims join forces to trip him up. A superb graphic novel for the picture book crowd.

--Snow Wildsmith

(<http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/blog/540000654.html>), *GN Organizer*

## **Non-fiction (Middle Grade and YA)**

### **11 Planets: A New View of the Solar System**

*written by David Aguilar*

*National Geographic Children's Books*

My Very Exciting Magic Carpet Just Sailed Under Nine Palace Elephants (10-year-old Maryn Smith's winning entry for the National Geographic Children's Book Planetary Mnemonic Contest). So begins this engaging introduction to the newly classified solar system. Stunning artwork, cool facts on how the planets are named after different gods and goddesses, simple explanations and an informative glossary make this a book young astronomers will enjoy reading.

--Vivian Mahoney, *HipWriterMama*

### **Ain't Nothing but a Man: My Quest to Find the Real John Henry**

*written by Scott Reynolds Nelson*

*National Geographic Children's Books*

A field trip into the mind of a historian. Historian Scott Reynolds Nelson invites readers to follow him as he uses artifacts, photographs, and other documents to put together the pieces of a real-life historical mystery.

--Carol Wilcox, *Carol's Corner*

### **Body Drama: Real Girls, Real Bodies, Real Issues, Real Answers**

*written by Nancy Amanda Redd*

*Gotham Books*

Leave your embarrassment at the door, because this book combines refreshing candor with no-holds-barred topics, untouched photos, and information backed by a leading physician to help empower teen girls. The photos are somewhat shocking, but important for girls to see so they know their body is normal. Don't let your teens get the wrong information from their friends...let them get empowered with real information and love the body they're in.

--Vivian Mahoney, *HipWriterMama*

### **King George: What Was His Problem?: Everything Your Schoolbooks Didn't Tell You About the American Revolution**

*written by Steve Sheinkin*

*Roaring Brook*

Historian and textbook author Steve Sheinkin provides a factual, fun chronicle that traces the American Revolution from start to finish. Humorous chapter titles and illustrations, entertaining facts, and labeled maps make learning history lots of fun.

--Jill Tullo, *The Well-Read Child*

### **Lincoln Through the Lens**

*written by Martin Sandler*

*Walker Books for Young Readers*

John F. Kennedy may have been the first television president, but *Lincoln Through the Lens* makes a strong case for recognizing Abraham Lincoln as the first photographic president. From the earliest known photo of Lincoln to the only one taken after his death, Martin Sandler shows how the sixteenth president was captured on film, and how he used the images to his advantage.

--Sarah Rettger, *Archimedes Forgets*

### **Swords: An Artist's Devotion**

*written and illustrated by Ben Boos*

*Candlewick Press*

Ben Boos' well written and visually stimulating book was a pleasure to read. The illustrations were detailed and the history fascinating. Children of all ages will pore over this book as they trace the sword designs through the ages. Ben relayed the use of the sword throughout the ages including the Middle Ages and the age of the Samurai. Ben's drawings illuminated not only the variety of swords used but his love for this "formidable tool".

--Kathy Burnette, *The Brainlair*

### **The Year We Disappeared: A Father-Daughter Memoir**

*written by Cylin Busby*

*and John Busby*

*Bloomsbury USA*

In summer, 1979, Cylin Busby was nine years old, living with her parents and two older brothers on Cape Cod, Massachusetts when her life changed in a matter of minutes. Cylin's father, John Busby, a policeman, was on his way to work when a car pulled up next to him and shot off the bottom half of his jaw. *The Year We Disappeared* is a memoir, told by Cylin Busby and her father John, in alternating chapters, of the terrible year following Busby's shooting. A terrific real life crime read!

--Carol Wilcox, *Carol's Corner*

### **We Are the Ship: The Story of the Negro League Baseball**

*written and illustrated by Kadir Nelson*

*Hyperion*

Kadir Nelson connects with readers in his history of Negro League baseball told from the first person point of view of an "everyman" player. The engaging narrative combined with stunning oil paintings capture

the joy and passion of the players who were surrounded by hatred and inequality.

--Jill Tullo, *The Well-Read Child*

--Mindy Rhiger (<http://propornoun.net/>), *MG/YA Non-Fiction Organizer*

## **Middle Grade Fiction**

### **Alvin Ho**

written by Lenore Look  
*Schwartz and Wade Books*

Alvin Ho is brave (as long as he has his Personal Disaster Kit), a gentleman (in training), a good friend (but NOT to girls), and an interesting kid (who doesn't talk in public). It's just that he's allergic to everything: girls, substitute teachers, airplanes, escalators ... and anything else that's even remotely scary (like leaving the house). However, he loves explosions, his dog Lucy, Plastic Man, Wonder Woman, the Green Lantern, Aquaman, King V, and all the superheroes in the world. The illustrations are unique and flavorful, and so is the Ho family. A book that everyone -- from the struggling second-grade reader through to the adults who know that struggling second-grade reader -- will fall in love with.

--Melissa Fox, *Book Nut*

### **Diamond Willow**

written by Helen Frost  
*Farrar, Strauss & Giroux*

Helen Frost tells the story of Willow, a young girl living in a remote Alaskan town. When Willow gets her first chance to mush the family dogs, everything changes. Told in a series of diamond-shaped poems, with sporadic prose every few chapters, Frost has woven a beautiful coming-of-age story fraught with realism and magic. Braiding the stories of Willow, her family, the dogs, and her family's ancestors, the story is simple and middle-grade students will easily connect with Willow and her family. The deeper themes of love, respect for nature, and being yourself are carved into the poems, just like the diamond willow stick can be carved.

--Sarah Mulhern, *The Reading Zone*

### **Every Soul a Star**

written by Wendy Mass  
*Little, Brown*

Three middle school students are brought together along with thousands of eclipse-chasers to witness a rare full solar eclipse. Told in the three voices of Ally, Bree & Jack, the alternating narrations are beautifully written and increasingly weave together. Ally (short

for Alpha) and her family own the Moon Shadow campground, and have been preparing for their eclipse-chasing guests for years. Bree's parents have bought the Moon Shadow and are dragging her from city life to try running a campground. Jack is along for the ride as his science teacher's assistant in an amateur astronomy experiment they plan to run during the eclipse. *Every Soul a Star* offers three humorous and insightful journeys of self-discovery mixed with an intriguing dose of astronomy lessons.

--Matthew Wigdahl, *The Book Club Shelf*

### **Shooting the Moon**

written by Frances O'Roark Dowell  
*Atheneum*

Both the characters and the setting are fully fleshed out and believable in this Vietnam era novel. Born and raised in a career army family, 12-year-old Jamie explores her changing feelings as her brother enlists in the army and is sent far away to fight. While offering no easy answers, this is a thought-provoking page-turner that will have lots of appeal for kids.

--Mary Voors, *APCL Mock Newbery*

### **The London Eye Mystery**

written by Siobhan Dowd  
*David Fickling Books*

This story has Ted and Kat searching for a cousin who disappears from the London Eye Ferris wheel. The two siblings must work together to solve the mystery. What's unique about this tale is how Ted's Asberger's doesn't stand in the way of him being active in solving his cousin's disappearance. The portrayal of Ted is a refreshing change from stereotypical characters in some books.

--Kim Baccellia

--Kerry Millar (<http://shelfelf.wordpress.com/>),  
*Middle Grade Fiction Organizer*

## **Young Adult Fiction**

### **Audrey, Wait!**

written by Robin Benway  
*Penguin USA*

Audrey started it by breaking up with Evan, but when he releases a hit song about her things quickly spiral out of control in this fresh, funny novel by Robin Benway. Audrey's distinct, snarky voice and her passion for music immediately sucked me in to the story. Lots of musical details and a cast of well-developed supporting characters flesh out the book. This is a fun read, but it also takes a look at the flip side of being a celebrity - maybe being famous isn't

all it's cracked up to be!

--Abby Johnson, *Abby (the) Librarian*

### **Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks**

written by E Lockhart

*Hyperion*

The summer before her sophomore year, Frankie Landau-Banks blossomed. Upon her return to prep school, she finds that she is suddenly one of the most sought-after girls on campus. E. Lockhart has written a novel that is an utter joy to read. Not only is her prose delicious, playful, and lovely, but she created a completely irresistible character and a completely irresistible storyline, complete with a secret society, first love, and the discovery of the delights to be found in the novels of P.G. Wodehouse. Viva La Frankie!

--Leila Roy, *Bookshelves of Doom*

### **I know It's Over**

written by C. K. Kelly Martin

*Random House Children's Books*

Nick is sixteen and still in love with Sasha when she tells him she thinks they need a break, still in love with her weeks later when she tells him she's pregnant. In her debut novel, C. K. Kelly Martin writes with precision and honesty about an emotional subject: first love. *I Know It's Over* traces the arc of Nick's relationship with Sasha from the beginning through the end. But this is not just another story about a guy in love or teen pregnancy; it's a novel in which every detail feels so real and true that you could swear that Nick, Sasha, their family, and friends all actually exist.

--Trisha Murakami, *The YA YA YAs*

### **Jellicoe Road**

written by Melina Marchetta

*HarperCollins*

My father took one hundred and thirty-two minutes to die. I counted. It happened on the Jellicoe Road."

Thus begins the beautiful and haunting novel, *Jellicoe Road*, by Australian author Melina Marchetta. The narrative hooked me with the prologue and while I'll be the first to admit that the novel had its challenging moments--it's not a straightforward novel; it weaves two stories together--I never once considered abandoning it. It's intricately and exquisitely written. It's bittersweet, tragic, beautiful, and redemptive. A true must-read in my opinion.

--Becky Laney, *Becky's Book Reviews*

### **Sweethearts**

written by Sara Zarr

*Little, Brown*

Jenna has left behind a painful childhood. With her mother's remarriage and subsequent move, she's reinvented herself. Then her grade-school friend, who Jenna thought was dead, shows up at her high school. This novel's crisp focus on the relationship between Jenna and the ghost from her past gives this story heart and soul. It will have readers wondering how the traumas of their young childhoods affect who they are today--and how much any of us are capable of helping the people who have touched our lives the most.

--Kate Fall, *Author 2 Author*

### **Ten Cents a Dance**

written by Christine Fletcher

*Bloomsbury USA*

In this beautifully crafted piece of historical fiction about a Chicago taxi dancer in the 1940s, Christine Fletcher brings to life the shady world of a girl who is paid to dance with lonely strangers. Getting to know spirited Ruby was a pleasure, and the gorgeous use of language and 1940s slang in Ruby's authentic voice made this book truly captivating. The experience of being immersed in the vividly captured setting, accompanied by characters that feel like real people, is one that shouldn't be missed.

--Jocelyn Pearce, *Teen Book Review*

### **Thaw**

written by Monica Roe

*Boyd's Mills Press*

Temporarily paralyzed by Guillain-Barre Syndrome, popular jock Dane is sent to a rehabilitation center in Florida, where he's forced to change his icy exterior while breaking down physical and emotional walls. Though instantly filled with dislike for this exasperating main character, the incredibly powerful themes of love, patience, and honesty had me hooked from the very beginning, both on the plot and on Dane.

--Amanda Snow, *A Patchwork of Books*

--Jackie Parker, *Young Adult Fiction Organizer*  
(<http://interactivereader.blogspot.com/>),

### **Fiction Picture Books**

**Abe Lincoln Crosses A Creek: A Tall Thin Tale (Introducing His Forgotten Frontier Friend)**

written by Deborah Hopkinson

illustrated by John Hendrix

*Schwartz and Wade Books*

In a year abundant in releases about our 16th president, this picture book title stands out for its

originality, vibrant illustrations, and interactive flair. While the setting is historical, the mood is thoroughly modern in this clever celebration of the oral storytelling tradition.

--Travis Jonkers, *100 Scope Notes*

### **Big Bad Bunny, The**

*written by Franny Billingsley*

*illustrated by G. Brian Karas*

*Atheneum*

No rushing stream or mucky swamp can stop Big Bad Bunny and his long sharp claws. Through the tangly bushes he marches, fierce and scowling--and a worried mama mouse has just discovered her baby mouse is missing. Suspenseful pacing, engaging art, and a delightful twist ending make this an enchanting tale for the preschool set.

--Melissa Wiley, *Here in the Bonny Glen*

### **Chester's Back**

*written and illustrated by Melanie Watts*

*Kids Can Press, Ltd*

A sublimely pushy cat vies for attention and control with his author and illustrator in this wildly funny book. With creativity and innovation, the author allows her persistent character Chester to scrawl over her illustrations and text with a red marker, creating immediacy, tension, and humor.

--Cheryl Rainfield

### **How to Heal a Broken Wing**

*written and illustrated by Bob Graham*

*Candlewick Press*

When a pigeon is injured in the middle of a busy city, no one stops to help until a little boy and his family take the bird home to heal it. Told mainly through pictures with minimal text to drive the plot forward, the story is touching one of kindness, patience, and humanity.

--Pam Coughlan, *MotherReader*

### **Katie Loves the Kittens**

*written and illustrated by John Himmelman*

*Henry Holt*

The dog Katie can't contain her desire to play with the new kitten companions in her home, but unfortunately her exuberance is overwhelming to the tiny creatures. With redirection and restraint, Katie finally finds a way to show her love for the kittens. The humor in, the situation, the story-telling, and illustrations will engage kids of all ages in this fun, romping story.

--Pam Coughlan, *MotherReader*

### **Sea Serpent and Me, The**

*written by Dashka Slater*

*illustrated by Catia Chien*

*Houghton Mifflin*

An extraordinary friendship begins when a sea serpent drops from a faucet into a little girl's bath. As their friendship grows so does the sea serpent, until the girl has to admit that this creature belongs in the sea. This charming tale of friendship is propelled by lovely, energetic watercolor illustrations that create a world full of whimsy the reader will find hard to leave.

--Stephanie Ford, *ChildLit*

### **Visitor for Bear, A**

*written by Bonny Becker*

*illustrated by Kady Denton*

*Candlewick Press*

When a mouse ignores the sign on Bear's door that reads "NO VISITORS ALLOWED", Bear can't get back to business as mouse continually reappears in Bear's home finally making Bear wonder if he really prefers to be alone after all. The text begs to be read aloud and the subdued watercolor, ink, and gouache illustrations chock full of personality that creating a tale every member of the family will adore.

--Stephanie Ford, *ChildLit*

### **Wabi Sabi**

*written by Mark Reibstein*

*illustrated by Ed Young*

*Little, Brown*

A Japanese cat searches for the meaning of her name, and discovers that beauty can be found in simple, ordinary things and experiences. The text shows many layers and depth, the haikus are well-integrated into the story, and the collage illustrations are astonishing in their texture and beauty.

--Cheryl Rainfield

--Pam Coughlan (<http://www.motherreader.com/>),  
*Fiction Picture Book Organizer*

### **Non-Fiction Picture Books**

#### **A River of Words: The Story of William Carlos Williams**

*written by Jen Bryant*

*illustrated by Melissa Sweet*

*Eerdmans Books for Young Readers*

This biography follows "Willie Williams" from his days as a smart, athletic youngster to his later years as a physician. As readers see him aging, they also see the inexplicable pull of poetry in his life and the making of a man as a poet. The multimedia

illustrations closely compliment the text, making for a book that exudes the spirit of Williams in every way. The book concludes with timelines of both Williams' life and world history during Williams' lifetime.

### **Astronaut Handbook**

*written and illustrated by Meghan McCarthy*

*Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers*

How does one become an astronaut? McCarthy opens the door to astronaut training and lets readers in on all the secrets. The eye-popping illustrations offer ways to understand information that would be too difficult for the target audience had it been presented only in text. The back matter includes a page of fascinating facts and a bibliography of books, web sites, videos and places to visit.

### **Duel! Burr and Hamilton's Deadly War of Words**

*written by Dennis Brindell Fradin*

*illustrated by Larry Day*

*Walker Books for Young Readers*

Fradin's historically accurate telling of the story of the duel between Hamilton and Burr is dramatically told. Both men are cast as well-rounded human beings with flaws and strengths, and both are shown to be at fault for the duel. The book concludes with a lengthy bibliography.

### **Fabulous Fishes**

*written and illustrated by Susan Stockdale*

*Peachtree*

This Seuss-like look at the world of fish uses bold illustrations and rhyming text to introduce young readers to the wide variety of ocean fish. Stockdale follows up her textual overview with a few pages of additional information about each fish pictured. A long list of resources is also included.

### **Nic Bishop Frogs**

*written and illustrated by Nic Bishop*

*Scholastic Nonfiction*

Jam-packed with amazing and sometimes quirky facts, and gorgeous photos, this book takes readers on a journey through the wonderful world of frogs. Scientifically, Bishop doesn't talk down to young readers, but rather helps to make the mystery that is life and science more understandable. A glossary and index are included.

### **Wanda Gag: The Girl Who Lived to Draw**

*written and illustrated by Deborah Kogan Ray*

*Viking*

Using Gág's own words, Kogan Ray tells the story of a woman born into an art-loving family who followed her own dream to create art, no matter what obstacles stood in her way. This biography follows Gág from her childhood years up through the publication of her Newbery award-winning book, *Millions of Cats*.

### **Wangari's Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa**

*written and illustrated by Jeanette Winter*

*Harcourt*

Winter's bold illustrations and straightforward prose tell the story of this Nobel Peace Prize winner's efforts to bring the green back to Kenya. Focused on her early life, this biography introduces readers to a girl who loved nature, decried its destruction, and worked tirelessly to reforest her beloved homeland. The back matter includes an author's note and quote from Maathai.

--Fiona Bayrock (<http://fbayrock.blogspot.com/>), *Non-Fiction Picture Book Organizer*

### **Poetry**

#### **America at War**

*illustrated by Stephen Alcorn*

*edited by Lee Bennett Hopkins*

*Simon & Schuster*

The poems in the anthology are not about war itself, but about the emotions related to warfare. The anthology is focused on the poetry of war, and the 54 poems inside the book are separated into eight sections, beginning with poems related to the Revolutionary War and concluding with poems about the war in Iraq. . . . Some classic poems are used in unexpected ways, including a portion of Sir Walter Scott's *The Lady of the Lake* and Langston Hughes's poem, 'Dreams.' More than half of the poems were commissioned for the book and are by contemporary poets." Excerpted from panelist *Kelly Fineman's* review of the book.

#### **Honeybee**

*written by Naomi Shihab Nye*

*HarperCollins*

As panelist *Bruce Black* said in an online review "Naomi Shihab Nye's poetry and prose poems in *Honeybee*, her newest collection, will draw readers to the page as surely as bees are drawn to nectar to start the honey-making process. . . . These poems are both valiant protest against a world intent on destroying the goodness and beauty contained within it, and, at the same time moving paeans to the beauty and potential

sweetness contained in the world, if only we take the time to open our eyes to see it.”

### **Imaginary Menagerie: A Book of Curious Creatures**

*written by Julie Larios*

*illustrated by Julie Paschkis*

*Harcourt*

Larios creates “many poems celebrating a handful of creatures from a mythological world [using] spare, concise poems with rhythms and imagery which stir the imagination,” as panelist *Julie Danielson* pointed out. “Larios infuses the poems with a real sense of mystery and reverence, drawing in the reader with what Publishers Weekly called (in their review of the similarly-formatted *Yellow Elephant: A Bright Bestiary*, 2006) her ‘near rhymes.’”

### **More than Friends: Poems from Him and Her**

*written by Sara Holbrook*

*and Allan Wolf*

*Boyd's Mills Press*

This collection of poems in a variety of forms from sonnets to free verse, and more, is essentially a dialogue between a teen guy and a teen girl. As Bruce Black commented during our discussions, “*More Than Friends* pulled me into the life of the two characters immediately, too. From the first line... I was inside the voice on the page, inside the character.” Panelist *Laura Purdie Salas* concurred, noting the terrific audience appeal of this collection.

### **On the Farm**

*written by David Elliott*

*and Holly Meade*

*Candlewick Press*

As panelist *Elaine Magliaro* said in her review of this book earlier in the year, “This large-format book contains twelve poems about animals commonly found on a farm: rooster, cow, pony, dog, sheep, barn cat, goat, pig, bees, bull, and two reptiles-turtle and snake. . . . Elliott’s rhyming poems, for the most part, are simple and straightforward - but he does include figures of speech in some. For example, the pig’s tail is ‘As coy as a ringlet.’ The snake ‘coils/in the/garden/like a/ spring...’”

--*Kelly Fineman, Poetry Organizer*

(<http://kellyrfineman.livejournal.com/>)

## **About the 2008 Cybils**

The Cybils are a series of book awards given by children’s and young adult book bloggers. The Cybils have only two criteria: literary merit and kid appeal. We don’t think those two values have to collide. There are books we want kids to read and books kids can’t resist. Somewhere in the middle, they meet.

Now in our third year, we’re comprised of 90+ bloggers who write about children’s and teen’s books every day. We open our nominations to the public. Maybe there’s a book your child resisted bedtime for. Another may’ve circulated from locker to locker. And still another never seemed to make it back to the library by its due date.

You compile the list. We take it from there.

### **Dates to remember:**

Oct. 1-15 Nominations open to the public

New Year’s Day: Short lists announced

St. Valentine’s Day: Winners announced

### **Simple rules:**

- Titles must be published between Jan. 1-Oct. 15, 2008
- Books must be published in English, or bilingual with English
- Only one nomination per genre per person

## **The Organizers**

In addition to the category organizers listed above, the administrative committee for the 2008 Cybils consisted of:

Anne Levy (anne@bookbuds.net) – Co-Founder and Editor,

[http://dadtalk.typepad.com/book\\_buds\\_kidlit\\_reviews/](http://dadtalk.typepad.com/book_buds_kidlit_reviews/)

Kelly Herold (kidslitinfo@gmail.com) – Co-Founder and Director, Publisher Contact,

<http://kidslitinformation.blogspot.com/>

Jen Robinson (Jen@GrowingBookworms.com) –

Literacy Evangelist, Publicity,

<http://jkrbooks.typepad.com/>

Sarah Stevenson – Deputy Editor,

<http://writingya.blogspot.com/>

With special thanks for database development to

Sheila Ruth, <http://www.wandsandworlds.com/blog1/>.