



2007 Cybils Finalists

Presented by the Children's and Young Adult
Bloggers' Literary Awards Committee –
www.Cybils.com

Co-Creators: Anne Boles Levy and Kelly Herold

Fantasy and Science Fiction Short List Titles

Teen/Young Adult

Book of a Thousand Days

by Shannon Hale

Bloomsbury USA Children's Books

On her first day as a Lady's maid, Dashti finds herself sealed in a tower for seven years with her Lady, who is being punished for refusing to marry the Lord of a neighboring land. Tight plotting, beautiful use of language and metaphor, and an engaging main character make this book a standout.

--Sheila, *Wands and Worlds*

Incarceron

by Catherine Fisher

Hodder Children's Books (UK)

No one has been in or out of Incarceron for over 150 years. Now, a young man on the Inside thinks he's found the way Out--and a young woman on the Outside thinks she may have found the way In. Success will require going up against the Warden--and Incarceron itself. The strong writing and characterization, suspenseful narrative, and creative world building brought this book to the top of the pack.

--Leila, *Bookshelves of Doom*

Northlander (Tales of the Borderlands)

by Meg Burden

Brown Barn Books

Northlander is an engaging tale which shows how hatred is only ignorance of the unknown. Though Ellin's gift of healing saves the

Northlander king, she is feared and imprisoned. This gripping tale is both emotionally moving and thought-provoking.
--Kim Baccellia, *Earrings of Ixtumea*

Repossessed

by A. M. Jenkins

HarperCollins

Fast-paced and sharply funny, A.M. Jenkins' story of Kiriel--the fallen angel whose name means "mirror of souls"--takes readers on a week-long ride in the body of an ordinary human boy. Philosophical in a religious sense, yet untethered from any churchy elements, this novel's quirky appreciation of the mundane combines with a wisecracking, personable narrative voice to create a funny yet thought-provoking novel. (For mature readers)

--Tadmack, *ReadingYA: Readers' Rants*

Skin Hunger

by Kathleen Duey

Simon & Schuster/Atheneum

Take two divergent story threads and weave them into one of the year's darkest novels. Add vivid characterization, a quest for knowledge beyond any cost, and magic that is repulsive but intriguing and you have Skin Hunger.

--Tasha, *Kids Lit*

Elementary/Middle Grade:

The Chaos King

by Laura Ruby

HarperCollins/Eos

The Richest Girl in the World and the son of gangster Sweetcheeks Grabowski have to find their way back to friendship, as compelling weirdness enters their lives again in the form of a giant squid, a super-annoying hotel heiress, an animated stone lion, and The Chaos King--a "Sid" punk with a serious art fetish. This fast-paced, stand-alone sequel is accessible to both middle grade and teen readers and is both funny and endearing. --Tadmack, *ReadingYA: Readers' Rants*

Into the Wild

by Sarah Beth Durst
Penguin/Razorbill

A long time ago, all fairy-tale characters fled from their stories seeking refuge from "The Wild," a tangled, evil forest. Since then, Rapunzel has kept the forest under control with the help of her daughter Julie, but when it gets too powerful she is forced to depend on Julie to set aside her fears and doubts and defeat The Wild. Julie's strong character is an inspiring example of duty, survival, and love. --Traci, *Fields of Gold*

The Land of the Silver Apples

by Nancy Farmer
Simon & Schuster/Atheneum/Richard Jackson Books

Land of the Silver Apples has it all--adventure, fairies, old world gods, and an ancient world that is caught between belief in the Old Gods and Christianity. This stand-alone sequel will appeal to not only fans of Nancy Farmer but those who enjoy adventurous tales.

--Kim Baccellia, *Earrings of Ixtumea*

Skulduggery Pleasant

by Derek Landy
HarperCollins

When twelve-year-old Stephanie Edgley's mysterious uncle dies, he not only bequeaths her his house, but a sticky supernatural situation and a rather dashing skeleton

detective named Skulduggery Pleasant. This smart novel is full of humor, action, and a real sense of danger--and has a sly wit that would appeal to a wide age range.

--a. fortis, *ReadingYA: Readers' Rants*

The True Meaning of Smekday

by Adam Rex
Disney/Hyperion

Nothing has been the same since the Boov invaded Earth and re-christened it Smekland. But things get even weirder when twelve-year-old Gratuity Tucci embarks on a journey to find her missing mother--accompanied by her cat (named Pig), a fugitive Boov (named J.Lo) and a slightly illegal hovercar--and realizes that there's more at stake than just her mother's whereabouts. A hilarious satire with a touching ending and spot-on illustrations by the author.

--a. fortis, *ReadingYA: Readers' Rants*

Graphic Novels

Teen/Young Adult:

The Arrival

written and illustrated by Shaun Tan
Arthur A. Levine Books

This is the story of the strangeness that an immigrant encounters no matter where he moves: there are barriers of language, food, and finding work; there is loneliness, isolation, and longing for loved ones. But at every turn, there are those who will help, and those who have their own stories of leaving, abandonment, and exile. The most amazing thing about this intricate and subtly nuanced graphic novel is that it is silent: No words whatsoever.

--Mary Lee, *A Year of Reading*

Flight Volume Four

edited by Kazu Kibuishi
Villard

From full-color manga to rollicking comic adventures to imaginative childhood tales, *Flight 4* has something for everyone. *Flight 3*

fans will be happy to see some familiar faces, and a myriad of beautifully crafted new stories, full of depth and life. The volume is consistently high in quality throughout; each story has a well-realized visual world, strong characters, and tight and compelling storytelling. Readers new to graphic novels will find many reasons to read more in this genre.

--Elizabeth Jones

Laika

*written and illustrated by Nick Abadzis
First Second*

Before men walked on the moon a little Russian dog named Laika was sent to orbit the Earth. Her story is a mix of political moves, attempts at scientific advancement and heartwarming personal connections. Nick Abadzis looks at each of those angles in his version of Laika's story and the result is a powerful and touchingly told account of a moment in history.

--Katie, *Pixie Palace*

The Plain Janes

*written by Cecil Castellucci; illustrated by
Jim Rugg
Minx*

Jane has just moved to the suburbs, and is caught up in the boredom of her new school. Things start to look up when she meets three other girls named Jane. Eventually they decide to form an art-appreciation club called the Plain Janes. Cecil Castellucci's graphic novel debut has a distinctive art style and great characterization—it's a story about exploration of self-expression that is sure to appeal to teenage girls.

--Alyssa, *The Shady Glade*

The Professor's Daughter

*written by Joann Sfar; illustrated by
Emmanuel Guibert
First Second*

The Professor's Daughter is bizarre, well told and completely wonderful. The sepia-toned illustrations are absolutely gorgeous, depicting Victorian London in a way that makes the pages look like an old book from that era. Lillian is charming, elegant and such a lady, while Imhotep IV is elegant, gentlemanly and a bit dysfunctional. His relationship with his father, for instance, is like any normal father and son's misunderstanding and angst--with the added quirk of being dead mummies wandering around London.

--Gina, *AmoXcalli*

Elementary/Middle Grade:

Artemis Fowl: The Graphic Novel

*written by Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin;
illustrated by Giovanni Rigano and Paolo
Lamanna*

Hyperion

Artemis Fowl, Butler, and all of the characters from the underground fairy world of the 2001 hit novel come to life in this graphic novel adaptation of the story. Readers new to the series will be drawn into Fowl's schemes, while those who have loved the *Artemis Fowl* books will be able to revisit them in this new format.

--Mary Lee, *A Year of Reading*

Babymouse #6: Camp Babymouse

*written and illustrated by Jennifer L. Holm
and Matthew Holm*

Random House Books for Young Readers

Babymouse is back and off to summer camp in *Camp Babymouse*. Her bunkmates are initially less than impressed with Babymouse's attempts to be the perfect camper and earn them points, but with the right mix of skill, humor and luck Babymouse might just win them over! This addition to the Babymouse series is smart, funny and adorable.

--Katie, *Pixie Palace*

The Courageous Princess

written and illustrated by Rod Espinosa
Dark Horse

Princess Mabelrose of tiny New Tinsley is happy with her life--until she attends a ball in a neighboring kingdom and learns just how small and unhip her own kingdom is. When a dragon kidnaps Mabelrose and holds her for ransom in his faraway castle, the princess takes matters into her own hands and escapes from his hopelessly inescapable domain--and that is where the adventure really begins. A vividly realized world, charming characters and an unpredictable, interesting plot make this a great read for all ages.

--Elizabeth Jones

Robot Dreams

written and illustrated by Sara Varon
First Second

Robot Dreams tells a wordless but eloquent tale of friendship, mistakes made, abandonment and reflection. It's the story of a dog who builds a robot in order to have a friend. On a happy beach trip, the robot rusts and gets stuck. The dog leaves but thinks often of the friend he left behind while the robot dreams and struggles with his immobility. Seasons change in marvelous, muted but vibrant colors and after many adventures, real and imagined, both robot and dog find their own path.

--Gina, *AmoXcalli*

Yotsuba&! Volume 4

written and illustrated by Kiyohiko Azuma
ADV Manga

Yotsuba is a green-haired girl with a taste for getting herself into humorous situations. This volume follows her zany adventures as she gives advice on boys to a neighbor, goes fishing, and takes on the issue of global warming. Rather than following an overall plot, each chapter takes a new story and allows us to see the world through Yotsuba's

innocent eyes. A great graphic novel that's humorous and heartwarming at the same time.
--Alyssa, *The Shady Glade*

Non-fiction (Middle Grade and YA)

Marie Curie: Giants of Science #4

written by Kathleen Krull
Viking Juvenile

In a world dictated by "No Women Allowed," Marie Curie, a two-time Nobel Prize winner, became who she was because of her love of learning, her refusal to accept the facts, her bravery and her willingness to sacrifice everything to follow her dream. This book reveals Marie Curie's private life, her brilliance and her obsession with radium. Recommended for children ages 11 and up, this book is written in a compelling and easy-to-understand manner.

-- Vivian, *HipWriterMama*

The Periodic Table: Elements With Style!

written by Adrian Dingle
illustrated by Simon Basher
Kingfisher

Artist Simon Basher and chemistry teacher Adrian Dingle have created a vivid rogues' gallery of elements guaranteed to bring the periodic table to life and appeal to kids of all ages. A remarkably engaging science book, not to mention a sensible approach to making the subject--indeed, the individual elements--memorable for everyone from fourth or fifth graders to college seniors.

-- Becky, *Farm School*

Smart-Opedia

written by Eve Drobot
Maple Tree Press

About as close to the world in 200 charmingly illustrated pages as you're going to get, with entries on everything from animals and art, history and human rights, to space and cyberspace, most with a double-page spread. Entertainingly and clearly presented, this is a

one-volume reference book that eight- to twelve-year olds (and probably their younger and older siblings, too) will be reaching for even when no homework assignment is in sight.

-- Becky, *Farm School*

Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood

written by Ibtisam Barakat

Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Ibtisam Barakat's powerful memoir about her childhood experiences during and immediately after the Six-Day War of 1967. Palestinian residents of Israel's West Bank, Barakat and her family evacuated to Jordan, later to return to a different life entirely. What is it like to grow up in a war zone? What does it mean to be a refugee? How can you leave the only home you've ever known? At turns heartbreaking and hopeful, *Tasting the Sky* answers these questions in a lyrical, compelling narrative. Highly recommended for readers aged thirteen and older.

-- Susan Thomsen, *Chicken Spaghetti*

Tracking Trash: Flotsam, Jetsam and the Science of Ocean Motion

written by Loree Griffin Burns

Houghton Mifflin

"Cleaning up the ocean would be like mowing the state of Texas. Twice." ... This well-reviewed resource presents science as a mystery to be solved by creative thinking. Not to mention it promotes environmental awareness--it would be perfect to share with students before a class trip to a beach.

-- Mindy, *Propernoun.net*

The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain

written by Peter Sis

Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Peter Sis again pushes the boundaries of the picture book format, using everything from his own illustrations, family photographs and diaries, and graphic novel elements to create

his highly personal memoir of growing up in Communist Czechoslovakia and surviving the Prague Spring. This book can be enjoyed and appreciated by younger readers, but will especially appeal to young adult readers, who will understand the personal emotions, public history, and outstanding art.

-- Becky, *Farm School*

Who Was First?: Discovering the Americas

written by Russell Freedman

Clarion

Who indeed--it certainly wasn't Columbus. That idea is so old school. In his usual lively way, Russell Freedman shakes the dust out of history books with this eye-opening look at early exploration of the Americas. Cybils panelists enjoyed the author's fresh take on a seemingly familiar subject.

-- Susan Thomsen, *Chicken Spaghetti*

Middle Grade Fiction

A Crooked Kind of Perfect

by Linda Urban

Harcourt

"I teach middle school, and sometimes I find that I have more choices for my readers who like edgy YA stories than I do for those kids who read well but aren't quite ready for teenager issues. *A Crooked Kind of Perfect* is a perfect kind of book for those readers."

--Kate Messner

Cracker: The Best Dog In Vietnam

by Cynthia Kadohata

Atheneum

"It's a war story about a seventeen-year-old named Rick Hanski and his experiences as a dog handler toward the end of American involvement in Vietnam's civil war. As he stumbles into the army, then into dog handling, then over to Vietnam, Rick grows into a man of integrity and purpose."

--Sherry, *Semicolon*

Emma Jean Lazarus Fell Out of a Tree

by *Lauren Tarshis*

Dial

“This was a very refreshing book and one I really feel middle school students can and will enjoy. It is great to read books that are written about abnormal children or kids that simply do not blend in with everyone else, yet are perfectly fine with that fact. So many stories are written about wanting to fit in and needing to gain social acceptance, yet this, shows the reader that being different can be perfect.”

--Amanda, *A Patchwork of Books*

Leap of Faith

by *Kimberly Brubaker Bradley*. *Dial*

“The writing in Leap of Faith was good; the plot always moved along smoothly and compelled me to keep reading. I needed to know that Abby was going to pull through and be okay. Leap of Faith was a sweet, hopeful story that I’m very glad to have read.”

--Miss Erin

Leepike Ridge

by *Nathan D. Wilson*

Random House

“*Leepike Ridge* is a book for every kid (and every grown kid) who played in refrigerator boxes, caught critters in the woods, and floated down creeks on homemade rafts. It’s a fantastic story with a grand adventure, a heroic boy, bad guys that you love to hate, a loyal dog, and a hidden treasure. The fact that it’s beautifully written with magical, transporting descriptions is gravy.”

--Kate Messner

Louisiana's Song

by *Kerry Madden*

Viking

“In *Gentle’s Holler*, Kerry Madden introduced young readers to Olivia (better known as Livy Two) Weems, a twelve-year-old with a passion for books and music. Livy has eight siblings of various ages and

temperaments, a sweet mama, and a starry-eyed daddy. Money’s tight – Daddy’s music fills the heart and ears more than it fills the pocketbook -- but the Weems make do, and their household is always bursting with family, love, and music. *Louisiana’s Song* is a worthy sequel to *Gentle’s Holler*, and, unlike many middle books in trilogies, can stand on its own two feet. When Louise learns to do the same, Livy Two will cheer her on, and so will readers.”

--Little Willow, *Bildungsroman*

Miss Spitfire

by *Sarah Miller*

Atheneum

“This book is the story of Helen Keller’s teacher, Annie Sullivan, as she struggles to teach a girl who can neither hear, see, nor speak. She displays incredible strength and determination as she sacrifices herself completely for Helen. Almost everyone knows this story, but hearing it from the teacher’s point of view is a really unique insight. This delightful debut novel will keep you rooting for teacher and student right up until its triumphant ending.”

--Miss Erin

Wild Girls

by *Pat Murphy*

Viking

“Pat Murphy tells the story of two girls -- the rule-following Joan (a.k.a. “Newt”), who just moved to California from Connecticut and has always written the kinds of stories she thought her teacher would like, and Sarah (a.k.a. “Fox”), who hangs out throwing rocks in the woods near the run-down house where she lives with her dad, a motorcycle-writer-guy who doesn’t fit the image of any dad Joan has ever known. Fox and Newt form the kind of bond that can only be forged in secret clearings and treehouses, and together, they weather the storms of family trauma and trying (or not) to fit in among their peers.

More than anything, though, they learn about writing and about the power of story to help us see truth -- especially when truth is different from the story that the grownups are dishing out.”

--Kate Messner

Young Adult Fiction

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

by Sherman Alexie

Little, Brown

Meet Junior, a skinny, teenage Spokane Indian with hydrocephalus, ugly glasses and too many teeth. He knows that to make his dreams come true, he has to go where no one in his tribe has gone before--a white high school outside the reservation. Sherman Alexie's semi-autobiographical novel comes at you with its chin up and fists flying. You're guaranteed to fall in love with this scruffy underdog who fights off poverty and despair with goofy, self-deprecating humor and a heart the size of Montana.

--Eisha, *Seven Impossible Things Before Breakfast*

Billie Standish Was Here

by Nancy Crocker

Simon & Schuster

Summer 1968. Billie Standish is a young girl with a lot of heart and soul whose life is about to change forever when the rains come pouring down. Newly befriended by a neighbor, Miss Lydia, neither suspect how close danger lurks to young Billie--and it's not danger from the rising storm waters threatening the town's levee. *Billie Standish* is a story of friendship, courage, and devotion that will charm readers young and old as they fall in love with Billie's world.

--Becky, *Becky's Book Reviews*

Boy Toy

by Barry Lyga

Houghton Mifflin

Eighteen-year-old Josh Mendel can calculate batting averages and earned run averages in an instant, but coming to terms with his past has been impossible. Until, perhaps, now. Bypassing the tawdry and sensational, Barry Lyga takes a ripped-from-the-headlines plot (Teacher-Student Sex Scandal!) and explores the devastation it leaves behind. Told with intelligence and sensitivity, *Boy Toy* is a powerful story that may occasionally disturb, but ultimately captivate readers.

--Trisha, *The YA YA YAs*

The Off Season

by Catherine Gilbert Murdock

Houghton Mifflin

Farm girl and football player D.J. Schwenk's refreshing voice and self-deprecating humor return in this continuation of her hilarious and occasionally heartbreaking coming-of-age story. Catherine Gilbert Murdock's characters are authentic and fully realized, and the story perfectly captures the rhythms and conventions of life in a small, rural town. D.J.'s straightforward and endearing personality shines as she faces up to everyday adversity and struggles to find her voice.

--Anne, *LibrariAnne*

Red Glass

by Laura Resau

Random

Sophie, an Arizona teenager full of insecurities and phobias, becomes the foster sister to an orphaned illegal immigrant boy. When the boy's family is located in southern Mexico, Sophie goes along on the trek to return him, all the while hoping he'll decide to come with her back to the U.S. As she journeys through Mexico and beyond, evocative settings and vivid characters immerse the reader in Sophie's world. Sophie finds guardian angels along the way, and discovers inner strength.

--Stacy, *Reading, Writing, and Chocolate*

Tips on Having a Gay (ex)Boyfriend

by Carrie Jones, Flux

Tips is in many ways a typical high school story--loves lost and won; navigating the social minefields of a small town; figuring out who you are, measured against the way others see you. It depicts a week in the life of Belle, a high school senior who's just been dumped by her "true love"--for another guy. Belle progresses through heartbreak to jealousy to anger, to genuine concern for Dylan (her ex), whose road will be much tougher than her own. And Belle's gradual realization that she and Dylan weren't meant to be opens her to new possibilities. Belle is a sweet and optimistic narrator with quirky but believable friends and family.

--Stacy, *Reading, Writing, and Chocolate*

The Wednesday Wars

by Gary D. Schmidt

Clarion

Condemned to spend every Wednesday afternoon alone with a teacher he is sure hates him, Holling despairs. When two demon rats escape into the classroom walls, and Mrs. Barker brings out Shakespeare, Wednesdays seem to grow even worse. But despair has no place in this very funny and deeply moving book about 7th grade love, the Vietnam War, heroes, true friendship, and the power of giant rats.

--Charlotte, *Charlotte's Library*

Fiction Picture Books

Pssst!

by Adam Rex

Harcourt Children's Books

Pssst! is a funny, light-hearted fantasy that uses snappy text and surreal post-modern oil-and-acrylic illustrations to tell the tale of a girl who visits a zoo with crafty animals who all want something from her. This results in a surprise ending and one of the year's most unforgettable illustrated double-page spreads.

--Cheryl Rainfield

Go to Bed, Monster!

written by Natasha Wing; illustrated by Sylvie Kantorovitz

Harcourt Children's Books

A sleepless girl creates a playful monster to keep her company one evening with surprising results. Kantorovitz's oil paint and pastel illustrations, made to look like crayon drawings, capture the immediacy and creative range of a child's imagination.

--Annie Teich, *Crazy for Kids' Books*

The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County

written by Janice N. Harrington; illustrated by Shelley Jackson

Farrar, Straus and Giroux

A sassy, young farm girl, living with her Big Mama, transforms herself from chicken-chaser extraordinaire to fender-of-the-fowl in this spirited read-aloud, whose energetic mixed-media collage illustrations provide much for observant eyes to take in.

--Julie Danielson, *Seven Impossible Things Before Breakfast*

Leaves

by David Ezra Stein

Putnam Juvenile

In this engaging poem of a picture book with spare text and shimmering earth-tone paintings, David Ezra Stein captures the wonder of the changing seasons as seen through the perspective of a wide-eyed bear.

--Julie Danielson, *Seven Impossible Things Before Breakfast*

Four Feet, Two Sandals

written by Karen Lynn William & Khadra Mohammad; illustrated by Doug Chayka
Eerdmans Books for Young Readers

Two girls in a refugee camp in Pakistan share a pair of sandals that begins a friendship in this poignant story of courage. When hope of a better life comes for one girl, they must both

find a way to still share their sandals – and their hearts.

--Marcie Flinchum Atkins, *World of Words*

Knuffle Bunny Too

by *Mo Willems*

Hyperion

In this sequel to *Knuffle Bunny*, the photography, the cartooning, and the drama is all kicked up a notch as Trixie and her dad have to set things right in the early morning hours. Fantastic in its capture of subtleties of expression, the dynamics of families, and the mind of a child.

--Pamela Coughlan, *MotherReader*

The Incredible Book-Eating Boy

by *Oliver Jeffers*

Philomel

Oliver Jeffers has crafted a visually-stunning, humorous story about a young boy who loves books so much he eats them -- until he discovers that the greatest power comes from reading them. Jeffers' innovative illustrations, cleverly superimposed on pages from various books, merge with an inviting storyline that continues right into the book's back cover.

--Cheryl Rainfield

Non-fiction Picture Books

Guess What is Growing Inside this Egg

Written and illustrated by *Mia Posada*

Millbrook Press

Emily of *Whimsy Books* says: "*Guess What is Growing Inside this Egg*, by Mia Posada, is an interactive treat. Children will scour through the creative illustrations guessing at the animals hiding in each egg. Following each guessing game, readers will enjoy learning a few interesting facts about the animals."

Let's Go!: the Story of Getting from There to Here

Written by *Lizann Flatt*; illustrated by *Scot Ritchie*

Maple Tree Press

Andrea of *Just One More Book!!* says:

"Engaging, upbeat illustrations and a stirring current of action, alliteration and ever-changing gaits sweep us through the evolution of transportation from the ice age to modern day, providing vivid glimpses of North American life and insight into the impact of transportation technology on the human experience."

Lightship

Written and illustrated by *Brian Floca*

Atheneum/Richard Jackson Books

Fiona of *Books and 'Rocks* says: "The fog seems to waft off the page in this delightful look at the work and life aboard the lightship *Ambrose* -- a floating lighthouse anchored offshore. Floca's detailed watercolor illustrations and deceptively simple text sprinkled with sensory language have readers practically feeling the dampness, tasting the sea air, and tilting with the deck."

Living Color

Written and illustrated by *Steve Jenkins*

Houghton Mifflin

Jennifer of *Kiddosphere* says: "Using his trademark cut-paper-collage illustrations and engaging text, Steve Jenkins introduces readers to the wild and wonderful world of color in the animal kingdom. Jenkins shares information, rather than lectures, and readers feel as if they are being included in delightful secrets. Perfect for children who enjoy 'browsable books,' but don't be surprised if an adult sneaks a read as well."

One Thousand Tracings: Healing the Wounds of World War II

Written and illustrated by *Lita Judge*

Hyperion

Andrea of *Just One More Book!!* says: "Eye-opening scatterings of yellowed newspaper footprints, handwritten lists and aged, intimate photographs make vivid this

beautifully told true story of hardship, and the pulling together of communities torn to opposite sides of war.”

Vulture View

Written by April Pulley Sayre; illustrated by Steve Jenkins

Henry Holt & Co.

Tricia of *The Miss Rumphius Effect* says: “We’ve all seen them, with their dark plumage, featherless heads and hooked beaks, circling, circling something in the distance. Road kill for breakfast? Don’t mind if I do! Yes, I’m talking about vultures, and so is April Pulley Sayre in her informative and poetic book, gorgeously illustrated by Steve Jenkins.”

Where in the Wild?: Camouflaged Creatures Concealed...and Revealed

Written by David Schwartz and Yael Schy; photographs by Dwight Kuhn

Tricycle Press

Fiona of *Books and ‘Rocks* says: “A refreshing selection of ten camouflaged animals beautifully photographed and presented as a “find-the-critter” challenge. Snappy titles and delicious poems cleverly hint at the animals’ identities (form and meter match each animal!), and fold-out pages reveal the animals and cool information about them, clearly written in a kid-friendly style.”

Poetry

Animal Poems

written by Valerie Worth, illustrated by Steve Jenkins

Farrar, Strauss & Giroux

The poems about twenty-three different animals (some common and some very unusual) are told using free verse--not a typical choice in collections for children these days (at least not when it’s the sole type of verse). And these poems are spectacular in their use of imagery and metaphor. One of the standout solo collections of the year.

Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!: Voices from a Medieval Village

written by Laura Amy Schlitz, illustrated by Robert Byrd and Trina Schart Hyman

Candlewick Press

This book is distinctive, with its echoes of *Canterbury Tales*, a bit of Shakespeare, and *Catherine Called Birdy* all rolled into one. Besides being rich in history, language, and voice, it is understandable and accessible to middle grade kids. Plus, it lends itself to oral reading and performance.

Here’s a Little Poem: A Very First Book of Poetry

edited by Jane Yolen, illustrated by Polly Dunbar

Candlewick Press

A true delight. There is a real freshness to this volume in that many of the poems include in it won’t be found in other anthologies. The selected poems speak to the exuberance of childhood and the simple, everyday things that little children often think about.

Poems in Black and White

written and illustrated by Kate Miller
Front Street/Boyd’s Mills Press

The premise behind Kate Miller’s collection of poems and art is simple: all are about objects that are black and white (cows, a comet in the night sky, etc.). The poems range from funny to melancholy, and are all marked by a keen observation of life. Each poem reads as if the poet froze a moment and recorded it with great clarity and insight in the best possible words.

This is Just to Say: Poems of Apology and Forgiveness

written by Joyce Sidman, illustrated by Pamela Zagarenski

Houghton Mifflin

Joyce Sidman has imagined a teacher, Mrs. Merz, and a classroom full of sixth graders from different backgrounds, all of whom

write poems of apology to someone or some thing they've wronged; in the second half, forgiveness or explanation is returned to the students. The individual poems in the book are excellent, but cumulatively this book is a killer, in the best possible sense. It moves on as a finalist because of its emotional impact and poetic virtuosity.

Twist: Yoga Poems

written by Janet S. Wong, illustrated by Julie Paschkis

Margaret K. McElderry Books

Twist gets high marks for innovation and freshness and for the insights it provides into yoga, which is a new topic for a poetry collections. The poems are evocative and really speak to both the physical and Zen nature of the yoga poses included.

Your Own, Sylvia: A Verse Portrait of Sylvia Plath

written by Stephanie Hemphill

Random House Children's Books

Hemphill's collection of poems about Sylvia Plath convey emotion through imagery. The use of period verse attributed to a variety of people who knew Plath in order to convey both the facts and emotional content of her life and work is extraordinary.

About the 2007 Cybils

The Children's and Young Adult Bloggers' Literary Awards, or Cybils, will be awarded in eight categories, from picture books to graphic novels and even fantasy and science fiction. The contest drew more than 570 nominations from the public this fall, up from 490 last year. It also enlisted 90 judges from around the blogosphere including college professors, librarians, authors and teachers, as well as teenagers and parents. About 50 judges participated in this first round, and the remaining judges will now decide the winners, to be announced Feb. 14 at 6 a.m. Central time.

The Cybils began last year with kidlit bloggers hoping to steer a middle course between the lofty Newbery Medal and populist Quill Awards. Bloggers decided to organize, start a group blog (at blog.cybils.com) and honor children's books based both on popularity and literary merit.

The Organizers

The administrative committee for the 2007 Cybils consisted of:

Anne Boles Levy (http://dadtalk.typepad.com/book_buds_kidlit_reviews/) – Co-Founder and Editor

Kelly Herold (<http://kidslitinformation.blogspot.com/>) – Co-Founder and Director

Eisha (<http://blaine.org/sevenimpossible-things/>) – Nonfiction Picture Books

Jackie Parker (<http://interactivereader.blogspot.com/>) – Young Adult Fiction

Jen Robinson (<http://jkrbooks.typepad.com/>) – Middle Grade/YA Nonfiction

Jules (<http://blaine.org/sevenimpossible-things/>) – Fiction Picture Books

Kelly Fineman (<http://kellyrfineman.livejournal.com/>) – Poetry

Little Willow (<http://slayground.livejournal.com/>) – YA Outreach

Liz Burns (<http://yzocaet.blogspot.com/>) – Middle Grade Fiction

Sarah (<http://writingya.blogspot.com/>) – Graphic Novels

Sheila Ruth (<http://www.wandsandworlds.com/blog1/>) – Fantasy and Science Fiction